



Bull's Run Newsletter

December, 2009

Annual President's Message



The Annual Meeting was especially meaningful this year, as we celebrated 30 years of Bull's Run. It was a good time to look back at the beginnings of Bull's Run Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum.

In anticipation of the celebration, we talked to a few people who attended the Fresh Air Camp which was situated on the grounds of Bull's Run from 1924 until the mid 70's. The mission of the camp was to offer nutritious food and clean air, sunshine and recreation to children who lived in the city. It was believed that a healthy child was less likely to develop tuberculosis. Research revealed that Middletown wasn't the only city with a Fresh Air Camp.

We interviewed campers as well as counselors. Those we spoke to said it was a positive experience. Lois Lafayette said as a six year old she remembered the woods as being a mysterious place with so many trees and birds of all colors. To this day she loves birds. Jeanie Stephenson liked sleeping out in the open and playing house in the woods. She even enjoyed the thunderstorms. Jeanne Berry enjoyed the freedom of the open space and making lots of friends. Louise Richter spoke of the loyalty and commitment of the professional staff. Mary Lord said she learned a lot from the children.

When the camp closed in the 1970's, according to Knight Goodman, there was much discussion and arguing as to what the Civic Association should do with the land. The 11 acres could provide a wonderful housing development. Thanks to the tenacity and steadfastness of three women, Peggy Verity, Louise Whitehurst and Carolyn Gaker, the land on Rosedale was set aside for an arboretum.

Today, some pieces of the Fresh Air Camp's foundations peek up through the soil. The road into the woods still exists lined with old oaks and sycamores. Bull's Run Creek still runs through the park and perhaps a few old "reminiscing" box turtles wander the property.

In celebration of our 30 years we produced a 35 minute documentary, in conjunction with TV Middletown, about the history of the Fresh Air Camp and Bull's Run. If you would like to own a copy of this time in history check the box on the enclosed membership form. We also offer a program centered on the showing of this DVD. To book this program call Barb at 422-5063.

The mission of Bull's Run Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum is to preserve the natural area as well as to be an environmental facility and educational resource for people of all ages. For the last thirty years we have been true to this mission and hope that it will continue into the future. To the people who visit today, the woods are still a mysterious place. The birds of many colors still fly there. To this we owe the foresight of three women and the loyalty and commitment of our volunteers and supportive members. Included in this mailing is our membership form. It is time to renew. If you have never joined, we encourage you to take this opportunity. We need your support for our next 30 years.

Thank you,

Debbie Grant
President

Naturalist's Ramblings

Winter is here, the cold will be long, I wonder where the birdies have gone!

Migration: Definition: n. The annual movement of groups of animals between their breeding grounds and wintering sites. Migratory movement usually occurs between areas of different latitude or elevation.

(Source: [Sibley](#))

Resident: Definition: n. "A non-migratory species that completes its annual cycle within a fixed area."

(Source: [Sibley](#))

Snowbirds: Definition: n. Snowbirds are typically retirees, and business owners who can afford to be away from home for long periods of time or have a second home in a warmer location.

"Spread your tiny wings and fly away
And take the snow back with you
Where it came from on that day

...

So, little Snowbird, take me with you when you go
To that land of gentle breezes where the peaceful waters flow..."

Oops! I digress.



Bird watching is a favorite activity of mine. Although some times and places are better than others, it can be done anytime, anywhere, by anybody. A decent pair of binoculars and a good guide book enhance the experience. I especially enjoy the spring migration of neo-tropical songbirds. We make an annual trip to the south shore of Lake Erie to admire them as they congregate before crossing the lake to their breeding grounds. It is quite a spectacle. In the summer we have participated in the breeding bird census, recording behavior and sounds that indicate nesting. In the autumn many raptors head south and can easily be seen perched in trees along the roads and highways. In winter, our feeders, full of black oil sunflower seed, attract the cold hardy winter residents to within easy viewing.... from the warmth indoors!

