Environmental Defenders’ 50th Anniversary Dinner Celebration

by Bev Dow

On a beautiful sunny day on March 8, The Environmental Defenders of McHenry County celebrated 50 years of environmental preservation, protection, education and advocacy at the McHenry Country Club, situated along the Fox River, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. President, Lori McConville, welcomed everyone. On this special anniversary, the Annual Dinner featured a presentation by Leslie Goddard as Silent Spring Author, Rachel Carson, and first screening of The Environmental Defenders’ documentary, “50 Years of Defending” by Steve Firak of Ahoj Productions. Congratulations to all who helped to make this video possible. In addition, there were wonderful decade boards on display adjacent to the dining room, celebrating accomplishments and people who made The Defenders what we are today. Thanks to Kim Hankins and Lauren Tatum for all they did to create that wonderful project that will be on display in the Woodstock Square Mall and elsewhere in the future.

Over 200 members and guests attended the special celebration. The Fundraising Action Team organized a silent auction, which attracted unique items such as a “cook and dine” with Duke’s Chef, Zak, and tickets to Soul Jam at Soulful prairies, among dozens of other treasures. The 50/50 raffle brought in record numbers with over $700 going to both the winner, Bailey Wise, and the organization!

The MB Martini Jazz Band, including Ben Kanner, provided music during the social time and silent auction.

Viewing our “50 Years of Defending” documentary trailer produced by Steve Firak, Ahoj Productions.

During the Annual Meeting, Dwight Dalton, Kim Hankins, Sue Jensen, Lori McConville, and Ken Santowski were re-elected to two-year Board terms. Cynthia Kanner, Executive Director, and Lori McConville high-

The delicious sit-down dinner ended with a special anniversary cake for dessert (two actually!) with our 50th Anniversary logo proudly displayed.

(See 50th Anniversary p. 3)
ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS’ BUSINESS MEMBERS

1776 Restaurant
815-356-1776

About Better Living: Lee Frisch
847-639-2564

Alpine Accessories
847-854-4754

American Ad Bag
800-382-6844

Assisting Hands
815-701-0091

Backdrop Vintage
815-338-3007

Baird & Warner Real Estate
Adele Petersen, Broker Associate
815-355-5729

Bluestem Ecological Services
630-417-1922

Calco Pallets
815-725-5387

Casting Whimsy
815-342-2630

Certasun
312-638-0800

Conscious Cup Coffee Roasters
815-356-0115

Copy Express, Inc.
815-338-7161

Crystal Lake Park District
815-459-0680

Current Automotive
630-615-5710

Dave’s Bait & Tackle
815-861-1533

Duke’s Alehouse & Kitchen
815-356-9980

Falcon Green Resources
815-334-8689

Gypsy Glen K-9 Castle
815-385-8585

Habitat for Humanity
McHenry County
815-759-9002

Hastings Asphalt Services, Inc.
815-648-9099

Hyperstitch
815-568-0590

William R. Kreznor & Associates
815-338-2362

Lehman & Menis
815-459-7400

Magitek Energy Solutions, Inc.
847-409-1927

Marengo-Union
Chamber of Commerce
815-568-6680

Mars Insurance
815-459-0711

Marvin’s Toy Store
779-220-4179

MassMutual Illinois
815-527-9404

McHenry County College
815-479-7765

McHenry Co. Dept. of Health
815-334-4585

Natural Communities Native Plants
331-248-1016

Oakford Physical Therapy
815-334-8850

Organic Rootz Health Food Shop
224-209-8648

Pioneer Tree Farm
815-385-8512

PrairieLand Disposal
847-381-9300

RCW Tax Services
815-893-0736

Red Buffalo Nursery
815-648-4838

Reprographics
815-477-1018

Riverbottom Ice Cream Co.
224-678-9438

Savior World
847-728-8811

Seven Point/Harvard Grow LLC
312-593-8448

Silver Prairie Natural Soap Company
815-403-6931

Simotronics
815-382-7009

Soil and Spade Company
815-893-9849

Soulful Prairies
846-336-6743

Terra Vitae Farms
815-245-0490

TGEP (The Green Electric Product)
630-847-1421

U-Haul Crystal Lake and Woodstock
815-477-1673-Crystal Lake
815-345-4030-Woodstock

