



THE SPIRIT *of The Lakes*

vol. 9 no. 3

July/Aug. 2024

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IT'S COMIN' UP JULY/AUG. EVENTS

Upcoming events

Scoop Waukegan

Scoop Waukegan is a car show held in Waukegan, Illinois, July 12 -13. It's a summer tradition featuring classic and custom cars on display and "scooping" through the streets in a parade. There's live entertainment, food vendors, and family-friendly activities. For more information, call 847.599.2500.

Harborpalooza

Friday, July 12 through Sunday, July 14 featuring three days of live music, food and beer.

Friday, July 12 – 4 p.m., Jon Hayes; 7 p.m., L&M Experience

Saturday, July 13 – 1 p.m., Andrew Denlinger; 3:30 p.m., Chapel Hill Band; 7 p.m., Red Panda Band

Sunday, July 14 – 1 p.m., Ryan Nowotarski; 4 p.m., 65 North Pickers Harbor Brewing Co.'s Lakefront Craft Biergarten is at North Point Marina, 701 North Point Dr., Winthrop Harbor, Illinois.

Artisan Market

The Lindenhurst Artisan Market will be held 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sunday, July 14.

Enjoy live music, engaging activities for kids, pet-friendly atmosphere, delicious food vendors, handcrafted items and products from local vendors and small businesses.

Lindenhurst Center is at 2082 E. Grand Ave., Lindenhurst, Illinois.

Sidewalk Sales

Mainstreet Libertyville Sidewalk Sales will be offered Friday, July 19 and Saturday, July 20 in downtown Libertyville.

Have lunch or dinner at one of the restaurants before, during or after shopping the bargains. Note that sales may be inside stores if not out on the sidewalk.

Vernon Hills Days

Thursday, July 18 through Sunday, July 20, visit Vernon Hills for four days of food, fun, carnival rides, free entertainment and a beer tent. There will also be children's activities, a petting zoo, car show, fireworks and live bands. Held at Century Park, 1101 Lakeview Parkway, Vernon Hills.

Antioch Taste of Summer

Thursday, July 18 through Sunday, July 21 – Antioch Taste of Summer hours will take place 4-10 p.m., Thursday and Friday, noon-10 p.m., Saturday, and noon-5 p.m.,

Sunday.

Four days of family fun, headlining bands throughout, great food from area restaurants and vendors, free admission to the festival, an expanded exhibitor booth area and sidewalk sales. The Taste event is held behind the shops on the east side of Main Street.

Car show

The Village of Round Lake Car Show will be held Thursday, July 25 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. in downtown Round Lake (Cedar Lake Road, between Nippersink Road and Highway 134.) Participant entry fee is \$10, all makes, models and motorcycles are welcome and should arrive by 5 p.m.

Spectators get in for free. The event will also feature a DJ, games, awards and more.

Festival of the Arts

The 43rd Annual Festival of the Arts at Adler Arts Center, 1700 N. Milwaukee Ave., Libertyville, will be held Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 3 and 4.

This is a two-day juried art and music festival with an emphasis on the visual arts. This family friendly event is presented by The Adler Arts Center and the Green Oaks, Libertyville, Mundelein, Vernon Hills Chamber of Commerce.

Stories in the Woods

Heller Nature Center, 2821 Ridge Rd., Highland Park, Ill., will host Stories in the Woods from 10 to 11 a.m., Wednesday, Aug. 7.

Enjoy an interactive story with a naturalist, then adventure on a short hike through the lively forest and prairie, with hands on nature activities throughout.

All participants, children and adults, must register for the program in advance. Children must be accompanied by a paid registered adult.

The program is outdoors so participants are reminded to dress for the weather.

For more information, call 847-433-6901.

Ongoing events

Thunder on the Chain

Drag boat races at Blarney Island are held 5:30-7:30 p.m., Thursdays, through Aug. 29.

The unique world of Blarney Island Drag Boat Racing is now in its 37th season. Blarney Island is on Grass Lake Antioch.

