

Bit of an odd bird, eh?

The way birds go about their business on Red Brook Pond is probably like bird behavior on other Cape Cod ponds, but sometimes, well, it seems a bit different.

SYNCHRONIZED ODD COUPLE

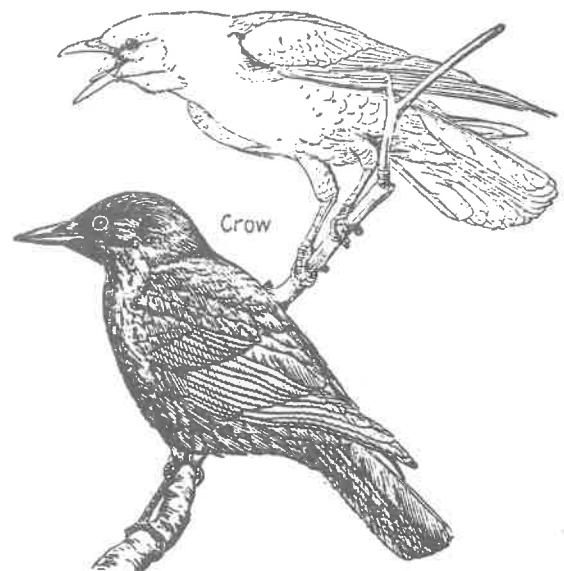
In November, before the rest of the flock winged in from the Arctic, a pair of inseparable buffleheads settled onto the Pond's southeast corner, their longtime winter quarters. As their cousins flew in --often more than a week later-- and took up residence at the Pond's center, the early birds kept pretty much to themselves. They were not, however, outcasts. They were just a sort of odd couple who seemed as atuned to one another's intentions as Fred and Ginger. At the same moment, they might spring into flight for a speedy round of close formation flying, then simultaneously skitter through a comic, cartoon-worthy touch-down. After only a short pause, they often submerged at the same instant, resurfaced together and jointly shimmied themselves dry in a fine spray of water droplets before executing an adroit preening duet.

LEAVE THE WATER RUNNING

Trailed by her second brood of the summer, a mother mallard paddled leisurely through the Pond's shallows when, suddenly startled into panic, she headed for the shore at top speed. In her wake her half-dozen fuzzy, new-hatched ducklings struggled to keep pace with her as she plowed through the pickerel weed toward a reed thicket at the Pond's edge, pursued by the crisp clatter of a dozen small, webbed feet scampering over the water's surface.

WHIMSICAL CROW'S FEAT

Just off the Pond's south shore long before the fall's first frost, three of the mother mallard's first brood, now matured enough to forage unchaperoned, became targets of a whimsical crow. Watching their approach from an overhanging oak limb, the crow waited for exactly the right moment to launch a dive-bomber-style mock attack and scatter the surprised trio. Back on his perch, the crow watched them reassemble, then repeated the swooping maneuver, again dispersing the bewildered trio. Again the crow returned to his perch to watch and wait. Only after the third sham attack did the flustered juveniles decide to regroup off the Pond's north shore.



TRESPASSERS WILL BE PERSECUTED

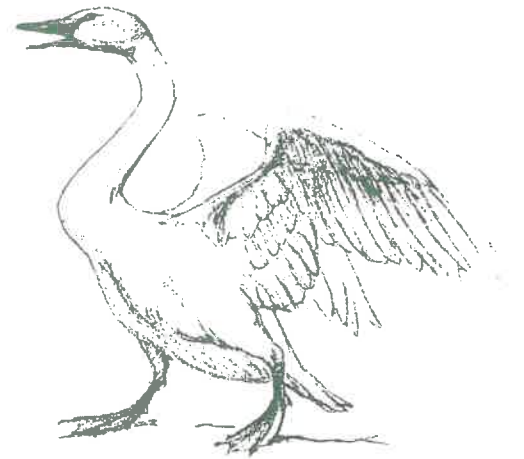
The osprey couple that fish the Pond haven't made the intended use of a platform placed years ago in the northeast quadrant to lure them into nesting. However, they seem to know that they have a proprietary right to it and now and then scare off a few cormorants lazily hanging out their wings to dry. This year, long before flying south to winter in Peru, they espied, not a couple of soggy cormorants atop their platform, but a great blue heron. By turns, they swooped, coming ever closer to the trespasser who reacted like a seasoned welterweight, bobbing, ducking and weaving to avoid a half dozen passes before capitulating and gracefully taking to the air and slowly sailing out of sight.

DOUBLE VISION?

