

Green Link

An Employee & Volunteer Newsletter



Mount Mitchell

November/December 2013



Gorgeous Weather And Impressive Attendance Combine For A Near-Perfect Fair

With sunny and relatively cool weather and a steady stream of visitors, no one had cause for complaint at this year's Fair. The atmosphere remained relaxed and stress-free throughout the five-day event, and it seemed everyone—from vendors, staff, participants and most importantly, the visitors—seemed happy to be there.



Put Your Hands in the Air! The Friends have reason to celebrate; this year's 50-50 Raffle, one of their biggest annual fundraisers, was their most successful in years. Proceeds will help fund the 2014 line-up of Friends-funded projects in the parks.

As usual, teamwork saves the day, from preparations to operations to running the Fair events. Note that the group photos below (and on the next page) feature a blend of volunteers, seasonal staff and full-timers. Whenever you gather a bunch of event staffers together it becomes obvious, the Park System relies on all of us to get the work done.



New Fair Events Win Fans. Some of our most popular new events and displays were Paragon Jousting (those knights wore real armor weighing up to 45 lbs!), the Pinewood Derby (kids made and raced their own cars), and the Future Farmers of America, or FFA, "Ag" Tent (which sold, then sold-out, of local vegetables). That's Park Planner Paul Gleitz (center) with FFA staff managing the tent.



Therapeutic Recreation Crew Manage the Auto Show: (l to r) Kim Crocker (Seasonal Asst. Camp Director), Raymond Gonzalez (Volunteer), Bethany O'Brien (Seasonal Head Counselor), Justin Dunn (Recreation Leader), Ryan Critti (Seasonal Camp Counselor), Brittney Sinker (Volunteer), Dawn McEvoy (Seasonal Arts and Crafts Director), Lauren Gerber (Recreation Supervisor).

Continued, page 3

DIRECTOR'S CORNER



“STAYING FOCUSED”

I believe our visitors know quality when they see and experience it. When we do our best with a positive attitude, we thrive. Our customers desire attention, convenience,

and clean, safe conditions for their family. An important part of our job is making the people we serve feel special. Being friendly, knowing our customers by name and knowing their needs is an important part of our job. When we must say “no” to a request, we need to suggest other acceptable options. I believe that how we approach our jobs will determine whether we are able to set ourselves apart from others.

This year’s county fair was one of the best ever. I received nothing but compliments. That is truly a credit to the Fair Committee and each of you who worked to make it a success. Not only did we have great weather, we also made positive and innovative changes that included how we organize our work, the hours we were open, and the appearance of the fairgrounds. Details such as tablecloths and keeping the tables clean were signs of a first class operation. Visitors responded by putting their trash in a trash barrel that was emptied before it overflowed with the result that litter was minimal.

I also believe customers want and expect quality facilities and experiences, and will respond accordingly. When our customers have a positive, enjoyable and memorable experience, they tell others. This is one of the best advertisements we can have, a personal unsolicited endorsement.

Our customers have choices and, if we are to meet their expectations, we must stay focused on providing ...exceptional experiences.

Our customers expect to have an enjoyable experience in the parks, whether participating in an activity or just relaxing and enjoying the scenery. We are in a highly competitive world and need to be sure we don’t disappoint those we serve. We should always remember that our customers have choices and, if we are to meet their expectations, we must stay focused on providing exceptional, enjoyable and memorable experiences.

“Public opinion is a second conscience.”

–William Alger, Unitarian Minister and Writer



A meticulously clean fair picnic area is one detail that people always seem to notice, and may keep them coming back year after year.

VOLUNTEERS: We Couldn't Do It Without You!



Whether staffing the Fair, helping us manage new activities such as the Sweet Corn Festival, or welcoming visitors at the Fort Monmouth Recreation Center Open House, no park event—new or old—could function without our volunteers. We extend our heartfelt thanks for all that you do!

(l to r): Look how many of our smiling and dedicated volunteers turned out to represent us at the Fort Monmouth Open House! (l to r) Elaine McColgan, Joyce Henry, Barbara Finazzo, Barbara Trouwborst, Victoria Gercher, Donna Hansen, Jim Henry, Barbara Eckert, Katha Larity, Ruth Garipey, and Linda Hodgins.



