

New Volume 3 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!

*Click to check us out on [Facebook!](#)  
Or online at [www.ranocascreek.org](http://www.ranocascreek.org)*

Creekside News January 2019

## The Ornithologist Corner

### Contributed by Ranger Jacob



The Belted Kingfisher

The Rancocas Creek has an endless supply of recreational opportunities. One opportunity that many people who live on the creek, and those that flock to the creek, enjoy is the outstanding fishing. A bird that makes us all look like novice anglers on the creek is the Belted Kingfisher! Equipped with a heavy dagger-like bill, the Belted Kingfisher waits atop branches along the Rancocas for the right chance to utilize their built in fishing gear. They dive bomb head first into the water towards their prey and enjoy their meal back on their perch or bring it towards their earthen bank nests that they create along waterways.

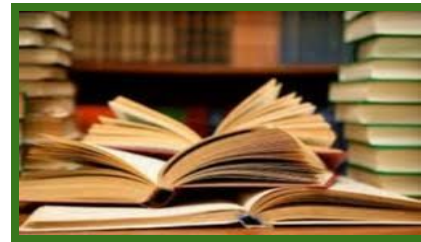
The belted kingfisher is often seen perched prominently on trees, posts, or other suitable "watchpoints" close to the water. They also eat amphibians, insects, and small mammals and reptiles.

The belted kingfisher nests in a horizontal tunnel made in the banks of the creek or a sand bank that is excavated by both parents. The female lays five to eight eggs and both adults incubate the eggs and feed the young. An adult can have a wingspan

of over 22 inches!

So next time you are fishing at your favorite spot, look out for the stocky blue and white bird scoping the fish below or keep your eye out for their distinctive buzzing rattle call!

---



## 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".

William Bartlett was born in 1903 - and came to the Rancocas Creek in 1925.

Hailing from Camden and travelling by trolley, he would stop at Hacks Canoe with friends and camp along the north-side of the creek.

In 1927, he decided to build and named the cabin "ODTAA" - one damn thing after another!

As was custom, Mr. Bartlett "paid the Smith Estate \$25 a year ... for lease of the land...

Creekside News January 2019

(He) tried to buy the land" but was told no until new management took over the Smith Estate. \$500! And taxes were \$10!

Mr. Bartlett said that "the creek used to be so deep. You couldn't touch the bottom with your paddle it was so deep. But when the dam broke washing all the stuff into it the level came up." "We used to paddle down (to Kates) and buy food, candy, soft drinks, and things like that. They had a little store there. On Saturday night we would coast down there with banjos and all just to have a good time."

"People just don't take care of (the creek). That's the whole trouble." "And then of course the water from the creek washed away the banks. Do you know, you're not allowed to have any motors on the creek?...That would wash the water more on the banks."

Mr. Bartlett stated that "Everything was nice and beautiful then."



OH NO!

Isn't this our worst nightmare?!

Well even worse than this - Tom Greenfield and Kerry Sharps had a harrowing downed tree experience. Not only were there multiple trees involved, but Tom's steady truck and Kerry's brand new car were sacrificed. Our thoughts are going out to you.

Be careful members! The tree species most likely to fall in wind tend to be willow, white spruce, cedar, and white pine. These species tend to live in our wetter soils which can contribute to a tree's likelihood of falling. Taller trees with large canopies are more susceptible to a phenomenon known as "windthrow" where the tree's trunk and it's "sail area"/canopy acts as a lever which uproots the tree. Trees with shallow roots are not anchored as well as roots that grow deeper and run a high risk of uprooting, especially with all the rain we have experienced.



Get well soon John McNamara! The RCA Members are wishing you a speedy and easy recovery from your recent visit to hospital!

## Fire and Ice Festival

On Saturday, January 26, 2019 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, downtown Mount Holly will be the place to warm your tummy and see lots of artistic ventures.

The Ice Carving Festival takes place outdoors, in the Business District on High Street and in the Mill Race Village on White Street, where you can watch as professional and amateur ice carvers transform 300 pound blocks of ice into beautiful crystalline works of art. The fire takes place in the chili competition!



Happy Birthday to Claudia and Sharon - wishing you a Joyful January!

Happy Birthday to Tom G, Phil, and Talulla - hoping that you have the Fantastic February!

