

**** THE NORMAN BIRD ****

- A FLYER -

NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY
Third Beach Road
Middletown, Rhode Island

This newsletter takes its name from a lady who came to the Sanctuary one day and said she'd searched high and low for a Norman Bird without finding a reference to one even in a textbook.

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The Norman Bird Sanctuary is so named as a memorial to the father and brother of Mabel Norman Cerio, who directed her land to be used as a place where the public could come to enjoy the creatures, the quiet and the natural beauties.

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If one were just to leave land unattended, in short order it would be an overgrown mess. Paths must be cleared, trimmed or mowed incessantly. As we have no tractor we are dependent on the generosity of a neighbor who himself mowed 10 of our 15 miles of trails.

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All winter long Nature Walks will be held again (as last year) when requested by groups. In the past, groups have come from Head Start, Kindergartens, Schools, Colleges and Clubs. Has anyone ever brought a Senior Citizens Group?

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Throughout the summer Nature Classes were held weekdays teaching a total of 180 children.

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On Wednesday evenings films were shown in the barn, mostly Walt Disney color films of animals.

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Constantly people bring injured animals to the barn. Often nothing can be done for the little creatures, but happily a number are returned to health and freedom. Our hawk, having lost a wing, will be with us all his life. Racquelle Raccoon was a tiny ball of fluff once upon a spring day. Throughout the summer she has grown so her cage door is left open. In time she will gain confidence enough to leave us. As did a Lady Skunk; we were so hoping she'd leave before having her babies, and she did!

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The wounded one who rung our hearts the most was a fawn, injured on a wire fence on Prudence Island. He received most tender care, but gangrene set in and His Graceful Shyness was mercifully put away. The tanned faces at The Barn were white with sorrow that day.

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✓
april + Oct
annually
on
Wed
for 6

In back of The Barn is a plowed area. It is a demonstration of "Contour Plowing" — the proper type of plowing to aid in conservation of top soil and strip cropping. How nice it would be if farmers and nurserymen learned this way of plowing.

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✓ The Barn is really a charming Museum now. The center attraction is "The Forest Floor," an exhibit showing many of the forest's living plants, fungi; and even a toad living happily under his stump, until one day he hopped down and out the door.

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✓ The woodcock colony flourishes. Eleven years ago six couples started the colony and now we have 15 nesting pairs as year round residents. No luck with quail of 60 eggs only 3 hatched and died. Next year we'll try again with chicks instead of eggs.

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✓ The late Senator Flanders of Vermont wrote a book on gardening. He dedicated it to rabbits "in the hope that flattery will succeed where traps and guns have failed." Flattery doesn't work either — rabbits ate all the lady-slippers, blood wort etc. so optimistically planted. Rabbits do not like trillium but they do like trailing arbutus.

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✓ Speaking of rabbits; pet rabbits, hamsters and cats cannot survive, on their own, in the Sanctuary — they should be given to a Pet Shop for re-sale (or to the Potter League) or to a neighbor. Such pets, sheltered all their lives, are Instant Dinners for foxes. Cats die of starvation in the snows of winter.

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✓ The First Annual Cocktail Party was held in The Barn, September 27. The contributions help with the budget. Cocktail parties in Barns are not usual affairs and the setting helped make our party outstanding. But mostly it was the people. What a gathering of interesting personalities — not a dud among them! Good food, good drink, good conversation. If you missed it, well, your loss. Don't deprive yourself next year.

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Fall is a lovely time in the Sanctuary but how about winter? Come out sometime in your snow boots after a storm and see how good you are at identifying tracks in the snow.

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We had a mountain climbing buff practicing his climbs on the west face of Hanging Rock. Fun to see him swinging "doing his thing" up there.

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The college students who laboured to the top of the rock and painted a peace symbol thereon, were caught. Instead of paying a fine, they had to come back and remove the paint. Seems to be much harder to scrape paint off than to spray it on! Did this mark the end of a spray paint era, or are we speaking too soon?

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Three college students were hired, innumerable neighborhood youths (not hired) and 13 adult volunteers did noble duty all summer long. They did patrolling, teaching, cleaning up, teaching, clearing paths, teaching, weeding, feeding and teaching; washing oil-doused ducks, teaching; splinting wings and legs and teaching; banding birds and teaching; answering telephones, questions and teaching; and rounding up the strays at closing time each day. With their help the Sanctuary ran, (the lawn mowers ran, the pump ran, the water heater ran, the refrigerator ran, the programs ran, the movies ran - even the brook ran) in an organized fashion.

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Vandals seem to be upon us all. The beautiful sign on the road indicating the entrance was stolen. Two pairs of binoculars and a movie camera were stolen - expensive items to replace. The new arrangement of fences around The Barn seems to control the traffic flow a lot better. The mothers of the countryside are learning the Sanctuary is not -- repeat is NOT -- a built in baby sitting service.

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O, how we need members. If we had a lovely list of members we could, perhaps, keep The Barn open all year for classes. As it is now we have one tiny room warmed. We could have our own tractor. We could have our own well, we could --- yes, we could. We could increase our effectiveness in the schools, colleges and in our community, if we had more members.

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Please watch channel 36 on T.V. Tuesdays at 8 a.m. or 3 or 7 p.m. "The Norman Bird Sanctuary Presents" (along with Salve Regina College) a course on human ecology.

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The 4H Clubs meet at The Barn on Saturdays. They had a contest last summer with prizes going to the most imaginative creation made of roadside litter. After the contest the litter was taken to the dump.

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It is not everyday that one of our young helpers becomes an Eagle Scout, so we broke precedent and allowed him and 3 friends to "sleep-in" at the Sanctuary the night after the Honour Court was held. It was a big affair.

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The Beekeepers Association have twice chosen the Sanctuary as their place to meet. Their gift to us - a beehive - was wrecked by vandals - hope they got stung.

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As we are growing and growing we are trying to obtain a grant from some foundation. So many things, large and small, need doing. The dam must be repaired before spring. Our ponds are too public for duck resting so we must arrange one more remote. We must plant more seed for birds - last winter a small flock of Canadian geese spent the season here (we had a corn field for them.) To plant we need a tractor. The Barn must be insulated and heated, so we can teach and teach. Then teach some more.

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"The Norman Bird" may fly again one day. It is not a weekly or a monthly newsletter. It's printing was a gift from a friend, mailing a gift from another, to you (our friend,) so you may know a bit more about the activities of The Norman Bird Sanctuary.