

# NEWSLETTER

Winter 2011

## CANDID CAMERA



When we saw this atmospheric beauty by Vineyard photographer, Gary Mirando, we thought it said what often words cannot express: the specialness of our waterways and the need to keep them healthy and vibrant. This shot was taken on a cold December day at sunrise. "Vineyard Haven harbor is a remarkable resource for my

creativity," notes the photographer. For more on Gary's photography, visit [www.garymirandophoto.com](http://www.garymirandophoto.com). We invite our readers to submit photos they've taken that honor the uniqueness of our marine environment. Please email any candidates to [streetps@msn.com](mailto:streetps@msn.com) so we can showcase them in future issues of the Newsletter.

## THE WATER TESTING REPORT - WHAT'S PERCOLATING



While our initial sampling of nitrogen concentrations, enterococcus bacteria counts and e-coli bacteria at our various locations is not exhausting in its data, certain preliminary conclusions can be drawn, according to Fred LaPiana, right, Director, Tisbury Department of Public Works.

What's important, LaPiana recently told our board, is the following:

- The water coming through the road drainage system significantly contributes to the high enterococcus counts at Owen Little Way, where the main collector pipe empties, and why TWI focused its runoff remediation efforts there

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# THE WATER TESTING REPORT - WHAT'S PERCOLATING

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with its installation of a bioswale.

- There may be higher counts/concentrations at the intersection of Lighthouse Road and Fairfield Ave.

A project to alleviate the runoff and resulting impact of damaging bacterial counts at Owen Little Way is underway. This fall, the DPW began installing a total of five new catch basins along the hill that collects runoff from the Grove

Avenue/Main Street intersection (*photo, bottom left, page one*). “The water will flow from each catch basin into sets of infiltrators (*photo, bottom right, page one*) which run parallel to the road,” LaPiana explains. “These infiltrators will percolate the water caught in the catch basins to the surrounding soil. It’s a good way of mitigating road runoff where the real-estate is available.”

Speaking of the DPW, once again we

used its TWI-sponsored lab to collect and analyze the effects of stormwater runoff at beaches with public access in Tisbury. We test water quality because swimmers are more likely to get sick when the Federal health standard of 104 enterococcus colonies per 100 milliliters is exceeded.

Results from testing the Owen Little Way bioswale TWI created is encouraging. Although it was only tested once, on July 14, enterococcus bacteria were more than ten times more abundant in a nearby puddle than they were in the swale (greater than 24,196/100ml compared to 2,143/100ml).

A long-term concern of TWI has been whether the debris (sand and rotting leaves) that accumulate at the bottom of storm drains is a source of bacterial contamination. This fall, the Tisbury Testing Laboratory continued to test the water in the storm drains along Fairfield Avenue both before and after the storm drains were cleaned.

*Seven sites were tested for Enterococcus bacteria; the frequency of times each site exceeded the standard are:*

<u>Site</u>	<u>Times Exceeded</u>	<u>Times Tested</u>	<u>Percent Violations</u>
Vineyard Harbor Motel	1	9	11
Owen Park	2	8	25
Beach Road Extension	3	9	33
Vineyard Haven Yacht Club	3	9	33
Lagoon Pond Boat Launch	3	8	38
Owen Little Way	5	10	50
Grove Avenue	2	4	50
Lake Street	6	9	67

## How not to be Wasteful about Waste

The Martha’s Vineyard Water Alliance and the Martha’s Vineyard Commission recently sponsored a presentation by Earle Barnhart and Hilde Maingay, two Falmouth residents who have been at the forefront in spreading their “Let No Waste Go to Waste” gospel. Earle is president of The Green Center, a non-profit research and educational organization. His wife, Hilde, is on the board. The couple spoke to a packed audience in West Tisbury eager to learn how to minimize our reliance on fossil fuels by creating a “water-conserving, nutrient-recovering, low-impact house.” The focus was on the benefits of composting toilets, particularly those produced by Clivus ([clivusmultrum.com](http://clivusmultrum.com)) and Phoenix ([compostingtoilet.com](http://compostingtoilet.com)). Besides saving water, these toilets are key components in recycling recovered nutrients safely and putting them to use in natural and agricultural ecosystems. Septic tanks, the couple explained, were invented to kill pathogens. They were not designed

to remove nitrogen and keep it out of groundwater: 95-98% of nitrogen that enters a septic tank goes into groundwater.

