An early fall tang was in the air as the Central New York Conservancy brought together more than 130 celebrants on September 9, 2006 in recognition of the Centennial of the Utica Park System.

From the moment that Conservancy guests entered F.T. Proctor Park through the redesigned entrance arch with its festive plantings and shrubs, it was clear that this evening was going to be a magical one.

Small clusters of patrons strolled through the newly restored and planted areas of the park to see the miraculous transformation of the lily pond, bath houses and stone staircases leading to and from the upper pavilion near the park’s main entrance.

Docents pointed out the hundreds of rose bushes surrounding the lily pond and the swath of flowering crabapples that visually link the bath houses to admiring guests. The restored stone staircases led guests to and from the lily pond and a large, double staircase that has also been refurbished offered visitors a glimpse of the ravine area, which had previously been off-limits because of the poor condition of the masonry stairs and walls. Guests gathered beneath a Continued on page 4…

F.T. Proctor Park will become a prime site for watching butterflies and other wildlife when the Central New York Conservancy installs a new butterfly and bird habitat later this summer.

The Conservancy’s butterfly garden plan calls for the restoration of some naturally occurring plant communities as well as the construction of meadows, ponds, thickets, and woods to accommodate the basic needs of most butterfly species.

Butterfly gardens often become havens for birds, too, as they share many basic requirements. In fact, some birds are Continued on page 3…
Transforming a city park is no easy feat. It takes brawn and brain. Both are in ample supply as the Central New York Conservancy continues its efforts to restore, preserve and maintain the beauty of Utica’s parks system. Landscape design consultant Katechen Cardamone has two very enthusiastic interns working with her this season along the Memorial Parkway and in F.T. Proctor Park.

It Takes Two
Intern Craig Lalonde is a recent graduate of Clinton High School. A long-distance runner with a winning record, Craig was vice president of his school’s academic honor society. An interest in history has led him to SUNY-Geneseo, where he will begin his freshman year this fall.

“We are excited to have Craig on board this season,” said Cardamone, “because of his outstanding scholastic performance, his mettle as an athlete and his love of the outdoors. There will be many opportunities for him to satisfy all of those passions as an intern.”

Joining Lalonde is Ross Pristera, a graduate of the University of Florida. Pristera is tasked with gardening and developing architectural plans, thanks to his knowledge and experience in computer-aided design (CAD).

Pristera’s undergraduate degree in design with a concentration in architecture necessitated his study of CAD. When his internship concludes, he will attend graduate school at Cornell University to study historic preservation and architecture.

“Ross saw the Conservancy’s exhibit at the Oneida County Historical Society and was especially intrigued by our ongoing restoration work in F.T. Proctor Park,” noted Cardamone.

“He attended a Proctor Park lecture that the Conservancy sponsored jointly with the Landmarks Society on June 11, as part of this season’s Utica Monday Nite. When he heard that the Conservancy needed interns, he immediately volunteered. Ross has many skills that fit well with the Conservancy’s roster of summer projects and we’re thrilled that he agreed to work with us.”

Out in the Noonday Sun
Another new face with the Conservancy is Lee Edelbute, a contractor from Sauquoit. He has colorful and great experience as a landscaper, as the owner of an organic vegetable farm, and as a skilled horticulturist and plantsman for several local firms. Edelbute earned a degree in horticulture from SUNY-Morrisville.


“Lee works with the Conservancy part-time and he has made an enormous difference on the Memorial Parkway,” said Cardamone. “He assists with planting, edging and weeding the landscaped areas surrounding the many Parkway statues.”

Edelbute has expertise in construction, photography and — a rare attribute — working with nature’s most avid contractors, beavers.

Cardamone is also receiving an assist this season from Robert DeSanctis, owner of Royal Landscaping, located in New Hartford in the same complex as Jay-K Lumber. DeSanctis donated a number of large, beautiful plants to embellish the décor for the Conservancy’s Centennial Celebration of the Utica Parks System last September.

DeSanctis will handle mowing services in F.T. Proctor Park and ensure that the grass surrounding the highly ornamental lily pond and bath house areas of the park is well tended.
It’s important not to prune the raised cocoon attached.

host plant or bark will have

eat the milkweed’s vegetative

hatch, the monarch caterpillars

laying its eggs. When they

syriaca, orange-and-black monarch

butterflies.

species-specific plants for cer-

larval stage often requires

terflies. The crawling caterpillar

as adult butterflies. The crawling caterpillar

larval food. Use evergreens

for protection and to provide

section adjacent to the garden

for protection and to provide

larval food. Use evergreens

and deciduous trees and place

the grove to block wind, but

not to shade the main garden.

