

# Greenwich Point News

Friends of Greenwich Point - PO Box 711 - Old Greenwich, CT 06870

SPRING 2011



Spring walks will look at trees, birds like the black-and-white warbler, above, and horseshoe crabs, right.

Photos by Cynthia Ehlinger



## Walks on the Wild Side at Greenwich Point

Sponsored by Friends of Greenwich Point and organized by Barbara O'Neill

### **Invaders in the Forest — Changes In The Woodland Ecosystem** Sunday, April 17, 3 p.m.

Join long-time resident Peter Davenport for a walk into the native — and nonnative — woodlands at Greenwich Point. The group will meet at the second (southern) concession stand. Peter, who recently received a master's degree in environmental education and currently works as a ranger leading tours of Henry David Thoreau's Walden Pond in Concord, MA, will take participants on a journey into the Point's forested trails. Discover tree species that have grown in the region since the retreat of the glaciers, learn about the nonnative plants that are changing the park's traditional ecology, and explore what, if anything, might be done to revitalize the ecosystem. Estimated walking time: 1 hour 15 minutes, approximate distance 2.5 miles. For more information, contact Peter Davenport at 781.248.9817 or via email at [peterdaven@gmail.com](mailto:peterdaven@gmail.com)

### **Warblers and Orioles — The Color of Spring Birding** Sunday May 15, 7:30 a.m.

Join Cynthia Ehlinger, avid birder and Bruce Museum staff member, for an early morning walk to look and listen for the sights and sounds of migrating birds that use Greenwich Point as an important migratory refuge and refueling station as well as home base. The group will meet near the second (southern) concession stand. We will focus on bird identification skills using habitats, bird behaviors, song and shape. Estimated walking time: 2 hours, 15 minutes, approximate distance 2.5 miles. For more information, contact Cynthia Ehlinger at 203.698.1167 or email [cehlinger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cehlinger@sbcglobal.net)

### **Horseshoe Crab Walk and Talk** Saturday, May 21, 10 a.m.

Horseshoe crab expert Rosemary Loudon will lead a walk and talk focusing on the mating season of

the horseshoe crab. Other topics will include the shedding of shells, the importance of their eggs for other species and local and national scientific efforts to protect the horseshoe crab. Meet in the boat launch parking lot near the OGYC. Program lasts approximately 45 minutes. **Rain date May 22.**

### **Horseshoe Crab Walk and Talk** Saturday, June 5, 1p.m.

Same as Saturday, May 21, but we are now at a different point of the "horseshoe crab season." Meet in the boat launch parking lot near the OGYC. Program lasts approximately 45 minutes.

### **SAVE THE DATE:**

### **Geology of Greenwich Point** Sunday, September 25, 2:30 p.m.

Mike Aurelia leads a casual 90-minute walk around the Point to show interesting aspects of the geological history of the Point. Meet in the small parking lot near the Innis Arden Cottage.

Check the FoGP website for updates and more at [friendsofgreenwichpoint.org](http://friendsofgreenwichpoint.org) OR join our Constant Contact list for up-to-date information on events at Greenwich Point by sending a message to FoGP at [info@friendsofgreenwichpoint.org](mailto:info@friendsofgreenwichpoint.org).

**GRAND OPENING!**  
**(Stay tuned for the date!)**

**ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER**  
**at INNIS ARDEN COTTAGE**  
**with the NEW SEASIDE CENTER**



**with Free Tours, Music, Activities, Refreshments, Special Guests**

**Town of Greenwich – Greenwich Point Conservancy – Bruce Museum – Greenwich Shellfish Commission – Friends of Greenwich Point - and many more friends of the Center!**

Letter from the President  
**New Beginnings**

By Amy Burke

The Innis Arden Cottage restoration project is nearing completion and preparing for the Bruce Museum Seaside Center to take up residence this Spring. The new touch tanks, labs and galleries as well as the building's sustainable energy technologies will provide educational opportunities and hopefully inspiration for all visitors. As we witness this merge between the past and present, I would like to reflect upon the Friend's early involvement with the Seaside Center.

Dedicated and opened in 1968, the Greenwich Point Exhibit Center (which was the predecessor to the Bruce Museum's Seaside Center) was visualized, planned and created by members of the the original Friends of Greenwich Point. At that time, the organization called itself the Greenwich Point Committee. The early planners brought together

educators, naturalists, writers, conservationists, crafts people, artists and Town politicians to bring to fruition the dreams of Helen Kitchel "to have information readily available at the beach to identify the many creatures that inhabited Greenwich Point". In the subsequent years, the Center has opened its doors during the summer months to, literally, tens of thousands of children, parents and the curious – free of charge.

One cannot help but wonder how many budding marine biologists and naturalists gleaned their first inspiration from visiting the original Center on a hot, summer day. And, with the relocation of the Seaside Center into the historical setting of the Innis Arden Cottage, we now have a remarkable opportunity to show a new generation the importance of conservation and protecting our environment. New beginnings born from a past vision – what a wonderful thing to see.

**First Sunday Bird Walks**  
**May 1, June 5, July 3**  
**9 -11 a.m.**

Co-sponsored by Wild Wings, Audubon Greenwich, and Bruce Museum. Free. Meet by the second (southern) concession stand. Learn about the birds of the Point. All ages and experience welcome. Bring binoculars.



**“Experience the Sound”**  
**Saturday, May 28, 1– 4 p.m.**

The Greenwich Shellfish Commission presents the sixth annual “Experience the Sound” event on Saturday, May 28, 2011 at Greenwich Point. Set in the backdrop of beautiful Greenwich Cove, all are invited to come learn about the various outdoor opportunities in our area -- including nature, sports, and the environment -- from the individuals, societies, and commissions that offer them.

