

## Wildcrafting with Herbs

## Summer 1988

The Summer Solstice arrives and with it comes visions of hot sunny days at the beach, cool summer drinks and evenings spent outdoors enjoying the pleasures of nature. For me and other lovers of nature, Summer also means the blossoming of many wildflowers and wild medicinals and edible plants that begin to lure me into the forest and fields.

Gathering plants for medicine and food is an ancient art that has its "roots" leading back to the dawn of humankind. The art of gathering plants is called "Wildcrafting". Every culture has known this art, though with the coming of agribusiness and grocery stores the needed skill seems to have withered like so many lawns on a hot summer day.

The French celebrate St. John's Day on June 24th and traditionally, this is the day St. Johnswort blooms. This is also the time I begin my search in earnest for the bounties of Mother Nature. Here are a few of the many, many herbs to be used as simple home remedies or to enhance your variety of foods.

Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*) is quite distinctive once you've learned to identify it. The tender green leaves are divided onto threes, the leaflets being ovate. The bright red or pinkish red flowers are globular heads. The stems and leaves are covered with whitish hairs. Red Clover is found in abundance at the Norman Bird Sanctuary, in open fields and along woodland edges. It blooms from June through September. Gather it in full bloom collecting the flower heads and leaves. Used fresh, Red Clover is a tasty addition to a salad or mixed with peppermint, for a useful and pleasant tasting tea. This is an excellent herb to use for children as

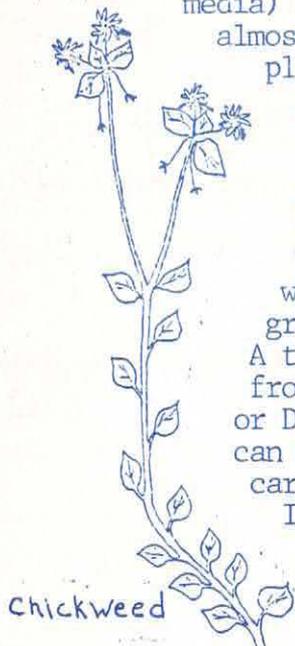
it has gentle acting alterative properties. A strong tea blended with lots of honey also makes a good cough syrup.



We know Spring has arrived when green lawns, sidewalk cracks and city lots are covered with this bright yellow and cheery flower. Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) has been used as food and medicine for many centuries. The basal rosette leaves are lobed, almost like teeth. The name dandelion comes from the French "Tooth of the Lion". The hollow stem contains a white milky latex. The flower, a bright yellow, will form a white puffball when it goes to seed. Dandelion blooms from March through November and I've even seen it flowering on mild December days. The parts to use are the taproot, leaves and flowers. Dandelion is a good tonic and diuretic and is said to help with digestion and aiding the liver.

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The little plant Chickweed (*Stellaria media*) can be found growing almost all year in moist waste places, gardens, fields and roadsides. Only when the extreme cold comes will Chickweed become dormant and then become active again as early as March. The long stem is fleshy with tiny ovate leaves growing opposite each other. A tiny white flower blooms from March through November or December. The entire herb can be used as a laxative, caminative and demulcent.



Chickweed

It works wonders in a salve for any type of skin problems. Chickweed can be eaten cooked or fresh in a salad.

Jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) is a very easy plant to identify and a useful plant to know. Also called "touch-me-not" the flowers are orange, yellow and spotted with red and brown. The flowers are irregular, have a spur and hang from a tall succulent stem. The leaves are oval or egg-shaped and are toothed. The plant grows tall, two to five feet and likes moist shady areas. It will bloom from June - September. The entire herb can be used as an astringent in treating anything from mosquito bites to poison ivy. I'd recommend only using it externally as a wash by breaking the juicy stem and rubbing it directly on the itchy area.

