



Upper Delaware Council 34th Annual River Valley Awards

September 18, 2022

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

Upper Delaware Council, Inc.
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PROGRAM ITINERARY

3:00 p.m. - Reception with hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar

4:00 p.m. - Welcoming Remarks by UDC Chairperson Andy Boyar and dinner buffet

5:00 p.m. - Keynote Address: U.S. Congressman Matt Cartwright, PA 8th District

5:15 p.m. - Presentation of Awards by UDC Executive Director Laurie Ramie

6:30 p.m. - Closing Remarks and Group Photograph of Award Recipients

Thank you for joining the Upper Delaware Council to pay tribute to those who have acted to enhance the quality of life and protect the resources of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Valley.

Full profiles follow for our 2022 slate of honorees:

Oaken Gavel Award ~ Jeffrey R. Dexter, Damascus Township, PA

Special Recognition Award ~ Liam Mayo of the River Reporter

Volunteer Award ~ Cameron Forehand

Recreation Achievement Award ~ Dan Santoro

Recreation Achievement Award ~ Corrine Hinton

Cultural Achievement Award ~ Juan and Carmen Rigal, former owners of the Nutshell Arts Center, Lake Huntington, NY

Cultural Achievement Award ~ Cochection Pump House proprietors David Lieber and Jin Zhang

Community Service Award ~ John Pizzolato

Robin M. Daniels Memorial Lifesaving Award ~ Sam Macri

Distinguished Service Award ~ William J. Rudge



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: Representative Matt Cartwright

U.S. Congressman Matt Cartwright returns as keynote speaker after last joining the Upper Delaware Council in that role in 2019.

Representative Cartwright was first sworn into Congress in 2013, originally in the 17th District prior to winning the November 2018 election to represent the new 8th District, which includes all of Wayne, Pike and Lackawanna Counties, and portions of Luzerne and Monroe Counties.

The Congressman serves on the House Appropriations Committee and is the chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee for Commerce, Justice and Science, where he oversees more than \$70 billion in annual federal spending on matters of economic development, law enforcement, and science and innovation. He is vice-chair of the Financial Services & General Government Appropriations Subcommittee.

Matt is a co-chair of the House Democratic Policy and Communications Committee, committed to ensuring rural areas like Northeastern Pennsylvania are represented at the highest levels of the federal government.

He ranks #1 in the Commonwealth and is among the top ten in the country for securing Community Project Funding dollars for his district, landing \$52.68 million in the House's Fiscal Year 2023 appropriations bills.



A strong believer in working with members of both political parties, Matt has been recognized by the Center for Effective Lawmaking for introducing more bills with bipartisan support than any other House Democrat since he was first elected.

He graduated *magna cum laude* with a History degree from Hamilton College in 1983 and earned his J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1986.

Prior to coming to Congress, the Moosic resident worked as an attorney with Munley, Munley & Cartwright for 25 years.

He and his wife, Marion, have two sons, Jack and Matthew.

Congressman Cartwright maintains a satellite district office locally in the Hawley Silk Mill building at 8 Silk Mill Drive, Suite 213, Hawley, PA 18428; phone (570) 576-8005 or (570) 355-1818 for available hours.

Matt Cartwright was newly elected to represent Pennsylvania's 8th Congressional when he spoke at the UDC's 31st annual awards banquet at Central House Family Resort on April 28, 2019. He cut short a fact-finding mission to the Southeast China Sea region to keep his commitment. (Photo by David B. Soete)

Oaken Gavel Award ~ Jeffrey R. Dexter

The Upper Delaware Council recognizes leadership of the board through the Oaken Gavel Award, and Jeff Dexter is now a two-timer.

Having been instrumental in Damascus Township's decision to join the Council in 2008, the Board of Supervisors that he served on for a decade appointed him as its 1st alternate in 2010 then he became the voting representative in 2012.

2021 marked his second stint as UDC chairperson, with the prior experience in 2013. He served as vice-chair in 2012, 2016, 2019, and 2020, as well as secretary-treasurer in 2015.

Jeff is also a member of the UDC's Project Review and Operations Committees, and the Personnel Subcommittee.

The Cohecton, NY native who can trace his genealogy back to the Cushetunk Settlement graduated from Narrowsburg Central School in 1967. His father operated Lily's Propane Gas Service and the family lived along NYS Route 97.

He earned a 1971 Bachelor's degree in Resources Management from the College of Forestry at Syracuse University, including one year of study at SUNY Alfred Agriculture and Technical College.

Jeff worked for the Arizona State Parks System for 31 years before retiring from that career in 2003 and returning to the Upper Delaware River Valley.

He served as a Damascus township supervisor from May 15, 2006 to Dec. 31, 2015, including six years as chairperson, then was appointed to a six-year term as Township Auditor in 2016.

