



FRIENDS OF THE LIMBERLOST
 PO BOX 571, GENEVA, IN 46740
 FACEBOOK: FRIENDS OF THE LIMBERLOST
 PHONE: 260-849-0308



THE INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, located in downtown Indianapolis, is featuring a new exhibit about Gene Stratton-Porter! It's called "LIMBERLOST AND FOUND", and it opens to the public June 15 through October 26. *It's a look at the life, writing, photography and heritage of Gene Stratton-Porter. The exhibit will showcase her legacy — "a complex and storied one — and what it tells us about our world today".* Go to indianahistory.org for more information about this exhibit.

THE INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, *STORIES FROM THE STACKS*: Gene Stratton Porter, Saturday, August 3, 2024 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center, join librarians, archivists, and curators as they explore unique stories, highlight recently processed collections, and give you an up-close look at the photos and documents that help Hoosiers remember and share the past. Free parking in the Indiana Historical Society parking lot off of New York Street. Go to indianahistory.org for more details.

WE DO HISTORY.
 INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Indiana Historical Society has been Indiana's premier storyteller since 1830. The Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center is not only the headquarters for IHS but also a museum dedicated to immersing visitors to the past in new ways.

PROGRAMS OFFERED THIS SUMMER AT LIMBERLOST THE ARCHITECTURE OF LIMBERLOST

Saturday, July 20, 2024 @ 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Presented by Limberlost Site Manager, Shaun Payne. He will highlight everything you need to know about the architecture of the Limberlost Cabin, from the Queen Ann style to the tiny design features that make it unique. You'll see where Gene Stratton-Porter drew inspiration for her writing and see why the Porters "cabin home" is really an extravagant house. Shaun's program includes an informative PowerPoint in the classroom at the Limberlost Visitor Center and a walk-around tour of the interior & exterior of the Limberlost Cabin. To purchase an admission ticket visit indianamuseum.org/limberlost, or call Limberlost State Historic Site at [260.368.7428](tel:260.368.7428) to reserve your spot. Walkups are subject to availability. Limberlost State Historic Site is located at 200 East 6th St., Geneva, IN 46740. The price for this special program is \$6 per person (25% discount for members of the Indiana State Museum).



FLAT 50 PLUS BIKE TOUR (33rd year) Saturday, June 22, 2024

For more information and to register online go to:

www.adamscountybicycleclub.com



Deadline to register is midnight, June 19. CHECK-IN STARTS AT 6:30 AM on the 22nd at Riverside Center, Decatur, IN. The bike tour includes a lunch break at Limberlost State Historic Site and features live Bluegrass music for Flat 50 riders. Ride one of the flattest rides of the year in Northeast Indiana. You'll get peace of mind knowing this ride has some of the most well furnished SAG stops. If you are a bicyclist, you probably know that SAG stands for "support and gear". During a long bike ride, a SAG vehicle is a welcome sight as you fatigue or encounter mechanical complications with your bike.

FRIENDS OF LIMBERLOST OFFER THEIR 1ST PLEIN AIR PAINT OUT



1st Limberlost Plein Air Paint Out
Offered in conjunction with the
Geneva End of Summer Event
Saturday, August 17th
Sponsored by:
Friends of the Limberlost

Paint the Limberlost!

Seeking Artists wanting to participate in a
Plein Air Event around Geneva, Indiana

Work in the medium of your choice:
Oil - Acrylic - Watercolor - Pastels

Choose to paint these:

- Gene Stratton-Porter's Limberlost Cabin
- Limberlost Swamp
- Historic Homes and Structures in Geneva
- Ceylon Covered Bridge



For more information about this event or to request a registration form contact:
Melissa Fey, email: linngrove@live.com, Phone or Text: 260-849-0967

The Limberlost State Historic Site features the Limberlost Cabin—the 13-room home of Gene Stratton Porter. She was, as you may know, an author and nature photographer, but she was certainly an artist as well.

The Limberlost Cabin and surrounding gardens are beautiful, and the grounds of the site are also a protected historic area. They practically call out for an artist to paint scenes that include flowers, stone walls, and unique structures such as the smoke house and carriage house.

You can see in the distance across the street from the historic site a portion of the restored Limberlost Swamp Nature Preserve. Today there are nearly 1800 acres of restored wetlands with miles of hiking trails and views of nature that please the eye.

