

President's Message

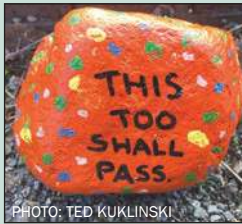


PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI

Kindness Stone

A painted “kindness stone” last spring at Dolan Pond had the encouraging message, “This too shall pass.” Little did we know the pandemic would last so long and have such dreadful consequences. As the leaves have filled out the trees, the masks have been falling off our faces — revealing wide smiles. Casual conversations have shifted from *weather* to *whether* you have gotten vaccinated! In the near freezing weather of February and March, the warmth of the breath held in by a mask was welcome comfort. As the ponds melted, the trill of the toads singing, the wake behind swimming muskrats, and sunbathing painted turtles fascinated young visitors while their parents said that visiting our open spaces every day helped get them through the pandemic. Spring plants, shrubs, and trees seemed to

burst out with much more vigor this year.

Birding each morning this spring was a special treat when we witnessed the season unfold slowly over the weeks. The return of our local avian residents like catbirds, orioles, swifts, and swallows was eagerly awaited and noted, but some felt the numbers of migrating warblers and thrushes were down a bit. But when you spend time out in nature, there are often surprises, like a beautiful Barred Owl or an ephemeral floral display found along a path at Dolan Pond with the quote from Thoreau scratched nearby, “*Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads.*”

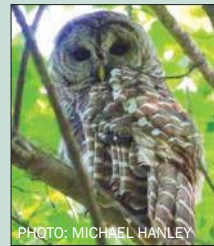


PHOTO: MICHAEL HANLEY

Barred Owl



PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI

Flower Heart

In place of the usual series of walks, our spring webinar series had greater attendance than ever, covering such topics as vernal pools, Cold Spring Park, spring birding, and pollinator gardens. In case you missed any of them, they will be available in the near future on our Newton Conservators' video channel. Moreover, we expect to have both in-person walks and online webinars this fall!

In other news, the Pony Truss Trail portion of the Riverside Greenway opened officially this month, and orienteering courses are now available at four of our open spaces. Newton Conservators celebrates its 60th anniversary this year with an in-person dinner meeting and lecture at Post 440 on Wednesday October 27 — finally a return to some semblance of normality!



PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI

Garlic Mustard

We are grateful for this newsletter's articles by some of our most dedicated volunteers. For BU Professor Richard Primack, the Webster Woods/Hammond Pond area has always been somewhat of a laboratory. He details some of the changes in the trails there due to the recent increased usage during Covid. Retired Brandeis ecologist Eric Olson cogently explains why invasive plants should be controlled. And if you are inspired and moved to action, we are opening up our invasive removal sessions once again to public participation under the newer Covid guidelines.



PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI

Sweat Bee

As a counterpoint to undesirable invasive plants, Beth Wilkinson and Mark Feldhusen's article on a new Pollinator Toolkit is must reading for all those Newton gardeners who ask, “What native varieties should I be planting?” Putting words into action, they also describe a newly installed native plant pollinator garden at Newton City Hall with grant support from the Newton Conservators.



PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI

Smile Stone

Perhaps you will be inspired to search out invasives in your own yard and put in some native pollinator plants. With vaccination widely available now, you can fully enjoy the restored freedoms and activities we so sorely missed over this trying Covid period and show off your smile in our open spaces!

All the best,

Ted Kuklinski

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President, Newton Conservators