

KVAS Autumn 2011



Kaskaskia Valley Audubon Society, a chapter of Illinois Audubon Society

Letter from Our President:

As we approach the end of 2011, it is fun to reminisce about some of the interesting events and personal experiences that may have impressed us in one way or another in the past 10 months. I'm sure each of you had some memorable experiences related to the great outdoors, as I do. It's hard to forget the natural disasters and weather events, including the after math of Japan's tsunami, the tornadoes in Alabama, Joplin, even St. Louis; stories about the arctic ice sheets melting and breaking up and the Gulf of Mexico allegedly getting back to "normal" (depends on whose perspective you take, of course--that of oil industry, gulf shore residents, or the animals that have survived). I'm going to give you my 2011 top ten list, for what it's worth: 1. Our son and I hiking gorgeous trails in spruce-pine forests of northern Wisconsin (Jackson Springs Wilderness area), at which we found wild strawberries and blueberries, a peat bog with pitcher plants and Indian pipe, and a male black-throated blue warbler all within a couple hours, 2. Colton and I watching sunsets as we tried to catch fish in the middle of a small lake in Northern WI (sunsets and the bats fluttering around us were much better than our fishing fortunes), 3. Encountering a young, seemingly confused, but entertaining and "tame", young wood vole with Ken, Hugh, and Colton, 4. Shouldering up to 300 year-old hemlock and 200 year-old pine trees in Northern and Central WI, 5. Seeing the amazing variety of plants at the White Rock Nature Preserve during a recent work day (not to mention the wonderful, human teamwork portrayed in restoring hill prairie habitat), 6. Participating in the Bioblitz at Salt Lick Point Land and Water Reserve, 7. Experiencing the beautiful Fall Weather of this October, 8. Enjoying the great quantity of snow on a few occasions this past Winter (some of you know I LOVE snow), 9. Waking up to the profusion of morning songbird chatter during May and June camping trips, and 10. Trying to trap hummingbirds for Vern and Tom (...if only that one didn't get away). And just think, with two months to go, even more captivating events could occur!

Many of these experiences got me thinking about the importance of individual plant or animal encounters versus the ecosystem that such an organism is a part of. I am beginning to see that, at least, this Nature lover needs to learn to recognize and celebrate the ecosystem or the habitat level a little more than he has in the past, perhaps bring less attention to a particular species of orchid, shorebird, insect, or towering tree, and find amazement more in the community to which each belongs, as a whole. In many cases our society has seen that failing to preserve "the whole" results in loss of some of the individual wonders. I'd like to bring more attention to appreciating the whole. These are some of my goals for 2012 and beyond, as I spend time learning about, and discovering and appreciating the Natural world.

Perhaps I may be able to inspire others in this way, or perhaps they will inspire me. Either way, it seems to me that, as a race, we humans could see the natural resources provided to us on Earth in a more sensitive and caring light if we choose to attach higher value the sum of the parts, even though the beauty and wonder we perceive in one or more of the parts has us tempted to feel more connected to one part more than others. It complicates matters that most ecosystems are unimaginably complex, and that our human existence is inextricably connected to these.

Tim Dever, President

Volume 16, issue 3

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We Nurture Nature



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KVAS Programs 2011

All meetings will be held at 7pm at Southwestern Illinois College, Redbud Campus in the auditorium.

All meetings are Free and Open to the Public, invite a friend or two to learn about KVAS.

November 17 – Photographer Paul Feldker will share many of his stellar photos with us in his presentation Birds of Monroe County. After retiring from 41 years of teaching physics at St. Louis Community College, Paul has spent considerable time with one of his favorite hobbies, nature photography. Paul uses the camera as a way to identify birds passing through or residing at his Monroe County home and property. Brush up on your id skills as Paul shares his avian delights with you on the big screen.

December 8 - CHRISTMAS PARTY



- The annual KVAS Christmas party will be held **Thursday, December 8, 2011** at Will and Susan Harbaugh's home - 1204 Raymond Drive, Red Bud, IL. Social hour begins at 5:30 pm with **dinner served at 6:30 pm**. To get an accurate count to the caterer in advance, **please RSVP by November 30**. Following the meal will be a very short business meeting including election of officers for 2012.

- The buffet dinner will be provided by Gourmet Catering from Steeleville, IL. The menu includes pork tenderloin, turkey, rice pilaf, green beans, glazed carrots, garden salad, rolls, tea and coffee all for the economical price of only \$10.00 per plate. Payment can be made the evening of the party.

