

Westford Wanderings

By Gordon B. Seavey

In the wake of the gypsy moth

As we look back over the past three months weatherwise, it's been something for the books. The tulip trees, usually the first to blossom in the spring, were hard hit by early May frosts, killing all the buds. Now they've been rejuvenated, and are in bloom.

The same frost ruined much of the fruit in town, taking heavy toll on the peaches, pears, apricots, nectarines and most apples. A couple of growers have peaches and the apple crop is expected to be down 40%.

In turn, Nature has wrought some of her unusual wonders and is now busy bringing back the leaves of the thousands of deciduous trees defoliated in June by the gypsy moth caterpillars. Hit hardest were the oaks, the maples, beeches - and the apple trees. The evergreens, struck later by the pesky larvae

of the moth, in some cases are doomed to die. Cemetery landscaping saved by Anderson

In an effort to save the trees in Fairview Cemetery, Superintendent Wilfred "Fiddle" Tougiant found that all spraying contractors were overloaded with work during the defoliation crisis. Orchardist Carl Anderson of Chamberlin Road brought in his heavy spray equipment during the peak of the invasion, resulting in a near 90% kill of the pests. The effort "saved the day", including some of the more mature trees which have been given to the cemetery as a memorial.

Rare bird seen

Of the many hobbies, bird watching takes keen eyes and a sense of color. Evidently Dick Emmet of Concord Rd. has these qualifications and more too, besides being a teacher and chair-

man of the Board of Selectmen. More than anyone else in recent years, he has recorded more species of birds in town than anyone else. And now he has come with a "lifer" once again. Does a sandpiperlike bird with lobed toes that likes to wade as well as swim, about 9 inches long, with deep reddish underparts and a white face mean much to you? Well, this wanderer did to Dick. He spotted one in a small pond not far from the Vine Brook Estates, the new development off Powers Rd., in the southwest part of town.

The bird which he identified as a Red Phalarope breeds near the Arctic Circle, spends much time in the North Atlantic and its winter range at sea is poorly known. It is rarely seen in New England, occasionally along the Great Lakes. For verification another local birdwatcher, Mrs. Edward Lamson, agrees that this was a "bird of a day" for the town.