

AMERICORPS CAPE COD THEWAYPOINT

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Dear Readers,

Year IX of AmeriCorps Cape Cod has begun and this year's members are well on their way to becoming yet another productive AmeriCorps task force. After a long month of training, everyone is happily settling into their everyday lives here on the Cape, and now that the hectic pace has slowed down a bit, we have begun to work on our first newsletter.



We hope that you have been anticipating the stories within the following pages and that you find enjoyment, and even a few laughs as we share accounts of our lives as AmeriCorps members. In these first three months we have explored not only what the Cape has to offer in terms of welcoming people and the best beaches and coffee shops, but also what it means to get to know 27 fellow members on an in-depth, personal level. Thus far it has been a great ride and we have much to look forward to in the upcoming months. With all the knowledge we have acquired already, the year holds an immense amount of promise and productivity. Enjoy!

Where in the World are we from?

Wellfleet House

1. Amanda Howe: Marion, VA
2. Danielle Craft: Holt, MI
3. Erin Der-Mcleod: San Francisco, CA
4. Heidi Fuchs: Boulder, CO
5. Christina Imrich: Hawthorne, NY
6. Austin Krcmarik: Fort Collins, CO
7. Casey Lutz: Dallas, TX
8. Christin Marshall: Knoxville, TN
9. David Quinn: Waltham, MA
10. Caroline Schmittiel: Marquette, MI
11. Michael Towle: Brockton, MA
12. Caitlin Welsh: Grosse Pointe, MI
13. Ben Winterhalter: Savannah, GA
14. Amber Stonik: Gaithersburg, MD



Bourne House

15. Rebecca Wolfson: Syracuse, NY
16. Andrew Brown: Findlay, OH
17. Tara Di Giovanni: Haverton, PA
18. Natalie Dinki: Buffalo, NY
19. Chase Fuller: Barrington, RI
20. Samantha Hayes: Appleton, WI
21. Angela L'Heureux: Cumberland, RI
22. Iman Olguin-Lira: Ft. Lauderdale, FL
23. Sanjoy Paul: Williamsville, NY
24. Rebecca Prosser: Indianapolis, IN
25. Nikki Toner: Raynham, MA
26. Seth Williamson: Dewitt, MI
27. Jaime McLaren: Adams, MA
28. Samantha Alarie-Leca: Johnston, RI

Need Retreat

By Danielle Craft (Wellfleet)

Merely a week into our AmeriCorps year on Cape Cod, twenty six members arrived at the NEED retreat building on Coast Guard Beach in Eastham; most of us were new to the Cape, and all of us were new to each other. At this historic house, the purpose of the retreat was for members of the Wellfleet and Bourne houses to get to know each other, develop team unity, and spend some time reflecting on how we arrived here, at Cape Cod. The next three days consisted of team building activities, service projects, presentations aimed at helping us prepare for our upcoming year of service.

Each house had a chance to participate in team-building activities individually because for the most part we would be working apart for service projects. The Wellfleet team participated in a series of fun games, including a water balloon toss, butt-ball, human knot, and many others. For the balloon toss, the group was split into two teams and sheets were used to toss balloons back and forth. The purpose was for each team to work together and move the sheet as one unit. The purpose of this activity was very apparent to me, because we had to have good communication and move at the same time in order to be successful.

During our stay at the Need building we had several presentations. First, Mary Lawrence, AmeriCorps Cape Cod's program coordinator, gave a speech on the history of the program, and its evolution over the past 8 years. Next, George Price, the Superintendent for the Cape Cod National Seashore, delivered a talk about the history of the park service as well as the myriad of environmental concerns and social issues that he addresses in his job. Ethan Estey gave an introduction to his doctoral study on finfish populations surrounding Cape Cod and Nancy Knight, an administrator at the Cape Cod Technical High School, discussed an upcoming beach clean-up with students at the school.

In addition to these orientation presentations, we kicked off our first service project of the year with service partner Ethan Estey, a doctoral student at the University of Rhode Island researching fin fish populations in the waters surrounding Cape Cod. The project, which took place at Fisher Beach in Truro, involved Ethan "flaking" an enormous fishing net into the ocean, and with the help of the entire house of AmeriCorps members, pulling it back into shore. In the net we



AmeriCorps members spend some time team-building at the NEED retreat.

caught an assortment of fin fish, and the occasional crab. Ethan would then identify, measure, and record the fin fish species before returning the creatures to the sea. It was a great way to start the year learning to work together as a team.