Leave leaf litter on the ground

for non-migratory butterflies.

Bright flowering plants located

in a sunny area protected from

the wind will provide nectar.

Butterflies are cold-blooded

and like to be warm. Including

stones, rocks or a gravel path in

your butterfly habitat makes for

good viewing opportunities for

you and a place for butterflies to

sun themselves. Moreover, puddles

are terrific “watering holes”

for butterflies. Practicing good

stewardship of your habitat will

ensure success. Never use pesti-
cides or herbicides in a butterfly
garden. Appreciate the aesthetics

of nature – its leaf mulch, native

weeds, fallen logs and branches.

A large diversity of plants will

mimic nature and you will reap

many brightly colored rewards.

In and Out of the Garden

An added bonus when creating

a butterfly garden is that

it provides an opportunity to

reduce the lawn and restore a

more natural habitat for all out-
door creatures. Butterfly gardens

are an inviting space in which to

sit, view the changing seasons

and watch the “guests of honor.”

As you would with any spe-
cial “dinner guests,” you must

consider how to feed younger
caterpillars as well as adult but-
tterflies. The crawling caterpillar

or larval stage often requires

species-specific plants for cer-
tain butterflies.

For instance, the familiar

orange-and-black monarch

butterfly will choose Asclepias

syriaca, or wild milkweed, for

laying its eggs. When they

hatch, the monarch caterpillars

eat the milkweed’s vegetative

growth — its leaves, buds and

green stems.

In the chrysalis stage, the

undersides of the monarch’s

host plant or bark will have

the raised cocoon attached.

It’s important not to prune the

stalks until the butterflies have

completed metamorphosis.

Once in flight, butterflies need

nectar plants. Adult monarchs

are attracted to bright, fragrant

flowers, where they sip the nec-
tar deep in each flower’s center.

Practicing Good Stewardship

The stages of a butterfly’s life

are often supported by differ-

ent habitats because butterflies

need food, protection, shelter,

and water. Since loss of habitat

is the primary cause for a spe-
cies decline, restoration of a

natural habitat is the best meth-

od for attracting butterflies to

your backyard.

Keep or introduce a wooded

section adjacent to the garden

for protection and to provide

larval food. Use evergreens

and deciduous trees and place

the grove to block wind, but

not to shade the main garden.

Leave leaf litter on the ground

for non-migratory butterflies.

Bright flowering plants located

in a sunny area protected from

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Butterflies are cold-blooded

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garden. Appreciate the aesthetics

of nature – its leaf mulch, native

weeds, fallen logs and branches.

A large diversity of plants will

mimic nature and you will reap

many brightly colored rewards.

CNYC Calendar: Those Were the Days

If you missed the publication of the 2007 Central New York Conservancy calendar, fear not. We have some copies remaining and would be delighted to send one – or more – to you.

The photographs, taken throughout F.T. Proctor, T.R. Proctor and Valley View parks by John Hubbard are sure to evoke memories and inspire you to visit the parks.

To request a 2007 calendar, please contact the Conservancy at 853-2225. Please leave your name and telephone number when you call.

Single copies of the calendar will be sent to you with our compliments. Additional copies cost $15 each (including postage/handling).

The 2008 edition of the calendar will begin production this summer and will be mailed to all Conservancy friends in December.

A Tree Grows in Utica

Utica Parks Department Commissioner Dave Short is continuing an ambitious 10-phase project to restore the grandeur of American Elms along Utica’s Genesee Street.

Phase 1 of the project began in 2003 with a grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Funding was obtained to underwrite the planting of 15, 3-inch caliper elms which were planted along upper Genesee Street.

A matching grant from the Liberty Elm Institute provided 45 juvenile trees. These 1-inch trees were planted in a nursery created by Commissioner Short, where they will be cultivated until they are mature enough for planting along Genesee Street.

CNY Conservancy readers are encouraged to support this project and may contact Dave Short by calling 315-738-0172 to find out more about helping to enhance and maintain this worthy project.

