

Demarest Nature News



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

www.demarestnaturecenter.org
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President's Message

As I write this we are in our fourth hour of no electricity. It's December 1, 2010. This time travel back to the 19th century started at around 1:30pm this afternoon. A storm has thrown us for a loop but we are dealing with it thanks to oil lamps, flash lights and the remaining battery life on our laptops to watch movies. My wife is taking a conference call in the Honda making use of its engine to generate the electricity to power her laptop, wi-fi and phone. I have just come back from an unsuccessful attempt to buy a couple more hurricane lamps. As the 1st of December's light disappears I re-visit the idea of buying a generator and ponder how we could shoe horn a small wood burning stove into our 2500 square foot remodeled 1949 Cape....these thoughts are a yearly event.

OK, I'll admit it, this might not really be a time shift back to the 19th century... we still had indoor plumbing this afternoon.

True darkness is rare in our part of the world.

The only time I think I have experienced it is in the Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico or the cenotes in southern Mexico. The darkness we usually encounter in Demarest comes with a fair amount of ambient light, natural and man made. Even on a moonless night we can sometimes see the glow from NYC reflected off the sky. The light from houses and streetlights light the way for evening walks. With a full moon our shadow will lead or follow as we walk.

The thing I find interesting about darkness is that 'light' makes it seem somehow darker. The glow of my computer screen is making my room that much darker. The lights from my back yard neighbor's windows render the rest of my powerless neighborhood pitch black.

The eye is an amazing machine that enables us to adapt to most lighting conditions. When the ambient light is

low we first sense total darkness until our eyes adjust to the new lighting condition. I'm amazed what I can see in the "dark" when I get away from ambient light. A neat thing to do is to take a walk at sunset through a well-marked familiar trail in the woods. As the light diminishes our eyes adjust and with more awareness to our surroundings and a little slower pace, we can travel quite comfortably.

Darkness is wonderful when it's a choice. Having to do without electricity is a pain when you need it to live, eat and work. The nice thing about camping is that we can experience the dark and then come back to the luxuries of modern life in the 21st century. Right now I wish we had power to microwave last night's leftovers.

Thanks, now take a hike.

Kevin Riley

PS: 10:52pm, the electricity comes back on...all is right in my little world.



Lenny Cottrell of Demarest, who won the Demarest Nature Center's first cross country race in 2003, recaptured his title in a dash through the woods on Sept. 25 in the "Trial of the Trails".

(Photo: Kevin Riley)

You can't be suspicious of a tree, or accuse a bird or a squirrel of subversion or challenge the ideology of a violet. ~Hal Borland, *Sundial of the Seasons*, 1964

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We'd like to thank the following trustees for their service to the Demarest Nature Center over the last few years: Toni Dolan, Marianna Simpson and Bill Stegmayer need to step down as trustees due to term limits set forth in the by-laws of our organization. We must also say goodbye to Mayor Elect Ray Cywinski who will be busy in the Mayor's chair in Demarest for the next few years. Rich Van Buren, who has been active with the Nature Center since the days of Jean Wilson, is also taking a break to pursue a full time retirement of travel and his second home in Florida. These five board members have donated literally thousands of hours of service to the DNCA and we wish them well. They will be missed as board members but I'm sure they will stay active as a "Friends of the DNCA".

As you probably know, a portion of your membership dues is used to support educational programs in the Demarest Public Schools dealing with nature and environmental studies. We're very proud and excited in announcing our school programs for 2011 which could not happen without your support:

Kindergarten: Mrs. DUBY:
Demarest Nature Center tour with Closter Nature Center Naturalist Marc Gussen

Grade 1: Mrs. Licameli
Closter Nature Center walk with Marc Gussen, field trip to discuss butterflies

Grade 2: Mrs Peterson
Abmas Farm field trip

Grade 3: Mrs. Sims
Greenbrook Sanctuary field trip

Grade 4: Mrs. Glastein
Lenni Lenape history with Marc Gussen

Grade 6: Mr. Regan
Batman Rainforest program

Grade 7 and 8: Mr. Regan
Endangered Turtle Program

Our Members!

We are grateful to all of our supporters. Listed below are members who have joined or renewed their membership since January of 2010. Please tell us if we accidentally omitted you.

