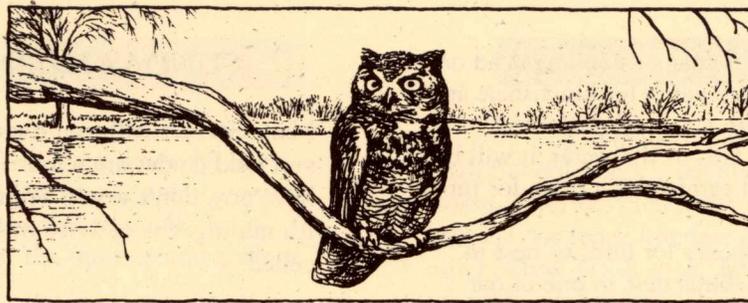


# STILLMAN NEWSLETTER



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## LIFE IN A DEAD TREE

-- Mark Spreyer

When people ask me if I live here at the Stillman Nature Center, my normal response is, "Yes, in the third hollow tree from the left."

Humor aside, what's really living in dead trees? As many as 400 species of birds, amphibians and mammals use dead trees for shelter or food.

Add to this scores of snakes, pillbugs, snails and slugs that call dead wood home. Speaking of which, here's a spelling bee word for you: thigmotactic. This term is used to describe creatures that are attracted to places in which they are touched on all sides. Then, of course, we have the hundreds of fungi, moss and lichens that add color and texture to a decomposing log.

To narrow it down a bit, there are, approximately, thirty-six cavity nesting bird species to be found in our north-central forests. Examples include the house wren, white-breasted nuthatch, black-capped chickadee, eastern bluebird, screech owl, American kestrel, tree swallow, great crested flycatcher plus red-bellied, downy, and hairy woodpeckers.

Without trees, these birds would disappear. So, if a tree dies in your yard, consider keeping it around.

Obviously, many of these birds are unable to excavate their own holes. They need contractors. That's where the woodpeckers come in.

With deference to fans of heavy metal rock, woodpeckers are the original head bangers. When digging a hole, the woodpecker hits a tree trunk at a speed of about 15 miles per hour. That may sound slow but just think about how your SUV would look after hitting a

tree at 15 mph!

In addition to withstanding the shocks, our avian chiseler's face is only an inch from his work table, so to speak, and he doesn't wear goggles. How does he get approval from OSHA? No problem. He just blinks a fraction of a second before making contact thus avoiding a chip in the eye.

I can hear some of you now, "That's all fine and good when he's working on a dead tree but what about when he is drilling my siding."

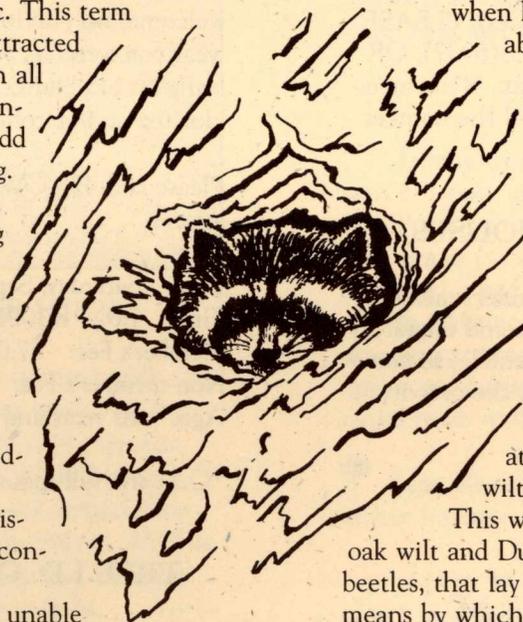
One of the reasons I encourage folks to leave dead trees standing is that they offer a natural alternatives for the woodpecker drumming on your house or the raccoon in your attic. If the only quiet dark spot in the neighborhood is your attic, is it surprising that squirrels and raccoons move in?

All right, I realize that if the dead tree is leaning over your porch or garage, you need to take it out. Also, if it is a dead elm which still has the bark attached or a red oak that died of oak wilt, you should have it removed.

This will help reduce the chance of spreading oak wilt and Dutch elm disease. With the latter, bark beetles, that lay eggs underneath elm bark, are one of the means by which the disease is spread from dying to living elms.

If you have lots of bug-eating birds around, that's a good thing for both you, your house, and your trees. That's another reasons to leave dead trees. Most of the cavity nesting birds listed above dine on insects including bark beetles.

