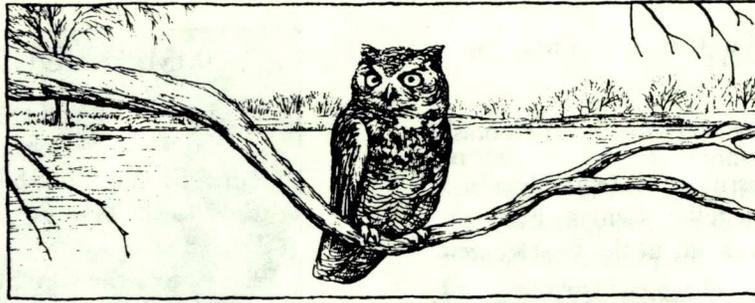


STILLMAN NEWSLETTER



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ARBOR DAY AND HISTORIC TREES

-- Mark Spreyer

*To exist as a nation, to prosper
as a state, and to live as a people,
we must have trees.* --Theodore Roosevelt

With my undergraduate degree in forestry, I have long been an advocate of trees. So, when **Susan Allman**, President of the Stillman Nature Center and North Barrington's village forester, asked me to help her verify the largest oaks in her village, I jumped at the opportunity.

Beginning on Arbor Day last year, Susan sponsored a contest in North Barrington where residents were invited to nominate the biggest oak in the village. When we first saw the tree nominated by **Harvey and Elaine Silets**, we knew we had found the winner. The trunk of this bur oak has a circumference of 15' 8."

When discussing the tree with the Silets, the question of its age came up. I'm not going out on much of a limb here when I guess that it has to be at least 350 years old. With this tree's age in mind and help from the Arbor Day Foundation, I thought it might be interesting to review the history of oaks and other trees over this period of time.

Trees in American History

1686-- Jeremiah Wadsworth saves the Connecticut Charter from the Royal Governor by hiding it in the

hollow of an old oak tree. The tree later becomes known as the Charter Oak.

1758-- Evangeline and other Acadians disembark under the shade of an oak in St. Martinville, Louisiana.

1774-- Johnny Chapman, known as Johnny Appleseed, is born in Massachusetts. He moves west, across the Midwest, planting thousands of apple trees for those who would follow.

1775-- George Washington takes formal command of the Continental Army beneath a large elm tree.

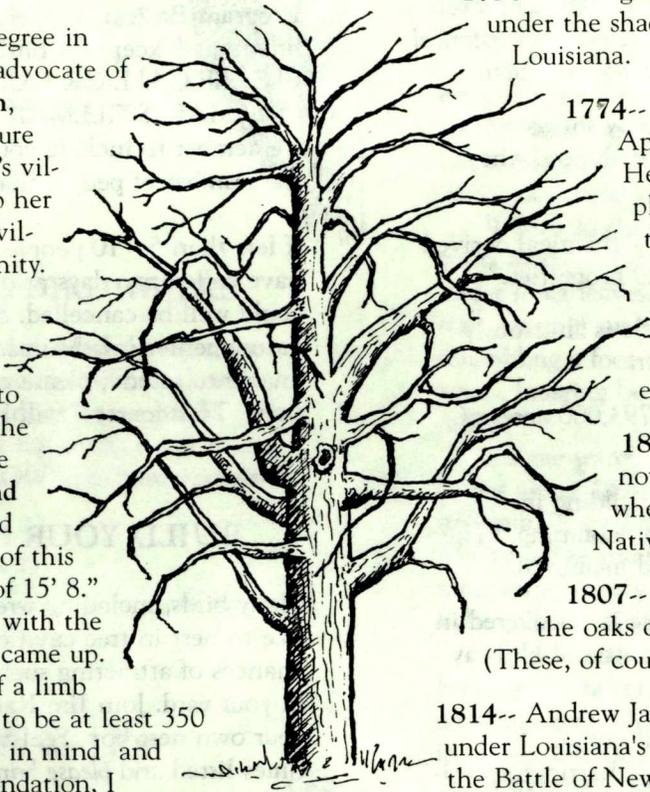
1804-- The Council Oak, near what is now Sioux City, was some 150 years old when Lewis and Clark held council with Native Americans by it.

