

BRANT POINT ASSOCIATION



A Word from BPA President Bob Dobies

Welcome to the fall 2023 edition of our Brant Point Association newsletter. The BPA continues to provide residents with relevant, useful information on local topics of interest as well as issues pertinent to the entire Nantucket community. Member feedback helps inform what we write about, so please let us know if there are topics of interest high on your list of priorities.

In this issue we address topics pertaining to Brant Point, highlighting the Nantucket Shellfish Hatchery located on Easton Street, and birding on Brant Point. We also cover people and businesses in our community in this issue including an interview with the owners of the local business Épernay and an article on the history of the Nantucket Hotel.

Maintaining and increasing a robust membership in the BPA is another priority for our Board. We increased our membership by 75% over the past year. That gives us a stronger voice working with Town officials and, importantly, with more input from you, our members, a focus on the issues most important to Brant Point. BPA membership allows you to be better informed about factors that contribute to quality of life in our neighborhood. Members can channel their concerns through the larger voice of the BPA. Please encourage your Brant Point neighbors to join the BPA and make us even stronger and more effective.

This past summer the Massies on Hulbert Avenue hosted our BPA cocktail party, a gathering which proved to be one of the most successful and well-attended in recent history. With 120 attendees in a perfect venue on a lovely night, we enjoyed mingling and talking with friends and neighbors, old and new. Thank you, Toni and Mike Massie, for being such gracious hosts. Also this past summer, we had a productive annual meeting at the Nantucket Hotel with nearly 100 members in attendance. Our guest speakers were Town Manager Libby Gibson, Sustainability Programs Manager Vince Murphy and Sewer Department Director David Gray. All three speakers provided informative and timely updates on their areas of responsibility, and we had a lively Q&A session with engaged residents. Thank you, Nantucket Hotel, for again providing the excellent meeting venue and tasty breakfast for BPA members.

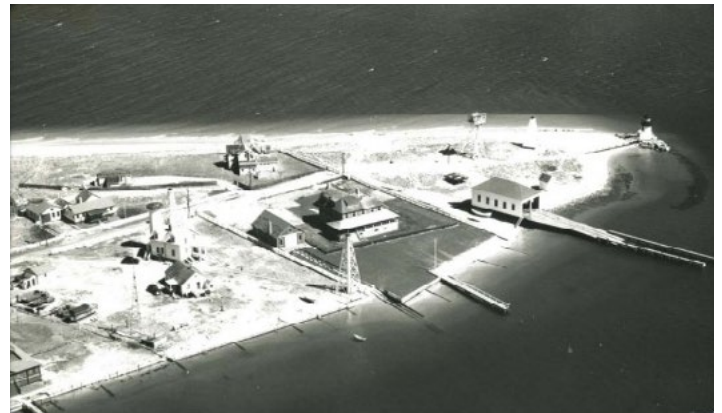
Lastly, the BPA Board welcomes its newest member, Toni Robinson. Toni and the rest of the Board (Andy Reinhard, Vice-President, Charles Phillips, Treasurer, Caroline Baltzer, Secretary, Carole Beller, Marty Glavin, Gretchen Lytle, Woody Newell, Matt Poor and Susan Rein) wish you all a healthy and fulfilling fall season. Please enjoy our fall newsletter.

Thank you,

Bob Dobies, BPA President

Shellfish Hatchery

Tara Anne Riley, Shellfish and Aquatic Resources Manager, Town of Nantucket ~ Natural Resources Department



filtering pollutants from up to 50 gallons of water per day, buffering and stabilizing sediments preventing erosion, and ultimately enriching the biodiversity of our harbors.

Since 2009, the hatchery has produced millions of bay scallop larvae per season and coordinates timed larval releases into both harbors in conjunction with ideal tides, water quality, and habitat-rich locations. The Bay Scallop Larval Release Program seeks to buffer the natural spawning populations whose successes have been highly cyclical over the past four decades. In addition to bay scallops, the hatchery grows out quahog and oyster seed as needed for restoration initiatives and educational or coastal resiliency projects, in that way promoting biodiversity. The facility has recently expanded into eelgrass management, converting some of the shellfish tanks into eelgrass seed germination tanks for habitat restoration projects.

