



**Upper Delaware Council
32nd Annual
River Valley Awards

Tribute to 2020 Honorees**

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32nd Annual River Valley Awards

While the Upper Delaware Council (UDC) was not able to proceed with a rescheduled August 30, 2020 awards ceremony banquet out of caution against the coronavirus pandemic, we take this opportunity to spotlight those who serve our communities, protect the resources, and enhance our quality of life in the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Valley in diverse and often unheralded capacities.

The UDC accepted public nominations through March 16 in award categories recognizing individuals and projects for activities that occurred in 2019 or over time. Honorees were publicly announced on May 7. Please enjoy the tributes that follow.

Distinguished Service Award ~ Harold G. Roeder, Jr. (LR)

Robin M. Daniels Memorial Lifesaving Awards ~ Paddy McCarthy and Tim Freeman (LR); and James Moss, Johnny Smith, Andy Moss, and Jeff Dexter (LR)

Advocacy Award ~ Pennsylvania Representative Jonathan Fritz, Representative Mike Peifer, and Senator Lisa Baker (LR)

Partnership Award ~ Dr. Heather Galbraith, Carrie Blakeslee, Jeff Cole and Barbara White from the USGS Northern Appalachian Research Laboratory (SC)

Cultural Achievement Awards ~ Big Eddy Film Festival (LR); and Wayne County Historical Society's 1888 Spencer Tractor Restoration (SC)

Community Service Award ~ Nancy Furdock (LR)

Recreation Achievement Awards ~ Dan Plummer, Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Inc. (SC); and Bill Streeter, Delaware Valley Raptor Center, Inc. (SC)

Volunteer Award ~ Star Hesse (SC)

Special Recognition Awards ~ Carla Hauser Hahn (LR); John Ogozalek (LR)

Tributes were researched and written by UDC Executive Director Laurie Ramie (LR) and UDC Resources and Land Use Specialist Shannon Cilento (SC) as indicated, with project support from UDC Secretary Ashley Hall-Bagdonas.

At the 33rd Annual Awards Ceremony Banquet tentatively slated on April 25, 2021 at Central House Family Resort in Beach Lake, PA, the UDC will invite these above honorees as special guests and recognize a new roster of recipients for the good works that can always be found, even in times of crisis and hardship!



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.



UDC BOARD: Gathered at the January 2, 2020 Upper Delaware Council annual meeting were officers and board members, seated from the left: Secretary-Treasurer Alan Henry (Berlin); Chairperson Larry H. Richardson (Cochection); Vice-Chairperson Jeffrey R. Dexter (Damascus); and 2019 Chairperson Harold G. Roeder, Jr. (Delaware). Standing from the left: Dan Paparella (Tusten); Bill Rudge (New York State); Roger Saumure (Shohola); Jennifer Claster (National Park Service partner); Aaron Robinson (Shohola); Fred Peckham (Hancock); Tim Dugan (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania); Doug Case (Lackawaxen); Virginia Dudko (Deerpark); Michael Barth (Westfall); Patricia Jeffer (Shohola); Nadia Rajszy (Lumberland); Jim Greier (Fremont); Susan Sullivan (Tusten); and David Dean (Deerpark). Absent were representatives for the Town of Highland and the Delaware River Basin Commission. (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)

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Greetings from the Upper Delaware Council Chair

Hello, my name is Larry Richardson and it is my pleasure to serve as the 2020 Chairman for the Upper Delaware Council.

With the support of my fellow council members, I have served in every elected position and as Chairman now for the fourth time.

One reason might be longevity since I was first appointed in 1989 to represent the Town of Cochection, but I would hope more importantly that it is with confidence and a recognition that I am constantly working to safeguard the interests of the people and to maintain the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the Delaware River corridor for future generations.

As you review the list of award recipients, you can see a common thread running through them: a desire to promote this beautiful area; to enhance visitors' experiences; and to provide a safe and rewarding outing.

There are always more nominees than we have time and space to recognize, but for those that are named, CONGRATULATIONS, and to all the others that could be - a big THANK YOU!



Special Recognition Award ~ Carla Hauser Hahn

Thirty-nine years, four months, and nine days.

That is how long Carla Hauser Hahn labored at the National Park Service (NPS) Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, but to hear her describe that precisely-counted tenure, it was a labor of love.

The Callicoon Center (Sullivan County) native and current Callicoon-on-the-Delaware resident started her federal government career as a clerk stenographer.

She was one of the first six employees that Superintendent John Hutzky hired following the new NPS unit's 1978 Congressional designation.

One of Carla's first assignments was to serve as the secretary for the Upper Delaware Citizens Advisory Council which worked with the NPS to establish a River Management Plan team and develop the Land and Water Use Guidelines.

Over the years, Carla took on increasing responsibilities to provide executive support and assistance for programs managed by the Superintendent's Office, which included project research and planning, database creation, agreements for river access sites and organizational partnerships, records digitization and management, facilitating Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Outstandingly Remarkable Values and Foundation documents, overseeing permitting



Her fellow staff members gifted Carla with this Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River photo at her October 19, 2019 retirement gala held at The Inn at Lackawaxen. (Two photos by David B. Soete)

and boater safety plans for work on interstate bridges, shepherding numerous cultural resource projects, developing an interactive Geographic Information Systems mapping tool, and serving as a liaison to various regional marketing, conservation, economic development, and think-tank initiatives.

"She truly is an unsung hero," remarked Sandra Schultz, who worked closely with Carla in her capacity as NPS Upper Delaware Assis-

tant Superintendent from 1983 to 2010.

"Carla has been involved in an endless variety of projects. It's an exhausting list of activities and accomplishments. It represents Carla's commitment and consistency in supporting the Delaware River, its natural and cultural resources, as well as its communities and people," Sandy said.

At the time of her August 3, 2019 retirement, Carla's position was Management Assistant.

She also served as the NPS delegate to the Upper Delaware Council's Project Review Committee, and an alternate to the Operations Committee and the full Council monthly meetings.

