

# The Rookery



## The Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc.

Volume 17, Number 3

Fall 2013

### GET ACQUAINTED WITH MELISSA BAILE, OUR NEW PRESIDENT

*Editor's note:* At our September 4 board meeting we will officially elect Melissa Baile as the new president of the Friends. I'll let her tell you about herself in the article she wrote for this issue, but I do want to give just some background information. Melissa has a PhD in Higher Education, and her last education position was as senior athletic director at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA. She coached various sports at Michigan State University and Old Dominion, and played field hockey for the US team for five years. She has two children and one grandchild, about whom she writes in this delightful bio:

"I spent every weekend on our family boat since I was 10 years old. So, boating, fishing and crabbing is how I grew up. First on the Bohemia, then the Sassafras and then on Davis Creek [just outside of Rock Hall].

My family came to Rock Hall when my father had a boat built here in about 1966. Iky Bryden was a long-time builder and did a great job. We then kept our boat at his sister's dock, next to the Rock Hall Yacht Club, for about four years before my Dad bought property in Piney Neck. We cleared the land ourselves and kept our boat on the property. In 1970 we built the house.

I retired early from Old Dominion University to take care of my mother and, after she passed away, I decided to stay retired because life on the Eastern Shore had so much to offer and was so sane compared to my professional life. I live in the family home, which I share with my brother and the rest of the family. Luckily, they only get to come on weekends.

The outdoors is where I feel most comfortable. Walking, biking, hiking, gardening, swimming, boating, sailing and land management make up a large part of my days. Waterfowl, birds and animals all have a place in making me feel comfortable and not alone.

I have been volunteering at Eastern Neck for about seven or eight years. Time flies. I feel that safe places for migrating birds and animals are very important in our overcrowded world. I am a member of the winter waterfowl counting team and volunteer in the bookstore.

If you know me you know that I never met a boat in which I didn't see potential. I have a 30' Skipjack, a 16' Tolman skiff, and a 32-year-old 15' wooden Garvey built in Rock Hall. Oh, and a kayak.

My brother and I raise bees. But my hobby is hiking sections of the Appalachian Trail. I have covered over one-third of the 2,168 continuous footpath miles from Katahdin, Maine to Springer Mountain, Georgia. I find it physically and mentally challenging. The beauty of the wilderness and the simplicity of life are refreshing. I just returned from hiking in Maine. I was fortunate to have my son hike with me for the week. *It was remote and more like rock climbing with a pack on. I am sure the moose were laughing at me. I know the loon was early one morning.* I hike different sections based on where I can get rides, who I know close to the trailheads, and the difficulty of the hikes. When people ask me if I am going to complete the



whole trail, I answer as honestly as I can: "I do not know." There is a lot of trail left.

Besides my work at Eastern Neck I am involved in St Paul's, Kent, Episcopal Church. I chair a committee for Camp Dayspring, an enrichment day camp for Rock Hall kids, and I co-chair the Camp Agape committee, a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Easton for kids who have an incarcerated parent.

I am the proud grandmother of a baby girl, Daphne Goll. She is three months old. I just bought her first life jacket."

*Congratulations, Melissa. And thanks for taking on the Friends position.* Ed.

**President's Message****Fall 2013**

Dear Fellow Friends,

In this life, the only constant is change. It's hard to believe, for example, that the osprey parents have already begun to migrate. It has become quieter around our house without the six osprey family members calling as they swoop and hover about. And the Refuge seems very still without them -- even though some of the young won't begin to migrate until later this month or even in October.

As we noted in the previous issue of *The Rookery*, our president resigned, and our by-laws require the board to fill any vacancy by a vote on one or more nominees. At our July meeting, we filled the vacant board position with a unanimous vote for Penny Brown, a Rock Hall resident with family roots on Eastern Neck Island. Penny worked in the Virginia education system as a counselor. She is most enthused about the Friends and board membership, and she and her husband Jeff spend several days each month on the front desk as bookstore volunteers.

I hope you read the Page 1 article about Melissa Baile, now the president of the Friends. I have worked on the board with Melissa for years and find her to be calm, effective and a hard worker. Fellow board members share my feelings and they, like I, have every confidence she will do a fine job. Thank you, Melissa, for taking on this responsibility!

If you come to the Refuge any time during the next year, I hope you'll meet Cara Murray, a Washington College Environmental Services student who joined the staff in August as our Visitor Services intern. During this time she will provide visitor services, volunteer coordination and educational outreach to local school children. The visitor services staff position at the Refuge has been vacant for more than a year; it will be great to have its activities re-invigorated. Cara's position is funded by the Friends as a way to assist the Refuge staff meet its mission of outreach. Welcome, Cara!


