PROMOTING NATURAL ROADSIDES. . . The Citizens' Natural Resources Association (CNRA) has just issued its publication on the history and recommended management of green belts bordering our state highways. This concise booklet with its colorful cover may well become a collector's item. Any one interested in promoting wildflower restoration on road sides should make a quick effort to either join CNRA and receive a free copy in the mail, or buy the booklet at a Wild Ones meeting.

Our natural landscapers will find familiar names among the authors of the articles. For example, Victoria Nuzzo was the CETA-funded Dane County botanist in 1976 when the Prairie Heritage Trail won an EPA award and was promptly mowed down by an unsympathetic road crew! Drawings of wildflowers are copied from Vicki's book illustrating plants along Dane County roads and identifying their location. David Kopitzke has also illustrated his article, "Plants of Natural Roadsides: A Biological Tapestry". Three other contributors who were speakers at our seminars are: Jerry Schwarzmeier, Donald Vorpahl, and John Harrington. Residents of Fox Point, Bayside, and Mequon will recognize the photographs of a robot's mowed paradise. A policeman gave me a warning ticket, and Ted Stephenson of the DOT presented me with an orange day-glow jacket as a consequence of taking such highway pictures! One can only stop on a highway for an emergency.

Membership in CNRA requires that a check for seven dollars be sent to:
CNRA, 1240 South 11th Avenue, Wausau, Wisconsin 54401.

Lorrie Otto
CNRA Vice President
Mowers, Growers Now Are Quarreling Over the Back Fence

New Little 'Wildlife Habitats' Pop Up Like Daffodils; Cultivators Are Vexed

By PAMELA SEBASTIAN
Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal
DUNEDIN, Fla.--Just about the time the Berlin Wall was coming down, the Earle Fence went up.

On one side of the stockade here, holly tangles with burrashes, and sour grass nuzzles young palmetto trees as native plants reclaim the north bank of tiny Earle Lake. On the other side of the fence, Clara Honold has to climb a ladder on her neatly manicured lawn to reclaim her view of the pond.

Miss Honold, 70 years old, has lost both her vista and her friend, 88-year-old Alice Earle. The two women are on opposing sides of what, seen from a larger perspective, is a national battle between those who would mow and those who would grow natural landscapes. The National Wildlife Federation last year certified 1,900 new "backyard wildlife habitats."

"This has turned out to be a vendetta," says Miss Honold of her relations with Mrs. Earle.

In late 1989, Mrs. Earle, egged on by a daughter, fenced in the family's two-acre pond to let the fringe of land around it go native. The lake takes up half the property.

Trouble is, Miss Honold used to be able to see the lake from her backyard swing. Now the swing faces a fence six feet high that doesn't even give her any peeking through the picket fence. Mrs. Brown still has a nice picture of the lake from her yard. (After all, a selling point for houses around here is the "splendid lake view.")

"Everybody has a different vision of Eden," concedes Miss Honold, who has lived on the edge of the lake for more than 30 years. "But that isn't my Eden," she adds, gesturing at the fence. (On her side of it, she has planted a tidy red-tip hedge.)

Kevin Campbell, head of planning and development in Dunedin, notes that the Earles haven't applied for local sanction to grow their "natural" plot, and one of the many city officials drawn into the Earle Lake fracas.

One Man's Weed

And what is a weed, anyway? "My professor always said a weed is only a misplaced plant, and dirt is only misplaced soil," says Richard Follett, Dunedin's planning director and landscape architect. He says there are "very few people in the United States who can claim that his lawn is a weedless lawn." A "natural" lawn is as old as civilization, it does date back at least to the 1960s, when Milwaukee's Lorrie Otto, the acknowledged godmother of natural landscaping, ran up from her laundry room one summer day to find that city employees had hacked down her delicate fern and raspberry garden.

She went on to become the leader of the Wild Ones, a group that rejects lawns and chemical pesticides.

'The Critters'

As to the future, Mrs. Earle, the biologist, says her mother would like to keep everything as it is for the critters. We'd like to honor that if we can."

But Earle Lake doesn't seem as peaceful as many neighbors remember it when Mrs. Earle and her late husband strolled its banks. They didn't mind the mowing then, neighbors recall. Now the Earles have festooned the fence with "no trespassing" signs.

