

The Bird That Knows Too Well

by Lisa Pritchard

Perhaps no other bird has had such a past or "presence" as the Common Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*). As Arthur Bent has stated: "If a person knows only three birds, one of them will be a crow". Unfortunately for these birds, they are usually looked down upon by the human species. From farmers who consider them pests that damage their crops, to the sleepy person who is awakened at dawn by their harsh caws, crows are not well liked. I realize that am a minority - I like crows.

My appreciation and respect for them comes as they represent one of the few species of wildlife that have responded favorably as a result of the human factor in this world. They have been able to adapt - unlike many other more fragile creatures that cannot. When the world has lost its Panda Bears, Blue Whales, and Bluebirds, I will bet on the survival of five species that will remain- the starling, the pigeon, the rat, the herring gull, and alas, the crow. Of these, the crow has my blessing. For a bird that is "too noisy", "too bold", "too prolific", and "too common", the crow has the wit, the smarts, and the self-preservation to deserve to make it. To quote Henry Ward Beecher, "If men wore feathers and wings, very few of them would be clever enough to be crows". No other bird has as large a brain proportional to its size, nor has the ability to solve puzzles, learn to talk, use tools, such as sticks and stems as probes to get food, nor has the ever cautious look and action as the crow. I also like them because I've come to know a few individual crows fairly well, in my association with the Sanctuary.

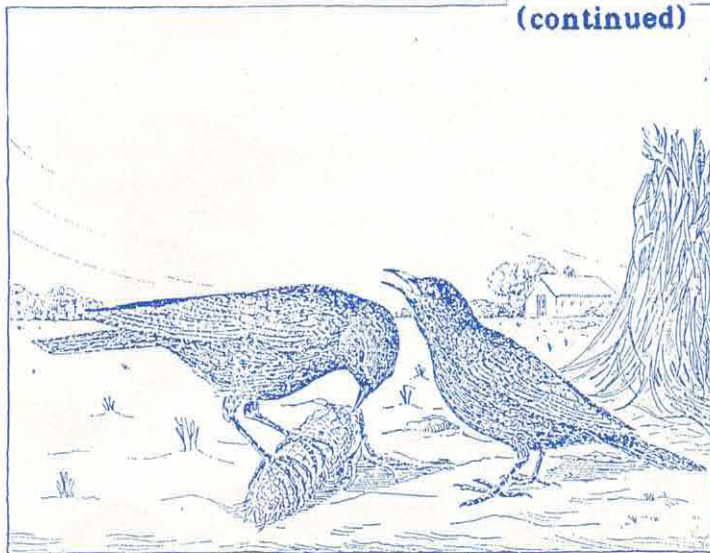
A creature of open woodlands, the crow began to prosper as farms replaced heavily wooded areas, not only maintaining enough of an "edge" needed for nesting or

cover in tall oak or coniferous trees, but also by making food more available. Corn, and the beetles, grubs, and grasshoppers that feed on this crop are the predominant food sources for most crows. Today, as farmland across the country is being replaced by suburbs, crows seem to be able to benefit once more. As scavengers and omnivores, they, like people, "are able to eat anything that does not eat them first". *

During the fall and winter season, one has no choice but to learn about these birds as they noisily begin to form their gregarious gatherings at chosen roost sites. At least twice a day, they will make a racket approaching these areas for the night and leaving them to form smaller feeding groups for the day. One famous roost in Washington D.C. is said to have upwards of 200,000 birds! That's some party!

Because crows, as members of the Corvidae family, which also includes jays, ravens, and magpies, are social in nature, they have a close family unit. A monogamous breeding pair will often be helped each year

(continued)



by 4 or 5 non-breeding siblings or offspring acting as "nannies". If one observes these family units in the spring or summer, although they may all be in one color, there is an immediate behavioral distinction of who are the parents, nannies and juveniles. Speaking of the latter, their repeated food begging calls and mischievous nature can be bothersome to most people. Or, they can be hilariously entertaining, as evidenced by my experiences with three of these juveniles.

"Kai" happened by as a very definite "last to hatch" runt. His scrawny appearance and smaller than usual size didn't stop his aggressive begging for food, which seemed like every minute of the day. Despite the nutritious diet of canned dog food, berries, cracked corn, brewers yeast, peanut butter, egg yolk, and vitamins, "Kai" never did improve his plumage nor could he fly. He did, however, develop an affection for our obnoxious rooster, "Andrew", feeding him morsels of food through his cage and learning how to "cock-a-doodle-doo", quite well, I might add.

