



# FRIENDS *of Retzer*

## FRIENDS OF RETZER NATURE CENTER

### SPRING, 2018 NEWSLETTER

#### **Friends of Retzer Chili Dinner and Annual Meeting: Monday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> 5:30-8pm**

Join us for our Chili Dinner and annual business meeting on Monday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>. This year's honored speaker will be Retzer's own Larry Kascht, who will offer a personal reflection on the past, present and future of our nature center, including insights on milestones, accomplishments and lessons learned through the years.

Email your RSVP to [retzer@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:retzer@waukeshacounty.gov) or call Dannett at Retzer Nature Center (262-896-8007) with the number of people attending. Please bring a dish to share (salad, appetizer or dessert) that evening. Thanks!

#### **Summary of Winter Activities**

Waukesha JanBoree: The final weekend in January was uncharacteristically mild, but several seasonal activities attracted families to Retzer – indoor games and art projects, outdoor trail hiking and obstacle courses, and selected planetarium shows.

Visitors from Chicago enjoyed the exhibits.



Wild Winter Night: Over 150 people attended this fun event on a chilly, snowy February evening. Indoor activities included art projects, games, storytelling, and planetarium shows. Outdoor activities included snowshoeing, night hikes, and a campfire with s'mores.

(top left to bottom right) Books and puppets attract a young visitor at Kathy's Story Corner; Larry preps his group before an Owl Prowl outdoors; volunteers assist with art projects; MK encourages a boy to touch Peaches the snake.



### Upcoming Spring Events

*Learning Center Expansion Completed:* Good news! The newly remodeled classroom/meeting space and interactive exhibits at our Retzer Environmental Learning Center are ready for use. The grand opening will be celebrated from 10am - 4pm on Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup>. The remodeled indoor space will feature new exhibits integrating recycling, composting, natural resources and water conservation into the existing ecology exhibits and learning center programming. The renovated space will extend the breadth and depth of science and environmental education by offering dynamic learning experiences focused on enhancing the future of resource recovery, conservation and sustainability in Waukesha County.

#### *Earth Week Activities: April 22-28*

Retzer Nature Center is hosting several more wonderful activities during Earth Week/2018:

- Sunday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>: a canoe outing led by Retzer Nature Center staff and guest naturalists.
- Thursday, April 26<sup>th</sup>: a pre-school hike, and a raptor presentation by Wildlife in Need staff.
- Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup>: a morning bird hike led by the Benjamin Goss Bird Club.
- Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup>: join the Jack Young Memorial Earth Watch (half hour shifts from 5am until noon); a Family Bird Watch (10am - 11:30am); a Trees and Wildflowers



Hike (2pm - 3pm); a Family Concert (3pm -5pm); an Outdoor Campfire (5pm - 7pm); an evening Magical Mystery Tour hike (7pm - 9pm); ongoing activities and crafts (10am - 3pm); ongoing master gardener presentations (10am - 3pm); a volunteer service activity (12pm – 3pm); or ongoing thirty minute planetarium shows (8:30am - 3:30pm).

Please check out the county’s website for full Earth Week program details and scheduling specifics ([www.waukeshacounty.gov/earthweek](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/earthweek)).

### **Environmental Education Program in Tropical Belize**

In recent years, the Friends have donated \$1000 to the non-profit Programme for Belize organization for use in organizing an overnight retreat for rural school children at a tropical ecology field station located in the heart of Belize’s Rio Bravo Conservation Management Area. The RBCMA encompasses an area the size of Waukesha County, and supports such endangered species as the yellow headed parrot, the Baird’s tapir, the Jabiru stork, and the Central American jaguar. This year’s primary school group totaled 26 students and two teachers from Double Head Cabbage School, who spent a weekend in January at Hill Bank field station (a former British logging camp). While there, the group learned about the benefits of resource conservation and the history of tropical forest management in the region. They also learned how to identify various tropical birds and animals, visited an undeveloped Mayan ruin, and did a night hike through the surrounding forest. The program was organized by naturalist Marcos Corado.



Students pose atop an abandoned logging camp tractor, and used spotting scopes to identify tropical birds.

### **Panama-Costa Rica Trip Summary**

*Central America* -- Our two-week 2018 natural history tour of Panama and Costa Rica last month included five nights in Panama and nine nights in Costa Rica. Highlights included tours of the Panama Canal and an indigenous Embera tribal village in Panama, followed by natural history tours of Wilson Tropical Botanical Gardens, Manuel Antonio National Park, Arenal Volcano National Park, Mistico Hanging Bridges Park, Rincon de la Vieja National Park, Carara National Park, and other ecotourism destinations in Costa Rica. The tour was guided once again by renowned Costa Rican naturalist Carlos Chavarria.





The group touring historic Panama City



Friends for a day – Stephanie and a young Embera girl



Volcano viewing and bird watching (Montezuma oropendolas) at Arenal Observatory in La Fortuna

Carlos Chavarria guides us on a forest hike at Mistico Bridges Park;

Donna crosses one of the hanging bridges, under the watchful eye of a collared aracari.





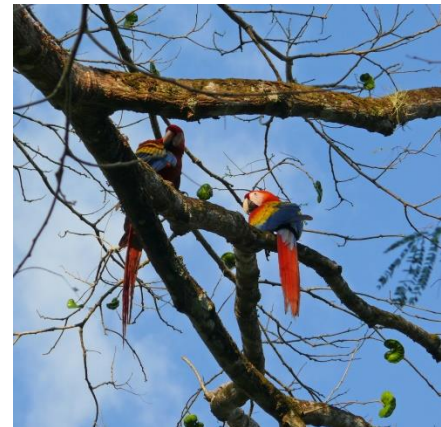
Terese ziplines through a mountain forest



Alice, Joe, Mary and Don prepare to hike a coastal trail



Life's a beach – posing on Costa Rica's Pacific shore near Tarcoles ...with scarlet macaws waiting to entertain us



*Alaska and the Yukon* -- Meanwhile, our two-week trip to Alaska is all set and all full for this coming June. The itinerary will build off the success of last summer's trek to the Northwest. Highlights will include visits to several Alaskan national parks (Denali NP, Kenai Fjords NP, Sitka NHP and Skagway NHP), ferry travel through the state's scenic Inside Passage, minibus travel through the Yukon and central Alaska, and overnights in Sitka, Juneau, Skagway, Whitehorse, Fairbanks and Seward.

### Membership Renewal

If you need to renew your Friends of Retzer membership, you can do so either by mailing a check to the Nature Center, stopping by at the front desk, or paying via our new website at: [www.FriendsofRetzer.org](http://www.FriendsofRetzer.org). Membership helps us support vital projects and programs at the Nature Center, and provides discount benefits to those on the membership list. Many thanks!

- Membership Levels:
- \$ 20.00 Hummingbird (Individual)
  - \$ 25.00 Robin (Family)
  - \$ 50.00 Cardinal (Donor)
  - \$ 75.00 Owl (Donor)
  - \$ 100+ Eagle (Donor)

Newsletter prepared by:  
David Block, Vice President  
[David@FriendsofRetzer.org](mailto:David@FriendsofRetzer.org)