U of I Extension Master Gardeners
815-338-3737

The UPS Store of Crystal Lake
815-477-3800

Wells Fargo Advisors
815-338-2550

Wheel Werks Bikes
815-444-6897

White Oak Interiors
847-854-8892

Winestock
815-308-5610

Woodstock Chamber of Commerce
815-338-2436
lighted accomplishments over the years. Cynthia mentioned our membership reached a new total – 630, thanks in part to a goal set five years ago to attract 100 new members annually until 2020. A goal that was reached! The goal now is to make it to 1000 member households and businesses by year’s end.

Cynthia introduced the three prior executive directors in attendance: Jerry Paulson, Cindy Skrukrud and Lenore Beyer, who also appeared in the Environmental Defenders’ documentary, an idea, which came about thanks to the video The Land Conservancy created for their 25th anniversary. She thanked the Community Foundation for McHenry County’s Give360 Program for their help funding the documentary.

Cynthia highlighted a change in semantics within the organization – The Defenders’ Committees are now called “Action Teams” to better capture the active nature of our work. Cynthia introduced the Chairs of each of the teams: Education – Dave Roggenbuck and Kim Compton; Fundraising – Anne Basten; Membership – Zak Klehr; Recycling – Barb Day; Transportation – Gary Kanner; Waste Reduction – Cecilia Carman and Michelle Muryn; and Water & Natural Resources Protection – Cindy Skrukrud.

A big thank you was extended to all of our auction donors and sponsors: to Jack Schafer for the billboard donation announcing our 50th anniversary (which can be seen on Route 14 just west of MCC as you travel east); to Jim O’Leary of Copy Express for our 50th Anniversary logo and banner; and Martini Jazz Band with high school student Ben Kanner for our entertainment.

The meeting ended with the presentation of awards to honor outstanding volunteers and supporters of The Environmental Defenders: Bailey Wise – Young Defenders Award; The Green Read volunteers – Volunteer of the Year Award (received by book store manager, Pam Johnson); The City of Woodstock – Government Award; and Bill Donato, our coveted award – the Theta (received by his wife, Elizabeth Donato.)

After the dinner, a dozen members continued the celebration for a bit longer by fireside on the patio at the club, overlooking the Fox River and accompanied by a nearly full moon.
Special 50th Anniversary Events Throughout 2020!

JULY 11
Float The Fox for the Fiftieth

AUGUST 22
Summer Corn Roast & Camp-out at Pioneer Tree Farm

OCTOBER 17
Farm to Table 50th Anniversary Fundraising dinner, Soulful Prairies

DECEMBER 4
Holiday Open House at Woodstock Square Mall, Environmental Defenders’ office/The Green Spot

JULY OR OCTOBER
“50 YEARS OF DEFENDING”
An Environmental Defenders’ documentary on the 4th Monday. Date TBD. Luecht Auditorium, MCC at 7PM, doors open at 6:30.

Thank you to Copy Express for designing our 50th Anniversary logo and banner!!

Our other annual events will take place as well, like It’s Our River Day on September 19 and Make a Difference Day on October 24 as well as our regular restoration workdays at Sterne’s Woods and Wingate Prairie, plus special programs for our Business Members, Hispanic community, and Young Professional members.
Environmental Defenders’ 50th Annual Meeting Award Winners

THETA AWARD ~ Bill Donato
For his dedication and commitment to educate young people about environmental stewardship, for his leadership within the Environmental Defenders, for which he served many years, and for his position as director of the McHenry County Schools Environmental Education Program (MCSEEP) Kim Hankins presented the award to Bill’s Wife, Elizabeth.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD ~ The Green Read team of volunteers
For their passion for books, welcoming customer service, sharing the mission of The Environmental Defenders, flexibility with scheduling, and for making the adventure of opening a downtown bookstore possible and successful. Lori McConville presented the award to Pam Johnson, Manager.