There are also many historic homes and structures in or near the downtown district of Geneva. Artists will have many opportunities to capture the beauty of Geneva and the surrounding natural area.

THE PAINT OUT SCHEDULE AUGUST 17—for registration form contact Melissa Fey 260-849-0967 email: linngrove@live.com

- **8-9 AM** Check-in at the Limberlost State Historic Site Visitor Center, 200 E. 6th St., Geneva, (located on the corner of HWY. US 27 & 6th St. in Geneva). Artists must provide their own canvas and/or art media. There are NO Registration fees. In lieu of a registration fee, we encourage artists to give a free will donation to the Friends of Limberlost to support the legacy of the naturalist, Gene Stratton-Porter.
- **Lunch** The Friends group will provide assistance and a free lunch for the participants.
- **3 PM** Return to Limberlost SHS to submit art work for display. There are no prizes for artists. Any sold items must stay on display until 5 PM.
- **5PM** Artists must pick-up their unsold art.

RULES:

- ◆ Only artists who register on the morning of August 17, or who have pre-registered earlier than Aug. 17 may participate in the *Limberlost Paint Out*.
- ◆ All artists should check in at Limberlost State Historic Site between 8-9 AM on the morning of Saturday, August 17, to register, or if pre-registered, to confirm their participation in the Paint Out.
- ◆ Only artwork created on Aug. 17, 2024 will be accepted. Artwork can be displayed from 3-5 PM at the Limberlost Visitor Center. Artists can exhibit and price their work for sale. All sales will be handled by the artist. A nominal portion of the sale goes to Friends of Limberlost.
- ◆ All displayed artwork must be labeled with the artist's name and contact information. All Art mediums will be accepted: Oil, Acrylic, Watercolor, and Pastels.

“Wonderfully written and illustrated. A great introduction to Gene Stratton-Porter and the Limberlost for a new generation of readers.” —Shaun Payne, Site manager, Limberlost State Historic Site, Geneva, Indiana.



BIRD GIRL

A new book written for children about Gene Stratton-Porter just came out in March. The author is award-winning Jill Esbaum (pictured below). Jill is the author of nearly 60 fiction and nonfiction books for children.



Here's what the esteemed Kirkus Reviews had to say about

BIRD GIRL

Growing up in 1870s Indiana, young Geneva Grace Stratton loves to roam and explore, watching and wondering. “Who cares if her apron tears or her face and hands get scratched up?” She’s especially enamored of the birds she sees on the farm. After nursing an injured hawk, she tends to other hurt birds. She adjusts to a different life when her family moves to town, but she misses the country. As an adult, known as Gene, she marries and, in her new country home, happily reconnects with the birds she loves and writes true stories about her experiences with them. Her dream slips away when an editor demands that her work be illustrated with images of stuffed birds. No way. An incident with her daughter’s parrot inspires her to learn photography, and she’s off to nearby Limberlost Swamp, patiently observing birds and taking photos. After five years, she produces photos that wow the editor of Recreation magazine. Esbaum relies on simply stated language and syntax, emphasizing Gene’s love of birds and allowing her determination to shine through. Gibbon’s glowing, detailed acrylic-and-ink illustrations appear in vignettes or in full-page or double-page spreads, matching and enhancing the text. Though greatly respected in her own time, Gene Stratton-Porter is far less well known today; this work rectifies that oversight—this self-taught woman naturalist will come alive for young readers.

BIRD GIRL is for sale in the Limberlost Gift Shop for \$18.99 . If you can’t visit the gift shop or purchase the book elsewhere, just send a check payable to *Friends of the Limberlost* in the amount of \$30.47 [this includes \$18.99 for the book + \$1.33 sales tax + \$10.15 for shipping and packaging anywhere in the U.S.]

Send your check to Friends of the Limberlost, PO Box 571, Geneva, IN 46740. Be sure to include your shipping address, and we will mail you the book via the U.S. Postal Service. You should get the book in a week or two.