At night, the houses come together for some "enforced" Corps-wide bonding when we cooked and ate "family" meals together. Each member was assigned to prepare breakfast, lunch, or dinner at some point throughout the three days. During this time both Bourne and Wellfleet had a chance to interact and work together to produce meals for 30 people, which is no small task! We also got to know more about each other's background during a bonfire at the beach, where we all sat around and talked about why we chose Americorps Cape Cod. The educational background and experiences of members varied immensely, but we all seemed to have come to the Cape for a common purpose, "to make a difference". At this point I realized how competitive and established the program was, and felt an immense sense of pride and accomplishment to be a part of the program.

The NEED retreat proved to be a good stepping stone to start off the year. We all felt like a whole "Corps" after the experience. The next retreats should be even more exciting because we have had so much time to connect.

Bourne House Gets Things Done

By Natalie Dinki (Bourne)

It's 6:30 on a Monday morning. The alarm goes off, and like millions of adults across the country, we begin preparing ourselves for an eight hour work day to kick off the week. It's a pretty typical morning. We eat breakfast, perhaps sit down to read the morning paper, and then begin loading our cars with handsaws and power drills. Well, maybe it's not that typical.

Welcome to the AmeriCorps Cape Cod style of Mondays and Fridays. While many people begin a workday that could be cloned four more times throughout the remainder of the week, our Monday and Friday "office" is not always the same. Perhaps it could be a trail along a kettle pond, or perhaps on a motorboat in a bay. Instead of a suit and tie, we gear up in our waders, protective eye gear, and rain jackets. Brief cases? No. Try pulaskis and poison ivy block. These two days of the week are dedicated to group service projects. Both the Wellfleet and Bourne houses use these days to tackle outdoor projects involving the conservation and preservation of the Cape's natural resources.

Members of the Bourne House usually tend to projects located in the Mid and Upper Cape. Here are just a few of the projects we Bournians have worked on so far this corps year:



Sam, Chase, and Angela get things done by loading up a boat full of that terrible plant called Phragmites

Shell Fishing with the Mashpee Shellfish Department.

As one of our recurring projects, Bournians are quickly learning the art of shell fishing, and not just in terms of simply being a leisurely activity. We are also learning about its scientific benefits. In many bays and estuaries around the Cape, eutrophication, or an increase of certain chemicals, is a serious issue. In this case, the problematic chemical is nitrogen, and too much of it in one ecosystem can lead to an overgrowth of algae. Enter shellfish that counteract this process. Mashpee Shellfish Warden Rick York has acted as both service partner and teacher to Bourne House, explaining to us the science behind this project, and always giving us an update on the current conditions of the bays. Out on the water, we fish shellfish seedlings out of bags that have been planted in the bay. Shellfish sizes are recorded, and to finish off, we toss the seedlings back into the bay.

Barnstable Land Trust.

The Bourne House has worked on a variety of projects with the BLT in the past month. Under the direction of Bill Keto, our first assignment was removing invasive scrub oak to clear an open field at Bell Farm in Cotuit. We were also involved in sign installation, providing indications of BLT land throughout the town of Barnstable. On a later date, we returned to Bell Farm to fix the wooden fence that runs along Putnam Rd, and had fallen down in many spots. While hauling lumber and digging holes for fence posts, the friendly beeps and encouraging waves from drivers on the road let us know our work was appreciated. To finish up, we performed some trail maintenance around nearby Eagle Pond, clearing up debris left behind by Hurricane Noel.

Garden Work at the Falmouth Service Center.

Located at the Service Center is a community garden containing over 50 plots. Community members may rent out a plot at the beginning of the growing season at no cost, but must give a portion of their produce to the Service Center for its clients. Under the direction of Brenda Swain, we began the process of preparing the gardens for winter by weeding the area. After the weeds were pulled, the beds were turned over, exposing fresh soil. Finally, mulch was hauled one wheelbarrow at a time, and laid down along the paths between each of the beds.

Our Mondays and Fridays certainly aren't typical, nor are they ever boring. While uncooperative weather and physical labor can be trying, they are worth the challenge. At the end of our workdays, we can look back at an area of land that was once covered in invasive species and see a beautifully clear environment. It's wonderful to see the appreciative face of a service partner, or hear a sincere "thank you" from a community member out for a walk on a newly cleared trail. Sharing this sense of accomplishment with housemates after a long day's work is certainly a great feeling as well.

