



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

Commentary: *Is there such a thing as "Nature Deficit Disorder"?*

By Don Cuddy

Are we raising a generation of children who will come of age completely out of touch with the natural world? This is a question that has begun to stir some debate as we evolve into a society that seems to have focused increasingly on technology, a trend that some claim serves only to alienate us even more from Mother Nature.

With laptops, cell phones, ipods, computer and video games in every hand, DVD's in every family vehicle, and TV screens in every room, our children increasingly derive most of their entertainment from electronic devices, with all of it received passively. Under these circumstances, teaching children to respect the environment may become an increasingly abstract enterprise. Leisure time is now predominantly centered on indoor activity, or inactivity, and when kids go outside, time is frequently spent pursuing organized activities. Kids are driven to prearranged locations and supervised by grown-ups at every step.

It was so much simpler when I was small. There were fewer distractions from the business of being a child. We played outside and went home when we were hungry. We picked berries in the summer, built forts and caught tadpoles. We were free to examine and explore the world that began outside our doors.

That was a different time and place. The world has changed in many ways, and not for the better when it comes to allowing our children to roam. But a recent book titled 'Last Child in the Woods' by a man in California called Richard Louv is apparently suggesting that the problem has now become so serious that many of our social ills trace their roots to this disconnect between children and the natural world. It is subtitled "Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder." The epidemic of childhood obesity,

the prevalence of attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity are all suggested to be the consequences of children spending too much time indoors.

As quoted by the author: "Healing the broken bond between our young and nature is in our self-interest, not only because aesthetics or justice demand it, but also because our mental, physical, and spiritual health depend upon it."

I have an eleven year-old daughter, whom I love to distraction, although my mental, physical and spiritual health do not hinge on how many hours a week she spends looking for earth worms. She does like to swim and play tennis in the summer. She rides her bike a lot and jumps on trampolines. She will watch TV for hours if permitted and will not spontaneously jump off the couch to announce that she is going into the woods. She can talk on the phone and instant message three other people at the same time. But she is not unaware of the natural world and she possesses that most precious quality of all – curiosity.

Being a child, she also has the willingness to continually accept and absorb new things. She has seen Holmes comet this week and can point to Orion's belt. She has witnessed a litter of kittens appear in the cellar and she knows the difference between what she sees on TV and what is happening in her own world. She does not confuse the two, as far as I can tell.

There is no question that many children are deprived of opportunities to spend time in the natural world, particularly inner city kids in New Bedford, many of whom have never even heard the word Mattapoissett, let alone visited us. I can testify to that.

In spite of their circumstances, children never seem to lose their sense of wonder and I do not believe that they ever will. Have you ever seen any children kicking and screaming because they were being taken on a field trip? Given the opportunity, a child will embrace the natural world because it is an inseparable part of who we are as creatures of the universe. It is our obligation to ensure that they are given that opportunity.

Don Cuddy is a freelance writer and member of the MLT Board of Directors.

Harbor Days

By Martin Hudis

Every year, the MLT participates in Harbor Days festivities in order to increase our visibility within the community. While our efforts were scaled back from the previous two years, Harbor Days 2007 remained a success for the MLT. Here are some highlights:

- Sales of shirts, hats and salty pins increased by more than 150% from previous years.
- Julie Craig from Sea Horse Farm and Helping Hands and Hooves provided horseback riding for the third year in a row. Over 200 children experienced the fun of riding Copper (the gentlest horse you'll ever meet!). Thanks Julie for your continued support of the MLT!
- The MLT tent hosted the Nasketucket Bird Club which had great bird pictures and a list of walks scheduled by the bird club for the second half of 2007.
- At least 10 new members were recruited during the two-day event.
- A significant number of new donations were received. These exceeded donations received from previous Harbor Days!
- There was more interest in the MLT maps and land acquisition plans than seen in previous years.

