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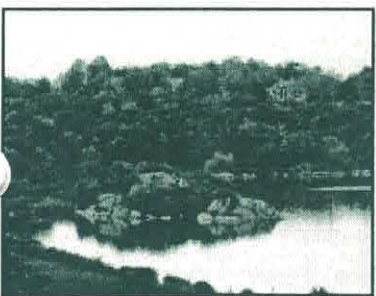
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*Melissa Ellis photo*



*Frederick Orwiler photo*

# THE FLYER



*the norman bird sanctuary newsletter*

## *Claim a Sanctuary for Yourself and Enjoy Peace*

*By Rita Lussier*

*Touch the earth.  
Honor the earth. Rest  
your spirit in its solitary  
places.*

*Henry Beston*

I stand in front of the wooden sign posted at the entrance to the trail at the Norman Bird Sanctuary. Solitary places. Not a lot of those to be found these days, I'm afraid.

Fastening the straps of my backpack, I begin to walk. The path is not a new one for me. I've probably been here at least 100 times before, although perhaps never needing the place as much as I do now.

As I wind through a glade of shady maples and cross a small wooden bridge, something occurs to me. I've come here before with my mother, my father, my sister. I've come here with my Girl Scout troop, my camp leaders, my friends. I've come here with my husband, my son, my daughter. But never have I come here alone.

As far as I can tell, I am truly alone. This is to be expected, I suppose.

Lunch hour on a Wednesday tends to be something less than a bustling time here in the woods. Alone. Just me and my thoughts, wandering amid the oaks as the sunlight filters in and out of the branches.

There is a deep quiet here. It takes me by surprise at first. But then I find myself quickly settling into it.

*I'm transported  
to a place where  
there are no  
decisions to  
make, other than  
what trail to  
take...*

There are sounds, of course. Barely audible, but there. The swish of a branch. A stone beneath my sneaker. The rustle of denim, one leg brushing against the other.

Past the woodland trails, I'm transported to a place where there are no decisions to make, other than what trail to take. For me, that's easy, for one has always

been my favorite: the red trail to Hanging Rock.

Soon I am scrambling up the side of a ridge until I reach a rocky trail above the treeline. I call it a trail, but it's really little more than a huge ledge of stone, seemingly carved right into the woods by a giant butcher knife. A glacier brought it here, I've been told.

It takes a little while, more climbing, more careful footwork. But soon I make my way to the very edge of Hanging Rock. I find a seat fashioned from smooth gray stone and set down my pack. Its contents are simple: a bottle of water, an apple, a notepad, a pen. No cell phone. No radio. I even left my watch in the car. The calls, the talk shows, time itself- all of it can wait today.

Some say philosophers once came to this very spot to think their great thoughts. Some say privateers came up here to hide booty somewhere along a river that supposedly ran between these stony ridges. Legend even has it that pirates hanged their captives

*Continued on Page 2*



## Board of Directors

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*Each staff member has an identifying icon. Please follow the guide to identify articles in the newsletter.*



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# Claim a Sanctuary...

*Continued from Page 1*



*Melissa Ellis photo*

from this very ridge, a dark explanation of its name.

I've just come here to sit, to close out the harried world, if only for a few moments, and to open my eyes.

From my perch, I can see cattails in the marsh below. They are gently swaying in the breeze. On the other side, a pond shimmers in the sun, separated only by a thin grassy margin from the Sakonnet River on the horizon. And directly in front of me, a sandy white beach stretches out to meet the Atlantic. And I am here. Alone. At the place where land meets water meets sky.

For the first time in a long while, I have found sanctuary. And that, I have to remind myself, is essential. Every nurturer needs to be nurtured. Every homemaker needs shelter. A sacred space. Every breadwinner needs sustenance before going back out into the world.

Undeniably, we all need our sanctuaries now. For nearly a month, we've been bombarded by grim news, staccato messages of terror and turmoil, all of it delivered to our doorsteps, into our cars, our living rooms. All of a

sudden, our reality seems a bit surreal, our sense of security uncomfortably insecure. Yes, we need to be informed, but we need to be quiet too. We need our calm moments, our hanging rocks.

When so much seems beyond our influence, surely this is one thing we can control. In the months ahead, we will need these quiet times, these moments of tranquillity, these small sanctuaries. We will need to take time out, even a lunch hour will do, to get away from it all. We will need time to renew our perspective, revive our spirit, find our peace.

Whether it's a gathering of friends, a church, a concert, a beach, mountain-side, it doesn't matter. We need our sanctuaries. Even if it is just a rock.

