

JUNE 2020

HALIFAX NEWS

Gardens

May and the coronavirus have put us to work in the kitchen and in the yard.



The month of May saw covering snowfalls, including a windy snowstorm on May 9 that coated every branch of the still-naked maples in our field. It saw 80-degree heat. It brought us baby birds and busybody bugs. It brought confusion as I occasionally wondered, what month is this? What day is it? Oh, yeah. Good morning, quarantine.

Friends and coworkers, unseen for months, warned of added pounds while

sharing their latest recipes. I made rock-hard sourdough bread but delicious whole wheat “everything” bagels. I made many cheesecakes. I like having this extra time to do things at home instead of going, going, going somewhere, anywhere, everywhere. As I cooked, I watched the bluebirds and tree swallows fighting over the nest boxes we had put out (the tree swallows won).

Having more time to walk and less inclination to drive anywhere, I have been watching the woodland flowers come out—one day the trout lilies, another day the trilliums (both red and white), lately Jack-in-the-pulpit and—a new one to me—sessile bellwort. That one is hard to spy with its shyly drooping, narrow yellow blossom and minimal leaves. I took its picture, in case you are curious to see it. Skinny little thing.



I love the sundews by the pond, tiny carnivorous plants, sticky palms glistening. I love the floating clouds of little bluets that have lingered in the fields and lawns this month. Little bluet, or *Houstonia caerulea*, as a website tells me, is plentiful and beautiful. The website offered this further enlightenment: “The Cherokee used an infusion of little bluet as a cure for bedwetting” (gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org).

The watching and looking has been good this past month. Then there is gardening. I like to dig in the dirt and move things around and put in a few annuals, but I am not a real gardener. There are many in Halifax who are, however. Here is a picture of one. The photo was taken in 1933 and has been colorized. Who is it? To help you a bit more, an evocative poem about a Halifax gardener follows.



The Gardener

She built her dream
On a south-facing slope
dependable spring
A plant wonderland
High Halifax had never seen—
Dig and divide, share-the-wealth mother
Superior, sacred source
Of every erstwhile garden and gardener
In all the hilltop domains.

We met on the ice
Timeless toe loops and legs
Perfectly perpendicular, not
Ninety pounds with her skates on.
White-water racer, back country guide
She figure-eighted me
Her arm now in mine
She knew my one rhododendron,
Suggesting, it seemed, I could do better, and
Before skating off, *Come by in the spring.*

So

After the snows
And mud, skunk cabbage and peepers,
I showed up
to dozens of little bags of soil
and shoots just breaking through
tagged in Latin and common, water and sun
I've been waiting for you

Walks and talks and twenty years
of bags and baggies—
Ligularia, kirengeshoma and phlox.
She enlisted me in her campaign
to grow the blue Himalayan poppy.
Shared her seed and her sadness
When her decades-old carpet
of heath and heather, collunna and ericaceae
Turned threadbare in successive
snowless winters.

It's more work her world without mulch.
The daily bend and fall to knee,
Soiled hands and mindless hours
Weeding out the unwanted. But there are gifts—
Nature's whimsical, self-sowing splatter,

unexpected treasure, extravagant bounty,
and the greatest, giving it away.

Year after year, flood after freeze,
I harvest more baggies and reread
Her June fairytale of marsh marigold
Pulmonaria and primrose
In opera house tiers, which dip their toes
In artfully dammed pools,
A scramble of streams.

She visits me at a civilized hour—
Eighty something, crowned in straw, silver braid
Rapunzeling to the waist, long sleeves and
wellies—
to tour far-flung beds and borders
filled with her progeny.

Artemisia and arsenic, a shade of pink
Too demanding, brush piles and critters
And compost, bards and barred owls
Pollinators in decline—

Socratic musings and subtle wonderments,
soil testing and companionable silence.

Oh, the thrill, finding a wildflower
Or a lungwort whose silver spots
Caught her eye.
When she accepts a shovel
Of each for her garden, my world
Turns upside down.

Lupin, daylilies, and other imperialists
She banishes to the roadside,
Where her husband can restrain them
With the mower—Sweet Cicely's white lace
On sugary stems she keeps to herself,
despite my pleadings
And pizelles.

Not well behaved
My child, my Cicely runs wild—
The bully on the playground
Only a mother could love.

