EBERSOLE CENTER

EarthBeat

EMBRACING NATURE • ENGAGING MINDS

A Few Words About Eggshells

Excerpts from a speech by John Whritner, Superintendent, Grosse Pointe Schools, 1988

A friend once gave me a carved wooden sculpture of a hand holding an egg. You may have seen something like it before. It symbolizes responsibility.

As administrators, we need to keep in mind that this gift of responsibility we have been given needs to be handled like an egg—with sensitivity and a light touch.

I would also propose that this egg represents the children who walk into our classroom each day. They too are fragile like eggs. Too much pressure and they can break. Not enough, and they can slip through our fingers.

Just as we cannot see what is inside an eggshell, we cannot see what is inside a child. Behind the exterior is a hidden soul. Whether that child is a duckling or a swan, we do not know. The only thing we can be sure of is that we will have a hand in shaping what comes out of that egg.

That is our greatest *responsibility.*
That is our greatest *gift.*
That is our greatest *joy.*

Summer Extended Learning Program

This year, the Lansing School District provided a pilot Summer Extended Learning (SEL) program to students from all grade levels during the summer months. Ebersole hosted kids in grades 4-6 for project-based learning experiences which included a 3-day, 2-night stay at the Center. Students and teachers from Pattengill, Pleasant View, North, Attwood, Post Oak, Wexford, Lewton, Mt. Hope, Sheridan Road and Lansing STEM attended this most unique "summer school".

Activities at Ebersole included team building, survival skills, nature hikes, fishing, journaling, debris huts, crafts, canoeing and archery. Everyone had an amazing time and also learned a lot while they were here. We are looking forward to the Lansing School District continuing this rewarding SEL program in the years to come!

A student tries out a debris hut. More photos from the summer learning program inside.

ADVICE FROM A WETLAND...

Make a splash.

Take time to reflect.

Listen to nature.

Reed more.

Be green.

Don't get bogged down.

What's the rush?

Naturalist's Corner

Cattails: Common Wetland Plant

Family: Poaceae, Grass Family

Botanical Name: Typha latifolia

Other common names:
Broad-leaved cattail, candlestick, cat-o-nine-tails, soft-flag, water-torch, swamp brush, baco, apuk'we

A common feature of wetlands is the presence of cattails. The common cattail is a widely distributed perennial wetland plant that is native to Europe. These herbaceous plants can grow to 7 or more feet tall and have long, slender, green leaves which appear very similar to giant blades of grass. The seed case is brown and about the size and shape of a hot dog. When the seed case opens, white fluff comes out and carries the seeds away in the wind.

Cattails are always found in or near water and can live throughout temperate North America, Europe and Asia. Cattails often form extensive, clear stands in shallow, freshwater marshes, ponds and creeks.

There are quite a few cattail stands in Jackson Lake on the Ebersole Center property.

Cattails are very good at survival because they have two modes of reproduction. Common cattail reproduces from abundantly produced, tiny one-seeded fruit or from spreading underground stems called rhizomes. The male (staminate) and female (pistillate) flowers are adjacent, but the upper male flowers are short-lived and readily shed. The female flowers and fruit are borne in very tight clusters (spikes) that are hot dog shaped, dark greenish or reddish brown, and six to ten times long as they are thick. The cattail seeds germinate in April and the plant matures from July through August.

Cattails provide favorable habitat for marsh birds such as the marsh wren and the red-winged blackbird, which often build their nests among the shelter of thick stands of cattails here at the Center.

Cattail seeds are generally too "fuzzy" to be eaten by most birds, although green-winged teal do feed heavily on cattails. Canada geese, snow geese and muskrats feed on the root sprouts and young foliage of cattails. Generally, however, cattails have low food value for most waterfowl. The foliage of cattails attracts numerous insects, including aphids, several moth caterpillars, and beetles. This in turn provides insect-eating birds with large amounts of food.

All parts of the cattail are edible. In the spring, young shoots can be gathered and eaten raw or pickled like cucumbers. They can also be sautéed, roasted, or steamed, much like asparagus. Cattail pollen can make a high-protein, golden flour which may be substituted for half of the wheat flour called for in common recipes such as pancakes, muffins or biscuits. The pollen is bright yellow and turns pancakes and other baked goods a pretty golden color. The core of the cattail can also be ground into flour. The base of the stem, where it attaches to the rhizome, can be boiled or roasted like potatoes. The roots and lower stems have a sweet flavor and can be eaten raw, baked, roasted or broiled. The brown fuzz can be mixed with tallow and chewed like gum.