*Rita Lussier is a free-lance writer, whose column, For the Moment, appears in the Providence Journal's Lifebeat Section on Wednesdays. She can be reached at ReetsAL@aol.com.*

*This article is reprinted with the permission of the Providence Journal Company, and originally appeared in the Lifebeat Section of the October 11, 2001 Providence Journal.*





## Director's Notes

### Dear Friends,

When I last wrote you, we were in the first week of September; our perspective has changed dramatically since those days of summer. Today, our nation is at war, at home and abroad, and uncertainty about the shape of our world dogs our steps.

My appreciation of the unique and fragile treasures at the Sanctuary is heightened by these uncertain times. The rocky ridges and woods have survived generations, centuries of man's inhumanity to man, and their beauty endures. A walk through the fields, along the trails gives me renewed courage to face the challenges of my day.

Two of our members have graciously shared their personal thoughts about the importance of this special place. Rita Lussier reflects on the importance of a special place of sanctuary in all our lives, and how she finds hers here. Tom Buell writes of the images of his youth on the ponds and ridges, images that continue to nurture him although he is a continent and many years away. I thank them for these moving personal reflections. Each of us has a special corner of our hearts reserved for this magical place.

But the Sanctuary is not just a place of nostalgia or a shelter away from the world. Its unique setting challenges our thinking about the ways in which we can make our island community a better place to live. The Sanctuary is proud to be a member of the Aquidneck Island Partnership, a coalition of local governments, businesses, individuals, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations, dedicated to the liveability of Aquidneck Island: preserving its environment, promoting its economic vitality, enhancing its institutions. If you have not yet read the Partnership's Vision document, adopted in 1999, please stop by my office; it's truly exciting to see the unity of vision from diverse perspectives.

On October 2, 2001, the Aquidneck Island Partnership sponsored a lecture by William McDonough. Best known as an architect and planner, McDonough is probably better described as a practical visionary. He challenged my thinking about my community and my life. He posed questions at the outset: How would we treat this island if we were its indigenous peoples? Do we have a vision for a sustainable future of this island?

McDonough questioned the very paradigm by which we evaluate our "green" behavior. Most of our strategies are directed at being "less bad" than being "good". He pointed out a number of limitations inherent in our concept of design, and urged us to treat nature as a model and mentor, not as an inconvenience to be evaded or controlled.

As we embark on the design phase for the Barn and "Ed Shed", the second chapter of our renovation project, McDonough challenges our thinking. We have talked about wanting to respect the historic fabric of these buildings, while making them, and the Sanctuary, sustainable for the future. We will have to be creative in our partnership with our architects and designers. We are already working with a mechanical engineer with an expertise in renewable energy, and hope to use sustainability as a design criterion and a teaching tool. Our staff is hard at work discussing our long-range educational plans and the best ways to have the buildings reflect those plans. I invite you to stop by for a chat and be a part of the dialogue, or to give me a call and come to one of our planning meetings.

As we move into the holiday season, we at the Sanctuary wish for you all a year of peace and beauty.

Betsy de Leiris  
Executive Director

### Preserving the Legacy Campaign Progress Notes

Recent weeks have been wonderful in our progress toward the goal of giving new life to the Paradise Farm buildings. Each day that we welcome a new friend to the Sanctuary, or tour the newly renovated buildings with an old friend who hasn't been by for a few years, we are revitalized by their enthusiasm for the work we are doing and the progress we have made.

The McBean Charitable Trust has awarded us a grant in the amount of \$100,000 toward the restoration of the Farm House. As they are the biggest force for historic preservation on this island, we are particularly grateful for their tangible expression of confidence in us. In addition, The Roosa Family Foundation will be making a grant in the amount of \$25,000 toward the Farmhouse renovations.

The Frank Stanley Beveridge Foundation has awarded the Sanctuary \$50,000 toward the renovations of the barn for the Environmental Learning Laboratory. Newport Federal Savings Bank has awarded a grant of \$20,000 toward the renovation of the "Ed Shed" and the creation of a new environmental education classroom. We have received additional awards from The Virginia T. Madeira Trust, in the amount of \$5,000, and from McLaughlin and Moran, in the amount of \$10,000, toward the Environmental Education Center.

We will be starting weekly meetings of the staff, architects and designers, and Building Committee this month, to move forward with the design. What an incredible dream will be realized for the Sanctuary and the community as the design comes together into a concrete plan!





