



**Upper Delaware Council  
29th Annual  
Awards Ceremony**

**April 23, 2017**

**Central House Family Resort  
Beach Lake, Pennsylvania**

Upper Delaware Council, Inc.  
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Narrowsburg, NY 12764  
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# **UDC Awards Ceremony Program**

## **3:00 p.m. Registration and Reception**

Enjoy appetizers and a cash bar; browse exhibits

## **4:00 p.m. Welcome and Introductions**

James A. Greier, 2017 UDC Chairperson  
Laurie Ramie, UDC Executive Director

## **4:10 p.m. Buffet Dinner Served**

## **5:00 p.m. Keynote Address by Congressman John J. Faso** Member of the U.S. House of Representatives New York State 19th Congressional District

## **5:15 p.m. Presentation of 2017 UDC Awards**

## **6:30 p.m. Closing Remarks and Group Photo**

Award recipients, please assemble at the front podium at the conclusion of the ceremony with your plaques and certificates. The UDC expresses appreciation to David B. Soete and Scott Rando for serving as our event photographers.



*The Upper Delaware Council, established in 1988, is a not-for-profit organization working in partnership with the National Park Service to coordinate implementation of the River Management Plan for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, designated by the U.S. Congress in 1978 as a unit of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Voting members are the two states (New York and Pennsylvania) and 13 local governments that border on the Upper Delaware River. These include the Towns of Hancock, Fremont, Delaware, Cochection, Tusten, Highland, Lumberland, and Deerpark in NY; and the Townships of Damascus, Berlin, Lackawaxen, Shohola, and Westfall in PA. The Delaware River Basin Commission is a non-voting member.*

# Keynote Speaker ~ Rep. John J. Faso

The Upper Delaware Council is pleased to welcome Congressman John J. Faso as our keynote speaker.

John Faso was elected to represent the 19th District of New York in the United States Congress on November 8, 2016.

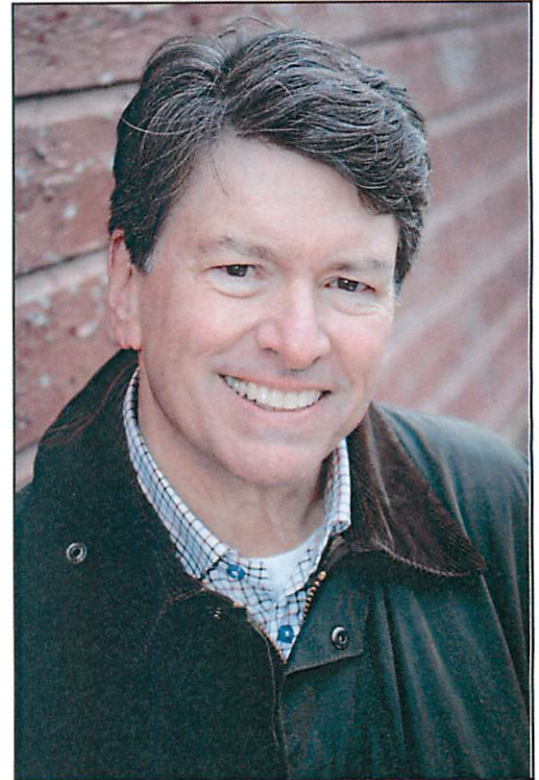
The district encompasses all or part of 11 counties in the Capital Region, Hudson Valley, Catskills, and Central New York, including the entire County of Sullivan.

As a first-time member of Congress, Rep. Faso has been appointed to the House Committees on Budget, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Agriculture.

He recently joined the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus, and co-introduced a resolution which expresses the commitment of the House of Representatives "to working constructively, using our tradition of American ingenuity, innovation, and exceptionalism, to create and support economically viable, and broadly supported private and public solutions to study and address the causes and effects of measured changes to our global and regional climates, including mitigation efforts and efforts to balance human activities that have been found to have an impact." (HR 424).

A graduate of SUNY Brockport and Georgetown University Law Center, Rep. Faso is a former Republican leader of the New York State Assembly.

During that tenure, he led the way on legislation that made a difference for tens of thousands of families such as the STAR program, education, criminal justice, and state spending reform, including accomplishing the first reduction in state spending in over five decades



while closing a \$5 billion deficit.

He and his wife, Mary Frances, a registered nurse, have two adult children and reside in Kinderhook.

## Upper Delaware Council 2017 Membership



Gathered at the UDC's February 2, 2017 meeting were, seated from the left, Secretary-Treasurer Alan F. Henry, Berlin Township; Vice-Chairperson David M. Dean, Town of Deerpark; and Chairperson James A. Greier, Town of Fremont. Standing, from left to right: Steve Tambini, Delaware River Basin Commission; Michael Barth, Westfall Township; Jeff Dexter, Damascus Township; Susan Sullivan, Town of Tusten; Fred Peckham, Town of Hancock; Virginia Dudko, Town of Deerpark; Zoriana Gingold, Town of Lumberland; Larry H. Richardson, Town of Cochection; Aaron Robinson, Shohola Township; Doug Case, Lackawaxen Township; Jeff Haas, Town of Highland; Harold Roeder, Jr., Town of Delaware; Bill Rudge, State of New York; and Carla Hahn, National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River.

Absent from photo: Hancock alternate Katt Judd; Fremont alternate George Conklin, Delaware alternate David Peters; Cochection alternate Sean Nearing; Tusten alternate Tony Ritter; Highland alternates Debra Conway and Andy Boyar; Lumberland representative Leigh Sherman; Damascus alternates Steve Adams, Joseph Canfield, and Daniel Rutledge; Berlin alternate Paul Henry; Lackawaxen alternate Judy Kuhn Conklin; Shohola alternates Patricia Jeffer and George J. Fluhr; State of New York alternate Michael Flaherty; Commonwealth of Pennsylvania representative Tim Dugan and alternate Rhonda Manning; National Park Service representative Michael Caldwell and alternate Kristina Heister.

# Oaken Gavel Award ~ Fred Peckham

The Upper Delaware Council recognizes the extra commitment and responsibility that our board members take on when they agree to serve as chairperson of our non-profit organization with the presentation of the Oaken Gavel Award.

Fred Peckham was elected by his peers to the top leadership position on January 7, 2016.

The Town of Hancock had appointed Fred as its alternate delegate to the UDC in 2008. He assumed the role of Hancock's UDC representative in January 2009.

For Fred, his participation carries on a family legacy of service to the UDC. His uncle, George Frosch, was named as Hancock's first representative when the Council was established in 1988 and held that position for 14 years until his death on October 12, 2002.

George chaired the Council in 1995 and won the Distinguished Service Award in 1997 for his activism with four UDC predecessor citizen groups which contributed to the development of the River Management Plan for the National Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River and for his private property rights advocacy.

Fred had graduated in 1978 from Hancock High School where he was an All-Star athlete in football, track and wrestling, earned a Bachelor's degree in Marketing from SUNY Oswego School of Business, and moved to Fairfax County, Virginia for 18 years to work as an outside sales representative before transitioning to supervising the development of high-rise hotels along the East Coast and working as a service foreman for a commercial roofing company.

