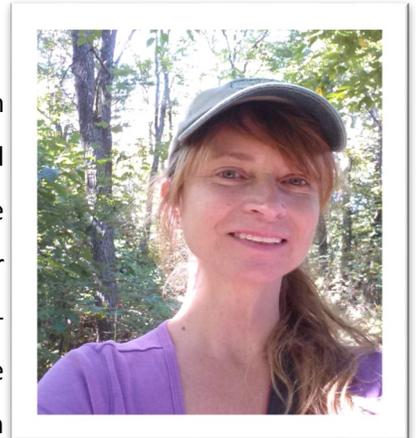




June 2018

## ***From the Directors Pen by Sue Miller***

This is my first directors pen article for The Valley. I would like to thank Jaclyn for this honor and the opportunity to address the readers with a bit of knowledge and insight. These past two years DCVA has grown and has become more active in the communities in the watershed. As some may know DCVA is part of the Delaware River Watershed Initiative (DRWI). The DRWI is a cross-cutting collaboration of 50 organizations working to bringing people together to ensure swimmable, fishable, drinkable water for years to come. The William Penn Foundation announced DRWI Phase II on April 4<sup>th</sup>. Phase II, and will have a more substantial impact for focus areas. For more information about this program and DCVA role in the partnership go to: <https://4states1source.org/about/>.



DCVA also kicked off the Community Environmental Education Series to educate the public about environmental issues and give them the knowledge and tools needed to solve these problems in their own community. DCVA is partnering with Pennsylvania Environmental Council and Penn State Extension to participate in presentations and promote the series. The Community Environmental Education Series is a mobile event and will take place in numerous community gathering places including but not limited to Haverford Community Recreation and Environmental Center and John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education Center. Most events in the series will be held at libraries or community centers throughout Delaware County. The events will take place at least quarterly every year on different topics. The overall objective is to foster community advocates that will receive information about environmental issues and to give them the tools to use within their own community.

DCVA is also moving upstream, to help stop the issues downstream. The plan is to start a “Green Team Volunteer Program” which will be an elite team of volunteers within each municipality. The teams will work alongside the municipalities, EAC and other community members to restore Darby Creek and tributaries. We are looking for team leader volunteers to help lead and guide within their own communities. DCVA is moving up and growing and our impact to restore Darby Creek watershed is growing. If you are interested in having the Community Environmental Series in your local community and or would like to help coordinate the dates and locations, or to help develop the Green Team in your community , email me at [director@dcva.org](mailto:director@dcva.org) or [suedcva@gmail.com](mailto:suedcva@gmail.com).

## Frederick P. B. Thornton

1929-2018

Frederick Perry Boynton (Fritz) Thornton Sr., formerly of Villanova, died peacefully in hospice care on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at the age of 89. He is survived by his wife Olga M. (née Dickinson) Welsh Thornton, a sister, 4 children, eight grandchildren, five great grandchildren, many nieces and nephews, many friends, and a legacy of care for the environment and the Darby Creek Valley. He was born February 5, 1929 in Philadelphia and graduated from the Haverford School in 1947. Despite being stricken with polio as a youth, he became known for his athletic prowess in football, baseball, track and field, and racquet sports, and was inducted into Haverford's Athletic Hall of Fame in 2004. He earned his bachelor's degree in government from Cornell University in 1951, serving as president of his Chi Psi fraternity. During the Korean War, Fritz served as an Air Force Lieutenant and was stationed in North Africa. After discharge he returned to Philadelphia and joined the family automobile business, Thornton-Fuller Co., established by his grandfather, Samuel Stokes Thornton, in 1906 and expanded by his father George Hilyard Thornton. He moved the company from Philadelphia to Wayne, PA, where his Oldsmobile dealership was a fixture on Lancaster Avenue for many years. Fritz later sold cars for Van Wyk Oldsmobile in Media, PA before retiring. He served in many civic and business associations, including the Rotary Club of Wayne, and also supported local environmental organizations. He became especially committed to the Darby Creek Valley Association, for which he

served as President and volunteered many hours of his clean-up and watershed management skills across the 77 square miles and 31 municipalities that this vital creek traverses in Delaware County. He once described the Darby Creek Valley Association (DCVA) as a dedicated group of individuals who through persistence, passion, and hard work have transformed themselves into a dedicated group of individuals. Fritz was an excellent cat herder —always steady, helpful, and kind. His legacy can be heard, to borrow a phrase from Christopher Morley, in the murmurings of the "laughing little river that preaches sermons unawares".

