



# Ancient Oaks Seedlings

Winter 2016-17



## Upcoming Events & Activities



### February 11... Save the Date! Trivia Night Returns

Columbus Centre, 365 Surryse Rd #280 LZ  
Saturday, February 11, 2017,

Doors open at 6:30 pm. Trivia from 7 to 10 PM

Are you passionate about trivia? Even if you're not, you can still put your lifetime collection of useless information to work while supporting the AOF. In addition to the competition and camaraderie, there's a cash bar, food, snacks, and fun. Cruise the silent auction and stock up on raffle tickets. Tickets are \$25 per person. Updated info and ticketing is available at our website: [ancientoaksfoundation.org](http://ancientoaksfoundation.org)



### Owl Walk

Paulus Park Barn,  
200 S. Rand Rd, LZ  
Saturday, Jan. 21, 2017  
4:30-6:00 PM

Several species of owl call Lake Zurich home. We'll meet a live owl, learn about how these fierce

flyers live, and walk through winter-dark Paulus Park in search of these fascinating predators. For planning purposes, please register through the LZ Parks and Rec Dept. for class #577975-A. Fee: \$3/person or \$5/family.



### Birds and Blossoms

Oak Ridge Park, 351 Lions Dr., LZ  
Saturday, May 20, 2017  
8:00 to 9:30 AM

It's never too early to think spring. Shut your eyes and imagine

woodlands full of birdsong, dappled sunlight, and delicate spring flowers. You can put yourself in the scene by joining our Maytime walk in the woods. Help us plan by registering through the LZ Parks and Rec Dept. for class #637975-A. Fee: \$3/person or \$5/family.



### Seeking New Board Members

We have openings for additional Ancient Oaks Foundation Board of Director Members. Experience in natural resources is not necessary, just an interest in impacting your community while contributing to this dynamic conservation organization. Contact Judi Thode at [info@ancientoaksfoundation.org](mailto:info@ancientoaksfoundation.org) or 847-571-7450 for more information and an application packet.

### A BIG THANK YOU

Our business sponsors' partnership with Ancient Oaks Foundation shows that they value living and working in an engaged community and a healthy environment. We encourage you to support them.

- ✦ **Aurico Corporation**, Arlington Heights, IL  
[www.auricoinvestigations.com](http://www.auricoinvestigations.com)
- ✦ **Byte Outfitters**, Deer Park IL  
[www.byteoutfitters.com](http://www.byteoutfitters.com)
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[www.discover33.com](http://www.discover33.com)
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Judi Thode and Mary Mihelic presented Claire Slattery and her staff at Mindful Mix with a plaque recognizing their generous donation to Ancient Oaks Foundation.



## Recent Events & Activities

### Calling All Coyotes

Attendees gathered around the “campfire” to learn more about our local call of the wild -- coyotes.



After hearing both the facts and legends surrounding these versatile canids, everyone took a walk through the woods to discover if their yelps and howls would be answered.

### Oak Ridge Marsh Nature Park

#### Phase One 351 Lions Drive LZ

Restoration is underway! A crew from McGinty Brothers removed buckthorn, honeysuckle, and lots of dead trees from the area across the street from the Oak Ridge Marsh Nature Park. The cleared site looks rather bare—especially now in winter. But over the next few years, it will fill in with native grasses, shrubs, and flowers. We had previously scattered seed here which will begin to germinate this spring. Thanks to Mayor Tom Poynton, and Public Works Directors Mike Brown and Mike Cernock for their enthusiasm and cooperation in this project. This project was funded by a ComEd/OpenLands grant and the Ancient Oaks Foundation



## Ongoing Projects

### Kuechmann Park

626 N. Old Rand Road

### Oak Ridge Marsh Nature Park

500 Lions Drive, LZ

Winter is when we head these two oak woodlands with our saws and loppers. Volunteers at both parks ignore snow and cold to remove invasive species (buckthorn, honeysuckle), clear downed trees, and remove brush piles from previous work days.

Why now? Nature helps us out by removing most leaves, thereby reducing the size of the loads we have to deal with. The ground is frozen so we are not disturbing the vegetation underfoot. And the winter woods have an austere and surprising beauty all their own. Without the distractions of flower and foliage other fascinating facets of the woods reveal themselves: animal tracks, seed pods, fungi.

*Volunteers from LZHS National Honor Society gathered native seeds which will be used to restore other sites in the village...*



## Membership

Do you know somebody like you who cares about Lake Zurich’s woodlands and natural areas? Please tell them about Ancient Oaks Foundation! Different levels and types of membership are available or you can give a one-time donation. We accept checks made out to Ancient Oaks Foundation or you can use the secure PayPal account found on our website. Visit [ancientoaksfoundation.org](http://ancientoaksfoundation.org) for information about our 501(c) 3 tax deductible sponsorship levels.

### Contact Us

Mail: 52 Robertson Ave, Lake Zurich IL 60047

Email: [info@ancientoaksfoundation.org](mailto:info@ancientoaksfoundation.org)

Phone: 224-286-1312

Website: [ancientoaksfoundation.org](http://ancientoaksfoundation.org)



## Owl Star Facts



These fascinating predators include over 200 different species. They live on every continent except Antarctica, Their super senses, specialized fathers and lethal talons make them fearsome hunters.

