

QUABBIN

Voices

The Friends of Quabbin Newsletter

We must hear and listen to all of Quabbin's many Voices; Voices of the Past, as well as Voices of the Present and of 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.

a Farewell to Former FOQ Founder/President Shaun Bresnahan

Since our last newsletter FOQ has lost one of its original founding members, former president, Quabbin historian and environmentalist, Shaun Bresnahan. Shaun died in September at the age of 54 after a long illness.

A local high school history teacher, Shaun often used Quabbin history and environment as a teaching tool in his social studies classes. His students remember him as an inspiring and innovative teacher. It is not surprising that he became one of the first advocates for a visitors center at Quabbin.

Shaun helped organize the Friends of Quabbin and its first open house at the Visitors Center in 1985. He was elected to the board as a founding member that year and each year following, becoming President in 1989.

One of the main focuses of Friends



Shaun speaks with author Tom Conuel at an FOQ Meet the Writers and Artists event

during his presidency was the continuing protection of the Quabbin watershed as a pristine, although well-managed wilderness and refuge for wildlife. He supported funding of wildlife studies and the establishment of the Coit Memorial Research Fund, which made possible the Gull Population Study and the Coyote Studies undertaken by Friends. Always supportive and enthusiastic about our Oral History

Fellow board members miss his quick wit and enthusiasm. . .

Project, his ready help and expertise as a local historian was much appreciated in the production of our very popular "Here Was Home" tape.

Shaun's interest in the environment, wilderness, and forest protection reached far beyond Quabbin, taking him and his high school students on annual trips to the rain forests of Costa Rica.

Citing his increasingly heavy workload in teaching and environmental concerns he resigned his presidency in 1999 but remained an active member until his illness. During his 30-year teaching career, Shaun taught not only at the high school level but also at Holyoke Community College, UMass Amherst and Clark University in Worcester, as well as numerous programs and workshops throughout the Northeast. Rewarded for his dedication, he was named "Social Studies Teacher of the Year" at Clark Univer-



Shaun speaks on the Costa Rican Rain Forest, a subject dear to his heart, at the FOQ's 9th Annual Meeting

sity, chosen MCSS "Teacher of the Year" and "National Social Studies Teacher of the Year" in 1992. Receiving honorable mention as a "National Earth Teacher" he was recognized by the Alliance For Environmental Education.

He wrote for numerous publications and was active in humanitarian programs spanning the globe. He was president at various times of both the BTA and the MCSS as well as of FOQ.

We were fortunate indeed to have this busy educator and environmentalist serve as president for almost ten years. Fellow board members continue to miss his quick wit, enthusiasm and (sometimes outrageous!) program suggestions. ✨

QUABBIN VOICES

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

Edited by Lois Barnes
Design & production by Lisa Yeisley

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

Check Our Website for Current News of Quabbin www.friendsofquabbin.org

Quabbin Reservation, which has been closed in the aftermath of the terrible events of September 11, will now be open to limited public access. Fortunately Friends' web site is now on line so you can check for a current update if you cannot reach the Visitor Center by phone.

Board members at the recent meeting enthusiastically endorsed the web site. Lisa Yeisley, the board member in charge of getting the site up and running, welcomes your comments and suggestions. Contact her through the webmaster link on the website, or use her email address: lislos@javanet.com.



New Editions of JR Greene Favorites Now Available from the Visitor Center

2002 Quabbin History Calendar

This is the 17th consecutive edition of this annual tribute to the valley towns, and contains 12 new black and white photos, including the Enfield Congregational chapel, an auction in Prescott, and Hager's last store in No. Dana. \$10.50.

"The Creation of Quabbin Reservoir", the classic 1981 history of the valley and the coming of the reservoir, is being reissued. The new edition features a larger typeface and a new introduction, which updates Quabbin events in the twenty years since the book first appeared. \$15.75.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by
Bob Clark

Shaun Bresnahan, friend, board member, and President of Friends of Quabbin for ten years, from 1989 to 1999, died in September. He took time from a very busy schedule to represent the Friends, to arrange for our Annual Meetings and many other functions. His years of dedication, expertise, coordination of activities and events, and seeing that projects were properly carried out were invaluable to the Friends. Shaun was a true friend of Quabbin and is greatly missed.

