



# THE TRAIL BLAZER

The Bi-Monthly Newsletter of Take-A-Hike

Winter

2010

## Many Unique Features Offered at Ryerson Woods

by Gregory Skogg

I always have a fun time on the Take-A-Hike outings, and our outing to Ryerson Woods last November didn't let me down. It was the group's first trip to Ryerson woods, which has many interesting features that I didn't expect. I was pleasantly surprised by the farm exhibit not far from the parking lot. In the pens we viewed goats, chickens and one very well-fed white-feathered turkey.

Ryerson Woods is a nature preserve near Deerfield, Illinois, with over 500 acres of forest surrounding the Des Plaines River. The Edward Ryerson Conservation Area is nationally recognized for its ecological and architectural significance. In the 1920's Mr. Ryerson and his friends built log cabins in the



woods for their weekend getaways, and several of these cabins are still standing. By the early 1940's Ryerson had also built a Greek Revival summerhouse he called "Brushwood." The house is used today for parties and for the staff of the preserve's conservation group.

The most dominant feature of

the nature preserve is the Des Plaines River and its floodplain, but the spacious area also contains a sugar maple forest, oaks and hickories and a flatwoods forest containing swamp white oak and wet meadows. The quiet woodland provides a fantastic habitat for deer, raccoons, woodchucks, foxes, beaver and more. Even coyotes are returning to the area. Throughout the year more than 150 bird species can be seen, making the preserve a bird watcher's paradise.

Although the weather was chilly, the group enjoyed being out in the woods (as we always do!) It is a pleasure to see that Lake County and the state are preserving the natural and cultural history of the area through Ryerson Woods.



## Enjoying The Holiday Season With TAH



by Jerry Rudnick

Who would have ever thought back in 1995 when TAH started that we'd still be going strong in 2010? The holiday party is always a wonderful time to break bread with friends but it's also a time of reflection. Over the years we've met many wonderful people and hope to continue into the next decade.

The 2009 Holiday party was a total success on all levels. As usual Greg did a fantastic job of getting us into the holiday spirit by bringing all kinds of decorations and making the party room look wonderful. He even had his famous elf hats to pass around. Jim was in charge of getting the turkey dinner

together, which is no easy task. He did a great job which was obvious at the lack of many leftovers.

Many people contributed to make the meal a feast fit for kings. Amanda's rice and beans, Art's cranberry sauce and apple pie, Dan and Gary's Swedish Meatballs, Louise's salad, Mattie's cake, Jessie's chocolate and Ralph's wonderful vegetarian stuffing were just a few of the treats I can associate a person with. Others brought, homemade chocolate cookies, cheese trays, vegetable trays, chips, pop, dinner rolls and more cakes. Most of us walked away from this event a few pounds heavier.

The festivities included more than just eating. Jerry and Iris gave each attendee a framed photograph taken at one of the events. The photos included flowers, wildlife and memorable events. Of course we had the traditional *TAH Year in Review* slideshow. This is a good way for us to reflect on the good times we've had at events and makes us look forward to the coming year.

(continued on page three)

Please excuse the delay in distribution of the newsletter. We've made this the Winter Issue that will cover the months of January to April. Starting again in May we'll be back to having an issue of the Trail Blazer every two months.

## Volunteer Drivers Needed

Volunteer drivers are the backbone of Take-A-Hike. To facilitate the growth of our organization and to continue the great services we provide for our members, we need to continually develop a pool of insured drivers. If you or any of your friends and family are interested in driving for events, please call the TAH voicemail line (312-409-9094) or email us at (take\_a\_hike1999@yahoo.com)

Take-A-Hike is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for persons living with HIV/AIDS by providing free year round nature activities.

Take-A-Hike activities are drug and alcohol free.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### President and Driver Coordinator

Greg S

#### Secretary

Jerry R

#### Treasurer

Ken M

#### Directors at Large

Iris R

Ralph V

Bill D

#### Trail Blazer Editor

Jerry R

#### Copy Editor

Iris R

#### Photographers for this Issue

Gary H

Jerry R

Take-A-Hike  
5836 N. Artesian  
Chicago, IL 60659  
312-409-9094

#### email

take\_a\_hike1999@yahoo.com

#### Web Page

http://www.take-a-hike.org

# Winter Schedule

**Chicago History Museum  
February 14, 2010**

February's trip will take us to the Chicago History Museum, formerly known as the Chicago Historical Society which was founded in 1856.

Much of the early collection amassed by the museum was destroyed in the Great Chicago Fire in 1871, but like the city, the museum rose from the ashes.

The museum contains many standing exhibits on the fire, Ft. Dearborn and the Civil War. One of the current exhibits which we will tour is "My Chinatown." We'll learn about the history of Chinese immigrants who arrived in Chicago after 1870 and what they contributed to the city.

The times for this trip will be a little different. We'll have lunch in the Old Town neighborhood at around 11:30 and then head to the museum after it opens at 12:00. Please make your reservations for this trip no later than Wednesday, February 10.



From Take-A-Hike

**Herrick Lake  
DuPage Forest Preserves  
March 21, 2010**

We're starting our outdoor season early again this year. Herrick Lake Forest Preserve, once an early Illinois settler's homesite, is a wonderful habitat for native plants and animals. Our hike will give us an opportunity to experience the forest in late winter.