The Red Cross Experience

By Casey Lutz (Wellfleet)

Groan. It's 6:30 am and all I want to do is stay in my warm bed all day, but my IP awaits. Today I have a CDE at the Hyannis CCCDC, a meeting with the DSHR partners about the LMS network, and then I have to email the DMHS representative. Confused? Well Erin, Seth, Chase, and I spend our days and nights working for the Red Cross, a world of acronyms and conference calls. The world of non-profits and saving the world (or at least Cape Cod and the Islands) from hurricanes and choking has definitely been a new experience for me.

The first few weeks were filled with learning the background of the Red Cross and meeting the dozens of volunteers who spend their free time in a small chapter house conference room. Last year's corps was great at introducing us to the different projects we would take over for them. From what Seth, Chase, Erin and I have

“The world of non-profits and saving the World (or at least Cape Cod and the Islands) from hurricanes and choking has definitely been a new experience for me.”

been told, we adopted a much more organized office than what existed last year, no doubt because of the efforts of Jennifer Carlson, Director of Response for the Red Cross, and the AmeriCorps kids.

So we were shown our office, a cozy two-windowed room with four small desks for

everyone, complete with personal laptops! The perks of the job, including the free coffee during office hours, are counter-balanced with the long hours of volunteer meetings and dealing with the bureaucracy of Cape Cod. It's not all fun and games though. Chase and Seth have a serious game of “find the plastic rat” that they use to terrorize Erin and Jenn. As for me, I like any job that involves me and 12 Stop, Drop and Rolling preschoolers.

So for now we go about our daily routines, whether its me at a preschool teaching crazy little people not to hide from firefighters, or Erin visiting Nantucket to establish some good rapport with the isolated islanders. Yet in the midst of all our hard work we still find time to sneak Reese's Peanut Butter Cups from Jenn's office. For now, all we need to worry about is exactly how many cots we have.

Green Living

By Tara DiGiovanni (Bourne)

More often than not, we find that our eyes are bigger than our stomachs and hurl through the kitchen like a hurricane. The rhetorical question of, “What am I in the mood for?” quickly passes through our thoughts. We go to the fridge, then to the cupboards, and back to the fridge again. We feel an overwhelming desire to craft a majestic four-course meal with appetizers, first and second courses, and most importantly, dessert.

Is all of this food truly crucial for keeping us alive? Are our stomachs really endless pits that are never full? Sometimes we think so, but in reality, we cannot consume as much as we think we can, causing a lot of food go to waste. Of course, dumping a pound of pasta into a pot of boiling water and getting rid of the box right away is more convenient, but we need to think more logically and practically on an environmental level.

This little known fact may help you manage your impulsive mealtime actions and put those unconscious habits into perspective:

“When cooking and baking, try to avoid wasting food by using perishable ingredients before they spoil, measuring carefully, saving leftovers for future meals instead of throwing them away. If you could reduce the amount of food wasted in your household by just 25 grams per day (about the weight of a slice of bread)...the savings would be enough to provide three meals per day for a whole year to each of the 1.35 million children in the U.S. who are homeless.”

-E. Rogers and T. Kostigen

You can do the following things to reduce the amount of food you waste:

- 1) Buy only what you need at the grocery store. Instead of buying fruits and vegetables by the bushel, purchase only what you think you will consume in a week.
- 2) Make dinner for 2, 3, or 4 instead of 1. Communal dinners are much more practical, and you may end up saving money if there are enough people interested in cooking together.
- 3) Freeze food that can withstand colder temperatures. Bagels, bread, grapes, blueberries, and much more can be frozen to last much longer if you only take them out on an ‘as needed’ basis.
- 4) Make jambalaya or a casserole with food that you know is headed for the hills. You might be surprised at the delicious flavors that come out of mixing random foods.
- 5) Leftovers. Need I say more?
- 6) When you have old, grody food, compost it! There is something somewhere out there that will eat or digest the old food you forgot to eat.

The Fairest of the Faire

A Fairytale by Christina Imrich (Wellfleet)



The eight brave souls of Wellfleet (and one from Bourne) begin their quest to find the Fairest of the Faire

King Richard was known throughout the land as a benevolent king, always providing for his people with the utmost care and consideration. Never a day passed when one of his followers went hungry as he ensured that homes were well stocked with turkey legs and meat pies; he even sent away to France and Spain to enhance the vegetarian options for those with more specific tastes. Never a day passed when there wasn't ample entertainment for those finished with hay bailing. He sponsored jousts that were attended by only the most noble of knights. Never a day passed when people wore rags, for King Richard imported the finest silks and jewels for all to wear. All was well in the land called Carver until, one dark day, dense mists fell upon King Richard's Faire and did not lift away with the setting sun. The mists remained for days and people began to worry that they were cursed; all felt an impending sense of doom (that was NOT an allergic reaction).

