



[www.springvalleynatureclub.org](http://www.springvalleynatureclub.org)

[springvalleynatureclub@gmail.com](mailto:springvalleynatureclub@gmail.com)

**Editor: Al Larson**

**July/August 2019**

## **Letter from the President, Donna Johnson**

### **The Fourth of July Oh My!**

**And we thought it was never going to get warm!** Our cold wet spring had us all thinking.. Ice Age Cometh? Don't despair, our usual Chicago weather is kicking in!

All our spring planted milkweed plants and heirloom veggies are now basking in the gloriously hot & wet summer! First tomatoes and squashes are finally ripening!

Be sure to join us Wednesday for an evening of cooling off at Spring Valley Nature Center and enjoying our favorite falconer, Cathy Blecker and her friendly owl!

### **Spring Valley Nature Club Meeting – Wednesday, July 3, 2019 7:00 p.m.**

**Program: Raptors at Home near Your Home – Presenter, Registered Falconer, Cathy Blecker**

**We are all looking forward to meeting with Cathy Blecker and the new Wings and Talons Barn Owl.** It was raised and imprinted to be sent to WAT as an educational bird. The bird weighs only 17 ounces, so she is a very small raptor. Though small her personality is very big, sweet and friendly, she chatters merrily and almost continually! This owl variety is very rare in this area and we are privileged to be able to see and learn about such a unique creature so up close and personal!

So, be sure to bring along your significant other, a friend or neighbor, to see and hear about this living wonder! Refreshments will be served, and you do not need to be a member to attend. Your support is always appreciated!

### **Spring Valley Nature Club Meeting – Wednesday August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019 7:00 pm.**

**The Incredible Bats! Presenter Sharon Peterson M.S. Ed. Educator/Bat Naturalist**

**Bats in Your Belfry? I hope so!** Sharon will have a fascinating presentation about the environmental benefits and ecological impact bats have on our ecosystem. No need to fear these night stalkers of mosquitoes and other bothersome insects. Her presentation will be enhanced with her guests, several unique species of bats and even a few surprise animals that are normally thought of as pest, but in fact are crucial to our ecosystem! Should be a fun and very educational session! Be sure to bring a camera, a friend or two and enjoy a great program! Refreshments will be served, and guests are always welcome!

## Summer Happenings at Spring Valley – July/August 2019

The summer months feature numerous events and programs at Spring Valley! 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.

### ***Firefly Fandango – Saturday & Sunday, July 13 & 14, 8:45-9:45 p.m.***

Register in advance for this popular family program. Participants will learn about fireflies and how they make their ‘cool’ light in the Nature Center backyard. Groups will then be taken on a twilight wagon ride to view the incredible light show to be seen on mid-summer evenings at Spring Valley. Fee is \$4 for residents or \$5 for non-residents.

### ***Buzzing About Insects – Sunday, July 14, Noon – 3 p.m.***

Explore the fascinating world of insects through games and activities at this free family drop-in program! Spring Valley’s woods, prairies, and wetlands has an astounding diversity of insects – and only a handful of them will ‘bug’ you – most are beautiful and fun to learn about. Stop by the Nature Center backyard anytime to learn something new about our six-legged friends! Refreshments will be available for purchase.

### ***Heritage Farm Drop-in Thursdays 10 a.m.-noon***

July 11 – *Leather Works* July 25 – *Cookie Creations* August 15 – *Sundae School*

Stop by the Farm anytime between 10 a.m. and noon for something unique and special on these days. Activities and demonstrations are on-going. *Leather Works* will allow you to make a simple leather bracelet in our harness shop; *Cookie Creations* will feature historic cookie making in the farmhouse, along with making and decorating your own cookie; *Sundae School* will get everyone cranking out home-made ice cream. Participation and materials fee of \$2/person.

### ***Heritage Farm Local Market Days – July 13 & August 10, 9 a.m.-noon***

Visit the Heritage Farm to purchase locally made cheeses and meats, along with garden produce and handicrafts.

### ***German Beer Gardens – Saturdays, July 20 & August 24, 4-7 p.m.***

Socialize with your neighbors at these re-creations of traditional German ‘biergartens,’ held at the Heritage Farm. There will be games, live traditional music, pretzels, soda, and of course, good German beer! The entrance fee of \$5 gets you a souvenir glass as well as a pretzel. Beer and soda are available for purchase. Kids welcome at these family events!

### ***NEW EVENT! Christmas in July – Thursday-Sunday, July 25-28, times vary***

July 25, 10 a.m.-Noon – *Cookie Creations* - July 26, Noon-2:30 p.m. – *Horse-drawn Sleigh (Wagon) Rides*

July 27, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. – *Ornament Making* - July 28, Noon-3 p.m. – *Meet St. Nick*

Get a taste of holiday spirit during warm summer weather at this new Heritage Farm program!

### ***Star Gazing Party – Saturday, August 10, 8:30-11 p.m.***

Raise your eyes to the skies at this family celebration of astronomy! Telescopes will be set up along the trails behind the Nature Center, and games and activities will be available inside the building. The annual Perseid meteor shower will be a highlight, so bring a blanket or folding lawn chairs so you can sit back and watch the heavens for a shooting star. Admission is free! Sponsored by Spring Valley Nature Club.

### ***Back to School Campfire – Friday, August 16, 7:30-9 p.m.***

This family event features a cheery campfire in back of the Nature Center, marshmallow roasting, and wagon rides through the prairie. Bring a camp chair or blanket. Fee is \$2/person. Sponsored by Spring Valley Nature Club.

