

## EVENTS

Programs are free and open to the public.

 **Forum: Ghosts of New England Lighthouses.** Monday, October 21, 7 PM. Jeremy D'Entremont, featured speaker. Meeting place to be announced. See page 6 for additional details.

## GOT EMAIL?

Maybe you want to receive our news and notices electronically? Or perhaps you used to get notices but don't anymore? If so, we need your current email address! Email us at [friendsofbelleislemarsh@comcast.net](mailto:friendsofbelleislemarsh@comcast.net).

## ON-LINE ARCHIVES

Back issues of *Belle Isle News* as well as a complete index of the contents of every issue are now on-line: [http://friendsofbelleislemarsh.org/Belle\\_Isle\\_Newsletters.html](http://friendsofbelleislemarsh.org/Belle_Isle_Newsletters.html).

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# Belle Isle News

Published by Friends of Belle Isle Marsh

Number 94



September 2013

## Harvest Festival Sunday, October 6

**When: 1 - 3 PM**

**Where: Belle Isle Park**



### Fun for the whole family, including:

- Colby Farm hayrides
- Live animals
- Gourd decorating
- Live music: Zili Misik
- Return of the wonderful knitting lady

### Come join us!

*This event is free and open to the public.*

**Sponsored by:** East Boston Foundation, East Boston Savings Bank, East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Friends of Belle Isle Marsh and individuals and local businesses.

**Park entrance on Bennington Street, East Boston, across the street from Suffolk Downs T Station.**



*Belle Isle Bridge dedication ceremony, from left to right: Project Manager John Vitagliano, Speaker of the House Bob DeLeo, Senator Anthony Petrucci, Boston City Councilor Sal LaMattina. Photo by Barbara Bishop*

## New Belle Isle Bridge Completed

A dedication ceremony was held on August 22nd to celebrate the completion of the new \$4.3 million Belle Isle Bridge at Saratoga Street, replacing the old bridge that connected Winthrop to East Boston across Belle Isle Inlet. Speaker of the House Robert A. DeLeo and Senator Anthony Petrucci secured the funding for the project. Many thanks to our local officials and project manager John Vitagliano for a smooth sail during construction.

While the dedication of the bridge marks a milestone

*Continued on page 2*



*Sand Tiger Shark*

## The Perfect Shark

From the time I was a child, a trip to the New England Aquarium was always a special treat. Fortunately, my daughter contracted a similar affection for the place, so I had a legitimate excuse to get a family membership. She and I spent many hours over the years, sitting in the windows of the Giant Ocean Tank (GOT) watching the world swim by. The Sand Tiger Sharks were undoubtedly a big part of that experience. They looked sufficiently fierce with their protruding pointed teeth and they were large enough (especially compared to a small child) to inspire more than a little fear.

In 1995, I was extremely fortunate to have an opportunity to dive the GOT. The safety briefing included the very practical advice of “if the sharks are swimming at you, get out of their way.” Seemed like common sense to me, but the reasoning for it was not what I expected. Avoiding

### **Belle Isle Bridge** *(continued)*

in overall safety and improves the landscape of the bridge environs, a few businesses that provided economic benefits were affected. Belle Isle Seafood was relocated and the gas station and auto repair shop adjacent to the bridge and directly under Logan Airport’s flight path are no longer.

and potentially injure itself.

Fast forward to July 2012; through a unique set of circumstances, I had an opportunity to try to film Sand Tigers in the wild. Massachusetts is the northern edge of the range for Sand Tigers. In fact, the adults don’t make it this far north, just the juveniles. The juvenile sharks are still very impressive animals 4 to 4½ feet long. I was fortunate to be connected with Jeff Kneebone, a graduate student at UMass - Dartmouth who has been tagging these animals for the past four years. In that time, Jeff has tagged well over 200 individual sharks in Duxbury Bay alone.

Due in part to the routinely spectacular shark footage seen on the Discovery Channel, the general public has no appreciation of how difficult it is to actually get a shark in the wild on film. Our expedition had one important advantage: we had Jeff’s three years of research and knowledge of where and how these animals move. We had two

an oncoming shark was not for my safety, but for the shark’s safety. The GOT looks large from outside, but it is a fairly confined space. To avoid a collision, a shark might veer quickly away from a diver into the reef or glass

major challenges to overcome. First, we only had one field day to dedicate to this effort; there would be no second chances. Second, these animals prefer areas of relatively high turbidity / low visibility. They have small eyes and relatively weak eyesight and thus hunt by using chemoreception and their lateral line to sense the electromagnetic fields that all living things produce. The use of these senses in waters of low visibility give them the advantage over the schooling fish they hunt, which tend to use sight to avoid predators. For our project, poor water clarity would render any filming impossible so we needed to either lure the sharks outside of their preferred locations or catch them in transit between preferred hunting grounds.

