



# The Heron

The Newsletter of the Mattapoissett Land Trust, Inc. • [www.mattlandtrust.org](http://www.mattlandtrust.org) • E-Mail: [info@mattlandtrust.org](mailto:info@mattlandtrust.org)

## *Can we still afford to save land?*

**By Gary Johnson**

The recent revaluation of property in Mattapoissett and our historically high property tax bills have some people questioning again whether taking land off of the tax rolls to be held as a public trust is a good idea.

We believe that taking some land off the tax rolls for the benefit of the public not only enhances the town's aesthetics but also makes good economic sense. Let's look at the benefits and costs.

A primary benefit is that all of the MLT properties are open to the public; this clearly has economic worth. Whether watching harbor activity from a bench on the Munro Water Front, walking a dog through the Munn Preserve, or hunting ducks on the Walega-Livingstone Preserve on Brandt Island Cove, we permit activities without charge that might not be permitted by a private landowner. Would a commercial establishment be willing to maintain "Salty the Seahorse" at the corner of North

Street and Route 6? It's doubtful. Although we haven't calculated a value, there are clearly economic benefits that accrue to both residents and visitors who use our wild spaces and "parks".

Although we rarely think about it, open space, especially forests and wetlands, provides other economic benefits even if it is not used for recreational purposes. These benefits include, among others, climate regulation, freshwater regulation, nutrient regulation,

and even pollination. The Mass Audubon Society, in its November 2003 study "*Losing Ground: At What Cost?*", estimated that the annual per acre benefits for forest/wetlands in our area to be approximately \$1,200 to \$6,200 per acre per year. While much of the forest and wetlands might remain in place if they were in private hands, we know from experience that many would not with a subsequent loss of value to us all.

Finally, one should not forget when looking at alternative uses for the land that other uses may demand significantly more in governmental services. The land held by the MLT requires very little in such services. If property is used for housing, especially



*Gary Johnson*

for families with school children, the cost of services to the town can significantly exceed the revenues generated through property taxes. Ironically, increasing tax revenues may actually hurt the town's financial position.



*Gary Johnson*

So what are the costs? The recent revaluation of land values in Mattapoisett has significantly, and we believe unrealistically, increased the assessed value of the MLT properties. (Ignoring last year's acquisitions, our assessed value went from \$2,514,500 to \$7,286,600 this year.) Hypothetically, if all of our properties were transferred back to the tax rolls, but remained undeveloped, the effect would be to reduce the tax rate by approximately 1.5 cents (from \$9.48); that is, by less than one-sixth of one percent. It's unlikely that anyone would even notice this difference in their taxes.

In summary, as members and friends of the Mattapoisett Land Trust, we can all be very proud. Our efforts make a significant contribution to preserving the aesthetic, recreational, and environmental resources of the town. And we accomplish all of this at very little cost to the local taxpayer. In short, Mattapoisett would be less "special" without the MLT.

*Gary Johnson is the current President of the MLT.*

## *Who We Are: Charlie Dunn*

*By Don Cuddy*

Charlie Dunn has a map that his mother gave him in 1972, dating from September of 1860 that shows the Dunn farm on Old Slough Road. In 1869, Jerome Dunn (his great-grandfather) and Jerome's wife, Laura Dunn, worked the land.

"I remember my father taking me back there when I was a boy," Charlie, now 77, said. "You could still see traces of a house and the lilacs were still growing," he said.

The Dunn family has a long history in Mattapoisett, all connected to land ownership and it was the desire to preserve some of that land for future generations that inspired Charlie to sell forty acres of his land to the Land Trust.

"My wife and I both belong to the Mattapoisett Land Trust and we both felt that the land should not be developed," he said. "Not enough land is being saved for future generations."

While any land acquired provides cause for celebration, the newest parcel is of particular value to the Land Trust and the people of Mattapoisett because of its location (see also the adjoining update on the Dunn Preserve by Gary Johnson, this issue of the Heron). The wooded parcel is supporting habitat for Pine Island Pond and protecting this land will help mitigate the negative impacts that increased development can have on water quality in Buzzards Bay.

