

The Waypoint



Year XIII, Issue 2

Spring & Summer 2012

Cape Cod, Massachusetts

MLK Day - A Day On, Not A Day Off



Featured Above: MLK Day volunteers flaunt their best smiles before a fun-filled day of service.

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By MATTHEW SIENKIEWICZ

Our challenge was to be something more than ourselves. We are clustered together around a table in the upstairs conference room, occasionally dipping crackers into cookie butter (yes you read that right, it's made out of cookies, and yes it's delicious), and trying to figure out the best way for us to make a difference. It was a much more daunting task than one would suspect.

Identifying community needs was done with relative ease, but implementing solutions took not just hard work but creativity. Rather than bashing our heads repeatedly against obstacles (as for some reason it is oddly appealing to do when wearing a hard hat) we had to develop solutions that circumvented those obstacles.

We are all doing great work as AmeriCorps members but the challenge for this day was to go beyond what even our strong backs can do. We became catalysts of change. Sounds epic, right? Believe me, it was.

The seven members of Tuesday COD (Community Outreach and Development)

Day; Rob, Dan, Alex, Ben, Pfeif, Ruby, and myself along with our fearless leader, Program Specialist Christin Marshall, were able to recruit nearly 150 volunteers and manage their participation in more than a half dozen projects.

Rob led volunteers in tearing the roof off a house, no big deal. Dan helped build garden beds that will provide nutritional support to the underprivileged. Pfeif tackled the management of two huge painting projects. Ruby led dozens of volunteers in creating everything from food storage crates to no-sew blankets. Alex handled the registration of volunteers, by no means a simple task when they arrived in droves. And I conducted a successful food drive at local businesses to collect food for the needy. It all seems pretty amazing doesn't it?

We fed people, we helped build housing, and we created blankets and other materials to improve the quality of life for many individuals. Basically, we powered civilization for a day. Yeah, pretty cool I know, but what is really cool is that we powered civilization for the underprivileged. We helped to bring some light to dark places and by doing that we succeeded; we were, for a day, more than ourselves.



Kelsey Boyd (far left) and three community volunteers asking customers at a local Stop-and-Shop for donations.



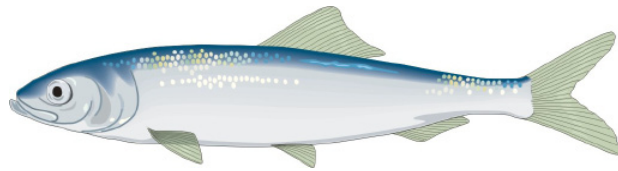
Wooden crates were constructed and then filled with donations before being shipped out to local food pantries.

FREE THE HERRING

By KELSEY BOYD

Clearing a herring run may sound like a lovely walk in a stream, which it can be, but it also is a necessary project to ensure the health of the herring on the Cape. The streams must be cleared of debris that has accumulated over the fall and winter so the herring can make it to spawning areas. In the morning we set out with hedge trimmers, pitchforks, and the longest waterproof gloves we can find. Fearing my own clumsiness, I opt for the much safer pitchfork and leave the power tools to those blessed with a better sense of balance. Most of my day is spent alternately pulling branches and leaves out of the stream and prying myself out of the mud; thankfully a friend (or two or three...) is there to lend a helping hand when one gets especially stuck. Throughout the day we pull out logs and clear out tangled plants that could trap the herring or prevent them from making it further upstream.

"Fearing for my own clumsiness, I opt for the much safer pitchfork and leave the power tools..."



Despite the amount of time some of us spend trapped in the mud, a lot can be accomplished in one day. At the end of the project there is a noticeable difference when you walk back downstream and notice the change in the openness of the stream. In April, the herring will pass through the streams while dedicated volunteers take counts to see if the populations are improving.



To the left, Matt Cannon in stylish orange arm gloves and Mike Sousa, repping the green sleeves, pull out some embedded vegetation in the stream bed. Above, Alex Heyn pulls out branches being cut by Annie Cook.

IN SEARCH OF PETER COTTONTAIL

By TOM VOHOSKA

Some people track bears. Some people track mountain lions. Some people track wolves. I do not track any of these things. I track bunny rabbits. Not the most dangerous of creatures listed above, but exciting none the less. Too be specific I trap, tag and track New England Cottontail (NEC) rabbits, which face possible extinction.

I do all of my work on the Massachusetts Military Reserve (MMR) which encompasses many different entities including Otis Air Force Base, Camp Edwards and the US Coast Guard among other things. I have been assigned the task of assisting the US National Guard's lead wildlife technician in the study of rabbits on the base.

