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# Winfield American

Vol. 16, Issue 762

Serving Winfield, Lakes of the Four Seasons, and Winfield Township since 2002

January 20, 2017

## Annual Christmas tree bonfire at the Fairgrounds draws a warm crowd

Hundreds of gazers gathered for the 19th Annual Christmas Tree Bonfire Celebration at the Lake County Fairgrounds on Sunday night. A gigantic bonfire lit up the sky, as about a hundred Christmas trees were lit on fire with the help of the Crown Point Fire Force.

"We've been doing the tree burning for many years now, and it's always a great family-friendly event. The fire warms the entire area here, so even if we have sub-zero temperatures, it's always comfortable around the fire," said Larry Geisen.

Geisen, owner of Geisen Funeral Homes, has been carrying on this community tradition almost 20 years. "Events like this help bring people together and promote community fellowship. Geisen Funeral Homes is celebrating 150 years in business this year, so we understand the importance of those

traditions," Geisen added.

Firemen with the Crown Point Fire Force managed the massive blaze, as they have since the first tree burning years ago. The crowd also enjoyed complimentary hot chocolate and popcorn courtesy of Geisen Funeral Homes. As a newer tradition with the event, music was played on a sound system and featured songs with a fire or burning theme. From 'Light my Fire' by the Doors to 'Ring of Fire' by Johnny Cash, the music created a fun atmosphere to watch the flames grow higher.

"I come for the hot chocolate", nine-year-old Owen Lahm of Lowell said. "This is the biggest fire I've ever seen and even standing far away it's still nice and toasty," he added.

The Crown Point Fire Force received help with the initial lighting of the fire from Jake Stanley, a longtime vet-

(See *Annual* Pg. 2)



Jake Stanley sets off the blaze while Larry Geisen, owner of Geisen Funeral Homes, looks on.



Owen Lahm said he came for the hot chocolate, but he seems to also be enjoying the bonfire as well. Also shown are members of the Crown Point Fire Department as well as some of the hundreds of residents who attended the annual event.

## Indiana Parks Alliance releases 'Outdoor Bucket List' activities for 2017

If you are looking for a 'bucket list' of places to go and things to do this year, the Indiana Parks Alliance has a list of suggestions.

During the centennial celebration for Indiana State Parks in 2016 and in preparation for the 50th anniversary of the Nature Preserves

Act this year, the IPA asked Hoosiers to select their top "outdoor bucket list" visit locations at Indiana State Parks and State-Dedicated Nature Preserves.

The top 15 vote-getters were:

- Hike a trail of boulders left by the last glacier and

- climb the ladders of Trail 3 at Rocky Hollow-Falls Canyon Nature Preserve at Turkey Run State Park.

- Explore the Pioneer Village at Spring Mill State Park.
- Watch the sunset on Lake Michigan at Indiana Dunes State Park.
- Wade in the creek below

- the waterfall at McCormick's Creek State Park.

- Visit a state park nature center to watch birds and learn about park wildlife.
- Linger and enjoy the sunset at Hesitation Point in Brown County State Park.
- Walk on the world-renowned 386 million year-old

- fossil beds at Falls of the Ohio State Park.

- Ride the refrigerated toboggan run at Pokagon State Park.
- Visit Monroe Lake to search for bald eagles in winter.
- Sit by the fire in the historic Lonidaw Lounge in

- Potawatomi Inn at Pokagon State Park.

- Stand beside the Great Mound at Mounds State Park and listen to the wind.
- Explore the old-growth forest at Donaldson's Woods Nature Preserve in Spring Mill State Park.

