



The Friends

VOLUME III ISSUE II

FALL / WINTER 2010

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

Join us for trail work the first Saturday of each month. Contact Gary Sawyer, Trails Director, at trails@friendsofrcsp.org

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Halloween Hoedown is Just Around the Corner



Grab your hat and your boots for a great event! The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park are hosting a Hoedown in

the beautifully decorated Mansion ballroom on **Saturday, October 30**, starting at 7 pm. All funds generated benefit the park.

If you've never square danced before, this is a great time to learn. If you haven't danced for a long time, why not dust off your dancing shoes and come join us! When was the last time you had a night out for only fifteen

dollars? In addition to a professional caller, guests will be treated to beer and soda and light snacks. As always, park historian Kay Ferrari will offer behind-the-scenes tours of our 19th century mansion, and we may hear a ghost story or two.

It promises to be a fun night of instruction, music, refreshments, and dance. There will be a silent auction with prizes. Caller George Polk, Jr. will lead us in an energetic and sometimes funny evening of square dancing. We encourage costumes, as long as one can dance in them!

The cost for the general public is \$15 per person, and \$12 for members of the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park. For further information and reservations, call Carol at 610-565-3877.

First Aid/CPR Training on October 16



Here's an opportunity to learn, for First Aid and CPR from a Red Cross certified instructor, Mike Gommer. Mike

has presented this training before at Ridley. This year's training session will take place Saturday, October 16, from 9 am-4 pm at the Mansion. Lunch will be provided. The only fee is \$12, collected on the day of the training, for a card that certifies your atten-

dance at the session. There is a limit of 10 people, so be sure to register ahead of time by calling the park office at 610-892-3900.

CPR Statistics

- Less than one-third of out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest victims receive bystander CPR.
- Effective bystander CPR, provided immediately after sudden cardiac arrest, can double or triple a victim's chance of survival.
- The most effective rate for chest compressions is 100 compressions per minute – the same rhythm as the beat of the BeeGee's song, "Stayin' Alive."

Free Talk about Science in Our Streams on November 18

The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park will hold a joint event with the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watershed Association on Thursday, November 18, at 7 pm at the Mansion. The event will feature Thomas Cordrey, PhD, wetland scientist from DelVal Soil Environmental Consultants, speaking on "Using Science in Our Streams: A Case Study with Little Crum Creek." The talk will address the question: How does life in our streams affect life on its banks? Dr. Cordrey will speak about the classification of stream channels via macroinvertebrates (bugs), how

water quality impacts permitting, how development impacts water quality, and restrictions used to protect water quality. A case study involving Little Crum Creek and a recent convenience store expansion will illustrate these points.

Come and join us for this enlightening program! For further information, contact Leslie Weinberg, Outreach Coordinator for the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association at 610-892-8731, or e-mail rcrcleslie@nni.com.



ALYCE'S CORNER



Taking Responsibility for Our Home Gardens

In previous issues of the newsletter, we have reported on the Friends' efforts to control and eradicate the numerous invasive plants that are having a significant impact on the park. This will be an ongoing effort as the invasives continue to crowd out and displace natives and reduce habitat for birds and small animals.

What many homeowners do not realize is that their own yards have a direct impact on the health and welfare of the adjoining forest. Many aggressive plants are happily thriving and spreading and they are still being sold and planted by homeowners. Yes, that burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*) does have nice fall color -- but for the



small window of beauty it provides, numerous natives will eventually disappear from the woods as the *Euonymus* plant seeds itself in and dominates.

The same aggressiveness is found with Japanese barberry

(*Berberis thunbergii*). This plant, like burning bush, spreads through berry dispersal by birds and is aggressively displacing native shrubs that provide more nutritional berries for birds.

When you are out in your yard this fall, please consider replacing any invasives you have or -- at the least -- prune them so the berries cannot be transferred to the woods where the invasive problem will be compounded further. Seeds from many of these aggressive plants build up in "seed banks" in the soil. If we can at least reduce that influx of seeds, controlling the existing plants will be more productive.

Fall is a great time to buy gourds, mums, and other plants, as well as catch those fall nursery sales, so please be on the lookout for natives you can plant to replace these two undesirables. Excellent substitutes are Northern Bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*) and Highbush Blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) as well as *Fothergilla gardenia*.

For excellent information regarding invasives, check out the following website: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/wildplant/invasive.aspx>.

Alyce Zellers, Friends Board member and Grounds Chair, is a Master Gardener.

Park Improvement Award Received



The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park received a Group Improvement Award from the Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation at their annual banquet in Harrisburg in May 2010. The award, a beautiful carved wooden bowl handcrafted by

Robert Gochinauer, Wood Turner, of Lancaster, was given in recognition of our outstanding work to combat invasive species, maintain trails, and enhance public awareness and stewardship at the park.

