



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A Tough Act to Follow



D. Seeley Hubbard

Being my first message as President, I am humbled by having to follow the leadership of our previous president Marny Smith. To use an old cliché this is truly a tough act to follow. To fully appreciate Marny's legacy to the Norwalk Land Trust one has to look back at the state of the organization before she became President. This is not to suggest that the board of the Land Trust

then did not consist of dedicated individuals committed to the preservation and conservation of Norwalk's open space. It did, but Marny Smith took this organization to a level that many of us did not believe attainable.

When she asked me to join the Land Trust Board, she was not its President, but a very active member of its Executive Committee. She was so enthusiastic making the Land Trust a more effective organization for the preservation and conservation of open space in Norwalk. At that time, the number of members was constant, the finances from membership and fundraising were modest, and land acquisition was dependent solely upon private donations. The public relations, publicity and outreach to the community were also modest. The organization did not have a high profile in Norwalk or the surrounding communities.

All this was to change when Marny took the reins of the Land Trust.

“Marny was to preside over a major series of acquisitions which significantly added to the Land Trust's inventory, both in terms of total acreage and quality.”

Her first major project was to work in partnership with the state, city and Connecticut Friends School to acquire for the Land Trust a conservation easement of over five acres of pristine land, which included a beautiful pond on the White Barn Property. This acquisition was possible because of two grants requested by the Land Trust for \$450,000 from the state and \$250,000 from the city of Norwalk. Never before had the Land Trust received grants of this magnitude for any acquisition or collaborated with the state and city to preserve such significant open space.

“For Marny, the White Barn success was just a warm up for the next acquisition, the Farm Creek Nature Preserve. Under her stewardship, Norwalk Land Trust partnered with the city of Norwalk and obtained a 10-acre conservation easement over city property on the peninsula at Farm Creek in Rowayton.”

The next challenge was to raise \$4.5 million to purchase 34 Sammis Street in Rowayton in order to combine it with the Peninsula to create a permanent nature preserve consisting of 16 acres on the Farm Creek estuary. Today, the Land Trust has accomplished the astonishing feat of raising all but \$293,000 of the \$4.5 million by contributions large and small from over 800 contributors, another grant from the state for \$500,000 and a grant from the Sixth Taxing District for \$250,000. The Campaign for Farm Creek is a testament to Marny's vision, persistence and sheer optimism.

But Marny's leadership is not just defined by the stunning financial success and the acquisitions the Land Trust has received under her tutelage. Successful leadership is more than just numbers. It requires motivating people to support and follow you. The high profile of the Norwalk Land Trust generated by its public relations and marketing savvy, stewardship, special events and outreach reflect an organization that is well led and people who are devoted and passionate to the mission. In the end, this is an organization of volunteers, which can only attain and maintain its current level of success through a strong commitment and an abiding inspiration. So Marny we thank you for leadership, your time, your passion and most of all your kindred spirit to this special and vital cause. Yes, you are truly a most difficult act to follow and we all salute you for your service. 🍀

D. Seeley Hubbard
President

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A Canoe & Kayak Coastal Salt Marsh Tour Coming Up

by John Moeling, *Vice President*
and Ken Whitman

Paddlers, Get Ready!

