

Flat Rock Brook News

The Newsletter of the Flat Rock Brook Nature Association

Volume XXXVI, Number 1

Winter 2009-2010



Holiday Sale and Silent Auction

Friday - Sunday
December 4-6
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Members Preview
Thursday, December 3
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Come join the fun at the Member's Preview on Thursday evening and continue to shop for the holidays all weekend long! Fresh Christmas trees and wreaths, great gift items, toys, holiday plants and wonderful baked goods for sale.

Buy Tricky Tray tickets to win gift baskets and prizes.

The Silent Auction offers opportunities to bid on great vacation homes; dining in fine restaurants; Letterman and Martha Stewart Tickets, concert tickets for bergen PAC, fine wines, artwork, tickets to sporting events, and many more exciting items and adventures galore!



Clockwise: Director Steve Wiessner with daughter Lindsey; Bat-man Joe D'Angeli and friend; Painting pumpkins with Dad; and an enthusiastic young audience enjoying the bat presentation. Go to our web site, www.flatrockbrook.org, for more Members Day photos. Photographs

Members Day Was Fun for Everyone!

Although it was raining outside, smiling faces and high spirits abounded at our annual Members Day event, held on Sunday, October 18. Joe D'Angeli, otherwise known as the "Bat Man" of New Jersey presented two terrific shows on the mysterious mammal. With two of his straw-colored fruit bats, Joe educated our members on the importance of bats worldwide.

Kids of all ages loved painting pumpkins, making wings and guessing just how many sunflower seeds fit into that little jar—1,983! The food was great and the company better. Thanks to our staff and all of our volunteers who helped us out this year. As always, we couldn't do it without you!



Flat Rock Brook News is published quarterly by the Flat Rock Brook Nature Association as a benefit of membership. To become a member, make your tax-deductible check payable to Flat Rock Brook and mail to

Flat Rock Brook Nature Assn.

443 Van Nostrand Avenue
Englewood, NJ 07631

Student (over 13) \$15

Seniors (65 and over) \$20

Adult \$30

Family \$45

Group \$50

Sustaining \$75

Sponsor \$150

Life \$1,500

Staff

Executive Director

Stephen Wiessner

Education Director

Jill Bennetta

Caretaker

Ryan Hasko

Secretary

Sandy Chiappino

Bookkeeping

Lisa Higgins

Building Hours

Monday - Friday

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Trails are open every day
from dawn to dusk.

Flat Rock Brook's New Trustees and Officers



Left to right: New Flat Rock Brook Trustees James Cohen, Toni Fay, Sue Bassing, and Anthony Avallone. Not shown: Elizabeth Miracky.

At the Annual Meeting in September, five individuals were elected to the Board of Trustees of the Flat Rock Brook Nature Association. They are Anthony Avallone, Susan Bassing, James Cohen, Toni Fay, and Elizabeth Miracky. We are delighted to welcome them to the Board and to introduce them to our members.

At the first organizational meeting of the 2009-2010 Board, the following officers were elected: R. Peyton Gibson, President; Jerry Cunningham, 1st Vice President; Jennifer Rubin, 2nd Vice President; George Milne, Treasurer, and Phyllis Dain, Secretary.

Flat Rock's new President, R. Peyton Gibson (shown at right), has been an Englewood resident for more than 25 years and previously served on Flat Rock Brook's board from 1996 to 2002. She rejoined the Board in September of 2005 and has served as 1st Vice President for the past two years.



Peyton is a graduate of Columbia University School of Law and a former partner in the New York law firm of Phillips Lytle, LLP where she had a corporate bankruptcy and litigation practice. She is currently the owner of The Gibson Law Firm in New York and has one daughter.

Profiles of Flat Rock Brook's other officers and new Trustees are available on our web site: www.flatrockbrook.org.

