

Green Link

An Employee & Volunteer Newsletter of the Monmouth County Park System



May/June 2009

RANGER GRADUATION

What better time of the year to report on our most recent class of new rangers, than graduation season. This past fall, the Park System welcomed its 26th class, consisting of 17 new rangers and one new manager, into the parks. Overall this year's class, comprised of 2 women and 16 men, had quite a few young members. This class also covered a few new subjects: a snake presentation given by Senior Park Naturalist Sam Skinner and Gang Awareness Training offered through the Police Academy-both in addition to the usual topics.

26th Class of Graduating Park Rangers: (top row, l to r) David J. Whalen, Tatum Park; Jeffrey R. Ward, Holmdel Park; Ryan M. Shaughnessy, Bayshore Waterfront Park; William L. Shaffer, Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park; Matthew C. Ruding, Turkey Swamp Park; Sean T. Ramsey, Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park; Emerald G. Platzer, Thompson Park; Thomas J. Osborne, Holmdel Park; Kenneth G. Olsen, Hartshorne Woods Park. (bottom



row, l to r): Jason A. Miller, Hartshorne Woods Park; Angela R. Kochon, Tatum Park; Patrick J. Killeen, Turkey Swamp Park; Ronald P. Chevestick, Manasquan Reservoir; Anthony P. Calderon, Dorbrook Recreation

Area; Lawrence R. Bork, Hartshorne Woods Park; Paul D. Bagdanov, Thompson Park; Shawn J. Allen, Dorbrook Recreation Area; and Edward Dobrosky, Holmdel Park.

Statistics Corner

1,324. The average number of visits per day to the Park System website in the second half of 2008, following its redesign last June.



Out with the old (left) and in with the new (right).

While we are sure all the graduates will all go on to become outstanding rangers, this year's medal recipients deserve special recognition. Sean T. Ramsey of Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park received "top of the class" honors and the Golden Oak Award for achieving the highest class average. Edward Dobrosky of Homdel Park received the second highest average and this year's Silver Oak Award.



Park System Secretary-Director James Truncer (left) stands with the top two graduates in this year's ranger class, Sean Ramsey (center) and Edward Dobrosky (right).

DIRECTOR'S CORNER



“CHALLENGING TIMES”

No one has to tell you that we are in an unusual and uncertain economic period. Times like these test our ability to adjust and respond in positive and creative ways. Our ability to be resilient is being tested. Fortunately, we have been able as an organization to adjust and meet the challenges before us.

One of our biggest challenges is to analyze how we can stretch, improve, and do an even better job with the resources at hand. Our challenge is no different from what businesses and industries are facing as a result of reduced revenues and increasing costs.

Our services have become even more important as families look for less expensive vacations and close-to-home recreation opportunities. Historically, during times of economic strife and times of military conflict, the use of public recreational facilities and services has increased.

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Interestingly, Central Park in New York City (completed in 1873) was created to give businessmen of the day a place to relax and escape the pressures of their work environment.

I can't help but believe that what we do and provide is important to the mental and physical health of our society and fellow man. My hat's off to all of you for your dedication in meeting the challenges that are before us.

“Government should love people....if you don't love people then you should not be in government.” **--John Heinz III**



LETTERS OF THANKS

It's been a while since our last foray into the Park System mailbox. We've received many, MANY letters of thanks and commendation since then. Here are just a few examples from the past year.

Reservoir Staff Win Over Scout Troop with Geography Program

“Naturalists **Chris Lanza** and **Cara Wombacher**...did an outstanding job answering questions and presented a very impressive program for us to enjoy....We now consider the Fall 2008 Directory a significant tool for our event scheduling committee.”

Cub Scout Pack 27, Bayville NJ

Rangers Assist Motorists

“It's amazing how kind a complete stranger can be in the time of need...I really appreciate his help!”

*Neptune motorist stranded on a dangerous part of Gully Rd,
assisted by **Principal Park Ranger Alan Boyce***

“My husband was struck by the courteous professionalism [of Ranger staff at Holmdel Park]...Their attitude lifted his spirits and improved what was otherwise a frustrating experience.”