Birding is different everyday. You never know what you might see..... or not! Sometimes it turns out to be just an excursion for outdoor exercise. That can be reason enough for me.

Many thanks to the volunteers who maintain and fill our feeders at Bull's Run. Stop by and check out the avian action at the feeders.

Please join us at Bull's Run on December 19th at 9AM for our annual Christmas bird count. Beginners and experienced birders are welcome to participate.

Nurturing Bull's Run

I looked up the definition of nurture and found this: The act of nourishing or nursing; tender care; education; training. Our mission is to nurture the land and educate the public. To that end, please continue reading! We are being proactive in addressing the potential problems posed by hazard trees in the park. By definition a hazard tree must have one or more *defects and a target*. Usually the target is a person or a structure. This autumn the trees at Bull's Run have been assessed by a MUM student, a naturalist, a certified arborist and an urban forester. Labeling a tree as a hazard requires the determination of reasonable risk. For example, a dead tree leaning over a sitting area (stationary target) is a greater risk than a dead tree along a walking trail (moving target). More than 25 trees have been identified as needing attention and we are pursuing various solutions to reduce the risk of potential damage. Ultimately, some of these trees will be cut down.



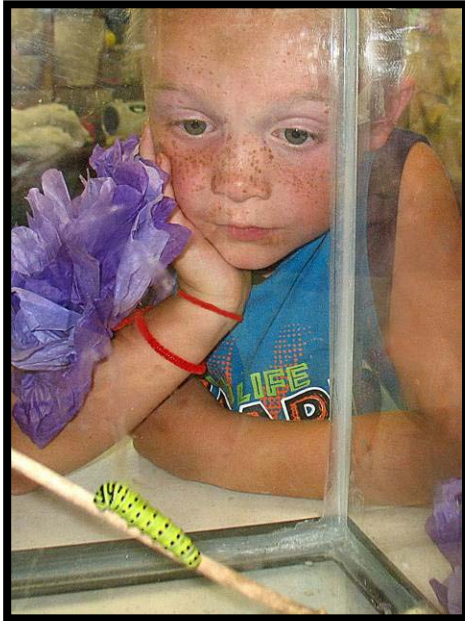
How is cutting down a tree considered “nurturing”? A defective tree (rot, disease, dead, split, etc) is very little risk to a bird or squirrel. But remember, a hazard tree must have a target and that target could be you! We are trying to provide you with “tender care”. We struggle to balance the needs of a healthy habitat (yes, dying trees are a vital part of a healthy habitat!) and the safety of our visitors and our structures. We will leave in the habitat whatever we can after mitigating the risk to any target. How did we get so many hazardous trees? Consider these contributing sources: Hurricane Ike damage, Emerald Ash Borer, recently discovered nearby (and probably already in the park though not yet confirmed), stress from several summers’ droughts including 2008, erosion, natural death and years of aggressive competition for water and nutrients from non-native invasive species such as honeysuckle.

As you walk the trails, if you notice where a tree has been removed, think about the pleasure and joy of a visit to woods that are being treated with tender care. As always, you are encouraged to join us in our efforts to nurture Bull's Run.



What a Year!

It's difficult to choose one word to characterize the past year's activities of Bull's Run Board and Friends. Vigorous, vibrant, energetic, reaching, stretching, growing – all these words apply. Perhaps the new sign at the park entrance – thanks to Jeff McMullen and Denny Lumber – signals our efforts to renew and revitalize.



Wrapping up the four year pilot program with Amanda Elementary led us to an energetic stretch with our outreach in education through the “I Dig It” six week summer camp at Damon Park. Debbie Grant, Lynn Getter and Chris Parker wrote the curriculum for this formidable project. The children worked with composting, recycling, worms [a favorite!], weather, plant structure and recipes.

