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**The St. George Journal**  
**connecting people and the natural world**  
from the Friends of St. George



*Kirt Gentalen*

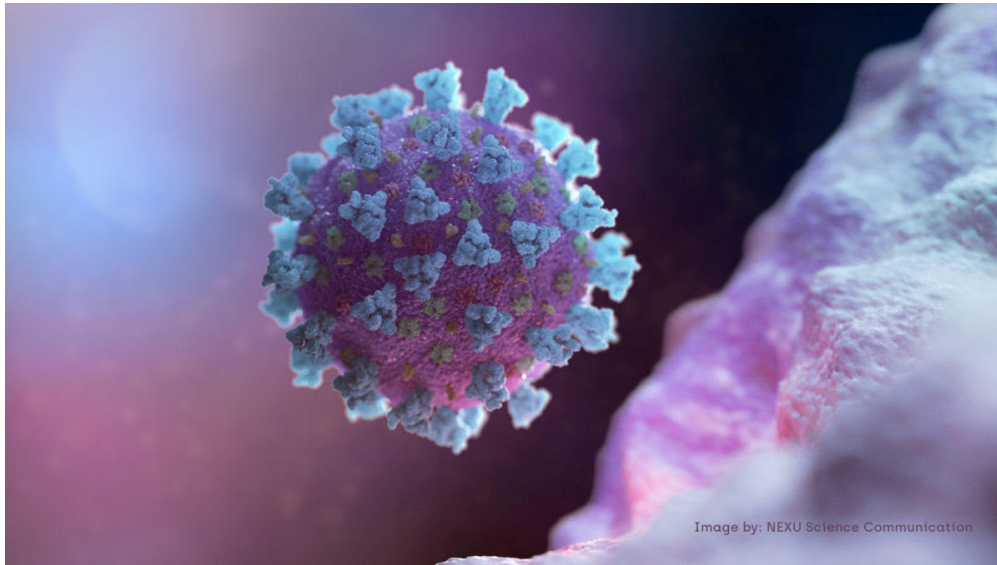
“April is the cruelest month . . . ” truly takes on a new meaning this spring of 2020, our Pandemic Spring. It is one that will be etched in our individual and collective memory for the rest of our lives - a moment in time when our human strengths and vulnerabilities are knit together in ways that seem only to manifest in times of disaster.

It is deeply inspiring to be part of a little community at the end of a peninsula in Maine that is finding its footing and building on its network of connections to gather up and care for its children and elders, families and individuals, and businesses and community institutions. It is together that we find our way forward in such uncertain times.

meadows, woodlands, wetlands, and broad sky vistas, all filled with living creatures, to all of us. The natural world of St. George calls to and holds each of us in some way. It is our refuge, inspiration, and strength. The connections we develop and nurture between humans and the natural world can sustain and heal each of us. What better time than now . . .

Be safe and well and stay connected  
Wende McIlwain, Editor

### **The blooms of a Pandemic Spring . . .**



COVID-19 Virus





*Anne Cox - Crocus*

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**Welcome to the April edition of The SGJ, a monthly online publication,** offering you a range of content in celebration and praise of the connection between humans and the natural world.

We offer longer reflections in [Around the Peninsula](#), as good browsing and company throughout what promises to be a long hard month. Enjoy . . .

**Please send us feedback and suggestions or a request to be added to the Mailchimp subscriber list at [friendsofstgeorgeme@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofstgeorgeme@gmail.com)**

#### **In This Issue:**

**You may scroll through this issue or you may prefer to go directly to one of the sections listed below by clicking on the link.**

- [Calendar of Events](#)
- [Follow up](#)
- [New on the Scene](#)
- [Around the Peninsula](#)

**Port Clyde Water District** from Rob Sloat

- [Voices from the Peninsula](#)

#### **Monthly Columns:**

**Hedgerow Diary** from Anne Cox

**Peninsular Creatures** from Hugh Blackmer

#### **Guest Contributors:**

**Long Cove from a Kayak** from Skinder

**One Part Maple** from Brian Higley

Of Sea:

Of Sky:

- [Fellow Beings - Critters & Creatures](#)

**The Crow by Banjie** from Getsinger Nicholas

**Nature Bummin** from Kirk Gentalen

- [Kids' Corner](#)

What the kids and the school are up to

- [Book Corner](#)

- [Factoids](#)

- [Where In St. George](#)

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- What features do you like the best?
- What else would you like to see on these pages?
- Are you an artist or writer who would like to work with us?
- Your suggestions for topics or ideas are most welcome.

We love feedback - thank you!

## From Friends of St. George



*Marge Winski*

**Staying connected in troubled times.**

torrent of undifferentiated "Breaking News" flooding over us. Like everything else, balance is the key. We are all finding our way to what serves and comforts us, going to YouTube for laughs, staying in touch with friends and family online, and finding a few reliable sources.

