

PITA NEWSLETTER

Sponsored by the Plum Island Taxpayers and Associates, Inc.

Bringing Plum Island Together

www.plumislandtaxpayers.org

Spring 2022 Issue 1



JOIN PITA BUYERS' GROUP FOR TOWNSEND FUEL DISCOUNTS

The PITA Propane and Fuel Oil Buyers' Group negotiates fixed rate discount pricing with Townsend Energy for both propane and heating oil for PITA members. Our negotiated rate for the past year was **\$1.93 per gallon for propane fixed for 2 years** for 100+ gallons per household consumption (\$3.70 per gallon for less than 100 gallons consumption). These prices are with no extra fees, no rental fee, and no delivery fee. **Please Note:** we are now mid-cycle in our 2-year contract period with Townsend Energy, which will end in July 2023. At that time, new rates will be negotiated for the PITA Buyers' Group.

This past year, the rate for heating oil was \$2.79 per gallon fixed for 1 year (with no consumption limits), which expires July 2022. Given what happened to fuel prices skyrocketing this year, these negotiated prices were excellent.

Townsend's **PROPANE** rates for **NEW** PITA Buyers' Group members joining now will be **\$2.64 per gallon for 100+ gallons per household consumption fixed for 1 year** (\$4.19 per gallon for less than 100 gallons consumption). Townsend requires new members to sign up **before July 1, 2022** to get these propane rates. After July 1, the contract is locked and you will have to wait a year to join. Also, Townsend has no extra fees, no rental fee, and no delivery fee for PITA Buyers' Group members. **Please Note:** Existing PITA Buyers' Group members who signed

up with Townsend Energy in 2021 will keep the same rate stated above in paragraph 1 for one more year to finish out the 2-year Townsend contract. At the end of the 2-year cycle (ending July 2023), all PITA Buyers' Group members will enjoy a new negotiated price for a new contract period.

Townsend's **OIL** rates for all PITA Buyers' Group members have not yet been set for the coming year, but we anticipate there will be a significant discount for the PITA Buyers' Group. **Stay tuned for more information this Summer about oil prices and the sign-up deadline.** The more members we have, the better negotiating power we have, so please consider joining the Group if you haven't already.

All Plum Island resident PITA members, can become a member of the PITA Buyers' Group for propane or oil, or both, regardless of who your service provider is today. However, PITA currently has negotiated pricing only with Townsend and, to get these rates, you must switch to Townsend as your provider.

Also, for propane, you must have a Townsend tank. There is no charge for the new Townsend propane tank, provided your tank site location is in compliance with existing regulations. You may have a fee from your current alternative propane provider to remove their tank if you decide to make the switch to Townsend. For oil, you do not need to switch to a new oil tank, but Townsend must inspect your existing oil tank for safety compliance before they will fill it.

To participate in the PITA Buyers' Group, **you must also be a current paid-up PITA member** (\$35/year *Townsend continued on page 2*

Inside this Issue

BUYERS' GROUP	PG. 1
SNOWY WINTER	PG. 2
LIGHTHOUSE UPDATE	PG. 4
'20 HISTORY PHOTO BOOK	PG. 4
ARTIST SPOTLIGHT	PG. 5
WE GOT SAND	PG. 6
RESERVATION TERRACE	PG. 7

Events

PROPANE DISCOUNT DEADLINE = JULY 1
SAVE THE DATE:
PLUMFEST SEPT. 17, 2022

PITA MEMBERSHIP Join or renew for 2022

It's our Spring membership drive and we really appreciate your support! We are asking for renewals for 2022 to continue our efforts and we welcome new members!

See the President's Letter and Membership Form on our web site at www.plumislandtaxpayers.org

The 2022 membership fee is only \$35/year individual or \$50/year for a family.

Now you can conveniently renew your membership or join online - via PayPal - just click the link "Join PITA online" on our website. You can also print out the Membership Form and mail it back to PITA with your paper check payment.

Some benefits of PITA membership:

- Significant Townsend Energy PITA Buyers Group discounts for propane and oil
- PITA hall rental discounts
- Knowing that you supported our Island projects

Townsend continued

individual or \$50/year family). Not a PITA member yet? Forgot to renew? No problem. You can join PITA at any time online or by mail. Visit our website www.plumislandtaxpayers.org for more information.