Ten years ago, the UDC presented Carla with its Cultural Achievement Award to recognize her outstanding management of the complicated project to repair successive damage caused by the floods of 2004, 2005 and 2006 at Roebing's Delaware Aqueduct and the half-mile-long D&H Canal Towpath Trail.

Carla oversaw the whole process of securing Federal Highway Administration funding, seeking out supplemental sources to expand the scope of work, handling all the environmental compliance paperwork, and overseeing the contractors on-site.

By the time the work was finished in the fall of 2009, these battered cultural resources were restored to their former glory thanks to her typical attention to detail and organization.

For her passionate dedication to the mission of the NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, the UDC pays tribute to Carla Hauser Hahn.



The Delaware River Sojourn proclaimed Carla Hauser Hahn as its "Lady High Admiral" in 2015 in a presentation made by DeJay Branch, left, and Sandra Schultz, right, in Lackawaxen, PA. (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)



Former NPS Superintendent Sean McGuinness and Carla, 2010 Awards

Special Recognition Award ~ John Ogozalek

It started when French Woods resident John Ogozalek mentioned to the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Committee a historic tidbit he heard that the property behind his home with wife Kristin Barron and kids Sam and Lily, was the highest point along the approximately 75-mile NYS Route 97.

After verifying that 1,836 foot fact through elevation maps, the NYS Department of Transportation installed two signs near Klondike and Neering Roads in the Town of Hancock in June 2019.

It didn't end there. John took it upon himself to enhance the brief but spectacular vista that on a clear day offers a glimpse to the windmills in Waymart, PA by trimming vegetation that blocked it.

His informal adoption of the markers extended to beautifying them by building flower boxes dedicated to Kristin's relatives, Francis and Marjorie Dirig.

That also wasn't the end. John continues to decorate the markers for special occasions, such as rigging up a plastic-duct, battery-operated star atop

a scaffold to offer goodwill to passers-by during the holiday season.

John's latest display pays tribute to health care providers, emergency services, front-line workers, and everyone keeping the world running during the coronavirus global pandemic.

A respected educator known to his students as "Mr. O", John began teaching Social Studies in 1988 at Narrowsburg Central School, now merged under Sullivan West High School where he is a SUNY Sullivan instructor in American Government, after his own studies at Vassar College, City College, and SUNY New Paltz and a stint as a managing editor & reporter at the *Sullivan County Democrat*.

His supportive encouragement of his students, past and present, is legendary.

He also proudly served as a mentor in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program.

Since 2014, John has volunteered with The Kingfisher Project in honor of his former student Rebecca Pisall to create greater awareness and understanding about addiction and the opioid epidemic.



(Contributed Photos)

Listen to WJFF public radio's "Making Waves" program Mondays at 7 p.m. for information.



An April 2, 2020 Facebook post from the Delaware County Sheriff's Office read: "While out and about on patrol, Deputy Sheriff Kyle Karcher and K-9 Eli discovered this monument to 'Heroes' on State Highway 97 near the intersection of Neering Road in the Town of Hancock. Upon further investigation, it was found that local resident John Ogozalek had made the monument about a week ago to express his gratitude for all the 'heroes' who've been working tirelessly to help others during this difficult time. Mr. Ogozalek further advised that the small black square in the center is in memory of members of the Dirig Family who have resided in the French Woods area for over 150 years. Kudos to you Mr. Ogozalek for your positivity, creativity and uplifting support."

Addressing John's involvement as a founding trustee of the Kingfisher Project, Inc.:

"Mr. O is a kind soul who is a dedicated teacher and friend, always going out of his way to help anyone who needs it. From the start, when Mr. O sent me Rebecca's essay (about saving an injured Kingfisher bird as tied to her personal philosophy) just after she died, he said, 'Years from now, Rebecca's essay is one that I will always remember.'

He was the first one on the air (WJFF) to read her essay. He also attended those first town hall meetings convened by the Kingfisher Project and interviewed the police about the drug activity on Taylor Road in Jeffersonville. Mr. O also created a curriculum on the Kingfisher Project that he assigns to his seniors each year. They are asked to do research and record a PSA about substance use and alternatives to it. Above all else, the unit educates all the graduating classes about the very real consequences of drugs such as heroin.

Lastly, Mr. O serves on our new Kingfisher Project non-profit board and is a member of the school's Rebecca Pisall Kingfisher Project Scholarship Committee. We're thrilled to say two students in the health care and animal care career paths have received these scholarships so far." ~ **Julie Pisall**, mother of Rebecca, killed at age 20 on June 20, 2014

Addressing John's impact as an educator and union political coordinator activist:

"First, thank you for bestowing this award on Mr. Ogozalek. I do not know of anyone more deserving. It is an honor to work with him.

What John Ogozalek does for the students and community can never be measured. He constantly works for the success of our kids, whether it is creating new activities to entice learning, bringing in guest speakers (pre-COVID) who experienced the history he was teaching, taking the steps to encourage and assist our students to take part in our local, state and federal government, especially elections, and during this time of on-line learning, expanding his ability to support students through video lessons posted on his teacher-created YouTube channel, and keeping them safe within the classroom. Mr. Ogozalek works for the students of SWHS.

For me, Mr. Ogozalek is the person I can speak with to get a true sense of our school, what and how we provide for students. He always provides honest, open feedback as we are able to discuss challenging topics, with again being student-centered. I value his voice and opinion greatly.

Mr. Ogozalek always places the needs of the students first. He is a selfless teacher and consummate professional who will not shy away from new methods and possesses the qualities that I look for in every new teacher we hire at SWHS." ~ **Mark Plescia**, principal, Sullivan West High School, Lake Huntington, NY

Volunteer Award ~ Star Hesse

"One couldn't find a more devoted and humble volunteer in the County. Star has turned her retirement into a fulltime job helping her fellow residents and protecting the environment for future generations. She is truly an inspiration."

