

# Demarest Nature News



Demarest Nature Center Association,  
Box 41, Demarest, N.J., 07627

[www.demarestnaturecenter.org](http://www.demarestnaturecenter.org)  
Summer 2012 Vol. XXXVII, No. 2

## President's Message

**I first drove** through Demarest, on a hot, summer day in the early 90's. My windows were open, so I checked the dash to see if the air conditioner had gone on.... it had not. Sure, I saw the obvious – lots of mature trees lining the streets. But, at the time, the Demarest Nature Center was not on my radar. Those 55 green acres were back there pumping out oxygen, contributing to the coolness.

Not too long after that drive, I found the entrance and walked a trail. This discovery has changed my life in so many positive ways. I'm there often observing birds and fauna. Its existence renews my optimism. Its preservation, a promise to earth's next inhabitants.

Preservation however, doesn't mean stagnation. Since my discovery, I've witnessed major changes. Including two new, steel pedestrian bridges now connecting trails across the Tenakill Brook.

Trees along the Gus Stump Trail have been tagged, with both Latin and common names and identifying characteristics.

And, this sounds too simple to say, and was no easy feat – three whole, new trail systems, the Nine Bridges, Closter, and Trestle Bridge Trails were added, complete with boardwalks, foot bridges, blazes and carved, wooden signs.

As I write this, past president, Kevin Riley, and the 2012 Senior DNVHS volunteers, Gil, Tammy,

Hyo, and Jared, are clearing the Rail Road Station Trail, which is the starting point for the Northern Valley Trail. NVT will connect trails through Demarest, Closter, Norwood, both Boy Scout camps, to a Palisades Interstate Park trail, and on up to Harriman Park, where it will connect to the Appalachian Trail.

It's no wonder, I'm in awe of the founders and trustees, past and present, who saw, manifested, hone and maintain such an educational, recreational and totally immersible environment for all to enjoy. And, a huge "thanks" to all you members for helping sustain this treasure.

*Marianna Simpson*  
President, Trustee



*Continuous Improvement: NVRHS Senior Service volunteers build a boardwalk over a muddy trail. How can you improve the Nature Center? L to R: Tammy Lee, Hyo Khang & Jared Oliff-Lieberman, not pictured, Gil Levy - Thanks Gil!*

PS. My favorite memory of the Nature Center took place last March, 2011, in the East Meadow. The Morning dew was lifting, sun on the path ahead and rising just above the horizon was an Ivory-billed Woodpecker on a high tree branch.... Okay, okay so I'm no Audubon. A more accurate memory then. While walking on the Tenakill Brook Trail, we saw a box turtle. Spectacular!

***"You only need sit still long enough in some attractive spot in the woods that all its inhabitants may exhibit themselves to you by turns." Henry David Thoreau***

# Demarest Nature News

## Educating our Children

### DNC Continues to Provide Environmental Education for the Children of Demarest

This school year the Demarest Nature Center has continued its mission of providing environmental resources to the children of Demarest Public Schools. The charismatic naturalist Marc Gussen led our kindergarten and 1st grade classes of the County Road School on an exploration of the Demarest Nature Center in search of the various flora and fauna. Mr. Gussen also addressed each fourth grade class on the topic of the Lenape natives of New Jersey in correlation with the fourth grade Social Studies curriculum. Financial resources were provided by the DNC for all 2nd graders to visit the Health Barn at Abmas Farm in Wyckoff to explore nutrition, physical activity and healthy behaviors. Our 3rd grade classes received a tour of the Greenbrook Sanctuary, a special use nature preserve maintained by the Palisades Nature Association. Lastly, as a result of DNC resources our 6th graders were visited by Joseph D'Angeli the "NJ Bat Man" and director of the Wildlife Conservation and Education Center in Ridge Field Park. Mr. D'Angeli dazzled the 6th graders with a variety of exotic animals and information on wildlife conservation. – Jon Regan



*Irene Lourbas joined the Easter bunny hall of fame this year! Thanks Irene!*



*A Crane, A Crane !*



*Naturalist Marc Gussen imparts the gospel of Mother Nature to a lucky few at our Nature Walk*

## Think Globally Act Locally

**The Demarest Nature** Center Association is run entirely by volunteers like YOU. The Association is accepting new trustees in 2013 to replace current trustees, whose terms expire this coming December. If you would like to make a positive impact on Demarest, you will find preserving and improving the Nature Center for the future a great experience. Trustee positions are limited. Call Marianna Simpson at 201-767-1382 to apply.

## 'Poison Ivy Pass'

**Toxicodendron** radicans - otherwise known as Poison Ivy, isn't really ivy at all. It does, however grow like a vine, and can be found in different forms, like a shrub. The Nature Center is loaded with great examples of biodiversity, including poison ivy. So wear some long pants as you navigate our trails or be sure to avoid the poison ivy on the edges of some of the paths. The distinct 'leaves of three' means 'let them be' and never touch the hairy vines either! 'Poison Ivy Pass,' as coined by Ella Lasky, a young Demarest resident, is along the Tenakill Brook Trail just past the skating ponds.

## On the Appalachian Trail?

**This summer,** the Demarest Nature Center will be connecting its trails with those from the Nature Centers of Closter and Norwood in a project known as the Northern Valley Trail. The intention of the plan is to also connect with trails through the Boy Scout camps, the Palisades Interstate Park and eventually, The Appalachian Trail! Look out for new signs on the hiking trails marking the path.

