



Friends of Thorn Creek Woods

Thorn Creek News

Late Winter 2015



Earth Day Celebration of a Life: Jon Mendelson and Thorn Creek Woods Saturday, April 25 Noon - 4 p.m.

On this Earth Day, the legacy of Jon Mendelson, the long time GSU professor, field ecologist and chair of Thorn Creek's Management Commission who died last November, will be honored. A dedicated champion of open space, and a force of nature in his own right, he worked tirelessly to acquire land for Thorn Creek Woods, and to study and protect local watersheds. Jon taught courses in ecology to generations of GSU students and was caretaker for the Preserve's historic farm.

Join us to celebrate Jon's life with remembrances by family, colleagues and friends, displays highlighting his work in the woods, photographs, music and a hike to explore the habitat of the salamanders, frogs and toads he studied. Mendelson's drawings, his crafted gourd mobiles, and his Thorn Creek Woods T-shirt design, with their whimsical takes on natural flora and fauna, will be on view.

Maps and photos from the many ecological field studies he conducted in these woods, and the nature essays that graced the pages of Thorn Creek News for many years will be displayed. A new trail bench along the trail he walked countless times will be dedicated to his memory

Thorn Creek Nature Center, 247 Monee Road, Park Forest, IL 60466.
For information: 708-747-6320; thorn_creek@att.net; tewoods.org



What is Thorn Creek Nature Center's JEC program?

“JEC” stands for the Junior Ecologists Club a group of young people ages 9-12 who meet one Saturday afternoon each month at Thorn Creek Nature Center for fun-filled activities. Junior Ecologists explore the woods, track seasonal changes and discover woodland plants and animals. They perform ecology studies and create artwork based on their experiences in the preserve. Last year JEC helped with Woodland Carols Annual Food Drive & the Clean-Up Days.



Logo by JEC member
Tava Oosterbaan

2014 Reflections

Last winter with the thick snow cover JEC members spotted many animal tracks. Deer, squirrel, raccoon, coyote, mink and mouse were observed. Track drawings were created for the JEC bulletin board on display in the nature center. Bingo games and the bird viewing window were winter favorites to learn birds and practice use of binoculars. We heard woodpeckers hammering and their squawky calls.

As the snow melted we heard frogs on our hikes. Junior Ecologists matched the song to the western chorus frog's call. These frogs sing loudly day and night, but aren't visible as they conceal themselves in the pond vegetation. On a late spring hike it fell quiet near the shallow ponds. Was the calling over? Then we witnessed the tiniest froglet emerging from Salamander Pond, perhaps its first time out of water. We gazed in silence and saw there was a bit of a tadpole tail left on the tiny frog as it climbed to shore. We were in awe!

Summer brought insects, students found where insects/invertebrates live in the woods and their roles. (i.e. tiger beetle- fast hunter, click beetle- clicks to escape a scavenger, roly poly- a decomposer shreds dead leaves to feed).

During autumn the club got to know the common oak, hickory, and walnut trees. They learned the leaves, nuts and habitats of each tree and how the landscape of TCW provides the ideal ecosystem for these trees to grow and thrive.

Join us for the 2015 JEC cycle of seasons:

March 7 - Master Birder Sue Zelek leads a bird hike.

April 4 - Seed Travel Learn at least four ways that seeds travel and hold a seed relay race.

May 2 - Wildflowers Learn the parts of a flower and why they are so important and make our own flash cards to identify the common wildflowers of TCWNP

June 6 - Central Park Wetland Hike - Field trip to the Central Park Wetlands in Park Forest.

July 11 - Beekeeper Marge Trocki displays her honeybees and honey!

August 1 - The Importance of Insects

August - We'll view live hummingbirds at the Audubon's Hummingbird Festival.