As a Disaster Building Inspector since 2005, Jeff has responded on short notice and for extended stays to numerous emergency situations across



the country.

He is also extremely active in his community, volunteering with the Damascus Township Volunteer Ambulance Corps, serving as the Volunteers-in-Mission Team Leader for disaster recovery projects through the Damascus Methodist Church, being the sponsor's representative to the Northeast Council of the Boy Scouts of America for Troop 122 in Damascus, and he belongs to numerous local historical societies.

Jeff and his wife, Linda, built a log home on 19 acres where he enjoys working on his wood lot, building rock walls, picking blueberries, making maple syrup, tending to a vegetable garden, and tinkering on his machinery. He kayaks and runs races too!

The couple raised three children: Kari, Bethany, and Jonathan.

Jeff Dexter may have "retired" multiple times, but he remains a dedicated public servant with a selfless mission to give back.



Jeff, sworn in as 2021 UDC chair by Judge Ronald J. Edwards (top), shared in the UDC's 2020 Lifesaving Award through his service with the Damascus Township Volunteer Ambulance Corps after a 2019 river rescue. (Left & center photos contributed by Linda Dexter)

Special Recognition ~ Liam Mayo

Fresh out of Bard College where he double-majored in Written Arts and Literature, Liam Ainslie Mayo applied sight-unseen to become a reporter at a weekly independent newspaper in an unfamiliar area.

"When I saw Main Street, Narrowsburg for the first time, it was magical. Looking out at the Delaware River still creates chills," the 23-year-old says.

Liam shared his writing samples including his work with the Bard Free Press student newspaper, while discussing the community journalism philosophy of the River Reporter with Publisher Laurie Stuart. She offered him the job on May 27, 2021, covering a wide range of beats including Sullivan County government, several river towns, and the Upper Delaware Council.

"Liam is an insightful, thoughtful human being," Laurie says. "Classically trained in literature and piano, Liam always has a fresh perspective to offer. He is a man of many talents, is a hard worker, strives to do his best, and *always* maintains a sense of humility and a willingness to serve the common good. He's great!"

He particularly enjoys delving into complicated stories and "issues that really affect people" such as local governments and master planning.

"I used to want to get every word perfect but I've learned that what is on the page is so much less impor-



tant than listening, being out in the community, and letting people know that their concerns will be heard," Liam says of his editorial department contributions that also include photography, production assistance, website updates, and he serves as the River Reporter's representative to WJFF 90.5 FM Radio Catskill.

The Reporters Roundtable gathers a team of journalists monthly to discuss pressing issues, while Liam also offers a weekly roundup of newsworthy bits on The Local Edition. Recent roundtable topics included cell towers, redistricting impacts, farming, cannabis, and COVID.

WJFF host Patricio Robayo says, "Liam has been an asset to The Reporters Roundtable. He brings his passion and knowledge of local issues to the program and has quickly become a staple to the station. Our listeners can be assured that when they hear Mayo on the air, they will have fair and accurate reporting, whether on The Local Edition on weeknights or the weekends when he reports the headlines from the River Reporter."

Having studied voice, dancing, and acting, Liam says that his public radio station appearances "help scratch some of that theater itch."

Liam was born in Boston and spent his childhood in Green Bay, Wisconsin. He became an accompanist and composer for the Makaroff Youth Ballet company in Appleton, WI from 2014-2017. He chose Bard College for its combined focus on academics and the arts, graduating in 2021.

A strong believer in pitching in, Liam has rolled up his sleeves for trash pick-ups including the Upper Delaware Litter Sweep and the Lackawaxen River Clean-up, and takes pleasure in attending various meetings and events as a resident instead of a reporter such as the Deep Water Literary Festival and Narrowsburg Riverfest. He spends his spare time comparing notes with a writers' group from Bard and revising a magic-realist novel he started as a senior project in college that is now set in a fantastic version of rural New York. A goal is to be a published author one day.

To further hone his craft, Liam does some long-form freelance writing, such as a recent in-depth article for the Hudson Valley River Newsroom on the Delaware Aqueduct repair project, which he completed just before New York City Department of Environmental Protection decided to postpone the shutdown for a year.

For his nimble facility with words, ability to dissect layered issues, trustworthy reporting skills, and enthusiasm, the UDC recognizes Liam Mayo.



Volunteer Award ~ Cameron Forehand

"Cameron was a joy to work with. She is intelligent, hard-working, and self-motivating, all of which made our job easy. She accomplished so much and added a great deal of natural resource content to the UPDE website. We are fortunate to have worked with her." ~ Andy Weber, Ecologist, NPS UPDE

The Upper Delaware National Park Unit does not have a dedicated person to work on the park's webpage and as a result, the site has suffered. In particular, the Natural Resource pages were almost nonexistent. UPDE created a project for a Natural Resource Web project with the Virtual Student Federal Service.