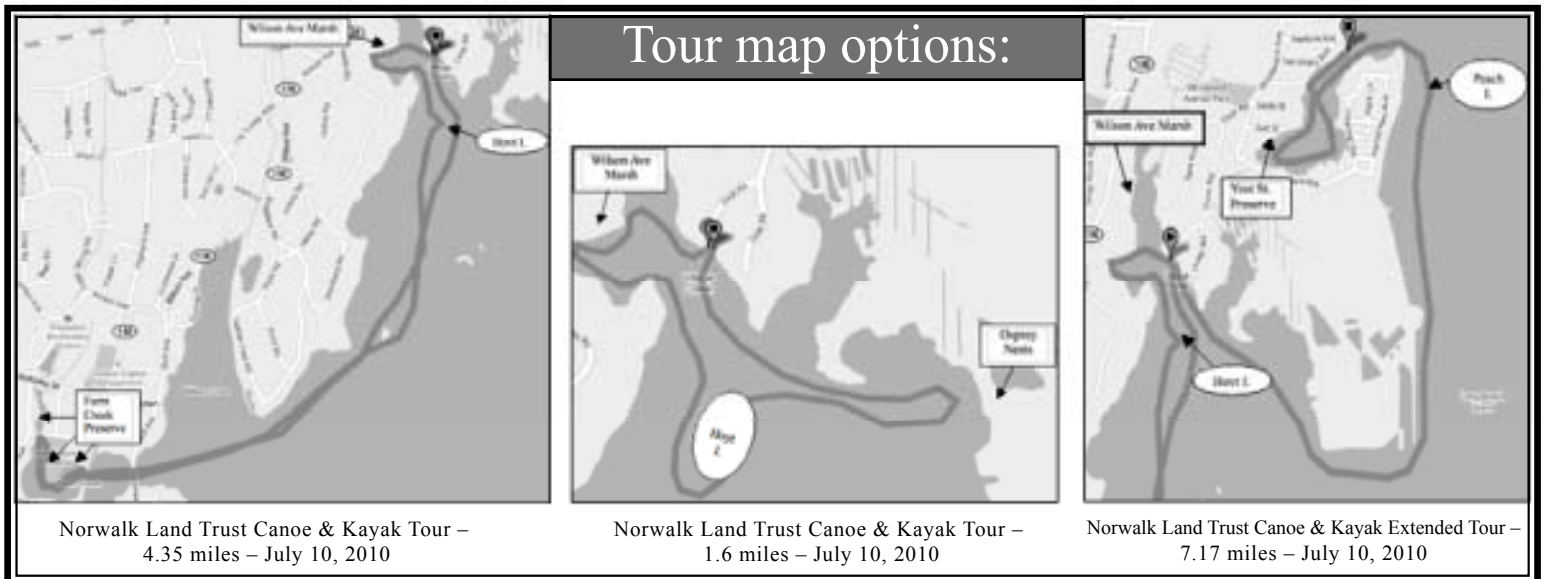
Grab your calendars: Saturday, July 10, at 10AM marks the launch of the first sea-based exploration of some of The Norwalk Land Trust's most interesting properties. Spearheaded by long-term kayakers and NLT Directors, John Moeling and Ken Whitman, the tour will launch at Village Creek and offer a visit to nearby Hoyt Island and the Wilson Avenue salt marsh and uplands. The tour will then proceed around Wilson Point and through to the Farm Creek Preserve where we will stop and enjoy the beauty of the marsh. Kayakers looking for a longer voyage may continue on with a pod destined for Norwalk Harbor, going around Manresa Island with a stop at Peach Island, a National Wildlife Refuge, then on to the protected marsh behind Harborview to visit NLT's Yost Street marshlands. Along the way we are likely to see nesting ospreys, great egrets, snowy egrets, great blue herons, yellow-crowned night herons, oystercatchers, mute swans, cormorants, and various ducks, geese, gulls, terns and sandpipers.



Everyone is invited and skill levels from Novice on up will enjoy the trip. There will be three paddling "pods" with trips ranging from 1.5 miles to 8 miles, from totally protected waters to Proper safety gear is required. Contributions from paddlers are voluntary but appreciated; \$10-\$20 is suggested depending your tour length. Kayakers may register by emailing NorwalkLT@optonline.net.

Come out and support the preservation of some of Connecticut's most pristine and vibrant coastal marsh and uplands, and enjoy a day of fun and exercise!

Special thanks to the citizens of Village Creek, a lovely and historic community well - worth a visit (visit them online at www.vchoa.com), and to Harbormaster and NLT Director Roger Willcox.