**OUR MISSION**

The mission of the Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc. is to provide support to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge through educational outreach programs and volunteer service on the refuge, including the operation of the refuge bookstore.

***The Rookery***

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**Friends of Eastern Neck  
Memberships**

Friend: \$25  
Patron: \$50  
Eagle Society: \$100  
Blue Heron: \$250  
Tundra Swan: \$500

**Board of Directors****Officers:**

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Lew Halin  
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Meg Parry

**Committee Chairs**

Jackie Cicconi and Kay Snelson:  
Bookstore  
  
Melissa Baile:  
Membership

## REFUGE UPDATE

### What's Happening on Your Refuge by Cindy Beemiller, Refuge Manager

The summer has flown by -- from an overly wet June to a hot start of July with a wonderful cool July and August ending. Partly because of the good weather, the Refuge has welcomed 80 to 100 visitors a weekend to the lodge and our weekday numbers are up from single to double digit counts in the lodge alone.

The Refuge has (nearly) completed the shoreline protection project along Cedar Point to protect the Cedar Point marsh and Hail Cove. (Hail Cove feeds and shelters 1000s of wintering waterfowl and was the site of an intensive anti-erosion project three years ago.) I say "nearly" because some of the salt marsh plants that we planted were washed out before they could get rooted in the sand. In an effort to give the plants more time to root, we have placed coconut matting, usually used in erosion control at construction sites, at the shoreline protection site and will add more plants in the near future.

Ford van Fossan and Cindy Anchor (called "Cindy II" by everyone here for obvious reasons), our summer bio-techs, have been battling invasive plants. Ford's position was funded by the Friends and he will be with us through October. Cindy has left us to return to school in Pennsylvania. They enjoyed the wildlife at Eastern Neck and, in addition, assisted with banding pelicans on the Bay.



You may recall a couple of years ago that the state approved an oyster reef for harvesting off the coast of Eastern Neck close to the Eastern Neck narrows. This state permitted, private endeavor has *not* taken place and the permits are no longer valid. Therefore, it appears the site will not be disturbed unless the permits are renewed. The US Fish and Wildlife Service welcomed the business venture with some caution. The oyster reef could be a great asset to the Bay by filtering the Bay's water. However, we planned to keep a close eye on the waterfowl and swan populations visiting Eastern Neck over the winter,

hoping the noise created by harvesting wouldn't disturb them. We also wanted to monitor the impacts on SAVs located near the proposed reef site. We will continue to look for oyster reef projects, to be harvested or with no proposed harvesting.

At the end of July the Youth Conservation Corps crew from Blackwater joined us for two days. The crew comprised four teens and one adult leader from Dorchester County. They worked hard to clean up all of Wildlife Trail and spread wood chips on the last 1/3 of the trail. The trail looks awesome! We were lucky the weather was cool and the biting insects were not too bad. I was later plagued by the worst case of chigger bites I have ever had! The thrill of getting that trail in shape and the woodchips in place helped me through all that itching!

The \*new\* monthly trail crew is off to a good start. Ben Bennington helped clean up the lodge's front beds in June. More volunteers came out in July to weed the flower beds around the lodge and clean up the Salt Marsh Overlook Trail. Our next project is the Bayview Trail on September 4. I look forward to it. There is so much satisfaction in having the Refuge trails in shape for visitors so they can focus on the natural beauty of the Refuge rather than maneuvering around overgrown plants along the trail. Any volunteers in the area are welcome to join this crew. Give me a call (410-639-7056) for details.

Have you seen the butterflies! How could you not, we have so many! The butterfly garden looks awesome and the butterflies are appreciating it every day. Our wonderful garden volunteers have worked and worked and, in addition to everything else, have spread over 120 bags of mulch.



*The zebra swallowtail continues to be one of the most common in the garden.*

*(Continued on page 4)*

**Refuge Update**

(Continued from page 3)

Not to mention the weeding, cleaning, planting and so on. Wow! There is always room for more garden volunteers. The garden is another rewarding opportunity with beautiful results. Thank you, Friends, for supporting the garden with funds for supplies.

If you visited the Refuge in early July you may have noticed more grass than usual. We are lucky to have Bill Burrit, a volunteer, mow... well, mow everything! That is, until the mower broke. However, by the end of July the mower was repaired and all was mowed and back in order. We have purchased a lightweight string trimmer for volunteers. Feel free to stop by and give it a try.

Hard to believe fall is around the corner. I have seen signs of it already; the eagles are flying about. I still enjoy watching this year's eaglets soar over the Refuge. Smaller birds are starting to flock together and a tree in my yard has a red leaf or two! Before fall is upon us, Cara Murray will be joining the Refuge staff in August as our Visitor Services intern. Cara's position is funded by the Friends. She will promote the Refuge and educate school children about nature and the role of the Refuge as land set aside to keep some places wild for people to enjoy. (Also see Phil's President's letter on page 2.)

