

OUR TOWN: CELEBRATE WELLFLEET 1763 - 2013



Wellfleet

Wellfleet, Wellfleet by the sea!
Quaint, nostalgic ecstasy.
Those who've lived there must return,
Sometime, during life's sojourn.
They can never quite explain
Just what lures them back again.
There's a hidden joy, sublime,
Brightened by the span of time.
Wellfleet, Wellfleet by the sea!
Quaint, nostalgic ecstasy.

Dorothy E. Wiles

The board of the Wellfleet Non-Resident Taxpayers Association commissioned this book to honor Wellfleet's 250th anniversary. Here you will find a cross-section of Wellfleet citizens – resident and non-resident – expressing their feelings about this unique place in artwork, photographs, poems, and prose.

As future generations create their own enduring associations with the town, we expect supplementary volumes to appear. Thus will Wellfleet continue to be experienced and reinvented, like a beautiful recurring dream.

Betsy Van Dorn
Editor

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A Love Letter to Wellfleet

At first glance, a love letter to Wellfleet takes in the charming village, the sparkling waters of bay and ocean, and the taste of a Wellfleet Oyster. In our case, that was plenty to draw us in for more. My husband and I are now on year 22 of loving Wellfleet, 15 of them as owners of a house on Duck Creek Marsh, our refuge until we sold it a year ago. In terms of the physical “place” of Wellfleet, our hearts are a part of that marsh, with its rustic bridge connecting a world of nature to the activity of the village.

Each time we sat on our back deck or walked by a window, we saw beauty in a different costume. Every February we came for at least two weeks, enjoying whatever weather was served up. Many times it was snow, sometimes impossibly deep, and we would count ourselves lucky as we got out the shovel. We came twice in November, several times in May and for entire summers, not returning to Cleveland until after Labor Day.

The setting was always the same, yet always looked different, depending on the light (always a miracle, no matter what) and whether the tide was in, out, high or low. Many times we awoke in the morning to find the marsh had turned into a lake. It was a constant surprise, yet always our reassuring refuge and the place where our best summers were spent.

We know our beloved marsh by memory, as well as each shop and restaurant in town, but there is much more Wellfleet has given us. Between St. James the Fisherman and the Wellfleet Library, we have had wonderful sources of nurture in the places themselves and in the people we met. We are now blessed with lifelong friends who are year-round or summer residents of Wellfleet, and it is the joy of seeing these friends that draws us now.

No sooner had we sold our house than we decided to keep coming to Wellfleet, renting a house for two weeks each summer. This year we are on a different part of Duck Creek Marsh, “in town” this time, where we have the close proximity of Uncle Tim’s Bridge, herons and geese - and the historical vision of ships sailing in to anchor for the night.

The people here now are as much a part of the history of this special town as those who lived here 250 years ago: they are giving a portion of their lives to Wellfleet, carrying on its traditions and dreaming of ways to continue to preserve what has been here for 250 years. We are honored to have been a small part of this treasured heritage and in this year of celebration we raise a glass to all who have come before us to make Wellfleet so remarkable.

Karen and Chick Holtkamp



Marsh in Sunlight, Karen Holtkamp

Wellfleet's Sense of Community

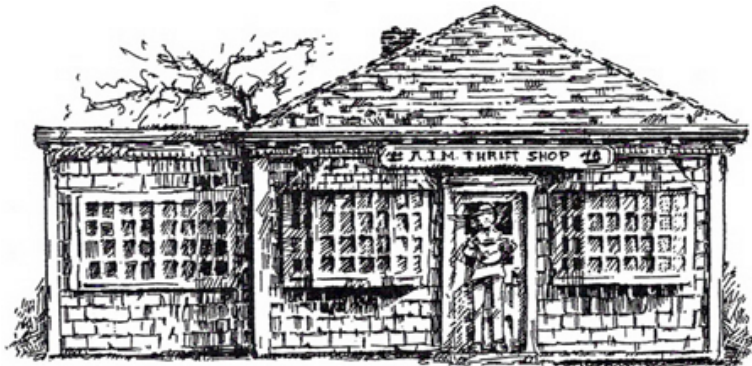
When my husband and I first came to Wellfleet in 1972, we knew we would enjoy the ocean beaches, sail on the bay, and swim in the ponds. We loved the town for all the summer activities it offered, and we found these to be a perfect respite from our teaching jobs in London. Then over the years, as we were granted sabbaticals, we began to spend time in the town during the off-season. Quieter pursuits like walks in the National Seashore, Audubon talks, and hours at the library (many when it was still above Town Hall), increased our love for Wellfleet.

So what is it about this town that is so appealing and intriguing? All of the above, but it wasn't until we retired in 2006 that we really understood the ethos of this place and counted our blessings that we settled here. What we discovered is the sense of community in this small town. I will use the A.I.M. Thrift Shop as an example. Since the 1960s, it has been donating to a number of non-profit health-related organizations that serve the Outer Cape, and since its inception, it has been the largest single donor to Outer Cape Health Services.

The shop is manned entirely by volunteers – a staff of 29 during the summer months and 19 in the off-season. A diverse group, they cheerfully sort and price goods, keep the shop organized, and are committed to making a contribution to the community. Those who shop at the store know they are reusing and thus recycling, but the practice at A.I.M goes even further: clothing that is not to standard is given to the Salvation Army, and goods that can't be sold are brought to the Swap Shop. Likewise, sheets and towels that are not acceptable at the shop are brought to the animal shelter in Orleans.

Those who support the A.I.M. Thrift Shop understand that their generous donations and frequent patronage are just one of many examples of how Wellfleet comes together as a community to do good. This has deepened our understanding of the town and our love for it.

Bill and Alice Iacussa



“Don't Ever Give Up This Place, Mom”

My cozy cottage on Indian Neck is the family center my children will keep when I am gone. This comforts me, that the beauty of sea, sand and sky that I have enjoyed for more than half a century of summers will be part of my children's and grandchildren's lives.

Of course, Wellfleet boasts a wonderful library and a richness of intellectual offerings in lectures, theatres and performances of all kinds. These make it special along with the wealth of ocean, pond, bay and harbor beaches. But the memory that keeps coming back to me is of the son I lost saying to me while he was building a sand castle with his two-year-old daughter on Burton Baker beach, "Don't ever give up this place, Mom."

In my heart I never will.

C. S. Adler

Our Wellfleet Stories

The summer of my tenth year, my mother packed up our two-toned, tan and copper Chevy station wagon with sheets and towels, clothes, food, baby beagles and my brother and me, and departed from Cambridge MA, headed to Wellfleet on old Route 6. It took us about three-and-a-half hours to get there. We followed our directions to the tree with many handmade signs on it, turned onto a sand road that led down to the MacDonald cottage on Slough Pond, and spilled out into the little driveway by our new summer residence.

We explored the pond's edge, fished, discovered leeches in the reeds and spent time at the ocean and bay beaches. The following summer, I got to explore around town, which had an old water pump, a bridge out to an island, and Lema's Market, where we bought our groceries.

For two summers, we lived in the Chermayeff cottage on a bluff above Slough Pond where, many years prior, Serge and my father had gone fishing and Eero had been pulled overboard by a large snapping turtle! By that time, we had met writers and designers, architects and artists and sundry young folk who spent their summers in the woods. We heard such names as Juliet and Gyorgy Kepes, Connie and Marcel Breuer, Marian and Arthur Schlesinger and Edmund Wilson.

At the end of our fourth summer in Wellfleet, my mother purchased an old fishing cabin on Herring Pond. Herring Pond had one public beach, but the pond was "very organic." Every time I went swimming there, I would emerge from the water covered by a light green film. And I didn't like the idea of leeches in the reeds!

My mother's longtime friend, Olav Hammarström, an architectural colleague of my father's, designed a house around the existing cabin, and Hayden Walling, an interesting and talented builder in Wellfleet, built the addition over the next winter and spring. The house came to be known affectionately as "Lily's Pad."

Years later, I took my two small sons to Wellfleet. We paddled to the sluiceway, swam in the ponds, or went bottom fishing with Old Captain Jack. Lema's Market was still there, new faces behind the counter. No more "Ye Olde Helpee Selfee Laundree," but it made a great story for the boys when we went to dinner at the Lobster Hutt.

Our Wellfleet stories are dog-eared like an old beloved book: Pete Seeger playing his banjo on the back steps of the old town hall; the square dances ending with "Good-bye, Jimmy, good-bye"; the 4th of July parade in front of the Arms' apricot yellow gingerbread house; watching an old salt come by with a one-foot-high clam spouting out water; and all those quiet walks through the woods. The stories are different for all of us who spent time in Wellfleet then, but the memories I have are cherished – as is the feel of the sea on my face of an afternoon.

Susan Saarinen



Drawing by Lily Saarinen

The Little White House

I grew up in Providence, Rhode Island, but Camp Mar-Ven in Wellfleet was my childhood playground. Every morning and afternoon of those hot July days, I'd look across the harbor at a little white house on the beach and secretly imagine: "Someday I will knock on their door and plead with them to sell me that house!" I was 12 years old - what did I know?

Forty years later, my husband searched online and found gorgeous Oyster Cove B&B: "Let's give it a try." We booked a week on the hill overlooking Chipman's Cove. I hiked around the marsh: the smell was familiar. I looked around and got that "I-have-been-on-this-very-spot-before" feeling. I gazed along the beach, saw a brown boathouse, and thought, "This is just too weird!" Exploring further, I found the old Camp Mar-Ven tennis court, lonely and overgrown. The brown boathouse, on closer inspection, was now someone's studio or crash pad. Then I stared longingly across the flats: there was the little white house.

"I sailed over to the Marina from this very beach, I'm certain of that," I insisted silently. I had "discovered" Camp Mar-Ven, but it was only a street name now.

This story has a happy ending: years later, we bought a house just over the hill from my private fantasy white house and met its present owners. I did not have to plead with them to sell me their house. We could just be friends - and we are.

My 12-year-old self and I, along with our grandkids, play happily in the woods above my beloved cove.

Amy Diamant



On the Way to Chipman's Cove by Sarah Smith

Peace and Serenity

My wife and I spent our first week in Wellfleet during the summer of 1972. We stayed at Salt Box Cottages and enjoyed the most perfect week of weather imaginable. We relaxed completely and enjoyed Newcomb Hollow and Long Pond beaches daily. We enjoyed ourselves so much we returned to Wellfleet each summer.

In the summer of 1981 we happened upon a house for sale on Old Kings Highway only 1/4 mile from Long Pond and bought it with another couple. We have spent most of each summer enjoying Wellfleet's beaches, ponds, shops, restaurants and theater and eventually we bought out our co-owners. Our sons and now our grandchildren have grown up sharing Wellfleet summers with all the joys they provide. Our love of Wellfleet extends to our year-round lives as we often reflect on the peace and serenity that Wellfleet continually inspires.

Wellfleet has changed and improved the lives of our entire family and will hopefully continue to do so for generations to come.

Anita and Roy Rubin

Our Seaside Community

Wellfleet is a state of mind, a place where we can hear the ocean or take long walks in the woods. It is also a place of promise and opportunity. We are a seaside community rooted in history, tradition and pride. We are a community of tradesmen, writers, artists, fishermen and women, restaurateurs and tourists, all finding a common ground.

Visitors flock to our town every year and we accommodate them for a season. Then once the fall arrives, we have time to decompress and enjoy this place again for all the reasons we fell in love. Our lives are like the tides changing with the seasons. There is so much natural beauty surrounding us that inspiration is boundless.

Traci and I have chosen to raise a family, create businesses and create our lives here because we want Wellfleet to be a part of us just as we want to be part of Wellfleet. We strive every day to make Wellfleet a better place so that it remains a place that our children continue to love. We give back to the community, as most of our residents do, to show our commitment to the future and to repay the love and respect we have for such a beautiful town, Wellfleet.

Mac Hay



Mac's Seafood at Night by Sharon Inger

One Touch and I Am in Wellfleet

Wellfleet is images, words, smells, and memories that do not combine easily into sentences. Perhaps this is because these events take place in Wellfleet, so there is a sense of space between them where wind crosses in, out, and around.

Always, there is May Ruth and Henry's house. Boogie boards. Birdfeeders. Catching up on news over lobster (but shrimp for Henry, who never cared for lobster). It is this house and their generosity that brought us here so many years ago.

It is the cemetery across the street with lines of latitude and longitude; the Bishop grave that makes me wish we could have met; the ancient Cape family names; and the one grave with no headstone, only an ever changing collection of trinkets, chimes and shells. I often sit here to remember my own lost loves, never knowing whose loved one is buried there. Now Henry lies nearby.

It is walking into town: "Thickly Settled." Pancakes at The Lighthouse; blueberry muffins; art; Zack's teachings; square dancing with delighted five-year-olds; the Lobster Shack lobsters that were larger than our newborn; the 'Comber – 'nuff said.

Sinatra with wine; James Taylor on the way to buy groceries; Marc Broussard as we drive through the pines, and best of all – nothing. Just wind, early morning breezes, and evening's bending trees. Rain with the faint scent of scrub pine.

Newcomb, where "I'm going to go on a walk" means I won't be back for hours. Bumbling, I call it, always with a stone turning over in my hand. It is where I do my best thinking or no thinking at all. The sand holds memories . . . Grandpa feeding the baby her first chocolate chip cookie; a million shooting stars; the summer of phosphorescences; seals; learning to ride waves: "Damn, that's cold!" Other beaches gained popularity when surfing arrived, but Newcomb is the classic.

Duck Harbor – sacred space. Each summer, on an evening when the moon is up but the sun hasn't yet gone down, I come here to give the annual report to Mom. I think of her every day but, for some reason, it is here that I must hike out along the gravelly sand to give my report to the moon, accounting for each child, grandchild and in-law, the ups and downs of the year. She feels closest here.

Wellfleet is stones – wafer thin; stackable; black; speckled "bird's eggs"; the ones with good-luck circles. Every coat in our closet has a Wellfleet stone in its pocket. Only one chosen each year – instant comfort when touched on a cold day in the city. To handle a Wellfleet stone is to be reminded of your best self: your laughing self; your gin-and-board-games self; your self who remembers to exhale.

One simple touch of a Wellfleet stone unites the images, words, smells and memories. One touch, and I am in Wellfleet.

Beth Schultz



Rock Family by Sarah Smith

Everybody is Family

In April 2006, I began working at the Transfer Station. People know me because of my dog, Oliver; he's the official dump greeter. He seems to remember everybody. He gets birthday cards, Christmas cards, and get-well cards.

What makes the Transfer Station unique is our Swap Shop – the craziness of the Swap Shop! Some people are there multiple times a day; there's always something new; you always find something good.

Wellfleet is a welcoming place. It's comfortable, quiet, a real New England town. But it's not as quiet as it used to be. After Labor Day, the sidewalks would roll up, the Town Hall and a couple of the little shops would stay open, but everything else would shut down. Today, there's much more going on.

When I lived here as a kid, I had friends that lived up on Trotting Park. We used to take our bikes into town to watch movies downstairs in the Town Hall. There was a candle factory where the library is now, and a candy store. We stopped at the candy store before going to the movies. At 10 o'clock we'd walk up Main Street, past what is now Kelly's flower Shop.

I remember being a teenager and making fun of the tourists who square-danced on the pier. A few of those friends still live in town – Chopper Young, our oyster-shucking champion, he's one of my best friends in all the world. There's a lot of people I've known since I was a kid – Russ, another shell-fisherman in town, and my co-worker Ryan, who I've known since he was fifteen.

People look after one another here. If someone gets hurt, everyone rallies around – like when Caleb got hurt. And Tommy Landon is on his third or fourth tour in Afghanistan. I put together a box for him and people in town bring things by.

Wellfleet is different from any other town on the Cape – it's basically free spirited. Everybody is family.

Becky Savin (From an interview with Phyllis Bretholtz)



Becky and Oliver by Phyllis Bretholtz

My Dream Realized

There is something in the air - something that eases out along Main Street; something in the way the sand kisses the ocean and shifts out to meet the horizon; something in the scale of the town. It seems to defy a quick and easy description, but many years ago, when Wellfleet was a special place I visited for a week at a time in the summer, I was drawn here. In one frantic week, I would ride the bike trail, attend lectures at the library, search for treasures in the shops, explore the beaches, walk out to Jeremy Point, square dance at the harbor, attend the W.H.A.T., eat seafood galore, indulge in delicious ice cream, gorge on the freshest local corn, patronize Shakespeare on Mayo Beach, and always long for more time here.

Now, many years later, I have settled into a rhythm in my small neighborhood of year-rounders: gardening, exchanging plants and dinners, indulging in daily outdoor showers, filling my bird feeders, watching the wind whip up the tops of tall pines around my house, standing out on a black night to marvel at the starry sky, exchanging treasures at the Swap Shop and relishing the constant visits of family and friends.

Well beyond the crush of summer visitors, I love this town in the cooling days of fall, in the frosty barren days of winter, and in the budding green days of spring. I love the openness of greeting Becky, Warren and Ryan at the Transfer Station, the access to mountains of compost, the constant stimulation of lectures, poetry readings, exhibits at the library, the edgy theater, the sunsets in the harbor. There is still a small-town feel to Wellfleet that seems to open its heart to newcomers, and for that I am grateful. I have a feeling of belonging as I spend more time here. This is truly a long-held dream – finally realized.

Phyllis Bretholtz



Newcomb Hollow by Jane Beard

Congratulations to Wellfleet!

My wife and I first came to visit Wellfleet in 1965 and have spent our summers and other periods here since then - 47 years! Indeed, in 2012, with all of our children and grandchildren, I celebrated my 80th birthday in Wellfleet.

Each time we first drive into town, we have a real sense of joy: passing the Congregational Church where the chamber music concerts are held, the beautiful town hall, the harbor, and Mac's Seafood Market. Newcomb Hollow beach has a special meaning for our three generations of swimmers and surfers, as does the view of the harbor from our Wellfleet house. A very special memory is being in our house during Hurricane Bob - a day that was both exciting and somewhat terrifying.

We were very pleased to see that the owners have restored the beautiful Morning Glory house and that the old Lema's store has been upgraded and preserved as the Wellfleet Marketplace. We're especially happy that our fellow Wellfleetians have worked and supported the transformation of the historic Catholic church into a beautiful community center, preserving the wonderful carved doors while creating a space for many events.

We continue to cherish our time here. Congratulations to Wellfleet on achieving its 250th anniversary!

John H Siegel and Family

Wellfleet Day

Solitary walker bundling against the wind,
Plodding over shifting sands,
Dodges errant waves ebbing and flowing.
A stray gull soars on high.

Sunrise peering above Newcomb Hollow dunes,
Purple shades creeping slowly,
Marram grass rustles amid morning breezes.
Several gulls join in flight.

Whiffs of brewing coffee,
Eggs sizzling atop hot griddles,
Await morning diners.
Shuttered windows open downtown.

