

NEWSLETTER

Winter Issue

DECEMBER 8, 2015



Cecelia Madore

OF PINE TREES AND GIVING

This quarter's Minna Anthony Common article talks about the stubborn resolve of the pitch pine, a native tree to the Saint Lawrence River basin. You may have seen it implausibly clinging to a narrow crack in bedrock on the side of a windswept island, or high upon a North-country hillside struggling to regrow limbs in spite of numerous wind, snow, and ice storms. The pine, according to Mrs. Common, behaves like the "rugged independent men who long ago wrested a living from the land in spite of almost insurmountable difficulties."

Perhaps the bedraggled tree could better represent the Nature Center as a mascot in our newest fundraising endeavor. The thought of raising \$300,000 seems almost unattainable at first. Yet the need to grow, progress, and improve oneself propels us forward, much like the persistent pitch pine.

The Friends of the Nature Center, Inc. has created new naming opportunities for your consideration. It is our goal to not only raise necessary funding, but allow members and patrons to physically become part of the Nature Center. Three naming opportunities have been designed for your consideration:

- a brick along a new river-facing patio
- a leaf on an artistic tree mural located on a prominent interior wall near the entrance.
- a bench along the Nature Center trails

With your help, we are confident the Nature Center will remain a relevant, engaging and important part of the River community.

Please send your improvement or fundraising ideas to us at macnaturecenter@gmail.com.

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON SERIES - ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED DECEMBER 1931



PITCH PINE IS UNUSUAL TREE

DISDAINS BOTANICAL
RULES IN ITS GROWTH

ITS IRREGULARITY IS ARTISTIC

Pitch Pine Will Continue to
Grow If Blown Over - Hardy
Tree Has No Regard For Time,
Often Taking 3 to 4 Years to
Ripen Fruit.

By MRS. JAMES A. COMMON

The pitch pine persisting in the sterile soil of northern hillsides where nothing else can grow is symbolic of the rugged independent men who long ago wrested a living from the land in spite of almost insurmountable difficulties. With a critical eye the woodman cutting Christmas trees selected, for height, for spread, and thickness, for symmetry and color, since only perfect trees would sell. On the other hand the artist searching for the subject to portray on his Christmas picture just so surely ignored these geometrically perfect specimens for the imperfection of their wayward cousin. The pitch pine may be less beautiful, but paradoxical as it may sound, it is certainly more artistic.

This hardy tree disdains every botanical rule of law and order in its growth; it has no regard for time, taking three or four years to ripen its fruit if circumstances are unfavorable to a swifter course; its branches

bristle with cones that should have fallen long ago; its limbs bend and twist and spread with poetic irregularity; yet withal its needles whistle most musically and exude most freely the clean odor of growing turpentine; it is the bohemian of conifers.

Most persistent of life the pitch pine will continue to grow if blown over and even when thrown ignominiously in the woodpile will send out tufts of stiff green needles while its severed trunk will try in vein to grow a fresh tree. All this is only the flickerings of a false hope for fate has decreed that no pitch pine once felled shall rise again.

So let the Christmas trees have their day, their pride goes before a fall and in a month they will be only ashes while the pitch pine, now scorned, will stand on the bleak hill top, at once rigid and spontaneous, independent and impulsive, an uncompromising Puritan, haughty though bedraggled.

- Reprinted with permission from the
Watertown Daily Times.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

The August 2015 issue of The Conservationist (pg.22), aside from some beautiful Michael Ringer prints, has an article that eloquently sums up the potential danger of the Southern Pine Beetle to the pitch pine.

Please click the link below for the article:

http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/o8r5consweb.pdf

Remember to like us on Facebook for realtime updates and events calendars. Look for "Minna Anthony Common Nature Center - Friends."