Cameron Forehand, a student at Clemson University in South Carolina, was recruited and she almost singlehandedly created and updated the vast majority of Natural Resource content for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River website. She did a phenomenal job taking an idea or concept and figuring out how to best articulate it in a way that was easy for people to read yet did not diminish or water down the content.

Prior to Cameron's work, there was a minimal amount of Natural Resource content on the UPDE website and what was there did not convey the robust natural resource story that the park unit has. Cameron has changed that in a huge way! By creating content that will live on the park's website for many years to come, she has effectively managed to invest not only in the present, but also in the future of the park unit. She has created a better NPS experience for park website visitors. The pages that she created brought the Natural Resource material on the website into the 21st century. The website is extremely important as the internet is also the best way to engage youth and get them interested in the outdoors and in protecting our National Parks. In this day and age, visitors expect that websites will have current and engaging content, and Cameron has led the charge in this area for Natural Resources at Upper Delaware!

Cameron created 27 pages for the UPDE website. She provided input into which pages would be created as well as taking



the lead on writing all the content for each page. Ingrid Peterec and Andy Weber, her supervisors, noted how little oversight Cameron required to produce well-written content – which was a benefit, as having an individual who could work without much oversight allowed the project to progress at a rapid pace.

"It was very easy to work with her," said Ingrid, "and she always had a positive attitude and a smile on her face when we would talk."



Cameron graduated from Clemson University with a degree in Environmental and Natural Resources. She is currently at the University of Oklahoma in a graduate program seeking a master's in biology. She is working with Texas horned lizards, monitoring them with radio transmitters; as well as working with the Oklahoma City Zoo, raising the lizards in captivity to release back into the wild in hopes to increase their numbers. She enjoys running and is training for a marathon, even in the Oklahoma heat! After achieving her degree, she hopes to work in a National Park as an ecologist, just like her former supervisor Andy Weber. She loves writing, says she enjoyed her work on the UPDE website, and that Andy and Ingrid were great mentors.

Recreation Achievement ~ Dan Santoro

Dan Santoro is a man of many talents – tattoo artist, fly fisherman, trash picker-upper.

Dan started his tattoo apprenticeship in 2000 and was tattooing full time by September of 2001. He spent most of his 20s and early 30s in New York City, both Manhattan and south Brooklyn, before relocating to Pennsylvania. He's the owner of American House, a primarily one-man private tattoo studio in Hawley, Pennsylvania.

Dan's been an angler all his life and a fly fisherman since 2014, when he did a float trip on the Delaware with his friend Chris Calabrese. As he told Fly Lords Mag, "After a long day of getting skunked with spin gear... I landed a smallmouth on a Clouser minnow almost at the boat ramp... I was elated and immediately bought a setup."

In 2021, along with Sean Witman and Tim Miller, he opened Housefly Fishing, a full service fly shop where they "strive to couple our love for fishing and the outdoors with conservation and community."

Housefly is a couple doors down from his tattoo studio, and just a few steps from the Lackawaxen River.

But the reason Dan is here today is his work with "Get Trashed" events. At these river cleanup events, participants compete to see who can collect the most litter along the river, be it the Upper Delaware or the Lackawaxen. They meet the night before to determine a game plan. Then, the morning of the pickup, they disperse to various spots along the river, where they pick up trash from the shore, from a boat, or by simply wading into the river. And then they fish! The afterparty consists of music, libations, and counting up the amount of trash picked up, and the number of fish landed. A winner is crowned.

Dan has been involved in planning and participating in Get Trashed events on the Upper Delaware since 2017, as well as cleanups along the Lackawaxen since 2019, helping to organize a dedicated base of volunteers year after year. He also has adopted a stretch of highway in Pennsylvania to keep clean, through the Keep Hawley-Honesdale Beautiful group.

Chris Calabrese, co-founder of the Get Trashed River Cleanup Battle, says, "Dan's got an undeniable gift. Luckily (for us), he's always been extremely generous with his gift. From punk show flyers to logos for his friends' fledgling businesses, Dan has always stepped up. As his fame in the tattoo world has grown, he's still always down to help. The next evolution has been the promotion and planning of river cleanups. Still pretty punk if you ask me."



Town of Tusten UDC Alternate Representative and Sweetwater Guide Service co-owner Evan Padua says, "Dan Santoro has carried and shared enthusiasm to promote river cleanups and general ethical practices in our local area. He has participated in and led local groups to clean trash ridden areas. These efforts are appreciated and the kind of acts that have lasting effects. He helps raise awareness regarding littering for the general public and future generations."

Dan uses his art and his passion for the outdoors and his enthusiasm for this wonderful place and community to help maintain the features that make it so special.



Dan Santoro is pictured with his Housefly Fishing crew at left and with Mike Coppola (photo courtesy of KHHB) for a Rt. 652 clean-up below.



