

WAYPOINT

The Wash-a-Shore Edition



Fired Up: A New Initiative Expands AmeriCorps Cape Cod!



Home Improvement Meets Self Improvement, Friendships are Bourne!



Trial By Water: Wading into Education

Not Your ERVry Day Job: Crossing Gaps In Disaster Education



Year 14
Fall Edition

Responding to Super Storm Sandy



And Many, Many
More...



THE WAYPOINT

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the Waypoint, AmeriCorps Cape Cod's seasonal newsletter!

Here are some things we did not include in this edition: Kelsey's off-the-charts baking ability, Sara's incredible reading pace, how I managed to break a window and the chopping block, and blow a fuse in the same week, Collin, Senja, Jenna, and Meg's laughter, Kristy's beautiful watercolors, Lindsay and Suze's height, Mike and Will's encyclopedic knowledge of everything, Adam's ability to consume 5,000 calories a day (and inability to gain weight), and Joelle's obsession with the swap shop. You won't see much of anything about our third bathroom, Scott's passion for birding, that one time Kel paid attention at a house meeting (wait, that never happened), Jared's intimidating skill at the guitar, the blood drive at the Patriot's Stadium that we're going to this weekend, Meg's smile, that time Hannah sprinted straight into a pole at the gym, or all the times that no one knows where Ben is.

You'll see little to no information about Chasity's enduring commitment to Wet Fest, the jewelry that Lauren has been making in the Bourne House reading room, half the Wellfleet house summiting Mount Washington, the fact that the Bourne house ratio of vegetarians:meat-eaters has exceeded 1, Scott and Suze's devotion to studying for the GREs in spite of being surrounded by total and utter chaos, or the number of wheelbarrows of sand we moved in Falmouth after Hurricane Sandy. You'll see nothing of Jason's affinity for walking around the house in scary costumes, Erik's wealth of knowledge and ability in relation to all things 'tree,' Sam's skill for popping her shoulders and hips out of their sockets, Senja's love of dirt, I mean 'Soil,' the lengthy list of Kayla's injuries, or Erik and I running a marathon.

You definitely won't read about Suze's T.V preferences on Saturday mornings, Dan's somewhat unnatural level of attraction to chainsaws, the time the Bourne House beat the Wellfleet House in a tree-dropping competition, Joelle's car, Steph's new boyfriend, that time we didn't save a dolphin, or the difficulty of saying goodbye to a new friend.

What you hopefully will read about in this issue is a sampling of the multitude of passions and areas of expertise that make us who we are, the occasional snapshot of the deepening friendships that we are forming, a few of the thousands of hours that we are committing to improving Cape Cod, and a taste of why this program matters so much to us, to past members, and to the Cape. Put simply, the work we do matters; the relationships we make matter, and the experiences we learn from matter. But why put it simply when we have a whole newsletter to work with here?

Hope you like it,

Sebastian Wheeler

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Table of Contents

Page Four and Five

Fired Up: A New Initiative Expands AmeriCorps Cape Cod!

by Amy Henderson

Not Your ERVry Day Job: Crossing Gaps In Disaster Education

By: Adam DeVito

My New Home Away From Home

By Joelle Mushel



Page Six and Seven

Home Improvement Meets Self Improvement, Friendships are Bourne!

By Sam Sorrin

Reflections as a Second Year Member

By Meg Quirk



Page Eight and Nine

Sea's The Day: Shorely Interesting Prospects

By Lindsay Crouch

Bump, Set, Spike

By Brian James

Page Ten and Eleven

So You Want to be a Firefighter

By Matt Spears

Keep On Shuckin'

By: Jared Dearth

Page Twelve and Thirteen

1 Fish, 2 Fish, Bioluminescent Green Fish

By Suzanne LaChance

From College Rocks to Cape Rocks

By Hannah Baranes



Page Fourteen and Fifteen

Responding to Super Storm Sandy

By Matt Spears

Residential Living:

They say two's company and three's a crowd; so what does that make 14?

By Senja Melin



Page Sixteen and Seventeen

Swept Away By Waquoit Bay

By Lauren Ruotolo

The Diamondback Terrapin Gets an Extreme Home Makeover by AmeriCorps

By Ben Fairbanks

We Make A Clean Sweep!

By Will Clark

Page Eighteen and Nineteen

Cape Cod Kwassa Kwassa: AmeriCorps Explores the Cape

By Sara Cawley

Trial By Water: Wading into Education

By Chasity Reeder

Page Twenty and Twenty One

AmeriCorps Crossword

Sea's The Day: Shorely Interesting Prospects

By Lindsay Crouch

THE WAYPOINT

Home Improvement Meets Self Improvement, Friendships are Bourne!

By Sam Sorrin

On a beautiful day in September, just a few short weeks into our AmeriCorps experience, the Wellfleet House came over to Bourne to help us work on some household projects and upkeep. Although we have not been living in the Bourne House very long, we call it our home and wish to see it looking top notch. In preparation for the arrival of the Wellfleet crew, we had reviewed paint samples, split up tasks, and readied our tools. We were pretty excited for the day, considering that our training had so far been located all around the Cape, and we were finally switching things up to serve right at home. Additionally, it's always rewarding seeing both houses team up for a project.

Although it was just a single day of service, as a group of 30 hard-working people with specific goals, we were able to accomplish plenty. For starters, the inside of the Bourne House was practically transformed. A group of about eight got to work tearing down the old wallpaper in the foyer, stairway, and upstairs common room. A primer and light cream coat were painted on the newly bare walls, and, with some nice white trim, it started to look like a pretty professional job. The kitchen was also revamped with a coat of subtle mint green, and a coat of robin's egg blue really added to the basement.

One of the big projects involved combining our three little kitchen tables into one massive one. After taking measurements and a whole lot of planning, we used power tools to create a masterpiece. It was stained a dark charcoal to effectively transform our dining room. We can now all fit comfortably around it at weekly house dinners. Other big projects included revitalizing the greenhouse and planting beds, staining the outdoor picnic table, splitting wood, pruning the garden, and staining some of the indoor tables.

Bourne house day was important not only so that the house can look nice and inviting, but also so we can start to take ownership of where we are living. It is our house for one year, and we should have a solid interest in its upkeep. It also gave us increased respect for the property and motivated us to take it upon ourselves to maintain it. Furthermore, days like these bond the two houses strongly. We had some freedom with our tasks and methods of painting, so we got to see some creative sides come out a bit. Since we will be working together closely all year long, days like the Bourne House day are important for teaching us each other's strengths and weaknesses and for connecting us on a deeper level.



AmeriCorps Cape Cod Deploys in Response to Hurricane Sandy

By Sebastian Wheeler

In the early hours of Monday, October 29th, all members of the Bourne and Wellfleet houses found themselves heading to the first, and hopefully the only, American Red Cross shelter deployment of the year. We had some idea of what was ahead of us- we had trained for just such circumstances- but like the rest of the Eastern seaboard we were anxiously waiting to see which of the multitude projections for “Frankenstorm” would come to fruition. Upon arriving at each of our three assigned locations we helped out as much as we could, setting up cots, registering the clients trickling in, and assisting the other agencies staffing each location, all the while hoping for the best but preparing for the worst.