1807-- Aaron Burr is tried for treason under the oaks of Washington, Mississippi. (These, of course, would be Burr oaks.)

1814-- Andrew Jackson and his troops take shelter under Louisiana's Sunnybrook Oaks on their way to the Battle of New Orleans.

1856-- The Republican Party is founded beneath the shade of a grove of white oaks. Connecticut's Charter Oak is destroyed by a storm.

1857-- Sam Houston kisses young women who stitched and gave him a Texas flag under what is now known as



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the Sam Houston Kissing Bur Oak in San Marcos, Texas.

1872-- The first Arbor Day is celebrated in Nebraska.

1879-- The 'spreading chestnut tree' (actually a horse chestnut) under which Longfellow's village blacksmith stood is cut down to widen roads in the Boston area.

1903-- Washington D.C.'s celebrated cherry trees are first planted. 30 varieties were received as gifts from Japan.

1913-- Joyce Kilmer publishes his famous poem, "Trees."

1930-- Dutch elm disease is first discovered in the U.S.

1949-- Aldo Leopold's environmental classic, a *Sand County Almanac*, is published. In an essay published about ten years earlier, he wrote, *...he who owns a veteran bur oak owns more than a tree. He owns an historical library, and a reserved seat in the theatre of evolution.*

1965-- A University of Vermont study shows a dramatic decline in the sugar maple population. The decline may be due to acid rain.

1966-- Early tests show that taxol, a chemical derived from Pacific yew, has cancer-fighting properties.

1984-- The largest bur oak in Seattle is "hideously decapitated" reports Arthur Jacobson.

1988-- A massive forest fire burns 793,000 acres of forest in Yellowstone National Park.

1995-- An elm outside the federal building in Oklahoma City withstands the tragic bombing. "The Survivor Tree" now lives in a walled memorial.

1996-- The Asian longhorned beetle is discovered in Brooklyn munching on horse chestnuts and Norway maples.

2002-- On Arbor Day (Friday, April 26th), village forester Susan Allman asks N. Barrington residents to nominate the biggest maple.

It is humbling to realize that trees, such as the Silets' oak, are the only living witnesses to much of this nation's history. As Roman poet Virgil wrote of the oak, "For length of ages lasts his happy reign, And lines of mortal men contend in vain."

SUMMER HOURS BEGIN IN APRIL

In March, Stillman will be open to drop-in visitors on Sundays from 11 AM to 4 PM. Starting in April, Stillman will be open Sundays from 9 AM to 4 PM.

Please note that the Stillman Nature Center is available, by reservation, during the week to school classes, Audubon chapters, garden clubs, and other organized groups. For a brochure that describes the programs and fees, just call 428-OWLS or email us and we'll be happy to send you one.

PROGRAMS

Program Basics: TO MAKE RESERVATIONS for programs (except for bird banding open houses), PLEASE CALL OR FAX US AT 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.

If less than 5 - 10 people (varying with the activity) have called two days prior to a program, the program could well be cancelled. So, don't forget to call the nature center in advance. If you discover that you are unable to attend, please call to cancel your reservations. This courtesy will be greatly appreciated.

BUILD YOUR OWN BIRD HOUSE

Many birds, including wrens, swallows and bluebirds, like to nest in tree cavities. You can increase the chances of attracting such birds by placing nest boxes in your yard. Join **Jim Kaltsas** as he helps you assemble your own nest box. Feel free to drop in between the times listed and *please bring your own hammer.*

Date: Sunday, March 17

Time: 1:00 - 3:30

Member's Fee: \$3.00/house kit

Non-member's Fee: \$5.00/house kit

BIRD BANDING

Watch Mark Spreyer, a licensed bird bander, measure, weigh and record data about our resident and migratory birds. Birds are not caught in a predictable manner, so come prepared to hike the trails. With luck, you'll see a bird in the hand and two in the bush. If it is raining, the banding open house will be cancelled.

