

PITA NEWSLETTER

Sponsored by the Plum Island Taxpayers and Associates, Inc.

Bringing Plum Island Together

www.plumislandtaxpayers.org

Fall 2023 Issue 2



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear PITA Members,

We are one island, and your community organization that speaks with a unified voice to address the most pressing issues facing our residents. Since 1948, PITA has remained steadfastly focused on ensuring that the issues we care about are presented and addressed by our local, state and federal officials. Please remember, your continued support through membership dues and contributions provides the majority of our annual operating capital. The past twelve months have been very productive for both Plum Island residents, as well as the PITA organization, and our efforts during this time have resulted in the following achievements:

Christmas Fair at Plum Island Hall:

We resumed our longstanding tradition of hosting the Christmas Fair last December. Crafters were invited back to our Hall to complement the availability of Christmas trees and wreaths available for purchase in the parking lot. We look forward to seeing all of you again very soon for this year's Christmas Fair on Saturday, 2 December 2023.

MRBA Working Group:

PITA continued in its role as the sponsor and host to the Merrimack River Beach Alliance (MRBA), our working group of federal, state, town and city officials whose combined efforts have been critical in responding to the most pressing issues facing Plum Island residents. PITA was instrumental in the successful completion of the recent river dredging operations during 2022 and 2023 that placed much needed sand on our beaches. And, through our role in MRBA, PITA is also fully engaged with the US Army Corp of Engineers to acquire funding / complete a study associated with the correction of the

South Jetty "spur".

Plum Island Hall: Building maintenance always remains one of our top priorities. Repairs to the paved parking areas, the addition of parking space lines to facilitate safe and orderly parking for Hall events, and accessibility improvements to the Hall for those requiring a walker or a wheelchair highlight our 2023 accomplishments.

PITA Propane & Fuel Oil Buyers' Group:

As was offered in the past, PITA members who participate in the Buyers' Group program will continue to enjoy access to a low, fixed price over the next heating season thanks to our friends at Townsend Total Energy.

Finally, we remain appreciative for your continued support of PITA. Please remember that your membership dues help to keep our Hall open and available, not only for your use, but also for use by all our Plum Island social, public and community organizations. Please take a few moments to fill out the attached membership renewal form included in our hardcopy newsletter, or consider joining (or, rejoining) PITA online (<https://www.plumislandtaxpayers.org/membership.html>).

If you would like to enclose an additional contribution of support, any amount no matter how small will be greatly appreciated, and will have an enormous positive impact to our community. We continue to look forward to another great year with you and yours as members of PITA.

With kindest regards,

Ron Barrett
President

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PLUM ISLAND CHRISTMAS FAIR,
DECEMBER 2, 8 A.M. TO 3 P.M.

PITA MEMBERSHIP... IT'S TIME TO RENEW OR JOIN FOR 2024

It's our annual Fall membership drive and we really appreciate your support! We are asking for renewals for 2024 to continue our efforts and we welcome new members! The 2024 membership fee is only \$35/year individual or \$50/year for a family.

You can conveniently renew your membership or join online at <https://www.plumislandtaxpayers.org> Just click on Membership and then click the link "Join PITA online" or "Renew". Alternatively, you can print out the Membership Form and mail it back to PITA with your paper check payment. Our mailing address is PITA at 8 Plum Island Boulevard, Newbury, MA 01951.

Thanks for your support!

DID YOU KNOW???

PITA HAS A BUYERS' GROUP FOR TOWNSEND FUEL DISCOUNTS

PITA has a Buyers' Group for fixed rate discount pricing with Townsend Energy for both propane and heating oil for PITA members. PITA has again negotiated with Townsend for the best rates possible.

The PITA Buyers' Group negotiated propane rate (fixed for 2 years from July 1, 2023 to July 1, 2025) is \$1.79 per gallon 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. PITA was lucky to lock in this low price for the current 2-year contract period.

The PITA Buyers' Group heating oil rate (fixed for 1 year for the 2023-24 heating season) is \$2.99 per gallon. No minimum required.

