“It is good to love many things, for therein lies the true strength, and whosoever loves much performs much, and can accomplish much, and what is done in love is well done.” – Vincent Van Gogh, Dutch artist

MY WHITE CHRISTMAS WISH

By Deanna Frautschi

MY CHRISTMAS wish in 2014 was to see and photograph a Snowy Owl in Central Illinois. The previous year’s arctic visitor sightings had me chasing all over Central Illinois, but all I found in fields to focus on were white plastic bags.

THANKFULLY, this Christmas was different. The week before the holiday a nature friend contacted me and told me she might be able to help with my wish.
SHE SENT ME north of Lexington where after some hunting of fields and outbuilding roof tops, I found my Snowy Owl perched on a telephone pole! I got to see him over a period of several days.

IT TURNED OUT to be a male who was over a year old. The patterning of brown markings and the very white body feathers helped fellow birders to identify the sex and age of the bird. Young first year Snowy Owls have many more brown markings on their bodies and heads.

MORE YOUNG ones come south than older ones. They can often be found surveying open fields for their next meal.

WHILE MOST OWLS hunt at night, these owls are used to working in the land of the midnight sun so they have no problem roaming the fields during the day. This makes it easier for us to find a Snowy Owl if it doesn't blend in with a snow-covered field. Most often, I found the one pictured here perched on the top of a telephone pole or a farm building.

THESE ARE LARGE and beautiful birds that are here to find food and survive the winter. Do not get out of your car or try to get too close. If you’re lucky enough to spot one, roll down your car window and use the car as your “blind.” The Snowy Owl will probably not fly off if you stay in the car, but if you get out, you will likely scare the bird.

INSTINCTS TELL them humans can hurt them. Even though this is not your intent, they will remain extremely cautious as well they should. You don’t want to startle them and make them lose their prey or expend excess energy in cold weather and feel stressed.

REMEMBER, THEY ARE out there trying to survive without a nice warm car to go back to.

THIS IS ANOTHER irruption winter for these owls. (In birding terms, an irruption is a sudden, dramatic and rapid increase in a bird population.) They are visiting in record numbers, and more have shown up in the Midwest this winter. They are even larger, at 25 to 28 inches, than our Great Horned Owl year-round residents.

THEY COME SOUTH in winter because they are looking for food. Lemmings are a diet staple in the arctic, but mice and voles make up much of their diet here.
AS I SIT watching four blue jays take turns on my window-attached bird feeders, the cat is purring in my lap. What better way to avoid the cold teens outdoors than to write this article?

LIFE FOR HUMANS on the Illinois prairie was definitely different than it is today. My fireplace is bright with fire and light as I read the latest Green Thoughts of James Bortell, our first Master Naturalist of the Year. The article on ground hogs reminded me of the ones that lived in a shed when we lived in New Holland – but they were never sweet or nice. A video of Dee Frautschi’s owl and her picture of the American Kestrel on Facebook always connect me to nature. These Master Naturalists truly know the meaning of the Power of One and its impact on all of us.

OUR JANUARY Annual Meeting was well attended with over 75% of our membership in attendance. Dr. Michael Wiant’s program was a great conclusion to 2014 and a new beginning for 2015.

THANKS TO all committee chairs and the executive board members for their hard work, commitment, and continued dedication to our IGPMN. A special thank you to Roberta O’Mara for serving as Volunteer Chairman, and a warm welcome to the new chair Deb Tock. Special thanks, too, are in order for Phil Houser as he steps down from the Curriculum Committee. All other chairs will be continuing with the addition of Marge Ehlers as co-chair for National Trails Day, and of Marilyn Freeze as a replacement for Lenore Clark as Membership co-chair.

ANOTHER “THANK YOU” to James Bortell, Green Thoughts, Kathy Clesson, IGPMN Newsletter, and Judith Valente-Reynard, radio, for our IGPMN connections. These three keep all members and community informed. Thank you!

CONGRATULATIONS TO our newest interns turning into Graduates: Barb Moore, Maryann Stork, Susan Trotter, and Jan Turner.

WE LOOK forward to a great new year with a training class this fall, knowing our membership should grow into the 80’s.

AT OUR FIRST Advisory Council meeting, all Executive members and all Chairmen were in attendance. Policies and Procedures of the U of I Extension Master Naturalists and established By Laws were discussed, and clear goals were assigned each committee to be accomplished during 2015. It is essential that all members are current with proper procedures to keep the IGPMN moving forward.

HOPEFULLY, the schedule of training classes for our Class of 2015 recruits will be available by Garden Day on March 7 and for the IWU Illinois Sustainable Wellness Expo on April 11. These events are our opening to sign up new training class intern possibilities at our booth.

MARK YOUR calendar for Quarterly meetings on April 9, July 9, and Oct.15. The next Annual Meeting is slated for Jan.14, 2016. Advisory Council Meetings are June 18, Sept. 24, and Nov. 19. Giving you these dates will allow you time to prepare and accomplish goals. National Trails Day is June 6, my husband’s birthday.