This is where our story begins. When King Richard sent out a plea for help, eight brave souls of Wellfleet and one of Bourne came riding, bearing an 'A' stitched into their cloaks. When they arrived, King Richard addressed them. "People of the 'A' I need your assistance. I have decided that the only way to lift these mists is to

seek out the fairest person of all my Faire grounds and present said person before the gods of mist so as to please them. Go now and do my will!"

Armed with courage and strength of spirit, they ventured forth into the unknown, seeking the fairest of the Faire. They came across many strange sights and sounds. There were people wearing devil and dragon horns, ligers and bear cats roaming aimlessly, and a man juggling knives and flaming sticks. Even the food tasted strange; what was meant to be a turkey leg tasted remarkably like ham. The People of the 'A' were unsure where to begin their search. That was, until the joust began.

When they saw Sir Philipe enter the arena on horseback, they knew they must speak with him. His strong stance yet gentle face made them think that surely he was the fairest of the Faire. Sir Philipe performed mightily, though not well enough to beat the British scoundrel who stole his title. This dastardly Brit took down Sir Philipe in that underhanded and crooked match.

The People of the 'A' moved forward, saddened by the loss of their champion, but determined still. They came across women hanging from the sky and exclaimed, "Huzzah! Surely we have found

them, the fairest of the Faire!" They approached the place where the woman hung and watched as they contorted their bodies in knots and climbed up cloths. It was a beautiful sight to be sure. But alas, these women, like the knight, could not be trusted. They passed fire from the end of their wands to their tongues. These devilish witches could not be the fairest of the Faire.

Wearied from their searching, the People of the 'A' rested under a tree. Nearby were some peasants playing games and, to boost their spirits, the People of the 'A' joined them. The ladies Casey and Caitlin and the lads Mike, John, and Benjamin Aaron Winterhalter-Millard, Esq. learned to wield the ancient cross bow. It turned into a fierce competition. With a fated shot, Caitlin struck her final target in triumphant victory. In honor of her success, a scroll was bestowed upon her, declaring *her* the fairest of the Faire. Everyone screamed with delight for they had, unknowingly, been walking around with the fairest of the Faire the whole day. They sought out King Richard to share the news.

King Richard was so pleased with the news that he agreed to pose for a digital picture with his new champions. The picture was promptly posted on Facebook where it was viewed by the mist gods who regularly check their homepage. They were so delighted with the spectacle that they lifted the mists from King Richards Faire. All were merry, though the turkey legs still tasted like ham.



The Fairest of the Faire

Shellfish Stories

By Mike Towle (Wellfleet)

Aquaculture service projects are interesting every time; working directly in the water creates as much peril as it does excitement. This list is an attempt to rank these moments as the top ten HIGHS and LOWS of AmeriCorps Year 9's shellfish adventures to date.

HIGHS

- Observing the poor sucker who falls into the water. Muahaha.
- Watching baby shellfish. (Those little cuties.)
- Rake Race. (The rules are simple; rake for a minute and the person with the largest haul wins. Craig is the current champion.)
- Power Washing Oyster trays. Dave Quinn was having a BLAST spraying the BEEjeebies out of them. (Both puns intended since the job was done over a metropolis of mud wasps.)
- Spreading clams around. (There is something peaceful about the sound as they "kaplunk!" into the water.)
- Finding a big, FAT clam for chowder.
- Eating Shellfish or making sushi with Rick York. Mmmm.
- The strange suction feeling from the waders in the water. The deeper you go the better it gets!
- Hanging out with Craig, Rick, or Jaime.
- Getting that full haul of clams.



Wellfleet House at the end of a shellfishing project in Chatham.



