

TRIBUTARIES

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE OLD LYME LAND TRUST

Incorporated 1966

www.oldlymelandtrust.org

August 2012

OLLT Establishes the John Lohmann CT River Preserve

The Old Lyme Land Trust is pleased to announce its newest preserve, located in the northwest corner of Old Lyme on the Connecticut River. This unique and special 40-acre tract was left to the Trust by the estate of John Lohmann, a founder and past President of the Trust who passed away in 2005. John was a dedicated conservationist who was instrumental in the campaign to save Watch Rock, which is today one of the Trust's most popular preserves. Together with Bud Twining and Emay Buck, John had also previously donated a 46-acre tract along the Lieutenant River – the Lohmann Buck Twining Preserve. The new John Lohmann CT River Preserve, however, is clearly the jewel-in-the-crown of John's legacy to land preservation in Old Lyme. Located to the west of Coult Lane, the preserve slopes down gently through tree-studded open fields to the Connecticut River, where spectacular views meet the eye both north and south, as well as across the river to Old Saybrook.

John was an architect who, after graduating from Yale, made Old Lyme his second home, and eventually his first. During World War II, the soldier John was stationed in England, where he fell in love with the landscaped-type preserves so common there. He was especially impressed with the fact that people were encouraged to actively use these and be a part of them, a lesson that came back with him to Connecticut after the war. After his return to the United States, John began to acquire land along the Connecticut River; in total, he assembled an overall tract of 40 acres. Though cleared for sheep farming in the 19th century, the forest had grown back, and John set right away to recreating the type of landscape he so admired in England. Trees were selectively removed



A view of the Connecticut River from the lower field at the John Lohmann CT River Preserve.

and an annual mowing led eventually to the creation of three magical fields, a large one up top, a smaller one down slope, and a river plain at the bottom. It might be fair to say that this was John's life work – it took many, many years of constant attention and devotion.

Most importantly, though, John did it with people in mind. Instead of building what could have been one or more very

(Continued on page 3)

Featured Preserve: The Belton Copp Preserve



The entrance to the newly created Belton Copp Preserve on Smith Neck Road.

This spring the Belton Copp Preserve on Smith Neck Road in Old Lyme was opened to the public. The Preserve is easy to find, down the road about a quarter of a mile on the left-hand side. The entrance is at a grassy clearing behind a stone wall surrounding a lone cedar tree and a granite bench donated by Genie Copp. The trail was recently cleared by the hardy Old Lyme Land Trust volunteers.

The preserve itself is four acres, however it abuts a large area of preserved salt marsh. From its overlooks you can see the sunrise over the marsh and get excellent views of an active osprey nest. It has even become an active Geocaching site.

The dedication of this preserve memorializes in small measure the many accomplishments of Belton Copp, who lived on and loved the land surrounding Smith Neck. He was

(Continued on page 3)

Watch Rock Preserve Enhanced by Installation of Memorial Bench

This year, visitors to our Elizabeth B. Karter Watch Rock Preserve might find that they linger a bit longer before returning to their vehicles. Just on the shore at the end of the main approach to the preserve, a lovely granite bench has been installed, beckoning those who pass by to pause and "sit a spell".

The bench is a memorial to Jerry Ward, a gentleman who was a long time resident in Lyme and enjoyed a special fondness for the preserve. He spent many hours happily traipsing the trails and enjoying the beautiful and inspiring views of Long Island Sound from its rocky shoreline. He was a constant visitor, and despite periodic inclement weather he found comfort and delight in the changing seasons and pastoral vistas. Jerry was a quiet, contemplative man who found solace there after a hard day, or pure pleasure when he was feeling joyful.

Betsy McManus, Jerry's beloved wife, graciously donated the bench in his honor. It rests by the water where views of the tidal wetlands and Long Island sound are truly awe-inspiring. The plaque reads in "Loving Memory of Jerry Ward, May 13, 1953 - March 5, 2009".

Now, amongst the many other delights this preserve has to offer, this memorial bench will provide for all who choose



Betsy McManus, wife of Jerry Ward, rests on the new Jerry Ward memorial bench at the Elizabeth B. Karter Watch Rock Preserve.

to rest upon it, a serene spot for reflection and enjoyment for many years to come.

