

Palisades Views



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December 2008

Schoolchildren protect Costa Rican rainforest

Sierra Club members Jack and Ginger McCall experienced the rich biodiversity of a mountain rainforest in Costa Rica last summer. They also learned about the Children's Eternal Rainforest in the Monteverde area.

The McCalls will share informa-

tion about this interesting place at the December meeting of the Piasa Palisades Group.

The project dates back to 1951. American Quakers started a dairy farm and set aside 5,000 acres for what they called the Eternal Rainforest. In later years, experts warned the property needed more protection if wildlife such as the resplendent quetzal bird were going to survive.

Swedish elementary students learned of the problem in 1987 and decided to help. They raised money from bake sales and other means, bought adjacent farmland and restored it to its natural habitat.

This prompted other schoolchil-

dren from around the world to get involved. The property has been expanded to include 54,000 acres and renamed the Children's Eternal Rainforest.

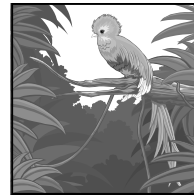
Six students in fifth through seventh grades recently formed their own Forever Forest Group in St. Louis. Four were part of the McCall's tour group. They

hiked, planted trees and observed a wide range of animals and birds.

The young explorers were especially active — taking pictures, chasing snakes and climbing trees, much like monkeys.

Today, their enthusiasm continues

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Need a last-minute Christmas gift?

The Piasa Palisades Group is selling Sierra Club calendars again this year. You pay the same price as in the store (minus sales tax), and a portion of proceeds goes toward local education and conservation programs.

The 2009 desk-top engagement calendar has a weekly format and more than 50 stunning color photos of flora and fauna (\$13.95). The 2009 wilderness wall calendar has a monthly format with photos showing the grandeur of the North American wilderness.

For more information, call merchandising-committee chair Jennifer Politsch at (618) 466-6150. She also will have calendars available for purchase at the Dec. 8 group meeting in Alton.

Six people running for ExCom

One incumbent and five other candidates are running for four open seats on the Piasa Palisades Group Executive Committee for 2009-2010.

The incumbent is C. Gayle Borman. The other candidates are Laura Asher, Bob Freeman, Joe Michlitsch, Virginia Woulfe-Beile and Phil Whitlock.

A ballot is printed on page 2. It's due in the Alton office by Monday, Jan. 5. Please participate in the democratic process and show your support for our group leaders by

voting. Below are candidate statements in alphabetical order:

Laura Asher of Alton

This summer, I visited Yosemite National Park, and I was awestruck by the vast beauty of the place. My experience in Yosemite ignited a newfound respect for John Muir, the sacred spaces of our parks and the work of the Sierra Club.

Personally, I strive toward a natural and sustainable lifestyle. My interests include organic gardening,

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Bond, Calhoun, Fayette, Greene, Jersey, Macoupin, Madison and Montgomery.

Staff report: Cool cities, recycling and more

By Christine Favilla
Staff person

The agenda for United Congregations of Metro-East's Faith and Democracy Public Action meeting on Oct. 30 included the Sierra Club and its Cool Cities campaign.

The organization invited friends, allies and the public to meet with elected officials to propose solutions to injustices in their communities and ask for commitments of support.

"Justice is what love sounds like when it speaks in public," said atten-

dee Michael Eric Dyson.

Issues addressed at the meeting included jobs and training for low-income workers, minorities and women; affordable and quality health care for all; diversity in O'Fallon school-district staff and city government; the impact of global warming on our cities; and efforts to keep Madison County Sheltered Care open.

United Congregations of Metro-East (UCM) believes that by working in faith and fellowship, members can transcend their differences

and help to bring about world peace, justice and equity for all.

UCM is affiliated with the Gama-liel Foundation, which "teaches ordinary citizens to unleash the power within themselves to collectively impact social, political, environmental and economic decisions affecting their lives."

