

Palisades Views



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November 2009

Candidates sought for ExCom election

**By Laura Asher
ExCom member**

Do you have fresh ideas for the Piasa Palisades Group? Are you passionate about making “green” communities a reality and not just a buzzword? Would you like to work behind the scenes to determine the direction of our organization?

If so, please consider contributing your talents to the group’s Executive Committee (ExCom).

A nominating committee is seeking enthusiastic members to run in the December election. Five candidates will be elected to two-year terms.

The ExCom meets monthly to shape policies and plan events for our local group. Members take action on various issues and coordinate with others to further environmental causes.

Volunteering with the ExCom is an opportunity to both learn about and contribute to the intricacies of the Sierra Club.

Members can suggest nominees by contacting Laura Asher by e-mail at lasher@sbcglobal.net or Virginia Woulfe-Beile by telephone at (618) 465-1842. Self nominations are welcome.

Club member to report on Kentucky food conference

Sierran Cathy Dondanville will speak at the November meeting of the Piasa Palisades Group. She’ll report on the 10th annual Healthy Foods, Local Farms Conference on Nov. 7 at University of Louisville at Louisville, Ky.

The conference is sponsored by the Sierra Club’s Greater Louisville Group. This year’s theme is “Growing Community Through Food.”

The impressive line-up of speakers includes Wendell Berry, author, farmer and academic, cultural and

economic critic; Sam Levin, co-founder of Project Sprout; Josh Viertel, president of Slow Food U.S.A.; Nicolette Hahn Niman, author of “Righteous Porkchop”; Laura Krebsbach, Sierra Club organizer; Sara Fritshner, food writer; and Augusta Brown Holland, executive producer of “The Green Building” and “Flow: For Love of Water.”

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

Green Gift Bazaar moves to new location in downtown Alton

The Piasa Palisades Group will host the 7th Annual Green Gift Bazaar in a new location, Riverbender.



com Community Center in Alton. It’s the perfect opportunity to buy environmentally friendly Christmas gifts.

Hours are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 12.

Vendor booth spaces still are available. If you’re interested in

selling your eco-friendly wares or services, please contact Christine Favilla at cfavilla10@sbcglobal.net by Dec. 7.

The event is being expanded to include an educational component — a free workshop called “How to Green Your Holiday Get-Together” — at noon and 2 p.m. in a separate room. No registration is necessary.

Riverbender.com Community Center is at 200 W. Third St. in downtown Alton. For more information, call (618) 462-6802.

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

Everyone pitched in to make weekend a success

By Carol Klinger
Group member

Piasa Palisades Group members and friends attended the annual Weekend in the Woods retreat Sept. 25-27 at Pere Marquette State Park, west of Grafton. We had about 45 people, ranging from senior citizens to young children, teenagers and college students.

Our base was a secluded Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp known as Camp Ouatoga. Its large dining hall is surrounded by cabins, some tiny with only four beds; others larger with fireplaces.

We were on our own for Friday night's meal. Several of us opted for the Fin Inn in Grafton, where you can watch fish swim in tanks built into the walls.

Back at camp, wet weather prohibited our usual campfire activities. But the evening included great companionship and conversation with some of the very best kind of people I know.

The weather continued to threaten Saturday, but that was no reason to cancel hikes! In the morning, we went to one of my favorite areas -- Little Giant City -- which is beautiful and naturally diverse. I would have never known about it if not for the



Sierrans gathered in the Camp Ouatoga dining hall include, clockwise from lower left, Stephanie Freeman, Bob Freeman, Rich Keating, Jim Bensman, Mariana Solaris, Gayle Borman, Wayne Politsch and Jennifer Politsch.

Sierra Club.

The rock formations are reminiscent of Giant City State Park in Shawnee National Forest in Southern Illinois, surrounded by a mixture of old-growth and newer forest.

The best part of the hike was listening to Rich Keating provide detailed descriptions of trees and

other plants, rocks and -- my favorite -- fungi. I've come to better appreciate the richness of natural areas since joining the Sierra Club and being exposed to such a wealth of knowledge and wonder.

Saturday-afternoon activities included a hike to the "lost cabin" and canoeing on backwater lakes along the Illinois River.

Saturday night's dinner is always the weekend's climax. I'm amazed at the loving hands that pull it all together, and this year was the best yet. We tried to buy as much organic and locally produced food as possible. Some items even came from members' gardens.

Everyone contributed to planning and preparation, and being involved is a big part of the fun. I must say, I particularly enjoyed the homemade pies: apple, peach, berry and banana.



Dave Gocken washes dishes while Cindy Phegley dries.



Carol and Mandy Klinger cook breakfast on the old gas stove.

See WEEKEND/page 4

CALENDAR

Monday, Nov. 2 Piasa Palisades Group monthly moonlight hike at The Nature Institute in Godfrey. Explore Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve by the light of the full moon. 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.



Saturday, Nov. 7 Sowing and Stomping at the Prairie. The Nature Institute is seeking volunteers to broadcast seed over a two-acre extension of the Heartland Prairie, across Illinois 140 from Gordon Moore Park in Alton. Starting time is 9:30 a.m. For more information, call Nan Adams at (618) 655-0170.

Saturday, Nov. 7 Monthly Walkabout at The Nature Institute in Godfrey. November's theme is "Going Dormant." Geared toward adults with moderate to difficult hiking. Hours are 9 a.m. to noon. Meet at Talahi Lodge. Wear suitable clothing for weather and walking. Free; donations accepted. For more information, call (618) 466-9930.

