

Thorn Creek News

Spring 2019

On the Trails

By Lloyd Richert

Today (April 18, 1982) mud is the word! In spite of all the good work done by the Nature Center staff..., there were still wet and muddy spots in low places on the trail due to Friday's heavy showers. However, the boardwalk on the upper Woodland Trail was a lifesaver. We hope one day it can be extended... [It was extended!]

Birds were seen and heard in the woods today: robins, of course, and cardinals, and woodpeckers. Wood chips at the base of some tree trunks showed where the latter were insect hunting. John and Betty Weber reported they had seen a myrtle warbler, an olive-backed thrush and a rufous-sided towhee. You can run across the Weber's, indefatigable workers that they are, almost any time you are in the woods, relentlessly hunting down wildlife, with their camera, that is!

Rabbits, squirrels and a white-tailed deer were seen too. Today for the first time in years, I saw a dead animal, an opossum, lying off the trail among the shrubs.



Bloodroot



Toothwort

And there were insects: a few gnats flying in our faces, and a red admiral butterfly and a mourning cloak butterfly flitting along the path. These are among the first spring butterflies, since they overwinter as adults and so can appear whenever the weather turns warm, and do not have to emerge from cocoons, or hatch from eggs as later moths and butterflies do.

The early wildflowers are out already. Hepatica, bloodroot, spring beauty and some anemones are now starting to flower. Toothwort and trout lily are budding. Still others—wild geranium, corn lily (Clintonia), Valerian, wild onion are in leaf or at least beginning to expand their leaves. The tiny May apples are just emerging, their rolled up leaves looking like tiny furred umbrellas. Vinca, or myrtle, is brightening up their leaves. These, being evergreen, were noticeable all winter long along the east leg of the Loop Trail.

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Bright green patches of moss can be seen throughout the woods now on fallen tree trunks and wherever the soil is damp. Their swelling spore cases, atop their tiny stalks, will soon ripen and send out their spores to propagate their kind with the help of wind or animals brushing against them.



May Apple

Most of the shrubs are beginning to leaf out: the hawthorns, wild roses, sumac, poison ivy, honeysuckle. Buds on the maples, elms, willow are opening ahead of the hickories and oaks. Most of our sumacs are the smooth sumacs, but in the immediate Nature Center area there are several hairy sumacs covered with a velvety nap like that on a deer's antlers. These are staghorn sumacs. Have you noticed them?

Several days ago I was surprised to see wedged under the foot bridge over the Woodland Trail, a large dead tree trunk about fifteen feet long and two feet thick. Today it had been swept downstream a few feet where it lies wedged against another log which has lain across the creek for years.

Would you be interested in knowing how to describe the stages of growth of a plant from its appearance to its withering and drying up? Our early woodland flowers, for example, expend their whole visible life cycle within a few weeks time. Scott King gives us these seven steps: emergence, leaf expansion, budding, flowering, fruit setting, ripening, dying back...

Our early woodland wildflowers, unlike the swallows of Capistrano in California, do not always emerge on the same date each year. For example my field notes for April 17, 1979, tell me that the early woodland flowers on that date were just about at the same stage of development as I noticed today in the woods. Last year, in the spring of 1981, these same plants had reached this same stage on April 3, a full two weeks earlier. That was a mild winter, and an earlier spring, as I remember. What will next spring be like? I can hardly wait to see!

Editor's note: This was reprinted from the May-June 1982, No. 32, edition of Thorn Creek Preservation Association Newsletter. Thorn Creek Preservation Association became our Friends of Thorn Creek Woods. The late Lloyd Richert was a long time Friends member. He served on the Friend Board, and as you see above, was an avid woods walker, wonderful observer of nature and a lovely nature writer.



Earth Day at Thorn Creek: Woodland Wildflowers

Saturday, April 20 1 - 4 p.m. Free! All ages

Earth Day celebrates the wildflowers of Thorn Creek Woods.

Even in our shady preserve a bouquet of flowers grow
and bloom each spring before the tree leaves unfurl.

Join us to explore how these unusual plants thrive.

1 p.m.—Program begins with a presentation on our wildflowers
followed by a Hike to view the flowers that may be blooming



*There will be lots of fun
for everyone including
refreshments,
activities and games,
Milkweed planting,
a hike
and our Spring Raffle.*

Reservation required by Thursday, April 18:
call 708-747-6320 or email thorn_creek@att.net

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

Thorn Creek Woods

247 Monee Rd, Park Forest
708-747-6320

tcwoods.org

Thorn_creek@att.net

Nature Center open Friday and
Sunday, noon to 4 pm

Trails Open Dawn to Dusk

Wednesday Morning Walkers	Wednesdays 9-10:30 am
Follow the Fox Kids under 12	Sunday April 7 1-3 pm
Earth Day: Woodland Wildflowers	Saturday April 20 1-4pm
Spring Night Hike	Sunday April 28 7-9 pm All ages. Free
Trees for Kids Kids 5 -12	Saturday May 11 1-3 p.m.
Flower Moon Hike 10 years and older	Tuesday May 14 7:30-9:30 pm
Historic Farm Walk	Saturday June 8 1-3 pm
Friends of Thorn Creek Woods Picnic at Central Park	Sunday June 9 11 am-2 pm
Hidden Ponds Hike Ages 10 and older	Saturday June 15 1-4 p.m.
Solstice Hike	Friday June 21 7:30-9:30 pm
Women of the Woods: A Nature Retreat Adult women	Saturday June 22 9 m-1 p.m. \$5/person
Insects Abound for Kids ages 6-10	Sunday June 30 1-3 pm

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Richton Park, IL 60471,
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Spring Renewal

With spring's welcome arrival, the Friends of Thorn Creek Woods annual membership renewal date of May 1 is fast approaching!

