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robins, tree swallows, and yellow-rumped warblers as well as red maple flowers. Look down to spot marsh marigolds, early violets, polygala, and trailing arbutus. Spring cleaning in your yard means you will undoubtedly hear the first phoebes and, later in the day, a chorus of wood frogs and peepers calling from a nearby wetland. It's

time to bring in the bird feeders and hang the hummingbird feeders. When will the loons return to Highland and Bradley Lakes? Will great blue herons nest again at the Fenvale rookery? Find the answers to these and other questions as you participate in the arrival of spring.

Please share your nature sightings and interests with me at AndoverNaturally@gmail.com. 

AASP from page 21

AASP. Our space is limited, so the earlier we make this happen, the better.

Also, on display will be some crafts and artwork your children have made especially for this party. Come and spend some unrushed, quality time with all of us, and let your child guide you through our lovely display.

In like a lion, out like a lamb, was the AASP theme for the month of March. March always seems like such a long month. We spent some time sledding and making snow forts. We made windmills, leprechaun costumes, decorated

some clovers, had cookies as a treat, and necklaces to keep for St. Patrick's Day. Ending the month with Easter projects helped to welcome spring and warmer weather. We will also have ice cream cookie sandwiches and an Easter egg hunt the week before Easter.

When ski Fridays are in full swing at AE/MS, we have a small group coming over to the Annex. We often have hot cocoa, popcorn, and a movie. They all enjoy having some extra goodies. We also take children off the bus from the mountain. This is another advantage of having your child enrolled in the After School Program. 

Arlyne from page 21

person and was surprised to learn that the artist's studio was right next door. His name was Walter Sherwood, and he was from England. He had arrived 15 years ago to paint portraits in this country. His fee was ridiculously low, especially for the caliber of his work. I learned the reason for this later.

At that time, I had been searching my brain as to what I could send my husband for Christmas. The list of items that could be sent to servicemen was very limited, and during the past two years I had sent him all of the allowable items.

One night, I had a brilliant thought. I would give him an oil portrait of his wife. Being English, I remembered the old English tradition of families having their portraits painted to leave to their children, generation after generation. When Hal came home, he could sit for his portrait. It would be a start for our family. A great idea!

As it turned out, when Hal came home he was busy making decisions on other family matters. We moved back to Maine, and his portrait was never done. Currently, my portrait is shared, and visits a different family member each year.

To return to the making of my portrait, I knew that I could afford the low fee because Hal was receiving pay as a second lieutenant at the time. Of course, I could not send the portrait, only a photograph of it, until he came home.

Without Hal, my weekends were very lonely, so I made arrangements with Mr. Sherwood for my sittings to be on Sunday afternoons.

I will always remember meeting this remarkable man. He was not very tall, about 5 foot 7 inches. He had a crop of short white curls and a cheerful, round, ruddy complexion.

The sessions were two hours, and I was allowed to rest for 15 minutes each hour. During that time, he entertained me by playing his mandolin or a little antique organ he kept in his studio. He was a talented musician. To me, he was like an other-worldly, very chivalrous character out of a fairy tale book.

These sessions were not at all boring, but very interesting and informative. He positioned a large mirror that reflected the portrait painting from where I sat, and I could watch every brush stroke. Having dallied with the paint brush myself, this was a wonderful opportunity.

For the portrait, I wore a beautiful, pinpoint purple wool dress with a sweet-heart neckline and a sarong wrap style skirt bought especially for my husband when he came home. During the fourth sitting, Mr. Sherwood said, "For some reason, something is preventing me from getting the flesh tones that I want."

Could it be the background color, the position, the lighting? It was decided that the dress color was not suitable for my flesh tone, and I agreed to wear a different dress.

Luckily I had a friend who loaned me her beautiful white, brocade strapless evening gown. It had a four-inch wide, deep maroon velvet ruffle going around the full

six-foot hem. It had the same ruffle bordering the bodice. My friend was very tall, so I had yards bundled on my lap, which could not be seen in the portrait.

I wore a pendant with a stone the same deep maroon color. It was Hal's first gift to me, for no occasion, when we first started dating. It had much sentimental value for me.

Mr. Sherwood could now continue his painting. The scheduled eight sessions turned into nine. It is fun to know that there is a purple dress painted under the white one. Oil is a wonderful painting medium to cover up mistakes or changes.

During those nine sittings, Mr. Sherwood and I became friends. While painting in England, he lived among the wealthy, doing family portraits of the nobility: dukes, earls, lords, and their children. For his own reasons, he did not choose to accept the wealthy as his friends. No doubt his fee in England was several pounds. When he came to this country, he wanted his friends to be of the middle class, therefore charging a lower fee.

We shared many thoughts of past experiences. His life in England had not been happy, and he had never married. His only brother had committed suicide, so he had no family, which was the reason his friends were important to him.

He led a very frugal life in England and continued doing so after he moved to this country. Every Sunday, he treated himself to riding his bicycle along the shore of Narragansett Bay and to drinking one bottle of "stout," which is most English men's favorite beer (and is also recommended to pregnant women because of its nutritional value).

I was sorry to have the painting sessions end. Several of my art teachers have marveled at the flesh tones. His talent for painting was such that the mayor of Providence replaced his own portrait in City Hall with a portrait painted by Mr. Sherwood.

After the painting was finished, Mr. Sherwood would take the trolley car to Edgewood and walk the two blocks to my house for occasional visits. He wore a brown, wide-brimmed, floppy hat and a long, flowing coat. His walk was slow and unsteady, and he possibly suffered from gout. His dress and demeanor personified the typical English artist.

When my husband came home from the war in 1945, there was a big, white, wrapped gift hanging on the wall for him. It was tied with a wide red velvet ribbon and bow. My mission was completed.

Many years after leaving Providence, a friend sent me the obituary of Walter Sherwood. It was very brief, and I have often wondered what happened to the paintings left in his studio, especially the self-portrait of him playing his mandolin.

Recently, my daughter did a Web search on Walter Sherwood. There was little information other than that a portrait of a woman was auctioned in 2004 at Christie's in London for \$1,100.

This experience added much to my life. *Reprinted with Arlyne's permission from the Heritage Heights Residents Write literary journal.* 

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