

The Ovenbird

Pfeiffer Nature Center and Foundation

SPRING, 2014



IT'S UP TO YOU...

In keeping with our existence as a Nature Center, we're considering eliminating the paper copy of *The Ovenbird* and going totally electronic with our news and information.

We want to hear from **YOU**— Is it important to you to still get a paper copy of *The Ovenbird*? **If so, you need to let us know.**

Clip and return the bottom of the back page with your feedback. Or phone or email us with it.



Check out our upcoming programs on insert and on our website.



We hope you'll join us for birds, kids programs, astronomy, painting, and more!

FROM THE PRESIDENT

For ten years the Nature Center has had Peg Cherre at the helm. For ten years as Executive Director, she has guided Pfeiffer Nature Center with wisdom, industry and a deep love of nature. For ten years Peg has worked not only with an eye on the mission, but to help others embrace it as well. At the end of June, Margaret A. Cherre, Executive Director of PNC has decided it is time to begin her encore career.



When asked to comment on her upcoming retirement, she said, "It's been great working here for the past 10 years.

Amazing volunteers have made the Nature Center thrive, expanding our programs and what our properties can offer. I'm confident we're ready for the next phase, spreading our roots deeper and our branches further."

We have been lucky to have had in Peg an Executive Director who could take the lead when it came to writing a grant and also fearlessly present a balanced budget that met the needs of a young organization and yet did not sacrifice important aspects of programming in years when the line was thin. These are important and rare assets for a single individual to possess. Our gratitude runs deep.

In September we will have a chance to celebrate Peg's accomplishments. When we invite you to Sunset at the Cabin please join us. We want to wish her the very best of which retirement may bring and thank her for the stewardship she has provided for ten of the Center's fifteen years.

This is a pivotal time for Pfeiffer Nature Center. This would be true even if we were not in the process of selecting a new Executive Director. We

Continued on p. 3

NATURALLY HEALTHY

By Peg Cherre

We here at Pfeiffer Nature Center love our preserves. It makes us happy to walk the trails, to get our hearts pounding by climbing up to the huge boulders, to reward our hard climbs by the long distances vistas that open up to us.

It makes our spirits soar to sit by the pond, inspect the vernal pools, and turn over rocks in the creek. It thrills us to hear bird-song in the transition area and follow the sound with our ears, eyes, and binoculars to find and identify the Chestnut-Sided Warbler. Sitting meditatively in front of the cabin watching the sunset, or on the edge of what we call "the Sound of Music meadow" as deer browse below us, refreshes us.

As wonderful as all that is, it's just the tip of the iceberg.

Being in the outdoors, especially in natural, wild areas, has proven benefits to our physical and emotional health. So much so that everyone from the Harvard Medical School (HMS) and the American Public Health Association (APHA) to Oprah promote the health benefits of nature.

In their *Harvard Health Publications*, HMS identified five concrete benefits of spending time outdoors in natural, green areas.



- **Increase in Vitamin D levels** Although it's been added to milk for decades, Vitamin D is one of the few things that doesn't naturally come from food; instead, it comes from sunlight hitting the skin. In the past few years the importance of Vitamin D to overall health has been recognized. Doctors believe it may help protect against such varied

Continued on p. 3

From the Director

Change. It's the one thing we can count on in life, the one constant.

I like change when it's my choice; I'm often somewhat resistant when it's thrust upon me. I think that's pretty much human nature, not something that's specific to me. This particular change—my decision to retire—was guided by many factors, the major one being my continuing acknowledgement of the passage of time. Hours, days, weeks, months, and years fly by. I am extremely fortunate to have adult children and a grandson who want me closer to them, who want us to be able to share our unique strengths and help each other out on a very regular basis. My final determination was simple—if not now, when?

Simple doesn't always mean easy. There are many things I will miss. The wonderful people at the Nature Center. The hills and woods that surround and embrace us all. My home in the sticks. My best friends.

Still the plusses pull me away.

While many people have expressed sadness at my departure from Pfeiffer Nature Center, the reality is that this creates a new opportunity for the Nature Center. A new person will bring a fresh perspective, innovative ideas, and new creative and physical energy. He or she will help the Nature Center reach the top of the next mountain and glide down the other side.

