

Vermont Country Sampler

February 2022

Free

- Statewide Calendar of Events, Map
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- Sights to See, Things to Do
- Plenty of Good Reading!

N. Cassidy

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GREEN MOUNTAIN STOCK FARM
RANDOLPH, VERMONT



February Journal

Impeccable Limbic Vision

by Bill Felker

In a powerful wave of winter depression, the aftermath of a week of cabin fever and a night of bad dreams, I was overwhelmed by regret and pain and then the dreariness of the gray day. Lost and disoriented, I stopped by the woods with Bella, the family border collie.

Bella cared nothing for dreams or gloom. Her limbic brain was far wiser than my less balanced cerebrum. We wandered deep into the forest along the frozen river, and with her good example and the endorphins spawned by walking, my illness lifted like a fog in the sun.

As for virtue and the past, Bella's lack of guile, her trust and focus, were my best guides. Even though no part of the night's residual images might ever be erased or even forgiven, resolution was waiting as I followed the dog along the path, and the magnitude of my morning terror was transformed by a simple therapy.

Phantoms, cold, clouds

and chemistry might have sickened me, but health was only on the other side of this maple or that birch. The mind was as fickle as the sky and the weather. It did not require eternal spring, unchanging purity or a perfect, transcendent glade.

Knowing my tendency toward poor judgment, I recognized once again that a second or third life would simply offer me the chance to commit different, not fewer errors. How many times had I come to that conclusion? Each time the haunting dreams occurred, the question was the same. Each time, the answer was the same.

On this particular day, regret was easily dissolved by Bella's focus on the present. The impeccable limbic vision of my border collie reassured me that life still held seductive secrets. Everything was, indeed, in front of me if I would only use my time well. All that I could ever ask for lay within the borders of the bottomland.



photo by Brattleboro Museum & Art Center
Visitors gather to have a look at the Artful Ice Shanties in Brattleboro, VT.

Brattleboro, VT

Artful Ice Shanties

February 19-27

The Artful Ice Shanties will be displayed in and around Farmhouse Square at Retreat Farm in Brattleboro, VT (where the Food Truck Roundup takes place in the summer) from Saturday, February 19, through Sunday, February 27.

This outdoor exhibit is a place-based celebration of artistic talent, creative ingenuity, and the rich history of ice fishing at the Retreat Meadows. It is presented by the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center and Retreat Farm.

Last winter, over 1,000 people attended our inaugural exhibit. They saw ice shanties shaped like a giant iridescent fish, a black die

with moon-shaped dots, a seascape with a three-dimensional octopus, and more. They hiked and snowshoed on the Retreat Farm trails, visited Carlos the ox and other animals, went cross-country skiing, and skated on the Retreat Meadows.

As weather and Covid conditions permit, this second iteration of the exhibit will include more outdoor events, activities, demonstrations, and performances.

Join us on Sunday, Febru-

ary 26, at 2 p.m. for a wintry, wonderful outdoor Awards Ceremony where a panel of local judges will give out an array of awards for ice shanties with notably artistic, inventive, or silly qualities.

The Awards Ceremony will be held following the 100th anniversary of Brattleboro's Harris Hill Ski Jump, which will take place a short walk from the Retreat Farm.

This project was inspired in part by Art Shanty Projects in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Admission is free. Space for ice shanties is limited, so if you plan to build one, please register as soon as possible.

Retreat Farm & Meadows is located at 45 Farmhouse Square in Brattleboro, VT. Brattleboro Museum & Art Center is located at 10 Vernon St. on Brattleboro, VT. Contact Kirsten Martsi at kirsten@brattleboromuseum.org. www.brattleboromuseum.org.



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And find the matchbox, strike a match
And light a lantern light;

And set the lantern on a chair,
And then look down to see
If there is any kindling there
Jest where it oughter be;
Then lift the lid and take both hands
To feed the fire-food in,
And touch it off and curl all up
To feel the heat begin;

And stand there till your legs get weak
As No. thirteen wire,
And then decide you'll take a peek
To see what ails your fire,

And lift the old cracked lid again
From off its iron seat,
But not a vittermine of fire
Or callory of heat—

It's quite a thing, it's quite a chore
To make two cold sticks spark,
Without, as I have said before,
No malapert remark;
The fire collapsed, but 'twan't your fault
No more than urn, a bit,
When Europe scrapped and called on us
To make the Hell-Bosch quit.

It didn't ketch, that's all; you know
It means a woodshed trip,
Which means that you must
sweep some snow
Unless you want to slip;
You grab the broom, unlock the door,
But such a blast of air!
It blows the cat inside the house,
The lantern off the chair.

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Your hopes of heat-waves higher,
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—DANIEL L. CADY
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Vermont Country Sampler

February 2022, Vol. XXXVIII

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Current and back issues of the Sampler and calendar are available online at www.vermontcountrysampler.com

100th Annual Harris Hill Ski Jump February 19 & 20

Discover the original extreme sport at the 96th Annual Harris Hill Ski Jump competition. Come to Brattleboro, VT for two days of breathtaking, heart-stopping ski jumping. On February 19th and 20th an international field will compete on New England's only Olympic-size 90-meter ski jump. Gates open at 10 a.m. with competition starting at 12:45 p.m.

Enjoy two fun-filled jumping days of music, tailgating, and a climb to the takeoff for an up-close look at the jumpers as they fly by. Watch up close as jumpers launch from the top of a 90-meter jump and soar up to 300 feet at speeds up to 60 mph.

Enjoy the festive atmosphere and fun for the whole family with music, tailgating, food, bonfire, souvenirs, and beer tent. Witness the excitement of the spectators, the focus and friendliness of the athletes, and the ringing of cow bells!

Founded in 1922, the annual jumping competition held on Harris Hill attracts several thousand spectators each

year not only to watch local jumpers reach great heights but also to view world renowned jumpers soar in the sport of ski jumping.

The three major competitions, merged with the annual Pepsi Challenge and Fred Harris Memorial Tournament, will draw the best male and female ski jumpers from across the globe to Brattleboro.

Tickets are \$20 adults, \$15 youth age 6-12 years, under age are always free, available online and at the gate.

Dress warmly and wear boots. We love dogs but leave them at home. Parking is free.

Harris Hill Ski Jump is a non-profit organization. The yearly event is put on entirely by volunteers.

Harris Hill is located in Brattleboro, VT, off I-91 exit 2. Follow the signs to Cedar Street.

For more information, to order the book, Harris Hill Ski Jump, the First 100 years, or to buy tickets go to www.harrishillskijump.com.



Harris Hill Ski Jump competitors ready for competition on a bright winter day in Brattleboro, VT.

photos courtesy of Harris Hill Ski Jump



Steps to the top of the jump at Harris Hill in Brattleboro, VT.

photo courtesy of Harris Hill Ski Jump



Miran Zupanicic of Slovenia takes to the air, a winner at Harris Hill in 2014.

photo courtesy of Harris Hill Ski Jump



A young fan gets an autograph at Harris Hill Ski Jump.

photo by Allan Seymour

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Visitors enjoy a horse-drawn sled ride around the fields at Billings Farm & Museum in Woodstock, VT.

photo by Billings Farm & Museum

Woodstock, VT

February Festivities at Billings Farm & Museum

February at the Farm is a time to enjoy outdoor winter activities, celebrate all things Maple and even plan your spring garden! Billings Farm & Museum is open weekends in February and daily February 12-27 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Visit our Farm Animals—Jersey cows, sheep, calves, chickens and goats—all cozy for the winter. Enjoy the snow-covered fields with a Cross Country Ski or Snowshoe Trek. Bring your own gear or rent from the nearby Woodstock Inn & Resort Nordic Center. Venture through the picturesque snow-covered farm fields and along the Ottauquechee River. Bring your sled to slide down the small hill next to the orchard. Warm up around the fire pit and roast delicious s'mores, available for purchase.

Explore Vermont's Rural History

Take a self-guided tour of the 1890 Farm Manager's House. Considered state-of-the-art when it was built in 1890, the farmhouse has features quite uncommon for the times. Tour the Farm Life Exhibits to explore what life on the farm was like in the 1890's and search for snowflakes hidden within the exhibits. Learn about the families and history of Billings

Farm in our Upon This Land Exhibit. *A Place in the Land*, the Academy Award® – nominee film which chronicles the development of Billings Farm is shown throughout the day in the Visitor Center Theater.

Vacation Weeks February 12-27

- Join us for the Magic of Maple, an engaging experience around the site. Learn about maple trees, the maple sugaring process and the significance of maple sugar in Vermont's history. Hear children's stories about maple, meet a local maple sugarer, see sugar taps in action and taste the delicious treat of sugar on snow.

- Public Sleigh Rides Conditions permitting, Billings Farm & Museum will offer horse-drawn sleigh rides on February 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24 & 25 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Reservations for rides will be taken upon arrival at the ticket desk, first come, first served. The cost is \$5 per person in addition to the purchase of a general admission ticket. Ages 2 and under are free. Rides are approximately 10 minutes long.

- Private Sleigh Rides by reservation. To book please visit www.billingsfarm.org/winter-sleigh-rides.

- Winter Wonders Camp, February 14-18, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. "Fun"tastic winter activities such as snow explorations, sledding and winter crafts for ages 6-8. Visit our website for more information and to reserve a spot.

- Torchlight Snowshoe, February 24, 4:30-6:30 p.m. Join us for a torchlight snowshoe or walk along the Billings Farm trail as evening light begins. Warm up around the fire pit with complimentary s'mores and hot drinks. Learn about the wildlife and history of the land, guided by National Park rangers. Tickets must be purchased to attend. Adults \$10, youth (4-15) \$5. Children 3 & under are free.

Woodstock Vermont Film Series

Join us in the Billings Theater for this season's selections with screenings on Saturdays starting at 3 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. This month's films will feature Storm Lake (February 5), The Ants and the Grasshopper (February 12), Jimmy Carter: Rock & Roll President (February 19) and Summer of Soul (February 26). Tickets, season passes, and additional information are available on our website.

Billings Backyard:

Seed Starting and Garden Planning Like a Champ with Ben Pauly. Saturday, February 26. 10-11:30 a.m. Join Kelly Way Garden's Master Gardener Ben Pauly for a discussion on planning and starting this year's garden indoors using unique varieties only available in seed catalogues. Join us as we will talk about the how's and why's of starting your own garden from seed including sources, materials, methods, planning, and variety recommendations.

This workshop will be held simultaneously on Zoom and on site at Billings Farm & Museum. The Zoom presentation will be recorded and available to all paid participants. Proof of vaccination is required for onsite participants. Register by February 24th at our website.

Visiting safely. For the continued safety of our staff and guests, all guests over the age of 2 are required to wear a face covering in all indoor spaces. All guests must wear masks when around people and unable to maintain 6' physical distances outdoors. No entry is permitted without a face covering. Visit billingsfarm.org/safety for details.

Billings Farm & Museum is owned and operated by The Woodstock Foundation Inc., now in its 39th season, is a charitable non-profit institution.

Billings Farm & Museum is located at 69 Old River Rd. off Rt. 12 just north of the village in Woodstock, VT.

Admission: adults 16-61 \$16; 62 & over \$14; students 16 & up \$9; children 4-15 \$8; children 3 and under are free. Open weekends November through February 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. April through October open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Visit www.billingsfarm.org, facebook.com/BillingsFarmMuseum and instagram.com/billingsfarm. Call (802) 457-2355.

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Plants That Shine in the Winter Garden

by Judith Irven

It's mid-January as I write this article. My garden, and most likely yours too, is sleeping under a light covering of snow, and the temperatures are the coldest they have been all winter.

After unseasonably warm weather in December and early January, we have now entered a cold stretch. Indeed, a couple of nights ago the temperature here dropped to -17 degrees Fahrenheit.

But, even so, as I gaze out of the window in my study, there is still plenty to catch my eye and hold my interest.

First I notice the structure and shapes—sometimes called 'bones of the garden', including the gazebo and arbor, as well as groups of trees and shrubs, as well as the walls and steps.

My eye is especially drawn to a delightful small tree with intriguing exfoliating bark, that grows right outside my window. It goes by the unusual name of Seven-Son Flower (*Heptacodium miconioides*) and in late September it is covered with fragrant white flowers that are abuzz with bees. So the sight this little tree in mid-winter, with its sculptured shape and peeling bark against a snowy backdrop, is a second treat at this time of year.

In this article I will introduce many other plants which can enliven our gardens in every month of the year—including winter.

Of course, as we know, occasionally it can get very cold in Vermont. So, as we choose plants for our gardens, we need to select those that will survive the coldest temperatures we can expect to encounter at our particular location. This important concept is known as 'plant hardiness' and I will start by discussing its meaning and how it can influence our choices.

How cold is 'cold' for our plants?

The answer is that it all depends on the particular plant!

Some, like tomatoes and begonias, will die as soon as the temperatures drop below freezing.

But many kinds of plants thrive outdoors all year round, both in our forests and in our gardens. And the strategy they use to combat the cold depends on the type of plant.

With plants that we call perennials, the stalks and leaves die back each fall. But below ground, especially when thick snow creates an insulating blanket, the temperatures are actually slightly warmer than the air above. This helps their roots remain viable throughout the coldest weather, and it is one reason why we gardeners love a snowy winter!

By contrast woody plants—trees and shrubs—survive above ground all year long. But each fall—triggered by the ever-shortening days and cooler temperatures—they cease their active growth. In addition, to conserve valuable moisture, deciduous species will also drop their leaves.

At this point they then enter a state of dormancy, where the concentration of sugars in each cell markedly increases. This actually lowers the temperature at which the cell fluid will freeze (which would destroy the cell's walls). It is like 'nature's antifreeze'.

But—most important of all—the actual temperature at which the cell fluids begin to freeze and cause the plant to die, is heavily dependent on the particular kind of plant. Thus, as gardeners, we need to know, for each type of plant, the minimum temperature it can tolerate.

This critical piece of information is designated the plant's 'hardiness rating'. (For instance, a rating of three means it can tolerate temperatures between -30 and -40 degrees Fahrenheit)

But we also know that the coldest it is likely to get varies widely with location. Where I live I know that, for a few nights in any one winter, I can anticipate the temperature could drop below -20 degrees Fahrenheit, meaning I live in Hardiness Zone 4b.

However, up in the northeastern part of Vermont, the temperatures may go as low as -30 degrees Fahrenheit, which is designated as Zone 3B.

But you live further south, you will probably only encounter to occasional night when the temperature drops to -10 degrees Fahrenheit (Zone 5b).

The USDA publishes a detailed map for every state showing the hardiness zones at each location. Check it to find the exact Hardiness Zone where you live, and then only select plants classified as hardy in your zone or lower. Thus I will buy plants designated for Zone 4b or lower, but avoid any shown as only hardy in zone 5.

Small trees

I love to see a few small trees planted to complement a house, perhaps a crab apple at the corner diagonal. (Just be sure to plant it far enough out so that it will have sufficient room to grow to maturity without the need for pruning). This really useful listing of crab apple cultivars shows the sizes and other characteristics of many different cultivars, including those that keep their fruit into the winter months: https://www.jfschmidt.com/pdfs/JFS_CRAB_CHART.pdf

The various species of serviceberries (*Amelanchier*) are all delicate small trees that, again, are perfectly sized to complement the house. And they too look lovely in the snow.

Evergreen shrubs

When we think about dressing up the garden for winter our thoughts quickly turn to evergreens.

Most garden-sized evergreen shrubs are specialized cultivars derived from genetic mutations of full-sized coniferous trees—primarily pine, spruce, hemlock and fir—all of which bear cones and have needle-shaped leaves. And today there are literally hundreds of hardy coniferous cultivars available for gardeners!

Garden-sized conifers are classified according to their growth rate and their growth pattern. Expect the smallest, those designated as 'miniatures', to grow less than three feet in ten years, and those classified as 'dwarf' to grow between 3' and 6' in ten years.

By contrast, in a decade those designated as 'intermediate' will likely grow between 6' and 12 feet, whereas 'large' cultivars will grow 12 feet or higher. Furthermore some cultivars primarily grow outwards to create a wide mass, whereas others grow upwards as a single focal point.

So, to narrow down your choices as you consider which conifers you might use in your own garden, I suggest you consult with a specialty nursery that carries a wide selection such as Rockydale Gardens in Bristol (check their website to see their vast collection).

Boxwoods are also delightful low-growing shrubs that have very small rounded leaves which remain green all winter long. They are also extremely versatile in the garden since they can be readily pruned into particular shapes. For instance, I have a group of three boxwoods to create a four-foot high backdrop for an elegant metal bench that sits at the front of one of my flowerbeds.

I have also planted pairs of boxwoods, pruned as rounded balls, to emphasize the top of a stone stairway, plus a row as a low hedge alongside the path up to our barn.

Two boxwood cultivars in particular are designated as hardy in Vermont. 'Green Mountain' grows naturally as a pyramid and can make an accent, whereas 'Green Velvet', which forms a rounded shape, is excellent for creating a knee-high hedge.

I am also very partial to rhododendrons with their large shiny leaves and huge flowers in springtime. However, be warned! Especially during the winter months hungry deer

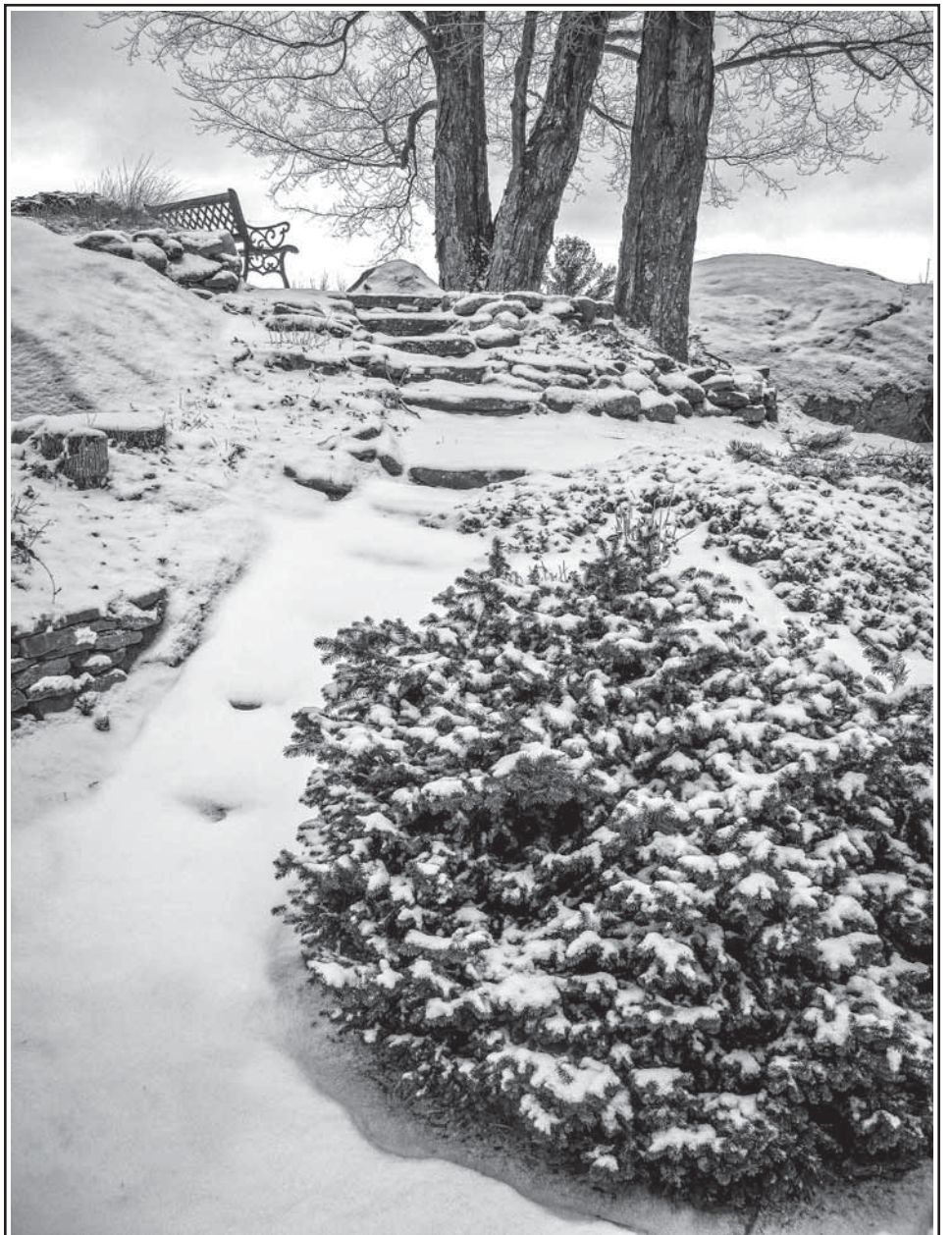


photo by Dick Conrad

This dwarf Norway spruce cultivar *Picea abies* 'Pumila' looks delightful in the snow, where it marks the bend in the stone steps that lead to our little upper patio.

may seek out available rhododendrons. So, if you do decide to plant a couple of bushes, plan on taking appropriate precautions, such as applying deer repellent spray and installing some fencing during the winter months.

Fruits and seeds

And finally, many plants keep their fruits or seeds into the winter, creating beautiful pictures for people, as well as tasty treats for birds and other wildlife during the coldest months of the year.

Many years ago I planted six female winterberry bushes (plus one compatible male) around the back corner of our driveway. Winterberries, our native holly, drop their leaves in the fall. But their red fruit, which usually remains for much of the winter, not only makes a stunning picture in the snow, but also provides food for hungry birds.

Similarly the native Smooth Rose, (*Rosa*

blanda), which also keeps its hips until late winter, is a wonderful addition to a wild hedgerow.

And, as I mentioned earlier, several crab apple cultivars also maintain their fruit into the winter.

And finally, I wait until spring before I cut back any perennials and grasses which have attractive seed-heads and strong stalks. Black-eyed Susans and purple cone flowers, which are also enjoyed by the chickadees and goldfinch, are among my favorites for their contributions to my winter garden.

Judith Irven and her husband Dick Conrad live in Goshen, VT where they nurture a large garden. Subscribe to Judith's blog about her Vermont gardening life at www.northcountryreflections.com. Dick Conrad is a landscape and garden photographer: northcountryimpressions.com.

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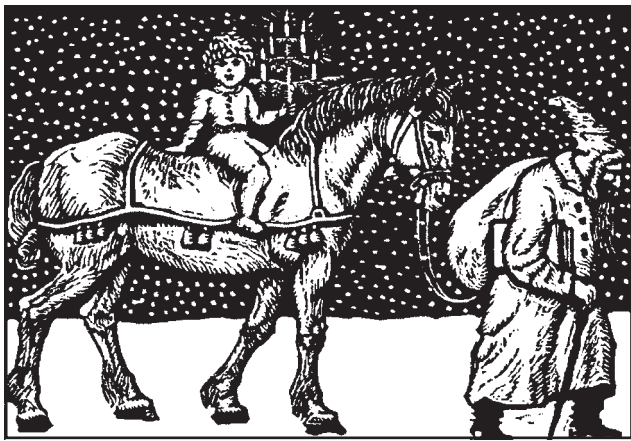
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Allen A. Mills, Jr. has written a book about his childhood on the family farm in Florence VT:

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Barnyards, Barefeet and Bluejeans A Horse's Tale
 By Allen A. Mills, Jr.



February In the Field & Garden

by Bill Felker

The celebration of Chinese New Year begins February 1 and lasts through February 3. Sell decorations at your winter farmers garden stand.

Spray your broad-leaved evergreens with anti-drying agents to prevent winterkill.

Spray fruit trees with dormant oil when temperatures are in the upper 30s or 40s. The best early chance of those temperatures occurs February 15-23.

As the cold grows deeper, provide a little extra hay and root crops for your rabbits, extra grain for your sheep and goats.

Take cuttings to propagate shrubs, trees, and house plants; they should do well as the days lengthen. Force bulbs and branches for indoor markets.

To maximize weight gain in lambs and kids, think about letting them nurse as long as they want. Milk fed newborns often produce more meat.

Frost seeding of dormant pastures and lawns may be started this month. Just spread the seeds and let the freezing and thawing of the ground plant them.

Prepare for drought by making sure your soil has sufficient potassium and phosphorus.

Explore the "club market" for lambs, kids and other animals. Let your local 4-H clubs know what you have available.

Reserve your guard guinea fowl chicks from breeders; that way maybe you can replace your donkey by the time the coyotes get hungry.

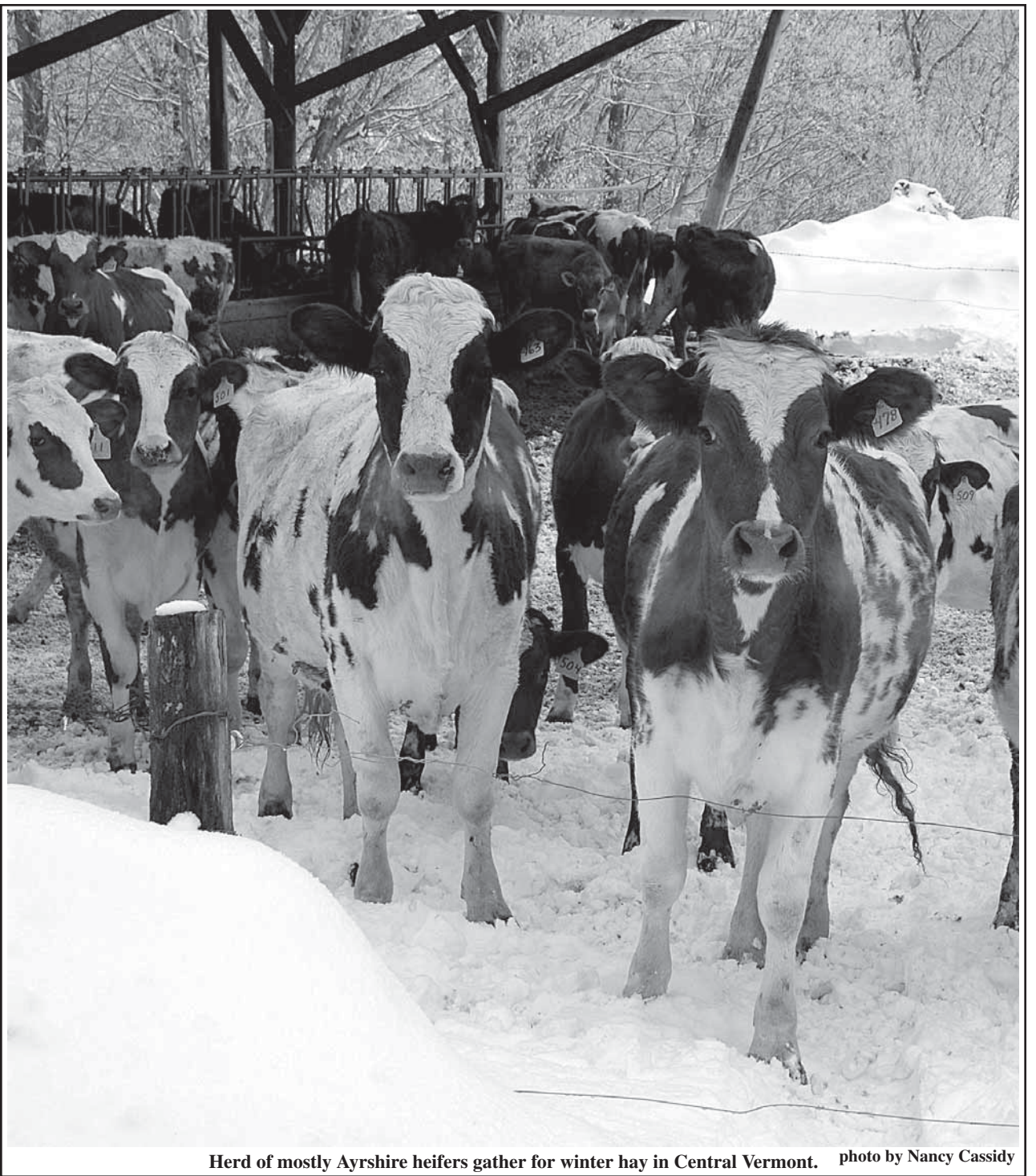
The 16th is full moon day. Expect snow and cold. Keep track of animal and family behavior at this time, as well. Full moon madness is common among many creatures.