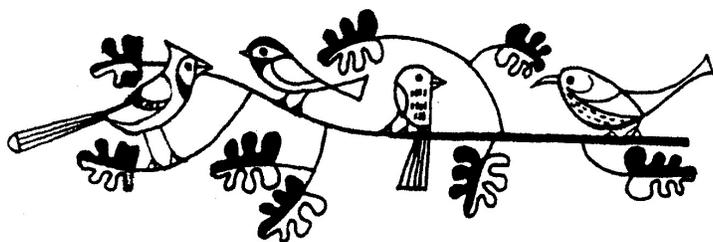
For more information on JEC contact Naturalist April Richards at Thorn Creek Nature Center: 708-747-6320 and thorn_creek@att.net. Call or email to register 2 days before each program day.

Late breaking news:

April was interviewed for an ABC Liveshot that appeared Saturday, February 7. You can watch this wonderful interview highlighting our Junior Ecologists Club on the ABC website:

<http://abc7chicago.com/family/junior-ecology-club-at-the-thorn-creek-nature-center/507480/>

Please share this link on your Facebook and Twitter pages. Also you can “like” ABC 7 Chicago and follow them on Twitter @abc7chicago!



New Preserve Bird List

Master birder Sue Zelek has been compiling a bird list for the preserve—the first new bird survey in many years for Thorn Creek Woods.

Check out Sue's current Bird Survey List posted in the nature center.

See our Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve map for locations of some interesting species that Sue has observed in the last year.

SHARE YOUR OBSERVATIONS OF BIRDS—OR CRITTERS OR PLANTS—

Let us know what birds (and other critters and plants) that you observe in the woods this year.

Tell us what you observed and where in the preserve.

How?

Leave a note or the blue Trail Watcher sheet in the Drop Box at the front door to nature center.

Or email us at thorn_creek@att.net.

Or stop in the nature center Friday-Sunday from noon to 4 p.m.

Friends Annual Meeting November 2, 2014

At our Friends Annual Meeting, President Jon Mendelson spoke of the Friends organization. "The early years were very exciting, even glamorous with all the rabble-rousing and fighting developers. And now Friends has a vigor that rivals that earlier time. Volunteers do so much for the programs and the preserve. FTW is just as vital but not always as glamorous."

He spoke of the preserve and nature center, saying "this is not a cookie-cutter nature center. It is unique and comes from the work and minds of the volunteers." In urging participation, Jon noted that "over the years Friends members have shown a charming reluctance to be officers..they like to work cooperatively."

We elected the slate of officers and two individuals afterward volunteered for board positions!

The new Bylaws were distributed with thanks to member Mary Lubertozzi. Jon felt that working on the bylaws this year focused our attention on broadening the scope of how volunteers can help.

Judy Dolan Mendelson presented a slide show on the History of the Preservation the Thorn Creek Woods.

The Board now is composed of:

Sue Zelek-*Vice President*

Dan Moore- *Treasurer*

Judy Dolan Mendelson-*Recording Secretary*

Diane Kozlowski-*Director-Membership Coordinator*

Carolyn Gann-*Director-Assistant Secretary*

Alice Hanes-*Director at large*

Friends Board meets the 4th Wednesday of each month at noon at the nature center. Come join us. For info call the nature center 708-747-6320.



Thorn Creek Preservation Association meeting 1982

Bird Seed

When you buy bird seed or suet for your backyard feeders, get an extra for the nature center.

Bring it Friday-Sunday noon to 4 pm and relax with a cup of coffee or tea at our bird viewing corner.

Look in our references and wonderful bird books to identify and learn more about these winged creatures.



Wednesday Walker Wonders

January 2015

"You never know what you might find on a morning walk in Thorn Creek Woods". Our Wednesday Morning Walkers take this motto in stride. Lately people are on the lookout for wild turkey, since we recently sighted some 5" long prints in the snow and then tracked a couple of foraging toms under the pines along the southern ridgeline of the Woodland Trail.

