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UGGLA, THE GREAT HORNED OWL, PASSES

On January 9, 2021, The Raptor Trust announced one of their very dearest ambassador birds, Uggla, the Great Horned Owl, had passed on at age 40. Chris Soucy, director of the organization, wrote a tribute to Uggla on their Facebook page and asked the public to share their memories of Uggla. At this writing the post received 1.1 K likes, 135 comments, and 187 shares.

The Raptor Trust is a 501c 3 non-profit organization located in Millington, NJ that provides free medical care to thousands of injured and orphaned wild birds each year. In addition, they provide educational programs to individuals, clubs, and schools about New Jersey's native raptors. Learn more at theraptortrust.org.

Chris Soucy, Director, The Raptor Trust, Facebook homage to Uggla reprinted below, reveals the history, and passion of the organization.

Uggla was an almost unimaginable 40 years old. In the research I have done, I believe he may have been the second-oldest Great Horned Owl that ever lived, and he lived almost every day of those 40 years right here at 1390 White Bridge Rd, Millington, NJ.

In the early spring of 1980, I was a freshman in high-school. The backyard wildlife rehab facility that my parents ran on our property had not yet become The Raptor Trust. It was still The New Jersey Raptor Association at that point: not yet incorporated and without the 501(c)3 nonprofit status that would follow. A "fledgling" organization, one might say. But Len and Diane knew their birds. Even though The Raptor Trust wasn't hatched until a few years later, they had been caring for wild birds - often in the laundry room or bathroom of the house - since the mid-1960's.

It was in that setting that someone dropped off a young floof of an owl. Just a few weeks old, the owl had been found by some well-intentioned local folks who attempted to raise it on their own. There are few things cuter than a baby owl, I'll give you that. But raising a wild baby owl is not easy to do. It is also against state and federal law. The owl wasn't being fed a proper diet, did not have proper housing and it wasn't thriving.

Worse, even though it had been with the folks who found it for only a



(above) With Raptor Trust founder, Len Soucy. Summer 1980

few weeks, it was already completely imprinted and dependent on humans, having been hand-fed and socialized to people. This youngster, still fluffy, had already lost his chance to survive in the wild. Since he was so young, and already so accustomed to people, Len and Diane made the decision to keep him as an education and ambassador bird.

My grandparents and my 95-year-old great-grandmother joined us for dinner one night that spring, shortly after the owl's arrival. Great-grandma Alma Gustavson, a first-generation immigrant from Sweden, saw the bird and proclaimed, "Uggla!" She explained: "Uggla" means "owl" in Swedish. And so, his journey as "Uggla" began.

For 40 years Uggla delighted visitors here. He was talkative. Children would inevitably "hoot" at him - he was an owl after all - and he would often return the favor.

He was inquisitive. Having been imprinted, he had no fear of humans and would often sit out during the day, right up at the front of his enclosure, engaging passers-by with his big, yellow eyes and that kind of funny way he always tilted his head to one side. He really seemed to enjoy it.

He was photogenic. He has graced many of

(continued on page 5)



(above, l-r) Summer 1980: Baby Uggla and his tennis ball friend, Summer 1980 - As a fledgling in the Soucy family living room, Circa 1983: As a "young man", Circa 2018: ready to greet visitors.



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SEA SCOUT SHIP 228 VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

Are you interested in boating, sailing, or mechanics? Come check out Sea Scouting and let the adventure at sea begin! The crew of Ship 228 will be hosting a virtual open house, taking place over Zoom on Saturday, March 13 at 4:00 p.m. and featuring various activities that are bound to pique a young adult's interest in scouting.

Sea Scouting is open to both male and females ages 14-21 who have graduated the 8th grade; we also have a new Maritime Explorer Club for younger youth in 6th to 8th grade. Adult volunteers with maritime experience or captain's licenses are needed too. Join us for a day on the water and bring a friend! Visit our website for more information ship228.com.

Ship 228 is proud to host the virtual open house. The event will include a tour of the ship's main vessel (the 65' Sea Dart II, one of the largest Sea Scout vessels on the east coast), an introduction to the Sea Scout program, appearances from current Sea Scouts, a lively Q&A, and more.

To register, please provide your name, email address, and phone number (which is optional) in an email to Ship228.SeaDart@gmail.com.