The Brant Point Shellfish Hatchery has been lucky to receive specialized equipment to help efficiently move our efforts forward. In 2022, the Great Harbor Yacht Club gifted the hatchery a photobioreactor, which is affectionately called “Weird Al.” We are the first municipality in the Commonwealth to receive a bioreactor unit that allows us to produce phytoplankton which we feed to our hatchery-produced shellfish in an efficient and consistent way.

This year we have documented an astronomical amount of high-density bay scallop seed within Nantucket

The Town of Nantucket’s Natural Resources Department owns and operates the Brant Point Shellfish Hatchery under the direction of Tara Riley, the Shellfish and Aquatic Resources Manager. The hatchery building, originally owned by the Coast Guard, was deeded officially to the town in 2012 and underwent a full renovation in 2016. It now operates as a state-of-the-art, fully integrated, municipal shellfish hatchery that produces shellfish for local stock enhancement, coastal resiliency projects, and research. In addition to shellfish production, the facility provides a research hub for visiting scientists and graduate students engaging in work to help move Nantucket’s harbor initiatives forward. Free public tours are offered during the summer months and educational outreach is continual throughout the year for local island schools and the community.

Very few coastal towns have invested in a dedicated municipal hatchery for preserving the sustainability, culture and tradition of its shellfisheries, making Nantucket unique. While shellfish from Nantucket maintain their status as a luxury seafood, it is important to note that shellfish provide a host of eco-benefits before they land on your plate. Shellfish are ecosystem engineers



Harbor. While it is great news that we have this level of successful recruitment, it creates an illusion that our harbors are thriving. Currently, these scallops are being proactively moved and managed to prevent mass strandings, stunted growth, and heavy mortalities from low-oxygen events that will occur next summer. Our communities' biggest challenges include heavy nutrient loads in the harbor that contribute to the continual loss of eelgrass. The eelgrass beds are a marker for a healthy ecosystem and essential habitat for juvenile scallops to attach to for escaping predation on the harbor bottom. The beds also act as a "fence" to keep the small scallops from washing up on the beach during significant wind events. Without eelgrass, other opportunistic macroalgae take over, creating additional problems for water quality, aesthetics, and survival of the shellfish.

Small changes at homes and on the water can significantly impact overall water quality. Consider decreasing or omitting fertilizer use, converting to the use of natural lawns and native plants, and watering lawns only as needed to limit runoff into our harbors. To help mitigate some of the physical pressures on eelgrass, people can consider using more environmentally friendly mooring systems and supporting an increase in no-wake zones

coming into the harbor to improve water clarity for the eelgrass beds surrounding Brant Point.

Please come visit us in the spring or summer for a tour of the Brant Point Shellfish Hatchery. We would like to meet our neighbors. 🇺🇸

Commentary from the BPA:

The BPA Board thanks Tara for contributing the article and for the incredible work she and her team do at the Hatchery.

For Brant Point residents that would like more information on the Shellfish Hatchery programs, or how to support their work through tax free donation, please reach out to Tara directly via the town website:

[Brant Point Shellfish Hatchery](#)
(Brant Point Hatchery website)

Content & resources:

[Time & Tide Podcast: The Shellfish Series Episode 2: Sam Denette, Tara Riley & Matt Herr](#)

[Instagram: @nrdack \(hatchery and natural resource news and events\)](#)

[Facebook: Town of Nantucket Natural Resources Department](#)

The Nantucket: A Brant Point Icon for More than 130 Years



In the late 1700s and early 1800s Nantucket whaleboats set out across the oceans returning, oftentimes after years at sea, laden with oil that helped illuminate a pre-industrial world. By the mid-1800s kerosene emerged as a cheaper, more abundant way to light America's homes and factories. The subsequent sharp decline in Nantucket's economy caused nearly half its population to leave the island.

In the late 1800s Nantucket's natural beauty began to attract summer visitors who journeyed every year to admire its mansion-lined streets, historical sites, and pristine beaches. Tourism provided Nantucket with a new path to prosperity. New hotels, inns and boarding houses flourished. In the summer of 1891, the Point Breeze hotel opened, close to town and to the beaches. It consisted of forty "sleeping apartments equipped with fine furnishings." Early advertisements boasted of the hotel's running water, two dining rooms, gaslights, billiard halls, croquet lawns, and sea views. Guests could enjoy dancing across the hotel's ballroom floor to live music or simply relaxing in rocking chairs on the verandah. The more adventurous guests allowed themselves, in the words of a newspaper from that period, "the invigorating and delightful indulgence of sea bathing." The hotel's popularity allowed expansion in early 1900 when it took on the shape we recognize today with the addition of an east wing.

In the 1920s a fire razed the hotel's west wing and iconic tower. In the mid-1930s, Gordon Folger, Jr., grandson of the original proprietor, took over. He renamed the hotel The Gordon Folger Hotel and opened a restaurant, The Whale,

whose dining room and terrace are the precursors to today's Breeze Bar and Café. Fast forward to the 1990s when the Gonella family purchased the hotel, restored the original name The Point Breeze and turned the hotel's iconic porch into a popular spot for live music and cocktails. Then in the summer of 2012 new owners, Mark and Gwenn Snider, completed the most extensive refurbishment in its history, and "The Nantucket Hotel & Resort," "The Nantucket," was reborn as the only sizable hotel open year-round.

To reflect their own inspiration and vision, the Sniders committed to retain The Nantucket's authentic, historic exterior while the inside came to embody a completely new, casual atmosphere with 21st century, family-friendly comforts. With its two outdoor pools, trendy Breeze restaurant, popular work-out and socializing spot the Nantucket Club, and expansive Grand Ballroom, The Nantucket offers amenities guests would expect from a world-class hotel. Happily, it still holds on to its original Point Breeze traditions, including live music in the evenings and old fashioned New England clambakes on Mondays.

Today, you can enjoy a ride through Nantucket's streets on The Nantucket's antique red or green fire trucks. If you're looking for a good summer beach read, check out Elin Hilderbrand's recent novel, *The Hotel Nantucket*, where



it is the venue for a juicy scandal at a storied local hotel on Nantucket.

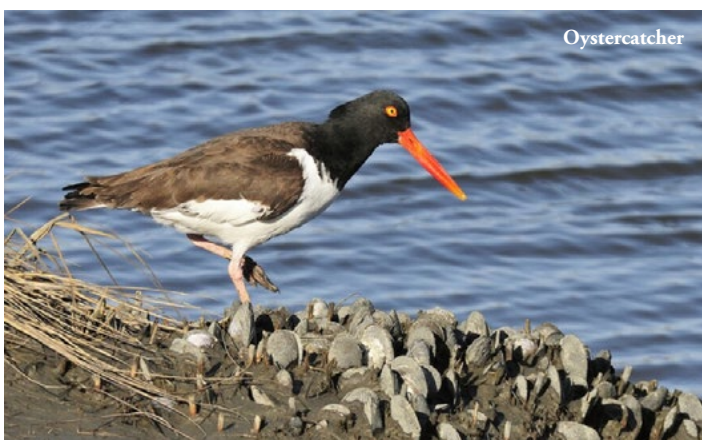
The Brant Point Association is grateful to The Nantucket

for its commitment to our community and for graciously hosting the BPA Annual Meeting each summer. We encourage all our Brant Point neighbors to stop by the hotel during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays or end the year with the elegant New Years Ball. We also recommend The Nantucket's amenities and accommodations as an ideal setting for your family and friends to enjoy throughout the year. 🏠

Birdwatching on Brant Point

The Brant Point community offers a variety of recreational opportunities for its residents and visitors. Walking, jogging, and biking are popular given Brant Point's flat and uncrowded roadways, which also happen to provide terrific access to the inner and outer harbors and extensive beaches around Brant Point. Another recreational opportunity that has gained momentum over the past few years is birdwatching. Brant Point offers some excellent, diverse habitats for a variety of birds throughout the year.

The Brant Point lighthouse beach area is a great place to start, especially in the early morning when bird activity is at its peak and boat traffic is at its minimum. No matter the season, there is always good birding along the beaches or out in the channel, as shorebirds, terns, gulls and cormorants are on the move, looking for bait entering the harbor. In the summer and fall seasons, look for [Least Sandpipers](#) and [Semipalmated Plovers](#) along the shoreline. [Common/Least Terns](#), [Greater Black-backed Gulls](#), [Herring Gulls](#), and [Double-crested Cormorants](#) are usually found chasing bait in the harbor. Use a good set of binoculars to scan the inner Coatue beach area for the beautiful [American Oystercatcher](#).



Nestled near the point where Hulbert Avenue and Easton Street merge is a significant Nantucket Conservation Foundation wetlands. It is a great place to check for bird activity. Several species of hawks, including the [Red-tailed Hawk](#) and [Northern Harrier](#), can usually be found hunting there. This past summer a group of [Black-](#)



[crowned Night-Herons](#) utilized the wetlands as a resting area. A [Great Egret](#), affectionately known as Willard, patrols backyards on Willard Street in search of rats... yes, rats! Each evening a couple of ospreys fly overhead with their fresh catch of the day en route to their nesting platforms. Finally, people on a walk without binoculars might listen for the melodious calls of the [Carolina Wren](#) and [American Goldfinch](#), wonderful sounds on a summer day.

While the Jetties Beach is a popular spot for sunning and swimming, it is also a good birding location, particularly at low tide in the summer and later in the fall season when shorebirds and sea ducks migrate. The tidal flats at low tide bring the gulls and terns closer to shore while the wave-washed rocks of the Jetties are excellent habitat for [Spotted Sandpipers](#), [Ruddy Turnstones](#), [Black-bellied Plovers](#), and cormorants. Later in the fall season, many sea ducks such as scoters, [Common Eiders](#), and [Long-tailed Ducks](#) use the Jetties location both for food and for protection from stormy seas.

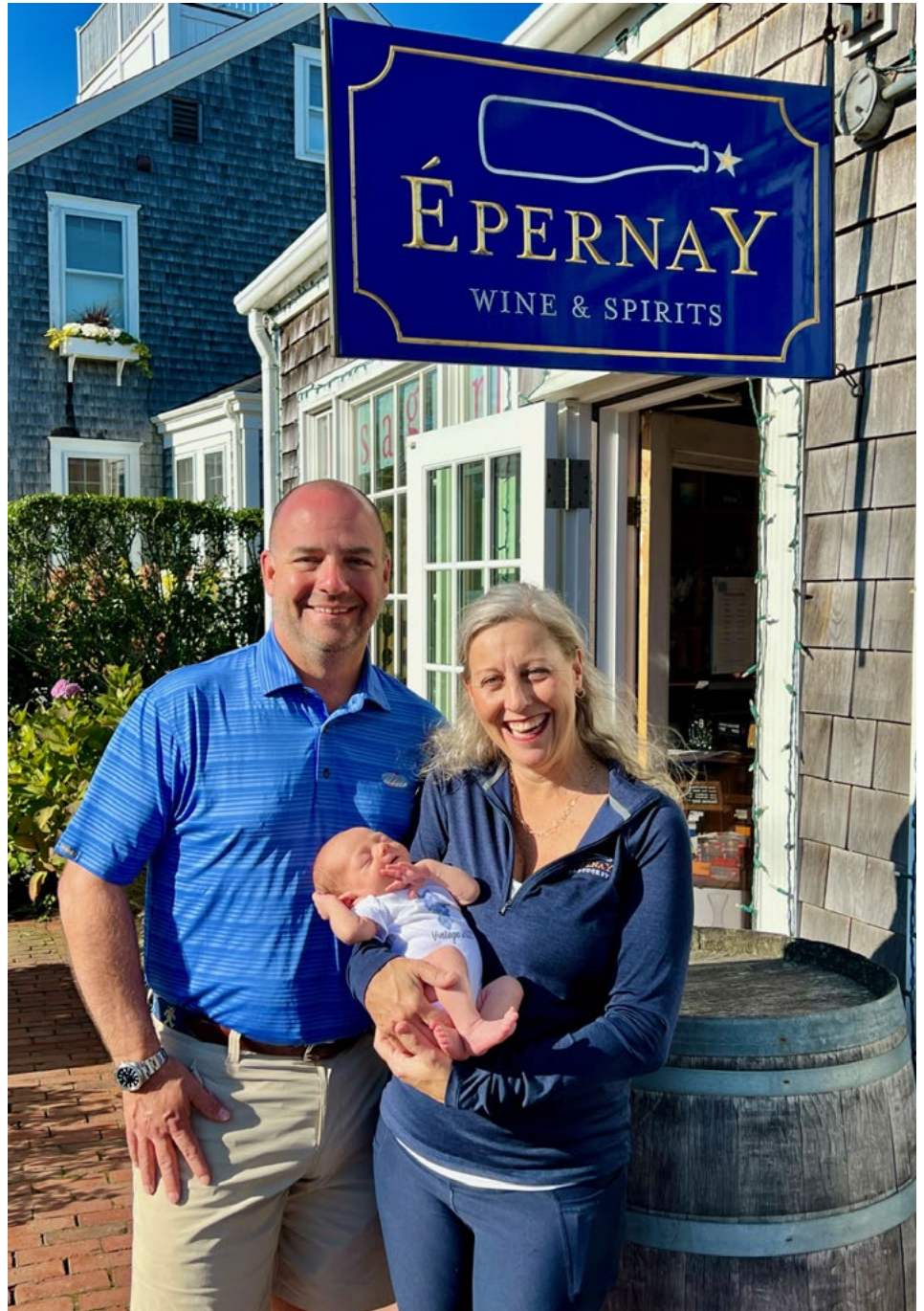
You never know what you might see on any birding excursion on Brant Point. The diversity of ocean harbor, shoreline, and wetlands can turn a pleasant walk into a nature-filled extravaganza. Bring along a pair of binoculars and a smart phone with an app for help in identifying birds - Audubon has a good one. Keep these handy as you pursue a therapeutic combination of exercise and Nantucket's rich natural history. 🦉



Brant Point Community Spotlight: Épernay Wine Store

Épernay, located at 1 North Beach Street, is a jewel of a Brant Point business, carrying one of the island's best selections of wines. Jenny Benzie is the only wine shop owner on Nantucket with an Advanced Sommelier certificate. She and her husband Kirk Baker purchased the shop in 2013 while she was still the wine director at Cru, following her distinguished career as a Sommelier in Palm Beach. Kirk, an experienced restaurant manager, is the official buyer for the store. Jenny and Kirk have embraced the island of Nantucket and been active in Nantucket's premiere events including the Nantucket Wine & Food Festival, the Daffodil Festival and other celebrations. They provide tastings and introduce the public to small and newly discovered vineyards as well as to vintner owners who come to share their passion for wines with Island wine enthusiasts.

Épernay, with its warm and welcoming atmosphere, attracts wine enthusiasts from across the island. They respect Jenny's expertise and the shop's curated selection of wines at every price point, including small champagne houses. Kirk stocks a large selection of craft and domestic beers, ready-to-drink cocktails and seltzers in addition to a wide variety of premium spirits. The store employs experienced, friendly staff who can help you select wines from vineyards that might be new to customers.



Épernay also maintains a large cigar humidor as well as a selection of caviar, pâtés and select cheeses. Customers can assemble elegant gift baskets for any occasion with the thoughtful recommendations of the Épernay staff. Épernay has become the go-to place for events, parties, weddings and customers who want excellent service and selection. They also deliver anywhere on island. The newest addition to Épernay, is Stephanie Grace, Jenny and Kirk's daughter born this September. 🏠

General Announcements



Please be sure to frequently view the BPA Website (www.nantucketbpa.com) for important and convenient links in the resources section concerning items of interest to residents, seasonal and year round.

DATES OF INTEREST

Nov. 30- Dec. 3

NHA Festival of Trees

Dec. 1-3

Christmas Stroll

April 25-28, 2024

Daffodil Festival

July 27, 2024

BPA Annual Meeting (Nantucket Hotel)

Aug. 10, 2024

Boston Pops on Nantucket (Jetties Beach)

Week of Aug. 12, 2024

BPA Summer Social Event

(Specific date and venue TBD)

RESOURCES

New Nantucket Conservation Foundation video on water rise impact on the Coatee Refuge:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdxHgsxY23s

GENERAL

We encourage members of the Brant Point Association to propose topics for consideration in future newsletters. Please contact our Vice President, Andy Reinhard, (andyreinhard@gmail.com) with any suggestions.

We enthusiastically welcome all ideas relevant to Brant Point and our Nantucket community, including historical, current, environmental or community interest. We also welcome interest from members who would like to be contributing authors of future articles. Newsletters are published on a quarterly basis.