The overall goal of the study is to determine the "home range" or area where these rabbits like to live. The NEC faces possible extinction mainly because of habitat fragmentation. In other words, the areas they like to live in are disappearing at a rapid rate. They used to be found throughout New England, but are now limited almost exclusively to Southeastern Massachusetts, which includes Cape Cod.

My job entails unorthodox and sometimes long hours driving HUMVEES and crawling around the woods in all kinds of weather. It is a great place to work. The study of these rabbits has opened my eyes to just how much a species' habitat can change because of human influence. If we do not stop and look for the bunnies every once in a while we may just miss them when they are gone. I will continue my search for Peter Cottontail until my time on Cape Cod is up.



Above, a New England Cottontail rabbit recently trapped and adorably wrapped by Tom Vohoska.

From AmeriCorps Cape Cod & Army Corps of Engineers,
Thank you so much to all the volunteers and sponsors for a very successful...

CANAL CLEAN-UP



Counter-Clockwise from Top Right: ACC Program Coordinator, Amanda Howe, and ACC Program Specialist, Christin Marshall, showing off their pearly whites while signing up volunteers. Top Left: A Girl Scout troop also showing their pearly whites while hanging out at the event hub. Bottom Left: Dozens of volunteers adding their artistic touches to the mural along the canal. Bottom right: The completed mural in all its glory.

Below, Annie Cook and a gardener-in-training make their thumbs a deeper shade of green.



CLEANING THE CANAL, ONE GARDEN AT A TIME

By ANNIE COOK

On April 21st, 2012, the 12th Annual AmeriCorps Cape Cod Canal Clean-Up event, a local church member, four volunteer park attendants and a Plymouth Girl Scout Troop worked hard to protect the herring from polluted runoff. They did this by planting a rain garden that will filter out many pollutants including fertilizers, waste, parking lot runoff and debris. The Army Corps of Engineers provided the nutrient-rich soil, wood chips and plants for the rain garden. The volunteers picked out rocks and weeds and leveled the site so rain will filter in through the center of the garden rather than down into the herring run. The Girl Scouts got right to work prepping and planting all of the plants and shrubs. The finished product is a beautiful 15x20 rain garden visible from both the road and the walking path. The project came at an opportune time as the herring were running upstream at that time of year to spawn. Thank you to all the volunteers that came out to help, and also to the local church group and park attendants who will be maintaining the rain garden.

SOLAR POEM

By MEG QUIRK

Six highschoolers.

One solar car competition.

Laden with solar knowledge and interactive science activities,

AmeriCorps members Janet Zarate, Matt Cannon, and Meg Quirk are

Responsible for leading an afterschool enrichment cluster to teach students about solar energy.

Construction of solar cars out of recyclable materials

Allows the students to be creative AND environmentally conscious.

Race day will occur at the end of the five weeks,

So let's hope for some *SUN!*



MY TITLES

By MATT CANNON

Harwich Environmental Initiatives coordinator... Chainsawyer... Goat-herder... These are my titles in my Individual Placement within AmeriCorps Cape Cod. The responsibilities that these jobs involve are vast and require me to be extremely versatile, adapting to various circumstances each day. Depending on the weather, volunteer participation, and/or animal behavior, I must be able to move from task to task seamlessly. Because I have two different Individual Placements, the Harwich Conservation Trust and the Eastham Department of Natural Resources, I must maximize my time each day to give the service partners as much help as possible. Although it can be hectic, I have loved the constant excitement of doing different things each day and learning many handy skills along the way.

In Eastham, I have seen how town departments carry out the will of the local community. We have maintained town trails, propagated shellfish, and used GIS (a powerful mapping tool) to inventory open space parcels. Recently we have acquired four goats to be used for invasive species management. It is a trial and error project to see exactly how much they will eat in one day, if they can be left alone in their pen, and whether it is a cost effective complement to more traditional vegetation management plans. We will see if Butthead, one of the goats, will behave!

