



"What the Kennedys are to politics, the less-famous Craigheads are to nature—a prolific and accomplished clan." *Kirkus Reviews*

Volume IV No. 2 Winter 2019

Hunter

President's Message

John Coyle



This is a sensitive subject in the wildlife conservation world.

Carnivorous animals must of course kill to live. Omnivorous humans, however, CHOOSE to kill *indirectly* when they eat animals killed by farmers. And we know they could just as well survive on plants. Hunters, worst of all, DIRECTLY kill their own animals, sometimes just for sport and may not even eat them.

What's an animal-lover to think?

Let's consider the Craighead naturalists' view of hunting. This will be pertinent in January 2019 as Craighead House opens its "Book of the Month Program" with a focus on Jean's *Vulpes the Red Fox*, her first book, published in 1948. After an idyllic youth wonderfully described by the author, *Vulpes* encounters his first humans when a group of boys try to "catch the baby fox" as they return from their swimming hole. The fox pups encounter a variety of other threats, as the prey/predator theme plays out. Later, before meeting Fulva,

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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.

Grants & Support Update

The parking lot improvements/ADA outdoor restroom project is proceeding. The sewage plan submitted by the engineer has been approved, allowing the plans and drawings to be completed. Architect Bob Cianfichi submitted the bid specifications to the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and they have been approved.



PA

DCNR, Cumberland County Planning Department, Cumberland County Visitors Bureau (CVVB), and private individuals are making substantial donations to make this project a reality. **We can still use in-kind donations of materials such as roofing, electrical and plumbing items for the restroom.**

A request for bids will be advertised in the month of January. A pre-bid conference will be held to handle questions potential bidders might have, and bids must be submitted to Cianfichi's office by 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 24.

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Jean Craighead George Was Born 100 Years Ago

On July 2, 1919, three years after unexpectedly having identical twin boys, Frank and Carolyn Craighead had a blonde-haired daughter. They named her Jean Carolyn. Born into a family of naturalists, Jean was exposed from her first breath to the world of things wild. Living in Washington, DC during the school year, the family spent their weekends along and in the Potomac River, exploring, experiencing and learning about the world around them. As soon as school was out, they escaped to Frank's childhood home in the Pennsylvania countryside along the Yellow Breeches Creek. Jean loved those summers. "We had glorious times." Largely unsupervised, she, her brothers, cousins and friends cavorted in the woods, fields, mountains and streams of Cumberland County, preparing themselves for careers as naturalists.

When Jean was twelve, her brothers took up falconry, a sport previously unpracticed in North America and, just teenagers, soon became famous through newspaper reports of their unusual activities and from journal articles they wrote. Jean's participation had a lasting effect on her as reflected in her works.

The Craighead children excelled at school as their parents expected them to do. However, when Jean was in fourth grade, she was unable to work a math problem at the blackboard. So, she wrote a poem

instead. That her teacher encouraged her writing stuck with her for the rest of her life. Her high school yearbook, which she illustrated, declared, "She is talented, especially in writing and drawing, and hopes to become an author, illustrating her own books."

Her father gave her two college choices: George Washington University, where she could live at home, or Penn State College, where she would get in-state tuition due to her father maintaining his birthplace as his permanent residence.

Jean thrived at Penn State and served in leadership positions in several writing and dance organizations. Months after Jean Craighead graduated from Penn



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NEWS from the CHH Board

Jean's *Book-of-the-Month* Celebration

This year, one of the ways Craighead House is honoring the 100th anniversary of Jean's prolific career as a writer of children's books about nature is with our Book-of-the-Month celebration. Titles were chosen on the basis of being still in print and readily available to readers from bookstores and libraries across the country. Relevance was also a consideration.

Vulpes the Red Fox leads off the year because it was the first book Jean wrote—and illustrated. Newbery Medal winner *Julie of the Wolves* is the selection for July, Jean's birth month. September is the only month with two books: *How to Talk to Your Dog* and *How to Talk to Your Cat*, to avoid discrimination. It is also the only month to deal with pets, not wild animals.