Clip, Dip, Strip and Sip with newborns: Clip the navel to an inch; dip it in iodine; strip the teat so the animal gets a sip of colostrum.

Be ready for broody chickens that don't want to take their eggs. Be sure to pick up eggs regularly. You could even sometimes replace the eggs with frozen vegetables. Surprise!

Regular fecal samples will help you keep track of your pregnant animals. Herbs to help with birthing: peppermint, thyme and chamomile.

Plan to bake your hot-cross buns to sell at Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) celebrations on March 1.



Herd of mostly Ayrshire heifers gather for winter hay in Central Vermont. photo by Nancy Cassidy

Plan now to market to those who celebrate Meatfare Sunday and Jamaican Independence Day toward the end of the month.

If queen bees stop laying eggs after a cold spell, feed your bees pollen substitute until flowers start blooming again.

Designate lambs and kids to use for the graduation cookout market that develops between April and June.

To improve the condition of a rundown animal, old-time lore suggests feeding a daily amount of dill, fennel, anise and celery seeds. Traditional supplements to ward off abortion in livestock include rose hips, hawthorn berries, raspberry

leaves, tansy leaves and hollyhock root. Mares could show signs of estrus (a three-week cycle) as the days grow longer. You may wish to use ultrasonography to detect estrus.

Plan your victories at the county and state fairs: blue ribbons are the result of consistent year-round management and training.

Prune trees and shrubs just before bud-break during the moon's third or fourth quarter. Don't prune flowering plants.

The 27th is also Dominican Republic Independence Day. Explore the Hispanic market in urban centers near your location.

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The Windham Thaw

Magellan braved all seas that roll,
Commander Peary found the Pole,
Leander swam the Hellespont,
But I have tramped across Vermont
And known far more about rough weather
Than those three worthies put together;
And the bitterest weather that ever I saw
Was what they called, "a Windham thaw;"
And if you'd learn what that might be,

Listen to me:

The wind comes down from the north-northeast
At sixty miles an hour at least,
Bringing a sweep of snow and hail,
Freezing the milk in the foaming pail;

Great boughs crack in the hemlock grove;
Men sit close to the red-hot stove;
The storm cloud sinks, the storm cloud lifts,
Horses wallow among the drifts,
The carter stamps to save his toes,
Icicles hang from the postman's nose;
Every blast has a tooth and claw,
The farm boy's cheek is red and raw,
Never a rooster dares to crow,
Towser cowers beneath the straw,
The snow whirls up in a williwaw,
For the devil is beating his mother-in-law,
And *that's* what they call "a Windham thaw!"

— ARTHUR GUITERMAN
1871-1943, Pittsburgh, PA




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A Vermont Almanack for Deep Winter

by Bill Felker

In February, if the days be clear,
The waking bee, still drowsy on the wing,
Will guess the opening of another year
And blunder out to seek another spring.

—Vita Sackville-West

The Sun

On the 18th day of the year's second month, the Sun reaches Cross-Quarter Day, the halfway point to equinox, entering Pisces at the same time and initiating the season of Early Spring, a six-week period of changeable conditions infiltrated ever so slowly by warmer and warmer temperatures that finally bring the first trees and the earliest bulbs to bloom.

Phases of the Mourning Dove Moon

Mourning doves and cardinals join the chickadees and song sparrows as the morning chorus grows in intensity. The volume and complexity of birdsong creates an audible gauge with which to measure the advance of spring.

February 1: The Mourning Dove Moon new at 2:06 p.m.

February 8: Second Quarter: 8:50 a.m.

February 10: Lunar Apogee (the Moon is farthest from Earth): 10:00 p.m.

February 16: Full Moon: 11:56 a.m.

February 23: Last Quarter: 5:32 p.m.

February 26: Lunar Perigee (the Moon is closest to Earth): 5:00 p.m.

The Planets

Mars moves retrograde from Ophiuchus, joining Venus in Sagittarius, both planets dramatic Morning Stars before dawn. Saturn in Capricorn completes the morning procession, while Jupiter remains in Aquarius setting in the far west near sundown until the middle of the month, when it disappears until the middle of March and reappears in the morning sky.

The Stars

Sirius, the giant dog star, will be due south at 10:00 p.m. on the 8th. The Great Square of Autumn will be setting in the west then. Perseus follows Cassiopeia into the northwest. Spring's Regulus will be well up in the sky on the other side of the horizon in the constellation Leo. Early Summer's planting guide, Arcturus, is visible just before midnight in the northeast on February 12th.

In the last week of February, the early night sky tells of Spring. Looking east, you can almost forget that cold Orion fills the west. Just a little to the right and down from the Big Dipper, May's Regulus is shining in the constellation Leo. The faint stars of lanky Hydra spread along the horizon. Due



Snowshoeing in deep winter in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.

photo by Jeff Gold

east, the brightest star is Arcturus, which will be overhead this time of night when the first fireflies appear.

Getting up to exercise or to comfort the sheep and goats, you can see the Milky Way filling the eastern half of the sky. The lanky giant, Hercules is coming center stage above you. A little west of him lie the Corona borealis and bright Arcturus. Regulus is setting, telling you that winter is gone for sure.

The February Weather Outlook

There's an art of attending to weather, to the route you take, to the landmarks along the way, to how if you turn around you can see how different the journey back looks from the journey out, to reading the sun and moon and stars to orient yourself, to the direction of running water, to the

thousand things that make the wild a text that can be read by the literate.

—Rebecca Solnit

High-pressure systems are due to cross the country on or around the following dates: February 3, 6, 11, 15, 20, 24 and 27. New moon and lunar perigee will bring snow and ice to the north and the threat of tornadoes to the South.

Conditions should improve between the 7th and the 13th as lunar apogee and the weakening moon exert less influence on the weather. Full moon on the 16th, however, will bring back Late Winter with a vengeance.

As the moon wanes, the weather is expected to be mild and pleasant until the moon moves to perigee, its position closest to Earth, on the 26th, and March's new moon threatens Snowdrop Winter as February comes to a close.

Late Winter Journal

by Bill Felker

Part I

The flowering season has just barely begun in the warmest corners of the Lower Midwest, and one might take an early stock of the landscape before momentum builds much more.

The exact end of winter comes well before the thaws, of course, arriving unseen in the coldest weeks of the year when the March and April bulbs follow their own subterranean schedules and push up through mulch beneath the snow.

Walking through your neighborhood, you could find evidence of that movement, find that some daffodil stalks have reached two inches high, and a few tulips and hyacinths are up at least an inch. Snowdrops and aconite may be ready to bloom.

Lilac buds are swollen, fat green and gold. On the pussy willow branches, a few catkins are cracking. Garlic mustard, wild mallow and henbit are growing new leaves. Chickweed is spreading quickly. Wild strawberry, celandine, wild onions, hollyhocks, sweet William, lamb's ear, lungwort, dandelion, motherwort and great mullein have remained intact from fall and are waiting for a little more sun.

Spring, of course, is as much a state of mind as a state of nature. The beauty of a seasonal inventory is that there is never a correct number of things to find. The end of winter always appears in the eye of the beholder. Critical mass for the arrival of spring rests less on the total quantity of observations than on one crucial scent or sight or sound that tips the scales of private time. Each person encounters that pivotal event at a different moment and in a different way. And whenever that one event occurs, then the entire scaffolding of the old year collapses and all the pieces of the new year take on meaning as they fall into place.

Part II

As Late Winter wanes into middle February, my notebooks gather events from across the years, accumulating pieces of Early Spring.

Last year, Ed Oxley called to report he had seen a turkey vulture on February 9th, five days later than he saw the first vulture in 2004. He also said that some of his snowdrops have been in full bloom for over a week.

Any Old Vermont Sugarhouses Out There?

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We're in the process of identifying, documenting and helping to preserve these iconic legacies. Never before has a list been made of these vanishing landmarks. Please help us gather this important information. Learn more by visiting our website at www.sugarhousevermont.com.

On February 15, 1999, I found the first hepatica flower in bloom in the woods. On February 16, 1990, the first open pussy willows were reported. On the 17th of February of 1983, I found the first bee of the year in the swampland a mile or so from my house. In the unusually warm February of 1984, red-winged blackbirds arrived, the first maples flowered, the first strawberry leaves and peony stalks emerged, and one red quince flower opened, all on the 18th.

In 2004, Margaret Lacy from Richmond, Indiana wrote, "I saw a pair of doves courting on February 11, but I never heard a call till February 18." On February 19, 1992, the first worm crossed a High Street sidewalk in the rain. On February 21, 1984, Fern Albertson called to say her first crocus had bloomed.

It doesn't matter that these events have occurred in different years instead of this year. Every early event sets precedent and promise. Signs create momentum that soon create the season that they signify.

Part III

In my winter moods, nothing is ever what it appears to be; one thing becomes the sign of another. Like children playing the game of telephone, I dialogue with myself until my thoughts come full circle, transformed into something completely different from the image that began the conversation.

This morning in the woods, I came across a small pool surrounded by bare saplings, a pond in a glade. It reminded me of the flooded field I played in as a boy one April; reminded me, too, of so many beaches and dreams.

Later in the day, I was driving through the fog south of town. I settled back in my truck and watched the countryside, looked out at the gray, quiet fields, the glow of sunset beyond the tree line, my mind wandering.

Once, before the time of freeways, I drove east through the Great Smoky Mountains in the rain, winding through

the night, holding my breath at each curve, until I finally emerged onto the broad flatlands of South Carolina. Ahead of me lay sunrise and the coastal plain, the treacherous hills gone, the way made straight and free.

Today, the recollections around me continue to be dendrites extending from within and from without, pulling me deeper into their tangles. I can never be certain what the landscape will provoke. I walk through plain but loaded contexts, stumble unexpectedly over associations that transcend decades, literally lives and deaths. Behind each tree, in each skyline, lie coiled masses of impressions, wild and tangled like salamanders mating in the dark ponds of February.

Part IV

The shift in weather that multiplies the signs of spring takes place in middle to late February nine years out of ten. Three or four good thaws, sometimes lasting a week apiece, have already come up from the south before then. Bulbs made progress during each of them, foliage rising ever so slowly though the soft ground.

Cardinals not only sing before dawn now, but deep into the afternoon. Peonies come up through the mulch, their deep red tips emerging when blue jays are calling, and sparrows and starlings are loud and reckless in the middle of mating.

Depending on the year, growth occurs on ragwort, dock, sweet rocket, asters, winter cress, poison hemlock, sedum, mint, celandine, plantain, poppies, pansies, daffodils, tulips, crocus, aconites, hyacinths and strawberries.

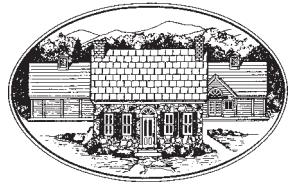
All those hardy leaves are expanding a centimeter here or there, such measurements seeming unimportant until they can measure spring, and then there is no insignificant degree. The signs accelerate, accumulate, and become a new season, turning into what they represent by force of numbers.

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Manchester, VT

17th Annual Southern Vermont Primitive Biathlon

This year's Southern Vermont Primitive Biathlon will be held on February 12th & 13th, 2022, at the Old Skinner Hollow Farm on Route 7A south of town in Manchester, VT.

What is a Primitive Biathlon? A Primitive Biathlon is an event where participants snowshoe through a one-two mile course shooting at nine targets using primitive muzzle loading firearms. As a tribute to America's beginnings, many participants dress in period attire representing Colonial Frontiersmen, Native Americans, and Early Militia.

Competition in the woods

Competitors not only have to be able to shoot well, but must also be able to load their firearms through the muzzle, swiftly and accurately. Scores are calculated using travel time through the course and the number of hits made while shooting. There are specific classes for Men, Women, Youths under 16, and Elders over age 60. A special "Woodswalk" class was also created for people who do not wish to run or use snowshoes, and has become the most popular class. Participation in this event is open to the public, and one does not need to be a runner or competitor to enjoy this event. There are other target shooting contests held during the two day event to participate in as well. It is a great family event and spectators are welcome to walk the trail to view the participants shooting.

A popular event

The Southern Vermont Primitive Biathlon was started in 2005 by a small group of people to meet a unique demand for this type of event in this part of Vermont. This two-day event has grown in the number of participants every year since. Several events like this have sprung up around New England and Eastern New York in the last 25 years.

The Southern Vermont Primitive Biathlon is hosted by the Manchester Rod and Gun Club, and held at the Old Skinner Hollow Farm in Manchester, Vermont. There will be a food concession trailer, and a cantina in the warming tent for hot chocolate, coffee, and tea. A few vendors (or Sutlers as they were once called) will be on hand distributing their hand made wares.

Grand prizes and door prizes

There is a long list of sponsors who have donated in-kind services for the event, and merchandise for a large door prize giveaway at the end of the event. There will be three muzzle-loading rifles available as the grand prize give away. Grand prizes and door prizes are available to participants and spectators in a raffle drawing, and you need not be present to win.

Many local sponsors, who have supported this event since it's inception include Orvis, RK Miles, Dorr Septic



A competitor loads their firearm getting ready to shoot at a target at the Southern Vermont Primitive Biathlon.

photo by Southern VT Primitive Biathlon

Service, Northshire Bookstore, The Reel Angler, Herrmann Construction, MMA Guns, Hopkins and Sons Contracting, The Mountain Goat, HN Williams Store, Lawrence Grant Excavating, Tom's Lawn Care, Miles Lumber of Arlington, M&M Plumbing and Heating, Manchester Hot Glass, Brooks Brother's, Fuller's Restoration, Brown Enterprises, Lux Brush, Black Magic Chimney Sweeps, Big Butterfly Promos, Walnut Hill Sporting Club, and many, many more.

Proceeds will benefit the Manchester Rod and Gun Club's Youth Conservation Camp Scholarship Fund. The Green Mountain Youth Conservation Camps are a summer camp network owned by the State of Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. Week long camp stays are available to youth's 12-16 years of age, with an emphasis on teaching Vermont's Wildlife Ecology, and Hunter's Safety. Every summer The

Manchester Rod and Gun Club sponsor youths from the area that wish to attend these camps. To date the Southern Vermont Primitive Biathlon has raised over \$40,000 for this scholarship fund.

This event is open to spectators at no charge. It is a fun way to spend a day with some fine and interesting people and take a brief look into our past.

The Old Skinner Hollow Farm is located on Route 7A just south of town in Manchester, VT. The event will follow all current Covid requirements.

To find out more about this or other primitive biathlons, Green Mountain Youth Conservation Camps, or the Manchester Rod and Gun Club please visit our website at www.svtph.org and like us on Facebook.



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Vermont Winter Farmers' Markets

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Bennington Holiday and Winter Farmers' Markets at Bennington High School cafeteria. Saturdays through April 16. 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. (802) 733-6559. benningtonfarmersmarket@gmail.com. www.benningtonfarmersmarket.org.

Brattleboro Winter Farmers' Market. At C.F. Church Building, 80 Flat St. Saturdays through March 26. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (802) 869-2141. brattleborowinterfarmersmarket.org.

Dorset Winter Farmers' Market. At J.K. Adams, 1430 VT Rt. 30. Sundays through May 1 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Helen Wood, (802) 384-4499. dorsetfarmersmarket.com.

Middlebury Winter Farmers' Market. At VFW Post, 530 Exchange St. Saturdays through April 30. 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. www.middleburyfarmersmarket.org.

Montpelier—Capital City Winter Farmers' Market. At 133 State St. 2nd and 4th Saturday, thru April 2022, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (802) 498-8214. www.capitalcityfarmersmarket.com.

Norwich Farmers' Winter Market at Tracy Hall, 300 Main St. Saturdays February 12 & 26, March 12 & 26, and April 9 & 23. (802) 384-7447. norwichfarmersmarket.org.

Rutland—Vermont Winter Farmers' Market. At Food Center Building, 251 West St. Saturdays through April 30. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (802) 417-8661. www.vtfarmersmarket.org.

St. Johnsbury—Caledonia Winter Farmers' Market. At St. Johnsbury Welcome Center, 51 Depot Square. First and third Saturdays through April 18, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (802) 592-3088. caledoniafarmersmarket.com.



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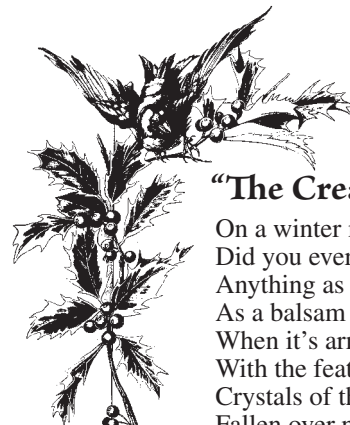
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Aging, like a tree?

— NELLIE S. RICHARDSON
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Merck Forest & Farmland Center Winter Activities

Merck Forest and Farmland Center in Rupert, VT invites you to enjoy our winter activities.

Visit the farm, venture into the forest or stay overnight in a rustic cabin lean-to, or camp site. Take a hike—ride your horse—ski or snowshoe in the diverse landscapes and breathtaking views of the Taconic Mountains. There are over thirty miles of trails on 3,100 acres! There are easy, moderate, and difficult trails. Visit the website for recommended hikes.

Eight cabins and three shelter and tent sites may be rented, by reservation. Dispersed camping sites are for backpacking only. See website for rates and details.

The property is open free to the public daily, from dawn to dusk, year-round.

To learn more about an event, call the Joy Green Visitor Center at (802) 394-7836 or stop by. Advance reservations are recommended.

Our farm and forest products may be purchased at our Visitor Center or our Online Store. We offer pastured pork, grass-fed lamb, wool & fleece products, maple syrup, MFFC baseball caps, and vintage snowshoe mirrors!

The 60-acre farm at Merck Forest and Farmland Center is managed with low impact, ecologically sensitive practices. Our animals—pigs, sheep, chickens and horses—are raised according to the highest standards of humane animal management.

Fall Event Schedule

February 12, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Family Owl Workshop. Kids (ages 5 and up) will learn about owls and their special adaptations through hands-on exploration: we'll start indoors with a short story about owl life, then we'll hike through the woods to listen for owls calling. Then we'll warm up inside, dissecting owl pellets to discover what they eat, and explore what makes an owl an owl.

Meet up at the Visitor Center 15 minutes prior to the start of the program. Space is limited (to 10 children); parents must be present. Dress warmly and bring a snack and warm drink, if you desire.

Registration is \$10 per person. Due to the low cost of the program, refunds are not available, unless the event is cancelled by Merck Forest and Farmland Center.

For more information, email Chris at christine@merckforest.org.

February 16, 5:30-7 p.m. Full Moon (Evening) Hike. The moon will be rising in the east tonight, and hopefully skies will be clear! Join us for a guided moon-lit hike on our trails on a wintery evening. Meet up at the Visitor Center.

Bring a headlamp and dress warmly, with proper footwear, including Microspikes or snowshoes, depending on ground



Sheep in a cold, sunny winter pasture at Merck Forest & Farmland Center in Rupert VT.

conditions. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the program. Covid protocols will be in place as needed. Due to the low cost of the program, refunds are not available, unless event is cancelled by Merck Forest and Farmland Center.

Registration is \$10.00 per person and reservations are required.

Merck Forest and Farmland Center is a non-profit educational organization in the Taconic Hills of southwestern Vermont. The Center's mission is the sustainable management of its forest, the promotion of innovative agricultural

practices on its upland farm, the education of local students in outdoor exploration and the study of natural sciences, and the creation of recreational opportunities.

The Joy Green Visitor's Center is open Sunday, Monday, Friday & Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Merck Forest and Farmland Center, 3270 Rt. 315, Rupert, VT. Once you reach the top of the big hill turn left into Merck Forest's driveway. If you start going back down the hill, you've gone too far. (802) 394-7836. www.merckforest.org.

Norwich, VT

Igloo Build and the Science of Winter

Explore and enjoy the season with winter-related science and one of the museum's longest-running traditions – the Igloo Build – hosted by Montshire Museum of Science on February 12, 2022 from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Dubbed the #1 Way to Winter Fun by Yankee Magazine and a "Top 10 Winter Event" by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, the Montshire's Igloo Build is guaranteed fun for the whole family.

Learn how to build an insulated, sturdy house strong enough to support the weight of a polar bear!

Dr. Bert Yankielun, engineer and author of the book *How to Build an Igloo and Other Snow Structures*, will be on hand to offer a demonstration, as well as instruction on the structural secrets of building with snow—from making an initial snow angel

to placing the final block on the dome and sawing your way out.

Dr. Yankielun will provide a quick lesson on how to build an igloo, and will be on hand to assist igloo-builders with the process.

Dr. Yankielun's instructional session starts at 10 a.m. and the igloo-building portion of the day ends at 3 p.m.

It will be a day filled with hands-on winter activities, including one of the museum's longest-running traditions, the Igloo Build!

Schedule

10:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Igloo Build. Join engineer Dr. Bert Yankielun for a quick lesson on building an igloo. Then build your own! Held out of doors by the Hughes Pavilion.

11 a.m. Fun with Ice. Experiment with a variety of ice using color, lights, and

salt. At the Science Discovery Lab.

1 p.m. Frosty Science. How cold can you go? Create sub-zero temperatures inside as we create our own frost. At the Science Discovery Lab

3 p.m. Ice Fishing. Use a variety of tools and methods to extract a little fish from a block of ice. At the Science Discovery Lab.

All Day. Snowshoe Exploration. Explore the Montshire's winter trails! Snowshoes are available at the admissions desk for visitors to borrow. At the Montshire Trails.

Free with museum ad-

mission: \$17 for adults, \$14 for children 2-17, free for members and children under two years of age.

Montshire Museum of Science is located at 1 Montshire Rd. off Rt. 5 in Norwich, VT. (802) 649-2200. montshire@montshire.org. www.montshire.org.



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Two kids having fun ice fishing on a Vermont lake.

VT Fish & Wildlife photo

Vermont Fish & Wildlife

Ice Fishing Fundamentals

As winter sets in, many Vermonters are preparing for one of the most popular cold weather pastimes in the state—ice fishing. Anglers spend more than 400,000 days each winter ice fishing in Vermont, and the state’s Fish and Wildlife Department is encouraging more people to give it a try.

Department fisheries biologist Shawn Good says ice fishing is a fun, social, family-oriented activity, and that there are many great reasons for Vermonters new to the sport to try it this year.

“Ice fishing is generally more accessible than open water fishing,” says Good. “Almost anyone can walk out on a frozen lake or pond and fish through the ice. And once you’re out there, there’s lots of room to spread out.”

Ice fishing can also be more sociable than open water fishing, with friends and family gathering on the ice for cookouts and winter fun along with the fishing. With an uptick in anglers trying the sport last year as a way to get outside with friends during the pandemic, Good expects to see a lot of action on the ice this winter.

“For many, it’s not just about the fish. Kids love ice fishing because they can run around and slide on the ice or play in the snow. I’ve seen families with grills, food and hot drinks having a great time. They set their tip-ups, build snowmen,

play football, and even skate in between bouts of fishing.”

Ice fishing is inexpensive and simple to get started. “An auger used for cutting holes in the ice is the most expensive piece of equipment you’ll need,” says Good. “But you can get a 4-inch or 6-inch hand auger for under \$50 and share it with others, so not everyone needs one. Add a scoop for cleaning out the holes and an ice fishing rod and reel combo or a couple tip-ups with hooks, weights and bait and you’re set for a fun day on the ice.”

When you’ve had a successful outing, bringing home a meal of healthy, locally caught fresh fish is a delicious benefit. Videos from the department’s Vermont Wild Kitchen partnership are a great place to find fun recipes for fresh caught fish, like lake trout or crappie.

“I think fish taste better in the winter,” says Good. “There’s something different about pulling a tasty perch, bluegill or bass from ice cold water. They tend to be firmer and have a milder taste than in the summer.”

Good says it is normal for new anglers to worry about venturing out on frozen water, but with a few basic precautions and common sense, ice fishing is safe.

“A minimum of three to four inches of clear black ice is safe to walk on,” advised Good. “If you’re unsure about ice thickness in your area call your local bait and tackle shop. They’re always up on current conditions and can help you get started with gear and advice, too. You can also look for other people out fishing. Experienced anglers know how to read the ice, so if you’re unsure, go where others are or have been.”

Good says that with the mild winter so far this year, most anglers are finding that ice fishing opportunities have been restricted primarily to Vermont’s smaller ponds or higher elevation areas that have formed good ice. Where ice is thick enough for safe fishing, access has been broadly simplified this year with Vermont’s new 2022 Fishing Regulations.

“Many large lakes still have not developed thick, solid black ice,” noted Good. “Some haven’t frozen over at all yet. Anglers looking to get out should focus on smaller waters and make the effort to check ice thickness frequently as they venture across the ice.”

It is important to know that ice is not always uniform in

thickness. Areas around pressure cracks or near stream or river inlets can be thinner and weaker than surrounding ice. Good advises anglers to carry a set of ice picks, head out with a partner, and let someone know where you will be fishing, your access point, and when you plan on returning home.

Good says dressing properly is key. “On a calm sunny day, you’ll be surprised how comfortable you feel. Even with the thermometer showing single digits, the sun will warm you right up. Make sure you dress in layers and keep your head, hands and feet covered and dry, and you’ll be quite toasty,” said Good.

No matter where you are in Vermont, an ice fishing opportunity is close by. Ice fishing is a great way to enjoy the outdoors in winter, offering a fun, unique winter experience.