## Guest Article

# A Sanctuary Gift of Space and Time Grey Craig and the Ledges

By Tom Buell

*A boy's eye view, much later (late 1930's and now).*

*This is about Hanging Rock and those long ridges where we played, knowing these woods the way we knew each other and the land. As if we owned it.*

*Remembering, now, the way we'd run safe as fox and hounds every path, known and fearless—except the time I saw rising*

*from the murk a great green loggerhead surface from the water and subside. And then the time, skating alone, and falling through too early ice and breaking to shore, run gasping home. Afraid.*

*Or the time the gardener on the estate caught us for spying (another game) by scruff of neck but let us go, smiling sternly.*

*Next, see, looking down as gull*

*or like an owl careful in its tree at night:*

*See and hear the frozen pond by the bonfire and hear the boom of cracking ice—you could see the black of it, feel the heave of it, the cracks ready to catch your skates in the coldest years, the moon making us glad even though the war, and we*

*can warm us still.*

*The way a rotting log gives off heat in such woods as these for balancing turtles amongst the skunky cabbage and pray we keep it so and see and hear the way from Sachuest Point along the beaches to Hanging Rock, where the Bishop sat to find his words for churches and we can hear him or imagine*



Melissa Ellis illustration

*Sturtevant, the names ring, like Cerio or Rogers or van Beuren. Walking these trails. Or the Narragansetts, whose woods these were.*

Guest Article writer Tom Buell is a long-time Sanctuary member who lives in Portland, Oregon with his wife Joan. He is a Professor Emeritus of Literature and Writing from Portland State

*swirled and hugged.*

*Earlier, not even teens, we learned to track with Ted the lobsterman in the snow along the paths we knew from summer games, following the rabbit way of foxes. And find a small pond deep in cedar and imagine hockey. Sliding falling laughing, scoreless and happy as such memories, even from a frozen time,*

University, and continues to practice poetry writing and sculpture in retirement. Tom grew up across the valley from the Sanctuary, and taught and coached there for many years before moving on to higher education. He gets back to Middletown as often as possible, to stroll the beaches and ridges. He reminisces fondly about the days before there were ticks on Sachuest Point, and says that this area was an Eden when he was young. Tom says, "it still is, when you walk your way along the trails of the Norman Bird Sanctuary."

# FEBRUARY 2002



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Guided Bird Walk	4	5	6 Preschoolers w/Parents Session A	7	8	9
10 Eagles & Hawks & Owls	11	12	13 Preschoolers w/Parents Session A	14	15 Winter Stars & Stories	16
17 Guided Bird Walk	18 Blizzards w/Tony Petrarca	19 Winter Vacation Camp	20 Winter Vacation Camp	21 Winter Vacation Camp	22 Winter Vacation Camp	23
24	25	26	27 Preschoolers w/Parents Session A	28		

# MARCH 2002



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Introduction to Birding by Ear
3 Guided Bird Walk	4	5	6 Preschoolers w/Parents Session A	7	8 Archeology in RI's Cemeteries	9
10	11	12	13 Preschoolers w/Parents Session B	14	15 Woodcock Walk	16
17 Guided Bird Walk	18	19 Private School Camp	20 Private School Camp Preschoolers w/Parents Session B	21 Private School Camp	22 Private School Camp	23
24 31 Guided Bird Walk	25	26	27 Preschoolers w/Parents Session B	28	29	30





## Educational Programs

### Holly Days Winter Celebration



**Date:** Saturday, December 8

**Time:** 12:00 - 7:00 PM

**\$5 Adult \$3 Child**

Come out and enjoy a variety of activities to kick off the holiday season, such as a chicken-naming contest, a scavenger hunt down the Sanctuary trails, interesting storytelling and craftmaking activities for both adults and children, festive craft demonstrations, and at the end of the day, an evening walk through the Sanctuary, after which we'll be roasting marshmallows around our roaring bonfire.

### Plum Island Birding

**Dates:** Saturday, January 19

**Time:** 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM

**Fee:** \$25 NM

**\$20 M**

#### ADULT PROGRAM

Road trip! Plum Island offers miles of public sandy beaches and the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, home to over 800 species of birds, plants, and animals on 4,662 acres. The featured guide for this birding trek through the Wildlife Refuge is Jay Manning, the Sunday Bird Walk leader. Meet at NBS promptly, so we can load up the van and fly off ASAP. Please wear appropriate clothing and bring a bag lunch. We will provide snacks and refreshments. **Maximum 12.**

### Owl Prowl

**Dates:** Adults only Owl Prowl - Jan. 24

**Family Owl Prowl - Jan. 25**

**Time:** 6:00 - 7:30 PM

**Fee:** \$8.00 NM

**\$6.00 M**

#### FAMILY & ADULT PROGRAM

Winter is the time of the year when many owls are actively building nests and laying eggs for this year's clutch. Moreover, they are aggressively staking out territory with hoots, screeches, and deep

sounding warbles. Last winter we heard and saw Great Horned Owls flying over our heads. Following the owl prowl, we will check out our stuffed specimens while sipping hot cider or cocoa. **Maximum 15.**

