

AmeriCorps Cape Cod
PO Box 427
Barnstable, MA 02630

Top Ten Things I Like About Driving on Cape Cod

By Mike Platt

10. You will utter at least two R-rated insults at another driver while maneuvering through a Rotary.
9. \$0.06 off gas on Tuesdays. A great tactic to make you forget that you're getting ripped off the other 6 days of the week.
8. Nearly 80% of all street names on Cape Cod appear to be excerpts from an incredibly boring game of Mad-Libs, or rejected nicknames for Hip-Hop posse sidekicks (read: Stub Toe, Bumps River, Shad Hole)
7. Streets are allowed to change name without notification, and you're a damn fool for questioning this policy.
6. Yield to oncoming drivers when taking a left turn at a green light? HECK NO! What is this, Pleasantville?
5. If you've driven more than 100 yards and haven't seen a Dunkin' Donuts, you probably drove into the bay.
4. In the winter, the only lights you see on the side of Route 6 are those of the cop that just pulled you over.
3. Cardinal directions associated with highways are for aesthetic purposes only, and in no way represent the direction it travels.
2. Your MapQuest directions may include "Turn RIGHT onto UPPER OLDE COUNTY STRAWBERRY HILL ROAD. Jump FENCE. Travel back IN TIME. Turn SLIGHT LEFT onto US 6 W / MID-CAPE HWY."
1. **You can give directions by using your curled arm as a map. Unfortunately, my Dennisport needs a little more definition.**

AMERICORPS CAPE COD THEWAYPOINT

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Building Community Through Art

By Amy Usowski

Back in October, the Outreach group on Thursday COD day had a dream. A dream for children and artists to come together and learn from one another. Plans for Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2007 had begun. The event was called "Building Community Through Art."

We wanted to teach the children about service by encouraging them to donate their art. Our first task was to find a venue: the Boys and Girls Club of Cape Cod in Mashpee. We thought this was fantastic because the space was spacious, and we knew that some children would attend, as the Club was open on that day. We also asked kids from organizations like Children's Cove and Big Brothers/Big Sisters to attend, put out press releases, and made signs to ensure that enough children would be there.

Now came the hard part, though we thought it would be easy when we began. We had to find artists to come and share their knowledge with the children. We must have contacted over 50 artists either by phone or email. Less than 10 responded, and only 4 came to the event.



Volunteers spend time making a mural.

Each artist was asked to teach the kids about a certain art medium, such as painting, drawing, sculpture, and beading. Though we only had a few artists, other volunteers from the community helped out, captivating the children through art.

It wasn't just the children who came away with something that day. Chelsea Clarke said the experience was very rewarding for her mother, who assisted her other daughter, Tiffany, at the beading station. Mrs. Clarke had a personal connection with a shy, reserved little girl

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Community Presentations

By Molly Kitchel

One of AmeriCorps Cape Cod's greatest perks for members is its devotion to member development. Members can walk away with skills so varied; one wouldn't have thought it possible. For the past few months members and staff alike have been able to hone their public speaking skills by presenting information about the AmeriCorps Cape Cod program to municipal and community organizations across Barnstable County. By the end of January, members will have given thirteen 10-minute presentations in

eleven of the fifteen towns in the County, to organizations such as the Assembly of Delegates, Boards of Selectmen, and Conservation Commissions.

The goal in scheduling the informative presentations was to spread the word about AmeriCorps Cape Cod, help to generate more projects throughout the towns and garner support from the community. Our program is nothing without a clear expression of need from the community, and it is important to regularly

remind them of our availability and accomplishments. We have received many accolades from community members with regards to our presentations and some individuals have chosen to spontaneously stand up and speak for AmeriCorps Cape Cod during town presentations. We have more coming up in the next few months, and we hope to reach each town by April. Stay tuned for AmeriCorps presentations, coming to a town near you!

Children’s Cove

By Chelsea Clarke

Children's Cove is a Cape and Islands organization that advocates and provides services for child abuse victims and their families. For the past 8 years, AmeriCorps Cape Cod has been lending a hand with the Cove's annual Christmas Party extravaganza. This holiday soiree is not the seasonally requisite small-talk-laden potluck and Yankee swap event at the workplace that first comes to mind. Far from it, this is an event designed, at every single level, with the participating children as the sole focus.

This year, starting at 9 AM with many boxes of decorations, food, presents, and craft items, the staff of Children’s Cove and half of the Corps transformed the site of the party (a firehouse) into a veritable winter wonderland. It would be difficult to determine what might catch a child's attention first upon entering such a room; perhaps the beautifully crafted, glowing arrow pointing the way to a Santa's workshop, or maybe the rows of tables filled with outlets for artistic creativity, the popcorn or cotton candy machine, or possibly the laughter and song emanating from the elfin karaoke room.



Jess Staubach getting the candle-making table ready to glow.

