



Painting the North Barn.

beautifying, marking, and clearing at the Whittemore and Van Vleck Farm Sanctuaries. They were supervised by Taft faculty members, including Garrison Smith, whose wife Laura taught in Flanders' "Outdoor Rangers" program.

Garrison waxed enthusiastic about the program, "This type of service-oriented activity goes on all the time at Taft. I wanted to be involved with the Flanders projects because I like Flanders. We've been coming here for years".

"Not to be Served, but to Serve"

Question: Why do dozens of students from Taft School come to Flanders every year to perform desperately needed jobs like trail clearing, wood splitting and barn painting?

Answer: Because Taft's motto is "Not to be served, but to serve", and those students are participating in Taft's annual Service Day. With 575 students and 115 faculty, that's a lot of service!

Sixty-five students spent a day at Flanders in early November, chopping, stacking, painting, winterizing,

The program was organized by Taft Chaplain Michael Spencer. "Service Day started seven years ago", explains Michael. "The entire school participates in this one massive day. It's always good to 'get outside of ourselves', and be reminded that we are part of a larger community. Our Volunteer Council also organizes a variety of service activities throughout the year".

Flanders has been the beneficiary of a number of projects performed by Taft students over the years, and Taft seems to have a fond spot for Flanders as well. "Reflecting on our connection with Flanders - it's a very rewarding project for us, in a beautiful setting that we really enjoy", says Spencer. "It's been a great partnership that we hope to continue in the future".

The wood splitting crew.



Looking forward to seeing those Tafties next year!

A Day on the Farm



On The Farm Program.

Parmelee, teacher and coordinator of Flanders' "On the Farm" program.

Dianne and the other staff who will conduct this program (Josh Rapport, Jolynn Rostowsky, Deron Ash) seat the youngsters on hay bales by the North barn. Dianne greets them with a megawatt smile and a bellowing "Good Morning!". Students at the Hopeville Elementary School in Waterbury, many of them have never seen farm animals before. They're sneaking glances at the nearby cow, while the pig peeks out from behind its fence and the roosters chime in with the children's gleeful shrieks. Something very special has just begun.

As on many weekdays throughout the fall and spring, these children have come to Flanders to learn more about nature, and the Van Vleck Farm Sanctuary, itself a working farm for hundreds of years, will be their learning laboratory.

The children will partake in activities that have been designed to complement their school curriculum. The first group heads out on an interpretive hayride with Josh Rapport in the old farm wagon, pulled by an antique tractor. To the accompaniment of the old John Deere's distinctive 'chug chug chug', Josh leads the group in a rousing chorus of "Old McDonald Had a Farm" as they head out into the fields.

One hundred kindergartners are about to descend on the North Barn at the Van Vleck Farm Sanctuary. "As the kids step off the school bus, the excitement begins and the noise level goes up!" says Dianne

A second group is playing a game of 'Hurricane' where, Dianne says, "They'll learn that farms are a part of nature, and they're valuable not only because of what they produce but because of the habitats they create. The weather is your boss on a farm, because it tells you what to do - a farmer's whole schedule revolves around the weather and the cycles of nature: planting, growing, harvesting. We dress one of the kids as a cow, and talk about mammals, milk production, and dairy products. Then we pick pumpkins and decorate them with wool and feathers, and talk about the fibers produced from animals and plants. All the animals we're talking about are right here! It's a very well integrated program".

The last group joins Deron for a scavenger hunt. "We look for treasures in nature, things like fallen leaves and acorns", says Deron. "We walk to the pond and talk about life there. Most of the kids know they'll see frogs there, and usually someone thinks we'll see alligators, too! This program gives the kids a sense of the larger web of all life. It shows them about our dependence on nature. On top of all that, they're having a lot of fun!"



Instructors Deron Ash, Jolynn Rostowsky and Dianne Parmelee.

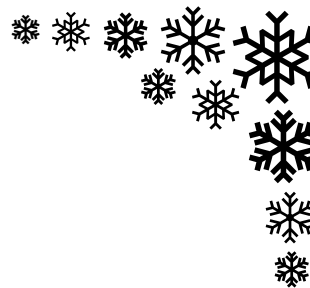
After rotating around to each segment of the program, the kids climb back on the bus and head back into the city, but their view of the world has changed. What they've learned today will be reinforced when they see the leaves falling off the trees in their yard or a nearby park. Today's lesson on mammals will flow into mind as they gulp down their next glass of milk.

