



# BLOCK ISLAND CONSERVANCY

Dear Members and Friends of Block Island Conservancy

This is my first letter to you as President of BIC. As many of you know, I have served for a couple of years as Vice President and, as you probably don't know, have been a member of BIC for virtually all of its 41 year existence. My wife and I are strong supporters of conservation on Block Island and consider it an essential part of Island life.

I am extremely grateful to Stephen Record not only for his five years of service as President but also for his efforts in making the leadership transition as seamless and easy as possible. The enclosed Newsletter is largely his work, not mine, a product of his commitment to a smooth transition.

My main contribution to the Newsletter is the article "Investing in Our Future." At the risk of repetition, I want to emphasize several points here as well. We enter our 41st year as a strong and well positioned organization. The past months have seen us pass several milestones.

After many months of effort, this September, we filed our application for accreditation with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. Literally hundreds, if not thousands, of hours of work by Board members was required to formulate written policies and procedures covering every aspect of our operations, together with the background research to determine national best practices for each area. Preparing this application has left us with a very knowledgeable and committed Board that has demonstrated its ability to pull together to meet tough deadlines. I am very grateful to the Board for all its efforts.

We made an important commitment to the future of BIC moving into our new permanent office on Weldon's Way in June. In August, we opened a striking new Education Center with wonderful exhibit panels illustrating the history, focus and ingredients of the conservation effort on Block Island. It is our great hope that the Education Center will, over time, not only expand our membership base but spread the Block Island conservation ethic to visitors and parts of the Block Island community that we have not previously reached. Community reaction to the new Center has been very positive, although we were disappointed with the very limited times we could be open.

To build on our recent accomplishments, to grow the organization, and to effectively use the new Center requires some new thinking. The BIC Advisors have been of great assistance in helping us think through the new challenges.

We must find ways of keeping the Center open on a regular basis during the summer and ways to have off-season usage as well. We have already planned for expanded intern coverage for the 2014 season in a cooperative effort with The Nature Conservancy. Funds permitting, we hope to be able to hire a part time but year round Program Director to not only manage the Center but extend its outreach. We see this as an essential part of our mission and a step that must be taken if we are to realize our potential. Finally, we must begin to rebuild our acquisition funds. It is important for us to have seed money on hand since acquisition opportunities often arise suddenly with tight time fuses.

**For all of these reasons, I would like to ask you to join me in making an increased contribution to BIC's Operating Fund for 2013—as an investment in our future.**

Thank you for your past and continuing support for conservation on Block Island and best wishes for the holidays.

Sincerely,

Bill Comings,  
President

# Memorials

**Jennifer Connelly**  
Jeffreis & Company

**Matthew Helterline**  
Family & Friends

**Cathy Riker**  
The Manisses Crew

**Becky Dowski**  
Doug & Maura Foley  
Steve Lighty & Mary Anne  
McGonnigle  
Cynthia Murray  
Christie Sumner  
Nancy MacKenzie  
Stephen & Connie Finn  
Mathew & Elise Hickey

