

Sept. — Oct. 1971

Hello!

What a fad of bee-keeping hit Aquidneck Island this summer! Vandals have ruined previous efforts. Some bright person figured that there is one place to which vandal-prone children do not voluntarily go. Several of our gorgeous schools were betressed with bee hives! The bees did their work throughout a drought summer and young bee-keepers tended them. The knowledge that the golden goo was cared for by young ones adds a different nutritional value to the food. The Bird is a believer in the adage "The devil finds work for idle hands". (Whatever has happened to that clever fellow? Playing possum, that's what.)

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Thoreau wrote that we should not worry about the future of mankind,—"nature can snap our threads at will". We date our happenings by nature's — a cold Friday or a Great Snow. He wrote "a colder Friday or a Greater Snow" could do the trick. September 21, 1938 ended two weeks of rain—brought the equinoctial gale and tides—and a hurricane. Lots of people and things were snapped that day. Could we have restrung our strings if the tide had been higher or the hurricane more fierce?

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Thieves steal anything! Just anything. Dominic O. Possum has been stolen. Peppi Skunk has been stolen too. Whoever stole Peppi should come back and get his security blanket. Think how miserable he must be without it. They were our pets. With us they had a life expectancy of 9 years. Will the new "owners" love and cherish them for 9 years?

Part of the charm of the Barn-Museum was the numerous little busy bodies scampering about. They were an integral part of the teaching material for schools all over the state. Until we get time, muscle and money together to build security pens for them, there'll be no more padded feet on the Sanctuary's floor.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's skunk, or his possum, or anything that is his.

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The Loop, the heart of down-town Chicago, was invaded after Labour Day by Monarch butterflies. The big orange and black beauties migrate southward each year. The Loop, an area roughly 18 city blocks—pulsated with orange wings. The "dust" on the wings of butterflies are microscopic scales like those on a fish.

Members! Some of your money was taken from "S. Crow" and used to provide a shower for 2 lady teachers hired for the summer. They lived in The Loft with bunkbeds discreetly curtained off. A sign at their door read "Screech Owls". Day Camp was such a success no money will be spent to advertise it next year—no need to. It was filled to capacity.

At the close of Day Camp a farewell supper was given for the teachers, aids and volunteers—23 came, 10 absentees. Tons of spaghetti were prepared in the tiny kitchen. More cakes than even that crew could eat (in one sitting) were donated for dessert. Wisteria Mood Indigo's newly shed skin was admired, she was measured and found to have grown 5" this year, to a grand total of 6 feet. One purpose of the Day Camp is to remove fear of animals, insects and reptiles by

teaching the truth about them. The Bird witnessed the result of good teaching. A small boy 8-9 years old, playing with Wisteria Mood, had her coiled nicely around his neck and shoulders. He then reached out and brought her head to him and tenderly kissed her. He loves Wisteria Mood now. All his life he will be thoughtful of snakes. He will not grab a rock or an ax whenever a snake crosses his path. And he, in turn, will teach.

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An awesome magazine recently carried an article on the irrelevancy (ugh) of national borders. The author maintained that people should be free to move around as birds do. Unfortunately he chose the wagtails as examples. Wagtails establish their own borders. They allow no trespassing on their established territories. Most birds do the same. The sparrow is a ferocious defender of his borders. Spring songs are "territorial" not "love" songs! The robins we read about each spring, who fight their reflections in hubcaps and windows know nothing about mirrors. Each fights what he sees—an interloper who may not cross the border into "private property"—a territory large enough to feed the cock and his up coming family.

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Wasps were numerous enough last year, but this year they were more so. Like all living things they proliferate when the environment is good. Food is part of the environment. We Americans gallop through life eating and dropping bits of food and containers—a bonanza for wasps.

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Words of a popular song are, in part "Being in love means never saying again I'm sorry". Without the smooth ball-bearings of "I'm sorry" ("Thank you" and "I love you") the fabric of love is soon shredded.

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Psychologists say "humans, like animals, fear to die alone." Where on earth have those big brains spent their lives? Have they never experienced what we lesser brains have as dearly loved ancient pets have sought places to die along? Animals accept death as a part of life—the end of it. Only humans arrange for the survival of the least fit - nature doesn't. Quite the opposite! The hunter becomes the hunted, and both end up as compost. Humans have an idea of life eternal on earth, and they are right. Nothing ever dies. It changes. Hunter, to hunted, to compost, to life—in a different form. Only humans fear death. We all have a strong survival instinct, and survive we shall, in one form or another!

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In October The Norman Bird will be attending a seminar on fund raising. Do thread a needle and sew up the tops of your money bags. While you're sewing up the tops, holes will be pecked in the bottom. There'll be fund raising affairs this winter. You will be appraised of them.

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On September 13, 1899, the first automobile accident happened. A man running for a streetcar in NYC was killed. In 1970 50,000 + people were killed by cars. We've come a long way, baby. What is distressing is that we accept the killer. We fought an all-out war on small pox and polio, and won. We are after measles

and rubella, and we'll win. We're out to kill Cancer, and we will. But we keep on buying cars that can go from 0 to 60 in 60 seconds—the "muscle cars". Muscle cars are needed on race tracks and no where else. Don't blame the manufacturers. Blame the consumer, the driver.