As morning became afternoon, and eventually night, we happily acknowledged that the worst of the storm had passed, leaving the Cape a little bruised but largely out of harm’s way. We continued to offer help and support to those clients who chose to seek safety, but by the next morning the sky had cleared and the winds had calmed. As we packed up to return home we accepted the fact that we had witnessed a near disaster and took a little pride in the fact that we had been more than nearly prepared to do our part.

Below,
Meg and Kayla’s allnighter in the library
is more relaxing than previous experi-
ences from college.
To the right,
The storm rages.



THE WAYPOINT

Fired Up: A New Initiative Expands AmeriCorps Cape Cod!

by Amy Henderson

AmeriCorps Cape Cod is excited to announce a new initiative for the 2012-2013 Corps Year. The six members who comprise the new Fire Corps bring the total number of Corps members in the program to 32, and their house in Wellfleet, the Wells House, adds a third house to the roster.

This fall, the Fire Corps members have been serving alongside the Cape Cod National Seashore Fire Management Team. Through completing trainings and service projects with Seashore staff throughout the park, the Fire Corps is learning basic Wildland Firefighter skills and tool/equipment use – including use of chainsaws, brush cutters and pumps.

Earlier this fall, the Corps was deployed to New York City, where they used their new skills to assist in repairing the damage caused by Hurricane Sandy. Over the winter, the Fire Corps will assist in the implementation of the new Barnstable County Wildfire Preparedness Plan, which will aim to reduce wildfire risk in each of the Cape's towns. The Fire Corps will facilitate community education events on fire preparedness and help to conduct community assessment on Cape Cod. In the spring, the Corps will return to service at the Cape Cod National Seashore to continue habitat restoration and wildfire mitigation projects through participation in prescribed fires and mechanical treatments.

Upon completion of the service year, each member will have performed at least 1700 hours of national service and be fully qualified as a Wildland Firefighter.



Not Your ERVry Day Job: Crossing Gaps In Disaster Education

By: Adam DeVito

When I hear the words “Red Cross”, flashing lights, floodwaters, downed power lines and windswept streets are the images that instantly come to mind. I imagine a Red Cross truck battling high winds in severely reduced visibility, as it makes its way to a local shelter with food and water to help those displaced by a storm. When I learned that I was positioned at the Red Cross for my individual placement in early October, I had no idea what this year had in store for me.

Soon after starting, I discovered that my title was “Community Disaster Education Coordinator,” and I became confident that I would not be traveling in an Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) to help disaster victims. Instead, I have been traveling Cape Cod in my own vehicle with Frankie the Firefighter and the fire safety puppet crew, educating children on the importance of fire safety. Other AmeriCorps volunteers and I visit local schools and put on the fifteen-minute long Fire Safety Puppet Show, which was created by an AmeriCorps member in Year 12. The most important message that the show tries to impart on these young minds is that firefighters are not scary! The fire-retardant clothing, masks, and oxygen tanks worn by firefighters intimidate many children. Fortunately, the West Barnstable Fire Department donated some of this equipment to AmeriCorps. During the show, an AmeriCorps member, to the delight of a crowd of five year olds, struggles into pants, a jacket, boots, gloves, and a helmet in order to demonstrate to the kids that firefighters are trusted members of the community who are only in their homes to help. We also teach the children to dial 9-1-1 in an emergency situation and that smoke detectors will warn them of fires in their homes.

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My New Home Away From Home

By Joelle Mushel

Cape Cod is unlike any other place I have ever been. I hail from central Minnesota, and this is the first time I have ever been to the Cape, or anywhere on the East Coast for that matter. I remember pulling into the driveway of the Le Hac house on my first day and thinking, “This is really happening; I am moving over a thousand miles from home for a year to experience something completely new.” Many of my family members and friends thought I was crazy, brave, or a combination of both. Little did they know, it would be easy to call this place home.

Cape Cod is definitely not like Minnesota. The landscape is different; there is certainly no ocean in Minnesota, but I love being surrounded by it here! The food is different too; I had never had clam chowder until I came here, but I have now tried it from a few different places. Before you know it, I will be a clam chowder connoisseur! The roads are also unlike any I’ve seen: curvy and twisting every which way. I have found that they are quite easy to get lost on. Lastly, the seasons are a little milder, and summer and fall seem to last a lot longer here. At this time of the year in Minnesota, there aren’t any leaves left on the trees, and we’re lucky if temperatures get above 45 degrees. I’d say I’m pretty lucky to be spending a year in such a beautiful and unique place.

Transitioning into life in the AmeriCorps program was less difficult than I had originally thought it would be, too. My first few days here were a whirlwind, but what I remember most is the moment I first stepped out of my car: Erik, the Wellfleet House supervisor, and Mike, the house member leader, were there to greet me. They were so welcoming that I immediately felt at ease. In fact, each time I met someone connected to the program, from Darlene and Phil, to my IP supervisor, and everyone in-between, they were just as welcoming. So much so that all of us “newbies” found ourselves feeling comfortable almost from the get go! But what I have been most surprised by is the amount we can accomplish with all of the hard work we do. I remember a friend’s sister telling me that working for AmeriCorps was going to be one of the most exhausting yet rewarding experiences I would ever have; and she couldn’t have been more right. We serve 40+ hours a week, but we are making a difference. When we go to group service projects, we get so much done!

One type of project that combines the uniqueness of Cape Cod and of AmeriCorps (that also just happens to be one of my favorites) is shellfishing. What could be better than spending a day in waders, seeing crabs and other ocean creatures?! I had no idea what shellfishing even was before I came here, but I’ve now gotten to participate in multiple steps of it. I have only been here two months, but I feel like it’s been so much longer! I can’t wait to see what the next nine months hold in store.



Not Your ERVry Day Job, cont.

As a part of my position, I also provide disaster education to adults and seniors. For adults, I give a general “Be Red Cross Ready” presentation, which outlines ways that an individual can be prepared in case a disaster strikes. The three simple steps are **1. Get a kit, 2. Make a plan, and 3. Be informed.** The presentation that I give to seniors outlines the importance of carrying a three-day supply of medications and a contact list of relatives and friends who could drive them to shelter (or off the Cape) in a disaster situation. Serving with the Red Cross has shown me that simple preparations, which can be made in just a few hours, could be an invaluable resource when an unexpected disaster strikes. Thus, I have come to appreciate how imperative disaster preparedness is, and I am excited for this opportunity to assist the Red Cross in educating the Cape Cod community.

THE WAYPOINT

Reflections as a Second Year Member

By Meg Quirk

As Year 13 came to an end this past summer, many members were getting excited about their next steps in life. Some people were ready to move away from Cape Cod and travel different parts of the United States, while others anticipated starting new jobs. It seemed like everyone was entering new experiences, except for the five of us who had decided to become second year members. Little did we know, becoming a second year member is an entirely new experience in and of itself!

At first glance, you would think not much has changed: the houses are still standing, group service projects still occur every Monday and Friday, group dinner is served Wednesday nights without fail, and “A” shirts continue to dominate our daily wardrobe options. However, if you take a closer look, it is the unique individuals who are goofing around in the houses, working hard during service days, eating delicious house dinners, and rocking those “A’s” that make all the difference. Between the Bourne, Le Hac, and Wells Houses, there are 28 fresh faces that make being a second year feel nuanced. Of course, the ghosts of past housemates and AmeriCorps members linger around corners of the office, on the stools in the kitchen of Le Hac, and on the couches in the Bourne House. I felt their presence very strongly at the beginning of the program year, but as time goes by, I have come to accept that they were integral to my experiences in Year 13, but they have moved on to let others enjoy the space they left behind. Those spaces have been filled with new personalities, different attitudes, and varied hobbies. I am so grateful to be with a group of people that has so many interests and complexities to share.