Sputtering pickup trucks
Meandering across harbor flats,
Etching tracks on brackish sand,
Stop to deposit their cargo.

Oystermen alighting
Wade through mud
Carrying rakes and buckets.
The harvest begins.

Sun setting over Great Island,
Orange rays marbling the harbor,
Marram grass rustles amid evening breezes.
Spent gulls settle for the night.

Plodding back from the grants,
Wearied backs aching,
Seeking a warm supper
Oystermen head home.

Kathrine LeTourneau

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Oystermen by Kathrine Le Tourneau

Hidden Jewels

The O'Connor family has been coming to Wellfleet since 1939, when Great Aunt Deb bought a little cottage right out on the top of the dunes. The views were spectacular; but not wanting to be right at water's edge, she moved her new home back on the other side of a little dirt road now called Ocean View Drive. How intuitive the O'Connors were! That tiny one-bedroom cottage would have been long gone into the sea by now if it had stayed where it was. A one-car garage was added (one that opened on both ends because Aunt Deb did not like to back up), and that was turned into a bunkroom for the growing and thriving family. Year after year, the O'Connors spent summers here in Wellfleet, taking turns so that each family would have some time at the cottage.

Seventy years passed by, full of Wednesday-night square dancing on the pier, bike trips to miniature golfing, gallery hopping, nightly ice-cream runs, and hours upon hours in the water. Cousins and aunts and uncles and grandparents and friends came from all over the United States, as well as from Ireland. They would start in the salt water on the ocean side, riding waves until, depending on the tides, they would head over to the fresh-water ponds to "clean off."

No year was complete without a trip to Marconi Site to honor the scientific creativity that all started right here in Wellfleet. And no one can forget the wonderful movies seen under the open sky at our beloved drive-in. It was becoming increasingly clear that Wellfleet would be a part of the O'Connors' hearts for years to come.

They looked for what seemed like forever, and could not find anything that was just right. It was not until the fourth generation was heading off to college that a hidden piece of property was located, right down the road from Aunt Deb's initial find. In 2006, this hidden jewel had been vacant for many years, was in significant disrepair and needed some loving care. Joy and Bill O'Connor have been purposefully working to restore this 10-acre homestead, now affectionately known as Hidden Hollow: first the one-bedroom cottage sitting quaintly by the road; then the three-bedroom cottage with its view of Blackfish Creek. Both were renovated in such a way as to keep the integrity of the old Cape and respect the families who had lived here before.

Currently, with their four children and the support of many generations of relatives, the O'Connors continue to creatively guide the rebuilding of Hidden Hollow. Spending their summers in the Main House, they are working to help others start a tradition that will last from generation to generation and include the beauty, artistry, and uniqueness of Wellfleet.

Joy and Bill O'Connor



Roof Deck at Hidden Hollow by Joy O'Connor

The Bunkroom

Boom! Thunder roared through the old garage, sending fear through its occupants. The small bunk-room lit up repeatedly then went to complete darkness as my cousins and I waited for the storm to subside.

My older sister Red cowered on the ground with my younger brother Liam, nervous that this ancient structure would be blown off the house. We were in Wellfleet, Cape Cod, in the children's domain of the cottage – the one place the adults of the family did not dare enter. A lightning bolt showered the room with color, making me cringe: "Holy Moly," I thought. "This is a huge storm!"

The room could hold seven comfortably, but up to thirteen the right way: three bunks, one full-size bed, and a couple of cots. Ryan, Red, Cian, Kyra, Thomas, Tiarnan, Liam, Rory, Mikaela, Mackenzie, Miranda and I jumped as a flash of lightning landed with a force that shook the room. Here was my chance at a great prank, so I slid from my bunk down to where the cousins were huddled.

Darkness consumed us, except for random lightning flashes. They colored the room with greens, oranges, and purples, giving a surreal view through the screened garage doors on either side. That's what was so great about the place, yet made this moment so frighteningly intense. We always felt like we were outside, yet so cozy, surrounded by those we loved. Alone in this storm would have been a nightmare, but the bunkroom gave me a sense of courageous comfort that grows from the heart and envelops one's being.

"Justin! Where did ye go?" My cousin Tiarnan screamed over the wind. No answer from me as I slithered along the floor to the center of the room. My journey was tedious but would pay off in the end. I was not worried about people seeing me since I could barely see myself.

Wind rushed into the room from all sides, along with the calming smell of the sea. I could hear waves thundering down at LeCount Hollow, and a shiver ran through my body as I thought about being on the beach during this storm.

Across the center of the room was an old blue curtain that divided the space into two sides. The group was sitting on the other side, listening for my response. I stood up and hid behind the curtain, close enough to touch them, waiting for the right moment. My oldest sister began to lecture me: "Justin, this is not funny! Answer us now, you know that I can –"

Boom!

This time it wasn't just an enormous purple lightning bolt that showered the room. I had been holding too tightly to the curtain, and down it came, crashing over my cousins and me. Screaming like a baby, I fell onto my favorite rug with an oriental design embroidered around the edges. Needless to say, I scared myself more than my cousins.

The storm continued unnoticed, while my cousins and I laughed uncontrollably. We were safe in the Bunk Room, in Wellfleet, making memories that would last a lifetime – like our parents and grandparents had done before us.

Justin O'Connor

Wellfleet's Inspired Architecture

For generations, living on the Cape required individualistic souls who created an architecture that was simple and economical. The "Cape" style was developed because it had a low profile to protect it from the winds, required a minimum of materials, and created a snug environment from the elements.

In the 19th century, a new architectural style came onto the scene in both Nantucket and the shipping villages of the upper Cape. The houses were big, flashy and paid homage to their rich owners (often ship's captains), who were often absent pursuing their fortunes. Wellfleet's architecture (with few exceptions) remained traditional, with village homes and modest summer cottages.



Painting by Gerrit Beneker 1926

The past decade has seen a new generation of owners. These owners have limited time and their "summer homes" have become year-round retreats, complete with the perceived luxuries and necessities of their urban environments. Not unlike the ship's captains of the 19th Century, their homes often represent who they are and are monuments to their financial success.

In the early 1930s, a group of young, creative artists and architects were attracted to the Weimar Bauhaus in Germany. By the end of World War II, many of its members had migrated to the academic centers of the eastern United States. Wellfleet and Truro had a special appeal to these architects, and experimental "modern houses" soon began to be built on the dunes and between the ponds. Designed by Marcel Breuer, Serge Chermayeff, Olav Hammarstrom, Paul Weidinger and Charles Zehnder, these houses represented a new vernacular of Wellfleet "modernist" architecture.

In 1948, Nathaniel Saltonstall created The Colony next to the Chequesset Yacht Club. It is typical of the slightly sloping box-like structures of this period. Some were "shoe box" in form and had minimalist spaces, often with built-in furnishings.

Arriving in Wellfleet in 1953 as a teen, I was able to appreciate and personally experience many of these architectural statements. They were typically understated and often blended into the environment. By the time I was in college they became an obsession, and I would sneak into many during the winter months and, in a Zen-like trance, absorb the many details and their placement in the environment. I wrote papers on the Breuer "cottages" and submitted my undergraduate thesis at Yale on the works and philosophy of Olav Hammarstrom (a copy is available at the Wellfleet Historical Society).

In 1972, I designed my first house in Wellfleet. It created something of a sensation and was featured in the local newspapers. Although I was teaching at Ohio State at the time, I had enough clients to establish a "summer workshop" at my water's edge Boat House on Blackfish Creek. The practice evolved into Geiger-Phillips, which provides planning, architectural design, and design/build services. We created homes utilizing the forms of traditional New England architecture and landscape designs that would blend within a natural environment.

Harvey Geiger

Our Pop-Up Home

For the last 24 years, our family has lived in two distinct places. For most of the year, we live in a little house in the Boston area, but every June we move to the woods of Wellfleet until Labor Day. Our Wellfleet home is Site C-10 of Paine's Campground: a pop-up tent trailer for my wife, daughter and me; a small tent for Bob, my brother-in-law from Manchester, England; and a stack of guest tents that go up and down over the course of the summer, as friends arrive and depart. We sleep in the tents, and the rest of the time we live outside.

Every year when we move to Wellfleet, our lives transform completely. The pace changes, the activities change, the whole way of living changes.

Our ten-year-old daughter Jayla has spent every summer of her life as a camper in Wellfleet. When she was a little baby, each morning started at the top of the dune at White Crest with a bottle for Jayla and a large coffee for Bob and me. Every evening ended around the campfire. After ten summers in the woods, Wellfleet is permanently in that girl's blood.

As Jayla's gotten older, she's grown into a curious role in the campground: all summer long, people come and go. Most stay for a weekend or a week or two, but Jayla is permanent. Year to year, the same families often return to Paine's, and when they do, Jayla is their touchstone. So for her, the summer months are a continuous stream of reuniting with old friends and meeting new ones.

The campground backs onto the National Seashore, and from our tent it's about a ten-minute walk to Duck Pond and a twenty-minute walk through the woods to White Crest Beach. There are very few days all summer that don't include a visit to one or the other.

Although we live in the woods and have no TV, that's not to say that we're isolated or "roughing it." We love the restaurants, the music, the theater, the art, and all the other Wellfleet activities and features.

Over the years, slowly and steadily, Wellfleet has become a bigger and more important part of our lives. We've watched the Paine family children grow up over the years, and each year we meet more people. Slowly, Wellfleet has changed from being a place we visit every year to our other home. Twenty-four years later, that pop-up trailer in the woods is as much our home as our house in Boston.

Jerry Reilly



White Crest Beach by Patricia Lemme

Wellfleet's Got Attitude

Mary and I had been coming to Cape Cod for 25 years when we found Starfish Vacation village online. We saw a cottage that didn't seem too dilapidated and offered the asking price.

The realtor called us up: "You're going to own a house on Cape Cod!"

We couldn't believe it! First we drove to Hyannis for the closing – and then we came to see it. We were pleasantly surprised.

Now we've been here eight years and we love it. We wish we could live here, but we have jobs. So I tell people our house is in Orange CT, but our home is in Wellfleet.

We like the life out here: no beeping your car horns in Wellfleet, although it happened the first weekend we were here:

"Mary, we don't beep in Wellfleet!"

We began to renovate our cottage on a Saturday morning in the spring and worked our buns off all day – working, working – no food in the house. By 8:30 we were hungry, so we went downtown. Starving, covered with paint, we walked into The Lighthouse. The waitress said, "We're closed."

"What? It's 8:30 on a Saturday night!"

"Sorry, we're not serving any more."

Mary and I just stared. We looked really pathetic and dirty, and we were sad for a brief little minute... and then Wellfleet struck: Michelle, the waitress, took pity on us and said, "You can have something from the grill because we haven't cleaned it yet."

"Whatever you want to grill for us, we'll be happy," we told her. So she made cheeseburgers and we had a great night. That's one of our favorite Wellfleet stories.

Once, at the Beachcomber bar, we struck up a conversation with a couple from Canada, who'd just driven down from Boston. The guy had come here as a kid, and wanted to find the Beachcomber. We asked where they were planning to stay. They had no idea: "We just drove down for the day."

So we said "We're leaving tonight. If you want to stay at our house, we'll tell you where the key is. Just let yourself in, we'll leave linens." They couldn't believe it.

Tim and Agnes from Canada stayed in our house, wrote in our guest book and left us a new shower-head that's still in our shower. Mary was in total agreement with me, but later she said, "Brenda, couldn't we have talked about that for a second?" NAH!

I love the attitude and culture of Wellfleet!

Brenda Anziano (From an interview with Jerry Reilly)



Newcomb Light by Beth Whitman

Wellfleet: Woven Into My Skin

When I was much younger, I used to walk the shores of Duck Harbor with my little brother, searching for horseshoe crabs. They were always in abundance, strewn in great masses with their ridged backs protruding from the trampled sand. We would dig them out and rescue them, hurling them into the bay without ever checking to see if they were still alive. If they weren't, we didn't want to know. We just wanted them to be okay, and get to live here forever, since we couldn't. We would return to our family's umbrella like heroes.

My family and I only live in Wellfleet during the summer, which I've been told makes us washashores, like most of the people on the Cape during the heat waves and mosquitoes. Yet we feel entitled enough to roll our eyes at tourists with bad parking jobs, because Wellfleet is an instinct - an innate understanding and perspective acquired through the years. We have learned which back roads lead you to hidden ponds, which trails lead to the ocean; we have lived through years of square dances and hip-hop nights under the big white tent and have successfully tasted every ice-cream combo at PJ's; we learned how to swim in Gull Pond (and know all about the eel under the dock), and owe several cavities to the a Chocolate Sparrow, thank you very much.

Summer humbled my siblings and me with sunburns and tank-top tans, the splinters from the pier forcing us to limp down Mayo Beach, leaving our heels at the mercy of the oysters. My sandcastles are scattered between Duck Harbor and Great Island. My adolescence is wedged between the planks of Uncle Tim's, and tangled in the seaweed of Newcomb Hollow's last tide line. I haven't made it through all my teenage years yet, but I imagine they will be divided between bonfire coals and daily tips.

The evolution of my life is charted in the sand; footprints smoothed by waves greedy and ageless. Some days I am frightened by the size of my own footprint - at the foot of Whitecrest dunes I am small again.

For me, Wellfleet is woven into my skin, even once the sand falls out of my shoes. After years of searching for a sunset to rival Nauhaught Bluff's, I cling to my three months of Flying Fish mornings and Beachcomber nights each year, feeling like a sleepwalker when I leave; only to dream of June bugs all through December.

Catherine Malcynsky



Harbor Seal, Mayo Beach by Catherine Malcynsky

What Makes Wellfleet Tick?

Even as a kid, I found Wellfleet magical. For me, arrival in mid-June meant three months of running barefoot, swimming, sailing, shellfishing and all the other pleasures Wellfleet could offer.

When I became a parent, my work precluded summers in Wellfleet, but somehow I managed to find a few weeks in early June or September when I could whisk my kids out of school and expose them to Wellfleet's charms. For all of them and now for their children, coming to Wellfleet has become an annual ritual to be treasured.

When the time came to wind down my career, there was little doubt as to where I would want to spend my retirement years. Like so many others, I easily found my way to Wellfleet as a full-timer – and in the 13 years since have never once regretted that decision.

As a resident and now a Selectman, I have been able to see and appreciate even more fully what makes Wellfleet tick. The town operates by dint of an amazing wealth of volunteer committees that take on projects as ambitious as the Herring River restoration and as specific as providing flowers and landscaping for the small public parks dotting the town. Wellfleet's Town Meeting regularly draws a crowd of several hundred, and town issues are subjects of thoughtful and occasionally heated debate. Wellfleetians "get" the idea of a participatory town democracy. It is an exciting and rewarding place to live. And yes, there is plenty to do in the winter!

Wellfleet has a long tradition of caring for its own. I remember as a kid noticing there were some "odd ducks" in town – and I later realized that in many communities such folks would have been carefully hidden and "put away" out of sight. Not in Wellfleet. Townspeople as a matter of course stepped up to the plate and took care of their own – so these marginal personalities became part and parcel of the town fabric. This sense of communal responsibility endures today in many unsung ways in which Wellfleet men and women reach out to give each other a hand up as opposed to a handout.

When I was helping to write the Town's *Local Comprehensive Plan*, our committee conducted a survey of residents and non-resident taxpayers. Overwhelmingly, the top priority for both groups was to maintain Wellfleet's character as a small village with a diverse population. *Don't let it get too big! Keep the sense of community! Protect and nurture the finfish industry and shellfishermen!* These are but a few of the many comments reflecting that fervent wish.

Some 65 years after I first arrived on its shores, Wellfleet remains the jewel of Cape Cod – a magical place to live, to visit, to enjoy.

Paul Pilcher



Boundbrook by Curt Smith

The Club

It was 'The Club' - not the Chequessett Yacht and Country Club, but a haunt for sailing, families and lasting friendships. Yes, there was the weedy, sandy, occasionally wet 9-hole golf course and, in the early 50's, clay tennis courts between the beach and the road, but the focus was families who sailed and raced their wooden boats: O-Boats for the older group and Weasels for us kids (Weasels were gaff-rig, plywood cat boats, a knock-off the popular Beetle Cat).

On weekends the O-boats raced. During the week when many dads returned to work, the kids took over the club. The tide in meant we were on or in the water, racing, sailing, or swimming. No life jacket was ever worn. Tide out left us to hang around the clubhouse, where we ate greasy hamburgers, sucked on endless sodas and popsicles and bought candy bars for a nickel – all put on one's charge account!

We played ping pong in the 'kids' room,' played cards on the couches in the big room, and played records at our Friday night dances. Unsupervised, we were given the time to be bored – and from that space we had to be creative. No schedule, just long hot summer days. No one ever drove us to the ocean or ponds. We practically lived in our bathing suits and took great pride in never putting on shoes.

There were relatively few of us, but everyone was popular, as all were needed to make a group. Coming from many states, most of us spent the entire summer in Wellfleet, from July 4th to Labor Day.

The Club was not the attractive manicured building of today, but a funky, unkempt, sandy edifice. Golfers walked across the floor with their spiked shoes to pay fees or order lunch. Dripping bathing suits and bare feet were the norm.

On the waterfront was a tall wooden pier with two floating docks. From there we could bring in boats to pick up crew or check on the race course with the race committee (on weekends the moms). We kids could jump, dive or cannonball off the wooden railings, and at some point almost everyone got a nasty splinter on their hands or feet. I suspect that it was a winter storm in the late 50's that took our beloved pier away.

I lived for the summer – unrestricted and seemingly endless. Labor Day meant the last of the races (the Governors Cup) and a farewell dinner and awards ceremony. The season was over. My freedom and friends would go. I still carry that empty feeling every Labor Day.

Many of my childhood friends have returned to Wellfleet, either to live as residents or to come for the summer months. Childhood is a wondrous time. For me, those days at the club, in Wellfleet, on the Cape seem especially precious.

Catherine Currier McCormick



Photo by Christopher Hann

The Transfer Station: Past and Present

I was born in Provincetown but moved in to Wellfleet and have been working for the town for almost ten years now. I like working here and meeting new people. Provincetown is such a hubbub – busy, busy! Wellfleet is a little easier, a little slower-paced.

When I first came here, it took a lot to get things running smoothly. But now it's good. I have a great team working with me.

More and more people are becoming Wellfleet residents and buying dump stickers. It gets more crowded in the summer, but even the winters are busier than they used to be – and that makes the time pass faster.

Over the years I've seen a transformation from a landfill to what this place is today. The landfill was busy, lots of fires going on down there, but it's pretty quiet now. Those pipes sticking up used to release methane gas, but there's just about nothing coming out now; pretty much everything down there has been burned. And there are more changes coming down the road: we're probably going to a "pay as you throw" system. The goal is to burn less and recycle more.

