

# The Cape Cod Chronicle

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## EDITORIAL

### The Transformation Of Marconi

We live in a wireless world, one that could not even be imagined when Guglielmo Marconi began transmitting Morse Code signals through the ether more than 100 years ago.

Until recently, however, the evolution of technology from wireless radio signals to pocket computers tied to the World Wide Web hasn't been comprehensively presented in a permanent museum environment. That changed a few years ago when the Chatham Marconi Maritime Center opened at the former Marconi Wireless station in Chathamport.

This week, the Center embarked on its next evolution, assuming control over a second building on the campus overlooking Ryder's Cove. The two-and-a-half story brick structure known as the Hotel will provide the museum with additional museum display space to go along with the exhibits in the adjacent operations building, as well as education and assembly space to enhance what has become a nationally recognized institution attracting significant corporate and foundation funding as well as widespread local support. Eventually, tenants may be found to lease the 15 or so former bedroom spaces on the second floor. Volunteers were busy Monday clearing out debris from the neglected building in preparation for renovations that will restore the nearly 100-year-old structure which hasn't been fully utilized for a half century.

Next door to the Hotel, one of two remaining residences on the town-owned property is also undergoing renovation by a private resident. That leaves just one of the major buildings on the campus vacant, a far cry from just a few years ago, when none of the eight or so buildings there were occupied. In the past several years, however, several of the bungalows there were leased as affordable housing, the Marconi Center renovated the operations building, and now upgrades of the two other buildings are in process.

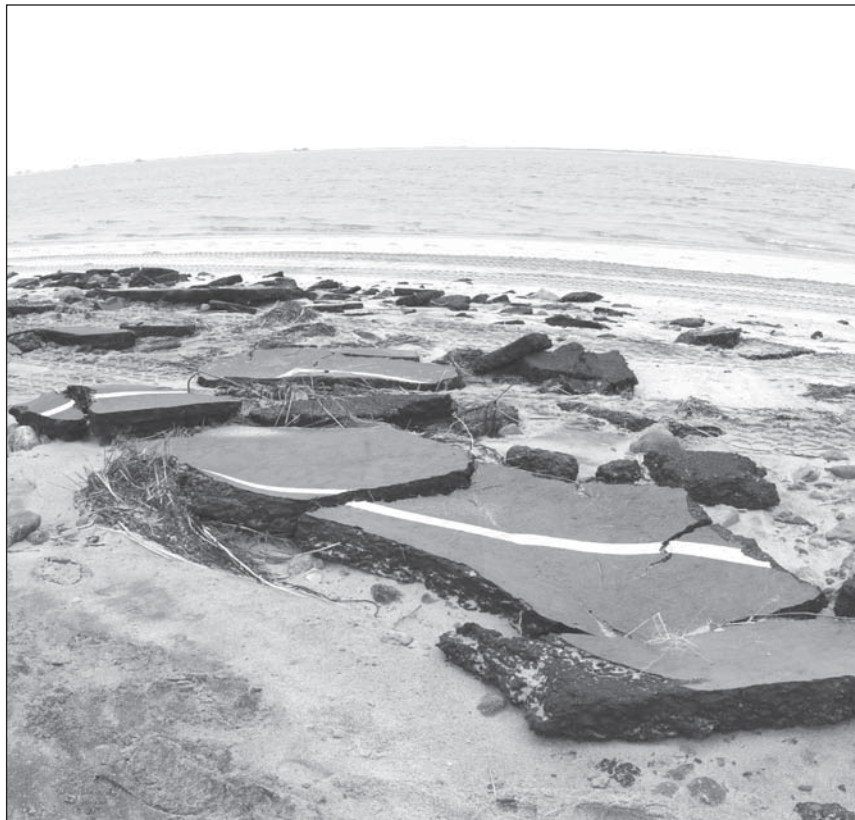
It's been a truly remarkable transformation of this gem, a National Historic Register property that the town had the foresight to acquire for less than \$1 million in 1999. It's safe to say that the true historical heritage of the property was not fully understood then, before smartphones and ubiquitous Wi-Fi. But it is now, and as it heads toward its centennial, we eagerly await the further transformation of the property into one of Chatham's most important assets.