Now, if you have water and dead trees, you've got a



# STILLMAN NATURE CENTER

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wildlife party in the making. A snag, a standing dead or partially dead tree, is a favorite perch for kingfishers and green herons and a nesting site for wood ducks and hooded mergansers. When it falls in the water, it will be a perch for ducks, herons and egrets plus a place for turtles to bask in the spring.

Of course, you can build boxes for birds to nest in. Here at Stillman, we had bluebirds nest in one of our boxes this spring but a box can be little else. As it ages, a dead tree is home to the diversity of creatures mentioned at the outset.

When the decomposers finish with the rotten log, a rich and fertile compost will return to the soil and, with some luck, support the roots of a seedling or a sapling. Tree to tree, soil to soil, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

Which reminds me, you know what Beethoven is doing in his grave right now? Decomposing. O.K., I'll go now.

## PROGRAMS

Program Basics: TO MAKE RESERVATIONS for programs (except for bird banding open houses), PLEASE CALL OR FAX US AT (847) 428-OWLS(6957), OR EMAIL STILLMAN AT: stillnc@flash.net. Remember to include your name, phone number, and the number of people that will be attending.

### BIRD BANDING OPEN HOUSES

Watch Mark Spreyer (a licensed bird bander) measure, weigh and record data about our resident and migratory birds. Catching birds is not always predictable, so come prepared to hike the trails. If it's raining, the activity will be cancelled.

Date: Sundays, Sept. 1 & Oct. 6  
 Time: 9:00AM to Noon  
 Fee: None

### PRAIRIE RAMBLE

She's back! Daria Sapp, the head of our prairie volunteers, can't wait to show you how our prairie plants are blooming. Call (847) 428-OWLS to make reservations.

Date: Sunday, Sept. 8  
 Time: 1:00PM  
 Fee: None



### SUNDAY MORNING BIRD WALK

Mark Spreyer will lead a morning bird walk. Binoculars and field guides are a must. If you don't have any, don't worry, Stillman does. If it's raining, the activity will be cancelled.



Date: Sunday, Sept. 15  
 Time: 8:00AM  
 Fee: None  
 Age: 10 years and up

### FULL MOON YOGA

Join Evamarie Pilipuf for a unique way to celebrate autumn's colorful leaves and crisp air, while gently working and stretching stress-weary muscles. We will venture out at the nature center with a short hike, followed by a relaxing yoga session under the quiet light of the full moon. If we're lucky, we might even catch the hoot of a distant owl as our accompanying "music"! All levels are welcome; no previous yoga experience is needed. Please wear comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing, and bring an old blanket (one that can lay on the ground). Hot tea and/or coffee will be provided.

Please call 428-OWLS to let us know if you plan to attend.

Date: Saturday, Sept. 21	Date: Friday,* Oct. 18
Time: 7:00 - 8:30PM	Time: 7:00 - 8:30PM
Member's Fee: \$7.00	Member's Fee: \$7.00
Non-member's Fee: \$10.00	Non-member's Fee: \$10.00
Age: 10 years and up	Age: 10 years and up

\*O.K, the full moon isn't until Monday. Nag, nag, nag.

### TREE I.D. OR THIS BUD'S FOR YOU!

As the leaves turn color, join Stillman's naturalist as he shows you how to identify some of our Midwestern trees. Easy to remember tips and simple hand-outs will inspire you to open your own "branch office." Come prepared to be out in the weather.

Date: Sunday, Oct. 13  
 Time: 2:00PM  
 Fee: None

## COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

The Community Enhancement Foundation of South Barrington is sponsoring an open house for anyone interested in learning more about our nature center.

Stillman's own Mark Spreyer will take folks for a tour of the grounds and explain the purpose and goals of the nature center.

Stillman volunteer and board member **Jim Kaltsas** invites families to try their hand at making bird feeders out of common materials. There's no better way to add color to your winter yard than by attracting birds to your own feeder.

Seasonal refreshments will be available. If it's raining, activities will be moved to the South Barrington Park District Center. Come out and join the fun!

Date: Sunday, Oct. 20

Time: 3 - 5:00PM

Fee: None

## WINTER HOURS BEGIN IN NOVEMBER

In September and October, Stillman will be open Sundays from 9 AM to 4 PM. Starting in November, Stillman will be open Sundays from 11 AM to 4 PM.

Please note that the Stillman Nature Center is also available, by reservation, during the week to school classes. For more information just call or email us at [stillnc@flash.net](mailto:stillnc@flash.net).

