



The Catoclin Forest Alliance Bulletin

www.catoclinforestalliance.org



Newsletter of the CFA

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Editor: Linda Sundergill

Our mission is to preserve and protect the Catoclin Mountain forest for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations

www.catoclinforestalliance.org

Jim Robbins, CFA President, Receives DoGood-er Award

by Linda Sundergill



JIM ROBBINS

- Mentored youth for over 30 years through Boy Scouts, church programs, and the Frederick Police Activities League
- Serves as longtime president of the Catoclin Forest Alliance, enhancing and preserving local parks
- Founded and leads the SUCCESS Program partnership, helping students with disabilities gain real-world skills through service
- Directed the creation of the Thurmont Regional Library Story Path, coordinating students and community partners
- Organizes large volunteer groups, including faith-based and Amish teams, for park restoration projects
- Dedicated to maintaining the DAR Never Forget Garden, then involving students in its ongoing care
- Honored with the NSDAR Conservation Award for environmental leadership and service
- Proud Vietnam veteran who continues to model service, stewardship, and community commitment.

On October 9, 2025, CFA President, Jim Robbins, received the Military DoGood-er Award at the Arc of Frederick County. This award is given for individuals who have served in any military branch and have made a significant community impact.

Jim served in the US Army July 1966 to July 1969. He did his basic training at Ft. Dix, N.J. and was assigned to the First Army Ft. Meade. He served in Vietnam from 1967-1968 and then returned to Ft. Meade.

Jim was nominated for this award by Ysabel Suarez, Regent, Carrollton Manor Chapter, National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR). Ysabel said, "I was initially made aware of Jim's lifelong commitment to service and conservation when my chapter, Carrollton Manor DAR, awarded him with DAR's Conservation Award. Numerous people from the community wrote letters of endorsement and attended the ceremony. In recent months I have gotten to know him better and seen him in action with all the work he has provided our Never Forget Garden at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, so when I

learned of the DoGood-er Award I immediately thought of Jim! I was particularly touched by his humility and credit to his mother for instilling his life of giving back to the community. He is such a wonderful man.”

Jim did not know he was being nominated for the award until he was contacted to set up an interview with the application review committee. Later there was a get together with all 16 candidates. At the presentation on October 9, six candidates got certificates and ten got trophies. All got recognition for the good work they do in our community. The proceeds from ticket sales for the event went to two charities—Andrea’s House and Suicide Prevention and PTSD Awareness. Each year the honorees nominate one charity each. From that list of nominees, the charitable beneficiaries will be chosen for the following year.

When asked how he felt as he accepted the award, Jim said, “I didn’t think that I would get the award. It was a very emotional moment. People come and go in our lives and we may not have the opportunity to thank them as much as we want to. I was thinking about my mother and how she repeatedly told me I could do anything.”



The Inspiration behind the DoGood-er Awards

The following was copied from www.dogooderawards.com

The event idea started in the Fall of 2014 by Frederick MD native, Caressa Flannery Peterson. At the time doing research to help her son suffering from drug addiction, she discovered that many of the folks who have the disease, also suffer from some sort of mental illness. Research shows that a positive coping mechanism for tragedy, trials, chaos or crisis, is doing good in your community and for others; putting the focus on others, can relieve the pain you personally feel. The pleasure centers of the brain that are affected by opiate drugs (maladaptive), can also be affected by Doing Good (adaptive). Doing good does us good and has positive results on mental health.

The idea was shared with a few mentors and friends who thought it was a great event for our community to honor and recognize those doing good in the community, but supporting non-profits with the efforts. Research also shows recognizing achievements builds character strengths, life satisfaction and the continuation of doing good toward others.

Artist in Residence by Linda Sundergill, AIR Chairman

Martina Maya Callen

Martina Maya Callen was the Artist in Residence at Catoctin Mountain Park September 4-25, 2025. Martina is a 2-dimensional artist from Laurel, MD. During her residency, Martina experimented with the “alchemy of nature” and crafted her own watercolor pigments using plants, seeds, leaves and berries found locally. Reminiscent of the Hudson River School painters who captured the beauty of the wilderness and were instrumental in the formation of the National Park Service, Martina plans to create artwork that is not only inspired by the park but is physically made from the local community—deepening the connection between art, nature and environmental responsibility.

