Food Pantries

River Food Pantry
2201 Darwin Rd.
Tues. 11 am–12:30 pm and 5–6:30 pm
Thur., noon–1:30 pm
Fri., 5–7 pm registration on free clothing
Fri., 6 pm dinner served and pantry open

Lakeview Lutheran Church
4001 Mandrake Rd.
You must have a reservation to use this pantry. Call 244-6181 on Mondays from 9–11 am to make a reservation to use the pantry from 5:30–7 pm on Monday evenings.

St. Paul Lutheran Church Bread of Life Food Pantry
2126 N. Sherman Ave.
Wed., 9–11 am

Kennedy Heights Community Center
199 Kennedy Heights
Every Monday from 5–6 pm
for Kennedy Height residents
5:45–6 pm for non-residents

Goodman Community Center
149 Waubesa St.
Tues., 9:30 am–noon
Wed., 6:30–8 pm
Thur., 12:30–3 pm
Sat., 1–3 pm

Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center
953 Jenifer St.
Wed., 1–3 pm

Personal Essentials at Zion Church
The essentials for personal and household hygiene
2165 Linden St.
(1 block north of Atwood Ave.)
Sun., 11:30 am–2 pm
Thur., 11:30 am–6 pm

Help is available to get off the roller coaster of bills

By Nancy Helgesen Lyons
Northside News

The word "fair" makes most people think of rides and cotton candy, but the Community Energy Resource Fair that was held on March 27 on the Northside gave people resources to help them stop climbing the roller coaster hill of increasing bills. If you did not attend, check out the following information that may help you. Representatives from several organizations, including the sponsor, Madison Gas and Electric, shared information about their services that afternoon at the Northport Community Learning Center.

Sue Taylor, an educator with the Financial Education Center, was there to talk about the classes and one-on-one budget counseling her organization offers. Contact the Financial Education Center at 261-5077 for more information. Taylor said, "The biggest thing is to be sure you're not spending more than is coming in."

For many people, that is far from the case, and there are funds and staff available from organizations to help out for people who are income eligible. Mark Van Allen, an energy intake specialist with Energy Services, Inc. said that people can contact ESI at 267-8601 to set up an appointment to find out if their financial situations qualify them to get energy assistance money to help pay for heating bills.

If you qualify for energy assistance help with ESI, you automatically qualify for help from Project Home, an organization which does weatherization in homes to help stop energy waste and save clients' hard earned cash year round, according to Regan Jacobsen, an intake specialist with Project Home. PH can be reached at 246-3737 for more information.

Other service agencies were represented at the Community Energy Resource Fair. United Way offers people in Madison help just by calling "211". People who answer that line are trained to help connect callers to organizations and resources. The North East Side Coalition of Older Adults can be reached at 243-5252. Residents needing help with their food bills can apply for FoodShare, a federally-funded program administered locally by the Second Harvest Foodbank, according to Kim Grafenauer, outreach specialist. The FoodShare Helpline is 1-877-366-3635. The Dane County Timebank can be contacted at 608-663-0400 for information on how to use this alternative to using money to get help from other Timebank members.

Personal actions can also help save energy and money. Charles Warner, a residential services specialist III with Madison Gas and Electric, shared some steps people can take, including buying things from light bulbs to appliances that have the Energy Star label, which means that they are extremely energy efficient.

Puree Turner, who attended Warner's talk, said, "Some things that I learned that I could do are unplugging everything that you're not using, lowering the a.c. and heat, and switching to compact fluorescent light bulbs."

The EnAct organization offers a downloadable book that is designed to build community as small groups get together to learn about actions that benefit the environment and people's wallets. EnAct: Steps for Greener Living is available for free downloading or for purchase at www.enactwi.org or call 608-204-2888. It's also at Madison libraries. Maria Sadowski, community relations manager with EnAct, said "If people meet to talk about energy issues, we can get people to help each other. Sharing is the most cost-saving, community-building thing that people can do."

2-1-1

First Call For Help

Call 211 (First Call For Help) to get information on a wide range of services in Dane County, including assistance with basic life needs and personal assistance. This helpful resource is free and confidential, 24 hours a day.

Resources for food, shelter, financial and legal assistance, health and mental health care, drug and alcohol problems, child and elder care, community gardens, support groups and much more is available from this help number.

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COMMUNITY

From
Michael Schumacher

District 18 Alderperson

Tidbits of information

Google is launching an experiment to bring "ultra-high speed broadband" to just one city in the United States, and Madison fits their stated criteria. The Google Fiber trial network would offer Internet speeds more than 100 times faster than what most of us have today at a competitive price. Check out www.madfiber.net.

Completing the Census 2010 is critical to Madison and the Northside. Every year, the federal government allocates more than $400 billion to states and communities based, in part, on census data. Census data are used to determine locations for retail stores, schools, hospitals, new housing developments and other community facilities. For more info see www.census.gov.

