

From The Editors

Two of our editors researched and wrote the feature article in this Winter 2008 issue of *Spritsail*. "A Silent Fall" is the history of the 1969 West Falmouth oil spill and its aftermath. It is a dramatic and cautionary history.

Contemporary reports by Shellfish Warden George Souza accompany "A Silent Fall." Readers will be impressed by his field work, his initiative and his persistence. The town was also impressed. In 1987 George Souza's annual report included this statement: "Again, I sincerely want to thank the townspeople and our town fathers for their great support of the Bourne's Pond Project and the show of kindness in naming the new Menauhant bridge the 'George Souza Bridge.' My family and I thank each and every one of you for this wonderful gift in my honor."

Virginia Valiela worked with George all the while she was a full-time select woman. She wrote to *Spritsail*: "He was a pioneer and a self-made man. He was very earnest about everything he did, and he cared deeply about keeping the town's shellfish and herring industries healthy. He was a hard worker and spent a lot of physical effort keeping the herring runs open and the salt ponds properly 'flushed' by keeping the inlets open. He was also very practical and down to earth. His wife Edie was his soul mate. She kept a lot of the records for him, and was as dedicated to environmental efforts as he was."

"Great Sippewissett Marsh: Looking For Birds and Finding the Past" by Ivan Valiela complements "A Silent Fall." The author describes the natural forces that created the marsh and the human activities that have impacted it from the time of the Native Americans. His primary focus is the migratory birds that add greatly to our enjoyment of the marsh and whose survival depends on the continued health of wetlands.

Dana Hastings recalls his first sight of another marsh in the same area in "West Falmouth – A Foggy Beginning 66 Years Ago." His story is echoed by Mavise Crocker's Letter to The Editor. We welcome submissions to *Spritsail*. Our focus is the history of Falmouth and vicinity, but our definition of history can occasionally be expanded to include vignettes like those recounted by Dana Hastings and Mavise Crocker.