

FRIENDS OF RIDLEY  
CREEK STATE PARK

SPECIAL POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

Join us for trail work  
the first Saturday  
of each month.  
Contact  
Gary Sawyer,  
Trails Director,  
Muddy boots @comcast.net



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# The Friends

NUMBER 18

FALL / WINTER 2011

## Run, Walk, or Hike on October 2

The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park will be holding our first Road and Trail fundraising event Sunday, October 2nd. The Friends have a long history of providing unique educational and entertaining events and are happy to offer something to the many runners and hikers who enjoy the park.

Participants can choose from three events: a timed run, a family walk, or a 5.5 mile trans-watershed guided hike from Ridley Creek to Chester Creek. These events are being held in conjunction with the

Great Pennsylvania Outdoor Challenge sponsored by the Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation.

The race, walk, and hike will start in the morning with refreshments and a chance to mingle afterwards at Pavilion 14. The hike, co-hosted by Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association, will begin and end at the Peace Wall and will run along Middletown township trails, Tyler Arboretum trails, and Ridley Creek Trails.

We are still looking for sponsors, donations (water, food, giveaways)

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## Meet the New Park Manager!

Being the new park manager at Ridley Creek State Park is the best of all worlds for Mike Kutzmonich. It combines his talents in landscaping (he has a degree in ornamental horticulture), his love of the outdoors, and his excitement at being



at a state park that has so much support. "Not every park is like this," he said. "Ridley is one of the most

widely used parks in the state system. It gets just shy of one million visitors each year."

For many years after getting his degree, Mike put his landscaping talents to use – creating beautiful gardens, patios, and stone walls. In the winter, he turned to carpentry work. With a growing family, he decided he needed some-

thing more dependable. Working in a park blended many of his interests,

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## All About Bats: Program with CRC on October 19

You won't want to miss this program, jointly sponsored with the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association: learn all about our ecologically valuable and most misunderstood neighbors -- the vacuum cleaners of the night sky -- bats.

Brenda Malinics, a passionate environmentalist and animal advocate who has been working with bats and wild animals for over 25 years, will dispel myths and share important facts about why bats are the cornerstones of a healthy environment. Brenda joins us with her bat management certificate, Nuisance Wildlife License through the Game Commission, and most importantly her enthusiasm.

She will present an overview of bats worldwide, while focusing on the bats residing in Pennsylvania. Additional topics will include: white nose syndrome,



the fungus that has killed over 1.5 million bats in the last 5 years; the effects of wind turbines on bats; loss of habitat; and the impact of pesticide use on bats.

The audience will learn correct ways to remove a bat from one's house, and what to do if an injured bat is encountered on the ground.

Brenda will suggest ways to help bats, including the installation of bat houses and bat building plans. Her presentation will be supplemented with actual bat skeletons and mounted species as well as books, displays, and props.

All this for free on Wednesday evening, October 19, at 7-8:15 pm in the mansion ballroom, open to the public. RSVP appreciated: email [crc@nni.com](mailto:crc@nni.com) or [crcintern@nni.com](mailto:crcintern@nni.com) or phone: 610-892-8731.

## Talk on Herbal Medicine on November 6

If you are interested in herbs, be sure to reserve a seat for this special event scheduled for Sunday, November 6 at 3:00 pm in the mansion ballroom.

Author and food historian William Woys Weaver will be speaking about native medicinal plants, based on their historical usage by the Pennsylvania Dutch, as presented in his 2001 publication, *Sauer's Herbal Cures, America's First Book of Botanic Healing* (published by Routledge). This event is sponsored jointly by the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park and the Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Herbalists Guild (AHG).

*Sauer's Herbal Cures* is a translation of the text from Pennsylvania Dutch, originally assembled by Pennsylvania apothecary and printer Christopher Sauer (1721-1784). Sauer grew up in the German immigrant community and his German was riddled with syntax and terminology borrowed from colonial English. As a skilled ethnobotanist, Mr. Weaver added footnotes and edited segments to the translation to clarify historical details for the reader.

Mr. Weaver resides in Devon and specializes in

the history of American cuisine and foodways. He is a three-time winner of the Julia Child Cookbook Award. His books include *Heirloom Vegetable Gardening*, *Pennsylvania Dutch Country Cooking*, and *Sauerkraut Yankees*. He is well known as an heirloom gardener and seed saver.