Don't forget to subscribe to the successful City's AlertMadison text message system.

Once subscribed (at no cost) you will have the option of receiving alerts for Metro rider and detour, Para-transit, weather including declared snow emergencies and supplemental school service via text/email messaging. Go to my.cityofmadison.com.

During the last few years the City has expanded its online Report a Problem capabilities. The following self reporting services are available at www.cityofmadison.com/reportaProblem:

Abandoned Vehicle on Private Property • Drinking Water Quality & Pressure • Bikeway Concerns • Brush Collection • Consumer Complaint • Dead Animal Collection • Erosion Control • Exterior Housing • Graffiti • Interior Housing Problem • Mailbox Damaged from a City Snow Plow • Parking Enforcement • Pothole Concern • Recycle Collection • Refuse Collection • Refuse and Recycling Carts • Sewer Access Covers • Sidewalk Concern • Sign Violation • Snow Removal • Traffic Enforcement • Traffic Signals, Street Lights and Signs Requests • Tree Concerns • Weeds and Overgrown Vegetation.

Of course you can continue to contact City staff or me directly for more assistance related to our City services.

Have a great spring.

Grassroots Leadership College hosts community organizing event

By Amy Mondloch

The Grassroots Leadership College (GLC), a small Madison based nonprofit organization has made a big impact since its inception seven years ago. It has supported the development of more than 100 different community projects in the Greater Madison area.

GLC has not only supported projects, it has also supported the development of the leaders who drove those projects. Now GLC itself is graduating from working with individuals, to supporting whole organizations. On Sat., May 22, from 10 am–4 pm, community organizations, activists and supporters of community organizing are invited to come together for "Tools for Community Organizing: Building Our Toolbox." The event will be held at MATC's Truax campus.

"This event is really something exciting for Madison," said GLC director Amy S. Mondloch. "The GLC is built on the idea that everyone is a learner, everyone is a teacher, and everyone is a leader. For the forum this means that we are bringing in the experts — that is the folks on the ground who are doing the good work all around our communities."

Event co-organizer Sarah Hallas said: "The people who come to the forum will be creating the agenda for the day based on what they want to learn and what they have to share. People should come ready to work, ready to network, and ready to have a whole lot of fun!"

Individuals and groups can register online at www.grassrootsleadershipcollege.org or call 608-441-0085. Lunch and childcare will be provided. Interpreters are also available for Spanish speakers.

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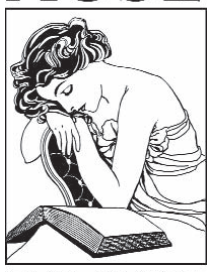

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Lakeview Lutheran Church to hold annual Rummage Sale May 14

The third annual Lakeview Lutheran Church Rummage Sale will be Fri., May 14 (7 am–7 pm) and Sat., May 15 (8 am–noon). Lakeview Lutheran is located at the corner of Northport Drive and Mandrake Road on Madison's Northside.

Lakeview Lutheran Church has an established reputation for having a strong outreach program and relies on several fundraising events during the year. The proceeds from this rummage sale will be used to fund two specific areas:

Lakeview Lutheran has partnered with The Road Home Dane County as a host congregation (see article on page 8). Half of the rummage sale proceeds will go to fund The Road Home programming. www.trhome.org

Lakeview Lutheran Church is used every day of the week for community activities and as a result is in dire need of some basic building needs. This year a portion of the carpeting will be replaced using half of the funds from the rummage sale.

In 2008 and 2009, the huge East Hall at Lakeview was filled to overflowing with rummage sale treasures. Antiques, furniture, housewares, sporting equipment, toys, games, automotive care items, "brand new still in the box" items, books, CDs, DVDs, yarn, fabric, children's clothing, you name it, it was there!

If you would like to donate to the sale please contact the church office at 244-6181 to get more information. All unsold items will be donated to St. Vincent De Paul.

Lake View Hill Neighborhood Association

By Lorie Walker

Spring is finally here, the days are longer, the evenings warmer, and as with the change in season, so too the Neighborhood Association has changed. New officers were elected at the annual meeting in February. We say goodbye to Char Tortorice as president. We are very grateful to have had Char's stellar leadership and gracious heart in creating a neighborhood that truly is a great place to live. As a resident of the Northside for 12 years, I am excited to take on the role of president this year and to have a more active role in sharing and shaping the neighborhood's destiny. We are also happy to add Kelly Olson to our slate of officers as vice president and grateful that Diana Quinn will continue to serve as secretary and Sue Gleason will remain treasurer.

We hope to have an exciting and active year filled with fun events and continued opportunities for neighbors to meet and get to know each other. It looks like the weekend of May 15 will offer our first opportunity for Northside residents to mingle, with a plan to do a community garage sale together. In July, the association will host the annual picnic in Sunfield Park, always a popular event; we hope you all join us on the May 18 for fun, food and friends.

