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

HOI Group Meetings

WED Nov 16 Springdale - Rebirth of a Cemetery

Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Springdale Cemetery, founded in 1854 and covering 239 acres, contains the graves of many of Peoria's founding families. After years of mismanagement and decline, the State took control from the private owners and placed control with the Springdale Historic Preservation Foundation. Pat Lewis, Springdale's general manager, will present a program on the rebirth of the cemetery and plans to control erosion along the creek and from the hillsides. This is an opportunity for your volunteer help in the restoration project. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*



Annual Christmas Potluck & Slides Party Forest Park Nature Center, 6:30 p.m.

Bring your favorite food to share and a dozen or so slides from your latest trip or event, for a holiday time get-together. The Nature Center will be decked for the season, and this is a great chance to enjoy a relaxing evening during the holidaze. Bring some friends! Hot and cold drinks will be provided. You will need your own table service and a good appetite! A projector will be available for showing a sampling of slides after dinner, and you will see your fellow/friend Sierrans in action!

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club Christmas Birdseed Sale Order Form Inside.

An Unholy Trio

BY RALPH GINN

Katrina, Rita, and the Iraq War have coalesced to push environmental issues off the back burner and onto the floor. The politics of "saving face", after belated aid to the hurricane victims by the federals, will cost your children and grandchildren handsomely, because they will be the ones who get the bill. The tab for the "War Without End" will be an attachment.

It didn't take long to see that these disasters may divert environmental rules and regulations in the wrong direction. The U.S. House of Representatives wasted no time in writing a bill that would end a 24 year old ban on drilling for oil and gas off coastal shores and in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. On September 30 The House passed legislation that would expand private property rights and overhaul the 1973 Endangered Species Act. You can guess what "overhaul" means. This piece of legislation is more than ominous, the Endangered Species Act is, along with the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, a cornerstone of environmental safeguard. Not only animals and plants receive protection, but critical habitat as well. Seeking to stimulate new construction of oil refineries and pipelines, The House also passed a bill that would expand subsidies to oil companies, allow an increase in polluting emissions, waive fuel-additive requirements, and reduce air quality standards. In a note of irony, President Bush, after jetting back and forth between Louisiana and Washington seven times in 15 days, asked Americans to conserve gasoline by driving less. A week later, the financial news reported that Hummer sales were up 75 percent.

Hurricanes are correctly classified as an act of nature, global warming is not. The higher than normal gulf water temperatures undoubtedly intensified the strength and size of Katrina and Rita. That global warming was a factor is debatable but gaining creditability with many climatologists. The Iraq War supports White House and congressional propaganda that proposes weakening environmental regulations and drilling in highly sensitive areas in the name of "energy independence". To paraphrase a quote from a Time Magazine contributor, we can pull out of Iraq now and it will fall into civil war, or we can wait 12 months, 24 months, 36 months, pull out and it will fall into a civil war. But, more than a few pundits would say it's already a civil war.

Help

For a long time I have been puzzled by the general apathy of modern religion toward the environment. There are exceptions, of course, some individuals are very supportive of the environmental ethic and there is at least one church in America that practices a strong environmental commitment. But, in the entirety of religion only Native Americans and a few of the Asian based faiths consistently teach reverence for the biotic and physical world. Three months ago, I decided to solicit comments about why

(See **Help**, page 2)



Comprehensive Sex Education: For Healthy Youth and a Healthy Planet

SARAH FAIRCHILD, NATIONAL STAFF
SIERRA CLUB'S GLOBAL POPULATION AND ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

The Population and Environment Connection

This year, world population will increase by more than 73 million people, and a billion people will be added to the planet between 2000 and 2015. Environmental dilemmas such as biodiversity loss, deforestation, global warming and the spread of pollutants are exacerbated by rapid population growth. With almost one-half of the global population under the age of 25, the choices young people make today will have a tremendous impact on the world for this and future generations.

Support for voluntary family planning, reproductive health care and sex education programs plays a critical role in the global effort to curb population growth and helps to ensure a more sustainable environmental future. One of the best ways we can slow population growth here in the United States is to advocate for policies and programs that effectively work to address the occurrence of teenage pregnancy. In comparison with most other developed countries, U.S. teen pregnancy rates are the highest.

Why Comprehensive Sex Education?