The next summer, "Kai 2" (the sequel) came from somewhere, also with the same appetite and developed an affinity for Nature Day Campers' untied shoe laces, tomato seedlings, and children's heads as landing pads. Despite his wonderful personality, he, for the sake of unsuspecting visitors, had to be given to a farmer who offered to tolerate his misguided actions

The last juvenile of the three that I came to know more intimately was slightly older than the others (already cautious of humans). He had a permanent upside down head tilt and therefore could not stand, eat, or fly. After consulting with local vets, this condition was thought to have occurred due to a B vitamin deficiency. Consequently, I, quite awkwardly, had to force feed him. Neither of us appreciated feeding time. Enter Henny Penny, the Sanctuary's affectionate Rhode Island Red- an orphan herself and quite lonely. When the crow saw Penny, it prompted him to beg for food, at which point, I was there as the feeder. A beautiful mutualistic relationship formed where one benefited by the other (Penny became fond of crow food). As "Mr. Caw's" condition improved, he one day left on wing and proceeded to beg for food from a 40 foot tree. Of course, neither Penny nor I could reach him, and he was left on his own, knowing full well where the "feeders" could be reached. He was heard each day, a bit

further away, until, to quote a famous raven, he was heard "nevermore." I hope to hear the crows, myself, evermore. I'm sure I will.

* "Hello, Goodbye", by Bill Gilbert. Sports Illustrated. Dec.19, 1988.

The Norman Bird Flyer is published quarterly by the Norman Bird Sanctuary, a non-profit 450 acre nature preserve established under the will of Mabel Norman Cerio.

Trustee: Rhode Island Hospital Trust National Bank
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Education Coordinator: Lisa Pritchard

Naturalist/Caretaker: Hap Morgan

Receptionist: June Doolittle



CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Preschool Nature Hour

Wednesday afternoons 12-1 pm
(New Hour!)

Our Preschool Nature Hour is a popular program shared by both preschooler (ages 3-5) and parent. Crafts, songs, stories and short hikes will fill this hour long class. It's a wonderful and friendly way to introduce your child to the natural world. An adult must accompany a child and one adult may be responsible for two children. Please dress for the weather. You may register per session or by individual class.

Early Fall Session:

10/18: Fall's Changing Colors

10/25: Life in the Pond

11/1: Migration

11/8: What's For Dinner: Predator/Prey

Late Fall Session:

11/15: Rabbits

11/22: Animal Homes

11/29: Pioneers

12/7: How About a Hike!

Fee per Session: \$12 (\$10 NBS Members)

Fee per Class: \$5 (\$4 NBS Members)

Limit: 10 child/parent pairs

Pre-registration is required

Nature Club

Saturday mornings 9:30-12:30

Join our exciting Saturday morning Nature Club and experience the fun and joy of being in the natural world. Each week will be packed with crafts, songs, games, and hikes. Nature Club is open to boys and girls in grades K-4. We will supply a mid-morning snack and children should dress for the weather.

Early Fall Session:

10/21: The Seashore

10/28: Rainforests Are Alive

11/4: Attracting Birds To Your Feeders

11/11: Explorer's Day

Late Fall Session:

11/18: Sensing Our Surroundings

11/25: Habitats

12/2: Rotting Logs

12/9: Do It Again: Recycle!

Fee per Session: \$36 (\$32 NBS members)

Limit: 10 children

Pre-registration is required.

After School Hikes

Thursdays: October 19 and November 9
3:30-5 pm

What a great way to spend your time after school during the Fall season! These hikes are for boys and girls in grades 3-6 who would like to explore the Sanctuary's field, forest, pond, and ridge along with a Sanctuary Naturalist. Please dress for the weather and wear hiking shoes or sneakers.

Fee: \$4 (\$3 NBS members)

Limit: 10

Pre-registration is required.

Children's Holiday Crafts

Saturday, December 16 1-3 pm

Children in grades K-4 can experience the joy of creating and giving handmade gifts made from natural materials. Each child will bring home three finished crafts for the holidays.

