

The Collingtonian

~ News and Views ~

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WINTER'S LAST HURRAH

By Jacob Fisher

It had been a bad season for Old Man Winter, OMW to his friends. Just when he was expected to be at the top of his form -- the months of December, January and February -- he turned in just about the sorriest performance imaginable. The warmest winter on record, said the weather people.

Every time he stuck his nose out, glittering with icicles, he was greeted by a blast of warm air, air warm enough to reduce to slush every bone in his body. He couldn't help retreating further and further back in his cave, seeking comfort in the feel of the cold dirt walls.

Then one day he sensed a chill wind on his face. It was bracing, rejuvenating. He peeked out, cautiously. It was real. The folks up there had taken a picnic. It was late March, the March that legend had it came in like a lion and went out like a lamb. Not this time, he said to himself. He would show them he still packed a punch.

OMW zipped out.

First thing he did was to put his icy hand on every crocus he could reach, saucy little yellow things whose yellow faces he found particularly annoying just now. (This didn't happen to most daffodils -- they survived.)

The emerging green tips of begonia, iris and tulip were given a good hard pinch to punish them for their chutzpah in sticking

their heads out too soon.

Slapped hard was the forsythia against the Creighton Center wall for showing prematurely the gold it held in its fist.

Moving on OMW walloped the weeping willow for leafing out in March not April, like any well-behaved tree should. The tiny leaves, shaped like teardrops, promptly drooped.

Dogwood and redbud, heads bare in the washed-out light of an early spring, hurriedly put their hats on again, or pretended they did, pulled their heads in, and began rehearsing their excuses for the scolding to come.

Red maples, abashed at blooming too early, readily agreed to stop all growth until further notice. (But went on converting the bloom to seed as soon as OMW's back was turned.)

The woods here offered little for OMW to do. There were no targets of opportunity other than red maple. The big mature oak and tulip trees, veterans of warm winters and cold, did none of the foolish things the younger trees, shrubs and flowers had been tempted into doing. They were all still buttoned up tight, hands in pocket and head down.

As the day drew to a close OMW hastened to his cave, pulling it in after him, which is why no one can find him once he's gone.

Despite appearances he was not unhappy. He had shown them he

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still packed a punch. So don't you discount OMW too soon, he muttered to himself as he fell asleep for the season.

ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW

By Robena Taylor

The third annual display and sale of crafts and paintings was held on Friday, March 27, from noon until 5 pm. Thanks to the efforts of the Creative Arts Committee and talented residents, the event garnered the gratifying sum of \$529 for the Residents Association. This compares with \$218 received last year.

The basket-weaving class of Laretta Dankers and the ceramics class of Mary Louise Knobbe were responsible for much of the display, as were the Woodshop and Flower Arranging committees. Many other objects were the products of residents' individual creative hobbies and artistic pursuits.

Small arrangements made by members of the Flower Arranging Committee were sold.

Ceramics by Helen C. Kelley and Julia Gilkes were on display, as were baskets by Laretta Dankers, Mary MacLean, Winnie Myers, Maude Robinson and Mary Louise Knobbe.

Among pieces of furniture were a coffee table by Jim MacMartin, two chairs and a screen by Isabel Gerhard, a refinished dresser by Ruth Sumner, and one cherry straight chair refinished and rush-seated by Maude and Philip Robinson. Other wooden objects included a model plane by Jim MacMartin, a bovine flower or plant box by George Dankers, and a bowl by Ruth Sumner who also displayed a coconut bowl.

There were paintings by Pat Trammel, Ted Scott, Betty Williams,

Georgia Paine-Heldt, Robena Taylor, Helen Eisenhart and Anna Dougherty.

Needlework included embroidery by Ruth Sumner, framed needlework by Julia Gilkes, quilting from Jean Van Wagenen and Ruth Sumner, a cross-stitch blessing from Mary MacMartin, a candlewick bedspread by Mary Ellen Hines, and needlepoint by Hannah Crosswhite, Helen Eisenhart and Julia Gilkes.