In the early 2000's, he decided to start his own business, opening Fred Bluestone in Front Royal, VA, with the raw materials imported from Uncle George's quarries in Hancock. After George died at the age of 73, Fred moved back to the river valley permanently to take over the bluestone, sand, gravel and topsoil business and maintain the 284-acre property known as Kilgour Farms upriver of Lordville, NY, where he had worked and played all during his youth. The property includes Frisbee Island and nearly two additional miles of river frontage.

Fred chairs the Town of Hancock Board of Assessment Review, and serves as a volunteer member of the Equinunk Watershed Alliance and a global moderator of the public website, [www.naturalgasforum.com](http://www.naturalgasforum.com), whose 3,700 members post opinions and findings on natural gas exploration topics.

He continues to review all of George's records dating back to the late 1960s that trace the Upper Delaware's evolution.

Fred also enjoys watching wildlife, fishing, hunting, gardening, library visits, genealogy research, reading, and spending time with his fiancée, Cheryl Korotky, and family.



*Town of Hancock Supervisor Sam Rowe, Jr. congratulated Fred Peckham after administering his oath of office as Upper Delaware Council 2016 chairperson.*

# Special Recognition Award ~ Connie Lloyd

*Nomination submitted by National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Chief of Interpretation Ingrid Peterec:*

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Constance 'Connie' Lloyd began her time at Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River in the 1980s as a seasonal park ranger in the division of Interpretation.

Before serving as a park ranger, Connie lived and worked on a ranch in Wyoming, where she rode horses, roped cattle, and camped under the stars in a teepee.

Connie's sense of adventure and taste for the outdoors led her to the National Park Service, where she continued to grow her passion for the conservation and preservation of the natural world.

In December of 2016 she hung up her Stetson for good, and rode off into the sunset of retirement.

Connie grew up locally in Honesdale, PA, and Upper Delaware is the first and only park she worked for.

During her 30-plus years of service to the National Park Service, Connie guided and mentored countless seasonal park rangers, most of whom were just starting out in the service.

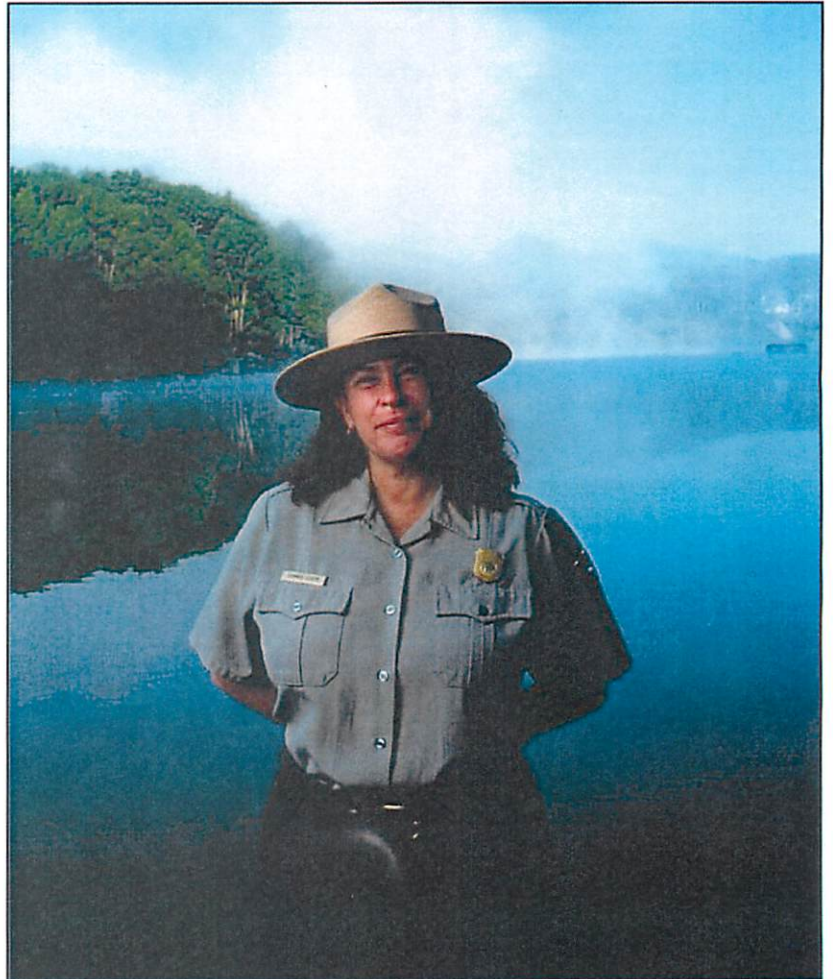
Her no-nonsense style of mentorship and endless wisdom and experience were often a source of reassurance to the staff in the face of challenges.

While she was working at Upper Delaware, Connie was a constant source of knowledge and entertainment. With her keen wit and knack for storytelling, even discussing the most mundane of office business could spark a conversation about her adventures in the Florida Keys or one of her many encounters with dangerous wildlife.

Her instinct for fostering meaningful relationships with the people around her makes her absence in the park felt acutely.

Her time at Upper Delaware was occupied by creating educational exhibits, giving programs, and staffing the Narrowsburg Information Center in Narrowsburg, NY and the Zane Grey Museum in Lackawaxen, PA.

Her presence at the desk as manager of



the Narrowsburg Information Center was cherished by locals and visitors alike.

She collaborated closely with local artists and photographers to bring the stunning beauty of the area to the National Park Service's visitors through digital media.

Her legacy at the park is marked not only by the beautiful displays and exhibits she fabricated, but the knowledge she shared with people who came to experience the Delaware River.

Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River is proud to nominate Connie Lloyd for the Upper Delaware Council Special Recognition Award for her outstanding contributions to the park and its staff, dedication to building partnerships on behalf of the National Park Service, and her unwavering commitment to the community of the Delaware River Valley.

