

**WELCOME
TO THE**



*116th Annual Meeting
of The Prairie Club*

June 8, 2024 at Hazelhurst

The Prairie Club's
116th Annual Meeting of Members
Agenda
June 8, 2024

New Member Meet & Greet

Call to Order

Welcome, Opening Remarks, Recognitions.....Mike Maloney, *President*

Financial ReportingMark Sever, *Treasurer*

Memorial for Departed MembersHope Little, *Annual Meeting Chair*

Door Prizes.....Hope Little, *Annual Meeting Chair*

Closing Remarks/ Adjournment.....Mike Maloney, *President*

Lunch

Wildflower Program.....Cathy Maloney

THE PRAIRIE CLUB

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

President – Mike Maloney
1st Vice President – Sarah “Sally” Craig Pratt
2nd Vice President – Carolyn Edison
Hazelhurst Camp Vice President – Barb Burton
Spring Grove Camp Vice President – Erin Kiehm
Treasurer – Mark Sever
Recording Secretary – Wendy Lyford



Board of Directors

Arthur Anderson
Larry Bergman
Charlie Johnson
Terry Riban
Rick Krumbacher
Deb Holland
Jim “Mac” McCarthy
Brian Reed
Charles Calkins
Mildred “Mickey” Hanson
Hope Little
Charles Manthey

*Thank you to our volunteers who serve
on the Board of Directors. We continue
to thrive because of their dedication
and service to The Prairie Club.*

2023 Committee Chairs

Standing Committees

Audit – Kevin Oravec
Elections – Terry Riban
Finance – Richard B. Spurgin
Historical – *OPEN*
Membership – Jo Burda Smith
Nominating – Dan Gapen

Activity Committees

Annual Meeting – Hope Little
Buena Vista – Linsey Crowninshield-Ryan
Conservation – Penny Longo
Family Cottage – Laurel Salvador
Farm House – Deb McGrath & Barb Wittersheim
Promotional – Barb Burton
Publication – Natalie Brennan
Spring Grove Lodge – Mickey Hanson
Website – Natalie Brennan
Walkers/Activities – Hope Little & Terry Riban

2023 Audit Report

I have completed the independent review of the financial books and records of The Prairie Club for fiscal year 2023. A review does not constitute an audit, thus, the assurance that the financial statements are free of misrepresentations is limited. This review was done remotely.

I have found no material misstatements and recommend no modifications to the financial statements. The review found the books to be clear and comprehensible, the supporting documentation to be well-organized and the administration of financial activities to be in adherence with The Prairie Club's Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual.

Sincerely,

Charles Manthey, *Finance Committee*



Activities Committee Report

The Prairie Club of Chicagoland activities group has enjoyed a growing number of participants this year.

More and more people seem to be gravitating to the outdoors to enjoy walking in nature and socializing with other like-minded folks.

We began the year with over 20 people hiking together at Fullersburg Woods and we continue to have good size groups for our monthly hikes.

In addition to Fullersburg Forest Preserve we have visited Starved Rock State Park in Utica IL, McKinley Woods in Channahon IL and we hiked the Fox River Trail through Batavia IL.

We are looking forward to doing a Kayak activity on the Galien River in New Buffalo on Sunday, June 8th. We will do another one at Skokie Lagoon in a few months.

All events are posted on the Hazelhurst and Spring Grove Facebook pages. Please reach out to me at terryriban@yahoo.com or text me at 630-886-2308, if you are interested in participating in an event or going to a particular place and would like to lead a group there. I will be happy to write up the information and post it on meetup and Facebook sites.

There is such value to our health getting outside in nature. Sunlight, Trees and the beauty of the outdoors increases the neurotransmitter Serotonin in our body and brain and is known to make us feel happier. We need as many moments of mindfulness and happiness as we can get in this busy, crazy place we call "life on earth!"

Please join us in some of our upcoming activities this year and Happy Hiking!

Terry Riban, *Activities Committee chair*

Treasurer's Report on 2023

The Prairie Club continues to be in a strong financial position. We ended the year 2023 with approximately \$504,300 of cash and investments, of which \$267,900 is unrestricted and \$236,400 has been reserved for future long-term capital improvements and other uses. The Club does not have any debt except for routine expenses in the process of being paid.

The net profit for the year (after the depreciation charge) was net income of \$30,358 compared to net income in 2022 of \$63,809, a decrease of \$33,451.

The Club's tax return (Form 990) for 2023 was filed on a timely basis with the IRS.