Fee: \$6 (\$5 NBS members)

Limit: 30

Pre-registration is required



Rainforest Creature Feature

Mask Making

Wednesday, October 25 3:30-5:50 pm

From Flying Frogs, Three-toed Sloths, and Spider monkeys to Okapis (giraffe cousins) and Carybaras (the largest rodents in the world), the creatures of the tropical forests abound in stripes and spots, and feathers, scales, and fur. Join us during **World Rainforest Week** as we create a tropical mask (or costume) for Halloween or for our night hike (see details) to celebrate nature's unique and fragile critters. Bring yourself, your creativity, something that can be recycled, old clothes to wear, and a paint shirt, if necessary. This workshop is for children in grades K-4.

Fee: \$10 (\$7 NBS Members)

Limit: 8

Pre-registration is required

Rainforest Night Hike

Sunday, October 29 7-9 pm

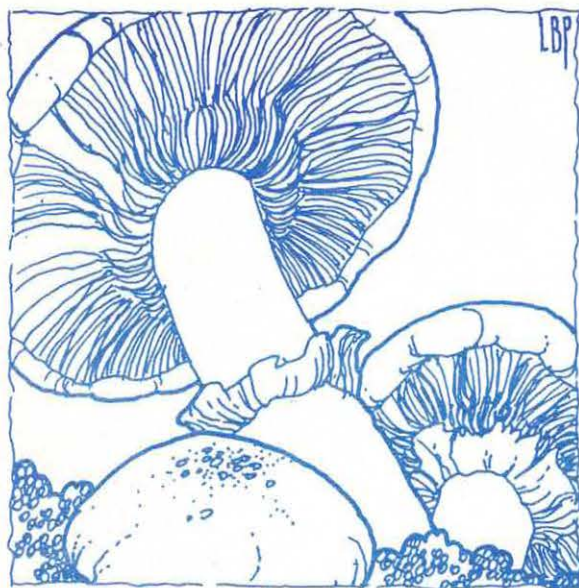
In celebration of **World Rainforest Week** we'll learn about the nightlife of the world's rainforests - the wonderfully scary sound and brilliant colors and habits of the creatures that live there. Children should dress like a rainforest creature (flora or fauna) during this night of games, prizes, refreshments, and a hike around the upper trails. Adults should accompany children under the age of 7.

Fee: \$5 (\$4 NBS members)

Limit: 30 children

Pre-registration is required





PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Mushroom, Fungi, and Lichen Walk

Saturday, October 14 1:00 pm

U.R.I. Mycologist Dr. Roger Goos will once again lead this enchanting walk through the Sanctuary's woodland trails in search of the wonderful world of fungi. He'll help to identify species brought from home and teach about their lifecycles and importance as decomposers in the natural world.

Fee: \$4 (\$2 NBS members).

Limit: 15

Pre-registration is required

Fall Foliage Walk

Saturday, October 21 2:00 pm

Autumn is the most popular season for hiking on the Sanctuary's trails. From the ridges, splashes of vibrant colors can be a visual delight. Lisa Pritchard, NBS Education Coordinator will lead this walk helping to explain some of the mysteries and fascinations of the fall season. Individuals and families are welcome.

Fee: \$3 (\$1 NBS members)

Limit: 15

Pre-registration is required.

Guided Birdwalks

Every Sunday morning 8:00 am

Take an hour's walk through the Sanctuary's trails and down to the shore identifying seasonal and resident species. We'll also begin to search the coast for sea ducks as they move in for the winter. **No Fee.**



World Rainforest Week

October 21-29 1989

Help us appreciate the beauty and importance of the world's tropical rainforests during this week by joining our planned festivities. We'll have free handouts, and posters, stickers, cashew and brazil nuts for sale all week to help support the Rainforest Action Network, an organization committed to saving the forests from destruction. Events include:

- Field Trip to Roger Williams Park Zoo tropical exhibit.
- Speaker: Tropical Ecologist, Tod Highsmith.
- Mask Making Workshop for Children
- Movie/Video Night: The Emerald Forest.
- Rainforest Night Hike for Children.

(see program listings for more details)

Field Trip to Roger Williams Park Zoo

Sunday, October 22 noon - 5:00 pm.

Come join with us during **World Rainforest Week** on a field trip to the Roger Williams Park Zoo to view the Tropical exhibit

Fee: \$1.50 adults / \$.75 children.

Minimum: 10

Pre-registration is required by Wed. Oct. 11

Rain Forest Ecology and Migrant Birds

Tuesday, October 24, 7:00 p.m.

Many of the migratory birds that nest in North America spend the winter months in the tropical rainforests of Central America. The future of numerous species of birds and other wildlife is threatened because much of the rain forest ecosystem is being destroyed by "development" in that region.