Roz & Stuart Alpert, Ronald Barr & Dr. Joy Micale, The Beucler Family, John & Anne Beucler, Dr. R.V. Biagioni, Marianne Bolduc, Donald Bomeisl, The Bower Family, Yvonne Caldarulo, The Cantarore Family, Joe & Lisa Caruso, Dr. & Mrs. Mark Cetta, Eugene & Doris Claeysens, Mike & Charlotte Clarke, The Conti Family, The Cottrell Family, The Coy Family, The Cywinski Family, Dr. Philip A. D'Alesandro, William & Ruth Day, Bob & Kathy Dean, Barbara & Richard Deragon, Winifred Derfus, Assunte DeSimone, Robert Dolan, David Emerson, Naomi Epstein, Gerald & Edith Escala, William & Susan Feil, Richard & Dr. Jane Fried, Fred & Donna Giannetti, Fred Goldstein, Helen Goody, Edward & Olga Greenwald, Dr. Jutta Greweldinger, Joel & Mary Hamilton, Leon & Rita Hillman, Eva Holzer, Rosemary Hunt, Melinda Iannuzzi, Warren & Barbara Johnson, Mr. & Mrs. Edwin Kabakow, Timothy & Lydia Ke, Bill & Frances Khani, Deborah King, Dr. & Mrs. Koenigsberger, Joseph & Paula Kolacia, Sandy Kozinn, Klaus Kretchmer, Margaret Kristensen, Jenie Lee, Sam Lee, Yong & Seung Lee, Max & Ellen Leimgruber, The LePrees Family, Mr. & Mrs. Lino Linteris, Thornton & Lee Lockwood, The Lourbas Family, Roderick & Lucia MacKenzie, William & Priscilla MacPhail, David Marco, William & Priscilla MacPhail, Theodore & Marianne Martens, Robert McCormack, Mr. & Mrs. James McGahren, Richard Mercier, Christian & Hwa Soon Meyer, Norman & Barbara Miller, Glen & Lucila Mills, The Molina Family, The Molnar Family, Richard Motta, Blanche Muller, Dr. Jose Munin, Michael & Viola Nemeth, Irwin K. & Lorraine Nissen, Linda Nociti, Dr. Daniel Ochs & Arlene Sparks, Suzanne Ornstein, Fredrick & Edna Ortega, Tom & Jennifer Otto, Fred & Robin Pierce, The Pilsbury Family, Edgar & Luisa Pittaluga, The Pluzsik Family, Jeffrey & Edith Pullman, John & Lourdes Reinke, Ethel Reitsema, MaryAnn Rich, Bud & Ginny Rich, The Riley-Stern Family, Dave & Marilyn Robertson, Angela G. Rodin, Dom & Mary Rutigliano, Albert Sanz, Stephen Sapontzis, Dr. & Mrs. Stuart & Marilyn Schiffman, The Schliem Family, Albert & Cynthia Shachar, The Shelton Family, Steve Shur, Elaine Silvia, The Simon Family, Lee & Nancy Simonson, Peter & Marianna Simpson, Mildred Singer, Arthur Sinensky & Debbie Oremland, Mildred Singer, Margaret Slaven, Anna Smiley, Allen & Myrna Soast, Albert Sproul, Dr. & Mrs. William Stegmayer, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Steinel, Junius Stephenson, Robert & June Stoll, Harry & Jean Strickholm, Bill Strohmeyer, Harvey & Mimi Strum, Karen & Fabian Tenenbaum, Victor & Frances Trubuzio, Arthur & Madeline Truninger, Gazen & Sadettin Tuysuzoglu, Dr. Benjamin & Carol Tycko, Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Vadala, The Vallejo Family, Richard & Clair Van Buren, Aram Varteresian, Grace Walsh, John & Clair Westervelt, Dr. Carl Weirum, Richard & Nancy Stern Winters, Kyoung Soo Won, Mia Woo, Nancy S. Woods, Mark T. Wright, Charles Wrubel, Ky Yurseko, Peter & Patricia Zampieri, Robert Zenorini

ThankYou!

Our Maintainers!

We just want to send out a thank you to the individuals and organizations that support the nature center with their "sweat equity". With our busy schedules these days it takes a lot to get out onto the trail and do some muscle work. Picking up trash, clearing the path, clearing downed trees from the trails, repairing bridges, and cutting back the overgrowth are all part of the job...and fun.

2011 Scholarship

The applicant for the one year \$1000 Environmental Scholarship must be a high school senior attending either Northern Valley Regional High School in Demarest, The Academy of the Holy Angels in Demarest, a resident of Closter, Haworth or Demarest attending Bergen Counties Academies or the child of a current member of the Demarest Nature Center graduating from another high school. The applicant must be accepted and planning to attend an educational institution in the coming school year (2011/2012) pursuing environmental studies or a similar program such as one involving habitat conservation, natural resource management, preservation and protection of nature and/or education of the public concerning such subjects. Details are available from the High Schools guidance counselors or at www.DemarestNatureCenter.org.

Thanks for Making Oktoberfest a Success

We would like to give our sincere thanks to the many people who made our annual fund-raising event, the Craft Fair at Oktoberfest, a success. Our thanks to the Demarest police, fire, and public works departments, Mayor Jim Carroll, the Demarest Town Council, the Borough Clerks Office, the Korean Women's PTO, and the United Methodist Church. Thanks also to everyone who baked goodies for the bake table and those who volunteered to help at the event. We'd also like to thank all those trustees, past and present plus all the members of the Nature Center who gave up their Saturday to make another successful Oktoberfest. We're on the constant lookout for new & interesting crafters so if you know anyone who might fit the bill you can direct them to our website for more information.