Already, this group of Year 14 AmeriCorps members has given me the opportunity to learn new things and go on new adventures. For example, before this September I wouldn’t have been able to say that I hiked to the top of Mount Washington, tried a fried cheese curd, or stood in the moonlight on the night before a hurricane came through and watched the biggest waves I’ve ever seen come crashing down around me. I have my new housemates to thank for these experiences.

A wise AmeriLegend, Stefanie Kramer, offered me some crucial advice in preparation for this year. “Whatever you do,” Stef said, as a second year member herself, “don’t compare your two years.” It has only been two months since the start of my second year, but I already appreciate Stef’s words. To compare the two years would only hinder the ability to enjoy and appreciate the people and promise this year holds. Instead, I am excited to be experiencing this year, for the first time, with my fellow Year 14 members.



Not So Cold Turkey After All: We Whet Our Whistles on Watery Wescue

By Sebastian Wheeler

For the five of us who decided to stay at the Wellfleet house for Thanksgiving, the big concern of the morning was whether Jared was going to get up early enough to get the turkey in the oven on time; that is until the phone rang. Soon after Senja answered, her tone became serious and her questions pointed. That could mean only one thing: we were being called by IFAW (the International Fund for Animal Welfare), and we were going to be responding to our first stranding with less than half the house, without Suzanne (our resident marine mammal expert), and on Thanksgiving! Luckily, Jared had in fact gotten up too late to start roasting the turkey, so we were able to quickly get our gear and leave the house, free of culinary concerns.

Despite our lack of experience, the IFAW team was happy to have the extra help and started bringing us in on the rescue procedure right away. They gave us a concise overview of the situation- four dolphins stranded in high grass, deep within 'the gut' in Wellfleet harbor, needed to be transported and released in Herring Cove- and then we followed one of the staff to the site. The animals looked relatively unharmed, but the urgency of the situation hardly needed emphasis. We immediately began to stretcher the dolphins onto the cart and ferry them to the truck, not such an easy task on uneven sand, as a small crowd began to gather around the truck. We continued to focus on the task at hand, and soon all four dolphins were safely loaded on the truck and on their way to Provincetown. We met the truck at the beach, and the staff informed us of the procedure for releasing the animals. We helped the staff transfer the dolphins to mats at the water's edge and were suddenly prepared to return them to their natural habitat.

The crowd was larger here than in Wellfleet, and as the scientists let go of the first pair of dolphins, allowing them to swim off towards the safety of deeper waters, the atmosphere was palpable. The release of the second pair garnered a round of applause, and we finally allowed ourselves to smile as people thanked us and snapped pictures. From what we were told, all four dolphins were largely unharmed and now had a high probability of surviving. The same could hardly be said of them at the start of the day, or of the turkey that was beckoning us homeward. The coincidence of this all happening on Thanksgiving scarcely matters, except for this: it would be relatively easy to glorify the experience by focusing on our lack of hesitation at dropping everything on a holiday. I could go on and on about our commitment to the program, dolphins, AmeriCorps etc., but that is simply not what this experience was about. Rather, this experience perfectly summarizes how lucky we are to be serving on the Cape. Who wouldn't want to help rescue dolphins on Thanksgiving? Talk about an experience to be thankful for.



THE WAYPOINT

Bump, Set, Spike

By Brian James

When I started high school, I had no idea that I would quickly find the love of my life. She wasn't pretty, nice, or easy to get, at first. In fact, she wasn't even a person. I fell in love with the sport of volleyball. Everything about it was appealing. 6 vs. 6. Fast-paced. Explosive movements. Jumping as high as you can. It was a sport made for someone who enjoys hitting a 2 lbs. ball at opponents as hard as he can with the intention of hitting them so hard that they quit the sport. No, it is not that brutal all the time, but it is a great sport nonetheless. Let me take through the history of the evolution of Brian James' burning passion for volleyball and the roadblocks therein.

It all started when I walked into the high school gym one day. I had been recruited, purely because of my height, to join the basketball team. I had no previous experience in that sport, but I enjoyed it, and that pleasure I received from it would grow into another love of mine. That said, I was in the gym, doing my basketball thing, and someone saw me playing. He didn't know my name, nor did I know his, but he was interested in recruiting this young, energetic, tall player to his volleyball team. I accepted with little convincing, and next thing I knew I was on the freshman volleyball team in Irvine, California.

Time passed, and the season flew by with a losing record, but I was still set on playing volleyball. I quit basketball because we had also lost every single game that previous season, and I wanted to limit my losing to one sport. I carved a niche as a middle blocker. His job is to block the opponents with force and authority, on both sides of the court. I had started as an outside hitter, who lines up in the front row on the left-hand side (facing opponent) and whose job it is to block defensively and to attack with a forceful hit. I also experimented with being an opposite. An opposite plays in rotation with the setter (soon to be defined) in the front row but on the right-hand side.

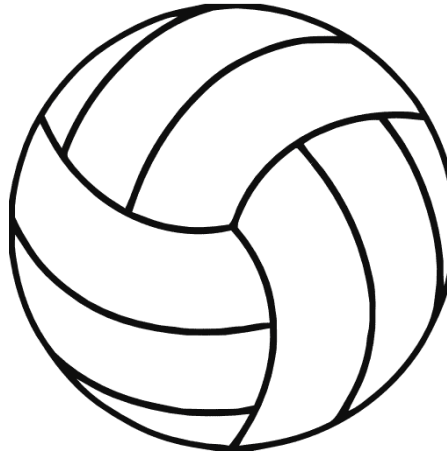
They have the peculiar job of blocking, hitting and stepping in, and setting if the setter cannot reach the ball in time. The only position I never really had any real playing time as was the setter. He is the point guard of volleyball. Or you could say he is the quarterback of volleyball. He runs the offense and makes the game time decisions of who to set the ball to. The other two positions I did not mention were in the back row, and they are purely for defensive purposes, something I lacked quite a bit in my first few years.

More time passed. I graduated high school and was living in Santa Barbara, California. My hopes of playing indoor volleyball had passed

because I wasn't at the collegiate level of competition; but I was not a beginner either. So I did what any rational person would do in southern California: I joined an outdoor volleyball class. There, my passion grew into what it is now. I was suddenly able to dive without worry of getting injured and spend time outside in the beautiful sunshine, all the while getting tan and in shape. It was a dream come true. And low and behold, my indoor skills quickly translated

to me becoming one of the best players in the class. I found myself having more fun than ever, especially with the format of outdoor volleyball. While indoor requires 6 vs. 6, outdoor is more personal with 2 vs. 2. You and a teammate. That's it.

Again, more time passed. With the opportunity to help teach an outdoor class in addition to taking multiple indoor classes, my skills reached a new level. I was better indoor than I had ever been in high school, even after taking a three-year hiatus to solely play outdoor. Now, the opportunity to play with my fellow housemates once a week fills my heart with happiness, and that void of empty space is full once more. Thank you to everyone who has made my dream come true once a week, and safe travels on your continued journey in AmeriCorps.