Cecilia MacLore

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Fall is one of my favorite seasons to hike as I like to look for signs of plants and animals making preparations for the cold winter months. Migrating birds pass through our forests on their journeys to winter feeding or nesting grounds, the monarchs leave for Mexico, and our booming squirrel population takes advantage of another year's mast crop of acorns by feverously gathering nuts to keep them fed through the winter. Even our resident chipmunk Scrappers gathers a cash of nuts in her enclosure. She is in fact, still holding a grudge against Russ for the extra work he caused her by cleaning the cash out the boxes in her tunnel system. We are convinced she is going to spend the winter in the lower portion of her enclosure out of spite.

With the help of the many generous donors who contributed to our butterfly campaign throughout the spring and summer, we raised \$15,000 to rehabilitate our butterfly house. We have purchased new signs made by the Coughlin Printing Group and Geordie Magee Jr. of Magee Canvas, LLC finished making our new net just a few weeks ago. We encourage you to come by next summer to see our butterfly house. Hopefully improvements to the netting design will help us extend the lifetime of the material even longer than the 17 years we were able to utilize our original net. We greatly appreciate the support of everyone who contributed to our butterfly house campaign! Thank you!



Our annual Autumn Festival was well attended with 1,283 people passing through the admissions tent. We had 87 volunteers, even more than last year, who helped ensure the day was a success. A number of new vendors attended, adding a total of 86 people to our overall attendance count. We were able to make over

\$5,000 from the Festival which will be used to support environmental education programs at the Nature Center. Pictured to the left are Meyer, Christian, Connor, Caleb, and Kolbe Dillenback who were about to head up to the games field.



We started two new annual traditions this fall: *Luminaries along North Field Loop* right before Halloween and our *Hike for Hunger* in November. We were very excited by the success of both events as they were well received by everyone in attendance. We were able to donate over 100 non-perishable items and \$30 to our local food pantries and by partnering with Ponderosa of Watertown, all the food collected at that restaurant will only multiply our total donations. We are still collecting food at the Nature Center and Ponderosa so please consider stopping by at your convenience to make a donation. We also welcome the new members and volunteers who joined our Friends group as result of these programs.



We are happy to announce we have new snowshoes to rent this winter. With luck, we will have enough snow pack to warrant using them. There will be plenty of fun programs that take advantage of the winter weather including our moonlight snowshoe hikes. We hope you are able to come and sit by the fireplace for a while to soak in all the wonders the winter season has to offer.

- Molly Farrell, Environmental Educator II

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER



2 year old Susie Schwalm, having a hoot with Gismo, a spectacle owl from Rick West's Birds of Prey.



Charles Rickard, Grandson of Wellesley Island Resident Velda Schlyer, takes a break from the festivities to show off his fiddling... much to the delight of onlookers.

37TH ANNUAL AUTUMN FESTIVAL

The weather cooperated for a wonderful, fun-filled day of family fun! Throughout the day, we had great crafters who displayed amazing works of quality art. Delicious food was available during the day provided by the Redwood Rescue Squad and the Redwood United Methodist Church. We were fortunate to have a great variety of non-profit organizations come with fun activities to enjoy.

Creating scarecrows in the Scarecrow Gallery is always a HUGE draw. It is truly a delight to watch families work together to make lots of creative scarecrows. The cider press was nearby so everyone could have an opportunity to make fresh apple cider. Five different games were available for kids to enjoy and painting a pumpkin is such a fun and messy activity. Music was played throughout the day... hammered dulcimer and guitar duo, folk singers, and the 10th Mountain Division Brass Quintet.

A special event this year was the appearance of the sled mushing dogs. Everyone was fascinated to hear about the dogs and the gear needed and to see them involved in some activities. Rick West's Birds of Prey is an ever popular area. The NYS Zoo had a great hands-on with animals that they had brought. The 37th Autumn Festival was indeed a most successful fundraiser for the Nature Center's year-round programs and a day thoroughly enjoyed by over 2000 visitors! We hope to see you next year!

- Lynn Morgan, Volunteer and Board Member



Elliot Russel and Larry Yehle, from the Wellesley Island Fire Department, passing out balloons and creating awareness about the new fire station fundraising drive.