The acquisition also provides a vital link in a chain of holdings that now extends from the Martocci preserve on Route 6 down as far as Angelica Avenue and plans are in the works, in co-operation with Mattapoisett Boy Scouts, to provide a series of trails and strategically located parking areas to allow people easy access to virgin forest land that looks today much as it did when the Duns first came to this area to fish.

"My ancestors were loyalists who went to Block Island," Charlie said. "They built weirs to trap fish and when it got too crowded they moved up here, first to Fairhaven and then they bought the land that is now Point Connett. They had fish traps here and took the catch to New Bedford in a wagon."

When the trail system is complete there will be access from Route 6, Aucoot Road and Angelica Avenue for hikers, birders and cross-country skiers.

To support the acquisition of this critical property for the benefit of the townspeople, the Land Trust is launching a major fundraising effort in the coming months. We know that it's a tough time to raise funds because of the economy," Gary Johnson said. "But this is a special piece of land and we are confident that our members and supporters will recognize that."



## Stewardship

### A Natural Playground at Dunseith Gardens

We are excited to begin work on a natural playground at the Dunseith Property. With efforts headed by Ozzie Ozenkowski, he is working to use natural materials to create a hanging rope bridge, a scuttle tunnel, an obstacle course for play, along with refurbishing the bell buoy for kids to climb on and ring. We look forward to a dedication of this natural playground on August 15th. If you're interested in helping with this project, please contact the MLT via e-mail ([info@mattlandtrust.org](mailto:info@mattlandtrust.org)).

### Trail Blazing from Grace Pond to the Hiller Trail

As a part of their Eagle Scout project, Nathaniel and Walker Fuchs are blazing a trail from Grace Pond on Bowman Road to the Hiller Trail on the Martocci Preserve. While they may have the skills to do this entirely themselves, an important component of the Eagle Scout project prevents them from doing all of the work on their own. Instead, they must also enlist others to help and then oversee the project. The MLT hopes to later extend this trail project down to tie into Old Slough Road.



*Sandy Hering*

*Nathaniel and Walker Fuchs at the entrance to the Hiller Trail - through their efforts the trail will soon be extended to Grace Pond on Bowman Road.*

### "Protected Spaces" Maps Available

Whenever we make a presentation to groups about our land protection efforts (including during Harbor Days) we use large maps that show all of the protected land in Mattapoisett. Over the years several individuals have inquired about how they could acquire copies of the map. Unfortunately we have neither the software to create the maps nor the hardware to print them – they are created for us as a public service by the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program in Wareham.

While we cannot create new maps for members, we can distribute the old maps after we have used them for our land protection activities – we prefer to recycle them rather than adding them to a landfill. To this end the Directors have authorized the distribution of the old maps to members in good standing on a "first come, first served" basis. We will keep a list of interested members and, as the maps become available, we will contact the member to arrange a delivery.

All of the maps are large, measuring 44" by 34". We have two different styles: one shows individual land parcels with an overlay of the "DEP Core Wetland Resources"; the other uses an aerial photograph of the town. Both have color grids that show land held by the MLT, other land trusts, municipal bodies, and the Commonwealth. To protect the maps for display purposes, we have one set laminated in plastic.

If you're interested in receiving one of the maps please contact a director, contact us by e-mail at [info@mattland-trust.org](mailto:info@mattland-trust.org), or send a note to the MLT at P.O. Box 31. Let us know whether you would like "paper or plastic" and "parcel or aerial" and we will add your name to our list.

Everyone loves maps and with your own "Protected Spaces" map you'll be able to track our efforts as we try to protect some of what makes Mattapoisett "special".

### Gary Johnson Named 2008 Mattapoisett Man of the Year

For his dedication and commitment to preserving Mattapoisett's natural resources, the MLT's President, Gary Johnson was selected as The Standard-Times 2008 Mattapoisett Man of the Year. For the past six years, Gary has led the MLT and provided a clear, thoughtful, and forward-thinking vision to acquire environmentally sensitive lands. He was also a driving force behind the town passing the Community Preservation Act.

