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

HOI Group Meetings

Riverfront Walk & Dinner, JULY 18 6:30 p.m.

Meet at Liberty Park, located at the foot of Liberty Street, on Peoria's riverfront. We will take a short walk to the top of the Bob Michael Bridge and then return to the Liberty Park area for dinner at the Rhythm Kitchen. Call 243-2230 for more information. All are welcome!

Aug 15

Bennett's Terraqueous Gardens Walk & Dinner, 6:30 p.m.

Meet at Bennett's Terraqueous Gardens, located along the east side of Rt. 116 in East Peoria, approximately 2.5 miles north of I-74. We will walk the trails of this small 4-acre bluff-side seep. Afterward, we will have dinner at a nearby restaurant chosen by the group. Call 243-2230 for more information. Everyone is welcome!

Conservationist of the Year Nominations Sought

The HOI Executive Committee is seeking nominations for the 2007 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 September 12th. 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.

Dark Matter and the Price of Corn

BY RALPH GINN, Opinion Columnist

Astronomers using NASA's Hubble Space Telescope have discovered a ring of dark matter that formed a few billion years ago when two galaxies collided. They had long hypothesized the existence of dark matter as an additional source of gravity needed to hold galaxies together, but the Hubble pictures are the most solid proof yet of its authenticity. It is estimated that dark matter makes up from one fourth to three fourth's of the universe's mass and theoretically consists of a type of elementary particle unknown in ordinary stars and planets. Although dark matter is not directly visible, it bends light in a way that appears much like a dark ring.

The U.S. government has over the past 75 years created an object similar to dark matter. It is called the "farm bill." Once, but no longer, named "freedom to farm" the farm bill comes up for renewal about every five years and is about to do so again. Added to, subtracted from, tweaked and massaged since the 1930s, the number of congressmen that understand or even read the farm bill is the about the same as the number that understand dark matter. The farm bill is laced with incomprehensible jargon and vestigial programs, and this is no accident. For, you see, the farm bill is not about farming at all, it is about agribusiness and who is better suited to write a bill for the government than the agribusiness lobby.

A few years ago an obesity researcher at the University of Washington named Adam Drewnowski went to the supermarket to solve a mystery. He wanted to know why the most reliable predictor of obesity is a person's wealth. It had been readily observable for many years that the lowest economic class of Americans have the highest incidence of obesity. What Drewnowski found in the supermarket is that a person can buy more calories per dollar in the center section of the store where the processed food and soft drinks reside. Vegetables, fruits, dairy, meat and fish live in the supermarket's periphery. Processed foods are energy dense, contain less water and fiber, contain more fat, are cheaper and richly (no pun intended) deserve their common name, "junk food." For example, a package of Twinkles consists of 39 ingredients, has twice the calories, and sells for about half of what a bunch of carrots cost. For an explanation of this public health contradiction, look no further than the farm bill. The Twinkie is birthed from corn, soybeans and wheat. The farm bill supports these three and, to a much smaller portion, cotton and rice, to the tune of \$25 billion a year. It doesn't take a savant like Will Hunting to understand that the farm bill and public health are working at crosspurposes.

The farm bill has other ugly ripples besides enabling cheap obesity. It has made it possible for American farmers to sell their crops abroad for less than it costs to grow them. The flow of immigrants north from Mexico since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is linked to the flow of corn in the opposite direction. The Mexican gov-

(See Dark Matter, page 2)



Lobbying on the Redrock Wilderness Act

By Bob Jorgensen

On May 23rd HOI Sierra Club members Bob and Diane Jorgensen traveled to Moline, IL to the Senate Office of Barack Obama. They lobbied with Seamus Ahern, head staff member of the office, concerning the Redrock Wilderness Act. The bill is sponsored by Senator Durbin of Illinois. When passed it will set aside 9.4 million acres of wilderness land in Utah. It will protect these majestic areas from ORVs (off road vehicles), from energy companies, and from logging companies. By declaring these acres wilderness areas they will remain wild and untouchable, with no roads, unless Congress someday votes to rescind this act, something that is highly unlikely. Bob and Diane urged the Sierra Club's view that this is such an important piece of legislation that Senator Obama should cosponsor it, giving it more momentum as it comes up for a vote. (He has already said he will vote for the bill.) Mr. Ahern was a very good and supportive listener. He said he would send the literature and briefing notes to Senator Obama as well as advise the Senator to cosponsor the measure. At the end of the meeting all three of us felt that the time was well spent.

