

# WingBeat

Volume 58 Issue 3 • Fall 2006



## A Birders' Night Out: Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup>

Birders' Night Out is a casual night out for birders and families — dinner and an event with a surprise presentation, meeting at 5:00pm. Meet at Lakeside Nature Center, [www.lakesidenaturecenter.org](http://www.lakesidenaturecenter.org). Bring your family, binoc's, and interest in wildlife. We'll bird/nature watch prior to darkness (weather permitting). Then we'll proceed with a chili-feast, side dishes, and enjoy the indoor warmth of Lakeside Nature Center's Lodge and have a fascinating wildlife presentation. Chili and soft drinks will be provided. Guests are encouraged to bring appetizers, salads, or dessert. Please check [www.burroughs.org](http://www.burroughs.org) for current program information. Contact Jill DeWitt (816) 333-3293, or Nancy Leo ([njleo@aol.com](mailto:njleo@aol.com)) for more info and to sign-up.

## Autumn's Approach

by Jill DeWitt

As summer's heat waves fade from memory, the breeding season ends. Flocks of Purple Martins gossip on utility wires. The stark reality of staying alive until Spring replaces the optimism of previous seasons, with their promise of new life. Fall commences with the soft pinks of tall grasses and blues of billowing asters.

If you haven't used your hummingbird feeder this summer, there's still time to put it out. Clean it and fill it now. Summer resident Ruby-throated Hummingbirds head for warmer weather in mid-October. Sugar water in the feeder will help them prepare for the trip across the Gulf of Mexico to South America, where they'll spend the next seven or eight months. Then keep an eye out for wandering western species!

Watch for Tree and Song Sparrows, juncos, White-throated Sparrows and keep an eye on the feeder for Pine Siskins, and White-breasted Nuthatches. Clean feeders will help curtail the spread of disease.

Olive-sided flycatchers return to exposed tree snags, showing white tufts of feathers above dark tails. Migrant warblers, vireos, and flycatchers in pale plumage skirt the treetops—exasperating for those of us who each year learn to identify a few more species, and get together to bird in groups and enjoy each other's progress.

Common Nighthawks are gathering to migrate through Missouri and Kansas. Large congregations may be joined by flocks of Franklin's Gulls, peppering evening skies with swirling displays as they pluck cicadas and grasshoppers from the skies. Later in the season, dumpster-diving, fish-eating gulls will reign, so enjoy them while you can. Late summer pulses into fall with sounds of cicadas, katydids and tree crickets. This is the year to be out and aware—look up -- look around!

**General Meetings** are held the **FIRST THURSDAY** of each month, September through June (except in April, when we hold our Annual Dinner), at the Missouri Conservation Department's **Anita Gorman Conservation Discovery Center**, 4750 Troost, Kansas City. Meetings begin at 7 PM; come at 6:30 for coffee and conversation.

## Programs

**Thursday, September 7, 2006: Kenyan Safari**, by photographer and Burroughs member Priscilla Wilson. A magical trip seen through the eyes of Priscilla's 10-year old granddaughter...and repeated with Ms. Neth's fifth grade class at Belinder School!

**Thursday, October 5: Missouri's Newest Audubon Center**, by Burroughs member and architect Matt Gearheart. As the project architect for the Wildcat Glades Conservation and Audubon Center in Joplin, Matt will share images and stories about both the center's green technology and the globally unique chert glades of the area.

**Thursday, November 2, 2006: Birds of The Galapagos**, by Greg Griffith.

**Thursday, December 7, 2006: Holiday Pot Luck Dinner and Member Slide-Show.**

**Thursday, January 4, 2007: Tropical Birding in Australia**, by photographer and Burroughs member, Jack Revare.

**February 1, 2007: Birding China**, by Roger Boyd, Professor of Biology and Director of Natural Areas at Baker University in Baldwin City, KS.

# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S NEST:

Audubon friends,

Since the turn of the century decision to protect birds from the hat industry, Audubon has come a long way. We band together to enjoy and protect critical bird habitat, work on policy issues and share responsibilities in education.