GOVERNMENT ~ The City of Woodstock
For showing leadership on plastic waste reduction through passing an optional fee on single-use bags and collaborating on Styrofoam collection, for partnering on electric vehicle charging, for the willingness to experiment with utilizing effluent from their waste water plant to pre-treat roads against icing, supporting sustainable energy, showing a commitment to protecting our land and water and for the work and dedication of their Environmental Commission. (L-R: City Manager, Roscoe Stelford, Councilman, Gordon Tebo, Mayor Brian Sager, Lori McConville presented the award.)

YOUNG DEFENDER ~ Bailey Wise
For his dedication to the environment as demonstrated through his volunteer efforts, supporting the causes of the Environmental Defenders, commitment to sustainable living, and setting an example of stewardship. Kim Hankins, presented the award.
From Your Executive Director
Cynthia Kanner

We are grateful!

We are very excited to share the news about several recent grants that The Environmental Defenders has received. We cannot thank the foundations that support us enough! Here are some details below that explain what we plan to do:

Expand staff capacity
On March 25 at the Grand Victoria Foundation board meeting, a grant application from The Environmental Defenders was approved for $75,000 over the next two years to help grow our staff capacity! We will spend the next weeks writing a job description for a part-time position to help expand our membership and communications outreach. We plan to research how to best reach applicants with a strong communications background, but also environmental work experience and Spanish language ability will be a plus!

School Environmental Clubs and scholarship
Thank you to the Gerry & Bill Cowlin Foundation for their generous grant of $4,000! This grant will go toward developing a handbook for teachers who wish to start and sustain an environmental club. This project will include ideas on starting a club, who to connect with and involve, as well as lesson plans for meetings and resources. Written with the help of those asking questions, and with the guidance of established club leaders, this resource will help to engage students, teachers and families alike and has the goal to raise awareness for the next generation of environmentally minded adults! The grant will also go toward a future scholarship for a Latino high school senior who wishes to pursue studies in the environmental field.

Lastly, this grant will support our Latino Outreach program through funding our next bilingual conservation outing for Latino families to be held on Sunday, July 26 at Glacial Park for a hike up the kames. This is part of a joint program of The Environmental Defenders, The Land Conservancy, the McHenry County Conservation District and Friends of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge called “Conversacion de Conservacion.”

Thank you to the Full Circle Foundation for a $2,500 grant that is part of a broader grant from Seven Generations for zero waste lunch programming in our county. We will be working with Prairie Grove Elementary and Prairie Grove Jr. High in Crystal Lake. We also received a generous $3,205 grant toward producing interpretive signs for four prairies that we restore and maintain!

Electric Vehicle Charging Station
We would also like to thank Barbara Oughton for her donation of $1,000 and others who contributed in her honor to Barbara’s choice of charity upon retiring from the Community Foundation’s Board of Directors. We plan to pursue a project that will help mitigate problems of climate change, per Barbara’s wishes, such as the establishment of another electric vehicle charging station in our county.
Earth Day at 50!
By Cynthia Kanner

Not only is our organization 50 this year, but so is Earth Day! In fact, The Environmental Defenders is closely connected to the spirit of environmental stewardship that blossomed in 1970. The theme for Earth Day this year is CLIMATE ACTION. This brings both a sense of urgency and opportunity. Urgency, because daily life habits and legislation can have global effects that can help mitigate climate change, and opportunity through legislation now being rolled out in our state’s legislature in the form of the Clean Energy Jobs Act (CEJA). Some of you may even have hitched a ride to Springfield on March 4 for Clean Energy Lobby Day. Earth Day is still mostly about local action that comprehensively raises awareness, crucial to helping protect our planet, which in turn creates lasting change. Here in McHenry County, The Environmental Defenders has been proud to co-sponsor the annual Earth Day celebration with the McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD) for many years. Unfortunately, due to the current health crisis on our planet, the Earth Day celebration has been canceled. But, Earth Day is every day and there are opportunities to observe its 50th anniversary virtually. While we had plans to show The Environmental Defenders’ documentary, “50 Years of Defending,” on Earth Day itself, that has been postponed to a later date, which we will keep you apprised of! While we cannot be together, there are virtual opportunities, including the Earth Day panel discussion mentioned elsewhere in this letter. We hope you’ll join us on April 21 and take advantage of connecting with others on-line.

