

Sakonnet Preservation

Newsletter of the Sakonnet Preservation Association

Loving the Nature of Little Compton

My grandfather bought our family summer home on Warrens Point in 1938, so I grew up in Little Compton in the summers. My husband Peter and I have lived on a beautiful historic farm since we sold the summer home on Warrens Point 5 years ago. So now, instead of watching the boats go by, we watch foxes, deer, and hawks hunt in and around the fields in back of our cottage, and listen to the nearby cows and donkeys.

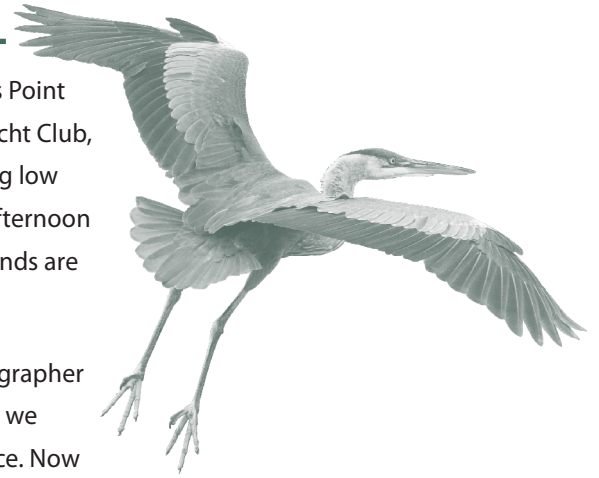
The more time we spend living in Little Compton the more we learn what it means to be connected to the natural world. Many times our daily schedules revolve around seeking out natural events: recording the peeper frogs on early summer nights, watching

the moonrises from Warrens Point and the sunsets from the Yacht Club, going for beach walks during low tides, and heading out for afternoon sails when the southwest winds are just right.

Peter is a commercial photographer and I work in real estate and we both have work in Providence. Now

when we leave LC for the day, we can't wait to come home. To return from working in Providence on a summer day and be able to head to Lloyds beach for a sunset swim with the dogs just clears the head and balances out the whole day.

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Photos: Peter Goldberg Photography

Sakonnet Preservation

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7 South of Commons

Little Compton, Rhode Island



sound finances
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President's letter

Sakonnet Preservation's important role

What are the benefits of having so many different groups conserving land in Little Compton? And why keep Sakonnet Preservation in the mix?

As we have gathered together community members for small events, or have met with some of our contributing members for one-on-one conversations, we hear confusion and lack of understanding about each group's role and Sakonnet Preservation's particular niche among them. It is one that has evolved over time since its founding in 1972 and continues to do so.

In the simplest terms, the Little Compton Agricultural Conservancy Trust gives priority to protecting large parcels, particularly farmland, and often partners with the Department of Environmental Management and/or The Nature Conservancy and U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.

The Nature Conservancy of RI works statewide and focuses its attention here on habitat, preferring larger parcels or those that enhance abutting or nearby conserved sensitive habitat. Its holdings include several that provide for public access.

Sakonnet Preservation's role has evolved into conserving, on its own or collaboratively, some of the town's many small properties that make up the majority of the remaining developable parcels in Town. These properties have value protecting surface water, preventing forest fragmentation, and preserving some of the town's scenic rural character. Our organization also assumes a role educating the public about conservation with its bi-annual community newsletters, educational programming in our local school and for the public, and our comprehensive community-wide conservation mapping of interest to all.

Collectively and collaboratively, these three organizations leading local conservation initiatives each have a significant role to play ensuring that there is meaningful protection of the resources upon which we depend, that some historic uses of our lands remain possible and that elements of the rural character that so define our town remain intact for us and future generations.

Your membership support is essential to maintaining Sakonnet Preservation's part in the larger picture of conservation in our community, and we thank you.

– Abigail Brooks



Photo: Peter Goldberg Photography

My childhood friend, John Torgan, now head of the RI Nature Conservancy, was the person who first taught me the importance of preservation and conservation. John and I would go on kayak adventures out to Sakonnet Preservation's East and West Islands and he would tell me about things like the hidden life of our marshes and all of the habitat that depends on them.

We're both incredibly grateful to live in such a beautiful place and to be proud supporters of Sakonnet Preservation.

