

# DCEC Newsletter

*Environmental News for Door County*



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door county environmental council  
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Summer 2012

## Widely Published New York Author and Activist is coming to Door County!

**DAVID KIRBY**, Author of controversial best-seller ***ANIMAL FACTORY*** and the New York Times ***EVIDENCE of HARM***, is the presenter for the annual DCEC free summer program Wednesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Baileys Harbor Town Hall 7:00 P.M.

David's best-selling book **Animal Factory** has brought raves in support and the wrath of the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations out in reaction to the facts of this eye-opening book. Recent world-wide public health crises and recalls raise urgent questions about how our animal-derived food is raised, brought to market, and ends up on our dinner table.



Author David Kirby

In **ANIMAL FACTORY**, investigative journalist David Kirby exposes the powerful business and political interests behind large-scale factory farms, and tracks the far-reaching fallout that can contaminate our air and water supply.

Kirby is a contributor to the *Huffington Post* since it's founding in 2005, has been a professional journalist for over 15 years. He was a foreign correspondent for UPI, and *Newsday* in Latin America, covering wars in El Salvador and Nicaragua, and covered politics, corruption and natural disasters in Mexico.

DCEC is proud to bring author and activist David Kirby from Brooklyn, New York to Door County, Wisconsin with his important message of changes needed to restore agriculture to family farmers.

**Bring your friends to this outstanding FREE presentation on:**

**Wednesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Bailey's Harbor Town Hall, 7:00 P M.**

**Free • Refreshments • Come Early as seating is limited • Free**

# Global Warming in Wisconsin

Evan Childress, a research limnologist from UW Madison was outstanding in his presentation on Global Warming in Wisconsin and its effect on all of us. The DCEC event at Crossroads at Big Creek was very graphic in showing the changes we can expect during the next decade, and some before. Evan has been involved in a long-term study of fish migration and duration changes that are caused by specie preference and temperature.

Different species of fish have begun a transitional change in the times they migrate upstream to spawn, and feeding habits are also changing, as the food source varies from the norm. He indicated that contrary to public belief the water temperature rises more rapidly than does upland temperature and the result is different species are moving further north to be in their usual temperature range. This has been reinforced by avian studies done at the Aldo Leopold Center over the last two decades, the same changes are occurring.

Also contrary to public belief, the global temperature increases are moving around in Wisconsin, as was shown by his power-point presentation, with hotter spots being in one location for a short period, then moving somewhere else to another area, in a fluid-like movement from one place to another.

The temperature of Lake Michigan has changed dramatically, with June water temperature recorded as high as 80° F in some locations, which is extreme for a lake of this size. We can assume that Huron and Erie are following with like temperature changes.

The good news is that water depth in the Great Lakes will not be affected greatly by the glacial melt in the Arctic regions, BUT it will probably begin a long trend of lower water levels because of increased evaporation. That trend will be discussed in the summary of the International Joint Commission Lake Level Study.

**Watch for the final seminar in our series on Wednesday, September 12<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm at Crossroads at Big Creek. This presentation will be the powerful Robert Kennedy Jr. battle to help save the last mountain from open coal mining by the Massey Corporation. "The Last Mountain" depicts the battle that common folks in the West Virginia coal town had to endure to save their mountain and valley from complete destruction and the good things that are happening there now.**

(JMV)

## International Joint Commission Report

The recent report of the International Joint Commission (IJC) for the Great Lakes recently was intended to involve live participants from two locations in Canada, Washington DC, and Fish Creek, Wisconsin. However, the other participants in the live video conference were visible and could participate on the big screen monitor, but communications with Fish Creek failed, so the concept of a mutual live panel was dropped in favor of a presentation by the Chairperson.

Concerns are evident that global warming is going to play a very important part in the challenge of maintaining the Lake levels with the known facts of increased evaporation, less ice cover, and lowered rainfall amounts. The challenge will be most evident in maintaining Lakes Michigan and Huron to acceptable navigation levels along with shore property owner demands. One of the solutions to the problem is to increase the water level in Lake Superior to provide a reserve of water to supplement Michigan and Huron when the need arises. Other likely solutions are to restrict the flow from the St. Clair River from Huron (at Detroit) by installing weirs on both sides of the channel to slow the water flow and prevent further bottom erosion. These weirs (underwater concrete or stone barriers) were included in the original plan for deepening the St. Clair River years ago but were not completed for even though they were funded (they were deemed not necessary).

