



Outdoors

SPRING

BY Alexia Barnes and Kevin Moore

"THERE I Turn to her gently and said, 'Hon-just look. It's spring.'"

M. NEWBERRY

As spring is almost here, we wait for signs that will tell us that the long days of indoor confinement are over. We look for signs to make us believe what the calendar is telling us for the snow still covers the ground, the trees are still grey and there are no birds around to speak of.

The basic knowledge of most people, is that they realize leaves, flowers, and birds make up spring but yet they couldn't tell a sparrow from a hawk, nor a rose from a lady slipper. Here we will slightly elaborate and talk of some

of the first flowers that one will see in early spring and also talk briefly on the fantastic phenomena of spring.

There are many flowers that can be found early but the earliest has to be Coltsfoot *Tussilago Farfara*. It has earned itself the distinction of being nicknamed the "first flower of spring". It's bright yellow to orange flowers looking similar to a dandelion make it stand out on the gravel banks and roadsides that it inhabits. The flowers bloom before the leaves of the plant come out and these leaves resemble the hooves of ponies in shape and size, hence the plant's name. It was introduced from Europe and is common on most gravel areas, spreading not only by seed but also by extensive rootstalk systems. Probably the largest patch in the Halifax

area lies just inside the entrance to the Dingle Park and its leaves can be used to make an effective cough drop.

Although it is common and earlier than others the above plant is usually overlooked and many consider the first flower of spring to be the pussy willow — *Salix* sp. Since there is a good degree of difficulty in distinguishing the species of this genus we must rely on Roland and Smith's identification that *discolor* and *humilis* are the commonest spring willows. Even though commonly picked, almost to the point of destruction, there are still many bearing plants around, particularly in the Sackville area where there is much area opened up, poorly drained, and untended.

As you drive out the Bicentennial Drive, in early spring, you'll notice large patches of purple glaring from the boggy areas. This is *Rhodora canadense*, and although it does bloom later than the others, it is so conspicuous that it is included here. Again it is a plant whose leaves do not appear until after the blooms have left it. The section of the above highway from the Kearney Lake turnoff to the Sackville turnoff is usually alive with this plant's flowers.

In these same boggy areas, although a bit earlier, is found leatherleaf *Chamaedaphne calyculata*. This beautiful circumboreal species with small white bell-shaped flowers is common in wet areas, and particularly on the stream pond edges. The flowers are strung out on a

stem like bells on a string and are one of the easiest pressed and most decorative plants.

A lesser known plant and found closer to Truro in the well-shaped, rich soils is bloodroot *Sanquinaria canadensis*. Its roots when broken will secrete a bold red sap used by MicMacs and pioneers as a dye. Another common spring plant whose roots are used is the violet, *Viola* sp. There are many species some of which don't bloom until late summer though some are much earlier, but they have roots that are eaten as a delicacy.

A flower freak we do not profess to be but knowing even these few flowers increases the enjoyment of a walk in the woods. We mentioned several that were common and where they could be found so that in a month or so as you drive down the road and see something, this article will come back to you, hopefully.

In closing we'd like to mention a special feature that occurs every spring and that most will hear about, if not see. The migration of the amphibians to the breeding ponds. Even before the ice is completely gone from the ponds, in particular, the ponds created by man along roadsides, you'll hear the calls of wood frogs and peepers. Then as time progresses, the toad, and the other frogs will come out in turn. Although their calls are enough to make one go looking for them, even if one simply drives on a wet night, you'll meet this animal.

On rainy nights when

the amphibians can pass easily through the otherwise rough grasses, to the ponds, they can be found by the hundreds on the roads for the artificial ponds besides the road are usually absent from any natural predators of eggs, larvae, or adult save those few predatory aquatic insects that can fly. As they cross the roads, the warmth of the asphalt, heated all day by sun, will be enough to make them stay awhile and for every one you find alive on the road, you'll find three dead from cars. Although there are few who will actually go and try to find these animals even for just one night, the Sackville area, and in particular the Beaverbank Road are good areas. Even Point Pleasant Park has its share of amphibians. But if you don't go looking at least take care on the roads for many areas, notably in New Brunswick, are dangerous to drive on because there are that many dead amphibians. Not that we worry about the human occupants but that more amphibians will die. In closing, remember that driving slow on back roads, late at night, provide you not only with this scenes of amphibians but also the sighting of many mammals. In one night alone we saw wood frog, spring peepers, American toad, Pickeral frog, leopard frog, yellow-spotted salamander, red eft and adult newts, twelve deer, two porcupines (alive), mice, moles, bats, a racoon, and even a dead skunk. We never left the car which was driving on the Trans-Canada, last April 25, 1974.

Student demonstration in Manitoba

WINNIPEG (CUP) — Two hundred University of Manitoba students, angry with government underfunding, demonstrated at the Manitoba Legislature Tuesday, (March 4).

The students left the opening session of the legislature shortly after Public Works Minister Russel Doern announced that a meeting had been arranged between Education Minister Ben Hanuschak and U of M Student Union president Bob Setters.

Setters revealed Wednesday (March 5) the meeting had already been arranged last Friday (Feb. 28). He said the demon-

stration was still necessary to show the provincial government that students supported UMSU in their demands for increased university funding.

Setters will also meet with newly-elected Liberal Leader Charles Huband and Conservative MLA Bud Sherman, after the meeting with Hanuschak later this week.

UMSU Academic Affairs Commissioner Paul Graham said UMSU will be asking for an "increase in the operating grant and money to get some buildings built."

Setters said the demonstration had been "very successful," and added

that MLA's "know how much support this has."

Students arrived at the legislature around 1 p.m. and began marching in front of the legislature shouting slogans and waving placards. This lasted nearly an hour before the students entered the building.

Once inside the students continued to chant, we want space. They remained in the lobby and competed with the brass band assembled for the opening of the legislature.

Doern eventually appeared and asked students to leave since a meeting had been arranged and the students "had made their point."

Many students wanted to stay and a quiet discussion among the remaining students was held on one side of the lobby.

The Action Committee for Defence Against Cutbacks (ACDC) asked why UMSU was siding with the university administration

and not with the faculty and support staff.

The ACDC announced a meeting for Friday (March 7) at which time student, faculty, and support staff representatives would discuss the university's financial problem and decide what action to take.

No one is quite sure how much the whole exercise cost UMSU. Setters said "there are bills all over the place" but estimated the cost was "over \$200."

Wreck Cove Power

Guidelines for the assessment of impact on the environment of the Wreck Cove Hydro-Electric Power Station in Cape Breton will be produced jointly by Nova Scotia and the Federal Government.

The announcement was made March 14 by Hon. Glen M. Bagnell, Minister of the Environment for Nova Scotia, and Environment Canada Minister Jeanne Sauve.

Nova Scotia will coordinate the joint effort to specify guidelines for the

environmental assessment of all aspects of the Hydro-electric Development, including effects on the Cheticamp River Basin.

The objective is to determine how the living resources and the environment in general can be protected from undue damage by the project.

The assessment that is produced by the Nova Scotia Power Corporation in response to the guidelines will be reviewed promptly by the two environment departments so that desir-

able modifications may be incorporated in the project's design.

Measures to protect valuable stocks of fish will be reviewed immediately with the Nova Scotia Power Corporation and officials of The Fisheries and Marine Service of Environment Canada and the Nova Scotia Department of The Environment.

The two governments have agreed to co-chair a public meeting after the environmental assessment has been completed.

ATTENTION !

New Sub Shop
opening on
Friday, March 21,
at 5384 Inglis St.

