



LYME LAND TRUST BULLETIN

The Lyme Land Conservation Trust

April 1992

Vol. VI No. 1

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

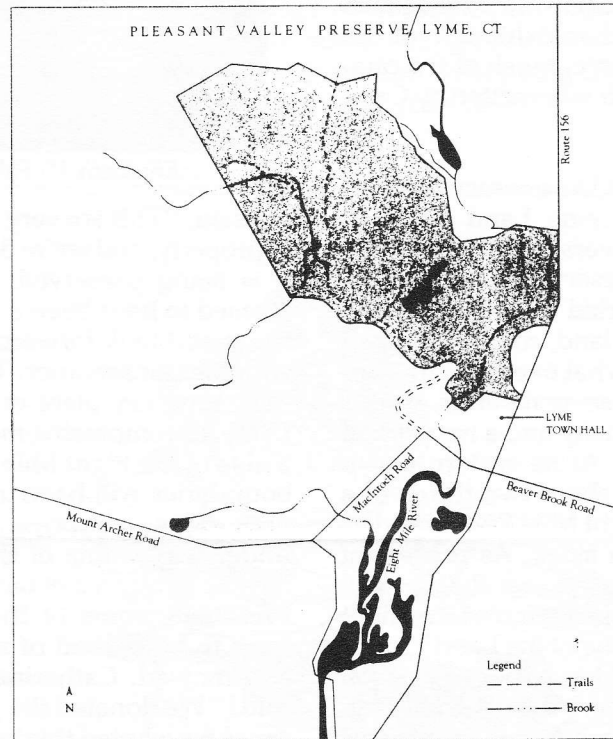
Dear Neighbors,

This issue of the *Bulletin* deals principally with the recent, very generous gift of land to The Nature Conservancy by Catherine and Elizabeth Fehrer, with which we at the Land Trust will be intimately involved as managers. In this connection I have come to reflect on the motivation behind the various gifts of land which we have received. While I have not been privy to the thinking that has led to each gift, there seems to be a common thread running through most of them, a genuine love for the land as well as a desire to see it preserved in its present natural state.

Over the years we have heard much about the tax motivation for large charitable gifts. This is undoubtedly true for those at the upper end of the tax brackets, but since 1986 the Internal Revenue Service has taken so much of the appeal out of gifts of appreciated real estate that such gifts have slowed to a trickle.

There remains, however, a significant opportunity to offset inheritance taxes on estates with large land holdings while at the same time maintaining family control. Too often we have seen large tracts of "family land" whose owner's desire was to "keep it for the children," sold by the heirs to developers in order to pay the inheritance tax. Anyone in such a situation should be aware that both goals, the preservation of the land and the continuation of the family interest, can be achieved in a way that minimizes inheritance taxes. Careful review and estate planning

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*Lyme's Pleasant Valley Preserve
(Map by Pollard Design; courtesy of The Nature Conservancy)*

FEHRERS GIVE 235-ACRE "PLEASANT VALLEY PRESERVE" TO THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Over Half-Mile of Eight Mile River Preserved; Land Trust to Manage It

Last December Elizabeth V. and Catherine Fehrer of Beaver Brook Road completed arrangements for making a gift of some 235 acres of their land in Lyme to the Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. It will be called the Pleasant Valley Preserve, and it ranks as one of the largest land conservation gifts in Lyme's history, being exceeded in recent years only by the Hartmans' 300-acre donation now known as Hartman Park.

The Fehrer sisters' land has been in their family since 1919, having been acquired soon after their father,

Oscar Fehrer, a well-known artist, first brought his wife, Mabel Vanderbilt Fehrer, and their two young daughters from New York to summer in Lyme. For many years before that, going back to the early 19th century, the property had been known variously as the Charles Stark or Christopher Stark Farm. Oscar Fehrer (1872-1958) together with Robert Vonnoh (1858-1933) and Eugene Higgins (1874-1958) were loosely associated with the Lyme Impressionists and became known as the artists

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**FEHRERS GIVE 235-ACRE
"PLEASANT VALLEY PRESERVE"
TO THE NATURE CONSERVANCY**

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of Pleasant Valley. They all had summer houses in Lyme near the intersection of Beaver Brook Road and what is now Route 156, in the heart of Pleasant Valley, an area described in *Harper's Magazine* in 1865 as "one of the loveliest spots on the borders of Long Island Sound." Last summer the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme had an exhibition of the works of all three, much of the catalogue for which was written by Catherine Fehrer.

