

## Our Mission, Our Challenge

a message from the President

The WPA is celebrating its 44th year of preservation efforts in Wonalancet. For most of that time the Board of Directors worked to covenant every property in the area. However for the past few years, in order to more effectively pursue the promise of our mission, we have expanded our efforts. As many of our members know, we are actively promoting pollinator protection, open fields preservation, and invasive species control. We recently started educational outings and seminar programs in the Tamworth schools. This summer a WPA-sponsored 'little free library' will grace the Chinook trail in the vicinity of the Chapel.

In looking to the future we see two primary challenges. First, can we improve on the protections our 30-year covenants offer? This question goes to the heart of our association and will rise toward the top of our agenda in coming years. Finding ways to satisfy the concerns of everyone in the association while insuring permanence is worth some serious conversation.

Second, and at the top of our agenda this year, we look to encourage our members and neighbors to consider permanent protection for more of the open fields and undeveloped forest around us. There are now better options available for landowners and more resources to make it happen. Interest in regional



land preservation is increasing and more communities are rising to the challenge. All stakeholders here in Wonalancet, our members and non-members alike, should find this encouraging. The WPA Board aims to do its part to provide information, education, encouragement, and support as this promising future unfolds.

We continue to seek opportunities to assist local permanent preservation projects. As our membership knows, we contributed to the permanent protection of the Steele farm in 2007. In 2015 our matching-grant fundraising effort made it possible to protect 57 acres of the Ainsworth property in the very center of our community. Recently other members have put two

more properties in permanent protection. At this year's annual meeting we'll display maps that graphically show our progress, both with covenants and by permanent easements.

But we're determined to do more, and fortunately we are not alone. There is much interest among local property owners in permanently protecting their fields and forested land. And the Wonalancet Lands Group, originally an offshoot of the WPA, is

now an autonomous group consisting of a small number of conservation activists, who work directly with interested land owners, advocating, educating, and providing informed guidance. Their tenacious effort to bring together property owners, local conservation commissions and land trusts, like the Lakes Region Conservation Trust, has been very productive. Since 2014, the Wonalancet Lands Group has facilitated the conservation of 3 properties comprising 128 acres in Wonalancet. Their work

[continued from page 1] addresses tracts of land very central to our mission here in Wonalancet, and others somewhat further afield but closely associated with the continuum of natural land surrounding us. It is essential to understand that because of habitat connectivity, to name just one thing, we can't protect Wonalancet if we turn our backs on what is happening all around us.

Before our annual meeting on August 13th, I will be asking the membership to commit their financial support to our permanent protection efforts by donating to the Wonalancet Preservation Fund. This will be our second annual fund request and it is my hope that all WPA members will contribute as they are able. The WPA Board feels strongly that our mission is enhanced if we spend judiciously to help families initiate a permanent protection process that they couldn't consider otherwise. Although WPA can never be a sole funding organization, we can provide seed or starter funds when needed to offset survey and legal expenses which can be a hardship for many. These seed funds may be modest, but they are mighty. WPA funds can serve as the local match dollars often required by conservation grant agencies.

Please take a minute to visit [http://wonalancet.org/html/mission\\_Docs.html](http://wonalancet.org/html/mission_Docs.html) and take inspiration from our long-standing Mission Statement. That mission needs your input and support going forward. I hope that when you find the funding announcement in your mail you will donate generously.

Thank you.

– John Waite, President

*... to maintain Wonalancet as a physically beautiful, rural and undeveloped location, so that the public may continue to benefit from and enjoy the unspoiled bucolic, yet wild, character of the area, and to exercise special vigilance to ensure that human activities and habitation do not diminish the natural assets of the area . . .*

– WPA Mission Statement



## *Wonalancet Preservation Association Annual Meeting* Sunday, August 13th at the Wonalancet Chapel

### Albany Selectboard Meets in Wonalancet

Even old-timers can't remember any selectboard meeting of Albany – or for that matter of Tamworth, Sandwich or Waterville Valley – ever being held in Wonalancet. It may never have happened . . . until one historic day last November.

Most of Ferncroft Road, and much of the rest of Wonalancet, lies in the town of Albany. Albany elected officials are eager for a closer link to this distant part of their realm, so at their request WPA made arrangements for an Albany Selectboard meeting here at the Chapel.