Other Happenings at the Watch Rock Preserve

Things are changing at the Elizabeth B. Karter Watch Rock Preserve. In this case, that's not just a good thing, it's a remarkable achievement by Ed Sopneski, a steward for the preserve. OLLT named Ed the Volunteer of the Year at the March annual meeting, partly in recognition of his heroic efforts to eliminate the significant populations of invasive plants that dominate a large part of the preserve.

Invasive plants are those that are not native to our region and grow in an aggressive manner, causing severe damage

to native ecosystems. All through the fall, winter, and early spring, Ed worked daily, hand cutting and removing these invaders from about two acres of land just to the west of the parking lot. On Earth Day, OLLT volunteers planted 22 native shrubs in the newly cleared area, a start on reestablishing the native flora. Volunteers also cleaned up the Whimsy Trail.

OLLT's Board of Trustees recently adopted a management plan for Watch Rock developed by CRCCD (Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District) and received an assessment for habitat management from the University of Connecticut-based Coverts Project. It is presently considering options for further removal of the still-extensive invasive species, as well as maintaining the region cleared by Ed. Additional information on invasive species, why they are a problem, and references for identification and management can be found on the OLLT website: www.OldLymeLandTrust.org.

Jill Hautaniemi is 2011 Winner of Twining Scholarship

Jill Hautaniemi, a 2010 graduate of Lyme-Old Lyme High School, is the winner of Old Lyme Land Trust's 2011 Kinsley Twining Memorial Scholarship. The \$1000 scholarship is awarded to a graduate of LOLHS who is pursuing a college degree in environmental science or a related field. Jill is attending Dickinson College where she is majoring in Environmental Science. Good luck Jill! Applications for the 2012 Scholarship are due by August 31, 2012.

More information including an application can be found at www.oldlymelandtrust.org.



OLLT President Chris Clayton presents the Land-saver Award to Sarah (not shown) and Chris Smith, the sister and nephew, respectively, of John Lohmann, the 2012 recipient.

Shannon Chapman Completes Trail Passport Project

A walk in the woods of Old Lyme is more fun than ever thanks to Shannon Chapman. For her Girl Scout Gold Award, Shannon designed a Trail Passport for six of Old Lyme's preserves, three owned by OLLT (Goberis-Chadwick, George & Woodward H. Griswold, and Mile Creek) and three owned by the Town of Old Lyme (Champlain North, Champlain South, and Bartholomew). The Trail Passport contains maps for the preserves designed to be child-friendly. The maps are colorful and informative, and feature objects that children can identify as they walk the trails.

John Lohmann CT River Preserve

(Continued from page 1)

large houses, or selling the land for many millions of dollars, it was always John's intention to open his favorite preserve to the public for passive recreation. True to his dream, the preserve was transferred to OLLT this past spring, under the condition that the fields be forever maintained in their current state. To ensure this, an easement was granted to The Nature Conservancy, who will monitor the preserve on a regular basis.

The one remaining challenge, however, is access. As an almost "landlocked" parcel, there is no easy way in at the moment. The Trust is currently working to resolve this, and we hope that, within the next few months, a small parking area can be established and a simple trail blazed that will lead to the first field. Please keep an eye on our website for further news in this regard.

We would like to thank everyone who worked so devotedly to make this donation possible, including John's family, the Smith's of New York City, his lawyer Campbell Hudson, attorney Mike Wells (who represented OLLT pro bono), and the staff of The Nature Conservancy, among others. Most of all, we would like to thank John Lohmann for his foresight and extreme generosity – thank you, John, because of you and what you have done here for us, Old Lyme has become a better place, and will remain so forever.

Here is how it works. The passport is available for download on the websites of both OLLT (www.oldlymelandtrust.org) (go to the Properties Overview page) and the Town (www.oldlyme-ct.gov) (go to the Open Space Commission page). The child registers at the trailhead (look for the small wooden box nailed unobtrusively to a tree) and stamps the passport when the walk has been completed. When the passport has been stamped for all six trails, the child can submit it to the Physical Education instructor at Mile Creek or Center elementary schools.

