

# The Friends of High Point State Park

Spring 2007



## Nature's Palette in Spring

by Bill Wurst

As I ascend a steep ridge on a trail deep in High Point, I am awestruck by the spring freshness and beauty that has enveloped me. Cooling, tangy breezes from the northeast buffet my face. Turkey vultures soar and glide against the burnished sea of blue above me.

Looking towards the woodlands below, three distinct colors emerge—white, red and green. The white is the shadbush now in full bloom. Its milky, starred flowers blur into snow-like puffs affixed to branches of steel gray. I recall how the shadbush received its common name because the blooming of its flowers coincides with the spring journey of the shad(fish) upriver to spawn.

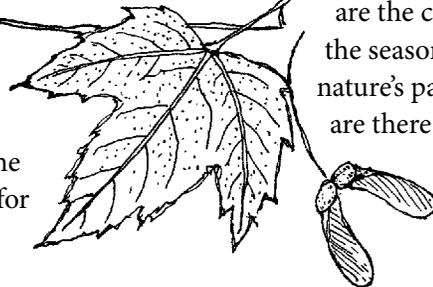
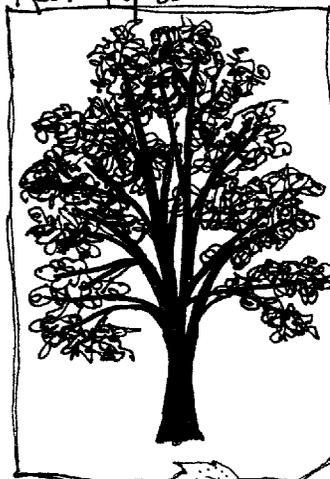
Standing taller are the red maples. They are concentrated in wetlands and a lakeshore below me. Countless buds are opening on twigs, each

exploding into a tiny ball of red. From this height, the balls seem to coalesce into a red haze.

The greens are pale with a tinge of yellow. This is spring green not the deeper hue of July and August. The greens are reawakening hickories and birches, their tiny leaves unfurling and basking in the spring sunshine. I can almost taste the sweet black birch sap as it rises from the trees' roots and see the liquid being tapped years ago for birch beer.

White, red and green—three distinct colors. Separately, each is a delight to the eye of the

Red Maple



springtime hiker longing for a vernal color to confirm the arrival of the long-awaited season of rebirth and renewal. Together, however, the three hues intensify the beauty and heighten the emotions, White, red and green remain separate yet meld into a single visual experience. They are the colors of the season—all from nature's palette. They are there to savor and treasure. ♦

### Officers

Myra Snook - President  
Lynn Panico - Vice President  
Roberta Bramhall - Secretary  
Michael Bender - Treasurer

William J. Wurst - Editor

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The Friends of High Point State Park is a not-for-profit organization that fosters and supports the historical, scientific, educational, interpretive, recreational, and natural resource management activities in the Park. Our support takes the form of funds, materials, and voluntary services for which no government funds or resources are readily available.

## From High Point to the North Pole

by Bill Wurst

"The people at High Point have been so wonderful to me," commented Queens, New York resident Barbara Hillary. Ms. Hillary has been in training this past winter at the High Point Cross Country Ski Center in preparation of an April visit to the North Pole with about nine other intrepid explorers organized by Eagles Cry Adventures.

Ms. Hillary, who is 75-years old and has worked as a nursing educator, is determined to be the first African-American woman to reach the pole. In 1909, the pole was first explored by Robert E. Perry accompanied by his Black assistant, Matthew A. Henson.

Not only has Ms. Hillary been fine-tuning her skiing skills in preparation for her trip, she has also been working out in a gym following

a strength and core training and cardio fitness regimen. Much of her time is also occupied in fundraising for her polar trek.

Well aware of the challenge posed by her undertaking, Ms. Hillary said confidently, "I don't like the sound of the word 'failure.'" ♦



*From the President...*

The annual meeting of the Friends was held on March 10, 2007. Election of officers was as follows: President, Myra Snook; Vice President, Lynn Panico; Secretary, Roberta Bramhall; Treasurer, Michael Bender.

