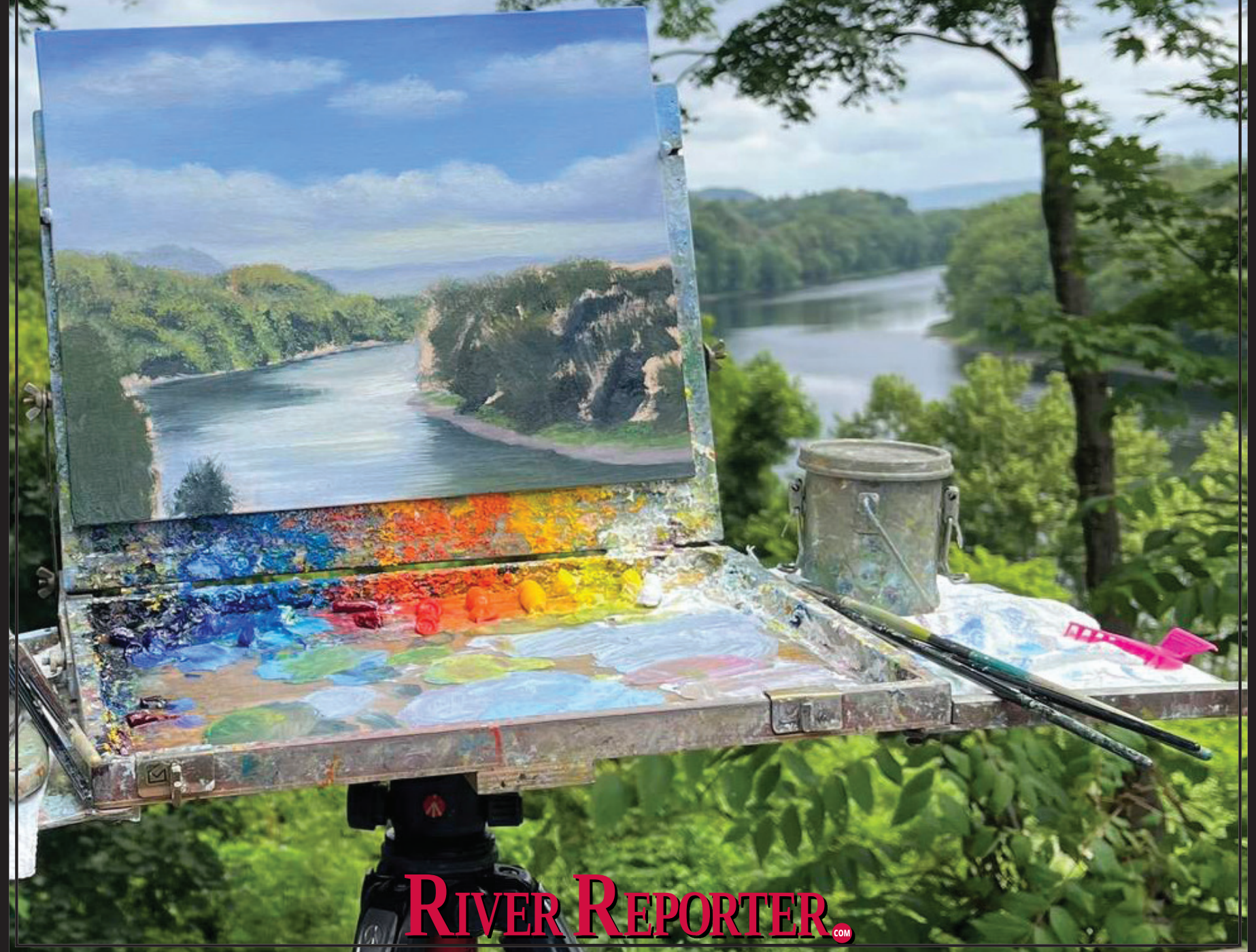


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From the editor:

Landscape stories

Well, this one was fun to put together! Kudos to the wonderful writers who sojourned into the summer heat to paint, to consume barbecue, to photograph the eagles who live here.

Nick Roes, who runs the Barryville Area Arts Association, explains plein air painting. He and other artists have learned to look, truly look, at our landscape and render it in art.

Jude Waterston explored the culinary wonders of the National Kansas City BBQ Competition, held in June in Liberty, NY. Barbecue is a deeply American approach to meat and food—and it comes with its own culture. In case you want to try your hand, she offers a side of coleslaw to go with the BBQ.

Photographer Jeff Sidle returns to Upper Delaware Magazine from his new home, from which he can watch the resident eagles, beavers and other wildlife go about their days and nights. He’s spectacularly documented the eagles for us and for you.