1 Fish, 2 Fish, Bioluminescent Green Fish

By Suzanne LaChance

This article may appeal to the types of adventurous individuals who find themselves exploring the beach after nightfall; but it may also encourage others to follow suite. The green bugs washed ashore and left illuminating the sand are not fallen fireflies. These marine creatures create a natural glow as a result of an oxidation reaction that is catalyzed by the enzyme luciferase. A product of this reaction is a green or blue glowing light referred to as bioluminescence. Essentially all of the energy from the reaction is used to produce light; thus, very little is left to release as heat, earning it the title “cold light.”

This is a common trait found in marine creatures, spanning across fourteen different phyla. Some create their own bioluminescent glow- intrinsic luminescence- while others form mutualistic relationships with bioluminescent bacteria- bacterial luminescence. The light emitted appears as a green-blue color because it is the wavelength that travels farthest in seawater.

With so many predators seeking out these creatures one might wonder, why would it draw attention to itself with a bright glowing light? Although the bright light causes these marine animals to be more conspicuous, it allows them to perform many essential tasks as well. For example, bioluminescence can be used to attract mates, communicate, startle predators, detect/attract prey, or all of the above.

Many species of marine organisms exhibit bioluminescent displays. The deep sea jellyfish and the Bermuda glow worm both use their bioluminescent capabilities when threatened by predators. The sudden illumination startles the bigger fish and sends them swimming! This allows the jellyfish or the glow worm ample time to escape.

This next bioluminary creature made its famous debut into pop culture when it attempted to consume Nemo and Dory in the family favorite movie “Finding Nemo.” The anglerfish is well known for dangling a bioluminescent lure at the end of a single antennae-like structure. Smaller fish are attracted to the light and unknowingly migrate right onto the anglerfish’s dinner plate. Their seafood is so fresh it puts the Cape Cod restaurant industry to shame!

Vieques, Puerto Rico and Bermuda are well known sites for studying and observing bioluminescence. Vieques is home to Bioluminescent Bay, the most active bioluminescing bay in the world. This can be attributed to the thousands of dinoflagellates found in each gallon of the bay’s seawater. The brightly glowing lights are at their peak following full moons. Similarly, in the bays of Bermuda the water glows. The source of these glowing swirls is a slime excreted by female aquatic worms in order to attract their male mates. Nothing says “Hey, I’m into you” like green-glowing slime.

Luckily for the amateur marine scientists, there are ways for us human observers to easily view this phenomenon without hopping on a plane to Puerto Rico or Bermuda. Taking up activities such as snorkeling or SCUBA diving are ideal, but a good first step is to simply splash around some sea water at night. If your eyes have had time to adjust, you should be able to observe your very own aquatic firework display. Furthermore, bioluminescence is only one of the numerous remarkable adaptations marine animals have evolved to survive in the underwater world. So get out there and start exploring!



Article Source: Wood, James B., PhD, and Kim Wood. “Marine Animal Bioluminescence.” FishChannel.com, 9 Nov. 2007. Web. 31 Oct. 2012. <<http://www.fishchannel.com/saltwater-aquariums/species-info/fireworks-in-the-night.aspx>>.

Picture Source: <http://rateeveryanimal.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/anglerfish-comin-at-ya.jpg>

THE WAYPOINT

So You Want to be a Firefighter

By Matt Spears

The piercing, high-pitched tones echo throughout the room as my scanner blares to life. The dispatcher announces there is a smoke alarm activated at a single family house. Leaving dinner mid-bite, I rush to the firehouse, my mind running through a checklist; where is the call located, what do I already know about the housing situation (construction, vacancy, dangers, etc.), what do I have to do to get there, and what will I will be doing on scene. When I arrive at the firehouse, my Lieutenant is already there and says “Engine 2.” I don my turnout gear and jump in the driver’s seat of Engine 2. The sirens are blaring and the lights are bright, but I do not pay attention to them. I’m used to them. I safely drive the quickest route to the house and begin the job - the job of helping people, who are possibly having the worst day of their lives. The rush of running into a burning building is truly exhilarating, and knowing that you are doing the right thing, at the highest level of which you are capable, is truly magnificent.

That is what AmeriCorps is all about: helping people and communities, in nearly any fashion possible, and doing the right thing, to the best of your ability. I have been volunteering as a firefighter for nearly ten years, an EMT for three years, and before all that, I was a Boy Scout – earning the rank of Eagle Scout. Volunteering is in my blood, and always it will be. After graduating college, I served in AmeriCorps NCCC, based out of Sacramento, CA. It was there that I learned about a completely different side of firefighting – wildland. As red-card certified wildland firefighters, my team and I served with the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service – Tahoe National Forest, along with a few non-profit organizations in need of fire management. When comparing the two sides of firefighting, the simplest way is to think of structural firefighting as a sprint – the job is quick, most fires lasting 20 minutes to an hour - whereas wildland fires can last days, weeks, or months – truly a marathon.

After AmeriCorps NCCC, I came home searching for that ever difficult to find “career”. Nothing seemed right. Receiving the email notification with the position posting for the AmeriCorps Cape Cod Fire Corps, about a year after leaving California, was perfect. Again, it would be the best of both worlds.

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Keep On Shuckin’

By: Jared Dearth

This past October, some AmeriCorps Cape Cod members had the opportunity to volunteer at the annual Wellfleet Oyster Festival. The festival is a two-day event that celebrates the town’s shellfishing roots with food, music, art, and games. As volunteers, we taught the community about what oyster shell recycling involves and why it so important for aquatic life.

Before Oysterfest, most of our group knew little to nothing of the oyster lifecycle; but thanks to an informative talk with Curt Felix, head of recycling efforts for Oysterfest, we were lucky enough to get a step-by-step look at the fascinating role oysters play in the local ecosystem. Believe it or not, oysters serve a bigger purpose than just being tasty! They are also crucial for filtering the water, providing a habitat for other species, and controlling erosion. Oysters filter water by bringing it in through their gills and running it past their cilia. Plankton and other particles get trapped in the mucus of the gills, and then they are transported to the mouth where the oyster eats them. This process effectively filters the water and removes excess plankton and nitrogen that often proliferate in Wellfleet Bay and other harbors in the area. But the power of the mighty oyster doesn’t stop there; they also provide a habitat for smaller aquatic life! Oysters form habitats by attaching themselves to one another, forming dense reefs that provide a safe haven for fish, shrimp, crabs, and many other animals. Erosion control is another area where the oyster shines!

12 (CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)



Firefighter, Cont.

I would get to serve a community, and I would get to do so as a wildland firefighter, this time with the National Parks Service – and as an added bonus, I would be living on Cape Cod! Of course I applied! Being the first year of the Fire Corps Initiative, I knew it would be a crawl, walk, run type program. Kinks would have to be worked out, communication (which is always a problem) would have to be fine-tuned, and most importantly, all members would have to be trained to the red-card certification Firefighter Type II level. As a Member Leader, it would be a test of my knowledge, skills and endurance, as a human, a leader, and a firefighter.

