



# THE LAND STEWARD

Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Land Trust

Vol. 20, No. 3

working to protect the natural integrity of the Finger Lakes Region

Summer 2008

## Geneva Land Gift Becomes the Kashong Conservation Area

These days, rapid land development encroaches on people and wildlife from all directions. A recent gift of land, including a significant tributary into Seneca Lake, will add significantly to conservation of open space in the Finger Lakes.

The Finger Lakes Land Trust has helped facilitate Polly Spedding's gift of 84 acres to the Town of Geneva and will hold and monitor a permanent conservation restriction on the land. The land will be protected in its natural state as the Kashong Conservation Area. Kashong is a Seneca name for an historic tribal village that once lay along an adjacent creek and its outflow at Kashong Point.

A farmed property until 20 or so years ago, the Spedding gift comprises a network of fields in various stages of reforestation. The remaining acres are primarily wooded hills of hardwoods. There is also a deep gully fed by a seasonal creek and natural springs running through the property down to Seneca Lake. The higher elevations of the parcel provide good views of the lake.

Spedding's love for her family property is immediately evident. Although at first the family tried farming, that didn't last. "We soon realized," she said, "that we had become so entranced with the

*continued on page 3*



ANDREW ZEPP

*Land Trust Director of Development Jan Hesbon and Senior Field Representative Betsy Landre survey bird species on the 84-acre Spedding land gift.*



HARRY LITTELL©

*Land Trust Director of Preserve Stewardship Betsy Darlington points out a hemlock tree to her 4th grade nature class during a recent field trip to Six-Mile Creek in Ithaca.*

## Betsy Darlington Steps Down as Director of Preserve Stewardship

One of the small cadre of Land Trust founding members in 1989, and a full-time volunteer for nigh 20 years, Betsy Darlington steps down this summer as Director of Preserve Stewardship to a part-time role. She will continue her work with the nature preserves she was instrumental in creating.

The Land Trust is seeking a full-time replacement for her — certainly no easy task.

The love and respect for Betsy here at the Land Trust is overwhelming. As former Board President Jim Kersting put it, "Betsy is the one steady flame, she is always clear on why we are here, she is the founding mother/sister of the organization."

A self-described "environmental activist and amateur naturalist," she has no intention of stepping away entirely. Perhaps the epitome of the volunteer, Betsy plans to lead more nature preserve walks and volunteer crews. She also plans to stay on the Land Trust's editorial board, land committee and the preserve management committee.

That's not sounding much like retirement. But it sounds a lot like Betsy.

A native of the New York City area, Betsy calls Ithaca home — and has for the past 45 years. She received a B.A. degree in anthropology and sociology from the University of Minnesota in 1960. She and her husband Richard came to the Finger Lakes in 1963, when Richard was hired to teach psychology at Cornell. They have two daughters, Jean and Lois, both grown up and both teachers. Betsy and Dick have an eleven-year-old grandson.

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# PERSPECTIVES



As I reflect upon my good fortune working alongside Betsy Darlington for a lucky seven years, I am struck by the marvelous legacy that she leaves, a legacy that includes the best of the two fundamental elements of the Land Trust — land and people.

Betsy's hand is evident in many of the Land Trust's most precious natural areas. In some cases, she played a key role in ensuring their permanent protection. She began with her own family land. Together with her husband Dick, Betsy donated the Land Trust's very first conservation easement, their beautiful hill-top retreat in Tioga County.

She has been tireless in her effort to expand our protected natural areas. From negotiating with landowners to leading donor field trips, she has been involved in every step of the land protection process, shouldering the myriad responsibilities that come with a network of 26

natural areas. Just as important, she has also led the Land Trust's stewardship efforts, working with other volunteers to fight back invasive exotic weeds, maintain boundary lines and clean up trash and debris.

While Betsy's legacy is evident in the rugged grandeur of the Lick Brook Gorge or the expansive vistas of our Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve, her greatest accomplishments are in reaching out to so many people. I am frequently struck by how her combination of enthusiasm and patience has helped to spread the message of conservation to people of all kinds — from wide-eyed school children to burly contractors.

Betsy has touched them all — from the Belle Sherman grade schooler who went on to pursue a career in conservation, to the landowner who became a passionate advocate for conservation, to the volunteer who daily ensures the proper care of our nature preserves.

While we might see less of Betsy around the office during the coming months, we very much look forward to seeing more of her out there where her heart is: on the land, working with volunteers and educating our children about the natural world.

Please join me in thanking Betsy when you see her. Also, take time to celebrate her legacy during the coming year by visiting one of our nature preserves. Think of what she has accomplished as you admire the flashing blue of an indigo bunting, the majestic crown of an old oak tree or the crystal waters of a babbling brook. And keep an eye out for Betsy, as you're likely to encounter her around the next bend in the trail.

—Andy Zepp

## Land Trust Outreach Results in Additions to State Conservation Lands

Efforts by Land Trust staff and volunteers to reach out to the owners of undeveloped lands in identified focus areas recently resulted in two key additions to state conservation lands.