An Innovative Farm Creek Fundraising Idea!

by Marny Smith

How does the Land Trust help to bring its \$4.5 million fundraising campaign to the finish line? Ask Jean Fitzgerald who lived on Farm Creek for thirty-five years and what she tells you about Farm Creek might surprise you. Jean was constantly mesmerized by the view outside her kitchen window of the bird life, children swimming and playing in boats, the sunshine on the water. Now living on McKinley Street, she still thinks about the wild creatures that captivated her and writes stories about them.



The cat and crow from
A Farm Creek Fable

Knowing that there is a major campaign underway to purchase the last open piece of Farm Creek shore Jean wrote a story, “The Odd Couple”, about a Cat (fashioned after her own pet), a Crow and other wild critters living in and near the stone barn that remains on the property. Entranced by the story of these animals’ ability to co-exist and actually become friends, the Norwalk Land Trust asked Jean for permission to publish it as “A Farm Creek Fable”. It is now available for sale at www.norwalklandtrust.org.

Here’s an excerpt.

The creek was sparkling in the sun. It was full tide, gulls wheeled overhead and a couple of egrets flapped out of the rookery tree across the marsh. Sunlight shafted down through the leafy treetops in a shifting pattern. A black cat was stretched out on the warm stone steps leading down to the water and an old boat landing. With a panoramic view of three sides plus a rear view of the wooded area behind, Cat felt secure from any unwanted surprises.

Suddenly he was jolted by an unexpected flurry in the nearby weeds. His siesta interrupted, he cautiously opened one eye. There was a large black crow observing him with interest.

“Sorry to wake you up fella” squawked the crow, but did you by any chance use to hang out across the creek? Sittin’ on top of the backyard shed? watchin’ the world go by?”

Cat considered this blunt interruption, stared off into the middle distance, and then invoked one of the basic rules of cat-dom: when in doubt, wash.

“I’m that one. And you might be Corvus the Crow!”

“Right on”, squawked Crow. “Didn’t we have a time though, chasing out those boys?”

Cat was paying attention now. “We did indeed. How they fled when you dive bombed them with your ominous croak ‘NEVERMORE!’”

“Well, I’m not exactly a bird brain like certain idiot pigeons. So where are you stopping now?” Cat finished his washing routine and sat up straight. “I’m with the caretaker Person in that little stone house back in the trees. It’s quiet there, no dogs, lots of

marsh birds, the usual pesky squirrels who think they own the woods, sailboats on the creek, tide coming in and out. Very pleasant.”

Cat shifted further into the shade of the blackberry bushes. This was more conversation than he’d had in months and his pleasant little daily routine was shaken up. “This island has just been purchased by the town to be turned into a Nature Preserve.”

“Whatever that means”, croaked Crow. “I hope it gets left alone pretty much. Well, I’m off to get started on nest-building anyhow.”

Cat stretched and settled back to finish his siesta.

The next few days the noise of a buzz saw was heard throughout the land. Clean up was top listed on all sides. Cat’s caretaker-Person was busy neatening up the little island. Cat made his usual inspection tours but found many familiar landmarks had changed or disappeared altogether. The mice seem to have relocated. He couldn’t find Coon’s tree. Squirrels were yakking and chattering madly while flinging themselves about and sometimes missing a familiar branch that was no longer there. Paths seem to be rearranged.

It suddenly occurred to Cat that Crow hadn’t been around for several days. Surely he wouldn’t go away and not come around to say good-bye. Cat realized he missed getting the latest creek news and sightings from Crow’s aerial vantage point as well as his company. He sat glumly on the front step in the gathering dusk.

There seemed to be slight movement down the path from the road. Was that a black blob moving? Or did his eyes trick him? The blob seemed to waver and tip, then start and stop again. Cat rose up straight and peered sharply into the gloom and called “Crow, is that you?”