Good Journey, my friend, and thank you.

### To Fritz

You are gone from our midst  
Our bluff gruff loving friend  
It's another beginning and not nearly the end  
The cats that you herded  
The things you inspired  
The DCVA nurtured  
You and Olga umpired  
To keep us together on our own separate paths  
With a love for the watershed  
Nature and laughs  
We think of you now and we look at your tally  
In the flow and the beauty  
Of the Darby Creek Valley

**Thank you to John Haigis for this  
wonderful essay and poem for Fritz.**

# An Appreciation of Fritz Thornton

By Thomas Roy Smith

Fritz lived out his life self-disciplined. An early stint in the armed service fastened in him a self-confidence. Atop, he embodied a wish to please. President of DCVA, he strove to please. A view of his place in DCVA history - proves out Fritz delivered. As an automobile seller Fritz Thornton appreciated promotion. Yes, the leader led same, singularly, differently, he worked to promote DCVA public awareness. Months into his tenure Fritz was notified that the Delaware County Council wanted to afford the Darby Creek Valley Association with a Proclamation, saluting the organization's efforts to improve the watershed. The Proclamation, in a sense, it ranked as a benchmark event in DCVA history. It can be remembered as such. Public recognition was achieved. I recall how proud Fritz was on Proclamation Day. I witnessed. He accepted and spoke a truism. He acknowledged the years of efforts put forward. Heartfelt, from one and all, "A thank you Fritz." And thank you readers - for listening.

**Stream-Watch a Huge Success!**  
By Alan Samel

The annual DCVA Stream Watch was be May 5<sup>th</sup>. We had to push this back from our typical April collection date BECAUSE OF SNOW! Over the years we have experienced glorious and, uhm, less than glorious days. But, what a crazy, whacky winter we had in 2018. It's hard to believe that we have been doing this for 15 years! This is a tribute to the legions of volunteers that have helped in the past and continue to help. This year we had beautiful day to get in the stream! The temperature was in the 60s the entire day and it was partly cloudy. It was bright enough for a little spring temps and not too sunny to make it hard to see what was in the stream. No snow!



This is always a great opportunity for us to get in the creek, take samples, work with the samplers, and see what is living in Darby Creek. On this day, we took samples from five locations on Darby Creek: Bartram Park in Darby, Darby Creek Road in Havertown (downstream from the Haverford Reserve), Skunk Hollow in Radnor, the Brandywine Preserve at Waterloo Mills in Easttown, and the Swedish Cabin in Upper Darby. What a great way to meet others and learn more about Darby Creek!! The insects and bugs we collect will provide a snapshot of the health of Darby Creek. We have been doing this for 15 years! From this long-term sampling, a trend of the stream health at each site has been determined. Each year we gather data and compare our water quality findings from previous years. It's a way of getting the big picture from a

From left to right: Harriet Henry, Lauren McGrath, Derron LaBrake, and Charlie Coulter  
Photo by Alan Samel

Continued on next page.....

Continued from previous page... lot of very small bugs! But getting into the stream and collecting the bugs is only part of the stream watch program. The next step will be to identify the bugs pulled from the stream. We then can identify the level of water quality for that section of the creek. The Insect Identification Workshop will be scheduled for this coming fall. Please check the DCVA web-site for more information as we get closer to this time.



From left to right:  
Austin Hepburn, Rocco Mastricono, Der-ron LaBrake, Alan Samel, Harriet Henry, Charles Coulter and Chris Coulter  
Photo provided by Alan Samel

## The Role of Vegetation in Stormwater Management

Compiled by Carl DuPoldt

Human activities can negatively impact hydrologic and chemical cycles, pollute air and water, degrade soil, and reduce biodiversity. Failure to maintain basic ecosystem functions places humans at risk because of our dependence on these functions. As human populations and resource consumption increase, it becomes even more important to preserve basic ecosystem functions. Sustainability is the principle and practice of creating and maintaining the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations. Green infrastructure is one tool or approach to creating sustainable urban environments. While stormwater professionals have a good understanding of the role that vegetation plays, the public should be aware as well. A healthy stream has a broad “riparian buffer”- zone of bushes, plants, and trees that line the stream banks. Ideally, the riparian buffer should be native plants. Some plant functions include:

- Minimizing erosion by stabilizing the banks with roots
- Minimizing erosion by absorbing storm energy with their foliage
- Minimizing erosion by taking up storm water
- Regulating water temperature by shading streams
- Capturing debris and pollution before they can enter a stream
- Beautifying the area around streams
- Providing vital food and habitat for stream invertebrates (e.g. insects, crayfish, and snails) through the leaves that they drop into the streams

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**References to which the reader can go for further information:**

The Role of Landscapes in Stormwater Management – Applied:

[www.appliedeco.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/RoleofLandscapes.pdf](http://www.appliedeco.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/RoleofLandscapes.pdf)

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Preserving Native Vegetation to Reduce Stormwater Impacts:

[www.greenbeltconsulting.com/articles/preservingnative.html](http://www.greenbeltconsulting.com/articles/preservingnative.html)

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## **Gayle Lawrence- An Appreciation via an Old Picture**

### **By Tom Roy Smith**

Recently I pulled out an old DCVA picture taken of the first president of the organization- Gayle Lawrence. The photo shows a room full of DCVA members with Gayle conducting the meeting. Pictures are snap-start-time-transporters. Today I share my picture inspired memories, in a reflective appreciation of the first DCVA president.

Gayle looked the patrician. Deftly animated, his style of conducting a meeting was engaging, always words uplifting. He used vocabulary as a means to both convey and paint. To use a sample word, he spoke “voluminous” inspiration. Above all, he knew how to get business done. HE knew how to infuse color. In reflection, Gayle inspired the late Bob Dougherty to frequently speak of Darby Creek as a “ribbon of green.” One more recall of Gayle- starting at the first DCVA meeting, Gayle liked to give out verbal applause to a member who proposed a great idea. Gayle would bellow: “Hear! Hear!” Soon members responded in kind.



Gayle Lawrence (standing at left) leading a meeting of the Darby Creek Valley Association at the “Yellow House” on the Scott Estate in Darby, Pennsylvania in the early years of the organization. *Photo provided by Thomas Roy Smith*

*Continued from previous page...* Back to the old picture... It was snapped from the rear of the room. Early and long meetings were held in an old building called "Yellow House." Since razed, it stood on the old Little Flower Manor tract. Sturdy building, it stood at the south end below the former Scott mansion. It was obviously quite old, but interior hints as to its history were obliterated by sheet rock. In cold weather the place was yes- cold indeed. Because DCVA did not need to scramble for a place to meet each meeting, the organization gained strength from stability. Yellow House deserves to be called a stalwart DCVA member for that important contribution. Long free use users, DCVA members were grateful to Catholic Sisters who owned the whole property. The sisters used the adjacent mansion as a residence for senior citizens. As described in an article by John Haigis in this issue of *The Valley*, the property was purchased by the county in 2016 with the help of Natural Lands Trust and will become a park. My old picture must have squirreled-away cousins among the treasure troves of other older members. It is high time to dig them out- for preservation sake, for their time transported value. Are you among the members who might have some old DCVA photos?

Thank you for listening. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Darby and the Liberty Bell**

**By John Haigis**

**First published on [www. DarbyHistory.com](http://www.DarbyHistory.com)**

It may seem somewhat strange to realize, but if not for Darby, we may never have had a Liberty Bell (originally called the State House Bell. People didn't start to call it the "Liberty Bell" until the 1830's when it became a symbol of the anti-slavery movement). While Darby was not the only reason for the Bell, it certainly played a part. Listen and I'll explain. Of course everyone knows about the Liberty Bell and the inscription "Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land" and everybody knows that the Bell is cracked. No. That's not the connection. We had nothing to do with its cracking. Anyway, the inscription on the Bell is from a book of the Bible called Leviticus, Chapter 25 Verse 10, and when you read the whole verse, it becomes very interesting. The whole verse says:

*"And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you: and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family" Lev. 25:10*

So what was this 50th year stuff? Well fifty years before the Bell was ordered for the Pennsylvania State House (later called Independence Hall), William Penn signed something in 1701 called the Charter of Privileges. This was just before Penn went back to England for the second and final time, and the colonists in Penn's holy experiment wanted some written guarantee of their rights, and one of those colonists was John Blunston who lived in.....Right, Darby. Not only did he live in Darby but was one of the first settlers of Darby and owned a big chunk of it. As a matter of fact it was Blunston who gave the land which the Quakers used for their burial ground and for their first meeting house. You can still see the burial ground on the hill at 12th and Main in Darby and Blunston himself is buried there somewhere. I'll talk about that later.

