The Leading Edge

Mike Roth
Maywood President

Hello, I am Mike Roth, newly elected President of our Maywood Advisory Board. My affiliation on the Board is as the representative of Sheboygan Rotary Club which is also known as Downtown or Noon Rotary. I started on the Board eight years ago. Since then, I have served as Treasurer and Vice-President. I have lived in Sheboygan with my family since graduating from University of Wisconsin Law School almost half a century ago.

There are many reasons to love Maywood, especially the number of volunteers and the amount of time and effort they invest in making this such a beautiful place. Of equal importance is our staff, Kendra, Angie and Nate, whose devotion to duty deserves admiration! Together, all of us make Maywood Sheboygan's jewel on the Pigeon River. As I typed that last sentence, I begin to think of the role the Pigeon River Valley has played in the life of me and my family. For a long time, we lived in the "tree street subdivision" on the northeast side of Sheboygan bordering Lake Michigan. My sons and I would walk down to the lake through the ravine which could be Eisner Avenue extending east. We would walk under the cliffs north to the mouth of the Pigeon River. Moving upriver, as a Sheboygan Jaycee, we worked on Jaycee Quarry Park (especially the waterslide) and then as a Rotarian, Making Spirits Bright in Evergreen Park.

Outside of volunteering, my son Nate and family operate Pigeon River Orchard, Wisconsin's only orchard inside a city's limits. I am a golfer and since my wife Bonnie and I live about a mile west of Maywood and Town and Country golf course is another mile west, I golf quite a bit next to the Pigeon River. An interesting historical note: when the Maywood family donated the 135 acres on which Maywood is located to the City of Sheboygan, it was conditioned on the city creating a park, golf course, or other green space. If the T&C course had not already been operating, could Maywood have turned out to be a golf course? Idle speculation perhaps. In any case I am happy things turned out the way they did. Maywood Environmental Park is truly a unique place, area, and facility of Sheboygan. I have served as an officer or director on many volunteer boards, including Sheboygan Elks Lodge 299. However, Maywood provides the best opportunity for educational involvement, recreation, relaxation, and peace of mind. There is nothing like a walk in the green glory of nature to meet those goals!

ECO EDGES Vol. 43, No. 3

Ellwood H. May Environmental Park
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Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Sheboygan, WI
Permit No. 48

GoMaywood.org

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Our Mission
To foster environmental stewardship
through educational and outdoor experiences
that connect our community with the natural world.

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FSC® C023133

ECOEDGES
A Publication of the Ellwood H. May
Environmental Park Association of Sheboygan County, Inc.

Take Flight - Wisconsin's Little Brown Bat

Growing up in Illinois, my grandparents had a lake house near Galena on Apple Canyon Lake. It was a weekend retreat during the school year and a second home during the summers, surrounded by woods and the usual activity that comes with a lake. It was there that I had my first encounters with bats. Filling the sky just after sunset they would venture out into the night to feast on insects.

In the world of mammals, bats are extremely fascinating, using echolocation to navigate and hunt insects in complete darkness. By making rapid, high-frequency sounds and listening to the echoes that bounce back, bats can determine where objects are around them and where insects will be traveling. Bats use sound to "see" and interact with their surroundings, which is remarkable. A single little brown (*myotis lucifugus*) bat can also eat up to 1,000 mosquito-sized insects in an hour. Their appetite for insects makes them an important asset to farmers and agriculture. Many of the insects they eat are pests to crops and bats can help naturally control insect damage.

Unfortunately, little brown bats face serious threats. One of the biggest is white-nose syndrome, or WNS, a disease caused by a fungus that affects bats during hibernation. WNS has caused major declines in bat populations across North America and was first detected in Wisconsin in 2014. Little brown bats are especially vulnerable because they hibernate in caves and mines where the fungus can spread. Females also generally have only one pup each year, making it difficult for their populations to recover quickly after major losses.

It is unfortunate that conservation messages sometimes seem to be heard only when we can explain how an animal benefits humans. We care that bats eat mosquitoes. We care that they help farmers. We care that they can reduce agricultural pests. Those things are important, but it seems strange that an animal needs to prove its usefulness before we decide it is worth protecting. Bats are fascinating animals in their own right, and they are also an important part of Wisconsin's ecosystems.

There are simple ways people can help. Putting up a properly designed bat house can provide bats with another safe place to roost. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is also a good source of information about Wisconsin's bats, white-nose syndrome, bat houses, and ways to protect bat habitat.

In my younger days, bats would occasionally get inside the house and we would help them get back outside. We had a couple of bat houses and happily shared the outdoor space with our flying friends. By helping bats we are helping the entire ecosystem, it is critical that we expose young people to nature. Those early experiences spark lifelong curiosity and help us understand the world around us.