**Connie Lloyd's 34-year career with National Park Service  
Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River:  
May 1982 - Seasonal Park Ranger  
July 28, 1991 to December 31, 2016 - Permanent Park  
Ranger for the Interpretation Division**

# Special Recognition Award ~ "Tusten's Colorful History"

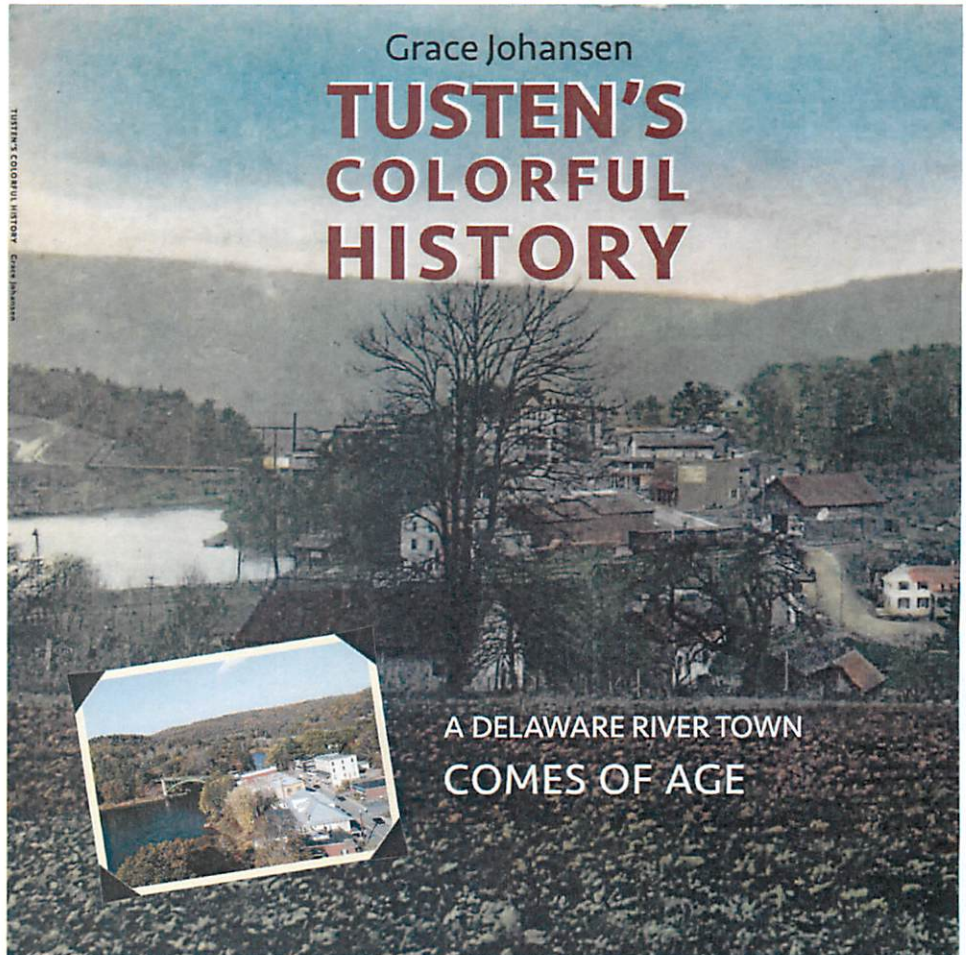
A book initiated by Tusten Historical Society founder Grace Johansen and lovingly finished after her death by two of her seven children earns this Special Recognition Award.

When "Tusten's Colorful History: A Delaware River Town Comes of Age" was published by the Tusten Historical Society in December 2016 and offered through the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance's Signature Gifts shop, its first printing sold out in a matter of two weeks.

The book's timeline and images date back to the 1700s, with chapters covering Early Inhabitants, Narrowsburg Logging, Becoming Narrowsburg, Boarding Houses, A Growing Community, The Era of Flying, 1953 Tusten Centennial, and Tusten Today.

Grace was actively involved in the Tusten community throughout her 86 years, whether near or far.

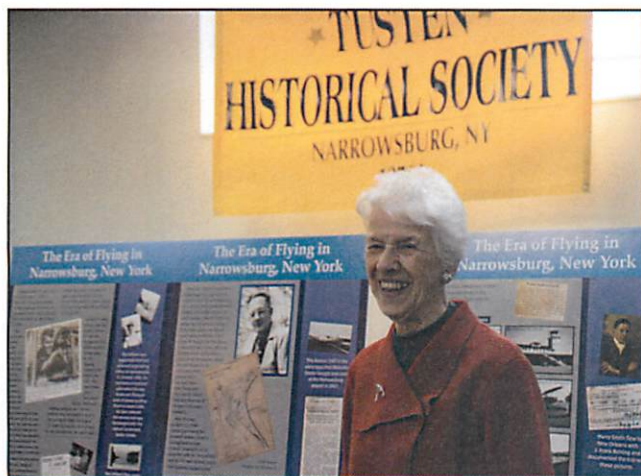
Her parents built and operated Peggy Runway Lodge on the PA side of the Delaware River for 46 years; she helped establish the Tusten-Cochecton Library in 1990; served as president of the Tusten Historical Society for 20 years; worked as an advertising manager and history columnist for *The River Reporter*, produced in



2003 a walking tour booklet for Narrowsburg; belonged to an eight-member Crones Club which celebrated the wisdom and contributions of senior women; and had authored the book "The Tom Quick Trail" before embarking on "Tusten's Colorful History".

Town of Tusten Co-Historian Art Hawker told us about the book, "Grace, her daughters, and Tina did an outstanding job. The only regret I had when done looking at it (several times) was that it leaves the reader thirsting for many more pages and topics. The beauty of its publication is that it provides those who never knew the people or saw the locations depicted therein with a visual reference and factual historical information. As it is said, 'A picture is worth a thousand words' and this publication definitely brings the past to life while preserving it for the future. For those who have lived in the community for many years and recall some of the locations or have known the people or their families, the book serves as a pleasant reminder of the area as it once was, and those visionaries and characters who helped to shape the history of Tusten and the surrounding area. Warmest congratulations to all of the award recipients!"

The award is accepted by Grace's daughters, Lauren Johansen Schlangenhaft of Beach Lake, LouAnn Johansen Joyce of Beacon, NY, and their design assistant Tina Spangler from the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance, who worked together to complete Grace's vision.



Grace Lou Behling Johansen (July 16, 1929-August 8, 2015)

# Volunteer Award ~ Scott Rando

A former Upper Delaware Council representative for Shohola Township, PA from 2010-2012 with an interest in science and an eye for wildlife photography receives this year's Volunteer Award.

Scott Rando was born in Garland, TX, spent his childhood in Staten Island, NY before moving at age 12 to Delaware Township, PA, served in the U.S. Army in Germany, and lived in Westwood, NJ for 15 years while working for a British company that installed and serviced mass spectrometers, before becoming a Shohola resident in 1981.

Here is what Don Hamilton, the Natural Resources Chief for the National Park Service (NPS) Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, had to say in his nomination:

"Scott has been a devoted volunteer for the NPS and other natural resource agencies in the Upper Delaware River region in a number of capacities for well over a decade.

"He's been a primary monitor of bald eagle nests and pairs in the region, reporting on their nesting success and status.

"He also helped document the recent successful nesting and fledging of young of a pair of peregrine falcons within the Upper Delaware corridor.

"Scott is an excellent naturalist and nature photographer as well, and readily shares his exceptional photos on Facebook and in a 'River Talk' column he writes for *The River Reporter*, helping to increase the awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the river's natural resources with his audience.

"Scott also shares his knowledge in other ways,



*Scott has volunteered for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Endangered Species Unit with a special interest in radio telemetry tracking of bald eagles.*

recently helping to provide a nature photography workshop, along with other local photographers, for attendees at the 2016 Upper Delaware BioBlitz.

