



Photo by Janet Fallon

Tasting Wine

Diane Gray, wine manager at State Line Liquors, discusses the merits of a Riesling wine with Joanne Reichart-Young at the FHNEC's wine and cheese tasting April 1. The event was sponsored by State Line Liquors and Moo Over Cheeses, Cecil County's only manufacturer of cheese.

FHNEC hosts competition

by Janet Fallon
Teacher/Naturalist

The Cecil County Soil Conservation District, which sponsors the Fair Hill Nature and Environmental Center's 4th grade outdoor school program "Land and Water," will hold its Envirothon training and testing here in April and May.

The County Envirothon is a partnership for education between the District and the FHNEC.

The Maryland Envirothon is a natural resources education program for high school age students sponsored by

local soil conservation districts. It provides training on four recurring natural resource topics (aquatics, forestry, soils and wildlife) and a rotating environmental concern of current interest. This year's special topic is, "preserving the cultural landscape," an appropriate topic for Fair Hill with its rich heritage of fox hunting and equestrian events, its covered bridge and its old stone buildings.

On April 13 teams of students spent the day at the Nature Center learning about these topics from natural resources professionals. The teams are mostly from public and private county high schools but
See "Soil" on Pg. 6

Trash to Treasure

Recycling is more than bottles and cans

by Cindy Miller
Editor

I recently bought a house... an old house ... undergoing lots of renovations.

During the renovation I haunted Internet sites full of new products and appliances specifically designed for the homeowner. Gleefully I researched stoves, washers and dryers and made decisions about the products I wanted to buy. I envisioned a modern kitchen with a stove that had all the bells and whistles required for modern cooking. It was imperative that I have a washer and dryer with wrinkle guard and seven wash cycle selections, with 3.2 cubic feet of capacity, and... well, you get the picture.

Then I got the call.

It was my mother and she was simply trying to downsize the abundance of "stuff" she had accumulated after living in the same house for 30 years.

"Cindy, you need a stove for your new house, right?" she started the conversation.

"Yes, I've been researching them," I responded.

"How would you like your Aunt Barbara's old stove?" she asked. "It's a 1940's Frigidair, it's in good condition and worked last time I plugged it in 10 years ago."

"Uhhhh – thanks, but no thanks," I replied.

Well, to make a very long conversation rather short, my mother convinced me to think about taking it. **Myth June 2005**
Apparently there was some sentimental value involved since my Aunt had died and my mother desperately wanted to keep this stove out of the landfill—which is where it was headed if I didn't take it.

Jumping on my trusty Internet, I researched old stoves and quickly discovered there's a whole sub-culture out there dedicated to the craft of restoring these old hunks of Americana and selling them at a whopping profit. Suddenly, I realized my mother wasn't offering me an old piece of junk, but a true antique; a collectors' item!

Then it hit me. Americans are programmed from early childhood through our constant exposure to advertising to think new is better. But what's wrong with old? And where do our old computers, televisions, stoves, washers and dryers, cars, etc., go when the new items replace them? I mean, how many times do you hear people say "they just don't make 'em like they used to?"

As I pondered this truly perplexing question, I thought of an ex-boyfriend who, although he makes a good living, never buys anything new. His house, his life, his yard, is filled with hand-me-downs and used "stuff." I just thought he was cheap, but perhaps there's a
See "Recycling" on Pg. 7

Fundraising, volunteering keys to FHNEC success

by **Mario Gangemi**
President, FHNEC

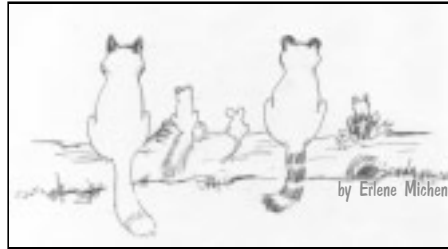
Spring has sprung at the Nature Center and that means the place is a beehive of activity. The crocuses have bloomed, the sugar maple has been tapped, the frogs are peeping and the students have returned for their spring classes. We even have a family of geese nesting in our marsh, and soon the does will drop their spotted fawns.

