

THE WOODBRIDGE PARK ASSOCIATION, INC.

WOODBRIDGE, CONNECTICUT

FOUNDED IN 1928

ANNUAL LETTER 2009

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EDWARD MAUM SHEEHY

Dear Friends,

Our association celebrated its 80th anniversary this year. Sadly, we also suffered a great loss. Win Hubbard, who along with his wife Katie, served our association as a director since the early seventies, died last month. Win and Katie had just stepped down as directors last year. Up until that time Win served as our park's superintendent, a post he held for 35 years. Past president Rich Forselius will eulogize Win more formally later in this letter. We on the Woodbridge Park Association board will be forever grateful to Win for his dedicated service to the park. His life will continue to be an example and an inspiration to us all.

This past year our community and our nation have witnessed some historic events and have been rocked by the worst financial times since the founding of our association. With these uncertain times many of us have reassessed what it is that we value most. Renewed connections to the land and a desire to live more balanced lives have flourished despite our dwindling monetary resources. Green technologies are sprouting up everywhere and efforts to preserve land both for open space and for farming are engaging people across our country and here at home. A wonderful example of this in our community is the Massaro Farm project. For our part, we on the Park Association have continued to care for the land for which we are the stewards. We also continue to look for opportunities to help preserve and protect lands for the future. We believe that open spaces have a value that goes beyond the monetary value of the parcel of land. These spaces help us maintain a connection to the land and our environment as well as preserving the quality of our community and town.

This past spring we coordinated our *Spring Clean-up Day* in the park with other town Earth Day celebrations and events. This proved quite successful and we are so appreciative of all the Woodbridge residents who came to help us on that April Saturday. We plan on continuing to participate in the yearly Earth Day events in this way and

hope to welcome more volunteers next year! Mike Walter, our park superintendent, continues to be the main force behind our efforts to maintain the park. His tireless efforts keep the trails marked, mapped, and open. He has been leading our work to add new trails on the Newton Road property. This summer he led a work party that installed a new gate at the Hampton Drive entrance to that property as well as three signs marking new trail heads. He has also recently completed some absolutely wonderful trail maps for both the Newton Road property and the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park as well as several other open spaces in Woodbridge.

In our May meeting the directors voted to welcome Paul Acampora onto our board. Becky Daymon, our nominating committee chair, will introduce Paul in more detail later in this letter. We welcome Paul and the talents he brings to our association. Paul has already made a dramatic impact on our group through his efforts to help us improve and update our website. These efforts are currently ongoing, but I invite you to visit our site for information about the park and our upcoming events. You'll also find links to the new maps that Mike Walter has done for us. Please visit us at www.woodbridgeparks.org.

Our most recent events have been the 6th annual Harvest Hike and our fall park clean-up day. Suzanne Werth, one of our new directors elected last year, will tell us about the Harvest Hike. This is an important event for the park in which we make an effort to introduce the park to young people through a partnership with the Beecher Road School and their PTO. We thank both Suzanne and Sarah Davison for working to organize the hike this year. As of this writing the fall clean up is scheduled for November 21st. We hope for fair weather so that we can further our efforts to keep the meadow clear of leaves and debris.

Over the past 80 years we have been the beneficiaries of many generous gifts. These gifts have taken many forms from simple monetary donations to gifts of land both as property and as easements. Below I've listed the history of land donations to the park beginning with its founding gift in 1928 from the Street's. We remain eternally grateful to all our donors and take our charge very seriously. Our counsel, David Schnieder, will introduce some ways that individuals can donate land for preservation later in this letter.

Win Hubbard – Our Long Time Superintendent by Richard Forselius

Winchester Loomis Hubbard died October 20, 2009 and was born March 5, 1919 in Windsor, CT. He was a veteran of World War II. He worked as a research entomologist for Uniroyal Chemicals for almost 40 years.