### Preschoolers with Parents

**Ages:** 3 - 5 years

**Dates:** Wednesdays, February 6, 13, 27 & March 6

**Session B March 13, 20, 27 & April 3**

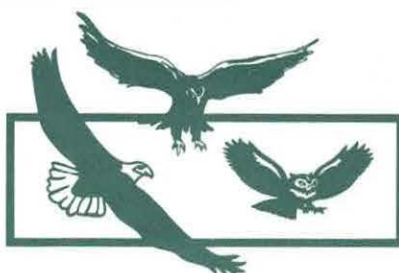
**Time:** 1-2 PM

**Fee:** \$35.00/session NM

**\$30.00/session M**

#### CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

This series of one-hour programs is a gentle and fun way to introduce your preschool age child to the wonders of our natural world. We'll explore nature through our five senses, with songs, crafts, and exploration of the plants and animals at the Sanctuary. Marilyn has been teaching this great program for several years and has quite a following, so be sure to register early. Please dress for the weather. **Maximum 10.**



### Eagles, & Hawks, & Owls, Oh My!

**Dates:** Sunday, February 10

**Time:** 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM

**Fee:** \$25 NM

**\$20 M**

#### ADULT PROGRAM

Road trip! We are driving to Essex, CT, home of the Eagle Festival. Our goal for the day is to see bald eagles, but there is also a great chance to see golden eagles, harriers, rough-legged hawks, short-eared owls, and lots of waterfowl. Grab your binoculars, mittens, a bag lunch and let's go! We will provide snacks and refreshments. **Maximum 12.**

### Winter Stars & Stories



**Dates:** Friday, February 15

**Time:** 6:00 - 7:30 PM

**Fee:** \$8.00 NM

**\$6.00 M**

#### FAMILY PROGRAM

Search the winter skies over the sanctuary for stars, galaxies, and nebula. Discover the position of winter constellations and how they change in the night sky over the seasons. If the night is clear, we will set up a telescope to get a closer look at the objects in the sky. Then we will light a camp fire, enjoy sweets and share celestial legends. In case of cloud cover or rain, we will move inside for a star slide show and gather around the fireplace for storytelling. This program is suitable for families with children ages seven and up. **Maximum 20.**

### Blizzards with Tony Petrarca

**Dates:** Monday, February 18

**Time:** 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

**Fee:** \$5 NM

**\$0 M**

#### FAMILY PROGRAM

WPRI's meteorologist, Tony Petrarca, is doing a talk on Rhode Island blizzard history, how blizzards develop, and what to expect for the remainder of the winter. Join one of Rhode Island's celebrities for a chillingly fun talk. **Maximum 40.**

### Winter Vacation Camp

**Ages:** K - 4th grade

**Day:** Tuesday - Friday

**Dates:** February 19 - 22

**Time:** 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

**Fee:** \$125 NM

**\$115 M**

#### CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

This year's winter camp is going to be bigger and better than ever! The theme for





## Educational Programs



this year is "Winter Marine Life." During the week we will go on field trips searching out seals and other marine wildlife, including a stop at Biomes, a great hands-on aquarium in North Kingston. Do not worry, we will still spend plenty of time romping around the Sanctuary. Be sure to bring your lunch, snack, and water bottle every day. Dress for the weather, too! **Maximum 20.**

### Introduction to Birding by Ear

**Dates:** Saturday, March 2

**Time:** 9:00 - 11:00 AM

**Fee:** \$8.00 NM

\$6.00 M

#### ADULT PROGRAM

Most people use binoculars to observe and identify birds. However, many more species are located through recognizing sounds. The mid-to-late winter season is a great time to focus on our year-round residents like cardinals, mourning doves, titmice, downy woodpeckers and more. This workshop will combine songs with slides. Then we will take a walk along the field and forest trails, to test your new listening skills. **Maximum 15.**

### Archaeology in RI's Cemeteries

**Date:** Friday, March 8

**Time:** 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM

**Fee:** Free

#### FAMILY PROGRAM

The cemeteries of Rhode Island may not yield such exotic treasures as the tombs of Egypt, but they are rich in history. This overview of cemetery archaeology offers a unique perspective on graves and their physical

environment. Exploring the underground spaces of the dead provides new insight into the lives of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Rhode Islanders. Although family audiences are welcome, slides of the cemetery are graphic and may upset younger children. *Presenter: Jim Garman, assistant professor at Salve Regina University, specializing in archaeology, architectural history, and landscape history.* **Maximum 35.**

### Woodcock Walk

**Dates:** Friday, March 15

**Time:** 5:30 - 7:00 PM

**Fee:** \$8.00 NM

\$6.00 M

#### FAMILY PROGRAM



During the early spring, male woodcocks exhibit a behavior that includes a bizarre and amazing courtship flight. Dusk is a wonderful time at NBS, with activity from deer nibbling on new sprigs of growth, crickets awakening from their winter sleep, and of course, the amorous woodcocks with whistling wings. Join us for a delightful evening, sipping hot cocoa in a field surrounded by the wildlife that shares this island. **Maximum 20.**

