



Friends of Thorn Creek Woods

Thorn Creek News

Winter 2022

Remnants of the Past

It seems timely to be thinking of this subject, since I just passed a milestone birthday, although the pejorative, “Old Fossil”, doesn’t yet apply (I hope!). In any case, the term is redundant, since fossils are by definition old. Not just old—they’re ancient evidence of the living animals and plants that once lived here. Fossils are the last vestige of life forms that existed in a world we can otherwise explore only in our imaginations. Once living organisms, their fragmentary remains offer clues about what this part of the world was like millennia ago.

Skeletons, shells, and more rarely, soft tissues of animals, and the roots, stems or trunks, leaves, and even individual grains or spores of plants have been preserved by being embedded in sedimentary layers, where, over time, they are gradually replaced by silicates, and calcium carbonate. Immense pressure on overlying layers of soil, rock or water caused the organisms buried below to be preserved in delicate, even microscopic, detail. These treasures from the past are hidden in layers of sedimentary sandstone, limestone, and shale, and within beds of peat that were later transformed to coal.

Fossils can be of several types: sometimes pieces or bits of the original material may survive, real bone, shell, or test (the casing of some invertebrates). In most cases, though, what’s left is the mineralized structure of the creature or plant, or the hollow cast or mold of its body or trail, as with some marine worms, for example.

In our region there are two significant fossil rich areas.



trilobite
Calymene

Coral reefs were built some 425 million years ago in the Silurian period when the Great Lakes area was covered by a shallow tropical sea. The reef organisms were preserved in dolomite (magnesium-rich) limestone deposited on the sea floor. This limestone underlies the entire Chicago region. The Thornton quarry, which can be seen from I-80 or Thornton-Lansing Road, occupies one of the largest of these reefs, one particularly rich in fossils. Found there are fossils of the sedimentary reef-building organisms like corals *Halysites* and *Favosites*, calcareous algae, stromatoporids—lime secreting animals, brachiopods, and the trilobites *Calymene* and *Bumastus*. Brachiopods are bivalves that resemble clams but are not related. The three-lobed body trilobite is an abundant fossil, yet no members of its subclass survived extinction.

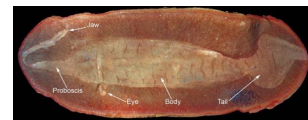
The other fossil rich region is the Fossil Forest area around Mason Creek near Braidwood in Will County extending through Grundy County and to the southwest, where the vast lowland forests flourished and died as the continental seas of the Pennsylvanian era 300 million years ago ebbed and flowed. The forest remains were compressed and hardened into coal deposits. Ironstone concretions found here can be lightly rapped on the edge with a rock hammer to crack open, and often reveal impressions of plant stems and leaves or the fossilized remains of animals such as the soft-bodied marine invertebrate, the Tully Monster, found nowhere else in the world.

Ancient plants in this fossil record show a very different flora from that of today. Huge ferns grew fifty feet high with six-foot fronds, but scale trees one hundred feet high dwarfed them. Scouring rushes and club mosses were also tree-size, unlike the small forms found here today. Condaites, early forbears of conifers, preceded the true gymnosperms like ginkgo and sequoia.

Fossils are the time-line of life on earth, and accessible wherever stone layers are exposed to view. In quarries, along streams or lakeshores, even in the gravel underfoot, these ancient recorders of earth’s past await your discovery.



