



[www.springvalleynatureclub.org](http://www.springvalleynatureclub.org) [springvalleynatureclub@gmail.com](mailto:springvalleynatureclub@gmail.com)

**Editor: Al Larson**

**January/February 2017**

**President: Donna Johnson**

**Happy New Year!**

2017 promises to be an exciting time for Spring Valley and the Nature Club. We are all anticipating the official grand opening of the Bison Bluff childrens play area which is on Earth Day, April 22. The Backyards for Nature Fair is slated for a new date later in May where Nature Club will be offering its' unique array of delicious and unusual heirloom vegetables and herbs, and a **new** addition of heirloom flower and vegetable seeds from Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds. Find the details about this opportunity to get top quality heirloom seeds for an early start on your garden and help Spring Valley Nature Club's efforts as well! The article about how to order your seeds is within the pages of this News Leaf.

**Annual Spring Valley Nature Club Meeting and Election of Officers on January 18, 2017 at 7:00 pm at Spring Valley Center.**

The slate of officers and directors are:

Donna Johnson - President   Nancy Mamsen - Vice President   Phil Skultety - Treasurer  
Rich Wysocki - Secretary   Al Larson - Director   Pete Justin - Director   Jay Johnson - Director  
Please, show your support of Nature Club's efforts by coming to the Annual Meeting and voting for your Club's leaders!

**Spring Valley Volunteers & Nature Club Meeting - Wednesday February 1<sup>st</sup> 2017, 6:30 pm  
Living with Nature in Your Backyard**

We're happy to invite back Chris Anchor, Cook County Forest Preserve District Biologist, who will share his expertise on common suburban wildlife. Chris will be sharing tips and tricks for living with area wildlife, along with practical suggestions for methods of dealing with nuisance critters when they become unwelcome guests in our homes, attics, garages, etc.

## Winter Happenings at Spring Valley

### Bison's Bluff Grand Opening & Earth Day Celebration Saturday, April 22 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

What better day to celebrate the opening of Spring Valley's new nature play area than Earth Day! Following a ribbon cutting ceremony, parents will be taken on short tours of the site to learn about its unique play features and the benefits of nature play. Kids, of course, will be able to explore each of the play features and play to their heart's content. The day will include additional hands-on activities, refreshments, and more! Admission is free for all ages.

## Bison's Bluff Nature Playground FAQs

### What are the hours the play area will be open?

- APRIL – OCTOBER 9 a.m.-7 p.m.
- NOVEMBER – MARCH 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (weather permitting)

### Is there a fee to use the play area?

- Just like all of Spring Valley's facilities, use of the nature playground will be available free of charge to all visitors. The only exception would be for scheduled special events, when admission fees may be charged.
- Site users will be able to make donations to support the on-going maintenance of the nature playground and Spring Valley in general at a donation kiosk planned near the entrance.

### Are there any restrictions on use?

Mostly, children will be restricted only by their imaginations and abilities! **Parents and caregivers MUST supervise and be attentive to children at all times, while letting them play freely.** The following are prohibited at Spring Valley:

- Pets
- Bicycles, skateboards, scooters, etc.
- Beverages in glass containers
- Collecting plants or animals
- Consumption of alcohol
- Smoking not permitted in playground



### **May groups reserve space in the play area or schedule a group visit?**

Organized groups may visit Bison's Bluff; however space cannot be reserved for this public facility. Due to this fact, it is recommended that groups be limited to 50 at any time, since there will be others using the play area at the same time. Groups should call ahead to inform staff of their plans to avoid exceeding the play area capacity. This will insure a fun and safe play experience for all.

### **What is a nature playground and how is it different from a typical park playground?**

- Many of the play elements (climbing features, slides, physical spaces) are either constructed entirely of natural materials or are constructed to mimic natural features such as logs, boulders, a flowing stream, etc.
- A nature play area is designed and landscaped to more closely resemble a natural area.
- Play features are often designed in such a way that their function is more open-ended, i.e., they can be used in many different ways, dependent on the imagination of the child.

### **What features are available at Bison's Bluff?**

- A bluff designed to resemble a natural rock outcrop which features a large bison and slides leading to the base of the bluff.
- Climbing structures and towers resembling a multi-tiered tree house.
- A meandering shallow stream fed by a waterfall with log crossings to encourage agility and balance.
- A re-created shallow wetland traversed by stepping stones.
- A beaver lodge children can crawl into and help to build.
- Artistic area where children create with mud and sand or weave with natural materials.
- Musical area for creating sounds with wood and metal percussion instruments.
- Hidden nooks for hiding and sitting quietly.
- Benches, logs, and boulders for sitting.
- Sand and water play area.
- Rocks and minerals exploration area.
- Soft, resilient surfaces beneath climbing structures to protect active little bodies.
- Winding pathways leading through the site and to each of the features.
- Informational signs to help guide children and parents to make the best use of natural play opportunities.