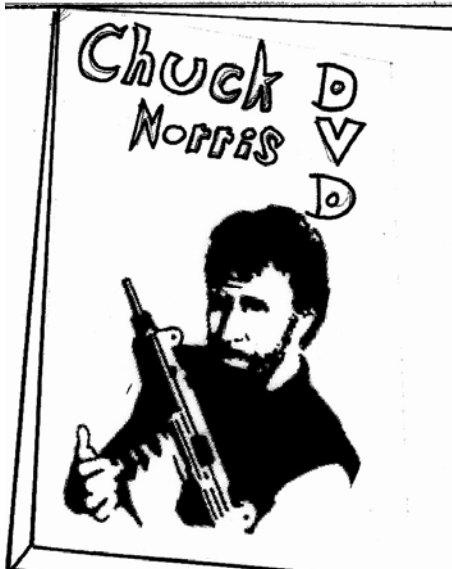
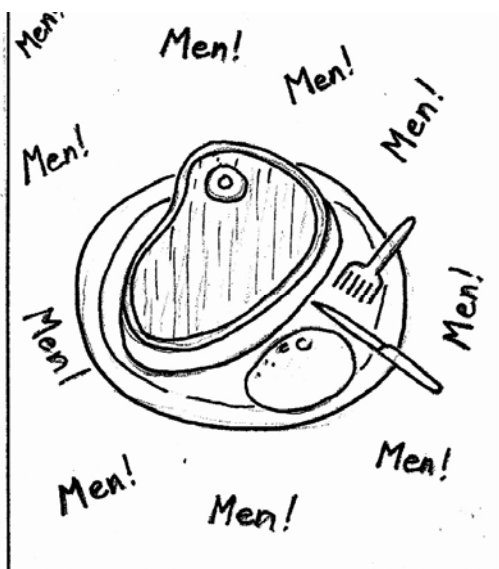
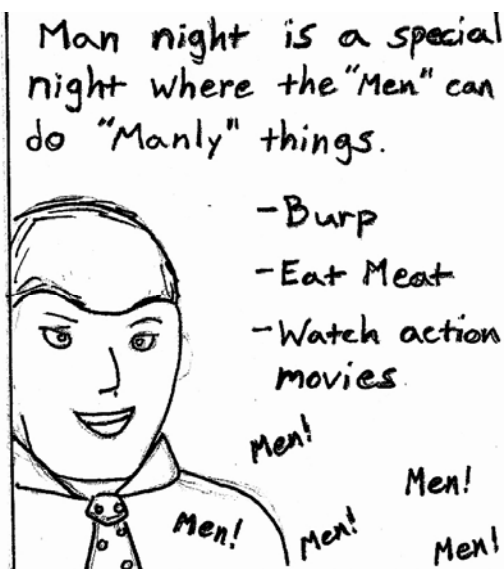
Austin Kremerik and Christin Marhall shellfish in Chatham.

LOWS

- Being pulled out of waders when you grab a pair that's too small.
- Cutting your hand with a shucking knife. OUCH!
- Cutting your hand with an oyster.
- Falling down in waders. This usually has a domino effect as the viewer cranks their neck to see which poor sucker fell in. The sudden motion of excitement tends to cause people to lose balance.
- Rapidly rising tides. Wellfleet house almost found themselves swimming to shore one day.
- Leaky waders.
- Water filled waders. Amanda Howe was filled to the brim and poured herself out like the kool-aid man.
- Having a whole set of waders smell like long dead finfish because of a forgotten LONG... DEAD... SHELLFISH! (Ben Winterhalter wanted to save a moon snail from Craig's wrath and hid the little guy in his front pouch. He then forgot about "little Moony.")
- Raking at the mudflat for five minutes and hauling up nothing but two clams and an impaired moon snail.
- Trying to pick up ladies (Muffins) in waders while smelling like an oyster.

Blouw!

Cartoons by Mike Towle



Tick Tally!



Total Ticks Found (imbedded): 5

Total Members Impacted: 5

Total Cases of Lyme Disease: 0

Mung vs. the Members

By Sam Jean Hayes (Bourne)

“What did we catch? A shark? Seals? Dolphins? A huge load of fish? Nope. It was a net full of mung...”

Fish sampling was one of our first Bourne House group project experiences, and thankfully it was spent on the beach. Ethan Estey, a doctoral student at the University of Rhode Island (URI) researching fin fish populations in Cape Cod, met us at Coast Guard Beach in Truro. It was a cool and crisp morning, but the sun slowly warmed up our wader-covered bodies.

The mission assigned to us was to collect a fin fish sample using the longest and biggest net any of us had ever seen. As Ethan released the net in a rectangular fashion using the shore as one of the long sides of the rectangle, our house, a total of 14 people, was split into two groups. Each group struggled between the two sides of the net. Why did we struggle, you ask? Perhaps because waders take an adjustment to get used to – some raw rubbing occurred on a few members’ ankles from the rubber.

After the net was spread and manned at either end, each side was instructed to pull it in



Bourne House members hard at work pulling up a net full of mung.

– not too hard, right? With seven on each side, Ethan running back and forth from end to end, and two extra volunteers, this grandiose net should have been pulled in rather easily. A half of an hour of pulling had gone by and we were feeling like we could take over the world, or at least this net, but this feeling escaped us as the net became heavier and heavier. We had been pulling for a couple of hours, and the buoys that keep the net afloat sunk under the water. What did we

catch? A shark? Seals? Dolphins? A huge load of fish? Nope. It was a net full of mung, the dreaded seaweed that fishermen are all too familiar with. At this point we knew AmeriCorps and mung were going to become quick and close friends – or enemies for that matter.

