



# FRIENDS *of Retzer*

## FRIENDS OF RETZER NATURE CENTER

### SPRING NEWSLETTER

#### Summary of Winter Activities

Waukesha JanBoree – Despite the icy trails and chilly temps, nearly 300 people enjoyed a day of snowshoeing, animal tracking, and other outdoor activities as part of Waukesha’s annual winter celebration on Sunday, January 27<sup>th</sup>.



*Local residents Eric and Farrah (left) and Jon and Elena (center) enjoy father-daughter snowshoeing at the JanBoree, while Retzer naturalist Sarah Anderson introduces Evelyn and Olivia to Maizee the corn snake.*

Wild Winter Night – Over 130 hearty folks participated in an evening of wild winter adventure at Retzer on Saturday, February 16<sup>th</sup>. The event included a special planetarium show, guided hikes, indoor craft activities, free snowshoe use, and a warm campfire with s’mores and hot cocoa.



*Kathy Strazishar teaches kids at the Reading Corner -- Jayne Jenks schools Larry Kascht on macroinvertebrates*

## Upcoming Spring Events

Spring Workshop Series at Retzer – Waukesha County Parks and Land Use has partnered with Johnson's Nursery this year on a fine set of Saturday morning workshops. An initial workshop on "Birds and Birding" was held on February 9<sup>th</sup>, and a second workshop on "Spring Gardening" was held on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Still to come? "Citizen Science Day" at Retzer on Saturday April 13<sup>th</sup>, from 9am to noon. Check out the Waukesha County Parks and Land Use website for more info.



*Carrie Hennessy of Johnson's Nursery shares about "birdscaping" your yard; Tim Hahn and Melanie Krause of the Benjamin Goss Bird Club share about identifying birds; Julia Robson points out local birds and shares how these sightings can be recorded on Cornell's "eBird" website.*

Earth Week at Retzer – Join us for our Friends of Retzer annual meeting and chili dinner on Monday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Dinner begins at 5:30pm, followed by the annual business meeting at 6:15pm and featured speaker at 7:00pm. This year's guest speaker is Waukesha County Conservation Biologist, Julia Robson, who will provide an overview of her exciting county-wide citizen science initiative, launched last fall in a series of "Wild in Waukesha" training sessions. Supplies and equipment for this program were funded by the Friends.

Email your annual meeting 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 that evening (salad, appetizer or dessert). We'll provide the chili, dinner rolls and drinks. Thanks!

Later that week, on Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> (10am - 2pm), join us again at Retzer for their annual Earth Week celebration, which will include interactive activities for kids, an outdoor service project, and guided hikes. You'll also have a chance to view our newly-renovated animal enclosure exhibit in the nature center lobby.

Coming attractions – As final touches are being made on the new animal enclosures and wall monitor displays in the nature center lobby, the Friends wish to thank MK Kelly for her tireless oversight of this funded initiative. Also, thanks to financial support from the Friends and from the Waukesha Rotary Club, a major renovation of Retzer's *Adventure Trail* is underway. Among other improvements, the three-year project will include upgrade and expansion of the boardwalk and construction of a creative children's play and learning area. A summary of preliminary project plans will be presented at our annual meeting.

## Maintaining Central America Connections

Cuba Natural History Tour – Costa Rican naturalist and guide, Carlos Chavarria, is teaming up next month with the Friends of Retzer on a first-time natural history tour of Cuba. The trip will include tours of the rugged cave region of Vinales, the vast wetlands of Cienaga de Zapata, the montane forests of Topes de Collantes, and the coastal shores of Cayo Santa Maria. Historic sites in Trinidad and Havana will also be visited. Pending evaluation of this initial trip experience, a second trip to Cuba in 2020 is possible.

*Programme for Belize update* – Each year, the Friends donate \$1000 from our educational outreach fund to the Programme for Belize in Central America, for the purpose of supporting an overnight tropical ecology workshop for youth in their vast Rio Bravo tropical forest reserve. (Of note, the PfBelize co-organized and hosted a Friends of Retzer natural history tour five years ago.) This past February, a group of 24 students and teachers from Trinidad Government School were treated to a weekend of birdwatching, trail hiking, animal tracking, and archaeological site investigation, with themes of tropical ecology environmental stewardship underscoring each activity. La Milpa eco-lodge naturalists Vladimir, Melvis and Marcos organized the workshop.



*Belizean students pose on the grounds of La Milpa Tropical Field Station, learn how to spot birds in the forest canopy, hike a forest trail, hunt for tarantulas at night, and check out a Mayan ruin site.*

### **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](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)

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