



The Newsletter of the Mattapoissett Land Trust, Inc. • www.mattlandtrust.org • E-mail: info@mattlandtrust.org

Saving Brandt Island Cove: MLT Moves To Acquire 106 Acres of Critical Habitat

By Gary Johnson

You may have already heard that the MLT has entered into an agreement to purchase in fee a parcel of 106 acres of salt marsh and coastal forest that make up the northwestern shore of Brandt Island Cove. This acquisition, in addition to the conservation restriction that we purchased on the Field Farm in 2004, will ensure that the most environmentally sensitive parts of the cove will be protected in perpetuity.

This is by far the largest project the MLT has ever attempted, at least from a financial standpoint. The total price of the acquisition is \$1.45 million, and would be far beyond our capacity for fund raising were it not for a grant of \$770,000 under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). These funds are available as a result of the fines paid by the Bouchard Oil Company for the 2003 spill that contaminated the shores of Buzzards Bay, including Brandt Island Cove. The fine was designated by the judge to be used largely for restoration and protection of the wetlands surrounding Buzzards Bay. With the assistance of the Coalition for Buzzards Bay we were fortunate to find a project that would meet the strict criteria of NAWCA and provide long-term benefits to Mattapoissett.

What makes this marsh and woodland so valuable? The entire property lies within an area that the state has designated "Critical Habitat" for the protection of threatened and endangered species, including the diamondback terrapin and numerous shore birds, such as the American bittern and the least tern (see this issue's Kids Corner for more information on these species). No other part of Mattapoissett is so critical for protecting threatened species or so vulnerable to degradation by development.

In the past couple of years we have tried to focus our preservation activities on land that would provide our members and visitors greater opportunities to enjoy the wonders of nature that Mattapoissett offers. Fortunately, this land abuts our property

on Anchorage Way that was donated to the MLT by Thomas and Barbara Ferreira in 1994. Our hope is that we will eventually be able to cut a path from Anchorage Way through the woods to the marshlands of the cove. The trail will provide future generations with easier access to this important nature preserve. Of course, we welcome others who choose to visit the property by kayak or canoe, a wonderfully serene experience.

*Map of Brandt
Island Cove-West
Hill project*



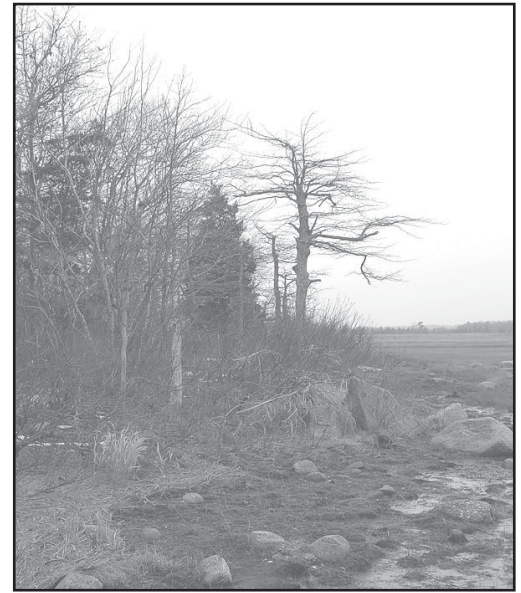
We understand what a large and demanding undertaking this is for the members and friends of the MLT. The membership generously supported our efforts to protect 60 acres in the Hiller Cove area two years ago, and while we considered that acquisition a stretch at the time, this one will cost much more. If we could choose the time, we probably wouldn't undertake this

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Brandt Island Cove - continued

acquisition now. However, the Bouchard-fine funds have only been reserved for use around Buzzards Bay for a limited time. If we do not use them for worthwhile projects now, they will be returned to the general pool of funds to be used for projects in other parts of the country. Therefore, we must either stretch ourselves to protect this land now or lose the opportunity, probably forever. We believe the members and friends of the MLT will step forward when they realize the environmental and recreational significance of this unique property. We hope you'll join us for a visit to the property on May 6 as part of our annual meeting. We'll take a walk through the woods to the salt marsh and see what wonders the property holds. And we hope that you will generously contribute when asked, so that we can keep this corner of Mattapoisett "special."