Native Americans throughout North America used cattails for a variety of uses. The leaves were woven into rush seating and baskets. The stalk of the cattail were used for matting, bedding material and ceremonial bundles. Some tribes used the leaves and sheath bases as caulking materials. Apache Indians used cattail pollen in female puberty ceremonies. The stalk was often dipped in oil and used as a torch. Cattail fluff was used as tinder, insulation, or for lining baby cradle boards. Cattails were also made into floating decoys to lure waterfowl to roosting areas to be bow-hunted, netted or snared.

CATTAILS – "SUPERMARKET OF THE SWAMP"

- Early spring shoots can be picked, peeled and cooked, or eaten raw.
- Young flower heads can be boiled and eaten like corn on the cob. They can also be pickled.
- Early summer pollen can be collected and added to other flours to add protein and vitamins.
- Winter roots can be harvested and processed into flour by mashing, rinsing, and drying.
- Fresh, pounded cattail root can be used as a poultice on infections and blisters.
- The sticky substance at the base of the green leaves of the cattail is an antiseptic, coagulant, and even a bit numbing.
- When pollen is mixed with honey it can be applied to bruises, sores or swelling to ease discomfort.
- Cattail leaves can be boiled and used as an external skin wash.
- The starchy mashed root of cattails can be used as a toothpaste.
- The pollen of the cattail can be used as a hair conditioner.
- To stop diarrhea and dysentery, drink cattail root flour in a cup of hot water, or eat the young flower heads.
- The fuzz from mature female flower heads can be used to treat scalds, burns and diaper rash.
- Cattail leaves can be used for thatching, basket weaving and cordage, and to make dolls and toys.
- The brown flower head of a dry cattail stalk can be dipped in animal fat or kerosene and used for a torch.

Yum! Achoo!
A Note of Caution

As with all new foods, exercise your best judgement if you try the recipe below. Cattail pollen may be allergenic to some people. If you suffer from strong pollen or food allergies, use care and moderation.

What's Cookin'?
Cattail Pollen Pancakes

INGREDIENTS

½ cup cattail pollen
1 ½ cup wheat flour
1 teaspoon of salt
1 Tablespoon brown sugar or honey
3 eggs
2 cups milk
2 Tablespoons oil

Optional:
½ cup blue elderberries, blackberries or blueberries

INSTRUCTIONS

Collect pollen by bending each yellow-dusted cattail head into a plastic or paper bag and shaking it by the stem. Hold the bag closed with your hand, and minimal pollen will be lost to the air. Some cattail fluff will shake into the bag along with the pollen, this is easily sieved out. Pollen may be frozen for later use.

Sift flour with other dry ingredients. Mix moist ingredients in a separate bowl. Combine and cook on greased griddle.

If you like, make pancakes in the shapes of wetland plants or animals—frogs, fish, ducks, cattails, water lilies. Have fun and enjoy!

EBERSOLE FOUNDATION

2ND ANNUAL Ebersole Classic SCHOLARSHIP GOLF SCRAMBLE

Under the guidance of some AMAZING golfers, a bunch of non-golfers pulled off a successful second annual Ebersole Foundation golf benefit at Timber Ridge Golf Club on Saturday, August 20.

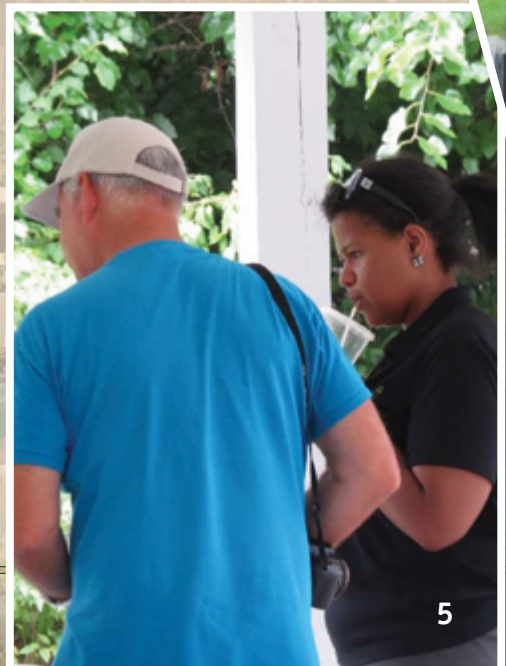
It was exciting to have golfers return from last year and to welcome new participants. It was a pleasure to have representation from the Lansing School District Board of Education, administration, teaching staff, and retirees. The course was beautiful and the day was perfect in that we completed all our planned events and headed home prior to the storm.

