



**Upper Delaware Council
30th Annual
Awards Ceremony**

April 22, 2018

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

Upper Delaware Council, Inc.
P.O. Box 192, 211 Bridge St.
Narrowsburg, NY 12764
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UDC Awards Ceremony Program

3:00 p.m. Registration and Reception

Enjoy appetizers and a cash bar

4:00 p.m. Welcome and Introductions

Aaron I. Robinson, UDC Chairperson
Laurie Ramie, UDC Executive Director

4:10 p.m. Buffet Dinner Served

5:00 p.m. Keynote Address by Gay Vietzke
Regional Director
National Park Service Northeast Region

5:15 p.m. Presentation of 2018 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 ~ Gay Vietzke, NPS

The Upper Delaware Council is pleased to welcome Gay Vietzke, regional director of the National Park Service (NPS) Northeast Region, as our keynote speaker.

Vietzke began her assignment as director of the Northeast Regional Office based in Philadelphia, PA in September 2017.

She had most recently served as superintendent of the National Mall and Memorial Parks in Washington, D.C.

Vietzke oversees operations for 83 national parks, 22 national heritage areas, 1,102 national heritage landmarks, 154 national natural landmarks, and many other associated sites within the states of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island,



Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.

The Northeast Region has a budget of nearly \$320 million and more than 3,000 employees.

Vietzke served as the Northeast Region's deputy regional director from 2011 to 2015, leading the region's park operations, resource stewardship and science, and external affairs and partnership programs.

Among her many other NPS assign-

ments, she served as the superintendent of Fort MCHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine, and Hampton National Historic Site in Maryland.

She also served as superintendent of Sagamore Hill National Historic Site in Oyster Bay, NY.

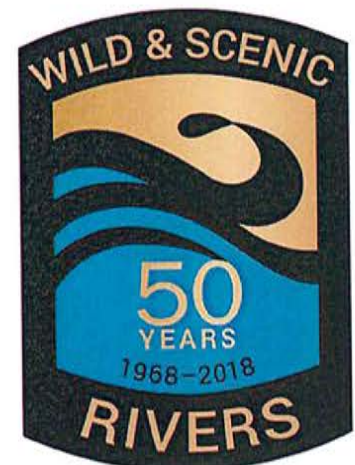
Vietzke holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art History from the University of Connecticut and a Master of Science degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania.

More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 417 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Visit www.nps.gov, or National Park Service social media pages on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Upper Delaware Council 2018 Membership



Gathered at the UDC's February 1, 2018 meeting were, seated from the left, Secretary-Treasurer Alan F. Henry, Berlin Township; Vice-Chairperson David M. Dean, Town of Deerpark; and Chairperson Aaron I. Robinson, Shohola Township. Standing, from left to right: Larry H. Richardson, Town of Cochection; Steve Tambini, Delaware River Basin Commission; Bill Rudge, State of New York; Kristina Heister, National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River; Virginia Dudko, Town of Deerpark; Tim Dugan, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Roger Saumure, Shohola Township; Michael Barth, Westfall Township; Susan Sullivan, Town of Tusten; Fred Peckham, Town of Hancock; Kaitlin Haas, Town of Highland; Steve Adams, Damascus Township; Harold G. Roeder, Jr., Town of Delaware; Doug Case, Lackawaxen Township; and James Greier, Town of Fremont. Absent: Town of Lumberland.



Oaken Gavel Award ~ James A. Greier

The Upper Delaware Council presents the Oaken Gavel Award to recognize the extra responsibilities that our board members take on to serve as chairperson for each one-year term.

Jim Greier became the first Town of Fremont representative to ever assume the UDC leadership since the organization's inception in 1988.

At the age of 83, he was elected to that role on January 5, 2017 and sworn in by Town of Fremont Supervisor George Conklin February 2.

The town had originally appointed Jim to be its UDC alternate representative from January 2000 through November 10, 2004.

Nine years later on March 18, 2013, Jim returned to the board as a 2nd alternate to replace Jim Rodgers after his move away.

Jim accepted the appointment as the town's UDC representative effective August 14, 2013 following the death of Jack Niflot, who had fulfilled a 19-year tenure for Fremont.

He has been active on the full Council, its three standing committees, and the Personnel Subcommittee.

Jim had a wealth of experience in municipal public service as a former town assessor, councilman, and 12 years as town supervisor starting in 1999.

He also previously served a four-year term on the Board of Education for his alma mater, Delaware Valley Central School, and chaired the Sullivan County Democratic Committee.

Jim resides on the same property in Obernburg, NY where his grandparents, the Tempels, ran a boarding house, and his mother grew up. His father was a New York City police officer.

Jim earned a Mechanical Engineering degree from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn in 1955. He worked as a tool and die maker on Long Island for 10 years. In the meantime, his family expanded their 68-acre boarding house into a 200-acre, year-round working dude ranch and hotel which they operated from 1962 to 1987.

Today at the Little Texas Ranch, they continue to care for a stable of Arabian horses, board other horses, farm hay and oats, host antique auctions, and put on occasional catered events.

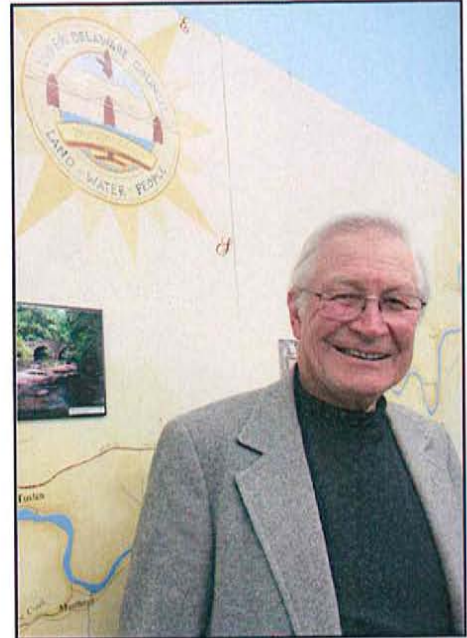
Since 2011, Jim has been employed by the New York State Gaming Commission as a racing inspector at Monticello Raceway after previous positions at the Bard Parker plant in Hancock, Dedeco International in Long Eddy, and Ike's Auto Parts in Monticello.