Mark V. Sever, *Treasurer*

The Prairie Club 2023 Financial Summary

	End of Year 2023	Beginning of Year 2023	Increase (Decrease)
Unrestricted cash	\$267,874	\$280,943	\$ (13,069)
Restricted cash and investments	236,410	128,646	107,764
Total cash and investments	\$504,284	\$409,589	\$ 94,695
	2023	Prior Year 2022	Increase (Decrease)
<u>Rental Fees</u>			
Buena Vista	\$ 61,506	\$ 57,098	\$ 4,408
Family Cottage	44,854	41,116	3,738
Farmhouse	65,901	54,250	11,651
Spring Grove Lodge	6,993	7,290	(297)
	<u>\$179,254</u>	<u>\$159,754</u>	<u>\$ 19,500</u>
<u>Membership Dues</u>	\$ 99,244	\$104,214	\$ (4,970)
<u>Net Profit (Loss)</u>			
Buena Vista	\$ 32,978	\$ 19,622	\$ 13,356
Family Cottage	6,613	16,056	(9,443)
Farmhouse	23,937	19,291	4,646
Hazelhurst	(8,005)	11,374	(19,379)
Prairie Club Office	51,756	48,651	3,105
Improvement Funds	26,856	24,660	2,196
Spring Grove	0	0	0
Subtotal - before depreciation	<u>134,135</u>	<u>139,654</u>	<u>(5,519)</u>
Less Depreciation	<u>(103,777)</u>	<u>(75,845)</u>	<u>27,932</u>
Net Profit after Depreciation	<u>\$ 30,358</u>	<u>\$ 63,809</u>	<u>\$(33,451)</u>



Members & Friends Who Passed Away in 2023

Karla Nadine Ilten passed away May 8, 2023
George V. Burbach passed away June 2, 2023
Barbara Pratt passed away June 7, 2023
Frank Calkins passed away June 28, 2023
Dorothy Simmons passed away July 16, 2023
Joan Hughes passed away August 6, 2023
Beverly Chethik passed away August 10, 2023
John F. McKee II passed away October 28, 2023
Lawrence "Larry" Reinhardt passed away October 30, 2023



Membership Count for 2023

811	- Category 1 (Active)
2	- Category 2 (Honorary)
2	- Category 3 (Senior Active)
2	- Category 4 (Hiker/Walker)
12	- Category 5 (Student)
60	- Category 6 (Senior)
889	- Total Prairie Club Members

Membership Committee Report

The purpose of the Membership Committee is to review applications, facilitate the membership process, and screen new members to ensure that the goals and objectives of the Prairie Club are understood and agreed to by the prospective member. The Membership Committee then makes recommendations to the Prairie Club Board of Directors for approval and admission of new members.

The Committee also reviews and revises membership policy, and then presents any rule revisions to the Board.

In 2023, the Membership Committee interviewed and approved 18 new members. At the end of 2023, the Prairie Club had 889 members.

The committee also revised the following membership policies:

- A sponsor must be an active Prairie Club member for two years before being a sponsor.
- A prospective PC member must complete all phases of application, and be approved by the PC board, before enjoying any benefits of membership.

The membership committee continued to emphasize the vital role and responsibilities of the sponsors of a potential PC member. We encourage our current members to help us maintain the values and goals of membership in the Prairie Club, and to continue to sponsor candidates that will make The Prairie Club a better place for future generations.

The membership committee also began the process of bringing the application and sponsor forms into this century by providing an online application and sponsor form.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Burda-Smith, 2023 Membership Chair

2023 Membership Committee Members:

Jo Burda-Smith - Chair
Barb Burton
Teri Clancy
Sally Cook
Marilynn Gorawara
Marcy Gray
MP McKenzie
Erin Kiehm
Paula Kiehm
Frankie Kirby

New Members 2023

Justin Bruns
Kathleen Casey
Anna Dominov
Virginia Edwards
Gary Edwards
Nancy Friesen
Max Ganong

Dennis Gibson
Cathy Gibson
Steven Kluender
Kristin Kluender

Kris Kotte
Renée Kotte
Barbara Kwatro
Douglas Nightingale
Victoria Stevens
Jeanne Szromba
Thomas Szromba



Conservation Committee Report

The Prairie Club continued its annual contribution in 2024 to two conservation organizations near our camps: Chikaming Open Lands (COL) in southwest Michigan and the Nippersink Watershed Association (NWA) in McHenry County, Illinois.

Chikaming Open Lands is dedicated to preserving open space and the diverse natural character of southwest Berrien County.

The Nippersink Watershed Association conserves, protects and renovates the Nippersink Creek watershed in Illinois and Wisconsin.

Thank you to Penny Longo for serving as Conservation Chair in 2023.

We welcome our new Conservation Chair, Terri Hebert.



Spring Grove Report

The purpose of this report is to wrap up 2023 and preview 2024 at the Spring Grove camp. We finished the 2023 season strong with maximum site occupancy and a positive budget. Our main challenges continue to be increased utility costs, taxes, and insurance costs. We helped to offset those costs with a successful golf outing fundraiser.