Protections for Brandt, Yellow-billed Loon, Spectacled Eider, Greater White-fronted Geese and a herd of 45,000 caribou at Teshekpuk Lake have recently been removed at the federal level, opening one of the most important wetland complexes in the circumpolar Arctic to subdivision and oil and gas leasing this September. Our chapters unite to protect our nation's resources. Please let us know if you are willing to contact legislators by phone or email and would like to receive critical Audubon alerts.

Burroughs is initiating regional and international bird conservation initiatives, backed by sound science and international partnerships. Each member has a voice within Audubon. Let us know of your concerns. Together we can leave the earth habitable for our children and other living beings.

Fifty additional memberships would put us over the 2000 mark in the Kansas City region. I've made it my personal goal to give the opportunity to join Burroughs and National Audubon to at least one individual or family each month. I hope you will match my commitment with gift memberships or by sharing your newsletter or magazine and membership information with others. As our organization grows, so grows the force for sound policy and habitat protection.

Let the Fall migration begin!

—Jill DeWitt, President

*Burroughs Audubon Society of Greater Kansas City*

**Gift memberships and Donations:** Care to send AUDUBON magazine to a friend? Send this coupon with new member information to the address on the form. Help Burroughs place *Audubon Adventures*® curricula in KC area classrooms, fund graduate level education in ornithology and promote restoration of local habitat. **Send donations to:** Ellen Zellmer, 2001 NE 5<sup>th</sup> St. Blue Springs, MO 64014. **Donations are fully tax deductible.** BAS is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

**If renewing membership, please use form and envelope received from National Audubon**

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National Audubon Society / Burroughs Audubon of Greater Kansas City N-02

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*WingBeat* is the quarterly publication of the Burroughs Audubon Society of Greater Kansas City. BAS is a non-profit membership organization in the Kansas City area whose members share an interest in birding and our natural heritage and wish to preserve and enhance it for future generations. Our members share and promote this interest through a variety of activities that are open to the public. Your participation makes Burroughs Audubon an effective, dynamic voice and center for birding and conservation in the Kansas City region. Contact us to join in activities!



**Support your National Wildlife Refuge**

**Participate in Prairie Restoration at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge**

**Squaw Creek Fall Events**

- September 16, 2006 (9am-4pm)\*\*  
Annual fall workday sponsored by Midland Empire Audubon
- September 23 (9am-3pm)\*  
Join in the Refuge habitat restoration workday sponsored by Squaw Creek Friends.
- October 7 (9am-3pm)\*  
Join in the Refuge (college/high school) habitat restoration workday sponsored by Squaw Creek Friends.
- October 8 \*\*  
Big Sit (Bird Count) sponsored by Midland Empire Audubon Society
- October 8-14\*\*  
National Wildlife Refuge Week
- October 14 \*\*  
Classroom Dedication
- October 28 (9am-3pm)\*  
Join in the Friends of Squaw Creek Refuge habitat restoration work day.
- November 4 (5pm)\*\*  
Squaw Creeks NWR annual Hay ride and Deer Spotighting, sponsored by the Friends of Squaw Creek.
- December 2-3 (9:00am-5:00pm)\*\*  
28th annual Eagle Days co-sponsored by Squaw Creek NWR and Missouri Department of Conservation
- December 17 Christmas Bird Count\*\*

Activities are weather dependent and may be canceled due to inclement weather. Please contact Corey at 816-383-0034 to inquire about cancellations. Safety is a primary concern of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for this reason on all work day volunteers will need to wear work boots, long sleeve shirt, and long Pants.

\*\* Call the refuge headquarters for details (660-442-3187)

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**Open Board Meetings**

The Burroughs Audubon Board meets on the third Thursday of the month. Board meetings are open to Burroughs members, and we welcome your participation.

Please contact a Board member for additional information or to become involved.

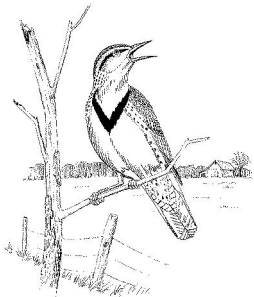
**Backyard Bird Count**

Kudos to first-time *Backyard Birdathon* sponsors Robert Barnes and Deborah Borek! Your contribution provides critical funding to ornithology research programs and classroom education. We also appreciate the long-term commitment of JoAnn Garret and her stalwart team, whose Birdathon information did not reach 'WingBeat' before the printing deadline.

