



Friends of Thorn Creek Woods

Thorn Creek News

Spring 2016

Stories of our Nature Center Building with Richard Stuenkel

Sunday, June 12 1-4 p.m. Free All ages

Special guest speaker Richard Stuenkel will share his knowledge and recollections of the Thorn Creek Nature Center when it was the Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, and stories of the local communities and woodland as they were when he was growing up in the area. Those attending are invited to come with questions.

Then join our naturalist on a hike in the woods.

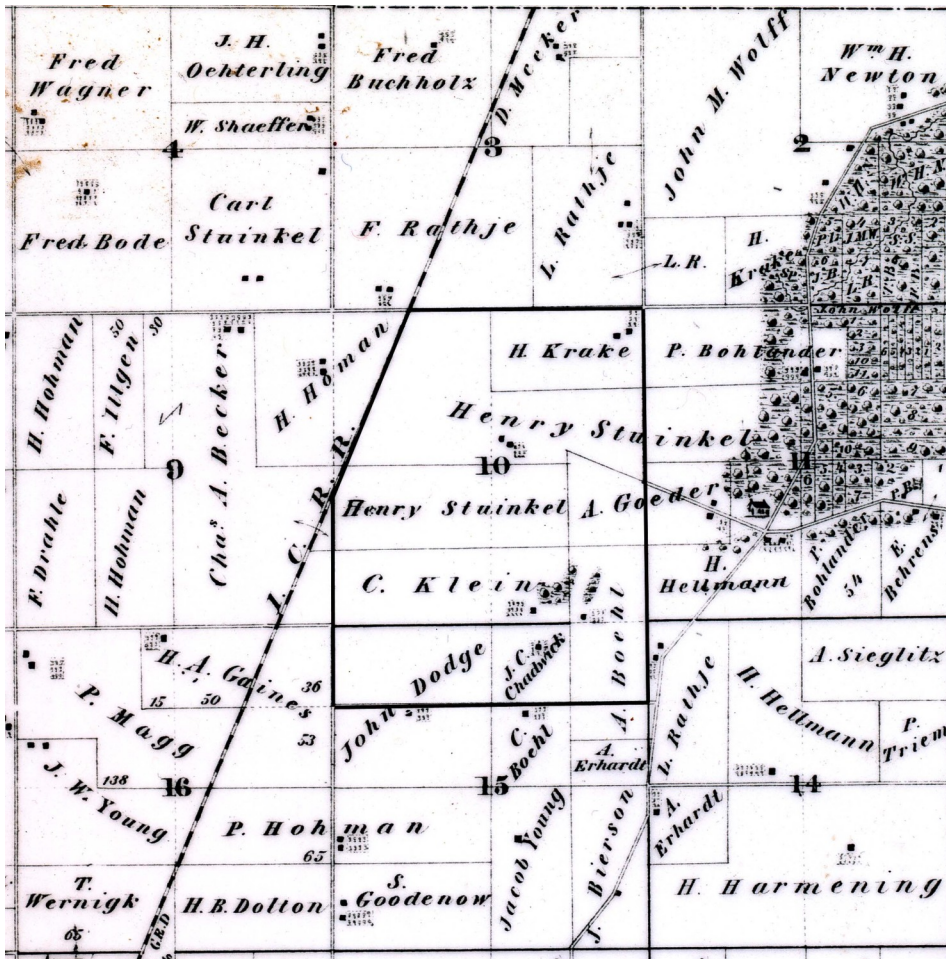
Mr. Stuenkel still farms on the land originally owned by his grandfather, and lives in the 130 year-old farmhouse in Monee.

Stuenkel Road which runs past Governors State University is named for the train stop Stuenkel's Crossing, run by one of Richard's family members. After World War II, he worked for a company that supplied heavy equipment used to build Park Forest.

Videos of Mr. Stuenkel being interviewed on the history of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Richton Park can be seen on YouTube or the church website -

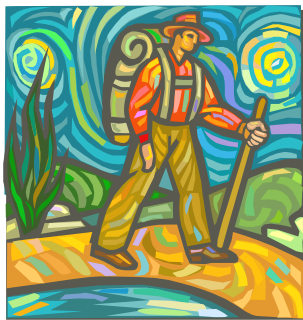
<http://www.immanuelrp.com/history.html>.

This gathering, Friends of Thorn Creek Woods annual meeting, is sponsored by the Jim Marzuki Fund, established by Friends of Thorn Creek Woods to enhance our public programming.



The northeastern portion of the Plat Map of Monee Township 1873. Future Governors State University campus boundary shown in bold outline. Thorn Creek Woods shown in the east.