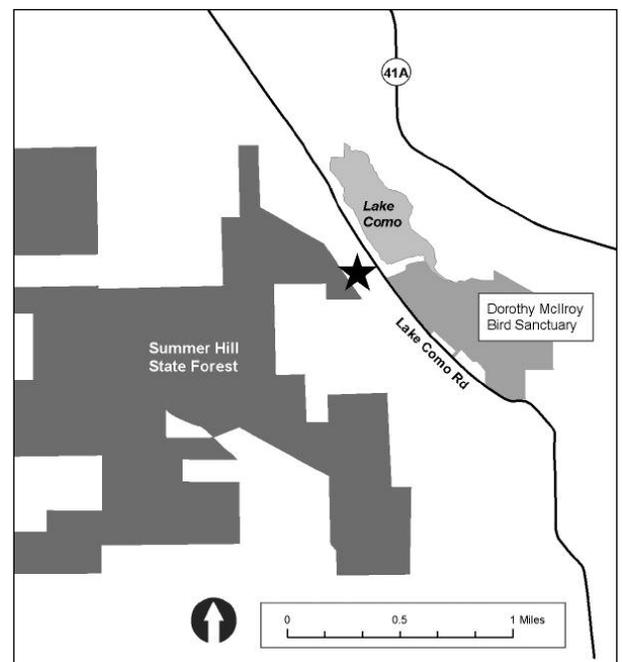
In Tompkins and Schuyler Counties, the Land Trust has been contacting the owners of lands adjoining Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area — an extensive tract of forest that has been recognized by the National Audubon Society as one of the state's Important Bird Areas. The site is also well known as a place for outdoor recreation.

During 2007 the Land Trust contacted a property owner who expressed interest in selling some of his acreage to the state. Land protection specialist Rocci Aguirre subsequently introduced the owner to representatives of the state, and 22 acres were added to the wildlife management area as a result. The parcel acquired by the state consists of upland forest overlooking Cayuta Lake.

In Cayuga County, Land Trust volunteer Nick Gavrielides encouraged the Lake Como Fish and Game Club to consider a sale of its surplus acreage to the state as an addition to adjacent Summerhill State Forest. This sprawling tract of public land occupies a high plateau located between Fillmore Glen State Park and the Land Trust's Dorothy McIlroy Bird Sanctuary.

In March the state completed its acquisition of 20 acres of woodland from the Fish and Game Club that will link the existing state forest to the McIlroy Sanctuary. This addition will also allow for public access to the state forest from Lake Como Road.

These acquisitions, while relatively small in size, are particularly important in that they will help secure some of the largest intact forests remaining in our region.



KAREN EDELSTEIN

A recent state acquisition will link Summerhill State Forest to the Land Trust's Dorothy McIlroy Bird Sanctuary.

# Second Annual Bird Quest Celebrates Nature's Gifts

Though the calendar says it's May, for me it always feels a little like Christmas — a time of rejoicing, the culmination of a year of waiting. For us enthusiasts, birds themselves are the gifts under the tree . . . well, not just under the trees, but in them, and on the ground, on the water and in the air. And so, over Memorial Day weekend, dozens of people joined me in celebrating birds through the Finger Lakes Land Trust Spring Bird Quest (SBQ). We not only reveled in our feathered presents but also gave thanks and offered something of ourselves in return.

I didn't find any stunning rarities, but I did come across almost all of our region's usual breeding birds, plus several seasonally-uncommon species such as Common Loon, White-throated Sparrow and Red-shouldered Hawk. My species tally was 105, two more than last year, including 22 warbler species. The collective tally from all birders was at least 110.

Final fundraising totals aren't yet available, but it's clear that once again, the SBQ raised several thousand dollars for the Land Trust's continued efforts in land preservation. We thank everyone who participated and pledged. We extend special gratitude to Wild Birds Unlimited, Marie Read and the Frame Shop for their generous donations.

The brightest highlights of my weekend came from intimate glimpses of mother birds and their offspring. At the Station Road tract of the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve, I saw a Ruby-throated Hummingbird in a round little nest of white spider silk adorned with lichens. At the Parke-Dabes Natural Area in Varna, I stumbled upon a Wild Turkey hen and two striped and stub-winged chicks toddling along behind, barely three inches long and quite possibly on their first walk from the nest.

It was a special joy to watch birds breeding on these newer Land Trust acquisitions, which, though now protected, only recently were privately held and subject to development. The presence of the birds, from Hooded Warblers to Hermit Thrushes to humming-



BETSY DARLINGTON

Mark Chao (center) and birding colleagues arrive at the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve for the Land Trust's annual Spring Bird Quest.

birds, demonstrates definitively the immediate, profound, and hopefully lasting positive impact of the Land Trust's work.

Birds are indeed a precious gift, infusing our world with color, music and wonder. It is fitting that we should celebrate them during this and every season. But their gift does not come for free. The diversity of birds depends directly on land preservation, which in turn depends on us. As the SBQ emphasizes, if we treasure the birds, we should also try to value and protect their fragile and diminishing habitats. If we do so, then maybe spring might continue to feel like Christmas year after year.

—Mark Chao

## Geneva Land Gift Becomes the Kashong... *continued from cover*

woods and gully that it would be more suitable to our growing interest in conservation and wildlife to allow the entire property to revert to a natural state.”

Over the years, many requests by developers and others to purchase the property in whole or in part came the family's way, but they turned all offers down. After just a few years on the land, they decided that most of all they wanted to let the property go wild — to protect the habitat they valued for the deer, rabbits, pheasants, turkeys, owls and songbirds they had grown to treasure.