Crocheted work included a throw and a table mat by Brownie Ammann, and a baby blanket by Marie Ludden.

Other handwork included four sweaters by Mary Kramer, one Aran-style sweater by Mary MacMartin, four hooked rugs by Jean Marple, and hand-decorated textiles by Mary Parrish, Dorothy Skillman and Connie Grisard.

Among the other miscellaneous handmade items were leather purses by Marian Jenkins, four large stuffed rabbits by Connie Schnaubelt and 15 tote bags by Sophie Clagett.

All-in-all, it was a colorful festive bazaar, reflecting the extremely varied talents of Collingtonians.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

By Gail L. Kohn

Fellowship Fund Advisory Group

Since January, residents Art Longacre, Fannie Jeffrey, Frances Kolarek and Keith Glennan have provided advice on fund raising for the Fellowship Fund. They have joined Fellowship Fund Consultant and Board member Lorraine Sheehan to plan means to help newer residents and those with longer tenure to understand the importance of the Fund. The philosophy of Collington places emphasis on achieving economic diversity among residents. The sole purpose of the Fellowship Fund is to help

residents who run short of funds as the years go by, and, when resources are available, to assist additional persons to move here who have engaged in socially beneficial, but less remunerative careers. Residents in the Advisory Group are interested in your questions about the Fund.

American Association of Homes for the Aging (AAHA) Spring Conference

In simultaneously occurring presentations, Collington helped participants of the 20th annual Washington, D.C. meeting of AAHA learn more about achieving excellence.

In one session Fannie Jeffrey received the only round of applause from participants when she explained why Collington is especially concerned about achieving and maintaining racial diversity and how other continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs) can strive to diversify their resident populations.

At the same time, resident Virginia Conley joined former Collington Board member Dr. Sandra Charles and staff members Kathryn Brod (Director of Finance) and P. Gail Whitehead (Director of Health Services) in presenting a session on completing a self-study to present to the Continuing Care Accreditation Commission, when seeking accreditation. As the youngest accredited CCRC in the nation, Collington is considered a model for other communities to emulate.

A POOLISH PARTY

By Mary C. MacLean

April Fools' Day is surely a time to be poolish, at least it is if you are lucky enough to live at Collington and have a pool. As announced in advance, the festivities began promptly at 2 p.m., by which time the poolside chairs were

pretty well filled. Before any games began, our long distance swimmers were recognized (Bob Kramer who has logged 100 miles and Isabel Gerhard and Bob Willing, each with 50). Also recognized were those who participated in the recent Swim-a-thon. Loyally supported by other residents, they have received pledges amounting to \$7500 for the Fellowship Fund.

A third presentation, although serious in intent, set the stage for the antics of the afternoon when George Dankers was presented with a jolly stuffed bunny in recognition of his untiring efforts on behalf of the Pool Committee. The number and variety of games which followed were proof enough of his tireless ingenuity and the smiles and laughter of participants and audience alike proved the skill with which he and his Committee are able to bring out the urge to play which lies within each of us.

EARLY SPRING GARDENS

By Margaret Werts

It was my intention to write about some outstanding early spring gardens here at Collington. However, the really weird weather we have had during March, with abnormally warm temperatures followed by abnormally cold temperatures, heavy rains and strong winds, has more or less mowed down individual gardens. In spite of this, in walking around some of the clusters, I have noticed that certain plants can be depended upon to do well despite all adversities.

Vinca minor, also known as myrtle or periwinkle, thrives. Its small, glossy, dark green leaves form a dense but not uncontrollable ground cover, a sort of living mulch. It is now coming into bloom, with its bright lavender-blue flowers brightening many of

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our front gardens. I don't know any one who has not had some degree of success with this plant.

Another flower that has held up amazingly well during this difficult March is the early daffodil. The miniature **Tete-a-Tete**, growing only six to eight inches tall, with yellow perianth and orange cup, is thriving. We planted several clumps in the 3000 Cluster in the fall of '90, and they have been abundantly beautiful for the past two springs. Another beauty is February Gold, a semi-miniature, slightly cyclamineous. Like the **Tete-a-Tete**, these bloomed early, and due to the cold weather, are still in good condition four weeks later. Last year, unseasonably warm weather did the early daffodils in as soon as they came out.

