



WINTER 2017
Volume XXVII
Issue 1

FIELD NOTES

From the Friends of Quarry Hill Nature Center

TREASURE UNDERFOOT

From the Director, Pamela Meyer

I'll admit I have always been a fan of Calvin & Hobbes. I enjoy Calvin's imagination, curiosity and perspective. This particular cartoon has always been one of my favorites, partly because I was that kid who was always collecting treasures from my outdoor escapades and partly because I feel it truly embodies the spirit of kids and the outdoors. In fact, anyone who has ever spent time outdoors and in the company of a young child knows they are some of the greatest treasure hunters. A recent inventory of treasures on my back step from my own two children yielded:

- Locust pods from the Quarry Hill woods (*warning: contents are believed to be magic beans!*)
- The most beautiful leaves from our backyard (*strictly the most colorful!*)
- Mussel shells from the mouth of Cascade Creek and
- A sizeable chunk of quartz from Silver Creek.

My two kids like most, love finding and collecting things in nature and their treasure is serious business. During a recent hike at Great River Bluffs State Park, my daughter squealed in delight at finding a bigtooth aspen leaf. She quickly handed her treasure to me for safe keeping, which I was happy to hold, though that didn't seem good enough. "No Mom, I want to see you put it in your pocket!" she said. (She may be on to the fact that not ALL their treasures make it back home).

Whether kids collect out of curiosity or fascination, or appreciation for the uniqueness or beauty of the treasure, a sense of ownership or the need for a memento, collecting treasures in nature is natural, innate even and I think it's a good thing. Exploring the world and collecting things that spark one's interest can build observation skills, fuel curiosity, foster respect for nature and, in the end, can lead to a better understanding of the world around us and a sense of connection.

Truth be told, the desks of many of the Quarry Hill staff are adorned with treasures from nature. I guess once a treasure hunter, always a treasure hunter and many of us were just that. I still have my most prized treasures, agates, I collected as a young child from a neighbor's river rock driveway. They sit in a Mason jar on my desk and every now and then I add to it. I still enjoy a good treasure hunt, though these days the local geology has me hunting more fossils than agates. There really is treasure all around, even if the beauty is only in the keen eye of the beholder. So whether your treasure is collected as fossils, agates, leaves, flowers or perhaps you catch your treasure through the lens of a camera or a pair of binoculars, take the time to seek it and appreciate nature's treasure trove. Better yet, take the time to take a young treasure hunter with you! Whether you leave with a treasure or not, you will find your day enriched from the experience of the quest and the time outdoors.



NATURE TIP

Winter Bird Feeding 101

What could be more beautiful than a bright red Cardinal against a blanket of white snow? Winter can be one of the best times of year for bird watching and if you set up a backyard feeder you can watch from the comfort and warmth of your own home! Although birds have unique adaptations that help them survive, the harsh cold, wind and snow cover can be a challenge for them. Here's the basics for how to make life a bit easier for the birds this winter by setting up a feeding station in your yard.

Feeder location: Place your feeder in a sheltered area that is easy for you to see and convenient to refill. Near evergreens, shrubs or brush piles can provide birds with much needed cover from the winter winds and predators.

Food: We use black-oil sunflower seeds at Quarry Hill. They attract a variety of songbird species, are high in fat and have thin shells which make them easy for small birds to crack. Blue Jays and woodpeckers appreciate suet feeders. Below is a guide to other common food sources for backyard birds.

Type of Food:	Attracts:
Sunflower seeds	Chickadee, nuthatches, titmice, finches, sparrows, woodpeckers
Safflower seeds	Chickadee, nuthatches, titmice, finches, cardinals
Thistle	Pine Siskins, Common Redpolls , finches
White proso millet	Juncos, sparrows
Cracked corn	Cardinals, jays
Suet and suet mix	Woodpeckers, jays, chickadees,

Water: A reliable source of unfrozen water can be hard for a bird to find in the winter. Adding a heated bird bath to your feeding area can attract birds that would not normally come to your feeders. Not only do birds need water to drink, but clean feathers provide the best insulation. An alternative to a heated bath would be to use a shallow lid or frying pan filled frequently with fresh water.

Maintenance: Cleaning your feeders regularly will help keep your backyard birds healthy. Seed and leftover hulls can become moldy and pass disease to birds. Wash your feeders with soap and water every couple weeks and allow them to dry thoroughly before refilling with seed.