One of the most interesting facts that emerged from the discussion – at least to many WPA members – was the major commitment, in some ways parallel to our own, that the Town of Albany has made to land conservation. In 2012, after 4 years of labor, the town managed to acquire a 300-acre town forest, divided between wild and agricultural acreage, adjacent to the White Mountain National Forest, and protected by conservation easements.

We all agreed we'd like to continue this new tradition on a regular basis. So we're making arrangements now for a fall 2017 Albany selectboard meeting in Wonalancet. Everyone is welcome.



## Oceanic Feeling

by Susan Barba

Some find it in water  
some in water's frozen form  
on nordic tracks a chord of feeling  
struck by a grove of saplings,  
slight descent and burst of speed.  
The smell of snow and sun  
in the acceleration.  
Freud called it infantile – certainly  
it has to do with return,  
with calling the saplings,  
snow and waves by the same name,  
which is also mine and yours.

*In memory of Doug Barba*

*Our new neighbor, Susan Barba, loves being outdoors and feels deeply about the power and mystery of nature. She found inspiration for this poem while cross-country skiing in Wonalancet.*

*Susan is a widely published poet, a translator, and an editor at New York Review Books, the publishing arm of the New York Review of Books.*

*Her new book of poetry is Fair Sun (Boston: David R. Godine, 2017).*

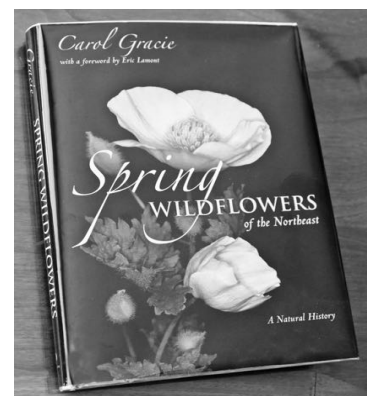
### Book Review Corner

*Spring Wildflowers of the Northeast: A Natural History* by Carol Gracie.  
Princeton University Press, 2012. 272 pp. With glossary, index and references.

Carol Gracie takes a richly cross-disciplinary approach here, necessitated by her true subject: not just wildflowers, but the intricate web of life in the forest.

There are thousands of enjoyable tidbits: Some violets can spew their seeds 15 feet. Bloodroot, trout lily and many other wildflowers spread their seeds by growing a tiny fatty appendage on each one that draws ants who lug them off to their nests. Ants in fact do a lot for flowers and enjoy their nectar, but being mostly hairless are very poor pollinators. The rhizomes of trillium have annual rings that have revealed some plants to be more than 70 years old. Lady-slippers, during part of *their* long lives, may lie dormant under the soil, surviving on nutrients transferred from tree roots by soil fungi. Each of these tidbits individually is fascinating, but their larger purpose is to reveal, in sum, a stunning vision of the complex unity of Nature.

Some may be disappointed to find many of their favorite flowers omitted, but this book was never intended to be a comprehensive field guide. Where the author does delve into the distinguishing characteristics of related species, it isn't to assure that the correct name is affixed. Names (both common and scientific), she believes, tell less about the plant and more about the insight and interests of the cultures (both common and scientific) that created the name. The importance she sees in patterns of variation is what they reveal about how an organism and its lineage have responded to challenges in the world around them.



## Country Drivin' & City Drivin' Contrasted

It seems a shame that the potholes of city roads get so much more national attention than the brutish-but-honest, clear-water swilling frost heaves of country roads. Eighty years ago potholes showed up in American books only twice as often as frost heaves, today it's more than six times. What if *that* trend keeps up?

No one's saying potholes are a blessing to modern travelin' infrastructure. They pop out from nowhere, for no good reason, and deal a shocking strike that can fracture your undercarriage. But frost heaves don't need surprise or guile. They raise their rearin' ramparts the same places every year, like a spider putting up a web: the victims know it's there but steer straight into it anyway.

Those raggedy tears running down the length of the pavement are to motorists what the San Andreas Fault is to San Francisco. Top that off with waves of asphalt and frontal upheavals across the road like tree trunks - 'cept they're hard to see because they blend in, and you can't just cut 'em up with your chainsaw and haul 'em out of the way.

Now to be fair . . . When you're city drivin' and a pothole jumps up, you usually can't swerve around it because there's traffic on both sides. You can't even slow down because there's likely a bunch of mad commuters rushing up behind you. But if you're country drivin' and there's something in the road, it's easy to drive into the other lane, and just stay over there as long as you damn well please.