Muscari, known to most of us as grape hyacinths, also seem to like our soil, and have come into enthusiastic bloom during the last week in March. Another bulb I have had success with at Collington, having never been able to do much with it elsewhere, is **Anemone blanda**, also known as Greek windflower. It is an enchanting daisy-like flower, three to four inches high and about one and a half inches in diameter, in shades of intense violet blue with yellow centers. It also comes in pink and white. Some of my deep blue ones came up pale blue, almost white, the second year. It is in bloom right now (the end of March). Mine have multiplied noticeably since last year. Also in bloom are pansies and primulas. Pansies that are planted in the fall bloom very early in the spring. Primulas, which come in a variety of colors (the yellow does the best for me), should be divided every year or two, giving an ever-increasing show.

An early blooming shrub that does very well here is **Pieris**

japonica, also known as Andromeda. It is a vertically growing evergreen shrub, with long slender glossy green leaves and abundant white blooms, resembling lily of the valley, cascading from its branches. So far, it has proved disease resistant and fairly impervious to insects.

I hope to do a general survey of later spring flowers in April and May, and early summer flowers in June. Watch this space!

OLD FRIENDS

By Emily Abouchar

During the past two weeks three very different musical events took place either at Collington or nearby, to be especially cherished by all residents, because by now they have become old friends. Each of them first came when we were all newcomers here, and slightly uneasy in our new surroundings. They came voluntarily, and moreover they came back, again and again. By now, they have become part of our lives.

First came the Chesapeake Trio, on March 14th. As always, their exuberance and music endeared them to an appreciative, and numerous audience. And rightly so, since it was the Chesapeake Trio who gave us a gala performance as the climax of our fund raising campaign to raise money for the restoration of the grand piano in the Auditorium.

Then, on March 23, the Olde Chorale of Goodwin House West returned for a joint concert with our Collington Singers. This was just their second visit to Collington, but all sense of uneasiness seemed to have vanished. They seemed "at home" and obviously enjoying themselves. The program was more ambitious and the voices stronger. Their rapport with the audience was warm and happy. and

everyone had a splendid time.

Finally, last Sunday, March 29, the last of the Candlelight Concerts at St. Barnabas Church was given by the Bellini Ensemble. It was a jewel and well attended by Collington residents. These Candlelight Concerts are just one of the many ways that St. Barnabas Church has shown its support of and interest in Collington. It has truly been a good neighbor. But, apart from that, it is a rare treat to be able to enjoy such fine music so well performed in such an ideal setting. The informality and friendliness are irresistible.

We can only hope these special friends will continue to come to Collington in years to come. They are already a part of our lives. In time, who knows? Perhaps it will become a nourishing tradition.

A TESTIMONIAL

By Betty Clark

The coming marriage of Baker Port and Anna Berry is a cause for rejoicing in Cluster 2100. We wish them every happiness, so well-merited, though we must also record our deep regret that Baker's move to another cluster will take him away from us.

As our Cluster Housing Representative he enlarged his duties beyond the usual requirements, as instanced by his devising a fire/disaster warning signal for us and our own bulletin board.

But it is as a kind friend we shall miss him most. His inventive mind found ways out of our dilemmas, large and small. His skillful endeavors encompassed carpentry, electrical matters, clock-bracing, door panel changes, burglar-proofing sliding doors, the carrying of heavy burdens for the infirm, and even the cheerful transport of a neighbor to a six o'clock in the

morning hospital appointment.

"Poor Bandit," someone says, reflecting on the cat's coming change of locale.

"Poor 2100," we echo, regretting the removal from our midst of a gracious and good man.

Come back to see us, Baker; we'll miss you!