Tully Monster-
Tullimonstrum gregarium

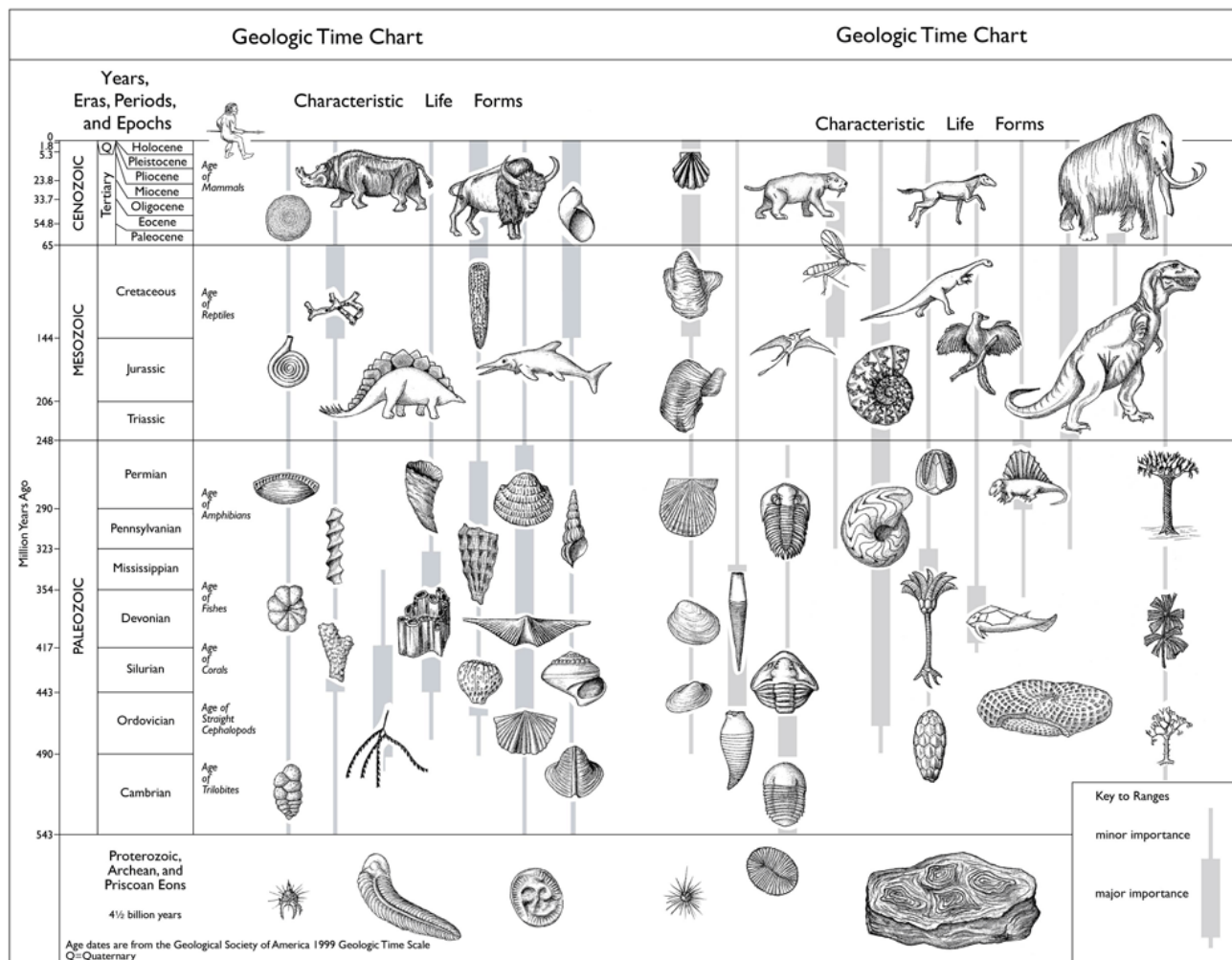


-by Lily Bormet, former Thorn Creek Naturalist
Reprinted from Thorn Creek News, January 2002

Ancient Life of Illinois: Fossils

Saturday, February 12, 1-3 p.m.

Sign up for our Fossil program featuring
presentation by the Earth Science Club of Northern Illinois and the fossil collection of Jim Marzuki
Call Nature Center 708-747-6320 or email thorn_creek@att.net to register.



Raffle Baskets- we need raffle baskets created!

We're setting up a fabulous Spring Raffle at Thorn Creek Nature Center. Hopefully it will be set up the **end of February** and the items awarded at our Earth Day—Wild Water program Saturday April 23.

Baskets are particularly popular. Ideas for basket creations could be: water, gardening, wildflowers, coffee, chocolate, kids, Italian/Pasta/Garlic, etc. Let your imagination go wild.