*Ocean Grove motorist assisted by
Tom Osborne, Scott Augun, Ed Dobrosky*

Visitors Enjoy Both Show and Venue at Summer Musical

“Seussical offered a great opportunity to accustom our grandchildren to the energy and excitement of live theater.” And...“You have an excellent theater in an impressive summer themed venue. We found it a pleasure to participate.”

MM, Bayville NJ



This past summer, Seussical offered one of the park's most colorful performances. This was also the last performance managed by Performing Arts Supervisor Angela Knox who retired in January after 34 years of service.



Helpful Staff Contribute to Event Success

“Thanks to the staff at **East Freehold Park** for all the preparation and participation in helping to make our Annual Senior Picnic a success... The crew did an outstanding job!”

Monmouth County Office on Aging, Freehold NJ



Staff at East Freehold Park take care of operations for all sorts of events throughout the year, such as horse and dog shows, in addition to the Fair. Here Hank

Schreiber, Principal Park Ranger; former Park Manager Chris Plantamura (now at Turkey Swamp); Frank Biddle, Supervising Mechanic at Thompson Park; and a shy Steve Clayton, Senior Park Ranger of Operations and Maintenance, at work at last year's Fair.

Staff Recognized for Organizing First Fair BBQ

“...in addition to carrying out her normal office duties, Helen [Fiore] was deluged with documents and instructions that we require in order to make a contest of this nature a success.” The letter goes on to describe Helen as “prompt, pleasant, well-organized, and capable,” recognizing her and all the other park staffers and volunteers for their cooperation.

Kansas City Barbeque Society Contest Representative



Team BBQ (l to r) Rich Pillar, Sue Provost, Barbara Reeves, Cara Wombacher, Robin Ostrowski, Stephanie Weise, Susan Stafford-Smith, and Barbara Zarella, with Team Leader Helen Fiore (in front).

Children Treated With Care at Sprayground

“This is what is so impressive to me... Every child is treated by staff with dignity, passion and a sincerely high level of energy to help that child have a wonderful experience.”

Principal of School Commission for Children with Autism about Chris Davino and Sprayground staff

People of All Ages Enjoy the Manasquan Reservoir Boat Tour

“...scenery was great. I felt I had been on a vacation when I came [home].”

Senior Visitor

“Thank you for teaching us about the animals of the reservoir... I loved the turtle presentation... Thank you for the best boat ride on the reservoir... I enjoyed learning about the bald eagle.”

Student Comments



This group enjoys a relaxing tour of the reservoir by boat, led by John Sawyer (retired).



Among other things, horse competitions like this one require special expertise to take care of the animals' needs (water, hay, “waste management,” etc.). To that end, E. Freehold Park staff are hard at work behind the scenes whenever an event is underway--and their trucks are never far from view.

Volunteer Turns Tables and Says “Thank You” to Park System

“...for offering me so many interesting opportunities and teaching me the skills to accomplish them.”

EM, a dedicated Park System volunteer

Staff Team Up to Host Press Tour

“Your assistance before and during the trip was invaluable. The journalists were appreciative of all the local support evidenced by your hospitality. Thank you so much for hosting them.”

NJ Division of Travel and Tourism Press

Tour, hosted by Hartshorne Woods Park Manager

Ken Olsen and Public Information Officer Susan Walsh

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Summer Camps Make an Impression

“The smile on [our son’s] face each day we pulled up to camp is a gift to [us], but a tribute to all of you... You have created an environment where all the children feel safe and loved and are eager to come back each day. It takes very special people with big hearts, open minds, and arms strong enough to lift spirits, to do what each one of you do. Thank you!”

*Parents of attendee at **Therapeutic Recreation Summer Camp***

“In the short time our son has attended your camp, we have seen [him grow] in the areas of self-esteem and confidence... We would highly recommend this camp and its staff to parents of teens, and look forward to [him] attending in the years to come.”

*Parents of attendee at **Outdoor Recreation Odyssey Adventure Camp for Teens***

“I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude for the wonderful program you offer. The facility is lovely and beyond what I anticipated...I was just so impressed with how friendly everyone was, how well the horses are cared for and the quality of the program overall.”

*Parents of attendee at **Sunnyside Equestrian Center Youth Horseback Riding Summer Camp***

High School Grateful for Use of Course

“I cannot tell you how much we appreciate the county’s support of high school golf throughout the year... Without your courses... we would not be able to have one of the most envied conferences in the state.”

