

March 2021

HALIFAX NEWS

SPRING DREAMING

by Laurel Copeland, Halifax, Vermont

February deep freeze yielding to the freeze-thaw cycle makes me think of maple sugaring. While cursing the foot-deep ruts and ornery ridges of mud season, I look for old-time metal buckets and admire the blue tubing that brings maple sap down the hills to large sap traps along the roads. Oh, here is an ode to mud season!

Winter Motion

Slow and steady now
the old truck eases onto the everyday
roller coaster of half-frozen ruts. Still,
one channels them unaware.
He overcompensates, tires twisting 75 degrees to sideways,
lugging them into a ditch. Had it been fifteen years ago,
or fifty, they might have limbered, snow hopped, wheeled.
Now, coffee flies from trembling hands,
soiling her Irish sweater—a souvenir
from their one trip abroad—and the un-mailed bills
on the dash. Reproach sluices through the air,
fast, uncontrollable as regret.
She screams his name like a curse.
You never support me, he says. *Push.*
She crouches shoulder to tailgate.
Always she wanted to live in town.
You never *really* wanted me, muttering
slush and splatter.
Finally, he remembers to engage
the four-wheel drive. He wraps her
into the passenger seat with a wool blanket
pulling ice from her hair—then cranks the heat,
which works like a charm.

-- Gregg Orifici

This winter, I have been enjoying VAST trails—those trails maintained by the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers. The snow-covered tracks through consenting property-owners' forests let me see the woods and the light and the birds absent the traffic of the roads. Sometimes at night I hear snowmobiles in the distance, now grabbing their last snowy rides before it all turns to slush. And in the morning I think, Look at that sunrise on an 11-hour day! We are making progress toward spring.

The rhythm of our freeze-thaw cycle, when it is not causing havoc on the dirt roads, is causing magic in the roadside maple trees. Maple sugaring was developed by Native Americans in the northern parts of the continent. Native tribes had different names for the maple tree and its wonderful sap. The Algonquin called maple sugar *sinsibuckwud*. The Ojibway said *sheesheegummavvis*, meaning “sap flows fast.” The Cree called the maple tree *sisibaskwattick*. The Anishinaabe of



Minnesota called it *aninaatig ahfiwaagamizigan* (maple syrup). Native Americans taught white settlers how to tap maple trees and boil the sap down to sugar, which kept indefinitely. When sheet metal and tin cans were developed in the 19th century, people began canning maple syrup. Around the turn of the last century, the flat-bottomed flue pan was developed, with baffles and channels to put more of the sap in contact with fire-heated metal, leading eventually to the modern evaporator. In the middle of the 20th century, the use of plastic pipelines was developed, rather slowly from 1959 to the mid-1970s, but now replacing the majority of the classic bucket-and-spile systems of sap collection.

TOWN NEWS

FIRE DEPARTMENT

- On 1/25 in Whitingham the Deerfield Valley Ambulance could not get up a steep driveway because of snow. Wayne [Courser] pulled the ambulance out and brought the patient down to the ambulance on this mutual aid call, neighbor helping neighbor.
- On 1/26, five men and Deerfield Valley Ambulance responded to a call on Deer Park Rd. It turned out to be an untimely death.
- On 1/26, five men responded to West Halifax Bible Church for a woman with chest pains. She was transported to Brattleboro Hospital.
- On 2/12, three men responded to an alarm sounding on Collins Road. The alarm was being checked by the alarm company.
- On 2/18, five men and one truck responded to a mutual aid call for a chimney fire in Guilford.
- On 2/19, three men and one fire truck responded to Readsboro to ‘cover’ their station; they were turned back en route.
- On 2/19, six men responded to Rte. 112 for a car on the side of the road, found it was just broken down.
- On 2/20, five men and one fire truck, Whitingham Rescue, Deerfield Valley Rescue and Colrain Rescue responded at eight minutes after midnight to an accident on Rte. 112.
- On 2/21, six men responded to Karen Day Rd. for a woman having trouble breathing. She was transported to Bennington Hospital.
- On 2/21, three men from Halifax Fire Dept., Whitingham Rescue and Deerfield Valley Ambulance responded to LaRock Lane for a woman with severe headache. She was transported to Brattleboro Hospital.

HEALTH – GETTING A COVID-19 VACCINE IN VERMONT

You can register for the vaccine to prevent COVID-19 at the Vermont Department of Health website: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/myvaccine> or <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine/getting-covid-19-vaccine>.

For help making an account, please call **(802) 863-7240**.

When you are eligible to get an appointment, return to your registered account and book a time and location.

