

quill

FROM THE SCHUYLKILL CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION | WINTER 2015 - 2016

thank you, volunteers:

14,000 HOURS & COUNTING

By Claire Morgan, Volunteer Coordinator, and Mike Weilbacher, Executive Director

THROUGHOUT OUR NOW 50-PLUS YEARS of educating thousands of people, volunteers have been central to our mission. In fact, we could have accomplished surprisingly little without volunteers. Claire Morgan, our volunteer coordinator, calculates that in the 12-month period ending July 1, volunteers poured 14,000 hours of service into the Center, planting trees,

feeding baby birds, measuring water temperatures in streams, hanging gallery exhibitions, even tallying supermarket receipts for dividends.

In this season of giving, we'd like to thank our volunteers for giving us so much.

hours of volunteer service come from the wildlife clinic alone.

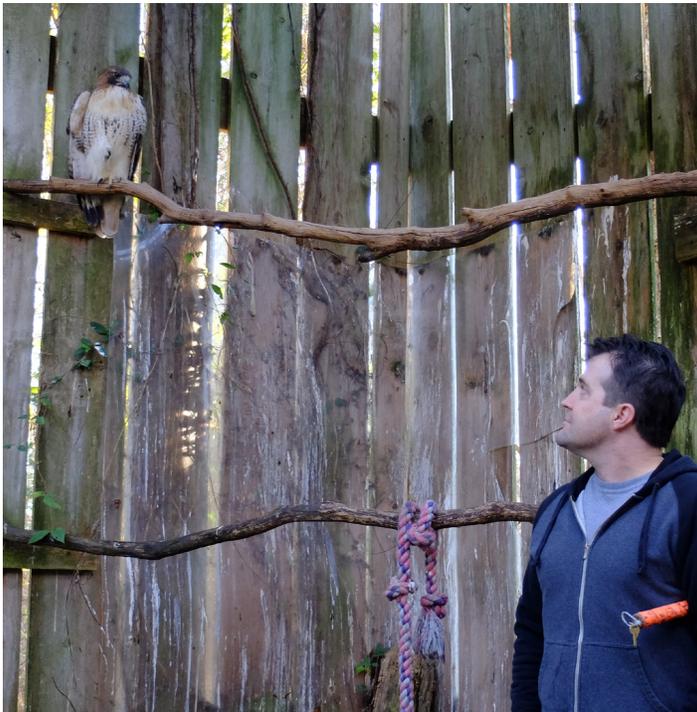
10,000 OF THE 14,000 HOURS OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE COME FROM THE WILDLIFE CLINIC

Dan Featherston is one of those volunteers. Helping us for 2½ years now, he “deeply cares” about rehabilitating wild animals, and has a

special fondness for pigeons, a bird usually overlooked.

We capped off the recent jubilee year of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



DAN FEATHERSTON AND REHABILITATED RED-TAILED HAWK

Like at the wildlife clinic. There, some 70 volunteers in the clinic greatly extend the reach of clinic staff, taking regular weekly shifts cleaning cages, feeding animals, even helping administer medicine. In 2015, about 3,300 wild creatures were brought to the clinic, a record for one year—and without volunteers, rehabilitators Rick Schubert and Michele Wellard would be unable to provide this critical level of service.

Here's one measure of the importance of clinic volunteers: 10,000 of the

in this issue:

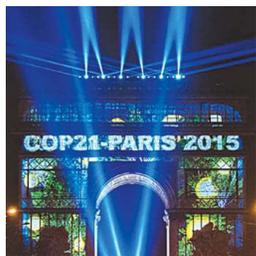
THE WORLD WE WANT TO BUILD, PAGE 3

5TH ANNUAL RICHARD L. JAMES LECTURE, PAGE 5

THE FORAGERS, PAGE 6



PLANTING JUBILEE GROVE, SEPTEMBER 12.



director's cut

2016: A YEAR OF CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMS

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FOR MOST OF THE LAST TWO MONTHS, THE WORLD'S ATTENTION HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON PARIS, first with the horrific November terrorist attacks, then immediately thereafter when almost 200 heads of state—the most ever in one place—traveled there to work on climate change. While President Obama and his peers only stayed a day or two, their staff feverishly continued collaborating on a groundbreaking plan to cap the increase in average global temperatures to 2° Celsius over historic levels, a seemingly small but immensely challenging goal.

