

Palisades Views



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May 2010

Freeman was a “quiet yet tireless” leader

It's hard to imagine the Piasa Palisades Group without Bob Freeman, an environmental hero and outdoor adventurer who died April 16 after a long illness.

He was 75.

Freeman founded the Alton-based group in 1972, with help from his wife, the late Louise Freeman, and friends Rich and Jody Keating. He spent the next 38 years working behind the scenes, accomplishing great things but rarely taking credit.

“He had no desire to speak publicly or hold office,” recalls Rich Keating, of Edwardsville.

Bob Freeman lived in Godfrey. He studied environmental issues to stay one step ahead of the opposition and developed an almost-encyclopedic knowledge.

He served as Palisades Views newsletter editor for years. He attended hearings, led outings and sold bird seed. He hauled supplies to the VP Fair lemonade stand in St. Louis each summer. He organized the Weekend in the Woods retreat at Pere Marquette. He picked up trash along the Great River Road.

The list goes on and on.

“Bob was a brilliant man with a gentle soul,” said Teri Maddox, 50,



BOB FREEMAN
1934-2010
Piasa Palisades Group
founder

of Edwardsville, a group member for more than 20 years. “He was generous, patient and dedicated to a fault. I can't think of anyone I respected more.”

Friends and family members will celebrate Freeman's life on May 1 at the Grafton home of his son and daughter-in-law, Doug and Sharon Freeman.

Bob Freeman also is survived by two sons and three daughters-in-law, Kenny and Stephanie Freeman of Dow; Wayne and Fanee Freeman of Bozeman, Mont.; and Beth Swazey of Bar Harbor, Maine; three grandchildren and two sisters.

See **FREEMAN** on page 2

What's growing on that roof?

Two engineering professors from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville will discuss “green-roof” technology at the May meeting of the Piasa Palisades Group.

Susan Morgan is chair of the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Department of Civil Engineering. Serdar Celik teaches in the SIUE Department of Mechanical Engineering.

SIUE is home base for the Green Roof Environmental Evaluation Network (GREEN), a collaborative green-roof research project.

Green roofs involve growing plants on top of buildings instead of covering them with shingles.

Also known as “living roofs” or “vegetated roofs,” they absorb rainwater, provide insulation, create wildlife habitat and help to lower urban air temperatures and combat the “heat-island” effect.

The Sierra Club meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. Monday, May 10, at First Unitarian Church, Third and Alby streets in Alton.

Members are invited to join the speakers for a pre-meeting dinner at 5:45 p.m. at Bossanova, 112 W. Third St. in Alton.

There are two types of green roofs: intensive, which are thicker

See **GREEN** on page 4

Fellow founder: Bob's friendship meant the most

By Richard C. Keating
Group founder

On the wall of my credit union is a poster showing an eagle in flight. The caption reads, "Leadership isn't position; it's performance."

In many ways, that epitomizes Bob Freeman's life.

He had no desire to speak publicly or hold office in the Piasa Palisades Group or any other organization, but he was always working through quiet persuasion and direct action to make things happen.

Our acquaintance began as parents of Cub Scouts around 1970. We learned that the Boy Scout council was planning to log the forest at Camp Warren Levis in Godfrey.

Together, Bob and I managed to get the council to abandon the pro-

ject. Then we hatched the plan to establish a permanent environmental presence, namely a Sierra Club group.

Over 40 years, on countless canoe trips, day hikes and pack trips, I learned the many facets of Bob's wisdom, based on his love of the natural world.

It is rare enough to find friends with this level of understanding and rarer still to find one as soft-spoken yet effective.

Some of Bob's ideas were quite bold in concept. I remember the great fun we had working the fresh-squeezed lemonade stand at the VP Fair in St. Louis for several years.

Bob conceived the plan, did the necessary organizing and got the materials and supplies together for this amazingly

successful project.

The club made significant income off lemonade until the idea was copied by other organizations.

Later, Bob came up with another entrepreneurial plan: running a food stand at the Rams stadium.

With more volunteer help, it could have taken off. But its short life was certainly not due to lack of vision.

This small sampling of actions illustrates the depth of Bob's commitment to the club and to a sustainable world.

It is often said that community leaders are divided among visionaries and those who accomplish. Bob could lay claim to both in equal measure.

For me, with the passage of time, it was his friendship that meant the most.

FREEMAN

Continued from page 1

He had a fourth son, the late Jeff Freeman.

"Bob is someone who made a big difference," said his protégé, Jim Bensman, 51, of Alton, longtime member of the Piasa Palisades Group Executive Committee. "I will never forget him."

