

Tallgrass Sierran

March/April 2002 Volume 30 No. 2

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

HOI Group Meetings

**WED
MAR 20** Wind Power in Illinois
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Stefan Noe, President of Illinois Wind Energy LLC, will present a progress report on the establishment of Illinois' first wind farm near Tiskilwa in Bureau County. Also invited to attend are two local area residents, who have had their own wind turbines in operation in Edelstein and Chillicothe for the past twenty years. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

**WED
APR 17** Navigation Expansion on the Illinois River
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Mark Beorkrem, Mississippi River Basin Alliance, will speak on "Navigation Expansion Affects on Peoria and the Illinois River." Mark will provide an update on the restarted Corps of Engineers Navigation Expansion study and discuss specifically how the Illinois River and Peoria area might be impacted by navigation system planning. Bring your questions about the rivers and the Army Corps. Mark is the Navigation/Flood Damage Reduction Projects Director of the Mississippi River Basin Alliance and a long-time Sierra Club Upper Mississippi River Basin issues coordinator. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

CALL SENATOR FITZGERALD TODAY!

Senate Vote on the Energy Bill Coming Soon -
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Needs Protection

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Please phone Senator Peter Fitzgerald at his Washington, D.C. office 202-224-2854 or FAX a letter to the Senator to urge him to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and veto any amendments that might call for drilling in the Refuge. Mail letters will be too slow in reaching the Senator, due to mail security steps since 9/11/01. Senator Fitzgerald has voted to protect the Refuge in the past, however, intense pressure will be placed on Senators as the Administration Energy Bill starts in the Senate during the last week of February and first of March. Even if you have phoned/FAXED/or emailed Senator Fitzgerald recently, please contact his office again:

E-mail: senator_fitzgerald@fitzgerald.senate.gov
Chicago office: 312-886-3506
Springfield office: 217-492-5089

Stress that protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is a human rights issue and a civil rights issue for the Native American people that depend on the wildlife that use the Refuge. Stress that the Refuge is also an international issue, as Canada is opposed to drilling in the Refuge. Higher fuel efficiency standards are a much better means of gaining oil independence than drilling in the Refuge, which has only a 6 months supply of oil for the U.S. at current usage.

Ilo Dillin Land: Reprise

BY RALPH GINN

In 1996 Heart of Illinois Sierra Group received a letter from a Bloomington, IL legal firm informing us that Ilo E. Dillin had died and willed us 80 acres of land located two miles northwest of Armington in Tazewell County. Ms Dillin was neither a member of Sierra Club or known to any of us. HOI is technically a group within a state chapter, and a legal entity of (national) Sierra Club. Because national SC has a bylaw that does not permit owning property, we were immediately engulfed in a legal quandary.

At the outset, national SC suggested giving the land to a foundation. We found a reputable foundation in Parklands, also based in Bloomington, and made a verbal agreement that would place ownership in their custody with HOI managing restoration work. This arrangement quickly became mute when national SC, in a spasm of legal paranoia, disclaimed the

property. A \$240,000 market value. Although the land had been in the Dillin family for almost 150 years, national SC feared a toxic waste site lurked below the surface. At about the same time, the executor of Ms. Dillin's estate was accused by the Illinois Attorney General of stealing more than \$40,000 from another part of the estate. Naturally, this chain of events perpetrated a numbing headache for the courts. All of the above occurred in about one and a half years. Since early 1998, the Dillin property lay buried in legal briefs and delays. HOI was excluded from the proceedings and became disillusioned with national SC, the estate executor, and the courts. Until, a small article in the January 13, 2002 Sunday sports page of the Peoria Journal Star announced that the Ilo Dillin 80 acres had been accepted by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources as **see page 2**

■ Ilo Dillin, from page 1 ■ a Pheasant Habitat Area. IDNR will manage the property.

This may be a very welcome outcome. Pheasant Habitat Areas are new to IDNR, this being only the second in the State. Byron Paulson, District Wildlife Biologist for IDNR, says the plan is to establish fields of warm season grasses and, possibly, some tree plantings with a shrub border in the lower field along the creek. In the future a hunting season of approximately 16 days will be offered for wild birds only.



For the Earth.....

Take a Moment of Peace, April 22nd

Celebrate Earth Day 2002 with a Moment of Peace. More than ever, we need to come together as a global community to protect our common home. Environmental degradation is a direct cause of poverty, political instability, and conflict. Through making a Moment of Peace on Monday, April 22nd, individuals around the world seek to shift attention toward peace and the need for international cooperation. For more Earth Day ideas go to the Earth Day Network at



HOI will meet in MACOMB April 20th

A special meeting of the Heart of Illinois Sierra Club will be held at Aurelios Pizza, 221 N. Randolph, Macomb, IL on Saturday April 20th, 12pm. All members and guests are invited. This is an opportunity for our members in the western part of the State to meet executive board members and other members from Central IL. We will be entertained by an outstanding slide show presented by mountaineer Barb Gurtler. Barb will tell the story of her ascent of Denali (Mt. McKinley) in breathtaking slides and relate her perspective as an experienced climber during an ascent when other climbers met death on North America's highest and most weather-brutal peak. Come with an appetite. Pizza and drinks are compliments of HOI.