Recreation Achievement ~ Corrine Hinton

The safety of river recreationists has been the top priority for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River (UPDE).

In 2011 a Water Safety Committee was formed, made up of partners who have a vested interest in promoting the importance of wearing life jackets when fishing, boating, swimming, and floating when on or near the Upper Delaware River.

Over the years the Water Safety Committee has utilized the National Safe Boating Council's "Wear It!" messaging to spread the word about the importance of wearing life jackets. However, in 2021 the park experienced five drownings and it was determined that new messaging was needed.

Enter Corrine Hinton!

A graduate of East Stroudsburg University, Corrine was working as a seasonal Park Ranger intern in the summer of 2022. She worked in visitor outreach, interacting with visitors and helping disseminate park information from both riverside kiosks and from a canoe. She also presented interpretive programs to visitors of the Upper Delaware, including a popular salamander program that she developed herself.

And when Ingrid Peterec, Chief of Interpretation at UPDE, noticed that Corinne was designing stickers, pins and brochures for other programs, Ingrid realized she was the ideal person to design new water safety signs for the park unit.

Using messaging that had come out of the Water Safety Committee, in just a few days Corrine designed and developed six new water safety signs that focused on the hazard (drowning), what the activity was that led up to the drowning, and what was the expected outcome (wear a life jacket).

Corrine designed the new signs to help visitors think about the potential effects of their drowning, such as the impact on their family and friends. The signs cover swimming activities, swift river currents, and steep drop offs. They are in English, Spanish, and Russian, and will be translated into further languages to reach the more diverse audiences that are coming to recreate in and on the Upper

Most drownings happen on a calm river.

Wear a life jacket no matter what.



Delaware.

"The posters are eye catching and colorful, and are sure to resonate with visitors to the river. Job well done to Corrine," Ingrid said in her nomination.

Corrine's degree is in Environmental Science, with minors in Parks & Recreation Management.

She currently lives in Easton, PA and is searching for an opportunity in a state park or a similar setting to work in environmental education and interpretation.



Cultural Achievement ~ Juan and Carmen Rigal

For 27 years, the Nutshell Arts Center in Lake Huntington, NY was home to exhibitions, performances, fundraising events, and weekend hangouts, all thanks to a couple who lived across the street and learned the business as they were running it.

Juan Rigal was a full-time computer consultant (until 2013) with a Cooper Union arts degree and Carmen Rigal had done secretarial work in New York City. They discovered Lake Huntington while visiting their friends Krista Glasser and Dean Scharf who had bought property around the corner from the Nutshell that became an artists' workshop with small exhibitions.

The Nutshell had many lives since 1896 including a casino, inn, bowling alley, and a biker bar.

The Rigals bought their lake-adjacent vacation home in 1984 as they transitioned from living in Queens to Tuxedo and then Rock Tavern over their 56 years of marriage. When the Nutshell property became available, they bought it as an investment in 1987.

They invested two years into renovating it, determined to reopen "as a venue where the musically inclined, the art lovers, and those who just want to come and relax can listen to music, meet friends, and enjoy a cocktail while looking out at the beautiful lake."

The spruced-up lounge with its existing black light psychedelic artwork opened after 6 p.m. on weekends, and open spaces and an Annex would house three galleries. Sculptors, painters, photographers and mixed media artists from the tri-state area were all welcome.

"The Nutshell has always been a flexible space. You could change it to be anything you wanted. It was about whatever the community wanted, whatever was fun," Juan says.

They hosted jamborees, club meetings, dinners, dance parties, concerts, comedy shows, films, benefits, political rallies, Hell's Angels Toys for Tots, and served as the drill evacuation site for the nearby Sullivan West High School over the years.

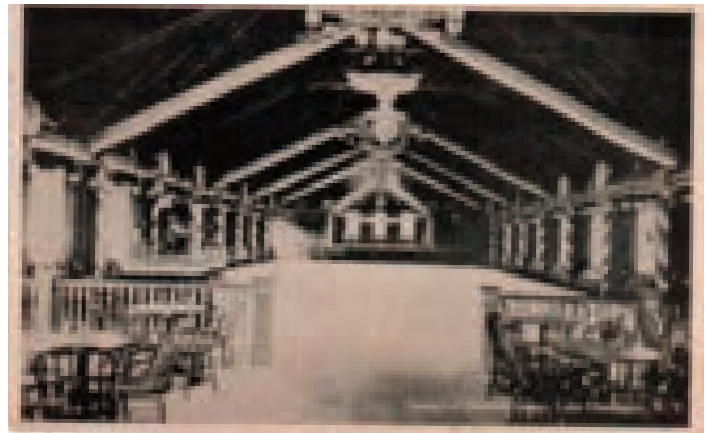
Their first art show in 1994 was titled "The Catskill Connection" based on a Juan Rigal painting and it all came full circle with "The Last Picture Art Show" featuring the works of 26 artists that ran from Aug. 28-Sept. 12, 2021.