### Private School Camp

**Ages:** K - 4th grade

**Dates:** Tuesday - Friday, March 19 - 22

**Time:** 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

**Fee:** \$125 NM

\$115 M

#### CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

"Winter Marine Life" is our theme for the week (see Winter Vacation Camp for more details). Be sure to

bring your lunch, snack, and water bottle everyday! Dress for the weather, too. **Maximum 10.**

### Spring Egg Hunt

**Ages:** 3 - 10 years old

**Dates:** Saturday, April 6

**Time:** 1:00 - 2:00 PM

**Fee:** \$8.00

#### MEMBERS ONLY

#### CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

Our annual Spring Egg Hunt is always so much fun, for kids and parents alike. It's great to watch the children searching the orchard, barn and upper trails for chocolate eggs and other goodies. Welcome spring this year by bringing them out to this program, which includes educational information about animals in the spring. Please bring your own collecting basket. **Maximum 35.**

### Nature Guide Training

**Dates:** Mondays & Thursdays, April

8, 11, 15, 18

**Time:** 9:00 - 11:00 AM

As a nature guide you will work with a group of 10 to 16 school children, leading them on a two hour hike through the property and visiting the various habitats. Sharing nature with children is a very rewarding experience, and if this sparks your fancy, please contact us to sign up for the comprehensive training session this spring (previous teaching experience *not* required).

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**Bird Walks begin January 3, 2002 and will continue on every other Sunday until March 31, 2002.**



# CALENDAR 2001

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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Guided Bird Walk 2	3	4	5	6	7	8 Holly Days Winter Celebration
Guided Bird Walk 9 First Day of Hanukkah	10	11	12	13	14	15
Guided Bird Walk 16	17	18	19	20	21 Winter Solstice	22
Guided Bird Walk 23	24	25 The Sanctuary is Closed Today Christmas Day	26 Kwanzaa Begins	27	28	29
Guided Bird Walk 30	31 New Year's Eve					

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# JANUARY 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5
Guided Bird Walk 6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 Plum Island Birding
Guided Bird Walk 20	21	22	23	24 Adult Owl Prowl	25 Family Owl Prowl	26
27	28	29	30	31		



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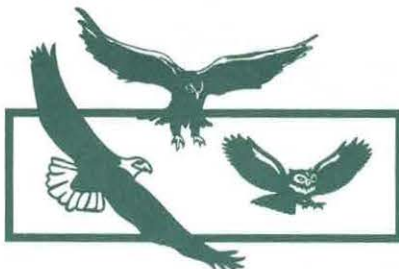
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This year's winter camp is going to be bigger and better than ever! The theme for





## Educational Programs



this year is "Winter Marine Life." During the week we will go on field trips searching out seals and other marine wildlife, including a stop at Biomes, a great hands-on aquarium in North Kingston. Do not worry, we will still spend plenty of time romping around the Sanctuary. Be sure to bring your lunch, snack, and water bottle every day. Dress for the weather, too! **Maximum 20.**

### Introduction to Birding by Ear

**Dates:** Saturday, March 2

**Time:** 9:00 - 11:00 AM

**Fee:** \$8.00 NM

\$6.00 M

#### ADULT PROGRAM

Most people use binoculars to observe and identify birds. However, many more species are located through recognizing sounds. The mid-to-late winter season is a great time to focus on our year-round residents like cardinals, mourning doves, titmice, downy woodpeckers and more. This workshop will combine songs with slides. Then we will take a walk along the field and forest trails, to test your new listening skills. **Maximum 15.**

### Archaeology in RI's Cemeteries

**Date:** Friday, March 8

**Time:** 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM

**Fee:** Free

#### FAMILY PROGRAM

The cemeteries of Rhode Island may not yield such exotic treasures as the tombs of Egypt, but they are rich in history. This overview of cemetery archaeology offers a unique perspective on graves and their physical

environment. Exploring the underground spaces of the dead provides new insight into the lives of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Rhode Islanders. Although family audiences are welcome, slides of the cemetery are graphic and may upset younger children. *Presenter: Jim Garman, assistant professor at Salve Regina University, specializing in archaeology, architectural history, and landscape history.* **Maximum 35.**