Given the Town of Geneva's recent decision to conserve more land within its borders, preserving the Spedding property as a natural area goes beyond simply limiting development. Geneva Town Supervisor Mary Luckern said, “The town is very excited and very appreciative of the gift made by Polly and her family. Not only does the property have wonderful open

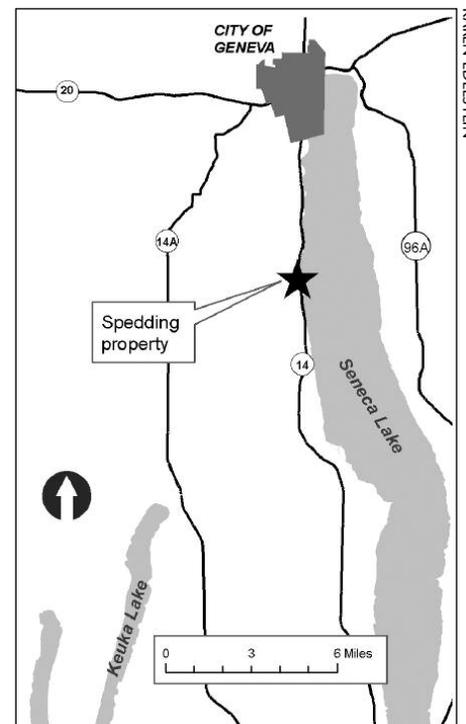
space and recreational value, but it also ensures that the town will have greater protection over its drinking water supply.”

When Polly asked her children about donating the land to the town (rather than it someday becoming part of their inheritance), the kids' reply was instant: “They immediately said that they cherished the land as much as their father and I and that the continued protection of the land would be absolutely their first priority...in other words, they all said, ‘Go for it, Mom!’”

Polly went for it, and the beneficiaries of her generosity are innumerable, not only in Geneva but in the Seneca Lake watershed as a whole.

—George Dillmann

*The Land Trust expresses its gratitude to Attorney Virginia Tesi and the law firm of Barney, Grossman, Dubow, & Marcus for their pro bono legal services in support of this project.*



KAREN EDELSTEIN

# PRESERVE PROFILE

## A Forest Oasis at High Vista Preserve

Last summer, on a hot September midday following two practically rainless months, the Land Trust's High Vista Preserve in the Cortland County town of Scott seemed to me a surprising oasis of cool, moist forest in a desert of brown hay and corn.

Just after leaving the parking lot on Vincent Hill Road and gaining the preserve trail, I was startled by a deafening salvo from a tree close by. I ducked; it sounded like howitzer fire. My surprise was a Pileated Woodpecker gunning for carpenter ants in a beech tree. The normally shy bird, by far our largest woodpecker, ignored my presence and continued to drill into the trunk for several minutes, wood chips flying everywhere. When I finally inched up the trail, the majestic woodpecker swooped off into deeper woods with a prehistoric shriek. I had goose bumps. An open encounter with a Pileated is rare, at least in my experience.

High Vista is pretty much a misnomer these days. Attractive as the forested terrain is, there are no vistas of Skaneateles Lake below, except maybe in winter when the leaves are off the boughs. Still, it's not hard to imagine a time 100 years ago, when most of the land was cleared for farming, when there must have been astounding lake views for those who lived there and worked the land.

The first stretch of the one-mile trail loop introduced me to a forest of young sugar maple and white ash, the sturdiest pioneers of succession from field to forest. Old and gnarled apple and pear trees line certain parts of this trail — remnants of abandoned orchards.

As the trail continues south, tree size increases, the canopy grows higher, and there's gradually a sense of a much older woods, including impressive black cherries, red oaks, tulip trees and beeches. This high-canopy, mature hardwood forest is just the place for the Scarlet Tanager, one of my favorite birds. Not hearing the familiar "chick-brrr" call of a foraging tanager, I moved on. Well, it was hot, and it was September, and for all I knew the tanagers were already Nicaragua-bound. (I'll be back in spring, for sure.)

High Vista lies within the Southern Skaneateles Lake Forest Important Bird Area, as designated by Audubon New York. Uncommon or threatened species in the preserve include the Acadian Flycatcher and the Cerulean Warbler. The latter is known to nest along the preserve's central stream. In all, more than 20 breeding warbler species can be found in the area. Also in residence are forest raptors, including the Broad-winged Hawk and the Cooper's Hawk.

The preserve trail offers nice surprises. The terrain seems an oasis because springs and seepages pop up across the gentle slope toward the lake, creating pockets of wetland habitat in the midst of forest. The trail wisely skirts most of these ecologically sensitive areas, home to cattails, Joe-pye weed and boneset, among other plants. Frogs, water snakes, damselflies and dragonflies also thrive here.

The many seeps along the upland side of High Vista contribute to streams that run together to create a lively gully cours-



*A mature hardwood forest at the High Vista Nature Preserve in Cortland County.*

ing downhill to Skaneateles Lake right through the middle of the preserve. The creek's water is kept cool and clean, from its hemlock-shaded upper reaches to the dense hardwood-covered slopes on its descent to the west. A species inventory of the preserve found the uncommon Spring Salamander in this creek.

Given the parched air, I was naturally drawn to the seductive sound of flowing water in the creek, and I wanted to discover a Spring Salamander under a creek rock. Yet I kept to the trail, suspecting I'd do more harm than good stumbling around in the stream bed. I felt cool just sitting by the stream, dreaming about the woods around me.

In winter, the salamanders will hibernate, burrowed safely beneath an iced-over stream. And I'll think of them as I walk on snowshoes through open woods on cold, white powder snow.

Pulling off my sneakers back at the sun-baked parking lot, I found hundreds of tiny Velcro-like seeds clinging to my socks and laces. In my walk I'd been just as effective a plant spreader as any mouse or deer or fox, and that pleased me. I plucked as many of the seeds off as I could and left them to their fate at High Vista — an inspiring place to grow, I'd say.