Jim toured steadily throughout the Catskills and upstate New York as a guitarist and vocalist with "The Texans", and continues to perform country and western music.

He is a member of St. Mary's Church and Holy Name Society of Obernburg, where he conducts a weekly guitar mass; chairman of the Town of Fremont Democratic Committee; helps plan the town's 134-year-old Annual Memorial Day Parade; serves on the Sullivan County Farm Bureau Board of Directors; and belongs to the Knights of Columbus.

Hobbies include hunting, float fishing, and sports, with a special love for baseball which he coached at every youth level.

Jim and his wife of 45 years, Rita, whom he met when she was a guest at the Little Texas Ranch, are the parents of James, Anthony, and Patricia, and have four grandchildren.



Rita and Jim Greier, UDC Awards Banquet, April 23, 2017
(Top right photo by Laurie Ramie; Above photo by David B. Soete)

Special Recognition Award ~ Cindy A. Odell

The Upper Delaware Council wishes to formally express its appreciation to Cindy A. Odell for seven years of dedicated employment as our secretary.

The Narrowsburg, NY native began her UDC duties on August 29, 2011.

Cindy was selected from a pool of 47 applicants following the May 24, 2011 resignation of Carol A. Coney after 19 years in the position.

Every work day until she made the difficult decision to leave the job on February 16 of this year, Cindy demonstrated a commitment that extended beyond her written job description to support the Council's mission.

She took on the role of office manager, handling countless business details quietly, capably, and efficiently.

She provided critical help to the board and fellow staff members, always offering to lend a hand to any task that needed doing.



From arranging repairs on guilotine toilet seats to tediously sorting through dusty old boxes of files in the attic, Cindy could be counted on to pitch in.

Her meeting preparations and drafting of minutes contributed to smooth operations, and a vital historical documentation of UDC

actions and river valley issues.

Cindy's genuine interest in and caring for people came through in her professional and personal interactions. Her wide network of friends from all walks of life attests to that.

The daughter of Ed and Doreen Kraus, Cindy graduated from Narrowsburg Central School in 1983 and earned an Associate's degree in Business Administration from SUNY Cobleskill in 1985.

Always possessing a strong work ethic, she had previously been employed by Leeward Construction, the Sullivan County Clerk's Office, and Lander's River Trips before joining the UDC staff.

Cindy and her husband, Michael "Chip" Odell, are the parents of two accomplished daughters, Brittany and Lauren.

She is active with Grace Ridge Church and The Vineyard Center, particularly youth engagement.

The Honesdale, PA resident has worked since Feb. 26 for Wayne County in the Prothonotary Office.

For her reliability, good humor, and contributions to the UDC, we recognize Cindy Odell.



Upper Delaware Council Resource Specialist Pete Golod and former Secretary Cindy Odell prepared to greet guests at the 29th Annual Awards Ceremony at Central House Family Resort in 2017. (Photos by David B. Soete)

Special Recognition Award ~ Jessica Lynn Newbern

Nomination submitted by Ed Wesely, 2017 UDC Distinguished Service Award recipient:

"I first met Jessica Newbern about a decade ago, when she was a graduate student at East Stroudsburg University, assisting in a Bat survey of the Upper Delaware Scenic River Corridor - which included our Milanville farm and barn.

The National Park Service funded the study to which Jessica was assigned by her professor.

For two evenings one summer weekend, she and a fellow student set up mist nets, examined captured bats, recorded data, etc.

I was very impressed by her professional competence and love of her work, and by her willingness to share knowledge with me and a young high school student and her Mom I'd invited along.

The next thing I knew Jessica was working as a biologist in the NPS Milanville Office, beginning as a part-time assistant and continuing at this position until now.

Her present duties involve routine water quality monitoring and studies, bat surveys, shad surveys, study of fresh water mussels, etc. All are performed with the same verve and competence we valued at the farm.

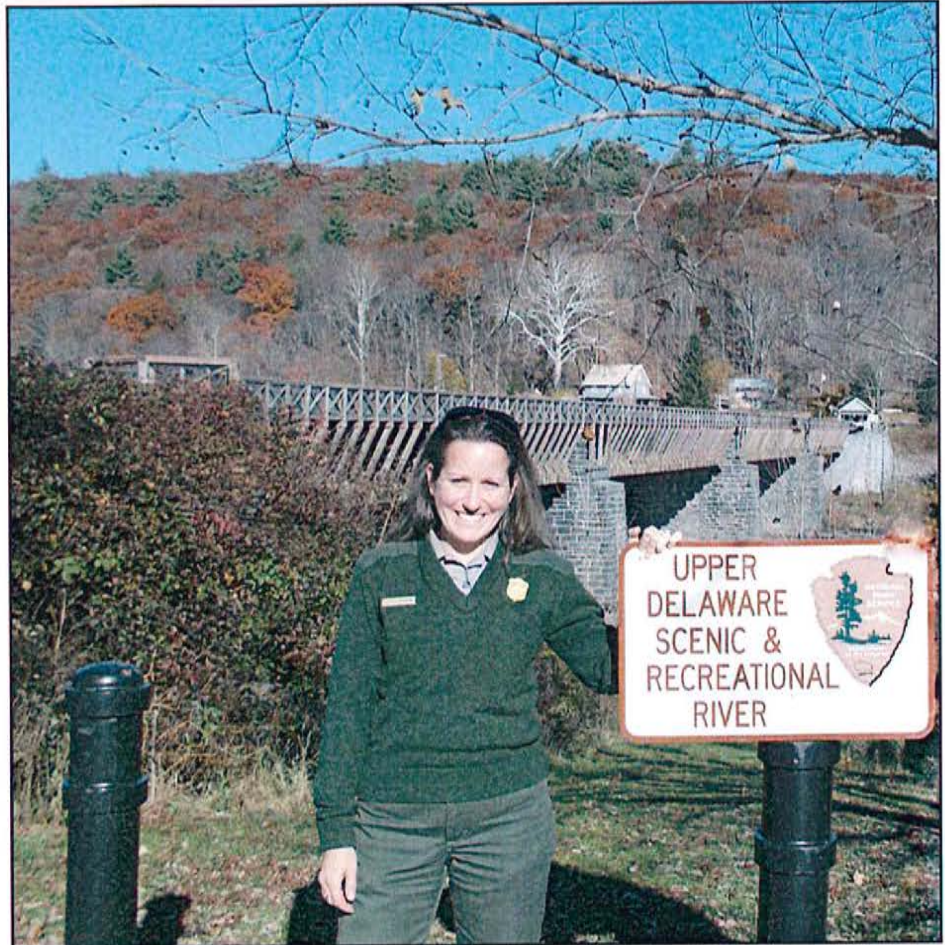
In addition, in summer 2017 she directed and taught two NPS summer interns - both of whom are anxious to return.