Between me writing these words and you reading them, you'll know whether or not they pulled this off.

But let's be honest: climate change is one of the signature issues of our time, and while America is famously ambivalent about the issue, so much of the rest of the world is not. In fact, several Pacific island nations are begging negotiators to lower the cap from 2° to 1.5°. Yes, half a degree in the planet's average temperature makes a surprising difference in big-picture projections—and sea-level rise.

In fact, you don't have to live in the Marshall Islands to feel the impact of climate change. Since only 2010, just the last five years, Philadelphians have weathered the snowiest winter ever, the two warmest summers ever, the wettest year ever, two hurricanes, and a derecho—a sideways tornado, of all things. In the 30 years before 1990, Center City usually experienced an average of 20 days of temperatures above 90°. In just the 9 years between 2003 and 2012, says an EPA report, that number doubled to 40. Summers are simply hotter.

Here at the Schuylkill Center, fresh off celebrating our 50th anniversary, we're focusing our attention on this transcendent issue. Throughout the year, we'll offer programs and events centered on climate change globally and its impact locally, starting with the fifth annual Dick James lecture in February. Workshops, the University of Nature, gallery exhibitions, and more will offer a year of climate change programming to bring you the latest information by the people in the region working in this area.

I hope you'll join us for these critical conversations.

All the best,

Mike Weilbacher, Executive Director, mike@schuylkillcenter.org

the world we want to build

ON CELEBRATING OUR 50TH BY LOOKING AHEAD

By Anna Lebr Mueser, Public Relations Manager

ALMOST A YEAR AGO, 100-PLUS PEOPLE gathered for the Richard L. James Lecture that kicked off our 50th Anniversary celebrations, a full year marking our 1965 founding. It's been a year of parties, gatherings, and thought-provoking conversations. When artist Mary Mattingly spoke at the James Lecture about how art can influence people, can change conversations, and adapt for climate change, she opened the door on an important way to think about how we interact with both our sense of stability in the environment and our expectations for art. Mary argued for art that can offer alternative ways to see our world and help us find a way into a future on this changing planet.

At the beginning of October, we honored the Silver Lake Nature Center's Bob Mercer with the annual Henry Meigs Award for Environmental Leadership. Retiring after 40 years of service to that nature center and to the environmental education community, Bob shared his vision for a path forward, emphasizing the need for nature and environmental education centers to reinvent themselves. It's time, he argued, to respond to the next generation's needs by finding ways to connect the new generation with nature and seek common

ground. Bob argued that nature centers must adapt to the 21st century by developing civic consciousness, being welcoming to diverse audiences, and not being bound

WE ENVISION A WORLD WHERE ALL PEOPLE LEARN, PLAY, AND GROW WITH NATURE AS A PART OF THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES.



SEAN DUFFY AND KARIN JAMES BURY THE TIME CAPSULE, OCTOBER 10.

by the expectations and assumptions of the past.

Finally, we rounded out the year by dedicating Jubilee Grove and burying our time capsule. There, Delaware Riverkeeper

Maya van Rossum, and Judy Wicks, founder of the White Dog Café and Philadelphia's local food movement, read letters they'd written to the year 2040 (just a sampling of well over a dozen letters put into the time capsule). In these letters, leaders, artists, and thinkers imagined a future Philadelphia. Maya van Rossum spoke of her dedication to the river and its ecosystems, promising to protect them in the years to come; Judy Wicks turned her attention to the distant future, to "the children of our children's children," offering a hope for their safety and for a world where they live with nature.

That is a world we want to build. As an organization, the Schuylkill Center envisions a world where all people learn, play, and grow with nature as a part of their everyday lives. Throughout this 50th year, we've led thought-provoking conversations, opened dialogs, and asked ourselves and our community to envision the future we want to live in.

