



# The Warbler

## A Periodic Newsletter of the Friends of the Welty Environmental Center, Inc.

Volume 6: Issue 1

January 2006

### A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

**C**ongratulations are in order to our Program Director, Tanya Zastrow, who graduated in December from the Stateline Leadership Academy, a program of the Greater Beloit Chamber of Commerce. FWEC is extremely grateful to Genencor Corporation for paying her tuition.

There have been changes in the composition of our Board of Directors. Geoffrey Rand resigned citing added responsibilities in his work at M&I Bank. We will miss him. We also lost Peter Maiken who resigned this summer. Pete served admirably for two years as our Public Information Committee chairman, and spearheaded the development of a professionally produced video which we use to introduce FWEC to audiences at presentations to service clubs, etc. Thanks are due to M&I Bank for partial sponsorship of the video. If you are associated with a group that might want FWEC to do a program, call Dave Dobson at 608-364-1023.

In Pete's place, the Board appointed Dr. Robert Schwaegler. Bob is a retired Beloit physician who has distinguished himself in community service, notably in the development of the Society for Learning Unlimited, a.k.a. SLU, a Beloit elder-hostel. We appreciate his stepping forward to serve with FWEC.

Looking to the year ahead, the Board has approved three fun fund-raising events: The Nature Rendezvous in May, a canoe run in summer (new for 2006), and the Indian Summer Festival in October. Volunteers are needed to help plan and implement all of these events. No level of skill or commitment is too large or too small; we need you! Don't hesitate! Call the Center at 361-1377 today (or tonight) and leave a message for Tanya, with your name and phone number.

In the year 2005, FWEC saw growth in the number of children served. We are increasingly a recognized presence in the stateline area. Thanks to all of you who have supported us with your time and treasure. Let's keep this momentum, and accelerate our successes in the new year.

*Stephanie Dobson, FWEC President*



FWEC President Dobson

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### MAPLE SUGAR FESTIVAL 2006

**L**ast year, WEC collaborated with the City of Beloit for a Maple Sugar Festival. The event was enjoyed by over 200 people! We hope to share the joy of maple sugaring with many community members again this year. Sign up to help with this special day, or if you would like to help plan this event, let WEC know. Volunteers are needed for other programs as well! Watch the website for the newest details.

## PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Big Hill Park in Beloit was the setting for twenty-five fall field trips. The School District of Beloit contracted with WEC to lead a variety of Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, and 4th grade classes on their annual fall field trips. Nature provides the ultimate learning environment. Outdoors the students are able to learn by directly seeing, hearing, and touching nature. Each class experienced nature differently as nature is not predictable. The weather cooperated beautifully as students gazed at fall colors, listened to woodpeckers calling and drumming, investigated the interesting puff balls, and searched for the perfect acorn. Students looked high and low and were rewarded by finding a bat hanging underneath a leaf, a snake curled up in a bush, three huge wasp nests hanging in the trees, and a bunny jumping away. However, it's always important to remember not all of nature is friendly to the touch as some participants discovered when they disturbed some bees nesting in one of the wooden steps in the park. Many thanks to the volunteers Carol Kies, Katherine Geist, Stacy Salomone, Sarah Lyon-Hill, Bruce Cawkins, Stephanie Dobson, Neil Dupree, Shirley Newsome, Nancy Stabb, Will Polluck, and Muriel Polluck for their help.

The November Eco-Buddies program was new. The laptop and multi-media projector purchased with a grant from the Colonel Morse Foundation were used to view air quality education CD's from the DNR. The program participants were able to watch as everyone had the opportunity to free "Planet Polluto" from the invading pollutants. A video showed the dangers of burning garbage in burn barrels.

The December program topic was Suet Snacks. The participants melted beef fat and added peanut butter, fruits and bird seed to make a tasty suet treat for wild birds. The children collected seeds from the prairie plants in the park to use in the suet mixture. They also made suet log feeders, bird pizza, pine cone feeders, bird ornaments and attempted a wildlife snowman. This program is fun, but messy. Thanks to Sarah Lyon Hill and David Dobson for assistance with the program and clean-up.

During the month of November volunteer groups worked hard to restore the oak savanna area of the park. A group of 15 youth from the SPRITE program removed exotic plants on November 10. A week later Val and Dick Dunagan worked with 15 Beloit College students hauling out brush, collecting and sorting seeds from the oak savanna and pond edge, and spreading them throughout the oak savanna. Work days like these are making a big difference in the park.