A January jolt of falling temperatures left the Pond almost iced over, its glassy surface static except for a patch of open water about the size of a cramped two-car garage. At mid-morning a lone herring gull-- the first of many-- sailed over from the bay and settled just inside the west rim of the patch only a few yards away from the aloof resident swan couple. As more gulls flew in-- increasingly outnumbering the swans -- the temperature plummeted and the collar of ice relentlessly strangled the open patch, crowding swans and gulls into a restive huddle of white. Just short of noon the gulls-- now numbering in the scores-- suddenly exploded into the sky and headed west. Minutes later the swans too deserted the now completely iced-over patch, awkwardly waddling east, their upside down images, reflected in the pristine ice, accompanying them step by step.

COB ON THE JOB

Two weeks into spring the buffleheads had not yet flown north and were sharing the Pond with a just-arrived osprey circling over head, and with a few eager red-winged blackbirds noisily scouting nesting prospects in the northeast quadrant. Meanwhile, atop this spring's clutch of eggs, an expectant lady swan snuggled down on her refurbished nest while her staunch defender, her macho cob, patrolled the water ever on the lookout for danger. Finally he found it lurking off the eastern shore. Puffing himself up to fighting trim, he bore down on the threat, a peacefully grazing muskrat, and at top speed pursued it for some twenty-five yards until it disappeared into one of its burrows in the southeast bank.



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Tempus Fugit

If you can't recall when you last made a donation to the BCT, check the mailing label on this newsletter. The number in the upper right corner represents the date of your last donation--first the year, then the month. For example, "9802" means February 1998. No number? We hope you will send us a donation soon.



Hey Folks!



It's Sing-Along Time!

(All together now)

You're in the Money, the Skies are Sunny,
You've got a lot of what it takes to get along. . .

(Melody – circa 1930's – available upon request)

Since “you've got a lot of what it takes to get along” -- and before the stock market turns south -- consider a common, lasting and halcyon haven for the excess.

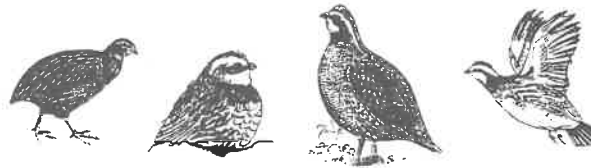
Herewith the BCT's current status and future needs:

- ◆ The final payment was made (1/99) to Larry Dubois for the Pocasset Park Property.
- ◆ Contributions are needed to pay off the loan used to purchase the Kingman property on Red Brook Harbor Road in Cataumet. Our status is:
 - a \$45,000 payment was made in early 1999;
 - a balance of \$200,000 remains;
 - we need to start securing funds for the next payment, due early 2000.
- ◆ Building our endowment:
 - our properties need to be maintained; funds are required for the perpetual care of our holdings.
 - we continue to be on the alert for land purchases which would contribute to our goals. Funds should be available for such purchases.

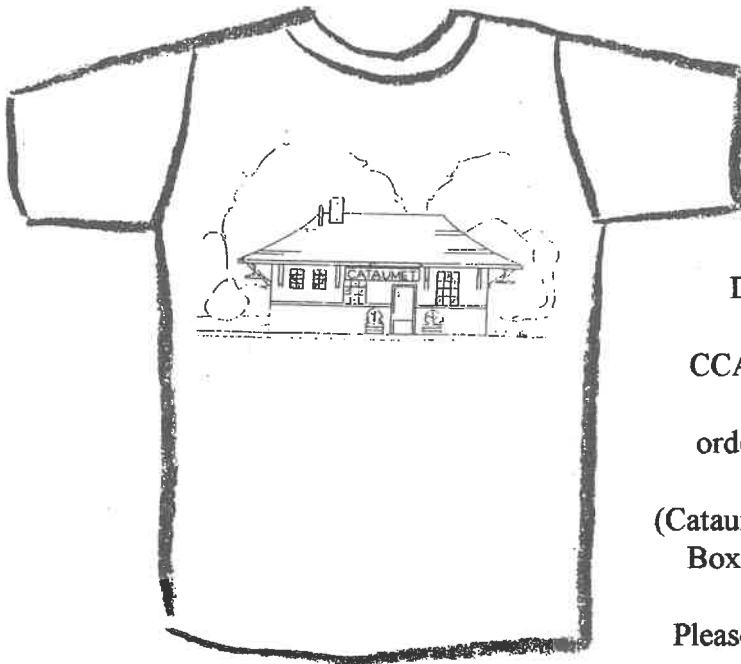
The returns on these investments are immediately apparent and everlasting. No worry about interest rates, P/E ratios, or the comments of Alan Greenspan. And, in a real way, it may be the best part of your children's inheritance.

