

New Volume 5 Edition 1

THE RANCOCAS CREEK ASSOCIATION

The New Creekside News



### The "New" Creekside News

is an e-newsletter for, about, and by the Rancocas Creek Association - free to all, published quarterly (**January, April, July, October**). The Creekside News was previously distributed weekly (1930's) to all residents free of charge - for the first copy - any additional copies were sold for 2 cents per copy!

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Or online at [www.rancocas creek.org](http://www.rancocas creek.org)

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Creekside News January 2021

The Ornithologist Corner  
*Jacob Poinsett*  
*Audubon Society*



The Song Sparrow

Winter along the Rancocas Creek may not have the breathtaking hues of orange and red foliage like it does in the fall, nor the vibrant green display of spring and summer. But the subtle beauty of the Song Sparrow can still be found year-round! Although this large songbird is migratory in much of its range, it is a resident throughout the great state of New Jersey. Just as its common name suggests, the male Song Sparrow uses its melodic tune to attract a female rather than its breeding plumage like many other songbirds. Studies have shown that the female seeks the male with the most complex pitches and transitions in their song as a suitable mate! Much like other sparrows in the passerelidae family, the Song Sparrows field marks are slight but when you learn the differences it can be easy to identify them. The long tail accompanied with the white belly scattered with brown streaks is what sets this sparrow apart from the rest. Also, look for the central spot just below the throat.



Thank you to everyone that supported our various Fundraising endeavors in 2020. It was a difficult year; the Rancocas Creek Association truly appreciates the support.

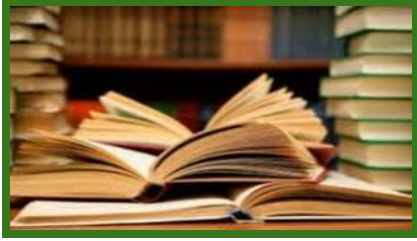
\$1,334.42 was raised through our GoFundMe initiative; \$150 was raised through PayPal; \$105 was collected through Facebook; \$455 was collected at the Mount Holly Farmers Market; and \$882.15 was garnered through the Silent Auction. This is a grand total of \$2,926.57 - **Thank You!** These monies will assist greatly with tree removal.

Thank you also goes out to our fearless Fundraising Chair - Tom Greenfield!

We are always in the process of maintaining the creek, and donations sent to us go to clean-up efforts! Trash seems to end up in the creek year round! We are also attempting to keep up with tree removal and this year we plan on devoting time and energy to training, siltation and remediation.

Note that all donations are tax exempt - and receipts will be either emailed or regular mailed to you - please provide either your email address or your home address.

Thank you!

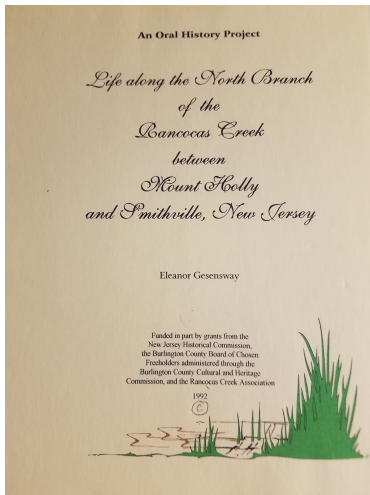


## Ellie's Corner

*"To me it is important not to live in a throwaway society...that you respect what came before." Eleanor Gesensway.*

The banks of the Rancocas Creek has in its residents a

remarkable membership of truly talented and interesting persons. Please enjoy another excerpt from Ellie's book - "An Oral History Project: Life Along the North Branch of the Rancocas Creek between Mount



Holly and Smithville, New Jersey".

*Excerpts from interviews with many of the residents showed that quite a few knew Hugh Campbell - so here is a short story of his life:*



Hugh Campbell was born on December 4,

1905 in Atcheson, Kansas. His family moved to the Camden, New Jersey area when he was 10 years old from Scranton, Pennsylvania. Then, as an adult, Hugh Campbell left a nine-to-five job in the 1930's to pursue an artist's life moving to the picturesque Mount Holly, NJ.

