

Tallgrass Sierran

September/October 2002 Volume 30 No. 5

THE HEART OF ILLINOIS GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB ♦ P.O. Box 3593, Peoria, IL 61614 ☎ (309) 637-1393

HOI Group Meetings

WED
SEPT 18

Kenya Wildlife

Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.



Maury Brucker and Emiko Yang will present a slide show of their recent trip to Kenya. Travel the forests, savannas, grasslands, and wetland habitats of Kenya with its variety of bird and animal wildlife. The tour includes Mt. Kenya, Masai Mara National Reserve and Lake Nakuru National Park. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

WED
OCT 16

Conservationist of the Year Award,
Poetry, & The Bunkhouse Buckaroos

Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m..



The 2002 Conservationist of the Year Award will be presented to Dave Pittman. Dave and Dave (Grebner) will honor us with readings of their environmental poetry. We will also be entertained by the very popular Bunkhouse Buckaroos. This is a group of local musicians (Dale Goodner, Elroy Limmer, Lou Carter) that has performed to rave reviews throughout the Midwest *Everyone is welcome! Refreshments will be served.*



Forest Fire Protection from Bush Is Fake

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Whatever your personal political preferences are, you should be aware that the Bush administration is exploiting fears from forest fires to gut environmental protections and boost commercial logging in our national forests. While the press focuses on brush and small tree removal, the real deal will let logging companies take good trees and build more roads into backcountry. There are better ways to face the threats of forest fires. The Natural Resources Defense Council is calling for removing hazardous fuels around communities and taking fireproofing measures for homes and restoring natural fires with prescribed burns to reduce fuel buildup and restore healthy forest habitats.

What Were They "Thinking"?

BY RALPH GINN

In the spring of 2002 the Illinois House of Representatives passed, unanimously, the Agriculture Facility Protection Act. A 1,100 word bill introduced by Mary O'Brien (D-Coal City), that pretends to address trespass and vandalism. But aren't these already illegal? Look closely and you will find 16 words buried in the bill, that make unauthorized farm photography punishable by 6 months in jail. I admit cynicism and suggest that those 16 words were the purpose of the bill.

In the long, and mostly unsuccessful, war against factory farms one of the most effective tools has been photography....still pictures and videos. Whistleblowers and aerial watchdogs have brought to the public the horrors of the new age animal farm, and the public has been moved to sympathy. But sympathy does not reside in the hearts of legislators, where money is still king. Celebrities like Tiger Woods, and Julia Roberts would love to have the same protection, proposed by Illinois lawmakers, as Porky and Bossy.

However, this is serious legislation. It would prohibit state inspectors (Dept. of Agriculture, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency) from taking pictures to document their investigations of these farms. Even the big farm friendly Illinois Department of Agriculture is not endorsing this bill. It does have the

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backing of the Farm Bureau...surprise!! The Pork Producers, Beef Association, Corn Growers, Fertilizer and Chemical Association and the City of Chicago. Chicago? Good question, but no answer here, maybe it has something to do with not allowing pickup

trucks on Lakeshore Drive. Then.....maybe not.

The big ag spin is that this bill will protect the food supply from terrorists, and that it would protect state of the art ag technology, and blah, blah. In truth, it is nothing but special interest legislation that seeks to neutralize the opposition's (that's us) most powerful weapon in the fight to preserve a clean rural environment.

So what were Ricca Slone, Dave Leitch, Mike Smith, Keith Sommers, and Don Moffitt thinking when they voted for this pig in a poke? Maybe they didn't do their job and read what they voted for?

There is a crack of light in this sorry scenario, the bill has not been voted by the Senate. They should pinch their noses and flush this aberration all the way to Chicago. Call or write your State Senator.

New Farm Bill Pays Mega Animal Factories

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Giant factory food companies (Tyson, Perdue, Cargill, Smithfield, Murphy Farms, etc.) have their own personal pork barrels in the new farm bill. The new farm bill funds an Environmental Quality Incentives Program to pay animal factories as much as \$450,000 each for "nutrient" management. In this case the word "nutrient" means manure and dead animal carcasses. Your tax dollars are at work assisting the Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) to get rid of their vexing byproducts. Farmers that raise cattle and hogs on pasture get no "nutrient" management funds. Author Gene Logsdon has a lot of insight on low grain prices and points out that government subsidies to grain farmers are a critical part of the growth of CAFOs. The fact is that animal confinement factories depend on cheap grain for the huge amounts of feed they must purchase for their facilities. Gene Logsdon is quoted as saying "What gripes me about all this is not so much the subsidies. The situation in agriculture is so impossible right now that government gravy may be the only answer, all things considered. But I find it downright putrid the way so many agricultural economists continue to claim that large animal factories are the most efficient way to produce meat. They can only say that by blithely ignoring the true costs involved." Logsdon is the author of The Contrary Farmer and lives in Ohio.



