



Belle Isle News

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Sunday, September 29, NOON to 4 PM
(raindate: Sunday, October 6)

Arts in the Park

at Belle Isle Park

**Entrance on Bennington Street, East Boston
Between Suffolk Downs and Beachmont T Stations**

▼ *The Arts*

Paintings
Sculpture

▼ *Nature*

Hawk-watching in back of hill
Heron viewing at Rosie's Pond
—meet at Suffolk Downs
MBTA Station at 12:30 PM



▼ *Children*

Hay rides, Face painting
Caricature drawing
Arts & crafts

▼ *Music*

Aguilas del Norte (Mariachi)
Kolors (Soca-Calypso)

*Sponsored by Friends of Belle Isle Marsh, Metropolitan District Commission
MassPort, Revere & Winthrop Arts Councils*



Bring picnic lunch; juice & cookies provided



For more information: (617)846-0786; (617)727-5350; (617)846-3294

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER

Bats

As a young child I was terrified of the Halloween-inspired bats known to haunt Mr. Pearson's barn. Then, one day, while I was trailing along on one of my brother Frank's adventures, we came upon a baby bat hidden in the grass of the strawberry patch. We took the bat home and made a bed in a shoe box with a lid. Frank said, "Bats live in dark places, sleep all day and fly at night." We also filled one of my pink baby bottles with milk and dropped tiny drops of milk into the bat's eager mouth.

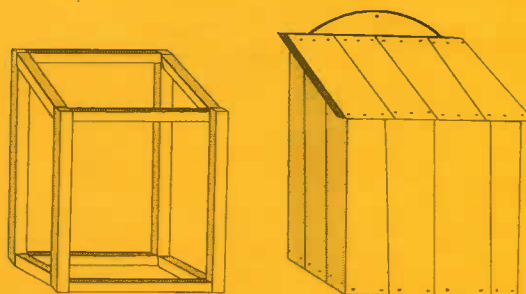
My brother told me, "Bats aren't birds; they're mammals, like us!" To a five year-old this was a very impressive afternoon. The bat, about half an inch long, was so homely he really was cute; not something to be feared. And wow! Was my brother smart!

Of course today, being a good member of FBIM, I know a lot about bats and their importance to our ecosystem. Locally, bats eat millions of mosquitoes each night. Using *echolocation* they follow and catch their prey in total darkness. Some kind neighbors of the marsh have constructed bat boxes to house these helpful friends.

Try your hand at building a bat box for your area.

Bat House

1. Build a frame.
2. Cover the top, front, sides and back with boards. Leave the bottom open for the bats to get in and out.
3. Put the bat house in a high place in your yard.



Book Review

Stellaluna, by Sanell Cannon; Scholastic, Inc.; NY 1993

Stellaluna is an endearing story of the friendship between three baby birds and a young bat. Subtle references to their natural habits are woven into the simple story, emphasized by soft illustrations. This book would be enjoyed by young and old and would make for good shared reading.


Mary Mitchell

A Batty Puzzle

Circle the 21 bat words in this batty word search. Words go up, down or across.

Bat Words: ECHOLOCATION FUR MAMMALS NOCTURNAL ULTRASONIC
 BAT FRUIT BAT HIBERNATE MAMMARY POLLINATE VAMPIRE BATS
 CAVES FRUITS INSECT EATERS GLANDS ROOST WINGS
 EARS FLYING INSECTS NIGHT SONAR

W I N G S
 F I H I B E R N A S T E I C
 D Z U L T R A O J H A H F A R A
 L O M A M M A L S I E R E M
 S E L I N A Y D E R A K
 W P L K M I N S E C T E A T E R S
 P S O N A R Q E C H O L O C A T I O N
 V A M P I R E B A T S W R U U E J K T
 M A M M A R Y G L A N D S
 F R U I T B A T F U R
 Q A R T



H P W N S E R O O S T P
 F R U I T S A O C S P Z
 M I G F D D O C C E C S
 Z P O L L I N A T E C S
 R H G F L I N A T E C S
 S P I C S W I W S O S
 I B T D E
 H P W N S E R O O S T P
 F R U I T S A O C S P Z
 M I G F D D O C C E C S
 Z P O L L I N A T E C S
 R H G F L I N A T E C S
 S P I C S W I W S O S

(Bat box directions and word game supplied by Zoobooks, Wildlife Education Ltd., California, September 1994.)

Construction to Begin on Sireen Reinstein Memorial Boardwalk

The last permitting hurdle was crossed on Friday, August 9, as The Friends of Belle Isle Marsh recorded the Order of Conditions for the boardwalk at the Suffolk County Registry of Deeds. Without this step, construction could not legally begin.

In fact, the permitting process, which began in February as we prepared the first draft of the state Environmental Notification Form, has taken much longer than the actual construction of the boardwalk will take. Why so long? The main reason is that Belle Isle Marsh is located in an *Area of Critical Environmental Concern*, a designation we ourselves lobbied for, so that all activities in the marsh are subject to an extra level of scrutiny.