Special Thanks to Peoria Heights Mayor Mark Allen

Congratulations and thanks to the Mayor of Peoria Heights, Mark Allen, who announced in early April that he was supporting development of the Kellar Branch trail through the Heights. Mayor Allen chaired two open meetings with the Peoria Heights village board regarding the Kellar Branch. One meeting focused on presentations from Pioneer Rail Corporation and the other meeting had presentations from the Peoria Park District and trail advocates. Mayor Allen has sent a letter to the Surface Transportation Board stating support for trail development. Thank you Mayor Allen!



2006 HOI Conservationist of the Year Presentation

Ted Tourlentes (lower left), HOI Conservationist of the Year 2006 is shown at a special gathering with Rudy Habben, HOI Vice Chair (top left), Ted's mother Mona (middle), and good friends Jane Johnson (upper right) and Anna Johnson at a lunch to celebrate Ted's award. Ted has worked many years in prairie restoration, and his photographs of prairie plants have promoted interest and appreciation of prairie across the area.

Fond Memories and Everlasting Thanks
For
Larry A. Johnson

July 17, 1935 – April 15, 2007

Past Chair and Board Member HOI Sierra
HOI Conservationist of the Year
Leader in Saving and Establishing the Rock Island Trail
Tireless Worker to Save Rice Lake
Environmental Advocate, Politician, and Friend

(Dark Matter, from page 1)

ernment estimates that the flood of grain from the North has displaced two million Mexican farmers and workers off the land since NAFTA.

Other damage from the farm bill is no further away than the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. Per bushel subsidies encourage tilling the maximum amount of land. Soil erosion, siltation and reduced recreation opportunities are the result. Wildlife habitat has dropped precipitously since the 1930s. Although increased barge traffic would exacerbate river bank degradation and siltation, the Army Crops of En-

gineers wants to spend \$5 billion to expand locks and dams on both rivers. Cargill and ADM, the principle grain transporters, congressmen and state legislators applaud. Maybe the worst consequence of the farm bill was that it handed control of the grain markets to agribusiness. Artificially low prices have impoverished small farms and the rural towns they supported. Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) would not have flourished without the low grain prices the farm bill ensured. Now, the small farm is extinct, the moderate sized farm is scarce.

but CAFOs, ADM, Cargill, Smithfield and Monsanto prosper.

Although the same players will be writing and voting this year's farm bill there are reasons to expect change. With the ethanol boom raising corn prices to levels not seen before, the impact on subsidies, exports and CAFOs is an unknown. Organic farming is a \$15 billion industry and will demand a place at the negotiating table. Hopefully, wildlife habitat, moderate sized farms, land stewardship and eaters will claim their rightful place in shaping a true farm bill. Dark matter is a deep mystery, but the farm bill





Far left: David Pittman and Joe Laszlo blow up balloons for a demonstration on CO₂ emissions

Immediate left: Diane Jorgensen and Kiersten Sheets prepare for the CO₂ emissions demonstration.

Bottom left: David Pittman describes the purpose of the demonstration and talks about the first example of CO₂ emission reduction.

Photos: Bob and Diane Jorgensen



HOI Sierra Club at Universal Rhythm Assembly

The HOI Sierra Group participated with a table and demonstration at the Universal Rhythm Assembly, a music and social issues festival on Peoria's riverfront on June 22nd and 23rd. The theme of the HOI Group's presentation was actions you can take to help prevent global warming by reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Examples demonstrated were replacing incandescent light bulbs with CFLs, replacing old appliances with Energy Star appliances and reducing use of gasoline in vehicles. Thanks to David Pittman, Joe Laszlo, Kiersten Sheets, and Bob and Diane Jorgensen for all their efforts in making the HOI Group's participation possible.

