



TreeMail



STE-ANNE-DE-BELLEVUE, QUÉBEC 514-398-7811

February 2010

Welcome to a new year at the Morgan Arboretum! Like many of you, the members of the Representative Committee of the Friends of the Morgan Arboretum enter 2010 with many ideas and plans, and we look forward to another year to enjoy the natural beauty of the Arboretum. You are encouraged to get involved whether through the “Year in the Forest” photography project, the birding challenge, or upcoming volunteer opportunities.

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For all event registrations or general enquiries, please call the gatehouse at 514-398-7811 or email us at morgan.arboretum@mcgill.ca.

Successful Winter Solstice Event

On the crisp, sunny afternoon of Sunday, December 20th, the FMA hosted a family event to observe the coming of the winter season. The participants were put to work at the craft table upon arrival, producing decorations for the solstice tree (located outside of the Conservation Centre) with a dedication and focus that would make anyone proud. The event organizers were not expecting such elaborate results when they conceived of the simple craft, and happily admired the ornaments produced by our young artists!



After decorating the tree, our visitors took a walk in the woods, guided by the Arboretum's naturalist, Chris Cloutier. The weather was perfect for tobogganing at Dale Field.



Hot chocolate (with marshmallows!), homemade cookies, and story time awaited everyone when they returned to the Conservation Centre. After a happy day, each family went home with a pottery tree ornament, made exclusively for the Arboretum.



Thank you to everyone who attended this event and helped to make it a success!

Volunteer at the Arboretum!

There will be several activities in the next month for which we need *an event coordinator* and other volunteers. This call for volunteers is to enable us to expand our outreach program into the community. Note that these events are weather dependent.

We are looking for one or two volunteers to fill our 5 bird feeders on **two Fridays: February 12th and 19th**. If interested, please call Anne Godbout at 514-398-8697.

On Saturday, February 13th, Baie d'Urfé is having its annual Winter Fest. We have been offered a tent in Bertold Park from 11:00 to 1:00 pm. We plan to have a running photo exhibit of the Arboretum, which is being prepared by our naturalist, Chris Cloutier. We need four people to be on the site to answer questions and promote the Arboretum to the residents of Baie d'Urfé, many of whom may not be aware of our existence.

On Saturday, February 20th, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue is running its first Carnival. As a part of their festivities, the FMA will be hosting an Open Day at the Arboretum. Entrance will be free for everyone from 11:00 to 4:00 pm. Crowds are expected to come and try out our snowshoe and ski trails, as well as our toboggan hill. We need *a volunteer organizer* to coordinate this event. Furthermore, we require volunteers to help with the following tasks:

- Coordinate the volunteer activities;
- Promote membership to the Arboretum;
- Hand out maps;
- Bake cookies/squares;
- Make and sell hot chocolate, coffee, hot dogs, sausages, and taffy on snow;
- Patrol the trails to ensure no one gets lost.

Note that Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue will take care of parking, security, first aid, and the portable toilet.

On Saturday, February 27th, the Arboretum plans to host a cross-country skiing evening. This will only happen if we can find *an organizer*, and of course if the weather conditions are favourable. We also need volunteers to help with the following tasks:

- Organize pre-registration;
- Direct parking;
- Handle the entrance booth;
- Make and sell hot chocolate and refreshments.

If you would like to help out at these events, please indicate your interest to the Gatehouse or by email.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Treat the Arboretum as your “Backyard” and help gather data for the scientists who study bird populations. All the information you need is at www.birdcount.org.

You can combine this with a walk in the forest any day from Friday, February 12 to Monday, February 15 – it’s an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It’s free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. Participants count birds anywhere for as little or as long as they wish during the four-day period. They tally the highest number of birds of each species seen together at any one time (please make sure to consult the [data form](#) beforehand to make sure you understand what is expected of you). To report their counts, they fill out an online checklist at the [Great Backyard Bird Count web site](#).

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time.

We need your help. Make sure the birds from the Arboretum are well represented in the count. No need to be an expert – just enthusiastic.

I Spy With My Little Eye...A Birding Challenge



Birder, Richard Gregson has posed a challenge to all Arboretum members. He seeks, in 2010, to spot as many as possible of the the bird species - and there are over 180 of them – that are on the Arboretum’s checklist. If you, too, are a frequent visitor, we urge you to participate in this friendly competition; get out your binoculars and create a list of birds that you spot over the course of the year. This is also a great way for your children to become acquainted with the diversity of species in the Arboretum.

The official Arboretum checklist is available at the Gatehouse or at the [Arboretum website](#).

A Ski Soirée



On **Saturday, February 27th**, the FMA is planning to host a cross-country ski evening from 7:00 until 9:00 pm, weather permitting. The event is open to adults and children over twelve years old. There is no charge for members, while non-members will pay \$6. Meet us at the Conservation Centre to confirm your presence before strapping on your skis and taking off into the woods. Hot drinks and snacks will be provided...but please don’t forget your headlamps and flashlights!

Kindly **RSVP** at the gatehouse by Friday, February 19th.

Life in the Cold

Don your snowsuits, gather at the Conservation Centre, and join us on a winter walk on **Sunday, February 28th** from 2:00 to 3:30 pm (weather permitting). Discover how the Arboretum's flora and fauna cope during the winter season. Anne Godbout will talk about trees, and Richard Gregson about our local birds.



Cost:

- Members: Child \$3; Adult \$6
- Non-members: Child \$5; Adult \$10.

Kindly **RSVP** at the Gatehouse by Saturday, February 27th.

Arboretum Dog Policy Under Review

The continued disrespect by limited number of members for even the basic dog rules has compelled the executive of the Friends of the Morgan Arboretum to re-evaluate the privilege of dog access for members. All members with dogs registered in the Arboretum have received a letter reminding them of the behaviour expected from them and their dogs, and announcing the more stringent application of the rules.

We would like to remind everyone that the Arboretum is a multi-use facility, whose maintenance depends on the cooperation and vigilance of all members.