Upper Delaware Magazine is about history and culture, and this time we dug into—or started digging into—the really deep history of the area.



RR photo by Amanda Reed  
The rock story is complicated and beautiful, and each stone holds a secret of the distant past.

What happened millions of years ago? A billion years ago? Is there a way to track the Upper Delaware through time?

Join us on the journey.  
Annemarie Schuetz  
Section editor  
Upper Delaware Magazine

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On the cover: The work of plein air artist Mitchell Saler captures the Delaware River in Milford, PA. RR photo by Nick Roes.

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# Portraits of the Upper Delaware



Plein air artists high above the Delaware.

RR photos by Nick Roes

## *Painting en plein air is deeply personal and uniquely magical*

By NICK ROES

There is no place better for plein air painting than the Upper Delaware Region. Every day, there's a new adventure around each bend of the Delaware River. It's just waiting to be captured on canvas. That's why plein air artists flock to our region like kids chasing an ice cream truck.

Each artist who makes a connection here has very personal stories to tell. Some tried painting for the very first time at a plein air event. For others, a creation along the Upper Delaware River was the crowning achievement of a very productive career.

Here's what a few local artists have to say about painting en plein air:

"Painting outdoors and feeling the environment with all my senses is like meditation that takes me away from my everyday tasks."—Eija Friedlander, Shohola, PA

"Plein Air is like waving a Harry Potter wand as your brush is playing in the creation."—Robert Bradley, Dingmans Ferry, PA

"I value the immediacy and spontaneity of painting outdoors—those spilt second decisions about color, shape and mark. There's an urgency to capture the scene as the light changes and storm clouds pass overhead. I love being out in the elements and challenged to capture the essence of the scene unfolding before me."—Annette Rusin, Pond Eddy, NY (and Brooklyn)

The theory and language of plein air painting first took shape in France in the 1800s, when a group of artists challenged the idea that painting portraits in a studio should be their highest aspiration. They developed the

~ Page 7



Plein air artist Valerie Taggart in Lake Huntington, NY

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## PORTRAITS → Page 5

idea of a “landscape portrait” created outdoors—en plein air.

In the late 1800s, Claude Monet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir experimented with painting outdoors, sometimes using umbrellas to control the light.

The Delaware River and Catskill Mountains were popular subjects for painters of the Hudson River School of plein air artists, founded by Thomas Cole. He first came to the Catskills in 1825, and created such masterpieces as “The Clove, Catskills” (1825) and “View on the Catskill—Early Autumn” (1837).

Cole preached about direct observation of nature—immersing oneself in the scene. Plein air artists often form an emotional connection with the scenery they are painting.

The talents of Cole, his friends and his students made painting en plein air popular in our area. It’s fair to say that their creations made a contribution to the conservation movement, whose goal was to preserve the natural environment many people only saw in these paintings.

There’s no room here to share all of the splendor, but here are some of the more famous plein air masterpieces created locally.

During the 1840s, Worthington Whittredge traveled across the country and created paintings of many rivers, including “Scene on the Upper Delaware.”

On an outing in the Catskills with his friend, a poet, in 1849, Asher Brown Durand created “Kindred Spirits.”

“The Lackawanna Valley” by George Inness was commissioned by the first president of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad in 1855, and includes a representation of the railroad’s first roundhouse. His “Delaware Water Gap” was thought to be completed in the 1850s as well.

Jasper Francis Cropsey worked in watercolors and specialized in autumn scenes like “Autumn on the Delaware” (1856).

Nowadays, much of the Upper Delaware is managed by the National Park Service, whose job it is to protect the environment that inspired these early plein air artists. The tradition of painting en plein air is carried on at annual local events like Plein Air Milford and at community painting parties on both sides of the river.

This work is supported by the Greater Pike Community Foundation’s Richard L. Snyder Fund on the Pennsylvania side and the Statewide Community Regrant Program, a program of the NYS Council on the Arts, with the support of the Office of the Governor and the NY State Legislature and administered by the Delaware Valley Arts Association on the New York side.