(See *Parks* Pg. 7)



### Crown Point, LOFS residents latest paramedic grads ready for duty

The Franciscan Health Crown Point Emergency Medical Services Training Academy honored its latest graduates during a recent program in the hospital's Marian Education Center. The academy trains most of the medics who serve south Lake County. Shown front row, from left, are: Drake Cogley of Schererville; Joe Arce, Crown Point; Ashley Truth, Hammond; and Ryan Potter, Lowell. Back row, from left: Lynn Sebyan, program clinical coordinator; Michael Streeter, DO, program medical director; Kevin LaDuke, instructor; Justin Andras, Four Seasons, valedictorian; Jarred Andras, Four Seasons, also a valedictorian; Joel Hasselgren, St. John; Rob Dowling, program director; Steve Fugaj, instructor. For more information on the program, call 219-757-6461.

## LOFS Girl Scouts prove they have the right 'stuff'

Lakes of the Four Seasons residents have great reason to be proud of their Girl Scout Troop #35135. These twenty young ladies, ranging from ages six and over, and members of The Greater Chicago Northwest Indiana #321, set a goal last November to collect 1,000 stuffed animals for their 'Project Comfort Bear'.

Exceeding their goal in just a few weeks, they invited emergency responders from LOFS, Winfield, and Lake and Porter counties to attend their January 10 meeting. The First Responders received the stuffed animals collected so they may provide them to children who are accident or crime victims, as well as those having experienced a



traumatic event coping with loss, sickness and/or injuries.

Representing area First Responders were LOFS Fire Chief Jeremy Campbell; LOFS FF/EMT Kevin Heerema; Winfield Town

Marshal Daniel Ball; LOFS Security Director Craig Philp, Sgt. Kenny Green, and Officer Barry Cook; Dan Murchek and Cliff Coldwell from the Lake County Sheriff's Department;

Porter County Sheriff Adam Gleason; and Indiana State Police Officer Kim Zelnis.

The Girl Scouts thanked everyone who participated by donating stuffed animals. It (See *LOFS* Pg. 2)

[www.winfieldamerican.com](http://www.winfieldamerican.com)



(LOFS from Pg. 1)

should be noted the girls only reached out for donations to the LOFS and Winfield areas, highlighting that this is a community that cares.

The Girl Scout leaders are, for the Cadet's (grades 6 to 8) and Juniors (grades 4 and 5), Kelly Ryan; Brownies (grades 2 and 3), Dawn Long; and Daisies (grades K and 1) Carolyn Webb. Troop liaison Eileen Ryan and Service Unit Supervisor Specialist Kathy

Sullivan from the Greater Chicago N.W. Indiana Girl Scouts Merrillville office were also on hand to offer their congratulations.

To learn more about joining the LOFS Girl Scouts contact Kelly Ryan at 219-226-4172.

LOFS Girl Scouts meet Tuesdays at the LOFS Clubhouse from October through May.

### Newly-formed local historical society seeks members

An organizing meeting of the LOFS Historical Society, which will include the communities of Winfield and West Porter, will be held at 4 p.m. on Thursday, February 9, at the Lakes of the Four Seasons Clubhouse.

The newly-formed, sanctioned committee approved by the LOFS Board of Directors has been established as a not-for-profit, private educational organization dedicated to perpetuating Lakes of the Four Seasons history and Winfield history as it relates to Four Seasons.

Our meetings are open to all ages interested in LOFS and the bordering communities of Winfield and West Porter.

The society will be seeking volunteers to help keep records, write articles, take pictures, and other organizations and clubs to appoint their group's liaison for the purpose of submitting their information for historical keeping.

For questions and other information, reach out to Sally Lugo at Sally2614@aol.com or call her at 219-988-5305.

### Porter Lakes 'Kindergarten Round-up' coming in April

Porter Lakes Elementary will be holding their Kindergarten Round-up on Wednesday, April 19. There will be four parent-child meeting sessions, which are: 7:30 to 8:15, 9:00 to 9:45, 10:30 to 11:15, and 1:00 to 1:45.

Parents are asked to call the school to reserve a space in their preferred session.

(Annual from Pg. 1)

eran of the event.

"The Stanley family has been at the tree burning almost every year we've had it,

Spaces are limited so phone early. Parents may reach the school at 219-306-8076, extension 5000.