~Brandi Merolla, Town of Tusten Energy Committee chairperson

Humble. Tireless. Compassionate. Energetic. These words accurately describe Star Hesse, one of Tusten's most dedicated and prolific volunteers. Her commitment to community beautification, improving access for the elderly, and the climate earns her the UDC's 2020 Volunteer Award.

"When I first came up here and saw that river, I fell in love," Star reminisces about her first visit to the region in the 1980s. She and her husband Mike were living on Long Island and had been long searching for property in a more rural setting, with land, water, and an older house. After looking all over New England and Pennsylvania, the couple settled on an 1889 home in the Town of Tusten after a realtor convinced them to make the trek to Sullivan County. Star was blown away with the history, arts, and culture that defined the area and knew she made the right decision.

She began working at the Sullivan County Department of Family Services following the move, and eventually retired from the Office for the Aging after 25 years of service with the County. Following retirement, Star continued to volunteer with the County's Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) providing medical transportation to those in the community that needed it most. She continues to provide transportation on a weekly basis, and sits on the County's Senior Legislative Action Committee, advocating for policy changes to improve local transportation infrastructure for seniors.

In addition to her work with and for the elderly, Star can often be found working on the numerous stunning gardens around Narrowsburg, including at the UDC office and the post office. Star has worked with the Narrowsburg Beautification Group to strengthen local partnerships, including with Sullivan Renaissance and local business owners, creating a sustained gardening community in town. Further, Star participates with the local Litterpluck program, picking up roadside trash year-round, coordinates a plant swap, and gives plant advice at the Tusten Repair Cafe.

Often, people think of climate change as solely a global issue, but Star aims to change that narrative and educate people about the importance of actions they can take at a local level. She has been a member of the Tusten Energy Committee since its inception in 2011, citing former Town of Tusten Councilwoman Brandi Merolla as the driving force for her involvement.

With Star's help, the committee has accomplished energy audits, a municipal solar array, energy-efficient lighting upgrades, purchase of a Town food composter, and the prestigious New York Climate Smart Community designation. Star also collects soft plastic waste from several collection points and turns them into a recycling company in exchange for benches to further beautify the Town.

Despite the pandemic, Star hasn't let that get in the way of her various projects.

She continues to advocate for those who need help, citing her mother as an inspiration for her spirit of volunteerism.

"I may be getting a volunteer of the year award, but this is the year of the volunteer. I'm accepting on behalf of all the volunteers who have risen to the occasion during COVID," Star remarks, ever humbly. "This award should be shared by everyone."



The Upper Delaware Council office at 211 Bridge St. in Narrowsburg is one local property that has benefitted from Star's beautification efforts. (Top photo contributed; this photo by Laurie Ramie)

Recreation Achievement Award ~ Dan Plummer

“When children get hurt, they run to mother; when we get hurt, we run to Mother Nature.”

These are the words Dan Plummer uses when describing not only the past several months dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, but when reflecting on a lifelong passion for the environment.

Plummer is perhaps best known locally for his role as Friends of the Upper Delaware (FUDR) Chairman of the Board since 2006; his leadership in this position earns him the UDC’s 2020 Recreation Achievement Award.

Originally from New York’s Finger Lakes region, Plummer began fishing at a young age and the activity remained a constant despite many moves and careers.

His career in filmmaking began in California when he was offered the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work for ABC Sports covering the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. Following the Olympics, Plummer continued with ABC covering Monday Night Football, boxing, golf, and more for several years. After working on various films in LA, Plummer decided to return to school to pursue a career in building and construction management. This led him to start his own construction company, work as a general contractor on the popular show *This Old House*, and open an eco-friendly store with his wife in San Francisco.

Plummer returned to his New York roots in 1988 when he secured a position designing showrooms for Ralph Lauren. During this time, Plummer purchased a cabin upstate on the East Branch to escape the city and bring his flyrod on weekends.

It wasn’t until the early 2000s when Plummer began his involvement in FUDR after a series of catastrophic floods devastated the greater Hancock area. He was familiar with FUDR’s work prior to the floods, and was excited about their passion and focus on the Upper Delaware and its tributaries.

At the time of the major floods, FUDR had a tumultuous relationship with local communities and a reputation for putting the needs of fish before local people. Plummer sought to close this divide between FUDR and the community, emphasizing that “the fish, the river, and the people are one package” and the narrative needed to shift to include local stakeholders in conversations and planning. Plummer envisioned FUDR as a true community organization, one that prioritizes Upper Delaware communities at an economic and environmental level. “We don’t just fish here, we live here, we eat here, we sleep, drink, and work here,” he noted. Plummer brought that vision to life over time by giving FUDR a Main Street presence in a building in Hancock, hiring experienced non-profit professionals Jeff Skelding and Sherri Resti Thomas, and encouraging more diversity on the board.

Though Plummer has retired as Chairman of FUDR, he is confident he is leaving the organization in competent and passionate hands.

“FUDR has become an anchor in the community; this is a long-term commitment and we need to keep people in the game,” he reflected.

Increasing diversity on the board is the best way to make FUDR sustainable in Plummer’s opinion. They have continued to engage non-anglers for the board, which now in-



“Dan joined FUDR [in its infancy] and immediately recognized the need for FUDR to better integrate its river protection mission with the social, cultural, and economic needs of the people and communities in the watershed. Dan assumed the helm as Chairman of the Board in 2006 and has been its guiding force ever since... His vision and wisdom helped navigate the organization in a new direction that blended advocacy efforts to protect the river and the prized wild trout fishery with the larger needs of the people and communities.

His departure will be sorely missed and he will always be remembered as the person who kept the organization solvent and effective, sometimes singlehandedly, for many years until it got its footing in the community as a self-sustaining voice for the river and the people who live here.” ~ Jeff Skelding, Executive Director, www.fudr.org, 158 E. Front St., Hancock, NY 13783

cludes women, younger generations, business owners, and others. FUDR’s work to increase diversity is far from over though according to Plummer. Including people of color and minorities in the conversation is a key vision for Plummer going forward and remaining a successful organization.

