



*Working to preserve open space in Newton for 44 years!*

## *the Newton Conservators*

# NEWSLETTER

Winter Issue

[www.newtonconservators.org](http://www.newtonconservators.org)

February / March 2005

## ANGINO COMMUNITY FARM IS ON THE WAY! *City Approves Purchase and Begins Acquisition*

In December, the Newton Board of Aldermen voted to fund the Newton Conservators' proposal for the acquisition of the Angino Farm. With their vote (20 yes, 4 no), the Aldermen brought to a close a nine-month process during which the idea to operate the property as a community farm took shape. Now a new process is in motion to close the acquisition and set up the infrastructure for operation of the farm. The schedule for this part of the process will take us into May.

Meanwhile, we are working with the city and with other groups to prepare for the first season's harvest at Angino Farm. It is unclear at this point how long that will take and whether we can expect 2005 to be the first season or whether we will have to wait until 2006. Either way, there is a great deal of activity needed to get this project underway, only part of which has directly to do with planting.

Needless to say, the Conservators are extremely pleased that the city has agreed to save one of Newton's most significant remaining open spaces. In a city nearing full build-out, with few remaining privately held open spaces, the Conservators will continue to negotiate with landowners and advocate for the protection of irreplaceable open spaces.

One thing that has been especially gratifying about the effort to save Angino Farm is the tremendous outpouring of community support for this project. Newton residents spoke out loudly for saving our last farm and returning it to agricultural use as a community farm and city officials heard the call. We

thank all of those who wrote letters, made phone calls, volunteered countless hours and made pledges of financial support to insure the success of our efforts.

### **Next Steps**

Current activity on the city side falls into three categories. First is the acquisition of the property. The city is negotiating the final details of the Purchase and Sale Agreement with the Angino family. As part of the purchase process, a permanent conservation restriction (CR) is being developed, as required by the Community Preservation Act, to protect the property from resale or unintended use down the road. This CR must be approved by the state Department of Environmental Protection and will likely be held by the Conservators. Closure on the CR and the property itself is expected to occur in May 2005, at the latest.

*(Continued on page 2)*

### **Invest NOW in the success of Newton's new Community Farm**

Funds are needed to cover start-up costs  
***Help us meet a generous  
\$15,000 Challenge Grant!***

Make checks payable to Newton Conservators, Inc.  
Write "Farm" on the memo line  
*All contributions are fully tax-deductible*

The second city activity relates to rezoning of the property. The farm is currently zoned for housing, which, while questionable under prior circumstances, is clearly inappropriate for a community farm. The most likely scenario is to convert this property to a “public use” zone and those details are being worked out with the Board of Aldermen, who must approve all zoning changes.

Finally, the city is designing an oversight process to manage its interests in the operation of the farm. A Farm Commission is being discussed that would be made up of a variety of city and community representatives. It would have responsibility for selecting and contracting with a farm operator, reviewing and approving business plans, and monitoring operations to ensure compliance with city interests. The precise size and shape of this new city board is still in discussion. Formation of the Farm Commission will require passage of an enabling ordinance by the Board of Aldermen, appointment and approval of members fitting the requirements of the ordinance, and organization of the Commission. It is unclear how long this process will take or what shortcuts may be possible to expedite first-season decisions, but this is probably the most critical outstanding issue in terms of the farm’s ability to actually get into the ground this summer.

### **Conservators’ Vision**

Our vision for the farm, which has been conveyed to city officials, includes a resident farmer, organic farming, produce sales, educational programs, and the donation of food to those in need. One thing that it is important to emphasize is that the Conservators’ proposal to the Community Preservation Committee calls for a financially independent, non-profit community farm operation that would not depend on continuing financial support from the city. The operation would pay its own way and maintain the farm buildings through sale of produce, fundraising, and programming.

In developing the Community Preservation proposal, the Conservators partnered with a grassroots coalition of Newton residents, who worked with professional farmers to develop an extremely credible farm operations proposal. This group has shown an ability to organize, to fundraise, and to build a base of knowledge and expertise necessary to launch a successful farm operation. This Newton Community Farm group is currently in the process of

incorporating and obtaining 501(c)3 tax-exempt status. One possibility is that the city will select this group to operate the farm. Alternatively, this group may play a supporting role through fundraising and volunteering, a role similar to that of the Friends of the Newton Free Library. The Newton Community Farm group has prepared a Farm Status Report which can be found at the Conservators Web site ([www.newtonconservators.org](http://www.newtonconservators.org)).