*High School coach/team using **Shark River Golf Course***



Did you know? Eleven area high school teams used our golf courses for practice and matches in 2008. Here is just a bit of the lovely scenery that they-and all golfers-enjoy each spring at Shark River when the trees are in bloom.

Other staffers who received calls and compliments include...

- **Barry Barone** for helping a stranded bicyclist on Henry Hudson Trail
- **Sarah Bent** and **Bill O’Shaunessy** for helping a local organization plan their 5K run through Historic Walnford
- **Courtney Bison** and **Urban Rec** staff for an “amazing job” helping the Boys & Girls Club with an activity at Asbury Park Boardwalk
- **Cindy Ross, Liz Haenchen, Pat Bernstein** and **Claire Morris** of Sunnyside for being great at what they do
- **Michele Clampffer** and **Jan Galanti** of Outdoor Recreation for participating in Little Silver’s 1st Annual Family Fitness Night

STAFF AT WORK, AROUND THE PARKS

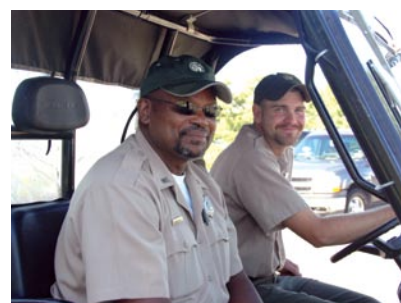
These Yellow Jackets Don’t Sting



Sprint Triathlon Staffers (l to r): Volunteers Carol Smith and Joyce Wingertner, Assistant Superintendent of Recreation Patti Conroy (back), Rachel Cohen of Cultural Services (front), Program Employee from Cultural Services Alison Gibney (back), Volunteer Harden Fowler (front), Ann Sage of Cultural Services, and Volunteers Ralph Maratea, Charlyene Douma and Anna Schoeffling (far right).



Staff at the Timberbrook Triathlon Finish Line (back row, l to r): Marijane Bruncati of Headquarters, Cultural Services Program Employee Robin Keller, Ann Sage of Cultural Services, Volunteer Jennifer Tremper, Assistant Superintendent of Recreation Susan Liu, and Jean Kline of Visitor Services. (seated at table, l to r) Asst. Recreation Supervisor Jen Troisi, Shelagh McCarthy of Dorbrook Administration and Volunteer Kevin Drennan.



Rangers at Work

Hartshorne Park Ranger Kivin Brown and Seven Presidents Park Ranger Bob Laauser at the Sprint Triathlon.

A Year in the Life



Historic Longstreet Farm staffers literally work year round managing the facilities and running programs for visitors to enjoy. During fall, Michelle Robbins, volunteer Kayla Wroblewski and Sarah Duterte make fresh apple butter at the Harvest Home Festival. Chopping the frozen pond ice into blocks for an interpretive program are Senior Park Manager Sandy Byard and Ranger Tom Osborne last February. In spring, staffer Ray Moylan leads many wagon rides during the 2-day Sheep Shearing event. What better way to enjoy summer than to make your own ice cream by hand, then enjoy it under a shady tree during summer camp at Historic Longstreet Farm.

Ramping Up for the Fair

At last year's Fair, the Creative Arts staff introduced a new feature in the Home & Garden tent.



Christina Carlson's pottery wheel demonstration was "unbelievably popular" because it was hands-on, which really sparked the interest of visitors.



Staff and volunteers working the Home & Garden tent included (clockwise from bottom left) Volunteer Jan Mundy, Supervising

Account Clerk Typist from HQ Mary Naughton, Deep Cut Seasonal Employee Kayla McKenna, and Patty Burke, also from HQ. On the right is Volunteer Sandy Wolfe.

Naturalists at Work

Park Naturalists Susan Harasty, Peter McCarron, Barbara Reeves and Chris Lanza returning from a program last spring.



Cookin' With Therapeutic Rec



Therapeutic Rec staff work a new MCRAC Day program that teaches a "life skill." Here (in the green park logo shirts) Lauren Gerber (left) and Justin Dunn (right) show participants how

to make low-fat ham and cheese crescent wraps.

