

PANORAMA

RICE LAKE, WISCONSIN

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A wing and a prayer

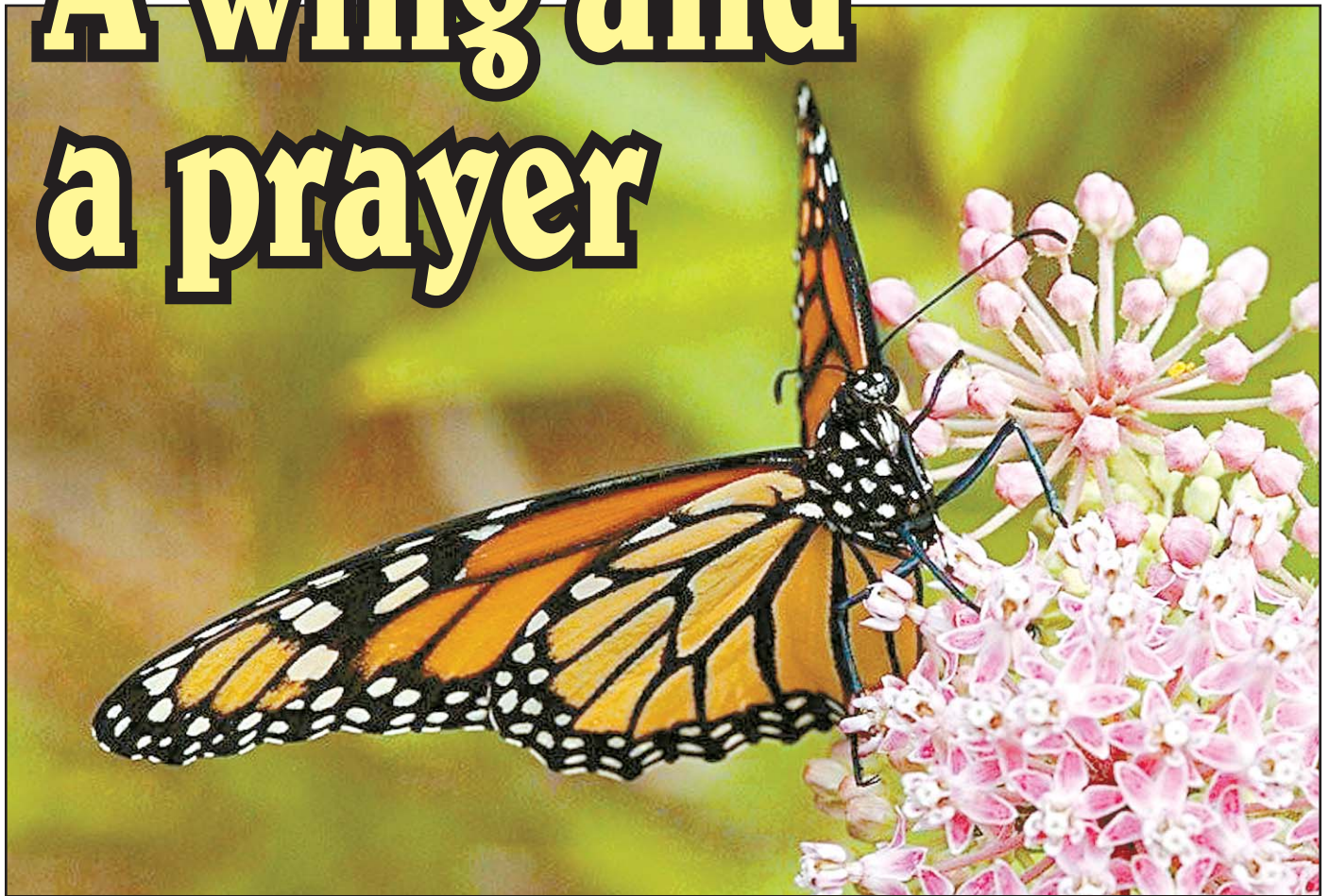


Photo by Cindy Dyer

A symbol of nature's delicate balance

by Valerie Leair, Chronotype staff

The beauty of butterflies has captured the heart of Mary Ellen Ryall. And her passion to preserve the species and raise environmental awareness has taken flight.

Ryall has been the driving force behind a monarch butterfly habitat in Shell Lake. She also operates a store, Happy Tonics, in the downtown area that helps support the cause.

"Nature is an interconnected web of life. What happens in one area or to one species affects others places or species," Ryall said. "Environmental issues cannot be ignored. We need ecological balance to promote peace and harmony in life. Creating a habitat to protect native plants and butterflies will help educate community members and visitors about long-term sustainability of natural resources."

Ryall said that the monarch butterfly is a thermometer of the ecosystem around us.

"The monarch butterfly teaches us about the impact of deforestation to people, the environment and other species," she said. "The butterfly teaches us about the danger of pesticide and herbicide use and the outcomes of genetic engineering."

"The butterfly also teaches us that what happens to the butterfly can happen to us," said Ryall. "Environmental issues cannot be ignored."

Ryall grew up in New York and has lived and worked around the country and in South America. "All my life it's been about the

Wings of art

Above, a monarch butterfly feasts on milkweed. Below is a photo of a pupa, which is the inactive stage of a butterfly's life cycle between the larvae and adult stages. Happy Tonics in Shell Lake has now established a butterfly habitat along Hwy. 63. A gift store in downtown Shell Lake helps to fund the sanctuary, along with donations from individuals and businesses.



Photo by Mary Ellen Ryall

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