Special thanks go out to those individuals who volunteered their time during the Harbor Days festivities:

Craig Bolton
Vince Cragin
Don Cuddy
Ed Hubert
Martin and Diane Hudis
Mike LaBossiere
Elizabeth Leidhold
Jane and Adrian Lonsdale
Edwina McCarthy
Jenny Mello
Paul Osenkowski (Ozzie)
Blanche Perry
Diane Perry
Eleanor Smith

– Photo by Martin Hudis



Jane and Adrian Lonsdale volunteered their time to assist with answering questions at the MLT's Harbor Days booth

Salty's Silvery Moon Soiree a Success (Now say that three time FAST!)

On Saturday, October 20, the MLT hosted the 1st annual "Salty's Silvery Moon Soiree" at the Dunseith Gardens. The brainchild of Don Cuddy, the event was geared toward families with younger children and featured two fire pits for toasting marshmallows and making s'mores, some live accordion music (thanks to Luana Josvold), and a local storyteller. By all accounts, the event was considered a great success, and many of the nearly 150 participants encouraged us to hold this event again next year. Special thanks to Don Cuddy, Jenny Mello, Blanche Perry, Marty Hudis, Luana Jøsvold, and Gary Johnson for taking care of the many details needed to pull the event off!

– Photos by Luana Jøsvold



Local Boy Scouts help to prepare wood for the bonfire



The Osenkowski's help their granddaughter with her first marshmallow

Who We Are: Vince Cragin

This season's Member Spotlight column features Vince Cragin, a recently elected member of the MLT board:

MLT: Where did you grow up?

VNC: I was born in Virginia, but I grew up in Westbrook, Maine, which is located near the city of Portland in the southern part of the state. I was the youngest of six kids. I was fortunate to be able to visit frequently with my grandparents, who lived year-round on an island in Casco Bay off the coast of Maine. I also spent a significant number of weekends at my parents' mountain "camp" in rural western Maine. My siblings and I climbed trees, hiked in the forest, and swam at a nearby ice-cold brook.

MLT: What is your educational background?

VNC: I have a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Southern Maine and a Juris Doctor from Suffolk University Law School.

MLT: How did you come to live in Mattapoisett?

VNC: Mattapoisett was my spouse's hometown and we moved here shortly after I finished law school. Although we were not in the market to buy a house, we were in town for the 200th anniversary celebration of the Mattapoisett Inn in Shipyard Park, and we happened to see a house for sale that we fell in love with.

MLT: How long have you lived in Mattapoisett?

VNC: Since the Fall of 1999. It is a beautiful town that reminds me of the small communities of coastal Maine. The people of Mattapoisett could not be any friendlier. It is nice to live in a town where you know most of your neighbors and people always offer warm greetings.

MLT: Are you retired?

VNC: No, I work full time at a law firm.

MLT: What are your hobbies or pastimes?

VNC: In my spare time I enjoy visiting family and friends throughout New England, reading, running, kayaking, and international travel.

MLT: How long have you been involved with the MLT?

VNC: My active involvement started earlier this year.

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

VNC: I have been impressed over the years with the work that the Mattapoisett Land Trust has done with acquiring and preserving properties throughout the town. My next door neighbor informed

me of the possibility of serving on the board, and I gladly jumped at the opportunity.

MLT: How do you see the MLT contributing to Mattapoisett's future?

VNC: The MLT will play a crucial role in Mattapoisett's future. It will contribute to a better future for the town by continuing to procure and maintain properties for generations to come. With each acquisition by the MLT of an additional parcel of land, there is one less property that is subject to development, and one more property available to be used and enjoyed by all. The MLT, through its conservation actions, will also help Mattapoisett forever maintain its small town charm and character.

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 website: mattlandtrust.org**, or email us at info@mattlandtrust.org. We would like to hear from you and welcome any suggestions or comments!

Education Committee Updates

4TH GRADE FIELD TRIP TO NASKETUCKET BAY STATE RESERVATION (NBSR)

For those unfamiliar with the NBSR, it is a beautiful 210-acre property with miles of marked trails, 3/4 mile long beach, and a large open meadow – a perfect place for kids to explore! The entrance is located on Brandt Island Road, and it is open to all for non-motorized recreational use. For the third year in a row, the MLT provided funding for school bus transportation for a field trip to NBSR. This year, the classes studied three areas: **vernal pools** – led by Mrs. Elizabeth Leidhold; **the beach** – led by Mrs. Ruth Bates; and **the woods** – led by Mr. Greg Cabral, from the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Pictures of the school outing were displayed in the MLT tent at Harbor Days.