Win is survived by his wife, Katherine (Katy) of 60 years, four children, Jonathan, Christopher, Paul and Elizabeth (Grimes), eight grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. A memorial service was held at the First Church of Christ, Woodbridge, on Monday, October 26th, the Rev. Dr. Sara Penn-Strah officiated.

Win and Katy served the Woodbridge Park Association for many years as Directors until last year. Win also served as Superintendent of the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park for 35 years. It was Win's responsibility to provide maintenance for our park properties including numerous Boy Scout Eagle projects and community

service projects as well as to report on the state of our parks at Park Association Board meetings. As recently as several years ago, he would enter the park alone with his chainsaw to clear fallen trees obstructing the trails. One would often run into Win and Katy, both birders, on the trails around Woodbridge, always carrying their binoculars.

Win loved growing things and was a master gardener. Working in his garden up until the day before he died, he grafted fruit trees and planted flowers and vegetables and harvested his own seeds for use the next year. He had fish in his own pond. He also loved fishing, especially trout fishing, where he tied his own flies. By vocation he surely knew the details of the bodies of the insects he was trying to create to lure the trout to his hook. He also enjoyed snorkeling, scuba diving, sailing and star-gazing.

Active as a Boy Scout leader in Woodbridge for many years, Win also served on the board of the Woodbridge Land Trust and other conservation organizations. He loved the natural world, and was a strong conservationist of forests, ponds and streams. He was a keen observer of life around him.

With a deep love of traveling, Win and Katy traveled to every one of the 48 continental United States together and to a number of foreign countries, especially in Central and South America.

Win loved making things from items he had saved. We have heard stories of the kites he made. He was very active on many church boards in the First Church of Christ in Woodbridge.

In her beautiful eulogy at his memorial service, the Rev. Dr. Penn-Strah said:

“Win’s family said that he had what they called an anti –worry gene. He didn’t worry about his health or safety as he aged ...It seemed to us all that the Holy Spirit must have been at work on Tuesday, the day he died, when millions of ladybugs—one the most beneficial insects for a gardener to have in the garden—showed up in Woodbridge to honor his passing. His granddaughters saw him as a gentle giant with the best hugs in the world; his son said that his twinkly-eyed smile could light up your day when he got a glimpse of you passing by.”

He was a soft-spoken great man who added much to the Woodbridge conservation community. His life touched many and he will be sorely missed.

Nominating Committee by Becky Daymon

At the annual spring meeting I had the privilege of nominating Paul Acampora as a new Director of the Board. He was greeted with enthusiasm and was unanimously voted in as a Director. Paul really hit the board running. Over the years Paul has been ready and willing to lend a hand to our Park Superintendent, Mike Walters. He would show up with his chainsaw in hand to cut a fallen tree or clean up debris after a storm. Paul was appointed as the new Assistant Superintendent, much to Mike’s delight.

Professionally Paul is a technology wizard. He heads up the IT dept at the Hospital of St. Raphael. His knowledge of the construction and hosting of websites is tremendous. Not only will Paul be out cleaning up the Park he has also agreed to clean up and host our website. The entire Board of Directors joins me in welcoming Paul.

Harvest Hike by Suzanne K. Werth

In our efforts to introduce the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park to the Beecher Road School Community, the Woodbridge Park Association sponsors an annual “Harvest Hike” during the third week of October. Beecher Road School principals, teachers and staff join Woodbridge Park Association trail guides and Beecher Road School children and their families on a 1-hour walk through the park. We are pleased that the hike has become a yearly welcomed event on Beecher Road School’s calendar, and we hope to develop more collaborative programs with the elementary school and other community groups. The Harvest Hike has become an important community outreach event for the WPA, and a popular event for families who have recently moved to Woodbridge.

This year’s Sixth Annual Harvest Hike was held on Wednesday, October 21st. It was a beautiful autumn day with warm temperatures and a full spectrum of fall color. A group of over 50 hikers, including Beecher students and their parents as well as our superintendent Dr. Stella, gathered to wind their way along the popular Blue Trail. Upon arrival at Wepawaug Falls, children and adults alike enjoyed the splendor of this classic New England landscape. Hikers paused to appreciate the simple beauty of the grassy Meadow on the walk back to the trailhead. Apples, cider, and snacks awaited hikers upon their return, compliments of the Beecher Road School PTO.