We all realized that we were not getting anywhere with this net full of mung. A stronger force was needed, and Ethan’s truck was quickly recruited. We managed to maneuver the 30 feet of net out of the water by attaching a rope to the truck and pulling hard.

At that point, our day was only half over. After removing as much mung from the net as we could, the net needed to be gathered so we removed it from the water and spread it out on the beach to dry. With time running out, we did not have much left for the net to dry completely and had to gather it bearing the smelly, sandy, wetness. Although we were covered head to toe with sand and mung by the time we reached the end of the net, we had an intense amount of fun serving on the beach, getting to know our new roommates, and figuring out how to make living with 14 other people work.



AmeriCorps members prepare Ethan’s boat to begin setting the fishing nets.

In the Dark: Surviving Noel

By David Quinn (Wellfleet)

Growing up in New England, I have experienced my fair share of big nor'easters. Some of my most vivid childhood memories involve staying up all night watching in awe as the snow piled up outside while I prayed for no school the next day. I've also listened to my parents tell and retell the story of the "Blizzard of '78" in such detail that it feels as though I lived through it myself - that historic storm buried southern New England in up to 4 feet of snow, trapped people in their homes and cars for days, and forever altered the landscape of Cape Cod. This past month, however, I lived through my first Nor'easter on the Cape when the remnants of Hurricane Noel blew through.



Downed tree across power lines on Pamet Point Rd. in Wellfleet

The storm hit during a Saturday morning service project and cut our work a bit short. We all curiously headed down to Head of the Meadow Beach to check out the surf; although the storm was just beginning to wind up, the waves and wind were already impressive, with waves rising over 20 feet above the horizon and wind that made walking nearly impossible. I spent much of the rest of the day driving from beach to beach along the outer Cape trying to get a look at the storm in different locations. The storm made me giddy like a little kid again and I felt small standing besides the raging ocean's power. At the height of the storm I walked out onto the stairs at Nauset Beach in Eastham, barely able to stand as the wind blasted me with 80 mph gusts full of sand from the beach. It was amazing how much sand the storm blew over the dunes and into the parking lot, with up to a foot on sand covering some areas; I can see how easily a bigger storm, like the one in '78, can reshape the Cape's landscape in a matter of hours.

The storm's brutality also had some real consequences for members in the Wellfleet House. At about 3:30pm on Saturday afternoon a large tree blew down across power lines on Pamet Point Rd., down the street from our house, causing us to lose electricity until early Tuesday morning. We had no light, no running refrigerator, no water, no flushing toilets, and no heat for almost 60 hours. For a while it was fun having some group bonding time as we sat around the wood-burning stove each night reading scary stories. But with 14 people in the house and no running water, things got nasty: the dishes piled up, the toilets backed up, and

the house just smelled foul overall. Sleeping huddled together in the common room by the fire, we all breathed a huge sigh of relief when the power came back on early Tuesday morning. Fortunately for my wallet, the power came back on just in time for me to salvage all the meat that I had stored in the freezer, which would have been tough to replace on an AmeriCorps member's budget.

In addition to the storm's winds, which left their mark on the land with felled tress and downed power lines, Noel also stirred up some great surf on the Cape's outer beaches for the next few days. I won't soon forget standing atop the dunes at White Crest Beach on Sunday morning, watching a few eager surfers strategize how to break through the rough surf close to shore in an attempt to catch a big one. I couldn't help but champion one particular surfer who kept getting washed back to shore with each attempt. I didn't stay long enough to see if he ever caught a wave but I assume he was very sore the next day.

“We had no light, no running refrigerator, no water, no flushing toilets, and no heat for almost 60 hours.”

Experiencing the height of the Noel's fury and living through its aftermath, it was hard to believe that this was actually a fairly minor storm for the Cape - in fact, I'm sure you locals are getting some amusement out of my excitement as you read this. However, from an outsider's perspective, Noel was quite a storm and, as our first nor'easter as Cape residents, one that many AmeriCorps members won't soon forget.



Surfer watches the waves at White Crest Beach in Wellfleet while contemplating the meaning of life

From One Coast to Another

By *Erin Der-Mcleod (Wellfleet)*

Born and raised in California, I had never been to the Cape before. Most of my friends back home do not even know which state it is in. When I told them I was going to Cape Cod to serve in AmeriCorps, one of my friends thought I was going to Cape Town, South Africa to do the Peace Corps. To most West Coasters, all the tiny states found in the northeast corner of the map are the same. I've lost count of how many phone conversations with friends at home begin, "So how's Maine? Oh wait. Is that where you are? Where is Cape Cod?"

