



# The Norman Bird Flyer

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 3 NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY, THIRD BEACH ROAD, MIDDLETOWN, RHODE ISLAND 02840 PHONE 401-846-2577 \*

## MUSEUM

- CONCEPT--1: Something conceived in the mind; thought, notion
- 2: An abstract idea generalized from particular instances
- DESIGN --1: A mental project or scheme in which means to an end are laid down

With a Concept Design now completed by a group of volunteers, staff, and museum designer, the Sanctuary barn is one step closer to being the home of a modest trailside museum.

What's in store for the interested island resident or visitor who comes to the museum? Here are some of the simple guidelines the museum committee formulated for museum development.

The museum will augment the visitor's experience of the trails and not become the primary focus of Sanctuary operations. The message to members and visitors will continue to be the importance of this preserve and others like it to the quality of life on the island, as well as to the health and stability of our island's natural systems.

Barn displays will focus on the special qualities and natural resources of the refuge. Visitors will discover in the museum what can in turn be uncovered in the refuge. Pursuing some of our local natural mysteries in turn opens up the whole world of wonders to the curious.

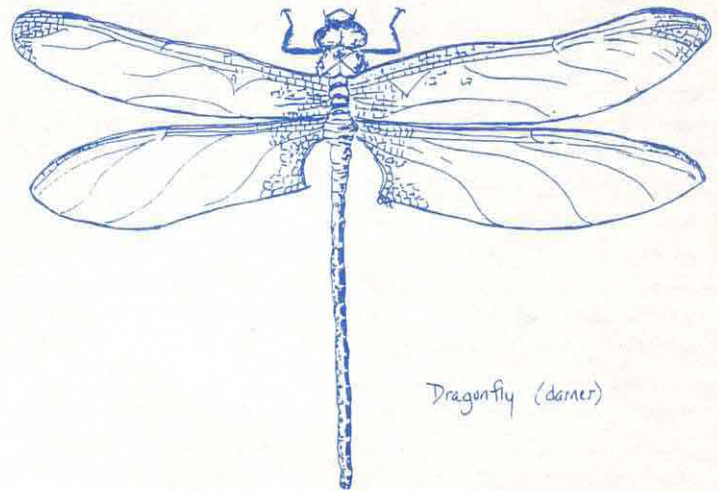
Museum displays will be designed to accommodate our educational programming. The museum, through the artifact storage areas it will provide, gives the Sanctuary staff the opportunity to better physically organize teaching aids and supplemental materials for improved quality of programming and outreach.

The feeling and flavor of the 18th century barn will not be compromised and displays will reflect the simplicity and earthiness of the Sanctuary. The barn, at this juncture, will not be insulated for winter use, partitioned, or altered in any way that would detract from its open-barn feeling.

Planning calls for the ground floor of the museum to remain relatively open and unchanged.

## SUMMER, 1983

A visitor reception area and small museum store, i.e., counters and shelves for selling field guides, bird feeders, seed, and the famous Sanctuary tee-shirts will be built into the front east corner. The east side of the ground floor will be used as a gallery for changing displays of wildlife and local naturalist art, including sculptures and carvings. The barn's center will become the visitors' orientation to the refuge, a sense of its place on the island and in the region; a sense of its historical context, reason for being; and a sense of it from the natural history perspective. Murals, a 3-D central topography map showing crags and low places, habitats, and trails of the refuge, along with murals, photo collages, maps, and aerial photos will be incorporated here.



Dragonfly (damselfly)

Up the stairway, which, in the plans is reversed to rise toward the windows on the south end of the barn, the visitor will enter the display areas. A bridge across the two sides of the upper level at the south end will enable one to walk around the entire upstairs without having to backtrack through display areas.

The display areas themselves will be organized by habitats. Six display areas, corresponding to six habitats, are arranged in the order that the visitor walking down the main



# Museum, cont.

trail will view them. A recurrent theme will be the birdlife found in each habitat, but there's more to discover than birds in the refuge! Seasonal changes in the habitats, the history of land use at the refuge and plant communities and succession are themes which will surface throughout the display areas.

Each display will have an assemblage of countertop cupboard spaces for revolving hands-on displays and artifacts, teaching aid storage, glass cases and wall space for displays. Above each area, a mural will depict the characteristics of each habitat. The mural will continue the circumference of the barn.

What sorts of displays are planned? Probably the best way to answer this question is to ask some questions which you might ask yourself on an imaginary walk through the Sanctuary.