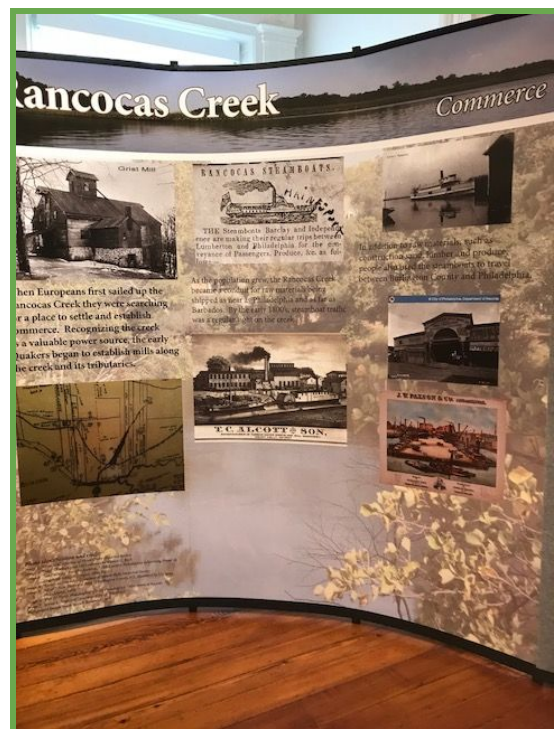
Happy Birthday to Paul - a Marvellous March to you!

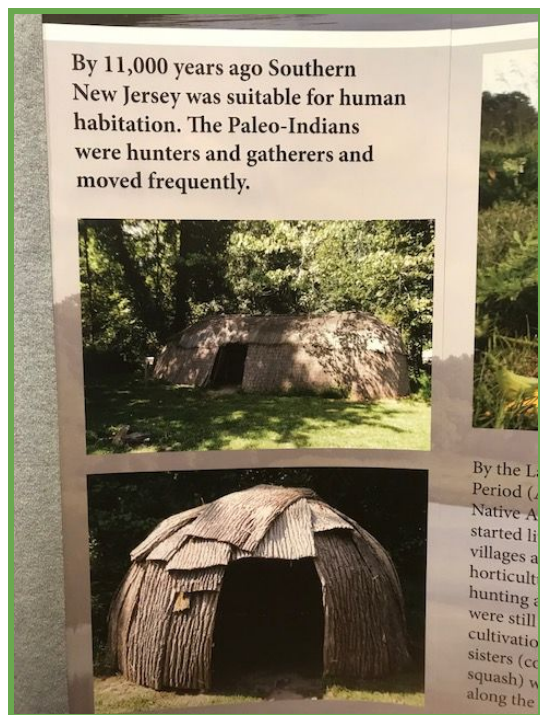
Please let Sharon know your birth months so that you are included in our well wishes!



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

On December 1st, the Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences Association hosted the Rancocas Creek and Watershed Book Fair that visited this long and interesting history. There were speakers, displays, and Heidi Winzinger debuted her video on the Creek - "The Rancocas Creek - What I Love, Part 1". You may view it on YouTube!





Past President Rich manning the booth and braving the wind and cold.

## Burlington County Annual Fall Float Festival

Another successful event!

The free, family float festival in October at Smithville Park brought out many paddlers - Canoes and Kayaks - to see the fall foliage along the creek.

We had but a few dock decorators and the paddlers enjoyed the displays - hopefully, we can have more this year! We are solidifying our relationship with Burlington County to ensure the waterways are clear, and the prizes are enticing!

Rich and Sharon manned the RCA booth and made a few connections with local organizations! We would like to request volunteers to assist with the booth this year! It is a fun afternoon and we got to interact with some lovely people!



A tribute to the Smithville Bicycle!

The H. B. Smith Machine Company produced the American Star Bicycle beginning in 1880.

In 1892, Arthur Hotchkiss received a patent for a bicycle railroad and contracted with the Smith Machine Company for manufacturing. The initial track ran 1.8 miles from Smithville, crossing the Rancocas Creek ten times, ending at Pine Street. It was completed in time for the

Mount Holly Fair in September 1892. The purpose of the railway was to enable employees to commute quickly from Mount Holly to the factory at Smithville. Monthly commuter tickets cost \$2.00. The average trip took 6-7 minutes. There was one track so it was impossible to pass another rider, and if riders traveling in opposite directions met, one had to pull off. By 1897 ridership had declined, and the railway fell into disrepair.

Visit the Smithville Museum for more information on this interesting history of our area.



There were 'loggers' showcasing their talents at the Fall Float this year as well!

Mayhaps we should have gotten their business cards?

The participants and winners!



The Henneberrys - 1st prize - \$250



Talulla's Cruise Boat - 2nd prize - \$125



The Milligans - 3rd prize - \$75

Thank you to Burlington County and the RCA for the funding for prizes.



