

# The Natural Observer

## The News of Governor Dick Park

### Autumn, 2017



What came first, the caterpillar or the butterfly?

During one of our misty Sunday morning fitness hikes, we stopped by the meadow at the tower and spotted all kinds of life right beneath our noses. Although it appeared as though most of the flowers had bloomed and were “dying,” taking a closer look at individual plants revealed how caterpillars, pollinators, and plants co-evolve.

*“Some host plants produce toxic or foul-tasting compounds meant to dissuade herbivores from munching their foliage. But many caterpillars can sequester the toxins in their bodies, effectively using these compounds to protect themselves from predators. The classic example of this is the monarch caterpillar and its host plant, milkweed. The monarch caterpillar ingests glycosides produced by the milkweed plant. These toxins remain within the monarch through adulthood, making the butterfly unpalatable to birds and other predators.”* Borror and Delong, [Introduction to the Study of Insects.](#)

As we hiked on I thought, “What came first, the caterpillar or the butterfly --- or the plant?” Just something to ponder as you read some other incredible facts you may never have thought about until today...

Female butterflies lay eggs in a protected location on the plant that the soon-to-be caterpillar will eat. The monarch butterfly lays her eggs on the bottom of the milkweed plant which her caterpillar will eat.



Caterpillars must eat an enormous amount during the larval stage to sustain growth through the pupal stage and into adulthood. Without proper nutrition, it may not have the energy to complete its metamorphosis. Some consume 27,000 times their body weight during this phase.

Within a few weeks, caterpillars will increase their body mass by as much as 1,000 times or more. It will molt its skin or cuticle multiple times.

That tiny little caterpillar has as many as 4,000 muscles!

There are approximately 180,000 various species of caterpillars.

Did you know caterpillars produce silk? You’ve probably seen those suspended beings hanging from overhead branches and such. They seem to

be just hovering always at eye level trying to get your attention, but we walk right past, too busy to really notice....Yeah, that might have been a cool caterpillar waiting for you to chat with it ...why else would have it stopped right at eye level??

It's an incredible world we live in. Take some time to experience it. ~Diana



### *Life Lessons from a Butterfly*

*Let go of the past.*

*Trust the future.*

*Embrace change.*

*Come out of your cocoon.*

*Unfurl your wings.*

*Dare to get off the ground.*

*Ride the breezes.*

*Savor the flowers.*

*Put on your brightest colors.*

*Let your beauty show.*

*~author unknown*

**Remember!!!** The trails are open for use from dawn to dusk. Night hiking, climbing, or mountain biking is prohibited unless organized by Park staff. Please respect the properties of our neighbors, too, by not trespassing or littering.

With that said, we invite you to a **Full Moon Hike** on October 6 at 7:00 p.m. You may bring a flashlight, but we'll use them only if we must so that everyone can experience the night rising around us. Rain or clouds will cancel so be sure to register with your name and phone number.

## *Tool Donation*



The Ames Company, Inc. of Camp Hill has given the Park a generous donation of tools that will be used for many years to come. Rakes, pruners, loppers, shovels, and hoes gleamed on the grass in July as staff and volunteers admired them. Thank you to Friend of the Park Beth Hoffer for making this happen.

Thank you, Ames Company, for your generosity!

## **WE** **VOLUNTEERS!**

We are looking for a volunteer to adopt our bird houses. You would be responsible for making sure the houses are in good repair and clean for the spring nesting season and cleaned out for the winter roosting birds and mice that winter there (or flying squirrels as volunteer Harry Brown discovered!). A Scout troop could make this into a project by also monitoring what species use the boxes, whether birds, rodents, or reptiles. Call or e-mail the office if you're interested.



Casey Emler, son of Rick and Terri Emler of Lebanon, has completed his Eagle Scout project at the Park. He built bluebird houses and bat houses. You'll find two bluebird houses in the meadow near the Environmental Center. He placed bluebird and bat houses in the meadow close to the Tower as well as in the meadow located at the former radar site between trails 10 and 11. THANK YOU, Casey!

**BLACK FRIDAY!!** For some of us those two words create shivers up our spine at the thought of teeming crowds of shoppers and spending too much money. How 'bout coming to the quiet of Governor Dick Park and joining in a fun scavenger hunt as an alternative to the shopping frenzy! Autumn is a colorful time outdoors, and spring flowers delight us, but there are a lot of interesting black things in the forest. You'll search them out and return to the Center for hot cider and cookies. The cost is \$5 per person.

