

PITA NEWS LETTER

Sponsored by Plum Island Taxpayers and Associates, Inc.
Bringing Plum Island Together



Spring 2019 Issue 1



PLUMFEST IS CELEBRATING FIVE YEARS ON MAY 18, 2019! By Cynthia Keefe

Our little island porch festival has grown. Each year, the festival offers islanders an opportunity to celebrate spring, meet their neighbors, appreciate our beautiful community, enjoy the talents of local musicians and raise money for organizations that help people in our community and beyond.

Year #1 (2015) was the year of deep snow, big winds and failing sewers; we needed a celebration. That first PlumFest showcased about 40 performers, and all money donated went to "Songbird Sings," an organization that helps bring healing to victims of trauma through music. It's run by Robin Lane, and her band Robin Lane and the Chartbusters was an incredible addition to our lineup.

PlumFest continued on page 2

PLUM ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE TOURS START MAY 19

Opening Day is May 19!
Come climb the iconic Plum Island Harbor Light at the Point to get spectacular views of the Merrimack River Entrance and beyond.

Opening Day is Sunday, May 19; additional tours will be held the third Sunday of every month June-September -- June 16, July 21, August 18, September 15 and run from 1-4 pm, weather permitting.

Visit PITA's new Website!

- Current events
- Rent PITA Hall
- Renew Membership/Donate to PITA
- Advertise
- Download the Newsletter
- See Photos
- Volunteer Opportunities

If you missed our drive last Fall, please renew your PITA membership for 2019

It's only \$25/year individual or \$35/year family membership.

Now you can renew and join online - via **PayPal** at **www.plumislandtaxpayers.org**

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EVENTS

- SALTBOX GALLERY ART SHOW THIS WEEKEND, PITA HALL, APRIL 5-7
- PEPPERWEED PULL- PAGE 6, CONTACT NANCY_PAU@FWS.GOV
- PI BEAUTIFICATION 7PM 1ST TUES

- Join PITA at plumislandtaxpayers.org
- Rent PITA Hall inexpensively as a Member
- Find PITA now on FaceBook to contribute photos, comments and listen to @PitaTwita for local up to date happenings.

MAKING PLUM ISLAND HEART SAFE.

by Lynn Mather

Good news! A public access Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) and emergency phone have been installed at Plum Island center on the low gray building – (31 Plum Island Turnpike) – directly across from the beach.

When sudden cardiac arrest occurs, minutes count. A combination of CPR and AED helps save lives! The AED on Plum Island is in a climate-controlled, code-locked case. To open, just press the emergency call button next to the case to connect to 911 and obtain the code.

The Plum Island AED is the result of a

Heart Safe continued on page 2

PlumFest continued

Since then the people of PlumFest have donated generously to the Pettengil House of Salisbury, the Boys and Girls Club of Lower Merrimack Valley, the Music and Memory Program at Elder Services, and the Richard Guertin Memeorial Scholarship. All in all, our generous attendees have contributed ~\$25,000 to these great organizations through PlumFest!

Hundreds of local performers have entertained in yards all over the island, and many come back year after year; who wouldn't want to spend the day making music on our fair isle?

The event seems to bring out the best in people. In our first year (the hottest), one woman came out with freeze pops to offer to the audience in the neighbor's yard. A local businessman has provided banners each year, and another local resident supplied postcards for several years. One performer's dad prints our T-shirts. Plum Island Kayak has helped out with shuttle service. Each host gives of their time and space to provide stages, shade and welcoming crowds. Many local businesses have contributed to make this event great.

Friends of Newburyport Youth Services will be the beneficiary this year. NYS provides an extensive variety of after-school and summer programs, including recreation, parenting, youth leadership, support groups and community events. These are offered to residents of Newburyport and the surrounding towns.

Please join us in celebration on May 18 from noon to 6, and we are always welcoming new hosts and volunteers!

Heart safe continued

terrific private/public collaboration. There are many people to thank, including Plum Island residents and local businesses who donated the funds to acquire and maintain the equipment, PITA for use of PITA hall for the first of many training sessions, the Plum Island Foundation for their support and fiscal sponsorship, and the Town of Newbury, Newbury EMS, police and fire for their support and ongoing partnership.

To learn more, watch this video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jk1JoqweD8>

Remember — always call 911 first in any emergency, and send someone else to get the AED.

Look for more CPR and AED training sessions on Plum Island soon or contact mppoppe@gmail.com to get notifications.

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ARTISTS OF PLUM ISLAND

by Sandra Turner

A Life's Purpose

Don't you just love seeing an artist painting outdoors? There is a canvas on a French easel, being covered with bold brush strokes, an umbrella for shade; throw in a straw hat and scarf and you have the complete picture of an idyllic scene. Little does the observer know that the wind had just taken the pallet and tossed it into the air, and the morning dew on the grass has attracted the mosquitos who are in full attack mode. The artist has already reworked the composition of the painting a few times and despite all efforts the painting may end up in the recycle bin, to be painted over next week.

Of course it's not always so chaotic. There are those days when you are just finished with blocking in the big shapes and the sun hits your objects with the perfect light, causing the most amazing shadows to dance across your canvas. Invigorated by what has happened before your eyes, the scene almost seems to paint itself as your brush is guided from somewhere deep within.

Those of us that have been painting and working at our craft for many years know how many failed attempts and how many hours of practice and study are involved in becoming an artist. However, many people still have the false illusion that artists are somehow born with an innate talent and that with no real need

for practice, magnificent works of art appear effortlessly on their canvas. I assure you this is not the case. Far more important than natural born artistic talent is the passion and desire to create, along with the perseverance to follow it through.

Allow me to share with you the story of one such person possessing these qualities, who never thought she had any talent, but had the desire; someone who always felt she was a slow learner, who struggled in school. She was a single mom and a loving daughter who rediscovered her childhood love for sketching while working at the hospital switchboard. Encouraged by her husband, she rented a small studio

An Artists Life continued on page 4

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An Artists Life continued

space that she shared with the likes of Scott Jackson and other local artists. Here she spent hours of her day learning from books and painting, painting and painting.

Running a successful business for over thirty years, Pat (Follansbee) Lutz has come a long way since she was first approached by someone to teach them how to paint. Never imagining that this would be an option that would open up for her, after a brief visit to the ER for hyperventilation, she managed to take a deep breath, dove in and never looked back. Through her own determination to learn all she can, she has instilled the joy and excitement for art into the hearts of the many students that have studied at her studio, The Artists Playground, at the Tannery in Newburyport, where she teaches classes for all levels of experience. As a testament to her long career as an art instructor, teenagers who have taken classes with Pat since they were young children still stop by during school break to visit their favorite teacher. Many have gone on to art schools and colleges, majoring in art. Pat's excitement to see them and hear about their lives is evident in her voice and manner, one that is familiar to all who know her. For many, her studio is a familiar

place, especially to one group of women artists that started classes with Pat when she first began at the Tannery in the late 80s. They fill the morning and evening studio classes as the welcoming committee to new students joining The Artists Playground, a family of artists who have stayed the course, who have followed the teachings of this most gifted, talented and giving teacher.

The photographs of Pat's paintings that accompany this article are from her most recent series of portrait paintings. Many artists paint in a series, which is a collection of paintings usually in the same medium that have a common thread running through them. Her goal in this series of paintings was to introduce exaggerated color and expose the character of each person in unusual vantage points. All of the subjects were people who worked at the Tannery, in Newburyport. Pat took photographs of them during their workday. The canvases measured approximately 30" x 40". All eleven were completed over a six-month period of time. You'd be hard-pressed to find a truer example of "enjoying the doing" than Pat's gifting of each painting to the individual who provided the inspiration. The doing gave the artist what she was looking for... the experience, the joy of creating and

An Artists Life continued on page 5



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An Artists Life continued

the knowledge she gained will be the gift that will be given to other artists that she mentors.

As the first in my series on local artists, Pat was my inevitable choice. She has been a dear friend for over 30 years, a mentor to many and someone who represents all that we as artists strive to be.

I recently sat down with the artist herself for a quick Q/A session:

Sandy: Why do you do what you do?

Pat: Many years ago, I was feeling quite lost and without purpose in my life. My husband suggested that I meditate about it. So, daily I would ask myself, "What is my purpose?" In the beginning nothing happened, but eventually I started to remember feeling of joy when I used to draw as a small child. Taking the lead from my inner self, I started to draw again and with encouragement and years of self study, was able to share this knowledge with others which I feel is my true purpose in this life. I love the process that I go thru as an artist. Having worked in many mediums, I am drawn to the ones that provide textures.

Question: What type of environment do you work in?

Pat: Ever since I was a child I had trouble concentrating. This has followed me into adulthood, but I now know enough to ensure myself a quiet environment, free of distractions when I am working on my art.

Question: How has your practice changed over time?

Pat: I have become more aware of feelings and less concerned with detail. Initially I painted realistically, reproducing scenes before me. Eventually I learned to make my own color choices and the painting started to change. My subject matter is less detailed and more



**Plum Island Beautification meetings,
the 1st Tuesday of the month**

All are welcome to PI Beautification meetings, the 1st Tuesday of the month at PITA hall at 7:00.

Any questions or ideas please email Lynne Petty at lynneplumisland@gmail.com

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An Artists Life continued

about evoking a feeling than representing a scene. I find myself working best when I trust my inner self and work intuitively.

Question: What role does the artist have in society?

Pat: Artists who paint in a way that portrays and bring out the feelings and emotions of our times, mirroring society as it is, or how we hope it to be can become catalysts for future change.

Question: What inspires you?

Pat: My inspiration comes from a need to express my feelings. This often shows on the canvas intuitively without planning, by being open to what your inner voice tells you and to be brave enough to follow.

Sandy: How do you know when a work is finished?

Pat: This is a question that a lot of students ask. I customarily point out things that could be corrected or changed to make the work better. As the painter matures, they begin to realize that the painting itself closes the door on any further work. This is how I know.

Sandy: What is your most important artist tool?

Pat: The recycle bin! An odd answer I know, but as artists we all become familiar with failure and when we learn to embrace it and remind ourselves that we will be presented with another opportunity to learn when we recycle that old painting and start anew.

I hope you have enjoyed reading this article, and I look forward to writing another in the next issue. Your comments are welcome at plumislanderart@gmail.com

Pepperweed Pull and Project

Parker River Refuge and Mass Audubon has made great strides in controlling pepperweed on the north end of Plum Island. Several sites are close to eradication; and we are looking for local residents to "adopt" sites to keep pepperweed out. If you have a few hours to spare each June or July, Refuge staff will train you and your friends and neighbors on how to keep pepperweed out of your favorite marsh or beach.

We will also have a community pull in early June (date TBD). If you're interested in the group pull, or adopting a site, please email nancy_pau@fws.gov



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PITA is looking for the following volunteers:

- Hall manager assistant
- Web help
- Newsletter editor and writers
- Activities organizer
- Suggestions - if you want to be involved in any way

Send an email to: info@plumislandtaxpayers.org or contact one of our board members (listed on page 2, contact info on our web site at www.plumislandtaxpayers.org)



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