## A HUGE Thanks!

The DNC's longtime President, Kevin Riley, just retired from the job this past January, only after reaching the term limit in the bylaws of the Nature Center. Kevin's tireless efforts have pushed the DNC to new heights both as a place of beauty and as an organization. Thank you Kevin!

## Did you know?

Each and every Demarest Nature Center birdhouse and bird feeder is carefully built to spec by our own longtime trustee Dave Emerson. Dave hand cuts the wood from raw lumber each year and assembles the kits that families put together in the

early spring. Because of Dave's hard work, the birdhouses are a common sight in the backyards of countless Demarest homes. Thanks to Dave for his years of service to the nature center and his carpentry skills too.

## Trustees Wax Poetic

We asked our board of trustees to share with the community their special memories or moments in the Nature Center. Some heartfelt responses came back – here's a sampling:

“The northeast corner of the nature center-east of the railroad tracks and north of the mulch piles--used to be terra incognita. Nobody went there. Now the Nine Bridges Trail winds through it. The trail goes between the hockey ponds, up to the east meadow, down a steep slope, and then back around in a big loop to the gravel road that connects County Road to the railroad tracks. There are benches along the trail and two bird feeders and plank walkways, not to mention those nine bridges. The northeast corner still feels wilder than the rest of the nature center, but now it's accessible. I love it.” – Peter Coy

last spring. We hiked through, counting the bridges and stopping to spy on the bird feeders along the way. It's amazing how far away you feel so close to home. Just recently, she woke up in the morning and the first thing she said was ‘Dad, when can we walk the nine bridges trail again?’ It made me smile -- Scott Lasky

Some trustees gushed with enthusiasm over their trustee experience.

“I've been with the DNC since 1992 when I had the treasurer job bestowed the on me. 16 years later in 2008, I retired from the job. My association with the DNC has been an experience I treasure. I encourage anyone with a desire for a nature experience to become a trustee, or member and enjoy our “Green Acres”. As a trustee you will also be helping our community, through conserving the Nature Center, with the camaraderie of a group of great people.” –Ed Pittaluga

I joined because I want to assist the efforts of the DNC, Demarest Garden Club and the Alpine School Greenhouse in augmenting knowledge of organic plants and environmental conservancy for the youth in our communities. -- Luisa Pittaluga



“My daughter and I discovered the nine bridges trail together

*Happy Demarest residents build birdhouses and bring a piece of the Nature Center home with them*

# What's Happening This Summer And Fall!

## 2012 Board of Trustees

Marianna Simpson  
*President*

Cynthia Soroka-Dunn  
*Vice-President*

Peter Coy  
*Treasurer*

Teddy Lourbas  
*Recording Secretary*

Jonathan Regan  
*Corresponding Secretary*

Blake Chroman  
*Borough Liaison*

Irfan Akdag  
Marianne Bolduc  
Dave Emerson  
Scott Lasky

Dr. Lewis Nelson  
Ed Pittaluga  
Luisa Pittaluga  
John Reinke

Sadettin Tuysuzoglu

Website:

[www.DemarestNatureCenter.org](http://www.DemarestNatureCenter.org)

Email:

[info@DemarestNatureCenter.org](mailto:info@DemarestNatureCenter.org)

► June 9th

### “Breakfast in the Woods!”

Next Saturday!  
9am to 11am  
Bring the **WHOLE FAMILY** to our annual breakfast cookout! Eggs, bagels, coffee, juice, and more under the tree canopy. Grab the kids and come out for a fun filled morning - Live music, photo contest winners plus a live animal show! Cost is **FREE!**  
Rain date - June 10th.

► September 15th

### “Trial of the Trails!”

**1-Mile Trail Fun Run (8am) 5K Trail Run (8:15am)** Enjoy the beauty of the Nature Center as you navigate the twists and turns (and roots) of our trails. The times to beat? 7:49 for the Trail Fun Run and 20:43 for the 5k Trail Run. To see the maps of both races click the “Maps and Trails” link on our homepage and choose “Trail Map”.

► October 13th

### “Oktoberfest!”

**Grab your Lederhosen** Duck Pond 10am to 5pm. Handmade crafts for sale, German and Korean food, Canoes with the Boy Scouts, inflatables, a bake sale, Alpine folk music – what else could you possibly want? Beer? Sorry, no-go. Crafters can visit the Oktoberfest page at our website for more information.  
Raindate October 20th

## We are a 501(c)3!

**There is no greater feeling** than supporting a worthy organization. The Demarest Nature is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. This means that your donations are tax deductible. Your donations support all of our educational programs, scholarships, events and the continued preservation of our green space. Consider a gift to the Demarest Nature Center as an investment in the future of our community. Of course, it goes without saying, or with saying in this case, that we are not offering tax advice by the above statement. Contact any of our trustees if you would like more info.

*Photos by Kevin Riley unless where otherwise credited.*



ECRWS  
POSTAL PATRON  
DEMAREST, N.J.  
07627



**DEMAREST NATURE CENTER ASSN.**  
Borough of Demarest  
P.O. Box 41  
Demarest, N.J. 07627  
[www.DemarestNatureCenter.org](http://www.DemarestNatureCenter.org)

Presorted Standard  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Paramus, NJ  
07652  
Permit No. 230