The Manomet Bird Observatory has been studying the ecology of the forests in Belize and Puerto Rico. Join Tropical Ecologist, Tod Highsmith during **World Rainforest Week** for a slide lecture about MBO's research in the tropical rainforests.

Fee: \$4.00 (\$2.00 NBS & MBO members)

Limit: 30

Pre-registration is required.

In the Spirit
of Competition

Entry Details



- Entries must be brought to the Fair grounds before 11 a.m. on Saturday, September 30.
- Entrants may pick up entries on Sunday, October 1, between 4 and 5 p.m.
- All entries should be identified in an unobtrusive manner.
- Judging will take place at 12 noon on Sunday, October 1.
- Ribbons will be awarded to the winning entries.
- The Norman Bird Sanctuary is not responsible for loss or damage.
- For further information, call the Sanctuary: 846-2577

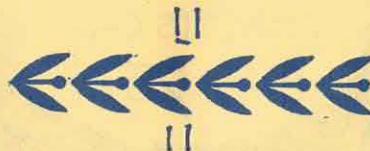


Scarecrows

CREATE YOUR OWN, OR
MAKE IT A FAMILY AFFAIR...



PROTECT THE CROPS OR
INDULGE YOUR IMAGINATION.
MAKE A SCARECROW.
ENTER THE CONTEST.



IN THE SPIRIT OF COMPETITION
FOR THE 1989
NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY
HARVEST FAIR

Scarecrow Contest

In the Spirit
of Competition



Home and Garden
Competitions



Call for Entries

SEPTEMBER 30-
OCTOBER 1



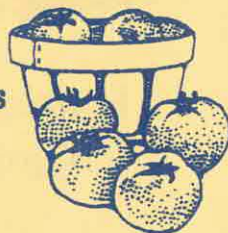
NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY
Middletown, Rhode Island
846-2577

Garden VEGETABLES

Categories ← Best of ...

SINGLE VEGETABLE COLLECTION

- Above ground crop
- Root crop
- Melon, squashes, gourds



BEST COLLECTION

- Mixed vegetables

BIGGEST

- Squashes or pumpkins
- Other



ODDEST LOOKING UNUSUAL VARIETY YOUNG GROWERS (UNDER 14)



...Ah... FLOWERS

Categories ← Best of...

FRESH ARRANGEMENT DRIED ARRANGEMENT HERB WREATH WILDFLOWER ARRANGEMENT YOUNG GROWERS (UNDER 14)



FOR DETAILS OF
CONTESTS CALL:
846-2577

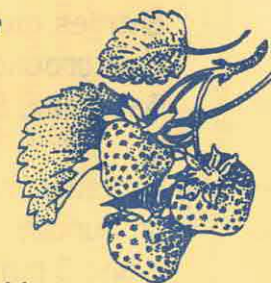
All vegetables and flowers
must have been grown
by the contestant

Home FOOD AND HANDWORK

Categories ← Best of ...

HIGHEST QUALITY

- Preserved Food
- Breads, Muffins
- Pies
- Specialties



FINEST HANDWORK

- Knitted
- Crocheted
- Quilted
- Embroidered
- Smocking
- Samplers
- Dolls
- Others (X-mas stockings, aprons, etc.)



The Emerald Forest

Thursday, October 26 7:00 pm.

Join us for the video The Emerald Forest shown in the NBS "Ed. Shed". This major motion picture depicts the wonders and beauty of the Tropical Rainforest.

Fee: NO CHARGE
Limit: 25
Pre-registration is required.



Herbal and Wildflower Wreath Making Workshop

Saturday, November 4 1:30-3:30 pm

Create a naturally attractive wreath for your holiday door or wall made from a base of moss and decorated with delicate bundles of dried herbs, wildflowers, cones, pods, and berries. Sharon Culberson, owner of Hilltop Gardens will provide materials and detailed instructions for each participant. Please bring clippers or heavy scissors, and if you'd like, your own dried flowers or special ribbon.

Fee: \$20 (\$17 NBS members)
Limit: 12
Pre-registration is required.

Archaeological Tour of The Sanctuary

Sunday, November 5, 2:00 - 4:00 pm.

In addition to the shell midden that has been discovered, the Norman Bird Sanctuary has strong potential for containing other archaeological sites, including camps, rock shelters, and even a village. This program will begin with a slide presentation 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 might have so much potential. The program leader is Alan Leveille, director of the Public Archaeology Laboratory.

