

EVENTS

Programs are free and open to the public.



Monday Night Forum: July 8,
7 PM. Orient Heights Yacht
Club, Bayswater Street, East Boston.
Showing of the film *Ocean Frontiers*.



**Revere Beach National
Sand Sculpting Festival: July 19, 20
& 21.** The largest sand sculpting
festival on the east coast welcomes
world-renowned artists and over
500,000 spectators. *With new
features including the interactive Kid's
Zone and Learning Center and the
hearty and healthy beach side food
pavilion. Everyone can experience the
beauty, history and fun that is Revere
Beach. For a detailed schedule and
list of sponsors please visit: [http://
reverebeachpartnership.com/sand
sculpting/schedule/](http://reverebeachpartnership.com/sand-sculpting/schedule/). The Kid's Zone
ends earlier each day than the rest of the
Festival. Accessible by MBTA.*



Dawn heron censuses:
September 15, 6:00 AM
October 12, 6:30 AM

Meet at Siren Reinstein Memorial
Boardwalk at the southeast corner
of Belle Isle Park to count the
Snowy Egrets, Great Egrets, Great
Blue Herons, Black-crowned
Night-Herons and Glossy Ibises.
In addition to herons, you'll see
other shore and water birds. Bring
binoculars, waterproof footwear and
mosquito protection. *The census
lasts anywhere from one to four hours.
Parking on Bennington Street across
from Suffolk Downs (T) station, near
Belle Isle Reservation entrance. More
information: 781-863-2392.*



Belle Isle News

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Number 93

June 2013

May in the Marsh Festival



Arts & crafts table

Thank you to all who participated
in and attended our spring event,
May in the Marsh, on May 4th! This
event was planned to replace last fall's
Harvest Festival, which was cancelled
due to weather, and it was a great
success with beautiful weather and
exciting activities. We plan to have our
Harvest Festival as usual in the fall this
year on October 6, so save the date!



Erica Foley & friends



Creature Teacher's turtle



Billy & Kristen Goodspeed

Crazy for Crustaceans

Man's history with the American lobster has been
a complicated one, to say the least. Historically
it was considered a trash species, food for poor people
or prisoners (they were probably forced to eat it without
melted butter). Over time, it evolved into a high priced
delicacy which only the affluent could afford. In the
summer of 2012, lobster prices bottomed out at \$3.99
per pound, the lowest price of anything at the seafood

Continued on page 2





Horse Breath.

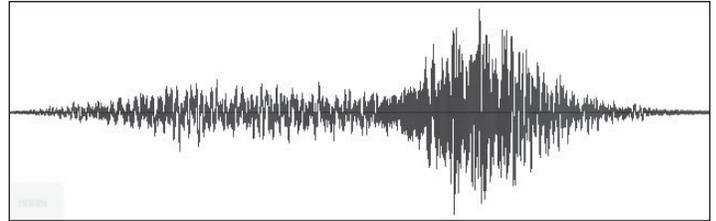
That's not an ordinary conversation starter. It's a strange phrase which does not come to mind easily and it started with quiet.

I'm out early most mornings with the dog. Ruby and I have the world to ourselves. The overnight air freight arrivals aren't coming in to Logan. The Blue Line is asleep. No traffic, no trucks, although you can just hear the highway murmuring over by Chelsea Creek and there's no wind. What's left is an extraordinary and rare commodity, quiet. I'm so used to the weathering, sandpapering effect on life when your neighbor is a city airport. Noise is so constant that it deadens my hearing

bit by bit and my ears grow duller with the daily cacophony. Age doesn't help either. Quiet is rare except for dawn.

Mornings, early mornings, that's when I hear the noisy (and they are very noisy) robins. There are Downy Woodpeckers hammering at trees, hunting for food in tree bark. The sleepy Mourning Doves make owl moans. The coyotes' chorus can add a touch of cheap Western movies to an urban landscape without cacti. Raccoons slink beneath the fence, rattling the chain links. A neighbor's wind chimes put me in mind of a Japanese temple. I even hear my own foot falls. It's morning and the world is rich with sound, sounds that are ordinarily muffled by the workaday city. Morning at Suffolk Downs is when the horses are out on the track for their exercise. The jockeys whistle, sing, tell each other jokes and occasionally curse their mounts. In wet weather, the

horses make gloppy, sucking sounds as their hooves pull loose from the mud. Horses that enjoy the wet are called mudlarks. When horses run in a race or practice, they run counterclockwise. That's the standard direction for races here in this country. After a workout



at speed, they walk slowly back to the stables clockwise near the outside of the track. The horses are close to the fence along which we walk every morning. They breath. They breath very, very loudly. It's a startling sound, a miniature wind storm as they catch the breath that they spent running so fast. I've never spent time on a farm and so horse breath is a new experience for me. It's why early mornings are so full of wonder to my ear.