While waiting in line to have an audience with Mr. Claus, who made quite the dramatic entrance by riding in on a fire truck, children were regaled with Scooby Doo



A jolly group of Santa’s Helpers just outside his workshop.

and the motley crew, sated with hot chocolate, and further appeased by a choice of a plush friend from the stuffed animal menagerie. No shopping-mall-inspired tears of impatience in sight, only yuletide cheer for all.

In fact, the whole atmosphere of the day, from the first minutes of set-up to the late night cleaning spree, was jovial, warm and inviting. Smiling volunteers from the

Barnstable County community joined with AmeriCorps to run the various stations and aid the attendees in construction of picture frames, pins, ornaments, and such treats as dipped marshmallows and ice cream cone Christmas trees.

The local food service community showed their support by providing an outstanding banquet of food

that was served beneath a twinkling Christmas-light bedecked tent.

AmeriCorps Year VIII members not only had a blast contributing to the smooth operation of this wonderful endeavor, but we also came away with a deeper understanding and gratitude for the multiplicity of roles taken on by the dedicated staff of Children's Cove.

The nature of our group service projects do not always enable us to help out the Cove on such a large scale, and it was truly rewarding to spend an entire day being a part of the hard work, planning, donations, service, creativity, and heartfelt care that mesh together every year to create a magically fun-filled evening where memories are made. In the end, it was the delight, the awe, and laughter of the children that epitomized the night of the Children's Cove Christmas party.

Children's Cove accepts donations for the benefit of child victims of sexual abuse and their families involved in traumatic experiences. For more information, visit www.childrenscove.org/index.html Funds support forensic interviews, medical evaluations, counseling services and family programs. Contributions should be made out to:

Children's Cove
P.O. Box 427
Barnstable, MA 02630

A Dish Your Guests Are Sure Never To Forget

By Laura Nichols

At this year’s Falmouth Service Center holiday party, Jan, one of the volunteers at the Service Center shared a special recipe that is quite the favorite among the guests. The squash casserole dish has always impressed and titillated the palates of the attendees. It’s been her number-one dish every Christmas season for over a decade. Believe me, it did not last long on the buffet table, and soon enough all that could be heard was the clanging of despair as the serving spoon hit the empty casserole dish.

This recipe would be great to use during house dinner. It takes less than an hour

to bake and the prep work isn't difficult at all. So this treat is easy AND fun. Novel.



Squash Casserole Dish

3 cups of Pepperidge Farm stuffing
½ of cup of butter melted
2 Small Zucchini Squash shredded
2 Small Summer or Yellow Squash shredded
1 cup of shredded Carrots

1 cup of cheddar cheese shredded
1 can of cream of chicken soup or mushroom soup
½ of cup of sour cream

- Mix the melted butter and stuffing mix together and spread at the bottom of the baking pan (9X13).
- Save a ½ cup of the crumbs to put on the top.
- Mix the squash, carrots, soup, and sour cream and spread it on top of the crumbs.
- Cook 35-45 minutes at 350 degrees, till dish is bubbly...then enjoy!

AmeriScopes - February 2007

By Glenda Stardust

Aries (March 21-April 19): With your incredible ability to flip between charm and sarcasm in a single sentence, this month you will win over housemates and service partners alike, enabling you to have things done your way.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): You bring stability and good looks to every situation this month. Save a dolphin, learn another activity at the WET fest, or cook something you’ve never made before for house dinner. What do you have to lose?

Gemini (May 21-June 20): A misunderstanding early in the month may make working at your IP challenging for a week or two. This month, see if you can use your communication skills on group service days as well. Do squirrels and birds not communicate? Maybe they have something to tell you, if you actually stop to listen.

Cancer (June 21- July 22): As the lone Cancer in the AmeriCorps member family, you may feel like the last one invited to the party this month. That’s ok, just have your own party.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): Take charge and plow ahead. Your ability to create with your hands gives you a leg up on service projects and puppet shows. To li-

ven up the office, suggest a “pajama day” or “dress like your favorite T.V. character” day.

Virgo (Aug. 23- Sept. 22): Your sign is known for being adaptable, which will come in handy this month. Thought you were doing a puppet show, and now you are working a WET Fest? Those around you appreciate your flexibility, and you gain lots of brownie points with the staff!

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Never one to sit around (unless “The Office” is on), use your love of activity, as well as rest, to find a balance this month. Plan a service project doing something you are interested in, learn how to fix one of the sinks in the house, or get that compost bin back in shape for spring.

Scorpio (Oct. 23- Nov. 21): As there are no AmeriCorps members or House Supervisors who fall under this sign this year, you Scorpions must not be “getting things done” the way the rest of the zodiac is this month. Don’t fret, for there is ample opportunity to take after the other signs and improve your surroundings.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22- Dec. 21): Leaders by nature, your energy and positive outlook on life make you a strong sign

in the zodiac to create the positive changes you wish to see. This can be in the home, at your IP, in the office, or socially. Now is the time to rest before spring, but that doesn’t mean you have to lie around watching reruns of Arrested Development all weekend.