Mr. Weaver's books will be available for sale at the event and he will autograph your copy. Don't miss this unique opportunity to hear from the expert!

There will be a nominal charge for this event (cash only) of \$7 for the general public, and \$5 for members of the AHG, members of the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park, seniors, and students with ID. Space is limited and doors open at 2 pm. Come early to sample herbal teas, check out books and herbal items for sale, and talk to local herbalists. Refreshments will be served.

For further information and to make a reservation, contact Jayne Tamburello at 610-566-2881 or e-mail [jstamburello@gmail.com](mailto:jstamburello@gmail.com).

## 2012 Calendars For Sale

The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park is producing a calendar for the year 2012, which features outstanding photographs from our annual photo contests. This project was generously organized by Christi Bailey, a graphic designer whose business includes restoration photography. We are grateful for the time and effort she gave to help make this calendar a winner. It will be sold at our

upcoming fall and winter events, as well as in the park office. See our website for further details – [www.friendsofRCSP.org](http://www.friendsofRCSP.org). The cost is \$12 for the general public and \$10 for members of the Friends.

We limited the number of available calendars so if you want to reserve one, please call Carol at 610-565-3877. They make wonderful holiday gifts for people who love Ridley Creek State Park!

## Mark Your Calendar for Dancing in December!

Back by popular demand, our 4th annual winter dance is on for Saturday, December 3, at 7 pm at Hunting Hill Mansion. The Highballs will be returning to help us dance the night away with their wonderful music. We are hoping for the return of the Ambassadors choir of Penncrest High School to start out with caroling. Hunting Hill Mansion (the park office) will be decorated by the Master Gardeners, directed by Alyce Zellers, Board member and Grounds Chair. It is a “wow” moment when you walk into the early 1900s

mansion, decorated for the holiday with natural greenery.

Mansion tours and refreshments of holiday fare, beer, and wine are all part of the package! All this for only \$40 per person (general public), and \$35 per member of the Friends. Due to the popularity of the event, tables for groups will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. It was practically standing room only last year, so be sure to reserve early. Call Carol at 610-565-3877 for information or if you would like to volunteer.

## ALYCE'S CORNER

### Planting Easy Perennials to Feed the Birds

If you visit the park, then most likely you appreciate nature, and more importantly, birds. Many backyards have bird feeders that are stocked in the winter but not as likely stocked in the summer. Like you, birds do not stop eating in the summer! If you add some bird-beneficial plants in your garden you can maintain them all year round.

Perennials are the backbone of any garden, but for birds they provide seeds, cover for moving around

safely, as well as insects, slugs, caterpillars, and other tasty treats. Fall is a great time for finding sales on perennials and for planting them. Cooler weather with more consistent rainfall helps them to establish more quickly than a spring planting.

Several perennials to consider are: Echinacea (coneflower), Boltonia, Asters, Goldenrod, Agastache (anise hyssop), Rudbeckia (black-eyed Susan), Core-

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## Meet the New Park Manager!

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so he took the park manager trainee test in 2004 and waited to hear from the state.

In December of 2005, he was called for an interview and was brought on board as a park manager trainee ... in Emporium. "It's 75 miles northwest of Lock Haven .... compared to Emporium, Lock Haven was a city!" he said, laughing. In September of 2007, he became an assistant park manager at French and Marsh Creek State Park, where he stayed until he started working at Ridley Creek State Park, in May.

Mike loves the gardens in Ridley – the rose garden, the topiary garden, and the fountain garden. "None of the other state parks have ornamental gardens like this," he said. "This was a big attraction for me."

Given his background, it's not surprising. One of

his goals is to restore the gardens to their former beauty. "I want to turn back time. Get the gardens back to looking like they did when they were first designed [in the early 20th century]," he said, adding wryly, "as the budget permits!"

It's not solely for their beauty, he said. They could help attract more people --- and events such as weddings --- to fund work that needs to be done throughout the park.

Mike and his family – his wife, Kristin, son Michael, and daughters Victoria and Erin – will soon be making the move to their new home in the park and can't wait.

"I'm really looking forward to working with the park staff, the volunteers, and other groups in the park," he said. "I've always liked Ridley Creek State Park. It's a hidden gem."