Memberships are still just \$20 for a regular membership, \$200 for a life membership, and \$50 for organizations or businesses. New and renewed memberships will be valid through April 30, 2020.

Thank you for your past support and we hope you will renew for 2019.

You might find it convenient to buy your 2019 membership on-line.

- Go to: www.tcwoods.org
- Click on *Donate* and follow directions to order your membership using PayPal.

Donations of any amount are greatly appreciated and can also be made on-line to:

- The Thorn Creek Woods Capital Fund for improvements in the preserve and in the Nature Center Building. The Capital Fund is focusing on trails – adding more trail improvements, additional boardwalks, water bars and signs, and planning for a bypass trail.
- The Jim Marzuki Memorial fund to support Thorn Creek public programming.
- The Friends General Purposes Fund for the purchase of equipment, supplies and displays for the nature center and preserve, plus for Friends mailings and newsletters.

Friends of Thorn Creek Woods is a non-profit, 501-C3 organization and contributions are tax exempt.

FRIENDS volunteers support nature center staff in so many ways—staff the nature center on weekends, trail work, displays, leading hikes, special events, cleaning, pruning, artwork, music, research, and on and on.

Help us build on the spring momentum by asking your neighbors and friends to become members. And please spread the word that we always appreciate greater community support in the form of new memberships and attendance at Thorn Creek programs

Join us!

Welcome to Monica Banaszak

Monica is the Assistant Naturalist at Thorn Creek Nature Center, starting in October 2018. She was drawn to this position because she has always had a passion for teaching people about the natural world.

Monica has held various positions in the natural resource field such as being a reptile/amphibian keeper and education volunteer for a student chapter of The Herpetology Society, a restoration intern for Audubon Great Lakes, and the Conservation Leadership Corps Coordinator for the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation.

Some of her favorite places she has traveled to are the Aldo Leopold Shack in Baraboo, Wisconsin and the Great Blue Hole in Belize. Monica's favorite things to do at Thorn Creek Woods are leading Wednesday Walkers and researching content for programs. On her off time she enjoys going to heavy metal concerts, hiking, reading and hanging out with her pet cat, Taio.

We are lucky to have such an enthusiastic, personable, intelligent nature educator on staff. Stop by to meet and welcome Monica to Thorn Creek Woods.



Thorn Creek Photo Series by Tim Bell

At the beginning of 2019, I started a photo series at Thorn Creek Nature Preserve. My plan is to take a photo from the same location, about twice a month, for the entire year. I decided to record the seasonal changes at Thorn Creek because I enjoy seeing them and thought it would be a good way to encourage me to get out and get some exercise.

If you've seen my posts on the Friends of Thorn Creek Facebook page, you may recognize the location. The photo station is at the east end of the North Bridge facing south. I picked this location because I can easily position my iPhone so that I get the same shot by bracing the iPhone against the rail of the bridge, using a bracket designed to attach the iPhone to a tripod to have the iPhone at the same height every time.

I plan to create a slideshow at the end of the year with all of the photos and will post it on the Friends of Thorn Creek Facebook page.



March 27, 2019

On the Trails by Lloyd Richert

...Do you wonder what Thoreau was seeing on these first days of May? His journal for 1853 has this entry:

"May 1, Sunday. A cold northwest wind. Now, on my return to Concord, I am struck by the increased greenness of the country, or landscape. I find that since I left Concord on April 11, there have blossomed here, nearly in the following order, these plants: dandelion, field horse-tail, large toothed aspen, violet, dwarf cinquefoil, anemone, columbine, strawberry, June berry, peach, cherry, hornbeam, sheep sorrel.

The expanding leaves of the sugar maples now make small crosses against the sky. Other conspicuous green leaves are the gooseberry, currant and elder.

A phoebe's nest and one cream-colored egg at the spring-house; nest of mud, lined with grass and edged with hypnum. Channing has seen a robin's nest and eggs. I hear a black and white creeper at the Cliffs.

The shrub oaks are well budded. The young ivy leaves are red on Cliffs. Oaks and hickory buds just ready to open. The large woolly ferns and others stand up a foot on banks. The skunk cabbage leaves green the warm, springy meads.

Was it not the black and yellow or spotted warbler I saw by the Corner Spring? The barn swallow is about. Channing says he has heard the wood thrush, brown thrasher and stake-driver. Did I not see the oven bird yesterday?"