Here are a few sources of local information you might find useful:

- **Sign Up to receive an email copy of the St. George News Letter from the Town Office** and choose from a menu of other information of interest to you  
<https://www.stgeorgemaine.com/subscribe>
- [Division of Disease Surveillance](#)  
**Daily updates of Covid19**
- [St. Goerge Message Board](#)  
Local goods and services
- [Jackson Memorial Library](#)
- [St. George CDC/Community Cupboard](#)
- [Maine Public Radio programming including Maine Calling.](#)
- [Village Soup](#)



*Wende McIlwain, Chair/SGJ Editor*

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*Sandra Roak, At large*

### **Journal Support**

*Peg Fields*

*Alane Kennedy - St. George CDC*

*Sandra Roak - School liaison*

*Anita Siegenthaler - Content*

*Ancho Honey, Sponsor of "Where in St. George "*

*Photos by WMci unless otherwise attributed*

## **Calendar of Events**

*Anita Siegenthaler/Wende McIlwain*



### **Time to be Creative.**

Anita Siegenthaler

Pretty much everything has been canceled, awaiting rescheduling as we all practice "social distancing." All is not lost. We here in St. George are rich in natural resources to soothe the soul and exercise the body while keeping our safe distance. Nature awaits offering her woodlands and coastal areas. The social distancing protocols to protect us all apply as we walk about our beautiful places. It is best to check to see if State and Federal parks are open before setting off.

Here are some suggestions close to home.

### **The Woods & Sea:**

Early spring is bug-free and hiking trails are open. Fresh air and warming temperatures abound. Tick protection is needed, but mosquitoes have not yet hatched and it's early for black flies. The trees have not leafed out so birds are easy to spot. Walking alone provides an opportunity to hear the chunk-chunk of a woodpecker or the territorial song of a male bird. Walking with family offers an adventure and a chance to





*Steve Cartwright*

### Trails here in St. George.

- **School Nature Trail:** (short and easily accessed from the Library parking lot)  
The trail guide is on the adjacent kiosk and there are interpretive sign boxes along the trail.  
Wood, meadow, and marsh . . .
- **The Fort Point Trail:** (the shortest) a little muddy at this time of year and being repaired by the town trails committee so caution advised. St. George River vistas.  
[Trail Map for Fort Point](#)
- **Jones Brook** (the longest) and the **Town Forest** (short)  
These two trails are linked but can be done separately.  
[Jones Brook Area Map](#)  
[Trail Map for Town Forest](#)

### Trails further afield:

- [Merryspring:](#)

[www.georgesriver.org](http://www.georgesriver.org)

- **Coastal Mountains Land Trust:** provides similar information on its trails. Beech Hill in Rockport is a short hike with views of bay and mountains. At the summit, a stone hut built-in 1914 will not be open but is peek-able through the windows. [www.coastalmountains.org](http://www.coastalmountains.org)



**How about Drift Inn Beach, off-season?**



*By Other*

**Or Marshall Point Light without the traffic?**





*By Other*

## Follow Up



**Poised and waiting, as are we all . . .**

The work of town officials and committees, other committees, and community organizations goes on steadily and quietly behind the scenes - a creative pause as we and they watch and wait together, gathering ourselves to respond to realities of a very changed world.

### **Community Solar:**

John McIlwain

built a community solar farm.

The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for Monday, April 6th at 5:30 pm. Kurt Penney from ReVision Energy plans to attend and continue the committee's education about the current and fast-evolving world of solar power in Maine.

In line with the CDC's COVID-19 policy, the meeting will not be in person but on Zoom. The meeting is open to the public but, as it will be on-line, people will need an invitation to attend. If you want an invitation, please email Alane Kennedy at [alane@stgeorgecommunity.org](mailto:alane@stgeorgecommunity.org).



## New on the Scene

**Not so much these days, however . . .**



**Monhegan Boat Headquarters gets clad . . . "perseverance furthers," one cedar shake at a time.**



### **Pocket Cove Farm on Long Cove Goes into a Conservation Easement**

Thanks to Les Hyde and Anne Cogger, owners of Pocket Cove, and the Georges River Land Trust. [Conservation Easement](#)



*Anne, Les & company sailing "Alice". Stever Cartwright*

## Around the Peninsula

We tend to take natural resources for granted until something goes wrong. Clean drinking water is threatened all over the world, but thanks to decades of effort by dedicated, hardworking individuals, here in Port Clyde the water still flows strong and clean.



Mighty Blue Tower . . .

### **The Port Clyde Water District**

#### **25 Years of Improvement**

by Rob Sloat, Commission, PCWD

Interestingly, Port Clyde has one of the earliest rural water systems in the country. It was started by the Balano family around 1895. This is the same family that brought us the famous book, “Log of the Skipper’s Wife,” written by Dorothy Moulton Balano, the wife of schooner Captain James W. Balano. The Balanos still own a home here in Port Clyde Village. The well and first pumping system was located on Glenmere Road and provided only about 23 gallons a minute to a handful of residents. Remnants of that system can still be seen today. The history of the water system management and location in subsequent decades is a rich one.