*Congratulations Gary!*



## Property Updates Acquisition

### The Dunn Preserve – A Benefit to All

By Gary P. Johnson

For the past decade we have looked for opportunities to increase our holdings in the eastern part of the town south of Route 6. The effort began in the late 90's with concerns expressed by MLT directors Bradford Hathaway and Dana Coggins that development in the area was having adverse effects on natural beauty of the area and that continued development would ultimately harm the ground water and the water quality of Buzzards Bay. At the time we only held three widely distributed properties: Indian Cove Preserve on the Marion town line, the Martocci Preserve and the Coyne Forest between Bowman Road and Hollywoods Road.

Focusing on this area has paid off. In 2004 we were able to acquire three parcels totaling 60 acres on Aucoot Road and Bowman Road. In 2006 we added the Grace properties with the large vernal pool later dedicated as the Grace Pond on Bowman Road. The 40-acre Dunn property lies directly south of these properties and will increase the contiguous MLT holdings south of Route 6 and Aucoot Road to 215

acres, larger than Nasketucket Bay State Reservation in the western part of town. (Our thanks to the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program for providing the map.)

When Mr. Dunn contacted us last year about the property, we were very excited. While the property



Map courtesy of Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program



Gary Johnson

*The future Dunn Preserve as viewed from Old Slough Road*

does not contain habitat for threatened or endangered species, it will provide a much larger area for public recreation. After we have cut a path from Grace Pond to Old Slough Road, visitors will be able to travel from Angelica Avenue all the way to Marion Road (Route 6) on MLT property. It will give everyone a chance to go outdoors and experience nature at any time of the year. For example, an occasional snow-storm might present a wonderful opportunity for cross-country skiing. Or people may want to discover which amphibians are resident in the Grace Pond in spring. Or folks may wish to take the walk to appreciate the changing colors in the fall. The opportunities will be unlimited and ever changing.



## Activities

### Kubb Comes to Mattapoisett!

The Mattapoisett Land Trust hosted an afternoon of Kubb at Dunseith Gardens on a cold day in January. But the weather didn't seem to bother the adults and

This, combined with the fact that there is a certain level of strategy that can be used by players, has led some players and kubb fans to nickname the game "Viking Chess." However, unlike chess, if a player or team knocks over the king before achieving their objectives, that player/team immediately loses the game. Some games have been known to last for hours.



*All ages were able to enjoy a game of Kubb at Dunseith Gardens*

*Luana Jøsvold*

children that attended. They were all too busy trying to knock over their opponents' "King".

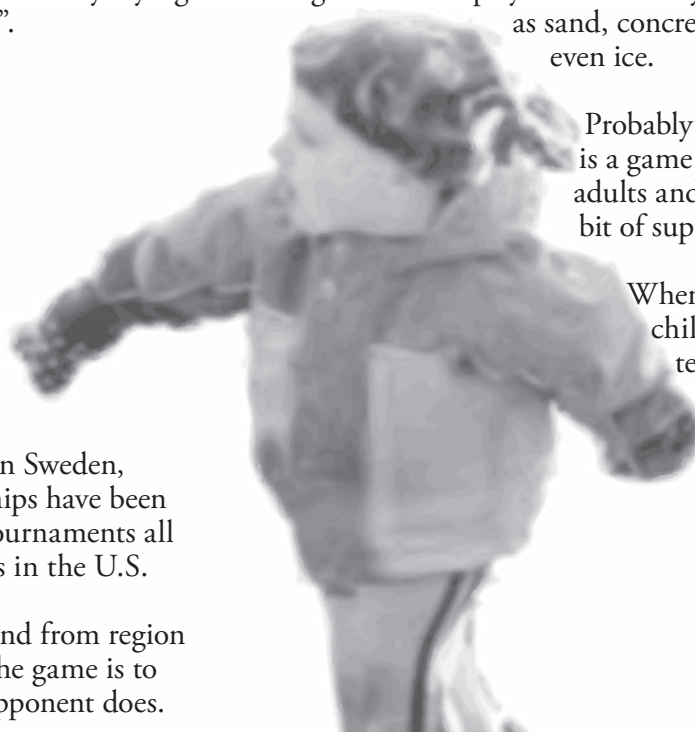
Kubb is a lawn game where the object is to knock over wooden blocks by throwing wooden sticks at them. Kubb can be simply described as a combination of bowling and horseshoes. Today's version originated on the island of Gotland, in Sweden, where the annual World Championships have been held since 1995. There are regional tournaments all over the world, including many places in the U.S.

