



NORWALK LAND TRUST *News*

Fall 2011 | norwalklandtrust.org

Live From Norwalk: Lucie Arnaz in Concert!

Hurry and get your tickets while they last! Norwalk Land Trust has hit the ground running recently with tickets sales for its upcoming concert benefit *An Evening With Lucie Arnaz*. The event is scheduled for 7:30pm, Saturday, October 29, 2011 at Norwalk Concert Hall, 125 East Avenue at City Hall.

The Emmy Award-winning actress and singer will deliver a fiery, explosive, and heartfelt musical tribute to the rhythm of her roots and a love note to the man who introduced La Conga to the United States, her father, **Desi Arnaz**. Lucie will perform songs from her latest CD *Latin Roots*, which is an eclectic Latin American mix in English and Spanish highlighting songs from Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, and Johnny Mercer alongside tunes by Agustín Lara, Rafael Hernandez, and Margarita Lecuona.



Lucie Arnaz

Latin Roots sizzles with sophistication and sassy spice. "These are the rhythms of my soul", Lucie Arnaz says of her new *Latin Roots* CD, which was released in the winter.

According to critics: "She brings down the house with a couple of fiery Latin songs." Lucie Arnaz is celebrating 40 plus years in show business. She began her long career in a recurring role on television on **The Lucy Show**, opposite her mother, **Lucille Ball**. At age fifteen, she became a series regular on **Here's Lucy**, a show which ran for six seasons. She starred in her own series, *The Lucie Arnaz Show* and later in the critically acclaimed *Sons & Daughters* on CBS.

State **Representative Lawrence Cafero** and **Senator Bob Duff** are the Honorary Chairpersons. *An Evening With Lucie Arnaz* is supported by **AT&T, Moffly Media, Fairfield County Bank, Starbucks, Stew Leonards, Tuliptree Site Design** and **Whole Foods**, among others.

NLT expects a sellout. Tickets can be purchased online at norwalklandtrust.org. To purchase tickets by mail, cut out and complete the form below and mail to Norwalk Land Trust, PO Box 34, Norwalk, CT 06853. For more information email event@norwalklandtrust.org.

Don't miss out on the fun! ☺

- • • • • An Evening With Lucie Arnaz -- 7:30pm, October 29, 2011 • • • • •
- Name _____ •
- Address _____ •
- Daytime telephone _____ •
- Tickets: I/we would like to purchase _____ tickets at \$50 per person •
- Journal Advertisement: _____ Gold full page- \$1,000 _____ Silver full page- \$600 •
- _____ Bronze full page- \$400 _____ Full page- \$300 _____ Half page- \$150 •
- _____ Quater page/business card- \$100 •
- Total enclosed (Payable to the Norwalk Land Trust) \$ _____ •
- **Mail to: Norwalk Land Trust, PO Box 34, Norwalk, CT 06853** •
- • • • •

A SUCCESS STORY: CRANBURY'S WHITE BARN NATURE PRESERVE

by John Moeling, Vice President

It all began when a letter arrived in June 2003 informing Cranbury residents that the White Barn property was going to be developed - and the open space neighbors cherished was in serious jeopardy. "We knew we had to get organized and work hard if we wanted to have a chance of preserving this wonderful gem," says Cranbury resident **Joanne Jackson**. "We went to work -- we had to!" A core group was formed: Jackson, **Gail Wall, Pete Hynes** and **Celia Maddox Gable** -- and the effort began. Jackson, a Norwalk Land Trust Director, recruited the Trust's membership, led by **Bill Wrenn, Paul Littell** and **Diane Lauricella**.



White Barn Pond

Five years ago, when the Connecticut Friends School contracted to acquire the former Lucille Lortel White Barn property at the corner of Cranbury Road and Newtown Avenue, a major turning point had been reached for the effort to Save the White Barn Theatre Property in Cranbury. Save Cranbury Association, a grassroots citizens' group, had fought hard against development and the possible loss of open space that had been cherished in the Cranbury for generations. Today their success -- and the ambitious progress of the School and its students, parents and teachers -- is clear to see.