This is the first step in a comprehensive outreach plan drafted by Sarah Fischer, Craighead Education Coordinator, who strives to create programming that will expand audiences via a curriculum targeting Engagement with Nature, Immersion in Literature and the Arts and Connection to History.

It is our hope that schools and libraries will adopt this Jean Craighead George book list in whole or part to encourage adults and children alike to read more about nature. Look for signs at libraries and bookstores to see if the ones you patronize are participating. You can also do this on your own. The following books have been selected for the first quarter of the year. More information can be found on our website, CraigheadHouse.org.

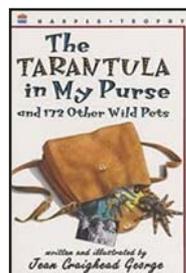


January

She illustrated it, too! *Vulpes*, the smartest kit in the his litter, becomes a legend among the forest's hunters. What happens when he meets his greatest foe?

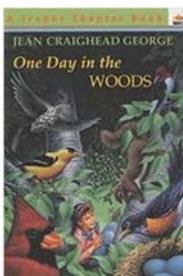
February

On any given day there might be a bat in the refrigerator an owl in the shower, or a crow at the kitchen table. *The Tarantula in My Purse* abounds with humorous tales that recall what life was like in Jean's house.



March

In *One Day in the Woods*, an intrepid explorer, young Rebecca searches for the wizard of the woods, a warbler. Seeking the bird, she discovers the magic of spring and forest inhabitants.



Jean Craighead George 100 (from page 3)

State in 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, disrupting her graduate studies and launching her into a writing career. During WWII, she worked as a reporter covering topics of national interest for *The Washington Post*. In January 1944, she married her twin brothers' grad school botanist roommate, John Lothar George, but didn't see much of him due to his being at sea on the *USS Mervine*.

During John's infrequent leaves, Jean and John spent hours interviewing Buck Queen, a dog trainer and fox hunter who lived down the road from "The Shack," her parents' weekend cabin along the Potomac in Maryland. John took fastidious notes concerning the information on dogs and foxes the old man related. With John's notes in hand, Jean started typing her first book while he was away defending the country. While Jean did the bulk of the writing, "John brought to the book his observations of birds and animals and occasionally typed out a paragraph."

After he was released from government service in early April 1946, John joined his bride at Craighead House. Here, he reviewed her manuscript for accuracy in terms of animal behavior. Jean's friend from childhood in Washington, DC, Ruth Chew, visited them the last two weeks of April. Much of the activity during Ruth's visit was centered around catching or buying

a red fox kit. Eventually, Jean and John bought Fulva, a young female, from Andy the fox hunter. During the visit, Ruth read Jean's completed manuscript for Jean's first book, *Vulpes the Red Fox* and, on a rainy Sunday, painted an air castle above the kitchen's east window. John joined her and painted a red fox in the space over the east door, possibly using Fulva as a model. Prior to finding Ruth Chew's diary, the Craighead family thought Jean had painted the fox, not John.

John wanted to further his education. With the G. I. Bill and a teaching fellowship to support them, he re-enrolled in a Ph.D. program at the University of Michigan. The start of the 1946 school year found Jean Craighead George living in a tent on an Ypsilanti farm, not far from the university's campus in Ann Arbor. There, John conducted research for his dissertation and Jean wrote.

After submitting the *Vulpes the Red Fox* manuscript for publication, Jean looked for topics for future books. During the four years they lived in the tent, an experience Jean loved, she researched and wrote more books. In 1948, her first novel for young adults was published by E. P. Dutton, now a division of Penguin Books, co-authored with her husband and illustrated by Jean. But Jean wasn't finished, she had already begun writing another book.

Jean and the Craighead Family I Remember

by Laurie Craighead Rudolph (second cousin to Jean, Frank and John)

In celebration of Jean's 100th birthday, we will be encouraging the reading one of her books each month. As one who knew her, I would like to tell you about Jean.