Comprehensive sex education programs can reduce teen pregnancy rates. These programs give youth information about how and when to obtain health care and how to negotiate relationships. Combining an abstinence message and information about contraception, they have proven effective in delaying the onset age of sexual intercourse, reducing the number of partners young people have and increasing contraception use. Yet, NO federal dollars are invested in these programs. Instead, funding has poured into abstinence-only curricula that often contain scientifically inaccurate information. Their "lessons" are ineffective in reducing teen pregnancy and, moreover, at preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

While over 90% of sex education teachers in Illinois want to take a comprehensive approach to sex education, most do not have the resources or curriculum available. The Illinois Campaign for Responsible Sex Education, with the support of 80 organizations statewide, including Sierra Club, is working to mobilize community members to help change this reality and the future of sex education in Illinois. One way the campaign is doing this is by supporting SB 457, the Responsible Sex Education Program. Introduced by Senator Carol Ronen (D-Chicago), SB 457 would create a grants initiative to help schools and communities that choose to implement comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education programs.

Because the only funds schools can currently access come from the federal government for abstinence-only programs, Illinois youth are being left in the dark, unprepared, and unsafe. SB 457 is not a mandate, but gives local school officials a choice. This is a crucial time for teachers, parents, community members and activists to raise their voices about the need for providing information to Illinois youth on how to be responsible, safe and lead healthy lives.

Take Action

You can take action! Find our more about the Illinois Campaign for Responsible Sex Education at http://www.responsiblesexed.org. Sign onto the campaign! Make your voice heard and let your state Senator know that as an environmentalist and a concerned citizen, you support SB 457 and want comprehensive sex education programs available for Illinois youth.

Find out more about Sierra Club's Global Population and Environment Program at http://www.sierraclub.org/population. For information about the Club's involvement with the campaign,

(Help, from page 1)

religious and environmental groups do not have a closer relationship, with a goal of publishing some of the comments in an article for the *Tall-grass Sierran*. *I sent more than 20 inquiries to church leaders and a few lay people*, I received a response from only three. The comments I did receive were excellent, but I need more and a broader range of views.

I am asking you, our members and readers, to contribute a paragraph or two on this topic. We may have do some editing, depending upon space, but I would send each of you a draft, with your option for changes or electing not to have your comments appear in the newsletter. **PLEASE** consider taking part in this exchange of ideas. My phone and email are on the back page, my address is 20822 Blue Ridge Rd. Chillicothe, IL 61523

- Ralph Ginn

Thanks to Representative LaHood and Peoria City Staff

Action on the Kellar Branch Line Means Trail Can Proceed

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Special thanks go to Representative Ray LaHood for his efforts on behalf of the Rock Island Trail extension. Representative LaHood provided essential momentum in getting the involved parties to meet and in contacting the Surface Transportation Board to urge a decision on the Kellar Branch Line. Peoria City Manager Randy Oliver, City Attorney Randy Ray, and City Engineer Steve Van Winkle worked to obtain the needed agreements under challenging circumstances. After years of delay Mayor Ardis and the City Council can celebrate a resolution in the trail contention. Citizens of Peoria can look forward to a safe north/south bicycling, hiking, and jogging trail through the city.

Black Partridge Park Has a Bright Future

By Joyce Blumenshine

Ed Willi of Metamora was actually dancing with happiness at the Heart of Illinois Sierra Club September hike at Black Partridge Park. Ed discussed how the Metamora Park Board had voted in August to have much of the park listed as a Land and Water Reserve, which will protect the woods from future development schemes. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources officially listed the park on August 8th of this year, and 287.5 acres are now protected for future generations

Ed is a survivor and a fighter, and he has seen a lot of troubling times for the park. As one of the founders of the Black Partridge Park Conservancy and a leader in the battle to save the park from being turned into a golf course resort, Ed spent years of effort and personal sacrifice to turn the tide for protection of the park. During the worst of the controversy over the park, Ed recalled how friends and

neighbors were at odds on the issue. Local residents were afraid to sign petitions to protect the park because retribution against them at their jobs in town or toward their children at school.

Times for the park are a world better now. New park board members have made a strong statement for protection of the park in its natural state. As the largest remnant woodland in all of Woodford County, Black Partridge Park offers birds and critters an impressive expanse of unbroken tree canopy and habitat. Ed talked about seeing wild turkeys, coyotes, deer, and other wildlife.

The park offers great hiking and soon there will be three levels of marked trails for different levels of difficulty. Mountain bicycles will also have trails. During the vigorous hike Ed lead for Heart of Illinois Sierra Club, he pointed out new trail markers and work that was being done by helpers from PAMBA, the Peoria Area

Mountain Bikers Association. Ed has done a huge amount of trail work on his own, as one of the park volunteers. Trails are being fit to the contours of the land and best practices for erosion control and trail routing are being considered. Ed would like to see a program for young people going on a regular basis, and has many other hopes for the park. Right now he is savoring true happiness in seeing Black Partridge Park protected for future generations.

