



# Tallgrass Sierran

September/October 2004 Volume 32 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 15

**Meet Steve Waterworth**  
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Steve Waterworth is the Democratic candidate for United States Representative in the Illinois 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. A native of rural mason County, he retired from a career in the U.S. Air Force and the 182<sup>nd</sup> Air Lift Wing Reserve Unit in Peoria. He has wide interests in environmental, economic, and social issues. For a more complete review of biographic and issues statements, go to [waterworthforcongress.com](http://waterworthforcongress.com) on the internet and be prepared with your questions and comments.

Also on the program will be a presentation of "Illinois at Risk", the Bush administration's assault on the environment and it's effects on the State of Illinois. Jennifer Hensley with the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club office in Chicago, will give a presentation on the critical environmental issues in Illinois.

*All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

WED  
OCT 20

**Green Architecture**  
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Steve McCardle with the Peoria architectural firm APACE Design will give a presentation on environmental designs incorporated in two recent projects by the firm; the Chillicothe Public Library and the Cuba Unit School District Junior/Senior High School. The designs use natural light, geothermal heating and cooling, photovoltaic panels for electricity and extensive use of recycled materials in the building and athletic field. Come and learn how we can build smarter. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

## Stop the Banner Strip Mine

Public Hearing Scheduled for August 31

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

### Send Your Letters of Concern to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Freeman Coal Company is pushing forward with its proposal to strip mine at the south edge of Banner along the Illinois River. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mines and Minerals, has declared that the application for the strip mine is complete. A public hearing on the application is scheduled for 7 p.m. at the Banner Township Building on Tuesday, August 31st. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also has jurisdiction in this issue as the Freeman mine would impact wetlands, streams and the Illinois River, and is in the flood plain. As of August 6th, the Army Corps Rock Island regional office had not received any application materials for the mine and the Peoria Army Corps office had no information about the mine.

Local Banner area environmental activist John Grisby and his wife Lorraine are leading an effort to stop the mine. Much of the proposed mine area is in the Illinois River flood plain. There are numerous major environmental issues with this mine proposal, including the impact of mining on the river and the water table, concerns for flooding release of toxic mine tailings, pollution from mine equipment and activities, and wetland preservation. The strip mine would border the Banner sewage treatment plant, and John Grigsby questions what would happen if blasting and work on the mine damages the plant,

what would happen to Banner sewage in the interim, and who would pay for the sewage plant repair. Banner residents depend on private well water, and serious concerns exist for the stability and quality of Banner water wells if the strip mine proceeds.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers office in Rock Island only recently learned of the mine application to IDNR. According to Marlyn Schafer at the Corps Rock Island Office, the Army Corps has its own review process, and they look at different aspects than the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Additional issues for the proposed mining area are the location of endangered species, as an endangered plant is known to be in the area and eagles have been known to nest along this river section. There may also be possible archeological survey needs.

Freeman Coal Company is a wholly owned subsidiary of General Dynamics Corporation.

This is not a good place to be strip mining. River and water quality issues for the citizens of Banner and central Illinois as a whole should be an overriding concern. The area also is near the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Banner Marsh and the Rice Lake Fish and Wildlife Conservation areas. One cannot help but wonder why an intensive industrial noise and polluting industry should be allowed to proceed in such an environmentally important location.

Let Joel Brunsvold, Director, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL

(See *Banner Mine*, page 2)



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(Banner Mine, from page 1)

62702-1271 know your concerns about the Freeman Coal Mine and request that your letter be submitted for public comments on the Freeman Coal Company application to mine near Banner, Illinois. Several Heart of Illinois Sierra members will be attending the August 31st meeting. Phone 688-0950 if you need directions or information.

## Petition Drive Continues to Oppose Expansion of the PDC Hazardous Waste Dump

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Tom Edwards, leader in the effort to stop more hazardous waste from being dumped at the west edge of Peoria in the Peoria Disposal Company's landfill, says that about 2,300 signatures on petitions against the toxic waste dump expansion have been collected. Tom spoke at a recent Peoria County Board meeting in an effort to raise concerns about the hazardous waste landfill. Every Sierra member in Peoria County needs to be sure to phone and write their County Board representative and state your concerns and opposition to any PDC hazardous waste dump expansion. No announcement has been made yet by PDC to give the date for a public meeting which must be held before they can proceed with their expansion permit process. For petition forms or to help with door-to-door petition work, phone Tom Edwards at 681-9069.



