

## Nahant Marsh Designated Five Star Restoration Site

Written by Joe Collins

Tuesday, 19 December 2000 18:00

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The Five Star Restoration Program has named Nahant Marsh in Davenport a Five Star Restoration Site. The program is organized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Fish & Wildlife Federation, the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, the National Association of Counties, and the Wildlife Habitat Council, and it supports restoration projects involving contributions from multiple and diverse partners. To qualify for this program, a project must have a strong on-the-ground habitat-restoration component providing long-term ecological, educational, or social benefits for people and their communities. River Action, as a recipient of this award, was given a \$10,000 grant toward capital improvements at the marsh, and a bronze plaque will be mounted at the site listing the major partners.

Jubilee Justice 2000 is a campaign to educate the public about the need for sentencing reform and to ultimately persuade President Clinton to commute the sentences of thousands of federal prisoners before he leaves office. The length of sentences served by prisoners has grown significantly in recent decades. Congress abolished federal parole in 1984. By the end of the year 2000, there will be 150,000 people imprisoned in the federal prison system alone, and 60 percent of these prisoners are serving drug sentences. The effort has so far gathered 32,000 signatures. You can find out more and sign the petition by looking at (<http://www.jubileejustice.org/>). In a related effort, the Coalition for Jubilee Clemency (<http://www.cjpf.org/clemency/>) has delivered a petition to the president from more than 600 clergy.

The 2000 presidential election is finally over, and while snooping around the Palm Beach County Supervisor of Elections home page at (<http://pbcelections.org>), I discovered a copy of the actual voting instructions for punch cards. If voters followed these directions, there would be little chance that voters would leave a "hanging chad" that could prevent a machine from properly counting a ballot. See for yourself at (<http://pbcelections.org/Sample%20Ballots/instruct.jpg>).

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Illinois' new program to test and ticket polluting diesel trucks isn't even close to starting. Police should have been able to start ticketing dirty rigs two months ago, except the state has yet to purchase the meters necessary to perform the checks. A mere 2,500 of the 50,000 state trucks that needed to be screened since July 1 of this year have been tested. Finger-pointing abounds, but the delay can be traced to three issues: a budget problem in which no money was assigned to purchase meters to test trucks; the state police, who are still researching how other states conduct such tests; and the state's sluggishness in sending out notices to truck owners informing them of the requirement to have their rigs tested.

The holidays are often a stressful time, and dealing with children often compounds the problem. If you need help parenting – such as selecting age-appropriate gifts for children – consider calling Helpline for Parents at (309)757-8555 or (800)433-6644. Helpline for Parents is a community service funded by the United Way of the Quad Cities area, with volunteer support from the Chile Abuse Council and Illini Hospital.

This column was written in the middle of blizzard conditions amid dire warnings for travelers. Web users can now take advantage of a new resource before heading out into the weather. Point your browser to (<http://www.icepack.org>) for more information about the weather in just about any area of the country, including temperatures, wind conditions, weather hazards, precipitation, dew points, and road conditions. The Web site also has valuable information on how to drive in bad weather and how to prepare your car for the season.

Under as much controversy as when it began, the Planned Parenthood Clinic in Bettendorf celebrated its first anniversary. Located at Happy Joe and Tech Drive, the center has provided sex education, medical and pelvic exams, sexually transmitted disease screenings, birth control, condoms, and counseling since it opened last year. This summer, the center began offering surgical abortions, and this month it became one of three clinics in Iowa to offer medical abortions with an oral medication known as mifepristone. The next service planned by the center is vasectomy services.

The State of Iowa might not have enough money to fund the ambitious projects planned by Governor Tom Vilsack and legislators. The Revenue Estimating Conference, a state budget panel, predicts that tax revenue will increase only moderately in the 2001-02 budget and won't be enough to cover promised tax cuts, increases in teacher salaries, and other projects. It's anticipated that there will be a 4.4 percent growth in tax collections for the fiscal year 2001-02, which begins July 1. This is a total tax and fee collection of \$5.5 billion, which will not be enough to cover inflationary increases and new programs. This might leave Governor Vilsack and legislators scrambling to find the \$60 million raise Vilsack has pledged to teachers and Republican-promised tax cuts, including having the state stop taxing Social Security income.

The Quad Cities Emergency Medical Services (EMS) community was dealt a double blow recently with an automobile crash on Interstate 80 near Princeton, Illinois. Injured in the crash was Jo Chandler, EMS director for Trinity Emergency Medical Service. Jo is still at Trinity Medical Center West Campus in serious condition at this writing. Killed in the crash was Chaunda Gradert, coordinator for the Trinity Medical Center EMS department. Chaunda touched many of us in the emergency-medical field during her nine years in the trauma center

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at Trinity Medical Center, as a faculty advisor at Trinity School of EMS, and as an instructor and friend. She will be missed.