

the *Newton Conservators* NEWSLETTER

Fall Issue

September 1992

RECYCLING CENTER EXPANDS HOURS

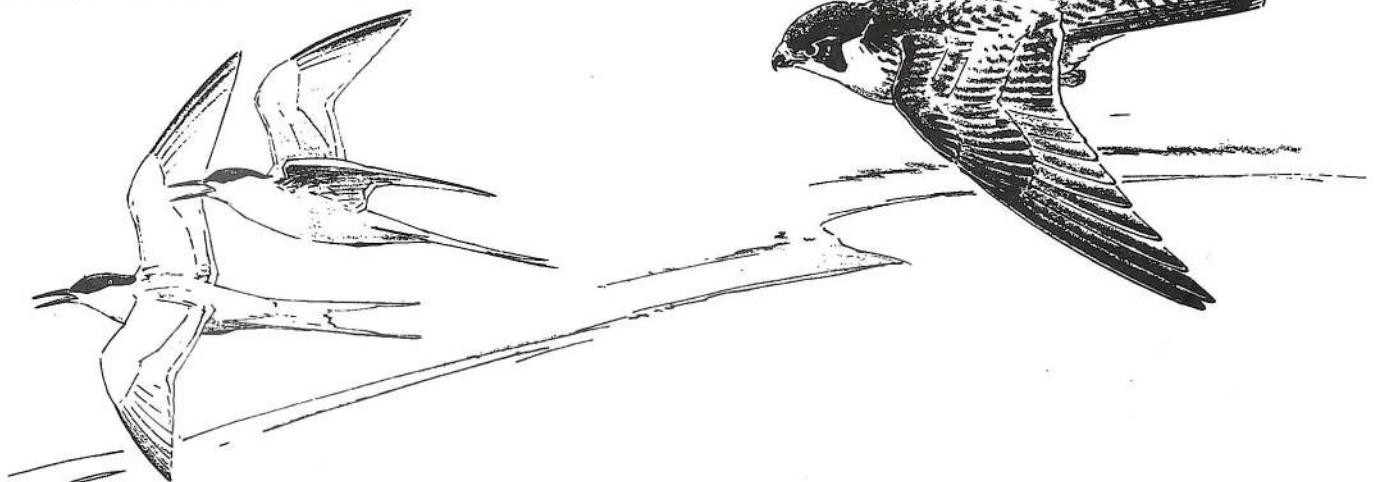
The Rumford Avenue recycling site has been able to expand the time it is open thanks to Newton Volunteers. Open hours are now Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM and Saturdays from 10 AM to 2 PM. During these hours, residents can pick up compost and wood chips for personal use. Shovels for digging and buckets and baskets to carry compost must be brought from home. Residents are urged to make an efficient round trip: bring old tires, car batteries, scrap metal, metal furniture, white computer and office paper, corrugated boxes, and magazines on the trip over to the recycling site, and take home all the compost and wood chips needed for gardens.

The Compost Subcommittee plans to participate at Harvest Fair on Sunday, October 4th. The committee will have a display of "How to Compost" and a flyer for folk to take home. Various pieces of equipment that can be useful, even though not mandatory, will be shown. Please plan to stop by.

Members of the committee are prepared to go to various organizations or groups to show a video and demonstrate how simple it is to turn fall leaves, yard waste and non-protein garbage into "brown gold" which can then be recycled onto gardens next year.

The Compost Subcommittee of the Solid Waste Commission usually meets the second Tuesday of the month. The meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome. Check with Public Works (552-7181) to confirm date, time and location.

For further information call: Betsy P. Leitch at 244-0771.



Introducing...

New members of the Board of Directors

Margaret Albright

A resident of Newtonville, Margaret Albright is employed in the Development Department of a local foundation. She first became aware of the Newton Conservators during her effort to limit the Newton Little League's further development of her neighborhood park. Along with her neighbors, she was successful in securing modifications to the original plan--namely, having the Little League move a concession stand away from an abutter and provide plant cover around the stand. Their efforts also resulted in a pledge from the City not to allow further development of the park by the Little League. She is interested in the continued problem of the private use of public land, and the need to support public parks and playgrounds.

Michael Clarke

A resident of Newton Centre, Michael Clarke is a chemistry professor at Boston College and an active explorer of Newton parks and waterways. He has led trips on the Charles River in conjunction with the Appalachian Mountain Club. His interest in public access to Newton's limited water open space is demonstrated by his being largely responsible for having the City develop public access guidelines to Crystal Lake which conform with the Massachusetts Constitution and General Laws.

Oliver Komar

Oliver Komar is an active birder who has led some of our bird walks and has developed a listing of Newton birds. He came to the Newton Conservators through his participation with the Friends of Nahanton Park. Oliver has mixed pleasure with business by creating a multi-media board game based on bird identification. His interests in birding goes far beyond Newton; he has worked on a bird program in Central America. In addition to his birding work, he is involved in development for the Brown Bag Opera, which is directed by Susan Stone, a past Director of the Newton Conservators.

WARE'S COVE UPDATE

The treatment of Ware's Cove with the aquatic herbicide "Sonar" took place on May 28th. While state-financed monitoring studies continue, the target plant species--fanwort (*cambomba*)--has shown a significant reduction in growth compared to last year. Waterlilies were less impacted by the treatment. The Auburndale community group "save the Cove," which successfully focussed attention on the fanwort infestation in 1991, is continuing its efforts to identify and disseminate information on ways to reduce Charles River nutrient loading and aquatic overgrowth.

NEWTON CONSERVATORS CONTINUES GIFTS TO THE NEWTON FREE LIBRARY

In addition to the gift of a book collection we made last year, the Newton Conservators made a gift this year to provide subscriptions of periodicals on environmental subjects for the new Library. The Library's collection of books and periodicals

on environmental subjects is substantial and growing, and is an excellent source for research and pleasure reading. The library welcomes gifts by individuals of books or dollars to continue the expansion of the collections on these (and other) subjects.

NEWTON CONSERVATORS CONTINUES GRANTS PROGRAM

The Newton Conservators continued its tradition of an annual grant to the Environmental Science Program which provides youngsters with opportunities to learn about the environment during the summer. We are also in the process of making additional grants to the Newton Schools through the Science Center for environmental and green space programs to provide students in elementary to high school levels programs for which funds are not available through the regular school budget at this time.

The Conservators will welcome any donations by individuals or companies interested in helping to share the costs (and the pleasure) of providing these grants to the school children. You may designate your gift specifically for these programs if you wish.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Board Meetings of the Newton Conservators are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the Lower Falls Community Center, 545 Grove Street at 7:45 pm. All members are welcome. Call President Roger Feinstein, 969-0942, for details.

Harvest Fair will be held at Newton Centre green on Sunday, October, 4 from noon to 4:00 pm (rain date October 11). If you can spend an hour or so at the Conservators' booth, call Roger Feinstein 969-0942.

Ordway Park, located at the corner of Grant Avenue and Everett Street, is owned by the Newton Conservators. If you would would like to take an active part in its maintenance, please call Roger Feinstein at 969-0942 or Bonnie Carter at 969-0686(h) or 965-7200(w).

The Newton Conservators Newsletter appears three or four times a year. Editing and production by: Bonnie Carter 969-0686 and Jean Husher 527-5981. Membership chair: William Leitch, 69 Dexter Rd., Newtonville, MA 02160, Tel: 244-0771. We wish to thank the contributors to this Newsletter: Bonnie Carter, Burton Elliot, Roger Feinstein, Helen Heyn, Jean Husher, Peter Kastner, Oliver Komar, Betsy Leitch, Susan Regan, Marty Sender.



Newton Conservators, Inc

1992 FALL WALKS SCHEDULE

Sunday, September 20, at 2:00 pm

EXPLORE NAHANTON PARK BY THE CHARLES RIVER

Enjoy seeing many facets of Newton's newest park. Meet at the park's Nature Center building. Enter the park from Nahanton Street at the drive nearest to the Charles River. Plenty of parking space is available.

Leader: Paula Chasan, 965-2752

Sunday, September 27, at 2:00 pm

MDC'S CUTLER PARK, ONCE NEWTON'S SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER

Cutler Park, just across the Charles River in Needham was Newton's source of drinking water until 1952 when the City was fully connected to the MDC. Follow Nahanton Street across the Charles and meet in the parking lot of the first building on the south side of the street.

Leader: Peter Kastner, 244-6094

Sunday, October 4, Noon to 4 pm

NEWTON'S HARVEST FAIR - NEWTON CENTRE GREEN

Be sure to visit the Conservator's booth and test your knowledge of Newton's open spaces.

Sunday, October 4, at 2:00 pm

MDC'S ELM BANK RESERVATION IN DOVER

Explore a major gem of the Charles River valley, now saved for public use. Take Route 16 (Washington Street) 1.7 miles west of Wellesley Center. Elm Bank Reservation is marked only by a small green sign at 906 Washington Street, across from the Hunnewell Farm. Drive into the reservation, continue across the soccer field area, and park to the right of a red brick carriage house.

Leader: Rob MacArthur, MDC official

For information, call 969-0942

Sunday, October 11, at 2:00 pm

DISCOVER NEWTON'S UNKNOWN LINEAR OPEN SPACE. THE AQUEDUCT SYSTEM

The Cochituate Aqueduct runs behind backyards and through a rarely-noticed Newton area of pine woods, and meadows. Meet in the parking lot of the MBTA Waban station.

Leader: Nick Yannoni, 444-0166 or 332-6683

Columbus Day, Saturday, October 12, at 9:00 am

BIRD WALK IN NAHANTON PARK

Come and see a variety of birds and other wild life in Newton's newest park. Meet at the Nature Center. Enter the park from Nahanton Street at the drive nearest the Charles River.

Leader: Oliver Komar, 332-5509

Sunday, October 18, at 10:00 am

CANOEING ON THE CHARLES ABOVE THE FALLS

Canoe on the Charles River above the Upper Falls dams into a wilderness rarely visited. Meet at the canoe launch, near the Nature Center in Nahanton Park. Enter the Park

from Nahanton Street at the drive nearest the Charles River. Bring a picnic. If you need a canoe, call the leader several days in advance.

Leader: Michael J. Clarke, 965-5074

Sunday, October 25, at 2:00 pm

EXPLORE THE CHARLES RIVER PATHWAY WITH AN MDC PLANNER

The pathway will eventually give walkers and cyclists an opportunity to follow the river from Nahanton Park to the Charles River dam in Boston. This walk will explore the segment going westward from Watertown Square to Bridge Street in Newton. Meet on the north side of the Galen Street Bridge on the south side of Watertown Square.

Leader: Dan Driscoll, MDC Planner, 244-6901

Sunday, November 1, at 2:00 pm

A WALK THROUGH EDMANDS PARK IN NEWTONVILLE

Edmands Park is one of Newton's oldest parks. This 33 acre park contains woodlands and wetlands and is crisscrossed by many paths. Sharp eyes will detect many signs of plant and animal life here, even in November. Meet at the entrance on Blake Street, between Cabot and Mill Streets.

Leader: Bonnie Carter, 969-0686



CHECK YOUR NEWSLETTER MAILING LABEL NOW!

Are your name and address correct? ZIP code, too?

Due to a software problem on the mailing list, all names were re-entered. While the list was carefully checked, there could be mistakes. PLEASE CHECK NOW!

If the number after your name is '90 or earlier, your membership is not on the books as renewed and you may be dropped from the next mailing! (Life Members are marked "LIFE").

Renew your membership by the coupon found on the last page, and mail to the Newton Conservators, P.O. Box 11, Newton Centre, MA 02159.

Thank you!

Newton Conservators, Inc.

OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND ADVISORS, 1992-1993

President:	Roger Feinstein	96 Roundwood Rd.	NUF 02164	969-0942
Vice President:	Bonnie Carter	177 Homer St.	NC 02159	969-0686
Secretary:	Frances Seasholes	163 Cypress St.	NC 02159	969-5927
Treasurer:	Burton Elliot	319 Highland Ave.	WN 02165	244-8920
Past President:	Peter Kastner	49 Woodbine St.	Aub 02166	244-6094
Directors:	Margaret Albright	166 Edinboro St.	NV 02160	244-6145
	Rodney Barker	49 Woodcliff Rd.	NH 02161	244-6949
	Catherine Brigham	92 Reservoir Ave.	CH 02167	734-9355
	Michael Clarke	38 Halcyon Rd.	NC 02159	965-5074
	William Hagar	248 Winchester St.	NH 02161	964-2644
	Bart Hague	104 Roundwood Rd.	NUF 02164	969-3640
	William Jones	92 Bullough's Rd.	Nv 02160	527-9110
	Lawrence Kaplan	26 Parker St.	NC 02159	527-3449
	Oliver Komar	61 Wade St.	NH 02161	332-5509
	William Leitch	69 Dexter Rd.	Nv 02160	244-0771
	Michael Malec	53 Margaret Rd.	NH 02161	969-5031
	Susan Mirsky	68 Hyde St.	NH 02161	332-6896
	Susan Regan	9 Kingswood Rd.	Aub 02166	965-1082
	Vaunita Schnell	68 Stern St.	NC 02159	969-3620
	Douglas Sherman	9 Cragmore Rd.	NUF 02164	332-3785
	William Stevenson	168 Nevada St.	Nv 02160	527-0411
	Martin Tropp	42 Elinor Rd.	NH 02161	969-2674
	Robin Washington	62 Beaconwood Rd.	NH 02161	969-4762
	Nicholas Yannoni	31 Lafayette St.	NLF 02162	332-6683 or 444-0166
Advisors:	AnnaMaria Abernathy	45 Islington Rd.	Aub 02166	244-3447
	Lisle Baker	137 Suffolk Rd.	CH 02167	566-7564
	John Bliss	9 Lewis St.	N 02158	244-6495
	Thelma Fleishman	14 Kenwood Ave.	NC 02159	244-5598
	Helen Heyn	21 Alexander Rd.	NH 02161	969-5712
	Fiora Houghteling	258 Mill St.	Nv 02160	969-7764
	Deborah Howard	34 Fairfax St.	WN 02165	244-7659
	Jean Husher	1686 Beacon St.	W 02168	527-5981
	George Mansfield	312 Lake Ave.	NH 02161	969-1479
	Richard Primack	16 Styles Terrace	NC 02159	332-1684
	William Shaevel	881 Dedham St.	NC 02159	965-1534
	Virginia Taplin	15 Sewell St.	WN 02165	527-1928
	Verne Vance	101 Old Orchard Rd.	CH 02167	232-5494



Newton City Hall (1848-1932)
Washington St., West Newton
This was the site of the annual
Newton Horticultural Society fair and exhibit

ANNUAL EXHIBIT AND FAIR
NEWTON HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY (est. 1854)

Each generation has a habit of thinking that its ideas, aims and programs are something never thought of before. In fact, often they prove to be simply re-introduced ones with new emphases. One hundred years and more ago, Newton citizens belonged to a variety of local environmental organizations. For instance, there was the Newton Centre Tree Club, the Newton Natural History Society, the Newton Centre Bird Club, and the Newton Horticultural Society.

The Newton Horticultural Society, which started in 1854, aimed at encouraging and coaching ordinary citizens (as against farmers) to grow the finest fruit trees, vegetables and flowers they were capable of. (It also can take credit for being the first organization to lobby the city to create public parks.) From its beginning, it held an exhibition and fair each year with prizes awarded the best exhibitors, and it was this event which was the ancestor of our annual Harvest Fair.

The following are excerpts from an article in the Newton Graphic, September 29, 1883, reporting on the society's 29th exhibition and fair:

"HORTICULTURAL EXHIBITION
THE NEWTON SOCIETY'S 29th ANNUAL FAIR
A choice display of Fruits, Flowers and Vegetables

"In spite of the dryness of the past season which has so seriously affected the crops, the horticulturists of the Garden City presented this week at the City Hall a very creditable display of fruits, flowers and vegetables. While some departments were poorly represented, the exhibition as a whole was as good as any for the last three years. The attendance was good and the management are gratified at the results.

"The exhibitions opened Tuesday noon. The center hall was taken up with a display of greenhouse and foliage plants, including some splendid specimens from W.C. Strong's nursery, and a choice collection of tropical plants shown by J.S. Farlow. Close by the entrance were a number of potted evergreens, contributed by W.C. Strong. Four rows of tables extended the length of the hall, that on the right being devoted principally to pears, the next to grapes, pears and other small fruits, the third to apples and canned fruit, and those next to the left hand and rear walls to vegetables. The platform was brilliant with the exhibits of flowers.

"The most attractive exhibit was perhaps J.S. Farlow's splendid collection of foreign grapes..... The display of pears was most abundant, 100 dishes being on the tables. George S. Harwood showed the finest specimens, taking eight first prizes..... Among the exhibits of vegetables, N.D. Moody showed some fine squashes....."

Then were listed the many prize winners. The exhibit lasted three days, ending with a great festival dinner.

It would seem appropriate to the season and to the title of the present fair if Newton citizens were once again invited to show off the best from their gardens, with perhaps small token prizes awarded. Many people here take great pride in growing outstanding vegetables and flowers. The Conservators, too, could make an award that day - perhaps to present a prize to a Newton school student for the best essay on some aspect of conservation.

Where the Wild Things Are... in Nahanton Park

by Oliver Komar

Nahanton Park is a delightful place to enjoy the outdoors and observe wildlife. The park contains mature oak woods, riverside thickets, freshwater marsh, grassy meadows, a small pond and the banks of the Charles River. In addition to these natural habitats, the grass playing field and extensive gardening area provide excellent opportunities for observing birds, butterflies, and some mammals.

At least 133 species of birds have been observed in the park, including quite a few rare species during spring and fall migrations.

In the early spring, the worms and insects in the soccer field attract dozens of robins and a few flickers and brown thrashers onto the grass. From early March to mid-May, male American Woodcocks leave their swampy haunts at dusk and come out onto the open field adjacent to the Nature Center to impress females with their amorous antics. Nahanton Park contains the only nuptial display ground in Newton for this mysterious bird, a cryptically-colored, plump relative of the sandpiper, with short legs and a remarkably long bill. Each bird utters a loud "peent" at 15-second intervals, sometimes all night long. Around the time the first stars appear in the sky, the woodcock begins his extravagant nuptial flight, rising in great circles 250 feet high into the air, the height of a 25-story building! All during this flight the bird emits a twittering sound. At the pinnacle he begins a haunting song which he completes while hurtling back towards his spot on the ground. I first observed this behavior when I was nine years old. I was convinced that I had come upon a group of beings from outer space.

From May to June, the riverbanks are alive with the song of Warbling Vireos, Yellow Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, Northern Orioles and Red-winged Blackbirds. These birds also are common in the marsh near the golf course, where they are joined by the loud musical trills of the Swamp Sparrow. The woodland edges are good spots to look for Brown Thrashers, House Wrens, and Indigo Bunt-

ings. Northern Mockingbirds abound in the thickets and garden plots.

For the avid birdwatcher, the most challenging and exciting birding occurs in September and October in and around the community garden plots. As many as ten species of sparrows can be seen in one day, as well as rare warblers, Indigo Buntings, Bobolinks and occasionally, a Dickcissel or other western vagrant.

Autumn is also the best time to observe migrating birds over the open fields. During late August and early September afternoons, dozens or even hundreds of Common Nighthawks (not real hawks) pass low over the park, heading to the Amazon rain forests for the winter.

At least eight species of migrating hawks have been seen, including the Osprey and the rare Peregrine Falcon. The large Red-tailed Hawk is the most common bird of prey. Red-tails nest nearby and can be seen throughout the year, often at very close range.

While hawkwatching in September or October one may also see sizeable flocks of other birds, such as great v's of black Double-crested Cormorants and Canada Geese heading for the southern states, and small flocks of chattering Chimney Swifts, each only five inches long, winging their way toward the Pacific coast of South America. I once watched twenty Great Blue Herons on a southward procession over the park. A careful eye will undoubtedly pick out numerous Monarch butterflies high in the air, bouncing southward to their winter refuge in southern Mexico.

Some of the migrating monarchs will come down to frolic among the open fields around the gardens and near the soccer field. These fields are great for studying butterflies and other insects during August and September.

Mammals in the park are secretive, except for eastern cottontails, gray squirrels and woodchucks who venture out onto the playing field early in the morning. With luck one of the many chipmunks in the park will stop playing hide-and-seek long enough for you to appreciate its lovely colors.

Many people have seen red foxes, muskrats, skunks and raccoons. Other mammals may occasionally wander into the park, or take up residence (deer tracks were spotted during the spring of 1992).

The most common small mammals, mice and voles, attract Garter Snakes and occasionally an American Kestrel, a small falcon, to the community gardens.

In addition to Garter Snakes, common reptiles in the park include Painted Turtles that sunbathe around the pond. Also here are Bullfrogs, and Spring Peepers piping their loud calls during spring evenings. In late October, the reflection of red and yellow leaves in the pond make this serene spot arguably the loveliest in the park.

Vegetation of the park is typical of farmland abandoned a century ago. The recovery of the forest has been slowed by poor soil, fires and human disturbances. Nonetheless, the vegetation coupled with broad vistas and the river make the park among the most beautiful in Newton.

The riverbank is dominated by tall Cottonwoods, and tangles of Greenbrier. Near the gardens are many Crab Apple and Black Cherry trees, as well as a thicket of young Quaking Aspen. Staghorn Sumac line the bluff overlooking the marsh of cattail and loosestrife.

Look for patches of Pink Lady's-Slipper and Wild Pink blooming during the late spring in the mature oak woods on the uplands near the Jewish Community Center.

The small grass prairie adjacent to the gardens may eventually be managed to include greater numbers of native wildflowers. Near the soccer field are many blueberry bushes that can make a summer walk a tasty event, if you can harvest the berries before the birds do.

Of course, much wildlife in the park cannot be described in this short article. You may obtain a copy of the park's wildlife registry in the nature center. Please report unusual sightings to the nature center, at 332-2686.

PATH PRUNERS

The Newton Conservation Commission Thanks TWO NEW PATH PRUNERS!

**** CHARLES COHEN CONSERVATION AREA (WEBSTER VALE)**

PATH paralleling Thompsonville Brook has been adopted for pruning by THOMAS E. POLITE of 36 Madoc Street, Newton Centre, who lives next to The Vale.

**** DOLAN POND CONSERVATION AREA's Cumberland and Webster Park Paths in West Newton will be pruned by LORI SWENSSON of 19 Oakland Avenue, Auburndale. Lori knows the Dolan Area because of her nature study work at the Community Schools program.**

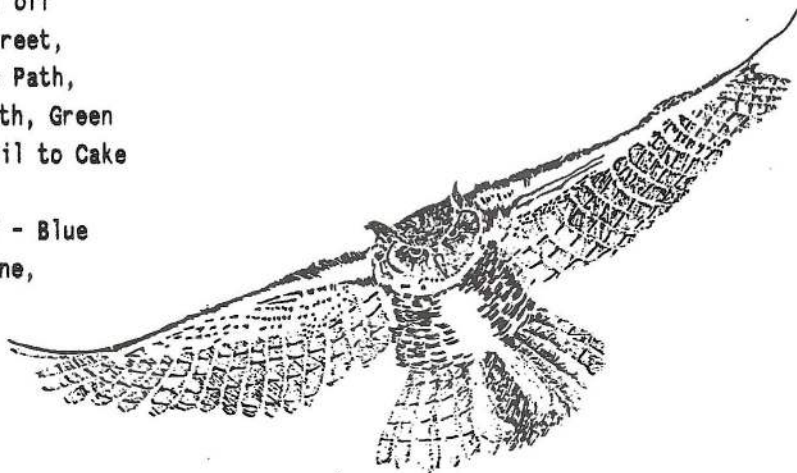
Paths awaiting adoption by volunteer pruners:

- ** DEER PARK PATH** off Suffolk Road and Lowell Lane, Chestnut Hill.
- ** FLOWED MEADOW CONSERVATION AREA** path off the West Pine Street Parks and Recreation Department parking lot, Auburndale.
- ** HUNNEWELL WOODS CONSERVATION AREA** path off Elmhurst Road, Newton.
- ** OAKDALE WOODS CONSERVATION AREA** path off Walnut Hill Road, Newton Centre.
- ** OAK HILL CONSERVATION PATHWAY** off Ober Road, Newton Centre.
- ** WEBSTER CONSERVATION AREA - NORTHWEST** - Elgin and Ledge Paths off Hammond Pond Parkway, Chestnut Hill.
- ** WEBSTER CONSERVATION AREA - SOUTHWEST** off Langley Road, Madoc Street, Elgin Street, Warren Street, Newton Centre: Madoc Path, Carlisle Path, Temple Path, Elgin Path, Green Trail to Gooch's Caves, and Blue Trail to Cake Rock and Gooch's Caves.
- ** WEBSTER CONSERVATION AREA - SOUTHEAST** - Blue Trail off Suffolk Road and Lowell Lane, Chestnut Hill.

The volunteer path pruners monitor their chosen paths anywhere from two to three times a year in uplands, to monthly surveillance during the summer in low-lying terrain. They help the Conservation Commission cope with severe maintenance budget constraints and reap fun and exercise in the process. This work does not include Litter Control which is done every two weeks by **CLAYTON** and **KATHERINE DAVIS** -- except in January and February. The Davises are retirees who have worked under contract with the Conservation Commission since 1980. They are paid \$7.25 per hour for 9 hours per week, but furnish their own transportation.

The Parks and Recreation Department empties the trash barrels containing the litter collected by the Davises plus refuse deposited by users of the conservation areas. No other firms even bid in 1992 on the Litter control work which the Davises do. They are the City of Newton "treasures!"

For information details on the path pruning, call Helen Heyn at 969-5712 or 552-7135 x119. If no answer, please leave a message with Kenn Eisenbraun, Conservation Land Administrator in the Planning and Development Department, 552-7135 x113.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

I would like to renew my membership in the Newton Conservators _____
I would like to join the Newton Conservators _____

Enclosed find my check for the membership category indicated below:

_____ Member \$10.00

_____ Sustaining Member \$25.00

_____ Family \$15.00

_____ Patron \$100.00

_____ Additional Contribution _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____
(street) (Village) (zip)

Please make checks payable to Newton Conservators, Inc.
Please send this form and membership dues to:
Membership Chairman, Newton Conservators
P.O. Box 11, Newton Centre, MA 02159

Dues and contributions are tax deductible.





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