Thorn Creek Trail and Building News



A top priority has been to **stabilize and complete the new North Bridge**. The Thorn Creek Management Commission just approved a contract to bring rip rap to stabilize the North Bridge piers protecting them from further erosion. The

project will be done this spring and Friends Capital Fund is funding it for \$3000.

Our **N-S boardwalk** – the very long north-south boardwalk on our Woodland Trail – was built over a number of years starting in 1980. In the last few years our volunteer Mark Petnuch has singlehandedly worked to keep the N-S boardwalk in good repair. He replaces planks and stabilizes the boardwalk supports. It requires continuous maintenance and we are very fortunate to have Mark.

Friends of Thorn Creek Woods Board members Sue Zelek, Carolyn Gann and Alice Hanes are spearheading a **South Bridge Committee** to look at designs for replacing the demolished south bridge. Contact the nature center for information on their next meeting. There is some funding (in the Friends Capital Fund) for a possible south bridge but our current design estimates are in the \$25,000-\$40,000 range.

Trail Watchers are our eyes & ears on Thorn Creek trails reporting trail problems and nature observations. Use the blue Trail Watchers forms available at the trail kiosk. You can fill out the form and leave in the Drop Box at front door of nature center. You can also follow up by leaving a message on nature center phone 708-747-6320 or e-mailing the nature center at thorn_creek@att.net. Your input and observations are welcome and important. They help us get trail problems solved quickly– like removing downed trees.

We're identifying a number of wet spots on our the Nature Center Loop and the Woodland Trail where **new boardwalks** need to be installed—great projects for the Trail Workdays or Eagle Scout projects.

Our **Owl Lake Trail** especially the portion looping around Owl Lake itself needs a lot of work including at least one boardwalk. And the small bridge between the pine tunnel and Owl Lake needs to be stabilized.

Work Your Trail Off This Spring and Summer

Trail Workdays

Saturday, April 9; Sunday, May 15; Saturday, June 25; Sunday, July 24; Sunday, August 14.
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Join the Thorn Creek Trail Work Crew in maintaining the trails, and building and repairing boardwalks throughout the Preserve.

Prairie Sampler Workdays

Mondays: May 16, June 20, July 18, August 15, September 19
9:30 a.m.-noon

Get down and dirty and help Master Gardeners from the University of Illinois Extension Service care for Thorn Creek's Prairie Sampler. Located in front of the Nature Center, the small prairie that was nurtured by the late Jim Marzuki needs your help with weeding, pulling tall goldenrod, trimming out woody plants, and identifying native species present.

For all Thorn Creek Workdays:

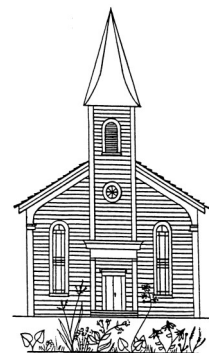
Bring your own gloves, hand clippers, and kneelers if you like. Dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes or boots. Bring a lunch and refreshments will be provided. Outdoor work is on natural surface across uneven terrain.

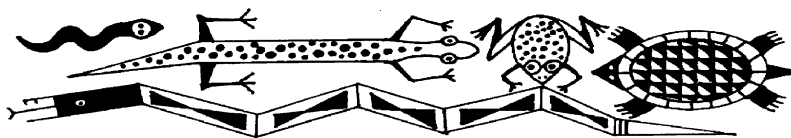
Registration required 2 days before each program day

Ages 15-adult

Community groups are welcome!

On another front– The Village of Park Forest and the Commission are trying to arrange for **nature center building** repairs and exterior painting. We need to find a contractor to do the repair work, and estimates for painting the exterior. We'll need additional funding from the Village to add to the Friends Capital Fund to be able to accomplish all these repairs.





Share Your Observations of Birds-Critters-Plants in Thorn Creek Woods

Let us know what birds (especially pileated woodpeckers, red headed woodpecker), frogs, toads, salamanders, foxes, coyotes, weasels, wildflowers and more that you observe in the woods this year.

Tell us what you observed and where in the preserve.



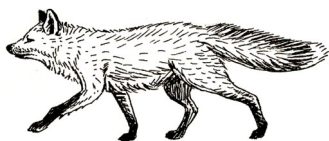
How?

Leave a note on the blue Trail Watcher sheet (sheets at kiosk).

Put any notes 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.



Send us photos of our preserve

to include on the website
and in our publicity.