Fee: \$12.00 (\$9.00 NBS members)
Limit 20
Pre-registration is required.

Guided Fall Natural History Walk

Saturday, November 11 2:00 pm

Help us look for animal signs, the changing colors of Fall, and wildflowers gone to seed during this casual walk on the Sanctuary's trails. Hap Morgan, NBS Naturalist will guide families and individuals on this hour long walk.

Fee: \$3 (\$1 NBS Members)
Limit: 15
Pre-registration is required

Advent Wreath Making Workshop

Saturday, November 18 1:30-3:30 pm

Begin the winter holiday season with the making of a traditional advent wreath of fresh greens, fragrant herbs, and four symbolic candles to be displayed as a table centerpiece. Sharon from Hilltop Gardens will be leading this workshop with her creative, energetic and festive expertise. Participants are asked to bring a pair of clippers or heavy scissors, and a small bag of greens, for variety. All other materials will be provided.

Fee: \$24 (\$20 NBS members)
Limit: 12
Pre-registration is required.

Holiday Wreath Making

Sunday, December 3 1:00-3:00 pm

Enjoy the pleasure of making your own holiday wreath from fresh sprigs of spruce, cedar, pine, and holly. The special technique of making this creation stay "alive" throughout the season will be demonstrated by NBS member, Jocelyn Sherman. Participants are asked to bring a trash bag full of greens (6"-24" boughs) and clippers.

Fee: \$15 (\$12 NBS Members)
Limit: 12
Pre-registration is required.

A gentle reminder: The Sanctuary requires pre-registration for most of its programs (excluding the Sunday morning bird walks and the stargazing programs) for the purpose of contacting you in case of cancellation and to meet the desired number of participants in order to give notice to teachers. We often do take walk-ins, but cannot always. Please be aware of this policy.

Director's Notes

Gray Craig Update

As most of you know, we have been working to protect the open land of the 81 acre Gray Craig estate which abuts, and serves as an important ecological buffer zone for, the Norman Bird Sanctuary and the Nelson Pond reservoir. We are looking to permanently protect over 41 acres of the more sensitive ecological and scenic areas including the northern forested section, the two ridges and a buffer zone around the reservoir.

I stated in the previous issue of the Flyer that we were close to reaching an agreement with the owners of the estate on how to protect the land from future development. Since that time we have reached an accord in principle, are in the process of drafting a letter of agreement that states what areas are to be protected, and have drafted the terms of the conservation restrictions that will be placed upon the land.

In the coming weeks we should know where we stand with our Rhode Island Open Space grant application and with the Town of Middletown. From there, we will begin planning a fundraising campaign which involves foundation and individual support.

Lawrence Taft

Wish List

- VCR
- Color T.V.
- Rolling T.V. Stand
- Laser Printer
- Computer Table
- Macintosh Computer
- 2 Office Chairs
- Telephone (touch tone)
- Woodstove (small air-tight model)
- Wood for Building Storage Shelves.

Volunteers and Donations

Volunteers and donations are an important part of the Sanctuary's well being. Our thanks to those of you who helped us during the summer season.

For office sitting - Fran Holmes, Beverly Murphy, Paulette Ache, Betsy deLeiris, and Dave Pritchard.

Mailings-Fran Holmes, Janet Rego

Staff Training-Phil Rhondino

Gardens -June Warren

Children's Programs- Bill Thomas

Public Programs- Bill O'Connell, Dario Diaz, Patti O'Neill, Barry Murphy, Jan Binger, and Millie House.

Animal Care and Donations for Animals- Star Market, Tom Richter, Charles Donald, Erin Carney, Carie Hiener, Elizabeth Ferreira, Jared and Brian Mosher, Chris and Laura Wigand, Elsa Sylvander, and the Blanchettes.

... And a special thanks to Paulette Ache who entered our membership and volunteer database on to the computer.

Intern Housing Needed

The Sanctuary will be supervising an educational intern from January-June 1990 who will help teach our school programs. Since a job description will be sent to many local and not so local colleges and universities throughout the northeast, we would like to assist in finding housing for this person, if needed. If you have a room, apartment, or cottage to offer for rental, please contact us at the Sanctuary.

Animal Caretaker Needed

We are looking for someone 12 years old or older to help us with our daily routine of feeding and caring for our resident animals. Particularly, we need someone for **Thursday or Friday afternoons (3:30-5 pm)** during the Fall season. Training and supervision will be offered. Please give us a call if you can help!