**Jeanette Batchelder**  
Michael & Anna Marie Lofaro

**Roger Aubut**  
Michael & Anna Marie Lofaro

**Bob & Glo Hull**  
Frank Eliot Taylor

**Dorothy Nelson**  
Craig Nelson  
Megan Callahan

**Eileen Dolphin**  
Dan & Rosemary Millea

**Carole White**  
Dan & Rosemary Millea

**Alice Jones**  
Edith Blane

**Claire Pike**  
Dan & Rosemary Millea

**John Connell**  
Dan & Rosemary Millea

**Francis Lorson**  
Linda Greenhouse  
Marjorie Derven & Michael  
Garfunkel  
Mary Donnelly

**Jeane Forbes**  
Jessie Edwards

**John Warfel**  
Jessie Edwards

**John Pinney**  
Paul Doan & Kathleen  
Gormley

**Joseph Devine**  
Ken & Gillian Moss  
Charles & Gail Alling  
Steve & Rita Draper  
Fred & Debbie Howarth

**Joan Abrams**  
Steve & Rita Draper

**Bill Crawford**  
Steve & Rita Draper  
Diane Bean

**Doris & Herman Hassinger**  
Steve & Rita Draper  
Diane Bean

**Joan Dolan**  
Diane Bean

**Leo Raymond Sr**  
Justin Abrams & DJ Horton

**Eric Jess Spirer**  
Trevor & Antonia  
MacPherson  
Leonard & Ruth Perfido  
Alexander Perfido

**Lee Sumner Cushman**  
Christie Sumner

**Capt. JR Lewis**  
John Henry Tripler

**Dorothy Murphy**  
Frank & Toni Buono  
Anthony Buono  
Richard & Gina Mauri  
Rita Buono  
Frank & Luann Buono  
Dept of Teacher Ed,  
Lander University

**Dorothy McCluskey**  
Robert & Mary Bush  
Donna Corey  
Tony Goldwyn & Jane Musky  
Fred & Deborah Howarth  
CC & Carol Kern  
Don & Lydia Littlefield  
Gordon & Frances Smith  
Elizabeth Theve  
Margaret Wingert  
Ellen Jacke  
Laura Parsons  
John Liebman & Anne Fine  
James & Julie Johnson Family  
David & Peggy Lewis  
The Noonan Family  
Nancy Ruddle  
Robert Kilmarx  
Frances Migliaccio  
Ken & Gillian Moss  
Richard & Micheline  
Weisbroat  
William Byrnes & Lisa Bailey  
Ally Bailey  
Bob & Martha Agricola  
Craig Cerone

Lauren Sundstrom  
Althgra Soest  
Dawn Soest  
Richard Soest  
Ken & Stephanie Knapp  
Hugh & Donna Soest  
Marie Michelle deSavigny

**Frank Ruddle**  
Israel & Ruth Zelitch  
Richard & Micheline  
Weisbroat  
Richard & Kerala Saylor  
Marilyn Bogdanffy  
William Leiserson  
Kenneth Huttner  
Tika Benveniste & Casey  
Morrow  
Jennifer Barry  
Marie Siniscalchi  
Helena Ruth Estes  
Marie Louise Landry  
Dana Kalina & Greg Moore  
Alyson Zeitlin  
Adam Manus  
John & Elizabeth Bradley  
Friends of Frank Ruddle

**Nadine Pearce**  
Hiroki Kurita

**Gregor Smith**  
Robert Ellis Smith

**Emily Phyllis Russo**  
Laurel Serratore

**William Transue**  
Bain & Kaylee Transue

# Honors, Celebrations

**Wedding of Marie Snyder & Darren McCormick**  
Jeff & Terry Snyder

**Wedding of Caroline Mullen & Gordon MacGill**  
John & Susan Fullerton  
Anonymous Friends

**The Bayberry Laureates for Conserfest 2013**  
Dean & Beverly Brown

**The BI Wedding of Mary Alice Wilbur & Brian Daly**  
Chris, Crystal, Andrew & Grace Hiza

**Mary Meeker**  
Leon & Carol LaPlante

**Adrian Mitchell**  
Debby Thurston

**Justin Lewis**  
Dean & Beverly Brown

**Ellen Appleby**  
David & Carol  
Appleby-Vanko

**Christmas Honor for Willie Feurer**  
David & Anne McCollogh

**Bill Comings**  
Scott Comings

**Bill & Margie Comings**  
Tom & Pat Doyle  
Steve & Rita Draper  
Jim & Pam Hinthorn  
Cliff & Sara McGinnes  
Clifford & Marianne Mellor  
Fran Migliaccio  
Sam & Linda Spak  
Christina Wileikis  
Fraser, Betty & Neil Lang  
Justin Abrams & DJ Horton  
Barry Saxe  
Michael & Anna Marie Lofaro  
Joseph & Lois Nolter  
Stephen & Mary Sue Record  
Ken Maxwell & Arlene  
Tunney