To learn more about ice fishing for beginners, visit Vermont Fish and Wildlife’s “Ice Fishing Basics” webpage: <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/fish/fishing-opportunities/vermonts-ice-fishing-opportunities/ice-fishing-basics>.



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Visiting my Grandmother

by Pamela Hayes Rehlen

I spent a lot of time with my grandmother growing up. If I was staying for a week at her Fair Haven house, I would run upstairs and put my suitcase in my favorite light-filled bedroom with an always-cool floor-square of linoleum and a white-painted iron bedstead made up with two feather mattresses and old quilts brought down from the West Haven farm on which my grandmother had grown up and that she had never gotten over having to leave.

It took a day or so to adjust to that house's gentle rhythm. The two of us liked to play Chinese Checkers, which we did on a round oak table that dominated the middle room of the house.

That table was always piled with leisure-activity paraphernalia. That's where we had all our meals, and in the mornings when my grandmother first got up she'd pull her rocking chair close to the boxes of scented stationary, National Geographics, Readers Digests and sit moving back and forth, drinking hot water from a white, egg-shaped, cup.

Her downstairs bedroom was small and over-full of furniture: a massive Victorian-era bedstead and a matching bureau, a highly varnished honey-colored

travel trunk, a foot-pedal-driven sewing machine, and her deep, deep, dark closet full of nearly-new dresses.

Aunt Elizabeth, who had run off to Oregon when she was a young woman, sent my grandmother a new dress every year for Mother's Day, always the same style, a small-flower-patterned cotton with a self-fabric belt.

My grandmother wore these dresses reverentially and infrequently—maybe to a Kings' Daughters' tea—and then hung them in her black cave-like closet which, because of some building irregularity, must have been eight feet deep.

It was very exciting for me to push into this blackness—which I did regularly—imagining that the back wall could magically give way and I might wind up in a Narnia-like land.

But as our week together went on, there was no activity I loved more than the two of us cooking in the small, haphazard kitchen, crowded, and primitive in the early years with a slate sink and a massive coal-burning range.

A wringer washer stood behind the kitchen door and a tall, rickety, steel cabinet, full top-to-bottom with saved brown paper bags and folded wax paper.

On the wall behind the washing machine, there was a murky oil painting of the West Haven farm, and my grandmother would take it down during cooking breaks and talk about this lost home.

I believed it was unattainably far away—

maybe somewhere far up in the Champlain Valley—and was startled when I realized, years later, that it was less than ten miles north of Fair Haven.

The two of us assembled our ingredients on an old table in the center of the kitchen. I remember the front doorbell ringing and Bessie Gardner standing on the porch.

Bessie was part of a very old, financially-ruined, West Haven family with whom my grandmother had grown up. There was Bessie, her sister Clara, and a brother who, as any West Havenite would have told you, hadn't amounted to much.

But his sisters had been counting on him, and all three of these one-time rural aristocrats wound up in desperate straits. Bessie sold Christmas cards house to house in Fair Haven.

My grandmother told me whenever she came to us we weren't going to buy any more cards, but no matter the time of day, we were to make Bessie a big dinner.

So we raced around and pretended it was normal to eat like this mid-morning, and then Bessie and my grandmother sat and talked together about their girlhoods in West Haven.

Every day, right after lunch, arranging herself neatly on her big Victorian bed, my grandmother took a nap. If she slept longer than usual, I'd creep in and watch anxiously trying to tell if she was still breathing. She must have sometimes drifted awake startled to see my little worried face peering up from the foot of the bed.

I was always good at finding things to do in that house. One favorite little upstairs room had a dressing table holding some ancient, too-good-to-use toiletries, bath salts, and a box of three guest-sized Maja soaps. There was a narrow daybed and floor-stacked *Good Housekeeping* magazines, saved in the same spirit as the kitchen cabinet's paper bags and wax paper. I loved sitting in that room, leafing through the old magazines.

Every late afternoon before dinner, my grandmother labored up the steep stairs to find me and read me my favorite Louisa May Alcott books. We sat together under a framed poem called *The Little Wish*, which hung on the wall over our heads and which began:

"All day I have been thinking, thinking just of you, of the time we had together and the things we used to do."

Predictably, it ends very poignantly. Predictably, today, it often runs through my mind.

Pamela Hayes Rehlen has written and lived most of her life in Castleton, Vermont. She is the author of stories, articles, essays, magazine features, and of two books: The Blue

"Predictably, today, it often runs through my mind."



Mary Hitchcock Hayes as a young woman still living in West Haven, VT.

Cat and the River's Song (\$17 plus shipping and handling) and *The Vanished Landmarks Game—Vermont Stories from West of Birdseye* (\$20 plus shipping and handling) available at the Castleton Village Store P. O. Box 275, Castleton, Vermont 05735 and at a few Vermont booksellers. To reach the store, call (802) 468-2213. All back issues of these columns can be read in the archives, usually on page 11, at vermontcountry sampler.com.

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All day I have been thinking,
Thinking just of you,
Of the times we were together
And the things we used to do;
And I felt a lonely feeling
As I chased a tear away,
And this little wish came stealing—
That today were yesterday!

—ANON



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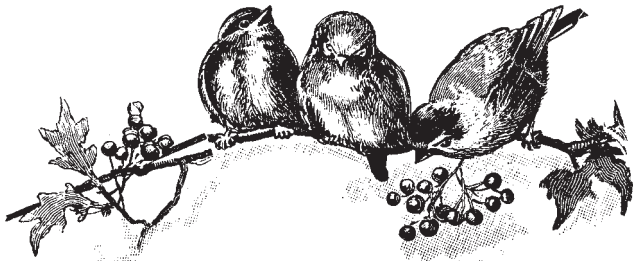
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The Pine Grosbeak

When winter winds their wildest blow
 And snowflakes, falling thick and fast,
 Wind-blown, go rushing, whirling past
 Till all the land is heaped with snow;

From the far north a little band,
 Some carmine-robed, some Quaker-gray,
 In cruel mornings cross my way—
 Scouts that come down to spy the land.

Rarely their little hearts o'erflow
 In songs, yet sometimes they will sing
 In measures that suggest the spring,
 Crisp as the sound of trodden snow.

The mountain ash a breakfast yields,
 They dine upon the harvest seeds
 Stored in the granaries of the weeds,
 And roam about the frozen fields.

When they will come or whither go,
 Shunning the forest solitudes,
 According to their vagrant moods,
 The wisest man may never know.

Enough that they are here today;
 Tomorrow, ere the flush of dawn,
 Their glowing campfires may be gone—
 With folded tents they speed away.

—NELLY HART WOODWORTH
 1891, New Hampshire

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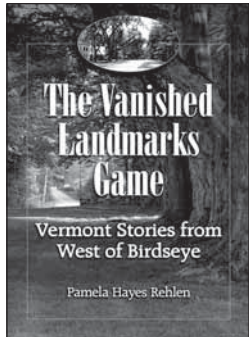
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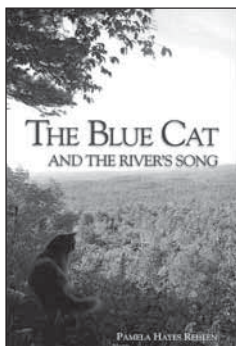
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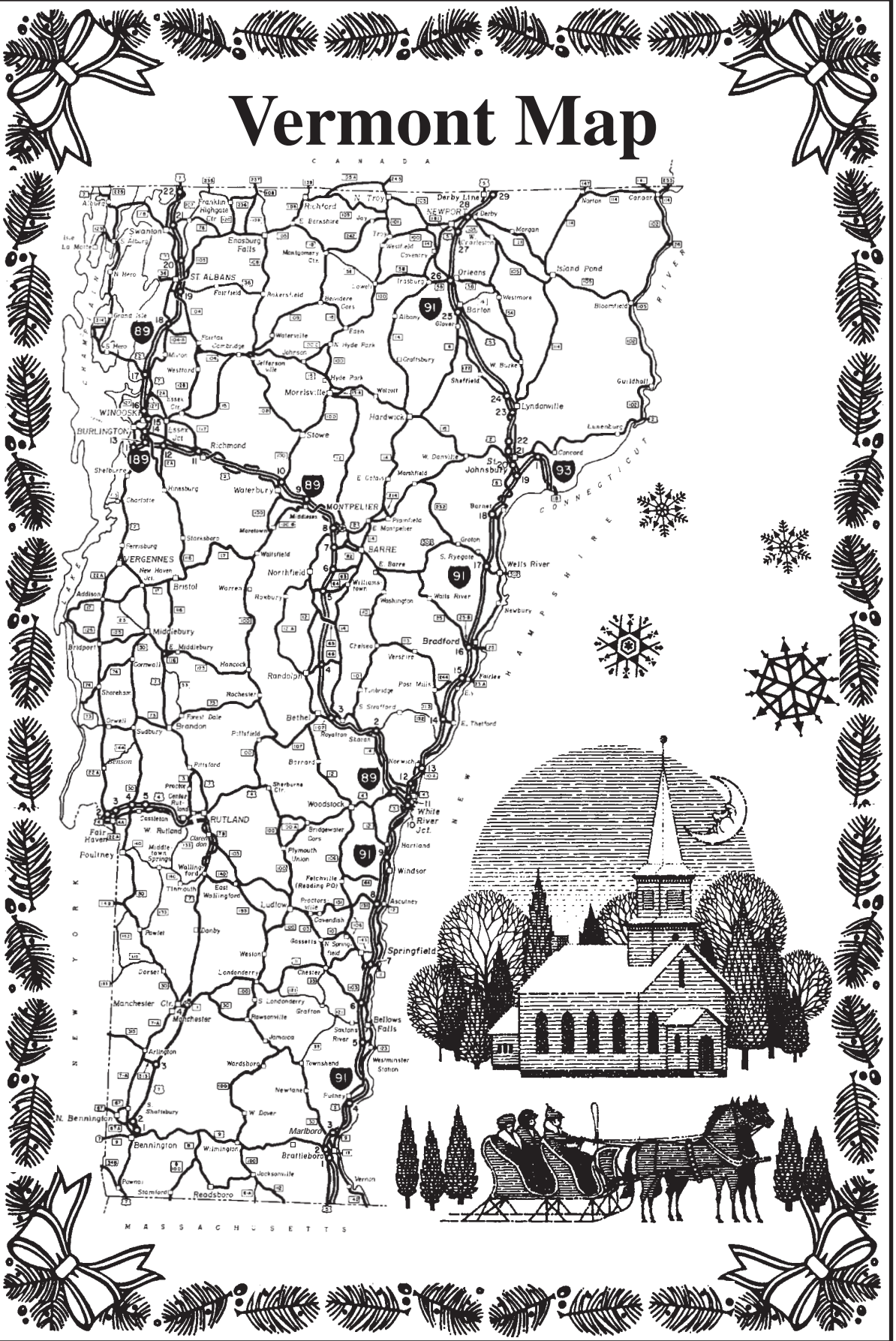
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Vermont Country Calendar

See the end of the Ongoing Activities for daily listings.
Call ahead to confirm events before going.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES 2022

BARRE. Art Exhibit: "Safety Procedures" by Jason Galligan-Baldwin. Exploring the disquiet of living within a culture that, "has no distinct culture of its own," using acrylic paints, antique text, childhood books, film stills, and random materials from our youth. Presented by Studio Place Arts. AR Market, 159 N. Main St. (802) 661-8964. armarketvt.com. *Through February 26.*

BENNINGTON. The Dollhouse and Toy Museum of Vermont. Admission \$4 adults, \$2 children three and older, \$10 families. Please wear masks. Sat. and Sun. 1-4 pm. 212 Union St., corner of Valentine St. (401) 578-9512. dollhouseandtoymuseumofvermont.com.

BENNINGTON. Bennington Museum. Works by Grandma Moses. Adults \$12, seniors (62+) and students \$10, under 18 free. Friday-Monday, 10 am - 4 pm through December, reopening in April. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. benningtonmuseum.org.

BRATTLEBORO. Vermont Jazz Center Spring Educational Semester. On-line and in-person classes, Sunday through Thursday. Tuition for 10-week semester: most classes \$250; Latin Jazz & Blue Note Ensemble I \$200; Samba Percussion \$160; Youth Jazz \$100; Zoom Tunes \$15 per session. No one turned away due to lack of funds. Vermont Jazz Center, 72 Cotton Mill Hill, Studio 222. (802) 254-9088. Questions: ginger@vtjazz.org for. Class content: eugene@vtjazz.org. vtjazz.org. *Begins week of February 13.*

BRATTLEBORO. Guild of Vermont Furniture Makers Exhibit: "Evolving Traditions", contemporary works in wood, *through February 13.* Exhibit: B. Lynch, "Pull Back the Curtain," a fantastical universe of the Reds and the Greys, set in the 18th century, using puppetry, drawing, painting, linoleum block printing, and digital animation, *through February 13.* Vermont Glass Guild Exhibit: "Inspired by the Past." Contemporary works in glass exhibited alongside historical counterparts, *through March 5.* Exhibit: Delita Martin, "Between Worlds," a year-long installation in the museum's front windows that reimagines the identities and roles of Black women in the context of Black culture and African history, *through May 31.* Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 10 Vernon St. (802) 257-0124. www.brattleboromuseum.org.

BRATTLEBORO. Brattleboro Winter Farmers' Market. Saturday 10 am - 2 pm. Church Building, 80 Flat St. (802) 869-2141. farmersmarket@postsoilsolutions.org. *Saturdays through March 9.*

BRATTLEBORO. Outdoor Exhibit: Artful Ice Shanties. Ice shanties shaped like a giant iridescent fish, a black die with moon-shaped dots, a seascape with a three-dimensional octopus, and more. Hike and snowshoe on the Retreat Farm trails, visit Carlos the ox and other animals, cross-country ski, and skate on the Retreat Meadows. Outdoor events, activities, demonstrations, and performances. Admission free. At Retreat Farm, 45 Farmhouse Square. (802) 257-0124. kirsten@brattleboromuseum.org. brattleboromuseum.org. *February 19 through 27.*

BURLINGTON. Itty Bitty Public Skating. An intro to ice skating for preschool children and their parents/caregivers. \$8 per family per visit. 10:45-11:30 am. Leddy Park Arena, 216 Leddy Park Rd. (802) 865-7558. eweaf@burlingtonvt.gov. www.enjoyburlington.com. *Saturdays and Sundays through March 6.*

BURLINGTON. Catamount Trail Association. Cross-country ski tours and special events. Catamount Trail Association, 1 Mill St., Suite 350. (802) 864-5794. info@catamounttrail.org. catamounttrail.org.

BURLINGTON. ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain. Exhibits, workshops, programs, museum store. For all ages. Adults \$18, students & seniors \$16, children 3-17 \$14.50, children 2 and under free. Open seven days a week! ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, 1 College St. (802) 864-1848. www.echovermont.org.

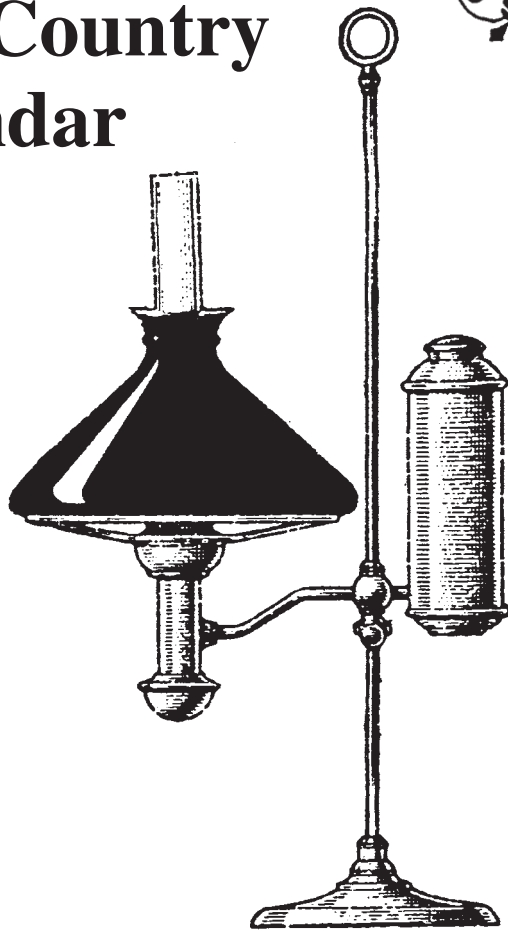
COLCHESTER. Sam Mazza's Farm Market. Home-grown produce. Bakery, ice cream, fudge, wines and specialty foods. Open 7 am to 7 pm. 277 Lavigne Rd. (802) 655-3440. sammazzafarms.com.

EAST MONTPELIER. Bragg Farm Sugarhouse & Gift Shop. Tours. Maple Ice Cream Parlor. Maple syrup, candies & cream. Mail orders welcome by phone or on-line. (802) 223-5757. 1005 Rt. 14. www.braggfarm.com.

ESSEX JUNCTION. Vermont Genealogy Library. Classes, archives, research, books. Open Tuesday 3-9:30 pm and Saturday 10 am to 4 pm. Vermont Genealogy Library, 57 River Rd. (Rt. 117). mail@vtgenlib.org. www.vtgenlib.org.

GLOVER. Bread and Puppet Theater. Open for drop-in visits to see museum puppets, masks, costumes, paintings, buildings, and landscapes. Bread and Puppet Theater, 753 Heights Rd. (802) 525-3031. breadpup@together.net. breadandpuppet.org.

GRAFTON. Horse-Drawn Sleigh Rides. Adult \$20, youth \$12, 5 & under free. Reservations required. 11 am - 4 pm (final ride 3:30 pm). (802) 843-2400. The Grafton Inn,



Outdoor Center, 783 Townshend Rd. graftoninnvermont.com. *Jan. 29; Feb. 12, 19-20, 26.*

HANOVER, NH. Community Dinner in Hanover. To-go meals available upon request. Free. 5-6 pm. Our Savior Lutheran Church, 5 Summer St. (603) 643-3703. office@oslchanover.org. *Every Thursday.*

HANOVER, NH. Musical: *Rent*. The groundbreaking and iconic musical follows a year in the life of a group of impoverished young artists and musicians struggling to survive and create in New York's Lower East Side. Thursday-Saturday 8 pm, Sunday 2 pm. Hopkins Center, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu. *February 18-20 and 24-27.*

HARDWICK. The Vermont Curators Group Itinerary. Hardwick to Waitsfield. Five exhibitions. Meandering scenic route on a trip through at least 11 towns. 251 Club of Vermont. vt251.com. vermontcuratorsgroup.com.

HUNTINGTON. "The Gift of Art" Art Show. Included with admission to the museum. Open when the museum is, 10 am - 4 pm. Birds of Vermont Museum, 900 Sherman Hollow Rd. (802) 434-2167. birdsofvermont.org. *On exhibit through April 30, 2022.*

HYDE PARK. Traditional Full English Afternoon Tea. Price \$12-\$35, reservations required. Thursdays and Sundays, 3-6 pm. Governor's House, 100 Main St. (802) 888-6888. onehundredmain.com. *Every Thursday and Sunday.*

LEBANON, NH. AVA Gallery and Art Center. Exhibits, classes, programs. Tues-Fri 11 am - 6 pm, Sat-Sun 11 am - 4 pm. 11 Bank St. www.avagallery.org.

MANCHESTER. Hildene, Robert and Mary Lincoln's home. Covid protocols. Admission \$23 adults, \$6 youth, under 5 free. Thursday through Monday, 10 am to 4:30 pm. Hildene, 1005 Hildene Rd. (802) 367-7960. hildene.org.

MANCHESTER. Art Exhibits, Classes, Programs. Exhibit: Hiroshige and the Changing Japanese Landscape. Japanese woodblock prints by Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858), *through February 27.* Exhibit: "The World Between the Block and the Paper". Group exhibition of Mokuhanga prints in collaboration with Japanese print collective the Mokuhanga Sisters, *through March 27.* Wednesday-Saturday 10 am - 4 pm, Sunday 12 noon - 4 pm. Southern Vermont Arts Center, 2522 West Rd. (802) 367-1311. www.svac.org.

MANCHESTER. Dutton's Farmstand. Winter squash and lots of produce. Our own maple syrup, apples, cider. Baked goods, pies, bread, cookies, creemees! Daily 9 am - 7 pm. Dutton's Farmstand, 2083 Depot St., Rts. 11/30. (802) 362-3083. www.duttonberryfarm.com.

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MIDDLEBURY. Middlebury College Museum of Art. Collection of several thousand objects ranging from antiquities to contemporary art. Free admission. Tuesday through Friday 9 am - 12:30 pm, 1:30-4 pm; Sunday 12-5 pm. Middlebury College Museum of Art, Mahaney Center for the Arts, 72 Porter Field Rd. (802) 443-5007. www.museum.middlebury.edu/visit.

MIDDLEBURY. Exhibit: *Pride 1983*. Through interviews with organizers, photographs, and scanned images of historic documents, the exhibit, curated by Meg Tamulonis of the Vermont Queer Archives, explores the origins and lasting legacies of Vermont's first Pride March on June 25, 1983, in Burlington. It can also be viewed online at vtfolklife.org. Vermont Folklife Center, 88 Main St. (802) 388-4964. vtfolklife.org. *Through March 25.*



Forcing Branches For Winter Flowers

by Deborah J. Benoit
Extension Master Gardener
University of Vermont

Forsythia in February? Impossible, you say? Not so. A vase full of flowers from the garden won't take much more effort than harvesting some branches to force them to bloom.

A good time to take cuttings for forcing is when you're doing your annual winter pruning. If pruning isn't on your winter to-do list, just take a look around your yard. What trees and shrubs do you have that bloom in the spring? These set their buds during the previous growing season, so they're already ready to bloom once spring arrives (or you fool them into thinking it has).

The best varieties

Choose early spring-blooming varieties for early winter forcing. Shrubs such as witch hazel (*Hamamelis*) and forsythia (*Forsythia*) are good choices. In mid-winter, you can try flowering quince (*Chaenomeles*), azaleas and rhododendrons (*Rhododendron*), crab apples and apples (*Malus*) or cherries (*Prunus*). In late-winter, lilacs (*Syringa*), spirea (*Spiraea*) and mock orange (*Philadelphus*) can be forced to bloom indoors.

In general, those varieties that bloom earlier in the spring can be cut and forced earlier in winter than those that bloom later in spring. All can be cut and coaxed into bloom right up to their outdoor bloom time. Imagine a vase filled with lilacs and forsythia while there's still snow on the ground outside your window.

Since these plants are programmed to bloom once winter departs, they do need a period of cold weather. Once they've experienced at least 6-8 weeks of temperatures below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, you can begin to harvest branches for forcing. Grab a pair of pruners and head outside. The best time to cut is when temperatures are mild.

How to prune

Always use good pruning practices. Remember, what you cut now will affect how the tree or shrub blooms come spring, as well as future growth and form. If you'd like to know more about pruning, you'll find helpful information at <https://go.uvm.edu/pruning-dormant-plants>.

Cut segments at least a foot or two in length, longer if you'd like a really dramatic display. More flower buds mean more flowers. While it may be difficult to distinguish between flower buds and leaf buds, in general, flower buds will be fatter, leaf buds more pointed.

What next

Once you've gathered enough cuttings, bring them inside. Fill a container with warm water. Recut the ends of each branch at a sharp angle and slice vertically through the end or lightly smash it to allow more intake of water.

Remove any side branches or twigs that will be beneath the water. Then arrange the cuttings in the container.

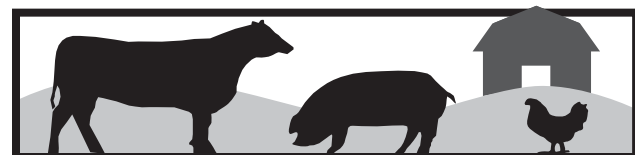
Place the container in indirect light such as a north-facing window, away from drafts and heat sources. Be sure to change the water frequently, at least every few days, to keep it fresh.

Buds may drop if your indoor environment is very dry, so misting daily or covering the branches and container with a large, clear plastic bag can add needed humidity until the buds begin to open.

If buds do drop off, you may have taken your cuttings too soon. Don't hesitate to try again. The later in winter and closer to nature's bloom time, the greater the chance for successful forcing.

Above all, be patient. The process can take up to a month, sometimes longer. But as you watch, you'll witness an early spring as the buds swell. And you'll be rewarded with a vase full of flowers while there's still snow on the ground outside your window. Sometimes it's very nice to fool Mother Nature.

Deborah J. Benoit is a UVM Extension Master Gardener from North Adams, Massachusetts, who is part of Vermont's Bennington County Chapter. For more information on forcing branches in winter, check out <https://go.uvm.edu/forcing-flowering-branches>.



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Vermont Country Calendar

(Ongoing Activities 2022, continued)

MONTPELIER. Exhibit: "The Catamount in Vermont". An exhibition that explores the feline symbol of Vermont through the lenses of art, science, and culture. 10 am to 5 pm Wednesdays-Saturdays. Vermont History Museum, 109 State St. (802) 479-8500. vermonthistory.org. *Thru May 31.*

MONTPELIER. Cross Vermont Trail Association. A project to build a multi-use, four-season path across the width of Vermont, following the Winooski River and Wells River valleys. (802) 498-0079. crossvermont.org.

MONTPELIER. Wildlife Tracking Wednesdays. Walk the property with NBNC naturalists in search of wildlife tracks and sign. Learn or brush up on track and trail identification in a community of curious nature lovers. Free, registration required. 7:30-8:30 am. North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm St. (802) 229-6206. info@northbranchnaturecenter.org. northbranchnaturecenter.org. *Every Wednesday in February.*

MONTPELIER. Northeast Wilderness Trust. Forever-wild conservation is about freedom for wildlife, natural processes, and the untrammelled evolution of the landscape. We work with partner organizations and landowners to evaluate land for wilderness conservation. Northeast Wilderness Trust. (802) 224-1000. newildernesstrust.org.

NEWFANE. Dutton's Farmstand. Winter squash, fruits and vegetables. Our own maple syrup, apples, cider. Baked goods, pies, bread, cookies, creemees! Dutton's Farmstand, 391 & 407 Rt. 30. (802) 365-4168. duttonberryfarm.com.

NORWICH. Montshire Museum of Science. All ages. Adults \$18, children 2-17 \$15, under 2 free. Reservations. Tues-Fri 10 am - 5 pm. Montshire Museum of Science, One Montshire Road off Rt. 5. (802) 649-2200. montshire.org.