Flanders' "On the Farm" program will host thousands of young visitors this year, in addition to those who meet a Flanders staff member in their classroom. As Dianne so aptly summarizes, "Nature is a good teacher".

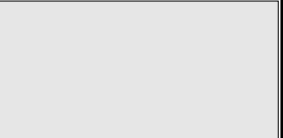
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Taft Students Serve

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Come and enjoy
the winter season.



Flanders Road
P.O. Box 702
Woodbury, CT 06798-0702



From the Director's Desk



Dear Members and Friends,

At our recent Fall Festival, I ran into a new volunteer at Flanders. She was amazed by the day's bustle of activities. She summarized her first few months of involvement at Flanders by commenting, "Wow, this is a happenin' place!".

Yes, Flanders is a happenin' place. We have so many people doing so many amazing things here, they make it all look easy. A long-time friend of Flanders recently remarked at the Four Seasons of Flanders Auction, "Everything looks so smooth and well organized, the auction almost seems to run itself".

It's a credit to the expertise and professionalism of our volunteers that Flanders' programs might appear to "run themselves". In reality, however, a lot of hard work is done by that cadre of volunteers, who number in the hundreds, and that is what accounts for the continual growth in the depth and breadth of Flanders' impact on the community.

Success breeds success. When people see what's going on at Flanders, they want to be a part of it. Countless volunteers have been members of the Flanders family for decades, because we have incorporated their skills and enthusiasm in ways that are fulfilling and personally rewarding for them.



Sincerely,
Arthur S. Milnor
Executive Director
Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust



Newsletter

THE ORGANIZATION THAT IS HERE FOR YOU
TODAY AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Winter 2002

(203) 263-3711
www.flandersnaturecenter.org

Looking Ahead

To register for programs or for additional information, call Flanders Nature Center, Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

FLANDERS STARGAZERS' GROUP: NOVEMBER 15, DECEMBER 20, JANUARY 17, FEBRUARY 21, MARCH 21 & APRIL 18 (Series continues every third Friday of the month), 8:00 PM, VAN VLECK FARM SANCTUARY, STUDIO. Connect to the cosmos in our on-going monthly series about the night sky. Local naturalist and astronomer Deron Ash will cover fascinating monthly topics such as night sky objects, navigating the stars, and ancient sky lore. (In bad weather, the program will be rescheduled). Registration required. Donation requested.

MAKE YOUR OWN THANKSGIVING TABLE CENTER-PIECE: NOVEMBER 26, TUESDAY, 7:30 - 8:30 PM, VAN VLECK FARM SANCTUARY, TRAIL HOUSE. Have you ever thought of making your own table centerpiece for Thanksgiving Day, using fresh cut flowers? This workshop with local florist Leslie Gamsjager will show you how! Bring clippers or scissors and one 8" diameter table centerpiece bowl. A basic bowl will be provided if you do not wish to use a "fancy" one. Registration required (maximum:12). Fee: \$35/members, \$40/non-members, per centerpiece.

DECORATE YOUR OWN WREATH: DECEMBER 3, TUESDAY, 4:15 - 8:00 PM, VAN VLECK FARM SANCTUARY, TRAIL HOUSE. Let your creativity bloom with these special workshops taught by local wreath makers, including florist Leslie Gamsjager. The afternoon is for parent and child (maximum:15 pairs); the evening is for all ages. Participants will receive a 12" balsam wreath. Working with this base of greens, you will make your own holiday wreath using natural and dried materials collected locally. Materials and craft supplies will be provided. Registration required. Fee: \$25/members, \$30/non-members, per wreath.

FLANDERS' CHRISTMAS FEST: DECEMBER 15, SUNDAY, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM, VAN VLECK FARM SANCTUARY, NORTH BARN. Make it a traditional family day with hay rides (weather permitting), Santa Claus, wreath making, kid's crafts and live farm animals... all coming gift wrapped with hot chocolate, popcorn and caroling! No registration necessary. Look for directional signs to the North Barn, just north of the Van Vleck House and Studio on Flanders Road. Drop in any time - come one, come all! No fee or registration necessary.

