



# Tallgrass Sierran

July/August 2005 Volume 33 No. 4

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

## HOI Group Meetings

WED  
JULY 20

**Rock Island Trail Walk**  
Pioneer Parkway, 6:30 p.m.

Join in a relaxed walk on the Pioneer Park section of the Rock Island Trail. Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the west side of the Connor Company plumbing supplies building, 1209 W. Pioneer Parkway. Park near the trail/railroad berm. Your Heart of Illinois Sierra Club is a member of the Peoria group Rail-Trail Advocates, lead by George Burrier. They plan new LED lighting for the Rock Island Trail tunnel under Route 6 and other improvements. We will hike to the Rt. 6 tunnel and learn about the status of trail improvements and the link to downtown Peoria. Call 688-0950 for more information.

WED  
AUG 17

**Riverfront Walk & Dinner**  
Gateway Building, 6:30 p.m.

Enjoy an evening out along the river for a comfortable hour hike. Afterward we will stop at the Old Chicago Restaurant near the Gateway Building for an optional late dinner. Meet at the Gateway Building fountain (at the foot of Hamilton Blvd.). Parking is available along Hamilton or in nearby lots. Call 688-0950 for more information.

## Heart of Illinois Group Hosting State Sierra Board in September

Volunteers are needed to help with hosting the Illinois State Sierra Club Board, which will be meeting September 17th, at the Chillicothe Public Library. Donations of baked goods for a morning snack and for dessert at lunch are needed. This is an opportunity to visit a State Sierra board meeting close by. Please phone 688-0950 if you can help with set-up or with baked goods.

## "A Republic, If You Can Keep It" .....Franklin

BY RALPH GINN

When asked what sort of government the Constitutional Convention had formed, Benjamin Franklin replied, "A republic, if you can keep it." Today, there are fundamental changes sweeping our nation at every level of government that don't bode well for keeping our democratic republic. The environmental movement is bleeding a thousand cuts as a consequence. Three changes are most ominous: domination by larger and fewer corporations, the abrupt rise of plutocracy, consolidation of the media into a small number of conglomerates. Each is dangerous for conservation and the environment because each has created its own sphere of influence, prevailing upon government to create laws, regulations, tax cuts, and subsidies that satisfy their insatiable voracity for profit.

Example: Despite a 60% public opinion to preserve the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), the U.S. House and Senate have approved drilling for oil in this pristine wilderness. This, in spite of a predominance of scientific evidence indicating that the oil fields are not large and there is potential for great harm to the extremely fragile ecosystem, its flora, fauna, and indigenous natives. The oil lobby has persuaded a compliant media to present their greed in simplistic and favorable terms: "national security, less dependence on foreign oil, reduced transportation costs and home heating bills." The facts are much different. The U.S. consumes 21 million barrels of oil per day. The Interior Department says that ANWR has about 10 billion barrels of

recoverable oil and by 2025 can produce one million barrels a day, lasting for 30 years. Even at today's consumption rate that is less than 5% of our national use. The National Resources Defense Council says that boosting automobile and light truck fuel efficiency standards to 40 miles per gallon would save 2 million barrels per day and those savings would never run out. Corporate political power has bought a grave on The Capital lawn for such a "silly notion."

The present is not the first time in our nation's history when the wealthy have held great power and privilege in government. In the late nineteenth century "robber barons" amassed huge estates and ruled their congressmen with impunity. Before the Civil War the plantation gentry of the South controlled the wealth and power of half of the country. Since 1980 the wealth gap between the richest 1% and the middle 20% has tripled and is rising at an unprecedented rate. America now has the highest degree of wealth inequality of any major democracy in the world. The environmental movement is largely driven by the middle class and without the ability to buy influence with those in office, conservation and environment groups find their influence waning on many important issues.

Mirroring the trend in corporate numbers, the media is controlled by fewer and fewer companies: General Electric (NBC, CNBC, MSNBC); Time Warner (Time, CNN); News Corp (Fox Network); Disney (ABC); Viacom (CBS). Five companies own 75% of the book market. A few chains own a large share of the newspaper. (See *Republic*, page 2)



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## Annual HOI Picnic & Auction Raises \$300

BY GRAYCE MESNER

The weather could not have been better for our annual picnic/auction on the evening of June 15. We started out listening to James Polk who wanted to ask us to contact ICC and other officials to discourage building along the bluff in East Peoria. As usual there was a good assortment of food and interesting conversation enjoyed by about 20 people.