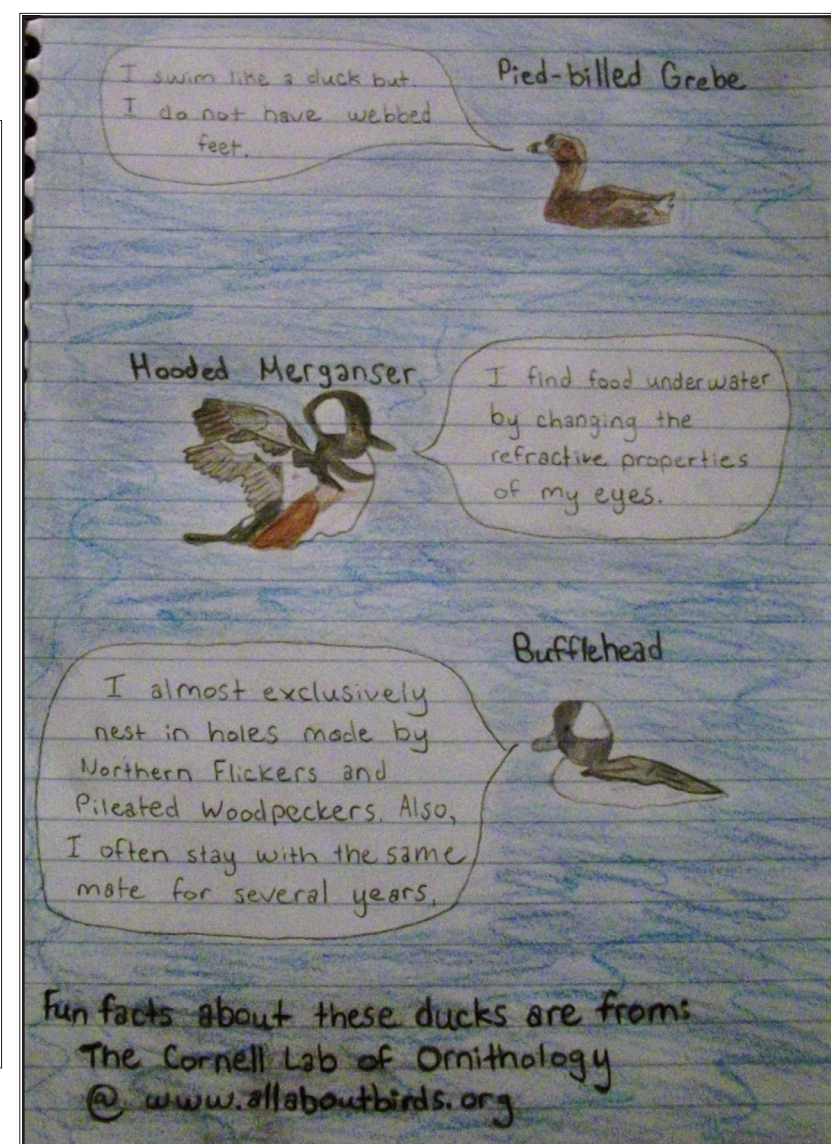
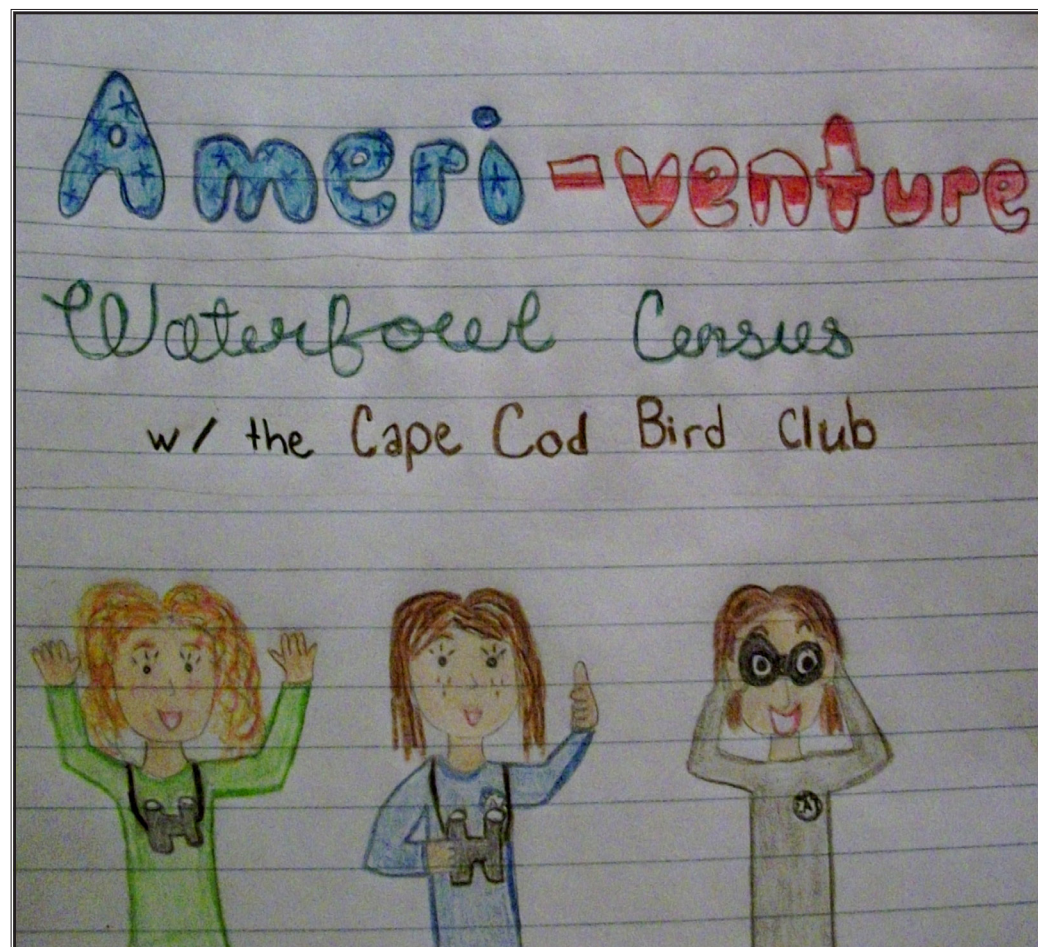
In Harwich, I help with carrying out the mission of the Conservation Trust to "preserve land forever." My duties include helping with the boundary quest program, wildlife enhancement plans for eel and herring habitat, and trail maintenance. I have built a fence for a bee-hive, created bird habitats at the Bank Street Bogs, and taken baseline photos. My experience here thus far has been dynamic because the needs of a non-profit are vast. After this experience, I look forward to continuing conservation and land trust efforts in the future.