### Woodcock Walk

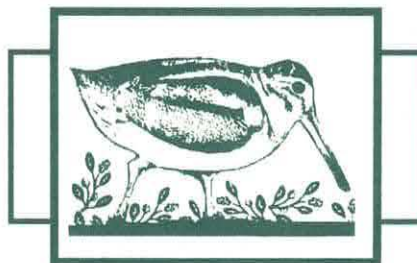
**Dates:** Friday, March 15

**Time:** 5:30 - 7:00 PM

**Fee:** \$8.00 NM

\$6.00 M

#### FAMILY PROGRAM



During the early spring, male woodcocks exhibit a behavior that includes a bizarre and amazing courtship flight. Dusk is a wonderful time at NBS, with activity from deer nibbling on new sprigs of growth, crickets awakening from their winter sleep, and of course, the amorous woodcocks with whistling wings. Join us for a delightful evening, sipping hot cocoa in a field surrounded by the wildlife that shares this island. **Maximum 20.**

### Private School Camp

**Ages:** K - 4th grade

**Dates:** Tuesday - Friday, March 19 - 22

**Time:** 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

**Fee:** \$125 NM

\$115 M

#### CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

"Winter Marine Life" is our theme for the week (see Winter Vacation Camp for more details). Be sure to

bring your lunch, snack, and water bottle everyday! Dress for the weather, too. **Maximum 10.**

### Spring Egg Hunt

**Ages:** 3 - 10 years old

**Dates:** Saturday, April 6

**Time:** 1:00 - 2:00 PM

**Fee:** \$8.00

#### MEMBERS ONLY

#### CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

Our annual Spring Egg Hunt is always so much fun, for kids and parents alike. It's great to watch the children searching the orchard, barn and upper trails for chocolate eggs and other goodies. Welcome spring this year by bringing them out to this program, which includes educational information about animals in the spring. Please bring your own collecting basket. **Maximum 35.**

### Nature Guide Training

**Dates:** Mondays & Thursdays, April 8, 11, 15, 18

**Time:** 9:00 - 11:00 AM

As a nature guide you will work with a group of 10 to 16 school children, leading them on a two hour hike through the property and visiting the various habitats. Sharing nature with children is a very rewarding experience, and if this sparks your fancy, please contact us to sign up for the comprehensive training session this spring (previous teaching experience *not* required).

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**Bird Walks begin January 3, 2002 and will continue on every other Sunday until March 31, 2002.**





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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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Guided Bird Walk 2	3	4	5	6	7	8 Holly Days Winter Celebration
Guided Bird Walk 9 <i>First Day of Hanukkah</i>	10	11	12	13	14	15
Guided Bird Walk 16	17	18	19	20	21 <i>Winter Solstice</i>	22
Guided Bird Walk 23	24	25 The Sanctuary is Closed Today <i>Christmas Day</i>	26 <i>Kwanzaa Begins</i>	27	28	29
Guided Bird Walk 30	31 <i>New Year's Eve</i>					

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 <i>New Year's Day</i>	2	3	4	5
Guided Bird Walk 6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 Plum Island Birding
Guided Bird Walk 20	21	22	23	24 Adult Owl Prowl	25 Family Owl Prowl	26
27	28	29	30	31		





## Naturalist's Notes

# JOURNEY OF A SNOW CRYSTAL

By Stephanie Bongiovanni

My story begins on a cold winter day when the temperature of the cloud I was in dropped below freezing (32° F, 0° C). Suddenly, I condensed directly into ice from water vapor, skipping the liquid form altogether. Earlier, I had wrapped myself around a microscopic piece of dust that had floated up into the atmosphere. Now, with this nucleus upon which to build, I became a beautiful six-sided snow crystal. Depending on the moisture content and temperature within the cloud, I could have formed into one of seven main crystal shapes. The stellar, or star-shaped (see illustration), is one of the rarer ones. I was lucky enough to have become a stellar ice crystal, which was about to lead me on an exciting journey!

Floating inside the cloud as a snow crystal, I continued to bump into water vapor molecules, which instantly froze as I hit them. I grew larger and eventually was heavy enough to succumb to the force of gravity pulling me toward the Earth's surface. Falling, I collided with other snow crystals. (This is especially easy to do when you are a stellar crystal because your six radiating arms stretch out and easily interlock with the arms of other crystals). As a member of this aggregation of snow crystals, I was finally a snowflake. Since the temperature remained below freezing, I knew that I would pile up with other snowflakes and we would blanket the earth with our beauty. I was about to find out that we would do more for the world than decorate it!

I landed on the ground amidst countless other snowflakes (many were composed of other types of snow crys-

tals that had come from different clouds). I could see humans holding out their arms to catch some of my fellow crystals on their sleeves, examining the shapes to see how many they could find. I suspected that they were also trying to determine whether there is any truth to the theory that you will never find two identical snowflakes.

Once the storm ended, and the world was very peaceful, most sounds were dampened by the blanket we had created. There were no animals to be found, for they had waited out the storm in sheltered areas. Soon they would go about their lives and would need to adapt to their new environment.