Plummer’s environmental advocacy extends beyond the Upper Delaware region, as he’s served multiple boards over the years, including the national board of directors for Trout Unlimited and the board of the Wild Salmon Center in Portland, Oregon advocating for the conservation of salmon and steelhead in the Pacific Rim. Plummer has channeled his love of filmmaking into environmental films, including *Chasing Coral*, a documentary telling the story of the decline of coral reefs and its subsequent impacts on the people reliant upon the ocean’s health.

When asked what’s next for Plummer, he emphasizes that he hopes his new film *The River* (working title) will be his swan song. The film focuses on the waters of the Upper Delaware, its people, and its communities. Though his official board involvement is sunsetting this year, the Upper Delaware community can rest assured it has a lifelong advocate and champion in Dan Plummer for years to come.

Recreation Achievement Award ~ Bill Streeter

Few people can say they made a career out of their life's true passion. Even fewer people can say they've put a cast on a wild green heron's broken leg in their kitchen. Bill Streeter is one of those people.

Streeter, along with his wife Stephanie, founded the Delaware Valley Raptor Center (DVRC) in Milford, PA in 1987. For his contributions to the conservation of raptors and other birds, Streeter earns the 2020 UDC Recreation Achievement Award.

When Bill's wife Stephanie became the second licensed female falconer in Massachusetts history in 1979, a chain reaction occurred which would ultimately lead to the establishment of a world-class rehabilitation facility for raptors in the Delaware River Valley.

Originally from Easton, Pennsylvania, Bill moved to Massachusetts with Stephanie to pursue his Master's degree in zoology. Following Stephanie's licensure, the pair began working with the wildlife clinic at Tufts University Vet School. It was there where Bill was offered a rare spot in a two-week wildlife medicine intensive course. While the clinic focused on medicine and surgery, Bill was able to provide the rehabilitation services the clinic needed for the birds.

"Rehabilitation is about more than just the medicine. It's about physical therapy, the proper housing and diet," according to him. The partnership forged between Tufts and the Streeters would solidify their role as the go-to raptor rehabilitators in the Northeast.

The couple eventually returned to Pennsylvania and began working at a local nature center. However, when the nature center closed in 1987, Stephanie encouraged Bill to incorporate their own center, focused on the rehabilitation of raptors, a group of birds which includes hawks, falcons, owls, and vultures. Their shared vision became a reality when they established the Delaware Valley Raptor Center and began soliciting memberships and support.

Despite working a full-time job in construction for the first few decades of the Center's existence, Bill began hosting educational programs with his raptors on evenings and weekends. Bill's educational programming eventually grew to 120-140 programs on average per year and accounted for half of the facility's operating budget. His construction background allowed him to build and design all the housing for the birds; more than 20 buildings now dot the property housing their 24 permanent residents.

Over the years, the DVRC has had on average 35-40 raptor residents receiving care from the Streeters. Though they stopped accepting new birds earlier this year, they care for 24 permanent residents, including foster parents for baby birds and other non-releasable raptors.

Bill says working with bald eagles has been one of the most rewarding parts of his job. In 2018 alone, he received 16 bald eagles in various states of distress, most often from lead poisoning or gunshot wounds. He has witnessed birds on the brink of death make miraculous comebacks, but has unfortunately also seen the opposite, where a bird seemingly doing well takes a turn for the worst. These experiences serve as a constant reminder of how critical and important the work the Streeters do to rehabilitate and release birds back into the wild.



Bill Streeter released this rehabilitated yearling eagle on April 27, 2017 in Milanville, PA after the Delaware Valley Raptor Center nursed her back to health and flying condition 12 weeks after surgery on two fractures in her left wing. (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)

Educating the public about raptors is Bill's passion. Whether it's inspiring the next generation of falconer, or encouraging a hunter to use lead-alternative ammunition, Bill is making sure people understand and appreciate these complex birds.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic, Bill has continued to provide constant care to the raptors at DVRC, and is working on creating YouTube programming about birds to educate the public despite the inability to offer his usual in-person programs. He has also had the opportunity to lead three bird-themed cruises to Alaska.

"It's more than just being bonkers about raptors—which I am; it's about relationships you form and the people you meet along the way," he says.

"When I walk through center feeding birds every day, I can't believe I did this. It's a combination of building something, making something, creating something, and meeting wonderful people along the way," Bill says. "Sometimes I have to pinch myself."

Visit www.dvrconline.org or call (570) 296-6025 to help.

Community Service Award ~ Nancy Furdock

As vice-chair of the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Inc., creator of the DestinationHancock.com website, programming director for the Hancock Partners' Hancock Town Square, and active member of the Delaware County and Hancock Area Chambers of Commerce, the Eagle River Valley Corridor, and Hancock Gateway Tourism Council throughout her 20 years of living in the Upper Delaware River Valley, Nancy Furdock has left an indelible mark.

She's now taking her tireless volunteerism and creative skills back to where she grew up in Central New York, but the Upper Delaware region that she characterizes as "unique and wonderful" will always have a place in her heart.

"The Community Service Award is given to an individual who contributes significant time and energy in service of the Upper Delaware Valley," said long-time former Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Inc. Chairperson Glenn Pontier.

"Indeed, as Nancy's life takes her out of this area, it will be difficult (if not impossible) to find another volunteer willing to give as much as she has over the years," he says.

Pontier cited as a few examples of her June 15, 2015 to February 20, 2020 appointed tenure as the Village of Hancock's UDSB Committee representative, "Nancy oversaw the revitalization of the byway's website, headed the Marketing Committee as it developed a new radio advertising program, and instituted a campaign of environmentally-friendly re-

usable litter bags."

Nancy's ability to identify needs and implement bold ideas to address them earned her the respect of colleagues, governmental leaders, business owners, and members of the public who benefitted from the improvements and programs for which she was responsible - sometimes single-handedly as well as in collaborations.

