

Lime Hollow wish list

The following items, new or used, would greatly assist operations at the Center if anyone wishes to donate one or more:

- Binoculars
- Cars or trucks – consider donating instead of trading in your old car; a tax deductible gift to LHCEC may be more advantageous than the small amount an automobile dealer will allow
- Empty Altoids® tin containers
- Field Guide Books – geology, wild flowers, reptiles, mammals, trees, etc.
- Hand tools – hammers, saws, axes, wrenches, shovels, rakes, etc.
- Ladders – different sizes
- Laptop computer and LCD projector
- Lumber – treated and untreated for various building projects
- Public address system or a bull horn
- Riding lawn mower
- Short range walkie-talkie sets – for hiking groups to communicate; also good for emergencies
- Snow blower
- Sound system (bookshelf speakers, 70 watt integrated amplifier, microphone pre-amp, and an all-weather microphone)
- Taxidermy mounts – fox, weasel, mink, birds of all sorts – prefer specimens indigenous to the Central New York area
- Tractor with loader – to load gravel for roadways, etc...
- Wheel barrows

Consider:

The Natural Implications!

Natural Implications, Lime Hollow's latest public program offering, gives birth to a monthly forum for interpreting our profound-and often complex connection with the natural world. Natural Implications is more than just a book club or open mic reading: we'll explore books, poetry, guest speakers, visual art, music . . . we'll go wherever the realms of culture and nature intertwine.

Become a charter member of Natural Implications; contact the office and find out how to participate in initial discussions to set day, time, and venue. Remember: it won't happen without you!



3091 Gracie Road
Cortland, NY 13045-9355

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Lime Hollow's Woodland Whispers

Volume 11 Number 1

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New Benchmark for LHCEC!

November 23, 2004, was indeed an historic day for LHCEC when ground was broken for our new visitor center! While less than cooperative weather conditions have made progress slow, the foundation and log framework are now in place. So, LHCEC friends can "keep an eye out" for the massive log wall building as it continues to grow at 332 McLean Road. (Those who like to know details may be surprised to learn that no nails or iron of any sort went into erection of the walls and roof trusses. The huge 30 inch diameter logs and structural members are all joined utilizing mortise and tenon and other old time construction techniques.) The uniqueness of LHCEC's new visitor center is sure to pique the curiosity of many who travel busy McLean Road.

LHCEC launched the public phase of its *Ready to Grow* capital campaign on February 5, 2005, to coincide with completion of the new visitor center foundation and arrival of the

visitor center logs. A well-attended press conference, featuring a \$50,000 donation from Senator Jim Seward, resulted in extensive exposure through newspaper, radio, and television outlets.

The *Ready to Grow* building campaign has also benefited from the generosity of members and friends who responded to LHCEC's matching grant appeal last November. To date, more than \$23,000 has been received to match \$20,000 pledged by one of LHCEC's long-time benefactors. A donation of \$20,000 has also been approved by the Cortland County Legislature to help LHCEC promote travel and tourism in the county. These and other funds will allow completion of Phase I (basic building shell, windows and doors, etc.) for the visitor center. An additional \$200,000 remains to be secured to allow completion of the building (porches, composting toilets, etc.) and interior furnishings.

Our Mission

The mission of the Lime Hollow Center for Environment & Culture is to provide year-round environmental education and outdoor recreation opportunities through the utilization and protection of the natural and cultural attributes of the Lime Hollow area.

LHCEC Visitor Hours

Monday – Saturday: 9AM - 4PM

Sunday: 1PM – 4PM

LHCEC Trails: Open during daylight hours

LHCEC Telephone: 607.758.5462

E-mail: limehollow@clarityconnect.com

Web: <http://www.limehollow.org>



New Benchmark for LHCEC! continued on page 2

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Newsletter

Charles Yaple, Ph. D.