Guided by our history and our mission, the new Executive Director will surely find ways to reach out to groups and individuals who aren't familiar with us, offering programs, services, and opportunities that we haven't yet achieved—or maybe even thought of.

In partnership with our dedicated Board of Directors, committed volunteers, and community collaborators, I am



Margaret Shulock is a professional cartoonist. Her work can be seen in the Olean Times Herald and at Facebook.com/Margaret.Shulock.

confident that the new Director will make Pfeiffer Nature Center better. After all, only one person is leaving; literally hundreds of people remain.

Along those lines, here's what I think is an important message I've been waiting for the perfect opportunity to share. This seems like the right time. This message came in what I thought a very unlikely place....the box lid of my new pair of Timberland hiking boots.

"How will we change today?"

The opportunity to make it better is everywhere if we choose to act. Better is seeing a void and filling it. Hearing a call for help and answering it. Taking a wrong and making it right. It is as small as making boots, shoes, and gear or as big as changing the world. Better is giving employees paid time to serve. Building a house. Painting a school. Empowering our youth. Feeding the hungry. Or revitalizing a community. Better is a call to action. A rallying cry. Fearless. Determined. Passionate. And connected. It is searching within. Reaching out. Heading into the eye of the storm. Adventuring out to the middle of nowhere. And doing so with a purpose. So when the sun sets and we think about what tomorrow will bring, we understand that better is not what we do. It is who we are."

Remember that. **YOU** make the difference, **YOU** make the change. **YOU** make things better.

Looking forward with joy, both personally and for the Nature Center,

Peg Cherre

In a bit of shameless self-promotion, I will continue my handweaving—scarves, shawls, baby blankets, and more. You can always find out what I'm up to at my blog: secondwindjewelry.com/jewelry-weaving-blog.

I hope you'll join me at one of the three free concerts at the Richburg Library this summer that are part of my Community Weaving Project funded in part by the NYS Council on the Arts Decentralization Program administered by the Cattaraugus County Arts Council. The dates are June 26 (string quartet), July 10 (Generations rock & roll), and August 7 (Olean African Drum Ensemble). No experience needed to do some weaving!



From the President (cont from p. 1)

have a capital improvement project well under way with our historic cabin. Last year a giant step was taken by adding a part-time administrative staff position. The Board of Directors recently completed the transfer of the Kay Pfeiffer Gerkin Endowment to the Cattaraugus Region Community Foundation.

The placement of the Endowment with the Community Foundation typifies where we are as an organization. We have the maturity to recognize that not only can we have a positive influence on meeting the needs of our community, but also by making this investment we ensure having a wider audience of donors who we will receive the most benefit from their contributions.

In Wendy’s words, “The purpose of [Pfeiffer Nature Center] is to allow the real property to be used for the study of nature as the real property has a unique natural setting and several acres of virgin forest....” Stewardship of this amazing and beautiful place is more than being aware of its existence. It’s about participation. As we reawaken our Adopt a Tree program to better meet the needs of our community and reach along our branches for membership please do continue to participate with us.

We, the Board of Directors truly do hope you join us for Peg’s celebration at Sunset at the Cabin. Many of us have great stories to share or have worked with Peg on at least one of the many projects she has spearheaded. We also hope to see you along the path where science, art and nature meets before then.

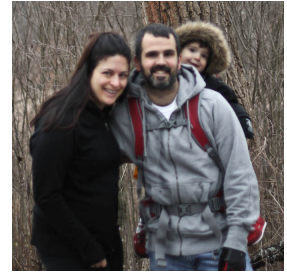
Thank you Peg!!

Colleen Kent

Colleen Kent is not only a massage therapist, horse enthusiast, and certified addictions professional, but also is a past staff member of the Nature Center having worked in the capacity of Naturalist and is currently President of the Board

Naturally Healthy (cont from p. 1)

conditions as heart disease, osteoporosis, cancer, and depression. It’s now common for many people, especially older adults, to have a prescription for Vitamin D. Yet some experts wonder if this is only one piece of the puzzle. Are there other as-yet-unidentified specific benefits of sunshine that interact with the Vitamin D to compound its impact, benefits that can’t be replicated with a pill? This writer thinks it’s likely that there are.