Fall Programs at Flat Rock Brook

To register please fill out the form on page 5 and mail it along with your payment to Flat Rock Brook. **All registration is by mail and on a first come, first served basis.** You are not registered until payment has been received. **In the event of cancellation, your payment will be refunded only if we are notified at least 5 business days before the scheduled program.** Additional registration forms are available on our web site (www.flatrockbrook.org). Programs meet at the Nature Center building, unless stated otherwise. Be aware of age requirements. **For additional information, please call 201 567-1265.**



Winter Explorers Series

Mondays: December 7, 14 ; January 4, 11; February 1, 8
3:45 - 4:45 p.m.

For children 4-7 years old.

If you and your child enjoy our spring and fall Young Explorer series, you'll love exploring nature together in the winter too! Take part in hands-on discovery in both outdoor and indoor activities with teacher-naturalist Elli Grayzel. Mom, dad, or favorite adult are asked to come along with 4-5 year olds on this series of six sessions of outdoor explorations.

Pre-registration by mail is required.

\$70 per child for members only.

You must be or become a \$45 family member.

Winter Toddler Times

Tuesdays: December 15, January 19, February 16

Thursdays: December 17, January 21, February 18
4:00 - 4:45 p.m.

For children ages 2-5 with parent or adult.

These 45 minute programs are designed for the little ones. Each session will be held here at the Nature Center, and will include a story and interactive activity. Come and join us for the fun! **Pre-registration by mail is required.**

Per child cost: \$5 for members, \$8 for non-members

Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 19, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

For adults and teens.

Join local birders and our staff as we do our part to count all the birds at Flat Rock as part of the National Audubon Society's annual nationwide Christmas Bird Count. We'll go out in small groups to search sections of the park and identify different species of birds. Afterwards, enjoy hot refreshments back at the Center as we tally the results.

Dress for cold weather. We go rain or shine! Bring binoculars or borrow ours. Bring lunch. Beginners welcome.

No need to register. FREE to all.

Here Comes Winter Walk

Sunday, December 20

2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

For families.

Join us to celebrate the coming of winter. We'll take to the trails and wander FRB, reveling in the wonders of nature in winter and discussing the upcoming winter solstice.

Dress warmly, walk followed by hot chocolate and yum-mies. **Pre-registration by mail is required.**

\$5 for members, \$8 for non-members

Project Feeder Watch

Sunday, January 10

2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

For adults and children 6 and older.

Learn the names of the birds that hang out around your house! This program is perfect for budding birders and armchair birders! Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology uses amateur "citizen scientists" with bird feeders to gather valuable information about bird populations every winter. Join us for an indoor program to learn to identify and tally the birds at our feeders and be a part of this important project. Bring your binoculars or borrow ours.

Pre-registration by mail is required. Free for members, \$5 for non-members.

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Holiday Hikes

Martin Luther King Day Hike

Monday, January 18

Presidents' Day Hike

Monday, February 15

2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

For adults and children 9 and older

Celebrate the winter holidays with hike leader Geneva Warrick by taking a beginner's hike through the Flat Rock woods. Each hike is approximately 2-3 miles in length depending on the group's pace. Dress for the weather. **No need to register.** Free for members, \$5 for non-members.

Eagle Watching On The Hudson



Sunday, January 24

9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Meet naturalists from Tenafly Nature Center, Weis Ecology Center, and Jill Bennetta, Flat Rock Brook's Education Director to begin a full day of Bald Eagle watching. The search will take us up the Hudson and across the New York border, with possible stops at Bear Mountain, Croton Point, and George's Point. Dress for the weather and bring

your best optics. Last year's highlights included many eagles of varying ages, Peregrine Falcons as well as other exciting species. Meeting location will be off-site, with directions sent upon registration.

Pre-registration by mail is required.

Per-person cost: \$15 for members, \$20 for non-members. Space is limited so register early!

Owl Howl Night Hike

Thursday, February 4

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

For families with children 6 and older.