The Connecticut Friends School came aboard, to expand their campus beyond its Wilton base, to preserve the teaching and guidance mission initiated by Ms. Lortel, and to involve its students in the preservation of the property's natural beauty and community value. "Our students celebrate Earth Day on our hill overlooking the Pond on Stony Brook," says School Co-Director **Kim Tsocanos**. "There's a lot yet to do, but the land is safe and protected, and we'll keep it that way."

In June, generous help from **Seaman Construction** of Norwalk allowed complete removal of the old tennis court on the property. Native plantings will be introduced. The Preserve continues to thrive! ☺

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



D. Seeley Hubbard

I am delighted to report that the Norwalk Land Trust (NLT) has had an active agenda over the last six months. We have seen significant increases in our membership, volunteer interest and in the enthusiasm and participation in our programs and activities. We have forged partnerships with other environmental organizations and neighborhoods groups in stewarding our properties and working toward a cleaner and greener city. We are working with the city to create and expand the opportunities for preserving open space in Norwalk.

After making our final payment on the mortgage for Farm Creek to The Conservation Fund, the Land Trust shifted its focus at Farm Creek to preserving and restoring the stone barn on the property. A committee has been created by the Land Trust to oversee the restoration, to raise money for its completion and to study and make recommendations for its use. The committee is expected to make its recommendations this fall and proceed to implement its plan shortly thereafter.

The Land Trust with the help of grants and the city was able to remove the deteriorated tennis court on the White Barn Property. The land will be restored to its natural state with native plantings. The removal of this eyesore is a significant improvement and accomplishment for this beautiful property. With help from the city and corporate grants, NLT removed the debris from the Betts Brook Preserve, an 18-acre parcel of natural land situated in the center of Norwalk. The Land Trust is currently working with the city to place this property under a permanent conservation easement. NLT is also working with other environmental groups such as the Norwalk River Watershed Association to clean up the Norwalk River and partnering with the Stamford Kayak Group to support and publicize our activities and share our common goals. It is our intention to identify, approach and collaborate with all groups, neighborhood associations and organizations that share the common goal of preserving our natural open space, stewarding our natural resources and advocating for a natural sustainable environment in Norwalk. We appreciate those partnerships because without them we could not accomplish all that we do.

Lastly, I will tell you about a very successful program launched initially by the Land Trust two years ago. It is our education program with the fourth grade students in the Norwalk public schools. Working with the teachers in the fourth grade, our volunteers have supplemented the science curriculum with a classroom presentation and on site visits to Farm Creek.

The students experience a “natural classroom” and the beauty and wonders of nature. Approximately one thousand students have participated in this program and it is truly one of the most rewarding and successful Land Trust initiatives.

This is one of the programs that we hope to expand with the proceeds from our benefit on October 29th, *An Evening With Lucie Arnaz*. All of the programs and activities which I described above need funding. The more that we raise, the more project we can fund. Therefore, I hope you will support our concert benefit with Lucie Arnaz. It will be a delightful entertaining evening, among friends, for a good cause. I hope to see you there. ☺

D. Seeley Hubbard
President

 2011

MEMBERSHIP REPORT:

STRONG GROWTH

by Peggy Holton, Vice President

Memberships in the Norwalk Land Trust continue with strong growth: up 45% from one year ago. Now that funds have been successfully raised to purchase Farm Creek, many contributors to the Campaign for Farm Creek have continued their support via 2011 membership dues. (Note: a much smaller campaign is being planned to enable needed repairs and restoration of the Stone Barn and entry gate at Farm Creek Preserve.)

This growing membership base is making it possible to extend the reach of the youth education programs, develop additional trails on other properties, add focus to the White Barn property, and cover stewardship of all properties. In other words, you are needed.

Your membership contribution in the fourth quarter of 2011 will be counted as a 2012 membership. ☺

With Some Help From Our Friends -- Thank You

The Norwalk Land Trust Board is a working board; but if we didn't have the help of many volunteers and donors, much of the work we do would not get done. The time, expertise and donations of people, organizations, and businesses who care about Norwalk open space have been invaluable. In the past 12 months these contributions have included helping with property cleanups and stewardship, guiding Norwalk fourth grade students during visits to Farm Creek Preserve, and contributing goods, skills, grants, and services where needed. Thanks to you all!