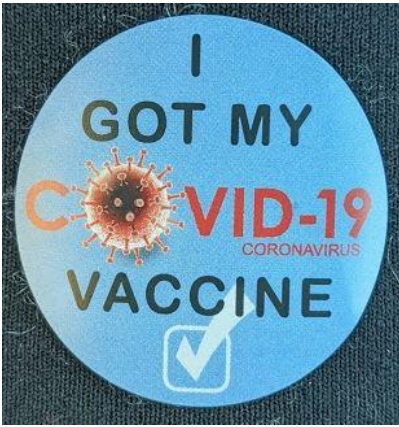
For help making an online appointment, call **(855) 722-7878**.

Remember that you need 2 doses, 3 weeks apart for Pfizer BioNtech vaccine and 4 weeks apart for Moderna. The new Johnson & Johnson shot will be a one-time dose when it becomes available.

You will be given a federal COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card. You may use it when traveling to satisfy quarantine requirements in some areas (such as when returning to the state of Vermont).



In February, **“People 70 and older need to live, work or access primary care in Vermont to be eligible for the vaccine.”** On March 1, the age limit will drop to 65 and older.



After that group is vaccinated, people with high-risk health conditions will be able to get the vaccine. These conditions include cancer, chronic kidney disease, COPD including emphysema and chronic bronchitis, heart disease (but not high blood pressure), those with compromised immune function, pregnant women, severely obese persons (BMI 40+), people with diabetes (type 1 or type 2), and those with sickle cell disease, and those with chromosomal or intellectual or lung-function disabilities; see <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine/about-covid-19-vaccines-vermont>.

Veterans in the area can call the VA to ask for an appointment for the vaccine. I volunteered at the Springfield (MA) outpatient clinic on Saturday (2/27); 300 veterans received the Moderna shot that day. One person on our team had the job of calling nearby veterans to come in on very short notice to replace our 8 no-shows; she was 100% successful, and we used every dose we thawed.

SENIOR MEAL

Friday, March 19 is Halifax's next Senior Meal. The menu is **New England Boiled Dinner** with corned beef, cabbage, carrots, potato, onion & rutabaga, served with cornbread and a dessert. It is still take-out only. Meals may be picked up from 11 AM until 1 PM at the Community Hall in West Halifax located at 20 Brook Road. A free-will donation of \$3.00 is suggested. All seniors are welcome.

Let Joan know you are coming by calling her at **802.368.7733**.

– Joan Courser

SORROW

We are sad to learn of the COVID19-related death of Halifax resident Roger Dann, b. March 21, 1934 d. February 23, 2021. Roger was a veteran having served in the US Navy during the Korean War. He loved the out-of-doors. Our sympathies go out to his family and friends. A memorial service will be held later in the spring at the Halifax Bible Church with a Christian burial following.

REMEMBERING EDIE FENTON

Edie gave me clippings from her Lemon-Scented Geranium plant. I have been propagating them over the past three years, in part so I can put them around my screened porch in the warm weather to discourage mosquitoes. The Halifax Community Club is pleased to offer a clipping of Edie's plant to anyone who would like one. A

donation to the Community Club would be welcome but is certainly not required.

If you are interested in having a clipping of Edie's Lemon-Scented Geranium, contact me, Laurel Copeland, HCC President & Clerk, via email

LaurelACopeland@gmail.com or call my landline 802-368-2439 or text me at 210-488-1701.

In the photo, these are the numerous plants with frilly leaves. These plants are also known as 'French Lace' geranium because the leaves have wavy margins and are closely



stacked on the stems, giving the plant a frilly appearance. They love sun and are drought-tolerant. And yes, they have a strong lemon scent.

JOAN'S SIGHTINGS.

Well...a few people have called with sightings....thank you..... Marion and Leslie saw 'a strange-looking bird' on a road in Halifax. It was the size of a goose...perhaps a darker grey than a goose...the head was a lighter color than the body...it had a long, pointed beak and webbed feet. They were and still are wondering what kind of bird it was. It could have been a pet as it was near a home that has several birds.

Bill Dame saw a possum...that is not an animal that should be out in winter???

Amanda and others saw a nice, good-sized Bobcat off Reed Hill Road, and a Bobcat has also been seen near Coopers Coop. I believe the animals are having a difficult time with all the snow (more than 2 feet) we have covering the ground, and that they are mostly having problems with the hard ice cover on the snow.

I have 12 wild turkeys coming to my feeders. I feel sorry for the wildlife with the conditions we have right now.....come Spring, come soon! My feeders are busy. I have so, so many Blue Jays: 20+ every day, several times a day. But I am happy to help them survive. I still have my Cardinals; they arrive each day around supper time (5pm). Chickadees, a Red-breasted woodpecker, a Downy woodpecker and a Hairy Woodpecker, a couple of Titmice, two Rose-breasted Nuthatch and two White-breasted Nuthatch have visited. The birds are a 'pick me up' in this time of staying home and not seeing friends and neighbors very much. I am more than ready for COVID & social distancing to END!!!! It has made a snowy, cold winter longer than it usually is!!!

