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## Towanda Home and Community Education

The Towanda HCE will meet for their annual Christmas Party Pot Luck on Monday, December 14, 6:30 p.m. at the Towanda Community Building, 103 S Jefferson, Towanda. Bring a dish to share. Meat, bread, drink and table service will be provided. There will be a \$10 gift exchange of "make it, bake it, sew it, grow it" if you wish to participate. Or you may make a donation to the Brotherhood Tree. We'll also play Christmas Bingo.

Hostesses are Joann Steinberg, Clara Lehan, Bev Hornickel and Robin Pearson. Guests are welcomed but please RSVP by Sat Dec 12 to Robin Pearson at (815) 579-1650 or email: [rbnprsn@mchsi.com](mailto:rbnprsn@mchsi.com). Come for a festive time.

## Gardening Tips

by Helen Leake



With the mild weather we have been having, we aren't ready to think about the family tradition of going out and cut our Christmas tree. There is something about the thrill of seeing all the trees and picking out that special tree,. Often it is a last minute decision, "we need to it today", but a little planning saves some stress.

Before you leave the house, decide where you will place the tree in the house. Get out the tape measure and see how tall and wide it can be. Write it down and put it in your pocket. For some reason, those trees seem to grow the minute they come inside the house.

Next gather everything you will need. Of course you need the tape measure to measure the tree before you cut it. Take gloves, because the needles can stick you and the trunk can release sticky sap. Also you need a light, sturdy saw. While laying on the ground, cutting your tree, it helps to have an old blanket or a tarp to lay on, instead of the cold ground. Also a few bits of ribbon or scraps of cloth, to mark the ones you have your eye on.

After you have cut the tree you want, you can use the tarp with some rope tied around it to drag the tree back to the truck. Make a fresh cut before you place it in the stand, because the cut tends to heal over and it will not be able to draw up water. Also make a fresh cut on the ones you buy off the lot, and do not let the water dry in the stand.

The Amaryllis bulb kits are in the stores now. You can plant them now, just be sure to leave the top 1/3 of the bulb above the soil. If you want to purchase it now and plant later, for a later flower, store it in a cool place.

Continue to use the lawnmower to mulch the leaves in the yard. That will break them down so they can break down and return the nutrients to the soil to feed the turf grass next spring. Also let the leaves that blow up around the shrubs and perennials they will help insulate the base of the plants and leave a pile of leaves and small twigs on the garden so wild life can find shelter for the winter

We don't talk much about the frogs in our garden, but they do eat moths, flies and grasshoppers. During the summer the grey tree frog stays near the ponds and marsh. In cold winter it burrows under leaves and other debris to hibernate, its body produces glycol and it freezes. Its heart beat and breathing stops until spring. Some insects lay eggs in the leaves to hatch next spring. It pays to leave a "not so neat pile" in the garden.

While the temperature is above freezing, time to apply anti-desiccants, like Wilt Pruf, to evergreens and broad leaf evergreens that are subject to the winds that pull the moisture out of them.

You can plant some garlic cloves in a pot indoors. As the leaves grow, you can snip them and use them for seasoning your food.

Now that the colder weather is on its way, the soil temperature is also dropping. When the soil temperature gets down to around 55 degrees, the trees and shrubs switch gears. Instead of using its energy to care for the above ground part of the plants, it sends the energy to the roots below ground level. From that time, until the ground freezes, the roots will be growing. All summer, the roots stored the energy from the sun, now it will use that energy to grow stronger and deeper roots to use for next years above ground growth. In order to do that, they will need to have plenty of moisture. Any tree or shrub planted within the last 4-5 years will need about an inch of water a week. Also newly planted perennials planted this past summer should also be watered well, so its roots can grow deeper. Then after the ground freezes place mulch at least 2-3 inches over the plant.

Before the ground freezes, you could put stakes in the ground to put a fence around fruit trees and other young trees to prevent wildlife damage to the trunk bark. Also if you place burlap screen near evergreens to prevent snow and salt damage from snowplows, put the posts in before the ground freezes.

When the temperature drops we can put on a warm coat, hat and gloves. The birds can't do that. They are also warm blooded but they have a higher body temperature of 105 on the average.

Their feathers provide remarkable insulation, and some grow an extra layer of down as part of their fall molt. The feathers are aligned so that they create tiny air pockets, and the outer layer is coated with an oil produced water proofing, produced by a gland near the tail base. That oil is distributed when the bird preens. The layers of air trapped between the overlapping feathers is warmed by the body heat and acts like a cocoon of heat. Their feathers-less legs and feet are covered with scales that minimize heat loss.

When the sun shines, the birds turn their backs to the sun to soak up the solar radiation. When it is cloudy, they shiver, which burns calories to increase the body temperature. They also try roosting in groups in small cavities.

In the fall, when food is more plentiful, The birds will eat a lot to build up insulating fat, which helps to conserve body heat. Some birds will switch to higher fat diets in the winter.