INDIVIDUALS

Christina Aetier
Miki Alicastro
Mike Andrews
Wayne Arcamone
Brenda Ashooh
Mike Barbis
Connie Bennett
Alex Bloom
Chris Bosak
Andrew Breck
Kimberly Bryant-Smith
Cherie Burton
Rep Lawrence Cafero
Sue Casey
Maria Camillo
Stephanie Close
Mark Dansereau
Tenzin Dickyi
Chris Donahue
Phuntsok Dorjee
Senator Bob Duff
Susan B. Edwards
Steve Holton

John Ignieri
Jennifer Irving
Gail Janensch
George Jackson
Munro Johnson
Kayla Kessler
Bob Kuchta
Theresa Labella
Tammy Langelis
Ryan Mange
Carolyn Marino
Susan McGoldrick
Bridget McCallum
The Jeff Nixon Family
John O'Donnell
Brenda Pank
Rick Pank
Rep Chris Perone
Rita Phillips
Sandy Pratt
Lynn Pratt
Nina Pallesen Richardson
Amy Rowe-Smith

Susie Salomon
Chuck Schoendorf
Linda Scull
Pete Scull
Jes Sebastian
David Shockley
Ian Sidey
Tia Sidey
David Siever
Fred Smith
Marcia Smith
Tashi Sonam
Glenn Syska
Don Thomas
Christine Tierney
Ann and Peter Tombros
Kim Tsocanos
Laura Vallejo
Sandy and Steve Ward
Gail Wall
Roger Willcox
Carol Wrigley

Businesses, Organizations, Professionals

AFK Karting
Norm Bloom & Company
Brendan's 101
Brown & Company Tree Specialists
Caricatures by Tom Glover
CL&P
Downunder Kayaking
Dock Shop Nautical Boutique
Laure Dunne Photography

Earth Place
Fairfield County Bank
Fat Cat Pie Company
The Hour
iAssistant
NEON
Newman's Own Foundation
Norwalk Redevelopment Agency
Norwalk River Watershed Association

Save the Sound / CT Fund for the Environment
Seaman Construction Inc.
Small Boat Shop
Stamford Kayaking Group
The Total Printing Center
Walgreens – West Avenue, Westport Avenue

BANISHING THE INVASIVES

by Marny Smith, *President Emeritus*

A challenging problem with caring for natural open spaces is keeping aggressive, invasive plants from crowding out the natives. It is an ongoing battle and can take several years to get the invasives under control. A case in point is the NLT land bordering the salt marsh along the western side of Farm Creek next to Roton Avenue in Rowayton.

Originally, a mixture of boulders, gravel, sand, silt and clay deposited directly by glacial ice, the land for many years was a convenient place for dumping construction waste and garbage. When the Five Mile River was dredged in the 1960's, the marsh was used as a dumping ground for the dredging spoil. Thus the ground became 'disturbed soil', where *Phragmites australis*, a hardy pioneer plant that is usually the first to populate disturbed soil, moved in and thrived. Now considered an invasive plant the *Phragmites* had a head start on later efforts to curtail its growth. Soon the Creek was invisible from Roton Avenue, obscured by a wall of 12-foot tall *Phragmites*, their plumes waving in the breezes. Few native plants could compete.

In 2002, a newcomer to Roton Avenue, **Tia Sidey**, saw photographs of the way Farm Creek once looked and took on the task of learning about the life and health of a salt marsh and then of restoring the area to its former beauty. Invasive trees, like Ailanthus, the "Tree of Heaven", and Norway maple plus *Rosa multiflora*, Asiatic bittersweet, and poison ivy had moved in alongside the *Phragmites*, filling the land on the western border of the Creek and crowding out the native wild crabapples, box elders, white oak and wildflowers.

