



# Vermont Country Sampler

May 2020

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- Statewide Calendar of Events, Map
- Inns, B&B's, Dining, Real Estate
- Entertainment, Book Reviews

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May Journal

## Sparrow-in-the Bushes

by Bill Felker

I moved my desk to an east window last week. It faces a hedge that once was forsythia but now has been grown over by honeysuckle and Japanese honeysuckle vines. The shrubbery encroaches on the sidewalk, which parallels High Street, and it is dense enough to block most traffic from view.

It is also dense enough to be a haven for house sparrows, and this afternoon, the snow is covering the hedge, and I sit and watch the sparrows flit from branch to branch, sometimes following one another, sometimes pecking at branches, moving back and forth in no obvious pattern, fluffing their feathers, chirping in steady rhythm that I once tracked to be the rate of my pulse. It is sparrow mating time,

but I see nothing of that, only their communal, steady movement.

Yesterday, I went on a short retreat at the Monastery of St. Clare near Cincinnati, and I sat for a little more than an hour in the chapel and looked out the tall, wide windows at the trees lined with snow. I was sleepy, and I dozed and stared at the woods and said mantra prayers and rested in the warmth and psychic protection of the church.

Today, the prayers are replaced by the fluid, hypnotic mosaic of sparrows. Absent-mindedly, I witness their random activities, suspending all my concerns. My usual disruptive monkey mind that scatters my thoughts and feelings gives way to a sparrow-in-the-bushes mind that lulls me to peace.



photo by Nancy Cassidy

"Little Lamb, who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee?..." — William Blake

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### Vermont Country Sampler

May 2020, Vol. XXXVI

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# BILLINGS FARM AT HOME CRAFTS, VIDEOS AND ONLINE RESOURCES BILLINGSFARM.ORG





# Billings Farm & Museum Presents “Billings Farm at Home”

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Billings Farm & Museum in Woodstock, VT has launched **Billings Farm at Home**, a new online resource for young and old to explore the Billings Farm and its history. Visit [www.billingsfarm.org/billings-farm-at-home/](http://www.billingsfarm.org/billings-farm-at-home/) to come face-to-face virtually with our farm animals and learn how we care for them.

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video series! See how to milk a cow and learn about making maple syrup. Take a tour of the 1890 Farm Manager’s House. Learn to make delicious recipes such as maple popcorn with step-by-step cooking instructions.

**Billings Farm at Home** content is also available on Facebook and Instagram, and includes the Ask Billings Farm Live, a twice a month Facebook Live series on Wednesdays at 1 p.m. EST.

Chat with Billings Farm & Museum’s resident experts and learn more about our collections, our farm, and our programs.

The Billings Farm & Museum is owned and operated by The Woodstock Foundation Inc., a charitable non-profit institution. Our team is committed to providing educational opportunities and experiences at home wherever you are.

*Discover! Explore! Visit us often at [www.billingsfarm.org/billings-farm-at-home/](http://www.billingsfarm.org/billings-farm-at-home/).*

*Billings Farm & Museum, Woodstock, VT (802) 457-2355 x 310.*

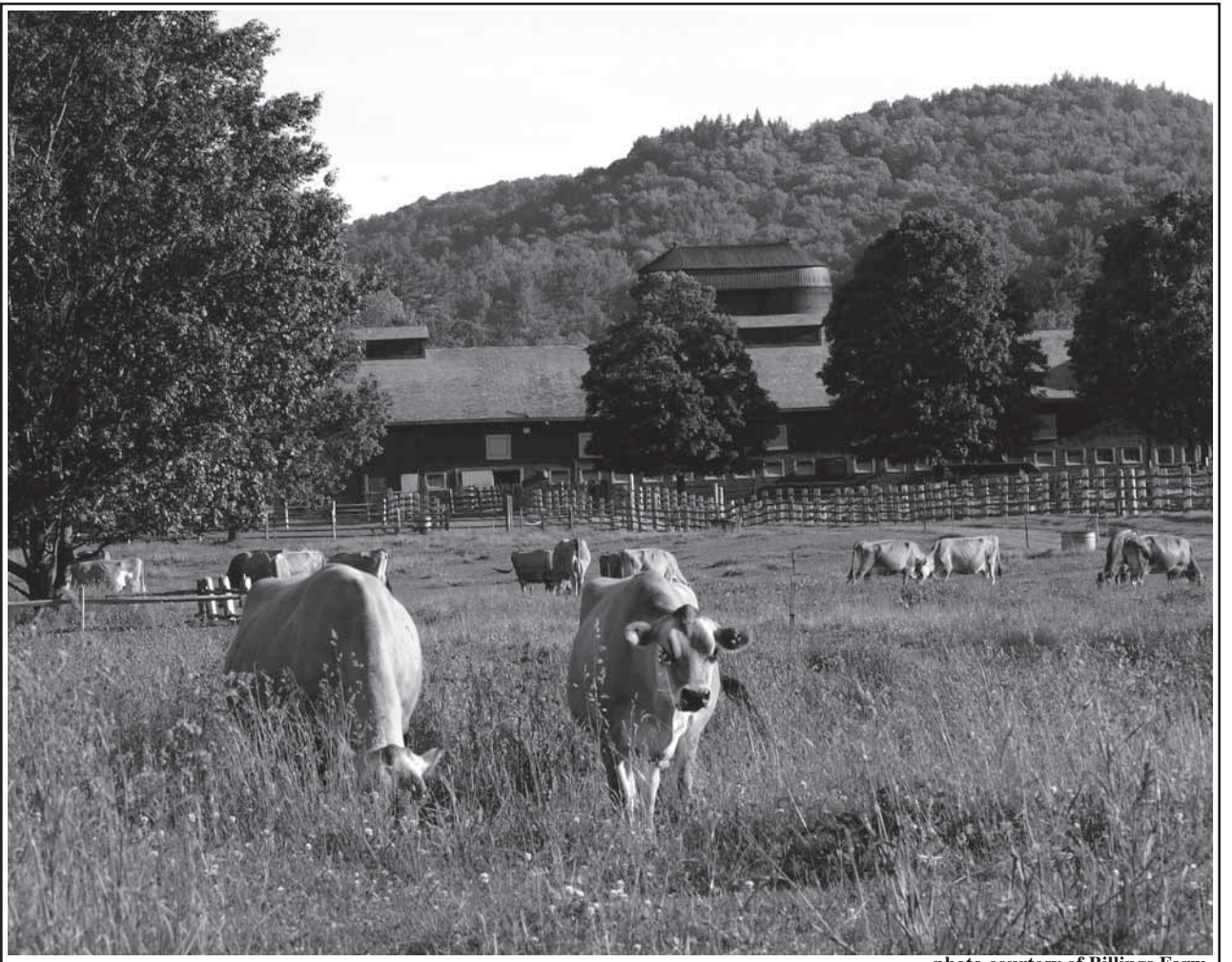


photo courtesy of Billings Farm

The Jersey herd out in the pasture at Billings Farm & Museum in Woodstock, VT

### The Way to the Arbutus

I cannot remember the names of roads and hills,  
I remember only where the wild flowers grow;  
By an old stone cellar there are daffodils  
And bluets where a pasture brook runs slow.

I cannot remember which is east or west,  
I remember only where a lady’s-slipper stood;  
And I recall arbutus, growing best  
Around a certain corner of a certain wood.

I cannot remember the path that winds along there,  
I remember only a wild rose in the lane  
Where you cross by a thicket beyond the maidenhair,  
Past the place I found a gentian in the rain.

—CATHERINE CATE COBLENTZ  
1897-1951



### Useful Vermont Websites

- Vermont Tourism Site: [vermontvacation.com](http://vermontvacation.com)
- Vermont Chamber of Commerce: [visitvt.com](http://visitvt.com)
- Vermont State Parks: [vtstateparks.com](http://vtstateparks.com)
- Green Mountain National Forest: [fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl](http://fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl)
- Vermont Outdoor Guide Association: [voga.org](http://voga.org)
- Hunting & Fishing: [vtfishandwildlife.com](http://vtfishandwildlife.com)
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- Four Wheeling: [vtvasa.org](http://vtvasa.org)
- Vermont Events: [www.findandgoseek.net](http://www.findandgoseek.net)
- Vermont Forests, Parks, Recreation: [fpr.vermont.gov](http://fpr.vermont.gov)

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# New Boarding, Grooming, Doggie Daycare

by Virginia Dean

Mary Smith (not her real name) used to drop off her golden retriever at daycare in Windsor every day before heading to work in Woodstock. A long, round-trip venture but one that Smith was willing to do in order to keep her dog happily safe and socialized.

Now, Smith's drive has been cut by about 40 miles, thanks to the opening of Kedron Valley Vet's new Boarding, Grooming and Daycare facility that is fast becoming this area's go-to place since its official opening on January 3.

Owners Dr. Blakeley Murrell-Liland and Dr. Philippa Richards of the new business and the current KVVC veterinary clinic, indicated that they have been thinking of establishing such a facility for a long time.

"We looked at various locations over the last several years but realized that this is where we should be," said Murrell-Liland of the new facility located at 560 W. Woodstock Rd.

Murrell-Liland and Richards purchased the facility at a closed price of \$345,000 with an original list price of \$425,000. The listing agency was Williamson Group Sotheby's International Realty of Woodstock.

## A building and a business resurrected

Former veterinarian Dr. Marie Casiere had abandoned the facility and business, known as Woodstock Animal Care, in the spring of 2018. The building was foreclosed by lender Live Oak Bank of Wilmington, North Carolina, known for its veterinary loans, who did not take care of it during the winter of 2018-2019, rendering the buildings and kennels into a state of disrepair. Casiere had installed radiant heat in the kennel area but, due to neglect on the part of Live Oak, all the pipes burst.

Last September, Murrell-Liland and Richards found local contractor Greg Jenne and Springfield Fence to bring the structures back up to high standards.

"All the rain, snow and ice had rotted out most of the kennel building from five feet down," Murrell-Liland said. "The building had to be jacked up from the inside because the beams had also disintegrated."

Now, the 11 kennels have new fencing inside and out along with some new concrete slabs and pressurized wood wedges for stabilization. In addition, each kennel has a new weatherproof plastic door and flap, and a wooden piece on the inside for extra security at night. There are three-foot high aluminum sheets (pieces) in between each kennel outside to allow for privacy between the runs and prevent potential altercations between dogs. New copper piping, water boiler (heater), and three heaters have been installed inside the kennel area that has also been repainted.

## Changes in and out

"We're hoping that some of the Art Department students will come over and paint some murals, too," said Murrell-Liland. Outside, there is a large play area and a smaller one to allow dogs of different temperaments and sizes to play with one another, Richards related.

The old pine tree that stood in front of the two additional outside kennels on the right side of the kennel building was cut down, Murrell-Liland related, because of the fear that its roots would continue to rot out and/or buckle the building and kennel slabs.

Inside, Murrell-Liland and Richards re-purposed the kennels with some taller than others. "These are for the jumpers," said Murrell-Liland. "We've got three tall ones for them."

Dogs are free to come and go from the inside to the outside. The plastic door is magnetized so will shut either way. The vets are still figuring out what kind of bedding will be used. "We have ordered thick rubber mats to put down in the kennels that can be sprayed down to clean," said Richards. "People are welcome to bring their own bedding if they'd like, although all pets will be closely watched to make sure



photo by Virginia Dean  
Dr. Blakeley Murrell-Liland and Dr. Philippa Richards have opened a new boarding, grooming, and doggie daycare facility down the road from the Kedron Valley Veterinary Clinic in Woodstock, VT.

none of the bedding is being chewed." Grooming at the new facility will be located in the main house where cats and birds can be boarded or dropped off for daycare. Grooming was moved from the kennel building because Murrell-Liland and Richards wanted more space in a quieter area.

A new washing tub (with a walk-up ramp) has been discussed by the vets to be put into the current x-ray room with the current equipment moved out. "We haven't moved very far with the grooming because we still have some configuring to do," said Murrell-Liland. "But we should be up and running soon."

## A staff is hired to handle the cats and dogs

The main office will remain intact, with new furniture and fresh coat of paint. Murrell-Liland and Richards have hired a General Manager who will be responsible for overseeing a staff of four, including someone who has ample experience in dog behavior who will oversee the staff members interacting with the boarding and daycare animals.

Upstairs, in the former surgery room, there will be room for cat boarding. "We are currently set up to board cats, but we're looking to get cat condos in a separate quiet area upstairs where there is lots of natural light from the skylights", said

Richards. Also upstairs is a large newly painted apartment (walls and floor) that is offered for rent. There is a kitchen, bathroom and two bedrooms, with front stairs leading down to a common room and the main office. A new fire system has now been installed, and parts of the roof have been replaced.

Adjacent to the main office is a room that Murrell-Liland said could potentially be for puppy socialization between the ages of 8 and 16 weeks. "This is a critical part of canine development particularly in the way they see the world," said Murrell-Liland. "More animals are euthanized with behavior issues than infectious diseases."

Hours of the new facility are Monday-Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday by appointment. Prices range from \$27 a day for dog daycare (\$18 for cats) and \$35 per night boarding for dogs and \$25 per night for cats.

"We are not allowing clients to pick up their dogs at will," said Murrell-Liland. "We will always have an employee available to discharge the animals."

Murrell-Liland and Richards will be overseeing the facility but will remain actively involved in their veterinary practice down the road.

"As such," said Richards, "we can stand behind and make recommendations. We will know how it's run and that the animals are being well taken care of. We want to have a hand in it and know what's going on. It's nice that we can just go over and tend to the animals if we are needed."

Richards related that she and Murrell-Liland are happy to provide a need in the community, and Murrell-Liland indicated that finally there is a place where people's dogs can have fun and be well taken care of.

The Kedron Valley Veterinary boarding, grooming and daycare is located at 560 W. Woodstock Road in Woodstock, VT. call (802) 457-7498 for boarding/daycare fees.

## A Familiar Spirit

There is a ghost of a dog that comes  
As soon as I touch the knob of the door.  
I can hear his quick nails scratch on the floor,  
And suddenly all my fingers are thumbs—

I scarcely can get the key in the lock,  
But I do, and I feel his paws on my knee;  
Then off he goes in an ecstasy,  
Barking like mad. I stand like a stock.

I can hear his last-year's collar-tag clink  
On the edge of the bowl—he has gone to drink.  
But he seems to get lost somehow in the bowl,  
For he doesn't come back, and I think and think:  
Who says a little dog hasn't a soul?

—WENDELL PHILLIPS STAFFORD  
St., Johnsbury, VT, 1851-1953

Grandma Miller's

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**Chester, VT**

**Annual Plant Sale  
St. Luke's Church May 29-31**

The Annual Chester Plant Sale at St. Luke's Church, the gray church at 313 Main Street near the Village Green in Chester, VT, has become a marvelous opportunity for the public to purchase a wide selection of proven, large, healthy, hardy plants at bargain prices. Well-groomed plants with helpful labels will make garden additions easy, and experienced gardeners will be on hand to give advice about planting and garden design.

The sale is optimistically scheduled to run on Friday

May 29 and Saturday May 30, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. both days, and on Sunday May 31, 1-3. The later timing of the annual event allows for larger and more attractive plants—all organized by kind and growing needs on the side lawn of the church.

*If you have perennials on your property that you would like to contribute or if you have plants to suggest or need more information, please contact Lillian Willis at (802) 875-1340 or lbwillisct@comcast.net.*



photo by Lillian Willis

Peruse the many beautiful annuals and hardy perennials at the Annual Plant Sale in progress at St. Luke's Church.

**Joe-Pyeweed**

And the name brings back those kindly hills  
And the drowsing life so new to me;  
And the welcome that those purple blossoms  
With their tiny trumpets blew to me.

Stout and tall, they raised their clustered heads,  
Leaping, as a lusty fellow would,  
Through the lowlands, down the twisting cow-paths;  
Running past the green and yellow wood.

How they come again—those rambling roads;  
And the weeds' wild jewels glowing there.  
Richer than a Paradise of flowers  
Was that bit of pasture growing there.



Weeds—the very names call up those faint  
Half-forgotten smells and cries again...  
Weeds—like some old charm, I say them over,  
And the rolling Berkshires rise again:

Basil, Boneset, Toadflax, Tansy,  
Weeds of every form and fancy;  
Milk-weed, Mullein, Loose-strife, Jewel-weed,  
Mustard, Thimble-weed, Tear-thumb (a cruel weed).