It was not until 1963, with the sole goal of proving its customers with a steady supply of clean, safe drinking water, that the PCWD as we know it, came into being. Initially, the District serviced 75 accounts. As of the end of February 2020, that number has risen to 127 residential and 14 commercial customers, being served from the well and pump house located next to the fire station on 131.



### *Well & Pumphouse*

The PCWD is currently overseen locally by an elected, three-person Board of Trustees, all of whom are customers of the district, and a skilled, longtime Operations Supervisor, Dick Nixon. Aqua Maine, now Maine Water Company, provides accounting, billing and financial reporting for the district. Rates are based on current costs and expenses, with every effort made to keep them as affordable as possible, while maintaining high water quality and service. A brief history . . .

- **1999:** A new 77,000-gallon tank was installed at the top of the hill on Drift Inn Road, providing 40 to 60 gal/per/ minute with a maximum of 195 gal/minute if needed.
- **2000:** The beginning of the replacement of a number of the original water lines, discovered to be too close to residential septic systems.
- **2003:** A winter freeze-up left the district with no water for about a two-week period. Poland Spring generously provided us with a tractor-trailer load of drinking water, free of charge, to see our customers through this time.

It was after this event that a thorough upgrade of the system was started.

- **2004/2005:** A thorough upgrade of the system was begun. The primary water mains were replaced first and subsequently, the lines to each customer were finished. Those were days when the sound of dynamiting through ledge echoed in the village.
- **2008:** A new pump house, complete with monitoring equipment, was built.



overseen by certified engineers and contractors to exacting federal and State of Maine regulations with the invaluable assistance of Wright-Pierce and Dirigo Engineering.

As in 1963, the goal of the PCWD today remains - provide customers with a steady supply of clean, safe drinking water.



The little booster station that could . . .

## Voices From the Peninsula

**Hedgerow Diary** from Anne Cox, Co-owner of Hedgerow, landscape designer, artist and thinker of thoughts . . .

**A Jubilee Year?**



*Ann Cox - In the Greenhouse Now*

Needless to say, I have been thinking a lot about this pandemic, and what it means for all of us. All over the country and the world, we are shutting down business as usual, closing schools, trying to figure out emerging, social, economic, familial, and community relationships. Freefall, confusion, isolation, distancing, anticipated shortages, outages, deaths. Uncertain times. Yet Spring is unfurling slowly, relentlessly, deliciously.

While the news we hear focuses on how to take precautions, virus predictions, missteps in handling testing and information, corruption, ineptitude — you name it — there are a few tidbits underneath everything that intrigues me. I recall a report that while the country was shut down, the air quality in China was the best in a long time. All over the world, we are using less gas and oil. Couple this trickle of back page news with the inexorable approach of Spring, and I start thinking about what happens when we slow down and let the land heal.

Thinking about slowing down and letting the land heal reminds me of the biblical idea of sabbath and the Jubilee Year. The Jubilee Year is a time when everything that is out of wack, out of joint, economically, and ecologically, gets a reboot. The idea spelled out Chapter 25 in the Book of Leviticus (not a book many people

everyone returns to their property (sounds familiar), slaves are released, the land lies fallow (which means a fair amount of storing up of food had to have taken place), and “if you see to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor, you shall not wrong one another.” (i.e., no insider trading, etc.) The idea of the Jubilee year is that human relationships have time to heal and equalize, and the land, free from farming and mining and all manner of exploitation during that year, has time to heal.

Maybe we are being forced into a Jubilee Year, even though things seem anything but jubilant in many respects right now. Maybe we are being forced to stop, and for a good long time, as it seems this coronavirus is not going to disappear magically. Maybe, just maybe, this will be the reboot we need. Globally. Just as increasing hours of sunlight and warmth brings great green growth, maybe a forced Jubilee Year will bring creative, life-giving adjustments — to our human ecology as well as our world ecology. Maybe.

### **Peninsular Creatures**

From Hugh Blackmer, anthropologist/librarian, scholar, trash collector, photographer, Mindbender.

**Creatures of the Pandemic . . .** Pareidolia is where you find it







### **Into another realm . . .**

A few years ago, while on the way to Melissa Derbyshire's morning yoga class at the town office, I'd stop next to the present-day Granite Gallery to grab a photo of Ripley Creek in whatever its mood of the moment was: tide high or low, spring-summer-fall-winter, sunny or cloudy or foggy. Over the course of a couple of years, I collected a set of 167 images (all can be seen at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/blackmerh/albums/72157625173076309>) and then strung some of them



rigorous document of the place.