After you join PITA (or pay for your renewal membership for the current calendar year), you can sign up for the PITA Buyers Group pricing by contacting Kevin Anderson at Townsend Energy: call 978-705-2322 or email kanderson@townsendtotalenergy.com. After you sign up directly with Kevin at Townsend Energy, please be sure to also let our PITA Townsend liaison, Diane Barrett, at diron@comcast.net know that you are now in the PITA Buyers' Group. If you have any questions about the process, you can email Diane and she will help you through the process.

In summary, follow these simple steps:

1. Join PITA and renew your membership each calendar year
2. Contact Kevin to join the PITA Buyer's Group for Propane before July 1, 2022
3. Email Diane to let her know you are now part of the PITA Buyers' Group
4. Watch for more info this Summer about Townsend's oil prices and sign-up deadline
5. Enjoy our excellent group pricing for propane and oil

SNOWY WINTER --- STORY AND PHOTOS BY SANDY TILTON



It was quite a snowy winter! Seems like there was a snowy owl around every corner!!!

It's so wonderful to see these majestic visitors from the Arctic & to learn so much about them!! This has been what is called a snowy owl "irruption year", which tends to happen every 4 - 5 years. One of the causes of the irruption is related to the owls' diet. Snowy owls are carnivores that feed large amounts of lemmings, voles and other small rodents to their young during nesting season on the Arctic tundra. When the rodent populations are thriving, snowy owls are able to successfully raise more owlets. These young snowy owls come south, to our area, in unpredictable "invasions" known as irruptions.

PITA Board of Directors

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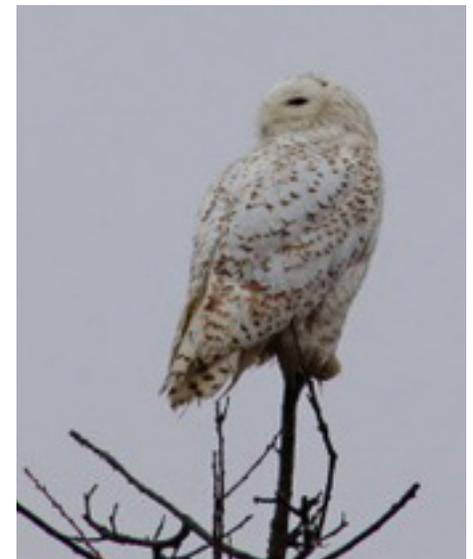
Susan Grillo, Director, Membership

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These young owls are not yet strong enough to survive the brutal Arctic winter, so Mother Nature sends them south where the food source is plentiful & the climate milder. Much

Snowy Winter cont. on page 3



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like any juvenile - this is a learning experience for them. It is always fun to observe the young owls when they first arrive in late fall (like teenagers on their first solo trip away from home), as they get acquainted with their new surroundings. I often wonder what they must think of the groups of photographers who seem to appear like magic to watch the snowy's every move. Snowy owls have no known predators here, so they seem to be fearless, not easily intimidated, and sometimes quite the poser for the camera!

Personally, it is such a special moment to stumble upon a snowy owl on the wild beaches of Plum Island. It catches my breath every time! Please remember: It is important to respect all wildlife, stay a good distance away, try not to disturb them and just enjoy the moment. They have traveled a great distance... they need to hunt, rest and repeat. Their mission is to remain strong and return healthy to their Arctic breeding grounds to successfully raise more beautiful snowy owls that can visit us next winter!

Snowy owls often succumb to secondary rodenticide from eating rodents that have ingested rat poison. Discontinuing the use of rat poison will help prevent the unintentional poisoning of these beautiful creatures, as well as any other rodent eating creatures.

Some cultures consider witnessing a snowy owl in flight to be a good omen. I consider it a great gift from nature and an experience to treasure!



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PLUM ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE UPDATE

After having been closed to public tours for the last 2 seasons due to COVID restrictions, the Friends of Plum Island Light have opted to try a new approach to openings. This Summer, the lighthouse will be open to tours by reservation on the second Saturdays of each month from June to September from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. If you would like to reserve a time, please send an email to friendsofpiligh@gmail.com. The goal is to reduce the lines that frequently occur at our open houses and to foster a safer experience for all. While the tower will only be open at scheduled times, please remember the grounds are always open to visitors.



Several dedicated volunteers have been quite busy this past winter working on the display and erection of an information kiosk on the lighthouse property. The kiosk will be a fabulous 2-sided display of the history of the light and surrounding events on the river. The information will include

what you can see from the inside and top of the Light, along with significant historical information and dates. The kiosk will also include information on how to make a donation and/or join the "Friends of Plum Island Light". The Friends hope to have the kiosk installed by the end of May 2022. Please stop by the lighthouse property at your convenience and enjoy the efforts of this dedicated group of volunteers.

2020 HISTORY PHOTO BOOK OF PLUM ISLAND

From March 2020 - December 31, 2020 Plum Island resident, Maria Casey, captured photos of things that we wouldn't normally see on the Island if it wasn't for the pandemic. For example, restaurants closed; no parking on the turnpike; drive by graduation celebrations; individuals with masks; 6ft social distancing; outside eating; etc. As she was taking photos, Maria decided to add pictures of folks at their home/cottage,

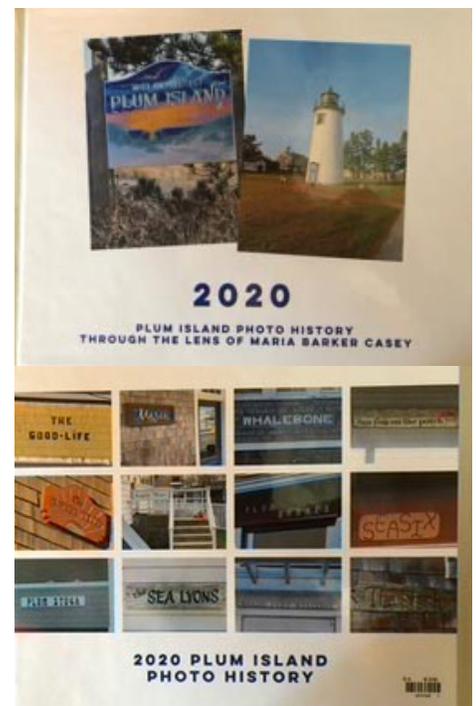


activities on the Island, boats on the Basin, sunsets, sunrises, birds and so much more... a 2020 history photo book of Plum Island.

Fast forward to today, Maria has finally finished the 2020 Plum Island memory book (106 pages). Maria will be donating a copy of the book to the Town of Newbury, the City of Newburyport, PITA and Museum of Old Newbury.

She was able to secure an additional 40 copies at a discount/bulk rate of \$30.00. If you are interested in purchasing a copy, please send Maria an email to porchesofplumisland2020@gmail.com.

Thank you, Maria, for capturing Plum Island life during the pandemic!



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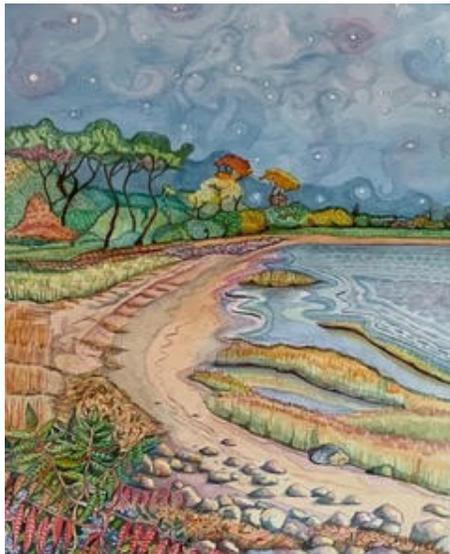


ARTIST SPOTLIGHT INTROSPECTION: COFFEE WITH AN INSPIRING ARTIST

Written by Sandra Turner

Over a green tea latte, I sat with Lisa Arcomano and discussed her connection to nature and the seashore. We talked about her decision to retire early after a career in overseeing collections and exhibitions at the Rubin Museum of Art (RMA) and the Princeton Museum of Art, and her move to Newburyport just short of the pandemic.

I started following Lisa on Instagram a couple of years ago, and found her art refreshing. Photographing the ever changing patterns of nature during her daily walks, she sets about expressing her feelings in her own unique style of watercolors.



Her passion also pulls her to Italy where she has found relatives and joy in painting the unique landscapes of the area where her family came from.

Most recently she won the "Art Adventure Grant" from the Newburyport Art Association. This \$1,500 grant will help to offset the expenses of traveling to Italy. There



she will capture her surroundings in her joyful watercolors.

I found Lisa truly inspiring after hearing about her life story and her decision to pick up and move to our community and to dedicate so much of her energy following her passion.

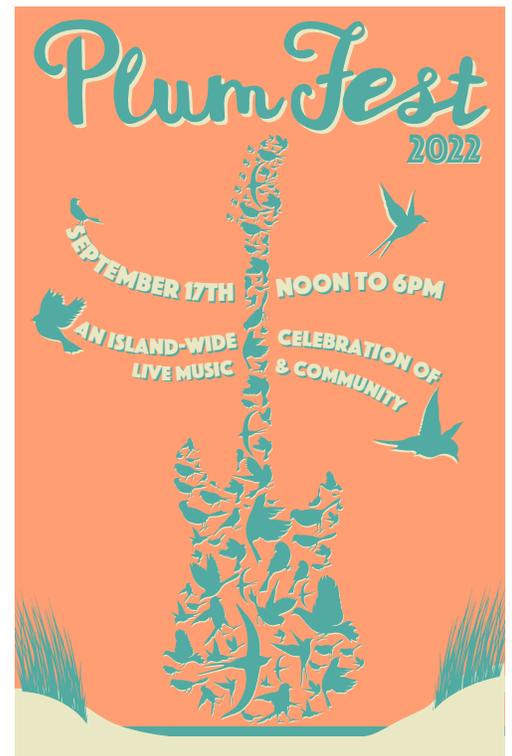
I encourage you to follow her on Instagram at https://www.instagram.com/lisa_arcomano/ and also view her art at <https://lmastudio.patternbyetsy.com/shop>.



Sandra Turner
Artist/Owner
PlumIslander Art

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WE GOT "SAND"



Thanks to the US Army Corps of Engineers, Plum Island received hundreds of thousands of cubic yards of glacial till (sediment) from the Piscataqua River Turning Basin Dredge Project in Portsmouth NH. \$1.6

million of the Federal Rescue Plan Act funds were allocated for the expansion of the Portsmouth Harbor shipping channel turning basin and the dredging of harbor waters, taking Portsmouth "forward in the shipping industry", according to Geno Marconi, the longtime New Hampshire Port Authority director. This is particularly important as the US continues to deal with supply chain issues, allowing Portsmouth "to be able to have bigger ships, bigger loads, faster delivery" according to US Senator for NH Maggie Hassan.

Plum Island and Salisbury, Massachusetts were the lucky beneficiaries of the dredged sediment from the Piscataqua this past winter, most of which was allocated to Plum Island. Local residents and beach visitors witnessed



the tugs and barges 24/7 for several weeks as they traveled South and North along the shoreline stopping to open their hoppers to drop the sediment just offshore. The idea is that this sediment will naturally be filtered by the motion of the ocean. Over time, the filtered sediment will then migrate landward to help nourish the shorelines of these beautiful sandy beaches, which will help protect beachfront homes from further erosion.

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To rent PITA Hall contact Frank at HallManager@plumislandtaxpayers.org or visit www.plumislandtaxpayers.org to fill out the PITA Hall Rental Agreement.



RESERVATION TERRACE UPDATE

The winter of 2022 was not kind to Reservation Terrace residents. On January 17, a severe Nor'easter caused damage to the dunes, public infrastructure and private homes between 71st and 77th Streets on Plum Island. According to Mayor Sean Reardon, "while the coir bags and rocks held their position fairly well and certainly protected the area from what could have been far worse damage, it is tough to see the outcome." Mayor Reardon immediately met with City staff, GZA GeoEnvironmental Consultants, Senator DiZoglio, Representative Kelcourse, Senator Tarr and Councillor Zeid to discuss the dire situation and next steps to help protect the area from further damage. A three-pronged approach was developed:

1. Employ GZA to evaluate potential options to strengthen the existing system that was left after the storm.
2. Engage with MEMA (Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency) to determine what (if any) assistance they can offer local homeowners and the City to implement short-term protective measures.
3. Press the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) to stay on schedule with the proposed Merrimack River dredge in 2022. This dredge could potentially provide nearly 300,000 cubic yards of sand that may benefit the Reservation Terrace dune system and/or Plum Island's oceanfront beaches. Also, continue lobbying the ACOE about their responsibility for the cause of the erosion and potential structural remedies.



Mother Nature gave the area a break with no further devastating storms over the last few months. The Merrimack River Beach Alliance (MRBA) has continued discussing next steps and pushing the ACOE for the dredging project to stay on track and to obtain funding for the jetty study. The next MRBA meeting is June 10 at 10 a.m. PITA Hall.

In March 2022, the Town of Salisbury joined with Newburyport to enter the Merrimack River dredging agreement. An official intermunicipal agreement between the communities is needed

to amend the ACOE dredging project to include dredging the Merrimack River just outside the channel between the northwestern side and the Salisbury Beach State Reservation breakwater. Salisbury Town Manager Neil Harrington said the project could cost under \$100,000, most of which would come from federal American Rescue Plan Act funding.



Also in March, the City of Newburyport secured \$240,000 from the federal government (also part of the American Rescue Plan Act funding) for the ACOE to study the South jetty spur. City Councillor Sharif Zeid, who represents Plum Island, "the jetty has long been considered the key underlying cause of the destructive erosion that has occurred in

the Reservation Terrace area." The study would allow officials to take a close look at the jetty and the spur to determine a viable solution to alleviate the tidal gyre that currently contributes to the Reservation Terrace dune erosion. The timeline for this study is still unknown. According to Mayor Sean Reardon, "the Merrimack River dredge, which would replenish sand along Plum Island, is the most immediate need."

The dredging contract has gone out to bid and the ACOE expects to award a bid by late June. Work would probably begin in September 2022 when the environmental window allows dredging and beach nourishment to be done. Zeid also said "longer-term stability will be delivered by addressing the disease and not just the symptoms."

Meanwhile, in addition to a community beach clean-up "Stash The Trash" on April 22, local residents on 77th Street recently purchased over 2000 beach grass plugs and organized a planting party to help secure the dune from further erosion. The pictures here document this effort and show the dire situation for these homes on the riverfront from 73rd Street to 77th Street.





PLUM ISLAND TAXPAYERS AND ASSOCIATES
8 PLUM ISLAND BOULEVARD, NEWBURY, MASSACHUSETTS 01951

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2022

PLEASE NOTE: You can pay conveniently online via PayPal at <http://www.PlumIslandTaxpayers.org>
Or mail your completed Membership Application and check payment to the PITA at the address above.
We do not sell or publish your membership for any reason.
We will not call your mobile phone or send a text unless there is an island specific need.

Name: _____ Primary Phone: _____

Mailing Address: Street or P.O. Box _____ My E-Mail: _____

City/Town _____

State/Zip Code _____ Please email the PITA Newsletter to me to save printing costs

Plum Island Address: Same as above

Individual Membership: \$35 per year	Dues Amount	\$ _____
Family Membership: \$50 per year	Additional Amount for projects:	\$ _____
<i>Please consider additional contributions - any amount will be most appreciated and will be used for Plum Island projects.</i>	Total Amount	\$ _____

I would like to be contacted for PITA volunteer projects: **Yes** **No**

If you like, tell us your special skills or interest for volunteering:

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS SURVEY:

Do you currently participate in the Townsend Energy Buyers Group for PITA members? **Yes** **No**
For Propane? **Yes** **No** For Oil? **Yes** **No**
If NO, would you like to participate in this Buyers Group Program? **Yes** **No**

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