The Newton Conservators is committed to helping the Newton Community Farm Group get off to a strong start. To this end, we have pledged financial support to this group and have also agreed to accept and hold donations while this fledgling non-profit organization obtains its 501(c)3 status. A farm cannot operate without tools, equipment, and supplies. Now is the time to get the farm off to a strong start by providing funds for farm start-up costs, development of educational programs, and basic building maintenance.

### **We Need Your Support**

Four generous Newton residents have offered a \$15,000 Challenge Grant to the Newton Community Farm group. This means that the first \$15,000 in donations will be matched dollar-for-dollar! But it also means that we can’t claim this gift unless other generous residents make contributions up to the amount of the Challenge Grant.

We urge you to support the farm today by writing a fully tax-deductible check, payable to Newton Conservators, Inc. Be sure to write “farm” on the check memo line and the Newton Conservators will hold these funds in a designated account on behalf of the Newton Community Farm Group, pending that group’s incorporation as a non-profit. We also want to take a moment to thank the Ledgebrook Condominium Association, abutters to the Angino Farm, who have also pledged substantial financial support to the Newton Community Farm group.

*Jon Regosin and Doug Dickson*



## EDITORIAL

### *Open Space Acquisition Process Must be Shorter and More Certain*

While we are very excited to see the Angino Farm acquisition move forward, there have been some unexpected bumps in the road. This is the third time we have partnered with the city to acquire open space using Community Preservation Funds, and each time the rules laid down by the city have been slightly different. We hope to continue working with the Community Preservation Committee, the Board of Aldermen and the city administration to acquire open space parcels as they become available, but we believe that greater predictability in the process is imperative if we are to work successfully with landowners.

The primary issue involves the development of conservation restrictions (CRs) as required by the Community Preservation Act. Any property purchased with CPA funds for open space must be owned by the city and must be protected by a CR held by an organization qualified to do so. As the only local organization formed as a land trust, the Newton Conservators is the most likely holder of these CRs. We currently hold the CR for the Wilmerding property (addition to Cohen Conservation Area) purchased last year with CPA funds, and we anticipate holding CRs on the Forte property (addition to Dolan Pond Conservation Area) and Kessler Woods, both of which were acquired with CPA funds, once those restrictions are finalized.

In two of these three transactions, the acquisition was closed without the CR having been finalized. Bringing a CR to the point of final agreement is a long and complex process involving the city law department, the city agency or board who will ultimately have jurisdiction over the land (usually the Conservation Commission), the Mayor, the Board of Aldermen and the state Department of Environmental Protection, in addition to the Conservators (or other outside holder of the restriction). Each of these authorities must sign off on the CR and if there are changes made by one along the way, the others must agree, even though they may previously have signed off. In the Wilmerding case, that process took over a year to complete. CRs for the Forte property and Kessler Woods are still in development, with no scheduled date for completion.

With this background, it is easy to understand our concern when the city law department determined that the CR on Angino Farm would need to be finalized before the acquisition of the property could close. Our agreement with the Angino family, based on our experience in working with the Forte family and the Kessler Woods transaction, assumed that the sale would be completed in March 2005, independent of the CR approval process. The most optimistic timetable for finalizing a CR for Angino Farm put the closing closer to June.

Some compromises have been worked out and we now expect the purchase of the farm to be completed no later than May, but it is clear from this experience that the rules of engagement need to be standardized and clearly understood by all parties from an early point in the process. Otherwise, our credibility as well as that of the city is at stake and the success of our efforts is put at risk.

The Conservators seek the shortest possible route to approval and funding of CPA projects. It asks a great deal of a landowner to wait a year to complete a purchase. It asks a great deal of the Aldermen, city officials, and the Conservators ourselves to carry a proposal through multiple committees and meetings. The Conservators and a group of farm advocates turned out in large numbers on many evenings over the course of nine months when the proposal was before the Community Preservation Committee and then the Board of Aldermen. The process IS shorter in many communities. The potential downside to Newton's process is that worthwhile projects and acquisitions may not happen because property owners will simply not want to endure the wait.