Early on the morning of July 16th, I pulled a government owned vehicle onto the fish pier in Gloucester to pick up a bucket of dead fish destined to become our chum. My wife wisely discouraged me from using our own car for the trip. Mid-morning found us launching the boat from the boat ramp in Duxbury and Jeff met us in a second boat at a predesignated location in Duxbury Bay. We used three different techniques to draw a shark in front of our lens. First, we liberally distributed chum, a duty which fell to our summer intern (she volunteered for it!) in an effort to entice them towards the boat. Second, we placed a mesh bag full of oily dead fish on the bottom and placed two divers in the water with a camera trained on the bag. Third, Jeff would be trying to catch one via rod and reel and would alert us over

*Continued on page 3*

The larger community hopes that this leads to the development of some environmental benefits for Belle Isle Marsh and the neighborhood. Massport CEO Tom Glynn promises to work with FBIM and other community groups on landscaping the area.

Now the gateway to Winthrop at Belle Isle Bridge is a beautiful panoramic view of the harbor and the

Winthrop waterfront. Thanks to local developer Mike Carney for transforming the ugly old Mirak building into the beautiful new Belle Isle Seafood restaurant where the Costin family can continue to offer award-winning seafood to customers. We can all be proud of the new Belle Isle Bridge, the view of the waterfront and the thriving Belle Isle business district.

# THE CHILDREN'S CORNER

## The Perfect Shark *(continued)*

the radio if he was able to catch one. Six hours of chumming and staking out the bait bag produced about 40 minutes of useless footage of green crabs eating our bait. I started to get depressed when I noticed that we had been in the water long enough that a large number of snails from who knows where had made their way over to our bait bag. Jeff was faring slightly better than us; he hadn't caught any sharks, but did nab a keeper striper and a bluefish.

As daylight began to fade and a series of menacing thunder clouds began to approach, we started talking about packing up. Right on cue, Jeff's voice cackled over the radio, "Shark on the line". We sped over to his location and scrambled our three divers into the water with multiple cameras. The water was shallow, but the current was very strong. Jeff told us that he would release the shark next to our side of the boat, but even he didn't know what the animal would do then. It might immediately take off or it might go to the bottom to catch its breath before swimming away. Fortunately, it did the latter and we got 8½ minutes of video footage of this animal.

Though the animal we taped was smaller (4+ feet) than the ones in the GOT, it still had the protruding teeth. It played the role of the fierce shark quite well, though it is in reality quite a docile animal (unless you are a small schooling fish). It was the perfect shark.

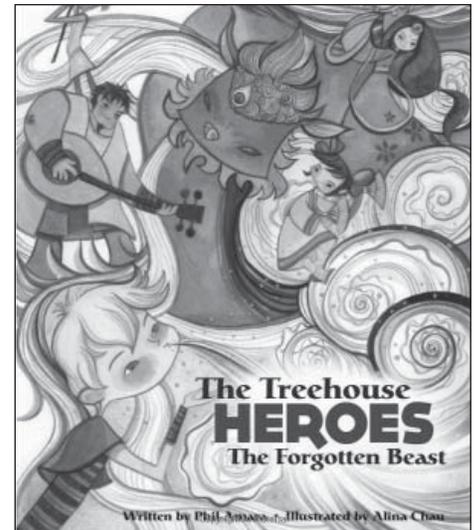
*Phil Colarusso*

Phil Amara, the author of the book reviewed here, grew up in East Boston overlooking Belle Isle Marsh. Phil is a Boston Public Schools teacher who inspires his students using his vast experience in the field of comics and animation.

Phil dedicates his book to Friends of Belle Isle Marsh, Friends of Sayama Forest, Japan, and Friends of Tyrone Creek, Oregon. I was eager to explore why these two other sites interested him. From what I have been told, Phil has worked in both Japan and Oregon. These other friends groups share the same principles that we do here at Belle Isle: conservation and protection of our special natural resources. We all work to educate those in the area to use their own brand of magic to enjoy and protect these special places. I think we are in good company and I thank Phil for pointing out that people all over this planet are "doing their part."