In the past, going to the dump used to be a chore, but now people tell us that they enjoy coming here. I turn on the radio, play music, and try to keep it to a local station so people are up-to-date on local stuff. This is a place where people come to hang out, so why make it a chore? I bet if we sold coffee here, we'd sell a pot every hour. Last summer some kids down the hill set up a lemonade stand, and for a dollar a cup, made \$52 in one day. Their dad had to go back to town to get more supplies!

The Swap Shop is the big oddity here. It's been around about twenty years – since May 1992. Before that, it was the fire chief's house. There's a book in the Wellfleet library that shows the Swap Shop being built; it's in the town section of the library.

It's not easy to keep the Swap Shop clean and organized. We have to do constant patrolling. People leave a lot of stuff there at the end of the summer and again in the spring when they're closing or opening their houses. The only thing that's disappointing is when some of them take advantage and leave junk, like broken mirrors or a stool with only three legs. Every once in a while the town has to clean it out, and that costs us money. If people use it the right way, then it would be fun, real fun.

There was a raccoon in there a few years ago and we had to shut the place down. That raccoon was hissing at everybody. We had to have Animal Control come down and get it out.

Warren Silva

(From an interview with Phyllis Bretholtz)



Warren and Jasper by Phyllis Bretholtz

Shellfish Scars

One of my fondest childhood memories is shellfishing with my grandfather and uncle on the windswept shores of Cape Cod. Every summer, our family vacationed at my grandparent's home in Wellfleet, Massachusetts. A retired navy admiral, Grandpa took us out on his fishing boat several times a week. After a short ride out of the marina, we'd dig for clams and gather oysters wherever my grandfather decided to anchor, usually on the long, skinny sand spit of Jeremys Point, where Wellfleet Harbor meets Cape Cod Bay. At dead-low tide, we knelt down on the cool, wet sand, looking for the key-shaped holes made by clams burrowed deep underneath.

Grandpa taught us to dig into the hole with our bare hands, about a foot under the sand, feel for the clam, grab hold firmly, and pull it out. In the shallow water, we looked for oysters attached to barnacled rocks and broken shells, reaching down with a screwdriver to knock them free of their craggy homes. We were supposed to wear gloves so our hands didn't get cut while digging and picking, but like my grandfather and uncle, I ignored my broken nails and bleeding fingers, wearing my scars like badges of honor.

Today, recreational shellfishing is tightly regulated, permitted only on certain days and designated beaches, keeping the bivalves healthy and plentiful. Each summer, we dutifully purchase our permits, which are checked by the Wellfleet Deputy Shellfish Constable, Chris, before our dinner is allowed off the beach.

My grandfather died a few years ago, so Uncle Curt has taken the helm. Leading our low-tide expeditions, he's shown my kids how to dig for clams without cracking the shell, how to spot elusive oysters in the wave-rippled water, how to find the best areas to rake for cherrystones. And he has taught them well: my 12-year-old daughter can spot an oyster a mile away and makes a seriously good clam linguini, while my teenage son spent part of his summer working for one of Wellfleet's largest commercial shellfishing farms. They both have the cuts and scrapes to show for it. My grandfather would be proud.

Beth Whitman



Bloody Fingers by Beth Whitman, reprinted with permission from Amagazine (amagazine.com.au)

Unique Ingredients

Nina and I first came to love Wellfleet when we visited it on our honeymoon. In due course we brought our two children for many summers. Then we bought a house here, and by and by found many friends in this area who shared our feelings for this place. Indeed, some come regularly, if only for a week or so, all the way from Europe.

In trying to define what makes Wellfleet so special for me, I find that mere words may not suffice. But a good response must surely have at least two ingredients.

One is Nature. For city dwellers, here for part of the summer, Nature reminds them that she is a powerful complement for a good life: here she reveals it in this unique mix of ocean, bay and ponds; secretive forests and enchanting birds; fish and frogs; oysters and berries, ready for the picking; even a congregation of small black turtles, each gazing in puzzlement at my kayak. . . all this within a few miles, with the sweet town at its center and the luminous sky above.

People, the other ingredient of specialness, are here in great variety: fishermen, some of whom may have descended from the whalers of long ago; famous artists, architects and writers, who "discovered" Wellfleet nearly a century ago; the splendid chamber musicians; and academics of all flavors, by the bushel.

All these are in quiet interdependence with the townfolk who keep the place working throughout the year: the post office staff, police and fire departments, doctors at the clinic, builders and landscapers, librarians, a variety of eateries, the market, the generous Council on Aging, and many more.

Now, after a lively excursion with family and friends, one repairs to privacy and self-renewal, to work on another chapter, or on an idea for the new sculpture. Ultimately, on returning home, the whole summer experience will have helped us to face again, with renewed strength and spirit, the stark realities we all are heir to.

Gerald Holton

My Wellfleet

When we return to Wellfleet every year in late June, the first thing I do before I unpack is to go to town and see if everything is still there as we left it the previous fall.

As I drive up Main Street, my heart beats a little faster when I see my beloved two steeples of the Congregational Church and the Methodist Church.

And then I enter *my* wonderful town: the Town Hall, across from it the new grocery store, a little expensive but worth it. I stop by and say hello to Rob at Hatch's fish market.

Then I walk across to the AIM thrift shop, where I usually bring some good things for them to sell, and where there is always something interesting for me to buy.

Our town has several lovely dress shops and you may be sure, though my closet is full, I will find yet one more irresistible dress or jacket to add before the summer is out.

I say hello to the librarians in our great library and make my way down to the pier. My heart again beats stronger; it is late afternoon and the water shimmers mysteriously. The fishermen's boats are in for the night.

I should go home and start unpacking, but how can I resist one more stop? I must see my beloved ponds. *My* pond is Slough. At this time of early evening, there is a kind of majestic silence over the ponds.

One more stop, please! I go on. At the end of the road, there is the roaring, merciless and mysterious ocean, which every year takes tons of sand away. Today, the ocean is tranquil and greets me silently. I am grateful – I will be back soon.

Time to go home and unpack – and stay for the summer.

Nina Holton

Memories from the Wellfleet Post Office

Last October I celebrated my 25th year with the Wellfleet post office. Many people think that I am a true Cape Codder but I'm not. I was born in Indiana. My father grew up in Wellfleet and purchased our house from his stepfather, and our family came on weekends whenever we lived close enough. And we always came back in the summers.

No one could have had a better childhood than mine during the '50s and '60s. My brothers, my sister and I ran freely all over town and everyone knew who we were. We played pirates on the old shipwreck down in Duck Creek; we attached a rope to a pole up on Cannon Hill and swung out over the trees; we walked to the ponds by ourselves, went swimming for the day, and walked home again. It was delightful.

I always knew I wanted to end up in Wellfleet so I moved here right after high school. Our house didn't have any heat, so I used an old potbelly coal stove and a little kerosene heater. When the nights were really cold, I'd go out for a walk. When I got back inside, the house felt much warmer. I spent a lot of time at the library when it was open in the evenings, but mostly I just didn't go far from the stove. It was kind of fun.

My first job was at the Army/Navy store in Orleans. I didn't have an automobile so I used to thumb to work, year-round. It was much safer in those days. Families would pick me up, even in the winter months when it was dark. And throughout that time, I was never late for work - amazing! Later on, I joined the Cape Cod Savings Bank and worked my way up from teller to loan department, to manager. Then I decided to go back to school. After two semesters at community college, a test came up for the post office. They offered me a position, and since I was beginning to run out of money, poor student that I was, I took it.

My first job was delivering mail in Provincetown - the most fun I've had in my whole life. After all those office years, here I was walking outside, cutting through people's yards to get over to the next street for a delivery. I got to know all the little byways and throughways. I met lots of wonderful people and got to see everyone's beautiful gardens. One time I was walking through someone's back yard and there were two nude sunbathers. We said hello, and on I went.

I'd worked in Provincetown for about eight years when I met a woman who was working as a clerk in the Wellfleet post office and lived in Provincetown. I worked in Provincetown and commuted from Wellfleet. It took a little time, but she persuaded me to switch jobs with her. I've been smiling ever since.

Ruth Bishop
(From an interview with Phyllis Bretholtz)



Photo by Phyllis Bretholtz

The Saga of Moby Dick's

The Barry family was living in Connecticut when we first visited Wellfleet in August of 1967. At the time I was six years old; my two brothers, David and Scott, were infants; and my sister, Tracey, was not yet born. Upon arriving in Wellfleet, we stopped at Al's Hamburgers.

This little roadside burger stand was started in the mid-1960s. Al Hendrickson ran the restaurant while his wife, Ginny, operated their gift/antique shop, The Trading Post, next door. Through the years my family would frequent Al's and my mother became good friends with Ginny. In the late 70s, Al had a stroke and passed away. For the next few years, Ginny ran the shop and the restaurant.

Fast forward a few years to the spring of 1982: I was attending school in England for the semester. My family decided to spend Easter break in Wellfleet. It was during this trip that my parents noticed a "For Sale" sign at Al's. Soon after, my parents literally bumped into Ginny while shopping at Lema's market. Ginny explained that running both businesses was too much for her so she was selling the restaurant. This conversation got my parents thinking: "Hmmm, we have four children all in need of summer jobs."

At this point in my life, most of my work experience in high school and college had been at various restaurants. When I was 16, my first restaurant job was a fry-cook position at The Bayside Lobster Hutt, which is currently Mac's Shack. This restaurant was well managed, extremely busy, and a fantastic experience for me. With my bit of restaurant experience, my parents, Dick and Patricia, decided to lease Al's for the summer of 1982.

I came home from school in England and went right into running a hamburger stand. The following winter my family purchased Al's. We changed the name to Moby Dick's and opened for our first season in 1983. Since then we have strived to make Moby's a fun place where families and friends can gather and enjoy our great Cape Cod seafood.

But the story continues . . . sadly, Ginny passed away in 1997. We purchased "The Trading Post" property and opened up our retail store, Moby's Cargo, in 2003. Two years later, the Barry family purchased Aesop's Tables and that became Winslow's Tavern. I will let my sister tell that tale!

Wow, it has been an amazing trip! It is hard to believe that this will be our 31st season at Moby Dick's - a lot of work, but a lot of fun. As I walk my dogs at Cahoon Hollow to watch the sunrise or at Duck Harbor to see the sunset, I often think to myself how fortunate I am to live and work in such a special place. It crosses my mind that many people work 50 weeks a year so that they can spend two weeks in Wellfleet. I get to be here for all of the 52 weeks!

Todd Barry



Photo by Beth Whitman, reprinted with permission from Amagazine (amagazine.com.au)

The Aura of Wellfleet

In 1992 I was traveling the United States as a short-term contract nurse. It was a way to work, live and travel at the same time. While on an assignment in the New York City area, someone suggested I visit Cape Cod. Being born and bred in Kansas, I had very little knowledge about the aura of the Cape. So off I went.

Of course, a trip to the Cape means driving out to the end. After I got off the boat from a whale watch, I asked a woman, whom later I found out to be Penny Pierce, about a good place to eat. She recommended that I stop at Moby Dick's for a great treat – the New England clambake. Since locals know where to go, I took her advice.

While “chowing down” on my clambake, a gentleman came up to check on my dinner and to make sure I was a happy customer. He introduced himself as Todd Barry, whose family owned the restaurant. We started talking about my travel experiences in the U.S. He spoke of his travel destinations in Europe. The conversation continued for a while. Then I finished my clambake, got a cup of coffee and a free Moby Dick's tee shirt and was on my way back to New York.

Long story short . . . Todd and I started dating and then were married in 1995. I joked to my friends that I was trading in the stethoscope for a spatula. The fact that we were looking over Wellfleet Harbor as we said our vows sealed the deal for a successful marriage. Ever since then, Todd and I have been a team at Moby Dick's.

During the past 17 years, I have come to love the Cape and especially Wellfleet. Where else can you see sunrise and sunset over a horizon? I love that I can drive down Main Street, roll down my window and say “Hi!” to someone I know. I treasure the fact that the post office and the dump are places not only to do business, but also to socialize with the folks in town. Moby Dick's participates in the July 4th parade – what fun! Where else can you dance, throw a few beads and wave to your friends? It is a wonderful small-town celebration. The sea of red, white and blue is truly festive.

What really amazes me is that for as long as I've lived here, I always find little places I have never explored, paths I've never been down. I remark to Todd that I could probably get lost in Wellfleet more easily than in New York City. I would say that I have realized the “aura” of Wellfleet.

Mignon Muirhead Barry

Our Beloved Town

For us, Wellfleet means lobsters, the ocean, the ponds, family and fun. I cherish this photo of my husband and son (then age 16 months, now age 30) walking down Main Street. We are so happy to be homeowners in Wellfleet and glad to share our beloved town with family and friends.

Sara Mills-Cohen



Main Street by Sara Mills-Cohen

Perfect!

When my brother, sister, and I were children, summers in Wellfleet meant buying great penny candy, eating at a restaurant we called "The Library," and spending hours in the bookstore attached to that restaurant – a store like nothing I'd ever seen.

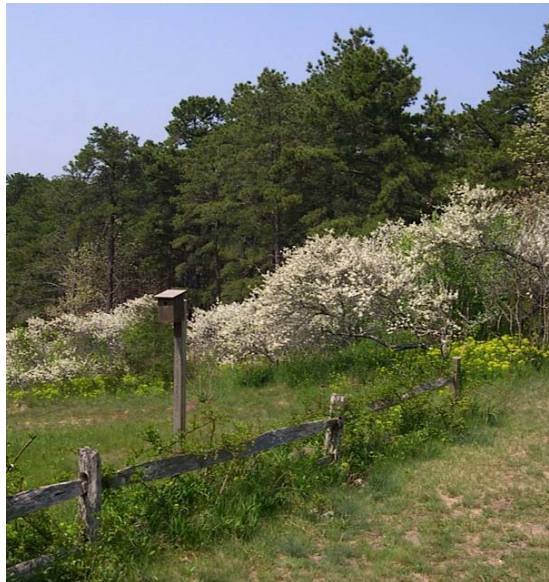
The man who ran the bookstore was wonderfully eccentric and, to us kids, magical. When that great man died we felt like we'd lost a family member. I still have some of the most unusual books from that store and I know the hours spent there contributed to my love of reading.

Over the years, my husband and I continued to take family vacations on the Cape. It was heart-warming to see our children love Wellfleet the way we did – racing around inside of the Town Hall (we loved that there was a bathroom there) eating at the Lobster Hutt, and stopping at Dairy Queen on our way back up to Corn Hill.

Today, Wellfleet feels the same to me as it did when I was young. But now I can appreciate the wonderful art galleries and eateries I wasn't too interested in back then.

"Perfect!" is what comes to mind when I think of Wellfleet. After 50 years, it continues to be part of memories I treasure and memories yet to be made: In 2013, I will be celebrating my 60th birthday with my husband up at Corn Hill in Truro.

Kathy Grentzenberg



Beach Plum in Flower by Otile McManus

A Family Haven

The ocean, the bay and the ponds make Wellfleet special. The people and the history make Wellfleet unique. We came to Wellfleet years ago as guests of Joan and Bill Broadbent, who, along with the Cole families, welcomed us to the community. Our home on Pine Ave. has been a family haven for Thanksgivings and Christmases, with the Fourth of July Parade a favorite.

Our grandchildren love the spring and summer vacations with camp at the Audubon nature center; our daughters enjoy gathering with friends; and the entire family loves the library, a center of learning and fun. I read everything I can about Wellfleet history and enjoyed "Eva and Henry, A Cape Cod Marriage."

My husband Fred and I try to spend part of every month in Wellfleet. His favorite time is the off-season, when things are peaceful and quiet. Rich Bell's shop is a treasure for restoring and maintaining his Model A autos. We have enjoyed the suppers at the South Wellfleet Schoolhouse and hope everyone will support its restoration.

Wishing peace and friendship for the community!

Lea Turner

Wellfleet's First Habitat House

The occupants of Cape Cod's first Habitat house talk about their early days in Wellfleet.

Lori: In 1985, Bob and I moved from Provincetown and rented a house in Wellfleet. We knew Wellfleet was a family-oriented town, had a great elementary school and would be a good place to raise children.

Bob: We weren't making much money at the time so we applied for a Habitat house – the first Habitat house on Cape Cod. The people running Habitat at that time were the best bunch of guys you would ever want to meet. They didn't have any volunteers, just a president and a treasurer. The Town donated the land and Habitat came up with the lumber. Anybody could help build the house, but nobody was chosen to live in it until construction was done. But we were determined to have it.

Lori: While we were working on the house, our rental place was sold and the new owners wanted to move in. So, with our kids aged five and seven, we gave it up. The Paine's, kind people that they are, offered us a campsite for the summer and we lived in a tent. There were those first two days of seeing my daughters get filthy, and then I got over it.

The Habitat model was all over the world, but figuring out how to make it work in Wellfleet was a wonderful experiment. Here was this group of people willing to work together to build a house for a family in need of a home: some were from Wellfleet, some from Eastham, the minister from Brewster and one other couple. They were all willing to be a part of it.

Bob would work his day job until five or six, and then go over to the building site at night. He had the lights from his big old van pointing at the house, working until 1am. Then he'd go crash in the tent and get up at 6am for work. Bob did that day after day, not even knowing if the house was going to be ours.

Bob: We were chosen out of seven families, through meetings and interviews that included our children. As a matter of fact, we moved into the new house the day before school started. It was a little shack, but it was our home and we were glad to get it. At first, we didn't have appliances; no toilet; but we didn't care. Now our house looks very different – not fancy, but nice.

Lori: The original piece of land was a funny shape, about 9/10 acre, going uphill behind our house. Our neighbors wanted to build a Habitat house, but because of the septic and the size of their family, they needed 15 more feet. Habitat asked us and we said, 'Of course, if someone needs a home, they can have 15 feet of our land.' That was the spirit back then.

Lori and Bob Harding (Interview and photo by Phyllis Bretholtz)



Photo by Phyllis Bretholtz

How Shall We Count The Ways That We Love Wellfleet?

Martha's first visit in 1959 as a guest of Jane Currier at the house on the hill off Chequessett Neck Road. The ocean and bay beaches, sailing, and the variety of fresh food and shellfish.

Digging and getting oysters from Jim O'Connell, going out with him on his grant; the Oyster Fest.

The extraordinary and much used Wellfleet Public Library, and more recently, Preservation Hall.

Elliot on his dirt bike, riding from bay to ocean with the western sun behind, keeping the bike's shadow parallel before the bike, finding pathways and landforms elusive to others.

Peter McMahon for his commitment to preserving the Cape's mid-century modern houses, giving us and others the privilege of visiting them—The Hatch Cottage, the restored Kugel/Gips House, the Breuer House and many more. We designed our own house, have enjoyed it springs, summers and falls since 1976, and are pleased that it was counted among the Modern Houses on the Modern House Tour, 2011.