In an effort to keep our neighborhood green, LVNHA signed up to participate in the MG&E Neighborhood Green Challenge Program. The Green Challenge Program was developed to increase the use of renewable energy sources. The challenge is for neighborhoods to go beyond the current levels of green power use and to significantly reduce environmental impact of energy use. The neighborhood with the largest percent increase in participants in the Green Power challenge will receive $1,000. The neighborhood with the second highest increase in participants will receive $500. The program runs from Jan. 1–Sept. 30. Let's make LVHNA a green winner, sign up today at www.mge.com. Look for the Green Power Tomorrow link on the bottom of the home page.

Please join us this year by participating in one of the many opportunities to meet your neighbors, become involved in your community and keep LVHNA the greenest neighborhood in the City. Happy Spring!

COMMUNITY

From

Satya Rhodes-Conway

District 12 Supervisor

Here's a bit of good news. Part of the resurfacing of STH 113 – Pennsylvania Avenue and Packers Avenue – will be done in 2011 (instead of 2013). And starting in August 2010, the city will start improving the pavement and safety on North Sherman Avenue between Northport and Trailsway. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements will also be made on Aberg, Commercial and Fordem. Please visit my website at www.cityofmadison.com/council/district12/initiatives.cfm for more information on these projects. Also posted on my website is our "road construction survival guide" and information about temporary signs to help businesses prepare.

Work on improving the Warner Park parking lot will start this summer/fall (finally!). The designs were approved at a recent Parks Commission meeting — the lot is going to be much, much nicer. This project will be implemented over three years. Much of this work was recommended in the new Northside Plan. We're working on some of the other recommendations as well: including how we're going to landscape and bring in public art along Northport and Sherman and in Warner Park. If you're interested in helping, please let me know.

Another new venture will be the installation of a dog park at Demetral Field. While this still has to be approved, I anticipate that it will be in the area at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Commercial Avenue.

It may seem early to be thinking about it, but we have started planning for Rhythm and Booms. If you're interested in knowing when the meetings are, please let me know.

Finally, you may have heard that Madison is getting high-speed rail. Where we put the station is a big decision — locations along the tracks from Union Corners to the Dane County Airport have been proposed, as well as downtown sites. What do you think? Let me know!

Until next time, happy spring!

From

Dennis McQuade

241-4849

Community Social Worker

Services for eviction prevention, homelessness and those facing possible foreclosure

During the ongoing recession, more and more Northsiders are sometimes in danger of becoming homeless. In 2005 there were about 40 foreclosures per month in Dane County. But, in the last year, that number has risen to between 150 and 175 per month.

If you are concerned about your home being foreclosed, Homeowner's HOPE, at 888-995-4673, is a highly recommended resource. This toll-free number is answered 24 hours a day by highly trained, compassionate credit counselors, who will help you establish a budget, understand the terms of your loan and talk with your financial institution.

Two other resources that help homeowners facing foreclosure are the City of Madison Foreclosure Prevention Program (through the Dane County Housing Authority) 261-5677 and GreenPath Debt Solutions – (888) 776-6735.

For renters needing assistance, the Tenant Resource Center's Housing Help Desk, 242-7406, is located at the Dane County Job Center at 1819 Aberg Ave., Room 2. The Help Desk provides information, applications and referrals to assist people in finding and maintaining rental housing.

In addition, the Salvation Army of Dane County at 630 E. Washington Ave. in Madison, 256-2321, provides temporary shelter for families and single women, as well as other services for those in danger of becoming homeless and those who are homeless.

Also, Porchlight provides shelter for homeless men at the Grace Episcopal Church, 116 W. Washington Ave., 255-2960. Intake is from 7:30-10 pm. Porchlight also provides other services to the homeless, including financial assistance for eviction prevention. Call the main office at 257-2534, to obtain more information.

As described elsewhere in this issue by Marlene Hardick, the Road Home serves homeless families with children in collaboration with local faith communities and organizations. The main office is located at 128 E. Olin Ave., Suite #202, Madison, WI 53713. You may obtain more information about the Road Home by calling 294-7998.

Finally, on the Northside, CAC Housing Case Manager Marilyn Feil is a member of the Joining Forces for Families Team at the Vera Court Neighborhood Center. The best time to reach Marilyn is Wednesdays from 10 am-noon by calling 241-4849. Community Social Worker Dennis McQuade is also available to assist in linking homeless people to appropriate resources. The best time to reach Dennis is 9 am– noon Tuesdays and 1-4:30 pm on Thursdays. If no one is available when you contact the JFF office, you can try calling 240-2045 or just leave a message on voicemail.