Through grants and donations, she secured more than \$3.5 million for her various non-profit causes, and played key roles in the revitalization of Hancock's tourism promotion and economic development strategies.

The Hancock Town Square became a popular venue for eclectic international performances under Nancy's Summer Nights series, for which she would spend the whole year seeking out acts, raising funds for booking and publicity, and often hosting artists at her home.

Festivals, farmers' markets, and charitable events were also programmed using her Marketing Communications education from Rockland County Community College and Music Education studies from Syracuse University.

One distinctive achievement was Nancy's role in coordinating a group called "Common Ground" to promote cultural understanding of the Islamberg Muslims of America community whose approximately 200 residents have lived near Hancock since around 1980. That began with her invitation to talk over tea.

"I saw a community of peaceful people



being attacked by outsiders who came to our town to harass them," she says.

Protests met by local counter-demonstrations with Nancy's participation gained international media attention.

What motivates her to get so involved in her community?

"Every human being needs a purpose," Nancy explains. "I have to feel like I'm making some kind of contribution to the world where I live and wherever I rest my head."

On May 18, 2020 Nancy married Darren Keegan. The couple is now building their dream house atop a hill with sweeping vistas based on Nancy's custom design.

In a full circle moment, their new property is located just two miles from Nancy's childhood home in Pompey, NY.

Nancy will continue her freelance Media Chameleons marketing consulting and design business, and is scoping out opportunities to get involved in all new activities.

"I want to take what I've learned over the years and apply that to my new community through the arts, chamber of commerce, and community-building," she says.



Nancy relaxes with now husband Darren Keegan after the 2019 UDC Awards. (Top photo, contributed; above photo courtesy of David B. Soete)



The former Upper Delaware Scenic Byway vice-chair posed with Secretary-Treasurer Larry H. Richardson and former Chairperson Glenn Pontier in 2016. (UDSB Photo by Laurie Ramie)

Cultural Achievement Award ~ 1888 Spencer Tractor Restoration, Wayne County Historical Society



The 1888 Spencer Steam Tractor began as a heap of scrap metal, left, and ended as a meticulously restored showpiece which debuted on August 29 at Wayne County Historical Society's D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 in Hawley. (Left photo contributed by Wayne County Historical Society; Right photo by Laurie Ramie)

Few people have the ability, energy, and passion to take a pile of century-old wood and metal parts and envision and rebuild the steam-powered tractor it once was.

Luckily for Wayne County, they have five of these very people.

On August 29, 2020 at the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31, the Wayne County Historical Society unveiled the fully restored and reconstructed 1888 Spencer Steam Tractor, which was completed by a group of enthusiastic volunteers who call themselves the "Five Stars Team."

These Five Stars - including Fred Murray, Rich Robbins, Frank Ward, Rod Warner, and Steve Weber - and their "Plus One", Kim Erickson, have earned the 2020 UDC Cultural Achievement Award for their dedication and tenacity in restor-

ing the historic Spencer Steam Tractor.

On the 4th of July, 1889, Pleasant Mount, Pennsylvania native David Spencer introduced his revolutionary steam-powered tractor.

The first of its kind, the tractor used wood or coal as fuel and reached a speed of 4 m.p.h.

Spencer, whose family were early settlers in Mount Pleasant Township, made all of the tractor's parts by hand in his blacksmith shop after becoming inspired during a visit to the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition.

The tractor's intended use was for farmers, as it could plow, draw a series of other wagons, and haul logs.

Despite Spencer's ingenuity, the tractor was determined to be too costly,

costing Spencer about \$10,000 to build.

The tractor remained on display at the Wayne County Historical Society in Honesdale for years but unfortunately fell into disrepair and became a pile of pieces and parts, begging for restoration.

It wasn't until 2017 when the Five Stars banded together to rebuild the tractor using nothing more than old photographs, mechanical

"With no plans or directions, the volunteers worked at rebuilding the tractor two days each week, spending hundreds of volunteer hours during 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020. Every board was measured and recreated, each piece of metal was sanded, primed, and painted. The wheels, which stand approximately 6 ½ feet high, were totally rebuilt...this is a one-of-a-kind object from Wayne County History."
- Carol Henry Dunn, Executive Director, Wayne County Historical Society

ingenuity, and elbow grease. The team used space at New Wave Woodworking in White Mills to store and work on the machine two days a week for four years.

Assisted by Kim Erickson who got materials and provided administrative support, and a variety of local businesses and craftsmen, the team was able to get the project completed and have begun to show off the marvel as a travelling exhibit.

The project will gain national recognition when it appears on the hit show "Small Town, Big Deal" in late fall 2020.

The project is indeed a big deal for a small town, but perhaps the people behind the project are the bigger deal, as the Five Star Volunteers have preserved an important piece of Wayne County's history for generations to come.



FIVE-STARS TEAM PLUS ONE: Pictured from left to right, Frank Ward, Steve Weber, Kim Erickson, Fred Murray, Rich Robbins, and Rod Warner. (Photo contributed by Peter Becker, Tri-County Independent, and the Wayne County Historical Society)

Cultural Achievement Award ~ Big Eddy Film Festival

The “blurry line between reality and illusion” was the theme that Big Eddy Film Festival Director Tina Spangler chose for the Eighth Annual event that celebrates all aspects of independent filmmaking.

The often sold-out audiences that enthusiastically embraced the September 20-22, 2019 festival were certainly no illusion.

How many communities the size of Narrowsburg (population ~431), NY can lay claim to a film festival that attracts premiere movie screenings, an opportunity to directly engage with well-known filmmakers eager to discuss their work, and the ability to comfortably walk from one quaint riverside venue to another?

The Delaware Valley Arts Alliance has expanded and polished the Big Eddy Film Festival each year but 2019 represented an art-imitating-life milestone.