Congratulations to Ed Willi, the Black Partridge Park Conservancy members, and all the volunteers and those who cared to save this woodland from destruction. Bill Rutherford had the vision to obtain these woods for a park, and now his legacy will continue for the generations and many birds and animals that will benefit from the park.

2005 HOI Excom Election: Rules and Procedures

- 1. You must be a HOI Sierra Club member to vote.
- Vote for not more than 3 candidates for a 2006-2007 term to the Heart of Illinois Executive Committee.
- 3. Joint memberships may use Ballots #1 and #2.
- 4. Mail ballot(s) to: Joyce Blumenshine

c/o Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

P.O. Box 3593

Peoria, IL 61614

- Write the name of the voting member(s) on the outside of the envelope containing the ballot.
- Ballots must arrive at the Sierra Club's mailbox by Dec. 14, or can be delivered to the Group Meeting on November 16.
- 7. Ballots will be counted by the Election Committee on Dec. 14.

2005 HOI Sierra Club Excom Election Ballot #1

__ Rudy Habben

_ Joseph Laszlo

John Wosik

2005 HOI Sierra Club Excom Election Ballot #2

___ Rudy Habben

Joseph Laszlo

John Wosik

Ballots Due December 14

Heart of Illinois Executive Committee Election: Candidate Statements

Rudy Habben

I am interested in continuing on the HOI Executive Committee because of my interest in trail development and restoration plans for the Illinois River. The next two years should see the building of trails in Peoria and East Peoria. Restoration work has begun on the Emiquon site. I have been a Club member since 1970 and, now retired, can represent the Club on local committees such as the Illinois Bluffs Ecosystems project and Tri-County Planning Commission work groups.

Joseph Laszlo

Over the past six years I have served as Group Chair, Conservation Chair, Secretary, group delegate to Chapter, and led the local Water Sentinels projects. Although I would prefer to have a new activist take

my place on the board, I will endeavor to continue to serve the needs of our group until such time that someone expresses an interest in stepping up to serve.

John Wosik

As a member of the Executive Committee, I will continue as newsletter editor and focus my efforts on encouraging our members to participate in Club activities and in educating the public on environmental issues. We need to make all our members feel that it is of value to be a part of our Group, and that their participation is needed and welcome. Whether one's area of interest is conservation, outings, or politics, we all share an enjoyment of nature, and a desire to see it preserved and protected.

PDC Wants to Expand Its Toxic Waste Landfill in Peoria

BY TOM EDWARDS

Most citizens are still not aware of it, but sitting immediately adjacent to the west edge of the city, home to one of Peoria's densest populations, is a commercial "hazardous waste landfill," one of only two in the state and 15 in the nation. And a proposal to greatly expand it is in the offing.

The landfill is owned by Peoria Disposal Co., and PDC attorney Brian Meginnes announced at the Peoria County Board's October meeting that PDC intends to file in November for a permit to expand.

However, long aware that this was coming, a citizen petition for the board to deny the permit is already circulating (helped by Sierra Club), and now has about 3,000 signatures turned in.

The county has sole authority to grant or deny the permit and its criteria. If granted, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency also governs what can be buried there.

PDC's present IEPA permit allows nearly 1,000 of the most toxic chemicals known to man, and only requires PDC to conduct monthly groundwater checks for just 30 of them. And the checking method can miss problems.

When a like facility in the Chicago area is closed (it is nearly full), Peoria's will be the only one in the greater Midwest. It now is receiving hazardous waste from up to 14 states, IEPA records tell. And in a trade magazine PDC announced its intention to add more states.

This is a vital matter to the health and well being of people because:

- 1. This landfill sits atop the aquifer from which 60% of Peoria's drinking water supply is drawn from relatively shallow wells.
- 2. There is NO monitoring of air pollutants from PDC's landfill despite the dire health consequences (as birth defects) linked to gaseous air emissions of volatile chemicals from a like landfill in New Jersey and such landfills in 5 European countries. And the City of Peoria is directly downwind of it.

In 2002 the USEPA reported Peoria County was a) the highest in toxic chemical releases to the air in the state, and b) 16th in the nation — with PDC's operation a greater source than any other company in the state.

Unlike other such landfills, PDC, headed by Peorian Royal Coulter, pays no fees to the county, and reportedly barely enough to the state to cover groundwater monitoring let alone repairs or calamities after it closes. It could end up in the laps of taxpayers.