-- Gregg Orifici, Halifax, Vermont (©2020)

TOWN NEWS

GUESS WHAT? No gatherings are scheduled! **Stay safe, stay 6 feet apart, wear a mask, and wash your hands.**

CORONAVIRUS IN HALIFAX. The Halifax Emergency Management Director (EMD) posted a notice of 2 confirmed cases in Halifax back on April 9th and none since then (<https://halifaxvermont.com/>). For information, contact our EMD Peggy Rafus at 802 490 8221 or Email: peggyrafushalifaxemd@gmail.com. State information: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/coronavirus-covid-19>



LOCAL BUSINESSES NEED YOUR PATRONAGE. <https://halifaxvermont.com/about/halifax-business-services/>

TOWN OF HALIFAX SELECT BOARD MEETINGS are continuing 1st and 3rd Tuesdays 7pm via teleconference call. Contact the Selectboard secretary at 368-2590 or halifaxsecretary@gmail.com to receive call-in details. <https://halifaxvermont.com/selectboard/>.

SENIOR MEAL (SERVING IN HALIFAX SINCE 2000)

Friday, June 19 is the next Halifax Senior Meal served at the Halifax Community Hall, 20 Brook Road, West Halifax. Once again it will be TAKE-OUT ONLY because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The menu is roast pork, gravy, mashed potatoes, vegetable, roll and dessert.

You may pick up the meals outside the Hall (weather permitting) **from 11 AM to 1 PM**. If the weather is bad, the take-out boxes will be just inside the foyer door for pick-up.

Donations are welcome but not necessary. The cost is \$3.00 for age 60 & up (\$4 for younger companions). Put exact change in the donation can on the table. PLEASE DO NOT MAKE CHANGE – don't risk the contact with everyone else's dollars. If you cannot make a donation, just take the meal. Meals will be packaged up and ready to go.

Please call Joan to let her know how many meals you want: 802.368.7733.

The Halifax Fire Company Annual Auction has been postponed. It usually takes place the first Saturday in July, but we cannot gather together that early. Watch for updates regarding the auction and the Clam Bake.

OLD HOME DAYS celebrating Halifax's 270 years have been **postponed** from 2020 to 2021. If you have thoughts and suggestions, feel free to send them to Patty Dow halifax@myfairpoint.net. Please stay safe and healthy, and we hope to see everyone when it's safe

FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

May 13 one truck and five men responded to a mutual aid call to 'cover' Readsboro station. They were turned back en route.

May 17 three men responded to assist the ambulance on McMillan road. The patient was transported to Greenfield Hospital.

May 24 five men responded to LaRock Lane; the patient was transported to Brattleboro hospital by ambulance.

May 25 three men responded to LaRock Lane again; there was no transport.

FOOD IS AVAILABLE from the Deerfield Valley Food Pantry, 7 Church Street in Wilmington. For more information, call 464-0148, or visit <https://www.facebook.com/DeerfieldValleyFoodPantry/> or <http://www.deerfieldvalleyfoodpantry.org/>. Perishables distributed on certain days, non-perishables distributed Thursday 6/18 from 1-3 PM, and Saturday 6/20 from 9-11 AM. "We will be serving our customers via "curbside" again this month – meaning our customers should drive up to the food pantry and wait in their cars. One of our volunteers will check the customers in, and another volunteer will load groceries into the vehicle. Please help us practice "social distancing" by staying in your cars." Serving Dover, Halifax, Jacksonville, Marlboro, Readsboro, Searsburg, Whitingham, and Wilmington.

WHITINGHAM FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY is open for pick-up & delivery on Saturdays and Thursdays from 11am – 2pm. Please call 368-7506 or email whitinghamvtlibrary@hotmail.com to place an order. Whitingham Library Catalog (copy and paste link): <https://opac.libraryworld.com/opac/home.php> - Library name: Whitingham Free, Password - none / blank

HALIFAX DIRECTORY

Get listed in the Halifax Directory! List your business. List yourself, too. Please send your information to LaurelACopeland@gmail.com (or by mail to 1513 Hanson Road, Brattleboro VT 05301). Send the information you want published: Name, Business Name, Address, Telephone, Cell Phone, Email.

Feel free to share this request with other Halifax residents and other persons associated with Halifax. We would love to have your submission this month (June). We need a little money to print the directory. Ads can be purchased – ask us! – *Penfield Chester & Laurel Copeland*

JOAN'S SIGHTINGS

OH, MY.....do I have birds!!!!!! BEAUTIFUL BIRDS..... I have two pair of Baltimore Orioles coming to grape jelly and oranges. They really are so beautiful! They bring me joy each time I see them, and they come very often! I still have the Woodpeckers, Mourning Doves, Cardinals, Evening Grosbeaks, a few Blue Jays, Goldfinch males in their beautiful yellow colors and the pretty females, and of course the Hummers. I enjoy them very much too. I had an Indigo Bunting a short time. I also had a pair of wild ducks feeding under the feeder -- that was a first for me having them! I was surprised to see a Titmouse at a feeder. It sort of looked like a young one. I still have the White-breasted Nuthatch and the faithful Chickadees. I am happy to have Tree Swallows in a birdhouse here, also. The numbers of Red-winged Blackbirds are down but there are still some. Of course, most birds are raising young now, too, so we don't see them quite as often. Still enjoy the many Sparrows I see, too. I hope my bear problems are over.....so far, so good. I didn't dare to walk underneath it while it was in the tree -- that was scary.

