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Last issue written by
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The Norman Bird--A Flyer

Hi! Just because the calendar says "Spring" does not insure the winter is through with us, instantly! Geese are still flying over--Perhaps because of the ice, north, and the snows, south, they stay here, where until March 2 some of our deepest ponds had not frozen completely, and where farmers had spread winter wheat and rye, and Bob had scattered corn. We haven't had a winter like this since '42 when we were all too busy with The War Effort to notice! But we are grateful for the mild winter we are in! This old Bird goes back to winters when drifts were hand dug--too much for the machines, and when there was no "down hill" from The Barn! The Sanct. has been, and is, lovely, with fields of softest gold with patches of bronzed red dried ferns, berries everywhere uneaten, as with open ground, seeds are bountiful. Mosses are blazing greens, the bark of maples are apricot. Foxes and abandoned cats are fat. Mink zip by so fast and shining, one can't be quite sure one saw anything! Bob says each predator animal is within 36" of food!

Many twigs can be snapped and brought in for early bouquets--pussywillows are first to come to mind,--hideous black alder will drop graceful catkins of golden Victorian charm, when brought indoors. *Pyrus japonica* will bloom a delicate Oriental pink, even if all you can spare is two twigs; Crab- and apple blossoms bloom in the warmth of home, plus water. So will a tiny bit of moss, if you provide a humid habitat for it. Some mosses grow scarlet mushrooms, of elfin size! Forsythia, cut a week ago, rival the yellow of evening grosbeaks at the feeder outside. So far, no sign of gold on gold finch--they need more sun to change their winter overcoat colour. But the shoulder blaze of gold and scarlet arrived Mar 3 with redwings who flew, finally, through the snow. Usually the first week in Feb, find them at the feeders. Probably the southern snows held them back this year. We know the swallows left Argentina, and on the appointed day will arrive at Capistrano. We peeked, and daffodils near southern stone walls are up 2 whole inches! No, the earth is not dead! It is very much alive, with all forms of life eating, mating, birthing, sleeping, reproducing, it is only we humans who wrongly think winter is a dead season. As for colours, we humans are endowed with eyes capable of seeing 1/2 million shades of colour, we have only to use our wonderful eyes and see these miracles around us, no matter where one is!!! Have you noticed, pine trees as you pass, have already formed next years pine cones?

This is the mating season for owls. There was a well attended Owl walk- Bob got out of a sick bed to conduct it. A few days before an injured great horned owl was brought in . Bob assisted Dr.Kenfield,DVM, in the setting of the broken wing. He may have mated already, so very soon, with TLC he can rejoin his spouse. If not, next year he surely will. No lady owl could resist so handsome a courtier. Anybody lost a white domestic goose? It can fly, was injured, now recovered, and most ungracious about the whole thing, despite his suite in our largest cage. He wants his own. If he's not claimed, maybe later,when the ice is gone from Cerio Pond, he will be happier there, but home would still be best!

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How long have you been around The Sanct.? Do you go back to Mrs.Cerio who gave us her land? Or did you come aboard with Mr. Hacket, a keeper? Our first director was Jim Baird, a naturalist. He left after two years as there was no money to do winter work with. He was the chap who had to wait 6 months for .27¢ to replace a saw blade. His first summer day camp raised \$1000.00 which he turned over to the Trustees --he thought that they would hold it as seed money for the next day-camp. But Bankers will be bankers, so they invested it. Dear Jim, we still enjoy the profits from that money! But then, Jim had to turn to, with hat in hand, and raise some money for summer camp. He is now prominent in Mass Audubon. Then came Bob Woodruff and the forming of an Advisory Committee. Bob was a naturalist. He too found the winter boring. He filled up his time carving the beautiful signs, some of which are still with us. The "Quarry Nature Trail" is the first one one sees. (The gorgeous sign at the gate was a gift of the John Stevens Shop.) After Bob left-- he's the guy doing such wonders preserving the shore and wetlands on Martha's Vineyard--we had our first director, not a naturalist, Lee Gardner, museum man from Ankara, Turkey; and a new Chairman of the Committee, Ad.Eccles, USN. It was from Ad. Eccles many of the next ten years of innovations sprang. This newsletter was his idea, and a membership to provide working funds. Under him we bought, with emergency help from R.I.Audubon and The Nature Conservancy, some 47 acres that suddenly opened up for sale and would have blacktopped the Alfalfa Field, ruined the sheep fold and sprouted a condo where Cerio Pond is now.. Then the membership came roaring up and we have paid back the full \$50,000. except for \$1.00 still owed to Audubon, which keeps those fields tax exempt.! That was dear Archie Van Buren's bright thinking. And, using the Audubon again, our checks feed through their

