

Green Link



An Employee
& Volunteer
Newsletter
of the Monmouth County
Park System

July/August 2009

HISTORIC SITES STAFF SHARPEN SKILLS OVER WINTER

Our historic sites staff is regularly called upon to perform some challenging and rather unusual tasks for their audiences (operate a cider press, cut blocks of ice from a frozen pond, assemble a barn frame with no hammer or nails, etc.) They also have to answer the many questions they get from a curious public about the sites they represent.

To stay sharp and well-trained, all the historic sites staff—full-time, part-time, seasonal and program employees and volunteers—participate in special information series each winter.



Could you assemble this frame without hammer or nails? Sarah Bent (standing on barrel, left) and Sandy Byard (third from right) show program attendees at Walford how to frame this model barn with fitted wood beams held together by pegs.

Winter Info Series: A Historic How-To

The line-up of staff activities includes presentations, guest speakers (from inside and outside the parks), educational or instructional DVDs, participation in other programs, as well as the occasional field trip or tour. Featured speakers have included the Longstreet Farm veterinarian (to teach all the staff about the health of the animals), as well as a member of the Holmdel Historic Society (a visit prompted by a very curious set of visitors who “really grilled” our staffers about local history). Since our historic sites staff maintain a good working relationship with other area historic farms and organizations, it is not uncommon for us to return the favor—a swap known as “horse-trading” in historic vernacular.

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER



“Loud and Clear”

The survey of county households we conducted last year produced some interesting results that I believe speak well for all of our efforts and hard work. Survey

questions were directed toward usage, customer satisfaction, needs, unmet needs and priorities. The citizen opinion and interest survey was conducted in November of 2008 by Leisure Vision/ETC Institute. The random survey yielded responses from 614 households with a 95% level of confidence (margin of error +4.0%.)

The survey's major findings from respondents noted that –

- The park system is the prime provider for indoor and outdoor parks, and recreation activities.
- Our customers learn about us from their friends and neighbors, and through the newspaper.
- The most important functions for the park system are to
 - operate and maintain parks and facilities
 - provide safe and secure facilities
 - provide walking, hiking, and biking trails
 - acquire open space and preserve the environment
 - manage natural areas and wildlife habitats
- The benefits most important to the future of Monmouth County
 - preserve open space and the environment
 - protect forested areas from development
 - make the County a more desirable place to live

- 24% visited park system golf courses in the past 12 months
- 45% are very satisfied with the overall value received from the park system (this rating is significantly higher than the national benchmark of 24%)
- 51% rated the condition of all parks in the park system that they have visited as excellent (this rating is considerably higher than the national benchmark of 30%)
- 55% visited park system paved trails
- 75% are very or somewhat satisfied with the overall value received from the park system
- Over 75% of park system programs and facilities are of higher or equal quality to other programs and facilities they use
- Over 90% support acquiring and developing open space for parks and recreation
- 94% had heard of the park system
- 97% rated the condition of our parks as excellent to good

The survey results help answer the questions, “How are we doing?” and “What should we be doing?”

Now that we know needs and expectations of our residents, we have our work cut out for us. There is nothing like meeting a challenge when the bar has been raised even higher.

“Why not go out on a limb? That's where the fruit is.”
Mark Twain

Historic Sites Staff, continued



Ever try baking with firewood... in a stove from the 1890's? Kitchen staff at Longstreet Farm (l to r) Program Employee Mary Rice, volunteers Ellen and Laura Rice, and Historic

Site Interpreter Sarah Dutere bake period recipes each year for the Harvest Home Festival using authentic ingredients and utensils.

Started by Walnford Historic Site Supervisor Sarah Bent in 1999 as a way to share professional information and stay current and connected, winter session events are arranged by her and Sandy Byard, Senior Park Manager at Longstreet Farm. Each year, they select a different theme and, in 2008, the meetings explored how we present information

to our visitors. There was a session on visitors with disabilities given by Recreation Supervisor Lauren Gerber and a staffer from a camp for the visually impaired. There was also a field trip to the Trenton Barracks, where the staff guide interpretive activities “in character.”



