



Musconetcong River News

Fall 2008

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Asbury, New Jersey

MWA 2008 Commemorative Ornament Fund Raiser Features Canoers under the Imlaydale Bridge

By Rosemary Kent

Hidden in plain sight, an abandoned, arched bridge on an energetic stretch of the Musconetcong River near secluded Imlaydale, a residential hamlet on both the State and National Register of Historic Places off New Jersey's busy Route 31, is the featured image for the Musconetcong Watershed Association 2008 Commemorative Ornament, an annual MWA fund raiser.

Ninth in an ongoing series, "Canoeing under the Imlaydale Bridge" is a bold, vibrant watercolor combined with pen and ink depicting two canoers paddling beneath the narrow, old bridge on the swift waters of the Musky amid blazing fall foliage. Straddling both Hunterdon and Warren counties, this triple-arched, concrete bridge with rusting iron railings (now closed) was built in 1913 and was one of the first highway bridges designed and constructed with NJ state funds.

The art for this year's ornament was painted exclusively for MWA by multi-medium artist Sandy Gaskins-Watts, a new MWA member and a NJ native. Last year she moved with her husband, Chris Watts, and three sons, to New Hampton, another nearby history-rich district in Lebanon Township, where the family bought the landmark 1840 general store with meandering Musconetcong riverfront property.

"In the process of capturing the ornament's image of the bridge, the river and the canoers, I used watercol-



"Canoeing Under the Imlaydale Bridge" artwork on front side; signature and date on reverse side. Actual size 3.5"

or which I like for its fluidity and its transparent quality. Like the Musconetcong, it flows quickly," explains the soft-spoken Gaskins-Watts. "It was my attempt to capture the feeling of being on the river myself and what it would be like to pass under this vaulted bridge in fast moving waters."

From a very early age of two years old, Gaskins-Watts began to draw and paint with a nonstop passion and obvious talent. She is the first to generously acknowledge that she was "hugely influenced and encouraged" by her beloved father, Lee E. Gaskins Jr., a

noted, widely-exhibited NJ artist and art teacher, who at one time had studied with the prestigious Brandywine school of artists in Pennsylvania.

"Art entered my life when I was young and it has never not been there," says Gaskins-Watts, perennially drawn to and inspired by traditional art, particularly the Old Masters, Impressionists and Pre-Raphaelites. She attended Newark School of Fine and Industrial Arts and The Harrow College of Arts and Technology in London and received her B.A. in Fine Arts Education at Kean University.

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Ornament Fund Raiser

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Her extensive body of works includes landscapes, still lifes and portraits done in watercolor, oil, pen and ink, lithography, and pastels and she has had exhibitions in both England and NJ. Last fall, Gaskins-Watts was given a one woman show entitled "In Retrospect" at the Township of Lebanon Museum at New Hampton. When she is not painting, she makes intricate, medieval-style chainmaille jewelry and other creative projects.

"Now that my family and I live on it, we use the Musconetcong River visually. We have become very aware of this beautiful river with its rushing waters, quiet pools, overhanging trees, shadows and wildlife; we watch the water levels often and recognize families of merganser ducks, bats, snapping turtles," says Gaskins-Watts, adding that an old surveyor's transit set inside their restored home is a big help for

closer observations. "I intend to paint more of the Musconetcong and its surrounding natural elements which fortunately are outside our doorway."

The MWA Commemorative Ornament, introduced in 2000, is a custom-made, white porcelain disc with original art on one side of it highlighting a recognizable scenic or historic site on the Musconetcong River, as interpreted by an artist living on or near the river, as Gaskins-Watts does. Her signature and the title of her image appear on the reverse side of this kiln-fired ornament.

Both to keep and to give, these high-quality ornaments have become instant collectibles over the years they

have been sold. All sales of the ornament, which can be hung, framed or displayed, benefit MWA. The 2008 ornament—"Canoeing Under the Imlaydale Bridge"—sells for \$23 which includes shipping and handling.