Sea Scouts from Ship 228 operate the 65' vessel Sea Dart II, along with a fleet of smaller vessels (including sailboats) from their picturesque base located in Linden, New Jersey. Sea Scouting (which is part of the Venturing Program of the Boy Scouts of America) offers young adults the opportunity to travel and learn skills that could be useful in future careers. Whether you're steering the vessel from the wheelhouse, learning engine room repair, or visiting a new location on one of the many trips, there's something you'll enjoy in Sea Scouting. So, try something different, check us out, and prepare yourself to set sail for a real adventure.

(right) Whether you're steering the vessel from the wheelhouse, learning engine room repair, or visiting a new location on one of the many trips, there's something you'll enjoy in Sea Scouting.



(above) Sea Scouts from Ship 228 operate the 65' vessel Sea Dart II, one of the largest Sea Scout vessels on the east coast, along with a fleet of smaller vessels (including sailboats) from their base located in Linden, NJ.



(above) Adult volunteers with maritime experience or captain's licenses are needed too. Visit our website for more information ship228.com, or email Ship228.SeaDart@gmail.com.



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DARRIN WOLSKO - WHRHS EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Submitted by Denis Kelly



(above) Darrin Wolsko.
Photo by WHRHS

Science Teacher Darrin Wolsko has been selected as Educator of the Year for the 2020-2021 School Year at Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS).

“Mr. Wolsko has been teaching at WHRHS for 17 years and has made an indelible mark on student learning both in and out of the classroom,” said WHRHS

Principal William Librera.

“As a 9th-grade biology teacher, he has assisted students in their transition from middle school to high school with an empathic attitude,” Librera said. “Mr. Wolsko takes pride in his every interaction with our 9th graders: he not only facilitates their understanding of biology, but he also eases them into a high school environment. For some of our students this support is invaluable because it can be daunting to move from a middle school of less than 300 to a high school of 2,000 students.”

WHRHS Director of Science Michael D’Alessio characterized Wolsko as the consummate team player.

“Mr. Wolsko works with other members of the science department to prepare resources that challenge all students he teaches,” he said. “He is known to his peers for modeling inquiry-based instruction. Other departments even hear students speak highly of him, and when he was presented with the Educator of the Year Award, multiple teachers beyond his department commented on how surprised they were that he hadn’t won previously.”

Beyond the teaching staff, security, assistants and administrators rejoiced for him and agreed it was an overdue and well-deserved honor, he added.

“In addition to mentoring freshmen expertly, he also teaches Human Biology,” D’Alessio said. “Mr. Wolsko helps students understand how the systems of the body and their interlaced mechanisms work. His goal is not to make them physiologists, but rather he is committed to preparing students for life. Mr. Wolsko uses the curriculum as a metaphor to help students practice independent and evidenced-based thinking when encountering difficult material not only in preparation for college but beyond.”

D’Alessio continued, “Students who have graduated and who have taken Mr. Wolsko’s human biology class often return to WHRHS extolling the deep learning they experienced in his classroom. Every break, it seems students cannot wait to visit and to thank him. His memory is exemplary; not only do students remember him, he frequently demonstrates his social and emotional IQ when he asks returning

students about how their sibling is doing or whether they are still political science majors, philosophy or business majors; he also often gets their graduation year correct even if it’s been 10 years.”

Principal Librera concludes, saying, “Mr. Wolsko has it all: classroom prowess, personal commitment, and collegial relationships that he nurtures year after year. It is with great pride that we honor him as the WHRHS Educator of the Year.”

Wolsko said he grew up in Hopatcong in Sussex County, and graduated from Hopatcong High School in 1992.

He said he wanted to make sure he acknowledged the person who inspired him to become a teacher.

“I would like to give props to Mr. Robert Schray, who was my German teacher, and bowling coach, throughout my high school career,” he said. “He is the number one reason that I am a teacher today, and I dedicate my career to him.”

Wolsko went to Montclair State University for his bachelor’s of science degree in Biology and teacher’s certification in Biological Sciences, as well as for his master’s degree of science in

Biology. He also has a supervisor’s certification.

He began his career as an 8th grade teacher of life sciences at Mount Olive Middle School in 1997, and left there to come to WHRHS in January of 2004.

“While I taught middle school, I was also an adjunct professor of biology at Montclair for a few years before my first son was born. So, I am here 17 years at Watchung on January 4,” he said.

It was at Mount Olive Middle School 21 years ago that he was awarded Teacher of the Year there, he said.