I'd like to think I was a little more knowledgeable than my friends before I began the program. I knew that Cape Cod was in Massachusetts, that Kennedys lived there, and that it was a summer vacation destination known for its beaches. As an avid baseball fan, I also knew it was home to the only collegiate wooden bat baseball league from watching an awful movie called *Summer Catch*. Other than these trivial facts, names like Bourne, Wellfleet, and Hyannis were as foreign to me as Tel-Aviv and Helsinki.

I had no idea what to expect while moving here, though I did have certain assumptions of what life here would be like. I pictured affluent businessmen sailing their yachts, Kennedys riding horses on their estates, and people young and old sunbathing on pristine beaches. My assumptions about the people and life here are probably half true, half myth. However, I must say that the natural landscape here not only lives up to, but also exceeds the myth built up around it.

Though I've always lived near the ocean, no beach I've been to in California compares to those that I've seen here. What I've found most striking is how clean they are. You might find bits of trash here and there, but it's nothing like what you'd find at say, Venice Beach in Los Angeles. I've also noticed less residential development along the coast than I am used to, which adds to the unspoiled nature of the area. I love that I can watch the sun rise and set over the water without annoyances like car alarms, fire sirens, or the shouts of other beach-goers sounding off in the background. Overall, the Cape is a quiet and peaceful place--perhaps boring to some, but an ideal setting if you like the undisturbed outdoors. My only complaint so far is that the ocean water is always cold. It's getting pretty chilly outside as well, but I guess no place is perfect.

Residential life on the Lower Cape has also been a unique experience. Wellfleet, the town I live in, as well as its neighboring towns, are the epitome of small-town life. Our house has partaken in local events like town potlucks, dump dances, and turnip festivals. Such events have helped dispel some of the myths I came to Cape Cod believing. There are very affluent people who live in their own world, but there is also a steady year-round population of people who form a tight-knit community that care for their neighbors. Being in this type of environment has helped make the 3,000 mile cross-country move a fairly smooth transition. While I've been here only three months, I now consider myself a proud Wellfleetian, even if I am only a wash-a-shore.



From San Fran...



...to Wellfleet

"He was a bold man that first eat an oyster"

Lessons from OysterFest 2007 By *Caitlin Welsh (Wellfleet)*

What do bivalves, tubers and Chocolat have in common? Quite little once one steps foot off-Cape. With the exception of the ill-fated DeppFest 2007 and the humbly wholesome Eastham Turnip Festival, my explorations of the Cape have admittedly been restricted to Wellfleet. However, the curious culture of this town was introduced to me by way of a local festival that celebrates what is one of its most valuable resources: shellfish.

Wellfleet's Shellfish Promotion and Tasting (SPAT) organization is a non-profit that promotes Wellfleet's shellfishing industry. They host events designed to introduce the public to fundamental topics in the world of shellfish propagation and harvesting, including its storied history and environmental issues that threaten its success. Proceeds from these events go toward scholarship funds and sponsorship of the annual OysterFest. This particular event is where I among many other "Wash Ashores" – the locals' term for non-native Cape dwellers – would receive my introduction to the world of bivalve appreciation.

(Continued on page 11.)

OysterFest 2007

(Continued from page 10)

Prior to arriving on the East Coast I could safely say that my knowledge of oysters' popularity was largely informed by the habits of literature's most famous, if not most corpulent pinniped. Lewis Carroll's Walrus did for oysters what Will Smith did for rap, making them accessible to clueless adolescents. Even as a child I knew there was something dubious about their existence if they were fool enough to blindly follow him to the dinner table, that charlatan of a Carpenter hot on their trail. Thus, I vowed never to consume the loathsome little snout pockets, lest my appetite betray me. Of course, that was before I was offered a chance to wield a shucking knife and don an ankle-length butcher's apron in order to observe the goings on at OysterFest from behind the scenes.

When October 13th arrived, the sun shone with the promise of an early-autumn sunburn for those festival-goers who would tipple local brewhouse beverages and stand for hours on end slurping shellfish from, well, their shells, without so much as the Wellfleet Market's awning to shade them. A trip down the bottleneck that was Main Street forced tourists and locals alike to slow their pace and pass the kiosks of over 70 craftsmen and artists who overtook the sidewalks. The varied interests of Cape residents were well-represented by non-profit organizations like the Cape Cod Stranding Network, countless textile merchants displaying intricate weaving, knitting and sewing, and culinary samples aplenty.