Friends and neighbors of Farm Creek joined in the effort to eradicate the undesirables by hand during regular property cleanups, but more was needed. The DEP advocated use of Glyphosate as the safest of all the herbicides, but no one wanted to use any poisons near the Creek. After all, this was part of a nature preserve with a remarkable ecosystem that would have been disrupted. With funding raised from neighbors and **Patagonia** Westport, professionals were brought in to remove the towering invasive *Alanthus* trees. The following year there were dozens of sprouts coming from the stumps plus many seedlings that had germinated seemingly overnight. A licensed pesticide applicator was hired to spray the leaves with Glyphosate, taking care that none would find its way into the creek. A year later Tia and **Brenda Ashooh** cut any new seedlings and sprouts and put a tiny drop of Glyphosate on the stem. This treatment finally banished the ailanthus.

Brian Bruni was hired to come in monthly to cut a strip of grass along the sidewalk for the convenience of walkers and to keep the rest of the area under control. (Poison ivy, a native invasive, had deterred volunteers from venturing into the area, but Brian is not allergic to poison ivy). Brian cuts new growth of *Phragmites* and maintains breathing space around the newly uncovered crabapples, box elder and groundsel. Funded by a grant from **Pep- peridge Farm**, the area has since been replanted with appropriate natives such as shadblow, *Rosa virginiana*, spicebush, arrow-wood

viburnum and bayberry. Bull Thistles and Queen Anne's Lace are thriving alongside the bushes.

By 2009, Tia decided to see what would happen if the *Phragmites* were eliminated from a small area. A 40 by 15-foot test plot was marked off and in early spring Tia and Brenda cut every shoot growing in the test plot down to the ground except for two struggling high tide bushes. Over the summer they kept cutting down new *Phragmites* shoots every week and marked new high tide bush seedlings with orange markers to assure they would not be cut down by mistake. By the fall a small number of groundsel trees had also poked through the muddy soil. Tia and Brenda kept cutting back the unwanted *Phragmites* once a month during the second summer and so far, they have had to cut them out only once during this third summer.

No longer just a test plot, the area is now thick with marsh elder and groundsel bushes and many other newly emerged natives. Seaside goldenrod, switchgrass, creeping bentgrass, waterhemp, sea lavender and saltmarsh asters have all appeared voluntarily. The seeds of these native plants were always there, lying quiescently in the soil, waiting for space and sunlight to allow them to grow. *Spartina* and spikegrass have now been freed to move up the bank. Incredibly, there are now fiddler crabs in residence in the mud among the grasses. In addition, the area is now a snapshot of a perfect salt marsh.

Over time Tia, Brenda and other neighbors may continue to open up the view of Farm Creek from Roton Avenue by creating new test plots. **Miki Alicastro** and Brenda, who live in houses at the northern end of the Creek have kept the *Phragmites* under control in their back yards that border the Creek by vigilant cutting back.

Banishing the invasives from the Roton Avenue section of Farm Creek Preserve has drawn praise from naturalists, residents and landscapers alike. New upland shrubs are thriving, shadblow bushes bloom each spring, clusters of viburnum berries appear in the fall, red winterberries stand out against the snow in winter and wildflowers such as yarrow, Queen Anne's lace, bull thistles and asters are popping up from wherever they have been hiding for years. All of this is a tribute to the volunteer neighborhood stewards who care deeply enough for the lovely open space of Farm Creek Preserve to have taken on restoring and stewarding it as a gift to the community.

NLT will welcome efforts from other neighborhoods bordering our properties to undertake similar cleanups and enhancements. Open space can improve neighboring property values as well as provide breathing room from human structures and development, especially when neighbors care enough to keep them free of invasives. ☺



MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

The word is out! It's no longer insider information. Former IBM employee Peggy Holton, a Vice President and longtime member and a wealth of resource for the Norwalk Land Trust, was recently featured in the company's news. The article was written as part of IBM's centennial birthday celebration and focuses on volunteer efforts of employees and retirees. The article can be read at: http://www.ibm.com/ibm100/us/en/service/stories/holton_june_2011.html

We are grateful to IBM for acknowledging Peggy's work as well as the Land Trust. Peggy has been a member of the Land Trust since 2004. She chairs the Membership Committee and diligently keeps the organizations records and data. Peggy is proactive and is the kind of volunteer every non-profit would love to have. Norwalk Land Trust is quite lucky to have her on its team. ♡



