

# Craighead House Chronicles

Volume I No. 4 Summer 2016



## *Curiosity, Craigheads and the scientific method*

### President's Message

John Coyle

Our family has been raising orphaned kittens since late winter. Stella and Beatrice were rescued from under porch stairs when they were no more than a few days old, and like most hand-raised cats they are uncannily human.

A few weeks ago I sat outdoors with my morning coffee, watching Beatrice examine the first moth she had ever seen. It got me thinking about curiosity... and hoping that it wouldn't kill MY cat.

She was demonstrating something that the Craighead naturalists all understood well from their childhoods. Nature is fascinating. And aside from keenly attuned senses, it

requires very little to appreciate it.

So, house-cat Beatrice wondered if the fluttering moth might be a cat toy.

She watched intently, leaping back at first with its every move. Creeping ahead, she sniffed it. Touched it with a paw. Batted it between both paws. Licked it, and finally took a bite. It was not

cat food. And by now, having stopped fluttering, it was no longer of interest. She went on to study another species in the new wide world.

So where's the science? Beatrice, with unbounded kitten-

*(Continued on last page)*





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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**

Craighead House volunteers continue to pursue funding to complete the renovation of house and grounds. We have submitted a grant request to the Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau to underwrite the costs of repainting the exterior of the house. We are investigating the possibility of getting a grant from a different source to cover the rest of the painting cost.

We have been approved to submit a proposal to South Mountain Partnership for the funds to create an accessible walkway and ramp from the parking lot to the house and to remodel the restroom to become ADA compliant.

We have been encouraged by the support for these grants that we have received from local colleagues such as the Cumberland County Historical Society and Cumberland Valley Trout Unlimited. We are also fortunate to have our generous in-kind partners, Cianfichi Scholl Architecture/Engineering and McCorkel Construction Services.

## Upcoming Projects

This summer, two projects require 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.

### Sleeping Porch

The two-story porch attached to the east side of the kitchen wing is the last major construction project for the house. It's often called the sleeping porch because the twins, Sam, Bill, and young male visitors, including Bapa the Indian rajah, slept on the roomy second floor. It needs to be completely rebuilt from foundation to roof. G. B. Stuart Charitable Foundation has made a significant donation toward the rebuilding. However, considerable additional funds are needed to complete this project.

### Parking Lot Improvements



PennDOT and South Middleton Township require that we make several unanticipated improvements to the parking lot that could easily total \$25,000. No money has been raised to pay for them, so any help you could give would be most appreciated. PennDOT's requirement that we narrow the driveway connection to Old York Road presents us with the opportunity to design the streetscape along Old York Road as a cohesive whole.

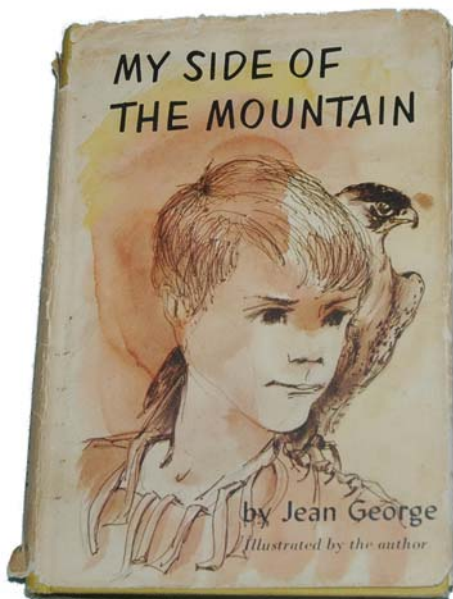
# Jean Craighead George Made My Son a Reader

*Trish Carlucci*

As a lifelong avid reader, I was distressed when my son, Pete, disdained books. He didn't like the library books available to him at school. He complained that they were all about girly things and just was not interested. He couldn't relate to them at all. Pete was an active child. He was always outside running and hiking, especially when we were in the Poconos. He blazed trails, marking directions with stacked stones, waded in streams, and caught pollywogs. I was worried, not only about his future in a world that increasingly requires strong reading skills to succeed, but that he would miss out on the worlds and experiences books bring to readers' imaginations.

When Pete was in first or second grade, someone suggested *My Side of the Mountain*, one of Jean's many books, as a book he might enjoy. Because he was still too young to get many of the words in a chapter book, I read part of it to him each night over a week. It was the first book he could relate to. He enjoyed hearing of Sam Gibley's adventures on his great grandfather's abandoned farm in the Catskills. Thrilled that I had found a book he loved, I sought out similar books. It wasn't easy finding children's books on nature, but I discovered that Jean Craighead George was a prolific writer and was able to keep Pete's interest.

Thanks to Jean Craighead George, Pete discovered the magic of books. As an adult he is an avid reader & shares his love of books with his own children.