Dark-eyed juncos spend the winter months in our area. Low platform feeders will help attract these ground feeding birds. Juncos especially enjoy white proso millet.

RECYCLE YOUR HOLIDAYS

It's time to detangle and deck the halls with holiday lights. If you have burnt out lights, give them a second life by bringing them to the Olmsted County Recycling Center Plus or Rochester Public Utilities Service Center. These light strands can be recycled, but they should NOT be placed in your curbside recycling bin. There is no charge for drop off.

SAVE WITH LED LIGHTING!

Did you know that the average Minnesota home can save between \$10 to \$250 each holiday season by switching to LED holiday lighting? When you replace those old lights, try some LEDs this year! Rochester Public Utilities offers a rebate of up to 50% per string when you are an RPU customer and purchase LED lights. Check out all the details at RPU.org.

ZVAS Monthly Bird Walk



Join a local Audubon member on a guided, but casual walk through Quarry Hill Park. Bring binoculars if you have them or some are available to borrow from the nature center. Dress for the weather. Families and children are welcome. Stay for any length of time. Hikes begin at 9:00 am and last about one hour. Free and open to the public - no registration required.

Upcoming dates are:
December 3
January 7
February 4
March 4

BE A PART OF TEAM NATURE!

Volunteers are central to the success of Quarry Hill Nature Center. We value the expertise and time our volunteers provide each day that contribute to our mission of *"opening eyes and minds to natural science discovery."*

Current needs include:

DOCENTS

If you enjoy nature and conversation, our Exploration Hall is the place to be. Docents welcome visitors and spend time answering questions and providing interpretation about our many interactive exhibits. Docents are typically adults with a keen interest in nature and comfort interacting with the general public. Docent shifts are mainly on weekends and non-school days. Docents receive training and work alongside Quarry Hill naturalist staff.

SKI & SNOWSHOE RENTAL ASSISTANT

During the winter season, ski and snowshoe rental is a busy area at the nature center. Volunteers greet visitors, help fit them with the correct equipment, and help them fill out their rental forms. Rental assistants are needed on the weekends and during special events. Training is provided.

VOLUNTEER SATURDAY

4th Saturday of every month

1:30—3:30 pm

Indoor and outdoor projects, gardening, button making and more: this opportunity is open year-round to families, groups or individuals (children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult). Volunteer one time or monthly. Sign up at uwolmsted.org or by calling the nature center at 507-328-3950.

If you are interested in volunteering, contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Jill Danielsen at jdanielsen@qhnc.org.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

From Jill Danielsen, Volunteer Coordinator

Weed Warriors = WOW!

In its second year of existence, Weed Warriors continues to impress! This group of volunteers battles invasive species from early spring into early winter. This past year, Weed Warriors began work in March removing garlic mustard and digitally mapping their progress. And wow – did they make progress – 20 acres of second year garlic mustard were cleared! That is millions and millions of seeds kept out of the Quarry Hill soil! Way to go Weed Warriors! With the change of season, Weed Warrior volunteers shifted their fight to buckthorn. Working along side each other, as well as facilitating large groups of volunteers, impressive tracts of the oak savanna have been opened up as part of a continued and coordinated effort to restore that ecosystem. You can see their progress by walking the most Northwest trail of the savanna. Since March 2016, these amazing volunteers have logged over 500 hours of time in the park. But they are not done yet! Their buckthorn work will continue until the snow flies and with this extended fall, the impact will be great. Wow!

Additionally, Weed Warriors have planted native seeds and plants, done trail work, and educated the public about the significance of battling invasive species. A small group of Weed Warriors have also begun using new techniques in fighting the invasive battle. They are working with the city of Rochester and Quarry Hill Nature Center to continue to find and use the most efficient and effective methods.

The dedication of this group of volunteers is none other than remarkable and the park has become a better, healthier park because of their efforts. Wow!



Terri Dugan, Weed Warrior leader, explains to a group of volunteers where they will be working in the park and how we have mapped the areas of concern to track progress.

WINTER 2016-7 PROGRAMS

AT QUARRY HILL NATURE CENTER



FOR ALL AGES

Sundays at QHNC

Public programs open to all ages are held Sundays, year round, at 1:30 pm \$2 adults, \$1 kids, free for members

Bird Banding Program

Experience the beauty of birds up close. Learn about bird characteristics, bird adaptations and the Federal Bird Banding Program. Program is hands on and includes trapping, netting, banding and releasing birds.