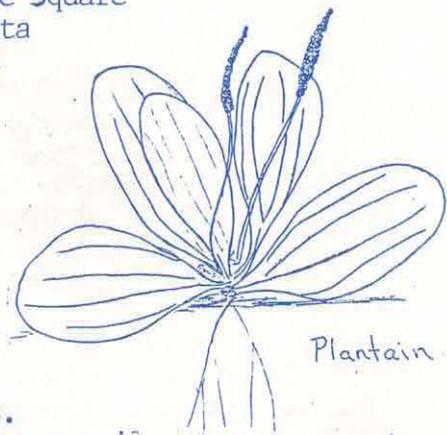
Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), is a sight to behold. This tall, spirit-like plant grows throughout the Island. The flowers, a pleasing yellow, grow on a large terminal spike. The alternating leaves are thick and wooly being covered with a coat of white hairs. They grow six to eight inches at the base and are rosette. Mullein grows from two to six feet and blooms from June through September. The leaves and flowers are demulcent, anodyne, diuretic and expectorant and can be used for inflammation, as a poultice for wounds. As a tea, it helps to eliminate coughs and congestion.

Probably my favorite herb because of its simple beauty and its many uses is Yarrow. (*Achillea millefolium*). Yarrow has a downy erect stem which gives way to clusters of white flowers, tiny and five petaled. The leaves are deeply dissected and are feathery or fern-like in appearance. Yarrow grows most everywhere. Fields, roadsides, pas-

tures and woodland edges are a likely habitat. It grows from one to three feet and blooms June through September. The stems, leaves and flowers are used as a styptic, tonic, diaphoretic, stimulant and astringent. Yarrow can be used for breaking fevers, relieving cramping of the uterus and bowels. Its astringent properties help to stop bleeding if used as a fomentation or infusion. Yarrow has stimulating qualities and is good for warming up prior to exercise. Taken on a regular basis with other herbs it is a good general tonic. The dry powdered leaves can be put on wounds to stop bleeding.

Found along woodland edges, the wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*) is not often forgotten, once the flowers are seen. The leaves are distinctive being somewhat toothed, more so sharply lobed and palmate. They are hairy, deeply veined and a light green. The flowers are red, pink or white, regular with five petals. The deep red of the dying flower is stunning. A fruit appears composed mainly of the carpel. Geranium blooms from April through June and grows one to two feet. The root and leaves are used as an astringent, tonic and styptic. The Native Americans say geranium is the most astringent plant and is used for dysentery, diarrhea, open wounds and bleeding gums. It should be harvested before it blooms.

Plantain (*Plantago major*) or (*Plantago lanceolata*) is called "White mans foot" by the Native Americans. The plant has spread across the continent along with the arrival of the European settlers. The spade shaped leaves of *P. major* or lance shaped leaves *P. lanceolata* are basal and are deeply ribbed. The flower stalks are square on *P. lanceolata* and at the top a short spike of tiny white flowers forms. The *P. major* has broad leaves that are ovate and a flower stalk that has clusters of green flowers.



Plantain

They like almost any soil conditions and will be found here at the Sanctuary and in driveways in some places. The entire plant is used as an astringent, expectorant, and demulcent. It is good for cuts, insect bites and rashes. As a tea, it helps clear congestion from the lungs, sinus, and nasal cavities.

### Community Tours

- Over 300 individuals from Girl Scouts, a Retirement Center, a Day Care Center facility, and YMCA participated in walking tours the Sanctuary. Wildlife badges were earned by approximately 86 Girl Scouts.

### Public Programs

- Approximately 727 adults participated in public programs offered throughout the year, including, bird identification classes, pot pourri making, winter tree identification, cross country skiing workshop, holiday wreathmaking, a fall foliage walk, maple sugaring demonstration, an herbs and natural healing class, a geology walk, a whale watch, and a beachcombing walk among others. The programs were enhanced by the recruitment of community professionals from Manomet Bird Observatory, Mass Audubon, DEM and Hill Top Gardens. Volunteer Teachers included Bill O'Connell, Anne Truslow MacIntosh, Joycelyn Sheman, Dr. Roger Goos, Anne Garnet, and Julie Morris.

