

EVENTS



**Boston Harbor
TASL census (water
bird count):** Sunday January 17,
2010, 8 AM. Call leader for details:
781-863-2392.



**Bear Creek Sanctuary
(Rumney Marsh) biweekly
bird walks:** Sundays, January
10 and 24, February 7 and 21,
at 8 AM. Call leader for details:
781-863-2392.



**Monday night forum:
Return of the clam
(date and time to be
announced).** Check our web site:
<http://www.friendsofbelleislemarsh.org>.
See also **The Return of the Clam**,
page 5.

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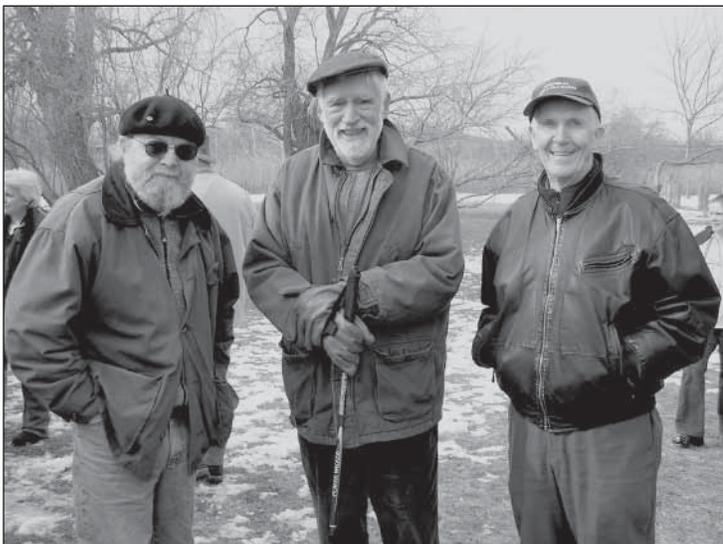


December 2009

Harvest Festival more photos on page 2



Photo by *Barbara Bishop*



Alert!

Members and friends: Belle Isle Marsh Reservation isn't fully protected these days. The simple reason is that one of our reconnaissance masters, John Kilmartin, is set back by medical challenges and hasn't been on his bike for the last several months. Everyone, please pick up the slack in his absence.

John routinely monitored the marsh perimeter for violations and reported on problems. Recall that it was John's fact-finding that prompted the Town of Winthrop to hire an environmental consultant to work on restoring the perimeter of Belle Isle Cemetery.

Evan Gellar, Conal Foley, John Kilmartin, February 2007

Photo by *Barbara Bishop*

Harvest Festival October 4

More than 350 people enjoyed a beautiful fall afternoon at the Park.



Jack Markley, Liz Regan, Bob E.



Photo by Barbara Bishop
Happiness with pumpkins



Photo by Soheil Zende
Moms and kids



Loading up the hayride wagon (from Colby Farms in N)



Photo by Barbara Bishop
Mike Oliver, storyteller



Photo by Soheil Zende
Rick Roth, the animal guy (from Creature Teachers)

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



Photo by **Barbara Bishop**
Shback, Nancy & John Kilmartin, Lee Fich, Daniel Simon Skepple



Photo by **Soheil Zende**
(Newbury)



Photo by **Soheil Zende**
Crowding the hayride

When I was growing up the “first snow” was always eagerly awaited. I remember one particularly pretty snow day, when school had been called off. My friend Janet and I planned an outing to one of our favorite spots down the old barn road on my neighbor’s farm. We had a special tree that we considered “ours.” It was a two-hundred-year-old fir tree. As you can imagine, it was especially beautiful with freshly fallen snow blanketing it in the sun. We set about to make a snowman to keep it company. When it was completed we stepped back to admire our work; a fine job if I may say so.

Book reviews

Time To Sleep by Denise Fleming, Scholastic, Inc, 555 Broadway, NY, NY.

