

Palisades Views



Volume XXXVIII No. 2

February 2009

Learn more about wind energy at meeting

People in the United States finally seem ready to talk seriously about reducing dependence on fossil fuels and getting more energy from renewable sources such as sun and wind.

That's great news for Jeff Nemeth, who will be the guest speaker at the February meeting of the Piasa Palisades Group. He coordinates Illinois Wind, a program of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University in Moline.



The institute promotes improvement of the quality of life in rural areas by developing public-private

partnerships with local agencies concerning small-business development and community-development projects.

"As part of its work, the institute is committed to assisting rural residents and communities of Illinois in building knowledge of wind power," according to its Web site. "This knowledge will lead to sound decision-making regarding the development of wind energy and facilitate development where it is feasible to do so."

Nemeth will speak about the development of wind sites throughout Illinois to produce electrical power on small and large scales.

The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 9, in the community room of First Unitarian Church, Third and Alby streets in Alton.

Please join us! Meetings are a great way to get to know other Sierra Club members. For more information, call the Alton office at (618) 462-6802.

New ExCom takes office

Four people were elected or re-elected to the Piasa Palisades Group Executive Committee last month, including new members Virginia Woulfe-Beile, Joe Michlitsch and Laura Asher and incumbent Gayle Borman. They will serve two-year terms.

Positions on the 2009 committee are: Wayne Politsch, chair; Dave Gocken, vice chair/programs; Laura Asher, secretary; Gayle Borman, membership; Everett Loy, political action; Jim Bensman, outings/chapter; Virginia Woulfe-Beile, conservation; Sandy Wood, member/personnel; and Joe Michlitsch, member.

Thanks to all for your willingness to serve.

Edwardsville is getting "cooler"

Edwardsville became a "Cool City" last month, when Mayor Gary Niebur signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

The agreement is part of a national Sierra Club initiative. Mayors pledge their cities will help reduce global warming by making buildings and vehicles more energy efficient and taking other steps to protect the environment.

The Jan. 22 signing at Edwardsville City Hall garnered positive media coverage for the Piasa Palisades Group. Newspapers ran photos that included Executive Committee Vice

Chair Dave Gocken, an Edwardsville resident, and Three Rivers Staff Person Christine Favilla.

"This is much more than signing a piece of paper," Niebur was quoted as saying in the Belleville News-Democrat. "This is a renewed commitment this city is making."

The mayor pointed out Edwardsville was one of the first metro-east cities to provide curbside recycling and ban open burning. More recently, officials have installed energy efficient lighting and windows

See COOLER/page 4

Published by the Piasa Palisades Group of the Sierra Club.
Serving the Southwestern Illinois counties of
Bond, Calhoun, Fayette, Greene, Jersey, Macoupin, Madison and Montgomery.

Larson named “Sierran of the Year” for 2008

Bob Larson has fallen out of a few canoes, but for most of the past 15 years, he’s been a steady hand on the tiller of the Piasa Palisades Group Executive Committee.

The Alton attorney has served as chair, vice chair, program coordinator, secretary, staff supervisor and chapter delegate since he was first elected in 1993. He has volunteered on countless projects.

“He’s a street-smart man and knows how organizations work,” said long-time Sierran Dick Worthen.

“Bob just makes things go!” added Hospitality Coordinator Audrey Wiseman of Alton..

Last month, Larson was named 2008 “Sierran of the Year” at the

group’s annual winter gala at The Nature Institute in Godfrey.

ExCom member Gayle Borman presented him with a glass world globe on a wooden pedestal. She described him as well-versed in listening, analyzing, writing, negotiating and communicating, among his many skills.

“His generosity and love of nature is what motivated him to share these personal gifts with our community at Piasa Palisades,” Borman said.

Larson also is a board member for the Godfrey-based James and Aune Nelson Foundation, which provides funding for a wide range of environmental causes. Last year, a \$5,000 donation allowed Piasa Palisades to buy a badly needed computer, refrigerator, copier/fax machine and camera.

Larson isn’t afraid to get his hands dirty, either. He has planted trees at the annual John Muir birthday party and helped with renovations in the Alton office — plastering holes, repairing lights and painting walls.

“For many years, he has tirelessly and gallantly volunteered with organizing our annual Beaver Dam picnic, taking care of shelter, food and entertainment, even bringing his family heirloom canoe to share with all,” Borman said.

“He’s been a friend to everyone,” added ExCom member Sandy Wood.