During her residency, Martina did two public presentations. Her September 17th presentation was held on the porch at the Thurmont Library where she talked about her work for environmentalism, naturalism and community wellness. She pointed out the importance of being outdoors and had participants make “intention jars” with leaves, herbs, flowers and oils. Each combination of ingredients was formulated for the “intention” of calmness, sleep, focus or energy. At the end of the session, she led a guided meditation where we listened to the sounds of the night (rain on the roof, crickets and tree frogs) and were led to a very peaceful place.

On September 21st, she did a “Nature’s Palette Workshop” at Apples Church Pavillion in Thurmont. There were 35 adults and children in attendance. She showed all the steps needed to make your own watercolor pigment using local plants, leaves, bark and berries. She showed how the color of the pigment

could be altered by changing the pH with baking soda or lemon juice. The audience had lots of questions and wanted recipes for the watercolor medium that she made. It included gum Arabic, honey and clove oil.



Martina showing the process of making watercolor paint from natural ingredients during a presentation at the Apples Church Pavillion.

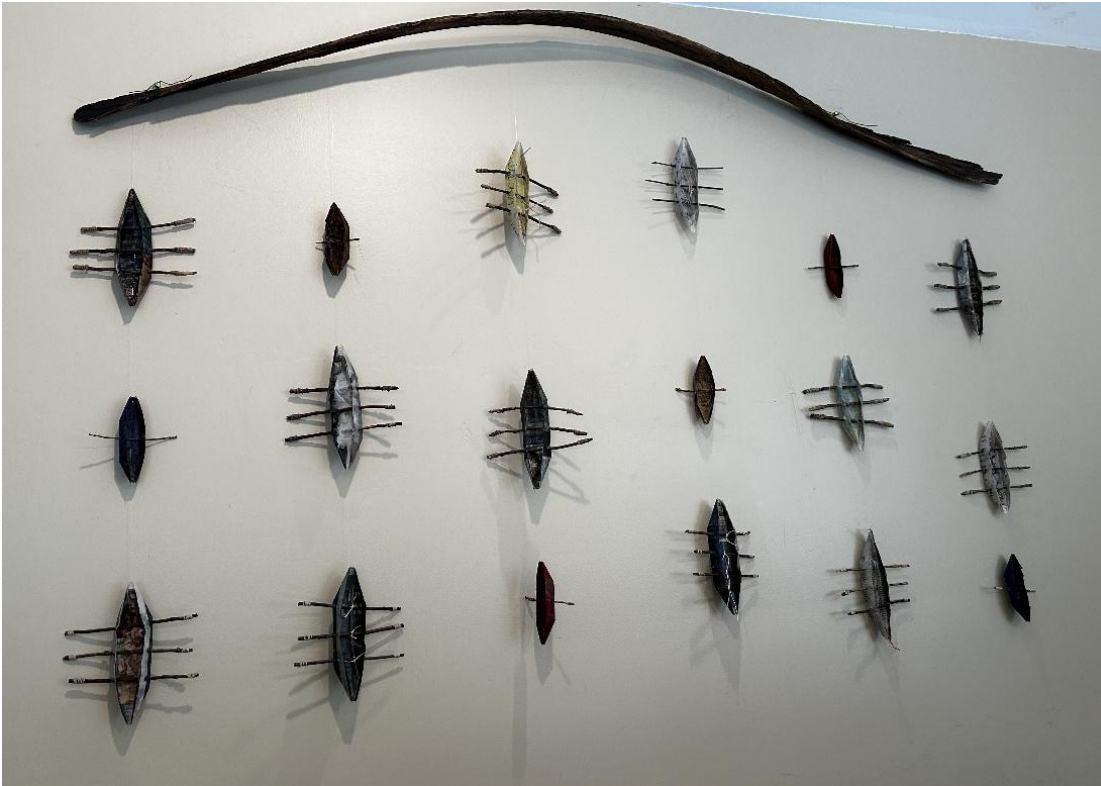
Cherie Peters

Cherie Peters was the Artist in Residence at Cunningham Falls State Park (CFSP) September 6-20, 2025. Cherie is a 3-dimensional artist from Osage Beach, Missouri. Cherie has been practicing her art for 30 years and has taught K-12 to diverse populations for 12 years. While in residency, she produced and demonstrated encaustic painting using melted beeswax and pigment to produce unique pieces. Cherie did three presentations while in residency.