- **Increased physical activity** This isn’t a given. You can sit in a lawn chair outside and get no additional exercise or run on an indoor track and get lots of it. However it’s much more likely that you’ll be moving around if your outdoors and sitting in front of some type of electronics if you’re inside. We’ve known for many years that walking is a great exercise; we also know that most people are more likely to spend more time walking outdoors than on a treadmill or other piece of equipment. Research done by the National Institutes of Health suggests that most people reported more enjoyment and satisfaction with outdoor exercise than indoors, and indicated that they were more likely to more of it. As an added benefit, if you’re walking or running on Pfeiffer Nature Center’s 9+ miles of trails, you know you’ll get a good workout, since we have very little flat ground – it’s all uphill and downhill.

- **Increased happiness** Exposure to more light, especially natural light, increases happiness, and there’s certainly more light outdoors than indoors. Physical activity – more likely outdoors than in – is also known to increase both relaxation and happiness. Researchers in England are especially promoting the benefits of exercising in nature, especially the improvement in mental health. In February, 2013, the New York Times reported that volunteers not only reported preferring outdoor over indoor activity, “on subsequent psychological tests they scored significantly higher on measures

Get at least a few minutes of sunlight on your face every day that it shines. Sunlight stimulates the pineal gland, behind your eyes, and enhances a feeling of well-being.

Did you know...

- Saturday & Sunday rentals book quickly in our beautiful timber frame pavilion. Don’t wait to schedule it for your family picnic, class reunion, birthday party, small

wedding, or other gathering. Get rental costs and policies on our website pfeiffernaturecenter.org/nature-blog/programs-events/rentals-services/ or phone us for more details.

- Trails on both of our

properties are great places for self-exploration. Trail maps and interpretive signage will guide you on your way and add to your enjoyment of the beauty that surrounds you.

4 Naturally Healthy (cont from p. 3)

of vitality, enthusiasm,

pleasure and self-esteem and lower on tension, depression and fatigue after they walked outside.”



- **Improved concentration** Several studies with children have documented improved concentration after time spent in natural, green areas. This is especially of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Although similar studies with adults don't exist, anecdotal evidence suggests that taking a walk in the woods or on a trail helps with

focus and problem solving.

- **Faster healing** Studies with surgical and other patients experienced less pain, reduced stress, and took fewer pain medications when exposed to natural light.

The Everybody Walk! Collaborative (everybodywalk.org) concurs, stating that while walking itself is beneficial, taking the activity out into a green, natural area augments the positive impacts. Tests with people walking in green, leafy areas versus commercial areas showed decreased levels of cortisol (the body's stress hormone), reduced tension and increased calmness, as shown in saliva tests and EEGs, respectively.

After studying the research, in November, 2013, the American Public Health Association (APHA) adopted a policy entitled "Improving Health and Wellness through Access to Nature." Their summary includes the following excerpt, "Access to nature has been related to lower levels of mor-

tality and illness, higher levels of outdoor physical activity, restoration from stress, a greater sense of well-being, and greater social capital. Natural elements that promote well-being include trees, diverse vegetation, local biodiversity, water features, parks, [and] natural playscapes....[P]ublic health officials, physicians, nurse practitioners, and other health professionals should advise patients and the public at large about the bene-

Many Thanks Our Wonderful Volunteers

Garry & Sue Pollock led a terrific Intro to Brewing workshop, sharing their knowledge and the fruits of their labor.

Vicki Schmidt skillfully designs our program flyers, distributing them around Portville. She also does almost anything else that's asked of her from helping with mailings to seeking out needed info.

Joe Leo was happy to prepare bluebird house kits for our workshop.

Bert Schweigert readily responded to our request to lead the Naturalist 101: Intro to Birding workshop, sharing his years of experience.

Velma Tanner & June Eaton help us get out mailings, including *The Ovenbird*

Woods Walk Committee Chairs, **Judy Patton, Wendy Brand, Carol Bradley, Chris Piaggi, Vicki Schmidt, Mike Ermer, Pam Dominsky, and Colleen Kent** are hard at work preparing for our 8th annual event! **Jason Burt** has made awards for our top runners this year.

Eat fresh, local food—it's MUCH healthier than processed foods, or even those that have to travel a distance to your grocery store. Plus it tastes great!