Volunteers from the Korean Woman's PTO (Photo: John Goodwin)

Geocaching: An Outdoor Scavenger Hunt using a GPS... Anywhere in the World

By Dr. Lewis Nelson

You may have heard of geocaching, or this may be your introduction, but one thing is for sure....it's a game created for nature lovers. Basically, people hide containers, called geocaches (or caches for short), in off-beat but accessible places, identified by GPS coordinates, and it becomes the seekers job to go and find them. The caches contain trinkets, really nothing of value, and the fun of the game is not in the loot but in the hunt. There is a nice introduction at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FxrMY91jJU>.

Demarest and the surrounding towns are home to a dozen or so geocaches. To find them go to www.geocaching.com, click "hide or seek a cache," and put in your zip code or other geographical data (or course you can do this anywhere you go and find local caches). If you have a basic free membership, you can download the nearby cache coordinates to your handheld GPS device....and you are off. (There is a short how-to video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4VFeYZTTYs>) Each marker on the map (e.g., box, smiley face, question mark) represents a cache, and within walking distance of Demarest there are 9 caches. Our's (my son and I) is the starred cache located in the Demarest Nature Center near Wakelee Field.

The geocaching website provides information on the difficulty of the find and the complexity of the terrain. The recent history of other seekers of a specific cache and their experiences during the trip are present in a blog-like format to help you prepare. There are even clues, encrypted of course, that you can easily crack if you are stressing out about not being able to locate a cache. With all of this information in hand, you travel to the area of the cache, turn on your handheld GPS (\$100 and up), and start seeking!

Some caches contain travel-bugs, which are essentially dog-tags with a code number emblazoned on them that are meant to be moved from one cache to the next cache you find. This movement is tracked via the geocaching website (assuming the mover enters the bugs new home location). Some caches are multi-caches; you find a cache which has within it the coordinates for the next stage. Some of the containers are old coffee cans or film canisters (remember those?) and others are WWII-era ammo boxes.

The absolutely best part about geocaching is that it gets you outside, exploring places you would maybe not normally go. People place caches in beautiful places such as rock formations, rivers and lakes, stone fences, boardwalks, statues, and gazebos. While seeking, you spend time becoming familiar with the area as you stare at your GPS, follow its instructions, turn over rocks, look in tree stumps, and carefully reach under structures.

Geocaching has provided hours of entertainment and enjoyment for our family both locally and while away. If you want any further information, please feel free to contact us. Check out [geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com), and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geocaching> too. Its simple to get started, and there are enough intricacies to keep you coming back if you are an outdoor enthusiast.

And geocachers are an environmentally friendly group: the motto of all geocachers is "cache in, trash out."

What's Happening This Winter and Spring!

2010 Board of Trustees

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William Stegmayer

We're on the Web!
www.demarestnaturecenter.org
Email:
info@demarestnaturecenter.org

► **January 13th** The public is invited to the annual **Reorganization Meeting** of the Demarest Nature Center Association on Thursday at 7:30pm at the Wakelee Field House. There will be a brief report on 2010 activities, a financial report, and the election of trustees, followed by refreshments. All are welcome.

► **Impromptu skating parties** will be held at the skating pond by the Imaginative Playground in January and February, weather permitting. We'll supply the hot chocolate and other refreshments. Keep an eye out for information on the Hardenburg electronic board. You can also check our website for information.

► **March 19th Birdhouse and bird feeder building** in the train station. Two sessions: 11am till 12pm and 1pm till 2pm.

► **April 2nd Easter egg hunt**, 2pm, at the Imaginative Playground in Wakelee Field. Rain date, April 3rd.

► **May 14th Spring Nature Walk** followed by **Volunteer Day**, 9:30am departing from the parking lot by the Imaginative Playground. Rain date, May 15th.

► **May 27th Deadline for Photo Contest** submissions, see our website for more info.

Senior Service

Once again we have the distinct pleasure to make use of the youth & strength of three seniors from NVRHS-Demarest as they participate in their Senior Service for the Demarest Nature Center this June.

Three seniors will be selected to clear and put down wood chips on the Nature Center's trails. They will experience the utter joy of picking up trash from the smallest gum wrapper to the ever-present abandoned shopping cart. They will clear the Tenakill Brook of garbage as well as remove downed trees and other blockages in the water way.

Nature Center volunteers will supervise the precarious chores, while the more mundane tasks will rely on the student's ability and maturity to work independently.



DNC Friend Kathy Kobylarz and board member Bill Stegmayer cooking up a storm at Breakfast in the Woods
(Photo: Kevin Riley)



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