Want to watch the Races? Take the Blarney Island Shuttle Boat Service from

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• CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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the Port of Blarney. If you have your own boat, there is an expanded section of free parking on Blarney Island during race nights, now including the brat bar row.

The front row to the racecourse (Blarney Island pier parking) is reserved or pay by race night spots. The pit area is racing boat parking only! Once the races are over, all slips are once again open to free parking.

All Thursday night racing is run by the Northern Illinois Drag Boat Association.

Contact NIDBA if you have any questions or are interested in participating. For more information, call 847-395-3804.

Blarney Island is at 27843 W. Grass Lake Rd., Antioch.

Fox Lake Farmers Market

The Fox Lake Farmers Market has kicked off a new season of delectable goods locally made.

The market, which will run through Aug. 27, is constantly growing and making this a fun shopping experience for the

families in the Fox Lake Area.

The wide variety of food and craft vendors makes this a fun shopping experience for its customers.

Fox Lake Farmers Market is at 17 E. School Ct., Fox Lake.

Antioch Farmers Market

The Antioch Farmers Market is held 4 to 7 p.m., Thursdays, through Sept. 12.

Local farmers, crafters and other artisans gather each Thursday to offer goods.

Free admission.

For more information, call 847-395-2160.

Antioch Farmers Market is held at the corner of Main and Orchard streets in Antioch.

The calendar of events is compiled from a variety of sources including the Antioch Chambers of Commerce and the Lake County Visitor's Bureau. It contains events available as of press time.

Events, dates and times may change, or events may be canceled. We suggest you verify event times, dates and locations prior to making travel plans.



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Take in a summer ski show

Area water ski teams ready to make waves

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**
CORRESPONDENT

Summer is the time to get out on the water for many. Whether heading out for a day in a canoe or kayak, jumping into a boat for a ride around the lake, or relaxing while lounging on the beach with an occasional dip in the water to stay cool, summer is a season when people flock to area waterways.

While most of us look forward to summer, particularly excited for the warm weather and time out on the lakes are a trio of area waterski teams that know how to have fun on the water and entertain residents and visitors with regular shows.

But that's not all as they also take their talent to the competitive level and have been very successful, winning titles at the state and even national level for some.

The teams are comprised of volunteer skiers who put in countless hours to perfect their craft and often more than one family member is involved with a team, adding to the fun while mixing in some quality family time.

Wonder Lake Ski Team

The Chain O'Lakes area features the Wonder Lake Water Show Ski Team, which

was founded in 1955 by eight teenagers. But it was the building of its first jump in 1956 – which was 24 feet long and 4 feet high – that saw their membership increase to 40 as many skiers wanted to try out that jump.

They did not begin as a competitive team but a show team, putting on their first performance on Labor Day in 1959. In 1962, the team performed a show for Fiesta Days in McHenry. Today they continue to offer “shows for hire.”

The Wonder Lake Water Show Ski Team will take their show on the road to perform at events as long as the water depth is safe.

They have done shows in Mundelein and St. Charles in Illinois and at Venetian Festival on Geneva Lake. This year, the team's Venetian Festival performance will be held on Aug. 18 at 6 p.m.

By 1986, the team began to participate in competitions with remarkable success. From 1996 to 2010, they were the National Show Ski Champions four times.

Being a team in northern Illinois is different than for teams in Wisconsin. There are so few in Illinois that they do not have a state championship competition but rather a Regional Championship of several Midwest states.

In 2023, Wonder Lake was awarded first place in that competition.

“Our team members are mostly local skiers who live here in Wonder Lake,” said Brea Imse, one of the team's show skiers.

“But we also welcome skiers from other areas. We have a Junior Club open to skiers 6 or older who know the basics of waterskiing, and a Senior Club which

currently has members as high as in their 60s.”

Imse and fellow team member Arik Lebda represented the USA at the World Show Tour in 2018 where the team placed first.