### Children's Programs

- The Sanctuary continued to offer its Saturday morning Nature Club and Wednesday Afternoon Preschoolers with Parents Nature Club. Also, special events including holiday crafts, a Halloween party, an Easter Egg Hunt, and school vacation weeks were offered. Explorer's club for children in grades 5-7 was cancelled due to lack of registrants. Over 200 children participated in these programs.

### Summer Camps

- 378 children came to summer camp this year. The camps offered included Nature Day Camp, Preschoolers with Parents and Summer Challenge. During the summer months, five Teacher/Naturalists and four Junior Teacher/Naturalists were employed.

### Volunteers

- St George's has continued its volunteer student program with three students in the Fall helping the Sanctuary with the Harvest Fair, and trail and grounds maintenance

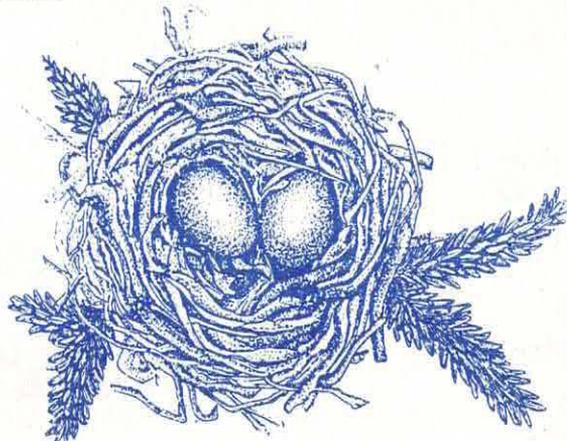
- SMU illustration students in Bob Barry's class volunteered graphic work for the Norman Bird Flyer, and future publications.

- The bulk of volunteer effort came from work needed for Birds and Breakfast and the Harvest Fair. An estimated

300 volunteers donated weekend hours, baked goods, professional services and organizational talents. Other volunteer projects included gardening, public program teaching, trail maintenance, stone-wall building, layout and artwork, animal care and bird house construction.

### Miscellaneous

- The staff attended the New England Environmental Education Alliance Conference, the Lincoln Filene Center Environmental Conference, and Rhode Island Environmental Educators Association Conference.



## **SPONSOR A CHILD**

"A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. We should preserve a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last a lifetime".

These words, by Rachel Carson, capture the hope of introducing a child to nature camp who would otherwise not have the opportunity to go. Because of the generosity of our members, eighteen children will benefit from a week of Nature Day Camp or Summer Challenge. These children, chosen based on need by Child and Family Services, the Jamestown School, Project Head Start, and the Gaudet Middle School will participate in hiking, exploration, noncompetitive games, nature sing-alongs, group problem solving activities, and honest to goodness natural outdoor fun! We extend our thanks to those of you who were able to help with a donation, and we hope the week of camp helps to preserve "the sense of wonder".

# Public Programs

Every Sunday  
8:00 a.m.

SUNDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS Ready for some early morning "eggs"-citement?. Wake up and join NBS Director, Larry Taft for our 8:00 a.m. BIRD WALKS. Birdwatchers of all levels are invited. Pre-registration is not required. No Fee.

Thursday Eves.  
July 14 9 p.m.  
Aug. 11 8 p.m.  
Sept. 8 8 p.m.

STAR GAZING Shooting stars, planets, and constellations are visible in Summer sky on a warm clear night. Astronomer Bill O'Connell will be your guide during these informal viewings. Bring binoculars and a blanket. In case of clouds, Star Gazing will be held the next night, same time. Call to confirm. Pre-registration is not required. Free.

Wednesday Eves.  
July 20, 27  
Aug. 3, 10  
6 - 8 p.m.