"Most recently, Scott has been involved in an effort coordinated by Clarion University of Pennsylvania to collect tissue samples from amphibians throughout Pennsylvania to help document the distribution and prevalence of pathogens that affect their populations, including chytrid fungus, an emerging pathogen that has been decimating amphibians worldwide.

"Scott is always willing to help with projects and share his knowledge with the public and others to promote conservation efforts," Don concludes.

*Volunteer Award recipient Scott Rando is pictured chatting with 2017 Distinguished Service Award honoree Ed Wesely during a 2005 Delaware Highlands Conservancy Meadow Party. (Photo by David B. Soete)*



# Cultural Achievement Award ~ Wayne County Historical Society



The Wayne County Historical Society's main museum at 810 Main St. in Honesdale, PA was formerly the office for the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company, pictured above circa 1910.

## Trustees and Officers

Kelly Alogna, President  
Tracy Schwarz, 1st Vice-President  
Elaine Herzog, 2nd Vice-President  
Tom Colbert, Treasurer  
Dorothy Kieff, Secretary  
Margy Coccodrilli  
Juan Espino  
Lee Garing  
Ann Kovatch  
Gerald Marks  
Jean Meagher  
Peggy Murphy  
Jorge Perez  
Judy Poltanis  
Stanton Pratt  
William Woodward

Executive Director: Carol Henry Dunn  
Wayne County Historian: Peter Becker

The Wayne County Historical Society (WCHS) is making its own history by celebrating 100 years of service in 2017 as a community-focused, educational organization.

The Society was formed in 1917 by a group of forward-thinking citizens who wisely recognized that Wayne County's history would fast slip away without dedicated volunteers determined to preserve it. The fledgling Society had as its mission "to gather all historical facts, books, papers, etc., that apply to past and present history of Wayne County and to provide a suitable place for their preservation."

WCHS was incorporated in 1922. A year later, WCHS negotiated with the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company to lease space in its 1860 Honesdale building for \$1 per year. That occupancy extended to the whole office in 1932, and expansions of the museum were subsequently added in 1978, 1981, 1993, 1996, and 2008.

The museum now features a research library with a 9,000-photo archive, books, over 1,000 microfilm reels, and genealogical records; replicas of the *Stourbridge Lion* steam locomotive and *Eclipse* gravity railroad car for the "Movin' Energy" permanent exhibit; the Marjorie Smith Gallery; the "Faces in Clay" permanent exhibit of 4,600 American Indian artifacts; climate-controlled storage and exhibit areas; a Children's History Lab; and a work room, office and kitchen facilities.

The Society opened the 13-acre D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 near Hawley in 2013 and continues to restore the 1820s Daniels Farmhouse, improve two walking trails, and offer public programs including a popular Canal Festival each August. Through an agreement with the Wayne County Commissioners, WCHS volunteers organize open houses at Bethel School in Berlin Township (built circa 1872) and the Old Stone Jail in Honesdale (built circa 1856) every summer. They also staff the Farm Museum at the Wayne County Fair, and regularly host students and other groups for tours at the main museum and their other facilities.

An ambitious series of events is underway to mark the Centennial anniversary. A major new exhibit, "History of Wayne County in 100 Objects" just opened yesterday with an accompanying book release, and will be on display through Spring 2019. "Spring Centennial Celebration: A Gourmet Fundraiser to Herald our First 100 Years" is set for June 3 in Hawley. A symposium, "Celebrating Our First 100 Years", will take place on June 24 at the Dorflinger Factory Museum in White Mills. The public is invited to cast votes through August 31 for Centennial Historic Preservation Awards nominees, the results of which will be announced at an October 21 ceremony. Visit [www.WayneHistoryPA.org](http://www.WayneHistoryPA.org) or call (570) 253-3240 for details about all these activities.



# Cultural Achievement Award ~ Elaine Giguere

As Elaine Giguere prepares to retire on June 30 after 41 years of nurturing the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance (DVAA) into the preeminent arts council for Sullivan County, NY and beyond, we express our appreciation.

Born in Maine, Elaine parlayed a 1969 Bachelor of Arts degree in Dance with a minor in English from Adelphi University in Garden City, NY into positions with the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Dance Program, the Staten Island Dance Theatre, the Harvard University Dance Program and Connecticut College American Dance Festival during the 1970s.

She lived in New York City before moving with her husband, Tom DeGaetani, to Narrowsburg. The couple founded DVAA in April 1976 after seeing the Town of Tusten's U.S. Bicentennial celebration and Tom served as its first executive director. It was after he passed away unexpectedly that Elaine assumed that role in 1978.

Elaine and her staff are responsible for administration, budgeting, fundraising, programming and production development in the visual, performing, literary, and media arts for 300-plus members, as well as organizing the Narrowsburg RiverFest now in its 27th year and the Big Eddy Film Festival.

She oversaw the purchase, historic renovations, and expansions of the Delaware Arts Center with its two galleries and the Signature Gifts shop, and the Tusten Theatre in Narrowsburg in her tenure.

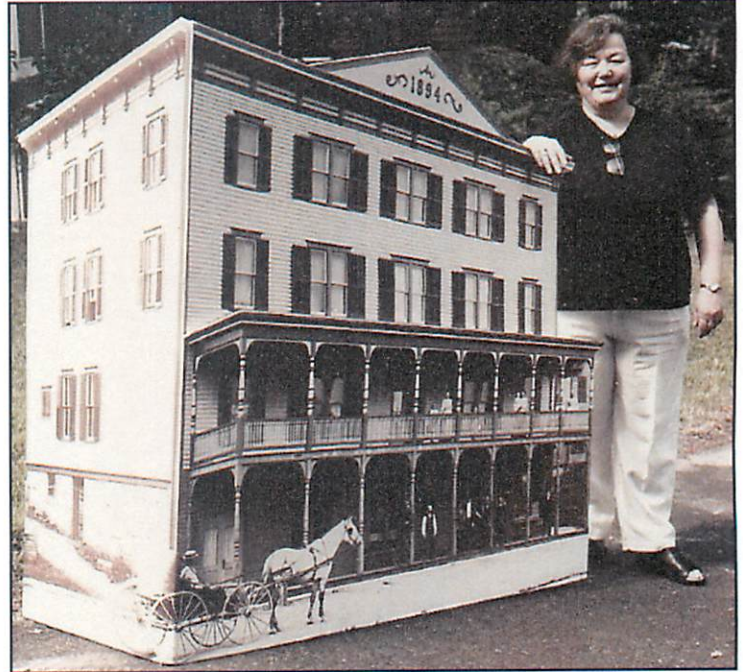
DVAA since 1984 has administered grant and scholarship programs that have funded numerous non-profit cultural organizations and artists' projects throughout Sullivan County.

Their advocacy provides a collective voice for the importance of sustaining the arts. Just on April 10, Elaine appeared alongside U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand at Bethel Woods Center for the Arts to warn about impacts of proposed federal budget cuts to national arts and humanities programs.