Stay well and happy, my friends.....SPRING is near!!! Sugaring should be starting in a few weeks.....yeah!!!!
Send your animal sightings to Joan at jwcinvt@gmail.com

- Joan Courser



We see the fox and the barred owl up on Hanson Road quite a bit, and the pileated woodpeckers are busy, too. I spied the owl pictured up by Zinny and Fran's on Hatch School Road.



We also see this orange stripey character hanging around quite a bit (photo at right). We think she might be trying to figure out something about physics or mechanical engineering here, but we are not quite sure. Let me know if you know what she's doing.

- Laurel Copeland

THE “BLUE PLATE” AWARD

I was honored this past week to be given the Halifax Good Neighbor Award, also known as the Blue Plate. Gary Rand passed it to me with many kind words and the history of it, too. Here is the story of the award that was enclosed with the plate and a notebook filled with previous honorees.



Towns have different ways to recognize the efforts of good neighbors. Anchorage, KY, for example, is a close-knit community on the edge of bluegrass country which names its honoree during the annual 4th of July festivities. To symbolize and make the contribution known to all, an antique wooden manure spreader is hauled to a prominent position in the awardee’s dooryard where it must remain in full view from the road until the next 4th of July celebration. Even casual passers-by take note and are reminded of the original use of the wagon on exceptionally humid days when the breeze is just right.

Halifax’s “Blue Plate” reminds us less aromatically of the outpouring of neighbor helping neighbor after Hurricane Irene, specifically of an ingenious solution to navigating our neck of the woods when the most well-traveled roads and many bridges were washed out. With portions of Routes 9 and 112 and the Green River Road impassable, even natives and long-time residents of Halifax and adjoining towns were at a loss to find their way



to Greenfield, Brattleboro, and Whitingham. A helpful neighbor had a plan. Green plates appeared on trees leading to Greenfield, white plates led to Whitingham, and blue plates to Brattleboro. When the roads were repaired, one of the original blue plates was given to the Halifax Historical Society.

Through the action of the Select Board, this clever and cost-effective solution became a symbol of how we find the best of ourselves when we join together to work through adversity.

The town came together a year after Hurricane Irene to celebrate the work of the many good citizens and neighbors who helped the town cope during and recover from the flooding and destruction of roads and bridges. At this celebration, Tim Putnam was recognized with the first “Blue Plate.” The contributions of the person so honored and the date of the award was written in a special blue notebook. After a couple of weeks and usually not more than a year, the “Blue

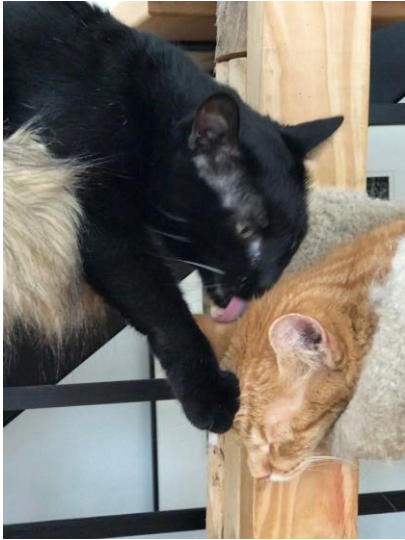
Plate” is passed on to another deserving good neighbor, sometimes quietly and at other times in a public forum.

What is special about this “Blue Plate” is that it is given by one good neighbor to another. Since Tim Putnam’s award on Oct. 20, 2012, the “Blue Plate” has honored the good works of Christina Moore (Nov. 20, 2012), Wayne Courser (Dec. 8, 2012), Lewis Sumner (Feb. 15, 2013), Ross Barnett (Mar. 8, 2013), Malcolm Sumner (Jan. 20, 2014), Joan Courser (Mar. 4, 2014), Mark & Leslie Monroe (Apr. 6, 2014), Rick & Dorie Mirucki (May 16, 2014), Laura Sumner (June 5, 2014), Patricia Dow (July 5, 2014), Blanche Thayer (n.d.), Randy Pike (Oct. 16, 2014), Amanda Ryan (Feb. 2015), Beaver & Linda Swanson (n.d.), Dan & Diane Longe (n.d.), Alan & Rhonda Ashcraft (Nov. 2015), Tina Blais (n.d.), Gary Rand (Feb. 3, 2020) and Laurel Copeland (Feb. 17, 2021).



A late February snow turned Hanson Road white early Saturday morning (Feb. 27, 2021)

Newsletter
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Hold still!



Full moon rising on over the snow Feb. 26

Halifax News

MARCH 2021

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Thank you!!!

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