Nathan Dallesasse

Visit GoMaywood.org for current Ecology Center Hours

Back To School At Maywood

Back-to-school season is in full swing, and across the country, nature-based learning is on the rise. Maywood Environmental Park has fostered outdoor education for years, offering opportunities for learners of all ages.

George D. Warriner High School (WHS), a charter school within the Sheboygan Area School District, entered into a partnership with Maywood in 2017. During the school year, WHS students spend every Tuesday and Thursday at Maywood, attending classes with Warriner teachers that currently include Environmental Science, English, and STEM. Nature Art and Mathematics courses have also been offered, and students receive Physical Education credit through daily hiking and outdoor games. WHS students participate in place-based education, fostering a deep connection to their local environment and community. Alongside their coursework, they assist with park activities such as planting trees, setting up for events, monitoring water quality in the Pigeon River, and managing invasive species.

The following year, in 2018, Camp Y-Koda partnered with Sheboygan Area School District and Maywood to start a nature-based 4K program. Nature School is tuition-free and runs Monday through Thursday during the school year, with both morning and afternoon sessions. Students spend a large part of their day outdoors in every season. Childcare is also available through Camp Y-Koda at Maywood, so nature exploration and learning can continue throughout the day.

Sharing the environmental park as a campus, the 4K students and high schoolers enjoy working together on occasion. WHS students have the opportunity to serve as daily helpers in the 4K classroom, and last year, Art students worked with the 4K to design and decorate a scarecrow for The Christopher Farm and Gardens Scarecrow Festival. In the spring, STEM students explored physics concepts and hosted a "marble run day" for the 4K students to test out their projects.

Field trips through Camp Y-Koda outdoor skills and education programs provide a great way for other schools in the area to incorporate nature-based learning into their existing science curriculums. These field experiences are designed around the local environment and place-based education as well, highlighting careers in science while exploring real-world environmental issues.

Learning can and should happen in many ways, and by integrating the outdoors into every aspect of education, Maywood provides experiences that go beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Maggie Hafertepe

Wreath Making Workshop

Visit Maywood on a mid-November Saturday, and you may hear the Pavilion a-buzz with holiday creativity. The air is filled with the scent of freshly cut pine, spruce, and cedar. The annual wreath making and porch pot workshops are underway.

In the Pavilion at Maywood, participants can be found bundling greens and selecting decorative items to craft holiday décor for their home or office. Meanwhile, members of the Lake Shore Garden Club are busy cutting greens, restocking decorating stations, and assisting participants.

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However, the work of preparing for these workshops starts many months before. Club members collect decorative florals from their own gardens. Supplies are ordered. Colorful bows are created.

The day before, floors and tables are covered. Large branches are trimmed down into more usable sizes. Decorating stations are prepared.

The first workshop held in 2010 had 16 participants. Since then, attendance has grown to about 75 participants.

The 2026 wreath making and porch pot workshops will be held on Saturday, November 21. A Christmas Kissing Ball workshop will be held in early December. Registration information for all the workshops can be found on the Maywood website.

Maywood is very grateful for the many years and many hours Lake Shore Garden Club has given to these workshops. The funds raised have truly helped the park in its mission of connecting our community with nature.

Angie Doell

Prepping for Winter Birding

Though it is still summer, a cool evening breeze reminds me that fall and winter are soon coming. I have recently begun putting bird feeders out in the cold months, not just for observing birds, but also for providing those birds with an adequate food source in the winter. We are lucky to have a list of small birds that do not migrate, giving us some colorful and beautiful life to look at during the dreary and cold winter months.

Birds will make their own preparations before the winter season. Depending on the species, they will create their own stores of food, as their typical food sources are difficult or impossible to access once the snow falls. Like many mammals, birds will bulk up their fat reserves in case they struggle to find food sources.

If you do choose to put out bird feeders, make sure that you regularly clean them out and refill them with fresh feed. It may feel like an easy choice to buy cheap bird feed at a grocery store or hardware store, but birds can be picky. I have had the best luck with black oil sunflower seeds, as most small, winter birds will eat the seeds. No doubt, you will see the competition that birds have with squirrels, so you can invest in baffles that guard many bird feeders from those squirrels. Having a block of suet hanging in a basket will provide some birds with extra fat when their own body stores have diminished.

I generally do not mind having squirrels take some of the food I have intended for the birds. Squirrels will also create stores of food and fatten up before winter, but they also need to feed themselves as they do not hibernate. They do not remember the places of all of their stores and some of those stores are also covered up by winter snow, just like bird stores, so they will take some of the seed from bird feeders.

Ultimately, as long as you keep your bird feeders full of fresh seed, there will be enough for all of the critters that stick around during the cold winter months.