Capricorn (Dec. 22- Jan. 19): Practical by nature, this month work on growing into your life one year older and wiser. There are those in the house who may not know of a special talent you have, and now is a great time to show them. When the nights are dark around the new moon on the 17th, the light of your enthusiasm will shine through.

Aquarius (Jan. 20- Feb. 18): The water-bearer sign is appropriate to our surroundings here on Cape Cod, and you will bear great things into your life this year. Be ready for change and travel in the coming year, both of which propel you forward in both the career and social aspects of your life.

Pisces (Feb. 19- March 20): So, it is February. The December holidays are long gone, and although your birthday is peeking around the corner, it is still too soon to start reminding all your housemates how much you like cake. What should you do? Throw a theme party!

IP:A Memoir

By Katie Anderson

Our Individual Placements serve as a break from the quality group time we inevitably experience from being part of AmeriCorps Cape Cod. Technically, my IP is a freshwater quality assistant at the Cape Cod National Seashore, a title that I have mastered saying in one breath during the frequent questioning over Christmas break. Included under this title are sample collecting, running tests on water samples for iron and (more importantly) various counts of nutrients, data entry, and miscellaneous lab-work.

I felt weird signing up for this article, feeling that no one else would be interested in the geekiness of water quality and working in a lab, but upon hearing Dana’s enthusiasm for getting to press a button until it whistles, I reconsidered. After all, not only can I help Outer Cape towns figure out if their kettle ponds are dying, every week I get to go out in the field and get data.

Every Tuesday morning, I leave the Truro Biolab in one of the Seashore’s trucks, loaded up with tubs, coolers, data sheets, and antifreeze. I first visit two sites on Seashore property to collect and replace rain gauge charts that, if working properly, tell how much rain (or snow) has fallen, and when the precipitation occurred.

My third site is located in the woods of Truro. Here, too, is found a rain gauge, as well as a state weather monitoring station, an atmospheric particulate collector, and the sample collectors for two nationwide networks monitoring rainfall quality, including the amount of mercury. By establishing the quality of wet deposition (rain and snowfall), these networks can compare results across the country and figure out trends of pollutant spreading. Rainfall data is utilized for various scientific projects.

Tuesday afternoon and all day Thursday I am involved with various water

quality projects, such as testing for nutrients in town kettle ponds, or helping a U.S. Geological Survey team take sediment core samples from the bottom of kettle ponds, and later drill holes around Salt Pond for groundwater sampling. The former required standing in ankle deep water in a boat-like contraption, where I balanced the vessel and responsible for keeping the sample and equipment from toppling into the brink.

Recently, we have begun testing water on a regular basis at East Harbor, near Provincetown. East Harbor has recently been subject to a salt marsh restoration project, making careful monitoring of changes in water quality essential. In a similar way, I’ve also been regularly testing water at Herring River, another target of salt marsh restoration. It’s projects like these, I feel, in which I am contributing to the success of major restoration projects, that really make my IP worthwhile.

Wickedly Good Eats

By Dana Griswold

With its pale yellow and white interior, low ceilings, worn, but polished wood floors, and comfortable, but a bit upscale country-esque feel, The Wicked Oyster provides a cozy haven during the long winter months on the outer Cape, when hardly any other restaurants remain open.

The waiters are dressed in classy black attire and carry themselves with an air of loftiness, but you'll feel at home nonetheless. The tables are laden with crisp, white table clothes, and the lighting provides just enough brightness to see the delicious dish you're taking part in, while also giving the room a soft mood. Realistic paintings of well-known and loved Cape Cod scenes decorate the walls, and bring the whole atmosphere together.

This gem of a restaurant is located on Main St. on the way to the Wellfleet Center. The dining rooms are the bottom floor of a classic two-story Cape Cod home backing a small marsh area. The sign is simple and enticing...**the wicked oyster**, all lower case, with a tiny drawing of an

oyster...how appropriate. A good restaurant doesn't need to spend a lot on advertising; make it tempting to the passersby, and let the inventive and quite colorful menu featuring organic produce, fresh, locally caught seafood and, of course, Wellfleet oysters do the rest.

Plus the extensive wine list complements this creative cuisine rather nicely. You can enter from the front or the back; there are two large areas for dining, and then a small, but classy bar area. The dining areas are not overly packed with tables, so you're not forced to hear every other table's conversation while trying to listen the person across from you.

The style is a bit more upscale than say that of the Flying Fish, but the ambiance is still welcoming to all. I've personally experienced the breakfast, consisting of an amazing egg, cheese, and sausage sandwich with fresh squeezed orange juice and pan-seared, seasoned home fries, and several dinners (inquire at dana.griswold@gmail.com for further infor-

mation on the dinners), both of which satisfied my hungering palate perfectly. Besides being perhaps just a tad bit expensive, The Wicked Oyster is one of the restaurants that you cannot leave the Cape without stepping inside to feast on a delectable dish and a glass of elegant wine. Go and treat yourself...you won't be sorry. I guarantee it.

Check it out for yourself if you don't believe me, but as most people know, I don't joke around when it comes to food: **www.thewickedoyster.com**.