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So what's the big deal about a Charter? Aren't our rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, freedom of speech and all that? Not at that time. In 1701 the Province of Pennsylvania was owned by the Penn family and they made all the rules; after all, King Charles the Second had given the land to Penn in honor of Penn's father, Admiral Penn and insisted it be named Pennsylvania in honor of the Father. Now Penn did have something called a "Frame of Government" which set out the way things would be done, but many of the colonists didn't trust the Penn family and were afraid that the rules would be changed. One of these people was David Lloyd, who didn't like the Penn family at all at all and thought the seat of Government should be in Chester where it started and (in his opinion) belonged. So you had a group of people around Lloyd who wanted to stick it to the Proprietary Party and the Penn Family in any way they could, and you had Penn who didn't want to give up his power, and in the middle you had ..Ta da... John Blunston, who served as mediator and deal maker. He had been a trusted friend of Penn from the beginning (and was likely with Penn at the famous treaty at Shackamaxon,) and was able to talk with both sides to get the thing signed. The Charter

Of Privileges was an important model of representative government and religious toleration later on when the Constitution was drafted and Darby played a part., so, when Isaac Norris was looking for an inscription for the State House Bell, honoring the Charter of Privileges seemed appropriate and the verse from Leviticus seemed to fit,, and the rest, as they say, is history. There is some speculation that Norris was also making a plea against slavery and against the land grabs causing friction with the Indians but that is another story.

I said I would talk about the Burial Ground, so here it is. At various times, Quakers did not agree with the practice of putting up headstones on graves, believing that it was a sign of worldly vanity, so we don't know exactly where John Blunston was buried when he died in 1723. Nevertheless, when you pass the burial ground at 12th and Main, and think about the American liberties we enjoy, you may want to whisper a small "thank you" to John Blunston at rest on the hill. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Woodburne on the Heights of Darby - Uncommon Common Ground**

**By John Haigis**

One of the newest jewels in the Delaware County Crown of Parks is the property known at various times as the Heights of Darby, Woodburne, Woodbourne, The Scott Estate, Little Flower, and Villa St Theresa. The land on which the mansion stands was originally the Bartram family farm which ran all the way to the Darby Creek (see 1687 map). The Bartram family farm (purchased in 1682 by the grandfather of famed botanist John Bartram) became Eden Cemetery in 1902. There are also indications that the [Great Minquas Path](#), a fur trading route between the Susquahannock region and the Dutch fur trading posts along the Schuylkill, passed through the property before the arrival of William Penn. It is said there were encampments on the "Heights of Darby" during the British occupation of Philadelphia (1777-1778).

Before the Civil War, the property was owned by [George McHenry](#), President of the Philadelphia Board of Trade, and a Southern sympathizer who went to England and arranged for shipments to go through the Union blockade. There was a house on the property described as a Brick mansion house or country seat, 25 by 50 feet, three stories high, with an observatory at one corner, four stories high, with brick wing on the southeast side and another wing on the northwest side with other brick and frame buildings on the property... all divided into convenient rooms and finished in the latest and most improved style, being furnished with two bath rooms, the latest style of gas fixtures, with both hot and cold water in all the rooms where it is necessary, the whole being heated from furnaces in the cellar and well ventilated. Under the wash room is a good well from which the water is forced by a horse power pump to supply the house. The wash room is supplied with a boiler and four permanent tubs, into which either hot or cold water can be introduced, and the main building is all cellared under. There is also a frame lodge house at the entrance gate, (on Providence Road?). The description also speaks of frame building attached to the east end of a brick building, two stories high, the lower story being used as a wash room and the upper for a billiard room. In April of 1862 The land was sold at Sheriff's sale and the property came under the ownership of Thomas A. Scott who served in Abraham Lincoln's Cabinet as Assistant Secretary of War for Transportation and later as President of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Thomas Scott's son, Edgar Scott, Senior commissioned noted architect [Horace Trumbauer](#) to build the present mansion between 1906 and 1907 and there is a possibility that famed African-American Architect [Julian Abele](#), who is buried across Springfield Road at Eden Cemetery, may have participated in some of the drawings