Monday, Nov. 9 Piasa Palisades Group monthly meeting. Sierran Cathy Dondanville will report on the 10th Annual Healthy Foods, Local Farms Conference at University of Louisville (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 the Sierra Club office at (618) 462-6802.

Saturday, Nov. 14 Discovery Garden maintenance at LaVista Park in Godfrey. The public is invited to join forces with Lowe's, the Community Cultivators, Village of Godfrey, Sierra Club and Annie's Inc. to help get the children's organic garden ready for winter. Rebuild a deer- and rabbit-proof fence, conduct a small native-prairie burn and plant perennials along a handicapped-accessible walkway. Meet at 9 a.m. Wear long pants and closed-toe shoes and be ready for fun! Annie's will provide organic snacks. La Vista is at 2124 W. Delmar Ave.

Monday, Nov. 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.

Wednesday, Nov. 18 Knee-High Naturalists program at The Nature Institute in Godfrey for children ages 3 to 5 accompanied by an adult. November's theme is "Good Vibrations." 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. To make reservations, call Patti Brown at (618) 466-9930.

Friday, Nov. 27 Stargazing at the Prairie. The Nature Institute is inviting the public to join astronomy

expert Steve Sands at the Heartland Prairie, across Illinois 140 from Gordon Moore Park in Alton. He'll bring his monstrous telescope. Meet at 6 p.m. (rain date is Nov. 28). Hot drinks and snacks provided. For more information, call Nan or Neil Adams at (618) 655-0170.

Wednesday, Dec. 2 Piasa Palisades Group monthly moonlight hike at The Nature Institute in Godfrey. Explore Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve by the light of the full moon. 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.

Palisades Views

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(618) 656-8132
palisadesviews@gmail.com

**DEADLINE FOR DECEMBER:
SATURDAY, NOV. 28**



Volunteers needed to plant trees in Calhoun

Help the Sierra Club make a big impact by planting 1,000 trees near the Brussels Ferry in Calhoun County on Nov. 4, 7 and 8. Volunteers will start at 9 a.m. each day. Wear gloves, outdoor clothing and leather or rubber boots. If possible, bring a shovel!

From Illinois 100, cross the Illinois River on the ferry and continue about 3 miles toward Brussels. The tree-planting area is on the right side of the highway, directly across from the Pohlman Slough sign.

R.S.V.P. to cfavilla10@sbcglobal.net with dates and times available and number of volunteers. Wet weather could change plans or affect working conditions.

IN SYMPATHY

Our deepest condolences go out to the Freeman family after the death of Jeff Freeman. His parents, Bob Freeman of Godfrey and the late Louise Freeman, co-founded the Piasa Palisades Group in 1972.

Jeff Freeman, 51, of Bar Harbor, Maine, died Oct. 14.

"He was an accomplished artist, a world traveler and an ardent fly fisherman who could catch fish from a rock pile," according to an obituary in The Durango Herald. (Freeman formerly lived in Durango, Colo.)

His work included watercolor caricatures, aluminum furniture with glass or polished-concrete accents and hypertufa pots he originally made for his wife Beth Swazey's gardening business.

Coalition stops floodway project

By George Sorvalis
Corps Reform Network

The Corps Reform Network and member organizations (Missouri Coalition for the Environment, National Wildlife Federation, American Bottom Conservancy, the Piasa Palisades and Shawnee groups of the Sierra Club) and others successfully worked for removal of two anti-environmental riders from the Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Bill (H.R. 3183) that would have kept on life support the

controversial and environmentally damaging St. John's Bayou/New Madrid Floodway project in New Madrid County, Mo.

The U.S. District Court halted the project in September of 2007 because of its major environmental impacts on Mississippi River fisheries and wildlife and its failure to comply with the Clean Water Act and National Environmental Policy Act. The court order also required the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to deconstruct project features it had already put in place and restore the site to its natural condition. The riders, inserted by U.S. Sen. Kit Bond (R-Mo.), sought to thwart the order by rescinding the deconstruction money.

With the riders now gone from the Conference Report to H.R. 3183, the Corps will have the funding it needs to complete restoration of the project site. The Corps Reform Network also worked with local officials whose towns would have been exposed to greater flooding risks to save 75,000 acres of rare backwater fish and wildlife habitat that would have been damaged or eliminated by the project.

WEEKEND —

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(OK, that last fruit isn't quite local.)

Leftovers prompted some people, especially the college boys, to return to the kitchen several times later that night!

On Saturday evening, the sky cleared up perfectly for stargazing with the largest personal telescope I have ever seen. Piasa Palisades Group member and astronomy expert Steve Sands treated us to magnified views of Jupiter, the moon and several constellations. A Pere Marquette ranger even stopped to look!

As always, I had a wonderful weekend. This event is just one reason I treasure being a Sierra Club member. Not only do I learn something new each year; I get to share the experience with the most amazing people I've ever met.

Plus, I know I am part of an organization that is fighting every day to preserve the wilderness for others for many generations to come.

Please consider joining us on a Sierra Club outing. We can use your help, we would enjoy your great company, and we think you'd have fun, too!



7th Annual
Green Gift Bazaar
No Entry fee to shop

Organic Snacks and drinks
Free Kids' craft to take home

Sat., December 12
10am - 8pm
200 W. 3rd St- Alton
RiverBender Community Center

618-462-6802
For info or to verify

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