

June 2023

HALIFAX NEWS

TOOTH OF THE LION

– Laurel A Copeland, Halifax, Vermont

Dandelions (genus *Taraxacum*) are named for their fearsome appearance! The French phrase “dents de lion,” meaning teeth of the lion, traveled from France to England back in the 14th century and morphed into our English “dandelion.”



← How fearsome is it? Here is a Dandy Lion by the artist IguanaMouth

This little yellow member of the daisy family has other names, including some that refer to its diuretic qualities—the French *pissenlit* means exactly what the Middle English version says: piss-a-bed. When you cut a dandelion’s stem, a milky liquid oozes out—so another name for this plant is “milk witch.” When you are tired of the way the plant spreads like crabgrass, you might call it “cankerwort” from “canker” meaning “crab” (and thence our word “cancer”) and “wort” meaning “plant.” The Britannica describes it as a “weedy perennial herb.” But it has long been prized by humans. And there is even a California dandelion, *Taraxacum californicum*, which is categorized as endangered.

Dandelions were brought to North America intentionally and were a staple in colonial life. They have been cultivated for centuries—in Europe since Roman times. All parts of the plant can be eaten, including the root and flowers. Leaves make salad or steamed greens, flowers go into making dandelion wine, and roots may be boiled, steeped, or roasted for use as a coffee substitute. The website “Act For Libraries”



(<http://www.actforlibraries.org/plant-history-how-dandelions-came-to-north-america/>) explains, “During the 17th century, dandelions were heavily used as food and medicine. Early colonists who came to the new settlements of the American colonies brought many items from their homeland that they thought they would need in this new land. One of those items was the dandelion. It was from this very early introduction in American history that dandelions began their spread across uncharted territory....Many Native American peoples also developed their own uses of the dandelion after it naturalized. Since their introduction to North America, dandelions have colonized the rest of the world and are just as abundant as other introduced species such as house sparrows and starlings.” Some invasives are here to stay.

One thing I love about the dandelion, beyond the way its cheery yellow brightens up roadsides and lawns, is that it is one of the first food sources for bees early every spring. Goldfinches also feed on the insects they find on dandelions. I wonder if the yellow color attracts them. Bees feed on dandelions when few other flowers are available. I photographed the pictured goldfinch and bees here in Halifax at the beginning of May.

I hope you love the dandelion a little bit more now.



Invasive phragmites reeds are not native to this area. These wetland plants shade out native species, deny fish and wildlife nutrients and space, and pose a fire hazard.

Invasives are quite hard to get rid of, but many can be contained. Please help manage them in Halifax!

All the reeds you see in Halifax and in most of Vermont are invasive phragmites. There is, however, a very rare native reed (*Phragmites americanus*) up in Addison county. Native reeds have reddish-brown stems that are smooth and shiny and grow interspersed with other wetland plants.

- Invader: Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*).
- Type: perennial.
- Height: 6 to 15 feet tall.
- Stems: stiff, green to tan in color, dull, and hollow.
- Leaves: sheath-like leaves grow 2 feet long, are about 1 inch wide, and taper to a point.
- Flowers: purplish turning to tan/whitish, feather-like plumes, 1-2 feet long.
- Roots: knobby rhizomes and runners spread the reeds underground.



Phragmites australis plume – photo credit Vijai Pandian & Mark Renz, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension.



New shoots form at each node along *Phragmites* rhizomes. Photo courtesy of Roger Wolfe.

Phragmites australis rhizome – Wetland Restoration/Mosquito Management, CT Wildlife Div.

What to Do:

- Cut plants at 45-degree angle with a spade (4-6” below surface) or pull out by hand; late July-August is best.
- Bag seed heads and roots in black trash bags and leave in the sun to rot for 3-4 weeks.
- Let stems dry before composting or burning.
- Revisit all sites annually.

More information:

https://vtinvasives.org/sites/default/files/fact-sheets/PhragmitesFactSheet_2019.pdf
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/wildlife/pdf_files/habitat/PhragControlpdf.pdf

Was this information helpful? Need help? Email LaurelACopeland@gmail.com or LesleyPollitt@gmail.com of the Halifax Conservation Commission or call Laurel at (802) 368-2439 or (210) 488-1701

Helpful information on identifying and removing 6 invasives in Halifax—Barberry, Asiatic Bittersweet, Buckthorn, Japanese Knotweed, Phragmites, and Poison Parsnip: <https://czresearch.com/conservation/>

TOWN NEWS

ITEMS NEEDED FOR THE FIREMEN'S AUCTION! Call (802) 368-7809 ASAP. Auction is July 1st.

YOGA – TUESDAYS AT 10:00 AM IN WEST HALIFAX

Seth Geeslin is offering free yoga sessions on Tuesdays throughout May and June with a final session on July 11 (no class July 4th). Sessions start at 10:00 a.m. in the Halifax Community Hall, 20 Brook Road, West Halifax, Vermont. Bring your yoga mat and dress comfortably.

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO BEAUTIFY THE WEST HALIFAX CEMETERY on Saturday, June 3.

Gather at the Community Hall between 8:30 and 9:00. Work commences at 9 AM in the West Halifax Cemetery across the way. Contact Gary Rand Grand221@gmail.com or 860-558-3565 for details

SENIOR MEAL IN HALIFAX – FRIDAY, JUNE 16, AT 12:00 NOON

Friday June 16th is the next meal at the Halifax Community Hall, 20 Brook Road, West Halifax, Vermont. We serve at noon. Menu: baked breaded chicken thighs, mashed potato, vegetable, rolls, and dessert. All are welcome. Seniors 60 or older \$3.00, under 60 \$4.00. An advance call to Joan is appreciated 802-368-7733.

– Joan Courser

JOAN'S SIGHTINGS.

I am so much enjoying the Baltimore Orioles. There are two pairs here enjoying the Hummingbird food and grape jelly. I am sure they get their 'real' food off somewhere I don't see them, but they sure like to come here for 'dessert'! They sure are beautiful.

I have a few Chickadees, two Red-Breasted Grosbeaks, five or six Blue Jays (down from 17!!), a couple of Goldfinches – bright yellow males and their females. Mourning Doves, Robins, Evening Grosbeaks, a few Sparrows, a Starling now and then, Brown-Headed Cowbirds, a Yellow-Shafted Flicker come around. I hear but don't see a Pileated Woodpecker, and I see a Red-Bellied Woodpecker. I also see a Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker and a Tufted Titmouse. I was so pleased to see not far from my home six Tree Swallows. I used to have so many of them...I hope they return. Still have Red-Winged Blackbirds, a White-Breasted Nuthatch and a Red-Breasted one, too. I wish my House Wren would return! I see a Junco and my Hummingbirds, and I hear Crows behind the barn., I love, love, love the birds—all of them!

– Joan Courser



Elsewhere Around Town. One day late in May, I dropped off my car to Norm down at First Stop then walked home from Jacksonville. Coming along beside Jacksonville Pond's marshy area on its north end, I saw a man walking his dog toward me on the other side of the road. Suddenly they both stopped and stared intently into the marsh. I couldn't see anything in the thicket and continued to walk along. As I drew near, the man said, "moose." I peered into the marsh and pretty soon I saw it too! We watched it for a while, then it started to walk toward us. It was just a young moose, but being charged by any size moose is not of interest to me so I resumed walking north. It seemed the man on the other side of the road likewise preferred not to be charged. He began walking north as well, pulling his dog's leash. "Come along," he said. "That's close enough, close enough!" The

little moose kept walking toward us, following us in our retreat. We nervously exchanged glances and kept moving. All at once the moose changed course, crossed the road, and disappeared up the slope. Wow. On the rest of the walk, I listened to birds, and I heard: Red-winged Blackbird, Least Flycatcher, Gray Catbird, Common Yellowthroat, American Goldfinch, Brown-headed cowbird, American Redstart, Blue Jay, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Red-eyed Vireo, Black-and-white Warbler, American Crow, Black-



throated Green Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Eastern Phoebe, Pine Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, Veery, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Tufted Titmouse, Ovenbird, Hermit Thrush, Blackburnian Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, House Wren, Grey Catbird, and Black-capped Chickadee. 29 different birds! That was a great walk. Other animals in May were turkeys, Broad-Winged Hawk, Barred Owl, Common Merganser, Canada Geese, Tree Swallows, Bluebirds, a Baltimore Oriole, Hairy and Pileated



Woodpeckers, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, red efts, groundhogs, a beaver, bobcats, porcupines (see Bonnie Brown's photo) and a hairy-tailed mole. I also came across some white trillium in the woods above Butterfield Road. —

Laurel Copeland



FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS.

On May 6 four men responded to a call on Route 112 for a person on the floor who was unconscious before emergency services arrived; patient was turned over to ambulance personnel.

On May 12 three men and one truck responded to a fire and carbon monoxide meter check on Branch Road.

On May 12 nine men and one truck responded to a motorcycle accident. The rider signed off, not wanting or needing help.

On May 13 six men and one truck responded to a motorcycle accident but were turned back.

On May 15 one man responded to Green River Road but were turned back before arrival.

On May 18 two men responded to Karen Day Road.

On May 19 three men responded to a medical call on Larrabee Road. Colrain ambulance transported the woman to the hospital.

It's summer – the Clam Bake is coming! Tickets will be available at the Firemen's Auction, July 1.

Burn Permits are Required – call before you burn. Dennis (802) 368-7809 or Malcolm (802) 368-2484

Emergency services — call 911

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — call 988

Veterans Crisis line — call 988 then press 1, or text 838255



Monthly Fire Department 50/50 raffle: Buy tickets (\$10 each) from any fireman



CALENDAR

June 3, 2023 (rain date: June 4): West Halifax Cemetery **Restoration Work Party** with VOCA. We need you to help clean and restore the grounds! Meet at the Hall at 9:00 am. Contact: Gary Rand Grand221@gmail.com or 860-558-3565.

June 6, 13, 20, & 27: Free 10-week Tuesday **Yoga Sessions** at the Community Hall in West Halifax 10-11 am.

July 1, 2023: Firemen's Auction begins 10:00 am in West Halifax. Simultaneously, Halifax Historical Society will have **"Pie By The Slice"** next door.

July 15, 2023: Annual Meeting of the Halifax Historical Society, 1:00-2:00, followed by a **presentation** on the Life of Kyra Markham (her mural is pictured). Halifax Community Hall, 20 Brook Rd, West Halifax.

August 5, 2023: Clam Bake! Serving 1-3pm at the Old Cody Farm on Old County Road in Halifax. **Tickets must be purchased in advance** from any fireman.



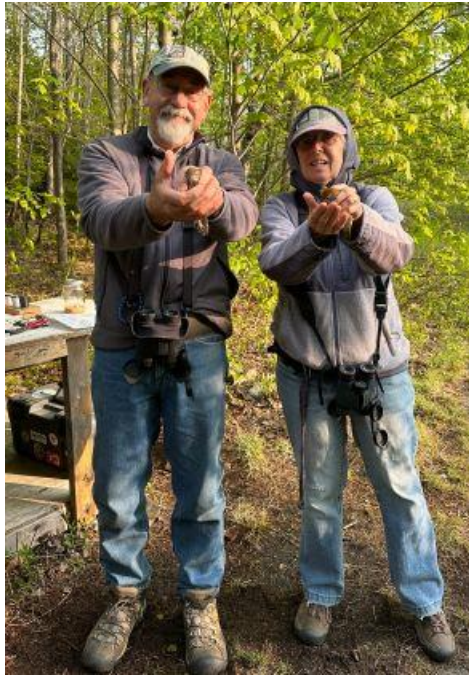
CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Dorothy Christie died peacefully on December 11, 2022 at her home on Tucker Road, surrounded by her family. The family has planned a memorial for her on Saturday, July 8, at 11 AM at the Halifax Union Society — the little church at 44 Stowe Mountain Road in Halifax Center. All are invited to attend, especially the many people in Halifax who knew Dorothy. In particular, a cohort of life-long Halifax residents, now in their late 50's, who were students in Mary Butterfield's 1st-4th grade classroom in the then two-classroom Halifax Elementary School, are welcomed. Mrs. Christie was assistant teacher for a brief period in the 1970's. She remembered all those children all her life, though many she hadn't seen since they were small, and she commented on how they had been as children whenever word of one of them appeared in the Halifax News.

BIRDBANDING UP ON HOGBACK

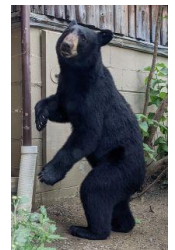
has wrapped up for the season. We netted fewer migratory birds this year than last. But the birds are so delightful to see up close and to hold before releasing them back into the woods. In the photo, Lou and Nancy Tognan prepare to release a pair of Wood Thrushes that were caught together, having chased each other into a net.

Among thrushes, we caught Wood Thrushes, Hermit Thrushes, Swainson's Thrush, American Robin, and Veery. Among warblers, we netted Black-throated Blue Warbler, Myrtle (Yellow-Rumped) Warbler, Ovenbirds (our largest warbler), and a Magnolia Warbler (pictured).



WILDLIFE CONNECTIVITY PROJECT

Have you seen any of these 5 animals crossing a road? Moose, River Otter, Fisher, Bobcat, and Black Bear. (Photo at right by E J Hull) As part of a wildlife connectivity project, I am recording where these 5 wide-ranging mammals cross roads. If you see one on or crossing a road, or if you see tracks / scat that suggest one crossed the road, let me know (LaurelACopeland@gmail.com, 802-368-2439). Include **date, time, & location**.



Newsletter
P O Box 27
West Halifax VT 05358



Ever see a tiny pile of detritus moving through a shallow pond? It's a caddisfly larva. They pile on bits of leaves for camouflage.



A hummingbird stands guard under his feeder

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JUNE 2023

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