National Sierra Says "It Takes 2"

Be Part of the 2% Solution to Cut Carbon Emissions 2 Percent Every Year to 2050

Here's what you can do:

- 1. Replace at least 2 incandescent light bulbs in your house with compact fluorescents (and turn out the lights when you leave a room).
- 2. Make your drive 2 times as efficient by inviting another passenger (or buy a hybrid for your next vehicle).
- 3. Write 2 letters: one to your local newspaper and another to your employer to encourage ways to cut carbon emissions by 2% per year.
- 4. Talk 2 your mayor. If your city is not already a "Cool City", urge your mayor to sign on to the Cool Cities Campaign.
- 5. Take 2 minutes to sign on to the national Sierra petition at action.sierraclub.org/twopercent/.
- 6. Hang your clothes out 2 dry instead of using the dryer.
- 7. Turn down your thermostat 2 degrees.
- 8. Walk or bike 2 work as often as you can.
- 9. Call your local power company and ask them to increase their reliance on renewable energy sources by 2% per year for 40 years.
- 10. Try 2 eat locally grown food and shop at a local farmer's market.
- 11. Check your house 2 be sure it has adequate insulation.
- 12. Write 2 your governor to urge state action on cutting carbon emissions 2% each year for the next 40 years.
- 13. Check **2** see how you are doing. Use the carbon calculator to figure your carbon emissions at www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction/carboncalculator/.

Take a look at the National Sierra website <u>www.sierraclub.org</u> for lots more good information!

Energy Saving You Can Do: Mother Nature's Clothes Dryer



BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Get ready now for your Step #2 for a greener life-style (remember Step #1, previous issue of *Tallgrass*: replace your regular light bulbs with energy-saving bulbs and resolve to ensure they are disposed of properly). Clothes dryers use huge amounts of energy. Hanging clothes out to dry, or in your basement or covered porch, is a great way to cut your power usage and CO2 emissions. Look for a convenient place for your laundry hanging. Maybe one of those retractable clothes lines is just right for you, or a compact clothes pole with multiple arms might be the ticket. It does take more time to hang clothes, but that fresh-air smell for sheets and T-shirts is worth it, especially when you are really cutting your energy use!



Illinois Pollution Control Board Affirms Peoria County Board Vote Hazardous Waste Landfill Expansion Denial Holds

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

On June 21st the Illinois Pollution Control Board (IPCB) voted 4 to 0 to affirm the Peoria County Board vote and actions denying the Peoria Disposal Company (PDC) Hazardous Waste Landfill expansion application. The IPCB review of the record and filings determined that the County Board vote was done within the statutory timeline and was valid. PDC had appealed the May 3, 2006, County decision, contending that the Board failed to act within the statutory timeframe, that the County made no written findings and issued no written decision, that the hearing lacked fundamental fairness, and other issues.

The IPCB ruling also found that the County Board's findings of fact regarding siting criteria were not against "the manifest weight of the evidence." PDC claimed that the County Board voted against the evidence, and had requested that the IPCB send these issues back to the County Board for reconsideration. PDC also wanted to be reimbursed by the County for hearing expenses.

Denial of three of the nine siting criteria, as determined by the County Board, was upheld by the IPCB. The Peoria County Board voted that the landfill expansion: 1) is not necessary to accommodate area waste needs; 2) is not designed, located and operated to protect public

health, safety, and welfare, and 3) is not designed to minimize incompatibility and property value effects. PDC also included criteria 5 in the appeal, because special conditions had been applied with this criteria. The IPCB responded that PDC failed to meet the requirements of criteria 5, which states that the facility expansion is designed to minimize danger from fire, spills, or operational injury, because this criteria was only met with the addition of numerous conditions added in at the hearing.

The special conditions were not included in the original expansion application. With the IPCB decision, PDC failed four of the nine siting criteria. Failure of only one criteria is sufficient to deny the expansion application.

On October 20, 2006, Peoria Families Against Toxic Waste and Heart of Illinois Group Sierra requested permission to file an *amicus curiae brief in* support of the Peoria County Board vote. The IPCB granted this request on December 7, 2006. Attorney David Wentworth, with Hasselberg, Williams, Grebe, Snodgrass & Birdsall Attorneys, Peoria, represented the citizen groups and prepared the *amicus curiae* filing and other documents. The 39 page decision from the IPCB refers many times to the citizen groups' filing. Great thanks and appreciation go to Mr. Wen-

tworth for his extensive work on this case on behalf of HOI Sierra and Peoria Families. The IPCB decision is posted at the Peoria Families' website www.notoxicwaste.org.

Thanks to everyone who wrote comments to the IPCB. 238 comments in support of the Peoria County Board vote were received. You can see the comment letters and filings for the case at the IPCB website http://www.ipcb.state.il.us/ and click on COOL, the Clerk's Office Online and then search by Peoria County. PDC has announced they will appeal the IPCB decision.