Staff Sample History: On a visit to the Trenton Barracks, our staff got to experience how other sites do their job. Here, they are being sworn in as members of the Continental Army, which is just one way they learned about

what the soldiers really went through. By participating in historic situations as characters themselves, they learned much about the time period and circumstances, not unlike the authentic, living history atmosphere the staff strive to create at Longstreet Farm.

PARK STAFF RECEIVE TWO AWARDS FOR PLOVER PROTECTION

Principal County Park Ranger Mary Mautner was recently recognized for her steadfast work in protecting the endangered Piping Plover during a particularly perilous season at Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park. Mary was honored by Todd Pover of the Beach Nesting Bird Project/Conserve Wildlife Foundation on behalf of New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program.



Mary with her award.

The overall effort at Seven Presidents was also honored with an award by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, accepted by Park Manager Ken Thoman from Planning at A&D. According to federal officials:

"Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park has done a tremendous job with beach management as a cooperative partner with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife Endangered and Nongame Species Program for the protection and recovery of Federal- and State-listed beach dependent species. Despite that fact that the entire Park is less than a half mile long and receives over 400,000 visitors annually, the Park has managed to successfully provide nesting habitat for piping plovers and good productivity, with pairs having a fledge rate above the Service's Recovery Goal in most years."



(l to r) Todd Pover from the state, Ken Thoman and Stephanie Egger, a Biologist with the federal government.

2008—A Challenging Year for Plovers & Staff

The plovers—and all the staff at Seven Presidents responsible for protecting them—faced many challenges in 2008. Early storms put 2 of the site's 3 plover nests completely under water. One nest survived, hatching and fledging 2 chicks; the other nest failed. A third nest eventually succumbed to predation (likely by fox or cat), then rebounded with a second brood late in the season. But, this pair nested right on a busy bathing beach! Staff had to rope off their nest to prevent damage.

The plovers faced many challenges in 2008: storms, predation and nest sites in the middle of busy beaches.

If that wasn't hard enough in the height of the season, once the chicks hatched, the entire plover family walked right up the beach and re-established their nest at another busy site. Staff had to relocate the protective apparatus. This late-season nest fledged only one plover chick, though four had hatched. As you can see from these numbers, survival rates are generally low, even with protective measures in place.

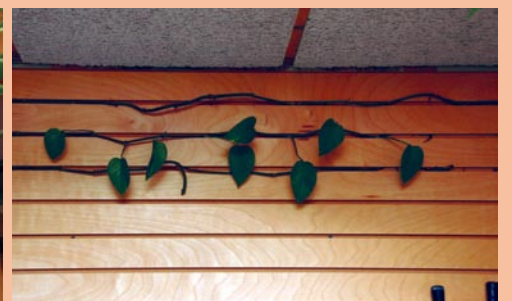
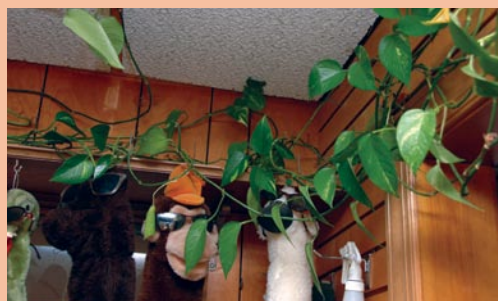


Ken and Mary on plover-watch at Seven Presidents.

What's interesting about this photo is the seashell, it helps illustrate the plover's tiny size.

Congratulations to Ken, Mary and the entire staff at Seven Presidents for this important recognition.

Continued, next page



IN MEMORIAM

Long-time Walnford employee and friend **Frank Inman** passed away on February 26, 2009. Born in the Upper Freehold hamlet of Hornerstown, Frank lived all his 85 years within a five mile radius. He grew up working nearby farms, and worked at Walnford for most of the 1940s.



Frank brought photos, memorabilia and his considerable knowledge of the area to Walnford Day each year, answering questions for curious visitors.

When the Park System began restoring Walnford in the 1980s, Frank returned to work at the site. He brought a unique, firsthand knowledge of the area and offered many helpful clues to park staff as they learned about the property. According to Walnford Site Supervisor Sarah Bent, Frank was “a tremendous source of information.” He told many wonderful stories over the years, according to Crosswicks Creek Ranger Kelly Cole. Frank worked the site as a caretaker, later switching to volunteer work—which he continued until early 2008. He will be keenly missed by park staff.