Among the unique features of the Wonder Lake team is the prefab pyramid, which is created while still on the pier, three skiers high at which point the boat begins to pull the pyramid to its feet with everyone remaining in place.

They also present a prefab pyramid where two sections of skiers are gathered on the piers, the piers split apart and a pyramid section already on the water joins them, filling out the center.

“Last year our show theme was ‘Beauty and the Beast,’” Imse said.

“This year we are working hard on a new theme, ‘Kids Rule 2024.’ It will start out as a Blues Brothers piece and then the kids will hijack the show and change what will come through. It will be a fun program,” Imse added.

The team is proud of the many former team members who have gone on to become professional water skiers, appearing in places such as Sea World, Cypress Gardens, and the Tommy Bartlett Water Ski Show.

Additionally, members have performed

Putting together a ski show requires the work of many including skiers, boat drivers, announcers, safety lookouts and show directors.

PHOTOS COURTESY WONDER LAKE WATER SKI CLUB
Spirit of the Lakes



not only in the United States but in several other countries including Australia, Germany, Malaysia and Japan.

The Wonder Lake Water Show Ski Team presents free shows to the public on most Fridays through Labor Day Weekend. See the sidebar for details.

Two other competitive teams in the area are the Twin Lakes Aquanuts and Southern Wakes United.

Twin Lakes Aquanuts

The Aquanuts are a highly competitive waterski team who make their home in Twin Lakes and perform on Lake Mary. They are a Division I team competitively, the highest rank of competition, and two years ago, in 2022, won both state and national titles.

Among the things the team is known for are its champion ballet line, four-tier pyramids and daring stunts.

“In 2023, the team still had a good competition as they finished third in both the state and in national competitions,” Gurda said. “They are looking forward to this year’s competitions.”

The team members fluctuate each year as some of the younger skiers mature into adulthood and take on full-time jobs, are getting ready – or move for college, or decide to take a break from skiing. But they often come back.

“The year 2022 was an important one as many who had skied with the team in the past returned to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the team,” Gurda said. “We hope this year will bring many of them back to competition.”



above: This trio flips high into the air without getting in each other’s space. **top:** Pyramids take a lot of practice and good timing but are always a sight to see.

PHOTOS COURTESY WONDER LAKE WATER SKI CLUB *Spirit of the Lakes*

In addition to state and national titles that year, individuals on the team also won awards including Kalley Koehler and Ethan Shuda who were named top female and male skiers.

The Aquanuts began in the early 1970s as a small volunteer group that enjoyed water skiing. While they began without sponsors or a home base, it did not take them long to find their way. They began by acquiring sponsors, including Dr. Pepper, and some of the local marine vendors

donated equipment. By the second year, Lance Park in Twin Lakes on Lake Mary became their permanent home and has remained so ever since.

The Aquanuts are composed of two teams – a junior team and a senior team – with members coming from a wide area in Wisconsin and Illinois. Some of the members’ families have summer homes in the area while others travel to be part of the team.

The team works hard to present variety

of unique and inventive shows. One of their early shows introduced clowns which continue to be a part of today's shows and have even been incorporated on their team logo. The ballet line, dance and ski routines and four-tier pyramids are among the features in their performances.

The team is once again performing free shows at Lance Park in Twin Lakes on Wednesday and Saturday evenings at 6 p.m. except during state and national competitions.

They also hope to once again have a special guest for an upcoming show.

"Each year, Jim Cornelison, best known as the anthem singer for the Chicago Blackhawks Hockey team, comes to Twin Lakes and sings the anthem for our Independence Day celebration. We expect that he will be here again this year on July 6," Gurda said.

Southern Wakes United

For Southern Wakes United Water Ski Show Team, 2023 was a special year as they won the Wisconsin State Championship in their division. Southern Wakes is a medium sized team and as such competes in Division III.

"This was the first time we won the state title in our division since 1990, so it was an important event for us," shared Laura Lohrmann, Southern Wakes United Show Director. "Because we won the division, we will move up to Division II this year, where we will compete with larger teams."