*Tanya Zastrow, WEC Program Director*



**Tanya Zastrow,  
Program Director**



**Suet-making program at WEC**

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION GRANTS AVAILABLE

Thanks to grant support from the Rock County Conservationists (RCC), WEC is excited to announce a new grant opportunity for any school in Rock County. These grants can be used to support WEC program fees, transportation to the Center, or for Project WET/WILD and Project Learning Tree teacher professional development workshops. A 25% match required for each grant. Submission of a form, available on the WEC website, is required. Grant requests will be considered, on a first come - first served basis, until funds are spent. Applicants are not guaranteed to receive funding,

**WEC NEEDS gardening tools and supplies such as loppers, rakes and gloves. Please consider making a donation.**

## UPCOMING WELTY CENTER EVENTS

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Visit [www.weltycenter.org](http://www.weltycenter.org) or call 608-361-1377 for details and all registration information!

- Sunday, February 12. *HOOOO's There?*** 1:00 -3:00 PM. Find out more about our favorite nighttime bird, the owl. Learn where it lives, what it eats, and more. For ages 6-12. Fee and registration required.
- Thursday, February 23 (4:00 - 6:00 PM) and Saturday, February 25 (9:00 - 11:00 AM). *Maple Sugar Program Volunteer Guide Training.*** Individuals interested in taking an active role in the maple sugar programs at Big Hill Park should attend either of these training sessions. Guides and/or teams of guides will learn how to show small groups of 3rd graders the tapped maple trees and the evaporation station. All the necessary information and training will be provided. Guides will be needed for the maple sugar programs. There will be two programs per day, one in the morning (9-10:30) and one in the afternoon (12:30-2:00), during the weeks of March 6-10 and 13-17. Unable to attend the training, but still interested in helping? Contact WEC and special arrangements can be made.
- Monday, March 6 to Friday, March 17. *Maple Sugar Programs at Big Hill Park.*** Each weekday, maple sugar programs will be delivered to school groups. Volunteers needed for 9:00 - 10:30 AM and 12:30 - 2:00 PM sessions. See information on volunteer training sessions given above.
- Saturday, March 11. *Annual Meeting of the Rock County Conservationists.*** 1:00 - 3:00 PM at the WEC. The meeting will include a welcome by FWEC External Secretary David Dobson and the annual business meeting, including a financial review and election of new board members. After the business meeting, Dave Bendlin will share experiences he had during a teacher exchange program in Australia. If you need a break from the cold winter weather with a visit to the tropics and would enjoy diving or snorkeling on a coral reef, you won't want to miss this presentation.
- Saturday, April 29 and Saturday, May 6. *Interpretive Trail Guide Training Sessions.*** 10:00 AM - Noon. Well-trained trail guides can greatly enhance the experience Welty Center visitors have at Beckman Mill Park. Trainees are strongly encouraged to attend both Saturday sessions. During the first session, trainees will learn how to lead groups along the new interpretive trail. They will learn the habitats, animals, plants, and other features of the trail. They will also learn more about the Center so they are able to answer questions. During the second session, trainees will practice leading groups along the trail and will refine their presentations. The trail will have its grand opening during the Welty Nature Rendezvous. Funded by WEEB grant.
- Sunday, April 30. *Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Welty Environmental Center.*** More info coming in the next issue of the Warbler.
- Saturday, May 27. *Third Annual Welty Nature Rendezvous.*** More info coming in the next issue of the Warbler.

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## WHAT IS THE NUMBER 923830?

A phone number? A zip code?

No, it's our Pick'n Save We Care number! You can support WEC when you shop at Pick'n Save grocery stores. The We Care program will donate a portion of the total grocery sales on your behalf. Here is how you can support WEC through your grocery shopping:

1. Sign up for a Pick'n Save Advantage® Saver's Club card at the service desk.
2. Select WEC as the organization you would like to support. The We Care number for WEC is: 923830.
3. Present your Advantage® Saver's Club card to the cashier every time you shop at Pick'n Save. (You must do this in order for WEC to benefit.)



## HYBRID CARS - SOME FAQs AND ANSWERS

by David A. Dobson

**Q: What is a hybrid car?** A: It is a car that combines the technologies used in a gasoline-powered internal combustion (IC) engine with a battery-powered electric motor to gain the advantages of both propulsion systems.