Larson, 64, decided not to run for ExCom re-election in December. He wants to spend more time exploring the natural areas he has helped to protect. But he promises to stay involved in group activities.

“I think we need new ideas and

fresh energy (on the ExCom),” he said.

Larson earned a philosophy degree at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a law degree at the University of Illinois College of Law. He will begin his 40th year as an attorney in private practice in June.

Larson became involved with the Piasa Palisades Group in the early 1990s, after a high-school teacher gave his son, Joshua, now 33, a Sierra Club membership.

“My first activity was helping to sell lemonade at the V.P. Fair in St. Louis,” Larson said. “I did it because (late Treasurer) Louise Freeman wouldn’t take ‘no’ for an answer. I met lots of wonderful Sierrans, and that meant as much as anything in getting me active. I liked the people.”



Volunteers needed for road clean-up

The Illinois Adopt-a-Highway program provides opportunities for all kinds of organizations to help beautify their communities. It makes particular sense for environmentalists to be involved.

The Piasa Palisades Group is responsible for the Great River Road between Clifton Terrace and Stanka Lane in Godfrey. Volunteers are needed to collect litter on Saturday, Feb. 28, the first of four clean-ups planned this year.

Meet at 9 a.m. in the Clifton Terrace lower parking lot. Wear close-toed shoes and warm layers of clothing. Bring water bottles. We’ll provide bags, gloves and safety vests. For more information, call Christine Favilla at (618) 462-6802.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I would like to say “thank you very much” to everyone who made the Piasa Palisades Group Winter Gala so special.

For those interested in my Yip-Yip recipe, here it is:

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 8-ounce can of tomato sauce
- ¼ cup ketchup
- 1 tbsp. brown sugar
- 1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tbsp. cider vinegar
- 1 tsp. dry mustard
- Salt and pepper to taste

Brown the ground beef then add all the other ingredients and simmer a half hour.

Bob Larson
Alton

CALENDAR

Saturday, Feb. 7 Wilderness conference.

Sierrans are invited to attend Wild Things: A Chicago Wilderness Conference for People & Nature, sponsored by the Volunteer Stewardship Network, Audubon Chicago Region and Chicago Wilderness. Large and small group sessions led by experts with real-life experience in everything from the nitty gritty of habitat management, botany and zoology to advocacy, education, art and other culture, history and backyard and neighborhood ecology. The keynote speaker is Doug Ladd, director of conservation science in The Nature Conservancy's Missouri



Field Office. For anyone who cares about the environment or is interested in nature, gardening, conservation or restoration with technical and interactive components. Registration cost is \$35 (\$15 for students). For more information, visit the Web site at www/habitatproject.org, send an e-mail to chicagowildthings@yahoo.com or call (847) 328-3910, ext. 21.

Sunday, Feb. 8 Piasa Palisades Group monthly moonlight hike

at The Nature Institute in Godfrey (a day early because of the Feb. 9 meeting). 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, Feb. 9 Composting symposium.

Sierrans are invited to attend Composting Symposium: Vermicul-

ture and Beyond in Springfield, sponsored by the Illinois Stewardship Alliance, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department of Agriculture and Springfield Division of Waste and Recycling. Learn about turning kitchen scraps and other organic materials into inexpensive fertilizer while minimizing landfill waste. Topics range from back-yard composting for beginners to large-scale projects for farms or municipalities. Hours are 12:30 to 5 p.m. at Northfield Suites Conference Center. The registration fee is \$30. Pay an additional \$25 for supplies and build your own bin (BYOB) from 5 to 6 p.m. To register, visit the Web site at www.ilstewards.org. For more information, call (217) 498-9707.

ture and Beyond in Springfield, sponsored by the Illinois Stewardship Alliance, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department of Agriculture and Springfield Division of Waste and Recycling. Learn about turning kitchen scraps and other organic materials into inexpensive fertilizer while minimizing landfill waste. Topics range from back-yard composting for beginners to large-scale projects for farms or municipalities. Hours are 12:30 to 5 p.m. at Northfield Suites Conference Center. The registration fee is \$30. Pay an additional \$25 for supplies and build your own bin (BYOB) from 5 to 6 p.m. To register, visit the Web site at www.ilstewards.org. For more information, call (217) 498-9707.

Monday, Feb. 9 Piasa Palisades Group monthly meeting.

Jeff Nemeth of Illinois Wind will be the guest speaker (see related article). Meet at 7:30 p.m. in the community room of First Unitarian Church, Third and Alby streets in Alton. For more information, call Christine Favilla at (618) 462-6802.