## New and Expanded Locks are Not Needed

Write or Call Your Senator

BY CHRISTINE FAVILLA, *Three Rivers Project Manager*

The Third Quarter 2004 *Lake and Prairie* newsletter encouraged Sierra Club members to send a letter and/or postcard to the Army Corps of Engineers, requesting them to neither build the proposed 5 new locks and dams nor expand 7 current locks on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. Thank you for taking the time to get those important comments in!

This past month, volunteers traveled to Washington D.C. and spoke with the Members of Congress about the same Navigation Study. Legislators are trying to authorize the expansion and new construction of locks and dams, by putting it in the upcoming Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) in September. They are not waiting to hear the Navigation Study's results from the Army Corps. We need to make sure this project is taken out of the WRDA before it is passed in legislation.

The legislators and their aides told us they need to hear directly from the voters and are awaiting letters or phone calls from all of you. The opposition is contacting them often and we need to get our voices heard. Your voice is exceptionally

important because of the lay of the land – both politically and geographically. No other Sierra Club group is in this position!

Please help us out by sending your U.S. Senator a strong message by writing a letter using the below points. As a note, experience shows that calling your Congressman's office and leaving a message in the voice mailbox of the environmental aide is very effective.

New and/or expanded Locks are not needed because:

- Two panels of the National Academy of Sciences have since concluded that the Corps is employing economic tools that exaggerate the benefits of this project.
- River traffic has been flat since 1980 and has actually declined in recent years.
- Domestic, local use of grain and oilseeds in ethanol plants, feedlots and other processing facilities use a variety of traffic modes, not just barges.
- Unlike longer locks – which would not be completed for decades – congestion management measures like traffic scheduling and helper boats could be implemented right away at a fraction of the cost.

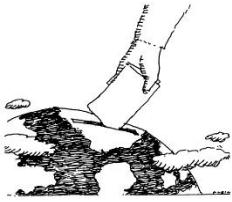
The free phone number to Congress is 1-800-839-5276.

## Doug Franks and Allison Wolverton Selected for 2004 HOI Conservation Award

BY JOSEPH LASZLO

The HOI Executive Board has selected Doug Franks and Allison Wolverton to receive Conservationists of the Year Awards. Allison, a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, founded and directs the Wildsides Wildlife Rehabilitation and Rescue Center in Tazewell County. Since 1996, she and her all-volunteer staff have provided treatment and care of injured, sick or orphaned wildlife. She was a featured speaker at our Group's General Meeting earlier this year. Doug Franks is a long-time prairie restoration activist in Central Illinois. He is the leader of the Prairie Dawgs, who work throughout Jubilee State Park to remove invasive plants and restore native species in the park. Doug also manages prairie outside the park, including sites at the Caterpillar Tech Center in Mossville. He hosted a statewide meeting of the Illinois Native Plant Society at Camp Wokanda this year.

HOI Sierra Club annually recognizes individuals living within its 15-county area who work as volunteers to protect, preserve and enhance our natural environment. We salute this year's winners for their outstanding commitment and contributions to our community. Doug and Allison will receive their awards at the December Potluck Dinner Celebration, December 15, at Forest Park Nature Center.



## Sierra Club Political Endorsements: 2004



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### ☒ John Kerry (D) - President

Senator John Kerry has stood up to polluters and been a champion of protecting human health and the environment during his entire career in public office, from helping organize Massachusetts' first Earth Day in 1970 to opposing the Bush administration's efforts to dismantle environmental gains made over the last century. Highlights of Kerry's environmental record include:

- Advocated strict enforcement of the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, and opposed Bush administration efforts to weaken the laws in order to let polluters put more dangerous toxics into our air and water;
- Advocated restoration of Superfund's "polluter pays" trust fund to ensure that polluters, not ordinary taxpayers, pay to clean up abandoned toxic waste sites;
- Led the charge against the Bush administration's attempts to allow oil drilling in the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge;
- Championed an energy plan that increases fuel economy to reduce the nation's dependence on oil and supports the development of clean, energy-saving technologies and renewable energy to reduce our dependence on other polluting sources of energy;
- And, advocated for the United States to take the lead in international efforts to cut global warming pollution, reverse ozone depletion, protect tropical rain forests, preserve biological diversity and press for sustainable development.

