



Homestead Happenings

Newsletter of the Stahl-Conrad Homestead

www.HistoricHalesCorners.org

9724 W. Forest Home Ave., Hales Corners, WI 53130

January, 2019

Winter program

Chase away those winter blues by coming to the Homestead at 2:00 pm on Sunday, February 24 for a program by Matt Smith, land manager at Riveredge Nature Center. Matt's talk is titled "Two Years of Prep for One Day of Seeding: Rebooting an Aging Prairie." We look forward to his insights on site preparation and techniques for creating and restoring native landscapes, many of which we will be able to use here at the Homestead.

Matt has a B.S. in Biology from Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin and previously worked for Green Tree Tree Care and as land manager for the Schlitz Audubon Center. He is currently a member of the board of the Milwaukee Audubon Society. His work experience has left him with a lasting impression of our natural heritage and the need to restore land and educate people about our original plant communities.

Please be sure to join us for this learning opportunity and the chance to socialize with your fellow Homestead members. The meeting is free and open to the public and refreshments will be served.

Big tree contest

Since we have had just a few nominations for the Big Oak and Hickory Contest, we have extended the contest into this coming spring. One reason for the contest is to try to identify as many of the large old trees as possible so please get those nominations in. Entry forms will be available at our event, or leave a message at 414-858-9195 to request them by mail.

Happy New Year!

A new year is upon us which means it is time to renew your membership. We appreciate your continued support since the Homestead relies on this source of revenue to help us meet our operating expenses. Please keep in mind that additional donations are also welcome!

A return envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Thank you!

Our appreciation goes out to the family of Betty Braun for donating rugs that had been woven by Betty's grandmother along with several beautiful quilts that Betty had in her collection.

Thanks also go out to Dave O'Brien for the donation of numerous old tools he had been storing in his garage.

We hope to have all of these items on display in the near future.

Congratulations raffle winners

The drawing for our cash raffle was held at the annual meeting on September 26, 2018. Carl Zepecki won the \$300 third place prize, Bill Holton won \$400 for second place, and the winner of the \$500 grand prize was Tom Hancock. Many thanks to Bill Holton for donating his prize back to the Homestead, and thanks also to those of you who purchased tickets. The Homestead netted \$1460 from the raffle. We would also like to thank Title 100, Inc. for generously sponsoring the printing of the raffle tickets.

Threats to native landscapes

Since part of our mission is to educate the public about pre-settlement landscapes, we must be concerned about the threats posed to natural systems and restorations by nonnative and nativar (cultivars of native plants) species.

In addition to the destruction of original Midwestern prairie and savanna habitats, invasive and aggressive nonnative plant species have the potential to destroy the beauty and biodiversity of rare remnants. A photo in our barn taken by the late Richard Barloga shows an oak savanna remnant heavily infested with European buckthorn. Buckthorn out-competes native herbaceous species, allelopathically toxifies the ground paving the way for garlic mustard, and eventually kills the lower branches of mature open-grown savanna oaks thereby ruining a site's natural potential. A late stage of this can be seen at the southwest corner of Grange Avenue and West Loomis Road where a dead white oak stands in a sea of persistent buckthorn.

Nativars are propagated to select for specific characteristics such as leaf color, compactness of growth or flower size. This reduces the genetic diversity and ecological value of the original. Color and blossom size variations from typical native species can confuse pollinators and, since many cultivated plants are sterile, wildlife is deprived of winter seed sources. Consequently, when doing restoration work and natural landscaping, it is best that nativars be avoided particularly when they might invade natural areas or contaminate native gene pools.

The mission of the Stahl-Conrad Homestead is to create a museum focused on transitions in the land in Hales Corners and its environs from presettlement into the future and to preserve the Stahl-Conrad Homestead as a remnant of a bygone lifestyle.

The Homestead's vision: The land is restored and the buildings are renovated to accommodate changing exhibits and public events.

The Homestead is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization. Your donations and in-kind gifts are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Officers and directors are: president, Delene Hanson; vice president and secretary, Jim Bruening; treasurer, Michael Jedrzejewski; directors: George Berger, William Holton and Dave Zepecki.