Clovers in all sorts—Nonesuch, Melilot;  
Staring Buttercups, a bold and yellow lot.  
Daisies rioting about the place  
With Black-eyed Susan and Queen Anne's Lace...

Names—they blossom into colored hills;  
Hills whose rousing beauty flows to me...  
And with all its soundless, purple trumpets,  
Lo, the Joe-Pyeweed still blows to me!

—LOUIS UNTERMEYER  
1885-1997, Newtown, CT

**Chester, VT**

**Can You Give Some Watering Help?**

In just a few weeks Chester Townscape volunteers will start planting annuals in numerous large pots and bridge boxes, as well as the landscaped areas at the Brookside Cemetery, Information Booth on Main Street, and Gazebo at the Village Green in the Town of Chester.

The flowers that will bloom from spring into fall show community pride and neighborhood support all of which will have extra significance after the coronavirus lockdown.

In this town-wide endeavor, the volunteers of Chester Townscape who create the

plantings and water the flowers all summer long would welcome extra help with the watering and weeding.

The locations of the public pots and bridge boxes are familiar: Whiting Library, Train Station, Village Green, Hearse House, Pinnacle Recreation Area, various bridges, and more. They are places Chester residents usually visit; and experienced Chester Townscape waterers can help identify water sources and the easiest techniques to keep the pots and boxes properly moist for the season. Whether it's for one day a week, one week a month, or

relief at someone's vacation time, every bit of help would be appreciated. Volunteers can sign up for any amount of time that fits their schedules and locations that mesh with their travel routes.

We invite you to help welcome spring and make Ches-

ter the most welcoming town in Vermont.

*Anyone who is interested in being part of this community improvement effort is encouraged to contact [chestertownscape@gmail.com](mailto:chestertownscape@gmail.com) for more information.*

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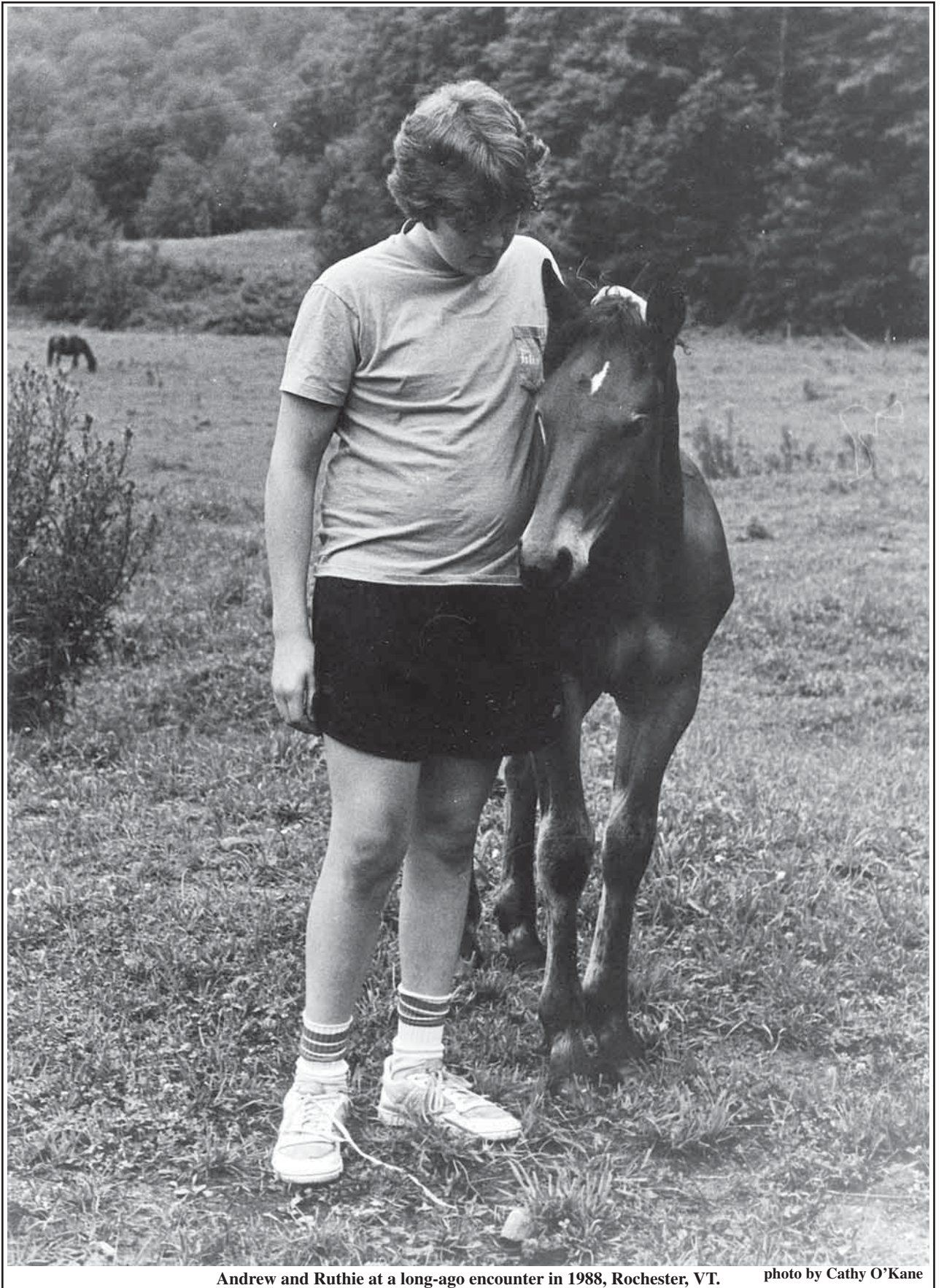




## Poor Will's Guide for the Farm & Garden

by Bill Felker

- May 1:** When May apples have fruit the size of a cherry and honeysuckle flowers have all come down, then cucumber beetles reach the economic threshold on the farm.
- May 2:** Watch for bees to swarm after the major dandelion bloom is over.
- May 3:** As conditions permit, sow seeds for forages that will provide as close to year-round grazing as possible.
- May 4:** As conditions permit, sow seeds for forages that will provide as close to year-round grazing as possible. If you garden with little space, try plant "stacking," growing vertically instead of horizontally.
- May 5:** After the first monarch butterfly arrives, be alert for young coyotes coming for your chickens and new kids and lambs.
- May 6:** Japanese beetles start to attack when yucca plants send up their stalks.
- May 7:** Animals given dry hay before being let out to new pastures tend to gorge themselves less and develop bloat far less frequently.
- May 8:** Black tadpoles swim in the backwaters. Bass move to the shallows.
- May 9:** When blackberries set fruit, then the earliest field corn starts to tassel.
- May 10:** If you hear spring crickets sing, go find leafhoppers in the garden.
- May 11:** Sow seeds for forages that will provide as close to year-round grazing as possible.
- May 12:** Think about selective breeding for the production of sheep and goat milk and cheese. Premium milk can sell for considerably more than cow's milk.
- May 13:** Termites swarm. Cabbage butterflies visit the developing cabbage sets.
- May 14:** When the first elderberries bloom, bean leaf beetles and alfalfa weevils assault the field and garden.
- May 15:** Spring rains and humidity can increase the risk of internal parasites in livestock. Consider using stool sample analysis to ensure that drenching has been effective.
- May 16:** Have you made a timetable for getting your prize animals into peak condition for the fair?
- May 17:** Finalize all spring culling. Make tentative notes about which animal to breed to which, why and when.
- May 18:** Today's Full Moon presents a major chance of frost in northern states.
- May 19:** Increase the water supply to your livestock as pastures dry out and feed contains less liquid.
- May 20:** Use the time of the waning Moon for hunting potato leafhoppers, cucumber beetles, corn borers, mites, bean-leaf beetles, fleas, lice, ticks, screwworms and fly maggots.
- May 21:** Plan ahead to supplement late fall grazing when quality of forage declines.
- May 22:** Around the time that locust flowers fall, look for powdery mildew in the wheat.
- May 23:** Check the straw bedding of your pigs. Keep it clean and dry.
- May 24:** Watch out for the first chiggers to bite in the woods and garden.
- May 25:** Check the nutrient content of your livestock's forage.
- May 26:** Finish clipping your goats' hair and feet for summer before June's first heat wave.
- May 27:** The darkening Moon is right for all kinds of animal care, for planting root crops, shrubs and trees, and for weeding and mulching, as well as insect and parasite hunting.
- May 28:** Gather pie cherries, mulberries and black raspberries all along the 40th Parallel.
- May 29:** As the weather heats up, don't forget to refrigerate your chickens' eggs.
- May 30:** Fertilize asparagus and rhubarb as their seasons end. Side dress the corn.
- May 31:** If you are getting a pig, consider digging a small pond for him or her to cool off in.



Andrew and Ruthie at a long-ago encounter in 1988, Rochester, VT. photo by Cathy O'Kane

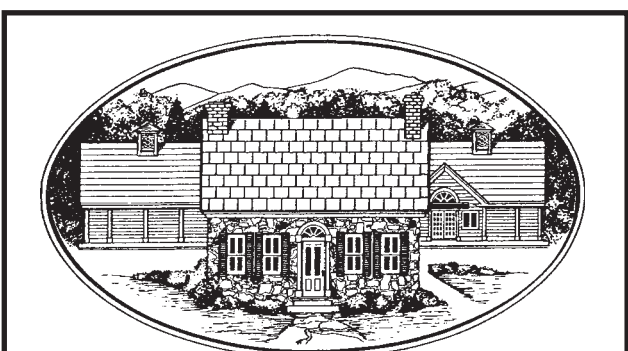
## The Horses

Barely a twelvemonth after  
The seven days war that put the world to sleep,  
Late in the evening the strange horses came.  
By then we had made our covenant with silence,  
But in the first few days it was so still  
We listened to our breathing and were afraid.  
On the second day  
The radios failed; we turned the knobs, no answer.  
On the third day a warship passed us, headed north,  
Dead bodies piled on the deck. On the sixth day  
A plane plunged over us into the sea. Thereafter  
Nothing. The radios dumb;  
And still they stand in corners of our kitchens,  
And stand, perhaps, turned on, in a million rooms  
All over the world. But now if they should speak,  
If on a sudden they should speak again,  
If on the stroke of noon a voice should speak,  
We would not listen, we would not let it bring  
That old bad world that swallowed its children quick  
At one great gulp. We would not have it again.  
Sometimes we think of the nations lying asleep,  
Curled blindly in impenetrable sorrow,  
And then the thought confounds us with its strangeness.  
The tractors lie about our fields; at evening

They look like dank sea-monsters crouched and waiting.  
We leave them where they are and let them rust:  
"They'll molder away and be like other loam."  
We make our oxen drag our rusty plows,  
Long laid aside. We have gone back  
Far past our fathers' land.  
And then, that evening  
Late in the summer the strange horses came.  
We heard a distant tapping on the road,  
A deepening drumming; it stopped, went on again  
And at the corner changed to hollow thunder.  
We saw the heads  
Like a wild wave charging and were afraid.  
We had sold our horses in our fathers' time  
To buy new tractors. Now they were strange to us  
As fabulous steeds set on an ancient shield  
Or illustrations in a book of knights.  
We did not dare go near them. Yet they waited,  
Stubborn and shy, as if they had been sent  
By an old command to find our whereabouts  
And that long-lost archaic companionship.  
In the first moment we had never a thought  
That they were creatures to be owned and used.  
Among them were some half a dozen colts  
Dropped in some wilderness of the broken world,  
Yet new as if they had come from their own Eden.  
Since then they have pulled our plows and borne our loads,  
But that free servitude still can pierce our hearts.  
Our life is changed; their coming our beginning.

—EDWIN MUIR

1887-1959, Swaffham Prior, Scotland



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Find out how you can help this effort at [www.caspvt.org](http://www.caspvt.org)



# A Vermont Almanack for Late Spring

by Bill Felker

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,  
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;  
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast  
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.  
The snowdrop and then the violet,  
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet;

— Percy Bysshe Shelly

## The Phases of the Moon

The moons of this period include the Cows Switching their Tails Moon (thanks to flies in the barn and pasture), the Corn and Soybean Planting Moon (which oversees the major seeding time in much of the nation) and the Wheat and Alfalfa Cutting Moon (which shines on early harvest time).  
**May 5:** The Cows Switching Their Tails Moon reaches perigee (its position closest to Earth) at 10:05 p.m.  
**May 7:** The moon is full at 5:46 a.m.  
**May 14:** The moon enters its fourth quarter at 9:03 a.m.  
**May 18:** The moon is at apogee (its position farthest from Earth) at 2:46 a.m.  
**May 22:** The Corn and Soybean Planting Moon is new at 12:39 p.m.  
**May 29:** The moon enters its second quarter at 10:30 p.m.

## The Sun's Progress

The Sun enters Taurus on May 21. Solstice occurs on June 22 at 4:44 p.m. The Sun enters Cancer at the same time.

## The Planets

Venus becomes the morning star in the east in Taurus during May. Jupiter is the earliest and largest of the morning stars, rising a few hours past midnight in Sagittarius. Find it low in the southern sky. Saturn follows in Capricorn, also close to the horizon. At first light, find Mars following Saturn in Aquarius.

## The Stars

Late in the evening, Arcturus is the brightest star overhead. A little below it, Jupiter consorts with Spica in Virgo. Libra moves into the far west, Regulus, the star of early spring daffodils, leading the way. In the northern sky, the Big Dipper lies almost directly above the northern hemisphere, while in the east, Hercules chases the Corona Borealis, and the constellations of the Summer Triangle are rising.

By chore time in the early morning, the sky has moved to the way it will appear on an October evening: Hercules is setting, the Summer Triangle shifting into the far west, Pegasus almost overhead, and the harbingers of winter, the Pleiades, appearing on the horizon.

## The Shooting Stars

The Eta Aquarids are active from April 19 through May 28, with the most meteors expected on May 5 and 6.

## Meteorology

The cold fronts of Late Spring usually cross the Mississippi on or about May 2, 7, 12, 15, 21, 24 and 29.

Tornadoes, floods and prolonged periods of soggy pasture are most likely to occur within the following windows: May 3-12 and May 17-24. The last days of May and the first week of June are often soaked by the Strawberry Rains.

New moon on May 22, lunar perigee on May 5 and full moon on May 7 could contribute to unseasonably cold and unstable weather.

The cool fronts associated with Early Summer typically cross the Mississippi on or about June 2, 6, 10, 15, 23 and 29.

## A Calendar of Holidays

**May 5:** Cinco de Mayo

**May 10:** Mother's Day

**May 23:** Id al Fitr: Islamic Festival of the breaking of the Ramadan Fast

**May 25:** Memorial Day

**June 21:** Father's Day



Beavers actively building in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.

photo by Jeff Gold

## A Late Spring Natural Calendar

by Bill Felker

You watch the afternoons of spring across the river,  
and you know that nothing only is or happens once,  
and that our hearts spin like the earth around the sun.

— bf

Deep into Late Spring, fledgling grackles, sparrows and cardinals are leaving their nests and are begging for food in the honeysuckles. Goslings and ducklings swim the rivers. Carp and pond koi are mating. Insects increase in number. The high canopy fills in quickly. Flowering locust trees join mock orange, honeysuckle and late lilacs to create the most fragrant time of the year. Almost everything that has happened before will happen again: Apple blossoms fall, and then the first sweet rocket, fleabane, sweet Cicely, daisy, fire pink, common plantain, white clover, chamomile, black medic, star of Bethlehem, lily-of-the-valley, sweet William, meadow goat's beard, May apple, and wood sorrel almost always open.

The woods are filled with garlic mustard, green and white among the still bare trees. It's the best time of all for blue forget-me-not, golden ragwort, water cress, wild geranium, miterwort, swamp buttercup, late toad trillium, late trillium grandiflorum, late winter cress, white spring cress and the wild purple phlox.

Strawberries come into full bloom when the last crabapple petals are gone. A few early poppies and peonies unravel then. Early iris and lupines are budding. Astilbe and clematis have formed flower heads. Summer hostas are eight to ten inches tall. Ferns, day lilies, comfrey, summer phlox have reached almost two feet. In the parks, the paths are thick with violets.