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS AUTUMN FESTIVAL SUPPORTERS!

Thank You to the Following
Sponsors and Donors For Helping to Make
Our 37th Autumn Festival a Success!

*Citizens Bank of Cape Vincent,
DAK Design & Constructing (Wellesley Is.), F.X.
Caprara (Pulaski), Wellesley Is. Building Supply*

Alex Bay Businesses: *Gouverneur Savings & Loan,
Horizon Marina/TI Club, Premier Building Associ-
ates, Watertown Savings Bank, ABay International,
ABay Thrift, Big M, Cranberry Boggs, Jreck Subs,
North Country Seed-n-Feed, Price Chopper, Treas-
ure Island, Uncle Sam's Boat Tours*

Carthage Businesses: *Slack Chemical,
Gambles Distributors*

Clayton Businesses: *Clayton Distillery, River Rat
Cheese, Shurfine, St. Lawrence Pottery, Wheeler
Creek Pumpkin Patch*

Redwood Businesses: *Heath Photography,
Rt 37 Building Supply*

Bill's Feed Service (Great Bend), LaFargeville Agway

Watertown Businesses: *Purcell Constructing Corp.,
Professional Practice Management, Security Supply,
Walter H. Bisnett, Inc., Cheney-Tire, Comfort Inn,
Great American, Holiday Inn, Impossible Dream,
Kohls Cares Program, Mustard Seed, Ponderosa,
Ramada Inn, Sam's Club, Target,
Walldroff Farm Equipment*

Individual Raffle Basket Donations:

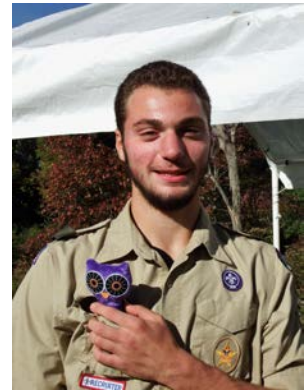
*Bradley's Surplus, Bess Carl, Clarissa Chester, Kathy Elliott,
Kathy Fenn, Kathy Hanna, Jan Joyce, Kathy & Joe Leskoske,
Michele McKinney, Sarah & Chase Miller, Gale Suhawatsky,
Margaret Taylor*

Raffle Basket Donations From Vendors:

*Bambi Cole, Cindy Tripp, Dave McMahon, Dragonfly
Pottery, Earl Murphy, Jolynn Fiorentino,
Liv Yum (Liz Price-Kellogg & Kristen Taylor),
Manos Maple Farm, Queen Thumb Creations
(Valerie Whitcomb), Ron McGregor, Roxann Ojeda,
Spider Rybaak, Luvin' Spoonful (Steve & Laurie
Jameson), Two Winey Sisters of Syracuse (Patricia
Henson)*

Roadside Signs:

*Clipper Inn, Gouverneur Savings and Loan,
1000 Island Bait Shop*



Critter kids- Perfect Porcupines

Porcupines are big, clumsy rodents that are often found high up in trees.



They often look like a big clump of leaves stuck high in the branches.



Porcupines eat plants (they are herbivores). They climb to the top of trees to eat the tender tissue beneath the bark.

Quills help camouflage a porcupine, allowing them to blend in with their surroundings.

Pictured above are the quills on a porcupine's back. Quills look a little like tall blades of grass from a distance.



Porcupine quills are also used for protection.

Each quill has a **barb** that looks like the end of a fish hook.

Did you know if you look closely at the branches a porcupine was chewing you can see teeth marks?



Quills are released if contact is made with a porcupine during an attack. The **barbs** make it very **difficult** to remove the imbedded quills.

There are **30,000 quills** on an adult porcupine making them a great defense against predators!



Porcupine Tracks

When a porcupine needs to find to a new tree to feed on it climbs down one tree and up the next, leaving tacks in the snow.

When porcupines are on the ground they shuffle and waddle along, creating funny looking tracks.