### SPLASH!



Away from the coastline, heavy rain and slushy snow was the rule during last week's storm. A delivery truck plows through a puddle on Main Street, Harwich Port. ALAN POLLOCK PHOTO

### ATLANTIC 1, COURT 0



Erosion uncovered chunks of old tennis courts near Claflin Landing. ALEX HILLMAN PHOTO

### Treasure Hunting

One day last week, before seven in the morning, I glanced outside at the bird feeder and its busy customers. The feathery ones owe all to my husband, St. Frank, who is compassionately devoted to them, and keeps them in thistle and sunflower seed heaven all year.

A flash of white, resembling a small snowball dropped to the ground. I followed the vertical trajectory, but the ground was bare. I saw another flash, a startling snippet of white which darted in and out of the rhodies. Unexpectedly, it zoomed toward the holly under my window. From my perfect vantage point, I espied a fat budgie-shaped white bird, marked only with a couple of symmetrical charcoal smudges on either side of its beak and a faint hint of grey on its wings. Knowing this was an unusual sighting, I raced to the computer searching "black and white Cape Cod bird." Unsuccessfully, and don't ask me why, I tried "albino chickadee" and got a hit! This was not a true albino, but an equally rare leucistic chickadee – from the Greek root word meaning white. I was tickled pink. Unfortunately, the camera was still dead so I couldn't record it. Amazingly, it returned the next day, witnessed by St. Frank, elevating my tall bird tale to fact.

Finding the unusual and unexpected is exciting and always renews one's sense of wonder and awe. And, speaking of pink, last fall, while raking, St. Frank found a rare pink katydid on a leaf – we do have that photo.

A friend's son was pruning trees in Orleans when his hawk-like eyes perceived unusual movement in the grass. He lifted up two thumbnail-sized hummingbird chicks which agreed to perch delicately on his and his wife's fingertips. Wildcare advised they place the teensy treasures on some nearby branches, and miraculously, mom came and spirited them away. The same nature-loving son was transplanting a tree from a nursery in Westport to a house in Chatham. An employee and he noticed what appeared to be a lizard in the autumn leaves. He recognized it instantly as an

anole, a southern amphibious species. He brought it to Wildcare whose director was, fortuitously, headed to southern climes and brought her new slithery friend to Florida where he was appropriately released. It was believed he had lived in the roots for the summer, but would never have survived our winter. I'm sure he/she became quite the social darling of the chameleon cocktail set with the tales it had to tell.

Twenty-five years ago on a church youth trip out west, our youngest son, Justin, then six, discovered an Indian arrowhead in the dirt while hiking an untraveled area of the Grand Tetons. We joked that, being the smallest of the group, he was the closest to the ground, and the most able to spot it. We were moved by the experience, knowing that the last person to touch it was its original owner on a hunting expedition 200 years ago.

There are all kinds of unusual treasures we find which cause us pause. My mother has always had a penchant for ferreting out four, five and six-leafed clovers. From childhood on, she would nestle herself in a patch of thousands, and

in minutes zero in on the "luckiest" ones. But, as my father often said, "To see, first you have to look." A few years ago, a kindergarten-aged girl, playing at Brooks Park in Harwich with her family, unearthed a diamond in the dirt. No one knew how long ago it had escaped from its ring and lain there awaiting possible discovery, it could have been two weeks or 20 years. The mystery remains.

There are treasures hidden among us yet undiscovered. Unlike searching for the leprechaun's elusive pot of gold at the end of a rainbow, whether the yet-undiscovered treasures, often hidden in plain sight, are natural wonders, or fruits of our spirits, the journey of discovery begins with opening our hearts and eyes, and looking around us. Those who seek the undiscovered treasure will eventually find it.



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TO  
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