

LVNC's new look

After a being closed for three months this spring for renovation, the Nature Center reopened in May.

Although the classes and programs at the Nature Center will remain much the same, the separate classroom will allow us to develop new exhibits for the main space while keeping the messier (and noisier!) activities in a separate room.

There is also



a new mural on the south wall. Painted by local artists Diane Stapleton and Nanette Bonugli, the mural depicts 46 species of animals that live in the DuPage County area.

If you haven't seen the "new" Nature Center yet, be sure to stop by for a visit soon.

Look inside for...

Featured animal:
Lightning beetles (fireflies)

Special pull-out section for kids:
games, crafts, and activities.

Fall classes and programs

LVNC Notes...

The Nature Center will be closed:

Sept. 6
Sept. 11
Nov. 25-6
Dec. 24-27
Dec. 31-Jan. 3

The Passport to Adventure Program ends on Labor Day but there's still time to pick up your prizes and certificates.

Deadline for pickup is October 18th but keep in mind that some prizes may go early.

Pictures for the Thanksgiving coloring contest can be picked up after October 18th. They will be available at the Nature Center, Fitness Center, Heritage Center, or may be downloaded at www.obtpd.org.

The Summer Adventures classes spent a lot of time outside this session. On this day, the class met on the floating stage and focused on water activities. The class did water experiments, made watercolor paintings to take home, and took a ride on the lake in a paddleboat.



Instructor Deanna DeChristopher reads a story to the class.



Waiting for their turn in the paddleboat with “Captain” Leslie Patsavas.

First Tuesday lectures

On the first Tuesday of each month, LVNC sponsors a special lecture series. Topics are varied, ranging from nature themes to ghost stories and are geared towards adults and older teens. They are held at the Heritage Center on Ardmore Ave. from 7:00 to 8:30 pm.

Check the enclosed program flier for dates and topics.

New green space

The next phase of the Terrace View Park landscape improvement plan has begun with the removal of the inline skating area behind the Nature Center.

Part of the area will be fenced off to be used as equipment storage for the maintenance department, but the rest will become open green space. This area will be landscaped and become an extension of the campfire circle and picnic area.

New class for 9–12 yrs.

Starting this fall LVNC will be offering a new class for 9-12 year olds—ESI: Oakbrook Terrace. (ESI stands for Environmental Science Investigations and, of course, is in no way a shameful rip-off of any hugely popular TV show!)

Intended as a continuation for young naturalists who have grown too old for Nature Navigators, this class will use experiments and projects as well as fun and games to investigate scientific principles and learn about the plants and animals around us.

Participants will be using the same sorts of equipment and methods used by real biologists in their research.

REI grant

LVNC has been awarded an environmental grant from REI (Recreational Equipment, Inc.) that will be used to produce signs for our native plant gardens, and to develop a self-guided hike around the lake. The hike will utilize sign posts to inform visitors about points of interest along the way.

The Oakbrook Terrace REI store has been involved in many events and activities at LVNC over the years. The company dedicates a portion of its operating budget to help protect and restore the environment, increase access to outdoor activities, and encourage involvement in muscle-powered recreation.

Creature feature

Lightning beetles (fireflies)
Photuris and Photinus

For most people the sight of fireflies flashing in the dark brings back happy memories. Children of all ages love to chase and capture them; perhaps observing a bunch flashing in a jar before releasing them.

Actually, the name firefly is incorrect; they are not flies and the light has nothing to do with fire. Fireflies are actually beetles from the family Lampyridae. And the light is produced by a chemical reaction when two chemicals are mixed together in the insect's abdomen. This reaction produces a cold light that gives off almost no heat. The glow sticks sold at concerts and other night-time events contain synthesized versions of the same chemicals.

Adult fireflies only live for a few weeks, and probably don't feed at all. They spend most of their one-year life as wingless larvae living in the soil. These larvae can produce light just like the adults and are sometimes called glowworms. They are predatory, feeding on pretty much any smaller creatures (snails, worms, slugs, etc.), they can catch.

Although humans appreciate fireflies' flashes for their visual beauty, they have a more important meaning to the fireflies themselves: reproduction. Different species of fireflies produce flashes in different patterns so they attract only members of their own species. The males typically produce the characteristic flash patterns while in flight. Females sit on a leaf or branch and watch for the male's signal. When a female sees a flash pattern of her own species, she replies with a flash of her own. Most females reply with only a single flash, but the time delay between the male's signal and the

Fireflies are found on every continent except the Antarctic. There are 170 species in the U.S. and more than 1,900 worldwide.



Maggie Caldwell and Madison Andonjadis work on their summer creepie-crawlie paper hats during a recent program.

female's response is species specific and will only attract males of her species.

An interesting exception to this system occurs between members of two different kinds of lightning beetles. Species in the genus *Photinus* produce a chemical known as lucibufagin that protects them from being eaten by spiders, toads, and possibly even bats and birds.

Species in the genus *Photuris* do not produce this chemical protection but have developed a devious way to obtain it. Female *Photuris* fireflies can imitate the flash response of a female *Photinus*. When a male *Photinus* flies too close, she grabs and eats him, incorporating the lucibufagin into her own body.

Some scientists believe that *Photuris* females can recognize the flash patterns of several different *Photinus* species and reply with the appropriate response for each species.

So, the next time you find yourself watching a firefly light show in your back yard, take a few moments to reflect on the fact that behind those twinkling lights that we find so beautiful, the fireflies themselves may be engaged in a life-or-death struggle.



Lake View Nature Center
17 W 063 Hodges Road
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

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Hours

Lake View Nature Center

Monday to Friday – 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Saturday and Sunday – Noon to 4:00 pm

Terrace View Park

Open sunrise to 10 pm

For more information

Lake View Nature Center (630) 941-8747
Heritage Center (630) 627-6100
Fitness Center (630) 574-0420

www.obtpd.org

Staff

Becky Lambert	Supervisor
John Stoddard	Naturalist
Liane Knight	Program Coordinator
Karen Ritter	Environmental Educator
Deanna DeChristopher	Environmental Educator
Leslie Patsavas	Program Assistant

Fees

The Nature Center is free to the general public.

School and Community Groups

The Lake View Nature Center is an excellent place to explore the natural sciences. We offer programs for all ages and grade levels. We can customize programs to reflect seasons, special interests, Scout requirements, or Illinois State Learning Standards.

Fees for these programs are as follows:

\$2.00 per participant
\$20.00 minimum group charge

Call the Nature Center at (630) 941-8747 for more information or to schedule a program.

If you no longer want to receive this newsletter, please call us at (630) 941-8747.