Pictured are (from left to right):

- Rachel Wagoner of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, who supervised the invasive plants work and nominated the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park for an award
- Joan Nikelsky, Vice-President and Membership Chair of the Friends, who also nominated the Friends for an award
- Tim Higgins, past President and Board member of the Friends, who heads the invasive plants project
- Roger McChesney, Park Manager of Ridley Creek State Park, who provides guidance and support to the Friends.

Upcoming Holiday Dance in December

A winter holiday dance event will be held on **Saturday, December 4 at 7 pm** at the Hunting Hill Mansion. Our December 2009 dance was so successful, we are organizing another one. At the request of the guests last year, the Highballs will be returning to entertain us with their music! Many people attending that event never sat down. At the end of the party, they asked for more and the Highballs reciprocated with a few more songs.

The dance will feature tours of the Mansion, delicious food and holiday fare, drinks, and more.

The Penncrest High School choir will once again start out the evening entertaining us with their latest holiday tunes.

Call 610-565-3877 for information or if you would like to help get ready for the dance. We could use some extra volunteers!



The Highballs — From Left to Right:

Dana Guthrie, Steve Rulon, Howard Laskin, Ed Richey, and Paula Eagle



Get Set for the 2010 - 2011 Photo Contest

The next annual Photo Contest, usually held in November, has been moved to January 2011. Hopefully, all you amateur photographers took advantage of a beautiful winter of snow in 2010 by taking pictures. The award ceremony will be held Sunday, January 30, 2011, which will extend the opportunities for photographing all the seasons for the contest. The deadline for submissions will be Saturday, January 29.

Check for entry forms on our website, at the Park office, and at our upcoming events. A new feature on the entry form is a release form for any people who appear in your photograph to sign, giving permission for their image to be used.

We also encourage you to submit a digital version of your photos to our website so that we can display the contest photos there after the award ceremony. In addition to your matted print for the contest judges, send a digital copy to photocontest09@friendsofrcsp.org and give your full name, a brief description of your photo and the month in which it was taken. Attach the electronic file in .jpg format and use your first initial and last name in the file name (use numbers also, if sending more than 1 photo). If

you used a film camera and don't have a digital file, you can get one made from your photo or negative at a photography store.

For more information on the photo contest, call Carol at 610-565-3877



2009 Winning Photo by Hollie Riley

Spring 2010 Open House at the Mansion was Great Success



It was a beautiful Spring day in May when we had our 2nd annual Open House at the park. We set up tables right outside the Mansion in order to enjoy the warm weather. Many people passed through during the afternoon, and the tours of the Mansion given by our park historian, Kay Ferrari, were very popular.

A tour was also given of Hidden Valley Farm, the horse stable concession that resides in the park. In addition to the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park, the groups represented at the Open House were the Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation and the Delco Anglers fishing group.

2010 Friends Annual Meeting and Election Held

On June 4, 2010, the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park and the Trail Work Group had a joint event: a member and volunteer appreciation picnic, followed by the Friends' annual meeting and election of officers.

Appreciations to Tony Ieradi

We would like to thank our departing Board member, Membership Co-chair, and volunteer extraordinaire, Tony Ieradi, for his work on designing and producing such a beautiful newsletter these last few years. Tony is now moving on to greater job responsibilities and other volunteer commitments, but he has promised he will continue to update the membership database for the Friends. We will miss your active participation, Tony, but we are happy we are going to continue to benefit from your many skills and your dedication.

Volunteer Opportunities



We are a small group of dedicated volunteers who love Ridley Creek State Park and we welcome you to join us in our mission of preserving, protecting, and enhancing the natural beauty of the park. In addition to becoming a member of the Friends, you can also support our work by volunteering some time.

The monthly trail work happens the first Saturday of each month (see calendar).

The Adopt-a-Trail program allows you to maintain a section of a trail on your own schedule.

If interested, contact Tim Higgins at 610-355-9208.

Tim is also the person to contact if you want to join in the effort to eradicate invasive plants in the park.

Then there's our social events and photo contest, organized by a team headed by Carol Rubin, 610-565-3877.

And if you want to help with the newsletter, contact Joan Nikelsky, 610-352-5685.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- First Saturday of each month, 9 am → Regularly scheduled trail work. Meet at Park office.
- Saturday, October 16, 9 am-4 pm → First Aid/CPR training. Meet at Park office.
- Saturday, October 30, 7 pm → Halloween Hoedown in the Mansion ballroom.
- Thursday, November 18, 7 pm → "Science in Our Streams" talk at the Mansion.
- Saturday, December 4, 7 pm → Winter holiday dance in the Mansion ballroom.
- Sunday, January 30, 2011 → Photo Contest award ceremony

Would you like to volunteer your time to the park in a meaningful way? Please contact any one of the Friends' officers listed on our website at www.friendsofrcsp.org to find out more.