Kennedy Heights Community Center food pantry is growing

By Alyssa Kenney

Kennedy Heights Community Center has hosted a weekly food pantry on the Northside of Madison for the past 15 years. The food pantry is open Monday evenings from 5–6:15 pm. Each week, 30–50 families visit the pantry to access food and nutritional information. The food pantry depends on community volunteers to run it and for donations of money and food to fill the shelves.

February is often a difficult time of year for food pantries to fill their shelves. This year the children and staff at Lindbergh Elementary School hosted a food drive to benefit the Kennedy Heights food pantry. With Lindbergh School's help the pantry was able to get food into the homes of those who needed it. Thank you for supporting Kennedy Heights' food pantry.

More good news for the food pantry arrived at the center in early March. The Kennedy Heights Community Center learned that our food pantry will receive a Madison Rotary Foundation grant. The grant will provide 100 Thanksgiving Baskets for families and $1,000 towards getting food for the pantry. It is wonderful to already have a support for our Thanksgiving Basket Program. Thank you, Madison Rotary Foundation, for supporting our pantry.

A major challenge for our food pantry is storing food. Having adequate, quality storage allows the pantry to accept more food donations and ensures that we never have to turn away a food donation because we lack the space to properly store it. A grant from the Madison Community Foundation will ensure our pantry does not have to turn away any more refrigerated or frozen food. With this generous gift our pantry will be purchasing a commercial refrigerator and freezer in 2010. This grant will increase our food storage capacity and make sure we are able to help families get the safest, most nutritious food home to their table.

The Kennedy Heights food pantry is always seeking Monday night volunteers and donations of food, toiletries and money. For additional information, community members can call Clare at 244-0767. If any families on Madison's Northside find themselves in need of food, please visit the Kennedy Heights Food Pantry on Monday evening between 5–6:15 pm.

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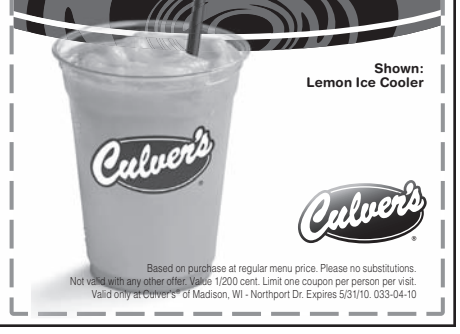

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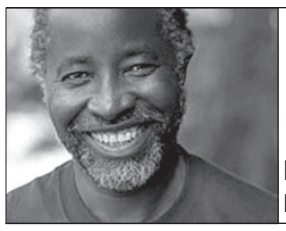
Northsiders celebrate the 40th Earth Day

By Terrie Anderson
Northside News



Dr. John Francis
Environmentalist

Forty years ago Wisconsin Sen. Gaylord Nelson founded Earth Day. Nelson pictured a large-scale, grassroots demonstration "to shake up the political establishment and force this issue onto the national agenda." Over 20 million people took part in this event that was the beginning of the modern environmental movement.

Twenty years later, Earth Day became a worldwide event. Now observed in 175 countries, Apr. 22 is the largest secular holiday in the world. More than a billion people participate in clean-ups and other Earth Day events.

One poignant annual observance is the ringing of the Peace Bell at the United Nations headquarters in New York. The bell was given to the UN by Japan, and is constructed of coins donated by school children to promote worldwide peace.

Several local activities are planned to clean up and celebrate the Earth on the Northside. Check the listing on this page and join one to honor our land.

Students at Black Hawk Middle School have a unique opportunity to mark the occasion. Some will be participating in the Cherokee Marsh Experience and learning from a master environmentalist, John Francis.

Francis eschewed motorized vehicles after a major oil spill in San Francisco Bay in 1971, and avoided them for 22 years. He walked all over the US as an advocate for preserving the environment. In that time he walked to universities in Washington, Montana and Wisconsin and completed degrees at all three. He received a Ph.D. in Land Management at UW.

Francis eschewed motorized vehicles after a major oil spill in San Francisco Bay in 1971, and avoided them for 22 years. He walked all over the US as an advocate for preserving the environment.

Even more remarkable, Francis took a vow of silence that he kept for 17 years. He communicated with writing, gestures and by playing his banjo.

Currently, Francis uses modern transportation and his voice to further the cause of his non-profit educational organization, Planetwalk. He will bring his mission of "raising environmental consciousness and promoting earth stewardship" to Madison in April, presenting at the Nelson Institute Earth Day Conference. He'll also bring the message to Black Hawk Middle School that week.

All 134 seventh grade students will walk from the school to Cherokee Marsh, stopping at learning stations along the way staffed by local naturalists. They'll observe, record data and discover some of the wonders of the marsh. These activities will build on their knowledge of ecology in preparation for setting personal goals about protecting the environment. All classes will prepare for or build on the experience, from making charts and graphs of data in the computer lab to using GPS systems in math, studying motion and walking in Phy. Ed, and the benefits of silence and listening in Health.