Before I left home, I thought wouldn't it be nice if there were so many people there that I'd have to give out cards and numbers, in order to keep track of all the bidding. I even took some cards and a marker in case they would be needed. As it turned out, we had more people in attendance than usual, but not enough to use the cards! The auctioneers were Al and Mary Harkrader, who always do a splendid, laid-back, job of getting bids for many items ranging from plants and rocks to home-made bird houses and books, also quite a few bags and some homemade goodies.

Thanks to all who donated items, who put in bids, and to those who donated money above what they actually bid on items! We made \$300 – the second largest amount since I became the treasurer 10 years ago.

*(Republic, from page 1)*

pers and magazines. Don't wonder why the media frequently gives the environment the short straw. Big business is not the natural friend of The Clean Air Act, The Clean Water Act, or The Endangered Species Act. Their instincts are always to greater profit and environmental laws are an impediment.

The public does, however, hold the trump card: **THE VOTE**. The conundrum is how this all powerful tool is used....or not used. We who love our country and are concerned about the environment must be diligent educators of not only the public but our representatives in government. Our republic and our natural heritage depend upon it.

## ATTENTION HEART OF ILLINOIS SIERRA GROUP MEMBERS

Dear Members,

Over the last three years, the funding we receive from the Sierra Club National and State organizations has dwindled substantially. HOI Group is in dire need of support from our members to continue its activities.

How do you benefit from the funds we do receive? The group publishes a newsletter every two months containing current information on speakers, outings and legislative concerns. We host group meetings at Forest Park Nature Center to provide a forum for featured speakers. We provide financial support to local activists, such as those fighting a hazardous waste site expansion and strip-mining in Banner. We finance the group's CAFO water monitors, the telephone hotline, and this newsletter, which is our single biggest expense.

Our group does raise some money through calendar sales, a white elephant auction, a bird seed sale, and we are planning an aluminum can drive for the fall. Over the past few months we have received donations to pay the Forest Park Nature Center room rental. This all helps, but these revenues don't come close to covering our costs. In order to continue activities at current levels we need a contribution from you.

Please send your donation to the P.O. box indicated under the masthead. We appreciate your help.

## Hazardous Waste Landfill Attorney Says Extension Application May Be July

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Brian McGinnes, lead attorney for Peoria Disposal Company (PDC) mentioned that PDC may file for expansion of their hazardous waste landfill next month, which would be July. His comment was made during the question and answer session following a talk by Lois Gibbs, head of the Center for Health, Environment, and Justice, Falls Church, Virginia.

Gibbs spoke at Bradley University June 16<sup>th</sup> on her experiences living in the Love Canal neighborhood in the city of Niagara Falls, New York, during the 1970's and 80's and being the head of the Love Canal Home Owners Association. Tons of chemical wastes had been dumped into Love Canal, and local residents were not informed and suffered severe health affects. Gibbs's comments addressed the Peoria PDC expansion situation. Gibbs said PDC has "duped" and "exploited" the Peoria County

Board, by offering only \$1 per ton of hazardous waste dumped under their proposed agreement for expansion, and that currently the citizens of Peoria County get no additional fees from PDC for all the tons of hazardous waste being buried next to the city. Lois Gibbs urged the people of Peoria to action, as there is this one opportunity to try to stop the hazardous waste landfill expansion. Gibbs said that all landfills eventually leak, and that the treatment given to hazardous waste by mixing it into blocks or paste only delays the time until chemicals begin to leach from the dump. Tom Edwards, River Rescue and founding member of Heart of Illinois Sierra Club arranged for Lois Gibbs to come to Peoria, and has been working endlessly to inform the public and the County Board about issues regarding the PDC toxic waste landfill expansion. Thanks Tom!