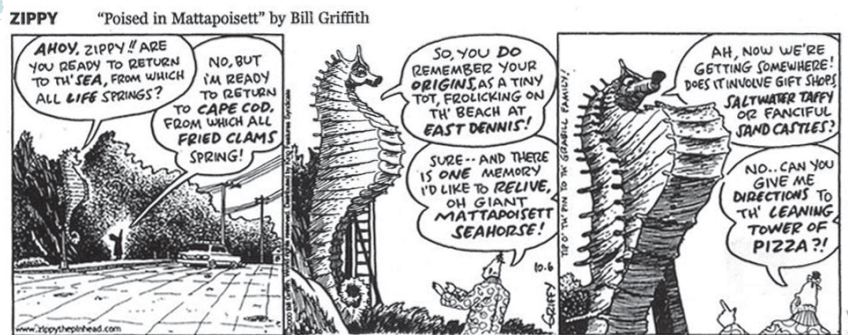
*Brandt Island Cove
salt marsh
in the winter*



A History of Salty the Seahorse

When Henry Dunseith passed away in 1988 he willed his property on the corner of North Street and Route 6 to the MLT. It had been an icon to all those who lived in town, and all those who would pass it on their way to Cape Cod, because of the giant seahorse denoting his gift shop. With a unique personality, Henry delighted thousands of patrons with his model trains and many gardens. There was a fish pond that had Moby Dick – with water spewing out of his blow hole – being pursued by a square-rigged whaling ship, as well as many gardens with exotic trees and plants throughout the property. As time passed, the place became rundown and overgrown. Allan Schubert, an MLT board member and retired jet engine manufacturer, found that the seahorse held many memories for the community. Through the MLT, he subsequently organized the restoration of the big seahorse and Dunseith Park. Paula Cobb, Brownell Boat Yard, the Mattapoisett Fire Department and many others from town, gave of their time and expertise to restore the seahorse to a new state of excellence. And, the solar powered hardware and software that light Salty's blue glass eye each evening was furnished free of charge to the MLT by NSTAR.

Even the nationally syndicated cartoonist, Bill Griffith, felt that Salty was such an icon that he should speak to Zippy the Clown.

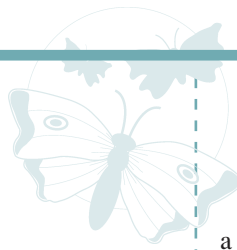


At the unveiling of the rehabilitated icon on June 3, 2000, hundreds of people showed up to find that the seahorse was to be named Salty as a result of a "name the seahorse program" at one of the local schools. The children all had posters and letters that were displayed depicting what they felt the seahorse should be named. It was gratifying to see the whole community displaying such pride in something that was part of their heritage.

Dunseith Gardens now has a gazebo. It was donated by Michael Esposito and moved to the park through the combined efforts of Charlie Duponte, David Kaiser and Allan Schubert. Many of the old pieces of granite that had formed the foundation of the house and gift shop have been used to construct park benches. Boy Scouts from the town have also constructed benches out of logs. The garden section of the Mattapoisett Women's Club maintains the flowers and the entrance of the park. Throughout the park, many flower gardens are cared for by other individuals from the community.

Dunseith Gardens is a great place to enjoy a stroll or a picnic. So, bring your coffee and newspaper. Bring your family. Bring your grandchildren. Bring your grandmother. But bring with you a desire to enjoy what really matters in life.

Who We Are: Martin Hudis



This season's Member Spotlight column features Martin Hudis, board member and treasurer of the MLT:

MLT: *Where did you grow up?*

MH: Los Angeles, CA.

MLT: *What is your educational background (college, degrees, etc.)?*

MH: BS in Engineering from UCLA, MS and PhD in Applied Plasma Physics from MIT, MBA from the University of Chicago.

MLT: *How did you come to live in Mattapoisett?*

MH: I was recruited to Aerovox (New Bedford) in 1991 from California. My family chose to live in Mattapoisett because of the good quality of life.