COLLINGTON CHAPTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE LARGO-KETTERING LIBRARY

By Iladene Filer

Collingtonians interested in keeping the Largo-Kettering branch library alive voted last month to help organize a chapter of the Friends of the Largo-Kettering Library. The membership of the parent group would include Prince George's County residents from all the neighborhoods served by the Library.

Representatives from numerous citizens associations -- Largo, Kettering, and Lake Arbor among many others -- appeared last February before the Prince George's County Library Board to ask that the Largo-Kettering Branch be kept open. Collington residents sent petitions to the same purpose and organized a bus trip to the meeting for which some 20 residents signed up. Icy roads caused cancellation of the bus. Monies paid for the use of the bus plus some additional contributions amounted to \$130, which is now deposited to a "Friends of the Largo-Kettering Library" account.

The Collingtonians who met in March to consider the disposition of these funds voted unanimously to grant \$100 to help organize a Friends of the Largo-Kettering Library under the leadership of Jeannie Nichols, the prime activist in keeping the Library alive. Mrs. Nichols is a close neighbor of Collington. She lives just off

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Lottsford Vista Road with her husband and two small children.

The group also agreed that individual membership of residents in the Friends would be the most effective way to work on behalf of the Library.

An organizational meeting of the new Friends of the Largo-Kettering Library is planned for an early date. Notices will keep residents informed.

RECOMMENDED RESTAURANTS

By Bob Willing

Paul's on the South River: 3027 Riva Road, Riva, Md. 21140. For reservations telephone 1-410-956-3410 or 798-5272 or FAX 956-3743.

Open: Tuesday thru Friday for lunch, 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; Tuesday thru Sunday for dinner, 5:00 to 10:00 p.m.

When my wife, Marion, asked me where I would like to lunch to celebrate my birthday, I said Paul's, because several Collington residents had recommended it highly. I was not disappointed. Arriving at the restaurant, we were ushered into a busy dining room, usually a sign of good food, by a gracious hostess and seated at a table with a view of the South River and the small boats docked outside near the bridge crossing the river toward Annapolis. The atmosphere was relaxing and quiet, and our waiter was very accommodating.

I got in the mood with a Molson beer and then ordered the Seafood Pie. It was preceded by Paul's House Salad -- mostly greens with a tasty honey-Dijon vinaigrette dressing. The seafood pie was baked in a round pewter dish with a rather thick but flaky crust. Inside were scallops, shrimp and backfin crab in a cream sauce. Absolutely delectable! For dessert I selected White Chocolate

Chambord Cheesecake, topped with raspberries, Chambord liqueur and white chocolate -- a perfect climax to a wonderful lunch. Marion also ordered the Seafood Pie, but for dessert couldn't resist the homemade Bread Pudding, baked with raisins, with a whiskey sauce and whipped cream. She liked it so much that she brought a carryout order back to Collington and indulged again that evening. Other enticing desserts include Chocolate Swan -- a pure white milk chocolate swan filled with chocolate mousse in a raspberry puree; Cannoli -- Italian pastry filled with cream cheese, citrus and chocolate pieces; Chocolate Snowball -- vanilla ice cream rolled in toasted coconut and drizzled with homemade chocolate sauce; and Poached Pears. Dessert prices range from \$2.50 to \$5.25.

Luncheon entrees also include Surf and Turf -- grilled filet mignon and crab cakes; Crab Flake Continental -- backfin crab meat topped with white cheddar cheese and asparagus spears, and baked; and Sauteed Scallops, ranging from \$6.95 to \$11.95. Sandwiches include a Shrimp Salad Sandwich on a croissant (\$6.95). All entrees and sandwiches are served with Paul's House Salad and are accompanied with homemade rolls.

Soups and appetizers are priced from \$2.95 for the Seafood Bisque and French Onion Soup to \$4.50 for Clams Casino.

The dinner menu includes such entrees as Coquilles Saint-Jacques -- large sea scallops sauteed in a cream and white wine sauce with mushrooms and imported cheeses; Crab Imperial; Alaskan Salmon; Lobster Tail; Dover Sole Bonne Femme; baked Stuffed Shrimp with Backfin Crab; and Chateau-briand for two -- broiled filet mignon with a bearnaise sauce. Prices range from \$15.95 for the Scallops to \$27.95 for the Lobster Tail.