The self-taught proprietors oversaw all aspects of the business and served as gallery directors, with Carmen curating the shows including advertising and installations.



Award nominator Linda Slocum recalls, "We thoroughly enjoyed attending the exhibition openings at the Nutshell Arts Center and meeting new people after we moved to Narrowsburg from the city. Their gallery space was large enough for visitors to enjoy the art on display and it also had plenty of room for socializing. It was certainly a labor of love that provided decades of opportunities for our community of artists to share their work with the public! With the ever-increasing changes being brought to this area through social media, the Nutshell Arts Center will always remain in my mind as part of the 'good old days'."

When they opted to retire and sell The Nutshell, the Rigals were pleased that the venue is continuing its cultural outreach as the new home of the Delaware Valley Opera Center. They attend every show.



Above is an early 1900s postcard showing the "famous Nutshell Casino" built in 1896. Carmen & Juan Rigal, left, purchased it in 1987 and did extensive renovations to accommodate a concert/dance hall, lounge, and art galleries that they operated until 2021.



Cultural Achievement ~ Cochection Pump House



BEFORE restoration with trees and vegetation growing wild; and *AFTER* image of the venue by Randazzo & Blau Photography.
Below left, aerial photo by Mike Chernesky and right, a painting of the Cochection Pump House by local artist Jay Brooks.

In the latter part of the 1800s, oil baron John Rockefeller recognized the need to transport crude oil more efficiently from wells in Pennsylvania and New York to refineries around Bayonne, NJ. Rockefeller and his Standard Oil Company set out to plot a pipeline route along the southern tier of New York and eventually to turn southeast through the Delaware River valley toward Port Jervis, NY. Just north of the city, the pipeline would move out of the river valley and over the Shawangunk Mountains continuing toward New Jersey. The overall distance from the oil fields to the refinery is about 300 miles. Although over much of the pipeline the oil could move by the force of gravity, in order to get over higher elevations other stations were required along the route. These pump stations were located approximately 30 miles apart.

It was determined that a pump station would be needed around Cochection, NY. Property near the Erie railroad tracks was purchased from the John Tyler Estate. The station began operation in 1881 and ceased operation in 1925. After sitting idle for many years, an effort was made in 1936 to demolish the structure. Multiple attempts were only partly successful. Just as the Cochection Erie Station located along the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway is the last train depot to escape demolition, so too the Cochection Pump House is the last to “partially” remain out of the eleven that were built.

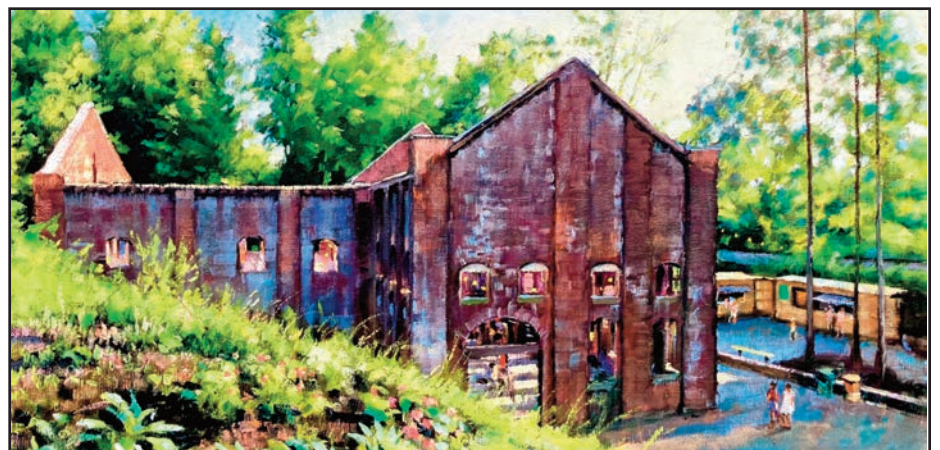
Over the years people have recognized the important part that this pipeline, and more specifically this Cochection pump house, played during the industrial revolution. There were discussions about restoring and repurposing the site, but nothing came to fruition – that is until David Lieber and Jin Zhang purchased the vegetation-concealed remains. They set about cleaning up the site and stabilizing the remaining structure with the aim of creating a destination Open Air Biergarten and Event Space.

It took a considerable amount of funding, research, and effort to do this in a historically correct manner. But they loved the area that they lived in – a place to get away from the city, among rolling mountains and the beautiful Delaware River, the gorgeous drive on the Scenic Byway, the local wildlife.

“It’s a simpler life up here, it’s not pretentious,” says Dave. They wanted to build a destination that would draw people to the area and to local businesses, to share what they’ve discovered in the Catskill mountains.