Elaine's community contributions extend beyond the DVAA. She was a founding director of the Tusten-Cochecton Library and helped get *The River Reporter* newspaper started in Narrowsburg. She has sat on the Sullivan County Visitors Association Board since 2000, vice-chaired the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Committee from 2001-04, was a Sullivan County Rural Economic Area Partnership board member from 2002 to 2012, and became the New York State co-chair of the Scenic Wild Delaware River Geotourism Stewardship Council in 2016.

Elaine is a member of the Narrowsburg and Sullivan County Chambers of Commerce, Delaware Valley Opera, Delaware Valley Chamber Orchestra, Tusten and Sullivan County Historical Societies, Delaware Highlands Conservancy, NACL Theatre, Liberty Museum and Arts Center, and Western Sullivan Public Library.

The DVAA will hold a retirement party for Elaine on June 17 from 6-9 p.m. at the Narrowsburg Union to help usher her into her second act, when she can focus on deferred passion projects such as documenting the migration of artists to the river valley region and exploring her own creative endeavors.



Elaine and husband Tom DeGaetani, who served as the DVAA's first executive director at its 1976 inception.

# Partnership Award ~ Debra Conway, Dorene Warner, Town of Highland, and Upper Delaware Scenic Byway: Revitalizing the Monarch Butterfly



Logo created by Dorene Warner for 2016 event; brochure inset at right.

The production of a new brochure that addresses the 82% decline in Monarch butterflies over the last 20 years while offering simple conservation efforts toward their revitalization receives the Partnership Award.

“The Monarch Butterfly: Fostering the Flyway by the Byway” was initiated by discussions of Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Inc. (UDSB), the non-profit organization that enhances and promotes the resources of New York State Route 97.

The Delaware River serves as a flyway for the annual migration of Northeastern Monarchs from their summer breeding grounds to their wintering roosts in central Mexico.

UDSB member, the Town of Highland, successfully applied for \$4,500 through the Upper Delaware Council’s 2016 Technical Assistance Grant program to develop the brochure with a required completion of Aug. 23, 2016.

The town contracted with W Design of Barryville, NY, whose Creative Director Dorene Warner enlisted the research assistance of local historian and writer Debra Conway, who is also an alternate for the Town of Highland on both the UDC and UDSB boards.

Their collaboration of talents and research savvy led to the beautifully illustrated, 16-panel color brochure which opens up to a 15x18-inch poster chock full of information on the significance of the Monarch declines, information on their life cycles and cross-continental migration patterns, and what steps can be easily taken to provide habitat critical to the survival of various pollinator species. Five thousand brochures were printed, with the Delaware Highlands Conservancy contributing \$300 to receive 1,500 more copies for their distribution.

The well-received brochure is the core piece for a campaign that aims to educate and inspire people to be proactive stewards. One spin-off event to occur this past fall was a first-ever Barryville Butterfly Bike Ride in which bicyclists registered to toss clay discs infused with pollinator plant seeds along their route.

In making this nomination, Sullivan County Historian John Conway praised the expertise that the coordinators brought to this labor of love and continue to devote to promotion of the habitat-saving mission.

He wrote, “This brochure was, simply put, one of the very best pieces ever produced locally, at least since I have been involved over the past 40 years. There are, quite frankly, plenty of people who played small parts

in the overall Monarch project, but it was Dorene and Debra who put the hours and hours of work into the brochure and turned out a real masterpiece. The research and the writing Debra did and the design and layout Dorene did combined to make this such a valuable piece that it is sure to be reprinted over and over again. And achieving the widespread distribution they did was no mean feat itself. Brochures like that, that excel in so many aspects, don’t come along very often.”

The brochure is available for request or viewing on the websites of the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway and Upper Delaware Council, which offers an additional resources page that Dorene contributed to post.



Debra Conway



Dorene Warner

## Recreation Achievement Award ~ Operation Safe River

Those in need of emergency assistance along the Lackawaxen River and their would-be rescuers have both gained by implementation of "Operation Safe River."

Recognizing the challenging geography of this tributary to the Delaware River and the tentative reliability of electronic communications, this program has installed numbered markers on the river bank that correspond to signs along the roadway to better identify one's location for dispatch purposes.

The Lackawaxen Township Fire Commission - which includes the Central, Forest, Greeley and Lackawaxen Volunteer Fire Departments and Lackawaxen EMS Squad 21, as well as a Board of Supervisors representative, nominated civilian delegates, and two non-voting student members of the High School Emergency Responder Club - oversees the program that all started with a simple suggestion at a Chief's meeting.

In support of the initiative, the National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River provided technical assistance and \$1,000 to purchase the necessary materials.

Volunteers associated with the Fire Commission installed the posts and markers with the strong backing of the Lackawaxen Township government. The Lackawaxen River Conservancy citizen group was also consulted.



*At left, volunteers drive in support posts for the numbered signs, shown at right, installed along the bank of the Lackawaxen River.*

Now anybody summoning help can seek out the nearest red and white triangular signs to find out the number. Emergency units all have the maps showing the positions of every sign to proceed immediately to the proper location.

Brochures were produced and distributed to liveries that serve Lackawaxen River recreational visitors for boating and fishing.

The brochure explains, in part, "Due to the Lackawaxen's location in the mountains, there are dead areas along the river where two-way radios and cell phones will not work. If you need to call for help and can find a location where you have service, mentioning the number on the nearest sign will enable first responders to find you more quickly.

"We hope you enjoy all that the Lackawaxen River has to offer and never have to make an emergency call. If you do, though, make note of these signs along the way and always give the 911 operator the number of the sign you remember seeing last. It could be a life saver."

Improvements continue to be made.

Plans are in the works to install instructional signage at several river access points for the general public and to add four new markers to supplement a few on the route that have limited visibility.

The Lackawaxen Township Fire Commission meets monthly to discuss issues impacting the provision of emergency services and brainstorm for possible solutions.



*Lackawaxen Township Supervisor Mike Mancino, left, and Lackawaxen Township Fire Commission Vice-President Al Petrillo review a sketch of the Lackawaxen River to help determine placement of the emergency marker signs.*

# Community Service Award ~ Vanessa DeGori

*Nomination submitted by Ed Wesely of Milanville, PA:*

“My highest recommendation goes to Vanessa DeGori, popular owner of the Milanville General Store, for her work in persuading PennDOT to reopen the historic Milanville Bridge after they abruptly closed it on December 12, 2015.

“On this day PennDOT surprised the Upper Delaware community by announcing the bridge was unsafe and that they were closing it ‘indefinitely’ - without a clue to the meaning of ‘indefinitely’.

“Would it be six months? Two years? Or was it the end (as many of us feared)?

“This was the climate when Vanessa began - and managed - a petition drive from her store that produced ca. 2,000 signatures and emails urging PennDOT to reopen the bridge. She not only solicited petitions at the store, but set up a petition site on-line to broaden the mix and locales of petitioners.

“Her work also educated the community - including part-time residents in NYC, New Jersey, etc. - about what had happened, and the likely result if we stood by passively.