December 4, January 8,
February 5, March 5

Critter Sunday

Enjoy an up close look at one of Quarry Hill's live animals including a chance to learn about and observe feeding and care of the animals.

Dec 18	Rockin' Raptors
Jan 22	Animals Surviving Winter
February 19	Owls
March 19	Goodness Snakes

Cave Tour and Historic Hike

Quarry Hill Park was formerly the grounds of the Rochester State Hospital. Learn about the Park's historic structures on a short hike to the sandstone cave, built in 1882.

Following the cave tour is an optional hike to a featured historical site.

Dec 11	Cave & Cemetery
Jan 15 & 29	Cave & Drop Structure
Feb 12 & 26	Cave & Pond
Mar 12 & 26	Cave & Rock Crusher

Nature Center Hours:

Monday —Saturday 9:00—5:00 pm
Sunday 12:00—5:00 pm

Park is open dawn—dusk daily.

Friday Night Owl Prowl

Ever wonder how many different owls are silently flying through our woods? Join us as we look at **Minnesota's varied owl species**, dissect an owl pellet and find out what makes an owl hoot. A moon lit hike will follow to try and hear some of the many calls that owls make.
December 30, 6:30—8:00 pm
\$5/person, \$16 family maximum
\$4/person, \$12 family maximum



Maple Syrup in your Backyard

Learn how to produce syrup from even a single maple or box elder tree. We'll cover the basic equipment and techniques required to collect and process sap. Participants will practice tapping a tree and sample some finished box elder syrup. Appropriate for adults and families with school-age children.
March 25, 1:30—3:00 pm
\$5/person, \$16 family maximum
\$4/person, \$12 family maximum

HOW TO REGISTER

Many Quarry Hill programs have a maximum number of participants. Advance registration helps us plan a great nature experience for all.

Call (507) 328-3950
Mon—Fri from 9 am—5 pm and we'll help you take care of all the details. Payment is required at the time of registration.

WINTERFEST XV

Candlelight Ski

Celebrate Minnesota's sparkling season and beautiful winter landscape. Enjoy an evening skiing by candlelight and the glow of the moon. Warm up in front of the

Nature Center's blazing fireplace while refueling with cocoa and s'mores.

Equipment is available on a first come first serve basis. All ages are welcome – equipment is available in youth and adult sizes. Event is dependent on snow and trail conditions—call ahead.

February 3, 6:00—9:00 pm
\$10 person

No registration required.

It's Snow Crazy!

Get ready to experience snow like you never have before! Bring your mittens for snow games - ice bowling, snow snakes, and snowball toss; bring your sweet tooth for making snow candy; and bring your creativity for snow creating! You can color it, shape it, or adorn it for the birds - whatever you are in the mood for. We'll provide the materials and (hopefully) Mother Nature provides the snow! The fire will be roaring and hot cocoa simmering whenever you need to take a warm up break!

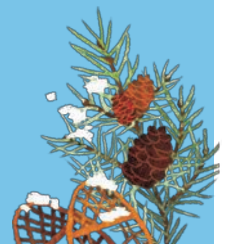
February 12, 1:30—3:30 pm
\$5.00/person

Advance registration required.

CANCELLATION POLICIES

Quarry Hill may cancel programs due to weather conditions. Rescheduling and/or refunds will occur.

If you cancel your registration more than 10 days prior to the program you'll receive a 75% refund. No refunds within 10 days of the program.



ADULTS

Valentine's Candlelight

Ski and Snowshoe

Enjoy the sparkling winter landscape on a candlelit trail. Bring your sweetheart or come with friends for an enjoyable evening in nature. Then warm up by the crackling fire where champagne and sweets will be served. Equipment is provided by Quarry Hill. Alternate activities will be provided in the case of poor snow/trail conditions.

Must be 21+ to register.

February 11

7:00—10:00 pm

\$20 person, \$15 member

Advance registration required

Introduction to Snowshoeing

If you can walk, you can snowshoe! And snowshoeing can be a great winter blues buster. Come learn about the history of snowshoes and their construction, and then strap on a pair for some guided practice. Cost includes instruction and use of snowshoes. A minimum snow base of 6 inches is required to snowshoe. In the event of an inadequate snow base, class will still meet and participants will receive a gift certificate to snowshoe on their own at another time.