HERBS AND NATURAL HEALING This four part mini course led by NBS Naturalist Hap Morgan will introduce participants to the history and study of herbalism. A field identification walk, information of the harvesting, storage, and preparation of herbal medicines, and a review will be included. Handouts will be provided. Pre-registration is required. Fee: \$16.00 (\$12.00 NBS Members)

Thursday Eve.  
July 21  
7:00 p.m.

WILD EDIBLE WALK Discover and taste some delicious edible samples from Nature. Hap Morgan will be your guide as you search the fields and forest in quest of wild edibles. Samples will be made to taste. Handouts will be provided. Pre-registration is required. Fee: \$4.00 (\$2.50 NBS Members)

Tuesday Eve.  
Aug. 2  
7:00 p.m.

BEACHCOMBER'S WALK Learn the names and fascinating life stories of all those creatures you see on the beaches. Leader, NBS Director Larry Taft, will point out shells, crabs, seaweeds, shore birds and other shore life. Families are welcome. Pre-registration is required. Fee: \$2.00 (\$1.00 NBS Members)



Sunday afternoon  
Aug. 14  
2:00 - 4:15 p.m.

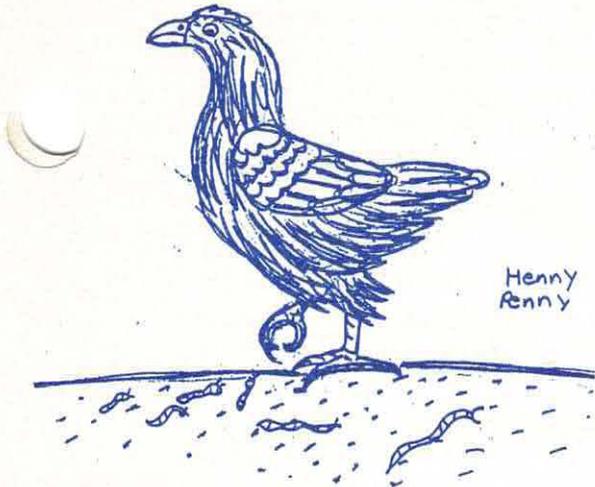
ARCHAEOLOGICAL TOUR OF THE SANCTUARY In addition to Indian shell midden that has been discovered, the Norman Bird Sanctuary has strong potential for containing other archaeological sites, including, camps, rock shelters or even a village. This program will begin with a slide lecture about the pre-history of Rhode Island. Artifacts will be on display. Following the lecture will be a tour of the property to see the midden and then on to other sites to discuss why they have so much potential. The program leader is Jordan Kerber of the Public Archaeology Laboratory. Pre-registration is required. Fee: \$10.00 (\$8.00 NBS Members) Limit 20.

Thursday Eve.  
Aug. 25  
6 - 8 p.m.

SEAWEED PRESSING Beautifully textured and colorful, seaweeds are often ignored or unseen as they wash ashore, in favor of interesting fauna also living there. Join Lisa Pritchard, NBS Education Coordinator, to learn a bit of the natural history of these wonderful plants while pressing them for collecting or framing. Participants will meet at NBS first before gathering the plants along the shore. Limit 8. Pre-registration is required. Fee: \$7.00 (\$ 5.00 NBS Members)

Sunday afternoon  
Sept. 11  
2:00 p.m.

LATE SUMMER WILDFLOWER WALK Field wildflowers are in full bloom or are going to seed as the Summer begins to fade and Autumn approaches. Field Naturalist and Roger Williams College Instructor, Millie House will guide participants along the Sanctuary trails pointing out some of our native late bloomers along the way. Millie's book, The Joy of Wildflowers will be on sale in the Sanctuary store, for those interested, before or after the walk. Pre-registration is required. Fee: \$2.00 (\$2.00 NBS Members)



Dear Henny Penny,

Yesterday, I found an orphan baby bird under the tree in my backyard. It couldn't fly so my mom and I tried to feed it bread and water. What should we do now?.

Signed

Baby bird helper and my Mom.

Dear Baby bird helper and Mom.