– Cherry Arnold & Peter Goldberg

This fall and winter we've been walking the dogs around the Round Pond area, past SPA's Haffenreffer land and "The Meadow". Round Pond and its surrounding preserved land is an incredibly vibrant habitat for wildlife. One day in mid-November we counted 8 Great Blue Herons who had taken up temporary residence around the pond. Peter was so inspired by the beauty of these birds that he purchased a special long lens to better capture them and other Little Compton wildlife.

We're both incredibly grateful to live in such a beautiful place and to be proud supporters of Sakonnet Preservation.

– Cherry Arnold & Peter Goldberg

Sakonnet Preservation

P.O. Box 945, Little Compton, RI 02837

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to Smile.Amazon.com/ch/23-7225987, or type in Sakonnet Preservation Association when prompted.

Be Like Beethoven: Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle, Reduce!

It seems like an unlikely combination, doesn't it? But the creative people at the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra (NBSO) have found a way to teach the value of recycling while increasing music appreciation at the same time.

When *Up with School Arts* Coordinator Lillian (Birdie) Edwards contacted us about participating with Wilbur-McMahon School and NBSO on the Learning in Concert program, we were excited to learn more.

Part one of the three-phase curriculum project is an in-school assembly concert program, followed by individual classroom lessons partnering the NBSO Education Director Terry Wolkowitz with individual classroom teachers and students. The third phase is the culminating event where students' year-long creative work and collaborations are featured and performed at the annual Young People's Concerts at the Zeiterion Theater in New Bedford.



We attended the initial assembly concert, which featured Terry Wolkowitz and three musicians from the symphony introducing the concepts of music and plastic recycling.

The program was so inventive and entertaining that the kids didn't notice that they were learning!

During the composition process, the skillful composer will reuse (repeat), repurpose (modify), and recycle (reconstruct) musical ideas within a piece of music. Use of these techniques has allowed great composers like Beethoven to create beautiful symphonies crafted from a small amount of musical material. Just like Beethoven, these same three techniques of reuse, repurpose, and recycle are also effective actions needed to reduce plastic pollution on our planet.

Each year, over 2 million metric tons of plastics ends up in our oceans, with only 9% of the world's plastic currently being recycled. This has created a serious problem for our aquatic, airborne and terrestrial environments and to the health of humans and marine and land animals. Throughout the Learning in Concert program, students explore the concepts of reuse, repurpose, and recycle through musical composition and hands-on, plastic repurposing activities.



Each year, over 2 million metric tons of plastics ends up in our oceans, with only 9% of the world's plastic currently being recycled. The plastic debris above was collected and photographed in Little Compton by Geoff Dennis.

On this theme of plastic pollution and recycling, Sakonnet Preservation hosted the film, *A Plastic Ocean*, which raises awareness of pollution and the existing solutions. When the weather gets warmer we hope to lead a beach clean-up and measuring walk with Wilbur-McMahon students here in Little Compton. What a great collaboration!

– Kathy Klees Clarendon

Thank You Holly!

Our long-time Administrative Assistant and Bookkeeper Holly Lippert has chosen to move on to other opportunities. Her ten years of service have been invaluable to professionalizing our organization and will continue to be felt for years to come.

Stewardship Perspectives

The Stewardship Report

One of my responsibilities is working to resolve any issues we find on the properties we monitor. What is the most common violation found on land protected by Sakonnet Preservation? Encroachment on a protected property in the form of yard waste such as grass clippings and leaves is one of these. While considered a “minor violation,” this seemingly innocuous intrusion can be harmful to the ecosystem on conserved land.

The dumping of yard waste, leaves, grass clippings and other forms of debris can damage a forest or grassland environment.

Extra debris on the forest floor can create an imbalance in soil chemistry and overwhelm fragile ecosystems of fungi, bacteria, insects and earthworms that support soil health. Ferns, wildflowers, and tree seedlings can be smothered and killed by excessive plant material. The relationship between the forest floor and trees is complex. Soil in the forest floor supports crucial processes such as nutrient uptake, decomposition, and water availability.

In addition to potential ecological disruptions, slight encroachment on conservation land can sometimes lead to *more* encroachment, so discussing property boundaries from the get-go is always best.