This week, with the boon of a fresh dusting of snow, we spot a resident doe and fawn foursome by the long boardwalk, as well as plenty of signs of raccoon and opossum, squirrel, and more deer along the iced-over creekbed (used by woodland dwellers as a "critter highway")! As red-bellied woodpeckers chide us, we note a line of small canid tracks crossing a patch of ice--oops, one of the feet slipped, wiping away a small arc of snow--so much for "perfect" gait in this possibly vulpine traveller!

Farther along the trail we notice some bounding tracks with four or maybe five toes--it's often hard to tell when a creature moves swiftly--small enough to be a mink, but too large for an ermine. Mounds of oak leaves are shoved aside to reveal concave depressions in the dark soil-- individual-serving acorn larders--the squirrel equivalent of raiding the fridge.

As the winter light bathes shaggy hickories, cowl-draped nuthatches comment with their nasal-toned "chinks" as they topsy-turvy down the east facing trunks, gleaning sleepy yet sun-duped insects from between the long fringes of bark. We also admire some orange boles arranged up and down a nearby dead tree.

Earlier on our walk we found a stump festooned with small brown buttons--rows of tiny puffball mushrooms, looking like nothing so much as Great Aunt May's hand-knit brown boucle sweater. Touch the side of the fungus and a thin finger of brown spores tests the crisp air.

Speaking of fungi, turkey wing shelf fungi create mini snow-capped awnings for sheltering in-quelined arthropods. During previous winter hikes, between snowfalls, we've found other vegetative fowl: orange layers of chicken-of-the-woods, bursting from tree trunks with its brightly-gloved hands, and the feathery, more demure brown and grey hen-of-the-woods, looking for all the world as if someone dropped the living room dust mop along the mossy base of an oak tree.

Delicate mouse trails enlase snowy clefts on tree trunks, and the tunneled networks of other small rodents branch beneath crusts of ice.

Squirrel and rabbit tracks tamp down the snow across fallen logs. Follow the trail and you may note another line of canid tracks looping from across the way--evidence of a struggle, a bloody patch of snow, and only one set of tracks continuing past the disturbance...

On overcast days we've even startled barred owls from their hunting roosts in trees, and once found feather and talon marks amongst red spatter holes in snow, where a hapless rodent became an owl's courting gift to its mate.

Along with the wild turkey, we always keep eyes and ears out for pileated woodpeckers. Their handiwork is most evident amongst the pines, with trademark rectangular excavations chipped along upper trunks. We listen for this largest extant native woodpecker's characteristic "wukwuk" calls.

We also are eager to find other signs of wild canids--fox and coyote--in our woods: territorial spoor marks on fallen logs and stumps, twisted scat, and tracks of single-lined registered gait. What do you know, one morning we left the snow dusted parking lot only to find a line of dainty oval paw prints edging our sidewalk, headed south, crossing the nature center building's own threshold!

You never do know what you will find walking along Thorn Creek woods, or exactly where you'll find it!

We walk from 9 a.m.-11 a.m. most Wednesdays--come wonder along with us!

-Assistant Naturalist, Ingrid Krizan



Garlic Fest 2014

We raised \$3783!- our third best income ever...

Even with cold weather, snow in the morning and fewer attendees!!

-About 200 visitors attended with 102 cars paying \$510 admission.

-Sold and used over 1200 bulbs - making \$2376.

-We had a great variety of baked goods with and without garlic making \$162.

-Braiding took in \$180 making about 16 braids and selling pre-made braids and wreaths.

The Raffle was huge with \$123!

-Sold T-shirts, garlic roasters, keepers and gardening books for \$208.

-Donations brought in \$224.

Many, many friends of Thorn Creek Woods made this event possible and successful

* Musician Anna Stange, Maureen Chappell of The Herb Basket, Emily Thiel with PoopyDoo Farm compost

*Our Garlic Gurus —Jon Mendelson & Judy Mendelson

*Items for the fabulous raffle baskets were donated and arranged by: Penny Chamberlain, Mary Ann Transon, Lisa Horvath, Barb Stephens, Jeff McGrain, Mary Ann McLean, Joan Crabbe, Helen Funk.?