Bob Beccarelli, a dedicated volunteer in many park areas since 2002 and recent honoree for over 2,000 hours of service to the parks, passed away on Friday, March 13, 2009. Bob was an “anchor” of the Park System’s successful volunteer trail program, as both crew leader and instructor. He spent many hours at Sunnyside helping with the therapeutic horseback riding lessons for individuals with disabilities, and also volunteered at beach and special environmental clean-ups around the parks. Bob was also a volunteer with the Friends of



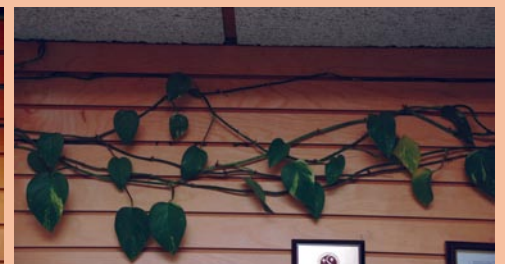
Bob is pictured here, working on the trails—one of his regular volunteer pursuits.

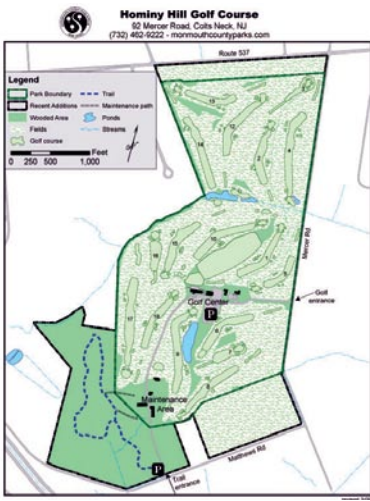
the Parks since 2003, and active member of the Friends since 2005. He could be found each May at the Friends Annual Golf Outing registration table. And all this was just his work at the parks! Generous with his time and energy, Bob was also a dedicated volunteer for other organizations. All those who worked with him in the parks are deeply saddened by his passing.

Park Plover Efforts, continued

NEW! Volunteers Pitch in to Protect Plovers

In addition to helping protect the birds’ nesting area from both wildlife and human threats, Mary and Ken do an amazing job of educating the public about the importance of this effort. Mary often serves as the Park System’s go-to person for plover information and answers detailed questions from the press. This past winter and spring, she and Ken worked with Coordinator of Volunteers Karen Livingstone and Todd Pover to develop a Beach Nest Bird Monitor program. Through this program, a volunteer staff of plover-watchers (and other bird-watchers) are trained to help monitor and manage the nest sites. They will also help educate the public at Seven Presidents during the summer season.





The new trail appears as a blue-dotted line, lower left.



The new trail at Hominy Hill.

MORE THAN A GOLF COURSE, PART II

Over 80 acres of land were recently added to the Hominy Hill Golf Course property in Colts Neck, and that may mean something to you—even if you don't golf. The northern parcel, added along Route 537, will protect the land from development too close to the course, and a new parcel to the southwest of the maintenance area will buffer adjacent neighborhoods. In particular, this second area is forested and, as it turns out, is a perfect site for a trail.

While certain golf courses have begun accommodating trail users on the paved cart paths during the off-season, Hominy Hill will soon become our second golf course with a dedicated walking trail for use year round. Soon after the Park System added the land, staffers went to work to clear major portions of the less than 1 mile trail, and completed the job in just one afternoon.

Trail signs will be placed this summer, and visitors will be able to access and use the trail after completion of a new parking lot on Matthews Road, planned for this summer.



The trail-clearing crew from Hominy Hill maintenance (l to r): Greenskeeper Alejandro Roman, Superintendent Tim Mariner, Senior Greenskeeper Greg Sharin, and Greenskeepers Jeff Faistl and Jake Savage.