Dates: Sundays, April 7 & May 5
Time: 9:00AM to Noon
Fee: None



SUNDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS

Mark Spreyer will lead a morning bird walk. Migration will be under way and you never know what we might find. Binoculars and field guides are a must. If you don't have any, don't worry, Stillman does. *Please call 428-OWLS to make reservations.*

Date: Sundays, April 14 & May 12
Time: 8:00AM
Fee: None
Age: 10 years and up



FRIDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS

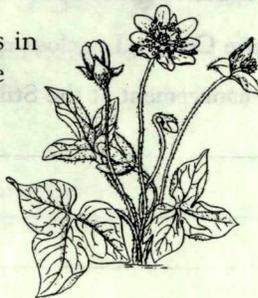
Just like above but on a weekday. Mark Spreyer, former Director of Chicago's peregrine falcon release project, will lead the walks. Binoculars and field guides are a must. If you don't have any, don't worry, Stillman does. *Please call 428-OWLS to make reservations.*

Date: Fridays: May 3, 10, & 17
Time: 8:00AM
Fee: None
Age: 10 years and up

WILDFLOWER WALKS

Join us as we explore Stillman's woodlands in search of ephemeral beauties such as white trillium, may-apple, Virginia bluebell and jack-in-the-pulpit. Bring your camera!

Dates: Sundays, April 28 & May 5
Time: 2:00PM
Age: 10 years and up
Fee: None



Tick Talk

I hate to tell you this but if you visit Stillman late in spring or in early summer, odds are you'll go home with a tick or two. Of course ticks aren't unique to Stillman, they've been in Barrington as long as I can remember. And, by the way, that never stopped me from enjoying the outdoors.

What about Lyme disease, you ask? Not a big deal. First off, the most common ticks, and only ones I've seen at Stillman, are wood (aka dog) ticks and they don't carry Lyme disease. Some deer ticks do.

Second, when it comes to Lyme-endemic states, Illinois doesn't even make the top ten list. This statistic is based on ten years of data collected by the Centers for Disease Control. Even among these ten states, which include Wisconsin, the distribution of the disease is concentrated in local regions. Within the ten states, significant risk of infection is only found in 100 counties.

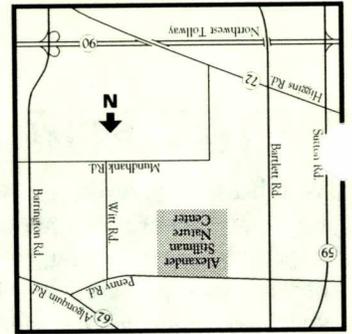
So, how can you tell the two ticks apart? The easiest way is by size. An adult deer tick will fit inside the black dot on your right. A wood tick is twice as large. Also, wood ticks have white markings on their backs, deer ticks lack white marks.

Where do they hang out? A young tick typically starts its day hiding out in some moist location, perhaps under some leaves. Then, as the day warms up, they start heading away from gravity. This usually means scrambling a foot or two up a blade of grass. Then they wait... hanging by their back legs, their front legs at the ready.

If some warm, carbon dioxide-exhaling mammal comes along, like you, they'll grab on and start moving up again. They'll do this for quite some time. They stop when they've reached an ideal dining location such as a nice warm, sweaty crevice or an obstruction such as a tight collar or elastic waistband.

I'll spare you the gory details on how ticks feed because I've never had one do so. I always feel them crawling around long before they had a chance to settle in. Then, it's just a simple matter of picking them off and disposing of them in whatever manner you choose. Remember, ticks can be hard to kill. I suggest a flush down the toilet, a burial at sea, as it were.

As for Lyme disease, consult a doctor or the numerous publications that have discussed the symptoms. If caught early, antibiotics will take care of it. Also, studies have shown that over 98% of the people bitten by a deer tick have not developed Lyme disease. So, relax and take a hike.



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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.

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