The Nature Conservancy has designated the Lyme Land Trust to manage and oversee their new Pleasant Valley Preserve. It is a beautiful and richly varied tract of southern New England land, containing open fields (somewhat overgrown), running streams, several ponds, woods of varying density and a network of woods roads. At its eastern end it also contains about two-thirds of a mile of the Eight Mile River, bordering it on both sides. As readers of previous issues of this *Bulletin* will recall, the preservation of the Eight Mile River is one of the Land Trust's fondest ambitions; so our association with this preserve is most gratifying. The eastern border of the tract runs north along Route 156 from just above Lyme Public Library for not quite half a mile (including a parcel of several acres being retained by the Fehrer family for their own use). The property line then turns westerly, bordering Gahagan land on the north. Its western border is along Honiss and Matschulat properties, and its southern border runs along Jewett land mostly and, to a lesser extent, along Town of Lyme property at the southeast corner. The Preserve extends almost one and one-third miles along its east-west axis.

The Nature Conservancy plans in due course to establish an endowment to provide for care of the property and will raise \$25,000 to fund it. A lease agreement will be entered into with the Lyme Land Trust to manage the Preserve. As Rufus Barringer, president of the Land Trust,



Elizabeth V. Fehrer

has said, "This is a very special piece of property, and we're delighted that it is being preserved. We're very pleased to have been asked to manage it and look forward to working with the Conservancy. This is, to my mind, the key piece of property in Lyme, encompassing more than half a mile of the Eight Mile River." The boundaries will have to be marked with signs, a process that is well under way, some of the trails will have to be cleared of fallen trees and eventually some of the fields will have to be cleared of sapling trees and mowed. Catherine Fehrer has said, "We donated the property because we wanted this beautiful river property preserved. We enjoyed it for many years and wanted it preserved as it is." The Land Trust, with the help of volunteers recruited for the job, expects to apply its stewardship resources to assure that the wishes of the donors are realized, and thus to demonstrate Lyme's appreciation of their generosity.

The land will be open to the public for passive recreation, including hiking, cross-country skiing, bird watching and other nature studies. In keeping with long-standing policy of The Nature Conservancy, no hunting of any kind will be permitted on the property. The Conservancy and the Land Trust are, however, looking into ways to allow fishing of the Eight Mile River in season. A number of significant plant species can be found on the Preserve, including Virginia snakeroot, a threatened species in



Catherine Fehrer

Connecticut, and threadfoot. The land also provides habitat for most of the wild animals and birds one would expect to find in this relatively unspoiled part of the state. Access to the major part of the Preserve to the west of the Eight Mile River has been facilitated through a right-of-way donated by the Jewett family over their land from MacIntosh Road.

Both Elizabeth and Catherine Fehrer have spent most of their adult lives as teachers. Elizabeth did her undergraduate and graduate work at Bryn Mawr, where she earned a Ph.D. in experimental psychology. She began teaching at Wellesley and later spent 26 years at Brooklyn College, retiring as Professor Emeritus in 1975. Catherine did her undergraduate work at Vassar and then followed her sister to Bryn Mawr, where she got her Ph.D. in French and Spanish after having spent two years in Paris just before the outbreak of World War II. She ultimately became Chairman of the Department of Modern Languages at Suffolk University in Boston, from which she retired as Professor Emeritus in 1977. Since then she has pursued an interest in art, doing research on the Julian Academy, Paris, where Oscar Fehrer had studied for two years just prior to the turn of the century. Elizabeth continues to live in New York and Catherine in Boston, but both spend parts of each summer and early fall at the house in Lyme that has been in their family for so many years.

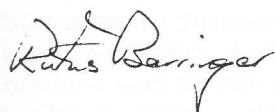
PRESIDENT'S LETTER

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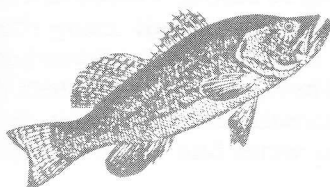
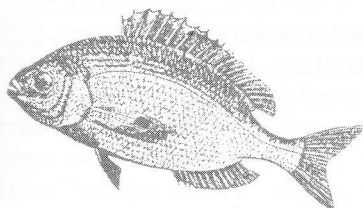
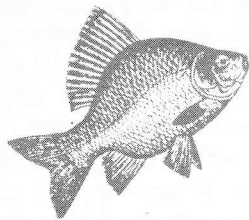
is called for. I recommend to anyone in this situation an excellent booklet on this subject, "Preserving Family Lands," put out by The Nature Conservancy. Copies are available from the Land Trust and at the Lyme Library.

All of which leads me back to my original statement that the primary motivation must be much deeper than any short term tax advantage. We at the Land Trust hope that we can justify the trust that our donors have placed in us and that their generosity will encourage others to examine the possibilities open to them.