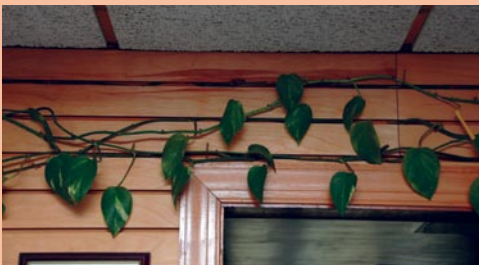


PARK NEWS & NOTES

• Just over 1 mile of new trail (pictured) was built by the Borough of Atlantic Highlands along the water between our property at Popamora Point and the **Henry Hudson Trail, North** near the Atlantic Highlands Marina. One final portion of trail is needed to complete the Atlantic Highlands section, that is the connection between Bay Ave. and Avenue D.



• **What's that Big, New Object Gliding Through Reservoir Waters?** No, it's not the Loch Ness monster; it's the Christian Brothers Academy rowing team—they now hold practice at the **Manasquan Reservoir**. As of this past spring, the team had all its equipment onsite (those crew boats are between 40 and 60 feet long) and were practicing after school and on Saturday mornings. Like the high school teams who use our golf courses for practice, this is an important community connection for the parks. And, according to staff, team rowing practice is a sight to see.



VOLUNTEER CORNER

“NOW MORE THAN EVER” VOLUNTEER EFFORTS CRITICAL TO PARKS

The Park System recently received some very good news about its operations and programs from a public survey (see Director’s Corner article on p. 2). We also received CAPRA reaccreditation in March (details to follow). We share credit for both of these important accomplishments with our volunteers, whose dedicated service has become even more critical during these tough economic times.

On Sunday March 8, 2009 the Park System recognized our volunteers for their hard work at over a dozen different park areas and for helping to staff all of our major races and events, including the Fair. The departments and parks that devote particular attention to the training and inclusion of volunteers saw the most hours of dedicated service. These include Outdoor and Therapeutic Recreation programs and camps, Sunnyside/SPUR (the largest program with 159 volunteers), the Theater, and park areas that hosted Garden/Pruning and Trails volunteers—they all benefited from more than 1,000 hours of volunteer service. Of course, volunteers also staff many other programs, camps and departments and are a critical component of our lifeguard program at Seven Presidents, and the Friends of the Parks.

This year, special recognition was given to two volunteer superstars who reached a milestone 2,000 hours of service to the parks: Eileen Murphy and the late Bob Beccarelli (see In Memoriam, p. 4), they are each pictured in the photos. Thank you to all our volunteers—we couldn’t do it without you!



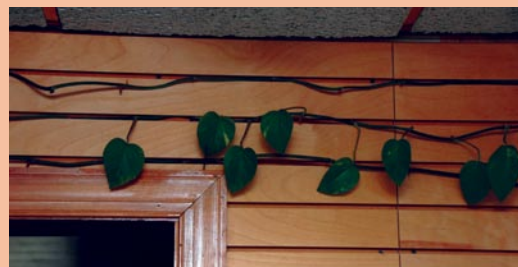
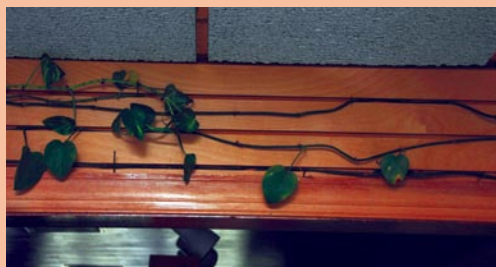
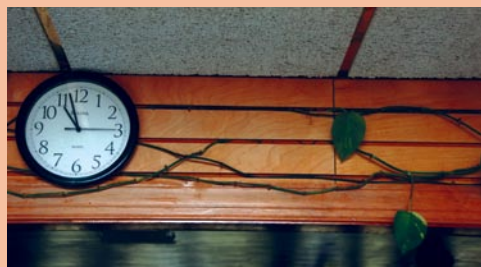
The volunteer staff from Outdoor Recreation. (back row, l to r) Harden Fowler, Don Brocklebank, 2,000 Hour Honoree Eileen Murphy, Leslie Roche and Recreation Leader Ryan Kimble. (front row, l to r) Emma Caccarale, Michelle Sica, Howard Rockhill and David Roche.