**MIGRATIONS**

Joe F. Goetz, Sr., 92, of Lake Lotawana, MO, passed away July 28, 2006. We appreciate his sponsorship of Burroughs events at the Hillcrest Country Club.

**Stephen Koshland, D.D.S.**  
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## Bird Profile: CAROLINA WREN

(*Thryothorus ludovicianus*)

by JoAnn Garrett

The perky 5 ¼ -6 inch Carolina Wren is the largest and reddest – and my favorite -- wren of eastern North America. The state bird of South Carolina has a wingspread of 6 ¾-7 inches; rich rufous above, bright buff underparts below; a conspicuous white stripe over the eyes and a white chin with decurved bill. The tail and wings are warm rufous with black barring.

The preferred habit of the Carolina wren is brushy undergrowth, tangles, brush piles, and moist swampy areas, whether in forests, parks or the shrubbery and gardens in our yards.

The Carolina Wren has such an endless vocabulary that he has been called the mocking wren. The Carolina Wren's loud cheery songs to a new birder may easily be mistaken for those of the Tufted Titmouse or the cardinal as their songs have enough in common with the wren to be confusing when first heard. Soon the rhythmic, loud ringing; tea-kettle, tea-kettle, tea-kettle or whea-udel, whea-udel, whea-udel will leave no doubt that it is the Carolina Wren.

Although this wren is shy and secretive, he is also curious and will show himself to look us over if we stand quietly out of sight and make a pishing or squeaking noise. One slight movement and he will disappear. This wren has such an excitable nature that if he feels he is being watched, he flits from one perch to another, ever bobbing his tail up and down and in sight but a few seconds. He often drops down and disappears by running rapidly under the weeds and grasses to the next brushy area. His movements are accompanied by scolding notes, musical trills and metallic rattles which are an outlet for his irrepressible energy.

In the woodlands and brushy areas in the wild the Carolina wren build their nests in a hole in a bank or tree stump, roots of a fallen tree and other natural cavities, including those made by woodpeckers. They gather twigs, bits of bark, snake skins, grasses and leaves for their nests and line them with soft feathers. Wren nests around human dwellings are found in many nooks and crannies. They may nest in or under buildings, in coffee pots and tin cans, empty boxes, old hats or purses, mailboxes and manmade nesting boxes. Then there is the popular barbecue grill. No grilling until the 4 to 6 white rounded eggs with irregularly reddish brown spots hatch in 12 to 14 days! Then it will be another 12 or 14 more days until they fledge.

Several years ago Norm and I returned from vacationing in Colorado to find our garage taken over by a family of Carolina Wrens . We were scolded. I

mean, emphatically scolded, and I'm not sure what we were being called--probably just as well--as we unloaded the car. The nest was built in an old unused heater hanging in the garage. The female had ripped into a huge bald-faced hornets' nest—one of my treasures as a source of larvae and insects to feed the nestlings. There were also spiders and water in the garage, which helped them to survive. Soon our presence in the garage was of no concern to the wrens. One day I sat and watched as a male wren tried to coax one of the young from the nest to the edge of the heater. All of a sudden the female came flying in with a clack; click, kurrst—out went the male—and the female fed the bit of rufous fluff back into the nest. All five young were out of the nest in about a week. After exploring the garage several days, they left the garage, but stayed around the barn and workshop.

This year they chose to build their nest in an old mailbox with a sweet potato vine planted in it on the deck. The nest was in the very back of the mailbox. I didn't know it was there until I saw the female zip into the mailbox. She was very secretive. She would perch in the nearby Zumi crabapple tree to make sure nobody was around, then fly to the deck railing, make sure the coast was clear and dart into the mailbox. When she left the mailbox, it was as though she were shot from a canon as she disappeared into the shrubbery. I watched this routine for several days from the comfort of the sunroom. There were five eggs in the nest. One morning I was saddened to find the mailbox lying on the deck. Nothing was left of the eggs but shells – and nothing remained of the nest but a feather or two. I am sure one of the raccoons was the devastator of the nest and eggs. The adult wrens are still around and singing again, so I hope they find a safe place and will nest again soon. Mated Carolina Wrens often stay together throughout the year, so maybe this pair will remain here. I sincerely hope so.