Rules vary from country to country and from region to region, but the ultimate object of the game is to knock the "King" over, before your opponent does.

The game can be played on a variety of surfaces such as sand, concrete, grass, snow, or even ice.

Probably best of all, Kubb is a game enjoyed by both adults and children (with a bit of supervision).

When playing with children, the 8-meter pitch length (specified in some instructions) can be shortened. Interested? Simply "google" KUBB. Or keep an eye out for the next Kubb event sponsored by the MLT!



# Kids Corner

## Featured Creatures

With spring officially here on the calendar, it's time to get outside and look for those first signs of spring in New England! To help get you started, here are some flora and fauna to keep an eye out for...

How many of these ten spring things can you find? (We'll give you a hint: remember to check out the sky, water, and land!)

To help you get started, we've included a picture of a Gray Cat Bird, to guide you on your spring adventures! If you're interested in inviting some Gray Cat Birds



into your backyard, you can try this simple trick: Hang a dish outside your window with grape jelly in it. Gray Cat Birds love sweets and will come to eat from the dish (it's also worth noting that

*Diane F. Hudis*

ants also like sweet things, so you may need to wash the dish and refill it with grape jelly every few days).

And while you're exploring your own back-



*Vince Cragin*

yard or hiking on one of the MLT properties, if you see an unusual or interesting species, take a picture and submit a Field Log form on the MLT web site!

## Do you have suggestions for activities we could offer area kids?

We'd love to hear your ideas for fun, educational outings or events that get kids involved with the MLT and appreciating the outdoors! Drop us an e-mail ([info@mattlandtrust.org](mailto:info@mattlandtrust.org)) if you'd like to suggest an activity that could be sponsored by the MLT, or would like to get involved in the MLT Educational Committee.

Through a gift of the late Edith Shoolman, the Education Committee aims to provide seed money for funding environmental educational initiatives in the wise use of resources (both locally and globally). With periodic planning meetings, the committee offers educational programming for area children.

## We would like to hear from you!

We know that there are many organizations asking for contributions from you these days! Contributions can take many forms, whether through tax-deductible financial gifts or through volunteer services: your support matters! Your annual membership contributions support the operating expenses of the MLT. Mowing, inspections, forestry services, trash pick-up, legal and accounting advice are all part of what keeps the organization vital and growing.

If you are concerned about preserving the scenic beauty of Mattapoisett, maintaining its biodiversity, or fear the degradation of Buzzards Bay waters from septic systems and chemical run-off, there are many ways you can volunteer your time and services, allowing for the enjoyment and education of future generations. You can check out some of these opportunities on our website, [mattlandtrust.org](http://mattlandtrust.org), or contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Jenny Mello at 774-377-3305.

To become a member of the MLT, renew your membership, or learn more about upcoming events, check out our website: [mattlandtrust.org](http://mattlandtrust.org), or email us at [info@mattlandtrust.org](mailto:info@mattlandtrust.org). We would like to hear from you and welcome any suggestions or comments!



*Brandt Island Cove**Gary Johnson*

## ***Honor Your Loved Ones***

The following individuals or groups have chosen in the last six months to honor their loved ones through donations to the Mattapoissett Land Trust.

***In honor of Noah Tavares' 10th birthday  
from Joyce & Regis Lavoie***

***In memory of Russ Pearson  
from Shirley L. Pearson***

Thank you for your generous contributions, which will be used to further our mission of protecting the land and environment of Mattapoissett for generations to come.