Thank you, to each and every one of you, for being a part of this landmark year for the Schuylkill Center, and for joining us when we imagine nature and environmental education on our changing planet. ✈



MARY SALVANTE, MARY MATTINGLY, BETHANY WIGGIN, AND MAYA VAN ROSSUM AT THE RICHARD L. JAMES LECTURE, JANUARY 28.



BOB MERCER TALKING ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AT THE 10TH ANNUAL MEIGS AWARD CEREMONY, OCTOBER 1.



JUDY WICKS READS HER LETTER TO 2040 AT THE JUBILEE IN THE GROVE, OCTOBER 10.





3,300 REASONS TO SUPPORT THE CLINIC

RECENTLY, A RED-TAILED HAWK was brought to our Wildlife Clinic. He was found tangled in soccer netting, with a wounded wing, suffering from dehydration. Rick was able to cut the hawk free and treat the wounds. After three weeks of care, he was released back into the wild. This majestic creature would have died without the efforts of staff and volunteers.

Stories like this are common. The clinic is on the front line of local efforts to protect wildlife of all kinds.

DID YOU KNOW?

- More than 3,300 sick, injured, and orphaned animals are treated and cared for free of charge each year
- In the last three years seven other wildlife clinics have closed due to lack of funding
- The clinic relies on over 70 volunteers, contributing over 10,000 hours of time a year
- The clinic receives no government funding

Won't you support the Wildlife Clinic with a generous gift this holiday season? Every dollar you give will be invested back into the clinic. Your gift purchases medicine, bandages, and the many varieties of food the clinic needs to perform its mission on a daily basis.

VOLUNTEERS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

celebrations with the planting of Jubilee Grove, 200 new trees planted mostly by volunteers and interns. Year round, land stewardship volunteers help stewardship manager Melissa Nase propagate native plants in our greenhouse and nursery. As our native plant sales have been growing in importance, our volunteers are invaluable here, potting plants, caring for the nursery and greenhouse, and even advising customers during the sales as to what plants to use in their own gardens.

Monthly, restoration volunteers join us on the front lines of ecological restoration, removing noxious invasive species that choke out native plants while planting new trees and wildflowers as well.

And then there's Toad Detour. Unique to Roxborough, every year thousands of toads cross Port Royal Avenue to mate in the reservoir. Instead of getting squashed on the road by passing cars these toads are ushered across by volunteers. This spring, some 1,400 adult toads made the journey through the help of many volunteers, including Scout troops.

The Senior Environment Corps run by Claire leans on a core of wonderful retired adults who, this year, have been monitoring the stream along Wises' Mill Road to measure the impact of storms on water quality. They share this data with Phila-

delphia Water and the statewide program Nature Abounds.

We also have a small but dedicated group of volunteers who help us with office skills including data entry, shredding, mailing, organizing, etc. And a new volunteer has just started helping our facilities staff with carpentry and handyman jobs.

Last but not least, an incredible board of 18 volunteer trustees has supported and guided us this year, offering their gifts of time and talent.

Henry Geyer, one of the SEC volunteers, summarizes the experience for many. "Volunteering is my way to say thank you and to give something of myself back to my community. It's a chance to be with caring people who have your same interests, and hope to make a difference, no matter how slight, in our world. I hope that what little I have contributed will be of some significance."

Henry, it is. And we are deeply indebted to Henry, and all our extraordinary volunteers.

With a New Year just around the corner, perhaps you'll make a resolution to give back both to the environment and the community through volunteering. 🦋



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION GATHERING, SEPTEMBER 18.

interested in volunteering?

Call volunteer coordinator Claire Morgan at 215-482-7300, ext. 120, email Claire at claire@schuylkillcenter.org, or simply go to our website and fill out the application form. Love to have you join our volunteer team!

naturalist's notebook

THE MEADOW OF 2040

By Anna Lebr Mueser, Public Relations Manager

IMAGINE YOUR FAVORITE MEADOW.

I imagine mine in September: grasses stand waist high though the underbrush is falling back, seed pods hang in dark silhouettes, forests at the edges of the field mostly green, the promise of red and orange in their leaves.