Above, Butthead takes interest in the camera. She is one of the goats being used to control invasive plants in Eastham.

AN AMERI-VENTURE

By JANET ZARATE



A TRUE LEADER AMONG US

By Becca Wolfson

On March 3rd, 2012, Amanda Howe and I drove to the College of the Holy Cross to see Darlene Johnson-Morris accept an award for Outstanding Environmental Leadership from the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC). A group of alumni (our impromptu informal "Alumni Association") with the help of Advisory Board and Service Partners nominated Darlene for the amazing contributions she has brought to Cape Cod through the development and leadership of AmeriCorps Cape Cod. So many alumni have been touched by their service experience with the program, not to mention all of the environmental and disaster service brought to the region, and we were excited to see her honored for all of her hard work and recognized for the legacy she has brought to Cape Cod. Congratulations and thank you!

Below you may read the press release for the event.

April 3, 2012 (BARNSTABLE, Mass.) – The Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC) chose Darlene Johnson-Morris of Dennis to receive an Outstanding Environmental Leadership Award at MACC's Annual Environmental Conference in March. MACC Awards recognize Conservation Commissioners and their staff, government officials, citizen activists and others for important and long-standing efforts in protecting the Commonwealth's natural resources. Friends and families joined Johnson-Morris at an Awards Ceremony and an afternoon reception on March 3 at Holy Cross College in Worcester.

Darlene Johnson-Morris' is an inspiration as someone who has made an extraordinary commitment to natural resource preservation on Cape Cod. Darlene is the force behind Barnstable County AmeriCorps Cape Cod which has graduated nearly 300 young leaders, who have completed thousands of projects since 1999. Johnson-Morris has served as a mentor and director, linking towns, schools, land trusts and thousands of volunteers to a variety of natural resource management projects, many on town-owned conservation lands. In addition to the direct results of these projects (ranging from invasive species control to trail maintenance and habitat restoration), the program has developed a new generation of conservation professionals who have gone on to successful careers in public and private service.

Johnson-Morris also serves Barnstable County communities by managing the County's Resource Development Office, securing and managing grants that enable resource conservation and stewardship projects to happen in spite of declining local, public budgets.

"We are proud and excited to present this distinguished award to Johnson-Morris, a stalwart advocate for our environment and as a leader in Massachusetts' conservation community," said Linda Orel, Director of MACC. "Environmental volunteers like Johnson-Morris are dedicated, model citizens who work hard to protect our lands, wetlands and water resources for everyone, including future generations."

"As a mentor, steward, and visionary, Darlene has paved the way for hundreds of people from across the country to make Cape Cod's environment and community a better place," said Mike Maguire, Extension Educator at the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension and alumni and former staff of AmeriCorps Cape Cod. "Darlene's dedication and passion for environmental conservation and service is both exemplary and inspirational."

Conservation Commissions are in every municipality across Massachusetts. They are entrusted with broad authority to administer the state's Wetlands Protection Act and local wetlands laws, make decisions regarding rivers, streams, lakes and ponds, and protect and manage land, including working farms and forests.

MACC hosts the largest, oldest Annual Environmental Conference in New England, drawing nearly 800 people. This year, MACC celebrated its 41st conference on March 3 at Holy Cross College in Worcester with the Secretary Richard Sullivan, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs as our Keynote. The conference included 27 workshops, 4 trainings, 44 exhibitors and Environmental Service Awards.

Since 1961, MACC has helped preserve the state's ecologically valuable resources, scenic vistas and wildlife making Massachusetts a spectacular place to live, work and play. MACC remains the oldest, largest and most active statewide association of local environmental officials in the US.