Send photos to thorn_creek@att.net

Photos should be 5 x 7 @ 72 dpi,

or between 500k and 800 k,

or medium sized for emailing;

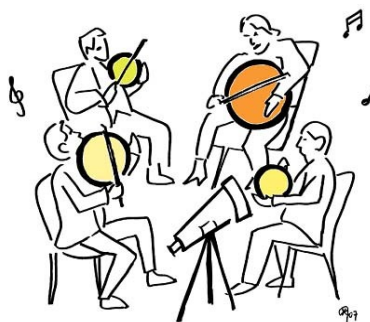
and should be in .jpg or .jpeg format.

Also send a short description of photo, where it was taken, date taken, photographer's name.



Helpers Needed

- Helpers for Earth Day—bakers, parking attendants, helpers with refreshments and crafts
- Bottles of water for spring-summer programs
- Open Hours volunteers to work Friday, Saturday or Sunday noon to 4 p.m. to greet visitors, answer phones and work on a whole variety of cleaning, office work, and miscellaneous jobs to keep our nature center open.



Thorn Creek Chamber Players

Friday, June 10
7-9 p.m.

Ages 12 or older

\$10 per person

Ingrid Krizan is a classically trained professional cellist who weaves seasonal nature narratives into her music. Join us for a fun-filled evening of music echoing through the woods.

Refreshments will be provided.

Get your tickets by Wednesday, June 8; 708.747.6320.

Nature Programs for Groups at Thorn Creek Nature Center Are Sponsored By Thorn Creek Audubon Society

Calling all schools, home school groups, day cares, preschools, youth, adult and family groups! Nature Education Programs are offered at Thorn Creek Nature Center throughout the year where your group can discover the plants and animals of Thorn Creek Woods.

These Nature Education Programs are sponsored by the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. The Audubon Society and the Thorn Creek Nature Center announce their new Partnership for Programming to further the Society's environmental education mission and give valuable assistance to Thorn Creek Nature Center in providing nature programming for groups of area children and adults.

Some of the nature education programs offered this year include *Birding by Sight and Sound*, *Creek Walk* (the world of aquatic insects and metamorphosis), *Trees Big and Small* (identification by leaves and bark), *Insects* (what makes an insect unique), the *Web of Life* (interdependence of producers, consumers, predators and decomposers), *Soils Hike* (how soil fuels and supports life), and *Night Hikes*.

On the Fall Color Hike learn why leaves change colors and what trees do to prepare for the long months of winter. Discover clues to wild animals' identities and behavior by trails and trails in Wild Animal Tracks. Make your own track replica. On Vixen's Trek you are the fox following your daily routines on Thorn Creek trails. Or visit the Historic Farm in the woods to explore an early 1900's woodland farm.

Groups can also arrange for a naturalist to come to your location for programs such as Wild Animal Tracks, Web of Life, Woodland Wildflowers, Soils, History of Thorn Creek Woods, and the like.

"Part of our mission is to provide environmental education," said TCAS President Al Thomas. "The Thorn Creek Nature Center has a building, two excellent trained naturalists, and of course the 850-plus acre Thorn Creek Woods. We don't have either a building or naturalists. I think one of the best ways we can fulfill our own education mission is to help the Nature Center provide even more programs."

"We are thrilled to expand our relationship with the Thorn Creek Audubon Society in this new direction," said Judy Mendelson, Chair of Thorn Creek Woods Management Commission. "This is enhancing the long-standing support and interest we have received from Thorn Creek Audubon since the 1960s."

The new partnership has already collaborated in sponsoring three programs: the *Learn 70 Birds by Spring* class, which runs from January through March; the *Great Backyard Bird Count Open House* that was held in February; and the *Build a Gourd Birdhouse* sessions to be held in March.

TCAS members will assist with the programs and the Society's education committee, Karen Blackful and Michelle O'Connor, will meet regularly with Nature Center personnel. "By combining our expertise and our resources we can provide more and better programs for both young people and adults," said O'Connor.

TCAS has just approved a generous donation of \$750 for these programs including purchase of animal tracks molds, insect collectors, books for the Learn 70 Birds program and staff costs for two Nature Education programs.

For information about Thorn Creek Audubon Society membership, events and projects: Thorn Creek Audubon Society, P. O. Box 895, Park Forest, IL 60466, or thorncreekaudubonsociety.org.

Minimum group size for all Nature Education programs is ten with a maximum of 20. Larger groups may be accommodated based on staff availability. Registration is required and all programs require a minimum of four weeks notice. When you call to register be sure to have three dates in mind in case your first choice isn't available.