Please click on the image above to view the video.

### **Esteemed Guest Contributors**

#### **Long Cove from A Kayak – Reflections of Nature and Life.**

from Carla Skinder, longtime avid naturalist and birder, animal lover, world traveler, kayaker and photographer. Carla's work will be at the JML in September.



*Steve Cartwright*

Kayaking is my mental health time...it is my addiction and a time to relax from the daily craziness as I paddle about the cove. The buffleheads, loons, eiders, mergansers, black ducks and Mallards, and of course the occasional majestic bald eagle entertain me. I am awaiting the yellow legs, the kingfishers, herons, osprey and of course the guillemots, terns, and cormorants to do the same this spring.



*Carla Skinder*

If I am lucky a harbor seal or otter will pop up to say hello. The cove is alive with natural beauty - the reflections of the trees and boulders are beautiful in all seasons, though I think I do love the exquisite colors of

As I paddle about up and down the cove, I sing a few of my favorite songs like “raindrops on roses and whispers on kittens,” the National Anthem...trying to hit the high note at the end, strangers in the night, and somewhere over the rainbow along with a few other tunes, hoping that no one hears me, not entertaining anyone but myself...thank goodness!

I have been living on and kayaking Long Cove for almost four years. The previous three winters did not let me in the water until March with ice stacked like pancakes for most of the winter, in which in my little cove meant no kayaking until spring.

This year was a very different story. I was able to kayak on Christmas Eve day around a scattering of “icebergs,” and then had a few days in January and February. Now it is March and I am kayaking whenever the winds and the tides allow me to get in, but finding the open water earlier in the year was too open, and too soon, glazing over with low temps at night but quickly thawing during the day.

As much as I have loved being in the water through the winter and back in my kayak early in March, this is a bittersweet moment . . . a climate change reflection moment, when I think what is going on in the world and how we can protect all of our vulnerable populations.

I am honored and fortunate to belong to this wonderful caring community, a community that looks out for young and old, and all its creatures . . . a community that exudes kindness! Thank you all for what you do!



*Carla Skinder*

### One Part Maple

From Brian Higley, landscape architect, finish carpenter, furniture maker, one part Maple.

Photographs by Brian Higley





Being a native Vermonter, from a long line on my father's side, I believe that makes me genetically part Maple. I am one of those maple syrup people.

Aside from syrup, the Sugar Maple is also a highly regarded hardwood. By far the hardest of the Maples (nail-bending hard), it is coveted by furniture and instrument makers, prized for its rarer "Birds Eye" and "Flame" grain patterns. Its lumber makes a wonderful floor or cabinet, and..... it burns great in a wood stove. But, the precious syrup is probably the most widely appreciated dividend paid out by the Sugar Maple. Maple for me is a season, an environment, a passion of hard work. It is true engagement with the earth, brought to us by the Native Americans. It brings friends and neighbors together, sometimes in humorous ways.

One year my father played a joke. He took three of Rodney Clarke's metal sap buckets and hung them on a sizable Hemlock tree (an evergreen) right along our road for all the town to see. My father howled when Rodney (the old farmer who tapped our road) called him up and scolded him loudly over the phone, "Damn you, Harry! I know it was you!". Everyone noticed and thought it was pretty funny and the two men laughed about it for years. How much more New England can it get? But the joke only worked because everyone noticed. The whole town was familiar with the maple pride, and everyone knew whose trees were whose.

chilly morning during sugaring season, I would sometimes witness the delightful transfer of energy from the heavens above to the earth below. As the warming sun washed over the twiggy filigree of branches that were literally stretching up to grab the rays, the message was slowly delivered down to the roots, and the sap began to rise. Then twenty, thirty, fifty taps on both sides of the road began to drip sap into the empty metal buckets. Ping, ping, ping-ping, ping-ping-ping. It was the dissonant pinging sound of springtime echoing down the road beside me. And all caused by a giant fireball, millions of miles away, waking a tree on planet Earth, which in turn sent out lifeblood to its branch-lets, while industrious humans intercept a bit of sugar along the way. As the buckets would fill, the pinging went away, and that was the perfect moment to step up to a tree, put a bucket to my lips, and savor a long sip of slightly sweet, ice-cold, maple sap.

- **The Tree:** *Acer seccharum* – Sugar Maple, Hard Maple, Rock Maple

Note: All other Maple varieties are “Spring Bleeders” and will provide lots of sap if you tap them, However, the sugar content in the sap is much lower (ie: much more boiling/work, etc.). This is why they are typically not tapped for maple sugaring.