The Fire Corps is now complete with five additional members. The six of us, as a team, live together under one roof, serve together five days a week, and, most of the time, eat together. The bonds between us have already grown beyond our shared status as AmeriCorps members. Each of us has a set of talents and a positive role to play within the team, strengthening the group as a whole. This is what I looked forward to most, before I joined this new initiative: the sense of belonging and camaraderie that grows from strength, hard work, trust, and shared leadership. This team atmosphere is rare in AmeriCorps, seeing that most AmeriCorps members nationally serve as single units (the largest exception being AmeriCorps NCCC, where teams of ten to twelve people serve in four different areas with different service partners, throughout the ten month commitment). NCCC teams only serve with each service partner for two or three months before moving on. I feel that AmeriCorps Cape Cod has the right idea, pairing a team of young, hard-working individuals with the National Parks Service – Cape Cod National Seashore – for the entire term of service.

Nearly two months into the term of service, the new Fire Corps isn't so new anymore; to us at least. The team is cohesive and hard-working. We have made great progress in attaining our red-card wildland firefighter certifications, and we have already learned more than we had anticipated! I look forward to the next nine months of service with the Cape Cod National Seashore and the community of Cape Cod!



Shuckin', Cont.

Oysters can combat erosion by providing a stable barrier between the ocean and shore during storms and flooding events.

Oysters do so much for us that it only makes sense that we do our best to pay them something back. Without shell recycling, the entire oyster lifecycle becomes disrupted! The cycle works like this: Adult oysters produce up to two million fertilized eggs during a summer season. During a two to three-week gestation period, the larvae are carried away, often moving a great distance from their original point of release. When the larvae are nearly full grown (also known at this stage as “spat”), they must attach themselves to a hard surface, like an adult shell. If there is no shell for the larvae to attach themselves to, they will die. These “spats” require two or more years to fully mature, but they can reproduce within their first year, completing the cycle. This means that many of the shells that we recycle from Oysterfest have living baby oysters attached to them. In fact, Curt was proud to tell us, research has shown that each oyster recycled from last year's Oysterfest led to an average of six new spat joining the population of animals in Wellfleet harbor and eventually adding to the adult population. That's six new oysters for each one recycled!

The Oysterfest was a big success this year and I am grateful to have been a part of it. As an AmeriCorps member, I feel that we really helped get the message out to the community about the importance of recycling oyster shells and how it can strengthen the biodiversity and ecology of Wellfleet harbor. If you have further questions about oysters or Oysterfest, this and other information is available on the Oysterfest website (wellfleetoysterfest.org).

THE WAYPOINT

From College Rocks to Cape Rocks

By Hannah Baranes

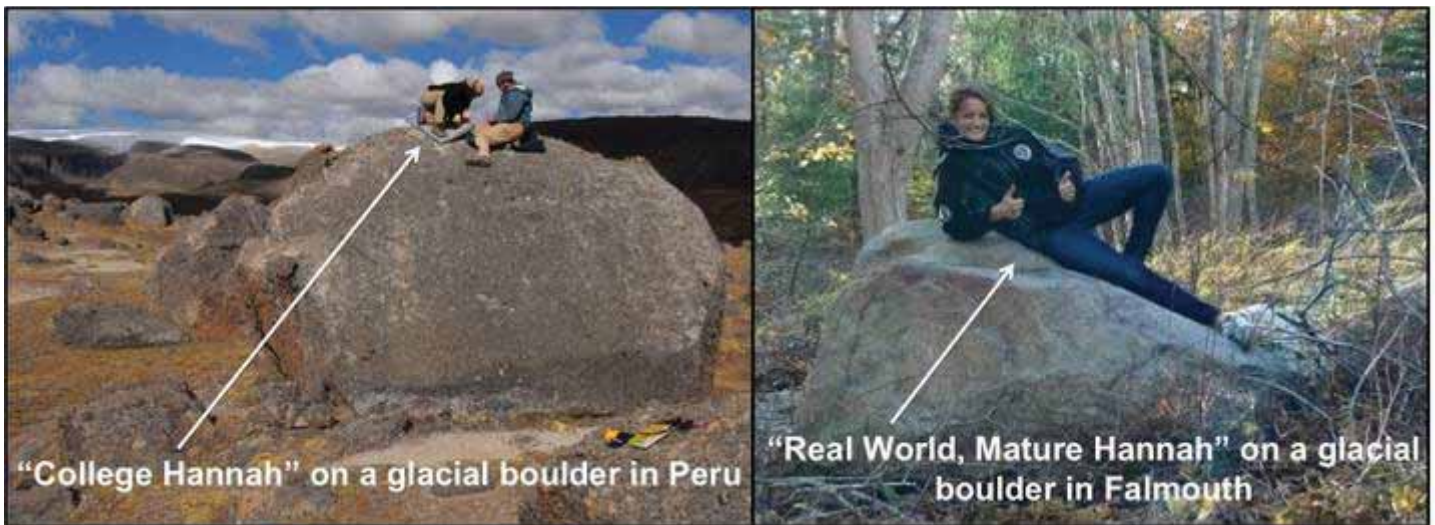
During my final year of college, I devoted the majority of my academic energy to researching, pondering, standing on, and writing about a row of boulders that sit on valley floor high up in the Peruvian Andes. Those boulders were transported and deposited in that valley by an advancing ice cap about 17,000 years ago, forming what is called a glacial moraine. Moraines exist all over the world, delineating areas that were, once upon a geologic time, covered by ice.

The longer I spent studying moraines, the fonder of them I became. By the end of the year, I was rather attached, and I decided to pack up and go live on one after graduation. That's how I chose AmeriCorps Cape Cod.

I'm only half kidding. Cape Cod is, for the most part, a giant ridge of unconsolidated sediment that was plowed up by a massive ice sheet roughly 20,000 years ago. Before the last ice age, the continental shelf, which extends about one hundred miles eastward into the Atlantic Ocean from the modern coastline of the United States, was all above sea level. As temperatures dropped, an ice sheet, called the Laurentide Ice Sheet, began forming on North America. At its maximum extent, it was up to two miles thick, and it extended all the way down into New York. Long Island, Block Island, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket are all glacial moraines that delineate the southernmost points that were overrun by the Laurentide Ice Sheet. As the climate began to warm, ice receded to the north and formed Fishers Island, the north shore of Long Island, the Elizabeth Islands, and Cape Cod.

So here I am on Cape Cod as recent graduate who has just made the intimidating leap into the real world after sitting in class for the last seventeen years. Currently, I am lounging on top of a glacial moraine inside a house that I share with thirteen other people, where I am staying up way too late writing something that I procrastinated on for way too long.

I think that "intimidating leap" into the real world may have been more of a gentle hop.



Responding to Super Storm Sandy

By Matt Spears

After returning from NYC, I thought about all that we accomplished. I asked myself, “What was the hardest part?” (because inevitably that would be one of those vague, yet difficult questions I would be asked). I could neither think of one task, nor one objective that stood out above the others. Physically, it wasn’t too demanding. Emotionally, it wasn’t too difficult, as we weren’t working directly with the people of New York or New Jersey who were affected by the storm. The only thing I had difficulty with while on assignment was leaving the assignment when it ended. I, along with the rest of my crew, simply did not want to leave. The workloads on Ellis Island and Liberty Island were overwhelming. We filled eight 30-yard dumpsters with natural and man-made debris on Ellis Island alone! The work there seemed almost unending, and we all felt that we were the crew for the job!

