**Letter From the Editor**

**Dear readers,**

The transition from 2005 to 2006 seemed to happen all too quickly for me, and by the time you read this Winter issue, hints of Spring may be in the air. Nevertheless, the topics covered are not only timely, but indeed critical for readers to understand, if we are to continue to enjoy a healthy Long Island Sound. Many of the features in this issue emphasize a common theme, invasive aquatic nuisance species in Long Island Sound. Invasive species are a growing global problem with potentially serious impacts on both the economy and ecology of any region. You’ll find out why, what it means to you, and what you can do.

"Alien vomit" and "scrambled eggs" are some of the charming descriptions used for one of the scariest of these aliens, *Didemnum*, the latest newcomer to the bottom of Long Island Sound. Sounds pretty weighty, but the average person can really help to curb the spread of at least certain invasive species by everyday actions such as properly disposing of unwanted aquarium vegetation, or cleaning boat hulls between trips.

To avoid a gloomy pall upon the issue, we bring you some cheer: you can help get rid of pesky sea squirts by stir-frying a mess of them to serve over rice—don’t forget the soy sauce. Later we present some whiz-bang space-age technology being used to track changes in plant communities, here in the case of the pervasive, invasive reed, *Phragmites*. Best thing to do with *Phrag*, I’ve always thought, is to cut it with sharp clippers and set a bunch in a large colorful vase. Last but not least, a celebration! A well-beloved lighthouse at the University of Connecticut’s Avery Point campus has had a successful face-lift, triumphantly returning home as it should—by water—documented for you here.

Finally, for those with kids, I mustn’t fail to mention a marvelous new super-sleuth educational game that goes along with our invasive nuisance theme, that you can play online. Nab the Aquatic Invader!, created by Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, with some help from their friends, allows users to play detective while learning about suspects (various invasive species) and their impacts. Sea Grant programs in the Northeast USA, including Connecticut Sea Grant, are helping to add more of our regional invaders to the site. The game was intended for children in grades 4-10, and also has a teacher’s guide. The web address appears on the back inside cover, along with some another terrific resource, “Habitattitude”.

I hope you enjoy this issue and will become a willing volunteer in the battle to control the spread of invasive species. We don’t intend to drop the issue after publication, either—a future article will feature a new invasive seaweed in Long Island Sound, *Grateloupia*, and what it means to the local ecology. As always, *Wrack Lines* invites reader suggestions.

**Peg Van Patten**
Editor
Got "Habitatitute™"?

The national Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, working through a partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, the National Sea Grant College Program, and state fish and wildlife agencies, has launched a new public awareness campaign called Habitattitude™. The campaign targets aquarium hobbyists and water gardeners, for the purpose of raising their awareness about the issue of aquatic invasive species and its relevance to their hobbies. It promotes several environmentally-friendly alternatives for people who need to dispose of aquatic plants or fish. By following the sanctioned alternatives regularly, people can reduce the spread of aquatic plants or fish that, if released, could become established and invasive, and thus limit their negative effects on our lakes, rivers and coastal resources.

For more information, visit http://www.habitattitude.net online.

Try this online! Parents and teachers too! Select your favorite Detective and round up the pesky culprit invasive species. You’ll learn a lot during your investigation.

http://www.sgnis.org/kids/ or Google: Nab the Aquatic Invader