

The Friends

VOL XV ISSUE 2

FALL/WINTER 2023



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

FRIENDS PICNIC	1
FIRST DAY HIKE	1
SUMMER EVENTS AT THE MANSION	2
WELCOME NEW BOARD TREASURER	4
HISTORIC PARK BOOKLET	4
GARDENING OPPORTUNITY	5
LITTLE BUFFALO STATE PARK	6

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTHLY TRAIL WORK

First Saturday of each month, 9 am, meet at the Mansion.

FRIENDS ANNUAL PICNIC

Saturday, October 7 at noon, Area 3.

FIRST DAY HIKE

January 1, 2024, starting 10 am, behind Pavilion #8.

FRIENDS OF RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK NEWSLETTER

Editor..... Joan Nikelsky

Design.....Mark Dougherty

You are Invited to the Friends Picnic October 7

We are happy to announce the return of our annual member and volunteer appreciation picnic, to take place on Saturday, October 7 starting at noon, rain or shine, after the trail workday. The picnic is open to all trail workers and members of the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park (you can join or renew membership at the event!).

This year we will be at Pavilion 3, which is a sheltered site off Sandy Flash Drive North – a turn off from Gradyville Road (or West Chester Pike) going in the direction of the Colonial Plantation. Follow signs for Area 3. The picnic treats are compliments of the Friends: hamburgers, hot dogs, potato salad, coleslaw, beverages, and other fare. People are welcome to bring a dessert or other dish to share.

Please RSVP for the picnic so we can plan the food. E-mail members@friendsofrcsp.org or call Joan at 610-352-5685 by Wednesday, October 4, if you can. We hope to see you there!

First Day Hike in Ridley Creek State Park

by Gary Sawyer, Board Member and Trails Co-Chair

Come celebrate New Years Day 2024 with us at Ridley Creek State Park. The Friends of Ridley State Park are hosting a First Day Hike along the Equestrian Trail, beginning promptly at 10 am, Monday, January 1, behind Pavilion #8.

Gary Sawyer will lead a 3.5-mile lollipop loop with views of the creek and a stop at the historic hilltop Russell Cemetery. It is expected to last 2 to 2 ½ hours.

The hike starts at the parking lot behind Pavilion 8, descends to the creek at Gradyville Road, passes by an area recovering from a tornado in 2019, and winds around a lovely wooded section up and over Hunting Hill and the Russell Cemetery. The trail is wide, mostly gravel, with good footing. Be prepared for early January weather conditions, and for elevation gains of about 350 ft.

We will have hot chocolate, coffee, and light refreshments at the trailhead after the hike. We have a limit of 25 participants for the hike. Dogs are allowed on leash at all times. Please register by email to Gary at muddyboots@comcast.net to secure a spot



Summer Events at the Mansion

by Jack Miller, Friends President

THE PHOTO CONTEST

The annual photo contest finally returned this year. We wondered how the contest would be received, as the pandemic caused the Friends to cancel the photo contest for 2020, 2021, and 2022. There were 35 photographs entered in the 2023 contest. We were pleased to see so many entries consisting of photos taken through all the different seasons of the year. We had photos taken from the ground looking up and photos taken in places that we worked hard to try to guess their location. The award ceremony was held on Wednesday June 23 at the park Mansion. Wind and rain moved the event from the patio outside the Mansion to the ballroom inside.

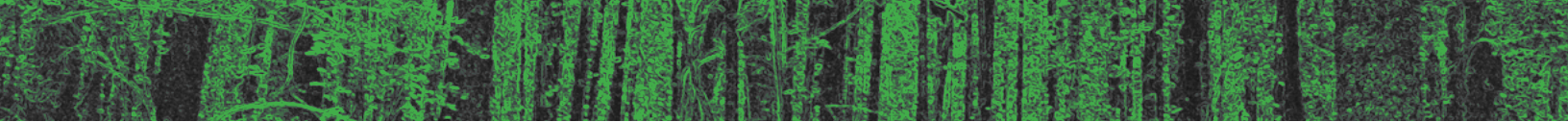
The photo contest organizer, Paul Mickle, engaged a judge for the contest, Mark Duckworth. Judging of the photos a few days ahead of the ceremony took 2½ hours as the photos had to be continuously rearranged on the display table to make sure each entry took advantage of the maximum amount of lighting. Every photograph submitted was worthy of an award. There were no entries in the youth category, so we decided to use the youth prize money to add a second first place award in the adult category. That did not make the selections any easier, but it gave us an opportunity to recognize more photographers for their outstanding effort.