Jessica has been a big help to us in assisting and monitoring local Monarch butterflies, a major community goal here.

She has volunteered hours of off-duty time to collect and rear dozens of monarch caterpillars, and to make counts of Monarchs during autumn migration.

One result has been to learn that the river valley around Milanville is a very important Monarch migration corridor. I've always suspected it; it's been eye-opening to have Jessica's observations and data confirm it.

Anyone who wants a butterfly or insect identified is welcome to knock



on her door - as I've done dozens of times.

Jessica always volunteers professional time at BioBlitz programs, where experts survey and identify local flora and fauna in a select area. Last spring, she volunteered a weekend at an NPS BioBlitz in Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C. to assist with bat surveys and identification.

The Park Resource Manager, a friend, was so impressed he emailed me about her work and how it impressed other visiting biologists.

'They're lucky to have her,' he concluded, producing great vibes about the Upper Delaware region.

It's all done 'under the radar', so to speak, with a caring and competence that has enriched our river, and the entire community served by the UDC.

I've not met anyone in the river valley who cares more about her work with the river and its creatures, or does it more professionally." ~ Ed Wesely

Jessica Lynn Newbern graduated from Moore High School in Moore, OK in 1996 and served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1998 to 2003.

She was a Spanish Cryptologic Linguist who went on to earn a B.S. in Biology with a minor in Chemistry from the University of Central Oklahoma in 2007, and a Master's degree in Biology from East Stroudsburg University in 2010. At ESU, her thesis topic was "Comparative Diet Analysis of Three Eastern Pennsylvania Bat Species."

Jessica joined the National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River staff in 2011.

In addition to water quality monitoring and sampling, bat work and education, and American shad studies, the Honesdale, PA resident serves on the Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership and chairs the NPS Safety Committee.

Cultural Achievement Award ~ Carol Ann MacMaster

As Life Member (since 1981), Office Manager (since June 2007), past President of the Board of Directors (two terms), interim Curator, current Recording Secretary, Research Librarian, Hospitality Committee, Membership Chair, Car Show Committee Coordinator, Newsletter contributor ... there is very little at the Equinunk Historical Society that Carol Ann MacMaster doesn't do.

She may not be a native of Equinunk but she has fully embraced the entire region as her own.

Carol Ann's first six years of life were spent in Binghamton before her family of five moved to Cannonsville, NY in 1946.

She graduated from Deposit High School in 1958, about a year after an eminent domain notice was posted on the tree in front of their fourth-generation farm. Properties were taken for development of the New York City Water Supply System. The community was submerged to make way for the Cannonsville Dam that opened in 1964.

Carol Ann married in 1961 and relocated to Hancock, NY before a two-year stint in Apopka, FL.

She and her children moved back to Hancock in 1965. She was active as a Boy Scouts den mother, Sunday School teacher, and Preston School PTA president while working variously at Bard-Parker, Read Memorial Hospital, and Fox Bowling Center (which her father owned along with a garage in Hancock and where her daughter currently works).

In 1971, she wed Kenneth and Equinunk became her home. They started a campground (now known as Pleasant Valley Campsite and run by her son) and for 19 years they operated two school buses for the Wayne Highlands School District.

Carol Ann's personal history includes fostering the designation of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, which she says she loves.

She served for nine years on the Manchester Township Planning Commission, and was a 1985-



"She's a tireless worker. She puts in more hours than anybody. She keeps an eye on whatever is going on and is very community-minded and talented." ~ Bob Wood, Equinunk Historical Society Board of Directors

1986 member of the Upper Delaware Citizens Advisory Council (CAC). She also volunteered for the National Park Service.

Carol Ann represented the CAC on the Plan Oversight Committee tasked with rewriting the *River Management Plan for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River* and was an Upper Delaware delegate to the Delaware River Basin Commission in 1986-1987.

Her level of activity with the Equinunk Historical Society evolved over the years, much in the same way that the organization has expanded its buildings and reach.

She is passionate about preserving history through the acquisition of relevant artifacts and documents, skilled at helping find the funds to support the mission, and eager to host public programs such as the ongoing schedule at the Calder House Museum, First Friday musical series in the winters, and Joel Hill Sawmill demonstrations.

Carol Ann raised six children and has eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She belongs to the United Methodist Church of Equinunk, Equinunk Watershed Alliance, and serves as Secretary and Genealogist for the Hathaway Family Association.