Volunteers at Thorn Creek Woods

- **Help staff Open Hours 12-4 p.m. on Fridays & Sundays**
- Be a Trail Watcher. **Trail Watchers** are our eyes & ears on the trails. Use the blue Trail Watchers forms or email nature center with concerns.
- We 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
- Become a member of Friends.
- Post Thorn Creek events on the Friends Face Book page.
- Share our Nature Education Program Brochure – available on our website & at nature center—with your clubs, home school group, scouts, seniors group, garden club or school.
- Help manage our website tcwoods.org



Nature Center Needs

We Need:

- Cases of bottled water for our spring-summer events
- 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
- Night scopes
- Portable easels
- Hand clippers
- Hoes

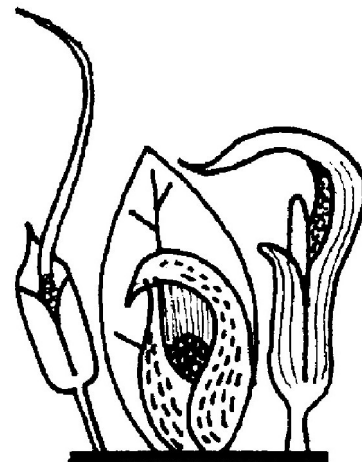
Always needed:

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

Best Job Ever

Open Hours volunteers work Friday 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.

Call 708-747-6320 or email thorn_creek@att.net NOW to volunteer.



Friends of Thorn Creek Woods Board

meets

*the 4th Monday of each month
10:30 a.m. at the nature center.*

Come join us.

Be a FRIEND OF THORN CREEK WOODS

___ Membership \$20 ___ Organization & Business \$50 ___ Life Membership \$200

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 Fund** for Thorn Creek
Public Programming.

___ I am donating \$_____ to **Friends General Purposes**.

Total Enclosed \$_____

Name _____

Address _____

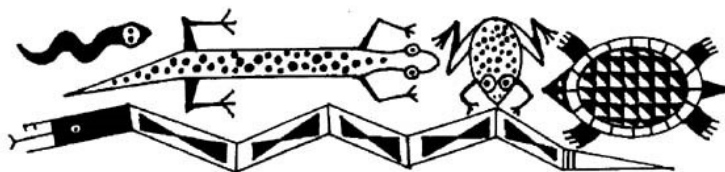
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone & e-mail _____

Make checks payable to: FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS, Box 32,
Richton Park, IL 60471

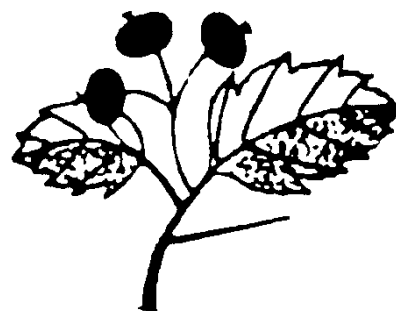


Annual Renewal Date is May 1st
Send in your dues today!
Or renew & donate using PayPal
at tcwoods.org



Thank You

- \$200 donated by Thorn Creek Audubon Society in memory of Pat Braker
- Laptop for nature center—Friends of Thorn Creek Woods
- Printer for nature center— Alice Hanes
- Welcome to New Members: David Juhl Family, Dan Gardner, Kay N. Schultz, Linda Galloway, Deborah L. Orr.
- Donations to Thorn Creek Woods Capital Fund from: Deborah and Paul Hart; Kay N. Schultz in memory of Andrew Hoffer; Carol Sessions-Robinson; Susan Zelek; Leslee & Kendall Parish in memory of George Collar; Anonymous; Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence F. Mysz in memory of Ted Jostes; Judith Dolan Mendelson in honor of Celia Pincus.
- Donations to Friends General Purposes Fund from: Robin Condro, Jonathon Smith, Al Sturges, Penelope Chamberlain, Henry Lorsch.
- Many membership renewals.
- Many donations of items: bird books and stationary-Alice McBride; pruners— Leo Courshon; birdwatching book, insect light bulb, wall hanging strips— Linda Gattis; stamps—Jim McNelly; batteries and birdseed— Margrit Withers; four sleeves of paper cups— Larry McClellan; sidewalk chalk— Mark Petnuch.



Thank you for your support and kindness

Friends of Thorn Creek Woods
Box 32
Richton Park, IL 60471

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



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only via email-
then email editor
Judy Dolan
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dolanmendel@aol.com
Thank you-
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Renew Now!

SAVE THE DATE

FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS PICNIC Sunday, June 9 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

East Pavilion in Central Park, on Lakewood Boulevard, Park Forest
Free! All ages. Rain or shine.

Registration required by Friday, May 31:
708.747.6320 or thorn_creek@att.net

All Friends members and Nature Center volunteers
and their families
gather for a fun-filled afternoon
with a pot luck and a hike at
Central Park in Park Forest.

BYOW = Bring Your Own Whatever for a pot luck.
We provide the meats, buns, water and ice.
You bring a dish to share.

We'll picnic and have a hike to the Central Park Wetlands.
There are play areas and tennis courts adjacent to the shelter.

