

Green Link



An Employee
& Volunteer
Newsletter
of the Monmouth County
Park System

Happy New Year!

January/ February 2009

END OF THE YEAR FUNNIES

Here's a run-down of the cute, unusual, and entertaining from 2008. Very special thanks to all who submitted stories, photos and tips for this issue.



It's The Thought That Counts!

Can you read what the sign says? Neither can we, but if we had to guess we might say, "I Can't Write Yet, But If I Could, I'd Tell You I Support You 100%!" This little cheerleader, seen near the finish line at this year's Manasquan Reservoir 5-mile Race, was clearly enthusiastic about her message. No doubt, her family/friends in the race felt cheered on by her efforts.

Freak Show Fun

Some of the acts in this year's new entertainment line-up at the Fair surprised even the most experienced, "been-there, done-that" staffers. Circus Night, for instance, featured acrobats, a gorilla, trapeze acts, a dog show and clowns in addition to fire-breathing, sword-swallowing and this interesting demonstration. Yup, that guy has a drill up his nose!



Reptiles Get 25% Discount at County Golf Courses

Not really, but you would think so from the number of turtles (and now snakes!) that make their way onto the greens. This Red-tailed Boa-as in constrictor-appeared on the 10th hole at Bel Aire Golf Course. Here, Greenskeeper Paul DeJesus wrangles the specimen and readies it for relocation to a more appropriate site (a local pet store). How did this Central/South American native appear on a golf course in New Jersey? Staff believe its previous owner may have released it there...maybe because this species can reach an unmanageable 13-18 feet in length!



The Weird and the Wonderful (You Decide Which...or Witch?)

Depending on your point of view, you could be entertained or frightened by these images sent in by Donna Baginsky of Deep Cut Gardens. The first (left) is a Monarch Butterfly at the very end of its metamorphosis from caterpillar. It is completing the chrysalis stage and is just about to emerge from its capsule. The second is the "ghost tree," located on the maintenance road at Tatum Park.



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DIRECTOR'S CORNER



“BUSINESS SENSE”

We often hear that the public sector should run their operations “like a business.” This certainly has interesting connotations for those of us who provide a public service by meeting park, recreation and open-space needs. Our purpose is not to produce a profit, but rather to meet societal needs for the benefit of our community.

However, in looking at what we do, there are business guidelines and practices that make sense if, like a for-profit business, we wish to be successful.

There are business guidelines and practices that make sense if we wish to be successful.

Some of the things I think are worth remembering include:

- Quality counts
- Be sure our customers know the value of what they receive
- Market what we do to the minds of our customers
- Make sure what we do and provide is visible
- Say “yes” to our customers’ needs when we can, and then figure out how to do it
- Anything we can do to save our customers’ time is worth doing
- Be “Faster, Smarter, and Better” in what we do
- Exceed the expectations of our customers
- Always be sensitive to the needs of our customers
- “Word of mouth” is the best advertising
- Remember that a customer will tell 9 other people when they have a bad experience, and only 3 other people when they have a good experience
- Whatever we do is worth doing right

These are exciting times and I am sure 2009 will be a year of challenges and rewards for us all.

“Well begun is half done.” --Aristotle

One recent project hits quite a few of these points. The new Off-Leash Dog Area at Wolf Hill in Oceanport opened October 1, 2008. It was built in response to public demand, is both highly visible and beautifully designed, and is sure to be



discussed by area dog owners. NOTE: Wolf Hill’s Off-Leash Area is about 4x larger than the one at Thompson Park.

End Of The Year, continued

Eager to Take on a New Identity?

Then come work for the Monmouth County Park System! You can dress up as...