Layout

natolidesign

New Opportunity for Natural Connections:

Young Naturalist Club

Learning about nature shouldn't have to end when school begins. Why let Nature's Keepers' preschoolers have all the fun discovering the beauty and wonder of the natural world? Become a part of the Young Naturalists Club, and let your school-age child continue discovering the mysteries of nature. Each month, school-age children, together with

their parents, will explore a particular nature topic through stories, experiments/ activities, hikes, and crafts. Plans for this exciting parent-led opportunity are in the early stages. Call the Lime Hollow office to find out how you can be involved! We anticipate a first meeting in Autumn 2005.

New Benchmark for LHCEC Continued...

LHCEC leaders are pursuing several avenues to secure the additional funds including continuation of its Ready to Grow campaign (see insert). Several naming opportunities still exist for portions of the new visitor center and its grounds. To date, purchase of an Aldo Leopold* bench has been the most popular gifting method chosen by supporters. Eighteen benches with nameplates honoring the donor(s) are under construction. These rustically handsome benches will be placed around LHCEC trails and buildings to provide rest for weary hikers and to honor those who have demonstrated their faith in LHCEC's mission. (It is also possible to purchase a "Leopold" bench for one's own home or grounds.)

Meanwhile, thanks to the growing support of those who purchase LHCEC's Christmas and "living" trees, a new landscaping service will be offered to the public this spring. Utilizing the talents of staff members who are graduates of the Syracuse College of Environmental Science and Forestry, LHCEC can provide certified advice, plans, nursery stock, and installation service for local residents needing assistance in beautifying their property. Of course, LHCEC's "Naturscaping" service will promote native species and arrangements designed to attract wildlife. Assistance will also be available for those experiencing problems with nuisance wildlife. What better way to support the Lime Hollow Center for Environment and Culture than to beautify one's own property and admire its grace from a comfortable "Leopold" bench?



The "Leopold" bench

– Charles Yaple

**For those not familiar with conservation/environmental history, Aldo Leopold is recognized as a pioneer in the science of ecology and the father of the modern environmental movement. His book, A Sand County Almanac, is considered a classic in the realm of environmental literature.*



(From left to right) Dr. Charles Yaple, LHCEC Executive Director; Scott Steve, Chair of the Cortland County Legislature; Linda Hartssock, Executive Director of the Cortland County Business Development Corporation; and NYS Senator James Seward.

Magical Moments. Memorable Days.

Winter Feather Chasing

by Ryan Butryn

18 December 2004

Stepping outside at daybreak on a frosty morning is always a magical moment, but when you see seven species of passerines (perching songbirds) and two raptors (birds of prey) before leaving your driveway, it just might be a decent day for birding. As our party piled in the Suzuki Birding Sidekick (Kerry's car) armed with binoculars, field guides, and coffee, I had a hunch it would be a memorable day. The sun was anxious to rise, leaving behind a pink sky that lasted well into the morning, giving a magical hue to the fields we scanned for raptors and shrikes. Our eyes were focussed on bird feeders, electric lines, and open water. The reason for this blustery birding blitz was the Cortland Christmas Bird Count.

Cortland bird enthusiasts have contributed to the national Christmas Bird Count (CBC) for a majority of the past 85 years. The count takes place within a 15-mile diameter circle and lasts a full 24 hour calendar day. Each party covers a specific portion of the circle to ensure that birds are not counted twice. The result is a snapshot of the bird life in the count area each year. Comparing the standardized counts from year to year can display trends in the North American bird population. This yearly event is a tradition for over 50,000 observers nationwide.

Commonly overlooked resident birds must be accurately counted, receiving their deserved attention. Migratory waterbirds, finches, and birds of prey are of special interest as they typically constitute the bulk of birds seen during the CBC period. Great-horned Owls establish breeding territories in early winter and several other owl species can be found with regularity. In addition, hardy sparrows, bluebirds, and robins are always good birds to see during this time. This year's Cortland Count tallied 65 species (including a few "count week" birds) and 9,990 total individuals.