NORWICH. Mindfulness Meditation. In-person and online. Approximately one hour of sitting and walking meditation, followed by a reading most days, and discussion. Free, donations welcome. 9-11:30 am. St Barnabas Episcopal Church, 262 Main St. (703) 727-5208. joyceandpat@gmail.com. *Tuesdays through June 28.*

ONLINE. Animal Scoops: Virtual Learning Opportunity for Kids 8-18. Information on the animal of the day. Topics: Delve into Dairy (February 22), Horsin' Around (March 1), Got Your Goat (March 8), Don't be Sheepish (March 15). Four consecutive Tuesdays, 5-6 pm. Enrollment in 4-H not required. Free, preregistration required. University of Vermont (UVM) Extension 4-H program. (802) 388-4969 x 335. martha.seifert@uvm.edu. go.uvm.edu/animalscoops. *Tuesdays, February 22 through March 8.*

ONLINE. Exhibit. "Pattern & Purpose: American Quilts from the Shelburne Museum". Free. Shelburne Museum, 6000 Shelburne Rd. (802) 985-3346. shelburnemuseum.org.

ONLINE. Atowi: Intersections of Culture, Language, Place, & Relationship with the Plant Nations from an Indigenous Perspective. Presented by Melody Mackin & Rich Holschuh. Free, registration required. 6-7 pm. North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm St. (802) 229-6206. info@northbranchnaturecenter.org. northbranchnaturecenter.org. *Every Wednesday in February.*

ONLINE. Fairbanks Night Owl Club. An informal online discussion with astronomy and space exploration experts that follows your curiosity to the edges of the universe. Via Zoom and Facebook live. Free. 7 pm. Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium. (802) 748-2372. fairbanksmuseum.org. *First Thursdays.*

ONLINE. Birding Hotspots in Rutland County. Publicly accessible places, variety of habitats. www.eBird.org. Rutland County Audubon. rutlandcountyaudubon.org.

ONLINE. Poetry Event: Recite! Poets, amateurs, first-timers, and those who just want to listen. Free. 7-9 pm. Norman Williams Public Library, 10 The Green. (802) 457-2295. normanwilliams.org. *Second Tuesdays.*

ONLINE. Outdoor Radio. Over 50 episodes online, with topics ranging from birds to bats and beavers to peepers. Co-hosts: Kent McFarland and Sara Zahendra. Find episodes on the VCE website. Vermont Center for Ecostudies. www.vtecostudies.org.

ONLINE. Opera Company of Middlebury presents *Candide*. Online ticket - household \$25, generous \$50. Link will be sent by email. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. tickets@townhalltheater.org. townhalltheater.org. *February 15 through March 1.*

ONLINE. Forevergreen: A Vermont Adventure in Music. Bringing the music of Vermont and the artists who have an affinity for the Green Mountain State directly to you. All shows stream live at 7 pm on Vermont Tourism YouTube and Facebook. vermontvacation.com/forevergreen.

ONLINE. 2022 Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Licenses Available Online. License gift certificates also available. John.Hall@vermont.gov. vtfishandwildlife.com.

ONLINE. Middlebury Collage Exhibit: "Itty Bitty: Tiny Texts in Special Collections". Books from the 17th to 21st centuries that measure between 1.8 and 10 centimeters, from religious manuscripts to cookbooks, children's books to Shakespeare. View the works online at go.middlebury.edu/tinybooks. Davis Family Library, Middlebury College, 110

Storrs Ave. (802) 443-5494. www.middlebury.edu. *Exhibit through May 31, 2022.*

ONLINE. Solstice Seeds 2021 Catalogue of Open Pollinated Seeds. Solstice Seeds, Hartland, Vermont. solsticeseedsvt@gmail.com. solsticeseeds.org.

ONLINE. Exhibit: "In Plain Sight: Rediscovering Charles Sumner Bunn's Decoys". Shelburne Museum. (802) 985-3346. shelburnemuseum.org. *Through October 5.*

ONLINE. Interactive All-Vermont Band Guide. Big Heavy World. (802) 865-1140. bigheavyworld.com/band-guide.

POULTNEY. Art Gallery. Classes, workshops, events. Sundays 1-4 pm, Fridays 5-7:30 pm by appointment. Stone Valley Arts Center at Fox Hill, 145 E. Main St. stonevalleyarts.org.

QUECHEE. VINS Nature Center's Outdoor Exhibits. Adults \$17.50, seniors (62 plus) \$16.50, college students \$16.50, youth 4-17 \$15, kids 3 & under free. Open daily 10 am - 4 pm. 149 Natures Way. (802) 359-5000. vinsweb.org.

RANDOLPH. Exhibit: Voices of Home. Explores the experiences of Vermonters living in affordable housing through audio recordings and painted portraits. Brought to Chandler by the Vermont Folklife Center. Free. Tuesday-Friday 11 am - 4 pm, Saturday 12-5 pm. Covid precautions. Chandler Center for the Arts, 71 N. Main St. (802) 728-9878. chandler-arts.org. *February 5 through March 19.*

RUPERT. Merck Forest and Farmland Center. Workshops, events, children's activities, over 30 miles of hiking trails, overnight camping in reserved lean-to's and cabins, and tenting. 3270 Rt. 315. (802) 394-7836. merckforest.org.

RUTLAND. Chaffee Art Center. Exhibits, workshops, classes, gift shop. Wed, Thurs & Fri 12-4 pm and Sat 10 am - 2 pm. Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St. (802) 775-0356. www.chaffeeartcenter.org.

RUTLAND. Wonderfeet Kids' Museum. A discovery center of the rich heritage of Vermont while building skills in our youth, through interactive exhibits and programs. \$5 ages 1 to 64, \$4 for seniors 65+, \$2 for anyone with a valid EBT card and identification. Friday & Saturday 10 am - 2 pm and 2-4 pm, Sunday 12-4 pm. Wonderfeet Kids' Museum, 11 Center St. (802) 282-2678. wonderfeetkidsmuseum.org.

RUTLAND. Vermont Winter Farmers' Market. Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm. At Cortina Inn (formerly the Holiday Inn), 476 Holiday Dr. off Rt. 7 south of town. (802) 417-8661. vtfarmersmarket.org. *Saturdays through May 7.*



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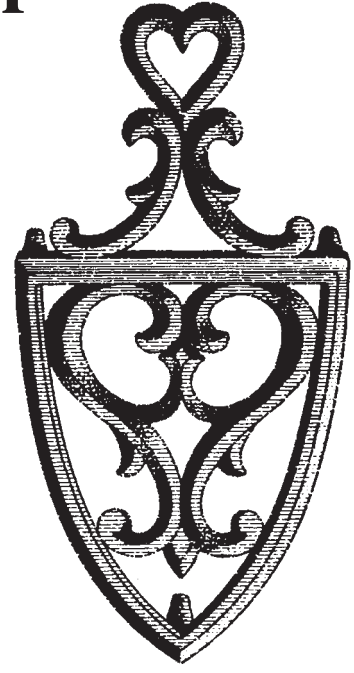
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Vermont Country Calendar



SPRINGFIELD. Gallery at the Vault. Exhibits, workshops, classes online and in-person, gift shop. Free. Open 11 am – 5 pm Wednesday through Saturday. 68 Main St. (802) 802-885-7111. gallervault@vermontel.net. gallervault.org.

ST. JOHNSBURY. Northeast Kingdom Artisans Guild. A Cooperative Craft & Fine Art Gallery. Backroom Gallery exhibits change every six weeks. Open Tues-Sat 10:30 am – 5:30 pm. Northeast Kingdom Artisans Guild, 430 Railroad St. (802) 748-0158. nekartisansguild.com.

ST. JOHNSBURY. Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium. Exhibits, programs, special events, wildflower table, collections, Star Space Astronomy Tours. Admission: adults \$12, seniors (65+) and children 5-17 \$8, 4 and younger free. Planetarium admission: \$7. Wednesday through Sunday 10 am – 5 pm. COVID protocols. Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium, 1302 Main St. (802) 748-2372. fairbanksmuseum.org.

ST. JOHNSBURY. The Stephen Huneck Gallery at Dog Mountain and Dog Chapel. Free. Hike the trails, open seven days dawn to dusk! Gallery and Dog Chapel open Fri 10 am – 4 pm, Sat & Sun 11 am – 5 pm. Dog Mountain, 143 Parks Rd. off Spaulding Rd. (800) 449-2580. www.dogmt.com.

SHELburne. Shelburne Farms. Walking trails. Programs and activities for the whole family. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides through January 2. Welcome Center parking lot. Admission by donation. Shelburne Farms, 1611 Harbor Rd. (802) 985-8686. www.shelburnefarms.org.

SOUTH POMFRET. "I Do! I Do!" A musical about marriage by the creators of *The Fantasticks*. Tickets \$35-\$45. Thurs, Fri, Sat 7:30 pm, Sun & Wed at 2 pm. The Grange Theatre, 65 Stage Rd. (802) 457-3500. info@artistreevt.org. www.artistreevt.org. February 10-13, 16-20 and 24-27.

STATEWIDE. Vermont Atlas of Life. Lectures, field trips, events for naturalists to get together. Vermont Center for Ecostudies. www.vtecostudies.org. inaturalist.org/projects/vermont-atlas-of-life.

STATEWIDE. Vermont State Parks. Vermont has 55 developed and staffed state parks and undeveloped state park lands to use and enjoy. (888) 409-7579. www.vtstateparks.com.

STATEWIDE. The 251 Club. Since 1954, organization of Vermont enthusiasts whose objective is to visit the state's 251 towns and cities. (802) 233-8649. www.vt251.com.

STOWE. Peace Pups Dogsledding. All sorts of dog powered activities available year round. Times vary, visit website for bookings. Prices range \$50 to \$120. Peace Pups Dogsledding, 239 Cross Rd. (802) 888-7733. peacepupsdogsledding.com.

STOWE. Exhibits. Helen Day Art Center, 5 School St. (802) 253-8358. helenday.com.

STOWE. Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum. Celebrating Vermont's Skiing History. Admission by suggested donation: individuals \$5, families \$10. Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum, 1 South Main St. (802) 253-9911. vtssm.com.

WAITSFIELD. Naturalist Snowshoe Program. Join one of Mad River Glen's Naturalists for a guided snowshoe trek on Stark Mountain! Easy to moderate difficulty. Two-hour programs. \$25 per person (minimum of \$50 for 1 or 2 people). Tubbs Snowshoes rentals available. Snowshoe Trail Pass (without a program) \$5. 10:30 am. For reservations and info call (802) 496-3551 x 125. naturalist@madriverglen.com. www.madriverglen.com. Every Saturday and Sunday.

WATERBURY. Board & Tabletop Games. Lifelong gamer Vinni Yasi hosts a morning of fun and strategy for teen and adult players. 9 am – 1 pm, first Saturday of every month. Free. Waterbury Public Library, 28 N. Main St. (802) 244-7036. www.waterburypubliclibrary.com. First Saturdays.

WEST BRATTLEBORO. Dutton's Farmstand. Winter squash and lots of produce. Our own maple syrup, apples, cider. Baked goods, creemees! Dutton's Farmstand, 308 Marlboro Rd. (802) 254-0254. www.duttonberryfarm.com.

WEST MARLBORO. Southern Vermont Natural History Museum. 600 mounted specimens of native northeastern birds and mammals, close to 250 species represented. Northeastern Mineralogy Collection. Wednesday through Monday 10 am to 4 pm. Southern Vermont Natural History Museum, 7599 Rt. 9. (802) 464-0048. www.vermontmuseum.org.

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION. Art Exhibits, Workshops. Two Rivers Printmaking Studio, 85 North Main St., Suite 160. (802) 295-5901. tworiversprintmaking.org.

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION. Exhibit: Julie Crabtree & Amanda Ann Palmer. Fiber-art landscapes inspired by the Scotland coast, and hand-thrown pottery, respectively. Long River Gallery, 49 S. Main St. (802) 295-4567. Through February 28.

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION. Public Skating. Skate rentals and sharpening are available on site. Rentals \$5 per pair and skate sharpening \$5 per pair. Memberships are available online, at the Rec. office, or the arena. Friday 1:15-2:30 pm, Saturday 4:15-5:45 pm, Sunday 3:10-4:30 pm. Closed

February 18. Wendell A. Barwood Arena, 45 Highland Ave. (802) 295-5036. hartfordvt.myrec.com. *Through the winter.*

WOODSTOCK. Scenic Billings Farm & Museum in February. Visit the animals all cozy in the barns. Bring your own snowshoes or rent from the Woodstock Inn & Resort Nordic Center. Bring your own sled – kids and grown-ups can speed down the small hill next to the orchard. Warm up with hot chocolate and s'mores around the fire pit, available for purchase. The Magic of Maple: learn about maple trees, the maple sugaring process and the significance of maple sugar in Vermont's history, February 12-17. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. Weekends in February, and daily February 13-27, 10 am – 4 pm. Closed February 28-April 7. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. off Rt. 12. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org.

WOODSTOCK. Horse-Drawn Winter Group Sleigh Rides. \$5 per person. 30 minutes. 11 am – 3 pm. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org/winter-sleigh-rides. February 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24, & 25.

WOODSTOCK. Woodstock History Center. Free admission. Open Wed-Sat. Woodstock History Center, 26 Elm St. (802) 457-1822. www.woodstockhistorycenter.org.



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Vermont Country Calendar

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

HANOVER, NH. Concert: The Crossing, with Dublin Guitar Quartet. America's "most astonishing choir" and the Irish quartet "with a difference" team up for a colorful, energetic performance. Tickets: \$25; advance registration required. 7:30 pm. Hopkins Center, Spaulding Auditorium, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu.

NORWICH. Hanover Garden Club: "The Skinny on Garden Pests and Diseases". Learn about current and emerging pests and plant diseases in the garden and landscape that can impact the home gardener. Free. All welcome. 1 pm. Montshire Museum of Science, 1 Montshire Rd. (802) 649-2200. montshire@montshire.org. www.montshire.org.

ONLINE. Publisher Sales Rep Night at Northshire Bookstore. Publishing sales representatives tell us all about the best books from their lists. We're delighted to share their expertise with you in this virtual event! Please register. Most events free, check website. 6 pm. Northshire Bookstore, Manchester, VT. (802) 362-2200. events@northshire.com. northshire.com.

ONLINE. Lunar New Year Cooking Demo. Artist and chef Cai Xi of Cai's Dim Sum Catering teaches how to make dumplings from scratch. Organized by the Asian Cultural Center of Vermont. Via Zoom and Facebook Live; recording available afterward. Free, registration required. 5:30 pm. Brattleboro Museum & Art Center. (802) 257-0124. brattleboromuseum.org.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2

BURLINGTON. Performance. Flip Fabrique presents Six°. Québec City-based cirque troupe Flip Fabrique, led by acrobatic comedian Jamie Adkins presents a new show. Tickets \$15-\$55. 7 pm. Main Stage, The Flynn, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynnvt.org.

HUNTINGTON. Drop-In Soap Carving. Stop by and try your hand at soap carving. Tools and soap provided. All ages. Included with admission to the museum. Admission: adults \$7, seniors \$6, children 3-17 \$3.50. 10 am - 4 pm. Birds of Vermont Museum, 900 Sherman Hollow Rd. (802) 434-2167. museum@birdsofvermont.org. www.birdsofvermont.org.

MANCHESTER. First Wednesdays Talk. "Walt Whitman: American Poet". With UVM professor emeritus Huck Gutman. Free, registration required. 7 pm. First Congregational Church of Manchester, 3624 Main St. cworkman@mclvt.org. mclvt.org.

MIDDLEBURY. First Wednesdays Talk. Sermon from the Studio: Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On." Fifty years after its release, Jazz archivist and poet Reuben Jackson shares tracks from and discusses this riveting recording. Free, registration required. 7 pm. Ilesley Public Library, 75 Main St. (802) 388-4095. ilesleypubliclibrary.org.

MIDDLEBURY. Screening. Metropolitan Opera Performs "Rigoletto". Bartlett Sher's bold new take on Verdi's timeless tragedy. Tickets: adults \$24, students \$10. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. tickets@townhalltheater.org. www.townhalltheater.org.

ONLINE. Life of a Conservation Photographer: Stories from the Field with Isabelle Groc. Her photography and stories can help build public exposure on important science and conservation work. Free. 6 pm. North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm St. (802) 229-6206. www.northbranchnaturecenter.org.

ONLINE. First Wednesdays Talk. *Boneyarn: New York Slavery Poems*. Actor and poet David Mills reads from and discusses his award-winning poetry collection, *Boneyarn*, featuring groundbreaking poems about slavery in New York City. Free, registration required. 7 pm. Brooks Memorial Library. (802) 254-5290. brookslibraryvt.org.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3

ONLINE. Book Discussion. With the contributors and editors of *Turner Family Stories: From Enslavement in Virginia to Freedom in Vermont*. Featuring the work of six New England cartoonists and drawing on the personal and family stories of the remarkable Daisy Turner (1883-1988) of Grafton, VT. Free, registration required. Book purchases welcome. 7 pm. Phoenix Books Zoom Channel. (802) 872-7111. tickets@phoenixbooks.biz. phoenixbooks.biz.

ONLINE. Northshire Presents a HarperCollins Crowdcast Launch Event. Lindsey Vonn—*Rise: My Story*—with Angela Duckworth. The most decorated female skier of all time will discuss her revealing memoir with Duckworth, the author of *Grit*. Please register. Most events free, check website. 7 pm. Northshire Bookstore. (802) 362-2200. northshire.com.

PITTSFIELD. Winter Death Race. Participants will be put through the winter elements for 50+ hours of mind-bending mental and physical tasks. Registration \$150. 4:30 am. Riverside Horse Farm, 57 Tweed River Dr. info@peakraces.com. On Facebook. *Through February 5.*

RUTLAND. First Wednesdays Talk. "John Lewis and *RUN!*" Andrew Aydin, co-author of *The March Trilogy* with civil rights icon John Lewis, describes the creation of the next book in the series, *RUN!* Free, registration required.

7 pm. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St. (802) 773-1860. rutlandfree.org. vermonthumanities.org.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4

CRAFTSBURY. Bill Henchey Memorial Races: SuperTour/UVM Carnival/NENSA Eastern Cup. A skate sprint Friday, classic interval start Saturday, and skate pursuit Sunday. Craftsbury Outdoor Center, 535 Lost Nation Rd. (802) 586-7767. www.craftsbury.com. *Through February 6.*

FAIRLEE. Vermont Pond Hockey Championship. Team registration fee \$720. Lake Morey Resort, 82 Clubhouse Rd. (802) 333-4311. sarah@lakemoreyresort.com. www.lakemoreyresort.com. *Through February 6.*

HANOVER, NH. Movie Screening: *Bergman Island*. Tickets \$8. 7 pm. Hopkins Center, Loew Auditorium, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu.

PERU. Mom's Day Off at Bromley. All-day lift tickets \$25 for any mother who presents a photo of their child, pet, or honorary child. Enjoy a Wild Boar Tavern beer and burger special. 9 am - 4 pm. Bromley Mountain Resort, 3984 VT Rt 11. (802) 824-5522. events@bromley.com. www.bromley.com.

PITTSFIELD. Snow Devil Snowshoe Ultra. 10K, Half Marathon, and Full Marathon snowshoe races for those that wish to test their limits, and a 100 mile Winter ultra for those that want to leave those limits far behind. Riverside Horse Farm, 57 Tweed River Dr. info@peakraces.com. www.peakraces.com/snowshoe-races. *Also February 5.*

RUTLAND. Concert. The Machine Performs Pink Floyd. A diverse mix of The Floyd's extensive 16-album repertoire, complete with faithful renditions of popular hits as well as obscure gems. Tickets \$35. 7 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. shawn@paramountvt.org. www.paramountvt.org.


WAITSFIELD. Vermont Specialty Foods Day. Ski Vermont and Vermont Specialty Foods team up to offer up samples of their fine products. All day. Mad River Glen Cooperative, 57 Schuss Pass Rd. (802) 496-3551. madriverglen.com.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5

BENSON. Down Home Ice Fishing Derby. All legal species. All legal Vermont waters and Lake Champlain. Sponsored by Benson Fish and Game Club. 12 am Saturday through 2 pm Sunday. Check in at Benson Town Office, Stage Rd. (802) 537-2468. tbarthol@shoreham.net.



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Way Back Then

Life in the Second Half

by Charles C. Sutton

Mostly people retire later in life after a long career with perhaps several jobs and occasionally a change of career.

I've had the good fortune to have had such a career in journalism, working through the years for six newspapers, at a time before the dailies started their rapid decline. In the past 15 years 25 percent of the nation's 9,000 dailies have gone out of business with many of the remaining ones only shells of what they had been before.

I started my life in journalism in New York, then Washington and then moved to Maine before returning to Connecticut and finally Vermont.

One of the dailies I worked for in Maine was the family-owned Biddeford-Saco Journal (later named Journal Tribune) in southern Maine, where I was its city and later managing editor in the 1970s. This was a lively community newspaper that garnered many awards for its writing and photography. It shut down its presses and closed its doors on October 12, 2019.

Previously I had worked on newspapers in Augusta and Portland, Maine. My first job

for the Portland Press Herald was general assignment and police reporter. Soon afterwards I became its first full-time education writer/editor. This position was created because the Soviets had launched Sputnik (Oct 4, 1957)—the first artificial satellite to orbit the earth, and suddenly Americans wanted to know why its schools were behind the Russians and what we were going to do about it.

In those days The Portland Press Herald also employed a large staff of reporters covering local government, business,

the courts, the waterfront, the State House, and even had a news bureau in Washington, DC.

Following the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* on June 30, 1962 (the beginning of the save-the-environmental movement) the paper invested in a full-time environment writer, demonstrating how smaller papers back then covered pivotal developments in society.

Maine, at that time, had serious river pollution problems from the pulp & paper, shoe-making and poultry industries. These polluted river waters were a serious threat to the sea and shore fisheries.

I had my own experience with river pollution after I purchased a small home on the Saco River in Hollis Center, Maine, and was about to for a swim when a polluted mess of "what's this?" came past me flowing downstream. It was from a fiber mill up-river who would routinely dump half-made unusable fiber board into the river. Others joined me in getting the river upgraded for recreational use including

fishing and swimming. It had previously been designated "D", suitable for wastes.

The next family-owned newspaper I worked on was in Bridgeport, Connecticut—the Bridgeport Post (now the Connecticut Post). I was its front page and news editor, and adventure travel editor for several years. The owners invested heavily in the newsroom. But when they died the newspaper was taken over by a series of newspaper chains managed by often-changing publishers. The newspaper had already shut down its afternoon edition.

With the handwriting on the wall, I took my pension money, left early, and started a new life traveling back and forth across the country in a V.W. camper, still able to do some freelance articles for the Post.

Freelancing became my entry into Vermont where I started writing for the Vermont County Sampler founded by Catherine O'Kane in 1987. We ended up married and continued the Sampler as a family-owned business.

We consider ourselves lucky to have been able to publish for 37 years despite the demise of so many other newspapers. Covering everything good about Vermont has been a heartfelt adventure, and the best part of my long life. How many people in their 90's can get up each day to do a job they love? With our loyal readers and faithful advertisers, and the Green Mountains and all that is wonderful about life in Vermont, I plan to sail right past the end of my life.

Charles C. Sutton is the co-publisher with his wife Catherine O'Kane, of the Vermont Country Sampler, now in its 37th year.



JAMES HAYFORD
Orleans, VT 1963

Vermont Country Calendar

BRATTLEBORO. 18th (Almost) Annual Collegiate A Cappella Benefit Concert. Tickets: \$10-\$40. All seating reserved. All ticket purchases fully refundable until two weeks prior to concert. Proof of vaccination may be required; fmasking required. 7:30 pm; doors open at 7 pm. Latchis Theatre, 50 Main St. (802) 257-0124. www.brattleboromuseum.org.

BRATTLEBORO. Brattleboro Winter Farmers' Market 16th Season. Saturday 10 am – 2 pm. Church Building, 80 Flat St. (802) 869-2141. farmersmarket@postoilutions.org. *Saturdays through March 9.*

BURLINGTON. Concert. Turnmusic. The contemporary chamber ensemble conducted by Anne Decker features talented Vermont musicians including Nic Cannizzaro, John Dunlop, Mary Rowell, and more. 8 pm. The Flynn, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynnvt.org.

ESSEX JUNCTION. Concert. Kat Wright. Proof of vaccination required. Tickets \$20 plus tax. 8 pm. The Double E: T Rex Theater, 21 Essex Way, Suite 300. www.doubleevermont.com. info@doubleevermont.com.

ESSEX JUNCTION. Winter Renaissance Faire. A family-friendly event for all ages, featuring performance troupes including singers, musicians, acrobats and dancers, performers, and Vermont artisans. Kids under 6 free. 10 am – 6 pm. Champlain Valley Expo, 105 Pearl St. (802) 778-9178. www.vtgatherings.com. *Also February 6.*

HANOVER, NH. Movie Screening: *C'mon C'mon*. Joaquin Phoenix delivers a career-best performance in this beautiful road drama. Tickets \$8. 7 pm. Hopkins Center, Loew Auditorium, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu.

HANOVER, NH. Concert: Coast Jazz Orchestra. A sensational performance from the student ensemble joined by Gonçalves's Trio. Tickets \$12, registration required. 7:30 pm. Hopkins Center, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu.

HUNTINGTON. Camel's Hump Challenge. A rigorous wilderness ski touring experience where spirited backcountry Nordic skiers traverse the perimeter of Camel's Hump to raise funds and awareness for Alzheimer's Disease and related dementia. Camel's Hump, 600 Handy Rd. jemsmith@alz.org. act.alz.org. On Facebook.

MANCHESTER CENTER. Book & Author Event. Chris Bohjalian in conversation. The beloved bestselling Vermont author presents his New York Times bestseller, *The Hour of the Witch*. Tickets: pay-what-you-can. 5:30 pm. Northshire Bookstore, 4869 Main St. (802) 362-2200. northshire.com.

PUTNEY. Concert: Big Lazy with Mamie Minch. Sponsored by Oak Meadow. Tickets \$20 at the door. 7:30 pm. Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill. (802) 451-0053. info@nextstagearts.org. www.nextstagearts.org.

QUECHEE. 20th Annual Youth Ice Fishing Derby. Youth Anglers will be placed in age appropriate divisions based on the number of registered participants. Prizes will be awarded within age division. Dress appropriately. Free. 7:30 am – 12 pm. Dewey's Pond, Quechee Main St. hartfordvt.myrec.com.

RANDOLPH. Concert. Bengisu Gokce, violinist and singer combining Turkish roots with Eastern European and Middle Eastern traditions, with Nacho Gonzalez Nappa, composer and producer. Covid precautions. Depending on virus presence, event may be streamed. Tickets: pay what you can. 7 pm. Chandler Center for the Arts, 71 N. Main St. (802) 728-9878. chandler-arts.org.

RUTLAND. Vermont Winter Farmers' Market. Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm. At Cortina Inn (formerly Holiday Inn), 476 Holiday Dr. (802) 417-8661. vtfarmersmarket.org. *Saturdays through May 7.*

SALISBURY. Lake Dunmore Ice Fishing Derby. Fish: Lake trout, landlocked salmon, largemouth bass, northern pike, rainbow trout, smallmouth bass, yellow perch. Lake Dunmore. Sponsored by Lake Dunmore Kampersville. 6 am Saturday through 3 pm Sunday. Check in at Lake Dunmore Kampersville Store. (802) 352-4501 (day), (802) 352-4546 (evening). *Also February 6.*

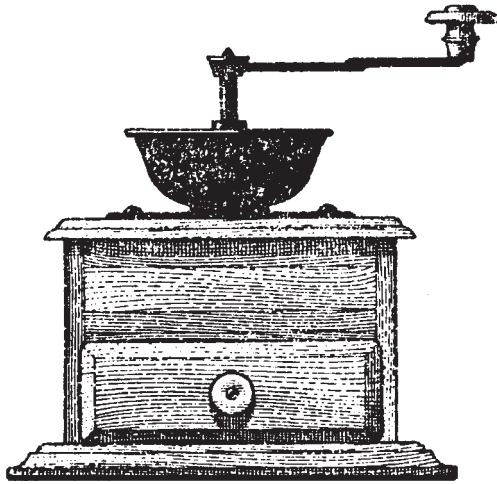
SAXTONS RIVER. Community Fire. This monthly fire is an open invitation to meet the people living around you. \$5 suggested donation. 5:30-8:30 pm. Main Street Arts, 35 Main St. (802) 869-2960. info@mainstreetarts.org. www.mainstreetarts.org. *First Saturdays through April.*

SPRINGFIELD. Calligraphy with Love. Join Instructor Jorika Stockwell to start or develop your calligraphy skills by learning to write the word "love" in several scripts. Fee \$45, register by February 2. 11 am – 3 pm. Gallery at the VAULT, 68 Main St. (802) 885-7111. galleryvault.org.

WOODSTOCK. 12th Annual Woodstock Vermont Film Series: *Storm Lake*. A charming yet cautionary documentary about The Storm Lake Times, a small-town, twice-weekly newspaper. Tickets \$15. 3 & 5:30 pm. Billings Farm & Museum Theater, 69 Old River Rd. off Rt. 12. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6

ESSEX JUNCTION. Winter Renaissance Faire. A family-friendly event for all



ages, featuring performance troupes including singers, musicians, acrobats and dancers, performers, and Vermont artisans. Kids under 6 free. 10 am – 6 pm. Champlain Valley Expo, 105 Pearl St. (802) 778-9178. info@vtgatherings.com. vtgatherings.com.

SALISBURY. Lake Dunmore Ice Fishing Derby. 6 am Saturday through 3 pm Sunday. Check in at Lake Dunmore Kampersville Store. (802) 352-4501, (802) 352-4546.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8

ONLINE. Virtual Book Launch Celebration. Historian Willard Sterne Randall discusses his new book, *The Founders' Fortunes: How Money Shaped the American Revolution*. Free, preregistration required. Book purchases welcome. 7 pm. Phoenix Books Zoom Channel. (802) 872-7111. tickets@phoenixbooks.biz. phoenixbooks.biz.

ONLINE. Random House Presents Tara Westover—*Educated*—with Natalie Portman. Northshire is thrilled to be a participating bookstore in Random House's virtual celebration of the release of *Educated* in paperback. Please register. Most events free, check website. 8 pm. Northshire Bookstore. (802) 362-2200. northshire.com.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9

HUNTINGTON. Fledglings Explore Winter. Great for kids. How do animals and plants adapt to February in Vermont? Dress for outdoors: we will be looking over and under the snow. Drop-In Soap Carving. Stop by and try your hand at soap carving. Tools and soap provided. All ages. Suggested donation \$5/child. Advance registration required. 1-3 pm. Outdoors at Birds of Vermont Museum, 900 Sherman Hollow Rd. (802) 434-2167. museum@birdsofvermont.org. birdsofvermont.org.

ONLINE. Northshire Presents Kekla Magoon—*Revolution In Our Time: The Black Panther Party's Promise to The People*—with Steve Sheinkin. Please register. Most events free, check website. 6 pm. Northshire Bookstore. (802) 362-2200. northshire.com.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10

HANOVER, NH. Community Dinner in Hanover. To-go meals available. Free. 5-6 pm. Our Savior Lutheran Church, 5 Summer St. (603) 643-3703. *Every Thursday.*

ONLINE. Ask a Naturalist: Owls. Listen to and ask questions about these astonishing predators. Birders and ornithologists from Audubon Vermont, Birds of Vermont Museum, and Vermont Reptile and Amphibian Atlas answer your questions. Suggested donation \$5-\$10. Advance registration required. 6-7 pm. Birds of Vermont Museum. (802) 434-2167. museum@birdsofvermont.org. birdsofvermont.org.

ONLINE. Studio Tour and Demonstration. Glass artist Robert DuGrenier will give a virtual tour of his studio and a glassblowing demonstration. Presented in connection with the exhibit "Vermont Glass Guild: Inspired by the Past". Via Zoom and Facebook Live; recording available afterward. Free, registration required. 7 pm. Brattleboro Museum & Art Center. (802) 257-0124. brattleboromuseum.org.

SOUTH POMFRET. "I Do! I Do!" A musical about marriage by the creators of The Fantasticks. Tickets \$35-\$45. 7:30 pm. The Grange Theatre, 65 Stage Rd. (802) 457-3500. info@artistreevt.org. www.artistreevt.org. *Also February 11-13, 16-20 and 24-27.*

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11

BRANDON. Opera: Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*. Set in an Italian restaurant in New York. Hijinks ensue in a hilarious romp. Tickets: \$53. 7:30 pm. The Barn Opera House, 1321 Pearl St. (802) 772-5601. welch@barnopera.com. barnopera.com. *Also February 12.*

HANOVER, NH. Concert: Welcome to Indian Country. Songs and stories of Native American life. Indigenous artists celebrate their heritage and modern reality. Tickets: \$25; advance registration required. 7:30 pm. Hopkins Center, Spaulding Auditorium, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu.

LEBANON, NH. Performance. Mike McDonald's Comedy Extravaganza. Tickets \$34-\$40. 7:30 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 North Park St. (603) 448-0400. lebanonoperahouse.org.



Old-Time Recipes

Cold Weather Warm-ups To Start the Day

Maple Butternut Muffins

2 cups flour	3 tbsp. melted shortening
2½ tsp. baking powder	1 egg
½ teaspoon salt	1 cup milk
2 tablespoons maple spread	½ cup butternuts

Sift the dry ingredients. Mix the maple spread with the melted shortening and add the egg. Stir together until smooth. Mix in the milk gradually, and add to the dry ingredients. Remove the black skins from the butternuts. Chop the nuts and add them to the muffin mixture, and stir in quickly. Turn the batter into well-greased muffin tins and bake twenty minutes in a hot oven, 425°F. Makes one dozen muffins.

—*Secrets of New England Cooking*

Apple Pancakes

"One pint of sour milk, a tea-spoonful of saleratus, a tea-cup of fine Indian meal, a tea-cup of molasses, three sweet apples chopped fine and mixed in, and flour enough to make the right thickness to drop from a spoon. Have your fat boiling hot. Cook till they slip from the fork."

2 cups sour milk	1 teaspoon baking soda
or 1¼ cups fresh milk	¾ cup molasses
with 2 tbsp. lemon juice	2-2½ cups sifted flour
¾ cup cornmeal	Fat for deep frying
2 apples	Butter

Modern Method: Mix milk and cornmeal. Chop apples and stir into milk and cornmeal. Add molasses and baking soda. Stir in flour. Heat fat for frying in deep skillet or deep fat fryer, 375° in an electric fryer. The fat is hot enough when a small pinch of dough dropped in rises to the surface of the fat immediately. Drop batter into the fat by tablespoonfuls, leaving enough room for the pancakes to swell as they cook. When one side is browned, about 3-5 minutes, turn pancake to brown other side. Drain on paper towels. Serve warm with butter.

Hearth Method: Follow Steps 1-3 in the Modern Method recipe. Heat fat in hanging skillet and follow Steps 4 and 5 in the Modern Method recipe. Pull away from fire when adding batter or turning pancakes. Turn when browned on first side. Follow Step 6 in the Modern Method recipe.

—*Old Sturbridge Village Cookbook*

Breakfast Sausage

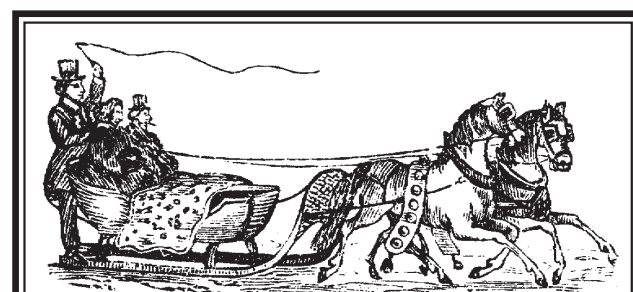
This is really easy to make and very, very tasty. How nice to know exactly what's in it as well! Makes about 20 breakfast-size patties.

Ingredients:

4 pounds ground pork	1 tbsp. red pepper flakes
6 cloves garlic, minced	1½ teaspoons black pepper
1 tablespoon salt	1½ tbsp. fresh sage, minced

Place all ingredients in a bowl and mix together very thoroughly. Shape into patties and cook in a skillet over medium heat until browned and cooked through. If this recipe makes more than you will use in one meal, you may shape your patties, wrap, and freeze them. Use within one month to avoid freezer burn.

—*The New Southern Basics Cookbook*



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Vermont Country Calendar

(Friday, February 11, continued)

ONLINE. Northshire Presents Willard Sterne Randall—*The Founder's Fortunes: How Money Shaped the Birth of America.* The author will discuss his illuminating financial history of the Founding Fathers, revealing how their personal finances shaped the Constitution and the new nation. Please register. Most events free, check website. 6 pm. Northshire Bookstore. (802) 362-2200. northshire.com.

ONLINE. Zoom Webinar. Jillian Cantor, in conversation with Miranda Beverly-Whittemore—*Beautiful Little Fools.* Cantor revisits the glittering Jazz Age world of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Free, registration required. 7 pm. Norwich Bookstore. (802) 649-1114. info@norwichbookstore.com. norwichbookstore.com.

PUTNEY. Concert. Antje Duvokot & Mark Erelli: Double Bill. Tickets \$20 advance, \$24 at the door. 7:30 pm. Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill. (802) 451-0053. info@nextstagearts.org. www.nextstagearts.org.

SOUTH POMFRET. "I Do! I Do!" A musical about marriage by the creators of *The Fantasticks*. Tickets \$35-\$45. 7:30 pm. The Grange Theatre, 65 Stage Rd. (802) 457-3500. info@artistreevt.org. www.artistreevt.org. Also February 12-13, 16-20 and 24-27.

STRATTON. Rossi We Rise Camp. Mountain Sports School is partnering with Rossignol to supercharge your skiing and riding skills in a supportive, fun environment with other like-minded women. \$580. 8 am - 3 pm. Stratton Mountain, 5 Village Lodge Rd. (802) 297-4000. www.stratton.com. Through February 13.

WESTMORE. Willoughby Lake Store Annual Ice Fishing Derby. Fish: Lake trout, landlocked salmon, rainbow trout, yellow perch. Lake Willoughby. 12 am Friday through 2 pm Sunday. Check in at Willoughby Lake Store, 2003 VT Rt. 5A. (802) 673-7058. coldmountainmaple@gmail.com. Through February 13.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12

BARRE. Concert. Croce Plays Croce. Featuring a complete set of classics by his late father Jim Croce, A.J. Croce also plays some of his own tunes, and songs that influenced both him and his father. Tickets \$24-\$36. 7:30 pm. Barre Opera House, 6 North Main St. (802) 476-0292. staff@barreoperahouse.org. barreoperahouse.org.

BRANDON. Opera: Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*. Set in an Italian restaurant in New York. Hijinks ensue in a hilarious romp. Tickets: \$53. 7:30 pm. The Barn Opera House, 1321 Pearl St. (802) 772-5601. barnopera.com.

BRATTLEBORO. Brattleboro Winter Farmers' Market 16th Season. Saturday 10 am - 2 pm. Church Building, 80 Flat St. (802) 869-2141. farmersmarket@posttoilsolutions.org. Saturdays through March 9.

BRATTLEBORO. One-Day Workshop: Monotype Printmaking. Create unique prints quickly. Inking process, printing press operation, stencil creation, mark making and much more. Process is safe and nontoxic. All materials provided. Open to ages 8+. Beginners welcome. Fee \$45; space limited, registration required. 2 pm. First Proof Press, 183 Main St. (802) 257-0124. brattleboromuseum.org.

BURLINGTON. Performance. Jeh Kulu Dance and Drum Theater. People of all backgrounds and ages honor the joyous traditions of West Africa through music and dance. FlynnZone Kids Hour (free event for kids ages 3-5). 10 am. The Flynn, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynnvt.org.

COLCHESTER. 42nd Annual Lake Champlain Islands Ice Fishing Derby. Fish: All legal species. Lake Champlain. Sponsored by Islands Fishing Derby Committee. 12 am Saturday through 3 pm Sunday. Check in at Martin's General Store (Highgate Springs); Hog Island Market (West Swanton); Harborside Harvest Market (North Hero); Keeler's Bay Variety (South Hero); Lakeshore Ace Hardware (Colchester); J&S Fisheries (St. Albans). (802) 233-7613. casimer37@aol.com. Also February 13.

ESSEX JUNCTION. Concert. Visualizer Orchestra. The Vermont Symphony Orchestra matches dynamic, animated projections with an hour of intense, emotional music by Rimsky-Korsakov, Barber, Mendelssohn, Su Lian Tan, and more. Tickets \$10-\$30. 5:30 & 8 pm. The Double E Performance Center, 21 Essex Way #300. (802) 864-5741. hello@vso.org. www.vso.org.

GREENSBORO. Cross-country Ski Outing. Ski the Great Circle at Highland Lodge with an optional pond crossing. Must be experienced skier, have your own equipment (or rent from home), have a season's pass or purchase a day pass, wear layered clothing, and carry snacks, lunch, water, and extra gear. To reserve your spot contact leader: Phyllis Rubenstein at (802) 793-6313 or phyllis@phyllisrubensteinlaw.comcastbiz.net. www.greenmountainclub.org.

HANOVER, NH. HopStop Family Show: Youth Wind Ensemble Showcase. Upper Valley middle school musicians perform ensemble pieces and chamber ensemble performances along with short demos for younger music lovers to explore wind instruments. Free, advance registration required. 11 am. Hanover High School, 41 Lebanon St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu.

MANCHESTER. Southern Vermont Primitive Biathlon. 5k run/walk, 11k run, 11k ruck, 11k team ruck, there will be a huge door prize giveaway, also food vendors and warm drinks. All proceeds will benefit the Manchester Rod & Gun Club's Green Mountain Conservation Camp Scholarship Fund! Registration \$10-\$15, forms are available at www.SVTPB.org. 8:30 am. Skinner Hollow Farm, 1703 Main St., south of the village off Rt. 7A. (802) 362-0420. www.svtpb.org. Also February 13.

MONTPELIER. Workshop Part #1: "Winter Trees of the North Branch River". Fee \$25, ages 12 and up. Registration required. 1:30-4:30 pm. Meet at North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm St. (802) 229-6206. Contact info@northbranchnaturecenter.org. northbranchnaturecenter.org. Part #2 February 19.

NORWICH. Igloo Build and the Science of Winter. Join Mike Fenzel for a demonstration, as well as instruction on building an igloo, from complete start to finish. For families and igloo enthusiasts. Free with museum admission. 10:30 am - 3 pm. Montshire Museum of Science, 1 Montshire Rd. (802) 649-2200. montshire@montshire.org. montshire.org.

RUTLAND. Vermont Winter Farmers' Market. Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm. At Cortina Inn (formerly Holiday Inn), 476 Holiday Dr. (802) 417-8661. vtfarmersmarket.org. Saturdays through May 7.

SHELburne. Cupid 5K Race. Celebrate the love of your life, or your love of running, this 5K course is an out-and-back which has a slight hill, but nothing too tough. Registration \$30. 9 am - 10:30 am. Shelburne Athletic Club, 166 Athletic Dr. www.runsignup.com/Race/VT/Shelburne/RacevermontCupid5K.

SOUTH POMFRET. "I Do! I Do!" A musical about marriage by the creators of *The Fantasticks*. Tickets \$35-\$45. 7:30 pm. The Grange Theatre, 65 Stage Rd. (802) 457-3500. info@artistreevt.org. www.artistreevt.org. Also February 13, 16-20 and 24-27.

Florence, VT

Riding a Runner Sled in the Back Pasture

by Allen A. Mills

Usually by the end of January, we had a good heavy blanket of snow covering over the rocks and hummocks of the hills and pastures creating a gentle undulating surface inviting us to go sledding.

Oftentimes in February, the surface of the heavy snowpack will turn into a solid crust, strong enough to support a person walking and even running on the hard surface and will support a person on any kind of sled.

Sometimes when my sisters and I were children, my parents would let us invite neighborhood children to come to our Whipple Hollow farm for a sliding party. We would be sliding down the hills on anything from a piece of cardboard to the best runner sleds. My father even showed us how to ride his big aluminum sawdust scoop shovel. I know I could demonstrate it now if we had enough snow and enough people to help me get back onto my feet again after the ride!

It was just yesterday that I was up in our barn looking for a particular tool when I spotted the runner sleds hanging on the wall. I hadn't seen a runner sled in years and certainly don't remember the last time I saw anyone riding one.

The runner sled was the one with two steel runners with a wooden slat platform attached to the runners about six inches above them. The runners were about one-half inch wide and the person riding the sled could steer it with a wooden handle that was attached to the platform. You could either sit on the sled and steer with your feet or lay down and steer with your hands. Sitting down made the sled more unstable and by laying down the rider and sled were more aerodynamic allowing for more speed.

Mostly what I see people sliding on now are inflatable

snow tubes or plastic sleds. Some will say they are safer in that the surfaces of the sleds are softer than the wood and metal of the runner sled, but you can't steer them, and they flip over more easily.

While I was in the barn looking at the runner sleds my mind went back to a day when my younger sister Jan and I went sliding on the crust. It was Abraham Lincoln's birthday, February 12th, which was back when Presidents had their own birthdays and before just being recognized for a generic Presidency. It was also a day off from school.

This day back then was a clear cold morning. I was in the barn clipping cows which kept them cleaner when they lay down in their stanchions. My father had gone to Pittsford to talk with Alice Wimette, an insurance agent, about more insurance on the farm property. Suddenly, Jan popped into the barn. She said Mom and my sisters, Ferne Marie and

Kathy, were cleaning the house and she had escaped from her dusting job. She said she had been out running on the crust. I was getting tired of being slapped by the cows' tails and kicked at by those who

objected to the clipping. I thought if Jan could run on the crust maybe it would support a runner sled. Jan was more than enthusiastic when I suggested we get the runner sleds and go sliding on the crust.

Ferne Marie and Kathy, both, had long sleds and I suggested we borrow them as we only had short sleds that were harder to steer and much slower. I knew we should ask permission because I had borrowed Ferne Marie's new Lightning Glider and run into a stump with it. I knew I said before that you could steer a runner sled but, as with anything else, you can only steer as fast as you can see. Yes, I said that right, so you just think about it.

I was sure for this reason Ferne Marie wouldn't let me borrow her sled. I, also, told Jan that if she asked to borrow the sled she would get caught and have to do her dusting job first. So off we went with the runner sleds, dragging the sleds up the freshly sanded road to shine up the runners.

We went up through the gate and followed the wood road to the highest point in the open pasture. As we passed the gateway, I noticed the solid ice patch just before we would be coming down through the gateway. It was quite a distance



to the upper peak barway where we would begin our slide, so we had to hurry before the morning sun softened the crust.

As we got to the peak barway, Jan was getting a little nervous about starting so high in the pasture, but I said to just follow the road right through the gateway and then back of the barn to the meadow for as far as we could go.

Jan was using Kathy's sled as I knew it steered better and she started down first. I started right after her, but I was noticing how much faster she was going than I was. I lost sight of her as she dropped over the hill just before the gateway and I then worried, what if she hits the gate post!

My fear left when I saw Jan go streaking through the gateway only to return when I found myself sliding on the patch of ice headed straight for the gate post. But I passed through the gateway and breathed a sigh of relief coming only inches from hitting the post.

After that it was just a pleasant ride through the meadow all the way to the corner on the other side of the valley. Jan then said let's do it again, but after such a close call at the gate post, I said I had better get back to clipping cows and you better go in and take your chances with the dusting.

But if the crust is right and you get a chance, I say, take a ride on a runner sled!

Allen A. Mills, Jr.'s book about his childhood on the family farm in Florence VT, *Barnyards, Barefeet and Bluejeans—A Horse's Tale* It can be ordered from Shire Press at Northshire Bookstore for \$20 (802) 362-2200. northshire.com.

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Useful Vermont Websites

Vermont Tourism Site: vermontvacation.com

Vermont Chamber of Commerce: visitvt.com

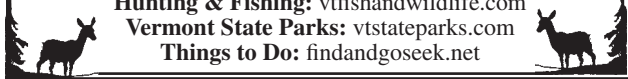
Green Mountain National Forest: fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl

Vermont Outdoor Guide Association: voga.org

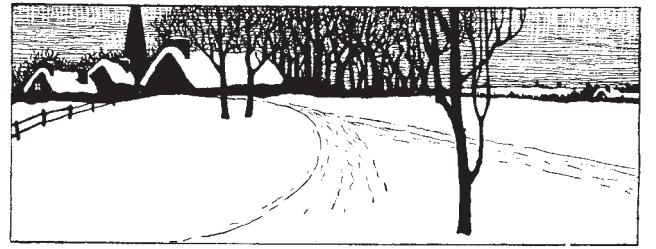
Hunting & Fishing: vtfishandwildlife.com

Vermont State Parks: vtstateparks.com

Things to Do: findandgoseek.net



Vermont Country Calendar



VERGENNES. LC Jazz Winter Thaw Free Community Concert. LC Jazz is a Vergennes'-based 17 piece big band with vocalists. Free. 7:30 pm. Vergennes Opera House, 120 Main St. (802) 877-6737. info@vergennessoperahouse.org. www.vergennessoperahouse.org.

WEST HAVEN. Winter Outing at Chapman Farm & Cemetery. At the Nature Conservancy, Buckner Preserve. Cross country ski, snowshoe or hike from the Galick Trailhead north along old roads to an abandoned farm and a cemetery that was rediscovered a couple years ago and restored in 2021 by the VT Old Cemeteries Assoc. Views of Lake Champlain to the west and Bald Mountain to the east. Four easy miles. The Conservancy does not allow dogs. Vaccination required. Sponsored by the Killington Section of the Green Mountain Club. Newcomers and non-members welcome. Leader: Herb Ogden. (802) 293-2510. hogden@vermontel.net. www.gmckillington.org.

WESTFORD. Westford Winter Festival and Concert. Music, games, food, drinks, raffle, and more! Skating, snowman building, sledding, skiing, and guided walk with Chittenden County Forester Ethan Tapper. Free admission. 12-4 pm. Westford Common Hall, 1 White Church Lane. (802) 363-0930. westfordwinterfest@gmail.com. On Facebook.

WESTMORE. Willoughby Lake Store Annual Ice Fishing Derby. Through 2 pm Sunday. Check in at Willoughby Lake Store, 2003 VT Rt. 5A. (802) 673-7058. coldmountainmaple@gmail.com. *Through February 13.*

WOODSTOCK. Magic of Maple. See sugar-on-snow demonstrations, learn about the maple sugaring process and find out about the history of maple in Vermont. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. off Rt. 12. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. *Through February 27.*

WOODSTOCK. 12th Annual Woodstock Vermont Film Series: *The Ants and The Grasshopper*. To save her home from extreme weather, Anita Chitaya travels from Malawi to California to the White House, to persuade Americans that climate change is real. Tickets \$15. 3 & 5:30 pm. Billings Farm & Museum Theater, 69 Old River Rd. off Rt. 12. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

DERBY. Book Discussion: *The Blue Flower* by Penelope Fitzgerald. Part of the Romantic Ideal series. Free, registration required. 1:30 pm. Dailey Memorial Library, 101 Junior High Dr. (802) 766-5063. daileymemoriallibrary.org. vermonthumanities.org.

HANOVER, NH. Movie Screening: *Drive My Car*: A profoundly beautiful film inspired by a Haruki Murakami story. Tickets \$8. 4 pm. Hopkins Center, Loew Auditorium, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu.

HANOVER, NH. Concert: Dartmouth College Gospel Choir. Tickets \$15, advance registration required. 2 pm. Hopkins Center, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu.

HUNTINGTON. Workshop: Handwork and Happiness. Bring your own project: woodcarving, knitting, sketchbook, quilting, poems-in-progress, field notebook, crochet, etc. Cider, coffee and good company provided. Suggested donation: \$5-\$10. Advance registration required. 2 pm. Birds of Vermont Museum, 900 Sherman Hollow Rd. (802) 434-2167. museum@birdsofvermont.org. birdsofvermont.org.

ONLINE. Performance. Baldwin and Buckley at Cambridge. The groundbreaking Obie-winning NYC theater troupe, Elevator Repair Service, re-creates Baldwin

and Buckley's profoundly relevant confrontation. Free. 8 am - 5 pm. Visit website for link. (802) 748-2600. www.catamountarts.org.

MANCHESTER. Southern Vermont Primitive Biathlon. 5k run/walk, 11k run, 11k ruck, 11k team ruck, there will be a huge door prize giveaway, also food vendors and warm drinks. All proceeds will benefit the Manchester Rod & Gun Club's Green Mountain Conservation Camp Scholarship Fund! Registration \$10-\$15, forms are available at www.SVTPB.org. 8:30 am. Skinner Hollow Farm, 1703 Main St. (802) 362-0420. www.svtpb.org.

MONTPELIER. Nature & Environment Book Sale. Peruse hundreds of books ranging from nature guides to environmental writing to travelogues. 10 am - 4 pm. North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm St. (802) 229-6206. info@northbranchnaturecenter.org. northbranchnaturecenter.org. *Also February 14.*

POULTNEY. Frosty Fishing Derby. Fish: Brown trout, chain pickerel, largemouth bass, northern pike, rainbow trout, smallmouth bass, yellow perch. Lake St. Catherine. Sponsored by Poultney Fish and Game Club. 5 am through 4 pm. Check in at Lake St. Catherine State Park. (802) 287-0184. weh52@hotmail.com.

RUTLAND. Visualizer Orchestra. The VSO matches dynamic, animated projections with an hour of intense, emotional music by Rimsky-Korsakov, Barber, Mendelssohn, Su Lian Tan, and more. Sponsored by Northfield Savings Bank VSO Innovation Fund and Physician's Computer Company. Tickets \$10-\$25. 3 pm. The Paramount Theater, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. hello@vso.org. www.paramountvt.org.

