

***SEEDLINGS, the Newsletter  
of Kalamazoo Area WILD ONES  
Native Plants, Natural Landscapes***

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What more substantial service to conservation  
than to practice it on one's own land?

--Aldo Leopold

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**October-December, 2017  
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***Artist & Beekeeper Lad Hanka Speaks to Wild Ones  
Oct. 25 on “Artists, Bees, and Natural Communities”***

Lad Hanka, well-known artist, naturalist, printmaker, craftsman, beekeeper, and maker of books will speak to Wild Ones October 25 on “Artists, Bees, and Natural Communities.” His program will feature a powerpoint presentation of his art and its relation to natural history, especially some of the work in which he collaborates with bees.

In his collaborations, Lad glues his etchings to wooden frames for beekeeping and places them into the hive. “Living bees,” he says, “sniff around and they start moving honeycomb around, and eventually they either chew up the artwork and spit it out or cover it with honey. I make a decision of when to pull it. There's a collaboration that happens. Bees have a brain the size of a pinhead, but there is something about the collective intelligence of the hive.

I've seen a response that goes past an accident. But maybe it's not. Either way, I love beekeeping, like I love art. It's one of the ways I've enriched my life."

Lad will also talk about one of his best-known recent etchings, "Kalamazoo River Songline," a large work that incorporates images of plants and other creatures inhabiting the Kalamazoo River, the meandering course of which is central to the etching.



Kalamazoo River Songline

The etching "encapsulates much of what I've done over the last three decades I've been an artist," Lad says. "It really is like the Australian tradition of the songline where you walk the landscape, and you sing to yourself where you've been and what it looks like and it somehow becomes your story. We all have a story of some kind. I tell my story through pictures, through drawing."

For Lad, environmentalist writers and artists are part of a lineage that serves the politics of the day because they transcend it and "the eternal war we seem to be fighting somewhere for some reason."

"My subject matter," Lad concludes, "will tell you where I find evidence of the divine. I love to fish and gather mushrooms. I cannot get enough of ancient trees and the way their asymmetries and gravity bring me back to a place of profound stillness. The very idea that trees alive today were seeded at the birth of the old kingdom of Egypt and are thus as old as the written word itself, sets me free. I kneel at their roots and feel blessed."

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Lad Hanka has a degree in biology from Kalamazoo College, including courses from Wild Ones' Paul Olexia. He also has a master's degree in zoology from Colorado State University and an M.F.A. in printmaking from WMU. Lad's work

is included in many collections, including the Detroit Art Institute, the Grand Rapids Art Museum, and over 100 other public institutions ranging from Boston to Prague and Beijing. Unlike most artists, Lad earns enough money from his art to cover his needs. "The answer," he says, "is somewhere in the direction of the naked Saddhu wandering the world and not really needing much of anything."

We will meet **Wednesday, October 25**, at First United Methodist Church, 212 S. Park St., downtown Kalamazoo. Socializing at 6:30; **program promptly at 7.**

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**Annual Member Meeting November 15**

***Final Wild Ones Program of the Year Focuses on Integrating Natural Landscaping into the Mission and Practice of Area Faith Communities***

The final program of the year for Kalamazoo Wild Ones, on November 15, will feature a panel discussion, "Having Faith in Native Gardens," a follow-up to the June 17th field trip to five native-garden projects on the grounds of area churches. The five panelists will relate their experience of working with faith congregations to integrate the practice of natural landscaping into their sense of mission and service to the community.

At the November 15 meeting, panelists will talk about both the challenges and the benefits of this transition, both for the church congregations and for the panelists who championed the plantings. Our five panelists will tell you how they got started, what they learned, and how these gardens have changed the congregations and engaged the surrounding community. The panelists include

- Ann Klobucar                      Schoolcraft United Methodist
- Ruth Caputo                        Portage Chapel Hill United Methodist
- Tom Small                            Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Trish Joseph                        Skyridge Church of the Brethren
- Catherine Niessink                People's Church

Skyridge Church of the Brethren has adopted the following mission statement regarding their rain garden:

To care for creation cooperatively with mother nature in such a way as to increase biodiversity, reduce unsustainable lawn area, and educate ourselves and our community in the beauty and ecology of native Michigan

plants and wildlife. To provide an outdoor oasis – somewhere to retreat to for relaxation and quiet contemplation amidst our busy lives.