A northward view of Genesee Street in the early 1900s. Once known as the “city of elms,” Utica is again experiencing the magic of these magnificent trees through the “Liberties for Genesee” project, spearheaded by Parks Department Commissioner Dave Short.
large tent near the park’s permanent picnic pavilion and applauded heartily when CNY Conservancy President William F. Locke recognized the leadership and hard work of Utica Parks Commissioner Dave Short and presented him with a mirror decorated with a photograph of F.T. Proctor Park.

The event was elegantly catered by Café CaNole and the Mohawk Valley Jazz Collective, led by Mike DeMeo, enticed guests to dance and mingle throughout the evening.

Event proceeds – more than $15,000 – were directed to the Conservancy’s ongoing restoration and preservation efforts.

Centennial Celebration... continued from page 1

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“Borrowed views” is a phrase coined by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. to describe views of features beyond the original landscape.

Roscoe Conkling Park image from Oneida County Historical Society collection.

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Preserving and restoring the Olmsted green spaces in the Mohawk Valley
The Volunteer Grapevine

If your idea of fun involves being outdoors to hoe, till, dig, plant and weed, then run — don’t walk — to your phone and call Katechen Cardamone, the Central New York Conservancy’s landscape design consultant.

Cardamone is looking for more than just a few good men, women and responsible children who are willing to get down and dirty for a great cause — keeping the parks and green spaces in Utica ever-blooming through the summer, fall and next spring.

If you like working alone — or in a group — call to let her know that you’re available to plant, seed, weed or perform other tasks. This is an ideal opportunity for garden clubs, church groups, Scouting organizations and other youth programs. It’s also a chance to brush up on Utica parks, their creation, design and why they are important historically and culturally.

Volunteers need only bring a willingness to work and to learn. Garden tools and gloves are welcome, but not essential.

To reach Cardamone, call 315-853-2225. Please leave a message and be sure to give your name and telephone number so she can return your call promptly.

That Old Witchhazel Magic!

Thanks to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and his keen sense of design and spatial organization, Utica’s F.T. Proctor Park is defined by a trio of significant features: open fields and meadows, a dense woods and sculpted, formal gardens.

It was Thomas R. Proctor’s grand plan for this area — which he named for his brother — to be the “crown jewel” of Utica’s park system.

The design specifications for the park’s wooded sections included many native trees and shrubs. Pin oaks, red maples, American beech, northern maple, yellow birch, European linden, and hemlocks comprised much of the over-story. For the under-story, shrub species such as shadbush, or Juneberry, were planned for more open areas.

Northeastern witchhazel was a favorite under-story tree/shrub choice for the Park’s dappled, shaded glens.

Aptly Named

Common witchhazel, Hamamelis virginiana, may have naturally occurred in this damp, wooded habitat. Its range is from Canada to Georgia as well as parts of the central United States. The northeastern or common witchhazel blooms in autumn, while the leaves are still on the shrub.

Ribon-like yellow flower petals unfurl with spicy fragrance. Once the leaves fall off the tree, its yellow flowers are still visible, along with the prior year’s capsule fruit clusters. These dry fruits create excitement when they discharge their edible seeds with explosive force. Both vernal and common witchhazel create a floral, arboreal bridge that spans the barren winter season.

Witchhazel’s name likely derives from Wych, an English term meaning plant, while hazel may recall the yellow blooms of Hamamelis that resemble the early yellow flowers of the European winter hazel, or from the leaf’s similarity to the European filbert or hazelnut leaf.

For a small tree or shrub, witchhazel packs a potent medicinal punch. The Iroquois used the leaves, bark and roots — which are saturated with tannin — as an astringent and anti-inflammatory. They used its leaves to brew teas or to make poultices to treat sore throats, swellings and cuts.

Beautiful Denizen of the Forest

In the mid-19th century, Theron T. Ponds of Utica collaborated with a medicine man from the Oneida tribe to patent a medicine whose primary ingredient was a chemical extracted from witchhazel wood called “Golden Treasure.”

The Mohawk Valley woods were abundant with witchhazel, so Ponds initially located his factory in Utica though he later moved his operation to Rome. Eventually, the harvesting, distilling and manufacturing of witchhazel moved to Connecticut and the name “Golden Treasure” was changed to “Ponds Extract.” Pharmaceutical uses today include an after-shave balm with the recognizable red and yellow E. E. Dickinson label.