**Arietta Slade's B-Day**  
Eliot Nerenberg & Amy Jaffe

**Mary Sue Record's B-Day**  
Judy Wiener

**Jean Miste**  
Gregory Miste

**Dorrie Napoleone & Jim Fiorato**  
Beverly Cardinale

**Mr. & Mrs. David Sinclair**  
Alexandra Austin

**Bob, Susie, Travis, Cameron & Hanna Greenlee**  
Nora Underwood

**Nancy Breitling**  
Juliana Flower



# BLOCK ISLAND CONSERVANCY

Block Island Conservancy Inc. Newsletter

December 2013

## BIC Education Center



Photo by Keri Carris

Block Island Conservancy held the grand opening of its new Education Center/Office on Wednesday August 14<sup>th</sup>. There was a ribbon cutting at 3:30 PM, with the ceremonial act performed jointly by BIC President Stephen Record and Lester Nelson. The latter along with his wife and children are principals of the Temper of the Times Foundation, which provided major funding for the Education Center exhibit. Also present were the Board of Directors and State Representative Donna Walsh. (Other dignitaries were invited but unable to attend for various reasons; however, Senator Jack Reed and Representative Jim Langevin set aside time during their Island visit on September 3<sup>rd</sup> for a tour of the Center and a discussion of conservation issues with several BIC directors.) The opening reception was held at the Atlantic Inn from 4-6 PM, during which time guests were transported by van from the Inn to the Center and back.

By means of well-lit panels, the first floor display at the Center tells the story of conservation on Block Island from its beginnings, the land donations of Lucretia Mott Ball and Elizabeth Dickens, through the action of Captain Rob Lewis to rescue Rodman's Hollow

*Education continued on page 6*

## Investing In Our Future

It is an exciting time for Block Island Conservancy. After celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year, we are ushering in a new era built on recent accomplishments. There are great possibilities for new directions and some significant new challenges.

The recent accomplishments are easy to count off. We have completed a spectacular new education center and office for BIC and, after years of preparation, have filed an application for accreditation with the Land Trust Alliance. While there will not be final action on our application for accreditation for many months, there are some immediate payoffs. We have a strong and well trained board of directors, a direct by-product of all the work on preparing for accreditation. For the first time, we have a comprehensive set of written policies and procedures to guide our future actions. We have at least a partial road map of the steps we need to take to build an even stronger organization

Our education center offers many exciting possibilities for growth and increased organizational visibility but to get there we must have the center open on a regular and

predictable basis. This year, we were not able to keep the center open as much as we had planned. We had to devote all available resources to completing our application for accreditation, which had an absolute drop-dead date of September 12<sup>th</sup>. In addition to keeping the center open, there needs to be community outreach, publicity and activities. This will require a combination of greater summer intern support and, as recommended by the Advisory Committee this August, hiring a year around (but part time) staff person.

In leasing the new building on Weldon's Way, your board made a wager that the increased costs would pay off in membership expansion and much higher visibility for the organization. We remain convinced that we are on the right course. We have had significant grant support for the exhibits and will be seeking further grants for program management and capacity building. As we usher in this new era, we must count on member support in the form of increased contributions to BIC's operating fund.

Will you help by investing in BIC's future?

## Solviken Property Update

Thanks to the efforts of the many generous donors in our community, the Solviken property on Corn Neck road was purchased by Block Island Conservancy and the Block Island Land Trust. The final closing on the land occurred in the late fall of 2012. Over the past year we have been working to develop a use program and master plan for the property.

In the spring of this year we were approached by the Committee for the Great

Salt Pond and representatives from the Rhode Island Natural History Survey (Kate Venturini) and RICRMC (Caitlin Chafee) about how they could participate in the project. The idea being to demonstrate the importance of preserving our natural coastal features, native plants, proper coastal barrier protection practices and invasive plant removal strategies while allowing the public to enjoy the Solviken property. Each

*Solviken continued on page 5*

# 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting features LTA's Sylvia Bates

Block Island Conservancy held its 2013 Annual Meeting on October 6<sup>th</sup> at St Andrew Parish Center. Guest speaker Sylvia Bates, Director of Standards and Research at the Land Trust Alliance and liaison to LTA's independent Land Trust Accreditation Commission, opened her presentation by congratulating BIC on 41 years of conservation success. The theme of her presentation was the role of the LTA in helping to ensure that land trusts in all communities have the tools and the support necessary to thrive. She focused on three essential aspects of the LTA's assistance: increasing the pace of conservation activities, enhancing the quality of conservation efforts, and ensuring the permanence of conservation results.