Directions: As you leave Collington, turn left on Lottsford Road, right on Enterprise Road (Rt. 193), left on Central Avenue (Rt. 214) toward Annapolis, past Rt. 424 (Davidsonville) and Homestead Gardens Nursery on the right. A short distance beyond, you will see a sign on the right, Riva Road, and an Amoco Station. Get in the left lane, and turn left on Riva Road. Drive several miles into the town of Riva and to the restaurant located just before you get to the bridge on the right side. Be careful not to cross the bridge. Turn right into Paul's parking lot. Paul's is about 16 miles from Collington -- a pleasant and easy half-hour drive.

OPPORTUNITIES OUTLET

By Margaret Werts

The Opportunities Outlet, conceived and coordinated by Hilda Jay, is located on the Courtyard Level, past Environmental Services. It can also be reached by taking the stairway down from the Swimming Pool. It now has its own phone (2266), but there is not always someone there. It is better to contact Hilda at home (7273) if you have something to contribute, or if you wish to volunteer your services.

The stock consists of almost anything you can think of -- china, glass, metal or wooden objects, as well as clothes and small pieces of furniture. The nicer things are kept separate from what Hilda calls the "flea market".

The shop is open on the second Thursday of every month, from 7-9 a.m. and from 12-4 p.m. The early hours are for the convenience of the staff -- the night shift going off duty, and the day shift coming on -- and also for the early risers among the residents.

If you are interested in obtaining a specific item, you can make an appointment with Hilda to open the shop at a time convenient to both of you.

The Outlet provides three services: first, to the residents, to help them dispose of things for which they have no further use; second, to the staff and to the residents, to provide an inexpensive source of miscellaneous items; and third, to anyone who is searching for an interesting and unusual gift that might not be found elsewhere. Also, I have friends who have found attractive and useful items of clothing.

When a unit becomes vacant, the resident's heirs come to dispose of the furnishings. What they do not want, they turn over to Collington. Sometimes, there are desirable pieces of furniture or decorative objects, that can be used somewhere in the Creighton Center. An inventory is now being taken of Collington's holdings, which will be appraised for insurance purposes.

A donor can put a fair value on anything that he or she contributes, for tax purposes only, and can request a receipt.

Hilda wants to emphasize that even things that are broken, or in various states of disrepair, are acceptable. Sometimes they can be repaired and sold, and if not, they can be given to the Salvation Army or to some of the neighboring churches.

The Outlet is always eager for new helpers -- particularly those who would be able to turn up for the 7-9 a.m. shift. Another need is for large paper or plastic bags, such as you get when you go grocery shopping.

Hilda would like to thank all residents -- too numerous to name here -- who make the Opportunities Outlet such a success.

Keep the good things coming!

KILLING COCK ROBIN

By Jacob Fisher

In the old nursery rhyme it was the Sparrow who killed Cock Robin.

Will it be the city next time?

This is a symbolic way of asking whether birds will be able to adapt to the loss of natural environment -- food, nesting sites, protection against predators -- with the growth of cities and industry.

Here are some answers for some birds.

One of my earliest memories as a child growing up on the streets of New York is the sight of house sparrows descending in great numbers on freshly dropped horse manure and busily devouring the oats it held. The feast was provided by the horse pulling the wagon which had just delivered the produce to the fruit and vegetable store on the corner. The feed bag hung around the horse's head held a grain mixture, mostly oats, and quite a few oats came through the stomach of the overworked animal almost untouched by digestion, providing a feast for the sparrows in the neighborhood.

Their hasty eating, their nervous chatter, the quick flight if you came too close, seemed of a piece with the busy noisy life around them, a Friday morning market day in East Harlem with all the housewives for blocks around out to do their weekend shopping.