From clean air to clean water to toxics to public lands to energy, we can count on John Kerry to provide leadership, vision, and solutions so that all Americans can have a clean, safe, healthy environment.

-- From the Sierra Club website. Check [sierraclub.org/pressroom/presidential\\_endorsement](http://sierraclub.org/pressroom/presidential_endorsement) for more detailed information on John Kerry's environmental record and positions.

### ☒ Barack Obama (D) - U.S. Senator, Illinois

State Senator Barack Obama has been a leading supporter of environmental protection in the Illinois Senate since his election in 1996. His consistent support for clean air, clean water, safe energy, and conservation of our natural resources has earned him high marks from the Illinois Environmental Council, and regular endorsements from the Sierra Club. Obama's strong record of supporting and championing environmental protection and conservation legislation in Springfield make him one of state government's most important environmental champions. Obama was one of only six State Senators to receive a 100% Environmental Voting Record Award from the Illinois Environmental Council for 2003.

Obama has a personal commitment to the environment particularly cleaning up smog and other pollutants in the air that contribute to asthma attacks among millions of children each year. Obama will work to restore EPA funding that has been cut by the Bush Administration. He will vigorously oppose any attempt to allow drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Obama will work to encourage the use of natural renewable energy sources like wind and solar, will support the development

of new technologies, like hydrogen fuel cells, and in the short term, he will support reasonable fuel efficiency improvements that reduce America's dependence on imported oil. As in Illinois, Obama will support measures that encourage energy efficient construction, increased appliance efficiency, and improvements in industrial energy efficiency.

You can trust Barack Obama in the U.S. Senate because he has consistently supported the public's interest in matters of the environment and health over special interests in Springfield.

-- From Illinois Sierra Club website at [illinois.sierraclub.org/vote/obama.html](http://illinois.sierraclub.org/vote/obama.html). For more information, check out the Illinois Sierra Club website or the official Barack Obama website at [obamaforillinois.com](http://obamaforillinois.com).

### ☒ Lane Evans (D) - U.S. Rep., 17th District

While serving in Congress, Evans has achieved an exemplary record of defending the environment and conserving our natural resources. According to the League of Conservation Voters (LCV), Evans has a pro-environmental voting record of 93% since his election in 1982.

Last year, Evans pro-environmental voting record was 95%. Evans voted against granting special exemptions on pollution limits to oil and gas companies, and against weakening clean air standards. He voted against the Bush administration's falsely named "Healthy Forests Restoration Act" and for forest management rules that would protect homes and communities from the threat of wildfire without undermining public participation and environmental laws. Evans continued to uphold the prohibition on oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and supported increases in automobile fuel efficiency.

(Although most HOI members reside in the 16th Congressional District, a large number also reside in the 17th. Lane Evans is expected to be endorsed by the Illinois Chapter in September.)

### ☒ Ricca Slone (D) - IL Rep., 92nd District

Representative Slone received a 100% environmental voting record from the Illinois Environmental Council for 2003. She has been a vocal leader for environmental issues through her four terms as Representative, and is a past chair of the Smart Growth Task Force. Rep. Slone serves on eight House committees, including as Vice-Chair of the Environment & Energy Committee, and is on the Subcommittee on Transit. She has sponsored numerous environmental bills, including HB2541 for Open Lands and HB4567 which restricts EPA violators from doing business with the state of Illinois for five years. She is an important environmental advocate, and has particular interests in preserving farmland and minimizing sprawl. She is facing a well-funded Republican challenger who is getting a great deal of publicity in Peoria.