Flower Power. A staff sample from this year's park tent (l to r) Volunteer Michelle Lee, Asst. Public Information Officer Lisa Bonelli, Seasonal Naturalists Stephanie Geronimo and Erin Lubbeck, Naturalist Regina Deveaux, Seasonal Naturalist Cynthia Milewski and Outdoor Adventures Recreation Coordinator Jan Galanti.

Dynamic Duos, and Solos and Trios...



Count on Courtesy. Mary Jane Bruncati and Jean Kline handled Customer Relations (aka "complaints") with their usual patience and charm.



Different Duties at the Fair. Computer Guru Matt Bezahler doubles as a ticket/finance agent at the Fair while Coordinator of Volunteers Melissa Kelly helps dispense literature.



East Meets West. Dorbrook Senior Ranger Nick Podsvirow with Cross-wicks Park Ranger Jeff Ward.



Keeping Us Stocked. Our janitorial, maintenance and first aid supplies were brought and dispensed by Central Supply Park Ranger Jim Gregory, who also helped with visitor transport.



Midway Photo. Photographer Maribeth Gardner, Sports & Fitness Seasonal Tiffany Stevenson and Recreation Leader Allison Gibney stop for just a minute to get their picture taken.

Ranger staff were also ever-present patrolling the grounds, ensuring safety and order (not that we had to worry much about that this year), and generally helping out wherever needed.

They May Look Serious at First... But There's a Smile Underneath. (l to r) Holmdel Park Ranger Eric Doren, Shark River Park Ranger John Sheridan, Supervising Park Ranger Scott Schaff and Senior Park Ranger Scott Augun, both from Turkey Swamp Park.



The Fairground's So Bright... (l to r) Hartshorne Principal Park Ranger Tom Dillon and Thompson Senior Park Manager Rick Royle. Holmdel Senior Park Manager Mark Borchert. (left) Seven Presidents Park Ranger Shea Gilliland.

Fun on the Fairgrounds...



Jan's Groovy Van. Jan Galanti of Outdoor Adventures shares her tricked out VW camp-van with visitors as part of this year's auto show.



No Fear. Recreation Leader Allison Gibney with Michele Clampffer and Jan Galanti of Outdoor Adventures didn't flinch while serving as obstacles for this skateboarder.



Fooling Around. That clown in the middle with the drum is none other than Seasonal Employee and Volunteer David Roche.

NEW Programs & Events In The Parks



The Lead Up & Grand Opening of Fort Monmouth

While programmers began using this space in early summer, it wasn't until August that this new facility brought in its full staff and opened its doors to the public. County representatives as well as staff from the all the park areas were on hand to say "Welcome."

Summer campers were in for a treat when "pool shark" and Fort Monmouth Senior Park Ranger Andy Spears stopped by for a visit.



Freeholder Liaison to the Parks Lillian Burry—who is also a member of the Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Authority (FMERA) that designated this site to the Park System—addresses visitors, flanked by colleague Freeholders, Board of Recreation Commissioners, and park staff.



Two of our most knowledgeable staffers, Recreation Supervisor Jenn Troisi and Recreation Coordinator Ann Sage, make sure visitors know what's in store.



Park Ranger Jim Curry and Supervising Park Ranger Travis Bryan managed parking for the unexpectedly large group of visitors—over 400—who dropped by to see the new facility.



Fun & Games: Just a small sample of the many activities available that day...featuring Seasonal Naturalist Melissa Plitt.



Sweet Corn Festival

In a continued effort to encourage visitation to our sites in western Monmouth County, staff from Visitor Services worked with Historic Site Supervisor Sarah Bent to offer another mini-event at Historic Walnford this past August. The Sweet Corn Festival, which joins the Bluebell Festival held last spring, celebrates the

county's agricultural legacy and highlights park activities with games, a reptile show, archaeology display, crafts, music and more.



Bethany O'Brien, Lauren Gerber and Patti Conroy shuck the corn...



Asst. Superintendent of Parks Tom Fobes and Site Supervisor Sarah Bent boil the corn...



...and this young visitor, who happens to be the daughter of Visitor Services Copy Editor Amanda Tanay, eats the corn.



