

## *Celebrating Baldwin Hill*



Jason Houston

On August 25 last summer, more than 100 members of ELT, plus friends and neighbors, gathered at the Burdsall farm to celebrate the preservation of Baldwin Hill and enjoy the fabulous view that we and future generations will be now able to enjoy in perpetuity. This was the culmination of a 15 year dream of ELT brought about by more than four years work by BNRC, the support of the Commonwealth's APR program and the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service, the vision and generosity of the Burdsall and Proctor families, funding from the Prospect Hill and Geoffrey Hughes Foundations, and last, but

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Kathy Orlando



*These photographs of Egremont wildflowers were taken by Bryan Hamlin, who often visits family here. Bryan is incoming president of the New England Botanical Club.*



Clockwise from top left:

- Marsh Marigold*
- Red Clover*
- Thimbleweed*
- Skunk Cabbage*
- Goatsbeard*
- Milkweed*
- Blue Monkey Flower*





## Aunt Rose's Column

*Aunt Rose reads the same depressing headlines we all do, but as a long-time optimist she's always looking for something to be cheerful about. Here's what she's found this time.*

Well, we've all got our parachutes on as we stumble toward the fiscal cliff, but conservationists, at least, don't need to pull the ripcord for a little while yet.

The experts at the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition and at The Nature Conservancy have rounded up some items that promise us a few months of breathing room.

As all us farmers (well, now I only have a vegetable garden since Seth took over the back forty) know, the Farm Bill was extended for nine months, and its Conservation Title survived pretty well.

And there's a ray of sunshine in the fed's new tax bill. Now there's what's called an "enhanced" deduction for donors of conservation restrictions. If you were to give ELT (or, to tell the truth, any qualified conservation charity) a CR on some of your land, you could take a deduction of up to 50% (not the former 30%) of your adjusted gross income in the year of your donation and if you have any unused amount you can carry it forward for 15 more years (not 5 years as before.) *And* this would apply retroactively to cover qualified conservation contributions completed in 2012. Who said the tax man has no heart?

His kindness won't last forever, unfortunately. It never does. This enhanced benefit has been extended until December 31, 2013. That day will be here before you know it. But now it will help land trusts like us work with modest-income landowners, like farmers, to increase the growth of conservation. What are we waiting for? (And this means you, Seth.)

## Annual Wildflower Walk

**E**LT's wildflower walk was May 12<sup>th</sup>, just a few days later in the month than the walk last year. Once again, botanist Stephanie Bergman, who lives on property adjacent to our protected land on the Green River, led the walk. As always Stephanie made a point of showing us both native plants as well as some very troublesome invasive plants that are taking over many areas.

On the walk to the river and along the banks we saw trout lily, trillium, wild strawberry, jack-in-the-pulpit, wood anemone, violets and, of course, dandelions. There were huge clusters of the invasive garlic mustard plant, which have very shallow roots and are encouragingly easy to pull out of the ground.

## Celebrating Baldwin Hill

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definitely not least, donations from more than 400 ELT members and other residents of our area of the Berkshires – in other words a perfect synergy of the government and the private sector.

Following a brief formal program which included remarks by MDAR's commissioner Gregory Watson (*photo, right*), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's State Commissioner Christine Clark, BNRC Executive Director

*Photos: Kathy Orlando*



Tad Ames and ELT President Ursula Cliff, we enjoyed a delicious lunch catered by SOMA of Richmond, MA, the delightful music of Steve Adams and his guitar, and continued to celebrate the wonderful achievement that everyone present made possible.

Many of the invasives have attractive scents and flowers, yet are very harmful to the environment, sometimes entirely crowding out our native flora. Some of these villains are several of the honeysuckle family, multiflora rose, barberry, and Asian bittersweet (so tempting to employ for Thanksgiving decorations.)