MAPLE SYRUP SEASONAL GATHERING: JANUARY 23, THURSDAY, 6:00PM, VAN VLECK FARM SANCTUARY, STUDIO. Come and join us in planning our Maple Syrup season - the first in our new Sugar House! We'll discuss projects and set dates for upcoming events: tree tapping, sap collection, cooking and interpretation training. Meet volunteers from past years, peek at photos and educational materials, check out the Sugar House, and sign up to participate in any or all events of your interest! Everyone is welcome. Light snacks provided. Registration required. No fee.

WEDNESDAY WANDERINGS: FEBRUARY & MARCH, WEDNESDAYS, 9:30 AM, VAN VLECK FARM SANCTUARY, TRAIL HOUSE. Naturalist Ronnie Kamphausen is back! Join her every Wednesday on the trails of Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust, exploring nature in winter. Ronnie will guide participants through woods, fields, and trails, observing the changes plants and animals go through to survive the winter season. Visits to local treasures, such as Orenaug Park, will also be scheduled. All ages, all levels of experience and knowledge are welcome any time. Dress for the weather! Registration and a small donation to Flanders are appreciated. Call for weekly meeting spot.

FLANDERS' ANNUAL MEETING: FEBRUARY 20, THURSDAY, 6:00 PM, WOODBURY EMERGENCY SERVICES BUILDING, QUASSUK ROAD, WOODBURY. Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust will hold its Annual Meeting to reflect on the past year and usher in the new, and to elect the Executive Committee for fiscal 2003. Featuring a potluck dinner and educational program. Please join us! No fee or registration necessary.

THE STORY OF GARLIC: THURSDAY, 7:00-8:30 PM, VAN VLECK FARM SANCTUARY, STUDIO: Presented by Joshua Rapport, founder and principal farmer of Sacred Organics and Flanders' Land Manger, this program will feature a discussion and a question/answer session on history and folklore, organic growing techniques, and medicinal properties of this ancient gourmet and therapeutic herb. Practical growing tips are available for the home gardener, covering all stages of growth (including bed preparation, planting, mulching, organic fertilizing and flower topping), to harvesting, curing, grading and storage. Registration required. Fee: \$5/members; \$10/non-members.

MAPLE SYRUP DEMONSTRATIONS: MARCH 1/2, 8/9, 15/16, SAT/SUN, 2:00-4:00 PM, MAPLE SUGAR HOUSE, VAN VLECK FARM SANCTUARY. Help us kick off our first season in the new Sugar House (some of you helped build it!), as a New England tradition continues at Flanders. The public is invited to learn the history, science, and humor of maple syrup production at our "state of the art" Sugar House, located near the red Trail House on Church Hill Road (off Flanders Rd.). Demonstrations and interpretation are provided by staff and volunteers, as we collect sap and boil it down into syrup. Flanders' maple syrup, and a host of additional maple products, will be available for purchase at the Sugar House (weekends) and in the Studio (main office, weekdays). Call for directions or additional information. No fee or registration necessary.

Call Flanders for information about specially arranged Maple Syrup educational programs, tailored to your group.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST: MARCH 2, SUNDAY, 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM, WOODBURY EMERGENCY SERVICES BUILDING, QUASSUK ROAD, WOODBURY. Enjoy breakfast fit for a New Englander! Pancakes, sausage, juice and hot beverages - and 100% real maple syrup - will be prepared for you by Flanders' staff and volunteers, as we celebrate nature's seasonal bounty and the running of the sap. All-you-can-eat breakfast: \$5.00/adults, \$3.00/children. Proceeds help provide materials for educational programs.

Continuing Education Programs

ART ALL YEAR LONG: SEASONAL MONTHLY AFTER-SCHOOL SESSIONS, 4:00 - 5:30PM (Wednesdays), VAN VLECK FARM SANCTUARY, TRAIL HOUSE. Open your imagination and explore techniques to develop your talent and personal expressive style! Discover various art mediums such as brushwork, color mixing, color wheel, collage, pen & ink, watercolor, pastel, art history, journaling, sketchbook and drawing. All mediums can be an endless source of joy! Sessions are geared for ages 5 - 10 (maximum: ten students). No art experience necessary; register for one or more sessions. Fee: \$65/members, \$80/non-members, per four-week session. Registration required.