This work led to a descriptive article which appeared in the Audubon Miami Valley Newsletter as well as the Butler County Master Gardener Newsletter. The connection with the Butler County Master Gardeners was further deepened through featuring a butterfly garden – replete with host plants and caterpillars – for the BCMG booth at the Butler County Fair. The display included a “bigger than life” set of inflatable models of the monarch butterfly metamorphosis borrowed from Germantown Nature Center.

Of course, our energetic “routine” continues unabated: filling bird feeders, November through April thanks to the great team comprised of Chuck and Guy Stone, Les Mills, Bob Wise, Bruce Peters and Carrie Kienlen; contributing 405 volunteer hours, material value of \$6075, toward Middletown's Tree City USA status; adding – through Barb's effort with a battery powered auger and a few dauntless volunteers - 240 trees in the Bull's Run woodland; Barb is mentoring two Eagles Scouts with projects at the Sanctuary as well as two Miami University Middletown students who have made commitments to the park via their requirements for the Bachelors of Integrated Studies degree; meeting with professionals from Butler Soil and Water Department and Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry focusing on erosion and bridge deterioration. Our annual Family Fall Festival last October drew the largest crowd to date. Approximately 100 people joined us on a lovely day. The children planted buckeyes, hickory nuts and acorns.



Some newly initiated activities included a delightful night hike in recognition of Earth Hour on March 28 during which we communicated with the barred owl, tried to correctly identify scents and colors, and chewed on glow – in – the dark mints. To the delight of teachers and students alike, Debbie helped design and install a butterfly garden at Highview Elementary. Following the land stewardship efforts by Barb and Jeff at the Water Tower Park on Autumn Drive, we hosted a spring ephemeral wildflower hike at that location drawing 24 participants.

With all this on our plates, board members felt the need for having fresh strategies in furthering the process of meeting our mission. To that end, we have been attending seminars provided free of cost by Bridgework Development Professionals, and have scheduled a meeting with facilitator Sheri Lawson in Middletown specifically focusing on Bull's Run issues.

Barb appeared on TV Middletown in two shows, 8 Minutes in Middletown and Foundation Matters. The expertise and ease developed in that realm led to the extraordinary "photo finish" of the year in the production of a documentary on the transition from the Fresh Air Camp to Bull's Run Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum. The premiere viewing was central to the celebration of "30 Years and Growing" at the Bull's Run Annual Meeting, drawing the largest participants to date, many of whom had played a role in the Fresh Air Camp, either as counselor or camper. Working with TV Middletown, Barb Reuss and Debbie Grant produced this outstanding work.

Special awards were given to the 11 people who were interviewed by Reuss and Grant for the film. Other awards included the following: the Sycamore Award to Lisa Wilson for her decades of service to Bull's Run in many capacities; the Oak Leaf Award to Carolyn Gaker for her work in developing the transition from the Fresh Air Camp to Bull's Run, and the Shooting Star Award to John Sawyer for facilitating a sizeable grant from the Miriam G. Knoll Foundation.

Indeed it has been a vigorous, vibrant, energetic, reaching, stretching, growing year. We look forward to 2010!



You may watch the documentary of the Fresh Air Camp to Bull's Run Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum starring Knight Goodman, Louise Richter, Jeanie Stephenson, Jeanne Berry, Lois LaFayette, Mary Lord, Carolyn Gaker, Dan Diver, Nancy Clark, Virginia Christy, and Barb Reuss, on the TV Middletown station airing December 26 and December 27 at 7:00 pm.. Check their website at <http://www.tvmiddletown.org> for viewing times in January. The show can be seen anytime on your computer by going to <http://www.tvmiddletown.blip.tv> Scroll down to October 24 to see the documentary. If you wish to own **TV Middletown's Top Selling DVD**, order a copy of the documentary by denoting this on the enclosed membership form or call Debbie at 425-7250.

