



THE GREENBELT Gazette

As the incoming President of CAGA, I wanted to welcome everyone to the new year and express gratitude to all who support CAGA's mission of preservation, enhancement and promotion of the Greenbelt. These unusual times serve to remind us how valuable a resource the Capital Area Greenbelt is to the community and why it deserves our commitment. We remain focused on improving the trail and working closely with valued partners and volunteers from the community. We hope that you will consider joining us and become more involved in 2021.

Thanks - and see you on the 'belt!

Mike Shaull
President, CAGA



Why I Volunteer for the Greenbelt by Scott Shepler

My relationship with the Greenbelt has evolved throughout my life. I grew up on Sixth Street near Lucknow Road, and as a teenager and young man, I rode my bike in Riverfront Park and recreated in Wildwood Park.

My bicycle riding has always been sporadic, intensive at times, non-existent at others. As an adult, I was mostly focused on my career, but managed to train and ride in the MS-150, Harpers Ferry Happening in 1989. My wife, Debbie, and I began donating to CAGA in the 90s, but we had little time to volunteer. One of my favorite experiences was riding the Greenbelt with my two grandsons. This became the inspiration for starting a Trips For Kids chapter in Harrisburg with help from Recycle Bicycle and the Boys and Girls Club. We've taken 100 Greenbelt rides with 900 kids in the last ten years.

My relationship with the Greenbelt began to change when we started to take long walks with our dog Shadow. Throughout our marriage Debbie has made it her mission to help me appreciate nature more, but in ways that are not possible while flying down a parkway on a bike. I started to see the Greenbelt in new ways. We looked for delicate trout lilies, spring beauties and other wildflowers each spring, and discovered new birds like tiny kinglets. We saw many other plants and animals including the vibrant fall wildflowers and beautiful Monarch butterflies. We also enjoyed hearing the screeching of hawks and kingfishers and listening to the creek sounds. One day she asked me to touch a plant, stinging nettles, much to my surprise.

However, I also started to see the impairments from uncontrolled stormwater runoff and traditional landscaping best described as mowed turf grass, ornamental trees and pavement.

When I decided to retire in 2010, I wanted to volunteer my time and career experience to a worthy cause, and the Greenbelt Association was a perfect match. Although I worked in the IT application industry, I was able to leverage my program management expertise while learning about environmental issues and solutions. This included conservation or natural landscaping principles, which involve planting native species, removing invasive species, and controlling stormwater. Native grass and wildflower meadows eliminate regular mowing with proper invasive controls and combined with mowing less often in the remaining turfgrass areas provides many benefits like reduced time, expense and pollution. These changes are intentional, not to be seen as signs of neglect. With the help of many partners, we are employing conservation landscaping practices on both Paxtang and Cameron Parkways, various trailheads and at the Five Senses Garden where you can get a full sensory experience.

Several key changes to our perspectives are necessary.

- We are part of nature, not apart from nature, so we should only use it in a sustainable manner.
- Nature is perfectly imperfect, so seek to guide and help nature, not to control, dominate or exploit.

- We remain absolutely dependent on air, water, soil, energy, and biodiversity for our survival and good health.

In the past thirty years CAGA has made extraordinary progress, but so much more needs to be done. Volunteers have been and will continue to be the lifeblood of this association, but financial contributions are important as well. Grants make much of our work possible and grants require matching funds. Please consider giving your time or treasure to this worthy endeavor.

Oh, and I still enjoy flying on my bike, but there is so much more to enjoy.

New Bluebird Kiosk Installed

The bluebird educational kiosk on the Greenbelt's Andrea Avenue Trail at the Harrisburg State Hospital was in dire need of repair. The sign is part of a 20-box bluebird trail that stretches for one-mile from the state hospital grounds east to Veterans Park. With financial support from the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania

(BSP), Bill Strauss and Jay Smullen (pictured by the kiosk) refurbished the kiosk. BSP leaders Nancy Putt, Phil and Sandy Durgin, and Mellisa Gallagher designed the first-ever BSP informational trail sign. Learn all about Pennsylvania bluebirds at our new Greenbelt kiosk thanks to BSP!

If you are interested in helping care for bluebird boxes or create your own trail along the Greenbelt, contact Diane Kripas at: dwkripas@gmail.com



Digging in the Dirt is Good for You!

Did you know that working in the garden actually improves your mood? Fungus in the soil may be responsible for causing a release of serotonin (an anti-depressant) in your body which improves your mood and relieves anxiety!

Master Gardener Trainees Earn Volunteer Hours on the Greenbelt

The Dauphin County Extension began a new class of Master Gardeners this past fall. In addition to their classroom training, they are required to complete 50 volunteer hours at a site pre-approved by the PSU Extension. The entire Capital Area Greenbelt was recently approved as one of the many activities the trainees can pursue to fulfill their volunteer commitment.

To the benefit of the Greenbelt, five trainees so far have been active on the trail. They have spent time at the MLK Memorial Garden, the Five Senses Garden, Cameron Parkway (tree cleanup) as well as the parking lot gardens at the 19th street and 28th street parking lots. We are quite fortunate they have expressed an interest and have started fulfilling their volunteer hours with us. We welcome their time and expertise!



