

Junior Naturalists

Edited by **Joyce Deutscher**, 7200 6th Ave., Regina

NOTES AND COMMENTS

As a special Christmas bonus to Juniors this issue has a Christmas project by Helene R. White. We hope you have been saving goldenrod galls so you can try some of the projects suggested by Mrs. White. Even if you have not collected any, you still may be able to find them if the snow is not too deep.

Send your illustrations, stories and letters about nature to Mrs. Joyce Deutscher, 7200 6th Ave., Regina. We will be looking forward to hearing from you.

NATURE HOBBIES

by **Helene R. White**

In this issue we are going to tell you how to make use of the goldenrod galls you have been gathering.

We will start with birds. For these you will need some white glue, a darning needle, and a penknife. Select a large gall for the body, cutting off the stems, and a small one for the head. Decide whether you wish a long or short neck and cut that stem accordingly. Punch a hole in the body with the needle, moving it around in a circular fashion until you have a big enough hole to receive the neck, a dab of glue, then the neck in the hole. Flatten the body bottom so it will sit, or hang it up on a mobile or spray it gold and hang on the Christmas tree. If you have trouble getting it to sit just right, glue it to a square of cardboard. You can add wings made from a split and slightly hollowed out gall, glue to body, holding in place with straight pins until dry. Stray feathers should make a dandy tail and wings. Sequins, rhinestones (pried out of old discarded jewellery) or seed beads make bright eyes. Coloured bits cut from an old magazine do admirably also.

Pieces of stems can be used for legs if you want a long-legged bird, halved

galls once again are used for feet. You'll likely have trouble making them stand alone at first; don't despair, glue them to a piece of cardboard. Once you start you'll find each gall reminds you of something and you are on your way. We have a fish with whittled tail and fin added. Our penguin is only an inch high, he sits on a gall slice, we added black felt flippers and coat, yellow beak and feet.

For tricks split a gall in half, add a toothpick mast and paper sail and you have a boat. If you want to sail it paint the hull with nail polish or crayon it heavily.

The snowman is made of three galls glued together with stem arms. I punched a hole in the top of his head to receive a piece of pipe cleaner and glue, then dipped him in white paint. A felt "hat", some features, a bend in the pipe cleaner, and he was ready for the Christmas tree. Cotton batting could be used instead of paint.

The carved heads take more time but they are fun. The first step is to peel off the shiny hard coating. Then start carving! Keep it simple for the first one. The crow has two hollowed circles for eyes and his beak was carved from separate gall pieces and added to the face like the birds' necks. Once you have a face you like, paint it with water colours, when dry, cover with clear nail polish. Snippets of coloured wool are added for the hair and if you want ears, use gall slices. Your head can now be used on the end of a pencil, or you can flatten the back and glue it to a purchased bolo tie, or glue to a brooch back. These are available and inexpensive at hobby shops. The finished article would make a dandy gift.

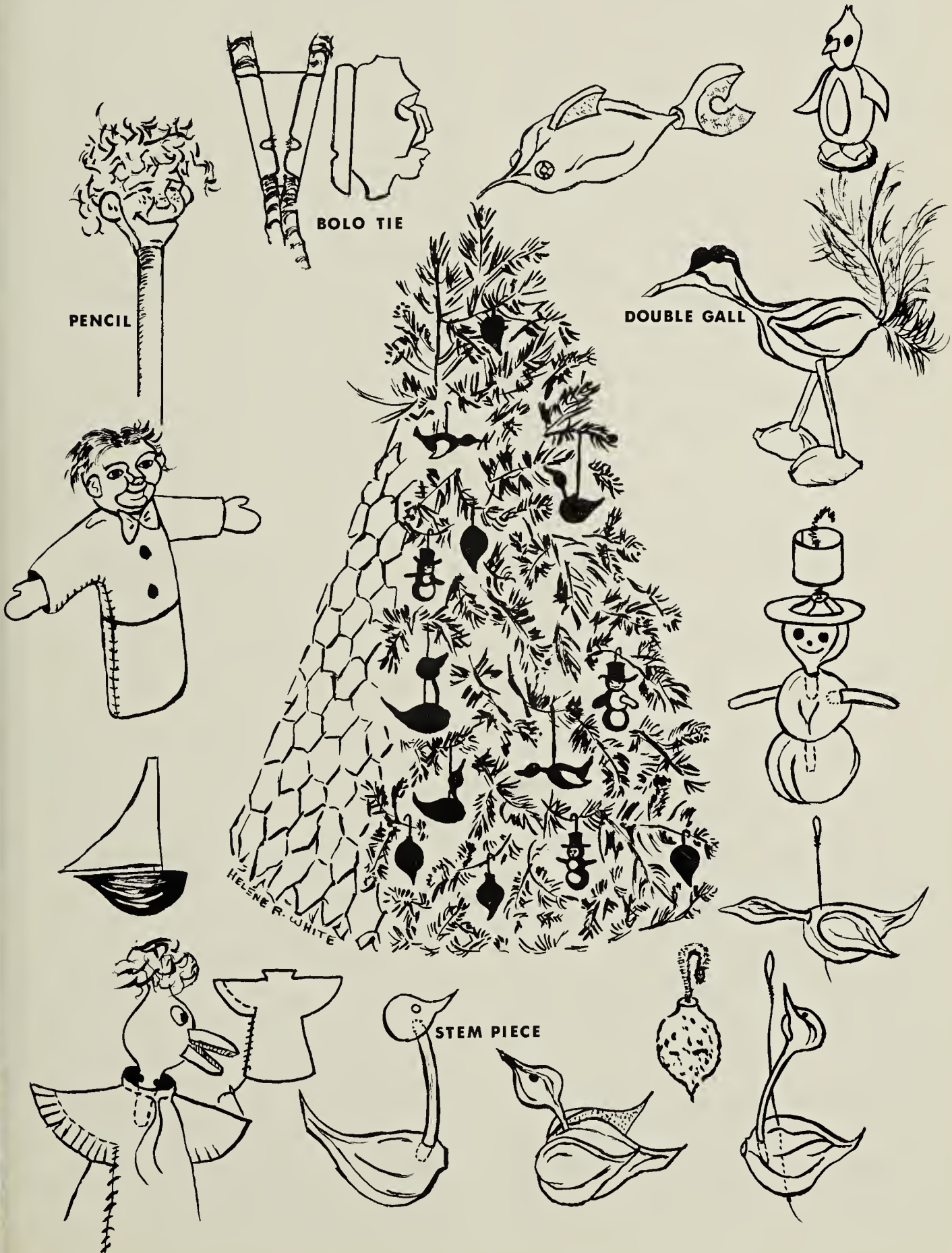
A series of animal and bird heads would make a totem pole.

The heads can also be used on finger puppets. For the crow cut two pieces

of felt exactly the same, stitch the sides as shown. Notch the gall at the neck (see illustrations). Using double thread and a running stitch go around the neck of the felt costume, slip in head, and draw garment tight, tie. Cut feather fringe and you have a finger puppet. The little man has a white shirt with black "trousers"

added. His hands are pink felt glued into the sleeves, his felt bow tie and buttons are also glued on.

The annual slaughter and defacing of evergreens at Christmas prompted us to purchase an artificial tree, but we still have a live one. Why don't you help conserve our trees and make one like the illustration, for your



table? A 14" cone of chicken wire, with small evergreen twigs tucked in, makes the best little tree imaginable. If you sprayed your birds gold do hang them on your tree; if you want more sparkle, powder them with glitter or make some baubles. Punch a hole in top of a gall, glue in a pipe cleaner hook, paint brightly and dust with glitter while still wet.

Have a happy Christmas, one and all, and since it is His birthday why not light a birthday candle or two to show that you remember Him on this day.

A DAY IN THE WILDERNESS

February 23, 1968 was the day to go out in the wilderness and survive with nature around us. This incident started when Mr. Cleave, our teacher, decided to take the class to Mr. Gilroy's farm for survival practice. After weeks of study and preparation we had learned two of the most important points—suitable footwear and light knapsacks.