A little old lady in a kerchief, like Asst. Superintendent of Recreation Jim Foligno in his rain gear at the Fair

Happy hooplas like Ann Sage (left) and Rachel Cohen (right) of Cultural Services



Your favorite bird--volunteer Terry Levy impersonated one of the osprey commonly seen at the Reservoir on Earth Day

A Dr. Seuss character, like Stacy Coppola (Mazie), Connor Spahn (the Cat in the Hat) and Margaret Monteleone (Gertrude) who performed in the summer musical, Seussical, at Thompson Park



But Wait! You don’t even have to work or volunteer for the Park System. Larry the Lighthouse wore this costume to run in our Todd Half Marathon- and many other races- last year. He does it to raise awareness and



Larry the Lighthouse

money for Camp Sunshine, a camp for children with life-threatening illnesses. We understand (from his website www.larrythelighthouse.com) that he also now has a companion, Wendy the Windmill, who runs races with him. We’ll keep an eye out for her this year.

Autumn in Wonderland

Senior Gardener Julie Soleil, with help from new garden staffer Justin Birk gave the display gardens at Deep Cut a gorgeous fall makeover, featuring an amusing cast of characters. Mums, stalks of wheat, bamboo, garden/other supplies and seasonal plantings were all crafted into colorful, autumn-and-nature-themed sculptures. Check it out...



All Hail the "Fair" Weather

We've had a micro-burst (a near-tornado) at the Fair that snapped a few trees and knocked some tents down, so what's a little ice storm in July? Unless, of course, you are in a trailer where the sound of each hailstone (and there were many!) resonates and multiplies. Those white streaks in this photo are gumball size hailstones hurtling down from the sky, and the white blur (circled) is the splash created atop a nearby tent as a particularly large hailstone makes a landing.



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THE VOLUNTEER CORNER

Taming of the Shrub: Volunteers Take on Some Serious Plants in 2008

The Dorbrook Gardening Team was a mixed age group of dedicated volunteers who worked all summer long every week, cleaning up shrub borders and removing invasive plants. From big briars to wild blackberries, they tamed the foliage at Dorbrook without fail, and it shows.



The Volunteer Gardening Team (kneeling): Reid Levitt, Stephen Hartnett. Standing (l to r) Nico Timpani, John Bauer, Jim Henry, Charlyene Douma, Julie Harnett, Werner Aehlich, Joanne Harnett.

Trails Group: Extreme Makeover, Holmdel Edition

This past summer, a team of very experienced trail volunteers tackled (and that is not too strong a word!) the Steeplechase Trail in Holmdel Park. According to Volunteer Coordinator Karen Livingstone, this was the most challenging trail she has ever done. Why? Because it was completely overgrown, and the group had to pull shrubs, vines, trees, poison ivy, wild plants, thorny plants, wild roses and blackberry. According to Karen, "You could play Tarzan out there, the branches were that thick and strong." But the group was determined and cleared about 1/4 mile after 3 hours of work. They were rewarded for their hard work with scrapes and scratches, a bee sting or two, and some very sore muscles.



Check out the virtually impenetrable "wall" of vegetation that trail volunteers cleared in Holmdel Park.

Comings and Goings at Sunnyside

After Teddy was transferred to the Asbury Park Police Dept.'s Mounted Unit, and Aries sadly passed away, Sunnyside staff had to say good-bye again to one of its therapy horses. Barnegat (aka "Barney") a beloved older Dutch Warm Blood was retired to a farm in Pottstown, PA at age 31. Staff at Barney's "retirement home" report that he is finding his way onto the social scene by trying to get to know the other horses and receiving human visitors. Here, Barney stands with Sunnyside Stable Manager Cindy Ross and Senior Park Ranger Andy Spears.



Cindy, Andy and Barney

And who arrived? The only new horse is "Salt." He is a Quarter Horse gelding (a gelding is a male that is castrated to create a calmer, more well-behaved horse) approximately 22 years old. He is currently the only horse at Sunnyside "on loan" to us. "Confident, brave, and consistent," according to staff, "Salt is clearly happy when working with the students and is a huge asset to the program!!!"



