



*Working to preserve open space in Newton for 47 years!*

## *The Newton Conservators*

# NEWSLETTER

Summer Issue

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

June/July/August 2008

## DUKES TELLS CONSERVATORS: HEAT WAVE COMING

The atmosphere is heating up, we all know. The question is how much. Professor Jeffrey Dukes of UMass Boston, speaking at the Newton Conservators' annual meeting on May 28, discussed global temperature trends, 50- and 100-year forecasts, the causes of global warming, some potential cures, and the likely damages to New England along the way. He answered the question: how fast is global warming happening? Faster, he says, than was forecast in even the worst-case projections.

Professor Dukes, the recipient of a National Science Foundation grant for his current experimental field work in Waltham, cited statistics from the Union of Concerned Scientists and others. The most startling of these was the track record of the projections themselves. Scientists make best- and worst-case scenarios for temperature trends, given the amounts of heat-trapping gases that are expected to be emitted. The best-case scenario shows a gradual warming. The worst-case scenario shows a steeply climbing temperature trend. And in each of the two most recent years for which data are available, actual temperatures have exceeded the temperatures predicted in even the worst-case scenarios.

Carbon dioxide is the most important of the heat-trapping, or greenhouse, gases. Methane is emitted from cattle, and nitrous oxide is produced in wet environments such as rice paddies and cattle waste lagoons. Human activity, including farming and the burning of fossil fuels, has resulted in an increase of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere of roughly 50% in the past 10,000 years. The amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that we put into the atmosphere annually is relatively small

in comparison to emissions from natural sources. But it is enough to tip the scales in favor of greatly increased warming.

Warming can be expected to be greatest at the poles and least near the equator, with an average annual temperature increase of 7° at the poles. Winters will become wetter in the northern hemisphere. New England can expect an increase in precipitation of 10% to 20% in 50 to 100 years. Egypt, already dry, will become dryer. Along with the increased rain will come greater extremes, with rain falling in larger storms, separated by longer periods of drought.

Massachusetts can expect an average annual temperature increase of 5° to 11° by 2100. The climate of Massachusetts will become more like today's climate in Maryland or Georgia. Our winters will see much less snow cover. Growing seasons will be a month or more longer. Species that today are prevented from surviving in New England because of extreme cold temperatures will enter the region. The woolly adelgid, kept in check throughout much of New England because of its inability to survive deep freezes, will no longer be frozen out, and hemlocks, the adelgid's favorite food, are likely to die off. The same goes for sugar maples. The bright colors of fall will become dull.

Professor Dukes has established the Boston Area Climate Experiment at a field station in Waltham. There, he and a group of volunteers subject small patches of ground to the climate conditions that are projected for New England's near future. The station could use additional volunteers.

Can we stop climate change? Professor Dukes' answer is "yes." But to do so takes will. His advice: eat less meat. And elect leaders who will take on the challenge, rather than put it off to another day.

- Eric Reenstierna

**ENVIRONMENTALISTS OF  
THE YEAR:  
TED KUKLINSKI  
HARVEY EPSTEIN  
WILLIAM SHAEVEL**

*The text of President Hagar's award at the annual meeting follows.*

"Ted Kuklinski, Harvey Epstein, and Bill Shaevel are awarded our 2008 Environmentalist of the Year award for their activities with three major happenings in the City: (1) preservation of additional open space at Dolan Pond, (2) preservation of a historical house, and (3) the first Habitat for Humanity buildings in Newton. It was a cooperative effort including input from several public and private sources in cooperation with the Newton Conservators. Each of you played a major role in this happening: Ted Kuklinski for your extraordinary interest in the environment and your ability to make things happen in Newton; Harvey Epstein for your work as Special Projects Coordinator of the Housing Department for the City of Newton, where you helped coordinate the buildings; and Bill Shaevel, for your superb legal advice and assistance with numerous tasks for the Conservators, including the recent transfer of property at 76 Webster Park and the Habitat for Humanity. None of this could have been accomplished without all of your skillful and tireless efforts.

"We remember the groundbreaking ceremonies that had all of the participants beginning the process for the building of the Habitat duplex. It was a central event in Newton that was attended by nearly one hundred residents and supporters. The sound of a Scarlet Tanager from Ted's tape recorder enlivened the morning activity. It was a wonderful day for the Newton community as it was the first Habitat for Humanity building in Newton."