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Because a child has died from eating an alkali soap we are urged to return to the use of phosphates. We are told, the life of a river is not comparable to the life of a child. So we are urged to poison all the rivers because a mother was negligent about her child. All the rivers? Yes. From West Germany comes news that no eels have been caught in the Rhine - no fish for several years - but by 1971 the oxygen content is so low, pollution so high, that the eels too are dead. How long before all water is polluted, and how long before all children die as devoted parents look on, helpless? A group of Ralph Nader-type critics in Boston wrongly accuse business of making a death-trap in that one company manufactures a red furniture oil that is the same colour as strawberry soda. Is it not the duty of a parent to see that poisonous oil is stored where little ones can not get at it? Or is it the businesses' business? One opinion is: - parents are expecting others to take over too many of their responsibilities as it is.

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An adult fox weighs between 7 & 9 pounds. If their sumptuous pelts indicate the kind of winter we are in for, we should all invest in new longjohns!

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On October 4 five ospreys were seen soaring on a thermal draft, circling upward until low scudding clouds hid them. What a sight! At this season they are massing for their trip south. Would that they would come back to us next spring. Their nests are waiting. So are we. Mrs. Cerio knew that it takes two years for an osprey to build a nest. Annually, during the season of what was called "tempests" she would have poles, wheels and nests carried into the Barn. They were re-set before frost. To help entice ospreys back, our volunteers have "thought osprey" and done the first year's work for them. Boughs and sticks have been carried aloft. Permission for tenants to re-arrange the decor is freely given. If only they'd come back. And purple martins too. Their apartment houses are waiting-and we had loads of mosquitos all summer long.

In really olden times, the Bird has heard, horses were whipped to a gallop to make the dash along Hanging Rock Road through the clouds of mosquitos. And, because someone might be dashing at full gallop the other way, the drivers yelled loudly during the entire run.

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People still decry the cost of the moonshots. As if all that money had been bundled up, shot to the moon, and left. True, a few thousand dollars worth of metal was left there. But the billions spent were spent right there in the good ol' USA. Pay Checks. In little Rhody, the American Thread Company perfected and wove, the thread that made up the amazing space suits. The man who invented the specialized thread was a Portsmouth boy, a Rogers and Brown graduate. Nature put no strength in his legs, but plenty of it in his character. Some would say he's a cripple because he's in a wheel chair. Seems to The Bird that the Providence Journal's "The Rhode Islander" should do an article on Jerry Johnson. Because of him, Aquidneck Island has been to the moon and back. Several

Died 197

times.

* Frost proof windows made in Great Britain.

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The Second Annual Benefit Cocktail Party was a PIP. Again the setting did its part — there's something about boozing in the Barn that recalls the sneaking of a fag behind it in days gone by. But it was the people who truly made it an outstanding party. Gosh, we have nice friends! Thanks to their generosity the thousand dollars needed for the winter teaching program was raised. If you missed it this year— you're a nut—you were warned. Next year? To Lovely Ladies who provided the edibles, gracias, — the flowers were beautiful, the diswashing— great! (Our non-bio-de-gradable glasses are reused, so there). For the calorie aware non-drinkers: next year, no Bavarian coffee. Tea, with lemon and saccarin. The wonderful thing about this year's party is that more people came than last year. We're getting there. The name of the game is Growth In Membership.

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THE NORMAN BIRD NEEDS HELP. HELP!

A new quarterly entitled "The Sanctuary News" is in the making. (Emily Kimborough said "writing is like being pregnant—you carry it around inside you for months—or like an elephant, for years." Unlike pregnancy you are in labour the entire time!) The News will have articles by our neighbours who are experts in their fields. We shall be painlessly taught in varying aspects of ecology, conservation, and nature studies. There will be the familiar chitter-chatter of The Bird, a project for children, and because of the interest in cooking, a recipe using a local product or one used by Founding Mothers. A flight to the attic produced great-grandmother's handwritten cookery book, dated 1804. The recipe for Irish Sea Moss pudding says " $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of mofs and 2 cups milk". Now: is that dried mofs, or wet mofs? $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of moss dries out to about 3Ts. If you know call 847-4967 and ask for The Bird. Great Grand Ma knew a lot! Never used Sherry when there was Medeira! She also knew the value of a nap, but failed to note name of carpenter who would make lovely chaise-lounge for \$3.00!)

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With winter coming on, how about helping the Sanctuary with its new display on "Man's Use of Nature"? The Bird is doing a panel on "Man's Use of Nature in Dyeing Fabrics". A musician will do one on "Man's Use of Nature to Make Music." Someone could do one on — flavourings — medicine — dentistry — herbs — cosmetics — habitats — clothing — transportation — computers, etc. Speak to our Fearless Leader, Mr. Gardner, as to size and aspect of panel.

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0 When can a member walk in the Sanctuary? Anytime one wishes. We suggest early mornings when it is beautiful and not crowded. When may members walk their dogs in the Sanctuary? Early, or when there are not crowds — but first, please call the Director to get permission. 846-2577.