MLT: *Are you retired?*

MH: I am semi-retired. I retired (Vice-President of Engineering for capacitor manufacturing) in February of 2004. After retiring, I started a consulting business with my daughter, who lives in Wellesley, MA. We consult for capacitor companies, mainly in third world countries, plus large electronic companies in the US. In addition, we sell capacitors and capacitor materials in North America. Capacitors are electrical components used in almost all electrical and electronic equipment. Examples of other electrical components are transistors, microprocessors, batteries, monitor displays, etc.

MLT: *What are your hobbies or past-times?*

MH: I build furniture in my basement mainly for my grandchildren. Recently, I began taking woodworking classes at the North Bennet Street School in Boston.

MLT: *Tell us a little about your family.*

MH: I am married and my wife and I like to walk, kayak and enjoy bird watching. We have a bird-friendly home (bird houses, bird feeders, heated bird bath with dripping water) and everyone who comes to our house enjoys watching the birds. We have three children (two sons, ages 35 and 28, and a daughter, age 33) and three grandchildren (4 years old and two newborn babies). Our children live close by, which is great (Fairhaven, Wellesley, and Baltimore). Our youngest son is at John Hopkins University finishing up his PhD in Physics. Consulting with my daughter involves a lot of travel and we travel to Mexico City, India, China, Canada, Italy and many places in the US.

MLT: *Why have you chosen to get involved with the MLT, and to be a board member?*

MH: After I retired and had a little more time, I wanted to help participate in the community and contribute to the quality of life that exists in Mattapoisett. Ruth Bates recommended that I take

a look at the MLT and consider volunteering for the board. I think the MLT is a major contributor to the high quality of life in Mattapoisett and plays an active, vital role in this community. The board contains many community-concerned people and people who want to get involved. I felt the MLT was a good place for me to make a contribution and get involved with the community. I have been

a member for about two years, and I feel I have been able to make a contribution. I still have a long way to go to fully appreciate the work that is done by land trust organizations in general and the MLT in specific.

MLT: *What are your current roles/responsibilities on the board?*

MH: I chair the Harbor Days Committee and the Membership Committee and I also serve as the Treasurer. The Treasurer is mainly a record keeping and administrative function and utilizes some of my experience.

Dennis Perry



Martin Hudis directing last year's MLT Harbor Days festivities.

The MLT only has volunteer positions and the record keeping and administrative functions take up significant amounts of time. The MLT has recently expanded its role at Harbor Days with the objective of gaining much more visibility within the community. A new membership committee has recently been established with the goal of increasing the membership by 25% through a more proactive approach.

MLT: *How do you see the MLT contributing to Mattapoisett's future (your vision for the land trust)?*

MH: The MLT is preserving land with rich environmental impact for future generations. The MLT is also contributing to the environmental education of the local children. Preserving land has a major impact on the growth rate that can take place within Mattapoisett. Planned and controlled growth will preserve the quality of water and the land (some with ocean access) for future generations. Growing up in a very large, highly populated city with uncontrolled growth like Los Angeles has taught me to appreciate the quality of life that exists in Mattapoisett. This quality will not be maintained if some of the rich environmental land is not preserved and if children do not understand the impact of everyday activities on the environment.

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 you get started, here are some flora and fauna to keep an eye out for... And while you're 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 website!

American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*):

This brown streaked heron can grow to 23-24" tall. A very secretive wading bird, bitterns spend most of their lives camouflaged. They step slowly through tall coastal vegetation in search of food, and when approached, will often freeze, stretch out their necks toward the sky, and sway slowly from side to side, imitating waving stalks. If this doesn't fool the intruder, the bittern will fly off, uttering a low barking call. Its eerie calls have led to some strange nicknames: stake-driver, thunder-pumper, and mire-drum. The bittern's diet consists of insects, amphibians, and small fish and mammals. In recent years, the population has declined substantially due to the loss of its habitat.

Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*):

The smallest of the terns, this 8-10" bird has a distinct black-tipped yellow bill and a fast, shallow wingbeat. The yellow bill and legs, and white forehead of the adult least tern are distinctive features. Most often seen hovering over the water, the least tern peers downward in search of small minnows and other marine or freshwater organisms. When flying, its wingbeats often are so rapid that they cannot be counted.

Do You Have Suggestions for Activities We Could Offer Area Kids?

We'd love to hear your ideas on fun, educational outings or events that get kids involved with the land trust and appreciating the outdoors! Call Diane Perry (508.758.9063) if you'd like to suggest an activity that could be sponsored by the MLT.

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

Membership Renewal

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Seasonal Address (If Applicable) _____

City, State, Zip _____

Dates (from-to) _____

☐ Additional donation designated for
land acquisition _____

Membership Categories:

- | | | | |
|---|-------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$ 30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$ 250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$ 50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$ 500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting | \$ 75 | <input type="checkbox"/> Founder | \$1000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining | \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends of Salty | \$5 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | _____ |
| (children under 12 years) | | | |

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Mattapoissett Land Trust, Inc.

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Mattapoissett, MA 02739

Property Updates

AN UPDATE ON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION

By Gary Johnson

In the fall issue of *The Heron*, I asked whether the time had come to consider adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in Mattapoisett. My argument in favor of adoption rested largely on the fact the town is likely to have capital expenses in the future that would qualify for funding under the CPA, and the act would provide a mechanism for obtaining state matching funds.

As I discussed the subject further with individuals in town who were concerned with planning issues, historical preservation and conservation, it became clear that there is an interest in finding a way to obtain these state funds. In January, I had an opportunity to discuss the CPA issue with the Selectmen, at which point I explained how and why it could benefit the town. The Selectmen agreed that the issue should be presented at Town Meeting in May.

We wish to encourage all of the members of MLT and supporters of land conservation to support this article at Town Meeting and to vote in favor of it in a subsequent election. No matter what you've heard, the CPA is not "just another tax." It is a mechanism by which the town can raise funds that the state will match, which can then be used to pay for projects that the town has already identified as important, such as protecting land around our water wells and restoring town hall. Coincidentally, at the same time we were

recommending the CPA as a way to raise funds, the Capital Planning Committee was preparing a list of the capital spending requirements for the town; however, the committee made no recommendation on how to fund these projects. *That's the problem that CPA can help solve.*

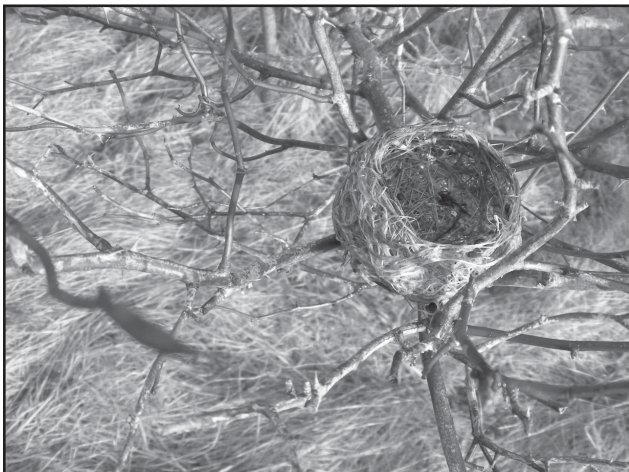
We know that taxes are high in Mattapoisett, but that is precisely why we need the CPA. We can either pay for everything with general tax revenues or we can use a program that provides state matching funds. Those people most opposed to high taxes in Mattapoisett should be the ones in favor of passing the CPA. If you'd like more information on the CPA, visit the website of the Coalition for Community Preservation at: www.communitypreservation.org or email mattcpa@comcast.net.

Gary Johnson



Town Hall... still needs repairs

Dennis Perry



A low-lying nest likely made by a goldfinch

BIRD WALK AT NASKETUCKET BAY

On February 4th, fourteen very lucky people were treated to spring-like weather during a bird walk led by Mr. Mike LaBossiere, knowledgeable bird enthusiast from Mattapoisett. Participants ranged in birding experience from novice to advanced. Approximately 40 species of birds were sighted in the bushes, trees, air and water. It was a surprise to see catbirds, normally not around at this time of the year. Another treat was a close up look at a small bird nest in low-growing bushes. Everyone left with the feeling that the morning had been well spent, and we're looking forward to scheduling our next walk!