Do you know a person or group who has made a difference in the lakes, rivers and beaches so many of us enjoy on the Northside? Why don't you nominate them for a Dane County Water Champion Award? See the article on page 13.

Earth Day Goings-On

Here are some of the great activities happening that you can join to do your part to protect our Northside environment.

Brentwood Village Assn. Neighborhood Park Clean-up: Sat., Apr. 24. Meet at Monterey Playground at 9:00 am. Wear gloves. Bags will be provided. Please help us keep our neighborhood parks clean. For more info, please email BrentwoodVillage@gmail.com or call Ann Baxter, 241-1147.

Northport Community Learning Center: Thur., Apr. 22. Meet at the center at 3:30 pm. Join the kids and staff as they clean up from the corner of Sherman and Northport to the corner of Dryden and Northport and plant a tree by the main entrance. For more info, contact Pat Steele at pwsteele@me.com or 249-9281.

Lake View Hill Park Earth Day Clean-up: Sat., Apr. 17. Meet in the parking lot near the water tower at 10 am. Event will continue until noon. For more info, contact Nelson Eisman at 217-5512.

Evening at Cherokee Marsh: Fri., Apr. 23. Meet at 6:30 pm at the main Cherokee Marsh parking lot at the north end of N. Sherman Ave. Watch cranes, observe the "sky dance" of American woodcock, and view other spring migrants. Waterproof footwear recommended. Sponsored by Madison Audubon and the Friends of Cherokee Marsh. Call 241-5828 if you have questions.

Home Composting Class: Sat., Apr 24 at 11:30am at the Lakeview Branch Library. Composting reduces waste sent to landfills while generating top quality soil for your garden. Madison Recycling coordinator George Dreckmann teaches us how to get started, how to maintain your compost pile, and uses for compost. Informational brochures will be available. The Earth Machine bin on sale May 1st at the Alliant Energy Center will be on display.

In addition, you may be interested in the Earth Day Conference at Monona Terrace that the Nelson Institute is sponsoring. Several Northsiders will be presenting, including Janet Parker, Claire Strader, and George Dreckmann. Apr. 21-22. Info available online at www.nelson.wisc.edu/community/programs/earth-day

Green Building and Alternative Power is Focus of Habitat ReStore Earth Day Celebration

Green building and alternative power sources will be the focus at the 2010 Habitat ReStore Earth Day Celebration. Learn from the experts and incorporate "green living" into your life at the ninth annual Earth Day celebration on Sat., Apr. 24, noon-4 pm, at the Habitat ReStore, 208 Cottage Grove Rd.

Wind, solar and alternative fuels are just a few of the earth-friendly presentations that will be held at the Earth Day Celebration. In addition, the free event features more than 25 exhibitors on eco friendly landscaping products and artists selling salvaged art.

Among the exhibitors will be Northside organizations and businesses including Community GroundWorks and Blair Landscape. This free event is open to the public and includes refreshments, plenty of Earth Day activities for families and live music with Buttons and Banjo.

NORTHGATE

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Photo by Janet Battista

Project Green Team relaxes after clearing brush at Lake View Hill Park.

Malcolm Shabazz Project Green Team discovers Lake View Hill Park

By Janet Battista

The Malcolm Shabazz Project Green Team (PGT) has joined with the Friends of Lake View Hill to continue restoration at Northside Madison's premier urban conservancy forest. This year, the annual cycle of restoration activities began on Feb. 10 when science teacher Robert Banks and his PGT students prepared native seed for planting later this spring. Many bags of pure clean seed remained after an afternoon of crushing, sieving, bagging and weighing in Mr. Bank's classroom.

On Mar. 3, the Green Team cleared brush in preparation for the annual spring burn. Brush clearing was no easy task this spring with lots of deep snow and much of the brush frozen to the ground. The cleared area has not seen earlier restoration activities and it will be a good testing ground for the reintroduction of native understory plants.

After the spring burn, the team will spread the prepared seed over warm ash. Ongoing volunteer efforts on the hill to remove invasive herbaceous plants such as garlic mustard, non-native thistles and burdock will help give the natives a chance to take hold. In the summer, we will evaluate the area to see whether the native seed was able to germinate. If so, the annual restoration cycle will continue apace with the fall collection of seed for another year.

Nominations sought for Dane County Waters Champion Awards

The Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission is seeking nominations for the Dane County Waters Champion Awards, which recognizes individuals, businesses and organizations that have positively impacted the water resources of the County. The ninth annual Waters Champion Award pays tribute to those who improve water quality as well as scenic, economic, recreational and environmental value of our water resources during Take A Stake in the Lakes Days in June.