Stephanie has promised to lead another walk on Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup> this year. For our microclimate, she believes that mid-May is the best time to catch the most wildflowers. And be sure to admire the array of photographs of Egremont wildflowers opposite

# ELT MEMBERS 2012

*Egremonsters responded enthusiastically and very generously to our Baldwin Hill project, assuring the future of this productive farmland and beautiful landscape. We are including in this list everyone who contributed through ELT and thus became land trust members for the year. It is our fervent hope that all our new friends will continue to support our work in the year to come and we've included a membership envelope to make this easy to do. In the list below, a single star denotes a Baldwin Hill contribution,*

*two means a contribution to Baldwin Hill in memory of our beloved member Bernhard Haeckel, and three stars is a contribution to Baldwin Hill in honor of Marjorie Wexler.*

*We've checked as carefully as we could, but if we've made a mistake or --- horrors! --- left you out, please leave a message at 413-528-0556.*

*Thank you; we are profoundly grateful.*

- Peter & Jonnet Abeles \*\*  
Steve & Hannah Agar  
John & Cheryl Alden \*  
Caroline Alexander & Dennis Kostyk \*  
Ginger Alexander  
Bev Almond \*  
Cindy Alper \*  
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Paul & Katie Burns \*  
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Willima & Katharina Perlow *		

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## *Annual Lunch*

This year ELT's Annual Luncheon was held on Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup>. The beneficiary of the fund-raiser was ELT's Baldwin Hill project. Once again, Terry Moore, the proprietor of the Old Mill, and Ginny Filkin, the General Manager, generously (and genially) hosted this popular event.

And popular it was. A record-breaking crowd of seventy-eight guests were treated to the foods of local farms and vendors, including Equinox Farms, Monterey Chevre, Mayflower Farm, Berkshire Greens Farm, Berkshire Blue Cheese, and SoCo Creamery. The luncheon has become a way for new members to become part of the group and

for old members to renew friendships, and the warmth was assisted by servers threading through the crowd with wine and appetizers.

Terry's menu began with asparagus soup or salad with cheese, followed by roasted cod or braised lamb ragout, and finished with berry cobbler or salted caramel ice cream. Wine, poured with a generous hand was '09 Bourgogne Les Setilles and '08 Grand Barossa Shiraz.

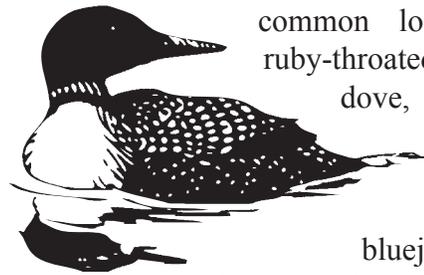
Appropriate to the occasion was the talk by Tad Ames of Berkshire Natural Resources, who described the long history (with occasional humorous moments) of preserving in perpetuity the Proctor and Burdsall Farms on Baldwin Hill.

Next year's luncheon is scheduled for May 18th.

# Looking for the Birds

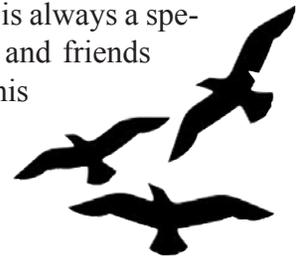
On May 6, 2012, Brian Kane led a small but merry band of us on a delightful and informative walk in the Jug End Reservation., on an excursion known as ELT's Annual Bird Walk.

Bryan Hamlin



Among the winged creatures sighted were the common loon, osprey, turkey vulture, ruby-throated hummingbird, mourning dove, yellow-bellied sapsucker, red-bellied woodpecker, pileated woodpecker, least flycatcher, Eastern phoebe, bluejay, American crow, tree swallow, tufted titmouse, black-capped chickadee, white-breasted nuthatch, house wren, American robin, Eastern bluebird, wood thrush, gray catbird, blue-winged warbler, yellow warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, black-throated green warbler, chestnut-sided warbler, black-and-white warbler, magnolia warbler, ovenbird, common yellowthroat, northern cardinal, eastern towhee, field sparrow, chipping sparrow, song sparrow, common grackle, red-winged blackbird, Baltimore oriole, and American goldfinch. Much of the credit for this impressive list, of course, goes to Brian with his incredible eye and ear, not to mention his amazing ability to imitate bird calls and lure unsuspecting birds to what they no doubt hope is an appealing mate.

Although it does mean getting up fairly early on a Saturday or Sunday morning, our annual bird walk is always a special treat, and we urge all our members and friends to consider setting their alarms early. This year, set those alarms for early morning on Saturday, April 27 (rain date Sunday, April 28.) Of course all house guests, family members, and friends are welcome. See you at 7:30 sharpish.



## MORE EGREMONT HISTORY

Nic Cooper, Egremont's resident historian, will take us on a walk on Baldwin Hill (*photo of its famous elm above*) this summer, summarizing the results of his research into the history of Baldwin Hill and its farms. The date is Saturday, July 20, at 10:30 AM, with the meeting place to be announced.

### PLEASE JOIN US!

If you're already a member, pass this envelope to a friend who's not yet a member.

If you haven't yet joined ELT and love Egremont, use the envelope to become part of the good work.

# ANNUAL MEETING 2012

**P**umpkins and corn stalks (both grown on conserved land), and pots of chrysanthemums decorated the pavilion at French Park, the site of ELT's Annual Meeting on September 8. After brief reports on finance, land conservation, and membership, three directors: Walter Cliff, Chuck Ogden, and Susan Shapiro were re-elected to the board.

Narain Schroeder, the architect of the Baldwin Hill project, spoke about the general process of working with families, often over many years, to devise a method of conserving family lands. Very often the negotiating sessions consist of long conversations around a kitchen table: a process fraught with emotion, sometimes tension, and, very occasionally, humor.

The meeting ended with a social hour, fueled by lunch offered by ELT.

This year, our Annual Meeting (September 7) will be preceded by a program on birds of prey, presented by Tom Ricardi.

## ELT's BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**T**heir faces are probably already familiar, but here are the most recent additions to the board of the Egremont Land Trust:

### Robin Goldberg

Robin, along with husband, Peter, and daughter, Sarah, moved to Egremont in 1992. A special education teacher, she now tutors at a local school and at the Literacy Network. Besides serving as an Assessor in Egremont, as a member of the Egremont Green Committee and as co-chair of the Egremont Cultural Council, she volunteers at the Breaking Bread Kitchen and can often be seen walking one of the Baldwin Hill loops. She joined the ELT board in the fall of 2011.

*Peter Goldberg*



### Marjorie Wexler

Marj came to Egremont as a weekender in 1977 and has been a full-time resident since 2002. She has a PhD in microbiology and is a free lance medical and art book editor. She served on the Egremont Planning Board from 2005 to 2010, and is presently the Associate Planning Board member. She is an active member of the Egremont Green Committee. In 2012 she was named Egremont's Citizen of the Year. Marj joined the ELT board in the fall of 2012.

*Tom Wexler*



# Egremont Land Trust Online:

[www.egremontlandtrust.org](http://www.egremontlandtrust.org)

Look for our calendar of events and a link to local resources. Fill in your e-mail address in order to receive announcements or to print out a membership and donation form. We do not share membership information with anyone, no matter how worthy the cause.

## THE EGREMONT ZERO WASTE CHALLENGE IS ON!



### OUR GOAL THIS YEAR?

Slash 100 **TONS** off the 480 **TONS** of trash we produce every year.

Call Juliette Haas, Sustainability Coordinator  
(413) 528-0182 ext. 22 for info.

Ursula Cliff – *president*  
Lois Ginsberg – *vice president*  
Charles Ogden – *secretary*  
Walter Cliff – *treasurer*  
Peggy Barrett  
Robin Goldberg  
Tom Haas  
Wendy Linscott  
Wendy McCain  
Peggy Muskrat  
Susan Shapiro  
Maureen Steiner  
Marjorie Wexler

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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