In the valleys, the woods are flushed, pale but luminescent. Mountain maples, lilacs and wild cherries flower. Poison ivy develops to a third of its June size—pacing the Virginia creeper and wild grapes.

Mayflies are out along the water. Bullfrogs call. Minnows and chubs are flushed red for their mating season. Flea time

begins for pets, a sign that insect activity is nearing the economic threshold on the farm. Spitbugs grow in the shelter of swamp parsnips, announcing that the first cut of hay will soon be underway. Flies become pesky in the mild afternoons.

It's the best time of all for blue forget-me-not, golden ragwort, water cress, wild geranium, swamp buttercup, late winter cress, white spring cress and the wild purple phlox. Sweet rocket, fleabane, golden seal, Solomon's seal, columbine, golden Alexander, sweet Cicely, daisy, fire pink, common plantain, horseradish, chamomile, black medic, star of Bethlehem, lupines, lily-of-the-valley, sweet William, meadow goat's beard, May apple, wood hyacinth, sedum, and wood sorrel are almost always open.

Ferns, nettles, day lilies, comfrey, and summer phlox have reached almost two feet. In the parks, the paths are still thick with violets. The thrush, catbird, and scarlet tanager arrive in dense thickets, just as wild cucumber sprouts along the rivers.

## Again

One day, not here, you will find a hand  
Stretched out to you as you walk down some heavenly  
street;

You will see a stranger scarred from head to feet;  
But when he speaks to you you will not understand,  
Nor yet who wounded him nor why his wounds are sweet.  
And saying nothing, letting go his hand,  
You will leave him in the heavenly street—  
So we shall meet!

—CHARLOTTE MEW  
1869-1928, London, England

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— Bob Bushee, Owner —

Those who  
contemplate  
the beauty of the  
earth  
find reserves of  
strength  
that will endure as  
long as life lasts.

—Rachel Carson

Merck Forest & Farmland Center  
www.merckforest.org

- Our hiking roads remain open to the public and admission is free.
- The Visitor Center & all buildings are closed and unstaffed until further notice.





A zig-zag split rail fence, apple orchard, and farm road, in Vermont's Lake Champlain Islands.

*From The Vermonter*

## A Spring Day in a Vermont Orchard, circa 1917

by Norman C. Tice

The May-days had sped along with their busy transformations and the month was nearly gone. I walked through the apple orchard at the rear of the house and observed that the trees were in full bud. Delicate pink petals set in pale green clustered on every branch, soon to become a pink mass of bloom. The plum trees on the outer verge of the orchard showered down upon the returning grasses a storm of white petals. Not a stray leaf could be seen and even the brown limbs were completely hidden. Myriads of bees and other insects, were hovering about and a drowsy humming pervaded that part of the orchard.

A ruby-throated humming bird darted near and flitted among the sweet blossoms. Surfeited with sweetness it alighted on a raspberry stem and from my hidden retreat I saw the sparkling ruby clasped about its throat.

Opposite the orchard wall was the lane that led down to the meadow. The fence on either side was composed of

native boulders. A large elm tree grew beside the path and its arching branches shaded the field beside the wall. On one of the pendulous branches an oriole was making a nest. The bird darted about like a golden flash of sunshine as it skilfully wove grayish threads and bound them to the bough. Having completed its morning's work, the oriole sat upon the topmost spray of the elm and sang its almost petulant song.

*"The perfume of the apple blossoms floated heavily upon the evening air. I strolled up the orchard path..."*

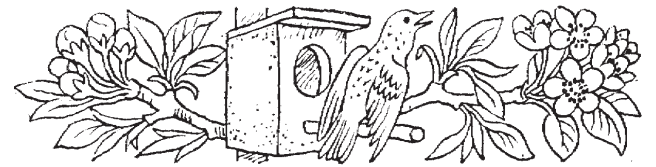
Great clumps of sweet elder in full bloom nestled beside the orchard fence. Cherry and plum trees in fluffy masses of white grew at intervals and native apple trees leaned over the piles of gray rocks. These trees were just showing buds which covered every scraggy limb. On one branch a large cluster had burst open and the tinted blossoms perfumed the air.

On the lower side of the orchard was the meadow. Here the dandelions dotted the landscape, and later would be supplanted by the gold of the buttercups. Harebells and iris were beginning to show above the short grasses. By the middle of

June their blossoms would paint the meadow and add to the summer's palette of color. In the marshy hollows, masses of cowslips filled each bend and nook. Gold, yellower than the vain quest of early explorers was spread about for the seekers of Nature's wealth.

The air of the meadow was vibrant with the music of the birds. Bobolinks sang with outbursts of the wildest passion, then sank into the swaying grasses in tremulous ecstasy. A catbird called from the willow thicket beside the brook, while song sparrows and summer yellow birds warbled in every covert.

The day rapidly passed away. The birds had been busy all through the bright hours. The perfume of the apple blossoms floated heavily upon the evening air. I strolled up the orchard path as the last faint glow of the setting sun tinted the masses of pearly bloom upon the apple trees. A subtle, ethereal mist pervaded the darkening gloom beneath the trees, lending an additional mystery to the beauty of the apple orchard.



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## Rupert, VT

# Spring at Merck Forest & Farmland Center

It's a great time of year at Merck Forest & Farmland Center, with gorgeous clear days and starlit nights.

*Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature—the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.*

—Rachel Carson  
*Silent Spring*

### We Are Still Here

In these unsettled times, the benefits of immersion in the natural world remain immeasurable. Understanding that, Merck Forest & Farmland Center will continue to allow access to our open spaces and forest road network. As the situation evolves, we will update this page with any new developments regarding access and programming.

### Visiting MFFC:

While the fields and forest roads remain open to the public from dawn until dusk, all buildings at MFFC—including the Visitor Center, sap house, barns, cabins and outhouses—will be closed until further notice.

There is an emergency phone on the back porch of the Visitor Center, but visitors should not count on the availability of MFFC staff during this time.

Standard mud season trail closures are in effect—all “roads” remain open for hiking while all “trails” are closed for drying until Memorial Day. Please take a look at the Trail Map to plan your route accordingly.

### Visitor Guidelines

Merck Forest and Farmland Center asks that visitors to the property adhere to the following guidelines:

- Practice distancing in fields, on forest roads, and in the parking lot
- Keep it local by following Vermont's recommended travel restrictions (visitors should not be traveling from more than 10 miles away)
- Stay in open areas and on the forest road network
- Pack it in, pack it out
- Keep it mellow and explore with caution — no staff will be on site to assist
- Keep dogs on leashes at all times
- Avoid touching surfaces such as fences, signs, etc.

### Staying in Touch

During this period, MFFC staff will be on property for essential functions only, but all phone and web systems remain open and are checked regularly. Online booking and registrations are available, and online syrup orders will be processed on a weekly basis.

### Visit Online

Knowing that many families now find themselves at home together for an extended period, MFFC is increasing our digital outreach to share ideas and resources related to outdoor play and learning. Stay in touch at: Facebook.com/merckforest and Instagram.com/merckforest.

### Spring Programs

**Meet the Lambs, May 16 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** Have your little lambs meet our little lambs: this is a popular event with the wee folk who are just learning about farm animals and prefer them pint-sized. This family-friendly event features our new lambs, but there will be plenty of other activities for children, including pond explorations and horse-drawn wagon rides. *Suggested donation: \$3 per person.*

**Bird Walk, May 23 from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m.** Welcome back the incoming migrating birds moving through the area with conservation manager Tim Duclos, on this early morning walk. Open to all. Call or visit our website to sign up. *Fee: \$5.*

**Meet and Feed, Sunday afternoons, May 24 at 3 p.m. through October 11 at 4 p.m.** Join Merck staff on Sunday afternoons as they go about afternoon chores feeding our animals. Get to know our sheep, horses, chickens, and pigs during our daily routine. *Fee: \$5 per person.*

**Volunteer Workparty, Saturday, May 30 at 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.** Free, all welcome.

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

*Merck Forest and Farmland Center is located between Rupert and Dorset, at 3270 Rt. 315 (Rupert Mountain Rd.) in Rupert, VT. Once you reach the top of the very big hill turn into Merck Forest's driveway. If you start going back down the hill, you've gone too far. (802) 394-7836. merckforest.org.*

### Pied Beauty

Glory be to God for dappled things —  
For skies of couple-color as a brindled cow;  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;  
Landscapes plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plow;  
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.  
All things counter, original, spare, strange;  
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;  
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change;  
Praise Him.

—GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS  
1844-1899, Dublin, Ireland



Draft horse and goat share the grass at Merck Forest and Farmland Center in Rupert, VT.

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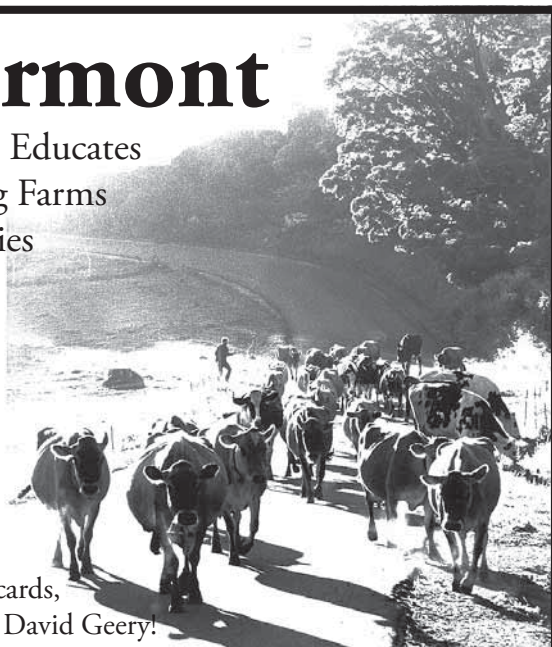
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# Fishing is the Ultimate Social Distancing Activity

The rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus has temporarily changed our lives in many unexpected ways. Schools have closed, kids are doing distance-learning, school sports and other activities have been canceled, and many parents are now working from home or are off work completely. As a result, many Vermonters have found themselves with time on their hands and a case of cabin fever.

It's extremely important to follow the Vermont Department of Health's guidelines on social distancing to slow the spread of this virus. It is also important for our physical and mental well-being to take some time to get outdoors and appreciate the natural resources we have in Vermont. As more parts of Vermont see closures and recommendations for social distancing, time safely spent outdoors can help us find ways to manage the stress and uncertainty.

According to Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department fisheries biologist Shawn Good, there's no better remedy than fishing. Good says fishing is the original social distancing tool, because it is often a solitary activity or something you do with just a few people—often your own immediate family members.

"The times we're facing right now have had a deep impact on our work, school and social lives," said Good. "But fishing has long been viewed as an effective stress-reliever. Any time spent outside reconnecting with nature has been proven to benefit our health in many ways."

Good says that as spring weather arrives, melting ice and warming waters around the state, fishing is a great way to get outside with your immediate family, provided everyone is feeling well and not exhibiting any symptoms of being sick.

"Social distancing doesn't mean you need to completely shut yourself in the house. With some simple precautions, you can take advantage of many fishing opportunities we have right now across the state."

## Vermont fishing opportunities

Good's list of recommended fishing opportunities people can enjoy right now include:

**Trout:** there are 17 different rivers in the state that allow catch-and-release trout fishing all winter long—until regular trout season opens on April 11.

**Bass:** bass can be targeted on most water throughout Vermont right now on a catch-and-release basis. Artificial lures are required, and you can't harvest them until mid-June, but after a long winter, hungry bass bite eagerly and fight hard. It's a ton of fun!

**Other fish species** that are open to year-round angling included pike, pickerel, bullhead, catfish, and panfish species like perch, bluegill, pumpkinseed, and crappie.



VTF&W photo by Shawn Good  
Vermont Fish and Wildlife's Shawn Good says fishing is the original social distancing tool, because it is often a solitary activity or something you do with just a few people—often your own immediate family members.

"Now that spring is here, the opportunities are abundant and varied, and conditions will only improve in the coming weeks," said Good.

"It's really my favorite time of year to fish, and the main problem is just deciding what to go after. There are plenty of places you can cast a line from shore. Bullhead is a favorite springtime species, and can be readily caught with a simple hook, worm and bobber around culverts and the mouths of streams where they flow into lakes. With the same setup, catch catfish, perch, crappie and sunfish while casting from the bank to areas near vegetation like bulrushes and cattails."

While the harvest of trout and bass is prohibited until their respective regular seasons begin, Good says that the other species he mentioned can be harvested right now.

"There's nothing better than a fresh meal of perch, crappie, bullhead or catfish caught in our local waters. They make for an excellent, healthy, locally-sourced meal for your family! You can even make a biology home-school lesson out of your adventure."

## Stay healthy with basic precautions

Although spending time outdoors fishing is a healthful activity, Good says a few basic precautions will help keep everyone healthy right now:

- Refrain from carpooling. Drive to your fishing spots only with your immediate family members and only if everyone is feeling well.
- When fishing from shore, keep a distance of at least six feet between you and your companions. A good way to measure this is with your fishing pole! Hold the pole straight out in front you. If you can turn in a circle without hitting anyone, that is a safe distance.
- Don't share fishing gear with others. Each angler should have their own fishing gear (rod and reels, bait, lures, towels, pliers, and other personal items).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean your gear well after using it.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water after fishing.

For more information on current fishing opportunities and ideas on where to fish around Vermont, visit the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's "Reconnecting With Nature" page at <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/learn-more/reconnect-with-nature>.

For more information on Covid-19 and health guidelines, visit: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/infectious-disease/2019-novel-coronavirus>.

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## Vermont Walleye Fishing Season Opens May 2

The Vermont walleye fishing season will open on Saturday, May 2, marking the return of some of the best walleye fishing in New England.

Revered by many as one of the best tasting fish in freshwater, the walleye is Vermont's official warm-water fish. The state offers excellent spring walleye fishing opportunities in several lakes and rivers across the state. Opportunities include Lake Champlain and its tributaries—the Missisquoi, Lamoille and Winooski rivers and Otter Creek. In the Northeast Kingdom, Sa-

lem Lake and Island Pond also have walleye populations that are on the rebound thanks to stocking by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

A trio of additional waters—Lake Carmi, Chittenden Reservoir and the Connecticut River, also offer quality walleye fishing.

Veteran walleye anglers employ a variety of techniques, but one of the simplest and most effective methods is to slowly troll a nightcrawler harness near the bottom. Most nightcrawler harnesses include a rotating blade ahead of two hooks,

where the worm is secured. The blade produces a fish-attracting flash and vibration. Shore-based anglers can catch walleyes on night-crawlers or live minnows or by casting crankbaits or hard jerk baits. Walleyes are generally more active at night, so fishing in the dark is often more effective.

As a reminder to anglers, there is no open season on sauger, a close cousin to the walleye. Once abundant in southern Lake Champlain, sauger still appear there rarely. If caught while fishing for other fish, sauger must be immediately released.

Anglers can read about current fishing regulations in the 2020 Vermont Fishing Guide & Regulations, available free from Vermont license agents. To purchase a fishing license or learn more about fishing in Vermont, visit [vtfishandwildlife.com](http://vtfishandwildlife.com).

Vermonters are encouraged to get outside to enjoy fishing provided they can do so while meeting social distancing and other guidelines. In addition, to the greatest extent possible, outdoor activities should take place as close to home as possible to minimize travel and potential risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Please use good judgement to keep yourself and others safe and reduce the spread of the coronavirus:

For information about staying safe while enjoying outdoor activities, check here: <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/outdoor-recreation-and-covid-19>.

For more info on COVID-19 and health guidelines, visit: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/infectious-disease/2019-novel-coronavirus>.

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The Manse in Castleton, VT.

photo by Andrew Donovan

## The Fates of Grand Old Houses

by Pamela Hayes Rehlen

How, I sometimes wonder, can the fortunes of really old Castleton houses—all of them architecturally meritorious—differ so dramatically? It strikes me as inexplicable, for example, that the famous local house-joiner, Thomas Dake's, South Street home, a wedding gift to his bride Sally Deming, has taken such a beating over the years.

Located out at the edge of the village, now standing too close to the road, hemmed in by little mid 20th century buildings and a jumble of student automobiles, it sits on a minute .19 acres—all that's left of a one-time hundred acre wetland farm. It's close in front of a former auto parts shop and garage. For hard-scrabble years, it was put to use as a rooming house.