Donations Are Needed for Legal Fees

Currently Peoria Families Against Toxic Waste and Heart of Illinois Group volunteers are facing a recent bill of \$15,000 in legal fees for work on the PDC landfill case. Donations of any size will be sincerely appreciated! Please make your check to "Peoria Families Against Toxic Waste" and mail c/o Southside Bank, 119SW Adams St., Peoria, IL 61602-1328, or you can donate online via the Peoria Families Against Toxic Waste website www.notoxicwaste.org and thanks!

Cut Down Your Junk Mail and Support Peoria Families Against Toxic Waste

By Joyce Blumenshine

Fundraiser! Cut down your junk mail and subscribe to "41 Pounds" which will remove your name from junk mail, catalog, and other lists, and will do this for 5 years. See their website at https://www.41pounds.org/

U.S. citizens average 41 pounds of junk mail every year. The average person gets only 1.5 personal letters each week, compared to 10.8 pieces of junk mail. The production and disposal of junk mail consumes more energy than 2.8 million cars and destroys over 100 million trees. What a waste!

When you sign up be sure to use the pull down box under "Supported Organization" so that your subscription will be credited to Peoria Families Against Toxic Waste. \$18 of your subscription fee will go to PFATW. Funds are needed for the ongoing legal fees regarding the Illinois Pollution Control Board Appeal by PDC. Peoria Families and HOI Sierra have legally participated in the case in support of the Peoria County Board decision.

IDNR Office of Mines & Minerals Denies LUMP Petition: Banner Citizens File Suit

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources Office of Mines and Minerals (OMM) has denied the Banner citizens' petition to declare Lands Unsuitable to Mine at Banner. Citizens from the Banner area have filed a legal appeal. Named in the suit are Sam Flood, Acting Director, IDNR; Joe Angleton, Director, OMM; and Scott Fowler, OMM Head of the Land Reclamation Division.

A Lands Unsuitable to Mine Petition (LUMP) is an administrative procedure to have lands protected from mining due to wildlife, environmental, or other issues of overriding importance. The LUMP for 643 acres at Banner included a hydrology study of the area by Chuck Norris, Geo-Hydro, Inc., that showed major concerns for loss of well water and other negative impacts on area hydrology that would occur from mining. Other issues citizens brought forward were impacts on nesting eagles at Rice Lake, the impact on ecotourism being developed along the Route 24 corridor, proximity to Banner Marsh and Rice Lake which are

designated internationally significant migrating bird areas, and the potential for major pollution. All of the proposed mine area is in the 100 year floodplain, and much of it floods on a regular basis, including three times so far in early 2007.

OMM stated in their comments that the citizen LUMP was untimely and that all points raised were without merit. One point made was that it was not sufficient to show that private wells would be affected, but that the LUMP did not prove that alternative water sources, such as the Illinois River or deep underground aquifer near the river, could not be used as alternative water sources. IDNR OMM has until July 5th to respond to the appeal.

Attorneys David Wentworth and Ken Davies of Hasselberg, Williams, Grebe, Snodgrass, & Birdsall, Peoria, are handling the appeal. Donations are needed for ongoing costs. Funds can be given to "Save Rice Lake Area Association," c/o John Grigsby, 19942 North Highway 24, Canton, IL 61520.

Global Warming Solutions Group Meets in June

BY DAVID PITTMAN

The global warming solutions group (GWSG) met for the first time on June 7th. We will meet every first Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the downtown Peoria Public Library second floor meeting room for discussion and organizing to solve global warming. Check us out on the internet on our new link, http:// groups.yahoo.com/group/ ciglobalwarming. We look forward to both your feedback and your activism. Because we want to reach out to churches, schools, and city/county groups, any advice or names of contact people within our 18 county HOI Sierra Group region will be very helpful. Contact David Pittman or Kiersten Sheets, cochairs of the group. Thanks very much to Tracy Fox and Kiersten Sheets for taking on internet set-up and maintenance.

We will focus first on promoting public education efforts to reduce personal CO₂ use with creating lifestyle energy efficiencies and saving money. Examples

such as CFL (Compact Fluorescent Lighting), replacing aging appliances with Energy Star products, reducing gasoline usage by a specific weekly amount and promoting green building design will be part of our public education as we encourage greater political commitment to reducing our regional global warming gas impact. We agree there is a crisis, global and severe. We agree the threat is real, and scientifically documented. We believe it is linked to CO₂ and other global warming gas concentrations rising. We are aware that many people in our community are not as strongly convinced. Part of our commitment will be to show the facts and encourage people to act. We will show films and have public speaker discussions in 2007. We will be a coalition, supported by HOI Sierra. We will reach out to many kinds of local organizations to get their help to create Cool Cities, part of the national Sierra pro-

Illinois Legislature Still In Session

Your Letters and Calls Are Needed!