We were delighted that there were four Ebersole family members present. Robert, a Foundation trustee, and his brother Richard of Traverse City are sons of Vernon D. Ebersole, the longest ever serving Board of Education member in Lansing School District history (31 years, as a matter of fact) and for whom the Vernon D. Ebersole Environmental Education Center is named. Also joining us from Traverse City were two of Vernon's grandsons, Robert and David. The Traverse City Ebersoles should have won the prize for coming the farthest.

We had outstanding support from Joey Stimac and his staff at Timber Ridge. We also wish to extend our sincere thanks to Kellie Dean of Dean Transportation for his continued support of the Ebersole Foundation. Through the efforts of our Foundation trustees we presented a great assortment of door prizes donated from Lansing area merchants, sending each golfer away with a door prize.

Our efforts are paying off as each year we are continuing to provide scholarship assistance to Lansing School District teachers and students who attend the Vernon D. Ebersole Environmental Education Center. With that in mind, we hope you put August 19, 2017, on your calendar for the Ebersole 3rd Annual Classic Scholarship Golf Scramble.

SAVE THE DATE!
AUGUST 19, 2017
3RD ANNUAL
Ebersole Classic
SCHOLARSHIP GOLF SCRAMBLE



1. Robert and Richard Ebersole checking out the goodie bags
2. Greg Sinicropi, Carl Word, and administrator Sam Sinicropi discuss their game.
3. Attwood teacher Pete Jordan mid swing.
4. Pattengill principal Tony Forsthoefel and his daughter Brianna head out to the next hole.
5. Board of Education member Rachel Lewis with teacher retiree and Ebersole Foundation trustee Dave Brigham taking a refreshment break.

Chaperones Needed!

Our programs here at Ebersole Center are very unique and require the assistance of parents and chaperones in order for a program to be a success. Many times, teachers cannot find enough chaperones to bring with their group and have in some cases had to cancel their program. We are always in need of chaperones, especially on a last minute, emergency basis. If you are interested in being this lifeline to the teachers and students who come to Ebersole Center, we want to hear from you! There is a simple application and a background check required and any availability you have would be much appreciated!

Thanks for the support

A special thank you to all of the schools and groups who are attending or have attended Ebersole Center this year: Lyons, Lansing STEM Academy, Mt. Hope Elementary, Post Oak Elementary, Pleasant View Academy, Wexford Montessori, North Elementary, Kendon, Sheridan Road Elementary, Gardner, Pattengill, Attwood, Lewton Elementary, G.L.O.B.E. Bi-lingual Camp, Hackett Catholic Central Band Camp, Everett High School Band Camp, Eastern High School Band Camp, Immaculate Heart of Mary and Riddle Elementary. If your school or group is not listed here it should be. Call us to book a date.

Amazon.com wish list

Ebersole Center has a wish list on the popular Amazon.com site. You can view the wish list at **http://www.amazon.com/registry/wishlist**.

Once on the site, locate "Find a List or Registry" and type in Ebersole Environmental Education Center in the box beneath it. Make sure to spell it all out correctly or you won't get to the right page. On the wish list you will find all sorts of items, big and small; everything from life jackets to bags of birdseed to washers and dryers. Check it out and see if there are any wishes you would like to fulfill. Thanks in advance for any and all support!

Make your reservations for next year now!

Ebersole 2016-17 program dates fill up fast! Join the elite group of educators that have found the value of an outdoor environmental education program at the Ebersole Center. If you haven't gotten your reservation for next year give us a call or send us an email – we still have dates available! If you have never experienced an environmental education program with your class or school and would like to learn more, please visit our website at http://ebersole.lansingschools.net or contact us at (517) 755-5000, (269) 792-6294 or ebersole@lansingschools.net.

Scholarships available

Thanks to the generosity of the Ebersole Center Foundation, we will once again be able to offer scholarships to Lansing School District schools. All teachers from LSD schools are welcome to apply and it is a very simple process. The scholarship application period will begin in early January and winners will be announced in February, 2017. Lansing School District teachers should keep an eye on their e-mail as well as the LSD website for more information about these scholarship opportunities in the New Year.

Don't be left inside – get outdoors at the Ebersole Center.

Please LIKE Ebersole at www.facebook.com/EbersoleCenter. It's a great way to stay in touch and be alerted to the many upcoming programs and special events at the Center!