

The Green Oasis

*The Official Newsletter of
Liberty State Park*

SPRING 2013

*The Green Oasis is published
by Liberty State Park.*

*We encourage and welcome
your comments and sugges-
tions. If you have any ideas for
articles for upcoming issues,
please contact us at
lspic@verizon.net.*

Editor: Lori Garth

Contributors: Katherine
Craig, Michel Cuillerier,
Frank Gallagher, Patricia
Hilliard, Sam Pesin, Jon Luk

Photos: John Dunstan, Gail
Zavian

Layout: Sarajane Bruno

New Jersey Department of
Environmental Protection
Division of Parks and Forestry
State Park Service
Chris Christie, Governor
Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor
Bob Martin, Commissioner

Message From the Superintendent: Liberty State Park Open for Business

In the last version of the Green Oasis (Fall 2012), our readers were updated on several exciting events that took place during the summer of 2012. Liberty State Park opened the much-anticipated group picnic pavilions in the southern section of the park at Freedom Field. The reserved-use pavilions provided a new park access point at Theodore Conrad Drive, restroom facility, two covered picnic shelters, and a scenic pathway along Freedom Way offering breathtaking, panoramic views of the Hudson River estuary and the Statue of Liberty. Such an exciting moment this was for the Department of Environmental Protection that brought Assistant Commissioner Boornazian, new State Park Service Director Texel, local officials, business and community members to the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Park staff also reached out to the public through interpretive programming and volunteer events. An old railroad baggage cart was revived and proudly displayed in the CNJ Terminal Waiting Room for visitors to get a sense of history and imagine what rail travel was like during the 19th and 20th centuries. Our nature staff capped off another successful summer of kayak eco-tours and other interpretive programming and the LSP gardening crew again welcomed volunteers all year long to maintain flower beds throughout the park.

The month of October ended successfully with Liberty State Park's annual Haunted Park tour. The public event was a collaboration of business and community friends with most of the park staff, especially park maintenance, acting roles and supporting the haunted Terminal walking tour and hay ride.

Little did we know that there was a more significant event to happen at Liberty State Park. By now most, if not all of us, have seen the devastating images caused by Superstorm Sandy throughout the state and greater northeast US region.



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The storm was the worst to hit the area in over 100 years, combining a full moon, high tide, storm surge, and hurricane strength winds that resulted in almost the entire park being flooded. All three buildings in the park were damaged, with the historic CRRNJ Terminal and Nature Interpretive Center receiving floodwaters. Portions of the waterfront promenade, shade trees, lighting, and garden space all received some sort of damage from the storm's high winds and surge of floodwaters.

As we fast-forward to 2013 and the upcoming spring season, I'm happy to report in this edition of the Green Oasis that the park is open to the public. In the days after the storm, the entire park staff came together to assess the damage, remove tons of debris, secure hazardous areas, and get back on track to re-opening by Thanksgiving Day. The park hosted volunteer cleanups bringing hundreds of people to remove plastics and other non-biodegradables. There is still much work to be done, but activities are already underway for the coming warm weather. The maintenance staff continues on many storm-related projects such as rebuilding decking, repairing picnic tables, installing pavers, and checking lighting. We are currently taking reservations for the group picnic pavilions while planning for special events like Hudson County Earth Day and the Friends of LSP annual salt-marsh cleanup. Interpretive programming continues through our staff outreach efforts and volunteer gardeners are already gearing up for the growing season. Although the storm has knocked us and the region down, we have already begun to rise up and make sure the park is just as welcoming as it always has been.



Volunteers remove debris from a fence in Liberty State Park during the first post-storm public cleanup.

Anniversaries Anticipated: Boxwood Hall Prepares for 2014



While 2013 is less than one quarter over, as far as Boxwood Hall State Historic Site in Elizabeth is concerned, 2014 is close on the horizon. In 2014, Boxwood Hall, a satellite site of Liberty State Park, will participate in the commemoration of two historic anniversaries.

2014 will mark the 350th anniversary of the founding of Elizabeth, and the beginning of the colony, now State, of New Jersey. While the Dutch and Swedes had settled along the Hudson and Delaware Rivers respectively, the first English came in 1664. Farmers from Long Island, they received permission from the Dutch governor of New Amsterdam (now New York) to settle and named their town Achter Kol. Less than one year later, New Amsterdam had been ceded to the English, and the land containing Achter Kol given to Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret. A delegation from England, headed by Sir George's nephew, Sir Philip Carteret soon arrived. As Sir George was from the Island of Jersey (in the English Channel), the territory was renamed New Jersey. Achter Kol became Elizabethtown, in honor of Sir George's wife, Lady Elizabeth Carteret.