We were able to utilize the Spring Grove improvement fund to purchase gravel to rebuild our aging lowland road. The labor for grading, spreading and steam rolling the road was provided free of charge by site holder Bruce Buschick and his family. We plan to expand that project to include rebuilding the remaining roads this coming season.

A generous \$1000 donation to the SG conservation fund by long time site holder Cathy Halfpenny will be used to plant trees throughout the property. As part of a new initiative to monitor and hopefully reduce our electric costs we purchased and are in the process of installing electric meters on all the trailer site power pedestals.

As we continue to operate at full occupancy in 2024, for the first time, we now have developed a waiting list for the next available trailer site! A huge thank you to our SG Lodge committee woman and board member Mickey Hanson who always goes above and beyond to ensure the lodge is clean and ready for use.

If you have never visited SG, I invite you to come check out the beautiful lodge and spring fed pond or traverse the beautiful Nippersink Creek which winds throughout the property. Spring Grove is a great place for a family reunion or weekend getaway. We also offer weekend camping or tent sites. I hope to see you soon.

Erin Kiehm, *SG Camp Chairman*

Buena Vista Report

Buena Vista has been under a big transformation this Spring as we look to welcome our Summer guests.

Work late Winter included a full purge of outdated and duplicated kitchen items, linens, and bath towels, some of which were donated as spaces were prepped for updates. A new couch, rug, and wicker coffee and end tables were purchased and delivered for the old side.

Work this Spring included: Full renovations to both kitchens, including new cabinets top and bottom, and new counter tops. Sinks and faucets have been replaced and we now have dishwashers (for the first time at BV). Kitchens and living rooms were painted and the kitchen and dining room wood floors have been replaced on the old side. Kitchens will be restocked with updated dishes and utensils and items to make consistent both sides.

Bathrooms have new shower curtains and liners and towels and mats. And bedrooms have all flat sheet linens and new comforters, as well as, window blinds!

Carpet cleaning was done in late April and a deep clean of the house will take place in mid-May.

None of this work could have been done without the amazing time and talents of Vern, Deb, Bar, and DeeAnna for the spearheading of contracts and facility improvements and for all the work they do to keep Buena Vista spotless and welcoming to renters. So much appreciation to them for their support and guidance!!

Looking forward to a great summer season! See you at camp!

Linsey Crowninshield-Ryan, *Buena Vista Chair*

Family Cottage Report

The Family Cottage had a very full summer rental season in 2023 and was fully booked through the summer again. The main task that I finished with help from my husband, was to change out the old, spray-painted wicker screened in porch furniture in Ravinia with a new set of outdoor wicker chairs and table. We also replaced one of the side tables in Ravinia that was unstable.

DeeAnna and I did the spring clean-up of both screened in porches in May 2023, a yearly activity that involves cleaning the outdoor cushions and outdoor rugs with upholstery cleaning equipment and vacuuming and wiping down of ceiling, walls, and floors in the screened in porches. We also change out the outdoor table covers every May.

As part of the May cleaning, we also retire and replace old linens (mattress covers, sheets, blankets, towels, dish towels, hand towels, dish cloths, pillow covers etc.).

After four years serving as the Family Cottage Rental Chair, I am passing the reins over to Terry Breach and Barb White for 2024. The Family Cottage will be in good hands, they are very enthusiastic and ready to take over. Thanks Barb and Terry for stepping up and volunteering!

As always, much appreciation and many thanks go to Vern and DeeAnna for the hard work they do to keep the Family Cottage well maintained. Natalie keeps the rental records meticulously and keeps us all informed weekly with updates, thanks Natalie!

Laurel Salvador, *former Family Cottage Rental Chair*

Farmhouse Report

We had another great year at the farmhouse! The renters had very few complaints and the majority of renters did an adequate job of cleaning up after themselves and following check out procedures. We continue to send a letter of explanation and charge the renters a fee of a minimum of \$100 if the farmhouse is left dirty or checkout procedures are not followed adequately.

The farmhouse floors in the kitchen and living room were worn out and were replaced with beautiful new engineered hardwood and they look fantastic. They will last a long time!

Two twin mattresses were replaced in Room 4. We continue to replace missing or damaged kitchen items and linens when necessary.

We did our annual Spring cleaning in April and May which involved: carpet and upholstery cleaning, a deep cleaning of the whole house by DeeAnna, laundering of mattress pads, pillow protectors, bedspreads, and blankets. Stained towels and sheets were replaced. Windows were washed both inside and out.