Special thanks go to our out-going officers. Anna Edsall has been a dedicated volunteer since the start of the Friends, acting as Vice President and President. She also spent many hours in charge of the sales table. Marie Bilney was a very capable Treasurer and volunteered many hours with sales, Open Hearth Cooking, and other events.

The fiscal year for the Friends is March 1<sup>st</sup> through February 28<sup>th</sup>. Dues for 2007 are now due.

The Friends are pleased to announce that member William Wurst has been selected as the Friends' 2006 Volunteer of the Year. Bill is editor of this newsletter, leads a Park oral history project, and has delivered many enjoyable story-telling programs at High Point.

Through the generosity of the Minisink Valley Historical Society (MVHS), information about the Friends will soon be available on-line through a link on the MVHS web site ([www.minisink.org](http://www.minisink.org)).

- Myra Snook ♣

*From the Superintendent...*

**What's up with the Monument?**

I'm sure many of you, who have visited the park in the last few months, are wondering "What's up with the Monument?" Late last autumn, the next phase of restoration of the Monument was started. This phase will include the repair of the front steps and perimeter wall, the construction of a new ramp for access by people with disabilities, and the restoration of the patio.

As I write this in late February, the contractor has temporarily moved out of the job awaiting the return of weather more favorable for masonry and cement work. The project is approximately 15% complete. The projected contract completion date is July 31, 2007. The contractor for this phase is Hilt Construction and the Architect/Engineer of record continues to be Holt Morgan Russell.

Although the contractor got a late start, we had scheduled him to start as soon as we closed the Monument for the season in October, we had an exceedingly mild November through January period. This enabled the contractor to get work done then that normally wouldn't have been accomplished in more normal cold weather conditions. Hopefully we'll experience more typical weather this spring and work will resume soon.

We usually reopen the Monument for the season on the third weekend in May. The project will not be complete by then but the contractor is required to provide temporary steps and platform into the Monument. At this point, we are planning on opening according to this schedule.

You might also be wondering if this work completes the restoration, started so many years ago. There is one final phase yet to be funded. That phase will consist of replacing the exterior lighting. The existing lights had to be removed this past fall so the contractor had access to the full patio. The lighting plan is complete and will assure that the Monument will be illuminated as fully as it originally was, with modern, more energy-efficient lights.

I am very hopeful that with the passing of ballot question number two last November, that the reallocation of the Corporate Business Tax will provide the funds to execute the one remaining phase of restoration and that this beautiful landmark will once again be brought to the full prominence it deserves.

- John Keator ♣

*Coming Events*

**May 5, 2007 - Sussex County History Day**  
Stop by our exhibit at Sussex County Community College.

**June 2, 2007 - Trails Day**  
Join us for a hike and we'll be on hand in the Interpretive Center, selling hand-made craft items, books, and park souvenirs.

**June 16, 2007 - June Meeting - 1:00 PM**  
The Friends of High Point will be meeting in the Interpretive Center. Members are encouraged to attend!

**July 14, 2007**  
**Sales Table in the Interpretive Center 10 AM to 3 PM**  
We'll be on hand in the Interpretive Center selling hand-made craft items, books, and park souvenirs.

**Save the Date!**  
**October 27, 2007 - Open Hearth Cooking Day.**

**Join the Friends of High Point State Park!**

Membership is open to individuals, families, and businesses who are interested in and support our objectives. Membership year begins March 1<sup>st</sup> and ends February 28<sup>th</sup> of the following year.

<input type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	Name _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$8.00	Address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$10.00	City, State, Zip _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$25.00	Telephone _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Business	\$50.00	Email _____

(optional)

Please make checks payable to:  
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PO Box 354  
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Yes! I would like to volunteer  
 Programs    Fundraising    Sales    Other (please specify)