The increase of activity at the Nature Center also heralds a new season of fundraising events. Thanks to our members, sponsors, and many curious guests from the community, the Wine and Cheese Tasting Extravaganza was a huge success; and hopefully that is a prelude to the success of our next event, SpringFest on May 21. Coupled with the Fairhill Scottish games, this year's SpringFest should be an event to remember. We hope to see you there.

The fact of the matter is that fundraising is our life's blood. Our fundraising efforts pay our overhead costs and make up the funding differences that keep our programs affordable and available to every child in the Cecil County Public School system grades K-5 free of charge.

As we head into our spring programs however, we need your assistance. As with many organizations, our costs have increased. We are doing as much as we can to control these costs, but to maintain the quality programs we are known for, we need your support. SpringFest is one of our major fundraisers, but it will not be enough. Please, continue to support the Nature Center by participating in our many activities, renewing your membership (even increasing your donation), encouraging others to become members, and encouraging your employers to become sponsors.

In addition to financial resources, we have an increasing demand for volunteers. SpringFest alone requires a volunteer workforce of 120 people. If you and your family plan to attend SpringFest, please consider donating a very valuable hour or two of your time to help us out. To volunteer, please call 410-398-4909 or contact Cathryn Harjung at charjung@zoominternet.net.



Tails out of School...

by **Holly Hannum**
Education Director

One of the pleasures of being a part of the outdoor school is experiencing the changing of the seasons on a daily basis. Spring at Fair Hill is well underway. The first hint began with the appearance of snowdrops on the banks of the road in late February. Next came the sound of the wood frogs over by the covered bridge. This was followed closely by a parade of volunteers toting shovels and wheelbarrows. Spring Trail Day, what a spectacular sight! Fifty-six people cleaned up the yard and gardens and moved gravel and mulch to ready our trails for students. Special thanks to the park maintenance crew for delivering the gravel, and to Dan Schneckenberger and Allen Sievert for the use of their pickups. Hud Benson and his new chain saw helped us clean up some downed wood and store it for future campfire programs. The many hands of the University of Delaware chapter of Gamma Sigma Sigma, Cherry Hill Environmental Club, Boy Scout Troop 443, and the Elkton Jaycees made the job go faster than we ever anticipated. Grilled hot dogs and home baked goodies were our reward along with pleasant company on this early spring morning.

Another sure sign of spring is the

flood of summer camp registrations arriving in our mailbox each day. The McCloskey site has been reserved for our 4th annual Wilderness Adventure Camp overnight. Campers ages 8 to 12 practice survival skills all week in preparation for this Thursday evening event. This year American Indian Adventure campers will travel to the Indian Steps Museum in York County, PA on a special afternoon field trip to see how our area's earliest inhabitants made their tools from the earth. Bay campers will take an all day field trip to Pickering Creek Environmental Center where they will explore the Bay with seine nets. Cathryn Harjung will share two special weeks of Fair Hill Friends with our youngest campers and an adult partner. Many of the participants of last years Fair Hill Friends will attend camp on their own this year at Summer Critters or Little Waterworks. Last year's 3 year olds may return for new activities. These camps fill quickly so be sure to sign up early to get your first choice.

The teaching staff has been collaborating on the development of an elementary level weather program featuring

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Fair Hill Spring Fest

May 21st from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

At the

Cecil County Fairgrounds

Plant sales, children's activities, nature walks, live music, 5K Run/Walk, Moon Bounce, Arts and Crafts, 4H and Farm Demonstrations, home made ice cream and lots of good food!

It's fun for the whole family!

Proceeds to benefit the Fair Hill Nature and Environmental Center

Continued from Pg. 4 _____

our new weather station. Immaculate Conception School's fifth grade class extended their study of weather with a visit to the Nature School this spring. This program will be refined over the coming months and will become a regular offering to area schools. We enjoy the opportunity to create new programs to meet the needs of the students we serve.

Take a hayride and join teacher/naturalist Erlene Michener for a stream exploration at this year's Springfest. Our baby snake, Striker will also make

his public debut that day. Contact Cathryn Harjung at the Nature Center if you are available on May 21st to help supervise one of the children's activities that have become a popular draw to this annual fundraiser. We'll be sure to leave you plenty of free time to peruse the crafts, pick up some spring flowers and grab a snack as well.

On a bittersweet note, the Nature School said goodbye this month to our administrative assistant Pat Holleran. She has been with us for four years. We will miss seeing her each day and wish her well in her new position.