Children who will be 5 years of age before August 1, 2017, should enroll in kindergarten. Parents should be prepared to bring their child's birth certificate, immunization record, and proof of residency to the session.

so it was only fitting that Jake had the honor of lighting the initial flame," said Geisen.

## This day in history

### JANUARY 20, 1942

Nazi officials met to discuss the details of the "Final Solution" of the "Jewish question."

In July, 1941, Herman Goering, writing under instructions from Hitler, had ordered Reinhard Heydrich, SS general and Heinrich Himmler's number-two man, to submit "a general plan of the administrative, material, and financial measures necessary for carrying out the desired final solution of the Jewish question."

Heydrich met with Adolf Eichmann and 15 other officials at Wannsee, a suburb of Berlin. The agenda was simple and focused: to devise a plan that would render a "final solution to the Jewish question" in Europe. Various gruesome proposals were discussed, including mass sterilization and deportation to the island of Madagascar.

Heydrich proposed simply transporting Jews from every corner Europe to concentration camps in Poland and working them to death. Objections to this plan included the belief that this was simply too time-consuming.

Although the word "extermination" was never uttered during the meeting, the implication was clear: anyone who survived the egregious conditions of a work camp would be "treated accordingly."

Months later, the "gas vans" in Chelmno, Poland, which were killing 1,000 people a day, proved to be the "solution" they were looking for—the most efficient means of killing large groups of people at one time. The minutes of this conference were kept with meticulous care, which later provided key evidence during the Nuremberg war crimes trials.

www.history.com

## Got stuff for the paper?

### News and Event Submissions

Community events and news items should be submitted through our website at [www.winfieldamerican.com](http://www.winfieldamerican.com). News and event items are published free-of-charge as editorial space and time permits. **Submission does not guarantee placement.** For guaranteed placement of your community event promotion please visit our website at [www.winfieldamerican.com](http://www.winfieldamerican.com) or call our office at 219-662-8888 to place a paid advertisement.

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Graduate of Ball State University and Worsham College of Mortuary Science

Enjoys golfing, riding her motorcycle and spending time with her husband Terry, friends and family