"Her undaunted spirit for acquiring historical records, researching genealogical information for anyone who asks, and providing programs for the EHS is a herculean effort that is appreciated but unrecognized - not that she would ever expect any such thing. She is making it possible for folks to find pride in their roots and for the younger generation to have evidence of the excellence of their forebears." ~ Katt Judd, Town of Hancock UDC Alternate Representative, First Friday musician

Volunteer Award ~ Dr. Shannon Thol

Nomination submitted by Jamie Myers, Park Ranger, National Park Service:

"Since introducing herself to the Resource Management staff at Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River over two years ago, seeking out ways in which she might be able to volunteer her services as a Geographic Information System (GIS) specialist, Dr. Shannon Thol has donated well over 400 hours of her time to the natural resources of the Upper Delaware River valley.

Using GIS for Substantial Conformance and Project Review among the municipal, county, state, UDC and NPS staff was a long-term goal that was made more urgent as the partners progressed from paper-based maps to digitally-based information.

Determining how to go about this transition technically, and with limited GIS experience, posed a significant problem.

As a collaboratively-managed partnership area, enabling all river valley partners to work together toward managing the valley's resources in accordance with the River Management Plan is everyone's job - yet actually implementing a collaborative tool using 21st Century technology was daunting.

Dr. Thol developed a plan of action and framework for a web-enabled GIS system that would integrate natural resource data with land use regulations and zoning data in a way that directly supports the Project Review process used to guide management activities within the river valley.

Dr. Thol spent many hours contacting town and township personnel, meticulously gathering and georeferencing GIS data, verifying data accuracy, and working hand-in-hand with National Park Service and Upper Delaware Council staff to first organize a project, then devise a plan for developing an integrated decision support tool. That is the basis for the current arrangement with the Shippensburg University Center for Land Use Sustainability to further develop the tool.

In addition, Dr. Thol made substantial contributions towards completing a georeferenced, GIS-enabled Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River boundary layer (shapefile) for use by all river valley partners.

The data were georeferenced to 7.5 minute quadrangle topographic maps from the USGS Historical Topographic Map Collection with a level of accuracy not previously achieved.

The methodologies meticulously researched, developed, and utilized by Dr. Thol, and vetted through the NPS Chief Cartographer, made a digital representation of the 8-page Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River boundary derived from the 1986 River Management Plan.

Once again, these efforts made great strides toward bringing modern technology to local municipalities and resource managers, providing another valuable means to carry out the mandates of the River Management Plan and the Upper Delaware Act to preserve and protect the natural, cultural, geologic, recreational, and scenic valley resources, as well as the excellent water quality and flow of the river, as Congress intended.

Through the selfless donated hours, utilizing her characteristic attention to detail, years of training in GIS techniques, and broad understanding of how the natural world works, Dr. Thol's talents and dedication have provided all of us in the Upper Delaware valley with valuable GIS assets to make the resource protection requirements set forth in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act that much more attainable.

Thanks to Dr. Thol, all of our jobs have already gotten a little easier. She was on hand for a presentation of the 'beta' version of the GIS tool which took place at the April 5, 2018 meeting of the Upper Delaware Council.

We would like to note that Dr. Thol developed this project while she was pregnant, literally working up to her delivery date and returning to the project after a brief maternity leave. Further, she continues to be interested in this project, and willing to lend her advice and support as we move forward." ~ *Jamie Myers*

Shannon has a Bachelor's degree in Biochemistry from Colorado State University, a Ph.D. in Biology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a GIS Graduate Certificate in Ecology from Iowa State University, and a Master's in GIS and Cartography from Penn State University, where her 2016 thesis was the Upper Delaware project. Since August 2015, Shannon has been employed by The Nature Conservancy as its Conservation Information Manager. She and her family reside in Honesdale, PA.



Community Service Award ~ Carol Ropke Wingert



Reflecting on why she shoulders the responsibility of serving as Town of Tusten Supervisor, Carol Ropke Wingert says, "The most important part of this job is actually caring for the residents of the township. If you don't care, you cannot possibly do a good job."

Her local government duties started with the nitty-gritty: being hired to clean the Tusten Town Hall.

That evolved to winning election as Tax Collector, which after 12 years was folded into the Town Clerk's position. Carol did that combined job for five years before seeking a seat on the Town Board.

After six years as councilwoman, Carol ran for Supervisor in 2011.

Parents Herman and Dorothy Ropke had been actively involved in their community too, on the town board, ZBA, fire departments, ambulance corps, and Lions Club.

In the late 1980s, Carol started the Tusten Playground Committee whose volunteers raised \$25,000 to install new equipment for children to enjoy.

She hasn't slowed down since.

Town of Tusten Councilwoman and Energy Committee Chairperson Brandi Merolla observes, "Over the past year, Carol has been busy making things happen in Tusten.

"With 20+ years of municipal expe-

rience and leadership, Carol has an extensive grasp of many positions that make our municipality function. She has innovative ideas for filling vacancies and then helps personnel with her guidance.

"Last year Carol re-purposed grant money to pay for our beautiful new deck.

"Over the last five years, Carol has applied for and received almost \$500,000 in grant money for town projects.

"The last three years, Carol has led the very active Zoning Re-write Committee.

"Carol applied for and secured two UDC grants to codify our town laws which she tirelessly worked on until completion.

"Carol advocated and initiated the Peace Officer training school in Tusten to serve the county.

"An active member of the Tusten Energy Committee, Carol has been moving Tusten towards getting LED street lights in the near future.

"She led the effort to expand a new parking lot in the center of town to be completed this year.

"Always an environmentalist, Carol has a great commitment to our pristine community rich in wildlife and natural resources.

"Carol is involved in town activities from parades to events, and initiated Volunteer Appreciation Day this year.

"Most of all, Carol is committed to her hometown, working diligently for all Tusten residents. She has the utmost respect for her growing community. Carol is a quiet humanitarian, giving from her heart always."