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accounts, thus remaining tax-free. That's why your checks may be late in re-appearing in your accounts.. Gardner resigned after ten years and we got our first real bird man--Bob Hinckley. Most of his work has been with Zoo birds, but any bird is his love.

And that brings us neatly to Zoos. Years ago, zoos were where small-time politicians could find city paid jobs for their no-good sons or son-in-laws. The men knew nothing about animals and cared only for the paychecks that would buy their cheap booze. Animals died almost faster than they could be replaced. Some 25-30 years ago, things began to change. Mostly due to Marlin Perkins--father of the modern zoo. He attracted highly educated specialists in animal care. Ph.Ds in about everything relating to animals., from diet and skin to teeth and habitats., from parasites to reproduction. In this marvelous change zoos have ceased to be a consumer of wild life and become the place where endangered species live and reproduce their kind, as it is intended for all living things to do. (Some of the cat family--tigers, lions etc., now are given The Pill--they live so properly!). So back to Bob again. He left Honeywell to live with birds. We only hope he has some Honeywell stock, because the salary at the Sanct. can not compete with Honeywell!! Bob says money isn't everything. Indeed it is not. It is not "the cart" nor is it the "horse", but it is "the grease" which makes the wheels go round, without screaming. A few more things about Bob. He is a New Englander and he's not about to fawn all over you. Fawners are simply horrid. Bob will keep a straight face no matter what outrageous statement he may make--like--"dieting to keep his weight at its usual 110 lbs". He is 6'4" and, Escoffier he is--he still keeps his weight between 210-220. One other outstanding thing about Bob is, if he does not know something he says so, then looks it up. There is no surer sign of greatness than a willingness to be correct. (Francis de Sales 1567-1622). Have you ever noticed how few people ever admit ignorance? In my long life I note only great people do so. Bob wondered about our 2½ acres of Krumholtz trees which, we were told were so rare that they grow only on the Alps at 6000 ft. above sea level, yet here they are, growing on rocks at 40 ft. where the temp. in summer must touch 125 degrees F. So Bob called in the Botany depts. of 2 R.I. Colleges--and we have--2½ acres of junipers! Birds, venting their seed containing droppings as they flew over Hanging Rocks, sprouted in the little earth and water that comes to them in their Pudding Stone holes, dwarfed by lack of root space, food and water they simply have done the best they could. Had they dropped a bit westward they'd have washed away, a bit to the east, they'd be 20-30-ft. tall as are their brothers growing.

But we are faithful--we still love our Sanct. Krums or no Krums.

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Back to twigs again- Andromedea will make as lovely a flowering springtime arrangement as the damsel after whom it is named. She was the only daughter of Capheus and Cassiopeia, King and Queen of Ethopia. At the demand of a sea-monster, she and she alone, could save her country from flood, if she were to be chained to the cliffs so he could eat her! Perseus, having just slain Medusa, saw her chained to the rocks, and loved her. He killed the sea-monster, rescued Andromedea and married her. So remember that when graceful white flowers drop-like veils, after a few days in warmth of your home--and water!

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For those of you who are thinking of careers, this quote from Andrew Mellon-- if you don't know who he was, look him up in the Encyclopedia---" It is not the rich man's son that the struggler-for-advancement has to fear in the race for life, nor his nephew, nor his cousin. Let him look out for the "dark horse" in the boy who Begins by sweeping out the office."

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Tact is the ability to describe others as they see themselves-----A. Lincoln

Consult your calender of events---lots coming up at Sanct. ~~1940~~

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