I LOOK FORWARD to volunteering with many of you with our Partners: Fugate Woods, Heartland Community College, McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District, Parklands Foundation, Sugar Grove Nature Center, and Wild Ones. Let’s have a great year!

REMEMBER: Volunteers don’t necessarily have the time, they just have the heart.

Karen Lowery
Master Naturalists Share Favorite VOLUNTEER Experiences

I HAVE REALLY enjoyed working the festivals at Sugar Grove Nature Center over the last few years. I like talking to people interested in Wild Ones or in the games and various activities for the children I have worked with as a Master Naturalist. It is fun meeting those interested in Geocaching at the informational table I've set up for geocachers the last couple of events out there.

IN TERMS OF programming, I have enjoyed the time we spent at Dixon Mounds during my MN class in 2011, as well as the day we spent last year at Cahokia Mounds learning about our awesome predecessors on this land. This was supplemented by wonderful, more recent presentations by Dr. Wyant from Dixon Mounds and Dr. Campbell on the Woolley Mammoth. There is so much to learn about those humans and beasts who preceded us on this earth.

Bob Williams
Class of 2011

MY FAVORITE VOLUNTEER gig has been helping replant trees after the tornado in Tazewell County.

HOUSES, ONCE THE rebuilding starts, are back in a few months. Trees will take a century. People literally see you as planting the future.

Shaun L. Bill
Class of 2012

A CHILLY DAY in March found me in the woods with six Tiny Tappers (Preschool children visiting SGNC to learn about tapping trees for maple sirup). Each child drilled, hammered and hung the bucket on a towering maple tree. All but one eagerly tasted the sweet water dripping from the metal spiel.

THE RELUCTANT ONE frowned and hid gloved hands behind her back. With five expectant faces looking at her and a little verbal encouragement, curiosity ruled. One gloved hand slowly emerged and tentatively reached for a drop of sap. It was suggested the sweet water would be even better without her glove. Glove removed and sap tasted, she beamed. Whipping off the other glove, she cupped her hands to receive more of the tree’s gift.

Barbara Gaffron
Class of 2010

ONE OF MY favorite volunteer experiences was this past May, when I went out to Sugar Grove Nature Center to pull some invasive Garlic Mustard in anticipation of the Trail Days Celebration. It was already getting hot out, and I was sweaty and needed a break. Janet had told me of a Green Heron near the train tracks, so I grabbed my camera and was able to watch him for a few minutes and shoot some pictures as he tried to catch some fish. The rest of my time there was all about filling bag after bag of those pesky weeds, but so long as I was working in such a beautiful place, it didn’t really seem like work.

Jeanna Powell
Class of 2013
MAMMOTHS Amongst Us!

*Pleistocene Paleontology*

By Vickie Robertson

DID YOU KNOW that Woolly Mammoths, giant sloths, mastodons and other now-extinct mammals roamed right in your own backyard?

ACCORDING TO Dr. Dennis Campbell of Lincoln College, he and his students have been finding fossils of several species over the past 10 years, the most spectacular being their find of tusks, molars and jaw pieces of a Woolly Mammoth in 2005. The Mammoth likely stood 11 feet at the shoulder. The tusks alone were 12.5 feet long!

THAT MAMMOTH is now named Judd. He was named after the student who originally worked with Dr. Campbell and brought out the pieces of tusk that lurked just beneath a gravel bar on Sugar Creek, a northern tributary of the Sangamon River, in Lincoln. Originally the crew guessed that the pieces might be from a Jeffersonian or Columbian Mammoth, but after study and measurement, they proved the specimen was that of a Woolly Mammoth.

DR. CAMPBELL, a professor of zoology and environmental biology, spoke to master naturalists at the new U of I Extension office recently. He detailed the process that the students used—laying out the tusk pieces on the bank to visualize the size of the specimen. "I was taken aback at the size of the find," said Campbell.

THE GROUP of professors and students worked diligently to take the pieces back to the college without compromising the quality—even taking their waders off and slipping the large pieces inside. That proved to be an ingenious way to transport them while keeping them moist. Moisture was essential. Too much time out of the water tended to cause quick deterioration.

“I THEN GOT on the phone with international experts to discuss it,” said Campbell. Soon enough, representatives from the Field Museum, the Illinois State Museum, the Discovery Channel and local media visited to help with the find and also to cover it. Tests were made which confirmed that Judd had died 13,500 years ago.

MIRACULOUSLY, LATER in the winter of
that year (2005), Dr. Campbell decided to go “walk the creek” on a cold December 26. IT PROVED to be worth his time when he found the molar of the Mammoth! Later, they would also find a jawbone—part of which was extremely fragile but completely intact. Dr. Campbell pointed out that this would prove that particular piece had barely been disturbed in 13,000 years!

