

SWEET AUBURN

Magazine of the Friends of Mount Auburn | SPRING/SUMMER 2012



AN OASIS FOR BIRDS AND BIRDERS

SWEET AUBURN

A publication of the
Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery

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Cover Photo: Black-and-white Warbler in blooming Crab
Apple tree near Halcyon Lake by Sandy Selesky

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The Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery was established in 1986 to assist in the conservation of the Cemetery's natural beauty and to promote the appreciation of its cultural, historic, and natural resources. Organized in 1990 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable trust, the Friends seeks financial support from its members, other individuals, foundations, corporations, and public agencies. It receives gifts for educational and interpretive programs and materials for the public, specific cultural projects, and operating support for horticultural rejuvenation and the preservation of the historic monuments, structures, and archival artifacts and records. The Friends has over 1,300 active members.

President's Corner

As our founders envisioned 180 years ago, Mount Auburn is a place of beauty and inspiration. And especially in the spring with all the vibrant colors of the flowering trees, shrubs, bulbs and groundcovers, it is difficult to imagine a more beautiful and inspiring place. Spring also brings the migrating warblers and so many other fascinating birds, and with them come the birders. It is also difficult to imagine a more passionate and enthusiastic group of visitors than our birding friends. We are pleased to have this issue of Sweet Auburn focus on Mount Auburn as "An Oasis for Birds and Birders." I am particularly pleased to be able to highlight, in the feature article, the role that long-time friend and supporter, Bob Stymeist, has played at Mount Auburn. As Bob has done with so many others, he took my son Jake "under his wing" at an early age and inspired him to learn about and appreciate birds.

For many years our horticulture staff has focused on adding new plantings that enhance the wildlife habitat value of the Mount Auburn landscape. Projects completed in recent years include the woodland plantings in Consecration Dell, the wildflower meadow at the Tower, the emergent zone plantings along the edges of our ponds, and many others. The project described on page 13 is the latest in our ongoing efforts to attract birds and other wildlife to Mount Auburn, and we are grateful for the funding received from the Anthony J. and Mildred D. Ruggiero Memorial Trust for this project.

Of course we continue to be an active cemetery, serving families at their time of need. As described on page 14, we are fortunate that birds and other animals peacefully coexist with our visitors and clients, and, in fact, often help to make a Mount Auburn visit or funeral service an uplifting experience.

And speaking of uplifting, I am very excited to announce that this summer we will begin construction of a new greenhouse complex that will replace our 41-year-old greenhouses. We continue to raise the funds needed to complete this project, and further details are provided on page 21. In addition to enhancing our plant propagation and production capacity, the new greenhouses will provide a dramatic visual improvement to the neighborhood along our perimeter on Grove Street in Watertown. We look forward to a continuing dialogue with Watertown officials regarding long-term community planning efforts to develop and improve the Grove Street corridor. I am most pleased that Mount Auburn was able to provide space on our Grove Street property for community vegetable garden plots, as described further on page 19. We will continue to look for similar ways that we can expand our capacity to be an invaluable community resource.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of Sweet Auburn, and I encourage you to come see the migrating birds and to visit Mount Auburn frequently all spring and summer. There is always something beautiful and inspiring!



David P. Barnett, President



pg. 5



pg. 9



pg. 19



Dave Barnett

PHOTO BY JENNIFER JOHNSTON



"THE BIRDING TRIBE:"

A Celebration of Mount Auburn's Birding Community

EDITED BY BREE D. HARVEY, *Vice President of External Affairs*
AND LAUREN MARSH, *Communications, Grants & Events Coordinator*

In its 180-year history, Mount Auburn has come to mean many things to many individuals. From a place of solace and comfort for the bereaved to an urban oasis where people come to retreat into nature, there are countless feelings and memories tied to this national treasure. For many people, memories of Mount Auburn are associated with its ornithological ties, as an important habitat for year-round and migratory birds that welcomes not only the birds themselves but also thousands of bird watchers.

The history of birding at Mount Auburn begins before the Cemetery's founding in 1831, when early naturalists visited the woods of "Sweet Auburn." As a boy growing up in Cambridge during the 19th century, ornithologist William Brewster (*see page 12*) included Mount Auburn and its vicinity in his regular birding excursions. The credit for turning Mount Auburn into the popular bird watching destination it has since become, however, goes to Ludlow Griscom, "the patron saint of modern birding." Griscom, who, like Brewster, is buried at Mount Auburn, began birding here regularly in the first half of the 20th century and authored the Cemetery's first bird list in 1939-1940. He solidified Mount Auburn's place of importance in the bird-

ing community, a group as vibrant and diverse as the birds they come here to find. Though birders do frequent Mount Auburn throughout the year, the Cemetery's importance to the birding community is most obvious during the spring. An early morning visit to Mount Auburn in late April or May looks like no other time of year: the Cemetery is buzzing with scores of birders looking for the newest feathered visitor, capturing images of the smallest and most colorful specimens, and animatedly discussing their findings.

As Mount Auburn's importance in the birding community can really only be told through the birders themselves, we first spoke with our good friend, Bob Stymeist, to hear his memories of birding at Mount Auburn for more than fifty years. We then asked our community of birders to share with us their favorite memories of this place. Many birders also shared wonderful photographs taken at the Cemetery through the years, which now illustrate this entire issue. The outpouring of quotes, anecdotes, and colorful images that we received perfectly tell this fascinating part of Mount Auburn's story. We are also reminded of another of the many ways that Mount Auburn remains true to the vision of our founders, as a place where the beauties of nature inspire the living.

The Consummate Birder: An Interview with Bob Stymeist



Introduction

Bob Stymeist began birding at Mount Auburn in 1960 as a 12-year-old. His early interest in birds was strengthened by fellow birders and keenly developed by his own independent study of avian life. Now, fifty years later, it is Bob encouraging others to explore the diversity of birds that can be found all around us, whether in an urban backyard or in Mount Auburn's historic landscape. Through the decades, he has given countless bird walks for the Friends of Mount Auburn and other birding clubs, and he has led our popular Nighthawks

Watch program for more than 20 years. He also writes the birding posts for the Friends' monthly electronic newsletter.

Bob has birded in 28 countries worldwide and in all but one state (Hawaii). He has seen over 3,000 species of birds, but he is most proud of his Massachusetts State List of 442 and his Mount Auburn list, which at 201 is just 26 species shy of the Cemetery's official list of 227 species.

Because of his expertise in the world of birding and his longtime connection to the Cemetery, Mount Auburn's Visitor Services Coordinator Jessica Bussmann and Media & Imaging Coordinator Jennifer Johnston recently took a long walk with Bob around the grounds for a candid conversation about his history of birding in this unique landscape.

Q. Can you tell us about your early years birding at Mount Auburn? We heard that someone used to leave you notes under a rock with locations of bird sightings on them.

A. A friend of mine and one of the most active birders at the time, Peg Fowler, used to leave me a list of what she had seen under a rock at the spruce tree at the foot of Indian Ridge. It was our way of reporting what was seen, but eventually others found out and often added bird reports. Now, of course, we have the chalk board at the main gate to report sightings.

When I first became interested in birds I had no idea that anyone else was interested in them. My earliest record of seeing birds at Mount Auburn was in 1960 when I was 12, but I was interested in birds before that. In 1961, I remember coming here alone often. It wasn't until 1964, when I went on my first official bird walk at Mount Auburn with the Brookline Bird Club, that I found out there were a lot of people who enjoyed bird watching!

Q. Was there anyone in particular who introduced you more into the world of birding?

A. I used to visit the Star Bookshop located in the Harvard Lampoon Castle while other kids were hanging out in Harvard Square. I got to know Eva Thurman, who ran the store for Milton Starr, and told her of my interest in birds. I would go downstairs to the nature section and read the bird books because I didn't own any myself. Eva introduced me to a friend, George Drew, in Belmont who was also interested in birds. He took me to his favorite birding areas in Belmont and to Great Meadows in Concord. I had a really old and crummy pair of binoculars and, as a birthday present, Eva gave me my first Swift binos. George took me on a special all-day birding trip to Plum Island where I met Herman D'Entremont, one of the most active members of the Brookline Bird Club. Meeting Herman and his friends really got me out and about birding.

Q. How did the Brookline Bird Club shape you as a birder?

A. I started to go to more and more places to see birds—Cape Cod, Mt. Greylock, even out of state to places like the Jersey shore—thanks to Herman. I also met Steve Grinley, another birder my age from Newton, and the three of us went everywhere! At that time, the Club only scheduled a few trips for Mount Auburn, all during the first two weeks of May. I pointed out that they could see a lot more birds if they added more trips in the spring. The following spring I led my first bird walks for the Club starting in April and lasting all the way into the first week of June. I led trips both in the morning before school, and then sometimes in the afternoon after school. That's when people started calling me the "Mayor of Mount Auburn."

Q. And you were an experienced enough birder to lead walks at that age?

A. I guess so. It was some of the older members of the Club who encouraged me to lead walks, especially at Mount Auburn where I gained my reputation for finding birds.



Q Were you aware of Mount Auburn before you came here to bird?

A. No, not really. I mean, who'd think of coming to a cemetery? That's still what some people think today until they come here. But most cemeteries are not like Mount Auburn, which has become "the spot" in the state for spring songbird migration.

Q How would you describe Mount Auburn's significance as a birding destination to someone not familiar with the Cemetery?

A. It's an oasis in the city. If you look at an aerial map of this area, Mount Auburn, along with Cambridge Cemetery next door, is a vast green spot within a well built up area. Mount Auburn's various ponds and natural features are also very attractive for the birds. During the spring migration, as dawn approaches, the birds see this spot and they are going to come here rather than land in Harvard Square. It's not so much that every bird lands here, but unlike a large forest, this area is still small enough to concentrate the birds. So, with a good number of birds in a smallish area and a large number of birders walking the grounds, not much escapes being seen.

Q On the subject of birders, it seems as though a rush of birders will descend on Mount Auburn almost immediately after word of a more unusual sighting. This really is a testament to the impressive network birders have developed to quickly spread bird reports. Can you tell us a bit about the different ways birders have shared sightings news through the years?

A. One of the first bird alerts in the U.S. was the "Voice of Audubon" started by the Massachusetts Audubon Society and maintained by Ruth Emery. Ruth compiled all the bird records for the state from a downtown Newbury Street office. The recording was updated every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and more often during the migration. You could read about past sightings in the *Records of New England Birds*, and, in 1973 I started *Bird Observer* magazine, which published in addition to "Where to Find Bird" locations all the more important bird sightings of the past months. More recently in time CB radios were used, but the transmissions were limited. Hotlines and phone trees have also been used. Now, of course, we all have cell phones, which can not only transmit near and far, but can also send photos instantly. I can't imagine what will be next.

Q Ornithologist William Brewster, who is buried here, wrote about changes in the bird population based upon decades of his own observations throughout Cambridge in the 19th century. Have you, like Brewster



Birders by Sal Perisano

did more than a century ago, noticed changes in the birds in your years of birding here?

A. Yes, one is pheasant. Last year was the first time in my entire birding career that I did not see a pheasant. They used to nest in the Cemetery. There haven't been any major changes in warblers, though we used to see more Golden-winged Warblers, which are now very rare, and Cape May Warblers, which are now also much scarcer. Cardinals are relatively new to the area. I think the first nest in Massachusetts was in the 1950s. Birds like Carolina Wrens and Red-bellied Woodpeckers are also new arrivals.

Q There have been some changes in the birds, but have you also noticed changes in the birders at Mount Auburn since you started?

A. When I started birding it seemed that everyone would have to leave before 9 AM to go to work or school. Many of the men birded in three-piece suits and the women were in skirts or dresses.

There are many younger folks birding today. Birding was often referred as an old ladies' sport. It has been often said that the sighting of a rare "pink" gull—the Ross's Gull—in Newburyport, Mass., in 1975, changed that image. The sightings made the front page of the *New York Times* and the national news stations all covered the story. Birding became popular after that. Now it's not unusual to see hundreds of birders in the Cemetery, young and old, during the height of migration.

Q What are some Mount Auburn records for bird sightings?

A. There are a number of first state records here at Mount Auburn. The first Hermit Warbler found in the state (May 16, 1964) was in the big oak by the end of the Dell. Osborne Earle, a professor at Brandeis, heard a different song and located this western vagrant. The first Townsend's Warbler in Massachusetts was identified by someone very new to birding (May 4, 1978). A Golden-

The Birding Tribe:

crowned Sparrow found in the meadow area was only the fifth record for the state (April 27, 1966). Other great birds were the Black-throated Gray Warbler (September 27, 2000), Ash-throated Flycatcher (December 1998), and White-winged Dove (April 22, 2005). Just last spring, three Sandhill Cranes were seen circling the Cemetery. I really wish I was here that day!

Perhaps the best record, and the only State record, is that of a Brewer's Sparrow that was collected on December 15, 1873, about where Willow Pond is today. The bird is in the collection of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard.

Q Speaking of which, can you tell us about your work at the Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ)?

A. I started helping at the Museum when the the Nuttall Ornithological Club provided a grant to database the threatened and endangered species in Massachusetts, birds like the Peregrine Falcon and Grasshopper Sparrow. Eventually, I continued on to enter more of the collection. Many of the identified specimens I've added to the database are from several ornithologists buried here now, notably William Brewster and Edward and Outram Bangs.

Q You lead many of our bird walks and always seem to know just where to go for a successful morning walk through the Cemetery. Can you share with us some of the more popular spots for birding in Mount Auburn?

A. The Dell is one of the premier spots for spring migration. I have seen, on several occasions, the ridges of the Dell with birders all around watching birds bathe in the pool or warblers darting from bush to bush. The area around the Auburn Lake is also a great spot where one can often see a Water Thrush or a Swamp Sparrow feeding along the edge. Halcyon Lake and Willow Pond are also good spots. The oak ridge extending from the Dell to Willow Pond is good for spotting warblers since the oaks are the last trees to fully leaf out.

Q As a birder, it is important to be able to identify birds by sight, and then for when the leaves come out and they are harder to spot, by song. For you, what came first, the ability to identify by sight or song?

A. Seeing them came first. The bird that really got me started was the catbird. I was at my uncle's rental cottage in Marshfield when this catbird landed on the corner of the chair next to me! I was also fascinated by terns, which I'd watch diving head first into the water and coming up with fish.

Today, though, I probably do identify birds by hearing them first.

Q When did you start photographing birds?

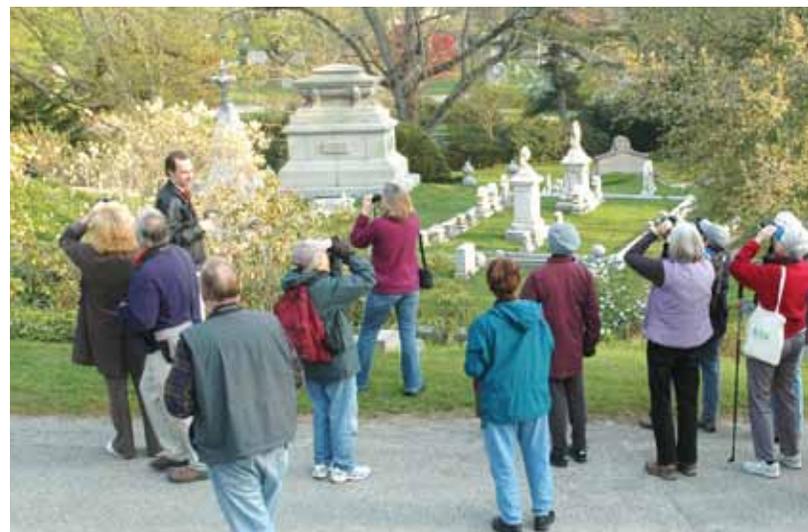
A. I did a lot of photographing years ago and then I stopped. I just started again in the last three or four years. I still have boxes and boxes of slides that I should go through someday, but I probably never will.

Q Where do you bird when you aren't here at the Cemetery?

A. I'm a big urban birder. I've tried to promote that birds are everywhere. You don't need to go to Plum Island or Cape Cod to see them. To promote urban birding I started the Greater Boston Christmas Bird Count in 1973. I also enjoy birding in Bristol County, which tends to be under-birded, and, more recently, I have done a lot of birding in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont, where my wife and I have a home by Lake Willoughby.

Q What advice can you offer for someone who is new to birding?

A. Join a bird club, go on bird walks, and meet people!



LEARN MORE!

Visit www.mountauburn.org/birdsandbirding for several special online features to celebrate Mount Auburn's past, present, and future as an important place for both birds and bird watchers. See the next page to meet more of our birders.

Meet our Birders!

"Birding in Mount Auburn in May is like going to an annual garden party where the guests are the birds in migration dressed in festive colors, often singing out to announce their presence as they circulate among the trees and around the ponds.

We are the reporters covering the daily events with binoculars and notebook in hand. Each day we seek out the anticipated arrivals, greeting each one by name. Throughout the month when we spot an unexpected guest, we try to share the sighting with the other birders: 'in which tree?' 'how high up?', then a burst of applause as the target bird takes a bow in the sunshine.

The party isn't over until we've seen the Mourning Warbler, usually the last arrival at the end of May, when most of the other guests have already departed for their nesting areas further north."

— Sue Denison



Red-bellied Woodpecker
by Rich Turk

"I travel up and down the east coast from Machias, Me., to Miami, Fla., in search of birds to photograph, yet some of the best shots I've taken have been two miles from home at Mount Auburn Cemetery. It's hard to single out one great birding moment because there have been so many, like watching a brood of Mallard Ducklings being fed by their mother, or seeing a Red-tailed Hawk fly off a tree in pursuit of a squirrel, or proud Great Horned Owls guarding their chicks.

What amazes me about Mount Auburn Cemetery is the great diversity of bird life that can be found in every season. All you have to do is find a good spot, like near any of the three lakes or the Dell, stay quiet, and 'don't just do something, stand there.' You will not be disappointed."

— Rich Turk

"A Worm-eating Warbler had not been seen in the area in several years. I wasn't feeling well, and I had joined Bob Stymeist's trip at 6 am but was not able to keep up with him. While trying to catch up, and walking through the Dell, I came across a Worm-eating Warbler. I finally caught up with Bob at Willow Pond. I told him about it, but I don't think he believed me because he continued to walk around the pond very slowly. I was able to keep up with him and he went back through the Dell. When he got to where I had seen the bird, he heard it and pronounced "WORM-EATING WARBLER!" Now, that was fun but on the next day, I went to see it again to find the Dell jammed with birders. They were lined up on both the lower and upper paths making the Dell look like an amphitheater. Fortunately, they got to see the bird."

— Ida Giriunas



Worm-eating Warbler by
Jeremiah Trimble



Yellow-rumped Warbler by
Brooks Mathewson

species of songbirds than I had ever seen in any one place. In a large, white oak tree along the path there were several Yellow-rumped Warblers, a Black-throated Blue Warbler, a Black-throated Green Warbler, an Indigo Bunting, a Northern Parula, and a Black-and-white Warbler all singing and foraging. This was around the time when I first started birding, and I was amazed at the great diversity of songbirds that could be found at Mount Auburn during spring migration. Ever since this first spring I have

been visiting each April and May as often as I can to observe and photograph songbird migration. Each visit always brings memorable experiences observing birds as well as great interactions with knowledgeable and genuinely kind and interesting birders."

— Brooks Mathewson

"I had 15 minutes between appointments and, in passing through the Cemetery, noticed that the Tower was now open to the public. I thought a landscape shot of Boston from the top of the Tower would be a nice, quick shot. So, off I went. Three people were coming down as I went up. I arrived at the top and as soon as I started to focus on Boston, I heard the hawk's call...and then I watched as he floated up and landed on the railing right next to me. As you can see from the photo, my first instinct was to shoot pictures."

— Anne Haggerty



Red-tail on Tower Railing by
Anne Haggerty

"Two springs ago I watched a juvenile Red-tail screaming for his mother, who was only a few trees away but completely ignoring him. He perched on top of one of the taller headstones and kept it up for ten minutes!"

— Roly Chaput

The Birding Tribe:

"A few years ago, one spring morning I watched with a friend as a Mourning Dove built a nest with its partner. The nest was totally exposed to view on a flat part of a low, sturdy branch of a tree. Each flimsy strand of grass was brought and placed with care. We thought it was great for viewing but maybe not the safest place for a nest. Since then I have seen several similar Mourning Dove nest construction sites. It is clear that Mourning Doves know something about their species that we don't know, and that's why there are so many of these beautiful birds."

— John Sharp



Osprey dive at Sweet Auburn by John Harrison

"For the past ten years I have gone to Falmouth on Cape Cod photographing Ospreys every summer. For a photographer, you always hope to catch the exhilarating Osprey dive for a fish. Ironically enough, my only Osprey dive catch was right at Auburn Lake. On September 28th of last year as I was photographing Red-eyed Vireos at the Sweet Bay Magnolia tree along Auburn Lake, I saw an Osprey flying over. I moved between trees and watched and photographed as the Osprey dove right before my eyes. It disappeared for a moment and then emerged from the water. It's fitting and proper that my only Osprey dive would occur at Sweet Auburn. It's a place of surprises..."

— John Harrison

"Sweet, sweet Auburn—I am so fortunate that I am able to enjoy Mount Auburn's nature and beauty year-round. Let's never take this very special place for granted."

— Michele Parham



Wood Thrush by Sandy Selesky

"I've been birding at Mount Auburn Cemetery for over 30 years and have had many treasured moments. I remember walking one early morning in May on Indian Ridge when a large group of Scarlet Tanagers were sighted around Auburn Lake. Everyone was in awe. The nesting, fledging, and flights of the Great Horned Owls in the Honey Locust tree was a community event. Everyone watched and wondered and came together to share in the magic. I remember hearing my first

Wood Thrush in Consecration Dell and thinking it was the most beautiful sound in the world. Walking with the expert birders at Mount Auburn including Bob Stymeist, Wayne Petersen, and Jeremiah Trimble, has made me a better birder and helped me appreciate what a magical place Mount Auburn truly is."

— Helen Abrams

"One Sunday in June 2011, a friend and I came upon one of the fledged Great Horned Owls high in a pine in the Dell. Suddenly, two adult Red-tailed Hawks flew up to the top and noisily began lowering themselves down to the owl as we watched in horror. We were helpless and so was the bird. Then, just over my right shoulder, long wings rushed to the pine and perched to the right of the trunk at the same level as the endangered chick. The Red-tailed Hawks hastened away. CAN YOU GUESS WHO FLEW IN? It was the sibling chick!!! Sibling love and concern."

— Sonia Ketchian

"I can vividly recall the first time I set foot in Mount Auburn, some 30 years ago. I wandered around not knowing where to go until stumbling into the Dell, where a crowd of people were staring at an adult Great Horned Owl sitting out in the open and staring back. This was the first Great Horned I had ever seen and, to this day, I am still astounded by the size of that bird."

— Cliff Cook

"Mount Auburn is where I was first introduced to birding. I was in junior high and my dad brought me along for an "Arbor Day and Spring Migration" weekend event. We joined the early morning bird walk led by Bob Stymeist. I knew lots of trees, but I had never even heard of a warbler. One of the first birds we saw was a Black-throated Blue Warbler foraging in full sunlight at eye level amongst the flowers of a crabapple tree. I was amazed at the beauty of the sight, and have been interested in birds and birding ever since. After that first encounter with a warbler, I followed Bob on many other bird walks at Mount Auburn. He was always so laid back; I didn't realize until much later that he was such an



Black-throated Blue Warbler by Brooks Mathewson

important figure in the birding community. I feel very fortunate to have been introduced to birding by such a knowledgeable, humble, and patient mentor."

— Jake Barnett

"One of my fondest memories is sitting at Spectacle Pond on Mother's Day, watching a Baltimore Oriole weaving its nest, and sharing the magic of that sighting with others who passed by. Another favorite memory is relaxing in the Dell, observing species of colorful warblers come to the water's edge, while listening to the ethereal song of a Wood Thrush. Of course, the possibility of observing resident Red-tailed Hawks, Great Horned Owls, and Screech Owls, always tops my list."

— Janet Kovner



Baltimore Oriole by Brooks Mathewson

"One of the many wonderful things about working at Mount Auburn is the opportunity to take regular birding lunch breaks. I was a casual birder before coming to work here and I am still far from expert, but the numbers and variety of birds I have seen here have definitely sharpened my skills. One of the things I enjoy most about my regular outings is the opportunity to learn more about bird behavior, which is just as fascinating as their plumage and aerial feats. From the fierce Red-tails to the plucky chickadees, every bird I see is an illustration of the incredible diversity of the avian world, each individual species so well adapted to what it does. It is truly a wonder and a privilege to behold."

— Regina Harrison,
Mount Auburn Cemetery Staff



Female Downy Woodpecker
by Regina Harrison

"My wife and I have traveled a fair amount to see birds, but the wonderful thing about living in Cambridge is that all you have to do to enjoy this pleasure is to visit Mount Auburn. And it's not just one month a year. There is something to see every day. Sure, there will be tons of warblers in the spring, but you are also bound to come across something interesting on a cold day in January. There just won't be as many people angling for a good view.

Photography is a hobby for me and I get to try out the new things I learn on a weekly basis by taking my camera to Mount Auburn. I find that the other photographers (and birders) are approachable and willing to chat about what they're seeing and even the equipment they are using. There doesn't seem to be a shortage of expertise at Mount Auburn Cemetery.

Every now and then someone at my office asks me on a Monday morning what I did over the weekend. I love to say that I hung out at my local cemetery. By now they know what that means."

— Sal Perisano



Great Blue Heron by Sal Perisano

"I have always been fond of finding a reference from ornithologist and Mount Auburn Trustee Thomas Mayo Brewer (1814-1880) of a Mourning Warbler at Mount Auburn:

Late in May, 1838, I have a note of having met with this species (Mourning Warbler) in Mount Auburn. The bird was fearless and unsuspecting, busily engaged, among some low shrubbery, in search of insects. It suffered our near presence, was often within a few feet, and was so readily distinguishable that my companion, with no acquaintance with birds, at once recognized it from Audubon's plates.

— from A History of North American Birds by S. F. Baird, T. M. Brewer and R. Ridgway (1875)

— Janet Heywood, former Vice President of Interpretive Programs, Mount Auburn Cemetery

"Every spring at Mount Auburn Cemetery, among many favorite moments, my first favorite moment is always when I greet my fellow birders after a long winter away from birding. I am just as happy to see my favorite birders, as I am to see my favorite birds! I am glad to join in our fellowship of bird watching and conservation, of citizen science. We exchange stories of winter travels and winter birds, and we all look forward to another spring of seeing each other every day, while marveling at the return of our tiny feathered friends as we check them off our Mount Auburn lists. Sadly, as May winds down, we once again say our goodbyes to the birds and to each other until next migration; but until then, it's strictly 'bird-ers of a feather flock together!'"

— Audrey Stanwood



Great Blue Heron by George McLean

"One of my most memorable moments at Mount Auburn was the day I met the Great Blue Heron for the first time. I was by myself (as usual) at Auburn Lake when I saw the great bird fishing at the farthest end. I slowly approached and sat on the bank. After talking to him quietly over the course of an hour, I crept in increments within 20 feet. I have a folder of his photos that I took over a four-year period as we became friends.

Truly, I have so many favorite moments, I would need a pages to list them."

— George McLean

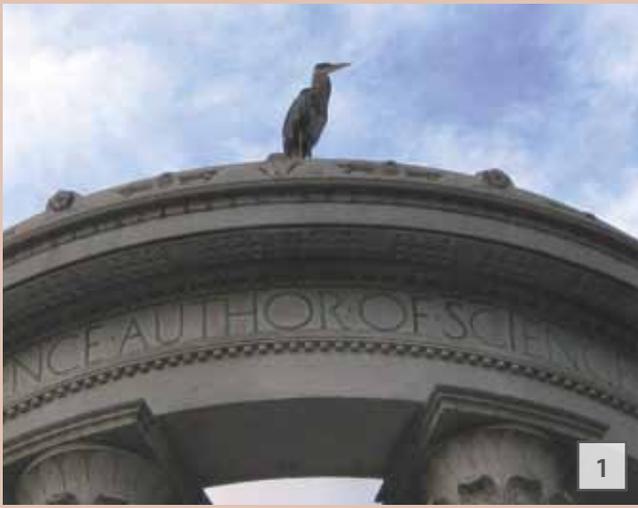
Make sure to visit our website:

(www.mountauburn.org/birdsandbirding) to learn more about birding at Mount Auburn. And don't forget to visit us in person this May so you can see the magnificent spring migration for yourself and meet some of the many individuals who make up our community of annual birders!



Mourning Warbler by Ryan Doherty

Turn the page to see more images from our birding community.



1

Test your knowledge of Mount Auburn's birds with the photos taken by our birding community. Turn to page 11 for a list of the birds and their photographers.



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1. Heron atop the Mary Baker Eddy Monument, photo by Brian A. Sullivan
2. Blue-headed Vireo, photo by Bob Stymeist
3. Barred Owl, photo by Regina Harrison, Mount Auburn Staff
4. Robin's Nest in a Monument, photo by Sherry Leffert
5. Red-tailed Hawk on a Monument, photo by Tom Johnson, Mount Auburn Staff
6. White-throated Sparrow, photo by Anne Haggerty
7. Blackburnian Warbler, photo by Chris Livingston
8. Hooded Merganser, photo by Volunteer Helen Abrams
9. Ruby Crowned Kinglet, photo by Chris Livingston
10. Turkeys by the Pond, photo by Lori Harris
11. Robin's Nest in a Monument, photo by Brian A. Sullivan
12. Yellow Warbler In Bradford Pear, photo by Brooks Mathewson
13. House Wren, photo by Sean McMahon
14. Barred Owl on a Branch above Indian Ridge Path, photo by Ken Sloan
15. Hermit Thrush, photo by Sean McMahon
16. Great Horned Owl, photo by Janet L. Heywood
17. Northern Parula, photo by Brooks Mathewson
18. Magnolia Warbler In Canada Yew, photo by Brooks Mathewson
19. Green Heron at Auburn Lake, photo by Sherry Leffert
20. Northern Saw-whet Owl, photo by Alberto Parker, Mount Auburn Staff
21. Red-tailed Hawk, photo by David Pallin
22. Red-tailed Hawk, photo by John "Garp" Harrison
23. Black-billed Cuckoo, photo by Jeffrey Offermann
24. Red-winged Blackbird, photo by George McLean
25. Mallard Duckling, photo by Rich Turk
26. House Finch, photo by George McLean
27. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, photo by John "Garp" Harrison
28. Screech Owl, photo by John "Garp" Harrison
29. Ruby-throated Hummingbird, photo by Ken Sloan
30. Red-tailed Hawk, photo by Jessica Bussmann, Mount Auburn Staff

STORIES BEHIND THE STONES: “The time of the singing of birds is come”

BY BREE D. HARVEY

A GRANITE BOULDER ON POPLAR AVENUE COMMEMORATES one of America’s most significant ornithologists, William Brewster (1851–1919). More than a physical tribute to a remarkable figure, however, this monument also symbolizes Brewster’s love for the natural world and an important lifelong friendship.

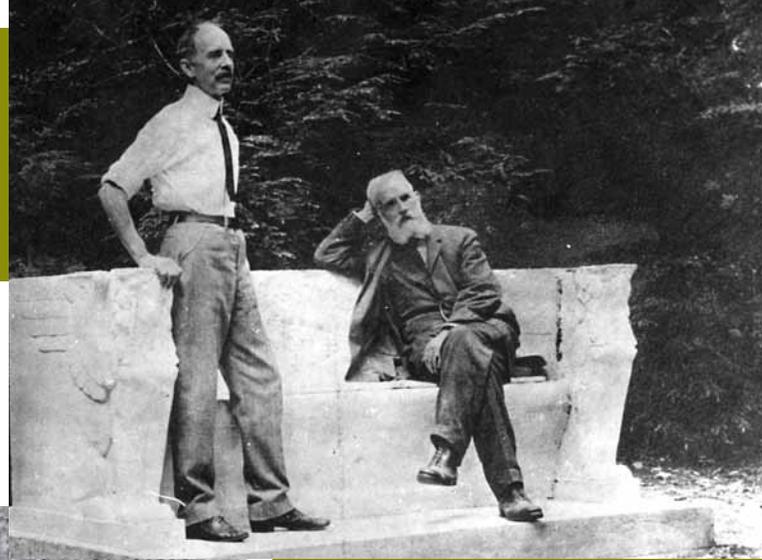
William Brewster grew up in “the Old House by the Lindens” on Brattle Street, less than a mile away from Mount Auburn’s gates. Reminiscing on the Cambridge he knew as child, Brewster later wrote,

...here the dandelions and buttercups were larger and yellower, the daisies whiter and more numerous, the jingling melody of the Bobolinks blither and merrier, the early spring shouting of the Flicker louder and more joyous, and the long-drawn whistle of the Meadowlark sweeter and more plaintive, than they ever have been or ever can be elsewhere, at least in my experience.¹

The fields, farms, meadows, and marshes that existed just beyond Brattle Street provided ample opportunity for Brewster and his childhood friend, Daniel Chester French, to collect eggs, nests, and birds. In an era when the study of birds was still done with a gun, both boys were experts in taxidermy, regularly preparing the specimens they shot in the field. While Daniel Chester French would go on to become one of America’s premier sculptors, Brewster’s childhood interest in birds paved the way for a career in ornithology.

Modern-day birders have much for which to thank Brewster. During his long career, he helped to found the Nuttall Ornithological Club (1876) and the American Ornithologists’ Union (1883). He served as a curator of the ornithology collection at Harvard’s Museum of Comparative Zoology, helping to turn the museum’s collection into one of the best in the world, and was selected as the first president of the Massachusetts Audubon Society upon its founding in 1896. A gifted writer, Brewster also published hundreds of papers on ornithological subjects. His *Birds of the Cambridge Region*, published in 1906 by the Nuttall Ornithological Club, was a careful look at local bird populations based upon Brewster’s own observations over a forty-year period. In *Birds*, Brewster documents the dramatic decline of certain native species, attributing the rapid development of the Cambridge region as a major factor in their demise.

Brewster was one of the country’s earliest advocates for the protection of birds and the conservation of their natural habitats. In 1891, he purchased 300 acres in Concord along the Concord River before its forests could be destroyed.



Above: Daniel Chester French and William Brewster in *The Circle*, 1905 (Photo courtesy of the Chapin Library, Williams College, Gift of the National Trust for Historic Preservation/Chesterwood, a National Trust Historic Site, Stockbridge, Massachusetts)



He named the acreage October Farm and spent most of the last two decades of his life exploring the property and recording his

wildlife observations. These observations were published posthumously as *October Farm* (1936) and *Concord River* (1937).

Brewster died in Concord in 1919, and was buried in his family’s lot at Mount Auburn, one of the few places in Cambridge still embodying the natural qualities he remembered from his childhood. Instrumental in selecting the memorial for Brewster’s grave was his oldest and dearest friend, Daniel Chester French. French, celebrated for his monumental sculptures of Abraham Lincoln (Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C.) and John Harvard (Harvard University), and for completing the impressive memorial to sculptor Martin Milmore (Forest Hills Cemetery), chose a much more simple form to commemorate the naturalist, a granite bolder selected from October Farm. In the Introduction he later penned for Brewster’s posthumously published *October Farm*, French describes the significance of his friend’s monument best:

As we were seated out of doors one perfect summer’s day, with a wide panorama of the Berkshire Hills spread out before us, our talk turned on the question of death, and I recall his dwelling chiefly on his regret that he must sometime leave all the beauty of the world that was so dear to him. I like to think that death has not brought this loss to him, but that the verse of Scripture that is chiseled in the stone that marks his grave in Mount Auburn reads aright, and that,

“Lo!, the winter is past, the rains are over and gone; the time of the singing of birds is come.”²

¹ Brewster, William. *Birds of the Cambridge Region of Massachusetts*. Cambridge: Nuttall Ornithological Club, 1906.

² Brewster, William. *October Farm: From the Concord Journals and Diaries of William Brewster with an Introduction by Daniel Chester French*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936.



View showing a section of the banks above Narcissus Path which will be re-planted.

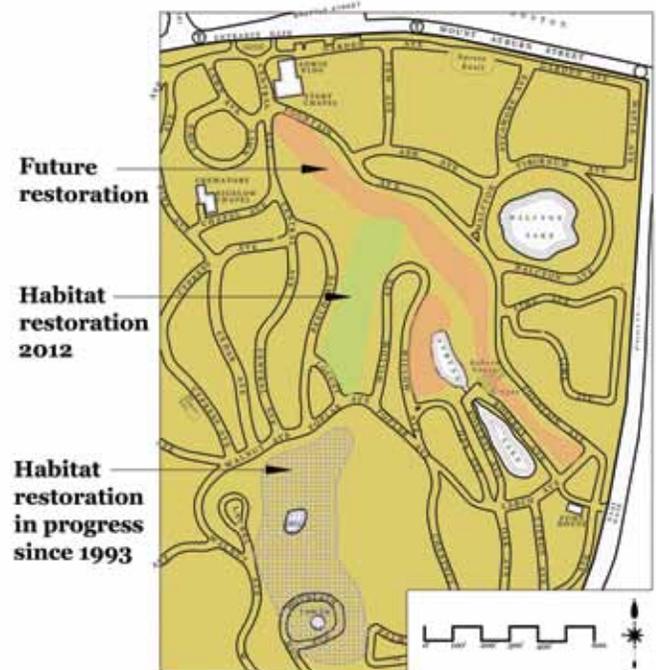
NARCISSUS/BEECH HABITAT RESTORATION 2012

BY CANDACE CURRIE, *Director of Planning & Sustainability*
and DENNIS COLLINS, *Horticultural Curator*

IMAGINE BIRDING AT MOUNT AUBURN AND WALKING through a native habitat corridor rather than from one destination “hotspot” like Auburn Lake to another like Consecration Dell. We have a plan to create such a pathway. The Beech Avenue/Narcissus Path area, once the location of Forest Pond, south of Indian Ridge and north of Consecration Dell, will undergo transformation this summer. Generous gifts from the Anthony J. and Mildred D. Ruggiero Memorial Trust and private individuals provided the funding to complete this vital habitat restoration.

The Beech/Narcissus corridor is long and narrow, spanning only 90’ at its widest point and covering an area of approximately 1.1 acres. From the higher west side along Beech Avenue down to Narcissus Path (a drop of more than 20’) one sees mature native oaks forming the canopy, together with several large hemlocks. The understory contains several significant swaths of the native American holly, whose fruit has a high animal habitat value. The fruit is eaten by over twenty species of birds including the Cedar Waxwing, Hermit Thrush, thrashers, finches, and cardinals.

The conceptual design for the new plantings capitalizes on the clusters of native American holly that now feature impressive mature trees. Using these as the primary focal points in the landscape, the plan introduces new forms of holly and uses them as the thematic element running through the landscape. From a wildlife habitat perspective, the variety of different hollies offers several important advantages. One advantage is that the fruit of different species ripen at different times of the year, thereby extending the availability of food sources through the seasons. Another advantage is that holly species grow in a range of different forms: tall trees, intermediate sized shrubs, and low, thicket-forming shrubs. This variety offers a diverse array of protection and nesting opportunities, suitable for different wildlife species.



This project satisfies multiple landscape objectives. It represents another sizable addition to our animal habitat-focused landscapes. It begins to connect some of our densely planted habitat spaces and satisfies our Master Plan objective to build aesthetic diversity into the overall landscape while appearing historically appropriate. It fits with our long-term sustainability objective of creating less labor-intensive landscapes that serve aesthetic needs while performing ecological functions. Even when important natural sites are spared from development, they can rapidly decline and lose their value as animal habitat without ongoing management. By removing invasive plant species and returning to these sites more sustainable vegetation, this project will help us provide the long-term management necessary for Mount Auburn to continue to be the outstanding landscape that it has been for over 180 years.



Great Blue Heron by Lori Harris

A MAJESTIC PRESENCE: WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS AT COMMITTAL SERVICES

BY TOM JOHNSON, *Family Services Coordinator*

THE APPRECIATION OF BIRDS WITHIN MOUNT AUBURN is not limited to bird watchers and other casual Cemetery visitors. For the family and friends coming to Mount Auburn to commemorate the life of a lost loved one, the presence of birds and other wildlife can provide a sense of comfort at a time of tremendous sorrow.

One example of the power of wildlife to soothe the bereaved took place on a cold winter day in February of 2010, while a family gathered for a burial service near Willow Pond. As the widow read a poem over her husband's grave, the mourners stood in quiet surprise as a Great Blue Heron gracefully flew overhead and then landed on the snow-covered ice of the nearby pond. Some attending the service may not have known that the man being laid to rest was an avid birder, but for those aware of this fact, the Heron's presence was a fitting, though unexpected, tribute.

Though the appearance of wildlife at funeral services isn't usually quite so dramatic, it is not uncommon for creatures to make themselves known. Whether it is the soothing songs of birds floating down from overhead, or the quiet fluttering of a butterfly passing from flower to flower, the presence of wildlife can be a powerful reminder for those attending a service to find hope and inspiration beyond the sadness.

Even when wildlife is not to be seen, references to birds are regularly incorporated into funeral services. As winged beings, birds are seen by many cultures as a symbol of passage from one life to the next. The poem "Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep," a popular choice for memorial services written by Mary Elizabeth Frye, uses the image of birds flying overhead to help comfort those left behind:



*Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there, I do not sleep . . .
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight . . .*

The purchase of burial space or the rental of our chapels and grounds at Mount Auburn helps to preserve the beauty of this important place for those already buried here as well the wildlife that call the Cemetery home. If you are interested in learning more about burial options, chapel rentals, or the use of our grounds, please contact our Cemetery Services Department at 617-547-7105 or email sales@mountauburn.org.

HIGHLIGHT FROM OUR HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS: *Bringing to light the Photographic Collections at Mount Auburn*

BY MELISSA BANTA, Program Officer for Photographs at Harvard University Library, Weissman Preservation Center;
Historical Collections Consultant at Mount Auburn



CURATOR OF HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS MEG WINSLOW has spearheaded an initiative to bring to light and encourage the use of Mount Auburn's extensive photograph collections. Accumulated for more than a century and a half and currently housed in the Cemetery's Historical Collections Department, the photograph holdings offer multiple perspectives of Mount Auburn's varied and changing landscape and the history of the rural cemetery movement. The collection spans the history of the medium from stereo views to digital images taken by noted photographers, staff, and associates. The project included completing a detailed inventory and description of the holdings, cataloguing images into the collections database,

and taking critical steps to preserve the photographs. Researchers will be fascinated to find evocative scenes of the two chapels, monuments, and mausolea representing the funerary artwork of celebrated 19th- and 20th-century architects and artists; seasonal views of trees, horticulture, and landscape design; and intriguing documentary shots revealing the inner workings of the Cemetery. "I can't say how thrilled I am that we have accomplished this exciting project," Winslow notes. "As a result we have created another portal into the extraordinary-and still unplumbed-visual history of Mount Auburn."

See a gallery of images and learn more about our Historical Collections at:

www.mountauburn.org/photograph-collections



Mount Auburn's Historical Collections includes several stereo views of the Swan House and swans at Auburn Lake (above, top).

A Bird Watching Legacy

FOR MANY DECADES, BIRD WATCHING AT MOUNT Auburn Cemetery has been a much enjoyed hobby for Honorary Trustees Susan Paine and Herb Pratt, and longtime Mount Auburn supporter, Betty Valentine.

Herb Pratt has a longstanding relationship with the Cemetery. His grandfather, Charles H. Watson, was a Mount Auburn Cemetery Trustee from 1900–1910. Herb followed in these footsteps and served as a Mount Auburn Cemetery Trustee from 1970–2000, and has since been an Honorary Cemetery Trustee. He is also an Honorary Director for Mass Audubon.

It was in 1938, when he was 15 years old, that a friend from school told him that Mount Auburn was a great place to bird. Herb said he would swipe the family car from his Chestnut Hill home to sneak off to the Cemetery and indulge in his hobby. While he and his schoolmate roamed around, they would see renowned ornithologists and biologists like Ludlow Griscom and Ernst Mayr conducting their own observations. Although Herb never had the chance to go on a bird walk with Griscom, who happened to be the neighbor of Herb's future wife, Pat, he now admits that he wishes he'd asked the famed ornithologist to take him around.

"It's sort of an oasis, dripping with trees" Herb says of Mount Auburn. "Open land like that in the middle of Cambridge, it just attracts the birds, especially warblers. You can go up to the Tower and see the nighthawks in late August. You never know what you're going to see."

Herb's interest in birding started with his love of being outdoors. "I like being outdoors and keeping a bird list. You can really increase your list if you go to Mount Auburn at least once a week in the spring."

Among his memories are spotting some Cerulean Warblers, something not easily forgotten. Red-tailed Hawks are some of his favorite birds to see at the Cemetery. He frequents Willow Pond and the Dell, but he also has several feeders in his own backyard and is able to appreciate birds year round. "I think it's sort of a game. I tell young people 'I don't care what you collect or look at, but look at something.'"

Susan Paine is an Honorary Trustee of the Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery and has been birding at Mount Auburn since the 1970s when she and her friend, Betty Valentine, were taking a Mass Audubon bird watching class. She has continued since then to frequent the Cemetery and always looks forward to the spring migration.

"Mount Auburn birders are certainly an ardent group who know every square inch of the Cemetery and where the birds can be found. It is definitely a unique and special community," she says.

A memorable experience at Mount Auburn is seeing the Screech Owl peek out of its hole. To beginner birders, she says, "Look, look, look. Wherever you are, take notice



Herb Pratt at home in Cambridge with a sculpture done by his brother-in-law, Charles Greenough Chase.

of the characteristics of a bird flying by." Having the right binoculars and optics is very important to the satisfaction of viewing birds.

But most importantly, Susan says of Mount Auburn, "In order to become a bird watching enthusiast there have to be birds in the area to hear, see, and watch. People generally start in their own back yard and branch out from there. Mount Auburn Cemetery, positioned on a major flyway with new and old growth providing a variety of (and ample) food for birds, is the gift of a magical and abundant backyard for all who live in Boston and its environs. People from all over the world come during the migration seasons to experience what we are lucky enough to have easy access to."

Betty Valentine, a longtime Mount Auburn supporter, started birding seriously in the early 1970s when she took the same Mass Audubon class with Susan Paine. She became hooked. This class was her first visit to Mount Auburn as a birder, although she had previously visited the Cemetery for family burials.

"For me, and I believe for most other birders in Mount Auburn, it is all a spring event—really an April and May event; and it's a reunion of sorts. You see people you haven't seen for a year, people whose names you have forgotten or never knew. Everyone is delighted to see one another," says Betty of the birding community.

"Over the last forty-one years I have had some memorable bird experiences at Mount Auburn. Perhaps my favorite was hearing a Worm-eating Warbler in the Dell, and then after some searching, spotted it—the first of the year. In no time a crowd had gathered. That was pretty special, and I have always been partial to Worm-eating Warblers, anyway."

Not every trip to Mount Auburn has to result in a rare sighting to be memorable. Betty also recalls one year when she was leading a group from Drumlin Farm on May 9, and it started to snow. After staying in the shelter of the Egyptian Revival Gatehouse for about half an hour, they gave up and went home. Their bird list for that day: one robin. But still better than nothing!

Staff Profile: Alberto Parker

BY LAUREN MARSH

IF YOU ARE A FREQUENT VISITOR OF MOUNT AUBURN, you probably know one of our security guards, Alberto Parker, by his cheerful disposition. You might not know that he also happens to be one of the few staff members to have taken up birding.

Al has worked at Mount Auburn since 2005, and his interest in birds began when he started bumping into our resident wildlife photographers. “John Harrison was the first—and from there so many others,” he says. Once he was armed with some binoculars, he couldn’t be stopped. Whether on one of our early morning bird walks offered each spring or in the late afternoon when his shift ends (and the bugs are out), Al loves walking the grounds finding various species in the landscape.

He has no set route or routine, but he does have his sweet spots. “Come migration I like the Dell, Laurel Ave, Palm Ave. My favorite spots seem to change every year,” he says. Deciding on a favorite bird proved more difficult for Al. “I like the kingfisher—it has beautiful color, it’s a bird that never stops. It’s always making noise and it just dive bombs right in the water. I like them all, but the kingfisher is one of my favorites.” As far as what to be on the look-out for, Al’s tastes are also seasonal. “My favorite types of birds are raptors, but in the springtime I like warblers. I like anything that has to do with finding something. Warblers are small and fast.”

Since it is Al’s job to patrol the Cemetery, which requires him to drive about 40 miles a day, he is privy to many interesting sightings not just limited to birds—flying squirrels, muskrats, and a host of other woodland creatures abound, but if he hears a bird in the mix, he’ll take a peek. Yet one of his most remarkable moments as a birder occurred when he wasn’t even purposely looking. “Last summer, I was at the front assisting with a funeral and I had gone into the office to get Jim Holman, and as we were coming out, we saw two Bald Eagles fly over the Administration Building.

That’s one of my most memorable experiences here.”

Concerning his relationship with Mount Auburn’s birding community, he says, “They let me know what they see, and I let them know what I see. They email me pictures. I want to let everybody know when I see something. I’ll sometimes get a phone call from one of them telling me where something is, and I’ll go see it and add it to my list of birds that I keep on my iPhone. I use a Mass Audubon app where you can pinpoint where you saw the bird. And I always write on the Bird Board out front, what I see and where I see it.”

Others appreciate Al’s enthusiasm for sharing as well. Artist, naturalist, and educator Clare Walker Leslie says, “Although I have been birding and drawing in Mount Auburn Cemetery since 1974, one of my most memorable moments is my recent encounter with one of your security guards, Al. Al loves the wildlife in Mount Auburn with an increasing and genuine passion. He notices and cares for every moving creature within your gates. Last week, I saw his truck parked beside a Weeping Beech. In pure excitement, he pointed out to me a Merlin eating a chickadee, high up and impossibly hard to see at the top of the tree. Al is passing on his love of nature to me, to everyone at Mount Auburn, and to his family and, in so doing, is passing on a true passion to protect and honor all wildlife.”

Mount Auburn is an excellent place for novice birders to start. Visit us some bright May morning for one of our bird walks or on your own to have a glimpse at some of our brilliant migrants—you might just spot Al in your travels doing the very same!



On March 3rd, we had a table at the Mass Audubon Birders Meeting where we chatted with members of the birding community and gave out information about Mount Auburn. Pictured above are Visitor Services Coordinator Jessica Bussmann and Alberto Parker.

GRANTS AWARDED

The **Roy A. Hunt Foundation** awarded the Friends \$7,500 in November towards the rainwater collection system for the new greenhouse facility. In December, the Friends received \$20,000 from the **Edwin S. Webster Foundation** towards priority projects. And in January 2012, the **Watertown Cultural Council** gave \$500 towards our public programs.



Left to right, Accounting Manager Melinda Moulton with Volunteer Christina DeLallo

STAFF NEWS

Finance Department gets Its First Volunteer

The Finance Department ended 2011 reaching a milestone—our department’s first volunteer! Christine DeLallo, who regularly works at the greenhouse, provided much-needed support on the Department’s offsite storage project. Over two days, she labeled and detailed the contents of 97 boxes of financial records and entered their contents into the Off Site Inventory database. These boxes will be sent to an offsite storage facility in the next few weeks. Thank you, Christine, for a great job! We really appreciate your efforts and hard work!

Jim Storey Retires from Board of Trustees

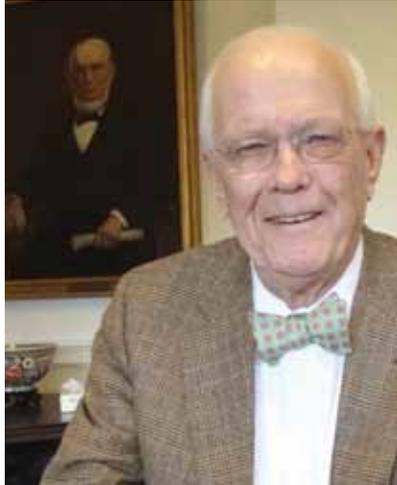
BY LAUREN MARSH

JIM STOREY, WHO HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF MOUNT AUBURN Cemetery's Board of Trustees for 32 years, officially retired from the Board this past December. Jim became a Mount Auburn Cemetery Trustee in 1979, the last of those Trustees

who inherited a "family" seat – he succeeded to the seat previously occupied by his father, Charles, since 1932. During his tenure as a Trustee, Jim served as Board Secretary from 1984–2005, and then as Board Chair from 2005–2009. Taking up his father's seat was his first introduction to the Cemetery and since then he has seen huge growth and radical changes at Mount Auburn. The era when the Board members treated the

Cemetery as if it were their private home was replaced by a new commitment to outreach and education, and this landscape and its story have continued to evolve. The reason Jim stayed through so many decades is simple – he loved it here. He learned on the job what Mount Auburn was and what it did, and he found this to be very satisfying.

"I'm very impressed by the continued efforts of the staff and interest by the Board in Mount Auburn, especially in its horticultural aspects. It seems to me that the current Board is carrying on the high standards of prior Boards, and plans for the future development and stewardship of this property are very exciting."



Board Meetings are Jim's fondest memories of Mount Auburn because he was so pleased and impressed by the unanimous natural cooperation and congeniality among the Board members. Jim also recalls the moment when Mount Auburn discovered what it meant to the surrounding community.

"Mount Auburn changed forever when the Cambridge Historical Commission objected to our planning to replace the deteriorating cast iron fence on Mount Auburn Street with a chain link fence. Until then the Board thought that it alone, with no other interests in mind, could decide what we did around here. We found that we weren't like any other private citizen as we thought we were, but a public institution, a community resource, and a national treasure. That surprised us and taught us that we had to look outside the gates. Then when Bill Clendaniel arrived he transformed our whole mindset and created this really wonderful outreach effort, establishing the Friends and successfully persuading the public that there is still room in the Cemetery. I am very impressed by Dave Barnett's leadership. He has built on Bill Clendaniel's foundation and, even in these times of economic stress, has expanded the Cemetery's outreach and put in place an exciting blueprint for Mount Auburn's future."

"I was very fortunate that Jim was Board Chair when I became President in 2008," says Dave Barnett. "He was incredibly supportive and did so much to make the transition very smooth for me. I enjoyed every minute I spent with him. When I think of Jim, I think of a true gentleman with a genuine smile who sincerely cares about his colleagues. Mount Auburn has benefited greatly from Jim's many years of service, and we will miss his good-natured personality and wisdom."

While his duties as a Mount Auburn Trustee have come to an end, Jim will continue to do what he has always done, practice law in the area of mutual funds.

Last year, we were fortunate enough to have a mating pair of Great Horned Owls that hatched a pair of owlets in a Honey Locust tree near the Dell. The owlets drew in large crowds of visitors who all wanted to catch a glimpse. Artist, naturalist, and educator Clare Walker Leslie, who has been birding and drawing at Mount Auburn for more than 30 years, captured the siblings from birth to maturity in her wonderful sketches.



Birds and Beans

BOSTON-BASED BIRDS & BEANS COFFEE is the only coffee brand in the entire country which solely roasts 'Bird Friendly'® certified beans. They roast and sell Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center certified shade grown coffee, every bean in every bag, which is also Fair-Trade and USDA Organic certified. Their coffee is great for birds, people, and the Earth – it's great tasting, too!

"In 2008, Scott Weidensaul and I launched Birds & Beans® coffee to make it easy for coffee drinkers in America to buy Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center 'Bird Friendly'® coffee," says co-owner Bill Wilson. "Kenn Kaufman and Dr. Bridget Stutchbury joined us in our mission. We have doubled sales year-on-year since our launch. We continue to work with local and regional 'Conservation Partners' to promote Bird Friendly® coffee."

Every bean sold by Birds & Beans is certified by independent inspectors to meet the rigorous Smithsonian



standards. This is a certification based on decades of objective scientific research. Bird Friendly® coffee means that migratory songbirds we know and love have a better chance to survive while on their wintering grounds in the tropics.

Their colleague Dr. Bridget Stutchbury, author of *Silence of the Songbirds* and Professor at York University, says the most important single step an individual can do to help stop migratory songbird population loss is to always buy certified Bird Friendly® coffee. Tropical habitat destruction is today's biggest threat to neo-tropical migrants. The massive shift to farm coffee on industrialized sun filled fields requiring heavy chemicals means that most of the coffee we drink in the U.S. is literally killing songbirds. Today, almost all coffee on the shelves in the U.S. does not meet 'Bird Friendly'® standards. For the past year, Birds & Beans has generously donated all of the coffee served at the Friends' public programs in addition to being the featured coffee at our annual Coffeehouse celebrating National Poetry Month in April.

Community Garden Grows and Gives

Those of you who drive down Grove Street in Watertown with any frequency may have noticed the recent changes happening just opposite of the Cemetery's Grove Street Gate. In October, Mount Auburn Hospital opened a satellite parking lot for its employees on land leased from Mount Auburn Cemetery. This parking lot is a temporary measure with a maximum life-span of ten years, as per agreements reached with the Town of Watertown. Another exciting change, currently underway, is the development of a community garden on a smaller parcel of land adjacent to the parking lot facility. For the duration of the parking lot's existence, the Cemetery will lease (at no cost) a small piece of land to Watertown Community Gardens (WCG), a non-profit organization created to foster a network of gardens and gardeners throughout Watertown. The Grove Street Community Gardens, the second community garden established by WCG, will provide gardening space for more than 30 Watertown individuals and households, from novice gardeners to certified master urban gardeners. "This is a wonderful

opportunity for both Watertown and the Cemetery," says Vice President of External Affairs Bree Harvey, who is also a member of the Grove Street Gardens steering committee. "Mount Auburn will be partnering with Watertown Gardens to provide

appropriate educational opportunities for gardeners looking for guidance on how to maintain a prolific and environmentally-responsible garden. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to solidify our place in the community as an important educational resource. And, speaking as a resident of the town, I am quite excited that in some small way, the Cemetery is helping to encourage more much-needed green space in Watertown." For more information about Watertown Community Gardens, visit www.watertowngardens.org.



Volunteers constructing garden beds in early March. Photo © Leslie Horst.





PHOTO BY SANDY SELESKY



Did **you** know...?

- Mount Auburn birders have different nicknames for certain landmark spots within the Cemetery that you may not recognize:
 - Auburn Lake is called “Spectacle Pond”
 - Hazel Dell is called “The Dry Dell”

...and

- sculptors looked to real birds when creating the wings for the angel sculptures at Mount Auburn;
- there are also several birds depicted on monuments such as the eagle on the First Corps of Cadets Monument.

...and that

- in 2002, Mount Auburn was awarded the status of an “Important Bird Area” by the Massachusetts Audubon Society because it provides essential habitat to breeding, wintering, and migrating birds.

...and also

- the only Massachusetts state record of a Brewer’s Sparrow was at Mount Auburn on Dec. 15, 1873;
- two first state records recorded at Mount Auburn were a Townsend’s Warbler on May 4, 1978, and a Hermit Warbler on May 16, 1964; and
- since 1985 a total of 5,562 Common Nighthawks have been recorded on our popular Nighthawks Watch – only one night August 18, 2008, had no sightings; and
- in recent decades, approximately 50 species of birds have bred in Mount Auburn.

...and in 2011

- during the spring migration, birding clubs and groups visited Mount Auburn 50 times;
- on August 30, participants of our annual Nighthawks Watch saw 244 Common Nighthawks from the top of Washington Tower; and
- in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology database for birders, eBird, 387 checklists were submitted for sightings at Mount Auburn. They tallied 154 species and 40,930 individual birds reported.



The First Corps of Cadets Monument, designed by Theodore Colburn, was erected and dedicated in 1867. Photo by Janet L. Heywood



Greenhouse Construction Begins

Our vision to build a new greenhouse complex as the initial phase in our proposed multi-year plan is becoming a reality. Construction of the glass houses will begin this summer. The diversity of the horticultural collections at Mount Auburn is largely the result of our in-house plant production program that has been in existence for over 150 years. With state-of-the-art open roof venting, the greenhouse facility will allow increased plant production with lower space requirements, while significantly reducing energy/utility demands. The advanced propagation technologies that will be included in the new greenhouse facility will enhance our capacity to continue these efforts. Our staff will be able to more economically produce a wide range of hard-to-find and/or historically appropriate plants as we strive to preserve and enhance Mount Auburn's historically significant landscape for future generations.

Mount Auburn's in-house production of woody plants has been ramping up over the past few years. Prior to our new facility coming on-line, we're gaining more propagation expertise. In our continuing effort to improve our sustainability record and enhance the landscape, we have a pressing need for larger quantities of affordable plants. In-house plant production from our greenhouse and nursery supports at least three of our planting initiatives. First, to reduce maintenance and greenhouse gas emissions from lawn mowers, we're replacing turf with groundcovers inside lots bounded by granite curbing and iron fences, or on top of lots with underground tombs. Second, we're enhancing the character of the landscape that has been categorized into different, distinct zones throughout the grounds (e.g., the Victorian period). Lastly, we're increasing diversity in the conifer collection in response to the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid problem. These three planting initiatives are part of our ongoing efforts to build a more sustainable landscape at Mount Auburn for the 21st century.

We are committed to this project, including the larger scope of expansion in the new Horticulture Center, which is intended to achieve Platinum certification, the highest from the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program of the U.S. Green Building Council, and we continue our fundraising efforts with a wholehearted resolve.

To make a gift towards this important horticultural initiative, please contact Jane M. Carroll, Vice President of Development, at 617-607-1919 or jcarroll@mountauburn.org.



Upcoming Events

Join us for a program this spring or summer. For a complete listing of our upcoming events, visit us online at www.mountauburn.org.

❁ Discover Mount Auburn

Saturday, April 7, May 5, June 2, July 7, August 4, September 1, 1 PM

This 1.5-mile walking tour will focus on stories of history, monuments, and the lives of those buried here.

\$5 for members / \$10 for non-members

❁ Discover Mount Auburn: *The Civil War*

Saturdays, April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, September 15, 1 PM

During these special “Discover Mount Auburn” walks we will share the stories of those buried here with connections to the war, visit the haunting monuments of those who sacrificed their lives on the front lines, and learn about how the war even shaped the history of Mount Auburn.

\$5 for members / \$10 for non-members

❁ North American Trees

Sunday, July 1, 10 AM

Join Visitor Services Assistant **Jim Gorman** for this summer stroll to explore the beauty, grandeur, and legacy of our native trees. \$7 for members / \$12 for non-members.

❁ Wine Tasting at Washington Tower

Thursday, August 16, 5:30 PM

Savor a hand-picked selection of wines provided by **The Magnolia Wine Company** of Watertown while enjoying the late-summer beauty of Mount Auburn in the early evening hours. *Please register in advance.* Free for members / \$12 for non-members.

PHOTO BY VOLUNTEER GINNY BRADY-MANN



❁ Preparing for End-of-Life Issues Tuesday, September 18, 5:30 PM

Moderated by attorney Rosemary Wilson, a panel of experts will discuss topics ranging from the preparation of basic legal documents and increasing support through personal caregivers, to planning for immediate post-death issues such as funeral and burial. Free.

❁ Music at Mount Auburn

Join us for these special performances to celebrate Boston's rich musical heritage and the musicians and composers now buried at Mount Auburn. Specific details for each program are available on our website. All music programs are FREE.

Sunday, April 22 at 4 PM: Futura String Quartet

New England Conservatory honors string ensemble **Futura String Quartet** will perform works by Mozart and Beethoven.

Sunday, May 27 at 4 PM: Ray Lam & Yelena Beriyeve

Clarinetist **Ray Lam** and pianist **Yelena Beriyeve** will present a concert of music by 20th-century American composers during Memorial Day weekend.

Saturday, June 9, 2 PM: Jean Danton & Thomas Stumpf

Soprano **Jean Danton** and pianist **Thomas Stumpf** will perform some the beautiful results of collaborations between the musicians and poets now buried at Mount Auburn.