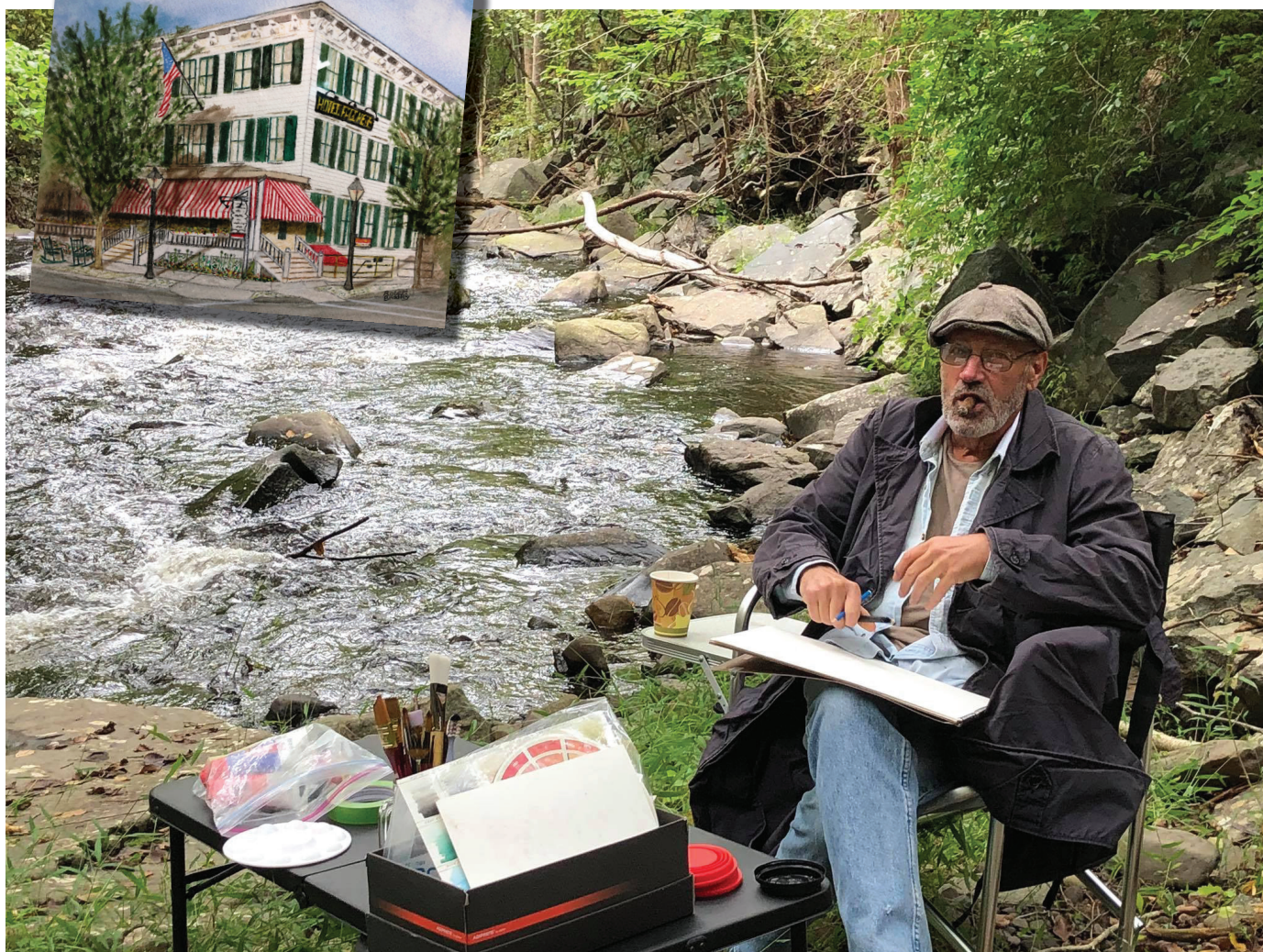
If you’d like to try your hand at plein air painting, local organizations such as the Barryville Area Arts Association (<http://www.barryvilleareaarts.org/PleinAirAdventures.html>) and Zane Grey Plein Air (<https://www.zanegreypleinair.com/>) host workshops, community painting parties and plein air exhibitions.



Plein air artists along the Delaware River in Narrowsburg.

RR photos by Nick Roes

“Hotel Fauchere” by Robert Bradley



Plein air artist Robert Bradley

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Chicken on the grill

RR photo by Jude Waterston

# Queueing up for BBQ

By JUDE WATERSTON

LIBERTY, NY — Saturday, June 15 was a breezy, sunny day, perfect for a walk through the beautiful Walnut Mountain Park in Liberty. That day, the Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association (SCVA), the Greater Liberty Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Liberty teamed up with the prestigious, highly esteemed Kansas City Barbeque Society to host a local Catskills BBQ competition. It was the first of its kind in this neck of the woods and was spearheaded by Sarah Halpern of the SCVA.

Two event areas went on simultaneously. One was highlighted by kids' activities, craft vendors, live music (by singer and guitarist Ray Castro while I was there) and the mouthwatering flavor of smoky, hot chicken (donated by Murray's and Carmine's). The chicken came straight off an enormous grill set up not far from the entrance to the park. There were picnic tables inside a tent (where the ordering and eating took place) and on the lawn. People waited patiently in line to receive their orders for grilled chicken wings or half a chicken and beverages.