Nonsense, says Sylvia Earle, Mrs. Earle's daughter, the biologist behind the back-to-nature movement on the Earle spread. "It's a silly thing," says Miss Honold, who runs the Dunedin Day School. "But I don't blame Mrs. Earle. I blame Dr. Sylvia Earle."}

To some, what all this boils down to is weeds and people too lazy or indifferent to get rid of them. And if the weeds debate isn't as old as civilization, it does date back at least to the 1960s, when Milwaukee's Lorrie Otto, the acknowledged godmother of natural landscaping, ran up from her laundry room one summer day to find that city employees had hacked down her delicate fern and raspberry garden. She went on to become the leader of the Wild Ones, a group that rejects lawns and chemical pesticides.

The citizens of Dunedin (the town's name sounds like "done eatin'", jokes the mayor, Manuel Koutsourels) were no match for Mrs. Earle, whose specialty is marine science and who has been known to swim with sharks.

She wanted her mother's neighbors to stop mowing. They wanted the city to enforce a weed ordinance and cut the newly liberated lake-bank vegetation abutting their yards.

After much back-yard back and forth (also some petition signing), the city mowed the north bank. That's when the big Earle fence went up. Most neighbors now must contend with a little fence of spaced pickets four feet high that keeps them and their mowers off the lake bank but doesn't completely block the view. But the two most vocal locals, Miss Honold and Josephine Cole next-door, got the big version of the fence, the so-called split fence that cuts them off utterly. (They share the ladder.) The tall part of the fence violated local law, but the Earles obtained a variance after the fact.

"Trampling through the brush after church one Sunday recently, 55-year-old Mrs. Earle, the biologist, marched past the big fence explaining her conservationist zeal and sending little lizards skittering for safety. She recalls that, as children, she and her two brothers would explore the enclave, avoiding fire ants, watching for new birds, picking mulberries and taking a dip in the lake, which is part of a drainage network in this Gulf Coast town.

She and her mother share a love of nature. (Mrs. Earle, for instance, nursed baby egrets in the 1960s on this preserve.) "It's just a little lake," says the daughter. "But the world is made up of little bits and pieces."

Border Skirmishes

Here and there around the country, as spring unfolds, little border disputes between mowers and growers are cropping up like daffodils. In Chicago, Marie Wojciechowski has to go to court on May 2 because neighbors have complained that her urban prairie plot breeds rats and mosquitos.

In Montgomery County, Md., William Marlow is haggling with county officials because someone has complained about the vines and "volunteer" trees on the quarter-acre lot around his house.

And in Huntington Beach, Calif., two elderly neighbors have been locked in a backyard weed battle for months as the naturalist's vines creep over the fence into the traditionalist's lawn.

Note: Wild Ones are mentioned.
To prove her case for a naturalized yard, Wild Ones member, Jan Koel, was recently asked to appear before the Village of Menomonee Falls Property Maintenance Compliance Committee. Jan's newly emerging prairie was reported to be "rank growth" by a neighbor.

Identifying herself as a botanist, Jan presented her philosophy of natural landscaping related to ecological principles, and showed pictures of award-winning naturally landscaped yards. To prove to the committee that she was establishing an environmentally healthy habitat, she gave each member a packet of materials to help explain natural landscaping. The handouts included past issues of the Outside Story containing information on pesticides and overuse of fertilizers and landscape guidelines from the National Wildlife Federation. Jan requested that before any action was taken to make the existing ordinance more restrictive by requiring permits, fees, and neighbor approval that the Village sponsor a conservation workshop.

When the committee realized it faced a prepared, educated, determined environmentalist they decided not to push for the most restrictive ordinance. Presently under consideration are milder guidelines such as: three-foot mowed borders, a noxious weed list, fire and safety hazard rules such as refuse removal and traffic visibility considerations.

Suggestions relating to conservation practices are welcomed by other city managers and village boards. For instance, Whitefish Bay has started the wildflower project suggested last year to the Village Board by Wild Ones member, Rochelle Whiteman and a Village resident. Donald Vorpohl is designing a small pocket of land between Lake Michigan and a heavily traveled Lake Drive using a sampling of Native Wisconsin plants including wild columbine, wild geranium, prairie smoke, shooting stars, and pasque flowers. Village Manager, Michael Harrington said he expects the plan to cost about $2100 to $2500, roughly the amount already included in the budget for upgrading the site.

