



Quarterly Newsletter

December 2020

A Message from our Board President:

This year has been truly unusual and in the coming months we are told that we shall all be challenged further. The staff has done a super job of seeing that many opportunities for participation are still being offered. I salute their efforts to keep CU current and active.

At our annual meeting we announced some big changes in our administrative structure. We hired Jamie Warner as our program manager; you likely saw the announcement. And Karla Rossini was asked by the board to serve as our Executive Director. For a number of years Karla has been acquiring and assuming many of the responsibilities of a director. Now she will be relinquishing many of her functions to Jamie and I will be passing along my administrative duties to Karla.

During Karla's five-plus years at CU Maurice River she has accomplished a number of notable tasks. She greatly expanded our relationship with WheatonArts, acquiring a grant to install a nature trail and stepping up our role in the EcoFair with themes and a guest speaker. She established a Neighborhood Wildlife Garden by engaging our volunteers in a collaboration with the Millville Development Corp., the City, Holly City Family Success Center, and local schools and churches on many of the garden ventures. These involvements have linked community leaders, acquainting them with our mission and the benefits of urban greening. The project also links a population traditionally underserved by the environmental community. It introduces city populations to resources that are usually more readily available to rural neighborhoods.

Karla has established our stewardship program, obtaining a variety of small grants in order to create, grow, and sustain this effort, garnering many working partnerships with large land owners, businesses, and conservation partners. The program included designations of properties that provided habitat features and/or conserved ground water. By fostering these relationships, we were able to design a new phase of the program that received a \$70,000 grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. We have also added stewardship workshops to the CU calendar.

Between 2015 and 2019 CU doubled the events offered on its calendar (an increase from 50 to nearly 100), reflected in both attendance and membership numbers. New technology modalities allow us to streamline planning and further monitor success of programs. The CU naturalist team has grown, permitting us to offer a wider range of interpretative experiences. Karla structured and grew CU Saturdays and CU Socials into a cohesive format.

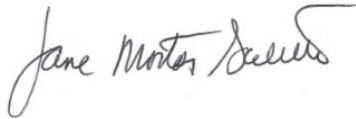
All of these ventures as well the improvement in our existing programming have attracted new participants and members. And you, our volunteers, have been the consistent glue that powers these successes. Karla and the CU Team are honored to coordinate your efforts. I hope you will welcome Jamie and congratulate Karla on her expanded role in the organization.

Beginning the end of October, we started planning for the new year. The calendar is always a challenge. Knowing that we will be faced with continued social distancing we are approaching our

plans with that in mind. A few things may go wrong but we think we can design a year in which most events can be implemented without a lot of changes. So you might say we have resiliency plans and some alternative opportunities. Our business meetings will be conducted virtually and our outdoor walks will be masked, distanced, and in small groups, unless recommendations warrant acting differently. We hope to take some presentations into the out-of-doors as well. We know there will be some bumps due to weather and understandably to cold feet due to the pandemic, but we shall venture to bring you the best that we can!

As Board President I will still be assuming some the pesky solicitation and 'funraising' responsibilities. Maybe someday we will be in a financial position to have a development director. Doreen and Meghan will still be heavily involved in these aspects. On rare occasions programs or activities contribute to our fiscal solvency. But most things are powered by your generosity and membership. Thank you for all you do, Happy Holidays, and until we next see each other, stay safe and well!

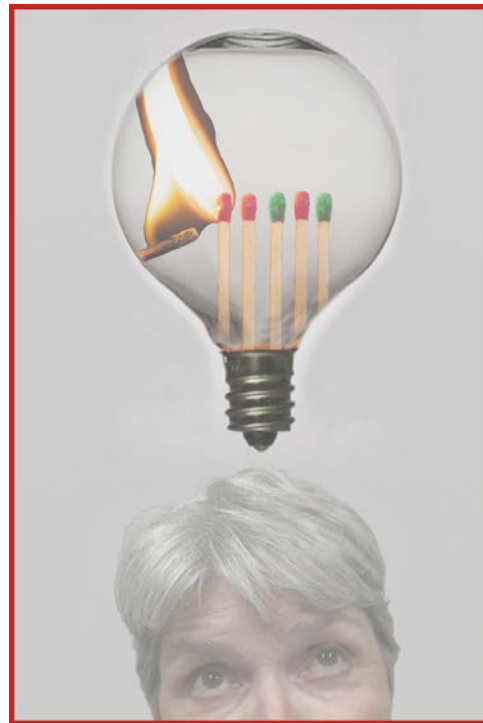
Sincerely,



Jane Morton Galetto
Board President

Holiday Match

The Holiday Match will be running until the New Year. This year's zany premise will be based on the Bayshore Heritage Byway. It could be characterized as historic fiction as our Board President uses various travel modalities to travel the length of the Byway from its beginning in Mannington Meadows to its end in Cape May. Members will see sections of our nomination for an All-American Road, thus learning about many places on the route. And you get yet another window into the wacky imagination of our Board President as she employs her odd fundraising techniques. So, the places are real, the history is real, the Byway is real, and raising funds is EXTREMELY NECESSARY – but the transportation methods and travel - well, we will let you be the judge.



**Keep the Match Lit
Donate Here**

Upcoming Events

Keep an eye out for CU Maurice River's Calendar of Events 2021
to be posted at the beginning of January.

First Bi-monthly Meeting of 2021
Wednesday, January 13th, 2021
Meeting – 6:30pm
Presentation – 7:00pm Olivia Le Warn



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice
within the Context of Conservation
An interactive virtual experience with Olivia Le Warn

Topics around Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) are becoming more commonplace in the environmental movement, but for many it can be an unfamiliar landscape. Join Olivia Le Warn from the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed to learn about what DEIJ means specifically for environmental organizations and how

incorporating these ideals makes our movement stronger, while examining the past of the environmental movement and its future. This presentation will have ample opportunities for reflection and interaction with the material and one another, as we come together to work on this important topic.

Olivia Le Warn joined the Coalition in 2019, serving as the Engagement Coordinator. In the Coalition's role they facilitate its Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice workgroup, as well as plan major events such as the Annual Delaware River Watershed Forum. Previously Olivia served with the Americorps N.J. Watershed Ambassadors Program as the Ambassador for the Saddle River and Lower Passaic River Watersheds, and worked in the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission's Engineering Department. Olivia earned a Bachelor of Science from Rutgers University New Brunswick in Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources, along with a minor in Environmental Geomatics, focusing on urban coastal toxicology and resiliency in her undergraduate thesis.

Second Bi-monthly Meeting
to be held on
Wednesday, March 10th, 2021 at 6:30pm.
Speaker to be announced.

More Upcoming Events Save the Dates

The first Bi-monthly member meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, January 13th, 2020 starting at 6:30 p.m.

CU Saturday – As is traditional, CUMR's first walk of the year will be held at Natural Lands' Glades Wildlife Preserve on Saturday, January 16th starting at 9:00 a.m.

Looking to get more involved? Join Meghan virtually for an Ambassador Training on Thursday, January 28th at 6:00 p.m. She will instruct the group on how they can volunteer to lead outreach activities at events.

Eagle Fest Limited – This year the Eagle Fest will not take place in its traditional form. CU Maurice River is currently organizing virtual opportunities as well as outdoor experiences. The

virtual events will take place on February 3rd and 4th, and will be followed by two walks on Saturday, February 6th. Be on the lookout for a stand-alone email with more details.

February 11th at 6:00pm Join Meghan Thompson for a Virtual New Member Training, an introduction to CU Maurice River and the work we accomplish together.

February 13th CU Maurice River will be leading its first Saturday Volunteer Work Group. Time TBD

February 20th Join CU Naturalists Tony Klock and Mary Watkins on the Annual Duck Caravan starting at 9:00am. The route will be determined closer to the date pending on where the ducks are!

February 25th CU Naturalist and high school history teacher Jim Blumenstein will be presenting on how a culture writes its history. He will place special focus on southern New Jersey.

March 2nd at 9:00am Join CU Maurice River Program Manager Jamie Warner for a local Tuesday on the Fly experience. Jamie has a special cultural treat planned for you!

March 5th at 6:00pm Assistant Office Manager Meghan Thompson will be hosting a virtual trivia fundraiser that you will not want to miss!



The Calendar

Our calendar is being diligently developed for the new year. The complexities - trying to make a schedule that incorporates the ability to switch back to live vs. virtual format - are being navigated by the staff. They are planning a super year of integrating both options. We know that both weather and virus will throw us some punches – but we are building in as much resiliency as possible. The calendar will be available on-line. This year it will be extremely important to check the calendar for any changes and try to read the emails closely for activities that interest you. Times are often tweaked because of tides, weather, accommodating leaders' schedule changes, location opening times, and such.

Past Activities

Many of our tours book extremely quickly. Numbers allowed in a group vary for many reasons but by and large we are trying to keep them small. So we encourage you to sign up early and let us know if you can't attend, since many opportunities have waiting lists or the option of a second tour guide if warranted by interest.

CU Socials

A CU Social was held on September 24 in Greenwich along the Bayshore Heritage Byway. The

backdrop for this outdoor presentation was the historic Greenwich Friends Upper Meetinghouse. Our speaker was Lisa Garrison who gave an engaging talk about the “Springtown” area and its abolitionist dedication to freedom seekers. The Quakers, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and other local congregations in and around the Greenwich area were major forces in helping lead people to freedom. Lisa illustrated her talk with a blue lamp, relaying how freedom seekers from Delaware would brave crossing the Delaware Bay by boat following yellow and blue lights that signaled their way to safety. She employed a felt board map, taking many of us back to this bygone childhood teaching device. It was a nice diversion from Powerpoint mania.

Lisa played her guitar and sang a song she wrote for the country's bicentennial, about early encounters between Lenape people and Quakers and the enduring influences of native people along Bayshore rivers. It was a wonderful evening under the night sky, exploring our area's connections to the Underground Railroad, appropriately during National Underground Railroad Month. The event maxed out at 23 attendees as we continue to be COVID aware.



Delaware Bay Maritime Resources

On October 22 we hosted Meghan Wren for a virtual presentation on Delaware Bay maritime resources. Meghan is a tireless champion for the Delaware Bayshore, its heritage, and its future. She founded the Bayshore Center at Bivalve, initiated and oversaw the restoration of the Schooner AJ Meerwald, and led Super Storm Sandy recovery efforts in Cumberland County. She even swam across the Delaware Bay to draw attention to the devastation unleashed on bayside villages by the hurricane. Meghan talked about the natural and cultural assets along the Bayshore and their recovery status. She reflected on the future of Bayshore beach towns and the initiatives by residents to preserve our historic villages.

Cleanups

National Waterways Clean Up

Our contribution to the National Waterways Cleanup on September 26 was a success. CU volunteers gathered approximately 12 bags of trash from the Maurice River Bicycle and Walking Trail and the Maurice River, and scoured the area by both land and water. Everyone showed dedication to the task at hand. As a bonus, it was a great day for



Tony Klock tows an inner tube filled with debris.

enjoying the area's wildlife and botany.



Money Island - Downe Township

A dedicated CU workgroup converged at Money Island on October 28; in collaboration with Downe Township they were able to pull a massive amount of refuse off the beaches. This work is necessary not just to maintain their esthetic value, but to keep them healthy for a vast array of wildlife. For example, the interface between the horseshoe crab spawn and shorebird stopover can be drastically impacted by litter as well as rubble. Thank you to all who came out and to Downe Township Public Works. Teamwork makes a world of difference!

Scotland Run Park's Annual Waterfest



On Sunday, September 13, 2020 CU was represented at Scotland Run Park's Annual Waterfest. Staff member Teresa Brown was joined by volunteers Carol Sibley and Wendy Walker at our table at Scotland Run Park's Annual Waterfest / Bioblitz event. Teresa, Carol, and Wendy enjoyed meeting attendees and sharing CU opportunities for involvement. We also had an Enviroscape, a watershed model that enabled visitors to explore the sources of water pollution. The Bioblitz utilized nature walks to survey flora and fauna. There were animal exhibits, live music, and other environmental groups represented. The event celebrated the reopening of the Nature Center after its having been closed for COVID.

CU Saturdays

Cox Hall Creek

Saturday, September 12 Bert Hixon guided us along the paved trails of Cox Hall Creek



Wildlife Management Area exploring flora and in search of migratory birds. Attendees were pleasantly surprised by how quickly the former golf course has been restored to habitat. The paths have signage that helps interpret specific restoration sites. Bert shared his knowledge of trees and how to differentiate similar species. We discussed troublesome invasive plants such as Chinese bushclover and the beautiful but vile porcelain berry vine. The restored meadows of this site boast many native plantings. The spotted horsemint was so plentiful in one area that we could smell its unique aroma. The trip was fully booked.

Butterflies on The Bayshore Tour

On Saturday, September 19 CU Naturalists Tony Klock and Jim Blumenstein led participants on a Butterflies on the Bayshore tour. They began in downtown Millville and ended at the Commercial Township Wetland Restoration site off Berrytown Road in Port Norris. Participants saw an abundance of butterflies, both locals and migrants. They learned about nectar sources and foodplants that support butterfly populations.



Exploring the Beach with Karen Williams

The CU Saturday on October 17 took us to Whale Beach in Strathmere. There Karen Williams, science teacher and native plant nursery owner, discussed the many different species that live and thrive in the surf, on the beaches, and in the dunes. Karen drew sand diagrams of waves and land formations to illustrate how beaches and marshes move. We even learned some Sea Isle City history. At the end of our walk we saw an epic standoff between an eagle and a hawk. Thank you to everyone who came out and to all those who added immeasurably to our experience with their own memories, common names, questions, and beach-finds. This walk hosted 23 participants.

Cape May Point State Park With Bert Hixon

On Saturday October 31 Naturalist Bert Hixon guided CU attendees at Cape May Point State Park and the migrating birds did not disappoint! We saw broad-winged and red-tailed hawks, a juvenile bald eagle, tree swallows, scoter, and even two Lincoln sparrows flitting through the reeds. The impromptu tour was booked within a

day or two of announcing it!



Spotting Leftovers with Mary Watkins

Saturday's November 14 walk was dubbed "Spotting Leftovers," in an effort to catch the late migrants. Mary Watkins took us out to Port Norris and historic Bivalve and attendees were astounded at the number of birds they saw. Thank you to everyone who made it a lovely morning and special thanks to our guide Mary who shared her wealth of knowledge about bird flight patterns, calls, and plumage. Viewed were yellow-rumped warblers, Ipswich sparrows, purple finches, white throated sparrows, lots of red-tailed hawks, yellow bellied sapsuckers, gulls, crows, eagles, cormorants, mixed flocks of blackbirds, towhees and more. In addition to the birds, we saw - a clouded sulfur butterfly, a red admiral butterfly (who is a long-distance migrant similar to monarchs, and who feast on the marsh's groundsel,) buckeyes, and even a very late greenhead fly! A great day. The walk hosted 21 participants.

Fourth Saturdays

CU Trustee Tony Klock leads incredible fourth Saturdays at Waltman Park. The last two were held October 24 and November 21 (pushed a back week because of Thanksgiving). Watching Waltman through the seasons continually unveils new natural happenings. Many CU naturalists join Tony to add their sightings. Thank you to everyone who makes the walks special, and an especially big thank you to Tony!



Tony shows off a huge sycamore leaf.



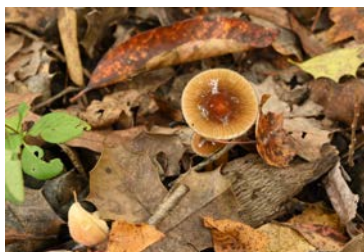
The group pauses at the Brandriff Street bridge overpass.



Ed and Bonnie regularly walk the trail and give eagle updates to the CU crew.



A number of people catch a glimpse of a nuthatch.



These cupped mushrooms capture water and reflect their surroundings.



The group always takes advantage of vistas from the bridges.

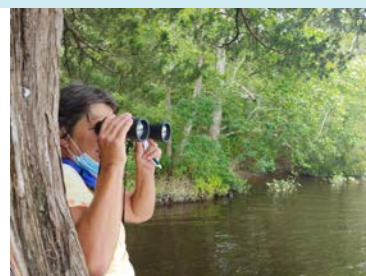
Tuesdays on the Fly

Fred Akers In The Egg Harbor Watershed

Tuesday, September 1 (previous newsletter)
Great Egg Harbor watershed tour with Fred Akers. Here are some pictures that came in after the newsletter.



Bethlehem Loading Co. ruins





Birding the Bayshore with Dr. Paul Kosten

Tuesday, October 6 - What a beautiful day on the Delaware Bayshore! Dr. Paul Kosten led seasoned birders and nature enthusiasts on an enjoyable walk by the saltmarsh. Paul taught everyone new terms and tips to aid in spotting numerous raptors high above the horizon and swooping through the tall grass. The new lingo helped each and every person hone in on the exact location of each raptor in the vast open blue skies. Not only did we get a great look at an American kestrel, but we also spotted an eastern meadowlark not far from the road. Our bird list for the day included American black duck, great blue heron, great egret, turkey vulture, northern harrier, bald eagle, red-tailed hawk, red-bellied woodpecker, downy woodpecker, and blue jays, to name a few. It was quite magical to scan for raptors as monarchs flitted by towards the bay, stopping to nectar on seaside goldenrod on their way south. Seventeen were in attendance.



Bridgeton City Park with Jamie Warner

Tuesday November 3 -The Tuesday on the Fly group explored the southern portion of Bridgeton City Park and The Nail House. We marveled at the HUGE sycamores that provide so much character to that portion of the park. We laughed at a Civil War statue that a prankster had outfitted in a mask. We learned about the raceway, and how it powered the early growth of industry in the Bridgeton. We also saw first-hand some of the restoration efforts to the historic and natural resources including the historic Nail House and a wetlands restoration. We concluded our morning taking an impromptu hike to explore one of the best vistas of the Cohansey in Bridgeton. It was a bluebird day with clear skies and the eight participants seemed to enjoy the tour.





On October 23 the Jersey Devil Hunt, with Russell Juelg of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, was filled with tall tales and bumps-in-the-night. We didn't get to see the Jersey Devil but the families did fill up on hot dogs, s'mores, and friendship around the campfire. Thank you to Vicky and Rob Tomlin for hosting us at their farm. We had 13 children join us on this Family Friendly Friday - an apt number if you're familiar with the legend of the Jersey Devil (Mrs. Leed's 13th child). We hope to have this event again.

PRESENTATIONS AND FORUMS

Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed Forum – Karla attended this regional meeting. She participated in a variety of presentations and break-out sessions that highlighted partners' conservation work and outreach efforts in the Delaware River Watershed.

River Days - October 28th Alliance for Watershed Education hosted their annual River Days Festival. This event aims to showcase the importance of the Delaware River and how everyone can be a local hero. Originally CU Maurice River was supposed to host a table at this community event, but due to the current pandemic it couldn't be held in person. When the Alliance announced that the festival would be held virtually, Meghan Thomson organized a presentation for Karla to offer on CU Maurice River's involvement in the Dragonfly Mercury Project.

Cape May Garden Club - October 13th Karla presented The Giving Garden to just under 50 attendees. The group donated a sweet pepper bush to the rain garden installation at the First United Methodist Church and a couple came out to volunteer with us.



Virtual Story Time – Adaria Armstrong of the Bridgeton Public Library contacted CU Maurice River to ask us to host a Virtual Reading Circle video. Karla Rossini and Peter Manzelmann of CU Maurice River took Adaria and the library's IT specialist out on Menantico Ponds via canoe. After filming a short interview while on the water, Adaria read a book that CU Trustee Leslie Ficcaglia gifted to the Rossini family, *Pond Year* – now a family favorite! Keep an eye out for the upcoming video.

On September 10th Jane Morton Galetto gave a presentation lakeside at Sunset Lake to the Bridgeton Rotary. It was great seeing some familiar faces. We had some fun when Gregory DiPalma showed up to launch his boat and upstaged Jane's talk. So Jane decided to ask the champion professional fisherman to share his knowledge with the group. It was a great example of what we do on our interpretative walks. Gregory is such an accomplished speaker on his area of expertise that people thought it was staged. Jane has known Greg since he was a tot, had watched his instructional videos, and was well aware of his talents as a presenter.

PROJECTS, GRANTS AND THE LIKE



National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant - October 15th a group of volunteers planted additional shrubs and flowers at the Amcor Wetlands Restoration site. Volunteers from Amcor also joined this effort. CU Maurice River purchased these native plants from Flora for Fauna.

The First United Methodist Rain Garden is one of four projects called *Implementing Green Infrastructure to Protect the Maurice River*, with funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Delaware River Conservation Fund. October 21, 22, and 23, 2020 the project at the First United Methodist Church began. On Wednesday, Rutgers Water Resources, CU, and Ernie Landscaping worked together to get the rain garden area dug out. On Thursday, the volunteers from CU Maurice River and First United Methodist covered the beds with woodchips and started creating a berm. Friday was planting day! Over the three days, 45 participants donated over 220 hours to the installation of a rain garden and pollinator space at the Millville church. Rutgers complimented the volunteers on their get-it-done approach.

A special thank you to CU Maurice River Trustee Ethan Aronoff who has been super helpful in getting this project off the ground. As a member of the church as well as CU he has been acting as an advocate for environmental stewardship and liaison between the two local partners. Also, we would like to thank Susan McKenna for kindly donating trees and shrubs to stabilize the berm. A real force behind the project has been First United Methodist Church's Beverly Smith who has been coordinating activities with Karla.

Next spring we will fill the remaining garden beds with nectar and host plants for pollinators. Larger plants were purchased from Flora for Fauna and Summersweet Native Plants, while plugs were purchased from local wholesaler New Moon Nursery in Woodstown. On November 20th, another group of volunteers from the First Methodist Church and CU Maurice River partnered to cover the lot with cardboard which will initially function as a weed barrier and later amend the soil as the material decomposes. Ethan Aronoff orchestrated the donation of a large amount of cardboard and bricks from an acquaintance. Thank you to Home Depot of Millville and Bryan Page!





Mapping of the *phragmites australis* stands on the Maurice River – CU Maurice River volunteer Tom McKee has been working with Karla to create a map of the phragmites encroachment in the Wild and Scenic designated area of the Maurice River. He has compiled information from state mapping archives. On October 19th, Tom and Karla ventured out to the Manumuskin Trail from the Tomlins' house to do mapping via drone fly-over. Thereafter Tom, Karla, Peter Manzelmann, and Tom Glynn took a kayak trip from the railroad trestle heading downstream, all the while marking GPS waypoints and snapping images of the stands along the shoreline. We hope to use this mapping to understand the rate of encroachment better and also as a tool for education and partnership building. This work has also involved discussions and assistance from Princeton Hydro.

River Entrance

Restoration at the mouth of the river is being reviewed and carried out by various agencies. In this regard we have had discussions with the National Park Service.

OFFICE HAPPENINGS

November is the time of year when job evaluations are conducted. Staff continually has ideas on how to improve their performance.

Performance reports to the National Park Service are a quarterly aspect of our office duties.

Grant reporting to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation involves performance and fiscal records.

Training and coordinating staff efforts continue as we redefine responsibilities while Karla assumes her new role and each staff member makes some adjustments to their duties.

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR OUR 2021 CALENDAR THAT WILL BE RELEASED EARLY IN JANUARY

Remember our calendar can always be accessed on line.

ANNUAL MEETING NOVEMBER 11, 2020 – VOLUNTEER NATIONAL
PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS
&
OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER SERVICE



Sabrina Simpkins was our keynote speaker at the Annual Meeting and wowed us with the work of the Holly Family Success Center of Millville in getting their clients introduced to the natural world. Their Club F.I.E.R.C.E. is an opportunity to help people either break free from negative cycles or simply take advantage of a healthy outlet to help them achieve their goals.

At the Annual Meeting we recognized volunteers for their outstanding service to CU Maurice River. Each of them exceeded 40 hours of service. Even during these COVID times our volunteers donated over 7600 hours of service. More than 170 people participated in devoting their time. There were 2,819 participations in 154 programs made by 1,090 people. Last year we had 5200 participations; however, COVID made it necessary to cancel a number of the largest events like Wild About Cumberland, the live EcoFair, our cruises, Elevate, and others. Still our members' volunteerism persisted!

We Are Indebted These People for Their Service.

Kathy Geiger
Jim Blumenstein
Jan Dwyer LoBiondo
Jody Carrara
Peter Galetto
Laurie Pettigrew
Sue Fenili
Allen Jackson- Continual Lifetime
Awardee

Luka Villani
Suzy Merighi
Cindy Berry
Wendy Walker
Cheryl Howell
Mary Watkins
Mike Golla

Annual Meeting Election Results (the respective term endings are in parentheses)

Jane Morton Galetto, Board President (2021)
Suzanne Olah, Treasurer (2022)
Corresponding Secretary, Sue Fenili (2021)
Recording Secretary, Jody Carrara (2023)
Ethan Aronoff (2022)
Leslie Ficcaglia (2022)
Tony Klock (2021)
Gary Moellers (2023)
Dennis Palmer (2023)
Mary Ann Russell (2021)
Mary Steinacker (2023)
Tom Talalaj (2023)
Vicky Tomlin (2022)



CU ON THE RIVER!

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See what's happening on our social sites:

