

Hi! Too bad that there was no snow for Christmas, but there were five hen pheasants and evening gros beaks. There were signs along the Woodcock Trail that those long billed flakey birds had feasted on The Day. Overhead a big Barn Owl scared hikers and dogs alike. It may very well be true that owls gave rise to tales of ghoulies and ghosties, so silently they fly. If you were coming home from the corner pub in the dusk, and an owl skimmed passed you, would you not swear that it was a headless horror? Speaking of owls, Hooter slipped her leash Dec. 18. On Christmas Eve she was found far down 3rd Beach Rd., in a "skin and feathers" condition. Despite the almost starved condition, she was not pleased at being caught. She can walk, hop and flap a few feet. Not enough, Hooter, to catch a mouse! Amid hisses and beak clatter, she was taken home and given a fresh chicken neck (by way of "Welcome Home" and "Merry Christmas"). Sweet Cicely, the other owl, had a wee fling with freedom too--very wee. When the snow did come, it was evident that the Sanct. is home for thousands of rabbits, or for a few very nervous ones! Tracks were everywhere. In with the rabbit tracks was another set that was a mystery. The pads were neat and small like a fox, but broad and heavy. Every step feathered snow, so it was a short legged critter. It wandered across the trail, never into deep snow. Serious tracking and study revealed them to be the tracks of "canus familiaris" specie dachshund! As the snow melted the roofs of mice trails caved in, making life easier for predators. It is in times of deep snow, and biting cold, that one is aware of their life struggle. In Nature there is no good or evil. There is life or death. Man is the animal that is truly cruel! The domesticated cats, abandoned in the Sanctuary, can not survive the snow and cold. They die of a combination of starvation and cold, brought on by man's cruelty.

The second snow brought out the cross country skiers. Interestingly, they did not "cross country" at all. They stayed glued to the trails, like pedestrians. Gosh, skiers, why didn't you take off? Go, find the ancient sheep fold! It's out somewhere in the 450 acres. Find it! With wings on your feet, leave the trails for plodding pedestrians. With the third snow, we were all old hands at the game, which is just as well, considering what came after!

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Have you noticed, with delight, the numbers of robins that are staying the winter? Puffed up fat against the cold, they appreciate quartered apples scattered on the ground. Your green-grocer will save bruised apples for you, if you ask! Another group of fruit eaters, cat birds, are joining their mockingbird cousins in numbers, and spending the winter. And this year, cowbirds, all on the seed covered snow!

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Somewinter vignettes:

Twelve starlings screaming over a slice of bacon-fat-soaked-bread in the snow, while overhead a crested titmouse silently feds on peanut butter.

A deer, with perpendicular lines, scent-tracked in the snow by a basset, whose lines are completely horizontal.

A fox makes a kill close to the house, at noon! A miserable mouthful of starling.

A squirrel skittering across the snow on three feet. The fourth hooked through the hole of a donut, clasped to his breast.

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At 1 p.m., Jan. 31, and for 14 weeks there after, watch Channel 36 for the NBS's

program "Going Out". You'll see Hooter and all the other friends; the kids, affectionately called "The Ugliers"; our Barn, and the Sanctuary that we all do so love. The theme song was written by a member and is sung by "our kids". Rarely do we have a chance to see on TV a program as charmingly instructive as this one will be.

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The Audubon Bird Count showed us to be living on Aquidneck Island with 122 species of birds. No rare one was seen this year, altho' the annual osprey was seen. All the varieties of duck were present but low in numbers. No smew. Fox sparrows were almost common this year. Not noted on the Count Day, but banded on an off shore island was a "phainopepla". That's its name. From S.W. Mexico, blown in, no doubt, on one of our southerly storms. It is a robin-sized bird, with a long tail: crested: beak like a cedar wax wing: black (m) with red eyes. Females are grey with red eyes. If you see one you will indeed have seen a rara avis.

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The Argo Merchant will be with us for years to come as law suits wend wearily through the courts. People worried about the oil spill for many and varied & valid reasons. No one reported on the hump back whales in migration east of Nantucket, or on the grey seals that were breeding there. The first oil soaked bird brought to the Sanct. was a kittiwake. But it is almost hopeless. Even if they should survive ingested oil, they must be kept in captivity for 3-6 months, until their own oil returns.

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If you saw the Rose Bowl Parade on Telly, you saw a float decorated by Monarch Butterflies. Until this year it has been a mystery as to where live ones find a breeding ground. They simply disappeared in Mexico on their southward migration. The grounds have been found and they are 30 miles N.W. of Acapulco. There they start the cycle that will result in a mass migration of their descendents north to the tundra. In the cold and snow, it is nice to think of butterflies in the sun! Particularly when the news tells that thousands of birds that went to southern N.J. to winter have died of starvation in snow covered, frozen marshes. And we are only one fourth into the winter season!