Down on the soccer field was the Kansas City Barbeque Society, made up of over 16,000 members worldwide.

The BBQ craze is believed to have originated in the 1920s, when Henry Perry began barbecuing in an outdoor pit near his barn, serving slabs of food wrapped in newspaper. Now, many states are known for barbecue and have brought on a slew of road trips to such places as Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Texas, Oklahoma, North Carolina and Arkansas to compare the various styles for which each state is known.

Leaving the first area of festivities behind, my sister Janet and I walked a few hundred feet down a grassy, sloping path to find the BBQ contest in full swing. There was a small table set up in front of the judge's tables staffed by two members of the Kansas City Barbeque Society. They told us that all the judges were volunteers, and some had been weighing in at various food events for years. There were strict guidelines set up, one of which—to my amazement—was “no finger licking.”

The offerings that day were pork ribs and chicken, and the judges were each given a roll of paper toweling and packets of hand-wipe sanitizing cloths. They were to vote on the chicken and ribs' appearance, taste and tenderness.

As we ambled over to the competitors' grills, I was reminded of the Westminster Dog Show, the final and most

prestigious of all dog shows, in which entries only get to participate after conquering smaller venues like this one.

Eventually, after a handful of wins are under their belts, the BBQ kings and queens competing this day could one day make it to the big league and enter the KCBS's champion and world contests.

We walked up to the enormous grills and tables laden with aluminum roasting pans of glistening ribs and chicken, and stopped to chat with some of the people staffing the booths. The Leaning Jowler BBQ gang was from Pennsylvania and had, indeed, entered the 2023 KCBS champion contest. Fire and Shine BBQ hailed from PA as well and took turns as contestants and judges. The Good Charcoal booth was run by two gutsy 13-year-old girls, and Rough-Cut Q was the fourth competition for a couple of friends, one guy from Massachusetts and the other from Cherry Hill, NJ. They confided that their name had grown out of their first competition, when they were told that their pork ribs were too roughly cut. They came in last at that first competition but had already edged up to second place.

The best part of our visit with the competitors was being fed ribs by both Mark from the Neversink — Page 11



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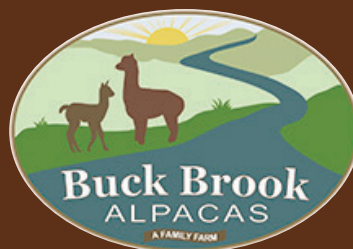
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## BBQ → Page 9

General Store and an SCVA board member, whose offerings were juicy and falling off the bone, slicked with a complex sauce; as well as the guys from Smokin' in the Barnes, who are also caterers. They offered us slightly spicy honey-glazed ribs that were meaty and delicious. I asked which sides were most popular with BBQ, and they said their specialties are mac and cheese, baked beans and coleslaw.

Before leaving the competitors' booths, we stopped to talk with SCVA's Sarah Halpern, who extolled the virtues of the gorgeous Walnut Mountain Park grounds. The park has both soccer and baseball fields, disc golf (a variant on regular golf but using Frisbees or special discs to aim at an above-ground target in as few throws as possible), a picnic area, pavilion, playground—and best of all, hiking trails that allow visitors to experience the lush beauty that is integral to upstate New York. When an event isn't taking place, parking is free. The park is located at 73 Walnut Mountain Rd. in Liberty.

And the winner was... Leaning Jowler BBQ! I had stopped by their booth as they were busy carefully laying ribs and chicken thighs on beds of curly kale. I didn't want to bother them while they were working, so neglected to get a bite of the winner's fare. Maybe next time. And for me, there will be licking of fingers, for sure!



The winners!

RR photos by Jude Waterston



Coleslaw with sweet and sour dressing is a great accompaniment to BBQ.

### Coleslaw with sweet and sour dressing

4 servings

This tangy coleslaw is the perfect accompaniment to BBQ or anything cooked on a grill.

#### For coleslaw:

- 1/2 small white cabbage
- 1/2 small red cabbage
- 3 carrots
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced scallions
- 1 yellow or orange bell pepper (optional)
- 1 heaping tablespoon snipped fresh chives as garnish (optional)

Slice the cabbages as thinly as possible and place them in a large bowl.

Peel the carrots, then cut each into thirds. Slice each third into thin strips, then cut the strips into julienne slices. Add to the bowl with the cabbage. If using the bell pepper, remove the top and seeds. Slice the pepper into very thin slices and add to the bowl with the other vegetables. Add the scallions to the bowl.

#### For dressing:

- 1/8 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil or avocado oil
- 1 tablespoon light or dark brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons honey mustard
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Whisk all of the dressing ingredients together and pour over the slaw. Gently mix the coleslaw. Top with snipped chives, if using. Refrigerate for about an hour. Check for seasoning and serve.