The Woodbridge Park Association invites the greater Amity community to join us at one of our annual events, and we encourage residents to utilize and enjoy the many hiking trails available in our area.

Do You Have Open Space to Donate? by David Schneider

As you can see from the separate list in this newsletter on the history of the Woodbridge Park Association, it has acquired interests in open space land in town in many different ways. Originally, and more recently, donors have made outright gifts to insure that land remained undeveloped. More recently, the Association purchased land at a deeply discounted price. In addition, it has acquired conservation restrictions, either by donation or purchase, to protect the open space character of the land.

The Association actively encourages gifts of land or conservation restrictions. However, the Association must evaluate any such gift prior to acceptance, in part to make sure that the land is not subject to unpaid taxes or other encumbrances, that it is free of pollutants and that the Association has appropriate access to the property.

It is impossible in this short space to discuss all of the various ways that in-kind gifts can be made. However, usually the gift is structured in such a way as to be most beneficial to the donor and to the Association.

Although the primary motivation of any gift to the Association is to preserve open space in Woodbridge, in many cases the donor will also receive a significant income tax benefit. In appropriate situations, the Association will pay the professional fees necessary to complete the land transaction. If you would like to discuss a possible donation of open space, please contact the Association president, Carrie Swigart, at 203-397-5084/carrie.swigart@yale.edu or the Association counsel, Dave Schneider, at 203-393-3721/legalschneider@gmail.com.

History of Land Donations to the Park

November 14, 1928 The Woodbridge Park Association was incorporated.

January 14, 1929 Newton Herbert Street donated 82 acres of land to found the Alice Newton Street Park in memory of his mother.

January 1930 Chester H. Hitchcock, an original member of the Association, donated 2.5 acres of land adjoining the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park in order to create an entrance on Meeting House Lane.

January 1938 Newton H. Street donated the land comprising the southeast corner of the Woodbridge Town Green. This property was obtained from the First Ecclesiastical Society by exchange.

1957 Dorothy Heise donated approximately 1 acre of land adjacent to the park to provide a right-of-way from Old Mill Road. Mrs. Heise served as secretary of the Association from 1963 to 1967.

1987/1988 Mrs. Frederick Kingsbury donated 3.9 acres of land adjacent to the park, extending the boundaries on the west side to include a portion of the Wepawaug River.

1986/1988 Establishment of the Newton Road Park with gifts of land by Dennis Nicotra (6 acres) and Harry Grossman on behalf of the Woodbridge Estates (1 acre).

1989 Harry Grossman (on behalf of the Woodbridge Estates) donated 7.8 acres on the northwester corner of the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park.

2004 The Association purchased, at a deeply discounted price, 5.67 acres from Woodbridge Estate Associates on Hampton Drive adjacent to the existing 7 acres on Newton Road.

2006 The Association, together with the Town of Woodbridge and the Amity and Woodbridge Historical Society, purchased a Conservation Easement consisting of 6.41 acres at 48 Center Road, the so-called "Hitchcock property", to preserve its open space and historical character.

2006 Elaine Glass donated 9.4 acres contiguous to the west side of the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park in memory of her husband, Joseph Glass.

2008 Anne Calabresi donated a Conservation Restriction to the Association to

protect the open space condition of 15.1 acres bordering Amity Road near the Bethany town line.

On a recent walk in the park in late October I came upon a great blue heron fishing in a rain swollen stream. As I watched this magnificent bird take flight and wend its way through the trees I was struck by a deep sense of gratitude. Eighty years ago Newton Herbert Street founded a park that has grown and thrived through the continued generosity of many members of our community, past and present. I welcome you all to come and enjoy the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park. It is a truly wonderful place to walk and appreciate the wonders of our natural, native woodland environment.

With warmest regards,

Carrie Swigart
President