ANNUAL ONLINE AUCTION FUNDRAISER FOR LIMBERLOST SWAMP REMEMBERED

STARTS AUGUST 1, at 12:15 am
ENDS AUGUST 9, at 12 pm



Creek Run is an environmental engineering company with offices in Montpelier and Laporte, IN. Creek Run is a full service consulting firm that provides environmental and engineering services throughout the Midwest. Their annual fundraiser is conducted in memory of James Peterson, founder of Jay Petroleum, and one of the original owners of Creek Run. James, who passed away in 2012, was one of the early supporters of Limberlost wetland restoration projects, which today total 1800 acres in Jay and Adams County, Indiana, and include miles of nature trails open to the public.



This annual auction fundraiser is, once again, being organized by Abby Michael, Events Coordinator, for Creek Run. If you, or the company you work for, have something you think would be a great item to include in this online auction fundraiser, please contact Abby by email, amichael@creekrun.com, and make arrangements to get your item(s) included in this online auction helping us raise money for the Limberlost wetland restoration projects.

Even if you don't have anything to contribute to the auction, it's very easy to participate. There will be a great number of items that are being auctioned online to raise money for Limberlost Swamp Remembered (LSR). When August 1 gets closer just go to <https://www.32auctions.com/creekrun2024> and create your account. Check out the many items that you can bid on. You can start your bidding on August 1. Keep checking your selected items to see if anyone has out bid you. You can keep bidding on your favorite items until the bidding is over at noon on August 9. If you are the highest bidder, you are the winner! It's fun. It's exciting, and proceeds go to Limberlost Swamp Remembered, a standing committee of Friends of the Limberlost.

LSR supports Limberlost wetland restoration and LSR works closely with the Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources Division of Nature Preserve to bring back portions of the Limberlost Swamp made famous by Indiana author and naturalist, Gene Stratton-Porter. We typically purchase flood-prone land from willing sellers and help pay the expenses needed to return that land to its original condition—to wetlands.

By participating in this online auction, you are raising money for LSR wetland restoration projects. This is the 18th year that Creek Run has conducted an annual Fundraiser for Friends of the Limberlost. In addition to their annual online auction, Creek Run has been soliciting annual sponsorship donations from the many companies and individuals they work with to help support Limberlost wetland restoration projects. Over the entire 18 year fundraising effort, Creek Run has raised a total of \$58,561.07 for the Limberlost Swamp Remembered wetland restoration projects!



Building Bridges with Birds by Terri & Randy Lehman

Audubon Great Lakes recently contacted Three Rivers Birding board of directors and asked if a few of our members would be interested in joining a bird walk with State Senator, Sue Glick, as a thank-you for her support of Senate Enrolled Act 246, a bill that passed the Indiana Legislature in March of this year. It's a bill that can provide tax breaks for developers and homeowners that preserve wetlands.

Bird walks with legislators is an activity promoted by the National Audubon Society as a great way of *Building Bridges with Birds*. It's a way to connect birding enthusiasts with legislators and other government officials. This program was conceived and used with great success by Tykee James, Government Affairs Coordinator for the National Audubon Society. We were fortunate to hear him speak at the Dunes Birding Festival on May 17. He is an energetic leader and creator of some good programs meant to bring people together.

State Senator, Sue Glick, lives in LaGrange. She has been an advocate for protecting Indiana's natural areas, and she currently serves as chairperson of the State Senate Natural Resources Committee. When some Indiana wetland protections were eliminated during the legislative session earlier this year, it was Senator Glick, who introduced Senate Enrolled Act 246 which encourages landowners to preserve wetlands on their land. According to Senator Glick, "Wetlands offer many benefits to the people and wildlife within our communities,"



Pictured from left-to-right: Sue Glick, Fred Wooley, Sabra Stevens, Terri Gorney Lehman, Tai Gunter (the tallest person), Mitchell Greenburg, & Randy Lehman



All of us standing on the steps that lead up to the front door of Gene Stratton-Porter's home which overlooks Sylvan Lake (seen behind us in the other picture).

guided tour of Gene Stratton-Porter's home. Gene Stratton-Porter was an author, naturalist, and nature photographer who wrote herself into her novels as "The Birdwoman," so the tour of her home was a perfect activity to include on our bird hike.

According to the tally that Fred kept, we heard or saw 17 species of birds on our bird hike, including a Sandhill crane, Acadian flycatcher, cedar waxwing, house wren, and yellow warbler.

Beside birding, we had good conversations on nature and history-related subjects. This event truly could be described as "building bridges with birds."

