



The Heron

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Welcome to Betsey's Meadow

Welcome to Betsey's Meadow

By Don Cuddy

This spring the Mattapoissett Land Trust is celebrating the acquisition of a truly unique piece of land, a special gift bestowed straight from the heart. Our good fortune comes from Mattapoissett's Florence Martocci, a woman no stranger to the concept of generous giving. Florence's mother, Ruth Hiller Martocci, donated the 90-acre Martocci Preserve to the Land



Trust in 1994. Now in 2020, Florence has given the two-acre meadow that adjoins her historic family home and barn at the corner of Prospect Road and Pine Island Road.

After living in this big house alone for many years, Florence came to the realization that it is time to downsize. This was by no means an easy decision, given the depth and breadth of her family's history imbued in the old house. Unwilling to completely sever all her historic ties, Florence contacted MLT with an offer to donate a parcel on Prospect Road next to her house and barn. The land in question is known as Betsey's Meadow, named for her great, great, grandmother Betsey Briggs Hiller. MLT gratefully accepted this generous offer. Approval for separation of the meadow from the house and barn was granted by the Mattapoissett Planning Board last month.

It is entirely appropriate that this donation was finalized in March, Women's History Month, because there is so much history surrounding this gift. The Widow Briggs was obviously a woman of strong character. Raised in a Quaker household in Mansfield she came to the Mattapoissett area of Old Rochester from her studies at Moses Brown School in Providence to teach at the Friends School in Aucoot. Her brother had settled here when he married Caroline Cowen in 1831, a local woman he met while selling lumber to the shipbuilding industry. Betsey followed him and married a ships carpenter, Seth Hiller, in 1834. At first the couple lived with Seth's widowed mother in what is now the Crescent Beach area but Betsey longed for a home of her own and in January 1836 the family moved to the house at the corner of Prospect and Pine Island Roads.

Sadly they did not live happily ever after. Husband Seth died of pneumonia in 1844. Betsey was left with four children, one just six months old, having previously lost two of her other children to sickness. She made do by selling cordwood, cultivating a vegetable garden, keeping cows and making butter. According to family records, she also became expert at braiding straw "in both plain and fancy patterns" which was then supplied to the hat shops in Foxboro. She instructed her children in the craft and once they had obtained proficiency she read to them in the evenings while they toiled. Apparently she also made and sold something known as 'Buffum's Stick Salve' and was known as a healer, frequently being called out at night to assist her neighbors with a birth or an illness.

Betsey's son Edward occupied the house after her death,

and ownership has remained in the family up to the present day. Betsey's youngest son Lilburne (future developer of Crescent Beach) also moved back to the house in his later years. Generations of the Hiller family made good use of Betsey's Meadow for grazing and growing produce, including the lovely orchard shown in the decorated plan on the cover. As shown a variety of apple, peach and pear trees were planted from 1876 to 1908, with a few apple trees dating from before 1876. Sadly neither the author or date of the plan are known, and none of these trees remain in Betsey's Meadow.

Of course the decision to move on has produced mixed feelings for Florence but her desire to maintain a connection to the sturdy generations that have gone before helped convince her that donating the land was the right thing to do. "I know my mother would love that part of the homestead is preserved forever," she said. "And even though I'm selling the house, as



long as the meadow is there I'll always have home." And let there be no doubt about the magnitude of this gift. This meadow, if sold for house lots, could easily have fetched hundreds of thousands of dollars. Generosity of this magnitude is rare and must not be forgotten. MLT is honored and humbled by Florence's unselfish gift. Betsey's Meadow will remain a treasure to MLT and to future generations forever.

Help us save Betsey's Meadow

Please consider a donation honoring Florence Martocci's gift of Betsey's Meadow. All donated funds will be used to complete gentle landscaping and tree pruning on the property, install an information kiosk, paths and benches, and provide funds for ongoing maintenance and stewardship of the property. Donate by mail or on line at www.mattland-trust.org, and be sure to tell us the funds are for "Betsey's Meadow." Thank you!

Volunteer Appreciation Reception and 2020 Annual Meeting

Volunteers of MLT will be recognized at our 2020 Annual Meeting being planned for Sunday May 3rd from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Rustico Restaurant. Note that this event may need to be postponed or cancelled in view of COVID-19 precautions. Watch MLT's website, Facebook page and local print media for details.

Summer is coming!

COVID-19 precautions may change our plans for events this summer. MLT and the Friends of the Mattapoissett Rail Trail had planned the Fifth Tour de Crème for Sunday May 17th with four bike rides of different lengths, ice cream at local creameries along the routes, and a finish line party at MLT's Munro Preserve. However as we went to press this event was cancelled due to concerns about the coronavirus. We hope to see you in May 2021!



Harbor Days plans to return to Shipyard Park on July 18th and 19th, and MLT will be there in our usual booth on the west (breezy) side of the park with information, maps, MLT clothing and hats, and a cool place to sit and visit a while. Don't forget

we'll have pony rides for the youngsters across the parking lot at MLT's Munro Preserve on Saturday afternoon. Thanks to the Mattapoissett Lions Club for making Harbor Days an annual summer highlight.

On Thursday evening July 30th MLT and the Mattapoissett Museum will host our fifth annual Great Community Picnic at the Munro Preserve. If a picnic dinner by the sea with fresh local oysters, live music and a summer sunset appeals to you, gather friends, prepare a picnic and reserve a table at the Town Wharf General Store or Mattapoissett Museum after June 15th. Tables with linen seating four, six, eight or ten people will be available. All proceeds support MLT and the Museum.



MLT buys the farm...

We are pleased to announce that MLT has reached agreement with the owners to buy the old Santos farm at the end of Bowman Road. This nearly 8 acre parcel abuts our Grace Preserve in the Old Aucoot District, and will bring the total land held by MLT in this area to 433 acres. We hope to conclude the acquisition by the end of 2020.



The Santos farm has been used for many years to raise pigs. Farming activities are winding down, and once MLT takes possession we plan to extend the wildflower meadow next door at our Grace Preserve into the western areas of the Santos farm that presently are bare ground pastures or hold scrub vegetation (mostly invasive plant species.) Fringing forest on the east side of the parcel will be left standing after invasive vines are removed or cut at ground level. Any remaining structures, equipment and debris left from the farm's long history of animal husbandry will be removed and disposed, and soils will be graded and amended if necessary to support expansion of the meadow. We have our work cut out for us, but the end result should be a sizable expansion of the beautiful 10 acre wildflower meadow we have created in this area.

To complete the acquisition MLT must raise \$175,000 in

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Education – A Major Mission for MLT

by Don Cuddy

Since our founding in 1974 MLT's mission has been to acquire and preserve natural resources and wildlife areas for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Concurrent with that comes the desire to educate the public about the wise use of these natural resources. The work of MLT's Education Committee has been vital to the success of this effort.

In 2002 a bequest by Edith Glick Shoolman established a fund for MLT to promote projects that encourage environmental education and physical activity. Students of all ages in the Town's school systems benefit from numerous projects implemented with MLT's support, thanks to the Shoolman



7th grade Students at Cape Cod Canal herring run

Fund and the hard work of our education volunteers. With spring arriving, MLT's 2020 education program is ready to launch but for the COVID-19 precautions put in place by state and local government. We had planned a March 24th event for children five years and older to join us at the Mattapoisett Public Library to build "Fairy Houses" (from all natural materials) for display on a MLT trail. That event was cancelled, and all of the planned events below will be subject to postponement or cancellation as Mattapoisett weathers the COVID-19 crisis. We hope to plan another Fairy House event in the fall.

We have planned a field trip to the Woods Hole Research Center (WHRC) on April 24 for forty-five ORRH advanced placement and community service students. WHRC studies climate change impacts and solutions, and the students will learn about salt marshes and their role in climate adaptation. Also in April seventy Center School third graders will make the annual trip to New Bedford to learn about water quality from the Buzzards Bay Coalition and explore the Whaling National Historical Park. The new and improved Story Walk at MLT's Dunseith Preserve will also be ready in April.

Perhaps the committee's most innovative and ambitious project to date involves raising trout in the classroom in collaboration with the eighth-grade students and teachers at the junior high. The students monitor trout growth and development throughout the school year, gaining first-hand experience in biology, chemistry, physics and earth sciences. The fish will be released this spring in the Mattapoisett River. Field investigations conducted along the river will facilitate the creation of an environmental impact study. The students also will visit the Sandwich Fish Hatchery, where MassWildlife raises 600,000 brook, brown, rainbow and tiger trout for release into

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the coming months to cover the purchase price, closing costs, and initial clean up and stewardship expenses. We hope to raise \$100,000 from state land conservation or municipal resiliency grants, leaving the remaining \$75,000 to be raised from private supporters. Please consider a donation to assist MLT in buying the farm, and extending the wildflower meadow! For more information, contact us at info@mattlandtrust.org.



Wildflower meadow in the Grace Preserve.

Trail Maps ... paper or on your Phone

Printable trail maps are available for download as PDF files on MLT's website. For trail maps on your digital device, download a FREE app for smartphones and tablets called Avenza Maps. All MLT trail maps are available for free download in the Avenza store. Trail maps will display on your device with your location updated continuously as the blue dot. The app also allows users to record a GPS track, navigate to a destination, and measure distances. If you have problems accessing or using MLT maps in Avenza, email us at info@mattlandtrust.org.



As all of us cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, remember that exercise outdoors with fresh air and sunshine are healthy ways to maintain both your physical and mental health. Get out and take a walk or ride on your MLT Preserves. Take your younger children to enjoy the new Story Walk coming to the Dunseith Preserve (home of Salty the Seahorse) in early April.

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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 Mattapoisett Land Trust.

In memory of Pricilla Hathaway:

Richard Bates Mattapoisett, MA	Jack & Linda Coughlin Franklin, MA	Cheryl Johannessen New Bedford, MA	Christianne Phipps Milford, MA
Eva M. Smith Mattapoisett, MA	Ellen Dunn King Fairborn, OH	Mary Ellen Kerswell Millbury, MA	Denise Roane North Grafton, MA
Gwendolyn Whittaker Via website	Susan Dupuis Via website	David Kirchthurn Franklin, MA	Brooks Robertson Mocksville, NC
In memory of Charles Stetson Mendell, III:	Bill and Liz Field Mattapoisett, MA	Joan MacKenzie Essex Junction, VT	Wendy Robins Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire, England
Cynthia Applegate South Grafton, MA	Linda Ferreira Rochester, MA	Rebecca Anne Marchant New Bedford, MA	Matthew & Elizabeth Rosati Smithfield, RI
Denise Arsenault Auburn, MA	Angelo Fisichella Bradford, NH	Beverly and Louis Marguerite Franklin, MA	Bernie & Julie Talty Mattapoisett, MA
Laura Ann Beohner Via website	Jane Gallagher Milford, MA	Ellen Marston Natick, MA	David Todesco Via website
Joe Bianchi Shrewsbury, MA	Kristine & Kathy George Via website	William & Irene McMullen Quincy, MA	Joseph Walsh Via website
Darcia Breen Acushnet, MA	Christopher Golden Via website	June Mendell Mattapoisett, MA	Susan Whitehead Acushnet, MA
Amy Caputa Via website	George Gotsis Holliston, MA	Amy Newfield Via website	Anita & Bob Worthington Las Cruces, NM
Catwiskers Handmade Quilts Framingham, MA	Joan & Bill Hartman Fayetteville, NY	Senthil Parthasarathy Via website	In memory of Edward Scholter:
	Ed Herbert Framingham, MA	Michael Persons Via website	Judith Livolsi Mattapoisett, MA

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

Join us for Garden Grooming!

Do you enjoy fresh coffee, salt air and harbor views in the early morning sunshine? If so, please join us for an hour or so on **Wednesday** morning each week beginning May 20th at the Munro Preserve just west of the Mattapoisett Town wharves. MLT's Garden Groomers meet at 8 a.m. when the weather cooperates to prune, pull weeds and do light garden maintenance while enjoying a fresh cup of coffee and good company. Please join us for a COVID-19 safe activity! For more information email us at info@mattlandtrust.org.

Your legacy for open land

For over 40 years MLT has worked to ensure that you and your family will always have woods, fields, ponds, and trails to enjoy. Much of our success has been made possible by generous individuals who made provisions in their wills to support MLT. Have you thought about leaving a legacy to protect the nature of Mattapoisett through a planned gift?

Please let us know if you have or would like to consider naming MLT as a beneficiary in your estate plan. We appreciate gifts of all sizes.

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6th grade students explore Cuttyhunk

Massachusetts waterways during spring and fall every year. This is wonderful exposure for these young people to working on real projects in the natural world.

June will be a busy month for the Education Committee, starting with the annual Cuttyhunk field trip for Old Hammondtown students on June 3. Approximately seventy-five sixth graders will board the ferry for this popular excursion involving a day of STEM-focused activities on the island including waves, wetlands, birds, whales, and

shipwrecks! The seventh graders at the junior high will visit the Cape Cod Canal Visitor Center and the herring run in Bourneedale to learn about the herring life cycle, the history of the Canal bridges, and the importance of ship navigation in the Canal. This is a large field trip with over two hundred students participating. But not all field trips require transportation. Seventy-five Old Hammondtown fifth graders will take the short walk to MLT's Tub Mill Preserve on June 10 to learn about the history of the mill. There are also plans to repeat the annual summer kayak camp with Mattapoissett Recreation at the MLT Munro Preserve. Kayak camp is fast becoming a summer tradition.

In addition to these school-based activities, as we have for many years MLT will award the annual Blanche B. Perry Scholarship to an outstanding high school graduate who is a Mattapoissett resident and plans to pursue college work in environmental studies or a related field. And for the third year we will support three teachers from Town schools to attend a STEM Conference in October to learn about ways to incorporate science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning into the classroom.

Mrs. Shoolman's dream was to make a difference in the lives of children, encouraging them to explore the world around them and their role within it. MLT's Education Committee has embraced her vision. The mandate is clear -- the mission continues to evolve and we are making a difference.

**The Mattapoissett Land Trust
Blanche B. Perry Scholarship**
for a Mattapoissett resident graduating from
secondary school pursuing an education in
environmental studies or a related field
Scholarship application details and forms
mattlandtrust.org/education/grants-and-scholarships/

Freemin Bauer

Tireless volunteer

By Wendy Capps

Freemin Bauer is a 2018 graduate of Old Rochester Regional High School and the 2018 recipient of the MLT Engaged Community Service Award. He has been an active member of our community for most of his life. Having spent countless hours working as a volunteer with the Land Trust to clear trails, install 'bog boards', and restore and plant the herb garden around the sun dial at the Mattapoissett Museum, he is a tremendous steward of the environment. As a Boy Scout, he regularly committed his time to local service and achieved the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout. He worked with the Mattapoissett Tree Committee planting trees at Old Hammondtown School, the Mattapoissett Police Station, and the Mattapoissett Museum. Some of Freemin's other volunteer efforts included working on a Shellfish Propagation Project in Pine Island Pond to grow oysters for the Town.

Freemin has also worked tirelessly to establish a dog park in Mattapoissett, raising funds and awareness through his annual Dog-Walk-A-Thon. Held in August, this year will be the 4th year of the fundraiser. The goal of the project is to have a good-sized park with plenty of shade trees for dogs and their owners to relax and socialize. Freemin was excited to report that the Town is currently evaluating several parcels to find somewhere suitable for the park!



A young Freemin helps restore the garden at the sundial at the Mattapoissett Museum

Currently in his second year at Bristol Community College, Freemin is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Science – he is still deciding between Life Science and Environmental Science. He told me that he has found his coursework to be challenging and he is looking forward to the hands-on classes like field biology where he will be able to get out in the field for some applied learning. Freemin is already out in the field gaining experience working weekends on a local shellfish aquaculture program growing oysters in our local waters with Bob Field. He reported to me that his experience has been invaluable to him and he hopes to use this together with his degree to work for the Town to develop and manage more local aquaculture projects.

The environment has played a big part in his life and Freemin is very appreciative of the support of the Land Trust in helping him work towards his goals. We wish him continued success and look forward to working with him in the future!



Kids' Corner

A builder on Land Trust Properties

For several years the MLT has sponsored each April an investigation of a vernal pool on one of the Land Trust's properties. Vernal pools are pools of water that provide a welcoming environment for several species of amphibians to lay their eggs before the pools dry up later in the summer. While visitors to a vernal pool are usually most interested in seeing eggs of wood frogs or yellow-spotted salamanders, vernal pools also provide a home for a wide range of insects and other animals. One of the most interesting is the caddisfly (order Trichoptera).



Adult caddisfly

There are approximately 14,500 species of caddisfly- all of them lay their eggs in water where they live their lives as larvae and pupae before emerging above the water to fly as adults with their two sets of hairy wings. These wings are folded tent-like over their bodies while at rest. They are closely related to moths and butterflies.



Caddisfly larva

The example we find most often is the log-cabin caddisfly larvae. After the egg hatches in the spring the larvae spin a sticky silk around their bodies and then stick small pieces of vegetation to themselves to create the "log-cabin". Within the cabin they are able to move to encourage water flow and provide oxygen. Log-cabin caddisfly larvae feed on vegetation in the vernal pool and provide a valuable service by breaking down larger leaf matter so it can be used by other organisms.

If you would like to investigate the mysteries of a vernal pool, please join us on April 18 at 1:00 p.m. If we're lucky we'll find another log-cabin builder.

Photos: Adult caddisfly- Britannica website; larva- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee



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Calendar — 2020 Spring and Summer Activities

date	time	event	description	place
April 18	1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	Vernal Pool Exploration Walk	Explore a vernal pool and learn the methods to officially certify it. Walk may or may not be held depending on COVID-19 restrictions. Watch local media, Facebook/mattlandtrust and MLT website for announcements	To be determined. Check mattlandtrust.org or Facebook/mattlandtrust
May 3	2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.	Annual Meeting	Meeting may or may not be held depending on COVID-19 restrictions. Watch local media, Facebook/mattlandtrust and MLT website for announcements	Rustico Restaurant
July 18-19	9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Harbor Days	Visit our booth to learn about properties, our mission, buy tee shirts, gear and memberships.	Shipyards Park
July 30	5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.	The Great Community Picnic	Music, oysters and more (reserved tables). info@mattlandtrust.org	Munro Waterfront Preserve

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: Marc Anderson, Charles A. Bedser, Mary Cabral, Malcom Campbell, Wendy Copps, Don Cuddy, Arthur Damaskos, Peter Davies, Joanna Dresser, Ellen Flynn, Sandra Hering, Gary P. Johnson, Alice McGrath, Paul Osenkowski, Charles Radville, Thomas Galavotti, ORR student representative and Mike Huguenin, President.

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

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