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Sixth annual Rubber Duck Race run at Hanson Park

By webmaster on October 26, 2016 · No Comment

CRANFORD, NJ

— The sixth annual Rubber Duck Race was held at Hanson Park on Sunday, Oct. 16, from 4 to 6 p.m. Each year, the event takes place to raise funds to restore Hanson Park. The Hanson Park Conservancy is a nonprofit group that supports efforts to maintain and upgrade the park.



Photo by Jennifer Rubino Residents watch as the rubber ducks float down the river in the annual race.

The sixth annual Rubber Duck Race was held at Hanson Park on Sunday, Oct. 16, from 4 to 6 p.m. Each year, the event takes place to raise funds to restore Hanson Park.

“Since the inception of Hanson Park Conservancy, our goal has been to support efforts to develop and maintain Hanson Park, provide guidance and financial support to the restoration of the Cranford Canoe Club and present educational programs.”

Kathleen Murray, the president of Hanson Park Conservancy, said in a press release. “A plan has been developed that separates the park into zones based on conditions such as flooding, soil, etc. The conservancy plans to continue the restoration of the park. A butterfly meadow was installed this past spring and we hope to obtain ‘monarch way station’ status, as well as reintroduce educational programs. This plan depends on HPC raising money through fundraisers, such as our annual Rubber Duck Race.”

Residents from all areas of New Jersey gathered on Springfield Avenue to watch the race. Pink, blue and yellow rubber ducks floated along as canoe rowers pushed them along the water.

A disc jockey provided additional entertainment for the event. Numbers were announced from a raffle drawing to award T-shirts to 50 children.

“This is a great family activity that I can attend with my mother, who is a senior citizen, and my niece, who is 19 months,” Cinzia Richardson of Hillside told Cranford Life.

Residents from another town said they were visiting friends in Cranford.

“I have friends here, so we went to the fair today and decided to check out this event today, too,” Elyssa Canfield of Glen Rock told Cranford Life.

A local resident was attending in order to cheer on his wife, who had purchased four ducks to race.

“This is the first time my wife is in the race,” Ethan Bezzyinski of Rahway told Cranford Life. “A friend of ours participated last year and told us about it. My daughter was really excited about watching the ducks race.”

“Experienced volunteers signed up to ride in the canoes,” Linda Livelli, a trustee of the Hanson Park Conservancy, told Cranford Life. “The mayor was in one canoe, as well as some local Boy Scouts. Nancy McHenry, treasurer for the board of trustees, rode in a canoe, in addition to the spouse of another trustee, Walter Gallagher. It was a lot of work, but it was also a lot of fun.

“I’ve been running the event for the past two years, but this was my first year as a trustee. I was in charge of gathering the prizes from the local businesses. Each member of the conservancy was in charge of something different, from printing the banners to coordinating the canoes, to contacting press and selling ducks. We also had to work with sponsors to organize the event.”

“Scouts from Cranford Troop 80 were in canoes as well as at finish line,” Murray told Cranford Life in an email. “Also at finish line was Cranford Township Commissioner Tom Hannen. Mayor Andy

Kalnins was in boat that released the ducks at race time. Also, in 'Miss Cranford,' our ceremonial canoe, was Trustee Carolyn Youngs."

On race day, 1,300 individually numbered rubber ducks were released into the Rahway River at Sperry Park and they tumbled over the falls, racing to the finish line at the North Union Avenue Bridge. Numerous prizes for the fastest ducks were awarded, with the top prize being a gift card.

Sixteen lucky winners were awarded prizes from various local businesses. The winners, beginning with first place, were: Esther Matthews, Affronti family, Olivia Billingham, Mayer family, Matt Wissner, Jason Croft, Mark Pollack, Melissa Paine, Marge Shackell, Billingham family, Begonia Cubeiro, Deal family, Nancy Kramer, Tracy Reinholt, Kevin Younger and Avery Lagola.

"On behalf of the Hanson Park Conservancy, I would like to thank all our sponsors and each person who purchased one of our ducks or stopped by Sperry Park to cheer them on," Murray told Cranford Life in an email. "We were blessed with beautiful weather and are thrilled to be one of the wonderful family-friendly events scheduled in Cranford this fall. We look forward to seeing everyone for our seventh annual Ducky Race in October 2017."

*Sixth annual Rubber Duck Race run at Hanson Park added by **webmaster** on October 26, 2016*

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