

Returning eagles to D.C.

Chicks given a roost in neglected part of town

By HEATHER DEWAR
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Four homeless Great Lakes eaglets have moved into new digs here — a riverfront "crib" in a tall poplar tree, within eagle's-eye view of the marbled Capitol dome and the city's most ravaged slums.

The 8-week-old chicks, crowded out of their wild Wisconsin nests by greedy siblings, are part of a five-year program to bring back the bald eagle to the District of Columbia. Though the once-endangered bird is on the rebound nationwide, experts say there hasn't been an eagle's nest in Washington since 1945.

"Fifty years is too long for our nation's bird not to be nesting in our nation's capital," said Bob Nixon, executive director of the nonprofit Earth Conservation Corps, a wildlife restoration program in its second year.

Nixon, a falconer trained in England, hopes to rebuild the link between humans and wildlife in a tough city's most neglected corner: Anacostia, home to more than its fair share of industrial decay, unemployment and poverty.

Unlike the famous Potomac, the Anacostia River flows through eastern Washington, separating the gleaming city of monuments from all-but-forgotten streets of boarded-up housing projects. There are peaceful blocks and strong families here, as everywhere, but you don't hear much about them. In Washington, the river's name and its neighborhood are synonymous with blight; its banks are a barrier seldom crossed.

Under rain-spattered, ragged skies, Nixon and four young people from Anacostia's public-housing projects ferried the eaglets upriver, past floating rafts of plastic bottles and used syringes, past a hunting egret, past junkyards and green meadows. From now until October, the four Anacostia residents will earn \$100 a week and \$1,700 of college tuition credits by caring for the eaglets.

The river is tainted with sewage and city trash, but its banks are lined with woods belonging to the National Park Service. Beavers inhabit its murky waters; great blue herons nest on its shores. Five decades after the last eagle pair abandoned its nest on one of the islands, biologists think the river is once again healthy enough to keep the big birds supplied with fish.

"The Anacostia is thought of as being a horrible river, as is the

community where these people live, but there's a lot of good in both," Nixon said. "It's not Alaska by any stretch of the imagination, but the food base is there and the habitat is there, so we ought to try to reintroduce this missing piece of the original ecosystem."

The first quartet of fledglings arrived last year from the University of Minnesota-affiliated Raptor Research Center in St. Paul. Three are still in the area, Nixon said, and one has been seen fishing near the Jefferson Memorial.

Experts from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service say Earth Corps is the only program attempting to introduce eagles into an American city. Their more diminutive relative, the peregrine falcon, was successfully transplanted into the concrete canyons of Manhattan and Boston; Akron, Ohio and Charlotte, N.C. and a dozen other places in the 1980s.

But it takes a powerful love of symbolism to tussle with a flapping, squawking young eagle, its wingspan already approaching 7 feet and 300 pounds of thrust in its long, curved talons.

Last month, Earth Corps workers used a cherry picker to hoist four more young birds into a cage made of wooden dowels, 60 feet

BALD EAGLES REBOUNDING

States where bald eagle populations are thriving due to efforts of conservationists



SOURCE: Knight-Ridder research

above the river's bank in the National Arboretum. To keep the birds from becoming too accustomed to humans, the caretakers will hide in a clump of bushes, using a rope and pulley to hoist up thrice-daily feedings of day-old fish donated by local markets. The cage will open in the fall and the fledglings will gradually begin to fend for themselves.

Missouri's games pay big money in taxes

Kansas City Star

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Gamblers lost \$537 million — more than half of it in Kansas City — aboard Missouri's nine riverboat casinos during a 12-month period that ended June 30.

Kansas City's four boats took in \$286 million from gamblers' lost wagers in that time.

The still-growing industry's half-billion-dollar take in the 12 months was up 73 percent from \$310 million for the same period a year earlier.

"That's a lot of money," said Tom Irwin, executive director of the Missouri Gaming Commission. "We're leaving the infancy stage," he said of the state-regulated gaming industry.

During fiscal 1996, which ended June 30, the casinos paid \$152 million in state and local gaming taxes.