Your NBS membership renewal date is printed on the mailing label below your address. If you're due to renew now (or before the next newsletter), please use the enclosed form and send it along with your renewal check. By using this form and sending your renewal ahead, you can save the Sanctuary the cost of sending out reminders. This will help us put your membership dollars to better use.



MEMBERSHIP

☐ New Member

☐ Renewal

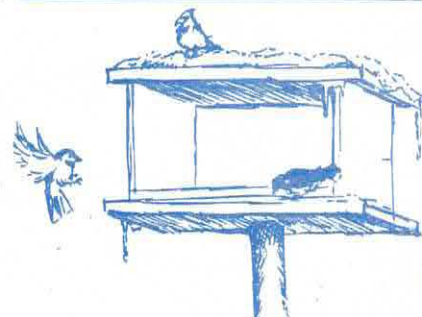
NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

- | | | | |
|---|---------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$15.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining | \$ 50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$25.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$ 100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional/Business | \$50.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life | \$1,000.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In addition to my yearly membership, I would like to contribute \$ _____ | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to be called for volunteer work. Phone _____ | | | |

**If you are not a member,
please use this form to
become one!**

NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY Bird Seed Sale



Saturday and Sunday, November 4 and 5, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Throughout the weekend, the NBS store will have bird feeders and accessories for sale. (See the special discount offer below). NBS will have a variety of home made feeders on display, activity ideas for children, handouts, and refreshments available to help kick off the bird feeding season.

Stock up now for the long winter ahead. Feed the birds and help support programs at the Sanctuary at the same time. Order seed now and receive a 10% discount on all new feeders in stock when purchased during this weekend only.

To order: Fill out the order form below and mail it with payment to the Norman Bird Sanctuary, 583 Third Beach Road, Middletown, RI 02840. Orders must be received by Thursday, October 26. Make checks payable to the Norman Bird Sanctuary.

Pick up your seed on November 4 or 5 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Sanctuary barn.

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

| QUANTITY | TYPE OF SEED | PRICE PER BAG | AMOUNT |
|----------|---|---------------|----------------------|
| _____ | Black Oil Sunflower Seed -20lbs | 9.50 | _____ |
| _____ | Black Oil Sunflower Seed- 50lbs. | 18.50 | _____ |
| _____ | "Bird Snack" quality mixed seed- 20lbs. | 9.00 | _____ |
| _____ | "Bird Snack" - 50 lbs. | 17.00 | _____ |
| _____ | Thistle 5 lbs. | 10.00 | _____ |
| _____ | Suet cakes | 3.00 | _____ |
| | | TOTAL | \$ _____ |
| | | | (sales tax included) |

10% OFF ALL FEEDERS IN STOCK ON "SEED SALE" DAYS NOV. 4 and 5

Norman Bird Sanctuary
583 Third Beach Road
Middletown, Rhode Island 02840



Non-Profit Org.
US Postage Paid
Newport, RI
02840
Permit No. 43

OR TO CURRENT RESIDENT

Norman Bird Sanctuary
Harvest Fair
September 30 and October 1 10 am-5 pm

an old fashioned country fair

Crafts, Games, Animals, "The Mud Pit", "Monkey Bridge", "Greased Pole"
Home and Garden Contests, Country Store, Greased Pole, Pony & Hay
Rides, Face Painting, Music, Talent Show, Raffle and more!

Volunteers Still Needed!

We still need volunteers who will be available to work during the Fair. If you can volunteer for 1-2 hours, please call the Sanctuary at 846-2577. If you would like to help us in another way, please let us know!

HARVEST FAIR RAFFLE

First Prize: Dinner, Lunch or Brunch for two at 15 Newport County restaurants: Le Bistro, Marriott, White Horse Tavern, Amsterdam's, Scales and Shells, The Pier, Green House, Sea Fare Inn, Canfield House, Inn at Castle Hill, Clarke Cook House, Country Cuisine, The Moorings, Salas', Dave & Eddie's.

Second Prize: Weekend for two at the Sheraton Islander.

Third Prize: Liquor Basket worth over \$200.00

* Tickets are \$1.00 each and are available before the Fair at the Sanctuary office, and at the ticket booth on the days of the Fair.

* The drawing will take place during the Fair at 3:00 pm. on Sunday, October 1.

* Help support the Sanctuary by buying tickets!