Another example. For some twenty five years we lived on a fifteen acre place in the western third of Fairfax County, then still quite rural in appearance and development. We drew our drinking water from a well and disposed of our liquid waste by septic field. Solid waste we hauled to a large county landfill next to the State prison camp on West Ox Road. You dropped your plastic twist tied bags in a fenced-in yard, from

where it was hauled by truck and bulldozer to a huge landfill, a mountain which grew higher and higher from year to year. Not too long ago landfill operations ceased. Some grading was done, and grass, trees and shrubs were put in place by the county park authority. Today it is West Ox Road Park, within sight of Interstate 66 and the huge Fair Oaks Shopping Mall.

During its active years as a landfill, the place was the feeding ground for several thousand gulls who commuted daily from their floating home on the Potomac River, an easy flight of fifteen or so miles as the crow or gull flies. Gulls are scavengers and as long as we dispose of solid waste by landfill we may expect to provide feeding grounds for millions of gulls in U.S. coastal and lake waters.

Scene 3 in my list of examples of birds coping is Sarasota, a lively, fast-growing community on the west coast of Florida. We lived there for some ten years before coming to Collington. Last winter we returned for a two month stay to get away from the no longer familiar cold of the northern winter.

In the Sarasota Square Mall we used for some of our shopping I noted these unexpected bits of avian life:

Small bands of grackles strutting about boldly on the sterile pavement, resplendent in their iridescent black and purple feathers, stopping only to take up a popcorn fragment a careless child dropped. Scanty fare it would seem but somehow they manage to thrive on it. (Is there a solid waste landfill in the area, as plump with garbage as a bread pudding is with raisins, on which they gorge themselves between Mall visits?) The grackles strike me as city-wise, sophisticated. They are unafraid of cars, take flight only when the

car is about to run them down. You can almost hear one saying out of the corner of his beak, Watch it, Bub, you're getting a little too close for comfort.

An altogether different presence is suggested by the resident mockingbird. He has deserted tree and field and arriving at the Mall has taken up his post on the highest point in the parking lot, one of those forty or fifty foot lamp towers. Here, in sun and shade, he is at his most lyrical, giving the unresponding cars below a selection of the best of the many arias in his repertory, in turn playful, scolding, mourning and rejoicing. Yes, what a bird! So small and yet how far his voice carries! A voice it does the heart good to hear. For in all its guises it is life affirmative, calling out Hello, you all (an echo of his southern heritage), Come hell or high water I'm still here!

And as if to demonstrate his sense of being at home in this jungle of brick, concrete and iron, he takes one of those short, vertical rise flights, the kind he had learned to do in the live oak of his birth.

At a smaller shopping mall a number of house sparrows had taken up residence in the bottom curve of the metal letters of the words Kash and Karry, the name of the supermarket below. There are at the most two inches of depth to the letters -- but enough for families of sparrows to set up house. Here, in season, the parents are busy flying in all the comforts of home -- odds and ends of dried fibers from the closely mowed manicured grass borders which define the rows of parking spaces, cotton tissue and plastic from discarded shopping bags, etc. And here, on the metal edge of the letter K sits the male parent shrilling his pleasure at the way the new crop of babies is coming along, with the flat almost mechanical cheep-cheep of the

species.

At still another shopping mall parking lot I observed a male cattle egret in breeding plumage (orange mop of feathers on head) sauntering about, seemingly very much at home in this busy anchorage of cars and trucks. His ancestors had made the island-hopping journey from Africa to South America only a few generations back. And now here he was, on the species' trek north, looking for a living on mall scraps, since the cattle insects on which his ancestors had lived and the cattle themselves were no longer around.

Woodpeckers typically build their nests in holes in trees, holes they enlarge with their adze-sharp bills. In the same Florida community of which I speak flickers and red-bellied woodpeckers seemed to prefer as nest sites the wooden shingles of the two-story condos which line the bay, chipping holes large enough for entry in minutes, and establishing a nest in the fire-resistant batting inside. To keep the bird from using one hole I watched being made, the homeowner covered the opening with hardware cloth. The homeowner enlarged his hardware cloth cover. The contest between bird and man went on for several weeks, until the bird, discouraged, moved to the adjacent house.