The cost for a group of 1-10 is \$25, group of 11-20 is \$50, and group of 21-30 is \$75. Additional fees for materials may apply for some programs.

Programs are typically 1 to 1.5 hours in length, including trail hikes. Nature Center tours are available but will require additional time.

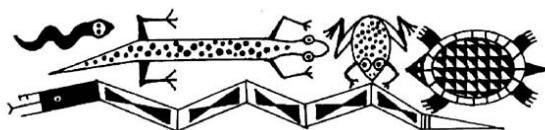
These Nature Education Programs plan for groups to experience Thorn Creek Nature Preserve firsthand. Participants should dress for outdoor weather and natural terrain trails.

To register for a program or to receive a copy of the Nature Education Program Brochure, please contact Thorn Creek Nature Center, 247 Monee Road, Park Forest, at 708-747-6320 or thorn_creek@att.net. Visit our website tcwoods.org.



Earth Day at Thorn Creek: Frogs and Toads and Salamanders Saturday, April 23 Noon - 4 p.m. All ages

Earth Day at Thorn Creek Woods this year celebrates amphibians. What kinds of frogs and toads and salamanders live in Thorn Creek Woods? How can you tell the differences? Where can you find them? And what sounds do they make? Come find out.



1 p.m. Slide Show Presentation
with herpetologist David Mauger

2 p.m. Nature Hike

All Day

Get Your *Calling Frog and Toad Calendar*

Bake Sale

Earth Day Raffle

Make a Toad House & Amphibian Crafts

Exhibits

Hear Frog and Toad Calls all day

This event is sponsored by Friends of Thorn Creek Woods
and the Jim Marzuki Fund for Public Programming.,

Thorn Creek Nature Center, 247 Monee Road, Park Forest, IL 60466.
Watch for parking signs.

For information: 708-747-6320; thorn_creek@att.net; tcwoods.org

Thank You

- ☀ Welcome to new members of Friends.
- ☀ Thanks to donors of stamps for Audubon.
- ☀ Thank you to donors of books for our library, and items needed for our Earth Day Raffle and our programs and general use.
- ☀ Thank you to all the hardworking helpers at Spring Clean-Up Day.
- ☀ Thank you to volunteers handling nature center open hours, and our Open Hours coordinator Penny Chamberlain. This volunteer work allows us to keep the nature center open to the public! We need more Open Hours helpers.
- ☀ Thank you for Park Forest Garden Club donation and Thorn Creek Audubon Society \$250 grant.
- ☀ Thank you for donating funds for our Capital Fund and for Friends general purposes.

Thorn Creek Woods

247 Monee Rd, Park Forest
708-747-6320 tcwoods.org
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
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Junior Ecologists Club Saturdays	April 2 May 7 Noon- 3 pm
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Trail Work Days 9am-4pm	April 9 May 15 June 25
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Prairie Sampler Workdays 9:30-noon	Mondays May 16 June 20
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March into Spring Hike	Sunday April 10 1-3 pm
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Earth Day: Frogs & Toads & Salamanders	Saturday April 23 Noon- 4pm
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Hidden Ponds Hike	Sunday May 1 1-4 p.m.
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Spring Wildflowers Hike	Saturday May 14 1-4 p.m.
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Flower Moon Hike 6:30-8:30 p.m.	Friday May 20
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Women of the Woods Hike	Sunday May 22 9 a.m.-1 p.m. \$5
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Historic Farm Walk	Sunday June 5 1-3 p.m.
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Newsletter editor:
Judy Dolan Mendelson
Friends: P.O. Box 159,
Richton Park, IL 60471,
dolanmendel@aol.com

So What Can You do?

- Help staff Open Hours 12-4 p.m. on Friday, Saturday & Sunday
- Be a Trail Watcher.
- Join our Trail Workdays & Prairie Sampler Workdays this summer
- We also have trail & boardwalk building projects for groups like Eagle Scouts
- Bake and/or make soup for our events
- Volunteers to assist at programs & nature hikes, and volunteers to assist in program planning and preparation.
- Donate money for nature preserve projects
- Scan our graphics collection
- Two or 3 members to work with the Friends Board on fundraising for the Capital Fund.
- Become a member of Friends.
- Know your local wildflowers? Come identify wildflowers and fungi depicted in our photos.
- Post Thorn Creek events on the Friends of Thorn Creek Woods Face Book page .
- Share our updated Nature Education Program Brochure – available on our website and at the nature center—with your clubs, home school group, scouts seniors group, garden club or school.