## Action Alert!

### Calls and Letters Needed Now! Last Chance for ICC River Bluffs

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Your letters and calls to the Illinois Central College Board of Trustees are urgently needed. Please ask that the wooded bluffs around ICC be protected. These hillsides deserve protection for future generations and for the safety and future of Illinois Central College. ICC can do a great service to the entire public by saving these wooded hillsides from development. The many environmental benefits of having intact, wooded bluffs include protecting the Illinois River from erosion, the advantages of having a continuous tree canopy and woods to provide wildlife habitat, and the potential for environmental education opportunities for ICC. There are serious problems with private devel-

opment of these bluffs. This will be the destruction of yet another section of the Illinois River bluffs. Environmental issues include chemical run-off from residential yards and streets, increased erosion going into the Illinois River, and the destruction of a scenic and valuable woodland. There are serious traffic safety issues with development on these bluffs. Adding more residential traffic and a dangerous turn on the Route 24 hill to the already heavily used and higher speed commuting traffic and ICC student traffic will make a real hazard on the way to ICC. Urge the ICC Trustees to look to the future for ICC and to protect the wooded bluffs around the college.

#### Contact:

Dr. Robert R. Ehrich . . . 1400 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Pekin, IL 61554 ph. 347-4394  
 Mary A. Heller . . . . . 117 East Hanover Place, Peoria, IL 61614 ph. 691-7707  
 Ken A. Hinrichs . . . . . 1517 W. Willcox, Peoria, IL 61604 ph. 682-9812  
 James K. Polk . . . . . 2127 N. Ardell Place, Peoria, IL 61604 ph. 688-4339  
 Jim Sherman . . . . . 710 Bayside Circle, Metamora, IL 61548 ph. 383-4702  
 J.E. (Jerry) Wright . . . 4606 S. Trivoli Road, Trivoli, IL 61569 ph. 362-2616  
 Sue Yoder . . . . . CEFCU, P.O. Box 1715, Peoria, IL 61656 ph. 633-3630  
 Wade Dooley . . . . . Student Trustee, 4021 S. Sheffield, Bartonville, IL 61607  
 ph. 697-5673

Dr. John Erwin . . . . . President, Illinois Central College, 1 College Dr., East Peoria, IL 61635

### Effort to Save Banner Road Goes to Circuit Court

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

The battle to stop a strip mine at the southeast edge of Banner continues. Local residents are appealing the decision of Fulton County Highway Superintendent Bill Kuhn to vacate Prairie Lane Road, which runs from Rt. 24 south of Banner northeast to the Banner Dike Road. Prairie Lane Road crosses fields proposed for strip mining and is considered a key issue in the fight to stop the mining.

At a public hearing in Banner June 1st, Bill Kuhn announced one of the main reasons he determined the road should be vacated was that it did not appear on the 1958 plat book of the area. John Grigsby, long-time Banner resident and key organizer against the strip mine, obtained a letter from the plat book publishers attesting to the fact that plat books are not intended to be used as legal documents. The publishing company wrote that publishers might eliminate a road or make other changes for publication purposes, as the plat books are published only as a guide. The same situation happened during the battle for the Rock Island Trail, as it was not shown in a plat book even though the complete right-of-way was intact.

Banner citizens against the mine are appealing the decision to vacate Prairie Lane Road to the Fulton County Circuit Court. Donations for legal costs are needed and can be mailed to the Grigsby's at 21574 N. US Route 24, Canton, IL 61520. Marc Miller from Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn's office attended the hearing and met with concerned citizens after the meeting.

## State & Local Updates BY RALPH GINN

The Illinois Legislature and Governor have backed off from changes to the Livestock Management Facilities Act (LMFA) that would have weakened environmental regulations for mega-livestock farms. Lobbying efforts by Illinois Stewardship Alliance and Sierra Club were important in this victory.

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John Fink of Pekin is warning, once again this spring, that pesticide drift is damaging trees and shrubs all across Central Illinois. This damage occurs when pesticides are applied improperly and/or on windy days. Look for yellow, curled, or falling leaves. Some trees recover but many will not and those that do can be weakened and become susceptible to disease and insect predation. If you believe your property has been damaged by pesticide misuse, call the Illinois Department of Agriculture's hotline at 1-800-641-3934 or 217-785-2427 for a complaint form.