Phone: 508-349-3455
Operating Season: Open Year Round
Hours: 6:30am - 2:00pm; 5:30pm - 1:00am
Appetizer Price Range: \$7.00 - \$14.00
Entree Price Range: \$7.00 - \$25.00



Yum.

FUN DAY: Not for the weak

By Laura Rooney

With lots of hugging – that’s how Fun Day ended. Everyone was going their separate ways for a week and a half, so there were plenty of happy, excited farewells. There were probably a few hugs at the beginning of the day too, but what I remember are the reindeer.

Fun Day part I: We had candy cane reindeer that helped us start out the day with sugar-filled holiday cheer. They were sweet, crunchy, and had been lovingly made by one of our Corps-mates. The whole Corps met in Dennis, where we received our Scavenger Hunt assignments. We broke down into inter-house teams and selected our trustworthy drivers.

Our list of search-for-ables included streets with iconic names, a Christmas tree in a boat, and a previous service project site (just to name a few). Different items were worth different points, so large importance was placed on getting the big 10-point item: Richard Perry, a local attorney whose office was located on our route.

My team did P-R-R-R-E-T-T-Y well, even though the competition was tough. We got creative and made our own sand fortress to fulfill the ‘castle’ requirement. We also managed to meet Richard Perry in person and found all of the famous streets.

Fun Day part II: Post scavenge we took a jump back in time to when we were all wee babies and tried to have a guess at who was the cutest of them all. Our steadfast member leaders had painstakingly collected photos from all the members, and from what I hear, that wasn’t easy to do. Each correct guess was worth one point and there were 26 photos; consequently, those points were crucial to winning the overall competition. The cuteness of the babies was distracting, but my team tried hard to stay focused. After we were done with the photos it was time to get our skate on.

Fun Day part III: Time for ice. The skating group divided itself by hockey stop or toe pick, and laced up. It took me a while to get out on the rink (I had to get my ‘ice

legs’ back under me), and when I finally did I was intimidated by two onlookers at the far end of the rink. As I skated closer their beady stares were unwavering, and I was a little uncomfortable until I realized they were a pair of dummies. There was a third, but by the time I spotted him I was onto their tricks. I paid him no mind and wobbled on. Some of us had to work pretty hard to keep up in the cold hamster wheel. For Eric Sweeney it was his first time skating. “It [the ice] felt really slippery,” said Sweeney.

At certain points we managed a few of the giant pinwheel moves where you form one long chain and the people on the outside flail while the person on the inside just laughs and glides along (I was always on the outside).

Soon all our muscles were tired and we got word that it was time to go. After the Corps skates’ were returned, and we settled the bill, we said our farewells. That’s when all the hugging resumed and we all knew we would be sad to go, yet happy to return.

Youths Contribute to Traveling Art Show

Continued from page 1

who opened up as she praised her for the thought and care that she was putting into her work. At the end of the day the little girl came back to Chelsea’s mother and gave her her prize painting and her choice of drawings, which are now displayed on the Clarke family refrigerator.

Our main goals for the day were accomplished; the children learned about Martin Luther King Jr. and that they were an important part of the community. The artists passed on their love of art, the children generously donated their artwork for us to distribute to nursing homes, and everyone painted what symbolized community and service to them on our mural. We all helped build community through art.



Ready to Raffle.

Jaunting for a Jolly Cause

By Ben Gildehaus

Many causes are worthy of support, but none were closer to AmeriCorps members' hearts than the Special Olympics last December, when almost the entire Corps came out to run in the Hyannis Jolly Jaunt, a race to raise money for the Special Olympics.

Over two million athletes of all ages are involved in Special Olympics sports programs in more than 150 countries. The organization offers year-round training and competition in 26 Olympic-style summer and winter sports. There is no charge to participate in the Special Olympics, and events are geared to accommodate a variety of ability levels so that athletes can compete with others who have similar capabilities.

The Special Olympics athlete oath is "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt." Bourne House member Laura Nichols, whose family has participated in many Special Olympics events in the past, recruited and or-

"Over two million athletes of all ages are involved in Special Olympics sports programs in more than 150 countries."

ganized a team of thirteen AmeriCorps members and staff, appropriately titled, "Bourne to Run." Donning red and green holiday costumes, elf and Santa hats and jingle bell shoes, the AmeriCorps team hit the road that morning to honor that oath. While none of us won, we had a



Dressed for the occasion, a group shot of team 'Bourne to Run.'

couple come close and everyone gave his or her best and bravest efforts.

I personally had been nursing a bug resembling laryngitis and therefore tried to take the scenic five kilometer race at a slower than normal pace. I could not help but reminisce during the run.

Back in college, I had a good friend whose brother, like Laura's, was a Special Olympics athlete. He and I used to raise money for the Special Olympics at a local Polar Plunge event at Lake Storey where we went to school, requiring us to leap into sparkling, frigid waters during late February. During the race, I kept thinking about how it was so much more enjoyable to be running a short distance in sweatshirt weather as opposed to pretending to be a penguin.