January 7, 8:30—10:00 am

\$17 person, \$13 members

Bee Keeping for Beginners

This class, specifically for beginners, will cover introduction to bees and beekeeping, equipment, disease and pest management, planting for honeybees, yearly management and how to produce a honey crop. Participants will be given information on where to purchase bees and equipment.

February 18

1:00-5:00 pm

\$30 adult, \$25 members



PRESCHOOL -FOR AGES 2-5 (AS NOTED) WITH A GROWN UP

Nature Toddlers

Observe, listen, and feel ... toddlers are natural explorers. Join us monthly for a nature-themed class and some special one on one time with your 2-3 year old. Story, art and outdoor adventures are part of the fun! Sign up for one session or all sessions, choose Wednesdays or Saturdays.

Dec 3 or 7 Nuts about Squirrels

Jan 7 or 11 Snow White, Snow Bright

Feb 4 or 8 Cardinals & the Color Red

Mar 4 or 8 Fishy Fish

\$8 per pair, \$6.50 members

Class time is 10:00 —11:00 am

Nature Nuts

Children are born naturalists, constantly exploring the environment around them with all senses. Join us monthly for an adventure that nurtures that natural curiosity. Each month we explore a new nature-theme through story, art and outdoor adventure. Enjoy time with that special 2-5 year old in your life.

Register for one class or the series.

Dec 17 Nuts about Squirrels

Jan 21 Wonderful Wintertime

Feb 18 Awesome Owls

March 18 How Egg-citing

\$8 per pair, \$6.50 members

Class time is 10:00 —11:00 am

Track Time!

Two feet, four feet - small feet, big feet. We all make tracks in the snow! Bring your valentine, don some snowshoes, and make some 'lovely' tracks of your own as you search for animal tracks. Warm up back inside while making a special valentine craft. Ages 4-5 with an adult. February 16, 3:30—5:00 pm
\$15 per pair, \$12 members

Sweet Treats!

Bring your sweet tooth and discover the natural sugars of MN maple trees. Learn how maple syrup is harvested and made and then head outside to take part in the process first hand. We'll do a fun maple craft back at the nature center. And what day would be complete without sampling nature's sweet treats! Ages 4-5 with an adult. March 16, 3:30—5:00 pm
\$15 per pair, \$12 members



FOR HOMESCHOOL STUDENTS

We are pleased to offer classes especially for home school families. These environmental education classes focus on interactive, hands-on learning and correlate to MN Science Standards. Each class includes indoor and outdoor experiences. Classes are \$4 per student unless otherwise noted. Full class descriptions can be found on our website.

Examining Life

January 3, 1:15 - 2:45 pm

Ages 4-7

Bird Adaptations

January 3, 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Ages 8-12

Learn to Ski and Snowshoe (\$8)

February 8, 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Ages 11-15

Let's 'Bee' Nosey

May 8, 1:15 - 2:45 pm

Ages 4-7

Weather

May 8, 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Ages 8-1

2016 SUMMER NATURE CAMP PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.
Albert Einstein

Each summer, we hold a contest for our Nature Photography campers. At the end of their week-long photography day camp, each camper chooses a single image to submit for the contest. Winning entries are displayed in the nature center. **Congratulations to this year's winners. Please enjoy the top three of 169 entries. View all the entries in full color on our Facebook page.**



1st Place: Monarch Larva by Anna Stacy
8th Grade, Friedell Middle School



2nd Place:
Goldfinch
by Grant Jones,
8th grade,
St. John's Catholic School

3rd Place: Damselfly
by Gabby Henderson
6th grade, Lincoln
Choice School



Quarry Hill Park has more than 8 miles of groomed ski trails and over 329 acres to explore on snowshoes. Classic cross country skis and snowshoes are available for rent daily.

Skis	up to 4 hours
Adult	\$7.50/6.00 members
Child	\$5.00/4.00 members

Snowshoes	up to 4 hours
Adult	\$5.00/4.00 members
Child	\$3.00/2.50 members

Overnight and weekend rentals available, inquire for rates. All rentals are dependent on trail conditions. Call ahead for details.



HOST A BIRTHDAY PARTY OUR PARTIES ARE NATURALLY FUN!

Nature—themed birthday parties at Quarry Hill Nature Center are available for kids ages 4 +. Parties include use of our party room, our Exploration Hall, & a 30 or 45 minute naturalist program. Lots of themes to choose from!