- And we will be looking for a couple of those great homemade desserts to finish off the meal. Please let Susan know if you will be attending and if you can bring a dessert to share - phone (618) 282-2914 or e-mail at harbaugh@htc.net. Also, feel free to bring your own adult beverages.

- Directions to 1204 Raymond Drive, Red Bud -

- 1) from Waterloo and points beyond: as you enter Red Bud, watch for Construction Supply (lumber yard) and just past that, make a right on Country Club, then just inside the subdivision, make a right on Raymond. The house is at the corner of Raymond and Clarence. Please enter via the front door as we will leave the garage access for the caterer.

- 2) from Hecker, Baldwin, Ruma and points beyond - at the four way stop in downtown Red Bud, choose Route 3 west (heading toward Waterloo) and proceed 0.9 of a mile. Watch for Clarence, then after that will be Country Club. Make a left onto Country Club, then just inside the subdivision, make a right on Raymond. The house is at the corner of Raymond and Clarence. Please enter via the front door as we will leave the garage access for the caterer.

November 17 Presentation – Photographer Paul Feldker

When I was nearly two years old my father moved our family to a dilapidated farm near Burksville (about 5 miles south of Waterloo) to farm like they did in the old country. He immigrated to the United States when he was 28 years old. While growing up on the farm some of my earliest memories were of observing nature ... rabbits hopping through the woods and fields, squirrels scampering in the trees, birds and clouds ambling through the sky. My father spoke of mink, bobcats, groundhogs and muskrats in our area as well as "chicken" hawks. There were no deer in Monroe county then.

My interest in birds began when I was ten years old and we moved to Waterloo. Birds were always interesting and a neighbor birding lady was always patient and helpful. She would get out her Peterson's guide, ask many questions and attempt to help me to identify any unknown bird I had spotted.

Photography became a hobby when my brother was in the navy in the late 50's and early 60's. He was the photographer aboard an experimental helicopter carrier. In Japan he bought a camera for me and I started casually taking pictures. College came and went and when I finished my masters degree in Physics I taught Physics full time at St. Louis Community (Florissant Valley campus) for 34 years, then part-time for another 7 years. In 1974 my wife and I moved to the country on 34 acres between Valmeyer and Waterloo. Wildlife of all kinds abound in the fields, woods and streams here in the area that in my recollection was always known as Deer Hill. I began building bird feeders and Karlene, my wife, began to plant gardens and feed hummingbirds. We collected a small library of wildflower, plant, bird, butterfly and all other manner of identification books.

November 17 Presentation – Photographer Paul Feldker (continued)

In the 80's I bought a good camera, took a few photography classes at the college, then began to snap photos in earnest. Since that time I have purchased better cameras and lenses.

Nature photography then became a serious hobby. My nature photography equipment is rather minimal. I now use a Canon 50D with an assortment of lenses beginning with a 50mm macro lens and ending with a 70mm to 300mm zoom (f4.5/5.6) with image stabilization. A faster, longer focal length lens would help, but such lenses cost much more than I can afford.

To take decent nature photos you need a good camera, good lenses, a good tripod, wildlife habitat, much patience, tolerance for poor weather conditions and good luck. Feeding birds and providing cover and homes for all wildlife makes the process a little easier. There is always the thrill that comes from getting a better shot of a familiar plant, animal, insect or bird. Some wildlife is very timid and most seem to enjoy making it difficult for portraits.

Even some common yard feeder visitors seem to relish making photography difficult, plants lie in wait in full harsh sunlight, in deep shade, unmanageable terrain or between less desirable associates. Birds will hide in leafy parts of the trees or in deep shade; many birds and animals will also keep moving, darting from here to there avoiding the camera. Many only sit quietly and sing when there is no sign of a camera. Because photography is all about light and movement, your subject has many advantages to avoid that really splendid photo.