**Q: What are the strengths and the shortcomings of conventional cars?** A: Conventional cars are a versatile, convenient, reliable form of personal transportation, but they suffer from a couple of serious problems that are growing in importance. All hydrocarbon-powered IC engines emit toxic pollutants, a serious problem in dense urban environments. IC engines also are not very efficient converters of the energy stored in fuel to mechanical energy, especially under congested, stop-and-go driving conditions.



David Dobson,  
FWEC External Secretary

**Q: What are the strengths and the shortcomings of electric cars?** A: Electric cars, first proposed to solve the smog problem, are powered by large-capacity on-board rechargeable batteries and have no toxic emissions. The efficiency of properly engineered electric motors is very high under nearly all driving conditions. Electric cars are quiet, pollution free and very efficient for trips up to 50 miles or so, where you can plug in to recharge when you get home. They do especially well in congested urban traffic, but are quite unsuitable for very long commutes or highway trips of several hundred miles or more.

**Q: What is meant by the term regenerative braking, a standard feature of hybrid cars?** A: In an electric car or hybrid car, stepping on the brake pedal at speeds above about 20 MPH temporarily changes the motor into an alternator, which recharges the batteries. Kinetic energy is converted into stored chemical energy in the battery. In practice about 75% of this energy is recovered in the battery and then reused by the motor to accelerate the car or climb the next hill. Regenerative braking can greatly improve the car's overall energy efficiency under some driving conditions.

**Q: Are all hybrid cars basically the same?** A: No. There are two quite different strategies employed to combine the IC engine and electric motor/alternator systems in the hybrid cars that are available today. A full discussion of these differences and the models that employ them can be found in the complete article on the Welty Website.

**Q: What about the cost of hybrid models? Do they make obvious economic sense?** A: In general the MSRP and dealer invoice prices of hybrid models seem to be about \$3,000 to \$5,000 more than their non-hybrid counterparts. With \$3/gal. gasoline and an EPA city mileage comparison of 50 mpg vs 30 mpg, you get \$6,000 (hybrid) vs \$10,000 (non-hybrid) for the total cost of gas to drive 100,000 miles. The incremental purchase cost is up front, while the gas savings is spread over at least several years of driving. So the decision to buy the hybrid is not obviously justified by fuel savings alone, unless the cost of gas rises well above the \$3 level in the lifetime of the car. It is well known that ordinary cars seldom deliver EPA-rated mileage performance. This is often attributable to poor driving habits and tire under-inflation, which would have a large detrimental effect on hybrid mileage also. Driving green, as if you had a thorn sticking into the bottom of your right foot, may be the best way to save on gas expense.

**Q: Are there other reasons to buy a hybrid rather than a comparable non-hybrid model?** A: If the CAFE (corporate average fuel efficiency) standard for all personal-use vehicles were 40 mpg, and that standard were being met today, the USA would not need to import any oil from the Middle East region. Driving a hybrid may be viewed as a patriotic act, one that's in the National interest. That said, it may be justified for the Government to offer us tax incentives.

**Q: Are there tax incentives for buying hybrid cars?** A: Yes. Currently there is a \$2,000 adjustment (above-the-line deduction) available on hybrid cars delivered to the purchaser before the end of 2005. This incentive expires very soon, but it's being replaced by a much better one, a tax credit that could be as much as \$3,000 or even a bit more, depending on the vehicle being purchased. For estimated tax credit values on specific models and an important alert about the timing of hybrid purchases, see the full article on the WEC website.

**Q: Should you buy a hybrid car if you need a new car?** A: This is a complex question, with many factors for the car buyer to consider. What kind/size of vehicle do you need, and is a hybrid alternative available? Do you do mostly city or mostly highway driving? What importance do you give to fuel economy, road performance, etc.? What is your best assessment of each vehicle's safety, reliability, maintenance cost, etc.? What kind of a statement will you make, or want to make, with the car you choose to drive?