VOLUNTEER CORNER



Last November, a group of volunteers came out to Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park in the rain to assist with the removal of a troubling invasive

species called Asiatic Sand Sedge or carex. This plant, which can crowd out the native dune grass and destroy the habitat of species such as the endangered Piping Plover, has underground root "runners" which make it particularly difficult to eradicate. Pulling it out by hand is, of course, very labor-intensive, but it ensures complete removal and reduces the need for chemical herbicides.



Here, Park Manager Ken Thoman (bottom left) works with volunteer Jonathan Worrell (top left); Lisa Baskin (bottom center), a graduate student studying this species; and volunteer Paul Bender (right).

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE PARKS?

• **Park programmers** regularly refine and add to our program listings to keep things fresh and fun for participants. Here are just two of the interesting and adventurous programs offered this past year.

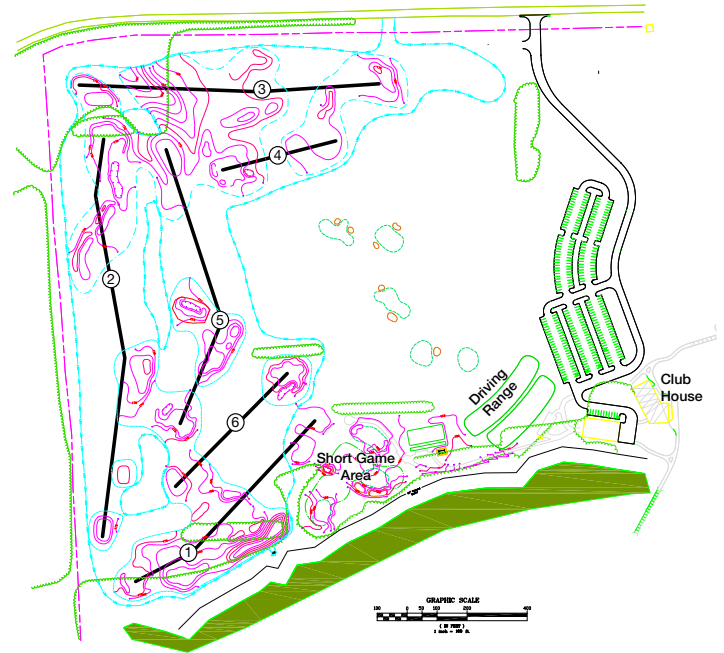


And now for something completely different. When the seasons change and the sun goes down, it's a whole different world out there! Visitors can enjoy a Moonlight Hike with Naturalist Joe Reynolds (left) and see the beach at night, look for gulls and winter birds, then search for shells by flashlight.



The Halloween Family Camp-out, offered by Outdoor Recreation, is a popular program because it introduces people to camping in a non-intimidating format. Camping locally (in Turkey Swamp Park), using platform tents (off the ground), and being accompanied by park staff tends to put people at ease. Plus, this program offers plenty of Halloween-themed activities to enjoy as part of the camp-out: tent decorating, playing games, telling stories by the campfire, night hike, s'mores, pumpkin carving, and more.

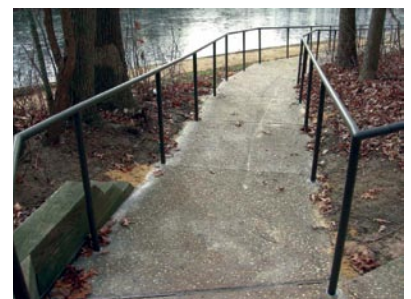
• Little by little, the new **6-Hole Course at Charleston Springs** is coming along. So far, the land has been cleared, grubbed and seeded in preparation for the design shown here. Given the current economic situation, building the course in-house has been considered. However, finding the right time and available staff to perform the work has been a challenge.



Here is the design for the 6-hole course. The tee for the first hole is located just north of Short Game Area, and each hole continues from where the previous hole finishes. The course ends right by where it started.

• The parks are constantly improving facilities. Here's a recent project that may seem relatively minor, but can have a really big impact for people with disabilities. A new railing was installed on the walkway by the lake at

Turkey Swamp Park to make the whole area more accessible. This is just one of many upgrades underway to improve accessibility. Others include modified doorways and adding hand rails at **Tatum Park's Holland Activity Center** to allow easier wheelchair access, and plans for a playground for people of all abilities at **Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park**.