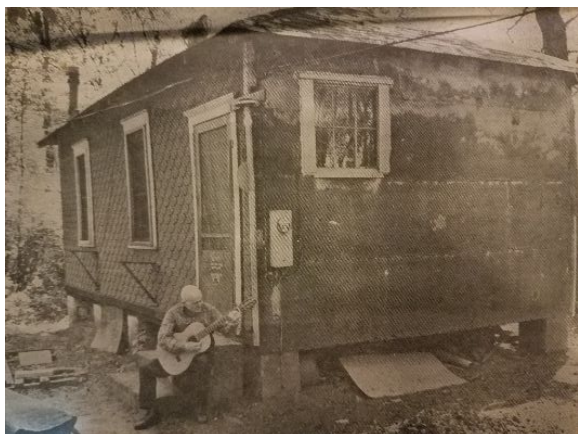
Campbell was a soft spoken individual - slight in build. He kept his head shaven and his icy blue eyes took in all the beauty that surrounded him in his beloved Rancocas Creek neighborhood.



*Campbell's Woodland Scene*

He jumped into his new life with nothing but determination and a "feeling" that he could paint. Campbell admitted that living on as little as \$2 per week made life difficult at times, but he believed that living his life this way was the best decision he had ever made; they were the happiest days of his life. An incredible statement coming from someone that stated he failed art in eighth grade as he became someone that made a living from art as an adult - if earning \$1,700 a year is making a living! But back then, if you went to a farmer in the area, you could

get permission to put up a shack and go undisturbed while you pursued your art.



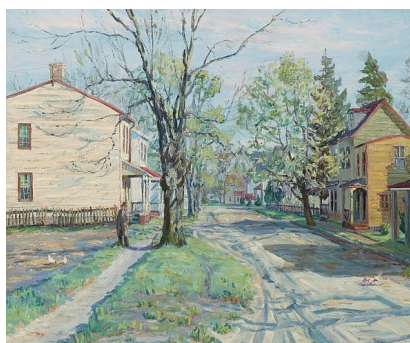
Campbell once lived off of Shreve Street in a tar-paper cottage that cost him \$150 in the 1950's. He once lived (for 7 years) in unheated rooms of a large canoe barn at Hack's Canoe. Campbell believed that if a man spends all his energies in eking out a living, he fritters away the best energies on the mundane.

Campbell was a simple man of great faith. He practiced Zen Buddhism, yoga, and he meditated. Meditation brought him closer to what he called "the pool of perfection" and into contact with his divine power. Campbell's love of nature fit well with his lifestyle.

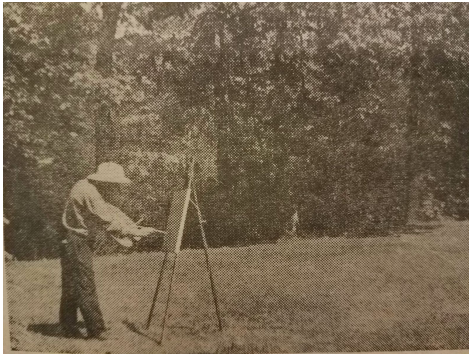
Campbell was also an author - his first book (1962) was "Knock Vigorously to be Heard; Reflections of a Yoga Trained Artist". He also penned books of poetry some of which are in the Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences on High Street in Mount Holly.



In the 1930's Campbell's art was entered in clothesline exhibitions in Rittenhouse Square and in the 1940's he received an honorary membership (for Work of Outstanding Distinction) from the Philadelphia Art League. His work has been offered at auction multiple times, with realized prices ranging from \$188 to \$9,375 depending on the size and medium of the artwork. Since 2008, the record price for his work at auction is \$9,375 for "Spring on Risdon Street, Mount Holly, New Jersey", sold at Sotheby's New York in 2008. Some works may be seen in the Burlington County Prison Museum.