*The answers in this article are excerpted from a more complete analysis of the topic by D. Dobson. For the complete article go to the Welty website at [www.weltycenter.org](http://www.weltycenter.org)*

## INAUGURAL INDIAN SUMMER FALL FESTIVAL A SUCCESS

**O**n a beautiful October afternoon, many families gathered at Beckman Mill Park and enjoyed pumpkin carving, vegetable stamping, dry flower arranging, scarecrow building, seed collage making, story-telling and apple games. Thanks to Brad Paulson for the donation of a truckload of pumpkins, to Will & Muriel Pollock for their cider-making



demonstration, and to Ed Mueller for the loan of his popcorn machine and his donation of the corn & oil. Thanks also to the Eckard-Lee family for helping to plan the event. We greatly appreciate the donation of fresh apples for the event by Apple Hut on Walters Road, and by Ridgewood Apple Orchard on Emerson Road. Edie Baran, of SpotLight-On-Kids, told neat stories, accompanied by unusual musical instruments, and engaged children who extemporaneously helped to act them out. Popcorn and cider were enjoyed by many of us, as well as by some wasps! Such a good time was had by all that plans are in the making to repeat the event in 2006.

**It's 2006! Please don't forget to renew your membership. See back cover for membership form.**

## SPOTLIGHT ON WEC INTERNS: REFLECTIONS ON BEING AT WEC

**G**iant mushrooms, scarecrows, and trees are just a few words that come to mind when I think of my time at Welty Environmental Center. My time at Welty has been incredibly fun, and being someone who does not know too much about nature, the experience has been truly educational. I am a senior at Beloit College double-majoring in French and International Relations and, up until this semester, had not really immersed myself in the Beloit community. The Welty Environmental Center has helped me to change that. This semester, I was able to help Tanya Zastrow show elementary school students around Big Hill

Park. We saw gigantic mushrooms, called Puff Balls, and many other interesting oddities. For Welty's Indian Summer Festival, I had the chance to help several children and their families make scarecrows, which was both enjoyable and humorous since I had never made them before. Interning at Welty has also given me the opportunity to design my own educational program on energy. With the help of Tanya, I wrote a grant to get funding for my program from Alliant Energy. I am looking forward to next semester when I will hopefully be able to implement those plans, present the program to schools around the area, and continue to help out with all the other exciting activities at Welty Environmental Center.



Sara and Stacy, WEC Interns

**W**orking as an intern for the Welty Center has been a fulfilling experience. As an English and Education major, I wasn't exactly sure how I could connect environmental science to my major. With Tanya's help, we decided the best way to include education was to create a project on a subject of my choice and present it in schools. I chose to create a project on water pollution and target it to elementary school children. I made many posters for my presentation: two with facts on water pollution, one with examples of

garbage found in water bodies, one on the nitrate cycle, and one showing the pH scale. During my presentation, I also played a game with the kids. I had them pretend they were a fish, frog, or duck that lived in polluted waters and what would happen to them. After I explained pH, the kids used pH paper to test water from the Rock River. The kids learned a lot about water pollution and seemed eager to help with the problem. My experience at the Welty Center has left me more knowledgeable about environmental science and has also helped me gain experience in the classroom.

*Sarah Lyon Hill*

*Stacy Salomone*

## MAKE YOUR OWN BIRD SUET CAKES

**W**elty Eco-Buddies in December constructed suet feeders. To make your own suet cake, combine one part peanut butter, two parts bird seed, five parts cornmeal, and one part melted beef suet. Suet is available from the meat counter at the grocery store. Press the mixture into muffin tins, let harden, and place in net bags to hang outdoors. Or to make a log feeder like the one shown, check out the directions at [www.birdnature.com/log.html](http://www.birdnature.com/log.html).



## WEC IS NEW HOME TO WSO BIRD EDUCATION KITS

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The Wisconsin Society of Ornithology has developed a statewide bird education program in the form of bird boxes containing binoculars, a spotting scope, audio recordings, bird silhouettes, field guides, and a Power Point presentation. We are proud to announce that WEC has been selected as the host for the box in Rock County. This has been made possible by funds raised by WEC, Rock County Conservationists, Ned Hollister Bird Club, and the Wildlife Society. Bird box mentors will be trained on how to use the equipment and may visit schools, scout troops, 4H groups, and more. If you are interested in becoming a bird box mentor or would like a mentor and the bird box to come visit you, contact WEC at 361-1377 or at [www.weltycenter.org](http://www.weltycenter.org).

