

New Volume 2 Edition 2
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!

Creekside News April 2018

The Ornithologist Corner

Contributed by Ranger Jacob



All the benefits of living alongside the Rancocas Creek are too plentiful to name. One thing worth mentioning is the opportunity to listen to the sounds of the wildlife around us. This includes the stuttering hoot of the *Great Horned Owl*. One of the eight species of owl found in the great Garden State, the Great Horned Owl is arguably the most impressive. Being the largest owl in New Jersey, their wingspan reaches 60 inches and can stand at nearly 30 inches tall. Although we will hear their territorial hoots and hums along our waterway, hearing them in action is nearly impossible. Their wingtips are soft and serrated which allows them to be the silent hunters in the night and go unnoticed while flying towards their prey.

Their diet varies (rodents, rabbits, birds, and even skunks!) and rely on extraordinary hearing to locate their next meal. Unlike other raptors, owls prefer to swallow their meals whole and resort to regurgitating the bits and pieces that are not digestible.

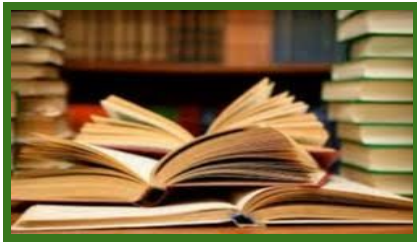
Living on the creek, rodents getting into our homes isn't an unusual occurrence. But do be careful about using rodenticides. The mice and rats become sluggish and expose themselves as easy prey to owls like the Great Horned Owl. Secondary poisoning from rodenticides is a major cause in premature owl deaths!

Next time you hear the "hoot from you know who", know that they are out to combat your potential rodent problems!



Congratulations to *Morgan Astorino* !

Morgan was accepted for IBES-Leadership Alliance Internship at Brown University, Rhode Island.



Ellie's Corner

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

Ellie has worked as a full time teacher, a National Park Ranger, and as the Assistant Manager of Pennsylvania's National Park Museum Shops, and simultaneously raised three children. Additionally, she has been a violinist in the Orchestra Society of Philadelphia - and more importantly, an integral part of the Rancocas Creek Association.

The Creekside News will be featuring excerpts from Ellie's book - right here in Ellie's Corner! Keep a look out!



*Happy Anniversary Sharon and Richard!
(May)*

Please let Sharon know your birthday month so that we can acknowledge your special day, or any other special events that you may want to share.



Happy Birthday to *Jacob Poinsett* - wishing you an Amazing April!

Happy Birthday to *Richard Astorino and Kerry Sharps* - hoping that you have a Magnificent May!

Happy Birthday to *Jenna Champion, Betty Hayes, and Carly Montgomery* - a Jubilant June to each of you!

The Rancocas Creek Association lost a dear member, Dan McGonigle. Dan passed away Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2018, surrounded by his loving family. Dan enjoyed a life full of travel, adventure, and fun. Dan was a keen supporter and helper for creek clean-up, and was very civic minded and passionate about environmental issues.

"I remember coming home one evening and there was Dan on the porch with some energy efficient light bulb samples - love him!"

We will miss you Dan, and as Deacon Jim Casa said "when we lose our loved ones, we need to keep one important thing in mind: **we will remember them long after we miss them**". Rest in Peace.



Bats are our friends!

Bats are completely harmless to us and are nocturnal, so we probably won't see them much. (Except for Teri - they love her comfy, cozy home!) The little brown myotis bat is the most common in our neighborhood, though there are more than 40 species of bats.

They are quite valuable to the ecological health of our planet. Bats play a huge role in reforestation by dispersing seeds. What is most appealing; however, is the bat's enormous capacity to consume insects - like mosquitoes! Some bats can consume up to half their weight (over 600 mosquitoes) in one hour. Since much of their preferred meals are insects with an aquatic life stage, such as those pesky mosquitoes, they prefer to roost near water. Brown bats forage near bodies of water and move in and out of adjacent vegetation. Evening forages are done in groups and above the water. They [echolocate](#) to find their prey. Brown bats will frequently return to the same feeding sites where they have previously made successful catches.



To encourage bats, you can install a bat house. The location should be sunny enough to warm up to 80 to 100 degrees and be at least 10 to 15 feet off the ground. The sunny side of a building is preferred to a tree where shade may be an issue. The location should be sheltered from the wind. You can also mount a bat house on a pole. Don't stain the house as the oil based stains are toxic to bats. Bats usually wait up to 18 months to move in, but if a house goes unoccupied for over 2 years, change the location! Bat houses provide a respite from wind and rain as well as dangerous predators - check frequently to make sure that bees or wasps haven't taken up residence in the bats' home. Bats like narrow, tight spaces similar to a tree trunk and its bark.