Your walk begins in open fields which have been continuously farmed for well over 200 years. Native Americans farmed this land long before that. What did the land look like? How was the land kept open when Indians farmed it? What crops did they grow, and what animals did these open fields encourage? How were animals hunted?

In July, we might see fox, rabbit or perhaps a meadow mouse. Overhead is a hovering Kestrel. How does energy flow through this web of interrelationships? In these hot and sunny fields, Dogbane, milkweed, and St. Johnswort are blooming, and so are our native pasture roses and some of the cultivated varieties gone wild. In July, we will certainly hear a Song Sparrow; if we are really lucky, perhaps a Black-billed Cuckoo or a Meadowlark. Where do these creatures make their nests? The field edges seem to attract lots of birds. Besides creating field edges, can farm practices benefit wildlife populations?

The field grasses and daisies are bent over in the July heat, but above them and throughout them are the motions of insects at work. Fields are the factories of food production in terrestrial ecosystems. What are some of the specific relationships occurring between insects and plants? Deaths of plants and animals in the field return nutrients stored in living tissues to the soil where the cycle begins again.

Interpretive display of these field areas will most likely begin with information on Native Americans, the original perpetrators of openings in the forest. The overhead mural in this unit depicts a landscape typical of that time in history. Displays

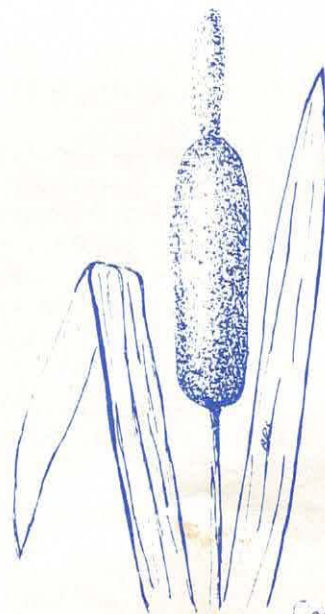
of Native American farming and fishing implements, perhaps on a shelf, provide the opportunity to grind corn or string wampum the way the Indians used to do it. The Sanctuary has been the site of past archaeological digs. Several large shell middens can still be found. Moving closer to the present time, antique farm tool displays are planned.

A common bird display, featuring the Song Sparrow, will teach people how to recognize this ubiquitous and boisterous bird of field and hedges. A time line of land use, a look at plant succession, herbarium sheets of the grasses, and illustrated keys to the common flowers and shrubs of field areas will be incorporated. Models of meadow mouse tunnels and an observation bee hive with other live insect zoo specimens are all planned for this section.

From the open fields interpretive area, the visitor moves into shrubby old fields, a predominant habitat type at the refuge, characterized by juniper and black cherry trees, blueberries and arrowwood viburnum. Each habitat has its own stories. The museum will make an effort to tell some of the stories, whether it be through graphics, touchable specimens, games or active participation.

The goal of this museum is to motivate the visitor to get out on the trails, enjoy the sights, sounds, smells, and wonders of the natural world, and perhaps to encourage the visitor to look a little deeper at the relationships found in nature from the perspective of man as a part of and not apart from Nature.

The next stages of museum development are fundraising and display design due to get underway this fall. The barn could see some display construction activity by the time the swallows return in the spring.



Cattail



# DIRECTORS' NOTES

Mabel Davenport has made it a point to know her places. Mabel is an incurable note-taker who has been writing about her places for a long time. During the Bird Sanctuary's formative years, Mabel was active recording observations of the first official walks of the naturalist. She found herself throughout the fifties documenting the daily comings and goings of birds around her Jamestown home, where Osprey and the American Elm, a preferred nesting habitat of the Jamestown Osprey were declining together. Mabel took notes on summer bloomings, grasshopper sparrows, and just about everything that hopped, flew, or just grew. Five stacks of her notes on the Purple Martin are a valuable resource waiting for vigorous future inspection.

Mabel now lives in Providence. Her real place there is a narrow strip of greenery between I-95 and a concrete parking lot behind the apartment building. The Moshassuck River flows through it. A dozen mallards float on that river. Grackles, mourning doves, swallows and robins nest in the shrubbery there. Plenty of grasses, wild flowers, and some of the exotic things the public works departments plant in cities to hold the soil down, grow in that place along the river with trees like weeping willow and Tree-of-Heaven.

"Tallish Hawkweed some with 6 plus flowers terminally, 8 plus flowers of Tragapogon . . . . oxeye daisies, curved cement wall crawling with tiny red spiders: is even the blood red? Five ran over my notebook. I moved and there were others: a small striped spider traces a path through them, stops, but when a red one approaches, moves away. Campion, at peak of bloom, 2½ foot tall onion chive-like bud. Frog hopper spittle."