Its nice to know there are boys and girls, like yourself, who care so much about wild-  
! First of all, many baby birds, when are old enough and they have feathers, will jump out of their nest all by themselves. Their moms and sometimes their dads, follow them as they begin to explore their natural world. The parents will continue to feed them, teaching how to find worms and bugs. In a few days, the baby's feathers will have grown enough to be able to fly. The baby is called a "fledgling" at this stage. Unfortunately, this is the time when most cats, dogs and people find these birds. It is important to leave the babies alone at this time, even if you think you can help it. Chances are that its parents are nearby. If you have a dog or cat, try to keep it inside for a few hours. The best thing for you to do with "Your fledgling", is to return it to the tree where you found it. Its mom may be still trying to find it. (Dont worry if you have touched it. Birds don't have a good sense of smell, so the mom will still take care of it) Watch the bird from a nearby window to see what happens. Its mom will locate the baby by sight and sound.  
Good luck and Happy summer

Henny Penny

P.S. If you must care for a baby bird, try to feed it canned dog food mixed with some egg yolk on the end of a plastic straw or tooth pick. If it is hungry, it

will open up its mouth to accept the food. It's a big responsibility to care for baby birds. They need to eat every 20 minutes from sunrise to sunset! You can call the Sanctuary for more information on particular types of food for different birds.

Note: Remember boys and girls, in order to raise most songbirds, a special wild-life permit is needed. Otherwise it is illegal!

## Volunteers & Donations

- Weeders and Waterers: we need you!  
Pick a day, in the late afternoon, or early morning and help us weed or water our gardens (to your heart's content). Stop by or call, or just come on a whim if you must.
- Thank you to the following individuals who helped make Birds & Breakfast 1988 successful:

- To all the talented members who baked for the breakfast( and we failed to get all your names)
- To the local businesses and individuals who made donations or supplied us with equipment:

Bank of Newport	Dunkin Donuts
Cappucinos	Frasch Bakery
Coffee Corner	Harvest Natural Foods
Cookie Jar	Katrinass
Crystal Springs	La Patisserie
	Le Bistro
Npt. Art Association	Sheraton Islander
New School	St. George's School
Rooney Plotkin & Wiley	Sweet Treats
Sheffield & Harvey	Our Daily Bread

- To Birds & Breakfast volunteers who helped organize, serve and clean up.

Nancy Adams	Gary MacDonald
Joyce Botelho	Jeff Metz
Chris Callahan	May Morris
Hellie Casagrande	Barry & Bev. Murphy
Patti Corgan	Patti O'Neill
Ann Damon	Eugene Platt
Becky Dow	Chris & Candy Powell
Ken Gates	Marie Resz
Jan Goodland	Bernie & Fran Roeder
Jeffrey Hall	Lois & Ray Rogers
Morris Hirsch	Gay Sheffield
Fran Holmes	Mil & Jay Sullivan
Mike Iannoli	Bill Thomas
Pat & Steve Kable	Janet Thompson
C. G. King	Elizabeth Thurston
Dottie & Mark Vissman	Marjorie Ward
Sher Williams	Vici Williams

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## NBS ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 1987 - MARCH 1988

### Visitation

- 6727 visitors signed in to hike the Sanctuary trails this year. Over the past five years visitation has increased on an average of five per cent per year. Visitation was evenly distributed throughout the year. The only "slow" month was February. The figures are below

April 87	510	October	683
May	422	November	604
June	601	December	525
July	677	January 88	- 560
August	621	February	385
September	632	March	507

### Membership

- Sanctuary membership continues to grow. It reached 1186 last October. (the previous year it was 1049) Many new memberships have come from offering summer camp discounts and early registration to members.

### Contributions

- The Sanctuary received \$21,000 in contributions, \$16,000 of which came from the estate of Marion C. Carey.

### Museum

- Phase II of the museum project began thanks to a \$20,000 award from the Garden Club of America Founder's Fund. The Newport and Little Compton Garden Clubs were sponsors. Display tables and graphic panels were fabricated by Wade Associates. The staff has been working on three of the exhibit areas which are now near completion.