Thomas Dake built this wedding-gift residence in 1809 and promised his bride-to-be that he would include a beautiful staircase. This staircase is a doll-house-sized masterpiece, and his bride came down it on the day of their wedding, but not long afterward she died in childbirth in a second-floor bedroom, so her coffin also came down these exquisite spiral steps.

In 2005, when they left Randolph for Castleton, Robert and Carol Cook bought the Dake house from Bob Rummel, a part-time contractor, a Dean at Castleton University, and his wife Marion.

The Rummels had cleared out renters, done a lot of restorative work, and turned the building back into a home. But they didn't stay in the house for long, and neither did the Cooks. The place has so little land; it sits so inescapably close to the road. South Street at one time ran right up to its front step. Presently, the parents of Castleton University students own Dake's masterpiece, and they bought it in order to provide housing for their children.



Across town, the grand Gone with the Wind-style Manse was built forty years later than Thomas Dake's house gift

to Sally Deming. Commissioned by the wealthy sheep-raiser, wool-producer, Justin Ransom and designed to be intimidating-grand, the Manse fared well for a long time. People admired its Main Street flash, its swagger, and the forward thrust of its monumental portico and seventeen Ionic columns.

But for any nearly-two-hundred-year-old house, circumstances change, and when Justin Ransom died the Manse passed to an unmarried niece who willed it to the Federated Church across the street to be used as a parsonage.

This was inappropriate-utilitarianism. The grand show-offy building did not make a good minister's house to be maintained by a poorish church. The Manse became shabby, a big, drafty, hot-air-heated, no-storm-windows, place of deferred maintenance, and by the early 1970s, ministers didn't want to live there.

One era's showplace had become another's white elephant. In an attempt to get it off their hands, the church came up with three possible scenarios.

The building could be turned into a restaurant. I imagine they were thinking of adventure-dining in the style of gothic Skene Manor situated across the state line in Whitehall, New York.

Or it might be moved to join a collection of restored historic buildings in Quechee, Vermont. Finally, they proposed the Manse be leveled, and the land turned into across-the-street parking. However, by that time the Federated Church didn't require much parking.

But just then my husband and I came along. All my life I'd responded to the Manse's romantic grandeur. We were recently out of school, just starting our lives. The church committee seemed astonished that we were willing to buy

this white elephant, and I was astonished that they were willing to sell it to us.

The Manse had found its saviors. There was no difficulty my husband didn't leap to confront. He rented equipment and sanded down all the pine floors. He papered the front room, and one night sledge-hammered open and reclaimed a long-boarded-up kitchen fireplace.

The porch columns were rebuilt at ruinous expense, tons of cement shored up a collapsing foundation wall, and a 'square' of replacement slates was ladder-hoisted to the dizzying heights of the top roof.



Not Main Street in-your-face like the Manse, nor obscurely-situated like Dake's homestead, the 1800 Ransom-Sweitzer-Reinfort house on the corner of South Street and Harmony Lane is a grand two hundred year old house that was lucky for years.

The long-ago-owners Ray and Florence Ransom were important people in Castleton. English-professor Paul, and Natalie Sweitzer were cultured antique lovers. Mark Reinfort was another antique dealer who turned this house into a showcase of American Federal Style.

But after Mark Reinfort's sudden death, Castleton University, which owned the abutting land, bought the house, and things changed. For a period of years, the building sat seemingly-abandoned and derelict. I'd walk by this town's arguably grandest, most graceful, long-time residence disbelieving. The paint was peeling; the doorway pilaster bases were rotting, the sill fascia boards falling away.

And then one day restoration began. Institutional building code requirements will require some blunting of its historic grace, but this is planned to become the new Castleton University president's residence. For this grand old house, there's been a saving turn of the Wheel of Fortune.



*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 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, VT 05735, and at a number of Vermont booksellers. To reach the store, call (802) 468-2213. All back issues of these columns are available to read under the achieves at [www.vermont.countrysampler.com](http://www.vermont.countrysampler.com).*



The Ransom-Sweitzer-Reinfort House in Castleton, VT.

photo by Andrew Donovan



The Dake Homestead, Castleton, VT

photo by Andrew Donovan

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# Maple Recipes

*circa 1922*

## Maple Layer Cake

- |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3 eggs                      | ½ teaspoonful salt          |
| 1 cupful soft maple sugar   | 1 teaspoonful baking-powder |
| 1 cupful pastry flour       | 1 cupful cream              |
| ¼ cupful grated maple sugar |                             |

Beat the yolks of the eggs until light. Add the soft maple sugar and the flour sifted with the salt and baking-powder. Fold in last the whites of the eggs beaten very stiff. Mix quickly and bake for about one-half hour in two greased and floured layer-cake pans in an oven registering 320°F. Put together with the cream whipped and sweetened with the grated maple sugar and sprinkle top with powdered sugar.

## Maple Charlotte

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 2 cupfuls rich milk                 | ½ teaspoonful salt                                    |
| 2 eggs                              | 1 cupful maple syrup                                  |
| 2 tablespoonfuls granulated gelatin | ½ cupful chopped blanched almonds or shredded coconut |
| 2 tablespoonfuls cold milk          | coconut   |
| ½ teaspoonful almond extract        |   |

Scald the milk in a double-boiler and pour it slowly over the egg-yolks well beaten; return to the double-boiler and cook five minutes. Add the gelatin which has soaked a few minutes in the cold milk and the salt. Remove from the fire and add the maple syrup. Let cool, and when beginning to set, add the almonds or shredded coconut or half of each and the extract. Beat until frothy and fold in the stiffly beaten egg-whites. Turn into wet individual molds to stiffen. Serve with or without whipped cream.

## Maple Nut Gingerbread

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 cupful maple syrup         | 2 eggs                       |
| ⅓ cupful butter or margarine | 2 teaspoonfuls baking-powder |
| 1 cupful cold water          | 1 teaspoonful ginger         |
| 2 cupfuls whole-wheat flour  | 1 teaspoonful cinnamon       |
| 1 cupful chopped nuts        | ¼ teaspoonful soda           |
| ½ teaspoonful salt           |                              |

Cream the butter and honey together. Add the eggs well-beaten. Mix and sift the dry ingredients together, and add alternately with the water. Add the chopped nuts last. Bake in a 350°F oven for forty-five minutes, or until done. Serve with whipped cream flavored with maple syrup and vanilla and sweetened a little with powdered sugar.



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# Vermont's Spring Turkey Hunting Starts May 1

Vermont's regular spring turkey hunting season is May 1-31. Vermont hunters took 5,496 turkeys during last year's spring youth weekend and May seasons.

Shooting hours are one half hour before sunrise to 12:00 Noon, and two bearded turkeys may be taken. A shotgun or archery equipment may be used. Shot size must be no larger than #2 and no smaller than #8.

A successful turkey hunter must, by law, report their turkey within 48 hours to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. In the past, this could be done at a local reporting station. This year, because of COVID-19 precautions, hunters are required to report their turkey electronically through the department's website at [www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com).

"Online reporting has been used successfully in other states," said turkey biologist Chris Bernier. "It is convenient for the hunter, and the information collected has proven to be just as valuable for monitoring and managing wild turkey populations. Most important now, we need to offer this online reporting option because of COVID-19 and our responsibility to promote appropriate social distancing practices."

The information needed to report turkeys online is the same as what has been traditionally collected at check stations including license, tag and contact information, harvest details, and biological measurements.

There are a few things hunters can do in advance to make submitting a report easier such as having their Conservation ID Number handy (located on their license), knowing what town and Wildlife Management Unit the bird was harvested in, and completing all the necessary measurements such as beard and spur lengths, and weight.

Although not required, the department also requests that hunters use the online reporting tool to upload a digital photo showing the bird's beard and properly tagged leg. Hunters who provide a valid email address will receive a confirmation email when they successfully submit a turkey harvest report using this new online reporting tool.

The department encourages anyone who experiences problems reporting through the online tool to contact a local State Police dispatcher to be connected with a State Game Warden for harvest reporting assistance. Regional dispatch numbers are:

- Brattleboro Dispatch – 802-257-7101
- Middlesex Dispatch – 802-229-9191
- New Haven Dispatch – 802-388-4919
- Royalton Dispatch – 802-234-9933
- Rutland Dispatch – 802-773-9101
- Shaftsbury Dispatch – 802-442-5421
- St. Albans Dispatch – 802-524-5993
- St. Johnsbury Dispatch – 802-748-3111
- Westminster Dispatch – 802-722-4600
- Williston Dispatch – 802-878-7111

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department urges hunters to hunt only if they are healthy, hunt close to home, travel



VT F&W photo by John Hall

Vermont Fish and Wildlife re-established our native wild turkeys when it released 31 wild birds from New York in 1969 and 1970. Today, Vermont has an estimated wild turkey population of more than 45,000. Vermont hunters who take a turkey this spring are required to report it electronically within 48 hours through Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website at [www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com).

and go out alone or with a family member you are already in close contact with.

If you do hunt with someone you do not already live with, take separate vehicles to your hunting location and make sure to maintain at least six feet between both of you.

Only share a hunting blind with someone you have been in continuous close contact with for the past two weeks, and be sure to carry hand sanitizer and avoid touching your face.

Remember to wash your mouth calls after handling, request landowner permission by phone, and maintain appropriate social distancing from others while afield.

For more information on fishing, hunting, and other wild-life activities, go to [www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com).



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## The Last of May in Vermont

Plantin' time's already here  
And will soon be gone;  
Hoein' time will soon appear  
As the year rolls on;  
Soon, before we know it, 'most,  
Hayin' days will dawn.

See the farmer on his land—  
Doesn't look so glum;  
See him swing his broadcast hand—  
Knows the seed will "come:"  
Earth is sayin' things to him  
And he isn't dumb.

Fog and rain and sun and air  
Are a-helpin' all;  
Whether it is foul or fair,  
Whether Spring or Fall,  
Seems as though a hidden force  
Answers back his call.

Happy farmer—happy days—  
Waitin' Autumn's yield;  
Doin' what his conscience says  
In his little field;

Happier he than hero dead  
Borne upon his shield.

Hoein' time is pretty near—  
Scumble out the hoes;  
Hayin' time will soon be here  
As the grinstone knows;  
Then will come the harvest home,  
Then the Winter's snows.

Ain't it great and ain't it fine  
How the seasons roll!  
Earth a reg'lar melon mine  
Under man's control—  
Hope nobody gains so much  
As to lose his soul.



—DANIEL L. CADY  
1861-1934, WEST WINDSOR, VT

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Wednesday— <i>Chicken &amp; Biscuits</i>	Sunday— <i>Chef Choice</i>



# Vermont Country Calendar

Since the coronavirus hit and everything closed down, so did most of our museums and venues. To their credit many have developed wonderful online resources. Plus there are still places to go walking on state lands and parks, but check ahead to see if they are open. Here is a sampling.

**ARLINGTON.** Martha Canfield Memorial Library is checking messages daily and responding to email Tuesday through Friday. We can find or select books, videos, and other materials for you to pick up or to be delivered to you. Will assist with accessing our resources online. 528 East Arlington Rd. (802) 375-6153. martha\_canfield\_lib@hotmail.com. marthacanfieldlibrary.org.

**BARRE.** Vermont History Center Digital and Online offerings. Digital Vermont: two dozen collections of images and scans; 52 five-minute programs tell the history of Vermont in the twentieth century. History lending kits, Census records, Underground Railroad resources & more. Vermont stories, articles, exhibits, & more. Kids activities, crossword puzzles, word searches. 60 Washington St. (802) 479-8500. vermonthistory.org.

**BELLOWS FALLS.** Rockingham Library at Your Service. Check out their online resources. Among them are: Mondays offers yoga, tai chi, circus arts. Tutorial Tuesdays provide a different type of class each week. Wednesdays offer links to local history programs. Throwback Thursdays feature a photo from the Library's Historic Photograph collection. Field Trip Fridays takes you on virtual tours of aquariums, museums, gardens, zoos and so much more. 65 Westminster St. (802) 463-4270, rockinghamlibrary.org.

**BENNINGTON.** Bennington Museum. Opening July 1st. Fourteen galleries for you to explore. 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. benningtonmuseum.org.

**BRATTLEBORO.** Brattleboro Museum & Art Center. Art, ideas, and community. Videos, galleries, lectures, springtime nature journaling – all online. 10 Vernon Street, Brattleboro VT. (802) 257-0124, www.brattleboromuseum.org.

**BRATTLEBORO.** Slow Living Summit– Take a Bite out of Climate Change. On June 4. What Are Beverage, Food and Local Producers doing for Climate Change, Economic Sustainability & Land Use? Virtual conference features live keynotes from Bill McKibben, Frances Moore Lappé, Tom Newmark, and Sandra Steingraber plus interactive panels, Q&As with food industry leaders. slowlivingsummit.org.

**CHESTER.** St. Luke's Church Annual Plant Sale. Lots of annuals and hardy perennials. Friday and Saturday May 29 & 30 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sunday May 31 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. 313 Main St. (802) 875-1340.

**CUTTINGSVILLE.** Caravan Gardens Farmstand. Vegetable, herb & flower seedlings. Pre-order organically raised broilers. CSA Farm Shares – 10% bonus. Opening in May. Rt. 103. (802) 492-3377.

**EAST MONTPELIER.** Bragg Farm Sugarhouse & Gift Shop. Maple syrup, candies & cream. Mail orders welcome by phone or on-line. For curbside pick-up call (802) 223-5757. 1005 Rt. 14. www.braggfarm.com.

**EAST THETFORD.** Cedar Circle Farm & Education Center. We will be open for online ordering and pickup starting May 9th. 225 Pavillion Rd. cedarcirclefarm.org.

**HANOVER, NH.** Hop@Home. Welcome to our new digital stage! Each week, we send out a different menu of enticing, interactive, online content created by Hop artists—plus a weekly selection of Hop staff recommendations from the wider world of digital live arts. Hopkins Center for the Arts, 4 East Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.dartmouth.edu.

**LEBANON, NH.** AVA Gallery and Art Center. Galleries and exhibits are available for online viewing, but are closed for in person visits. 11 Bank St. (603) 448-3117. avagallery.org.

**LEBANON, NH.** Online Performance. Opera North 2019 Resident Artists perform Shall We Gather at the River? Opera North looks forward to Summerfest 2020 at Blow-Me-Down Farm on the banks of the Connecticut River. (603) 448-4141. operanorth.org. Opera North, 20 W. Park St.

**LONDONDERRY.** Grandma Miller's. Homemade pies, 24 varieties. Pastries, cookies, cakes, bread, frozen entrees. Visit our website for menu choices. We're still open with limited access. Shipping available. Open Mon-Sat 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., hours subject to change, call ahead. 52 Hearthstone Lane off Rt. 100, 2 miles south of town. (802) 824-4032. www.grandmamillers.net.

**LUDLOW.** Depot Street Gallery. Home of the Silver Spoon. Online and phone orders taken, pick-up on porch. 44 Depot St. (802) 228-4753. silverspoon.com.

**NORTH MANCHESTER.** Bob's Maple Shop. Order by phone. Pick-ups on the porch. 591 Richville Rd. (802) 362-3882. www.bobsmapleshop.com.

**MANCHESTER.** Dutton's Farmstand. Greenhouses with beautiful plants and vegetables. Maple syrup, homemade baked goods, fresh produce, planting supplies. 2083 Depot St. (802) 362-3083. On Facebook. www.duttonberryfarm.com.

**MANCHESTER.** Southern Vermont Art Center is transitioning to interactive video calls and classes. (802) 362-1405. www.svac.org.

**MIDDLEBURY.** The Sheldon Museum, Research Center, and Store are closed until further notice. Subscribe to our email newsletter for updates each week featuring highlights from exhibits, videos of talks held at the Sheldon. One Park St. (802) 388-2117. henrysheldonmuseum.org.

**MIDDLEBURY.** Vermont Folklife Center. Online offerings: Listening in Place Project, VT Untapped podcasts. 88 Main St. (802) 388-4964. www.vermontfolklifecenter.org.