### **What are the benefits of nature play versus other types of active play?**

- Nature play areas provide opportunities for open-ended, creative, free play in a natural setting. Many adults can recall playing in streams, building forts, climbing trees, etc. from their own childhood. These opportunities are unavailable or extremely limited for most children today due to over-scheduled lives, technology, and parental concerns about the safety of un-supervised play.
- Studies show that children benefit physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally from imaginative play in natural settings.
- Studies show that children who spend play time in natural areas are more likely to appreciate nature and develop curiosity about nature.

**For answers to additional questions and more information, please call (847) 985-2100 on weekdays between 9am and 5pm.**

### ***Bison's Bluff Construction Update!!***

Spring Valley's new nature play area is 98% completed; however, the onset of winter weather has delayed the final completion. Some work will continue over the winter during mild spells of weather, but it is not anticipated that we'll be able to open the play area for any use until sometime in March. The official grand opening event is scheduled for **Saturday, April 22, 2017**.

Winter is a quiet season at Spring Valley, but a beautiful one as well! See below for a list of upcoming events and family programs! Note that some programs require pre-registration due to limited space. Visit [www.parkfun.com](http://www.parkfun.com) for more information or call (847) 985-2100.

### ***Spring Valley Winter Fest – Saturday & Sunday, January 14 & 15, 12-4 p.m.***

Celebrate the beauty of winter at this event, which will feature indoor games, crafts and activities as well as snowshoeing, horse-drawn wagon rides, live animal presentations (including a live WOLF!), and a bonfire. Admission is \$3/person or \$12/family; kids 3 and under are free. All activities take place in and around the Nature Center.

### ***Embrace Winter's Beauty – Snowshoe Rentals***

Snowshoes can be rented at Spring Valley anytime there is at least 4 inches of snow present. Rentals are available daily from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Cost is \$4 for a three hour rental. Snowshoes can also be taken offsite for \$10/day. Call the Nature Center for updates on snow conditions.

### ***Winter Campfire in the Cabin – Saturday, February 4, 6:30-8:30 p.m.***

Enjoy a short evening hike down to Merkle Log Cabin, where you'll gather around the fireplace and enjoy stories, songs, hot cocoa, and learn a few pioneer skills. Fee is per family of four - \$10/residents or \$15/non-residents. Pre-registration is required.

### ***Sundown Supper in the Sugar Bush – Saturday, February 25, 4-6 p.m.***

Experience the time-honored American tradition of maple tree tapping! This special program allows each family to tap a tree, gather maple sap, and experience the syrup boil-down during a short hike, and then retreat to the cozy Merkle Log Cabin for a pancake supper featuring real maple syrup. Fee is per family of four - \$35/residents or \$50/non-residents. Additional family members require an additional fee of \$7.50. Pre-registration is required.

### ***Cub Scout & Girl Scout Saturdays – Saturdays, January 7, January 28, & February 18***

Calling all Scouts!! Several weekend programs are scheduled for either Cub Scouts or Girl Scouts which focus on specific badge requirements completed with the assistance with a naturalist at the Nature Center. Topics and times vary, but all programs are scheduled on Saturday mornings. Call the Nature Center for a complete list of topics. Fee is \$6/residents Scout or \$9/non-residents Scout. Pre-registration is required.

### **Popular Spring Valley Wall Calendars available NOW!!**

Each year, a full color, high quality wall calendar featuring stunning photos taken by Spring Valley's staff and volunteers is printed as a limited edition item and presented to those volunteers who have contributed 50 hours or more during the previous year. The calendars are also sold in the gift sale area at the Nature Center. It is a great way to show off Spring Valley's beauty in your home or office!

### **COMING IN MARCH!**

### **Sugar Bush Fair – Saturday & Sunday, March 18 & 19, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.**

Celebrate winter's end at this annual event which features a delicious pancake breakfast with real maple syrup, demonstrations of maple sugaring, and more.

## **Baker Creek Seeds**

Nature Club has partnered with one of the foremost heirloom seed suppliers, Baker Creek Seeds of Mansfield, Missouri. If you would like to get an early start on getting some of the most unusual **heirloom vegetable and flower seeds**, view all the available varieties by going to [www.rareseeds.com](http://www.rareseeds.com). You can request a printed catalog sent to your home or simply jot down the variety and amount and send check (payable to Nature Club) and your order to Spring Valley Nature Center 1111 E. Schaumburg Road, Schaumburg 60194, Attn: Nature Club, SEED ORDER ENCLOSED. The early crop **order deadline is February 10<sup>th</sup>** with an expected delivery date of February 20<sup>th</sup>. When we get delivery of the seeds, we will contact you to come to the center and pick up your seed order. For later season crops, we will have a spot on our Heirloom Vegetable & Herb Sale order form for you to place an order for pick up at the “Backyards for Nature Fair” in May. Any questions? Send inquiries to [springvalleynatureclub@gmail.com](mailto:springvalleynatureclub@gmail.com).