Wolsko lives in Clinton with his wife, Aimee, who has been the Youth Services Librarian at Hunterdon County Library for 24 years. “We just celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary on December 3,” he said. Also in the household are his father, Vince, a retired therapist, their children, James, 17, a senior at North Hunterdon High School, who plans on attending at the University of Northwestern Ohio, Lima, Ohio, to be an auto mechanic, and Henry, 8, a second grader at Clinton Public School.

“Hobbies? I am passionate about cooking for my family and friends, reading nerdy sci-fi books, collecting cookbooks/researching recipes, as well as camping and being outdoors,” he said.

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UGGLA (continued from page 1)

our gift shop cards, mugs and other items, including a holiday card we sent out last month.

Not long ago, some of my young second cousins came to visit – little guys two generations further down the family tree than me. While passing by Ugkla’s enclosure, it occurred to me that SIX generations of my family knew this one amazing bird. That’s hard to wrap my head around, but there it is. SIX.

Later in his life, Ugkla’s voice changed and began to make this kind of scratchy, crackly-sounding call. Len used to say that he had “lost his hooter.” He was still as talkative as ever; he just sounded like a grumpy, little old man mumbling under his breath. In owl-culture, perhaps that’s exactly what he was.

There would be no way to even begin to count the number of people this one wonderful bird met, delighted, hooted at, taught. Tens of thousands for sure. Possibly hundreds of thousands.

While it would have been better in every way for him to have lived a natural life in the wild, he did live an amazing and meaningful life as an ambassador for his species and for all wildlife. Godspeed, old man.

If you have your own story about this wonderful owl, please do share. We know that many of you loved Ugkla just as much as we did. Visit us on Facebook at The Raptor Trust.

RAPTOR TRUST VIRTUAL EVENTS THIS SPRING

The Raptor Trust is a 501© 3 non-profit organization located in Millington, NJ that provides free medical care to thousands of injured and orphaned wild birds each year. In addition, they provide educational programs to individuals, clubs, and schools about New Jersey's native raptors.

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After graduating from medical school, Dr Somma served his internship in Internal Medicine at Trinitas Regional Medical Center. He then completed his residency in Internal Medicine at Seton Hall Post Graduate School of Medicine, where he was elected Chief Resident of Internal Medicine in his final year.

Dr. Somma has been in practice in Union and Middlesex counties for over 20 years, with an emphasis on excellence and compassion for his patients. He has served as the physician for the Elizabeth Fire Department, the Board of Health of Hillside and has served the Board of Education for Woodbridge NJ. He was granted the Humanitarian of the Year Award by Trinitas Health Foundation in May 2014, for his dedication to the community and his outstanding service to the goals of the Foundation.

Dr. Somma has special interests in various fields of Internal Medicine, including diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular diseases and arthritis/rheumatology. He has represented to major pharmaceutical companies, such as Schering-Plough and Pfizer, in a consulting and educational role for his peers. Dr. Somma has been a clinical educator for Seton Hall’s Physician Assistant Program as an Associate Professor of Medicine for their Internal Medicine program.

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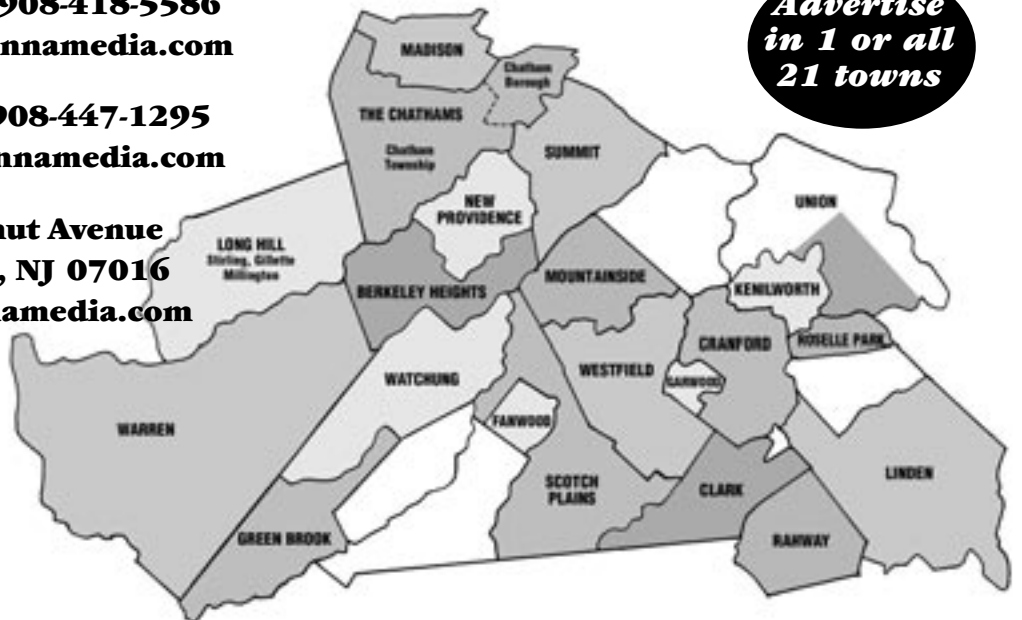
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Caregivers or family members can register on behalf of their loved one or patient. Each individual’s personal information is kept confidential. The service is password protected and will not be shared with other entities. Personal information will only be used for wellness checks and emergency response activities. Register Ready profiles will expire after one year, so personal information must be updated annually.

