**Clue #1**
From the bridge in the back yard of the nature center take a bearing of 240° (see “Taking Bearings”), and head in that direction along the trail. You'll quickly reach a sign pointing you in all directions, but you need only go in one. This time take a bearing of 320°, and follow the trail down the hill.

**Clue #2**
You'll pass through a stone wall as the trail curves around. In the spring May apples will be abundant. In the winter the black cherry trees will guide you.

**Clue #3**
A little further on the trail and you'll discover Mr. & Mrs. Twist. What kind of trees are they, and what part of each is edible? Follow the yellow blazes until you come to an intersection with a large flat rock.

**Clue #4**
Take a bearing of 240° (passing by the large rock on your right) and follow this branch of the trail until the next fork. This time take the trail that is more traveled and head down the hill past the meadow home of a cavity nesting bird, the great crested flycatcher, which uses snake skin in its nest material. You will see its nest box high in the air.

**Clue #5**
Once in the woods again, you might see water and another even larger bird nesting box on your left. This box attracts wood ducks annually. In the spring you may even see the ducks fly as you approach their nesting grounds. Continue on until you find a tree where one has become four. Push the bark with your finger nail and it should leave a mark. The American basswood is a softwood tree and a favorite to a native woodpecker called the yellow bellied sap sucker.

**Clue #6**
On the trail a little past the basswood you should see a tall stump, a sign about unusual birds will be beyond that. Between and slightly beyond these two markers lies a rotting log and there you will find the letterbox.

**Clue #7**
Please be sure to hide the box in the same place and out of sight before returning to the nature center. To do so cross the bridge and follow the blue trail blazes until it intersects with the Perimeter trail. Turn right and follow the yellow trail blazes and signs back to the nature center.

**Glossary**

**Bearing:** Direction, especially measured from one position to another using land or star reference lines.

**Blaze:** A trail marker, often painted on a tree or other landmark.

**Coordinates:** Set of numbers used in specifying the location of a point on a line, on a surface, or in space.
**WHAT IS LETTERBOXING?**

Letterboxing is an outdoor hobby which mixes elements of treasure hunting, navigating, art and puzzle solving. A waterproof box is hidden in a beautiful, remote or interesting location. Inside are a logbook and a carved rubber stamp. The person hiding the box writes directions or “clues” to its location, which often involves map coordinates or compass bearings from landmarks. Hunters take the clues and attempt to find the box. Once located, hunters take their own personal rubber stamps and stamp the logbook inside the box. They use the stamp from the box to mark their own personal logbooks. In this way they are able to keep a record of the boxes they find and the logbook from the box records all the visitors who found it.

**HISTORY OF LETTERBOXING**

Letterboxing began in England when a guide named James Perrott hid a bottle in a remote area at Cranmere Pool on the moors of Dartmoor in 1854. In the bottle, he left his calling cards so that future hikers who found the bottle could contact him and leave their own cards. Over time, a tin waterproof box replaced the bottle and visitors began leaving self-addressed postcards or letters inside, hoping these would be mailed by the next visitor (hence the name “letterboxing”). Clues to boxes were passed around by participants or published in an annual catalogue. Eventually logbooks and rubber stamps replaced postcards in the containers to help record visitors’ accomplishments in finding the locations of the hidden boxes.

Letterboxing came to the United States in 1998 after an article was published about the hobby in the Smithsonian magazine. Intrigued by the story, groups of people began hiding letterboxes throughout the country. Websites and forums sprang up for people to share information and as a result, the American version of letterboxing relies more heavily on the Internet to distribute clues to box locations. It also became more popular in America to hand-carve a rubber stamp to use as your letterboxing identity.

**HOW TO USE A COMPASS**

Hold your compass flat in your palm so the **Base Plate** is level and the **Direction of Travel Arrow** is pointing straight away from you.

The **Magnetic Needle**, called “Red Fred,” is painted red on one end and white on the other. The red portion shows you which direction **North** is. Turn your body while keeping the compass straight in front of you. You’ll notice that as the compass moves, the needle continues to point the same direction, **North**.

To find your direction, turn the **Degree Dial** until the directional point you want (North, South, East, West) lines up with the **Direction of Travel Arrow**. Holding the compass steady, turn your body until the **Orienteering Arrow** and **Magnetic Needle** are lined up. When this happens, you are facing the direction you want. An easy way to remember this is that the Magnetic Needle is called “Red Fred” and he wants to be in the “Shed” (red portion of Orienteering Arrow). To get “Red Fred” to the “Shed” you must move your body while keeping the compass steady until the two line up. Once “Red Fred” is in the “Shed” you are facing the direction you want to go.