

Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center Hosts 5th Annual *Bully!* Gala

By Patricia Pelkowski

THEODORE ROOSEVELT Sanctuary and Audubon Center celebrated its fifth annual *Bully!* Gala for 2003 at the Nassau Country Club in Glen Cove on Saturday, April 26th. The fund-raising dinner dance honored this year's recipients of the Legacy of Conservation Award—the Krusos Foundation, for its numerous habitat enhancement and preservation projects and Jamie T. Deming, for her work as a leading pillar of local community and environmental efforts. The Award is given to Long Islanders who share the Audubon and Sanctuary commitment to education, conservation and stewardship of our precious natural resources.

James Foote, portraying Theodore Roosevelt, gave a characteristically rosy and exuberant welcome to all after the cocktail hour on an otherwise overcast, drizzly evening. He introduced Advisory Board President Gloria Kruse, who thanked both the Krusos Foundation and Jamie T. Deming for accepting the Legacy Award and their years of tireless devotion to their respective works.

Gala Co-chair Newton J. Burkett, WABC-TV news correspondent, recently returned from assignment in Iraq, presented the Award to the Krusos Foundation, naming their many achievements that have benefited wildlife from Central Park to Shelter Island. Beginning a decade ago, when the Foundation gave a \$250,000 donation to preserve 40 acres of undisturbed land in Calverton, they have continued alone and in conjunction with various agencies and organizations to fight to keep Long Island's ecosystem, saving many bird species among other animals.

Mr. Burkett's co-chair Diane McGaw presented the Award to her friend and neighbor Jamie T. Deming, who was fundamental in establishing many of the programs at the Waterfront Center, a local community organization the Sanctuary works very closely with. Initially, Mrs. Deming spearheaded the fundraising efforts to procure this circa WWII dilapidated shipyard and turn it into a clean, vital education center, benefiting not only the community, but the ecosystem of Oyster Bay itself. Her additional volunteer activities include producing children's radio programs and heading the education committee of a local private school in Oyster Bay.

President Kruse also thanked Gala Co-chairs, Diane McGaw and Newton J. Burkett and Honorary Chairs and 1999 recipients Ursula C. and William Niarakis for their efforts on behalf of the Sanctuary as well as the entire Gala Committee and staff. The laborious efforts of the Gala Committee ensured the evening's success in a year that presented many fundraising challenges.

John Flicker shared with the festive crowd Audubon's 2020 Vision, elaborated on the goal of reaching one in four children with Audubon programs and establishing 1,000 centers by 2020. He cited the fact that it all started in 1923 when Christine and Emlen Roosevelt donated the original 12 acres, which became Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary, Audubon's very first sanctuary right in Oyster Bay, the "conservation president's" own backyard.

TRSAC's new Director Trish Pelkowski thanked the Gala Committee and co-chairs for making this event possible and helping to further the Sanctuary's mission to educate present and future generations about the beauty and importance of our natural world. She thanked the gala attendees for keeping the gates open, the vision alive and said the Sanctuary can only remain a vital community resource through the support of people as dedicated as the committee.

A touching moment, later in the evening, occurred when Ms. Pelkowski presented a bouquet of flowers and her deepest gratitude to former Sanctuary Director Marilyn England. It is hoped that since her retirement last January, Ms. England will continue on with the Sanctuary as a volunteer.

The magnificent Nassau Country Club, its elegant atmosphere and exquisite cuisine was made available to the Sanctuary through the generous sponsorship of board member Roger Bahnik and his wife Laurie. Between the ambience of the club, the excitement of the crowd, the swing of the band and the message of hope the Sanctuary and its Legacy of Conservation Award recipients represent, all came together to make the "magic" of the Sanctuary happen on an April evening.



SCOTT ROSS PHOTO

James Foote portraying Theodore Roosevelt



RICHARD HALEY

Audubon President John Flicker shares his 2020 Vision with the festive crowd.



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Diane McGaw (left) presents the Legacy of Conservation Award to Jamie T. Deming (right).

Gala Co-Chair Newton J. Burkett with Legacy of Conservation recipients from the Krusos Foundation. Left to right: Newton J. Burkett, Denis Krusos, Martin and Peri Wenz, and Catherine Krusos.



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Recipient Jamie T. Deming with Nassau County Executive Thomas Suozzi.



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New Executive Director Trish Pelkowski presents outgoing Executive Director Marilyn England with a bouquet of flowers.