Dennis Walters gives a demonstration; the event attracted about 175 attendees.

Happy 15th Anniversary, Charleston Springs!

A special event was held to celebrate this site on Monday, August 19 featuring disabled “motivational golfer” Dennis Walters, and his dog Bucky, who spoke and performed trick shots. There were also mini-lessons from staff, as well as contests and demonstrations for visitors of all ages.



Golf Superintendent Ron Luepke (left) and Golf Recreation Leader Courtney Kling (who organized the event, right) with Dennis Walters and Bucky.



And if all the other activities weren't enough, check out the beautiful moonrise over the driving range.

Wild Wildlife

'Paparazzi' Gather for Release of Seal. When this 600 pound Grey Seal was released back into the ocean at Sandy Hook after months of treatment at the Marine Mammal Stranding Center in Brigantine, the event drew a crowd. You've got to wonder what—if anything—the seal was thinking about all the fuss as it slid back into the water.



event drew a crowd. You've got to wonder what—if anything—the seal was thinking about all the fuss as it slid back into the water.



Oystercatchers Nesting at Seven Presidents. This has not happened in a long time! Oystercatchers were nesting on the busy south end of Seven Presidents this past July, and hatched their first and only chick right before the Fair. As you can see, this bird is friendly and curious. Note the bright orange beak. *Photo next to our Park System logo captured by volunteer Eleanor Swanson.*



Presidents this past July, and hatched their first and only chick right before the Fair. As you can see, this bird is friendly and curious. Note the bright orange beak. *Photo next to our Park System logo captured by volunteer Eleanor Swanson.*

Fox Family Takes Up Temporary Residence at C&R.

Staff at C & R were delighted last May when a female fox burrowed under the accessible entrance ramp, and soon gave birth to five adorable pups. When the mother went out scouting for food, the pups would come out to play or sun themselves, an entertaining site! Nonetheless, staff felt a bit relieved when the mother diligently led her young away from the den under their building to a more secluded spot



in the woods, where no doubt the pups could roam more freely. *Story from Sue Baranowski, Photo by Joe Smith.*



A VERY Rare Sighting.

This immature Brown Booby was spotted by Park Ranger Pat Becker in early July on the jetty at Seven Presidents.

Woof! Does your pet visit the parks? If so, send us a photo! This one is from Park Planner Paul Gleitz, when his cute pup Forrest—a 3-year old Golden Retriever/ Great Pyrenees rescue—visited Fisherman's Cove



last summer. Forrest also loves the Off-leash Area at Thompson Park, the Rocky Point section of Hartshorne Woods and camping at Turkey Swamp Park.

Stand-Outs: Accomplishments Worth Noting



Whoooo Me?! Talented 'Friend' Recognized

Freehold teen and **Friends member Mary Ellen Pulchaski** recently took one of our photography classes and entered her projects in the Fair Home and Garden Competition. As it turns out, she's both talented and generous with her time. After she took home two prizes for her owl photos (a first prize and an honorable mention, pictured) she took herself over to the Friends booth and volunteered with us. Our congratulations and thanks!

Staffer Places in Golf Tourney

Safety Officer Brian Corrigan was this year's A Flight-runner up at the Howell Park Golf Course Club championship this past August. Way to go, Brian!



Seasonal Ranger Captures Poisonous Spider

Shark River Park Ranger Don Russo demonstrated some serious courage when alerted to a black widow spider on the bathroom wall during a nature program in July. Naturalist Tanya Dinova identified the spider as the poisonous Black Widow and asked him to remove it by capturing it into a plastic container, which would allow preservation. According to Tanya, he was both kind enough and brave enough to help, and after

safely removing the spider we now have large and beautiful specimen preserved in alcohol so people can learn what they look like. We are proud of your bravery, Don!

Adventurous Naturalist Studies Scorpions, Sharks & One Special Cactus

The Black Widow encounter was not **Naturalist Tanya Dinova's** first run-in with a poisonous creature this season. Last May, as part of her Master's Degree program in Wildlife Research and Conservation, she went to Baja, Mexico for three weeks to count scorpions (by hand!!!) and study the world's largest cactus species in the Sonoran Desert, followed by a scuba diving expedition into the chilly waters of the Sea of Cortez to observe the feeding habits of whale sharks.