Ornaments are available by mail (make checks payable to MWA) and online by credit card. To order online please visit www.Musconetcong.org; or to order by mail please use the order form (enclosed separately) in this newsletter. A limited number of ornaments from the past years (2000-2007) also can be ordered. To place a phone order call (908) 537-7060 or e-mail Adrienne@musconetcong.org with any questions. ☺

MUSCONETCONG WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

908-537-7060

www.musconetcong.org

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In October, more than 30 people came out to hear former MWA Executive Director and avid paddler John Brunner present "Paddling the Musconetcong River - Everything You Need to Know about Canoeing and Kayaking A National Treasure." The class learned where and when to paddle the Musky, what to seek out and what to avoid. After the group enjoyed lunch and a sunny autumn day on the patio at the Merrill Creek Nature Center, class reconvened with a discussion about choosing a boat, paddles and other equipment. **Paddlers Cove** www.paddlerscove.com of Washington New Jersey provided samples of paddling clothes and equipment to the group to examine.

HELP WANTED

The Musconetcong Watershed Association is looking for an experienced volunteer to help members of the Board of Trustees work on the MWA Business Plan. If you have expertise in this area and would like to help in this exciting and worthwhile undertaking please e-mail MWA President Bill Leavens at bill.leavens@gmail.com

2008 MWA Wine Tasting Event, Some Rain, but Certainly Not a Washout!

By *Adrienne Kaczynski*

Even the weather didn't stop folks from supporting a very successful 6th Annual MWA Wine Tasting Event. This being our first year without the sun, about 100 wine tasters gathered to enjoy the delicious wine and food assortments. Under cover of the pavilion located at the perfect site generously provided by the Warren County Rod and Gun club, the event proved to be a warm and intimate gathering. This annual fund raiser held on the banks of the Musconetcong River, benefits MWA's continuing work to protect and preserve the Musconetcong Watershed.

Here's to the people who made the 6th Annual Wine Tasting one of our most relaxing:

MWA Special Events Chair Canny MacGonagle and committee members Mike Sedita, Stuart Shafran, Erik Henriksen, Bill Harclerode, and Adrienne Kaczynski.

MWA Trustees, staff and member volunteers.

Perryville Wine & Spirits - Owners **Gordon and Shelly Stewart**, and staff members of Perryville Wine & Spirits along with **Jeff Farrell**, worked hard all day to please all of the wine tasters. Perryville Wine & Spirits offers an exceptional range of the finest wines, spirits, beers, micro brews, champagnes with free local delivery. Please visit their shop at 72 Route 173 West, Hampton, N.J. or contact them by phone at (908) 735-9237 or via their website, www.perryvillewine.com.

The Milford Market - The Milford Market, owned by **Gordon and Shelly Stewart**, is a grocery store and wine shop that features full delicatessen and catering services. If you attended this year's event, we do not have to tell you how tasty the food was. On hand to prepare this awesome array of

appetizers this year was **Chef John**. Give them a call for help with your holiday catering at (908) 995-0810 or visit the market located at 26 Bridge Street, Milford, New Jersey,

Musky Trout Hatchery - Vern Mancini, owner of the Musky Trout Hatchery. The Musky Trout Hatchery is located at 279 Bloomsbury Road in Asbury and can provide koi and water plants for your ornamental pond. The hatchery can be reached by calling 908-479-4893 or e-mailing muskytrouthatchery@earthlink.net. Visit their website at www.muskytrouthatchery.com.

Warren County Rod and Gun Club - Warren County Rod and Gun Club President Mike Zawacki and club members provided the use the riverside pavilion and grounds.

Band member **Rich Plumpton**, member of **Jam-Bone** has contributed his time once again towards the success of the MWA Wine Tasting. Jam-Bone, with roots in traditional rock 'n roll and blues, is available for clubs, festivals or private parties. Call 908-670-3332 or visit www.jam-bone.org. We enjoyed a special appearance by DJ. Dave Werkhiser (**DW Wilson Entertainment, 908-689-3326**.) Remember Dave the next time that you need a DJ for a party or special event!