Ignoring scrunched faces of homeowners questioning why their property was under surveillance, our CBC team scoured the areas we were assigned. The driving was interrupted by a hike around Lime Hollow Nature Center. This area received little attention in the past but proved very productive for our group. As we counted a large flock of Cedar Waxwings near the Nature Center parking lot, a "Grey Ghost" (male Northern Harrier) came out of nowhere giving us a very close look. A Red-breasted Nuthatch and Golden-crowned Kinglet joined the abundant Chickadees in the Lime Hollow woods. After more driving in the late afternoon, we joined other members of the Cortland Bird Club for a potluck dinner.

A unique aspect of CBC tradition is sharing the day's sightings with everyone while preliminary totals are calculated. An unwritten rule (as explained by the veterans) is to surprise everyone with a really great sighting. It should be determined before the meeting what bird your group observed will have the greatest "wow-factor." Other good sightings may be used as decoys to protect the drama surrounding a special bird. Fortunately, our group had a very good bird to report. However, I could not hold back talking about it before the compilation, eliminating every drop of suspense. Our bird of the day was a Cortland CBC first, the majestic Golden Eagle! At first glance it appeared to be a Bald Eagle, but the smaller head and slight dihedral



A Great Horned Owl is only one of several species Cortland bird enthusiasts get to follow.

wing position while soaring proved otherwise. Other groups were able to surprise the crowd with great sightings like a Merlin and Eastern Phoebe. Lots of laughs and great food wrapped up a fun day of feather chasing. Surprise ending or not, it was a privilege to participate in a 105 year national tradition. Special thanks to Matt Young for organizing and compiling the Cortland CBC; his efforts and knowledge are much appreciated. Please contact the Nature Center if interested in participating in the 2005 Cortland Christmas Bird Count.

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2nd Annual Benefit Auction!

Got stuff you'd like to get rid of in a creative and productive way? Lime Hollow is looking for donations for its 2nd Annual Benefit Auction (to be held August 27, 2005!) We're looking for donations of merchandise and services of all kinds! Acceptable items include antiques, tools, furniture, small/large appliances, and more. (All we ask is that they be in good condition.) Own a business? Please do consider donating new merchandise (building, automotive, office supplies are perfect!)...gift certificates...or how about a donation of services such as auto repairs, backhoe work, or dry cleaning? Donations will be accepted at the Lime Hollow Center located on 3091 Gracie Road. (Donation "pick-ups" can also be arranged at 758-5462!)

A Powerful Process Heightens Awareness at LHCEC...

Nature's Half-tracks!

by Dr. Gus

Did you ever walk through woods or over fields on a winter day after a snowstorm and find yourself fooled by tracks that aren't tracks? It's the explorer in each of us that makes us keep looking for the unexpected or undiscovered. Robert Frost expressed this idea in "A Passing Glimpse":

Was something brushed across my mind
That no one on earth will ever find?
Heaven gives its glimpses only to those
Not in position to look too close.