- **Average Yield:** 40 gallons of sap = 1 gallon of syrup
- **Season:** February through March/April (before the buds break)
- **Ideal conditions:** Cold nights below freezing, followed by warm days above freezing
- **To make syrup:** Tap/drill a Maple tree, wait for the sap to pour out, find a way to catch the sap and deliver it to the sugarhouse, remove the water by osmosis and/or boiling, stop when the density meter reads 1.37 grams per milliliter. Have a very warm shot glass (or two) of syrup to test it. Bottle it up, and start giving syrup to your very best friends.
- **To enjoy syrup (recommended):** Take one full shot of maple syrup. Put it in the microwave for 12 to 15 seconds, sip an aromatic treat that gives one the feeling of testing it right in the sugarhouse.





## Earth / Sea / Sky

### Of Spring Earth . . .

In case you didn't notice in the midst of the Pandemic, it's official, Spring arrived on March 19th, the earliest date for it in over a century.

A virtual walkabout . . . Early spring is showing with the fierce beauty of Skunk Cabbage, pussy willows swelling, and a deer waiting in the understory to devour fresh shoots . . .





*Steve Cartwright*







## Of Spring Waters . . .

**p**This is time set apart, an April like no other.



*By other*

Most lobster boats still are up on the hard, and the local fleet of draggers much reduced. There is a glut of low boat price lobster chasing a shrinking market as economies crater all over the world. Anyone who makes their

Still, there are fish in the sea, boats to bring them in and those who can still get them to market, like St. George's Garry Libby. Back in the day, it was the sound of the siren that alerted all of St. George that sardines were in. Today Gary puts the word out on the [St. George Message Board](#) when he's got fresh fish - fine scallops and crab, dwindling groundfish.



## Of Spring Skies . . .



*By other*

**The April full moon will occur on Tuesday, April 7th, at 10:35 pm**

It will be the first full moon of spring and the biggest and brightest Supermoon of the year. The April full moon is known as the Pink Moon, more for the color of the expected blooms in April than its actual color. It is



*Brilliant moon,  
Is it true that you too  
must pass in a hurry*

*Basho*

## Fellow Beings - Critters & Creatures

### The Crow

from Banjie Getsinger Nicholas

Artist, and bird "whisper," Banjie, held state and federal permits in CT for 20 years to rehabilitate wild birds, before settling in Maine.

Pencil drawings by the author/artist at [www.banjiesart.com](http://www.banjiesart.com).

[Hedgerow Gallery](#), in Tenants Harbor, will be featuring her work July 16 - 25.



Most of us have seen crows foraging about at low tide with the gulls. It is a common sight, so next time you see one in Port Clyde, it may be a crow with a surprising story.

In early December 2018, a friend and I were walking along the water on Factory Road and came upon a wildly struggling crow, frantically beating its wings, with one foot so completely wrapped in monofilament line around a branch, that its efforts to escape were hopeless. The crow was just out of reach and us too far from home for easy access to a car or useful tools, so we texted friends asking for a stepladder and pruning shears. The friends arrived quickly with a ladder, pruning shears, a heavy towel and a pair of sharp scissors.

The branch was cut and the beating wings confined in a towel to hold it firmly while the tangled bands of line were cut to free the foot. Without knowing how long the bird had been trapped or without food or water we didn't dare simply release it. There were noticeably missing and torn feathers in addition to possible serious damage to the foot so we delivered the crow to Avian Haven in Freedom. Throughout the winter the crow got the best possible care.

It's injured foot was stabilized. To protect the whole feathers from gaps made by damaged feathers, a process called 'Imping' was used. It involves joining the broken feather shaft to a similar undamaged feather, from the

In early March Avian Haven called to say the crow was strong and ready to be released in a safe place as close as possible to where it had been found. It was a bright sunny morning and we chose the parking lot at Herring Gut as a safe spot. It was a joyful moment to see the crow leap from the box flying straight and strong to a nearby spruce. Within seconds it was joined by it's extended family in a loud reunion and what surely were cries of "Where have you been?" "We thought you were a goner!" "So good to have you back!"



Avian Haven is an excellent, local resource for bird rescue.

<https://www.avianhaven.org>.

### **Nature Bummin with Kirk Gentalen**

#### **Early, Edible, Poisonous, Rare ????**

Kirk Gentalen has worked as a Maine Coast Heritage Trust land steward and naturalist since 2007. While his job focuses largely on Vinalhaven, he leads hikes throughout Maine and writes wherever he goes.

All photographs by Kirt Gentalen





*Spotted Salamanders, to go . . .*

Years ago (decades at this point, yikes!), I was told that having participants ask questions on a hike is a good thing. A sign of engagement and interest, questions can also be as a precursor to fun conversations and good, hearty laughs (the true goal). The questions I am often asked fall along the lines of – ‘is that rare/unusual?’, ‘is it edible?’, and ‘will it kill me?’. I like these questions. Sometimes I am asked ‘did you see anything good?’. I am not a big fan of that one. It’s a question that takes you down an awkward path where I attempt to find out what the questioner means by ‘good’ while trying to convince them to never ask that question. Trust me, it’s uncomfortable for everyone. So pretty please, don’t ask me that one.

