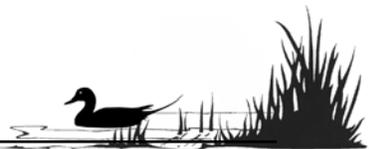


Watershed Observer



NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT LAND TRUST - VOLUME 22 NO. 2, SPRING 2008

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SEE [HTTP://ACLTWEB.ORG](http://acltweb.org) OR PAGE 4
FOR FULL CALENDAR AND ADDI-
TIONAL INFORMATION.

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American Chestnut Land Trust Celebrates Carson's Centenary

By Pat Ullberg

Wednesday, April 23, 2008

Rachel Carson came to Calvert County on March 30, via a play based on Carson's diaries and writings. The American Chestnut Land Trust brought this presentation to Calvert in recognition of Carson's centenary year. Carson was born in 1907 and died in 1964.

Carson, as everyone must know, is considered to be the mother of the ecological movement. Carson was a marine biologist who for many years worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife agency. She also was that rarity among scientists, a writer who could write about scientific facts in a way that the general public could understand. Her first books about marine life were well received, and one, "The Sea Around Us," was a bestseller that was published in 39 languages. Her next book, however, started a firestorm in scientific and corporate circles when it was published in 1962. "Silent Spring" dramatized the effects of virulent chemicals such as DDT on the chain of life.

As a scientist, she began to notice changes in the natural world—the waters and lands—that she believed were caused by the chemicals in insecticidal sprays. These chemical sprays went into production for civilian use in the late 1940s. They were widely marketed in post-war America as the means to controlling insect ravages in crops, and scourges such as the mosquitoes that cause malaria and yellow fever. These sprays did indeed perform as advertised, killing off all insects within spraying range.

Based on her own observations, Carson began to believe these chemicals killed much more than unwanted pests. Her empirical research demonstrated that the toxicity of these chemicals was not clearly understood by either the general public or the manufacturers.

The play, "A Sense of Wonder," dramatizes the period in Carson's life when she began to suspect that chemicals were changing nature and not for the better, and the next period when she was compiling the research for what would become "Silent Spring." Carson was reluctant to publish her theories, because she knew the validity of her research would be criticized by the scientific community, since she was a marine biologist and not a chemist. She knew, to prove her theory, the research into the underlying chemistry and biochemistry would have to be exhaustive and impeccable, to demonstrate, with credibility, the drastic side effects caused by these insecticides.

Kaiulani Lee, a professional actress with an impressive resume of credits in

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From the President's Desk ...

The ACLT Board Looks Forward to Revising the Five-Year Plan

"Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably will not themselves be realized." Daniel H. Burnham, renowned architect of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The time has arrived for the ACLT board to revise the Five-Year Plan. In July, the board will hold a retreat to do just that. Far from an arcane document, the plan is critical as it guides our policies, programs and projects from 2009 through 2013. Whether or not it will succeed in stirring our members' blood depends on the imagination and creativity that goes into preparing it. The retreat is a chance to think big and envision how ACLT will progress over the next five years. The purpose of this article is to solicit your thoughts and recommendations for the future.

As I reported in the summer 2007 *Watershed Observer*, the current Five-Year Plan, covering 2004–2008, has served us well and helped produce important accomplishments. The next plan provides an opportunity to take stock and set some ambitious goals for the next five years. As Calvert County continues to grow, ACLT must also grow and grow well if it is to maintain its vision as "a national model for a community-based conservation organization."

The following reflect the types of topics (in alphabetical order lest a priority be inferred) and goals likely to be discussed at the retreat. While none of the topics is new and we can point to solid accomplishments in each, I believe that it's critical to set ever higher targets. Such targets are not necessarily easy to achieve, would demand staff and financial resources and may prove elusive. Aiming high, however, is what the retreat is all about.

- **Advocacy** - Maintain effective ties with elected officials at all levels of government and make sure the voice of conservation is heard, in Washington, in Annapolis and in Prince Frederick. Advocacy is one of ACLT's key obligations as part of a much larger land conservation movement. There is no lack of issues, from state budgets to federal tax policies to protecting the permanence of easements. A strong advocacy program is a must.
- **Education** - Build a "green" education, meeting and office center as a focal point for administration, workshops, seminars, instruction and fostering partnerships to further ACLT's mission. This would be a showcase for the local natural and cultural heritage and provide opportunities for hands on learning. Pending building our own center, continue to sponsor events that engage and challenge the community, like the showing of "An Inconvenient Truth" and the Rachel Carson play.
- **Fiscal Health** - Finish what needs to be done to achieve and maintain our goal of supporting ACLT's operations: 1/3 by endowment, 1/3 by foundations and 1/3 by membership. Establish a planned giving program.
- **Have Fun and Celebrate** - Never lose sight of the importance of the Auction, the Parkers Creek Celebration, Volunteer Appreciation, the Canoe Trips and other events that are critical to truly appreciating the jewel we have in our preserved land.
- **Land Acquisition** - Aggressively and creatively pursue strategies for conservation of as much of the remaining unprotected land in the Parkers Creek and Governors Run watersheds as possible. Where outright purchase or donation of easements is not feasible,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

Around ACLT

HIKING TRAIL VISITOR COUNT INCREASES

Have you been noticing more new faces lately strolling along the East Loop or hiking on Parkers Creek trail and more cars parked at the North and South trailheads? Well, our visitor counts are up due to several steps ACLT has taken.