*Campbell's  
Spring  
on  
Risdon  
Street*



Campbell walked the neighborhood with his cart that contained a raincoat, a flashlight, a jacket, and his ukelele which he enjoyed playing as much as he enjoyed his art - it summed up his life - simple, but with a beautiful tone.

When asked what gave him the greatest pleasure, Campbell stated: "...walking down a road, particularly when the air is fresh and the stars are out and there is a tremendous clean vastness to the sky. I think man is spending too much time and energy into just getting a living today - all his inspiration is going out the window".

We are quite proud of our Rancocas Creek legend!



## A Blast from the Past

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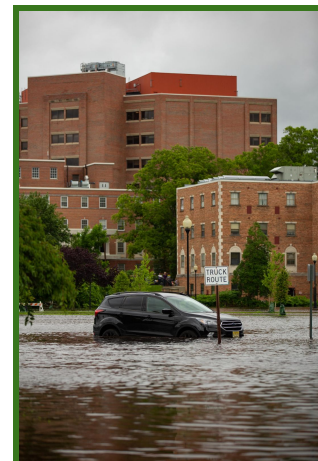
Deja Vu?

The Creekside News of August 24, 1934 ran this article:

### "The Smithville Dam in the News"

"A year ago yesterday marked the date of the "flood" on the Rancocas...Fortunately this will not have to be experienced again anytime soon. Nor even will it threaten us as long as the dam at Smithville is not allowed to become so weakened that the added strain of fresh water will force it. This is what happened last year. The dam has since been repaired and is now stronger than it ever was, which is most encouraging. It will be many years before there will be even the slightest suggestion of trouble from that source... Yes, for many years to come the guests of the camps will be shown the high water mark of August 23, 1933."

And then came the flood water marks of 2019!



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plastic bags and bottles in the creek (we clean a lot of those out each year)!

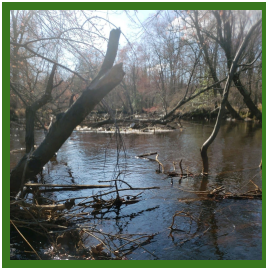
As the birds fly, feed, nest, entertain us...they are monitoring the health of our beautiful neighborhood along the creek - help them to help us by keeping the area clean and providing native plantings for their use.

This year, we would like to add some native plants to the banks to shore them up and help to deter erosion; and encourage birds to visit - your donations continue to do good!

Some of the native grasses that we may consider are<sup>1</sup>:

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## Native Plants for our Region



The past few editions showed native plants for our area as recommended by the Audubon Society. We hope you were able to benefit from that resource.

Every plant helps in the fight against climate change, the fight for birds. We need the birds to eat insects - and the area around the creek is a great insect producing neighborhood;; move seeds and pollen around - and that is much needed by our farmers so that we have food to eat; clean up after death of other animals - the birds of prey are not only beautiful, but they serve a major role in the environment!

This also means protecting their habitat - no



Freshwater Cord Grass  
*Spartina pectinata*

Also called Prairie Cordgrass and Sloughgrass, this upright, rigid, perennial grass has coarse leaves and tan, stiff seedheads that turn yellow in the fall and attract birds. It grows 5 to 6 feet tall in full sun, and in moist to wet, rich soils. Freshwater Cord Grass has a tendency to spread quickly and widely, so this plant is

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<sup>1</sup> "Native Plants" Audubon,  
[www.audubon.org/native-plants/search?zipcode=08060](http://www.audubon.org/native-plants/search?zipcode=08060).

best suited for large areas.



Yellow Indian Grass  
*Sorghastrum nutans*

This is a tall, perennial, sod-forming grass with broad blue-green blades and a large, golden-brown, plume-like seed head. In the fall, the seed head turns deep orange to purple. It is drought tolerant, growing in full sun to shade, and in dry to moist soil, including sandy, loam, and clay soils. Because of its height (3 to 8 feet) and its tendency to remain erect, it provides a nesting habitat and protective cover for many kinds of birds.

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### EHD and Deer



The **New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife** is asking the public to be alert for deer that may be affected by Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) and to report

any suspected cases. Outbreaks in New Jersey typically occur in August through October. EHD cannot be transmitted to people.