Fast forward 125 years later to 1789. On April 23 of that year, George Washington visited Boxwood Hall (no, he didn't sleep there), his last stop before entering his capital, New York City, where he would be inaugurated a week later. A committee of Congressmen, including the homeowner, Elias Boudinot, had assembled to meet Washington, and after lunch formed a formal escort for the final leg of the President's journey. They rode to the Elizabeth waterfront and were rowed in a decorated barge around Staten Island and Bayonne to lower Manhattan. Given the state of the roads in 1789, the barge ride was probably the most comfortable transport of the week long trip from Mount Vernon, Virginia.

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The dining room at Boxwood Hall, in the process of being renovated.

In anticipation of these upcoming celebrations, the interior of Boxwood Hall is undergoing a revision. Furniture has been moved, artifacts removed from storage, and several reproduction accessories purchased. When the project is completed, each room will reflect a particular period in the history of the house, and suggest the lifestyle of its occupants.

Visitors are encouraged to visit Boxwood Hall over the next few months, to see the changes and experience its history. Boxwood Hall is usually open Monday- Friday, 9-12 and 1-5, and admission is free. Because the staff is small, please telephone 908-282-7617 to confirm that the site will be open on a given day.



SAVE THE DATE

SUNDAY MAY 19th, 2013

10th ANNUAL TOUR DE ELIZABETH

15 mile bicycle ride around the City of Elizabeth

All levels of Cyclists welcomed



Free Raffle ticket to all riders

REGISTRATION BEGINS AT 7:30

STARTS AND FINISHES AT CITY HALL

REGISTER ONLINE at www.elizabethnj.org www.groundworkelizabeth.com PHONE: 908-289-0262

NEW JERSEY 101.5



'Matriarch' of Friends of Liberty State Park in Jersey City dies at 98

It is never easy to lose a friend, and Ethel Pesin was more than a friend. To Liberty State Park (LSP) and the very many people she touched in her long life, Ethel was an unwavering supporter, advocate and friend. This past February, at the age of 98, Ethel Pesin died peacefully at her home in Jersey City.

Ethel stood beside her husband Morris Pesin, a civic leader and the driving force behind the campaign to establish Liberty State Park. From 1958 until the park's opening in 1976, Morris Pesin strove and persevered, earning himself the title of "Father of Liberty State Park". After Morris' death in 1992, Ethel remained dedicated and involved in the improvement of the park as an

advisor on the LSP Public Advisory Commission. Like her husband before her, she was a formidable advocate, opposing numerous commercialization plans, and was an active volunteer with the Friends of Liberty State Park (FOLSP).

"She was a loving, kind, strong, and independent person," Ethel's children, Sam and Judy Pesin remarked. "She was an energetic and wise person, and a blessing to our family and to all who knew her." Sam Pesin is the president of the FOLSP, the volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and improving the waterfront park.

"She loved being with people and being outdoors by the waterfront," Sam recalled of his mother. "She loved being in the beautiful park, seeing the sun setting with the golden windows of the NYC skyline while enjoying Jersey City's free Summerfest concerts. She was a really great person and she'll be greatly missed."

In memory of Ethel's love for Liberty State Park donations are being accepted for "The Friends of Liberty State Park", PO Box 3407, JC, NJ 07302 or visit www.folsp.org.



Photo by Gail Zavian

For more information about Ethel's life and work, please visit www.folsp.org

Thoughts from a “Repurposed” Naturalist



Frank Gallagher and intern constructing Pond Islands in Freshwater Wetlands.

It's hard to talk about Liberty State Park without the name of Frank Gallagher popping up. Frank officially began his career at Liberty in 1983, but his relationship with the land began many years prior. Frank grew up in Bayonne, playing in the tidal creek which is now part of Route 440. He lived within walking distance of the old train terminal and rail yard we now know as Liberty State Park. You might say it was destiny that he ended up where he did, but I'll let Frank's story speak for itself:

“In April of 1969, the Central Railroad of New Jersey ceased its operations and abandoned the terminal and rail yards in Jersey City less than a mile from my house. I had known the railroad as both a passenger and as a scavenger of unattended rail cars. We once found an unlocked boxcar containing several full cases of “Wild Turkey,” which we promptly liberated. Wild Turkey and a group of seventh grade boys is an obvious prescription for failure, the results of which need not be transcribed here. However, the most significant artifact left behind by CRRNJ was the 1212 acres of land, 400 of which were in the littoral zone of the harbor, and the rest a gently undulating plane of cinder and ash. This open space was an immense “crack in the sidewalk,” that once abandoned began to produce an interesting array of plants and animals provide the experiences which fostered my urban ecological identity.”(Gallagher)

The early forging of Frank's ecological identity would inspire a lifelong journey of “exploring the connection between people and landscapes”. Years later, with a BA in botany from Rutgers, Frank returned to the playground of his youth as the first Chief of Interpretive Services. During his tenure, Frank laid the

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foundation for natural resource management and interpretation at Liberty State Park - a foundation which still stands today.