September 2007 ushered in two important events for ACLT—the adoption of a new logo with the tag line “... connecting people with the land” and new highway signs. These interconnected events have helped to significantly increase visitor traffic at ACLT preserved properties.

The distinctive and recognizable highway identification signs were a joint ACLT project with Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and Calvert County Department of Economic Development. Immediately after the signs went up, many excited visitors stopped in at the office to say that they had lived in the area for many years but were unaware of ACLT properties. They were thrilled to discover our hiking trails.

Connecting people with the land has also increased with community event coverage by local newspapers and the listing of our calendar of events, such as our Guided Hikes, on searchable websites. Extensive media coverage swelled the registration of our Winter Guided Hike to more than 40 hikers and our Spring Guided Hike to 28. In prior years, these hikes have only generated a handful of participants.

New signs will also be erected soon at our North and South trailheads welcoming visitors, encouraging them to



become members and directing them to sign in. Trail sign-in sheets are the only way we can gauge how many visitors are using (and enjoying) our trail network. Monthly visits to our trails have almost doubled over last year. For example, 413 visitors were recorded in March 2008 compared to 224 visitors for the same month in 2007. And if this trend continues, we will certainly exceed our 2007 annual visitor count of 2,300. ACLT reports our monthly visitor count to the Calvert County Department of Economic Development Tourism Office. Outdoor recreational activities, which include natural area hiking, are an important tourism marketing opportunity that the County is pursuing.

ACLT Land Manager, Liz Stoffel, is closely monitoring the increased hiking activity and trail use. Measures to avert any adverse impact on the trail system and protect adjacent land use will be implemented if necessary.

GUIDED HIKE CELEBRATES SPRING OFFERINGS

ACLT hosted almost 30 hikers for our annual Spring Guided Hike held Saturday, April 12, 2008. Hikers were guided by ACLT board member Dave Farr of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and ACLT member Ethel Dutky, a retired University of Maryland plant pathologist. Spring beauty abounded along the trails of the Gravatt West tract including flowering Dogwood and Redbud trees, Bloodroot wildflowers, and May Apples. Enthusiastic hikers enjoyed the leisurely pace with frequent stops to view the spring offerings and listen to the guides.



PLEASE HELP ACLT GROW

In February, we began an ambitious campaign to increase our membership by 25% over the next 24 months. We are asking you to help us meet this important goal.

Why increase our membership? Members are the life-blood of ACLT. Memberships are an important part of the financial support that allows ACLT to protect and provide access to almost 3000 acres in and near the Parkers Creek watershed—land that ranges from productive farm fields to breathtaking salt marshes and forests filled with wildlife. Members maintain trails, lead canoe trips and demonstrate community support for our organization.

Why meeting this goal should be easy? I believe that a major reason people who enjoy our trails and the beauty of the land we protect do not join is that they do not know that membership is important to sustaining ACLT. Many do not even understand that we are a member-supported organization—not a state or county-funded facility. The new signs on the road have brought a tremendous increase in people visiting our lands. It seems only natural that many of these people would become members *if we ask them to!*

What the Board and our Volunteers are doing? Our membership campaign is following a 3-pronged strategy. We are taking steps to: Increase the ease of joining ACLT; Increase communication on the importance of joining ACLT; and Increase incentives for membership. New signs asking people to join as well as welcoming them to our trails are being installed at every parking area. We are insuring that membership forms are easily available and will soon provide the ability to join ACLT online at our website. We are developing presentations and news releases about ACLT. We are asking volunteers who work at our events and guide trips to directly ask participants if they would consider joining. And we are developing additional incentives for joining—including discounts on ACLT activities and gifts.

What can you do? The most important thing that every current ACLT member can do is to be sure to let your friends and neighbors who already hike our trails, enjoy our canoe trips, or might like to do so, know that ACLT is a member-supported organization and that increasing membership is important to our ability to sustain and

grow the services we provide to the community. Also consider giving an ACLT 1-year membership as a gift to your friends and family, and then encourage them to renew their membership in subsequent years. *Don't be shy...this is a good cause!*

Please help us sustain and grow what is truly a treasure of Southern Maryland. Spread the word that we want everyone to join—we've been too good at keeping it a secret!