A recent challenge was leading the town through the two Nor'easter storms in early March that caused protracted hardships for so many and sleepless days for Carol to manage the crisis.

From undertaking preparedness measures upon hearing the forecast to setting up a 24/7 warming center

at the Town Hall; and from coordinating with state, county, and local agencies to going door-to-door to conduct welfare checks, Carol was "hands-on" in relentlessly advocating for all services needed.

On April 27, Carol is organizing a Western Sullivan County Resiliency Conference at the Narrowsburg Union to ensure that her town has a comprehensive response strategy in place to cope with future emergencies.

While serving as supervisor, Carol also runs two businesses (Blue Heron Park, a mobile home facility in Lava, and MLB Consulting as a firearms instructor) and is the general manager of Bethel Self-Storage Park.

She is the mother of Kaitlin and Kristin, with two granddaughters and a grandson on the way.

Carol and partner Wayne Nelson are Civil War and The War of 1812 re-enactors. She enjoys shooting sports, photography, and walking her Golden Retrievers, Fred and Ginger.



Town of Tusten Supervisor Carol Ropke Wingert spoke during a Sullivan County Parks Department press conference at the Fort Delaware Museum of Colonial History in Narrowsburg on June 27, 2017. (Photo by Laurie Ramie)

Community Service Award ~ Samuel N. Rowe, Jr.

With a strong family legacy tracing back to his New York State Police Trooper father, Captain Samuel Rowe, Sr., and his politically-active mother, A. Joy Rowe, who had served as a Village of Hancock trustee, Town of Hancock councilwoman, Town of Hancock supervisor, and aide to two Congressional members (Hamilton Fish and Howard Robison) and to NYS Senator Charles D. Cook, public service was in Sam Rowe's DNA.

His career path led to the New York State Department of Transportation. Ironically, it was that job that ended his tenure since 2002 as the longest-serving, nine-term supervisor for the Town of Hancock.

A promotion to Highway Maintenance Supervisor II at NYS DOT, his employer of 20 years, conflicted with the Hatch Act and compelled his decision to resign his town leadership and Delaware County Board of Supervisors positions as of February 21, 2018.

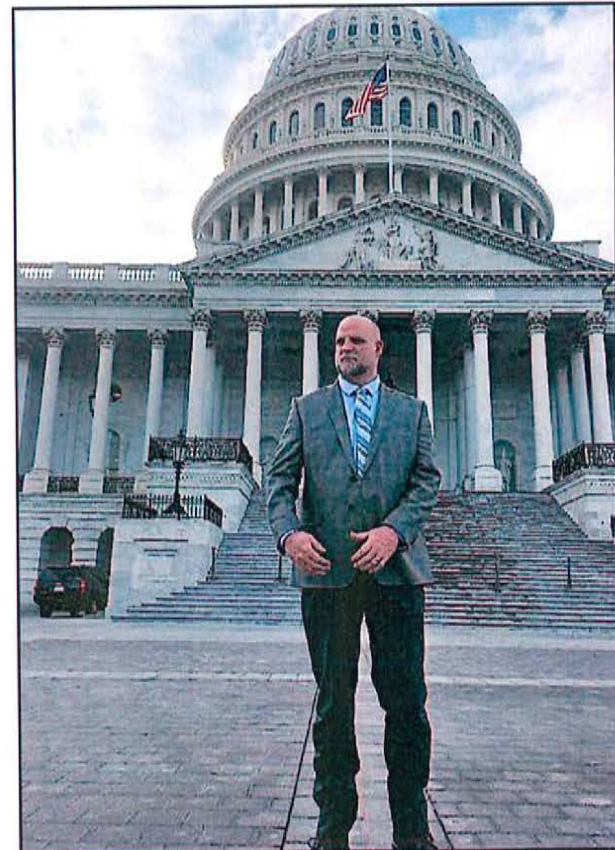
Always known for being a straight-shooter with great affinity for his hometown, Delaware River, and its tributaries, Sam guided Hancock to recovery from four major floods that caused millions of dollars in damages he recouped from FEMA, was instrumental in the fight against the New York Regional Interconnect high-voltage power line proposal, and championed river causes.

Jeff Skelding, executive director of Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Inc., had this to say about Sam's influence and accomplishments:

"Sam Rowe was Hancock, NY's Town Supervisor for 16 years. During this time, Sam played a pivotal role in raising the public profile of the Upper Delaware River and was the primary architect of a new narrative about the importance of the river to people, communities, and the regional economy.

"He created a vision for the future of Hancock that positioned the river as a natural resource jewel to be treasured forever and a centerpiece of local and regional economic development and tourism.

"Sam worked in partnership with Friends of the Upper Delaware River to help protect and restore the river, and offered the town's support on many important waterway initiatives including the Sands Creek Restoration Project.



"He helped spearhead the formation of two new coalitions in Hancock and Delaware County - the Upper Delaware River Tailwaters Coalition and Hancock Gateway Tourism Council.

"Sam worked closely with the Upper Delaware Council and the Delaware County Industrial Development Agency to develop a groundbreaking economic analysis that revealed how important the Upper Delaware River is to local businesses, municipal budgets, and people and communities that rely on a healthy river for their livelihoods.

"Sam was the driving force behind Hancock's involvement in the development of a multi-jurisdictional Stream Corridor Management Plan below the New York City Delaware basin reservoirs.

"Sam tirelessly promoted the Upper Delaware River in Hancock Town Board and Delaware County Board of Supervisors meetings, the State Capital in Albany, and the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C.

"His vision, dedication, patience, and persistence in protecting and restoring the Upper Delaware River for his constituents and the town he loves defined a path forward that links environmental protection with economic recovery and has sparked a new optimism for the future of the Upper Delaware River region."

Sam is a 1983 graduate of Hancock Central High School who served from 1984-1988 in the U.S. Navy. Currently vice-president of the Upper Delaware River Tailwaters Coalition, Sam is also a member of Deposit Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons, and American Legion Post 289. He and wife Laura (Wormuth) have three daughters together, Desari, Carmen and Shelbi.

Top photo courtesy of The Hancock Herald; Bottom photo courtesy of Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Inc.

Advocacy Award ~ U.S. Congressman John J. Faso

Congressman John Faso has unfailingly demonstrated his commitment to the Upper Delaware watershed since taking office in 2017.

While he represents all or parts of 11 counties in the 19th Congressional District of New York, Rep. Faso's actions have a ripple effect of benefits for the sustainability of our bi-state organization and region.

He and his staff were dogged champions of the Upper Delaware Council to overcome the two federal funding delays last summer and at the start of this fiscal year that threatened our ability to operate.

They wrote supportive letters, made phone calls, stayed on top of every development, and held the feet of the U.S. Department of the Interior to the fire to expeditiously complete their reviews and restore access to the funding on which the UDC relies to fulfill our Co-operative Agreement responsibilities.

In a Feb. 2 letter to Secretary Ryan Zinke, Rep. Faso wrote, "The UDC is a driving force behind the coordinated implementation of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Management Plan with the National Park Service as its main partner. The Council works tirelessly to conserve the Upper Delaware River Valley's treasured natural resources and is a major contributor to the economic vitality of the region. Unfortunately, the delay in federal funding jeopardizes nearly three decades of hard work by the UDC."

The successful intervention averted the March 30 shutdown that was looming as funds dwindled.

His advocacy extended to issues of importance to

our constituency, such as urging the 1954 Decree parties last spring to resume meaningful negotiations toward implementing a new Flexible Flow Management Plan for upstate reservoir operations to avoid devastating ecological and economic impacts that failure to do so would have had on the river.

Rep. Faso took the time to understand this complex issue and speak up for seeking balanced flows, protecting the coldwater fishery through thermal protocols, and enhancing flood mitigation capabilities.

In June 2017, he introduced H.R. 2292 to allow the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to extend the construction license for the Cannonsville hydroelectric project to allow for more study.

Rep. Faso one month ago introduced a resolution touting the value of the Upper Delaware River, recognizing the efforts of the Upper Delaware River Tailwaters Coalition, and urging coordination between all interests including New York's governor and Legislature to support and promote it appropriately.

"The Upper Delaware River watershed is tremendously important to our regional economy. It attracts visitors from around the globe who come to enjoy the top notch outdoor and nature-based experiences it offers, while at the same time supporting our local businesses," he said on March 21.

"The river is part of the National Park system, and one of the most picturesque scenic byways in the country runs along its shores. Upstate New Yorkers understand how important the river is to their social, cultural, and economic identity and that's why I'm fighting in Congress to fund the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program," he added.

Two days later, that funding indeed won Congressional approval to the tune of a \$5 million appropriation through the Fiscal Year 2018 Omnibus Spending Bill. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will coordinate implementation of a grants program to benefit the entire basin.

Formerly a Republican leader of the New York State Assembly, Congressman Faso is a graduate of SUNY Brockport and Georgetown University Law Center. He and his wife, Mary Frances, have two adult children and reside in Kinderhook.



Rep. Faso served as keynote speaker at the Upper Delaware Council's 2017 Awards Ceremony. (Photo by David B. Soete)



Meeting with Rep. Faso in Washington to advocate for Delaware River Basin Restoration Program funding were, from left, Art Merrill, Colchester Town Supervisor; Hallie van der Gaag, Delaware Programs manager, National Wildlife Federation; Madeline Emde, Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed; Mike Slattery, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Jeff Skelding, Dan Plummer, and Sherri Resti Thomas, Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Inc.; Sam Rowe, Upper Delaware Tailwaters Coalition; and Fred Gender, Shehawken Chapter of Trout Unlimited. (Contributed Photo)

Robin M. Daniels Memorial Lifesaving Award ~

Cinthia Ibarra, Mary Belezaire, Ranger Kevin Reish, Ranger Sean McNeil,

American Legion Ambulance Service President Louis E. Pine

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.

A fun family camping trip to the Upper Delaware River Valley last Independence Day weekend turned into a life-changing experience for those on both sides of a successful rescue.

For several years, Cinthia Ibarra's extended family from Mt. Vernon in Westchester County, NY spent their July 4th holiday enjoying the beauty and recreation of the Upper Delaware River.

In 2017, Cinthia's father bought a new inflatable boat with paddles, and insisted that anyone using it wear their life jackets and have a rope on board.

Cinthia and her best friend from Mt. Vernon, Mary Belezaire, then both aged 18, decided to take the boat out on July 3 with some younger girls ages 15, 12, and 11, as her aunt and uncle paddled just ahead of them in a canoe.

They were near Minisink Ford on the river when they heard yelling.

A witness to the incident told investigators that he had been swimming in the river with his friends, a father and son, when the 17-year-old got caught up in the unexpectedly powerful current.

"His father tried to help him but he almost started drowning too," the witness reported. "We panicked as we started to be pulled under. I screamed for help and some people on a raft heard us."

It was those cries of distress in Spanish that at-



Cinthia Arlette Ibarra Varela



Mary de Los Angeles Belezaire

tracted the attention of Cinthia and Mary's group.

Cinthia recalls seeing the three figures in the distance flailing in the water and yelling out for help.

"Some people said they were just playing but I could tell it was a situation where they could end up drowning. I could see their heads going under," Cinthia says.

The girls quickly paddled over to the men in trouble.

"The father wanted to put his son on the boat. I was concerned that we'd tip over. I asked him to hold on to the rope and a life vest. The father didn't want to leave the son and swam along us to shore," Cinthia says.

"My uncle and aunt came over to help us get to shore.

(Continued on next page)



Kevin Reish



Louis E. Pine



Sean McNeil

Lifesaving Award

Once we were in shallow water, a man came over. I went to call my dad to come get us while the people who were with the two individuals called for help. Once I returned, the paramedics arrived. I was in a state of shock at that moment," she says.