A strange croak answered. Cat took off like an arrow to have a closer look at the sad figure limping along. “Crow! Good heavens, what’s happened to you? You’re hurt!”

Crow gasped. “Got any water?”

Cat said, “I think so. Can you lean on me a bit ‘til we get to the shed?” He thought to himself ‘This fella’s bad hurt!’ They reached the shed and Crow flopped on his side next to the water dish, buried his head in it and slurped and slurped. He lay back and caught his breath.

Shortly, Crow started in with many stops for breath. “Got hit with a BB. Some guys were target shooting...which I didn’t notice ‘til too late. Pellet is still in my wing...so I can’t fly.”

Cat was quiet at first. Then, “Crow, we’ve got to think of some way to get that pellet out. Any chance you can reach it with your beak?”

“It’s no use, I already tried...it’s just out of reach”, said Crow.

To learn more about the wild creatures that live at Farm Creek and to learn where Cat and Crow managed to find help you’ll just have to purchase a copy of “A Farm Creek Fable” and settle down for a nice family read. It’s for children of all ages.

OUR PEOPLE

Profile: D. Seeley Hubbard



D. Seeley Hubbard

Newly elected Land Trust president Seeley Hubbard knows the coast of southern Connecticut well. He grew up in Darien and has spent much of his leisure time on board boats plying the waters of Long Island Sound. Educated in Darien public schools and later at Deerfield Academy and Trinity College, Seeley earned his law degree at the University of Connecticut Law School in 1970.

He began his professional career in New York City working as a trial lawyer for the Hart and Hume law firm. Four years later, he returned

to CT and became a partner with Ivy Barnam & O'Mara in Greenwich as a litigator. In 1980, he started to specialize in environmental regulations: inland, tidal, coastal, and federal. He formed Chapman, Moran, Hubbard and Zimmerman a new firm representing corporate clients as well as individuals before local environmental boards in 1987. Today he continues his practice in Darien.

From 1973 to 1980 Seeley volunteered his service on the first Darien Inland Wetlands Commission, helping to draft its initial regulations. He held a position on the Executive Committee of the Environmental Quality Section of the CT Bar Association as their expert on Coastal Area Management (CAM). He drafted Darien's CAM regulations in the early 1980s and chaired Darien's Advisory Commission on Coastal Waters. He also served on Darien's Republican Town Committee and served as its chairman for four years.

Seeley was a director of the Darien Land Trust from the late 1980s until moving to Norwalk in 1993. He joined the board of the Norwalk Land Trust in 2004 and was elected president last November. In 2001, Alex Knopp appointed Seeley to the Norwalk Conservation Commission, served as its chairman from 2005-2009, and is currently vice chairman.

We asked Seeley to answer some questions about why he has chosen to spend his time defending the environment. His answers are as follows:

When did you decide to specialize in environmental law?

I have had a passion for conservation and the preservation of natural resources since I was child. Darien had less than 5000 residents in the forties and early fifties when I was a child and the experience of watching each parcel be developed and the trees and animal habitat destroyed had a lasting effect on me. When I was at law school in the late 1960s, the environmental movement was in its infancy.

The (federal) Environmental Protection Agency was created; consciousness for our environmental problems was reflected in the first Earth Day. It was at that point that I committed myself to using my legal training to save and preserve as much of our natural resources as I could. This meant to me mainly natural open space. I have been doing what I can to save open space ever since.

What is the most satisfying thing you have done for environmental protection, something you are proud to have been a part of?

Clearly, the most exciting and satisfying experience for me in the advancement of environmental protection and the protection of open space and habitat is my participation in the campaign to create the 16-acre nature preserve at Farm Creek. With the daunting task of raising \$4.5 million to save this precious resource from the developer's bulldozer and with only \$293,000 remaining to be raised, I view this accomplishment as nothing less than a miracle. I know we are not there yet. However, the tenacity of the Norwalk Land Trust and a small group of dedicated conservationists with a noble vision has convinced me that preserving open space, and protecting our environment is a priority for residents and that the Farm Creek experience can be duplicated throughout Norwalk.