**MIDDLEBURY.** Virtual Video Series: The Quarantine Sessions—Town Hall Theater All-Stars, From Their Homes to Yours. Jazz at Lincoln Center, videos from the vault. National Theatre full-length plays, online Thursdays at 2 pm. (802) 382-9222. townhalltheater.org.

**MONTPELIER.** Vermont Humanities Online. First Wednesdays Talks, featured presentations. 11 Loomis St. vermonthumanities.org. facebook.com/VermontHumanities.

**MANCHESTER.** Dutton's Farmstand. Greenhouses with beautiful plants and vegetables. Maple syrup, homemade baked goods, fresh produce, planting supplies. 2083 Depot St. (802) 362-3083. On Facebook. duttonberryfarm.com.

**MENDON.** Mendon Mountain Orchards. Homemade pies \$14, pasture-raised beef, eggs. Order now for curbside delivery. Rt. 4., 3 miles east of Rutland. (802) 775-5477.

**NEWFANE.** Dutton's Farmstand. Greenhouses. Plants and vegetables. Maple syrup, homemade baked goods, fresh produce, planting supplies. 391 & 407 Rt. 30. (802) 365-4168. On Facebook. www.duttonberryfarm.com.

**NORWICH.** Vermont Center for Ecostudies Online Resources. Spring Wildflower Phenology Annotation Blitz: Look at beautiful images of plants and note whether they have flower buds, flowers, or fruits. Learn about the project and how to participate on the VCE blog: vtcostudies.org/blog. info@vtcostudies.org. vtcostudies.org.

**NORWICH.** Montshire Museum of Science Online Resources: engaging videos, simple science experiments, scavenger hunts, downloadable activities to do at home. One Montshire Rd. (802) 649-2200. montshire.org.

**POULTNEY.** Green's Sugarhouse. Maple products. Pre-order for pick-up. 1846 Final Hollow Rd. (802) 287-5745. greensusugarhouse.com.

**PUTNEY.** Curtis' Barbeque. Enjoy our picnic tables and park-like grounds. Delicious BBQ pork, ribs & chicken plus sides and Curtis' own unique BBQ sauce. Rt. 5 (exit 4 off I-91). (802) 287-5474. www.curtisbbqvt.com.

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# Vermont Country Calendar

**RUPERT.** Merck Forest and Farmland. Visitor's Center closed for now but farm store products will be shipped. 30 miles of trails available but please observe precautions, open year round, dawn to dusk. Some workshops are scheduled for later in May – call to see if they're on. 3270 Rt. 315, west of Manchester. (802) 394-7836. merckforest.org.

**RUTLAND.** Vermont Farmers Market Introduces Our Online Local Food Market. Offering online marketplace for farm products, pick-up on Saturdays. To shop go to [vermontfarmersfoodcenter.square.site](http://vermontfarmersfoodcenter.square.site). Vermont Farmers Food Center, 251 West St. [vtfarmersmarket.org](http://vtfarmersmarket.org).

**SHELBURNE.** Shelburne Farms. Walking trails are open. All programs are canceled until further notice. Welcome Center is taking orders for curbside pickup (closed to foot traffic). Opening dates for Children's Farmyard, tours, and Inn are to be determined. Shelburne Farms, 1611 Harbor Rd. off Rt. 7. (802) 985-8686. [www.shelburnefarms.org](http://www.shelburnefarms.org).

**SHOREHAM.** Champlain Orchards Farm Store. Order online. Orders of our apples, pies, cider, donuts & provisions ready for curbside pick up at 12 noon and 4 p.m. on weekdays, and 12 noon on weekends. Give us a call when you arrive so we can bring your order out to you. Closed to walk-ins. 3597 Route 74 West. (802) 897-2777. [marketing@champlainorchards.com](http://marketing@champlainorchards.com). [www.champlainorchards.com](http://www.champlainorchards.com).

**SAXTONS RIVER.** Main Street Arts Virtual Workshops and Book Clubs. Weekly Facebook challenges. 35 Main St. (802) 869-2960. [mainstreetarts.org](http://mainstreetarts.org).

**ST. JOHNSBURY.** Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium Online. Content for children and adults. Museum is closed to visitors, check for reopening. 1302 Main St. [fairbanksmuseum.org](http://fairbanksmuseum.org).

**ST. JOHNSBURY.** Dog Mountain. Closed till May 15 due to virus. Visit website for lots of fun – summer dog parties. 143 Parks Rd. (800) 449-2580. [www.dogmt.com](http://www.dogmt.com).

**STATEWIDE.** Green Up Day. A special day in Vermont when thousands of volunteers get involved in a community wide spring clean up of roadside litter. It is the largest statewide volunteer event in Vermont with over 22,500 taking part, and the longest running statewide Green Up Day in the United States. To see your town's schedule and for more information go to [greenupvermont.org](http://greenupvermont.org).

**STATEWIDE.** Vermont Humanities Council will present public events again after May 15. During this time of social distancing, we are sharing videos, podcasts, and online resources. On Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. [vermonthumanities.org/programs/digital-programs](http://vermonthumanities.org/programs/digital-programs).

**STATEWIDE.** Vermont State Parks. Vermont has 55 developed and staffed state parks and other undeveloped state park lands. Most are closed due to the coronavirus. Go to their website to find which are open for walking. (888) 409-7579. [vtstateparks.com](http://vtstateparks.com).

**STATEWIDE.** Vermont State Historic Sites tentatively scheduled to open on June 19th. In the meantime go to the state website and check out the various sites. Some have videos and such. [historicsites.vermont.gov](http://historicsites.vermont.gov).

**STATEWIDE.** Bookstores open for curbside pick-up:

- Next Chapter Bookstore, Barre, [nextchapterbooksvt.com](http://nextchapterbooksvt.com)
- Phoenix Books, Burlington, Essex, and Rutland, [www.phoenixbooks.biz](http://www.phoenixbooks.biz).
- Speaking Volumes Audio Store and Bookstore, Burlington, [speakingvolumesvt.com](http://speakingvolumesvt.com)
- The Book Nook, Ludlow, [thebooknookvt.com](http://thebooknookvt.com)
- Green Mountain Books & Prints, Lyndonville, [greenmountainbooks.com](http://greenmountainbooks.com)
- Hermit Hill Books, Poultney, (802) 287-5767
- The Bookmobile, Rutland, [bookmobilevermont.com](http://bookmobilevermont.com)
- The Eloquent Page, St. Albans, [heeloquentpage.com](http://heeloquentpage.com)

**STOWE.** Helen Day Online. See the exhibit, "Love Letters" online via a 360-degree video tour with an art and technology panel discussion among the five featured artists. Nine-minute video "Elegies". Art education—adult and children's classes. New weekly activity for children from the Jeff White Hands-On Room. Studio visit with the Dutch digital artist Jeroen Nelemans. No membership fee or admission charge. 90 Pond St. (802) 253-8358, [www.helenday.com](http://www.helenday.com).

**VERGENNES.** Lake Champlain Maritime Museum. Stories, educational experiences, and updates about Lake Champlain's history, archaeology, and ecology every week. Follow on social media channel to get the latest. Museum opening July 1. 4472 Basin Harbor Rd. (802) 475-2022. [www.lcmm.org](http://www.lcmm.org).

**WALDEN.** Fruit Tree Growing Workshop on May 30. Full day, every aspect, emphasis on apples. All levels welcome. A lot of information so bring a notebook. Classroom lecture and orchard walk. Instructor is Todd Parlo, owner of Walden Heights, a commercial certified organic orchard and plant propagation farm. Fee: \$100. Walden Heights Nursery and Orchard, 120 Rt. 215. [waldenheightsnursery@fairpoint.net](mailto:waldenheightsnursery@fairpoint.net), [www.waldenheightsnursery.com](http://www.waldenheightsnursery.com).

**WATERBURY CENTER.** The Green Mountain Club. Yes, you can still hike! We ask that you limit your hikes to local day trips and avoid traveling and congregating in groups. Please continue to maintain social distance of at least 6' between people even on the trails. The Visitor Center is closed. Store open for online orders. 4711 Waterbury-Stowe Rd. (802) 244-7037. [www.greenmountainclub.org](http://www.greenmountainclub.org).

**WEST BRATTLEBORO.** Dutton's Farmstand. Flower and vegetable plants. Fresh produce. Maple syrup, homemade baked goods. Planting supplies. 308 Marlboro Rd. (802) 254-0254. On Facebook. [duttonberryfarm.com](http://duttonberryfarm.com).

**WEST RUTLAND.** Timberloft Farm Store. Opening for the season on Mother's Day Weekend! Mixed hanging baskets, specialty annuals, vegetable sets, jams, aprons. Rt. 4B.

**WEST RUTLAND.** Vermont Herbal General Store. Handmade Herbal Medicines, Oils, Essences, Crystals, Gemstones & Books. Closed but open for phone orders with free delivery or shipping. Vermont Herbal General Store, 578 Main St. (802) 438-2766. [vermonthherbal.com](http://vermonthherbal.com).

**WEST RUTLAND.** Boardman Hill Farm. Fresh vegetables, meats, poultry, Vermont cheeses & maple syrup. Sign up now for Spring CSA. Order online with pick-ups for all farm goods. On Boardman Hill off Rt. 4. (802) 6834606.

**WESTMINSTER.** Allen Bros Farm Market. Curbside delivery of food, groceries & plants. Still open seven days a week. 6023 Rt. 5. To place orders call (802) 722-3395. [www.allenbrothersfarms.com](http://www.allenbrothersfarms.com).

**WHITE RIVER JUNCTION.** White River Indie Films Picks for Virtual Cinema. White River Indie Films, 58 N Main St., Suite 107. [wrif.org](http://wrif.org).

**WHITE RIVER JUNCTION.** The Center for Cartoon Studies Summer Workshops Online. Starting in June. The Center for Cartoon Studies, 94 South Main St. (802) 295-3319. [cartoonstudies.org](http://cartoonstudies.org).

**WOODSTOCK.** Billings Farm at Home. An online resource for young and old to explore the Billings Farm and its history. Come face-to-face virtually with our farm animals and learn how we care for them. Discover seasonal and historic recipes, arts and a crafts, and more. Explore the restored 1890 farm manager's house. Billings Farm & Museum, VT Rt. 12. (802) 457-2355. [billingsfarm.org](http://billingsfarm.org).

**WOODSTOCK.** ArtisTree Community Art Center. The Quarantine Art Virtual Exhibit. ArtisTree Community Art Center, Mount Tom Building, 1206 Rt. 12. (802) 457-3500, [info@artistreevt.org](mailto:info@artistreevt.org). [www.artistreevt.org](http://www.artistreevt.org).

**WORLD-WIDE.** The Museum of Modern Art. Offering free in-depth online courses through Coursera, a leading online learning platform for higher education, where 56 million learners from around the world come to learn. More than 200 of the world's top universities and industry educators partner with Coursera. The Museum of Modern Art is based in New York City. [www.coursera.org/moma](http://www.coursera.org/moma).



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# The Promise of Spring

by Judith Irven

This past winter a huge crowd of goldfinch regularly flocked to our feeders—sometimes even crowding out the ever-faithful chickadees. Their winter garb was decidedly low-key—brownish feathers with black and white wing-bars. Then, over about a four week period in the spring a little miracle occurs as, feather by feather, the males gradually transform themselves into glorious golden birds—all the better to attract the females when the nesting season arrives!

By now our feeders are put away for the season and the crowd of goldfinch has spread out. But they have not gone too far! My heart gives a little jump of joy each time I see flashes of gold as they dart around the garden.

## Swelling buds

In late March and early April—as they prepare for flowering and leafing out—the buds on most woody plants visibly start to swell. I am particularly fond of observing this phenomenon in the serviceberries, both along the road and in my garden.

Serviceberries are small native trees that flourish at the edges of the forest and also make wonderful additions to our gardens. Twenty years ago, I planted four Shadblow Serviceberries (*Amelanchier canadensis*)—which grow to about 12 feet high and wide—where I would be able to see them from our kitchen window. More recently I added one on the front corner of the house to greet us when we come up the driveway.

Now each spring, from late March onwards, I watch as their buds gradually fatten up. Then all of a sudden one morning, I will wake up to discover those four little trees covered in delicate white blossoms, that say ‘spring is really here’.

## Arrival of the wood frogs

For me another amazing miracle of the season is the arrival of the wood frogs in our small pond.

The first time I heard them I thought a flock of quacking ducks had descended on the water. Very slowly I approached to see who might be there and I soon realized it was actually dozens of vocalizing frogs darting around on the surface of the pond, all frantically trying to attract a mate. Then, suddenly, they discerned my presence and everything went silent. Finally, after a minute or so, as they detected no further movement on my part, the raucous cacophony started up again.

Wood frogs spend their winters in a semi-frozen state dug into the ground under the leaf litter on the forest floor. Each spring, when the ground temperature rises sufficiently, the frogs warm up enough to move around and seek out open water where they will lay and fertilize their eggs.

Once this mission is accomplished they all leave the pond and return again to the woods.

## The first flowers of spring

Green shoots pushing their way through the cold earth are like nature’s messengers, as they announce the start of the new season. Before long, the earliest flowers will be blooming.

Here in Vermont the ‘big flower show’—carpets of daffodils, bluebells and many more beneath a canopy of flowering crab apples—happens in May. But I always have a special place in my heart for those first flowers of April, with their smiling faces and messages of hope. These are indeed stalwart flowers that can survive a late cold snap and perhaps even a little snow.

Snowdrops, with their pure white little bells and green striations inside, are among the earliest flowers to open each spring. One fall, many years ago now, I planted a few dozen nondescript little brown bulbs on our ‘barn slope’—a spot that is readily visible from our dining room window.

And over the years this small investment of time and money has rewarded me handsomely. Every summer, down in the earth and hidden from sight, each snowdrop bulb gradually creates side bulbs, thus multiplying the colony. So now, every spring, literally hundreds of little white bells arrive on cue to greet the new season.

As the snow recedes I am also on the look-out for blood-root flowers—so called because their chunky roots exude a reddish sap when broken. It is said that Native Americans used this sap as a skin decoration.

The flowers, shielded by a wrapping of leaves as they push up through the leaf litter, have pure white petals with yellow



The serviceberry at the corner of our house in full bloom.

photo by Dick Conrad

centers of pollen. Furthermore, to protect the pollen from rain and cold, the flowers will only be fully open on sunny days.

## The arrival of the daffodils

As I mentioned, we must wait until May for the big daffodil extravaganza. But daffodils are opportunists! I planted some along the warm south-facing wall of our house—a gable end where not too much snow accumulates—and every spring I am rewarded by their smiling faces arriving well ahead of their counterparts further out in the garden.

And finally, I would be remiss not to mention the true-blue Siberian squills that eagerly push their way through the remains of last year’s leaves during the sometimes chilly days of Spring. I can see them amongst the snowdrops as I look up to the barn slope.

But all along the south-facing wall of our house they bloom alongside those first daffodils—creating a beautiful study of yellow and blue that is bliss for this winter-weary gardener.

This is the time of year when the Gilbert and Sullivan song from their operetta ‘The Mikado’, which I learned as a child, still rings clearly in my head:

*The flowers that bloom in the spring  
Tra la  
Breathe promise of merry sunshine —  
As we merrily dance and we sing  
Tra la*

*We welcome the hope that they bring  
Tra la*

*Of a summer of roses and wine.  
And that’s what we mean when we say that a thing  
Is welcome as flowers that bloom in the spring,*

*Tra la la la la  
Tra la la la la*

*The flowers that bloom in the spring!*

*Judith Irven and her husband Dick Conrad live in Goshen, VT where together they nurture a large garden. You can subscribe to Judith’s blog about her Vermont gardening life at [www.northcountryreflections.com](http://www.northcountryreflections.com).*

*Dick Conrad is a landscape and garden photographer; to see his photographs go to [northcountryimpressions.com](http://northcountryimpressions.com).*



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Members of Rutland Blooms planted trees along the city's roadways as part of a beautification project. The Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program recently recognized the group as a 2020 Vermont Tree Steward Award winner with the Volunteer Group Award.

***Vermont Urban and Community Forest Program***

# Tree Steward Awards Recognize Tree Champions

The Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program (VT UCF) recently announced the recipients of its 2020 Vermont Tree Stewards Awards.

These tree champions were recognized for their commitment and dedication to protecting and preserving their community's forests and trees. They will be formally honored at an Arbor Day event this fall.

