

# Sippewissett Association

## Newsletter

### Gear Adrift: Oyster Aquaculture

Over the past year or so there have been several incidences of floating aquaculture cages (or racks) washing up along our shore, between Wood Neck Beach and Quissett Harbor. Pete Chase, a scientist at the NE Fisheries Center at Woods Hole and local aquaculturist, who has helped collect and dispose of some of this abandoned gear, tells us that the design is not used by Falmouth shellfish growers in Buzzards Bay, who use bottom-based culture, lacking floats. This is seconded by Charles Martinsen of the Town of Falmouth Marine & Environmental Service, which addresses marine aquaculture in Falmouth

The floating gear on our shores probably breaks loose and drifts across the Bay from somewhere between Bourne and Westport on the opposite side, where oyster aquaculture is most commonly

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*Derelict cages used for oyster aquaculture washed up on Gunning Point (photo by J. Costanza).*

*Tom Chilton holds an aquaculture cage retrieved from Wood Neck Beach. The two black tubes keep the cages afloat near the water's surface.*



*Josiah K. Lilly III (1916-1995), using private monies, purchased Beebe Woods for the Town and significantly enhanced local assets in medical care, theater, athletic facilities, and education, among his other contributions.*

### Beebe Woods: To save unspoiled woodlands

*Arthur G. Gaines, Jr.*

In 1972 Josiah K. Lilly III purchased Highfield and the Beebe woods of which 387 acres would be devoted to open space and conservation. The price tag was \$2,050,000. With this act, Lilly secured one of two natural amenities that set the character and quality of life in Sippewissett. The other is Buzzards Bay.

The purchase involved 487 acres of the 668 acres secured by James Beebe by 1872, who died less than three years later. Beebe's sons initiated the manorial era at Beebe Woods, so well documented in exhibits by the present administrators, the *Highfield Hall & Gardens* organization. E. Pierson Beebe and brother J. Arthur built the two mansions, Highfield Hall (1876) and Tanglewood (1879), both designed by the Boston architectural firm of Peabody & Stearns, and squired the estate during the landscaping of the magnificent gardens and grading of miles of cart paths through the woods (cart paths that still serve as footpaths today).

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## Increased Police Presence along Sippewissett Road and Quissett Avenue

David Margareto, Chairman of the Sippewissett Association Traffic & Safety Committee, announced recently that beginning this spring and lasting one year, there will be increased presence of police on the traffic corridor passing through our neighborhoods, from Palmer Avenue to Woods Hole. Approximately 20 additional police details will stand 4-hour patrols including RADAR monitoring of traffic.

Most traffic along these residential streets currently obeys the speed limit, but a conspicuous number of cars widely exceed the speed limit (25

mph on Sippewissett Road; 30 mph on Quissett Avenue), endangering walkers, bicyclists, school buses, wildlife, and other drivers. Most drivers will not be affected by the heightened patrols; the objective is to send a strong message to speeders to slow down.

These overtime details, planned in concert with the Falmouth Police Chief, will be paid for jointly by the Sippewissett Association and the Quissett Association, as well as by private subscription by concerned residents frustrated by reckless driving along our roads. A part of the increasing problem comes from cellphone apps that direct traffic off main thoroughfares onto residential backroads, like ours, for purported shortcuts in time or distance.

The Traffic & Safety Committee has been meeting with Town officials for over two years to define a process by which placement of RADAR Speed Signs can be approved by the Town. These speed signs, which display a driver's measured speed, are believed to "calm" traffic by reminding each driver of his vehicle's present speed. Thousands have been installed around the country and in Falmouth they already exist near schools and a residential neighborhood along Old Barnstable Road.

As the next step in the process, this spring the Police Department will be collecting data on traffic volume and speed along the Sippewissett Road - Quissett Avenue corridor.



*This speed sign, located on Old Barnstable Road, Falmouth, is typical of the design proposed for the Sippewissett Road/ Quissett Avenue traffic corridor.*

## A Walk in the Woods

Jennifer S. Gaines

Two aspects about the Kelly Woodland I would like you to know: it is a wonderful simple way into the Beebe Woods and Peterson Farm trails from our side of the woods (aka the Sippewissett Way In); and it is a unique habitat in Sippewissett. Every time I walk through the Kelly Woodlands, I am grateful to the Kelly Family for preserving the wetland and for sharing it with all of us in their deeding it to the 300 Committee.

The habitat is unusual for Sippewissett: a classic maple swamp with red swamp maples rising out of the shallow water. In fact, Mrs. Kelly says that it was the wetland, set off by the lovely curving stone wall, which attracted her and her husband to this property back in 1950. This swamp is different from the wetland in the Beebe Woods just above Standish Avenue which is shallower and much more heavily populated with Tupelo, and so acidic it even supports sphagnum moss.

Our new path leaves the Mizell-Hoskins Trailhead, a parking facility contributed in 2016 by Merle Mizell, and quickly bumps into the swamp, then skirts around it to the left sticking to a narrow strip of dry land. On this side of the swamp, unlike the almost pure stand of maples at the southern edge, there is a stand of Black Gum



The first public access to (and parking for) Beebe Woods, Kelly Woodlands, and Flume Pond Conservation Area from Sippewissett Road is provided by the Mizell-Hoskins Trailhead, marked by a large glacial erratic boulder.

(*Nyssa sylvatica*), also called Sour Gum or Tupelo, stretching their skinny trunks up to the sky with their short horizontal branches sticking out in jagged angles into the treetops. On the drier land above the swamp stand white and red oaks and an occasional pine. Mixed among them are several tall skinny Sassafras trees (*Sassafras albidum*), probably a relict from when this was a sunnier spot.

Shrub species associated with this type of wetland are Highbush Blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*), Sweet Pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*) and Swamp (or Sticky) Azalea, (*Rhododendron viscosum*). All are here; the latter two have incredibly fragrant early summer blossoms (two of my favorite wildflower fragrances). They all like to “have their feet wet” and do much better here than in my drier garden at home. The *Clethra* and Azalea are found all along the path, more densely in the back corner of the Kelly lot. A thick stand of *Clethra* is just over the stone wall in the Beebe Woods, with stems so dense that you quickly sense that this is a “suckering” plant, growing up from underground stems or roots, leaping to the surface and sending up new stems only inches apart, to form a close-packed colony. When I was a kid, there was *Clethra* growing next to the pond where we swam almost daily in the summers. One of our favorite tricks was to pick a flower with our wet hands and rub it till it made suds in our palms. Hence, one of its other common names “Poor Man’s Soap.” It is also called “Sweet Pepperbush,” “Spicebush” and “Summersweet.” Nowadays I am more likely to cut a small road-side branchlet and bring it home to make a beloved bouquet, reminiscent of sweet summer days of my childhood. Out in the middle of the swamp, seemingly protected by a border of tall maples is an almost pure stand of Highbush Blueberries. In October, they and the maples make the brightest burst of reds and oranges,

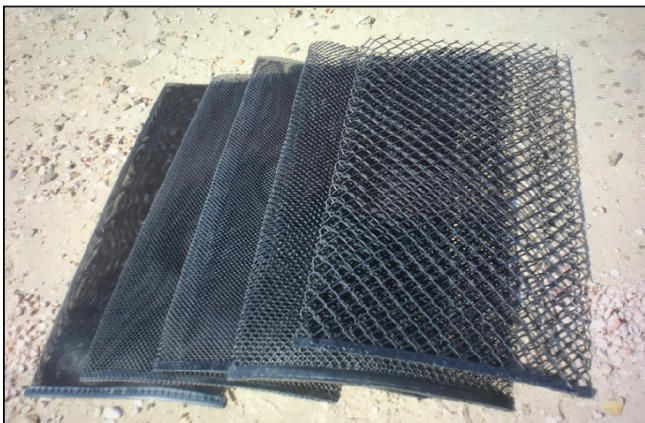
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## Gear Adrift *(continued)*

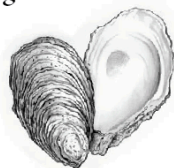
practiced in Buzzards Bay (and comprises 87% of all aquaculture in the Bay). We have found no identification marks on this gear and so have neither the owner's name nor the location of the farm.



*Farms are formed by assembling numerous floating cages, to form rafts or chains. Given the numerous use-conflicts posed by recreational boaters and other users of sheltered waters, the numbers of available sites for aquaculture are limited.*



*Within the floating cages oysters are contained in mesh envelopes measuring 20" x 40". As the oysters grow from tiny "spat" they are moved to envelopes of increasingly larger mesh, from 1/16" to 7/8". Oysters are ready for harvest when they reach ca. 2" or larger.*



This lost equipment generates at least two problems: property owners and beach visitors find the lost gear unsightly and potentially hazardous and want it removed. Secondly, this generates a public sentiment in opposition to the practice of aquaculture, which a 2018 report\* identifies as the major single obstacle to permitting of aquaculture. In Massachusetts permitting involves several loops of review and approval including that by Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (in consultation with the US Army Corps of engineers and U.S. Coast Guard) and by Town departments, with ultimate issuance of a permit by the Town Selectman. Several of these loops involve hearings and public comment.

While some public opposition could be based on self-interest or misinformation it cannot be denied that failure to recover lost gear from the shore could be a significant factor; it is an unnecessary problem in public relations that aquaculturists themselves could remedy.

The beginning of the obvious solution is that aquaculturists should be required to label their gear. At present lobster buoys and pots must carry the owner's identification as a part of the permitting process, but not aquaculture equipment. This deficiency is reportedly being addressed by local, county, and state shellfish associations and, hopefully, will be remedied soon. We'll see.

Several advantages are evident from identifying the owners of lost aquaculture gear:

- Parts of the recovered equipment retain a value that should make it worth salvaging. Some of the gear we have found contains undamaged floats and oyster bags and coherent wire frames that seem suitable for redeployment.
- Examination of the recovered equipment may reveal the reasons for its loss, providing a basis to improve deployment of the technology. Some

of the gear we have recovered seems to have been part of an assemblage held together by rope. Perhaps a stronger connection would not have failed.

- Identification of the equipment owner would make it possible to notify them of the location of lost gear for recovery. Our membership can help. Some of our neighbors walk the shore regularly and in the past have reported beached aquaculture (and other) equipment. Anyone who carries a cell phone has the wherewithal to identify the GPS coordinates of any site along the shore. In some cases we can even move items to a roadside location where it could be readily loaded onto a trailer.

Oyster aquaculture in Buzzards Bay should be a win-win situation. It can be a profitable economic activity that employs people, uses an underexploited resource (plankton), provides a locally valued seafood product, can be conducted in a manner that avoids use-conflict, and stands to improve water quality in the Bay by filtering out particulate materials.

It should be mentioned that Falmouth aquaculturists have a good reputation here and participate annually in a popular celebration of local oyster tasting, along with short presentations and a Q and A session. They are a welcomed part of our community.

*\* CEI, 2018. Opportunities for Aquaculture on the Massachusetts South Coast: A Sector Analysis. Coastal Enterprises, Inc. 30 Federal Street Brunswick, Maine 04011, 65 p.*



*Aquaculture gear adrift on the rocks at Racing Beach*

## John B. Pearce, PhD (1931-2020)

We were saddened to hear in January of the death of our friend and neighbor Jack Pearce. A resident of Upland Avenue in Sippowissett Jack had a career in fisheries biology and marine biology spanning six decades, most recently at the Northeast Fisheries Center in Woods Hole. Jack and his wife Ruth settled permanently in Falmouth in 1985 in their new house, on land they had acquired in 1982 while on temporary assignment to Woods Hole.

The Pearces became members of The Sippowissett Association soon after they settled here. Jack was an active member of our Association serving as President between 1988 and 1997, and remaining active throughout his life.

Detailed celebrations of Jack's life have appeared elsewhere. He was a distinguished and internationally recognized fisheries scientist and marine ecologist; the breadth of his interdisciplinary interests and accomplishments would qualify him more broadly as an oceanographer. On arrival in Woods Hole in 1985 he served as Deputy Director of the Fisheries Center, where he is remembered fondly as a fair and competent administrator.

During 18 years at the NOAA Sandy Hook (NJ) fisheries Lab., beginning in 1963, Jack focused on the impact of offshore dredge disposal and was recognized as an expert on that topic. His work was seminal to the passage of the Ocean

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## Beebe Woods *(continued)*

Arthur died in 1914 leaving Tanglewood and surrounding acreage to Harvard University, properties somehow later retrieved by the estate. Pierson, a bachelor, died in 1926 leaving his younger brother, Franklin, also a bachelor, in sole charge until his death in 1932. The estate was soon put up for sale. Sadly, Tanglewood was later demolished, but Highfield has been saved. Now owned by the Town of Falmouth the mansion has been beautifully restored to its original glory.

Under a subsequent owner, following the 1932 sale, about 100 acres went for development of Greengate, an early 1960s subdivision in traditional format of roadways with c. 88 adjacent 1-acre lots, with access from Woods Hole Road.

But for 40 years the larger holdings remained in a period of uncertainty under a sequence of subsequent owners. Proposals surfaced and submerged: construction of a highway bypassing the Town center by connect the new Rt.28 north of town to a traffic circle near Quissett Gardens (McCallum Road area) with a wide road through the Woods; a water main connecting the tower at Quissett with the pumping station at Long Pond, routed on a bee-line through the Woods.

A treatment of the history of Beebe Woods would be incomplete without mention of the great fire of October 1947. The fire started (or was set) near Sippewissett and burned within a few feet of the Beebe structures - but left them undamaged - engulfing the Town center with smoke, sparks and ash. The scars of this event are recorded in today's woods by multi-trunk trees, weed species (locust trees) and traces of firebreaks plowed into the land.

The urgency of Lilly's 1972 purchase of Beebe Woods was crystallized by a proposal to develop most of Beebe Woods for a 500 unit, cluster-designed development. After prolonged and alarmed debate the proposal was derailed by

a Town action that effectively blocked cluster development. Lilly made his move within a month and relieved the major concern of most citizens—the destruction of this large, unspoiled wooded area.

Lilly quickly designated 387 acres for open space conservation purpose, deeded to the *Town of Falmouth*. Over the decades the idea has grown over time with additions of adjacent lands. In the early 1980s 10 acres abutting the Punchbowl Pond were protected. In 1998 the 88-acre Peterson Farm, historically the 1677 Weeks Farm, was added, largely thanks to The 300 Committee Land Trust working with the Town.

In 2016 the 3.5 acre Kelly Woodland provided a wildlife corridor joining Beebe Woods with the 28-acre Flume Pond conservation property and the water's edge at Buzzards Bay (this a cooperative effort of The 300 Committee, The Coalition for Buzzards Bay, and the Sippewissett Association). Additional contributions are expected soon. Following Lilly's lead, nearby developments on the moraine (Sippewissett Highlands and Drumlin Road Homeowners) have incorporated large open wooded areas in their plan.

A second recipient of Lilly's insightful beneficence was *Falmouth Hospital*. Starting with an earlier donation of 17 acres from DeWitt Ter Huen, then owner of the Beebe estate, the hospital opened in 1963. Crucial support in creating the current facility was the 1969 contribution by Lilly for addition of an entire floor adding 30 beds to the original 58-bed capacity, in memory of his mother Ruth (Brinkmeyer) Lilly.

After 1972, Lilly contributed 21 acres to help make up the present 57-acre Hospital campus, housing a complex of new institutions offering broad and integrated medical, emergency and elderly services. The more recent additions of

the Clark Cancer Center (James and Ruth Clark) and a helipad (contributed by Lilly's daughter and son-in-law) for emergency transport of patients, brought the hospital solidly into the 21st century.

*JML Care Center* within the Falmouth Hospital campus was built in 1989 with Lilly's support of \$5 million. It was named in memory of his wife Josephine who died in 1986. JML Care Center is nationally recognized for providing superior care in nursing, social services, dietary and nutrition services and therapeutic activities. Both resident and day programs are offered.

*Gosnold Treatment Center* provides services addressing alcohol and substance addiction.

The *Visiting Nurses Association of Cape Cod (VNA)*, established in 1916 as the Falmouth Nursing Association, was directly gifted 6.7 acres of land by Josiah Lilly to relieve cramped headquarters on Locust Street and accommodate their enlarged present facilities adjacent to the larger hospital complex. The VNA provides home health and hospice care. With a current staff of over 850 employees, more than 300,000 round-the-clock home visits are provided annually.

Lilly designated 22 acres and all the structures, including Highfield Hall to *Cape Cod Conservatory of Music and Arts* founded in 1956 and originally centered in West Barnstable. The Cape Cod Conservatory had been renting Highfield Hall and the adjacent Highfield Theater to support their annual summer theater and winter productions. Reportedly they were astonished to receive the Lilly gift, and even more so when he added 2.5 acres and monies (said to be \$250,000) toward a new building, with space for offices, practice rooms, and ballet facilities. On this foundation the Conservatory has operated expanded programs of instruction and performance in music, art, theater, and dance at Highfield for over 50 years. Many local

youngsters learned their *plié* and *entrechat* at the hand of Ms. Klara Koenig who for years offered ballet instruction.

Highfield Hall and its converted barn had been used sporadically for theater since 1947 under various ownership and leadership. Beginning in 1957, Oberlin College's Gilbert and Sullivan Players performed popular operettas during the summer season. In 1969, when Oberlin withdrew, Robert and Ursula Haslun and D. Thomas Tull picked up the program, founding the *College Light Opera Company (CLOC)*, offering summer performances at the Highfield facility, through the present. Initially staff and students were housed for the summer in Highfield Hall and Tanglewood.

Later a large Tutor Revival style mansion, the 1895 Scull house, operated once as a restaurant, was purchased and gifted by Lilly to serve as summer headquarters for the College Light Opera Company. This facility on Chapoquoit Road in West Falmouth has served not only as a housing facility for the summer cast and production staff but for all the invisible year-round essentials of storage, administration, and maintenance. Now, this campus facility has entered a new phase, at the culmination of a \$3.9 million drive, to massively upgrade the facilities and grounds to accommodate future programs of the CLOC operation.

For many Cape Cod families Highfield productions form a central and memorable part of the summer experience. CLOC has provided the opportunity for aspiring actors, actresses, musicians, and production staff, mostly of college age, to test and hone their skills. Generations of local youngsters have gained their initial exposure to theater as volunteer ushers at Highfield.

The list goes on:

From his original land purchase Lilly designated 44.5 acres on which stand the *Falmouth Sports*

## Beebe Woods *(continued)*

*Center and Cape Cod Curling Club.* The Sport Center opened in 1975 offering indoor and outdoor tennis facilities and indoor exercise equipment, with instruction for both. The Curling Club operates three sheets with traditional support and viewing facilities. Programs include winter and summer curling for standard and handicapped curlers of different age groups, for men and women. Bonspiels are sponsored winter and summer, sometimes with national participation. Recently, a female wheelchair curler from Falmouth, Megan Lino, was part of Team USA and competed at the Olympic level.

*Falmouth Academy* is a non-profit, coed, private college-preparatory school for day students in grades 7–12. It was founded in 1977. Its first classes were held in rented spaces. In 1985, Josiah K. Lilly III gave Falmouth Academy 34 acres abutting Beebe Woods. In 1989 the school moved into the new 16-classroom building for the opening of the school year. Later additions added a gymnasium, and a new building to provide science labs, art rooms, offices, a computer lab, and a library.

A third addition, in 2014-2015, provided a meeting hall for school and community events. In July 2017, the Simon Center for the Arts, comprising a state-of-the-art theater and music rooms was completed. The Academy recently had an enrollment of 218 students, with class sizes of 12. The Academy prides itself in offering instruction and guidance in academics, athletics, art, and life skills in an atmosphere of personal attention. Students from about 24 countries have been enrolled.

Lilly and his wife, Josephine, made their home in Saconesset Hills, a gated community bordering on *Little Sippewissett Marsh* (to which he donated 15 acres). The structure not only accommodated their family in quiet, luxurious comfort, but also

his collection of character American cars, later to be donated to the museum at *Heritage Plantation and Gardens* in Sandwich, another of Lilly's valued projects. It is said Lilly's estate had more bays for cars than bedrooms.

Given Lilly's values and preferences it is not surprising his favorite food shop was the West Falmouth Market, housed in an historic building in West Falmouth. Founded in 1902, the shop opened as Bourne's Market and for many years was a centerpiece of community activity—perhaps it still is. Lilly valued its quiet setting, and small town characteristics: creaking wooden floors, friendly service, a tasteful deli and charcuterie, with a small selection of fine wines and liquors.

With the retirement of George West in 1975, proprietor for nearly 40 years, the market faced a critical juncture in its history. In 1977 Lilly purchased the store. During his short ownership he provided renovations of the structure and helped set the business on a firm pathway for the future. Now the center of a year-round retirement community, the market enjoys a bustling year-round luncheon business by area workmen and ever-growing summertime business. It still has creaking wooden floors.

Josiah died in 1995 from a heart attack at age 78. He is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery. His life of thoughtful generosity was consistent with an adage said to have come from his great grandfather Eli: "When you do nice things, do them in a nice way."



This short article is based primarily on materials gleaned from *The Book of Falmouth*, (1986) edited by Mary Lou Smith, and *Ring Around the Punch Bowl* (1979), a lively history of Beebe Woods by George L. Moses. To tell a tractable story and keep my focus I have omitted many salient participants and events in this complex and intertwined story. I am grateful to my wife Jennifer and to Susan Witzell for their suggestions. AGG



### *Josiah Kirby Lilly, III ~ In Gratitude*

In 1854 a 16 year-old boy in Indiana took a summer job in a drugstore, called "The Good Samaritan." His name was Eli Lilly. 144 years later the Eli Lilly Pharmaceutical Company of Indianapolis has annual revenue of \$24.5 billion, 34,000 employees, and offices in over 100 foreign countries. The story of this company, told elsewhere, makes fascinating reading.

The Lilly family first arrived in Falmouth from their winter home in Indianapolis in 1918, when Ruth Lilly (Mrs. Josiah K. Lilly, Jr.) brought her two infant children, Mary and Josiah III, here for a summer, while her husband was occupied with WWI. They rented an estate aptly named "Waterside," near where Surf Drive joins Shore Street at Vineyard Sound. The house had been built for a Beebe daughter in 1876. The structure is still there.

It would be a strange coincidence if the arrival of the Lilly family was independent of the earlier arrival of George Henry Alexander Clowes, a biochemist who conducted summer research at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole. Clowes, born in Beccles, England, developed international stature in cancer research, and was hired by Eli Lilly Company in 1919 to lead their efforts in linking company R&D with the larger academic research effort at scholarly institutions. Clowes' genius in recognizing mutual opportunity in this collaboration quickly led to the commercial development of insulin (for treatment of once-deadly diabetes) propelling Lilly into a pharmaceutical giant and, indirectly, many years later, Falmouth into position as the recipient of major philanthropy.

Lilly family members returned to Falmouth most summers to rent until 1934, when JKL, Jr. bought "Red Oaks" a grand mansion on 33 acres at Quissett Harbor, built in 1900-1902, its property landscaped by Olmsted Brothers of Brookline. When Lilly, Jr. died in 1962, it was gifted to Mystic Seaport but has since then returned to private residential ownership. Childhood and adolescent summer experiences in Falmouth no doubt "set the hook" into Josiah K. Lilly III.

After college (Cornell), and military service during WWII, young Lilly returned to Indianapolis. His family encouraged him to take up leadership within the Company, but his heart was not in it. After a few years in graduate school (Brown), Lilly did return to Indianapolis in 1949, but as full-time executive of the Lilly Endowment, a self-standing philanthropic organization formed by the family in 1937. It was endowed by Lilly family stock. (For perspective, in recent years the Endowment had assets of \$10 billion). Lilly gained experience in large scale philanthropy focusing on community development, education, and Christianity, an example set by his grandfather Eli. But after five years JKL III left the Endowment, later to be taken over by his sister Ruth, and explored some opportunities around Boston. In 1954, at age 38, Lilly returned to Falmouth, this time to stay.

For 41 years, until he died in 1995 at age 79, Josiah K. Lilly III directed his energies, business skills, and financial resources into Falmouth and Cape Cod. A private person with no desire for the limelight, the full extent of Lilly's contribution will never be known. But his contribution enhances the life, in many dimensions, of every resident and every visitor to our town.

## A Walk in the Woods *(continued)*

giving us our own Sippewissett Autumn foliage tour (along with the Tupelos around Ice House Pond, of course).

In the next few weeks the swamp will become a lively spot as the amphibians gather for their annual noisy evening rendezvous. In the cool spring evenings, even from the parking lot, the peepers' (*Hyla crucifer*) call is deafening, all those sweet little peeps combine into a roar. It is amazing to think that these noisy creatures are each less than an inch long! Sometimes, if you are lucky and not totally deafened, you can also hear the quacking call of the wood frog (*Rana sylvatica*).

But as you get closer to the water's edge, suddenly all is stillness as the animals sense the approach of a predator. On some of our evening explorations my grandkids and I have waited hoping that the frogs will start calling again and maybe we could even get a glimpse of them spotted by our flashlights, but it is always the kids' impatience that wins, and we walk away, only to hear the "reek, reek, reek" begin again when we are 100 feet on our homewards journey. There are of course many other animals that live here, but my absolutely most-prized sighting was of a woodcock trailed by five little babies, all walking gawkily in a line out of the wetland.



A few words about stone walls:

There are some very interesting stone walls in and around the Beebe Woods, most of them are very old. The hilly land which comprises most of the Woods was used historically (from colonial days) as woodlots to provide fire- and stove-wood for the homes down on the flat land in the center of Falmouth. At some point this high rough land was used for grazing sheep. On some of the old maps, you can see roughly parallel stone walls stretching out from Falmouth and over the hills. Many of the mapped plots bear the names of home owners from the Village Green

and environs. You can still see many of these walls in the woods today. (The easiest-to-access map detailing these walls, though not all of them, is the "Peterson Farm and Beebe Woods Trail Guide" produced by the 300 Committee, available at their office on Locust Street.)

Whenever I walk through the Woods I always observe the walls and try to figure out their history, their directions and uses, muttering silently things like, "This gap in the wall must have contained a wooden gate between the fields." "This declivity in the land must have been caused when they moved gravel from here to over there to build up the cart path." "I wonder if this wall was built before Sippewissett Road was put through [in the 1890s]." I always feel close to the past, and easily imagine sheep grazing between the walls and up the hilly slopes, or workers sawing down trees for firewood for the big houses back in town.

At the end of the Kelly property where the path continues on into the Beebe Woods, the stone boundary walls intersect at right angles. Here stands one of the characteristic formal boundary markers of the Beebe's: cut granite posts with



Throughout Beebe Woods one finds split granite markers with inclined tops, usually bearing numbers. These bounds are said to mark successive purchases, as James Beebe assembled the 668 acres forming Beebe Woods by 1872

sharp angled tops bearing carved numbers. You can see these throughout the Beebe Woods. Each marks a separate purchase of James Beebe as he bought up the old woodlots to form his estate, amassing acreage in the hills above Falmouth village. By the time of his death in 1875, he owned more than 600 acres of woodland. Unfortunately most of the Beebe records have been lost in time, and records of these land purchases are gone. But when you find one of these markers in the woods next to a stone wall, you can assume that the wall predates 1875, often much older.

I had assumed that the graceful curving wall around the south side of the swamp dividing the Kelly's house from the wetland must be an ornamental landscape feature because it seems so purposely beautiful. But Mrs. Kelly told me that it was there, and already old, when they bought the property 70 years ago. She added that when her sons were young, they had been given the task of rebuilding the old curved wall.

On the north side of the swamp there is another curved wall, almost a mirror image of the south side, but not as graceful. You step across it as you leave the parking area before you reach the swamp. As it moves away from the road,

it quickly merges into an old straight wall, as does the southern one, and both join at the back corner of the property at the Beebe marker # 76, looking as if they are attempting to enclose the swamp in a big circle. The new path from the Kelly property to the trails in Beebe Woods starts at Marker #76 and proceeds under the arching branches of a white pine, then leads gently up a swale, bending to the right to pass closely to another interesting rock array, again evidence of men working here in years past: a big rock, dumped here by the glacier thousands of years ago, but with drill holes...cutting it into smaller rectangular pieces, to be used in farms, fields, or houses. Since there is no bedrock here, these glacial erratics were the best source of this local building material. If you look carefully, you can find other, even clearer examples of this stone-cutting in the Woods and you can see the results around the Village Green in house foundations, mounting blocks, and doorsteps. It is said it took ½ hour to drill just one of these holes; the amount of time to drill all these is staggering.

As you can guess, figuring out how to read these landscape clues can be fun, though it might just drive you crazy!

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### **John B. Pearce, PhD** *(continued)*

Dumping Act of 1985, that restricted the practice. He spent time in the early 1980s in Washington D.C., assisting in the crafting and implementation of the Act and in planning NOAA's estuary programs.

During his 35 years in Falmouth Jack lent his talents not only to the Sippewissett Association but to other worthwhile organizations such as

The 300 Committee and Falmouth Council for Civic Beautification. He was a prolific writer of Letters to the Editor, often on use of science to improve environmental decision making.

We will miss seeing Jack with Ruth walking the family dog along the quiet byways of Sippowissett, stopping to chat and exchange information with those they encountered along the way.

## Sippewissett Association Newsletter

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### Board of Directors

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### Calendar

#### Annual Meeting

June 20, 2020

- Saturday, 10 AM - 12 PM  
Falmouth Public Library  
Hermann Meeting Room
- Neighborhood updates
  - Committee Reports

### Newsletter

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