ANOTHER FASCINATING deduction that the crew took from mud grab samples at the site was the fact that they showed the presence of Spruce and Ash trees in the area. That find was not consistent with what many of us associate with the terrain covered by Mammoths, in other words, tundra.

JUDD WAS NOT the last of the Sugar Creek discoveries. Since that time, the students and professors have found fossils from an American Bison (now extinct) and Eastern Elk, which can only be found in New Zealand. Also found were Pleistocene Musk Ox, Mastodon and a Giant Ground Sloth.

CLIMACTIC CHANGE, disease, and possibly human predation by Paleo Indians that lived during the time are just a few of the reasons these species disappeared. But scientists and laypeople have helped us learn a lot about these creatures of the past.

IN FACT, Dr. Campbell emphatically stressed the importance of “average” people like Master Naturalists in propelling science forward. After all, it was a student with little experience who helped bring this impressive Woolly Mammoth discovery to light!
WILDLIFE PRAIRIE PARK PROJECT 

BENEFITS FROM IGPMN VOLUNTEER EFFORTS

By Pam Terry, Jack Pfaffman, & Amy Aeschliman

WILDLIFE PRAIRIE PARK is often referred to as a jewel in the Midwest. Located just outside of Peoria, Illinois, this 2,000 acre zoological park is home to over 150 animals; that’s 50 different species that are native to Illinois. Individuals come to learn about wolves, bison, waterfowl, black bears, elk, cougar, otter, and other animals.

NOW, they can learn about native plants.

IN EARLY 2014, Kate Dunham, Volunteer Coordinator at Wildlife Prairie Park, contacted Sherrie Snyder of the Illinois Prairie Chapter of Wild Ones about the possibility of landscaping with native plants at the park. When Sherrie presented the opportunity at a board meeting, an exploratory committee made up of Illinois Prairie Master Naturalist volunteers Amy Aeschliman, Jack Pfaffmann, and Pam Terry, along with Robin VanDermay, from Wild Ones, was formed. Pam contacted Kate and set up a meeting. The initial meeting took place on March 24 at Wildlife Prairie Park with Pam, Jack, and Robin in attendance. Kate indicated the four beds as priorities for planting native plants. Pam, Jack, Amy, and Robin met weekly, and, after much discussion, they meticulously designed four beds. Some of the beds received little to no sunshine, while others received a large amount of sunshine.

THE FIRST OF June, the design committee met with staff from Wildlife Prairie Park, Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners from Peoria, Tazewell, Fulton, Mason, Woodford, McLean, and Livingston Counties and presented the landscape designs for the four beds. Wildlife Prairie Park liked the plans so much that they increased our budget and authorized the design committee to order the plants. Jack worked with several native plant nurseries and placed the orders. Plants were delivered in late June-early July. Jack picked some of them up at the selected nurseries and some were delivered to Robin’s house. Robin graciously agreed to babysit the plants until July 7, the
designated date for the actual planting of the beds.

PLANTING DAY arrived. Robin recruited her daughter, Sable, and son, Quen, to assist in the planting. Robin, Sable, Quen, and Jack provided the trucks to haul the plants to Wildlife Prairie Park. We arrived at 6:00 a.m. in the morning for a long day planting, watering, and labeling more than 800 native plants.

WE DISTRIBUTED plants to each of the four identified beds. At 8:30 a.m., volunteers (Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists from Unit 11 (Fulton, Mason, Peoria, and Tazewell Counties) joined us to assist in planting the natives. Those individuals were Diana Carothers, Melanie Anderson, Tony Anderson, Larry Herron, and Lee Macki.

THE DAY WAS extremely warm but the camaraderie was awesome. Some of those volunteers had to leave by noon; others stayed to finish up (around 3:30 p.m.).

**HERE ARE SOME OF THE NATIVES WE PLANTED AT WILDLIFE PRAIRIE PARK:**

Baptisia Blue, Bleeding Heart, Blue-Eyed Prairie Grass, Blue Vervain, Butterfly Weed, Columbine, Cream Indigo, Foam Flower, Wild Geranium, Goat's Rue, Golden Alexander, Hairbell, Iris Slender Blue Flag, Jacob's Ladder, Lance Leaved Coreopsis, Large-Flower Beardtongue, Little Blue Stem, Meadow Rue, Swamp Milkweed Red, Mist Flower, Monarda, New England Asters, Obedient Plant, Pale Coneflower, Prairie Blazing Star, Prairie Smoke, Prairie Phlox, Queen of the Prairie, Prairie Drop Seed, and others.
I HAVE recently been asked to chair the Volunteer Coordination Committee for the Master Naturalist program. I thought you might be interested in learning about our committee’s responsibilities.