September 7th at the CFSP Concessions Area at South Beach, she presented a program “Encaustic in the Wild” and shared her nature-inspired artwork while demonstrating the ancient technique of encaustic painting. She started with a thin piece of wood which she covered with two coats of melted beeswax and damar resin. With a heat gun she melted the wax into the wood. While the wax was still pliable, she layered on bits of leaves, burlap, flowers, etc. and then applied more wax. She did some engraving into the wax and applied liquid tar, then rubbed it in and wiped away the excess to create more definition to the lines and give an antique type finish.

On September 14th she led an Encaustic Collage Workshop at the Delaplaine Arts Center. There the students had the chance to create two collages of their own.

On September 20th she led A Nature-Zine Workshop where the participants crafted simple nature journals after doing a quiet observation of the park trails.



This is the art piece that Cherie installed at the Manor Area of CFSP. Strung from a piece of drift wood are small boats made from the pages of the park brochures. Small twigs form the oars. The boats are preserved with the encaustic process and are reminiscent of all the small crafts that ply the waters of the lake at CFSP.

Reagan Herndon

Reagan was our artist in residence September 2-26, 2024 in Catoctin Mountain Park. Below is her art that was inspired by her residency.



"Between the Echoes"

By Reagan Herndon.

Acrylic on canvas

16"x20"

During my time at the park, I often heard the pileated woodpeckers on the trails. Their very distinct calls easily carried through the forest, reverberating through the trees, and after I would hear them, of course I would do my best to follow and try to find the source, so I could hopefully catch a glimpse of one. I was so excited when one day while following the direction of their calls, I was able to find and see a group of them amongst the trees and some fallen logs. I stayed there quite a while just watching and listening to them and it was one of my favorite experiences at the park.

Reagan Herndon



Rachel Wojnar

Rachel was our Artist in Residence at Cunningham Falls State Park September 2-22, 2024. Below is the art piece that was inspired by her residency.

When the Birds Learn

By Rachel Wojnar

Oil on canvas

12" X 36"

Rachel said she noticed wings of the spotted lanternfly littering some of the logs along the trails as she hiked. She realized that the birds had learned to recognize the lanternflies as a source of food—hence the name of this piece.



A Note from our President, Jim Robbins

The nights are a little cooler and the daily temperatures not as hot. Winter is just around the corner and the mountains will be full, once again, of youth groups eager to explore, have adventures and learn about the Catoclin Mountains.

It is great to see and have Federal Park personnel back in our National Parks. Be respectful of the beauty and animals that you see as you visit their home. Hike the trails, take in the wonderful views and take the time to listen. Take in the smells of the forest and visit the vistas. Check with the visitor center for information on new trails or future ones to come and see what new changes have been made in the parks. Please stay safe as you do all these things.

On a personal note, I was honored at the DoGood-er Awards on October 9, 2025 and thank everyone for the support for me being named Military DoGood-er for 2025. If it was not for wonderful people in my life like my mother who instilled the importance of doing service from a young age, I would not be fulfilling the gift and joy as God wanted me to do.

“Happy trails to you”
Jim Robbins, President
Catoclin Forest Alliance



Memorial stone at the WWI Memorial Kiosk at Mt. Olivet Cemetery

Academy is a secondary transition/vocational education program designed for students 18-21 years of age with disabilities.” (FCPS.org)

Never Forget Garden Excerpts from article by Judy Thompson (*The Carrollton Chronicle* September 2025)

The Never Forget Garden has enjoyed a spring and summer of care thanks to Ysabel Suarez, Julie Holmes, Jane Warford, Bridgette and Matt Earnest, Judy Thompson and her husband, as well as the inimitable Jim Robbins, who has donated 22 hours since June 24. Jim and Judy tended 1x per week beginning June 24. Thanks to all!

As fall approaches, we await the arrival of students from Frederick County Public Schools’ SUCCESS Academy, who will tend the garden from September 30 through the end of the 2026 school year under the direction of Mr. Robbins and their job coach. “The SUCCESS



Never Forget Garden planted at base of WWI Memorial Kiosk at Mt. Olivet Cemetery

A Note from Shelley



By Shelley Miller, Membership and Fundraising Chairman

Hello CFA Family... I hope you are enjoying this beautiful time of the year as much as I am. If you have already renewed your membership with CFA, thank you! Membership enrollment has a positive impact on many levels supporting the programs of CFA. Joining or membership renewal is easy. Please check out the new CFA website, www.catoctinforestalliance.org, to join or renew. You may also send



the filled-out newsletter page to the CFA PO Box with a check made out to CFA. Or you may contact me directly (Shellbio@aol.com) for assistance. As always, please share CFA membership information with anyone interested in preserving the Catoctin Mountain forest for present and future generations. Many exciting things continue to happen in CFA and we hope you will be a part of them!