• The beachfront at **Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park** experiences some erosion following larger storms, creating this shelf-like sand feature that the kids really seem to enjoy. It's a temporary situation,



This beach visitor enjoys digging through a sand shelf caused by storm erosion.

however, as the waves tend to break down the shelf and restore a normal beach profile.

• Another recent improvement project involved putting up deer fencing at **Holmdel Park**, around the arboretum. It took a lot of coordination and planning and is critically important to protect the site's beautiful plant materials. Here is the completed fence, in February.



May

- 1 John Carey • Drew D'Apolito
- 2 Steve Clayton • Denise Dockweiler
- 3 Laura Lieneck
- 4 Leigh Schneider
- 6 Tim LaVance
- 7 Heng Chin • Craig Fraser
- Brian Sullivan
- 8 Patti Conroy • John Eisemann
- 9 Ken Thoman • Bob Ward
- 10 Ann Sage
- 11 Cathy Barfield • Marijane Bruncati
- Bob Kolczynski • Janet Ryan
- 12 Dave Compton • Peter D'Angelo
- 14 Laurie Marswillo
- 15 Chris Davidson
- 16 Ryan Shaughnessy
- 18 Helen Fiore • Karen Livingstone
- 20 Tom Noordzy
- 21 Shawn Allen
- 25 Hank Schreiber
- 26 Michelle Scolletta Gosha
- 27 Jeff Szalc
- 30 Gary Stedman

June

- 2 Liz Haenchen
- 5 John Lillis
- 7 Andy North • Bill Vaughn
- 8 Regina DeVeau
- 9 Spence Wickham
- 12 Jeanne Bezio
- 13 Nick Podsvirow
- 15 Aileen Desiata • Nick Samaras
- 16 Stephanie Weise
- 18 George Moran • Matt Ruding
- 19 Tom Dillon • Eric Doren
- John Hoffman • George Siebert
- Edward Zarella
- 20 Bill Kampe
- 22 Karen Rutt
- 23 Alan Archer
- 24 Vern Hasselbrock
- 26 Mike Janoski • Betty Leong

July

- 2 Travis Bryan • Jason Miller
- 3 Harold Ayers • Mike DeMauro
- 5 Anthony Ribera • Phyllis Storms
- 6 Richard Brunelli • Thomas Osborne
- Charlie Todd
- 8 Brian Corrigan
- 9 Chris Plantamura
- 10 Keith Bennett
- 14 Paul DeJesus
- 21 Donna Dugo
- 23 Kerry McKenna
- 24 Anna Luiten • Mike Vaccaro
- 27 Bill O'Shaughnessy
- 30 Pat Douglas • Martin Gonzalez
- Paul Lippert • Ryan Ponnwitz
- 31 Jose Bruno



Monmouth County Park System
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Lincroft, NJ 07738-1695

May/June 2009

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
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PARK SYSTEM

2009 Date Minder

Saturday, May 2

Turkey Boat Rental Begins
A Weekend in Old Monmouth,
Longstreet Farm, 10am-5pm

Sunday, May 3

A Weekend in Old Monmouth,
Longstreet Farm, 12noon-5pm

Saturday, May 9

Manasquan River Canoe Race,
Howell Park GC 8:30am

Sunday, May 17

Outdoor Adventure Expo,
Turkey Swamp 11am-5pm

Wednesday, May 20

Friends of the Parks Golf Tourney,
Hominy Hill GC 1-8pm

Saturday, May 23

Manasquan Reservoir Boat Tours Begin

Saturday, June 6

National Trails Day at Turkey Swamp Park

Saturday, June 13

Celebrate the Rose Parterre and Rockery at Deep Cut

NEW! Friday, June 26

Monmouth County Couples Golf Tourney,
Charleston Springs GC

You Don't See Photos Like These Everyday...

Ever been this close to a skunk? Most people -except our very own Crosswicks Creek Ranger Kelly Cole, of course-



Skunk



Bat

would run away from a potential spraying. How about a bat? Again, Kelly impresses with her steady-handed command of a camera in the company of a creature that many people shy away from. Did you know? The bat's wing is made up of four elongated fingers connected by skin. The thumbs, clearly seen in this photo, are free to aid in climbing, grooming and other tasks. Bats are also the only mammals that can fly. (Cool bat facts provided by the Park System's very own bat expert, Naturalist Erika Bozza).