Finally we were climbing out of the bus. There were nineteen of us all together in Mr. Cleave's class and we all stood quietly while Mr. Doty split us into groups.

We walked through a field and down into a valley to set up camp on the creek bed.

There were five fires. Each group made something to eat. We started our fire with tinder and kleenex. We soon had a tempting cup of hot broth.

Some groups had hamburgers, others had pancakes, and still others had potatoes. For dessert we had tea.

Meanwhile, Mr. Doty gave us a lesson on axes, how to handle them, and how to make a sheath for them.

Now came clean up time and following that came the tiring walk back to the farm where the bus was waiting.

Mr. Cleave gave us some advice about warming up but in spite of our tingling toes the trip had been most enjoyable.—Class from Public School Outdoor Education program, Regina.

BANDING HORNED OWLS

by **Rosemary Nemeth**, age 12, Yellow Creek

This spring I was fortunate to find three horned owl nests.

On May 11, my teacher and some classmates, accompanied by Dr. Houston and his helper, went to band the owls. There were seven nests in our district. I went to my three nests and two others.

Before we started banding, Dr. Houston showed us what happened when a horned owl flew at him. He had two bandages on his head and his goggles had a hole in them. He warned us never to climb a horned owl tree unless we have helpers on the ground.

In my first nest there were four nestlings. For food they had one baby rabbit, a leg of Mallard duck and one mud hen (coot). There were three little owls in my second nest. We had to lift the owls up to Dr. Houston by an old tree. My third nest had four baby owls. For food they had two baby rabbits, a Franklin's ground squirrel and a big rabbit.

Dr. Houston asked us if we knew what the parent owls feed the baby owls when there's not enough rabbits. He said they feed the littlest owls to the biggest owls. You may wonder what I mean by bigger and smaller owls. The eggs don't hatch at the same time.

I enjoyed this banding trip very much and am looking forward to another one next spring. You can come on a banding trip too if you find a horned owl's nest next spring.

AN UNUSUAL FLOWER AND EXPLORING BLOW OUTS

by **Colette Isinger**, age 10, Saskatoon

In June 1968 Rose Nemeth's father found a patch of Lady's Slippers. He told Rose about his find and she told my dad. So after school we went to see the flowers. They were yellowish in color, and in clusters. It was quite an experience. Dad used his 33mm. camera to take pictures of them.

Dad and I walk over the blown-out fields looking for Indian artifacts. Sometimes we find arrowheads or scrapers. This is one of my hobbies.

OUR BABY ROBINS

by **Joanne Waite**, age 8, Saskatoon

As I was going to school one day last May a lady showed me two baby robins she had found on the ground. She didn't know how to feed them so I took them home. My family and I kept them in a box in the house. We fed worms and hamburger to them. They drank water out of an eye dropper.

When they learned to fly a little we put them outside in the daytime and at night we brought them in. After a while they could fly better and stayed outside all the time. Every day they would be back for food and water. We hoped other robins would feed them but they wouldn't. We watched them learn to feed themselves.

They always stayed together and when they were apart they would call to each other. Each day they came back fewer and fewer times so we knew they were feeding themselves.

Soon they didn't come at all and we couldn't tell them apart from other robins.

FUN AROUND A DALE

by **Tim Keslering**, age 11, Indian Head

This summer we went to a dale where we found deer tracks all around a water hole. In the high grass we found flattened grass where the deer had lain. When we got out we saw two deer running across a field toward the hills.

In the middle of one hill we started looking for cactus.

We went into some bushes, found some empty nests and took them home.

THE WILD GAME FARM

by **Rita Ozimirski**, age 11, Yellow Creek

This summer I went to Edmonton, Alberta. A couple of miles from Edmonton we stopped at the wild game farm. The farm is about a mile each way. There were many wild animals. There were geese, pigeons, and peacocks running between the people. There was a baby elephant that was two times taller than a man.

Hundreds of deer were lying in wild surroundings. Camels were lying around chewing their cuds. Wild lynx and bobcats were in their cages. A few porcupine were sitting on trees in their cages nibbling on popcorn.

My parents and I walked to the end of the tiger cage and the tiger followed along side in his cage. I tried this several times and the tiger walked along every time. These are just a few of the animals I saw.

GEESE NESTING AT YELLOW CREEK

by **Gaylene Mazur**, age 11, Yellow Creek

In the early spring when my brother, sister and I were walking to school we saw two Canada Geese. As we came near they flew up and landed not far away. When we were about 100 yards from them, the male started honking. He was about 29 inches tall. The female was hidden in the grass so I didn't see her. As we came nearer they moved farther up ahead of us. Finally I threw a piece of dirt in front of them. Then they flew up and out of sight.

About ten minutes later we came upon them swimming in a slough. As we came near the male saw us and became very quiet. Then as we came nearer yet the geese flew up and out of sight. They went to make a nest in a big slough about one mile west of our place.

THE ROBIN'S NEST

by **Sharon Hubbs**, age 11, Indian Head

One day while I was out walking I saw a robin's nest with four blue eggs in it. The pale blue eggs were just beginning to hatch. I stayed and watched for a little while. Just then the egg opened and a small wet bird came out. Then I saw the mother come swooping down. I got out of there fast for fear I would alarm her.

After a few days I came back to the nest where the mother was feeding the young ones worms. Their mouths were big so the mother robin could drop the worms right in. It was getting late so I went to the house, because I didn't want to spoil their meal.

MY TRAP LINE

by **Delmer Dutka**, age 13, Yellow Creek

During the last fall and winter I had a trap line. I set snares and traps for squirrels and set traps for weasels and muskrats.

On Saturdays and Sundays I would go to sloughs around Yellow Creek and trap muskrats.

Each week I caught about five muskrats and two squirrels.

I caught 42 muskrats, 11 squirrels and two weasels. One muskrat was 11 inches long and nine inches wide at the bottom and I got \$2.40 for it. One weasel I caught was 23½ inches long stretched.

NATURE HIKE

by **Denise Beaulieu**, age 11, Indian Head

One morning when I was at Nipawin we went on a hike. Once when we were crossing a beaver dam there was a hummingbird sitting on top

of an old dead tree. The hummingbird was a glorious mixture of bright colours which glistened so much in the morning sun you couldn't tell the colours apart. It sat there for about 15 minutes, hovered in the air for a while, then flew away, but came back again later.

That morning we saw some pitcher plants as well as many other beautiful flowers. The pitcher plants grow in swamps. The leaves, which are shaped like pitchers, have many red and orange veins going through them. These pitchers have water in them. When insects fly in they are caught by the hairs in the leaf and drown in the water. The plant absorbs them for food.

We even saw some claw marks made by a bear going up a tree. There were a lot of other things we saw that morning. Too many to be mentioned here.

Letters and Notes

REGINA'S WASCANA WATERFOWL PARK

During my recent visit (October 1968) to Regina, I was drawn again to the Wascana marsh having been away from it for more than four years. A flood of wonderful memories of many past explorations of the marsh swept over me. I could sense again the companionship of those with whom I shared these outings and the changing seasons. I had known the marsh in all seasons and shared it with my Regina friends and many visitors of several nations. All of us were deeply imbued with the strategy of having a bit of naturalness of the Northern Great Plains within the bounds of one of the larger cities of western Canada.

All of us agreed that Wascana marsh offered great contrast to the contrivances of man. It also gave us a unity with nature, of which we are

an inseparable part. For us, the Regina scene was richer because of the marsh.

During the time I lived in Regina, my husband and I spent many hours not only at the marsh, but in defending it against those forces which would eliminate it or destroy its naturalness and great beauty.

I was deeply moved, during my recent visit, to see that the marsh was still there and that the University, the governments of the City and the Province, and private residents had not imposed upon or unduly invaded the bounds of the marsh as these had been set some five years ago.

I can only hope that all parties will continue to respect the uniqueness of this marsh and not invade it further. My husband and I will always remember Regina because of our friends and the Wascana marsh.—*Dorothy R. Wade*, Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, Illinois.