George Cumming

Crazy for Crustaceans (Continued)

The history between scuba divers and lobsters is much more straightforward and most times it does not end well for the lobster. Over my many years of diving in New England, I have found that a large percentage of recreational divers get into the sport and stay actively diving so they can catch dinner, predominantly lobster. If you have spent any time underwater at Cape Ann, you know that lobsters are very common in that area. Perhaps, that is what spurs so many divers to pay the \$40 required to get a lobster license from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Those divers quickly learn two things. An abundance of lobsters doesn't equal an abundance of legal-sized lobsters. They also learn that seeing lobsters is different from catching lobsters.

Lobster divers tend to be of a

singular focus while hunting their quarry. For most lobster divers, a mermaid could swim by and that would not distract them for an instant from looking under every rock and in every nook and cranny. Some of them get so enraptured by the hunt that they completely forget to periodically look at their depth gauge or remaining air supply. More than once after a dive with one of these hunter-gatherers, I have heard "I didn't realize we went that deep" or "I didn't know how little air I had left".

Besides being tasty, lobsters are actually quite remarkable creatures. Young lobsters are hatched from eggs, which are carried on the inside of the female's tail. They start their lives as free swimming plankton before settling down to the bottom. Mortality rates are very high at these early life stages, but as the lobsters grow, survival rates improve

dramatically until about age 7 when they generally reach the legal size limit. There are some interesting theories as to why survival rates are so high for teenage lobsters. One theory is that many of the lobster's natural predators (cod, striped bass, wolf fish) are dramatically reduced in abundance, thus reducing predation. The second theory is that the overabundance of baited traps is promoting younger lobster survival. Young lobsters can enter any of the gazillion lobster traps off Cape Ann, enjoy a free meal and then be tossed back into the ocean by the fisherman, because he or she is not legal size. There are many places on Cape Ann where it appears one could walk across the water from lobster buoy to lobster buoy. This only begins to tell the story, as each buoy generally supports a string of multiple traps.

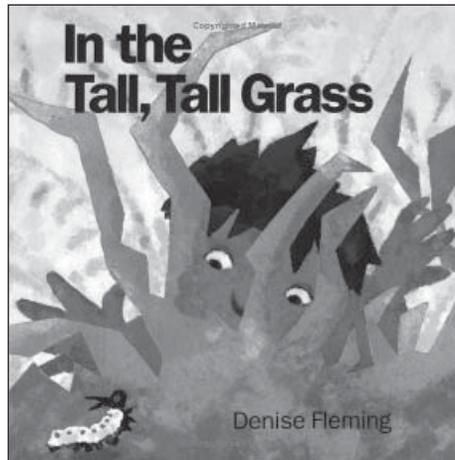
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THE CHILDREN'S CORNER

Spring in Western Massachusetts was always a time longed for and savored. On sunny, warm days after school my brother and I would head out to our "special place" in the neighbor's field and flop ourselves down in the warm, soft grass. There we would smell the fresh scents of earth and hay, listen to the bugs buzzing aloft, and watch the clouds float by. We would spend what seemed like hours, then walk home via the strawberry field to see if they were ripening. We couldn't wait for Mrs. Pearson's warm strawberry shortcake.

Following are two books my own children enjoyed as well as my many classes of kindergarten. They remind me of my youthful days and I always smile to myself when I read them to a young audience.

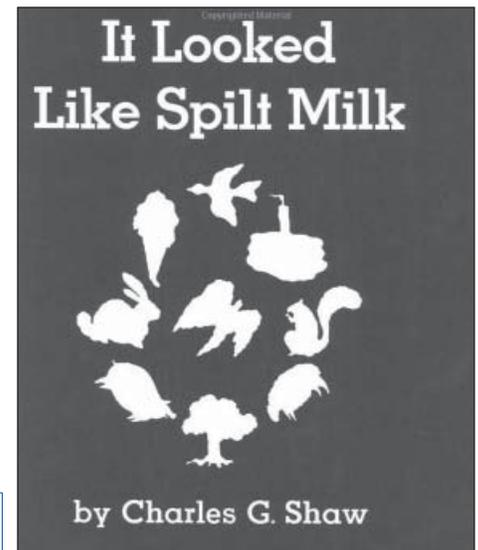
In the Tall, Tall Grass by Denise Fleming, Henry Holt and Company,