An adult bald eagle lands on the same branch occupied by a sub-adult, most likely a four-year-old. The head still is not completely white at this age.

RR photos by Jeffrey Sidle



This is the first photo of a take-off sequence taken from inside my vehicle and only required a small crop of a 500mm zoom capture. The eagle is leaning forward and raising its wings. The camera was taking photos at a rate of around 12 images per second, accentuating the commitment of what it takes between seeing the takeoff and putting it on a camera sensor—they are gone before you know it!



Free of the bonds of gravity, the eagle takes flight with its six- to seven-and-a-half-foot wingspan. It is now free to relax its talons from their grip on the old tree top.

# When the eagles visit

## Photographing nature’s wonders in Damascus Township

By JEFF SIDLE

Having relocated to my new forever home in the Upper Delaware region of Northeastern Pennsylvania’s Pocono Plateau, I have been blessed with the best of Mother Nature’s wonders, right outside my own doors and windows. There always seems to be something happening almost every day that catches my attention and diverts my attention from the mundane tasks that always are calling to me, such as cutting the grass or tidying things up around the property.

There’s one thing that always sends me scurrying to grab my camera, and that is a visit from the bald eagles who are frequently seen flying above and sometimes landing around the property.

The beavers take advantage of the lowlands and keep their dam in order. That’s despite the objections of the neighbors and the township road workers who need to keep a handle on the level of the pond to protect the road and the basement of the adjacent house. This provides a habitat for fish, ducks and other water birds and mammals who could all be potential prey for the raptors.

While I have never seen the eagles catch anything, I have heard some of their altercations with a great blue heron. And I have also seen them perched on stumps or the beaver hut. Then they fly up to the trees to dry their

feathers before flying off to their home territory. There is a nest along the Delaware River not more than two and a half miles from my property.

The success of the banning of the chemical DDT and the re-population of the eagles is something that remains an inspiration, reminding us of what can be done by determined individuals. The peregrine falcons have also benefited similarly and are slowly returning to their ancestral nesting cliff sites along the Delaware River as well as the rest of New York and Pennsylvania.

My hope is that these successes can be used as a catalyst for the conservation of other species in peril, so that following generations can have the same or better wildlife experiences than we are enjoying today.

The photos I have shared to accompany this article were taken on or adjacent to my property in Damascus Township from the beginning of February through mid-May. I reached out to Scott Rando, a friend and a regular contributor to the **River Reporter** for some information about these eagle encounters. I asked about the adult with the juvenile in the spring, and Scott said, “Nestlings are independent by the fall of the year of their hatching.” So I guess the prey in the area and or the presence of another eagle in the territory drew them together for a short visit.

Scott continued, “I have seen immature eagles in this area with leg bands from Maine and Massachusetts, especially over winter. Young eagles can be wandering nomads... but when they approach sexual maturity at 4-5 years of age, they return to their natal area, find a mate, and establish a breeding territory within 50 to 100 miles of their original nest.

“Eagles other than breeding adults display some social behavior by perching or roosting together. This is usually a short-term relationship.”

In the last sighting I photographed, I was fortunate enough to capture images of the bands on the legs of the eagle. The blue band identifies that the bird was banded in New York, and the silver band is from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I again contacted Scott, who funneled the information back to the folks he worked with on the eagles in the past. They were able to identify the bird as one that was rescued in 2018, found in New York State and was rehabilitated successfully and released back into the wild.

I had to check back through my photo archives, as I had been involved in two rehab releases—could it be? Well, it got my hopes up, but it was not to be, as the releases I was a part of happened on either side of that year.



The eagles work hard to catch their prey most of the time, but they are not above taking advantage of an easy meal. This one-and-a-half-year-old juvenile found what was left of a deceased whitetail doe and was joined by other eagles as well for about a week or so. Eventually the carcass was picked clean with the help of the local vultures.



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# Time travel

*The past is always with us. Sometimes it lives on in rock form.*



By ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ • Illustrations by AMANDA REED

**REGION** — We talk a lot about history here. There are museums aplenty. They chronicle the Lenape, the railroads, logging. Eighteenth century, nineteenth century.

The story of our people is important, but it's not the only story.

What happened here before humans walked through the Upper Delaware?

I'm not a geologist or a paleontologist or a physical anthropologist. Just somebody who has mastered Google and likes to learn. Trust me on this geological exploration? More fool you, probably. But it's a fun journey. If you take it yourself and learn something, tell me about it at [copyeditor@riverreporter.com](mailto:copyeditor@riverreporter.com).



Great Scott!