Join us on this full moon night for a hike to look for owls. We'll play recorded owl calls to see if we can get a response from these nocturnal hunters. Learn how to hoot like an owl and warm up inside with hot chocolate.

Pre-registration by mail is required.

\$5 for members, \$8 for non-members.

The Great Backyard Bird Count

Sunday, February 14

2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

For adults and children 8 and older

Be a "Citizen Scientist" and participate in this national bird research project. Learn to identify New Jersey's winter birds and then take a guided walk to identify and count all the birds we can find. Our data will be used by scientists at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology to analyze bird populations. Bring binoculars or borrow ours.

No need to pre-register.

Free for members, \$5 for non-members.

Nature Program Coop Events



Owls of New Jersey

Thursday, December 10

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

For adults and families with children 13 and older

A Nature Program Cooperative Program Event

Hosted by Tenafly Nature Center & Weis Ecology Center

Join naturalists from Tenafly Nature Center and Weis Ecology Center for a hoot of a good time. After an introduction inside, participants will meet some live nocturnal hunters native to New Jersey. Outside, participants will be trained to listen for the stylish vocalizations of our local inhabitants. This event will be held rain or shine at Tenafly Nature Center, 313 Hudson Avenue, Tenafly.

Pre-registration is required.

To register go www.tenaflynaturecenter.org

\$5 for members, \$10 for non-members.

For late listings of other Nature Program Coop Events go to www.flatrockbrook.org.

Volunteer Spotlight: Chika and Noah True-Daniels

Our featured volunteers for this quarter are Chika and Noah True-Daniels. Chika and Noah have helped to re-establish the Docent Program for Flat Rock Brook. They started as weekend docents in August 2009 and have volunteered at the Nature Center almost every weekend since then. Their presence has enabled weekend staff to pursue tasks outside the building. In addition to assisting visitors, Chika and Noah have also learned to provide animal care, help our staff with other projects, and volunteered at Flat Rock Brook events. Chika is also interested in working with the Japanese community as a translator. She will be working with a representative of the Volunteer Center of Bergen County to encourage our Japanese friends to become more involved with FRB activities.

Chika and Noah live in Fort Lee and frequently walk to Flat Rock Brook to hike. We welcome them into our family and thank them for their enthusiastic efforts. If you have an interest in serving as a volunteer weekend docent at Flat Rock Brook, please contact Executive Director Stephen Wiessner at 201 567-1265.



Flat Rock Brook Program Registration Form

To register for a program fill out the registration form and mail it with your payment to the **Flat Rock Brook Nature Assn., 443 Van Nostrand Avenue, Englewood, NJ 07631**. All fees are per person. Additional forms are available on our website (www.flatrockbrook.org).

Name _____ Daytime Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Member Yes No (circle one)

Name of Program	Date	# Attending	Cost/Person	Amount Due

I would like to become a member of Flat Rock Brook and receive discounts on programs, invitations to members only events, and Flat Rock Brook's quarterly newsletter.

Family \$45 Sustaining \$75
 Individual \$30 Sponsor \$150
 Senior \$20 Life \$1,500
 Student \$15
 Group \$50 New Renewal

My check for \$ _____ is enclosed. Total Programs \$ _____

Please charge my credit card: Membership \$ _____

Visa Master Card Discover Amount Due \$ _____

Card # _____

Signature (Required) _____

From Executive Director Stephen Wiessner



John Moran, chair of the North Jersey Trail Conference, installing new metal trail blazes along Flat Rock Brook's 3.6 miles of trails.

Trail Blazing at Flat Rock Brook

The New York/New Jersey Trail Conference made a significant contribution to Flat Rock Brook this fall by reblazing the trails throughout our entire trail system. Flat Rock Brook has 3.6 miles of excellent hiking trails that are maintained by our staff and volunteer help, and the blazes on trees and posts along the trail provide hikers visual confirmation to know which trail they are hiking.