Congratulations, Darlene! You are a true inspiration!

We love you!

-Year 13

Left, Darlene accepts her award for Outstanding Environmental Leadership.

SURVIVING THE CAPE COD WILDERNESS

By SARAH HILDEBRAND

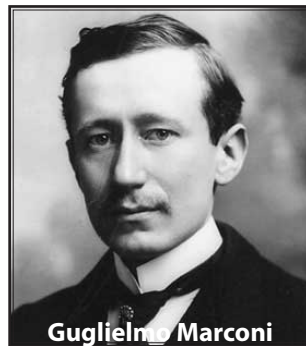
Hallie Rajkovich, Katie Houstle, and Sarah Hildebrand have begun working on an Enrichment Cluster at Barnstable Intermediate School entitled "Surviving the Cape Cod Wilderness." This five-week course meets for approximately one hour each Wednesday and focuses on teaching students the skills and concepts necessary for outdoor living through interactive activities that are both educational and fun. The class itself consists of twelve energetic students who are eager to learn and spend plenty of time outside. Students have already participated in active discussion and hands-on games based on the principle of Leave No Trace, a philosophy of interacting with but not negatively impacting the environment, as well as a team-building exercise in which the students worked together to construct tents. Upcoming lessons include an introduction to basic first aid and a crash course in backwoods navigation. The AmeriCorps members look forward to this opportunity to interact with the local community!



MARCONI'S LEGACY

By ALEX HEYN

"Every day sees humanity more victorious in the struggle with space and time."
-Guglielmo Marconi



In 1902 Guglielmo Marconi built a radio station that became a bustling site for science progression and radio transmission exchanging. Marconi was initially attracted to the site after hearing it described by Henry David Thoreau as a place "where man may stand and put all of America behind him." Marconi did just that as he spent his time at the station conquering feats that most people of his time deemed impossible and earning his place in history (more than once). In 1903 the first trans-Atlantic radio exchange from the U.S. left Marconi's radio station in the form of a greeting from President Theodore Roosevelt to King Edward VII. Marconi's site made history once more in 1912 when the station received some of the first distress signals from the RMS Titanic, which are believed to have led to the launching of rescue attempts of the ship's passengers and crew. Today the Cape Cod National Seashore (CCNS) Headquarters occupies this site.

A century later, Marconi might be surprised at just how quiet his radio station has become. An overlook of the Atlantic Ocean and a 360 degree viewing deck of the rest of the CCNS now mark where the late scientist's station once stood. It has some of the most breathtaking views Cape Cod has to offer. Where many once ventured to participate in the newest form of communication of their time and bridge the gaps of space and time, I now specifically visit for just the opposite. Being at the Marconi Station Site is one of the quietest, most peaceful, and seemingly disconnected places I have found on the Cape (off-season, of course). Ironically, the former radio station site is now completely void of any cellular or internet coverage, making it a safe haven for anyone looking to escape to the absolute beauty of nature uninterrupted by emails, calls, or texts. If you haven't already, I highly recommend everyone take the time to catch a sunrise, sunset, or coffee break at the Marconi Station Site in Wellfleet.