In addition to the team winning the Division III State Championship, it also received first place in several other categories – including highest scoring production, drive team, traditional ballet line, most original or unique act, dock and equipment, and best comedy act. They were also nominated for Medium Team of the Year.



above: The Gunderson Sisters, Lexi and Brooke perform a synchronized swivel act.
below: The ballet line brightens up the water in a performance of Peter Pan.

PHOTOS COURTESY TWIN LAKES AQUANUTS *Spirit of the Lakes*

Southern Wakes United was formed when two teams joined forces – the Lauderdale Lakes Aqua Skiers and the Minneiska Water Ski Team.

Today they have approximately 50 members who come from a wide area including Elkhorn, Whitewater, Janesville and Twin Lakes in Wisconsin as well as Illinois. Members range in age from 7 to 56, and while not all are actual skiers, each plays an important role in helping the team perform.

Lohrmann and Michael Maas will serve as the show directors this year and have been hard at work for months working on the theme for this year's team. It's a 40th reunion costume party theme and will feature them bringing back the 1980s with

a twist.

"Our team is so excited to be participating for the first time in Division II. We've worked hard all winter long on a theme that can be put on at the variety of different show courses we use. And we have tried upping our skill set to be competitive with the bigger teams that are well known in the division," shared Leslie Gostowski, vice president of the Southern Wakes United Ski Team.

"We feel we will have been very successful if we are able to place third during our first year in this higher division," she added.

The team is going to be highlighting the younger skiers this year to encourage more participation from them while also giving





Team members get into position for the 3-high pyramid that begins with two portions of it on the dock.

PHOTO COURTESY SOUTHERN WAKES UNITED *Spirit of the Lakes*

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them an opportunity to grow throughout the season.

“This year we have had a lot of younger members get involved in the development of this show. We love seeing the younger generation stepping up because they are the future of this sport,” Gostowski said. “They have been working hard on creating a fun, inclusive theme that can be performed at our multiple, unconventional sites.”

Southern Wakes is unique because they do not perform at one home venue as the other local teams do. Instead, they put on shows at four different venues – Elkhorn Lake, Turtle Lake, Lauderdale Lakes and Whitewater Lake.

Each site has different days and times for shows and all performances are free. For a complete schedule, see the related sidebar.

Showtimes for water skiing teams

Each of the waterski teams offer free shows throughout the summer. While the shows are free, donations are accepted and appreciated as they help defray some of the costs of putting on the show.

Guests are encouraged to bring a chair or blanket although some of the sites have seats and offer food, snacks and drinks.

Here is a breakdown of the teams' remaining shows for 2024:

Wonder Lake

The Wonder Lake Water Ski shows at Wonder Center Beach, a private beach owned by the Wonder Lake Property Owners Association. Located at Hancock and East Lake Shore drives, free shows are offered to the public on Fridays and will be held July 19 and 26 at 7 p.m.; Aug. 2 at 7 p.m.; Aug. 16 at 6:45 p.m.; Aug. 23 at 6:45 p.m.; Sept. 1 at 4 p.m.

The team will perform at Venetian Fest in Lake Geneva on Aug. 18 at 6 p.m.

For more information, visit www.wonderlakesskiteam.org.

Twin Lakes Aquanuts

The Twin Lakes Aquanuts team performs at Lance Park, 55 Lance Dr., Twin Lakes, Wednesday and Saturday at 6 p.m. except when attending state or

national competitions.

There is a seating bowl or bring a lawn chair or blankets. A snack shop on site opens one hour before each show. Indoor restrooms are available, and parking is free.

For more information, visit www.aquanutwatershow.com.

Southern Wakes

Southern Wakes United perform at a variety of venues.

- Elkhorn Lake – Parking is available at Precision Plus, 840 Koopman Lane, Elkhorn. Shows at Elkhorn Lake are at 6 p.m., Saturdays and noon, Sundays. The team will be at Elkhorn Lake Sunday, July 14; Sunday, Aug. 18 (Alumni Show); and Saturday, Aug. 31.