Nature Center Needs

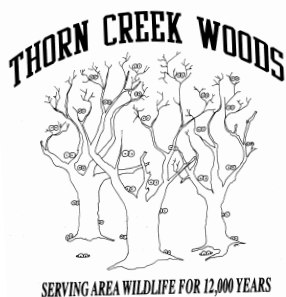
We Need:

- Cases of bottled water for our spring-summer events
- Scissors—for adults and for children
- Batteries—C and AA
- Large plastic storage boxes about 1.5 ft by 3 ft
- Middle sized plastic storage boxes with lids
- Shoe-box sized plastic storage boxes with lids
- Binoculars—for adults and for children
- Night scopes
- Portable easels
- Hand clippers and loppers
- Hoes

Always needed:

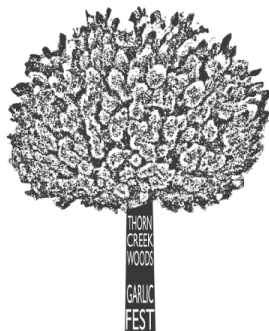
- Birdseed (mix or black sunflower seed—no corn)
- Stamps you saved for Audubon Society
- 3M Command medium Picture Hanging Strips
- 3M Command Poster Hanging Strips
- 1" x 2 5/8" address labels – ink jet or laser
- 6" x 9" mailing envelopes
- Suet cakes

Get your Thorn Creek T-Shirts



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

Design by Jon Mendelson



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 **Capital Fund** in memory of Jon Mendelson.

____ I am donating \$_____ to the **Jim Marzuki Fund** for Thorn Creek
Public Programming.

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

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

Friends of Thorn Creek Woods Board

Sue Zelek-*Vice President*

Dan Moore- *Treasurer*

Judy Dolan Mendelson-*Recording Secretary*

Diane Kozlowski-*Director-Membership
Coordinator*

Carolyn Gann-*Director-Assistant Secretary*

Penny Chamberlain-*Open Hours Coordinator*

Alice Hanes-*Director at large*

*Starting in May, the Friends Board meets
the 2nd Monday of each month at 10:30 a.m.
at the nature center. Come join us.
For info call the nature center 708-747-6320.*

Friends of Thorn Creek Woods

**Annual
Renewal Date is
May 1st**

Send in your dues
renewal today!



Thank You

Treasurer's Report for Friends of Thorn Creek Woods as of January 31, 2016 Treasurer Dan Moore

—**Friends General Operating Funds** = \$6,175.67
which includes Membership funds, General donations and
Eugene Schwartz Library Fund

—**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) =
\$486.73

—**Jim Marzuki Fund for Public Programming** =
\$213.04

—**Capital Fund**
(for vital improvements to the trails &
the historic nature center building) = \$30,091.63
which includes:

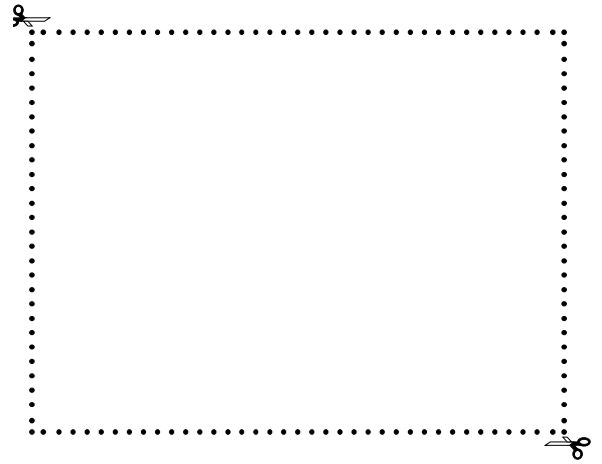
Capital Fund— generally=\$14,799.63
Donated to Capital Fund in memory of
Jon Mendelson = \$14,367.00
Donated to Capital Fund in memory of
Larry Lubertozzi = \$925.00

For a total Friends of TCW = \$36,967.07

FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS is a tax-exempt
501(c)(3) organization.

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



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

Renew Now!

ANCIENT JOURNEY

A whirling cry overhead, gurgling, spinning
Now rising, now falling
High and wild, thrown across the sky with abandon
I leave the dishes in the sink and race outside
Head back, eyes searching the sky
Ah-h-h-h...There they are!
Whirling across the sky in loose formation, long legs trailing
Riding the thermals northward to their summer home
They soar high above the winter seared landscape.
But their call floats down, like a long rolling "r"
So beautiful that my heart aches
Sandhill cranes following their ancient skyway
Spring is in the air!



-Kendra Reinshagen