

Quabbin *Voices*

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF QUABBIN

*We must hear and listen to all of Quabbin's many Voices:
Voices of the Past, as well as Voices of the Present and the Future;
Voices of the Trees, the Sky, the Rain that falls, and all the Wild Things;
Voices of the People who depend on this valuable resource for their daily needs of clean water;
and Voices of those who draw upon it for deeper needs of the Soul.*

Annual Meeting 2006

Our 2006 Annual Meeting was held at the Swift River Historical Society in North New Salem on Sunday, April 2. It was a beautiful spring day and attendance was good. After receiving reports, the election of members to the Board of Directors took place. There were three openings on the Board, two to replace Larry Lowenthal and Steve Rideout who did not wish to serve for another term and one to fill the unexpired term of Lisa Yeisley who resigned from the Board as she had moved from the area. Two of the openings were filled leaving one opening on the Board unfilled.

Reflecting on the Past, Learning for Today

The program following the business meeting, "Here Was Home—Voices of the Past," featured Lois Barnes and Bob Wilder reflecting on living in the Swift River Valley. Their comments depicted a life much simpler but much more difficult than today, a lifestyle of caring and responsibility which more people should try to emulate today.

The years of the planning of Quabbin and the taking of the towns were difficult year and especially years of sacrifice for the residents of Dana, Greenwich, Prescott, and Enfield. These were desperate time. Family history was broken, special places known by all in the community were to disappear from existence, and ways of life were about to change drastically. Attachments to neighborhoods and community were broken forever. There was no turning back, only beautiful memories of a life and time we can only reflect upon, yet the values of that life and times is most needed today. Lois and Bob commented on a life that we should all reflect on, a life lost, a life which we should try to recapture—the spirit of place and values of community that pervaded the Swift River Valley—and apply those values to our lives today. Thank you Lois and Bob. — BOB CLARK



Lois Barnes, Bob Wilder, and Betty Lincoln looking at scrap books before their presentation for the 2006 Annual Meeting.

Memorial Day Services Held

Memorial Day Services were held on Sunday, May 28. It was a beautiful day and the services were well attended. Bob Clark and John Zebb carried the Friends of Quabbin banner. *See page 4 for more.*



May 28 was the day for a very special 'Lois Barnes Tree Dedication.' Shown above, Lois Barnes, flanked by Bob Wilder and Ruth Jazab, listens to a tribute to her delivered by FOQ President Bob Clark.

Lois's Tree

Following the Memorial Day Services at Quabbin Park Cemetery on May 28, a special ceremony was held to acknowledge the remarkable contributions Lois Doubleday Barnes has made towards preservation of the oral history and written record from the Swift River Valley.

Before the Reservoir: Preserving the Record

For more than twenty years Lois has spent countless hours collecting interviews from former residents of the Valley, individuals who vacationed in the area and workers who were employed as part of the Quabbin Project. She has also compiled photographs, articles and newspaper clippings from the Valley, helping to preserve the record of what existed before the massive reservoir was completed.

The surprise ceremony was planned to honor Lois and recognize her remarkable work. Master of ceremonies Clif Read shared some of his experiences working with Lois over the past two decades, and

A Time of Transition



This spring and summer has been a time of transition for the Friends of Quabbin.

For years, Lisa Yeisley and Lois Barnes worked to produce, edit, and compile the many articles for the *Quabbin Voices* newsletters. Lois worked tirelessly and her vast knowledge and memories of life in the Valley were wonderful contributions. Lisa compiled the material and produced the newsletters and made them ready for the printer. She added her style and shaped the look and content of the newsletter.

Lisa moved from the area and stepped down from the Board of Directors this past spring which forced her to relinquish her role as producer of the newsletter and managing the Friends of Quabbin website. It took time to find people to carry on these functions and to get the information they needed to begin their work. Lisa has our thanks for her many years of work and we wish her the best.

Around the same time, Lois Barnes became ill and was no longer able to work on the newsletter. Her special contributions are quite unique and it will be very difficult to find someone who can match her abilities.

We owe Lois a great amount of thanks for all her work on the newsletter, Oral History Project, and the many other contributions she has made to the Friends. We wish her continued recovery and return to good health.