It’s their first time opening a space like this. Running a small business is a lot of work, but as Dave says, “I love this job; it’s the best.” They’re pleased with how popular the spot has become, and have been pleasantly surprised by the diversity of the clientele they’ve attracted – not just visitors from the city, but weekenders and locals as well, of all ages and walks of life.

Dave and Jin have succeeded in preserving a local historical landmark in a way that allows visitors to enjoy the space with food, drink, live music, storytelling, yoga, benefit fundraisers, and other activities. They’ve enhanced the region that they fell in love with, and are sharing its wonders with new and old visitors alike.



Community Service ~ John Pizzolato

Allow nominator Debra Conway from The Delaware Company to count the many ways that Johnny Pizzolato serves his Barryville, Town of Highland, and river valley community.

"His most significant contributions were/are: event planning for the inaugural Festival of the Founding Fish (coordinating talent, venues, set-up and clean-up, overnight and food prep accommodations personally donated, coordinating advertising and graphic design, liaison with Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association, Bethel Woods, and metro media); Upper Delaware Litter Sweep logistical and volunteer coordinator; Highland Silver Feather Award Sullivan Renaissance grantwriter and river-related projects coordinator; Upper Delaware Scenic Byway past chairperson who obtained State funding for a new administrative position and moved forward the Visitor Center at The Callicoon Depot among other successes; president of the Barryville Farmers' Market; board member for the Greater Barryville Chamber of Commerce, and much more," she says.

Johnny grew up in Rockford, IL and earned a degree in Theater Arts from Hofstra University.

Since 2012, Johnny has co-owned The Stickett Inn boutique hotel located along the NYS Route 97 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway. Stickett Inn produces its own popular brand of hard cider with a tasting room available at the Bang Bang Bar and an outlet in New York City's East Village. The former punk rock band member is also the director of International Playground, a public relations and consulting agency.

Margie Granese, who coordinates the St. Anthony's Food Pantry in Yulan, says, "Johnny and I met by him interviewing me to become a 'town hero'. If I had known then what I know about him now, the table should have been turned around. There are just so many nice things to say about him. He is one of the most 'giving of self' persons I have met since living in Barryville full-time. He helps by volunteering at the food pantry, always being positive in a negative situation and there to listen or to help move a piece of furniture. His smile lights up a room and his understanding is quite overwhelming to me sometimes. He's the guy I'd want in my corner if needed!"

Sullivan County Democrat Highland columnist Paula Campbell observed that Johnny not only unloads the trucks and packs food boxes to distribute to pantry families, but he also leveraged donations from shoppers at the Barryville Farmers' Market to provide locally-sourced, home-cooked meals in conjunction with Foster Supply Hospitality's A Single Bite program.



Above Delaware River photo by Noah Kalina. At right, John met with (then) New York State Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul at The Eldred Preserve last July during his campaign for Highland Town Supervisor. Below, at the Cohecton "Pup House" Canine Fashion Contest Aug. 20 which raised \$5,350 for the Sullivan County SPCA, Lamonte posed with the benefit's host, actress Melissa Gilbert of Barryville, and his three dads, Johnny, (a judge), husband Roswell Hamrick, and artist Trey Speegle.



Johnny is also active on all levels of the political realm, and with causes that could impact the area's economy and environment.

Delaware Riverkeeper Maya van Rossum notes, "John Pizzolato provides a rare breed of leadership. He is personally dedicated and engaged with the efforts he takes on, investing tremendous personal attention, time and resources. Johnny complements his personal demonstration of dedication with a welcoming call for others to become involved at whatever level feels comfortable for them, but Johnny then uses his talent for supporting, training, engaging and inspiring others to take people up the ladder of engagement so even those who never envisioned themselves as outspoken and persuasive leaders on an issue suddenly find themselves embracing that role. Johnny is a treasure for our Delaware River and communities - rising up to champion our River's protection on his own, and at the same time raising up others so they proudly and effectively join him in ensuring our River has a voice in our human world."

Undaunted by occasional obstacles, skeptical attitudes, and countless demands for his rare free time, John Pizzolato continues to embrace and give back to his communities.

Robin M. Daniels Memorial Lifesaving Award ~ Sam Macri

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, named 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.

The Macri family from Ramsey, New Jersey returned to the Upper Delaware River last summer for a family vacation that could have turned tragic if not for the cool head and bravery of their older son.

Parents Melissa (an event planner) and John



(a psychologist) had rented a house and decided to take their boys, Sam and Dan, on a tubing and swimming adventure starting from Lander's River Trips' Skinners Falls base on August 29, 2021.

At approximately 3:05 p.m., National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational Law Enforcement Ranger Ryan Schumacher and Seasonal Interpretation Ranger Grace Wilson were on the New York side of Skinners Falls in the area just south of what's known as Swimmers Rock, discussing route selection with a group portaging their canoe upriver towards the Skinners Falls Access.