On May 23, Randy, Terri, & Fred represented Three Rivers Birding (formerly Stockbridge Audubon Society of Ft. Wayne). Mitchell Greenberg represented Audubon Great Lakes, Sabra Stevens was there for Hollowell Consulting, and Tai Gunter for South Bend-Elkhart Audubon Society. We all gathered together for a bird walk at the Gene Stratton Porter State Historic Site in Rome City. The historic site is not far from Senator Glick's home, and we knew that she enjoyed learning about Indiana history.

The bird walk was scheduled for one hour but lasted two and a half hours because everyone was having a good time. Site Manager, Tiffany Parker, had been contacted in advance of our visit, and she arranged for Stacey Poage to give us an excellent

What is the State of Wetland Protection in the State of Indiana?by Randy Lehman



In the previous newsletter (Spring 2024), we reported on the status of wetland protection in Indiana. HB1383 passed through the Indiana legislature without much difficulty, and it quickly downgraded wetland protection in Indiana.

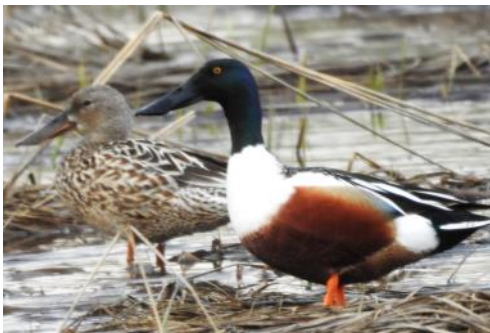
Before passage of HB1383, Indiana's wetlands were grouped into three tiers by the state. Only the highest ranked Class III wetlands received full protections. Class II wetlands had fewer protections, and Class I had none. That system went into effect in 2022. HB1383 redefined select Class III wetlands as Class II, leaving more of Indiana's wetlands at risk. HB1383 reduced the number of wetlands that are protected in the state by eliminating the definition of Class III wetlands, the most ecologically important wetlands.

In response to HB1383, some Indiana legislators, led by Senator Sue Glick, put together SB246. The bill gathered bipartisan support and passed through both legislative branches, and Governor Holcomb signed SB246 into law. SB246 gives tax incentives to private landowners for protecting wetlands on their property by allowing the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to certify that the property is "wildland".

Senator Sue Glick was reported as saying that developers told her the bill would give them an incentive not to destroy wetlands, and it would encourage homeowners to maintain them over time.

According to one online source... "The Indiana Legislature has taken a step in the right direction for wildlife and communities that depend on Indiana's wetlands. SB 246, signed into law yesterday by Governor Holcomb and introduced by Sen. Sue Glick (R-LaGrange), will encourage landowners to protect wetlands on their property by allowing some privately owned wetlands to be given "wildland" status, which qualifies them for tax breaks."

In another online source attributable to Policy Director of Freshwater for Audubon Great Lakes, Brian Vigue stated..."*The overwhelming majority of Indiana's wetlands are on private land, and encouraging landowners to preserve them is one tool to keep state wetlands safe. That's important because wetlands protection pays dividends. Among their benefits, wetlands provide habitat for vulnerable marsh birds, and protect communities from flooding. Communities like Tipton, Indiana, which suffered catastrophic flooding in 2013, serve as notable examples of what can happen when wetlands, and their water storage potential, are lost. While we are deeply disappointed in the passage of HB 1383 into law, we are encouraged to see Indiana lawmakers working to advance solutions to protect these vital natural resources. We will continue our work with lawmakers to achieve comprehensive wetland policy that is good for all Hoosiers.*"



It will be interesting to see if the process used by landowners to get their land classified as "wildlands" is a relatively simple or complicated process. Is there enough DNR staff to take on an increased demand from landowners seeking "wildland" status for their property, and what is the cost to landowners to secure and keep the "wildlands" classification? If you, or someone you know, decides to get wetlands classified as "wildlands", please let me know how the process worked for you. We could let others know how well SB246 is working. Email me at: randylehman@comcast.net

INDIANA NEEDS MORE WETLANDS

CAN MORE OF THE LIMBERLOST BE RESTORED ANYTIME SOON?