Party times available:
Saturday 9:30, 12:30 or 3:00
Sunday 12:15 or 3:00
Cost: \$40 or \$50 for members
\$85 or \$95 for non-member

MEMBER MATTERS

More than 750 households join Quarry Hill as members each year, enjoying all the park and center have to offer. We are thrilled to acknowledge the following new and renewing members since July. Membership and donations help us provide quality animal care, maintain the park and trails, provide quality affordable natural science programs, and keep the nature center admission free.

New Members

John Bailey
Shari Bornstein
Nancy Brownawell
Allison & Jonathan Charnin
Jessica Chauvin
Michael and Julie Collins
Thomas & Casey Downs
Michael Ganz
Josh Heindel
Pat Kane
David & Kimberly Larson
JoEllen & Miguel Park
Curtis & Amy Schemmel
Thomas & Erica Stark
Jessica Struckmann

Frannie Taysavang
Luke & Krista Wood
Renewing Members
Elaine Alcock
Arthur & Alexandra Beyder
Deborah Colgan
Kathy & Brian Cook
Joel & Sandy Dunnette
Rob Dunnette
Peggy & Phil Edwards
Andrew & Anastasia Folpe
Dana & Casey Funk
Amy & Robert Galbraith
Pamela Gellert
Ray & Jody Goldstein
Brian Jorstad

Peter & Kari Larson
James & Kathleen McMullin
Paul & Kelsey Metzger
Kah Whye Peng
Nicholas & Kate Remmes
Curtis & Amy Schemmel
David & Michelle Schmitt
Mary Schwager
Larry & Amy Steinkraus
Kevin & Andrea Strauss
Paul & Kari Takahashi
John & Judith A. Thistle
John & Michelle Wald
Sandra Taler & Andrew Westreich
John & Virginia Woodruff
Nancy Zaworski

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP—JOIN OR RENEW TODAY

Quarry Hill Nature Center has often been called the jewel of Rochester or a community treasure. Nature itself is really the treasure and we are grateful to those who continue to support our efforts to connect people to the natural world. Our members and supporters are the hidden gems behind the longevity of Quarry Hill as a community treasure. The Friends of Quarry Hill annual campaign and member renewal period begins this month. We look forward to your continued support and partnership.

Your support helps:

- keep the Nature Center open year round with free admission
- provide quality care for the live animals
- keep programs accessible and fees affordable
- maintain the park, trails, pond and historic structures

Here is how you can support Quarry Hill Nature Center:

Donations—Financial gifts are tax deductible and go a long way in helping us carry out our mission. Donations can be made in two ways:

- Give online through the GiveMN link on our website. By giving online the cost and time to process your gift is reduced and your donation can quickly go to work. Online you have the option to set-up sustaining monthly giving. By giving throughout the year you provide steady, reliable support for Quarry Hill.
- Soon, you will receive a request to contribute to our annual fund by US mail. Please respond by using the donation envelope enclosed in that mailing or go to our website to download a donation form.



Memberships—Besides the good-natured feeling that comes with knowing you are supporting a great cause, all donations of \$60 or more receive member benefits for the 2017 calendar year.

Member Benefits

- Free Admission to Bird, Cave, Critter and Nature Sunday Programs, weekly at 1:30 pm
- Priority enrollment and discounts on all summer nature camps
- Discounted birthday parties for kids ages 4 +
- Discounted fees on naturalist programs and events such as Full Moon Hikes, Nature Toddlers, Candlelight Skiing and more.
- Discounted cross-country ski and snowshoe rental
- Subscription to Field Notes—a quarterly newsletter

CONNECT WITH US
Phone (507) 328-3950

Fax (507) 287-1345

quarryhill@QHNC.org

www.QHNC.org

HOURS (Sept 1—May 31)
Mon-Fri 9:00 am—5:00 pm
Sun. Noon-5 pm

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Quarry Hill Nature Center
701 Silver Creek Rd. NE
Rochester, MN 55906

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2016 QUARRY HILL Nature Art Show

At Quarry Hill Nature Center

701 Silver Creek Rd NE, Rochester, MN • **FREE ADMISSION** • Meet the artists



Saturday, Dec. 3rd • 9am - 4pm

Sunday, Dec. 4th • 11am - 4pm



10% of sales donated to Friends of Quarry Hill

www.QHNC.org



Paintings Pottery Fiber Prints Photography Glass Wood Metal Original Art & More!