“I believe without Vanessa’s initiative and resolve - when so many of us were wringing our hands - it’s likely that PennDOT’s dictum of ‘closed indefinitely’ would still describe the status of the Milanville Bridge.

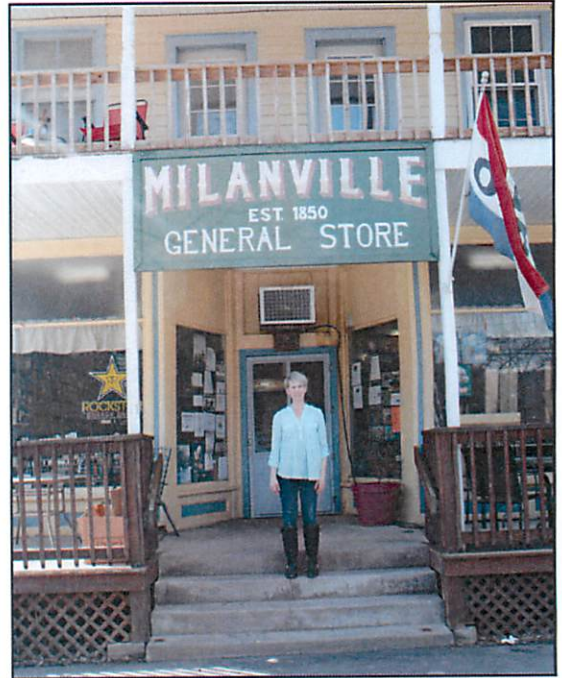
“By April, her petition drive was so effective that PennDOT announced it would make emergency repairs and re-open the bridge, restricting traffic to four ton loads by installing ‘headache bars’ at each portal. (Had the agency installed them in 2012 when they decreed the four-ton load limit, they’d have spared the bridge much vibration and deterioration.)

“Vanessa’s action was vital in protecting an historic and scenic resource for the Upper Delaware region - in this case, the first steel truss bridge built in the region, and to my mind the handsomest bridge on the river.

“In a year or two, after a 1904 truss bridge at Pond Eddy is replaced, the Milanville Bridge will be the last representative of its era. Hopefully we will convince PennDOT to fully restore and protect it and, with UDC grants, begin to interpret its fascinating history.

“Thanks to Vanessa, it remains a viable traffic crossing, while conserving Milanville’s rich history and the historic face of our scenic river.”

The Upper Delaware Council also recognizes Vanessa for enhancing the quality of life for local residents and visitors by preserving Milanville’s 1850 General Store, which has served as a community center under the proprietorship of Vanessa and husband Rocco. Vanessa has spearheaded numerous charitable campaigns ranging from helping families pay for life-altering medical expenses to children and animal causes, with a special emphasis on supporting military hospital patients, wounded warriors, and those on active duty.



*At left, Vanessa DeGori accepted a \$500 check in 2009 from former Jeff Bank Narrowsburg teller Carol Welton to support the Milanville General Store’s charity drive to send care packages to U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan by selling homemade candy and raising funds. At right is the 1901 Skinners Falls, NY-Milanville, PA Bridge.*



# Community Service Award ~ Pennsylvania Environmental Council

A Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) program which arranges for the remediation of unauthorized landfill sites at no cost to the property owners has yielded tremendous results throughout the Commonwealth and locally.

PEC started its Community Illegal Dumpsite Cleanup Program in 2007.

In the past 10 years, PEC has cleaned up more than 200 illegal dumpsites in 12 counties, removing 1,127.97 tons of trash, 172.17 tons of scrap metal, and 394.67 tons of tires. Using a combination of volunteers and paid contractors, some 3,600 volunteers have invested 17,000+ hours.

Illegal dumping of waste not only has environmental and economic impacts in terms of degrading property values, it is also a significant threat to human health and water quality.

The Community Illegal Dumpsite Cleanup Program partners with environmental organizations, schools, businesses, local municipalities, county and state governments.

Several properties in Wayne and Pike County have taken advantage of this opportunity over the years.

A volunteer clean-up took place on May 7, 2016 at four sites owned by the Beach Lake Fishing and Hunting Club near Cortese Road along the Delaware River and below Darbytown Falls in Berlin Township.

Despite the rainy, muddy day, the volunteers and PEC employees removed 86 tires, 4.6 tons of trash, and 2.7 tons of scrap metal. Gary Fronk Excavating returned in late fall with heavy machinery to finish the job they had started.

Dave Reining is president of the sportsmen's club which has owned and maintained 360 acres of land since 1935.

Even though the clean-up site is located at the end of a dirt road with a steep bank, all posted and patrolled, people still managed to sneak their old tires, appliances, and garbage there, much to the frustration of members.

When Upper Delaware Council Berlin Township Representative and Club Vice-President Al Henry brought news of the PEC program's availability, the members readily agreed to participate and were thrilled with the results.

"They did a fantastic job. We're very happy. It's a great program," Dave says.

A private parcel along McKnight Road in Damascus Township that had been used as an unauthorized dumping ground over the years got the clean-up treatment on Nov. 1 and 2.

Working from dawn to dusk, contractor Fronk Excavating plucked out 4 tons of trash, 5 tons of assorted metals, and 42 tires.

Find out more information about this beneficial PEC program at [www.pecpa.org/program/community-illegal-dumpsite-cleanup-program/](http://www.pecpa.org/program/community-illegal-dumpsite-cleanup-program/).



Examples of work accomplished under the Community Illegal Dumpsite Clean-up Program included sites at Star-rucca Creek (top); Susquehanna Boro (center); and Scott Township along the Delaware River (bottom).

Volunteers are now being recruited for a clean-up along Adam Road in Manchester Township, Wayne County, this spring. Call (570) 592-7876 or email Coordinator Palmira Miller at [pmiller@pecpa.org](mailto:pmiller@pecpa.org).

# Public Service Award ~ Chris Gibson

Exercising his pledge for a self-imposed term limit after serving in the United States Congress since 2011, Chris Gibson stepped away from politics at the end of 2016, leaving a legacy of strong bipartisan character, accessible constituent service, and a deep desire - coupled with responsible follow-through - to support the Delaware River's needs.

Mr. Gibson was first elected in 2010 on the Republican ticket to represent the 20th Congressional District in New York, then won re-elections in 2012 and 2014 to the reconfigured 19th Congressional District.

A decorated Army colonel from Kinderhook, NY who served 24 years' active duty with seven deployments before his 2010 military retirement, Gibson earned a History degree from Siena College in 1986, and an MPA and Ph.D. in Government from Cornell University in 1998.

He authored a 2008 book "Securing the State", taught American Politics at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point for three years, and completed a Hoover National Security Affairs Fellowship at Stanford University, among his many accomplishments.

Rather than opting to run for New York State Governor in 2018 as he'd been publicly considering, Chris Gibson is transitioning to academia. He has joined Williams College, a top-ranked private liberal arts college in Williamstown, Massachusetts, as a Visiting Professor of Leadership Studies where he will teach this spring and guest lecturer to students on political science and national security topics.