THE MOST exciting aspect of this committee is that we get to work with our Illinois Grand Prairie Master Naturalist Partners! Although we are introduced to our partners during our IGPMN training, if you are like me, I couldn’t remember all of our partners by a year or two out of training. So, here is a refresher for you. These are our partners:

- Sugar Grove Nature Center
- Parklands Foundation
- Wild Ones
- Heartland Community College
- Fugate Woods Nature Preserve
- McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District

FOR CLARIFICATION, the University of Illinois Extension (Livingston-McLean-Woodford Unit) is not a Master Naturalist partner. Rather, the IGPMNs are a program of the University of Illinois Extension. As such, we represent the U of I Extension to the community in anything in which we participate. We should be mindful of this relationship at all times.

IN ADDITION to these six Partners, we have numerous IGPMN-approved Projects with various other agencies. I will have a list of our Partners and Approved Projects available at our next Quarterly Meeting. I think it is important that each of us become familiar with these groups and all of the wonderful volunteer and continuing education opportunities they provide to us!

REMEMBER: We each need a minimum of 30 volunteer hours and 10 continuing education hours to remain Active members of Illinois Grand Prairie Master Naturalists! That brings me to a second and third aspect of the Volunteer Coordination Committee. We help monitor our membership’s volunteer and continuing education hours and other special volunteer services that our membership may be involved in, in order to present awards for certification, years of service, etc., at our meetings. And please, do as I say, and not as I do. Record your volunteer and continuing education hours promptly after completing them. Take my word for it—it is no fun spending hours going through your calendar and entering your hours, months after you completed them!

PLEASE HELP US by letting me or another member of our committee (right now - Mary Jo Adams) know of any special volunteer services you or another member are performing. We will work with the Publicity Committee to submit a newsletter and/or newspaper article recognizing your or that person's volunteer service! It is inspiring to all of us when we hear of the services other members have performed, and it’s nice to be able to acknowledge them.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT responsibility of our committee is to keep a photo database on volunteer efforts. Mary Jo Adams currently is
in charge of this aspect of our committee. I encourage you to take pictures at any event you attend as a volunteer, and submit them to Mary Jo so they can be included in our database! Your photos may find their way into our newsletter, in photos for our Master Naturalists booth display, in a newspaper article, or in other promotional materials for our organization.

IF YOU HAVE questions or comments regarding the responsibilities of our committee, or if you would be interested in volunteering to be on our committee, please contact me, Mary Jo Adams, or our current President, Karen Lowery. We would love to have more members on our committee!

MAPLE SIRUP TAPPING
AN INVIGORATING VOLUNTEER VENUE

Before hiking to tap maple trees, MN volunteer Marilyn Freese introduces field trippers to the history of Sirup and lets them sample the product.

Photos by Vickie Robertson

Above, PK Koranda teaches tapping to students

Left, Marge Ehlers, Marilyn Freese, and Vickie Robertson are dressed for a hike to the sugar bush.
WINTER CELEBRATION WELL ATTENDED
GOOD FOOD, GOOD FRIENDS, GOOD CHEER!

“Lots of good food and fellowship with a poetry reading to boot!”

“There is hope if people will begin to awaken that spiritual part of themselves, that heartfelt knowledge that we are caretakers of this planet. “

Brooke Medicine Eagle
NATURE AND POETRY go together like coffee and cream. That is why this April, for National Poetry Month, a group of local poets will be pairing their poems about nature and Illinois’ natural beauty with photographs taken by Illinois Master Naturalists. And that’s where we need you!

GRAND PRAIRIE MN Mary Jo Adams is currently soliciting your photographs celebrating nature in Illinois for the poetry reading/photography show, “Eyes to See: Celebrating the Beauty of Nature.” The program will take place **Sunday, April 12**, at the lovely Edwardian home known as Broadview Mansion, 1301 Fell Avenue, Normal, **from 2 to 4 p.m.** All are invited. The reading is free and open to the public. A short reception with refreshments will follow the program.

IF YOU ARE interested in having your photographs on display at the poetry reading, please send the photos (preferably with a title) to mjadams@ilstu.edu and jvalente17@msn.com.

FOR THE EVENT, we will also need you to provide a framed copy of your photograph (frames may be simple) so that we may display your images around Broadview Mansion.

THE POETRY PORTION of the program will feature local poets Kathleen Kirk, Susan Baller Shepard, Bill Morgan and Grand Prairie MN Judith Valente.

KATHLEEN KIRK is the author of several poetry chapbooks, most recently, *Living on the Earth*. Her work has appeared in numerous journals. She is editor of the Internet poetry magazine “Escape into Life” and the poetry anthology, *Illinois Poets: Where We Live*.

SUSAN BALLER SHEPARD teaches at Heartland Community College. Her poetry and prose have appeared in numerous publications including washingtonpost.com and Huffington Post. She is the coordinator of spiritualbookclub.com and an assistant pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Normal.