An typical early morning of nature photography often begins with a half-mile hike along my trails through deep woods and steep sinkhole sides, then down the ridge to Bond creek and along the bluebell filled creek bottom to my photographing blind. Because of the high ridges on either side of the creek sunlight is always slow to reach the area that I am searching. If it is a cloudy morning, the lighting will be even poorer. Much of the wildlife tends to be nocturnal but still moving in careful quickness as dawn breaks. Using natural light is my goal since flash gives a more harsh and unnatural look to the finished photograph. To compensate for the lack of light I adjust the ISO on my camera to about 1000 or higher knowing full well that my digital photos will be pixelated (the digital version of grainy) if I enlarge them much, but otherwise my camera will compensate by operating the shutter so slowly that any movement in my subject will cause a blurry image. In my small blind there is a chair and a tripod and little room for me. Now it is time to sit and wait for a willing wildlife participant. I have been sitting here very quietly for an hour now and all I have seen is a red-bellied woodpecker beyond the range of good photography darting from the front to the rear of a high sycamore. There may be a symphony of unseen birds or nearly deafening silence. During the next hour I may again see nothing, a few common visitors in no special poses or perhaps there was an unusual visit from a more special visitor. The lighting is better now, but the visitor usually moves quickly. I often have ten seconds or less to get the photo I seek. If it is a bird I don't recognize (very common) the photo will need to be examined closely and the species determined near my computer using identification books or the internet. In the summer my blind is hot, humid and very stuffy even with the zip-out windows open. In the winter it is a cold place, the same zip-out windows now allows the bone-chilling air in. Sometime the weather is not an issue, the leaves have fallen or not yet come out so the lighting is pretty good, wildlife seems to appear from nowhere and stay for five or ten minutes at a time. These visits turn all the previous visits into vague memories and invigorate me. Even in poor weather I find the sounds of the creek peaceful and joyful; a time to renew my spirit.

Besides the creek, there are wildlife photography opportunities all over my little timber farm. At Tom May's urging I placed a kestrel house in my two acre prairie in 2006. After two years a kestrel pair raised a hutch of five chicks to fledging. I kept a photo journal of the family from late April when they took over the house until the last chick fledged in late June. The photo below shows one of the fledglings. The chicks hatched on May 22 and Tom banded them on the 4th of June. Since 2008 there have been no babies in the house although a pair of kestrels laid 5 eggs this past winter.



Nature photography can be exhilarating.

It can be very time consuming.

It can become a passion.

Photograph and article by Paul Feldker

Green Isn't Always Good!

by Debbie S. Newman, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

It is that time of year again, where the cold winds blow and the leaves fall, turning our native landscape brown. But wait, what is all that green in the woods, those groves of thick leafy bushes? Well, some of you may know it, but if not, these are the Asian bush honeysuckles. They hold their leaves for another month after native trees and shrubs have gone dormant. They're also one of the first to green up in the spring.

Extending our season of green might appear good, but these plants are actually destroying our wildlands. Removing these bushes from *every woodland possible* is essential to the future of our native plants and animals, and incredible biodiversity that we are graced with in southwestern Illinois. For KVAS members who want a little background on the invasion of these aliens, see the below sidebar article. If you are ready to go remove bushes right now, here are some tips:

Methods: Use any of these with tools/equipment described (good exercise to work off the Christmas cookies!) or area contractors can be hired to perform the work for you.

Hand pulling – plant is shallow rooted and small bushes pull out very easy in uncompacted woodland soils. In paths, fields or areas where the soil is compacted, or where bushes have been mowed or burned, hand pulling will be difficult or impossible.

Grub hoe – grubbing hoe can be used to pop the roots out of the ground, even for large bushes. With your back to the bush, straddle the bush with legs standing a couple feet apart, swing the hoe underneath you slicing just below the ground and the shallow roots; push the hoe handle away from you to pop the bush roots up so you can pull the bush out.

Chainsaw or brushcutter – cut individual large bushes with a chainsaw, or groves of smaller bushes with brush saw. Ensure you cut below the lowest branch on multi-branch trunks or the bush will resprout. Once the stems are cut they **MUST** be immediately treated with 40-50% solution of glyphosate (Roundup or generic)

Foliar spray – backpack or hand-held sprayer – Foliar spray for bush honeysuckle with a 5% glyphosate solution can be done any time of the year, however **it is recommended you use this method only after native trees and herbaceous plants have gone dormant**, unless your area has few or no native plants that will be killed by the broad-spectrum herbicide. Treatment at this time can be very effective.

Mist-blowing foliar treatment – backpack mist blower or tractor-mounted mist blower. This method is the same as #5, but uses special equipment that can treat large, dense areas of honeysuckle easier and cheaper. **The same recommendation about dormancy treatment in #5 applies to this method.**

All initial treatment/removal MUST be followed up for many years to insure success. Plan to monitor your property in March and November each year (at a minimum) when the green bushes can be easily seen in the brown, dormant woods. If you are not seeing a reduction of new seedling bushes after 6-7 years (the lifespan of honeysuckle seed in the soil), berries are likely arriving (via birds) from neighboring properties. Use your nice, 'clean' woods as a way to discuss with your neighbors about removing their honeysuckle.