"Yard Design Day" was another suggestion the Recycling, Esthetics and Conservation Committees of Glendale were interested in acting upon. Eighty homeowners attended presentations by Rochelle, Rae Sweet and others at City Hall to learn how to redesign their problem areas using native plants. During a special time period for problem solving homeowners worked with members of the Wild Ones to redesign their problem areas incorporating native forbs and grasses. One of the participants and new Wild Ones member, Annette Alexander, commented that most homeowners needed to "detoxify" their yard. She decided to set an ecologically sound example on her busy, well traveled street the next day by replacing her front yard sod with ground cover, shrubs and wild flowers. Thanks goes to Mila of the Schlitz Audubon Book Store for the wonderful display of books on wild flowers and naturalizing, and thank you to all of the Wild One members that helped make the day a success.
WILDFLOWER SHOW 1991

cou-sponsored by the Milwaukee Public Museum and the Botanical Club of Wisconsin

Mark your calendars now for a celebration of the wildflower at the Milwaukee Public Museum’s fourth annual Wildflower Show on Sunday, June 2nd from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Over 250 species of Wisconsin’s flora will be on display as potted and freshly-cut material.

There will be booths offering information and materials on identifying wildflowers, preserving plants and their habitats, and growing natives in the home landscape. Prairie, woodland and wetland plants will be for sale by Wisconsin native plant nurseries.

This year’s show will feature woodland plants. Two programs will be offered during the show.

11:00 a.m. Dan Bohlke from Boehlke’s Woodland Gardens will speak on growing native plants.

1:30 p.m. Janice Stiefel will talk about medicinal uses and plant lore of Wisconsin’s flora.

1991 WILDFLOWER PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Also, don’t forget to start sorting through your slides of Wisconsin’s native and naturalized plants. The 1991 Wildflower Photographic Competition will be held in April and the winning entries will be displayed at the June 2nd Wildflower Show. Rules and entry forms will be available in March from the Botany Section, Milwaukee Public Museum (278-2711.)
MAYAPPLE
(Podophyllum peltatum)

Barberry Family

OTHER NAMES: Wild Mandrake, Hog Apple, Wild Lemon, Umbrella Leaf, Raccoon Berry, Ground Lemon, Indian Apple, Duck's Foot, Vegetable Mercury, Vegetable Calomel, American Mandrake, Devil's Apple, Puck's Foot

HABITAT: Damp, shady clearings, rich woods.

DESCRIPTION: The Mayapple can be a one or two-leaved plant. The one-leaved plant is flowerless. The two-leaved plant has two symmetrical, lobed leaves that are attached to the two forks of the stem by their inner edges. Emerging from the crotch is a single, nodding, waxy-white flower with 6-9 petals and twice as many stamens. The leaves can be up to 1 ft. wide. The fruit is a large, lemon-like berry. **Height:** 12-18 in. **Flowering:** April to June

COMMENTS: When the leaves of the Mayapple first unfolded in the spring like tiny umbrellas, the children of another generation used to cry, "the umbrellas are out!" The fruit is edible, but rather bitter. It was often used as a flavoring or to make marmalade. A southern drink is made from wine, sugar, and the juice of the Mayapple. Some folks think the fruit has flavor reminiscent of strawberry (when fully ripe).

Even though the plant has no nectar it is, nevertheless, cross-fertilized by early bees and bumblebees.

MEDICINAL USE: The Meskwaki Indians used the Mayapple for the treatment of snakebites. Other tribes used it to treat warts and to kill parasitic worms. Modern research has proved that folk medicine often has value. The Mayapple roots and leaves are poisonous, but they contain the substance, podophyllotoxin, which has been shown to be active against various types of cancer. A derivative of this resin has now been introduced for the treatment of testicular cancer under the trade name, Vepeside. Mayapple has proved to be one of the most important plants so far known for the treatment of cancer.

Warning: Tiny amounts of root or leaves are poisonous. Powdered root and resin can cause skin and eye problems.