BILL MORGAN is a retired English professor at Illinois State University whose nature poetry has appeared in numerous creative journals. He is the editor of the literary journal, “The Hardy Review.” He also has restored several acres of prairie in Livingston County.

JUDITH VALENTE is a Grand Prairie Master Naturalist (class of 2012) and the author of the poetry collection, *Discovering Moons*. She is co-editor with Charles Reynard of the anthology *Twenty Poems to Nourish Your Soul* and the author of *Atchison Blue: A Search for Silence, a Spiritual Home and a Living Faith* and *The Art of Pausing: Meditations for the Overworked and Overwhelmed*. She reports for WGLT Radio in Normal.

ALL FOUR POETS are known for their engaging, easily accessible poetry and for exhibiting an infectious passion for poetry.

PLEASE CONSIDER adding your photography to what promises to be a wonderful event. ✦
Here is a sampling of NATURE PHOTOGRAPHS and a sneak peek of a poem you will see featured at the APRIL 12 event hosted at BROADVIEW MANSION.

**Yellow Alert**  
*Photo by Susan Ballard Shepard (poet)*

**Fawn Resting**  
*Photo by Mary Jo Adams*

**Bird Watching**  
*Photo by Susan Ballard Shepard (poet)*

**SPIRITS OF THE FIELD**  
*By Bill Morgan*

The Greeks believed they hid inside the trees, but here in the heartland, the nymphs and dryads play—where else?—in summer corn and soybean fields.

See?—there they are—wind-surfing the blue-green seas of beans and, next field over, stilt-walking between the tall, wind-washed ranks of corn.

So suited to the place they are, they might be taken for barn swallows feeding low, or the velvet-covered tines of white-tail bucks.

These are the ordinary demi-gods of local earth—of seed and rain, of sun and air.
Meet Amanda Christenson

EXTRA HELP FOR HORTICULTURE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION

IF YOU HAVE been to the new Extension Office, then you may have already met this vivacious addition to the extension staff. Her official title is “Extra Help for Horticulture,” but her talents extend to work with the IL Grand Prairie Master Naturalists.

SPECIFICALLY, Amanda is assisting Bill as Extra Help until Reid, our new Local Food Systems and Small Farms Program Coordinator, begins his work next month.

SHE HAS BEEN working for Extension since March of last year as Extra Help and has recently assisted Kelly Allsup while her Coordinator, Brittnay, has been on family leave.

MS. CHRISTENSON was present at the last Advisory Council meeting with Bobbie Lewis-Sibley. She is computer savvy and promises to do her best to help the program with anything we may need. She does, however, have limited capacity for Volunteer Management work.

AMANDA WILL be working on setting up and confirming speakers for our upcoming Class of 2015 MN Training. You may contact her any time if you have questions or needs which fall under the position of Program Coordinator. In other words, if you would have called Brian in the past, you should now call Amanda.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

Amanda graduated in May of 2014 with a Bachelor’s of Science in Environmental Studies from Eureka College. She lives on a little farm near Eureka, and she loves ecology!

She looks forward to working with our Master Naturalist program.

Lewis Thomas (1913-1993), from The Fragile Species, p.25

Phone: (309) 663-8306 Fax: (309) 663-8270 <achr&euml;ste@illinois.edu>
2014 HOTTEST YEAR ON RECORD

By James Bortell

LAST YEAR was the hottest on earth since recordkeeping began in 1880, scientists reported on Friday. The report underscored warnings about the risks of runaway greenhouse gas emissions. Scientists also warn that claims by climate change contrarians—claims that global warming had somehow stopped—are undermining efforts to address the problem.

EXTREME HEAT blanketed Alaska and much of the western United States last year. Records were set across large areas of every inhabited continent. And the ocean surface was unusually warm virtually everywhere except near Antarctica, the scientists said, providing the energy that fueled damaging Pacific storms.

IN THE ANNALS of climatology, the year 2014 surpassed 2010 as the warmest year. The 10 warmest years have all occurred since 1997, a reflection of the relentless planetary warming that scientists say is a consequence of human activity and poses profound long-term risks to civilization and nature.

“CLIMATE CHANGE is perhaps the major challenge of our generation,” said Michael H. Freilich, director of earth sciences at NASA. His is just one of the agencies that track global temperatures.


"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."
~John Quincy Adams
THE ANTITHESIS OF MINDFULNESS

“Somewhere Else” Syndrome
ITS DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

By James Bortell

CALL IT the “somewhere else syndrome.” What is it applied to nature? It happens after a walk in nature (forests, prairies, mountains, etc.) when the walker realizes she or he was “somewhere else.” He or she was there in body but somewhere else mentally and emotionally.

“SOMEWHERE else” is thinking about the past (yesterday or long ago) or thinking and anticipating the future (tomorrow or more distant). These thoughts may be pleasant, neutral, upsetting, unhappy, productive of anxiety, and more. Whatever, they have this in common: they rob the present of its adventure, pleasure, purpose, and wonder.