Car Free Day, Monday, April 22nd

Celebrate Earth Day 2002 by going car free for one day. Car Free Days inspire people to take a look at their daily transportation habits and consider more Earth-friendly ways to get where they need to go. Cars pollute our air, emit carbon dioxide causing Global Warming, and require oil which has devastating effects on humans and the environment. Think about better transportation options and a clean energy future for Earth Day, April 22nd, 2002.



Membership

Yes, I want to help safeguard our nation's precious natural heritage. My check is enclosed.

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Address _____

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Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club

Mastercard Visa Exp Date ____/____

Cardholder Name _____

Card Number _____

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.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

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CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
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SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

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Sierra Club
P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO, 80322-2968

Important!

Corps of Engineers Public Meeting March 12th, Peoria

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will present an overview of its newly re-structured study of the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway at a series of public meetings scheduled throughout the study area during March. The first meeting will be Tuesday, March 12th, Holiday Inn Brandywine, 4400 N. Brandywine Drive, Peoria. An Open House will be held from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. There will be a formal presentation at 5:00 p.m., and a second Open House will be from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Prepared statements can be made after the 5:00 p.m. presentation, but you must register ahead of time if you wish to speak. It is very important that as many pro-river protection individuals attend this meeting as possible. Written comment sheets will be available, and Sierrans need to tell the Corps that the river is a living ecosystem, and should not be sacrificed to expanded barge traffic and larger locks and dams. For more information go to:

<http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/publicaffairsoffice/navigationstudy.htm>

Mutually Exclusive: Politicians and Truth

BY RALPH GINN

The evolution of a politician usually starts with intent to work for the public good, drifts to favors and access for money, retains that nasty trait, and adds arrogance and lying when the job becomes secure. In the U.S. Congress, job security is built into a system that favors incumbents. There are 435 House seats up for election in November of 2002. Thirty to forty will be contested. In the other 400 "contests" the incumbent has either no opposition or a token opponent. Arrogance and lying follow like flies to manure on a hot summer day.

For example, last year the U.S. House passed a farm bill that flies in the face of sound ag economics. It perpetuates low commodity prices, over production, huge subsidies, and is guaranteed to continue the downward spiral of the family farm. It is the failed Freedom to Farm in a thin disguise. Here's what Congressman Ray LaHood (18th district) had to say, "*large landowners aren't receiving the bulk of the farm subsidies.*" Lie! According to even the U.S. Department of Agriculture, always known to be cozy with Big Ag, 10% of the landowners received 65% of the government subsidy in 2001. LaHood goes on to say, "*It's small family farmers that benefit from Freedom to Farm.*" Lying again. Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Veneman says that our system of subsidies helped large commercial operations at the expense of small family farms. And LaHood would be hard pressed to find one ag economist in the country that would agree with him.

At a local level, The Chillicothe (Peoria County) City Council is wrestling with a leaf burning issue. Chillicothe allows leaf burning, but a very vocal group of citizens would like a ban. They oppose burning for health reasons that are well substantiated by medical research. After impassioned pleas by

crying mothers of asthmatic children, the Council has agreed to a survey. Mayor Don White says, "I recognize the health risks with leaf burning, but there are more people out there that enjoy burning leaves than are concerned with health issues." Regrettably, he is correct, but he goes on to say, "*I totally respect the health issue, but in a democracy you've got to get the public input.*" He hits the lie quinella and is this a prejudiced survey? Has this man a hint about representative government?

Back to LaHood. He and his disciples, State Senators, George Shadid, Carl Hawkinson and Claude Stone, and representatives David Leitch, Ricca Slone, Keith Sommer and Michael Smith have recently raised from the grave a part of the

It is no secret that politicians lie, omit facts, shade the truth, fib and avoid answering hard questions. Unfortunately, the public accepts this behavior, and regularly votes these rascals back in office.

Corridor A bypass of the Peoria-to-Chicago expressway. A section that would begin at route 6 and connect with highway 29 at Hart Lane, about one mile north of Chillicothe. Previously, this eightsome had favored an upgrade of route 29, and before that a complete Corridor A from route 6 to I-180 north of Putnam, and before that a ring road from Mossville to route 24 near Washing-

ton. So we can see that changing their minds frequently is an expensive pattern (about 8 million in studies) with this group. LaHood was caught in a lie On Feb. 1, 2002 when he told a meeting of mostly hostile Chillicothe residents, "*I am undecided on the bypass.*" Yet in his Dec. 19, 2001 letter to Illinois Department of Transportation secretary Kirk Brown, LaHood writes, "Our central Illinois legislative team would recommend that the Route 29 four-lane expressway should bypass around Chillicothe."

It is no secret that politicians lie, omit facts, shade the truth, fib and avoid answering hard questions. Unfortunately, the public accepts this behavior, and regularly votes these rascals back in office. It's a shame.

Support the Illinois Wetland Protection Act - House Bill 6013

Help Save Illinois Wetlands Left Open to Destruction by the U.S. Supreme Court



BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

House Bill 6013 would restore protections to wetlands that the federal government is no longer protecting by requiring a permit from the state before anyone could destroy a wetland in Illinois. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources would consult with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to determine if the proposed activity would cause a violation of Illinois' water quality standards. H.B. 6013 would allow for the wetland protection program to be run by county governments, rather than the state, if the county chose to and had a program in place that was as protective as the state program.

Please contact your State Representative and urge her or him to Co-Sponsor the Illinois Wetland Protection Act, H.B. 6013. For Peoria, write to Representative Ricca Slone or Representative David Leitch, State House, Springfield, IL 62706.