Most Likely to Keep Up With Fashion Trends



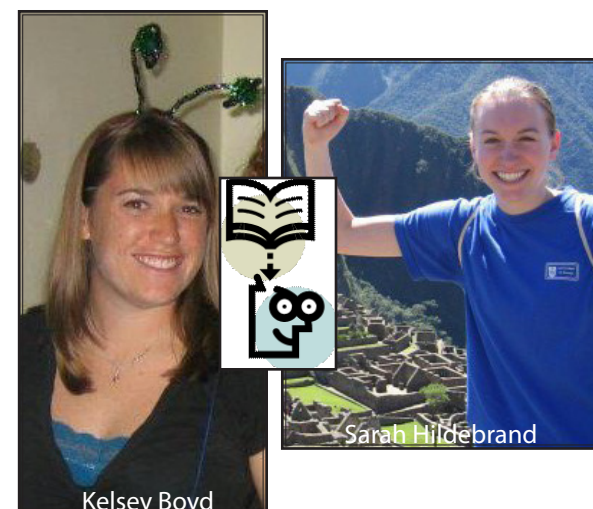
Most Likely to Live with Wolves



Best Cook

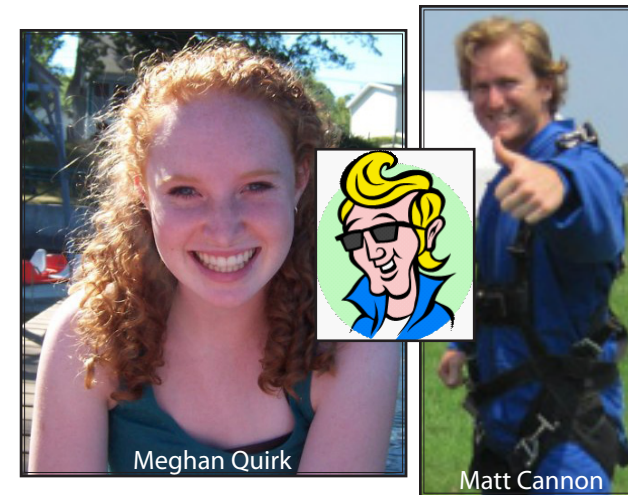


Most Likely to be Found Reading



SUPERLATIVES

Best Hair



Best Car



Most Likely Never to Leave the Cape



Best Tattoo(s)



Most Likely to Light Something on Fire



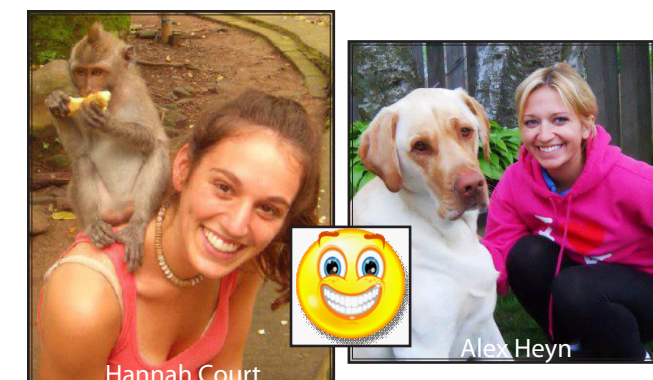
Most Likely to be a Wizard



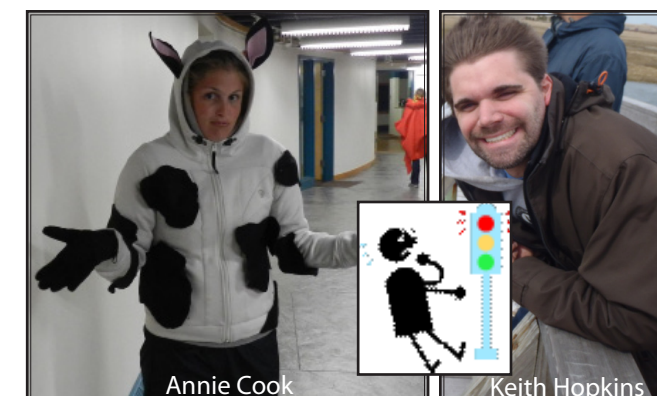
Most Likely to get Lost (Together)



Best Smile



Most Likely to Live in a Town with One Stop Light



RESTORING TAYLOR BRAY FARM

By BEN FAIRBANK

AmeriCorps Cape Cod has worked on many projects to preserve the Cape's environmental resources, but when working with Taylor Bray Farm, we also get to preserve some of Cape Cod's history. Our program has put worked many long hours, engaging scores of volunteers, to encourage future visitation and education of the farm. In May 2009, Year 10 members and alumni in town for the Year 10 reunion spent AmeriCorps Week building a boardwalk leading visitors out over a marsh and treating them to beautiful sunsets and vistas. This past fall, the Wellfleet House spent a day pulling out invasive plants in the blueberry patch, a contribution as timeless as the history of the farm itself, laying the groundwork for what is becoming an in-depth effort to uncover a full-viewed historical survey.

In 1987, Taylor Bray Farm was purchased by the town of Yarmouth "to maintain the farm for historic preservation and conservation." The property not only harbors significant archaeological finds (pottery shards, buttons, shoes, glass, clay pipe stems, bowl fragments and animal bones) but also rich marshland. By 2001,

a group of community volunteers formed the 'Taylor Bray Farm Preservation Association' to formalize these efforts. Since then, the Association has partnered with the Yarmouth Historical Commission, the Cape Cod Regional Technical High School, and AmeriCorps Cape Cod to enhance the property up for public benefit. Such partnerships have enabled a complementary relationship between historical preservation, environmental stewardship, and education at the property.

The Taylor-Bray Farm Preservation Association consists of 275 members and encourages anyone interested to become a member. Attractions at the farm include a coop full of chickens, goats, donkeys named Sam and Nestor, and, of course, the charismatic Scottish Highland Cattle, Scotty and Fiona. The Association anticipates future grant funding for further archaeological research with assistance from graduate students, community volunteers, and a partnership with the Plymouth Archaeological Rediscovery Project (PARP). Taylor-Bray Farm is open to the public from dawn until dusk, 7 days a week; I highly recommend that you join the effort to preserve one of the many gems on Cape Cod.