*Volunteers at the telephone, the Information table, Refreshment table, Raffle table, T-Shirt table, Garlic & Gardening stuff tables: Penny Chamberlain, April Richards, Sue Zelek, Barb Stephens, Carolyn Gann, Elaine Davis, Susan Inman, Jean Miller, Linda Gattis, Milley Just, Cody Vann, Marissa Mantel, Kristi Bauske, Nicole Novak

*Many people roasted garlic and baked goodies-many with garlic- including Penny Chamberlain, Marva King, , Marcy Marzuki, Ian Murphy, Barb Stephens,, Joyce Sligar.

*Claudia Mendelson provided sandwiches and chips and fruit for our volunteers and Paul Zelek brought thermoses of hot chocolate and coffee and delivered these to our volunteers

*The parking people-directing traffic, crossing guards, directing car parking. They were especially marvelous this year dealing with soggy roadway and switching parking to the church: Dave Mauger, Dan Moore, Tom Gallagher, Daniel Hunt, Jim Pisani, Cody Vann

*Garlic Marketplace sellers Mary Ann Transon & Claudia Mendelson

*Set up helpers were Dan Moore, Daniel Hunt, Jim Pisani, Lisa Horvath, Cody Vann, Marcy Marzuki, Judy Dolan Mendelson, Barb Stephens, Diane Kozlowski, April Richards.

*Special thank you to Maureen Chappell for herbs and plants for braids, and her extra donation for the day!

*This year featured chef Tim Chappell demonstrating garlic preparation with the able assistance of Mary Hellings, Philo Z, Allison McCray and Ian Murphy. Visitors loved sampling the garlic treats!

*Garlic Braiding was in the able hands of Marva King, Ingrid Krizan and Diane Kozlowski

*Garlic and organic gardening books and garlic stuff were donated by Judy Mendelson and Marcy Marzuki

*Forest Preserve District of Will County provided mowing. Park Forest delivered tables

*Friends of Thorn Creek Woods purchased food items & miscellaneous supplies for the fest.

*Judy and Jon Mendelson donated all the garlic!

*August Garlic Cleaners included: Mary Ann Transon, Kristi Bauske, Penny Chamberlain, Leo & Lois Arms, Barb Stephens, Judy Dolan Mendelson, Dan Moore, Milley Just, Mary Hellings, Mary Ann Cieselski, Jeri Setzke, Nicole and Jeanine Novak, Marva King, and others

*September Clean Up Day helpers especially Cub Scout troop. Open Hours workers helped prepare the nature center. And Penny Chamberlain, Diane Kozlowski, Sue Zelek, Ingrid Krizan, April Richards, Ingrid Krizan.

*Photographer for the day - Mike O'Neal

*New Community Church for graciously providing parking.

Thanks to you all

Thorn Creek Woods

247 Monee Rd, Park Forest

708-747-6320

Thorn_creek@att.net

Nature Center open Friday-

Sunday, noon to 4 pm

Trails Open Dawn to Dusk

Wednesday Morning Walkers Wednesdays
9-10:30 am
Year round

Junior Ecologists Club Saturdays March 7,
April 4,
May 2
Noon- 3 pm

Make a Gourd Birdhouse Sunday
March 1
1-2 or
2:30-3:30 pm
\$10/house

"Chili" Evening Hike Thursday
March 5
5:30-8 p.m.
\$5; All ages

Spring Clean Up Sunday
March 15
Noon-4 pm

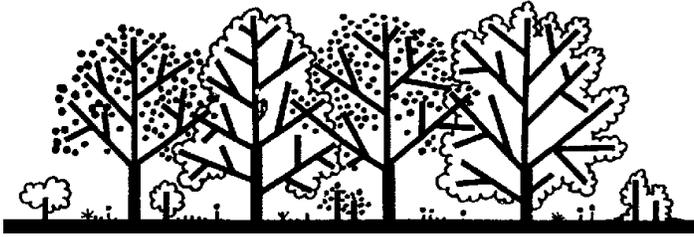
Woods Music Friday
March 17
7 p.m.
\$10/person

March Into Spring Hike Sunday
March 29
1-3 p.m.
All ages

Hidden Ponds Sunday
April 19
1-4 p.m.
Ages 10 ys +

Earth Day Celebration of a Life: Jon Mendelson Saturday
April 25
Noon- 4p.m.