Birds still need our help to survive the cold winter. We can provide quality food, such as seeds, suet, nuts and other food high in fat, like peanut butter, to give birds fuel to generate body heat. Keep the feeders full, so food is available when need to replenish their energy. Leave the flower head and stalks for the seed and insects. Also offer shelter, like evergreen trees and shrubs. You can also leave a brush pile or a bird house for them to crowd into. Water is also important. They do eat snow, but that uses energy needed to maintain body temperature.

Helen J. Leake

## Indian Creek Workday/Picnic - November 7, 2015



### Trail Work Team

Rodney Britain  
Craig Doubet  
Mike Orrick  
Louie Blank  
Larry Lynn  
Kevin Fahling  
Mark Bertsche  
Dan Duback  
Fred Walk  
Mike Emery  
Jonathan Rosenthal

### Tractor Shelter Work

Jim Russell  
Bob Hancock  
Barb Leathers  
Natalie Leathers  
Jim Kellenberger

### Honey Suckle Removal

Jim Larson  
Barb Ulbrich  
Larry Meyers  
Jim Ferrier  
Bill Priess  
Ron Metz

### Highway Cleanup

Greg Benezee  
Carol Benezee  
Faith Russell  
Val Beguin  
Nick Leathers  
Kathy Dumler

What a productive workday! A total of 27 Indian Creek residents came together and completed numerous tasks in a three hour time period. A great deal of honey suckle was removed, our stretch of highway is looking great after cleaning up our piece of the road, a new trail northeast of the bridge has been created with much brush being removed with a “minor army” wielding chainsaws, and the tractor shelter was stained and much needed repairs were made to strengthen the structure. This was our largest and most ambitious workday in recent history. It’s very rewarding to work with individuals who are vested in bettering our community by coming together for a common cause.

Fred Walk  
Grounds Chairman















PRESS RELEASE: June 15, 2010

Janice Holder, President, Friends of Kickapoo Creek (FOKC), [friendsofkickapocreek@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofkickapocreek@gmail.com), 309.473.9285

### **FRIENDS OF KICKAPOO CREEK PRODUCES FIRST EDUCATIONAL FISH POSTER**

Friends of Kickapoo Creek (FOKC) based in McLean County, Illinois, has produced the first educational fish poster illustrating the 57 species of fishes in Kickapoo Creek, a tributary of the Salt Creek of the Sangamon River. This project is an outgrowth of recent efforts by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and volunteers from FOKC to document the fish fauna of Kickapoo Creek. FOKC is distributing the fish poster at no charge to educational and allied institutions in the Kickapoo Creek watershed portion of McLean County. It can be viewed at the following page on the FOKC website (under News): [http://kickapocreek.org/images/FOKC\\_Fish\\_Poster\\_SM.pdf](http://kickapocreek.org/images/FOKC_Fish_Poster_SM.pdf)



Creek

Kickapoo Creek and its tributaries flow through Bloomington, Downs, and Heyworth in McLean County, then through DeWitt County northwest of Clinton, and enters the Salt Creek tributary of the Sangamon River west of Lincoln in Logan County. The 57 fishes of the stream and its tributaries include 55 native species and 2 introduced species. All depend on the health of the watershed for their continued existence and are just one of the special groups of organisms that make Kickapoo Creek an aquatic treasure worth protecting.

With development moving rapidly into the McLean County portion of Kickapoo Creek, protection of this aquatic ecosystem requires awareness of the community of freshwater organisms that share the watershed with humans. Many residents of the watershed are unaware of the diversity of fishes and other organisms that both inhabit the stream and depend on humans for reducing the impacts of sediment and pollutants that affect fish survival. FOKC hopes that this poster will stimulate an appreciation of our diverse native fishes and that this will be a major step towards generating a caring concern for those and many other inhabitants of the stream.

The poster was designed and developed by Ethan Kibler of the design firm Blueye39 in Bloomington, and Trent Thomas, IDNR stream biologist. The poster is 24" by 36" in size, laminated and can be mounted on foam core backing upon request. It shows photos of all 57 species along with their common/scientific name and their family classification. Inquiries for obtaining the poster can be sent to [friendsofkickapocreek@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofkickapocreek@gmail.com)

Friends of Kickapoo Creek (P.O. Box 273, Downs, IL 61736; [www.kickapocreek.org](http://www.kickapocreek.org)) is a nonprofit, public membership group (individual \$15, family \$25) dedicated since 2005 to protecting the Kickapoo Creek in McLean County by working with neighbors, surrounding communities, and other conservation groups to promote stewardship of this unique natural resource through advocacy, education, and monitoring.

## **Red Admiral butterfly uses Stinging Nettle**

I met with Angelo Capparella, an ISU professor of biological sciences, a week or so ago and we walked the IC common grounds together. He is very knowledgeable about the flora and fauna of our ecosystem. We were walking along and I mentioned how the stinging nettles are good for nothing. He told me that they do serve a purpose in supporting the red admiral butterflies as shown below. The link below provides information about stinging nettles and these butterflies. I

thought this might be interesting for our residents as I suspect most people were unenlightened like me regarding the stinging nettles.