Because it was AmeriCorps Cape Cod FireCorps’ first assignment, our eyes were wide and attentive as we took it all in. As we participated in more on-site operations, organization within the Incident Command Center became clearer, and we, as the Cape Cod National Seashore crew, were noticed for our organization, hard work, and attention to detail, on and off the job. There was one point when, as we walked back into the dormitory, a Parks Service Ranger called out, “Here comes the Cape Cod crew!”, as he performed a slow-clap. Another Ranger gave us all high-fives as we walked by. It was surreal!

When we were first notified of our assignment to Staten Island, I assumed we would be working around the island helping the people of NYC and New Jersey. That’s not how it worked out, however. Assigned to Ellis Island and Liberty Island, we cleared man-made and natural debris, and the work we performed there was more global. It spearheaded efforts to clean up, rehabilitate, and eventually re-open the islands. Ellis Island and Lady Liberty are national symbols, and throughout their history, they have been twin beacons of hope for millions of people around the world. With AmeriCorps Cape Cod and the Cape Cod National Seashore, we just may have helped to restore that same hope in the people of NYC and New Jersey. Whether people are gazing out their windows, or they are looking at their televisions and computers, we hope that when they look into the New York harbor and see the Statue of Liberty lit up at night for the first time since Sandy knocked out their power, they might feel a glimmer that same hope, for a better tomorrow.



THE WAYPOINT

Residential Living:

They say two's company and three's a crowd; so what does that make 13?

By Senja Melin

"Wow, that's a lot of people in one house!" is usually the reaction I get when I tell people about my new living situation here on Cape Cod. And let me tell you, it is. There are 13 AmeriCorp members living in just one house here in Wellfleet. It's unlike any other living situation that I've ever encountered in my life. All members are from different parts of the United States, come from different backgrounds, and have a variety of interests and pastimes. To say there is never a dull moment would be an understatement. Here's a glimpse into what an average day, if you could call it that, is like inside one of the AmeriCorps Cape Cod houses.



Morning: Waking up can sometimes be the most difficult part of the day. However, when you're in a room with three other people, with three other alarms going off at the same time, it's probably going to be the easiest part of the day. The tough part starts when your feet hit the ground. Each of the things that go into a normal morning, such as eating breakfast, brushing your teeth, washing your face, showering and packing your own lunch, now has 13 new obstacles to confront before it can be completed.

Afternoon: We'll skip straight to evening; we're all out working hard during the day!

Evening: Evening is usually when most of our personal interests and pastimes are brought forth. Quite a few members enjoy going for a run after work, which motivates others to go running along with them, or at least to attempt to. Some members of the house enjoy cooking and baking; when this happens the kitchen is the most popular room in the house. Taste tests are offered, and, if we're lucky, they make enough for all of us. There are also times when you'll find multiple members of the house sitting reading quietly. However, reading quietly and reading when it's quiet are two very different stories. We have three guitars, two ukuleles, one banjo, and a number of singers in the group; and with that combination a calm house can go into a hullabaloo in no time. Socializing is the one activity that's certain to be happening somewhere in the house at all times, usually with an abundant amount of laughter to go along with it.

So despite all our differences, from states of origin to our backgrounds and interests, we've come together to form this strange and non-traditional family. In that case, if they say two's company and three's a crowd, that must make 13 one unforgettable living experience.



Left: Senja and Collin awe Suz with their soulful duet.

Right: True bonding only happens over games of Cranium and popsicles.



Swept Away By Waquoit Bay

By Lauren Ruotolo

Where waters are wild, where the river runs into the sea, swirling and teeming with life and fervor: the estuary is a fascinating place! The Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, other than being a mouthful to say, acts as a crucial conservation agent for natural biodiversity by conducting research and monitoring habitats to guide science-based stewardship and education.

For my individual placement, I have joined the reserve team in order to assist in the implementation of its educational components. From teaching about watershed issues to doing coastal geologic studies, the team's mission is to increase students' understanding of estuarine systems. By engaging in hands-on investigations and field trips with the Reserve, students actively learn about factors that can negatively influence water quality and estuary regions, while becoming coastal stewards themselves!

Not only is the Waquoit Bay a beautiful spot to work, but the reserve members are also all super friendly, and they actively involve me in multiple projects within and outside of the reserve.

I recently participated in a geologic erosion survey along the coast of Washburn Island. Trucking through the sand in my waders, I assisted two environmental specialists in measuring the horizon, vegetation levels, and coastal slope. This particular survey has been an ongoing project at the reserve for the past twelve years, with data



being collected 3 times per year. Collectively, the information is graphed to document yearly and monthly coastal erosion trends in order help those involved protect and assess these areas.

During this past month, I have also engaged myself as an educator on some very exciting and lively field trips! The first included Bourne House members leading Morse Pond School 6th graders along the trails of Beebe Woods (altogether, over the course of the fall, we will guide approximately 300 sixth graders and twelve teachers through this geological phenomenon!). While navigating with our compasses and topographic maps, we pointed out several native species, such as pitch and white pines, winter green, 'old man's beard' lichen, black oak and maple trees. We also taught the eager learners about the thousands of years of glacial processes that formed the Beebe Woods landscape. Not only was the energy high, but the weather was also great, the foliage was plentiful, and our only beastly encounter was with a comradely golden retriever!

My next educational excursion included multiple eighth grade science classes from Lawrence Junior High. Together we explored and surveyed the shoreline of

Shiverack's Pond, looking for evidence of wildlife, pollutants, and excess nutrient sources. Although the eighth graders may not have been as impressed by my intellectual abilities and overall awesomeness as the 6th graders were, they were still super receptive, and they left with a greater understanding of pollutant sources and how to best combat them. This field trip has become a persistent tradition over the past fifteen years, and the cumulative data has been used by science teachers to illustrate coastal changes and contaminant concerns.

Overall, I am extremely happy with my individual placement at the Waquoit Bay NERR. Every day at the office is a new adventure. I also may be out in the bay, in a classroom, or hiking through trails and kettle ponds. The variety keeps me interested and exposes me to new ideas and experiences everyday. I am captivated by the beauty, power, and significance of estuaries and am eager to pass this knowledge on to others. Hopefully this effort will help to protect and preserve one of the most biologically diverse ecosystems on Cape Cod.

THE WAYPOINT

The Diamondback Terrapin Gets an Extreme Home Makeover by

AmeriCorps

By Ben Fairbanks

Over the years, AmeriCorps Cape Cod has done a lot of work restoring the homes of native plants and animals and making Cape Codders more aware of the importance of simply observing, rather than touching, these species. One sterling example of these efforts is our involvement with the Massachusetts Audubon Society Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary's "Turtle Gardens" Project. AmeriCorps Cape Cod's members have had a large impact on a Cape-wide effort to restore the habitat of the native diamondback terrapin.

In fact, if you type "Turtle Gardens" into Google or YouTube, you are likely to get an AmeriCorps hit. Search further, and you will come across other participants such as Orleans Conservation Trust, Wellfleet Conservation Trust, and the Wheaton College Biology Department, to name a few. The state's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program has recognized the diamondback terrapin as a threatened species. This categorization was a response to the species' steep population decline throughout the twentieth century, due to the escalation of development by humans and the subsequent destruction of the terrapin's nesting habitat. Our efforts, in partnership with the aforementioned organizations, aim to prevent further harmful development and to restore embankments of brackish marshes.