That centered on the New York State premiere of the documentary, “Narrowsburg”, fittingly being shown for only the second time ever in the hamlet where the true-life yet fantastical story of attempts to mount a Narrowsburg Film Festival in 1999 occurred.

The scandal of mafioso-turned-actor Richard Castellano and his film producer wife Jocelyne swindling over \$300,000 from local residents who in good faith bought into the exciting promises of turning Narrowsburg into “Sundance of the East” by establishing an acting school and film festival began its documentary life with a 2012 interview that director Martha Shane had with Jocelyne after she ripped off other people while trying to start a Queens Film Festival.

“Richie” Castellano, who played a mobster in “Analyze This”, wound up in the slammer for fraud in 2000 and died in 2015 at age 60, while Jocelyne was also jailed on grand larceny charges for the Queens incident and deported to France.

Shane and her production team dug into the compelling Narrowsburg story through interviews with



Director Tina Spangler introduces the 8th Annual Big Eddy Film Festival on September 20, 2019. (Photo courtesy of the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance)

those who lived it and footage dating back to 1999. The locally-shot gangster film “Four Deadly Reasons” that the Castellanos had started aired immediately after the “Narrowsburg” screening.

Ironically, 2012 is when the Big Eddy Film Festival began after the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance Board of Directors opted to venture into amplifying filmmaking as an art form.

Tina had created content for the Sundance Channel and gained insider knowledge through the actual Sundance Film Festival (again, ironically) of how these events successfully operate.

Her savvy in selecting themes that will resonate and films that have gone on to receive Academy Award acclaim is key. She seeks out movies with local connections and brings in feature filmmakers such as Melissa Gilbert and Timothy Busfield, who respectively produced and directed the Jeff Daniels’ 2019 movie “Guest Artist”, for post-film audience chats and fascinating panel discussions such as “Married to the Work: Partners in Filmmaking and Life” featuring three couples whose works aired at the festival. Fun cocktail parties at Narrowsburg venues with local service purveyors are also offered to all-access passholders.

Other 2019 highlights were the films “Saint Frances”, documentaries “Recorder: The Marion Stokes Project” and “Gay Chorus Deep South”, Catskills premieres of “The Show’s the Thing: Legendary Promoters of Rock”, “The Dog Doc”, and “Martha: A Picture Story”, five short films, and creations resulting from the Kid Flix Video Camp led by Ron Littke of Icehouse Arts.



Serving on the panel to discuss the documentary film “Narrowsburg” after its debut at the Narrowsburg Union were, seated: Martha Shane (director), Floyd Campfield, Beck Kitsis (producer), Chris McNabb (editor), Paul Salzberg, Cecelia Coacci, and Tom Coacci. Back row: Frank LaBuda, Ralph Huebner, Dan Nuxoll (co-producer), John Conway, Zac Stuart-Pontier, and Brian Vincent. (Photo by Jonathan Charles Fox, River Reporter)

Partnership Award ~ USGS Northern Appalachian Research Laboratory

For more than two decades, the United States Geological Survey Northern Appalachian Research Laboratory (USGS NARL) has been providing the Upper Delaware region with invaluable research that has greatly advanced understanding of local biology and ecology.

Because of their collaborative and important work, the USGS NARL team of Dr. Heather Galbraith, Carrie Blakeslee, Jeff Cole, and Barbara White receive the Upper Delaware Council's 2020 Partnership Award.

Don Hamilton, Natural Resources Chief for the National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, credits the scientists for working "broadly throughout the Delaware and Susquehanna River watersheds to conduct research and advance knowledge about key river components and processes that support ecosystem health and support goals aligned with the Upper Delaware River Management Plan."

The laboratory's Upper Delaware projects over the years have included:

- Freshwater mussel surveys, in collaboration with the National Park Service and other agencies, to document species distribution throughout the basin;
- Studying the effects of flow management on key species including various mussels, American eel, American shad, and the economically and recreationally important rain-



Barbara White from the USGS Northern Appalachian Research Laboratory inventories mussel species held by National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Biologist Jessica Newbern during a July 2016 snorkeling survey. Freshwater mussels provide valuable ecosystem services in evaluating a river's health.

bow and brown trout;

- Developing decision support tools for use in river flow management;
- Studying the impacts of invasive species on native fish communities;
- Developing methodology for detecting rare and invasive species;
- Studying the impacts of contaminants such as polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) on aquatic foodwebs;
- Studying the effects of native species restoration, such as American eel, on the control of invasive species (rusty crayfish); and
- Researching the impacts of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (invasive insect species) on trout streams.

Dr. Galbraith, Blakeslee, Cole, and White have all authored and co-authored numer-

ous scientific publications on their studies in the Upper Delaware River over the years to create a lasting legacy of knowledge.

"The National Park Service on the Upper Delaware River has benefitted from a greater than 20-year partnership with this lab, relying on their scientific expertise and capabilities in conducting biological surveys, and modeling flow and habitat components of the river that are important to varied biota and numerous stakeholder groups," Hamilton notes.

Despite a recent USGS decision to permanently close the NARL in 2020, the team's research contributions will continue to inform NPS decision-making and conservation methods far beyond the laboratory's physical existence.



Photos Contributed by Don Hamilton, National Park Service Upper Delaware

Advocacy Award ~ PA Rep. Jonathan Fritz, PA Rep. Mike Peifer, and PA Senator Lisa Baker



Representative Jonathan Fritz



Representative Mike Peifer



Senator Lisa Baker

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is making its first direct investment in the Upper Delaware River Valley thanks to the advocacy of its PA legislators.

Representative Jonathan Fritz (111th District), Representative Michael T. Peifer (139th District), and Senator Lisa Baker (20th District) helped secure a \$100,000 grant under the “Upper Delaware Council Townships, Technology and Sustainability” program.

Members of the Upper Delaware Council’s (UDC) Government Officials Liaison Subcommittee met with the delegation and their designees jointly in Honesdale, PA on February 8, 2019 to inform them about the lack of operational support from Pennsylvania and New York State despite the 60% Federal/40% States’ cost-sharing ratio outlined in the 1986 *River Management Plan for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River*.