### Buildings and Grounds

- A number of improvements took place. New stone was put on the parking lot and

walkways, new shrubs and flowers were planted by the entrance and a portion of the stone wall along Third Beach Road was rebuilt. Restoration of the apple orchard began this year. A waterline to the animal house was put in, and a security system was installed in the barn.

### Wildlife Management

- Our wildlife management plan was updated with the help of State Forester, Paul Dolan. Four Boy Scout Troops participated in clearing brush from a cedar grove to prevent it from being destroyed through natural succession. Three students from St. George's School planted 500 white spruce trees as an understory in a Maple stand by the pond. This will serve as a wildlife cover during the winter months.

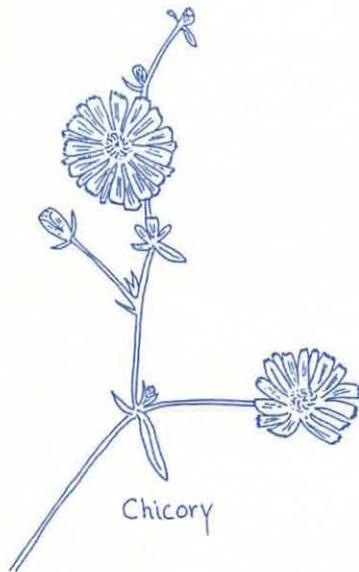
### Education

- The Sanctuary staff guided 1,416 students from Portsmouth, Middletown, Newport, Bristol, Providence, Barrington, Cranston, Warwick, Matunuck and Narragansett communities. The most popular theme for natural history walks was "Exploring Habitats", a two hour program exploring the pond, field, ridge, and forest habitats.

- Over 700 students participated in NBS In-school programs. Our "What makes a Bird, a Bird?" program being the most requested.

- Middletown's Gaudet Middle School students took part in In-school programs natural history tours. Fifth graders learned about "People and Birds" during in-class presentations. and sixth graders took part in three natural history walks throughout the year.

The Chicory flower (*Chichorium intybus*) closely resembles its cousin the dandelion except the flowers are blue and even pink or white. The leaves form a basal rosette. They are toothed, narrow and long. Branching stems hold the flowers which sometimes cluster and the main stem will often hold flowers in pairs. Chicory will bloom from May through November. The taproot reaches deep into the soil and along with its leaves is used as a blood cleanser, alterative, diuretic, cholagogue and tonic. The leaves are eaten as a salad green or steamed lightly. The root can be used as a coffee substitute by roasting first and then brewing. The plant is rich in vitamins and minerals.



These are just a few plants that can be commonly seen during a casual walk through the Bird Sanctuary or along the perimeter and throughout most of Aquidneck Island. Take the time to enjoy the pleasure of these natural wonders and continue the art of "Wildcrafting" throughout the many summers of your life.

Hap Morgan.

- \* The information provided in this article is strictly for historical purposes and is not intended to replace the services of a physician
- \* Please for ecological reasons, do not collect plants from the NBS.

Reference - Field Guide to Wildflowers  
 Roger Tory Peterson  
 - Field Guide to Wild Medicinal Plants  
 Bradford Angier  
 - The Herb Book  
 John Lust  
 - The Herbal Dinner  
 Rob Menzies

### Tree Swallow Conservation Project

This Spring, the Sanctuary began to monitor the activity around the 42 nest boxes that were donated by members to help conserve the Tree Swallow population. What was observed was some heavy competition between House Sparrows and Tree Swallows for these sites. Below is a listing of the activities observed in each box.