Bob Freeman and Bensman met when Bensman was a high-school student in the 1970s.

Their last adventure was bush-whacking to the top of Vilander Bluff above the Meramec River in November.

Bensman remembers how much Freeman loved to explore caves. One of his favorite sayings was, "I smell a cave."

"I remember one time we were canoeing down the Eleven Point River," Bensman said. "I had a cave

on my GPS, so we all took a mile hike back to try to find it. People were starting to think I messed up until Bob yelled out, 'I smell a cave,' and he found the entrance!"

Audrey Wiseman knew Freeman even longer than Keating or Bensman. They attended the same Baptist church as children and the same classes throughout their school years.

She described Freeman as a "nature adventurer" who loved to hike, bike, canoe, raft, parachute and spelunk.

"He had a great sense of fun and a droll, warm sense of humor," said Wiseman, 75, of Alton, a Piasa Palisades Group member for about 25 years. "His friends were numerous. He will be so much missed."

Freeman was born May 23, 1934, in Alton. He married the former Catherine "Louise" Tarrant on

Aug. 6, 1955.

Freeman was a founding member of the Missouri Speleological Society and instrumental in the development of The Nature Institute in Godfrey.

"He was a quiet yet tireless advocate for all that is green before it became commonplace," according to his obituary in the Alton Telegraph.

Dick Worthen joined the Piasa Palisades Group in 1972, shortly after it formed.

Over the years, he remembers Freeman continually pushing members to set higher goals for environmental action with the attitude that, "We should do more," or "We could do better." Or Freeman would ask, "Why don't we do it?"

"Bob was the heart, the conscience and the foundation of the Piasa Palisades Group," said Worthen, 67, of Alton.

CALENDAR

Tuesday, May 4 Weekly Heartland Prairie walk at Gordon Moore Park in Alton. Guides will discuss topics such as prairie history, habitat, plants, birds, insects, photography and ecology. Volunteers needed. Hours are 6 to 7 p.m. Bring water, notepads, guidebooks, cameras and snacks to share, if desired. For more information, call Nan Adams at (618) 655-0170.

Saturday, May 8 Wings of Spring Festival in the Alton area. Join the Sierra Club, Audubon International and many other non-profits and government agencies on Migratory Bird Day. Activities will take place at the National Great Rivers Museum in Alton, Pere Marquette State Park north of Grafton and Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary in West Alton, Mo. The Piasa Palisades Group will operate a children's activity booth at the museum. For more information, visit <http://www.wingsofspring.org>.



Sunday, May 9 Spring bird hike with veteran birder Edna Alexander at The Nature Institute in Godfrey. Meet at 8 a.m. at Talahi Lodge. Free. For more information, call (618) 466-9930.

Monday, May 10 Piasa Palisades Group monthly meeting. SIUE engineering professors Susan Morgan and Serdar Celik will speak on "green roofs" (see related article). Meet at 7:30 p.m. in the community room of First Unitarian Church, Third and Alby streets in Alton. Pre-meeting dinner at Bossanova at 5:45 p.m. For more information, call (618) 462-6802.

Tuesday, May 11 Weekly Heartland Prairie walk at Gordon Moore Park in Alton. Guides will discuss topics such as prairie history, habitat, plants, birds, insects, photography and ecology. Volunteers needed. Hours are 6 to 7 p.m. Bring water, notepads, guidebooks, cameras and snacks to share, if desired. For more information, call Nan Adams at (618) 655-0170.

Wednesday, May 12 Piasa Palisades Group monthly bike ride. Cover about 10 miles on the Schoolhouse Trail in the Collinsville and Granite City areas. The trail is flat and paved. We'll stop by Horseshoe Lake State Park to remember the late Bob Freeman, who enjoyed our rides. End at Culver's for ice cream. Meet at 6 p.m. in the Metro East Park and Recreation District lot (north on Illinois 157 from Interstate 55/70 and left on United Drive). Light and helmet required. For more information, contact Jim Bensman at (618) 463-0714 or jbensman1@charter.net.

Saturday, May 15 Greening Your Neighborhood workshop at Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey. Learn how to create an eco-friendly yard with simple, sustainable practices such as composting and gardening. Led by staff of The Rain Garden Network. Conserve water, reduce pollution and create habitat for birds, butterflies and other habitat. Hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The cost is \$59. Rain date is May 16. Register by calling Katie at (618) 468-5750.