The Trail Conference, at no cost to Flat Rock Brook, has updated our entire trail system's markings by putting new metal blazes throughout our preserve making navigation of our trail system easier than ever before. I would like to especially thank the Trail Conference's North Jersey Trails Chair, John Moran for spending over 50 hours at Flat Rock Brook installing more than 750 metal markers. The collaboration with the Trail Conference will not end with the completion of this project, as we plan to discuss new cooperative efforts involving trail maintenance and trail relocation that will greatly benefit our program of land management.

We have also received a donation of 10,000 new trail maps that will significantly improve the enjoyment of visitors hiking our trails. The maps were designed by Hannah Jerome and the cost of printing them by her father Marc Jerome, saving Flat Rock Brook thousands of dollars in printing expenses. It heartens me to know that there are organizations and individuals so willing to help Flat Rock Brook. Our thanks to the New Jersey Trail Conference, to Marc and Hannah Jerome, and to all of you who support Flat Rock Brook's mission to preserve our land and provide educational programs for schools, other organizations and individuals throughout our area. Whether as members, volunteers, or donors to our Annual Appeal, it is your generous support that has allowed Flat Rock Brook to exist for 37 years and

Many Thanks . . .

To Marc Rubin and board member Jennifer McMillan Rubin for hosting the Sylvan Society Party at their Englewood home this fall. The party was in honor of donors who contributed \$250 or more to the 2008-2009 Annual Appeal and about 70 Sylvan Society donors attended to enjoy music, poolside cocktails, and the gracious hospitality provided by Jennifer and Marc. It was a lovely evening and we thank the Rubins for their generosity on behalf of Flat Rock Brook.

Annual Appeal

The first mailing for the Annual Appeal went out in mid-October and contributions have begun coming into Flat Rock Brook's office. As the newsletter goes to press in early November we have received contributions totaling \$40,700 toward our goal of \$125,000.

This year, we need your support as we move forward from a challenging 2008-09 fiscal year. Please consider supporting the Nature Center. The Appeal provides our largest single source of revenue each year, and allows us to provide quality programs to school children and to maintain our 150 acres of property. Your gifts allow Flat Rock Brook to exist as a precious resource available to all. Thank you for your support!

Welcome New Members

Susan Bassing, Susan Chau and Gregg Tassone, Yumi Choi, James Cohen, Maria DeSousa, Hugh Evans, Jeong Whan Eom, Robert and Anna Farian, Toni Fay, Kim Goldup, Adam and Susan Greenbaum, David and Allison Hartstone, Christine Haviaris, Viana Hoskins, Eun Kyoung Kim, Jung Kim, Anat and Ron Ofeck, Sung Do Park, Sharon Rahav, Jeremy and Adrienne Roth, Andre Schanzer, Joyce White and Cormac Lyons

Restoring the Backyard Habitat for Wildlife

Step 1: Controlling Invasive Species

For the past year, Flat Rock Brook has been working on a plan to renovate the Backyard Habitat for Wildlife, a demonstration garden of native plants that have been selected to be both ornamental and to create a hospitable environment and refuge for wildlife. The renovation plan as designed will allow visitors to better understand how native plants provide food and habitat for wildlife, and the interdependence of animal and plant life. In the years since the Backyard Habitat was originally created, the Habitat has been severely degraded by both deer and the invasive plant species that have overwhelmed and displaced native plants.

In order to successfully restore the area and fully establish native species, we needed to find a way to effectively control the invasive species of plants that have come to dominate the ecosystem in the Backyard Habitat, while at the same time protecting wildlife, existing native plant species, and adjacent ground and water.

All possible options have been carefully investigated to determine the best way to deal with each species of invasive plants that we encounter. For example, small patches of certain plants such as Multi-flora rose, and Japanese Barberry, can be successfully managed manually by digging out the roots. Other more persistent plants such as Japanese Knotweed and Mugwort almost always need herbicide treatment to eradicate an established stand. These plants have such persistent root growth and regenerative abilities, that manual removal will not do the job, and may even result in spreading the invasive's growth. In these cases, we have determined that a judicious and careful use of herbicide is necessary.

