

Wellfleet Seasonal Residents Association

Promoting community involvement and communication

Early Summer 2020 eLetter

It's time to pay your 2020 dues -

please do so [online](#) or by mail

If you have been reading the updates WSRA has been sending over the past months, you already have a good picture of what is going on in town during the pandemic. Those of us lucky enough to be here during these long June days are getting used to the new Cumberland Farms on Route 6, the decrease in available parking at the ocean beaches, curbside pickup of everything from fish to French pastries, wash stations and portajohns in the public parking lots, lifeguards standing six feet apart, and no line at the beach parking sticker office.



Now that the Governor has issued detailed guidelines for reopening, the town's Emergency Management team will only meet on the third Tuesday of the month, instead of weekly. From the June 24 meeting:

- Outer Cape Health Services tested 2300 people for COVID in three sites last week; there were no positive cases among the 449 people tested in Wellfleet.
- The Recreation Department is beginning to open fields and playgrounds with mask and distancing guidelines. The new pavilion at Baker's Field is now up.
- Indoor seating in restaurants, with restrictions, is now allowed. The Health Department will be monitoring this.

Summer Programs

In its more than 20-year history, WSRA has always sponsored several free public presentations in July and August. This year, we have decided to do our part to limit the amount of time people have to spend staring at a screen during their vacations. We will hold one Zoom meeting and Q&A on the State of the Town with members of the Select Board on either August 13 or August 20 from 7:30 to 9:00. As soon as we finalize the date, we will let you know. We will email you the Zoom link the week of the meeting.

Another night to save is July 20th when WSRA President Susan M. Reverby will give a Zoom lecture/Q&A on her new book, *Co-Conspirator for Justice: The Revolutionary Life of Dr. Alan Berkman*, sponsored by the Wellfleet Public Library at 7:30. For the Zoom link, you need to send an email to jennifer.wertkin@wellfleet-ma.gov.

Susan's talk is entitled: **Ally or Co-Conspirator: Does One White Man's Past Help Us Think about What is To be Done Today?**



Some of us knew about Juneteenth even if President Trump did not. Some of us had read at least a few of the sudden bestsellers on anti-racism. Many of us had joined protest marches long before masks were being worn. But how many of us moved from being an ally in anti-racist struggles to a co-conspirator in some of the most dangerous political actions of the last half-century? This lecture focuses on Dr. Alan Berkman (1945-2009) who abandoned a promising medical career to become an underground bomber, political prisoner of the U.S., and then a renowned AIDS activist who saved millions of lives. He made choices on principles we might share but took actions we might abhor. Does his life journey point the way for us in a new era?

Susan M. Reverby is the McLean Professor Emerita in the History of Ideas and Professor Emerita of Women's and Gender Studies, Wellesley College. She has been coming to the Cape for half a century, and has lived part-time in Wellfleet since 1990.

Wellfleet Public Library

The Wellfleet Public Library is still closed but you can now request material from other libraries through clamsnet.org by calling the library at 508-349-0310 or by emailing Wellfleetcurbside@gmail.com.



When your materials are ready, library staff will call you to arrange a pick-up time; materials will be checked out and waiting for you on a table outside of the library on the West Main Street side of the building. All materials will be in brown paper bags, with the first three letters of your last name and the last four digits of your telephone number on the outside. Patrons should wear masks, and stay 6-feet away from each other when approaching the table for your pick-ups. Please return all books in the book drops on either side of the building. Note that the Friends of the Library are not taking book donations this summer. Sadly, their book sales have been canceled, and they cannot accept any more books at this time. For more information, call (508) 349-0310 or visit wellfleetlibrary.org.

New Town Administrator

Later this summer, Maria Broadbent, town manager of Berwyn Heights, MD, will take the reigns at Town Hall from Dan Hoort, who is retiring as Wellfleet Town Administrator at the end of June. The 54-year-old began her career in public service over 30 years ago here on the Cape as a naturalist with the National Seashore. "It was always my plan that I would be back in Massachusetts in 10 years," she told the *Independent*. "I'm a little behind on that plan, but it is worth waiting.

When she left CCNS in 1987, she founded and ran a regional recycling center in Maine, then led

neighborhood and environmental programs in Newport, R.I. As director of the Department of Neighborhood and Environmental Programs in Annapolis, MD from 2010 to 2016, Broadbent helped over 700 small businesses get off the ground. In 2018, she became Town Manager in Berwyn Heights. In Wellfleet, she plans to shift her focus to affordable housing once the pandemic is under control. Broadbent said she has already met with Provincetown Town Manager Robin Craver and Eastham Town Administrator Jacqueline Beebe to discuss a regional approach to addressing the housing problem



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“We have to do what we can do working together to solve some of those issues,” she said. “We aren’t going to solve them in a day.”

Shark Research

Between 2013 and 2018, a population study of great white sharks produced 3,000 underwater videos collected on over 100 trips off Cape Cod beaches that show frame-by-frame color patterns, scars, frayed fins and other physical features that are unique to each individual shark. The unexpected retirement of one of the critical team members delayed completion of the video identification process; as a result, the study is unlikely to be released this summer. However, research by the state Division of Marine Fisheries, supported by the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy and other funders, will continue to detect sharks and study the animals’ predatory behavior. 100 buoys will encircle the Cape and extend north to Cape Ann, most of them within a quarter-mile of the beach.

Last summer, the tagging effort expanded into Cape Cod Bay, and DMF scientist Gregory Skomal says he hopes to double the number of trips there this year to 10. The number of listening buoys will increase from 15 to 20. There appear to be fewer sharks in Cape Cod Bay, compared with the Atlantic side, but they are definitely there, with 27 sharks recorded on a buoy at Herring Cove Beach in Provincetown, 15 at Jeremy Point at the mouth of Wellfleet Harbor, and 17 on the Rock Harbor buoy in Orleans. The real number of great whites visiting the Cape each year could be much higher than those that are being tracked by buoys.

Skomal and Atlantic White Shark Conservancy scientist Meg Winton have a paper under review that shows that great whites spend half their time while off Cape Cod in water shallower than 15 feet. “The shallow areas are very challenging for big fish like white sharks,” Skomal says, “and they have no reason to go in there unless they’re feeding,” and they feed on seals, which frequently swim among swimmers, surfers and other water users, or haul out adjacent to popular beaches. Humans are not the target but they are caught in the middle as white sharks move closer to shore. “Farther offshore it’s calmer and easier to sit there and rest,” Duke University researcher Bryan Legare has found. “It’s a battle between ‘my food is inshore’ and ‘it’s comfy offshore.’”

For now, the best advice to swimmers is to avoid deep water, particularly the drop-offs on the edge of sandbars. Only go in waist deep and don’t swim near seals.

Short-term rental registration

Wellfleet is now the only Outer Cape town that does not require rentals to be certified. That will change in 2021 if new regulations drafted by the town’s health and conservation department are adopted. Rental properties will be required to have a Title 5 septic system and an on-site inspection by the Board of Health to determine the dwelling’s maximum legal occupancy. Each certification would be valid for three years and cost \$300.



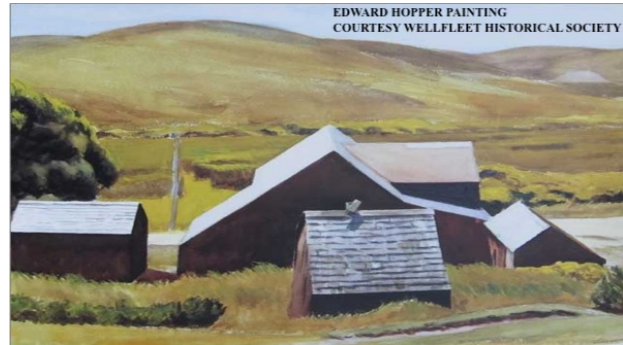
The cost, three-year renewals, and requirement for on-site inspections would make Wellfleet's proposed rental registration the strictest of the four Outer Cape towns. It would be the only one to require a Title 5 septic system for rental properties, allowing the Board of Health to ensure that the number of people allowed to occupy a rental property does not exceed the capacity of its septic system.

The proposal met with mixed reactions at the public hearing on June 10. Health agent Hillary Greenberg-Lemos said the board would discuss the feedback and adjust the draft accordingly.

Herring River Restoration Project

In a unanimous vote, on June 11, 2020 the Cape Cod Commission gave the Town of Wellfleet approval for Phase 1 of the Herring River Restoration Project. The first environmental permit to be issued for the Project, this marks a major milestone in efforts to restore tidal flow to the estuary.

Prolonged tidal restriction caused by the Chequessett Neck Road dike has resulted in severe habitat degradation and nearly complete loss of native tidal wetland habitat. The Cape Cod National Seashore owns 95% of the Phase 1 restoration area - accounting for 540 acres. Restoration of tidal flow will happen incrementally and will be carefully monitored. There have been more than 75 public meetings and presentations involving hundreds of stakeholders over the past decade. In the last year alone there were 15 publicly posted and hearings where the project was discussed.



Edward Hopper painting, courtesy Wellfleet Historical Society

More information is on the Friends of the Herring River [website](#).

Elections

Town elections were held on June 15, 2020, with none of the races contested. Ryan Curley was elected to the Select Board. Michael DeVasto was elected board chair, replacing Janet Reinhardt who has become vice chair. As per tradition, the newest board member becomes the clerk.

Approval of the FY '21 budget will have to wait until Town Meeting, which has been moved to October 10, 2020. Close monitoring of spending and income over the summer will determine how much spending will have to be cut. A draft of the Annual Town Meeting warrant is on the town [website](#).

Dues and donations, please

WSRA counts on its members to pay dues without receiving an annual invoice. Dues and individual donations are WSRA's only sources of funding-- \$25 for a single membership or \$35 for a family/household membership per calendar year.

To join, renew or pay by credit card or paypal, use the appropriate link below:

- * [For Individual Memberships \(\\$25 dues\)](#)
- * [For Family Memberships \(\\$35 dues\)](#)
- * [To give a donation](#)

New members, [join online](#) or download the [WSRA membership form](#) and mail it with your payment to:

WSRA
P.O. Box 1323
Wellfleet, MA 02667-1323

THANK YOU!

If you would like more than one member of your household to receive email from WNRTA, please add their names and email addresses [here](#).