Sarah McTish,  
PA's 2016 Honey  
Queen fielding  
questions during  
her June 26  
presentation at



We got a real surprise on June 26 when Sarah McTish, PA's 2016 Honey Queen, picked up something that looked like a piece of dry grass off the dais. It was a mayfly molt. She explained that the mayfly, one of several insect species that interest her, is the only species that molts as an adult. Sarah first became interested in insects about the time she learned to crawl. Perhaps she has some Craighead blood in her. She is Scots-Irish after all. Besides being so knowledgeable about honey bees and queenly, Sarah is unusual for a college undergrad. A Senior at Penn State, she is already conducting research in her entomology minor under Prof. Christina Grozinger, Director of the Center for Pollinator Research. They work to develop methods for breeding healthier and more productive stocks of honey bees. We hope Sarah comes back soon to conduct a program on water insects.

## Go West, Jean, Frank and John!

*Betty Bakley Craighead, widow of Bill*

John and Frank went on their first trip to the West when they were teenagers. That was when they discovered the valley of the Grand Tetons and eventually decided to settle there. And, it was there, where, in the '50s they did their famous study on the grizzly bears.

Bill and I were privileged to visit that area in Yellowstone. The Grizzlies would come in at dusk to feed. The twins would shoot a bear with curare, then weigh, measure, and take paw prints. They would attach a radio collar and this would allow them to track the bear and study its habits, even in the winter. John and Frank became the first naturalists to use radio collars in this way and since it has become the norm.

John and Frank were exciting and innovative naturalists and they got their start at Craighead, PA, the old family homestead. There is the story of the time some officials came to Craighead and told the twins they could not keep falcons. So the boys said OK and let the birds go, knowing full well they could call them back!

Their sister Jean, a naturalist in her own right, wrote, in her life



*Jean with Frank & John in the Tetons courtesy of Charlie Craighead*

## Summer programs at the Craighead Educational Center

**Saturday, July 16**, *Children & the Appalachian Trail*, a talk by Larry Luxenburg, at 2:00pm

**Friday, August 26**, *Fly Fishing Talk and Demonstration*, Dusty Wissmath, Guide, Instructor and Manager of TCO Sport Shop in Boiling Springs, at 6:00pm

**"Hands-On" Children's Programs**

conducted by Laurie Craighead Rudolph:

**Wednesday, July 6**, *Fishing in the Yellow Breeches*, 9am-noon

**Wednesday, July 13**, *Tubing on the Yellow Breeches*, 11am-2pm

**Wednesday, July 20**, *Creek Critters*, 9am-noon

Rain dates will be the very next day. For details, contact Laurie at [rudolphlaurie@ymail.com](mailto:rudolphlaurie@ymail.com).

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### Go West, Jean, Frank and John! (from page 6)

time, more than a hundred books, like *My Side of the Mountain*, for which she won the Newbery Medal. She won the Newbery Award for *Julie and the Wolves*. There must have been something in the water at Craighead, PA!

In the '60s and '70s, Bill and I had a truck camper and went every August with our kids, John and Clay, to visit the family, John and Coni, Frank and Esther and their kids in the Tetons. We would park at Dornans in the Town of Moose, then walk down to our favorite fishing hole on the Snake River or fish and float the Snake on a huge rubber life raft. The twins were the first to promote that activity on the Snake right after the war and it continues today. It is a serene and exciting journey, all at the same time! There are those who say traveling across the country is boring. Not so. The sky opens up, the horizon gets further and further away and in your mind's eye you can see those Conestoga Wagons making the same grand journey. The area in northwestern Nebraska is considered one of the most beautiful in the West. And I owe those fabulous trips to marrying Bill, also a teacher and environmentalist, of the fabulous Craighead Clan!

## *Curiosity, Craigheads and the scientific method (from page 1)*

energy, used every tool and sense available to her in studying an unknown object of interest. She made a hypothesis: It is a cat toy. She inspected (far, near, and sideways.) She manipulated with her only tools (paws) noting the response to a variety of stimuli (paw-pad, claw, tongue, teeth.) She made a chemical analysis (smell and taste). She drew a conclusion: it is a bad-tasting powder-winged, flutter-bug.

The Craigheads didn't have a lot of educational toys, chemistry sets, and the like. With just boxes, jars, and a little hardware added to their boundless energy and innate curiosity, they explored the world around them.

Surviving twin, John Craighead, living in his own home with his wife, and turning 100 this summer, still immerses himself in the outdoor world as he enjoys his teepee in the shadow of the Tetons. And,

fortunately for all of us, the Craighead twins and their sister, Jean, wrote many books to bring the glory of nature to others and inspire them to explore on their own.

The vision for explorers of all ages at Craighead House is casual exposure to the Scientific Method: With a starting hypothesis and holding all things constant, they will vary one input at a time, observe the result, and draw conclusions. Experiments might include jars of minnows, boxes of bugs, birds on a perch, bees with honeycombs, or just mud between the toes. Then, inspired, off they will go to study another species in the