Want to spend some time with great folks? Call us and volunteer!

Pfeiffer Nature Center is here for you. Hike our trails, come to our programs, marvel at our ancient trees and huge boulders, enjoy all that we have to offer!

fits of green exercise...and nature-based play and recreation.”

The APHA policy is long and detailed, providing many references to wide-ranging research. The entire document can be read at their website: <http://www.apha.org/advocacy/policy/policysearch/default.htm?id=1453>.

Pfeiffer Nature Center & Foundation

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Staff

Peg Cherre, Director
Joan Haynes, Admin. Assistant
Open, Nature Program Coordinator

Board of Directors

President: Colleen Kent
Vice President: Mike Ermer
Secretary: Pam Dominsky

Treasurer: Kathy Elser

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Jason Burt	Chris Scott
Ray Valeri	Rob Walk
Ann Feightner	Ted Georgian
Steve Potter	Christine Walden
Ryan Michelle Wilcox	

Honorary Board Members

Carol Woodin	Judy Patton
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Health & Nature Tidbits

- From writer Cristina Tudino, “The Japanese knew that *shinrin-yoku* or ‘forest bathing,’ does wonderful things for the body. But now researchers at Tokyo’s Nippon Medical School have quantifiable evidence: In one study, women who spent two to four hours in the woods on two consecutive days experienced a nearly 50 percent increase in the activity of cancer-fighting white blood cells.”
- If you meditate or do yoga, bring your cushion or yoga mat outside to your porch, yard, or the woods. You’ll be surprised what a difference it can make. Initially, you may find it harder to clear your mind, but begin out in nature will bring a whole new dimension to your practice.
- My grandmother used to say “You’ve got to eat a peck of dirt before you die.” Although my mother insisted it didn’t have to all be consumed at once, their mother’s wisdom has proven to be grounded in fact. Called the ‘hygiene hypothesis,’ researchers believe that bacteria, viruses, and even worms that enter the body through direct contact with dirt, especially in young children, are important in the development of a healthy immune system. It appears that children who do not have sufficient contact with these organisms are more likely to develop allergies, asthma, and autoimmune diseases as adults. Too much of a good thing, even fastidious cleanliness, can come back to haunt you.
- The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a nifty online tool called the Eco-Health Relationship Browser. It “illustrates scientific evidence for linkages between human health and ecosystem services—benefits supplied by Nature. This interactive tool provides information about several of our nation’s major ecosystems, the services they provide, and how those services, or their degradation and loss, may affect people.” For example, with a few clicks you can see that forests provide clean air, clean water, mitigate water hazards, and provide aesthetic benefits, as well as places for recreation & physical activity. Check it out at <http://www.epa.gov/research/healthscience/browser/introduction.html>
- The National Environmental Education Foundation (neefusa.org) recently conducted a study of how we take care of the earth, and in turn, our own health. Here are a few highlights:
 - * 77% of adults turn off the lights when leaving a room
 - * 61% of adults visited a park or nature center in the last 12 months.
 - * 9% of adults compost.

Connecting Nature & Art

We’re pleased to announce that Pfeiffer Nature Center was awarded a grant from through the Cattaraugus County Arts Council with funds from the NYS Council on the Arts Decentralization Grant Program. We’ll have three terrific programs this summer, made very affordable because of this grant.

In June, Helen Worth will lead **Muses of the Forest: Painting**. Renowned for her art work for decades, Helen loves to share her enjoyment of the arts with others. “Capturing the historic beauty of the buildings and landscapes in Western New York State, where I have lived most of my life, is my passion. By bringing to life a scene from the past in watercolors, oils, charcoal or pen and ink, I am telling the story of American people who cleared the forests, farmed the land, built their homes, churches, schools and businesses while accomplishing all the other tasks that built our great nation.”

In July, Brittany Stevens will lead **Muses of the Forest:**

Dance. Brittany Stevens is the owner of the Neighborhood School of Dance (NSD) calling it her own in July 2013, where she is teaching and growing the business. Brittany has been dancing at NSD since she was in Kindergarten. She continued dancing as she attended Elmira College, where she played leadership roles in their Tap Ensemble and was also active in the Orchesis Dance Club. Brittany has is skilled in Ballet, Jazz, Hip Hop, Modern, Pointe, and Tap. She has continued her education by taking classes at Center Stage Dance Studio in Buffalo, NY, Broadway Dance Center in NYC, and even a class in Rome, Italy.