After our hike in the forest, we'll find a nice warm place to eat and catch up with old friends. Don't forget to dress very warm for this event. Dressing in layers is a good idea so that if it's warmer than we expect, layers can be shed.

Please make reservations no later than Wednesday, March 17.

**Messenger Woods  
April 18, 2010**

In April we'll head southwest to Messenger Woods in Will County. This area, in rural Lockport, is one of Will County's oldest forest preserve sites — and one of its most unusual. Here we'll enjoy one of the few remaining forests in northeastern Illinois that has not been altered by grazing, cutting or development. Messenger Woods is known throughout the region for its abundance of spring wildflowers that carpet the forest floor.

April's weather can be quite unpredictable. Please check out the weather reports and dress accordingly. The trails are usually muddy at this time of year, so wear shoes you don't mind getting dirty.

Please make your reservations for this trip no later than Wednesday, April 14.

# Spotlight on Nature Tree Bark



A tree has three main parts: the roots, the trunk with its branches, and the leaves. The trunk has a dense core of heartwood that gives it strength. Surrounding that is a layer of sapwood. On the outside is a layer of bark. The bark protects the wood against attack by fungi and, most important, it protects the cambium: a microscopically thin layer of wonder-working cells between the sapwood and the bark. If a tree is “girdled” — its wood exposed by removing a band of bark around the trunk—the cambium dries and the tree dies.

The cambium enables a tree to live and grow. Each year it builds another layer of sapwood and also a layer of bark. The sapwood conducts water and dissolved nutrients, taken from the soil



**White Oak Bark**

by the roots, up through the trunk and branches to the leaves. Food manufactured by the leaves is carried down to the trunk and roots through the spongy sieve-like inner bark. As new layers of wood and bark are added, the older growths of bark are pushed outward. They become dry and hard.

Eventually they become loose and drop off.

In each species the bark on the older trees has a distinctive appearance. Even during winter, many of our hardwoods can be identified by the color of the bark and whether it is smooth, ridged, deeply furrowed, scaly, or shaggy. The beech, the paper or canoe birch, both hornbeams, the sycamore, hackberry, white oak, bur oak, black cherry, and shagbark hickory are familiar examples. On some kinds the bark is rather thin; on others, such as a bur oak, it may be 2 inches thick; on a gigantic sequoia the deeply wrinkled bark, spongy and fire resistant, frequently has a total thickness of 2 feet.

*This article originally appeared as “Nature Bulletin” of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.*

## Photo Gallery



Amanda, Fernando and Winslow enjoy a break along the DesPlaines River Trail.



Denise and Ralph in front of the Ryerson's cabin along the DesPlaines River.



Marcus and Dan are having a great time at the holiday party.



Enjoying food and the company of friends at the holiday party.

## Holiday Party

(continued from page one)

No party would be complete without our annual holiday grab bag. It's amazing how creative people can be with a limit of \$5 to spend on a gift.

Bingo is always a favorite. Greg searched high and low and selected a wide variety of gifts. I'm almost sure everyone went home a winner.

Thanks to all those who came early to help set up, those that stayed to cleanup and to everyone for just being a wonderful group. We look forward to seeing you all in 2010.

### Support Take-A-Hike

TAH has survived on a shoestring budget for over 14 years with funds provided mostly by individual donors. We encourage members and friends to help out with donations of any size.

**TAH's future depends on you!**



# Calendar of Events

**January 17, 2010**

Garfield Park Conservatory

**February 14, 2010**

Chicago History Museum

**March 21, 2010**

Herrick Lake

DuPage County Forest Preserves

**April 18, 2010**

Messenger Woods

Will County Forest Preserves

**May 16, 2010**

Kline Creek Farm and

Ed's Garden

**June 6, 2010**

Spring Bluff Fen

Elgin, Illinois

**July 18, 2010**

Family and Friends Picnic

Edgebrook Woods

**August 22, 2010**

Prairie Wolf Forest Preserve

Lake County Forest Preserves

**September 24-26, 2010**

Campout

Kettle Moraine State Forest

Pinewoods Group Campground

(Registration for this event to begins in July)

**October 2, 2010**

AIDS Walk Fund Raiser

**November 14, 2010**

Harold "Hal" Tyrell Trailside Museum

Cook County Forest Preserves

**December 12, 2010**

Holiday Party


(Location to be announced later)



**TAH Info**


To keep up to date on TAH news, it is important for members and volunteers to periodically check TAH voice mail for updates on events, meetings and current group news. Information about TAH is also available on our website.  
<http://www.take-a-hike.org>

If you would like to receive periodic TAH updates via email please send your email address to:  
 <take\_a\_hike1999@yahoo.com>



312-409-9094

*Thank You Volunteers*



We want to thank the following volunteers:

**Holiday Party**  
 Greg, Bill, Jerry, Iris, Jim, Gary

**Garfield Park**  
 Greg, Bill, Jim, Gary

**Birthday Corner**

The following people are celebrating their birthday during January, February, March and April. Happy Birthday to:

Ken M.	1/3
Tracy J.	1/6
Christine S.	1/19
Jim R.	1/20
Stan Y.	2/12
James G.	2/14
Mattie M.	2/15
Roger B.	2/20
Jesse D.	3/8
Otis P.	3/23
Art G.	4/23