To register, call 2-1-1 for assistance or visit <https://bit.ly/RegisterReady2020>. Residents who are interested in more community support can contact the Somerset County Department of Human Services at 908-704-6300

or visit bit.ly/HumanServicesPrograms. The Department of Human Services is responsible for the supervision and administration of divisions that help support juveniles, youth, the aging, people with disabilities, veterans and other residents.

For more information, visit bit.ly/HumanServicesPrograms. The Somerset County Office of Emergency Management is responsible for Emergency Management Planning, Emergency Services Training Academy, Hazardous Materials Response Team, County Emergency Response Team (CERT), County Animal Response Team (CART), Search and Rescue Team (SAR), National Incident Management System Compliance, Fire Coordination and EMS Coordination.

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The increase in support services to veterans and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic is possible thanks to funding from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

To make a referral, please call the referral hotline at 1-855-483-8466 or email SSVF@communityhope-nj.org, or email Gema Diaz at g Diaz@communityhope-nj.org.

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www.RoseannOKeefe.com

As a
FULL SERVICE REALTOR®
I can help you coordinate
all aspects of your move
whether you are staying local,
moving out of state,
downsizing or simply
changing your lifestyle.

-  Like Us On Facebook
Green Brook Real Estate
-  Instagram @roseannokeefe
-  LinkedIn /roseannokeefe
-  Twitter @roseannokeefe

The majority of buyers currently looking in our area consists of New Jersey residents seeking more space, as well as an influx of out of state buyers. It is more important than ever to hire a full time REALTOR® that has firsthand knowledge of our community. As an active community member and long time resident with extensive knowledge of our school system & local area, I am your best choice for real estate representation. Feel free to call me for a no-obligation conversation about selling your home, or to chat about the current market. Our conversation is always confidential. I look forward to hearing from you! - Roseann

This month's featured properties



1 Bayview Terrace, Green Brook
Updated kitchen & baths
4Beds / 3.1 Baths / 3 Car Garage / \$795,000



Mountainview Townhome
3 spacious levels of living space
2 Beds / 2.1 Baths / 1 Car Garage

Would you LOVE to know what your home is worth?

Here are just some of the services I provide

- ♥ Free in-home or virtual consultation on how to prepare your home for sale
- ♥ No-obligation market analysis and pricing report
- ♥ Network of professionals to provide cost effective repairs & upgrades, offering the best return on your investment
- ♥ Professional photographer, videographer, and home staging based on the need of the home
- ♥ Maximum advertising exposure on the internet, social media, websites, and print
- ♥ Referral network of attorneys, mortgage brokers, and title company
- ♥ Dedicated licensed marketing coordinator for your home



See what my past Green Brook clients who closed in 2020 have to say about my services.

- ★★★★★ John S. sold 12/20 "We were well informed throughout the entire process and we felt very comfortable that Roseann would help protect our family from COVID related issues. Roseann was also instrumental in quickly getting us a deal that was fair for both sides resulting in a timely closing."
- ★★★★★ Rosemarie S. sold 12/20 "Roseann kept us focused and her knowledge of the area and expertise in selling made it quick."
- ★★★★★ Marie M. sold 12/20 "She has expert knowledge of the process, the market and pays great attention to detail."
- ★★★★★ Matthew M. sold 8/20 "Amazing guidance and just a great person to work with; 'above and beyond' is an understatement!!!"
- ★★★★★ Maria & Steven M sold 8/20 "Her level of professionalism, expertise, knowledge and responsiveness are simply outstanding."



*Each office is independently owned and operated. If your home is listed with another broker, this is not intended as a solicitation. All above reported transactions are located in Green Brook, NJ