

## A Decade Taught by Jimmy Toskr

If Jimmy Toskr the Eastern Fox Squirrel (EFS) had been born almost 10 years ago with 20 toes, he would have spent his life running up and down trees, doing back-flips over blowing leaves, growling and squealing at people and other predators under his tree and collecting tree nuts to stash in tree cavities and underground. He would have danced rapid spirals around tree branches with female squirrels in early spring, and on warm fall and winter days. He would have done the latter for the sheer joy of sunshine and freedom.

Instead, Jimmy Toskr lived his decade bound to the indoors. He was born in or around a Northwest Ohio golf course and a neighborhood. According to Oregon State University's National Pesticide Information Center, golf courses regularly use pesticides to maintain the health and appearance of the turf. Pesticides include herbicides, fungicides, insecticides and rodenticides, plus a few other applications. So do the owners of uniformly green lawns devoid of anything but seeded grass.

Jim was born with a stunted tail, no cartilage 'cup' around one ear and only eight toes. He was unable to climb to escape predators. He couldn't grip tree trunks and branches or balance properly with a full, bushy tail. Although EFS are mostly terrestrial, Jimmy was completely ground bound, and that ground was where he was found. He was accepted by Nature's Nursery and placed in the care of volunteer Linda Madras Gorey. When it was clear that the young squirrel was nonreleasable, Linda allowed him to be put in the care of The Quarry Farm as an education ambassador. He lived with us until the early hours of Friday, December 2, 2022.

What we learned from Jimmy Toskr:

- EFS are not very social, unless the squirrel is Jimmy Toskr and his friend is Steve. Jimmy allowed Steve to stroke his forehead and to coax him back into his cage after a run.
- EFS are very intelligent. They know approximately where they have stashed tasty tree nuts, including in the ferret hammock that swings from the ceiling, and will strongly object to it being removed for any reason.
- EFS recognize when they have the advantage of safety from a predator. Quinn the Red Fox and Chryssy the Cat are two predators that Jimmy taunted on a regular basis. He knew they couldn't get through the cage doors and would throw things at them from high on the top level. Sometimes he would sprawl like a sunbather on the lowest level and twitch his tail, just out of reach.
- EFS run, jump and roll just for the fun of it.

Although an EFS may have a steady diet of tree nuts, greens and fruits, a cozy hammock to hide in and destroy a couple of times a year, fresh water and interaction with a variety of species—even when they have never really known otherwise—they recognize the absence of a life that is rightly theirs. Jimmy often sat on the upper level of his cage, watching the cottonwood and the world outside his east window. Nothing would break his concentration, not even new walnuts in the shell.

In Norse mythology, Ratatoskr is a squirrel who runs up and down the world tree Yggdrasil to carry messages between the eagles perched atop Yggdrasil and the serpent Niðhöggr who dwells beneath one of the three roots of the tree. Jimmy Toskr is now whole and is running up and down the Tree of Life. He is the Toskr, hurling commentary as he connects Heaven and Earth with the support of 20 strong toes.



## Under One Big Sky

(continued from inside cover)

A Cub Scout pack from Liberty Benton surprised us with an invitation to attend their November 28 meeting and annual Cake Auction. Each year, the boys decorate homemade cakes according to a few themes and bid amongst themselves to take home the finished baked goods. They select an organization to receive the auction proceeds. This year they selected The Quarry Farm. Tyree the Corn Snake helped accept the donation.

We didn't see the moon during the December 7 Cold Moon Hike. We did hear a Great Horned Owl bark warnings and saw an Eastern Flying Squirrel circling around a tree to hide from flashlights as well as the owl. The GHOs were very vocal in December, calling to and picking their mates. They will choose a nest site and breed in late January through early February.