“I had the privilege of becoming the emerging parks’ first full time naturalist. I started in November and saw my first snowy owl that December. The kids who came for programs and I planted trees, built bird blinds, and caught more killifish than could be counted. Restoring the Central Railroad terminal and working towards the creation and establishment of a world class science center were brick and mortar experiences that made me proud to be part of the Division of Parks and Forestry. Working towards the restoration of the estuarine and freshwater wetlands of the park was just plain fun.”(Gallagher)

In the 1990s, Frank became an administrator within the Office of the Director and was responsible for the development of site specific general management plans and the oversight of the entire Division of Parks and Forestry interpretive and educational programs. In 2004, Frank also served as Acting Director of the State Park Service, overseeing New Jersey’s 380,000 plus acres of parks, forests, and recreation areas.

Frank returned to Liberty State Park in mid-2000 and devoted the duration of his career with the Division of Parks and Forestry to the development and planning of Liberty State Park. He oversaw and managed the policies, restoration and redevelopment of the park’s brownfields and related issues, and served as a jurist for the selection of the NJ 911 Memorial. Frank oversaw the wetlands cleanup and restoration at Caven Point, led the interdisciplinary planning committee to restore the park’s 256 acre interior, and oversaw the planning and creation of the freshwater pond behind the Nature Interpretive Center. That’s the short list.

Frank’s ability to envision the ecological potential of Liberty State Park helped to transform an abandoned railroad yard into the thriving Green Oasis that it is today. At his “re-purposement” (aka retirement) celebration this past January, nearly 100 people came out to honor and celebrate his long and fruitful tenure with the Division of Parks and Forestry and Liberty State Park in particular. Among the many speakers who thanked Frank for all his dedication, courage and determination, was Greg Remaud of the NY/NJ Baykeeper’s, who presented Frank with a proclamation from Senator Robert Menendez in honor of his many years of service.

Despite Frank’s official retirement from the Division, his work as natural resource educator and researcher will continue to inspire, and Liberty State Park has probably not seen the last of him.

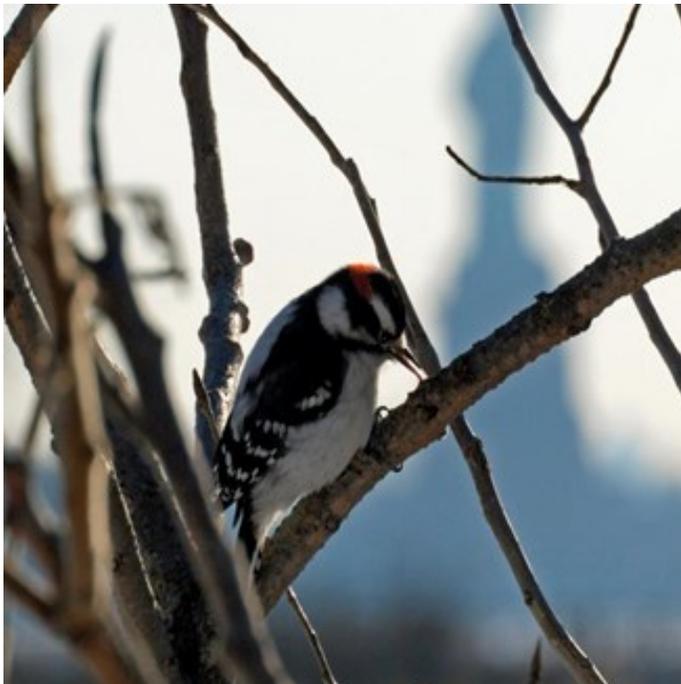
1 Shell Silverstein “Where the Sidewalk Ends”

2 Frank Gallagher <http://www.gallaghergreen.com/>

Winter Birds and Ducks Return to Liberty State Park By Patricia Hilliard

Around the Christmas holiday, bird watchers flock to parks and wildlife areas to participate in a birding event known as the Christmas Bird Count (CBC). This tradition started back in 1900 by Frank M. Chapman who was hoping to break the tradition of duck and dove hunting that used to occur at Christmas each year. He was also interested in knowing how many birds were still around when the daylight is dim and the air turns cold. Since then, the Audubon Society has coordinated the CBC to collect data about the birds that over-winter in our area.