Winter is coming. It is time for all the woodland animals to take their winter naps. Denise Fleming is a well known children’s author who writes and illustrates many “concept” books. Her scientific information is written simply and woven into a fictional story; delighting many young readers. Her illustrations are colorful, a bit abstract and very pleasing to a reader. Did you know that skunks, turtles, and ladybugs hibernate? Read this book and find out more!

Snowballs by Lois Ehlert, Voyager Books, Harcourt Bruce and Company, NY, NY.

Snowballs is a delightful, brightly illustrated book about the age old “first snow” event of building a snowman. In this case it is a snow family. The subject in the book has been collecting things for his or her snowman project, things like red maple leaves, buttons, pine boughs, etc. When the snow comes, building begins. Each snow person has his or her own identity. And as in all good snow stories, the snow eventually melts...leaving a diminished snow family. Lois Ehlert’s illustrations are

made using cut paper and paint. They are colorful and fanciful. At the end of the book she includes facts about snow and some wonderful photos of real snowman. A great winter read!



Pine cone bird feeder

Make a pine cone bird feeder and hang it near a window for little ones to watch the birds (and sometimes squirrels) feed on cold winter days.

You will need:

- A pine cone
- 3 tablespoons of peanut butter
- 1 cup of birdseed
- 18-inch piece of string
- 1 paper plate
- 1 popsicle stick or plastic knife for spreading

First tie the string around the pine cone on one end and secure tightly, leaving two equal ends of string. Tie the two strings together at the ends leaving a nice loop to hang on a tree limb. Now you can spread the peanut butter all over the pine cone. Be generous and cover the whole cone. Next pour the seed into the paper plate. Roll the sticky pine cone in the seed. Hang on a tree and enjoy the show!



Harvest Festival

Our Harvest Festival was a big success this year. Thanks to everyone who helped and to everyone who came to the Festival. Special thanks to Marc Wallerice and the Winthrop Marketplace for their generous donation of pumpkins, and to Geoff Wood and the DCR staff for their help, as always. Thanks to festival committee members Mary Mitchell, Suzanne Ryan, Dani Foley, Gail Miller, Heather McClure.

Our horse-drawn hayrides and pumpkin decorating are always popular. Mike Oliver, storyteller, delighted his audience with an original marsh story, and Peggy Connolly presided at the children's art table. This year we also hosted people from the Massachusetts

Oyster Project, the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority, the Mystic River Watershed Association, Rick Roth from Creature Teachers, and Colby Farms. Thanks to the band *Supraphonic* which features Dave Limina on the Hammond B3 organ, Kevin Barry on guitar, and Lorne Entress on drums.

It's always great to see members and supporters of the Friends at the Harvest Festival. See you next year.

Thank you! Thank you!

Our volunteer organization is successful because of the time, talent and money that is donated by people in the community. Everyone plays an important role in the Friends: walkers and dog-walkers who use the Park every day; birdwatchers who share their sightings with others; legislators who

support funding for the park. This year's events were funded by membership dues and with the financial help of many people in our community. Thank you, thank you to Speaker of the House Robert A. DeLeo, Mayor Thomas Menino of Boston, Mayor Thomas Ambrosino of Revere, Senator Anthony Petrucci, State Representative Carlo Basile, State Representative Kathi-Anne Reinstein, the Winthrop Marketplace, Cappuccio Enterprises, the East Boston Savings Bank, the East Boston Foundation, the Boston Foundation's Chelsea-East Boston Environmental Fund, Century 21 Mario Real Estate and Suffolk Downs.

We thank you for your support in preserving, protecting and defending Belle Isle Marsh.

Barbara Bishop
President, Friends of Belle Isle Marsh

Rivers be Dammed (part 3)

Parts 1 and 2 of this article (Belle Isle News, June 2009, September 2009) explored the conflict between private gain and public good in our nation's history, relating our "recurring political economic crises" to tension over the use and abuse of natural resources such as rivers.