- Lauderdale Lakes – held on the lake at Lauderdale Landing, Elkhorn. All shows are on Fridays and start at 6 p.m. Shows will be presented at Lauderdale Aug. 9; and Aug. 23.

- Whitewater Lake – Two shows will be held at N7660 State Park Dr. on Whitewater Lake this summer and are best viewed by boat as it will be difficult to see from the shore. The shows will be Saturday July 27 and Friday, Aug. 16.

For more information, visit southernwakesunited.com.



Members of the team show off their patriotic outfits during a performance.

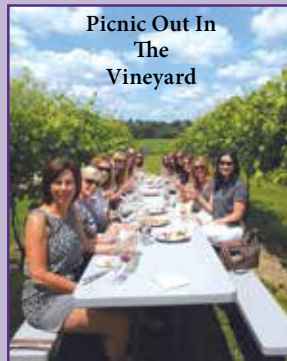
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What the glaciers left behind

Volo Bog offers the opportunity to see nature, wildlife

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**

CORRESPONDENT

Those who haven't been to Volo Bog might want to visit this summer, or any other time of the year as it's open daily. It's a unique area, overflowing with the beauty of nature, highlighted by natural plants and animals who make it their home. Most important is the natural quaking bog located on site, the only one in Illinois.

Summer, when people of all ages tend to fill their days with a variety of activities, is an ideal time to visit. It will likely be a treat – whether a family outing, a picnic lunch with friends, or a day spent taking photographs of the landscape and all the living creatures and plants that can be found there.

Volo Bog is in Ingleside and is the result of when the Wisconsin glacier began its final melt thousands of years ago. The receding glacier left a covering of debris that included clay, sand, gravel and sometimes even large boulders. Also imbedded in with the debris were extremely large chunks of ice, some so large that as the climate continued to warm, they melted

into lakes, bogs and marshes which remain today and are responsible for the landscape of this portion of northeast Illinois.

"This bog is unique in that it is the only open water quaking bog in Illinois," shared Carol Janssen, a volunteer docent as she prepared to begin a recent morning tour of the bog with a group of visitors.

"To be a bog it must have five different distinctive rings of vegetation surrounding an open water area. Closest to the water is the herb mat, then a low shrub zone, the tamarack zone, the tall shrub zone and the marsh. As we walk the trail through the bog to the open eye, we will see each of these areas. The three innermost rings are not on solid soil but are floating above a pond that is 50 feet deep," Janssen explained.

The trail through the bog includes a floating plank trail which takes visitors over the wetlands. The floating plank bounces with the movement of those walking on it and does not have any handrails so can pose a challenge, especially for young children and others with balance concerns. Visitors are advised to wear sturdy shoes to help with balance and, though it should go without saying, the sturdier ones in a family or group should hold on to children and the elderly while traversing it.

While the trail may be difficult to maneuver, the walk through the bog is certainly worth the extra effort.

It's filled with unique plants – including

some that are blooming, and walkers will go past the Tamarack trees, a surprising sight to many to see such tall trees growing in the sphagnum moss.

The walk ends with the arrival at the eye, the original lake of open water that is the center of the bog. Visitors often describe it as beautiful and serene, and many spend time there simply taking in the scenery before heading back to the Visitor Center.

"There are additional trails that visitors may use for hiking. The Tamarack View Trail is perfect for hiking and covers 2.75 miles. This trail is a good way to view the diversity of the grounds," Janssen said.

She said from the higher elevations, those on the trail can look down into the bog basin.

"This trail begins just south of the Visitor Center and is a one-way trail. Pick up the trail brochure before starting down the trail," Janssen advises.

In the winter, the Tamarack View Trail is available for cross country skiing when there is an appropriate amount of snow. Two other hiking trails offer an additional two miles of hiking, and, according to the docents, they take hikers through another two miles of woods, fields and prairie restoration areas.