Sunnyside/SPUR volunteer Jackie West (far right) is recognized by (l to r) Park System Secretary-Director James J. Truncer, Recreation Commission Chair Ed Loud, Freeholder Barbara McMorrow, Freeholder-Director Lillian Burry, and Sunnyside/SPUR Volunteer Coordinator Pat Bernstein.



Trail Maintenance volunteers (back row, l to r) 2000 Hour Honoree Bob Beccarelli, Harden Fowler, and Arnold McCormick. (front row, l to r) Gary Lingner and Ernestine McCormick.





July

- 2 Travis Bryan • Jason Miller
- 3 Harold Ayers
- 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

August

- 2 Betty Fish
- 5 Eric Kaplan
- 6 Frank Biddle • Jim Gregory
- John Sheridan
- 7 Alison Astalos
- 8 Louise McCook • Robin Ostrowski
- 9 Ronnie Grothusen
- 10 Rick Royle
- 13 Joe Reynolds
- 14 Michael Bernard • Walter Craig
- 15 Gary Johnson
- 16 Ilona Konstantinidis
- 17 John Skimelis
- 18 Andy Coeyman • Frank Mead
- 19 Greg Sharin
- 21 Bob Brannan
- 24 Anthony Calderon • Don Davison
- 25 Nancy Borchert
- 26 Fran Martone
- 29 Amanda Tanay
- 30 Lawrence Bork

September

- 2 Michele Santore
- 3 Diane Allen • Ronald Bomma
- Kelly Cole
- 4 Lauren Gerber
- 5 Wayne Connelly • Angela Kochon
- 6 Howard Dombroski
- 7 David Whalen
- 9 Ray Smith
- 10 Brad Bradach • Jim Mowczan
- Jeff Wyant
- 11 Susan Stafford-Smith • Mark Szemiot
- Susan Williams
- 13 Emerald Platzer
- 16 Carol Hobbs • Tom Petraglia
- 17 Mark Borchert
- 23 Robert Morris
- 25 Joe DePiero
- 26 Ken Herceg • Jim Janeczko
- 27 Chuck Rafferty
- 28 Dave Mishkin • Jim Register
- George Richdale
- 30 Eric Cadenelli



IS THIS THE LONGEST PHILODENDRON IN THE PARKS?

Golf Ranger Bob Schneider and the Bel Aire staff think so. Bob (pictured left) has been taking care of this plant at the Golf Center since 2001. It runs from its 12" pot, along a shelf around the entire Golf Center, and when Bob ran out of shelving, he re-routed the plant back around the shop again—the plant now measures over 160 feet in length! What's his secret? He waters once a week, spraying the whole plant and filling the pot. (By the way, all those furry cartoon characters—and their sunglasses—are Bel-Aire's long-standing assortment of lost & found head covers collected through the years.)

Green Link, A bimonthly newsletter for employees and volunteers of the Monmouth County Park System.

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July/August 2009

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2009 Date Minder

Mon., Tues. & Weds., July 6-8

Children's Summer Theater,
 Thompson Park
 "Stone Soup & Other Stories"

Sat. & Sun., July 11-19

Hominy Hill GC Club Championship
 Hominy Hill GC Women's Championship
 Shark River GC Club Championship

Weds. – Sun., July 22-26

Monmouth County Fair

Mon., Tues. & Weds., July 27-29

Children's Summer Theater,
 Thompson Park
 "Cinderella"



This photo of a Snowy Owl was captured this past winter in Belmar by Naturalist and photographer Bob Henschel. Adult



Males tend to be mostly white, but adult females and young have dark brown feathers (like the one pictured here). The best parks to look for this owl are along the coast.

Did You Know?

If you are traveling north at all this summer season, chances are good you will cross one of the widest bridges in the world—at least in terms of the number of lanes. With 15 driving lanes and 6 shoulders, the Driscoll Bridge on the Garden State Parkway crossing the Raritan River has an impressive total of 21 lanes. Most sources, however, recognize the Sydney Harbor Bridge in Australia as the absolute widest with 16 driving lanes (8 up and 8 down) plus 2 train lanes and a lane for pedestrian traffic.