



FRIENDS *of* Retzer

FRIENDS OF RETZER NATURE CENTER

WINTER, 2018-19 NEWSLETTER

Summary of Fall Activities

Apple Harvest Festival -- Retzer's premier event was held on September 22nd, and included the popular Passport Expedition, craft beer garden, vendor booths, live music, and of course, lots of apples and apple products. The Friends organized hayrides, children's games and crafts, a used book sale, a children's Reading Corner, and a silent auction. Over 1900 carloads of people came and enjoyed a day with beautiful weather conditions and lots of attractions.

Howl-O-Ween – We hosted our second fall event on October 12th, and provided night hikes, craft activities and games for young and old. The Horowitz-DeRemer Planetarium offered a fine presentation as well. Over 200 carloads of people attended.



Upcoming Winter Events

Waukesha JanBoree -- Join us at Retzer on Sunday, January 27th for a day of hiking, tracking, snowshoeing and other outdoor activities as part of Waukesha's annual winter celebration. You can check out all the weekend events at www.janboree.org.

Wild Winter Night -- Mark your 2019 calendar for Saturday, February 16th (6-9pm) and enjoy an evening of wild winter adventure at Retzer. The event will include guided hikes, free snowshoe rental, and a warm campfire with s'mores and hot cocoa. You can also check out the winter sky with telescopes and watch a special planetarium show. Remember that your membership affords you free entrance to this Friends' sponsored events.

Honored by Community Award

At an annual meeting of the Waukesha Education Foundation this past November, the Friends of Retzer were granted the *2018 Community Partner in Education Award* for the contribution made by our organization to the newly renovated and newly named Horowitz-DeRemer Planetarium. Addressing the attendees and accepting the honor was Friends' President Elaine Haberichter, who shared about the mutual partnership between environmental education and astronomy programming at Retzer, and recalled the exciting project presentation by Dave DeRemer when he approached the Board for financial support months ago. For those of you who haven't taken in a show at the Horowitz-DeRemer Planetarium, it's a *must see* for 2019!



The Friends Board Welcomes Two New Partners

With the retirements of Larry Kascht and Duane Grimm last July, two new faces have joined our Friends' Board at monthly planning meetings: Janet Barthel and Rebecca Mattano. Both have brought an impressive set of credentials to the table; but of equal importance, both have brought an enthusiasm, thoughtfulness and passion for making Retzer Nature Center a valued destination for years to come, and have sought to nurture many of the traditions and ideas generated by their two predecessors.

Janet Barthel is Retzer's newly appointed *Nature Center Supervisor*, responsible for the supervision and advanced professional work involving programs, research projects, education and operations at Retzer. Duties include supporting and equipping her team to successfully

address daily tasks at hand and seasonal initiatives, plus maintaining essential connections with Waukesha Parks System staff, the Friends of Retzer Board, and Retzer Trained Naturalists. Her previous work as Park Naturalist and Educational Naturalist at Retzer positioned her well for her new administrative position.

Janet grew up in Rockford, Illinois, and received her undergraduate degree in Biological Sciences at Illinois State University, followed by certifications as a Master Gardener and Master Naturalist. She moved up to Wisconsin years ago when her husband, Paul, took a job as a civil engineer with Waukesha County. Their oldest daughter, Emily, is an RN in Minneapolis, youngest daughter, Elizabeth, is pursuing admittance to veterinary school in Michigan, and son, Sam, is working on a PhD in Kinesiology at Michigan State University. Her hobbies and outdoor interests include hiking, gardening, and cooking, and she cites Yosemite as her current favorite national park destination.

When asked what attracted her to the new position, she replied, “The opportunity was given to me to use my strengths in a broader way to support environmental educational in Waukesha County...and to have an impact through leading my team with a greater vision of the Environmental Education Team, the Parks Division, and the County.” Though she misses actually leading a program with a school group, she is encouraged to step back and observe her gifted team of staff and volunteers implement quality environmental education programming to so many diverse visitor groups. She added, “The longer I am in this new role, my respect for what the Friends of Retzer Nature Center do and have done continues to grow. I am in awe of their passion and determination to support what happens at this place, from financial and volunteer needs to heartfelt advice for me personally...I’m forever grateful.”



Janet Barthel (left)

Rebecca Mattano (right)

Rebecca Mattano is Waukesha County’s new *Park System Manager*. Her duties include supervising, coordinating, and administering the planning, development and park operations for the county’s park system and ice arenas. In addition, she manages and mentors a strong support team whose focus is on continuous improvement of the aforementioned facilities. She is well versed in countywide programming, having previously served as Solid Waste Supervisor for Waukesha County, where she administered operations, budgets, grants, and partnerships of the solid waste program, including the material recovery facility, hazardous waste, yard waste, and electronics/appliance recycling programs.

Rebecca grew up in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, and received her undergraduate degree in Conservation and Environmental Science at UW-Milwaukee, followed by a Master's degree in Natural Resources at UW-Stevens Point. Her interest and training in environmental education led to several years of service as an instructor in the Environmental Sciences program at Carroll University before she moved on to her professional positions with Waukesha County. Hobbies and outdoor interests include hiking, running, swimming, skiing, traveling, and recreating with her family, and cites Moose Lake as her favorite getaway spot.

When asked what attracted her to her new position, she responded, "The opportunity to be part of a dynamic team of dedicated professionals working collaboratively to shape the future of the park system through focus on the protection, enhancement and enjoyment of our natural resources." When asked what she enjoys most about her new job, she comments, "The team! Each person working for the park system is invested in the success of others and the parks. We focus on helping each other and addressing continuous improvement initiatives that save money and improve operational efficiencies." Finally, regarding her relationship with the Friends, she adds, "We are fortunate to have the support of the Friends of Retzer Nature Center. In addition to financial support, the engagement and dedication of the board and members is inspiring...thank you! The future is bright and I look forward to working with all of you."

MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Membership Renewal Reminder

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 website at: 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)

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