Mabel shows us there's much more to our place than initially meets the combined senses. In her notes, she signs out a connection with the natural world and continues to renew it.



Mabel Davenport discusses tree characteristics.

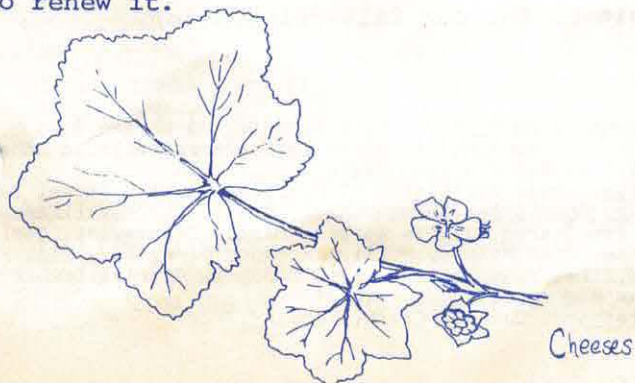
## RETURN of the CORPS

Everyone's heard of the good work done by the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) during the 30's depression. Sea walls, dikes, forests, and roadways still attest to the power of these labor-intensive work forces.

The Youth Conservation Corps of the 70's had similar aims: put youth to work in refuges, forests, beaches, and along the roadsides to make life better in a thousand small but important ways.

Thanks to the Fuller Foundation, New Visions of Newport County, the Newport Rotary and Lions Clubs, Aquidneck Island Ecology, and private individuals, the refuge has a similar student work force this summer. These teens are repairing eroded trails, cutting brush, building stone walls, and improving wildlife habitat.

Supervisor Ed Jalbert, a forestry graduate from the University of New Hampshire, is hopeful the kids will go away with more than a few dollars in their pockets. He hopes to impart knowledge of their environment, as well as a respect for a job well done.







Summer Challenge - Kara Laughlin and Polly Wessick share a poem in their homemade hammocks.

## CAMP DISCOVERIES

Nature Day Camp has returned for the month of July and August, bringing together a staff of six teacher/naturalists and 60 excited, exciting children per week for nature games, singing, and trail investigations. Last week's K's investigated the beehives, spider webs, and learned to sneak up on the orchard's resident catbird. The fifth graders constructed plankton nets and took a trip to the Estuary for plankton seining. Wild Edible Feast Day ends this week's camp activities.

Summer Challenge is more a challenge to the staff than to the campers at times! Thirteen and fourteen year olds are difficult to keep up with. Based on Nature Day Camp, expanded to meet the needs of this age group, Summer Challenge offers an array of natural history activities, crafts, hikes, and the opportunity to make hammocks, packs, tarps, and cooking equipment necessary for comfortable living outdoors. This session's 15 participants are getting ready for a five-day stint on Prudence Island.

The little challenges, says staff member Matt Nicholson, such as twisting a wire properly to make a live-trap for mice, are often more dramatic than the big ones, like scaling the side of Hanging Rock during a rock climb.

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Secretary/Receptionist The Sanctuary is looking for a qualified person to fill the position of secretary/receptionist for 10 hours per week. The job will involve greeting and registering Sanctuary visitors, answering the telephone and providing basic information, processing memberships, assisting in mailings, typing and other office chores. Applicants should have typing skills and an interest in and enthusiasm for natural history. Starting wage is \$3.50 per hour. Call the Sanctuary for more information.

Harvest Fair Workers Here's a chance to pitch in and be a part of this annual fest and fundraiser so important to the future programs of the Sanctuary. Volunteers are needed in the food tent, at the gates, in the game booths, in the country store, helping with set-up and clean-up, beer and cold drink serving, balloon selling, parking, and more. Adults and teens over 14 are welcome. There's something for everyone at the Harvest Fair. Call Chris Callahan at 849-6631 and sign up now!

## HARVEST FAIR

Do you have a prize winning vegetable growing in your garden? Is that funny-looking tomato the weirdest of them all? Save those cornstalks--create a scarecrow with family. The Harvest Fair is coming! Perhaps you will consider our Country Store for a donation when you're "putting up" your jams, jellies, and pickles.

Set aside time on October 1 and 2 to join us for our fall celebration.