Plans to control Lake Superior levels include restrictive structures on the St. Mary River (which parallels the Soo Locks) to enable increased water levels on Lake Superior to be used when necessary to supplement the lower lakes, Michigan and Huron. Through all of this manipulation, it is planned that water levels can remain constant regardless of the extreme climate changes that will occur. There was an **official comment** made that eventually Chicago will have to face the reality that the city needs to get a wastewater (sewage) system operational to eliminate the drain from Lake Michigan and to stop the access of the Asian carp through the sewage canal that presently exists. This is not expected to happen in the near future, but plans are being formulated to return Lake Michigan water rather than letting it escape to the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. Meanwhile, the Lake Michigan and tributaries temperature is becoming more attractive to Asian Carp invasion. We have high hopes!

# Remembering Frances "Fron" Hamerstrom

Once in a while someone appears on the scene in the environmental landscape that leaves an inspirational impression and a legacy of memories for those who knew the person and learned from that individual. Such is the legacy of Fron Hamerstrom. The Bird Lady was a friend of many people in Door County, Wisconsin, and worldwide. A former aristocratic Boston easterner who gave up on college and the big-city life to pursue a natural resource career researching, caring for, and understanding the resident birds-of-prey in central Wisconsin. She said she flunked out of early college because she was more interested in "boys and birds" which proved to be true, at least the "birds" part.

Fran earned a B.S. in biology at Iowa State University in 1935, where she studied nesting pheasants and quail and feeding habits of birds of prey. Fran went on to obtain a M.S. in wildlife biology at the University of Wisconsin, where she worked with Aldo Leopold, as his only female graduate student, on dominance in winter flocks of chickadees. Fran married Frederick (Hammy) Hamerstrom, Jr. (a fellow ornithologist) in secret on February 18 1931, and a second time in public on June 10 1931. Fran followed Frederick throughout their careers in university education and professional positions. Even so, the two were full and equal partners whose joint efforts and professional respect managed to raise the eyebrows of many of their counterparts. Fran's linguistic abilities, particularly in German and in French, provided her with a window to the European literature that she opened for North American ornithologists.

Fran and Frederick moved to a small farm near Plainfield in the central Wisconsin prairie lands, where they began a long life together in a crude civil war era house with no plumbing, heated entirely by a pot-bellied stove in the living room. This was a prime area for doing research on grouse, owls, American Kestrels, Northern Harriers and other birds of prey and the Hamerstroms took full advantage of their location and surroundings. Fran's interest and enthusiasm for researching birds in their natural habitat was not diminished when she lost the sight of one eye to a harrier.

Along with her husband, "Hammy" Hamerstrom, they established a "learning center" for dedicated and aspiring ornithology students regardless of their background, severely testing their knowledge and referring to them as "Gaboons" (which she said was the lowest form of life on the planet). Although not everyone who was exposed to Fran's unique approach to ornithological teaching methods achieved a productive career in the field, her success rate with apprentices ranks well above that of most academic institutions. For more than a half century, the two had spent most of their lives in researching the prairie grouse, and four decades were dedicated to inspiring young interns to become experts on Wisconsin birds of prey.

Dr. Jim Zimmerman who was a long-time friend of Fran was convinced that he could persuade her to do a presentation for the D.C.E.C annual program in 1992. He was successful and Fran gave a wonderful slide presentation at the Liberty Grove Town Hall, with a full house and attended by some of her interns who had driven long distances to hear their teacher. We realized that more people would be interested in another presentation and her agent was contacted to arrange another public program. Artist Jim Ingwersen drove with his wife Phyllis to Plainfield to do some initial photography for a possible Hamerstrom portrait and were cheerfully greeted by Fran at her historic home. After taking several photos, she insisted that they should go along with her on a tour of the Hamerstrom property so she drove her much-abused 73 BMW through narrow and rutted paths on the farm with tree branches whipping against the windows with Fran pointing out and identifying the wild foliage, all with the suspense of a one-eyed driver.

On September 25th, 1994 Frances Hamerstrom was featured at the Door Community Auditorium in a big-screen slide presentation of her adventures among the "Hunting Peoples of the Rain Forest". A rainy Sunday afternoon brought out a nearly full house to hear this internationally known field biologist and world traveler relate her adventures in the upper Amazon region of South America with the Pygmies. At the time, she was working on her final book with her Amazon guide, Alfredo, which has since been published.

Dr. Frances Hamerstrom, Adjunct Professor of Wildlife Biology at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, died in Port Edwards, Wisconsin on 29 August 1998.

Read the companion story by Roy Lukes as he relates his experiences at the Hamerstrom home with Frances and Frederick Hamerstrom.