So, what to do with all that yard waste? Consider grass-cycling — a fancy term for leaving grass clippings on the lawn when you mow. This practice saves time, money and the need for fertilizer. Backyard composting can create great organic matter to add to your gardens or planters. Leaves and grass clippings add the necessary carbon and nitrogen to your compost pile.

– Mary-Kate Kane, Stewardship Director

My First Day on the Job

On my first day as an encyclopedia salesman in my college days, my “mentors” and I stopped in a suburb with clear signage prohibiting solicitation. We ended up at the local jail, where my arrested colleagues spent the night. As the apprentice, I was free to go, but I had to call my mom for a ride home. Not exactly a walk in the woods, but instructive and a touch humiliating.

After a couple hours on site as a new property monitor, Mary-Kate, Ann Beardsley, and I were standing on the side of Old Harbor Road, waiting for Ann’s kind husband to pick us up and ferry us back to our car, parked on John Dyer Road. We hadn’t been arrested, but this was my first day on the job, and we had gotten lost.

Our stone wall, which marked the property’s boundary on the Cooper-Mullin Drew property, located between Old Harbor Road and John Dyer Road on 43 wooded acres crisscrossed with Frost-like stone walls, had petered out. We thought we were heading toward our next boundary marker, but Mary-Kate’s GPS (yes, we had that, a site map, and a compass) showed we were off property.

“Ugh,” I groaned. We’d stopped in a boggy area and were just sorta looking around. The mixture of holly and oak was beautiful, but the winter sky was darkening. After a few moments of indecision, Ann wondered, “Isn’t that a rooftop?” Sure enough. And, if we concentrated, we could hear cars passing on what, we hoped, was Old Harbor Road. “Ahhh,” it was.

Unlike my brief stint in encyclopedia sales, which I quit that next day, I look forward to many more walks in the woods, albeit less circuitous ones, on the Cooper-Mullin Drew property. That we still have woods one can get lost in, however briefly, is a testament to the generosity and foresight of original donors like Alison & John Cooper-Mullin and Thomas Drew and successor landowners Carolyn Benedict-Drew, James & Myrna Adolfo and Don & Susan Shedd, and to the hard work and visionary practices of Sakonnet Preservation. I am happy to do my small part to protect our town’s precious open spaces.

– One humbled, but happy, monitor, Peter Rowley

Note: contact Mary-Kate Kane at mkane@sakonnetpreservation.org to find out more about the joys of monitoring.

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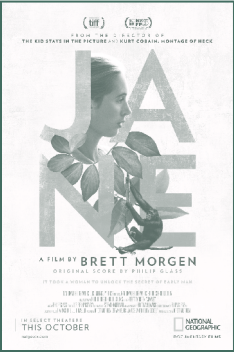
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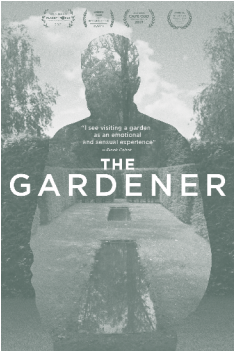
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Jane
March 8, 2019 – 7pm – Little Compton Community Center

Using a trove of never-before-seen footage, the film tells the story of Jane’s [Goodall] early explorations and research in Tanzania, focusing on her groundbreaking field work, her relationship with her cameraman and husband Hugo Van Lawick, and the chimpanzees that were the subject of her study. Most of Jane comes from 16-millimeter film shot by van Lawick, the renowned wildlife photographer who joined Ms. Goodall on her travels, and draws on more than 100 rediscovered hours from National Geographic’s archives.



The Gardener
April 12, 2019 – 7pm – Little Compton Community Center

The Gardener is a documentary film which reflects on the meaning of gardening and its impacts on our lives. Shortly before his passing at the age of 86, influential gardener and horticulturalist Frank Cabot recounts his personal quest for perfection at Les Quatre Vents, his twenty-acre English style garden and summer estate. Through the words of Cabot and his family, and with the participation of gardening experts and writers, the film looks back at this remarkable man’s personal story and the artistic philosophy that gave birth to one of the greatest gardens in the world.

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The Sakonnet Preservation Association, a non-profit land trust, is dedicated to preserving the rural character and natural resources of Little Compton for the lasting benefit of the community.

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