In the 1970s the severe winters took a drastic toll on the Eastern Bluebirds and the Carolina Wrens. Nesting bluebird houses placed in suitable habitat and monitored by homeowners, Boy Scout troops, Future Farmers of America, the Missouri Department of Conservation and dedicated individuals have greatly aided in the comeback of the bluebirds. The Carolina Wrens have also made a remarkable return. The Breeding Bird Atlas, breeding surveys, summer bird counts and Christmas bird counts show the increased status of the Carolina Wren.

However, with the extensive building construction in suburbs and farmlands, habitat is being destroyed, and this will certainly take a toll on the birds and wildlife.

Reference: *Bent, Life Histories*, 1948.

## TRIP REPORT: July 15th Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve with Paul Willis

By Helen Hewins

Five Burroughs members (Sherry Leonardo, Paul Habiger, Joe Alburty, Pat St.John and Helen Hewins) carpoled to the Tallgrass Prairie Field trip led by Paul Willis and accompanied by Dan Gish. Thanks to both of them for coming out on a very hot day!

A few birds were seen on a hot, beautiful day. Some highlights were Purple Martin, Upland Sandpiper, Cedar Waxwing, Lark Sparrow, Swainson's Hawk, and many Dickcissels and Meadow Larks. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Grasshopper Sparrow were also heard.

About 5 butterfly species were identified and a Collared lizard gave very good photo opportunities for those so inclined. Of course, the Prairie was the focus of the trip and many plants were seen and identified. I can not list them all, but of the species seen are bluets, non-blooming indigo, blue salvia, wild petunia, purple coneflower, blooming ironweed, non-blooming lead plant, numerous kinds of prairie clover, several kinds of milkweed (not blooming), blazing star (not blooming), thistle, flax, primrose, sensitive cat's briar, bindweed, Illinois bundle flower, prickly pear, compass plant, rosin weed, wild lettuce, a number of various sunflowers, goldenrods and ragweed. Senna, prairie dogbane, rough leafed dogwood, and sumac were seen. Grasses seen include Canada wild rye, big bluestem, little bluestem and sideoats grama.

Paul's knowledge and enthusiasm to teach others about the prairie ecosystem made this a memorable trip. We look forward to future visits to this important area and witnessing further habitat reclamation and Bison introduction. Thank you. Paul.

## Conservation Matters

### Net Metering, clean energy update

Net metering allows customers to sell extra power generated at home via wind, solar, etc. back to the electric company. 41 states have some form of net metering - not Missouri. This is important since it encourages installation of renewable energy. The Missouri Public Service Commission (PSC) is taking on the issue of net metering. We have formed a coalition of six groups, including some renewable energy companies, to formally intervene in the case. Please contact the PSC and let them know it is important they pass the "true" form. The utilities will lobby that they want to pay customers a lower rate for this renewable energy than what they charge for their own power plant generated electricity. For clean energy to become a viable option, consumers should be allowed to sell the power back at full retail. You can call the PSC at 1-800-392-4211, email at [pscinfo@psc.mo.gov](mailto:pscinfo@psc.mo.gov) or write to PO Box 360, Jeff City, Mo 65102. Address your comments to Jeff Davis, Chairman, Public Service Commission.

To receive updates on conservation in the Heartland or receive information on Conservation Committee meetings, send your email address to [jdewitt1@kc.rr.com](mailto:jdewitt1@kc.rr.com). Burroughs Conservation Committee currently partners with KCWildlands in habitat restoration projects and is involved in formulating and promoting policy affecting birds and birding at the local and regional level. We are seeking additional input for the management of Audubon's two Sanctuaries, Shirling Sanctuary, near the Kansas City Zoo, and the Victor Shelford Sanctuary, in Fonana (Linn County), Kansas.



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## Field Trips

**September 29 – October 1 The Kansas Ornithological Society (KOS) will meet at Southwestern College, in Winfield, Kansas,** on September 29, 30, and October 1, 2006. [Southwestern College](#) is located in northeast Winfield, at the intersection of Warren and College St. For more information visit the website at:

[http://www.ksbirds.org/kos/KOS\\_Fall2006\\_Schedule.htm](http://www.ksbirds.org/kos/KOS_Fall2006_Schedule.htm)

**October 14 Baker Wetlands with Nancy Leo:** Meet at the Wendy's at K-10 and Woodland Rd at 7 a.m. to carpool. Will bird Baker in the am and on to other sites in the Lawrence area for a full day of birding. Dress accordingly for the wetlands, bring snacks, water, lunch, insect repellent and rain gear as needed.

**October 21 Shell Osage with Jim and Ellen Zellmer.** We'll go to Montrose, Taberville Prairie and Shell-Osage. If there is time, we will also go to Four Rivers. All day trip. Meet at 7:00 am at the McDonald's at Harrisonville on Missouri 291. Will carpool as possible. Dress for the weather, bring snacks, lunch, drinks and FRS radios if you have them. Wear suitable clothing for some hiking on the prairie. Contact Helen Hewins @ 913-642-0498 for further information.

**October 20-21 Missouri Prairie Foundation campout at Cuivre River State Park in Troy, MO** for free camping at the historic 1930s Civilian Conservation Corps' Camp Sherwood Forest. On Saturday, October 21, MPF will host a Prairie Restoration Seminar. The seminar includes a hands-on seed collection workshop for a small registration fee. For more details, go to <http://www.moprairie.org/default.asp>.

**November 4: K C Wildlands Fall Restoration Workday,** 9a.m.-Noon. Our largest workday will focus on removing invasive honeysuckle from several sites in the Kansas City region. For more information, visit the website at: <http://www.kcwildlands.org/workdays.htm> or contact Linda Lehrbaum, Kansas City WildLands coordinator at 816-561-1061 x116.

**November 11: Lyon County State Fishing Lake with Matt Gearheart.** Participants will meet at 7:00 AM in the Holiday Inn parking lot at I-35 and 151st St. in Olathe for carpooling. We'll visit Lyon County State Fishing Lake, John Redmond Reservoir, New Strawn Sewage Ponds, Wolf Creek Lake, and Melvern Lake. Expected and hoped for species include: Smith's Longspurs, Long-eared Owls, Rough-legged Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, Neotropic Cormorant(at John Redmond) and other waterfowl. This will be an all day, largely driving, trip. Bring a sack lunch, snacks, optics, field guides, and clothing to fit the weather. Those who remember finding the Gyrfalcon on this trip a couple of years ago will certainly enjoy this trip, as well. Questions? Contact Matt at 913-568-4678 or [mgearheart@gwhm.com](mailto:mgearheart@gwhm.com). This trip may be cancelled due to weather. Check the field trip page of [burroughs.org](http://burroughs.org) on the day of the trip for a cancellation notice.

**November 18: "A Birder's Night Out"** family fun/social dinner event with a surprise presentation, beginning at 5:00 PM. Meet at Lakeside Nature Center, and bring your family, binocs, and interest in wildlife. We'll take a bird/nature hike prior to darkness (weather allowing), then enjoy a chili-feast, with side-dishes, while enjoying the indoor warmth of Lakeside Nature Center's Lodge (LNC waived normal rental fee in support of Burroughs!), AND have a fascinating wildlife presentation! Chili and soft drinks will be provided, participants are encouraged to bring appetizers, salads, or dessert. Contact Jill DeWitt at [jdewitt1@kc.rr.com](mailto:jdewitt1@kc.rr.com), or Nancy Leo at [njleo@earthlink.net](mailto:njleo@earthlink.net) for more info and to sign-up.

**November 25: Squaw Creek NWR with Mike Stoakes and Mark Land.** This trip is in conjunction with the Corinth Wild Bird Center, Corinth Square Shopping Center, 4046 W. 83rd Street (83rd and Mission Rd.) in Prairie Village. Meet at 7:00AM at the WBC for carpooling, or meet at Squaw Creek NWR visitor center at approx. 8:45AM. This is an all day trip. Bring a sack lunch, snacks, optics, field guides, and overdress for the weather. We will witness waterfowl migration at its finest and the Bald Eagles that follow them south. After lunch we may make another loop around the refuge, or explore other nearby areas for interesting species. Those who remember finding the Northern Shrike on this trip a couple of years ago will certainly enjoy this trip, as well. Questions? Contact Mark at 913-381-4324 or [kestrland@aol.com](mailto:kestrland@aol.com), or Mike Stoakes at 816-554-1956 or [mstoakes@juno.com](mailto:mstoakes@juno.com). This trip may be cancelled due to weather. Check the field trip page of [burroughs.org](http://burroughs.org) on the day of the trip for a cancellation notice.