*This article was contributed by Friends member Sally Sapega.*

## Get Ready for the 2012 Photo Contest

The Photo Contest is in its 8th year! This exciting event and award ceremony is set for Sunday, January 29, 2012 in the Hunting Hill Mansion ballroom. Deadline for submissions is January 25 at 4 pm. Entry forms are available at [www.FriendsofRCSP.org](http://www.FriendsofRCSP.org), at the park office, or on the multi-use trail.

We are requiring photos to be submitted matted, with a digital copy, because we use selected photo submissions in our calendar. For general questions and more information on the photo contest, call Carol at 610-565-3877.

## Remembering Cookie Chase

Cookie Chase was a founding member and active volunteer with the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park. She volunteered for the Pennsylvania Colonial Plantation at one time, but joined the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park at its inception. She served as Treasurer and enjoyed her role as a Board member.



*Standing by the plaque L. to R.: Carol Rubin, John Kennedy, Gary Sawyer, Jack Miller, Joan Nikelsky, Tim Higgins, Paul Mickle, Pam Cloud.*

Cookie will also be remembered for her extraordinary talent for baking. At one time, she owned her own bake shop and won a contest for professional chefs and bakers with her specialty - sticky buns! Her cousin owned a catering business and Cookie often helped. The business specialized in traditional Jewish foods.

Roger McChesney, former park manager, remembers her humor. He remarked that "she was one of the funniest people I've ever known.

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## Run, Walk, Hike on October 2<sup>nd</sup>

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and volunteers for the day of the event. The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park is a qualified 501(c)(3) organization, so donations are tax deductible.

Details and registration information will be posted on our facebook page, our website, and will be well publicized over the next month. Questions for the run and family walk can be directed to Pamela Cloud at 484-883-8231 or email [publicity@friendsofrcsp.org](mailto:publicity@friendsofrcsp.org) and for the hike, Gary Sawyer at [trails@friendsofrcsp.org](mailto:trails@friendsofrcsp.org).

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## Alyce's Corner

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opsis, Helianthus (perennial sunflower). There are also ornamental grasses with tassels that are excellent for providing seeds. Two of the best are Calamagrostis (feather reed grass) and Panicum virgatum (switch grass). Please do not plant Miscanthus or Pampas, as these grasses are becoming invasive and displacing natives.

Any of the above mentioned perennials are easy-going, requiring no fuss other than some additional watering to get established. To make the most impact and attract birds, plant at least three of one variety. Think of the plants as a road sign; the larger circumference it is, the easier it is to see.

By adding more bird-friendly plants to your garden, you can probably double the number of wild birds visiting your property!

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## 2011 Friends' Annual Meeting and Election

On June 3, 2011, the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park and the Trail Work Group had our 3rd annual joint event: a member and volunteer appreciation picnic, followed by the Friends' annual meeting and election of officers.

Recording Secretary Gary Sawyer was re-elected for another 2 years. Tim Higgins was elected to the office of Treasurer. Congratulations to both!

## Appreciation for John Kennedy

We would like to thank our departing Treasurer, John Kennedy, for his stellar job over several years serving on the Board -- keeping the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park books, collecting and depositing checks, working on finances with PPF (Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation), and doing all the related tasks of the Treasurer's position. We always knew we could count on John; you saw him at the registration table for all our fundraising events. John has been an active member in other Friends endeavors as well, including the monthly trail work. We look forward to John's continued volunteer participation in the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park!

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## Calendar of Events

- **First Saturday of each month**, 9 am – Monthly trail work. Meet at park office.
- **Sunday, October 2**, 9 am – Run, Walk, or Hike in the park to benefit the Friends. Meet at Pavilion 14.
- **Wednesday, October 19**, 7 pm – Talk about bats at the mansion.
- **Sunday, November 6**, 3 pm – Talk on herbal medicine by William Woys Weaver at the mansion.
- **Saturday, December 3**, 7 pm – Winter holiday dance in the mansion ballroom.
- **Sunday, January 29, 2012**, 1 pm – Photo Contest award ceremony in the mansion ballroom.

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## Remembering Cookie Chase

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She should have been a professional comedian!"

Cookie left a generous bequest to the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park in her will. She passed away several years ago. Last year the Board decided to honor her memory with a plaque in the park. Board members and Trails Co-Chairs Gary Sawyer and Mark Kern brought this project to fruition. The plaque has been installed on the multi-use trail near the Sycamore Mills area close to the parking lot, near the waterfall.

The plaque overlooks the historic mill community and has an inscription that provides users of the trail with information about this beautiful area. Be sure to check it out next time you are there!