Symptoms include: difficulty standing, drooling, lethargy, respiratory distress, foam from the mouth or nose, and swelling of the face, tongue and neck. Sick or dead deer are often seen in or near water.

Reports can be made to:

Northern Region: 609-259-6965

Southern Region: 609-748-2065

Division Veterinarian: 908-735-6398

More info:  
[www.njfishandwildlife.com/news/2020/ehd\\_alert20.htm](http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/news/2020/ehd_alert20.htm)

[#NewJerseyFishAndWildlife](#) [#Deer](#)

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### Spotted Lanternfly

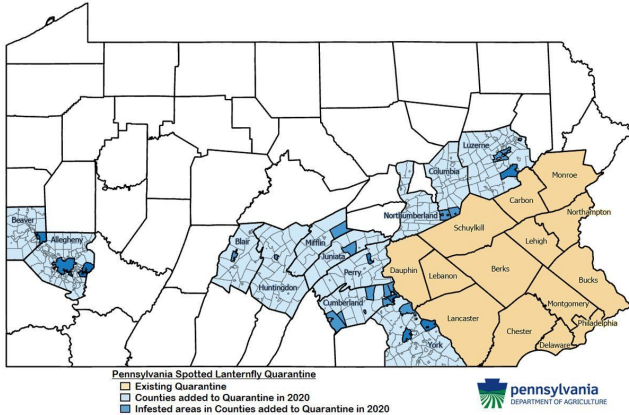
The Spotted Lanternfly is now found in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Burlington County no longer has to report sightings.

The spotted lanternfly is an invasive planthopper (a type of insect) in the U.S. It is native to certain parts of Southeast Asia.



## RCA SUNSHINE



Frequently asked questions regarding this pest may be seen at <https://extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly-frequently-asked-questions>.

Birthday Greetings and Happy Anniversary to our members celebrating in January, February, and March! Continued good health and happiness to each of you.

## Annual Northwest New Jersey Rivers Conference

The second annual conference was held virtually in November 2020.

Workshops varied from carbon defense to dam removal to stormwater management, to conservation to volunteer management. The information was tremendous and invaluable!

RCA was able to network with other agencies and we look forward to working with some of them this year so that the Rancocas can benefit from all this wonderful information.

## RCA OUTREACH

The Rancocas Creek Association, in an effort to connect our organization's ideas or endeavors to the public focused on educational initiatives in our community. Last year, we did seminars on Rain Gardens, Native plantings, and Birds of Prey to name a few.

The RCA team is in the process of developing programs that we hope you will enjoy - keep posted!



## Stream Visual Assessment Protocol Training (SVAP)

On November 4, 2020, Dr. Christopher Obropta, Extension Specialist in Water Resources with Rutgers Cooperative Extension conducted training for RCA members and volunteers on SVAP.

The SVAP, developed for relatively small streams, is a national protocol that provides an initial evaluation of the overall condition of wadeable streams, their riparian zones, and their instream habitats. Like the Rancocas Creek, the majority of the Nation's streams and rivers are small, yet, they constitute a close multidimensional linkage between land and water management.

Dr. Obropta, along with the members and volunteers, plan to complete the training in Spring 2021 by doing actual sampling and training creekside.

RCA acknowledges that it is important to recognize that healthy, resilient streams, riparian areas, and flood plains operate as a connected stream corridor system and will continue work to ensure that the Rancocas creek is a healthy body of water.



The RCA has a long history. - from 1934! It was originally a "camper's association", formed by families summering along the creek.

The Gazette was a newspaper that ran from September 1986 until March 1997; it was known for "Proudly serving the Rancocas Valley" in Eastampton, Hainesport, Lumberton, Mount Holly, and Westampton.

The June 3, 1987 edition ran a beautiful article on creek and our Association.

"Back before the Lenape Indians lived along its banks and long before Edward Gaskill and James Lippincott dammed the creek at Mount Holly in 1723, the mysterious, meandering, dark cedar water of the Rancocas Creek flowed through the heart of Burlington County on its way from the Pine Barrens."