Ceremonial presenting of the 2nd place prize!



The Loane's - Honorable Mention!



RCA Advertising! Posters were placed for paddlers to let them know about the RCA. That, along with our booth, helped to promote our mission!

Thank you Gary Pollak for the wonderful photography and all the hard work before, during and after the float!

### Update on the Smithville Bridge



The Smithville Bridge opening has been delayed to March 2019. There were flaws in the design of the rebuild of our 104-year-old bridge.

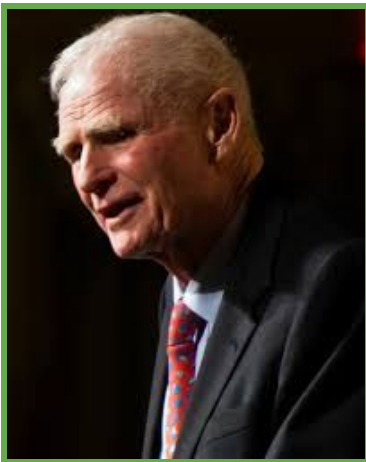
## Rain, Rain, Rain



2018 saw record rainfall - and the creekside residents will certainly attest to that! Hopefully next summer will not be as wet - and that we have a chance to dry out and enjoy our beautiful homes!

---

## Governor Brendan T Byrne



Last year around this time, New Jersey lost a great environmental leader. Governor Byrne was born in April 1924 and dedicated much of his career to the preservation and advocacy of the environment. He signed the Pinelands Preservation Act in 1979.



Congratulations to our incoming president, Sharon Astorino who has retired! Sharon worked with the New Jersey Judiciary for 30 years, and although she loved her career, she is starting a new chapter in life - RCA, Master Gardening and DIY-ing will be some of her new fun projects!

---

## Upcoming Projects

This past year was rough on the trees and the creek. The RCA will be looking into funding for professional tree removal services to be brought in to give estimates on trees in the waterways.

To that purpose, anyone that can, or knows someone that is interested in volunteering to work with Sharon to get our Facebook page up-to-speed to accept donations and better advertise, **please let us know.**

---



The RCA is a non-profit organization.

Tax deductible donations may be forwarded to RCA at 36 West Railroad Avenue, Eastampton NJ 08060.



Please mail donations while we pursue electronic means of donating!

---



We are looking for GRANT WRITERS!!!  
Anyone love to play on FaceBook?  
Please let the President know if you would be willing and able to volunteer your time - thank you!

---

### Delaware River Basin Restoration Funding

The Delaware River Basin encompasses NJ, DE, NY, and PA and the Restoration Program has funding for nonprofits to apply for assistance for certain types of projects.  
We are looking for volunteers to research and determine if the RCA would be eligible for funding to reduce flood damage, addressing erosion on our banks, and possibly addressing wildlife habitats - can't forget our active little beavers! We may also be home to endangered tree frogs - we need to research that as well!!  
If you are interested, please contact Sharon.



### 2019 Meeting Schedule

April 28 - McNamara  
May  
June  
July  
August  
September  
October Potluck

Meeting dates and venues to be determined!

---

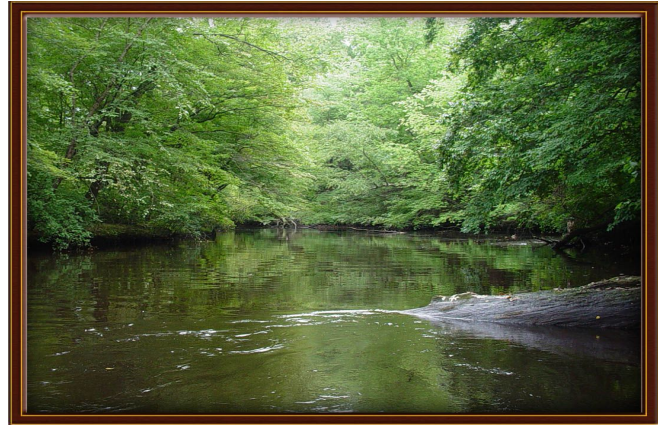
### Dues



Dues remain at \$20 per household! Please forward your dues to our Treasurer, Tom Kempton.  
You may mail them to the RCA at 36 West Railroad Avenue, Eastampton NJ 08060.  
We are considering electronic payments for the future if that would be a preference for our 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, Teri Montgomery, or Claudia McNamara. You may use our personal emails or our WebMaster will forward mail to us that is sent to [Rancocas@gmail.com](mailto:Rancocas@gmail.com).



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