Two individuals were named Hamilton Award winners. This award goes to a tree warden who has advanced the goals of urban and community forestry through public engagement, education and sustainable forestry and conservation practices. It is given in honor of the late Dr. Larry Hamilton, who was a tree warden in Charlotte.

- Dan Adams, the Brattleboro tree warden for the past 20 years, was recognized for his work with VT UCF on the Brattleboro Public Tree Inventory Report and for establishing the Brattleboro Tree Advisory Board. The board actively

supports and promotes urban and community forestry efforts through tree planting and maintenance, grant writing and review of town tree projects. Adams also works closely with his town's Department of Public Works to respond to questions and assess conditions of public trees in the town right-of-ways.

- Northfield Tree Warden Russ Barrett spearheaded his town's ash tree survey and has led town education seminars and walks to help community members better understand the tree canopy. In addition to being the go-to person for questions, Barrett has worked on numerous town forest projects, tree surveys and town tree policies. He is a retired Washington County forester and current vice-chair of the Northfield Conservation Commission.

- Tim Parsons, Middlebury College landscape horticulturist, received the Leader Award for demonstrating strong leadership in urban or community forestry through services to Middlebury College and his community. Along with his work of caring for the 2,200 trees on campus, Parsons has taught the Trees in the Urban Forest course several times and led field trips for other courses. With his students he developed an emerald ash borer emergency preparedness plan for the college and town.

- Tom Gray, a member of the Bradford Conservation Commission for the past 12 years, was this year's recipient of the Unsung Hero Award. He was recognized for his many years of service in the 507-acre Wright's Mountain and Devil's Den Town Forest including trail construction and maintenance and repairs to a forest cabin. He has served as an ambassador for the town forest, leading public walks and guiding youth volunteers in building and grooming trails.

- The Volunteer Group Award went to Rutland Blooms, which has helped beautify the city of Rutland for the past five years by raising money to plant 350 trees with assistance from nearly 100 volunteers from Boy Scout troops, Stafford Technical Center and area banks and businesses. The award goes to an organization, team, ad/hoc group or community

that demonstrates outstanding dedication and commitment to starting or sustaining a forestry project.

- In addition, the Resilient Roads Committee of East Montpelier received the Vermont Arbor Day Award. VT UCF presents this award annually to an individual or group that goes above and beyond to make a difference in their community's urban and community forest.

The committee has focused its efforts on building and maintaining a healthy roadside tree canopy along municipal roads by conducting an ash tree inventory and assessing the impact of the emerald ash borer on the town's ash trees. They also took part in a public hearing regarding removal of roadside ash trees near the local high school. East Montpelier residents who serve on this committee are Jennifer Boyer, Paul Cate, Jeff Cueto, Carl Etnier, Steve Justis, Mark Lane, Jack Pauly, Guthrie Perry and Jean Vissering.

*VT UCF is a partnership between University of Vermont Extension and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. Learn more at [www.vtcommunityforestry.org](http://www.vtcommunityforestry.org). For more information on this year's Vermont Tree Steward Award recipients, visit [go.uvm.edu/tsa](http://go.uvm.edu/tsa).*



## Tree Feelings

I wonder if they like it—being trees?  
I suppose they do.

It must feel good to have the ground so flat,  
And feel yourself stand right straight up like that  
So stiff in the middle--and then branch at ease,  
Big boughs that arch, small ones that bend and blow,  
And all those fringy leaves that flutter so.  
You'd think they'd break off at the lower end  
When the wind fills them, and their great heads bend.  
But then you think of all the roots they drop,  
As much at bottom as there is on top,—  
A double tree, widespread in earth and air  
Like a reflection in the water there.

I guess they like to stand straight in the sun  
And just breathe out and in, and feel the cool sap run;  
And like to feel the rain run through their hair  
And slide down to the roots and settle there.  
But I think they like wind best. From the light touch  
That lets the leaves whisper and kiss so much,  
To the great swinging, tossing, flying wide,  
And all the time so stiff and strong inside!  
And the big winds, that pull, and make them feel  
How long their roots are, and the earth how leal!

And O the blossoms! And the wild seeds lost!  
And jewelled martyrdom of fiery frost!  
And fruit-trees. I'd forgotten. No cold gem,  
But to be apples—  
And bow down with them!

—CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN  
*Hartford, CT, 1860-1935*



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## Cowslip Time

It's cowslip time in old Vermont  
On marshes brown and bare  
Lovely little clumps of green  
Are scattered everywhere

Round about these isles of green  
Wind rills of water clear  
A few day's sunshine and behold  
What miracle is here

Sweet mystery of springtime  
That changeth in a night  
This sombre weary working world  
To scenes that dazzle sight

First a barren hummock  
Next a mass of shimmering green  
Then a golden crown of glory  
On each cowslip bunch is seen

It's cowslip time in old Vermont  
And along with their baked beans  
The farmers wives all o'er the state  
Are serving cowslip greens.

HARRIET HOVEY HIGGINS  
Berlin, VT, 1917



Vernal pool glimmers in the springtime woodland in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. Listen, hear the frogs singing?  
photo by Jeff Gold

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### Bethel, VT

## Join the World of Stamp and Postcard Collecting

by Nick Nikolaidis

The Upper Valley Stamp Club is the most successful and active in the state of Vermont. I've been collecting stamps for 65 years now and old post cards about 30 years. The club has some fund raising means, such as two annual post card and stamp shows, one in April and the second one in October.

Last year I had the idea as president of the club, to print a calendar for 2020 with US stamps with Vermont connections for a fundraiser. We still have a few calendars available at \$8 each plus shipping.

The 2020 Calendar of Vermont Connection Stamps features a large reproduction of the stamp with a brief write-up about the person shown or event commemorated. You will find the well-known poet Robert Frost, artists Grandma Moses and

Norman Rockwell, and journalist Horace Greeley. Others of note are Vermont Sen. Justin Morrill, originator of the Morrill Land-Grant Act which provided federal funding for public colleges and universities; Paul Harris of Wallingford, VT, who founded the International Rotary Club; and Alden Partridge, founder of Norwich University in Northfield, VT, and an early superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

The stamps range in price from from 3, 4, and 8 cents to 32 cents. The Priority Mail stamp featuring the Arlington Green Bridge costs \$5.60.

We at the club feel that the educational value of stamp collecting is unlimited, and I must say I learned most of my American history by collecting stamps.

The club meets the 2nd Monday of every month at

the Quechee Library, 1957 Quechee Main St., Quechee, VT 05059.

Meetings start at 6:30 p.m., business meetings at 7-7:30 p.m., and after that our program, which is presented by members of our club with different topics every month.

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# My Father, the Would-be Journalist

by Charles Sutton

Sometime storage trunks at rest for years in family's attics may contain treasures which can give intriguing insights into a lost time and place. My find from a trunk was a scrapbook with a big C on its cover that revealed surprises about my father's life as a student at Cornell University 100 years ago.

I learned that from 1916 to 1918 my father, Frederick T. Sutton, was an associate editor on the student publication, Cornell ERA, first published in 1868. It contained poetry, discourses on Cornell affairs, write-ups on prominent students as well as professors and alumni.

## A sports reporter, too

Father covered sports for the publication including championship football and track teams. Among his papers are photographs with his hand-written directions for cropping and sizing them.

In a Cornell-Harvard football game picture among his papers we see the 'having-at-it' players lacked shoulder pads and some weren't wearing helmets. Another photo shows a downed player with a head injury in pain awaiting the stretcher. Their playing obviously was a lot more dangerous than the 'sand-lot' tackle-football experiences of my youth.

Father was on the Cornell swimming squad and played lacrosse. He was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity. A copy of his initiation banquet on March 24, 1916, where he is one of 10 novitiates shows a menu of oyster cocktail, clam chowder, deviled crabs in natural shells, graham sandwiches, roasted spring chicken, candied grapefruit and spice or white cake. For the grown-ups: Rameses cigarettes.

The scrapbook contains a large number of programs for musical events and plays. There's a letter dated May 10, 1917, informing him that he was that academic year's winner of the faculty's Sampson Fine Arts Prize given to the member of the senior class who has consistently demonstrated academic excellence, commitment, and achievement, particularly in the field of the history of art.

Because of low pay most journalists free lance. Among father's papers are a letter dated Aug 16, 1911, from St. Nicholas Magazine awarding him \$1 for his article on ways to improve the publication's Stamp Page.

## I became a journalist despite my father's wishes

My father never talked about this or his early work in journalism although when my turn came to be a journalist he encouraged me, but worried because its low pay would make it more difficult to support a family. Even though I did start as a copyboy at the New York Times for \$40 a week, he always cheered the ups and downs of my career although secretly he would have been happier if I had a career in business.

My father went into the Naval Air service as a quartermaster and officer cadet in mid-1918 while still on campus with more training on Long Island, NY. He was discharged several months later when the war ended in November, 1918.

Cornell awarded students (including my father) bachelor degrees after only two or three years of study as a thank-you for their service in the armed forces. After the war, father worked in a shipyard but then in banking starting as a bank cashier at \$25 a week, and later was a stock broker.

Father would have liked to return to Cornell but he had to support himself and help his single, divorced mother. He wrote in his diary that it didn't feel right that his mother would be working and he not at the same time.

He faithfully returned for 10-year alumni anniversaries and was there when my brother and I graduated in the 1950s.

## My brother Fred and I also went on active duty

Like my father, my brother Fred and I went on active duty during the Korean War, me in the Navy and Fred in the Air Force as soon as we graduated as we both had been in reserve training programs.



Charles Sutton (on left) with his father Fred Sutton and brother Fred Sutton, Jr. at Gramercy Park in New York City, circa 1937.

In father's collection, photos and news clippings show large number of Cornell students marching, often carrying rifles, some having firing practice or lined up for breakfast at an outdoor encampment. There's a photo of 30 Cornell seniors or graduates who were headed to France to man ambulances to retrieve the wounded from the front.

There was a fund-raising drive back then to purchase ambulances for the war effort. A gift of \$1,000 would cover the cost of transforming a Ford into an ambulance and transporting it to the front lines in France.

During World War I an estimated 9,000 Cornell students, professors and alumni served in the U.S. armed forces of which 3,000 were commissioned officers. Sadly 264 lost their lives. Of those who served many got their initial training on campus as can be seen in father's memorabilia.

## A Civil Defense Warden During WWII

Shortly after Pearl Harbor my father attempted to re-enlist in the Navy. He passed his Navy physical but was turned down for active duty (he was told) because of his age (43). There were many men and women in the Armed Forces at that age or older, so we suspected his work experience as a stockbroker wasn't what they really needed.

So he became a volunteer for the Civilian Defense Service whose duties included air raid warden, search and rescue teams, and other duties related to national security. His main job was to go out every night after dark on foot or by car through the neighborhood in Greenfield Hill, a part of Fairfield, CT, making sure no lights could be seen coming out of homes, businesses and other buildings.

In the early days of the war coastlines were particularly blacked-out of light to hinder navigational fixes by Nazi submarines. Considering the German Luftwaffe's blitz on England, one never could tell how soon German planes could reach US shores so the black-out was also for a potential threat.

After the war we kept and treasured his white CD metal helmet which we stored in a safe place in the attic next to

his World War I naval uniform. However today, I can't say what became of them.

Stumbling upon all this previously unknown information about my father during his college years and WWI, when I, myself, am more than 70 years away from my own college days, was exhilarating, a real tonic for an old guy like myself!

Watch out what you find in you own family boxes—may be wonderful, may be junk. But when your parents or grandparents pass on, give those boxes a good look -through before you head to the dump.



Frederick Sutton, on right, on active Naval Air Force training at Mitchel Air Force Base on Long Island in the summer of 1919, just before WWI ended.



Fred Sutton, Jr., on left, with his father and Charles Sutton, his younger brother at Big Moose Lake in the Adirondacks, circa 1941 just before the war started. photo by Elizabeth Sutton

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# The Milkman Doesn't Stop Here Anymore

by Roger Allbee

It has been said that the home delivery of milk started in rural Vermont around 1785. This was when wagons drawn by horses with cans of milk from nearby farms were used to deliver to customers. Whether it is true that it began in Vermont, it is clear that the home delivery of milk was a reality even up to the 1960's in the state.

Those of us who grew up in the 1950's and 60's and before undoubtedly remember the milkman, and the delivery of milk to the home in glass bottles. In my family's case, we were able to get our raw milk in glass bottles each day from my grandfather's small dairy farm next door. My mother would often take the cream off the top of the bottle where it settled for baking and making other things. For others, who were not on a farm, the milkman came and left the glass bottles in a metal box on the steps near the front door. Some even placed the milk in the refrigerator in the home if they were a trusted figure. The milkman was a fixture in America, described as a humble figure, circulating the city at all hours as the guardian of public peace and safety.

## Home milk delivery in earlier times

In the early history of home milk delivery, before the invention of glass bottles in the 1870's, it is said that milk was often delivered in a sheep's stomach, and later in metal cans. In one historical case (*A Brief History of Home Milk Delivery* by Robert Taylor) it is stated that for a period in the 1840's, John O'Sullivan of Utica New York delighted customers with his Fresh From the Teat campaign, wherein the milkman would bring the cow to the customers' doors and extract milk on the front lawn. People loved the service, but the cows became prone to performance anxiety, workers complained about unfair working conditions, unionized, and eventually drove O'Sullivan out of business.

In the early 1900's a large percentage of families kept a few cows to provide milk, and to make butter and cheese. Families who did not keep a cow, relied upon a neighbor for milk. At that time most of home delivered milk was raw. The interest in public health and milk quality, resulted in state laws and city ordinances that required that all milk be distributed in sealed containers and many ordinances also required that it be pasteurized.

## Moving on to the 1900's

According to records, the home delivery of milk was a big business before the 1960's. The U.S. Department of Agriculture data shows that the home delivery was a mainstay in the 1950's with one-half of all milk was home delivered. In 1963, 29.7 percent of homes relied on this method of delivery but by 1975 it had dropped to only 6.9%, and by the 1990's to less than 1%. The late Dr. Fred Webster, a Professor of Extension at the University of Vermont, stated in a Rutland Herald interview in 1996 "that when I came to UVM in 1956, there were 230 milk dealers in the state, and most did home deliveries. Going back to 1920's and 20's, you could multiply that number by 10." In 1944, data indicates that 44% of Burlington, Vermont and 45% of Essex, Vermont residents relied on the milkman delivering their milk. Several dairy farmers had a small home delivery route that served their community in the 1800's and the early to mid 1900's. In the area of Southern Vermont where I grew up there were still several distributors of milk to the home in the 1950's

## How did the decline of the milkman happen?

So, what happened to cause the decline? The post-World War II period brought a boost in automobile ownership as well as the movement to the suburbs of the population. Automobile ownership boomed after World War II. During the war years gasoline supplies were restricted and automobile production for public and commercial use ended in 1942 to be resumed after the war. In Vermont and across the United States, people became more mobile after the war with greatly improved roads. The 30's and 40's also saw the beginning growth of supermarkets where people could buy a number



Picture courtesy of Dr. Neil Pelsue  
An old carrier with bottles. From left to right: George Thomas bottle of Brattleboro Vermont with a Spoon for scooping cream from the top; UVM Amber bottle; Kenolie Farm Bottle from Newfane; Bellows Falls Cooperative Creamery bottle, used exclusively for First National Stores.

of items at one time, no longer being dependent on local specialty food shops. These stores had large refrigeration units that could store items for longer periods of time and in larger units, and in volumes and pricing that made it economically difficult for the milkman to compete. Milk could also be shipped longer distances and in much larger volumes. Tanker trucks, that replaced milk trains, with improved highways could transport up to 7,000 to 8,000 gallons of milk at one time to a processing facility in or near the city where the milk could be packaged into coated paper cartons and polyethylene containers, replacing the glass bottle. Due to economies of scale in assembling and distributing milk, these specialized processors grew in size. Dairy men became more involved in the production of milk as they could not afford to expend the time and cost in distributing the product to the home. They could not compete with the supermarket.