A Cecil County fourth grader performs a soil compaction test in the woods to see if the soil there is better for flood control than that in an open area.

Cont'd from Pg. 1 _____ can also be high school age teams from home school groups, church groups or scouts. On May 4, the County Envirothon competition will be held at the Nature Center after which the winning team will go on to compete at the state level at Harford Glen in June.

Envirothon training stresses the interdependence of various natural resources and encourages hands-on team oriented problem solving. Testing on each topic will not only require teams to understand their resource but ask them to develop strategies for increasing public awareness of the importance of preserving these resources.

The Fair Hill Nature Center is a perfect fit with the mission of the Cecil Soil

Conservation District, explains District Manager Charles Hayes, because "[our mission] is to provide information, technical assistance and education in conserving the county's natural resources."

This mission is realized in the District's support of the Nature Center's outdoor school.

"Land and Water" provides a hands-on soil conservation program which takes students out of the classroom to hike through land formations created by the Big Elk Creek and its tributaries. In school, county fourth graders model the effects of rain on land, demonstrating erosion and runoff, and creating gullies or valleys using pans of soil. On their field trip to the Nature Center they hike along a flood plain in the Big Elk Creek Valley, then up on the ridge above the creek observing actual erosion and runoff, deltas and deposition. Here they see first hand how riparian buffers protect the stream and observe the differences between soils found in the woods and open areas.

By funding the "Land and Water" program, the Soil Conservation District provides the educational resources that encourage today's students to become stewards of Maryland's natural resources in the future.

The Cecil Soil Conservation Dis-
See "Soil" Pg. 7

What's Up?

- May 3**
Nature Babies (10 - 11:30 a.m.)
- May 7**
Nature Babies (10 - 11:30 a.m.)
Repeat of Tuesday's program
- May 21**
SpringFest (9 a.m. - 4 p.m.)
Foxtrot 5K Run/Walk (8 a.m.)
- June 3**
Family Camp over (6 p.m.)
- June 4**
A Walk in the Woods (10 a.m.)
- June 7**
A Walk in the Woods (10 a.m.)
Repeat of Saturday's program

Pre-registration is required for all programs (except Spring Fest). Call 410-398-4909 for more information. Memberships are available at each event.

Soil Cont'd from Pg. 6
 trict has partnered with Fair Hill Nature Center since its inception on Earth Day 1990 and is instrumental in the building and maintenance of the property's manmade marsh.

"I don't know how we would teach without it," said Nature Center Education Director Holly Hannum as she describes the many programs that focus around the pond and marsh. "From teaching first graders that the pond is a habitat, to collecting and studying plankton samples with fifth graders, the wetland is an integral part of almost every program offered at the Nature Center," she said.

Wanted
 Wheelbarrows, pitchforks and coat rack.
 To donate, please call 410-398-4909.

Recycling

Cont'd from Pg. 2
 larger lesson to learn from him. Recycling isn't just about bottles, cans and newspapers. Indeed, those items take up minimal space in the landfill when compared to old toilets, refrigerators... and stoves.

So as the contractors are going about the business of renovating my house, which was built in 1935, I overheard them talking about replacing the sink and tub.

"Wait!" I said as I inspected the items tagged for removal. "Let me see them."

To my delight, there was nothing wrong with the sink or tub other than

being original parts of the structure. And by the time I was through cleaning and polishing even the contractor agreed they looked brand new. They stayed and with a little care and touch up, no one will ever know they're 70-years young.

I guess the moral to this story is that new isn't necessarily better and with a little creativity and attention to detail, many of the things we throw away every day can be re-utilized, not to mention the fact that retro is in!

Now, how can I reuse that old dryer with the burned out motor sitting in my yard? Ideas anyone?

Fair Hill Nature Center
 630 Tawes Rd.
 Elkton, MD 21921

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Special thanks...
 To State Line Liquors, Robert Murray, Diane Gray, Fred Landolfi, Moo Over Cheeses, Ilene Milburn and Robin Way. Without them the Wine and Cheese Extravaganza wouldn't have been such a success!

Spring Fest
Coupon
1 FREE
Moonbounce
 Good May 21, 2005 Only

Spring Fest
Coupon
1 FREE Hayride
 Good May 21, 2005 Only