Boxes #1 - 40 donated by Barbara Sturtevant

Box #41 donated by the Blandino Family

Box #42 donated by the Blanchette Family

<u>Species</u>	<u>observations</u>
	B.N. Building nest
T.S. - Tree Swallow	C.N. Complete nest (no eggs or young)
H.S. - House Sparrow	P.N. Partial nest
H.W. - House Wren	Y.O. young observed
CH - Chickadee	F.Y. Adults observed feeding young

Box #	Species	Obs	-	Box #	Species	Obs.
1	T.S.	F.Y.		22	CH	B.N.
2	H.W.	C.N.		23	T.S.	F.Y.
3	T.S.	C.N.		24	T.S.	B.N.
4	T.S.	C.N.		25	-	-
5	H.S.	C.N.		26	H.S.	1 egg
6	H.S.	3 young		27	T.S.	Y.O.
7	T.S.	P.N.		28	H.S.	Y.O.
8	T.S.	C.N.		29	H.S.	P.N.
9	H.S.	3 eggs		30	H.S.	P.N.
10	H.S.	P.N.		31	H.S.	P.N.
11	H.S.	P.N.		32	H.S.	P.N.
12	T.S.	C.N.		33	H.S.	P.N.
13	T.S.	C.N.		34	H.S.	C.N.
14	T.S.	C.N.		35	-	-
15	H.S.	C.N.		36	H.S.	P.N.
16	H.S.	C.N.		37	-	-
17	H.S.	C.N.		38	T.S.	C.N.
18	T.S.	C.N.		39	T.S.	C.N.
19	T.S.	Y.O.		40	H.S.	C.N.
20	T.S.	Y.O.		41	T.S.	C.N.
21	H.W.	F.Y.		42	H.S.	C.N.

Note: Many birds build more nests than they actually use. This may explain the large number of partial or complete nests in which no further activity was observed.

If you would like to build a nesting box to donate to NBS Tree Swallow Conservation Project. Kits are available at the office for \$7.50.

The Norman Bird Flyer is published quarterly by the Norman Bird Sanctuary, a non-profit nature preserve established under the will of Mabel Norman Cerio.  
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 Director: Lawrence Taft  
 Education Coordinator: Lisa Pritchard  
 Naturalist/Caretaker: Hap Morgan  
 Secretary: Jean Ballantine  
 Norman Bird Sanctuary, 583 Third Beach Road, Middletown, R.I. 02840  
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Third Beach Road  
Middletown, Rhode Island

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OR CURRENT RESIDENT



"Volunteers and Donations" cont'd from page 3

-Thanks to our Spring Animal Caretakers:

Charles Donald, Erica King, Monique Roeder,  
Nikki Philippe, and Dr. Cates.

-Thank you to Lee Blandino (Mailings)  
Steve Hayes, Jean Smith, Mary Smith, Jan  
Hall (Gardens) St. George's students-  
Libby Nissen, Susan Andrade, Charlotte  
Gaither (Volunteer interns) Anne  
Garnet, Bill O'Connell, Sean Conway, David  
Huntley, and Chris Raithel (Public Prog-  
rams), Ray Rogers (Tree Swallow Conser-  
vation Project), and to Danielle Johnson  
for fine repair work on our wigwam.

-Harvest Fair volunteers- its almost  
here again and we're still looking for  
volunteers to help us this year. If  
you can give us a few hours either on  
the days of the fair - Oct. 1 & 2, or  
even earlier (for set up), contact Lisa  
or Larry. We depend on you!

Summer Needs

- Portable Blackboard
- a bird bath
- stale breads, cereals & grains  
for animals.

ARE YOU DUE TO RENEW ?

Your NBS membership renewal date is printed below your address on the mailing label. If you're due to renew, please use the form below and send it along with your renewal check. If you have recently renewed, please accept our thanks. We appreciate your continued support.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

NEW MEMBER  RENEWAL

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$15.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Institutional/Business	\$50.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$20.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$50.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Life	\$1000.00

In addition to my yearly membership, I would like to contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 I would like to be called for volunteer work. Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
All contributions are tax deductible when made out to:

Norman Bird Sanctuary  
Third Beach Road  
Middletown, Rhode Island 02840