Both Edgar Scott Senior and Edgar Scott Junior served with the [Norton-Harjes American Volunteer Motorized Ambulance Service](#) during the First World War. Edgar Scott Senior died in France on October 20, 1918, 22 days before the Armistice. Edgar Scott Junior served as a volunteer ambulance driver in 1916 before America's official entry into the war and later married Helen Hope Montgomery who was the inspiration for Tracy Lord in the play (and later the movie) "[The Philadelphia Story](#)." The property was purchased by the Sisters of the Divine Redeemer in the 1930's and used the building as an orphanage and later as a nursing home which closed in 2005. It is believed the postcard below dates to the time the property was used as an orphanage. The Darby Creek Valley Association held it's meetings on the property in the "Yellow House." In 2016, being the largest parcel of open space in Eastern Delaware County, with the help of the Natural Lands Trust, State Representative Nick Micozzi, and others, the property was purchased by Delaware County in 2016 for a park which is currently being called Little Flower Park. The house was horribly damaged by vandals and scrappers before the County purchase and efforts are underway to stabilize the structure and formulate a plan for an adaptive reuse. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Acknowledgements**

My thanks to Sheila Jones, Harry Murray, and Jan Haigis for their help with the research for this article.

# Earl Wilson

## Ribbon of Green Awardee 2018

By Jeanette Guess

Earl Wilson has roots in South Carolina, but he has made Eastwick his home for over forty years. He is a retired Philadelphia Public School teacher who has taught hundreds of children science with great passion. The children affectionately referred to Earl as “Miiiiiiissssttter WWWiiiiiiIIIIssssson” and he would chuckle, but quickly return to the lesson plan. His passion for science and teaching has him committed to organizations such as Eastwick Action Committee, Eastwick Friends and Neighbors Coalition, Darby Creek Valley Association and the Eastwick Lower Darby Creek Area Community Advisory Group. Collectively with Eastwick Friends and Neighbors Coalition, Earl has received the Bread and Roses Award for his dedicated work in Eastwick as a community activist. He is also the proud recipient of the Eastwick Lower Darby Creek Area Community Advisory Group Leadership Award and just recently received the Darby Creek Valley Association Ribbon of Green Award for his lifelong dedication and commitment to over forty years of service to Eastwick and the surrounding communities. Nothing seems to slow Earl down as he continues to forge ahead with his journey of teaching and community service.



Earl Wilson is an activist for his community and for the environment in very many ways.

Above: Earl conducting an Eastwick public meeting in 2016

At Left: Earl at the 2014 People's Climate March

*Photos by Debbie Beer*

# DCVA President Jaclyn Rhoads Receives PennFuture Woman of the Delaware River Watershed Award for 2018

DCVA President Dr. Jaclyn Rhoads was one of two awardees for the PennFuture “Woman of the Delaware River Watershed” for 2018. Maya van Rossum, The Delaware River Keeper also received this award. The group of extremely accomplished women receiving awards at the PennFuture Celebrating Women in Conservation 2018 event included Katie McGinty, former Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the Honorable Donna Bullock, PA House of Representatives, Philadelphia County and Joanne Douglas, director of Bartram’s Garden High School River Internship and environmental educator at Glen Foerd on the Delaware, and a founding member of E.D.G.E ., Encouraging Development of a Green Economy. DCVA board members Ann Jackson, Toni McIntosh, and Kate Doms joined Jaclyn’s husband Billy and their friends in celebrating Jaclyn and other honorees at the Independence Seaport Museum on April 19, 2018.