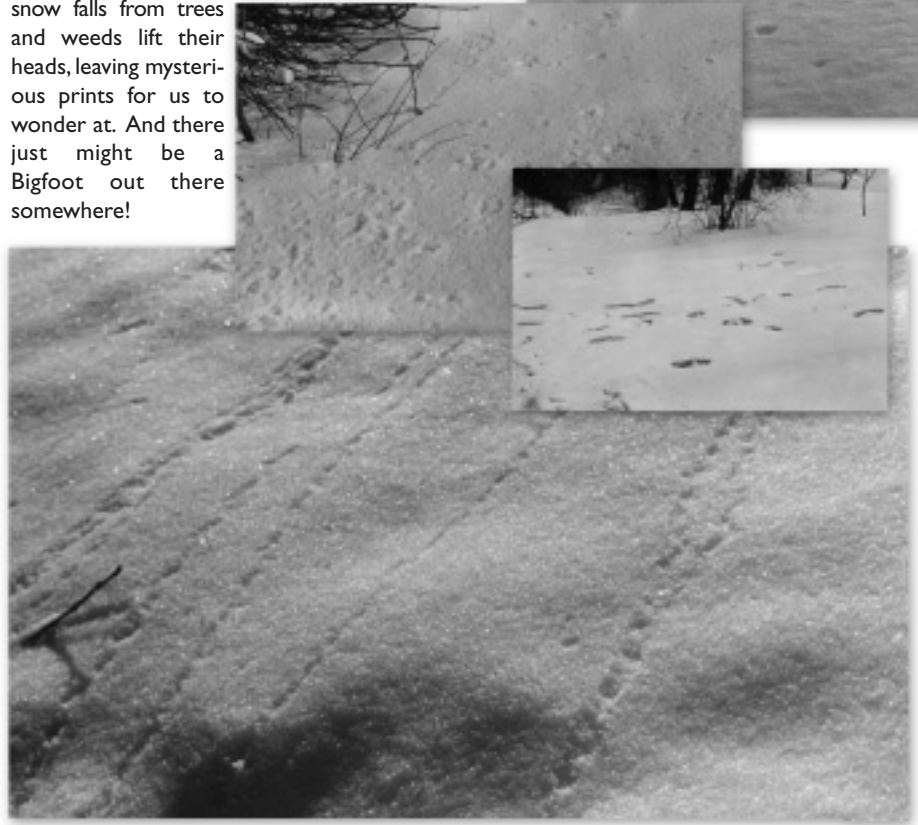
Sometimes I find giant footprints along the trail – is it a Bigfoot, or perhaps a woolly mammoth from Ice Age times? Is something really big lurking in that spruce thicket up ahead? Why spoil this excursion into the prehistoric past by being rational? Who would dare suggest that this giant track was just the mark of a clump of snow fallen from the boughs above?

Along the bank of a stream I see evidence of a great migration of lemmings. Drawn by some piper's magic notes, they have clambered over the edge to drown in the water below. All that remains are the numerous tracks of little feet. Why look closer? – for then we see that these tracks end at little snow balls, and each began where an alder branch, sweeping back and forth in the wind, had scuffed up a pebble of snow and sent it rolling down the bank.

Out in the wind-blown pasture are the imprints of the wings of a hawk or owl as it swooped down to pick up a mouse meal. Why notice that goldenrod stalks, bent by the weight of ice trapped in old flower clusters, have been swept by the wind in an arc over the smooth snow?

What are these small prints out on the hay field? Looks like a flock of snow buntings has been by. A closer look shows that grass stalks, bent by the snow, have finally been released by the February sun, leaving these delicate "foot-prints".

We don't really mind these practical jokes nature plays on us. We realize that, when no one is there to watch, the faces of forest and field are changing. Light and fluffy snow falls on the supple stems in the still of the night. Then, in the warming sun of the morning, snow falls from trees and weeds lift their heads, leaving mysterious prints for us to wonder at. And there just might be a Bigfoot out there somewhere!



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Time to trade for a new car?

Remember LHCEC

That is exactly what Ann and Joe O'Rourke did recently! The O'Rourke's 1994 Dodge Intrepid was getting old and the dealer wasn't offering much in terms of a trade. So, Ann and Joe kindly donated the automobile to Lime Hollow. We auctioned it off to the highest bidder and received \$1,000. It was a win for everyone-LHCEC got some needed funds, the O'Rourke's got a nice income tax deduction, and the buyer drove away in a decent automobile at a bargain price.



Volunteer Spotlight:

Hats off to Bob!

By Carol Navarro

One frosty morn in January as I was hiking the trails, I noticed another set of fresh tracks. I thought to myself, "Who could be hiking these trails so early in the day?" That question, I've since discovered, has an usual answer: it's Bob Martin! We have much to crow about with our new maps and trails, but without Bob's contributions of time, financial investment, ideas, leadership, and oh yeah-work, they would not be what they are today. We gave much thanks to Walt Anderson for the new maps (See previous Vol. 9, number 4 issue of Woodland Whispers). But when we want to express gratitude for trail conditions, marking, and maintenance, our hats go off to Bob.