"Dane County's lakes, rivers and streams make this a very special place to live, work and play," said Melissa Malott, Dane County Lakes & Watershed Commission Chair. "Consider nominating a friend, neighbor, business or group who goes the extra mile for cleaner water so they get the recognition they deserve."

Nomination forms are available from the Office of Lakes & Watersheds. Call 224-3730 or go to www.takeastakeinthelakes.com and click on "Dane County Waters Champion Award Ceremony." Nominations must be received by Apr. 30.

Friends of Cherokee Marsh awarded grant for schools

By Jan Axelson
Northside News

The Friends of Cherokee Marsh have received a $500 grant to support hands-on, outdoor, science education for third and fourth graders in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park.

The Madison Metropolitan School District provides skilled naturalists to lead field studies in Cherokee Marsh for local classes. But participation in the program has dropped since the district stopped funding transportation to the park due to budget shortfalls.

The grant, from the Dane County Environmental Council, will pay to bring four to five buses, each holding up to 55 students, to the Conservation Park. The students will learn about pond life, the value of wetlands, life cycles of plants and animals, and more. To boost awareness of the resources for science education in Cherokee Marsh, the Friends of Cherokee Marsh will produce a brochure for distribution to local teachers. The Friends are pleased to be able to help support this worthwhile program!

Photo by Jan Axelson

Volunteers on ice help with wetland restoration

Volunteers from the Friends of Cherokee Marsh went onto the ice in March to build brush circles as part of Madison Parks' ongoing wetland restoration. When the ice melts, the brush sinks and lodges in the shallow bay's muck bottom. The brush attracts fish, blocks wave action, and allows beneficial plants such as white water lily to gain a foothold. The circles are in the restoration area near the Conservation Park's boathouse. A crew from Operation Fresh Start also helped with the project.

To find out about upcoming activities in and around Cherokee Marsh, visit www.CherokeeMarsh.org.

ENVIRONMENT

Bolero at the Warner Park bird symphony

By Trish O'Kane

When I was a kid, before I turned into a rocking teen besotted with Led Zeppelin and Kiss, my favorite record was "Bolero." I'd shut the bedroom door, put on the heavy old LP and sit on the floor. As Ravel's first hypnotic flute line sounded, I began unfolding like a flower. Arms waving in the air, my heart pounded louder while the crescendo of horns, strings and drums swelled into an orchestral tsunami. By the end of the 15 minutes, I was prancing all over the room, ready to fly out my window after that intoxicating melody.

I remembered this in early March, as I sat on the bench facing Warner Park lagoon. After three months of staring at the ice and recording, at most, nine bird species on a good morning — suddenly the marsh island looked like a busy airport. Haiku lines of geese zoomed in, flapping and honking loudly as they landed and caused small clouds of sparrows and blackbirds to lift off the cattails. Three sandhill cranes delicately picked their way like dancers across the marsh island, booming. The geese honked back at the cranes, upping the volume. Necks stretched out like snakes, male geese hissed loudly as they drove other geese from their nesting spots.

… there was a new song I could not place, another instrument that had just joined the bolero. …"Song sparrow!" I shouted to the red-winged blackbirds.

Over a dozen male redwinged blackbirds rattled in a steady rhythm and flashed their red and gold epaulets around me. The females had not yet arrived and the males were jostling to get their chunk of the marsh. These birds are polygynous meaning one male may have as many as 15 mates. He needs a decent territory.

I scribbled furiously as I identified each new arrival — over 50 robins grazing in front of the dog park, grackles whistling from treetops, juncos doing a new trill from their sumac hideouts, male cardinals wheep-wheeping and flashing their red breasts in the new sun.

Photo by Bill Tuschl

The whooping cranes blend into the scenery at Warner Park.

High above, a pair of killdeer shrieked and announced their return. The last time I saw a killdeer was on an Alabama beach at Christmas where whole flocks of them wintered on the Gulf Coast just like human Midwesterners. And there was a new song I could not place, another instrument that had just joined the bolero. The sweet lilting line was so maddeningly familiar.

"Song sparrow!" I shouted to the red-winged blackbirds.

Melospiza melodia. The song sparrow's Latin name is as beautiful as its song. A dozen trilled back and forth as they clung to naked tree branches. One faced me, showing the delicate light pink inside his beak as he thrust his chest forward into the song. His tiny cream breast feathers vibrated in the sunshine.

The Warner Park Symphony awaits you. If you're interested in the Warner Bird Bolero, I'm leading three nature walks at 8:30 am on May 1, June 5 and June 19. Warner nature-lovers have also created a Wild Warner website where you can post photos of Wild Warner and share news of wildlife sightings. For more information, contact us at info@wildwarnerpark.org.

TROY GARDENS

There's a lot to dig at Troy Gardens this spring

By Marge Pitts
Northside News

Seeking your recipes and stories now!