**The Heron** is published bi-annually by the Mattapoissett Land Trust. The MLT, formed in 1974, is a non-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Its purpose is to preserve open space for the enjoyment of current and future residents of Mattapoissett, as well as to educate the public about the sound use of natural resources, and to work with other organizations having the same goals.

Our membership consists of annual contributors — our primary source of revenue — and a volunteer Board of Directors: Vincent Cragin, Don Cuddy, Ellen Flynn, Sandra Hering, Martin Hudis, Luana Josvold, Jenny Mello, Paul Milde, Paul Osenkowski, Blanche Perry, Charles Radville, Elizabeth Richardson, Johnna Tierney, and Gary P. Johnson, President.

The MLT is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization. All contributions are fully tax deductible.

**Mattapoissett Land Trust, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 31  
Mattapoissett, MA 02739  
E-mail: [Info@MATTLANDTRUST.ORG](mailto:Info@MATTLANDTRUST.ORG)

***Join the Mattapoissett Land Trust! Cut along the dotted lines and mail in your support!***

.....  
**Membership Renewal ~ We only exist with your help!**

_____ Name(s)		<b>Membership Categories</b>	
_____ Mailing Address		<input type="checkbox"/> Individual      \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor      \$250
_____ City/State/Zip		<input type="checkbox"/> Family      \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron      \$500
_____ Phone		<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting      \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> Founder      \$1000
_____ E-Mail		<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining      \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate _____
_____ Seasonal Address (if applicable)		<input type="checkbox"/> Friends of Salty      \$5 (Children under 12 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
_____ City/State/Zip			

Please make your check payable to: ***Mattapoissett Land Trust, Inc.***

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## *Calendar — Spring & Summer Activities*

*All Mattapoissett Land Trust activities are free and open to the public*

Saturday, June 6th, 10 am

### ***Shachoy Dedication, Walk and MLT Annual Meeting***

Come join us at the Shachoy property for a dedication, preserved for future enjoyment by all. Parking is available at the Friends Meeting House on Route 6. Following the dedication, we'll cross Route 6 and hike the Hiller Trail on the Martocci Preserve.

Saturday, June 6th, 12 PM

### ***Potluck Lunch, MLT Annual Meeting, and Guest Speaker, Don Lewis***

We'll return to the Friends Meeting House for a potluck lunch, with drinks and desserts provided by the MLT. Following lunch and a brief Annual Meeting, we are pleased to welcome our guest speaker, Don Lewis, a researcher who works with the Massachusetts Audubon Society and other groups (featured in our Fall 2008 newsletter), who will speak about diamondback terrapins, elusive and fascinating reptiles that inhabit the coastal waters of southern New England. Bring comfortable walking shoes and a potluck dish to share. Rain or shine.

Saturday, June 20th, 10 am

### ***Botanical walk on the Walega-Livingstone Preserve on Brandt Island Cove***

Led by certified herbalist, and Mattapoissett resident, Susan

Mort. Meet on Anchorage Way or at Dunseith Gardens at 9:45 am to carpool.

Rain date: June 21, 4:00 PM

July 18th - 19th

### ***Harbor Days Celebration***

Come check us out at the Annual Harbor Days Celebration! Those interested in helping at the MLT's booth for a couple of hours on either Saturday or Sunday, contact Elizabeth Richardson (terichardson@comcast.net), or any other member of the MLT board.

Saturday, August 15th, 11:30 AM – 2 PM

### ***Family Picnic and Grand Opening of the Natural Playground at Dunseith Gardens***

Join us for the grand opening of our new natural playground at Dunseith Gardens! We'll hope for grand picnicking weather and provide entertainment for the children. More details to follow!

### ***1st SATURDAY of the Month Work Days, 1 PM***

Join us the 1st Saturday of each month for cleaning and maintaining the MLT properties. We'll meet at Dunseith Gardens at 1 PM and then proceed to the property where work is most needed.