At final tally, "Bourne to Run" was the top fundraising team with a combined final amount of \$1366, well over our original goal of \$250. That spirit of giving, demonstrated by the members, says a lot to me about the people I'm living and working with this year. And it says a lot to Laura Nichols.

"I was very touched," Nichols said. "This was really close to home for me. It meant so much to see everyone so willing to be a part of it. It's great too because I think people were closer to the cause and the good it does for so many people after meeting all the participants."

Special Olympics Massachusetts is supported by individual and corporate donations that go directly into its programs. If you would like to make a general donation, you can visit the sites below:

CHECK IT OUT:

www.specialolympics.org

and

www.kintera.org/faf/home

Kids, Don't Play With Fire

By Mike Platt

"So let's say I'm in my room, and I hear a smoke alarm."

"I'M IN MY ROOM!" yells a three year old in the front row.

It's moments like these that have made AmeriCorps' "Fire Safety for Kids" presentations truly memorable. These Community Disaster Education presentations ("CDEs" for short) are part of a campaign to make sure that residents have the knowledge and skills to prepare themselves and their families for a disaster. For the last few months, members have been giving presentations to Cape Cod Child Development centers on Fire Safety.



Dana Griswold teaches young students about the components of a firefighter's uniform.

One of the main messages of the presentation is that the students should not be afraid of fire fighters. To get this message across, one of the presenters dons a real fire fighter uniform, explaining each part as it's put on. However, as those who've donned the yellow, slightly musty suit know, it is about as hot as the inside of a pizza oven on the surface of the sun. And, according to one young student, the jacket "smells like my brother's girl-friend."

First group activity -- (from the producers of "Deal or No Deal"), it's a rousing game of "Toy? Not a Toy?" The students are shown pictures of toys (a teddy bear, a bike) and dangerous household objects

(electrical plugs, matches, and a stove). They then try to decide whether or not the object is ok to play with, or if it is something they should avoid. Word on the street is that Kaplan will have a prep book on the shelves by the summer.

Next, students are shown an actual smoke alarm. As we later discovered, it's not a good idea to imitate the beeping of the smoke alarm, as the students will imitate the beeping noise for no less than five minutes. The teachers loved us for that one.

While we still have their attention, we present a picture of a house and show the different exits in case of fire. We then ask the students to point to the fire exits.

However, when I drew it, I forgot to put in a bathroom. Don't think the kids haven't pointed this one it. You haven't lived until you've been asked, "Where do you poop?" by a three year old.

We wrap up with a brief run-down of the different fire safety skills. Crawl-low-and-go and stop-drop-and-roll are just a few of the skills we hope the children will remember, or, at the very least, give them the opportunity to expel some energy by crawling and rolling around the classroom.

So kids, the AmeriCorps Fire Safety Patrol is taking over Cape Cod Preschools.

One really hot firefighter suit at a time.

Answering the Call of the Stranded

By Erin Baker

"I probably won't do too much more today, 'cause my arm is pretty sore from carrying that dolphin last night."

Never in my life did I imagine that I would be involved in a conversation about carrying dolphins. If someone had said this to me a few months ago, it would have seemed absurd. Yet after a few months serving with AmeriCorps Cape Cod, I was the one with a sore arm. Crazy!

On Saturday, 07 January 2007, AmeriCorps members answered the call when a 15,000 lb. pilot whale and a juvenile At-

lantic white-sided dolphin stranded in Wellfleet. Upon arriving at the scene of the pilot whale stranding, where a number of AmeriCorps volunteers were already working to free the whale from a ditch, Sarah Hertzog of the Cape Cod Stranding Network asked several of us to follow her out to Lieutenant Island to respond to a live dolphin stranding.

After pulling on our waders, we made our way across the salt marsh to the dolphin where another volunteer was waiting for us. When we arrived, it was obvious that the dolphin was in distress and was not going to survive, so Sarah made the deci-

sion to euthanize it. Afterward, we placed the dolphin on a stretcher and maneuvered our way back through the marsh.

Despite the training that we received, I wasn't sure exactly how I would respond to an actual stranding, especially when we had to resort to euthanasia. In this situation, although it was sad, it was obviously the best thing for the dolphin, so I think that made it easier to deal with. I left the stranding feeling as though my actions might make a difference. Perhaps next time there will be a happier ending.

Hear Us Out, We’re Helping Hudsonia Heathland

By Rebecca Wolfson

It’s not unusual for cars to slowly roll by while our AmeriCorps crew works diligently outside on group service days, and for them ask us what we’re doing. That’s one of the reasons we place an AmeriCorps tent sign by the road – to let people know who we are.

Usually, our work is well received – when we tell these inquisitive folks that we’re removing pesky green briar and invasive bittersweet, their hoots and hollers for joy are quite endearing. On the flip side, when we explain we’re cutting down trees to prevent a wooded monoculture or to cultivate the growth and survival of a grassland, are more likely to question our objectives.

These inquiries arose while half the Corps performed a service project of the Army Corps of Engineers on the Mashnee Dyke in Bourne removing woody species in order to restore a heathland.