Honeysuckle: Where, How, Why?

by **Debbie S. Newman, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission**

Where have these invaders come from? While many invasive exotic plants have arrived and escaped here unintentionally, unfortunately, these bushes were brought in from Asia and promoted in the 1960s-70s for wildlife because of their abundant and highly-palatable berry production. Of course at that time, no one could foresee the coming perfect storm that would allow these bushes to spread like a prairie wildfire across our Illinois landscape.

Today we've drastically altered our landscape, and the processes in it, such as fire. Add to this changing climate conditions, and a pervasive urban-wildland interface. This has led to declines of many native plants, changed structure and composition of natural areas, and allowed easy migration of aggressive plants from one place to another.

These myriad changes have created fertile breeding grounds for certain exotic plants; and with an ever-increasing abundance of these plants, they're now readily gobbling up available space in our forests and other wildlands, with nothing natural (ie predators, fire or disease) to stop them. Some of these plants, like bush honeysuckle, can become so thick and numerous that they are literally smothering our native forests. Wildflowers, mushrooms, ferns, and native tree and shrub seedlings often can't survive this competition. Instead of having a diverse landscape, exotics are propelling us toward a monoculture.

I like the analogy of an infection. In medical terms infections are caused by organisms trying to get a foothold in a host environment to successfully reproduce and thrive. With infections, there is usually a critical point when the pathogen is at peak numbers and the host can become really sick, just before some immune function or supplement (ie antibiotics) starts to work—or else the host dies. Unfortunately with honeysuckle, we're at the point of serious sickness on the native landscape. But other than our manual efforts, *there is currently no immunity or drug therapy to stop the death of the host*—that host being the native habitats we treasure.

It's up to all of us to stop this widespread infection. Check your property for offenders, and take action! If you don't own property, please volunteer a few times a year to eradicate exotics on a natural area or park. Help is needed everywhere.



There are 2 honeysuckle removal volunteer days coming up in our area:

Saturday, Nov. 5th, 9 a.m. at Salt Lick Point Land & Water Reserve. Meet at St. John's Church parking area, 201 S. Meyer Ave., Valmeyer. (Monroe County) For questions please call 618-935-2131.

Saturday, Nov. 12th, 9.a.m. at Stemler Cave Woods Nature Preserve. Meet at 6405 Knightsbridge Lane, Millstadt. (St. Clair County) If you want to park at the kiosk on Stemler Road and hike in, we will post a note and map designating the work area on the kiosk. For questions please call us at 618-281-9816.

Please wear weather-appropriate clothing, boots & gloves and bring water to drink.

The Virginia Opossum is the only marsupial living wild in the United States.

The average life span of the possum is one to two years.

The gestation (length of pregnancy) of a female possum is only 13 days!

Possoms have 50 teeth - more than any other mammal!

Possoms are omnivorous, which means they eat anything: meat, fruits, grains, vegetables, fish, etc.

Possumology 101 Brochure - TreeHouse Wildlife Center



Photo courtesy of the Forest Preserve District of Dupage County

Christmas Bird Count

This December Kaskaskia Valley Audubon members will attempt to complete the 16th consecutive Christmas Bird Count in the lower Kaskaskia River valley. Here are some trivia questions about the CBC. How many can you answer correctly? (answers on page 7)