NAME ORIGIN: The Common Name, Mayapple, is because the plant blooms in May. The Genus Name, Podophyllum (Po-do-fil'lum), comes from a Greek word and means "foot leaf." The Species Name, peltatum (pel-tay'tum), means "shield-shaped." Both names refer to the large conspicuous leaf.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: While doing my research on wild plants, I found the following quote: "At least 25% of the prescriptions dispensed by the modern-day physician contain active ingredients from plants." "Furthermore," says Norman R. Farnsworth, Ph.D., a pharmacy scientist at the Illinois Medical Center in Chicago, "essentially all of the plants yielding useful drugs, or which are found in prescriptions as extracts, are rich in medicinal folklore."

Even though our scientific and medical "experts" know the value and importance of plants to our survival, we still continue to destroy the habitat that supports them. Where I live (Sheboygan County), the original vegetation maps show that 200 years ago this area was completely covered with trees. As we travel around the countryside of Sheboygan County now, very little remains of those vast forests. What we do have are acres and acres of cleared land for agriculture, and many gravel pits. Some of these pits are still in operation - others have been abandoned (no effort is being made to restore the ugly gouges that are left). Inch by inch the land is being destroyed for temporary, economic gain. It appears that no thought is given to what will remain for future generations. If it wasn't for the foresight of the State of Wisconsin to set aside places like the Kettle Moraine Forest; and the Nature Conservancy's and DNR's land parcels, we could end up with nothing "wild" in another 200 years.
March: We ought to pass laws to prohibit unnatural landscaping. This thought was expressed by Ron Nowicki, landscape architect, at our March meeting. Ron and his wife, Vicki, an instructor with a master's degree in environmental education, presented a motivating talk and slide show explaining their philosophies and practices used in managing their Illinois yard.

When thinking about managing a yard in an ecologically sound manner, Vicki and Ron believe that we should not be thinking in terms of "deprivation" but rather a challenging and fun way to live. Through her studies, Vicki has learned that "modeling" is the best way to teach about the environment and that method uses actual examples to show someone what to do.

Ron designed their passive solar 1980 home on a 70' x 192' lot using the following criteria for location and design:

- located close enough to work to allow for walking or bike riding;
- located in the heart of the suburbs, but defying the typical look of suburbia;
- energy efficiency with landscaping to compliment the design;
- little or no need for chemicals;
- attractive and different, compatible with neighbors;
- no grass anywhere;
- planned for people and animals first and cars last.

A foot of wood chips was put down over the entire property after the house was build. This has decomposed to about 1 inch of peat. Evergreen were planted for a northern windbreak for energy conservation. Hundreds of plants, trees, and shrubs were "plugged in" over years, many are natives.

Instead of sidewalk there is a wood chip trail leading to the house. This encourages ground water recharge (mowed lawn has nearly the same run-off rate as concrete.) Nowicki's believe that storm water should be kept on each landowner's property.

A composting area and a large vegetable garden cover the backyard. By growing your own food, you save fossil fuel. Commercially grown food use much more fossil fuel and energy per calorie of nutrition.

Much less water is needed to maintain a naturally landscaped yard than a traditional mowed lawn. Grass is a monoculture which doesn't support any animals. Natural landscaping helps to preserve our native plant seed banks and provides food and shelter to birds, animals, and insects.

April: Gloy Jacobson comes from a teaching background and has studied with Dan Boehlke and Darrel Morrison. As owner of a landscape business, known as Landscape Lady Ltd., her primary interest is in eliminating lawns. Gloy specializes in natural landscaping and knowing plant communities. She uses informal designs and suggests woodlands, edge of woods plantings, prairie, and cottage gardens as alternatives to lawns. She has found that if lawn areas are kept small enough, they
can be maintained by organic means and by pulling weeds by hand.
Gloy stressed the importance of learning about native plant communities
and design elements yourself, or hiring someone who is well-educated in
these areas to help you. Her company is unique because they maintain as well as install the plantings. Two recommended books are
Diekelmann's Natural Landscaping and Curtis' Vegetation of Wisconsin.

She eliminated the lawn that surrounded her home and business by
putting at least ten overlapping newspaper layers (no glossy sheets)
over all the grass. This was covered by a thick layer of mulch (4" or
more). The first year 9" of sod was cut away from walkways and circles
of sod were cut out to plant trees and shrubs. After 1 1/2 to 2 years
the ground cover was planted to fill in areas nicely. Gloy stressed
that you must keep the mulched area covered to help prevent weed growth
and that it is essential to weed on a regular basis. For thistles she
recommends pulling out all new growth to ground level to starve the
roots out.

