



# Lake View's Nature News

Newsletter of the Lake View Nature Center

Summer  
2004

## Spring Celebration

**Saturday, May 8, 2004**

**Noon-4:00 pm**

**Nature Center Grand re-opening  
10th year anniversary celebration**

Join us on May 8 for a fun day in the park, as the Nature Center celebrates the completion of our renovation project and our tenth anniversary. There will be lots of fun activities and informational presentations. And did we mention free cake in honor of our anniversary?

### Exhibitors:

**Animals for Awareness  
Art & Linda's Wildflowers  
Atwood Outdoor Education Birds of Prey  
Midwest SOARRING  
REI  
Soil Adventure Mobile**

### Music by:

**Innisfree**

### Family activities:

**Geology activity  
Face painter  
Make a craft  
Paddleboat rides  
Campfire  
Self-guided hike**

**First look at the "new" Nature Center.  
Dedication of the Commissioner Memorial.**

### Look inside for...

Featured animal: Shrews

Summer family project

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

Summer classes and programs

### LVNC Notes...

The Nature Center will be  
closed:

**Construction  
through  
April**

**Grand re-opening May 8**

March 31  
July 4 & 5

Regular programs (Animal  
Adventures, Safari Club, etc.)  
will be held at the Heritage  
Center on Ardmore Ave.  
during the construction.

Please call after May 1 to  
schedule school, preschool,  
and scout programs in June.

**Hibernation • Renovation • Celebration**

# Summer family activity: Backyard investigations

Here are some activities that you can use to study the plants and animals that live in your own backyard.

Although these activities are fairly simple, they are the same techniques used by real scientists in studying plant and animal populations and ecology!

## Sensing your surroundings

*Materials: blank journal book or paper stapled together to make a booklet; crayons or markers to decorate the book and record observations. (This journal will also be used for the rest of the activities.)*

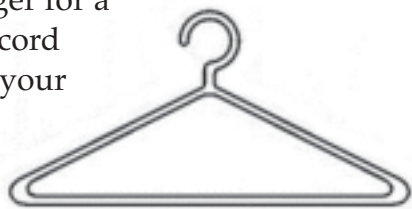
Label several pages in your journal with the headings "I see...", "I hear...", "I feel...", and "I smell..." Find a nice, comfortable spot in your yard and spend a few minutes sitting quietly. Record in your journal the things you see, hear, feel, and smell.

Did you hear, smell, or feel some things that you might have missed if you were just using your eyes?

## Hanger habitat

*Materials: Clothes hanger or similar sized loop of metal or plastic.*

Take your hanger outside and place it on the ground. Observe the area inside your hanger for a few minutes. Record what you see in your journal. (Hint: don't forget dirt



and grass, etc.) Use a small stick to gently move rocks and blades of grass aside.

Try repeating your observations at other places in your yard. Do you find the same things? More of some? Fewer of others?

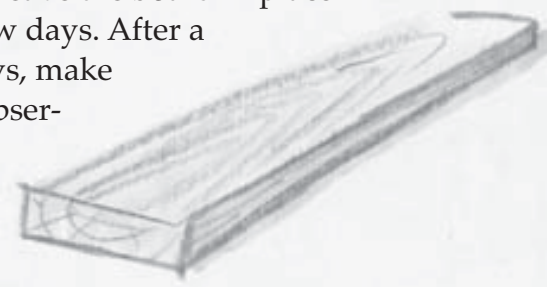
## Who lives here?

*Materials: Piece of scrap plywood or lumber (can be any size as long as it is easy to carry and lift).*

A lot of insects and other small animals like to live in places that are dark and damp. You can make a nice home for them that makes it easy for you to study them.

Take the board outside and find a nice spot where you think there might be lots of insects and other critters. This could be near a garden or compost pile, for instance. Lay the board flat on the ground.

Leave the board in place for a few days. After a few days, make some observations about your



board. Record what you see in your journal. If you don't know the name of something, just draw a picture!

- are there any animals living on top?
- can you see any signs that animals have used the top?

Gently lift the board and see if there are any animals living underneath.

- are there more or fewer than on top?
- do they move fast or slow when you lift the top?

Try moving the board to other parts of your yard.

- do you find the same kinds of animals?
- does it matter if the board is in the sun or shade?

## Creature feature

### *Short-tailed shrew*

#### *Blarina brevicauda*

If you've ever caught a glimpse of a small gray, pointy-nosed animal zipping around your yard, you may have assumed it was a mouse. However, you may have been lucky enough to have seen a shrew, most likely a short-tailed shrew.

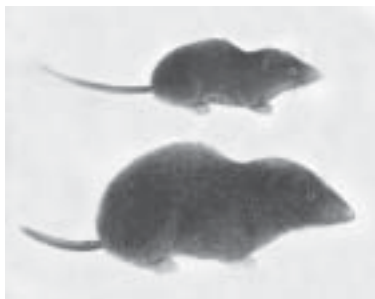
These hyperactive little mammals are quite common in our area but are rarely seen due to their secretive habits. They tend to remain hidden beneath the leaf litter, or even beneath the ground in shallow burrows similar to mole trails. They move about through an extensive network of tunnels without being exposed to danger from above (shrews are a favorite food of owls and coyotes).

Although they look like mice at first glance, shrews are not rodents. They belong to a separate Order of mammals known as Insectivores. Although the name Insectivore suggests that their diet consists largely of insects, shrews are ferocious hunters

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Top: Masked shrew

Bottom: Short-tailed shrew

and will prey on anything that they can catch and overpower. Short-tailed shrews have been known to capture small animals, birds, snakes, frogs, etc. many times their own size. This is partly due to the fact that short-tailed shrews are one of the only known venomous mam-

*Illustrations from: Peterson Field Guides: Mammals. William H. Burt and Richard P. Grossenheider.*



*This picture shows the northeast corner of the Nature Center. In the background is the kitchen and closet area that has been reconfigured to create a separate classroom.*



*Here is the same view as construction got underway. Hopefully it will look a little better than this at the grand re-opening on May 8. Be sure to stop by and see for yourself.*

mals. Their saliva contains a venom that immobilizes large prey so it can be safely handled. The venom is not dangerous to humans, although it may cause pain like a bee sting that lasts for a few days in anyone reckless enough to grab one with bare hands.

Short-tailed shrews are the largest shrews found in our area. They average 85 mm in length (body only) and weigh 13-24 grams.

Although short-tailed shrews are the most common in our area, the masked shrew (*Sorex cinereus*) can also be found regularly. About half the size of a short-tailed shrew (not counting tail length), masked shrews only weigh about 2.5 grams, or about the same as a penny. Several other species of shrews are found in our area, but tend to be uncommon.



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

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
VILLA PARK, IL  
PERMIT NO. 350

**Hours**

Lake View Nature Center  
Monday to Friday – 9:00 am to 4:00 pm  
Saturday and Sunday – Noon to 4:00 pm  
**CLOSED THROUGH APRIL 2004**  
**(re-opening in May)**

Terrace View Park  
Open sunrise to sunset.

**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.