The Limberlost Swamp Remembered Committee (LSR for short) has been trying to purchase more land for wetland restoration. After being out-bid in land auctions the past two years, LSR is taking steps to make it more likely that the Friends of the Limberlost will have a better chance at purchasing more land within the Limberlost Conservation area in the future. Restoring the Limberlost Swamp has always been a main goal of the Friends of the Limberlost, but increasing land prices in Adams County and Jay County and the preference of sellers for quick auction sales, has created a challenge for the Friends—we have no time to work with landowners to arrive at an agreed upon price before the land goes up for sale, and our cash reserves can't meet the demands of the marketplace. The Friends of the Limberlost rely heavily on grants and donations, which is a fundraising strategy that rarely works when sellers prefer land auctions.

So, we are making adjustments to our land acquisition strategy to meet the demands of this marketplace. Our goal now is to substantially increase the balance in our Limberlost Swamp Remembered (LSR) bank account so that we are better positioned to successfully participate in land auctions.

In the past, land purchases that did not take place at an auction, allowed the Friends time to appeal to our members and others in order to accumulate the funds needed for a particular land purchase. You may remember that we ran a fundraising campaign in 2020 & 2021 to raise money to purchase the Royer property, which added 10 acres to the Loblolly Marsh.



Hooded Merganser floats leisurely along in a Limberlost pond this spring

Many members of the Friends of the Limberlost have contributed annually to the LSR account—annual membership donations often include an extra donation for this important account. We use money in the LSR account to purchase land, but we also use these funds for other things: for example, to help the Indiana Division of Nature Preserves pay a Limberlost land management expense, or to enhance the visitor's experience by paying for mowing trails, for interpretation signage, kiosks, and benches.



Woodcock at Limberlost Nature Preserve—Adams County side

Occasionally we get generous donations from people who appreciate what we are doing and who have the opportunity to make a significantly larger donation to the Friends. For example, the Limberlost Swamp Remembered committee recently received a \$50,000 anonymous donation. Obviously, a very generous donation like this should improve our chances of purchasing more land.

Today the LSR account has grown to \$250,000. It's shocking to note that four or five years ago this amount of money would have easily purchased 40 acres of flood prone farmland in Adams County or Jay County, Indiana. Today it might only purchase 10 to 14 acres, and this high price for land, including flood-prone farmland, shows no signs of going down in the near future. Good time to be a seller, but a challenging time to be a buyer.

The Friends President, Willy De Smet, and Ken Brunswick (who started the Limberlost Swamp Remembered Committee back in 1993) would like to see the Friends purchase more flood-prone acreage in Jay County, perhaps adjacent to the Royer property (now referred to as the Rezits property) at the Loblolly Marsh. We will keep our members updated on our land purchasing goals with updates in the newsletters, or by special appeals for immediate donations. Regardless of what opportunities happen this year, with ongoing support from our members and non-members, our goal is to get closer to having the funds needed to compete successfully in today's challenging land market.

Randy Lehman, Retired Limberlost Historic Site Manager (1999-2016)
Current Friends of the Limberlost Treasurer and LSR Committee Chairperson

Who are Friends of the Limberlost ?

The Friends became a 501(c)3 not-for-profit in August of 1994. Previous to 1994, the Friends were volunteering at Limberlost State Historic Site helping with events, programs, and giving tours of the Limberlost Cabin, but when Ken Brunswick applied for an EPA 319 Grant for the Friends of the Limberlost to improve & protect the surface water quality of local watersheds, IDEM said the Friends needed to have 501(c)3 not-for-profit status, and so the Friends successfully applied for and were awarded 501(c)3 status in 1994-1995. With that 501(c)3 status established, Ken's efforts to bring back portions of the Limberlost swamp really took a big step forward, and the mission of the Friends became 2-fold:

- 1) To help the Indiana State Museum & State Historic Sites operate Limberlost State Historic Site. The Friends assist Limberlost by providing volunteers for daily operations, events, school outreach, and by providing financial support for approved projects that help preserve the legacy of Gene Stratton-Porter.
- 2) Limberlost Swamp Remembered, a standing committee of the Friends, works with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Nature Preserves to promote the acquisition, restoration, and enjoyment of wetlands in the Wabash/Limberlost/Loblolly watersheds associated with the literary works of Indiana author and naturalist, Gene Stratton-Porter.