Jaclyn was also recently honored as Green Economy Environmental Advocate of the Year by the National Association of Women Business Owners, South Jersey Chapter. In addition to being president of the Darby Creek Valley Association, Jaclyn is president of the Friends of the Heinz Refuge. She also teaches environmental policy at Drexel University. Dr. Rhoads received her B.S., M.S. and PhD degrees at Drexel University and she also earned a certificate in Nonprofit Administration from the University of Pennsylvania. Jaclyn lives in Norwood with her husband Bill and her two athletic young sons. Needless to say, we do not know how she does it and does it all so well! Congratulations to Jaclyn!



Jaclyn Rhoads (at right) with two of the other award-ees:

Honorable Donna Bullock, PA House of Representatives, Philadelphia County (left) and **Dulcie F. Flaharty**, former Vice President of Community Relations for Natural Lands Trust, and former executive director of Montgomery County Lands Trust (center)

## Enviro-DIY Meter Installed in Unnamed Tributary to Cobbs Creek By Derron L. LaBrake

The Stroud Water Research Center has generously installed one of their Enviro-DIY monitors on the McCall's Golf Course on November 27, 2017. It is a near real-time water monitoring station. It reports up to a website on 5-minute intervals the depth of the water, its temperature and its conductivity. The website, where you can view and download both recent and all of the data that has been collected is [http://drwisensors.dreamhosters.com/charts\\_main\\_SL137.php](http://drwisensors.dreamhosters.com/charts_main_SL137.php). The installation would not have been possible without the continued generosity of McCall's Golf Center's Joe Candelore, Director of Golf. Joe has been allowing DCVA to collect water quality samples, including both chemistry and macroinvertebrate samples in this stream since 2015. The stream is an unnamed tributary of Cobbs Creek. Stroud has installed many of the DIY meters throughout the region and there are volunteers who monitor and maintain the meters. The rest of the meters installed in 2017 can be viewed at <http://drwisensors.dreamhosters.com>, check back often in 2018 as Stroud installs more with funding provided by the William Penn Foundation.

During this winter, DCVA is collecting water samples and having them analyzed for chloride so that we can calibrate the conductivity measured by the DIY probe to chloride concentrations in the creek. Sometime during 2018 DCVA plans to install a time-lapse camera that will allow us to see how the creek responds to a variety of rainfall events (provided the rain falls during the day). A recent rainfall (2.08" that fell 13 hours) caused the water in this small creek to rise about 27" above its base flow.



Derron LaBrake and others installing the meter at the stream  
(below and the meter installed in the stream (at left)

*Photos provided by Derron LaBrake*



# Fishes from Topside

By Rich Horwitz

I've spent a lot of time catching fish (and more trying) and have had great days snorkeling and diving. I also recommend watching fish from streamside. In spring, you can watch fish displaying and courting in local streams like Darby and Cobbs Creek. A slowly moving, red blob is a school of tightly packed male Common Shiners, which develop bright rosy red colors on the body and fin edges. The female Common Shiners will usually be in a school downstream of the males. The females look olive-colored in the water, but silvery if brought out of the water. The Common Shiners often display just behind a Fallfish nest, a large mound of pebbles. You might see a male Fallfish, a 12-14 inch, trout-shaped minnow, making the nest, carrying pebbles one by one to construct its nest, which may contain several cubic feet of pebbles. Small, white dots wobbling near logs and rocks are the white fin edges of displaying male Satinfish or Spotfin Shiners.

The most commonly-seen fish is probably the Blacknose Dace, a small, olive-colored minnow, often with a black band along the side. It often occurs in shallow water at the edge of pools and in runs, where individuals can easily be seen. Several other species of minnows can also be seen, although identifying them from afar can be hard, unless you can count fin rays, numbers of scales and such things. White Suckers are easy to identify—they have long, round snouts and a broad head, so the body tapers from the head backward. The shape and the suckers' pale olive color with irregular speckles are distinctive. Large their backs out of the water. Adults move downstream, but juveniles and small adults (about 5 to 12 inches) can be seen in areas with quiet water. Sunfishes also occur in similar habitats. The sunfishes are deeper-bodied, shaped like a pumpkin seed (one is actually called the Pumpkinseed). Many sunfishes have the back of the gill cover extended into a flap, which is usually longest in adult males. Conveniently, the color of the flap helps identify the species: dark with small red spot at the rear edge (Pumpkinseed), dark bordered by white (Green Sunfish), dark and moderate to long (Redbreast Sunfish, which has, surprise, an orange to red breast), or all dark and short to moderately-long (Bluegill, which doesn't have a notably blue gill). These characters are less useful on small fish, and sunfish hybridize, but many individuals can be identified streamside.