Our deep ocean and coastal seas are suffering a variety of set-backs from advances in industrial fishing. A recent (2007) release by the Herring Alliance spells out the problem of the by-catches of the mid-water net-trawling fleets, which include additional fish caught other than target fish. While targeting ocean herring, which live entirely in the ocean, the fleets net 'other' fish (coastal and river herring, for example), decimating populations which require both ocean and river water to survive. Their numbers, once in the hundreds of thousands during spring river runs in the few remaining normal rivers, are now heading to single digits from their historic abundance.

On the plus side there are modest signs of improvement. Federal and state wildlife and fisheries departments

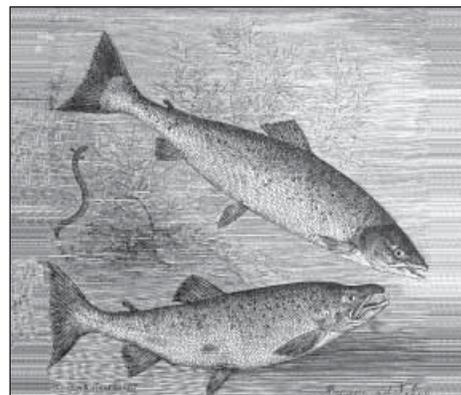
stock rivers and lakes and construct fish ladders which make up for some of the tremendous loss of ocean fish migrations upstream, though these measures do not make up for the resource that unimpeded fish migration represents. Federal regulatory authorities such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are enforcing dam removal, specifically addressing fish ladder problems.

However, of the nearly 75,000 sizable dams over 6 feet high across the U.S., and the tens of thousands smaller ones, less than one percent are under consideration for removal. A single dam obstructing a river mouth can render a hundred-mile watershed a shell of its former self. The celebrated removal of Maine's Kennebec River Edwards Dam (1999) and Massachusetts' Town Brook Dam in Plymouth (2002) opened up these rivers for the return of fish migrations. The Edwards removal opened up 17 miles of a 230 mile watershed drainage area. Six other dams require removal to allow the return of fish to give the river back its maximal potential wealth.

The abandonment without removal of thousands of obstructive dams

throughout the nation exposes the depth of impunity, bad attitude and overreaching commercial-financial harm we are dealing with. With fish costing \$10.00 a pound, perhaps we should think of unspoiled river watersheds as a significant portion of nature's "Social Security", not in the form of a check, but as a resource to be harvested in a civilized manner. Yet, narrow investor ambition, not the broad public good, has decided how the commonwealth of resources is to be exploited. The issue drives home our failure to overthrow the legalized political and economic arrogance of an imperial power and its colonial surrogates over two hundred years ago.

Conal Foley





Tom Shields, Joe Buttner and clammers getting ready to deliver baby clams to Snake Island

Photo by Barbara Bishop

The Return of the Clam

Our next Monday Night Forum, date and place to be announced soon, covers a local aquaculture project to restore

soft-shell clams beds. Clams and oysters were once abundant in the waters of Belle Isle Creek, Chelsea Creek, our local bays and along the beaches.

Dr. Joe Buttner of the Northeast Massachusetts Aquaculture Center and Salem State College will be the featured speaker. The goal of their project is to reseed the clam beds along the coast of Massachusetts. Clams are grown in tanks at Cat Cove in Salem until they are as big as pumpkin seeds. This summer, Joe delivered thousands of these tiny clams to coastal communities. In Winthrop, Chet McDonald and other Winthrop clammers took the clams out to Snake Island at low tide where they were buried in the mud flats and covered with netting to protect them from predators and tides. Later, in November, after the clams have grown, the netting is removed.



October Heron

There is a certain inevitable karmic cycle of change. The seasons move from one to the next and then on again. Fashion changes. Popular culture changes. In my memory I have now witnessed a third attempt to popularize roller derby, the only sport that empowers women to act like drunken louts in a waterfront dive. Fedoras for men will certainly come back and skirts that brush the sidewalk. Change sweeps by and it can take your breath away or bring on a little giggle when you remember the last visit. Literature is no different. Hemingway comes and goes like the tides. It's about time for Jean Genet to be unearthed. All this came to me as I lay in bed last night.