Club helps businesses recycle

The Piasa Palisades Group works with Alton Marketplace Association to pick up, free of charge, aluminum

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**PIASA PALISADES
GROUP
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ELECTION BALLOT
2009-2010**

(vote for four)

Laura Asher _____

C. Gayle Borman _____

Bob Freeman _____

Joe Michlitsch _____

Phil Whitlock _____

Virginia Woulfe-Beile _____

Return ballot by
Monday, Jan. 5, to
the Sierra Club,
223 Market St.,
Alton, IL 62002

Thanks for participating!

ELECTION

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herbs, cooking in accordance with the seasons, and vegetarianism. Some issues I feel passionately about are the protection and restoration of our lands and waterways, renewable energy, and supporting local farmers, artisans and businesses. I enjoy hiking and observing the rich landscape of our region with its abundance of plant and animal life. As a mother and a teacher, I love connecting children to nature.

I wish to become more active in the Piasa Palisades Group by serving on the Executive Committee. I hope to bring fresh ideas for our social, educational and volunteer efforts.

C. Gayle Borman of Wood River

I have been a Sierra Club member since 1992, and I am just completing my first term as membership chair for the Piasa Palisades Group. I am honored and pleased to have filled this position, for I have discovered how unique and gifted this west-central location is in all areas of environmental re-

sources and talent.

I take seriously my responsibilities to find ways to bring in and keep members. You are the fuel that is central to everything the Sierra Club is and does. It brings me joy to go out and meet new people (potential activists) at our recycling events, lectures, festival booths, outings and other activities.

I am currently working on ideas to enable our members in the outer counties to feel more connected and included. I need and thank you for your vote, which will enable me to continue to fulfill our collective mission to "explore, enjoy and protect the planet."

Bob Freeman of Godfrey

My wife, Louise, and I in the year 1972 helped form the Piasa Palisades Group. We have received many awards over the years. I think one of our main priorities should be the protection of our National Scenic Byway. One of the important things our group has done over the years is work to protect this area. We need to build on our accomplishments.

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Mark Hall remembered as an explorer at heart

The St. Louis area lost an environmental advocate and the Piasa Palisades Group lost a friend last month.

Mark Hall, 59, of Alton, died Nov. 23 at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis after a four-month battle with brain cancer.

He most recently worked with Sierrans on a project to grow seedlings from a 200-year-old white oak tree in Haskell Park as part of the Lewis and Clark bicentennial celebration in 2004.

Sandy Wood helped Hall collect acorns. She remembers him as someone who could get things done.

“He was diligent,” said Wood, a member of the Piasa Palisades Group Executive Committee. “He knew what needed to happen and how to make it happen, even if he stepped on a few toes. Everyone respected him.”

Hall was a science teacher at Mehlville (Mo.) High School for more than 30 years. He also led workshops at The Nature Institute in Godfrey.

Sometimes, Hall listened to tapes of bird calls on his daily commute to Mehlville.

“He was an avid birder,” said his friend and former wife, Carol Hall. “He loved astronomy, geology and all of the sciences. ... He loved teaching very much, and he was able to explain things so (students) could understand them easily.”

Mark Hall is perhaps best known in the Alton area as a driving force in development of the 25-acre Heartland Prairie at Gordon Moore Park in the 1970s and ‘80s. The city recently decided to name its trail after him.

Over the years, Hall organized many volunteer work days for plant-

ing and other maintenance.

Sierra Club member Nan Adams remembers when she and her husband, Neil, headed to the prairie on a cold, wet Super Bowl Sunday,



Mark Hall, right, poses with his son, Jonathan, at Niagara Falls in June.

expecting Hall to cancel the project and join them at a restaurant for coffee.

Not.

“He handed us our big bag of prairie seed and pointed to where we were supposed to broadcast it,” said Adams, president of The Nature Institute board. “It must have taken three weeks for us get all of the mud off our boots.”