James Kabrhel

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Maywood Fall 2026 Calendar

For more detailed program descriptions, visit GoMaywood.org or the front desk in the Ecology Center, or call (920) 459-3906. To register for any Maywood program, call (920) 459-3906 or email maywood@sheboyganwi.gov. The Ecology Center is closed September 5-7 and 16; and November 13 and 26-29. The park and trails are open 4 am-10 pm daily.

OWLS (Older, Wiser, Livelier Scholars), 10-noon. Free for members/$5 for general public, registration required. **September 4:** No OWLS. **September 11:** Butterflies, Moths, and Caterpillars at Maywood. **September 18:** No OWLS. **September 25 Offsite:** Lion's Den Gorge in Grafton. **October 2 Offsite:** Orienteering 101 at Kellings Lakes. **October 9:** Rain date for Orienteering 101; if not needed, No OWLS. **October 16 Offsite:** Maywood to Pigeon River Orchard Hike. **October 23:** No OWLS. **October 30 Offsite:** Ice Age Trail Hike. **November 6:** Letterboxing at Maywood. **November 13:** No OWLS. **November 20:** Bur Oak Hike, meet at Maywood. **November 27:** No OWLS.

Yoga at Maywood. Visit GoMaywood.org for program descriptions and registration deadlines. **Fall Yoga at Maywood Session #1,** Wednesdays, September 2, 9, 16, 30, and October 7, 5:30-6:30 pm. $50 for the series if registered by August 12, $75 after August 12. **iRest® Yoga Nidra,** Mondays, October 5 and November 16, 5:30-6:15 pm. $20 for the series. **Fall Yoga at Maywood Session #2,** Wednesdays, October 21 and 28, and November 4, 11, and 18. 5:30-6:30 pm. $50 for the series if registered by September 30, $75 after September 30. **Save the Date: Yoga for the Holidays**, Wednesday, Dec. 2

Maywood Nature-based Book Club, in partnership with Mead Library, 10-11 am, free. Registration appreciated. September 5, *Novels and Stories* by Jack London. October 3, *Lost City of Z* by David Grann. November 2, *Greenwood* by Michael Christie.

September 2026

8 **Nature at Noon,** noon-1 pm. Free, donations and pre-registration appreciated. Bring your lunch, Maywood will provide coffee, tea, water, and dessert.

10 **Fall Native Plant Fundraiser Pick-up Day.** 4:30-6:30 pm. Place your order by Sept. 4.

19 **Scoping the Skies,** 8-10 pm. Free, drop-in program.

26 **Resilient Sheboygan County Potluck and Hike,** 4-7 pm. Free, bring a dish to pass and table service. Pre-registration required. Meet and network with like-minded people interested in environmental protection and sustainability.

October 2026

1 **Lakeland University Faculty Lecture,** 6:30-8 pm. Free, drop-in program. Dr. Alexis F. Piper will present "Alternatives to Environmental Apocalypse: Interrupting Anthropocentrism as the Way Forward Together."

8 **Maywood Annual Benefit Banquet,** 5 pm reception, 6:45 pm dinner, 7:30 pm presenter. $95/person or $540/table of six. Reservation deadline: September 24. Join us at Lakeland University for an evening in support of Maywood. The evening includes reception with cash bar and complimentary appetizers, a delectable dinner, silent auction, and raffles.

13 **Nature at Noon,** noon-1 pm. Free, donations and pre-registration appreciated. Bring your lunch, Maywood will provide coffee, tea, water, and dessert.

16-21 **Wisconsin Science Festival Self-Guided Hike.** Open during park hours, free.

17 **Scoping the Skies,** 6:30-8:30 pm. Free, drop-in program.

23-24 **Wisconsin Garden Club Federation Environmental School.** Registration deadline: October 9. Open to everyone.

24 **Glow Hike,** 6:30-8:30 pm. $7 for members, $10 for general public. Registration encouraged. First 100 registered participants receive an eco-friendly reusable glow stick.

November 2026

10 **Nature at Noon,** noon-1 pm. Free, donations and pre-registration appreciated. Bring your lunch, Maywood will provide coffee, tea, water, and dessert.

15 **Pints for the Park at 3 Sheeps Brewing Taproom.** 11 am-4 pm. Packers vs. Vikings viewing party and Maywood fundraiser.

21 **Wreath Making Workshop,** 8:30-11:30 am. $28 members for members, $35 for general public. Registration required, deadline November 10.

21 **Pretty Porch Pot Workshop,** 12:30-2:30 pm. $28 members for members, $35 for general public. Registration required, deadline November 10.

Save the Date: Kissing Ball Workshop, December 5. $50, Registration required.