<http://www.raisingbutterflies.org/red-admiral/>

Fred

## Calendar

Wed. Dec.9 - Unit 5 1-hr Late Start

Sat. Dec.19 thru Mon.Jan.4 – Unit 5 – No School for Students (Teacher Institute Mon.Jan.4)

Tue. Jan.5 – Students return to school

## Towanda 4H

The Towanda 4-H will meet on Tuesday, December 1st at 6:30 pm at the Towanda Community Building. We will make cards for the residents of Mercy Creek Assisted Living then we will go Christmas Caroling at Mercy Creek. Afterwards, we will return to the Towanda Community Building for hot chocolate.

The Towanda 4-H is open to boys and girls ages 8 by September 1st to 18yrs old and Cloverbuds are for boys and girls ages 5 to 7 by September 1st. If you have any questions please contact Jeanie Wager at 309-728-2852, Scott Clements at 309-275-5913 or Malisa Kraft at 309-825-1235.

## Towanda Library

TOWANDA READS Book Discussion on Tuesday, December 8th @ 5:00 pm: “The Boys in the Boat” by Daniel James Brown will be discussed. Discussions are open to the public. Feel free to join the discussion any time the book appeals to you. Two new members were welcomed in October.

Open House Honoring Robin Pearson on Tuesday, December 8th @ 4:00 to 6:00 pm: After nearly 8 years, Robin Pearson is retiring from her job at TDL. Now with grandchildren close-at-hand, Robin will be adding more hours as “Gramma” to her life. Join us for refreshments and an opportunity to thank Robin for all she has contributed to this community and library.

Bulldog Book Club on Wednesday, December 9th @ 3:30 pm: Holiday Party with “Quiz Bowl Game” to review books already discussed. “MayB” by Caroline Starr Rose will be discussed.



Crochet/Knit/Felt Group on Tuesdays @ 5:00 pm: This group is adding members of all ages --- teens to retired --- all the time. Susie Shoemaker and Sherry Shipley are the organizers and leaders of this fun-loving craft group.

Pre-School Story Hours on Wednesdays @ 10:30 am: December 2 – What Do You Wear in Winter: December 9 – Gingerbread: December 23 – Christmas: December 30 – Animals in Winter.

Duncan Manor Christmas Ornaments For Sale: The FRIENDS of Towanda Library have ornaments for sale at the library. There is a choice between a vintage style and a modern style ornament. For a unique and local gift please consider an ornament -- which benefits both the library and the Duncan Manor Restoration Fund.

Books Donated in Honor of Someone as a Christmas Gift: Call or e-mail [director@towandalibrary.org](mailto:director@towandalibrary.org) -- to discuss a specific donation to our library in honor of someone this holiday season.

Karen Stott Bersche, Director  
Towanda District Library  
301 S. Taylor St.  
Towanda, IL 61776-7582

Phone: (309) 728-2176 Fax: (309) 728-2139

<http://www.towandalibrary.org>

Email: [director@towandalibrary.org](mailto:director@towandalibrary.org)

## Legion News

The Towanda American Legion will have a breakfast on Sunday December 6<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 – 11:00. Breakfast includes eggs, sausage, bacon, hash browns, pancakes, French toast, fresh fruit, biscuits and gravy, juice, milk and coffee for \$9.

All dinners are open to the public. Carry outs are available. Thank you for your continued support of the Legion and our Veterans.

The Legion is available for rent for reunions, parties and meeting. For more information contact Mike Potts at 728-2384 or Tom Wagner at 287-7861.

Due to the busy holiday season there will not be a dinner at the Legion in December.

Thank you for your continued support of the Legion and our Veterans. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

## Lost Cat



This cat has been hanging around our house. It is very tame and is a tomcat. Perhaps it's lost and someone is looking for it.

Fred Walk

## CLASSIFIED

### Businesses:

Still need holiday gifts for family and friends? Contact Annette to order in time for Christmas delivery. Visit her booth at Lexington's Christmas on the Prairie Show on Saturday, December 5 from 9am to 2pm at the Lexington High School. Lots of vendors & door prizes!

Annette Hancock

Call Home - 728-2990

Text or call- 309-242-1802

Email - [oldcars@frontiernet.net](mailto:oldcars@frontiernet.net)

Website - [www.pamperedchef.com/pws/annettehancock](http://www.pamperedchef.com/pws/annettehancock)

Pinterest Recipes - [www.pinterest.com/ahancock0935](http://www.pinterest.com/ahancock0935)



Great holiday specials! Pamper yourself this Christmas.

Janette Jones

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## **For Hire:**

Do you need a babysitter? Do you need your house cleaned? Or, just an extra set of hands to help out around the house? Anna Kraft is willing to help! She is a sophomore at NCHS and can be contacted at 728-8088 (home) or (309) 830-7721 (cell).

Need help mowing your lawn or weed-whacking? Even if you just want someone to mow for a week while you're on vacation, give Joe Kaufmann a call. Joe's cell # 824-1027

Jairon and Justin Schwamberger (Senior/Sophomore at NCHS) are available for mowing/lawn care or other outside labor. Will be willing to take on summer long jobs, help with special projects, or mow while you're on vacation. Contact information: 728-2857, 830-9544.

Lauren and Myles Smith will provide child care and pet care - call 728-2930