With details currently being finalized, we’ll round out the season in October with **Muses of the Forest: Music**. You’ll be treated to a dulcimer concert—an instrument originating in the Appalachians—and will have a chance to learn to play this stringed instrument, and maybe even make one to take home!

Watch our eNews & website for more details.

Pfeiffer Nature Center Mission

- To preserve the integrity of the old-growth forest
- To provide an area for scientific research
- To promote community-based nature study programs for grade school, high school, college and adult students
- To further natural resource stewardship

Thank You To Our Financial Supporters

New & Renewing Members

Jan. 1 – March 27, 2014

Kathy Alleman
 Don & Peg Bergreen
 Eugene Bennett
 Joe & Trish Bohan
 Ernie & Barbara Borer
 Bruce & Gloria Burton
 Christopher & Edythe Anna Clapp
 Ben & Laura Cole
 Dominic & Donna DiGirolamo
 David Elliott
 Rick & Nannette Giberson
 Colleen Kent
 Darryl Mayeaux
 Jeff McMullen
 Nina McMullen
 James Meyer
 Michael & Martha Nenno
 Melody Pollock
 Corinne Potter
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 Mike & Joyce Ermer

Ann Feightner
 Ruth Flood
 Tony & Carol Gallo
 Rick & Nannette Giberson
 Faith & Jerry Hustak
 Robert & Hana Jacobi
 Paul Kaduc
 Michael Kelley & Mary Freeman
 Marcia & Jack Kelly
 Colleen Kent
 Mallery's Autobody
 Melora Miller
 Edna Northrup
 George & Virginia Nuffer
 Katie & Jonathan Oakleaf
 Olean Medical Group
 Ried's Market
 Diane Sharpsteen
 David Shemeld
 Sprague's Maple Farms
 Maryjane Steinbacher-Wilson
 Nick Vazcek
 Chan & Karen Whitford

In Memory of

Skip Eaton by June Eaton
 Wendy (Pfeiffer) & Clive Lawrence
 by Jacqueline Lawrence
 Lee Merrick by Delores Merrick
 Susan Doucett Nickerson
 by K. Sue Stevens
 Susan Doucett Nickerson
 by Henry & Marcia Storch
 Bob Potter by Francie Potter
 Timothy & Eleanor Pfeiffer
 by Douglas & Barbara Pfeiffer

We are grateful for your generosity and support! Kind acts and thoughtful gifts such as these assist us in fulfilling our Mission. If we have inadvertently omitted your gift from these lists, please bring it to our attention and we will happily correct our oversight.

Create a Lasting Tribute

You can honor your family and friends in ways that will have lasting impacts on Pfeiffer Nature Center and therefore the local community. Gifts can be either memorials or tributes to the accomplishments of someone still with us, and all gifts will be acknowledged in this newsletter.

Gifts to the **Kay Pfeiffer Gerkin Endowment Fund** are maintained and managed separately from our operating funds. The principle in this fund is retained exclusively for investments and income generation, with only interest and dividends available to support our ongoing activities. You can now make donations to this Fund directly through the **Cattaraugus Region Community Foundation**. Check with your financial or legal advisor to name Pfeiffer Nature Center in your estate planning.

Gifts may be made specifically to our sugar bush expansion project. We will plant sugar maples on our Eshelman property annually. While donors will not be able to identify "their" tree, they will have the benefit of knowing that their gifts provided a source of ongoing income. Maple seedlings are \$35 each.

Gifts of any size may be made to the Nature Center to honor or memorialize relatives, friends, or pets. With no minimum donation, this option provides giving opportunities for all.

We hope you'll make a gift soon!



DON'T MISS OUT! If you receive *The Ovenbird* but aren't also receiving our e-News, you're missing a lot! E-News is sent out 2-4 times per month with the latest information about upcoming programs, events, nature happenings, & opportunities, including details on how you can join in the fun. Four easy ways you can start getting e-News:

Point your smart phone to the QR code – click & you'll automatically be brought to our sign up page **OR**



Go to our website, PfeifferNatureCenter.org, scroll to the bottom of the page and click the Get our e-News button **OR**

Send us an email, programs@PfeifferNatureCenter.org, and we'll get you signed up **OR**

Give us a call, 716-933-0187, with your email address and we'll do the rest.