(JMV)

## Who Said This?

"Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off."  
"Personally I'm always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught."

*Sir Winston Churchill*

# Reflections on Frances Hamerstrom

## *Wisconsin's famous research Bird Lady*

**By: Roy Lukes**

(Her portrait by James Ingwersen is in the Collins Learning Center at Crossroads at Big Creek)

My contacts with Fran Hamerstrom date back to the spring of 1956. I finished my time with the Korean War (oops, Korean Conflict—only about 30,000+ U.S. casualties!) in June of 1955 and had begun teaching at Shorewood Hills School right next to Madison along Lake Mendota in the fall of 1955. A friend asked me to come with him on a cold February weekend up to Plainfield to help the Hamerstroms with fixing and setting out prairie chicken blinds for the coming spring season. So up we went and were quite impressed with Fran and Hammy and their work with the chickens. Their “rustic” home also made quite an impression.

I had already joined the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO) and signed up to be with some of the group manning the chicken blinds during the peak of good activity in the spring of 1957. The WSO people always got the best weekend of the season and best blinds because the Hamerstroms learned that these people were very serious and accurate observers.

I arrived to learn that other WSO members always pitched in with food for the weekend – and I, not knowing this, had brought nothing. Well, I signed up the next spring too. This time I contacted my mother in Kewaunee and asked her to make several dozen Bohemian kolaches that I would bring to the Hamerstroms for the weekend session. I was the first to arrive, knocked on the door and Fran came to let me in. She asked me what I had in the long thin cardboard box, and I showed her the fancy Bohemian baking. She told me to follow her into the house, turn right and proceed into their bedroom. There she directed me to carefully slide the box under one of the beds. Gosh, I thought that was a strange place to put them.

After supper we chicken observers were seated in their living room listening to Hammy describe what kind of observing they expected, what to look for, etc. I happened to be facing the door leading to the kitchen, and every once in a while saw Fran very stealthily go into their bedroom and come out eating one of the Bohemian kolaches. Come the next noon and evening meals, there were no kolaches shared with the chicken watchers. When it came time late Sunday morning to leave, I told Fran that I was surprised that the kolaches had not been put on the table for the group to enjoy. Fran answered, “Roy, I wasn’t about to share that fancy Bohemian baking with that hungry pack of wolves!” And she chuckled with an ear-to-ear grin. Obviously ambrosial treats like that didn’t come about very often!



**Dr. Frances "Fron" Hamerstrom**

On another weekend of chicken watching we were having our evening meal of venison stew (probably a road-killed deer), Fran was seated directly to my left, and their junior high daughter, Elva, was in the corner behind us, working on some newspapers upon the floor dissecting a dead bird, which turned out to be an immature American Kestrel. Fran had given Elva the challenge of determining if the bird was a male or a female. Not having any luck, Elva brought the dead opened-up kestrel to the table, politely inched her way between Fran and me, and said, “Mother, I’m not having any luck with determining the sex of this kestrel. Fran said, “Oh, let me have a look.” With that, in went Fran with her fingers carefully probing the insides of the bird, nose about a foot from the carcass. Suddenly she exclaimed, “Elva, there they are, there they are – the most beautiful little pair of gonads I’ve ever seen on a baby kestrel!”

Naturally everyone seated around the large round table was silently and politely gagging and gasping over their meal and the dead male bird! Fran smiled as though nothing out-of-the-ordinary had happened, quickly wiped her bloody hands on a napkin and everyone proceeded to continue the meal, as best they could. Such was a typical supper and evening at the Hamerstroms! GREAT people never to be forgotten.

“My Double Life.” written by Fron Hamerstrom. The library should have it. What a wonderful read!

## A Kids Point of View!

making a difference ◦ ◦ ◦ doing your part ◦ ◦ ◦ making a difference

making a difference ◦ ◦ ◦ doing your part ◦ ◦ ◦ making a difference

For my column this newsletter I'm conserving energy, MY energy, and have asked one of my neices to fill in for me this time. Eileen

I live within walking distance of my school, but to be honest, I almost always get a ride. I think I'll have to change that, because I learned in science class that the gas from cars is destroying the ozone. I'm pretty sure we all like the ozone.

Hi, my name is Tess. My Aunt, who usually writes this column, asked me to write about the environment from a kid's perspective. I'm twelve years old and live in Milwaukee.

At school, for a really long time we didn't have recycling containers in the cafeteria. Now we do but it took us a long time to get them. Even now when we have them, a lot of kids don't use them because they don't know what can be recycled. Maybe we could have a class about it to get kids more informed.