In regard to pace, Sylvia noted that despite the challenges of the tenuous economic climate of recent years, there has been no decline in protection, with 10 million acres added to the conservation rolls in the last 5 years, more than was lost to development. The small size and local nature of most land trusts tends to simplify the search for common sense solutions to save land. Overall there are 1700 land trusts across the country, including 47 in Rhode Island, with a total of 5 million members. By their very nature land trusts are in the business of NOT going out of business. To that end, the LTA works diligently with Congress to make and reinforce the case that conservation is a smart money investment that both protects and helps grow the economy.

The LTA's principal quality initiative is

its accreditation program, a voluntary process established in 2006 to provide public recognition of, and bolster public confidence in, land trusts. Accreditation verifies compliance with the LTA's standards and best practices and creates stronger and more effective organizations through the process itself. Currently there are 229 accredited land trusts across the nation, of which only 2 are in RI, and another 119 in the application process, including BIC. Tellingly, Sylvia pointed out that those 229 accredited land trusts hold over 50% of the protected land inventory, and 160 of them are already pursuing renewal of their accreditation as required every 5 years. The overall view of accreditation, thus, is as a continuing journey toward excellence, not an end point.

Strong land trusts help ensure the permanence of protected land, and accreditation helps prepare land trusts to meet difficult challenges that may arise, such as defending against encroachment on conservation land or violation of conservation easements. The LTA has also established a conservation defense insurance program known as TerraFirma to help land trusts defray the costs of legal defense of conservation land. BIC is a charter member of the TerraFirma program and, upon attaining accreditation, will be eligible for a reduction in premium.

Sylvia closed with the observation that community invokes images of place, and that special places such as Dickens Farm or Mitchell Farm teach all of us, perhaps especially children, the values of humility, patience, and gratitude, convey an under-

standing of our place in nature, and lead to the discovery of what it means to be human. The ultimate test of our conscience may be the willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose thanks we will not be able to hear.

In opening remarks, BIC president Stephen Record presented a summary of the preceding year's activities; these topics are covered in detail in individual articles elsewhere in this newsletter. Four nominees for seats on the Board of Directors were then introduced, all incumbent directors seeking second terms: Bill Comings, Barry Saxe, Logan Mott Chase, and Derek van Lent. All four were elected unanimously. Stephen then announced that he would not be a candidate for another term as board president, and thanked the board and the membership for their vital roles in the many significant accomplishments of the last 5 years.

A sample print of Gillian Stevens's collage painting, "Homage to the Solviken," was unveiled at the close of the meeting and on display during the reception that followed. Please see the article elsewhere in this newsletter for information about the limited availability of these prints for sale, with a portion of the proceeds dedicated to stewardship of the Solviken property.

At its next regular meeting on October 19th, the Board elected the following slate of officers for the next twelve months: Bill Comings, President; Sue Gibbons, Vice President; Shannon Cotter Marsella, Secretary; Debbi-Jo Horton, Treasurer; and Barry Saxe, Stewardship Director.

## Accreditation Update

Block Island Conservancy's Board is proud (and relieved) to report that our full application for accreditation was submitted to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission in September. BIC's accreditation committee worked countless hours over the past winter, and especially during late summer, to complete this extensive process. The accreditation document pro-

vides detailed evidence of our ability to meet twelve standards that represent four indicator practices considered essential for land trust organizations. These indicators include: responsible governance; protection of the public interest with sound and sustainable land transactions and stewardship; ethical operations; accountability to donors and the public; and compliance

with all applicable laws. Although we feel BIC's actions have always met all of these indicators, many of our policies were not formally defined or clearly written, a problem common to most volunteer-led organizations. The process of applying for accreditation required us to formalize and clarify many of our policies and procedures,

*Accreditation continued on page 6*

# STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR'S REPORT

## Experiencing the Habitats We Have Preserved

*Submitted by Barry Saxe*

So much of BIC's time and effort this past year was spent on our accreditation application; it was a year of research, writing and deadlines -- all to what will be a very successful conclusion. The work we did on stewardship files gave me a better appreciation of the great variety of properties which BIC holds.

We own some properties out-right; we own conservation easements on others. We also hold many right-of-way trail easements. Some properties came after lengthy fundraising efforts; some were donated; others were purchased jointly with conservation partners, and some came to us as transfers from The Nature Conservancy. Two "star" acquisitions that were jointly purchased are the Hodge property off Corn Neck Road and the Solviken property overlooking Crescent Beach.

Now is a good time to sit back -- or go out walking -- and consider the diversity of habitat, views and trails that BIC has helped to preserve. The range is truly amazing, from beach-front (Bonnell Beach) to marsh (McCluskey) to stone-wall enclosed fields (Petit and Martin) and ponds (Murphy and Alker). Some primarily offer an overlook -- but a beautiful one, such as Attwood and Ray Durfee.

Finally, some properties are there just for themselves: the vegetation and wildlife are left to thrive on their own, with little or no access by humans. Such a place is the "Rookery" at the end of West Beach Road, a locale disturbed by none but the herons and egrets and other creatures of the marsh edges.

Our McCluskey property (aka "Skipper's Island") has a long and interesting history, dating back to the very early days

of Native Americans on Block Island. However, the property tends to be overlooked because it lies at the end of a long and bumpy dirt road --- Skippers Island Road -- the first left after Andy's Way on Corn Neck Road. The access path to this lovely property starts at the end of Skipper's Island Road where there's a small parking area. Along the way you will see grassland, marsh, native and (unfortunately) some invasive brush. Of interest are the many birds you might see, including the state-endangered northern harrier and the inescapable red-winged blackbird. At the high point of the trail is a stone marker that honors a site from approximately 500 BC where a native American village once stood -- a place to stop and contemplate the Island's long history. Past the marker, the trail veers to the left and comes to a great expanse of marsh and tidal flats. Look and listen ... and enjoy!

## ConserFest Raises the Bar

Now in its sixth year, ConserFest has continued to deliver. Through music events, ConserFest is doing its part to raise awareness about the importance and tradition of land conservation on Block Island. The response has been amazing, and this year was bigger and better than ever.

The concept of ConserFest came from a conversation between ConserFest founders Cameron Greenlee and Justin Lewis, and Lewis' father David, a former BIC director. David told them that if they and their friends care about the Island then it was time to take some ownership. The efforts of Block Island Conservancy have proven inspirational to the group, who recognize the importance of raising awareness for land conservation among the younger generations. "We realized

that many of our peers were unaware of the personal effort and financial sacrifice required to keep Block Island as open as it is today. It's time for us to step forward as the next generation of conservation leaders," Lewis said. Through benefit concerts, ConserFest aims to further the work of BIC and reach out to young members of the community. The growing support over the past six years has shown the community that the next generation has stepped up and their voices are being heard!

The 2013 events took place over two days at five venues including Poor People's Pub, Club Soda, Captain Nick's, Fred Benson Town Beach Pavilion and McGovern's Yellow Kittens. The events began on Saturday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> on the Summer Stage at Poor People's Pub from 3-6 pm. Musical performers included Bran-

don Morris, Homeslice featuring Travis Greenlee, The Max Balmforth Band, and Bonfire Bandit. In the evening, the celebration continued at Club Soda with musical performances by Kristin Plater, The Shades and Viennagram. On Sunday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, starting at 11 am and lasting until 4:30 pm, ConserFest rocked at the Fred Benson Town Beach Town Pavilion. Throughout the course of the day the crowd was entertained by nine performances including DJ Libre/Soundsystem, the Block Island School, Alex Brady, Mr. Kowalsky, John Fuzek, Christina Holmes, Phil & David Turano, Frank Viele and The Johnny Lingo Trip. From the beach the festivities moved to Captain Nick's from 4:30-7 pm. On the Sunshine Stage performances were enjoyed from Cooper

*ConserFest continued on page 4*

# TREASURER'S REPORT

## FISCAL YEAR 2012/13

*Submitted by Debbi-Jo Horton*

The Block Island Conservancy has stepped up its fundraising efforts and was able to complete the purchase of the Solviken property and fund the opening of our new Education Center located on Weldon's Way. BIC, in partnership with BILT, is now in its second phase of work developing the maintenance plan for the newly acquired Solviken property and will continue its efforts to financially support those efforts. With the focus of fundraising for the important Solviken acquisition and despite the efforts of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, in general, contributions over the last twelve months have been down from the previous fiscal year. General donations for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013 were \$45,719 versus \$68,344 the previous fiscal year.

The 2012 ConserFest events were very successful and BIC received a net income of \$9,167 from those fundraisers. Interest income on CDs and money market accounts continues to be weak due to low interest rates. The above-mentioned funds constitute BIC's operating and land acquisition account and are dedicated to covering operating costs which include maintaining an office with a part-time paid administra-

tive assistant, keeping our members and the community informed of our endeavors and supporting our conservation partners on the island. Operating funds also cover attorney's fees relative to land acquisition, appraisals and the expense of the annual financial review and tax return preparation by our accountant. BIC continues to pursue accreditation and has placed our completed application to the Land Trust Alliance for review. The addition of the new Education Center put a strain on the operating funds, but is a much needed step forward towards recognition in the community as an integral part of conservation on Block Island. If you haven't stopped by the new location, it is a must!

In the fiscal year ending June 30, 20143 operating funds generated by donations, the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala, and investments totaled \$86,595. Operating expenses totaled \$108,210 for a net loss of \$21,615. Much of this net decrease is due to the startup of our new education center.

BIC is past the final year of Mitchell Farm pledges. The balance of pledges due is \$20,000 that was payable by the end of 2012. \$50 was written off as uncollectible this fiscal year, a negligible amount given the total raised.

cal artists including Peter Gibbons, Emily Lindquist, Fred Poisson, Will Gasner, Noah Gasner, Lesley Ulrich Helterline, Whitney Knapp, Rachel Lemoine, Jessie Edwards Studio, Celeste Helterline, Mary MacGill, John & Laura Breunig, Patrick Evans, Tracy Finn and Lisa Sprague.

Over the two days, more genres of music were featured than previous years and included 21 hours of live music, which was free to the public. New this year was a

As most of you are aware, BIC and BILT worked in partnership raising money for the acquisition of the Solviken lots on Corn Neck Road. Most of the financial effort during the last fiscal year was dedicated to raising funds to support this purchase. At the November 30, 2012 closing BIC did not have the cash to fully fund the closing. The balance of the funds to close was provided by BILT in the amount of \$148,378.50. The balance of pledges due as of August 31, 2013 is \$122,280.

The Stewardship Endowment Funds at the Rhode Island Foundation have grown slightly and BIC elected to receive the annual proceeds of those accounts to enable more funds to be available for land acquisition. Proceeds from the RI Foundation Stewardship Endowment Fund were \$9,807. Memorial and honorary donations last year were \$10,065. Interest income was \$447. In all, including gains representing reinvestment of income in the endowment funds, income to Stewardship in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013 was \$47,116 against expenses of \$23,612 for a net gain to stewardship of \$23,504.

We are thankful for the continuing support of our members. This support enables us to continue our commitment to protect Block Island's natural heritage, rural character and public access to its resources by preserving land as open space through acquisition or via conservation easements.

*ConserFest continued from page 3*

Rivers, Cheers Elephant and The Booze Beggars. The Main ConserFest event occurred at McGovern's Yellow Kittens from 9:30-Midnight. The evening's music began with DJ Peter Dante/DJ Libre, and Naya Soundsystem followed by headliner Giant Panda Guerilla Dub Squad. The annual Silent Art Auction occurred at this event and featured donations from fifteen lo-

affle and a ConserFest team in the Block Island Triathlon in which athletes received pledges from family and friends to support the efforts. All in all it was a very successful year for ConserFest with high attendance at all events and a final donation being made to Block Island Conservancy totaling \$14,000.00. Thank you to all who volunteered their time and supported the efforts of 2013 ConserFest! Your hard work has paid off and is appreciated.

Published by Block Island Conservancy, Inc., P.O. Box 84, Block Island, RI, 02807 • 401-466-3111

Bill Comings, President

This newsletter was prepared by Martha Ball, Laura Michel Breunig, Bill Comings, Tom Doyle, Sue Gibbons, Debbi-Jo Horton, Shannon Cotter Marsella, Leonard Perfido, Stephen Record, Barry Saxe, Derek van Lent, and CRI Design.

*Solviken continued from page 1*

group is very excited about the possibilities of adding educational elements to showcase our various conservation efforts through this very accessible property.

To that end we have had several meetings to determine the contributions each group can make to the project, develop program ideas and discuss master plan concepts for the site. Another meeting is scheduled for late this fall to carry the design process to a point where we can begin to develop phase one final plans for pricing of the work. Derek van Lent, president of Van Lent Associates landscape architects and a BIC Director, has donated his firm's services to help create the master plan for the property. They have prepared a preliminary

base plan for the site and created multiple concept plans to stimulate the group discussions. Cherenzia Associates engineering and survey professionals have been hired to coalesce the available base survey information so that it may be used as the basis for this design process.

The overall goal is to produce a low impact design for the site that will provide educational opportunities for our conservation groups to demonstrate proper coastal feature management practices to our members and the public. Through the preservation of this property, we will educate the public about the benefits of open space conservation and the variety of proper techniques to achieve this in the coastal environment.

## BIC Advisors Annual Meeting

The BIC Advisors met on August 10<sup>th</sup> with BIC Board Members and made strategic recommendations to the Board for the next year.

Based on the establishment this summer of the BIC Education Center and Office on Weldon's Way which gives BIC the opportunity to reach a broader public in new ways, the Advisors recommended the development of "a Membership Program with annual levels of giving and corresponding levels of benefits to support BIC operations, including a Director, an Intern Program and the Education Center". They also recommended that the annual Membership Program appeal should be separate from Land Acquisition Program appeals for specific property and easement acquisitions, and that BIC invest in a database program to comprehensively manage all of its Programs, to transition to an electronic relationship with Members and to develop an interactive website.

The Advisors agreed that the joint proposal of several organizations, including the Committee for the Great Salt Pond, to develop the Solviken property as a demonstration project for how to handle changing coastal conditions should be pursued. However, they recommended to "keep it simple, minimize parking, encourage walking, provide leaflets with info on its significance as an example of changing coastal conditions, have weekly education programs during the season, and make sure the public can enjoy it while protecting it".

In the next few months the Board will give careful consideration to these various recommendations, with a view to taking appropriate actions on them, if possible, in the first half of 2014.

## Prints by Gillian Stevens to Help Conservation of Solviken Property

Giclee prints of Gillian Stevens's collage painting "Homage to the Solviken" will be available in two limited editions through the Jessie Edwards Studio with 25% of the net proceeds donated to benefit Block Island Conservancy's next phase in the conservation of the Solviken property.

A framed print was unveiled at Block Island Conservancy's Annual Meeting on Sunday, October 6. It will also be on display at the Conservancy's new Education Center in the renovated Old Schoolhouse on Weldon's Way behind the Figurehead building. The prints are being offered rolled in tubes in two editions: ten 19" x 30" numbered and signed prints at \$500.00, and 200 16" x 23" numbered and signed prints for \$250.00.

Matted prints and matted and framed prints will also be available through the gallery, which will be taking orders as of October 6 until the editions are sold out.

These prints vividly replicate the original collage which was exhibited in the Jessie Edwards Studio in August. (It was snapped up within hours.) The 20 7/8" x 33 3/4" collage depicts the Solviken House in its final state of poignant dilapidation after decades of disuse, neglect, stormy weather, and the most recent battering by Hurricane Sandy in October 2012. Because of its extreme deterioration, the house was razed in the spring, although the stone foundation is being preserved to be incorporated in the plans for overlooks and paths. The Solviken House lives on in Stevens's wonderful artwork.

## Planned Giving: Planning Now To Give Later

Block Island Conservancy is pleased to announce that through its partnership with the Rhode Island Foundation, it has access to planned giving resources and professional endowment management. Block

Island Conservancy has an endowment at Rhode Island Foundation. There are a variety of options available for bequests, charitable remainder trusts, charitable gift annuities and the like. The Rhode Island Foundation

is the largest and most comprehensive funder of nonprofit organizations in Rhode Island. BIC's Treasurer Debbi-Jo Horton is available to discuss these or other planned giving options.

# Education Programs With The Nature Conservancy Continue

**B**lock Island Conservancy continues to support The Nature Conservancy's education program through its annual donation. Through the program, Scott Comings is able to work closely with students in preschool through high school. Many students will benefit from TNC's programs through their entire educational lives on Block Island, allowing them to scaffold their knowledge and grow up learning about and appreciating the unique environment in which they live.

One exciting program actually started in March of 1999 and still continues today. Block Island School fifth graders do an almost weekly collection of data of the life on the beach in front of the Surf Hotel. Accompanied by Scott and their teacher Shannon Cotter Marsella, the students list every animal, plant, and algae found on the beach on a given day. In the spring they compile a list of everything they found and create "identification cards" for each species, which includes a description, range and habitat, an interesting fact, and a drawn picture. The students then classify the cards the following year in sixth grade. The cards have been kept in the middle grades science classroom,



and they now have 14 years of data!

BIC will remain committed to the education programs of Block Island's youth indefinitely because they are the future of Block Island and the next members of BIC.

Some of the other education programs this year include:

- 148 Block Island School and Block Island Early Learning Center programs.
- Scott is a co-teacher for a field biology class for juniors and seniors, sponsored one independent study, and mentored a student for a senior project.
- Employing summer interns, including Block Island students.
- 90 walks for the general public.
- 28 special walks.
- 20 Camp Mohegan programs.

## *Accreditation continued from page 2*

and has resulted in a policy manual that will support clear and consistent decision-making and practices even as the board changes over time. We are now awaiting the scheduling of a conference

call with accreditation commissioners during which we will be asked to respond to questions and confirm our knowledge of and commitment to our own policies and procedures. Stay tuned for an announcement of our accreditation status!

## *Education continued from page 1*

to the present in which Captain Lewis' descendants continue to play a leading role. Also explained is the genesis of the three conservation groups on the Island. The second floor office affords room for board meetings and work sessions.

The Center is located in the Old Schoolhouse building on Weldon's Way, directly behind the Figurehead Building at 234 Water Street. Please plan to visit the center and encourage others to do so, to learn about and become more involved in conservation on Block Island.

The Center started with a recommendation from the summer 2012 Advisors Meeting that BIC have an identifiable physical presence in the community. Prior to this the directors met at the American Legion Hall in New Harbor and had an office in the basement of St. Ann's Episcopal Church. In autumn 2012 a search began for a site both suitable and affordable. Once a suitable space had been located, planning for the education center itself began in earnest, and a grant from Temper of the Times Foundation was secured. A temporary part-time manager was in place prior to the opening; and with the help of both directors and volunteers, the Center was kept open four hours daily through Labor Day and on weekends through Columbus Day.

Planning for the future is at present an ongoing item on the BIC Board's agenda. A subcommittee is at work on finding a suitable permanent part-time program manager and determining what his or her duties would be. A bright future beckons.

As always Block Island Conservancy recognizes that none of its initiatives would be possible without the generous support of its donors, and in this instance Pat and Shirley Howe and The Block Island Fund deserve special mention along with the Nelson Family and the Temper of the Times Foundation.

## Block Island Conservancy Board of Directors:

**Bill Comings, President**  
**Sue Gibbons, Vice-President**  
**Debbi-Jo Horton, Treasurer**  
**Shannon Cotter Marsella, Secretary**  
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