Do you have any special goals for the Norwalk Land Trust?

My goals for the Land Trust focus on three areas:

First, double the land we protect in the next decade through gifts, conservation easements and purchase. If we can galvanize the same spirit that we created for the Campaign for Farm Creek Preserve, we can accomplish this goal.

Second, grow our membership by getting the word out about what we do and the importance of preserving open space, especially to Norwalk school children. We have professional and effective public relations and marketing skills that allow us to keep our focus and achieve favorable results.

Third is to expand the educational outreach to the schools and Norwalk Community College and to provide funding for educational projects. We have had a great start and have made progress in this direction. I believe that the more children visit our properties, the more parents become aware of the value of what we do and represent.

Why do you think it's important for Norwalk to have a Land Trust?

Land Trusts are or should be the most vocal grass roots advocate for preserving open space in the community. Unfortunately, open space has a very high economic value. It represents a significant asset to a homeowner or a developer. Norwalk loses tax revenues from protected open space. Yet, over-development produces far greater economic costs to the city. Norwalk Land Trust is vital to the city as the leading environmental organization protecting its open space through acquisitions, advocacy, and educational programs.

Profile: Kathy Siever

Norwalk Land Trust's new Secretary, Kathy Siever, has a passion for conservation, and brings event planning and administrative support skills to the team. A veteran of GE Capital, she supported several high-level executives, and coordinated hundreds of trade shows and customer events over a 16-year career.

Kathy serves on the NLT Outreach and Stewardship Committees, and is a regular volunteer at the Farm Creek Preserve. Due to her upbringing by depression-era parents, she's a do-it-yourself type with her own tool box and collection of power tools, and has a reputation for tackling projects involving power washing, weed-whacking, and log-splitting. Since February '09 she has been fundraising for the Campaign for Farm Creek, and last Fall organized the third annual "Discovery Day", coordinating 35 volunteers who hosted over 300 visitors eager to learn about resident wildlife, native plants and "fun facts" about the estuary.

She traces her love of the wild to childhood summers in New Hampshire (NH) where she and 10 family members shared a small and primitive lakeside cabin with no heat, telephone or TV. She was strongly influenced by her parents, a housewife and an IBM executive, who were charter members of the Little Lake Sunapee (NH) Protective Association which reestablished the habitat for loons, fox, moose, bear and many species of forest dwellers.

Together with various combinations of her husband, two daughters, three step-sons and step-grandson, Kathy has in recent years climbed Mt. Washington, Black Mountain and Mt. Monadnock, all in NH, and loves to day-hike through nearby preserves and nature sanctuaries. She is also an avid boater, enjoying lazy cruises on Long Island Sound, and excursions to Shelter Island. Her favorite pastime at the end of a typical day is sitting on the deck overlooking her rock garden, watching the birds while enjoying a glass of Chardonnay.

A New Canaan High School alum, she earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Fairfield University where she graduated magna cum laude while a single mother raising two teenagers. She and her husband David, an investment banker who raises capital for clean and renewable energy projects, have resided in Rowayton since 2000 and were featured in a New York Times article last May about couples sharing home office space due to lay-offs in the financial services industry. She is currently principal of iAssistant, a virtual assistant, and is on a job search for an administrative assistant and/or event planning position. More details about her background can be found at i-assistant.org.

Kathy is happy to be serving the NLT and her goals for the year are to help launch the "Nature's Classroom" study for 4th grade students this spring, conclude the fundraising to retire the mortgage on 34 Sammis Street, and organize another successful Discovery Day in the Fall.



Kathy Siever

Potpourri

Help Needed For The Final Stretch...