*The Tree House Heroes and The Forgotten Beast* by Phil Amara, illustrated by Alina Chau; Immedium, Inc., PO Box 31846, San Francisco, CA, 94131; 2012

It is a pleasure to review this picture book fantasy, beautifully illustrated by Alina Chau who uses whimsical pictures with an Asian flair. One can feel the mystery and magic on each page. The tale of the disappearing Zez, a lonely but magical beast who is responsible for keeping the balance of nature, begins on a dark and stormy



night. The Zez, tired and wet, is drawn to a tree house where five young heroes, who themselves have magical powers, meet the Zez. They take the Zez to meet their wise Teacher who tells them the tale of the disappearing beast. "A wild Zez in a village means the air is cool and the river is clean. Her presence...her magic...helps in ways we cannot imagine," says the teacher. "The Zez's magic is only one part. The rest is up to you."

So the heroes, the Teacher and the Zez set out on an adventure to reclaim Shining River, a village now controlled by the evil General Moon. This is a wonderful, spirited tale that implies that we are all responsible to keep our world healthy by protecting our natural areas using our own forms of magic...but we all have to do our parts!

*Mary Mitchell*

## Metropolitan Beaches Commission Visits Local Beaches

What do you like best about Constitution Beach, Revere Beach, Winthrop Beach? What do you think of the changes made since 2007 and what needs improvement? Metropolitan Beaches Commission, chaired by Senator Thomas McGee and Representative Kathi-Anne Reinstein, is

working with Save the Harbor to hold community meetings at DCR beaches, asking questions and getting a lot of answers!

Each beach is unique and has amenities that range from shade shelters (Nantasket Beach) to a concession building and bocce courts (Constitution Beach) and even a potential ferry terminal (Lynn). The Commission visited Marina Bay in Quincy, formerly the site of the Squantum Naval Air

Station, where more high-rise condos are planned near the boardwalk. The massive development features many restaurants, retail shops and a full-service marina. What a contrast to Winthrop Beach which is a small, neighborhood beach — what the residents said they preferred in the 2007 Commission visit.

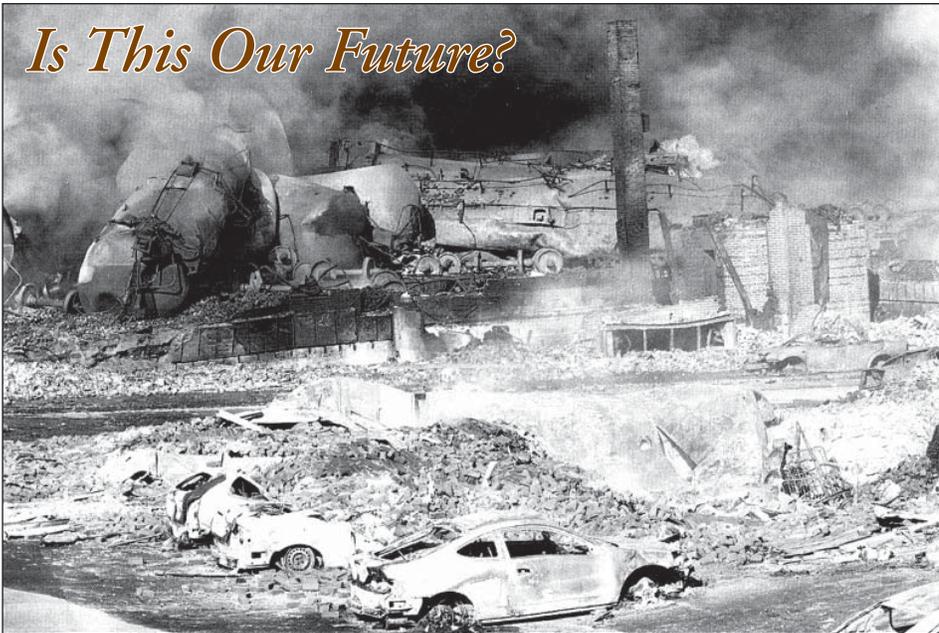
What's your vision for the future of *your* beach? All comments will be incorporated into the final report of the Commission.