We are **not** looking for nature pictures this year since we have a number of donated framed pictures that we can raffle off.

So, if you can create a raffle basket or contribute items to raffle or items for a raffle basket, let our naturalist April know (708-747-6320 or thorn_creek@att.net). We will collect a few large baskets that you can use for your creations. As usual we'll set up two tables for raffle basket creating.

Also, if you can fix up our raffle table, that would be helpful. This means coming by once or twice (before raffle opens end of February), to organize stuff collected, put out signs, etc. (Signs for the raffle ticket bins and the table are already created.) This would help April.

If you have any baskets/items for the raffle you can bring them by Fridays. It would be best to call or email to make sure we're open and/or to arrange a day/time.

Thank you. We always have wonderful raffles, thanks to you!



Types of Snowflakes ... SnowCrystals.com



So What Can You Do To Help?

Four hours each month can make **all the difference**

Nature Center is open on Fridays, 12-4 p.m.

But **ONLY** with **YOUR** assistance.

Open Hours volunteers greet visitors and answer phones, plus they use their unique talents to do office tasks or set up displays or do housekeeping chores—all to assist our Naturalist

and keep the Nature Center open to the public.

Call or email now to volunteer your time.

We'll train you.

- Trail Watchers are our eyes & ears on the trails. Use the blue Trail Watchers forms or email nature center with concerns.
- Trail & boardwalk & water bar projects on our Workdays and for groups like Eagle Scouts.
- Assist at programs.
- Assist with clerical tasks.
- Become a member of Friends. Come to our monthly Friends Board meetings, usually the 4th Monday at 10 a.m. at the nature center.

We need you!



Photo by Jack Rusnak 2019

Nature Center Needs Things

- *Birdseed (mix or black sunflower seed—no corn)
- *Suet cakes
- *Picture Hanging Strips – Command brand, medium size, need lots!
- *Cases of bottled water
- *Hoes and loppers
- *1" x 2 5/8" address labels- ink jet or laser
- *Large plastic boxes with lids 1.5' x 3'
- *Middle sized plastic boxes with lids
- *Shoe box size boxes with lids/
- *6" x 9" envelopes

Get your Thorn Creek T-Shirts

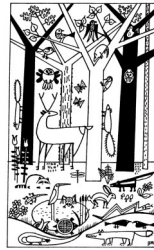
THORN CREEK WOODS



Serving area wildlife for 12,000 years

Long sleeve -
Forest Green with Mint Design
Short sleeve -
Blue with White Design

Thorn Creek Woods



"Serving area wildlife for 12,000 years"

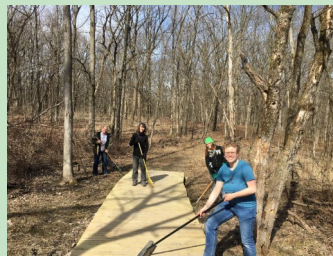
Short sleeve -
Heather Maroon with Crème
Design
NEW Long sleeve-
Regular Maroon with Creme



Short Sleeve = \$ 10 + \$5 per shirt shipping/handling
Long Sleeve = \$15 + \$5 per shirt shipping/handling

Please make your check to:
Thorn Creek Nature Center, 247 Monee Road,
Park Forest, IL, 60466

Call 708-747-6320 or mail or email
thorn_creek@att.net your order.



If you can help out
on trail work or
special projects
this spring,
just contact
April Richards
at 708-747-6320
and
thorn_creek@att.net.