RR photo by Amanda Reed

Rock on! Each rock has a story to tell if only we had the wit to understand.

## Written in stone

Scientists map out really ancient history based on the rock record and the fossils they find, using radiometric dating and other techniques. As they learn more, the pattern changes and the story shifts.

### All wet: The Precambrian Era, 4.5-3.9 billion years ago (bya) to 541 million years ago (mya)

At first, and for a long time, most of what became North America and the Upper Delaware was underwater. Life emerged in the sea, starting with bacteria—the building blocks of which probably hitched a ride on the asteroids that pounded the earth for a very long time. Then you got your blue-green algae, your single-celled critters (small!), your mounds of algae (ick), your sea worms (double ick) and more.

Not all at once.

Some national parks (such as Yellowstone) have yielded fossils from more than 2.5 bya.



Are you wondering what the Earth looked like from 750 mya on? Check out this interactive map and dino database at <https://dinosaurpictures.org/ancient-earth#170>. Enter a city name and see when and where our tectonic plate can be spotted. Where would you have been in the late Precambrian?

Was there land? Eventually. A supercontinent now called Rodinia formed about 1.2 bya. It included Laurentia, a craton (a chunk of the Earth's crust that is the basis for a continent), and *that* included North America and Greenland and at that point I guess part of Scotland and Ireland? Home sweet home.

Rodinia broke up between 750 and 633 mya.

The Precambrian closes with the Proterozoic Eon. Fossils dating back that far have been found around the Appalachian Trail, though not around here.





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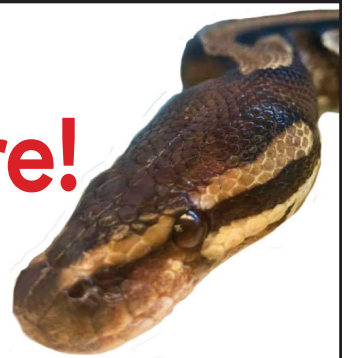
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# TIME TRAVEL - Page 15



## The Paleozoic, 541-251.9 mya

Different from the Precambrian. And now the Upper Delaware sports fossils.

Doug Kraus of Narrowsburg, NY found fossilized gastropods, which were determined by a National Park Service paleontologist to be from the Devonian period, about 383-359 mya. Relatively speaking. (Read more about it at <https://riverreporter.com/stories/ancient-history,116983>.)

Was there land? Yes indeed. During this period, Pangaea formed. Fun fact: Dr. Ted Nield at the Geological Society in the U.K. said that continents and supercontinents have formed and reformed repeatedly since plate tectonics began about 4.6 bya, and we are currently in the middle of a 500-million-year cycle now. Yes, this got some press a couple years ago, but yanno, not much has changed since then.

In any case, Pangaea contained Laurentia as well as Africa, South America and Europe. It was surrounded by the giant ocean Panthalassa.

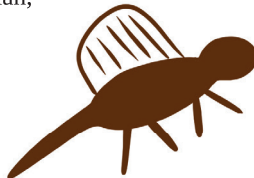
The Appalachian Mountains began forming about 480-250 mya, although parts are about a billion years old. (Visit the Blue Ridge Mountains sometime; they're spectacular.) Land was squashed and folded and mashed by more land until the Appalachians stood as tall as the Rockies do now.

Later, erosion. So it goes, old mountains.

Was there life? You bet. Synapsids (proto-mammals and proto-reptiles, the derpiest of the derpy animals but I still might not want to meet one on the street), plants, trees, fish, amphibians, sharks.

Pangaea was complete by the start of the Permian, and it teemed with life.

Until it didn't.



After a promising start, most of life ended. Asteroid? Volcanoes? Nobody really knows. What do you think?

So many things died in the **Permian Extinction, 252 mya**.

Ninety percent of life on Earth, gone.

What caused it? Some possibilities:

Multiple volcanic eruptions in what is now Siberia.

Asteroid strike followed by fast-rising levels of CO2.

Falling sea levels that released CO2, causing severe climate change.

Something else?

Scientists are still debating.



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There were and are many kinds of synapsids. The images are by Nobu Tamura, Max Bellomio, Roman Uchytel, Dmitry Bogdanov, Fir0002, and John and Karen. It is retouched by Zwoenitzer. Pictured are, from top left: Cotylorhynchus (might be my favorite), Dimetrodon grandis, Inostrancevia, Moschops capensis, Castorocauda, Adelobasileus cromptoni, a wild shortbeak echidna and a tiger.