**CHARLES JOHNSON  
MAYNARD AWARD:  
EDDY STREET/  
CHEESECAKE BROOK  
CDBG CITIZENS' GROUP  
CHAIR CHARLES  
WAGNER**

*The Charles Johnson Maynard Award is given each year to recognize efforts to improve biodiversity, habitat reclamation, and natural resource protection.*

"Charles Wagner and the Cheesecake Brook/Eddy Street Project Committee were selected to receive the Charles Johnson Maynard Award for their efforts to improve and preserve Cheesecake Brook. The Board of Directors selected this project for the Charles Johnson Maynard Award for many special reasons. The major reason was the environmental interest of the group, and their energy and success in protecting this stream. Charles Maynard, a 19<sup>th</sup> century resident of Newton, was an avid birder and naturalist. He lived near Cheesecake Brook on property now occupied in part by the Fessenden School. Maynard was a popular lecturer on nature and for 40 years taught classes in Newton on birding. The banks of Cheesecake Brook would have been well-known to Maynard, and we believe he would have heartily approved of the project which you and your committee have shepherded through the long CDBG process."

## DIRECTORS' AWARD:

### ANNE PEARSON

“Anne Pearson was selected for a Directors’ Award for her interest in the environment, her knowledge of environmental activities, her work on the Grants Committee, and her tireless efforts in maintaining our membership lists. Anne has been an essential member of the Newton Conservators’ Board of Directors for a long time. Her knowledge of the environmental area and computer networks helped make the conservators a major environmental group in Massachusetts. Your fellow Conservators find you to be a great pleasure to work with and we wish you well in all your future endeavors- hoping that you will still participate in some of our events with your grandchildren.”

## DIRECTORS' AWARD:

### MARC WELCH

“Marc Welch was selected for his work on numerous levels that has kept Newton as green as possible with a careful selection of trees and overall maintenance of flora in general. You helped convert Newton’s Forestry Department to a GIS based tree management system with cooperative overlap with the City’s GIS efforts. Throughout all these activities, Marc worked long days and even came in on weekends to run pruning sessions, or deal with pressing tree issues. Marc has a natural talent for converting complainers into allies and a talent for stretching ever-diminishing budget dollars. He has helped us with checking the status of vegetation on the city-owned stretch of land adjacent to our Dexter Road property, and also helped us by removing damaged trees in that area. The Conservator members find you to be a great pleasure to work with and the City is very lucky to have you in your current position.”

## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

*William Hagar gave his final address as President of the Newton Conservators at the Conservators’ annual dinner. Bill served with great humor, grew our organization, and was instrumental in the effort to expand the city's park at Crystal Lake. Excerpts from his address follow.*

Welcome to the forty-seventh annual meeting of the Newton Conservators. I want to thank all of you members and friends who are attending tonight’s dinner. Special thanks to municipal and elected officials who grace us with their attendance. Representatives Ruth Balzer and Kay Kahn, Alderman Ted Hess Mahan and Mayor David Cohen attended. Other aldermen sent best wishes and donations for our evening. Parks and Recreation Commissioner Fran Towle attended. We welcome all of you to our program and thank you for your assistance with the various open space projects in the past and the future. We also welcome individuals from other environmental and historical groups that are attending and have cooperated and collaborated with us in the past to keep open space and conservation on the agenda in Newton.

We also remember at this time Leo Levi, a good friend of the environment and of the City of Newton. Leo Levi recently passed away, but he left a legacy of beauty with his interest in flowers and the environment. Just think of it - over four million flowers that were purchased and planted in Newton by public and private individuals. He also worked with our children and initiated programs where they would grow plants, sunflowers, and small trees for better understanding of nature. Leo, more than most, put the City of Newton back into its depiction as the “Garden City”. There was a very nice article written by Linda Plaut in May 6’s TAB that listed all his activities. Leo will be sorely missed.

What activities have the Conservators been doing this past year? We have supported educational outreach programs. We have provided interesting walks and talks for residents. We have been able to protect and preserve several pieces of land by agreeing to hold conservation restrictions for the property. The Conservators were involved in the groundbreaking for the first “Habitat for Humanity” that was part of a “trifecta” for Newton and the Community Preservation Committee: (1) open space preservation (Dolan Pond), (2) historical house preservation (76 Webster Park), and (3) low income housing (Habitat for Humanity duplex). Interestingly enough, it was Ted Kuklinski who initiated the sequence of events that started the process of land acquisition and preservation by following a song bird.

*"You must have the bird in your heart before you can find it in the bush."*

- John Burroughs

Ted was following a Scarlet Tanager from the Dolan Pond area to the back of the adjacent property of Irene Forte. Subsequently, Ted met Irene Forte, who gave him permission to go into her back yard and watch the uncommon bird sing away in the trees. This fortuitous encounter formed the basis of their friendship - until her death at the age of one hundred and four. Ted's relationship with Irene provided the link to carry out her wish to have part of the property for open space and part for "Habitat for Humanity". By the way, Ted told me that over the past Memorial Day weekend his birding group had, once again, found Scarlet Tanagers on Irene's former property. Preservation and protection continues to help our flora and fauna.

*"We can never have enough of nature."*

- Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, 1854

Previous conservation efforts are still providing residents with wonderful parks and activities. The Newton Community Garden (Angino Farm) is going strong with abundant greens and vegetables. The farm manager, Greg Maslowe, was our speaker at last year's annual meeting, and the title for Greg's talk was "Bountiful Backyards: Fruit Trees and Vegetable Gardens". It was a wonderful evening for all of us as we were educated on how to properly plan and grow food producing plants in our backyards. This lecture can now be viewed on NewTV thanks to our video production staff.

*"Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil, and you're a thousand miles from the corn field."*

- Dwight D. Eisenhower

What I like best about the Conservators is that members are inclined to do the right thing. All of us in the Conservators are volunteers. We serve a common mission, to preserve, protect and enhance our city's open space as well as educating students and residents on the environment. When something needs to be done, someone will step forward and do it. You are a wonderful group of achievers who have made a difference in Newton and in New England. Included in some of our activities are the following:

- support grants for environmental activities
- maintaining land that we own such as Dexter Woods and Ordway Park
- pay for our newsletter
- fund the costs of appraisals and environmental assessments that are crucial to land acquisitions.
- provide Newton residents with environmental-based presentations that are shown on local television programs.
- fund scholarships for students in the Environmental Sciences Program

We had an interesting group of grant proposals submitted this year. The following grants were approved and funds were distributed to the requesting groups.

Butterfly Garden Open Classroom Grant Proposal - The Newton Conservators approved funding of \$2,314 for improvement of the Butterfly Garden Project at Horace Mann School. The allocation was for the purchase and assembly of three picnic tables and benches that will enable Horace Mann faculty and staff to transform the present garden into a true open space classroom for all students. The flowers that were planted include lavender, asters, purple coneflowers, butterfly weed, and sunflowers that add to the beauty and enhance the likelihood of insect visitors. It is with fond memories that we once again supported Horace Mann School endeavors to combine educational topics with environmental activities. At the turn of the century, the Newton Conservators provided funds to help initiate the first Butterfly Garden, which now will have expanded use. The tables that will be assembled - for up to a full classroom seating - will transform the present butterfly garden into a true open space classroom. Students will enjoy releasing butterflies raised in class, drawing pictures of flora and fauna in the garden, and writing some descriptions and poetry based on the garden.

The Impact of Litter on the Environment - The Newton Conservators approved funding of \$200 toward a Newton North environmental project to make people more aware of litter pollution. The funds were used to support an education theme that educated students and residents about the harmful effects of littering on watersheds. There was a logical plan or progression by first testing the water quality of the Charles River at several sites followed by using that information to educate the community toward public awareness and sustainability.

Boston College Organic Garden for a Sustainable Newton - The Newton Conservators approved funding of \$500 for partial funding of an organic garden as part of an educational endeavor for present and future sustainable food production for Boston College students. It is a novel

idea for schools to grow some food for their students to help reduce transportation pollution and the cost of food. The quality of food can also be better monitored and linked to educational processes.

The creation of this organic garden will provide students and faculty with an interesting environmental project. The coordinators plan to sell the produce for use in the school dining hall for some of the meals for students, and any sale profit for continued farm support. In addition, some of the produce that is grown will be given to local food shelters. It is beneficial for programs with students for them to learn about sustainable agriculture, including how to garden, and the benefits of “eating local.”

Environmental Science Program Scholarships 2008 – The Newton Conservators approved funding of \$3,000 for scholarship grants for Newton’s Environmental Studies Program (ESP). This year the Conservators have increased our allotment to include a thousand dollar scholarship in Carol Corbett’s memory. ESP’s focus on environmental science topics both inside and outside the classroom provides students with an essential background that will help them – and their parents – appreciate the local environment. Other activities reinforce the importance of the environment and how best to protect and improve what we have. The ESP summer program includes hiking trips to the Blue Hills, Mount Monadnock, and Mount Washington and brings the environment directly into students’ knowledge base.

In what other activities have the Conservators been participants? The TV action group is still going strong with their programs on NewTV. The Conservators’ Web site is continually updated to put our views and activities out to all viewers. Crystal Lake is another topic that comes to mind with our donation/support of \$15,000 to initiate a site analysis. The Conservators “walked the walk” and put up unrestricted funds to preserve an additional piece of the southern end of Crystal Lake. If the latest requests are met there will be more visual open space and recreational access to the lake and swimming area.

Our monthly meetings are still a multitasking person’s delight with numerous topics brought up and analyzed. These include discussions on Guided Walks, Environmental Lectures, Land Management, Publicity, Birding Activities, Habitat for Humanity, and Preservation of Open Areas. We have to be able to adapt to change to protect areas with indigenous flora and fauna. In closing, I would like to end with a quote by President John F. Kennedy:

“It is our task in our time and in our generation, to hand down undiminished to those who come after us, as was handed down to us by those who went before, the natural wealth and beauty which is ours.”

## TREASURER’S REPORT ON CALENDAR YEAR 2007

Calendar Year 2007 was another good financial year for the Conservators. We began the year with unrestricted net assets of \$171 thousand, and increased them by over \$18 thousand to an ending balance at 12/31/07 of almost \$190 thousand.

Net income from operations was \$7,731. That was made up of \$21 thousand of membership dues, gifts, and map sales, offset by expenses of \$13 thousand. Grants were made to the City’s Environmental Science Program, for scholarships and a camcorder, and to NewTV. Other expenses included insurance, Ordway Park maintenance, and newsletter production costs.

Investment income totaled almost \$11 thousand. That included interest income of \$2,200 on our Fidelity index fund and \$2,500 of unrealized gain in the value of that index fund, which has a balance of about \$81 thousand.

In total, the sum of operating income and investment income was \$18,462, which increased our unrestricted net assets to \$189,701.

In addition to the unrestricted assets, we also had activity in donor-restricted funds. We took in \$1,000 of initial start-up contributions for the Newton Tree Conservancy (a very important effort to support the City’s trees, about which you will be hearing a lot more). Houghton Gardens expended funds for grounds maintenance work, and we spent \$1,000 on tree work using the 60 Prospect Park Maintenance Fund.

The Conservators’ balance sheet shows property holdings of Ordway Park, 60 Prospect Street, and Sargent Street. The \$1.1M Webster Park property at Dolan Pond, along with its corresponding mortgage liability, came off our books in the summer of 2007, when the final transactions took place to transfer the property to the City and to Habitat for Humanity.

In total, unrestricted and restricted net assets ended 2007 at \$254,541, about \$17 thousand higher than the previous year.

- Treasurer Katherine Howard

## TASK FORCE THWARTS INVADERS

*Eric Olson, ecologist at Brandeis University, addressed the Conservators at our annual dinner with a call to help remove invasive species from our open spaces. He described a "silent tsunami" of garlic mustard, knotweed, buckthorn, and other invasives and the Newton Invasive Species Task Force's effort to "prevent our open spaces from becoming a 'global commons' of only a few species." The letter that follows is an early June email to the Task Force. (Don't show up on Saturday; the date has already gone by.)*

Dear Newton Invasive Plant Task Force members,

Your numbers have now reached 53! Our turnout of 10 volunteers last Sunday at Dolan Pond, in just the three hours about 9 to noon, took care of a large stand of Japanese Knotweed and significant areas of garlic mustard as well. Thank you to all who participated. There is at least one more full morning of work to do at Dolan, and although it appears we have a lot of rain in the forecast for this week, the weather is expected to clear exactly in time to get back to work outdoors on Saturday. As we stated last week, even lending a hand for an hour is enormously helpful and can be very educational for children so please bring them along. We will start again at 9 AM, and this time there will be coffee and donuts. Parents might want to bring juice for the kids. Please let us know if you need directions, but the basics are meet at the Webster Park entrance, off of Webster Street. The task force cell phone for Saturday only is 617 872 9928.

The basic recommendations for preparing for this still hold: long pants and long sleeved shirt for mosquitoes and some thorny brambles, and bring a water bottle and work gloves. Expected temps will be in the 80's, cotton is best for such hot weather. Work boots or other sturdy shoes are recommended. Also, you must ask us to teach you to identify poison ivy if you do not already know it well. It is up to you to learn this plant and we can help...but it's still up to you. Fortunately poison ivy is not too common at Dolan.

We can provide contractor bags and a few other tools, courtesy of funding provided by the Newton Conservators. Mostly this work involves hand pulling.

Once we finish with Dolan we will move on, perhaps as early as this Sunday. There are two other areas we have our eye on now. One is a large knotweed stand near the head of a nature trail in Hammond Pond Conservation Area, and the other is an invasion of garlic mustard into a wildflower stand (mayapple, cinammon fern, among others) near the lovely Blue Heron Bridge, West Newton. Both require DCR approval and we are awaiting news from that agency. We do hope to meet at one of these sites this Sunday at 9 AM, and we will be sending updates on precise location and time with directions as soon as we gain DCR approval.

Some of you have written recently with questions about invasive plant policies in Newton, and the good news is this is evolving well. We now have a better understanding with members of the Conservation Commission about how to remove invasives with finesse. The goal is to work with care so as not to damage what we have, but also to recognize that benign neglect really is neglectful. The data are in on the effects of these plants, and the news is, "let nature run its course" is really not a viable option. In those areas that the City, DCR, Newton Conservators, and others have deliberately set aside to conserve some semblance of wild biodiversity, at significant expense, it makes sense to do what we can to turn back the tide of invaders. The technology to eradicate certain invaders everywhere may someday be invented; for now though we can target our pocket parks and whack away with clippers and hand pulling.

Hope to see you this weekend, and thank you again all those who helped this past Sunday.

Sincerely,  
Eric Olson, Brandeis Ecologist  
Leah Wang, Newton North Senior

PS - We are not alone in our efforts: a Newton resident on a walk in Lincoln this past weekend reported seeing bulging plastic trash bags clearly marked "MUSTARD" piled up near the entrance to one of the Lincoln conservation areas. It appears that invasive plant task forces are springing up with no central organizing authority --- grassroots efforts at their best, no pun intended.

# SOMETHING NEW AT NAHANTON PARK

*This notice came to us from fellow Conservator Suzette Barbier.*

Birders, gardeners, nature lovers, photographers and visitors...

Please join us in sharing your sightings, musings, poems, sketches and photographs in our new Nahanton Park Bird Register. It will be located in the glass enclosure at the Winchester St. entrance to the gardens thanks to Judy Dore at Newton City Hall, who welcomed this idea with open wings. Feel free to unlatch the case at the end of your walk and write about your experiences (a pen will be included). The inspiration for this Bird Register came from a book that a friend of mine, Susan Avery (Newton Conservators) gave me to read called *Red Tails in Love*. The book chronicles the history of Central Park in New York City, its development as a prime migration site, and the birders that have come to know every aspect of their park and its inhabitants, including red tail hawks that nested on a nearby building. The Central Park birders had a Bird Registry where anyone was welcome to write down their sightings, thoughts or even respond to each other. Amateurs and experts are all encouraged to participate. I thought it would be fun if we could do that here at Nahanton Park.

## VERMICOMPOSTING – A NEW WAY TO RECYCLE!

*This article is by Jared Freedman, student at Day Middle School and staffer at DAYTIME, the award-winning school newspaper. The article was written for the newspaper's Kidservator page. It is reprinted here by permission.*

Don't make trash. COMPOST!!! Vermicomposting is a method of composting that uses red wiggler earthworms to compost faster than conventional composting. Red wiggler (*Eisena fetida*) worms are used because they reproduce faster than regular worms and they reproduce somewhat quickly (in about 3 months).

Using earthworms to decompose the matter faster, vermicomposting is almost the same as outdoor composting except it is small enough to fit in one's kitchen. Other animals that compost naturally are other

worms, fungi, beetles, flies, and centipedes. Some items one shouldn't put in compost are meat, dairy, fats, oil, or cooked foods with sauces.

Nature has been composting and vermicomposting for thousands of years using various decomposers to break down the plants and other organic material. Newton has been composting and recycling for about 20 years at the Rumford Avenue Resource Recovery Center.

A vermicomposting class run by Barbara Herson, part time recycling coordinator for the city of Newton, was held last fall at the Newton Angino Community Farm "We are setting up classes to help the city of Newton," explains Herson.

Newton spends \$6 million to pick up trash and ship it to be burned. Burning trash does not completely get rid of it. It leaves behind dioxins, a group of highly toxic chemicals, which settles on crops and waterways and eventually ends up in our food. Composting is a way to reduce trash and help plants. "It's like a natural composting," says Herson.

Composting is a great way to reduce trash, and less trash equals less pollution. It also saves resources and helps plants flourish.

Composting not only helps the environment, it also helps the plants one uses it on. Composting is a great alternative to chemicals because it is organic. Composting saves time and money because one doesn't have to go to a store to buy special soil or fertilizer. Composting also enriches the soil, which reduces erosion in the soil and adds the nutrients plants need to the soil. Compost can also suppress plant diseases and pests. Compost is a great way to reduce the need for water, fertilizer, and pesticides.

To vermicompost, one would need to start by grinding dry leaves into a box and hosing them down. Then one can add dirt for the worms. After that, one would add 10-40 worms (preferably red wigglers). One should try to keep a worm to garbage ratio at about two pounds of worms for every one pound of trash. Once one pokes holes in the box, one is ready to add fruits and vegetables. One needs to keep the worm bin in mild temperature (50°-80°F).

It is important to get to know what one's worms like and what they don't like. A good place to get worms is from Flowerfield enterprises in Kalamazoo Michigan.

The Newton Angino Community Farm is a community farm on 303 Nahanton Street. The farm's goal is to teach sustainable agriculture and environmental practices while modeling it on the farm.

# REMEMBERING THELMA FLEISHMAN

With the death of Thelma Fleishman in April this year, the Newton Conservators lost one of its highly cherished and admired former Trustees and Advisors. She had been active with the Conservators from the 1970s through the 1990s and was especially appreciated for her store of information about Newton's history. In her quiet way, with her great depth of knowledge and her persuasive manner with city officials, she accomplished much good for all of us.

Thelma had established herself as a political activist in her native South Africa where she had joined a group of women opposed to apartheid. In addition to making public statements condemning that system, her organization provided food and moral support for Mandela and other imprisoned leaders. Earlier, in her student years at Rhodes University, she had developed an interest in writing and in historical study. Skills acquired in these areas served her well in her later work here in Newton.

Not long after her arrival in 1964, she became involved in civic affairs, with a focus on environmental concerns of our area. She joined the Charles River Watershed Association and also the Newton Conservators, still in its early years. In addition Thelma became a regular at the Jackson Homestead, enlisting as a volunteer in its Archives section. In each of these organizations she earned much respect for her ability to gather key information and to provide insight into issues at hand. Not surprisingly, she was called upon to play a major role in these groups. She also served for many years with the Newton Conservation Commission and the Newton Historical Commission. In view of all this experience, she was invited to be a member of the Newton Historic District Study Committee. In 1992, in recognition of all this good work, the Newton Conservators awarded her the "Environmentalist of the Year" award.

Year by year Thelma worked steadily in the city's archives wherever material was stored - - in the Main Library's Newton Room, at the Jackson Homestead, or on back shelves at City Hall. This led to publication of several books, one of the first describing the city's very early years, combined with a biographical directory. She produced a volume on the history of dams and mills built along the Charles River, and another providing the story of the Adams Street Synagogue. In 1988 she produced a pictorial survey of architectural styles popular among the city's houses. Her most recent manuscript, yet to be

published, deals with the background of the Newton Cemetery, a "garden type" modeled after the Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge.

Thelma had developed an almost proprietary interest in the old Burying Grounds of Newton, describing how their locations reflected the early pattern of settlement in the city. She tracked down information about individuals buried in those graveyards and eventually published a guide to the East Parish Burying Ground, resting place of Newton's earliest settlers. She became an expert in distinguishing styles of inscriptions and designs on their tombstones and was even able to identify the individual artists who had carved them. Every fall Thelma would round up a group of friends armed with clippers and rakes to trim foliage and spruce up the appearance of the semi-neglected West Parish Burying Ground. For this work and for her other major contributions to historic preservation and conservation, she received special commendation from the City of Newton in 2005.

Few of us could match the level of interest and hard work Thelma offered the Conservators and other such civic groups in Newton. She was a good friend to many, and a model for us all.

- *M.G. Criscitiello*

## COMING EVENTS

*This schedule is from the Conservators' e-newsletter, assembled by Ted Kuklinski and reprinted here.*

**Sunday, June 22, 2008, 2 PM**

**Charles River Lakes District**

**Newton Conservators Spring 2008 Walk Series**

Come on a walking tour of the Charles River Lakes District where we will visit Ware's Cove, the Waltham Watch Factory Building, Mount Feake Cemetery, Brandeis University, the Duck Feeding Area, the Charles River Canoe Service, Norumbega Park, and Lyons Field. Meet at the parking lot for Auburndale Park ("The Cove") off of West Pine Street. The walk will last about 2 ½-3 hours. Wear comfortable walking shoes. This is a long loop so call ahead in case of poor weather. The leader is Peter Kastner, (617-244-6094). This walk is part of the Newton Conservators Spring Walk Series. The current walk schedule can be found online at

<http://www.newtonconservators.org/walks.htm>.

**Saturday, June 28, 10 am**

**Yard Waste Composting**

Ever wanted to compost your yard, fruit and vegetable waste but didn't know how to begin? Join us for this fun and informative workshop to learn the basics of composting in your own backyard. Learn techniques for successfully building your compost bin and starting and maintaining your compost pile. Included in this class are what you can and cannot compost, pitfalls to avoid, and using the finished compost.

There is a \$10 fee for Newton Community Farm members, and \$8 fee for non-members. Fee includes a how-to booklet, plans for a 3-bin compost structure, and useful tips. Experienced "composters" will be on hand to share their seasoned wisdom. The course is limited to 10 participants. The instructor will be Tom Libby. Impact Protection Eyewear required. For more information about the Farm, check out our web page at <http://www.newtoncommunityfarm.org/>.

**Sunday, June 29, 2008, 2PM**

**Lakes District Canoe Trip on the Charles  
Newton Conservators Spring 2008 Walk Series**

This trip is a leisurely paddle that explores the Charles River Lakes District. Starting at Charles River Canoe & Kayak Service, off Commonwealth Avenue, you will pass along the MDC duck feeding area and park land and go through the narrow channel at Norumbega Park. The trip continues to the Lakes district, including Fox Island, the views of the Islington Peninsula and Mount Feake Cemetery and views of the Waltham Watch Factory. This lake is well populated with ducks, geese, great blue herons and the occasional hawk. You will also look at the small creatures that inhabit the waters, using portable field microscopes. Bring binoculars and a lunch or snack for a stop along the river. If you would like to join the trip, need a canoe or could loan a canoe, call the trip leader William Hagar (617-964-2644). Canoes and kayaks are available to rent at the Charles River Canoe & Kayak (2401 Commonwealth Ave). Park across the river at the Duck Feeding Area. This walk is part of the Newton Conservators Spring Walk Series. The current walk schedule can be found online at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/walks.htm>.

**Saturday, July 19, 2008, 5-9 pm**

**Hardy Pond Picnic and Boating Event for the Whole Family**

Join the Waltham Land Trust and the Hardy Pond Association for a picnic and boating event on Hardy Pond. Bring a boat if you have one, though there will be others available to share. Bring food to share as well. At 8:30

p.m., the drawing for the Ride, Row, Ramble raffle will take place. More info is at <http://walthamlandtrust.org/calendar-events/on-hardy-pond>, contact Jennifer Rose, [jrose@walthamlandtrust.org](mailto:jrose@walthamlandtrust.org), 781-893-3355.

**Environmental Show on NewTV in June  
" North of Quabbin - Lessons in Land Protection"**

Newton's pure water originates in the Quabbin Reservoir in central Massachusetts, yet the area around Quabbin is unfamiliar to most residents except for perhaps birding and fishing enthusiasts. Allen Young, land protection advocate and author of *North of Quabbin Revisited: A Guide to Nine Towns North of the Quabbin Reservoir*, was the featured speaker for the Newton Conservators Spring Lecture. In Part 1 (shown in June), he talks and presents a slide show about land protection and recreational opportunities there, which has relevance for the people of Newton who may appreciate the concept of saving the rural parts of the Commonwealth that are under so much development pressure. This show will begin airing on June 14. (Part 2 to be shown in August.)

The Environment Show is broadcast on the NewTV Blue channel (Comcast Chan. 10, RCN Chan. 15, Verizon Chan. 34): Mondays 3:00 p.m., Tuesdays 1:30 a.m. and 11:30 p.m., Wednesdays: 11:30 a.m., Thursdays: 12:00, 4:00 and 7:30 p.m., Saturdays: 10:00 a.m.

Videos of previous Environment Show programs are now available for viewing online at the GDC website. This monthly show is produced alternately by the Green Decade and the Newton Conservators.

**Environmental Show on NewTV's Blue Channel  
"Bountiful Backyards"**

December's Environmental Show is entitled "Bountiful Backyards - Fruit Trees and Vegetables" and features a lecture by Greg Maslowe, Farm Manager at Newton Angino Community Farm. Newton is the "Garden City" and Greg advocates the use of the many backyards (and front yards) for gardening. He notes that a large space is not required for productive use. In this show, you will see many examples of Newton yards that have optimized their growing areas and produce bountiful crops. This is Part 2 of a lecture given at the Newton Conservators Annual Meeting earlier this year. Watching this program may inspire you to convert some of your lawn area to more productive use.

# HELP MASS WILDLIFE COUNT TURKEY FAMILIES

Sports-men and -women, birders, landowners and other wildlife enthusiasts are encouraged to assist MassWildlife to count turkey families this summer. MassWildlife conducts an annual wild turkey brood survey from June through August. "The brood survey serves as a long term index on reproduction," explains Jim Cardoza, MassWildlife's Turkey Project Leader. "It helps us determine overall productivity and allows us to compare rates of reproduction over a long period of time." Cardoza also points out that citizen involvement in this survey is a cost-effective means of gathering useful data, and he encourages all interested people to participate. A [turkey brood survey form](#) has been posted on the front page of MassWildlife's website. Information needed includes date, town, number of hens seen, and number of poults (young turkeys) and their relative size compared to the hens. Multiple sightings of the same brood should also be noted. The survey period runs from June 1 - August 31. The last two years of survey data is posted in the Wild Turkey area of the website. Completed forms should be mailed to the MassWildlife Westborough Field Headquarters, 1 Rabbit Hill Rd, Westboro, MA 01581. Check out [http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/dfw\\_turkey.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/dfw_turkey.htm).

## NEWS FROM THE FARM

*This article is excerpted from the Newton Farmer newsletter and reprinted from the Conservators' e-Bulletin.*

This year the Farm will be selling seedlings from a table next to the greenhouse (in front of the red chicken coop). We'll have early tomato varieties, as well as cucumbers, watermelons, broccoli, cauliflower, beets, and raspberries. In the weeks following we'll add eggplants, peppers, a wide variety of heirloom tomatoes, zucchini, cantaloupe, and others. Plants sell for \$1 a piece.

In addition to our recently installed apple mini-orchard, this spring we planted 50 blueberry bushes and 20 blackberry bushes. Both are long-term investments in the farm that will provide berries for many years to happy kids (and adults!). This year we'll again be having pick-your-own raspberries, though not for a few more months.

While there are no turkeys nesting on the farm this year (last year we got Casey the farm dog during nesting season and she scared away our resident hen), the barn swallows have returned. They're still not actively nesting in our barn, but if you come in the afternoon you might be able to see these beautiful and acrobatic flyers doing their part to control the insect population. On a sad note, we did find a dead bat on the farm over the winter. At the time I hadn't heard of white nose syndrome, but given that bats aren't often out in January it's likely this bat was another victim of this disease that is decimating bats throughout the northeast.

### Volunteering on the Farm

Anyone who would like to volunteer in the field is welcome to join the farm staff for regularly scheduled work sessions. Our goal is to make your time at the farm meaningful and educational for you, and at the same time beneficial for the farm. Volunteer sessions will take place each week on Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 8:30 to 10:30, and Saturday mornings from 9:00 to 11:00. Each session will begin with an orientation to the day's work—what needs to be done, how to do it, and how it relates to the overall farm operation. We'll then proceed to the work. At the end of the session, we'll gather again to assess what we've done. In order to make this work, we need volunteers to come at the start of the sessions and stay for the full time. There will also be opportunities on Saturday afternoons for less formal activities. Please check our website in the coming weeks for more information on our volunteer programs, including what types of work you can expect on different days.

For more information about volunteering, please contact Tom Libby at 781-235-8019 or [tomlibb@gmail.com](mailto:tomlibb@gmail.com).

**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 47 years ago in June 1961.*

**The Newton Conservators Newsletter**© has been published five times each year by the Newton Conservators, Inc. This year, we have moved to a four-issue schedule. Issues will be published in June, September, December, and March. 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 or letters by email in MS Word or rich text format to [ericgreen@tiac.net](mailto:ericgreen@tiac.net). Digitized photographs, maps and diagrams are also welcome.

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Thanks to the following contributors to this edition of the Newsletter: William Hagar, Katherine Howard, Eric Olson, Leah Wang, Suzette Barbier, Jane Sender, Jared Freedman, M.G. Criscitiello, Ted Kuklinski, and Greg Maslowe. Thanks also to Douglas Leith for his excellent proofreading.

**If you haven't done so already, now is the time to join the Conservators.  
 And consider a tax-deductible gift to support our work!**



*Celebrating 47 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: \$\_\_\_\_\_
- Please do not share my name and address with other groups.

**MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS**

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

*All amounts are tax deductible*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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

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



# *The Newton Conservators* **NEWSLETTER**

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