After much debate, the decision was made on which photo would receive which award. One first prize was awarded to Cindy Procopio for her photo entitled “Enchanted Winter Walk.” This photo captured the bright fall colors and when you looked closely, you could see a fisherman standing in Ridley Creek seemingly surrounded by the bright colors. The second first prize was awarded to Tori McClay for her photo “Golden Hour” where she captured the moment when the sun illuminated the trail with a golden glow - stunning.

The second place award was presented to Wayne Kuehler who took a photo titled “Dragon Tree,” in which the sun shone through a tree creating a silhouette that resembled a dragon. When asked how he achieved the outstanding corona lighting around the landscape he replied, “That’s what the iPhone 11 gave me.” The third place award went to Barbara Hayes for her photo of an owl that she titled “Owl speak to you later” which was perfectly lit and centered. We thought she had a long telephoto lens to capture the shot but she said she was driving down Sandy Flash Drive South and the owl was sitting beside the road, providing the perfect shot.

Honorable mention awards were presented to Tom Hooper for his photo “Amber Waves,” which captured a white cloud striped sky with a bright blue background over the cultivated grain field. Susan Shields received a second honorable mention award for her photo titled “Susurrou.”

continued page 3



Frozen in Time - by Marian Hetherington

We learned a lot about photography at this year's contest. It is obvious you do not need expensive camera equipment to win a prize. Some photographers are looking for their special shot all year long in anticipation of the photo contest being announced. Not holding the contest for three years gave the photographers plenty of extra time to choose their best entries. The Friends often wonder how successful the photo contest will be; from the faces of the visitors at the awards ceremony we know we had a lot of happy people and quite a few excellent photographers.

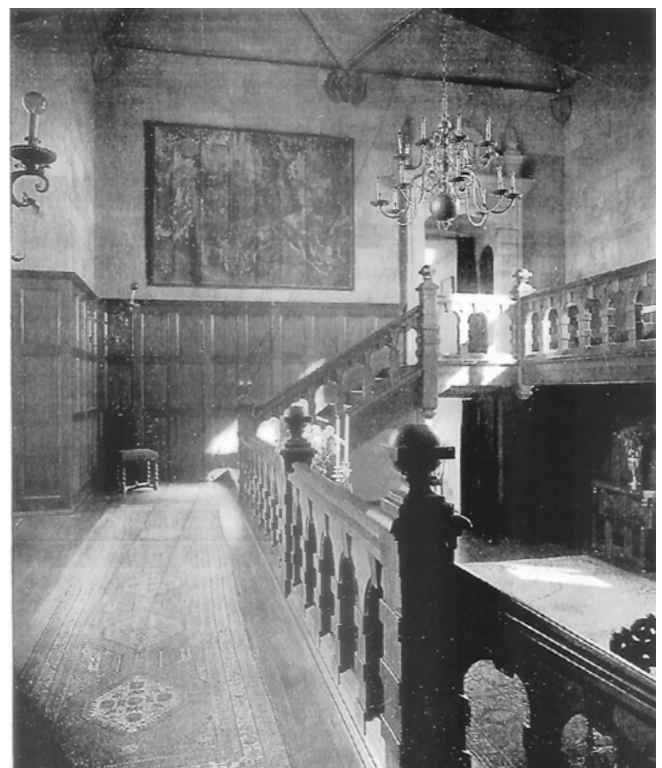
MANSION TOURS

Because of the popularity of Mansion tours during our 50th Anniversary Celebration in October 2022, we decided to schedule another opportunity for people to see the Mansion and learn about its history. We conducted guided mansion tours in the morning of July 15. Gary Stolz, Park Naturalist, had the front door open so we could get set up and prepare for our guests. He and I went through the Mansion to see what rooms we could have open for our tours, turned on lights as necessary and put out the photos we have collected of various rooms as they were furnished when the Jeffords lived there.