Wednesday, Feb. 11 Knee-High Naturalists program

at The Nature Institute in Godfrey for children ages 3-5 accompanied by an adult. February's theme is "Knock, Knock, Anyone Home?" Participants will learn about animal habitats and find some crafty dwellings in the woods. Morning session from 10 to 11, and afternoon session from 1 to 2. The \$5 cost includes a nature hike, snack and a craft to take home. Register by Friday, Feb.

6. For more information, call Patti Brown at (618) 466-9930.

Monday, Feb. 16 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, Feb. 28 Illinois Adopt-a-Highway clean-up.

Volunteers are needed to pick up litter along the Piasa Palisades Group's section of the Great River Road, from Clifton Terrace to Stanka Lane in Godfrey (see related notice). Meet at 9 a.m. in the Clifton Terrace lower parking lot. Wear close-toed shoes and warm layers of clothing. Bring water bottles. Bags, gloves and safety vests provided. For more information, call (618) 462-6802.

See CALENDAR/page 4

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 MARCH:
SATURDAY, FEB. 21



ExCom member gives office update

By Sandy Wood
ExCom member

Renovation of the Sierra Club's Alton office is nearly complete. It looks better!

The arrangement of furniture "finds" is quite professional. A bank of filing cabinets will allow neat, labeled storage. New carpet tiles are a major improvement. Walls have been painted.

There still is more work to be done to organize materials for workshops and displays and to store important historical records.

We owe a particular "thank you" to Jeannie Cousley for helpful and practical advice. We dared to ask an

artist/decorator what to do with our collection of "hand-me-arounds." It was a fun and interesting process.

Hopefully, the office is a lot more comfortable place for Staff Person Christine Favilla to work and for the Piasa Palisades Group Executive Committee and other committees and guests to meet.

Thanks also to members who volunteered as painters, carpenters, carpet layers, "finders" and sorters: Wayne Politsch, Bob Larson, Gayle Borman, Sandy Wood, Dave Gocken, John Becker, Zak Krug and Favilla.

more information, call (618) 466-9930.

Monday, March 2 Voluntary Simplicity Discussion Course at La Vista Ecological Learning Center in Godfrey. First in a five-week series that continues on March 9, 16, 23 and 30. Join this stimulating and important discussion. Find motivation to examine and transform your personal values and habits, accept responsibility for the Earth and act on that commitment. Hours are 7 to 8:30 p.m. at 4300 Levis Lane. The discussion guidebook costs \$20. To register, call (618) 466-5004.

Saturday, March 7 Spring prairie burn at Heartland Prairie at Gordon Moore Park in Alton. Volunteers are needed to assist The Nature Institute. In case of rain or high winds, the project will be postponed until March 14. For more information, call (618) 466-9930.

COOLER

Continued from page 1

and purchased a hybrid vehicle for the parks and recreation department.

"There's a definite impetus toward a cleaner, brighter future," Favilla was quoted as saying.

Edwardsville joins Alton as the metro-east's second Cool City. More than 900 mayors have signed the agreement nationwide.

Niebur is forming a citizens committee that will make recommendations on how Edwardsville can become "greener." Gocken will serve on that committee.

The catchy slogan for the Cool Cities program is "Solving Global Warming One City at a Time." For more information, visit the Web site at <http://www.coolcities.us/>.

CALENDAR

Continued from page 4

Saturday, Feb. 28 Orienteering Ecology Scavenger Hunt at The Nature Institute in Godfrey for children in third through sixth grades. Learn how to read a map and use a compass and global-positioning-system receiver. Follow point-to-point instructions to find laminated cards hidden in the woods. Prizes awarded for most cards found and best time. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Hours are 9 to 11 am. Meet at Talahi Lodge. The cost is \$5 per child. Great for Boy Scout or Girl Scout troops! Registration required by Friday, Feb. 20. For

Environmental tip of the month

By Zak Krug
Intern

When it starts getting cooler outside, people head for the thermostat to warm up inside. They raise temperatures in their houses to "comfortable" levels.

But remember, every time you turn that knob, you also raise your electric or gas bill.

With today's high energy costs, maybe it's time to rethink your heating habits. There are plenty of ways to stay comfortable without using so much electricity or gas.

Wear a sweater or long shirt to keep warmer. Also, turn down the thermostat if you're going to be away for the evening.



JOIN THE FUN!

www.myspace.com/piasapalisades