The eye of the bog is a clear lake, a beautiful and reflective spot.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of the Lakes*

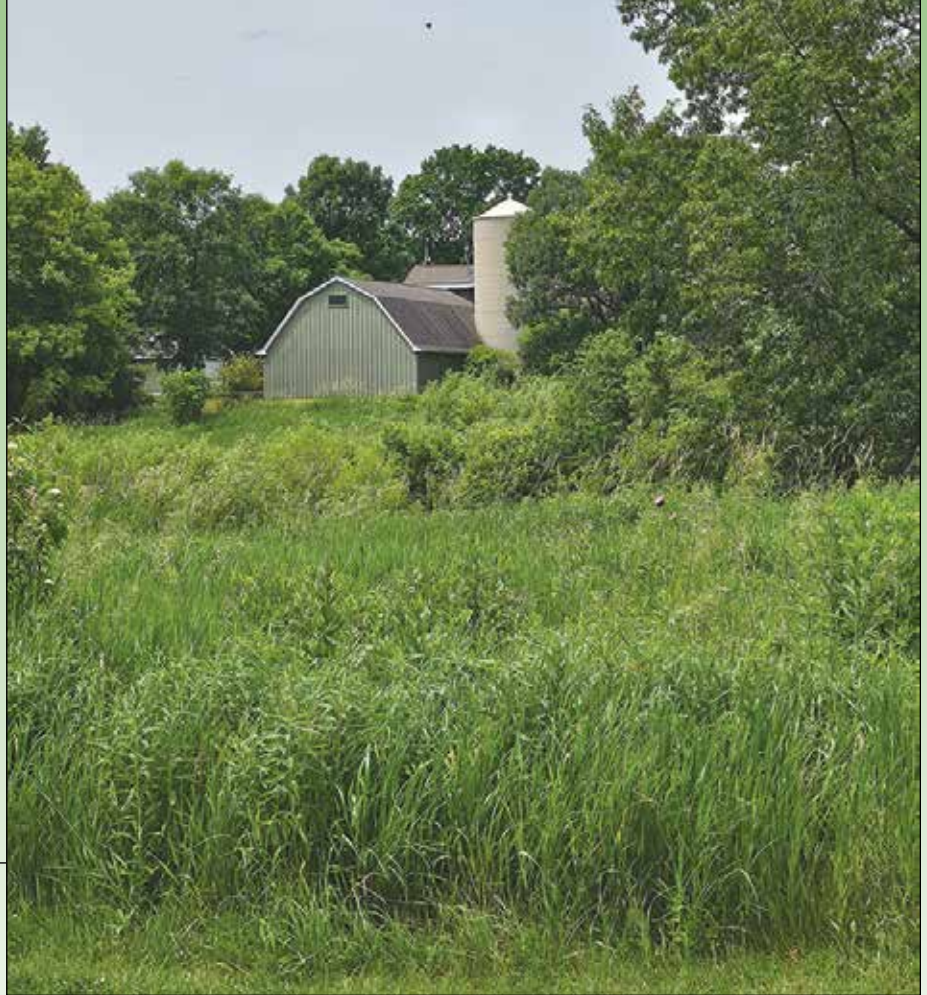
What a discovery

Volo Bog was first discovered in 1921 by W. G. Waterman and was originally named the Sayer Bog, after the land's owner George Sayer, a local dairy farmer.

Sayer was known as a wealthy butcher from Chicago who was said to have invented a sausage filling machine before he moved out to the Ingleside area and invested in multiple dairy farms. He also built and lived in the largest home on Pistakee Bay, known as the Rose Villa, named after his wife Rose, and her favorite flowers, roses.

The barn on Sayer's property in Ingleside now serves as the Visitor Center where volunteer docents explain the history of the bog, discuss the activities held there and share information about the many items on display.

After being documented by Waterman, Cyrus Mark, the first director of the Illinois Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, began a fundraising effort in 1958. That led to \$40,000 being collected, mostly in donations from school children, groups and individuals for the purchase of the property covering 47.5 acres.