1. The land surface area of the CBC circle is about how many square miles?
(a) 52 (b) 89 (c) 177 (d) 200
2. Not counting those huge flocks of common grackles, European starlings, red-winged black-birds...and snow geese and Canada geese, which three bird species are, historically (on average), recorded in the highest numbers on the Baldwin Lake-Kaskaskia River count?
(a) American robin, N. cardinal, house sparrow (b) mallard, blue jay, American goldfinch
(c) greater white-fronted goose, mallard, N cardinal (d) ring-billed gull, goldfinch, mallard
3. Which is the coldest morning (starting) temperature, in degrees Fahrenheit, that the KVAS team has recorded for a CBC?
(a) 22 (b) 18 (c) 7 (d) 14
4. In the 15 years we have conducted this count, so far, in how many did we have to postpone the original scheduled date for the count?
(a) 4 (b) 6 (c) 8 (d) 2
5. The KVAS team has recorded all of the following species on, at least, one occasion during the CBC count day, except:
(a) snow bunting (b) sand hill crane (c) black-crowned night heron (d) orange-crowned warbler
6. Which of the following sparrow birds have we been least likely to locate within the prescribed count circle on the count day?
(a) swamp (b) LeConte's (c) Vesper sparrow (d) Eastern towhee
7. Which is usually the first bird species written on our lists once the count begins?
(a) Eastern screech owl (b) barred owl (c) great horned owl (d) whip-poor-will
8. We often are blessed with the help of a friend who accompany's Marty Kemper (on the section he usually covers during the Baldwin L-Kaskaskia R. CBC) by what name?
(a) John Snow (b) Phoebe Johnson (c) Jimmy Christmas (d) Bob White
9. On some years the KVAS team is able to record only very small numbers of birds at the largest (and always unfrozen) water feature in the circle, due to what phenomena?
(a) fog (b) blinding snow (c) gates are locked (d) lack of enough observers to assign to the lake
10. The following bird species are all widely considered specialties of the count circle we do, except:
(a) short-eared owl (b) greater white-fronted goose (c) marsh wren (d) wild turkey
11. Which habitat type usually hosts the most different bird species (in this count circle)?
(a) unfrozen lake surfaces (b) wetlands/marshes (c) bottomland forest (d) pine plantation

Christmas Bird Count (continued)

Please join us at the marina on the riverfront in ***New Athens at 6:30 am on Sat, Dec. 17th, 2011*** for a day of great fun and opportunities to learn about Nature during the Winter, while contributing to the nation's most successful citizen-scientist-led data base--going strong since 1901!

(if bad weather occurs, we will try again on 12/18).

Please contact Tim Dever (count compiler) at coltond98@sbcglobal.net.

Answers: 1. C, 2. D, 3. B, 4. D, 5. A, 6. C, 7. B, 8. D, 9. A, 10. D, 11. B

For further information regarding meetings, field trips, events, please visit the KVAS website:

<http://www.e-kvas.org/>

Newsletter Articles Needed

Please email me or bring your articles to the next meeting for the February newsletter. All members are welcome to submit nature related articles, quotes, favorite books, tips, pictures or great places to view nature over the next upcoming months (think Feb-June). We have a new area to get to know our members better. The first question is: How did you get interested in birding? Deadline for submission will be the end of January. If you received this letter via mail and would prefer to get it emailed, send me your email address. Tina McElhattan - loves.nature@gmail.com

WITS Electronic Recycling Dates

November 13th - SWIC The electronics recycling drop-off will take place from 10 am to 4 pm, at the Belleville Campus, 2500 Carlyle Ave. The drop-off zone will be in parking lot M5, near the Varsity Gym.

Members of the community are invited to bring in their old computers, televisions, VCRs, DVD players, home electronics, washers, dryers, refrigerators and more. (might be a small fee for larger items)

November 19th - Columbia Public Works - 10 am to 4 pm at 110 West Sand Bank Road, Columbia, IL

For a complete list of recyclable items, visit WITSinc.org.

America Recycles Day - November 15



Holiday Light Recycling Drive

If anyone has any old strands of Christmas/holiday type lights, I'll be collecting them at the November and December meetings and taking them to the collection bins once the locations are posted. Taken from Fox 2 website: The push is on to recycle them instead of sending them to the landfill. "What people need to understand is a lot of what they are throwing out in landfills actually has a value," says QRS Recycling CEO Greg Janson who says even the worthless wads of holiday lights. "There is so much copper in these," says Jung holding a strand of lights, "the plastic and the glass all gets recycled it just gets shredded and they can use the whole thing its 100 percent so it just doesn't make sense to throw them in the trash." - Tina McElhattan - loves.nature@gmail.com

Local Places of Interest

If the Kaskaskia River freezes over (or nearly does so), we sometimes see up to 20 or more bald eagles right here along the shorelines, in trees next to New Athens. At such times the river also attracts brave, lingering great blue herons, a variety of gulls and diving ducks. You know, one of the best places to see a variety of birds (and occasionally mammals) is the Peabody River King State Fish and Wildlife Area, about 2 miles East of New Athens. The habitat would not seem to be that great--"reclaimed" coal surface mines (also known as the "strip pits" to local fish catchers)--but since I live close by, I make frequent trips throughout the Winter and manage to see quite a variety of birds. I think many of them are attracted to the isolation and wide-open spaces. Most of 400 acres or so is grassland and the deep-water "lakes". Some of the interesting birds are: swans, bald eagles, variety of diving and dabbling ducks, sparrows, gulls, and a surprising variety of hawks and owls. Most unusual birds seen here in Winter are: loggerhead shrikes, short-eared owls, golden eagle, rough-legged hawk, trumpeter swans, LeConte's sparrow, brown thrasher, Eastern towhee, ruby-crowned kinglet, lesser black-backed gull, pied-billed grebe, and hermit thrush. The location is open until 5 pm, officially, during the Winter.