Make your garden work for you while you sleep - fragrant flowers, herbs, and night blooming plants attract the night feeding insects that lure bats. Try dahlias, marigolds, thyme, evening primrose, honeysuckle, etc. Happy Bat Lodging!



Thank you to [Eleanor Gesensway](#) for giving Creekside News permission to use excerpts from her book *"Life along the North Branch of the Rancocas Creek between Mount Holly and Smithville, New Jersey"* Ellie interviewed 33 "creekers" in the 1980s and her book is a collection of their oral histories. We are looking forward to sharing that history!

Thank you *Darlene Heleva* for welcoming us into your hotel and for your warm hospitality!



Mill Street Hotel

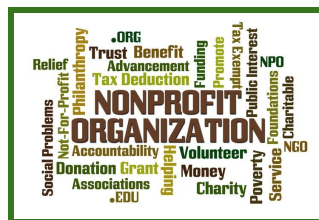
The Three Tuns Tavern was built about 40 years after the first settlers arrived in Mount Holly and is the oldest standing building in town; it is the fifth oldest tavern continuously in operation in the country. Built in 1723 by Samuel Bryant, and owned by Darlene Heleva and her family for the past 71 years, it has been used as a hotel and a tavern for the past 250 years. There is some Revolutionary War history connected with this site and the Court of Admiralty met here during the last year of the Revolutionary War. Some even say it is haunted and the inn is featured in a book called *Ghosts of Mount Holly: A History of Haunted Happenings* by Jan Lynn Bastien.

A "tun" is a measure for liquor in Colonial times, and a tavern was then described depending upon its size as 1-tun, 2-tun, etc and this hotel was permitted to store up to 3 tuns (around 750 gallons) of liquor onsite. It is a two and one-half storey rectangular inn with inside end chimneys and a four bay front porch. The second floor porch is enclosed by railing with

pierced and carved balusters.

There appeared to be a need for a place to rest and offer libation, so the Three Tuns Tavern was built near the mill in Mount Holly, at that time called Bridgetown because of all the bridges over the various feeders to the Rancocas Creek. Samuel Brian was the first owner and innkeeper, and few changes have been made to the building since his time and was grabbed as quarters by the Hessian soldiers during their occupation here in 1776.

There are pictures that show a pair of black vultures peering into one of the chimneys - a fairly unusual sighting - the more common sighting; however, is to see Tom Kempton, John McNamara, or Richard Astorino gracing the barstools!



The RCA is a non-profit organization.

Tax deductible donations may be forwarded to RCA at 249 Shreve Street, Mount Holly NJ 08060.

Volunteers Needed

The RCA would like to participate in area events. That would mean volunteers to man the booths, create displays, and possibly sell any existing inventory. If you are interested, please let Sharon know. Thanks!



Our Newsletter

Anyone interested in writing an article for our newsletter, or have news that they would like to share, should contact Teri Montgomery or Sharon Astorino. You may use our personal emails or our WebMaster will forward mail to us that is sent to Rancocas@gmail.com.

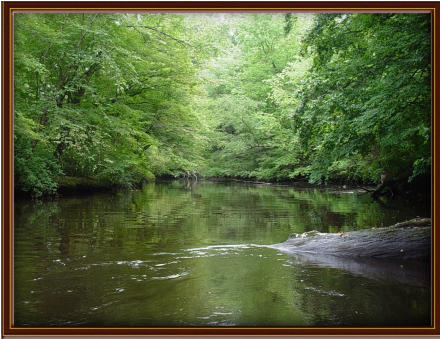
Advertisers

If you know of anyone that would like to advertise, for a donation, in our newsletter, please let John or Rich know. Thank you!

2018 Meeting Schedule

April 22 - Astorino
May 20 - Katz
June 17 - McNamara
July 15 - Barber / Joiner
August 12 - Champion / Pollak
September 9 - Loane
October 7 Potluck - McNamara

The Creek Clean-Up date(s) is yet to be set; however, the picnic shall be at Tallula's (Gary and Jenna have promised to assist!).



President: Richard Astorino
Vice President: Kerry Sharps
Secretaries: Claudia McNamara
Judy Loane
Treasurer: Tom Kempton
Parliamentarian: John McNamara
Editors: Teri Montgomery
Sharon Astorino
Webmaster: Kerry Sharps

www.rancocas creek.org