



# THE Spruce

## Fall 2011 NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 2276 ■ Huntington Station ■ Shelton, Connecticut 06484

## Robert Peter "Bob" Stockmal

The Shelton Land Conservation Trust was deeply saddened by the recent loss of one of its' original founding members, Robert Peter "Bob" Stockmal. Bob, husband of the late Marcella Stockmal, died this past summer on August 26. He was born on June 18, 1923 in Shelton, and attended local schools, graduating from Shelton High School before joining the Army Air Corps in World War II. After the war, Bob attended the University of Bridgeport architectural program, where he met his future wife, Marcella Vernik.

In his early career, Bob worked for architectural firms before establishing his own business, Robert P. Stockmal, Landscape Architect, Inc. Unlike some Landscape Architects who choose to import exotic non-native plants to enhance their designs, Bob's designs were



often characterized by the creative use of indigenous plants. With the proliferation of invasive plant species in today's environment, the concept of utilizing indigenous plants, has gained wider popularity, and is in greater demand.

If it were not for Bob, (and the other founding members) whose vision, foresight, and dedication to the cause of conservation in Shelton, the Land Trust would not exist. Bob worked tirelessly on behalf of the Trust, and was always at the forefront of many of its activities, from Land Acquisition, Land Monitoring, or battling invasive species on Trust property. Trust President Joe Walsh fondly recalls, "It seems like just yesterday, (during the early stages of clearing out invasive species at Nicholdale) that Bob could be seen blasting through the high brush with his "new tractor," while other trust volunteers were using his old one, flanked by a crew of volunteers on the ground." "That kind of dedication and leadership is rare, and Bob will be truly missed," Joe concluded.

Bob's commitment and dedication to being a good steward of the land was all the more evident in the Fall of 1999, when he sold the development rights of his property to preserve his land from the possibility of future development, thus assuring the protection and expansion of the Means Brook Greenway.

In addition to his Trust activities, Bob enjoyed building projects, woodworking, photography, and painting. He was also an active member of the Rhododendron Society, Connecticut Nut Growers Association, and the Connecticut Orchid Society.

He is survived by his daughters, Jill Bennett and husband Dale Bennett, Nan Peschel and husband Charles Peschel, granddaughter Lindsey Faye Bennett, his sister, Jean Barclay and husband Henry Barclay, and several cousins, nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his brother, Howard.

The Officers and Board Members of the Trust on behalf of all its members, extend its heartfelt condolences to all of Bob's family members and friends. We are indeed grateful to Bob Stockmal, a man whose life was well lived, and who left us all with an enduring legacy of environmental consciousness, and a healthy Shelton environment.





# Earth Day Essay Contest Winners

## "What Earth Day in Shelton Means to Me"

Sponsored by The Shelton Land Conservation Trust Inc., the essay had many wonderful contributors. The 1st place prize of \$200 went to Kenny Giangregorio, pictured third from the left. 2nd place of \$100 went to Brandon Guittard, second from the left, and the 3rd place prize of \$50 went to Megan Byrne, pictured first on the right.



Megan Byrne 3rd, Brandon Guittard 2nd, Kenny Giangregorio 1st, Joe Welsh SLT President

## Harriet's Bench

Harriet's Bench, named after the late Harriet Wilbur, a longtime member of the Conservation Commission and a respected Shelton citizen, has finally been returned after a prolonged absence to its rightful place overlooking the pastoral setting of the Shelton Land Trust's meadow off Lane Street. Originally hand-built with loving care by her friends several years ago as a memorial to Harriet, the bench had to be removed due to extensive vandalism and graffiti. Over the summer it has been restored close to its original condition in the hope that those that use it to rest and enjoy the serenity of the meadow also respect the sanctity of this memorial. Enjoy the shade and the view!

You may read each winner's essay at:

<http://www.sheltonlandtrust.org/htmlfiles/earthdaycontestessays.htm>

The following is an excerpt of Kennys winning essay:

### What Earth Day Means to Me

In an ever-changing world of rapidly developing technology and conflicts on a global scale, it is easy to lose touch with the little things happening right around us each and every day. Our constant neglect of the environment has become a way of life, from toxic fumes exhaled from our cars to oil spills and nuclear meltdowns destroying all living things in their path. Earth Day is a worldwide day of awareness of the condition of our planet. A large amount of the public still see it as just any other holiday, but each year more and more people are waking up. Now, and in the years to come, Earth Day will only grow in significance as we are forced to solve our environmental problems.