When faced with a situation like the Army Corps of Engineer’s Mashnee Dyke project, do we, as humans, intervene and prevent the trees from taking over the area, or do we let nature run its course? We have the power to act, but is it our place to make changes to this area instead of letting what is “natural” occur?

On the particular patch of land where we were working, woody species needed to be removed to aid in the continued growth of the Hudsonia (evergreen shrubs) in this former salt plains grassland. If the small trees that we cut down were given free reign of this heathland, they would grow to be much larger. They would tower above the Hudsonia blocking the sun that provides them with energy to live.

Over time the small Hudsonia shrubs would die off and the natural successional process would continue as the area changed from heathland to woodland. Heathland is rare, essential habitat for endangered species including the piping plover.

If we had done nothing, the heathland on the Mashnee Dyke would disappear. With many other areas of heathland destroyed by development, the preservation of existing lands becomes more pressing. For that reason AmeriCorps Cape Cod agreed to be the muscle for the weakened heathland and provide it with a foothold against the encroaching trees.

It may be shocking for observers to hear that AmeriCorps members, environmentalists, and natural resource conservationists are cutting down trees. Our hope, however, is that these individuals will listen to the full explanation of our project and grasp the bigger picture of habitat protection.

Our time at the Mashnee Dyke was amazing. We worked hard for two days, removing woody species as we moved down the dyke. We looked back at the amount of area we cleared over the two day period and felt a great sense of accomplishment. This heathland now has the ability to return to its “roots.”

live music. It impassioned me. I can’t explain it better than that...I was full of passion...well, and some beverages.” Hmm. I guess for some the show was more of a social event, but for us the night was all about discovering the music and forming friendships. As for Kelly, we promised to stay awake on the way home and drive her anywhere in the world as thanks for not leaving us stranded in Providence. We have a plan to drive to Africa just as soon as that becomes possible.

If you want to see a great live show, go see STS9 the next time they stop through your town or rent one of their live shows on DVD. But hurry, their popularity is growing as I and many others declare the birth of the next great rock band.

Flexin’ Around the Cape

By Jason Demers / Amy Usowski

It is efficient, clean, runs smoothly, and the drivers are extremely friendly. This is how the riders who took our surveys described the bus line that traverses along the outer Cape, between Harwich and Provincetown.

It’s street name is The Flex, because not only does it make routine stops, but it will also stop at your house, as long as you’re within one mile of its route. That seems pretty flexible. The Flex bus system was designed to help people get to work, do errands, and make it easier for those who do not have personal transportation to get around. Plus public transportation is better for the environment, as opposed to the alternative of everyone driving their own vehicles.

We started our trip in Provincetown, where we picked up our first rider. This woman said that she could drive to her job, but because The Flex costs only a dollar to ride, she’s saving money on gas, and repairs for her car. She is very happy that there is a public transit system on Cape Cod.

The bus driver knew every one of the regulars that stepped aboard the bus. Of course, there were only six people during

our entire ride: the woman from Provincetown, a guy in Wellfleet, who thought the bus should run every half hour for the elderly riders, a man coming home from the grocery store in Orleans, a teenager going to basketball practice, and two young boys heading to a sleepover. They all agreed that the bus was convenient because they weren’t able to drive themselves.

It became apparent to us that people of all ages, creed, and mental awareness ride the bus for all different reasons. The Flex Bus isn’t just a ‘no-name’ bus that ghosts its way across the Cape, but rather a service that is valued by its regulars. However, how is the overall community perception of the Flex Bus progressing and will it continue to improve? Only time will tell.

So how is The Flex Bus faring in the community? Well, that’s what AmeriCorps members and the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority are attempting to solve. Twenty-eight members of AmeriCorps are hopping The Flex during certain shifts and surveying the riders that come on, hopefully acquiring around 150 surveys by the end of March.

We started our trip in Provincetown, where we picked up our first rider. This woman said that she could drive to her job, but because The Flex costs only a dollar to ride, she’s saving money on gas, and repairs for her car. She is very happy that there is a public transit system on Cape Cod.

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“Oh What a Night...”

By Jess Staubach

On the night of September 29, 2006 myself and a few of my AmeriCorps cohorts, Laura, Dana, and Kelly left Cape Cod embarking on an adventure to Providence, Rhode Island that we would never forget. After overcoming the obstacle of I-195 traffic on a Friday night, we arrived at Lupo’s Heartbreak Hotel. Lupo’s is a nice venue with plenty of space for dancing, some tables and chairs for sitting, and an upper balcony.

We were there to see Sound Tribe Sector Nine, a band that I would described as electronic rock music combined with elements of funk, jazz, and hip hop. The Atlanta based natives assembled in 1998 and have since relocated to California. The band remains close to their roots and returns annually to the Tabernacle in GA for a three-night run over New Year’s.

The band delivers this down-to-earth, modest attitude in an always-stellar performance.