What I notice from school, my house, and my friends' houses is that we can all save the environment in our own little way. For my whole life I've been told, "Turn off the water" or, "Would you get out of the shower already!" I mean, if everybody right now would just turn off the water while brushing their teeth THINK OF HOW MUCH WATER WE COULD SAVE! Or we could just simply turn off the lights when we leave a room. These are the obvious things we learn in school, but there is so much more we could do.

My school does projects for the environment too. One year we picked up litter on the school grounds and in the surrounding areas. Another time we planted flowers on the Summerfest grounds. A local television stations filmed us for the news because they thought it was great how we were working to keep our community clean.

At my house, we bring our own grocery bags to the store so we don't have to use the plastic ones. Even if just a few more people did that, we could cut down a lot on the production of plastic. My parents were also talking about getting a rain barrel, so that we wouldn't waste as much water. We also don't use the air conditioner until we NEED it: that way we save money and electricity. At my school we do the same thing, and sometimes we hold classes in the basement where it's naturally cooler.

We're always looking for ways to help the environment, but sometimes we don't always DO them. If every person did the little things to help, we could save so much.

Well that's all from this kid's perspective. Bye.

*Eileen Andera DCEC President*

## Good News From the EPA

The Environmental Protection Agency on July 24<sup>th</sup> approved a first-of-its-kind program to cut phosphorus levels in Wisconsin's lakes, rivers and streams. The goal is cleaner water, fewer weeds and algae blooms and better habitat for fish and other aquatic life.

The idea is to allow wastewater treatment plants and companies such as paper mills or dairies with pollution discharge permits to avoid or reduce pollution-control costs, which they would presumably pass on to customers, in favor of partnerships within watersheds aimed at stemming the flow of phosphorus. Those partnerships could include grants for farmers to change their field and husbandry practices and help communities control runoff from streets. Phosphorus is a nutrient of fertilizer and comes from sources ranging from suburban yards to manure from farm fields.

In Wisconsin, 172 waterways are formally listed as impaired - or unacceptably polluted - due to high levels of phosphorus, thereby reducing their recreational use and value. The latest state phosphorus regulations were initially approved in December 2010 by the Natural Resources Board in the final days of the administration of Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle, but needed EPA approval to become a reality.

Beginning in April 2010, the state restricted the sale of fertilizer containing phosphorus. That same year, the state limited the phosphorus content in automatic dishwasher detergents. In Wisconsin, 172 waterways are formally listed as impaired - or unacceptably polluted - due to high levels of phosphorus, thereby reducing their recreational use and value.

A state analysis is under way on the economic impact of phosphorus reduction in bodies of water, according to the DNR. It's expected to show that the economic benefits of cleaner water on property values will outstrip the capital costs of pollution controls and other costs.

Let's hope that the results are not dismissed as being detrimental to economic growth.

# There's Hope For GMO Labelling

## Good news for local food consumers

In November, California voters will decide on a ballot initiative that would mandate labeling of all foods containing ingredients from genetically modified crops. The initiative made it to the ballot after almost 1 million Californians signed a petition in favor of it—nearly double the 504,760 signatures needed under the state's proposition rules. The campaign that organized the push to get the measure on the ballot focused on possible health effects of GMO foods.

This news will not likely be applauded over at Crop Life America, the main trade group of the GM seed/agricultural industry. The big GMO crops—corn, soy, sugar beets, and cotton—are processed into sweeteners, fats, and additives used widely by the food industry. Everything from high fructose corn syrup-sweetened Coke to soybean oil-containing Hellman's would have to bear a label reading something like "Contains GMO ingredients."

That would send a shockwave through the food industry—one that could ultimately be felt on the industrial-scale U.S. farms that have been devoting their land to GMO crops for years, and the companies that profit from selling them patented seeds and matching herbicides. The reason isn't just that California represents an imposing chunk of the U.S. food market. It's also that a food-labeling law that starts in California is *unlikely* to stay in California.

To see why, look at the case of another practice beloved of US agribusiness: that of stuffing egg-laying hens into cages so tight that they can't turn around. Back in 2008, California voters mulled a ballot initiative to ban that production method by 2015. The egg industry fought the proposal bitterly, but Proposition Two won anyway, by a margin of nearly two-to-one. Two years later, the California legislature passed a law applying the new rules to all eggs sold in the state stopping the industry's threat to close shop in California and send in eggs from hens caged in other states.

