

September 2021

## HALIFAX NEWS

A LOOK BACK AT THE FRIENDLY LOGGING CO. OF HALIFAX, VERMONT

— Laurel Copeland, Halifax, Vermont

Recently my friend, Gretchen Becker (see “The Lost Purse” published June, 2018, <https://czresearch.com/newsletter/HalifaxNewsletter2018-Jun.pdf>) posted a notice in Front Porch Forum offering old newspapers and magazines to any interested parties. Another neighbor, Bobbie Groves (see the February 2021 issue, <https://czresearch.com/newsletter/HalifaxNewsletter2021-Feb.pdf>), dropped by to see me later that day. She gave me an old clipping she’d found among Gretchen’s treasures. The article was titled, “Two Youngsters Run Friendly Logging Co.” by Carlo Wolter. It was published December 5, 1969, in the Brattleboro Reformer and in the Bennington Banner.

### Youngsters Make Business Their Play

## Protestant Ethic Still Strong in Halifax

By CARLO WOLTER

HALIFAX—A small sign on Route 112 in Halifax calls attention to “The Friendly Logging Co.” An iron-railed bridge crossing a lively stream, locally known as “The Branch,” leads to the home of the Homer Sumner beef cattle farm. This farm is also the site of two young enterprising business men.

Whenever we talk about enterprising business men we think immediately of mature men, former college graduates who have studied and majored in specific subjects.

We forget to look further afield to the upcoming generation, still too young to have had the opportunity to devote time and effort to the more serious complexities of life. We are also apt to neglect to give these venturesome youngsters the well-deserved recognition, just because we think that they are still too young to be taken seriously.

Some youngsters, however, have used their initiative to the point that they merit attention.

This family describes the president and vice president of the Friendly Logging Co., Malcolm Sumner, son of Mr. and Mrs. Homer Sumner, and Carlton Barnett Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Carlton Barnett. Both are fresh-air-tinged, hardy 12-year-olds.

Few children think of starting a business at the tender age of seven and then stick to it. Considering today’s world conditions it may even seem like returning to old-fashioned times when more children worked than played.

It all began about five years ago when Malcolm and Carlton met and became close friends during Malcolm’s daily family cattle drive of about 60 head to pasture. They were also pupils at the same Halifax Grammar



Wolter

BUDDING BUSINESSMEN — With football helmets on to protect against falling trees and branches Carlton, left, and Malcom Sumner of Halifax cut and bundle fireplace wood. Their company, The Friendly Logging Co., is a diversified one with interests in sap gathering and home-made pie making, as well as the wood business. The boys say they would rather work than play.

The Friendly Logging Co. of Halifax, Vermont, was a going concern in 1969, a business established and run by two local boys, Malcolm Sumner and Carleton Barnett, Jr. (“Weasel”). At the time the article was published, they were 12 years old. By that time, they had been in business together for 5 years! They had met and become close friends during Malcolm’s daily family cattle drive. They attended the Halifax Elementary School together. After school and in the summers, they walked in the woods and built forts but dreamed of making better use of the fallen wood all around them. Thinking they could sell it, they began offering fence posts and firewood. They cut the wood by hand and hauled it around in a hand cart. As their business ideas developed, they collected sap to sell to local maple syrup manufacturers, picked and sold blackberries, sold evergreen brush for winter decorations, and made flagpoles of spruce. They had lots of support from their families. As Mr. Wolter wrote,

The youngsters' inventiveness, however, is not confined to products from the woods. On special holidays they arrange neighborhood parties. Although most of the entertainment is free, such as showing slides and having bonfires, guests can also buy refreshments and home-baked cakes, which come from the mothers' kitchens with the able help of Tammy, Carlton's 11-year-old sister, who does much of the baking. The boys work the year round. They prefer hunting and fishing to childish games. Both boys are well trained in the handling of tools and firearms with Malcolm's father and Carlton's grandfather as able instructors, as well as cleaning and skinning their own game. All money earned through the combined efforts is deposited in a joint company savings account, which also covers company expenditures. Malcolm's teenage sister, Blanche, handles the bookkeeping. But, saws, safety helmets, gloves and other personal equipment comes out of individual pocket money which is earned moonlighting, mowing lawns, shoveling snow, or any odd job which requires only one person.

We are lucky to still have Malcolm in our town. We miss Carlton, Jr. who died in a logging accident in 1991 at age 34. He lives on in our memories.

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### **TAKE THYME (AND PLANTAIN) FROM YOUR LAWN!**

– Pam Baker, Halifax, VT

These common plants are probably growing in your Southern Vermont yard as you read: thyme, which can tempt your taste buds, and plantain, which can improve your wellbeing! Plantain (not to be confused with the banana-like fruit) and thyme are usually considered weeds...but that's because we are typically looking at a lawn as a monoculture of some type of grass.

Indeed, I discovered wild thyme quite by accident while mowing a large, neglected pasture. I would often notice an overwhelmingly familiar aroma as I mowed. One day, it popped into my head that this might be thyme. A quick internet search and voilà, I realized I had a local and free source of a culinary and medicinal herb. If you apply any type of weed killer/herbicide, or any kind of petroleum-based fertilizer to your lawn, it is recommended by experts that you should forgo foraging thyme or plantain from this area. And of course, here's my standard disclaimer: if you are not 110% sure of what you are gathering, then don't gather. I am not a certified herbalist or botanist, nor am I attempting to provide medical advice.

Back to thyme—I should mention that sometimes bugleweed might be mistaken for wild thyme. Bugleweed grows abundantly and wildly as well. Best way to tell, for me, anyway, is to crush some leaves and then inhale...it's hard to mistake the pungent smell of thyme. Here are some photos:



Thyme, end of flowering phase

<picture unavailable>

Thyme creeping along rocks

Some tips for harvesting wild thyme:



- Don't harvest the entire plant if you want to have some next year.
- Immediately give it a light, but thorough wash with plain water and pat dry. Then let it sit for a while in a warm room, free from flying insects.
- After a few hours of plain-air drying, it'll be time to pull the leaves off. If you completely dry the entire stem and leaves, then you will get stems in your thyme when you use it in cooking. Not a great thing to eat (can be kinda pokey, and not esthetically pleasing). But a quick trick is to strip the leaves by grasping the young end of the thyme stalk, and using your other hand, pulling your fingers down the stalk in a pinching motion thereby removing just the leaves. The younger end of the stalk will have some leaves left that are fairly easy to pick off.
- Use fresh or dehydrate. There are inexpensive food dehydrators available, or you can use your oven at a very low temp. I will leave it to your sleuthing abilities to discover the method that best suits your situation. The internet is full of ideas. Do store dried thyme in a dark and dry environment.

Here is wild thyme in the lawn that gets cut every week (yellow arrow); compare it to the narrow leaf plantain:



Plantain has two varieties in our area: narrow-leaf and broad-leaf. There isn't a difference in the types when it comes to the way I use it. Although you can eat this plant, either variety, my main use is as a salve for bug bites. If I get a deerfly/horsefly bite, I find some plantain, pick a leaf, rinse it (you don't know what has been walking or sprinkling on this), and then I pop the leaf into my mouth to give it a quick chew. I masticate that leaf and then take the ball of chewed green stuff and apply it directly to the bite. You can just leave the wet leaves there for a few minutes or use a band-aid and make a mini poultice. Honestly, for me it only takes a few minutes of "sit" time on my bite and I'm good to go.



Broadleaf plantain



Narrow leaf plantain



Basket of foraged herbs



All laid out

There you have two relatively easy and quick ideas for using plants growing in your lawn. If nothing else, I hope I've inspired you to look down when you are outside and be curious.

## TOWN NEWS

### SEPT. 19, 2021: REMEMBERING VERMONTERS LOST TO COVID-19

In honor of Vermonters lost to COVID-19, Vermont Interfaith Action is hosting a memorial service on the **Vermont Statehouse lawn in Montpelier** at 3:00 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>. The heart of the event will be a ceremonial reading of the names so that each individual who has died of COVID-19 is recognized. There will be music, and several clergy and spiritual leaders will offer brief interfaith prayers and readings. Governor Phil Scott has been invited, and Dr. Patsy Kelso, State Epidemiologist for Infectious Diseases, will participate.

If you are a family member or are otherwise closely connected to a Vermonter who has died of COVID-19, and you would like to take part in the service, please contact Debbie Ingram at Vermont Interfaith Action, [debbie@viavt.org](mailto:debbie@viavt.org) or 802-651-8889.

The event will also be **live on Facebook** at: <https://www.facebook.com/VermontInterfaithAction/>

**SEPT. 17: SENIOR MEAL** Senior meal is Friday, September 17th serving at noon inside the Halifax Community Hall, 20 Brook Road, West Halifax. Takeout is available. Menu: meatballs in Joan's special sauce, potato, veggie, roll and dessert. Hope to see you there. Please give Joan a call if you are coming at 802-368-7733.

### SENIOR SOLUTIONS HELPS VERMONTERS WITH FOOD & FUEL BENEFITS

**Senior Solutions** can help you find programs you may be eligible for, such as 3SquaresVT, Fuel Assistance, Medicare Savings Programs, Prescription Drug Assistance, and Meals on Wheels. There is no charge for helping area residents. Call the **Senior Helpline at 802-885-2669** to start the process.

**More info:** <https://www.seniorsolutionsvt.org/>

### FIRE COMPANY CALLS

August 5: nine men and two trucks responded to a reported brush fire on McMillan Road. It was a non-permit burn, unattended. The firemen put it out.

August 23: five men responded to Reed Hill Road in their own vehicles to a report of a tree on a telephone wire. The call was cancelled.

