

Builders Weekend 2026

Special Guest Bios and Activity Descriptions

2:00 pm: *Walkin' in Wonder: A guided walk on Turtle Hill with special guest, Bill Minter*

During this hour-long walk, the group will wander on a portion of the 1.1 mile Turtle Hill Loop Trail. We will explore patterns of the surrounding living and non-living features, and “wonder” how they might inform us of the natural and human history of this unique landscape. **Max 15 people. Sign up at registration.**

About Bill...

Bill Minter retired from Goshen College after serving 33 years as Dir. of Land Mgt. at Merry Lea Env. Learning Ctr. and teaching several environmental science courses on the main campus. He has worked with a number of Mennonite Church camps, including Friedenswald, over the past 45+ years in the management of their natural landscapes in support of their missions. In retirement, he continues to do so. A member of Waterford Mennonite Church, he lives outside of New Paris, IN with his spouse, Karla who is pastor of Open Table Mennonite Church in Goshen and active in CDC affairs.

3:30 pm: *Learning from our Indigenous Neighbors.* In this hour presentation, Dr. Kanine will be discussing Environmental Stewardship, Biodiversity, and Sovereignty through a multifaceted lens. Topics will include river and wetland restorations, protecting environmental quality, managing natural resources, completing inventory surveys, enhancing biodiversity, and promoting sovereignty through wise resource use. Camp Friedenswald has been fortunate to be learning from Dr. Kanine and her colleagues at the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians throughout the past number of years and we are excited to have the opportunity to introduce her to the Builders. **Cottonwood Center.**

About Dr. Kanine...

Dr. Jennifer Kanine obtained her bachelor's in natural resources and master's in conservation biology from Central Michigan University. Jennifer graduated with a Doctorate in Forest Resources from the University of Georgia in 2013. Dr. Kanine is a TWS certified wildlife biologist with over 25 years of natural resources and environmental experience. For over a decade, Dr. Kanine has been the Director of the Kowabdanawa odë kè Department ("They watch over this land") for the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians. This Department encompasses natural resources, environmental, and agricultural related programs. As the Director, she oversees ten full-time team members and up to 5 seasonals. The department manages over 6,875 acres of tribal properties.

9:30 pm: *Wonder of the Night Sky.* After a day of Walkin' in Wonder in the peaceful woods, we'll turn our attention to the vastness of the night sky. Join Steve Shantz and his

homemade telescope on the lower flat, and as dusk turns to night, we'll gaze at the sky in awe and wonder.

About Steve ...

Steve Shantz is a maker, amongst other things. He is constantly either making things to solve real problems, or thinking about making things to solve problems. His list of creations includes a Maple Syrup boiler, complete with RO pre-concentration, various garden tools to help with cultivation and other gardening tasks, and a home-made air conditioner that uses 55° well water to actively cool his house. His favorite creation is a lay-down 4 wheeled garden weeding cart, where he lays face down on a cushioned platform to do planting, weeding, and harvesting in his gardens.

The creation that brings him here this weekend is a telescope. Steve made it himself, including grinding and polishing the 8" primary mirror, building the optical tube assembly, mirror mounts, and a very solid German Equatorial mount. For those of you who are old-timers, the project was pushed to completion in time to see the effects of comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 after the comet broke up and crashed into Jupiter in 1994.

Steve is also a passionate gardener, with two 5000' square foot gardens used in alternate years to grow food for the Church Community Services 'Seed-to-Feed' program. He can talk your ear off about the 20 varieties of garlic that he grows. The unused garden is planted in cover crops to nourish the soil for the next year's crop. He can talk your ear off about this too! Steve is an Indiana Master Naturalist and is passionate about all things sustainable and the natural environment around us.

Steve is a member of Assembly Mennonite Church and works at Goshen College in the Systems department where one of his roles is managing the computerized system that makes the College buildings function efficiently and reliably. Under his watch, the campus electrical consumption has been reduced by 52% in the 20 years he has worked there. He is married to Kate Widmer Shantz, and both look forward to retiring at the end of October, volunteering, camping and spending more time with their grandchildren.