Townsend requires PITA members to join or renew before July 1 each year to be eligible for the PITA Buyers' Group negotiated prices for a new contract period. The more members we have, the better negotiating power we have. If you didn't join or renew your PITA membership earlier this year, you can join PITA now and request to be part of the Buyers' Group for the next contract period.

All PITA members can join 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.

Interested??? Not a PITA member yet? Forgot to renew? No problem.

JUST FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE STEPS:

1. Join PITA now or renew online or by mail. Visit our website www.plumislandtaxpayers.org for more information or fill out the attached PITA Membership Application and mail it in with your membership fee (\$35/individual or \$50/family).
2. Contact Kevin Anderson at Townsendkanderson@townsendtotalenergy.com to get on the PITA Buyers' Group list for Propane and/or Oil for the next contract period.

Townsend Continued on Page 5

PITA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ron Barrett, President

Jerry Klima, Vice President

Frank Pierce, Treasurer, Hall Mgr.

Kevin Byrne, Secretary

Ron Perkins, Director

Maureen Trout, Director

Susan Grillo, Director, Membership and newsletter editor

Lee Lane, Director

Kincade Webb, Membership

WCVB TV'S CHRONICLE TEAM VISITS PLUM ISLAND

Plum Island was in the limelight this Summer when WCVB's Chronicle team visited the island to do a show featuring the Plum Island Lighthouse, Surfland Bait & Tackle and the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge. In case you missed the stories, which were delivered on Chronicle in 3 parts, you can find them through "On Demand" or on the WCVB website here: <https://www.wcvb.com> and enter in the search icon:

"Plum Island is a hot spot for serenity off the coast of Mass."

"Plum Island fishing mainstay has an intriguing hidden history"

"Nature is accessible to all at this wildlife refuge on Plum Island"

Enjoy!



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PLUM ISLAND LIGHT UPDATE

Our famous Plum Island Light turned 125 this year! Although the Light has a history dating back to the late 1700's, the present conical structure was first lighted on September 20, 1898. To celebrate, Friends of Plum Island Light held one of its traditional fundraisers: a dinner cruise aboard the Captain's Lady II, providing an opportunity for folks to view the lighthouse from the river. The Friends thank all who attended in honor of this historic anniversary!

The Friends are thrilled to share that Board Member RADM Dan May, ret., teaches us about his inspiring work in restoring lighthouses in a text called "Preserving America's Lighthouses: Memoirs of a Coast Guard Ocean Engineer". Stay tuned for talks.

In June, Channel 5's Chronicle show did a feature story on the history of the beloved lighthouse. It was an excellent documentary. In case you missed it, you can find the show on <https://www.wcvb.com> and enter in the search icon "Plum Island is a hot spot for serenity off the coast



of Mass."

Over the past year, the Friends of Plum Island Light revised and updated their bylaws under the guidance of Attorney Rob Ciampitti of Liberty Law in Newburyport.

In September, the Friends of Plum Island Light collaborated with Plum Island Taxpayers & Associates (PITA) to sponsor a special event free to the public. Lighthouse historian, Jeremy D'Entremont, gave a talk on "Haunted Lighthouses of New England" focusing on some of the macabre tales of New England's coastal beacons. His stories included the lovelorn spirit known as Ernie at Connecticut's New London Ledge Light, the piano playing ghost of Maine's Seguin Light, and the longtime keeper who refuses to leave Harbor Lighthouse in New Castle, New Hampshire.

Jeremy is a U.S. Lighthouse Society historian and president/historian of the American Lighthouse Foundation, author of many books and articles on lighthouses and maritime history, and producer/host

Light continued on page 4

PITA CHRISTMAS FAIR

**SATURDAY,
DECEMBER 2 FROM
8 A.M. - 3 P.M.**

The holidays are fast approaching, and our annual Plum Island Christmas Fair is scheduled! Mark your calendars now and plan to join us at PITA Hall on Saturday, December 2nd.

We will have Christmas trees and wreaths for sale outside (delivered free to Island residents' homes), and inside we will be featuring hand-made arts and crafts for sale by local artisans. All crafter tables are already sold out!

Also, Santa will make an appearance after his usual route around Plum Island bringing holiday cheer to all our Island children! We will have a raffle and a limited food menu. Plans are still in the works for this festive event.

The financial support from the Fair is responsible for a large portion of the upkeep of PITA Hall and we truly appreciate your participation. We look forward to seeing you in December!



Candy L. Way



Fine Artist
Studio - Gallery
Ipswich, MA
(978) 420-5206

candyway@comcast.net
<http://candywayfineart.com>

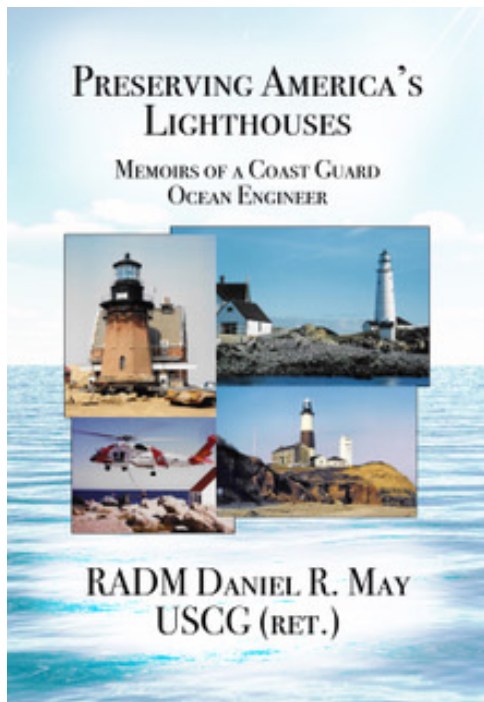


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Light continued

of the U.S. Lighthouse Society's weekly podcast "Light Hearted". He has also appeared on the Ghost Hunters TV show, as well as Haunted Lighthouses of America on the Travel Channel.



The Friends hope to see you all at the PITA Christmas Fair on December 2nd where you can purchase Plum Island Light sweat-shirts, T-shirts, afghans and more. Also, commemorative bricks are still available!

The Friends of Plum Island Light has a mission "to preserve and maintain the lighthouse" and that they do. Please visit their website at

www.friendsofplumislandlight.org to read their newsletter and for more information on the dedicated work the Friends do to maintain the structure, open its doors to visitors over the Summer, and share the history of this important lighthouse.



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RESERVATION TERRACE AND RIVER DREDGING PROJECT UPDATE

Residents breathed a sigh of relief when Hurricane Lee veered East and spared Plum Island from severe erosion back in September. The Merrimack River Beach Alliance (MRBA) has continued to hold meetings at PITA Hall with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) providing a forum for discussion and for residents "voices to be heard".



These actions steps have been ongoing over the past several months:

Gregg Moore and his team of students from University of New Hampshire, along with local volunteers, have planted yards of beach grass. This clearly helped to increase the sand elevation of the "pancake" - the river beach area where the dredged sand was placed earlier this year by the Norfolk Dredging Company and its super-sized dredger, the Delaware. Although the waterline erosion continues, the beach grass was a successful endeavor. Snow fencing and more grass is expected soon as the next step in preserving the sand elevation.

According to a USACE presentation at the September 29 MRBA meeting, USACE continues to work on the Major Maintenance Report to evaluate conceptual and structural modification alternatives at the South Jetty, relative to

Townsend Continued

3. Email our PITA Townsend liaison, Diane Barrett at diron@comcast.net to let her know you are now part of the PITA Buyers' Group.

4. Watch for more info next Spring about Townsend's propane and oil prices and the sign-up deadlines. If you don't like the Townsend prices, you don't have to change providers, but PITA only has a contract with Townsend for group discount pricing.

Still have questions?

Contact Diane at diron@comcast.net for more information and she will help you through the process.



current and projected conditions, to address the ongoing waterline erosion at North Point. Some of the alternatives include:

- Bypassing the Weir in the South Jetty
- Removing the South Jetty spur
- Removing the outer leg of the South Jetty

USACE anticipates completing the Major Maintenance Report in Spring 2024. Upon approval by the USACE District Commander, funds will then be requested for construction (a fiscal year 2026 request is expected per the Report).

We still have a long way to go, but the wheels are in motion!

Photos courtesy of Lela Lischke Wright



RENT PITA HALL

- PITA Member \$400/day**
- PI Resident Non-Member \$450/day**
- Non-Member \$550/day**
- Weddings \$ 1100 for the weekend**
- Weekday Monday-Thursday**
- Non-commercial300/day**
- Commercial \$550/day**

Mercy Meals: Free use of the Hall to Island residents for mercy meals, and recognition of your loved one on the PITA sign.

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

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: AN ARTIST'S INNER CONVERSATION

Written by Sandra Turner

"I think I would like to learn how to paint."

Mmm, what would I paint if I knew how? What is it that I love? I love dogs. They make me laugh and are unapologetically themselves and provide you with unconditional love. Capturing their spirit in a painting, that would make me very happy.

"What type of style would I choose? "

Well, I like the "why not" attitude children have about art. They're curious, like having fun, and not particularly interested in following the rules. That kind of sounds like me. Ya,, I think that is how I would like to paint.



"Who can I get to teach me?"

I have heard great things about Pat Lutz, I know she has a studio in The Tannery, think I will ask her if she will take me on as a student.

"Wow! Look at me! I'm painting away here, like I know what I am doing."

The best part about it is that I'm not taking myself too se-

riously. If the end result doesn't turn out how I like it, I can just go over it with this white paint called "Gesso" and the whole painting disappears! You get to start all over again. I don't mind that at all. This is great!

Beth Cennami paints with abandon and without fear. She uses quick, loose, bold brush strokes to capture the personality of the dogs she paints in acrylics from photographs.

Painting for over four years now, not just one a week, but many days a week, Beth has gained confidence and inner joy that comes with the ability to express herself creatively.

For Commissions: Contact Beth at bcennami@verizon.net

"The Beach Dog Daycare" in Newbury has some of her paintings displayed.

A portion of her sales goes to the animal rescue organization.



Sandra Turner
Artist/Owner
Plumislander Art
978-519-6353
plumislanderart@gmail.com

PITA E-SIGN FOR RENT

Last year PITA installed a new electronic, full color RGB Optec digital reader board sign outside PITA Hall. The sign offers state-of-the-art technology for graphics, scrolling, colors and programming. We've received a lot of positive feedback about the sign and hope that you have enjoyed reading the scrolling messages posted over the past year.

The sign's main purpose is to keep our community informed by displaying news, events and emergency alerts. Personal messages from the public can be requested by emailing HallManager@plumislandtaxpayers.org. The cost is \$35 per message. Please make your check payable to PITA with a note in the memo line "PITA e-sign payment" and mail to PITA at 8 Plum Island Boulevard, Newbury MA 01951.

PITA received generous donations from Newburyport Bank, NESFC Federal Credit Union, and Reservation Terrace residents toward the new sign. To further help offset the cost of this new communications device, you are welcome to make a donation specifically for the sign. We appreciate your support!

NESFC

CREDIT UNION

248 Pleasant Street, Methuen, MA 01844
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CarrStaples&Accardi, CPAs

Certified Public Accountants

Paul Accardi (978) 372-8910

BEFORE TUNA FISHING WAS "WICKED" -- PART 2

Written by Lee and Bob Yeomans
(Project Coordinators)

Progress is being made on our project to help produce a documentary about tuna fishing before it became "wicked" - when it was far, far more dangerous yet not as lucrative.

Jon Johansen, a Maine-based maritime researcher has been conducting interviews with many of the men and women who participated in this challenging method of capturing these giant bluefin tuna back in the day - when the fish were much bigger (1000 pounds or more) and the gear was not as sophisticated as that used today.

We had the pleasure of sitting in on Jon's interview with 89-year-old resident Carl Beal and his wife Ginny - and her delicious, homemade blueberry muffins. The scene was very surreal as Carl talked about some of his experiences tuna fishing with his dad and others when he was just a teenager. Carl spoke of the time he saved his dad when his foot became tangled in loose lines on the deck. He spoke fondly of the first tuna he handlined on his own, while knowing that baseball legend Ted Williams - his hero - was watching from another boat. Ted had already caught a tuna that day and all the surrounding boats cheered and clapped for their hero.

Then it happened! The line snapped on Carl's dad's boat and was handed to fifteen-year-old Carl to pull in on his own. He successfully handled the line and battled that fish all by himself. His motivation was knowing that Ted Williams was watching! After an exhausting fight, the fish was alongside the boat and tied up when Carl heard a blast from a boat horn. Yes, it was from Ted Williams on the Florida D IV paying tribute. The sound of clapping from his hero followed by more horn blasts from nearby boats made Carl's Day! Now it was time for Carl to, hopefully, get his picture taken with Ted Williams and to get an autograph on his baseball. You'll have to wait for the completion of this project to hear the rest of the story.

One thing that was quite evident during the interview is how, at 89 years old, Carl can remember so many details, write voraciously about his experiences, and even with a speech impediment, vocalize and respond with wonderful hand gestures and facial expressions - it was indeed surreal!

This winter, we hope to obtain more video footage and interviews to bring this project to light. After all, it is a piece of local maritime history that will be forgotten if not preserved.



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PLUMFEST 2023 A SUCCESS, DESPITE HURRICANE LEE

The PlumFest team was determined! Hurricane Lee was not going to thwart their year-long fundraising and logistics planning efforts for the annual island-wide music event. The category 5 hurricane threatened to wreak havoc on Plum Island on Saturday, September 16. Yet there were 50 hosts and 100 bands lined up to play that day from noon until dusk. With much

favored gathering to hear music outside.

Bands who stepped up to salvage the fundraiser on Saturday and Sunday included The Rolling Who, Charlie and the Hustle, Eloise Kirkpatrick, The Boondock Sinners, Cyn and Kevin, Pathological Outliers, Revel Up, Rebel Lane, JC and Friends, The Flying Clouds, Reservation Dogs, Alien Drag, Liz Gemba, Ben Swartz, Alan Foucault, Pat Hall and Friends, Everlovin' Rosie, and Lazy Susan.

By Sunday evening, the PlumFest team had collected more than \$8,000 in donations, which were awarded to the Boys and Girls Club of Lower Merrimack Val-



ley (B&GC) in a presentation ceremony attended by the PlumFest Team and all PlumFest Plan B hosts on Wednesday, November 1. Boys and Girls Club Executive Director Jim Keenan and his staff invited the event volunteers and hosts to view the Club's music room and enjoy the formal gifting of the event proceeds.

Event organizers learned an important lesson in planning from Hurricane Lee: PlumFest '24 will be held on September 14 with a rain date scheduled for September 15. Mark your calendar now and plan to join the fun!



trepidation, the team made a tough decision to cancel the event in the interest of public safety.

Unwilling to be totally defeated, PlumFest organizers developed a Plan B and quickly enlisted the support of local restaurants, Plum Island Beachcoma and Sunset Club, to host a slate of bands on Saturday as Hurricane Lee made its lackluster appearance. In addition, Plum Island residents Ron and Diane Barrett, Steve Minassian, Gregg Higginbotham, Chelsea Watt, Mike and Kelly Doyle, Chris Huntress, and Chris Jones shifted gears to host bands on Sunday when the day-late sunshine





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

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2024

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

>> **If Mailing, Please** make your check payable to "PITA" for the correct dues amount plus any additional funds, and your check and fold over your check and put it in the envelope (no staples please)

Office Use: Dues Paid _____ Amount: _____ Check#: _____