Bob's talents and generosity are very obvious on the trails. First, you won't get lost on the new trails because Bob not only found and purchased the new trail markers that correspond with the color-coded maps (thanks to Graphic Plus Printing), but he also installed the majority of them. Bob was involved in the development of the new trails with Dale Anderson. Once the path of the new trails was designated, he walked day after day, hour after hour, mile after mile, with Walt Anderson to accurately assess the location for the production of the Graphic Information System maps (GIS) that we now enjoy. Once the maps were completed, he was involved in naming the trails and gave valuable input on how to determine their level of difficulty. Bob is also responsible for the purchase and installation of the gate on the northwest McLean entrance.

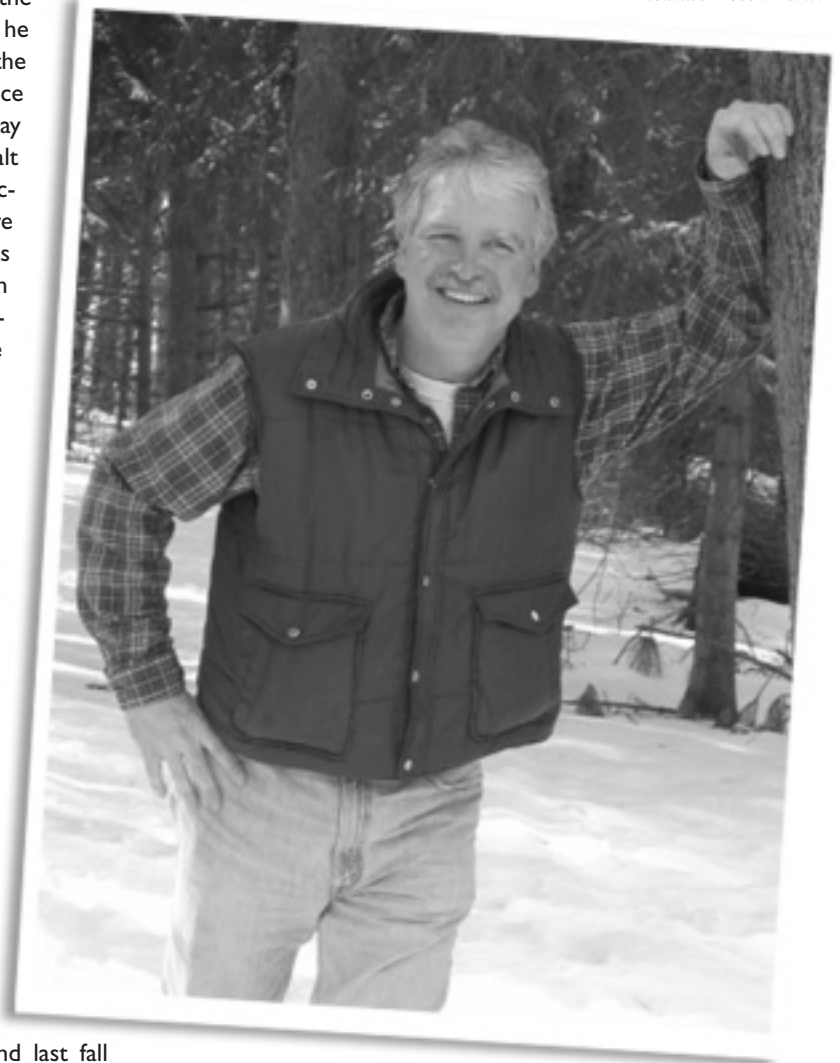
Clearly, Bob is a hands-on kind of guy, who makes a habit of following through. Implementing his ideas for the care, construction, and development of Lime Hollow's seven and a half miles of trails has been a long-time love affair for Bob. He began hiking the trails when they first opened about eight years ago. Like other residents of Cortland County who find our trails so appealing, he finds that after a day indoors, being outside helps balance his life. When asked about his love of hiking, Bob gives credit to his father. His father loved to hike, but his territory was limited because he did not have a driver's license. So, when Bob turned 16, he bought a car and they began hiking the Emerald Necklace trail system near Cleveland Ohio. He experienced first hand the quality of life this activity brought to his father and himself, perhaps even setting the course for the environmental activist that Bob is today.