We just had a terrific storm. Wind and very high tides covered the marsh and turned it into a lake. Surprisingly

we got our first snow. After all it is just October and this is not Maine. Our world was pounded and scrubbed clean. The trees were shedding leaves like a white house cat drops fur. Change, change, change. So warm and snug beneath the quilt (just pulled down from the closet shelf), I started to read. [*Caution:* The following text makes shameless and explicit references to poetry. Proceed further at your own risk.] Literary fashion is as ruthless, changeable and irrational as a critic watching a designer's clothing parading down a runway. I have to admit to reading Dylan Thomas, the dead Welsh poet famous for his words, his drunkenness and the number of suburban housewives he slept with on his book tours. Thomas is certainly no longer the darling of the literary classes. His poetry is full of words stumbling from line to line with a sort of Shakespearean grandeur (another poet strongly suspected of being a secret Welshman). There are no sweet melodies but rather fierce mouthfuls. Puccini *vs.* Muddy Waters. I was warm beneath the sheets and totally under the influence when I came to "Poem in

October".

*It was my thirtieth year to heaven
Woke to my hearing from harbour and
neighbour wood*

*And the mussel pooled and the heron
Priested shore*

The morning beckon

*With water praying and call of seagull
and rook*

*And the knock of sailing boats on the net
webbed wall*

Myself to set foot

That second

In the still sleeping town and set forth.

I know this moment. I know this nearly every time that I walk out into Belle Isle. Poetry doesn't teach me this but it fills me up to hear these words that Thomas uses. Even stronger was my experience the next morning when coming back from Lynn along Revere Beach, I looked across Broad Sound and the shining silver sea to the outer harbor islands. The air was full of the taste and tang of a cold draught of spring water. Only a heron was lacking.

George Cumming

George Cumming's blog **OrientSee** is at www.georgemacumming.com/.

Friends of Belle Isle Marsh
(FBIM) membership dues:

- Family \$15
- Individual \$10
- Seniors and Youth (under 16) \$5

FBIM is a registered nonprofit corporation; contributions are tax-deductible. Thank you for your continued support.

FBIM is a volunteer organization dedicated to the preservation of this marsh. We believe that protection ultimately depends on public awareness of the value and beauty of this natural resource. Our focus, therefore, is mainly educational.

For extra newsletters to share or leave on tables at your coffee shop, public library or boat club, etc., call 617-567-5072 or email:

friendsofbelleislemarsh@comcast.net

Our web address:

<http://www.friendsofbelleislemarsh.org>

*This issue was produced by Soheil Zende
with help from Barbara Bishop, Daniela Foley, Gail
Miller and Christine Zende.*

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Friends of Belle Isle Marsh

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Beach Poetry

Poetry by 5th grade students, A. T. Cummings
Elementary School, Winthrop

Beach Poem

*We went to the beach
Mr. Nash wanted to teach*

*We saw some gulls all very small
They had an interesting call*

*The plovers weren't there
Because the coldness was near*

*It was about 60 degrees
But there was a slight breeze*

*Some gulls had red bills
They gave us chills*

*One had a black back
Others seemed to lack*

*Piping plovers hide in the grass
They don't eat sea glass*

*Gulls up in the sky
Fly very high*

David Fisher and Frankie Ferrara



Sea Gulls

*We went to the beach,
With my fifth grade teach.*

*Our gull teacher was Mr. Nash,
Our trip was a smash.*

*We saw a gull with a ring around its bill,
Seeing this gave us a thrill.*

*The piping plover was as small as could be,
They are nowadays hard to see.*

*Up above, flying high, looking down for food today,
Not so much food because it is not May.*

*We smell salty, sea smell,
While the other kids wait for the school bell.*

*It was sixty degrees,
But there was a chilly breeze.*

*We found a slipper shell,
As the seaweed smelled a disgusting smell.*

*We had so much fun,
Playing and learning in the sun.*

Meghan Chavis, Regina Garufo, Kelsie Griffiths, Haley Holden