Most of all, we love being with our multigenerational families, those who stay with us in the summer and those who stayed with us and then rented their own houses in Wellfleet.

Finally, we both love to draw and paint in Wellfleet, with its endless views of the harbor, the beaches, the landscape and Main Street.

Martha L. Rothman FAIA and Elliot Paul Rothman, AIA



Audubon Wellfleet watercolor by Elliot Rothman

Nice Place, Great People

I have been living in Wellfleet since 1982. I graduated from tech school and saw there was an opening at the Transfer Station, with benefits. I began as a recycler and stayed on until I could get a full-time job. Now I'm full-time.

There's been a lot of change here – from a true dump to a nice place full of great people.

Winters are busier now than when I started here. In off-season we sell transfer stickers for residents who don't care about beach stickers. Between September and February, we sold 95 transfer stickers.

Our team has three members: Becky, Warren and me. In summer, we stay open seven days a week. Now there's talk of maybe being open only five days a week. But we're not the ones who'll be making that decision. It will be the higher up's – the Town Selectmen, Board of Health and all that. But if we go to a "pay as you throw" system, the town will have to hire one more person.

I like a lot of things about Wellfleet: it's pretty, nice beaches, the harbor, and good places to eat in the summer. Oysterfest has been going on about ten years, and the Transfer Station is the safest place to be then. People get crazy.

By September, I've had enough of the crowds and want some peace and quiet again. I regroup in winter – watch football games, stay at home, go to bed early, wake up and start over again the next day.

Ryan Williams

(From an interview with Phyllis Bretholtz)



Photo by Phyllis Bretholtz

A Mecca of Modernism

Starting in the late 1930s, the Outer Cape attracted some of the prime movers of modern architecture, including architects Marcel Breuer, Serge Chermayeff, Olav Hammarstrom, and engineer Paul Weidlinger, who built houses for themselves, their friends and clients. Walter Gropius, Xanti Schawinski, Konrad Wachsmann, Constantino Nivola, the Saarinen family and Florence and Hans Knoll all either rented summer cottages or were frequent houseguests in Wellfleet. The vibrant community also included artists Gyorgy Kepes and Saul Steinberg, as well as numerous writers, academics and their students.

This group of international refugees and their friends made a home for themselves in the secluded pine-woods of Wellfleet, Truro and Provincetown; many are even buried here. This collection of creative people believed in the power of design to improve the human condition and to integrate man with nature. They applied those principles equally to the great projects they undertook in the world beyond Cape Cod and to their own cottages, which were sometimes made with salvaged material, Homasote and driftwood.

The Cape Cod Modern House Trust (CCMHT) was founded in 2007 as a grassroots organization with the mission of preventing the demolition of a group of significant modern houses owned by the National Park Service (NPS) on outer Cape Cod, and of renovating and repurposing these structures as places for creativity and scholarship, as well as locating and archiving all available related material. The more than ninety modern houses in the area represent a little-known cultural asset. CCMHT has leased and restored (or are restoring) three of

these abandoned, federally owned houses (Charles Zehnder's Kugel/Gips house (1970); Jack Hall's Hatch Cottage (1961); and the Weidlinger House (1953), and has begun using them as bases for an off-season artist/scholar residency program. During peak season the houses are rented out, making the project economically self-sustaining.

Central to our project is the idea that buildings and landscapes bear cultural memories and ideologies. Our goal is to extend the usefulness of these buildings in their extraordinary landscapes; to preserve the tradition of free-thinking problem-solvers; and to nurture new creativity and address contemporary issues of community, sustainability and built form.

Peter McMahon



Hatch House by Peter McMahon

Dog Gone Dunes

In a bygone era, back before erosion became a top consideration, people – and even dogs – were allowed to walk on the dunes above Duck Harbor. The conservation rules, worthy as they are, also come with the unintended consequence of rendering only to memory the pleasure of climbing to the rise above the bay and scanning the sweep of the Cape, past Truro and around to Provincetown.

Wally, my big red hybrid Golden Retriever/Irish Setter, was my faithful companion on those walks. We'd visit Wellfleet for the gray days of January. It was cold and blustery but, when we walked together along the crest of the dunes, we were on our own, as could never be during the High Season – alone on the dunes, above the endless empty beach.

For those walks, I bundled up in a bulbous parka, the same gray as the sky, flannel-lined khakis over long johns, ski gloves, thick wool socks, boots and a balaclava. Wally wore his fur coat. When the wind blew, as it always did, my eyes watered and Wally's squeezed shut. I'd walk into the wind, leaning against it, Wally following, squinting, no doubt wondering what the great appeal was to be out there in lousy weather in the dead of winter, alone, with no people around for him to befriend.

Signs and fencing now funnel visitors to Duck Harbor along authorized paths from the parking lot to the beach. The dunes, properly protected from humans and canines, stand empty, fetching but forbidden. From below, it's okay: memories are better to savor than one more look from the crest, out past the beach and over the bay. It's best to let a bygone era be bygone. And it's a shorter walk back to the warmth of the car.

Stu Seidel



Stu Seidel and Wally

Hometown Elsewhere

My father's family was from Worcester, MA and vacationed often in Wellfleet. I recall visiting Wellfleet with my family, including my grandfather, Luman Marsh, when I was 8 years old. "We came by train," my grandfather said, pointing out where the train had come in.

Our family was from Washington, D.C., where most of our neighbors had a hometown elsewhere. We did not. When I saw how happy Grandad was when we were in Wellfleet, and realized he had come here first at age 4, I felt our extended family had roots in this place and claimed it as my "hometown elsewhere."

My grandfather's sister and her husband, Mabel and Chester Redding, had honeymooned in Truro. They were close friends of Anne Wells Munger, an artist from Worcester, and her husband, who owned a home on Old County Road in South Wellfleet. As a child and teenager, Mabel had posed for Anne. During the Munger's elder years, they made an agreement with Chester and Mabel that the house would be theirs after their passing. So the Reddings lived in that house when I was a child.

On one of our visits, I recall going down into the hurricane basement, descending a wooden ladder into a small, stone-lined, circular room entered by a trapdoor in the floor of the pantry. In this hurricane shelter was a safe.

It was right there that the Civil War became real to me, when Aunt Mabel took from the safe a little piece of wood wrapped with a note and tied with a narrow light blue ribbon. Opening it carefully and spreading it, she showed me what it said: "Dear Mama, This is a piece of wood from the tree under which Lee surrendered to Grant."

Across Old County Road lived a widow who invited my mother, sister, and me to come over and see the special furniture her husband had given her as a wedding present: chairs and a small settee, each made from steer horns and upholstered in dark red velvet. I remembered this occasion only a few years ago when I happened to read an account of a ship being grounded along the Wellfleet shore. On board was a cargo of steer horns, which were used at that time as material for buttons.

Years later, my husband and I bought the woodlot that belonged to Mabel and Chester Redding and had the shell of a house put up, for us to finish and retire to. Unfortunately, my husband did not live to see this dream fulfilled. But Wellfleet is still a very special place for our family. That house, though unfinished yet, has been our home elsewhere, where family and friends have enjoyed the quiet of the woods, the fun of swimming, boating and fishing, the wonders found in walks through nature trails and beaches, and the many other offerings of our precious place on the Cape.

Jean A. Marsh Adams



Preservation Hall by Phyllis Bretholtz

The Magic of Wellfleet

For the last several years, I have been fortunate enough to spend my summers in Wellfleet. I am madly in love with this town!

Wellfleet is a little gem that renews my spirit and refreshes my soul. It is always in my heart, always in my thoughts. As an artist, it is a constant source of colorful inspiration...never-ending!

Glorious with its magnificent towering dunes and oceanside beaches, nestled between the calm waters of the bayside and the inviting pristine kettle ponds, I love it all!

However, it is Wellfleet's brilliant sunsets that settle quietly over its bayside that I render on canvas. This sense of peace and tranquility are the elements I try to capture and convey to my viewers.

Although my husband and I have travelled to many places, it is the magic of Wellfleet that I most embrace.

Donna Baldassari



Mayo Beach by Donna Baldassari

The Deer

My mother died the previous winter. She had lived in western Connecticut on a piece of land she shared with a small herd of deer, and we always associated her with those graceful creatures.

The next fall we looked at houses to buy. We had rented in Wellfleet for 20 years, for a couple of weeks each summer. We had seen foxes, raccoons, ocean sunfish, an eagle, hawks, and leatherback turtles, but we had never seen a deer.

Finally, we found a house that seemed like it might be the one. As we stood on the deck mulling it over, a large deer with a good-sized rack of antlers appeared in the dirt road by the house. It stared at us, calm and unafraid. Diane whispered to me. "David, it's your mother. She's telling us to buy this house." The deer strolled off into the woods, confident and upright. While we might buy the house, the land would continue to be his, as it always had been.

And we did buy the house. And we have never seen another deer.

Every time we are in Wellfleet, at the house, we remind ourselves how lucky we are, and we think of the deer.

David Koven & Diane Gordon

A Long Trip from London

We first came to the Cape in the mid-1980s, swapping our house in London for a house in Wellfleet. Our first exchange was with Jean and Phil Woodes. Jean prepared a memorable supper of baked cod for us when we arrived. These visits were so successful that in 1998 we found a Wellfleet house of our own.

Since then, we have come to Wellfleet three times a year: in May, August and October. It's a long trip from London, but if we leave on a morning flight we get to Wellfleet in time for supper.

When we arrive, we unpack the car and head straight for the Bookstore bar. There I get my first taste of Wellfleet - a dry Tanqueray martini. It's worth travelling 3,500 miles just for that first sip.

We love so many things about the outer Cape: swimming across Long Pond at seven in the morning to see if the kingfisher is there; the walk over Cannon Hill and around the far side of the harbour; baked stuffed oysters (Bob Costa's recipe from *The Joy of Shucking* recipe book); the post office; the fabulous new Wellfleet Preservation Hall; the OysterFest (especially when the sun is shining); the Wellfleet Public Library; our friends in town and our neighbours on Gross Hill Road; the Audubon; kayaking up the Pamet; walking on Great Island; everything Mac; the birds that visit our feeders; the Nice Cream Shoppe; the late afternoon light in October; the drive to P-town; sailing the sunfish across the harbour and landing on Great Island for a picnic; and many many other things.

As I write this, I am sitting in London, where it has been snowing this week. Although it's January, I'm already thinking about the dry martini. Only 14 weeks to wait.

Fred Kavalier

This is Where I Belong

I had been to Wellfleet a few times before I moved to Lieutenant's Island. My first winter was fantastic. I think of it as beautiful desolation. It's amazing to watch the change over the marsh. It's nice making left-hand turns. There are so many places to hide, to get away from everything and get in tune with what's around you. I'm never leaving. I'm never going on the other side of the canal again.

In Wellfleet, you meet so many different types. Last night, I met a guy from France. I've met Serbians, a guy from Macedonia, people from everywhere. It's amazing to get in touch with the world through this little teeny tiny place where everyone congregates.

I enjoy the quiet. I enjoy watching nature from my back yard on Lieutenant's Island. I love the white cedar swamp. I think there's an energy there that's incredible. The snowstorm I experienced at Marconi this winter was euphoric. I came across a couple sitting on a bench. They told me they'd had their wedding there.

The people in Wellfleet are very progressive. I haven't encountered any racism. I haven't encountered ignorance. The majority of inhabitants are just happy and accepting of others.

My first night here, I went to the bridge at Lieutenant's Island. The stars were absolutely incredible. The wind was whipping through, coming over the marsh – cleansing the spirit. It was one of the most intense experiences I've ever had. "This is where I belong," I thought, "and this is going to be a good thing."

You could see so low on the horizon – it was a full 360-degree view. When I meet people from around the world and take them down there, they say, "Wow there's Pleiades coming up!" It's like giving them a piece of me, a piece of the sky to take home with them.

Julie Lewis

(From an interview with Jerry Reilly)



Sunset, Harbor Stage by Robert Kropf

Walks, Woods and Water

The "W" in Wellfleet stands for walks, woods, and water. For many more decades than I should tell, I have been a privileged summer weekend guest of a friend who lives in woods on a hill.

The best thing to do when visiting her is to walk together in the woods along deeply cut sandy routes that are still a mystery to me, but that she knows by girlhood heart. The most ambitious walk is from the house on the hill to an ocean beach, possible even now we are older because Wellfleet is the narrow land. We plunge directly into the woods, listen for birds, watch for turtles, examine from a discreet distance architecturally significant houses, look for patches of springy hog cranberry, avoid the poison ivy, and check the progress of wildflowers.



Box Turtles by Curt Smith

In not very much time, you get past the small waters, through the woods and over the dune to the ocean beach, where you set up your umbrella and chair and settle into your book. The sun warms and cheers, the waves beckon but are always much colder than reasonable, and the passing scene lures you to close your novel and search the beach for the perfect rock, bit of driftwood, or shell.

After a while it's time to go home – and then the fine opportunity arises of the after-beach-sunscreen-salt-and-sand-removing shower. Around the corner of the house under more sighing pines is an enclosure where woods and heated water meet bodies in secluded bathing bliss. Few things can lure the summer guest away from such luxury.

This century a son has bought an old cottage high on a dune in another part of Wellfleet. Here, the main attraction is the marsh that fills up at high tide and cuts off the road. In that event, it is necessary to wait for the tide to turn and then wade and run to the tiny beach and jump into the stream coming out of the marsh. That's the stream whose black muds, banks and tributaries we explore by kayak, always fearing to go far lest we be trapped in space too narrow and forced to back-paddle to return.

At tide turn in summer, that stream has spent the afternoon in the sun and is deliciously warm as it pours back to its ocean. You float in it as a bobble on a brook, paddling your hands a little to keep clear of that black mud, mostly looking up into the perfect blue sky, bumping your bottom on sandy bits as the tide lowers. Then you get out and hurry back to the putting-in place for another ride.

There is time for six or eight of these watery rides before the marsh is empty and the fun is over. It is important that you feel solitary, even though your grandchildren may be aghast to see such aged frolicking; but some few other sybarites on that little beach are floating too, and all is well in ageless wonderful Wellfleet.

Elizabeth Philipps

A Wild Life in Wellfleet

My family is privileged to spend six months of each year in Wellfleet, surrounded by beautiful birdsong and fragrant woods of pine and oak. When we are there, my days are spent at my Lookout - a spacious deck high above a long stretch of sand, moss, and hog cranberry that slopes down a steep hill toward the marsh. It is my job to protect this territory, which is often violated by squirrels, crows, foxes and wild turkeys. Routing them from the property is a matter of privacy and pride. For a Welsh corgi, Wellfleet provides endless opportunities to practice the art of herding.

One hot summer morning, while my owner was chopping vegetables in the kitchen, I fell into a frenzy of barking. Over the years, I have trained the family to tolerate a robust canine decibel level, but this was unlike anything she had ever heard. Dropping her knife, she stumbled out to the deck. Why was I rooted to the spot, frantic and frothing? Why hadn't I already launched myself from my perch and disappeared in hot pursuit of some creature?

Eleven steps lead from the deck to the ground below. At the foot of those steps stood two coyotes, staring up at my owner and me, staring with their cool coyote eyes. My owner's response was even louder than mine: "GIT OUTTA HERE! SHOO! SCRAM!" She stamped her bare feet and clapped vigorously. This brave display inspired me to act.

Down the hill I raced, determined to banish the invaders. Instead, a strange game developed. While my owner shrieked for me to come back, the coyotes and I found ourselves racing in circles around the hillside. This game lasted for several minutes until all parties were exhausted and the coyotes cut out into the marsh. I believe they were quite young, and at no time did I feel threatened.

Since then, I often persuade my family to sit with me at the top of the deck steps. We gaze into the distance and raise our voices in beautiful coyote "Owoo-owoo-owoos." It is deeply satisfying and confirms my belief that Wellfleet is the most perfect place on the planet.

Tasha Van Dorn



Photo by Betsy Van Dorn

Who Needs TV?

In the 1940s, my parents and I spent summers in Wellfleet with my great aunt, Elizabeth Freeman. Since we lived in the city, Wellfleet was a magical change. Daily chores for my great aunt were treats for me – feeding the chickens, picking vegetables, going to town for the mail. My dad showed my sisters and me how to catch minnows in the sluice between Gull and Higgins ponds so we could fish for sunnies and pickerel. And we all learned to read tidal charts so that saltwater fishing trips could be scheduled. There was no TV.

In the 1970s, I would drive my two young children from Virginia to Wellfleet to spend six weeks with my parents, Joan & Chester Nimitz, who had built a house up the hill from Elizabeth Freeman. The visit was the highlight of my children's summer: they could play with their cousins and learn all sorts of new activities from their grandparents, aunts, and uncles. The question "What can I do now?" was rarely heard.

The children learned how to dig worms, put them on a hook, and catch fish in Higgins or Herring ponds with their uncle, Curt Smith. As a twelve-year-old, my son learned the nuances of a riding mower from his grandfather, and for several summers he thought mowing was a lucky reward, not a chore! Working in the vegetable garden was a fascinating experience, and the children's uncles were wise role models, showing them how to weed, pick vegetables, and even sort onions according to size.

Now the third generation of my family is experiencing the same Wellfleet delights. My daughter and her children know from their great uncle how to tend a vegetable garden and where to find clams. My teenage grandson has worked summer jobs for an oysterman and for a fruit and vegetable store. Another granddaughter visits briefly each summer and has discovered that swimming in Gull Pond is much more fun than a city pool!

TV – who has time for it when Wellfleet still offers so many things to do?

Frances Zehmer



1970's mower by Fran Zehmer

Exciting and Regenerative

Approximately 45 years ago, we came to Wellfleet at the suggestion of very close friends. We were familiar with other seaside vacation spots and didn't expect a great difference. We loved the sea, sand and sun and wanted something special for our three children.

We immediately fell in love with Wellfleet and found it to be an extraordinary place. It became the summer destination for everyone in the family and is now a home away from home for all of us as our lives have taken divergent paths.

Initially we enjoyed renting different houses each summer but began to want our own place. In 1978 we converted a barn into our dream house. Wellfleet continues to be very special for everyone in the family, including the third generation. It is exciting and regenerative to come here each summer for the place and the people.

We celebrate Wellfleet's 250th anniversary with great pleasure and enthusiasm!

Georgie and Mac Gatch

The Arbutus Cottage

One's own home is always a special place, but one's own home in Wellfleet is special on steroids. Such is our Arbutus Cottage. Built about 1870 by my great-great-grandparents, George and Ruth Nickerson, it originally stood among many other diminutive carpenter Gothic cottages in the Yarmouth Methodist Campground. My great-grandparents moved it, possibly by barge across the bay, to a lot they owned directly across Baker Avenue from their Holbrook Avenue winter home. This convenient arrangement enabled them to travel only about 75 feet to their airy and cool summer cottage. There it has stood, withstanding many hurricanes, a loyal and constant gathering place for five more generations.