## **Spring Valley Membership Packets**

Spring Valley Nature Club membership packets are available at the Spring Valley Reception desk. Just let the receptionist know your name if you have sent in your dues, or you can pay your membership dues in person. The packets are available in February for pick up only. The packets include a lot of great offers including the Carson’s Community Days Booklet with over \$500 in savings coupons and a free Chick Fil A sandwich, \$10 off at Roselle Ace Hardware and many other great deals!

## **Carson’s Community Days February 23-25, 2017**

Look for the Carson’s Community Days coupon book which is included in your paid membership.

You may assist the Club by signing for several discount coupon books to sell to your neighbors and friends for \$5.00 each. You may even want to get an extra couple for yourself. When you have collected the funds, place in an envelope and return any funds and unsold books to Spring Valley prior to the expiration date of the booklet.

Remember Nature Club’s purpose is to provide volunteers, programming and funding to Spring Valley Nature Center. Carson’s Community Days are a great way to get a head start on Spring and Summer Shopping!

## **Nature Club Programs for 2017**

Many of our members and friends have come up with suggestions for programming that is of interest to many of our visitors. If you have any pet project or program that you would be interested in having at our Nature Club’s meetings, please, send an email to: [springvalleynatureclub@gmail.com](mailto:springvalleynatureclub@gmail.com) or visit our website: [www.springvalleynatureclub.org](http://www.springvalleynatureclub.org). Your participation is greatly appreciated and all submissions will be reviewed by the Nature Club Board. You may, also, leave a phone message at Spring Valley Center (847) 985-2100.

Thank you all for supporting the efforts of the Spring Valley Nature Club!

## Nature

The calendar year is winding down, even as day's light starts to lengthen. The time of later dawns and earlier dusks is past, and the sun's long climb above the horizon begins. Still, winter has taken hold, and ice and snow and gray winds will dog our voyage through the cold months ahead.

The shift in light/darkness ratios and the drop in temperature have produced a response in plants and animals that protect them from the change in seasons. Diminishing light spurs bird migration to places still abundant with insects, open water and growing plants. A few mammals, like the groundhog and some species of bats, hibernate, reducing body temperature to a whisper above permanent cold. Their life candle barely glows, slowly burning the food they've stored as body fat.

Insects, being cold-blooded, lack internal temperature regulation, and cold slows their metabolism. Survival for some means moving into a life stage where they can rest and wait out the cold. This means entering the winter as pupae, after spending summer and fall as grubs or caterpillars, and emerging in spring as adults. Other insects migrate, from ground level to below, from above the water to beneath and from shallower water to deep, where it is warmer, with temperatures more stable than where exposed to air. Some burrow into logs or crawl beneath rocks. Others slip behind bark or move in with us indoors.

But even in winter there are insects that stay active. Sometimes winter's sun warms through the snow to expose the leaf litter beneath. The surrounding snow may be covered with what appears to be a scattering of small black specks. A closer examination will reveal thousands of tiny insects called springtails. They are commonly called snow fleas and inhabit soil surfaces often numbering in the millions per acre.

The stone fly is another insect that has adapted well to winter. Found only in clean running water, certain species have larvae that grow throughout the fall and early winter. The adults emerge to mate in mid-winter and lay eggs in the water.

Winter lacks the activity of bustling spring, growing summer and the brief hurry of fall. But there are compensations. Its nighttime sky blazes brighter, and few warm-weather birds match the frolic of swooping juncos or equal the jaunty cheer of a gang of chickadees. And sometimes, when the sky is a bright blue and the air is as clear as crystal, that can be enough to forget the cold.

Al Larson

## 1974 And Beyond

**Spring Valley began as a dream by one of the founders of the Village of Schaumburg, Ellsworth Meineke.** Early on he referred to it as “The Spring Valley Dream.” It was he who convinced the Schaumburg Park District and the Village of Schaumburg to work together to acquire and preserve land for Spring Valley. Ellsworth founded the Spring Valley Nature Club in 1974 as a not-for-profit service organization which provides volunteer and financial support for Spring Valley and promotes conservation, nature and environmental education. The Club sponsors nature programs and teacher field trips, and members volunteer at festivals and fund raisers. We have been working hard since 1974. Won’t you join us?