Programs at Thorn Creek Woods

247 Monee Rd, Park Forest
708-747-6320

Thorn_creek@att.net
tcwoods.org

**Nature Center open Fridays
noon-4 p.m.**

Trails Open Dawn to Dusk

Ancient Life of Illinois: Fossils	Saturday February 12 1-3 p.m.
Ages 10-adult	
Birding By Sight & Sound for Kids	Sunday February 27 1-3:30 p. m. \$10 fee
Ages 7-12	
Make a Gourd Birdhouse	Sunday March 6 1-2 p.m. \$15/house
Age 13-adult	
Prairie Sampler & Trail Workday	Saturday March 12 1-3 p.m.
Ages 12-adult	
Seasons at Thorn Creek Woods: Spring	Sunday March 27 10:30 a.m.-noon
All ages	
Seasons at Thorn Creek Woods: Wildflowers	Saturday April 2 10:30 a.m.-noon All ages
Prairie Sampler & Trail Workday	Sunday April 10 1-3 p.m.
Ages 12-adult	
Earth Day at Thorn Creek: Wild water	Saturday April 23 1-3 p.m.
All ages	

Newsletter editor:
Judy Dolan Mendelson
Friends: P.O. Box 32,
Richton Park, IL 60471,
dolanmendel@aol.com



The Perfect Gift

Inspired by
Thorn Creek Nature Center
Prairie Chapel
is an original
graphite drawing
by Marikay Peter Witlock

Intrigued by a promise of a patch of prairie, Witlock visited Thorn Creek Nature Center in the late summer of 1988. She left that visit with a vision of prairie and chapel woven as one, and a profound sense of the sacred in the land. *Prairie Chapel* became the first in a series of over 35 drawings combining architectural elements with the grasses and forbs of Illinois.

Available in limited edition of 300 signed and numbered prints

Image size 13" x 17", finished size 18" x 21"

Printed on acid free 80 lb. paper, the reproduction retains every detail
of the original graphite drawing

Through the artist's generosity, this print is available with a donation
to Friends of Thorn Creek Woods of \$75 or more.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Donations to
FRIENDS, over the value of the *Prairie Chapel* print (valued at \$75) are tax-deductible.

Consult your tax advisor.

Donation - \$ _____
Shipping/Handling for a print - \$ 5.00
Total amount enclosed - \$ _____

Mail check made out to: Friends of Thorn Creek Woods
P.O. Box 32, Richton Park, IL 60471

Thank you for your support this past year



- Welcome to New Members: Christian & Linda Whitman, Penny Schnay, April Richards, Celia Powers, Karen Taylor, John Pitt Ray
- Donations to the Friends Capital Fund: David Bartlett, Darlene Obejda, Helen wild in memory of Marian Pike, Kendra Reinshagen, Christian & Linda Whitman, Thomas Wegrzyn, Margrit Withers, Ronald & Jan Harris, Barbara & Dean Zajicek, Linda & Lisa Bronson, Jill Rab, Barbara & Al Sturges, Terry Medhurst, Mary ann Transon, Michele Medhurst & Jeffrey Fortman, Kathleen Van Kampen, Penny Ploski, Joan Crabb, Terri Morandi, Allison McCray
- Donations to the Friends Capital Fund in memory of Gene Gann: Judith Mendelson, Penny Chamberlain, Jim & Sinclair Buchanan, Linda & Lisa Bronson, Homewood Rotary Club, Teresa Brenner, Lynn Rocha, Nancy Lear, Lura & Ryan Macke, Sharon Ryan, Susan Inman,
- Donations to the Friends Capital Fund in memory of Neil Higgins: Nancy Dannels, Anne Marie Leofanti
- Donations to the Friends Capital Fund in memory of Linda Bronson: Carolyn gann, The J.U. Bronson, Jr. Faily, Oak Forest Hospital Rehab, Kenneth Edwards, Judy Johnson,
- Donations to Friends General Purposes Fund: Penny Chamberlain, Darlene Obejda, Kendra Reinshagen, Tava Oosterbaan, Timothy Bainbridge, Linda & Lisa Bronson, Sally Huntley, Linda Gattis, Penny Shnay, Karen Taylor, Henry & Sharon Lorsch, Mark Petnuch, Karen anderson
- Many membership renewals.