The marketing history of this medicine involves other local Utica families, including the Harts, Munsons, Palmers and Hurts, who formed partnerships or scrambled to challenge patent rights. The Hurt family marketed its extract at the Paris World’s Fair and in posh London hotels. Ponds Cream, which is still found on drugstore shelves, had its origins in Theron Ponds’ witchhazel lotion.

Witchhazel had other, amazing uses. Early European settlers in the United States used forked witchhazel branches, which are crooked and very flexible, for dowsing — the semi-mystical ability to find water and minerals below the soil.

Whether it is revered for its healing or divining powers or simply admired for its delicate floral beauty, witchhazel is indeed a remarkable tree/shrub. Flowering as the days darken into the barren season, witchhazel holds the promise of spring and sunshine in its bright yellow petals.

If you have never seen witchhazel, a visit to Utica’s F.T. Proctor Park in the fall will offer an opportunity for you to observe this hardy and beautiful denizen of the forest.

Katechen Cardamone explained the uses of witchhazel on the F.T. Proctor Park tour as part of the Landmarks Society’s Utica Monday Nite “Walks & Talks.”
**Conservancy & Utica School District Partner on Character Education Initiative**

The Utica City School District is the recipient of a $250,000 grant over the next three years to implement Project SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act), a character education curriculum designed for fifth-grade students.

The Central New York Conservancy, along with several other community organizations, will work with the district's educators, students and other Project SAVE personnel to provide appropriate learning opportunities and events designed to meet the project's goals.

Enacted by law in 2001 by the New York State Legislature and former Governor George Pataki, and administered by the State Department of Education, Project SAVE requires instruction in civility, citizenship and character education for all students in New York State in grades K-12.

The curriculum includes, in addition to the teaching of basic civic values, addressing learning standards for health, physical education and family and consumer sciences. It calls for students to demonstrate personally and socially responsible behavior, including recognition of threats to the environment.

Funding was obtained for Project SAVE in Utica by Margi O’Hair and Peg Dowling, grant writers for the school district. All fifth-grade social studies classes in the district will participate in the multi-year project.

**A Team-Based Approach**

As part of the program, students will work on community projects to develop essential group work skills, including effective ways to make decisions and to resolve conflicts.

The service-learning component of the project will occur during the summer recess in each of the next three years. Students will have the chance to work on projects with staff and volunteers from the Conservancy, the Utica Zoo, The Utica Marsh and the Oneida County Historical Society.

Under the guidance of the Conservancy’s landscape design consultant, Katechen Cardamone, students, teachers and the project evaluator will design and create the new bird and butterfly habitat in the lower meadow area of F.T. Proctor Park.

**Tours Galore**

Looking for a new venue to show your out-of-town guests? Want to try a different meeting site for your book club, lunch group, corporate team, school classroom or child’s play group? Consider visiting F.T. Proctor Park!

Your group can arrange a docent-guided tour by contacting the CNY Conservancy. Learn about the history of Utica’s park system from Landscape Design Consultant Katechen Cardamone or one of the Conservancy’s volunteer docents.

Please call the Conservancy at 315-853-2225. Leave a message with your phone number and name so we may return your call and help you arrange a tour or outing in the park.

---

**Yes! I want to join the CNY Conservancy.**

___ $1,000 Parks Protector ___ $125 Sustainer
___ $500 Conservator ___ $100 Landscaper
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___ I prefer to make my gift in the form of appreciated securities.

**PLEDGES:**

Two-year pledges of $500, $1,000 or more are appreciated. If you wish to make a two-year pledge, please indicate the amount below.

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR THOUGHTFUL GIFT!**
Taking Root

From January 2006 through June 2007, gifts totaling $45,750 were made to the Conservancy through its year-end appeal and the 2006 Park Centennial Celebration. Your gifts make possible all of the restoration, planting and maintenance activities coordinated by the Conservancy, in partnership with the City of Utica and Utica Parks Commissioner Dave Short.

The following individuals, businesses, foundations and organizations made contributions to the Conservancy. We thank and recognize all of you for your continued interest and support:

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In honor of Katechen Cardamone
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In honor of Patricia Byrd Franklin
Mr. & Mrs. Richard C. Tantillo
In honor of William E. Locke
Mrs. Cynthia Brandreth

Plans are underway for 2008 to host an event that will enable CNYC friends and the general public to see what has been accomplished in the parks and what’s still to come. Details will be announced in the coming months.