### ***Farm to Fork Festival – Wednesday, August 14, 5-8 p.m.***

Join us for our 4<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of fresh, seasonal, regional foods at the Heritage Farm! Several area restaurants and caterers will be preparing and serving up locally sourced and seasonally fresh dishes as part of an unforgettable white tablecloth outdoor dining experience. Locally produced beers and wines will be available as well as live music. Cost is \$32/person, with pre-registration required by August 9.

## Nature

Sweet summer is stealing in, gliding over new-mown lawns, sliding past the peony patch and slipping in through open windows, riding soft breezes and carrying warm promises of high, bright suns, dew-drenched mornings, long, lazy afternoons, and evenings heavy with the scent of lush meadows and deep woods.

The sun's climb has neared its peak, pushing mornings back and delaying sunsets until the light's advance is stopped, and the long march of lengthening evenings pulls us towards the time of cold. But that time is months away, and summer has just begun.

The wrens who nested in the house hanging from the flowering crab, celebrate the season with a song that gushes forth with a joy too large for the morning. So it spills into the afternoon, bubbling up and out, with an exuberance that can only be matched by children.

The CHEER, CHEER, CHEER of a cardinal, echoes from the woods, adding its voice to summer bird song. And at the edge of the meadow, the clear, melodic notes of a song sparrow carry across the distance. Such beauty from such a plain little bird.

Soon fireflies will light the evenings, blazing their message of courtship. Children will race to catch them in jars, add grass and punch holes in the lids. We did. And at our grandparents' farm we made the holes too big. They lit out and lit the stairwell up to grandma and grandpa's bedroom. The bedroom too. They told us about it.

Summer skies mean red-tailed hawks wheeling on thermals, riding the rising columns of air while scouring the grasses for meadow voles, or cotton tails. Dragonflies rule the air over summer ponds, darting to catch insects on the wing, rattling to rest on a cat tail leaf, or someone's fishing pole.

Evening skies bring nighthawks, soaring under street lamps or swooping over tree tops to harvest insect flyers. Little brown bats work the darkness, soundless in their search for food. While the ruler of the night is the great homed owl, able to home in on the faintest sound of a leaf rustling, clutching its deer mouse or white-footed mouse quarry with deadly talons. Where the great homed owl rules, other owls are not safe and even skunks fall victim to their hunting prowess.

Toads are active on summer nights, when the air is cooler and heavier with moisture. They bump along, secure from most predators because of their poisonous skin. Inching close to an insect prey, they'll slowly hunch forward and then ZAP! Their tongue darts out, longer than you imagined and almost faster than you can see and the insect is now in their mouth. Gulp.

So summer is here with the sounds of crickets and thunder and lawnmowers and baseball. It's busy with vacations and swims and barbecues and picnics. It's filled with fireworks and bicycles and mosquitoes and no school.

Catch it if you can. Save it in a jar and don't punch holes in the top. We want to enjoy it without waking grandma and grandpa.

Al Larson

## Tending Your Heirloom Vegetable & Herb Garden!

It seemed that winter would never end! Our spring was the coldest and wettest that I can remember! Now that the weather has heated up with a vengeance, our garden crops are virtually racing towards maturity! For the cost of a few dollars' worth of seeds and plants we are soon to reap hundreds of dollars' worth of fabulous organic vegetable and herb treats!

With the rampant growth that our garden and container crops are doing, you must remember to feed them at least every two weeks. Even though it has been raining almost every day, you need to water your plants when the soil gets dry, that is how you keep your tomatoes from getting blossom end rot. Container plants usually need watering every day.

Be sure to harvest your veggies as they ripen to keep the critters at bay. There is nothing quite as enticing to those squirrels as a fully ripe tomato. To keep them from nibbling at those tasty fruits you can tent your plants with bird netting. It not only keeps the birds away, the squirrels get their paws snagged and it seems to frighten them from picking again. You can always dust your plants with cayenne pepper too!

Keep a log of how your plants grew, which ripened first and the qualities that you liked or did not like. By logging your progress you will be able to make good choices of the plants you would like to grow next year. Reflect on the varieties of veggies and tomatoes you have grown in the past, were they what you expected, do you want to grow them again? Looking for something new? Now is the time to check Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Catalogue or online at [www.rareseeds.com](http://www.rareseeds.com) and see what items interest you. Keep note of things you'd like to try next year and save your seed orders for the Club so we can place a group order early in the season we will place a group order and have your seeds for you at the proper planting time next spring.

We have a unique arrangement with Baker Creek Seeds of Mansfield Missouri whereupon our members and friends can submit their seed order and check made payable to Spring Valley Nature Club! Please note you do not need to be a member of Nature Club to place an order with us. You will be notified as to when you can come to pick-up your seeds. As a courtesy from Baker Seeds we do not pay a handling charge and Nature Club gets a special rate allowing the club to derive a profit from all the seeds that we purchase.

Please continue your loyalty to our cause, it is with support from our members and friends of Spring Valley, that we can assist the Spring Valley Nature Center in its educational and environmental efforts to provide programs for the community. Thank you.



## **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 purpose of 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 and discount coupon at their garden centers; Holistic Art Studio for their discount coupon; Skincare by Carmela for their discount on services.

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 Nature 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 2019 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), Skincare by Carmela (Discount on Services)

**Special Benefit;** 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 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 & Bi-monthly News Leaf:** Identifies you as a supporter of the Nature Club's efforts.

**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**.

**Current Life Members** are eligible for the Discount Coupon Packet. Donations appreciated and help our cause.

**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. Any member may have the membership package mailed to them for a handling fee of \$2.00

### Yearly Memberships Begin February 1<sup>st</sup> through January 31<sup>st</sup>

Senior 55 Plus	\$10.00
Individual	\$15.00
Family	\$25.00
Supporting	\$35.00
Family Fun Membership	\$120.00
Life	\$150.00
Sponsor	\$1000.00

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**Senior - Individual – Family – Supporting -- 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