☐ Yes, I want to join the Sierra Club! My check is enclosed.

Name

Address

City  State  Zip

Introductory ☐ \$25 Individual ☐ \$39 Joint ☐ \$47

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.

Please mail this to Sierra Club,  
P.O. Box 52968, Boulder,  
Colorado, 80322-2968



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# HOI Group Calendar

*July*

**13 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**  
WED John Wosik's home, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct., Dunlap. Call 243-2230 for directions.

**20** **Rock Island Trail Walk,**  
**WED 6:30 p.m.**  
Meet at the Connor Company plumbing  
supplies building, 1209 W. Pioneer Park-  
way. Park near the trail/railroad berm.  
*See front page for more details.*


**31**  
**SUN**

**Banner Dike Road & Prairie Lane Road Hike, 1 p.m.**

Join us for an educational outing to see the proposed area for strip mining at the edge of Banner and to walk on the contested Prairie Lane Road. Bird watching, wildflowers, and Illinois River wetlands along the way. Meet at the Forest Park Nature Center parking lot, far south corner at 1 p.m. Wear sturdy walking shoes and prepare for mud if it has been rainy. *Phone 688-0950 for more information.*

## August

**10 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**  
**WED** Joseph Laszlo's home, 330 S. Barnewolt  
 Dr., Peoria. Call 637-4692 for directions.

**13 SAT** **Bicycle on the Morton Bike Trail, 9 a.m.** 

Bicycle on the newly completed Morton bike trail – educational outing to see how the trail has been completed by problem ravine crossing. Benefits of bicycle commuting considered along the way. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Fondulac Park District building parking lot, 201 Veterans Drive, East Peoria. *Phone 688-0950 for information.*

**17** **Riverfront Walk & Dinner,**  
WED **6:30 p.m.**  
Meet at the Gateway Building in downtown Peoria. *See front page for more details.*




**20**  
**SAT**

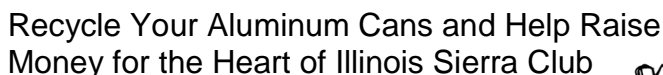
**Newsletter Deadline**  
Send articles for September/October to:  
John Wosik, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct.,  
Dunlap, IL 61525, or  
[johnwosik@insightbb.com](mailto:johnwosik@insightbb.com).

**29 MON 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.



Save your aluminum cans over the summer and help raise money for the Heart of Illinois Sierra Club! Drop off your cans at Forest Park Nature Center parking lot at our September 21st Group meeting, or on Saturday, September 24th, from 10 a.m. to noon. Your donation will help finance HOI Group operating expenses, including this newsletter. Please call 243-2230 for more information. *Thank you for your support!*



# Conservationist of the Year Nominations Sought

The HOI Executive Committee is seeking nominations for the **Heart of Illinois Conservationist of the Year**. The nominee does not have to be a Sierra Club member.

This individual's conservation efforts should have been pursued on a volunteer basis, not for pay. Your nomination should include a brief explanation of why you feel this person should be considered. The deadline for nominations is August 10th. The winner will be announced at our September Group meeting. Send nominations to **John Wosik, c/o HOI Sierra Club, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct., Dunlap; or call 243-2230.**

# Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

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

## Executive Committee

<b>Chair</b> . . . . .	Joseph Laszlo . . . .	637-4692	laszloja@excite.com
<b>Vice-Chair</b> . . . . .	Rudy Habben . . . .	685-5605	
<b>Conservation Chair</b> . . . . .	Ralph Ginn . . . . .	274-3289	randdginn@bwsys.net
<b>Membership Chair</b> . . . . .	Norman Ewing . . . .	686-4122	
<b>Outings Chair</b> . . . . .	Joyce Blumenshine . . . .	688-0950	joblumen@yahoo.com
<b>Political Chair</b> . . . . .	David Grebner . . . .	688-3908	
<b>Newsletter Ed./Sec.</b> . . . . .	John Wosik . . . . .	243-2230	johnwosik@insightbb.com

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

**HEART OF ILLINOIS**

*Sierra Club*

**P.O. Box 3593  
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