It turns out that our blanket of snow is pretty challenging for some animals. Many find it difficult to walk through deep snow. Predators may need to search harder for small prey, which are now well hidden. Many animals, however, are very well adapted for living in the snow. For instance, lynx and snowshoe hare have large, furry feet for walking on top of the snow, and ruffed grouse grow extra feathers on their feet to help them do the same. Long-tailed weasels grow a coat of white fur in the winter, so that they will be well camouflaged. It turns out that snow is a great benefit to some animals. For example, hibernating insects will be extra warm now that our insulating blanket covers the earth, while rabbits and other animals that remain active will have a place to

dig sheltered, warm burrows. In addition, a thick layer of snow will put the rabbits closer to an important food source - the buds at the tops of saplings. But dormant plants under the snow will be better protected from foraging animals.

We stayed on earth as snow until sunny days and warm temperatures caused us to melt (just having the sun shine on us is not enough for us to melt, since much of the sunlight is reflected off of our surface). While some of my fellow snowflakes were melting and seeping into the ground (another chance to help the plants!), I traveled over the land's surface into a nearby pond. As the winter wore on, I was lucky enough to freeze again, this time becoming part of the pond ice.

As spring approached, the air and water temperatures began to rise and the pond ice melted. Soon, summer arrived, and temperatures were warm enough for me to evaporate from the pond and travel up to the atmosphere. Eventually, I met up with some other water vapor molecules and we formed a cloud. I had come full circle, and now would wait until it was my turn to fall to earth again, either as rain or snow. I was excited because I knew that as the cycle continued, I might have a chance to try out all of the forms of snow crystals, possibly ending up on someone's sleeve as they marvelled at the fact that no two snowflakes are identical.

To learn more about snow and other winter weather, check out our program listing for "Blizzards," with local meteorologist Tony Petrarca.



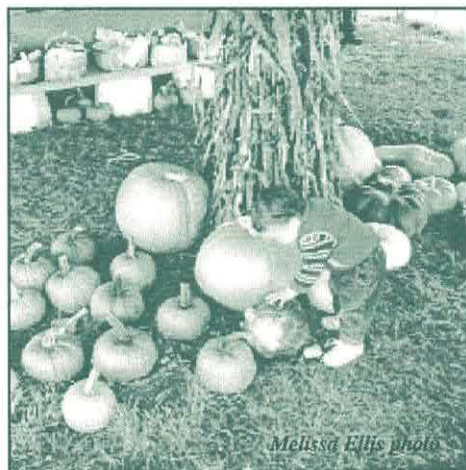




## Volunteers & Events

### Reaping in Another Successful Harvest Fair!

By Lori Cochrane



Melissa Ellis photo

Gazing from my office window across the now tranquil Harvest Fair field, it is almost impossible to imagine that it entertained thousands of people just a few weeks ago. Our 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Harvest Fair was a great success, measured both in the fun experiences had by all ages and the funds raised to benefit the Sanctuary and its educational programming.

Both days of the Fair were filled with wonderful musical acts, old fashioned games and activities including the ever popular monkey bridge, rock wall, sack races, log saw contest, hay and pony rides, and mud pit. This year's fair saw the Educational Exhibits expand to fill two tents. Local clubs and area nonprofit organizations used interactive displays to educate fair-goers on topics ranging from amateur radio to recycling. With over fifty New England artisans displaying their arts and crafts, the fairgrounds were larger than ever.

The Harvest Fair's continued success is a result of many months of preparation and careful planning by a dedicated group of volunteers – The Harvest Fair Committee. Special thanks to this year's outstanding Harvest Fair Committee, including: Lorrie Burns and Annie Howell (co-chairs), Anne Burns, Karen Shea, Bev Commons, Hellie Cassagrande, Kathy Shorey, Ginny Hinds, Connie Sullivan, Lori Call, Ann Gizzi, Kevin Zahm, Mike Condry, Lisa Carillo, Colleen Jermain, Diane Bolusky, Heather Lynch, Bob Barlow, Bob Hembrecht, Kevin Bongiovanni, Chris Greene, Marilyn Stookey, Beverly

Murphy, and William Flynn.

In addition, hundreds of community volunteers came out to lend a hand. High school students from both Portsmouth and Middletown High Schools were extremely reliable and willing to help out wherever necessary.

We are grateful to our Corporate Sponsors, who assisted us financially and also by providing volunteer groups - as in the case of the Newport County Board of Realtors, who stepped in and cheerfully manned the fair gates for an entire day.

Finally, thank you to each and every Sanctuary member, neighbor and friend who came out to help at this year's fair. The Harvest Fair is truly a community event that would be inconceivable without your kindness and support.