It's a summer place, and so much growing up happens in the summer: you go to school in the winter but discover life in the summer, especially in Wellfleet. My first memory of the Arbutus from my second summer there, age about 16 months, is lying in a world of whiteness in a bassinet in the tower room, where my nursemaid sang to me, not the usual soporific lullaby, but about a peanut sitting on the railroad tracks, along came the train and oops, peanut butter!

My brother and I made patty cakes in the sand in Baker Lane with Mariah Jordan, who hadn't changed her clothes in 50 years. We ran up to see the trains pass under the Holbrook Avenue bridge and dropped stones in the empty coal cars to make a fantastic clatter. To earn candy money, we cobbled together a flower stand on the sidewalk to sell leaves from our horse chestnut tree, wild beach peas and Bouncing Betts, surreptitiously harvested from neighbors' yards. We learned to sail at the Chequessett Club and subsisted on a diet of Nehi, Fudgsicles and frozen Charleston Chews; dug up artifacts from the old lighthouse on Billingsgate and made forbidden forays to collect bombs from the deck of the target ship.

As we grew, like quahogs we expanded and restored our shell, learning as we went along the art of construction. Over the years we made yards and yards of lattice, replaced the support pilings under the house and jig-sawed replicas of the porch balustrades and roof gingerbread tracery; built a new kitchen from the ground up and completed a fully modern bathroom renovation.

Come summer, we'll be back to the Arbutus to swim at the sluiceway, ride the waves at Newcomb Hollow, savor lobster and littlenecks and enjoy a tall cool one on the porch as the Fourth of July parade staggers by.

David Arms



Arbutus Cottage by David Arms

Jewelry Beach

Our family calls this beach "jewelry beach" as there are the best shells there for making necklaces. It's down from the Great Island parking lot and we have been going there at low tide for many years. I can sit forever on the sandbars watching my kids, the birds, the crabs.

My daughter, Halley Seed, wrote a haiku about this beach when she was about nine:

Summer in cape cod
Can't go wrong with the beach,
Wonderful summer!

Alex Piper



Photo by Alex Piper

Billingsgate Chronicles

I have always disliked the fall: the end of something, the end of the season. Pull the boat. Shutter the cabin. But now, in my mid-sixties, I dislike it less. It's partly "appreciate every day," and "learn to enjoy new projects," but mostly I try not to think about the coming winter of our lives.

The time for running the boat out to Stellwagen Bank is past. Peaked Hill Bar (pronounced "peak-id" with an emphasis on the "id"), where we had the best whale show of our lives, means going around Race Point, which even in midsummer can be an adventure. Going "around the Point" is literally getting out of our comfort zone. We leave cozy Wellfleet Harbor, head around Great Island and out across Cape Cod Bay for about an hour at 20 knots. The bay can be deceptively tranquil. But at the "Race" - when the wind has been blowing out of the north for a few days, and the seas build, and an outgoing tide makes the swells crest - we have put on our life jackets and called the Coast Guard in Provincetown to let them know our position in case we get into real trouble. Other days it can be indescribably beautiful, sunny and lake-calm.

But beyond the Point is where we are headed: it is like the Serengeti out there, with an abundance of life that is hard to imagine. We regularly see whales, dolphin, ocean sunfish, sea turtles, seals, sharks, sea birds, bluefish, stripers, and acres of baitfish. At times, all around us, everything is feeding on the bait - birds diving, whales working together, surfacing with mouths wide open, capturing hundreds of pounds of sand eels or spearing. Every so often, mixed in with the rest, tuna burst to the surface.

This is what we go there for - bluefin tuna. Not the 700-pound fabulously powerful giants, but the fast and ephemeral smaller "footballs." Ted and I have been looking for them since before we had children, some 30 years ago. Sometimes we see them on the surface, moving like a frothy wave 20-50 yards across. Every few years, we get close enough to cast to them, and a few times we have had them chase our artificial lures right to the boat.

Imagine the adrenalin! But maybe - a new thought just this year - maybe we shouldn't get one. Maybe it is too much adrenalin for 60-something's, trying to land 50-100 pounds of pure power. But the truth is, landing a bluefin would be the end of our years of setting out with the endless optimism of success for this day. Landing even one fish might be a reason not to go out again, maybe not this year, but next year or the one after that. If we don't feel up to it, we might say "We got our fish last year, that's good enough." Or "Let's sleep in today," not "I'll meet you at the boat just before sunup." It's an early morning thing, you see, with the promise of a day on the water looking for signs of fish - the beginning of something that might be great.

Al Kraft



Seagull Sunset by Christopher Hann

Love and Connection

My wife Mary and I started vacationing here when we were dating, and we never missed a year since. We raised our two boys in New Hope PA and had a house at the Jersey shore in Ocean City. But every summer we would leave Ocean City and spend a month in Wellfleet at the Packet Port cottages on Mayo Beach.

When our kids went off to college, we sold our place at the Jersey shore and bought a great home in Wellfleet. Today, we spend half the year in Wellfleet and are loving it. Our kids and their friends spend weeks each summer enjoying everything Wellfleet has to offer.

Our older son got married here September of 2011, and when you have 125 people for a bonfire at Newcomb Hollow Beach, you know it's a party that everyone will remember. We are sure that when our children have kids of their own, we will continue the Wellfleet tradition for years to come.

Many of the full-time Wellfleet residents don't understand the love and connection that summer residents and visitors have for Wellfleet. My hope for the future is that all residents and visitors learn to work together to continue to keep Wellfleet the unbelievably special and unique place it is.

Bob Goldman



Fog on Duck Creek Marsh by Karen Holtkamp

Five Years and Counting

My wife Meg and I are enjoying our fifth year in Wellfleet, having bought our Great Pastures home in January '09. We sought out Wellfleet because of the surprising richness and variety of its natural resources, all well removed from the congestion of the mid- and upper cape. I include the coyotes, foxes, wild turkeys and great horned owls screeching in the night among nature's wonders in Wellfleet.

We continue to be struck at how "regular" the Wellfleet folks seem to be, regardless of who they were or are in their careers. It may be one of the most understated communities in the country, and that suits us just fine. On the other hand, we've found most people we've met to be quite friendly and easy to know, traits not normally associated with New Englanders.

Wellfleet and its people have made it really easy to feel at home in our new community. We look forward to many years of great summer weather, incomparable beaches, fine food, the great library, tennis at Mayo beach, sailing around the harbor, and making many more new friends. As well, finding more ways to contribute our time and energy back to Wellfleet. Currently, we help out every week with the Mustard Seed Kitchen programs for people who occasionally need good, home-cooked meals.

Dana Houghton

Safe Harbor

What makes Wellfleet *Wellfleet*? We each have our own answers, many of which revolve around family, friends and activities in this special place. Like many in this town, I picked my ancestors well! It seemed more obvious as a child when my parents and grandparents referred to so many people as "Cousin, Aunt and Uncle So-and-So." There were fewer people and my range of activities was more local. Over the years, as I have met people outside the family, it seems that they, too have a long and appreciated history here. And we are fortunate to have so many newcomers who have helped make Wellfleet better and started to create and care for their own family place. And then there are those who have made an impact on places all over the world and still want to come here to relax in privacy. They enjoy the classic summer activities and have discovered the benefits of the off-season. I tell people that I love each season here!

When I was in my mid-thirties, I had an extended time at MIT's Sloan School, where one session was devoted to identifying your "safe harbor" - that place where you are most yourself and to which you always want to return. In my later life, while I was on the Wellfleet Planning Board, that professor, Dr. Ed Nevis, came in with a plan to establish a permanent place for the Gestalt Center. It was great reunion: here was another who made Wellfleet his own safe harbor.

Although Wellfleet was always my real home, we lived elsewhere for Dad's work and subsequently for mine. After I retired and moved back, I spent ten years on the Planning Board and gained a much greater appreciation for the townsfolk and land. There are so many special corners in town! One of my lasting memories and, I hope, legacies, has been with the Wellfleet Conservation Trust. It takes effort to preserve this special place, and I hope future generations will have their own memories of enjoying Wellfleet's open spaces

The more recent picture below is of two of my grandchildren as we enjoyed a walk on some conservation land near Drummer Cove. There are still families, friends, activities, histories and open spaces for these kids!

Dennis (Denny) O'Connell



June 1951 - Cousins: Stuart Nickerson, Denny O'Connell, Robin Ryder, Bob Page, Sue (Ryder) Hamar and Ginie Page



April 2011 - Siblings: Juniper & Dusty O'Campbell

Fishing in Wellfleet Bay

Two members of a family that has fished in Wellfleet for generations share memories of their father-in-law, Chester Nimitz Jr.

Walter: Chester was an enthusiastic and skilled boatman and a fisherman *par excellence*. His 28-foot Bertram, *Goldenrod*, was beautifully suited to navigating the varying depths, shoals, and channels in Wellfleet Bay and speeding from one location to another.

Curt: Leaving the slip at the agreed-upon hour (Chester was known to leave at the *exact* time with no exceptions), we would slowly exit the marina, pass the breakwater, and then push the throttles forward, leaving a wide wake behind us. Our usual destination was Middle Meadows.

Walter: It was always a unique thrill to sight a school of fish, usually blues, roiling the surface of the water at a distant spot, then racing there to cast into those waters before the perpetrators changed their minds and disappeared from view.

Curt: Once we got close, the boat made wider and wider circles, with one of us casting from the bow, another casting from the stern, and Chester at the helm supervising from the bridge. When one of us yelled "Strike!" he'd stop. The goal was always to get three blues on our lines at once before he'd move on. If we had no strikes after ten minutes, Chester would scan the skies for diving terns. Finding them meant we had to instantly reel in our lines, so that within seconds, he was racing to his new destination with us clutching onto the nearest railing.

Walter: When the harbor areas were unproductive, it was a another type of thrill to try the deeper waters seaward of the harbor as far as Provincetown, providing a different and equally marvelous view of the Wellfleet and Truro shorelines to the east and the darker and deeper waters of Cape Cod Bay.

Curt: Reeling in the blues was always fun. Chester yelled encouragement for our successes, and showed disgust if a blue flipped the lure. When we reached our limit and were still surrounded, the task reverted to casting plugs with worn-down barbs so that the fish would strike but not be hooked.

When we had had enough, we slowly cruised back to the marina and cleaned the fish as an expert surgeon would. On the drive home, we'd drop off filets to a long list of friends. The remaining ones were eaten that night or soaked in a brine mixture, then dried and smoked for a delicious hors d'oeuvre with cream cheese and crackers.

Curt Smith and Walter Van Dorn



Chester and Bluefish by Walter Van Dorn

“Look at it”

I love to go to the Marconi site where you can stand and see Cape Cod Bay and Nantucket Sound at the same time. I firmly believe the world is divided between ocean people and mountain people. For an ocean person like myself, the prospect from this spot is sublime. Someone asked my husband if he fished. He said, “No.” Do you have a boat? “No.” Why do you like to be near the water? “I love to look at it,” he replied.

Wellfleet offers so many dynamic opportunities to “look at it.” From the deep cliffs of the ocean side, to the dramatic tides on the bay and a landscape that changes with each season, each time of day, each cloud, each breeze, Wellfleet is one of the greatest places to enjoy the natural beauty of our country.

So we are asked, “It’s a nice place to visit, but why do you want to live here?” It is because we found that the people in town are diverse, intelligent, creative, interested in the world and caring about each other. Well, maybe not all the people are all the time, but often enough to make this town a vital and inclusive community that we are delighted to be part of.

Marsha DuBeau



Marconi by Patricia Lemme

Wellfleet Recreation

The summer I turned fifteen, I was hired to teach Recreation with a college student. The job was for two months, July and August, from 9:00 – 12:00. I was paid what I thought then was a princely sum.

At the time, the land behind the Bookstore was nothing but a field with a small locked shed where we kept “equipment.” This amounted to a variety of balls, a much-needed air pump, a few discarded tennis rackets, some “jump rope,” and some cones we laid out for relay races. We used the tennis courts across the way; the beach at low tide for building sand castles and racing on the flats; and the field.

No one signed up for Recreation. It was sponsored by the town for anyone who wanted to come. Local kids and those in Wellfleet for vacation might join us for a couple of days or for the whole two months. Age wasn’t specified, though the kids tended to range from five to twelve. They would ride to the field doing wheelies and tossing their bikes on the ground to announce their arrival.

If it rained, Recreation was called off and if the weather at 9:00 was unpredictable, we decided what to do. We didn’t have contact information to let families know our plans, so inevitably a few soggy hopefuls would arrive in slickers ready to play.

The summer I turned fifteen, I stayed up all night finishing *Gone with the Wind*, I made new friends, both older and younger than myself, and I taught Summer Recreation in Wellfleet – the first job of a 40-year career in education.

Jill Lazarus Eurich

Wellfleet in Watercolor

Even before we met, my wife Patricia and I were both summer visitors to Wellfleet. After we were married, we'd rent a house in Wellfleet every summer, and then, about a quarter-century ago, we bought one. Now we spend a lot of time here, summer and winter.

Patricia is a watercolorist, and Wellfleet scenes have provided her with a lot of subject material. I've included two of her paintings: Newcomb's Hollow in early spring and Uncle Tim's Bridge in winter.

Robert Denn



Uncle Tim's Bridge and Newcomb Hollow by Patricia Denn

Wellfleet's Got Soul

We discovered Wellfleet in 1985 when the house we rented in Eastham became unavailable. Besides the obvious trappings of a quaint seacoast New England town, we found that Wellfleet had a real sense of community - or as I like to say, "soul." Although we had been told about the exclusivity of being "Cape Codders" or "Washashores," we never felt like outsiders.

When retirement was near, like many others we had to decide where we would live out our remaining years. We could have built a home anywhere in the world, but because of the diverse community of Wellfleet, the decision was easy.

Wellfleet is like no other place I know. It is very special, and all the residents, both full-time and part-time, should cherish this little part of paradise that protrudes out into the beautiful Atlantic Ocean.

Charles Rutz

Washashore

Washashore: this is what the long-time residents of Wellfleet call people like me. I've been coming to Wellfleet all my life, but I am a washashore because I come *to* the Cape - I am not *of* the Cape. People who are of the Cape have family ties of many, many generations. They are the Roses, Dyers, Riches and Bakers. They are more recent long-timers of Portuguese descent – Lema, Managus, and Berrio.

We washashores live an enchanted existence. We leave our stressful city life behind and arrive at this place that is full of the serene, sun-filled memories of childhood. Every nook and cranny of the house, the town, the beach, touch a fundamental core of memory – a sinuous bodily connection to this world that exists nowhere else.

There is an ease of returning to Wellfleet: each time, we fall instantly into our Cape routines. We know where to shop, which beach to frequent, which bike or walking route to take. We set our own roots in our summer gardens – roses in June, zinnias and dahlias in July and tomatoes in August.

Part of the washashore ethos is to “remember when” - best accomplished by age. As much as I can recall from my 60-plus years of coming to Wellfleet, my friend Aggie, who recently died at the age of 90, could remember much more. If you're old enough, you can remember when... the post office was on the main block of Main Street, before it was on the corner where the gallery is now, and long before it was on the highway. You can remember the soda fountain and Myles' Standish Giftee Shoppe where the best fudge ever made was sold, wrapped in kitchen foil. You can remember Mrs. Rose selling lobsters at the pier and the Helpee Selfee Laundry (now Mac's Shack) with its witty slogan – “We'll do diapers if you put them in!” There was Captain Higgins where oysters were sold at the bar and Simeon Atwood's hardware store, now The Juice.

So much has changed about this little town. The town pump doesn't work anymore, the fire station has moved to the highway along with the cinema and pharmacy. The News Dealer is now closed and the railroad tracks are gone. And yet, so much is the same. The sun still sets magnificently into Cape Cod Bay off Duck Harbor, the exhilaration of riding a wave at low tide still clutches the heart, and the summer light is still soft, yet sharpens the colors and contours of the landscape. The clam flats are still as alluring, mysterious and full of wonder as they were when my young feet first walked on them.

Being a washashore is a choice of sorts. I choose, reluctantly, to leave each September and go back to a citified existence. I seek solace, refuge, contentment in Wellfleet and I always find it. I am a washashore. So are my children. And we are very lucky to have found this magical place we call home.

Carol Lazarus



Lucy Wave Riding by Diana Back

Bliss!

"The Barocas Family Cherishes Wellfleet" is the message we inscribed on our tile on the Wellfleet Preservation Hall wall. "It's a Wonderful Life" is inscribed on a plaque over our door. These two phrases say it all.

For years, our family vacationed in Wellfleet, enjoying all that this lovely community had to offer. More than other vacation spots, we felt a connection to this town and its people.

In our early days, we dreamt of someday opening a store in Wellfleet and spending our entire summers here. We learned about a building in the middle of Main Street that was being auctioned off and immediately contacted the new owners about running our Abiyoyo in one of the shops. This was in 1980. Abiyoyo opened that summer.

Over the years, our clothing shop added toys and gifts galore. In 2003, we purchased our own building. Now, we sit on a hill at 286 Main Street overlooking downtown Wellfleet.

Through the years, countless families have come through our doors. We have watched the young folks grow up and bring their own little ones for their first Abiyoyo shopping experience. How lucky we are to have found our niche in this magnificent community!

Several years ago, we retired from our New York careers and extended the Abiyoyo season, allowing us to make Wellfleet our year-round home. This opportunity has enriched our lives in ways we never imagined. Our winters in Wellfleet are surprisingly busy as we run to committee meetings, cultural events, book groups, and social gatherings with the dearest of friends.

The traffic that brought the busy presence of tourists vanishes and is replaced by tranquility, community, and deep, meaningful relationships. Wellfleet is like the opening and closing of a flower in season. In the spring, one business after another opens up until we are buzzing with life. In the autumn, one by one the businesses wind down and the spirit of Wellfleet goes indoors.

This past winter we spent an extended period in New York to help with grandkids. Wellfleet seemed so far away from our daily experiences. When we finally got an opportunity to return, we jumped at it. On our first night we attended a movie at Preservation Hall. It was mid-winter and the Hall was packed. We walked in to hellos, waves, and kisses from every corner. The program was wonderful, but most importantly, we were home.

Here's what our family loves most about Wellfleet: summer afternoons, staying so long in the water at Long Pond, our fingers looked like prunes and our lips turned blue; evenings at the bay, everyone clapping as the last sliver of the sun dipped into the water; jumping off the dock at Gull Pond and pedal-boating to the sluice; capturing peeper frogs from the sandy shores; biking two hours on challenging hills, then the reward of a two-hour nap at LeCount Hollow Beach; feeling like we're the only people on earth at a hidden pond; the beauty of the trails at Audubon Society; the excitement of seeing a seal, a whale, a dolphin; and sitting on Mayo Beach watching the sun set, looking over to Indian Neck Beach where my husband and I got married –

Bliss!

Yvonne Barocas

The Most Beautiful Spot on Earth

When my husband and I bought our house in Wellfleet, we thought we'd won the lottery. Our youngest child had graduated from college that year, we were used to paying tuition bills, and we were both still working full time. We could pay a mortgage on a retirement home. We found a house in the most beautiful spot on earth and, shockingly, we could afford it.

For the next several years, we spent weekends in Wellfleet and commuted to Boston, but leaving Wellfleet became harder and harder. We'd come on Fridays and leave Monday at 5 am, even in the winter. Our schedule had nothing to do with traffic but with our desire to spend at much time as possible in this beautiful place.

Then we retired, got to know more and more people, and became involved in town life, but still we spent part of the year in our house in the suburb west of Boston where we raised our children.

Where is "home" now? Home is Wellfleet. First we lived with our parents, just as our two children first lived with us; our next home was with each other and our children, just as they now live with their spouses and offspring. Today our home is here in Wellfleet, where our children and grandchildren love to visit.

My husband and I, along with many others, started *Nauset Neighbors*, whose mission is to help seniors age in their homes. We have over 150 members, 200 volunteers, and are growing. What better place than the outer cape?

Esther Elkin



On the Way to the Dump by Gail Ferguson

Moments Like These

I grew up in Connecticut and first came to the Cape in 1992, but I'm told that I was conceived in Wellfleet. It wasn't until I graduated from high school that I came here on my own.

I started clamming and then I got a job washing dishes part-time at Aesop's Tables, which is now Winslow's Tavern. That's where I met John Arsenal. He was a line cook at Aesop's and we started the restaurant Sol together.

As a year-round Wellfleet resident, I really enjoy the off-season. There are a couple of cruel months, but every moment is beautiful. Even on the nastiest, bitterest day, it's still an incredible place to be.

I'm a surfer. That's another element that drew me to Wellfleet, not that it's a world-class surf destination, but when the waves are good, they're very good. The beaches are great and they're going to remain that way because of the National Park.

Once, after an early spring storm, I went down to Maguire Landing and there was just one truck in the parking lot. I knew it belonged to Pat Walsh, a local carpenter and a surfer. He was way out there, and the surf looked good, perfectly groomed.

Because the weather was still unsettled, the ocean was backlit, with rain still falling. A rainbow came down right behind him – a really brilliant rainbow. It was just Pat and the rainbow and the surf. I took a picture of it on my phone.

I was going to join him, but then I thought: this is his moment. I'm just going to observe it and go. Later, I showed him the picture and he really liked it. Moments like these, they're not few and far between: in Wellfleet, they happen all the time.

People who live in Wellfleet are rich in character. The Outer Cape is a hard place to make a living - you've got to want to live here and you've got to work hard. Because people choose to live in Wellfleet, they have a high level of investment in making it a good place. When someone is ill or needs support, people rally around and take care of each other. In those moments, you realize what a unique community this is.

People who are born here almost always try to get out. It makes sense to want to leave the place where you've always lived – but most end up returning. That's what happened to me. I left for many years. I was in Central America, California, all over the place. But when I got tired of moving around and it came down to choosing just one place, it was easy: Wellfleet.

Kurt Brencher

(From an interview with Jerry Reilly)



Photo by Kurt Brencher

Thank You, Wellfleet!

Wellfleet harbor: a magical place,
Panoramic views, where from stress we escape

Summer seasons come and go,
Children laugh, love and grow.

Tides come in, then go way out
Enchanting sea life is all about.

Sun-kissed cheeks and sandy feet,
Harborside sundaes a special treat.

Searching for treasures swallowed by the sea long ago,
Memories of places you can no longer know.

Picking up sea glass along the shore,
Scanning, squinting, searching for more.

Listening to children shouting with glee,
"I found a piece of Chequessett Pottery!"

Talking of sharks, hermit crabs and whales,
Hoisting the mast and setting the sails.

A trip out to Billingsgate to pick up old bricks,
Lobstermen working with traps made of sticks.

Sandcastles, kites, playground, skate park,
To the beach with a football just before dark.

Sunsets and strolls to Great Island and back,
Biking to town to view galleries or snack.

Memories of a lifetime, happily made
Relaxing beneath the beach umbrella's cool shade.

That's why our family returns every year,
Thank you, Wellfleet for being here!

Heidi Glover-McAlpine



Boat at Low Tide by Heidi Glover-McAlpine

The Incredible Casuals

For over 30 years, our band – The Incredible Casuals – played the Beachcomber’s happy hour at twilight on Sundays. From the very beginning, we knew our band was the right band for the room and we always did good business.

The amazing thing about that gig was that the same people kept coming again and again. During that time our performances never flagged. Most bands have a certain batting average where you feel you played well, OK, or just so-so, but at the Beachcomber we almost never played poorly. We always felt like we were giving people their money’s worth.

Towards the end of our tenure there, people came who weren’t necessarily young enough to be hanging around at bars – married people who had real lives, but they would still go down on Sundays and pretend they didn’t. It got to be sort of a tradition and we were really lucky to be part of it.

The Incredible Casuals got so spoiled at the Beachcomber that we just wouldn’t play anywhere else. We did some tours and we left the country a few times, but progressively less and less until we were just playing the Beachcomber. We made our reputation in that one place and we had a blast.

Here’s what I love about Wellfleet: golf at Chequessett, the ponds, the beaches, the bars, PJ’s, The Juice, the Tragic Kingdom, Duck Creek Inn and The Wicked Oyster – and just a certain craziness one routinely detects in the inhabitants; and, of course, the Wellfleet Drive-In, where the Casuals once played a benefit right up in front of the screen. We had the sound go through the little speakers that hang on your car. Unfortunately, the speakers were out of sync, which made the performance a little more abstract than it might have been ordinarily.

All our Labor Day shows involved a lot of guest singers and usually some out-there foolishness. Once we did a re-creation of a really bad movie called “The Creeping Terror.” It involved a monster that looked like it was made out of a bunch of quilts with something like a vacuum cleaner hose coming out of it. We recreated that at the Beachcomber and had a few guys covered with quilts, waving vacuum-cleaner hoses, eating girls. Quite delightful.

Also on Labor Day, we’d get our sound man, Chris Blood, to perform as the White Prince. He’s a very bad singer and we took great pleasure in terrorizing the crowd with him. He’s put out two albums and they’re extremely frightening.

I’ve played many rounds of golf at Chequessett with Beachcomber guys; and once with a California friend, Paulette, who eventually wrote an entire 12-song album about the experience: one song about each hole, another song for the parking lot, and another song for the snack bar. It was his magnum opus, “Chequessett Forever.”

Chandler Travis (From an interview with Jerry Reilly)



Casuals Go Drivin’

Hungarian Yankees

Our love affair with Wellfleet started many years ago, when my grandparents, refugees of a revolution in Budapest, Hungary in 1956, moved to Connecticut from their homeland. They came speaking no English, with their two small children and very few belongings, to build a life in America.

To this day, I have never met two people like them: determined to become a part of their new country, and equally determined to remain close to their roots. They have always enjoyed travel, even with limited funds. That first year here was no exception. They saw that large arm of sand on a map of New England and drove out to Provincetown to see what it was all about. For years they returned to camp in various locations on the Cape, including Truro and Falmouth, before purchasing their property on Long Pond Road in 1974. The rest, as they say, is history.

Year after year, they brought friends and family to visit their summer home. There was no TV, no phone, no dishwasher, no washing machine, no dryer and no insulation, but it was always a good party - lots of family, lots of food and never-ending reunions.

In the past few years, the fourth generation of our family is experiencing Wellfleet each summer, and it is slowly becoming part of the fabric of their lives as well. The one house with few amenities has expanded to five houses of various extended family members within a mile radius from Long Pond Road, Old Kings Highway, and Dalmas Trail - each now complete with internet/fax/cable and the like.

We are scattered around the world, yet we know this place remains a constant in our lives; a place for rest, serenity, nature and some guaranteed family togetherness, like it or not! No matter where our lives take us during the year, we count on the familiarity of landmarks and people here, as well as the constant ebb and flow of the tides, to keep us centered and whole. I speak for my family when I say that I am forever grateful to my grandparents, the original 'Hungarian Yankees,' for bringing us all here so many years ago and hope that our future generations will continue to cherish and preserve this truly special, magical place!

Happy 250 Birthday to Wellfleet!

Ilona Kopits, granddaughter of Susan and Steven Deak



Ilona and her grandparents

How I Became a Fisherman

When I think of my time in Wellfleet, so many memories come to mind that it's difficult to narrow them down to a few. Spending over 40 summers here has played an important and life-changing role for me, but there is a consistent presence that has allowed me to become the person I am today: My uncle, Curt Smith.

Uncle Curt appears in my very earliest memories. He would wake me at the crack of dawn and we would head for the sluice between Gull and Higgins ponds. There we would catch minnows. To a young southern boy, it seemed as if we caught thousands! Curt would hook a minnow and then swim WAAAAAYYY out into Gull Pond, gently drop the bait and swim back to the shore where I waited.

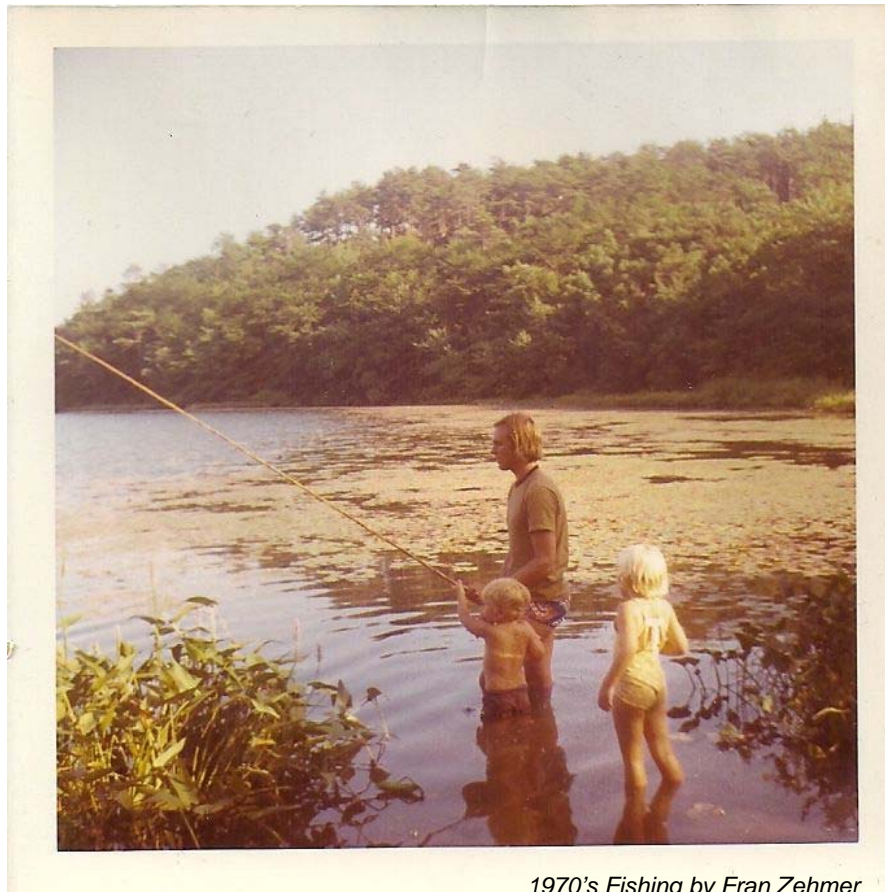
Almost always, the bait was taken by the true gem of Gull Pond – a yellow perch. And, if the minnows were not cooperating, there was always diving for the freshwater mussels that were abundant in both ponds. After a few hours of early morning fishing, we would return home – only to prepare for a day of fishing aboard my grandfather's boat. And again, I watched Curt's every move, hoping one day that I could do what he was doing.

Over time, my uncle taught me how to rig the rods, get the lures ready and finally, how to cast or set the trolling rigs. I was so jealous that he was allowed to fillet the day's catch while I was told to put away the rods, but in this way he taught me how to be a fisherman.

Perhaps my favorite Wellfleet memory is the two of us casting in the bay for blitzing blues – I on the bow and he in the stern – competing (though he may not have known it) to see who could cast the farthest, catch the most fish, the biggest fish, yelling, "Strike... Strike!... FISH!!" How I wanted to yell that before he did!

Wellfleet is such happiness to a Southerner – cool summer nights and warm days at the beach. But none of it would be as significant or memorable without someone to share it with me. Thanks to my Uncle Curt, Wellfleet is the most meaningful place in my life.

Chester Johns



1970's Fishing by Fran Zehmer

Realizing a Childhood Dream

My mother, Agnes Wolf, who left us at age 90, first came to Wellfleet at the age of eight with her mother, Agnes Weil. My grandmother came here to study voice with Alessandro Alberini and his wife, Margaret Atwood-Baker. She attended Camp Chequessett, where outings included swims across Gull Pond.

As a young woman, my mother returned to Wellfleet with her husband-to-be, Alfred Wolf, who also fell in love with the area. My brothers, sister and I spent every summer growing up here. In 1959, when I was six, they purchased a vacation home on – you guessed it – Gull Pond.

When my mother left us last summer, it was from her bedroom overlooking her beloved Gull Pond. That, in short, is how I, realizing a childhood dream, came to make my home and livelihood here in Wellfleet.

John Wolf



More About Aggie

In 1999, my husband and I went to a Town Meeting held at the Wellfleet Elementary School's gym. We were told we could not speak, vote or sit on chairs on the floor, but could watch from the bleachers.

The next summer, I put fliers around inviting non-residents who wanted to know more about how Wellfleet decisions were made to attend a meeting in the trailer that housed the Senior Center. About 100 people arrived. We agreed to start an organization, and when I passed a hat around (after all, we could not begin without money), someone named Aggie Wolf gave me a check for \$100. The next year we became friends, and Aggie served on the WNRTA board until she died. She was a guiding force for WNRTA.

May Ruth Seidel

Remembering Indian Neck Heights

Wellfleet entered my family's collective memory over half a century ago when my parents rented a small cottage on Indian Neck. Captivated by the barren loveliness of the Heights, they bought land way out on the end of King Phillip Road, high on a bluff facing Lieutenant's Island. Their family grew before they were able to build a home there; so for many summers my parents, two sisters and I rented a house that overlooked the marsh, often running down the road to visit "our" lot, imagining the day the Prager family could put down roots.

Back then it was a long ride from Boston. After packing the station wagon (a job that often stretched into days and sometimes involved a U-Haul for the bicycles), we made our way "down the Cape," around the rotary, over the Sagamore Bridge, and finally onto the same two lanes of Route 6, which wound its way past the landmarks we loved: the Drive-In, the Marconi Station, South Wellfleet General Store, the A&P, before taking the left that would lead us out towards the bay.

We rejoiced in our summer days. Pictures show us standing proudly on the deck or cartwheeling on the sand, wearing bright, colorful bathing suits. We treasured our traditions: early morning swimming lessons at Gull Pond; afternoons at Newcomb or Le Count Hollow; tearing chunks from a loaf of warm Portuguese bread on the way home; a soft-serve ice-cream cone with peanut crunch at PJ's after dinner. We trusted our mother's smile as she sat on a raft in the Great Pond shallows reading a newspaper, and our father's childish delight in riding the waves into shore. We relied on the ringing of the bell to bring us back from wandering the bay flats in search of the quahogs hiding just beneath the surface.

We grew up and Indian Neck Heights grew with us. What had been a sandy dune with low, prickly cranberry vine slowly filled in with scrub pine that soon towered over our heads. *New Moon*, our house named for my mother's favorite book from childhood, was born with her first grandchild. Now another generation of children makes the same trip each summer. Seven grandchildren, Millhams, Smiths, and Paines, race down the stairs built into the dunes to collect shells on the bay beach, spend long days at the ocean, swim across a kettle pond, and gather on another deck in the early evening to spend time together gazing out over Wellfleet Harbor. They still rely on my mother, their Nanny, to sit on a raft and dangle her feet in the soft pond water, watching them as they swoop and dive in the shallows; they remember the years when my father, their Bop, was well enough to stand on the ocean's edge and watch them catch the waves that long ago slipped out of his grasp.

Shared memories of Wellfleet, the love, laughter and loss, connect and unite us.

Laura M. Prager, MD

Multigenerational Love

It was spring 1975, and friends called and asked us about our summer plans. At that point in time we had no plans. Would we consider joining them in August in Wellfleet? We were open to suggestions, so we called a local realtor and rented a house for a month.

It is now 2013, and we have returned to Wellfleet every summer since 1975. In 1987, we decided that home ownership in Wellfleet made a good deal of sense. In the years since we built our house, we have become summer residents.

Wellfleet has become very important to us and to our children, grandchildren and friends. Our grandchildren look upon Wellfleet as their special summer place as do their parents, our children: we now have a multigenerational love of the town.

In our Wellfleet world, a sense of serenity prevails that has made it very different from our Delaware world. Our Wellfleet friends and neighbors are wonderful people who have helped us enjoy our summer months. Also special are the hiking trails, the ponds, the ocean and bay beaches. It is difficult for us to think of our lives without Wellfleet.

Marion Palley

Not Just a Name

My first opinion of Wellfleet was "Wow – how small and behind the times this place is!" But within weeks I realized how upscale and progressive our customer base was. I put up a suggestion box and was shocked by the things people asked for. That was the business side of life in Wellfleet.

After being involved with prostate cancer and being a survivor, I found out what this town is really about. I never knew that people would drop whatever they were doing to drive me to the hospital for radiation treatment, three years of shots once a month and CAT and bone scans every thirty to sixty days. I never had to take the bus unless that was what I wanted to do to clear my head.



Paul Souza

My personal experience of Wellfleet is if you have a problem and you ask for help, you will be surprised at the response. Every day I thank my God that I am here and not someplace where I would be just a name.

*Paul Souza
Wellfleet Marketplace*

The Pearl of the Cape

Wellfleet is the pearl of the Cape,
The tickle of sweat that drips down my nape
As I sit on Newcomb Hollow beach,
The hot sand just within my reach.

The ocean blows in a song
That's windy but not very long
Of words it scarcely knows more than three:
The sun, the sand, and you and me.

The ponds that speckle the forests so
With water warming in summer's glow
Like the glaciers that made them we melt into one,
While children splash and have their fun.

So simple sweet and delicate, the first Oyster's taste
To take a break from all our haste
Wellfleet always fills our sails
And shelters us from all the gales.

I only wish it were summer now
And I was on my way to Slough.

Michael Donovan



Delicious! by Tony Beard

Our Family Blessing

Wellfleet is more than a special place to me – it is the foundation for our family.

In 1955, my mother was widowed at age 32 and left with three young children – a boy and two girls. Her husband died suddenly, due to complications from what should have been a benign medical condition. When the police arrived at their house to inform her that they found him in his car on the side of the road, her life changed forever.

At around the same time, my father lost his wife of 10 years to leukemia, which was not detected until she was past the point of effective treatment. They had three young sons, and my father became a widower within weeks.

About a year later, Mom and Dad were introduced to each other by a mutual friend. They fast fell in love and married in 1957 – newlyweds with six kids at the altar.

Before the wedding, the employer of another friend heard their unusual story and asked where they were going for their honeymoon. The reply was “Nowhere, because they will now have six kids and can’t afford a honeymoon.” The ‘boss’ was bothered and felt that this situation was just unacceptable. He told the friend that he wanted them go to his summer house in a little town called Wellfleet on Cape Cod, and that he wouldn’t accept no for an answer.

My parents were ever so grateful, accepted his offer, left the kids with Grandma for a week, and came to Wellfleet for the first time. When they arrived at the house on Gull Pond Road, there was even a congratulatory cake on the kitchen table – and my parents had not yet met the man who had so generously given them their honeymoon!

Across the street, there were some cottages being built on what would later be named Gull Haven Lane. They were being sold for about \$7,000.00 each, but of course my parents could not afford one, because they had their new family to raise. They could only dream about owning one someday and settled by renting one of those cottages every year thereafter (except once, when I ruined their usual vacation plans by being born in August).

Years later, after much saving and fewer kids in college, my parents were at last able to purchase one of the little cottages in 1976. It has been our family blessing since then, and we have raised our own families along the shores of Gull Pond, the Atlantic and the Bay. And now that Mom and Dad have stepped beyond this life, that little house in Wellfleet is our way of staying close to them forever.

There truly is no place like Wellfleet.

Marilyn Jones



Shells in the Driveway by Beth Whitman

Wampanoag Gravestone

The words on the stone were more fully obscured before I took this photo. I tried not to intrude much on the way it looked when I found it, but I moved things aside just enough so that the text could be made out a little better. To me, there is double-edged quality to the words on this grave. The Wampanoag and many other tribes certainly did give of themselves, that this great nation might grow. But this was not entirely of their own free will, and probably they had no idea how ruthless many of the Europeans would turn out to be, or of the deadly diseases that would come along with them.



HERE LIES
AN INDIAN WOMAN
A
WAMPANOAG
WHOSE FAMILY AND TRIBE
GAVE OF THEMSELVES
AND THEIR LAND
THAT THIS GREAT NATION
MIGHT BE BORN AND GROW

REINTERRED HERE MAY 30, 1976
WAMPANOAG TRIBAL COUNCIL
WELLFLEET HISTORICAL SOCIETY

When I took this picture, I felt that the various decorations that had been gathered from the natural world had been placed gently, and with respect. I find them beautiful.

John Douglass

Clean Ponds and Dirty Dogs

"Say-rah! Let's take the dogs for a bath!" The raspy voice of my great aunt shouted for her bloodhounds: "Siegi! Erda! Geturne! Come here, damn you!"

I was ten years old and in charge of getting the leashes onto the dogs' choke collars. Tongues hanging, they swung slimy drool onto my arms as I did my best to get them under control.

The bloodhounds dragged me towards the car. Cackling behind me, Aunt Diddy followed with dish soap, rags, and old towels. We shoved the dogs onto the hot vinyl back seat of the old beige Chevy and slammed the door before one decided to escape.

In the front seat, I hunched forward to avoid the foul dog breath coming from behind. I couldn't roll my window down fast enough to dilute the rank, musky odor. It sure was time for a bath! And, as the dogs wagged their tails and smeared the windows with drool, off we bounced down the sand road to the pond.

Gull Pond: Back in the day when such activities were permissible, when there was no National Seashore, no rangers patrolling to protect the fragile kettle ponds. Back before anyone even thought about Title 5 septic systems or keeping dogs and soap out of the water. Back to a time where there was no public beach with screaming children jumping off the dock.

We always went to the same small beach across from what is now the public landing. As the car approached the parking area, Siegi, Erda & Geturne began baying with excitement ... so *this* was what the trip was all about! Out they tumbled, dragging their leashes, and hurled themselves into the clear shallow water.

Now came the hardest part of my job – standing knee-deep and squirting Ivory liquid onto the frolicking animals while my great aunt shouted instructions from the shore: which dog to work on where ... who needed her eyes wiped out with a wet rag, whose floppy ears should be lifted to clean out those inner recesses. I did my best to hold the dogs long enough to massage soap into their fur, getting my shorts and T-shirt completely sopped. As soon as I let go of a leash, the freed dog would swim out into deeper water, leaving a wake of suds behind her. There was no worry about rinsing as long as they had a good long swim on their own.

When we were ready to head home, I'd grab the closest bloodhound by the leash while Aunt Diddy attempted to dry the streaming creature and get it into the Chevy before it could drop and roll in the sand.

If a Park Ranger were to come upon this bathing frenzy at Gull Pond today, Aunt Diddy would certainly be given a hefty – and well-deserved - fine.

Sarah Smith



Bloodhound Bathing circa 1958

Click!

Every summer we try to capture the magic of Wellfleet in the photographs we take:

1970's: Click! Three little girls sit on a piece of driftwood holding purple wildflowers. We stopped along Cove Road to view the harbor in the background. Summers are filled with trips to the Penny Patch, art classes at Castle Hill and swimming lessons at Gull Pond. Dad will fly from P-town back to work, the girls and Mom will make beach-plum jelly to sell at the Flea Market, eat ice cream from PJ's and dance the Virginia Reel. Tiger Lily the cat will be found begging outside Hatche's Fish Market and the puppy, Happy, will be adopted, thanks to a sign hanging up in Cumberland Farms.

1980's: Click! A college sophomore is dressed in the washashore uniform of a Lighthouse waitress, the oldest of our three girls. The boyfriend – who will soon become the husband – took the photo. Tips from serving blueberry muffins to French Canadians will go towards the evening's food and drink. We will drive too fast in open cars, lie on the beach to see shooting stars and buy T-shirts that warn of no way off the Cape if there is a nuclear accident. The highlight of the summer will be the evening sailing trip with the Lighthouse gang.

1990's: Click! Five cousins dressed in matching terrycloth robes are sitting on the bench at Long Pond. The young waitress is the mom of three (soon to be four) of this waterlogged group. The kids will take walks in the White Cedar Marsh and across Uncle Tim's bridge, fish for crabs from the pier, enjoy bonfires at Newcomb Hollow, watch drive-in movies from the roof of the car and learn the Salty Dog Rag. The parents will trade babysitting nights to dine at JPs, will insist on visiting the flea market, will check emails while sitting on the steps outside the library, and will bring home keepsakes from the galleries.

2000's: Click! The picture in my mind is the view seen when turning from King Phillip onto Hiawatha. While the purple flowers have mostly gone, along with the Penny Patch on Main Street, the light still hits the water in the cove, and the bay continues to be dotted with a few umbrellas, along with children watching fiddler crabs, collecting shells or flying kites. In this picture are the memories of dreams that came true: a wish for a puppy written in the sand; true love; the joy of watching one's own child ride the waves; and the quiet contentment of repeated family traditions. This photo is elusive, never quite capturing our depth of memories. Despite my annual attempts to take home this special place, it can't be done. So we return, summer after summer to our Wellfleet – memories made and memories yet to come.

Lisa Handleman



Lifeguard Chair by Irwin Mendlinger

A Slice of Heaven

I grew up in the woods off Gross Hill Road, out in the National Seashore, just about a mile from the beach. I really soaked in my surroundings – the natural ponds, the bay areas, the ocean – and no neighbors. My brother and I liked to build tree forts and there are still remnants of our woodwork near our old house. I learned to sail when I was 12 and went fishing for large mouth bass in Herring, Gull, and Higgins ponds.

My father owns Jack's Boat Rental, which has been in business for over 40 years. Gull Pond was his first location and I grew up crawling on kayaks and pedal boats. Now we're located on Route 6 with Sea-Cycles, double kayaks, single kayaks, SunFish, paddleboards and surfboards.

I went to college in the Boston area at Salem State and studied to be a teacher, but every summer I came back to Wellfleet to work with my dad.

The best part about working at Jack's is meeting new people every day. Everyone's in a good mood, everyone's on vacation, everyone's smiling. The worst part is putting the equipment away.

When I'm not working, I like to go fishing. Occasionally I've gone surfcasting for striped bass, but for the most part I stick to the ponds. I've caught fish weighing from a few ounces to a 6- or 7-pound large mouth bass.

I never realized how much nature meant to me until I left Cape Cod and went to the city. It was a bit of culture shock. I'd ask people "Where can I go swimming?" and they'd look at me like I had five heads: "There's a pool down the street." Then I'd come back to Wellfleet and realize it's a slice of heaven.

Jake Ferreira

(From an interview with Jerry Reilly)

The Rules of the Game

The rules of the game: Get as close as you can, without getting your feet wet. The stakes are higher in winter. The waves are bigger and colder and the sea seems to get a bit wilier. But once you hit the beach, no one can resist the pull. So you run down in your boots and hope they don't get too soaked for the trudge back up the dune.

Sarah Eisinger



Cousins Jesse, Julia & Sarah, on a visit to our grandparents, Chester & Marjorie Eisinger. Taken by our uncle, Joel Eisinger. Wellfleet, circa 1980.

The Turtle Guy

I first visited Wellfleet in 1990 and moved to South Wellfleet, off Lieutenant Island, in 1998 to write the Great American Novel. But I got diverted.

My home backed to the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, so one day I stopped by the sanctuary, knocked on the door and uttered these fatal words: “How may I help?”

Bob Prescott, the sanctuary director, looked me up and down and pronounced, “Terrapins.”

“Okay,” I nodded, “What are they and how do you spell ‘em?” ... and thus I became the Turtle Guy.

The Turtle Guy is the voice of turtles, with the job to save the world one turtle at a time. The best way to learn about turtles is to spend time with them, and that’s what I’ve done 24/7 for the last 14 years. We have in Wellfleet Bay a population of elusive turtles called Diamondback Terrapins. That’s where I first focused my energies and branched out from there to all turtle species, from upland box turtles to the pelagic sea turtles that we rescue from the bay each fall.

One of the nice things about being the Turtle Guy is you get to write your own job description. It’s research, it’s rescue, it’s conservation, and they’re all tied together with outreach & education. We do that through our Turtle Journal: www.turtlejournal.com.

I have a 24/7 hotline and get calls from around the globe when people have turtle adventures and mis-adventures. For example, I get perhaps half a dozen phone calls each year from police dispatchers when one of their officers gets backed up into their patrol car by an angry snappy turtle who resents being “rescued” while crossing the road.

Once while kayaking in Chipman’s Cove and observing turtles, I got a call from a guy in a canoe in New Jersey. He had hooked a snapper and the fishing line had wrapped around the turtle. He pulled it into his boat and wanted to know how to disentangle the snapper without losing his hand.

Lieutenant Island is my prime research site. It is the mecca for Diamondback Terrapins in New England, perhaps on all of the East Coast. What makes Lieutenant Island so special for these turtles is its pristine salt-marsh system. It has enormous salt marshes that surround the island and afford a safe nursery habitat for babies. It has become a refuge for these charismatic critters.

The busy season starts around April 15th and goes through Christmas. In November and December, it’s sea turtle rescues. The rest of the year, it’s research and conservation of our local turtle species. And in the fall you get lots of other strandings like giant ocean sunfish, stunning electric torpedo rays and, of course, mammal strandings.

Every day and every moment in Wellfleet is marked by discovery and natural adventure. That makes it the most extraordinary place in the world.

*Don Lewis
(From an interview with Jerry Reilly)*



The Turtle Guy

To Wellfleet With Love

Falling in love is always an overwhelming experience, and it's often hard to explain why. We never expected to fall in love with a town, but that's what happened when we drove into Wellfleet one summer day in 1967. The quaint town center was enchanting and looked like the dream village we all have in the back of our minds. And we were drawn to the physical beauty of the beaches and dunes, the undeveloped sea-shore and woodlands, the sunsets and the extraordinary light that has attracted so many painters.

Although we initially fell in love with Wellfleet's appearance, over the years our affection has deepened as we have come to know and appreciate its character. How extraordinary that this small town has such an exceptional library and provides its children with a first-rate education! We love the lack of pretension and the inability to judge from the way people dress whether you are talking to a professor or a plumber. And the determination and effort that created Preservation Hall as a year-round social and cultural center reflects the uniqueness of this community. Although there are undoubtedly some unpleasant people who live in Wellfleet, we are lucky enough not to have met any of them and, whether they were born in Wellfleet or washed ashore, we have enjoyed our contacts with year-round and part-time residents.

For many years we rented a variety of cottages for a two-week summer vacation with our children. In 1990 we built a house of our own and made it large enough for three generations of our family, from the east and west coasts, to come together at the same time. And so Wellfleet has become the glue that has kept us together. We all look forward to the weeks we share here and continue to marvel at how lucky we are to be able to spend time in such a beautiful place. We often say that we think the world would be a better place if everyone could have a similar bit of respite just looking out across the bay to Great Island, or picking up shells or rocks on the beaches.

Becoming involved in the Wellfleet Non-Resident Taxpayers Association has made it possible for us to feel like an integral part of the town, and not just visitors. Through this organization we have lobbied for funds and programs that help the town, and have become more involved in the political process. We have also met and become good friends with part-time residents from all over the country. And we have also come to better appreciate the many community volunteers who help to make Wellfleet such a special place.

We recognize that we are fortunate to be able to enjoy Wellfleet as vacationers, but we know many of the hardworking people who make their living here and we thank them for sharing this beautiful spot with us.

Walter and Lila Croen



"Neptune's Toenail" shells by Sarah Smith

How Wonderful!

As someone who made Wellfleet her year-round home 35 years ago, it is – and has been – a community of extended “family” that lives. . .

. . . loves

. . .cares for each other. . .

and grows old together. . .

. . . How wonderful!

Melissa Shantz

Our Paradise

Our love affair with Wellfleet began many years ago when we rented a small apartment at the Drummer Boy Cottages with my wife's parents. The days were punctuated by tennis at Oliver's, excursions to White Crest Beach, and walks to Indian Neck and Great Island. In the evening we'd have a drink and watch the sun go down over Drummer Cove. But when the owner, Bob White, died and the property was sold, we had to move on.

For the next few years, we bounced around - to a cottage on Old Wharf Lane, up to Truro for a while - but finally found a simple summer rental just a short walk through the woods to our "secret" spot – Dyer Pond.

We had found our paradise. A New Englander and a New Yorker, living in New York City, now with two young children, we could hardly believe what was outside our back door. This was our chance to explore nature, to experience the quiet of the pond at dusk, or to just sit under the stars on our back deck after dinner.

Our children grew up relishing the independence of life in the city. They rode the subway to school and met their friends at favorite neighborhood spots. But they also inherited a deep appreciation for the best of New England's summer offerings – the Wellfleet beaches, fried clams at PJ's, ice cream at Mac's, and the Red Sox – to name just a few.

Lazy summer days were also the setting for family get-togethers. Uncles, aunts, cousins and both sets of grandparents visited every summer. We shared with them the endless fire roads that led to oases in the woods - Long Pond, Spectacle, Gull and Higgins, up to Horseleeche and Round Pond - and brought new discoveries each year. The Wellfleet ponds seemed like an endless chain of treasures, waiting to reveal themselves to us appreciative visitors.

Our children are in high school now. One is headed off to college soon, and the pressures of school, friends, and activities have forced us to shorten our vacations a bit, but we remain as captivated by Wellfleet as we were that very first summer. No matter how quickly the time passes, how "adult" our children seem now, they get to be kids again in Wellfleet - to walk barefoot down the wooded path to Dyer Pond and feel the muck between their toes at water's edge, to bask in the sun at White Crest, to lounge on the back deck listening to the breeze through the scrub pines. We *all* get to be kids here. That's why we will always love Wellfleet and always come home to it.

Michael Fitzgerald and Phoebe Hawkins



Wellfleet Harbor by Phoebe Hawkins

A Family Fixture in Wellfleet

In the early 1940's, each set of grandparents built cottages close to each other in Wellfleet, and I've been coming ever since. One of the reasons we came so consistently every summer was because of the polio epidemic. It was always at its worst in the summer. As soon as school was out, my brother and I and our cousins were sent here to stay. The mothers and aunts would also come down to help the grandmothers – all so that we wouldn't be exposed to polio.

We're ocean, bay and pond people – depending on the tide and the wind direction. The ocean beaches are lovely when there's no mung. If it's not pleasant on either side, then we go to the ponds. Of course when the grandkids visit, the little ones, it's a pond day.

My favorite bay beach is Duck Harbor. It's rocky, so not many people go there, but if you wear a pair of sneakers it's just not a problem. My second favorite beach is Indian Neck because that I can walk to.

Another thing I like to do is to pick beach plums and make beach plum jelly, which a lot of people don't do any more. I ship out homemade beach plum jelly every Christmas to my kids and the cousins – it's just incomparable to the store-bought: very sweet and tart.

Every now and again we'll take a walk along the fire roads. There are some hidden ponds back in there, isolated and lovely. And when my cousin and his wife visit from Philly with their mountain bikes, they'll go riding on the fire roads.

Wellfleet is where so many happy memories originate for our family. At least once a year, we try to get everyone together down here – and a party in Wellfleet is not a party without a raw bar with plenty of oysters.

Twenty years ago, I'd wake up in the morning and I wouldn't know who all was sleeping here. As a joke, my husband said we should put up a teepee. Ten years later, we were traveling in Arizona and saw lodge poles. We pulled in and asked where the teepee was made. We were told, "Oh, it's too far away for you folks – almost 2,000 miles away in New Hampshire!"

That was it! We got home and contacted the tent smith in New Hampshire. He made us a teepee, and he came to Wellfleet and erected it. From then on, the kids used it for parties. They'd sleep in it, and everything they took in had to be taken out in the morning. That became our backup guesthouse. It's been a fixture here ever since.

Sue Rogers

(From an interview with Jerry Reilly)



Duck Harbor Kids by Betsy Van Dorn

Love in Wellfleet

There is something about falling in love -- with a person, a place, a family -- under the scrub pines of Wellfleet that makes the process all the more mystifying. It is a town that, like love itself, burrows into the being in such a way that it's impossible to remember one's sense of self without understanding it from within the context of the other.

I'd spent time on the Cape before and was familiar with towns like Falmouth, Chatham, and Osterville and had enjoyed my time in them all ... but Wellfleet? I knew nothing about it. Funny then, that when my future husband invited me out to his family's house and gave me directions that sent me up a twisting, pot-holed sand road, I was hooked immediately: the clinging, salty ocean breath that seeps in with the fog every grey morning; the liquid trill of the wood thrush hidden amongst the pine branches at dusk; the laughter, chaos and clamor of an extended family unit that clearly knows and loves one another.

The next several years saw the expansion of my love for - and understanding of - the man who'd brought me to Wellfleet and the place he'd known from birth. With each new favorite spot shared, I became familiar with the lenses through which he saw the world. With every new family tradition, I learned the how and why of the way he approached life. And with every beach walk, sunrise, laugh, cookout and embrace, I became more complete. When we married, we chose to do it in Wellfleet: it was the place where "I" had become "we" ... it seemed only right to be there when our "we" became "us."

People often ask why I am so drawn to Wellfleet, and I've often struggled to put words to the emotional connection I have with this little spit of land. In writing this, I think I've come up with an answer: It is a place that somehow, miraculously, finds room for everyone.

Today I am a parent of two young children who grew out of the love that blossomed in Wellfleet. When I think of what they will have all their lives -- a magical place around which all others will orbit -- I feel such a sense of contentment. For in those summer beach days and communal dinners with funny older cousins, crazy uncles and silly grandmothers, they will come to know that whomever they become and wherever they choose to go in life, there is a place and a family waiting to embrace them upon their return.

Meghann Van Dorn



Gull Pond Mist by Beth Whitman

Off-Season

If you have to ask why I love Wellfleet, you haven't been here in months other than July and August. I'm sitting here on Lieutenant's Island today (March 5, 2013) watching the weather change from sun to rain to rain mixed with snow, snow, back to rain again. And the view over Loagy Bay at high tide or low is magnificent. It's so quiet I can hear the snowflakes hitting the roof. No TV, so a time for reading and reflection. And checking the tide chart!

I remember the cottages at Maquire's Landing at the end of Lecount Hollow Road: they'd be in the ocean now. And gas pumps in front of the Wellfleet General Store. Staying at Brownie's Cabins in the '50s, and at Surf Side Colony later on (my friends thought it was a nudist camp).

Yes, we have no-see-ums (*Ceratopogonidae* to my bug-wise friends) in June that come right through the screens and Greenhead flies in July that bite worse than tourists. In July and August, the beaches can be like Coney Island but usually without the noisy boom boxes. Bring a 5-gallon pail of sunscreen. Get to Great Pond before ten if you want a parking space. If it's cloudy and you're thinking of going to Provincetown, go early: have breakfast there or in town to beat the crowds and be able to park on the pier. There's a line out the door at PB Boulangerie and Arnold's, so be sure to make a reservation if going out to dinner.

But the other 10 months are another world. September: still warm enough to swim (wetsuit in the ocean, not needed for the ponds or bay). October: catch an Indian summer week or two and enjoy uncrowded vistas and long trail walks. Restaurants open and no reservations needed. November through June you can actually make a left turn onto Route 6. December through March: stark, bleak but beautiful. Scrub oaks with leaves that won't drop. Mini icebergs sleeping on the marsh road, blocking access to Lieutenant's Island. Winter storms, real Nor'easters - wind and waves eroding cliffs, uncovering the bones of ancient ships: listen to the stories they whisper to the wind. The Audubon, open for birds to watch you, and Black Capped Chickadees still at my feeder. What would they do without me?

April brings a renewal. The marsh grasses start turning green again and buds on the trees remind us that leaves and shade will soon be here. Birds with nice tans return from the south, looking for a hand-out. May is dressed and ready for summer. More friends of Wellfleet on the weekends portend another busy summer season. More restaurants open. Beaches ready at the end of the month. Don't forget your beach sticker.

Yes, July and August can be a fun time in Wellfleet. Relatives and friends visit. Wine and cheese on the deck, more birds at the feeder, hot sand burning your feet, beach umbrellas escaping in a gust of wind. Occasional mung, and oh yes, the sharks. But they vacation in Truro and Chatham, so no worries mates.

But give me off-season, may I share many more.

Jack Knies



Hurricane Sandy - Patricia Lemme

It Never Snows on Cape Cod

We started coming here from New Jersey with our kids in 1966, but we never drove down to Paine Hollow until we were looking for property in 1972. Fortunately we were here in Wellfleet the week that this property came on the market.

It's a delightful place and it's always interesting. Once the leaves come down you can see Blackfish Creek, Lieutenant's Island and Indian Neck. When the moon is out, it's like a million diamonds out there on the water. We often walk up just to see it.

During Hurricane Bob, the police came around with megaphones to tell us that we were all being evacuated to the Congregational Church. It was a zoo there, so we decided instead to go to our friends who lived on high ground. It's a good thing we did because a tree came down and would have crushed our car. When we tried to get home afterwards we couldn't –from Pleasant Point road on down, locust trees had fallen everywhere. I walked home, got my chain saw, and literally wore it out that week.

Several years ago there was a blizzard on the Cape. It was the most snow I've ever seen. The Chamber of Commerce always says we don't get snow on Cape Cod, but there were 36 inches piled up on my deck. I'm sitting looking out, and a rabbit walks across in front of my window right on the bank of snow.

When the storm was over, we had snow about five feet high against the outdoor shower. I had to get into the shower because the vent to the clothes dryer was at the bottom of the stall – I had to clear it out. The thing was literally packed full of snow from the top to the very bottom. I was curious how much snow was in the shower so I calculated it out: 52 cubic feet. It was nuts, I gotta tell ya!

George and Helen Meyers

(From an interview with Jerry Reilly)



Ducks in a Row by Karen Holtkamp

Can One Ask For More?

As I roam the paths of the town cemetery across Gross Hill Road from our home, I marvel in the history the gravesites tell. The granite headstones repeat certain names: RYDER, ATWOOD, NICKERSON, SNOW, HIGGINS, FREEMAN, SMITH, NEWCOMB, BAKER. Some stones hint at lives lived long ago.

MIZPAH

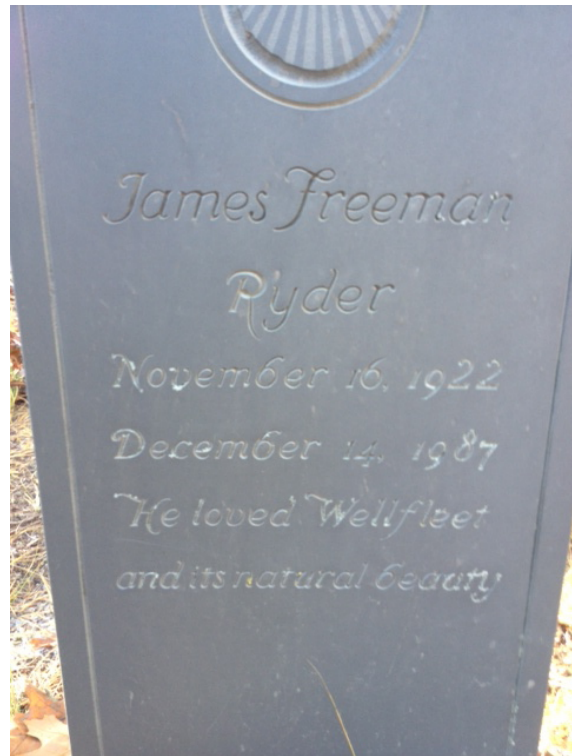
Louis Hamblin
September 18, 1852 – April 10, 1906

Amelia A. M. Owens
His wife
Born, Wales, England April 28, 1836
Died, Wellfleet January 1, 1892

Josephine A.
Daughter of
Benjamin and Victorine O. Hamblen
January 2, 1854
December 14, 1883

Victorine O.
Wife of Benjamin Hamblen
Died, January 2, 1862
Aged 26 years, 3 months, 19 days

Sally B.
Daughter of
Benjamin and Victorine O.
Born March 1, 1856
Died November 22, 1856



Wellfleet Gravestone by May Ruth Seidel

What a family history in one place!

I have made wonderful friends while working on countless projects over the years. Our shared love of Wellfleet brought us together.

At our award-winning library, I can browse and often find a book I've wanted to read. At the W.H.A.T. (Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater), the experience is fulfilling and stimulating, even if not always to my taste. Wellfleet's art galleries highlight the work of local artists. Judith Shahn's silk screens brighten our home.

Of course, the bay, the ocean, the beaches, the peace and quiet, I cherish, and I cherish sharing Wellfleet with my family and friends who make my time here special.

Can one ask for more? Not I.

May Ruth Seidel

Lieutenant Island - Up Close and Personal

Lieutenant Island is a vulnerable place. There are 155 houses on two islands, interdependent around the roads, electricity, water, and the tides. When the tide comes in, you can't get off the island.

One of the great things about living on the island is watching the weather. When we get lightening, it's literally lightening all around. If you're on the beach during a thunderstorm, the lightening strikes right into the water – like right out of the cartoons!

The winter months are very hard on Lieutenant Island. There are power outages, so even if you heat your house, the pipes can freeze. With winter tides, soft ice floes come off the bay and float up at high tide. Then the water recedes and there are icebergs on the road. So it's pretty complex living out here in the dead of winter, which is why we close our house then.

It's wonderful to kayak around Lieutenant Island. You can paddle over to the Audubon Society and see the birds. You can go over to Fox Island and the herons are just sitting in the trees – a Wellfleet phenomenon! And there's something about kayaking on your own, not going in a group, just exploring solo. A more challenging ride is out to Jeremy Point.

Early one morning, we were driving off the island at low tide and saw a series of big lumps in the shallows. They were the pilot whales. They travel together, and their leader was taking them on what looked like a suicide run. There were fifteen whales, all beached and all alive.

We wanted to help, but a rescue group showed up, so we weren't allowed to touch the whales. The reason you need trained volunteers is because you can get seriously injured if one of them flips onto you. The whales were pretty big, and it took a number of people to push each one out to sea. Then they all came back and died. It was a very sad occasion.

When it's low tide at sunset, there's no place in the world like Lieutenant Island. All the purples are reflected in the sand. It's nature up close and personal - and each time it's different.

Linda and Michael Brimm

(From an interview with Jerry Reilly)



Lieutenant Island by Donna Baldassari

“To Love That Well Which Thou Must Leave Ere Long”

The Blizzard of 2013 gets off to a slow start in Boston, but we're ready. We've known for days that "a storm of historic proportions" is headed for New England. By dark on Friday - thank goodness it's a Friday - the wind has picked up and the snow is coming down with convincing intensity.

I sit at my desk and wonder if the power will go off, how long it will stay off if it does, and how cold it will get in my drafty old house. I wonder about those things, but I don't really *care*. What I care about, what would keep me up all night if I let it, is how bad it is in Wellfleet.

I can hear the storm windows rattling in their tracks and the plows noisily making their rounds. I can *almost* hear the waves breaking at the foot of the bluff on which our family's beloved cottage sits. I can all too easily imagine pieces of the dune breaking off and falling into the ocean, shortening the time we have left there.

My relationship with Wellfleet has changed in the last few years. My parents began renting the simple three-bedroom house in the early 1960s and bought it in 1968. I immediately loved everything about the place - the Great Beach, of course, but the Bay, marshes, ponds, woods, and village almost as much. In 1985, we moved the house back so that it now sits right on the property line. Then we more or less forgot about what we could see every time we took a new visitor to Marconi Station. An average of three feet a year just didn't seem like that much.

In 2010, a series of Nor'easters swallowed 20 feet of our bluff. The following year, another 30 feet. This fall, when we dodged the Sandy bullet, there were about 50 feet between the edge of our deck and the edge of the dune. No way to know now how much of that precious footage we lost to this weekend's blizzard.

I no longer count down the weeks until it's time to open the cottage for the season. In fact, I now find it physically painful to think of a place that has meant so much to three generations of our family. It's like having an elderly parent. I don't know exactly what the future holds, but I know it isn't good.

I'm not the only member of my family looking at Weather.com to see how high the wind gusted on the Outer Cape last night, but since I'm the only one who lives in New England, it has an immediacy for me that it doesn't for the others. I'm paying for the proximity that allowed me to spend so much time in Wellfleet over the years, but I'm also trying hard to treasure the memories and remember what Shakespeare said, "To love that well which thou must leave ere long."

Ellen K. Rothman



Photos by Ellen Rothman

Wellfleet Beach Bonfire

On the day of the bonfire, in the first week of July, when our family has gathered for one of the few times a year we are all together, one or two of us go to the Beach Permit shack on the harbor to get permission for a bonfire. Because we are early, we are awarded one of the few permits given for Newcomb Hollow beach.

Later in the day, we pack up the car with buckets of firewood, the big pirate ship kite, a couple of Frisbees, baseball and gloves, beach chairs, and wooden twigs and the makings for s'mores. Before dusk the entire family goes to Newcomb Hollow to fly the kite, toss balls and run in and out of the surf with great abandon. As the moon starts to come up we set about building a gigantic fire. The children continue to play on the beach, while the older members sit in chairs, watching the sky darken as the full moon rises beyond the fire.

Up and down the beach we see other bonfires and imagine what the early settlers saw from their passing ships hundreds of years ago: the Indian fires along the coast of New England, where so many ships were tossed asunder during storms. The sound of the waves hitting the shore reminds us of the eternal power of the much larger world outside our own. It puts our quotidian worries and cares at rest. This is a blissful and carefree time.

Once it is dark, we gather around the fire to make s'mores, putting marshmallows on the ends of twigs, watching some of them burn to a crisp because we've put them too close to the fire, and then finding great pleasure when we succeed in toasting one a perfect brown. We sing a few songs and feel almost pure joy. We don't want it to end.

Eventually, we give it up and return home for a good night's sleep. It's been a stellar evening!

Shirley Blanchard



Beach Fire by Steve Blanchard

The Passage of Time

My family first became acquainted with Wellfleet when I was a little boy. I've been lucky to live in many beautiful corners of the world since then, but I'm always drawn back to Wellfleet. She lures me with her lovely woods and shorelines, the promise of good company, and hopes for delicious food and live classical music. Yet for me, Wellfleet holds a subtler, more profound magic that reaches far beyond the present. I think what most captures my imagination about this place is a strong sense of the passage of time. Wellfleet has a rich history, and it's hard not to notice that things continue to change—from the tides and weather, to the seasonal migrations of people and wildlife, and the slow, inevitable erosion of the entire peninsula into the ocean.

When I go walking on sand roads and undeveloped beaches in the National Seashore, there's always something new and interesting to discover. Yet my mind often wanders to the past, and to what may become of this place in the future. Thoreau and Emerson hiked the length of Cape Cod at a time when the ocean was much richer than it is today. They could still feast on fresh sea clams while they walked along the outer beach, or marvel at seahorses washed up in the eelgrass on the Bay side. But here in the 21st century, nature still has a lot to offer in Wellfleet. When I travel by boat instead of on foot, the world looks very different, and the appearance of the land evolves right before my eyes. I especially like to go in a small boat, preferably powered only by the wind or a paddle. I may then find myself thinking about what life was like for native Americans, and for the many living things that roamed the Cape long before people showed up. I remember as a child being amazed with the idea that the entire Cape owes its existence to the leftover debris of some huge glacier that melted at the end of the last Ice Age, and that it's all going to wash away just a few centuries from now. To me, its temporary nature is all the more reason for us to cherish and care for this special place as well as we can.

One of my most enchanting experiences in Wellfleet took place just last year. I was lucky enough to be able to watch an otter swimming in Dyer Pond, diving underwater from time to time before returning to the surface. If a day comes when I'm no longer able to spend time in Wellfleet, I hope I can at least still remember something like that.

John Douglass



Newcomb Hollow by John Douglass

Where There's A Will . . .

Have you considered naming a favorite Wellfleet-related nonprofit in your will? Your generosity can make a lasting difference to these organizations:

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS THAT BENEFIT WELLFLEET

AIDS Support Group of Cape Cod	PO Box 1522, Provincetown, MA 02657	508-487-9445
AIM Thrift Shop	PO Box 214, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-6622
Association to Preserve Cape Cod	PO Box 396, Barnstable, MA 02630	508-362-4226
Cape Cod Chamber Music Festival	PO Box 1934, North Eastham, MA 02651	508-247-9400
Cape Cod Children's Place	PO Box 1935, North Eastham, MA 02651	508-240-3310
Cape Cod Modern House Trust	PO Box 1191, South Wellfleet, MA 02663	508-349-3022
Chapel of St. James the Fisherman	2317 State Highway (Rte 6), Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-2188
Consumer Assistance Council	149 Main Street, Hyannis, MA 02601	508-771-0700
Council for Homeless Prevention	PO Box 828, Orleans, MA 02653	508-255-9667
Elder Services Meals on Wheels	68 Route 134, South Dennis, MA 02660	508-394-4630
First Congregational Church Wellfleet	200 Main Street, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-6877
Friends of the Cape Cod National Seashore	PO Box 550, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-957-0729
Friends of the Herring River	PO Box 496, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-479-1033
Friends of the Wellfleet Council on Aging, Inc.	PO Box 306, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-0313
The Friends of the Wellfleet Libraries, Inc.	PO Box 857, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-0310
Gosnold, Inc.	196 Terrace Heun Drive, Falmouth, MA 02540	508-548-7118
Grace Chapel Assembly of God	25 Lieutenant Island Road, So. Wellfleet, MA 02663	508-349-9323
Habitat for Humanity Cape Cod	411 Main Street, Route 6A, Yarmouthport, MA 02675	508-362-3559
Harbor Stage Company	PO Box 3009, 15 Kendrick Ave, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-6800
Helping our Women	PO Box 1376, Provincetown, MA 02657	508-487-4357
IFAW Marine Mammal Rescue & Research	290 Summer Street, Yarmouthport, MA 02675	508-744-2000
Independence House, Inc.	160 Bassett Lane, Hyannis, MA 02601	508-771-6507
Lower Cape Outreach Council	PO Box 665, Orleans, MA 02653	508-240-0694
Mass Appeal, Inc.	PO Box 1694, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-1173
Mass Audubon Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary	291 Route 6, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-2615
Mustard Seed Kitchen	PO Box 833, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-3287
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish	2282 US 6, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-2222
Outer Cape Health Services, Inc.	PO Box 1413, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-3131
Sight Loss Services	PO Box 414, West Dennis, MA 02670	508-394-3904
South Coastal Legal Services, Inc.	460 West Main Street, Hyannis, MA 02601	508-775-7020
Wellfleet Affordable Housing Trust	300 Main Street, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-0300
Wellfleet Alzheimer's Association	PO Box 1000, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-737-3328
Wellfleet American Legion	PO Box 950, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-240-3005
Wellfleet Childcare Association	130 Briar Lane, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-7932
Wellfleet Conservation Trust	PO Box 84, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-2162
Wellfleet Food Pantry	PO Box 625, South Wellfleet, MA 02663	508-349-3036
Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theatre	PO Box 797, 2357 Route 6, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-9428
Wellfleet Historical Society	266 Main Street, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-9157
Wellfleet Montessori Preschool	100 Lawrence Road, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-6252
Wellfleet Nonresident Taxpayers Assoc.	PO Box 1323, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-1078
Wellfleet Preservation Hall	PO Box 3024, 335 Main St., Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-1800
Wellfleet United Methodist Church	250 Main Street, Wellfleet, MA 02667	508-349-7217

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