115 West 18th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011, 1991.

"In the tall, tall grass... crunch, munch, caterpillars lunch..." and on the rhymes flow across the pages of Denise Fleming's bold and colorful book. The illustrations which are made using a collage of materials depict nature scenes that might occur hidden away in the tall, tall

grass; humming birds sip, ants lug, and bats swoop. I love the way the words actually dip and hop and scratch across the pages. This is a great book to read to little one's who will enjoy the delightful pictures and the whimsical rhymes. It will make you want to sit quietly in the tall, tall grass and just watch and listen.



It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles Shaw, Scholastic Inc, 730 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003, 1947.

It Looked Like Spilt Milk is a classic book enjoyed by millions around the world. This is a simple story with a repetitive text and bold blue and white illustrations. And yet if you have ever laid back in a field or a beach chair and looked up at the sky, you will enjoy this book. Sometimes clouds look like sheep, a great horned owl, or even a mitten, but it is "just a cloud in the sky."

Come to Belle Isle, take a moment to smell the grass, look for hidden signs of nature and watch the clouds. It is good for the soul.

Mary Mitchell

Crazy for Crustaceans (Continued)

In all my years of diving, I have seen many divers grab many lobsters, but know of only one story of the reverse. A friend of mine, after a prolonged struggle, was able to wrestle a large lobster out of its burrow under a large rock. In the process, the lobster somehow managed to get its claw onto and open the buckle on my friend's weight belt. My friend was faced with a dilemma. He could hold onto his dinner and possibly lose his weight belt, which would have resulted in him rocketing to the surface and possibly getting the bends or worse, or he could lose his dinner and secure his belt. He agonized over what should have been a pretty easy choice, until he felt his belt slipping down past his hips. That lobster got away and my friend lived to dive again.

Phil Colarusso

Monday Night Forum: *Ocean Frontiers*

Our next Monday Night Forum is scheduled for July 8, 7 PM, at the Orient Heights Yacht Club where we show the film *Ocean Frontiers*. As stated on their website, "Green Fire Productions has traveled the country from coast to coast, capturing stories of...ocean pioneers — people who are embarking on a new course of stewardship, in defense of the seas that sustain them. We can learn many lessons from these ocean pioneers; in a sense, we're all ocean pioneers, steering uncharted waters in a sea of rapid change." Rebecca Owens of the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Oceans, states "[This film] highlights how industry and government can work together and find solutions to pressing ocean issues."

Join us for this exciting event.

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>

Also, look for us on Facebook.

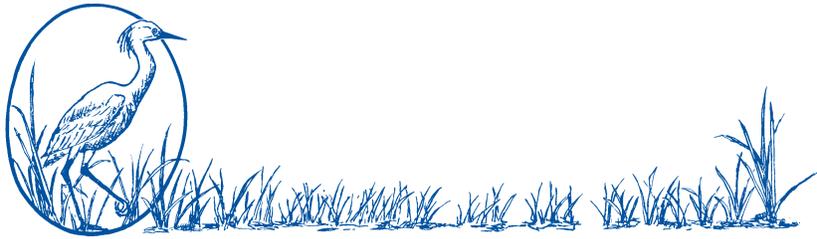
Editor-in-chief Joe Wilson with help from Barbara Bishop, Daniela Foley, Christine Zende. Production by Soheil Zende.

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Spring Clean-up Report

The FBIM Spring Clean-up on April 27th was a great success, with the weather cooperating and a good turnout of our members, young and old. We cleared out

the new John Kilmartin Pathway starting at Short Beach and extending to Bayou Street in Winthrop. We are so glad to have such a beautiful place to visit, and hope to enlist your help with a dumping problem. There have been some instances of people getting rid of large pieces of furniture (a



couch and televisions) at this site. If we have more frequent visitors, it may help keep those dumpers at bay. Please visit often, and enjoy this view of the marsh!

DCR Visitor Services Supervisor Matthew Nash and clean-up volunteers showcase the latest Trash Talking Turtle sculpture, designed to increase awareness of the harm that balloons and trash pose to sea turtles and other marine life.

Photo by Barbara Bishop