With the hurricane at the end of October, followed by a snow storm in early November, this year's weather was exceptionally challenging for birds and bird watchers. Habitat took a big hit. Trees fell, water quality deteriorated, and yet the migrating ducks, hawks, sparrows and warblers came down from the north to their annual winter home that includes Liberty State Park.



Downy woodpeckers are one of the many birds that overwinter in Liberty State Park.
Photo by John Dunstan

Diving into the cold waters of New York Harbor, one hundred-twenty Greater Scaup settled in and were accompanied by Red-breasted Mergansers, Buffleheads, Common Golden Eye and a Ring-necked Duck. Only fourteen Ruddy Ducks were seen by the CBC counters on the day they went out, but they also reported five Horned Grebe, a Red-throated Loon and three Common Loons. Twenty-six Black Ducks came down from Canada to join the thirty-two Mallards that spend all year at Liberty State Park. Brant held their turf with 680 to the 530 Canada Geese seen during the count.

Watching from the sky were one Cooper's Hawk, one Red-tailed Hawk, one Sharp-shinned Hawk, and one American Kestrel. Below on the tree branches were numerous Yellow-rumped Warblers, Chickadees, Cedar Waxwings, Tree Sparrows and three Northern Mockingbirds, all searching for food. Only two of the secretive Winter Wren made an appearance.

Among the unusual sightings listed by the CBC bird counters were three Wilson's Snipe, six American Coot, one Clapper Rail, two Black-crowned Night Herons and two Green-winged Teal. Pheasants used to be very common at Liberty, but none were seen this year in the count. Two Blue Jays appeared, but no American Crow were listed.

As the winter progresses, bird watchers will wait and wonder if the Snowy Owl will swoop in for a cameo appearance. The avian population of the park will continue to increase in species count and quantity until the summer solstice. Whatever the season, Liberty State Park is a prime hangout for bird and birders alike.

Friends of Liberty State Park Celebrates Its 25th Anniversary!

The Friends of Liberty State Park (FOLSP) is 25 years old this Spring. We are an all-volunteer, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, protection, conservation, and promotion of Liberty State Park.

On Sunday, May 5th, we will celebrate our 25th anniversary and the park's progress at our annual fundraising Luncheon from Noon to 4 at Liberty House Restaurant.

Please go to www.folsp.org to learn more about the Friends of LSP and ways to get involved. We encourage park supporters to join and volunteer. FOLSP is also a member of Earth Share (www.esnj.org), an employee-directed workplace contribution program. Our Volunteer Garden Program, supervised by LSP Gardener Maria Wakefield, meets almost every Saturday year round from 9am to Noon.

John Tichenor, FOLSP's first president, and Aristides Pappidas, co-founded FOLSP, believe in public involvement in park decision-making. Citizen participation helped stop major commercialization plans, and FOLSP has been instrumental in protecting and improving the park for future generations. The Friends value our collaboration with LSP Superintendent Rob Rodriquez and Deputy Superintendent Jon Luk and park staff.

We urge all who care about the park to get involved in shaping its future. For more information, please contact us at pesinliberty@earthlink.net or (201)792-1993.

Gardening Program



Church of Latter Day Saints planting new garden project.

Despite some major setbacks from Hurricane Sandy, the Liberty State Park Garden Program, sponsored by the Friends of Liberty State Park, is still going strong.

The Garden Program meets every Saturday starting at 9 am and new volunteers are always welcome. Please call the Park Office at (201) 915-3402 for specific meeting location.

Michel Cuillerier, FOLSP
VP/Coordinator of Corporate Volunteers

www.folsp.org

Volunteerism at Work

In the weeks and months following Hurricane Sandy, volunteers from around the region pitched in to clean up from the storm damage at Liberty State Park. The amount of damage and debris was truly staggering and only overshadowed by the overwhelming dedication and support of the generous volunteers who came out to help. We are very grateful for all the organizations and individuals who assisted in our recovery effort:

AT&T Pioneers, Hudson County Community College (HCCC), Boy Scouts Troop 89, Dunkin Donuts of Jersey City, Jersey Cares, Friends of Liberty State Park, HCCC Teachers Education Club, HCCC Phi Theta Kappa, HCCC Science & Engineering Club, Jersey City Parks Coalition, NJDEP Green Acres,

Hudson County Schools of Technology, NY/NJ Baykeeper, Liberty Historic Railways, Maritime Parc Restaurant, NJ State Park Service, NJ State Forestry, NJ State Department of Corrections.