The Norman Bird Flyer is published by the Norman Bird Sanctuary, a non-profit nature preserve established under the will of Mabel Norman Cerio.  
Trustees: Louis Lorillard, RI Hospital Trust National Bank.  
Advisory Committee: Norman Hall - Chair, Patty Vaillancourt, Happy Van Beuren, George Warren, Barbie Sturtevant, Chris Callahan, Fran Holmes, William Horton, Ginny Laughlin, Harri Phelps, Peter Randall, Barry J. Murphy, Charles, E. Levy, William Rogers, Ginny Purviance  
Co-Directors: Deborah Clark, Timothy Traver



## Norman Bird Sanctuary Events



**SUNDAY MORNING STROLLS:** These weekly walks last about an hour. Bring your field guides and your full senses for this general morning stroll. Dates: Every Sunday. Time: 8:00 am Fee: Free. Guides: Sanctuary staff.

**STAR WALK:** Lecture and walk. Shooting stars, planets, and constellations are visible on a clear night in August. Date: August 3 Time: 8:30 pm Fee: \$2.50 adult, \$1.00 members and children Star Guide: Delia Clark.

**EVENING BIRDS:** Walk. Bring binoculars and sensitive ears for this casual stroll out to Hanging Rock in search of signs, sights, and sounds of bird life. Date August 10 Time: 7:00 pm Fee: \$2.50 adult, \$1.00 members and children. Leader: Pattie O'Neal.

**SALT MARSH AND SHORE:** Walk. Take an evening stroll through the salt marsh and along the shore with experienced interpreters. Wear old shoes. Date: August 23 Time: 7:00 pm Fee: \$2.50 adult, \$1.00 members and children Leaders: Becky Brady and Debbie Smith.

**HERBS AND HERBALISM:** In four parts. Herbalist Hap Morgan will introduce participants to the history and study of herbalism. Course will include: Part 1) Introduction to the study of herbs, formulas and recipes Part 2) Herb Walk, field identification, harvesting and storage of herbs Part 3) Making herbal medicines: salves, tinctures, infusion linaments Part 4) Herb Walk II, review, field identification. Dates: August 2, 4, 9, and 16. Time: 6:00 - 8:00pm Cost: \$20 non-members, or \$5 per class. \$15 members, or \$4 per class.

**CONTRADANCE:** Labor Day folk dancing in the Sanctuary barn. Beginners welcomed. Caller Bob Walser with dance musicians. Date: September 2 Time: 8:00 - 11:00 pm. Cost: \$2.50 members, \$3.00 non-members. Pot-luck dinner beforehand in the barn for those interested, 6:00pm.

**FALCONRY:** Lecture. The Newport Garden Club presents Mr. Dick Lucius, Master Falconer for over 30 years and experienced lecturer. Lucius will speak on the history of falconry and the group of birds known as birds of prey. Live trained raptors, including a Golden Eagle, will be shown. Date: September 21 Time: 1:00 Free Admission

**AQUIDNECK ISLAND HARVEST FAIR:** This is the fair you've been waiting for! Crafts, foods, drink, games, clowns, garden competitions, flea market, music, lamb roast, animal exhibits, fresh cider press, magician, and more Fun? You bet! Proceeds go to Sanctuary operations. Dates: October 1 &



# KNOWING THE PLACE

Test Your Environmental IQ (From Co-Evolution Quarterly)

Here are a few questions to test your perception of place, "Environmental Perception of place," that is. Take your time. Cheat all you want.

1. Trace the water you drink from precipitation to tap.
2. How many days til the moon is full?
3. What soil series are you standing on?
4. What was the total rainfall in your area last year?
5. When was the last time a fire burned your area?
6. What were the primary subsistence techniques of the culture that lived in your area before you?
7. Name five native edible plants in your region--and when they're available.
8. From what direction do winter storms generally come in your region?
9. Where does your garbage go?
10. How long is the growing season where you live?
11. On what day of the year are the shadows shortest where you live?
12. When do the raccoons mate in your area, and when are the young born?
13. Name five grasses in your area. Are any native?
14. Name five residential and five migratory birds in your area.
15. What is the land use history where you live?
16. What primary geological event/process influenced the land where you live?  
What's the evidence?
17. What species have become extinct in your area?
18. What are the major plant associations in your region?
19. From where you're reading this, point North.
20. What spring wildflowers are among the first to bloom where you live?

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Scoring: 0-3 You are blind as a fruit bat  
4-7 It's hard to be in two places at once when you're not anywhere at all  
8-12 A firm grasp of the obvious  
13-16 You're paying attention  
17-19 You know where you're at!  
20 You not only know where you're at, you know where it's at

Questions made up by Leonard Charles, Jim Doddge, Lynn Milliman, Victoria Stockley

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