STS9 started the night off strong playing “Peoples” and “Today” (both classics) and remained solid by ending the show with a favorite song of mine, “Kamuy.” They played for almost four hours (ending at about 2 A.M.) to the dismay of our very patient friend, Kelly, who was waiting outside Lupo’s to drive our energized selves back to Cape Cod!

Sound Tribe has always put on a good show (demonstrated by their ability to sell out an entire week stint at the Boulder Theater in March!). A bystander at the show put it best: “The sound of the tribe commonly known as STS9 can only be completely experienced in the form of

out of context, and everyone blames the sound programmers.

11:10am: The first run-through is a complete success, and everyone is very happy with the results.

11:30am: Lunch is taken. The food is good. The company is better. Gummy lifesavers never tasted so good.

12:00pm: Recess. Did not see that coming. Little versions of grown-ups run around the gym floor under the supervision of a loud whistle.

12:20pm: A final run-through of the Green Ribbon is started.

12:22pm: “SURE” is played amazing loud and at the wrong time again. We start over.

12:25pm: Buff exposes himself after flying through his window. A formal investigation ensues, as does 5 minutes of solid laughter.

12:31pm: The final run-through continues without a hitch. High Fives are distributed among the troops.

12:54pm: Children arrive. Everyone becomes tense, especially because children can smell fear.

1:00pm: A wonderful program entitled “*The Green Ribbon*” is put on for

school age children, who fall in love with characters entitled Zoë and Ben. Unfortunately for the Sand Witch, everyone is still afraid.

1:20pm: Children are handed out tambourines and double-sided drums to celebrate why they love recycling. Unforeseeable to the puppeteers, children love making very loud noises more than they love recycling.

1:25pm: The music thankfully stops.

1:34pm: Performers start to take down the set, but due to several burst ear-drums there are communication breakdowns from time to time.

2:00pm: Everything and everyone has been packed for the journey back to the garage.

In all actuality one has to be careful, as the I Love Recycling theme is surprisingly catchy and fun to sing. All in all, it was a successful first time, and gave all the puppeteers, managers, and puppets an ego boost towards the next show. The show was fun to do, and after the first time we know what to expect, what problems we may face, and how we can handle those problems. Are we ready for the next show? “SURE!”

Alumni Profile – Tess Casey

Interviewed by Molly Kitchel

I am sitting in the basement of the Resource Development Office at a round table across from Tess Casey, a fellow AmeriCorps Cape Cod alumnus from Year 7 who lived with me in the Bourne House. Tess is originally from Concord, New Hampshire, and graduated from Boston College. She is at the office today visiting friends while she is on Winter Break from school.

Hi Tess! So, for our interested readers, please tell us what you have been up to since leaving the AmeriCorps Cape Cod program last July.
Well, I just finished my first semester of law school at Pierce Law in Concord, New Hampshire. I’ve pretty much been studying around the clock.

Wow! Law school! How do you think your year with ACC has influenced your current experience at Pierce?
I definitely have a better appreciation for the people I met through AmeriCorps. So many of the people I’ve met in law school talk about money and getting ahead as opposed to making a difference. It made me realize how valuable the people are in the AmeriCorps program. Also, while about half of my classmates are right out of college, the others are slightly older – from their late 20’s to early 50’s.

I’ve found that I can converse more easily with the older students because of my variety of work experiences through ACC.
Are there any specific service experiences from AmeriCorps Cape Cod that may have affected the career path you have chosen to take?
My individual placement with Gretchen working on County Sustainability really boosted my law school résumé and provided me with valuable experience because I want to get into environmental policy and protection. Also, I’m planning to apply for a scholarship from the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship, which gives money to graduate students who carry out health-related service projects in underserved communities across the country. Serving with AmeriCorps Cape Cod has helped to form a good foundation for moving forward with other service projects.

What do you miss most about the program?
I miss coming home physically tired from Monday/Friday group service projects with that feeling of accomplishment, like I’ve finished something. Now I just sit around and read all day.

What do you miss most about living in the house?
The outdoor shower.

I was thinking more along the lines of your relationships with housemates. Real sentimental, Tess.
Oh, well, sitting around the living room and having ridiculous conversations with housemates. Remember that time when we were watching that program on Alaska and we kept asking Julian (Neubauer, Year 7 alum from Anchorage) if he’d met that person before, or driven on that road, etc.? Stuff like that.

Ahh, yes. Needling Julian was one of my favorite pastimes as well. If I remember correctly, we might have pushed that one too far until he got quite angry with us. Good times had by all. So, as we wrap things up, do you have one piece of advice that you’d like to impart to the current members?
Yes. Eat a lot of ice cream and go to the beach! ****SHAMELESS PLUG ALERT**** If you need advice on where to get ice cream, go to www.theicecreamchallenge.com

Thanks Tess! You’ve been a wonderful interviewee. Good luck in law school! Thanks!

Learning to Stitch Without a Hitch

By Katherine Beauchamp

“Clickety-clack-clack, clickety-clak.”