The month of March is a transition month (and what a transition it is this year!). Came in like cold sauna and looks like it’s leaving as a slightly warmer sauna. A March such as this one, where winter leaves too soon and critters start returning or rising from winter digs, can become the month of the question, ‘is that early?’. It’s a question that I happen to like, but can be a tricky one all the same. There are so many perspectives of what ‘early’ can mean that finding the ‘correct’ answer often requires a convoluted discussion. Not necessarily a bad thing...



*American Woodcock*

Take American Woodcocks for example. A good friend of mine on Vinalhaven reported seeing one on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and asked “is that early for Woodcocks? I would love to answer that based on 100s of years of recorded data, but if that exists I am not privy to it. Should I base an answer on my 16 springs living in mid-coast Maine? That answer would be based on limited data (geologically speaking 16 years doesn’t mean squat) and also feels egotistical. I know when the earliest woodcocks have been reported to me over the years, but I would be foolish to think that other woodcocks didn’t pass by earlier, unnoticed and unreported. The fact that I have seen Woodcocks in January and February along the mid-coast begs another question – if given the chance, do some leave at all? Can you be an early arrival if you never left? You can see the potential convolutedness here. March 2<sup>nd</sup> is the earliest I’ve gotten a report of a Woodcock sighting (March 5<sup>th</sup> was the previous ‘early’), so I kept my answer somewhat simple – an excited ‘it’s the earliest anyone has reported one to me, that’s so cool’. There was no need to mute the excitement with convolution. That’s not the goal here.

The lack of snow and softness of the ground this March was perfect for Woodcocks. One might even say it was the ‘right’ time – habitat wise - for them to show up. Early and right on time, at the same time. Now that is a skill.

March is often the time for St George’s wood frogs and spotted salamanders to make their way to vernal pools. If I had to pick a time frame for a ‘usual’ amphibian migration it would be the last two weeks of the month. Some winters last into May (2015) of course. And others may not happen at all (2016). The timing of St George’s amphibian migration is greatly influenced by local conditions, so ‘usual’ is a fluid term here.

Rainy and warmish (40 degrees plus) evenings are the required conditions for the local amphibians to move. By late February it was plenty warm enough – which was comparatively early - and after the snow melted it felt as if we just needed a little rain and the amphibians would respond.

But the warm, evening rains didn’t come for a full two weeks. On Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup> amphibian observers took to the streets with visions of frogs hopping and salamanders scurrying to the pools. To my surprise, and

lucky as no others were reported.

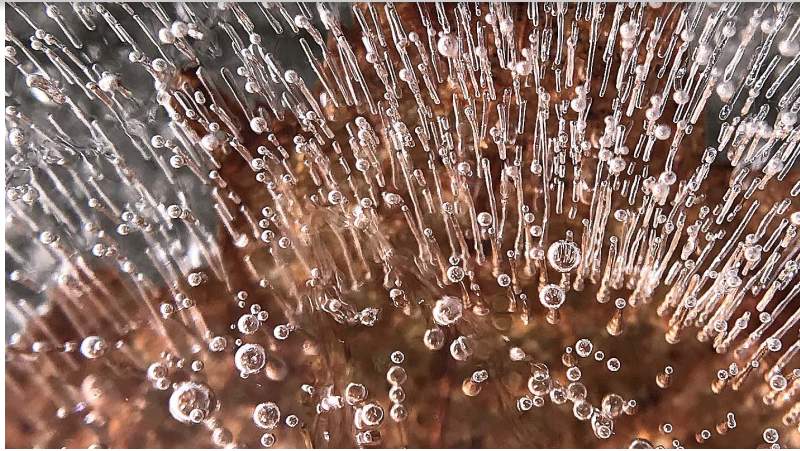


*Wood Frog*

So was she early? Back in 2016 – when there was little to no winter mind you – major amphibian movement was observed in St George on March 7<sup>th</sup>. So the 13<sup>th</sup> wasn't even the earliest in the last 5 years but was still earlier than the last two weeks of March. It was the 'right' time to migrate as far as conditions go, and yet she was 'early' compared to other local amphibians and as far as the calendar is concerned. 'On-time' and 'early' again.

But was she really early? I often go back to the default of 'the animals know what they are doing,' which may give them more credit than they deserve. The next day I found my answer while visiting the vernal pool to which this little frog was heading. Not only were no other amphibians seen at the pool, but the pool itself was also covered in ice.





*Vernal ice*

Not just a thin layer of ice, either. It was ice that supported both me and my mass! Maybe it was the right time for her to migrate, but there was no access to her vernal pool. So, in this case, the answer is a firm ‘yes’, she was early as far as the vernal pool was concerned.