## Rain Garden Happenings

In 2010 and 2011 a rain garden was installed near the Environmental Center to collect storm water from the roof of the large portion of the building. Over the years the shrubs and trees have grown, and the herbaceous plants were shaded out and died. In August master arborist Jon Schach pruned some of the wayward shrubs and trees, and Lee Wells removed dead and deformed shrubbery, opening the garden up for more sunlight. Dee Kissinger weeded those pesky plants that can grow no matter what. Sheila Cohen, Ashlea Good, and Janie Gockley planted new shade-tolerant flowering plants and ferns that have been donated by **Frey's Greenhouse** in Lebanon. Next year plant markers will be installed so you can learn the names of those plants, and we will be hosting a rain garden workshop. We hope to encourage you to install your own rain garden. Thank you,

volunteers! 😊

*Here's an article from a newsletter from October, 2006.....*



Why do leaves change colors in the fall?

Leaves change colors when trees stop producing the pigment chlorophyll which gives the leaf its green color.

During the spring and summer months, a food-making process takes place in the leaf. Chlorophyll absorbs energy from sunlight and uses it in transforming carbon dioxide and water to carbohydrates. Leaves also contain yellow or orange pigments, but these are masked most of the year by the greater amount of green coloring. In the fall, the decrease in intensity and shorter hours of sunlight and the changes in temperatures cause the leaves to stop their food-making process. The chlorophyll breaks down, the green color disappears, and the other pigments already in the leaf become visible. The brilliance of colors you see every fall is directly related to the weather conditions that occur before and during the time the chlorophyll in the leaves is decreasing. When the days of fall are bright and cool, and the nights are chilly but not freezing, the brightest colorations usually develop. Adequate rainfall also keeps the leaves on the trees longer and enhances the color.

## Things to Do

Below is our calendar of programs. Follow our website to stay up to date. Event dates are subject to change.

Programs are free unless stated otherwise. Meet at the Environmental Center on Pinch Rd.

**Registration is required:** call 964-3808 or e-mail [governordick@hotmail.com](mailto:governordick@hotmail.com).

## Governor Dick Environmental Center

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Sept. 21, 10:00 a.m. – Hands On Nature Toddler Walk for children 5 and under.

*Sept. 21, 7:15 p.m. – Monthly Board Meeting.*

Sept. 23, 1:00 p.m. – Backyard Biologists: Explore Hawk Migration. Children's program, \$5.

Sept. 24, 1:30 p.m. – Golden Eagle Hikers. 2 to 4 miles for hikers over age 50.

Oct. 1, 9:00 a.m. – Fitness Hike.

Oct. 1, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. – Music on the Porch. Bluegrass music jam. Bring a lawn chair.

Oct. 5, 10:00 a.m. – Hands On Nature Toddler Walk for children 5 and under.

Oct. 6, 7:00 p.m. – Full Moon Hike. 3 miles, wear sturdy shoes.

Oct. 8, 1:00 p.m. – Autumn Mushrooms with author Bill Russell. \$5 per person.

Oct. 11, 10:30 a.m. – Wednesday Wings & Things nature walk.

*Oct. 12, 7:15 p.m. – Monthly Board Meeting.*

Oct. 14, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. – 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday Volunteer Work Day.

Oct. 19, 10:00 a.m. – Hands On Nature Toddler Walk for children 5 and under.

Oct. 20, 10:00 a.m. – Toddlers in Tow. For children ages 2 to 5.

Oct. 22, 2:00 p.m. – Autumn Teddy Bear Hike. Bring your favorite stuffed bear! \$5.

Oct. 28, 1:00 p.m. – Backyard Biologists: Tree Detectives. Children's program. \$5.

Oct. 29, 1:30 p.m. – Golden Eagle Hikers: History Hike.

Nov. 2, 10:00 a.m. – Hands On Nature Toddler Walk for children 5 and under.

Nov. 5, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. – Music on the Porch (or by the fireplace if it's cold). Bluegrass music jam.

Nov. 8, 10:30 a.m. – Wednesday Wings & Things nature walk.

Nov. 16, 10:00 a.m. – Hands On Nature Toddler Walk for children 5 and under.

*Nov. 16, 7:15 p.m. – Monthly Board Meeting.*

Nov. 18, 8:00 a.m. – 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Bouldering Competition. All skill levels.

Nov. 22, 10:30 a.m. – Wednesday Wings & Things nature walk.

Nov. 24, 1:00 p.m. – Black Friday Scavenger Hunt. Cider and cookies after. \$5 per person.

Nov. 25, 1:00 p.m. – Backyard Biologists: Animal Antifreeze. Children's program, \$5.

Nov. 26, 1:30 p.m. – Golden Eagle Hikers. 2 to 4 miles for hikers over age 50.

Dec. 3, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. – Christmas Music by the Fireplace.

Dec. 8, 6:30 p.m. – Flashlight Candy Cane Hunt. \$2 per person.



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### **To contact us:**

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