The Norwalk Land Trust's Campaign for Farm Creek Preserve began an incredible project three years ago. It was an enormous challenge for a small non-profit to raise \$4.5 million to complete the 16-acre preserve on Farm Creek, an estuary of Long Island Sound located in Rowayton. However, our mission dictated our commitment to keep this land safe from multi-home development. As a result, Farm Creek continues to be home to the natural inhabitants, the animal and bird life. It is also a sanctuary for the human spirit.

Finally, we can report that the END is near for the Farm Creek fundraising campaign! With the help of hundreds of Norwalk residents, the Tombros Challenge Grant, the City, the Sixth Taxing District, and Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, the Land Trust needs less than **\$300,000**, to retire its mortgage.

\$\$\$ Your donations designated to Farm Creek can help us get to the final stretch. Mail your donations to Norwalk Land Trust, PO Box 34, Norwalk, CT 06853. It will be greatly appreciated. 🍀

Spring Clean-up Dates

Volunteers are needed for spring cleaning at the following properties:

March 20 10:00am -- Little Fox

Location: 12 Little Fox Lane

March 27 9:30am – Little West Cedar

Location: 383 West Cedar St. (at the Five Mile River)

April 24 9:30am – Farm Creek

Location #1: between McKinley and Sammis St. bridge – (meet @ 50 Roton Ave)

Friends of Farm Creek will provide coffee and gloves for volunteers.

Location #2: 34 Sammis Street

Bring your leaf rake. NLT will provide paper leaf bags and gloves

June 5 10:00am – Nursery Street

Location: Nursery St and New Canaan Ave

For additional spring clean-up schedule visit norwalklandtrust.org.

Calling All Volunteers!



Volunteers Suzanne Bryan and John Igneri bringing woodchips to line the trail at Farm Creek last May.

The Norwalk Land Trust has been supported by many wonderful volunteers: property stewardship, events, public relations, and much more. **THANK YOU!** To make it easier for you to find out about opportunities to help the Land Trust in 2010, we will be sending a monthly email volunteer alert to all of you who have provided your emails and indicated you would like to be a volunteer. Please check out our calendar of volunteer opportunities online at www.norwalklandtrust.org.

Whether you prefer being outdoors in glorious open space or helping with other tasks indoors, it's all up to you. Let us know your interest by emailing norwalkLT@optonline.net. Thank you in advance!



John Igneri and his wife Dr. Christine Tierney carrying a log used to line the trail at Farm Creek last May.



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Norwalk Land Trust News is published twice a year by Norwalk Land Trust.

For more information about NLT, please email us at norwalkLT@optonline.net

Lorraine Dowdey, Editor

JOIN US



Being a member of the Norwalk Land Trust has its benefits.
Your support means continued care and preservation of our precious
open spaces for today and years to come!

Our Mission...

Norwalk Land Trust recognizes the need to balance nature and development. Acquiring and preserving land protects nature and benefits Norwalk's present and future generations. Norwalk Land Trust is a non-profit corporation dedicated to preserve open space in Norwalk.

2010 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Please join the Norwalk Land Trust for 2010
if you haven't already done so...

You are supporting continuing preservation
of Norwalk open spaces! **Thank You**

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____

Phone (____) _____

- \$30 Individual
- \$50 Family
- \$100-\$249 Supporting
- \$250-\$499 Trees and Trails Contributor
- \$500-\$999 Trees and Trails Steward
- \$1,000+ Trees and Trails Leadership
- Other
- Matching gift form enclosed

Amount enclosed \$_____ check payable to Norwalk Land Trust
or from my PayPal account \$_____ to norwalkLT@optonline.net

Please contact me about: property donation volunteering
 other

Please use my email address to send me electronic newsletters
and communications: YES NO

Please clip and mail to:

Norwalk Land Trust, PO Box 34, Norwalk CT 06853

For Corporate membership, please email norwalkLT@optonline.net
or visit us at www.norwalklandtrust.org.

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