Sometimes the track will show the trail dragging on the snow.

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

FINDING A HOME FOR THE WINTER

Caves and rock crevices are a source of warmth in the winter months. The snow acts as an insulator, like a blanket, keeping the ground warmer than the surrounding air



Inside a den are crumpled leaves and grass. These make a comfortable bed and also help keep the porcupine snugly warm.

When not in trees, porcupines prefer the protection of a den. Dens can be found in rock crevices, caves, and hollow logs.



Can you find a Den?

See if you can survive the winter! Gather everything on the list of materials below and follow the directions.



- Materials:**
1. One package of Jell-O
 2. A small container with a lid. (about the size of a film canister)
 3. Temperatures of 41°F or less

Step 4: Check back after 5 minutes. If it is still liquid your animal survived the winter!

Step 1: Build a shelter for an animal to hibernate in for the winter. Look above for tips on making a warm den.

Step 5: If it turned into solid Jell-O, your animal did not make it but you still have a tasty snack!

Step 2: Mix the Jell-O with hot water and pour into the small container until it is halfway full.

Step 3: Place the container in your shelter and leave it there for at least 5 minutes.

May I have some?

Yum!



Written by: Kimbrie Cullen

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

A LIFE OF VOLUNTEERING

WINTER - A season of natural beauty, wonderment, and many activities planned at our Nature Center.

As the Fall season with it's beautiful foliage comes to a close, a new season starts inviting all to join in the adventure of the Winter season. Sunny winter days on the ski trails are welcomed by all levels and ages of skiers. The red cheeks and noses that result are quickly erased by a warming at the Nature Center's fireplace. Don't forget to join us.

Joe and I both were very fortunate to grow up in volunteer families. Our choice was nature and the outdoors. While living at Robert Moses State Park during the 1960's we helped children, teens, and adults learn to downhill ski at the park's slope. We could see the joy on their faces as we both shared in their "Watch Me" progress on the slopes.

As leaders of the Championship Racquetters 4-H Club, with their club room located in the park, members made lasting friendships, completed their 4-H programs and projects, winning numerous awards at the county, state, and national levels.

While living at Whetstone Gulf State Park in the early 1970's the Friday night Scavenger Hunts were welcomed by both campers and their children. As their parents set up camp, the young campers made new friends while getting to know the park searching for the many treasures waiting to be found.

A relocation for Joe to the Thousand Islands Regional Headquarters at Keewaydin State Park in 1973 and the development of the Nature Center at Wellesley Island State Park provided numerous additional volunteer outdoor opportunities for us. We cross country skied and helped with many ski events and races. Joe having raced and as a volunteer for the National Ski Patrol, both downhill and cross country, would start the racer and also call out their finish time. I had the numbers job - recording the skier's information, handing out their numbered bib, and finalizing the race results.

As experienced backpackers, it was natural to volunteer to assist the Director and Staff with trail maintenance at the Nature Center as needed. As members of the Adirondack Mountain Club we also volunteered for their Wilderness Work Week Program for many years. We paid a participation fee to get very dirty---but these physically challenging projects were always rewarding at their competition.

These are only a few of our volunteer activities we participated in over the years.

PARKS AND VOLUNTEERING ---- A WONDERFUL LIFE !!

You also can make lasting family memories by taking advantage of the many volunteer opportunities that await you at our M. A. C. Nature Center.

by:- *Caroline Batterson*

Volunteer

Joe Batterson

Volunteer

[Deceased - 1932 - 2010]

This letter on volunteering was recently sent to us from Caroline Batterson, a treasured member and volunteer. Please let us know if you are also interested in volunteering at the Nature Center. Thank you Caroline!

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER



Joe Batterson stagger-starts a cross-country ski race at the Nature Center in 1980. Caroline is in the background with the white hat passing out race bibs.