While the federal government through the U.S. Department of the Interior has allocated \$300,000 per year as a line item in the budget of the National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River (without any inflationary adjustment) to fund the Council, neither the Commonwealth of PA nor the State of NY has ever contributed their respective anticipated \$100,000 shares.

The Pennsylvania Code, as a successor to gubernatorial Executive Orders dating back to 1989, legislatively recognizes the Commonwealth’s charter voting member participation in the UDC which was established in 1988 under the Congressional designation to coordinate implementation of the River Management Plan by the federal-state-local cooperative partnership.

The delegation of Pennsylvania lawmakers responded by strongly supporting approval of the UDC’s January 24, 2020 grant application to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, for which the contract was executed in late February.

Retroactive to the July 1, 2019 start of PA’s fiscal year and ending December 31, 2021, the grant funds have been allo-

cated to support a multi-faceted series of projects by the non-profit UDC organization and its five PA local township members.

Nearly three-quarters of the funding at \$72,123.09 is being administered by the UDC to fulfill community improvement needs identified by Damascus, Berlin, Shohola, Lackawaxen, and Westfall Townships following a solicitation of proposals. The projects include:

Damascus - A 320-square-foot addition to the Community Center to allow expansion of the Damascus Food Pantry, and renovation of the restrooms at the Damascus Forest public hiking trail;

Berlin - Upgrade the township website and security camera system, restore the “Beech Lake” Keystone historic marker, renovate the message board, replace the property line fence, and pave the parking lot at the Berlin Township Community Center; and purchase a vehicle-mounted distance measuring instrument for road project bidding use;

Shohola - Assist with costs to replace the Municipal Building roof;

Lackawaxen - Support the Care Cabin Food Pantry located on township property and operated by the Growing Lackawaxen non-profit organization for its September 2019 construction and purchase of some equipment; and

Westfall - Resurface the lower level parking lot at the Municipal Building to accommodate the move of the Eastern Pike Police Department with additional spaces.

The UDC is pursuing a first-ever Upper Delaware Litter Sweep as a volunteer-powered trash clean-up within the land-based portion of the Upper Delaware Watershed and allocating funds to commission a long-term business plan for economic sustainability to guide the organization’s fiscal operations and explore diversified funding sources.

The Council also invested approximately \$7,200 in needed technology and presentation upgrades.

Without the advocacy of the PA legislators, many of these worthwhile projects would not have been possible.

Robin M. Daniels Memorial Lifesaving Award ~ James Moss, Johnny Smith, Andy Moss, Jeff Dexter

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.

On Sunday, July 6, 2019, Damascus Township Volunteer Ambulance Corps was dispatched for an injury reported near Equinunk, PA. While en route along State Rt. 191, the call was cancelled and they were redirected to respond to a second call about a half-mile upstream of the Kellams, NY-Stalker, PA Bridge for a medical incident involving a man in the Delaware River.

Wayne County 911 called out the Equinunk Volunteer Fire Company simultaneously with firefighters James Moss, Johnny Smith, and firefighter/emergency medical technician Andy Moss responding. They and Damascus Ambulance driver Jeff Dexter assessed the situation.

A heavy-set man who appeared to be in his mid-50s had floated far out into the river on a tube then began experiencing difficulty breathing. He and his family were staying at a private campsite but he lacked the stamina to wade back across the wide, shallow river span to return there.

"It wasn't the time or place to be out there with a thunderstorm coming and fighting the flow of the river," recalls Andy Moss. "He was at a stretch that is not too accessible to people and the family had no cell service; they had to find a landline to contact 911."

"His whole family was frantic," James Moss adds. "I was the first one on the scene and got his health information. He was stressed, dizzy, weak, couldn't breathe well, and was vomiting. He was probably 50-60 yards out from shore, where it gets deep quick. His father was out there with him trying to hold him up."

Johnny Smith confirms, "He was definitely in trouble. The water was only 2-3 feet deep where he was standing but he could have drowned."

"We could hear nearby thunder and feel the cool breeze from a nearby downpour. Even though it was closer to the New York shoreline, there was no land access to that point. If a medical helicopter had been available, there was no place to land it. There were also no rescue boats for miles, and all the equipment, ambulance, and paramedics were on the PA shore. It was quickly obvious that the only option was to walk the victim back to the shoreline that he had waded out from," says Jeff Dexter.

James Moss had grabbed a large float from the Soaring Eagle Campground but the man said he would not be able to breathe lying down. It would have to be a vertical rescue.

Three firefighters and the relative wrapped their arms around the victim to support him as the fifth person walked in front to search for any obstacles, large rocks, or debris that could hinder their approach.

It involved around 30 minutes of slow-going progress. Rain from



Jeff Dexter (Contributed Photo; fellow honoree photos unavailable)

that brewing storm began to fall toward the end.

"The victim said he might be able to walk only a few steps at a time. He needed frequent stops to catch his breath. We offered him encouragement every step of the way. Each step got us closer to shore. A few times, he felt that he could not go any further. As we began to get closer to the shoreline, his spirit improved as he knew that his ordeal was almost over. Once he got on shore, he was quickly surrounded by family and medical support. It's a steep bank with primitive steps, but he was able to climb them with only one break," Dexter says.

The man was evaluated and then loaded into the ambulance to be checked out at Wayne Memorial Hospital.

He was later transferred by helicopter to a larger medical center for advanced treatment of an underlying medical condition and is reportedly in improved health today.

Upon learning about the UDC award nomination, the victim's sister said, "I am excited for your team and pray they are honored for what they did. You did not know us, yet no one hesitated to go into the river and bring my brother back to safety. Thank you all for quite literally being life-savers."

Lifesaving Award ~ Paddy McCarthy and Tim Freeman

National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Interpretation Rangers Paddy McCarthy and Tim Freeman were practicing white-water canoeing techniques at the Mongaup Rapids on July 5, 2019.