As attendees perused the different shellfish vendors, I tried my as-yet callous-free hands at shucking. At every tenth oyster my confidence was bolstered, only to be shattered when the occasional hinge splintered, rendering the whole thing worthless. I was soon instructed that this was no reason to waste perfectly good protein. So, down the hatch they went. My body gave weak protest and was soon silenced completely by some 20 fresh oysters.

Under the guidance of Wellfleetian oystermen, I was able to learn the proper technique for preparation and consumption; moreover, I gained invaluable insight into exploring the newness of my home away from home. Being so far from Michigan and all things familiar to a Midwestern girl (read: corn and casseroles), I have come to wholly embrace the subtleties of coastal living. Additionally, in no other small town have I found such a profound sense of community togetherness, both related to and apart from this event. So, when OysterFest rolls around next October, Wash Ashores take note – you're in for a shucking-great time.

Dear Drew,

By Drew Brown (*Bourne*)

Dear Drew,

I am completely terrified of ticks. I am starting to develop an aversion to going outside and may be coming down with a case of agoraphobia. I think about ticks all day long and I am spending all of my free time checking myself for little black dots that weren't there yesterday. But perhaps my biggest problem is checking for the little buggers in all the places that I can not see on my own without the dexterous implementation of several mirrors and some duct tape. Do you have any suggestions on how to speed up the tick checking process or how we can eradicate their presence from the face of the Earth?

Thank you,
Tricky Ticky

Dear Tricky Ticky,

I agree; blood-sucking parasites are no fun, but they are a way of life here on the Cape. I would advise that you start thinking of ticks as your friends; it is after all a relationship where you each receive some-

thing. They get your blood, and you get Lyme Disease. It is not a fair trade, but what are you going to do, ticks have no morals after all. When you do go outside, make sure you tuck your pants into your socks in that ever-so-trendy Cape Cod style, and when you get home, cover your entire body in some of that ever-so-handly duct tape and pull it off to remove everything from the surface of your skin i.e.: ticks, hair, freckles. Depending on your modesty level and how good of friends you have made, get a tick check buddy who can help you search those hard to reach areas.

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Dear Drew,

I am scared of heights. No not just scared – terrified. I had to close my eyes as I drove over the Bourne Bridge when I first came here. I don't think I can risk another trip over that bridge again. I am concerned that if I can't cross the bridge I will never be able to leave Cape Cod and I will

be stuck here forever. I cannot stay here permanently in this coastal paradise as I am not retired or a salty sea faring pirate, and besides how would I ever afford the rent during the summer months? I just cannot live here forever on permanent vacation, I have to be able to escape this island prison somehow.

Help!  
Trapped in Paradise

Dear Trapped in Paradise,

Bust out that AmeriCorps shovel and start digging yourself a tunnel under the canal, because those bridges are your only option off this at times obscenely beautiful and chokingly quaint man made island. If an escape is necessary, add some padding and flashing lights to the outside of your car and a big sign that reads "STAY AWAY." However, you may be surprised that if you had to stay on Cape, there is a large demand for salty sea faring pirates, which in the end can be a lucrative and rewarding career.

**CHECK  
US OUT ONLINE!**

**AmeriCorps Cape Cod  
PO Box 427  
Barnstable, MA 02630**



## Calendar: December & January

**Here are just a few upcoming AmeriCorps Cape Cod events.**

**12/10—12/20:** Bourne House Solar Installation

**12/14:** First AmeriCorps Puppet Show

At the Ezra Baker School in Dennis

**12/18:** Present Wrapping at Borders in Hyannis

To benefit MLK Day service projects

**12/21:** All-Corps Fun Day!

**12/22—1/2:** Winter Break

**1/7:** Meet & Greet with the AmeriCorps  
Cape Cod Advisory Board

**1/21:** MLK Day

### **Martin Luther King Day**

This year's MLK Day project, "Share the Warmth," aims to alleviate the strain of the cold winter months on Barnstable County residents in need. On Monday January 21 we will help both shelters and individuals weatherize their homes and do some painting/general building maintenance. In addition, local schoolchildren will decorate quilt squares depicting Dr. King's message of social justice; these quilts will be sewn together and donated to local shelters and nonprofits. We need community volunteers to assist our neighbors in need! To sign up or for more information, email [mlkday2008@gmail.com](mailto:mlkday2008@gmail.com) or visit the AmeriCorps Cape Cod website.

**Please recycle me!**