[Above, Nichole Proctor-English and Kaite Houstle pose with residents of Taylor Bray Farm, Scotty and Fiona!]

[Below, Patrons of the farm enjoying one of the many different kinds of events offered throughout the year at Taylor Bray.]



WHEN SHOOP MET THE SHORE

By KATIE HOUSTLE

AmeriCorps Week 2012 was more than just a typical week of service. AmeriCorps "Week" was actually a three month stretch of outreach, education, and community engagement for Dennis and the surrounding towns. But "AmeriCorps Three Months" doesn't flow as nicely as "AmeriCorps Week", so we'll leave the name alone.

In March, AmeriCorps members officially began this extensive project by going into schools to discuss the wonders of volunteering and to teach students about bird boxes, invasive species, and worm farms. In April, donations were received, school groups were contacted, the celebration was planned, and volunteers were raring to go. By the middle of May, everything was ready and the real week of service was set to begin.

Our main site was at Shoop Community Garden in Dennis. Students that came

out were from all over: Lighthouse Charter School, Southeast Alternative School, Riverview School, and Barnstable High. There were other volunteers as well that included community volunteers and AmeriCorps members.

Throughout the week students and volunteers succeeded in so many projects. We are happy to report we completed: weeding and planting a pollinator garden, replacing old rusty fencing around the community plots, clearing invasive species, planting native species, installing bird boxes, performing trail maintenance, and building compost bins. In addition to these tasks at Shoop, there was fencing installed at beaches and conservation areas around Dennis, and more invasive species were removed at several other locations.

There was even more education during the week, as community members had the opportunity to learn how to shellfish and how to monitor bird boxes. AmeriCorps ensured that volunteers would not only accomplish tasks, but learn how to sustain the work they were doing. At the end of the week of service, after

months of preparation, education, and implementation, volunteers were invited back for festivities on Saturday to celebrate everything that was accomplished. AmeriCorps Week brought over 200 students and community members together to renew the Dennis environment. From Shoop to Shore, they got things done with AmeriCorps!



Above, student volunteers turn up some heavily weeded areas to make way for a pollinator garden.



Howard Sochurek/LIFE

Above, a man who has inspired millions to serve their country.

Below, Rob Emmett and several volunteers eager to serve their community.



SERVING THE MLK WAY

By ROB EMMETT

I am now on my 16th month of service with AmeriCorps and I've built one house, rehabilitated seven, lead over 250 volunteers, and racked up over 2000 hours of service. However, on January 16, 2012, I had one of the best volunteer experiences in my service career. With the help of an amazing non-profit organization and the most enthusiastic, hard working volunteers, MLK Day 2012 was nothing short of a success.