Story-walk on the Trail

In cooperation with CAGA, the Dauphin County Library System has installed a children's story on panels along the trail on Cameron Parkway. Now the youngsters have something to keep them engaged on a walk outside! Volunteers recently posted a second book, replacing "Lawrence in the Fall" with "When Winter Comes" by Nancy Van Laan. The book is about a child taking a walk through the outdoors to find out where things like leaves, flowers, birds, and bugs go in the winter. The book can be read page by page on the Cameron Parkway (near 1600 S. Cameron St.), with Page 1 just a few yards beyond the stone wall entrance to the parkway. It's never too cold to read!



Volunteers step up to clean up

Our volunteers are dedicated to the care of the Greenbelt and it was demonstrated once again on Sunday, January 9 when Becky Schuchert, longtime friend of the Greenbelt and board member, coordinated a group of volunteers to shovel leaves and debris that had been compacted on Cameron Parkway. You may have seen this story on WHTM ABC 27 the following Tuesday! Becky was joined by Nathan Lund, Cindy Hogeman, Larry Wasser and Pam Lyman.

Annual Meeting 2020

Due to the pandemic, our Annual Meeting was held via Zoom on November 18, 2020. All members were invited to join the meeting, and we enjoyed having a total of 38 people in attendance. Attendees could participate with questions or comments through the chat feature of the Zoom call. Reports were presented by Committee Chairs, and online voting was held to begin new terms for four board members:

Newly Elected Board Members- November 2020

Michael Shaul
President



Nate Yost



Neelam Zaver



Ambrose Buck



Remembering Carl Lorence

We were saddened to learn of the passing of a long-time friend of the Greenbelt and dedicated volunteer. Carl Lorence was born in the early days of the Great Depression in Ford City, Pennsylvania. He made his career in the U.S. Army, piloting nearly anything that flies, particularly helicopters. In his retirement he spent the past 30 years doing volunteer work on the Greenbelt until his death on December 18, 2020 at the age of 90. In recent years his activities were of a fairly routine nature: mowing, trimming, mulching, sweeping intersections, maintaining equipment...but throughout the existence of CAGA he and Norm Lacasse roughed-in the trail along Cameron St. in South Harrisburg, enjoying clearing it with on a borrowed tractor, and laid out the trail connecting State Farm Road to the Harrisburg State Hospital. He worked with Norm to create the Martin Luther King Jr. monument and for years he advocated for a trail to connect State Farm Road to Andrea Avenue (near the intersection of Elmerton Ave. and Progress Ave.). That dream was finally realized several years ago. He also worked with Norm and others to build the Spring House bridge along Paxtang Ave. This provided him with one of his favorite Greenbelt stories as recounted by CAGA maintenance volunteer Bob Finkle:

"Norm and Carl were faced with building some supports for the bridge to cross the stream. There was no way to divert or dam the stream, so they had to come up with a way to pour concrete in cold spring water while the water was swirling around them up to their knees. After some research they followed the method devised by the Romans when they built the aqueducts. They anchored tubes in the water and poured dry concrete into them forming the bases for the supports for the crossbeams. Next, they needed railings and some method of tying the bridge decking together. Norm got used guard rail wires that were used before the state replaced them with solid metal from a state park up north. Carl found a wire gripping system that allowed the wires to be pulled tight by a tractor while Norm secured them to the railing. The system stands today."

In addition to the Greenbelt, Carl was active in the Appalachian Trail Association, the Keystone Trail Association and was involved in the creation of the Standing Stone Trail. He'll be greatly missed for his sense of humor and colloquialisms as well as his effort, especially by his fellow maintenance volunteers.



The Great Tee Search! Do you have a 2002 Tour de Belt shirt?

Preparations for Tour De Belt 2021 are under way, but we need YOUR help with a little conundrum.

We are putting together a collection of every TDB tee-shirt starting with the first event in 2001, and the only one we are missing is the shirt from 2002!

Can you help us complete the collection? Is the 2002 tee-shirt hiding in your drawer creased and sad, longing to break out and become a part of history?

As a little incentive to dig through your old tee-shirts, the first person to present a 2002 TdB shirt will win a fabulous prize, along with the satisfaction of completing the circle of tees.

The shirt collection will be on display at the next Tour de Belt event!



Speaking of Tour de Belt....

We are excited to announce that the 21st Annual Tour de Belt will be our second hybrid event with an anticipated start date near the beginning of June.

The Tour de Belt Committee is hard at work planning an amazing 2021 event! Stay tuned for more details and announcements coming soon. Check our website for up-to-date information at: www.CAGA.org



**Save the Date! Our
Annual Awards
Dinner Will be a
Virtual Celebration
This Year!**

February 5, 2021,
6:00-7:00 PM

Grab your favorite
beverage and get
comfortable in front of
your screen with your
fellow friends of the
Greenbelt!



For more information and how to join us, visit our website: www.CAGA.org/events/

The Capital Area Greenbelt Association is an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created to act as a liaison between all concerned parties, and to organize and plan the continued stewardship of the Capital Area Greenbelt trail.

P.O. Box 15405
Harrisburg, PA 17105-5405
Phone: (717) 921-GREEN (921-4733)

Email: caga@caga.org