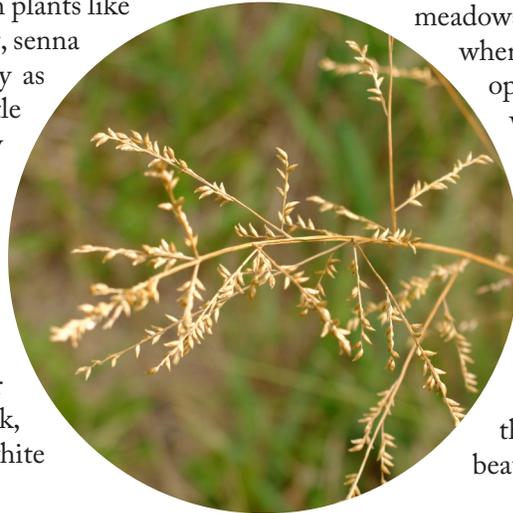
This is our gift to the future: a meadow in seeds. In our time capsule buried in Jubilee Grove, are seven clear plastic envelopes of seeds. Inside are dogbane, bluestem, grasses, senna, and white snakeroot. These seeds, collected this past fall from the meadows around the Schuylkill Center, offer a little picture of what an autumn meadow looked like in our moment, right now, in 2015.

These seeds are a gift to 2040. When the future Schuylkill Center staff dig up that time capsule, pushing dirt from its sides, twisting off the lid which will protect its contents for over two decades, they may

even be able to plant those seeds. So we're hoping that future Center staff will plant them. Then, those seeds become the meadow of 2040.

I picture it much like today's fields. The dogbane and senna pods will hang down from their waist-high plants like dark peapods (in fact, senna is in the same family as pea plants). Little bluestem, a lovely grass whose warm peachy color is a delight in fall, will wave in the wind. White snakeroot, leaves dark green after other summer plants have died back, will turn its lovely white flowers skyward.

THIS IS OUR GIFT TO
THE FUTURE:
A MEADOW IN SEEDS.



Of course, these fields and forests will be very different in 25 years. Not only will warming climates encourage southern plants and animals to migrate northward, but all signs point to an increase in invasive plants and animals in our region as well. Our meadows will look different, when that time capsule is opened. Our summers will feel different in 2040. Still, I love to imagine this meadow: its apricot-colored dry grasses and vines, the hint of fall coolness in its air, its. No matter what plants grow there, I know it will be beautiful. ✂

a climate-ready city

FROM PARIS TO PHILADELPHIA AT THE FIFTH ANNUAL DICK JAMES LECTURE

WHILE ALMOST 200 NATIONS GATHERED in Paris to hammer out a historic climate change agreement, Philadelphia released its own report on how the city should adapt to hotter summers and wetter winters. The Mayor's Office of Sustainability report, *Growing Stronger: Toward a Climate-Ready Philadelphia*, notes that 49 daily temperature records have been set in Philadelphia since 2000, 18 since only 2010, and the Delaware River has been rising at a rate of roughly 0.11 inches per

year since 1900, equivalent to an increase of nearly one foot in 100 years.

On Thursday, February 4 at 7:30 p.m., Sarah Wu, Director for Planning in the Mayor's Office of Sustainability, presents the fifth annual Richard L. James lecture, named in honor of our founding director. Wu presents the city's key findings, and will then be joined by a panel of leading Philadelphia scientists, activists, and policy experts working on a climate-ready

Philadelphia. We'll involve you in the conversation as well.

This lecture kicks off a year of climate change programming at the Schuylkill Center. Hope you'll join us. ✂

coming up:

RICHARD L. JAMES LECTURE
Thursday, February 4, 7:30 pm

the foragers

FIBER & FUNGI IN THE GALLERY

By Christina Catanese, Director of Environmental Art

MELISSA MADDONNI HAIMS AND HER husband, Josh Haims, have long been mesmerized by mushrooms. Early in their relationship, Josh, who is from Manhattan, recommended that they go mushroom foraging in Fairmount Park when visiting Melissa in her native Philadelphia. Having never been mushroom foraging before, the two stumbled over rocks and downed wood in the forest near the Valley Green Inn in the Wissahickon.