"Since World War II,...a group of concerned citizens who make up the Rancocas Creek Association have been here to protect the flowing waters."

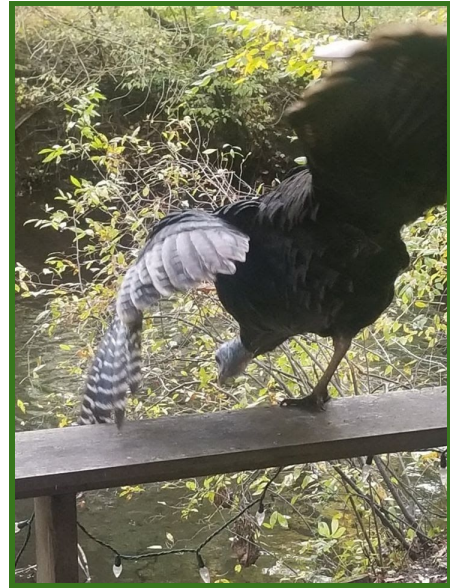
The article described efforts of the association to “learn how to properly plant red twig dogwood bushes to hold back the eroding earth from falling into the water below.

It stated that members gathered to “do something positive and constructive for future generations of residents, wildlife, plants and the creek itself”.

Under the masterful leadership of the founder, Bea Rosenthal, electricity came to the creek along with a realization by public officials that it is a valued asset that needed to be maintained!

That maintenance is essential - “due to the build up of silt in the creek, what used to take two to three days to flood, during a heavy rain, now only takes two to three hours” - a quote from then Director of Public Safety of Burlington County, Henry Van Brunt.

Bea Rosenthal stated about our beloved creek - “it’s a jewel. And we want to restore it to its former beauty.” This still holds true - the RCA is committed to preserving this jewel to share with others and hand down to those that follow.



The RCA’s one-legged turkey, Peggy, became mom to 12 poults last year.

Photos courtesy of Phil J.

Peggy layed her first egg early in the morning and every day, she continued to lay one egg until late one afternoon...then she was finished! Peggy started the 28-day incubation before she finished laying all the eggs. She used to leave them at night to roost in trees and meander the neighborhood, but after a few eggs, she stayed and night and day with her eggs.

Now, Peggy can again be seen hopping around with her children all grown!





The RCA is a non-profit organization.

Tax deductible donations may be forwarded to RCA at 3 Birch Avenue, Mount Holly NJ 08060;

OR you may donate through Facebook;

OR you may identify Rancocas Creek Association as your charity of choice when purchasing through **Amazon Smile** ([smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)); Amazon Smile now works on your Amazon app! RCA will receive 0.5% of your purchase courtesy of the vendor;

OR you may use PayPal - [rancocas@gmail.com](mailto:rancocas@gmail.com) is our identifier.

So many options!

## RCA GIVES BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

### VIRTUAL FOOD DRIVE

The easiest way to help the most people, right from your computer!

*Rancocas Paddlers*, sponsored by the RCA, has a fundraising page for the **Food Bank of South Jersey**. We are helping to raise funding to help fight hunger in South Jersey. You are invited to join us at <https://donate.foodbanksj.org/team/296015> to help our neighbors. Thank you!



## HELP WANTED!!!!

We are looking for GRANT WRITERS!!!

Anyone love to play on FaceBook? Social Media authors are needed!

Enjoy digging through archives? We are looking for someone to go to the library and download old copies of newsletters.

Please let the President know if you would be willing and able to volunteer your time - thank you!

## Dues



Dues remain at \$20 per household! Please forward your dues to our Treasurer, Gary Pollak at 3 Birch Avenue, Mount Holly NJ 08060.

You may also pay through PayPal (\$20.74) - please email us at [Rancocas@gmail.com](mailto:Rancocas@gmail.com) to ensure you are credited with the membership!



## Our Newsletter

Anyone interested in writing an article for our newsletter, or have news that they would like to share, should contact Sharon Astorino or Claudia McNamara at [Rancocas@gmail.com](mailto:Rancocas@gmail.com).