Summoned by Dispatch, National Park Service Rangers Kevin Reish and Sean McNeil had arrived at the scene.

The 17-year-old "was breathing but only semi-conscious. He was on his side in a recovery position and there was a large puddle of vomit which bystanders told me he had expelled," Kevin reported.

They placed him on oxygen to assist with his shallow respirations. Sean provided patient care to the father until EMT Lou Pine from the American Legion Ambulance Service arrived to take over stabilization.

"This was fortunately a rescue and not a recovery," says Lou, a Barryville resident who is Commander of Sylvan Liebla American Legion Post #1363 of Eldred and has been an Emergency Medical Technician for 33 years.

They loaded the boy onto a backboard, crossed a drainage ditch at Lander's Minsink Base to get to the waiting ambulance, and transported him to Bon Secours Hospital in Port Jervis.

Cynthia says family members of the near-drowning victims found them back at the campsite to tearfully express gratitude.

"I broke down then. It didn't make sense in my head until I had a moment to myself. It was really intense. We weren't even supposed to be there since we had planned to take the boat out earlier. I was really grateful we were there. Everything happens for a reason," Cynthia says.

The University of Pennsylvania sophomore is studying Criminology with a career goal to become a lawyer, then judge, and perhaps run for Congress one day.

Mary is now a freshman at the University of Vermont studying Psychology. She was unable to attend due to distance, but told us, "That was a wild experience we had this past summer and it's an honor to be recognized for that. Thank you so much from the bottom of my heart."

Distinguished Service Award Tribute: Shohola Township

The Shohola Township Board of Supervisors wishes to congratulate George J. Fluhr on receiving the Upper Delaware Council's Distinguished Service Award.

Mr. Fluhr has epitomized one of the finest examples of what public service means.

From his early days of serving St. Ann's parish as a bingo and barbecue worker, to joining the Shohola Fire Department as a volunteer fireman, Department Secretary, and life member, he has dedicated much of his life to serving our community.

He was a founding member of the Shohola Area Lions Club, regularly attending meetings.

He was a founding member of the Shohola Railroad and Historical Society and regularly conducts local history programs at their meetings.

His career as an educator enabled him to bring local history to life, first as Shohola Historian and then as Pike County Historian.

He has written numerous newspaper articles and books on local history. This documentation of our local history will provide future generations a view to their past.

As a Township Supervisor for 30 years, he guided Shohola through a period of rapid growth and change.

In 1986, his concern for our area led him to take a leading role in protecting the Upper Delaware.

After the federal mishandling of Tocks Island, a large majority of citizens in the Upper Delaware were opposed to any federal involvement here. Things were spiraling out of control when Mr. Fluhr made an emotional speech to a huge, angry crowd at the Shohola Fire House calling for calm and negotiation.

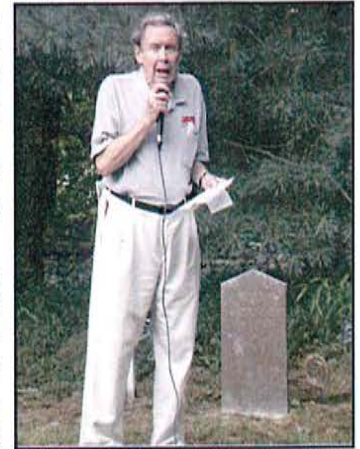
That speech provided the spark that led to the negotiations between all the parties. Had that speech not been given, the history of the Upper Delaware would be very different today. However, the negotiations resulted in a River Management Plan that was agreed to by all parties. This plan protected the Upper Delaware and created an Upper Delaware Council to oversee the arrangement.

Mr. Fluhr served for 30 years as Shohola Representative on the Council, serving as chair twice.

His leadership helped steer the Upper Delaware Council from its birth till today, where it protects and serves the Upper Delaware River and public at large.

While he retired as Shohola's representative, Mr. Fluhr continues to serve our community and we wish him well in his future endeavors.

~ Gregory P. Hoeper, Keith Raser, and George C. Fluhr



Pike County Historian George J. Fluhr recounted the July 13, 1864 train wreck near Shohola that killed nearly 50 Confederate prisoners and 17 Union guards en route to a Civil War prison camp in Elmira, NY during a 2012 observance at the Old Congregational Church Cemetery in Barryville, NY where two of the Confederate soldiers are buried.

Distinguished Service Award ~ George J. Fluhr

For the first time in the Upper Delaware Council's history, we are bestowing our highest honor on an individual for the second time.

It's fitting that the Distinguished Service Award has come full circle for George J. Fluhr.

He became its inaugural recipient after the first year of the UDC's operation, which may never have happened if not for his influential role in facilitating a compromise between local and federal interests.

At that Feb. 4, 1989 UDC ceremony, George was lured under false pretenses of believing that he was on hand to present the award to someone else.

Instead, George was announced as the winner "for his outstanding public service and unyielding commitment to protecting both the river and the rights of private property owners."

Described in *The Upper Delaware* newsletter as being "visibly stunned" at the surprise, he recovered enough to improvise a speech where he recalled sitting on his father's front porch 40 years prior when his uncle Thomas, who was the Chief Geologist for the New York City Board of Water Supply, told them, "In a couple of years, Barryville and part of Shohola will be under water."

George recounted that was the day that he began to worry about the Delaware River, even as a child growing up in New York City with visits to his grandfather's farm in Shohola.

He had a chance to put that concern into action as far back as 1969, the year he became a full-time resident of Shohola and attended a meeting of the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Outdoor Recreation held in Milford, PA.

Rumors were circulating of plans for a federal take-over of land, similar to the Tock's Island proposal, in order to address problems with increased indiscriminate use of the river, pollution, trespass, and lawlessness.