## MEMBERSHIPS FOR 2006 AND DONATIONS UPDATE

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### Renewals, New Members, and New Donations

Taylor Ambrose  
John & JoAnne Anderson  
Larry & Karen Arft  
Al & Jessica Southworth Bates  
Buzz & Fran Beckman  
Bud & Karen Beckman  
Blackhawk Propane Company (Bob Zeek)  
Mark & Laura Boettcher  
David and Jean Bradford  
Carolyn Brandeen  
Peg Bredeson  
John & Karen Butchart  
Dave Carlson  
David & Annie Collins  
Marilyn & Gary Cook  
James Cripe  
Larry & Bonnie Cunningham  
Audrey Liddle Cushman  
Roselyn R. Dahlke  
Jo Daugherty  
Ruth & Harry Davis  
George & Barbara Dilling  
Mary Doering  
James Dudley  
Richard & Val Dunagan  
Alan & Elizabeth Dunwiddie  
Frank Fiorina  
Mary Ellen C. Fulton (in memory of Eugene Fulton)  
Sherry & Patrick Gathof  
Ed & Kris Grutzner  
Helen Guetschow

Donna Harding  
Virginia S Harrer  
Barbara Higgens & Shawn Gillen  
Albert & Lois Hough  
Robert Hunter  
Izaak Walton League, Beloit Chapter  
Jeff & Sue Johnson (in honor of Dick Newsome)  
Irv & Alice Johnson  
Martin & Rita Kades  
Virginia Karstaedt  
Thomas & Rosemary Kautz  
William & Gayle Keefer  
Don & Ann Kemmeter  
Jan & Dave Knutson  
Ron & Julie Lange  
Kathleen Lindaas  
MacFarlane Pheasants, Inc  
Tammy, Jack & Amanda Maegli  
Mankiewicz/Mendelson fam.  
Ruth McCartney (in memory of Carl & Susan Welty)  
John & Carol Meland  
Chris Nelson & Fred Burwell  
Darlene Nelson  
Dick & Shirley Newsome  
Karen & Sam Niehans  
Jane Noble  
Les Nystrom  
Helen May Olsen  
Ken & Lois O'Tool  
Richard Ott  
Luis & Betty Owano

Lloyd & Peggy Page  
Julius & Barbara Pelligrini  
Jim & Irene Pollard (in memory of Thomas Pollard)  
Dick & Mary Baban Ramsdell  
Matt Robson & Family  
The Rojas Family  
Kimberly Rosenbloom  
Larry & Mae Sanford  
Loren & Diane Sass  
Harry & Liz Schermerhorn  
Mary & Hal Schlais  
Dr. Philip Selgren (in memory of Norma Selgren)  
Martin & Nancy Stabb  
John Stanton  
Maurice & Linda Sterken  
Marion Stocking  
Coral Swanson  
Edna Thorp  
Larry & Hester White  
Dr. Michael & Polly Wolfe  
Hank & Lyn Woodard

### Life Members Who Have Made Additional Donations

Catherine & Homer Anderson  
Dr. Daphne G. Fautin  
Sylvia Welty Geer  
Fred Mathews  
Mary Claire Prendergast (in memory of Carl & Susan Welty)

**Join the Friends of the Welty Environmental Center, Inc. Today**

Help support environmental education and programming in our region. FWEC members receive issues of this newsletter and information about programming and events. We have 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, and are solely a private, non-profit educational organization. All dues and contributions are tax-deductible.

**Membership Dues for Calendar Year 2006 (select one)**

Student/Child (\$5)    Individual (\$10)    Family (\$15)    Organizational (\$100)    Life (\$1000)

**We welcome your support. Please give the greatest total contribution (including dues) you can this calendar year.**

Level	Amount	Level	Amount
Dues	\$5-15	Cardinal	\$100
Swallow	\$25	Bluebird	\$150
Killdeer	\$50	Crane	\$250
Goldfinch	\$75	Great Blue	\$500 +

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Total (Dues & Contribution): \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Make check and mail to: Friends of the Welty Environ.  
Center, Inc., P.O. Box 131, Beloit, WI 53512

**Mission Statement**

"To provide leadership in environmental and ecological education to students, teachers and individuals of all ages so that the residents of this region can make informed decisions leading to the respect for and the enjoyment, preservation and sustainable use of our natural resources."

**FWEC Board of Directors**

**Stephanie Dobson: *President***

**Sam Niehans: *Vice President***

**Richard Newsome: *Treasurer***

**David Dobson: *External Secretary***

**Nancy Stabb: *Internal Secretary***

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**Neil Deupree**

**Hugo Henry**

**Tom Klubertanz**

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**Brad Paulson**

**Mike Powers**

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**Nancy Stabb**

**Tom Klubertanz**

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OF THE**



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After reading this issue of the Warbler, file it for future reference... or pass it on to a friend. Better yet, send the friend's name to us, and we'll send him or her a copy!