Image by ABeIov2014, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

A bonus picture of Cotylorhynchus, because it's so dang cute. That little head! Come on, admit it. Adorable. Link to file: [creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0)



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The Best encourages friendly competition but also serves to uplift the community and locally owned businesses by showcasing all that they offer. The listings serve as a visitor's guide to the variety and variability of the region, from architects and art galleries to first-date hot spots and wedding-cake bakers. At the end of each year, River Reporter is proud to announce the winners, present them with certificates and throw a party in recognition of the quality they bring to the Upper Delaware.

## WHY SHOULD YOU VOTE?

Do you have a favorite diner where the waitstaff treats you like family? Want to show your hairdresser that she matters? Or the patient people who run your child's daycare? If you have any interest in supporting local businesses, this is a way to show your appreciation for the hard work they put in to making our communities active, vibrant places.

Maybe you're a business owner yourself. Encourage your customers to vote, vote, vote so you can take advantage of all the opportunities to brag afterward!

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# TIME TRAVEL ~ Page 17

## Terrible lizards and the continental cruise, 251.9 mya to 66 mya

Breakups are messy. The Mesozoic started with one that lasted about 50 million years.

From 251-201 mya, Pangaea fractured. Rifts formed, including along what would become the East Coast of the U.S. Rifts are lowlands that are formed when tectonic plates move apart. Magma tore at the supercontinent. A chunk of supercontinent—part of which would become North America—gathered up its lifeforms and went for a very slow cruise during the Triassic Period.

(Side note: Want to see a modern rift? Check out the Great Rift Valley system, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_Rift\\_Valley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Rift_Valley).)

As far as life goes: Welcome to the age of the dinosaurs, and reptiles, and little mammals, and amphibians, and sea creatures, and ferns—basically the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous Periods.

We had dinosaurs, although because of erosion the fossils are gone. There is no rock record from the Mesozoic here. (Where are those rocks and microscopic bits of fossils? Under the Atlantic? Buried deep in the Earth?) Our dinosaurs toodled around in the Appalachian Mountains, riding the piece of supercontinent, making their way north and westward. The continent shed bits of itself and collected more, cooling down in the new Atlantic Ocean.

In national parks out west and in Alaska you'll find fossils and rocks from that time. Scientists have identified Triassic dinosaur footprint fossils in the Valley Forge, PA area and you can see the footprints at the national historic site.

And before there's a chorus of "We have coal and that's made of dinosaurs!"—the Encyclopedia Britannica explains that fossil fuel material mainly comes from algae, bacteria and plants. "Consequently, at least most of the time, you are not pouring refined dinosaur parts into the gas tank of your vehicle."

The dinosaur age ended with—probably—a bang, not a whimper. Physicist Luis Alvarez and his son Walter, a geologist, hypothesized that a giant asteroid strike near the Yucatán Peninsula killed 75 percent of life on Earth.

Multiple national parks out west harbor rocks that date back to the Mesozoic Era, and evidence of an asteroid strike at the right time was found in North Dakota.

The dinosaurs are gone and are not gone. Multiple museums have dinosaur fossils or skeletons or at least good replicas of them. You can buy fossilized dino poop (coprolites) online. How old are the rocks you see? Don't know? Neither do I. Pick up a book and learn.

## Chilling: The ice ages, 2.6 mya to 11,000 years ago

Yes, we're skipping the early primates and the formation of grasslands, skipping enormous mammals and terror birds. (Personally I am happy to skip terror birds.)

It's been a hot summer, so let's talk about the cold!

By this time, the Upper Delaware had settled down. North America and the other continents looked roughly as they do now. (Aside from fewer *Homo sapiens*, anyway. The current thinking has folks arriving in North America about 15,000 to 20,000 years ago.)