*Looking for a nice day on the water? Try Kayaking in Belle Isle Marsh and along the Revere, Winthrop and East Boston shorelines like FBIM members Gail Miller, Joe Wilson & Karyl Stoia!*

*Photo by Barbara Bishop*



## *Is This Our Future?*



*Early in the morning on Saturday, July 6, a train carrying 73 cars of pressurized crude oil derailed in downtown Lac Megantic, Quebec, and several tanker cars carrying pressurized crude oil exploded. At least 13 people were killed in the accident and more than 40 are missing. The incident destroyed 30 buildings.*

Following the rail accident at Lac Megantic, Kim Foltz, Director of Community Building and Environment at Neighborhood of Affordable Housing (NOAH) said “This is precisely the type of catastrophe we’re trying to prevent here in Massachusetts. Can you imagine if the proposed ethanol cars derailed as they went through Porter Square or downtown Chelsea?”

After more than two years of organizing, Chelsea Creek Action Group (CCAG) (who provided most

of the information for this article in their press releases) announced that Global Partners, LP, is withdrawing their proposal to bring millions of gallons of ethanol by train through more than 90 communities across the Commonwealth to their Chelsea Creek terminal. “His words were ‘We surrender,’” Roseann Bongiovanni, Associate Director of the Chelsea Collaborative, said after talking with a senior executive of Global Partners. “The \$17.5 billion company says that community opposition to their ethanol

trains is too strong.”

Thanks to Senators Anthony Petrucelli, Sal DiDomenico and Patricia Jehlen there is an amendment in the State budget that would stop ethanol transport on rail lines to Chelsea Creek oil terminals. Speaker Robert DeLeo, Representatives Carlo Basile, Eugene O’Flaherty, Kathi-Anne Reinstein, Denise Provost, Timothy Toomey, and Jonathan Hecht were also vocal advocates for the amendment, recognizing the threat that Global’s proposal posed to public health and safety.

After more than two years of organizing, members of CCAG and other organizations delivered over 1000 postcards signed by Boston-area residents to Governor Deval Patrick, urging him to sign the legislation into law. At the end of this budget process, the Governor did not endorse an outright ban on ethanol along Chelsea Creek but redrafted language to allow for a two-year moratorium preventing Global from going forward on their proposal to bring in up to nine million gallons of ethanol by rail weekly.

CCAG is continuing to work on legislation that will protect our neighborhoods from the dangers ethanol trains. Until the Governor signs the legislation into law, there’s nothing to prevent another company from transporting ethanol by rail. Are the risks worth the questionable cost benefits?



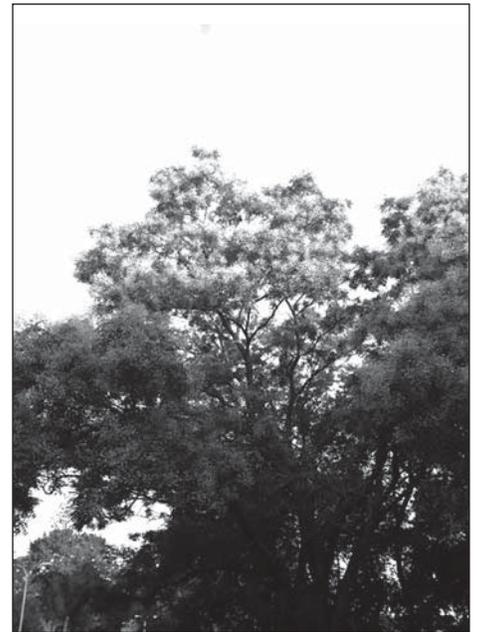
## Locust Bees

See. Hear. Touch. Taste. Smell. That's the world we swim in, a sea of sense. That's the real deal unless it isn't. There are optical illusions, echoes, allergies and a whole host of phenomenon that change and fool our senses. The Hubble and Kepler space telescopes look into the universe. The photographs that come back are dazzling to look at, but they are not "real". Our human eyes cannot see those galactic dust clouds or star fields. The images are all the result of digital manipulation that scales down the light spectrum observed to those frequencies that we can process visually. The Horsehead Nebula is actually invisible to us but its Hubble photos are beautiful and inspiring.

Bird watchers quarrel about those gorgeous photos of bright beautiful birds perched in a tree. Often the

pictures are Photoshopped, digitally manipulated with a piece of software on a pc. Some observers find those photos "wrong". You can't ever see a Green Heron that looks like that in Belle Isle Marsh. Those rich colors look drab when the bird is sitting in a locust tree next to the marsh. Even with my binoculars, the bird never looks as good as that photo, but I have no quarrel with Photoshop. With it, I can see things that I would never have imagined. The Sibley and Peterson drawings are more helpful when you try to identify an unusual new bird but those watercolors are no more real than the Photoshop versions. My nephew has color blindness. He will never see the bird the way I do. Whose vision is better?