When asked what about his favorite memory of hiking LHCEC trails, Bob recalled his hike to Baldwin Pond last fall where he saw 200 Canada Geese resting peacefully on the water.

Thinking about Lime Hollow's future, Bob would like to put in a trail from the new visitor center, being constructed on McLean Road, to the main trail system. He invites others to help with the maintenance of Lime Hollow's trail system.

Bob, a member of Lime Hollow's Board of Directors for the past four years and current Chair of the Building and Grounds Committee, has taken on leadership roles with a variety of environmental citizens groups in Cortland County. He is a vital member in CURB, CAPE, and the former Cortland County Environment Management Council. Lime Hollow is most fortunate to have Bob Martin as a member of its team.

Volunteer Robert Martin



An out-of-this-world way for everyone to stay curious...

Astronomy for the Whole Family: Part I

By Larry Klaes

We live in an amazing Universe. At this very moment, we sit on a spinning ball of rock eight thousand miles across. This oversized boulder, our planet Earth, revolves around a yellow star at over 67,000 thousand miles per hour. This star, our Sun, is just one of billions in a vast spiral island of suns we call the Milky Way galaxy. This huge star island floats among billions of other similar realms in a Universe almost fourteen billion years old in both space and time.

Feeling overwhelmed? Perhaps even a bit small and lost in all that vastness and information? Fear not, for as incredible, immense, and numerous as our Cosmos is, it is also a place that can be both appreciated and understood by curious individuals with their families at little cost and with high rewards.

Note this: Much of what we know about this wider reality was revealed by people who began their journeys in astronomy as young children. Simply curious about the Moon, planets, and stars they saw in the night sky and were supported and encouraged in their quests by caring parents.

4 Astronomy – The Science for Everyone

Astronomy is one science that can be enjoyed at a beginner level by people of all ages. One can also enjoy pursuing the study of the heavens in a variety of ways. Though many amateur astronomers take up actively observing the sky, others are “armchair astronomers” who read about and watch documentaries on the subject. Of course, these two ways are certainly not mutually exclusive and one method generally compliments the other.

Where to Begin

So, you have been curious about astronomy and what lies in the heavens above us. You want to share this interest with your family, but aren't quite sure where to begin. You know about folks using binoculars and telescopes and have seen images and read stories about all sorts of amazing worlds up there.

My advice is to start slowly and simply. Don't worry about the fancy equipment and details at the first stage of your journey. If you spend more time with the gadgets than you do observing, you may end up losing the interest and curiosity that brought you to astronomy in the first place.

The first step is to go outside into your own yard on a cloudless night and just take a look around that huge black vault high above. Don't worry if you don't know where Sirius and Saturn are or even what they are. You may have

looked at night skies before, but this time just stare up and let it all “soak in”. This will help “get back” childhood feelings and to remember why the stars are so fascinating. It will also help you appreciate what your children will experience when astronomy is shared with them.

Scouting a Location to Observe

Picking a place to conveniently and comfortably observe the sky is a very important aspect of astronomy, especially when children are involved. Whether the stargazing location is your backyard or a remote spot miles away, you will need to consider several factors when planning a night activity.

Unless a known location is already selected, new sites should be explored during the daytime to see in advance the best places to go.



Don't worry about the fancy equipment and details at the first stage of your journey.

While amateur astronomy is not necessarily dangerous, it is important to be sure that you will not be trespassing – especially at night. Family members should not end up tripping over tree roots, falling into holes, or disturbing some grumpy animal. You will have to return at night to ensure the location is relatively free of glaring artificial illumination, otherwise known as light pollution – an unfortunate by-product of our modern technological civilization.