Written by Tim Dever

Congratulations to Martin Kemper!

Nashville, Illinois, resident honored for volunteerism

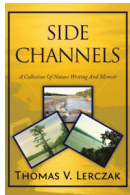
SPRINGFIELD, IL. The Illinois Audubon Society awarded the 2011 Mary Glenn Kirkland Volunteer of Year Award to Martin Kemper for his dedicated work in designing and developing full color posters depicting three Illinois Audubon Society sanctuaries. The posters were produced over a three year period in which Kemper spent countless hours visiting the properties to gather pictures and descriptions that expertly highlight the Society's mission of habitat preservation and management. The posters are proudly displayed in the state headquarters office and in each respective sanctuary featured; H&B Bremer (Hillsboro), War Bluff Valley Sanctuary (Golconda) and the grassland sanctuaries at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area (Newton.)

The award was established in 2001 to honor Mary Glenn Kirkland for her nearly 40 years of commitment as an officer, board member, and volunteer for the Society. The award is presented annually to a volunteer, like Kemper, who has been nominated based on a demonstration of exceptional volunteer effort and dedication to the goals and objectives of Illinois Audubon Society. In honor of his continued service and accomplishments, the Society was pleased to honor Kemper with the award during their recent annual membership meeting which was held in Decatur at Rock Springs Nature Center.

Marty is a Natural Heritage Biologist with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and was one of the original 12 employees involved in the Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Program in 1986. His office is located in the Sparta Shooting Complex in southwestern Illinois. Marty and his wife Linda live in Nashville, Illinois.

The mission of the Illinois Audubon Society is to promote the perpetuation and appreciation of native plants and animals and the habitats that support them. The Illinois Audubon Society is a member supported, not-for-profit, statewide organization. Founded in 1897, the Society is Illinois' oldest private conservation organization with over 2300 members, 20 chapters and 13 affiliate groups. Illinois Audubon Society has protected over 3000 acres by investing more than \$5 million to protect land and water throughout Illinois.





Side Channels

A Collection of Nature Writing and Memoir

By Thomas V. Lerczak

In 1994, I began writing a series of nature-related articles for *Illinois Audubon* magazine. All of the articles centered on some aspect of bird life based on field observations and the science of ecology. Many of these articles had the Illinois River, and to a lesser extent the Mississippi River, as an overall backdrop. I knew, though, that over the last 100 years or so, a great deal has been written about the Illinois River and its floodplain from a scientific perspective. A majority of this work tended to focus on fisheries, waterfowl migration and hunting, or water pollution. So I purposely took a different approach with my articles. Many, in fact, were written from the perspective of a canoeist or birder. I wrote about topics such as hawk migration, swallows, red-headed woodpeckers, bald eagles, and natural areas. In the end, I wanted my work to result in something unique.

A few years ago, it occurred to me that these river-related articles might be updated, collected together into a book, and made available to a wider audience. But as I began thinking about how these articles might be arranged as chapters in a book, I felt that something was necessary to tie everything together and perhaps better allow the reader to approach the book as a whole. Toward this end, I began writing short memoir pieces that examine the roots of my fascination with rivers and wild areas, and how my perspectives on nature and human society have changed over the years.

The book's chapters are arranged into two parts: *River Life* and *Travel*. Of the 30 chapters, 14 are previously published articles; the rest are mostly memoir and other previously unpublished materials. Debbie Scott Newman generously contributed the Foreword. In among the chapters are 14 sketches made by Patti Malmberg Reilly, most of which are based upon photographs of river scenes. I am gradually adding all of the photographs, which were used as a basis for the illustrations, to my weblog, The River Landing (<http://theriverlanding.typepad.com>) in a special category called "Side Channels Notes." For more information about *Side Channels* or to read an excerpt, please visit the author's website at www.side-channels.com.

Side Channels can be ordered from Amazon.com or Barnes and Noble. Copies can also be ordered by sending \$15.95 (Illinois residents add 6.75% sales tax) to: Side Channels, P.O. Box 33, Havana, Illinois 62644.