**The Norman Bird Sanctuary**  
wishes to thank all those who helped to make the 27th Annual Harvest Fair a great success!

**Thank you to our Sponsors & Supporters:**

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- Office Depot
- RI Resource Recovery Corp.

Thank you to all of the wonderful volunteers who made this event possible and Special thanks to the

**Harvest Fair Committee 2001**



Melissa Ellis photo





## Trails & Tails

### The Trials and Tribulations of Poultry Ownership

by Veronica Hinds

November 5th 2001, there were twelve happy little chickens. November 6th 2001, there was one frightened lonely chicken. One live chicken sitting next to a pile of eleven dead chickens. After freeing the lone survivor, the staff was left to deal with the ramifications of this horrific scene.

The question: What on earth would do such a heinous deed?

The Clues: Each chicken had died as a result of a wound on the back of its neck, but nothing was consumed or taken away. They chickens were piled up against the far wall of their coop. There was a small diameter hole in the middle of the hardware cloth that lined the coop. Something had burrowed through.

The answer: **The Mink** *Mustela vison*.

**Description:** A weasel-like carnivore, about the size of a house cat and semiaquatic in habit; generally dark chocolate brown in color, head hardly larger around than neck; eyes and ears small; legs short. It's about eighteen to twenty-four inches in length, including the somewhat bushy five to seven inch tail, and weighs one and a half to three pounds. Females are about three-fourths the size of males. Mink are polygamous. Their mating season is in January, February, and March. The four to eight young are born after a gestation period of from 39-76 days. At birth the young are blind, helpless, and covered with a coat of fine, short, silvery-white hair. They weigh about 6 grams. When they are about two weeks old, the whitish hair is replaced by a dull, fluffy, reddish brown coat. Which, later in the year, is replaced by the adult hair. Their eyes open at

about 37 days of age and they leave the nest for the first time when about seven weeks old.

**Habitat:** Mink are found throughout the United States, appearing in parts of every state except Arizona. They are closely associated with the waterways and lakes of North America, but the smaller streams are preferred to large, broad rivers. Along the coast they frequent the brackish marshes and on occasion, the littoral area adjacent to the ocean. They are most common along streams partly choked by windfalls and other debris.

**Behavior:** Mink are primarily solitary animals, with males being particularly intolerant of one another. They are mostly active at night, especially near dawn and dusk. The mink is a skilled



swimmer and climber. In searching for food, they can swim up to 100 feet underwater and dive to depths of 20 feet. They are tireless wanderers and may travel a couple of miles in search of food.

Mink will occasionally kill domestic poultry around farms. They typically kill their prey by biting them through the skull or neck. Closely spaced pairs of canine tooth marks are signs of the mink kill. Like some other members of the weasel family, mink occasionally exhibit "surplus killing" behavior (killing much more than they can possibly eat), when presented with an abundance of food, such as in a poultry house full of chickens. After the kill the mink will place the dead chickens neatly in a pile.

**Economic importance:**

Mink pelts have for years been considered one of the most luxurious furs on the market. Originally all fur came from natural populations, causing a severe strain on the species. However, starting in the mid 1900s, mink ranches were es-

tablished to help bring a more consistent pelt supply to the market. Ranching was successful, with the number of mink ranches in the United States reaching a high of 7200 during the mid-1960s. While the number of ranches has declined nationally to 439 (1998), a total of 2.94 million pelts were still produced (both wild and domestic mink), that were valued at \$72.9 million dollars (USDA 1999).

Although an individual incident of mink predation can be costly, overall the problem is not very significant to agriculture. But it can have personal significance to those of us that raise chickens as pets.

**Damage prevention and control:**

Exclusion is the best solution to mink predation on domestic animals. Physically exclude the minks entry, seal all openings larger than one inch with wood or tin, and by using one inch mesh poultry netting around chicken yards and over ventilation openings. Mink do not gnaw like rodents, but they are able to use burrows or gnawed openings made by rats. So fix those holes.

\*\*\*\*\*

A special thanks this month from the Norman Bird Sanctuary staff to **Frank Furtado**, a talented and committed volunteer. Frank helped in the spring with a new cage for our red-tailed hawk, and spoke with me about a particular interest in turtle habitats. We discussed the need for a special habitat for our resident Eastern box turtle, who has, not entirely happily, shared a tank with Little Jo. Frank designed and built a new habitat for the box turtle, which is designed not only to more closely replicate his natural habitat here in the Sanctuary, but also to make it easier to view him. With a ledge for children to sit at a glass window and watch his behaviors, we anticipate that he will be as much a popular star here as Little Jo has been these many years. The turtle is already displaying much more normal, less stressed behavior. What an incredible gift to the Sanctuary, Frank! Thank you for your dedication to wildlife protection and to the Norman Bird Sanctuary!



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