(Ricca Slone has been endorsed by the Heart of Illinois Group and is expected to be endorsed by the Illinois Chapter in September.)

# You Can Make a Difference this Election: Don't Wait

## Reach Out to Encourage Others to Vote to Protect the Environment, for Our Families and for Our Future

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

All of us know that the November 2004 presidential election is a crucible point for our nation in many ways. Each of us needs to push ourselves to talk about the environment and work to bring pro-environmental voters to the polls on November 2nd. The current administration is undermining the clean air act through their misnomer "Clear Skies" legislation which raises mercury pollution and brings a host of other loopholes for power industries to pollute the air. The Bush administration's purposeful obfuscation of intent in their "Healthy Forests" program panders to logging interests and extractive industries such as mining, at the expense of Ameri-

can taxpayers and the integrity of our national resources that we leave for future generations. Even more insidious than these blatant thefts of our quality of environment, is the Bush administration's consistent internal undermining of our regulatory and governmental agencies. Science journals such as "Nature" have regular articles speaking to concerns for the placement of political hacks on scientific boards and the usurpation of science-based decisions by Bush administration politicals. Folks, do not let yourselves be distracted. Whatever "family values" marriage or personally hot button topic that the Bush administration tries to wave to distract voters, whatever terror alerts and troop manipulations are shunted to the front page, ask yourself to go beyond your gut reaction and engage your brain to focus on the long-term environmental issues that will determine the health and well-being of us all.

### Election Calendar:

Sept. 18th, Saturday, 9:30 a.m.	■ League of Women Voters Candidate Forum at the Peoria Public Library, downtown Peoria.
Sept. 23rd	■ Absentee Voting Starts
Sept. 30th	■ First Presidential Debate
Oct. 5th	■ Vice Presidential Debate
Oct. 5th	■ Voter Registration Deadline
Oct 8th	■ Second Presidential Debate
Oct. 13th	■ Third Presidential Debate
Oct. 16th, Saturday, 9:30 a.m.	■ League of Women Voters Candidate Forum at the Peoria Public Library, downtown Peoria
Nov. 2nd, Tuesday, 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.	■ General Election:

***Vote Today!***

## Roadless Area Conservation Rule Under Attack!

Public Comment on Protection for Roadless Conservation Rule Ends September 14th: Send Your Letter/Email Now!

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

In July, the Bush Administration presented a draft proposal which will permanently alter and weaken the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. This places 58.5 million acres of our national forests at risk to destructive road-building, logging and drilling. Under the Bush proposal, management of roadless areas will revert to the directions contained in local forest management plans. Currently, nationwide, forest plans allow road building in about 59% of the 58.5 million acres of inventoried roadless areas. Once the Bush administration draft regulations are finalized, most roadless areas will become vulnerable to new road construction for logging, energy

development, and other commodity uses. Considerable burdens are placed on states if protections are being requested. The Forest Service would retain decision-making authority as the lead agency over all key aspects of the environmental analysis, and the draft regulations provide little incentive for a Governor to engage in the proposed petition and rulemaking process. For more information, see the Center for Biological Diversity website. The Bush draft rule is posted on the U.S. Forest Service website. Write, FAX, or email your request to maintain current strong protections for roadless areas, and to reinstate full protections for the Tongass National

Forest. Say that you want our national forests protected and not given away to corporate special interests. Urge that the Bush Administration proposal not be accepted. Comments must be received by September 14, 2004.

### Mail to:

Content Analysis Team  
ATTN: Roadless State Petitions  
USDA Forest Service  
P.O. Box 221090  
Salt Lake City, UT 84122

Fax: (801) 517-1014

Email: [statepetitionroadless@fs.fed.us](mailto:statepetitionroadless@fs.fed.us)