SOUTH POMFRET. "I Do! I Do!" A musical about marriage by the creators of *The Fantasticks*. Tickets \$35-\$45. 2 pm. The Grange Theatre, 65 Stage Rd. (802) 457-3500. info@artistreevt.org. www.artistreevt.org. *February 16-20 and 24-27.*

WESTMORE. Willoughby Lake Store Annual Ice Fishing Derby. Through 2 pm Sunday. Check in at Willoughby Lake Store, 2003 VT Rt. 5A. (802) 673-7058. coldmountainmaple@gmail.com.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14

EAST CHARLESTON. Valentine's Day Candlelit Snowshoe. Join us for a beautiful evening snowshoe through the candlelit forest with your sweetheart, friends or family. After your snowshoe enjoy a warm fire, hot cocoa, and cookies to go. Children under 12 attend for free. Snowshoes are available, but if you have your own bring them. No price difference either way. Fee \$15. Please register. 5:30-8:30 pm. North Woods Stewardship Center, 154 Leadership Dr. (802) 723-6551. www.northwoodscenter.org.

ESSEX JUNCTION. Concert. Songs I've Lived: Be My Valentine. Proof of vaccination required. Tickets \$20 & \$35 plus tax. 7 pm. The Double E: T Rex Theater, 21 Essex Way, Suite 300. www.doubleevermont.com. info@doubleevermont.com.

MONTPELIER. Nature & Environment Book Sale. Peruse hundreds of books ranging from nature guides to environmental writing to travelogues. 10 am - 4 pm. North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm St. (802) 229-6206. info@northbranchnaturecenter.org. northbranchnaturecenter.org.

WOODSTOCK. Winter Wonders Camp. "Fun"tastic winter activities such as snow explorations, sledding and winter crafts, for ages 6-8. Fee \$250, \$50 discount for a sibling. Monday-Friday, 9 am - 12:30 pm. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. afannin@billingsfarm.org. billingsfarm.org. *Through February 18.*

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

HANOVER, NH. Concert: Anais Mitchell and Bonny Light Horseman. The Vermont singer-songwriter performs new songs and older favorites together with a three-piece band. Tickets \$25, advance registration required. 7:30 pm. Hopkins Center, Spaulding Auditorium, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. www.hop.dartmouth.edu.

HUNTINGTON. Full Moon Snowshoe Walk. Explore the winter nighttime forest with us. Led by Erin Talmage. If weather permits, fire and hot cocoa outside at end of walk. Recommended: red plastic to cover lens of flashlight. Suggested donation \$5-\$15, advance registration required. 6-8 pm. Birds of Vermont Museum, 900 Sherman Hollow Rd. (802) 434-2167. museum@birdsofvermont.org. birdsofvermont.org. *If too cloudy, we'll try again the night before the next full moon: March 17.*

LYNDON. Concert. Polish Baltic Philharmonic Orchestra. Includes Rossini's Overture to La Gazza Ladra (The Silken Ladder); Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35; and Beethoven's Symphony no 5. Tickets \$52, \$42, \$32, \$15, students are free. 7 pm. Lyndon Institute Auditorium, 168 Institute Circle. (802) 748-2600. catamountarts.org.

ONLINE. Northshire Presents Rob Osler—*Devil's Chew Toy*—with Sara J. Henry. Osler will share his new work, a light, LGBT mystery that follows an unlucky in love—and life—teacher. In conversation with local mystery writer Sara J. Henry who also edited the book. Please register. Most events free, check website. 6 pm. Northshire Bookstore. (802) 362-2200. northshire.com.

Sifting Through Seed Catalogs by Andrea Knepper

Extension Master Gardener Intern
University of Vermont

Nothing brightens a dreary winter afternoon like a crisp, colorful seed catalog arriving in the mailbox. The anticipation of sunshine to come and daydreams of a bountiful harvest are welcome during these seasonally short days.

I have been caught up in the excitement and found myself with enough seed packets in my online shopping cart for a small farm, and later found my selections to not be ideal for my garden space or needs. Avoid this by taking some time to get organized and refining your shopping list.

After each gardening season, and before the temptation of seed catalogs calls, it is wise to reflect on your previous year's successes and struggles. Have an idea of what you would like to replicate, what you would like to adjust and any new plants or techniques you'd like to try. If you didn't do this after cleaning out last year's garden, the new year is a perfect time to ponder this and start formulating a plan for the coming year.

Request your catalogs now

If you haven't received any seed catalogs yet this year, check your favorite seed supplier's website. Most have a link where you can request a catalog by mail, download or browse their offerings online. Look for a local or regional supplier as seeds grown in a similar climate will be more predictable performers in your garden.

For first time gardeners, a great place to start learning about seed companies is your local garden center as they will stock seeds from numerous suppliers. If you find seeds from a particular company appeal to you, visit their website to view, or request, their complete catalog.

Now that you know what you want, as well as what you don't want, it's time to start going through the catalogs. In addition to beautiful photography, stories from growers and recipes, a good seed catalog will include a thorough description of each plant for which seed is available.

Selecting the right seed

Here in Vermont, with our short growing season, it is important to note the days to maturity. For plants that are direct-seeded, meaning the seed goes directly into the ground when temperatures are warm enough, the days to maturity indicates the number of days the seed will take to produce harvestable fruit. For plants that are started indoors and transplanted at the appropriate time, this is the length of time it will take from transplanting to harvest.

To find your frost dates, and determine the length of your growing season, you can search the National Gardening Association's website (<https://garden.org/apps/frost-dates>).

The plant description will tell you if a variety is open-pollinated or a hybrid. Choose open-pollinated if you plan to save your own seed. Hybrid varieties may offer resistance to disease or pests. Sometimes hybrid resistance is noted as a code. You may need to flip through the catalog to find out what the code means.

Pay attention to the details

Finally, carefully read the listing to see if there are any peculiarities of the variety. Some may be more tolerant to variations in soil conditions while others may need fertilization to maximize yield. Know what each plant will require before making your final choices.

I also recommend holding onto your seed catalog for the gardening season. Sometimes there are details provided there that are not printed on the seed packet. Having access to your catalog can save you time if the seed packet goes astray.

Andrea Knepper is a UVM Extension Master Gardener Intern from Bolton, VT.

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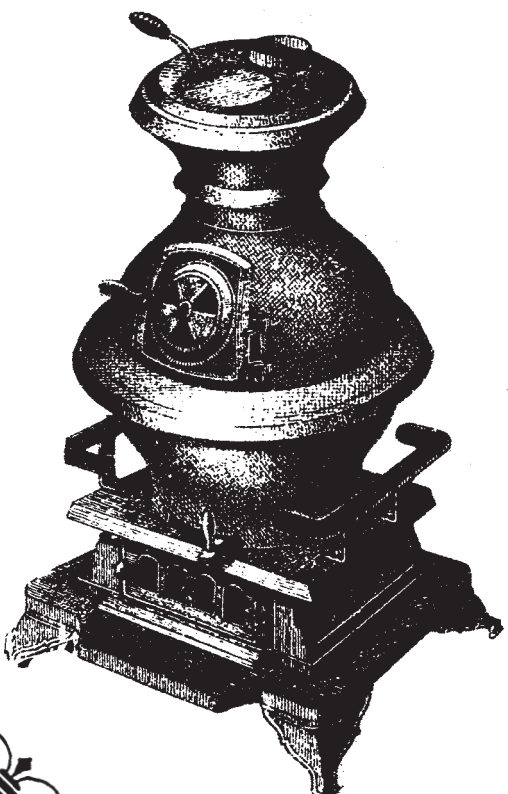
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Vermont Country Calendar

(Tuesday, February 15, continued)

ONLINE. Opera Company of Middlebury presents *Candide*. Online ticket – household \$25, generous \$50. Link will be sent by email. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. tickets@townhalltheater.org. townhalltheater.org. *Through March 1.*

QUECHEE. Let's Go Ice Fishing! Learn the basic skills of ice fishing like rigging and using a tip-up, using an auger to bore your fishing hole and information about basic ice safety and how to determine adequate ice thickness for fishing. Sponsored by Hartford Parks and Rec Department. Free. 9 am – 12 pm. Dewey's Pond, Quechee Main St. (802) 295-5036. recreation@hartford-vt.org. hartfordvt.myrec.com.

WOODSTOCK. Horse-Drawn Winter Group Sleigh Rides. \$5 per person. 30 minutes. 11 am – 3 pm. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org/winter-sleigh-rides. *February 17, 19, 21, 22, 24, & 25.*

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16

MONTPELIER. Wildlife Tracking Wednesdays. Walk the property with NBNC naturalists in search of wildlife tracks and sign. Learn or brush up on track and trail identification in a community of curious nature lovers. Free, registration required. 7:30-8:30 am. North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm St. (802) 229-6206. info@northbranchnaturecenter.org. northbranchnaturecenter.org. *Every Wednesday in February.*

ONLINE. Lecture. "The Robinsons of Rokeby and Kauffman's Station: A Story of Two Underground Railroad Sites". Tucker Foltz and Matthew March discuss two very different sites that operated as part of the Underground Railroad. Free, registration required. 6:30 pm. Rokeby Museum. (802) 877-3406. info@rokeby.org. www.rokeby.org.

ONLINE. Winter Speaker Series: Van Gosse. This talk will explore the political world, with special attention to notable Black Vermonters like Lemuel Haynes and Alexander Twilight. Free. 12 pm. Online via Zoom. (802) 479-8500. info@vermonthistory.org.

ONLINE. Naturalist Journeys Online Presentation. Lady Fern Evolution with Bertrand Black and his research on ferns. Free. 6 pm. North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm St. (802) 229-6206. www.northbranchnaturecenter.org.

PUTNEY. Concert. Right in the Eye: Live Movie-Concert on Georges Melies' Films. Tickets \$18 advance, \$22 at the door. 7:30 pm. Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill. (802) 451-0053. info@nextstagearts.org. www.nextstagearts.org.

STRATTON. Woman's Workshop. Stratton Mountain Sports School's top female instructors will offer insights, techniques and tactics in a supportive and collaborative women only environment. Registration is \$189. 9am – 3 pm. Stratton Mountain, 5 Village Lodge Rd. (802) 297-4000. www.stratton.com. *Also March 2, 16, 30.*

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17

HANOVER, NH. Community Dinner in Hanover. To-go meals available. Free. 5-6 pm. Our Savior Lutheran Church, 5 Summer St. (603) 643-3703. *Every Thursday.*

ONLINE. Northshire Presents Susannah B. Mintz—*Love Affair in the Garden of Milton: Loss, Poetry and the Meaning of Unbelief*—with Mason Stokes. Author & Skidmore professor Susannah Mintz will share her memoir, which interweaves the private story of a marriage coming apart with readings of John Milton's poetry and prose. Please register. Most events free, check website. 6 pm. Northshire Bookstore. (802) 362-2200. northshire.com.

PUTNEY. Movie Concert. Right in the Eye (En plein dans l'œil). A multimedia show composed of 12 films by Georges Méliès, a pioneer of the cinema and a wizard of special effects. Sponsored by Oak Meadow. Tickets \$22. 7 pm. Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill. (802) 451-0053. info@nextstagearts.org. www.nextstagearts.org.

WOODSTOCK. Horse-Drawn Winter Group Sleigh Rides. \$5 per person. 30 minutes. 11 am – 3 pm. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org/winter-sleigh-rides. *February 19, 21, 22, 24, & 25.*

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18

HANOVER, NH. Movie Screening: *Don't Look Up*. Two astronomers (Jennifer Lawrence and Leonardo DiCaprio) try to warn humankind of a planet-killing comet hurtling toward Earth. Tickets \$8. 7 pm. Hopkins Center, Loew Auditorium, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. www.hop.dartmouth.edu.

HANOVER, NH. Musical: *Rent*. The groundbreaking and iconic musical follows a year in the life of a group of

impoverished young artists and musicians struggling to survive and create in New York's Lower East Side. 8 pm. Hopkins Center, The Moore Theater, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu. *Also February 19-20 and 24-27.*

MANCHESTER. Equinox Golf Course Snowshoe. Start and finish at the parking lot behind Manchester Congregational Church. Meet at 6 pm. Hike a two-mile round trip on the back nine holes of the golf course. Bring layers of clothing, a warm drink, a fully charged headlight, snowshoes (spikes just in case) and poles. Please contact hike leader Keld Alstrup at (802) 362-1422 or alstrupkeld@gmail.com. www.greenmountainclub.org.

MORGAN. Eli Goss Memorial Ice Fishing Tournament. Fish: All legal species. Seymour Lake, Echo Lake, Lake Memphremagog. Sponsored by Eli Goss Memorial Scholarship Fund. Friday through Sunday. Check in at Seymour Lake F&W Access Area. (802) 673-8931. stee01@live.com. *Through February 20.*

NORTH HERO. Great Ice! Sled dog rides, Christmas tree bonfire, fireworks, skate party. Most free, some fees. 4-8 pm. City Bay. (802) 378-5115. www.greaticvt.org. *Also February 19 & 20.*

STATEWIDE. Great Backyard Bird Count. Join birders around the world for this annual event to count and celebrate birds in our backyard (or anywhere near home). Participate in as many of the four days you want, for as little as 15 minutes. birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org. rutlandcountyaudubon.org. *Through February 21.*

STRATTON. Presidents Week Fireworks Hike. Celebrate from mid-mountain to take in the best views of a spectacular firework display. \$75 plus tax. 7-9 pm. Stratton Mountain, 5 Village Lodge Rd. (802) 297-4000. www.stratton.com.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19

BRATTLEBORO. Harris Hill Ski Jump Competition: Pepsi Challenge & US Cup. 10 am gates open, 11:30 am opening ceremonies, 12:15 pm competition begins. Snow gear recommended. Heated beer tent. Tickets: adults \$20, youth (6-12) \$15. Free parking in the field at the base of the ski jump. Vehicles with low ground clearance park at the Brattleboro Retreat on Linden St. (Rt. 30); free shuttle bus to the venue. Harris Hill Ski Jump, Cedar St. harrishillskijump.com. *Also February 20.*



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Vermont Country Calendar

BRATTLEBORO. Brattleboro Winter Farmers' Market 16th Season. Saturday 10 am – 2 pm. Church Building, 80 Flat St. (802) 869-2141. farmersmarket@postoisolutions.org. *Saturdays through March 9.*

BRATTLEBORO. Jazz Concert: Joel Ross "Good Vibes". Joel Ross, vibraphone; Godwin Louis, saxophone; Jeremy Corren, piano; Kanoa Mendenhall, bass; Jeremy Dutton, drums. Limited in-person audience and livestream component. Tickets \$20, sliding scale. 8 pm. Vermont Jazz Center, 72 Cotton Mill Hill, Studio 222. (802) 254-9088. eugene@vtjazz.org. vtjazz.org.

BRATTLEBORO. Brattleboro Museum & Art Center's Artful Ice Shanties. An outdoor exhibit from ice fishers, design-builders, tiny house aficionados, and creative groups and individuals. Hike and snowshoe on the Retreat Farm trails, visit Carlos the ox and other animals, cross-country ski, and skate on the Retreat Meadows. Outdoor events, activities, demonstrations, and performances. Admission free. In and around Farmhouse Square. At Retreat Farm, 45 Farmhouse Square. (802) 257-0124. kirsten@brattleboromuseum.org. info@retreatfarm.org. brattleboromuseum.org. retreatfarm.org. *Thru February 27.*

BURLINGTON. Concert: Anaïs Mitchell featuring Bonny Light Horseman. Bonny Light Horseman performs selections from their two-time Grammy-nominated album of folk songs with a contemporary twist, before Anaïs takes to the stage. 7:30 pm. The Flynn, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynnvt.org.

CASTLETON. Lake Bomoseen Ice Fishing Derby. Fish: Brown trout, largemouth bass, northern pike, smallmouth bass, yellow perch. Sponsored by Castleton Lions Club. 6 am Saturday through 3 pm Sunday. Check in at Crystal Beach, Lake Bomoseen, Rte 30. (802) 468-5001. stanandmamie@gmail.com. *Also February 20.*

EAST CHARLESTON. Wild and Woolly Snowshoe Race. explore our gorgeous groomed trail system this winter. We will be hosting a 5K and 10K snowshoe race as well as a 1K fun run/walk. Chili and corn bread (provided for competitors and \$5 for spectators). Drinks: water, hot tea, hot chocolate, coffee. Fee \$25 & \$45. Please register. 10 am – 3 pm. NorthWoods Stewardship Center, 154 Leadership Dr. (802) 723-6551. northwoodscenter.org.

ESSEX JUNCTION. Concert. Troy Millette & The Fire Below (acoustic trio). Proof of vaccination required. Tickets \$15 plus tax. 8 pm. The Double E: T Rex Theater, 21 Essex Way, Suite 300. www.doubleevermont.com. info@doubleevermont.com.

HANOVER, NH. Musical: *Rent*. The groundbreaking and iconic musical follows a year in the life of a group of impoverished young artists and musicians struggling to survive and create in New York's Lower East Side. 8 pm. Hopkins Center, The Moore Theater, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu. *Also February 20, 24-27.*

HANOVER, NH. Concert: Dartmouth College Wind Ensemble. 7:30 pm. Hopkins Center, Spaulding Auditorium, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu.

HIGHGATE SPRINGS. 3rd Annual Clean Water Ice Fishing Derby. Fish: Yellow perch. Lake Champlain. Sponsored by Mill River Brewing LLC. 8 am through 3 pm. Check in at Shipyard Beach near Shipyard Bay Dock at 624 Shipyard Rd. (802) 309-0522. jmfitzgerald@millriverbrewing.com.

MONTPELIER. Workshop Part #2: Winter Trees of Blanchard Park. Led by Vermont Master Naturalist Alicia Daniel. Focus on common forest trees of central Vermont. Fee: \$25, ages 12 and up. Registration required. 1:30-4:30 pm. Sponsored by North Branch Nature Center. Parking available along Barre St. Meet outside the Montpelier Senior Activity Center on Barre St. (802) 229-6206. info@northbranchnaturecenter.org. northbranchnaturecenter.org.

MONTPELIER. Winter Discovery Hike for Families. Connect with one another and with the natural world in this fun program led by Naturalist Fiona Modrak. Free, registration is required. 10:30 am – 12 pm. North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm St. (802) 229-6206. info@northbranchnaturecenter.org. northbranchnaturecenter.org.

NORTH HERO. Great Ice! Free public skating, snow building competition, snowshoe or hike at Camp Ingalls, "I want to drive the Zamboni", chili cook-off, ice rescue demonstration, lighted skating rink for after dark. LCI Business Expo. Most free, some fees. 7 am – 8 pm. City Bay. (802) 378-5115. www.greaticevt.org. *Also February 20.*

ONLINE. Genealogy Class: First Black Family in Essex, Vermont. Jerry Fox goes over the research he conducted, including in New York State, as he worked to learn more about this family. Fee \$10, registration required. 10:30 am. Vermont Genealogy Library. (802) 871-5647. mail@vtgenlib.org. vtgenlib.org.

ONLINE. Workshop: Storytelling Through Illustration and Cartoons. Led by Christine Mix. Gallery at the Vault. A step-by-step set of lessons focusing on character design, expressions, action drawing, and how to create stories through illustrated, sequential scenes. For anyone age 10 and above. Free. 11 am – 3 pm. Hosted by Gallery at the Vault, 68 Main St. (802) 802-885-7111. galleryvault@vermontnet.net. galleryvault.org.



PERU. Febfest & Fireworks Show. Games and fireworks at Bromley Mountain! Free. 9 am – 9 pm. Bromley Mountain Resort, 3984 VT Rt. 11. (802) 824-5522. events@bromley.com. www.bromley.com.

PUTNEY. Concert. Antje Duvokot and Mark Erelli: Double Bill. Presented by Twilight Music. Tickets \$24. 7:30 pm. Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill. (802) 451-0053. info@nextstagearts.org. www.nextstagearts.org/event/antje-duvokot-mark-erelli-double-bill.

RUTLAND. Vermont Winter Farmers' Market. Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm. At Cortina Inn (formerly Holiday Inn), 476 Holiday Dr. (802) 417-8661. vtfarmersmarket.org. *Saturdays through May 7.*

SHELBURNE. Walk at Shelburne Farms. Walk or snowshoe the Farm Trail from the Welcome Center. Moderately difficult, five miles. Bring a snack or lunch, water, and dress to the weather in thermal layers (avoid cotton). Ankle gaiters & hiking poles recommended. Be prepared for ice & snow. For information and meeting time contact leader Ruth Penfield at (802) 388-5407 or ruthpenfield@gmail.com. www.greenmountainclub.org.

SOUTH BURLINGTON. Winter Concert Series: The Sky Blue Boys. A lively program characterized by the passion of bluegrass, the authenticity of folk and the excitement of old-time string-band music. Free. 12:30 pm. South Burlington Public Library, 180 Market St. (802) 846-4140. sbplinfo@southburlingtonvt.gov. www.southburlingtonlibrary.org.

STATEWIDE. Great Backyard Bird Count. Join birders around the world for this annual event to count and celebrate birds in our backyard (or anywhere near home). Participate in as many of the four days you want, for as little as 15 minutes. birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org. rutlandcountyaudubon.org. *Through February 21.*

STRATTON. President's Weekend Firework Hike. Join us mid-mountain to take in the best views of a spectacular firework display. \$75+tax. 7-9 pm. Stratton Mountain Ski Resort, 5 Village Rd. 1 (800) 787-2886. feedback@stratton.com. www.stratton.com.

WEST RUTLAND. Audubon West Rutland Marsh Monitoring Walk. Join us for the full 3.7-mile loop in this National Audubon IBA (Important Bird Area), or go halfway. Kids, new birders and non-members always welcome! Meet at the marsh boardwalk on Marble St. at 8 am. birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org. rutlandcountyaudubon.org.

WOODSTOCK. Horse-Drawn Winter Group Sleigh Rides. \$5 per person. 30 minutes. 11 am – 3 pm. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org/winter-sleigh-rides. *February 21, 22, 24, & 25.*

WOODSTOCK. 12th Annual Woodstock Vermont Film Series: *Jimmy Carter Rock 'n Roll President*. The mostly forgotten story of how Carter, a lover of all types of music, forged a tight bond with musicians Willie Nelson, the Allman Brothers, Bob Dylan and others. Tickets \$15. 3 & 5:30 pm. Billings Farm & Museum Theater, 69 Old River Rd. off Rt. 12. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20

BRATTLEBORO. Annual Harris Hill Ski Jump Competition: Fred Harris Memorial Tournament. 10 am gates open, 11:30 am opening ceremonies, 12:15 pm competition begins. Snow gear highly recommended. Heated beer tent. Tickets: adults \$20, youth (6-12) \$15. Free parking in the field at the base of the ski jump. Vehicles with low ground clearance park at the Brattleboro Retreat on Linden St. (Rt. 30); free shuttle bus to the venue. Harris Hill Ski Jump, Cedar St. harrishillskijump.com.

CASTLETON. Lake Bomoseen Ice Fishing Derby. Waterbody: Lake Bomoseen. Fish: Brown Trout, Largemouth Bass, Northern Pike, Smallmouth Bass, Yellow Perch. 6 am Saturday – 3 pm Sunday. Check-in location: Crystal Beach (Rt. 30). (802) 644-5884. stanandmamie@gmail.com. *Also February 20.*

North Hero, VT

Celebrate Winter at the Great Ice! February 18-20

Every winter Great Ice! turns North Hero's frozen City Bay into a winter playground for all ages.

Festival highlights include fireworks, bonfires, the Over 'n Back Trek, dog sled rides, ice skating lighted winter rinks, cook-offs, a business expo, community meals, snow building competitions, ice hockey games, and more. Most events are free, small charge for some. Free parking available, food and beverages, and restrooms. Fun for the whole family!

Festival Schedule • February 18–20, 2022

Friday, February 18

Great Ice! Food & Wine Village. 5:30-8 p.m. The best of hot eats and cold treats from tents on the bay.

Christmas Tree Bonfire. 5:45 p.m. At the Great Ice! Bonfire Pit, City Bay. Drop your tree off at Hero's Welcome General Store prior to 2/18/22.

Fireworks. 6:45 p.m. At City Bay. A fireworks display over City Bay. Food and drink vendors will be on hand.

Skate Party. 7-8 p.m. At City Bay. We'll crank up the music and light the rink for an after-fireworks skate party. Vendors will be on hand with refreshments for the whole family.

Saturday, February 19, 2022

Free Public Skating. 7 a.m.-5 p.m. At City Bay. Enjoy the skating oval, Hockey Rink or open skating.

Lake Champlain Islands Business Expo. 10:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. At North Hero Community Center.

Snowshoe or Hike. 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. and 1-2:30 p.m. At Camp Ingalls. Join North Hero Parks and Rec volunteers for a snowshoe trek. Afterwards sip complimentary hot chocolate and warm up by the campfire.

I Want to Drive the Zamboni. 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. At City Bay. Take a supervised turn behind the wheel of the Zamboni around our designated course. \$10 per ride.

Snow Building Competition. 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. At City Bay. Build your best snow structure, snow man, fort, you decide. Hot dogs and hot chocolate will be provided for participants.

Chili Cookoff. 12:30-1:30 p.m. At North Hero Community Center. Sample a variety of great chili recipes and cast your vote for the winner. Compete with a pot of your best recipe.

Ice Rescue Demonstration. 1:30-1:45 p.m. At City Bay. Watch the North Hero Volunteer Fire Department demonstrate the latest ice rescue techniques.

Lighted Skating Rink. 5-8 p.m. At City Bay. Enjoy skating after dark with on our illuminated rink.

Sunday, February 20, 2022

Free Public Ice Skating. 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. At City Bay. Enjoy the skating oval, Hockey Rink or open skating.

Over 'n Back Trek. 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. At City Bay. Ski, skate, walk, just get there any way you can. Trek the 1.7 miles ungroomed path over the ice to Knight Island State Park where hot chocolate and refreshments will be served.

I Want to Drive the Zamboni. 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. At City Bay. Take a supervised turn behind the wheel of the Zamboni. \$10 suggested donation per ride.

Lighted Skating Rink. 5-8 p.m. At City Bay. Enjoy skating after dark with on our illuminated rink.

City Bay at North Hero is located at 3537 US Rt. 2 in North Hero, in the Champlain Islands of Vermont. For more information go to www.greatice.org. Or call (802) 378-5115.



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Vermont Country Calendar

(Sunday, February 20, continued)

MIDDLEBURY. Screening: *Duma*. In this exquisite and drama directed by Carroll Ballard, an orphaned cheetah becomes the best friend and pet of a young boy living in South Africa. Presented by Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival. Tickets: adult \$16, youth 12-17 \$11, child under 12 \$7. 2 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. tickets@townhalltheater.org.

NORTH HERO. Great Ice! Free public skating, free over 'n back trek to Knight Island State Park, free "I want to drive the Zamboni". Free. 7 am - 12:30 pm. City Bay. (802) 378-5115. www.greaticevt.org.