It is good to think about being close to a lavatory facility, if possible. This should especially be considered if young ones will be along.

Take some extra time to visit the site and observe the skies while the Sun is still up. Note where our yellow star is as it appears to travel across the sky (always look indirectly, so as not to damage your eyesight). Also take heed of any clouds present. Should you decide to become an amateur meteorologist as well, knowing the various cloud types can help you make predictions about whether stars can be seen on a particular evening. This skill can help when planning the best potential time for your family to gather together for an evening's observation.



As you progress and increase your time observing the stars, an inexpensive telescope is a great way to get up close and personal with the heavens.

Thanks to New LHCEC Members

The following have become new members since our last newsletter. Congratulations to them for their sense of vision about the environmental and outdoor education needs of present and future generations.

Tony and Lori Barbis
Dave Boyland
Katherine Compagni
Linda Christy
Sue Foster
Andrea Hart
Beth and Karl Klein
Jim and Arlene Krebs
Janice Liotta
Robert Minor
Susan Morse
Beverly Powers
Candy Reynolds
Terri Rogers
Christine and Peter Sahn
Amy Taylor
Joe and Alane VanDonsel
Kay Zaharis

**SPECIAL SALUTE TO NEW LIFE MEMBERS –
THANKS FOR BELIEVING IN LHCEC
SO STRONGLY!**

Rich Compagni
Thomas Knobel
Gary Wood

Many thanks also to all renewing members especially to those who renewed at a higher level of giving. Continuing support of this sort will help LHCEC make the transition from relying on grants from business, industry, and government into an organization that is supported by its own programs and committed individuals.

Whatever you do, put it down in writing...

John Burroughs: Natural Born Writer

By Susan Mayberry

Blue Frog Coffee House was jumpin' as a near-capacity crowd gathered in December to hear Dr. John E. Lutz, Cortland's Superintendent of Schools, share essays by and insights on his "Uncle John." Great Uncle John Burroughs, that is!

Producing from a stack of well-worn volumes an old, cracked slate "where John Burroughs first began his writing," Dr. Lutz compelled the audience to consider how Burroughs became who he was: an avid fisherman, self-taught ornithologist, champion of pastoral life, and well-loved nature essayist with over a million and a half copies of his works in print.

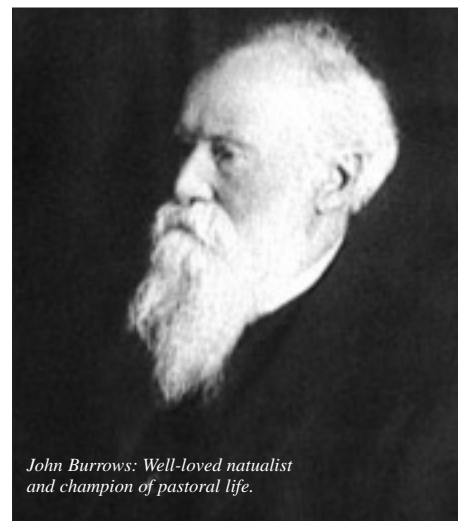
How does a man raised on a (not particularly profitable) dairy farm, who left home at 17 to be a teacher, and even worked in our nation's capital as a treasury clerk, find fame as a naturalist? Quite simply, Burroughs enjoyed the contemplation of simple life. The pastoral-not the wilderness-was his love. Dr. Lutz explained, "if you go to [Burroughs'] boyhood rock, the foot at which he's now buried, it's easy to see how contemplation there helped to form his naturally-inclined disposition." Whether you're contemplating fame as

an essayist, or just enjoy recording your own experiences, Dr. Lutz advises three simple steps:

1. Go out and have fun!
2. Journal your observations: what you see, feel, touch, discover.
3. Write from your journal entries, allowing the words to come from your heart, not your head.

Sound too easy to be true? Just consider: it worked for "Uncle John"!

Interested in future events like this one? Look for our new club, Natural Implications, introduced in this newsletter.



John Burrows: Well-loved naturalist and champion of pastoral life.