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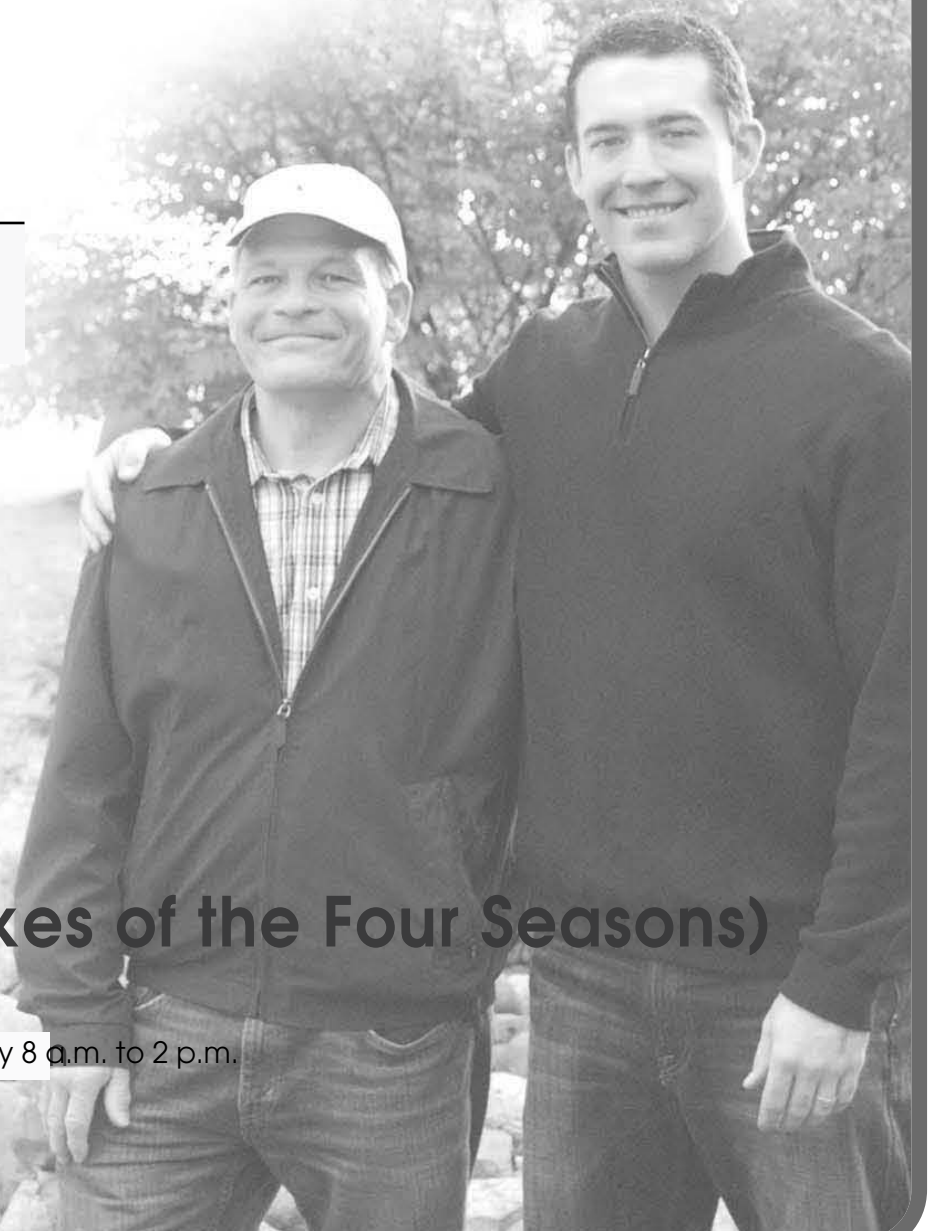
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LOFS Fire Auxiliary elects new board, seeks new members, plans 2017 schedule

The Lake of the Four Seasons has elected new officers for 2017. Those include Christine Buczek, President; Maria Diaz Lopez, Vice President; Nikki LaDuke, Secretary; and Edie Boudreau, Treasurer.

Sue Talmadge will retain her role as Historian and Nancy Waters remains as Sunshine Committee Chair. Fire Department Treasurer Kevin Heerema conducted the installation of officers.

The Auxiliary is currently busy planning their activities for the year and we will publish their calendar soon. Residents can look forward to the new LOFS phone directory, Crazy Bunco, Open



Pictured from left to right are Edie Boudreau, Treasurer; Nikki LaDuke, Secretary; Maria Diaz Lopez, Vice President; Christine Buczek, President; and Kevin Heerema, Treasurer LOFS Fire Department.

House Picnic, Pancake Breakfast, and Stop, Drop, & Donate. They conduct their meetings on the Wednesday after the first Tuesday of each month at Station 3500 on 745 West, 275 South at 7 p.m. The Auxiliary is always looking for new members to help us with activities; you do not need a family member on the department to join.

Lake County Master Gardeners offer grants, scholarships to groups, individuals

The Lake County Master Gardeners will give back to their community by offering grants and scholarships to Lake County groups and individuals. Proceeds from three major fundraisers throughout last year, the Lake County Master Gardeners' Plant Sale, Garden Walk, and Symposium, will be used to fund the LCMG Grant and Scholarship Programs.

Grants are now being offered to schools, churches, organizations, businesses, or others for their existing or new garden-related projects.

Grant amounts will range from \$100 to \$500 and will be awarded by April 1. To be eligible for a grant the project must be located in Lake County, Indiana, and preferably have an educational element. The deadline for submitting grant applications is March 1.

To be eligible for a scholarship, one must be a Lake County resident attending a college or university with a declared major in Horticulture, Landscape Architecture, Forestry, Botany, Plant Pathology, Agriculture

Education, Entomology, or another major that will benefit consumer gardening.