To me, Earth Day is important on a personal level. I've spent my entire life growing up here in Shelton and though I haven't experienced drastic changes, over time I've seen different areas of town become more developed as more nature is taken away from my hometown. I've always had an interest in the natural world, which led to me joining the Cub Scouts as a little kid. After a couple years, I became a Boy Scout and since then I've camped all over New England and even all the way down in Virginia. I've hiked miles, fished for countless hours, and even slept in the woods alone without a shelter. All of these experiences culminated in the recent completion of my Eagle Scout Service Project. I worked with the Shelton Trails Committee to renovate the Blue Dot Trail (formerly the John Dominick Trail) by Nells Rock Reservoir. My goal was to give the public a little piece of nature away from the rest of the city. Hopefully, as people enjoy it, they'll want to do more for the rest of the environment. Because I've had the chance to participate in these events in my life, nature really resonates within me, along with the annual celebration of Earth Day. I want other kids and even my own children to do the things that I've been able to do, but with the current rate of destruction of our environment, this doesn't seem to probable.

### HARRIET'S BENCH

Harriet Wilbur was a dedicated member of the Shelton Conservation Commission for many years until her passing in September, 2006. It is in her memory that this bench was hand-made by her friends and dedicated to her memory. Unfortunately, vandalism in the form of extensive graffiti forced the removal of the bench for restoration to its original condition.

Please treat this bench for what it is... a resting place from which to view this peaceful meadow as well as a memorial to a beloved member of the community, whose purpose was to make locations such as this a treasure for all to enjoy.

## Update On Our Stewardship:

It was a challenging year trying to eradicate invasive plant species at Nicholdale Farm. Last year's long winter snow prevented our contractors from heavy mowing because the ground was still frozen. Then the long snow melt and spring rains interfered with the scheduling of hand work. From mid-April to August we had an "off-limits" downtime period from improving the wildlife habitats because of the nesting season. Currently, we are now making progress and hope to be completed by mid November with the eradication process for this year. Let's hope all goes well and the weather will co-operate.

In Recapping the funding awarded through the U.S.D.A. Natural Resource Conservation Service, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, note that this puts us in the second year of the program.

Upland wildlife habitat restoration for the woodlands has divided the property into three sections where management practices are carried out over a five year period. Last year we started the first heavy mechanical removal of target plants followed by herbicide treatment. This year we began a new section while revisiting the areas managed last year. The results were right on point with the desired outcome. While invasive plants are not removed over night, the first round really eliminated the majority of the plants with some regrowth from what was cut and the vast seed bank that still exists in the ground. This regrowth is cut and treated, further reducing the number of invasives and allowing the native species to reclaim areas where they were displaced.

Fall is one of the best times for cutting and herbicide treatment of invasives because plants such as Asiatic bittersweet, multiflora rose, winged euonymus, and Japanese barberry are pulling nutrients from the soil and back into the roots. The active ingredient glyphosate in the herbicide is pulled into the roots as well, making for a successful kill.

# Conservation in Szarvas, Hungary

by Margaret Paulson

This summer I had the opportunity to visit Hungary for 3 weeks in August, and I was pleasantly surprised to find that in Hungary there is a very strong commitment to conservation in the city of Szarvas, where we stayed. Translated, the name means “Deer Town.” On the outskirts of the city, Szarvas hosts the largest Arboretum in Hungary.

In 1798, Peter Bolza became a land owner in Szarvas, and began buying up tracks of land. His grandson, Joseph Bolza and his wife Anna began the Batthyány–Anna Grove tree planting. They later built the castle Körös-Maros, which is now home to the National Parks Directorate Works. The young Joseph Bloza planted trees in the higher parts of the arboretum, away from the flood zones of the Körös river, which surrounds the park.



*The Gates of the Arboretum*

Later, the castle and the estate of Szarvas Bolza Paul (1861-1947) was inherited by his Uncle Joseph, who received the current Bolza Arboretum area of the “groves, and wooded pastures.” Beginning in the 1890’s, that area was used to control and regulate the Körös River. Anna Park contains many valuable trees and many rare plants imported from all over the world.

The institution today is a collection of 5 areas comprising 82 hectares. Some of the other tasks of the arboretum involve education, research, and cultivation. In 1985, the Horticulture and Food Industry



*The Samuel Tessedick Museum*

University was started here, and today the Budapest Faculty of Landscape Architecture is under the Arboretums supervision.

The park boasts a collection of nearly 1600 trees and shrubs, and 1200 broadleaf varieties. The arboretum is the proprietor of plants for the “living” gene bank in Hungary. It has an estimated 150 bird species, and many mammals including small rodents, moles, hedgehogs, rabbits, deer and fox.

After World War II, education and research became a very important factor of every day life in Szarvas.

The city is also home to the Irrigation

Research Institute, and the Fish Culture Research Institute, which is now merged into one group called HAKI. Szarvas is also the home of the Samuel Tessedick College. Today, Szarvas lies in Békés, one of the largest counties for academic and science centers.