# Funding for Open Space and Natural Areas Saved

Concerns for IDNR Staff, Ecowatch, and Other Programs in 2005

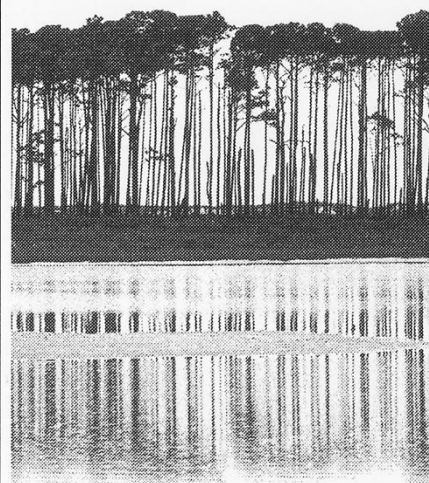
BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Thanks to all of you who made your voices heard! The final version of the 2005 state budget contains the same level of funding for the Open Space Land Acquisition and Development Program and the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund as those programs had in the last fiscal year. A bi-partisan effort succeeded in overcoming Governor Blagojevich's zero budget proposal, and has preserved support for parks, forest preserves and natural areas in the state. Jill Allread, who recently completed her second consecutive three-year term as chair of the Nature Preserves Commission, helped lead the fight to have open spaces funding restored during the end of the legislative session. Conservationists, parks advocates, and hunting, fishing and outdoor groups combined efforts to support the funding. According to an article in the Springfield Telegraph newspaper, many state representatives said they heard more from their constituents on this issue than on any other issue during the latest legislative session.

During the 2004 budget year, the Nature Preserves Commission was funded at \$1.2 million, which paid for a staff of 15

employees in the field working to preserve public and private properties from development. The Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Fund and part of the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund is provided by a dedicated portion of real estate transfer tax revenue. Blagojevich's proposed 2005 state budget took this funding for general revenue, leaving zero funding for these two conservation uses. However, your letters, calls, and emails saved the day. Open Space Lands Acquisition and the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund were restored near the end of budget negotiations.

Concerns that the Illinois Department of Natural Resources will have to cut 140 jobs raise worries for the future of such programs as Ecowatch. A 4% cut in the IDNR budget for 2005 may impact non-union employees the most, and this includes programs such as Ecowatch that are staffed by contract employees. IDNR Director Joel Brunsvold is planning to head a new "Conservation Funding Initiatives Task Force" in an effort to salvage other conservation programs. The first meeting will be October 21st in Springfield.



©Donald Muir Bradburn

## Turn inspiration into preservation.

Like Ansel Adams before him, the work of Donald Muir Bradburn is intensely honest, reflecting the passion of his childhood memories of the Mississippi Barrier Islands, which his photography helped save. For millions of people, the Sierra Club turns that same passion for nature into something just as moving—successful protection of our natural treasures. Insure tomorrow is filled with scenes that inspire. Join us. You'll be in good company.

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Enclose check and mail to:  
Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968

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## Thanks to Governor Blagojevich for Vetoes on Bad ATV Bills

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

The Governor has vetoed two bills passed by the Illinois General Assembly that would have opened the door for all-terrain vehicle trails through Illinois state parks, and would limit the state's authority to police illegal use of ATVs. Blagojevich vetoed Senate Bill 2272, which would have allowed state funds to be used to build tracks for dirt bikes and four-wheelers in existing state parks. He also vetoed S.B. 2273, which would limit the funds available to the state government to enforce existing laws against unsafe off-road vehicle use. Illegal use of ATVs has caused major damage to many areas in Illinois, including Cahokia Mounds historic site, pristine areas of the Shawnee National Forest, and other natural areas. The large tires on ATVs, combined with their ability to drive off established trails, can rip up large amounts of vegetation and cause major erosion problems, particularly on steep terrain.

--- information excerpted from an Illinois Sierra Club article by Jack Darin

# HOI Group Calendar

## September


**7 TUE Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**  
Joyce Blumenshine's home, 2419 E. Reservoir Blvd., Peoria. Call 688-0950 for directions.