WE'RE SEEKING NEW DIRECTORS

After many years of service, two of our most public-spirited Directors, Allan Schubert and Brad Hathaway, are stepping down from the Board of Directors at our annual meeting in May. Their shoes will be difficult to fill, but we are looking for three or four people that would be willing to join the Board and help carry the mission forward.

Allan joined the Board after taking on the responsibility of restoring Salty the Seahorse to its former glory and creating Dunseith Gardens in 1999 out of the property left to us by Henry Dunseith in 1989 (*see our article on Salty*). Since then he has also served as Treasurer during a time when we were converting to a computerized accounting system. His patience has been exemplary. Allan isn't leaving the MLT behind – he will continue to help with our stewardship activities, especially at Dunseith Gardens.

Brad Hathaway and his wife, Priscilla, were two of the charter members of the MLT in 1974, with Brad serving as the original Clerk of the organization. Since then he has strongly supported the mission of the MLT and provided wise counsel without ever being shy about expressing an opinion. After 32 years on the board he

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

We need you!

Have you ever wondered who plants the flowers at Dunseith Gardens? Or assists with tending the Tub Mill property? The MLT is looking for volunteer stewards of the Dunseith Gardens and Munro properties to assist with flower planting and light maintenance. Please email Allan Schubert (allan.schubert@comcast.net) of the MLT if you're interested!

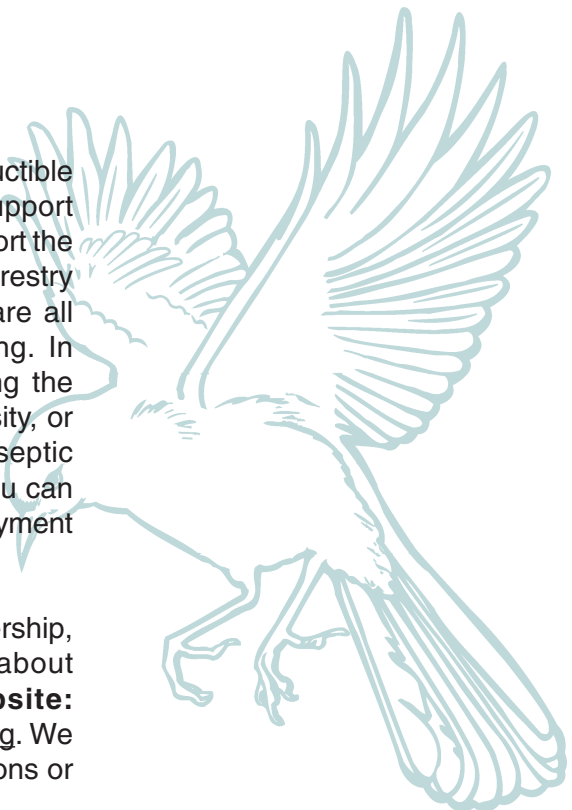
has decided that he needs a rest from the duties of Director. It's difficult to argue with that logic.

We will miss Allan and Brad at our monthly meetings, but we look forward to welcoming new Directors with new perspectives to the mission of protecting the open spaces of Mattapoisett. If you're interested in learning more about what the Board does and how you can help, contact us by email at info@mattlandtrust.org or call 508-758-7849. We won't ask you to commit for 32 years!

We would like to hear from you!

Whether your contributions come in the form of 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. In addition, whether 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.

To become a member of the MLT, renew your membership, learn more about upcoming events, and find out about volunteer opportunities, **check out our new website: mattlandtrust.org**, or email us at info@mattlandtrust.org. We would like to hear from you and welcome any suggestions or comments!