However, you're unlikely to see one of the common species in the stream, the American Eel. The eel checks off three of our common phobias: it hides by day and comes out at night, it's snaky-shaped, and it's slimy. Hence, many find eels scary or disgusting, or both. For those who do, is it better that they're hard to see, or worse just knowing they're there (or just fine until I told you they're there)? Alternately, think of them as significant parts of stream ecosystems. Eels are the largest fish in local small streams and are the top aquatic predator, eating small fish, crayfish, and aquatic insects. Two-foot long eels are commonly found locally; the largest we've caught was over four feet long. The total weight of eels in a stream may be greater than the weight of all other fishes. Eels are important food fish in many places, although in the US, they're mainly eaten as unagi in sushi or as a course in the Feast of the Seven Fishes.

There is one situation you can watch eels, though it takes a little sangfroid. One of the four life stages of eels, the glass eel, migrates upstream into the lower reaches of local streams in early spring. If you care to wade into streams in the middle of the night on a rising tide, it's a micro-spectacle to see the translucent, 3-5 inch-long fish appear and disappear into and out of your beam of light. It's eerie and ghostly. Oops, another phobia. Just think how amazing they are.

# DARBY CREEK CLEAN UP BIGGEST IN 34 YEARS

By Roy Perry

On Saturday April 14<sup>th</sup>, hundreds of volunteers jumped into a creek. The 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Darby Creek-Cobbs Creek Watershed Cleanup was the biggest in the event's history, according to Darby Creek Valley Association Committee Chair David Bennett. "The annual cleanup, our 34th, has grown beyond our original geographic boundaries," said Bennett. "It's gratifying that so many more municipalities and local environment organizations and their leaders have joined up to help include our entire watershed."

Hard working volunteers turned out at most of the 38 designated cleanup sites throughout the Darby Creek/Cobbs Creek watershed, covering most of Delaware County, plus parts of Chester, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties. Remaining sites will be scheduled for clean up at a later date. Dozens of DelCo communities took part on April 14th, including Glenolden, Marple, Springfield, Drexel Hill, Colwyn, Radnor and Newtown to name only a few. The crew at Drexel Hill's Collenbrook Farm was led by Clyde Hunt, who reported, "We filled the Collenbrook dumpster with invasives and some trash, plus a 5 gallon bucket of recyclables we brought back home." Over in Glenolden it was a real team effort, headed up by James Labonski. Helping out were Borough Manager Brian Razzi, Katherine Marenic, Debbie Hadden, Susan Caso-Bolnick, Diana Anderjczak, Dawn Pennack and a group from Glenolden Presbyterian Church led by Debbie Hadden. A big thank-you to Matthew DeMarco & Chris Kane from Glenolden Wal-Mart for contributing water, soda and snacks.

Sue Miller, DCVA's Director, welcomed Marple Township to the Clean-Up this year. Rick Flounders of Broomall Rotary cleaned the creek where Route 3 meets Lawrence Road. Handling Wetstone on the Don Guanella property in Marple was Chuck Protesto. Chuck commented, "The best news was that as we were working, a driver stopped and he said that he worked at Home Depot and that Home Depot would like to help out next time. Then, as we were on Reed Road by M. Cohan Iron Shop, one of their managers offered us the use of one of their dumpsters. It's community help like that that is going to get this area cleaned up!"

*continued on next page...*



Young Volunteers at the 2018 Clean-up *Photo provided by Sue Miller*

In Springfield, DCVA salutes its volunteer team including Dave Damon, Jamie Anderson, and the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts for a job well done. Radnor’s cleanup was led by Lisa Borowski, who praised DCVA as well as the volunteers who gathered 20 bags of trash including tires, rusty tools and machine parts. “Our amazing volunteers collected fifteen large bags of trash along Darby Creek, including old tires, tools and machine parts. Everyone felt great taking care of our natural environment this way.” Borowski added, “Special thanks goes to Radnor Conservancy for partnering with DCVA on this big event.” The Drexel Hill area featured two clean up sites: Naylor Run in Drexel Garden Park, captained by long-time volunteer Ann Jackson, where 29 bags of trash (and 2 shopping carts) were removed from the creek, and Bloomfield, under the leadership of Maureen McMahon and Tony Bastian. A great job was done in Colwyn as well, where the team was led by Parks & Recreation Chair Anita Roy.