– Photo by Jenny Mello

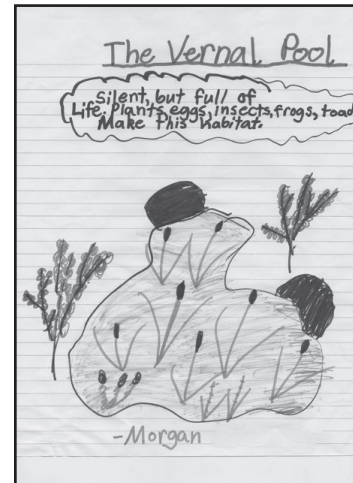


Elizabeth Leidhold gets assistance from 4th graders on surveying a vernal pool

In order to better understand fourth graders' perceptions of the field trip to NBSR, students were asked to document their experiences through journal entries and creating haikus, a type of Japanese poetry. Morgan Browning also provided us with a recorded commentary of the day. Thanks Morgan for sharing your day with us!

Hello. My name is Morgan and I am in the fourth grade at Old Hammondtown School. I want to share a special day with you, the day the whole fourth grade went to Nasketucket Bay State reservation in early summer 2007.

In the morning, we went to school as usual. Everyone wore pants, sunscreen, and bug spray in preparation for our trip. After attendance and opening exercises, Mrs. Valentine's class and Mrs. Ashley and Farias's class boarded a bus. Mrs. Homer's class boarded the next bus. Both buses took the 4th grade to the park. It was a sunny day and most of us were quite excited. Some kids live right down the street from the park so they had been there before. Others had never been there. Some kids, like me, had been to the park, but had never seen the vernal pool. This park is protected by the state.



A haiku from the fourth grade trip to NBSR

Each class went with their leaders to their respective areas to observe and learn more about the environment: Mrs. Ashley and Farias's class went to the forest and Mrs. Homer's class went to the beach. Our class, Mrs. Valentine's class, went with our leader Mrs. Leidhold and her son James to the vernal pool. We listened as Mrs. Leidhold told us about some of the vegetation surrounding the pool. She also told us that today our goal would be to find enough information to be able to certify the vernal pool. She said we would fill out the paperwork together when we were done.

Then the exploring began! We went around the vernal pool and looked for "obligate species," animals and bugs that you would find in a vernal pool. Mrs. Valentine asked us to make sketches in a journal (provided by the land trust!) of the vernal pool and the plants and animals that we observed. We saw some interesting plants called phragmites, which are like cattails, except they grow in sections. We saw rushes and cattails. Some kids caught a mole. We also saw a water scorpion, which looks kind of like a praying mantis. We saw water boatman. They look like a little circle with two legs on the side. We saw multiple green frogs and many tadpoles, some of which may be salamander tadpoles. We did not see any salamanders though. There were many log cabin caddisflies; this bug builds a little shelter around itself that looks like a mini-log cabin. Everyone had fun exploring the vernal pool.

At the end the day, Mrs. Valentine and Mrs. Leidhold measured the pool's length and width, which was 54x48. Then they made an educated guess of the depth, guessing 3ft. After that, we filled out the paperwork for certification and took a picture of all of us. **I am proud that we might have helped further protect the area by getting it certified.** The morning went by very quickly. We boarded the buses back to OHS just in time for lunch.

The next day, we brought our journals to art class and made a mural of the vernal pool. I painted a water scorpion, willow tree, a rush, a tadpole and an empty egg mass!

I am going to bring my family back to Nasketucket Bay State Reservation and show them the vernal pool. And, the next time I go on a hike, I know not to disturb things.

We wrote haikus about the property to say a big thank you to the **Mattapoissett Land Trust** for making our special day possible.

Property Updates

Acquisition

BRANDT ISLAND COVE UPDATE

By Gary P. Johnson

Many of you are probably wondering if we are ever going to acquire the 107-acre tract on the northwest shore of Brandt Island Cove – we started talking about it a couple of years ago. While we believed we had a deal last year, we found that the large amount of forest wetlands and the limited access to the property made it impossible to justify the original price. During the spring the owners graciously agreed to renegotiate the agreement which resulted in a new “Purchase and Sale” agreement this fall permitting us to acquire the parcel for \$1.15 million, a price that includes partially reimbursing the seller’s expenses.

– Photo by Gary Johnson



An “island” contained within the Brandt Island Cove Parcel

I hope you remember what makes this property so special. Not only does it provide a scenic natural view as one proceeds down Mattapoisett Neck Road, but it is one of the few places in Mattapoisett that provides supporting habitat for threatened shoreline species, such as roseate terns and diamond-backed terrapins. The State has categorized all 107 acres as “critical habitat” supporting threatened species. Our acquisition will mean that the property will be open for exploration and appreciation by the public for generations to come.

We still have more work to do before we finally close the deal. The grant we received from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) will provide \$770,000 toward the purchase. While we are attempting to tap other government sources of funds, we still need to raise more from our membership and interested individuals. The Bay Lands Revolving Fund, administered by the Coalition for Buzzards Bay (CBB), has agreed to provide a loan of \$200,000 that we can use for closing, if necessary. We will need to repay this loan from the CBB, so if you can help by making a contribution toward this acquisition, your generosity will be greatly appreciated.

Acquiring land like Brandt Island Cove is the reason we exist as a land trust. It will provide generations of Mattapoisett residents and visitors with the opportunity to experience the wonders of the flora and fauna surrounding Buzzards Bay. Please help us finally make this dream a reality.

Stewardship

REPAIR OF THE TUB MILL DAM

By Paul Osenkowski

As a result of a flash flood about five years ago, the race and supporting structure of the Tub Mill dam were severely damaged. Rocks had fallen away from the wall, threatening to allow the old earthen dam to collapse. The MLT had the dam repaired, only to suffer another “50 year” flood 2 years later and face the same issue.

After analyzing the problem with the help of engineer Doug Schneider and neighbor Gary Bowman, steward of the property, it was decided to reposition part of the lower structures of the dam to prevent a repeat of the problem.

Numerous people stepped forward to help in the effort to save one of Mattapoisett’s icons. Town Manager, Mike Botelho, and Selectman, Ray Andrews, helped us obtain the large rocks that were used for the foundation of the dam. Tim Ladd, Dennis Obeirn and Tom Simonson provided the muscle to move some of the foundation rocks. Tom Simonson also provided a brand new high volume pump, which allowed us to temporarily pump the work site dry. Without this device, we would never have been able to proceed with this project. Dan Sullivan provided underlay fabric to protect the area from runoff.

– Photos by Luana Jøsvold



Tub Mill race repair – before and after



(Continued on page 6)

Property Updates

Stewardship

REPAIR OF THE TUB MILL DAM *(Continued from page 5)*

Every job needs a site manager and long time member and Director Emeritus, Allan Schubert, filled this position. He helped with the design and actual cobbling of the stonework.

Barry Denham, Director of the Highway Department, was able to get us some loam for finishing the project. The Conservation Commission was very helpful in securing proper permits for the effort.

But in the end, this whole thing could never have happened without the help of Wes Bowman. Wes has been a mainstay of our community for his whole life. He knew where to get the materials. He knew what people to contact to get things going. He knew who to see when things got dicey. He was "the project". Wes handled his backhoe like a Stradivarius, placing huge boulders in line as if they were mere pebbles. Most people don't realize it, but for years he was the one who would cut the grass at the Tub Mill Park, on his own time, with his own equipment. The MLT and the people of Mattapoisett owe a great debt of gratitude to Wes for his devotion to this town and its wellbeing. Thanks Wes!

TEDESCHI ZONING APPEAL UPDATE

By Paul Milde

The MLT continues in its appeal of a Special Permit for a Tedeschi/Dunkin' Donuts drive-through window in the new building at the former Salvation Army site on Route 6. This would be next door to Dunseith Gardens, home of Salty the Seahorse. Last year the Mattapoisett Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) granted a special permit despite strenuous opposition from the Planning Board, abutters including the Land Trust, and several concerned citizens. We all felt that the litter, traffic, and pedestrian hazards associated with a drive-through would be a detriment to the town and to the community-friendly zoning for the area that had recently passed at Town Meeting. The special permit seemed so obviously in conflict with the requirements in the applicable town bylaws that we believed we should appeal the decision. The MLT made a \$1,000 contribution from its general funds for the appeal; the balance of the funding has come from interested individuals who have earmarked donations to the MLT for the appeal.

The Land Trust and one other abutter filed an appeal in the Plymouth Superior Court in April of 2006. This case was originally set to be decided by the summer of 2007. Our lawyer, Jerry Johnson, and MLT President Gary Johnson met several times with Tedeschi to discuss this case. Unfortunately, Tedeschi has offered nothing that would mitigate our concerns regarding having a drive-through nearby or regarding the adverse affects it would have on the town. We have moved through the various stages of litigation and are presently waiting for a trial date to be set, most likely in May or June of 2008. The trial will likely take a day and will consist of a re-argument of the case for and against the special permit, but with the judge making the final determination instead of the ZBA. Both sides may introduce new

evidence and expert witnesses. The judge may then decide, based on his reading of the bylaws and the arguments from both sides, whether or not to grant the special permit.

This litigation has been relatively inexpensive, and we believe that we have sufficient funds to proceed at least through the trial. (Should Tedeschi decide to appeal the decision, there could be further costs.) Thanks to everyone who has made a contribution to this effort. Donations are tax deductible and checks should be made out to the Mattapoisett Land Trust, Box 31, Mattapoisett, MA 02739, with Zoning appeal noted in the memo line. If you have any questions about this effort, feel free to call Paul Milde at home 508-758-2674 or work 508-758-3020.)

SUMMER VOLUNTEER PROJECT UPDATES

By Jenny Mello

As always, there are many rewarding opportunities to volunteer with the MLT, and this summer we were particularly active. One of our volunteers – Amanda Robbins – spent most of her summer break monitoring MLT properties. With over 360 acres now on our books, the Land Trust constantly needs help monitoring our properties to make sure they are well maintained and clearly marked. We also launched an initiative to keep close tabs on encroachment by invasive species on our properties. Amanda worked hard to keep our records updated in all these areas and also started recording the history of each piece of land. Thanks very much to Amanda and all our volunteers.



Amanda Robbins spent much of her summer break volunteering with the MLT

If anyone would like to find out more about volunteer opportunities with the Mattapoisett Land Trust please visit our web site – www.mattlandtrust.org or contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Jenny Mello at 774-377-3305.

A Special Request...

In order to provide you with timely information on upcoming MLT events, the MLT is trying to assemble a database of members' email addresses. You can provide us your email address by simply heading to our website (www.mattlandtrust.org), clicking "Contact Us", and entering your email address. We really appreciate it!

(And we promise to maintain the privacy of your information, emailing you only with MLT updates!)

EDUCATION COMMITTEE SEEKS INPUT: We Have Funds Available!

One of the goals listed in our original bylaws of 1974 was that we would educate the public as to the responsible use of natural resources. We have been fortunate to receive a bequest from the estate of long-time supporter Edith Shoolman that is targeted specifically toward programs for children. We are searching for creative ideas as to how these funds can best be spent and also what other education activities might be appropriate for the MLT. If you would like to serve on the Education Committee, or just have some ideas you would like to convey, please email us at info@mattlandtrust.org or call 508-758-7849. We are eager for your input.

Name(s)

Mailing Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

E-mail

Seasonal Address (If Applicable)

City, State, Zip

Dates (from-to)

Including your email address will help us to provide you with timely information on upcoming MLT events!

Join the Mattapoissett Land Trust!

Mail in your support!

Membership Renewal We only exist with your help!

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 | _____ |
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Calendar

WINTER/SPRING ACTIVITIES

All MLT events are FREE and Open to the Public. Check out The Wanderer and the MLT website for events coming in the Winter and Spring months ahead!



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, Michele Bernier, Martin Hudis, Luana Jøsvold, Elizabeth Leidhold, Jenny Mello, Paul Milde, Paul Osenkowski, Blanche Perry, Diane H. Perry, Elizabeth E. Richardson, Eleanor Smith and Gary P. Johnson, President

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

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