Deborah Valentine

EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATES

On Monday, May 8th, the Grade 4 students of Old Hammondtown School will make their 3rd annual visit to Nasketucket Bay State Reservation (NBSR) in Mattapoisett as part of a unit that involves collaboration between the classroom and art curricula. The students will be doing artistic and scientific journaling of their observations in some of the richly diverse areas of NBSR. The MLT Education Committee is sponsoring the trip. The students will do follow-up lessons that are related to the information gathered in their journals, and will create an exhibit for the main lobby of Old Hammondtown School.



During a school field trip to NBSR, students get an up-close look at some of the species identified in a vernal pool.

The MLT Educational Committee is looking for members. 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. Please contact Diane Perry if you have additional questions or an interest in getting involved (508.758.9063).

Dennis Perry



Birding in early February at NBSR



The Heron is published bi-annually by the Mattapoisett 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 Mattapoisett, 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: Robert Atkinson, Brad Hathaway, Martin Hudis, Luana Josvold, Elizabeth Leidhold, Paul Osenkowski, Blanche Perry, Diane H. Perry, Elizabeth E. Richardson, Allan Schubert, Eleanor Smith, Eileen Sorrentino and Gary P. Johnson, President

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

Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc.

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Calendar – Spring Activities

All MLT Events are FREE and Open to the Public!

Saturday, April 8, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM – Spring Clean-Up Day at Dunseith Gardens: Join area Boy Scouts as we all help get Dunseith Gardens – home of “Salty the Seahorse” – ready for summer! Bring along work gloves, rakes, and plastic trash barrels, if you have them. We’ll start at 9 AM, but please feel free to join us at any time!

Thursday, April 27, 6:30-8:00 PM – MLT Bird Club Meeting

The MLT is sponsoring the creation of a new bird club for adults. The first meeting will be held in the cafeteria of Center School. Mr. Mike LaBossiere, a well-known bird enthusiast from Mattapoisett, will be leading the group. The first topic will be related to backyard birding. This will include setting up feeding stations to maximize the variety of birds; what birds are common at this time of year; how to recognize differences in species by sight, as well as sound; and much more. Handouts will be provided, and follow-up bird walks will be scheduled. A one-time fee of \$10.00 (\$5.00 for MLT members) will be collected at sign-in for club dues. Future activities of the club will also be discussed, and will be determined by the interest of the membership.

Saturday, May 6, 10:00 AM-2:00 PM – MLT Annual Get-Together

10:00 AM – Brandt Island Cove-West Hill visit: We will meet at the Friends Meeting House on Route 6 and proceed as a group to the Brandt Island Cove-West Hill property where we will get a chance to visit the proposed acquisition, walking through the coastal forest to the salt marsh. We’ll get a chance to experience this unspoiled corner of Mattapoisett and discover why we must save it. Bring cameras and binoculars and dress appropriately (waterproof shoes or boots are a must).

12:00 Noon – Potluck Lunch: Bring a dish to share with friends; drinks and desserts will be provided by the MLT.

1:00 PM – Business Meeting: Election of Directors and Officers for next year.

1:15 PM – Guest Speaker Margie Lynch, Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation Friends Group Coordinator: Ms. Lynch will help us understand why and how citizens have organized as “Friends” of state parks and reservations and how this might be relevant to preserving Nasketucket Bay State Reservation (NBSR) for future generations. – *Rain or Shine.*

Sunday, May 7, 6:30 AM – MLT Bird Walk

Mike LeBossiere will lead another walk in NBSR during the spring migration, the height of the birding season. We will meet in the NBSR parking lot (off Brandt Island Road) and investigate for about 2 hours, but individuals can easily leave at any time. Wear appropriate clothing, especially waterproof shoes or boots.

July 15-16 – Harbor Days Celebration

Come check us out at the Annual Harbor Days Celebration! Last year at Harbor Days we offered a slew of new activities, including a motorized coach tour of MLT properties, a kids’ activities tent and horseback rides along the Munro property. Come check us out this year to see what we have to offer!! We could certainly use some help. Harbor Days is a major event for the MLT and it requires a number of volunteers to make it all happen. Those interested in helping for a couple of hours on either Saturday or Sunday, contact Marty Hudis (mhudis@mandhgroup.com), or any other member of the MLT board.