



# Howard County Bird Club

**A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society**

## *In Memoriam*

### **Frances J. Ehlers (1909-1990)**

To those of us who knew her, Frances Ehlers seemed spirited and indestructible, but suddenly, the afternoon of June 6th, she was gone from our midst. She had been working in the yard, although at that moment, she probably would rather have been peering into a bluebird box greeting new life as hers came to a close.

Frances was a native Washingtonian. She graduated from Central High School, attended Strayer Business College, and obtained a law degree from Southeastern University. Although admitted to the bar, she never practiced law but used her legal skills to become an insurance claims examiner for the Veterans Administration, the Labor Department, and the Social Security Administration. She retired from government service in 1969. She moved to Clarksville in 1961 after spending much of her early life in Silver Spring.

Frances was confronted with challenges throughout her life and met each with vigor. She held a private pilot's license and was an accomplished horsewoman as well as an avid swimmer. She loved all the gifts of nature, especially birds. Her feeders were kept filled for them all year and her property contained plantings which attracted them. Winter feeder trips often included a stop to see Red-breasted Nuthatches and Pine Siskins which were sometimes regular at her feeders, even when they were scarce elsewhere. Frances was a true steward, an advocate for many environmental causes and organizations, generous with both time and money. She was a staunch supporter of Howard County Bird Club activities, volunteering numerous hours staffing exhibits, mailing *Maryland Birdlife* issues, and attending hearings. Her great love was the Eastern Bluebird. She was a charter member of the North American Bluebird Society and, for many years, maintained a bluebird trail of nearly 50 nest boxes, faithfully monitoring them weekly. She was amused each year when she fledged higher percentages of bluebirds than her two friendly male "competitors" in the county.

Frances was candid; she could amaze and amuse you by what she said, but her conversation was refreshing. Behind a rugged exterior was a generous and loving person, a loyal and devoted friend. We and the bluebirds will miss her.

—Joseph Seuss