Finally, kudos to the crew from Newtown Square crew for their hard work. Martin Milligan captained the team. By removing trash – from truck tires to plastic bags and bottles – participants helped beautify the waterway, making it healthier for wildlife and more enjoyable for recreation. The Darby Creek Valley Association thanks the hundreds of volunteers who made this region-wide cleanup happen. Groups or individuals interested in learning more about DCVA’s numerous year-round programs and volunteer opportunities are invited to visit [www.DCVA.org](http://www.DCVA.org) or call Director Sue Miller at (484) 222 2502.



*Photos by Sue Miller*

# Darby Public Library: Some History Touted

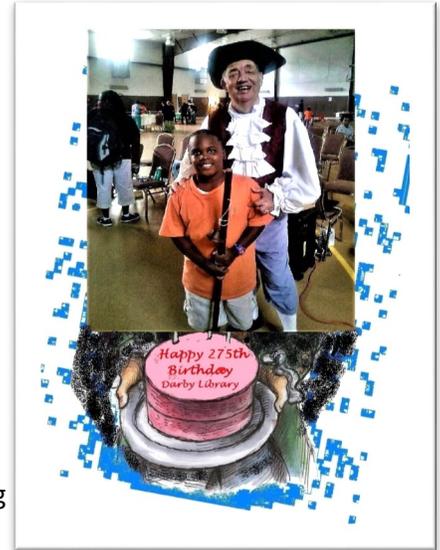
By Thomas Roy Smith

This article owes composition to a wish to share particularly about the oldest institution in Darby Valley, the 1743 founded Darby Free Library. When in 1743 the Darby Library was founded, the book collection was under the watchful charge of the librarian. Thereafter, for one hundred-twenty-five years, the 'current librarian' housed the books in his own home. It went with the job.

Next stage, for the next century and-a-quarter, the librarian was housed by the Darby Library -- How so? Briefly, after the first permanent library building was erected – the 'current librarian' - lived in institutional quarters. Just a door separated the librarian's rear living quarters from the library's collection. Over time, the responsibilities and the size of the book collection expanded, while the rear cramped living space of the librarian remained the same.

The first permanent Darby Library home got erected in 1872. – Hear ye! In the 1900's, workmen found in a wall space the library's expense book from the 1870's. A fun telling fact from the found ledger: punctuating many different expenses, in the found ledger, one expense was repeated. Namely, a ten cents expense for the replacement of a broken "doorbell spring." This repeat expense evinces. Fact, it is known patron frequency heightened throughout the 1870's. So, the doorbell spring - really did get weary of all the patrons using it to gain happy entry. Inside stood books inviting love....books waiting to be opened and beheld.....books waiting to be paged physically.

*Author's Note:* An earlier piece on Darby Free Library cited - 2018 - as the library's 275<sup>th</sup> birthday. This lover of books wanted to share facts.



Cricker's Corner author Tom Roy Smith and young local resident at the celebration of the 275th Birthday of Darby Borough Library. Tom Roy is dressed as John Pearson, Darby's first librarian.

## JOIN THE DARBY CREEK VALLEY ASSOCIATION TODAY!

*The Darby Creek Valley Association (DCVA) is dedicated to the protection and enhancement of all of the watershed's resources, including water, wildlife, historical sites, and the floodplains. The organizations immediate goals are to prevent all forms of pollution in the Darby Creek and its tributaries, to prohibit dumping and construction on the floodplain and to expand our educational programs for all residents within the watershed. It Also seeks to improve water quality and maintain a debris-free stream through clean-ups and public education. DCVA works to preserve historic properties, such as the Swedish Cabin and the Blue Bell Inn. The Association would like to set aside the more than 30 miles of valley for use as a greenway for all residents to enjoy. We need your support. Help us continue to protect the environment for ourselves and our children.*

**We invite you to fill in the form below, check member category, and mail form with your check to:**

**Darby Creek Valley Association, PO Box 732, Drexel Hill, PA 19026**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual member.....\$25

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