Virtual Gala

Thursday, November 11, 2021
7:00 pm
Best Wishes
Your Neighbors at the Blasdell Rod & Gun Club
The Evening's Agenda

Opening Remarks by HNHS Board Chair Frank Scarpinato

Presentation of the Baird Visionary Award to Mark Yetter

Penn Dixie Update by Dr. Holly Schreiber & Catherine Konieczny, M.S.

Special Guest Speaker Dr. Kimberly Meehan from the University at Buffalo

Construction Update by Dr. Phil Stokes

Auction Closes

Raffle Winners Chosen

Thank you for joining us!
Mission Statement

The Hamburg Natural History Society promotes the hands on study of natural sciences, including geology, astronomy, and ecology through the operation of the Penn Dixie Fossil Park and Nature Reserve, a tourist attraction for individuals of all ages and backgrounds.

2021 Officers and Directors

Chair.................................Frank Scarpinato
Vice Chair............................Jay Wollin
Treasurer..............................Kyle Gawronski
Secretary.............................Deb Welch

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Jeffrey Baumann
L. Hanna Burkett
Marcus Bursik
David Hanewinckel
Jennifer Hasse
Joe Kchodl
Lillian Los
Laura McDowell
Scott M. Maze
Bret Norvilitis
Keith Wesolowski
Welcome to Penn Dixie’s Annual Fundraiser – Hops n’ Rocks 2021! I hope that everyone is healthy and doing well. As we moved forward from the pandemic, Penn Dixie evolved our thinking, planning, and how we interact with our guests. Many of these changes forced upon us have proven to improve our ability to provide a better experience for our membership and guests. Thankfully we are blessed with an amazing group of staff and volunteers, I wish to extend a heartfelt Thank You to every one of them.

In 2021, we began moving the entrance of Penn Dixie to Jeffery Boulevard, thanks to generous support from the community. We would like to thank you for your continued support of Penn Dixie and hope to see that support continue to grow. Your generosity has an immeasurable impact on our community, children, and furthering the future.

It is my honor to thank our staff and volunteers for their professionalism, their patience, and their dedication to Penn Dixie’s continued hands-on science education. Please enjoy the food, remember to bid on the baskets, and enjoy the night.

Frank Scarpinato, Board Chair, 2021

We thank these generous individuals and businesses who supported our mission with donations of $250 and above to our operations in 2021.

Gordon & Carol Baird
David & Molly Quackenbush Fund
Baird Family Fund
Scott & Cindy Maze
Lillian Los

Lardon Construction Corporation
Grow Buffalo Business
James Eiseman
Karl Flessa
**Staff**

Dr. Phil Stokes  
*Executive Director*

Dr. Holly Schreiber  
*Director of Education*

Catherine Konieczny, M.S.  
*Director of Science*

Sydney Mecca  
*Marketing & Development Coordinator*

**Educators**

Gabby Green - *Lead*

James Hanna

Jonathan Hoag - *Lead*

Alex Krycia - *Lead*

Shirley Landsittel - *Lead*

Stan Martin

Paul Moretti

Matthew Norvilitis

Chris Polisoto

Robin Sanecki

Matt Wheaton

**Astronomers**

Adam Hansen  
Ernie Jacobs - *Lead*

Jim Maroney

Paul Moretti

Rich Switzer

Paul Zimmer

*Eldredgeops rana*

Director of Science Catherine Konieczny and Director of Education Dr. Holly Schreiber celebrating Erie County Earth Science Day.
**Dr. Phil’s 2021 Highlights**

**March:** Penn Dixie hires Sydney Mecca to serve as the first-ever marketing and development coordinator. Our social media and website immediately receive a huge upgrade.

**April:** We splurge and hire two excavators for three days of uncovering new layers of extremely fossiliferous shale. Some material is readily available and the rest is covered under plastic sheeting to protect it until August.

**July:** Marrano Home Builders and Lardon Construction team up to donate and deliver hundreds of loads of fill to help level our future parking lot on Jeffrey Blvd. Lake Erie is visible from the top of the pile. After years of evidence review, we learn that our 2018 attempt to set the Guinness World Record for World’s Largest Fossil Dig is certified.

**August:** Dig With The Experts makes a triumphant return, though the event is held with limited capacity. A heat wave brings 90 degree temperatures during the event.