Photos From the Fall



Memberships and Donations since the Fall Newsletter

Ethel Banks
Ron & Barb Conley
Michael Dannis
Geckeler Nursery School
Jim and Jeanne Kraft
Kenton Pate
Virginia Ritan
Sue Wright

In appreciation of Barb Reuss

Rose Grau
Chris Parker

Memorial Contributions since Fall Newsletter

In memory of Mary Jean Cohen
By Wilbur Cohen
In memory of Marilyn Eich
By Jim Eich
In memory of Esther Furlow
By Joan Shivers
In memory of Kenneth and Joyce Hinkle
By Victoria Wannemacher
In memory of Thomas Allen Nenni
By George and Stephanie Nenni
In memory of George, Elaine, and Gary Perry
By JoAnnette Perry
In memory of Lazaros Retzios
By Steve, Beth and Annie O'Neil
In memory of Geno F. Santoro
By Thomas Fye

Naturalist's Rumbings

"I hold that the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of man." Gandhi

I'm going to cut to the chase here. WHAT is a "cruelty of man"? Dumping unwanted pets! Don't do it! Not at Bull's Run, not in the countryside, not in an alley and not in a subdivision. Potentially beloved companions, dumped pets, lead short miserable lives. They become disease vectors, dangerous, a nuisance and wreak havoc on the native wildlife. They are the victims of human irresponsibility due to abandonment and failure to neuter or spay.

Wild birds are particularly vulnerable targets of cats. Bull's Run has been the dumpsite for cats, rabbits, white mice, goldfish and even a chicken. The mice, chicken, rabbits, fish and at least one cat were "recycled"; we do have natural predators at Bull's Run and they won't pass up the easy opportunity to dine on a confused, frightened, dumped pet.

In late November, three gray kittens were dumped at Bull's Run. We saw them for a few days but then they disappeared. A rescue group was contacted but we had no confirmation that the kittens were collected. Road kill? Hawk food? Owl snack? All more likely than finding a new, loving home. While on the point, if you own a cat, please keep it inside. All cats are natural and effective predators, homeless or not. They kill millions of wild birds yearly.

Pets are a long term commitment and the lucky ones become family members for decades. Companionship is a hallmark of a loved and loving pet. But, for a variety of reasons, a pet may be unwanted. If that is the case, don't be fooled by the thought that a dumped pet will have a better chance for a good life full of companionship and care. Life is lonely and tough on the street (or in the park) and a pet's prospects of adoption are much better if you put some effort into finding a new, loving home or a placement shelter that will do that for you.

Contact the Butler County Animal Friends Society at 513-867-5727 for information on low cost spay and neutering for pets as well as feral cats. The United Coalition for Animals, UCAN, located on West 8th Street website <http://www.rescueguide.com/optplace.html> for options and ideas in Cincinnati is a not-for-profit low cost spay neuter clinic. For information call 721-7387. Check out the about what to do with an unwanted pet. Now go spend some quality time with your beloved pet and count all your blessings!



Thank you



- To Carolyn Kieffer for securing Verity Lodge for the Annual Meeting and Professor Debbie Simpkins for technical assistance
 - To Phyllis and Jim Neuman for donating native trees and shrubs.
 - To college and high school students for muscle power on workdays.
 - To Bruce Peters for those yummy popcorn balls and picking up litter!
 - To Jeff McMullen for repair of bulletin board plexi-glass vandalism and hours of cutting, daubing and chipping honeysuckle
 - To Lynn Price, Dave Adams, Gibbie & Bob Wise, Debbie Grant, Jack Schaefer and Abby Ison for working the Tool Show
 - To Denny Lumber for Tool Show donation and letting us put out a tip jar
 - To everyone who has contributed in 2009
 - To Ty and Brett from TV Middletown for documentary DVD production guidance/assistance
 - To dedicated Middletown City Park Workers for pick-up of debris from workdays and delivery of chipped mulch for our trails
- And best wishes to Abby Ison, a faithful and invaluable City Recreation Representative.