Past academic success must be shown by providing an official transcript from your school. Applications must be submitted by April 3, 2017.

To get further information on both programs and to obtain applications, visit the Lake County Master Gardeners Association at [www.lakecountymastergardeners.com](http://www.lakecountymastergardeners.com), or call the Lake County Extension Service at 219-755-3240.

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## Obituary ~ Patricia G. Blair

Patricia G. Blair, 86, of Crown Point, IN passed away peacefully on January 5, 2017. Born in Clarksburg, WV, she was predeceased by parents, Laco and Snow Gochenour, and siblings Laco Gochenour, Jr. and Annabelle Fortney. She attended Sarah Lawrence College and graduated from West Virginia University, where she was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority. She was an elementary school teacher, realtor for Fairfax Realty, and proprietor for Abe's Log Cabin Blair House Restaurants. She greatly helped her late

husband, W. Robert Blair, II, in political campaigns in Illinois over a 20 year period. She was a member and dedicated volunteer at Church of Four Seasons United Methodist and the Lakes of Four Seasons Garden Club. She will be fondly and forever remembered for her innate kindness, grace, good nature and radiant smile. Surviving are sons, Steven R. (Christine) Blair of Lancaster, PA, Mark W. (Mary) Blair of Knoxville, TN, and daughter and compassionate caregiver, Susan B. Crowley of Crown Point, IN; grandchildren, John, Patrick and William of

Lancaster, PA; Marc, Alexis, Savannah and Justice of Knoxville, TN; and four great grandchildren. Relatives and friends respectfully are invited to a Celebration of Life on Saturday, January 21, 2017 at Church of Four Seasons United Methodist, Reverend Daniel Richwine presiding. Friends may greet the family at 1:00 p.m. followed by a service at 2:00 p.m. Interment will be in the Peace Memorial Garden at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be sent to Church of Four Seasons United Methodist, 9100 E. 109th Ave., Crown Point, IN



46307 or The Pat Summit Alzheimer's Foundation, 520 Summit Hill Drive, Suite 1101, Knoxville, TN 37902. Burns Funeral Home, Crown Point, entrusted with arrangements. Online condolences may be sent to [www.burnsfuneral.com](http://www.burnsfuneral.com).

## Obituary ~ Raymond J. Kucic

Raymond J. Kucic, age 83, of Crown Point, Indiana, passed away peacefully on December 16, 2016, with loving family at his side. Raymond was born January 20, 1933, in Chicago, Illinois, to the late Joseph and Lottie (Wilczewski) Kucic. Also preceding him in death are his loving wife of 50 years, Carole (Serafin) and his brother, Robert. Left to cherish his memory are his sons, Michael J. Kucic and David J. (Tonya) Kucic; his daughter, Kathleen A. (Paul) Pedersen; grandchildren Cameron Kucic, John Pedersen, Travis M. Kucic, Sarah Pedersen, and Caitlin Kucic; fond nieces and nephews, and a friend to many, with particular thanks to Louie "Zapata" Chavez, and his wife Dori. After graduating from Bowen High School, Ray honorably served in both the United States Air Force and United States Army. Also in his younger years, he was an exceptional athlete, playing in various baseball and football leagues throughout South Chicago. He was a life-long avid fan of the White Sox, Bears, and Blackhawks. For nearly 30 years, he was widely recognized as an outstanding lather and plasterer, and worked on many of Chicago's famous landmark



buildings. He was also an auxiliary police officer and later detective for the Thornton Township and Homewood Police Departments. At age 55, Ray and Carole left Calumet City and retired to New Port Richey, Florida, where he continued to lead an active life that included golf, softball, fishing, traveling, and spending time with his beautiful bride. Visitation was Wednesday, December 21, 2016. Burial was in Chapel Lawn Memorial Gardens. The family requests that donations be made to the Alzheimer's Association at [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org). To leave online condolences, please visit [www.chapellawnfunerals.com](http://www.chapellawnfunerals.com)

## Open registration at Crown Point Adult Learning Center

The Crown Point Adult Learning Center, an affiliate of the Center of Workforce Innovations, is having open registration Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:30 to 12:30, 1 to 4, and 5:30 to 7:30

for individuals wanting to attain their high school equivalency and to learn to speak, read, and write English.