Thank you so much.

Denise Breitburg, Membership Committee & Campaign Chair

ACLT Calendar of Events – 2008

Saturday, June 7, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. – Family Day Celebration of Parkers Creek at Double Oak Farm - A day of fun activities for the whole family, in celebration of the natural and cultural resources of Calvert County.

Saturday, June 14 – Paddle from Parkers Creek to Flag Ponds - Start early to get in shape for this seven-mile paddle. ACLT will be partnering with Calvert County Natural Resources Division in coordinating this event. To register call 410-535-5327. Fee.

Saturday, September 27 – 13th Annual Silent Auction & Celebration - Bid on donated items at the auction, catch up with other ACLT members and enjoy the evening at ACLT's annual fundraising event!

Friday, October 24, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. – Volunteer Appreciation Dinner - The ACLT staff hosts this enjoyable evening to honor and thank our dedicated and faithful volunteers. By invitation.

Sunday, November 2, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon – Fall Foliage Hike at Double Oak - You can't beat the fall colors at Double Oak Farm! Don't miss the last guided hike of the year. (Remember to set your clocks back one hour.)

Saturday, December 13, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. – Greens Sale and Beach Hayride - Purchase fresh cut evergreens for holiday decorations, drink hot cider and take a hayride to the beach.

In addition, ACLT offers guided canoe trips from April through October. The 2008 canoe trip schedule appears on page 7 of this newsletter and on our Web site, <http://acltweb.org>.

Turning Straw into ... Gold

Earth Day 2008 continued the tradition of five communities participating with ACLT in the cleanup of roadside litter and household trash dumped in ravines. All told, 7.5 tons of trash and almost 2,000 pounds of tires were taken to the landfill. We appreciate the cooperation of the Calvert County Solid Waste Division in providing three dumpsters for this purpose and in waiving the landfill tipping fees.

This year, however, we created a new Earth Day tradition—projects with a more positive environmental bent. The most dramatic was the project to turn a year's worth of vines and other downed wood generated by the invasive plant removal volunteers into mulch for the trails. This was ACLT's way of turning straw into gold—removing invasive species from our properties (with great care not to include any seeds) and using the mulch to reduce our carbon footprint by eliminating the need to mow grassy sections of the trails all spring, summer and fall.

We also broke from tradition with spectacular weather for our picnic on the beach at Governors Run. [Photos on this page courtesy of Nick Bohaska and Charity Higgs].



(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

develop strategic partnerships with others to maximize conservation. Working with others, push ahead with a trail from Prince Frederick to the Bay.

- **Membership** - Double the number of members by 2013 and diversify our membership to better reflect the county population. Increase diversity of the board. Develop an effective base of business members.
- **Partnerships** - Pursue strategic alignments with other NGOs in the County to collectively further the cause of conserving the county's natural and cultural heritage.
- **Science** - Actively encourage continuing academic research in the Parkers Creek watershed. Invite the researchers to conduct seminars and write up their results to highlight the value of Parkers Creek and the surrounding land.
- **Stewardship** - "Green" our existing buildings and grounds as a showcase for minimizing energy consumption, controlling stormwater and reducing nitrogen from our wastewater.
- **Sustainable Agriculture** - Establish a thriving Community Supported Agriculture operation on ACLT land to promote economically and environmentally sustainable agriculture in the county.

This is hardly an exhaustive list and taken together they are perhaps beyond our capacity to achieve between now and 2013. However, the purpose of the retreat is to stimulate creative thinking as we recraft our vision for the future. Recognizing that ACLT's strength lies in its members, I challenge each of you to start with these examples, reflect on what you feel ACLT should strive for over the next five years and pass your thoughts on to a staff or board member. I assure you that any such recommendations will be considered at the retreat.

Ted Graham
President, ACLT



Locally Grown

“What should we have for dinner?” Deciding what we “*should*” eat when, as humans, we sit at the top of the food chain (or, should I say, at the end of a very long, industrial food chain?) and *can* eat just about anything, is what author Michael Pollan refers to as the “Omnivore’s Dilemma.”¹ Should we choose the organic apple or the conventional one, the wild fish or the farmed, the local wine or the Australian, the industrially produced organic lettuce from California or the locally grown but not “certified” organic lettuce? How you solve that dilemma, and answer that mundane, everyday question of “what’s for dinner,” however, has many important ramifications.

A recently formed Calvert County group is encouraging residents to choose to answer that question by buying locally grown foods, whenever possible.² In turn, it is hoped that consumer demand will encourage more local farmers to grow foods that fulfill the growing demand and to add value to it through local food processing. This will not only support local farmers and our economy, but also help Calvert County to retain its remaining farm fields and forests. ACLT is considering a plan to partner with a farmer to produce local agricultural products on our open fields.

Best-selling author Barbara Kingsolver embarked on a one-year experiment, eating almost exclusively locally grown foods for one year.³ She explained that one of her reasons for doing so was that individuals are rapidly losing their connection to the land and to the foods they eat:

“Most people of my grandparents’ generation had an intuitive sense of agricultural basics: when various fruits and vegetables come into season, which ones keep through the winter, how to preserve the others. On what day autumn’s first frost will likely fall on their county, and when to expect the last one in the spring.... Most importantly: what animals and vegetables thrive in one’s immediate region and how to live well on those, with little else thrown into the mix beyond a bag of flour, a pinch of salt, and a handful of coffee. Few people of my generation, and approximately none of our children, could answer any of those questions, let alone all. This knowledge has vanished from our culture.”

You don’t need to go to the extremes that Barbara Kingsolver describes in her very entertaining book, however, to become more in tune with what you eat.

Essayist and farmer Wendell Berry has said that

“eating ... is inescapably an agricultural act, and that how we eat determines, to a considerable extent, how the world is used.”⁴ People should ask basic questions about the food that they buy, such as: Where was it grown? How far was it transported? How free of chemicals is it? How much did the manufacturing, or packaging, or advertising add to the cost of the food? How has the food been processed and how has that affected its quality or nutritional value? Slow Food International, an organization founded in Italy in 1986 but now boasting 80,000 members worldwide, recommends that, by being informed about how food is produced and by actively supporting those who produce it, people can be “co-producers,” an active partner in the agricultural production process, as opposed to merely passive consumers.⁵

What can we do to eat locally and responsibly?

Wendell Berry recommends that we:

- “Participate in food production to the extent that you can....
- Prepare your own food....
- Learn the origins of the food you buy, and buy the food that is produced closest to your home.
- Whenever possible, deal directly with a local farmer, gardener or orchardist.”

Buying locally grown foods sends a message that we support local agriculture. Supporting local farmers, and encouraging them to expand into the locally grown foods market, could be just the shot in the arm that is needed to stem the steep decline in agriculture in the county. In a recent article titled “Local may be Calvert ag’s best hope” in *The Calvert Recorder*, it was reported that the market value of Calvert County’s agricultural production is down from \$7 million in 1979 to \$3.2 million in 2002. The tobacco buyout certainly contributed greatly to this sharp decline; finding a replacement for Calvert County’s “cash crop” has not been easy.

The county commissioners have asked Greg Bowen, Director of Planning & Zoning to come up with a plan to promote sustainable agriculture⁶ in Calvert County. He has identified a number of opportunities including growing hearty grains for breads, grapes for wine, switchgrass for biofuel, and vegetables and flowers, as well as some challenges including the lack of canning and meat processing facilities, but he remains hopeful. One important step will be the location of a new outdoor farmers market somewhere in Prince Frederick to replace the indoor market that was not economically viable. The Farm Bureau

hosted a recent meeting of young farmers that was well attended and there was significant interest in vegetable production, organic gardening and extending the growing season with “hoop houses.”

Community-Supported Agriculture, or CSA, really captures the concept of the consumer as co-producer. In a CSA, customers buy a share of a farm’s production for the season. As a shareholder, you share in the risk that we might have another drought like last year, but you also share in the benefits of a good season by receiving a more bountiful weekly allotment of fresh, local food. You not only receive fresh, whole foods direct from the farmer, eliminating the middlemen, but you know exactly where and how your food has been grown. Calvert County has a new CSA operated by the Bourne family in Owings. They have been direct selling beef to local customers for many years, but recently decided to open a CSA, called The Lamb’s Quarter. For more information or to arrange a farm tour, contact thelambquarter@peoplepc.com.

ACLT is examining a number of ways that we can return our open agricultural fields to production, hopefully, by next season. There are 14 acres here at Double Oak that used to be farmed by Wilson Freeland and a few acres on the Gravatt West property that used to be farmed by the Wallace family. In the meantime, we have hired David Benson of Maryland Country Caterers for this year’s auction (scheduled for September 27th) who promises to build a meal around local produce, local meat and local wine. Remember to “Think globally, eat locally!”

Karen H. Edgecombe
Executive Director

¹Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore’s Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), pp. 1-11.

²The term *locavore* has been coined to describe those who eat locally grown foods. The Calvert County group prefers *loCALvore* to emphasize the Calvert County focus. <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/calvertlocalvores>.

³Kingsolver, Barbara. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 2007), pp. 8-22.

⁴Berry, Wendell. “The Pleasures of Eating,” in *What are People for?* (New York: North Point Press, 1990), pp. 145-152.

⁵<http://www.slowfood.com>. See also, <http://www.slowfoodusa.org>.

⁶As Michael Pollan states in the *Omnivore’s Dilemma*, p. 183, “‘unsustainable’ is a word that’s been so abused we’re apt to forget what it very specifically means: *Sooner or later it must collapse*.” Pollan contends that the current industrial organic food chain is unsustainable. He says, “at least in terms of the fuel burned to get it from the farm to my table, there’s little reason to think my Earthbound Farm spring mix salad is any more sustainable than a conventional salad would have been.”



A Community-Supported Family Farm—The Bourne Family Plants Together

2008 Canoe Trip Schedule

May 31, Saturday, 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

June 14, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Parkers Creek to Flag Ponds Paddle

June 21, Saturday, 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

July 19, Saturday, 4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

August 16, Saturday, 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

September 7, Sunday, 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

September 13, Saturday, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

October 11, Saturday, 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Depart from Warrior’s Rest and enjoy a scenic, volunteer guided tour of Parkers Creek. **Reservations are required.**

A \$10.00 per person donation is requested.

Please call us at 410-414-3400 or e-mail us at info@actweb.org for more information or to make your reservation.

Forenoon 22 June—Precisely 400 years since John Smith sailed north past mouth of Parkers Creek?

Scarcely a modest man, Capt. John Smith would have bathed in all the 2007 media attention. Last year was chosen for the quadricentennial celebration because Jamestown was founded in 1607. However, Smith's two main voyages of Chesapeake exploration actually took place in the summer of 1608—it was on the first of these that he “discovered” what we now call the Calvert Cliffs. But can we estimate the time and day Smith sailed past the mouth of Parkers Creek? I think so—adding ten days to convert the old Julian calendar then still used by the English—we can arguably celebrate the precise 400th on Sunday, 22 June. Forenoon, most likely.

Smith and his party (six gentlemen, four soldiers, one fisherman, one fishmonger, one blacksmith, but no sailors) departed Jamestown during the second week of June, 1608 (on our modern Gregorian calendar). The unnamed “shallop” was described by Smith as “*an open barge of two tunnes burthen*”, and had probably been shipped disassembled to Jamestown. It would be the first of two voyages that summer, exploring the Chesapeake and its tributaries—casing the “*Chesapioc*” for gold and other minerals, Indian trade opportunities, a northwest passage to the Pacific, etc. His shallop first sailed down the James River and across to the eastern shore, and then turned north. In the young captain's own words and spelling:

“But finding this easterne shore shallow broken Isles, and the maine for most part without fresh water, we passed by the straights of Limbo, for the weasterne shore. So broad is the bay here, that we could scarce perceive the great high Cliffes on the other side. By them, wee anchored that night, and called them Richards Cliffes. 30 leagues we sailed more Northwards, not finding any inhabitants, yet the coast well watred, the mountains very barren, the vallies very fertile, but the woods extream thick, full of Woolves, Beares, Deare and other wild beasts. The first inlet we found, wee called Bolus, for that the clay (in many places) was like (if not) Bole-Armoniacke...”

For those not familiar with Smith's report, I recommend “John Smith's Chesapeake Voyages, 1607–1609” by Helen Rountree, Wayne Clark and Kent Mountford (Univ. of Virginia Press, 368 p.) to provide some clarification: 1.) according to Calvert eohistorian Kent Mountford and others before him, the “*straights of Limbo*” are now called Hoopers Straits; 2.) Mountford, but not all the experts, believe Smith anchored along the southern Calvert Cliffs, plausibly near Rocky Point, currently and likely also then the highest spot on the cliffs, i.e. a natural landmark; 3.) “Richards” was his mother's maiden name,

but it obviously didn't stick; our cliffs were long simply called “the cliffs” (or “clifts”); the term ‘Calvert Cliffs’ is more recent; 4.) when Smith refers to “*the mountains very barren*” this was his way of noting the bare, eroded face of the cliffs, standing out in the thickly vegetated Chesapeake; 5.) the “*inlet*” he called “*Bolus*” after a type of red, iron-rich clay, is the Patapsco, the first navigable ‘river’ he encountered; 6.) When Smith wrote of “*vallies well watred*”, he surely meant the many tiny fresh-water streams trickling down through ravines onto the beach. If so, he must have sailed close enough to the cliffs to notice them. Kent Mountford does not believe Smith actually went ashore along the cliffs to fill his water ‘*barricoes*’; 7.) with an English league about 3 miles, “*30 leagues Northwards*” would be 90 miles, compared to approximately 60 actual statute miles, more or less following the coast from Rocky Point to the mouth of the Patapsco. Part of this discrepancy may well reflect the way distance was “dead-reckoned” back then—by timing a log tied on a line drifting past the known length of a vessel. Smith could not have known that water flows preferentially south along the Bay's western shore, such that distance covered sailing north through the water exceeds actual distance covered on average.

Smith and his men, sleeping on deck, surely rose at daybreak—which in June arrives early—to weigh anchor and sail north. Morning June winds were most likely from the southwest and rather weak, especially in the lee of the cliffs, so it probably took the shallop a few hours to cover the 10 miles to the cliffs near Parkers Creek. The likely wind direction put their sail on the starboard side, giving the men an unobstructed view of the pristine, forest-crowned cliffs, bathed in morning light.

Smith and his party did not explore the woods now protected by the ACLT and its partners. Had he done so, Smith would have described them as he did other forests inland from Indian settlements, “*plaine wildernes, as God first made it*”. Should we ‘celebrate’ this June 22 as a small milestone in the European colonization that later begat the Calvert Cliffs as they are today or should we also reflect on the vanished world Smith's crew saw here? Imagine 150-foot tall, 6-foot diameter oaks and chestnuts, tiny Indian villages along the Patuxent, the giant sturgeon and practically limitless oysters, the now-extinct Carolina parakeets and Passenger pigeons, the “*plaine wildernes, as God first made it*”.

Peter Vogt

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

theater and on screen, brings Carson to life with great empathy and skill. The play, in one act and two scenes, is set in Carson's summer cottage in Maine, and in her office at home in Silver Spring. Carson, unmarried and in her early 50s, has recently adopted a little boy, Roger, her orphaned great-nephew. Lee is particularly effective in dramatizing Carson's diary entries that record her love for six-year-old Roger, as she watches his joy at exploring the natural world he finds during their Maine summer. Carson writes of her own pleasure in seeing the wonders of nature afresh through Roger's six-year-old eyes.

When the scene shifts to Carson's Silver Spring office, Carson's anxiety about publishing her research is made more poignant by the fact that she had developed the breast cancer that would end her life at 56 years. She tries to get other scientists to publish her research, but nobody else dares to take the risk. She finally concludes that she must publish her findings herself, because the public had to learn about the potential damage these chemicals could cause, in fact, were already causing to the health of all living organisms, including humans. The play concludes at the time of Carson's decision to go ahead and publish, no matter what the cost may be to her reputation.

Lee has played "A Sense of Wonder" in many venues large and small, here and abroad. Lee also appeared on the Bill Moyer's television program during the year-long celebration of Carson's centenary. Her background is not in science, but she prepared thoroughly for this portrayal. Lee bases her interpretation of Carson not only on the diaries and writings; she also has taken courses so she has a clearer understanding of the science involved in "Silent Spring," and the ensuing controversy after its publication. Her sensitivity and skill takes Carson out of the realm of myth and looks at the real person, with the doubts and uncertainties that are part of the life of a scientist with new ideas.

To say that "Silent Spring" caused a sensation when it was printed is an understatement of epic proportions. Carson's work was ferociously attacked by scientists in the pay of the chemical producers. Not content with ruining her reputation, the corporations also vilified her personally, using every smear tactic in their arsenal. Even today her name is anathema in places where the environmental movement is discredited. She never saw herself as a crusader, but quoted the French writer and biologist, Jean Rostand: "The obligation to endure gives us the right to know."

The debt humanity owes to Carson's work is profound. Thanks to her courage, we have national recognition of the reality of our impact on the environment. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was established in 1970, a national recognition of the importance of guarding the earth—just one of the many results of her groundbreaking work. Communities world-wide have been alerted to the need to nurture the planet and care for its many complex and interrelated ecosystems.

In Calvert, the environmental movement was the impetus for developing the American Chestnut Land Trust, a nonprofit organization of local residents determined to preserve the county's farmlands, wetlands, and woodlands.

Since its founding in 1986, the ACLT has gradually [preserved] 2,758 acres of land in the Parkers Creek and Governor Run watersheds. ACLT manages this land as a public trust, and maintains the trails and waterways for scientific research and recreational hiking, birding, camping and canoeing. The ACLT lands are available to the public free of charge, 365 days a year. The trust has a small staff, but relies as well on volunteers for many land management activities. The ACLT raises operating funds partly through the annual dues of its members. Memberships are available at nominal fees for individuals, families, and corporations. To learn more about the ACLT, go to the Web site, at www.acltweb.org. These fine spring days are made for hiking in the woods. Try the ACLT trails for a real Calvert nature experience. Take the kids, and don't forget the dog—he's welcome, too.

[Note: Our readers might be interested to know that Rachel Carson visited the Scientists Cliffs cabin now owned by John and Judith Ayres Burke during the 1950s. Judith Ayres Burke reported learning of this connection from Bill Steiner who told her that Rachel Carson was a colleague of the cabin's former owner Dr. Goodykoontz, a plant pathologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Rachel Carson performed field studies on the fragility of eggshells of birds of prey including falcons, osprey and bald eagles while staying at Dr. Goodykoontz's cabin.

ACLT gratefully acknowledges the support of the Arts Council of Calvert County, the Maryland State Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, and St. John Vianney Catholic Church for their assistance in ACLT's presentation of "A Sense of Wonder." The play has been made into a film starring Kaiulani Lee and set, in part, at Rachel Carson's cabin in Maine that is now owned by her adopted son Roger. See www.asenseofwonderfilm.com for further information.]

LAND MANAGER'S CORNER

Floating Flotsam

Most of what I know to be true about the world is what I have observed in my own backyard—granted, what I consider my backyard, now, is the 3,000 acres of land that I manage for ACLT. As I walk a great deal of the property, I notice things around me. I see the beautiful things like: wildflowers blooming, birds of all sizes flitting around, the tallness of the trees, the deep greens of the lush ravines, gnarled artistically-shaped logs, cool-looking insects, and the patterns of animal footprints. I also see the ugliness: the many patches of non-native invasive plants, ravines used as dump sites, dead animal carcasses, and an unbelievably large number of balloons or stubs of balloons.

I find balloons everywhere, in every corner of the land trust's property. I find more the closer I get to roads and an even higher amount as I get closer to the bay. In one 2-hour walk, I counted 127 whole or bits of balloons. On the beach I have counted one balloon part about every 2 yards. I have seen them blowing off the bay too fast to catch just to get tangled in the marsh grass. I see them hanging from tree tops or wrapped around roots. Once, I saw one wrapped around a bleached bone of an indiscernible animal.

There is a tradition these days of sending balloons filled with lighter-than-air-gas upwards with wishes or prayers and messages tied to them. Many funeral services and memorial parks have large balloon releases in honor of loved ones. They are used at commercial building openings, for weddings, and other events to commemorate the occasion. Individuals send balloons skyward accidentally or on purpose. Many balloons sent out have ribbon, string, or a plastic clasp attached to them. The balloon has replaced the old fashioned "message in a bottle."

Queen Elizabeth II, last year, found a balloon in her garden that a child had put his name and school on and sent off in an opening day ceremony—she wrote back to the boy and the media picked up the story. A woman sailor I know told me about being becalmed off the coast of New England, in an area of the ocean they call "Balloon Alley." The wind and currents congregate adrift balloons in this part of the ocean—tens of thousands of them. She spent her whole time becalmed in a skiff retrieving balloons and hardly made a dent in the number out there.

Although the sentiment of using balloons to communicate heartfelt messages is genuine, the balloons and their

attachments are extremely harmful to wildlife and marine life. Animals often become tangled in the strings or ingest the balloons and attachments thinking they are food and die. Several states have passed legislation controlling balloon releases including Connecticut, Florida, Tennessee, New York, Texas, California and Virginia, as well as some cities including Baltimore and Ocean City, Maryland; Louisville, Kentucky; Huntsville, Alabama; and San Francisco, California. Legislation is pending in other states including Massachusetts, Maryland, and New York.¹

The balloon industry insists that latex (not Mylar) self-tied (no attachments or plastic plugs) balloons filled with lighter-than-air-gas are harmless and "do not constitute serious litter or ecological problems." From their point of view, latex is a natural product of the rubber tree and is as fully biodegradable as an oak leaf. The industry states that they float to five miles above the earth and then burst with the cold air into tiny pieces.²

Self-tied balloons, however, are not commonly used; in most of the ceremonies I have seen the balloons have string and messages tied to them. Nearly all of the hundreds of balloons I have found on ACLT property have something tied to them. Although the balloon industry says that they are biodegradable other research has found that, in water, latex takes much longer to break down. Floating on the oceans, bay, or our own Parkers Creek, marine animals confuse them with jellyfish (a common food source) and eat them and die.

I have also found a fair number of Mylar balloons which are more expensive, less natural and don't biodegrade at all. The metallic ones create havoc when they come into contact with electrical lines. An EPA report on plastics in the environment, states that "More disturbing still, once the animal dies and decays, the plastic is free to repeat the cycle," and kill other animals. Since plastic stays in the environment forever this is a never ending cycle.³

The balloon debris I see on a regular basis in "my own backyard" led me on a search to find out how preva-



lent this problem is. Balloons have few limitations when they are released; they can travel for long distances without stopping, crossing bodies of water and even national boundaries. In researching balloons I found articles calling for bans on balloon releases from Baltimore, New Hampshire, Ireland, Australia, and the United Kingdom. It is not

just a Parkers Creek observance but a world-wide problem. It is an ugliness that people create, usually with good intentions, but with little knowledge of the consequences. With heightened awareness of the problems that balloon releases create, it is an ugliness we can learn to prevent in the future.

Liz Stoffel

¹ <http://www.longwood.edu/cleanva/balloonlaws.htm>

² <http://www.ibaonline.net/TheBalloonCouncil/SpeakingPointstoOpposeBansonBalloons/tabid/102/Default.aspx>

³ <http://whale.wheelock.edu/archives/whalenet96/0338.html>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT ...

Spring Appeal

The Staff and the Board of Directors wish to thank the following members who made a contribution to the **2008 SPRING Appeal**:

Mr. & Mrs. Louis Amtmann
Mr. & Mrs. Roger Anderson
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Mr. Todd Sheldon & Ms. Mary McGahey
Mr. Henry Shryock
Mrs. Rosalind Springsteen
Mr. & Mrs. John Theriault
Ms. Mary Walker
Mr. Alan Wilson

New Members

ACLT would like to welcome the following new members since the **Winter 2008 newsletter**:

Mr. & Mrs. Eric Barger
Mr. Nick Bohaska
Mr. Ray Bogle
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Chambers -
The Show Place Arena
Senator Roy Dyson

Ms. Terry Bowsbey
Mr. Caleb Clark
Ms. Ann Crain - Vista Bay Studio
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Earl
Mr. Paul Elliott & Ms. Gabriele Ludwig
Mr. & Mrs. Art Guarinello
Ms. Mary Beth Harry
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Head, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Harris - J. F. Harris
Ms. Mary Hollinger
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Kay
Ms. Mickey Kunkle - MK Creations
Mr. & Mrs. John McGahey, Jr.
Ms. Jacqueline Morgan -
Jacqueline Morgan Day Spa
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Oswald
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Pattison
Mr. Rob Plant - Blue Wind Gourmet
Mr. & Mrs. William Scharpf, Jr.
Ms. Denise Schlener
Mr. & Mrs. Marc Stoffel
Mr. & Mrs. Alan Ullberg
Mr. Thomas A. Wisner

General Contributions and Designated Gifts

Thank you to the following for your generous gifts:

Mr. James Borrell & Ms. JoAnne Longhill -
In honor of Marie Bundy
Mr. Robert J. Boxwell
Natalie Doubleday (Natalie D. Signs) - fabrication and donation of an advertising sign for *A Sense of Wonder*
Ms. Marcia van Gemert - Winnings from Super Bowl Party
Heritage Printing & Mailing - Donation of color printing of the 2007 ACLT Annual Report
Mr. Conrad Hoska - Land Acquisition Fund
Ms. Linda S. Howard - In honor of Ted Graham

Mr. & Mrs. Gregory W. Locraft
Macy's Foundation - Matching donation
Mr. & Mrs. Lee McKnight
Mr. Mark Smith
Mr. George Tornell - donation of ski poles for hiking

Through the Maryland Charity Campaign:

Ms. Lauren S. Baker
Mrs. Joanne C. Kovach
Ms. Rebecca J. Morehouse
Mr. Marc. W. Pound
Mr. John H. Sadler
Ms. Elizabeth K. Vanden-Heuvel

Through the Environmental Fund for Maryland:

Mr. Richard Adams
Ms. Jacqueline Bowles
Ms. Sandra Draham
Ms. Jessica Holmberg
Mr. Michael Rudy

Gift Memberships

Thank you to the following members who donated a gift membership since our last newsletter:

Mr. & Mrs. Paul L. Berry
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph H. Dwan, Jr.
Dr. & Mrs. Glenn Edgecombe
Del. & Mr. Steven Kullen
Mr. & Mrs. Gary A. Loew
Capt. & Mrs. Patrick Murphy, USN (Ret)
Mr. Alan E. Wilson

Memorial Contributions

Thank you to the following members who made a memorial contribution since our last newsletter:

In memory of George S. Switzer who was a Charter Member and longtime supporter:
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Dahmann
Mrs. Vera Graham
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel M. Head
Mr. & Mrs. Warren Sengstack
The Thomas Tilghman Family
Victor Stanley, Inc.

Come Join Us!

Detach and Mail to: The American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc., P.O. Box 2363, Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Name _____ e-mail _____

Address _____

Phone _____ I (we) learned about ACLT from _____

Regular Membership

Corporate Membership

Land Saver - \$35.00

Habitat Protector - \$500.00

Land Saver Corporate - \$150.00

Land Protector - \$60.00

Trustee of Land - \$1000.00

Land Protector Corporate - \$250.00

Land Conservator - \$150.00

Sustaining - \$2500.00

Land Conservator Corporate - \$500.00

The American Chestnut Land Trust is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. A copy of the current ACLT financial statement is available on request. Requests should be directed to the American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc, P.O. Box 2363, Prince Frederick, MD 20678 or call (410) 414-3400. For the cost of copies and postage, documents and information submitted under the Business Regulation Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland are available from the Secretary of State.



American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.
Post Office Box 2363
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

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