He told the college's newspaper, "Moving to academia will allow me to make a meaningful contribution teaching and publishing while balancing family commitments. This decision allows me to enter a third phase of my professional life: soldier, statesman and, soon, teacher/scholar." (*Williams Record*, May 11, 2016)

Always responsive to the concerns of his Congressional district and receptive to invitations to travel throughout its large territory, Rep. Gibson made numerous appearances at local events including service as our keynote speaker at the Upper Delaware Council's 2014 awards banquet in Eldred, NY.

Rep. Gibson served as the New York co-chair of the Delaware River Basin Congressional Task Force, describing the river as "an ecological and scenic treasure that attracts anglers and sightseers from across the country."

He actively sought out constituents' opinions and ideas.

In early 2013, Rep. Gibson formed a Watershed Advisory Group to investigate and evaluate the issues concerning watershed management throughout the 19th Congressional District, after previously creating advisory groups on the policy topics of Veterans, Agriculture, and Energy.

He directed that the environmental, economic, and flood mitigation concerns of the Upper Delaware River region would be one area of special focus for his Watershed Advisory Group, citing the Upper Delaware Council among his valued consultants.

He spoke out about management of the Delaware River Basin reservoirs, delivering a still true statement during the 2014 Flexible Flow Management Program (FFMP) debate urging regulators to work cooperatively to improve the system.

"I understand there are significant and complex issues that remain under negotiation by the Decree Party Member's representatives. However, given the recent history of flooding in my district and downstream, the inconsistent nature of water releases that impact important recreational activities, and the growing unpredictability of major storms hitting the Northeastern United States, I believe that action among the Decree Party Members needs to be taken as quickly as possible," Congressman Gibson urged after the FFMP was renewed with no substantive changes again that year.

In a late-term victory, Rep. Gibson co-sponsored the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act and ushered it through six years of legislative wrangling before the bill became law on Dec. 16, 2016, establishing a non-regulatory basin restoration program that he predicted will be a "game-changer" for bringing overdue national attention and resources to locally-driven Delaware River projects.



*Rep. Gibson was the keynote speaker at the Battle of Minisink observance coordinated by The Delaware Company on July 23, 2016 at the Battleground Park in Minisink Ford, NY.*



*Nearing the end of his term, Rep. Gibson participated in a press conference in Hancock Dec. 22, 2016.*

# Robin M. Daniels Memorial Lifesaving Award ~ Michael K. Smith

*The Robin M. Daniels Memorial Lifesaving Award has been bestowed when applicable since 1995 to individuals and organizations whose heroic actions result in the direct saving of a life or lives in the river corridor and its environs, in memory of National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational Ranger Robin M. Daniels, who died in 1989 while responding to a volunteer ambulance emergency call.*

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Michael K. Smith of Point Pleasant, New Jersey and two guy friends were enjoying a nice Fourth of July weekend in the Upper Delaware River Valley, camping out at Kittatinny Canoes and Campgrounds in Barryville, NY.

"In the summer, we like to visit if the weather is good. I like the mountainous area," Michael says.

They went rafting down the river on Saturday.

On Sunday, July 3, 2016, Michael took his paddle board up to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Skinners Falls Access in the Town of Cohecton.

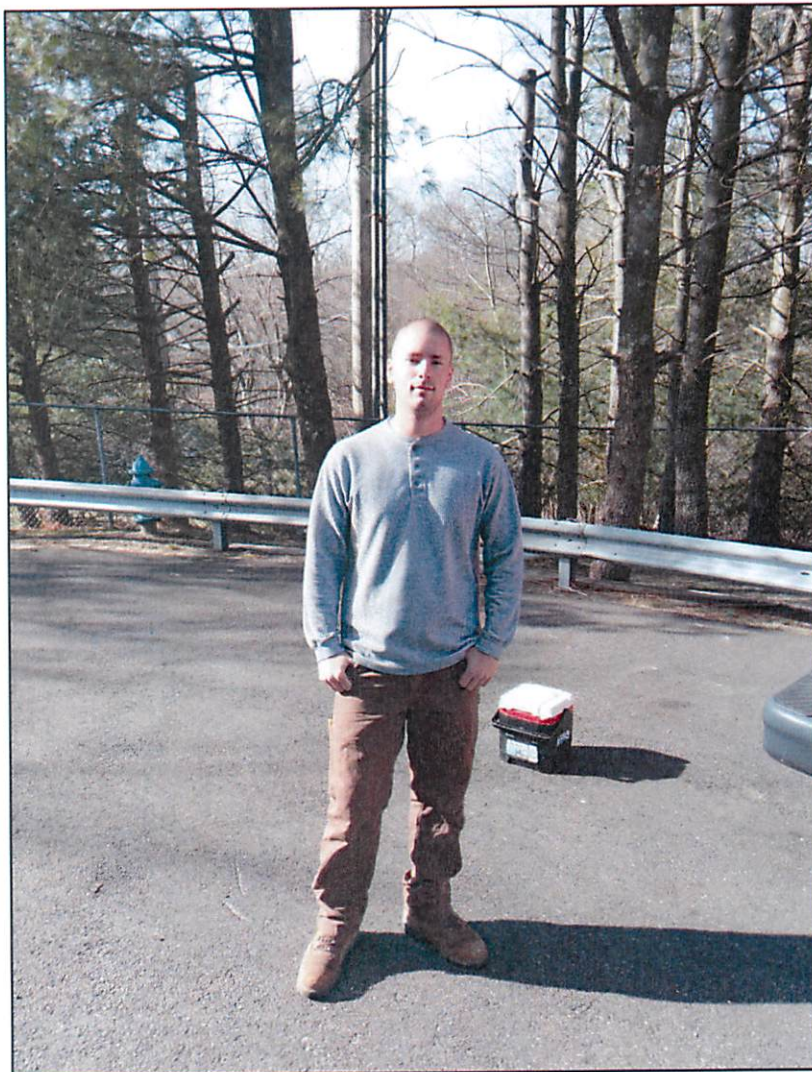
He was pulling his friend on an inflatable tube, fighting against some fairly strong currents, when he heard a sudden commotion.

"I saw a guy trying to swim across the river but his head kept going under. He couldn't keep himself up and was yelling for help in Spanish. This was about in the middle of the river," Michael recalls.

National Park Service Seasonal Interpretive Ranger Tenley Wurglitz was staffing the nearby kiosk and also heard the cries for help around 11:30 a.m.

As she ran toward her canoe, she saw that Michael had already reached the victim and was bringing him into shore while clinging to the paddle board.

"I didn't really think about it. It all hap-



pened very fast. The guy appeared to be in his late 20s, early 30s, with a big family that was jumping off the rocks. When we got back to shore, he wandered away," Michael says, while speculating further, "He went back to partying, I guess?"

Arriving after the fact to investigate, Upper Delaware Law Enforcement Ranger Vince Pareago was not able to locate the victim, who he said was likely quite shaken by the frightening experience and left.

