

The Conservancy Chronicle



www.greenwichpoint.org • P.O. Box 377 • Old Greenwich, CT 06870 • Fall 2011

A Message from President Chris Franco

What an eventful spring and summer it was! To much fanfare, on May 21st the GPC dedicated the newly restored Innis Arden Cottage and returned it to the people of Greenwich for use by the community. On June 29th the Floren Family Environmental Center opened at the Cottage, with the Bruce Museum relocating its Seaside Center to the new facility.

The Greenwich community welcomed the new Floren Center with open arms, and thousands of visitors toured the Center before it closed for the season (a few weeks early due to a less-welcome visitor named "Irene"). Innis Arden Cottage is showing all the signs of becoming a community favorite!

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Open House at the Cottage Friday, November 25th from 11am to 2pm

Bring your Thanksgiving guests to walk at the Point, tour the restored Cottage and enter the drawing to win 2 tickets to the 2012 Beach Ball.

Old Barn, New Life

The oldest surviving building at Greenwich Point will soon enter another phase in its almost-125-year life—but this time restored by the Greenwich Point Conservancy to its original stone and shingle beauty.

Constructed in 1887, the Old Barn (the first concession stand/Seaside Center building) originally housed livestock.

J. Kennedy Tod also had a golf course on the property and when the Innis Arden Golf Club was established there in 1899, the cow shed morphed into a pro shop for the club. The club moved from the estate in 1904. Thereafter, playing was by invitation only, and the old building became a golf house for Mr. Tod and his guests.

Fast forward to the 1960s: the Town had acquired the Tod property in 1945 and now a concession stand is in the structure that once housed cows and golfing gear. But life-long Old Greenwich resident and ardent environmentalist Helen Binney Kitchel had a better idea. Her generous donation created the Greenwich Point Exhibit Center in 1969 and in 1981 the Bruce Museum took over. On June 29th of this year, the Bruce's Seaside Center moved its touch tank and summer programs to the Floren Family Environmental Center at the newly restored Innis Arden Cottage.

So the original cow shed, former pro shop/golf house, Greenwich Point Exhibit Center, and lately the Bruce Museum Seaside Center will be transformed yet again. Architect and Conservancy board member Krist Dodaro has created plans for restoring the Old Barn to its original configuration: two stone and shingle wings joined by a cedar shingled roof with an open center courtyard. Restrooms will be in the north wing (the existing brick lavatory building will be razed) with the concession stand housed in the south wing and new dining terrace on the beach side.

The Old Barn restoration project is slated to begin in the fall of 2012. The first step: our proposed gift of the restoration to the people of Greenwich must be approved by the Representative Town Meeting and other appropriate town agencies.

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Victorian Era Charm—Powered for Today

What would the Tods and their guests have thought? The Innis Arden Cottage that once had only the Long Island Sound's breezes and a stone fireplace for climate control is now equipped with solar panels, a wind turbine, and a geothermal system.

Lars Norell, of Altus Power Management, who brought the Cottage's energy supply into the 21st century, is thrilled by the outcome: "With the solar system and the small windmill, we've shown that it's possible to generate renewable energy with minimum impact on aesthetics and design—in some cases, the clean energy systems even add to those."

Mr. Norell went on to explain that by early October, the system at Innis Arden Cottage had produced about 880 kilowatt hours of energy since its connection in May of this year, about 22% more than expected. And without destroying the Cottage's early 1900s ambiance.

The wind turbine—so handsome that many think it's an outdoor sculpture—has been sent back to the factory for re-calibration, but the solar panels are actually

Summer Interns

The Greenwich Academy students who volunteered at Innis Arden Cottage last summer are living their school's motto: pursue your passions and apply your learning toward the common good.

Megan, class of '11, Tara and Carolyn in the class of '12, and Hannah, class of '13 partnered with Seaside Center naturalists from the Bruce and added an alternative energy perspective by giving tours of the Matys and Ruth Rosengarten Energy Education Courtyard. The girls created laminated signs that displayed information about the renewable systems and worked with GPC board member Don Van Rhyn on getting LEED certification for the Cottage.

Many thanks to Ann Decker, head of GA's Duff Center and her students.

producing more energy than Innis Arden Cottage needs. Because the system is tied into the power grid, the unused clean energy goes back to the utility and creates credits against future power use. This excess is half the energy expected from the wind turbine for one full year; from a production perspective the system is holding its own.

A bonus of producing clean energy at Innis Arden Cottage is its high visibility. The Greenwich Point Conservancy believes that it's important to show the community that clean energy is doable, affordable and aesthetically pleasing.

A building from the horse-and-carriage era is leading the way.

Cottage Receives AIA Award

Innis Arden Cottage has been honored with the prestigious 2011 American Institute of Architecture Honor Award (Westchester and Hudson Valley Chapter) for historic restoration and adaptive reuse of an existing building.

The AIA Design Awards Program recognizes projects exhibiting excellence in design and is judged by a panel of distinguished architects. Program goals are to recognize projects that have made a positive aesthetic and social contribution to the built environment and, as a result, have increased public awareness of quality architectural design.

This award is a tribute to the work of board member Krist Dodaro and his firm, Dodaro Ross Architects; that of the Conservancy; and to your support and generosity.

A Hot Ticket at the Point

As word of the beauty and charm of Innis Arden Cottage spreads throughout the community, Conservation Director Denise Savageau reports increasing requests for meeting space.

Use of the Cottage is restricted to Greenwich organizations, boards and commissions. To book a room, call Denise at 203-622-6461 or e-mail denise.savageau@greenwichct.org.



Old Barn, New Life *(continued from front page)*

It's estimated that the completed project, including demolition of the existing restrooms, will require the GPC to raise approximately \$800,000. In addition to proceeds from the 2012 Beach Ball, we're pleased to announce two very special opportunities for involvement in the fundraising.

The first opportunity will enable the community to show its support for the Conservancy's work at the Point by purchasing customized paving stones to be inscribed with a name or message. The stones will be used to create the "memory" of the old estate's gate lodge in

the area between Innis Arden Cottage and the Old Barn. Installed flush with the pavement, the stones will be a beautiful and natural way to evoke the historical setting of the original lodge which was destroyed by fire in 1904.

The second is the rare and unique opportunity to "name" the new seaside dining terrace that will be built behind the Old Barn. When complete, this terrace will be the most spectacular public dining site in Greenwich and will undoubtedly become a well-known and favorite gathering spot for our community.

The Old Barn will be reborn through your generosity; if you're interested in either of these special opportunities, please e-mail Chris Franco, admin@greenwichpoint.org.



Architect Krist Dodaro on the site of the new dining terrace.

Become a member of the Greenwich Point Conservancy!

☐ Friend \$25 ☐ Supporter \$50 ☐ Patron \$100 ☐ J. Kennedy Tod Circle \$500

Make checks payable to Greenwich Point Conservancy or charge my membership donation to:

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**Thank you
for your support!!**
www.greenwichpoint.org

Mail to Greenwich Point Conservancy, P.O. Box 377, Old Greenwich, CT 06870