Recently, in the forest we have been going through an election of our own! We have two candidates who are beak and claw with one another as to who will take over the forest for the next four years. Have your classrooms vote, send in the results to aparker4@niu.edu, and we will print the results in the next newsletter!

**Lorado Taft Election 2016**

**Predator Party Nominee:**

Great Horned Owl, *Bubo virginianus*

They don’t call me the “Tiger of the Sky” for nothing! I will make sure our forest stays protected from any intruders! I am the third largest owl in the United States, but I am known to attack the two owls larger than me, the snowy owl and great grey owl. I could also bully those pushy bald eagles out of their nests if I wanted to; they don’t scare me! I have about 500 lbs. of pressure in my talons, which means I can squash any competitor or turn an apple into applesauce. Who doesn’t like applesauce? My eyes can’t move back and forth, but my head can swivel more than 180 degrees to look in any direction. Trust me, I will be keeping a forever watchful eye on the forest. I have great camouflage, and I am completely silent when I fly, thanks to my beautiful feathers. You can count on me to protect our homeland. Great horned owl for President!

**Prey Party Nominee:**

Virginia Opossum, *Didelphis virginiana*

Although I may seem like an unqualified candidate, I can assure you that I have plenty of adaptations that can contribute to making the forest a better place. I have a unique perspective as the only marsupial in the United States, and my kind has been around for over 70 million years! With this comes a strong parenting background. I have raised 13 babies at one time and can protect them in my pouch. If I am hit by a car, my babies will still survive. I can even swim with them in my pouch! I know how important our youth are and have plenty of experience trying to protect them from predators and other natural disasters. During their infancy, I will carry them on my back while I hunt for food. After birth, our youth need constant love and support, and I can provide that for them. The future of our forest relies on the survival and growth of our youth. Vote Virginia opossum for a better future!
The Taft Staff were asked three questions; read their answers to get to know them better!
1. What are three things on your bucket list?
2. What is your favorite condiment?
3. If you had to eat a worm, how would you cook it?

Top Row, Left to Right: Melanie Costello, Caleb Jenks, Alyssa Parker, Lori Knoechel, Joshua Hapner
Bottom Row, Left to Right: Anne Rohn, Tia Willens, Shannon Forney, Kylie Robey, Amy Banner, Sam Allen

**Shannon**
1. See the northern lights, learn to cook, go to every major theme park in the United States
2. BBQ Sauce
3. As quickly as possible, then pretend it didn’t happen

**Amy**
1. Visit all 50 states, go to the Olympics (Competing would be awesome but being a spectator is more realistic), compete in an obstacle race
2. Hoisin sauce
3. Chop it up in little pieces and throw it in a breakfast hash

**Caleb**
1. Seeing a snowy owl in the wild, visit Yosemite, The Smoky Mountains, and the Everglades, and see a massasauga rattlesnake in the wild
2. My favorite condiment is secret stadium sauce.
3. I would eat it raw, so that I could just get it over with faster instead of thinking about it while cooking it.

**Lori**
1. Hike the entire Appalachian Trail, own a black bear and a fox as a pet, have my own ministry based towards youth
2. Ketchup
3. I would roast it on a stick and then eat it with spices.

**Joshua**
1. Revisit Andros Island in the Bahamas, publish my own card/board game, ***TOP SECRET***
2. I’d say salsa. I love Mexican food.
3. Probably breaded and deep-fried

**Melanie**
1. Participate in a flash mob dance, Alaskan cruise, learn to crochet and make something useful
2. Does peanut butter count?
3. Over a fire

**Sam**
1. Visit all the Disney parks in the world, have a pet chameleon, hike at both Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks
2. Mayo
3. With spaghetti and red sauce so it’d be hard to tell the worm from the noodles

Cont’d on next page
Nature Myth
By: Joshua Hapner

Centipedes Have 100 Legs and Millipedes Have 1000 Legs

This “fact” would seem to make sense, since ‘cent’ is Latin for 100, and ‘mille’ is Latin for 1000 (making the literal translation of their names “hundred feet” and “thousand feet”). The truth is, however, that most centipedes have 30 to 300 legs, and most millipedes have 100 to 300 legs. No known species have 1000 or more legs. The real way to tell a centipede apart from a millipede is to examine their body segments closely. Centipedes have one pair of legs per segment (one leg on each side), while millipedes have 2 pairs of legs per segment (two legs on each side). In addition, most centipedes are orange or red colored, fast moving, carnivorous, and will bite to defend themselves. Millipedes on the other hand are usually brown or black (sometimes with stripes of other colors), slow moving, eat decaying plant matter, and will roll up into a ball and/or exude fragrant chemicals when frightened (but they can’t bite). For more info see: http://www.earthlife.net/insects/diplopoda.html and http://www.earthlife.net/insects/six.html.

Education Staff (cont.’d)

Anne
1. Take a boat trip to Antarctica, climb Mt. Kilimanjaro, eat an authentic Italian meal at a vineyard in Tuscany
2. Ketchup
3. Deep fry it and cover it in chocolate

Tia
1. Learn a second language, learn a martial art, learn to sail
2. Hot sauce or honey mustard
3. Fry it

Alyssa
1. Live in Alaska and see the northern lights, swim with great white sharks, go to Yellowstone National Park
2. Hot sauce
3. Put it in a smoothie

W A N T E D
Be in the next newsletter!
Email melcostello@niu.edu your best picture of an animal, plant, or fungus that you took on your trip to Taft. Didn’t bring a camera? Send us a drawing of an Illinois species. We will research it and include that in the next newsletter. Don’t forget to include your name, school, and what class you were in that inspired your artwork.

Find us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/loradotaftcampus
When on your trip this year, you may have a chance to see an old friend. The Eternal Indian restoration has been placed on hold, and the scaffolding has been removed as of early May. This is the first time the statue has been visible in nearly 2 years. More commonly known as the Blackhawk Statue, the statue has been rapidly deteriorating in recent years and is badly in need of repairs. The concrete statue was erected over 105 years ago by Lorado Taft and his team and is one of the 20 tallest free-standing statues in the US.

It was noticed several years ago that the concrete, especially around his arms, was starting to crack and crumble from the 48 foot tall statue. In late 2014, scaffolding was erected and a tarp was wrapped around the statue to help protect it from the winter. Do to gusty winds, his “winter coat” had be replaced several times. The next spring, workers could occasionally be seen on the scaffolding taking samples and measurements of the statue. Originally it was going to cost around $700,000 to complete the project but is now estimated to be nearly a million dollars. Funding is coming primarily from private donations, as well as a state grant.

Work has been placed on hold a few times while he was under wraps, but for now, it appears that work will be put off indefinitely. Disagreements between the engineer and the conservator working on the statue could not be resolved and the conservator has left the project. The state is currently looking for a new conservator. The statue will remain uncovered until mid-November and a small fence has been place around it until another art conservationist can be found. The state recently announced that they will be wrapping the statue again to protect it from the elements this winter.

Congratulations to all of our schools who got zero ort for at least one meal while at Lorado Taft! Many schools were very close, and we know the students worked really hard to achieve their goals. We hope that the idea of zero ort is something your students take with them back to school to share with their families and friends.

Contributing Authors
Lorado Taft Election– Alyssa Parker
Nature Myth– Joshua Hapner
An Old Friend Returns– Shannon Forney