STATEWIDE. Great Backyard Bird Count. Join birders around the world for this annual event to count and celebrate birds in our backyard (or anywhere near home). Participate in as many of the four days you want, for as little as 15 minutes. birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org. rutlandcountyaudubon.org. Also February 21.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21

ST. JOHNSBURY. Concert. A Tribute to Aretha Franklin. Musician, vocalist, and composer Damien Sneed toured with Aretha during her later years. In this special tribute, Sneed pays homage and six-time Grammy Award-nominee Valerie Simpson will sing Franklin's iconic songs. Tickets \$56, \$46, \$36, \$15, students are free. 7 pm. Fuller Hall, St. Johnsbury Academy, 1000 Main St. (802) 748-2600. www.catamountarts.org.

SHELBURNE. Book Discussion: *The Given Day* by Dennis Lehane. Led by Rachael Cohen. Free, registration required. 4 pm. Wake Robin Retirement Community, 200 Wake Robin Dr. (802) 318-6354. ngs612@hotmail.com. wakerobin.com. vermonthumanities.org.

STATEWIDE. Great Backyard Bird Count. Join birders around the world for this annual event to count and celebrate birds in our backyard (or anywhere near home). Participate in as many of the four days you want, for as little as 15 minutes. birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org. rutlandcountyaudubon.org.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

EAST CHARLESTON. Winter Day Camp 2022. An opportunity for kids to explore the outdoors by ski and snowshoe, discover

new ways to have fun in the snow, and learn about how the animals of the NEK adapt, survive, and thrive in the NEK. fBuilding forts, indoor arts and crafts, fire-building, sledding, games, and the best hot chocolate this side of the Clyde River. Fee \$150. Please register. 9 am - 3 pm. NorthWoods Stewardship Center, 154 Leadership Dr. (802) 723-6551. www.northwoodscenter.org. Through February 24.

NORWICH. Mindfulness Meditation. In-person and online. Approximately one hour of sitting and walking meditation, followed by a reading most days, and discussion. Free, donations welcome. 9-11:30 am. St Barnabas Episcopal Church, 262 Main St. (703) 727-5208. joyceandpat@gmail.com. Tuesdays through June 28.

ONLINE. Northshire Presents Jennifer Fawcett—*Beneath The Stairs*—with Leslie Zemeckis. Author & Skidmore professor Jennifer Fawcett celebrates the release of her debut novel, in conversation with actor, writer & award-winning documentarian Leslie Zemeckis. Please register. Most events free, check website. 6 pm. Northshire Bookstore. (802) 362-2200. northshire.com.

ONLINE. VTeen 4-H Science Pathways Café, for grades 7-12. NASA Internship Research about the Space Suit. Free, registration required. Closed captioning. Recording available YouTube at go.uvm.edu/4hteensciencecafes. 7-8 pm. University of Vermont (UVM) Extension 4-H. (802) 888-4972 x 402. lauren.traister@uvm.edu. uvm.edu/extension/youth/announcements.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23

SOUTH BURLINGTON. Planning for Seed Saving Workshop. Join master gardener Judy Hall to cultivate your knowledge and practice of seed saving. Free. 6 pm. South Burlington Public Library, 180 Market St. (802) 846-4140. SBPLinfo@southburlingtonvt.gov. www.southburlingtonlibrary.org.

HANOVER, NH. Concert: Cuarteto Latinoamericano, with Sally Pinkas. The piano quartet delivers sublime contemporary Latin American music interlaced with 17th-century influences. Followed by a discussion with the artists and composer Miguel del Águila. Tickets \$25, pre-registration required. 7:30 pm. Hopkins Center, Spaulding Auditorium, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu.

ONLINE. Book & Author Event. *Racing the Clock* with Bernd Heinrich. Biologist and natural historian Bernd

Heinrich presents his new work, part memoir, part scientific investigation. Free. 6 pm. North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm St. (802) 229-6206. www.northbranchnaturecenter.org.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24

HANCOCK. Hike Worth Mountain from Middlebury Gap. Strenuous, about two miles each way. Will go to top of Middlebury Snow Bowl and explore forgotten ski trails. Sponsored by the Green Mountain Club. Contact Morris Earle at morrisearle@gmail.com. greenmountainclub.org.

ONLINE. Talk. African American Experience: The Harlem Renaissance. Led by Gina Logan. During the 1920s, New York's Harlem neighborhood hosted an explosion of African-American cultural expression. Free, registration required. 2 pm. Cabot Public Library. (802) 563-2721. cabotlibrary@yahoo.com. www.vermonthhumanities.org.

ONLINE. Northshire Presents Benjamin Bogin on the 40th anniversary edition of *How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America*. Bogin, the nephew of author Rick Fields will discuss this landmark modern classic with James Shaheen, the editor-in-chief of *Tricycle*. Please register. Most events free, check website. 6 pm. Northshire Bookstore. (802) 362-2200. northshire.com.

WOODSTOCK. Torchlight Snowshoe. Snowshoe or walk along the Billings Farm trail as evening light begins. Warm up around the fire pit with complimentary s'mores and hot drinks. Learn about the wildlife and history of the land, guided by National Park rangers. Tickets: adults \$10, youth (4-15) \$5, children 3 & under free. 4:30-6:30 pm. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org/events/torchlight-snowshoe.

WOODSTOCK. Horse-Drawn Winter Group Sleigh Rides. \$5 per person. 30 minutes. 11 am - 3 pm. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. Also February 25.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25

BURLINGTON. Almost Queen. A deliberate four piece band, Almost Queen, delivers a live performance showcasing signature four part harmonies and intricate musical interludes. Brought to you by Higher Ground. Tickets \$35-\$75. 8 pm. The Flynn, 153 Main St. (802) 652-0777. info@highergroundmusic.com. www.flynnvt.org.

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www.vtgenlib.org

Statewide

Vermont Contest for Tree Stories & Art from Kids Grades K-8

Grade K-8 Vermont students, including homeschoolers, are invited to share their appreciation for forests and trees by creating an original story and artwork for the "Growing Works of Art" contest. The deadline to enter is March 11.

The theme of this year's contest is "Sharing your TREE-mendous story." Students are asked to write a short story (one to three paragraphs) about a meaningful experience or memory about trees, and then create a work of art to illustrate their story. Entries will be judged on creativity and originality (50 percent) and how well the story is told through writing and art (50 percent).

All art must be original

and no larger than 11 x 17 inches. Any medium may be used, including pen, pencil, crayon, pastels, paint, cloth, collage, photography or computer-generated art.

Entries may be submitted by mail or email but must include the official entry form, which can be found at go.uvm.edu/growingart along with contest rules and submission guidelines. Past winning entries also are available to view.

Each age group winner receives a Vermont State Park punch pass and will appear on *Across the Fence*, UVM Extension's weekday program on WCAX-TV (if possible in 2022). Winning entries will be announced on Vermont's Arbor Day, May 6 this year, and will be featured on the contest website.

The contest is sponsored annually by the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program, a partnership between University of Vermont Extension and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks

and Recreation, as part of its Arbor Day activities.

For more information, contact Gwen Kozlowski at gwen.kozlowski@uvm.edu or (802) 651-8343 x 506.

Forests

I remember a saying of forests,
Of long dark dungeons of forests
Full of paths that lead into blackness,
But to keep on his trail when the night drops,
One has to look upward for guidance,
To the path of the sky through the tree-tops.

So life is a deep-wooded forest
With cross-roads and paths like a forest,
And by-roads that lead into blackness
That no one need take to in madness,
Nor sigh or to cry that his road stops,
But to look for his guidance above him,
For a path, like the sky through the tree-tops.

—WILLIAM MUNDELL
1912-1997, South Newfane, VT

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Vermont Country Calendar

COLCHESTER. Biff Ice Fishing Derby. Waterbody: Lake Champlain. Fish: Lake Trout, Northern Pike, Walleye, Yellow Perch. Check-in location: Malletts Bay Access Area. (802) 468-5001. fightfive1971@gmail.com. *Through February 27.*

NEWPORT. Memphremagog Winter Swimming Festival. All swimmers in the 25-meter and 50-meter events must have swum at least 25 meters in water with a temperature of 41 F or less. All swimmers in the 100 meter event must have swum 50 meters in water with a temperature of 41 F or less. All 200 meter swimmers must have completed 100 meters in water with a temperature of 41 F or less. Presented by Kingdom Games and the Memphremagog Winter Swimming Society. Fees \$185-\$325. Registration is on a wait list. Friday 12 pm, Sat and Sun at 9 am. The EastSide Restaurant & Pub, 47 Landing St. kingdomgames.com/memphremagog-winter-swimming-society. *Through February 27.*

QUECHEE. VINS Family Owl Prowl. for families to enjoy the outside world in the nighttime forest! Dress warmly as we hike the nature trails of the VINS Nature Center. Find out "Hooooo" is out there making raucous noises in the nighttime forest. Bring a flashlight/headlamp and dress in layers. For adults and youth 5-17. Adults \$12.50, youth \$10.50. 5:30-7 pm. Covid protocols. Vermont Institute of Natural Science, 149 Natures Way, off Rt. 4. (802) 359-5000. vinsweb.org.

RUTLAND. Concert. Steven Page Trio. Distinctive and powerful voice that is among the most instantly recognizable in popular music. Tickets \$35. Doors open at 6:30 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. shawn@paramountvt.org. www.paramountvt.org.

ST. ALBANS. Performance. Comedian Christine Hurley—The Queen of Boston Comedy. The Depot. Tickets \$20. 8 pm. The Depot, 50 Kingman St. (443) 798-5380. Sheasmith1973@yahoo.com. www.thedepotvt.com.

WOODSTOCK. Horse-Drawn Winter Group Sleigh Rides. \$5 per person. 30 minutes. 11 am – 3 pm. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26

BRATTLEBORO. Brattleboro Winter Farmers' Market 16th Season. Saturday 10 am – 2 pm. Church Building, 80 Flat St. (802) 869-2141. farmersmarket@postoilutions.org. *Saturdays through March 9.*

BRATTLEBORO. Introduction to Ice Fishing at Retreat Meadows Fishing Access. A learning opportunity about one of Vermont's iconic winter activities for all levels. Free. pre-registration required. 9 am – 12 pm. (802) 505-5562. letsfishing@vermont.gov. www.vtfishandwildlife.com.

BRATTLEBORO. Awards Ceremony for Exhibit: "Artful Ice Shanties". Admission free. 2 pm. Farmhouse Square at Retreat Farm, 45 Farmhouse Square. (802) 257-0124. kirsten@brattleboromuseum.org. brattleboromuseum.org.

COLCHESTER. Biff Ice Fishing Derby. Waterbody: Lake Champlain. Fish: Lake Trout, Northern Pike, Walleye, Yellow Perch. Check-in location: Malletts Bay Access Area. (802) 468-5001. fightfive1971@gmail.com. *Also February 27.*

ESSEX JUNCTION. Concert. Big Eyed Phish. Proof of vaccination required. Tickets \$20 plus tax. 8 pm. The Double E: T Rex Theater, 21 Essex Way, Suite 300. www.doubleevermont.com. info@doubleevermont.com.

HANOVER, NH. Concert: Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra. Mahler's Fourth Symphony. 7:30 pm. Hopkins Center, Spaulding Auditorium, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu.

HANOVER, NH. Musical: *Rent*. The groundbreaking and iconic musical follows a year in the life of a group of impoverished young artists and musicians struggling to survive and create in New York's Lower East Side. 8 pm. Hopkins Center, The Moore Theater, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu. *Also February 27.*

HUNTINGTON. Monthly Bird Monitoring Walk. All birders (current, experienced, newbie and would-be) welcome. Most fun for adults, older children. Bring your own binoculars, dress for weather. Suggested donation \$5-\$10, advance registration required. 8 am. Birds of Vermont Museum, 900 Sherman Hollow Rd. (802) 434-2167. museum@birdsofvermont.org. birdsofvermont.org. *Last Saturday of every month.*

PERU. 36th Kare Anderson Telemark Festival. Clinics all weekend for all skill levels whether you're a beginner or advanced. Included with resort admittance. 8 am – 4:30 pm. Bromley Mountain Resort, 3984 VT Rt. 11. (802) 824-5522. www.bromley.com. *Also February 27.*

POULTNEY. Slate Valley Trails. Snowshoe or hike a five-mile loop, with a scenic overlook and a pond. Moderate, with a few steep stretches. Vaccination required. Sponsored by the Killington Section of the Green Mountain Club. Newcomers and non-members welcome. Leader: Diane Bargiel, (413) 687-1109. www.gmckillington.org.

POULTNEY. First Annual Andrew Mullin Memorial Ice Fishing Derby. Waterbody: Lake St. Catherine. Fish: Largemouth Bass, Northern Pike, Smallmouth Bass, Yellow Perch. Check-in location: Lake St. Catherine State Park. (802) 379-3883. armullin77@gmail.com.

RUTLAND. Vermont Winter Farmers' Market. Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm. At Cortina Inn (formerly Holiday Inn), 476 Holiday Dr. (802) 417-8661. vtfarmersmarket.org. *Saturdays through May 7.*

SHELBURNE. Sugarhouse Snowshoe 5K/10K. For competitive snowshoe runners as well as relaxed fitness walkers. Start and finish at Shelburne Sugarworks where there could be some sugaring in the works (depending on Mother Nature). Registration \$30. 9-11:30 am. Shelburne Sugarworks, 746 Shelburne Hinesburg Rd. (802) 233-7531. www.runsignup.com/Race/VT/Shelburne/SugarhouseSnowshoe5K.

SOUTH POMFRET. "I Do! I Do!" A musical about marriage by the creators of *The Fantasticks*. Tickets \$35-\$45. 7:30 pm, The Grange Theatre, 65 Stage Rd. (802) 457-3500. info@artistreevt.org. www.artistreevt.org. *Also February 27.*

STATEWIDE. Great Benson Fishing Derby. Waterbody: Lake Champlain and all legal waterbodies in Vermont. Fish: All legal species. Check-in location: Crystal Beach on Lake Bomoseen. (802) 265-3640. dacwoodsagency@comcast.net. *Also February 27.*

WOODSTOCK. Workshop: Seed Starting and Garden Planning Like a Champ. With Master Gardener Ben Pauly. The Zoom presentation will be recorded and available to all paid participants. Proof of vaccination required for onsite participants. Tickets \$15. 10 am. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org.

WOODSTOCK. 12th Annual Woodstock Vermont Film Series: *Summer of Soul*. In the summer of 1969, just one hundred miles south of Woodstock, The Harlem Cultural Festival included concert performances by Stevie Wonder, Nina Simone, Sly & the Family Stone, Gladys Knight & the Pips, Mahalia Jackson, B.B. King, The 5th Dimension and more. Tickets \$15. 3 & 5:30 pm. Billings Farm & Museum Theater, 69 Old River Rd. off Rt. 12. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27

COLCHESTER. Biff Ice Fishing Derby. Waterbody: Lake Champlain. Fish: Lake Trout, Northern Pike, Walleye, Yellow Perch. Check-in location: Malletts Bay Access Area. (802) 468-5001. fightfive1971@gmail.com.

PERU. 36th Kare Anderson Telemark Festival. Clinics all weekend for all skill levels whether you're a beginner or advanced. Included with resort admittance. 8 am – 4:30 pm. Bromley Mountain Resort, 3984 VT Rt. 11. (802) 824-5522. events@bromley.com. www.bromley.com. *Also February 27.*

RUTLAND. Performance. The British Invasion. An immersive multimedia show. Tickets \$35-\$45. 7 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. shawn@paramountvt.org.

STATEWIDE. Great Benson Fishing Derby. Waterbody: Lake Champlain and all legal waterbodies in Vermont. Fish: All legal species. Check-in location: Crystal Beach on Lake Bomoseen. (802) 265-3640. dacwoodsagency@comcast.net.



VTF&W Photo
Vermont Fish & Wildlife's Green Mountain Conservation Camp program offers young people the opportunity to learn about natural resource conservation and develop outdoor skills through hands-on learning experiences.

VT Fish & Wildlife Dept.

F&W's 2022 Conservation Camp Registration Now Open

If you are 12 to 14 years old and want to learn about Vermont's wildlife and gain outdoor skills, consider attending one of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's Green Mountain Conservation Camps this summer.

Specific details about what protocols relating to COVID-19 will be in place will be communicated via the department's website as they become clear.

The one-week camp programs are held at Lake Bomoseen in Castleton and Buck Lake in Woodbury. Campers participate in hands-on learning about fish and wildlife conservation, ecology, forestry, orienteering, safe firearm and archery techniques, swimming, canoeing, fishing and more. Natural resource professionals come to the camp to share information on their programs and take campers out for field activities.

"Whether kids come alone or with friends, they are guaranteed to meet new people and form new bonds while experiencing Vermont's natural resources to the fullest," said Fish and Wildlife Education Coordinator Alison Thomas. "An important take-away message and common theme during the week is that conserving and managing habitat will help ensure Vermont will have fish and wildlife in the future."

"We would love to have

all of the advanced sessions filled for girls who have already attended a basic session," added Thomas. "Advanced sessions are for campers who have completed a basic session the summer before and who are 16 years old or younger. Advanced sessions include more in-depth activities about backpacking, camping, natural resources, and unique hunting and fishing techniques."

Conservation Camps open June 19 and continue until August 19. Tuition is \$250 for the week, including food, lodging and equipment.

Covid is a factor in planning for the 2022 Conservation Camp program. Keeping staff and campers safe and healthy could mean last minute changes. While registration is open, with all camp weeks available to the full number of campers, the specific details of how camp may run are subject to change based on guidance from the Vermont Health Department and the Governor's orders. This could include and is not limited to, reducing the number of sessions held, reducing the number of students in each session, or canceling the program for 2022. For more information, contact FWGMCC@vermont.gov or call (802) 522-2925.

Applications and information are available at www.vtfishandwildlife.com.



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North Country Book News

Children's Book Reviews by Charles Sutton

Stories About Nighttime and the Mysteries of Sleep

It's very rare that parents will wake their sleeping children in the middle of the night for a hike out in all that darkness. Yet you will soon want to walk along with this adventurous family's nighttime hike and see what an amazing sight awaits them if they can get there on time. In *The Night Walk* by Marie Dorleans (\$17.95. Floris Books. florisbooks.co.uk) a brother and sister wonder what this night venture is all about. They soon join in savoring the air smelling of irises and honeysuckle and then "threading their way through the whispering forest where the earth is damp, the bark smelling comforting."

Is the goal when they come upon a beautiful moon scape by a lake? No, not yet. They push on and must climb a rocky hillside. They do get there just in time! Join them and see the rosy glow of an early dawn sunrise coming up behind the mountain tops. This hike was worth every step.

Talented artist Dorleans has created unusually beautiful nighttime scenes amazingly all colored in the dark. The book earned the New York Times/New York Public Library Best Illustrated Children's Book for 2021.

Most children don't have any trouble falling to sleep at night. But suppose you are the wolf with a serious case of insomnia? In *Looking for Sleep* by Geogiana Deutsch and illustrated by Megan Tadden (\$17.99. Tiger Tales. www.tigertalesbooks.com), the wolf does what humans would do and takes a bath and eats a snack, but to no avail, not sleepy. Wolf figures sleep is only hiding out someplace so he sets out to find it. He is joined by the badger and they come upon a lullaby-playing hedgehog. That gives them hope as "sleep's never far away from a lullaby."

Still no sleep but then badger gives a giant yawn prompting wolf to think sleep certainly must be hidden in a yawn. Next they find a sleeping, snoring, rabbit whom they figure has found what they are searching for. They tickle its nose with a feather which only annoys the rabbit into making a giant achoo!

By now the sleep-seekers are very discouraged and tired, but a wise old owl sitting up in a tree coaxes them to sleep, because that will happen when you are "tired and still, and feeling safe." A bedtime story by the owl helps, too.

Artist Megan Tadden's large expressive drawings portray a nighttime fantasy world which enlivens the story.

Before they can go to bed themselves, children with pets

make sure they are safely settled for the night. Dogs may get the end of a welcoming bed and cats are given a nest made out of a blanket in a safe corner. If one lives on a farm or other rural area you may have seen horses going to sleep standing up with one foot cocked up, known never to fall over.

In a book entitled *Where Do Creatures Sleep At Night?* by Steven J. Simmons and illustrated by Ruth E. Harper (\$16.99 Charlesbridge. www.charlesbridge.com) curious children can learn the bedtime habits of various outdoors animals including butterflies, honeybees, frogs, rabbits and birds.

Large scale drawings of the animals during the day and safely asleep at night are accompanied with rhymes for each species.

Some examples: "No one knows if it really does sleep, but a frog rests for hours, not moving its feet." And, "When it's time for rabbits to rest, they can hop into their holes, were they sleep best." And for honeybees "They stop their work to

get some sleep, head down for hours without a peep. Their antennae droop to the floor...until they awake and go out once more." Sleepy-time drawings also will help ease you into a good night's sleep, too.

Did you know your brain works overtime for your benefit at night? Learn all about this and share the fascinating information with your children with help from *What Happens While You Sleep* by Anna Russelmann & Judith Buchner (\$17.95. www.northsouth.com) who have vividly told and illustrated what happens through the characters aptly named Hippo and Campus. (The hippocampus, a major part of the brain that contributes to learning, emotional responses, memory and storage).

Intriguing and just normal happenings are told through the experiences of a young girl named Malu who gets help sorting out and keeping what is useful from the experiences she had during the day.

To understand what happens the writer-artist team have created a huge, sprawling tree in a double-page spread where stuff worth saving for another day is hung on the tree for later harvesting. Most importantly a great sort takes place at night by helpers Hippo and Campus who have to decide what to be kept for the future and placed on the tree of knowledge.

Malu has misplaced her teddy bear. Upon arising a picture of the bear where she left him in the bathroom flashes past her consciousness. She rushes to the bathroom to find her teddy. Our nighttime mind processes more than we can imagine. This archived information can be usefully available and it is helpful to understand how this works.

Malu is an excellent person to explore these things as she is open-minded and obviously a good sport. Some sense is made in this book of a complicated subject and we are never too young or too old to learn something new.

Most children would be fascinated by the great canopy of stars in the night sky if only they were more visible. Consider the young boy named Tamen who someday would like to travel the galaxy and be a Skywatcher. But he lives in a congested city with his single mom where the glaring night lights always outshine the stars.

Follow mother and her son in *Skywatcher* by Jamie Hogan (\$18.95. Tilbury House. www.tilburyhuse.com) as they travel into the countryside to camp out in a tent and toast marshmallows. This marvelous adventure really begins after dark when mother and son admire and can picture constellations' designs starting with Ursa Major (Big Bear).

This is a comforting story of gratitude for the Milky Way and other stars. The twosome also are visited by a large luna moth and a screeching owl. Mother insightfully sums up the star gazing night with the thought: "People are made of stardust. The atoms in us were forged in stars long ago."

Dark Sky Preserves across America and Canada are listed and include information on how to be a Skywatcher. Twelve constellations are displayed inside the front and back covers on backgrounds that prompt their names.



Book Review by Charles Sutton

5 Minute Really True Stories for Bedtime

Developed by Sally Symes

What on Earth Publishing & Britannica
\$12.99. www.whatonearthbooks.com

Sometime soon, when your kids are in bed awaiting the usual bedtime stories, they might ask, "Haven't you got anything new?"

This is an ideal time to bring out and share the *5 Minute Really True Stories for Bedtime*.

This remarkable 190-page encyclopedia is a treasure trove of stories and information about the night world. It is well-written and illustrated by 10 talented artists who lighten up the night's happenings with appealing drawings.

Among these stories, you can learn about other kinds of beds, including hammocks, that are used around the world. Also, where animals sleep or hunt at night. Read about desert animals escaping from the great heat, how sea creatures sleep (so they won't drown), and what are the best sights in night skies including the Northern Lights, Midnight Sun, Moon Mysteries, and Stories in the Stars. And much more!

Starting with where we sleep (our beds consist of spring and mattress), we learn that elsewhere in the world (India) the bed may be made out of mango wood with a hand-woven covering of cotton, coconut fiber and died leaves. Other beds are made of reeds (South Africa), blocks of ice (igloos in the far north) and green bark in tree houses in Indonesia. The most fascinating is the Kong Bed-Stove (Northern China), an ingenious invention whose wood fire warms where people sleep (on top), cooks dinner, and is used as a table.

The hammock, another kind of bed first invented 1,000 years ago by the Mayans in Central America, is made out of tree branches. Hammocks are strung today between trees in one's backyard, also by sailors on ships at sea, and people traveling through forests and jungles. Have you ever tried a hammock and ended on the floor? Here are five easy instructions to make the task quick and safe.

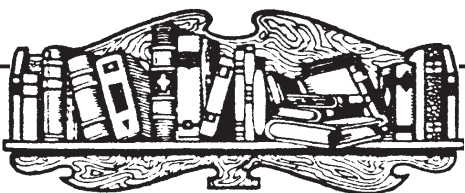
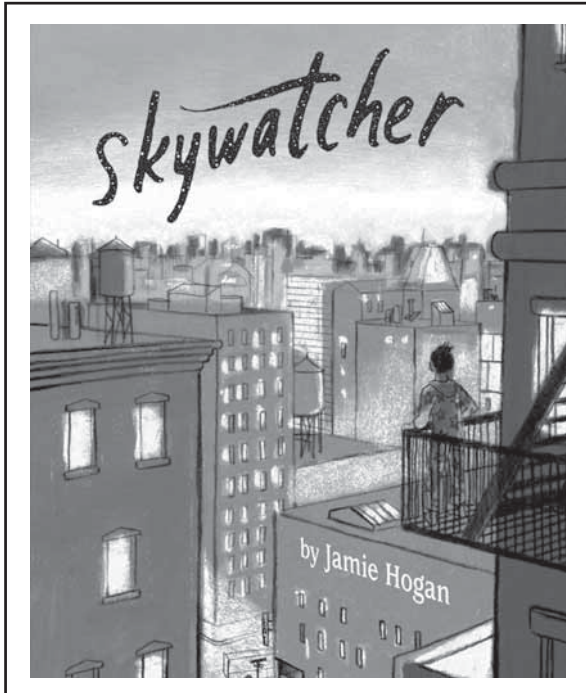
Thousands of years ago cave dwellers made their beds out of grasses and leafy plants topped off by leaves from a tree that repelled insects. Evidence has been found that back then if the bed got dirty and gross, cavemen would simply set fire to it and start all over.

What about record-breaking beds? The biggest and possibly the oldest is a four-poster bed called the Great Bed of Ware, big enough for eight grown-ups, on display in a London museum. One story about the bed is that 12 butchers and their wives slept in it.

The Egyptians had many unique beds. See drawings of beds honoring animals: ritual lion, ritual cow, and Ammut bed with a hippopotamus's head, lion's legs, and the body of a crocodile.