Lois' tree, the sugar maple from Lois' family homestead in Prescott which was transplanted to an area just west of Winsor Dam, is not only a tribute to Lois' many accomplishments but represents the heart of her work to link the past with the present, to make the traditions and memories of life in the Valley available for all to appreciate. The tree represents not only the link with Lois' family homestead, but a link to all the families from the Valley, their stories and accomplishments, for future generations. Thank you Lois and be well.

Nancy Allen of Petersham will be preparing the newsletter for publication. Nancy is a professional graphic designer, and her skill will shape the newsletter

as she adds her touch to its production. She is involved in the community and serves on the Selectboard, is vice chair of the Petersham Historic District Commission, and is a member of the Board of the Petersham Historical Society, among other positions she holds and time she gives to many groups. Nancy's talents and interest in local history will be a great asset.

Tom Conuel of Petersham, author and former Friends of Quabbin Board member, has agreed to be Chair of the Editorial Committee for the newsletter. Tom has considerable publishing experience. Clif Read, Lois Barnes, and I also serve on the Committee. The task of the Editorial Committee will be to solicit and compile articles and provide the material to the designer for preparation for publication. We welcome anyone interested in serving on the Editorial Committee or any articles or ideas for articles.

Another transition is the look of the Visitors Center. The Visitors Center is being completely renovated with offices moved to the back affording visitors a beautiful view of the reservoir from the front of the building. There will be adequate room for storage of Friends records and equipment and more efficient use of space. The Board of Directors recently met in the room and everyone was pleased with the changes. The renovations will not only make the Visitors Center more attractive and efficient but will make for a more pleasant meeting place for the Friends.

~ Bob Clark, *President*

OCTOBER 2006



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Quabbin Voices is the periodic newsletter of the Friends of Quabbin, Inc.

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of Friends of Quabbin, Inc.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
Lois Barnes | Bob Clark
Tom Conuel | Clif Read

Please send us your comments, letters, and suggestions for future articles to the address above or by e-mail to RAClarkPetersham@msn.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

A T R I B U T E

To Bruce Spencer

Not many foresters have the opportunity to shape a forest as large as the Quabbin Reservation and adjacent DCR watershed lands, nor do many foresters have the unique foresight to selectively use forest practices to guide such a large forest to a healthy natural state and successfully shape its future. Bruce Spencer has done just that.

There is no single management solution for the complex and varied forest cover Bruce has managed over the years. Bruce understood the effects of cultural influences—clearing, fire, grazing, and crops—and the effects of natural influences and disasters—drought, fire, flooding, beavers, deer, and moose browse, disease, hurricanes, and micro-bursts. Over the centuries, human activities have not only drastically altered the forest but have changed the condition of soils and altered the natural mix of species comprising the forest. Natural disasters have periodically added to forest disturbance.

Bruce came to a forest that was recovering from intense human activities, the ravages of the 1938 hurricane, severe forest fires, plantations of red pine planted in open fields, and extensive timber salvage. His predecessors had begun the task of logging mature trees and instituting sound silviculture practices, but it was Bruce who assessed all these influences and instituted policies and practices that have shaped the maturing forests of Quabbin.

I first knew the Quabbin forest in the mid-1950s when the ravages of the 1938 hurricane were still very visible and the deer population had soared with the increase of browse from the young re-growth of trees following the hurricane. There were plantations of young red pines and still open fields. I saw the effects of over browsing

by deer and the decline in the forest understory and lack of tree regeneration. There was also a marked decline in the prey species such as rabbits that were important to predators like bobcats and foxes. I witnessed the return of beavers to the region, their rapid population growth, and destruction of low-lying forests bordering wetlands and streams. Stream quality also suffered as once clear waters became polluted from beaver activity and the cooling effect of bordering trees disappeared.

Controlling the deer population became essential to shaping a healthy forest and controlled deer hunts were begun under much controversy. As beavers have no natural predators in the region, damage grew with the uncontrolled population and remains a problem in many locations. Attempts to artificially control beaver populations have not been very effective.