**11 SAT HOI Group Hosts State Excom at Chillicothe Public Library**  
Your local Sierra Group is hosting the bimonthly Illinois Sierra Club state board meeting at the new Chillicothe Public Library, 430 Bradley Avenue, in Chillicothe. Stop by from 9:30 a.m. to about 3:00 p.m. to listen to your state EXCOM in action. Topics for the meeting include political endorsements and major state conservation issue updates. The new Chillicothe Library is at the corner of Sycamore and Bradley Ave., across from the Chillicothe High School. Take Cloverdale Road west at the stoplight on Rt. 29 at the south edge of Chillicothe, and then turn north on Bradley Avenue and watch for the lovely green roof for the library at the next corner. The library phone number is 309-274-2719. It's not too late to donate baked goods for the event. Phone 688-0950.

**15 WED Group Meeting, 7 p.m.**  
Forest Park Nature Center. *Meet Steve Waterworth.* Everyone is welcome!

## October

**5 TUE Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**  
Ralph Ginn's home, 20822 N. Blue Ridge Rd., Chillicothe. Call 274-3289 for directions.

**9 SAT Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup, 9 a.m.**   
Meet at the Fry Farm at the intersection of Rt. 40 and Singing Woods Road. Gloves and hard-soled shoes are recommended. Sorry, no helpers under 10 years due to safety concerns. For more information, or if you have not viewed the safety video (required), call Rudy Habben at 685-5605.

**20 WED Group Meeting, 7 p.m.**  
Forest Park Nature Center. *Steve McCardle, Green Architecture.* Everyone is welcome!

**22 FRI Newsletter Deadline**  
Send articles for November/December to: John Wosik, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct., Dunlap, IL 61525, or johnwosik@insightbb.com.

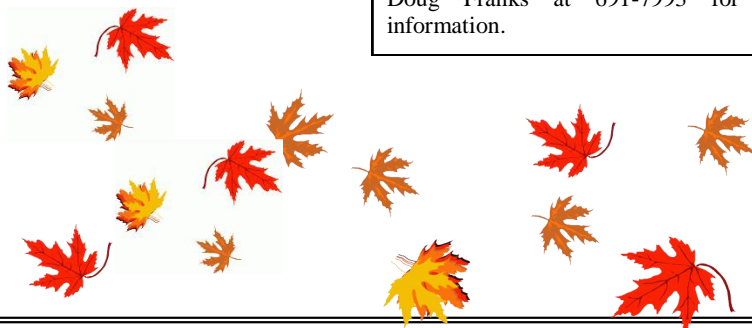
**27 WED Newsletter Mailing, 6:30 p.m.**  
Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 N. Prospect Rd., Peoria Heights

**Other Events:** (Not sponsored by the Sierra Club but provided as a public service.)



### Prairie Dawgs Work Crew

The Prairie Dawgs meet the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month at Jubilee State Park. Work includes prairie burns, brush cutting, eradicating alien plants, native plant seeding, and planting root stock. Call Doug Franks at 691-7993 for more information.



## Great Opportunity for Sierra Members

Nominations for the HOI EXCOM Board are needed by October 20th. Four board positions will be up for election this year. Board members have a range of opportunities from organizing programs for the general meetings, representing HOI at various meetings and events, or being active by contributing ideas. Nominate yourself or send in a nomination for someone that would like to be on the Board. Meetings are held once a month, and are a great way to participate in your local Sierra Group. Send nominations to Joseph Laszlo, 330 S. Barnewolt Dr., Peoria, 61604, or call 637-4692.

## Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

**Hotline:** Local Meetings & Outings • Action Alerts (309) 637-1393  
Contacts • Leave Messages

### Executive Committee

**Chair** . . . . . Norman Ewing . . . 686-4122  
**Vice-Chair** . . . . . Rudy Habben . . . 685-5605  
**Secretary** . . . . . Joyce Blumenshine 688-0950 joblumen@yahoo.com  
**Conservation Chair** Joseph Laszlo . . . 637-4692 laszloja@excite.com  
**Membership Chair** Cindy Ewing . . . . 686-4122  
**Newsletter Editor** . John Wosik . . . . 243-2230 johnwosik@insightbb.com  
**Political Chair** . . . . . Ralph Ginn . . . . . 274-3289 randdginn@bwsys.net



**Treasurer** . . . . . Grayce Mesner . . . 246-8397  
**Calendar Sales** . . . . . Emiko Yang . . . . 691-5213

**HEART OF ILLINOIS**  
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