MINDFULNESS is an aid in conquering the “somewhere else” syndrome. Mindful practices involve paying attention to one’s breathing. When your mind drifts, reel it back in. When taking an in breath, say “in,” or “quiet,” or “attention.” On the out breath smile, or say (to yourself) “out,” “wow,” “beautiful,” “peace,” “thank you,” or whatever your choose.

IT IS A simple matter of finding deliverance from an overactive mind and paying attention to your breathing. Concentration on breathing helps you stay in the present.

REMIND yourself frequently that your goal is what you are doing now and not where you will end up.

TODAY IS a gift. That is why we call it the “present.” In nature and most other activities, find ways to be in the present. It is the only time you have and you won’t have this time again.

For more about mindfulness: Thich Nhat Hanh, Peace is Every Step: The path to mindfulness in everyday life, Bantam Books

Don’t feel bad if SES strikes. Even Thoreau suffered from “Somewhere Else” Syndrome.

“I am alarmed when it happens that I have walked a mile into the woods bodily, without getting there in spirit. In my afternoon walk I would fain forget all my morning occupations and my obligations to Society. But it sometimes happens that I cannot easily shake off the village. The thought of some work will run in my head and I am not where my body is—I am out of my senses. In my walks I would fain return to my senses. What business have I in the woods, if I am thinking of something out of the woods?”

Henry David Thoreau, Diary
By Linda Giles

WE HAD wonderful weather for Eagle Day at Starved Rock this year. While “warm and sunny” appealed to the human watchers in our group, those conditions actually meant fewer eagles to see because the river was not iced.

IRONICALLY, many of the hiking trails proved treacherously icy, especially in the afternoon as the ice got wet. We got to a point where we decided it was a no go.

FINN AMBLE was also in attendance. He enjoyed the beautiful day and saw several mature bald eagles early in the morning by the Illinois River.

WE HAVE LEARNED that it is wise to arrive early in order to secure free tickets for the 10 a.m. indoor presentation (similar to the raptor program provided us at Sugar Grove Nature Center). Morning sessions are typically packed. An afternoon osprey presentation is also worth the trip to Starved Rock State Park.

Photo on left by Linda Giles
OUR RESIDENT HERBOLOGIST IS THINKING SPRING!

**Herbal Spring Tonics**

WE ARE ALMOST ready to see the new green plants of spring start emerging through the soil. Grandma Fleener would say it is spring tonic time. A *tonic* was a beverage to feed, cleanse the body of impurities, and rehabilitate us, strengthening the body after a harsh winter. Some provide nutrition that is not present in the winter, and some heal the body of maladies that occur through that cold season. I have mentioned many of these earlier in a newsletter. So, I will try not to duplicate too much information.

THE FIRST EARLY HERBS to harvest are chervil, red clover, chickweed, plantain, purslane, dandelions, nettles, lamb’s quarter, and burdock. These herbs can replenish your energy and your health.

HERBS HIGH IN Vitamin B and C, calcium, magnesium, and protein help our bodies renew after a sluggish winter with less activity than normal. If anxious, anxiety ridden, or having trouble sleeping, tonics should include chamomile, lemon balm, wood betony, valerian, skullcap, or hops. Try only one at a time in a tea or tonic. If over 60, introduce slowly. The usual rule of thumb is to enjoy ½ - 1 cup, two times a day. Those younger than 60 can consume 3 cups per day.

If you have eaten asparagus (an old time remedy for a cure) in the spring, then you know how it affects the odor of urine (evidence of Toxin removal). Many spring tonics may change the odor and color of urine; this is your sign that impurities are leaving the body. My Grandma said spring tonic was the cure for her rheumatism and gout.

WILD ONION AND young yarrow leaves are both infection fighters. Inflammation is problematic in most chronic health problems, whether it be bronchitis, back pain, arthritis, insomnia, or hay fever. So, a tea to attack infection is always a good start.

HAWTHORN, Birch leaves, raspberry leaves, cleavers (a.k.a. sticky willy), mint, dandelions and curly dock are known as some of the cleansing herbal remedies.

SPRING TONICS CAN come in many forms. Infusion (flowers and water), teas (leaves and stems and water), decoctions (roots, woody stems, and seeds and water), and tinctures (herbs plus alcohol) are the most common tonics.

SO, ENJOY a spring tonic!!!! It can do a body good. ♦

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**Photo by Marilyn Freese**

**View from the bridge over Sugar Creek on Constitution Trail**

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*Sixth in a SERIES
By Karen Lowery*
Master Naturalists regularly volunteer at the Illinois State University Horticulture Center. Cold winter evenings pass quickly when prepping for the upcoming Home, Lawn and Garden Day.