Sincerely,



Rufus Barringer
President
April 1992

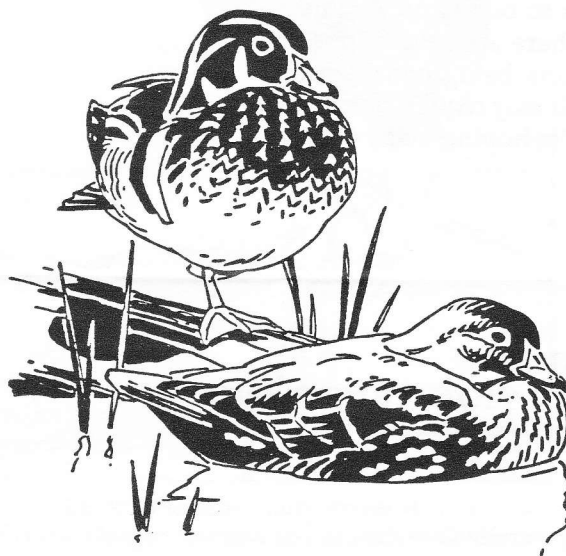


HARTMAN PARK

Trails and Picnic Sites Opened ; How To Make Contributions

The Hartman Park Committee reports that considerable progress has been made in making the area more attractive and accessible to Lyme residents. Existing old roads have been widened and washouts filled, and new hiking and cross country skiing trails have been opened. The area now has two picnic tables and an outdoor amphitheater with log benches, bulletin boards and blackboards for use by educational groups.

The preparation and maintenance of Hartman Park requires money, in addition to the substantial efforts of many willing volunteers. Contributions may be made at any time and in any amount by sending checks made out to "Town of Lyme — Hartman Park" to Lyme Town Hall, c/o William H. Beebe, 480 Route 156, Lyme, CT 06371.



"Wood Ducks" by Barry Van Dusen

LYME INVITATIONAL "WILDLIFE IN ART" SHOW IN JUNE

The second annual "Wildlife In Art" show will be held on Saturday and Sunday, June 6 and 7, 1992, at the Lyme Art Association Gallery on Lyme Street in Old Lyme. Show hours are from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. both days. Admission will be \$3.00 at the door, and proceeds go to The Nature Conservancy's Connecticut River conservation projects.

The show will display the works of 20 nationally acclaimed wildlife artists, including paintings and sculptures in various media and representations of wildlife ranging from insects and fish to birds and mammals. Robert Braunfield of Hadlyme, organizer of the event, says, "This year's show promises to be as exciting and varied as last spring's, with the same high quality of artwork that makes it one of the best of its kind in the country."

LAND TRUST ANNUAL MEETING

June 10th

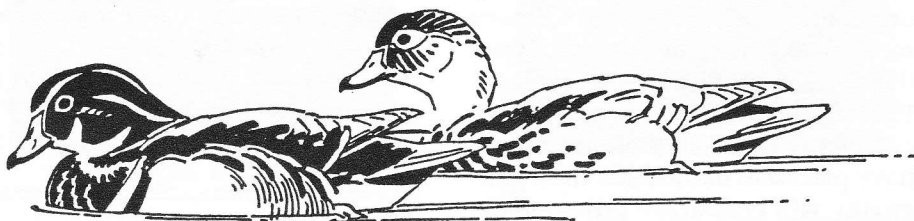
The 26th Annual Meeting of the Lyme Land Trust is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10, 1992, at the Lyme Public Hall at 7:30 p.m. There will be as usual a noted speaker from outside of our organization (whose identity had not yet been determined at the time this issue of the *Bulletin* went to press), and of course refreshments will be served. All members are urged to attend.

Sometime in May, prior to the Annual Meeting, we will make our once-a-year appeal for membership renewals, new memberships and contributions to our Land Acquisition Fund. There are several possible acquisitions being considered, some of which may require purchase funds; so we're hoping many of you

will see fit to make a contribution, regardless of the amount, over and above membership dues. Some of our contributors have been most generous over the years, for which we are very grateful, but no more so than for smaller gifts, all of which demonstrate the Lyme community's encouragement of our activities.

The Lyme Land Trust Bulletin

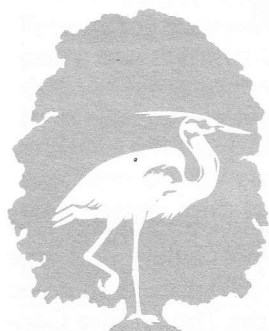
is published several times a year by the Lyme Land Conservation Trust, Inc. as a matter of interest to its membership and to the general public in Lyme. Its editorial board, to whom readers are invited to direct questions and suggestions, consists of John Friday and Cynthia Davison.



"Wood Ducks" by Barry Van Dusen

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