Tanya's studies took her from the bottom of the desert up into cloud-covered mountains to study different habitats.

She studied the Cardon Cactus, which grows as large as a tree (up to 63 feet!) and only blooms at night.

She also counted scorpions, which are an indicator species, at night when they are most active. She used a black light (see back cover) because their camouflage is so effective. Here is a scorpion under regular, white light.

The last part of her study expedition was spent diving from boats to study the feeding habitat of whale sharks in the chilly Sea of Cortez. This unusual species--the largest shark (around 30 feet)--is docile, has polka-dots, and is not a predatory meat eater but instead feeds on plankton. Sorry, no photos!

A Bright, Sunny Day for the 2013 9-11 Ceremony



This sunrise was a hopeful sign, perhaps able to lift the spirits of some in attendance.

The 9-11 Remembrance Ceremony was held at 8 am this year, and visitors were greeted by warmth and sunshine as they arrived at Mount Mitchell. Volunteers and staff had been hard at work preparing the site, and it showed. Weather and scenery combined to provide a beautiful setting for the event.



Assistant Director Bruce Gollnick walks through the site prior to the ceremony.



Hartshorne Woods/Mount Mitchell Park Rangers help conduct the ceremony. Ron Chevestick (top) salutes during the flag raising, Ralph Apicelli (above) places flowers on the memorial, and Jason Miller (left) stands guard.

Welcome New Hires!

Shawn Cusack, Greenskeeper,
Charleston Springs Golf Course

Brian Young, Greenskeeper,
Charleston Springs Golf Course

John Pekarovich, Maintenance Worker,
Monmouth Cove Marina

Zachary Kuhlwein, Park Ranger,
Dorbrook Recreation Area

Jamie Evans, Park Naturalist (part-time),
Acquisition & Design

Theresa (Terry) Jakubowski, Golf Ranger,
Hominy Hill Golf Center

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

November

1 Ivan Gottstein 2 Frank Bradford 3 Rich Pillar 3 Paul Zimmer
11 Bill Diehl 11 Tony Eng 11 Mark Miller 11 Jim Truncer
16 Paul Basquill 16 Sean Pierson 17 Ryan Rochelle
18 Jed Jesiolowski 19 Daniel Buecher 19 Mark Foulks
20 Michael C. Sullivan 21 Christina Miller 23 Mike Dollear
24 Ann Marie Osnato 25 Philip Patterson 26 Tom Ketcham

December

4 Frank Sardoni 6 Alejandro Roman 7 Marcia Floden
7 Charles Longo 8 Darrin Morrissey 8 Alan Roberts
11 Marcus Novak 12 Mary Naughton 13 Joe Sardonia
15 Andrew Spears 16 Tanya Dinova 17 Jeff Semanchick
18 Tim Parkans 19 Don Sadowski 21 Francisco Masini
22 Ilona Szabo de Bucs 23 Justin Dunn 24 Ken Olsen
26 Susan Baranowski 27 Joshua Storch 29 Sarah Bent
29 Kevin Dunn 31 Scott Augun

January

4 Mary Mautner 4 Jen Nixon 5 Diane Elwood 5 Tom Swords
6 Valerie Ferris 9 Pat Cernak 9 Joe Smith 12 Keith Heckman
12 Alvin Lopez 12 Beverly Miller 12 Jerry Ostrander
15 Bob Melick 16 Kathleen Ferraro 16 Melissa Kelly
16 Paul McCue 17 Jenna Pesano 17 Greg Shannon
18 Patrick W. Becker 20 Russ Anderson 20 Courtney Bison
22 Steve Moraghan 22 Kevin Wilhalme 23 Jan Galanti
25 Shelagh McCarthy 26 Brad Roe 26 Gregg Wolff
27 John Schanck 28 Rachel Cohen 29 Lisa Horner
29 Andrew Stegner 30 James Januszkiewicz
31 Bob Schneider

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

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PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
MONMOUTH CO.
PARK SYSTEM

Spooky Stories. Just in Time for Halloween...

A POISONOUS TALE & TAIL!

One was here in the parks, another at a distant location. Find out which is which, inside.