What seemed frivolous and foolish at first turned into twenty years of photographing local fungi and mycology enthusiasm. Eventually, Melissa became interested in biomimicry and would begin to recreate the mushrooms out of yarn by crocheting them and then attaching them to found wood.

When Melissa first showed me this work, I was delighted – as a knitter, mushroom

enthusiast, and art lover. Plus, fiber feels like a completely appropriate medium to explore the mycology of our local forests, analogous to the fibrous mycelium through which the fungus spread in the soil before fruiting into the diverse and beautiful mushroom forms. Josh's photographs and Melissa's crocheted yarn sculptures highlight the experience of immersion in the forest and nature's ability to create something beautiful out of almost nothing.

In addition to the gallery show, opening January 28th, Melissa will be offering a mushroom crochet workshop, where attendees can learn to make their own fiber fungi – no crochet experience required. Schuylkill Center visitors may remember Melissa's work from winter 2012, when she knitbombed trees along our Widener Trail. This time, she is bringing the outside in. ✂

coming up:

THE FORAGERS
Gallery opening Thursday, January 28

MUSHROOM CROCHET WORKSHOP
Saturday, February 20



ABOVE AND UPPER RIGHT: CROCHET MUSHROOM SCULPTURE, MELISSA MADDONNI HAIMS.
LOWER RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH, JOSH HAIMS.

the season in brief

HIGHLIGHTS FROM FALL 2015

- 1 In celebration of our 50th anniversary, we posted 50 facts on our Twitter and Facebook. One of them was: **Every time we get 1 inch of rain, Stacy Levy's art work RainYard captures and slows over 3,000 gallons of water.**
- 2 This fall we opened a third classroom in our **Nature Preschool** program, adding **Sassafras** to our **Sycamore** and **Sweet Gum** classrooms.
- 3 Wildlife clinic director **Rick Schubert** celebrated his 10th anniversary at the Center in September. In his honor, we planted a red maple in Founders' Grove.
- 4 On October 1, we honored **Bob Mercer**, of the Silver Lake Nature Center, with the 10th annual **Henry Meigs Award for Environmental Leadership**, acknowledging his lifetime of dedicated work in environmental education in our region. From left to right: Mike Weilbacher, Executive Director, Bob Mercer, Binney Meigs.

- 5 Also in October, we concluded our 50th anniversary celebrations at the **Jubilee in the Grove**, when we buried the **time capsule**, dedicated **Jubilee Grove**, and unveiled a new sculpture by **Binney Meigs**. Binney and his wife Katie are shown below with the sculpture, **Germination**.
- 6 This fall we welcomed **Casey Combs**, our new Director of Development and **Michelle Havens**, our new Gift Shop Manager. Casey comes to us from the Philadelphia Zoo and Michelle is a lifelong Roxborough community member.
- 7 On November 5, Nancy Cohen's **Hackensack Dreaming** opened, transforming our gallery with over 120 works of paper, fabric, and glass.
- 8 In mid-November, **Carol and Art Silverman** dedicated a bench in Jubilee Grove in memory of their daughter **Cheryl Beth Silverman**. The bench will offer a place for meditation, rest, and reflection for many years to come.



quill
WINTER 2015 - 2016

in this issue:

14,000 HOURS & COUNTING,
PAGE 1

THE WORLD WE WANT TO
BUILD, PAGE 3

A CLIMATE-READY CITY:
RICHARD L. JAMES LECTURE,
PAGE 5

THE FORAGERS, PAGE 6

support

THE SCHUYLKILL CENTER

Be a part of our work stewarding
the land, caring for wild
creatures, and connecting
people and nature.

Make a year-end gift to support
the Schuylkill Center today.



this winter

AT THE SCHUYLKILL CENTER



A CLIMATE-READY CITY

5TH ANNUAL RICHARD L. JAMES LECTURE
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 7:30 PM
Sarah Wu, of the Mayor's Office of
Sustainability, explains how Philadelphia
will live with climate change.

BUILD YOUR OWN COLDFRAME

FEBRUARY 27, 10 AM

Learn to extend your growing season
by building a coldframe to shelter your
garden in the cold months.