Donations of items:

six wildflower plants-Carolyn Gann; box of anti-bacterial wipes, suet cakes, mixed bird seed, cases of water bottles-Penny Chamberlain; twenty washed gourds (for birdhouse program)-Beth Temple. -printer paper, large binder, notebooks, pencil sharpener-Lisa and Linda Bronson; case of water bottles- Mark Petnuch; case of suet Margrit Withers; : \$5 donation- Laurie Walter ; \$10 donation-Jeanine Novak; 10 small storage boxes, 12 packages of adhesive strips, 120-6"x9" envelopes-Linda Gattis; 2 dozen Mazon Creek Fossils-Diane Bedrosian; used lawn mower-Bob Hernandez; new children's nature books and large 3 ring binders- Lisa Bronson; \$40 donation-Hilary Pries; \$500.00 annual fall grant from Thorn Creek Audubon Society; Birding Books- Sue Putnam; Audubon Adventures Newsletters -Thorn Creek Audubon Society; \$50 donation-Park Forest Garden Club; \$100 donation- Dawn Means; T-shirts reordered including a new Maroon long sleeve—Friends of Thorn Creek Woods

Program Assistants:

-Open Hours volunteers: Dave Schmidt, Tom Gallagher, Penny Chamberlain, Mary Lubertozzi, Judy Mendelson, Carolyn Gann, Bob Hernandez, Thorn Creek Audubon Society-(Alice McBride, Lisa and Linda Bronson, Janice Richey, and MaryAnn Mclean).

-April led the Prairie Sampler and Trail Workdays with Monica or Bob assisting. Planted the flowers in the Prairie Sampler, cleared vegetation & mowed Nature Center Loop Trail., removed woody vegetation in Prairie Sampler, cut in drainage channels on all water bars up to the bridge on The Woodland Loop Trail, swept and dug trenches around all the boardwalks, cleared the trail of leaves and washed the outside of the bird viewing window.

-Monica led most of the Seasons at Thorn Creek Woods Hikes, April and Dave Schmidt assisted.

-April led Woodland Wildflower hike with Monica and Dave Schmidt assisting, Fireflies Night Hike with Dave Schmidt assisting, August & fall Seasons at Thorn Creek Woods Hike, Owl Pellet Class and hike with teacher and chaperone assisting.

-Park Forest Summer Camp leaders Kellen and Adina led a hike to Owl Lake Trail.

-Sue Zelek led the Bird Hike, April assisted, Dave Schmidt and Leon Skibinski helped.

-John Yunger, GSU professor led his Environmental Biology classes on hikes.

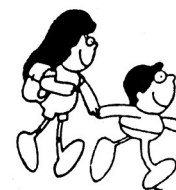
-Pete Soltesz gave presentation on current Bee Keeping for Friends of Thorn Creek Woods Annual Meeting Dan Moore brought supplies to and from Village Hall. Penny Chamberlain, Susan Inman, Alice Hanes hosted tables for t-shirt sales, refreshments, and memberships. Penny Chamberlain, Linda Gattis, Alice Hanes, Jeanine Novak, Ellen Olson, Margrit Withers and Judy Mendelson donated desserts. Susan Inman donated fee for program speaker.

-Artist Pat Moore led Drawing Owls, April assisted.

-Dave Schmidt led Wild Animal Tracks with April.

-April prepared program schedules.

-Trail watcher Leon Skibinski



-Monica prepared themes, outlines and flow charts for Seasons hikes. resigned her position as Assistant Naturalist. Her last day will be September 18.

-April, Monica, Dave Schmidt and Thorn Creek Audubon set up various displays.

-Mike O'Neal maintains our webpage tcwoods.org

-Sue Inman, Carolyn Gann, Janice Richey, Ian Murphy, Marcy Marzuki, Bob Hernandez, Art King, and Judy Mendelson cleaned garlic for upcoming sale. Also, Dave Mauger, Judy Mendelson, Taylor Adams, Toby Talarico, completed garlic harvest. Judy Mendelson, Susan Inman, Marcy Marzuki, Ian Murphy and Janice Richey hosted the garlic sale. Garlic planted at Historic Farm by Carolyn Gann and Dave Mauger.

-Bob Hernandez, Judy Mendelson, Alice Hanes, and Carolyn Gann prepared program brochure mailing. Carolyn Gann helped with the newsletter mailing.