### 2021 Meeting Schedule (tentative)

10:30 am - refreshments

11:00 am - meeting

Noon - adjourn

Sunday, April 25

Sunday, May 23

Saturday, June 26

Sunday, July 25

Saturday, August 28

Sunday, September 26

Sunday, October 10 "Potluck"

Sunday, November 7 Support-Local  
Gathering

Sunday, December 12 Winter Gathering

Venue to be determined

*For those of you who read this newsletter and are not members of the RCA, we would like to tell you what it is! The Rancocas Creek Association is residents' association for people who live on or near the Creek between the Smithville Spillway and the Mount Holly Dam, or who enjoy paddling along the creek. We are a non-profit organization. Although RCA is not primarily an environmental organization, our location and relationship to the Creek means that many issues that we take up on behalf of residents have to do with preserving the quality of the environment and ecology of the Creek.*

### ***We welcome new members!***

The more subscribed members we have, the stronger our voice to protect our environment and neighborhood and the quality of all lives along it. Dues are \$20 per year per household - not a high price to support an association that looks out for our small community and is also a source of information about local activities and development. So come on in! Join up and be part of this not-for-profit neighborhood association!

The 3 "M"s that make the Rancocas Creek "go"!

**Membership** - Encouraging friends and neighbors to join - \$20/year/household - the larger the membership, the stronger the voice!

**Mailings** - A newsletter geared to the membership is produced quarterly. We try to limit emails to a minimum!

**Meetings** - A minimum of 8 meetings per year; the third Sunday or Saturday of the month is preceded by coffee and refreshments, although lately they have all been virtual! Some meetings have speakers and run a little over the usual one hour.

The RCA has over *85 years of history*; formed by people summering along the beautiful Rancocas. The creek-side cabins were summer camps for families from Camden, Philadelphia, and other surrounding towns. RCA has had its ups and downs, some years with vigorous activity, others being barely active. RCA was instrumental in requiring the landfill to respond to health issues, paying for city water along Shreve Street, Kates Tract, and Paducah Road. Our main goal; however, is to maintain the beauty and health of the Rancocas Creek.

Consider joining us, and/or contributing to have some of the large trees removed through

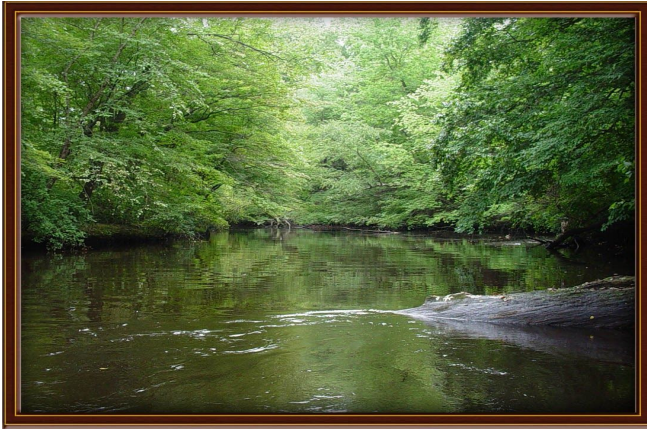
<https://charity.gofundme.com/.../cam.../tree-removal-fund...>

or through PayPal using rancocas@gmail.com as the identifier.

New members, simply mail your dues along with your name, address, email and telephone number to RCA, 3 Birch Avenue, Mount Holly NJ 08060. We look forward to hearing from you and working together for a beautiful, clean creek!

Like us on Facebook!





**President:** Sharon Astorino  
**Vice President:** Richard Astorino  
**Secretaries:** Judy Loane  
Claudia McNamara  
**Treasurer:** Gary Pollak  
**Parliamentarian:** Kerry Sharps  
**Editors:** Sharon Astorino  
Claudia McNamara  
Morgan Astorino  
**Webmaster:** Kerry Sharps  
**Fundraising:** Tom Greenfield  
**Creek Liaisons:** Paul Loane  
Claudia McNamara