



Working to preserve open space in Newton for 42 years!

the Newton Conservators

NEWSLETTER

Summer Issue

www.newtonconservators.org

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ANNUAL MEETING A SUCCESS

Ninety Newton neighbors, joined by a common commitment to local preservation of open space and quality of life, attended this year's Annual Dinner and Business Meeting. After a social hour and delicious dinner, outgoing president Lucy Caldwell-Stair called the meeting to order.

Reports by the Treasurer, Audit Committee and President indicated that the organization is strong financially and programmatically (see next page). A new slate of officers, directors and advisors was elected (look for a list and bios in September). Then it was time for the traditional strawberry shortcake dessert, as always, served on authentic shortbread!

Three awards were presented this year. The Environmentalist of the Year went to Martha Aherin Horn, the city's environmental planner. The Charles Johnson Maynard Award was presented to Ted Kuklinski, and a Director's Award was given to the Chestnut Hill Garden Club. (More on page 5.)

Dan Perlman, professor of conservation biology at Brandeis University, delivered the keynote address. His topic, "Our Small Pieces of Wilderness," centered on his seasonal photographs of Cold Spring Park. After placing the park into its historical context with maps and descriptions of changes over the years, he showed pictures he has been taking every two-four weeks for three years. These fascinating photos show changes over the course of a single season and variations from year to year for the same season.

Dan then moved to the broader point: these small spaces have enormous impact on individuals and their



Dan Perlman delivers keynote address at Annual Meeting

futures, and individuals can, by their stewardship, exert enormous influence over what happens in these small places. He cited the experience of a friend in Costa Rica, who by keeping weather records and looking after a small wildlife reserve there, created an important resource for researchers, producing results he had no reason to expect might be useful or possible. It is this same dedication and love of these small places, he said, that motivates us to commit our time and energy to the cause of the Newton Conservators.

Doug Dickson

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Lucy Caldwell-Stair
As delivered at the Annual Meeting

This has been a very productive year for the Newton Conservators. To keep this report short and get us as quickly as possible to our program for the evening, I'm going to focus on the ten most important items that occurred this year.



1. Much of our attention this year has been focused on our role with the Community Preservation Committee. Two committed Newton Conservators—Eric Reenstierna and Doug Dickson—serve on the committee and, in the process of their work, represent our interests. The Newton Conservators sponsored the city's acquisition of land from Alex and Ginny Wilmerding adjoining Webster Conservation area. This proposal was approved by the CPC and the Board of Aldermen and the transaction will be complete shortly. Eric Reenstierna will speak more about our Forte proposal by Dolan Pond in a minute.
2. Our grants program has gone well this year, as you heard from Katherine Howard, our treasurer.
3. Our lecture series has been reinvigorated over the last couple of years, under Ted Kuklinski's leadership. The fall lecture was on the history of New England stone walls by Robert Thorson. The spring lecture was on the vernal pools and amphibians of Newton by Jon Regosin. Both attracted about 80 people.
4. We completed the Map Guide. This was a big project and we need to thank two people for their tremendous contribution. Judy Hepburn created the maps and Pat Robinson did the graphic design and handled the printing. [Lucy failed to mention her own considerable effort in guiding this project as well as researching and writing the text. Ed.] The maps will be given to new members. We also plan to sell the map guide

through local bookstores, realtors, and other places.

5. We decided to refocus on a membership drive to get our memberships level up and to increase our public outreach. The membership campaign is going on right now. As for outreach, we had a last-minute opportunity in April to participate in Bread and Circus's environmental day. On only three days notice, volunteers went into the stores, set up tables and passed our information about the Newton Conservators, including our perennial Geology Guides. Bread and Circus gave us 6% of that day's revenues in the two stores, which totaled \$6,600.
6. Several of us continue to write for the Newton TAB's Environmental Page. Articles about encroachments in conservation areas and on monitoring the application of the tree preservation ordinance keep our concerns in the forefront.
7. Seven is about Ordway Park. A neighbor of Ordway Park has offered a gift that, if matched, would be used to create a special fund to maintain and add new plantings to Ordway Park. Thanks to Jim Broderick, a plan is underway for fundraising in the Ordway Park neighborhood.
- 8, 9, and 10 are about open space acquisition. I have asked Eric Reenstierna, our incoming president and chair of our land trust committee, to talk about these last three items.

Eric Reenstierna

This spring, the land trust group has seen three open space projects move forward.

Forte Property –
The Conservators sponsored a proposal for the acquisition of Irene Forte's pro-perty at 76 Webster Park. This is a 50,000-square-foot parcel of high ground that lies adjacent to the Dolan Pond Conservation Area. The Forte property overlooks the conservation area and provides a wooded buffer between the lower ground and the residential neighborhood on the south. It is part of what gives



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Dolan Pond, though small, its open space "feel." The Forte property provides important upland habitat. It harbors some magnificent, mature trees and a clear understory, where the Conservators, if we could protect it, might install a trail.

When Ms. Forte died this winter, the potential arose for sale on the market and dense development of her land. But, following her wishes, her estate made the property available first to the Conservators and the city, for protection. [On June 5, the city's Community Preservation Committee voted favorably on a request to fund an acquisition of the property for \$1.1 million. A large group from the Conservators attended the hearing to lend support. Ted Kuklinski led the presentation and explained the importance of this parcel as an expansion of the Dolan Pond area.]

Ted has worked to craft a joint proposal with the Newton Housing Authority that involves preservation of Ms. Forte's house and development of up to two additional housing units on the front corner of the property. This would leave 70% of the parcel, including all the land nearest the wetland, protected as open space.

The proposal now moves on to the Board of Aldermen for further consideration. With various hurdles, including a potential large commitment of CPC funds for Kessler Woods, approval is by no means assured. The Conservators' advocacy for this proposal will be important if it is to be accepted by the Aldermen in time for the seller's target date of sale in late summer.

Kessler Woods – The Conservators advocated hard for acquisition of Kessler Woods when this 42-acre parcel on LaGrange Street was put on the market by NStar in the winter. At the time, it seemed we had little chance, as the time frame for NStar's planned auction was too short for the city to assemble a bid.

The Mayor took charge of this initiative. Mayor Cohen succeeded in bringing about a delay in the auction date until late June. He and the Planning Department, with the help of an advisory group, then set about the task of framing a bid. The city hired a land planner (Sasaki) and an appraiser (Landvest) for advice about the land. The acquisition cost is projected to be more than the city might fund as open space alone. The city developed a plan to partner with a developer, who would bring a large

cash contribution to the bid in return for the right to site housing on the least environmentally sensitive portion of the land. The city received serious proposals from nine developers. In order not to tip its hand as to whether it will in fact submit a bid or what the amount of the bid may be (to prevent a competitor from winning the bid by bidding \$1.00 more), the city has maintained secrecy as to its final plan. The outcome will be known at the end of June. Either the city will submit a bid, win the bid, and protect the majority of this land or some other party will win. If that happens, the open space community will want to review the winner's plan and, potentially, advocate for involvement of a different kind.

Elgin Street – The acquisition of the Wilmerding property on a paper stretch of Elgin Street at the Webster Conservation Area in Newton Center is nearing completion. This acquisition was made possible by the Wilmerdings' generosity in a bargain sale. The Board of Aldermen voted favorably on this first acquisition of open space with CPC funds. The acquisition itself is expected to be completed soon.

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Katherine Howard

Assets grew slightly in calendar year 2002 from \$114,367 to \$115,530, this despite a \$6397 unrealized loss on our investments because of poor stock market performance. Liabilities increased by \$2950 because of money we are holding for the Friends of Hammond Pond. The result of these two changes is that our bottom-line equity position fell slightly from \$108,729 to \$106,942.

Income fell short of expenses in 2002 because of a shortfall in membership renewals. This occurred because of a decision to attempt renewals through newsletter reminders instead of annual membership appeals, as have been conducted in the past. The membership committee is currently reminding past-due members that their memberships have expired and we expect to make up the shortfall this year.

The lower income in 2002 was made up for by lower expenditures in membership development, grants and donations. With membership renewals back on track and an anticipated recovery in the stock market, we should be back on track in 2003.

LETTER FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT

By Eric Reenstierna

We are Newton's land trust. As volunteers, we do the work of protecting and enhancing Newton's open space. Sometimes growth comes to an organization so gradually that its full measure goes unnoticed. In the span of only a couple of years, the effectiveness of the Conservators has grown considerably. New tools like the Community Preservation Act are in our hands. Once the Conservators looked to others to make land acquisitions happen. Now Newton looks to the Conservators as the organization to bring forward the projects that safeguard our wild land.

We have learned, first, to use the tools that a land trust uses to gain open space: options to purchase, conservation easements, conservation restrictions, lawyers, surveyors, and appraisers. We have learned to team with the landowners who have been good stewards of their land and who want to see it protected in the future the same way. We have learned to team with advocates for other interests, like community housing and historic preservation, to bring forward stronger proposals that meet multiple community goals.

As an organization, we have become comfortable with proposals to commit often-sizeable amounts of our financial worth in the service of our mission, to preserve open space. We have learned to think big. Kessler Woods is big. The Conservators became the leading advocate for the commitment of public funds for the protection of this last undeveloped, large tract as open space.

For the Conservators, it has been a year of growth. In this coming year, we hope to expand our work.

Often, the boundaries between public and private land become fogged. Land use agreements become forgotten and abutters encroach onto public land. Lucy Caldwell-Stair publicized the difficulties for several landowners who inadvertently had crossed borders in an article on encroachments in *The Tab*. To address the same issue, Larry Burdick has taken on the task of forming a Stewardship Committee, to inventory and monitor conservation restrictions and land use agreements that need oversight.

The Community Preservation Act makes funds available for the enhancement of open spaces. The

Conservation Commission this year has accessed CPC funds to repair trails at Flowed Meadow and install signs. Years ago, the city commissioned a study that recommended interventions to remove invasive species, install trails, and create openings in city-owned wooded land, to create better wildlife habitat and better public access. The funds are now available to make that happen. The opportunity is there for a new Land Management Committee to develop proposals to make city lands more wildlife-friendly.

And of course, the Conservators will continue to do the things that for over forty years we have done so effectively:

- Advocate for open space wherever we can make our voice heard, before city boards, one-on-one with decision makers, on TV, in the papers, on the Web, through this newsletter;
- Sponsor high school students in the Environmental Science Program;
- Sponsor our educational walks and talks;
- Make grants to students, teachers and citizens whose work we value;
- Put out the Map Guide that brings the public into these open spaces;
- Present our lecture series; and
- Sponsor the annual Biodiversity Day initiative.

All of this sounds like a lot of work, which in one sense it is. But we do it with another motivation in mind: what we as Newton Conservators are all about is celebration—we celebrate the life that is all around us in nature. We celebrate it through our walks – the organized ones we run at Dolan Pond, at Kennard, along the Charles – or the simple daily ones, where we cross paths with a neighbor out to enjoy a short hike on a trail. What else is it but celebration when we take the time to see what the birds are up to? We may not make a lot of noise when we celebrate; celebration of nature often demands silence. But it's celebration all the same.

It has been a good year. The coming year should be another. We have plenty to celebrate.



AWARDS FOR 2003

Environmentalist of the Year

Martha Aherin Horn

For her leadership, integrity, diligence and fair-mindedness as the steward of Newton's conservation areas and the guardian of the city's environmentally sensitive land.



Nancy Avery accepting Directors Award for the Chestnut Hill Garden Club. Presenting the award is Doug Dickson.

Thanks from Martha Horn

Dear Members of the Newton Conservators:

I just finished watching the videotape of the Annual Meeting at which I was honored and want to thank all of you for your very kind words and for the award. It was thrilling for me to be so honored, especially because I'm a public employee and we're not often appreciated. I feel very appreciated and am most grateful!

It's important to note that I was credited for work done by others, especially Ted Kuklinski, Nancy Avery, Stephanie Bacon, Deric Reenstierna and so many, many others who contribute regularly to their community as volunteers. The Eagle Scout candidates are rapidly turning into my new best friends as their contribution to Newton is tremendous and it is a greazt pleasure to work with these fine young men.

I was so very sorry not to be able to be at the dinner to accept the award personally. My mother's health took a turn for the worse on Tuesday and I had to rush to Syracuse right away. Fortunately, I was able to spend three days with her before she died on Friday.

When I returned to the office, I found the framed award, and the videotape appeared today, along with lots of anecdotes about the meeting. I am so pleased that the Conservators found me worthy of the award. Thank you all for the honor—I will treasure it always. Sincerely, Martha

Charles Johnson Maynard Award

Ted Kuklinski

For his unrelenting purpose in building environmental awareness by launching Newton's Biodiversity Days, Newton Nature Notes and our Spring and Fall Lecture Series, and for his pivotal role in improvements to Dolan Pond.

Directors Award

Chestnut Hill Garden Club

For their devotion and perseverance in obtaining funding for and successfully guiding the restoration of the historic treasure that is Houghton Garden.

Nahanton Park Path Dedication

Around twenty Newton citizens and officials gathered in Nahanton Park on the beautiful spring morning of Tuesday, April 29 for dedication of a new handicapped-accessible path. The nearly 700-foot wooded pathway winds around the south and east end of the pond, linking the already handicapped-accessible Florrie's Path, with the paved roadway off the Winchester Street entrance.

Steve Gartrell, Associate Director of Planning for Housing and Community Development, opened the gathering with a welcome and introductions, and brief speeches by Jason Rosenberg, Chair of the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities, and by Parks and Recreation Commissioner Fran Towle followed. Judy Hepburn of the Newton Conservators presented each of the three with copies of our new "Walking Trails" parks booklet, which shows the new trail on Walk Map #22. Steve and Fran then cut the ribbon, and Jason led the group down the new stone dust path, past two new nature interpretive signs along it, and back.

Through the linkage of the dike path along the Charles River (Florrie's Path) to the meadow and community gardens area of the park, there is now over a half mile of continuous paths that can be explored at Nahanton by those who have disabilities.

Judy Hepburn

BRIEFS:

Conservation Area Improvements

The **Houghton Garden Rehabilitation Project** is nearing completion and will meet its Massachusetts Historic Commission deadline of June 30, after which we will receive reimbursement of some of the money expended by the city. The dam work is nearly finished and the pond is filling in. The contractor will be inserting flashboards with locks shortly. The 200 feet of new fencing along the Suffolk Road frontage is nearly complete as well. Four birch clumps have been planted in the areas adjacent to the pathway system as shown in the 1930s photographs. The Chestnut Hill Garden Club has generously contracted for additional work in the rock garden and we anticipate that it will be in great condition by fall.

The **Hammond Pond Improvement Project** is moving, albeit slowly. By the end of June we anticipate that the city will have a signed agreement with the Chestnut Hill Shopping Center and the state, thereby allowing us to move forward with wetland delineation, survey and engineering. Due to the late start, the actual work will be pushed to next year, allowing a significant amount of writing (brochures, signage, etc.) over the winter months.

The **Flowed Meadow Improvement Project** is moving along as well. Eagle Scout candidate Matt Gray will be building new bridges to cross the streams. He will also be creating and placing signage at appropriate locations. Contractual discussions have begun with a landscape designer regarding the placement of benches and signage. In addition, we are reviewing the type of construction and materials for pathways in the areas recently acquired by the Conservation Commission. [This project is being funded with CPA money.]

Numerous General Conservation Area

Improvements were funded by Mayor Cohen last year, and the funds were used as 'front money' for Houghton Garden. With the reimbursement anticipated from Mass Historic Commission, we will be able to go out to bid for benches, signage and other amenities this fall.

Eagle Scout candidates are appearing in great numbers and our Conservation Areas are all the better for them! As noted above, work will be done at Flowed Meadow in mid-June. Oakdale Woods clean-up and pathway chipping was completed in May. Trail signage at Dolan Pond will be constructed and installed in September. And there are several more young men looking for projects—thank you, Eagle Scouts!

Martha Aherin Horn

Do We Have Your Correct Email Address?

If your email address has changed recently or if you would like to be added to our Email Alert list, please send your address to Jason Glasgow, Membership Cmte, at jglasgow@attbi.com.

DOLAN POND GRAND RE-OPENING

For two weeks ahead of time, all the predictions were for rain on May 1st—the planned date of the Dolan Pond re-opening. The Saturday morning date was chosen as the final event in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Week so local neighborhood folks could attend and Mayor Cohen and US Representative Barney Frank were scheduled as well.

On Thursday, Joe Vaccaro, the president of Liberty Siteworks (the contractor for the improvements) was finally able to obtain the stabilized soil material for the accessible pathway. He and his able crew spent two hectic days with dump truck and wheelbarrows, spreading the material on the paths and steps and wetting it down. It's a material that looks like soil but hardens to a concrete like surface suitable for wheelchairs and strollers. They even came in early on Saturday to roll the material one more time to take out the inconsiderate motor bike tracks and footprints left there after hours.

Dee Spiro, CDBG Planner, who had seen the project through its planning stages, was getting very nervous since rain was still being predicted. As Friday went on, the forecast miraculously changed for the better and by the time Saturday rolled around, it was a bright, sunny, perfect May morning. Many members of our city Planning Department arrived early to set up the event (even on their day off). Newton Community Service Centers (Tony Bibbo) graciously provided chairs, podium and sound system for the event. Gregory Zaytman provided use of his driveway to set up since the stabilized soil in the handicapped parking lot was still a little soft.

David Banash of the Planning Board acted as MC and acknowledged the wonderful work of many of the folks who helped make the Dolan Pond project possible. Mayor David Cohen welcomed the assembled crowd of well over a hundred people to Dolan Pond and cut the ribbon to the new accessible pathway going from the Webster Park entrance all the way to Auburndale Avenue. A number of our aldermen were present for the festivities. Representative Barney Frank addressed the crowd quite appropriately as a faithful supporter of the federally-funded Community Development Block

Program in Congress. Balloons, ice cream and popsicles, donated Dunkin Donuts coffee and Great Harvest pastries made it a festive and tasty event as well. Many took advantage of the tour across the new boardwalk and to the new overlook at Dolan Pond. Lynn Slobodin was the first official wheelchair rider on the new path.



Mayor Cohen cuts the ribbon at Dolan Pond re-opening. He is flanked by CDBG Planner Dee Spiro on the left and Ald. Polly Bryson on the right. New kiosk appears on left side of photo.

Dolan Pond Conservation Area was saved from development and opened officially in 1979 through the efforts of Helen Heyn, concerned neighbors, the Newton Conservators, and the Wetlands Protection Act. In 1995, naturalist John Richardson did an inventory of the plants and creatures of Dolan Pond and provided a report to the city outlining suggestions for paths and overlooks. It was heartening to have so many participants who were instrumental in the subsequent process present on the morning of the opening.

The CDBG West Newton Advisory Committee, chaired by Carol Corbett, had allocated funds for the improvement project in the current five-year cycle. In a process begun by former Newton planner Tania Dobrowolski and so ably continued by Dee Spiro, the project was shepherded along. Luckily, a Radcliffe landscape design student and Newton resident, Margo Young, selected Dolan Pond as the subject of her design thesis and put together an outstanding plan for the area. This was presented to the Advisory Committee and the Conservation Commission in a number of meetings and public hearings with neighborhood input.

Under the auspices and oversight of our

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Newly constructed board walk at Dolan Pond

Dolan Pond Re-opening, continued from page 7

Environmental Planner extraordinaire, Martha Horn, the project was given to our Engineering Department where Ed Demling turned Margo's basic plan into a specification and wonderful practical design that was put out to bid. There were quite a few bidders and to our great fortune, Liberty Siteworks of Everett, MA was selected (they had done a wonderful job on a boardwalk in neighboring Brookline). After a few paperwork delays, work finally commenced in August of 2002.

Like the Big Dig, there were some unexpected below-ground glitches that required many more helical pier sections to support the boardwalk because of the depth required to reach solid earth. This boosted the project cost to around \$200,000 from the original \$150,000. The basic boardwalk was completed before winter set in and the finishing work waited until spring of this year. New side paths were installed. Two terrific information kiosks

were designed and placed. A sitting rock area and steps that could be used as an outdoor classroom were other important features. A handicapped parking area at the Webster Park entrance and accessible paths and boardwalk were essential and, since the opening, wheelchair users from the nearby Barry Price Center have already been seen traversing the new paths.

We hope the next chapter in this tale is acquisition of the adjacent 1.15-acre property at 76 Webster Park from the estate of Irene Forte for use as open space and community housing with CPA funds.

Dolan Pond is a small eight-acre conservation area with remarkable biodiversity as noted by John Richardson. This hidden gem of Newton, as he called it, has even more luster now. It was wonderful to hear the comments as people walked the new paths for the first time. To learn more about happenings at Dolan Pond, or to receive the free Dolan Pond News by email, please email dolanpond@aol.com, visit <http://www.dolanpond.org>, or call 617-969-6222.

Ted Kuklinski



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 dgDickson@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: Jom Broderick, Lucy Caldwell-Stair, Doug Dickson, Judy Hepburn, Martha Aherin Horn, Ted Kuklinski and Eric Reenstierna. Thanks also to Douglas Leith for his excellent proofreading services.

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 40 years ago in June 1961.

ORDWAY PARK RENEWAL

Preparations are underway for a 2003 fall campaign to raise \$50,000 for an endowed Ordway Park Fund for the maintenance and improvement of the park. Spurred by the generous offer of a neighbor to match the first \$10,000 raised for the Park Fund, a number of preliminary steps have been completed. As reported in the last Newsletter, Corry Berkhoof's evaluation of present conditions of the Park and her guidelines for maintaining and improving the park have been approved by the Board.

Dr. Frank Howard, a member of the Ordway Park Committee, has completed a survey of the shrubs and prepared a short report with inviting photographs. Visiting the park at all times of the day for a period of months, Frank's photographs suggest a woodland room of quiet beauty, a solace for passersby.

Preparatory to a request for a master design and planting plan from a landscape architect, Jim Broderick has completed a soil analysis in four sections of the park. It didn't take analysis to discover the reason so many bulbs planted by Conservators in the areas adjacent to the stone marker bloomed only once: beneath a very thin mulch layer, a substratum of red clay. The chemical analysis suggests only minor adjustments. In three areas the pH reading was low, and recommended

amendments for nitrogen and phosphorus were low in all four areas and medium for potassium in three.

A brochure announcing plans for the renewal of Ordway Park has been designed by Pat Robertson. It explains plans for the renewal of the park and invites contributions to the Ordway Park Fund. It will be mailed to neighbors of the park and to all Conservators in the fall. A wine and cheese neighborhood party in late September will be the kickoff event for the Fund campaign.

Jim Broderick

Nature Happenings

With all the recent rain, Newton is a very lush place indeed. All those dense leaves make it a little harder to see the birds. This is the time for intensive nesting activity, so keep an eye out for young birds. If you find any, its best to leave them in place. Keep watch for snapping turtles, which may leave the ponds to lay eggs. Keep a good distance from them for their name is justified by their powerful jaws. However, we'd be happy to hear of any great animal or bird sightings that you would like to share. So keep your eyes open out there. You never know what you will find in Newton's wild kingdom!

Flamingos Return to Newton! It has recently come to our attention that there have been a highly unusual number of *Phoenicopterus ruber* (Greater Flamingo) sighted within the confines of Newton, particularly in the vicinity of Prince Road on West Newton Hill (off Chestnut Street near the All Newton Music School). We have heard reports of whole flocks in some cases (e.g., near the home of artist Jill Hunter) and one or two individual birds in others. Recently some of these magnificent creatures appear to have dispersed from the initial West Newton sighting areas to the headquarters of the Newton Housing Authority at 82 Union Street in Newton Highlands (which also serves as affordable housing particularly for handicapped residents).

Our research indicates that this unusual pink bird had only once before been observed in Newton in the Auburndale section on May 23, 1965. In fact, until

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the recent spate of sightings, such wild flamingos have not been seen in Massachusetts since 1967, a gap of some 36 years! (Source: Birds of Massachusetts, Weit and Peterson, 1993). The arrival of the flamingos in Newton Highlands was celebrated with a welcoming ceremony by the residents of the Hyde Apartments on Tuesday, May 27 which received extensive coverage in local media.

Hall's Pond Brookline—Fred Bouchard, prolific writer and Brookline birder gives an account of some great birding around May 13 at Hall's Pond (which is his special home birding place). Sometimes there are days when the wind and weather conditions line up to produce an especially good fall-out of migrating birds. Fred's log for May 13th, which he describes as the best morning in years at Hall's Pond, lists well over 50 species, when we include the common as well as migrating species.



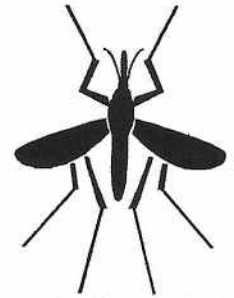
Now THAT's a good day! For the complete list, visit Fred's website at www.fredbouchard.com. Fred writes about nature (www.virtualbirder.com) and other topics and teaches music journalism at Berklee College of Music.

Mosquito Message—EcoAlert from American P.I.E. Scientists studying the potential impact of a warming planet on human health warn about the insidious spread of infectious diseases such as malaria, dengue, yellow fever, cholera, hantavirus, and encephalitis. Mosquitoes carrying tropical disease organisms are making their way northward. Ross Gelbspan, author of "The Heat is On" (Addison-Wesley, 1997), reported that if the UN-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's projected level of warming is realized, "the epidemic potential of the mosquito population in the tropical regions would double. In the temperate climates, home to the United States, it would increase a hundredfold."

The 1999 outbreak of West Nile virus in New York City proved to be a harbinger of insect-borne diseases previously unseen in most regions of the United States. As of the end of mosquito season 2002, West Nile virus had reached 42 states and the District of Columbia. Viruses require a host in which to live and crows, having had little time to develop any immunity in the New World, have a low

resistance to West Nile virus carried by infected mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes spread viruses from one host to another. When people think of mosquito control, broadcast spraying often comes to mind. This 'solution' is questionable for public health and environmentally irresponsible for non-target species. Most broadcast spraying is applied to densely populated areas where mosquito populations are low to begin with. Such spraying presents health hazards for children, people whose health is already compromised, and individuals with sensitivities to synthetic chemicals. Broadcast spraying of insecticides also kills many economically valuable insects such as honeybees, praying mantids, ladybugs and attractive species such as butterflies.



Mosquitoes, too, are a component of biodiversity and an integral part of the food chain. Life forms that feed on mosquitoes include a long list of familiar and less familiar amphibians, fish, birds and insects; controlling the geographic range and size of populations of mosquitoes is a matter of considerable public concern.

Not generally recognized is the fact that individuals, families and communities can implement non-toxic mosquito prevention programs, right in their own backyards, by surveying, monitoring and cleaning typical breeding sites. These sites, containing standing water, can include birdbaths, clogged roof gutters, old tires, wading pools, dripping outdoor faucets, street gutters, over-irrigated lawns, wheelbarrows and more. Help broadcast this message by choosing ecologically sound pest controls

These EcoAlerts are provided by American P.I.E., Public Information on the Environment, PO Box 676, Northfield, MN 55057-0676, email: Info@AmericanPIE.org.

New Maps are Complete!

The long-awaited revised guide to Newton's parks and conservation areas is hot off the press! Published by the Newton Conservators, it will be given to all members free of charge as memberships are renewed. For others, it can be purchased in bookstores for \$7.95.

Recreation vs. Re-creation

Excerpt from a letter, dated January 17, 1970, written by Elizabeth M. McKinnon (Newton resident) to the Commissioner of Recreation and Superintendent of Schools. The letter was written about **Cold Spring Park** and read by Dan Perlman at the close of his talk at the Annual Meeting. It was provided by Susan Abele of the Newton History Museum and lays out the importance of our mission to save open spaces and create opportunities for passive recreation.

"Basically, recreation is not only golf, swimming, baseball, etc. These are one means of achieving re-creation, which is the restoration of the soundness of body and mind. There are many purely sports facilities throughout the city and there are other sites than Cold Spring equally suitable for sports.

"But there are few, if any, natural sites, especially within a relatively high-density area, for the kind of recreation that most of us need at some times and some of us need most of the time. The difference is what makes swimming in the ocean (or Crystal Lake) more pleasurable than in a pool, bicycling along a

country road more exhilarating than round and round the block.

"Recreation of the spirit for some can best be had by walking in the quiet woods; taking a picnic lunch to the pine grove on the hill and sitting with friend or child on [a] thick bed of pine needles, unobserved; hearing birds and squirrels but no noises of the city; seeing a rabbit run across a clearing but no buildings, machines, or automobiles. Or by picking the purple and white violets on the banks of the brook; or by watching the ferns in spring grow from tight little curls to four-foot fronds in the swamp; or by traversing the network of narrow trails in the woods, made by how many generations of little boys playing Indians; or by picking as many different kinds [of] wildflowers as you can find to make a bouquet for your mother; or by coming across a colony of wild bleeding-hearts all in full bloom in June deep in the woods by the brook; or by watching a child, who when he was four was afraid of the woods, come running when he is seven to tell you about all the marvelous things he has seen in this small piece of wilderness that seems to him as rich and boundless as Yellowstone."

✂

**If you haven't paid your membership dues for 2003, it's not too late. Please renew today!
And consider an additional tax-deductible gift to support our work!**



*Celebrating 42 years
of open space advocacy
in Newton*

Newton Conservators Membership Form

PO Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459 • 617-969-8661 • 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

- | | |
|--|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual member | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family member | \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining member | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donor | \$75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$100 |

All amounts are tax deductible

NAME _____

STREET _____ VILLAGE _____ ZIP _____

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

June, July, August 2003 Newsletter



the Newton Conservators **NEWSLETTER**

IN THE SUMMER ISSUE:

- Annual Meeting Report
- Nahanton Park Path Dedication
- Conservation Area Improvements
- Dolan Pond Re-opening
- Ordway Park Renewal
- Nature Happenings
- Recreation vs. Re-creation

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Attend the Newton Conservators Board Meetings

Wednesday, June 25 and Wednesday, July 23, 7:30 PM in Room 202, Newton City Hall
(No Board Meeting in August.)



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NEWTON CONSERVATORS, INC.
P.O. Box 590011
Newton Centre, MA 02459

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