Owls and other night predators are known to make their homes in the abutments and open stonework of the roofs and upper floors of high-rise office and apartment buildings, swooping down at night to capture their prey in the city streets below and in city parks. Owls particularly don't need much nesting space. The top floor of an eight-story apartment building was used by one owl who laid her eggs on the bare cement floor of the balcony, ignoring the tissue-lined little wooden box the family put out for her.

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The dodo and the passenger pigeon couldn't adjust to change and perished. Almost every day there are reports of one or another species nearing extinction, primarily because of loss of habitat, aided in some cases by the enthusiasm of hunters for slaughter. The rate at which species are dying out seems to be increasing -- or perhaps there is better reporting. Living in a rapidly changing world, a world better known than it was in the past, more alert to these threats we have here and there taken action to save species about to perish, by raising such birds in captivity, etc. We have "saved" the whooping crane, the California condor, and the plumed egret, the use of whose plumes in women's hats at the turn of the century almost ended the life of the species some 75 years ago. Strange as it may seem the bald eagle, the American bird whose profile adorn the Great Seal of the U.S., and which holds top place in the avian iconography as a symbol of American aspirations, was only recently saved by the heroic measures of wild life societies and cooperating local authorities.

Not all birds are likely to make the adjustments required to survive the impact of urbanism. But many more than we now believe, will, I think. When England succeeded in improving air quality by appropriate controls on the emission of pollutants by industry and household, and said good-bye to Blake's dark Satanic mills, a certain indicator moth that had changed its pale wings to a smoky gray, changed back to white again. (Both "colors" enabled the moth to blend in with the background to escape predator birds. This is a very rough summary of predominance in color or surviving moths over many generations over the period of the transition.)

HILLTOP GARDENS: ON YOUR MARK, GET SET, GROW

By Frances Kolarek

Winter or summer, if you are looking for Lee Miller you will find him up at the Hilltop Gardens, working.

Now, at the end of March the garden plots are ready for planting. Lee has dug them up, mulched them, raked them and fertilized them with 10-10-10. "That's the best; has more nitrogen. What I always use," he says.

Soon gardeners will be setting out seedlings from the cold frames. No beauty-contest winners, the cold frames just work. Lee fashioned them from windows placed across heavy ties, and they afford a warm home for young seedlings to grow strong enough to withstand transplanting to the outdoors.

That's not all. This winter a three-foot ditch was dug, easily, thanks to a wonderful machine called a "Ditch-Witch" and plastic pipe was laid throughout the garden area. Now, when dry weather hits, gardeners can hook up to faucets rising from the ground at easy intervals and water their plots. Guess who filled in the ditches after the pipes were laid? Lee Miller, of course.

Lee handles a rake as if it were a third arm. It nearly is. He was born in Chillum where his folks had a truck garden. While working at home he attended the University of Maryland, receiving his B.S. in Agronomy in 1940. He took a job with the Department of Agriculture and spent 35 years there, travelling all over the state keeping farmers up to date on the latest in fertilizers, growing techniques, and anything else they needed to know.

"My great-grandfather came to this country from Ireland during the potato famine," Lee tells. "Settled down in Prince George's

County near the District line. For generations our people farmed. That's what we knew."

Gardening, farming, is in his blood. As much as Irish humor.

One day I stopped to watch Lee hoeing a row. The way he works with a hoe is almost hypnotic. A boy of five or six stood close by.

"That boy belong to you?" Lee asks me.

"No, never saw him before," I answer, sensing my role in this little drama.

"Wonder whose he is?"

"I wonder, too. Not yours, is he?"

The boy knows the game. He has seen it played out before. He smiles and says nothing.

Lee says, "Never saw him before." He grins over his shoulder.

I smile back at the youngster. "If you don't find anybody wants him, I'll take him," I say, and turn to go home.