Greenway Flowers - Nancy and George Cummings, owners of Greenway Flowers, provided pumpkins, mums and cornstalks, which beautified our festival outdoor event. For all of the products and services offered by Greenway Flowers, located at 441 Schooley's Mountain Road, call (908) 850-0700 or visit www.greenwayflowers.com.

Congratulations to Matt Cordova, of Lebanon Township,
winner of the 2008 MWA Canoe Raffle!!

Seber Grove Dam Fall 2008 Update

By *Bill Leavens*

We sincerely hope that by the time you are reading this that the Seber Grove Dam that spans the Musconetcong between Hackettstown and Mount Olive will be but a fond memory. The dam was 'built' in the middle of the last century to form a swimming area for Hackettstown residents. The dam was formed of dumped rock and rubble and periodically overlain with whatever pourable aggregate was on hand. It was breached and 'repaired' on a number of occasions over the past fifty years.

Township residents enjoyed their swimming hole until sampling of the river revealed high coliform bacteria counts and public health officials concluded that swimming in that part of the river might not be a good idea. The damming of the river is likely what caused the change in water quality. The Seber Grove swimming area was finally abandoned as a public amenity decades ago.

There are two important words in the dam removal business. They are 'persistence' and 'patience'. MWA's experience with

removing the Seber Dam has given us the need for a belly full of both. The removal is funded through Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Corporate Wetland Restoration Partnership. Engineering on the projects amounts to little more than 'Remove The Dam'. A qualified contractor has been selected at an agreed price. The dam owner, the Town of Hackettstown, has expressed their desire that it be removed. Everyone with the remotest interest in the structure wants it gone and it might take all of four days with a track hoe to complete the work.

Alas, because there is no one single point of contact at NJDEP who could shepherd permits through the removal process, our engineer must patiently explain to half a dozen agencies what we are planning to do, how we are going to do it, and what we will do to ensure the river is healthy after the dam is gone.

Stay tuned. Some day the folks who regulate our activities will realize that dam removal is beneficial and that there are no thorny downsides in allowing the river to work better. After the dam is gone, the river will know what to do. ☺

Musconetcong Watershed Association

2008 Commemorative Ornament

"Canoeing Under the Imlaydale Bridge"

Watercolor by Sandy Gaskins-Watts



Shown: artwork on front side; signature and date on reverse side. Actual size 3.5"

The Musconetcong Watershed Association 2008 Commemorative Ornament, ninth in a series, features an original watercolor painted by New Hampton, New Jersey artist Sandy Gaskins-Watts. The vibrant image is entitled "Canoeing Under the Imlaydale Bridge" and shows canoers on the Musconetcong River paddling beneath the historic Imlaydale Bridge which straddles both Warren and Hunterdon counties. This colorful artwork is mounted on a custom-made, white porcelain disc with a satin ribbon hang-tag and has the artist's signature and date on the reverse side. As a fundraiser for MWA, a non-profit organization founded in 1991, the annual ornament offers a scenic or historic site on the 42 mile-long Musconetcong River, now a part of the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System.

Ornaments are available by mail and online by credit card. Please send this order form to the address below with a check or money order (make payable to MWA) for \$23 which includes shipping and handling per ornament. To order online please visit www.musconetcong.org. There are limited quantities of past MWA Commemorative Ornaments still available for sale. To view photographs of the past and present ornaments visit www.musconetcong.org.