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### Fire Force Volunteers Needed

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## Celebrate the New Year With 10 free flowering trees from the Arbor Day Foundation

Residents in Indiana can ring in the New Year with 10 free flowering trees by joining the Arbor Day Foundation any time during January, 2017. By becoming a part of the nonprofit Arbor Day Foundation, new members will receive two Sargent crabapples, three American redbuds, two Washington hawthorns, and three white flowering dogwoods.

"These beautiful trees will beautify your home with lovely flowers of pink, yellow and white colors," said

Matt Harris, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. "These trees are perfect for large and small spaces, and they will provide food and habitat for songbirds."

The free trees are part of the Foundation's Trees for America campaign.

The trees will be shipped postpaid at the right time for planting, between February 1 and May 31, with enclosed planting instructions. The 6- to 12-inch tall trees are guaranteed to grow or they will be replaced free of

charge. Members will also receive a subscription to the Foundation's bimonthly publication, Arbor Day, and The Tree Book, which includes information about tree planting and care.

To become a member of the Foundation and to receive the free trees, send a \$10 contribution to: Ten Free Flowering Trees, c/o Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE 68410, by January 31, 2017.

Residents can also join online at [arborday.org/january](http://arborday.org/january).

## Crown Point Parks Department prepares to kick off all-ages winter programming

Crown Point Parks has many winter programs kicking off soon. To register call the Parks Dept. office at 219-661-2271 or go to [www.crownpoint.in.gov](http://www.crownpoint.in.gov) for more information.

Among the programs being offered are Mat Pilates on Saturdays, 9 am to 10 am from Jan. 21 - Feb. 25; Kinder Tumbling on Tuesdays, 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm from Jan. 24 - Feb. 14; Beginner Parkour on Tuesdays, 5 pm to 6:30 pm from Jan. 24 - Feb. 14; Mommy and Me on Thursdays, 10 am to 11 am from Jan. 26

- March 2; Bowl The Day Away on Wednesdays, 4 pm to 5 pm from Feb. 1-22; Kid's Canvas Painting Class on Tuesdays, 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm; Kid's Karate on Tuesdays, Jan. 31 - Feb. 21 (Ages 3-4) 5:40 pm - 6:10 pm, and (Ages 5-12) 6:15 pm - 7:05 pm; and Couples Adult Dance Class on Thursdays, 7 pm to 8 pm from Jan. 26 - March 2.

## Looking for the right financial advisor?



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(Parks from Pg. 1)

- Walk across the Cataract Covered Bridge at Cataract Falls State Recreation Area (Cagles Mill Lake).
- Explore the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Plaza at Lincoln State Park.
- Hike the narrow backbones of Pine Hills Nature Preserve.

Information about Indiana State Parks is at [www.stateparks.in.gov](http://www.stateparks.in.gov), and information about State-Owned Nature Preserves is at [www.dnr.in.gov/naturepreserve](http://www.dnr.in.gov/naturepreserve).

If 15 items is not enough for your bucket list, the remainder of the vote-getters can be seen at [www.indianaparksalliance.org](http://www.indianaparksalliance.org).

"There are some iconic features in our state parks and nature preserves," said Tom

Hohman, president of IPA. "This list is a great guide for parents, grandparents and just about anyone, so you can make sure you discover what Indiana has to offer on public lands, and also find your own favorite outdoor places to enjoy."