“Just as they were getting ready to head downstream to complete their patrol for the day, they were alarmed when they heard a man shouting. He was out of his raft standing in chest-deep water at the top of the rapid without a life jacket on. The raft he had been in was now moving rapidly downstream. The man struggled to remain standing in the fast-moving water but was not able to for long and became fatigued as he was being pushed toward the middle of the river,” recounts fellow Park Ranger Susie Kaspar.

Paddy, who has worked as a seasonal ranger for the past four years during his summers off as a science teacher at Sullivan West High School, and first-year intern Tim quickly paddled out but the man was pulled underwater.

“When he popped back up, he had a thousand yard stare, not shouting, not fighting or swimming. He appeared despondent,” Paddy says.

He didn’t reach for the throw ropes and was unable to put on a life jacket after they grabbed him by the arm. Trying to avoid tipping, they instructed him to hold on to the canoe as they carefully paddled back to shore.

The victim immediately put on his life jacket that was sitting in the raft, refused medical attention, and continued the trip.

“It was really striking to me, the miraculous timing of it. Had we been anywhere else or the timing was different... It was remarkably fast how it unfolded. We get very good training such as how to stay in a rapid and keep the craft under control while deploying equipment, but you don’t think it will ever come to that,” Paddy says.

The Cohecton resident is a 1999 Narrowsburg High School and SUNY Cobleskill graduate with a degree in Wildlife Management and Education. He and his wife Melissa are the parents of four daughters.

Sadly, Tim died on October 21, 2019.

The 21-year-old from Macungie, PA near Allentown wasn’t familiar with the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River before he applied to the NPS internship program.

Tim had been studying engineering at Temple University in Philadelphia before deciding to switch his major to geology.

His father Paul recalls Tim speaking to him and his mother Karen about the near-drowning incident.

“He said how grateful he was to help and that he realized how important their training was. He loved the opportunity to be out in nature, and to help people learn about it and how to safely enjoy it. It confirmed this was the direction he wanted to go in. He really liked all the training and different activities. He spoke highly of the law enforcement folks and enjoyed working with Susie. Everyone was really good to him and they took an interest in each of the interns,” Paul says.

Paddy praised Tim as “a really dynamic young man who was a talented photographer, could do all the skills we learned with very high precision, and was cool under pressure.”



Ranger Padraic “Paddy” McCarthy



Ranger Tim Freeman at 2019 NPS Zane Grey Festival
(Contributed Photos)

“It was a saving grace that they were there,” says Chief Ranger Keith Winslow, who credits the honorees for not hesitating to act selflessly when thrust into an emergency situation, which defines true heroism.

Distinguished Service Award ~ Harold G. Roeder, Jr.



Harold G. Roeder, Jr. makes a point to U.S. Congressman Antonio Delgado (NY-19) on March 20, 2019 at the UDC office. (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)

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*.

As Harold G. Roeder, Jr. was signing off at a December 11, 2019 Delaware Town Board meeting in anticipation of stepping back from his UDC role, he was quoted in the *River Reporter* as saying, "I've had the privilege of being the chair of the UDC three times in 22 years. And I just have to tell the people here and the board, I have been honored to represent this title and you people and all the supervisors that were here when I served. I hope I've been of help to you."

Harold had decided to exit on a high note following his 2019 Council leadership at the age of 78, but graciously agreed to stay on until the town could replace him.

It turned out that took until June of 2020, and Harold hasn't truly left the organization since he now fulfills the role of alternate to new Representative Tom Dent.

Roeder had translated his love for fishing, nature, and the outdoors into a "vested interest in the conservation end of it" when he accepted the Town of Delaware's UDC appointment in 1997.

He served as chairperson in 2000, vice-chair in 2009, and chaired twice more in 2010 and 2019, while also participating on the Operations and Project Review Committees, and the Personnel and Government Officials Liaison Subcommittees over the decades.

After moving to the town from Queens at age 12 in 1952, Roeder graduated from Delaware Valley High School, and earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music Performance from Ithaca College.

He worked as a music teacher at

"I've had the pleasure of serving with Harold since his appointment to the UDC Board by the Town of Delaware in 1997.

If you were to list the qualifications for a town/townships' representative to the Upper Delaware Council, it might read: intelligent, caring (passion one might say), idealistic, sense of humor, and along with all these traits, a willingness to recognize an opposing position and seek a compromise.

One person who would fill this description is Harold Roeder. He will be missed. I and my fellow Council members sincerely wish Harold a healthy and happy retirement. And GREAT Fishing!"

~ Larry H. Richardson, UDC 2020 Chairperson



(Jan. 2019 Photo by David Hulse)

Roscoe Central School and an instructor at Ithaca College. From 1960-1986, he owned Roeder's Pianos and Organs which sold, tuned, and repaired those instruments. Roeder earned his real estate license in 1988 and operated Roeder's Appraisal Service from 1992 until retiring in 2015.

Roeder was appointed Town of Delaware Councilman to fill a vacancy in March of 2009 and won subsequent elections until he resigned in January of 2015 when he and his wife, Donna, moved from Hortonville across the river to Welcome Lake, PA.

They continued to own property in the Town of Delaware. The Roeders are proud parents to Hal, Katrina, and Brian, with nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren in the family.

Ever responsible and generous with his time and talents, Roeder embodies the UDC motto of concern for the land, water, and people of the Upper Delaware River Valley.

"Harold certainly deserves this award. He served as Delaware's representative long before I was supervisor and continued even after he moved. His dedication and common sense made him a perfect leader for the UDC. He was here when the Park Service came and is very protective of private property rights. He keeps his eye on your mission and has been a champion for the Town's interest. His monthly presentations at Town Board meetings are notable! Rarely do we find a man with integrity and dedication to give of himself as Harold does. Well done, Harold!" ~ Ed Sykes, former Town of Delaware Supervisor