## TWILIGHT WILDLIFE HIKE

Cap off this Day of the Dead with an evening walk. You'll learn how to sharpen your senses to the sights, sounds and smells of the outdoors. The activities you will do come from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's "Watching Wildlife" program and we are delighted to have **Cyndi Duda**, from the Barrington Fish & Wildlife office, on hand to lead us from daylight into darkness. Who knows, an owl or raccoon might join us.

Casual clothes and good hiking shoes or boots are required. If you have to leave early, that's O.K. Call 428-OWLS to make reservations.

Date: Saturday, Nov. 2

Time: 4:00 to 6:00PM

Age: 6 years and up

Fee: None

## THANK YOU

A long overdue thank you goes out to Barrington High School honor students **Ken Barna** and **Victor Del Rosso**. They devoted many hours last school year to keeping our fence line free of weeds, tree limbs, and other debris. Ken's sister, **Katie Del Rosso**, a middle school honor student, also helped with the fences and picked up litter along Penny Road.

This past spring, Saturday work crews composed of hard-working advanced placement biology students from **Hersey High School**. Under the direction of Stillman Board member and biology teacher, **Jim Kaltsas**, these young women spread chips, pulled garlic mustard, and planted pine seedlings. Thanks to all for keeping Stillman looking ship-shape.

Of course, we can't forget to thank our 'regulars': **Daria Sapp**, **Jill Kohler**, **Nancy Hallquist**, and **Roger Laegeler**.

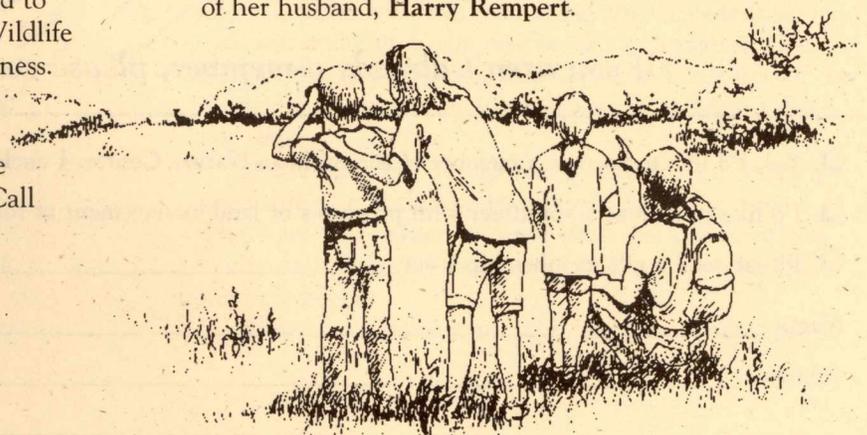
Speaking of Roger, we have a special thank you for his friend **Kryn Vanbeekum** who donated five bluebird boxes to the nature center. Last year, all five were used by either tree swallows or house wrens. This year, we were delighted when one box was used by bluebirds!

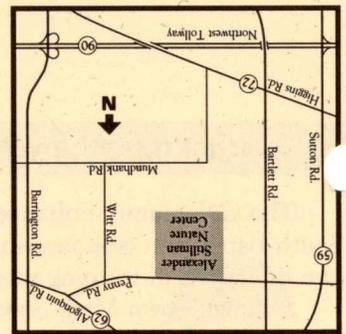
## THE TRIBUTE TREES

Tribute trees are planted to honor or celebrate persons or events that have touched our lives. Call or email us for the list of tribute trees currently available. Tree prices (which includes purchase, delivery, and planting) range from \$500 - \$700.

In addition to the tree, most of which will be 2" in diameter at breast height, the honoree's name will appear on a small plaque which will be located on the white brick wall that parallels the entrance drive.

🌳 **June Rempert** has planted a river birch in memory of her husband, **Harry Rempert**.





Email: stillinc@flash.net  
 (847) 428-OWLS  
 South Barrington, IL 60010  
 33 West Penny Road

# STILLMAN nature center



## ALEXANDER STILLMAN NATURE CENTER BOARD MEMBERS

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Frank Spreyer

Mark Spreyer, Director & Newsletter Editor

Jill Kohler, Newsletter Illustrator

*If you aren't already a member, please consider joining us.*

- Yes, I'd like to become a member of the Stillman Nature Center. I enclose my tax deductible contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- I'd like to help as a volunteer with programs or land management at the Stillman Nature Center, please call me.
- Please send a gift membership from \_\_\_\_\_ to the name and address listed below.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Student .....	\$10.00
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