

Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative

A not-for-profit organization and land trust

Working across state boundaries to enhance the Wolf Lake Watershed



April 20, 2017

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Music from steel mills
Part of wetlands fest

Contact: Michael Boos, 219 9337149 or 312 220-0120

Immediate Release

A 40-year history about the bands and choirs sponsored by U.S. Steel's Gary Works and South Works mills will be featured May 27 at AWLI's 17th annual Wolf Lake Bi-State Wetlands Wind & Water festival.

Sponsored by the Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative (AWLI), the festival is free to the public.

Mary Kuzniar, retired music teacher, traces these musical groups from the 1930s through the 1970s. They were comprised of US Steel employees, both management and labor.

"They flourished during their time," Kuzniar explains, "but their history has been, to a great extent, lost until now."

Kuzniar will speak at 10:30 a.m. Saturday at the Environmental Education Center, 2405 Calumet Avenue, Hammond. The festival is free to the public and will be held May 27 and 28..

Her presentation will explore the nature of this industrial music program and the "directors and musicians who made it both successful and beloved." Most of the records of the program had been destroyed so, to recover this history, Kuzniar interviewed a dozen of the musicians, who are now in their senior years.

They gave hundreds of performances, both locally and throughout the Midwest, at civic or corporate events and music festivals, Kuzniar explains. During the 1970s, band and choirs from both mills would perform in Pittsburgh for Christmas festivals with choirs from mills in other areas.

The morning session of AWLI's festival begins at 9 a.m. with the honoring of poster winners. Activities move outdoors to the old beach with canoeing and fishing events and a hike to view spring flowers by Dr. Young Choi of Purdue University Northwest..

Dr. Joan Crist, coach of Calumet College of St. Joseph (CCSJ) rowing crew, will give a demonstration at 11:30.a.m.

The fishing clinic will continue at 1 p.m. at William Powers State Fish & Wildlife Area, Chicago. There will also be kite flying.

At 2 p.m. there will be a discussion on Wolf Lake and Its Watershed.

Sunday begins at 7 a.m on the Chicago side of Wolf Lake with a Sunrise Worship service conducted by Br. Benjamin Basile, C.P.P.S, He is Associate Professor of Mathematics at CCSJ

The service will include an ecumenical choir directed by Mary Kuzniar and a color guard formed by Cub Scout Pack 733 of Annunciata Church.

Breakfast for participants follows.

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A brief history of Wolf Lake follows at 8:30 a.m. by Michael Boos of AWLI. He will lead a bike ride through the Wolf Lake watershed follow at 9 a.m. to conclude the festival.

AWLI is a bi-state, not-for-profit organization and land trust seeking to improve and protect the Wolf Lake watershed.

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