A pause on the Cold Moon Hike

## Winter 2023 Programs & Events

**Dress for the weather for outdoor events, including good walking shoes, and meet in Seitz Family Pavilion, 1/8 mile north of 14321 Road 7L, Pandora.**

### Annual Hat Day Hike

**Sunday, January 15, 2 to 3 p.m.**

National Hat Day is January 15. In celebration, wear your favorite warm hat and join us for a brisk hike in the shelter of the nature preserve. Bring a travel mug of your favorite hot coffee, cocoa or tea to carry along the trails.

### Great Backyard Bird Count

**Saturday, February 18, 9 to 10 a.m.**

Birds are everywhere, all the time, doing fascinating things. Dress for the weather and bring your binoculars as we document the many species of birds that shelter here in winter. All recorded species will be submitted to the international Great Backyard Bird Count.

### Worm Moon Walk

**Saturday, March 18, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

March's full moon is commonly called the Full Worm Moon. This is because of the earthworms that wriggle out of the ground as the earth begins to thaw in March. While this year's Full Worm Moon won't be complete until March 21, we hope to see it as it waxes toward its full glory a few days before. If it's behind the clouds, we will still enjoy a lantern hike through the woods.

### Spring Migration Bird Hike

**Saturday, May 20, 8 to 10:30 a.m.**

Migration will be in full swing during that time and our leader Deb Weston, Birder and Quarry Farm Board Member, hopes we'll see some nice warblers.

Dress for the weather in earth-toned colors and sturdy hiking shoes that can get muddy. We'll be walking with stops to look and listen for migrating and resident birds. Participants will learn which are passing through on their way to breeding grounds in Canada and which will stay to nest here. If the birds are actively singing, we'll listen for the differences between species. What we see will be documented on Cornell Lab of Ornithology's ebird and shared with any participants who want to share their email. Bring binoculars and cameras are welcome.

(Note: We won't use bird songs on devices to draw the birds in, especially during breeding season when they have enough to contend with. Sensitive species may leave the area if they hear a rival.)

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## Mission Statement

It is our goal and mission to provide the opportunity for people of all ages to increase their understanding of the natural environment of Northwest Ohio and to interact with their fellow inhabitants in a sustainable manner.



Turkey-tail fungus and Wild Turkey displayed in the nature preserve this autumn.

The Quarry Farm Newsletter is a quarterly publication for supporters of The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm, a nonprofit organization in Pandora, Ohio.

**On the cover: Willy the three-legged sheep observes the first snow with several members of the flock.**

All photographs printed in this newsletter were taken on The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm.

[www.thequarryfarm.org](http://www.thequarryfarm.org)

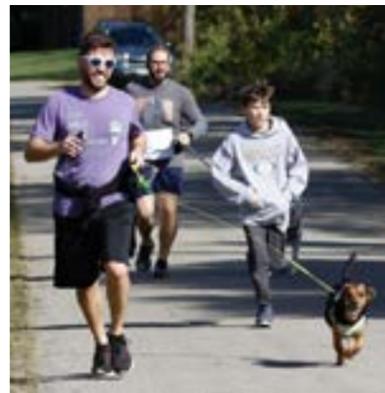
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This Liberty Benton Cub Scout pack decorated cakes for their annual cake auction (above) on November 28 then generously donated the proceeds to The Quarry Farm. Tyree the Cornsnake represented us (below).

## Under One Big Sky

Runners and walkers lined up on the annual 5K painted starting/finish line on October 1. Chad Carroll and Julie Klausung took home the gold (Quarry Farm mugs created by artist Brandon Knott) in the “Run” category. Jay Shapiro and Lois Seitz came in first for the “Walk” group (not the first time for either of these quick-steppers.) Deb Weston and her enviable telephoto lens provided photographic evidence of this year’s event. She even captured and shared images of avian observers and a brilliant, rare fire rainbow that flared over the farm animal sanctuary.



Nearing the 5K finish line

November day, Willie the three-legged sheep went for a car ride to Metz Petz for his initial visit and neuter. Willie is adjusting well to bossy goats and is moving easily about the grounds.