Artificial is not always a lesser experience, something not real. Nearby we have several trees which are some sort of thornless black locust. They come into bloom late in the summer. For a few weeks, the pavement is carpeted with small blossoms. Bumblebees roll on the ground covered in flowers as they drunkenly harvest the pollen. The trees are covered with swarms of even more bees. It is a vision of bounty and industry. At night, the scene changes. There are large



sodium lights near these trees, bright obnoxious light meant to deter bad behavior. Strangely, this light turns the trees into spectral delights. The large blossom clusters become airy globes and if there is rain or fog as well, these locust trees will take your breath away with their beauty. Is it wrong to take pleasure in this "artificial" sight? Is the Horsehead Nebula just an illusion?

*George Cumming*

*Read more of George Cumming's writing on his blog [OrientSee](#).*



## Trash-talking Turtle Places

The trash-talking turtle, designed and constructed by DCR staffer Matthew Nash and local kids, placed in the Most Beautiful competition in the Winthrop Horribles Parade on the Fourth of July. The artistic piece houses many items of trash which unthinking folks have discarded. This collected trash was made into the shape and form of a turtle as a reminder to keep our environment trash-free!

### **EGBERT THE EGRET SEZ:**

*Trash in.... Trash out!  
Always pick up after your  
marsh visit!*



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>**

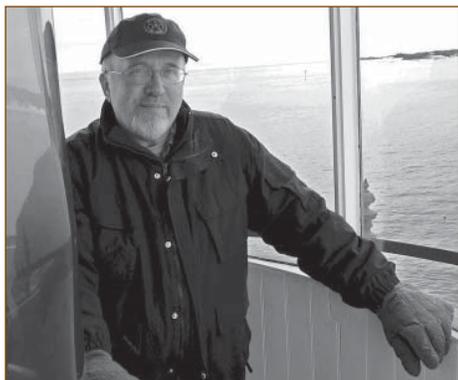
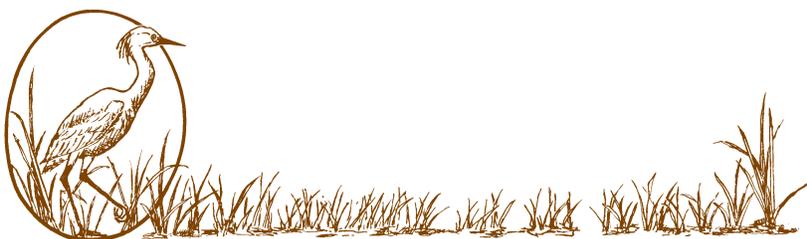
*Also, look for us on Facebook.*

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

**SZ13**

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*Jeremy D'Entremont*

## **MONDAY NIGHT FORUM**

### **Ghosts of New England Lighthouses**

*Speaker:* Jeremy D'Entremont

*When:* Monday, October 21, 7 PM

*Where:* To be announced

*This event is free and open to the public.*

**L**ighthouses are picturesque icons that remind us of our rich maritime

history, but they also have a dark side. Lighthouses and ghost stories often seem to go hand in hand, as confirmed by the many horror stories and movies that have utilized lighthouses as their settings. This presentation will focus on some of the macabre tales of New England's coastal beacons, including the lovelorn spirit known as Ernie at Connecticut's New London Ledge Light and the piano playing ghost of Maine's Seguin Island Light. Also included will be accounts of strange happenings at two New Hampshire lighthouses, Portsmouth Harbor and White Island.

Jeremy D'Entremont has personally taken part in many lighthouse investigations by paranormal research groups. He calls himself an "open-minded skeptic," and he'll share some of his personal experiences. He has appeared on the SyFy Channel's

popular *Ghost Hunters* program, as well as *Haunted Lighthouses of America* on the Travel Channel. He has also appeared on the History Channel, Public Television and National Public Radio speaking about lighthouse history.

Jeremy is a leading expert on New England's historic lighthouses. He is the author of more than ten books, including *The Lighthouses of Massachusetts*, *The Lighthouse Handbook: New England*, and *Ocean-Born Mary: The Truth Behind a New Hampshire Legend*. He's a past president and historian for the American Lighthouse Foundation and founder and operations manager of Friends of Portsmouth Harbor Lighthouses. His comprehensive website on New England lighthouses, **[www.newenglandlighthouses.net](http://www.newenglandlighthouses.net)**, was launched in 1997.