Troy Gardens "Savor the Summer Cookbook" Coming This Summer

Community GroundWorks at Troy Gardens, with help from the Northside News, is creating a new "Savor the Summer Cookbook" for 2010. This community cookbook will include a special children's story written by Marge Pitts, with coloring book pictures to go with it. This is one cookbook that will be fun for every Northsider to keep and enjoy.

If you're a Northsider or a Troy Gardener, we want your recipe — plus a few words telling us where you got the recipe, how your family enjoys it, a poem about your garden, a story about your grandmother — anything you want to share about you! High-resolution digital pictures of the recipe-giver are encouraged. Recipes don't have to be vegetarian or original — they can be as decadent or as hand-me-down as you like. Everyone whose recipe we use will receive a free cookbook—a $6 value.

To participate, please bring your recipes, stories and pictures to Opening Day at Troy Gardens on Sat., Apr. 17 from 9 am–noon. Or, email them to margepitts@sbcglobal.net. Or, mail them to Community GroundWorks, 3601 Memorial Dr., Suite 4, Madison, WI 53704. We want to collect as many recipes and stories as we can by Friday, May 14. The cookbooks will be ready for sale in early July.

Land of Opportunity: Troy Gardens Natural Areas

Community GroundWorks (CGW), the parent organization of all the programs taking place at Troy Gardens, has joined Madison Fruits & Nuts — a new initiative that encourages the planting and harvesting of fruits and nuts in Madison. Free, fresh food growing on trees and bushes throughout the city — why wouldn't we?

See the website madisonfruitsandnuts.org for more information. Five area orchards have applied to a national foundation which will provide trees and training. Troy Gardens is competing with 95 other orchards around the country. Vote for Troy Kids' Garden orchard by following the directions on the Madison Fruits and Nuts home page. Vote once a day and get your friends to do the same!

Christie Ralston, CGW's Natural Areas Coordinator, hopes to expand the number of teenagers participating in Troy's natural areas programs this year. "We're looking to establish some new partnerships with groups that serve teens, so contact me if your group is looking for service-learning opportunities," Christie advises. She can be reached at 240-0409, by e-mail at christie@troygardens.org, or through CGW's updated new website at communitygroundworks.org.

Opening Day at Troy Community Gardens — Dig it!

Opening Day at Troy Community Gardens will occur on Sat., Apr. 17 from 9 am–noon, rain or shine.

At Opening Day, gardeners learn which plots they have been assigned. New gardeners can attend a brief orientation to learn about gardening at Troy Community Gardens. If you received a plot but cannot attend Opening Day, please contact Community GroundWorks (240-0409 or info@troygardens.org) after Mon., Apr. 19, to find out where your plot is located.

For those who missed the plot application deadline earlier this year, it is likely we will have a few plots available after Opening Day. So, if you are interested in gardening at Troy this year, please contact Community GroundWorks (240-0409 or info@troygardens.org) to have your name added to our 2010 waiting list.

Photo by John Beck

There's nothing quite like getting out to play in the dirt first thing in the spring.

Mark Your Calendar!

Upcoming Troy Gardens events:

Sat., May 15, 10 am–noon at Troy Gardens: Greenhouse Grand Opening and Community Conversations in Troy Kids' Garden Outdoor Kitchen

Sun., May 30, 9 am–1 pm in front of Pierce's Northside Market: Troy Gardens Plant and Used Equipment Sale. Heirloom tomatoes and peppers, herbs, flowers, refurbished equipment and more!

Sat., Aug. 7, 3 pm–8 pm at Troy Gardens: Savor the Summer annual festival! Free garden feast, music and kids' activities — there's fun for everyone!

The First Market is Sunday, May 2!

Upcoming Events:

May 2: Cinco de Mayo

May 9: Moms Day
Free plant or flower for Mom

May 16: Plant Exchange
By Dane County Timebank

May 23: Farm Day
Farm animals visit the market

June 6: Milk the Moment
by **got milk?**

Set the Table with Milk Tent
Swiss Dairy Sampling Station
Milk Mustache Photo Area
Pass the Gallon Kiosk
Dinner Fun Zone
Madison Childrens Museum
Let's Grow Exhibit

Shop the Northside Farmers Market Every Sunday Morning!
8:30am – 12:30pm May 2 – Oct 31 Northside TownCenter across from Warner Park
Visit us online for recipes, news and more! NorthsideFarmersMarket.org

Community GroundWorks Has Joined Community Shares of Wisconsin

Community GroundWorks (CGW) at Troy Gardens has recently become a member of Community Shares of Wisconsin. Community Shares of Wisconsin is a fundraising federation with 65 member nonprofits. Established in 1971, it was the nation's first social action fund.

"We are thrilled to work with Community Shares to solve environmental problems through public education and sustainable agriculture," said Christie Ralston, interim executive director.