Adams had known Hall since he was a 17-year-old student in her debate class at Alton High School. She watched his love of birding evolve into an interest in all aspects of the natural environment.

“I remember him saying, ‘Birds just don’t stay still long enough for me to identify them. I’m starting to like plants,’” Adams said. “He had a wonderful sense of humor.”

Beyond local activism, Hall traveled all over the world to study and enjoy nature. He spent six weeks in New Zealand last year.

Friends describe him as an explorer at heart who always took the trail less traveled.

Hall became ill in July. He underwent chemotherapy and radiation at Alton Memorial Hospital’s Cancer Care Center. A group of friends took turns driving him to treatment sessions.

That included Sierra Club member Gene Sands, a fellow birder and friend for 40 years. He considered Hall “one of the brightest guys I ever knew.”

“I always called him Thomas Jefferson,” Sands said. “He was a voracious reader. You can’t believe how many books he had in his library.”

Hall is survived by two sons, Jonathan, 30, of St. Charles, Mo., and Jim, 25, of Springfield, Mo. As of press time, Jonathan’s wife, Jackie, was expected to go into labor at any time and give birth to Hall’s first grandchild.

Friends are invited to attend a memorial service on Jan. 10 at a time and place to be determined.

Anyone interested in adopting one or more of Hall’s three cats should call Adams at (618) 655-0170.

“That would be so helpful for the family if they could find a home for his cats,” she said. “He loved those cats.”

SIERRA CLUB MISSION:

**“EXPLORE,
ENJOY AND
PROTECT THE
PLANET.”**

ELECTION

Continued from page 2

Another important accomplishment of our group was the founding of The Nature Institute. Our group started the prairie out at Gordon Moore Park.

The accomplishment that I am proudest of is our lawsuit that stopped the logging of Pere Marquette and other state parks. I am proud that my sons, Wayne, Doug and Kenny, have grown up to become environmental activists.

My wife and I helped with our weekend retreat at Pere Marquette and many other outings and events. I want to continue this work.

Joseph Michlitsch of Edwardsville

I have a very deep respect for, and admiration of, the natural environment. I have been doing some things to protect and enjoy it and will only continue to increase my behavior that is beneficial to the environment. Of course, that does not distinguish me from other members of the Sierra Club. However, it is a necessary foundation.

My education and career experience have predominantly included learning about, teaching and engaging in strategic management. This consists of setting an overall focus or direction for an organization, then developing and implementing plans and actions to achieve it.

The base for my knowledge and experience in strategic management/policy includes a B.S. degree in economics and an M.B.A and a Ph.D. in strategic management. I have taught policy and related courses for several years at universities in South Dakota and for over 28 years at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE). I have also written and consulted with businesses and not-for-

profit organizations concerning establishing policy and the necessary plans and actions to be successful. In the most recent years at SIUE, I have been chair of the Management and Marketing Department, which included being a member of the executive committee of the School of Business.



My voluntary service work includes consulting with organizations such as the Missouri Conference on Education (I led the board of directors in establishing a strategic plan) and with various educational administrators. It also includes being a member of the board/executive committee for the St. Louis Area Chapter of the Planning Forum (mostly mid-level and high-level business managers); I also served as vice president for programs for several years and president for two terms. In addition, I was a member of the board/executive committee for the St. Louis Chapter of the American Parkinson's Disease Association, also serving as first vice president, chair of the Public Relations Committee and chair of the Fund Raising Committee.

I would now like to put my knowledge and experience related to establishing policy and the goals, tasks and actions needed to result in a wise and successful policy to work for the Piasa Palisades Group as a member of the Executive Committee.

Virginia Woulfe-Beile of Alton

Although a new member of the

Piasa Palisades Group, I have enjoyed an informal relationship with the Sierra Club for the last eight years. I am a life-long resident of Alton and have been employed by Alton Parks and Recreation for the past 25 years.