Peggy Holton

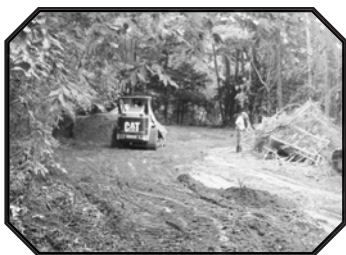
POTPOURRI

Soon to Come: Betts Brook Nature Preserve

In June, one of the largest undeveloped open-space properties in Norwalk turned in a new direction. Under the supervision of the Norwalk Land Trust and with the help of the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency along with NLT's Advisory Board member **Dave Shockley**, a half-century of dumped debris was cleared away in just two days! Out came more than 5,000 pounds of debris: a bathtub, a furnace, several piles of construction debris, and a 1950 Chevy sedan. The property, which runs between Blake and Allen Streets and includes a stretch of Betts Brook, constitutes nearly 20 acres of mid-city wildlife habitat, and is expected to be managed by the Land Trust as the "Betts Brook Nature Preserve". Access to the property has been closed to future illegal dumping.

White Barn Restoration

Within the same week as the cleanup of the Betts Brook Nature Preserve property, Norwalk Land Trust's White Barn Nature Preserve easement got its final restoration. Many thanks to Joe Seaman of Seaman Construction, who donated a major portion of his company's time and equipment to removal of the old asphalt tennis court, which was nearly a quarter-acre in size and deposit truckloads of topsoil onto the site. Now restoration of native species can be undertaken, with the continuing preservation and protection of the pond, stream and upland woods.



UPDATE: The Norwalk Land Trust Goes To Sea

Back in June, NLT sponsored a kayak-based tour of properties along Long Island Sound and its coves and marshes: Hoyt Island, 250 Wilson Avenue and the Farm Creek Preserve. Some two dozen kayakers enjoyed excellent weather and a leisurely paddle. The homeowners at Village Creek in SoNo graciously offered their lovely beach area for put-in and take-out, and contributors increased NLT's coffers by over \$300!

News

In August, the Stamford Kayak Group undertakes its annual Norwalk Islands cleanup fundraiser, which was on Shea Island last year. It's a fundraiser for both NLT and the Norwalk River Watershed Association. This event is organized by **Pete Cloudas** of SKG, which undertakes trips and tours throughout the area. For more information email us: info@norwalklandtrust.org

Annual Meeting Date Change...

This year, NLT is planning to hold its annual meeting sometime in January 2012. The date will be announced soon.

Xmas Stocking Stuffers...

It's not too soon to think about Christmas. The 2012 NLT calendars are the perfect stocking stuffers and will be on sale at our upcoming events. They can be purchased by emailing us.



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For more information about NLT, please email us
info@norwalklandtrust.org

Lorraine Dowdey
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Being a member of the
Norwalk Land Trust has
its benefits. Your
support means
continued preservation
of our precious open
spaces for today and
years to come!



Fall 2011

Our Mission...

Norwalk Land Trust recognizes the need to balance nature and development. Acquiring and preserving land protects nature and benefits Norwalk's present and future generations. Norwalk Land Trust is a non-profit corporation dedicated to preserve open space in Norwalk.

Please join the Norwalk Land Trust for 2012

You are supporting continuing preservation of Norwalk open spaces! **Thank You.**

2012 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____

Phone (____) _____

Norwalk Land Trust does not share member information
All membership contributions are tax deductible

Please check all that interest you:

I would like to volunteer for: ___Stewardship ___Education ___Events ___Administration ___Fundraising/Grants

I have special skills _____

Use my email address to send me electronic newsletters and communications: ___YES ___NO

- ___ \$30 Individual
- ___ \$50 Family
- ___ \$100-\$249 Supporting
- ___ \$250-\$999 Steward
- ___ \$1,000+ Leadership
- ___ Other
- ___ Matching gift form enclosed

Amount enclosed \$_____ to Norwalk Land Trust
or from my PayPal account \$_____ to
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