Shannon, a former member of Girl Scout Troop 63059, and a graduate of Lyme-Old Lyme High School, is currently a student at Boston University. She was honored as a recipient of the coveted Girl Scout Gold Award at a ceremony on August 5, 2012 at Old Lyme Memorial Town Hall.

The Belton Copp Preserve

(Continued from page 1)

instrumental in preserving much of this unique neck, sandwiched between Long Island Sound, the Connecticut River, and the Black Hall River.

Belton had a long history of public service as well as being an exemplary father, husband, sailor, pilot, fisherman, and war hero. Losing an arm in World War II did not slow him down a bit. He was a Yale Law School graduate, an early director of the Connecticut Forest and Parks Association, a founding member of the Old Lyme Conservation Trust, and was active in the preservation of the Peace Sanctuary in Mystic and the Haley Farm in Groton. He was a trustee of the Conservation and Research Foundation which helped develop techniques for non-governmental entities (e.g. land trusts) to preserve land.

Most of Belton's efforts were never recorded as he quietly gave of himself and guided others of similar mind. Those of us lucky enough to have known him will attest that the whole of Belton Copp was much more than the sum of his many parts. Please come visit the lovely Belton Copp Preserve.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Complete form and return to: **Old Lyme Land Trust**, Post Office Box 163, Old Lyme, CT 06371

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

☐ YES, I would like to volunteer. Please call/email me.

My employer has a matching Gift Program: ☐ Form Enclosed Company _____

Please consider Old Lyme Land Trust in your estate planning. ☐ Check here if you would like more information.

Enclosed is my contribution: ☐ \$35 ☐ \$75 Dogwood ☐ \$150 Maple ☐ \$500 Beech ☐ \$1500 Oak ☐ Other \$ _____

Please make check payable to: **Old Lyme Land Trust**. Your gift is tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. *Thank You.*

Donors at the Maple, Beech, and Oak levels are entitled to a cap, T-shirt, or book, respectively.

☐ Check here if you would like to receive a gift. For the T-shirt, please indicate: ☐ small ☐ medium ☐ large

Join Us For A Swallows Cruise on September 28

Join us for a fabulous natural spectacle on the Connecticut River. In the late afternoon during the fall migration, hundreds of thousands of tree swallows gather on the river from 30 miles around and create beautiful sweeping formations in the sky. Just as the sun sets they converge into a huge funnel over Goose Island and disappear into the reeds to roost for the night. Roger Tory Peterson, the noted ornithologist, was introduced to this phenomenon by Hank Golet, an

OLLT steward. Peterson later wrote: "For sheer drama, the tornadoes of tree swallows eclipsed any other avian spectacle I have seen."

OLLT will host a cruise on the Connecticut River to view the swallows in action on Friday, September 28rd from 5-8 PM. Tickets are \$40 each. Wine, beer, and soft drinks will be provided. You may bring a picnic supper. Contact Ted Mundy (860-434-5674) or Agnes O'Connor (860-434-9094) for more information or to purchase tickets.

With Gratitude

The OLLT expresses thanks to retiring Trustees **Charlie Beal** and **Sabine O'Donnell** for their work and dedication to OLLT over the past years. We also welcome new Trustees **Deb Heminway** and **Mike Kiernan** to the Board.

Special thanks to **Summer Hill Nursery** in Madison for the donation of blueberry bush seedlings for our planting event at the Midsummer Festival.

The Trust would like to acknowledge and thank **Mike Wells** and **Milton Allen** for their pro bono work as attorney and financial advisor, respectively, to OLLT.

OLLT thanks **Pfizer, Inc.** for matching the financial contributions of its employees and for providing financial support in recognition of employees who volunteer significant time to OLLT.

Save the Date!

Where is the next generation of conservationists coming from? How can we get our children outdoors? Take part in a panel discussion led by Connecticut Audubon Society and co-sponsored by Old Lyme Land Trust and Lyme Land Conservation Trust to be held October 30 at 7 PM at the Old Lyme Congregational Church.



Despite the inclement weather, children enjoyed themselves planting blueberry bushes in pots they decorated at the OLLT Booth at Old Lyme's Midsummer Festival in July. The plants were donated by Summer Hill Nursery in Madison.