Read about people who work all night in hospitals and as maintenance workers; lullabies sung to babies world-wide; how astronauts sleep; why we dream; and other surprises. These night-time stories will last, entertain, and lull your little ones to sleep for many a night.

The text for *5 Minute Really True Stories for Bedtime* was developed by Sally Symes, an author, editor and designer of children's books living in England. All of its facts have been verified by Britannica.



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Old Growth

The Best Writing About Trees from Orion Magazine

(\$15. Orion Magazine. www.orionmagazine.org)

Worrisome news keeps appearing about the continuing worldwide destruction of the earth's forests, especially its sustaining old growth trees.

Most newsworthy is the decimation of tropical rain forests, especially in Brazil, where last year's deforestation was the highest level in 15 years with the loss of 8,224 square miles. These forests are being clear-cut to create large plantations for cattle raising and for growing bananas, palm oil, pineapple, sugar cane, tea and coffee.

These world forests, aside from producing lumber and other products including paper, are also very valuable for their role as the "Earth's Lungs" in converting carbon dioxide (greenhouse gases) into life-sustaining oxygen.

For understanding why living trees are important for us in so many ways, *Orion Magazine* has compiled 17 essays and 12 poems about several species of trees including white oak and Norway maple, cherry and plum, hemlock and red cedar, spruce and white bark pine. Special attention is given to the few surviving old-growth forests, hence the book's title *Old Growth*.

These primeval forest trees are particularly vulnerable because their centuries-old seasoned wood is very valuable.

In a recent article *The Washington Post* disclosed that a 500-year old Sitka spruce on Prince of Wales, largest island on Alaska's panhandle, valued at \$17,500 was to be harvested by flying loggers by helicopter in and out with chunks of the prized 15.7 foot diameter tree. It was only saved (for now) by the U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack reversing policies regarding forests and that all old-growth harvesting was ended except by Alaskan natives and local small operators.

The plight and the saving of forests is a theme of *Old Growth*. Stories about them can also be positive.

Redwood—A Day of Discovery

Essayist Richard Preston writes about Steve Sillett and Michael Taylor being the first to find "the largest living things on earth" subsequently named the Grove of Titans, 1,500-year-old redwoods in an "inaccessible" valley in the Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park near Crescent City, California.

After a torturous bushwhack into the uncharted wilderness, they stumbled onto a twin redwood with a combined diameter of 30 feet then a grassy glade with a ring-shaped colonnade of undiscovered redwood titans. This included the Lost Monarch, found in 2003 to be the largest living redwood in the world. Their find is now known to naturalists as the "Day of Discovery—May 11, 1998".

Robert Van Pelt, a scientist who is one of the leading discoverers of old trees said, "In the history of botany in the twentieth century, there was never a day like the Day of Discovery, and there never will be again." Why is that, essayist Preston asked? "Because there is nothing on Earth like those trees left to be found."

Buckeye Memories

Ohio's State and its University's mascot are named Buckeye but little is known about this tree whose seed is both beautiful and poisonous. In *Buckeye* by Scott Russels Sanders, a former Indiana University English professor and author of 20 books retraces the times as a boy he would join his wood-working craftsman father in the hardwood forests of Northeast Ohio where the buckeye tree, a type of walnut, grew in the wild. It was the perfect wood for his father

to make handmade footstools, picture frames and jewelry boxes.

The buckeye makes seeds rather than nuts which are shiny and dark brown with a lighter spot that makes them look like the male deer or buck's eye.

Sanders takes us back to the area of his childhood, now devastated by neglect after a dam was built that flooded the woods and destroyed his and other family homes. In a tribute to his father and his love for that land, Sanders on this visit, likens the sighting of a red-tailed hawk as a "symbol of his father, not a reminder, not a ghost, but the man himself" who loved those woods.

Plum: Its Own Rewards

The Orchard by Geronimo C. Tagatac tells us of an old woman, alone and with limited finances, growing an orchard of plum trees. But she has the help of a father, Jacinto, and his son who hire themselves out for eight Saturday mornings to prune her plum orchard. The pay: 35 cents a tree.

The author, the son of a Filipino immigrant father and a Russian-Jewish mother, creates touching scenes based on his own experiences. His father trained him with shears for this careful and tedious work and how to maneuver the 12-foot ladders with their pointed tops to find the best resting place among the thick branches. And we read:

The boy pauses to watch his father work: "He wasted no motion, never seemed to hurry. But he always outdistanced me when we were pruning. I watched him work at that unceasing pace since childhood."

He will always remember the old woman and waves good-bye to her as they walk away now seeing the orchard's unburdened limbs.

The tiresome work of pruning trees had its rewards—the college-bound boy would use his pruning money for "cotton pants, white shirt with a button-down collar, and a blue V-sweater." He would fit right in.

Western Larch: One Tough Super Pine

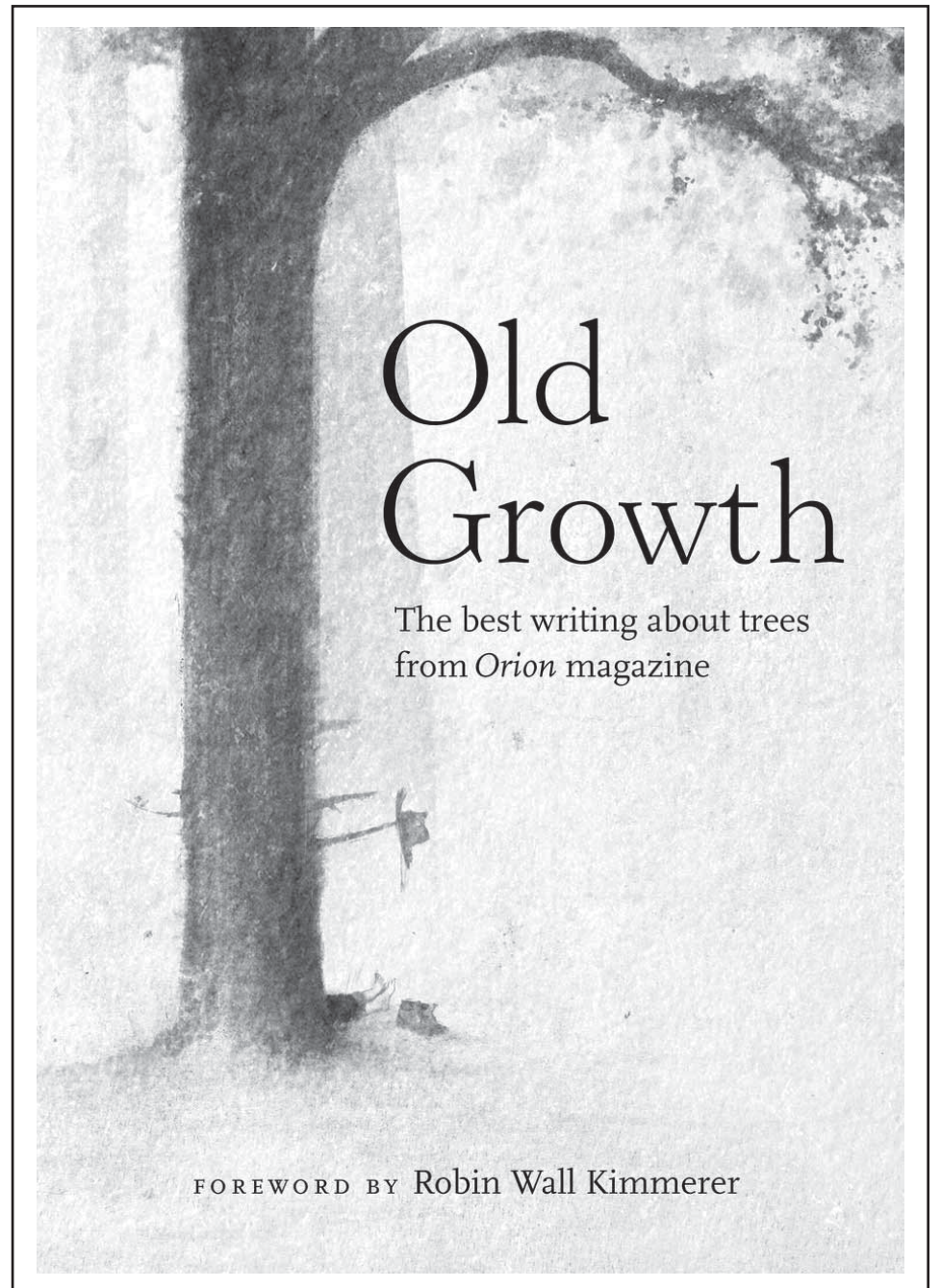
Consider how upsetting it must be when the scarce "old giant" forest of larch trees where you have been living for the past many years is threatened by loggers. Roadless area? No problem as they will use helicopters to harvest this heavy, dense, valuable wood which has survived the ravages of fires, storms, diseases and pests for hundreds of years.

In *The Larch* by Rick Bass we learn about the super-pine of the Yaak, a rugged and remote landscape in northwestern Montana, deep in the Kootenai National Forest.

In his admiration for the larch, Bass writes: "There is some deal the larches have cut with the world, some intricate bargain, part vain-glorious gamble and part good old-fashioned ecological sense." He goes on to describe how the larches "have casts their lot with the sun rather than the shade, having evolved to colonize new open space such as what follows a severe fire."

The larch, true to its survival instincts, grows a fire-resistant bark around its barrel base of up to feet round." It is frugal and does not waste water."The larches capture and claim and hold within the forest that water (from snowfalls and rain), and convert it to astounding height, and to magnificent breadth."

Bass, a writer in residence Montana State University, is still optimistic about the larch



and believes they will be well suited to the coming temperature variations, the dormancy demanded not just by winter's extremes, but by the coming heat and drought of global warming. "I believe in them, admire them, am in love with them."

He takes the reader into the forest in the autumn: "after a fire, those gold needles cast down by the millions on the blackened ground. The two colors, black and gold, seem as balanced and beautiful as gold stars within the darkest night."

"And I dream of someone, one day, being able to walk from the summit of the Yaak to

the Canadian border in a swath of uninterrupted old-growth larch ten miles wide, as once existed." And the "leafy cool light of an old larch forest" will greet them.

Orion Magazine, founded 1982, publishes articles on nature, environmental and cultural concerns with emphasis on how 'humanity might live on Earth justly, sustainably, and joyously.' To subscribe to the magazine and to purchase Old Growth (\$15) and other books, contact orionmagazine.org, (888) 909-6568, or write to Orion Magazine, 187 Main St., Great Barrington, MA 01230.



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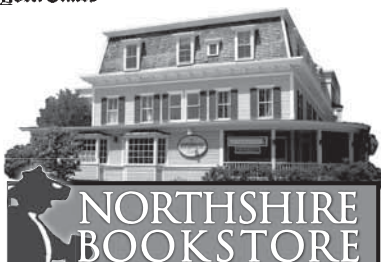
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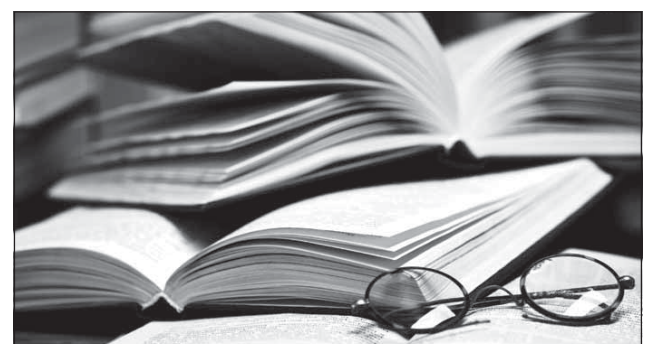
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Vladimer and Vera Nabokov, An Affair of the Heart

by Charles C. Sutton

It was my good fortune that the Russian-born novelist Vladimir Nabokov (*Lolita*) was teaching courses at Cornell University in Russian and West European literature while I was a student there majoring in Russian area studies.

Nabokov's lectures became a campus legend and it wasn't uncommon that many students attending his lectures were not regular students but were there just to be entertained by this Russian 'master.' This was much better than going for coffee or to the library.

But they also surely learned a great deal about the great Russian writers, Tolstoi, Puskin, Gogel, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky and others as well as the French novelist Flaubert and England's Dickens and were hopefully inspired to read their books.

A large, athletic man, Nabokov dominated the stage like a skilled actor not only with his persona but with enthusiasm, humor, and his just being so 'real' a Russian, whatever that might be.

Often during his lectures he would suddenly stop speaking and the lecture hall fell into an eerie silence. Nabokov

would then say the phrase or particular expression he was referring to in its original language usually Russian or French. Then he would ask? "Which sounds better? For example consider good night could be *bonne nuit*, *gote nacho*, *spokoinaya* or *mirnaya noch*".

Nabokov rarely spoke about his life in pre-revolutionary Russia where he was a member of a wealthy, aristocratic class family residing in a mansion in St. Petersburg and spending summers in Vyra (fifty miles to the south) on one of three estates which Nabokov fondly calls "the Nabokov lands." He did speak once about how the family had its own private zoo.

Because he was raised by nannies and governesses, he oddly enough learned to read and speak English before Russian.

Many-Tasking Vera

Memories of taking Nabokov's courses have been rekindled for me thanks to an 800-page book entitled *Letters to Vera* by Vladimir Nabokov edited and translated by Brian Boyd, the author of a Nabokov biography, and Olga Voronina, former deputy director of The Nabokov Museum in St. Petersburg, and a professor of Russian studies at Bard College (\$22. *Vintage*, www.penguinrandomhouse.com).

Nabokov's wife of many years, Vera, joined him for his lectures with her own seat in a corner off stage, usually taking notes. They were very devoted to each other—she was his constant companion and editor, research and teaching assistant, secretary and typist in four languages, chess and scrabble partner. She often carried a gun in her the role as his bodyguard.

She joined him, also a noted lepidopterist, when he hunted and collected butterflies and moths during their summer vacations in America's midwest. Several species discovered by Nabokov were named after him.

In *Letters to Vera* he wrote of his finds for each outing

and the teacher-in-him often came out with instructions. An example in a 1926 letter:

"You can't describe butterflies that way. What does 'yellow; 'mean? There are a million shades of yellow. That little one, with black speckles, must be not simple yellow, but orangey-russet, rather like wax for yellow boots. In that case, then it belongs to the genus *Brenthis* or *Melithea* (butterflies with motley, often nacreous underside)."

When he gave lectures at other colleges, an interested naturalist or linguist on campus (even a college president) would drive him around to hunt butterflies. The Harvard Museum of Natural History holds most of his collection, but some 4,300 specimens later were given to the Lausanne Museum of Zoology in Switzerland.

Before beginning a career as a literature professor first at Stanford, and then Wellesley College and Cornell (1948-59), he was an entomologist at Harvard University. But it was at Cornell that Nabokov wrote his famous novels *Lolita* (1955) and *Invitation of a Small Animal* (1957). He also wrote articles for *The New Yorker* and other magazines.

The couple had one son Demitri (1934-2012), a graduate of Harvard, who became a bass opera singer, translator, and race car driver.

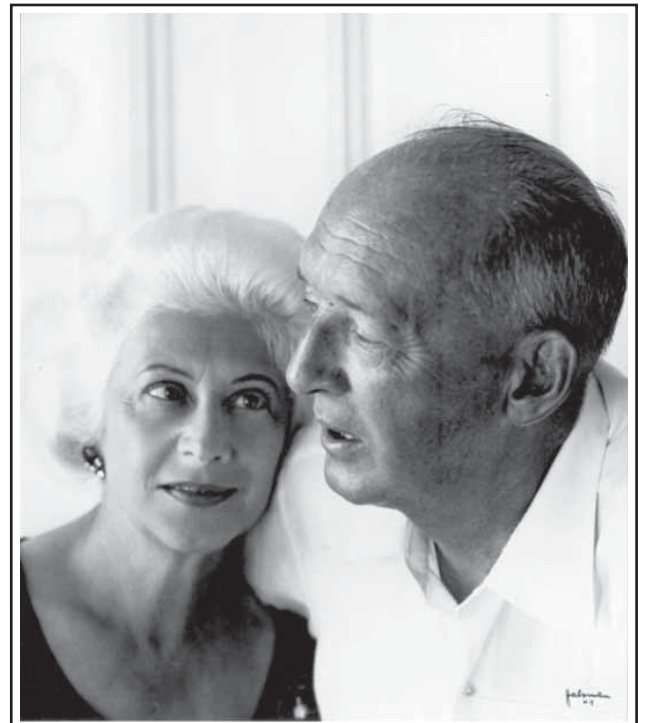
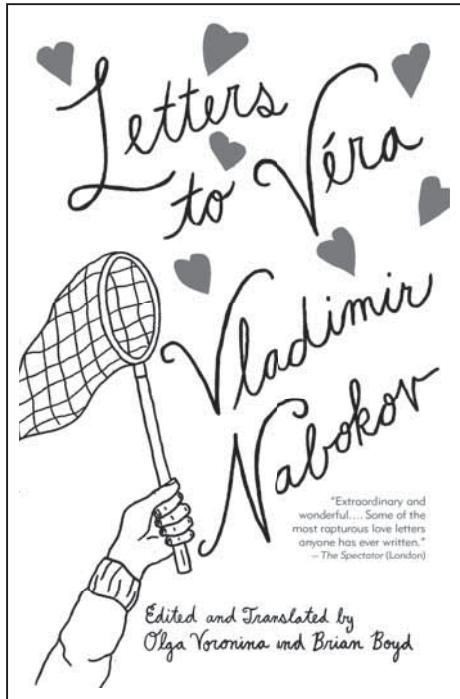


photo by Philippe Halsman (Филипп Халсман)
Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov and Vera (Владимир Владимирович Набоков и Вера). Storage of the photograph is at the Saint-Petersburg State University in The Nabokov Museum (<http://nabokov.museums.spbu.ru/En/index.htm>). Used with permission.



Love Letters Galore

For *Letters to Vera*, the two Russian scholars, Brian Boyd and Olga Voronina, translated hundreds of fascinating and passionate love letters from Vladimir to wife Vera (nee. Slonim) dated from 1923 to 1970. The book contains an amazing 84 pages of notes to accompany each letter with explanations and information including who were the many Russian people he wrote about.

He always started and ended each letter to wife with affectionate words: she was his fairy tale, my sweet love, my mouse, dear darling, my joy, pussykins, and many times my love. We never see any return letters to Vladimir as Vera destroyed them all feeling they were too personal. She didn't write as much as he did, and he sometimes reproached her for writing only one letter to his five.

Being a master fiction writer and poet, the letters often contained brilliant writing, but were more in the style of a journalist than a novelist, reporting actual details, even if trivial, like what he ate for breakfast, or when he shaved or got a haircut. This doesn't impede the story-telling to Vera of his adventures giving lectures and readings, and dealing with publishers far from home.

He was never angry nor showed the heavy heart and dark moods of most Russians resulting from years of repression under czars and dictators. Nabokov was up-beat and could be humorous, like the time he wrote about a man he met who collected flag poles but had a fit if anyone had one taller than his.

He was especially amusing describing an ordeal in a Boston hospital where he was being treated for food poisoning from eating spoiled ham. He writes: "The public ward was utter bedlam. There was an endless unruly din consisting

of the following elements: 1. The zoological sounds of an incessant radio set. 2. The wheezes, groans, and burping of the seriously ill. 3. Conversations across the whole enormous ward by the healthier with guffawing and strolling around." Nabokov fled the scene in his pajamas down a fire escape with enraged nurses running after him. But he escaped.

Prolific Writer

Nabokov was the author of 14 novels, many short stories and poems, some appearing in *The New Yorker* and *The Atlantic* magazines. At one time *The New Yorker* offered him \$500 for first options on whatever he wrote.

Nabokov said if he had not been driven out of Russia by the October, 1917, revolution he would have never become a writer but only an expert butterfly collector.

Instead he and his extended family lived in emigre enclaves in Berlin, Paris and other cities.

In the 1920s there were 400,000 Russian emigrants in Berlin. Because Vera was part Jewish they were savvy enough to leave Berlin in 1937 before the Nazis took over.

His most famous and controversial novel *Lolita* was about a grown man have an affair with a 14-year-old girl. It was later made into a movie featuring James Mason and Sue Lyon. The book made him enough money to retire from Cornell and move to Montreux, Switzerland, where he and Vera continued to travel, write, and collect butterflies. He died there in 1977 from a severe bronchial infection. Vera died in 1991.

Charles C. Sutton is the co-publisher with Catherine O'Kane, of the *Vermont Country Sampler*, now in its 39th year. He turns 91 this coming April.

Randolph, VT

PoemTown Randolph 2022

The Ninth Annual PoemTown in Randolph, VT is open for submissions. This is a welcome celebration of poetry and community!

Selected poems will appear in the windows of stores in town and in the annual anthology. There may be outdoor readings later in the year. PoemTown organizers are now soliciting original poetry submissions from poets of all ages residing anywhere in Vermont. No more than three poems should be

submitted, each poem no longer than 24 lines. *The deadline for submission is February 15.*

Poets should send one to three original poems as MS Word or rtf attachments by email to musbird@gmail.com. No pdfs please! Each poem should be typed on a separate page. Please type the name of the poet and town of residence at the bottom of each poem.

Poets should be assured that this information will not

be shared with the judges of the poems, but will be helpful when the chosen poems are submitted to the designer who prepares the broadsides for display in town as well as the published anthology.

In the text of the email, please include the poet's contact information (name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number). Each poem should be sent as a separate attachment to the email, with the title of the poem as each attached document's name.

Poets are asked not to

submit any work that has been previously displayed in any PoemTown or PoemCity celebrations, and also to not submit poems that have previously appeared in print.

Poets agree that PoemTown may use any poem in display, in promotional materials, and in associated online, print and other media. Poets will be credited for their work.

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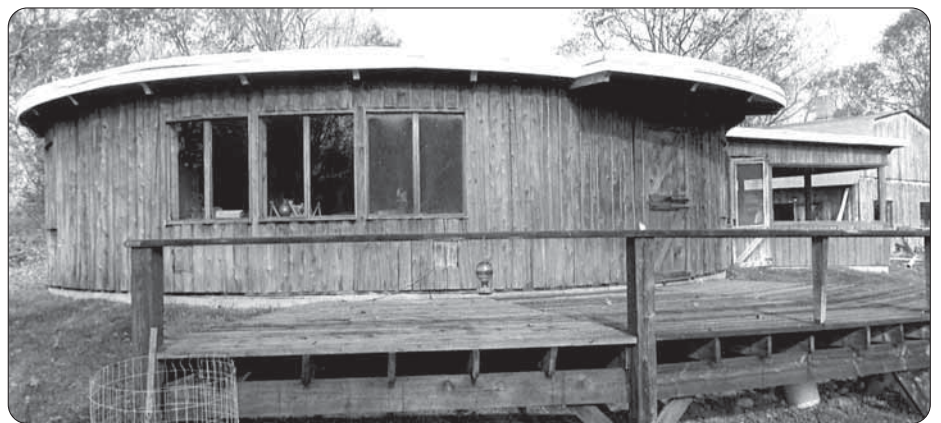
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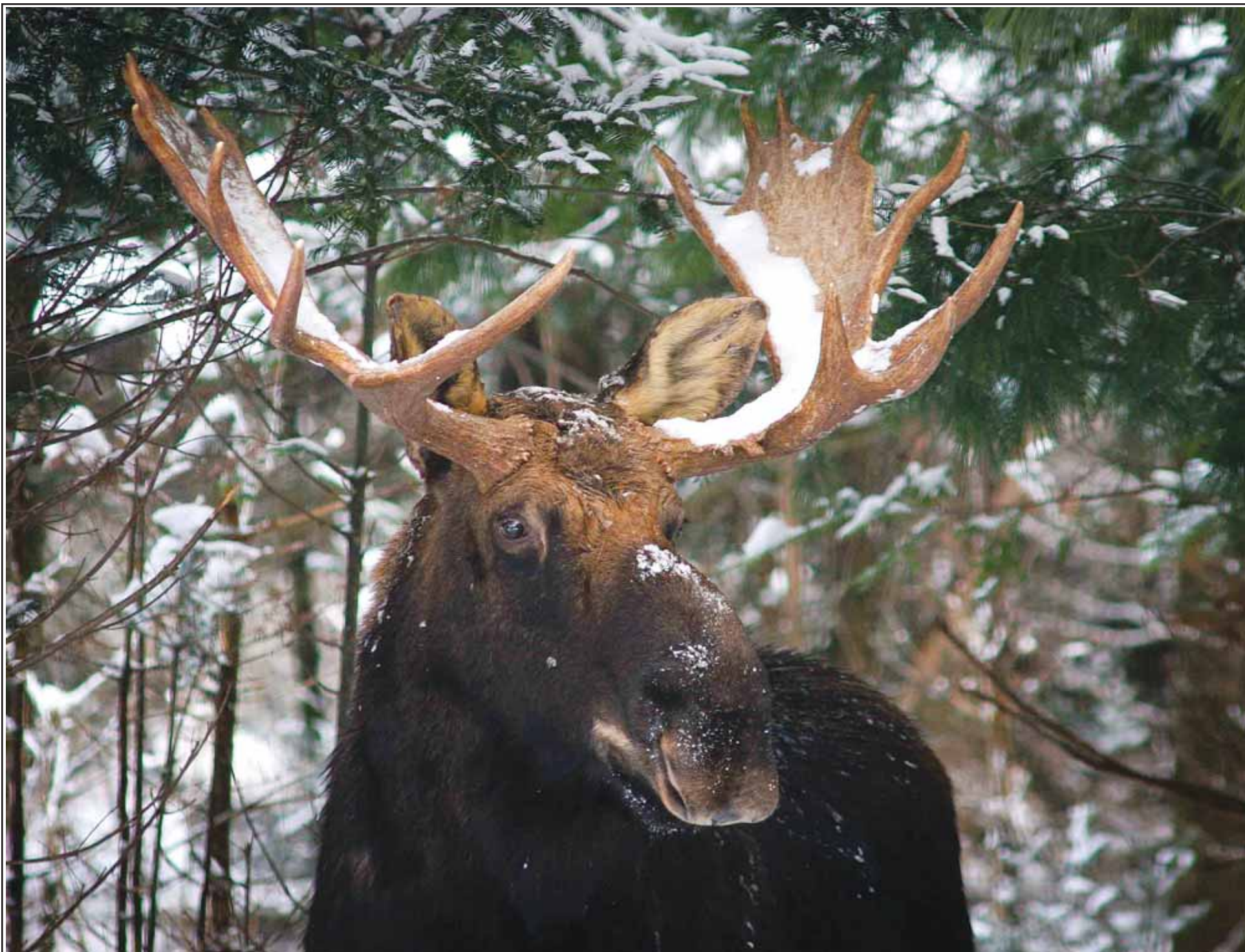
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Moose wanders the cold winter woods in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont.

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