After first commenting that he had never seen anyone paddle-boarding at Skinners Falls before this, Ranger Pareago said about the citizen rescue, "It was apparent that the individual would have probably drowned had it not been for Michael's actions."

Michael, age 25, is employed as an electrical apprentice and will now be known for this heroic deed as well.

# Distinguished Service Award ~ Ed Wesely

Naturalist, educator, conservationist, writer, photographer, historic preservationist, and monarch butterfly expert ... Ed Wesely humbly embodies all of these titles and the Upper Delaware River Valley has been the fortunate beneficiary of his talents.

Ed was an activist, water conservation expert, and hike coordinator for organizations such as the Potomac River and Trails Council, C&O Canal Association, and the Citizens Advisory Committee of the Water Resources Planning Board of the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments during his tenure as a professor of environmental education at Hood College in Maryland before being lured by the charms of the Upper Delaware.

With Barbara Yeaman, Ed organized and opened to the public a small nature center called the Butterfly Barn on property along the Delaware River in Milanville, PA which they operated through August 2013, offering free community programs, and rearing and releasing more than 7,000 monarch butterflies with the help of local families and school children.

He was also involved in the establishment of the Delaware Highlands Conservancy land trust organization and its programming.

Ed's presence at local festivals and environmental events was practically guaranteed, volunteering hundreds of his hours to teaching with an avid interest in continuing to learn as well.

In 1983, Ed became a contributing editor and general newspaper handyman for *The River Reporter*, writing several nature columns over the years including "Going Out" and "River Talk", as well as news and feature articles, providing data for the River Soundings report, and submitting photographs.



*"Ed's lifelong passion for learning and his drive to share his knowledge with others - especially children - has been an inspiration for all of us at the Delaware Highlands Conservancy. From the years of educational monarch butterfly programs he hosted with Barbara Yeaman for the Delaware Highlands Conservancy at the Butterfly Barn and at community events, to his dedication to contributing educational photos and quotes to our Facebook page to share his love of nature, Ed has inspired people of all ages to care for and steward our natural world."*

**~ Delaware Highlands Conservancy**

*Photos this page  
& far right by  
David B. Soete*

He designed the two-mile-long Damascus Forest Trail and led many nature walks.

Ed recently wrote and printed at his own expense two beautifully illustrated booklets documenting the Milanville Historic District, which listed 14 properties on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988, and the 1901 Skinners Falls, NY-Milanville, PA Bridge, for which he remains a strong advocate for its long-term rehabilitation and use.

For all that he continues to contribute to our quality of life and understanding of the natural world around us, the UDC proudly presents Ed Wesely with its Distinguished Service Award.

*"One of the great joys of working as an editor with Ed Wesely was the precision and conciseness of his work. It was always distilled to the absolute essence of what he had to say, nothing superfluous. He attended carefully to every word, every punctuation mark. And his photography, of course, was always fabulous.*

*"Each of his River Talks was a perfect little gem, reflecting a deep love and sense of wonder for our natural environment matched by the kind of knowledge that comes not only from books, but from years of meticulous observation." ~ Anne Willard, The River Reporter*





# Distinguished Service Award ~ Ed Wesely

"Thirty-five years ago, when I returned home to Washington D.C. after a year in California, Ed's words of welcome were: "Come with me. I want to show you a very special place." So we drove to Narrowsburg where I found, indeed, that 'very special place!'

"While I was gone, Ed was teaching a class in Outdoor Education at Hood College in Frederick, MD. As part of that training, he took his class to Narrowsburg and the Upper Delaware River region to show them what clean air and clean water really looked like. He revealed unspoiled trails, rivers, and unpolluted landscapes (the goals of the new 1972 Clean Air and Clean Waters legislation). One paddle down the beautiful Delaware River showed all his students a world found nowhere else in the Eastern United States. Always he was teaching as he introduced natural wonders to his college students.

"After bringing his classes here for three summers, we both regretted having to leave to return to a city at the end of the season. And so, after a few years we followed our hearts, and moved up here full-time.

"Since then Ed has continued teaching the riches of the natural world, to all ages, in his own enthusiastic way.

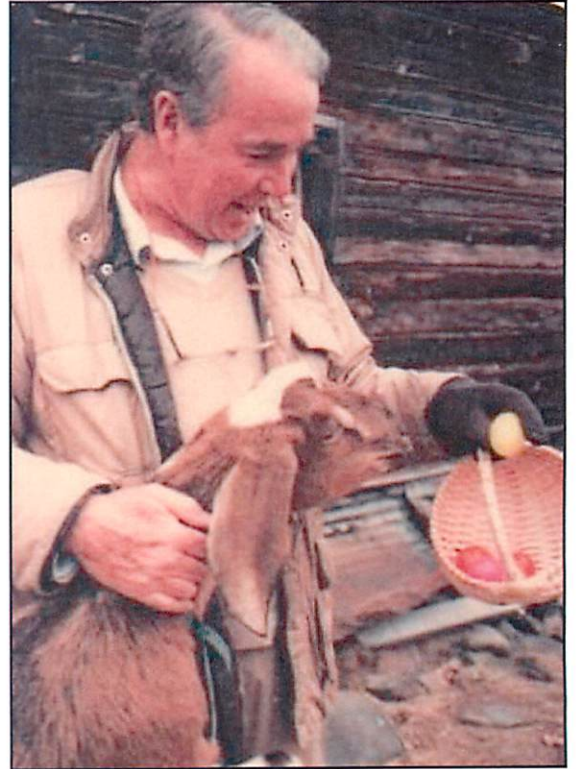
"Of particular interest were the mysteries of the Monarch Butterfly. Each summer the butterflies reappear in late June, lay their eggs and die. By August, the new eggs (found only on milkweed plants) hatch and grow from tiny striped green larva into robust caterpillars, grown fat on milkweed leaves. After forming a chrysalis they rest within for a week or so before emerging as fully adult winged butterflies! It is always a mystery to witness this creation of new life.

"Each summer our Butterfly Barn witnessed this same miraculous cycle. Some summers Ed collected, fed and reared up to 400 to 600 eggs through to adults. Many hundreds of children took part in releasing the butterflies to begin their journey to Mexico for the winter months. Each year the cycle repeats again. It is always amazing. But to witness a damp butterfly split open its chrysalis shell and gently move away to spread and dry its wings is an unforgettable sight that Ed has revealed to countless children and adults.

"This is gifted teaching at its best. And Ed Wesely is a gifted teacher, always sharing his knowledge toward a sustainable future."

*~ Barbara Yeaman, founder of the Delaware Highlands Conservancy in 1994, co-founder of Butterfly Barn, Milanville, PA, from Charlottesville, VA*

*Tennis champion Ed Wesely, left, Amherst College Class of 1952*



"I'm impressed with the passion Ed feels for the Delaware River and his dedication to documenting its historic resources." ~ Marileta Robinson, editorial assistant for Milanville booklets