There were times when we had to keep reminding ourselves that this is a good thing, and that it's only fair for our project to be as thoroughly surveyed and documented as anyone else's; still, it was an interesting (and educational) experience to find ourselves on the same side of the red tape as developers.

In addition to the state permit process, we also had to file legal notices in the *East Boston Times*, and to file a Notice of Intent with the Boston Conservation Commission and answer questions at a public hearing of the Commission. For any project of this type, a Conservation Commission's questions will include: What is the current condition of the resource area being affected? Will the project harm the area? What kind of precautions does the builder propose to prevent such harm? What kind of mitigation does the builder propose in order to compensate for any destruction in the area?

In the case of our boardwalk, the Conservation Commission looks to ensure that there will be no net loss of salt marsh. Our project design has limited the loss to the piling sites; the section of the walk that passes over high marsh will be raised five feet over the marsh and the deck boards will be spaced to allow sunlight to pass through to the salt marsh grass. We estimate that less than twenty square feet of marsh will be lost in digging the pilings.

To make up for, or "mitigate" this loss, Geoff Wood, MDC's Site Supervisor, has identified three sites where

the marsh grass is dead or dying, and where we can remove debris and chaff to restore salt water flow and growth of vegetation. We will monitor these areas for two growing seasons and report back to the Conservation Commission on their progress. The project will now proceed along three tracks. First, Geoff Wood, assisted by the youth workers of the Boston Natural Areas Fund, will work on the three mitigation sites. Later in the fall, a crew from the Massachusetts Audubon Society will bring in their innovative, low-impact pile-driver (designed especially for use in wetlands) to dig the holes for the pilings. The deck will be laid by a crew of MDC workers and volunteers.

If nature cooperates (and barring any unforeseen construction snags) visitors to Belle Isle Marsh this fall will be able to stroll across a short stretch of boardwalk to a viewing platform overlooking Belle Isle inlet and enjoy one of the loveliest views in Boston.

Funding the Trail

As construction on the trail begins, our fund-raising has resulted in the following contributions:

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| <i>Relatives of Sireen Reinstein</i> | \$6,850 |
| <i>Major corporate donations</i> | 2,300 |
| <i>Small business contributions</i> | 350 |
| <i>Local legislators</i> | 200 |
| <i>Birthday, memorial, & anniversary donations</i> | 691 |
| <i>Members & friends</i> | 2,000 |
| Total contributions: | \$12,391 |

This is great and we thank everyone who contributed so generously, but *we need another \$5,000* to complete the project. Please help out!



Make Way for the Greenway

Many people wonder, as they walk the East Boston Greenway from Belle Isle Park to Osco Drug on Saratoga Street, who was responsible for its construction. The MDC staff and the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) worked together to produce this trail for all to enjoy. After two weeks of

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Greenway (from page 3)

rigorous training under Belle Isle Park Ranger Geoffrey Wood, in his "Smoky the Bear" hat, he and his staff, consisting of James Buono, Emily Collins, Kevin Dilisio, Chris Gerasi and Mike DiGiovanni worked with and supervised the YCC in the trail work.

The YCC was divided into three groups headed by Bridget Faretta, Kerry Wilcox and Josette Williams. Another group contributing to the construction project consisted of youth fulfilling community service hours. All groups engaged in cutting along the trail, picking up litter and stones, and leveling the trail. They worked in high heat and in rain, not always with a smile.

The project was successful in increasing the environmental awareness and the cooperative spirit of these young people.

The trail includes views of Rosie's Pond and of Belle Isle Marsh. We would like to thank all those who helped in the construction of the Greenway, and we would like to invite the community to come and enjoy nature at its finest.

*Emily Collins
Seasonal park worker at
Belle Isle Marsh Reservation*

Fall Events



Sunset canoe ride to Snake Island: Friday, September 27, 5 PM. Leader: Geoff Wood. Meet at Winthrop Public Landing, off Shirley Street. Call (617)662-5230 or (617)727-5350 to preregister. Sorry, no children under 12.



Belle Isle Greenway Walk: Friday, October 18, 5 PM. Leader: Geoff Wood. Walk the new trail from the entrance of Belle Isle Park to Osco Drug on Saratoga Street. Meet at Belle Isle Park parking lot.



Hawkwatch: Saturdays & Sundays, September 28 through October 20. For more information call Soheil Zende at (617)863-2392.



TASL (Take a Second Look) Harbor Censuses: Sundays, October 20, November 24. For more information call Soheil Zende at (617)863-2392.

Friends of Belle Isle Marsh (FBIM) is a volunteer organization dedicated to the preservation of this marsh. We believe that protection ultimately depends on public awareness of the value and beauty of this natural resource. Our focus, therefore, is mainly educational.

To join: Send dues to our post office box: \$8 (Family), \$5 (Individual), and \$1 (Seniors/Under 16). FBIM is a registered non-profit corporation; all contributions are tax-deductible. Thank you for your continued support.

For extra newsletters to share or leave on magazine tables at your hairdresser, lodge, or boat club, etc., please call (617) 846-3294.

This issue was produced by Isabelle Guttell and Soheil Zende.

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Address correction requested

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