## Many changes in methods of delivery

Yes, a lot has changed in the delivery of milk and other food items today. The horse drawn wagon of early years that went house to house has disappeared to be replaced by large supermarkets. There has however been a re-emergence of the home delivery of food with on-line shopping. A 2017 study by the Food Marketing Institute and Nielsen, twenty-three percent of American households are now choosing and buying their groceries on-line. In some places the Milkman is back too. In several areas now across the U.S., there are companies delivering milk and other food products to the home. While customers pay more, they are said to like the convenience, quality, and tradition of the Milkman of the past. In Vermont today there still are family owned milk companies that started their businesses by delivering to the home that still exist doing delivery to stores. Glass bottles with local milk can be found in food cooperative stores in the state. Raw milk like I and others grew up on can also be purchased by consumers directly at many dairy farms.

The milkman does not exist in many places in Vermont today but the interest in convenience, quality and customer service still does.

## Roger Allbee comments about today

Today the home delivery of milk is a customer service that is missed by my generation and others. In the 50's and 60's when you went to the grocery store, the clerk would offer to carry your grocery bag out to the car. Likewise, when you went to the gas station, the attendant would put gasoline in the tank, and clean the windshield of the car. Customer service was considered to be necessary, as the customer came first. Consumerism and product delivery has changed since the 50's and 60's, but the growth of farmer's markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA's), Buy Local, and other venues has help to better connect consumers with products produced on or with the land in Vermont. This has helped to re-establish the connection between the producer of the product and the customer today that existed with the milkman of the past.

Roger Allbee is the former Secretary of Agriculture for the State of Vermont. He also has been a member of the Senior Management Team of the former Farm Credit and Bank for Cooperatives for the Northeast; a former Chair of the Animal Products Advisory Committee to a former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and U.S. Trade Ambassador. He lives in Townshend, Vermont with his wife Ann. Visit [www.whatceresmightstay.blogspot.com](http://www.whatceresmightstay.blogspot.com).

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A picture of the first transportation series US postage stamp introduced in 1987, that had a picture of this home delivery milk wagon.





Two Jersey bulls eating hay in their pasture in Central Vermont.

photo by Nancy Cassidy

### Native's Return

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 Behind dark trees, where all day long  
 It's quiet as a pin  
 That drops upon a cushion, or  
 Perhaps a rug-laid floor,  
 And where life seldom comes to rap  
 Upon the heavy door.  
 I like to sit beside the road  
 And watch the waving grass,  
 Where daisies and bright buttercups  
 Nod as the people pass,  
 And birds fly up and sway around  
 Upon a bending limb,  
 Singing a joyous snatch of song,  
 Or little, heartfelt hymn.  
 How much I pity people who  
 Have slowly aged, like me,  
 And yet must live where they must live,  
 Who cannot ever see  
 The lovely softness of the grass,  
 The trees, the lively birds—  
 A city life is, for the old,  
 Too pitiful for words.

—NELLIE S. RICHARDSON  
 1944, Springfield, VT



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**Book Review**

# The Burlington Bike Path and Waterfront Park

**An Environmental Handbook for the Post Auto Era**

by Rick Sharp

Here's an amazing story about Burlington, Vermont's unique 7.6-mile Greenway waterfront bike path enjoyed by so many here days for biking, hiking, jogging, even cross-country skiing.

If events leading up to creating this path over an old railroad line had happened differently, a token route might still exist today, but the area would abound with developments of high-rise condos, hotels and inns, commercial enterprises, lots of auto traffic, large parking lots for cars and private marinas for boats.

But thanks to a persistent Georgetown Law School graduate named Rick Sharp, the bike path became a reality instead of commercial development, but not without much drama, many legal battles, successes and failures of ballots, grassroots citizen involvement, plain luck, and mostly a big plus from 'a savior' legality known as the Public Trust Doctrine—all reported about in this book.

This doctrine states that certain places considered "public" are in a public trust guarded by the state. These include the bottoms of waterways such as Lake Champlain. So as it turned out, since a railroad no longer was using this acreage, the lands (although no longer lake waters) reverted back to public trust, and development there would primarily benefit private interests and not the public. So the land could then be used for bike and hiking paths, waterfront parks, and other public uses.

Ironically the key to saving this waterfront for the public began more than 100 years earlier because some 60 acres of the waterfront land were filled in with the sawdust and log trimmings from a booming lumbering operation which began in the 1870s. One

can only imagine how disappointed potential developers were when the choice Burlington waterfront and its stunning views of the lake and the distant Adirondack mountains could not be used for their enterprises.

Author Sharp reprints an opinion by Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas regarding protecting the environment when possible which reads in part... "that before these priceless bits of Americana such as a valley, an alpine meadow, a river or a lake are

lost or are so transformed as to be reduced to the eventual rubble of our urban environment, the voice of the existing beneficiaries of these environmental wonders should be heard."

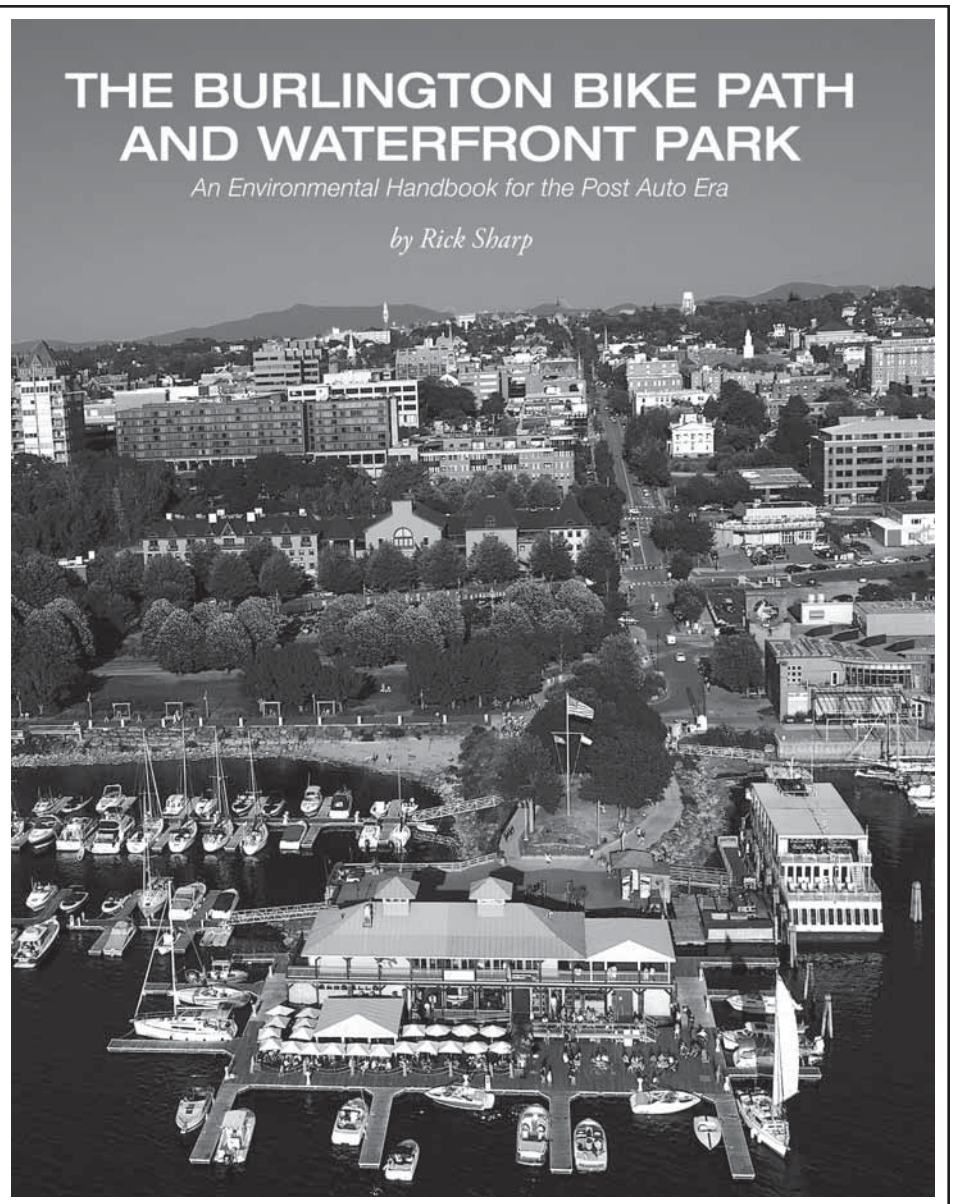
The book shows Justice Douglas leading a hike along the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal in the mid-1950's as a successful protest against the canal being filled in and paved into a freeway into Washington, DC.

Sharp's book recounts the story of how the Burlington bike path came about with him as one of its main proponents who worked with the bike-backers Citizens Waterfront Group in the 1980s.

For developers, many politicians (both sides of the aisle), and commercial entrepreneurs, this "eco-freak" Sharp was "a dreamer, a trouble-maker, a gadfly and a spoiler."

So wasn't it just like him to join a few of his kind with a chainsaw to remove a giant log that a resident had placed over the existing rail-bed trail to discourage bikers and hikers even before the path was secured.

Why wouldn't there be much public support to clean-up the long-time harbor eyesore? It supported huge stainless steel tanks surrounded by chain link fences topped with barbed wire, an abandoned rail yard,



# THE BURLINGTON BIKE PATH AND WATERFRONT PARK

An Environmental Handbook for the Post Auto Era

by Rick Sharp

scattered junk, and a facility where sewage was treated in open vats.

So one can imagine that finally cleaning up this mess became a must-do especially after its latest developer known as the Alden Plan got the famous architectural firm of Benjamin Thompson to draft a plan for Burlington Harbor. This firm had mega-development projects in Baltimore Harbor, South Street Seaport in New York City and Faneuil Hall in Boston. There the once industrial junkyards became thriving moneymaking tourist attractions.

The Burlington's Greenway bike path today is part of the longer 13.4 mile Island Line Trail that crosses Lake Champlain on a narrow 3-mile causeway. The entire trail is continually getting a facelift with new paving and landscaping...and is highly popular.

Those interested in the nuts and bolts of how the amazing bike path came about will find this book packed with before and after photographs and maps, pro and con newspaper editorials and news clips, court rulings and legal opinions, It's a legal brief in itself while being a fascinating story,

Burlington local, Rick Sharp and his wife Ruth Masters own and operate Burlington Segways, offering tours of the beloved bike path and waterfront park he worked tirelessly to help create. For information visit [www.burlingtonsegways.com](http://www.burlingtonsegways.com)

The Burlington Bike Path is available for \$29.99. To order go to [www.burlingtonbikepath.com](http://www.burlingtonbikepath.com). Rick is always interested in hearing from readers—write him at [burlingtonbikepath@comcast.net](mailto:burlingtonbikepath@comcast.net)



Rick Sharp on one of his Segways at the Burlington waterfront.

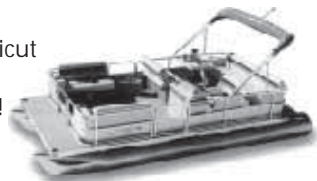
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**Holy Cow,  
What Are You Looking At?**

by Burr Morse

All the bad news from around the world gives me an even greater appreciation for living here in Vermont. And, yes, I'll even factor in cold, deep snow, and deep mud ruts which are our current highway and byway nemesis while doing the little driving we are allowed. Vermont is my homeland...I was born and bred here and, b'gory, love it clear to its ornery bedrock.

That appreciation for our beloved Green Mountains hit home particularly last week when I was making one of my daily treks down to the pasture water hole to chop the ice so our small herd of beef cows could drink.

It was a typical sunny but very crisp morning. I drove over to our barn, grabbed an axe, and climbed over the fence.

I met the cows at their circular hay feeder and headed toward the water hole via their trodden-down cow path. Following a cow path across an expanse of land brought back memories from my youth when my sister Susie and I tromped over this same ground to fetch the cows for their evening milking.

Back then the path was worn into green turf but wherever cows go and at whatever time of year, they always go single file and leave a bovine highway...a thoroughfare well known and beautiful to me!

On that cold day, I passed the "girls and boys" busily eating their breakfast and headed toward the ice covered water hole.

I had only gotten a couple hundred feet in my journey when I sensed a presence

behind me. Looking back made me jump a bit because there was Ferdie the bull literally breathing his sour breath down my neck!

After him, like dutiful soldiers, marched the rest of the our herd...hip, hip, hip... almost like they knew what I was up to. The ice had built up considerable thickness overnight and required a lot of chopping.

But even after I finished opening up plenty of cold, clear water, none of the bovines drank. They had just followed me for the sake of a nice morning stroll!

When I headed back, sure enough, my rag-tag crew followed right along. We trudged slowly through this bright, crystalline world.

The Berlin hills loomed beyond our waiting sugar-bush to the south while the sun shouted "Good morning!" in the east.

It was the perfect way to start a morning for eight of God's creatures, seven of the bovine variety and one aging man. And that, my friends, describes a peak experience in Vermont, a place where life always follows the "slow lane"

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Daffodils dancing around an old maple tree in Randolph, VT.

photo by Nancy Cassidy

**Statewide**

**USDA Forest Service Provides Recreation Guidance**

USDA Forest Service officials in Vermont are asking visitors to be mindful of trail conditions and respectful of others on national forests as the state continues to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak.

With mud season coming along and as more people look for opportunities to get outside in search of exercise, many trails have become wet, leaving them vulnerable to degradation and soil erosion. While the Green Mountain National Forest is open, visitors are being asked to protect themselves, others and avoid environmental impacts by not using soft trails and following the guidelines below:

- Avoid visiting the forest if you are sick.
- Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance on personal hygiene and social distancing.
- Stay at least six feet apart from others, including having your dog on a leash and close to you.
- Be cautious and choose low-risk activities to avoid injury.
- Stay out of closed areas and check [www.fs.usda.gov/main/gmfl/home](http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/gmfl/home) to see if your destination is open.
- Take your trash with you when you leave. Trash overflowing receptacles can be harmful to wildlife.
- Please make arrangements to use the restroom before

or after your visit to the forest. Unmanaged waste creates a health hazard for our employees and for other visitors.

• If an area is crowded, look for a less occupied location or return at a later time. Consider avoiding the forest during high-use periods.

• People traveling to Vermont should continue to adhere to Governor Phil Scott's Monday, March 30 restrictions on travelers arriving in Vermont.

• Per the State of Vermont: Stay close to home. Find areas close to home that you can walk or bike to. If you must drive, please limit the distance from your home to 10 miles, and only drive with members of your household.

*The USDA Forest Service continues to assess access to recreation areas that attract large crowds and cannot meet social distancing guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Visitors are urged to take the recommended CDC precautions. For tips from the CDC on preventing illnesses like the coronavirus, go to*

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html). Information from the U.S. Department of Agriculture is available at [www.usda.gov/coronavirus](http://www.usda.gov/coronavirus).

For up-to-date information on the Green Mountain National Forest, please visit [www.fs.usda.gov/main/gmfl/home](http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/gmfl/home).

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# North Country Book News

Children's Book Reviews by Charles Sutton

## Springtime Stories About Birds, Bunnies, and Beavers!

Kids are itching to get out in the spring, having been shut in all winter. However, recently they have been put to the test with shelter in place. Here are a few stories for them about what the animals all around us are doing when springtime comes to them.

A sure sign of spring are birds returning from their wintering over quarters in warmer climates. You may see many different species of song birds singing their familiar tunes but *Have You Heard the Nesting Bird?* by Rita Gray and illustrated by Kenard Pak (\$7.99 softcover. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. [www.hmhc.com](http://www.hmhc.com)) is a welcome and refreshing book on why some birds enchant us with their joyful songs while mother birds nesting on their eggs are so silent. This is both a charming picture and educational book about mother birds like the robin who sits quite still—"not a single tweet or trill." We learn they are quiet so that other animals won't know they are sitting on hatching eggs that would be a meal for them.

The reader is introduced to over a dozen birds and their songs. Meet mourning doves who coo and coo; woodpeckers who go cut-cuk-cuk; starlings that whistle ee-wee-tree; sparrows who go chiddik, chiddik; swallows who go ha-ha-chit-chit or ha-ha-twitter-twit and catbirds who really sound like a hungry cat with their meow! meow!