Premise Activities:

-Bob Hernandez repaired Butterfly Garden fence, trimmed overgrowth in parking lot, cleared under back porch and reorganized the woodpile, installed 3 signposts with arrows on Owl Lake Loop Trail and yellow "Caution" sign on the NS Boardwalk, cleaned and sanitized the 6' tables & workday tools, filled the bird feeders, trimmed vegetation around parking lot, opened drains in parking lot, swept up fallen black walnuts in the handicap parking space, patched a soft board on the bridge, helped clean up debris from a fire found off trail near the bridge. Bob generally sweeps and mops nature center once a month.

-A dead tree fell on the bird feeder system and broke the hanger cables, damaged one of the posts and the gutter downspout. Village of Park Forest removed the tree and repaired the gutter. Bob helping to make repairs to feeder system.

-Quality Alarm system has been upgraded to 5G.

-Village of Park Forest replaced the front door of the nature center, installed the Jim Marzuki Memorial Plaque in the Prairie Sampler, and reserved the Village Board Room for the Friends of Thorn Creek's Annual Meeting. -Tinley Park Girl Scouts cleaned all the shelves, unpacked all the materials, and set-up the toddler play space on the Nature Center balcony as a community service project.

-Volunteers also regularly deliver flyers; and Jim Pisani regularly puts out and takes in garbage and recycling bins.

-Tom Gallagher trimmed hedges on side of Nature Center and cleared overgrowth in the parking lot.

-Dave Schmidt assisted in Nature Center chores (filling bird feeders, empty de-humidifier and recycling bin), in placing a trail closed sign on the Nature Center Loop Trail barricade, and replaced a signpost on the Woodland Loop Trail.

-Crete Scout troop carried lumber to back of Nature Center and sorted it for AmeriCorps projects.

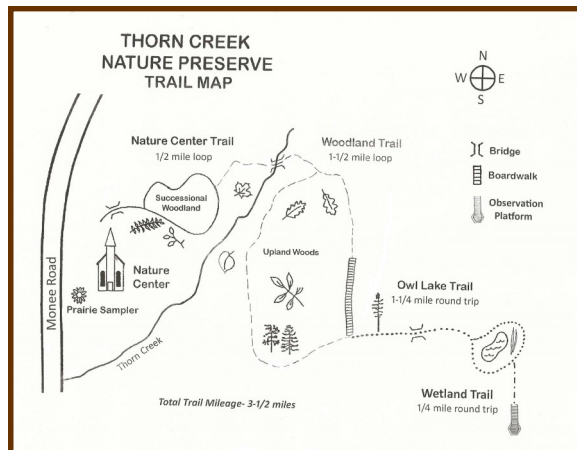
-FPDWC mowed and cleared the Wetland Overlook Trail, Owl Lake Loop Trail and the Owl Lake Trail, including pine tunnel, mowed a walking path at Camp Pompeii, regularly mows and trims Nature Center yard, trimmed overgrowth, & cleared downed trees on NS Boardwalk and Owl Lake Loop Trail, collected landscape waste and old lumber, removed limbs from preserve trails, mowed farm meadows an road, collected paver bricks dumped in parking lot, also collected woody material from workday, and posted warning signs at the trail head concerning the deer cull.

-FPDWC contractors removed the old Lawless house on east side of the preserve.

-FPDWC contracted surveyors surveyed and erected new TCP boundary signs for the state land that recently was turned over to FPDWC. These new boundary signs will also be posted on the rest of the exterior boundaries of preserve.

-April led AmeriCorps Team in the preserve from Aug. 23- 27, Bob Hernandez assisted. The new segment of the Woodland Trail Loop was completed including 2 boardwalks, and 3 water diversion bars. Barricades were also constructed on each side of the defunct trail. Signposts were installed. Also, a boardwalk was installed at the wetland Overlook platform to cover soggy trail. April and Judy Mendelson planned and prepared for the project. Ameri-corps is a grant through the Village of Park Forest. Friends of Thorn Creek woods purchased all the materials and supplies needed.

-Federal/State Agencies placed insect monitoring devices in preserve.



Thank you for your kindness

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

Renew Now!

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

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 Friends **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.

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