Several new faces joined in the Give Thanks Woodland Walk on November 26. We all hiked off some Thanksgiving Day feast on a late fall color hike of the nature preserve trails. When we arrived back at the gardens, we were met by a few of the goats as one of the fence posts had snapped at the base. Hikers helped herd the herd back to pasture and reinforce the fence to keep until a solid springtime repair is possible.

—continued on the back page



Putnam County Master Gardeners held their quarterly meeting in the Seitz Family Pavilion on Thursday, October 6. The organization spent a great deal of summer working in their pollinator plant specimen garden south of Red Fox Cabin as well as the adjacent daylily bed.

Several new animals arrived at the farm animal sanctuary this fall. We have developed a great relationship with the Lake Erie Nature & Science Center and have accepted Canada geese from them. The birds were kept illegally and imprinted on humans and are now here to develop kinship with their own kind in the hopes that they will join a migrating flock one day. On a snowy



Thanks to these woodland walkers, the sanctuary fence will keep until warmer weather and softer ground.

## Resident Spotlight: Tim

Tim the Canada Goose isn't here yet. Several months ago, Tim was a favorite resident of a community pond in Parma, Ohio. Part of the region's flood mitigation plan includes the removal of the pond and the concrete, impervious surfaces that surround it and replace it with a wetland that will absorb the water and filter out pollutants in the process.

Wetlands are a great thing. We study the wetlands here in the nature preserve and value the wildlife that they attract, the native plants that grow there and the way the soils and plants sponge out floodwaters. The wetland in Parma will likely attract bird watchers who gather there as birds migrate and nest around Lake Erie. There will be dragonflies, turtles, frogs and wildflowers. But Tim won't be able to survive there because he can't escape from predators. Tim has severely malformed wings that droop so much that they drag the ground.



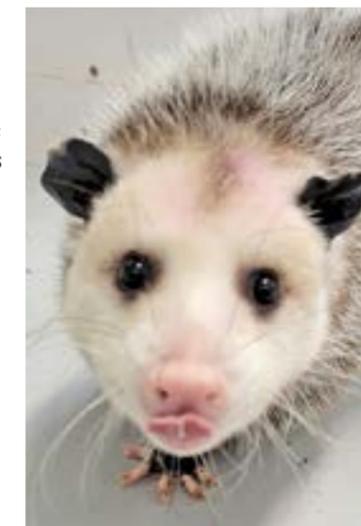
Because Tim can't fly, the Parma residents who care about his wellbeing helped get him to the Lake Erie Nature & Science Center where he could be quarantined and evaluated for disease. His caretakers at the Center, led by his namesake Tim Jasinski, Wildlife Rehabilitation Specialist, have discovered that Tim has cataracts so his sight is somewhat impaired. They are trying to see if medication will have an effect

on the condition. Once he is cleared for take-off, Tim will come here to the farm animal sanctuary where he will live out his life with domestic geese Gigi and Henry. Although he can never use his wings to fly, he will be able to stretch them out fully and flex his curious Canada goosiness as he grazes for green shoots on the hillside.

## Name the Newbie

A young female Virginia Opossum will be joining The Quarry Farm in January as an educational ambassador. She was surrendered to Lake Erie Nature & Science Center after she had spent the first months of her life in illegal captivity. She is not afraid of humans and has no experience of the wild world so will live here, helping us teach people about North America's only native marsupial.

Years ago, we asked people to help us give a name to a male Virginia Opossum. The winning name was Captain John Smith. The name and the history behind it was so intriguing that we ask you to help us again. Please send possible names and the reason behind the suggestion to [thequarryfarm@gmail.com](mailto:thequarryfarm@gmail.com) by January 21.



## Thank you...

...to Eagle Scout Matt Schroeder for the grassland observation platform and benches (below)  
 ...to David Seitz for honeysuckle and vine removal and hydrological engineering  
 ...to Phil Seitz for officiating at the 2022 5K and to Deb Weston for photographing the event (and the Great Blue Heron below)



## Monetary Donations:

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