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS JOINED OR RENEWED THEIR COMMITMENT RECENTLY:

Brian and Kate Breheny	Clayton, NY
Don and Sheila Smith	Wellesley Island, NY
Kathy Sommer	Redwood, NY
Windsor and Kay Price	Wellesley Island, NY
Mary Popovich	Skaneateles, NY
Mark Walczyk	Watertown, NY
Leigh Gongaware and Nick Armstrong	Watertown, NY
Sally Johnson	Buffalo, NY
Norm and Laurie Itjen	Elba, NY
Robert and Jane Keenan	Hinsdale, NY
Erik Daly and Family	Manlius, NY
Laura and Larry Yehle	Thousand Island Park, NY
Bonnie Gray	Alexandria Bay, NY

We could not provide the quality programming or educational resources without support from our generous members...

Thank you for your critical support!

The Board of Directors for The Friends of the Nature Center, Inc.

Kerry Roberge

President

Barbara Butts

Vice President

Jonathan White

Treasurer

Jane Arras

Secretary

Nancy Boynton

Sue Johnson

Chase Miller

Lynn Morgan

Joseph Leskoske

Michele Walton

Heather White

Matthew Elliott

Barb Eldridge

Park Employees

Steve Cline

Park Manager

Marvin Mattingly

Assist. Park Manager

Molly Farrell

Nature Center Director

Kimbrie Cullen

Program Coordinator

Friends of the Nature Center Employees

Darlene Sourwine

Volunteer Coordinator

Patty Davis

Bookkeeper

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

WINTER PROGRAMS 2015

315-482-2479

Audubon Christmas Bird Count

December 18

Birders of all skill level are welcome to participate in the annual count of all birds observed in 1000

Islands Region. Volunteers are divided into different sections region to record every bird they see or hear during the day. Beginner birders will be paired up with experienced birders.

Participating in the Christmas Bird Count is a great way to begin learning your birds as there are fewer species around in the winter than the spring. Since the Christmas Count is held throughout North America, it provides valuable data concerning species numbers and diversity and insight into potential winter range shifts. The 1000 Islands Christmas Bird Count extends from just west of Mallorytown, Ontario to just east of Gananoque and from north of Lansdowne into the US Mainland. **Contact Josh Van Vieren at Tel: (613) 923-5261 ext 113 or via email (josh.vieran@pc.gc.ca) for additional information.**

First Day Hike

Friday, January 1st, 1pm

Start the New Year off right with a guided hike at the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center.

Look for tracks and learn about how wildlife adapts to winter conditions while we walk. After the hike we will roast marshmallows in our fireplace and drink hot chocolate. If weather permits, this hike will be offered on snowshoes.

You may bring your own or borrow a pair from the Center. We will hike for no more than 2 miles over easy terrain.

Preregistration is required (315-482-2479).

Guided Winter Weekend Walking Explorations

Saturday, January 16, January 30th, and February 27th 1pm

The winter months provide some of the best opportunities for viewing wildlife along our trails. Come brave the cold and the wind on a Saturday in January or February and learn about animal tracks, plant and animal adaptations to winter, winter tree identification, and more. This program will be offered on snowshoes when weather permits.

Snowshoe rentals are available for \$3.

Trail Tales

Saturday, January 30th, 10am

Perfect for pre-school aged children (3-5 years old), accompanied by an adult. A naturalist will first read two stories to the children and then lead the group in an activity (a hike or craft, weather dependent) themed to match the stories.

Guided Moonlight Snowshoe Hike

Saturday, January 23rd and March 26th, 7pm

Explore our winter woods by the light of the full moon! Look and listen for signs of wildlife as we walk, along our trails guided by moonlight. If weather permits, this program will be offered on snowshoes. Registration is required. Please call the Nature Center at 315-482-2479 for additional information or to preregister. If you would feel more comfortable, you may bring a flashlight, but we encourage you to try walking by moonlight alone. Snowshoes may be rented from the Nature Center for \$3.

Super Science Saturday at Jefferson Community College

February 6, 10am-3pm

Come join the Nature Center and other local organizations for a day of family friendly fun at Jefferson Community College! We will have crafts, animal artifacts, and other fun activities!