But the initiative was never really just about California. Its main champion, the Humane Society of the United States, was clear about that from the start, saying that "Nobody can ignore the fact that California is the largest agricultural state in the country and it's often a trend-setting state. We envision national reforms coming from passage of Prop. 2."

In July 2011, less than three years after the California initiative's passage, executives from the egg industry's

main trade group joined forces with their peers from HSUS to propose national legislation that would essentially make the California rules the law of the land. The legislation hasn't gone anywhere yet, but with the industry vowing to support and not crush it in Congress, the days of stuffing hens in tiny cages seem numbered.

Did these execs experience a sudden pang of conscience over the plight of the millions of hens confined in their egg factories? More likely, they were acting in deference to a basic law of capitalism: differentiation costs money. Nearly 38 million people live in California—12 percent of the entire U.S. population, and 17 percent of the U.S. egg market, according to the USDA. It's costly and cumbersome to apply one set of production rules to eggs for California's vast horde of consumers, and another to everyone else. So the egg industry wants a set of standards that applies nationwide.

Similarly, if massive food processors like Kraft and Unilever are forced to label essentially all of their products just for the California market, it likely won't be long before they're pushing for national labeling—or simply just labeling everything for the national market.

It's hard to say how consumers would react to national GMO labeling, but there's evidence that a substantial portion of them might reject GMOs and demand alternatives. A recent poll found that 91 percent of respondents favored GMO labeling, a result that was roughly consistent among Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. The fact that they want that information suggests that they may be willing to act on it. If they do, they'll initially find that the only way to avoid GMOs is to buy certified-organic products, which by USDA code can't contain GMOs.

As of last year, genetically modified seeds accounted for 94 percent of U.S. soy and three-quarters of corn and cotton (which makes it into the food supply in the form of cottonseed oil, a popular fat for the food industry). A move to labeling would likely create a robust market in non-GMO, conventional versions of those crops, giving large-scale farmers incentive to transition away from GMOs and cutting into the profits of giants like Monsanto, Syngenta, and DuPont whose business models are based on constant growth.

(Condensed from Nation of Change JMV)

# 2013 is almost here...Did You Remember to.... Renew Your Membership now and save DCEC postage!

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## DCEC Endowment Fund

( ) \$ 25 Individual      ( ) \$ 35 Family  
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*This amount would really help! Thanks!*

The DCEC Endowment Fund exists so that the future of Door County's open spaces and family farms can be protected far into the future.

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Every year the fund grows as contributions are made and the interest accumulates. You can help this important fund grow even faster by remembering DCEC in your estate plans. Each bequest, through your will and estate funding helps bring us one step closer to financial independence, allowing us to take tough, sometimes unpopular positions that protect our county for future generations.

Whether you can contribute now or later please make a point of supporting the *DCEC ENDOWMENT FUND.*

Legacies, memorials, and direct gifts are deeply appreciated. Please call or have your advisor contact Jerry Viste at: (920) 743-6003 or dcec@itol.com for further information.

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## DCEC Town Water Testing Program Continues

The highly successful individual home water-testing program begun by DCEC two years ago has been very successful in getting town residents to take advantage of a reasonable complete water analysis of their well water. Liberty Grove and Gibraltar Towns have taken advantage of the program utilizing the \$500 DCEC contribution to cover the promotional costs.

The samples are tested in the laboratory at UW/SP and give a detailed analysis of the water sample with the cost to the homeowner around \$100 depending on how the Town determines the final pricing. Towns should have at least 40 samples to ensure a viable sampling and reduce costs and most have no problem securing enough samples.

There is always some well-owner concern that results of the test will be made accessible to agencies that would require you to drill a new well if your sample indicated a need. *No one will use the results of your test to make you take any action*; the water condition is the responsibility of the homeowner to ensure that the family has a quality water supply.

The homeowner receives a copy of the well report and the location is indicated by an unidentified dot on a map at the Town office, which does not specify the owner. This map enables the town to determine areas within the town that are more susceptible to water quality problems. The University furnishes a water quality expert to explain the results to homeowners at a general meeting after the testing is complete.

Egg Harbor Village is scheduled for testing in 2013 and possibly another town can be involved during that testing session also, under the promotional cost payment program sponsored by DCEC. This is a good deal and is a great incentive for towns to take action on water quality. You and your family are the beneficiaries.

Contact the DCEC office at 920-743-6003 or email: [dcec@itol.com](mailto:dcec@itol.com)

(JMV)

***...and, after you read this newsletter, please pass it along to a friend.***



DCEC Incorporated in 1970 under the laws of Wisconsin as a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation