



## Tiverton's Role in the Revolutionary War is Featured Topic at Annual Meeting

Rhode Island historian Christian McBurney was the guest speaker at the Tiverton Land Trust's Community Forum/Annual Meeting held in April at Tiverton Four Corners. McBurney lectured on Tiverton's role in the Revolutionary War during the British occupation of Aquidneck Island from 1776 to 1779. In his talk he focused on two American attempts

to invade Aquidneck Island that used Tiverton as its main base—one called Spencer's "Secret" Expedition in October 1777 and the other a combined French and American effort that ended with the Battle of Rhode Island in August 1778.

But first he told the story of kidnapping the enemy. Colonial Newport was an important maritime town that the British had captured along with the rest of Aquidneck Island and Jamestown. The British planned to use Aquidneck as a base from which to launch an attack and gain control of Providence. The British General in command of the island, Richard Prescott, often stayed in a farmhouse just five miles north of Newport. There was an award for capturing the General to counteract the recent capture in New Jersey of the second-in-command of the American Continental Army, Major General Charles Lee.

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Featured speaker Christian McBurney (r) discusses presentation with audience members



### Garry Plunkett honored by the R.I. Land Trust Council

TLT Advisory Board member Garry Plunkett received the Peter Merritt Award for Land Conservation at the 11th Annual Land & Water Conservation Summit held in March at the University of Rhode Island. The award is given each year to a volunteer who makes an outstanding contribution to land conservation in his/her Rhode Island community.

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Who among those people with a cultivated spirit, or whose heart has been wounded, can walk in a forest without the forest speaking to him?

~ Honoré de Balzac

*Dear Friends of the Land Trust,*

Since our Fall 2013 newsletter, a number of upbeat events have taken place. TLT was thrilled to hear in February that we have achieved land trust accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, a nation-wide independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. Accreditation assures our membership and funding partners of the integrity of TLT's land conservation work. Chairman of the accreditation committee, Mike Shand, led board members through the arduous process. TLT is proud of this achievement, a milestone in our land trust history.

TLT is also delighted to welcome two new members to our Board of Directors, Carmen Grinkis and Jennifer Escher, and two new members to our Board of Advisors, Martin VanHof and Roz Weir. Each brings significant skills and talents to the Boards as well as a commitment to land conservation work. We are grateful for their willingness to serve.

Significant progress has been made with regard to the master landscape plan for Highland Woods. Bradford Associates is currently completing the final design for the site which includes a trail connecting Highland Woods to Fort Barton Woods. The Newport County Fund through the RI Foundation awarded TLT a \$10,000 grant enabling the Trust to hire a landscape architectural firm. In addition, the Tiverton Open Space Commission approved the 2013 grant of \$1125 from the RI Foundation's Pocassetlands Stewardship Fund to be used for the construction of a footbridge in Highland Woods.

Please see this newsletter's insert announcing TLT's two major summer events. We are pleased to "bring back" our summer gala, *The TLT's Land and Sea Gala—2014*, on July 31—and don't forget to join us for a day of family fun, *A Country Day at Pardon Gray*, on September 13. Hope to see you this summer and thank you for your continued support!

Constance Lima, President  
Tiverton Land Trust



Witch Hazel

# TLT Welcomes New Board Members



Jennifer Escher enjoys all things outdoors. Born in New Jersey, moving to Chicago, then Connecticut and Pittsford, NY, Jennifer skied upstate NY and New England and sailed the Finger Lakes. In 1973, she moved to San

Diego, enjoying sailing, spectacular beaches and the desert. She earned her BA in Economics and Finance at SDSU. Jennifer strengthened her appreciation for open space and conservation on her return east. She hiked and kayaked in Jackson, bicycled from Calgary to Vancouver, and camped in Telluride. In 1997, she paused her career in Boston and wind-surfed the

Caribbean Islands from a 50' catamaran. A resident of Tiverton since 2003, Jennifer cherishes the space that the land trust works to secure. Her perfect day is an early morning bike ride, dividing perennials and an early evening hike in the woods. Jennifer studied Fine Art at BCC and enjoys drawing and painting.

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In addition to Jennifer, Carmen Grinkis joined the Board of Directors in January (see profile in Annual Report).

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Martin VanHof and Roz Weir have agreed to serve as TLT Advisory Board members. Both Martin and Roz have a long history of helping the Land Trust. Roz and her late husband Jim have generously supported the Land Trust since its beginnings, especially their work in preserving the town's historical character. Martin, one of the founding members of the TLT, is known for saying "Yes, I'll help" even before a request is actually completed.

## Featured Topic at Annual Meeting

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In July 1777 the American Col. William Barton led a handpicked party in whaleboats across Narragansett Bay. After landing, Barton and his men hurried to the farmhouse, surrounded it, seized the sleeping general, and made their way back to the mainland. The capture of General Prescott was humiliating to the British as it was done without a shot being fired by a band of less than 50 men on an island with 3,000–4,000 British troops that was surrounded by British navy ships. The capture of General Prescott also made possible an exchange with the American General Charles Lee.

Mr. McBurney discussed the R.I. Campaign—at one point 11,000 colonial soldiers were stationed in and around Tiverton; the Newport evacuation by British soldiers in 1779; and a summary of Col. Barton's later years (including a stint in debtor's prison).

The TLT was joined by the Tiverton Historical Society in hosting the event which drew a capacity crowd. Although copies of McBurney's books

*The Rhode Island Campaign: The First French and American Operation of the Revolutionary War* (2011) and *Kidnapping the Enemy: The Special Operations to Capture Generals Charles Lee and Richard Prescott* (2014) were sold out, they are available in area book stores.



Redoubt of Fort Barton, a topic at the Annual Meeting

# Tiverton Land Trust—Save the Dates

## TLT Land and Sea Gala – 2014

Thursday, July 31st

6 p.m.–9 p.m., Briarhill, Neck Road, Tiverton

A gala fundraiser celebrating the bounty of Tiverton...

Foods prepared by local farmers and vendors:  
roasted eggplant dip; smoked blue fish; oven roasted oysters; grilled polenta; chicken satay; potato latke w/chutney; grilled sirloin; corn fritters w/yellow tomato salsa...

Live auction including a select group of artwork from Tiverton artists...

Sponsor, Patron, and Supporter Opportunities available. Please call 401-816-0817 or leave message on TLT website ([www.tivertonlandtrust.org](http://www.tivertonlandtrust.org))



## A Country Day at Pardon Gray – 2014

Saturday, September 13th

10 a.m.–4 p.m., at Pardon Gray Preserve, Main Road, Tiverton

A community celebration for the entire family to enjoy. Ongoing events: entertainment, fire department demonstrations, vendors, crafters, Tiverton Mountain Men Campsite, exhibits, pooch parade, tractor pull, grilled foods, home baked pies topped with Gray's Ice Cream...

Sponsor and volunteer opportunities available. Please call 401-816-0126 or leave message on TLT website ([www.tivertonlandtrust.org](http://www.tivertonlandtrust.org))

# The TLT and SPA Co-host LiDAR Talk



Katharine Johnson

In April the TLT collaborated with the Sakonnet Preservation Association (SPA) in hosting a presentation by Katharine Johnson on Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), a technology that uses a laser scanning device to map the ground surface of an area below its forest canopy. The technology allows one to quantify the human impact on a landscape by collecting laser pulses that hit the earth and return to the tracking device. Kate showed images of aerial photos next to LiDAR images. Instead of views of treetops, the laser technology showed outlines of old farm buildings (some dating from the 1700-1800s), field patterns of stone walls, old cart roads, and river systems.

Use of LiDAR's potential for uncovering artifacts and for stewardship of protected lands was evident given the work the work already done in Weetamoo Woods, Little Compton, and in neighboring Westport.

## Garry Plunkett

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Connie Lima, President of the TLT, called Garry an 'Environmental Renaissance Man' as she listed his many accomplishments: former Chair and Co-Chair of the Tiverton Open Space Commission (TOSC), Stewardship Coordinator of TOSC overseeing 850 acres, and member of the Tiverton Planning Board where he helped develop Tiverton's Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Currently, Garry helps guide and direct projects and grant writing activities for the town and for the TLT, including a 15-acre meadow restoration project in Weetamoo Woods, invasive species project in Ft. Barton Woods, and a design concept plan for Highland Woods.



Garry is the go-to person whenever there are questions about the woods, native flora and fauna; our town's colonial history; or the history of open space in Tiverton. As Connie said in her closing remarks, "...we all know what a gift we have in him. We are lucky to have such a generous friend and mentor."

(more about Garry and additional pictures at [www.tivertonlandtrust.org](http://www.tivertonlandtrust.org))

The Award honors Peter Merritt, a founding and dedicated Board member of the Aquidneck Land Trust. Peter advocated tirelessly for open space preservation and was an eloquent spokesperson for the need for sustainable conservation. His enthusiasm and persuasive arguments were a catalyst for action that changed our landscape forever.



## Small Grant Award

The TLT has received an award of \$1,125 from the Pocassetlands Stewardship Fund to build a footbridge over a stream in Highland Woods. The award was given through the Rhode Island Foundation. The 16 acre property abutting Fort Barton Woods is the latest acquisition of the TLT.



Waking up from a long winter's nap, is this Christmas fern fiddlehead in Highland Woods. Its name comes from the fact it stays green right through the Christmas snows, and its leaflets are shaped like tiny elf hats.

Dedicated to preserving  
the rural character and  
scenic beauty of Tiverton  
for generations to come.

## OUR MISSION

Tiverton Land Trust  
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