Photo by Gail Zavian

Help Support Liberty State Park with Dedicated License Plate



With the purchase of Liberty State Park license plates, you will be supporting the continued improvement of New Jersey's premier urban state park. Your dollars help to maintain and restore historic structures like the CRRNJ Terminal, provide for upgrades to the Nature Interpretive Center, create wildlife habitat, increase recreational opportunities, and so much more.

Please consider becoming part of our community of supporters. For more information or to order your plates today, please visit your nearest NJ Motor Vehicle Agency or visit on line at <http://www.state.nj.us/mvc/Vehicle/Liberty.htm>, or by phone at (888) 486-3339. Thank you for your support.

Kayak Eco-Tour Liberty State Park

Come explore the natural beauty of the Hudson River Estuary by kayak. Tours will embark from the canoe/kayak launch located at the south side of Liberty State Park near the Park Office and will highlight the local wildlife and habitats of Caven Point.

Trips will run approximately two hours and will include a brief safety and paddle instruction. No prior paddling experience is required however participants need to be comfortable navigating in relatively deep water. Life Jackets (PFDs) will be provided and are required. This program is appropriate for adults and children 16 years and older. Children 16 and older need to be accompanied by a legal adult.



For registration and schedule information, please contact the Liberty State Park Interpretive Center at (201) 915-3402 or lspic@verizon.net. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. All programs run from 10am to noon. Please plan to arrive 30 minutes prior for check-in. Schedule is subject to change. Program fee \$15/person.

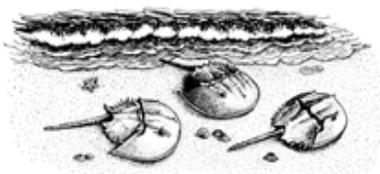
2013 SUMMER SCHEDULE

Friday, June 21
Saturday, June 22
Sunday, June 23
Thursday, June 27
Friday, June 28
Saturday, June 29
Sunday, June 30
Thursday, July 11
Friday, July 12
Sunday, July 14
Wednesday, July 17
Thursday, July 18
Thursday, July 25
Friday, July 26

Saturday July 27
Thursday, August 1
Friday, August 2
Saturday, August 3
Sunday, August 4
Thursday, August 8
Friday, August 9
Sunday, August 11
Thursday, August 15
Friday, August 16
Saturday, August 17
Sunday, August 18
Thursday, August 29
Friday, August 30

SAVE THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR NOW !!

LIBERTY STATE PARK'S INTERPRETIVE CENTER PUBLIC PROGRAMS



Explore the Estuary

July 13, 2013

August 10, 2013

10:00am - Noon

\$3.00 per person

Pre-Registration Required

We will don chest waders for a hands-on exploration of our estuary. You never know what you may find in and around the waters of the Hudson. Wear old shoes that can get wet and muddy. You will need your own transportation to get from the Park Office to our study site.



Summer Shorebird Walk

August 3, 2013

August 24, 2013

10:00am - Noon

FREE, Pre-Registration Required

Come on out to Liberty State Park and join us for a leisurely stroll as we look for and identify our summer shorebirds. Dress to be outside and bring binoculars if you have them, we have a limited number that can be borrowed.



If you would like to register for any of the above programs, complete the form below. Be sure to include the program title and date. Mail your completed registration form to: Liberty State Park, Interpretive Center, 200 Morris Pesin Dr., Jersey City, NJ 07305. **If you are registering for *Explore the Estuary* include \$3.00 per person, checks payable to Treasurer, State of New Jersey. You can also call with a valid credit card. Payment must be received to reserve your space. We will send you a confirmation of your registration and directions to our location. For further information, call (201) 915-3402. You can also fax your registration to (201) 915-3408 or email us at lsPIC@verizon.net. Spaces are limited! Children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Groups of 8 or more call for special arrangements.**

Please note: All programs will begin at the Park Administration Office at the end of Morris Pesin Drive.



Registration Note: Due to the popularity of our *Explore the Estuary* program, please list program dates in order of preference when registering for more than one program. We will try our best to accommodate everyone's requests.

PLEASE PRINT & INCLUDE COMPLETE ADDRESS

NAME: _____

Date & Title of Program: _____

Email: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

NUMBER OF ATTENDEES: _____