—Eben McLane

TO VISIT THE HIGH VISTA PRESERVE, FROM CORTLAND, go north on Route 281, then northwest on Route 41. At the Cortland-Onondaga County line, turn left on Vincent Hill Rd. Immediately after the bend in the road, park in the parking area on the right. Walk down the road to the trail entrance, on the left (East) side of the road.

## Betsy Darlington Steps Down as Director of Preserve Stewardship *continued from cover*

As a resident of Ithaca and the Finger Lakes, Betsy has contributed much to her community. She was chair of the City of Ithaca Conservation Advisory Council for 10 years, working on various plans to protect local water quality through land conservation along stream corridors leading into Cayuga Lake. She has received the Friend of the Land Award from The Nature Conservancy and Conservationist of the Decade (1990's) from the Land Trust. Her latest award was the 2008 Laura Holmberg Award presented by the Women's Fund last winter. Betsy also plays violin in the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra.

Betsy became involved early in organizing the Land Trust. The organization was essentially the inspiration of Andrew Zepp, then a Cornell graduate student studying natural resources — now the Land Trust's executive director. After exploratory meetings in 1988, Betsy became the first vice-president of the Finger Lakes Land Trust, with Carl Leopold as president, John Confer, secretary, and Lois Levitan, treasurer.

There was a steep learning curve for all involved. Betsy took on the job of figuring out how to structure conservation easements and private land donations for preserve stewardship. She did her homework, and it shows.

In her 20 years with the Land Trust, Betsy has worked tirelessly at the creation and maintenance of these lands, training other volunteers in land stewardship. The naturalist in her has always helped identify the areas most in need of protection. She also organized countless weekend work parties to build trails, control invasive weeds or clean up trash.

Betsy has had more than a hand in planning many of the Land Trust's 26 nature preserves. She's been instrumental in shaping their future, often with the help of local allies — new friends — from whom she sought advice and expertise. She has been an important ambassador for the Land Trust in its quest for recognition and acceptance around the Finger Lakes.

Betsy does not think of herself as an “educator,” but an educator she is, nevertheless. Since 1971, long before her years with the Land Trust, she has been working with teachers and elementary students at the Belle Sherman School in Ithaca, leading nature studies both in and out of the classroom. She has always taught things she was interested in and has a good hunch for what kids would find fascinating, too — salamanders under streambed rocks, spring wildflowers, millipedes and owl pellets. She has no plans to quit her role at the school.

“Betsy Girl” was the affectionate name given her by the children of longtime Land Trust volunteer steward, Carrie Koplinka-Loehr, who has worked with Betsy for many years. Maybe the kids felt a kindred spirit. “Betsy is a natural with children,” Carrie said. “She has such a big heart, such a treasure.”

“She had boundless energy,” Carrie also said. “If we'd planned a two-hour walk over a piece of land, I'd know to plan for four or more.” Jim Kersting similarly observed that on a walk with Betsy, “she could find more interesting things to point out in 100 feet of trail and spend thirty minutes on that first 100 feet.”

“One of my greatest joys is being out in beautiful natural areas and sharing this love with others. I think humans crave connection with the natural world, and it gives me a lot of pleasure to help others experience what I have so many opportunities to enjoy, myself.” That's Betsy talking, of course.

Happier in the field than confined in an office, Betsy's semiretirement is a good thing for her. And she will still be here to remind us to admire common things — Trout Lily, Spicebush, White Ash and Northern Red Oak — local things we'd overlooked before.

Betsy has always helped us see what was before us, and she always will.

—Eben McLane



*Betsy Darlington with her 4th grade nature class on a field trip to see wildflowers at Six-Mile Creek.*

## ***A Legacy of Stewardship***

The Land Trust will honor Betsy Darlington's Legacy of Stewardship by raising \$100,000 over the next two years to launch three new Stewardship Initiatives. The Initiatives will continue the legacy of Betsy's work by providing funds to improve nature preserves and manage voluntary conservation agreements on privately held lands. Specifically, the Initiatives will build a stronger network of stewardship volunteers, develop a systematic technical assistance program for private landowners and create an exemplary network of nature preserves. Additional training will be offered to volunteers, a new series of workshops will be offered on land management practices, and ecological monitoring programs will help protect environmentally sensitive resources and address non-native invasive plant species.

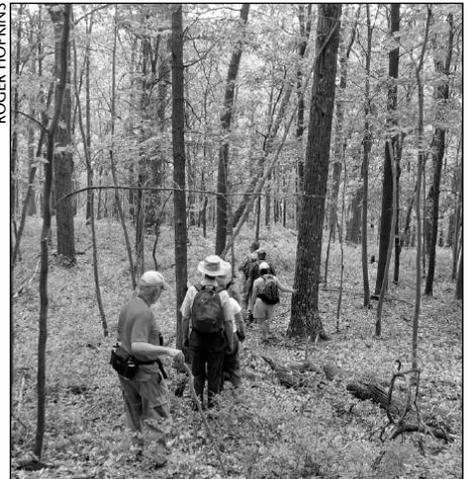
*To contribute to this campaign* please contact Jan Hesbon, Director of Development at 607-275-9487.

# Scenes' from Around Our Region...



BETSY LANDRE

Volunteer preserve steward Eric Cosman displays the new background - featuring a large colorful trail map - for the kiosk at the Wesley Hill Nature Preserve in Ontario County.