**September:** School field trips return to Penn Dixie, albeit with smaller numbers.

**October:** Erie County Earth Science Day returns; our storm water mitigation plan for our new parking lot is approved and we install our first-ever mailbox on Jeffrey Blvd.

**November:** After 19 years, we finally outgrow our office space in the Gateway Building and sign a lease for additional space to double our footprint in the building.
Gordon C. Baird Visionary Award

As Penn Dixie celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2020, we wanted to honor those supporters who have been instrumental in our past, in our present, and who will continue to be influential in our future. One of Penn Dixie’s most influential supporters is Paleontologist Gordon C. Baird. Twenty-five years before the successful preservation of Penn Dixie, Dr. Baird recognized the scientific and educational value of the fossils therein. Dr. Baird led field trips and published studies while advocating for the creation of a unique “fossil park used solely for the purpose of fossil collecting.” This award honors his vision.

2021 Gordon C. Baird Visionary Awardee – Mark Yetter

MarkYetter first became involved with Penn Dixie in 1998 when his son’s Cub Scout troop volunteered for a site clean-up at Penn Dixie. Mark was hooked from that point on. He started volunteering regularly, including planning events to draw visitors to the site. Mark’s fondest memories of Penn Dixie are the special events he helped plan. The Scare-assic Park Halloween event, which was held from 2003 through 2011, was a pirate themed event that annually drew up to 1,000 visitors and introduced many newcomers to the world of fossils. Another Penn Dixie event, Mid-Summers Night Adventure, was also one of Mark’s favorites. Mid-Summers Night Adventure allowed families to dig at night under the glow of lantern light. Mark has continued to volunteer his time in recent years. In 2018, Mark was awarded the Field Trip Trailblazer award for his dedication in helping thousands of school children visit Penn Dixie on field trips. When asked why he has continued to dedicate his time to Penn Dixie, Mark said, “Early on I realized that the site was a rare and unique place in my own hometown that drew visitors from around the world to discover its treasures. It still gives me great pleasure to help a first time visitor find their own fossils.”
Special Guest Speaker
Dr. Kimberly Meehan

Kimberly Meehan is a Clinical Assistant Professor with the Department of Geology at the University at Buffalo. She obtained her Ph.D. from the CUNY Graduate Center in New York City under the advisement of Neil Landman (emeritus) at the American Museum of Natural History within the Department of Invertebrate Paleontology. Kim actively conducts research on taphonomic processes and redox geochemistry of the Burgess Shale and sister Cambrian and Ediacaran formations in the USA, Canada, and Australia, conducts statistical analyzes the macro and microfossil assemblages in the Late Cretaceous Western Interior Seaway, and has currently undertaken a great interest in the vast array of microfossils in the black shale basins throughout North America, most especially in Western New York. Her current research involves detailing the abundance and composition of benthic foraminifera, charophytes, and lipid biomarkers for alga within the black shale sequences in the area.
Educator Chris Polisoto & Director of Science Catherine Konieczny

Jay Wollin gives safety briefing during Dig With The Experts

Wolf Clan elder, Marve Jacobs discussing an ash tree during the Tree Walk & Artifact Talk

Executive Director Dr. Phil Stokes teaching the NYSGA field trip about Penn Dixie

Lead Educator Jonathan sampling the wetlands

Fawn at Penn Dixie

Volunteer Dan Krisher at Earth Science Day 2021

Students studying flora & fauna during Ed-ventures

Executive Director Dr. Phil Stokes leading the NYSGA field trip at Penn Dixie

Experts Ian, Jay, Don, James, Phil

Expert, Don Bissett
The Hamburg Natural History Society thanks its officers and directors, staff, volunteers, members, visitors, and community supporters for another great season of science fun!

**Penn Dixie gratefully acknowledges**
the following 2021 supporters:

Erie County  
Town of Hamburg  
Arts Service Initiative of Western New York, Inc.  
New York Life  
U.S. Small Business Administration

**Penn Dixie is grateful to collaborate with**
the following community partners:

Souhtowns Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Buffalo Association of Professional Geologists  
American Museum of Natural History  
Explore & More -- The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Children’s Museum  
Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve  
New York State DEC  
Past & Present Fossil & Rock Shop  
Niagara Majestic Tours  
Graycliff Conservancy, Inc.

We thank County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz, Legislator John Gilmour, Hamburg Town Supervisor Jim Shaw and the Hamburg Town Council, Congressman Chris Jacobs, and the Erie County Legislature for their support of Penn Dixie and the cultural organizations of Erie County.