The budget is, well, we do the best with what we have. We did have money to complete body work on all the Refuge trucks, including replacing the FWS door shields. What a difference! Before, the stickers were so faded no one could tell who we were.

During these leaner budget years we find ourselves leaning more on our Friends. The Friends funded part of the shoreline protection project at Cedar Point and one of our summer bio-techs to work on invasive plants. Invasive plants crowd out native species, and it is native species that support our birds, mammals and other wildlife. Invasive plants on the island include Johnsongrass, princess tree, garlic

mustard, Canada thistle, mile-a-minute weed and many more. The Refuge has had success with eradicating invasive plants over the years, and we work to keep the invasives out through reforestation projects. Thanks to the Friends we can keep this project going.

As the weather cools, it's even more pleasant to come and visit the Refuge. We hope to see many of you in the coming months when the trees begin to turn color and the bugs have gone!



*Perhaps because of the wet weather, the marsh mallows were especially abundant and beautiful this year.*

*Clumps of smaller pink mallows lent spots of soothing color to marshy areas.*



**But don't come to visit  
on the dates of our annual  
deer hunt!**



October 5  
October 9  
October 11  
October 21  
October 28  
November 1  
November 8

The Refuge will be closed to all but registered deer hunters on these seven days.

FRIENDS' DOINGS IN THE BOOKSTORE

Straight to #1



It's not unusual for a song to go straight to #1 on the Billboard charts just after being introduced; in fact, it happens all the time. But for an item in the bookstore -- well, not so often. But this time it did: A new kids' t-shirt became our best-selling item in almost no time at all. Bookstore manager Jackie Cicconi has been buying kids' tees from The Mountain Company for quite a few years now, and they often offer new styles. She chose several for her last order, but one became the star: The raccoon shirt (being modeled at left by her grandson Nolan) sold out in no time at all. They're back in stock now, so come get one for your favorite kid ASAP! (\$12.95)



Nolan's big sister Anna, at right, is wearing another popular new shirt as well. Although there aren't any otters on the Refuge (that we

know of), otters are often a favorite wherever they are because of their antics in and out of the water. This shirt is selling pretty well, too. And if you have a little princess who still likes pink, there's also a pink shirt sporting a very bright multi-colored dragonfly. Come get 'em while they last!



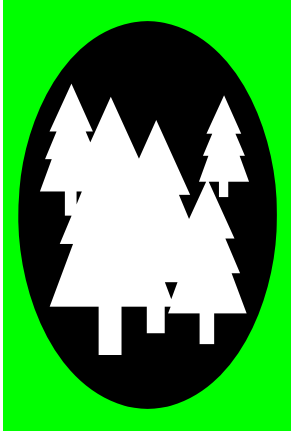
Many of our members know that we have been selling Heather Davidson's beautiful photo note cards exclusively for a long while. However, they're now out of print, and we're running very low on inventory. So Jackie began to look for cards which we could be proud to sell in their place. She found them, I think. Pictured at left are just three of the 20 different new cards we now have in stock. Unlike Heather's cards, not all of these are photographs; some are drawings, like the butterfly. They're all selling well, and at only \$1.45 each, they just might tempt you to handwrite a note rather than send an email!

IN MEMORIAM

In July, we learned of the passing of Lynne Smith, the first president of the Friends and the person with the vision and energy to found a Friends group for the Refuge. In the mid to late 1990's, as the Friends movement was emerging nationally, Lynne led a small group of volunteers in designing an organization that, as it grew over the past 16 years, has assisted the Refuge with its mission in so many ways. Our sympathies are with her husband Lew and his family.

## Did You Know...?

You can get *The Rookery* online (via email)!



We've added several new members since the last issue of *The Rookery* in which we made this announcement, and some of our established members may want to change their mode of receipt as well. We know that many of our Friends do much of their communicating online these days, and if you're one of them, we'll send you *The Rookery* in .pdf format via email rather than via snail mail. (You'll be saving the Friends some postage and paper, and we've put trees on this article because any time we don't have to print copies we feel we're saving some trees.)

Here's what to do: Send an email to [wkr1@verizon.net](mailto:wkr1@verizon.net) with the subject "Rookery" and tell me you would like to have the newsletter sent to your email address. I'll take it from there. Simple! (You can always reverse your decision later if you want to.)

And anyone can read *The Rookery* online by going to our website ([www.friendsofearnerneck.org](http://www.friendsofearnerneck.org)) and clicking on "Newsletters." Back issues (since Fall 2011) are also available there.

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