Name: _____ Total # of ornaments ordered _____

Address: _____ Total amount enclosed (\$23 per) _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip Code: _____

Series Ornaments Available - 2008 "Canoeing Under the Imladale Bridge"

- | | |
|--|---|
| ____ 2007 "Beattystown Great Blue Heron" | ____ 2003 "Hackettstown Union Cemetery" |
| ____ 2006 "Fishing on the Musky" | ____ 2002 "Changewater Railroad Bridge" |
| ____ 2005 "Bloomsbury Bridge" | ____ 2001 "Morning on the Musconetcong" |
| ____ 2004 "Finesville Bridge" | ____ 2000 "The Asbury Mill" |

Mail to: MWA P.O. Box 113, Asbury, New Jersey

SAVE THESE DATES!

November 29th, 2008 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon Annual Hike at Point Mountain

Each year MWA members and others set aside the Saturday after Thanksgiving to burn off those extra calories by hiking the trail at the Point Mountain Reserve. We look forward to having an expert along to speak to us about the special features of the 700-acre Point Mountain Reservation. Members are free, nonmembers \$2 (\$5 maximum per family). Bring a snack, water and binoculars if you'd like. All are welcome, novice and expert alike. Call (908) 537-7060 or e-mail beth@musconetcong.org for details, directions or to register.

Sunday, December 14, 2008 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Annual Members Holiday Party

Members are cordially invited to attend the Musconetcong Watershed Association Annual Holiday Party. Please join us at Arts off Main Gallery located at 128 Willow Grove Street Hackettstown, N.J. for this annual opportunity to meet and mingle with other MWA members, staff and trustees. Meet new friends and enjoy a relaxed visit with old acquaintances. Complementary wine, beer and finger foods will be served. Please R.S.V.P. by December 7th. Call (908) 537-7060 or e-mail adrienne@musconetcong.org. Not a member? What a great time to join! Please use the membership form on the back of the newsletter or join on our website.

Saturday, April 18, 2009 16th Annual Spring Clean Up

Come out and help at the Annual Spring Clean Up. Call (908) 537-7060 or e-mail adrienne@musconetcong.org for information.

Sunday May 3, 2009 9th Annual MWA Run/Walk for the River

Join us to either walk or run in this 4.0-mile event. Find details about this even on the website or look for an update in the next newsletter.

Note: If you are not receiving e-mail reminders for these events it means that we do not have a current e-mail address. If you'd like to receive reminders and occasional "Musky News Briefs" please contact beth@musconetcong.org.



Guests enjoy tasting and learning about wines at the 6th Annual MWA Wine Tasting Event.

- ◆ Save These Dates
- ◆ 2008 Commemorative Ornament Order Form
- ◆ Seber Grove Dam Update
- ◆ Wine Tasting Event
- ◆ Commemorative Ornament Fund Raiser

What's Inside:

Musconetcong River News



Asbury, NJ 08802
PO Box 113



The Musconetcong Watershed Association

The Musconetcong River Valley is rich in scenery, history, natural resources, and recreational opportunities. The river rises up in Lake Hopatcong - New Jersey's largest spring-fed lake - and is shadowed by 1,000-foot Highland ridges and slices through a deep, limestone river valley, flowing swiftly to the Delaware River. Along the way the "Musky" passes by state and county parks, bustling towns, vital industries, historic villages, and some of the most productive farmland in the state.

The Musconetcong Watershed Association (MWA) is a non-profit organization formed in 1991 to protect and enhance the Musconetcong River and its related resources through advocacy and environmental education programs, scientific research and river restoration projects. The MWA scope spans the 158 square-mile Musconetcong River Watershed, and includes portions of four counties, and all or portions of 25 municipalities. The Musconetcong River became part of the National Wild and Scenic River System in 2006.

MWA members are part of a network of individuals, families and organizations who care about the Musconetcong River and its watershed. They are kept informed about issues concerning the river and its related resources by receiving quarterly issues of the *Musconetcong River News*.

MWA Membership Application

Please enroll me as a member of the Musconetcong Watershed Association in which I will receive membership benefits and publications. I have enclosed a check payable to **MWA** for the membership category listed below:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Student | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Steward |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Champion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Supporter | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 + Life |

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Mail to:

Musconetcong Watershed Association
PO Box 113, Asbury, NJ 08802