Salt

Gang Green: Park System Forms Environmental Committee

To conserve energy and resources, and implement some new, cost-saving strategies and "green" products now available, the Park System's has recently formed a Green Committee. They had their first meeting this past summer.

If you have a "green" idea you'd like to share, please contact one of the committee members:
Bruce Gollnick, Bob Cain, Carol Stasik,
Mike Janoski, Karen Jarmusz, Sam Camuso, Jim Register, Bob Brannan, Tom Fobes, and Mark Miller.

Through the years, the Park System has implemented quite a few energy-saving strategies that employees may or may not be aware of. Here are just a few examples:

- geothermal heating/cooling at Manasquan Reservoir Environmental Center and Charleston Springs Golf Center
- replacing grass with natural fields and unmowed areas throughout the parks
- restoring old buildings (instead of constructing new ones)
- increased recycling efforts (drop off is now up from 1x/month to 1x/week)

Yet, according to Assistant Director Bruce Gollnick, "we can always find more ways to conserve, and that's what this committee is all about." New measures include switching to greener products whenever feasible (that is, when they are just as effective and safe, and also within our financial means). This includes supplies like cleaning products and light bulbs all the way up the line to equipment and machinery (like the new completely electric cart at Seven Presidents).

Did you know? The Park System also looked into LEED Certification (that's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design from the US Green Building Council) for the new Thompson Park Visitor Center. However, the reconstruction is financed through insurance and the LEED recommendations were just too expensive for this project. We will keep trying! In the meantime, we've gone out to bid for solar panels on the Sunnyside Equestrian Center. Funded in part with **NJ State Board of Public Utilities** grant money, we look forward to moving ahead with this first-of-its-kind project here in the parks.



Staffer Paints Beautiful Murals at Huber

Seasonal Naturalist Sue Draxler is a “fabulous artist” according to co-workers and that’s lucky for the Park System. Sue has contributed some of her considerable talent to the recently re-designed exhibits at the Huber Woods Environmental Center. She painted forest and meadow scenes (complete with wildlife) to create panoramic views of what visitors would actually see outside the building. They are so good, according to her co-workers, “you actually feel like you are outside.” All of Sue’s projects benefit from her considerable background as a naturalist and her talent as an artist. If you haven’t done so already, please make a point to stop by and check out the new exhibits.



Sue’s murals provide a beautiful backdrop for these nature displays.

Seasonal Employees Shares Madagascar Adventure

This past summer, seasonal Naturalist Tara Connolly spent a few weeks in Madagascar, a large island off the southeastern coast of Africa known for its biodiversity. It’s the only place in the world where you can find natural populations of lemurs (see photo, back cover). Tara made sure to explore this important species, but that wasn’t her primary reason for visiting.

A paleontologist by trade, Tara’s visit was funded by the Madagascar Nikizy Fund so she could study economic development, a field she would like to



Uncontrolled fires ravage the landscape in Madagascar.



Roadside foliage is charred by a recent burn.

pursue at the graduate level. She described the village where she stayed as, “beautiful and sad, full of wonderful people amid a devastated landscape.” The villagers are destroying the land just to survive—burning what was once lush forest to make a type of charcoal to sell. The slash and burn clearing techniques and uncontrolled fires make the landscape

unsuitable for farming or animal grazing, and erosion and run-off is killing off the fish in nearby waters.

Tara researched local efforts to create and expand markets that won’t do such damage, such as a micro-loan program that purchases goats for families to breed and sell for milk and cheese. She also arranged a trip for about 50 local children to a national park where they could actually see what their landscape looked like before the fires.



What does a park look like in Madagascar? Check out this photo of Ankarafantsika National Park.

If you would like to learn more about the natural history of lemurs, third-world economic development strategies such as micro-loans or Madagascar in general, Tara can be reached through the Huber Woods Environmental Center.