RARE CASES OF COLLECTIVE NOUNS SUBMITTED

After winnowing down the "Name that Flock" submissions to thirty-odd, the panel of distinguished judges revealed a decided weakness for outrageous pun-based collective nouns, for alacritous alliterations and for the vivid, colorful and apt. From the entries they culled several worthy examples, the submission of which will not only enrich the BCT (\$200) but the English language as well. In no particular order, here they are: a drumroll of woodpeckers, a platoon of pintails, a lode of goldeneyes, a raid of bluejays, a quorum of quail, a kernel of nuthatches, a jabberwock of bluejays, a quadrille of quail, a signal of terns, a spasm of sparrows and gulp of swallows (submitted twice).



Cataumet T-Shirts

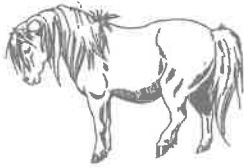


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*In memory of
"Cinnamon"*



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*In memory of the "Mowgli"
(the Cook family dog)
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*In memory of "Bubba"
(the Leone family dog)
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Marie Tournas*

*In memory of "Tyler"
(Leontire/Milbury family dog)
The Ballentine Family &
Cassie, Heidi, & Mako*

SPECIAL DONATIONS

For the ospreys
we had to chase out of our chimney top
Mr. & Mrs. Dean R. Noyes



*In appreciation for the hardwork and dedication of
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*For my grandson
Joel Drake (age 14) who loves Cataumet
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*In celebration of the
50th anniversary of Parker's Boat Yard
T. Langdon Allen*

*In celebration of
Mr. & Mrs. William Tomlinson's
60th wedding anniversary
from their children*

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Given in memory of
Carol Jean Downey
(1927-1999),

who enjoyed a lifetime of summers at her family home on Squeteague Harbor in Cataumet, where she lovingly sustained a host of family and friends through her many acts of kindness, her boundless energy, and the beauty of her character.

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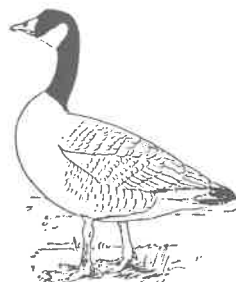


Given in memory of
Rosamond Hall Wright

who passed the happiest hours of her youth sailing the calm or rough waters off Cataumet; who harkened to the plaintive honks of Canadian geese as they flew to their feeding grounds in Squeteague Harbor; who loved the beaches as a place to rest, swim, and ponder the world. Best of all she liked her neighbors and they in turn gave back their love for her.

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Donations received in memory of **Frances F. Thomas** or **Dr. R. Clement Darling** will be listed in our next newsletter (November 1999). Memorial donations received after July 27, 1999 will be listed in our next newsletter.

Kahlin's Korner

is dedicated to the memory of Kahlin Jespersen, a child full of sunshine and a love of nature, and also to all children for whom we preserve a part of the natural world.



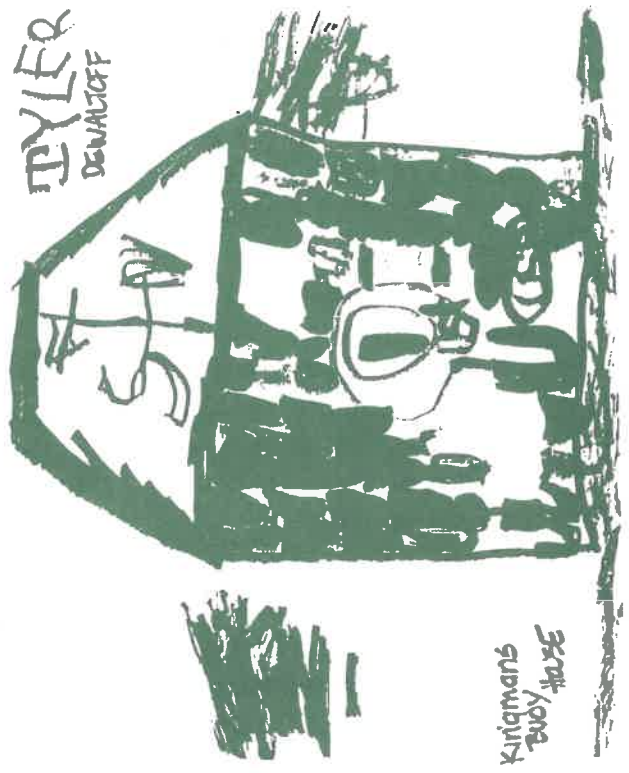
LAWRENCE ISLAND

MAX MCGUIRE



WASHINGTON PARK

MAX NERSTAD



Kirigami's Buoy House

TYLER DENHARTOFF

Kahlin's Korner is a regular feature of the Newsletter, featuring children's articles or drawings. Included will be activities that are fun and will also help children to understand their natural environment. We hope you will submit ideas for future issues. (BCT, Box 203, Cataumet, MA 02534)



SEAN MCGUIRE

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