Send your animal sightings to Joan at: jwcinvt@gmail.com

STRANGE TIMES...

I am sorry to think that most functions will not be allowed this summer because of COVID-19. Guess we will just have to wait and see. STAY WELL, EVERYONE - *Joan Courser*

WHAT'S THE STORY HERE? Do you know? This rock is in Halifax Center, by the side of the road. It reads, "A midsummer Rose // When friendship becomes hidden // By all laughter is forbidden."





Caddisfly carrying a big load

On Hanson Road we've seen grouse, red foxes, deer, grey squirrels and chipmunks, porcupines, a mole, many mice, mallards, geese and goslings, barred owl, broad-winged hawk, red-tail hawk, downy woodpeckers, veery thrush, goldfinches, common yellow-throat warbler, rose-breasted grosbeak (looking for the birdfeeder), tree swallows, bluebirds, robins, starlings, crows, ravens, little sparrows with rusty caps, white-crowned sparrows, red efts, green frogs and brown ones, the eggs of the spotted salamander, wasps, bumble bees (May 13), mosquitos, fireflies and butterflies –



White-crowned sparrow

big black ones, delicate blue ones, and a small black and white one. Up on Old Stage, we saw a debris-laden caddisfly toiling through the water of a vernal pool (picture: the head is black, beginning of body is white, debris is bigger than the fly). -Laurel

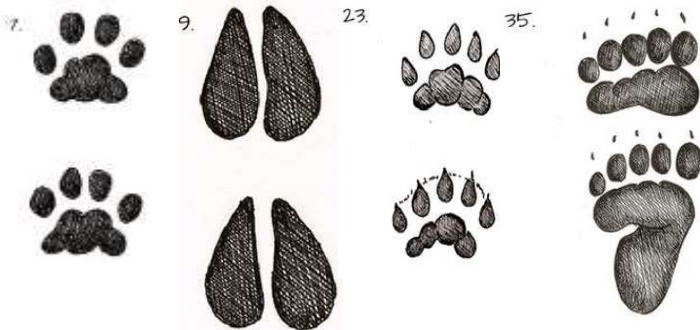


Tree swallows

WILDLIFE CROSSINGS –

LET ME KNOW IF YOU SEE ANY OF THESE 5 ANIMALS CROSSING A ROAD. Thanks for your calls and emails!

If you see one of these 5 mammals on or crossing a road, or if you see tracks/scat that suggest one crossed the road, let me know (LaurelACopeland@gmail.com, 368-2439). I am interested in the date of the crossing and the precise location. The 5 animals are Bobcat (tracks #7), Moose (tracks #9), River Otter (tracks #23), Black Bear (tracks #35), and Fisher (tracks with ruler).



A REMINDER (subscriptions) Please keep in mind that MOST subscriptions for the newsletter are due in AUGUST unless your address label says otherwise. You will find the month/year your subscription comes due on your label. Send payment and save me sending out notifications. If I ask you for your subscription at the wrong time, please forgive me. I do make mistakes sometimes, and they seem to come more often as I age. That is why I put the due date on the address labels as a reminder to you. The yearly fee is the same (\$7).

Newsletter

P O Box 27

West Halifax VT 05358



Bluebird looking in the window



Last snowfall – May 9, 2020

Halifax News

JUNE 2020

The **Honor Roll** from in front of the church in the village of West Halifax needs repair. If you would like to support this project, please send your donation to: Joan Courser, PO Box 27, W. Halifax, VT. 05358 (earmarked **Honor Roll**). The Honor Roll names **residents born and raised in Halifax who served in the armed forces**. We will update it. Please let us know if you feel you qualify to be on it. It will move to the Halifax Community Hall lawn after repairs are completed.

NEWSLETTER - Send your Halifax story to Laurel LaurelACopeland@gmail.com or Joan JWCinVt@gmail.com (802.368.7733; PO Box 27 05358).

Editor LaurelACopeland@gmail.com. Color e-mail version available.