While all the churches visited by KAWO this past June have different perspectives, they share a common dedication to serve as stewards of nature.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) presents a somewhat different case in that Tom Small works with an organization, Community Organized Regenerative Earthcare (CORE), which has an agreement with the church pastor and congregation to transform the 5-acre church campus and the structure itself into a community center, developed according to natural-landscaping and permaculture principles. The focus is on providing healthy food, recreation, educational programs, wildlife habitat, and open space for the entire community. Dedication to serving the broader community is also something shared by all the churches the panelists work with.

We will meet **Wednesday, November 15**, at First United Methodist Church, 212 S. Park St., downtown Kalamazoo. Socializing at 6:30; **program promptly at 7**. After the program, there will be a brief member meeting, with election of officers.

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## ***One Thing Leads to Another . . . and Another . . .***

By Ilse Gebhard

This summer I found a couple of Spicebush Swallowtail caterpillars on the Spicebush by our garage and one on Sassafras growing along the Kal-Haven Trail. Spicebush is my very favorite shrub. Not only is it the caterpillar host plant for Spicebush Swallowtails, but also the Promethea Moth, one of the giant silkworm moths, favors it for egg laying. And birds love the bright red berries in the fall since they are higher in fat content than many other berries. Migrating birds are especially in need of these berries to fuel their long flights.

After a long Michigan winter, nothing lifts my spirit more than the tiny yellow flowers of Spicebush, with their very sweet odor. All of a sudden I realize how smell-depriving winter can be. Many of our pollinators emerge in early spring and Spicebush provides them with the nectar and pollen they need.

As my Spicebush Swallowtail caterpillars grew, I kept raiding the conveniently located shrub for leaves to feed them. Finally, I decided to take a walk on the trail and collect Sassafras leaves, the other host plant for this species. While choosing leaves to bring home—and here comes the “one thing leads to another” part—I found a couple with circular holes along their edges. I tried to



Spicebush berries



The work of leaf-cutter bees

inspect as much of the Sassafras as the poison ivy on the ground allowed me to get near, but found no likely culprit for the holey leaves.

So I threw a holey leaf in with the others to take a photo and query some people as to what might have chewed those holes. Since I was e-mailing Dr. Ann Fraser, biology professor at Kalamazoo College, on another matter, I attached the photo and she had the answer for me: leaf cutter bee! These solitary, non-aggressive bees make their nests in cavities such as hollow stems and line them with bits of foliage. They lay their eggs and provide their to-be offspring with nectar and/or pollen. They are excellent pollinators.

I checked my *Insects and Gardens* book by Eric Grissell, and sure enough, he discusses leaf-cutting bees. They are also discussed in a book that Dr. Fraser recommended and I promptly bought, *Tracks & Signs of Insects and Other Invertebrates*, by Charley Eiseman and Noah Charney. I used it the other day to ID a gall on an oak leaf – another thing leading to yet another.

For information on providing nest sites for many of our native bees and wasps see: [http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/nests\\_for\\_native\\_bees\\_fact\\_sheet\\_xerces\\_society.pdf](http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/nests_for_native_bees_fact_sheet_xerces_society.pdf)

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## *... And One Story Leads to Another ...*

By Tom Small

Last July I was helping Karen Williams with the native planting she does in front of Confections with Convictions and Victorian Bakery on Crosstown Parkway. Dale Anderson, owner of Confections, had come out to talk with us.

Karen had a question: what's eating holes in leaves of the New Jersey tea? I took a look at the neat circular holes in the edges of the leaves. Leaf-cutter bees, I said. I explained to Karen and Dale how the bees cut and use the small circular pieces of leaf, and just as I was finishing up, still pointing at the leaf, the leaf-cutter bee arrived.

