



howard county
BIRD CLUB
50th ANNIVERSARY • 1972 – 2022

MEMBERS' MEMORIES

Janet Randle

(as told to Eva Sunell)

At 96 years of age, Jan remembers two things about the Howard County Bird Club (HCBC): the bookstore and 25 May Count tally rallies.

As HCBC Bookstore Manager 1982-1984, Jan and her husband, Don, carted books about birds and other subjects of nature from their house to each monthly bird club meeting. This led them to start a store in Ellicott City called "The Nature Nook," which stood for many years until a fire along Main Street in November 1999 gutted the building where they were located and put them out of business.

Jan also remembers the 25 May Count tally rallies at her home, especially the first and next-to-last.

In 1982, the first tally rally was all set up, so Jan and Don decided to walk to a local stream to do some birding. At the stream Don collapsed; his heart had stopped momentarily. They quickly returned home. Jan thought, "What are we to do about the tally rally? Soon 30-40 hungry and tired birders are due here and Don needs medical help. What to do?"

She thought of Bob Solem, who she knew would be home rather than out birding. Bob was quick to come to the rescue. He got Jan's keys and opened her house while Jan took Don to the hospital where he received a pacemaker.

Twenty-three tallies later (2005), the next-to-last one at Jan's house, was sad as Don had died peacefully about a week before the tally while taking a nap. Jan, as dedicated as ever, said, "Things are set and Don would want it that way, so we will go forward with the tally at our house." Jan hosted her last tally rally in 2006.

Jan later received a Certificate of Merit from HCBC for those 25 tally rallies. Upon receiving the certificate at a club meeting, Jan said, "I'm at a loss for words." From the back of the room, an anonymous birder, who must have known Jan well, shouted "That's the first time that's happened!"

Sunday, April 20, 1986 was a relatively warm, sunny spring day, so I decided to spend part of the afternoon lying in the chaise lounge on the deck where we have most of our bird feeders.

After lying quietly for short time, I heard and felt the presence of a bird on the cushion next to my head. A second or two later it jumped onto my head. I felt a pull on my hair; then the bird flew away. I saw that it was a titmouse which had a bit of hair in its beak. Unbelievable! I had never heard of this behavior with a person before—with a dog or a fur coat maybe, but not with a human being. The bird was not satisfied with one piece. He came back repeatedly. He seemed to be snipping the hair one piece at a time. As he left after the fifth trip, I went inside to call my husband, Don, and tell him of this strange behavior. After the phone call, I went back to the chair. Soon the bird was back. This time when he landed on my head, he started scritchng and pulling hair. I figured enough was enough, so I got up and ended this hair-thinning experience. [Originally in the May-June 1986 issue of *The Goldfinch*.]