Clifftop News

Conserving Lands in Farm, Forest, Talus or Prairie

Protecting Our Bluffs in Monroe & Randolph Counties

Congratulations to the Clifftop organization, including KVAS members who have had much involvement with the establishing of Southern Illinois' newest Nature Preserve, White Rock: Carl and Pen Daubach, Ralph Buettner, and Debbie Newmann, among others! KVAS now has a wonderful opportunity for stewardship. Stewardship basically means taking care of a gift that has been given to you. I feel we have a new gift and an opportunity to raise our level of commitment, as an organization, to truly local CONSERVATION. The owners of White Rock will be offering several opportunities each year to help maintain trails and hill prairie habitat on the preserve. I feel it would be great if each of us could commit to volunteering to help with these tasks, at least once or twice every year. In Southwestern Illinois, this is definitely one of our natural gems. We will keep membership posted about these opportunities.

Tim Dever, President

New Nature Preserve in Monroe County

By Debbie S. Newman, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

On September 20, the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission approved the dedication of White Rock Nature Preserve, located on Bluff Road just south of Old Valmeyer. The 306-acre site is owned by Clifftop (Conserving Lands in Farm, Forest, Talus or Prairie) and the Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation and Development (SWIRCD).

White Rock Nature Preserve is a biologically diverse site harboring hill prairies, limestone glades, cliffs, and a large block of forest. Four threatened and endangered species (3 plants and one snake) have been documented at the site, and there are likely anywhere from another 3 to 8 T&Es found at the preserve. White Rock also hosts numerous Species of Greatest Need of Conservation identified in the IL Wildlife Action Plan.

The permanent preservation of this site is an important addition to a growing complex of protected high-quality natural areas in the bluff corridor. White Rock and other nearby preserved public and private-owned lands, such as Salt Lick Point Land & Water Reserve, now total more than 1200 acres within a 2 mile section of the corridor.

Clifftop and the SWIRCD have worked tirelessly for more than a year acquiring funding and negotiating the purchase of White Rock from Columbia Quarry Company, to insure its protection. The groups have spent another 10 months developing public access for the site, implementing a stewardship program and fund, and bringing this site (along with the nearby 168 acre White Rock Land & Water Reserve) to the INPC for legal protection.

On October 22, the two groups, along with more than 120 supporters, volunteers, and distinguished guests celebrated the dedication and the official opening of the preserve to public hiking.

Kaskaskia Valley Audubon Society supported the long-term stewardship and management of the site with a donation from our chapter to Clifftop's Stewardship Fund. Members have also attended stewardship workdays at the site. Many opportunities for stewardship will be coming in future months as Cliffhangers, the volunteer stewardship arm of Clifftop, will work to clear brush from hill prairies and glades, maintain trails, eradicate honeysuckle and other exotics, and conduct prescribed burns.

Congratulations to our partner conservation groups Clifftop and SWIRCD for your wonderful accomplishments! For more information about these groups and the White Rock Nature Preserve, visit: www.clifftopalliance.org, and www.swircd.org.



Photograph taken by Thomas Rollins Photography

Fall into Fun...

Saturday, October 22nd 12:30 – 4 p.m. Please join Clifftop and the Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development to celebrate the opening and dedication of White Rock Nature Preserve. Meet at the former White Mine site for some social time and snacks with friends and neighbors, and then we'll take time for a few formal remarks just before the trails are opened to public hiking. Please contact Clifftop@htc.net or 618-458-4674 to register and get directions. for parking.



Suckle Shoot 2011

**Learn to track,
spot and kill this
non-native
invasive plant!**

Please wear weather-appropriate clothing, boots & gloves and bring water to drink.

Friday, Nov. 4th, 5:30 p.m. The Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development will host an **Autumn Vino & Brew Tasting Social** at 909 South Main Street, Caseyville. Enjoy live music by Cumberland Gap while dining and tasting beverages from the only licensed Illinois microbrewery, Grafton Winery and Brewhouse. Tickets are \$30 per person or \$55 per couple in advance by October 20th. For more information, please e-mail maryann.lopez@swircd.org.

Tuesday, Nov. 15th, 6 p.m. Clifftop's Membership Chair Joann Fricke will make a presentation at the Columbia Public Library, 106 N. Metter Ave., Columbia. Joann will discuss the history and mission of Clifftop, the new White Rock Nature Preserve, and membership and the range of volunteer opportunities available with the organization.