Kudos go to the couple who, at Falmouth’s Town Meeting last May, were instrumental in getting voters to approve \$2.3 million for pilot projects to mitigate nutrient contamination in Falmouth estuaries in new ways including the use of eco toilets, permeable reactive barriers, shellfish uptake and inlet widening. The funding will be used for a meaningful assessment of “green” alternatives, including design, installation of pilot systems and performance testing. “If innovative technologies are to be approved by state and federal authorities,” notes Earle, “then community-wide assessment and planning must also be completed, along with development of new institutions to manage new technologies over time.”

For more information, contact Earle and Hilde at [capecodalchemists@gmail.com](mailto:capecodalchemists@gmail.com).

## Owen Little Way on the Grow

It was just a year ago that we planted the first seeds at the Owen Little Way Bioswale, which as you can see by this mauve beauty (background) thrived during the summer. Next up: weeding, replacing the plants that didn’t make it and repairing the mouth of the bioswale to allow optimum flow through it. To help defray the costs of this expected maintenance, TWI added an Adopt-a-Plant table at its second annual Seasonal Celebration. Thanks goes to board member Harriet Barrow for that great fundraising idea. And our thanks again to Lucy (below center) and Sheldon Hackney for hosting our event at their lovely home.



# DIVING IN AT THE TISBURY WATERWORKS BUILDING

As part of the ongoing renovation of the Pump Station at Tashmoo Springs, Heidi Raihofer, *right*, a certified diver, recently inspected the well inside the waterworks building. Tisbury Waterways sponsored “the dive,” to assess the quality of the water running into the small pond next to the building and to study whether the well could sustain a fish habitat.

There are three very old pipes that lead from the top of the well to the pond, but they are not open conduits. Any flow could only be through open rusty areas of

the pipes. To establish an aquarium and re-establish the herring run, we need to determine whether water actually travels between the two bodies of water.

Rusty particles from the old pipes created poor visibility during the dive, but TWI board member Robert Culbert was able to collect water samples at different stages of Heidi’s dive to test for the presence of total coliform, E. coli and enterococcus. There was no significant sign of these bacteria, except for his final sample, taken from the bottom of the

water column, which indicated some total coliform.

To evaluate the well’s overall condition and confirm whether the pipes do connect to the pond, we have to remove four inches of rusty flakes from the well floor. We’ll also take new samples to see if they register the same results as those taken earlier this year in October.



## Did you know...

### The Outer Cape No Discharge Area has been approved.

While there are now 15 NDA along the MA coast, covering 67 percent of state waters, undesignated areas, alas, include Nantucket and Vineyard Sounds. Until these designations are made, there is good news. The Steamship Authority has been awarded a grant of more than \$1million to build new sewage pumping facilities for its ferries at the Vineyard Haven, Nantucket, Hyannis and Woods Hole ports where installation of wastewater

collection facilities will begin in 2011 and take about a year to complete. While some discharge regulations are in effect for our waters, a no-discharge designation approved by the EPA would prohibit any discharge whether it is treated or not. TWI has been at the forefront of the discharge issue with the pumpout boats it helped fund for the harbor and Lake Tashmoo.

**Septic System Inspections are underway.** By law, Tisbury homeowners must have “each and every septic system on his/her property

inspected by a State certified Septic Inspector” who then



files his report with the Board of Health. The good news: inspections (photo) are every seven years and, by locating ill-performing systems, they help prevent the creation of health hazards, including

surfacing sewage which can flow into our waterways.

**There are Websites worth trolling.** From Kate Venturini, the headliner at our workshop last May, comes [rismwater.com](http://rismwater.com) to remind you of ways to help with stormwater runoff.

**How Non-Profits can Profit.** Board members Jean Lewellyn and Melinda Loberg attended a workshop this fall to learn techniques for improving our board organization. Under a grant from the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation, the Martha’s Vineyard Donors

Collaborative invited Chuck Loring, a well-respected board consultant to provide this day-long training to Vineyard non-profits. Board governance, recruitment of board members and fund-raising tips for board members were major topics of the day. We learned that Dukes County, our island plus Cuttyhunk, has 188 non-profits! We also learned that for some charities, like the United Way, that 40% of their income comes from government payments for services. We are all aware that the government is pulling back on its support

for non-profit services. What’s more, less than 16% of the 35% of donations to religious organizations goes to serve the poor. And, the poor economy has impacted individual giving with fund-raising down some 13% in 2009. All of this makes for a tough environment for fund-raising. Jean and Melinda will share what they have learned with the full board over the winter with the goal of a more efficiently run board and, hopefully, a membership more engaged with our mission.

**TWI is now on Facebook!**

# Well Moored at TWI’s Annual Meeting

For its annual meeting in August, TWI partnered with the Martha’s Vineyard Commission to sponsor Jay Baker, executive director of the Massachusetts Bays Program, who spoke on “Conservation Moorings.”

Before Mr. Baker spoke, Melinda Loberg, TWI president, thanked Joanne Taylor of the MVC for co-sponsoring the event and for the commission’s helpfulness to TWI with its Water Resource Plan and Coastal Planning. Melinda then explained TWI’s major projects during the past year: how it supported and helped develop the new Tisbury Water Testing Lab and TWI’s key role in the installation of a demonstration bioswale at the end of Owen Little Way.

Mr. Baker began his presentation by reviewing the studies being conducted by the MA Bays Program in two different

harbors: Manchester-by-the Sea and Provincetown, where a sizable number of the new “conservation moorings” have been put in. Mr Baker said that the initial findings are encouraging and that the new moorings appear to be helping in the revival of eelgrass in mooring areas where they have been put.

The use of a new, ecologically-sensitive mooring seems like a no-brainer to us. Conventional moorings, with their heavy chains, running from a massive block or mushroom on the bottom to the bow of a boat, damage eelgrass as the boat swings dragging the mooring chain across the bottom. The conservation mooring eliminates the chain dragging since it is connected directly to a mooring float with a minimal amount of scope. Tension is

absorbed by an elastic component in the system, rather than a chain whose weight keeps it from coming taut. The scouring caused by the chain also muddies the water, suspending sediment that reduces the amount of essential light that reaches the remaining eelgrass. Given an average diameter of about 21 feet for a conventional mooring scar, about 77,000 square meters of eelgrass is effected. Since eelgrass is a major habitat for shellfish beds, it is feared that the shellfish may not be able to survive if eelgrass disappears completely.

We were pleased to note that Tisbury Harbormaster Jay Wilbur, who attended our annual meeting, endorses the new system and estimates that about 30 conservation moorings are already in use around the Vineyard.

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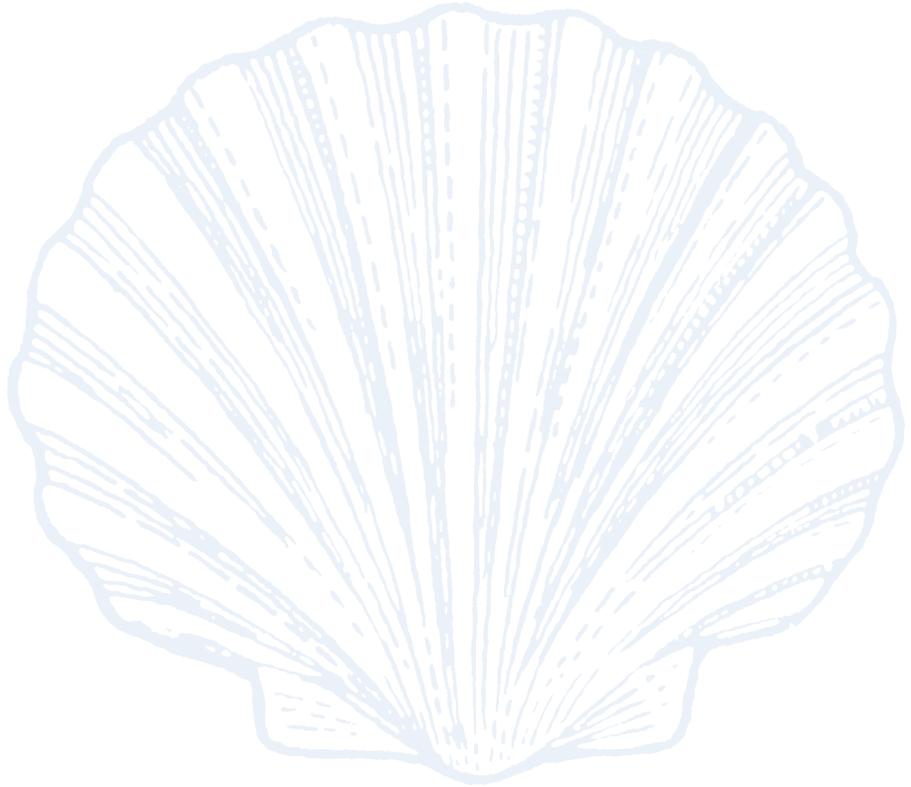
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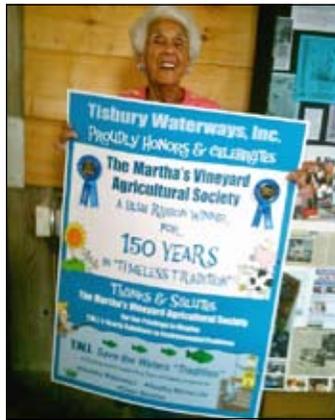


Visit our Website: [www.tisburywaterways.org](http://www.tisburywaterways.org)



## HAIL TO THE EDUCATOR-IN-CHIEF!

“I was so impressed with the fact that the Martha’s Vineyard Agricultural Society has been expanding and caring for the growth of Island agriculture for 150 years,” says long-standing TWI board member, Betty Feldman, explaining why she wanted TWI to honor the Society on its sesquicentennial anniversary. To do so, Betty worked with artist extraordinaire, Carolee Aiello of Color Concepts, who created this poster which artfully salutes and thanks the Society and pairs the “timeless traditions” of its endeavors



with those of TWI. And to honor and thank Betty for all her years of seamlessly organizing our annual educational exhibits at the Ag Fair, the TWI Board approved to present the poster to the MVAS. A metal plate honoring Betty as our “Educator-in-Chief” is attached to the frame.

We also do not want to forget this year’s winner of the June Cronig Kapell Award (\$50), which TWI presents at the Fair for the best educational display. It was the Massachusetts Audubon Society at Felix Neck.

## A Picture is Worth...

Well, in this case \$75. That’s the price of Stalking the Blue Eyed Scallop (*photo*) by Amandine Surier, available for purchase from the Martha’s Vineyard Shellfish Group ([www.mvshellfishgroup.org](http://www.mvshellfishgroup.org)). Click on Stuff for Sale. Profits from any sales benefit the Shellfish Group. “In recent years the loss of state and federal funding opportunities and not being able to increase town support shares have severely cut into our stabilization fund,” notes Director



Rick Karney. “Every little bit of support revenue is welcome.”

### MISSION STATEMENT

Tisbury Waterways Incorporated (TWI) is a citizens’ non-profit organization whose mission is to provide a community presence in matters involving the quality and improvement of waterways in the Town of Tisbury. TWI acts as an advocate and catalyst to enlist the active participation of the public in support of municipal, educational and research programs designed to improve local marine water quality.