This year's theme for the Holiday Party on December 2, "Poetry of Quabbin", will hopefully inspire some of our members and former residents to share any poems with a Quabbin connection. Poetry can express subtlety, depth of feeling, or images in a powerful and universal way. Although I arrived too late to witness the former Swift River Valley towns, I have many special memories of Quabbin. In the following poems, written years ago, I have tried to depict a scene, mood, and relationship experienced in Quabbin.

A Pine at Dawn

*O, how softly you move,
Your form a clear array
Against silver and gray.*

*Your whisper, like the dew,
Settles gently to the ground,
Where sparkling drops abound.*

Sunset

*Golden Swatches on blue
Turning an orange hue
In ever darkening shades -
Still - until black on black
And breath of night pervades.*

Perhaps these simple poems will inspire you to send any poems you may have with a Quabbin connection. I hope many of you will be at the Holiday Party.

**MAY YOU HAVE A VERY
HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON.**

Welcome New Members!

Kathleen A. Aldrich, West Springfield	Interest: History
Rafael Cruz, Springfield	Interest: Photography
Ann H. Frank, Somerset	Interest: History
Margaret Hunt, Amherst	Interest: Birds
Richard & Carolyn Matthews, Amherst	Interest: History
Anita Richard, Ware	
Dave Stanley, Wheelwright	Interest: History
Catherine E. Werd, Sturbridge	Interest: History
Albert Zielinski, Otter River	Interest: History
Patricia & Joseph Zinkowsky, Southbridge	Interest: History

We'd love to add more names to this list. Membership makes a great Christmas gift! Please see our form on page 7.

Correction: The photo on page 5 of our last issue was miscaptioned. It should read "Former site of Greenwich Plains." Greenwich Village would have been farther up beyond Mount Liz.



INTERPRETIVE SERVICES REPORT

by
Clif Read

It is certainly an understatement to say that life has changed following the attacks on September 11th. Those horrific events have significantly altered our daily routines, sense of vulnerability and assumptions about the simplest of things. This has certainly been in evidence here at Quabbin Reservoir, which, until recently, has been closed to all public access. The sight of National Guard troops patrolling the watershed lands in full combat fatigue has altered the sense of tranquility of the Reservation. A loss of innocence, a stark reality, a symbol of the times, it is clear that life has changed.

Following the initial shutdown on September 11th, the Quabbin Reservation reopened to the general public three days later. Several incidents of low flying planes over the reservoir on September 15th prompted the State Police to shut down the entire reservation later that day. Although the planes were most likely ignorant sightseers who chose a terrible time to break the law, the incident triggered an even closer examination of the entire MDC/MWRA water system. Since September 16th the reservation has remained closed, the fishing season cancelled and all public access temporarily prohibited. The MDC has been working closely with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, State Police, National Guard and Environmental Police Officer unit to develop and implement an increased security plan. For Quabbin this includes placement of barriers to prevent large vehicles from accessing the Winsor Dam and Goodnough Dike and other protective measures to protect the water system's infrastructure. The number of patrols by law enforcement personnel, Watershed Rangers and the

National Guard has increased the surveillance of the watershed and reservoir. And increased water testing has also been incorporated into the program to provide early detection of any possible contaminants. However Quabbin's greatest security is its well-protected watershed and the reservoir's immense size that provides tremendous dilution for any possible contamination.

Initial plans called for re-opening portions of the Reservation and Park on November 1st, however the FBI Alert issued several days before the planned opening delayed this date by a week. As of 6:30AM November 8th, portions of the watershed were re-opened to the public, consistent with the Public Access Plan. This included the area from Gate 6 to 16A and Gate 22 to 40, and the eastern portion of the Quabbin Park, with the exception of the Goodnough Dike and the area immediately below that impoundment structure. Plans to ease access restrictions on the remaining portions of land normally open to the public are on track for mid-December. The likely exceptions to this opening will be the area in the immediate vicinity of the power station at Winsor Dam and the area around Shaft 12. Vehicle traffic on the Winsor Dam and Goodnough Dike will be prohibited, although pedestrian and bicycle access on these structures will likely be permitted. Updates on public access are available on the Visitor Center phone message (413-323-7221).

On a very different note, Massachusetts will be hosting the 2002 Canon Envirothon at Hampshire College in Amherst next summer. The Envirothon is a natural resource-based education program for high school students that emphasizes a hands-on, problem solving approach to environmental issues. At the state or provincial (Canada also participates in the program) level, the year-round program culminates in an environmental competition in the spring, which tests team's knowledge of the

core topics of aquatics, forestry, soils and wildlife, along with a current environmental issue. The winning teams from each state and province advance to the North American Competition known as the Canon Envirothon. The five-member teams attend the week-long event, which is held in a different state or province each year. Next summer will be Massachusetts' turn to step up to the plate. More than 500 people from all over North America, including students, coaches and Canon Envirothon Committee members, will be gathering in Amherst for this event. It will require a tremendous amount of planning to coordinate activities for the entire week. Many volunteers will also be needed, to help with the events throughout the week. If you are interested in serving as a volunteer, please contact me by phone at (413) 323-6921 Ext. 401 or email clif.read@state.ma.us and I will send your information along to other Steering Committee members coordinating volunteers. ✱

Just For Fun...Guess Who?



Cutting the Ice, Part 2

(Continued From "Voices" May, 2001)

by Norman "Pete" Tandy

In the little village where I grew up, there wasn't any doubt as to where ice came from. It came from the west branch of Fever Brook, and spent most of the remainder of its dwindling life in a rude and roofless crib of slabs, filled with layers of sawdust and the great cakes of winter's cooling bounty.

Sawdust carries little cachet in our current world of high-tech insulators, but it remains a remarkably effective block to heat transfer. I'm writing in the first week of May; although the snow is long gone from even the shady parts of the woods, down by my log splitter a great bank of it remains. It persists because it is protected by a few inches of chainsaw chips thrown up by my snowplow. Wood itself is a fairly good insulator, abetted in this case by the thousands of tiny pockets of dead air trapped between the chips.

Gleason's Mill Pond spread Fever Brook back over a few acres of impoundment and, in the depths of winter, its ice was harvested. One morning in later January or early February a horse-drawn "boat" plow and gangs of shovelers would clear away the snow. The preferred thickness of the ice was fourteen or fifteen inches. If the winter had been warm, or too much insulating snow was laid down early, keeping the ice too thin, the patch to be harvested would be cleared of snow weeks before the harvest. This allowed the cold to penetrate, thickening the ice.

Much less thickness than that meant handling too many cakes per hundredweight of ice - too much process and not enough product. Much more thickness meant the blocks would be uncomfortably heavy for the human muscles that would provide most of their handling.

Some man noted for plowing

straight furrows would hitch his horse to a handmade "scorer" (sometimes simply called the plow) which was a timber frame with parallel steel blades projecting downward to scour four-inch-deep grooves in the ice. At the end of the first line the horse would be turned around and the frame adjusted so that, on the return trip, the "inside"

blade would ride in the "outside" groove just finished. In this way each trip back and forth across the cutting area made perfectly spaced parallel grooves. The next step, of course, was to lay down a pattern at right angles to the first set, laying out a great checkerboard. Then the hard work started.

An ice saw looks like a one-man crosscut made by a deranged blacksmith. The teeth are huge, and made up of all cutters, no rakers. The blade is thicker and more rigid than a crosscut, since the work is done on the "push" instead of the "pull" stroke.

The tip of the blade, teeth and all, is about three inches wide, with the back end being up to eight inches in width. At the top of the back end is riveted a gracefully curving gooseneck of iron rod which terminates in a transverse wooden handle. This added length allows the full blade to be used without the necessity of stooping fully over with every stroke.

Once the groove was started you raised the handle up over your head and a little in front of you, with bent wrists, until the tip of the blade was barely in the groove; then you whipped your arms down, with a finishing bend to back and shoulders. The actual cutting, the power stroke, was this downward thrust, but most of

"An ice saw looks like a one-man crosscut made by a deranged blacksmith."

the agony seemed to collect on the upstroke. That raising of the burdened arms up in front and over your head soon drained the muscles of the tops of the shoulders and the upper back. There was no other task that used the same combination of muscles and by bedtime household supplies of Sloane's Liniment and "Absorbine Jr." would be severely depleted.

In a small harvest of ice the individual cakes were separated and poled directly to a partially-submerged plank



Winter in Greenwich, 2/11/31

Clara B. Barlow's property - Barlow's Goldmine was located here.

Tuesday Tea Picnic August 2001

*at Hanks Picnic Area,
Quabbin Reservation*



Dorothy Russell and Lois Barnes



Helen and Don Towne



MDC Superintendent Bill Pula pilots a boat carrying Lois Barnes, Ruth Jazab and her Billings family relatives over Greenwich home sites



Chester Hanks

“Cutting the Ice,” continued

ramp. Pike poles varied in length up to a dozen or more feet, with all sizes terminating in a metal spike for pushing the ice, and with a recurved point for pulling. In larger operations the ice was cut into large rafts; a group of men standing on the iceraft would use their pike poles to move it up close to the ramp where it would be sawed into separate blocks.

At the ramp a large set of tongs would be jabbed into the cake to drag it up the ramp to the side of the waiting sled. Sometimes a single horse would be used to drag a string of single-file cakes up the ramp; more often a couple of men would drag up single cakes by means of a rope. Then the team would haul the ice-laden sled to the nearby ice house.

“House” seems too grand a name for most of the simple structures used

to keep ice. “Crib” or “pen” would fit better, but “ice houses” they were. To make an ice house you erected a series of poles in a rectangular pattern, then nailed planks to both the inside and outside of the poles. The resulting double wall was filled with sawdust. None of the country ice houses I’ve seen ever had roofs on them, and all were innocent of paint. There was no door as such, just a four- or five-foot gap in the wall. A foot or so of sawdust was laid down on the interior ground, and the ice house was ready for loading.

The cakes of ice were dragged in by muscle power and tongs, and packed tightly in layers. A couple of feet of space was left on all sides, and filled in with sawdust. Each layer of ice was covered with six or so inches of sawdust, and the top layer had as much as three feet of sawdust cover-

ing it. As the layers grew higher, planks were laid across the doorway, held in place by the ice and sawdust inside. After the first couple of layers a gin pole pulley and rope was used to haul the blocks up to the working level.

For all its primitive nature the ice house served remarkably well. With a little foresight and planning, the ice would last until the cold days of late autumn, when the householders could replenish the icebox in the kitchen by making their own ice in a basin on the back porch.

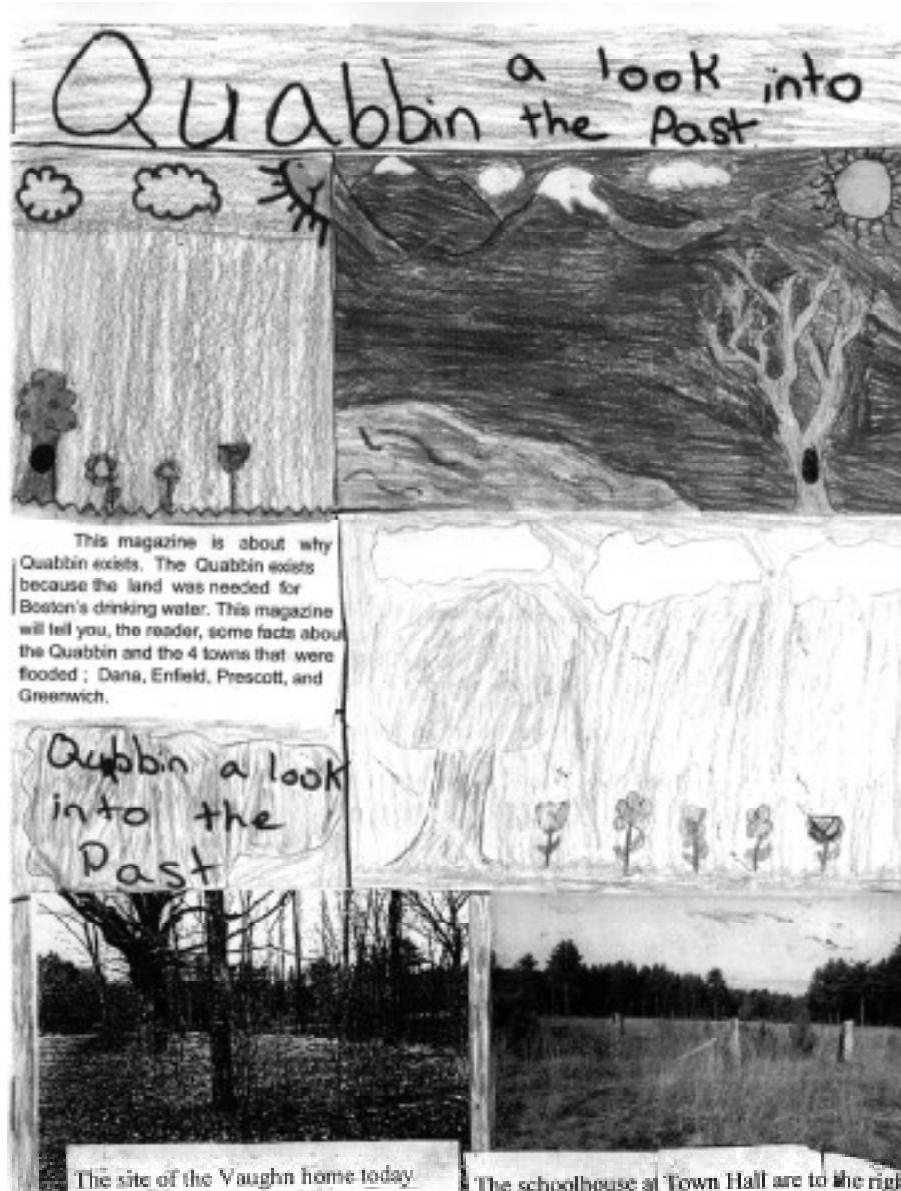
Were those simpler, more direct connections between demand and supply “better?” You could make a case either way. But I fancy that, back then, we were more aware of our sources and dependencies. We are all a part of nature, not apart from it. We forget that at our peril. ❁

Local School Children Learn About Quabbin

As Part of The Visitor Center Outreach to Area Schools

“We are the 4th grade A-TEAM from Ware Middle School. We are learning about the Quabbin Reservoir. We are studying the 4 towns that were flooded which were Greenwich, Dana, Prescott, and Enfield in this magazine. We will be including fun things to do and read about.

We are making this magazine because we want to share why Quabbin is important. One reason Quabbin is important is because it gives water to Boston. We want people to see how important it is and visit to see the trees, animals and reservoir.”



Trends in Quabbin

*by Lilly Clem and Brittany Sinclair
(from page 9 of the magazine)*

Some types of trends that were popular in the Quabbin before it was flooded were collecting stamps. Some stamps had things on them like President Franklin D. Roosevelt or the Empire State Building. It rises 1,250 feet, 102 stories, and for more than 40 years it was the tallest building in the world. It was built in 1931. Another thing that was popular was Olympic Athlete, Jesse Owens, who set 6 world records. On the afternoon of May 25, 1935, Ohio State University track star Jesse Owens set 5 world records and tied another world record. The next year, he earned 4 gold medals at the Summer Olympic Games in Berlin. Also, the Golden Gate Bridge was built in 1937.

The Monopoly Game was very popular too. Life, the magazine, was also popular. It was established in November, 1936. It opened a new era of photojournalism. Household conveniences like: electric mixers, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, irons and pop-up toasters were also popular. The 1930's also saw the spread of sliced bread and packaged frozen foods. Superman arrived in 1938. Created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, The man of steel was the world's first comic book super man hero. His sensational powers and dynamic deeds changed forever the content and style of the comic book. First lady Eleanor Roosevelt was an extremely vocal, active and influential First Lady. *

Another Former Quabbin House Documented



We continue to get reports of houses moved from the Quabbin area during the 1930s and '40s. We welcome this information and documentation, if possible. Joann Deans Prescott took the photo at left. She says her father, David McNab Deans, purchased the New Salem home for a nominal sum prior to the flooding of the valley. He moved it to its current home in Williamstown, MA. A general contractor, he numbered each piece before he moved it, so the structure is essentially the same as it was in New Salem.

"Here Was Home"

A History of the Swift River Valley and Quabbin Reservoir

To purchase this 55-minute audiotape, please complete and mail this form to the address below.

"Here Was Home" - tape only \$ 11.55
shipping & handling \$ 2.00
TOTAL \$ 13.55

"Here Was Home" education packet - includes \$ 19.95
tape, historic map, Quabbin Park map &
"Quabbin Facts & Figures" booklet shipping & handling \$ 4.00
TOTAL \$ 23.95

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