More than thirty exhibits will be located around the exterior of the Old Greenwich Yacht Club. The Soundwaters Schooner, Atlantic Clam Farms barge, and oyster boats will also be moored at the Club's docks and open to visitors.

The Shellfish Commission invites you to join us for a fun afternoon of experiencing the many activities related to the Long Island Sound and its coast. For more information, please call Sue Baker at (203) 637-4610, Bill Gremp at (203) 637- 2431 or Roger Bowgen at (203) 243-6364.

*P.S.* Town of Greenwich regulations that govern the use of Greenwich Point remain in force at all times during the event's use of the area.

# New Home for Purple Martins

By Cynthia Ehlinger

What is a purple martin and why does it need a new home?

The purple martin (*Progne subis*) is a bird in the swallow family, the largest swallow in North America, measuring about 7.9 inches from bill to tail. Like most swallows, it is an aerial acrobat and eats prodigious amounts of flying insects. The martin nests in cavities, and on the east coast of this continent it is totally dependent on man-made structures for nesting. Even before the arrival of Europeans here, Native Americans are thought to have attracted these birds to their villages using hollowed-out gourds. Designs and materials have changed over the years, but the tradition of putting up gourds for martins continues.

The Friends of Greenwich Point is supporting a project organized by board member Mike Aurelia to erect new purple martin housing on Greenwich Point. And the Town's Conservation Commission and Department of Parks and Recreation have agreed. Mike has been working with local birders Meredith Sampson of Wild Wings, which is also lending support, as well as Brian O'Toole at Audubon Greenwich, Cynthia Ehlinger of the Bruce Museum, and with the Parks Department to find an appropriate site at least 40 feet from tall trees or housing.



Purple Martin nesting gourds

Martins are somewhat particular about where they live. Each spring, the purple martins return from their winter home in South America to the same nesting site if they were successful raising young the previous year. They like to live in open areas, often near water. They don't mind living in close proximity to other martins, but if starlings or house sparrows try to set up housekeeping in their complex, the purple martins will leave. The earliest arrivals in spring, called scouts, will set up territories and claim the nesting site. But if

the colony has grown too large or the housing availability has changed, a new site must be found. That is why the erection of new martin homes is important. Currently there is an active purple martin colony on the other side of Greenwich Cove on private property in Riverside. Making a new site available nearby allows that colony to expand. So the next time you stroll around the Point and see some strange looking gourds hanging around, look again to see if the purple martins have discovered a new home yet.

## Your Help Is Needed

by Lynne Davenport, Membership Chairman

Calling all Friends of Greenwich Point, both past and present. Like many other non-profits, the Friends have seen a drop in contributions in the past few years. Therefore, we need your help more than ever. If you have already contributed to the Friends for this year, we greatly appreciate your doing so. But we need to ask one more favor.

Would you please contact your friends and neighbors and urge

them to send us a contribution.

The membership form along with the various contribution levels is on the back page of this newsletter. If your membership has lapsed, we urge you to renew it. If you cannot contribute at your previous level, please consider decreasing your amount, but please do send us a donation. Every little bit helps. Remember that your financial support helps us

to provide many programs at the Point, including Safe Roads on winter Sunday mornings, Holly Grove bird feeding, free summer concerts, and our newsletter, to name only a few.

We are now taking nominations for new board members and interested candidates are encouraged to send an email to: [info@friendsofgreenwichpoint.org](mailto:info@friendsofgreenwichpoint.org).

## Join the Friends of Greenwich Point

Your contributions support:

- Habitat restoration
- Traffic-free Sundays
- Nature education
- Summer concert series
- The preservation of this very special place

### FoGP Goes Greener

The Friends of Greenwich Point are continuing our goal to improve communication and do it in a green way. We want to share with you our newest additions.

**Constant Contact** is an email notification system of upcoming events and special announcements. If you would like to receive these notifications please send your email to [info@friendsofgreenwichpoint.org](mailto:info@friendsofgreenwichpoint.org).

**PayPal** - We now accept PayPal for FoGP membership dues and donations. To use the PayPal option, please go to the membership section of our website: [www.friendsofgreenwichpoint.org](http://www.friendsofgreenwichpoint.org).

**FoGP telephone:** (203) 987-6712

## Friends of Greenwich Point Membership Form



The Friends of Greenwich Point work hard to carry out our mission to preserve and protect Greenwich Point and promote safe recreation. Please make your tax-deductible check payable to: *Friends of Greenwich Point* and mail to PO Box 711, Old Greenwich, CT 06870.

**\* Available for a contribution of \$50: FoGP T-shirts (circle size)**

Youth 2-4 6-8 10-12  
Adult M L XL

**\*\* Available for a contribution of \$100 or more:  
FoGP baseball cap (Khaki)**

### Annual Family memberships

- Egret \$15
- Tern \$25
- Goldeneye \$50\*
- Osprey \$100\*\*
- Eagle \$250 and up\*\*

For membership information, please contact Membership Chairman at [info@friendsofgreenwichpoint.org](mailto:info@friendsofgreenwichpoint.org) or by mail at PO Box 711, Old Greenwich, CT 06870

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if you prefer to receive your newsletter by email.

You can also join on our website, [www.friendsofgreenwichpoint.org](http://www.friendsofgreenwichpoint.org)

**Friends of Greenwich Point**  
PO Box 711  
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