



Lake View's Nature News

Newsletter of the Lake View Nature Center

Winter
2002

New outdoor area at LVNC

This fall saw the installation of Lake View Nature Center's newest outdoor facility. The open area just to the south of the Center now boasts a campfire ring with wooden benches.

This area provides the Nature Center with an informal classroom for outdoor programs, acts as a meeting or staging area for visiting scout groups and day camps, and serves as a focal point for many of our regular evening and nighttime programs.

The fire ring and benches got their first use at the Halloween Night Hikes in October. Participating families hiked around the lake and learned some ways that animals (including people) adapt to darkness. They then returned to the Nature Center to make a craft project inside or relax around the fire and enjoy fresh popcorn popped in a cast-iron kettle over the fire.

The picture below shows the fire ring in use at the "Fall Open House" in November.



Nature Center Director Becky Lambert cooks iron kettle popcorn the old-fashioned way at Lake View Nature Center's "Fall Open House" on November 17, while Emily Flynn checks out the popping action.

Look inside for...

Featured animal—dark-eyed junco or "snowbird"

Family winter project

Special pull-out section for kids: games, crafts, and activities.

Backyard bird count

Listing of upcoming Nature Center programs.

New lecture series.

LVNC Notes...

Don't forget, LVNC is now open on weekends. Hours are Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4 pm.

Ice skating is allowed on the lake whenever the map board signs say "Skating OK." Bring your own skates and be sure to stop into the Nature Center to warm up.

The Nature Center will be closed:

December 24 and 25

December 31 and January 1

February 26

April 18-20

Bat house workshop



Fourteen families came to the Lake View Nature Center on October 20 to learn about bats and make a bat house. Demonstrating their construction skills here are the Harrington family (left) and the Stapleton family (above).

Family winter activity: easy and fun bird feeders

One of our favorite winter projects at the Nature Center is a simple bird feeder made with peanut butter and bird seed. We put the peanut butter and seed on various items that can be hung up outdoors for the birds to find. (Of course, the local squirrels and raccoons may help themselves as well, but, they need to eat too, don't they?)

Use a knife or craft stick to spread peanut butter on the item, then roll it in a tray of seeds until the whole thing is covered. If you're using muffins or cardboard, don't forget to cover both sides. Use a loop of yarn or string to hang them from a tree, bush or a regular bird feeder.

We usually use pine cones or English muffins as the base, but this feeder can be made using cardboard cut into animal shapes (see illustration), pieces of tree bark, or just about anything you can imagine. One book even suggests using empty toilet paper tubes.

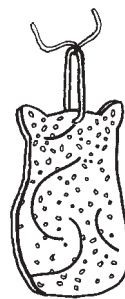
Try hanging your feeders in different locations and watch to see what kinds of birds visit them.



pine cone



English muffin



*cat (owl?)
cut from
cardboard*

Some bird experts think that peanut butter by itself is too sticky and could cause problems for some birds. One way to avoid this is to mix corn meal with the peanut butter. Mix roughly equal parts until the mix is the consistency of dough but still sticky enough to hold the seeds.

Family Winter Play Day
Sunday, Jan. 19

Spring Celebration
Saturday, May 10

Creature feature

Dark-eyed junco or "Snowbird" *Junco hyemalis*

One of our more common winter birds, the dark-eyed junco is also known as the slate-colored junco or "snowbird." They are easily identified by their



dark grey head and body with a distinctive white belly. They also

have white along the outer tail edges, but this is often not visible until they fly. Females sometimes look brownish rather than grey. They usually travel and feed in groups.

Juncos are ground feeders, and feed on seeds, insects, berries, and small fruits. Although they will often be seen scratching on the ground beneath a feeder to find the seeds spilled by other birds, many people like to put out a ground level platform feeder specifically for juncos and other ground feeders. Or, the seed can simply be scattered on the ground. Juncos prefer smaller seeds, so try a seed mix with lots of millet and sunflower hearts

When these birds "fly south for the winter," they come here!

Juncos are not found in our area during the summer. They spend their summers farther north, only returning here for the winter. When these birds "fly south for the winter," they come here! Like many birds, juncos often migrate along storm fronts to save energy, letting the winds push them along. This has led to their common name of "snowbird," as they often appear just before the first snow of the season.

Allergy sufferers take note: ragweed seeds are a favorite food for juncos, comprising up to one-third of their winter diet.

Illustration from: Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Project Feederwatch poster



Here are some of the winners in LVNC's Thanksgiving coloring contest. From left to right: Tommy Runnels, Emma Harrison, Patrick Feltz, Ellen Hartley, Daniel Tollas, and Colleen Lehrer.

Not Pictured: Ronny Graziano, Kristen Tollas, Grace Peña, Meagon Donner, Erica Sebesta, and Sarah Polvi.

Backyard bird count

Have you ever wanted to be a part of a nationwide research project? Are you interested in birdwatching or looking to get started? If so, you might be interested in taking part in the "Great Backyard Bird Count."

This annual event, which is a joint project of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the Audubon Society, takes place this winter from Feb. 14-17, 2003. Participants record the kinds and numbers of birds that they see at their location during a given time period (minimum 15 minutes). Report for one location or several, one day or all four, it's up to you.

Although individuals are welcome to take part in the GBBC, it makes a great project for families, scout groups, schools, etc. Last year more than 100,000 people participated and counted more than 4 million birds.

To help get you ready, LVNC will offer an introductory class on Saturday, Feb. 15. At this class, you will learn the basics of birdwatching, how to identify many of the common local birds, and how to record and submit your results.

For more info: www.birdsource.org.



Lake View Nature Center
17 W 063 Hodges Road
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
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Villa Park, IL

Hours

Lake View Nature Center
Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
☛ ☛ ☛ *Now open weekends!!!*
Saturday and Sunday Noon to 4:00 pm

Terrace View Park open sunrise to sunset.

For more information

Lake View Nature Center (630) 941-8747
Heritage Center (630) 627-6100
Fitness Center (630) 574-0420

Staff

Becky Lambert	Director
John Stoddard	Naturalist
Liane Knight	Program Coordinator
Karen Ritter	Environmental Educator
Nikki Dahlin	Environmental Educator

Fees

The Nature Center is free to the general public.

School and Community Groups

The Lake View Nature Center is an excellent place to explore the natural sciences. We offer programs for all ages and grade levels. We can customize programs to reflect seasons, special interests, Scout requirements or Illinois State Learning Standards.

Fees for these programs are as follows:

Up to 10 students\$20.00
Over 10\$20.00 plus \$1.00
for each additional.

Call the Nature Center at (630) 941-8747 for more information or to schedule a program.

If you no longer want to receive this newsletter, please call us at (630) 941-8747.