BBQ Cook-Off at Fair Draws Variety of Participants

If you have ever watched one of those BBQ cook-offs on TV, you might guess that the folks involved take their sport very seriously (eg, frequent competitions, fancy equipment, recipes perfected through years of practice, etc.). And while that was certainly true of some competitors in the Park System's first annual BBQ Cook-Off at the Fair, you might be surprised to know how many people were also decidedly casual, and decided to just "wing it" (no pun intended).

This 2 man team the Flintstones of Aberdeen, NJ, never competed before. They entered at the last minute, only because friends told them their sauce was good. They took 4th place in the pork rib competition-great for a couple of first-timers! Park staffers in these photos are Fair Chair Carol Stasik (left), Fair BBQ Coordinator Helen Fiore (center) and Fair BBQ Assistant Stephanie Weise (right).



help him make his qualifications, and he ended up taking 3rd place in the pork rib division.



The Rockin' Smokin' BBQ Pit team demonstrated that it doesn't have to be fancy to be good. Their minimalist set-up was 1 smoker, 2 aluminum chairs and a sleeping bag. Their efforts received 1st place in the chicken division.

Ranger Interns Make the Grade

Since 2000, the Urban Recreation department has been sponsoring an annual class of about 5-6 ranger interns each summer. Recruited through flyers and conversations with school counselors, these high school students experience what it's like to work in the parks for 8 weeks, Monday through Friday, 8am-4:30pm. Just like Seasonal Rangers, they perform a variety of maintenance duties and through time spent outdoors, learn what it takes to keep this busy park system clean, safe and beautiful.

The Green Link asked this year's "graduating" class what they thought were the best and worst parts of their experience with us. Here's what they had to say:

Best Part

Worst Part

Anthony	Liked pretty much everything: litter pick, stocking the buildings, using the leaf blower, clearing trees/branches	Weeding
James	Thought there were a lot of "characters" where he worked, enjoyed the personalities of his co-workers	Cleaning out the old Central Supply basement
Winfred	Liked the people, especially enjoyed working at Sunnyside because it was "awesome looking"	Insects, horses
William	Painting stakes (used in winter fencing)	When the weather was too hot
Chris	Thought all of it was fun; liked being outdoors and seeing different animals	Nothing really

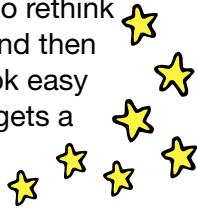


The 2008 Ranger Intern class (l to r): Anthony Ruiz, James Toon, Winfred Jones, William Jones, and Christopher Thompson. Not pictured: Ciara Lomax.

These students were able to finish projects that park staff would not have otherwise had time for, such as the stonework repair on the walkway at the Administration Building, according to Thompson Park Senior Park Ranger Rick Royle.



As this year's Fair Chair, Carol Stasik presided over one of the most ambitious agenda's ever with at least a dozen new acts and features. Implementing Wild West Night, Circus Night and our first BBQ cook-off ever required her to rethink our entire Outdoor Entertainment Area, and then fill it with entertainment! For making it look easy and managing a smile throughout-Carol gets a really big, shiny gold star for her efforts.



End Of The Year, continued

I've Fallen (in the toilet), And Can't Get Up!

At the start of camp season, Dorbrook's Ann Sage of Cultural Services received a "distress" call from her staff. A chipmunk had somehow fallen into a toilet in the Program Building and try as he would, the poor thing just couldn't get out. Because staff knew better than to touch the chipmunk, it scrambled wildly along the edge of the toilet rim until Dorbrook Park Ranger Tim Parkans arrived. Tim placed a garbage bag next to the critter so it could grab hold and pull itself out, then coaxed it into a bucket and carried it outside. The chipmunk was so wiped out from its effort, it couldn't even run away and just "staggered around like a drunk." Sensing the critter's obvious terror, the staff went back to work and let nature take its course and when Ann checked back later, the chipmunk was no longer there. Hopefully he made a full escape and recovered.



