



LYME LAND TRUST BULLETIN

The Lyme Land Conservation Trust

April 1993

Vol. VI No. 1

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Neighbors,

I recently attended a conference in New London dealing with the tax consequences of passing family lands from one generation to another. The conference and its contents are described in some detail in an article appearing elsewhere in this issue of the *Bulletin*. Suffice it to say that the penalties for failure to plan for this inevitable event can be severe, not only for the family involved but also for the community as a whole.

The attendance from Lyme was limited, in spite of efforts on the part of your Land Trust to publicize the conference. I have been searching for an explanation for the apparent lack of interest in a subject which should be of vital concern to anyone who cares for the land he or she owns and wants to see it passed on within the family.

Perhaps the problem was the title of the conference, "Estate Planning." How dull can you get? Estate Planning is for rich people who own lots of stocks and bonds. It is for old people, not ourselves. It is for rich, old people. It is just a ploy to make money for the lawyers, etc., etc. Wrong on all counts. If one cares for the land and wants to see it preserved in something like its present state, and unless one enjoys the prospect of paying large inheritance taxes, it is a subject one cannot ignore.

On the assumption that my explanation for poor response is correct, I will make an offer: at a time and place of your own choosing, the

continued on page 3



It was summer then, and possibly it will be again. The view is southerly along the Eight Mile River, past property formerly owned by the family of Mrs. Orlean V. Curtin, an early benefactor of the Land Trust.

LLCT CO-SPONSOR OF TELECONFERENCE ON ESTATE PLANNING LAST MONTH

A three-state teleconference on estate planning as it relates to substantial landholdings was presented in March by the Southern New England Forest Consortium, Inc. It was a video teleconference that was broadcast live via satellite to some twenty sites throughout Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The Lyme Land Conservation Trust, along with the Deep River Land Trust, the Essex Land Conservation Trust, the Mashantucket Land Trust of Mystic and the New London County Soil & Water Conservation District, co-sponsored a site at Connecticut College in New London. The program, which took place on a Saturday morning, originated in Boston and was monitored by Angela Hill, who has been an anchorwoman at WWL-TV in New Orleans for the past fifteen year and owns land in

Connecticut. It also included a panel of experts consisting of Stephen J. Small, a lawyer at Powers & Hall P.C. in Boston and author of *The Federal Tax Law of Conservation Easements* and *Preserving Family Lands*, and Tim Storrow, Director of Land Protection at the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Over 750 people participated in the teleconference from the three states involved. About 65 were at the Connecticut College site, of which seven were members of your Land Trust.

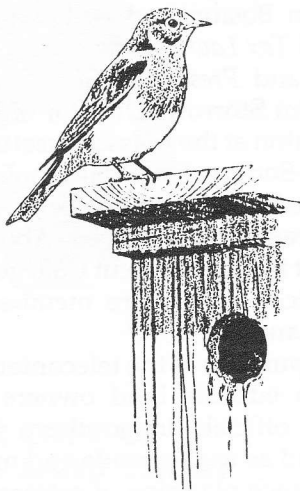
The purpose of the teleconference was to educate land owners and public officials in southern New England as to the needs and merits of advance planning of estates that include valuable lands. Studies have indicated that the average age of

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

landholders in our area is about 61, and that the vast majority of forest and other undeveloped lands is owned by private individuals. Many of such people have a great deal of valuable land and not much money, which often means, in the absence of thoughtful and timely planning, that much if not all of the land will have to be broken up and sold upon the death of the owner in order to raise money for estate taxes. The panel and moderator, shown on closed-circuit television, discussed three case studies involving differing problems of and approaches to land disposition, talked about those and other topics in the field and responded to questions telephoned into them by the participants in the three states.

Those at Connecticut College seemed to think highly of the presentation, as was evidenced by enthusiastic applause upon its conclusion. An abridged video tape of the program is being prepared, and a copy will be bought by the Land Trust and be available to anyone who wants to hear and see it. In addition, the Land Trust has copies of Stephen Small's book *Preserving Family Lands*, which is also available. Any trustee of the Land Trust will be glad to deal with requests for either.



"Eastern Bluebird"
by Barry Van Dusen

2
A BRIGHT
WINTER MORNING

On a beautiful Sunday morning in late January a group of Land Trust volunteers began clearing invasive growth from the largest meadow in the Pleasant Valley Preserve in readiness for a planned spring mowing. Armed with chain saws and heavy-duty clippers, they worked for more than three hours cutting back fast-growing hardwood saplings and woody shrubs that had nearly taken over the field. (As our readers will recall, the 235-acre Preserve is a recent gift to The Nature Conservancy from Catherine and Elizabeth Fehr that is managed by the Land Trust.)