Not visible from roadways, the landfill sits on a hilltop, and a high earthen berm keeps it out of view of the thick residential development along its east side. But there is a constant stream of trucks into its entrance off Rt. 8 (Southport Rd.) at Pottstown, and the sound of earth moving machines broadcasts its presence.

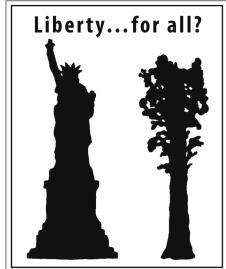
There are already a million tons of toxic waste in the landfill, according to PDC's reports to the IEPA. That's enough to fill 79 of one of Peoria's 30-story Twin Towers buildings. And PDC told the board nearly two years ago that it wants to triple that amount, that is, take in 2 million more tons.

PDC's landfill already has 50 times more toxic waste than the infamous Love Canal in Niagara Falls, N.Y. Its chemicals filtered into that community resulting in severe health problems, and in 1980 residents were evacuated and 600 homes were razed. The clean-up cost \$227 million. That area remains vacant. Also, 37 of the chemicals found in Love Canal are also permitted by the IEPA in PDC's landfill.

PDC asserts that its landfill is safe because its newest holding "cells" have double thickness plastic liners pieced together in them. But experts say, "Every landfill leaks." Also, the chemicals will last, literally, "forever," but not the plastic retainers. However, much or most of the PDC landfill has much lesser liners or none. A major portion, called the "barrel trench," used from 1975 into 1990, has no liners, and the barrels are likely rusted away. Smoke stack like pipes vent gases.

The short of it is: Peoria has a growing mountain of highly toxic waste on the edge of the city and in the heart of the county.

We need to reject PDC expansion, and 1) begin now the permanent closure of this landfill, and 2) become a community voice urging the state and nation to a) develop means to detoxify toxic waste, and b) find beneficial uses for it instead of burying it in the ground where it remains hazardous and a menace.



Giant Sequoias are the most massive trees on the planet—some stand as tall as the Statue of Liberty and date back over 3,000 years, making them among the largest and oldest organisms on Earth. Today, plans to open the Giant Sequoia National Monument to the chainsaws of the logging industry threaten its conservation. We need your help now—only an active citizenry can stop this destructive action that will forever damage treasures such as the Giant Sequoia National Monument.

Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!



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Contributions, gifts and	dues to the Sier	ra 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.

Enclose check and mail to: F94Q W - 0703 1 Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, C0 80322-2968



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



Support your local Heart of Illinois Sierra Club and stock up on bird seed to get you through the winter! All seed is from Kelly Seed Company. All sales must be pre-paid by the order deadline. Call 688-0950 for more information.

Order Deadline:

Order Deadline: Pickup Day: Pickup Location: Optional Delivery: November 28, 2005 Saturday, December 3, 2005, 9 to 11 a.m. Kelly Seed and Hardware Parking Lot, 202 Hamilton Blvd., Peoria Free delivery within 15 miles of Peoria for all orders of \$40 or more. There is a deliver charge of \$10 for all orders under \$40. Delivery is on Saturday, December 3, 2005.								
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 wild bird food makes a nice holiday gift. The basket includes: A 7 lb. bag of wild bird food mix of fruit and oil and striped sunflower seed with a mini Droll Yankee bird feeder. Suet cake with a Heath suet feeder. 		un-	ADDRESS _					
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A 2 lb. bag of thistle seed with a Nyger stocking feeder.			7	TELEPHONE				

Sierra Club Tests Volunteers for Mercury



By Joyce Blumenshine

Pam Burling (right), owner of Junction City Barbers, is shown trimming a hair sample from Heart of Illinois Group member Mary Bodell at the Sierra Club mercury hair testing event in Peoria on October 3rd. Pam volunteered her time and barbershop and cut hair samples from thirty volunteers. Thank you Pam! HOI helpers Diane Jorgensen and Diane Story labeled and bagged the samples, which were sent to a lab for analysis. Illinois Chapter Sierra Club Director Jack Darin and staff member Jen Hensley guided the testing process, and they organized similar testing opportunities in other parts of the state. For more information, go to the Sierra Club national website at www.sierraclub.org and take a look at the mercury hair testing resources.



Action Alerts!