We Need You!

HOI Group Seeking Excom Nominations

The HOI Sierra Club is seeking nominations for the annual election of its Group Executive Committee. If you are interested in being considered or would like to nominate a person for consideration, contact Nominating Committee Chair Norman Ewing (686-4122) by October 18. The EXCOM positions will be for a 2-year period (2003-2004).

Any member not considered by the Nominating Committee, but who would like to be on the ballot can submit a petition with the signatures of 15 HOI Group members to Joyce Blumenshine (688-0950) by Oct. 18. Ballots will be mailed with the November-December newsletter and counted at the November HOI Group meeting.



Join the Sierra Club today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag

My Name _____

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Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club

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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32



Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

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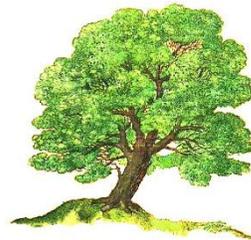


Jane Johnson and Anna Sophia Johnson
Awarded Honorary Doctorate Degrees

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Jane Johnson and Anna Sophia Johnson were awarded Honorary Doctorate Degrees by Knox College, just this June. Their Doctorate Degrees were in recognition of their decades of volunteer work on environmental issues. These ladies are truly awesome. They have saved thousands of acres of ag land from strip mining and worked on behalf of the environment in the face of daunting odds. We all owe them our highest praise and thanks for their dedication and personal sacrifice. Thanks Jane and Anna, for your wonderful work for a better environment for all of us and for future generations. Photo: Rich Wood

Write and Sign the Petition for the Magnificent Mulberry Tree



BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

You may not think that the words “magnificent” and “mulberry” go together, however, there is a grand old male Mulberry tree at 1804 West Forrest Hill Avenue, Peoria, that really fits this description. Current plans for widening Forrest Hill call for destroying this tree. Previous plans for widening Forrest Hill protected this tree. Please stop by Nature’s Own Shoppe, 201 East Lake, Peoria, to sign a petition in favor of preserving this unusual Mulberry tree. Write a letter to your Peoria City Council representative and urge that this tree be saved. The Peoria Urban Forestry Board (PUFAB) made efforts to be sure this tree would be protected when plans were drawn up for the widening of Forrest Hill. This tree is a buffer for street noise and glare, and gives beauty to the private homes on the south side of the street. We need to protect our grand old trees. They have given years of good work in filtering the air and provide much needed green and shade. For more information phone Tom Edwards at 681-9069.



Banner Mine Knockout

BY RALPH GINN

The Banner surface mine proposed by Freeman United Coal company for a 682 acre tract located between Banner Marsh and the north end of Rice Lake is the victim of a clever and courageous Banner Village Board and its president, Kenneth Fuller. Freeman submitted a flawed mining permit request to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) in February of this year. It was sent back to Freeman, deemed by IDNR to be incomplete and needing revisions.

Led by Fuller, the Banner Village Board consulted with an attorney and environmentalists, and then met on August 13 to annexed a one half mile strip of property that bisects the mine site. Protection of a federal flood plane and ground water was cited as justification. The village of Banner and all of its residents rely on wells for their water supply. The knockout punch came a few days later when the Banner Township Board reactivated a road that runs from route 24, near Banner, to a boat launch on the Illinois River. The road, abandoned years ago, will be repaired to accommodate river access traffic. It also crosses the mine site. For now, Freeman's plan for a Banner mine appear to be supine with a nine count tolling.

Macomb Area Residents!

Important Meeting to Oppose Mine

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

There is an urgent need for Macomb area residents to attend a meeting Thursday, September 12th, 6 p.m., at the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Office, 3022 W. Jackson, Macomb. The Illinois Department of Mines and Minerals is holding a hearing regarding plans for a new strip mine on 600 acres of land near Industry, Illinois.

This area has conservation considerations and provides habitat and a rookery for Big Blue Heron along Grindstone Creek. Anyone concerned about the impacts of strip mines on ag land and water quality should attend. If you can help with this effort, phone 309-688-0950.