Over the years, herbicide use has acquired the stigma of being widely destructive to animals, (especially amphibians) plants, and waterways. Misuse of herbicides, without regulation, or care can indeed be harmful, and such misuse does exist and can range from large-scale agricultural operations to chemicals applied by homeowners in their gardens. However, the judicious use of the right herbicide carefully chosen and applied using procedures such as cut stump or spot-apply will limit residual exposure of surrounding areas to ensure that only individual plants or stands are targeted and that no harm is done to healthy native plants, wildlife, ground, or water in the vicinity.

Our goal at Flat Rock Brook is to restore the Habitat to its intended purpose. Restored, the Backyard Habitat will attract a greater diversity of native insects, birds, mammals, amphibians, and other wildlife. Biodiversity has decreased at Flat Rock Brook as invasive species have gained dominance. These invasive plants threaten not only to overwhelm native plants, but to make the area inhospitable to the wide variety of wildlife that depend on native species for food and habitat.

In order to successfully restore the native ecosystem, we must first eradicate invasive plants using herbicides where necessary. It is important that we choose both the safest herbicide and the safest methods of application. To that end, after intensive study, we feel that the careful use of a controlled amount of herbicide will allow the hiker, bird-watcher, or student to experience and understand how protecting and preserving native species enhances the health and diversity of our ecosystem.

—Ryan Hasko

Go Green With FRB

“Buy Local”

We see it on billboards, at the supermarket, and in magazines: “Buy Local”. This is in reference to the production of food and local farms, but that slogan can easily be applied to any service or product we buy. Flat Rock Brook has always had a strong dedication to supporting the community and the services that it provides. Developing relationships with local vendors and service providers has always been a strong aspect of how we run our organization.

When one delves deeper into it, you realize the environmental impact that buying local has. Choosing to buy products that have been manufactured closer to our region helps reduce the emissions released through the transportation process. Utilizing local businesses helps reduce one's own emissions as one can drive (or even walk) to numerous stores within the same town, at the same time—saving gas and emissions. Many restaurants are now using local produce for their food preparation. The food is no longer transported from thousands of miles away, but rather only from a neighboring state.

It is important to recognize that the services we utilize and the products we buy all have a price of production, transportation, and even social costs. Many countries that produce products the United States imports may not have the same environmental regulations on factories and plants that other governments do. With the threat of global climate change looming, we must choose wisely the products we buy and be aware of the hidden costs that could ultimately threaten the well-being of our planet.

Winter Calendar

December

- 3 **Holiday Sale Members' Preview**
- 4-6 **Holiday Sale**
- 7 Winter Explorers
- 8 Blue Moon Fundraiser
- 14 Winter Explorers
- 15 Toddler Times
- 17 Toddler Times
- 19 Christmas Bird Count
- 20 Here Comes Winter

January

- 4 Winter Explorers
- 10 Project Feeder Watch
- 11 Winter Explorers
- 18 Martin Luther King Day Hike
- 19 Toddler Times
- 21 Toddler Times
- 24 Eagle Watching on the Hudson

February

- 1 Winter Explorers
- 4 Owl Howl Night Hike
- 8 Winter Explorers
- 14 Great Backyard Bird Count
- 15 Presidents' Day Hike
- 16 Toddler Times
- 18 Toddler Times

Blue Moon Fundraiser—Tuesday, December 8

Enjoy a festive evening and benefit Flat Rock Brook!

Clip the coupon below and present it when you dine at the Blue Moon Cafe in Englewood on Tuesday, December 8 and 20% of your bill (excluding tax and gratuity) will be donated to Flat Rock Brook! Coupons are also available at www.BlueMoonMexicanCafe.com.



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201 567-1265



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