
Coastal Neighbors Network Newsletter, February 2022

Coastal Neighbors Network

Wed, Feb 9, 2022 at 10:26

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VILLAGE MATTERS

Tea, scones and good conversation followed a vigorous round of croquet on a summer's day. Lots more photos below of this and other Coastal Neighbors events in 2021.

Fun Events for Your Calendar

Watch the weekly updates for details. All events will be virtual through the winter; in-person events will resume in spring when we can meet outside. Register [HERE](#).

Feb. 14: Simple Italian Cooking with the Mellis, 4-5 PM, via Zoom

Rosemary and Tony Melli will demonstrate cooking a simple Italian pasta dish with tomatoes, garlic and parsley in this online tutorial. You can simply watch the chefs do the cooking or cook along with them in your own kitchen. We'll supply the recipe before the session so you can have the ingredients on hand. This pasta dish is one of several simple and healthy recipes Rosemary compiled when she worked with Slow Food International, a grassroots organization founded in Italy to promote local food and traditional cooking.

What Are You Reading? A Whole New Kind of Book Club

Monthly, 2nd Thursday of the month beginning March 10, 3-4 PM, via Zoom

Join us for a whole new kind of book club. Instead of everyone reading and discussing the same book, this is an opportunity to share. You can briefly describe a book you're reading now, one you enjoyed in the past, or even one still sitting on your bedside table waiting to be opened. Jan Hall, former co-owner and book buyer at Partners Village Store in Westport, will lead the discussion.

Lots More

Check out the full Events Listing on our web page [HERE](#). You'll find events sponsored by the Westport and Dartmouth Councils on Aging, local libraries, the Whaling Museum and others, including a series of technology training classes and a session on birdscaping (planting your garden to attract birds).

How Are You Surviving Winter?

We're looking for tips and tactics on how people are surviving winter - especially this winter with its dual challenges of frigid weather and lurking covid. How are you managing through the winter doldrums? What kinds of activities fill your day? How do you keep in touch with friends and family? Call or email Executive Director Andy Pollock with your ideas or just to discuss with Andy: andy@coastalneighborsnetwork.org; Tel. 508-556-4004.

Kate Fentress: Creative, Courageous, Inspiring Leadership



The idea had been bubbling in the Dartmouth community for a few years, but in 2015 Kate Fentress did more than stir the pot. It had only been a few months since her retirement from The Women's Fund -- serving as its first Executive Director and growing it into a robust and well-respected organization. But already she was restless, which is typical of her boundless energy.

Having been immersed in the community, Kate recognized the coming challenges for Dartmouth's aging population, which had not just grown but was fast approaching 40% of the town, and knew that she had the skills and contacts to do something about it. She took the lead in pulling together people who were interested in starting an aging-in-place non-profit based on the model that Beacon Hill had established five years previously. In the words of Dock Murdock, who was one of the founding Board members of Coastal Neighbors, Kate had the "combined common sense, creativity and strategic thinking" that made it possible to form a Board of dogged people who could work together smoothly and get Coastal Neighbors off the ground.

Aging in Place was not a sexy or even topical issue in 2015; sometimes it was hard for the rest of us to see how it would be possible to get going, but as President of the Board, Kate's steadfast optimism and her ability to articulate what we were all about were inspiring. And stone by stone, coffee gathering by coffee gathering, dollar by dollar, volunteer by volunteer, and finally, member by member, we lifted off in 2017. Thank you, Kate for your essential leadership at the 2015 inception of Coastal Neighbors Network, and for serving as President of the Board 2017-2020 and then as a Board member 2020-2021.

How to Start an Olive Oil Business... and Have Fun Doing It

The first invitation came when Tony and Rosemary Melli were visiting friends in Italy who grew olives on ancient gnarled trees and grapes on old vines. “Would you be interested in importing our olive oil to the US?” they asked. But Tony had just retired after a long career in the Westport schools as Director of Guidance and Rosemary was in the middle of fulfilling work as a speech pathologist. So they politely demurred.

The next summer their Italian friends came to Westport for a visit...and repeated the invitation. Tony remembers saying to his wife, “I’m retired now, but if you want to do it...go ahead!” And so like any smart, accomplished woman, Rosemary did just that. After extensive research and hands-on education in Italy during the olive harvest, she began by identifying Boston restaurants and gourmet shops known for using the finest artisanal ingredients. Then, with some trepidation, she set off with a few cases of their premium olive oil and a long list of places to visit. As it turned out, every case was sold by noon - to the shop at the top of the list, Formaggio Kitchen!

Since that auspicious beginning in 1999, the Mellis have been purveyors of fine olive oil and balsamic vinegar, importing from farms in Italy and Spain and selling their products in stores, restaurants and farmers markets. While they have downsized recently, they still do private sales. Last October, the Mellis presented a special workshop for Coastal Neighbors members. As these photos attest, it was a gastronomic success!



Scenes from 2021: Bird Watching, Local History, Bonfires and More!

As soon as the weather allowed for outdoor gatherings last year, Coastal Neighbors organized a menu of events for members, offering everything from croquet to a workshop on making holiday swags. Here are some highlights.



Croquet and Scones - A group of about 20 Coastal Neighbors members enjoyed a vigorous round of croquet on the lawn at Salt Marsh Farm in Dartmouth, followed by home-made scones with clotted cream (compliments of Derrick Jones) and delicious jam (made by our Executive Director Andy Pollock). Thanks go to Lisa and Andy Mellgard for hosting the event and to members of the Marion Mallet Club who were on hand to provide pointers. The emphasis was on a bit of friendly competition and a lot of fun!



Westport History - We kicked off a new series of “Coastal Adventures” with a tour of historical sites in Westport, followed by a convivial lunch at Partners Village Store. Jenny O’Neill, Executive Director of the Westport Historical Society, was our guide for a fascinating look at Handy House. Originally built around 1712, the house is not simply a well preserved old house but three remarkable houses in one, progressing through expansions and renovations from colonial to Georgian to federal architectural styles (“Walking through the house is like peeling an onion,” Jenny explained). Next stop was the Westport Friends Meeting House to learn about one of its most famous members,

Paul Cuffee. Born on Cuttyhunk, Paul Cuffee was the seventh of ten children of Kofi Slocum, a freed African slave, and Ruth Moses, a Wampanoag Indian. He went on to become a successful boat-builder and merchant, as well as an advocate for voting rights, integrated schooling and the abolition of slavery. The memorial stone on the Meeting House lawn reads: "Patriot, Navigator, Educator, Philanthropist, Friend - A Noble Character."



Around the Bonfire - While it was a relatively mild autumn night, everyone was happy to gather around the bonfire for the warmth...and the plentiful s'mores. Thanks go to Andy Pollock and Jeff Schmalz for their traditional Silverbrook Farm hospitality, and to the crew who built the perfect fire.



Bird Watching on Gooseberry Island - Our group of nearly 30 birding enthusiasts was in good hands for an early morning walk at Gooseberry Island in Westport. We had THREE expert guides: Andrea Jones, Director of Bird Conservation at Audubon California (and daughter of Coastal Neighbors members Margaret and Derrick Jones); Tom Maloney,

Executive Director of the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (Andrea's husband); and Gina Purtell, Program Manager for Community Science & Coastal Resilience, Mass Audubon South East.



Deck the Halls - The barn at Silverbrook Farm was filled with the scent of evergreen branches and holly that had been harvested from people's backyards. Ribbons, wire, clippers and other equipment were provided, and Margaret Jones gave a brief demonstration on creating a holiday swag. Then a group of about 20 people got to work constructing their own beautiful decorations. Most people were able to make two swags, one to bring home and one to be delivered to someone who was home-bound. It was a festive and fun way to prepare for the holidays.

Feel free to give us feedback on Village Matters and/or submit an article for publication. We would LOVE to add you to our writing staff! Thanks to Margot Hand for editorial help on this issue. Editor: Terry Cryan.

Coastal Neighbors Network - Board of Directors

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Margot Hand, Secretary

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Margaret Jones
Mia Lahti
Lisa Mellgard

Tony Melli
Dock Murdock
Sarah Van Vleck
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Caring | Community | Connection

Coastal Neighbors Network is a membership-based organization committed to supporting older residents, on a one-to-one basis, who wish to stay safe, independent, and connected in their community.



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