Session 1: November 20, 27, December 4, 11

Session 2: January 8, 15, 22, 29

Session 3: February 5, 12, 19, 26

Session 4: March 12, 19, 26, April 2

Session 5: April 9, 23, 30, May 7

Session 6: May 14, 21, 28, June 4

MAD ABOUT SCIENCE: SEASONAL MONTHLY AFTER-SCHOOL SESSIONS, 4:00 - 5:30pm (Thursdays), VAN VLECK FARM SANCTUARY, TRAIL HOUSE. Learn about the fun-filled world of natural science as we explore topics in Astronomy, Geology, Ecology, Physics, Chemistry, and more. We emphasize fun, interactive, hands-on learning activities! Topics include: Magnetic Mysteries, 3-2-1 Blast Off!, Crystal Creations, Water Magic, Edible Rocks?, Whirling Worlds. Sessions are geared for ages 6 - 10 (maximum: 10 students). Come join us for science fun! Call for additional information about program starting in January.

OUTDOOR RANGERS: NOVEMBER - JUNE, MONDAYS OR TUESDAYS, 9:30-11:30 AM or 12:30-2:30 PM, VAN VLECK FARM SANCTUARY, TRAIL HOUSE. Nature theme-centered topics geared for the pre-school child. Classes explore different art mediums, projects, games, songs, stories, hikes, nature activities, mini-experiments, and a time to snack. Programs are presented in a manner that is easy for your 3 - 5 year old to understand and enjoy. Expect a visit from a weekly "Creature Feature"! Fee: \$12/members, \$17/non-members, per class. Call for registration (required) or additional information.

Nov. 18th & Nov. 19thSee You Later...
 Nov. 25th & Nov. 26thTurkey Tracks
 Dec. 2nd & Dec. 3rdWho's Going to Sleep?
 Dec. 9th & Dec. 10thEverything Evergreen
 Dec. 16th & Dec. 17thOh Deer!
 Jan. 6th & 7thEye On The Sky
 Jan. 13th & 14thAll Dressed in White
 Jan. 21st (*Tues. ONLY)Hot or Cold??
 Jan. 27th & 28thMaking a Come Back
 Feb. 3rd & 4thSnakes & Turtles
 Feb. 10th & 11thColors of All Kinds
 Feb. 18th (*Tues. ONLY)Whooo's There?
 Feb. 24th & 25thFoot Print Fun
 Mar. 3rd & 4thSap to Syrup
 Mar. 10th & 11thWeather Wonders
 Mar. 17th & 18thPretend Zoo
 Mar. 24th & 25thTail Tales
 Mar. 31st & Apr. 1stDisappearing Act
 Apr. 7th & 8thEggs-centricities
 Apr. 21st & 22ndRain & Rainbows
 Apr. 28th & 29thTake a Leap!
 May 5th & 6thGo Fish...
 May 12th & 13thDown on the Farm
 May 19th & 20thPlant Magic
 May 27th (*Tues. ONLY)Signs of Spring
 June 2nd & 3rdSkunk and Cabbage
 June 9th & 10thFamily Ties

Flanders Fall Events

Auction



Auction Chair,
Janet Bunch at the podium.



A table of enthusiastic supporters contemplates their bids.



Allison and Guy
Gabrielson
enjoy Auction
festivities.



Auctioneer Wayne Mattox and "Assistant" -
Flanders Volunteer, Donna Johnson

A Good Neighbor



Tim Pabst.

Much of what makes Flanders such a vital organization are the relationships people have forged with the nature center, and the commitments they've made to helping Flanders work within the context of its mission.

Many friends contribute in quiet ways, even though their association with the nature center spans many years. Such a person is our Flanders Road neighbor Tim Pabst, who grew up across the street from Natalie Van Vleck's sheep farm. From the days of his youth, when he worked alongside Natalie's shepherd, to his annual display of prized antique tractors every October at Flanders' Fall Festival, the Van Vleck Farm Sanctuary has been a part of Tim's life for decades.

Natalie Van Vleck was a successful farmer for years before founding the nature center. Tim recalls, "When Natalie was alive, this place was a sheep farm, and that continued for a while after her death. I was friends with Bobby Harmann, whose dad was the shepherd. We did all the haying and a lot of field work. The sheep were everywhere on the property - the South Farm, the North Barn, everywhere. The land was all open pasture then."

His boyhood experiences led Tim to a career working with the land. "I had been mowing lawns since high school, including at Flanders", says Tim. "Now I run a land clearing business, as well as landscaping. We work all around Western Connecticut and New York state. I also do some landscaping and plowing here at Flanders".