Welcome Back Claire!
By Nancy Schietzel

It’s with great pleasure that we welcome Claire (Flavin) Hodge back to our Board! That’s right, Claire joined our Board the first time as a young college graduate in November, 2010. She had just received her B. S. in Organismal Biology and Public Outreach from ISU. Sadly for us, but a great move for her, a job in Minnesota took her away in April, 2011. During her time with us, Claire served as our Board Secretary and volunteered at restoration workdays, book sales, and recycling drives. She also wrote the “Green Tips” for the newspaper and mentored Bill Donato’s Green Club at Woodstock High School.

During the intervening years since 2011, Claire received her M. S. in Agroecology from the University of Minnesota, focusing on building resilient community food systems. She also spent time working at zoos, nature centers, vegetable farms, and censusing plants and snakes on prairies! Now she and her husband, Nick, have moved back to Illinois to buy a home and start a family and set roots in Crystal Lake. They were drawn here as they value McHenry County’s continued commitment to conservation and environmental protection efforts. She is working as the Permaculture Farm Manager at the Smart Farm in Barrington, where they grow fruit and vegetables for our neighbors in need. And in her free time, Claire likes to garden, preserve food, hike, camp, craft, and host food gatherings.

So, you can see why we’re so happy to have Claire rejoin our Board, as she fit a lot into that short time with us in the past, and she has grown even more in her knowledge and environmental expertise since then. So welcome home, Claire! We’re so glad to have you back!
Education & Advocacy

The Environmental Defenders carried out the following educational and advocacy efforts during Winter 2020, in addition to our continuing work with McHenry County Green Drinks, Green Living Expo Committee, Citizens Climate Lobby, Boone Creek Alliance, and Silver/Sleepy Hollow Creeks Watershed Coalition.

- Screened the documentary “Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman” as part of the Green Screen quarterly series held at McHenry County College.
- Joined the Crystal Creek Watershed Steering Committee to create a watershed protection plan.
- Continued to supply monthly column Green Scene to the Woodstock Independent.
- Participated in the Solid Waste Task Force, McHenry County Health Department committee meeting.
- Provided speakers through Defenders’ Speakers’ Bureau to Kennedy Dinner, Randall Oaks Golf Club on Environmental Defenders’ 50th Anniversary; First United Methodist Church on “Building Green Lives”; Lehman & Menis Small Bites speaker series at Aroma Café on plastic waste reduction; and Heineman Middle School (Algonquin) Ecology Club.
- Participated in statewide conference calls of Illinois Environmental Council and additional calls concerning state-wide single-use plastic reduction bills.
- Continued to participate in the bimonthly Water Resources Action Plan (WRAP) at the county administration building.
- Participated in 12th Annual Vital Lands Summit in Champaign, IL.
- Participated in Clean Energy Lobby Day in Springfield to join over 700 individuals to lobby for clean energy in IL.

*Many thanks to all the volunteers who help make these efforts possible!*
He received a B.S. in chemistry from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1975 and later studied chemical engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

J.C. Kibbey analyzes and advocates for policies that advance renewable energy, energy efficiency, clean transportation, sustainable development, and grid modernization at the state public utilities commission, the legislature, and with other partners and decision-makers. He also works to develop policy solutions to climate change and to make the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy as equitable as possible for workers and communities. Kibbey previously served as a policy advocate in the Union of Concerned Scientists’ climate and energy program, where he helped pass clean energy legislation in Illinois and Michigan.

Here are the individual links to each event:

Zoom registration: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/uJ0scuqhqTMvKA___rdDfJADNVkSldR-bUQ

Eventbrite: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/online-panel-clean-energy-sfuture-in-illinois-tickets-101060408402

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/events/614188809310163/

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Summer Garage Sale 2020

By Anne Basten

Drop off: July 12 from 2 PM to 5 PM and July 13–15 from 10 AM to 3 PM.

