

DOROTHY MAIER, FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE WARREN LAND TRUST

The Warren Land Trust owes its founding to outrage generated in residents by the plan of Iroquois Energy to build a natural gas pipeline across Litchfield County, its 100 foot right-of-way to cut through the heart of Warren. The fight against the pipeline went on until 1989 when the massive grass roots opposition led Iroquois to establish a route further south. That battle won, Warren resident Nancy Binns, together with Dorothy Maier and other leaders in “Fight the Pipe” felt it important to form a land trust to insure that the rural character of Warren would have a permanent advocate. On August 17, 1989 an organizational meeting was held at Town Hall and a Board of Directors elected composed of Dorothy, Nancy, Blake Levitt, Robert H. Bolte, Edward G. Farrell, David S. Miles, Wayne Wilson, Robert Knox Kennedy, Joan Beattie, Ben Hoffman, Graham Brush, Jr. and May Hill.

It was a natural that Dorothy would be an active participant. When she and her husband Samford (Sandy) Maier moved to Warren after his retirement in 1978, they immediately became involved in the community; they began the Prime-Timers, Sandy was long-time treasurer of Warren, and both volunteered with the Fire Department as EMTs. Dorothy relates that in the middle of the organizational meeting she had an ambulance call and returned to find she had been elected president of the Land Trust. Nancy Binns was VP, Blake Levitt, Secretary and Ben Hoffman, Treasurer.

The WLT had an immediate infusion of funds no longer needed by Concerned Citizens against the Pipeline, as well as donations from individuals and a foundation. Possible gifts of land included 17 acres at Sunset Ponds. We were off to a good start with

Dorothy to keep us in touch and in line. At first, board meetings were every few months with, as Dorothy puts it, “the elves at 23 Cornwall Road” sending out notices, always with her hand written admonition, “We must have a quorum!”

In our second year the WLT received 17 acres from the Muriel Douglas estate as well as the 17 acres at Sunset Ponds and a 2 acre conservation easement from Graham Brush, Jr. By the annual meeting in 1991 the WLT had more than \$15,000 in the general fund. Robert Faust was elected to the board to replace Robert Kennedy. There were other turnovers of board members. In June 1992 Blake Levitt resigned from the board to be replaced by May Hill as Secretary. Dorothy herself wanted to step down as President before the October annual meeting that year, but her resignation needless to say was not accepted. New board members elected then were Paul Prindle and William DeSetta. Dorothy pointed out to the new Secretary her egregious spelling errors in the typed minutes, and thus began the Secretary’s practice of mailing Dorothy a copy for her corrections before sending the minutes out. Not much gets past Dorothy.

In 1993 several meetings were cancelled due to snow. That year the WLT was given 7 acres on Route 45 opposite Brick School from the Cashion estate and a 2-acre conservation easement from Graham Brush, Jr. The following year Anne Martindale was elected to the board at the October annual meeting. In 1995 the February meeting had to be cancelled because of an unexpected Town Meeting. Dorothy sent out a notice to all directors listing pending business with a handwritten addendum: “First one who calls with any complaint or correction will be the next President!!” That year the elves at 23 Cornwall Road sent out the annual fund drive letter and Graham Brush, Jr. gave another 2-acre conservation easement on Tanner Hill Road.

By the October 1996 annual meeting, the WLT had more than \$50,000 in the general fund, nearly half of it due to Dorothy's friendship with the executor of the Reichart Foundation, which gave an annual donation. That year the WLT accepted the gift of 25 acres at Eel Pond. Dorothy's antenna was constantly tuned to possible gifts of land or conservation easements. Many of these came to pass in the next few years including 63.79 acres deeded to the WLT by Lorraine Skidmore in 1999.

At the October 2000 annual meeting original members Nancy Binns and Bob Bolte resigned from the board. In 2001 the WLT received a state grant of \$25,000 towards the purchase of 40 acres of pristine woodland with the WLT contributing \$29,000. The same year a gift of \$125,000 from adjacent landowners enabled us to acquire 32 acres from the estate of Nancy Kennedy.

In 2002 Sandy Maier became ill; Dorothy was coping with that as well as Land Trust meetings. She sent an urgent notice to board members in November "We must have a quorum!! This meeting will have a significant impact on the future of the Land Trust!!!" At the annual meeting Dorothy announced that Graham Brush, Jr. had died. Ben Hoffman resigned from the board and David Scofield was elected Treasurer. In 2003 Tom Paul joined the board and was elected Vice President; Dorothy now had a firm back-up and talked of resigning. In 2004 original member Joan Beattie resigned and Jack Baker and Jed Struckus joined the board. At the annual meeting Dorothy at last had her resignation accepted (reluctantly) and Tom Paul became President. The Board honored Dorothy by naming the 32 acres on Sackett Hill Road the Dorothy Maier Preserve.

The WLT benefited in the next few years by the infusion of younger and computer savvy board members Carolyn Brau (who took over as Secretary in 2007),

Virginia Smith, Tim Angevine, Rebecca Neary, Barbara Page (elected Treasurer), Rebecca Connor, Laura Moore Brown, Ted Morse (elected President in 2009), Daniel Hulseberg and Tom Sarsfield. Of the original board members only May Hill and Dorothy remain. Sandy Maier died in 2006, but Dorothy, as always, continues to play a vital role on the WLT Board of Directors, and will celebrate her 89th birthday November 21st this year. She has missed only one meeting in 22 years--without her, the WLT might not exist.

May Hill