The Sayer barn now serves as the visitor center for Volo Bog, featuring a variety of displays and the offering of classes.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of the Lakes*



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The property was deeded to the University of Illinois, which retained ownership of the land until 1970 when it was transferred to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. That was done to ensure the protection of the bog as developers began encroaching on the area.

An additional 1,100 acres of land have been purchased to protect and enlarge the state preserve, which now includes marshes, prairie restoration areas, woodlands and two additional bogs.

Volo Bog, because it includes all stages of bog succession, was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1972. A plaque noting the designation can be seen at the beginning of the bog path.

Special events

Each summer on the fourth Sunday of July, this year on July 28, International Bog Day is celebrated at Volo Bog State Natural Area from noon to 4:30 p.m. A live band, The Prissillas, will be providing musical entertainment from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Bog tours will be available throughout International Bog Day. For the children in attendance, there will be a variety of crafts for them to enjoy during the afternoon.

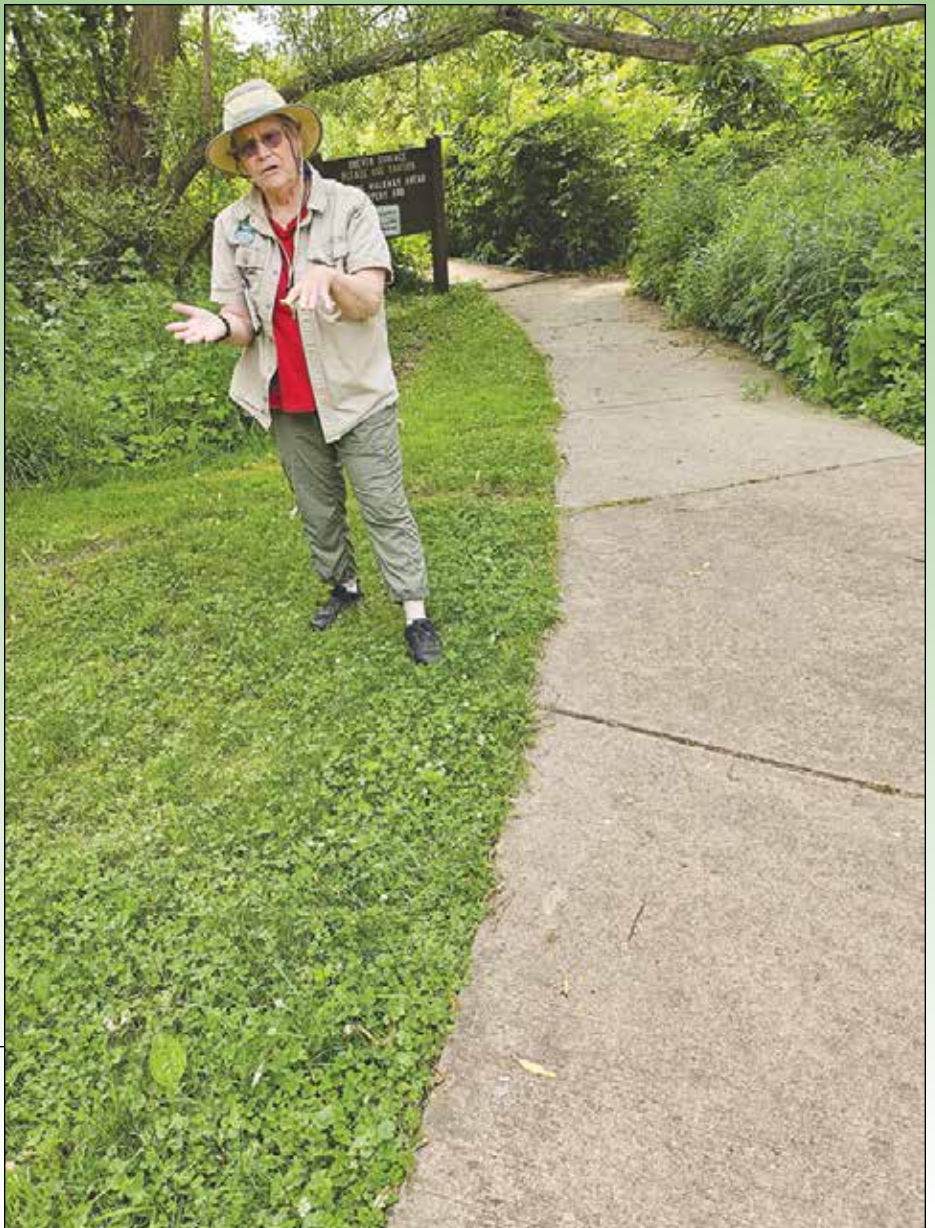
The highlight of the day will be the artwork on display known as the Bogs in Art. An artists' reception will be held noon to 2:30 p.m. and offer guests an opportunity to meet some of those who specialize in creating art about bogs.

