



EAST
HAMPTON

Trails Preservation Society

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EHTPS: A Brief History

By Jeri Wellman

EHTPS is more than thirty years old. It began with a group of about twenty-five horseback riders who loved riding through the great woods of Northwest, Springs, Amagansett, and Montauk. When land development started to block many of the trails, these men and women decided to do something about preserving them. Today, there are more than 600 families who support the lofty mission of this organization. We've come a long way from that small band of riders. This is how it happened.

Lee Dion was the first president. He said, "In the mid-sixties, I could ride my horse for twenty-five miles through the Northwest woods without the necessity of riding along the side of a road...By the early 80s, I could just about ride one mile before I'd have to cross a road and walk along the side...I remember riding in Montauk with 25 horsemen down Main Street blocking traffic, trying to make our plight understood, and, as I recall, it didn't even make the *The Star* that week."

The founders had some success in their preservation efforts once they started lobbying the Town. During Lee's tenure, the Grace Estate was preserved. Springs resident George Sid Miller, a member of the Town Planning Board, used his influence to make sure that trails and trail links were set aside during the planning process. And visionaries like Rick Whalen and Mike Bottini broadened the canvas. They had studied the town maps, knew the trails that were out there, and had eyes that could see where new trails could be developed. The Northwest Path, the trails through Springs and Stoney Hill, the Money Pond Trail, and, the crowning jewel, our remarkable section of the Paumanok Path, made hiking, biking and horseback riding a dream come true. The story, however, does not end here.

Leadership is key to the health and growth of any organization and EHTPS has had its share of great leaders. Each brought experience, wisdom, and vision to the job and each has made a lasting mark.

Richard Lupoletti saw EHTPS as a home for people who liked to walk in the woods, get their exercise, and meet like-minded people. He brought a more formal structure by creating various committees to carry out the mission. Richard described his most memorable accomplishments: "We increased membership from 40 to 400 member families and the number of sponsored hikes from 20 to 125 hikes a year." Perhaps his most exciting project was the completion of the East Hampton section of Long Island's Paumanok Path which officially opened in October, 1998 to coincide with the 350th anniversary of the

founding of our town. Working feverishly, four to five days a week, the trails maintenance committee (affectionately known as the "Geezer Brigade") cleared trails, built bridges over wetlands, and arranged transportation and celebration details. The result was a 48-mile hike, done over four glorious October days, from Town Line to the lighthouse. With lots of help from his supporters, and with the force of his extraordinary personality, Richard helped to make EHTPS an indelible part of the landscape of our town. Richard will be spending most of the winter months in Florida as does his predecessor Lee Dion.

Gene Makl followed in Richard's large footsteps and made his unique imprint on the organization. A retired engineer with a lot of managerial expertise, Gene set his sights on making sure EHTPS had some clout in government decisions regarding preservation. He said, "...we started putting people on a lot of the committees in town. We had representatives on the Comprehensive Plan. We had representatives on the Nature Preserve Committee. We had representatives on the Planning Board, and we still do. And even though since then, the Town Board has

changed, we do have, I think, the recognition that we deserve...EHTPS works to influence the town, the county, and the state to protect the natural beauty we have...and has been successful in helping those groups to support open space and protection of trails." When Gene left office he said that "...a lot of people look to EHTPS, not just for hiking, not just for getting out-of-doors, but as part of their retirement plan. It certainly became a big part of mine." Gene continued to serve the organization as vice-president of trails planning and as a vital member of the trails maintenance group. This fall, he and

his wife Arlene moved to New York City. His mark on EHTPS is significant.

Following Gene, and, in his own words, "very reluctantly," came Ed Porco. When asked about his tenure, he said: "Well, frankly, I didn't want to be president...Gene convinced me that I ought to try, and it turned into a wonderful experience...I didn't know what I was going to do but I realized early on that I wanted the group to be a community." Actually, his accomplishments were many. In collaboration with a local travel expert, he initiated what was to become, yearly out-of-area hikes out west and to other countries. Participants' common interests made these group excursions memorable. He enlisted the help of member Ray Hartjen to secure grants to underwrite a variety of projects including a grant to put information kiosks at some of our more popular trail-heads. Ray also helped to promote our mission through the development and sale of trail maps (artfully created by Charles Whalen and Rick Whalen) and trail and kayak guides written by our own Mike Bottini. In addition, Ray was the guiding architect of the magnificent



EHTPS Presidents, from left to right, Ed Porco, Lee Dion, Gene Makl, Jim Zajac, Eva Moore, & Richard Lupoletti.