We are looking forward to the time when the new screened porch can be started. We are hoping to start construction in the next year, but nothing has been finalized yet. The process has been delayed due to other priority projects at Buena Vista and the Family Cottage which have been expensive.

A special thank you to DeeAnna, Natalie and Vern for all the time and energy spent to help the farmhouse run smoothly. DeeAnna keeps up with the busy cleaning schedule especially during peak season. Vern's expertise in fixing things that go wrong in the farmhouse is invaluable. This winter he was quite busy with the farmhouse floor installation - from measuring to purchasing to scheduling to supervising the installation and so much more. Natalie makes sure we are on track in so many ways.

We continue to enjoy fixing up and managing the farmhouse as co-chairs. We are looking forward to a great summer with lots of Prairie Clubbers enjoying their gatherings at the farmhouse.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah McGrath and Barbara Wittersheim, *Farmhouse co-chairs*



Hazelhurst Report

We have a great Operating Committee for Camp Hazelhurst with many committed volunteers.

Red Barn Teri Herbert/Sara Sage_ Entertainments were scheduled in the Red Barn all summer, including site holder meetings in July and August. A BIG thank you To Rick Krumbacher for painting the walls which has brightened up the place. Events are already scheduled for 2024!

Monday Morning Coffees Chessa Lutter/Libby Buchele _2023 saw very high attendance throughout the summer.

Tennis and Pickleball Charlie Johnson/Lisa Pratt _ the tennis court was resurfaced and pickleball tournaments were held in 2023.

The Beach and Watercraft Randy Lutter _ instituted "Beachwatch volunteers" trained to assist in emergencies. Also continued ongoing efforts to monitor water conditions to keep swimmers informed.

Conservation at Hazelhurst Sharon Lemler

The Hazelhurst Conservation Committee was very active in 2023. Always advancing the founding mission of the Prairie Club, providing education and advocacy for sound conservation practices both in camp and in members' own communities, the committee additionally mobilized hundreds of volunteer hours of work within camp.

We always welcome new committee members who want to take a leadership role.

Highlights of 2023:

February -Professionally managed controlled burn of cleared materials, with HH volunteers assisting.

May-Huge morning of 30+ volunteers planting 3000 plugs of dune grass on the slope at Sunset Point

July- Screening of "*Shifting Sands*" and conversation with the makers of the documentary, which tells about saving the Dunes from industrial forces and highlights the role of The Prairie Club

- Red Barn speaker from the *Audubon Society*

- volunteer *work session* clearing invasives from dune forest area

- Red Barn evening led by Mike Maloney sharing overall *updates* on HH conservation progress

August-volunteer *work session* clearing invasives.

September - volunteer *work session* clearing invasives.

- *Stewards of Oak Road*, led by Penny Longo, planted native ferns inside the Oak Rd circle and made plans for ongoing conservation of the area

- provided *consultation* to Farmhouse chair regarding invasives at the FH

- numerous *individual consultations* for site holders

Hazelhurst Report *continued*

Goals for 2024 include:

- continuing all good work above
- rehab cleared areas "behind bath house" and creating a walking path up to Basswood Point, a historic landmark in the camp
- revamping the Legacy Garden design to accept the reality of our HH herd of deer while creating a natively beautiful area at the entrance of Hazelhurst

Building and Sites committee members worked throughout the year considering site holder requests.

The Pond Patrick Gilligan _ offers great viewing opportunities for nature lovers.

Juniors/Junior Clubhouse Heidi Buchele_ another great year of activities from Fairy houses to another great ice cream social.

Legacy Pavilion Becky Johnson/Charlie Johnson _ events included The Prairie Club Annual Meeting, The Variety Show a shrimp boil and more.

Camp's traditional 4th of July celebration Patrick Gilligan _was attended by Hazelhursters and guests enjoying great weather, food and community..

Building and Sites Nelson Pelletier _ committee members worked throughout the year considering site holder requests.

Community Liaison Willis Lyford _ has kept us informed of events in the community which impact Harbert and the surrounding area. Also acting as a point person when any challenges arise with our neighbors.

The Library Phyliss Pelletier _provides open library hours through the work of volunteers.

Waste Management and Grounds Vern Kits _ roads are in good shape and the club continues to recycle.

Beach Walk and Stairs Mike Clancy _ works tirelessly provide a safe and accessible route to our beach. Both 2023 and 2024 have seen the installation of beach mats on the beach path.

Memorial Service Janice Johnson_ service was held in August.

Treasurer Kevin Orevec _ Thank you

Hazelhurst bicycles Larry Bergman _ new committee to provide bicycles to all in camp.

Nominations Annette Robinson _ Thank you.

Fire Safety Geri Gorski _ Thank you.

Barbara Burton, *Hazelhurst Camp Chair 2023*