**Asymmetrical ears** Owls can locate prey under plants, dirt and snow. Ears set at different heights on an owl's head help it pinpoint the sound's source in multiple dimensions.

**Tube eyes** Unlike our eyeballs, their tube-shaped eyes are immobile, The result: precise binocular vision and superior depth perception, A vole up to a half a mile away is not safe.

**Whole Foods** Skin, bones, blood and guts—Barn Owls swallow up to 1,000 whole mice each year.

**Varied diet** Owls hunt insects, small mammals, other birds (including other owls) and fish.

**Sizes S - XL** The tiny Elf Owl is 5 - 6 inches tall and weighs about 1 ½ ounces. The Great Gray Owl, on the other hand, measures up to 32 inches tall.

**Silent fliers** Special feathers at the front of their wings break up turbulence. Soft velvety down further muffles noise. Owls make virtually no noise when they fly.

**Signs and Symbols** In Greek mythology, the owl was the companion of Athena, goddess of wisdom. That's why owls symbolize learning and knowledge. Some cultures see owls as a sign of impending death. Harry Potter fans will know that owls have also been associated with witches and magicians.



## Under the Snow

Snow totally transforms the landscape. Autumn's rustling browns and golds are suddenly a much softer and quieter sparkling winter white. The scene is not as lifeless as it seems however. Snow's arrival creates a new universe: the **Subnivean Zone**.

On your next walk in the winter woods, watch for tiny tracks in the snow. Follow the tracks and you might see them disappear into a small hole in the snow. You just found an entrance into the subnivean zone. The subnivean zone is the open, shallow layer that usually forms under deep, layered snow.



When snow first falls, the open space is created by debris on the ground — downed trees, brush, and dead vegetation— which holds up some of the snow. Later, as the snow melts and refreezes, a sort of icy ceiling also forms.



A variety of animals depend on the subnivean zone for winter survival. Mice and voles tunnel under the snow to travel from entrances to sleeping areas to food sources and cache. The entrance holes double as ventilation shafts.

The snow also provides cover for small mammals. Being out of sight, however, does not protect these animals from predation. Under the snow, the most common predator is the ermine or winter weasel. Long, slender ermine use entrances or ventilation holes to begin the hunt for their meal. Using their keen ears, foxes, coyotes, wolves and owls can actually hear prey moving around under the snow and know exactly where to pounce.



## Welcoming Winter Birds

Heading south for the winter? It all depends on where you start from. Migratory birds from this region head for Central and South America. Birds from the forests of Canada and Alaska also head south and may end up in your backyard.

About billion or more birds migrate from the northern forests to our backyards, parks, lakes, and ponds. So what can you do to welcome these winter visitors to your backyard?

### For berry-eaters, create a songbird border.

Plant native trees and shrubs to shelter your yard from the wind. Choose berry-producing landscape plants, such as juniper trees and shrubs like dogwood, serviceberry, and viburnum; many boreal birds, such as the Cedar Waxwing, the Yellow-romped Warbler, and several sparrow species, eat berries during the winter.



**For insect-eating birds, rake leaves under trees and shrubs**—and leave them there. The resulting mulch will make a lush environment for the insects

and spiders that these birds, such as the Savannah Sparrow and Golden-crowned Sparrow, like to eat.

### For seed-eating birds, make a mini-meadow.

Let part of your yard grow up in grass and flowers. Mow it once a year, in late summer. Seed-eating



visitors, including several sparrow species and the Dark-eyed Junco, will be happy that you let things go literally to seed. **Make a brush pile.** It will shelter birds from predators and storms and to provide night roosting places. In a corner of your yard, pile logs and larger branches and top them with smaller branches.

**Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count Feb. 17-20** [www.gbbc.birdcount.org](http://www.gbbc.birdcount.org). You'll be providing useful information to scientists to help our feathered friends.

## Poems for winter



### Blue winter

Winter uses all the blues there are.  
One shade of blue for water, one for ice,  
Another blue for shadows over snow.  
The clear or cloudy sky uses blue twice—  
Both different blues. And hills row after row  
Are colored blue according to how far.  
You know the bluejay's double-blur device  
Shows best when there are no green leaves to show.  
And Sirius is a winterbluegreen star.

— Robert Francis

### Winter Promises

Tomatoes rosy as perfect baby's buttocks,  
eggplants glossy as waxed fenders,  
purple neon flawless glistening  
peppers, pole beans fecund and fast  
growing as Jack's Viagra-spiced stalk,  
big as truck tire zinnias that mildew  
will never wilt, roses weighing down  
a bush never touched by black spot,  
brave little fruit trees shouldering up  
their spotless ornaments of glass fruit:

I lie on the couch under a blanket  
of seed catalogs ordering far  
too much. Sleet slides down  
the windows, a wind edged  
with ice knives through every crack.  
Lie to me, sweet garden-mongers:  
I want to believe every promise,  
to trust in five pound tomatoes  
and dahlias brighter than the sun  
that was eaten by frost last week.

—Marge Piercy