Elected as Supervisor of Shohola Township in 1977, George believed it was urgent that local governments take the lead in protecting both the river and private property.

He was a founder of the Conference of Upper Delaware Townships, which ultimately compelled the federal government to rewrite a River Management Plan in cooperation with those affected. It would be based on the premise that there



After presenting a 25th anniversary historic overview of the Upper Delaware Council at the 2013 awards banquet held at The Lackawaxen Inn, George J. Fluhr was gifted with a Pond Eddy Bridge portrait taken by David B. Soete.

would be no land condemnation, limited jurisdiction, and that towns and townships would provide stewardship of the river's resource values through their zoning.

Getting to that point of compromise was a struggle to overcome fear, dissent, and even some violence. Numerous public meetings by the National Park Service ended before they began due to the loud protests.

"It was a very intimidating experience. These were angry mobs that felt their way of life was being threatened," recalls NPS veteran Sandy Schultz. "Yet George Fluhr was respected enough that in June 1986 when he got up, evoked the memory of D-Day, and said, 'We went

"During my 20 years with the National Park Service on the Upper Delaware, and longer than that as a valley resident with a special interest in local history, I always knew George Fluhr was my go-to guy for anything related to Pike County. Whether it was the Roebling Bridge, the canal, the railroad, or the people - historically or politically - I always knew George would have the information or knew the lay of the land. A man of knowledge and integrity, he was unfailingly helpful and, when necessary, ready to take a stand, even if it wasn't what everybody else endorsed. It was a pleasure to have served alongside him as a public servant, and perhaps more importantly, as a volunteer." ~ Mary Curtis, who joined the NPS as Public Affairs Specialist in 1980 then served as Historian from 1994 through her Sept. 1, 2001 retirement.

"George Fluhr did wonderful things for the Upper Delaware as well as for his township and Pike County. He made extraordinary contributions, and stepped up when it mattered and could make a difference. He also acted with tremendous grace, listening to and respecting everyone. He is one of the finest people I know in terms of doing the right things for the right reasons." ~ Sandra Schultz, Assistant Superintendent for the National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, who retired on March 31, 2010 after 37 years of federal government service starting with the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in 1973, then the NPS Mid-Atlantic Office, before moving on-site to work at the Upper Delaware unit beginning in July of 1983.

Distinguished Service Award ~ George J. Fluhr

to war to protect the right to speak', he took on the crowd with his integrity and courage, and we were able to proceed with an orderly meeting."

Only by talking was it possible to forge a then-unique federal, state, and local partnership to be administered by an Upper Delaware Council that met the original conservation objectives.

George has remained supportive of the UDC ever since, whether in his capacity as a representative or alternate for Shohola Township since the non-profit organization's 1988 inception until he stepped down this year at the age of 81. He was elected chairperson twice in 1992 and 2009, and served as vice-chairman in 1991 and 1997.

He has also been the UDC's de facto historian, given his intimate knowledge of the bi-state river valley region and the Upper Delaware designation.

That role comes naturally to George.

After earning degrees from Manhattan College and a Master's in Education from Columbia University, the Bronx native worked as a teacher and administrator focused in the field of Special Education for 33 years in New York City and northeastern Pennsylvania.

George wrote his first published history of Shohola in 1970 and was appointed as Township Historian in 1972. He served as Pike County Historian from 1977-87, then was reappointed in 1996. He was also named Historian for the Wallenpaupack Area School District in 1988.

George has authored numerous books and pamphlets, wrote the *News Eagle* column, "Local



Upper Delaware Council 1992 Chairperson George J. Fluhr of Shohola Township, PA passed the gavel of board leadership to incoming 1993 Chairperson Larry H. Richardson, right, the Town of Cochecton, NY representative.

"I had the pleasure of serving with George Fluhr for more years than I can remember. But what I do remember from all those meetings is how George always presented his case in a relatively calm, very professional manner. As with any group of people with divergent opinions, there will be arguments that at times can become a bit excited but with George's 'even keel' presentation, it was easier to listen to his argument with an open mind. And in most cases he was successful in getting his point across. And he always had Shohola's interest in focus. I learned from my time rubbing elbows with George and wish him the best." ~ Larry H. Richardson

"George has been an outstanding Historian for Pike County as well as a citizen extraordinaire.

As a township supervisor, George's wisdom led Shohola for decades and his leadership continues to this day as senior statesman.

His volumes of historical writings are invaluable to many who have followed him in chronicling the history of Pike. George taught us all to love where we live, to learn from our history, and to be passionate about those who came before us.

The Pike County Commissioners are honored to have George as our County Historian, but most importantly, to call him our friend.

Congratulations, George."

~ Pike County Commissioners

Matt Osterberg

Rich Caridi

Steve Guccini

History is Interesting ... By George" for 11 years, and coordinated several UDC Technical Assistance Grant cultural resource projects.

He organizes annual commemorations of the Revolutionary War Battle of Minisink's Grave of the Unknown Soldier and the 1864 Civil War Train Wreck. Historic memberships include the Shohola Railroad and Historical Society ("The Caboose Group") and the D&H Transportation Heritage Council. He advocated for preservation of the NPS-owned Roebling's Delaware Aqueduct and the Zane Grey Museum, both in Lackawaxen, and was integral in achieving historic mitigation measures for the Shohola-Barryville and Pond Eddy Bridges.

George's 31 years as an elected official in Shohola Township through his 2008 retirement represent a remarkable public service tenure with major accomplishments including establishment of the municipal building and Rohman Park. Today, his son George C. Fluhr sits on the Board of Supervisors.

His busy community service extended to the Shohola Volunteer Fire & Rescue and the Shohola Area Lions Club.

George was married to Carmen for 46 years before she passed away in 2007. The couple raised six children.

In recognition of his legacy of service to the UDC and his invaluable contributions to the river valley, we proudly salute George J. Fluhr.