By the time we got back downstairs, Joan Nikelsky was setting up our greeting area with sign in sheets, 50th anniversary booklets, and all kinds of literature. At 9:30 am people were already gathering in the lobby for the tour. We had a poster of information on display to keep them interested while we finished setting up. We were almost ready to start when the ranger came in and asked whose car was parked outside the circle. The car was mine - I never got the chance to move it to the parking lot or shut the trunk or the back door!

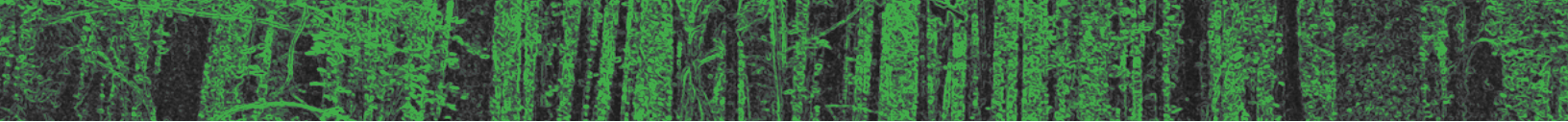
We got busy real quick. Ted Uhlman came in and organized the next tour group and then came to find me on the first tour to let me know the next group was waiting. We had three full quick tour groups in rapid succession. The groups were very interested, asked great questions, and appreciated the opportunity to tour the mansion. Just what we wanted to hear. Paul Mickle arrived to help out wherever he was needed.

The publicity obviously worked. The notice in the MUT bulletin board, website information, and eblast got the word



The Great Stair Hallway in 1921.

out. We met some very interesting people during the day. They all appreciated this rare opportunity to tour the mansion. Thanks to all of you for your help in making this event a success. The Friends "team" came through again with great results. We will consider making this type of tour available again.



Friends Board Welcomes New Treasurer

We are pleased to announce that we have a new Treasurer, Mackenzie Lantz, who joined the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park in November of 2022 and volunteered in May of this year to fill the Board Treasurer position. Mackenzie has a passion for both the environment and finance; she is a recent graduate of West Chester University with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and minors in both Finance and Business Analytics.

Mackenzie is eager to gain non-profit board experience. One of her career goals is to use her financial education to work with charities and other non-profit organizations to support these groups towards success. She brings the skills of task management, financial planning, and bookkeeping. She recently completed her Board training with Tim Higgins, who had been acting as interim Treasurer. We appreciate greatly his contribution to this important job and his generosity in following through with Mackenzie.

Mackenzie lives about 20 minutes from the park, passing it on her way to and from work, which makes it easy for her to pick up mail and to attend Board meetings. She has already tackled the task of digitizing the Friends of Ridley financial records, including scanning paper copies and auditing cash flows.

The Board is excited to welcome our new energetic Treasurer as an officer of the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park!



Treasurer, Mackenzie Lantz

Historical Booklet about the Park Wins Prize

by Joan Nikelsky, Friends Vice-President

At the forty-fifth Annual Preservation Awards on May 6, 2023, the Delaware County Council and Heritage Commission of Delaware County gave a Publication Award to the booklet entitled “Ridley Creek State Park: 50th Anniversary of the Opening of the Park to Visitors, August 1972.” The 32-page booklet was authored by Keith Lockhart, researcher and collector of Delaware County history, who operates the Delaware County PA historical website.

Keith worked in conjunction with the Friends of Ridley Creek Park, especially President Jack Miller, to get the booklet printed and ready for our 50th Anniversary celebration in the park in October 2022. It is chock full of photographs and articles from old newspapers that describe the people, buildings, and events from the past that led to what is currently Ridley Creek State Park.

The park was opened to the public on August 3, 1972. The booklet reviews the acquisition of surrounding farms,

pointing out the Riddle/Jeffords connection. It reprints historic articles that mention happenings in the area before it became a park, noting the rise and fall of the Sycamore Mills. It includes a major section on the creation of the Colonial Plantation and its mission. There are maps and a key to the historic houses that are within the park boundaries with many “then” and “now” photos.

The Delaware County Heritage is made up of 11 historically minded residents who are appointed by Delaware County Council to make recommendations to the Council on preservation issues in the County, including applications from historic sites for Community Development Block Grants. They present awards to groups and individuals for their preservation efforts each May at a Council meeting. The Heritage acts as a liaison between County Council and historic organizations in the County.