January

- 4 Mary Mautner • Jen Nixon
- 5 Diane Elwood • Tom Swords
- 6 Valerie Ferris
- 9 Pat Cernak • Joe Smith
- 12 Alvin Lopez • Beverly Miller
- 12 Jerry Ostrander
- 14 Andrew Wehmann
- 15 Bob Melick
- 16 Kathleen Ferraro • Paul McCue
- 17 Greg Shannon
- 18 Patrick W. Becker
- 19 John Caddock
- 20 Russ Anderson • Courtney Bison
- 22 Steve Moraghan
- 23 Jan Galanti • Randy McHaney
- 24 John Megill
- 25 Shelagh McCarthy
- 26 Angela Knox • Brad Roe
- 26 Gregg Wolff
- 27 John Schanck
- 28 Rachel Cohen
- 29 Lisa Horner
- 30 James Januszkiewicz • Dave Pease
- 30 Carol Stasik
- 31 Bob Schneider



February

- 1 Michele Maggio • Andy Spears
- 2 Chris Davino • Cheryl Stoeber-Goff
- 6 George Dallavalle • Lynn Duncan
- 8 Gail Hunton
- 10 Mike Towle
- 11 Ralph Johnson
- 14 Bob Cain • Sarah Duterte
- 14 Bill Oakes • Eric Wetherbee
- 14 Barbara Zarella
- 16 Ronald Chevestick
- 18 Karen Halvorsen
- 20 Bob Giolitto • Jeremy Schaefer
- 21 Charlie Woodward
- 24 Alison Petruzzo
- 25 Jennifer Papp
- 26 Jim Butler

March

- 1 Edward Dobrosky Jr.
- 2 Erika Bozza • Andy Nunes-Vais
- 3 Chris Brawley • Susan Walsh
- 3 Ruth Ann Zobel
- 4 Philip Andras • Kathleen Lugo
- 5 Bob Laauser
- 6 Christina Carlson
- 7 Ann Reinhardt
- 8 Jeff Faistl • Bruce Gollnick
- 8 Theresa Secks
- 9 Mary Ann Goodwin
- 10 Matt Bezahler
- 12 Steve Matthews • Ray Moylan
- 13 Karen Jarmusz • Brad Rogers
- 13 Scott Simpson
- 18 Peter Kucker
- 20 Jake Savage
- 21 Ryan Kimble • Debbie Tamburello
- 24 Sandy Byard
- 25 Barbara DeLorenzo • Maryann Elwood
- 26 Sharay Bartow
- 28 Chet Scalzo
- 31 Tim Mariner



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Monmouth County Park System
805 Newman Springs Road
Lincroft, NJ 07738-1695

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2009 Date Minder

February

Saturday, February 7
10am – 2pm

Seasonal Job Fair,
Hominy Hill Golf Course Clubhouse

March

Sunday, March 1
9 am

E. Murray Todd Half Marathon,
Brookdale Community College

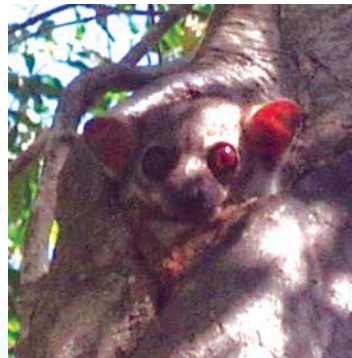
Manasquan Reservoir Boat Ramp Re-Opens

Sunday, March 15
GOLF COURSES RE-OPEN

TURKEY SWAMP CAMPGROUNDS RE-OPEN

Sunday, March 15
Noon – 3:30 pm

Volunteer Recognition Luncheon,
Hominy Hill Golf Course Clubhouse



This photo of a Milne-Edwards lemur (a type of small monkey) was taken by a part-time Naturalist Tara Connolly on a recent trip to Madagascar. Learn more about her adventures, inside.

Welcome, New Hires:

Alison Astalos Park Naturalist 9/8/08

Justin Dunn Rec Leader, Therapeutic Rec 9/15/08