DO IT NOW, BEFORE YOU MISS ANOTHER ISSUE!

Yes, I'd Like to Become a Member of Pfeiffer Nature Center

Membership Levels and Benefits

All members receive a subscription to *The Ovenbird*, our quarterly newsletter, delivered to your home. **If you want to continue to receive this in hard copy, be sure to return the form on the back page.**

Student/senior	\$10	1 \$5 off program admission coupon
Individual	\$25	1 \$5 off program admission coupon
Family	\$35	3 \$5 off program admission coupons
Steward	\$50	4 \$5 off program admission coupons
Conservator	\$100	4 free family program admissions
Patron	\$250	Same as Conservator, invitation to wine & cheese reception, 1 tree planted
Guardian	\$500	Same as Patron, plus 1 decorated fir holiday wreath
Benefactor	\$1,000	Same as Guardian, plus unlimited free program admissions
Additional Donation	\$ _____	

All members also receive discounted admissions and gift shop purchases at many other nature centers. *Your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowable by NYS Tax Law.*

NAME: _____

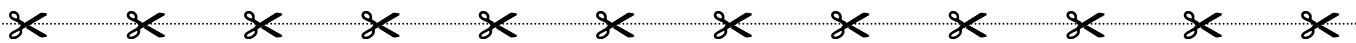
STREET ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL: _____ Is this a ____ new or ____ renewing membership? (Check one)

May we contact you about volunteering? ____ Yes ____ No, thank you.
Send your completed form to: Pfeiffer Nature Center, PO Box 802 Portville, NY 14770



Season's Stirrings

April

- Watch for garter snakes sunning themselves on rocks on warm days.
- Winter wrens are early risers. Their high-spirited song is one of the longest and most complex bird songs known.



- Listen for the chorus of spring peepers, which can be heard 1/2 mile away. Less than a week later the wood frogs will start singing.

May

- Sterilize your hummingbird feeders and get them ready to hang—the ruby-throated hummingbirds will be here any day.
- Insects are hatching, providing a food source for the migratory birds that are returning. **(Editor's note: Join our FREE bird walks on May 10th & 24th.)**
- Trillium and marsh marigolds are in bloom. You

can probably pick your rhubarb now, too.

- White-tailed deer usually give birth to a single fawn the first year of motherhood; twins often follow in subsequent years.

June

- Deer antlers are growing up to 1/2" per day!
- Poison ivy flowers are producing nectar—steer clear of them if you have any sensitivities!
- Snapping turtles are laying their eggs.
- Hermit Thrushes, Magnolia Warblers, and Common Yellowthroats are often heard signing well after dusk.



Information from Virginia Barlow's *A Look at the Seasons' Main Events* from Northern Woodlands

Pfeiffer Nature Center and Foundation

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**Pfeiffer Nature Center—
where science, art, and
nature come together!**

Non Profit Org.
US Postage
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14760



Or Current Resident



Hours of Operation

Office, 14 S. Main St.

Portville:

Generally Tuesday, Wednesday,
& Thursday mornings; other
times by chance or appointment

Lillibridge Road Property:

Trails open to non-motorized
usage dawn to dusk, 7 days a
week, year round.

Yubadam Road Property:

Trails open to non-motorized
usage dawn to dusk, 7 days a
week, year round EXCEPT during
hunting season Oct —Dec , when
all trails are closed.

Staff is available for questions,
tours, and programs as scheduled
or by prior arrangement.

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Check our website or call for the  
most up-to-date information and  
upcoming programs:

**www.PfeifferNatureCenter.org**  
**716-933-0187**

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**PAPER OR DIGITAL?**

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**If you want to continue to receive *The Ovenbird* in hard copy, we need to hear from you.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please continue to mail me *The Ovenbird* via postal mail.

I want only digital info **OR**  I want both paper and digital

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Return to Pfeiffer Nature Center, PO Box 802, Portville, NY 14770 or call us (716-933-1087) with your input.