The Head of Duck Creek in Wellfleet is the newest example of a successful turtle garden on the Cape! Multiple community groups helped create the garden by clearing the invasive plants and trash that threatened an otherwise suitable area for turtle nesting. Wellfleet Conservation Trust, Wellfleet Conservation Commission, the Audubon, Wellfleet Open Space Committee and AmeriCorps Cape Cod triumphantly saw the fruits of their joint labor when the Audubon was able to release 19 turtle hatchlings from the property in September of 2012. All groups would like to encourage the public to use this property for passive recreation and to spread awareness about these adaptive, yet increasingly rare, creatures. See it for yourself behind the Mobil Station in Wellfleet on Route 6, and start looking for signs of nesting in April!



We Make A Clean Sweep!

By Will Clark

It's a Thursday afternoon, and both houses are meeting with Everett, from the Dennis Department of Natural Resources, to survey Chapin Beach. The afternoon is slightly overcast, but the beach and water are both clean and beautiful. **MAJOR PROBLEM.** Wait, what? We're set to lead the Dennis portion of Coast-Sweep, a national beach clean-up program, the next day with students from Riverview School, a co-educational boarding school for students with an IQ in the 65-95 range and no significant emotional or behavioral problems, but there are only about a dozen pieces of garbage on the entire $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of beach! We briefly considered planting some trash on the beach to collect the following day but decided this probably wasn't the best idea.

On Friday, about 25 students from Riverview met with our 26 Corps members for the clean-up. As they disembarked the bus, the students were noticeably excited to meet all the AmeriCorps members. Or maybe it was because they got to be on a beach instead of in a classroom. One of those two things. Because of the aforementioned lack of garbage, the start of the beach clean-up could more accurately be described as a "beach stroll." This seemed to bother neither the students nor the Corps members, who were treated to a brief lesson about horseshoe crabs and insects by Jenna, our resident bug enthusiast. However, by the end of the day, we had actually collected several garbage bags full of trash and most of a pick-up truck full of scrapped fencing and wood! The day ended with a shellfishing demonstration by Brian Everett, who caught several soft-shell clams and donated them to the Wellfleet house. The students departed to eat lunch, but they were extremely thankful and had learned quite a bit about the environment and what they could do to protect it.



Cape Cod Kwassa Kwassa: AmeriCorps Explores the Cape

By Sara Cawley

Now that we are approaching our two-month anniversary of living on Cape Cod, (or “washing-a shore,” as the locals might say), we want to tell you about some of our favorite places on the Cape.

Truthfully, the Bourne House’s favorite haunt so far is probably our living room! After a long day out in the field, there’s nothing we like to do better than curling up on our couches in front of a roaring fire and putting on some Netflix. We can usually be found watching one of the following three shows on repeat: The League, Breaking Bad, or Parks & Recreation. We’ve been known to finish watching a season in one day; I guess we really shouldn’t be proud of it, but we sort of are anyway. Bourne House: Work Hard, Lounge Harder.

Flax Pond, a glacially formed kettle pond near our house, is also a spot we frequent. We made our first trip there to test our waders for holes- Jenna’s and Dan’s both leaked, in case you were wondering. Welcome to AmeriCorps, here are some wet pants! Flax Pond is a great place to sit and take in nature, especially during the fall, when the changing foliage is beautifully reflected in the water.

Since Falmouth is only a quick drive away, we Bournians also like to visit Downtown Falmouth on the weekends. You can’t beat the small-town setting or the awesome selection of restaurants, and shops. The standouts are definitely the Mexican restaurant Anejo, Eight Cousins Books, and Coffee Obsession, which sells just about every kind of caffeinated beverage you might desire.

Before Thursday evenings got too busy, our team the Bourne Supremacy, dominated trivia night at Trowbridge. We won a \$25 gift card, the Ultimate Dance Hits of the 1990s on CD, and the respect of the announcer for not using our smartphones to look up the answers. Trowbridge is also where Adam accidentally ate chicken for the first time after becoming a vegetarian.

So, what’s next for the Bournians? We’re looking forward to exploring more local towns and beaches, visiting places off-Cape such as Boston and Portland, and maybe even getting in some skiing this winter! We’re always down for a dance party at The Beach House in Falmouth, preferably to the incomparable music of Syndicate, our favorite cover band.

Hopefully Bait and Switch will play a show soon too, and we’ll all get to hear Dan rap Nicki Minaj’s “Superbass”; it’s always a highlight of the evening.

In the meantime, Kel and Adam are thinking of trying bee-keeping, and Steph has joined a women’s rugby team off-Cape. Dan plays for Cape Cod Rugby, along with Sean from the Wells House. Hannah’s ultimate frisbee team also recently went to the Club Championships in Sarasota, Florida. Finally, all of us in the Bourne House continue to get pretty excited about finding new grocery stores and markets that take food stamps. If you have any suggestions about cool places around the Cape for us to check out, let us know!

Some of our favorite spots:

The Knob
Chapoquoit Beach
Chapin Beach
Ryder Pond, Wellfleet
Downtown Falmouth
P-town
The Beach House
Coast Guard Beach
Flax Pond, Bourne
Heritage Museums & Gardens
Old Silver Beach
Martha’s Vineyard



Trial By Water: Wading into Education

By Chasity Reeder

When I joined AmeriCorps Cape Cod, I knew that I was going to be exposed to a number of new situations and experiences; and I was totally looking forward to it. I did not expect, however, that one of my main projects was going to include “flushing” elementary school students down a life-sized model septic system. This educational tool, known as “Flush the Kids,” piqued my interest, and, low and behold, I also discovered that it draws in the youngsters’ attention quite well. What does this all mean? You might be asking yourself. It turns out that Flush the Kids is just one of the twenty-five activities that are collectively called “Wet Fest.”

When I received my individual placement with the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension, I became the new Wet Fest Coordinator. Much of the service that I will do this year will involve preparing for and planning these Wet Festivals. The mission of Wet Fest is to educate young children about Cape Cod’s precious water source, the aquifer, and how people can harm it and the earth by polluting and improperly disposing of hazardous materials. Wet Fest also empowers children by teaching them that they can have a positive impact on the aquifer and the environment by recycling, reducing consumption, disposing of hazardous materials properly, and making any number of other small adjustments to their everyday lives that are critical to the wellbeing of our natural resources.

Each year, Wet Fest reaches out to about one thousand fourth through sixth graders at a number of elementary schools throughout Cape Cod, from Bourne and Falmouth to the Outer Cape. Wet Fest is an interactive, informative, and exciting collection of activities that schools endorse and students look forward to each year. Overall, Wet Fest is a great experience for the kids, the teachers, and even the people who make Wet Fest happen- the twenty six members of AmeriCorps Cape Cod. Don’t get me wrong, engaging and entertaining a group of one hundred rambunctious nine to twelve year olds with a traveling water festival is no simple task. It is only accomplished with the help and hard work of the dedicated, enthusiastic AmeriCorps Cape Cod members who have a heart for and love of doing service for their community. The members enhance the experience for the elementary school students not only by creating a fun atmosphere that fosters learning, but also by acting as positive role models who value education, people, and the environment.

As for me, I was extremely fortunate to be placed with this organization and to have the opportunity to be part of the planning, organizing, execution, and enjoyment of each Wet Fest, from beginning to end. I am lucky to be surrounded by such a large group of supportive and devoted people, including my service partners, Mike Maguire and Kalliope Egloff, the AmeriCorps staff, and my fellow AmeriCorps members. Through coordinating Wet Festivals, I am able to interact with so many people located throughout the Cape, and I gain skills and experiences that I will endearingly look back on with appreciation in the future.