Newsletter editor:
Judy Dolan Mendelson
Friends: P.O. Box 159,
Richton Park, IL 60471,
dolanmendel@aol.com



Woodland Carols Food Drive a Huge Success

The Nature Center's annual afternoon of music & food drive resulted in 40 bags of groceries and \$200 in cash contributions donated to the Rich Township Food Pantry.

Woodland Carols was made possible by the generous donation of the musicians' time and talents! Thank You to Anna Stange, Christopher Kondrath & Robb Zetti, and Ingrid Krizan.

* Volunteers provided homemade soups and baked goods for the music event.

The Rich Township Food Pantry, located at 22013 Governors Highway, regularly feeds over 750 low-income families from ten surrounding communities. Each dollar donated can purchase four meals. Donations are accepted there 8:30 am to 3:30 pm daily. 708-748-6722

Nature Center Needs

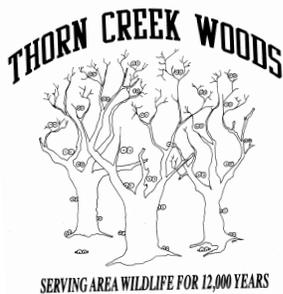
We Need:

- Scissors—for adults and for children
- Power point projector
- Handheld digital tape recorder
- Plastic boxes with lids—shoe box size & medium size
- Binoculars—for adults and for children
- Garlic roasters, keepers, books or recipes
- Hand clippers
- Plants for Butterfly Garden—must be shade tolerant and deer resistant

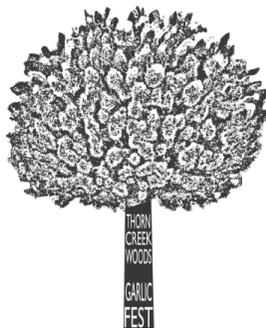
Always needed:

- Birdseed (mix or black sunflower seed—no corn)
- Stamps you saved for Audubon Society
- 3M Command medium Picture Hanging Strips
- 3M Command Poster Hanging Strips
- 1" x 2 5/8" address labels – ink jet or laser
- 6" x 9" mailing envelopes
- Suet cakes
- Paper towels
- Cases of bottled water

Get your Thorn Creek T-Shirts



Long sleeve -
Green with Sagestone Design
Short sleeve -
Blue with White Design



Short sleeve Garlic
T-Shirts
Dark Brown with Blue Garlic
Scape Design

Short Sleeve Thorn Creek Woods = \$ 10 + \$3
per shirt shipping/handling
Short Sleeve Garlic Fest = \$10 + \$3 per shirt
shipping/handling
Long Sleeve = \$15 + \$3 per shirt shipping/handling

Please make your check to:

Thorn Creek Nature Center
247 Monee Road
Park Forest, IL 60466
708-747-6320

Or stop by the nature center Friday
Sunday
Noon-4 pm

Be a FRIEND OF THORN CREEK WOODS

___ Membership \$10 ___ Organization & Business \$50 ___ Life Membership \$150

New Member ___ Renewing Member ___

___ I'd like to help as a volunteer at Thorn Creek Nature Center, please call me.

___ I am donating \$ _____ to the **Thorn Creek Woods Capital Fund** for improvements in the Nature Center building & in the Preserve.

In memory of _____ In honor of _____

___ I am donating \$ _____ to the **Jim Marzuki Memorial Fund** - to make a difference in Thorn Creek public programming.