I am interested in serving on the ExCom to deepen my commitment and become proactive on issues I hold dear. I have always been in awe of — and had deep respect for — the natural world and have done my best to not live a disposable life. I have practiced the philosophy of the three “Rs” in my home and, among my family and friends, it just seems to make sense!

I am passionate about energy conservation, alternative and sustainable fuels, healthy rivers and green building practices. Wouldn't it be wonderful to get the City of Alton genuinely inspired by the Cool Cities initiative? What a springboard it would be for our community. I recognize and welcome the educational opportunities of this position and will use them to find my voice to educate others.

Phil Whitlock of East Alton

I joined the Sierra Club last year and am currently a substitute teacher. My background is in the areas of insurance and investments. I retired from business seven years ago and am interested in being of service to the Sierra Club and helping turn this country around.

I think the Sierra Club can do much for this country. We have an obligation to our children and grandchildren. We must go back to basics and show others what the Sierra Club has to offer. We are on the threshold of future growth, and we have a new president with vision. Let's lead the way.

CALENDAR

Tuesday, Dec. 2 Green workshop at Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey. Home-repair expert Chuck Herring will give a presentation called "Save Green While Going Green." He will provide quick, simple ways people can make homes and businesses more energy efficient. Hours are 7 to 9 p.m. The cost is \$15. Registration required. For more information, call Jessica Pascoe at (618) 468-4811.

Tuesday, Dec. 2 Illinois Environmental Protection Agency hearing.



Officials will listen to public comments and answer questions before making final decisions on

whether to issue Title V operating permits to U.S. Steel in Granite City and support facilities such as Beelman Trucking and Stein Mill Services. U.S. Steel is in large part responsible for the area's lack of compliance with federal air-quality standards for fine particles, which can cause lung and heart disease, asthma and premature death. Several support facilities have a history of permit violations. The hearing begins at 7 p.m. at Knights of Columbus Hall, 4225 Old Alton Road in Granite City. The deadline for comments is Jan. 2. If you need help, call the Sierra Club office at (618) 462-6802.

Thursday, Dec. 4 Workshop on conservation easements by University of Illinois Extension. Experts will discuss how people can keep their land as a working farm or protect woodlands that have been in their family for generations; as well as the obligations, costs and tax benefits of

conservation easements. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at 900 Hillsboro Ave. in Edwardsville. For more information, call (618) 650-7050.

Monday, Dec. 8 Piasa Palisades Group monthly meeting. Jack and Ginger McCall will be the guest speakers (see related article). Meet at 7:30 p.m. in the community room at First Unitarian Church, Third and Alby streets in Alton. For more information, call the Alton office at (618) 462-6802.

Friday, Dec. 12 Piasa Palisades Group monthly moonlight hike at The Nature Institute in Godfrey. Explore Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve. Meet at 7 p.m. at Talahi Lodge, 2213 S. Levis Lane. From Homer Adams Parkway in Alton (Illinois 3), turn right on West Delmar in Godfrey (also Illinois 3), left on Levis Lane and left on South Levis. Bring a friend! For more information, call Sandy Wood at (618) 463-0358.

Monday, Dec. 15 Piasa Palisades Group Executive Committee meeting. All members are welcome to attend! Meet at 7 p.m. at the Sierra Club office, 223 Market St. in Alton.

Saturday, Dec. 20 National Audubon Society Christmas bird count. Sierrans will again help with this annual survey of bird species. The society coordinates the collection, analysis and publication of information from throughout the United States and Canada. Piasa Palisades Group members will count in the Brussels area after meeting at 7:30 a.m. (yes, that early) at Sandy Wood's home, 1719

Central Ave. in Alton. To R.S.V.P. and get directions, call her at (618) 463-0358.

Saturday, Dec. 20 Winter solstice celebration at La Vista Ecological Learning Center in Godfrey. As this part of Earth tilts away from the sun, take time for reflection and "meaning-making." Celebrate light and darkness with poetry, ponderings, procession and the turning of the sun staff. Bring a seasonal dessert to share. Meet at 7 p.m. in the main house, 4300 Levis Lane. Registration and optional donation appreciated. For more information, call (618) 466-5004.