The current Board of Directors for Friends of the Limberlost:

Willy De Smet	President	Portland, IN
LaDonna Habegger	Vice-President	Berne, IN
Randy Lehman	Treasurer & LSR Chair	Geneva, IN
Terri Lehman	Secretary	Ft. Wayne, IN
Melissa Fey	Board Member	Linn Grove, IN
Sean Dedert	Board Member	Geneva, IN
David Rezits	Board Member	Ft. Wayne, IN
Bill Hubbard	Board Member	Geneva, IN
Jackie Caffee	Board Member	Geneva, IN
Greg McCallister	Board Member	Portland, IN
Andrew Briggs	Board Member	Geneva, IN



The Friends of the Limberlost have board meetings on the 3rd Monday of every month, except there is no meeting in December. Board meetings take place in the Limberlost Visitor Center classroom at Limberlost State Historic Site in Geneva. The Limberlost Swamp Remembered Committee meets at 6:30 PM followed by the Board Meeting. Both meetings are open to the public. Currently FOL has two Board vacancies. The Friends welcomes anyone to their meetings who is interested in learning about what we do and why we do it. If you are interested in nature, local history, and the environment, or you are just looking to be part of a friendly group of conservation-minded people sharing what they know about nature & the Limberlost, you should join us. Attend a meeting and stay for a little while or stay for both meetings. There's no need to let us know in advance that you



April 2024 photo of four Sandhill Cranes at the Limberlost Swamp Nature preserve.

are coming. Check us out! The Friends of the Limberlost is one of the good things life has to offer. For more information call or text Randy Lehman-260-849-0308 or email randvplehman@comcast.net

FRIENDS OF THE LIMBERLOST NEW MEMBERSHIP & MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Friends of the Limberlost is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation. We support Limberlost State Historic Site, which is owned and operated by the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites. We also support the IDNR—Division of Nature Preserves which manages the restoration of wetlands in the Limberlost Swamp Conservation Area. Your membership dues and extra donations are vital to the many projects honoring the memory and legacy of Indiana author, naturalist, and nature photographer, Gene Stratton-Porter.

You decide how your annual dues will be spent. You choose one of the following:

- Choose the Limberlost Historic Site Friends who support projects and help pay expenses associated with the improvement or the betterment of Limberlost State Historic Site
- Choose Limberlost Swamp Remembered, a committee of the Friends of the Limberlost, which is primarily focused on Limberlost Swamp restoration projects
- Or you can support both missions of the Friends of the Limberlost

As a member you receive our quarterly newsletter. You get one free tour of the Limberlost Cabin, a 10% discount on Limberlost Gift Shop purchases, and you get a 15% discount if you purchase a membership in the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites. As a member of the Friends of the Limberlost you help us preserve the legacy of Gene Stratton-Porter and help us restore the environment by bringing back the Limberlost Swamp.

If you have any questions about your membership, please call or text Randy Lehman, membership chairperson, at 260-849-0308 or email randylehman@comcast.net

Please make checks payable to: FRIENDS OF THE LIMBERLOST. Mail both your check and completed membership form to: PO BOX 571, GENEVA IN 46740

STEP ONE

Select which mission of the Friends Group you want to support by checking a box to the right

☐ Limberlost Historic Site Friends—dues and any additional donations you make supports Limberlost State Historic Site and associated events, projects, and programs

☐ Limberlost Swamp Remembered Friends—dues and any additional donation you make supports Limberlost wetland restorations projects managed by the Indiana Division of Nature Preserves

☐ Combination Limberlost Historic Site and Swamp Remembered Friends—dues and any additional donation are equally shared by both groups

STEP TWO

Choose the type of Membership you want by checking a box below

☐ Older Adults—\$10

☐ Business—\$50 (Please enter the name of a contact-person below)

☐ Other Individuals—\$20

☐ Family—\$35

☐ Lifetime—\$1,000

NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

☐ Check the box if you want your newsletter mailed to you via the US Postal Service. We'd like to EMAIL the newsletter to you because it saves us money and time, and the e-newsletter is in color and has more pages. However, we are happy to mail you a "paper copy" of the newsletter, if that is what you prefer—just check the box. If you check the box and give us an email address, we will send you both versions of the newsletter.

AMOUNT ENCLOSED (additional donation appreciated!): \$ _____

ANY COMMENTS?