The Firemen's Clambake on the first Saturday in August was a huge success; over 500 people were served, and there were many, many very full, very happy people there. A fun day for many folks and a good fundraiser for the fire department. They were blessed with very nice weather! The Community Club ice cream trailer did quite well there also. Not sure how people can eat any more after all there is at the clambake, BUT APPARENTLY ...there is ALWAYS room for ice cream!!! Thank you, everyone.

**TOWN HISTORY....** From a 1985 newsletter....reported by Edie Fenton.....Halifax in its early days was rife with industry. Sugaring was important in the springtime of cold nights and warm days. The spigots and buckets were handmade of wood. Sturdy oxen drew the sled, with its wooden gathering tub, slowly through the woods and back with sap to a huge iron kettle swung over a flaming fire where it was boiled into syrup. Men sometimes used neck-yokes with pails attached to gather sap from the trees where the teams could not go. Sugar houses were soon built with arches (furnaces), over which large shallow pans were placed to boil the sap. After those came modern evaporators and equipment.

The two main rivers in Halifax are the North River and the Green River. At one time there were six sawmills stationed on these streams. Once there was a grist mill on the brook at the Sumner Farm (Homer Sumner's where Tom & Kim Tefft now live off Branch Road). Years ago, a cider mill that specialized in cider jelly was located at Reid Hollow, near the old Tom O'Brian house (now Green River Road just before the town line).

**ADVENTURE IN A DISHWASHER.** After a dinner party the other night, we were doing load after load in the dishwasher, and at about 2am Julie smelled a horrendous burning odor. She started poking around the kitchen looking for the source...not the wood stove, not the range...it was the dishwasher! She opened the dishwasher—smoke billowed out. Horrendously smelly smoke! And there was something burning on the coil... looked





kinda like... maybe the rubber ring from the bottom of a bowl...but wasn't...looked kinda like an insulated electrical cord...but wasn't... She used a flashlight and tongs and pulled it out bit by bit... She had a horrible thought but couldn't accept what she was seeing, so she asked Laurel for her input. Laurel agreed....Wanna know what it was???? Itty bitty baby snake! Every person I've shared this with has asked, how did it get in there? You tell me. – *Lynda Copeland, Halifax, VT*

**ADVENTURE IN A GREENHOUSE.** The critter in our greenhouse through the winter! That devastated my planting bed, destroyed stuff, went out through the screen 9 feet off the ground, made tunnels, refused the Havahearts and mouse traps, was finally poisoned and thankfully (or not) we smelled him. By the freezer outside, not in a wall. Filled with maggots. It was a MUSKRAT!  
– *Bobbie Groves*



**JOAN'S SIGHTINGS.** Wayne is still seeing wild turkeys; Joan saw one off Branch Road. She also saw an Owl perched in a tree there. Joan is getting laughs from the chipmunks at her place; they nearly run over the tops of our feet when we sit outside. How can they run so well when their cheeks are all puffed out with sunflower seeds?! At least I know they will eat well this winter, as they sure have stored up lots!!! I had several reports of a fox in the area, but everyone said it looked bad. I am afraid it had mange and other problems; have not heard of more sightings lately. I am still enjoying my birds ...the Hummers are still here. I have a couple that fight and chase each other from the feeders...I tell them they would get lots more sugar water if they stopped their fighting....I do love to see them though! I have quite a few Sparrows, Purple Finch, a couple of Chickadees, Blue Jays only now and then, still a couple of bright yellow male Goldfinch and quite a few females. I am still enjoying the Cardinals; they will stay the winter! A few Mourning Doves, a couple of Nuthatch, a couple of Grosbeak, a Robin now and then, a Catbird, and I was thrilled to see a few Swallows...but in Massachusetts not Halifax. I still have a couple of Woodpeckers. Love my birds!!!

Send your sightings to Joan at [jwcinvt@gmail.com](mailto:jwcinvt@gmail.com) – *Joan Courser*

On Hanson Road we hear cuckoos! Three notes of the black-billed cuckoo and the single note of the yellow-billed cuckoo (hear them on [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org)). My hubby, Z, saw a bobcat. It walked up the driveway, paused to look at him, then sauntered into the woods.



One day a loon flew overhead, calling mournfully. A gang of 18 turkeys visits often, with their 14 juveniles in 2 sizes. We also see deer, a porcupine, broad-wing hawk, woodpeckers, hermit thrushes, cedar waxwings, giant dragonflies, and butterflies – a White Admiral x Red-Spotted Purple, Mourning Cloaks (see pic), big Monarchs. Our neighbor, Patrick, had waxwings, too. – *Laurel*



At the Clam Bake, from top left: Husking a LOT of corn; baby meets calf; stoking the fire; bushels of clams



Newsletter  
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The Blueberry King at the Blueberry Festival



The Clam Bake 2021

# Halifax News

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