Gloy also suggests that if you are combining natural areas with lawns
to use gently curving lines create an "edge". Keep grass from growing
in areas where it is not wanted by cutting out 4" - 5" of sod. A sod
lifter is helpful. This edge must always be kept open and dry to
prevent grass roots from spreading.

Reasons she gave for using natural landscaping are that it:

- helps "remove" you from the street,
- provides a more human scale,
- is not sterile,
- has vertical depth,
- has diversity and is always changing,
- lowers maintenance and eliminates lawn mowing,
- is good for wildlife.

Gloy helped to strengthen our convictions for natural landscaping by
firmly reminding us, "We must not let other people's inability to
consider other landscape options keep us from doing our thing."

SPRING AT CHIWAUKEE PRAIRIE means puccoons, lupines, irises, and
shooting stars are in bloom. See the spectacular colors on Saturday,
May 25, from 10 a.m. to noon. Wear footgear for wet walking. Families
with children are welcome. Directions: From I-94 (between Kenosha and
the Illinois line), drive east on County Q for about 6 miles. Turn
south (right) on Highway 32 (Sheridan Road) for about 1 mile. Turn
east (left) on 116th Street (Tobin Road) for 3/4 mile, and turn right
(south) on the first road past the railroad tracks. Drive south for
about 1/2 block, and turn right again onto 3rd Street. In about 1
block, park off the road. Posts and a sigh mark the entrance to the
prairie.
Bayside environmental activist awarded

She sees many battles ahead

By Robert Mullins

Twenty-five years ago, a friend of Bayside environmentalist Lorrie Otto asked her niece what she wanted to be when she grew up. The eighth-grader piped up without hesitation: "I want to be a Lorrie Otto."

The accolade meant as much to Otto as the award she received last week at a national convention in New Orleans.

"Today, she (the little girl) has a prairie yard" at her home, said Otto, the local guru of natural landscaping as a way of helping the earth.

On April 9, Otto, 71, received the Margaret Douglas Award for environmental education at the annual meeting of the Garden Club of America, making her the first person from Wisconsin ever to receive the honor.

Otto, 7971 N. Lake Drive, has been a virtual Aldo Leopold on the local conservation front, fighting subdivisions that would destroy woods, urging environmental education in schools, working to ban DDT, and living the environmentalists credo to "Think Globally, Act Locally."

"When you manage your land, don't harm other parts of the earth," Otto says, explaining a manicured lawn may look picture perfect, but the fertilizer on it washes into streams and the grass clippings raked from it clog landfills.

"If you look at the whole planet, you'll see that all the parts are interconnected."

Otto's record of environmental concern dates back to the 1950s when she fought to save a 20 acre wooded area along the Lake Michigan shore that was eyed for a subdivision.

She learned the names of all the species of birds, plants and animals that lived in the woods, brought people in for nature tours, and got media support for saving the woods. Later, stockholders of the company that owned the land in question saved it from the bulldozer by a margin of three votes.

At a Bayside school, once in the 50s and again in the early 70s, Otto organized parents and students to help create a "secret garden" on the campus which called for native trees, plants and shrubs.

Students pushed wheelbarrows to the Bayside leaf dump to bring leaves back for use as a mulch. She sent others to a landfill to dig up small asters, goldenrods, and other plants that spontaneously sprouted up there during the spring.

"I told them to dig up anything that looks interesting," Otto said, teaching the students that there are all sorts of living things in a natural garden that deserve to thrive.

She's had to promote environmental education to adults as well as children. The fight against DDT in the late 1960s is a case in point.

"You were awakened every day by the silence," Otto said of the absence of birds chirping in the morning. DDT may have been an effective pesticide, but it killed birds, too. Otto talked about collecting baskets full of robins from her neighborhood that were convulsing from the effects of DDT.

At first, Bayside village officials were unconvinced of the need to stop DDT spraying.

"If everyone else (in the metro area) uses it, why shouldn't we? What do you want, birds or trees?" she remembers being asked.

Lorrie Otto wanted both.

Bills to ban use of DDT in Wisconsin had been introduced in the legislature before but had never gotten past the Agriculture Committee because of forming interests that wanted the chemical.