Resident naturalist Bonnie Corey had gone over the field ahead of the group, tagging selected trees and shrubs to be spared, such as crab apple and blueberry, a number of cedars and shade trees along the trails. She pointed out that the cedars take on added importance for wildlife in our area as hemlock forests succumb to attacks of the woolly adelgid. The evergreens provide protective winter cover for birds and mammals and are a favored roosting site for owls.

Restoration of all three meadows in the Preserve is envisaged in the management plan entered into by The Nature Conservancy and the Land Trust. Our stewardship of the property aims to maintain the Preserve in its natural, scenic, undeveloped and open condition. Clearing and mowing the meadows will promote the growth of seedbearing grasses and wildflowers and improve the habitat for insects and small mammals, which in turn will help the birds that forage in the fields. In addition to supporting resident birds such as bluebirds, towhees, prairie warblers and sparrows, the meadows are important food habitats for migrating birds.

Land Trust board members and other town volunteers have been at work ever since the dedication of the Preserve last September. A pedestrian entrance has been installed

next to the Jewett property gate off McIntosh Road, and a sign posted showing the right-of-way to the Preserve. Walking trails have been laid out through two of the meadows, maps of which and of other trails are available at Town Hall and the Lyme Public Library. Picnic debris and other waste materials have been cleared from the small meadow north of the Lyme Consolidated School property.

Many more volunteers will be needed for brush clearing in the large meadow and for cutting and clearing in the two farther meadows; anyone wishing to help our should call Toni Honiss at 434-2338, or any other Land Trust board member. Those lending a hand with our early efforts included Rufus Barringer, Jack Bugbee, Bonnie, Les and Glen Corey, Beverly Crowther, Judith and Lee Duran, John Friday, Toni Honiss, Jean and Dick Lee and Dixon Merkt.

LAND TRUST
WINTER PROGRAM TO BE
A WOODLAND ADVENTURE

This year the Land Trust's annual Winter Program, instead of being a talk in the evening at the Public Hall, will be a family introduction to the beauties and mysteries of Lyme's remarkable Hartman Park. It will take place on Sunday, April 25, 1993, beginning at 1:00 p.m. at the entrance to the Park on Gungy Road.

Dr. John Pfeiffer will start everyone off at the outdoor classroom by presenting a short talk about his extensive archival and archaeological study of the Park. Thereafter, three types of guided walks will be available: (1) a Nature Tour to look for early signs of spring, which will itself consist of three walks, a short walk at a slow pace, a moderate length walk and an extended hike, each with its own guide; (2) a tour of major points of interest such as the cemetery, the flume, colonial foundations and a charcoal kiln, and (3)

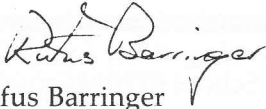
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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

continued from page 1

Land Trust will arrange to show the tape of the conference and will provide for an attorney to answer any questions you may have. If you are interested call Ruth Perry at Town Hall. Let us hear from you. It might be the most important call you ever made.

Sincerely,



Rufus Barringer
President
April 1993

LAND TRUST WINTER PROGRAM

continued from page 2

a Heritage loop, tailored to the stamina of its participants, including the "three chimney area," one of the unsolved mysteries of the Park. The knowledgeable guides will be Bonnie Corey, naturalist and assistant director of the Bushy Hill Nature Center (and a trustee of the Land Trust), Marianne Pfeiffer, naturalist and one of the two people responsible for most of the trails throughout the Park, Jeanne Thomson, an Appalachian Mountain Club guide and hike leader (and the other of the two who cleared and marked these trails) and Dr. John Pfeiffer.

Refreshments and entertainment will be provided at the outdoor classroom, and maps of the Park and its trails will be available there for those who would like to strike out on their own and any others who want one. In case of PERSISTENT RAIN on the Sunday scheduled, all those who might otherwise hike and everybody else will meet at the Lyme Public Hall in Hamburg at 1:00 p.m. to listen to Dr. Pfeiffer describe how to approach the Park on a better day, what to look for and how to find it. Refreshments, entertainment and maps will of course be there. For questions or information please call Jean Lee at 434-8373.

DEALING WITH BABY BIRDS

The following was contributed by Ginger Bladen, who is a well-known expert on the subject.

Every spring nature centers, science teachers and those who handle birds get calls that go somewhat as follows: "I've found a baby bird, and it's lost, and it can't fly. What should I do with it?" Of those claims, the only one that is likely to be true is that the baby bird can't fly. A baby bluebird that leaves its box often flutters unceremoniously to the ground or manages to get to a low branch, where it may hang upside down by one foot for quite a while before it gets its bearings. Early "flights" of many young birds only take them, by short stages, lower and lower. In fact, many or even most young birds leave the nest before they can fly.

Surprisingly, this is a safety measure in spite of the fact that the baby is vulnerable to predators, including domestic pets such as dogs and cats. If, however, all the babies were together in a nest the whole brood would be vulnerable to a single predator like a black snake, crow or raccoon. So they leave the nest as soon as possible. Large baby birds such as hawks and owls sit around on nearby branches and so are called "branchers." Small birds sit extremely still and blend in with their surroundings.

Their parents really deserve our sympathy, because they are flying all over the woodlot or meadow trying to feed these helpless youngsters. Parents and offspring keep in touch with each other with very special chips and cheeps. If danger threatens, the parent gives a call that warns the young to be absolutely still and quiet. If danger is very close, the parent often puts on a display to distract the predator. A pair of tiny worm-eating warblers have actually attacked a person who wandered close to a recently-fledged baby. An ovenbird limps away from his or her young with what appears to be a broken wing until the "threat" follows it to a safe distance from the fledglings, then it flies away in perfect health. For about two weeks adult birds bring food and protective care to their scattered young as the latter learn to fly and to feed themselves. It is stressful parenting, and loss of life at the end of the nesting season can be considerable for adults that are exhausted from their efforts.

So what to do with that baby bird? Leave it where it is! Modify this by a few feet only if the bird is in the middle of Rt. 156 or your dog's run. Stand or sit well away from it (100 ft. or more) and wait for at least an hour. By then a very busy parent will generally appear with a welcome morsel to feed to the gaping baby. Then the adult will disappear to forage for another meal to feed to another youngster wherever it may be hiding. In the unlikely event that no adult bird appears for a very long time while you are at considerable distance from the baby, call a rehabilitator who has a permit to care for birds issued by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. If you can't wait, leave the baby. The parent is almost certainly out looking for its lunch, knows exactly where the baby is and will be back to feed it after several other youngsters have been fed.

THIRD ANNUAL LYME INVITATIONAL "WILDLIFE IN ART" SHOW IN JUNE

Again this year, on Saturday and Sunday, June 5th and 6th, Rob Braunfield's "Wildlife in Art" show will take place at the Lyme Art Association Gallery on Lyme Street in Old Lyme. On both days it will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission will be \$3.00 at the door, and proceeds go to The Nature Conservancy for its Connecticut River conservation projects.

The show will include works by 20 nationally acclaimed wildlife artists, among whom will be Andrea Rich, master printmaker from Santa Cruz, California; Forest Hart of Hampden, Maine, and Margery Torrey of Pine Mountain, Georgia, who will show bronze sculptures; Robert Braunfield of Hadlyme and Jack Franco of Assonet, Massachusetts, who will exhibit woodcarvings; and Barry Van Dusen of Princeton, Massachusetts, an example of whose work is included in this issue of the *Bulletin*, who will display watercolors.

The shows of the past two years have been excellent, varied and well-attended, and this year's should be at least as good. We urge readers and anyone they may talk to to attend.

**DR. LUIS BAPTISTA, NOTED
ORNITHOLOGIST, TO VISIT
AND LECTURE IN AREA IN MAY**

Dr. Luis Baptista, one of the foremost ornithologists in the world, will be in the Old Lyme area next month and will present three different, slide-accompanied lectures on Saturday and Sunday, May 23 and 24. He will speak first at the Lyme-Old Lyme High School auditorium at 8 p.m. on Saturday, May 23. His main topic will be "Biology of Some Unique Birds and Conservation on Some Mexican Oceanic Islands." In addition, he will provide information on song dialect traditions among white-crowned sparrows. On Sunday, May 24, at 1:30 p.m. he will be at the Pequotsepos Nature Center in Mystic to speak about "Behavior of Hummingbirds and Their Relationship to Flowers." Later that day he will have dinner and speak after-

wards at the Old Lyme Country Club, his subject being, among other things, bird songs and dialects.


Dr. Luis Baptista is Chairman and Curator of the Department of Ornithology and Mammalogy at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. He was born in Hong Kong in 1941 and became a U.S. citizen in 1966. His B.S. and M.S., both in biology, were earned at the University of San Francisco in 1965 and 1968, respectively. The University of California at Berkeley awarded him a Ph.D. in Zoology in 1971. In 1972 and 1973 Dr. Baptista was a post-doctoral fellow at the renowned Max Planck Institute in Germany. Since his extensive formal education, Dr. Baptista has held a number of increasingly important academic positions and has spoken all over the world on subjects related largely to

ornithology. He is currently, among a number of other things, a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, a member of the International Ornithological Committee and Chairman of the Fulbright Scholar Program for South America.

All of Dr. Baptista's talks will be accompanied by slides and should be fascinating and rare opportunities for anyone interested in expanding his or her familiarity with birds. There may be a nominal entrance charge on Saturday evening at the Lyme-Old Lyme High School to cover costs.

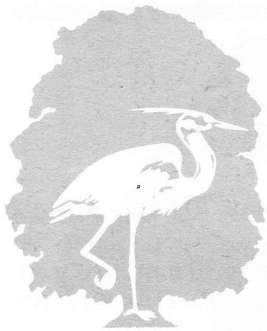
The Lyme Land Trust Bulletin

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