

# Craighead House Chronicles

Volume II No. 1 Fall 2016



## Security

### President's Message

It's late summer here in Carlisle, and the spiders in my "barn" are fat & happy. I watched one last week as he or she methodically wrapped a very large housefly in silk for long-term storage. The fly was easily twice her size and I tried to imagine how many times she might return to it to suck nutritious liquefied fly from the incapacitated if not quite dead insect. I believe she felt secure for the immediate future.

Little did she suspect, of course, that I, the Lord of the Barn, was watching. The customary fate of spiders dirtying the inside of my barn was instantaneous death by crushing. It occurred to me that we, like Mama Spider, often rest comfortably with our plentiful food and warm, dry homes. Door locks, money in the bank, guns under the bed, insurance policies, retirement plans, etc...These lead

### John Coyle

us to feel secure for the immediate future. Yet which of us is really certain of our next breath?

John Craighead died in his sleep last week at 100 years of age. He had been, living independently



(with lots of family help) in his own home in Wyoming. Now only his photos, books, and our vivid memories of him remain. His twin brother Frank Craighead lost nearly all of his possessions, including the priceless photos and artifacts of his fascinating life, in a house fire in 1978. How then can

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### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Craighead House Committee Corporation is to preserve Craighead House and put it to use as a community learning and support center for educational activities related with the Craighead Naturalists' areas of interest and to house offices and museums related to conservation, writing, art, and local history.

## **Grant Applications**

A large grant from G. B. Stuart Charitable Foundation and a large gift from a private donor have made possible reconstruction of the two-story sleeping porch. Demolition of the old porch took place during September, uncovering a cistern and unusual drain under the old porch floor. Construction of the new porch is underway.

The Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau grant is covering two-thirds of the cost of painting the house's exterior. They added funds to the grant to also cover two-thirds of the cost for a sign for the parking lot. The Boiling Springs Civic Association granted the funds to cover the matching funds for the sign. Donations from individuals are covering the matching funds for the painting. Weather permitting, Craighead House will be sporting a new sleeping porch and paint by winter.

South Mountain Partnership Mini-Grants have not been selected as yet. If successful, funds will be used toward constructing the ADA access to the house. Response to our capital campaign to raise funds to complete house renovations has been encouraging. New donors have given significant amounts and naming rights are being claimed. The next project on the horizon requiring funding is for parking lot improvements required by PennDOT that are to be completed by June, 2017.

## Current Projects

The last major restoration project, the two-story "sleeping" porch on the east side of the kitchen wing, is well under way. The contractor has applied an "all hands" approach to the demo phase and steady progress is being made toward completion before month's end. But, as sometimes happens with restoring old homes, interesting and unpredictable things appear. To wit:

Recently a cistern opening was exposed under the porch foundation, *see below*. The current thinking is to place a removable but secure panel over this area to allow possible future access, for historical reference only of course!



## Exterior Painting

A painter has been selected for whom a large part of the job will be scraping off the old, loose paint, reglazing all the windows, caulking where necessary and priming all over. It will take some time before the Victorian lady gets her new coat, especially if Mother Nature intervenes. But, if not in the fall, she will be proudly showing off her new coat soon.

And, thanks to grants from the Cumberland County Visitors Bureau and the Boiling Springs Civic Association, the parking lot will soon be sporting a new sign.

## The Hyphen In Between

We have all heard the sermon. It's often preached at funerals, and sometimes at baccalaureate or commencement exercises. It says that the two dates on one's tombstone tell little: just bookends on the library shelf that was their life. It is the hyphen in between that contains all of the important details that make a life well-lived...or not.

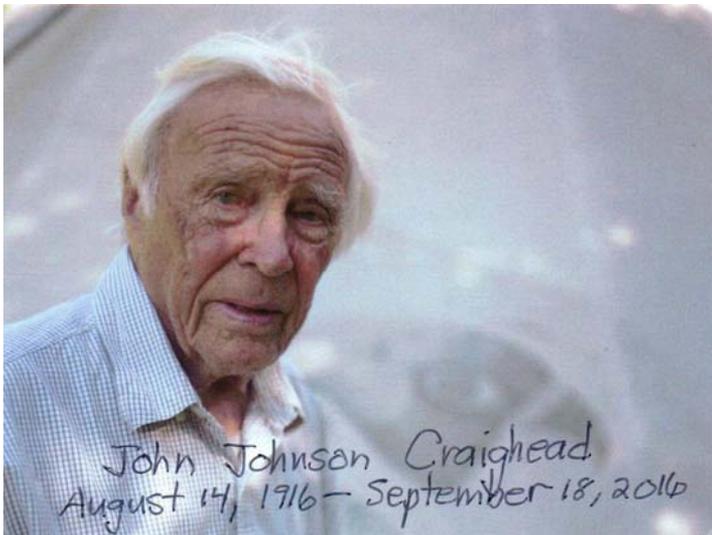
Last week the right hand bookend was placed on the long, immeasurably rich and full bookshelf of the life of John Craighead, leaving us to ponder the hyphen in between. His birth was somewhat of a surprise: his mother Carolyn was surprised when not one, but two identical baby boys appeared in August 1916.