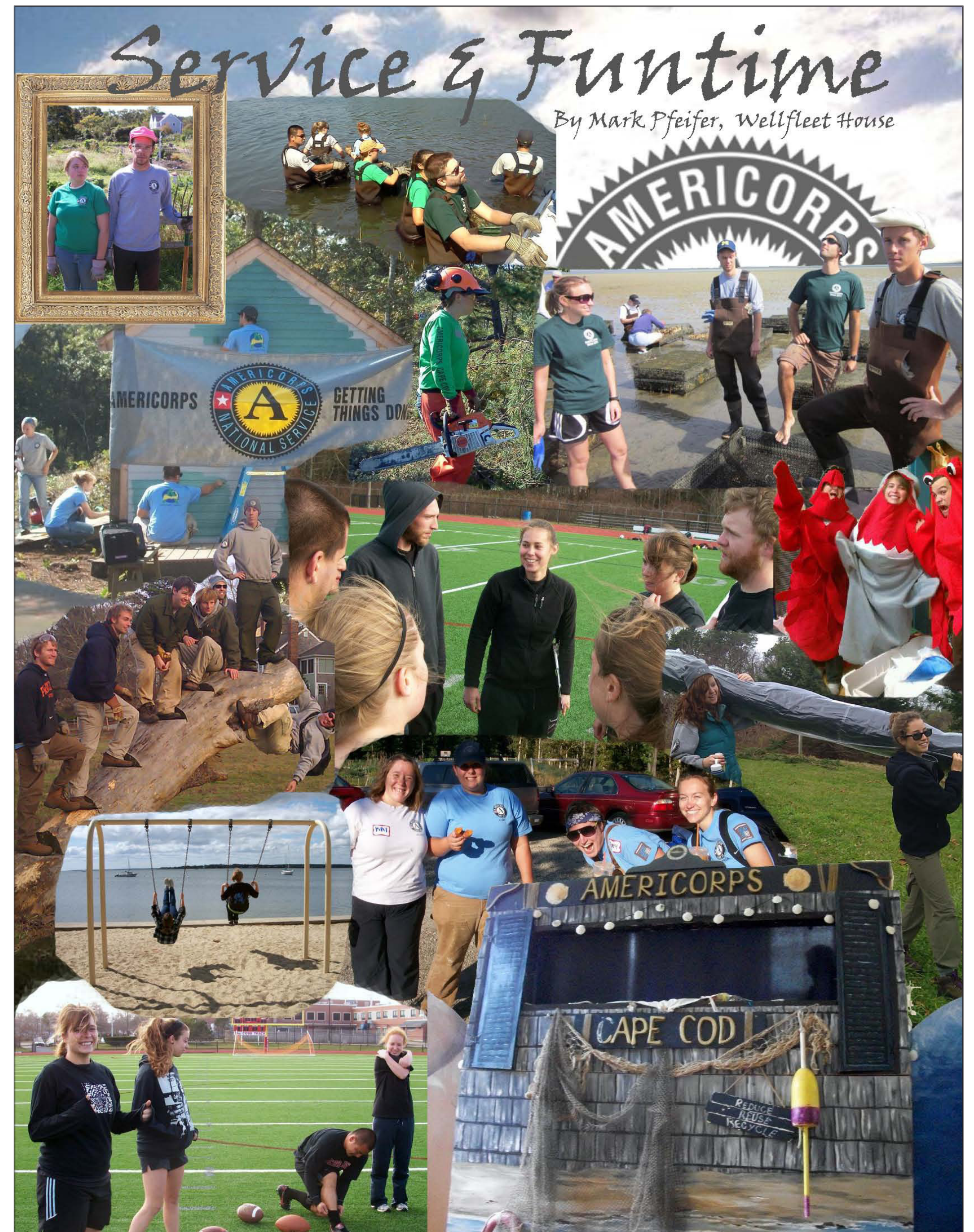
The harsh economic times have affected a vast majority of people in this country, especially here on Cape Cod. Our First Home, a non-profit organization out of Yarmouth, is taking big steps forward when it comes to affordable housing for the residents of the Yarmouth community. Our First Home will buy homes that are on the market or have been foreclosed on and rehabilitate them in order to make them fit to live in. After they put in an extensive amount of hard work, the house then gets sold substantially under market value. After I learned more about this organization I knew I wanted to facilitate a project working with them.

In the weeks leading up to MLK Day I was in contact with Our First Home's Project Manager Mike Williams. We came up with a project that could use a good amount of volunteers as well as get a lot of work done in just one day. The project was to take place at a single family home in West Yarmouth on Joshua Baker Rd. The goals of the project were simple: remove all the drywall on the inside of the house and all of the roof's shingles. After things were all planned and ready to go all I could do was hope everything would run smoothly. MLK Day arrived incredibly fast. After setting up our AmeriCorps MLK Day headquarters at Orleans Elementary, I was off to the work site in Yarmouth to get ready for the volunteers to

arrive. Not too long after I arrived, 18 volunteers showed up as well as three site supervisors from Our First Home and Mike Williams. After a quick pep talk and a safety debrief, the volunteers were off! Seven people were outside in the cold stripping the roof, seven others were inside ripping down drywall, and the rest helped construct a permanent wooden box to hold cardboard recycling for the Lower Cape Outreach Council (another organization that we partnered with during MLK Day). Everyone worked non-stop, even when six pizzas showed up for lunch. I practically had to drag people inside out of the cold to get them to eat some of the warm food.

After lunch everyone worked for a few more hours. When 2:30 came around, I informed everyone that they were free to leave whenever they chose. By 3:00 a few people had left but most were not going to leave until their part of the project was finished, including the folks working on the roof. In addition to removing all of the shingles, they helped put down the tar paper in order to get ready for re-shingling. Following the completion of that, everyone helped with the clean-up and then took off. I thanked the site supervisors and Mike Williams and was on my way myself.

The work done by the volunteers that day was absolutely outstanding. Not only was Our First Home incredibly appreciative of the help they received, but I can say on behalf of AmeriCorps Cape Cod we are very appreciative for all they did!



"Both abundance and lack exist simultaneously in our lives, as parallel realities. It is always our conscious choice which secret garden we will tend... when we choose not to focus on what is missing from our lives but are grateful for the abundance that's present — love, health, family, friends, work, the joys of nature and personal pursuits that bring us pleasure — the wasteland of illusion falls away and we experience Heaven on earth."

—Sarah Ban Breathnach

From AmeriCorps Cape Cod's 13th Corps Year Members...
thank you to everyone who made it possible for us to serve; we are unbelievably grateful.
We hope you enjoyed this issue of, **The Waypoint!**



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