Thursday, Jan. 1 Annual New Year's Day hike in the Pere Marquette State Park area. A long-time

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Palisades Views

is a monthly publication for and about Sierra Club members.

To submit a newsletter item:
440 W. Union
Edwardsville, IL 62025
(618) 656-8132
palisadesviews@gmail.com

**DEADLINE FOR JANUARY:
SATURDAY, DEC. 20**



STAFF

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and paper from businesses that are too small to get recycling services from waste haulers.

We personally pick up twice a month at 35 businesses and collect it in three locations. The total for our first year was about 15 tons of recyclable materials diverted from landfills.

Program teaches about river

The Upper Mississippi River Edu-

cation Program was established last year by representatives of the Sierra Club, National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and Prairie Rivers Network.

Its goal is to introduce a comprehensive curriculum on the Upper Mississippi River to high schools along the river. Several schools, including Alton, Jerseyville, Edwardsville, Mascoutah and South-

western High School, are using curriculum materials developed by the governing committee.

The committee also organizes day-long learning events that supplement the curriculum. A morning session allows students to tour Melvin Price Locks and Dam/National Great Rivers Museum. In the afternoon, they travel to local venues, work in professional settings and participate in "river-issue-solving."

The latter is meant to mimic a "real-world" civic experience. Students from two schools work together to form consensus, utilizing requested input from experts during their critical-thinking process. Then they present solutions to the group.

CALENDAR

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tradition of the Piasa Palisades Group. A time to clear cobwebs and rethink our environmental priorities. Eat breakfast at a Grafton restaurant at 8 a.m. and hike until 1 p.m. with lunch on the trail. Return to town about 2 p.m. For more information, call the Alton office at (618) 462-6802.

Wednesday, Jan. 14 Knee-High Naturalists program at The Nature Institute in Godfrey for children ages 3-5 accompanied by an adult. January's theme is "Stories on the River." Participants will meet the literary characters Seymour Bluffs, an American bald eagle, and the legendary Piasa Bird. Morning session from 10 to 11 a.m. and afternoon session from 1 to 2 p.m. The \$5 cost

includes a nature hike, snack and craft to take home. Register by Jan. 9. For more information, call Patti Brown at (618) 466-9930.

Saturday, Jan. 17 Piasa Palisades Group winter gala. Our nicest social event of the year! Sierras will again gather at Mississippi Sanctuary in Godfrey. Meet at 6:30 p.m. Dress up or go casual. Live music. Bring an appetizer or dessert to share. If desired, bring favorite beverages and/or photographs (slides or digital images). For more information, call Bob Larson at (618) 462-0901.

Saturday, Jan. 17 Winterfires Coffeehouse at La Vista Ecological Learning Center in Godfrey. A magical night of sharing favorite or original poetry, stories and music. Ambience provided by a glowing fire in the rustic lodge. Mexican hot cocoa and fair-trade coffee will be served. Meet at the Earth flag near the main house, 4300 Levis Lane, for a nighttime walk to the lodge. Registration and optional donation appreciated. For more information, call (618) 466-5004.

RAINFOREST

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with a fundraising project. They have raised more than \$1,000 in just a few months, mostly through the sale of quality note cards based on photographs they took of animals and flowers.

Sixth-grader Merran Waller produced a 30-minute PowerPoint presentation called "Exploring the Children's Eternal Rainforest." She will show it at the Sierra Club meeting.

Piasa Palisades Group members will enjoy seeing the strong conservation spirit of these youngsters.

The McCalls are long-time Sierra Club members and avid birders through the National Audubon Society. They live in Edwardsville.

The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 8, in the community room of First Unitarian Church, Third and Alby streets in Alton. A question-and-answer session will follow the presentation.



JOIN THE FUN!

www.myspace.com/piasapalisades