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The lab-raised peregrin falcons have been taught (how?) to migrate east-west. When they migrate North to South in the time honoured way, they fly over and winter in countries that use enormous amounts of DDT. As they also use unnumbered other insecticides, all foods imported should be thoroughly washed before they are served.

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Of the 20,000 chemicals in use today less than 6000 have been tested for their safety. Science, technology, things we all stood in awe of, have turned from Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde. So many things that seemed nice enough are turning out to be horrid. Asbestos, such a nice fire retardant! It seemed right, after we had used so much of our own oil in fighting World War Two, to be able to import oil from other countries, but how about having 30 million gallons riding in one tanker?

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From time to time Consumers Report comes up with a goodie. Do you feel you are using an economically priced dish washing detergent? You can test it. One teaspoonful of a quality washer will cope well with an ordinary pan full of dishes greasy and all. If your soap does not, buy a better quality next time, and use one teaspoonful at a time and save! Soap makers want us to use their soap!-up!

Blount Marine Corp. is going ahead with an oyster harvesting experiment on Prudence Isl. They'll dredge a salt pond and bury a conduit to increase water flow. They'll use a grid system on which the oysters will grow suspended off the bottom--it can be hauled up for harvesting. Coastal Resources finds no negative changes will take place. The biological and hydrological aspects of the marsh will remain intact. Blount expects many seed oysters will flow away, to settle and grow in other coves and inlets. If you are fortunate enough to find one, guard and tend it carefully. Oyster stew used to be a common item in R.I. dining rooms. Maybe it will be again.

Oyster Stew--- $\frac{1}{4}$ pint for 2 people. Heat 2 cups whole milk, add salt, white pepper and a lump of butter. Stir to the edge of boil. Add oysters and serve. If you do not worry about the three Cs--cholesterol, calories and cost--make half that milk, cream!

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Some call it "White Horse Power" or Tide, Wave or Water Power, whatever. Salt water tides are being used in France (Brittany and Mt. San Michel) to generate electricity. England has explored the idea and finds it positively feasible. What's the matter with us? Do we ever hear a public official even mention it? North of us is the Passamaquoddy region of Maine where the tides are 18 feet high! Just think of the potential for endless power! The generators in use in France are concrete submarine type boxes. Cost? One hundred of them costs the same as one nuclear power plant. No hot residue, no fear of explosions, no burn outs, no hot sites to last hot 250,000 years. A few fish might be inconvenienced, but these generators do not suck water in as nuclear plants do, nor do they expell hot water! What's the matter with US?

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A doctor recently made headlines by saying that tea causes cancer! Visions of billions of people in China, India, Russia, England, early ancestors, who did not topple over from drinking tea, spring to mind! Well made tea is a darned good substitute of coffee if it is made correctly. Granted American blends are awfully bland! Invest in imported tea, and make it right. Boiling water on the tea, steep it 7 minutes. It may cost you all of .03¢ a cup. Coffee is now \$3.00 a pound--that's about a week's coffee for two. For .42¢ you can do the same with tea. Tea and coffee, pound for pound contain the same amount of caffeine. The difference lies in the amount used. A tablespoon per cup for coffee--a teaspoonful per cup for tea. If you have chlorinated water, draw it a day before and let the gas escape, for better tea flavour.

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It's not the mountains that we must climb that wear us down. It is the pebble in the shoe.

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There are four things we can do with our hands. We can wring them. We can fold them in our laps; we can clench them in anger; we can stretch them out to some one in distress.

WANTED: A responsible person with business background and own transportation to manage the Sanctuary's Book and Nature Shop. Position would include ordering, buying, maintaining all records and inventory and managing volunteer help. Salary based on percentage of sales. Send letters of inquiry or resumes to

Susan Brayton

426 Paradise Ave, Middletown, R.I. 02840

WANTED YOU! At the Annual BIRD BALL At the elegant Glen Manor House
Portsmouth, R.I.

Featuring an excellent all you can eat Buffet 8:00 PM

A Happy Hour warm up from 7:00 to 8:00 PM

Dancing from 9:00 til the wee hours of 1:00 AM

All of this takes place March 26, 1977 and for only

\$25.00 per couple Stop what ever you are doing

and put this down on your calendar now.

This Spring we have one of the most ambitious school programs in
some years. We need people who would like to take small groups
of school children on interesting and enjoyable nature walks
on either school day mornings or afternoons. Mornings are the
most important. If you would like to volunteer for this activity
run back to your calendar and mark these dates: March 15, 16, 17.

10:30 AM. On those dates I will meet with you at the Sanctuary
and tell you everything you need to know to be a guide for
these programs. If you have any friends that would like to help
bring them too.

Oh Yes! At sunset (5:45 PM) On March 15th we will have our annual
WOODCOCK NUPTIAL FLIGHT walk. Hot Chocolate and cookies after.
Don't forget to register for the Spring Bird Classes that same night.

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