Thursday, Nov. 17th, 7 p.m. Local photographer Paul Feldker will present the **Birds of Monroe County**, a photo essay of discovery about birds – their beauty and fascination -- in our local area. The presentation, hosted by Kaskaskia Valley Audubon Society, is free and open to the public, and will be held at the Southwest Illinois College Red Bud Campus Auditorium.



Honeysuckle control days will be held:

Saturday, Nov. 5th, 9 a.m. at Salt Lick Point. Meet at St. John's Church parking area, 201 S. Meyer Ave., Valmeyer.

Saturday, Nov. 12th, 9 a.m. at Stemler Cave Woods Nature Preserve. Meet at 6405 Knightsbridge Lane, Millstadt.



Kaskaskia Valley Audubon Society

611 S. East Street
New Athens, IL 62264.

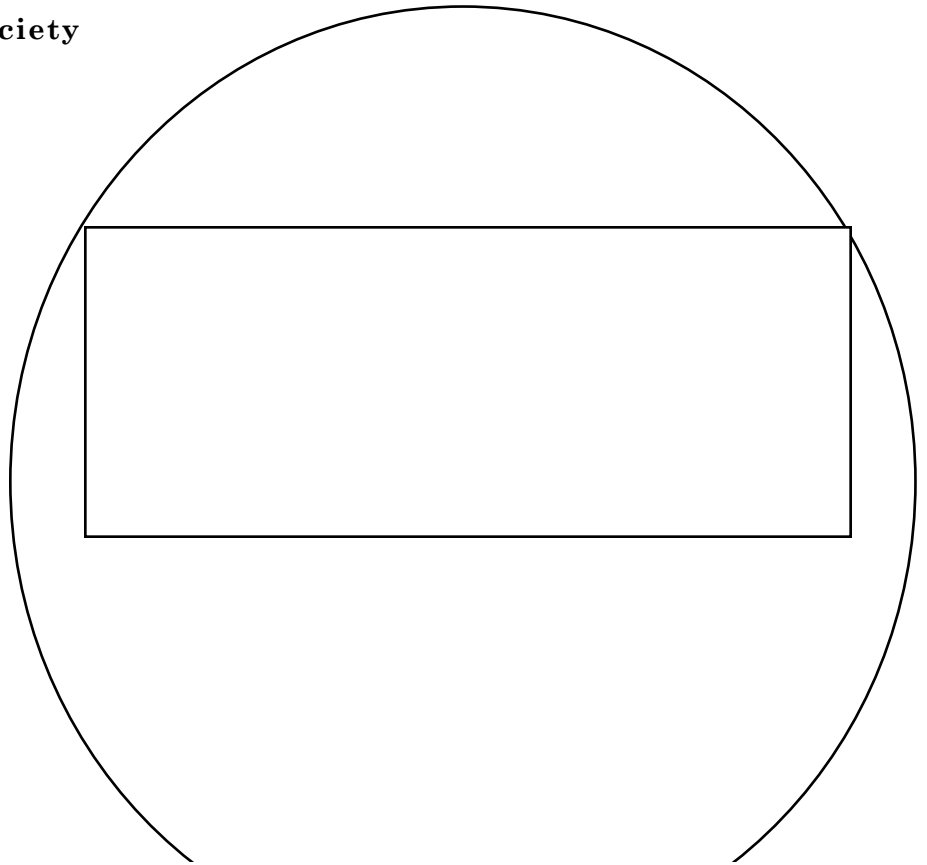
Phone: 475-2366
E-mail: coltond98@sbcglobal.net



KVAS

www.e-kvas.org

We Nurture Nature



Mission: To promote appreciation and increase knowledge of wild bird life, plants, animals and other living organisms, and of the environment that supports them, and to further conservation of natural resources.

Meetings: Held at 7pm, 3rd Thursday of each month, SWIC Campus at Red Bud, 500 W. South 4th St. or as announced.

Membership Application

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

(information is not for publication)

Membership Class

Student: _____ \$6

Individual: _____ \$8

Family: _____ \$10

We are members of IAS at the _____ level.

Maintenance of chapter status within Illinois Audubon Society (IAS) requires that a minimum of 51% of our membership also be IAS members, with a minimum of 25 IAS members in our chapter. We encourage members to join IAS as well as KVAS. Membership in the IAS, at the family or above level, fulfills 2 memberships towards our IAS requirements.

Please fill out the application to the left and send it, with a check made out to:

Ken Young

KVAS Treasurer

637 White Oak

Chester, IL 62233



To become an IAS member check out their website at: www.illinoisaudubon.org

Or Call: (217)544-BIRD