___ I am donating \$ _____ to **Friends** general purposes.

___ I am donating \$ _____ in memory of Jon Mendelson.

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone & e-mail _____

Make checks payable to: FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS, Box 159, Richton Park, IL 60471



Annual Renewal Date is May 1st

Treasurer's Report for Friends of Thorn Creek Woods as of February 2, 2015

Treasurer Dan Moore

—**Friends General Operating Funds** = \$6019.47
which includes:

Membership funds = \$2609.47

General donations = \$1363.42

Eugene Schwartz Library Fund = \$2046.26

—**Prairie Chapel Print income**

(Artist Marikay Peter Witlock donated prints which Friends sells for \$75 each, and these funds are then given over to TC Management Commission annually) =
\$256.73

—**Jim Marzuki Fund**

(to support Thorn Creek public programming)
= \$188.04

—**Capital Fund**—\$25,949.63 which includes:
\$13,079.63 + \$12,870.00 Mendelson donations
(for vital improvements to the trails & the historic nature center building)

For a total of \$32,413.55

So What Can You do?

- Help staff **Open Hours** on Friday, Saturday & Sunday 12-4 p.m.
- Be a **Trail Watcher** and/or **Trail Repair** person. Trail Watchers are our eyes & ears on the trails.
- We have trail & boardwalk building **projects** for groups like Eagle Scouts
- **Bake** and/or **make soup** for our events
- **Assist** at programs & nature hikes
- Donate **moneys** for nature preserve projects
- **Scan** our photograph/slide/graphics collections
- Help with our **Fundraising!**
- Become a **member** of Friends.
- **Update** our mailing and volunteer lists

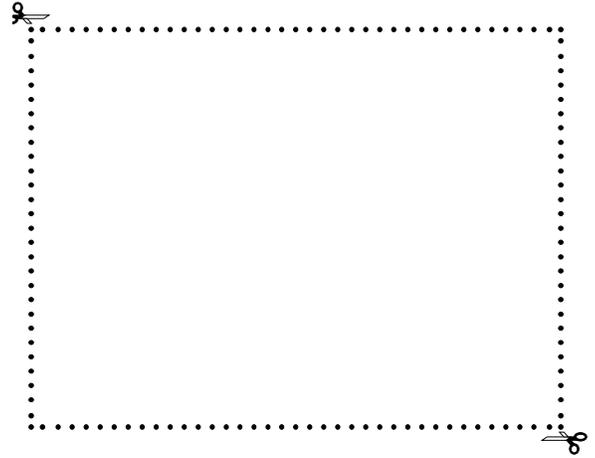


- Join the team—the **Friends Board.**

- Come to our **Spring Workday**

Friends of Thorn Creek Woods
Box 159
Richton Park, IL 60471

Please clip commemorative stamps
& bring to Nature Center for
Audubon Stamps
for Wildlife Habitats



Renew Now!

Want to receive
Thorn Creek News
only via email-
then email editor
Judy Dolan
Mendelson at
dolanmendel@aol.com

SPRING WORK DAY

Sunday, March 15, noon- 4 p.m.

Shake the winter blahs and come help in the annual spring cleaning of Thorn Creek Nature Center.

There will be indoor and outdoor work to be done in preparation for spring.

Bring a lunch and gloves and dress for the weather. Refreshments will be provided

Free! All ages

Children under 15
must be accompanied
by an adult.

Registration for a
group
of 6 people or more is
required:

Call Nature Center
708.747.6320



THANK YOU THORN CREEK VOLUNTEERS



We had a wonderful afternoon for Friends, volunteers & supporters on Saturday, February 24. We enjoyed a chili pot luck that filled up the tables.

Cellist and naturalist Ingrid Krizan played for us providing a beautiful festive mood.

Naturalist April Richards led a hike-no matter the weather our Friends and volunteers always need a hike in these woods.

Friends Vice President Sue Zelek, a long time naturalist and master birder, thanked volunteers for all the vital, and varied tasks you provide for the preserve. She told a sweet story of the dedication of our volunteers featuring Leo Arms and a storm. Leo and his wife Lois were founding Friends members and continue through all these years supporting and volunteering at Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve.

Thank you all