ROGER HOPKINS

Hikers from the Cayuga Trails Club on a recent visit to the Steege Hill Nature Preserve in Chemung County.



BOB CLINGERMAN

Finger Lakes Community College conservation professor Bruce Gilman (far right) leads a wildflower walk as part of the Talks and Treks series at the College's woodlot in Canandaigua.

*“Were the whole world filled with the peace and beauty of this special place. Thank you, Finger Lakes Land Trust.”*

*— Comments from the visitors’ log at the Sweedler Preserve at Lick Brook*

EMILY EISMAN



*Participants enjoying the Mother’s Day Wildflower Walk at the Sweedler Preserve at Lick Brook led by Field Botanist Bob Wesley – part of this year’s Talks and Treks series.*

BETSY DARLINGTON



*Volunteers Ron Bower (left) and Ed Hart pull up garlic mustard at the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve.*

BETSY LANDRE



*(left to right) Land Trust President Jim Kersting with Dick Cole, volunteer steward for the easement donated by the Morse Conservation Club, and Jim Walsh, one of the 20 owners of this property.*

BETSY DARLINGTON



*Volunteer preserve steward Tom Reimers at the King Nature Preserve in Tioga County.*

## Conservationist of the Year: Howard Hartnett

Honoring Howard as a conservation hero of the Finger Lakes Land Trust is pretty darned easy.

Early on, Hartnett absorbed his grandfather's simple argument for investing in land — "They're not making it anymore" — and eventually turned it into a personal philosophy of land protection and stewardship.

Last year an 11-acre parcel of Owasco Flats wetlands in Moravia, Cayuga County, came up for sale at a county auction. Fearing development of the sensitive wetlands property, the Land Trust had sought to remove it from the auction block, so as to negotiate later with the county. The Land Trust's efforts were rebuffed.

Hartnett, a Land Trust board member and longtime Moravia resident, independently stepped up and, with his own money, won the auction over a bidder whose clear intention was to develop the land. Hartnett will now work with the Land Trust and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to arrange transfer of the property to the state as part of a broad plan to conserve lands in the Owasco Flats area at the southern end of Owasco Lake.

A banker for M&T Bank in Ithaca

and Binghamton, Hartnett wasn't aiming for material profit but for another sort of profit: protected land for the future of Owasco Lake.

The Land Trust's recent Owasco Flats Planning and Stakeholder Survey Project in Moravia had him thinking about the future of the Owasco Flats and its effect on lake water quality.

"We need to step up to the plate to ensure that there is no further adverse development of the flats," Hartnett said in a recent statement to the Land Trust.

The Owasco Flats and the health of Owasco Lake waters, in general, have been in the news recently because of increasing concerns about nitrogen and phosphorous runoff. Hartnett knew the flats well and wanted to conserve and improve them for the sake of the Owasco Lake community.

"Howard was born and raised on Owasco Lake, works among the Lakes, and interacts with people in the community who have that same sense of place,"



Howard Hartnett

said former Land Trust Board President Jim Kersting. "He helps bring the Land Trust and those people together."

Hartnett is an unflinching contributor to many local nonprofit organizations in the Finger Lakes area. He is board chair of Tompkins County Area Development, and a board member of the Community Foundation of Tompkins County, Longview at Ithaca, Tompkins County Library and Powers Library in Moravia.

Land Trust Executive Director Andy Zepp applauded Hartnett's conservation courage. "Howard single-handedly rescued a key piece of wetlands from imminent development," Zepp said. "He stepped up, with his own money, and secured land that will ultimately become part of a new state wildlife management area."

Individual efforts often define the character of a larger organization, and Howard Hartnett's personal contribution to the Land Trust's mission this year has helped shape not only the Owasco Flats initiative but the more general goal of watershed protection throughout the Finger Lakes.

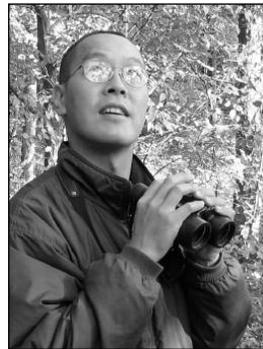
Thank you, Howard Hartnett.

— Eben McLane

## Volunteer of the Year: Mark Chao

In 1993, far from Ithaca, before ornithologist and writer Miyoko Chu married Mark Chao, she gave him a set of binoculars. They proved to be an investment of compound interest for the Land Trust, eventually leading to Mark's becoming one of the most capable, passionate and vigorous volunteers the Land Trust has ever had, according to several staff members. Despite an urban Boston childhood devoid of experience or interest in the natural world, with those new binoculars Mark took to birding like a goldfinch to a field of thistles. His first time out he was hooked.

Mark and Miyoko settled in Ithaca in 2001. Shortly after, he heard from the local birders about the Land Trust preserves, which surprised and delighted him in their size, beauty and variety of wildlife. "It's no accident that these lands have been saved from development," he said. "It's the result of great vision and work of the Land Trust, as well as Cornell and other community institutions, and the generosity of everyone who has supported



Mark Chao

these groups."

Mark began to think about how to form a link between the Land Trust and the birding community he had grown to love. In 2006 he decided to do a bird-count

fund-raiser and brought in more than \$2000. In 2007 he invited others to join him. With those 25 participants he raised \$6000.

"The event wasn't particularly challenging to organize, especially with the help of Emily Eisman and Bob McGuire," Mark said. "And the Land Trust has built such a positive reputation that I didn't exactly have to twist people's arms to persuade them to support the event and the

organization."

The main thing, he added, is to join the "great fun of ... seeing lots of different species of birds at their most active, behaviorally fascinating time of year, and sharing the sightings with others."

Mark's volunteer contributions are not limited to fundraising and sharing his love of birding. Land Trust Office Manager Abbey Chernela describes Mark's writing for the Land Steward as "always interesting, engaging and accessible for people without scientific background." Abbey added, "We trust his judgment because he's always right. He does a lot of research and is accurate and thorough."

After staffer Emily Eisman read Mark's writing, she wondered what else can this guy do! She found out: he brought the staff his delicious homemade sushi.

Mark Chao has been as precious a resource to the Land Trust as the preserves and birding community have been to him.

—Margot Brinn

# Going Coast-to-Coast for Conservation

What else would two eccentric, middle-aged past presidents of the Finger Lakes Land Trust have in common? It's not where they live. Geographically, the space between their respective homes practically spans the entire Finger Lakes Region. And it's certainly not their respective vocations: one is a freelance journalist, while the other is a retired counselor. No one could have predicted the outcome when the two of them happened to cross paths a few months ago in the Land Trust office. Our jaws dropped when Jim Kersting challenged Brad Edmondson to join him on a bike ride across the United States and, without skipping a beat, Brad accepted.

The presidential pair have christened their mission "Coast to Coast for Conservation," with the intent to raise awareness of the efforts of groups that protect America's most scenic and ecologically important places. In addition, the two have established a goal to raise \$25,000 for the Land Trust through pledges for each mile ridden. "This is something I have always wanted to do, and now is the

time," said Brad. "Knowing that I'm riding for the Land Trust might make it a bit easier to get up those hills."

To help achieve the cyclists' financial goal, the family of the late Albert B. Craig, Jr. has offered a \$12,000 challenge grant in an effort to encourage others to emulate his support of conservation in the Finger Lakes Region. The one-to-one matching grant and all proceeds from the ride will be designated for the \$100,000 campaign honoring Betsy Darlington's legacy of stewardship at the Land Trust.

The intrepid duo will embark on their 4,000 mile trek from Anacortes, WA on August 12, 2008. Jim's wife Sara — also a retired counselor and key Land Trust volunteer for the past 15 years — will accompany the bikers by driving the support wagon. The route will take them through the Cascades to Glacier National Park and then through Wyoming into the Badlands of South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ontario, New York's Erie Canal towpath, and New England. The trip will end on October 27,



*Presidential peddlers Brad Edmondson and Jim Kersting*

2008 at the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge in Wells, Maine, 80 days after the two cyclists start. And in between will be the trip of a lifetime!

To contribute to the efforts of Coast to Coast for Conservation or follow Brad, Jim and Sara as they make their way across the country, please visit their website at: [www.c2c4conservation.org](http://www.c2c4conservation.org)

## In Memoriam



All of us at the Land Trust were saddened by the recent passing of longtime member and conservation easement donor Al Craig, Jr. A resident of Monroe County, Al shared a passion for conservation with his wife Sybil and children.

Former Land Trust president Jim Kersting recalls that he met Al almost two decades ago at the first meeting of the Canadice Comprehensive Planning Committee, where he stood up and proclaimed that the Town ought to be proactive in conserving lands. Kersting remarks that "Al's vision and leadership were an inspiration for others."

Al and Sybil Craig subsequently donated the Land Trust's first conservation easement in the Western Finger Lakes Region — securing the future of their beloved hillside retreat near Canadice Lake. The Land Trust now holds 10 conservation easements in this portion of the Finger Lakes and has protected more than 2,000 acres.

Our condolences and best wishes go out to the Craig family for their loss. We are deeply grateful for donations made in memory of Dr. Albert B. Craig, Jr.:

Betty Jane Altier  
Bob and Sherrill Betts  
Richard and Diane Blevins  
Charles and Nancy Bloomer  
Stuart and Nancy Bolger  
Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Braine  
Josh and Beth Bruner  
Anne and William Buckingham  
Stephen Carter  
The Coons Family  
Walter Cooper  
Mr. and Mrs. David Courtney  
Mr. and Mrs. William Cowgill  
Richard and Diane Dennison  
Dr. Eric M. Dreyfuss  
Janis Dowd  
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Dury, Jr.  
Gerard and Alisa Fanara  
Sherman and Anne Farnham  
John and Suzanne Fitzgerald  
John P. Frazer  
Margaret Freeman  
Bev and Pete French

Carolyn and Roger Friedlander  
James, Brian, and Cassandra Frierson  
Harry and Marion Fulbright  
Lisa and Jon Gandelot  
John and Lindsay Garrett  
Donald and Marjorie Grinols  
Marian Griswold  
Elizabeth and Richard Hahl  
Carolyn Hammer  
Rita C. Hickey  
Arthur and Maureen Holtzman  
John and Bonnie Hood  
Mr. and Mrs. Ierardi  
Sol Israel  
Kathryn Jensen  
Nan and Bill Johnson  
Bob and Margaret Joynt  
Thomas and Elisabeth Judson  
Jim and Sara Kersting  
Mrs. Frederick A. Klipstein  
Mr. and Mrs. Gerard Knebel  
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# Earth Share of New York

Beginning this fall, The Finger Lakes Land Trust will be a member of Earth Share of New York. Earth Share is the federated campaign for conservation and environmental organizations, neither of which is supported through the United Way.

Employees of New York State, of the Federal Government and of participating corporations can make contributions through payroll deduction. If your employer is a member of the Earth Share campaign, you can participate and specifically designate your gift to the Finger Lakes Land Trust, and we hope you will. State employees participate through the State Employees Federated Appeal, and Federal employees participate through the Combined Federal Campaign and should reference CFC #71966.

If your employer does not participate, contact Jan Hesbon, Director of Development at the Land Trust office for more information; call him at 607-275-9487.

## Corporation and Local Business Gifts Boost Land Trust Conservation Plans

Several recent gifts from both large and small companies have energized the Land Trust's conservation plans.

Seneca Meadows, Inc. in Waterloo recently made a gift of \$6,000 as part of a multi-year grant for the Land Trust's Private Land Stewardship Initiative. With this initiative, the Land Trust will complete new conservation easements and also expand its educational outreach to landowners and local officials about the benefits of conservation easements. Seneca Meadows serves the municipal, business and industrial solid waste disposal needs of many communities in the northeast.

A recent grant of \$5,000 from Nucor Steel in Auburn will further support Finger Lakes conservation. Nucor is the largest recycler of scrap steel in New York State, processing about 140,000 tires and other steel scrap, producing about 500,000 tons of new steel each year with a recycled content of 99 percent.

"We're pleased to support the work the Land Trust is doing to support conservation in the community," said Nucor environmental manager Steve Green.

Canandaigua National Bank and Trust has pledged a 5-year grant of \$5,000 to the Land Trust. The gift was announced in April at the Annual Meeting of the Finger Lakes Land Trust by bank manager, Christopher Key.

"We are very grateful for this gift from Canandaigua National Bank," said Land



Chris Key of Canandaigua National Bank presents Land Trust Executive Director Andy Zepp with a check for \$5,000.

Trust executive director Andy Zepp. "It represents a significant vote of confidence to the work of the Land Trust in the western lakes region."

Finally, for the second year in a row, the 2008 Talks & Treks series is being sponsored by local corporations and businesses around Ithaca. M & T Bank, Tompkins Trust Company and HSBC Bank are repeating their support with gifts of \$1,000. Sciarabba Walker & Co. LLP, T.G. Miller & Associates and CFCU Community Credit Union have contributed \$500 and \$250 respectively.

These local businesses have generously supported the Land Trust for years, recognizing the value of reaching out to community members through programs like the Land Trust's Talks and Treks.

The Finger Lakes Land Trust eagerly welcomes local corporations, local small businesses and local citizens.

### *We are deeply grateful for donations in memory of:*

William P. Ewald  
FROM  
Gene and Joan Lane

Jonathan Scholes  
FROM  
Nancy and Charles Scholes

Donald and Virginia Tesch  
FROM  
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### *Our sincere thanks for gifts in honor of:*

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FROM  
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Ed Marx  
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Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Barrett  
FROM  
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David S. Marsh on the occasion of the  
Lakeland Rovers Outing Club's 10th  
anniversary, by the Rovers membership

### *Our deepest appreciation for gift in honor of the wedding of:*

Joanna Coopersmith and Patrick Woods  
FROM  
Leslie Ackerman

# A CLOSER LOOK

## The Mourning Cloak Butterfly

The Mourning Cloak is often the first butterfly of spring in the Finger Lakes, and it is certainly one of our most striking insects. The upper sides of its wings are crenellated and velvety brown or black, edged with a row of iridescent blue spots and bordered with bright yellow (which gradually turns white as the butterfly ages); it is a pattern said to resemble the cloaks worn by mourners in earlier centuries. The lower sides of its wings are mottled brown and gray, and edged with a dirty white border. Because butterflies rest with their wings folded, a perched Mourning Cloak looks almost exactly like a dead leaf. If a hungry bird or other predator manages to see through this disguise, the Mourning Cloak flicks into the air with an alarming click.

Different butterfly species have developed separate adaptations for dealing with the harsh winters of the Finger Lakes. Some species, like the Painted Lady, simply die at the onset of cold weather; the Painted Ladies we see each summer are the descendants of butterflies from southern latitudes that have moved northward with each successive generation over the course of the year.

Other butterflies, like the Monarch, avoid the winter by flying to warmer climes in the autumn and flying back in the spring, breeding along the way. Because the journey takes far longer than a normal butterfly lifespan, the final generation of summer Monarchs enters a non-reproductive state that allows the butterflies to live the eight months or so that it takes to migrate and overwinter in Mexico.

Butterflies adapted to overwinter in the Finger Lakes must be resistant to freezing during at least one stage of their life cycles. Freezing temperatures are dangerous because ice crystals that form inside cells quickly destroy living tissues. A few species, such as the Bog Copper and Southern Hairstreak, overwinter as eggs. Quite a few, including the Viceroy and the Red-spotted Purple, overwinter as caterpillars in various stages of growth. Many others, such as the Black Swallowtail, overwinter as chrysalises.

Mourning Cloaks overwinter as adults, sheltering in hollow trees and the crevices of man-made structures. In the fall, they prepare for winter by reducing the moisture levels of their bodies and producing large amounts of glycerol, a chemical that acts as a natural antifreeze. Once the cold weather starts, they enter a state of suspended animation called diapause. They emerge only when the temperature reaches 60 degrees, and may even be found floating about during unusually warm mid-winter thaws.

The butterflies emerge in spring before the flowers do, but they do not feed on nectar: they prefer tree sap (especially oak tree sap), rotting fruit, animal dung or carrion. The male establishes a territory and selects a perch from which he can survey his turf and watch for passing females. Mourning Cloak males often flit around humans in what seems to be a playful way, but their behavior is a product of nearsightedness, not

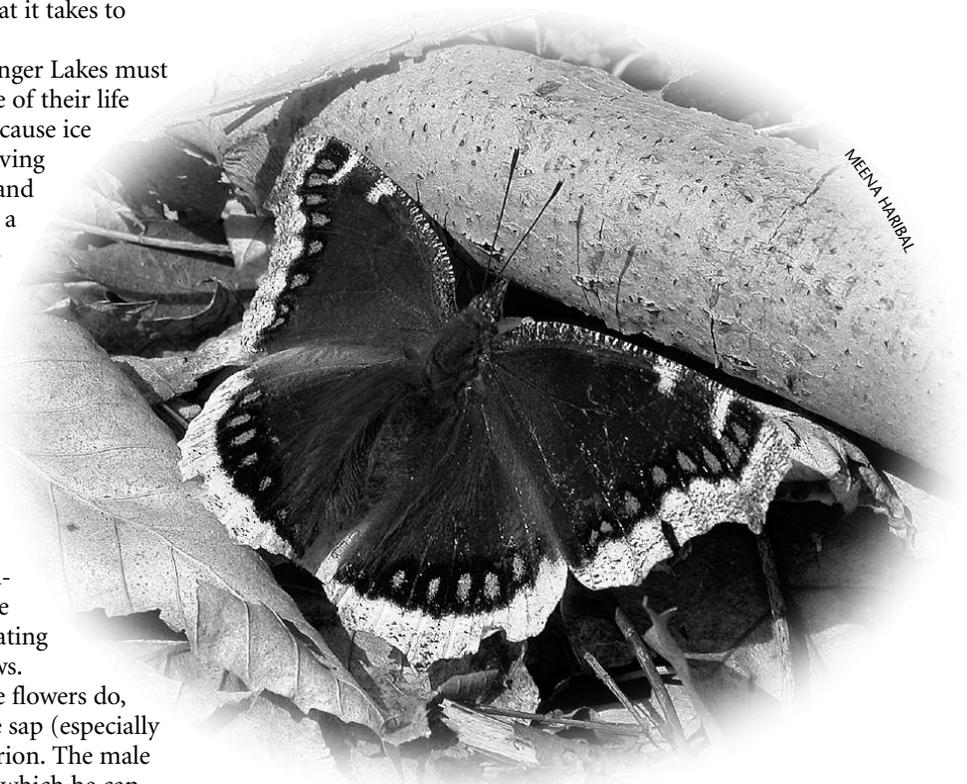
friendliness. Although the butterfly has a visual field of almost 360 degrees, it cannot see very far. Thus it cannot determine whether a passing shape is a human or a female Mourning Cloak without close-quarter inspection.

After mating and laying eggs on willows, birches and elms, the adults die. In about ten days, the eggs hatch into caterpillars, sometimes known as “spiny elm caterpillars.”

They are prickly and daunting in their later larval stages, with black spikes and red protrusions that advertise to would-be predators that they are poisonous. Groups of them can defoliate tree branches quite quickly; however, they do no lasting harm to the trees, which simply wait until the caterpillars leave before sending out new growth.

They eat their way through five larval stages before they pupate and emerge as butterflies in June or July. They then go into estivation — a sort of hot-weather hibernation — during the most uncomfortable part of the summer and re-emerge in the fall to store up energy before entering into diapause for the winter. Most butterflies only live a few weeks, but Mourning Cloaks, with their stop-start life cycles, live up to ten or eleven months.

—Jacqueline Stuhmiller



*Mourning Cloak Butterfly*

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## SUMMER 2008 CALENDAR

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6, 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM: Connecting Land Protection Options and Opportunities in the Canandaigua Lake Watershed.** Find out about the Land Trust's development of a land protection plan for the Canandaigua Lake Watershed and learn about the tools available to landowners and communities for conserving valuable land resources. Questions and discussion will follow the presentation. *Cheshire Fire Hall, State Route 21 in Cheshire. From State Route 21 in the Hamlet of Cheshire, about 5.5 miles south of the City of Canandaigua. The Fire Hall is located south of Cheshire's Company Store on the opposite side of the road.* Event is free and open to the public. For more information, call 585-880-9934. This event is cosponsored by the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Alliance.

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13, 7:30 PM-8:30 PM: The Unique Features and Natural Resources of Southern Skaneateles Lake and Options for their Conservation.** Hear about the Land Trust's current activities around the south end of Skaneateles Lake and learn about what options are available to landowners and communities for conservation of these lands. *Niles Town Hall on New Hope Road, just off Rt. 41A in the hamlet of New Hope.* Call 607-275-9487 for more information

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 19, 7:30 PM-8:30 PM: Land Conservation Options and the Unique Natural Features of Skaneateles Lake.** Find out about the Land Trust's conservation efforts within the entire Skaneateles Lake Watershed and learn about conservation options. *Skaneateles Public Library, 49 East Genesee Street, Skaneateles.* Call 607-275-9487 for more information.

**PLEASE VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT [www.fllt.org](http://www.fllt.org) for the Summer 2008 Talks and Treks Series**

*See our web site for maps and photos of the preserves.*

**WALKS GO RAIN, SUN OR SNOW. PLEASE BRING SNACKS AND WATER, AND WEAR STURDY SHOES. CALL THE LAND TRUST AT (607) 275-9487 FOR DETAILS.**