Samuel Tessedik (20 April 1742–27 Dec 1820) was an evangelical minister, writer, and conservationist,

and agriculturalist of the Great Plain.

In 1780, Tessedik established the “Practical Industrial School” for the peasant youth, greatly improving the peasants’ way of life. The school taught cultivation techniques, and practical work processes such as rotating crops, and fertilization.

He organized a library, vocational training workshops, and a farm, where he also trained the teachers and overseers. In 1791, he proposed a national education reform plan, which was not very well received by the town of Szarvas. They successfully blocked his reforms, and operation of the school, forcing him in 1806 to close the Institute which was already known country wide.

In addition to all his works, Tessedik also expanded cultivation techniques to all areas of the Great Plain, including Szarvas. He was a pioneer in propagating the modern rotation of crops, cultivation of fodder crops, and stalling stock-rearing. He experimented with melioration of Alkali soils, and was the first in using limy-marly soil-spread (digosing). He domesticated the Lucern River, and took the initiative of rearing bees and making silkwork.

Tessedik also used his knowledge of health care to improve the everyday lives of orphans and the poor people of Hungary. The most important being the sinking of wells to provide fresh, clean drinking water.

Today in Szarvas, there is a museum and church in his honor, and we were entertained one evening by the opera “Tessedik”.

Conservation plays a very important role in the Hungarian culture, one that goes back centuries and continues to develop and grow.



## Getting to know our parcels:

### Shelton Land Conservation Trust

#### Parcel #24 (Formerly #4)

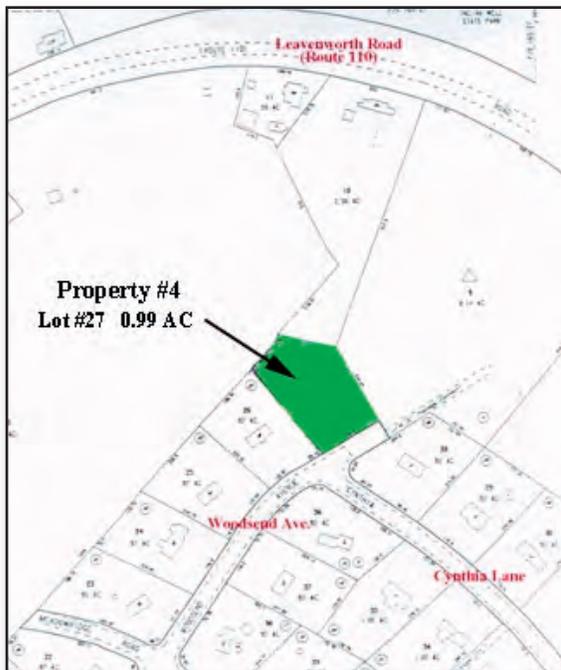
This Parcel is known to us as Parcel #4 and to the City as LT-24 is located at the end of Woodsend Avenue right after the turn to Cynthia Lane. The Shelton Land

Conservation Trust, Inc. was deeded this land from A&A Brothers, Inc. in February 1975. Known as Lot #31 of Driftwood Acres, Section 3 it is approximately 0.99 Acres with 150 feet of road frontage at the end of Woodsend Avenue. Adjoining the land to the southeast is Lot #32 or 48 Woodsend Avenue. The other adjoiners are larger parcels of 30, 2.4, and 8.1 acres having frontage on Leavenworth Road.

There is a small amount of asphalt roadway in front of the land where you may park and access the parcel. The land slopes steeply from the road dropping about 40 feet in the roughly 250' of the lots' depth. Crossing the property is a Sanitary Sewer, which was installed by the City of Shelton. The Land Trust granted an easement to permit the

construction of the sewer and received some trees, planted after the sewer project was completed.

While this small piece of land may not be suitable for any Hiking trails, it does serve as Open Space, and is surrounded by 3 largely undeveloped tracts of land. In the future it may be possible to explore the possibility of expanding this Open Space with the acquisition of the vacant 8.14 Acre parcel bordering on the northeast which slopes steeply down to Leavenworth Road.



## Shelton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

P.O. Box 2276 • Huntington Station • Shelton, Connecticut 06484

#### *President*

Joseph Welsh

#### *Vice Presidents*

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#### *Secretary*

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Robert Liddel

Bruce Nichols

Lisa Olsen

Margaret Paulson

Joseph Palmucci

Donald Pendagast

Robert Wnek

#### *Member Emeritus*

Robert Stockmal

Lise Olsen

#### **2011 General Meetings:**

Nov. 9 - 7 pm

Additional meetings to be announced. All general meetings will take place at the Shelton Community Center at 7pm.

To be better informed about Land Trust activities and local conservation issues, why not join the Trust's email alert list? To be added, simply send an email to [slctjoew@sbcglobal.net](mailto:slctjoew@sbcglobal.net)