After re-reading this column I can see that it doesn’t really clear up any confusion about things being ‘early’, but I’m not sure if that was the point. Late, early, on time – they all have different meanings depending on perspective. One thing that is clear is that it’s all ‘good’. And things are getting busy outside – catch a peek and enjoy!

This “Nature Bummin’” column originally appeared on Maine Coast Heritage Trust’s website at [mcht.org/nature-bummin](http://mcht.org/nature-bummin).



### If it looks like this and answers to "Asian Crazy Worm!"



*By other*

If the topsoil in your garden or around your struggling trees looks like coffee grounds, an Asian Crazy Worm might be at work.

These invasive worms can break down a leaf in three weeks.

Fungi native to Maine can take up to three years. The native fungi process provides nutrients to plants. The crazy worm depletes the nutrients before native plants have a chance to use them. Lacking nutrients vital to life, plants die.

Crazy worms reproduce without fertilization. One egg or cocoon can reproduce rapidly, and the cocoons can winter over. Mature worms pop up out of the ground near the surface or patches of leaves. When handled they thrash around and might even shed the tail, hence the name crazy. They like to hang out in clusters. After a rain, they tend to collect under flowerpots and coverings that sit on the ground.

Cocoons and the worms can invade via purchased manure or soil including even potting soil. They have been used for composting and even fish bait. Once embedded, the only way to get rid of them is to have the soil transported to a facility that can eliminate the pest, effectively sterilizing the soil.

In Maine, it is now illegal to import, propagate, or possess them without a special permit. Unfortunately, they are already present and have been reported at 13 new locations in the past year. For photographs so you can identify them, and more information, go to the state website:

<https://www.maine.gov/dacfphp/horticulture/crazyworms.shtml>

St. George is a pretty amazing place to grow up, held in the natural beauty of land/sea/sky, surrounded by a caring community, and nurtured by a dynamic school and institutions like the Herring Gut Learning Center.

The staff of [St. George Municipal School](https://www.facebook.com/stgeorgemu/) has risen to the challenge of these times with skill and heart. We are inspired and grateful.

You can follow along and find ways to support the school at <https://www.facebook.com/stgeorgemu/>

**Feast your eyes on the work of the children of St George . . .**

**We Went Outside!!**

**And the 6th Grade came back with Haiku!**



*Bella Lord*

*The loud taps of rocks  
Oliver's jingling collar  
The sting of the sun  
Oren Bly*

*Oliver's warm breath  
The buzz of the fireplace  
The drip drops of rain  
Oren Bly*

*Mud, sticky, ew, ick  
Fall into it - no! now it's  
All over you - ah!  
Isabella Lord*

*Drippy but sunny  
bright green pine trees are thriving  
dew a bit runny  
Trinity Delaney*

*Dewy shining sun  
Slosh slush footsteps on the lawn  
Bird songs in the air*

*Muddy and freezing  
Raindrops on my clean glasses  
The cold bitter breeze  
Karly Putansu*



*Sun shines but still cold  
Walking around my cold lawn  
I am shivering  
Kayla Thompson*

*It's wet and muddy  
I can not wait for summer  
No more ice and snow  
Izzy Simmons*

*drip drippity drop  
water falling from the roof  
drip drippity drop  
Madelyn MacCaffray*

*The clouds passing by  
My boots getting wet then dry  
My dog running by  
Wesley Smith*

### What's Happening at Herring Gut Learning Center?



### Aquaponics!

#### Why Does [Herring Gut Learning Center](#) Teach Aquaponics?

By Sally Crusan, Director

Nitrogen cycles, plant biology, fish anatomy, math, chemistry, and ecology are some of the hands-on learning our students experience using the aquaponics system as a teaching tool.

But why Aquaponics?

In order to do that, students need basic skills and real-life examples. One example is aquaponics. Aquaponics provides sustainable, year-round jobs for a new generation of farmers. Year-round farming means year-round employment. With a high percentage of our students being from families within the fishing industry, it's critical we teach alternative methods of sustainable living, such as aquaponics, kelp growing, oyster farming, etc.



Advocates of aquaponics say the systems are doubly sustainable: they provide year-round farming jobs and are environmentally friendly. Aquaponic systems use about 90 percent less water than what conventional growers use in soil. In addition, most aquaponics farms are local, reducing shipping pollution and the food waste that comes along with trucking perishable products across the country. Educating our students on the benefits of having a greenhouse and available produce on the peninsula is a unique hands-on teaching tool.

In 2018, the United States was home to about 40 percent of all aquaponics operations globally. Even during Maine's harsh winters, Maine has a really strong local food movement, so the demand is high. Growing local also has an added sustainability benefit: reducing food miles. Most of the lettuce in the United States are grown in California and Arizona, whereas Maine-grown aquaponic lettuce does not accrue the carbon generated by a cross-country journey.



As a non-profit, Herring Gut Learning Center relies on the generous support of donors. Donations directly affect our ability to deliver services and empower our students to learn. When students see the community stepping up to help, we use that as a teaching moment and encourage them to lend a helping hand and give back whenever possible.