Sale: July 16 –19 from 9AM to 4PM
Algonquin Township Road District
3702 US Highway 14, Crystal Lake, Garage B

Sign Up to volunteer online at www.mcdef.org

No fabrics, upholstered furniture, large appliances, TVs, computers, exercise machines. If you have items that you can donate to our summer garage sale, please set them aside! We would love to take them off your hands come Summer!
**Sterne’s Fen Restoration**  
*by Nancy Schietzelt*

As Environmental Defenders’ members know, in May of 2018 we were very fortunate to receive an Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation Challenge Grant to help restore Sterne’s Fen in Crystal Lake in collaboration with the Crystal Lake Park District and the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. As a requirement of the grant funding, we had to amass 400 hours of volunteer time removing invasives to earn $4,000. Thanks to many amazing volunteers, we did it! We also had to earn $7,000 in donations to receive a 3:1 match of $21,000. Thanks to many of you, we did that, too! Those monies, along with $2,000 earned for sharing about the project on social media, added up to $34,000 to be used to restore the native habitat in the Fen, an Illinois State Nature Preserve.

As the photograph above shows, large groups of volunteers are still showing up every month to continue work on this project. Also, we are using the grant money to hire professionals to remove trees, in order to restore the hydrology of the Fen and to control cattails and an invasive grass called phragmites at the site. So, a big thank you goes out to all Environmental Defenders’ members who donated money and precious volunteer time to this effort! If you’d like to watch some videos created by Steve Firak of Ahoj Productions about the project, you can find them at [http://mcdef.org/what-we-do/water-resources-protection-committee/](http://mcdef.org/what-we-do/water-resources-protection-committee/).

When we are able to continue our workdays on the 4th Sundays of each month from 9AM to 11AM, we will let you know. We’d love to have you join us. On some fine Spring day when we are no longer sequestered, stop by Sterne’s Fen for a short walk to see all that you have helped to accomplish!
MEMBERSHIP FORM
please circle level:
Supporting ($250)  Patron ($100)  Family/Basic ($50)
Young Professional ($30)  Student ($15)  Senior ($30)

MAKE IT A GIFT for $25*

Name _______________________________________________
Address _______________________________________________
City, State & Zip ________________________________________
E-mail ___________________________ Phone _______________
Total contribution: $___________

Please mail to Environmental Defenders of McHenry County
110 S. Johnson Street, Suite 106, Woodstock, IL 60098.
Checks can be abbreviated to EDMC.

*If this is a gift, please complete the above for recipient
and print your name & phone number here:

_________________________________ ____________

REACH1000 CAMPAIGN 2020
Help us reach 1,000 member households/businesses by
December 31, 2020 by purchasing a gift membership for a
family, friend or colleague!!

Please check out Hyperstitch at
https://tinyurl.com/give-defenders for shirts,
bags, caps and a li-
cense plate frame
with our logo. You
can pick up your or-
der at our office, sav-
ing postage. Help
support us and…

Wear it!!

Styrofoam Collection Sites
ALL SITES ARE CLOSED TEMPORARILY
due to COVID-19 health crisis.

Village of Algonquin
110 Meyer Drive
Algonquin Public Works
Open 24-7

Algonquin Township
Highway Department
3702 US HWY 14
Open 7 AM to 3 PM
Mon. - Fri.

City of Woodstock
Public Works
326 Washington Street, Woodstock
7:30 AM to 3 PM

Check our website periodically for information
about future drive locations.
www.mcdef.org/recycling

Please check our website for updated information
on County recycling drives. Next scheduled drive
is on SATURDAY, MAY 16 from 9AM to NOON
at 667 Ware Road – the McHenry County Govern-
ment Center in Woodstock.

One of the easiest ways to donate to The Environ-
mental Defenders is by contributing to EarthShare in
your workplace charity campaign. Talk with your
employer or contact the Environmental Defenders at
815-338-0393.