"I heard a cry come from the river," Ranger Schumacher recalls.

"As I turned, I observed seven-year-old Daniel Macri submerged in the river up to his shoulders and facing upstream. Daniel's nine-year-old brother Sam Macri was crouched on a boulder immediately to the right of Sam and holding Daniel by his life jacket, keeping his head above water. I ran into the river and tried to pull Daniel up by his life jacket as well. Sam stated that Daniel's foot was stuck down below the water.

"At this time, I entered the water up past my waist while still holding Daniel's life jacket by the right collar. As I blocked the water from rushing over him, I was able to find where his left foot was entrapped below the surface and freed it by pulling the foot upstream from the back of the leg. I picked Daniel up and placed



**"Sam is a hero, not only to his younger brother but to all of us who work every day spreading the word about river safety."
~ U.S. Park Ranger Ryan Schumacher**

him on the boulder with his brother. I helped both brothers to the edge of the river where their mother was able to meet with us a few seconds later.

"At this time, I asked Ranger Wilson to check on Daniel's leg for any injury and spoke with their mother, Melissa Macri. She stated she had also heard the cry and was trying to get over to help as fast as she could but was not as close as I was. Ms. Macri's husband was present at the river as well but was further downstream and out of earshot.

"None of the boys sustained any injuries but without Sam's quick thinking to call for help and strength in holding his brother's head out of the water, the outcome could have been tragic," Ryan reports.

John Macri says the thought of Dan being pinned by a rock with water up to his neck and



not a lot of people around to witness it is frightening enough, but Sam's instinctual action to protect his younger brother brought them great relief and pride.

"They usually fight like cats and dogs," John says with a laugh. "He never had any training for emergencies and I would never think my son would know what to do in that situation. This has earned him a lot of praise and we have given him a lot of love for it."

John said they are also grateful to the professional park rangers who happened to be on the scene and able to come to their aid.

"Along with my son, I am so thankful for the rangers being there. When I heard what happened, I thanked them immensely for being so responsive and helpful," he says.

Now age 11, Sam recently entered the sixth grade at the Academy of St. Paul's in Ramsey, and is happy to be back in school and on his schedule following the COVID-19 disruptions. He loves being outdoors, soccer, basketball and water sports.

The above photo of Sam tubing was taken on August 29, 2021. For saving that day from a potentially worse fate, the Upper Delaware Council honors Sam Macri.

(Photos contributed by Melissa Macri)

Distinguished Service Award ~ William J. Rudge

The Distinguished Service Award is the Upper Delaware Council's highest honor, given to individuals who have acted with distinction in support of the goals and objectives of the *River Management Plan for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River*.

After an outstanding 35-year career with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and a remarkable 21-year tenure as the State's voting representative to the Upper Delaware Council, William J. Rudge retired on February 25, 2022.

Bill's UDC liaison role was characterized by professional and consistent sharing of information, quick responsiveness to questions and concerns, active participation in UDC strategic planning, well-traveled familiarity with the Upper Delaware River Valley, a friendly demeanor and good-natured temperament, and genuine support of the organization's goals.

Distinguished service, personified.

"I have known Bill Rudge from his first day on the job as the representative to our Upper Delaware Council from the NYS DEC," says Town of Delaware Representative Harold G. Roeder, Jr. of Bill's April 2001 appointment that coincided with his promotion to DEC Natural Resources Supervisor for Region 3.

"Bill was not just another person filling a position. He turned out to be a stellar representative for NYS and the DEC. Over the 21 years of his service, having him at our meetings was more like him being part of a family. Bill was always willing to bring and to share information for us. He wouldn't hesitate to offer his advice or assistance if he knew it could be of help to us. He was and is 'the real deal'. Besides, his smile and laughter were contagious. Now that he has re-



Photo above and top right, courtesy of Stephanie Mossey, NYS DEC

tired, there are big shoes to be filled. But I'll always remember how well Bill filled those shoes. THANKS BILL!," Harold adds.

Town of Deerpark UDC Representative Ginny Dudko agrees.

"What an honor and privilege it has been to know and work with Bill. He has been the ultimate professional and handled the position of NYS DEC representative to the Upper Delaware Council these many years with grace and good humor, as well as a vast knowledge of the topics in his field. (He would have to have these qualities to put up with all of us!) He always brought to us the latest news from his department and answered all our questions. If



Left photo by David B. Soete; 2007
photo below by Bill Douglass, UDC



he was unable to do so when asked, he researched the topic and got back to us quickly and with a thorough response. We miss him already and he leaves 'big shoes to fill'. Our prayers and best wishes go with him into his retirement," she says.