Community Shares raises money for its members mostly through workplace giving campaigns and also through online giving at www.communityshares.com. "When donors decide to direct gifts to Community GroundWorks through Community Shares — for instance with an online donation — we receive 100 percent of those gifts," said Ralston. "Gifts through Community Shares will increase Community GroundWorks' capacity to promote healthy communities and personal well-being through education, growing wholesome and organic food for local tables and nurturing a relationship between people and the land."

For more information contact: Christie Ralston, interim executive director, Community GroundWorks, at 608-240-0409 or Christie@troygardens.org. Or contact Crystel Anders, Executive Director, Community Shares of Wisconsin at 608-256-1066 or canders@communityshares.com.

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Got that spring gardening fever and desire to live in outdoor spaces?

Northside garden centers and lawn and landscape specialists are here to meet your needs

By Marge Pitts
Northside News

Gardeners across the Northside are ready to replace mittens with gloves — garden gloves, that is. Even those of us who can't bend and dig are dreaming about landscapes and outdoor living spaces, looking for professionals who can make our visions come true. Let us introduce you to several such professionals doing business on the Northside.

Jung Garden Center 608-249-8120
1313 Northport Dr. / www.jungseed.com

Jung's has been the go-to garden center on the Northside for many years. Assistant Manager Craig Johnson has noted a growing trend among customers — "people wanting to know where their food comes from, organics and local." Interest in vegetable gardening is growing, especially organic insect and weed control. Plant-based and natural pest controls like pyrethrins and Bt are effective and much less toxic than artificial chemical controls. Jung's is selling lots of corn gluten meal for weed control in lawns — this non-toxic byproduct of corn processing effectively inhibits weed germination while it fertilizes your lawn. Passive controls like row covers and bird netting provide excellent barriers to pests with absolutely no detriment to the environment.

Native plants for home prairies and rain gardens are becoming hot sellers at Jung's. These are once-wild plants that have evolved and flourished in our region for centuries. Adapted to our climate and soil conditions, native plants generally don't require extra watering or fertilizers once they're established, according to Johnson. Some municipalities have ordinances regarding the permissible height of grasses; staff at Jung's can help you determine the best grasses and prairie flowers for your site. Native plants are a great solution for ecologically minded gardeners as well as those who don't have a lot of time. "Gives you that wild look with low maintenance," Johnson points out.

Jung's seed sales are already going strong. Their catalog can be seen online and in the store, if you haven't received it in the mail. Jung's bare root room is in full swing: offering asparagus, potatoes, strawberries, and other fruits, vegetables, bushes and trees that can be planted in early spring. Bare root fruit trees and bushes are more economical than potted ones, according to Johnson, and just as likely to do well if planted early in prepared soil. And, as regular customers know, "Jung dollars" accompany every purchase, which can be redeemed for discounts several times a year.

Ageless Concrete 608-242-2446
1414 Iowa Dr. www.agelessconcrete.com

Aaron Kinas, proprietor of Ageless Concrete, specializes in installing colored and stamped concrete flatwork: patios, pathways, steps, etc. Some 60 percent of his clients opt for decorative concrete and design, with the remainder choosing traditional flat concrete work.

Kinas offers 30 different patterns of stamped concrete and limitless color combinations. "People are interested in creating another living space at their homes," Kinas observes. Custom concrete work is more durable than the mass-produced pavers sold at the big home-improvement stores, and more cost effective. By using bendable forms, Kinas can create any shape flatwork or custom steps. Kinas enjoys creating "fun, unique shapes" for his clients. You can see photos of finished projects on his website.

O'Ryans Lawn Care 608-213-5223
4606 Cody Lane / www.oryansllc.com

Ryan Trost offers lawn care, home maintenance, handyman services and snow removal in his small business. Trost established O'Ryans Lawn Care in 2008.

Many of his clients are elderly people who need help to keep up their homes, so they can remain in them comfortably. Trost relishes one of the advantages of working for elderly ladies — "good cookies now and then!"

Harmony Lawn Care 608-255-0590
neilanderson05@gmail.com

In addition to lawn care, Neil Anderson's Harmony Lawn Care offers seasonal clean-ups and regular maintenance for garden and landscape beds.

"Many of my clients are elders of the community," Anderson says. "I offer a senior discount and help meet the needs of busy professionals, disabled home owners and just about anybody else that needs a helping hand."

Anderson chose the name "Harmony" for several reasons. "I strive to help (clients) find harmony with their own properties so they can enjoy them rather than feeling as though they are a burden." Anderson also promotes harmony with the environment, specializing in sustainable approaches to lawn care, such as core lawn aeration and grass over-seeding to combat weed growth. "This method creates a thicker carpet of grass over time — without the use of herbicides," Anderson points out. "Through this method of creating a thicker carpet of grass you can both discourage and out-compete weed growth

Gardening, Continued on Page 17

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