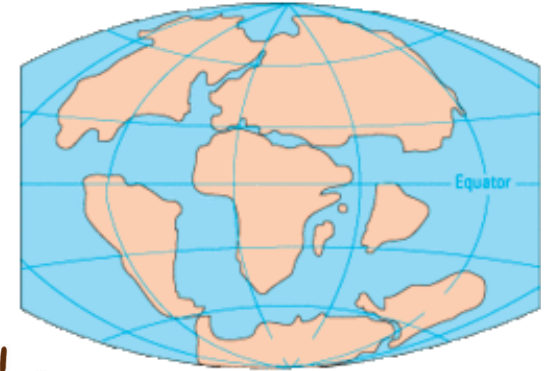
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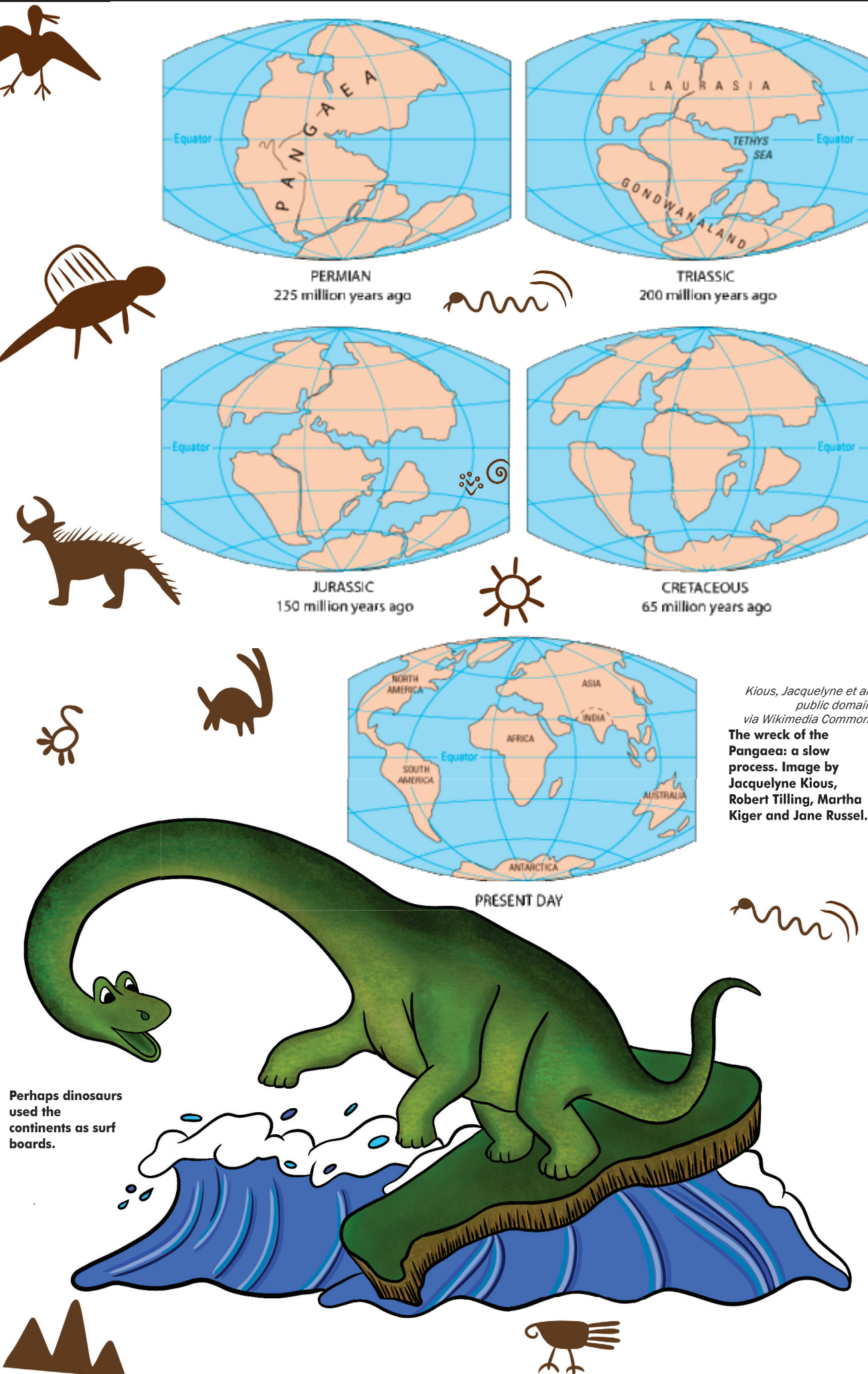
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PRESENT DAY

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The wreck of the  
Pangaea: a slow  
process. Image by  
Jacquelyne Kious,  
Robert Tilling, Martha  
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Perhaps dinosaurs  
used the  
continents as surf  
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The air cooled; ice formed in Canada and over time—growing in winter; not melting in summer—spread through New York and into Pennsylvania. The ice dug into the rock; it tore things up; it left bits and bobs and rocks and piles of things behind as the glacier retreated.

Mammoths and sloths and other cold-weather-tolerant animals lived here. Maybe they walked where you do now.

Here in the Upper Delaware, the glaciers left marks. The land is scarred by their passage. "The glacial landforms left behind by the last ice age are the most diverse and interesting features of the Upper Delaware," said the Park Service staff

who took time to answer some of my more ignorant questions. "The best way to experience the geology of the Upper Delaware is to take a boat down the river."

And look; always look.

That's not the end, of course. More things happened. Lots of things happened. Learn about it! History—written by humans, written by fire and rocks and ice—is vast.

Reading about the sheer staggering life of the Earth is humbling; time is measured out in millions of years. Billions.

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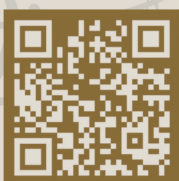
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