RICK WHALEN

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Can you hear a rustle stirring beneath the beautiful stillness and quiet of East Hampton off-season? Perhaps it's the sound of volunteers from the East Hampton Trails Preservation Society eagerly at work.

In the last several weeks, crews from EHTPS have been teaming with Town, Suffolk County and New York State employees to create new trails within the Amsterdam Beach Preserve in Montauk recently purchased from legendary talk-show host Dick Cavett and his wife. The 77-acre property will offer a short loop, access to Atlantic Ocean views, and dedicated parking, as well as a link to the Paumanok Path. Look forward to inaugural hikes sometime this spring.

In Amagansett, EHTPS is cooperating with the Peconic Land Trust to add a few hundred yards of trail east of Accabonac Road in Stony Hill between the Paumanok Path and another existing trail to create a short, easy loop entirely within the Trust's Silver Beech Preserve. We also helped flag a new link between the two trails in Stony Hill now ending at Wolf Way and Red Dirt Road, one of which trails will be slightly re-routed to create a single trail-head to supplement, not replace, the Town's trail-head a few hundred yards west. The Trust also anticipates fencing additional acreage of its farmland to the north of Town Lane, which will require some re-routing of the Springs-Amagansett Trail. Lastly, the Trust plans to install a series of informative kiosks at its Stony Hill trail-heads.

Slowly but surely, EHTPS is helping bring to fruition a pair of easements to enhance our Town's trail network. The first brings the Springs-Amagansett Trail into woodland off Hildreth Place, eliminating a short stretch of road walking; the second relocates the Paumanok Path east of East Lake Drive in Montauk onto higher, drier ground. We're hoping for both to be completed in 2012.

Gilding a lily might best describe these improvements: thanks largely to EHTPS, the Town of East Hampton already boasts a trail system unparalleled in access, extent or beauty. Please make time for yourself to enjoy it.

Happy Hiking,



Jim Zajac
President, EHTPS

EHTPS: A Brief History

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Tanbark Creek Bridge, situated at the head of Three Mile Harbor. Ed greatly appreciated, encouraged, and supported the contributions made by his EHTPS colleagues to the organization. Before leaving office, he said... "It's an evolving thing and every president goes through a different set of challenges. But...the organization is getting, I think, stronger and more influential, and doing a lot of good for the people of the East End." Ed and his wife Joan will be leaving Montauk for the North Fork in the spring.

Eva Moore's presidency was groundbreaking in that she was the first woman to be elected to the office. She said of that, "it was an honor to be entrusted with this responsibility following such a remarkable succession of men who had led the society so well since its inception." Like past presidents, she brought a host of valuable skills to the job. She used her professional editing and writing experience in the production of an EHTPS video and publicity brochure that highlighted the organization's accomplishments. But, she faced a new set of challenges, in part, because of the successes of the organization. With public awareness of East Hampton trails network and the tools to make them accessible, people could go on hikes without a seasoned EHTPS guide. She said, "this was definitely a period of change and challenge as reflected in two amendments to the By-laws during my tenure: the chair of the Member Services Committee was upgraded to VP, adding an 8th member to the board of directors; and, because of a fall off in meeting attendance, the quorum for passing motions was lowered from twenty to fifteen. (At the same time, membership grew steadily and donations increased dramatically.) If there was an underlying theme to my presidency," she continued, "it was the need for new volunteers to carry on the work to which EHTPS has been devoted for 30 years." Eva worked tirelessly to maintain and grow the organization during her tenure but replacing the old guard—the core of people who cut and blazed trails, who led hikes, who lobbied officials, and helped to sustain and enhance the beauty of our town—is not an easy task. Eva remains an active member of the group and is currently serving as our administrative vice-president.

Today, Jim Zajac is EHTPS' newest leader. He has identified two clear areas of challenge for the organization: to rejuvenate EHTPS membership rolls; and to improve public awareness and usage of town trails. He is comfortable with and optimistic about the role that technology can play in enhancing our membership, participation and influence. Among his ideas is the production and publication of a GPS survey of East Hampton town trails.

Richard Poveromo, our current vice-president of trails maintenance, and most recent recipient of the "George Sid Miller Friend of the Trails" award, is doing his part in maintaining the role of EHTPS as steward of the trails. In addition to his leading a loyal group of volunteers to do the physical work necessary to develop and maintain trails, he is working to enhance the quality of our hikes by giving them an historical context. An outstanding example is the Isaac Van Scoy property restoration project which officially opened last May. The cutting and blazing of trails through the recently acquired Amsterdam Beach property in Montauk brought numerous volunteers out to do the hard work. On a late winter afternoon, my husband and I hiked the new trail and met at least a dozen other walkers doing the same. The trail will officially open in the spring. In the meantime, Richard can be found, almost any day of the week, doing some work that needs to be done on this trail or that. The original "Geezer Brigade" members are retiring and some other loyal workers are hanging in, but new and strong-bodied men and women are needed so that the old guard can rest their weary bones.

EHTPS is bigger than any one member, any former or current leader, anyone who has supported the organization currently and in the past. What can each of us do? Renew your yearly membership whether or not you hike. Attend EHTPS celebrations. Lend a hand to maintain trails. Tell everyone you know about the great work that EHTPS does. Volunteer your unique talents to help promote and support the mission of this great organization. Come to meetings and bring a friend. Appreciate the miles of hard work being done by the few loyal volunteers.

(A special thanks to Eva Moore for her contribution to this article.)

EHTPS IN PHOTOS – (Special Events)



July, 2011 - EHTPS members and friends enjoyed delicious food, great conversation, and a sing-along at the annual summer beach picnic.



November, 2011 - Sixteen trail enthusiasts, organized by Richard Poveromo (holding the trail map), showed up for a weekend work party to open a new trail loop at the Amsterdam Beach Preserve in Montauk.



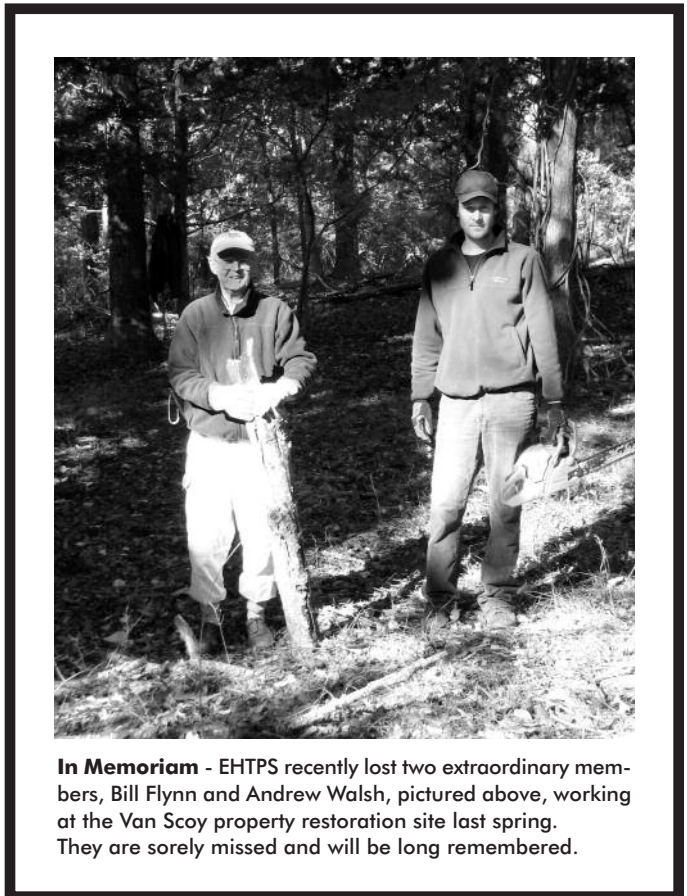
September, 2011 - Steve Adler reads a poem at the semi-annual poetry hike led by Laurie Adler and Leann Domash.



December, 2011 - Richard Poveromo, VP Trails Maintenance, received the much deserved "Friend of the Trails" award from Jim Zajac at the annual EHTPS holiday party.



Poetry hikers enjoyed a walk along the shore at beautiful Sammy's Beach.



In Memoriam - EHTPS recently lost two extraordinary members, Bill Flynn and Andrew Walsh, pictured above, working at the Van Scoy property restoration site last spring. They are sorely missed and will be long remembered.



New Members September 2011 - January 2012

Tina Oms, East Hampton; Barbara Lidsky, NYC; Suzanne & Joe Ryba, Amagansett; Peter V. Pantaleo, Rye, NY; Terry O'Brien, Southampton; John Timm, South Jamesport; Maureen Hovestadt, Ridge; Stephen R. Schumann, Sag Harbor; Susan Jaffie, East Hampton; Joanie McDonell, Amagansett; JoAnn Goldberg, East Hampton; Jonathan F. Lewis, East Hampton; Cindy Pavia, NYC; Marianne & Gerard Lally, East Hampton; Barry Moskowitz, Central Islip; William Metzger, NYC; Pamela Choy, NYC; Alison Aird, Amagansett; Adele & Jack McHugh, Holtsville, NY; Neal & Janice Platti, The Woodlands, TX.

A Good Place for a Walk

Late Autumn in Montauk

By Marshall Watson

On a late autumn Sunday, we were entreated by our good friends, fellow EHTPS members Nick and Jeri, to join in a brisk walk on one of those rare soft warm afternoons. That afternoon was either the blessing of our Gulf stream or global warming. The sun was a fading lemon white sifted through wisps of cirrus and the air was thick with the sea's moisture. It was that last gasp kind of autumn day, where it attempts to seduce you by its dulcet gentility, yet you are fully aware that a northern blast is but a noontide away. Whatever the pending arctic storm might bear down upon us, we could care less as we speed towards Montauk's Point Woods trail.

As an East Hampton Trails Preservation Society neophyte, I was doubting Nick and Jeri's enthusiasm—it wasn't summer, when we might be enjoying Mother Earth's full flung display, nor spring when floral treasures would be carpeting the forest floor.

But what we did discover immediately upon entering the trail was the magnificent architecture of the woods. Cinnamon colored bay laurel trees snaked and writhed beside us as if dancing for the head of John the Baptist. Their bark was smooth like stretched skin over old bones. The newly fallen leaves were a panoply of caramel, lemon, chartreuse, gold, cordovan, eggplant with hints of violet. Beyond the bay laurel one discovered magnificent stands of beech, statuesque and stately, like Doric columns that support the pediment of heaven. (Apparently it is highly unusual to find such towering trees so close to the ocean's edge.) The beeches shimmered silver as the gently autumn rays grazed their bark.

With the color palette dimmed to late autumn shades, the mounds of thick moss glittered like emeralds in graphite. We discovered



Paul Sparks, Nick Bryan and author Marshall Watson, enjoying the beauty of the Point Woods forest.

mosses of varying textures: feathery, spiky and the ultimate texture of rich velvet, fit only for a royal bed.

After an hour of rolling hills and fairly dense forest, we emerged from that vertical experience to behold the vast horizontal intake of the Atlantic. Nowhere on the planet does the earth seem quite so vast as it does taken



Paul, Nick, Jeri & Marshall on the magnificent Montauk bluffs.

in from the high bluffs of Montauk where one can sense the earth's curvature through the ocean's still horizon. A symphony of steel blues, chrome and gray, the ocean was alive with subtle motion. Striations of current cut swathes of silver lines through the blue. Squalls sent blisters of teal across the water, yet nothing seemed to disturb the ocean's implacable surface.

Viewing this, I was certainly humbled. I glimpsed my little life as but a blip on this magnificent, infinite continuum. A blip it may be, but upon seeing this, a blip I am deeply grateful for.

(Marshall Watson is an internationally recognized interior designer and a regular contributor to the East Hampton Press. He is a lifetime member of EHTPS.)

EHTPS OFFICERS 2011-2013

President, Jim Zajac

VP Administration, Eva Moore

VP Trails Planning, Nancy Kane

VP Trails Maintenance, Richard Poveromo

VP Hike Scheduling, Sharon Statucki

VP Member Services, Barbara McClancy

Secretary, Debbie Waldstein

Treasurer, Larry Raymond

ATTENTION Trail Lovers!

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SAY something.

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use of our trails.

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EH Town Police @ 537-7322

SH Town Police @ 728-5000

FOLLOW-UP

with an official police report.

Trail Times Editor: Jeri Wellman

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