But in 1969, after inviting lawyers from the Environmental Defense Fund in New York to camp out in her home for a strategy session, Otto got the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to hold a hearing so they could present their evidence for a DDT ban. DDT use was prohibited in Wisconsin on May 21, 1969.

Otto was nominated for her recent award by the Green Tree Garden Club of Milwaukee and the Kettle Moraine Garden Club of Hartland. At the fancy hotel at which she was put up, the ardent conservationist allowed herself the indulgence of a long shower, the relief she needed from New Orleans' oppressive humidity.

The award is a big laurel for Otto but she is not going to rest on it because there are other environmental battles ahead. While she applauds the renewed environmental activism of the 1990s, she thinks the task ahead is enormous.

"Everywhere you look, there's a disaster," Otto said, ticking off the list of everything from nuclear waste and the ozone layer to the Amazon rain forest and the Kuwaiti oil well fires.

Lorrie Otto doesn't seem like the kind of person who will retire and her environmental activism shows no signs of letting up.

"If each of us can do what's right, then we can really do something. It must happen or we will not survive."
SIMPLE FEEDERS YOU CAN MAKE

- Guard from galvanized iron disk
- Squirrel

- Flat for peanut butter
- Hinged for suet

- Metal soap dish and spring
- Suet

- Spaces for suet

- Use wire screen for feeders

- Cut from orange or onion bag

- Soap shaker

- Doughnuts

- Powel tin jar top

- Wire coat hanger

- Suet or seed

- Window feeder

- Cut end off coconut
  - Use screw eye or
  - Poke out eyes
  - And use wire

- For peanut butter
- Or melted suet

- Use screw eyes and use wire
May: Annual dig. (Bring containers, garden tools, gloves, plastic bags, gloves, plastic toboggan or saucer sled, etc. Wear old shoes and clothing that covers arms and legs.)

June: Yard tour of new prairie projects.

July: Trip to Mt. Horeb. See note below.

August: "Help Me" Day.

September: Tour of public and private established prairies in Racine.

October: Seed gathering.

November: Robert Ahrenhoister, "How to Develop a Prairie”.

December: Annual Holiday Meeting with video, seed, and treat exchange.

Open House

This year our OPEN HOUSE IS JULY 13 FROM 2 PM TO DUSK. Come and enjoy our restorations and nurseries in the peak of summer bloom. Tours and refreshments plus hayrides will be available for everyone.

PRAIRIE RIDGE NURSERY

Our annual traveling gala will occur on Saturday, July 13. We'll leave the Brown Deer Park and Ride (near I-43) promptly at 9:30 a.m. We hope to reach Joyce Power’s Prairie Ridge Nursery at 11:30 a.m. Lunch will be waiting for us and then we'll tour the lovely grounds. For dessert, we will be able to buy plants to take home. Bring your checkbooks! Mark your calendar and send in the form below. You must preregister. Wehr Nature Center group will join us.

__________________________
Name ______________________

__________________________
Address ____________________

__________________________
Phone ______________________

Enclose check for $10 for bus and lunch. Send to: Judy Ficks, 10848 North Pebble Lane, Mequon WI 53092 before July 1. Yearly dues are $12.


MOTHER’S DAY PLANT SALE. . . Wehr Nature Center, 9701 West College Avenue, Milwaukee, May 12, 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

A TRUCKLOAD OF WILDFLOWERS will be on sale after our June meeting. Dan Boehlke will be at the Schlitz Audubon parking lot. Bring money!
CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN will have a series of four classes called "Turfgrass Alternatives" on Tuesdays, June 4 - 25 from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Another class "Creating a Meadow/Prairie Yard" will help participants learn about landscaping with ever-changing native flowers and grasses. Chicago Horticultural Society, Box 400, Glencoe, IL 60022 708/835-5440

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SECRETARY
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TREASURER
Judi Ficks
10848 N. Pebble Ln.
Mequon, WI 53092
414-241-3034

NEWSLETTER
Carol Chew
8920 N. Lake Dr.
Bayside, WI 53217
414-351-0644

PROGRAM DIRECTOR
Lorrie Otto
9701 N. Lake Dr.
Bayside, WI 53217
414-352-0734

Meetings are held on second Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. at the Schlitz Audubon, 1111 E. Brown Deer Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53217. Phone 414-352-2880. Dues are $12/year.