Spring
8 a.m.–3 p.m. Saturday, March 7
Home, Lawn and Garden Day
Central Catholic High School, Bloomington
The Center information booth and exhibit. Sponsored by University of Illinois Extension-McLean County Master Gardeners

9 a.m.–4 p.m. Saturday, April 11
Illinois Sustainable Living & Wellness Expo
Shirk Center, Illinois Wesleyan University
The Center information booth and exhibit. Sponsored by the Ecology Action Center and IWU

Fall
4:30–6:30 p.m. Friday, September 11
A Literary Soiree
Join us as we celebrate the Center’s first 10 years with the introduction of The Literary Garden. Stroll through the gardens and learn about authors inspired by nature. Enjoy appetizers and a cash bar. Guests will receive a garden corsage and garden memento. Tickets required.

9 a.m.–4 p.m. Saturday, September 19
Autumnal Festival
Celebrate autumn at our 10th annual Autumnal Festival! Enjoy past favorites, including sculptures, activities and gardens. Our traditional family activities, Scarecrows on Parade, fall container silent auction and corn maze return. Purchase heirloom pumpkins, squash and gourds for eating, carving and decorating. Entrance fee.

“Illinois State University Horticulture Center
PRESENTS
the Literary Garden
Celebrating 10 years by connecting nature and literature

“Whether you are reading about gardens or in a garden while reading, nature and literature are wonderful companions.”

Jessica Chambers
Horticulture Center

For more information, visit HorticultureCenter.IllinoisState.edu

WINTER 2015
Vol. 4, No.1

For more information, visit HorticultureCenter.IllinoisState.edu
U of I Extension Volunteer’s:

Thank you for your patience with our recent relocation. All of our meeting rooms and the Master Volunteer office have received new furniture! With the new location and a different office set-up, new procedures are in place and we want to share those with all of you.

Please note the following policies:

• The Master Volunteer office will house three volunteer groups: Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists and the Money Mentor Volunteer program. Each group will have a space in the office allocated to them for storage of educational materials.
  The outside door to the Volunteer office will be locked at all times with the exception of Master Gardener Help Desk (formerly Plant Clinic) hours and days.
  Master Gardener Help Desk: During the growing season the general public will be able to come to the outside doors to the office during Help Desk Hours and Days. There will be signs to direct the public.
  Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists and Money Mentors should work with their Coordinators on reserving the office for needed meetings etc.

• All volunteers must sign in at the front door before they may proceed to the volunteer office. This policy must be adhered to for emergency evacuation and safety procedures.

• Parking will be available on the east and south sides of the building. Please reserve the North side of the building for patrons with mobility issue.

• Kitchen Use: The kitchen is a dual space kitchen; it is both our staff break room and can be used for programs. Use of the kitchen is available to volunteers as well. If you would like to reserve the kitchen for a program you must contact the appropriate Extension Coordinator to reserve the space. Everyone is expected to clean up after themselves.

• Boardroom: If you have a meeting that is for 12 people or less the boardroom needs to be utilized. Please work with the appropriate Extension Coordinator to reserve the space.

• Auditorium: The Auditorium can hold 58 participants for classroom style and 65 participants in chairs only. Please work with the appropriate Extension Coordinator to reserve the space.

• Please remember that the Board room and auditorium should be used for meetings and programs that extend the mission of the University of Illinois Extension.

• A staff person has to be present for any program that occurs in the evening and weekend. Please work with the appropriate Extension Coordinator to plan accordingly.
• Staff reserve the right to cancel any program if there is not adequate staffing to cover the program and or the program does not extend the mission of the University of Illinois Extension.

• Children in the workplace: Children in the workplace are strongly discouraged by the University of Illinois. It presents a liability as our work environment is not childproof for young children. There may be instances when it may be necessary to bring a child to the office for a short period of time to compensate for an emergency problem. These situations, while understandable, are definitely not advisable as common practice.

Thank you very much for your continued service and dedication to Extension! We are happy to be in our new space and we hope you all are too! If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask me, or one of the other Extension staff.

Bobbie Lewis-Sibley, MBA
County Director, University of Illinois Extension
Serving Livingston- McLean- Woodford Counties
1615 Commerce Parkway
Bloomington, IL 61704

http://web.extension.illinois.edu/lmw
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O’HARE AIRPORT HAS BEES!

New York Times, Science Section

WHEN THE Chicago Department of Aviation wanted to expand O’Hare’s green initiative (the airport already composes and keeps a grazing herd of rescued animals), Rosemarie Andolino, its commissioner, went to work.

FIRST, SHE approached Brenda Palms Barber, the founder and chief executive of Sweet Beginnings. The nonprofit beekeeping group provides job training to men and women recently released from prison. Ms. Palms Barber, also looking to expand (the group has 131 hives around Chicago), requested room for 25 at O’Hare.

THE REQUEST was granted. It now has 75, making it the largest airport apiary project in the world.