On any given night in the Bourne House, you can hear this repetitious sound coming from the living room. You may ask yourself, “Is it someone typing on his or her laptop? Maybe playing the drums with a pencil?” But no, those noises would be much harsher than this soft sound. You look around the corner, and witness a thing of beauty. It is one of your housemates partaking in the art of knitting.

As many of you have probably noticed, there is a large population of knitters in the AmeriCorps Cape Cod program. It is a noble craft that calms the nerves, allows

a person to express his or her inner artist, and remove him or herself from part of the rat race known as shopping for presents. Nothing says, “I care” quite like a knitted token of affection. Many of these “AmeriKnitters” were introduced to the craft during the program itself.

“I never thought about knitting until I came here. It really has opened my eyes to making things,” said Jessica Staubach from Michigan. Recently Jessica finished her first major work, a six-foot long scarf that could keep even the coldest person toasty. Many of us newbies fell under the guidance of Laura Rooney and Liz Hagen, to whom we will always be indebted. At

first, knitting can be very overwhelming with the awkward needles and never-ending choices of yarn color and texture. But these two ladies were patient and kind in their instruction. Many beginners started with an easy project, like a nice scarf. Once they made it past the threshold of finishing their first project, the opportunities of making something fabulous were endless.

So, if you are looking for a hobby and nothing has caught your eye, think about knitting. It is fun, artistic, and productive in the dark times of winter. Seriously, what is more rewarding than watching the Office and making a hat at the same time?

Succession: Mother Nature’s Cleaning House

By Dana Griswold

It came swiftly and with no warning. Thousands of trees were downed and power outages affecting more than 50,000 homes were reported. In just an hour people were stranded, roads were deemed impassable by swirling snowdrifts, and winds over 80 mph, nearing hurricane force, blew fiercely across the Cape.

On Friday, December 9, 2005 the residents of Cape Cod were speechless in response to this sudden winter storm. It'd been years since a nor'easter like this had hit with such intensity. The storm apparently had moved northeast into the New England region gathering strength as it came from the Ohio River Valley.

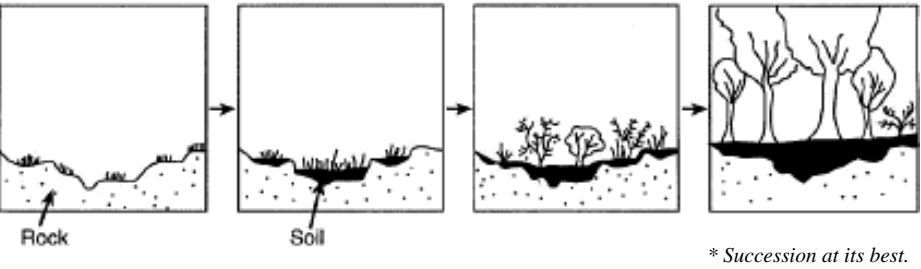
A Cape Cod Times reporter referred to it as an "Arctic invasion," catching everyone on Cape Cod and the Islands off guard. Although I was not on the Cape during this event, I've heard all about it. Members of last year's Corps informed us of all the shelters they opened for people



One of many downed trees from the storm of 2005.

But did this nor'easter actually "ruin" the habitat of the woods and other environments Cape-wide? Although the aftermath caused much unexpected and furious carnage of trees, Mother Nature has

by fast-growing, well-dispersed species often called opportunists, but as succession continues, these species will tend to be replaced by more competitive species, known as k-selected.



whose homes were without heat, plus my individual placement at the Eastham Department of Natural Resources has told many of the stories from winter's past.

I've seen pictures of Wiley and Nickerson Conservation Areas in Eastham, where huge pine trees were twisted, bent in half, and ripped from the ground as if a giant with quite the temper had torn it's way through the forest, destroying everything in its path. Residents were dumbfounded by the devastating results of this storm; it had ruined a huge amount of recreational areas where they had once walked their dogs, gone for peaceful winter strolls or hikes, or just sat to gaze out over the water or up into the pine tree canopy.

her reasons for storms like these. Ecological secondary succession is a very necessary and essential process that occurs after such natural disturbances as a winter storms with gale-force winds or forest fires.

The series of ecological changes that follow a large-scale disturbance to an environment can be influenced by the habitat's conditions, by the interactions of the specific species (wildlife and vegetation) present, and by other factors such as availability of seeds and weather conditions or season of the disturbance. Most of these factors contribute to the predictability of a habitat's successional characteristics. Ecological communities in the early stages succession will be dominated

In the end, which can take up to hundreds of years, succession will lead to the dominance of native or locally superior species that out-compete weaker species. Essentially succession is the continuous and developing replacement of one ecological community by another up to the point where a climax community is established.

Even though the delicate process of ecological succession may only take place every couple centuries, it is a process that must occur in order for the natural world to continue on its course, and we as humans should not stand in its way. We need to remember that it was a natural event, and by having so many trees downed, sunlight was able to reach the forest floor, allowing succession to begin. This is a natural and positive outcome.

*Above is a sketch depicting the process of ecological succession still occurring presently all over the Cape due to the legendary December 9th storm.