Saturday, May 15 Dragonfly monitoring workshop at Lewis and Clark Community College in

Godfrey. Learn to identify and collect data on dragonfly and damselfly populations. Craig Stettner, coordinator of the Dragonfly Monitoring Network, will lead a presentation and short identification session. Hours are 1 to 4 p.m. in Haskell Hall, Room 112. Free. Co-hosted by National Great Rivers Research and Education Center. To register, contact Vera Bojic at (618) 468-4870 or vbojic@lc.edu. For more information, visit <http://www.anisoptera.org/>.

Sunday, May 16 Spring bird hike with veteran birder Edna Alexander at The Nature Institute in Godfrey. Meet at 8 a.m. at Talahi Lodge. Free. For more information, call (618) 466-9930.

Monday, May 17 Piasa Palisades

See CALENDAR/page 4

Palisades Views

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members.

To submit a newsletter item:
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**DEADLINE FOR JUNE:
SATURDAY, MAY 29**



C A L E N D A R

Continued from page 3

Group Executive Committee meeting. All members are welcome to attend! Meet at 7 p.m. at the Sierra Club office, 223 Market St. in Alton.

Tuesday, May 18 Weekly Heartland Prairie walk at Gordon Moore Park in Alton. Guides will discuss topics such as prairie history, habitat, plants, birds, insects, photography and ecology. Volunteers needed. Hours are 6 to 7 p.m. Bring water, notepads, guidebooks, cameras and snacks to share, if desired. For more information, call Nan Adams at (618) 655-0170.

Saturday, May 22 Great River Rendezvous Paddlefest on the Mississippi River. The Sierra Club is joining with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Midwest paddling clubs to raise money for TreeHouse Wildlife Center in Brighton. People competing in an 18-mile race between Grafton and Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary in West Alton,

GREEN

Continued from page 1

and can support a wider variety of plants but are heavier and require more maintenance; and extensive, which are covered in a light layer of vegetation and lighter than intensive.

Morgan's research focuses on green roofs, stormwater management and waste management. She is co-founder and co-director of GREEN with William Retzlaff and serves on the SIUE Sustainability Advisory Group.

Celik's research focuses on alternative-cooling technologies, renewable energy and green buildings.

Mo., will see majestic bluffs and quaint river towns. A 10-mile guided paddle goes from Piasa Creek Boat Ramp to the sanctuary. An overnight family camp-out will include questing, astronomy, fishing, birding and kayaking. There will be a free paddling-skills clinic. For more information, call (618) 462-6802.

Saturday, May 22 Star-gazing in Heartland Prairie at Gordon Moore Park in Alton. Astronomy guru Steve Sands will educate and amaze you with his knowledge and telescope, which looks like something out of a NASA laboratory. Meet at 7:30 p.m. Bring a snack to share, if desired. Program will be repeated on June 19. For more information, call Nan Adams at (618) 655-0170.

Sunday, May 23 Spring bird hike with veteran birder Edna Alexander at The Nature Institute in Godfrey. Meet at 8 a.m. at Talahi Lodge. Free. For more information, call (618) 466-9930.

Tuesday, May 25 Weekly Heartland Prairie walk at Gordon Moore Park in Alton. Guides will discuss topics such as prairie history, habitat, plants, birds, insects, photography and ecology. Volunteers needed. Hours are 6 to 7 p.m. Bring water, notepads, guidebooks, cameras and snacks to share, if desired. For more information, call (618) 655-0170.

Thursday, May 27 Piasa Palisades Group monthly moonlight hike at The Nature Institute in Godfrey. Explore Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve by the

light of the full moon. Meet at 7:30 p.m. at Talahi Lodge, 2213 S. Levis Lane. From Homer Adams Parkway in Alton (Illinois 3), turn right on West Delmar in Godfrey (also Illinois 3), left on Levis Lane and left on South Levis. Bring a friend! For more information, call Sandy Wood at (618) 463-0358.

Friday, June 4 Sierra Club E-drive at Carrolton Bank's Jerseyville Banking Center, North State and West Exchange in Jerseyville. Free disposal or recycling of most electronics, computers and appliances. Hours are 2 to 6 p.m. For more information, call (618) 462-6802.

NOTICE

You can begin receiving Palisades Views electronically, if desired, saving trees and money on postage and printing.

We would stop mailing paper copies and e-mail notices that new issues have been published. The notices would include links to pdf files on the Piasa Palisades Group website.

This is optional. We want you to read the newsletter! If the print version works best for you, don't do anything.

If the electronic method sounds good, send your name, mailing address and e-mail address to christine.favilla@sierraclub.org.

P.S. Members who want to receive regular e-mail reminders or updates on Piasa Palisades Group activities, events, etc. also should contact Christine Favilla.