Information taken from 19 Feb. 2015 article by Danielle Beurteaux: “Now Cleared for Landing At Airports: Bees”

WILD ONES OFFER NATIVE PLANT WORKSHOP

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE Chapter of Wild Ones invites you to a special workshop offered for the first time this year. Cathy Bilow, owner of Accent Nature LLC, Green Gardening, Design and Lawn Care, will present a hands-on, landscape design workshop introducing key principles of landscape design. She will show us how to integrate native plants into our home gardens.

CLASS SIZE is limited to 20 so that you can get individual attention. Expect to go home with a good start on a plan for your garden space.

Two sessions of the workshop will be offered on Saturday, March 21, 2015. Bring photos and measurements of the area they would like to design.

Registration is on a first come, first served basis. Please use the entry form on the next page.
Home Landscape Design using Native Plants

Workshop facilitated by Cathy Bilow

Registration Form

Date: Saturday, March 21, 2015

Time: Session 1: 9:00 a.m. – noon
Session 2: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Where: Mennonite Church of Normal
805 S. Cottage
Normal, IL

Cost: $5.00 for Illinois Prairie Chapter of Wild Ones members (registration begins 1/19/2015)
$10.00 for non-members (non-member registration begins 2/10/15)

What to bring: Photos and measurements of the garden area you would like to design

Complete the registration form below and mail it to address at bottom of form along with your check made payable to Illinois Prairie Wild Ones

Registrations will be taken on a first come – first served basis. Registration will open to non-members on February 10, 2015 if spaces are not filled by this date. You will receive email confirmation of your registration. To inquire about space availability, please e-mail ilprariewo@gmail.com. If a session fills this information will be posted on our website http://illinoisprairie.wildones.org/. Registration deadline is March 14, 2015.

_______________________________________________________________________________________

Home Landscape Design using Native Plants

Name_______________________________________
Phone_______________________________________
Email________________________________________

Illinois Prairie Chapter of Wild Ones Member: _____Yes ($5.00/person) _____No ($10.00/person)

Session Preference (Please rank the following sessions according to preference, “1” being highest. If there is a time that you can absolutely not participate please indicate that session with an “X”. We will make every attempt to schedule you in your #1 ranked session, but indicating multiple session times may increase your chances of participating.

___ Morning session (9:00 a.m. – noon)
___ Afternoon session (1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.)

Make checks payable to: Illinois Prairie Wild Ones

Mail to:
Janet Rasmussen
16086 Inverrary Lane
Bloomington, IL 61705

I can’t resist going into the winter woods to have a look around and experience winter.
- Bernard Heinrich
WINTER BIRD WATCHING IN ILLINOIS
A DELIGHT

White-breasted Nuthatch
...A common feeder bird, they are active, agile little birds with an appetite for insects and large meaty seeds. Their name comes from their habit of jamming large nuts and acorns into tree bark, then whacking them with their sharp bill to “hatch” out seed from the inside. Though small, their voices are a loud, insistent, nasal yammering. (An acrobat: They climb down a tree trunk.)

Tufted Titmouse
Its voice is a low, clear, whistled “peter, peter, peter” or “here, here, here.”
L. 6.5/ WS 9.75/wt. .75 oz

Juncos vary by region, but are generally dark gray or brown, brightened up by a pink bill and white outer tail feathers that flash open, particularly in flight.

FROM GREEN THOUGHTS

Native Plant Sale – Build Your Own Garden

May 16, 2015
8 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Evergreen FS Building (former Extension Building)
402 N Hershey Road, Bloomington, Illinois

The sale will include plants for a:
Butterfly Garden
Shade Garden
Hummingbird Garden
Rain Garden
Drought-tolerant Garden
Urban Garden (plants under three feet)

Small Trees & Shrubs are also typically available.

*4 DIFFERENT KINDS OF MILKWEED!

Visit the website at:
http://illinoisprairie.wildones.org/nativeplantsale/ for a map, directions, and the TENTATIVE, evolving plant list for the plant sale.

Photos by Dee Frautschi
LAMOTT STRIKES A CHORD WITH MASTER NATURALISTS...

“When you love something like reading — or drawing or music or nature — it surrounds you with a sense of connection to something great. If you are lucky enough to know this, then your search for meaning involves whatever that Something is.”

—Ann Lamott, from Stitches: A Handbook on Meaning, Hope, and Repair

The birdhouse says spring but the junco and the snow say “not yet.”

THE ILLINOIS GRAND PRAIRIE MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM is an opportunity to experience nature, develop knowledge of and respect for the environment, and practice natural resource stewardship.

University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. If you need reasonable accommodations to participate in any of our programs, please contact our office.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences/State/County/Local Groups/United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating

For more information, contact the McLean County Extension Office, 1516 Commerce Parkway, Bloomington, IL 61704, or visit our website at http://web.extension.illinois.edu/lmw/

Advisory Council 2015

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