These words reflect the dedication that the founders felt for the Club and the love of the natural world around us. Since the Schaumburg Park District assumed the responsibility of recruiting volunteers, Nature Club’s purpose has evolved to share its love of Spring Valley by offering timely programs that reinforce a more wholesome lifestyle. We have initiated monthly educational programs that instill a comprehension of our ability to lessen our carbon footprint by reducing waste, recycling and reusing our valuable resources. Our monthly programs enlighten us to appreciate our environment and respect its fragile beauty.

We have lessened our impact on landfill waste by eliminating the mailing of our bimonthly News Leaf. We are encouraging members to attend educational programs which teach us the importance of the wildlife around us, the art of using our natural resources wisely and being more self-reliant by advising how to live a more wholesome lifestyle, grow and live more organically and become more self-sufficient.

With the kind donations and assistance from local merchants and organizations, we can exist more ecologically by shopping locally. Some of the wonderful supporters and contributors to the club have been, Roselle Ace Hardware for their support in offering a discount coupon for purchases at their location; Schaumburg Park District for the 1-day Fitness Pass; Platt Hill Nursery for their support by offering the “Blooms for Bucks” program where members buy a gift certificate for redemption at either of their garden centers; Holistic Art Studio for their discount coupon and their donation of a speaker for our club meeting to advise a healthful approach to healthy living; Bon Ton Stores for their coupon book for discounts throughout the store. The Bon Ton coupon books are valid for their other stores that are located throughout the US. A listing of their stores is on the membership dues page.

Our wonderful supporters have given us a way to lessen our footsteps by offering valued products and services at discounted prices while saving our energy dollars by reducing the number of miles we travel. Please support our supporters. With their help, we have been successful in raising additional funds to sponsor educational programming for our Club members, Spring Valley Volunteers, and school children and teachers from our community. We have supplied funds for books for Spring Valley’s Library and have sponsored various free to the public programs and events that the Center has offered.

Thanks to you all, and especially our valued Members and Supporters of Spring Valley Nature Club!

Please take time to review all the wonderful benefits we are offering to our members with their Nature Club membership. Won’t you join us?

Spring Valley Nature Club is a 501(c3) organization and contributions may be tax deductible. Check with your tax advisor.

## Spring Valley Nature Club 2017 Membership Rates

To show our appreciation for our members' loyalty, we have come up with special benefits for all members.

**Discount Coupon Packet:** This packet will include certificates and coupons for various merchants, i.e. Holistic Health Studio (massage discount), Schaumburg Park District (1 day Fitness Pass), Roselle Ace Hardware (discount on purchase), Platt Hill Nursery (discount on purchase), Chick-Fil-A (Free Sandwich - Schaumburg Stores only), Back In Line Chiropractic (Discount on Services) Bon-Ton Stores Seasonal Discount Coupon Book (Carson's, Younkers, Herberger's, Bergner's, Elder-Beerman, Boston Store, etc., estimated value up to \$500.00. A Spring and Fall benefit for members.

A special benefit is an invitation to the Spring Valley Volunteer/Meineke Award Picnic on the first Friday in August. A postcard will be sent to current members in good standing by mid-July asking for an RSVP.

**Free Entry to the Nature Club Programs:** Allows you to attend any or all the ten Spring Valley Nature Club monthly meetings and educational programs from February through November where you can enjoy some refreshments and camaraderie with fellow supporters of the Nature Club and the Spring Valley Volunteers.

**Membership Card:** Identifies you as a supporter of the Nature Club's efforts.

**\*\*All current Life Members** are eligible to receive the **New Discount Coupon Pack** for just \$10.00 a year

**Life Membership:** In addition to the above items, this membership includes a Nature Club Commemorative Fleece Throw (\$35.00 value); this fleece throw is for **New Life Memberships Only**.

**Family Fun Membership:** In addition to all the standard items above, this membership category includes a Spring Valley Annual Family Pass (\$120.00 value) to be used for a 15% discount on most Spring Valley Programs; 10% Discount on Summer Camps and Birthday Parties; 15% discount on Honey & Gift Shop purchases at Spring Valley and free admission to all Spring Valley events including the Pancake Breakfast. (The discounts do not apply to the Solstice Hop & Vine or the Haunting in the Valley.)

Your Membership Packet needs to be picked up in person at the Spring Valley Nature Center 9:00 – 5:00 daily.

**Yearly Memberships Begin February 1<sup>st</sup> through January 31<sup>st</sup>**  
**Your dues are now payable for the year 2017**

Individual		\$15.00
Family		\$25.00
Supporting		\$35.00
Senior		\$10.00
Family Fun		\$120.00
Life	**	\$150.00
Sponsor		\$1000.00

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**Individual – Family – Supporting -- Senior -- Family Fun -- Life -- Sponsor**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **City** \_\_\_\_\_ **St** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

Checks should be made payable and mailed to:  
Spring Valley Nature Club - 1111 East Schaumburg Road, Schaumburg, IL 60194