Sea's The Day: Shorely Interesting Prospects

By Lindsay Crouch

IP. Those two letters are very important for AmeriCorps Cape Cod members, especially during the month of training at the beginning of the program when the IP selection process takes place. It stands for Individual Placement, and it is the individual internship that each member serves at for the year.

The process begins when each house receives descriptions of all IPs that will be offered for the upcoming year, and then we each have to rank them in order of preference and explain why we think our top choices are the right fit for us. We then anxiously await the decision of who gets which one. As with any decision such as this, there was excitement and disappointment when we discovered the results, but the predominant emotion was anticipation for what was to come. IPs are a great way to learn about the town, county, government department, or non-profit organization that each member is placed with. For certain members, it ends up being related to their previous experience so that they can build on what they already know; for some it is an opportunity to learn about something completely new; and for others, like me, it is a chance to gain valuable experience related to future career goals.

I was very excited to find out that my IP was with the Cape Cod National Seashore Planning Department, which is part of the National Park Service. As a Spanish major in college, I only had the opportunity to take a couple of political science and environmental studies classes,

although I became very interested in environmental issues and environmental policy during my last few years of school. I got a taste of what it is like to work on an environmental campaign last summer when I canvassed for MassPIRG. Initially, I helped pass an expanded bottle recycling bill that applied a deposit charge to a wider variety of beverage containers. Later, I contributed to the efforts of Environment Massachusetts, a program that seeks to expand solar energy opportunities for homeowners. Although canvassing did not turn out to be my calling, I enjoyed learning more about the political process and the specifics of the campaigns we worked on; and it was great feeling like I was making a difference by advancing issues that matter to the state, the country, and the world.

Now, at my Individual Placement, I am excited to have the opportunity to see how environmental conservation work is done within a government agency. At this point in my life, my career goals involve something within the environmental field, whether that is working for an environmental non-profit organization, working on the government level, or being involved in some other aspect of environmental protection.

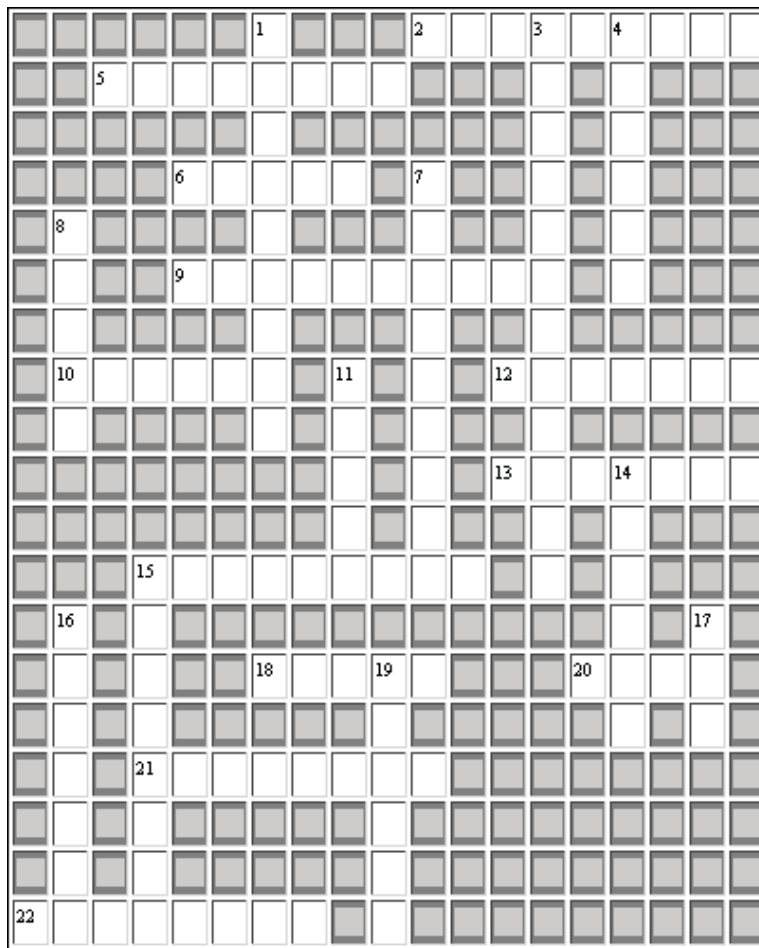
It is possible that my service at my IP will show me that environmental work within a government agency is not what I want to do. Or maybe I will love it and know that I want to take my career in that direction. Either way, I know that it will be a valuable educational opportunity. The great thing about the AmeriCorps Cape Cod program is that we get experience in a variety of different roles within the field of environmental conservation, and I am hoping that it might open my eyes to career options that I had never even considered before. I know that my experiences in AmeriCorps this year will give me great insight into my future, both personally and professionally, and I look forward to benefitting from the knowledge and the experience I will gain!

Lindsay, shown third from right, getting by with a little help from her friends.



Answers on <http://www.americorpscaped.org/>

AMERICROSSWORD

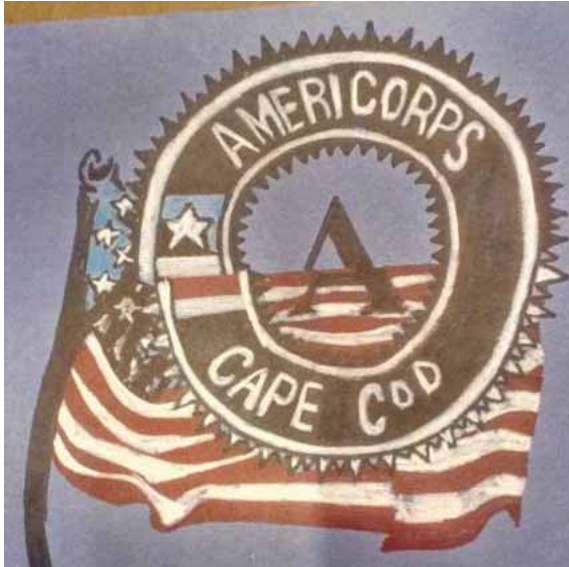


Across

2. Cape Cod's Native tribe
5. Important AmeriCorps service partner provides emergency response services and much more (2 Words)
6. Bisects town of Bourne, opened in 1914
9. _____ Bank, a national marine sanctuary
10. Wellfleet is famous for this seafood
12. _____ compound in Hyannisport
13. Type of scissors used to prune small branches
15. Massachusetts state flower, commonly known as Trailing Arbutus
18. A happy accident, or a part of a whale
20. Pinniped
21. Cause traffic jams on Rte. 6 in the summer
22. Highest point on Cape Cod (two words)

Down

1. This fruit is commercially grown in bogs
3. Town at the "fist" of Cape Cod
4. This lighthouse is featured on Cape Cod potato chip bags
7. Cape _____, a theater in Dennis
8. _____ Whale, formerly known as "Blackfish"
11. Town with smallest population on Cape Cod
14. Fire Safety and Recycling shows for kids
15. Massachusetts _____ Academy
16. Made the first transatlantic wireless transmission from Cape Cod over 100 years ago
17. Day of service in January
19. Type of pond formed by glaciers





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