You may follow the work of HGLC at <https://www.facebook.com/HerringGutLearningCenter/>

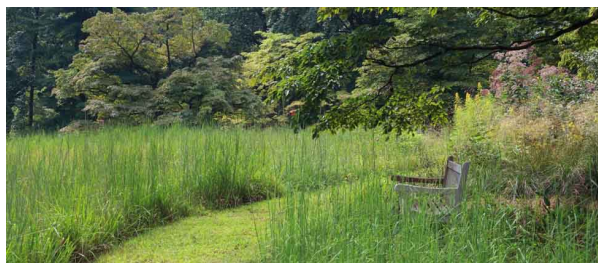
## Book Corner

**This new section** offers recommendations to a range of books relating to the human/natural world connection. May they keep you good company and inspired.

**Nature's Best Hope, A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard** by Douglas W.

Tallamy, bestselling author of **Bringing Nature Back Home**

Both important book in understanding the role of native plants in a healthy web of life.

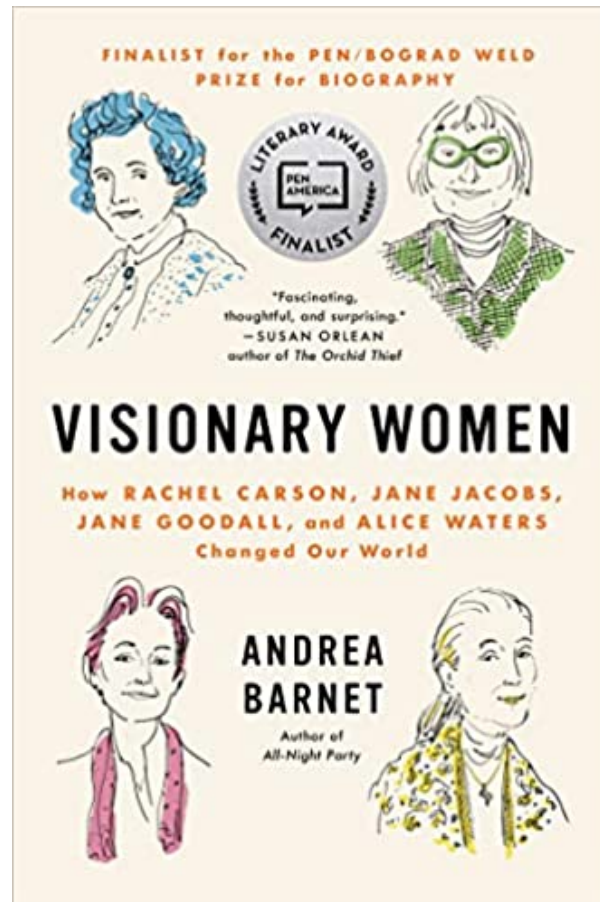


*Bring Nature Back Home*

**Visionary Women: How Rachel Carson, Jane Jacobs,**



A fascinating read about how these four women became famous in the 1960s for their iconoclastic work in four different fields, profoundly our relationship to conservation, community, animal intelligence, and food.



**How to Move Like a Gardener** by Deb Soule, Biodynamic farmer, Herbalist, and owner/cultivator of Avena Botanicals in Rockport. This is a beautiful and deeply impactful book for anyone interested in entering into a more profound relationship with the healing properties of plants.



*Avena Botanicals*

### **April is National Poetry Month**

Anita Siegenthaler

Might this be the perfect time to explore the poetic depictions of April through the internet or through the literature books long-forgotten on our shelves? To whet your appetite . . .

- Horace ( 65 BC - 8 BC) wrote, "The snow dissolved no more is seen, The fields, and woods, behold, are green..."
- Chaucer (c.1340 - 1400) opened his Canterbury Tales with, "When April with his showers so sweet. Has pierced the drought of March to the root..."
- Wordsworth concludes "I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud" (1804) with, "And then my heart with pleasure fills And dances with the daffodils".

Have you a favorite spring poem?

See our Kid's Corner for Hiku by St. George kids!

Have you written a spring poem, one that you'd like to share

by submitting to [freindsofstgoerogeme@gmail.com](mailto:freindsofstgoerogeme@gmail.com)

Home-bound we though we may be, the world outside our windows is out-bound with new life.



## Where in St. George?

### Where in St. George? . . . the Contest

Yes, there is a prize for the first correct answer sent to [friendsofstgeorgeme@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofstgeorgeme@gmail.com).

A Gift Certificate from [Ancho Honey](#).

Thank you, Malcolm!

**April Challenge**





## February Challenge

The winner is Jan Letourneau for identifying a Walston Road mailbox





**NOTE: All items are clearly visible from a paved road . . .**  
All you have to do is pay attention!



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