By Joyce Blumenshine

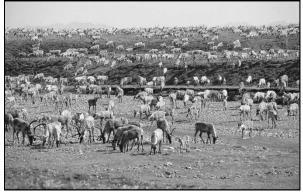
Letters Needed to Save Greenways Position

Please write to Governor Blagojevich and to Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Director Joel Brunsvold to ask that Richard Westfall be retained as the Greenways Coordinator for IDNR. It is essential that the Greenways position be saved, as this office is a key to obtaining grant funds for rail-trail conversions and other greenway projects. Richard Westfall has been instrumental in progress with the Rock Island Trail extension here in Peoria, and with many other Illinois trails. Cutting this position from IDNR is not acceptable. Write to: Governor Rod Blagojevich, 207 Statehouse, Springfield, IL 62706 and to Director Joel Brunsvold, IL Dept. of Natural Resources, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702.

Urge Rep. LaHood to Veto the Federal Budget Bill and Say No to Drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

The House of Representatives' vote on the Federal Budget Bill, which contains provisions for drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, is expected to occur in the early part of November. Please phone Rep. Ray LaHood's Peoria office (phone 309-671-7027) on every Monday up to the vote. Let him know that you are opposed to the Federal Budget for 2006. Among other things, it makes

cuts to Headstart, food stamps, Medicare, and other programs that help our most needy citizens, the elderly and children. Urge Rep. LaHood to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from drilling so that future generations can thank him for having the vision to save the last great wilderness left in America.



Porcupine Caribou herd in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Photo: Ken Whitten

-HOI Group Calendar-

November

Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.

John Wosik's home, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct., Dunlap. Call 243-2230 for directions.

Oppose PDC Landfill, 6 p.m.

Oppose the PDC landfill at the Peoria County Board Meeting, 4th floor, County Building, corner of Main and Jefferson, downtown Peoria. Enter from the Jefferson Street side. Volunteers are needed to arrive promptly at 6 p.m. and hold signs opposing the expansion of the PDC Hazardous Waste Landfill at the west edge of Peoria. Phone 688-0950 for information.

16 Group Meeting, 7 p.m.

Forest Park Nature Center. Pat Lewis, Springdale - Rebirth of a Cemetery. Everyone is welcome!

30 Letter Writing Party, 7 p.m.

Gather together for desserts and an hour of environmental issues letter writing. Bring your issues or choose from fact sheets and sample letters. For more information phone Joyce, 688-0950, or just stop by 2419 East Reservoir, Peoria.

December

Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.

Jovce Blumenshine's home, 2419 E. Reservoir Blvd., Peoria, Call 688-0950 for directions.

Annual Christmas Potluck, & Slides Party, 6:30 p.m. 💆

Forest Park Nature Center. See front page for more information.

22 **Newsletter Deadline**

Send articles for January/February to: John Wosik, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct., Dunlap, IL 61525, iohnwosik@insightbb.com.

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.

January 2006



Newsletter Mailing, 6:30 p.m.

Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 N. Prospect Rd., Peoria Heights

11 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.

Joseph Laszlo's home, 330 S. Barnewolt Dr., Peoria. Call 637-4692 for directions.

18 Group Meeting, 7 p.m.

Forest Park Nature Center. Speaker to be announced in the January/February Tallgrass Sierran.. Everyone is welcome!

Starved Rock Winter Hike

The Heart of Illinois Sierra Club will sponsor their 28th annual winter hike at Starved Rock State Park on Sunday, January 22nd. Everyone is invited to participate in this annual outing. Meet at the Forest Park Nature Center in Peoria Heights at 9 a.m. for the trip to Starved Rock, or meet in the Great Hall of the Starved Rock Lodge at 10:30 a.m.

The approximate 4-hour slow paced outing will explore some of the picturesque areas of the park that should also include bald eagle sightings and other photo opportunities. Dress for the weather, including waterproof footwear and pack a lunch to eat on the trail. On the return trip to Peoria, an optional dinner stop is planned at Mona's Italian Restaurant in Toluca. For additional information, contact Al or Mary Harkrader at 682-8462.

2006 Sierra Club Calendars . . . The Perfect Christmas Gift!



Wilderness Wall Calendar (\$11.95) - Spiral bound, month-by-month format, featuring 12 majestic North American landscapes.

Engagement Calendar (\$12.95) - Week-by-week format, featuring 57 spectacular photographs and 'wire-o' binding.

To order, call Emiko Yang at 691-5213. Calendars will also be on sale at all Group meetings through January.

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

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

Executive Committee

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

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Calendar Sales Emiko Yang 691-5213

HEART OF ILLINOIS Sierra Club 🎉

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. . . To explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth . . .

