

AmeriCorps! The Waypoint

ISSUE I: YEAR VI HAS LANDED

January 11, 2005



Welcome to the AmeriShow

[Notes From The Editors, hereafter known as NFTE]:

Inside this issue:

-Hello and welcome to year six of AmeriCorps Cape Cod. Your pilots:

***Michele "Single L" Palmer**

originally from Plymouth, Massachusetts
current 'Wellfleetian'

***David 'Dave' Hendrycks**

originally from San Andreas, California
current 'Bourne Again'

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-Please keep all loppers, hip waders, Pulaski's, community volunteers, service partners, board of commissioners, beached whales, digital cameras, and shellfish inside the upcoming pages at all times.

-Feel free to throw all invasive species, inclement weather, poison ivy, sarcasm, rabid dogs, voice mail, and dial-up internet connections out the window.



INTRODUCING YEAR SIX, FRESH OUT OF THE BOX, NEW MEMBER SMELL, READY TO GET THINGS DONE.

The 'A.' in a Nutshell

By Jamie Martin
Wellfleetian

Ok, so a lot of you might be wondering what this whole AmeriCorps thing is all about, and if you're not, just skip to the next article.

AmeriCorps is a national service organization, the "domestic Peace Corps", if you will. It provides people with opportunities to serve their country by volunteering in various areas, from education to health care, from homelessness to hunger.

This specific program, AmeriCorps Cape Cod, is an environmental service organization serving all 15 towns of Cape Cod. Our four main focus areas are land and water-based conservation, disaster preparedness, environmental education, and volunteer engagement. We are comprised of 26 members, from all over the country. Basically, we are trying to clean up this world. We also hope to spread the word on how important it is to do your part in taking care of our natural environment.

So you might be thinking, 'Well that sounds just peachy, but what do you actually do with your time? After all it is my tax money providing you with your 'living allowance'.' Well, we do quite a bit. Just allow me to explain. Bittersweet and other nasty invasive plants are rapidly strangling the natural habitat; therefore we spend a fair amount of time lopping these foreign, unwelcome greens. You know all those beautiful walking trails that are all over the Cape? Well,

someone's gotta keep those maintained. We also help to keep your bellies full of seafood goodness, by volunteering with the local shellfish departments, and helping with quahog, oyster and scallop harvesting. And I'm not sure if you've noticed but the Cape is getting smaller and smaller, mainly

due to coastal erosion, so we're doing what we can to stop, or at least slow down this process, by planting beach grass, and putting up wooden fences. And although we aren't garbage collectors, we do pick up after people who can't seem to understand the meaning of a trash-can.

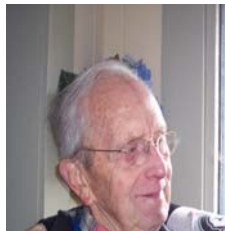
AmeriCorps Cape Cod also works closely with the American Red Cross in educating the public about how to best prepare for a disaster

and what to do if disaster strikes. In addition, all members are now certified in emergency response, so that we can serve the needs of the Cape Cod community, if such a disaster was to occur. We also make brochures and do public speaking, relating to what anyone from a kindergartner to a retired vacationer can do to aid in working toward a more sustainable, healthy living environment.

Still more? Why of course! Our motto is in fact, "Getting things done." A large portion of what we do involves getting you, the community, involved. We are currently planning a big Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. We are committed to strengthening the sense of community on the Cape, by asking you, the residents of this beautiful place, to volunteer with us. Although I could go on and on and on and on about what we do, I think I've said enough.



Birdhouse building in Harwich



Ralph 'Bud' Angier is a service partner that the Bourne House has served with twice this year. The Bourne Agains have removed invasive species from his property, as well as trimmed and hedged his blueberry fields. He is a private citizen that offers his lands to be used by the local elementary school science classes as living outdoor classrooms.



Before

The task is daunting



During

Fast-acting, like the wind



After

Immediate results

House Service Project Reports



The Wellfleetians have served several times with Vince Ollivier, including one service day removing invasive species from Sarah's Pond in Orleans. This was the day Bittersweet was reclassified scientifically (at least to Wellfleetians) as 'Devil's Spawn.'



A liger-like truckful of shrubbery at Sarah's Pond

A Week In The Life Of

ERIN LINSKY
Bourne House

Hi there, let me introduce myself. My name is Erin Linsky and I am a 22-year-old with two parents, one sister, and a dog known as a toodle (a poodle, terrier mix) that goes by Snickers. I am also a Colorado native that somehow ended up here on the east coast. I'll be honest, I think it's because I went to college at Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. And while Worcester didn't exactly win me over, Boston and the cozy East Coast ambiance definitely did. I graduated from Holy Cross with a major in Political Science and a minor in Environmental studies, but what I consider more important to know about me is that I left Holy Cross with memories of a semester abroad in Australia; spring break trips for Habitat For Humanity to Calhoun County, Alabama, and Lake County, Florida; and a summer trip for Habitat For Humanity to Zambia. My interests in service and the environment led me to this AmeriCorps program that I am in now. Before I joined this program, you could say my daily schedule was a lot less structured than it is today. So in following this new regiment, I am breaking up my day into concisely divided hours, which I am still trying to convince myself to comply by, even as I write this....



7:00, alarm goes off

7:00-7:30, repeatedly press snooze button

7:30, throw myself out of bed, bang on the incessantly busy bathroom door, grab necessary equipment for the day, and try to enjoy the early morning banter

in our dining room area
[Note From The Editor:

She eats breakfast sometime in there]

8-ish on Monday and Friday, head out to group projects, which so far have consisted of very eclectic activities. Examples of past group projects include hoisting up an ospray pole, seeding scallops, planting quahog beds, lopping multiple invasive species

(including, my favorite, green briar), clearing trails, measuring seaweed, and undergoing many training services to help us better serve the community

9-4:30-ish, exert massive amounts of energy tearing down, putting up, moving around, or meticulously courting countless plants, animals, shells, and other parts of the

Cape Cod environment

[Second NFTE: She eats lunch sometime in there]

8-ish on Tuesday and Wednesday, head out to the Cape Cod Commission, where I work on the new Stormwater Phase II regulations that are to be implemented on most towns here on the Cape in the next three years. At my placement, I am helping to

create a Web site that provides information to homeowners and municipal officials to help educate and inform them about what they can do to cut down on the pollution in our waterways. I am

helping to create stormwater Power Point presentations, educational exercises like workshops and plays, and making a photo album of the best and worst storm drain systems on the Cape

9-4:30-ish is spent toiling and laboring, reading and writing, eating and eating, and more reading and writing on the issues of stormwater

8-ish on Thursday, drive to the AmeriCorps office for COD Day, where I am working on our Martin Luther King Jr. Service Day Festival. At the moment, we are contacting multiple organizations, volunteers and possible donators for our day of service.

9-4:30-ish is spent typing on the computer, conversing on the phone, conversing with each other, jamming up the fax

machine, running out of toner in the copy machine, and otherwise misunderstanding the world of office equipment



4:30, head home after hard day's work, no matter the day

5:00-on, this part of my day seems to go so fast. It is mostly a blur of going for runs, cooking something somewhat appetizing for dinner, chatting with house members or friends from home, and trying to squeeze in studying for the GREs. Total time spent studying thus far: 1.2 hours. *[Third and last NFTE: Approximate time spent on cell phone headset talking to family and friends: approximately 833,574 hours]*

I hope this little excerpt gave you an idea of what our program is like, and even better, what is it like to be in my shoes, at least for one generalized week.

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A Week In The Life Of

SARAH HIPPLE

Background: As a fairly recently turned 22 year old, I am, in all senses, the

youngest member of ACC. I turned 22 in September, and I joined the program one month later.

Most members came to Cape Cod in September (well, all of them), but I was the 'Replacement Member,' (*Note From The Editor: She fit right in with our house, and the corps*) coming

here in October, leaving after two days in AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps in Sacramento, California (a switch that I am very happy with-yea for the environment).

College: Washington & Jefferson College (very small liberal arts college near Pittsburgh); math major, art major (art brought the fun back into my college life)

Home: Juniata County, Penn. (lack of town is purposeful, I don't live in one; the county has only three stop lights and a blinking red light, very rural)

Family: librarian father, Tom; children's librarian mother, Sue; sister, Maggie, freshman in college; my cat/family cat, Vincent van Cat, aged approximately 17; other cat, Elsa III, age unavailable; family dog (I take no claim on him; he is an after-I-went-to-college addition and not a very intelligent one at that but he does live at my house), Fred

Morning:

Alarm rings and a groggy hand reaches

out to turn it off. Lie in bed until the motivation builds up to ooze off the top bunk. Cleansing process. Put on (fairly clean) clothing thrown in heap on floor the night before.

Either eat or grab an apple to eat later.

Throw (hopefully) useful things into AmeriCorps book bag. Things like notebooks on Climate Change or Service Learning or work gloves and safety glasses and extra clothes.

Into the morning and on to the afternoon:

If Monday, Thursday, Friday or Saturday (if it is a service Saturday), get in car of other member or load equipment into my truck and drive to service project. Thursday is COD Day:

arranging service projects, donations, or volunteers for our Martin Luther King Junior Day of Service, or working on my service-learning projects, or running around like crazy doing many other random things at the AmeriCorps office.

Monday, Friday, and maybe Saturday: Usually an exerting day. Loppers, hoes, waders, and/or hard hats will probably be involved.

Lopping down invasive species, clearing out brush, operating a chainsaw (*Second NFTE: This year's high score in tree felling contest, she did go last but still, she got the shirt and nice padded gloves*), raking up young shellfish, scattering shellfish "seed," pruning community blueberry bushes, tilling community gardens

and more are all possibilities. A fun and active day of service with a much-needed lunch break in the middle. Often times, being able to see the difference one day

of work made or knowing the tradition of harvesting shellfish will continue and the ocean's interdependent creatures will not be lacking a part of their ecosystem. Satisfying.

OR

Tuesday, Wednesday: Individual Placement at Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, WBNER, (in case you don't remember from junior high science, as I did not, an estuary is a place where freshwater and saltwater meet and mix, it is tidal, and partially enclosed, possibly by a barrier island or beach.)

Working with some very interesting, busy people. Showing 8th graders around their school's pond and pointing out potential sources of pollution and identifying benefits for the pond. Or, compiling data from the pond study. Or, working on visual aids for presentations to kids/young adults/adults. Or, reading

about climate change. Or, doing something for one of many other projects.

Afternoon and on to evening:

Getting back to the house, possibly exhausted. Rum-maging around for a snack and wondering what to eat for dinner. Maybe

snacking so much that dinner is no longer necessary (ice cream is an excellent substitute dinner.) (*Third NFTE: Peanut butter goes with everything, as Sarah has claimed dozens of times*) Or cooking up a healthy, veggie-filled dinner (it can go either way). Reading, or checking email, or an evening of mindless TV watching, or the news (*Last NFTE: The two aren't the same*), or calling home and friends, or continuing to eat, or, well, you get the idea. Slouching off to bed, throwing out clothes for the morning, setting the alarm, and another night of sleep.



ALL-CORPS GROUP SERVICE



Various elves and raindeer, along with volunteers from Massachusetts Maritime Academy, during group service at the annual Children's Cove Christmas Party. Members helped families with craft making, traffic directing, karaoke singing, dinner serving, and gift giving.

Wetfest 2004 went well for the Corps. Horace Mann Charter School fifth and sixth graders learned about the Cape's sole-source aquifer, water cycle, geology, and they also ate ice cream and snow-cones in the name of education. There was Twister and Limbo, but no Cranium.



Other Bourne House Group Service Highlights

- *Conservation Pond, Bourne: vista clearing/code words for massive invasive species removal*
- *Falmouth Service Center: community garden restoration*
- *Mashpee Shellfish Department: shellfish seeding*
- *Mary Barton Land Trust: trail maintenance*
- *Bourne Conservation Commission osprey pole installed*
- *Peterson Farms, Falmouth: invasive species removal, trail blazing*

A Week In The Life Of

MICHELLE HIER
Wellfleet House

Note From The Editor: This is a day-in, not a week-in for Michelle, we were disappointed too (kidding)

"Sweet Home Alabama" bursts upon my consciousness and floods my ears, and I reach through the darkness to switch off my alarm clock. Its glowing lime green numbers tell me that it is a quarter past five, but in Michelle time that means it is really only 5 am. I leave our garret room and try not to stum-

ble into Danielle's bed before creeping across Devon and Jamie's room. Success again! I reach the stair landing without hurting myself and am thankful that the resident ghost has yet to appear to me during these early awakenings.

Downstairs I prepare some fair trade ginger spice for the morning coffee club, then open one of the four books that I am currently reading (this morning it is *The Bell Jar*, not my typical style of novel). Today will be spent at the National Seashore biology lab, only 10 minutes down the road in Truro, so I have a peaceful morning at Le Hac ahead of me. The sound of footsteps on the stairs tells me that "L" will be heading out on her morning run, and she will undoubtedly be followed by Lona, who may try to fit in a few minutes viewing of *The Gilmore Girls*.

At about a quarter to eight, I leave for the lab, filling my car with the sounds of Canadian fiddle player Natalie MacMaster. I frequently check my speed along the way, because the Truro stretch of Route 6 is notorious for being peppered with police officers. I drive down the National Park road and the Highland Center looms before me. The North Atlantic Coastal



Laboratory lies just outside the gates, and has the only signs of human life in the vicinity.

Kerry, my independent placement supervisor, has not set the front door to quack like she did last week, with the aid of some electronic device. It is always easy to tell when our biology lab comedian is around by the sound of her laugh carrying to the four corners of the building. Judith is already typing

in her gray-cloth cubicle beside my own, and we greet each other over the top of the screen. I glance at the giant binders lining the shelf in front of me: "Brewster Kettle Pond Data 2002," "Kettle Pond Volunteer Monitoring," a pond and lake atlas by the Cape Cod Commission, Corey's safety manual (he's a fellow member and housemate placed at the National Seashore with a different department), and a limnology book. Posted between the binders are maps of the ponds in Eastham, Orleans, Brewster, and Dennis,

along with the contact information for all of the volunteer leaders for the kettle pond groups from each of these towns.

The questions of the day are: will my computer be working, and will the biology lab files be accessible? Yes! Tom has come from headquarters and become my hero of the week by removing any and all diseases from our systems. My prospects for the day are much improved since I can now work on pieces of the traveling display at the request of the volunteer groups. When it is complete, I will join the leaders of the monitoring groups (who are volunteers themselves) in presenting it to the community. Our goal is to educate citizens about the need to protect kettle ponds and, most importantly, HOW they can do this. Along the way, we hope to recruit some more folks to monitor ponds in their hometowns.

Late in the morning, I am joined by the Johnsons of Brewster, a husband and wife monitoring team who have put a tremendous amount of effort into monitoring the kettle ponds in their town. Jane is the leader of the Brewster volunteers, and she has everything I need, right when I ask for it. Their

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visions for the future of the group steer towards community outreach through education, and they are hopeful that they will soon see some scientific conclusions being drawn from the data collected by “their” volunteers. These are feelings shared by all of the leaders, and are consequently the main forces that drive me in my individual placement. To me, these volunteer groups are at the heart of it all. When they talk about their work, it’s not mainly about dry numerical data and databases, but about the changes that have come over the years to the ponds they love, and what they hope to be able to do to help protect them.

But behind the vision there are still many details to be beaten down into place. Data—loads and loads of it in the form of dissolved nutrients, Secchi depths, dissolved oxygen, and chlorophyll a—must be organized. After a quick check-in from Corey, who has his own computer station set up in the conference room, I am off to the land of computers. My afternoon is devoted to learning how to shape data into a spreadsheet and then a database that volunteers and the park service will be able to use. Velma, the biology lab’s computer goddess, cuts and pastes as I look on and try to grasp what she is doing as she takes Eastham’s data and tears it apart. Several hours later, when Vel asks me if there is anything else to add for Eastham, I breath a sigh of relief and tell her that there is not.

When spring comes again, I will be more actively involved with the monitoring of kettle ponds as I join park staff and volunteer groups. This is something I am very much anticipating with glee! In the meantime, this is my typical day at the National Seashore. At half past 4 pm, I organize all the papers and notebooks that have been thrown into disarray over my desktop and head out the door with Corey. We did not drive together today, as I will be heading for the “man gym” for a jog and he will be going straight home.

One of the happiest parts of my day follows my trip to the gym, probably due to all of those endorphins that I have set

flowing during my jog on the treadmill. In the parking lot, perhaps I will call Heather or Andrea back in good old Worcester County before driving east along Route 6. I love the feeling of returning home to our bright little house in Wellfleet, sharing stories about what each of us has done during the day, and playing my fiddle, of course. Later, Julie, Al, Ryan, and I might have a pillow talk, and be lulled (or agitated) by the sound of tiny mice feet scampering above our beds. My day finally ends when the white glow from the Christmas lights is extinguished as Al flips the switch.

Wellfleet House Group Service Highlights

***Audubon Heathland Restoration, Wellfleet:**
invasive species removal

***Wing’s Island grassland restoration, Brewster:**
tree removal

***Bearberry Hill trail work, Truro:**
trail maintenance

***Harwich Bog restoration:**
trash removal, birdhouse installation

***Truro saltmarsh restoration:**
collected and replanted grass seed

***Chatham Shellfish Department:**
harvested and planted quahogs

AmeriCorps in the Community

This year's corps has discovered that the Cape offers much in the way of community meetings, and the corps has jumped into them headfirst.

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge drilling's effects on shorebirds

- *Migratory shorebirds, some of which live on Cape during the year, stay in a section of ANWR that is being considered to be opened for drilling. This presentation was decidedly against the proposed drilling, reporting on the amount of actual drillable oil versus the cost on the environment.*

Bourne Conservation Commission meeting

- *A Bourne Conservation Commission meeting concerning building a dirt parking lot on town-owned land overlooking one of the most pristine views on Cape also included some heated testimony by town residents who were opposed to the idea.*

Forum on Proposed Cape Wind Farm in Nantucket Sound

- *Corps members attended the Army Corps of Engineers community forum in Yarmouth. The opposition side were more vocal than those in favor, and voices were raised several times during the four-hour meeting, but overall the feeling was democratic and open to opinions.*

Housing Assistance (Champ House)

- *Champ Homes provide a haven for those who are physically disabled, in recovery from drug or alcohol abuse, mentally ill, and all those in need in some way or the other. Corps members attended a house meeting, receiving a warm welcome and an introduction to the homes, as well as presented the Program's missions and goals.*

Members have presented the program and its mission at Boy Scout and Girl Scout meetings, high school honor societies and community service groups, and assemblies of delegates, as well as many possible service partners.

For more information about AmeriCorps Cape Cod, contact the Resource Development Office at (508) 375-6869, e-mail us at info@rdoac.org or visit our website, www.rdoac.org

AmeriCorps Cape Cod is funded by Barnstable County and through grants from the Massachusetts Service Alliance and the Corporation for National and Community Service. AmeriCorps Cape Cod is operated out of the Barnstable County Resource Development Office.



AmeriCorps Cape Cod



Barnstable County

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