The IPA supports Indiana State Parks and State-Owned Nature Preserves through advocacy, fundraising, and assistance for local property Friends groups. IPA also supports fundraising initiatives of the Indiana Natural Resources Foundation (INRF) that are designated for Indiana State Parks or Nature Preserves, such as the Discovering the Outdoors Fund.

Support for IPA comes

from memberships and donations.

A variety of membership options are available. Donations are tax-

deductible. Visit [www.indianaparksalliance.org](http://www.indianaparksalliance.org) for details and membership information.



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Dunes Birding Festival ‘Birds & Brews’ poster unveiling to be held January 27

The third annual Indiana Dunes Birding Festival will officially unveil its 2017 festival poster at a special Birds and Brews event held at the Speakeasy at the Spa in Porter on January 27, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Local artist and poster designer, Kristina Knowski, will also be on hand to discuss the design process and the inspiration behind this year’s festival poster. Limited edition prints will go on sale at the event as well.

The Birds and Brews event is a chance for bird enthusiasts to socialize, win prizes for bird related trivia, and learn more about the upcoming bird festival.

The Indiana Dunes Birding Festival helps to celebrate the migration of birdlife through the Indiana Dunes region and is being held May 4 to 7. The festival is a joint partnership with the region’s major environmental groups highlighting the dunes area’s rich biodiversity and bird watching opportunities to create a positive impact on the economic, conservation, and environmental education for visitors and residents to the Indiana Dunes region.

The event is being organized by the Indiana Audubon Society and includes both the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and Indiana Dunes State Park as site hosts.

Registration is not required, but can be indicated on the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival Facebook event page for Birds and Brews: January.

For more information call the Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center at 219-926-1390. The Speakeasy at the Spa is located at 333 North Mineral Springs Road in Porter.

Don’t use climbing spikes when pruning trees

Is your tree care provider using spikes to climb while pruning your trees? Ouch! Climbing spikes are sharpened steel spikes attached to the climber’s leg by leather straps and padded supports. A tree worker should only use them to access trees being removed. When these spikes are used on living trees, it is traumatizing to the tree and creates unnecessary damage.

Each puncture from a climbing spike produces a certain amount of tree tissue death, though this varies from tree to tree. In most cases, isolated wounds will seal, but over time, groupings of spike holes can cause the entire area on the trunk to die back with no chance of recovery. This happens when a tree is repeatedly climbed for pruning while using spikes.

The likelihood of piercing the cambium (living tissue beneath the bark) is high, even with larger trees and thick bark.

If soon after the work is performed with spikes there is sap oozing from the wounds, the tree is responding to spike damage. Repeated damage of this type is harmful to the tree.

So why would climbers use spikes if they are harmful to the tree? There are a few exceptional situations where using spikes is appropriate, such as when the tree is being removed; when branches are more than throwline distance apart and there is no other means of climbing the tree (for example, when there are no branches lower than 50 feet), with no access for an aerial lift device or crane; if the tree is too close to power lines and cannot be accessed safely by other means; or to reach an injured climber.

Professional tree care companies are aware of the dangers of spikes and use proper tree equipment such as ropes and climbing harnesses to climb (or aerial lift devices or cranes, if accessible). This, coupled with their training and experience, contributes to the future health of the tree.

Homeowners searching for qualified tree care companies should look for the following:


- Good References: Ask for references, and check on the quality of their work. Don’t be rushed by a bargain and don’t pay in advance.
- Proof of Insurance: Ask for current certificates of liability and workers’ compensation insurance, if applicable. Be aware that if the tree care company you hire doesn’t have insurance or is not a legal company, you could be held responsible as a contractor.
- Solid Reputation: Verify professional affiliations the company might have, such as memberships in business and/or professional organizations such as the Tree Care Industry Association.
- Up-to-Date Knowledge: Ask if they follow ANSI Standards. A professional arborist will be aware of the current safety, pruning, fertilizing and cabling standards.
- Contract: Insist on a signed contract as to cost, dates when work is to be performed, and exactly what is to be done. Insist that climbing spikes are used only if the tree is to be cut down.

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