Over the years Tim developed a passion for tractors. Antique tractors, to be exact. Now he collects them, which has led to yet another point of contact with Flanders. "I started out buying a 1958 John Deere 530", says Tim. "Then I got another tractor, and another. I use them for work baling hay and on the farm". Some of the tractors are stored at Flanders, and Tim displays them at the annual Fall Festival, where they're a big hit. Tim also graciously loans Flanders his 1959 John Deere for hayrides when school groups visit the Van Vleck Farm Sanctuary.

Flanders' Director Arthur Milnor appreciates having Tim nearby. "Tim has numerous and unique connections to Flanders. He's been there when I needed him. He brings his tractors over for everyone to enjoy. He loans us one of his tractors for our Farm Programs, because ours is not large enough for the hay rides and special programs we do. He enhances Flanders' property by maintaining our land across the street, which abuts his property. Tim is one of those people who've been involved with Flanders for many years. Those kinds of relationships go beyond just making a difference at Flanders; they have an impact on the larger community as well. That's the type of thing that has always made Flanders so special".

Preserving Our Assets



Flanders' Botany Pond.

The award-winning Botany Trail (and its pond) at the Van Vleck Farm Sanctuary has been a point of pride at Flanders since its creation over 30 years ago. In recent years, however, the pond has "shrunk" to half its original size, the inevitable result of erosion along its banks.

Now the pond has been restored to its former glory, the result of a coordinated effort among members of Flanders' Botany Trail Committee, Master Gardener Nancy Gould, the Pomperaug Valley Garden Club, excavator Bob Smith and dedicated volunteers.

"Planning for the project started about a year ago", says Flanders Board member Cindy Hunt-Stowell. "The pond was slowly disappearing as the silt was sliding down the embankment and filling in the pond. Only by dredging the pond, removing the silt and controlling the erosion along the bank could we bring the area back to its original beauty".

Coordinated by Master Gardener Intern Nancy Gould, the procedure was not without its challenges. "After getting the proper permits from Inland Wetlands", Cindy says, "our biggest question was how to get the excavating equipment onto the site with the least impact on the surrounding flora. Bob "Smitty" Smith, who has worked with Flanders before, decided to bring the equipment in through the woods".

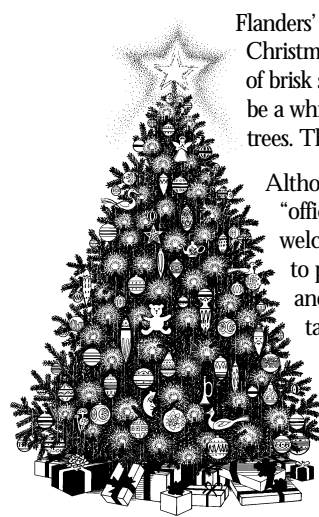
Smitty pumped the water into a nearby stream in August, dredged the silt, and then allowed the site to dry for a month before proceeding. Meanwhile, Nancy selected and purchased 800 plants for the embankment.

Come September, Nancy, Cindy and Botany Trail Committee member Joan Smith-Wallek assembled volunteers from the Pomperaug Valley Garden Club and the Master Gardener program, who conducted a massive "plant-in" along the water's edge.

It worked! "Next spring, when we traditionally hold our Botany Trail walks, the pond area will be completely restored to its former glory", says Cindy. "It's a wonderful spot for hiking and contemplating nature, with benches nearby. Our school groups also use the area for the popular "Pond Life" education programs."

Many thanks to all who participated in this huge project, which has greatly beautified the Van Vleck Farm Sanctuary.

CHRISTMAS TREES ARE GROWING



Flanders' loyal supporters have already realized that the Christmas tree groves are largely depleted, after years of brisk sales. Even under the best of conditions, it will be a while before Flanders will be up to speed with trees. There's no rushing Mother Nature!

Although Flanders will temporarily suspend its "official" tree sales this winter, the public is welcome to browse the groves on their own and to purchase any tree that suits their desires, and to "top off" any tree that is otherwise too tall - the branches remaining at the base can be used in wreath making classes.

As usual, Flanders will continue to offer winter wreath making classes using natural materials gathered from around the Van Vleck Farm Sanctuary.

Create a Legacy of Protected Lands

Plan a bequest to Flanders

Your legacy to Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust will help save special places where future generations can get their hands on nature.

You can remember Flanders in you will or living trust, or name Flanders as a beneficiary of your IRA, qualified retirement plan, or life insurance policy.

Fall Festival