Try Your Hand at Snowshoeing During Our Free Snowshoe Day!

Saturday, February 13th

Snowshoe lesson to begin at 1pm

Whether you are an expert or novice, this is the day to take advantage of our snowshoe rentals at no cost.

3rd Annual March Pack Basket Class

Saturday, March 19th, 9am

Learn to weave a traditional pack basket from start to finish. The cost of the programs includes all materials. Each participant will leave with a completed basket. Participants are encouraged to bring a bag lunch. Preregistration is required by calling the Nature Center at 315-482-2479.

Register early as the class fills quickly

\$65 for members, \$75 for non-members

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS!

Members of the Friends of the Nature Center provide the critical means and resources necessary to support the cherished education and preservation found here. Most of our members rejoin annually and for that we are continually grateful. Please remember, as a sign of our appreciation, we have increased the benefits for members this year!

Birch - \$25 Quarterly newsletter, 10% discount at our gift shop, discounts on some program fees, and a Minna Anthony Common T-Shirt (redeemable at the Nature Center).

Maple - \$75 Quarterly newsletter, 10% discount at our gift shop, discounts on some program fees, and a Minna Anthony Common T-Shirt (redeemable at the Nature Center).

Oak - \$150 Maple level benefits and a 2016 *Empire State Pass* that grants unlimited day-use vehicle entry to ANY New York State Park until March 2017.

Hickory - \$250 Maple level benefits and a 2016 *Empire State Pass* that grants unlimited day-use vehicle entry to ANY New York State Park until March 2017.

Please call or visit our website for more details - <http://macnaturecenter.webs.com/>

MISSION STATEMENT

The Friends of the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center support environmental education programming that fosters conservation of

local ecosystems, encourages outdoor recreation, and inspires our visitors to develop an increased respect for the natural world.

MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

Thank you supporting the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center by becoming a member of our Friends organization or by making a donation. We hope to see you soon!

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State/Prov: _____

Zip/Code: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

☐ I would prefer to receive our newsletter via email.

☐ I would be interested in volunteering at the Nature Center.

Alternate mailing address? _____

Yes, I want to help.....

This is a:

☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal

☐ Donation

General Donation amount: _____

Membership Level:

☐ Birch (\$25)

☐ Maple (\$75)

☐ Oak (\$150)

☐ Hickory (\$250)

Please make checks payable to "Friends of the Nature Center". We cannot accept credit cards at this time.

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

Program Spotlight

Junior Naturalist Program

This summer visit the Nature Center and become a Junior Naturalist. This three part series is full of fun activities to do outside. Complete all three packets and receive a Junior Naturalist patch. This program is recommended for ages 7 and up. The program is free, but there is a suggested donation of \$4.00 to cover the cost of the patch.

Natural Birthday Parties at the Nature Center

Make this a birthday special for your child with a Natural Birthday Party at the Nature Center. Children ages 5 to 12 can choose from seasonally appropriate themes such as Turtles, Exploring Ponds,

Trees, Beavers and more. Call the Nature Center for more information or to schedule a party. Members \$45; Nonmembers \$60.

Holiday Bonanza

Saturday, December 12th
10am-3:30pm

Come celebrate the holidays at the Nature Center! Crafts for kids, light refreshments, local vendors, and make a natural gland for your tree. Holiday Raffle will be drawn! Multiple local musicians will play, including Katie Taylor's a cappella group "For Heaven's Sake."

There is no fee, but donations are greatly appreciated!

**MY
NATURE
CENTER**

Goal: \$300,000

Raised: \$5,975

The Interior Improvement and Educational Display Campaign is Under Way...

Please Help!

Friends of the Nature Center, Inc.
Minna Anthony Common Nature Center
Wellesley Island State Park
44927 Cross Island Road
Fineview, NY 13640

Hours of Operation:
Museum 8am-4pm
Trails open sunrise to sunset



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**