With control of the deer population, regeneration of trees soon filled the once barren understory and rabbits

and other prey species are now in abundance. Periodic selective harvests have helped provide good regeneration and produce a mixed age forest which is ideal for wildlife as well as for long term forest health.

Bruce retired recently as Chief Forester at Quabbin. He leaves the Quabbin forest in a much better state than when he began as Forester. He used his skills as an artist would to create a masterpiece on canvas. His masterpiece is the Quabbin forest today on the canvas of the landscape of the watershed. Bruce's influence will be felt for many generations. I am certainly not alone in appreciating all he has done for Quabbin's forests. His policies and perspective will guide future foresters as they continue to manage this magnificent landscape.

Thank you, Bruce, for a job remarkably well done. May you have many years ahead of you to help and guide others and to continue to shape the forest around us.
– BOB CLARK



MARCHETERRE FLEUET

“HIS MASTERPIECE IS THE QUABBIN FOREST TODAY ON THE CANVAS OF THE LANDSCAPE OF THE WATERSHED. BRUCE’S INFLUENCE WILL BE FELT FOR MANY GENERATIONS.”

MEMORIAL DAY 2006



Earl Cooley and family place the wreath at the Dana Memorial.

Thank you!

Memorial Day Contributions

The Memorial Day Services at Quabbin Park Cemetery were very successful again this year thanks to the hard work of many individuals and organizations. Special recognition goes out to the local businesses which contributed donations and food so that the more than 350 participants at the event could enjoy refreshments that morning.

From Belchertown:

Bell & Hudson Insurance Company \$ 50.
 Stop & Shop \$ 25.

From Ware:

Country Bank for Savings \$100.
 Wal-Mart \$ 25.
 Big Y \$ 20.
 Friendly's COFFEE, SUGAR & CREAM

Thank you all for your generous contributions and for helping to make this event so special.

Annual Tuesday Tea Picnic

The annual Tuesday Tea Picnic was postponed to September 5 due to heavy rain. It was held as usual at Hanks Place Picnic Area at Quabbin Park. The weather was much more pleasant for the picnic and people enjoyed sharing Valley memories. Boat rides were held for former residents. A good time was had by all.



Florence May Avery and Lois Cooley enjoy a laugh together during the Tuesday Tea Picnic.



Earl Cooley, President of the Dana Reunion Committee, shares stories and food with fellow former Swift River Valley residents.

Gordon Raymond made his annual trip from Connecticut to meet with old friends.



Brothers Ed and Milton Howe relax after a visit to their former Enfield home site.

Lois's Tree

> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

then introduced Friends of Quabbin Vice President Ruth Jazab, former resident and Tuesday Tea regular Bob Wilder, and Friends President Bob Clark who shared their appreciation of Lois' work on the Swift River Oral History Project and for the Friends of Quabbin.

Honored with a Sugar Maple

The ceremony then moved to the dedication of a sugar maple tree

from Lois' family homestead on Prescott Peninsula had been transplanted to an area just west of the Winsor Dam earlier that month. The tree was placed in the stately row of maple trees lining the Administration Road as one approaches the Visitors Center, replacing a diseased tree which had been previously removed. Lois was invited forward to water

the tree, using water drawn from the Quabbin Reservoir earlier that day. Guests were then encouraged to come forward and give the tree a drink of Quabbin water.

Finally, a toast was given to Lois, with guests raising their glasses of sparkling cider in a tribute to Lois and an expression of appreciation for everything she has done to preserve the history of the Swift River Valley.

Interpretive Services Report

JULY 2006

by CLIF READ



June 22 marked the 60th Anniversary of the first release of water from Quabbin Reservoir through the Winsor Dam Spillway.

THE QUABBIN AT AGE SIXTY

In 1946 water was first discharged from the Spillway by removing stoplogs in the 30 foot section at the northern end of the 400 foot long structure. Although the reservoir had not yet filled to capacity, the Metropolitan District Water Supply Commission (MDWSC), the agency charged with construction of the massive reservoir project, decided to officially recognize the completion of the project with a ceremonial release of water. In an event which attracted hundreds of spectators from great distances, guests and officials from the MDWSC stood on the walkway above the stoplog bays and removed the three sections of 8" logs from each of the five bays. This sent water down the discharge channel, cascading over the 65' waterfall and down stream to the "Y" Pool.

Among the dignitaries was Mrs. Frank Winsor, widow of the Chief Engineer for the Quabbin Project who served until his death in 1939. Although he never saw the reservoir project completed, nor the flooding even begun (he died six months before the filling commenced), Frank Winsor's remarkable work was recognized when the main impoundment structure was named after him and a special memorial dedicated in his honor in 1941.

On June 22, 2006, the Winsor Dam Spillway was again discharging water through the stoplog bays with Quabbin Reservoir standing at 99.9% of capacity. The reservoir has sustained a continual release of water from the Spillway since late October 2005, making it one of the longest stretches with water above the base of the stoplog bays in history. (Note: the top of the Spillway Wall is 530' Boston City Base (BCB) elevation, the bottom of the stoplog bays is 528' BCB) Only the Hurricane Diane year of 1955 and the exceptionally wet year of 1992 saw longer stretches of time with the reservoir elevation above the 528' BCB. This year was also only the second in history when the reservoir was at 100%+ capacity on January 1, 2006 (1992 was the other), the results of record rainfall during the fall months.

Student Conservation Association Crew Members are shown gathered at one of the benches built at the Forest Stewardship Trail Vista as part of their Quabbin Trail Project this summer. CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT: David Habib, Michael O'Connor, Daniel LaFrance, Luke Grange, Patti Workover, and Carla Miller.



June 22, 1946: Engineers and officials along with Mrs. Frank Winsor, widow of the Chief Project Engineer, were on hand when stoplogs were removed from the Spillway Wall releasing the first Quabbin water down the Spillway Channel.

STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

For the fourth consecutive year DCR-Quabbin Reservoir has hosted a crew from the Student Conservation Association (SCA) Mass Parks Americorps Program. The SCA program provides conservation service opportunities for persons between 18 and 25 who commit six months to the program which is based out the Dubuque State Park in Hawley. After an intensive three week training period, the 22 members are broken into crews who fan out across the state working on one or two week long trail-related projects for a variety of agencies and organizations. At Quabbin the crew worked extensively on the Stewardship Trail by improving the trail, clearing several vistas and building benches at two of the overlooks. They also worked on the Vista Loop near the rotary and cleared vegetation encroaching on foundations in the Dana Common area. As always, the crew was enthusiastic, hardworking, and dedicated. Come check out their work next time you are visiting Quabbin Park, you too will be impressed by their work!

NEW QUABBIN PUBLIC ACCESS PLAN

In a ceremony in front of the Quabbin Administration Building on July 5, Commissioner Stephen Burrington signed the new Quabbin Public Access Plan into effect. Flanked by members of the Quabbin work force, many of whom served on the employee committee who helped craft the Plan during its nearly two-year process, Commissioner Burrington acknowledged the importance of this plan as part of an overall management strategy for protecting Quabbin's resources. The Plan balances public access with the DCR's Office of Watershed Management's mandate of preserving the reservoir's exceptional water quality for future generations. While not drastically altering the previous Plan which has been in effect since 1998, the 2006 version clarifies some sections of the old plan while addressing some issues such as geocaching which was not a significant activity at that time. Some activities were expanded such as bicycle access on designated roads in northern sections of the Reservation between gates 29 and 35, plus a connector between gates 40 and 43, and snowmobile access on Off Reservation lands in New Salem and Shutesbury.

The Plan should be available by early August on the DCR web site at: www.mass.gov/dcr/waterSupply/watershed/pacc.htm, at watershed community libraries and at the Quabbin Visitors Center.

Tuesday Tea

First Tuesday of every month at the Quabbin Visitors Center:

- October 3
- November 10
- December 5 (SEE BELOW)

Friends of Quabbin Holiday Party on Dec. 3

Sunday, December 3 at the Quabbin Visitors Center (with December 10 in event of storm). Elizabeth (Zib) Peirce will present a program and sign her new book *Quabbin Valley People and Places* (Arcadia Publishing, July 2006).

Tuesday Tea Holiday Party on Dec. 5

Join the annual Tuesday Tea Holiday Party at the Quabbin Visitors Center.

Volunteers Welcome!

We need volunteers to help with events and projects. If you have skills you would like to share, please contact Ruth Jazeb at 413.594.2474.

New Board Members

Every spring, a Nominating Committee is formed to seek nominations to present to the membership at the Annual Meeting. The Board of Directors is currently one member short and there are no Reserve Board Members. The Board meets six times a year on Thursday evenings at the Quabbin Visitors Center. If you are interested in serving on the Board, please contact: J.R. Greene at 978.249.0156.

Grant from the Commonwealth Received

A significant portion of the \$25,000 Grant from the Commonwealth to the Friends of Quabbin has been received. The Board voted to use the money for the Quabbin Interpretive Project prepared by the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) staff at the Quabbin Visitors Center.

Annual visitation to the Quabbin watershed is estimated to be 750,000 persons including 15,000 who stop at the Visitors Center. The Interpretive Project's goal is to improve experiences for visitors to the Quabbin watershed by enhancing their understanding of the historical, natural

Quabbin Series was Held at Mount Holyoke College

Mount Holyoke College offered a series of programs about Quabbin this fall. The public was invited to attend the following events:

> **Saturday, 30 September**

Quabbin Reflections: Stories from the Lost Towns

1:00 – 3:00 PM
Joseph Allen Skinner Museum
Mount Holyoke College
33 Woodbridge Street, South Hadley
Tours of the museum, formerly the Congregational Church in Prescott

Beginning at 1:30 PM:

Jane Yolen, reading from her acclaimed children's book, *Letting Swift River Go*.

Robert Shaw, Mount Holyoke College professor and poet, reading from *Drowned Towns*.

Lois Barnes, Robert Wilder, and Earl Cooley, former residents of the lost towns, sharing their memories.

Readings from *Here was Home*, a compilation of oral histories from the Quabbin, produced by Lois Barnes.

> **Thursday, 28 September**

Opening Reception for 'Looking Beneath the Surface: The Quabbin and Hetch Hetchy Canyon'

4:30 PM
Mount Holyoke College Art Museum

Remarks by **Marianne Doezema**, Florence Finch Abbott Director

PANEL DISCUSSION

Dis/placement and Re/membering: The Quabbin and Hetch Hetchy

7:00 PM
Gamble Auditorium, Art Building

Tom Philp, an editor of the *Sacramento Bee* and winner of the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing for a series on Hetch Hetchy Valley, California.

Lawrence Buell, Powell M. Cabot Professor of American Literature at Harvard University and award-winning author of *Emerson* (2003), *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture and Environment in the United States and Beyond* (2001), and other works.

Marge Bruchac, Abenaki, historical interpreter of Native peoples in New England, author of *Malian's Song* and other works, and winner of Storyteller of the Year award by the national Wordcraft Circle of Native American Writers and Storytellers.

Moderated by **Lauret Savoy**, Director of the MHC Center for the Environment

Sponsored by the Mount Holyoke College Center for the Environment, the Weissman Center for Leadership and the Liberal Arts, and the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum.

resources, and water supply importance of the area. To accomplish this goal, there will be a two phase approach which emphasizes passive interpretation in the field using outdoor displays and formal interpretive programming.

OUTDOOR DISPLAYS

The history of the Swift River Valley is a long, rich, and compelling story. From the original pre-historic settlements, to the establishment of towns by colonists, to the decision to discontinue the towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott for the massive reservoir, the Valley has been an area rich in natural resources and beauty. To fully appreciate the current landscape, it is important for visitors to

understand the past and recognize the sacrifices made for the establishment of a public drinking water reservoir.

Outdoor displays will be established in key locations in the watershed to assist visitor's understanding of the Quabbin history and management. These include four panoramic views of the surrounding landscape from the top of the Lookout Tower, one located at the Goodnough Dike site overlooking the former town of Greenwich, and a series of 16 displays at the former town center of Dana. The displays will be fiber embedded signs of various sizes produced by GS Images of Hagerstown, Maryland. GS Images has produced signs and outdoor displays for parks and historic

Fall Programs Held at the SWIFT RIVER VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Swift River Valley Historical Society, located at 40 Elm Street in New Salem, was formed in 1936. The aim of the Society is to preserve the historical and geological materials and the memorabilia of the lost towns of Quabbin, and to make this information available to education groups, historians, and interested individuals. In addition to operating a museum complex of three buildings, the Society offers programs during the warm months of the year. As a sister organization, Friends of Quabbin shares the SRVHS program schedule with its members, providing additional opportunities to learn about the Quabbin Valley.

September 16, Saturday

Annual Meeting, 1:00 PM, with election of officers, annual reports, and any other business. Building will be open for tours following the meeting and remain open until 4:00 PM. Coffee will be available.

September 24, Sunday

Bus pilgrimage through parts of New Salem, Dana, North Dana, and Greenwich. Meet at SRVHS at 10:30 AM. The bus leaves promptly at 11 AM. Reservations, \$8, but be made and paid by September 20. Call Elizabeth Peirce at 978.544.6207, send checks payable to SRVHS to her at 76 South Shore Drive, Orange, MA 01364.

October 7, Saturday

Fall Hike. Gate 11 to Bobbinville. Meet at intersection of Route 202 and Amherst Road, Pelham (by the blinker) 10:30 AM. 3–5 miles round trip.

October 21, Saturday

Final Walk of the Season, Gate 18, Prescott Poor Farm with optional side trip to Gate 19. Meet at Gate 17 off Route 202, “Cooleyville Junction” at 10:30 AM. 2 miles roundtrip if just to Poor Farm, 4 miles round trip if all the way to Gate 19.

Hikes, bus pilgrimages, and other events are open to members of SRVHS and their guests. Hikes are planned for accessibility, interest, and variety.

- *Rules for Bus Pilgrimages:* Wear sensible clothing and bring drinks, lunch, binoculars, camera, and bug repellent. All DCR rules are strictly adhered to (no smoking, no alcohol, no dogs, take nothing away, and leave nothing behind). Inclement weather will not cancel the trips, which will last about 4 hours.

- *Rules for Hikes:* Bring lunch, drinks, camera, binoculars, and bug repellent. DCR rules observed. Dress appropriately for the weather. On these hikes, you must stay with the group. A downpour cancels the hikes; drizzle does not.

sites across the country including the Enfield Lookout Interpretive Sign. The new signs would be consistent with the Enfield Lookout for appearance and size.

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMMING

The Visitors Center, established in 1984, is the focal point for formal interpretive programming and for dissemination of visitors information about the Quabbin watershed and surrounding area. The Friends of Quabbin have a long record of supporting the operation of the Center through volunteer efforts and purchase of equipment, materials, and displays. This project will complement the physical renovations of the Center which are being planned by DCR by

providing new equipment for public presentations, exhibit materials, and the Center’s display area.

Special thanks to Representative Anne Gobi who requested this grant item in the State budget and watched over it through the lengthy budget process ensuring that it was not removed along the way. And special thanks to Senator Stephen Brewer for watching over this budget item in the Senate and for ensuring its final passage.

We thank you Anne and Steve for this wonderful boon for the visitors of Quabbin and for your kindness and perseverance in making this a reality. You are true Friends of Quabbin.



North Prescott Church at the SRVHS in North New Salem — the site of our 2006 Annual Meeting.

Autumn Programs at the Quabbin Visitors Center

This fall the DCR Quabbin Visitors Center will host two presentations offered by MASS Wildlife focusing on the largest mammals found at Quabbin Reservoir.

BEARS

Held on Tuesday,

October 17

7–8 PM

Since the 1970s the black bear population in Massachusetts has grown from about 100 to about 3,000 in 2005. Come learn about these fascinating animals with an expert from MASS Wildlife.



MOOSE

Tuesday, November 14

7–8 PM

Moose sightings are becoming more common in Massachusetts, as state biologists estimate the population to be over 500 in the state. Join us as an expert from MASS Wildlife shares what they have learned about moose habits and movements in Massachusetts.



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June 22, 1946: A young boy gathered with others to witness water released over the Spillway Waterfall for the first time.
SEE STORY ON PAGE 5.

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