Right on cue.

As we watched, she proceeded to demonstrate, cutting another neat circular piece in just a few seconds, grasping it, and flying off. The three of us looked at each other in silence, delighted and just a bit awestruck.

Beyond doubt, that bee is the best teaching aid I've ever had.

And then there's the monarch butterfly that was also willing to demonstrate—and even pose for a publicity shot.

Jessica Hagen, a teacher and supervisor at the Howard Street Montessori School where the Nancy Small Memorial Fund has funded both wetland and upland native plantings, sent me this picture of the wetland planting and the new Monarch Waystation sign.

Since the children did the wetland planting in early July, Jessica reported, they've found "dozens of monarch caterpillars" on the swamp milkweeds. Clearly, one of the visiting monarchs felt the signpost needed further ornamentation and illustration.



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## ***Quotations for Contemplation***

The only creatures who are lonely are the ones who forget about *silá* . . . All life is breath. From the original breath that gave us the miracle of Creation to the world itself, *silá* wraps all around us.

--from *Silá*, a play by Chantal Bilodeau (a French-Canadian playwright)  
[*Silá* is the Inuit word for breath. In Inuit cosmology, *Silá* is the primary component of everything that exists.]

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In our culture, we're scolded for being so arrogant to think that we're smart. An individual is not smart, according to our culture. An individual is merely lucky to be a part of a system that has intelligence that happens to reside in them. In other words, be humble about this always. The real intelligence isn't the property of an individual corporation—the real intelligence is the property of the universe itself.

--John Mohawk, *Thinking in Indian: A John Mohawk Reader*,  
... ed. Jose Barreiro (2010)

John Mohawk (1945-2006) was an enrolled member of the Seneca Nation, one of the six nations of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois).

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## ***Events of Interest to Wild Ones***

**Sunday, October 8, 11:30 a.m.**

**Environmental Discrimination from Gauley Bridge to Flint**

David Benac, Professor of U. S. Environmental History, WMU

First Congregational Church, 345 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo

Program includes a vegan luncheon to support farmworker justice.

**Sunday, October 29, 2:30-5:00 p.m.**

**CORE's Final Harvest Celebration**

Disciples of Christ Church, 2208 Winchell

Join us for a harvest potluck, with music, stories, games, socializing. Outdoors if weather permits; otherwise in the Church's basement commons room.

Please bring your own tableware and a dish to share, plus whatever else you'd

like to share in celebration of all that the good earth provides in this time of harvest and turning of the seasons.

**Wednesday, November 8, 6 to 7:30 p.m.**

**CLIMATE-CHANGE PLAY READINGS**

Disciples of Christ Church, 2208 Winchell, Kalamazoo

In cooperation with **ART AND CLIMATE CHANGE**, an international group of playwrights and artists concerned about climate change, CORE will present an evening of readings of short plays and excerpts from full-length plays dealing with responses to climate change from around the world. This event is timed to coincide with other readings and stagings in over 40 countries and every single one of the 50 states, in support of COP 23, the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in Bonn, Germany, Nov. 6 to 17.

**If you'd like to participate in the readings or just want more information, call Tom Small, 381-4946.**

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**Events Cancellation Policy**

If the weather is questionable and you're wondering whether a Wild Ones indoor program is canceled, please watch WWMT Channel 3 for a cancellation announcement of our program. If time permits, an e-mail cancellation notice will also be sent to members. Field trips and plant exchanges are held rain or shine and canceled only in severe weather: i.e., raining cattails and dogwoods, mit donner und blitzten.

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**SEEDLINGS** is edited by Tom Small and appears five times a year, with a few additional brief supplements. The next regular issue, for **January-February, 2018**, will come early in January. **Deadline for submission is Friday, December 29.** Please send submissions, comments, and suggestions to Tom at [yard2prairie@gmail.com](mailto:yard2prairie@gmail.com).

For more information and news, check us out at [www.kalamazoowildones.org](http://www.kalamazoowildones.org) and [www.facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes](https://www.facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes)