

2020

ANNUAL REPORT



THE MISSION OF WILTON WILDLIFE PRESERVE & PARK IS TO CONSERVE ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AND NATURAL SETTINGS, WHILE PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OUTDOOR RECREATION, WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TOWN OF WILTON, SARATOGA COUNTY, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY, AND THE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION.

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A MESSAGE FROM US TO YOU



**MARGO B. OLSON,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

AND

**JENNIFER BENAMAN,
BOARD CHAIR**

2020 was a year in which we had to stop, look, and re-evaluate every aspect of our organization to see how we could continue serving our community and meeting our mission-driven goals in environmental education, outdoor recreation, and conservation. We learned so much about what was important to us and to our community.

As you read through this report, we think that you will see what a vibrant and creative organization we have here! We may be small in size, but we are determined to work hard to insure that our programs and outdoor opportunities add a great impact to the world around us - both in our human and our natural communities.

We are happy that you have been a part of our challenge and our journey this year. We hope to see you out on the trails!

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

We started the year with our full schedule of public programs, offering Wellness Walks, Preschool Nature Hours, Nature Discovery Walks, Owl Prowls, and a full schedule of Winter Vacation programs. We were doing programs in schools, at afterschool programs at Gavin Park, for Project Lift, and with BOCES. We were working with scout troops and with the Saratoga Springs Library. And then everything shut down. As in-person programs were cancelled, we began to develop a new way to offer programs, developing videos, doing Facebook live nature walks, creating virtual field trips for teachers who had to cancel their visits to the Preserve & Park, and even converting our annual Wildlife Festival into a week-long event of virtual programs.

Thankfully, by the summer we were able to offer outdoor programs, with masks, with limited attendees, allowing us to get back to what we love, sharing our love of nature and of the unique plants and animals that are found in the Saratoga Sand Plains ecosystem, in-person with our visitors.

It was a different year, but we still were able to work with many of the community groups that we have collaborated with in the past. In 2020 we worked with:

- Academy for Lifelong Learning
- BOCES
- Boy Scouts
- Charlton School
- Franklin Community Center's Project Lift
- Gavin Park
- Girl Scouts
- Malta Community Center
- Saratoga Springs Public Library
- Skidmore College Environmental Studies students

EDUCATION IS AT
THE HEART OF ALL
THAT WE DO





OUTDOOR RECREATION

GETTING PEOPLE OUTDOORS AND INTO NATURE HELPS PEOPLE TO CARE ABOUT AND TO WORK TO PROTECT THE PLACES THAT THEY LOVE

This year it was more important than ever to help people in our community to get outdoors and experience the beauty and healthful benefits found in nature. With COVID restrictions in place, we saw a huge surge of trail use on all of the 25 miles of trails on our partners' land. We created a series of videos to help people learn about all of the places that they could get outdoors to walk safely and get the physical and mental respite that was so needed.

New York State acknowledges the importance of outdoor recreation through many of its plans and initiatives and we are proud to be able to help get people outdoors, year-round.

The Saratoga Stryders running club is a valued partner, even though the 5k summer fun runs did not take place this year.

What kind of outdoor recreation takes place?

- Nature walks
- Bird watching
- Nature Photography
- Fitness walking and running
- Mountain biking
- Snowshoeing
- Cross country skiing
- Fishing, hunting, and trapping in accordance with Town and DEC regulations
- And more!

While winter didn't cooperate too much in 2020, we continued our winter trail grooming program at Camp Saratoga North utilizing the new grooming equipment shed built by Trevor Borden's Eagle Scout Project and with great assistance from the Town of Wilton.

CONSERVATION

HOW DID A LITTLE BLUE BUTTERFLY HELP TO CREATE A PRESERVE FOR NATURE AND A PARK FOR PEOPLE?



We coordinate with our partners to provide support and manpower for their conservation projects in the Saratoga Sand Plains. With restrictions this year, there were fewer conservation projects than in the past. We assisted with most of the year's projects with our staff, volunteers, and Environmental Education and Conservation Interns.

- Habitat preparation work at Fox
- Wild blue lupine seed picking
- New Jersey tea seed picking
- Butterfly milkweed seed picking and cleaning
- Woodcock Survey
- FrogWatch survey
- iMap Invasives Training
- Waterchestnut removal in Delegan Pond

WE WORK WITH OUR PARTNERS AT THE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, THE TOWN OF WILTON, SARATOGA COUNTY, AND THE NATURE CONSERVANCY TO SUPPORT THEIR WORK TO PROTECT THESE IMPORTANT LANDS.

10TH ANNUAL WILDLIFE FESTIVAL

THIS ANNUAL EVENT IS HELD EVERY YEAR ON THE SUNDAY AFTER MEMORIAL DAY SINCE THAT IS THE TIME OF YEAR WHEN THE WILD BLUE LUPINE IN THE MEADOW IS IN FULL BLOOM AND THE FIRST BROOD OF KARNER BLUE BUTTERFLIES HAVE EMERGED. IT IS THE PERFECT TIME TO SEE THE PRESERVE & PARK AT ITS PEAK. THIS YEAR, WE CREATED A WEEK-LONG VIRTUAL CELEBRATION!



Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park's
VIRTUAL
Wildlife Festival Week

Due to social distancing instead of a one-day Wildlife Festival on Sunday, May, 31st we will be hosting a Wildlife Week that will start with a LIVE Turtle Discovery Program at 10:00am on the 31st. Each day we will post a short video or live event.

All Events Premiering Online @ 10:00AM

Sunday, May 31: Facebook LIVE Turtle Discovery
Monday, June 1: Karner Blue Butterfly Walk
Tuesday, June 2: Nature Craft at Home
Wednesday, June 3: "Who Will Roar if I Go?" Storybook Reading
Thursday, June 4: Explore the Historic Cornell Hill Fire Tower
Friday, June 5: Aquatic Wildlife Exploration
Saturday, June 6: National Trails Day - Get outside and visit a trail!



9TH ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW

IN 2020, THE ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW WAS A VIRTUAL SHOW. PHOTOGRAPHS WERE DISPLAYED IN A VIRTUAL GALLERY. ERIC AVERY, ONCE AGAIN SERVED AS JUDGE FOR THE 67 ENTRIES SUBMITTED BY 27 PHOTOGRAPHERS. ALL PHOTOGRAPHS WERE TAKEN AT WILTON WILDLIFE PRESERVE & PARK AND HIGHLIGHT THE AMAZING BEAUTY AND DIVERSITY OF THE NATURAL WORLD THAT IS RIGHT IN OUR OWN COMMUNITY. MANY OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS ARE FEATURED IN THIS ANNUAL REPORT.

WINNERS WERE:

BEST IN SHOW: VALERIE ROOF, INCREDIBLE INDIGO
BEST KARNER BUTTERFLY: DENISE STONER, KARNER BLUE ON FLOWER
BEST ANIMAL SHOW: WAYNE JONES, MALE HOODED MERGANSER ON DELEGAN POND
BEST NATURE IN AUTUMN: LAURA STERLING, INTO THE FOREST AT OPDAHL FARM
BEST FEATURING CONSERVATION: SARICE OLSON, MEADOW
BEST WILDFLOWER: RONALD HARROWER, DAISIES GALORE
BEST NATURE IN WINTER: RICHARD PINE, AFTER THE ICE STORM
BEST FEATURING UNDER 13: HANNAH ASHDOWN, PILEATED WOODPECKER PARTY
JUDGE'S CHOICE: MICHAEL WINNEK, FIDDLEHEADS

WILD ABOUT BLUE

Like so many events in 2020, Wild about Blue, our major fundraising event went virtual! Instead of a one-evening, in-person event, we spread the activities out from October 15th through the 18th.

Wild About Blue

Our Annual Fall Fundraising Effort Has Gone Online!

October 15 through October 18

Thursday, October 15 at 7:00 pm

- Kick-off via [Facebook](#) live and [YouTube](#)
- Blues for the Karner Blues Performance by the Resonators
- [Online Auction](#) of Specialty Goods and Services

**Friday and Saturday
October 16 and 17**

- 10:00 am and 4:00 pm Video Updates
- [Auction Continues](#)

Sunday, October 18 at 4:00 pm

- Wrap-up via [Facebook](#) live and [YouTube](#)
- Bluegrass for the Karner Blues Performance by the Schroon River String Band
- [Online Auction](#) Concludes

Links for the free programs, auction, and making a donation can be found at www.wiltonpreserve.org/wild-about-blue

Thank you to Caffe Lena for the recording and live streaming.

Saratoga Arts supported the musical performances via a Community Arts Grant funded by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

QUESTIONS? EMAIL US AT INFO@WILTONPRESERVE.ORG
www.wiltonpreserve.org

WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR DONORS

THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH TO OUR 2020 HONORARY COMMITTEE

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Scotty's - The Parillo Family
Jane A. Wait

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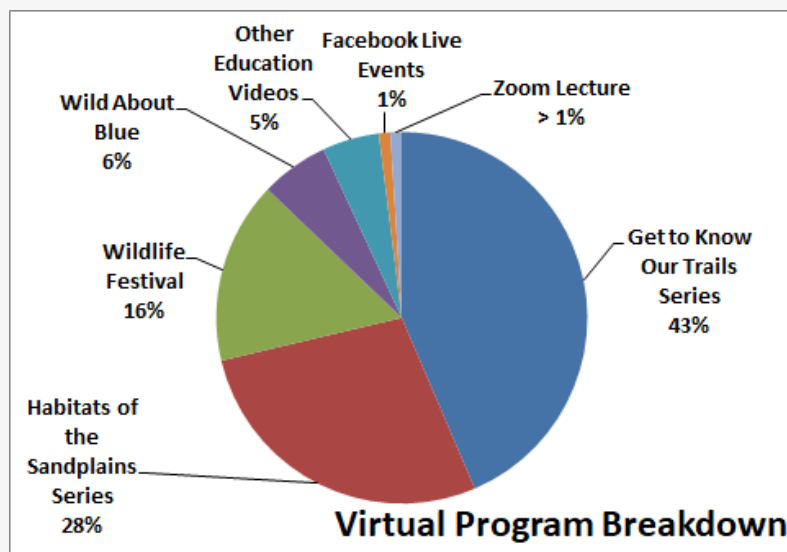
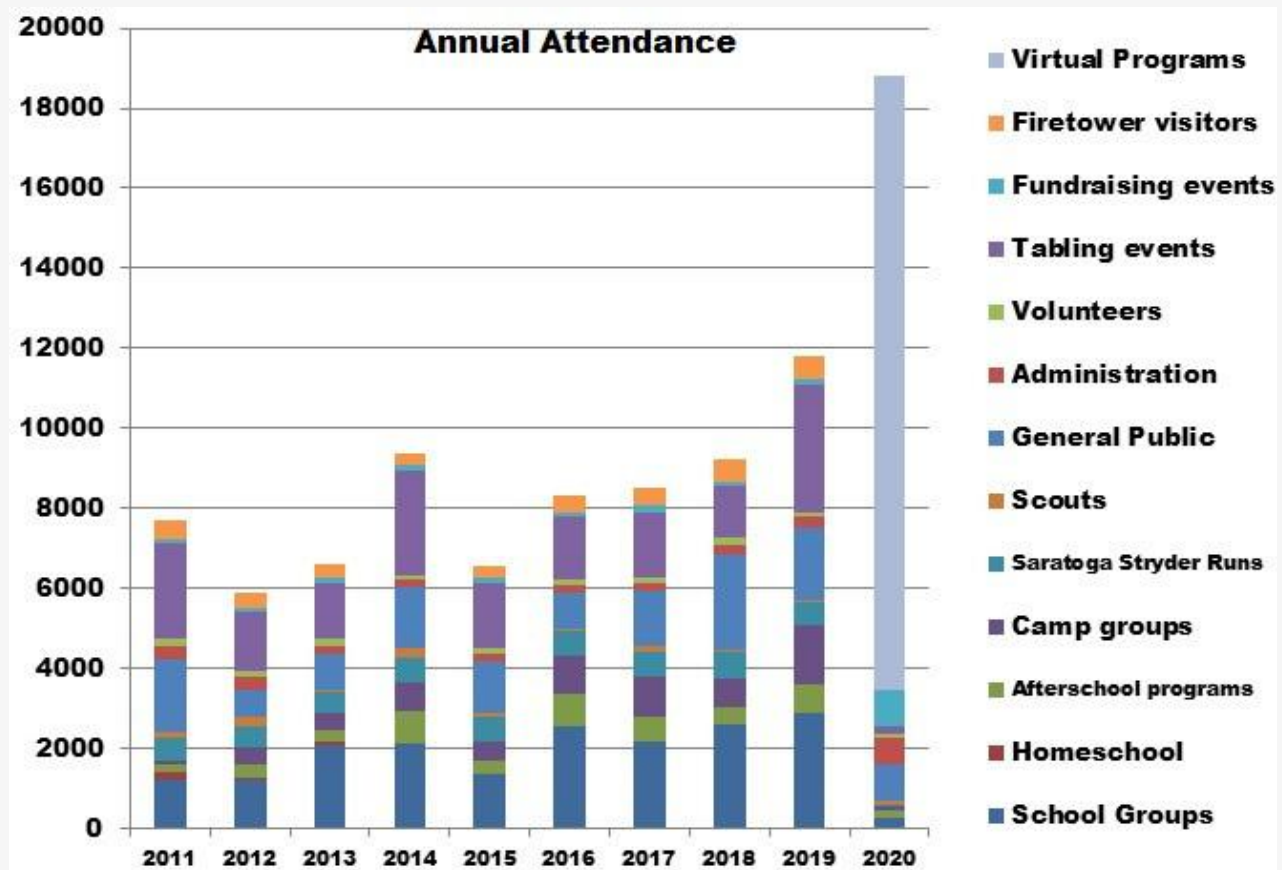
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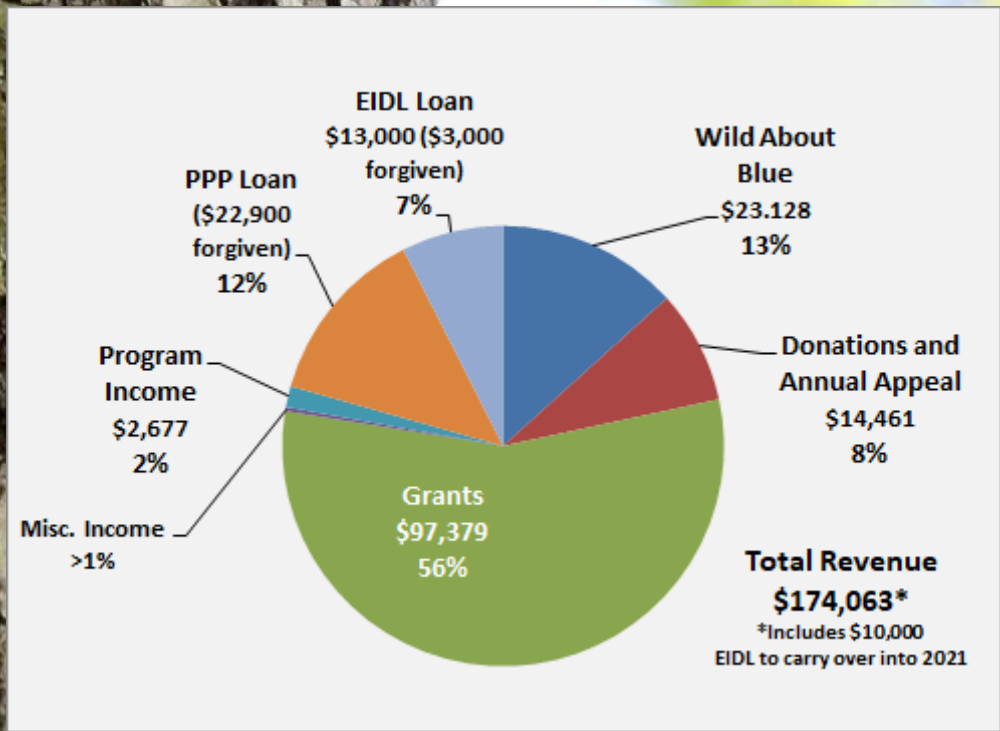
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HOW MANY PEOPLE DID WE SERVE IN 2020?

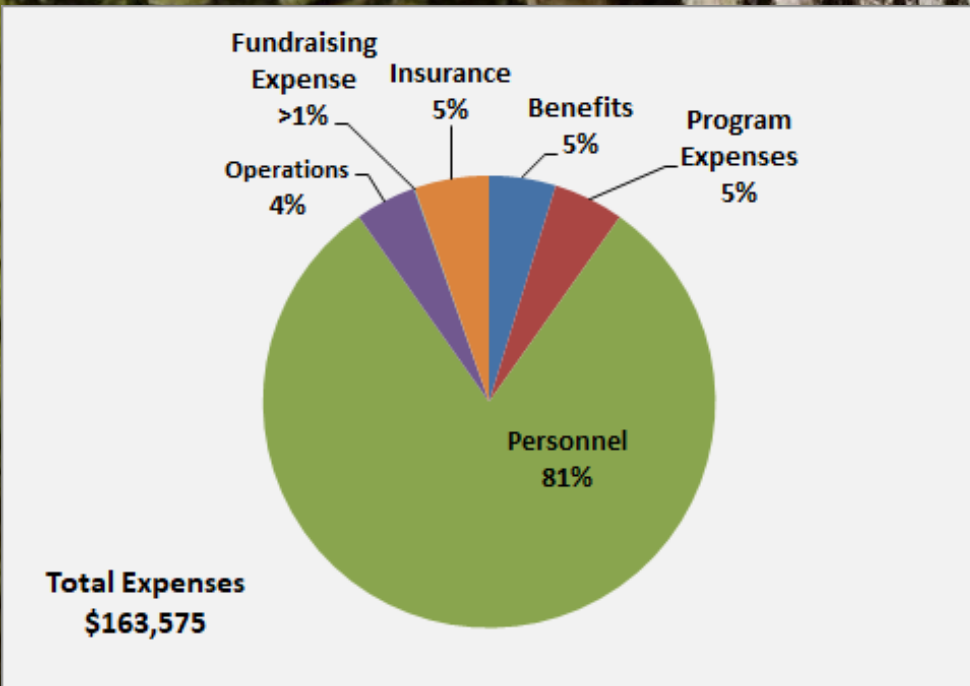
A NEW FOCUS ON VIRTUAL PROGRAMS RESULTED IN INCREASED OUTREACH AND PROGRAM ATTENDANCE



WHILE 81% OF OUR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS WERE VIRTUAL IN 2020, WE WERE STILL ABLE TO WORK WITH OVER 1,000 PEOPLE THROUGH OUR IN-PERSON PROGRAMS.



THANKS TO FUNDING THROUGH THE FEDERAL PPP AND EIDL PROGRAMS, AND OUR GENEROUS DONORS THROUGH WILD ABOUT BLUE AND THE ANNUAL APPEAL, WE WERE ABLE TO MAKE UP FOR PROGRAM INCOME LOSSES DUE TO COVID.



LARRY GORDON CAMP SARATOGA VISITOR CENTER

Planning Process

In 2019, we began the planning for an exciting new project to be located at Camp Saratoga. We worked with the Town of Wilton to begin to develop a plan for a year-round Visitor Center that would become the focal point for visitors and users of Camp Saratoga. It is being named after Larry Gordon, who spent most of his life protecting, enhancing, and promoting the conservation of the landscape of Camp Saratoga. The Visitor Center is a collaborative project of the Town of Wilton, Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park, and the Scouting Museum Committee.

The Vision of the Larry Gordon Camp Saratoga Visitor Center

- A welcoming building located alongside the trailhead at Camp Saratoga;
- A facility filled with information and exhibits about the natural history, flora, fauna, and environment of the Saratoga Sandplains; the human history of Camp Saratoga; and that encourages people to get outdoors;
- A place where knowledgeable staff and volunteers will enhance the park visitors' experience;
- The new heart of public programming at Camp Saratoga.



March Kick-Off

On March 11, 2020 we held a kick-off event at Camp Saratoga. We are able to announce the success of our first round of donations through the \$20,000 for 2020. While we were excited to have had a successful launch, with the shut-down due to COVID in the following weeks, the Steering Committee decided to put our fundraising efforts on hold for the remainder of the year.

Next Steps

The Larry Gordon Camp Saratoga Visitor Center Steering Committee developed a proposal that was sent to several architecture and building firms in the area to begin the next steps for the building planning. We are hoping that we will be able to continue progress on the project in 2021.



\$20,000 FOR 2020 CAMPAIGN FOR THE VISITOR CENTER

TO KICK-OFF THE FUNDRAISING FOR THE LARRY GORDON CAMP SARATOGA VISITOR CENTER WE RECEIVED A CHALLENGE GRANT FROM FRANK PARILLO. IF WE COULD RAISE \$20,000 BY JANUARY 20, 2020, HE WOULD MATCH WITH A GIFT OF \$20,000!

WE WERE ABLE TO MAKE THAT MATCH THANKS TO THE PEOPLE THAT DONATED AND PLEDGED TO THE CAMPAIGN.

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Caroline Stem

Trish Watkins

Jay & Pamela Weigel

Wendy Whittmore



LET'S HEAR IT FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS!

VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN 2,400 HOURS IN 2020! OUR FANTASITIC VOLUNTEERS HELP OUT IN SO MANY WAYS. THEIR WORK ALLOWS US TO FULFILL OUR MISSION AND IS KEY TO OUR SUCCESS. SO A BIG, HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO VOLUNTEERED FOR WILTON WILDLIFE PRESERVE & PARK IN 2020.

More than 100 Hours

Ellie Bowen
Erika Dodge
Kathleen Garofalo
Emily McCormick
Matthew Miczek
Natalie Simonton
Mia Stewart
Lauren Winkler

51 – 99 Hours

Isabel Beard
Jennifer Benaman
Marcy Revette

20 – 50 Hours

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Jeffrey Lawson
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Tina Morency
Marne Onderdonk
Richard Pine
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Robert Rice
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Under 20 Hours

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Howard Blake
Nicholas Cipriani
Laura Clark
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Peg McCanty
Lori McCarron
Tom McInTyre
Eric Mercandante
Nestor Monje
Amelie Przedwriecki
Nina Russo
Brenda Sanchez
Malina Stawarz
Bonnie Whitman
Wendy Whittemore

INCREASED TRAIL USAGE MADE THE WORK OF OUR VOLUNTEER TRAIL STEWARDS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THIS YEAR.



2020 DONORS

THANKS TO ALL WHO MADE FINANCIAL OR OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WILTON WILDLIFE PRESERVE & PARK IN 2020 THE FOLLOWING LIST IDENTIFIES THOSE WHO HAVE GRANTED PERMISSION FOR THEIR NAMES TO BE INCLUDED. WE APOLOGIZE FOR ANY ERRORS AND ASK THAT THEY BE BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION.

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In Memory of Larry Gordon
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Dr. Dennis Card

In Memory of Michael E. McCarron
Lori McCarron

In Honor of Nan & Don Polunci
Jean Polunci

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Caroline Stem
Stewart's Shops
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