There will be a silent auction to raise funds for the support of the bog. The bidding will stop at 2 p.m. and 25% of the

at right: Volunteer Carol Janssen shares the story of the bog with members of a tour before beginning the group walks through the bog.

below: Located at 28478 W. Brandenburg Rd. in Ingleside, Volo welcomes visitors year-round.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of the Lakes*



funds raised will go to the Friends of Volo Bog. And of course, the event will be an opportunity to learn more about the bog and meet other like-minded people who enjoy and appreciate nature.

Bogs In Art is on display now at Volo Bog and will be until July 28. These beautiful art pieces share the beauty and essence of bogs.

Beyond the bog

The visit to the barn is a favorite stop among visitors who enjoy seeing the variety of past and current wildlife that have, or do, make their home on the land. There is also a large meeting room where various talks and programs take place.

“We offer a variety of programs. From fun and educational programs that appeal to most ages, to historical programs that share the story of the bog. School groups often make field trips here,” Janssen said.

Volunteer naturalists lead the one-hour public tours of the bog on Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. They request advance registration for the tours but if visitors happen to be there and there is room on the tour, they of course will allow late additions.

There is no charge to participate in the tour and visitors will leave not only with a wealth of knowledge about the bog but also how it continues to survive.

There are additional educational programs led by the naturalists that offer deeper knowledge about Volo Bog. Working with trained volunteers there are a variety of programs including those that focus on insects and aqua safaris, bats and prairie walks to name a few.

A complete list of upcoming programs can be found at the Visitor Center or on the website.

Those interested in learning more about



top right: After completing the walk to the eye of the bog, this group enjoys the view before returning to the visitor center. **at right:** Many waterfowl and birds make their home at Volo Bog and are memorialized in displays in the visitor center.

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the bog and spending time there are encouraged to visit and if they so choose, bring lunch, which can be enjoyed in the picnic area adjacent to the parking lot. There are two grills on site while some choose to bring their own.

It's important to note that ground fires are not allowed, and alcohol is not permitted in the park.

Guests are responsible for removing all their garbage when they leave. There are no garbage bins in the park because they are a magnet for a variety of wildlife such as raccoons, opossums, and other animals found in the area and, eating garbage is detrimental to wildlife.

Not having garbage pickup in the park also saves taxpayers money and preserves the beauty of the area for visitors.

The park is open 363 days per year, closed only on Christmas and New Year's. The gates open daily at 8 a.m. while closing times vary based on sunset. Guest should check the posted sign when arriving to be certain that they can retrieve their vehicle prior to the park closing. Parking is free.

The Visitor Center is open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday.

Volo Bog is at 28478 Brandenburg Rd., Ingleside. For more information call 815-344-1294 or visit www.dnr.illinois.gov/parks/park.volobog.

top left: While walking through the bog, there are areas where small flowers can be seen blooming in the sphagnum moss layer of the bog. **above:** The floating plank takes visitors over the various zones of the bog amid the growth of plants. **at left:** This plaque outside the visitor center recognizes that Volo Bog is a Registered National Landmark as recognized by the Department of Park Services in 1973.

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