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Please call and write your state Representative and Senator to urge that they support iSPACE, the Illinois Special Places Acquisition, Conservation, and Enhancement Program. This will provide funding in the Capital Budget for Open Lands acquisition. This funding is contained in Senate Joint Resolution 53 and House Joint Resolution 55.

Ask that \$100 million annually be approved for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Budget to provide for land acquisition, which has been hugely shortshrifted for the last decade. Only 1% of our state is protected for future generations, and Illinois ranks last of all Midwestern states for land protected per capita. Funding for open lands acquisition ran out in 2003, and has not been provided since that time.

Please also phone and write your support for the Affordable and Clean Energy Standards Act, Senate Bill 1184. This legislation is designed to help individuals and businesses cut their electric power bills by utilizing energy efficiency and diversified power sources including wind energy.

Peoria Area Legislators:

Senator Dave Koehler 311 Capitol Bldg. Springfield, IL 62706 Phone: 217-782-8250 Local Phone: 353-6276 Senator Dale Risinger M103F Capitol Bldg. Springfield, IL 62706 Phone: 217-782-1942 Local Phone: 693-4921

Rep. David Leitch 220 Capitol Bldg. Springfield, IL 62706 Phone: 217-782-8108 Local Phone: 685-3900 Rep. Aaron Shock 226-N Stratton Bldg. Springfield, IL 62706 Phone 217-782-3186 Local Phone: 672-9292

HOI EXCOM Nominations Needed

Nominations for the HOI EXCOM Board are needed by October 10th. Three 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, IL 61604, or call 637 -4692.

HOI Group Calendar

July

Global Warming Solutions Group Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Peoria Public Library, 2nd floor conference room, downtown Peoria. Check out http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ ciglobalwarming for more information.

11 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.

David Pittman's home, 2422 W. Moss, Peoria. Call 676-5237 for directions. Optionally, arrive at 6 p.m. for a tour of St. Mary's Cemetery prairie and a barbecue dinner preceding the meeting at 7

18 Riverfront Walk & Dinner, 6:30 p.m.

See front page for details. Everyone is welcome!



Recycle Your Aluminum Cans and Help Raise Money for the **HOI Sierra Club**

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 19th Group meeting, or on Saturday, September 22nd, from 9 to 11 a.m. Please call 243-2230 for more information.

August

Global Warming Solutions Group Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Peoria Public Library, 2nd floor conference room, downtown Peoria. Check out http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ ciglobalwarming for more information.

Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.

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

Bennett's Terraqueous Gardens Walk & Dinner, 6:30 p.m.

See front page for details. Everyone is welcome!

19 **Newsletter Deadline**

Send articles for September/October to: John Wosik, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct, Dunlap, IL 61525, or johnwosik@insightbb.com

Newsletter Mailing, 6:30 p.m. 27

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.

Illinois Renewable Energy and Sustainable Lifestyle Fair

August 11-12 (Sat-Sun)

The Illinois Renewable Energy Association hosts its Sixth Annual Illinois Renewable Energy and Sustainable Lifestyle Fair at the Ogle county Fairgrounds, Oregon, IL. Attend great workshops and get great ideas from sustainable living vendors. Check their website http://www.illinoisrenew.org/ for speakers and displays.

I-Renew Energy Expo

September 9-10 (Sat-Sun)

Mark your calendar for the I-Renew Energy Expo, Solon High School, Solon, Iowa, sponsored by the Iowa Renewable Energy Association. Another opportunity for gaining momentum and means for earth-conscious living. For more information: http://www.irenew.org/

F940 W - 0703



Address City

Chapter newsletter.

Please mail this to Sierra Club,

P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, Colorado, 80322-2968

Appreciation and Thanks
to all those making donations to HOI Sierra Club
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Leslie Erickson

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

Hotline:	Local Meetings & Outlings • Action Alerts	(200) 627 4203
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Vice-Chair	Rudy Habben 685-5605
Co-Secretary	Diane Jorgensen 698-0325 jestpr@aol.com
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Newsletter Edit	or John Wosik 243-2230 johnwosik@insightbb.com

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

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