"The boy," of course, is Lee's grandson, and he is learning how to take a joke. This little boy has a grandmother named Olivia who knows how to make cookies Famous Amos would envy. She and Lee moved in to Collington last August. But they had been part of the place for a long time before that.

The Millers signed up nearly two years before they moved in, had trouble selling their three-acre spread in Upper Marlboro, but finally got a contract.

All that time, Lee worked on the Hilltop Gardens -- an absentee resident. Without his efforts -- well, it's hard to say. Most people who harvest the tomatoes and okra and peppers and eggplant that they share with the rest of us, most people who garden, would say the bottom line is Lee Miller.

A GALLERY VISIT

By Caroline H. Farquhar

"O welcome Spring,
Of thee I sing
And fain would go
A-gallery-ing ..."

One of the pleasantest ways to spend strolling on a spring afternoon is to visit some of the privately owned/operated galleries. In Greater Washington-Maryland-Virginia there are more than 100, offering works by contemporary painters, printmakers, sculptors and craft artists. Of course, to admire is sometimes to buy, but in any case gallery entrepreneurs usually welcome the casual browser. They like to talk about their artists and to field questions from an inquiring visitor who may confess that he or she is, really, only trying to sharpen the eye.

An exciting, unique gallery in D.C. is The Farrell Collection, on Connecticut Avenue just north of Taft Bridge, near the Sheraton Park Hotel and opposite the Woodley-Zoo Metro station. This is as close to a museum of (especially) fine ceramic pieces as exists anywhere on the commercial scene. One can wander among the works of more than 600 American artists living all over the U.S. The pieces range from traditional functional to very abstract forms and exotic glazes, literally sculptures. Whatever the result, whether a delicate pair of porcelain earrings or a monumental shape that cries out to sit at the end of a garden vista, or a huge yard-wide "platter" to attract sunlight on a trellis or patio wall, the piece is one-of-a-kind. Often one is stunned by the technical virtuosity that produced it, unable, from having played with clay and glass, to imagine how such a marvel was achieved. But, too, here are countless versions of the dear familiar house and table pieces, the casseroles, pitchers,

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plates and bowls, infinitely varied, since each is the unique creation of one artist's imagined vision of what "cup" or "pitcher" or "bowl" might be.

From the street one enters a long glittering space that is really an allee bordered from carpet to over one's head by walls containing almost invisible shelves displaying, with labels, the artists' work. One wanders slowly, stopped again and again by something miraculous wrought out of merely clay and silicon and powdered minerals, these beautiful things that beggar description or even belief.

Other crafts are here, too, fewer in number but equally superb in their own particular class -- jewelry, glass and wood, and a few almost anonymous treasures such as the tiny handwoven basket just big enough to hold a dime, perhaps also a penny, "tooth-fairy baskets." In one corner, suspended under the balcony like a forest in the air, are a number of sizes of bronze or brass windchimes. Just inside the front door, metal jewelry to croon over or to assault one's budget

The collection spotlights one artist's work each month. There is a balcony at the far end of a ramp rising from the main floor where the display is mounted with special effect through track lighting and against dazzling white walls. Whatever the features of the pieces, their particular texture or shape or colors, even the tactile rivers of globs of the glazes, are enhanced in this setting where each piece rests on a pedestal, the

whole assembly a pattern in differing heights. The effect is magical.

The Farrell Collection is open Monday through Saturday, 10 to 9, and Sunday, noon to 6:30.

Editors' note: Joan Farrell, owner and operator of the Farrell Collection, is the daughter of Collington resident Emily Abouchar.

WRITTEN FOR MY SON-IN-LAW WHEN HE RECEIVED HIS DOCTORATE

By Virginia Zeller

This is to say -- This is the day
To honor and bless you in many a
way.

Gifts wrapped in boxes
Sometimes obnoxious;
Too common and earthy
For someone so worthy.

You need the best
Of a change and rest.
So let us know
When you're ready to go.

On a beautiful spree
In gay Paree
Old London or
Beautiful, luscious 'waii.

This paper is proof
(And not a spoof)
That this is a bond
To help cross the pond.

May your joys be many.