In retrospect:

The Crab/Seafood Raffle



Drawing the winning tickets. Left to right: Shelley Miller, event chairman, State Park Ranger Carson, Jim Ribbins, CFA President and State Park Ranger, Claudia Padilla.

Thank you to all who made the annual CFA Crab Raffle a big success by selling tickets again this year. Ticket sales yielded \$980.00 toward CFA educational programs! That is \$180 more than last year. Your efforts are recognized and greatly appreciated. We are moving upward in the amount of proceeds that the raffle is bringing in to benefit the youth of the Catoctin Mountain area. Yeah! Keep a look out for the next raffle!!

First Place winner: Sharon Woerner

Sharon won a certificate for a bushel of steamed crabs from Liberty Road Seafood! Congratulations Sharon!

Second Place winner: Pat Black

Pat won the Artist in Residence Art Work! Congratulations Pat!

Third Place winner: Randy Eyler

Randy won a \$100 gift card from Dutch's Daughter Restaurant!

**CFA expresses a sincere thank you to
Liberty Road Seafood and to Dutch's**

Daughter for their continued support of the educational efforts of the Catoctin Forest Alliance to preserve and protect the Catoctin Mountain forest for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations

A Note from Shelley continued: Upcoming Opportunities:

CFA Holiday Gathering

Once again CFA invites you to join us at a table at the **2025 ThorpeWood Holiday Open House on Sunday December 7**. The ThorpeWood Holiday Open House event takes place from 2:00–6:00 pm at ThorpeWood Inc., located at 13002 Mink Farm Rd., Thurmont. CFA folks will plan to meet there at 3pm to enjoy the festivities and some social time together. Please come and join us! The event is free but it is requested that each guest bring one-two dozen cookies to share on the cookie buffet table! It is such fun! If you have never been to ThorpeWood this is a beautiful time to see it in its glory as it is decorated for the Holidays. Hope to see you there!

Want to volunteer for the EKO fourth grade field trips?

You hear me say this quite often and I will continue to say it! CFA's support of the Every Kid Outdoors (EKO) program at Catoctin Mountain Park has been a long standing one. Anyone interested in volunteering with the EKO fourth grade fieldtrips please contact Carrie Andresen-Strawn (Carrie_Andresen@nps.gov).

CFA remains a vital group of caring individuals who are making a difference in our community. Please consider being an active part of this incredible service-oriented, environmentally conscientious organization. Please consider joining or renewing your membership today! Visit www.catoctinforestalliance.com.

Consider Donation to CFA

To help CFA continue its programs to preserve and protect the Catoctin Mountain forest, please consider, making a donation. CFA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, so your donations will be tax deductible. Any donation over \$20 will include a one-year CFA membership. Here is what your donation could do.

- \$50 will buy notebooks or clipboards for 40 children at the week-long day camp.
- \$120 will cover the cost for one child to attend the week-long day camp
- \$125 will provide food for 40 children for one day of day camp.
- \$200 helps sponsor the Artist in Residence program
- \$364 will buy protective equipment for a SUCCESS program youth.
- \$400 will buy bus transportation for 40 children to day camp for one day.
- \$1300 will fund the SUCCESS program for one year.



Giving Levels

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| ▪ Acorn | up to \$99 |
| ▪ Seedling | \$100- 499.99 |
| ▪ Sapling | \$500-999.99 |
| ▪ Mighty Oak | \$1000 and over |

Donation checks can be made out to CFA and sent to Catoctin Forest Alliance, PO Box 411, Thurmont, MD 21788

Join or Renew your Membership to CFA

We'd love to have you join us in our mission to protect the Catoctin Mountain forest. Your support would be a great benefit to us and the forest. To join CFA or renew your membership, please send the membership application form and a check made out to **Catoctin Forest Alliance** with notation "**Membership**" to the address below. **The yearly membership dues are \$20 per person or \$30 per couple.**

You can also join online at <http://www.catoctinforestalliance.org/index.php/join>.

Kathy Byrne
CFA Treasurer
123 Ironmaster Dr.
Thurmont, MD 21788

New members will receive a CFA patch



Name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email address: _____

Committee Interest

Strategic Planning ____	Membership ____	Conservation/Education ____
Fundraising ____	Artist in Residence ____	Marketing/Publicity ____
Information Technology ____	Finance ____	

Visit our website at www.catoctinforestalliance.org