The booklets are available for purchase at the Colonial Plantation gift shop (3900 Sandy Flash Drive in the park), the Edgmont Township office (1000 Gradyville Road, Glen Mills), the Den of Antiquity (1350 Middletown Road, Glen Mills), Country Deli (1176 Middletown Road [Rt. 352], Media) and during events of the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park. Come to the picnic and get your copy!



REGISTER AS A CONSERVATION VOLUNTEER

If you do volunteer work at Ridley Creek or any other State Park, it's good to be counted! Volunteers are encouraged to register at DCNR Conservation Volunteers (state.pa.us). You can express your interests, log your efforts, and keep on top of upcoming events. And very importantly, registration includes access to the state Workman's Compensation should an injury occur as a result of your volunteer work.

Interested in Gardening?

by Jack Miller, Friends President

For several years now, the grounds around the mansion at Ridley Creek State Park have been maintained by a professional landscaping business. They cut the grass, trim around the plantings, and blow the trimmings off the pavement. There are two areas that need additional attention that the professionals do not do. Around the backup generator at the mansion along the driveway is a border of flowers approximately 20 feet long. You can see the flowers, but the weed growth quickly overtakes them. We need to spend some extra time clearing out the weeds from the flowers and give the flowers a chance to thrive.

The second area that needs hands on attention is the Pollinator Garden just off the bus parking lot path to the Multi-Use Trail. This area is enclosed by a split rail fence and has signs indicating what is planted there. We need to maintain this garden by hand to make the pollinators stand out from the weeds. The display and signs would make a much more informative environment if we could readily be able to tell which is a pollinator and not a very healthy weed.

We hope to entice enough individuals to take on these tasks on a rotating basis throughout the growing season. If interested, you will be given instructions on what the plants are and what the weeds are. Gary Stolz, the Park Environmental Education Specialist, will provide the training and guidance. The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park will provide the tools needed for the work.

We appreciate your consideration in helping make our park even more attractive. We would like to get this program established by the spring of 2024 so we can start the spring and summer of 2024 with a new fresh and attractive look. In the meantime, you may look these areas over now and think about joining this new project next year. Comments? Send an email to president@friendsofrcsp.org.





[LITTLE BUFFALO STATE PARK](#)

1579 State Park Road
Newport, PA 17074-9428
Phone: 717-567-9255

[MAPS](#)

[HISTORY](#)

[NEARBY ATTRACTIONS](#)

Exploring Pennsylvania's Parks: Little Buffalo State Park

This article is thirteenth in a series about other state parks in Pennsylvania, contributed by Friends Board member, the much-traveled Paul Mickle.

In this edition of our Pennsylvania State Park tour, we will be traveling to central PA to a place called Little Buffalo State Park. Spanning across approximately 920 acres, Little Buffalo State Park sits in the rolling hills of Perry County. The land in this region has a long history of various industries, including farming, charcoal and iron producing, and milling of various crops.

The park itself was created in the late 1960s and early 1970s and officially opened to the public in 1972. The name came from the Little Buffalo Creek, which is a smaller tributary of the Buffalo Creek that passed through the region. The local term "Buffalo" was derived from the belief that bison roamed and lived in this region at one point in history.

Today, Little Buffalo State Park entertains the public with various amenities, including hiking trails, hunting grounds, wildlife observations points, a large swimming pool, a 46-site campground, picnic areas, an outdoor performance stage, and most notably, access to the shores of Holman Lake.

Holman Lake is approximately 88 acres and offers many more activities like fishing, canoeing, kayaking, dramatic vistas, and certain kinds of boating. There are hiking trails around the perimeter and various docks and boat launches



scattered around its shores to provide plenty of space for quiet activities. The general tone of the atmosphere at Little Buffalo State Park is calming and laid back. The expansive views give lots to look at even for those not looking to do much more than sit and relax.

With the park being a short 30-mile drive from the Harrisburg region, it is somewhat convenient to visit as a day trip. It is also about 5 miles from Newport PA along Route 22, making it a nice resting area for those traveling across the state between Harrisburg and State College. Whether you are just passing through or making a specific trip, Little Buffalo State Park is one of those places that often gets overlooked, so if a quiet getaway in nature is of interest to you, a visit to Little Buffalo is worth a look!