Our hope early on was that farming at Angino would begin this coming summer. Because of the various organizational steps that are required before a farm operator can be chosen, it appears that real, hands-on farming may not take place for another year. A community farm group has formed and is anxious to move forward. We all need to exercise patience—the process takes time. But, with luck, we will be rewarded. Not too long from now, we will again see agriculture at Angino Farm.

*Eric Reenstierna*



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# *We Accept Gifts!*

The mission of the Newton Conservators is to protect open space. It is to protect it, enhance it, appreciate it and share our appreciation with others. In this issue of our newsletter, you can read some of that appreciation. And you can see it on NewTV, where the Conservators broadcast footage from Newton's wild, open places.

Protection of open space is often a struggle. We struggle against private interests that have development goals for the land. We struggle to create workable government rules to help keep our wetlands and streams in good health. We lobby hard for the funding to preserve a Kessler Woods or to revive an Angino Farm. We are so dedicated to this effort that we are taken aback when an outright gift of land comes our way. With gifts, we gain what we are after without the struggle. Often, we don't need to do much more than just say "yes."

The gifts of land we receive come from people who have spent years as owners and stewards. They see the pressure to develop small, unused parcels and look for a permanent solution for protecting the land into the future. And they come to us to make it happen.

Last year, the Conservators received a gift of a quarter acre of steep, wooded land near the Laundry Brook. The neighbors appreciate this small parcel of wild land in their midst. A hawk is in the neighborhood, too.

This year, we are to receive a half acre of land that makes up part of a hollow where another brook rises. This half acre could easily have become the backyard of a large, new house. But the current owners saw its value in a different context. The hollow occupies the backyards of house lots that front on two streets. The hope of the Conservators and the owners is that their neighbors choose to protect adjoining parcels as well—and that over the years we can protect the rest of the hollow, to leave it natural, as it now stands.

The Conservators make certain that the gifts we receive have value as open space. (See next article.) We receive land in a natural state, assure that there is access, set up a stewardship program so we can ensure it is cared for and not misused.

When a gift comes our way, our part is to accept it. The hard part—the struggle—is gone. Our part is to get familiar with the land, to be as good a steward as were its prior owners. We are fortunate for their generosity. So is the hawk.

When it comes to gifts, we don't need to do much. We only need to say "thank you."

*Eric Reenstierna*

## ***Conservators Adopt Land Preservation Criteria***

After reviewing and revising several drafts over two years, the board of directors of the Newton Conservators voted unanimously at their November 17, 2004 meeting to adopt a set of criteria to guide our efforts to promote land preservation in Newton. This includes acceptance of gifts as well as targeting of acquisitions.

This article presents an abbreviated version of the Conservation Values and the Requirements and Considerations adopted by the board to determine whether we should become involved in an effort to preserve any given property. The complete list of forty-three Criteria will soon be up on our Web site, [www.newtonconservators.org](http://www.newtonconservators.org).

### **CONSERVATION VALUES**

- **Open Space and Scenic Views:** This property is natural or scenic; joined to other conservation land; or benefits the neighborhood with its natural properties.
- **Public Policy:** This property has been identified by a governmental body as worthy of preservation or it is subject to environmental regulations.
- **Ecological / Habitat / Wildlife Significance:** This property has significant natural habitat or is a realistic corridor between such habitats; or it supports rare or endangered species.
- **Watershed Protection:** This property protects important natural land within a watershed and helps to ensure the quality and quantity of water resources in the area.

*(Continued on page 5)*

*Land Preservation Criteria, continued from page 4*

### **REQUIREMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

- **Organizational Issues:** Protecting this property is the right thing, legally, ethically, and publicly, for the Conservators to undertake.
- **Physical Issues:** The property is natural, safe, not contaminated, with well-defined boundaries, and will not require additional utilities.
- **Financial Issues:** The Conservators has or can obtain the financial resources needed to protect this property.
- **Stewardship Issues:** The Conservators has or can obtain the human resources needed to protect this property and has a written plan for doing so.
- **Community Issues:** The community will support the protection of this property.

If you know of anyone who might be interested in discussing the donation of land for preservation, please contact Duane Hillis, chair of the Conservators Land Acquisition Committee (dhillis@rcn.com) or any other member of the board of directors. In addition to helping you or others determine whether the land in question meets our criteria for preservation, we can explain the tax credits and other financial incentives that may apply.



**The Newton Conservators Newsletter**© is published five times each year by the Newton Conservators, Inc. Issues usually appear in February, April, June, September and November. Deadlines for these issues are the fifth of each month in which an issue is scheduled to be published.

We welcome material related to our mission from any source. Send proposed articles by email in MS Word or rich text format to dgdkson@rcn.com. Digitized photographs, maps and diagrams are also welcome.

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Thanks to the following contributors to this edition of the Newsletter: David Backer, Jim Broderick, M.G. Criscitiello, Doug Dickson, Patty Goldman, Deb and Frank Howard, Julia Malakie, Eric Reenstierna and Jon Regosin. Thanks also to Douglas Leith for his excellent proofreading.

## *Cold Spring Park Featured on NewTV*

Even if the weather outside is frightful in February, you can have a delightful time exploring Cold Spring Park in all seasons on NewTV, Newton’s community cable television channel.

The Newton Conservators and the Green Decade Coalition are taking turns producing monthly episodes of the Environmental Show. Our “Naturalist’s Look at Cold Spring Park” will run five times a week during the month of February and will feature colorful birds, plants and amphibians found in this 67-acre public preserve in Newton Highlands.

Our previous television tour of Cold Spring Park focused on its history and recreational uses. This time



we have two professional naturalists, and our own avid birder, Cris Criscitiello, takes us on a very close look at the flora and fauna of the park. It is a beautiful production and one that offers something for people of all ages.

Dan Perlman, Biology Professor and Director of Environmental Studies at Brandeis University, will show how plants grow and change in the park during the four seasons, and also how non-native plants have moved into the park.

Jon Regosin of the Massachusetts Fisheries and Wildlife Division joins him to take a close look at the vernal pools at Cold Spring and the various salamanders, toads, frogs and insects that breed and live in and around the pools at different depths.



Cris Criscitiello, a retired physician, serves both as host of the show and guide to the beautiful warblers, woodpeckers, hawks, ducks and other birds that visit and live in the park.

Thank you to the production crew, including videographers Duane Hillis and Frank Howard, script writer and director Patty Goldman, and technical editor Sage Jankowitz, with additional beautiful photographs from Dan Brody and Carole Smith Berney. Thanks also to the helpful staff at NewTV.

The show runs on Saturdays (10:00 am), Tuesdays (11:30 pm), Wednesdays (11:30 am), and Thursdays (4:00 and 7:30 pm). You will find it on Comcast’s Channel 10 or RCN’s Channel 15.

*Patty Goldman*

## **River Parks: Great Wherever They Are**

Last October, we went on a natural history trip to Argentina. We landed in Buenos Aires and on our first day of birdwatching, we went to a city reserve called Costanera Sur, an area reclaimed from the Platte River with fill from a massive regrading and rehabilitation job in the city some years ago. It was swarming with people and with birds! There were people biking, walking, jogging, picnicking and generally enjoying the outdoors in this large, open area. It was particularly well manicured—no sweeping green lawns—but the paths were paved and the fields, brushy undergrowth, small and large trees, river bank and small mucky areas provided abundant habitat.

Our group spotted 73 species of birds that morning. We got great looks at many land and sea birds and joined the local photographers in taking pictures of Argentina's springtime flora and fauna.

Clean air and clean water are important priorities for this sophisticated city of three million people (10 million more live in the greater Buenos Aires area), where international tourism is championed and one-third of the people in Argentina make their home.

Tourism in greater Boston and Massachusetts is an important part of our economy also. Mayor Menino led an impressive effort to attract the National Democratic Convention here in 2004 with a long-range goal of promoting return visits in the coming years. The Charles River and its paths and vistas are not as grand in scale as the Platte in Argentina, but our river is remarkably well preserved and accessible, especially considering how urban the area has been and for how long. It is also a great place to watch birds and is home to many species.

The vision, energy and effectiveness of past leaders, such as Eliot, Olmsted and the Storrows, has provided Boston with a beautiful and accessible river for many miles upstream. A quick trip to many other cities in New England makes clear how fortunate we are. In our time, further improvement has occurred. Karl Haglund and Renata vonTschanner's book, published in 2003 and titled *Inventing the Charles River*, tells the history of the development of a continuous series of public parks we all enjoy today. The Charles River Conservancy, the Charles River Watershed Association and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation have each accomplished important improvements for the public's benefit.



When you walk along the Charles, be on the lookout for many kinds of ducks, Canada geese, Eastern Cottontail rabbits, Black-crowned Night Herons and other wildlife. You will meet others enjoying the exercise and fresh air.

To learn more about all that awaits you at our great river, plan to watch The Environment Show on New TV in June 2005. The show is titled, "The Charles River: Newton's Great Waterway."

*Deb and Frank Howard*

## MISSION

### Newton Conservators, Inc.

The Newton Conservators promotes the protection and preservation of natural areas, including parks, playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open space for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of Newton. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters.

A primary goal is to foster the acquisition of land, buildings and other facilities to be used for the encouragement of scientific, educational, recreational, literary and other public pursuits that will promote good citizenship and the general welfare of the people of our community.

*The Newton Conservators was formed as a not-for-profit organization over 43 years ago in June 1961.*

## *The Envi Sci Program: The "Back Story"*

In the last issue of the Conservators newsletter, I wrote a short article about Newton's Environmental Science Program, which I described as "a unique summer program that lets students enjoy exploring the wilderness and learn about the environment." That's all true, because Envi Sci is a great program and I saw that first-hand as the parent of a participant for six years.

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*Envi Sci Program, continued from page 6*

This time I want to say a few words about what happens "behind the scenes," and invite your assistance.

What I have learned in the past six months as the new Executive Director reinforces my sense that Envi Sci is a great program. However, now I have a very

new perspective on the program, about what it takes to run an environmentally focused organization for teenagers.

This program gets students outdoors to go hiking, biking, canoeing and backpacking. Everyday, it delivers hands-on science education in the field, taught by students-leaders to students. It really raises their awareness of the environment and builds a sense of personal ownership of the issues: how the science works, how pollution and neglect threaten the environment, how a cleanup project can make a difference. And it builds critical thinking abilities and stamina, certainly by the time the students finish the mountain series.



The reality of getting everything in place so that these experiences are possible during four weeks in the summer is an eye-opener. Here are some things that I vaguely understood before and now see in much clearer detail:

- Getting full enrollment of 30 students is essential to keeping the program interesting and financially stable. We update, print, and bulk-mail our brochures to several thousand families, go to summer camp fairs and promote the program wherever we can. But Envi Sci competes with many summer camps for teens' participation and there are some extremely well-funded and polished marketing campaigns out there. **We need and appreciate whatever assistance we can get in promoting our program and enrolling students in it.**
- Training new leaders from the ranks builds continuity of the program, year-to-year. The best thing about Envi Sci is that it is run by student leaders who have gone through the program before and who care enough to go through the training to work as leaders for new students. It is the student staff that actually plans, develops, and delivers the science education workshops each summer. There is competition for these kids' time and some of it pays better than Envi Sci can afford right now. **We need to attract students who want to become leaders in the program and we need to be able to pay them enough for their work.**
- Fundraising is a necessity. Envi Sci's operating costs for transportation, promotion, backpacking

accommodations, building custodians, canoe rentals and first-aid training are rising. We have not changed the student leaders' salaries for several years. Even with good enrollment, it is difficult to end the season with enough "carry-forward" funds to cover the next year's brochure printing and early promotion expenses. To say that we are competing for limited fundraising dollars is an understatement. The Envi Sci program is that rare effort that builds a commitment to preserving the environment through education, experience, and fun. **We need the support of people who want to make sure that teenagers care about the environment and are able to do something about it.**

These ideas are familiar, but they have an urgency for me, now that I am working with this year's student leaders to make the program happen again this summer. I want to talk with anyone who would like to help us succeed (617-969-0288, [contact@newtonenvisci.org](mailto:contact@newtonenvisci.org)). Learn more about Envi Sci at [www.newtonenvisci.org](http://www.newtonenvisci.org).

*David Backer, Executive Director*

## Ring Around The Moon

By any chance did you see the moon last Christmas Eve? It put on a spectacular display!



That evening, after our grandchildren were tucked in bed, I went out for an eleven o'clock stroll with my dog, Dory. In the bright moonlight our two shadows were sharply etched on the ground. They kept pace with us as we hurried in the cold along the path on the Sudbury aqueduct. I looked up to check the moon and was astounded to see a huge ring around it! What I saw was not the kind of hazy luminescence one often sees

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**Ring Around the Moon**, continued from page 7

closely surrounding it on a cloudy night; rather it was a large, thin circle of whiteness, occupying a sizeable portion of the sky, with the full moon at its center.

To get some idea of the radius of this ring, I stretched out my right arm straight toward it and spread my fingers as far apart as they would go. With the end of my thumb just obscuring the moon, I found

the tip of my little finger barely touching the inner edge of the ring. This is a “rough and ready” way to estimate distances across the sky. Strangely enough, for most people, this distance—from thumb tip to little fingertip, with hand held up at arm’s length—represents approximately 20 degrees of angle. (You may recall that stargazers and mariners measure distances in the sky in degrees. For example, the arc from the horizon to the zenith, a point directly overhead, is 90 degrees, and the distance around the entire horizon is 360 degrees.)

The sky inside the ring was dark and clear, with the disc of the moon at its center. Just below it, and also inside the ring, there were three bright stars lined up in a row. It took me a moment to realize that these were the so-called “belt” in the constellation of Orion, the hunter. The ring itself was fairly thin, but it formed a complete circle, and its inner edge was colored with a definite reddish-orange glow. The remainder of the sky outside the ring was clear except for a few scattered wisps of cloud. What a show I was being treated to!

In the past, I had seen partial bits of rings around the moon, but in my memory there was nothing to match this! I hurried back to notify my wife, Nancy, and some of our neighbors who were still up. For a time we all watched in amazement under the night sky. The whole spectacle persisted for at least a half-hour before it faded and clouds moved in over the moon.

In the days following, I read as much as I could understand about lunar rings and discovered that they are officially known as “halos” and can be produced by the sun as well as the moon. The gist of it all is that the presence of cirrostratus clouds high in the atmosphere is key to their occurrence. At altitudes of 40,000 feet or so, these particular clouds are the source of tiny ice crystals which form rapidly at the low temperatures encountered at that height. Instead of the flat, multi-branching snowflake models most often pictured, these crystals assume the shape of tiny bars with six surfaces. Imagine a miniscule, six-sided tootsie roll with a hexagonal cross section! When light passes through such a crystal, it is bent (or refracted) at two surfaces, and the emerging beam is deflected by 22 degrees from its original path. Since the billions of these crystals floating in the cloud are oriented every which-way, the beams of moonlight passing through are deflected into a circular configuration, at least as seen by the observer on the

ground below. And voila!—these refracted beams appear from the ground as a circle with a radius of 22 degrees surrounding the moon itself. Since there is also a small degree of dispersion of white light as it passes through the ice crystals, there is a slight rainbow effect, with the red-orange seen on the inner edge of the halo and the harder-to-see bluish color toward the outside.

High cirrostratus clouds can produce the same effect with sunlight, and similar rings or halos may appear in daylight encircling the sun, especially when it is low in the sky. As is often the case, however, clouds may obscure the major portion of the sun halo with only a short segment detected. This may appear as a fragment of rainbow-like coloring in a small area of nearby cloud. This is called a “sundog” and it, too, is always found at a distance of 22 degrees from the sun.

Farmers and other weather-wise folks tell us that these rings around the moon are harbingers of storms, and meteorologists for the most part confirm this, indicating that these cirrus clouds are often associated with the advent of bad weather. When I described this experience to her, my fellow Conservator, Thelma Fleishman, pointed out to me that Longfellow wrote of this in his poem, “The Wreck of the Hesperus,” wherein an old sailor warned the skipper of that ship:

‘I pray thee put into yonder port,  
for I fear a hurricane,  
Last night the moon had a golden ring,  
and tonight no moon we see.’

His warning was not heeded and the vessel ended up on “Norman’s Woe” in Gloucester with all hands lost. You may remember that Christmas Eve this year was indeed followed in 36 hours by a heavy snowfall!

Those interested in the optical physics involved in moon halos may wish to check this Web site:  
<http://hyperphysics.phys-astro.gsu.edu>.

*M.G. Criscitiello*

## ***Join the New Citizen Tree Pruners Program***

Do you have an interest in trees? Are you concerned about the health of Newton’s urban forest—approximately 32,000 street trees, as well as trees in parks and other public property? Would you like an opportunity to volunteer, meet other interested



Newton residents, and learn skills that will help you take care of your own trees?



Newton's Urban Tree Commission and the city's Urban Forestry Division are establishing a Newton Citizen Pruners program. Modeled on successful programs in other cities, including Ithaca, NY, the

program will provide free training in proper tree maintenance and pruning techniques and allow people who have completed the training to work on city trees during supervised pruning sessions in locations throughout the city. For 2005, plans are to have four Saturday morning pruning sessions, two in the spring and two in fall.

You may have observed trees with dead or broken limbs and other pruning needs. Work done by volunteers, including pruning dead, damaged or diseased branches within reach of the ground, removing suckers at the base of trees and pruning to train young trees, will supplement the work of the city's Urban Forestry Division and allow the city's tree pruning contractors to spend more time on larger, older trees.

Training will be conducted by Newton's Tree Warden, Marc Welch, and will include three indoor sessions. In addition to proper pruning practices, these will cover tree biology (how trees work, growth and physiology, and tree diseases and pests), tree identification and the composition of Newton's street tree population. You will also learn how Newton selects species and locations for street trees. This will be followed by a hands-on training session at an outdoor location. Participants will learn how to use a variety of tools, including pruners, handsaws, pole saws and loppers. Tools will be provided by the city at both the training session and future pruning sessions.

### **Training Dates**

This year's training will be held on three Wednesday evenings, March 23, March 30, and April 6 from 7:00-9:00 pm, at an indoor location. This will be followed by hands-on training on Saturday, April 16 (rain date April 17), from 8:00 am-12:00 noon at West Newton Common (Webster and Elm Streets).

The first group pruning session for volunteers who have completed the training program is scheduled for Saturday morning, April 30 (rain date

May 1), on the Commonwealth Avenue median at a specific location to be selected by the Tree Warden.

Anyone interested may request registration forms or further information by contacting Marc Welch (617-796-1500 or [mwelch@ci.newton.ma.us](mailto:mwelch@ci.newton.ma.us)).

*Julia Malakie*

## **PLANT A NATIVE SHRUB IN ORDWAY PARK**

This past year, major steps have been taken to renew Ordway Park. In an effort initiated by neighbors, an Ordway Park endowment fund with a goal of \$50,000 has been established. A neighbor donated a matching grant of \$10,000, of which now only \$700 remains to be raised. Last spring, granite



*A grassy area at Ordway Park, as seen from the corner of Gibbs and Everett Streets (photo by Jim Broderick)*

curbing along Grant Avenue was installed and a connection to city water lines was put in place. Two landscape architects, Susan Sangiolo and Beth Schroeder, donated their services, drawing up a multi-

*(Continued on page 10)*

### *Ordway Park, continued from page 9*

phase layout plan for the renewed park and offering guidelines for the plantings in each phase. The neighbors and the board of the Conservators have endorsed both the plan and the guidelines.

Now encouraged by a generous gift from the Newton Centre Garden Club, we have asked for bids for the first phase of the Ordway Park Renewal Plan, using Beth Schroeder's proposal for varied native shrubs with attractive foliage and fragrances in a 75-

foot stretch along Grant Avenue. We need additional funds for this effort and are asking for donations to pay for individual shrubs or groups of shrubs.

### Shrubs Needed for Planting

- Dwarf Hummingbird Pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia* “Hummingbird”): \$50 per shrub, 7 needed
- Mapleleaf Viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*): \$75 per shrub, 6 needed
- Arrow Wood Viburnum (*Viburnum dentatum*): \$75 per shrub, 2 needed
- Fragrant Sumac (*Rhus aromatica* “Gro-Low”): \$70 per shrub, 7 needed
- Carolina Allspice (*Calycanthus floridus*): \$60 per shrub, 3 needed



If you can help out in this way, please make your check out to the Newton Conservators, Ordway Park Planting Fund and send it to PO Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459. We'll send you a planting plan and a full description of the plants you have sponsored.

*Jim Broderick*

## Wanted: Rare and Endangered Species in Newton

With the ground still blanketed with snow, here's a way to orient your thinking toward Spring. Plan some field trips into Newton's conservation area and other open spaces in search of rare and endangered species. Martha Aherin Horn, Newton's Senior Environmental Planner, has asked for the assistance of residents in documenting the continued existence of species once known in Newton but that have not been seen in some time. She is trying to update the city's list with new sightings to complement records from years past.

If you come across any of the following species, be sure to document the date, time of observation, location and, if possible, photographs. With this information, Martha can update the city's records, but also pass it along to the state, which keeps such records as well.

On Martha's hit list are Blue-spotted salamanders, which she knows are plentiful near the Charles River at the radio towers in Upper Falls, but she's wondering about elsewhere. Other fauna and flora

include the Wood Turtle, Henslow's Sparrow, Golden-Winged Warbler, Eastern Pondmussel, Purple Tiger Beetle, Elderberry Long-Horned Beetle, Barrens Daggermoth, Straight Lined Mallow Moth, Pale Green Pinion Moth, Linear-Leaved Milkweed, Andrews' Bottle Gentian, Long-leaved Bluet, New England Blazing Star, Adder's-Tongue Fern, Pale Green Orchis, Toothcup, Long's Bulrush, Wild Senna.

So get out your species identification books, your Walking Trails guide (published and available from the Newton Conservators) and plan to go exploring when the ground firms up in the Spring—not too much longer now!

Please forward any information to Martha J. Aherin Horn, Sr. Environmental Planner, Planning Department, Newton City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02459 (617-796-1134).

*Doug Dickson*



*Photo of a turtle on a jaunt along the Charles River Pathway, taken by Carole Berney Smith*

## Green Decade Coalition *Environmental Speakers Series*

### “The Permanent Energy Crisis: Oil, Dependency, and War”

Monday, February 28, 7:00-9:00 pm  
Druker Auditorium, Newton Free Library

Professor Michael Klare has written widely on US defense policy, the arms trade, and world security affairs, including “Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Petroleum

Dependency” (2004). He is defense correspondent for The Nation and contributing editor of Current History.

### Healthy Lawns & Landscapes Workshop

Monday, March 28, 7:00-9:00 pm  
Druker Auditorium, Newton Free Library

Ann McGovern, composting outreach specialist for the Mass. Department of Environmental Protection, will talk about how to have an attractive landscape that benefits the health of your family, neighbors, pets, wildlife and water quality without harmful chemicals.

### Calendar of Events

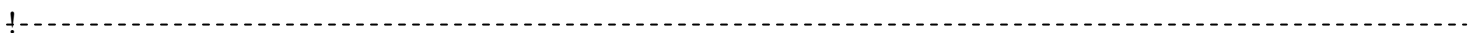
**Newton Conservators Board** meets the third Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm, usually in a City Hall meeting room or the City Hall cafeteria.

**Conservation Commission** meets the fourth Thursday of every month at 7:30 pm in City Hall Room 209.

**Parks and Recreation Commission** meets the third Monday of every month at 7:30 pm in City Hall Room 209.

**Community Preservation Committee** meets the last Wednesday of every month at 7:00 pm in City Hall Room 209.

**Aldermanic Committee on Community Preservation** meets the last Tuesday of every month at 7:45 pm in City Hall Room 222.



**If you haven't paid your membership dues for 2005, it's not too late. Please renew today!  
And consider an additional tax-deductible gift to support our work!**



*Celebrating 44 years  
of open space advocacy  
in Newton*

**Newton Conservators Membership Form**  
PO Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459 • [www.newtonconservators.org](http://www.newtonconservators.org)

YES, I'd like to start/renew my one-year membership with the Newton Conservators to help preserve open space in Newton. I'll receive informative newsletters and emails and be invited to participate in guided tours of local conservation areas, lectures, and other programs and activities.

I'd like to make an additional tax-deductible contribution to support the work of the Newton Conservators: \$\_\_\_\_\_

#### MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

|                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| Individual member | \$25  |
| Family member     | \$35  |
| Sustaining member | \$50  |
| Donor             | \$75  |
| Patron            | \$100 |

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET \_\_\_\_\_ VILLAGE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ Make checks payable to **Newton Conservators, Inc.**

February/March 2005 Newsletter



# *the Newton Conservators* **NEWSLETTER**

**IN THE HOLIDAY ISSUE:**

- Angino Community Farm is Coming! page 1
- We Accept Gifts of Land page 3
- River Parks page 6
- Ring Around the Moon page 7
- Join the Citizen Pruners page 8
- Donate a Shrub for Ordway Park page 8

## Contribute to the Angino Community Farm Fund—see page 1



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NEWTON CONSERVATORS, INC.  
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Newton Centre, MA 02459

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