Their birth was far from the last surprise John and brother Frank Jr. gave her. The boys outperformed their classmates in school, their troop mates in Boy Scouts, and most other boys in games and mischief as well. At 15, they took up falconry beside the Yellow Breeches, when it was essentially unknown in America. They published articles in major magazines while in high school, and in college established their decades-long relationship with *National Geographic*.

They created a wilderness survival school and manual for downed Navy pilots in WWII. As adults they saved the grizzly bears in Yellowstone Park, pioneered radio-tracking of large mammals, wrote what became the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and a whole lot more.

We hope to honor John's memory and that of the gifted Craighead family through displays of books, artifacts, programs and classes at the soon-to-be-completely-restored Craighead House.

A hyphen? *Hardly!* John's life was a 100-year underscore and exclamation for a naturalist's life very, very well-lived.



## Fly Fishing Talk

by Dusty Wissmath

Attendees from as far away as Marysville listened intently to Dusty Wissmath, guide, instructor and manager of TCO Sport Shop in Boiling Springs, on Aug. 26th. Dusty reviewed the early use and origins of bamboo poles to today's graphite options. Fun facts included bubbles are integrated into today's fly line -- so it floats, of course. He also demonstrated the secrets of casting a fraction of an once fly. Thank you Dusty!



## Rabies Pet Protection



Craighead House Committee President and emergency room physician Dr. Johnson Coyle presented the medical aspects of treating bites from rabid animals, suspected or otherwise. Domestic pets can get rabies from infected animals.

Laurie Mooney, who works as a Domestic Animal Health Inspector with the PA Department of Agriculture. Ms. Mooney explained some of the issues regarding rabies in pets and farm animals.

## One Special Summer

*Betty Bakley Craighead, widow of Bill*

A number of years ago, I cannot remember just when, Laurie and Jeff invited Bill and me to come to their house in Boiling Springs for a visit. It was early summer and I decided it would be a good time to make a weekend of it and take Melissa and the grandkids and their friends for a stay at Craighead. So, we went on a nice summer day. Bill took our dog Tanka with him and was the first to arrive. When we got there, we found Bill was concerned because he could not turn the water on. Melissa's friend, Ken, figured out right away that someone had stolen all our copper pipes!!

But we stayed anyway, had a great time using the rope swing to jump into the creek. At least the others did. That creek is too cold for me!! And we had a great visit with Laurie and Jeff. Bill scared everyone by swinging on the rope swing and jumping into the creek. But he made it. Jim Craighead, who was using the place several times a summer fixed the pipes. But I applied for the insurance and used the money for

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David Masland, Jean Craighead George & Bill Craighead in Craighead House Kitchen in 2011 *courtesy of Charlie Craighead*

## Volunteers Brad and Linda Sweitzer

Craighead House would not be where it is today—an evolving (a transformative) piece of naturalist history—without a range of support from many volunteers.

Brad Sweitzer is one such supporter we'd like to recognize and thank. Brad and his wife, Linda, also a CHC volunteer, moved to the area after retiring from government service in 2014. Brad's sister and family live in Mt. Holly Springs.



Linda had read many of the Jean Craighead George's books and, through that indirect contact the Craighead family, Brad became fascinated learning of the twins' exploits with grizzlies.

He writes poetry, reads early American history and is a Pittsburgh sports fan, "especially the Pirates". "When Linda helped scrape the old paint off the wood siding, that was too much like work for me", says Brad. "So I was volunteered to mow grass."

Thank you, Brad Sweitzer, for being a Craighead MVP Volunteer!

### One Special Summer *(from page 6)*

several things, even repairs on the roof. An old place always needs money somewhere!!

We went up another weekend that summer and had a wonderful time. There were plenty of beds and, I think we used all except the one in Jim's room. That was for Jim and Carol. They came down from Canada several times a year.

There is something special about an old house. It gently holds its memories from the time Charles Craighead built it for his bride, to when the family stayed there in the early days when Frank and John and Jean were just teenagers and Bill was only eight, to the times when Bill and I took our kids and our grandkids there. Lots of memories in the old Victorian house by the Yellow Breeches Creek.

*Editor's note: Betty later wrote that the year was 2008. Jim and Carol Craighead had bought half ownership in the house from Bill and Betty some years earlier.*

## *Security (from page 1)*

we securely preserve the memory of the Craighead Naturalists? One major purpose of Craighead House is to serve as a repository for historical items from the Craigheads and those who knew & loved them.

Among the very first improvements we made to Craighead House was a Central Alarm System. The empty house needed electronic protection from vandalism and fire. Now our new roof keeps out the rain and raccoons. Once climate control is established, and the doors and windows are refurbished, we will be better able to preserve the building and its kitchen art.

But ultimately the fate of the house and its contents will rest upon caring neighbors and supporters. Long after the current board of directors is gone, we trust that future generations will continue to love and protect the

memories at Craighead House.

And that spider in my barn? She received a pardon.



This spring, two parking lot improvements required by PennDOT and the township need additional financial support. Please consider assisting with one or both of them by donating on-line at [CraigheadHouse.org](http://CraigheadHouse.org) or by mailing a check to Craighead House, PO Box 335, Boiling Springs PA 17007.