## Field Trips, con't.

**November 26: Wyandotte County Lake and Park with Elizabeth and Mike Stoakes.** Work off your turkey-day dinner by joining us for a half-day trip to look for migrating waterfowl, resident winter passerines, and possibly, a Bald Eagle or two. The lake is in the middle of a 1900-acre park composed mainly of oak-hickory and sycamore woodlands. We will meet at 7:30 AM at the Administration Building. From I-70 take I-435 north to Leavenworth Road (Exit 15); continue east 1.7 miles to 91st St., then 0.6 miles north to the Administration Building. For further information or directions, and possible carpooling, call Mike and Elizabeth at 816-554-1956 or email [lizkvvet@yahoo.com](mailto:lizkvvet@yahoo.com)

**December 2-3: 28<sup>th</sup> annual Eagle Days at Squaw Creek NWR.** This event is co-sponsored by Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Friends of Squaw Creek and the Missouri Department of Conservation. If you have to miss the Nov. 25 field trip, take this opportunity to see a true waterfowl and Bald Eagle spectacle!

**December 17: Kansas City Christmas Bird Count.** This is an invitation to participate in the 107<sup>th</sup> Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count, the oldest and largest citizen science event in the world! A participation fee of \$5.00 per person is requested to help National Audubon cover the expense of compiling and publishing count data. Meet at Lakeside Nature Center, 4701 East Gregory Boulevard, KC, MO at 7:00 a.m. To participate in, or to inquire about the count, contact Mike Stoakes at 816-554-1956 or [mstoakes@juno.com](mailto:mstoakes@juno.com).

### **Falconry Outing (Tentative) with Mike and Elizabeth Stoakes, December or January**

In December 2005, Mr. Bob Payne of the Missouri Falconer's Association generously provided a unique winter field trip for our group—an opportunity to go out on a crisp morning and observe trained raptors on the hunt, at a public hunting area near Smithville Lake. All 8 participants agreed it was a fun and educational experience, and several would like to go again. I will try to arrange a similar trip this winter if BAS members are interested. Participants will need to be somewhat flexible, as this outing is VERY dependent on weather, condition of the birds, and local populations of prey species such as rabbits. We will take contact information from anyone who is interested and keep you posted as details become available. If this is an outing you would enjoy, please contact Elizabeth Stoakes at (816)554-1956 or email [lizkvvet@yahoo.com](mailto:lizkvvet@yahoo.com).

### **Saturday morning Bird Walks, offered by the Kansas City area Wild Bird Centers**

**Corinth Square Store:** First Saturday of the month unless otherwise noted, 4046 West 83<sup>rd</sup>, Prairie Village, KS. Meet at the store at 8:00 am, bird for 2-3 hours, then return to store. Call 913-381-5633 for more information. Bird Walks through December 2006:

**September 2:** Prairie Oak Nature Center at Ironwoods Park, (Leawood)

**October 7:** Antioch Park / Turkey Creek Streamway (Merriam)

**November 25:** Squaw Creek ( Full Day)

**Dec 2:** Indian Creek Streamway (105<sup>th</sup> & Roe)

For more information about our field trips, or to volunteer to lead a trip, please contact Helen Hewins at [silverystreak@aol.com](mailto:silverystreak@aol.com) , phone 913-642-0498 or Pat St. John at [pstjohn@kumc.edu](mailto:pstjohn@kumc.edu) , 913-706-5569.

# Burroughs Audubon Center and Library

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*Directions: From I-470/Hwy 291, take Exit 12 and turn right (east) on Woods Chapel Road. Drive one-and-a-half miles. At the Burroughs Nature Center sign (second Fleming Park sign), turn right (south) and go to the first road on the right. For more information, call (816) 795-8177.*

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**Note:**

Articles, photos, art, ads and  
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issue are due Nov. 14.

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