And this reminiscence from Town of Tusten Representative Susan Sullivan:

"Bill, you are sorely missed. I miss your sense of humor, your ability to truly listen to everyone's concerns, and to be thoroughly well informed. Yet, you were willing to sometimes say, 'I don't know, but I will find out and get back to you.' And you always did. When it was brought to your attention that the NY DEC river accesses were in need of attention, the work got done. You are a protector of our shared environment, and for that, I am very grateful."

Bill grew up in Clinton, NY, earned his Eagle Scout badge, obtained a degree in Natural Resources Management from Colorado State University in 1982, and immediately went to work for the NYS DEC as a seasonal ranger in the Adirondack High Peaks while working in winters for the Olympic Regional Development Authority at Mt. Van Hovenberg in Lake Placid.

He rejoined the DEC as a permanent employee in 1985 after briefly serving as Adirondack Mountain Club Facilities Manager, starting out as a Forest Technician.

As Natural Resources Supervisor based in New Paltz, Bill coordinated eight programs - Forestry, Wildlife, Inland Fisheries, Hudson River Fisheries, Habitat Protection, Minerals, Hudson River Estuarine Research Reserve, and Real Property - while supervising the work of some 60 employees.

"I really love my job," he told us in a Spring 2003 *The Upper Delaware* newsletter profile. "Everyone that I work with has been wonderful and I feel that what we do here influences the stewardship of our region."



"I'm overwhelmed with this award from the Upper Delaware Council. It's been my pleasure all the years I've worked with the UDC, especially with all the wonderful people who serve to preserve, protect and enhance the Delaware River. My recent battle with cancer has heightened my appreciation for the opportunity I've had to contribute to this effort. All the best, Bill Rudge" (August 10, 2022 message)



Photo courtesy of Sandy Long, Heron's Eye Communications

He and his wife, Patti, reside in Ulster County and have two children, Caleb and Sarah. The sporty, outdoorsy family are enthusiastic boaters and cross-country skiers.

Bill also cycled, hunted, and fished for fun. He was a past president of his local volunteer fire department and active with the Catholic Church in Phoenicia.

While serious health challenges accompanied his retirement, Bill has kept his spirits high in his typical manner.

"I can't express the wonderful career I've had at DEC, and particularly how much I've enjoyed working with all of you," he said in his announcement of stepping down.

His institutional knowledge, caring attitude, smooth handling of controversial subjects, and accessibility to all the various constituencies he dealt with are rare commodities that will forever fortify Bill Rudge's lasting legacy.

2022 Upper Delaware Council Membership



UDC representatives and alternates pictured at the March 3, 2022 monthly board meeting in Narrowsburg, NY were, seated from the left: Secretary-Treasurer Al Henry (Berlin), Chairperson Andy Boyar (Highland), and Vice-Chairperson Aaron Robinson (Shohola). Standing, left to right, were: Jeff Dexter (Damascus), Cody Hendrix (National Park Service Community and Land Use Planner partner), Mike DiSarno (interim New York State delegate), Bill Dudko (Deerpark), Joe Salvatore (NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Superintendent), Doug Case (Lackawaxen), Nadia Rajs (Lumberland), Susan Sullivan (Tusten), Larry H. Richardson (Cochecton), Ginny Dudko (Deerpark), Jim Greier (Fremont), and Harold Roeder, Jr. (Delaware). Absent or virtually participating in the meeting were Fred Peckham (Hancock), Mike Barth (Westfall), Tim Dugan (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania), and Kristen Bowman Kavanagh (Delaware River Basin Commission).

Tribute to Joe Salvatore

Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Superintendent Joseph A. Salvatore passed away unexpectedly on July 27, 2022 at the age of 53.

He started the position on December 20, 2020, after serving since 2016 as deputy chief for the Park Facility Management Division in the National Park Service Washington Support Office.

Joe enlisted in the U.S. Navy at age 18 for six years of active duty, and started his NPS career in 2013 after working as a defense contractor.

He was assigned to the Upper Delaware after a



six-month stint as deputy superintendent at the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

He played a vital role in navigating operations during the COVID 19 pandemic and was a big advocate for river safety.

Joe grew up in West Virginia and had been residing in Honesdale, PA.

The Upper Delaware Council was created and mandated in 1988 by an Act of Congress. It oversees a partnership of Federal, two States, and local governments to manage the 73.4-mile designated Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River.

The UDC fills a vital role in the relationship between the National Park Service and the local communities, protecting home rule authority, safeguarding private property rights, and advising towns/townships on meeting the River Management Plan Land and Water Use Guidelines.

The organization has been funded through a federal allocation, flat since its inception, with neither the State of New York nor the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania contributing their shares.

Despite funding challenges, the UDC has fulfilled its core responsibilities set out in the federal legislation for the benefit of the approximately 250,000 visitors each year and all those fortunate enough to live in the Upper Delaware River Valley.