"Whether you like it or hate it, if [the casinos] disappeared public entities would clearly miss the revenue," Irwin said.

The 12-month financial report made public last week by the Missouri Gaming Commission also showed that Harrah's two North Kansas City casinos con-

tinued in June to increase their share of the local marketplace.

Harrah's 53 percent market dominance comes at the expense of the Argosy Riverside Casino and the struggling Sam's Town Casino in Kansas City.

Harrah's has had the advantage since May 15 of operating two boats, allowing staggered boarding times that require waits of no more than 15 minutes.

One-boat casino operations are less convenient for patrons, with waiting times of as long as 75 minutes.

Sam's Town fell just one one-hundredth of a percentage point short in June of its long-stated goal of boasting the state's "loosest" slot machines — industry slang for those that pay players the most.

Longtime leader Harrah's posted a 94.99 percent payout rate in June for all its electronic gambling devices. Sam's Town logged in at 94.98 percent — its best performance to date.

The number, which the boats advertise heavily, reflects the percentage of all coins played that are paid back to players as jackpot winnings.

Diagnosing Civil War medicine

New museum shows pitfalls, progress

FREDERICK, Md. — (AP) — Ambulances, the nursing profession and many other touchstones of modern medicine can trace their American roots to the Civil War, according to a new museum near the Gettysburg and Antietam battlefields.

When the National Museum of Civil War Medicine opened last month, visitors also learned that germs and not bullets killed most of those who died in the war.

"Of the 600,000 dead, two died of disease for every one killed in battle," said Burton Kummerow, the museum's executive director. "Bad food and bad water made many sick. There was also a general lack of sanitation at the beginning of the war. The latrines were often near the drinking water supplies," he said.

Several major medical advances came out of the war, including the development of modern hospitals and medical evacuation techniques, the birth of the nursing profession and the first widespread use of anesthesia, Kummerow said.

"In 1862, during McClellan's Peninsula Campaign, the wounded were on the field for seven days," he said. "By the time Gettysburg came along, they had everybody off the battlefield every night."

But perhaps the most important advancement was the realization of how little was actually known about medicine, said Dale Smith, chairman of the Department of Medical History at the Uniformed Services University in Bethesda.

Many doctors did not have an adequate knowledge of anatomy, partly because only three states had passed laws before the war providing a method for universi-

ties to obtain human bodies for educational purposes. The lack of such laws led to the black-market trade in bodies, and "burking," the killing of people in order to sell their bodies, Smith said.

"The realization that we had a hit-and-miss system of medical education was brought to the forefront," Smith said. "That's the biggest social impact in terms of medicine on American society."

Museum exhibits feature a hospital ward, ambulance, medical devices and histories of important medical figures. The museum occupies the first floor of a three-story Civil War-era building. Curators plan to expand the museum to the upper floors in the future.

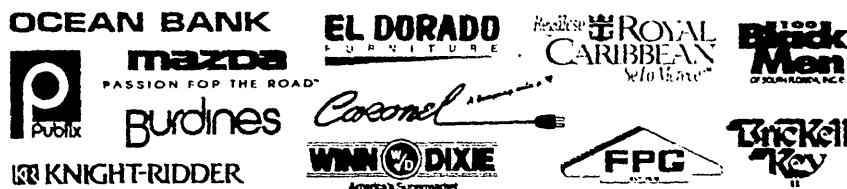
Kummerow hopes that the museum will be of interest to women, who might not be as interested in the military aspects of the war.

Let The Centennial Celebrations Begin!

Very soon, fireworks will light up the night sky and the Miami Centennial celebration will be off to an exciting start. To celebrate this historic event, The Miami Herald presents Miami At 100, a special section dedicated to Miami's Centennial.

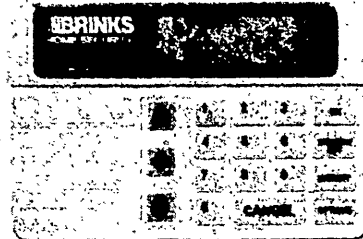
Look for Miami At 100 inside The Herald on Sunday, July 21. It's a wonderful piece of history you'll want to save.

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