Born on July 2, 1919 and died on May 15, 2012, Jean was not only a great author but also a talented artist/illustrator, using both skills in her books. Her Christmas cards and many personal notes to the family were illustrated.

Her greatest literary achievements were, a prestigious Newbery Medal for *Julie of the Wolves* and a Newbery Medal of Honor for *My Side of the Mountain*. But my favorite is *The Summer of the Falcon*, whose setting is the Craighead House beside the Yellow Breeches, where her drawings appear on the kitchen walls and is the site of many inspiring passages about adventure. Her writing desk, next to the window, still remains. Jean wrote over 100 children's books! She dearly loved the outdoors and being close to all that was in it.

Everyone was drawn to her. Jean had stories to tell using her experiences with nature and wildlife. She was brilliant and famous, yet genuinely pleasant



natured and down to earth. Fame did not change her friendly personality. I adored her and named my first child Julie, after *Julie of the Wolves*. She always made one feel important. Jean was one of a kind!



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Craighead family notoriety surrounds Jean, Frank and John but the Craighead blood and legacy runs through all of our veins. Our love of wildlife, nature and being outdoors is in our genes. My father, Sam, and his brother, Bill, used to spend the entire summer with Jean and the twins during the 1930s. My family would stay the summer in the 1950s. We were taught about the outside world and had it outside our window and at our fingertips to appreciate and enjoy.

The lessons and experiences were passed down through generations of Craigheads.

When I think of Jean and her brothers, Frank and John, I recall the song "Climb Every Mountain", a Rogers and Hammerstein classic. "Climb every mountain, ford every stream, follow every rainbow, 'til you find your dream ...," reminds me of what they achieved. They did find their dream!

We love to see and, the Craighead House Committee continues to share, what they accomplished as naturalists. They were unique, they were dedicated, devoted and determined. The Craighead Legacy is not only within the family, it travels throughout the world. I am very proud to be a Craighead and embrace the legacy in my name.

Grants & Support Update (continued from page 2)

It is quite possible that work may not start immediately after contract award due to wintry weather, but the project should be finished in early spring. With luck in our favor, it might be completed by the first day of trout season, Saturday, April 6 but we can't count on it.

This project completes the outside preservation and renovation of Craighead House. Our focus now shifts to putting the interior in sufficient condition to obtain an occupancy permit. For starters, the house needs rewiring and plumbing. The powder room can then be converted to an ADA-compliant restroom. With those things in place, a heating and air conditioning system can be installed. But that's not all, some plaster and floor work needs to be done. Donations of cash or materials would be most appreciated.

Once we have an occupancy permit, we can hold classes and events inside the house, something we've wanted to do since the beginning.

Hunter (from page 1)

the vixen of his dreams and becoming a proud father, the handsome Vulpes learns to delight in confounding the local fox-hunters and taunting their hounds. Read the rest of this story for yourself, but understand that the Craigheads all seemed to love and understand both the predator and the prey, the ethical hunter and the noble hunted.

Personally, I believe that a GOOD life for wild animals is preferable to a LONG life lived in forced captivity or poor conditions. Also I believe, as many Native Americans, that the hunted animal offers its life to the honorable hunter who is in the proper spiritual condition. After taking that life, I give thanks to the Great Spirit, and ask him to send more animals to replenish the earth.

My sister Suzy received a signed copy of *Vulpes* the same Christmas about 1959 that I got my copy of *My Side of the Mountain*. I believe the harsh reality of the hunting passages was hard for her, but I know she treasured Jean's cachet on the flyleaf. Here is the cachet from Suzy's memory, her book being lately misplaced after a basement flood.



Disclaimer: No animals were harmed in the writing of this article. And I was deerless in 2018.

**You can donate to Craighead House
on-line at: CraigheadHouse.org/donate**

OR

**By mail to:
Craighead House Committee
P.O. Box 335
Boiling Springs, PA 17007**