Rabbits traditionally are associated with spring because of Easter bunnies. Learn just how one baby rabbit learns about this special season in *Bunny Hopwell's First Spring* by Jean Fritz and illustrated by Rachel Dixon (E-book, \$7.99, Penguin, [www.penguin.com/youngreaders](http://www.penguin.com/youngreaders)). Immediately likable is baby rabbit Bunny Hopwell who is anxious to know "Who is Spring?" His mother may tell him that Spring is warm and beautiful and birds, squirrels and even a bear also praise

Springtime, but Bunny Hopwell finds Spring himself when he smells the violets and eats the green grass. This baby rabbit is so delighted when he finally finds Spring, he hops over a garden fence and back again. This is a reprint of the Wonder Books line originally published between 1940 and 1960.

Imagine what might happen to downstream wildlife—ducks and ducklings, water voles and one lone frog—if an eager beaver built a huge dam across their river. In *Frog and Beaver* by Simon James (\$16.99. Candlewick Press. [www.candlewick.com](http://www.candlewick.com)) follow the much-concerned frog who scouts out what the beaver is doing when their downstream river suddenly goes dry. The beaver promotes his dam as the "best for miles around." But see how this 'engineering feat' soon collapses. Everyone is washed downstream but the animals are safe including the much water-logged beaver whom the frog must give life-supporting emergency first aid to.

We see friendships are built with more than logs. Beaver builds a proper, smaller dam and a little log house for the frog. The drawings capture the drama of the dam collapse and the serene happily-ever-after community of animals coming together in the aftermath.

Want an easy and delightful way to teach your young child to recognize different colors? Enjoy *Baby's First Book of Birds & Colors* by Phyllis Limbacher Tildes (\$7.99. A board book. Charlesbridge Publishing. [www.charlesbridge.com](http://www.charlesbridge.com)) where 16 brightly colored birds are pictured in habitats of the same color helping them to stay hidden, but not from us. For red: scarlet tanager and northern cardinal among summer red maple leaves; for yellow: goldfinch and yellow warbler nested in the forsythia; for blue: eastern bluebird and blue jay among blueberry bushes and morning glories; and for orange: Baltimore oriole and Blackburnian warbler in the azalea bushes. This nifty book will also sharpen up adult's bird-watching skills.



Book Review by Charles Sutton

## In the Middle of the Mountains Scenic Roads & Trails In the Montgomery-Jay Peak Area

By Robert Gillmore  
Photographs by Eileen Oktavec  
(\$12.95. Published by Montgomery Recreation Board)

Mountains have always been a place to enjoy sheer beauty, solitude, and the wonders of the natural world. The guide has tempting descriptions of the natural world. For example in the hike entitled Haystack Mountain via Long Trail we read: "Parts of the trail are long, gorgeous, garden-like alleys, or walkways, composed entirely of massed spruces and firs on each side of the train."

Ten of the hikes follow The Long Trail, that spans the Green Mountains from top to bottom.

Being in remote Northeast Kingdom enhances its popularity, but author Gillmore has other reasons why this is exceptional.

He notes that farming is still holding its own (with 211 dairy farms) while declining elsewhere. One encounters picturesque old barns with surrounding hayfields, cornfields and pastures.

For some trails hikers can walk down rather than making arduous ascents thanks to aerials to the higher elevations. With ski slopes and trails under-foot hikers see ever-changing and continuous views of the scenery with

stops at fire towers. Gillmore and Oktavec have produced other guides in their great walks series, including Acadia National Park & Mount Desert Island; Smokey Mountains; and Yosemite National Park. Gillmore, a landscape gardener, is creating a seven-acre woodland garden in his hometown Montgomery. Oktavec is a painter, photographer and cultural anthropologist.

Published by the Montgomery, Vermont Recreation Board. Distributed by Great Walks, Inc., (802) 326-2400.

CHOSEN ONE OF 62 BEST INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORES IN THE WORLD BY ATLAS OBSCURA IN THE NEW YORK TIMES



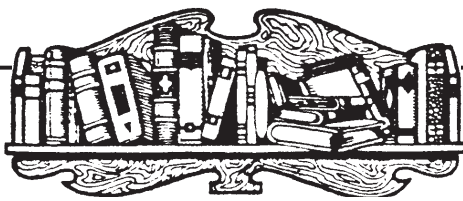
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# Naturally Curious

A Photographic Field Guide and  
Month-by-Month Journey through the Fields,  
Woods, and Marshes of New England

by Mary Holland

(\$32.95. Trafalgar Square Books. [www.trafalgarbooks.com](http://www.trafalgarbooks.com))

After winter's lingering presence finally vanishes, May is the perfect month of year for those who cherish the outdoors and the 'coming to life' in the natural world.

Vermont naturalist May Holland has compiled a 12-month guide to an ever-changing drama. And she writes: "Here is a sampling of species that are returning to breeding ground, engaging in courtship, laying eggs, nesting, hatching, giving birth, searching for new homes, foraging, flowering, and dispersing seeds in the month of May."

She thoughtfully introduces us to the spring happenings of amphibia, reptiles, birds, mammals, invertebrates and plants and fungi. She surprises us with their unusual habits and behaviors that are little known and usually omitted from guide books. The reader can't but exclaim: "Well, what about that!"

Take, for instance, song birds that entertain us after months of chilly silence: "In the hour before dawn a lone melodic voice brakes the silence, quite possibly of the American robin "Cheer up, cherrily, cherrio, cherrily," he seems to sing.

Gradually more voices join in, each one different in pattern, pitch, and tone, for they are sung by different species of birds. By sunrise a magnificent chorus greets the day and lucky are those who are privileged to hear this concert.

## Unusual songs from birds

We are treated to a sampling of songs heard in New England: red-breasted nuthatch (yank-yank); Eastern towhee (drink-your-teeeeeeee); Canada warbler (click! turn-it-on, turn-it-off); red-winged blackbird (monk-la-ree); wood thrush (ee-o-lay); and red-wing blackbird (konk-la-ree). Of course chickadees sing chick-a-dee-dee-dee-dee.

Some sounds coming out of birds are courtship calls, as we learn about the American Bittern whose deep-pumping "oong-ka-choonk" has earned him the name "thunder-pumper" and 'stake-driver.'

Some of the earliest sounds we hear are from peepers (baby frogs) whose high-pitched peep resounds in a chorus sounding like sleigh bells.

## Amazing courtship

Because May is the mating season Holland goes to some length explaining the courtship roles of the various species and how they behave once the eggs or offspring on their way. Male hummingbirds, for example, don't hang around to help with the babies and they leave a month ahead of the females on their trip to Central America for the winter.

Female orioles get extravagant courtship by the male. The male displays by singing, chattering, hopping from perch to perch in front of the female, and bowing repeatedly with his wings lowered and tail fanned.

Some mating calls aren't pleasant as we learn the pickerel frog gives out a low snoring call, often followed by a series of grunts.

## Everything from bears to black flies

Here are some other highlights of why the book is entitled *Naturally Curious*:

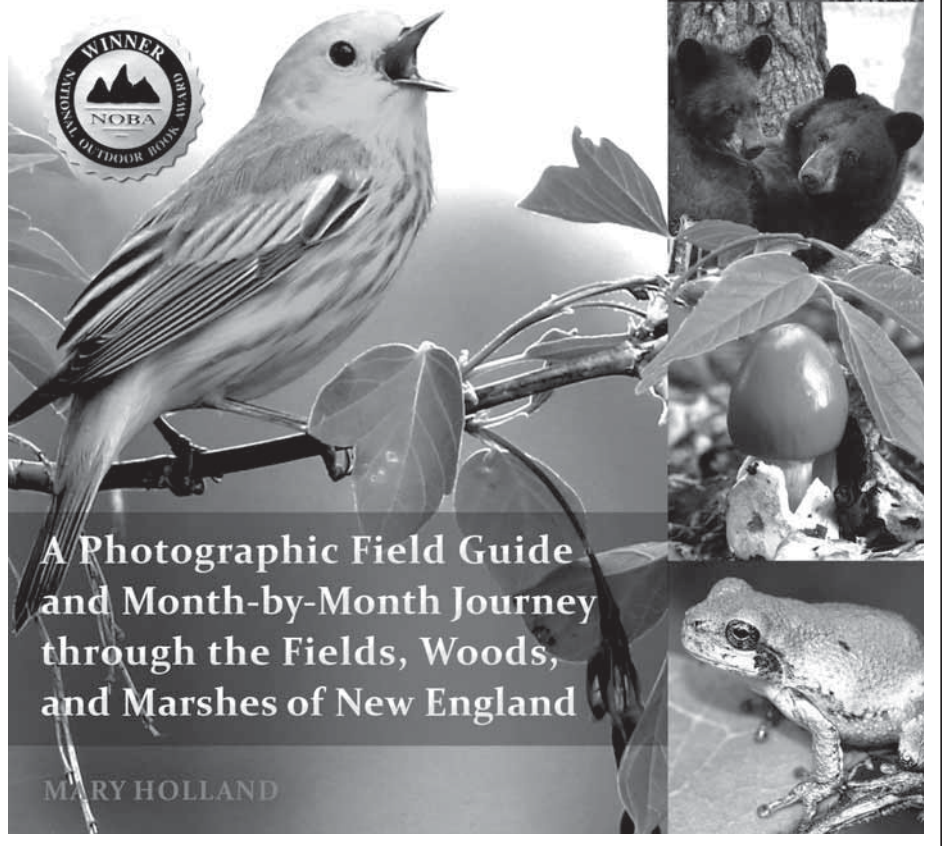
**Woodchucks**—In creating their 25–30 feet long underground burrows they remove 700 pounds of subsoils which can be seen piled up outside their homes (which unfortunate for us may be near our garden with its tempting woodchuck meals.

**American Black Bears**—Ever seen a rotted log torn apart in the woods? Chances are this was done by hungry bears looking to eat colonial insects like bees, wasps, ants. Bears, ever voracious, are also partial to berries, grapes, apples, acorns, leaves of deciduous trees, jack-in-the-pulpit roots, sunflower seeds, frogs, fish, mice, and colonial insects.

**Black Flies**—These pesky, tiny female flies want your blood so stay out of the woods during their session. Black flies are attracted to after-shave and perfume. The fly gives a wicked bite from saw-tooth mandibles that create most unpleasant itches and scratches.

The Award-Winning Original—Revised and Updated

# NATURALLY CURIOUS



A Photographic Field Guide  
and Month-by-Month Journey  
through the Fields, Woods,  
and Marshes of New England

MARY HOLLAND

**Mayflies**—A water bug that flies. This winged insect spends its immature life under water (3–6 months or longer) as a nymph and then emerges as a terrestrial adult. Male mayfly courtship takes place in the air with aerial display, often thousands of males performing synchronized dance.

**Five-Lined Skink**—This is the only lizard living in New England. Its bright blue tail turns dull gray as the lizard matures.

**Lady Beetle**—Gardeners love these tiny colorful beetles who devour aphids, scale insects, mealy-bugs and other soft-bodied insects that damage plants. There are 500 species of lady beetle who eat 60 aphids a day.

**Snake Scales**—Snakes aren't horrible to touch as they are covered with scales for protection, to help with locomotion, and to minimize water loss from evaporation. Eleven snakes breed in May including garter snakes, copperheads, and timber rattlesnakes.

**False and True Morels**—Learn which are edible. Check the difference in stems and caps before eating this mushroom.

**Poplar/Aspen**—Notice bunches of white fluff floating through the air? Not snow, what is it? These are tiny wind-dispersed seeds hanging from catkins from poplar tree species (quaking aspen, big tooth aspen and cottonwood).

This 480-page guide is generously packed with hundreds of color photographs of wildlife, wildflowers, plants, birds, insects,

nesting areas and other habitats, all captured on film by author Mary Holland. What is special is that much of the wildlife pictured here is hard to track down and see for any length of time because instinctively wildlife is in a protective mode, often camouflaged.

Mary Holland who resides in Hartland, VT., is involved in many environment projects for The Vermont Center for Ecostudies, the Massachusetts Audubon Society and Vermont Institute of Natural Science. She is the author of several children's books including *Animal Ears*, *Yodel The Yearling*, *Milkweed Visitors*, *Animal Legs*, and *Otis the Owl*.

## Book News

### On Dogs—An Anthology

Introduction by Tracey Ullman

(Published by New York Review of Books, Notting Hill Editions, \$18.95, hardcover.)

Dogs throughout history have enjoyed a special relationship with humankind, and our favorite four-legged creatures continue to grow in popularity.

The writers and poets collected within this linen-bound, handheld hardcover anthology reflect on the joys and pitfalls of dog

ownership with brilliant wit, insight, and affection. With a heartfelt and humorous introduction by Tracey Ullman (an inveterate adopter of strays), this illustrated anthology traces the canine's extraordinary journey from working animal to pampered pet.

Features six black-and-white dog photographs by

acclaimed reportage and portrait photographer Rhian Ap Gruffydd (Gruffpawtraits).

While *New York Review of Books'* office is shut down due to COVID-19, order this book through your local bookstore or go to [www.bookshop.org](http://www.bookshop.org). For more great titles visit [nyrb.com](http://nyrb.com).

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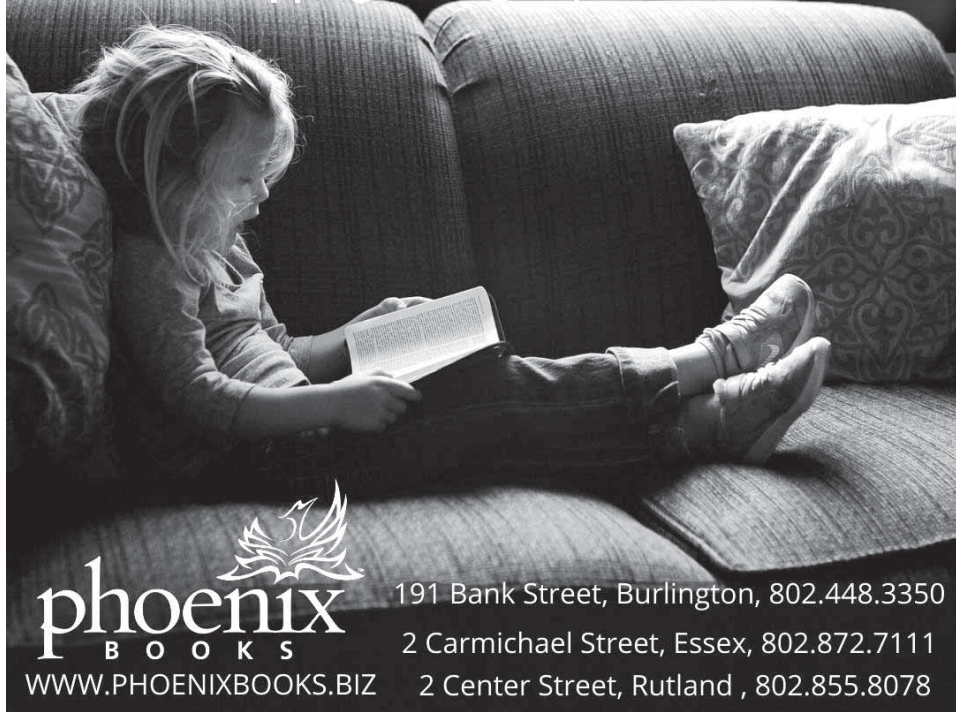
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# Cliff Tops Closed to Protect Nesting Peregrines

Hiking Vermont's hillsides is a great way to enjoy a spring day, but the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department and Audubon Vermont recommend you check to see if the area you're planning to hike or climb is open. Several cliff areas are currently closed to protect nesting peregrine falcons.

Each spring the Forest Service closes the Rattlesnake Cliff Area in Salisbury and the Mount Horrid/Great Cliff Area in Rochester from March 15 – August 1.

Information regarding the specific locations for the closure areas is available at Forest Service offices. Forest Service employees post signs to alert the public to let them know trails to the cliff overlooks are closed. Disturbance of peregrine falcons and/or these nesting grounds is a violation of federal law and may result in a fine up to \$5,000 and 6 months in jail. Please report any harassment of nesting peregrine falcons to 1-800-75ALERT.

The Forest Service works with Audubon Vermont, the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other non-profit organizations to protect peregrine falcons.

"Peregrine nesting is well underway this spring," said John Buck, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department biologist.

"The falcons are very sensitive to human presence so we ask climbers and hikers to please avoid the nests with a respectful distance. The closures help people to choose an alternative route in advance.

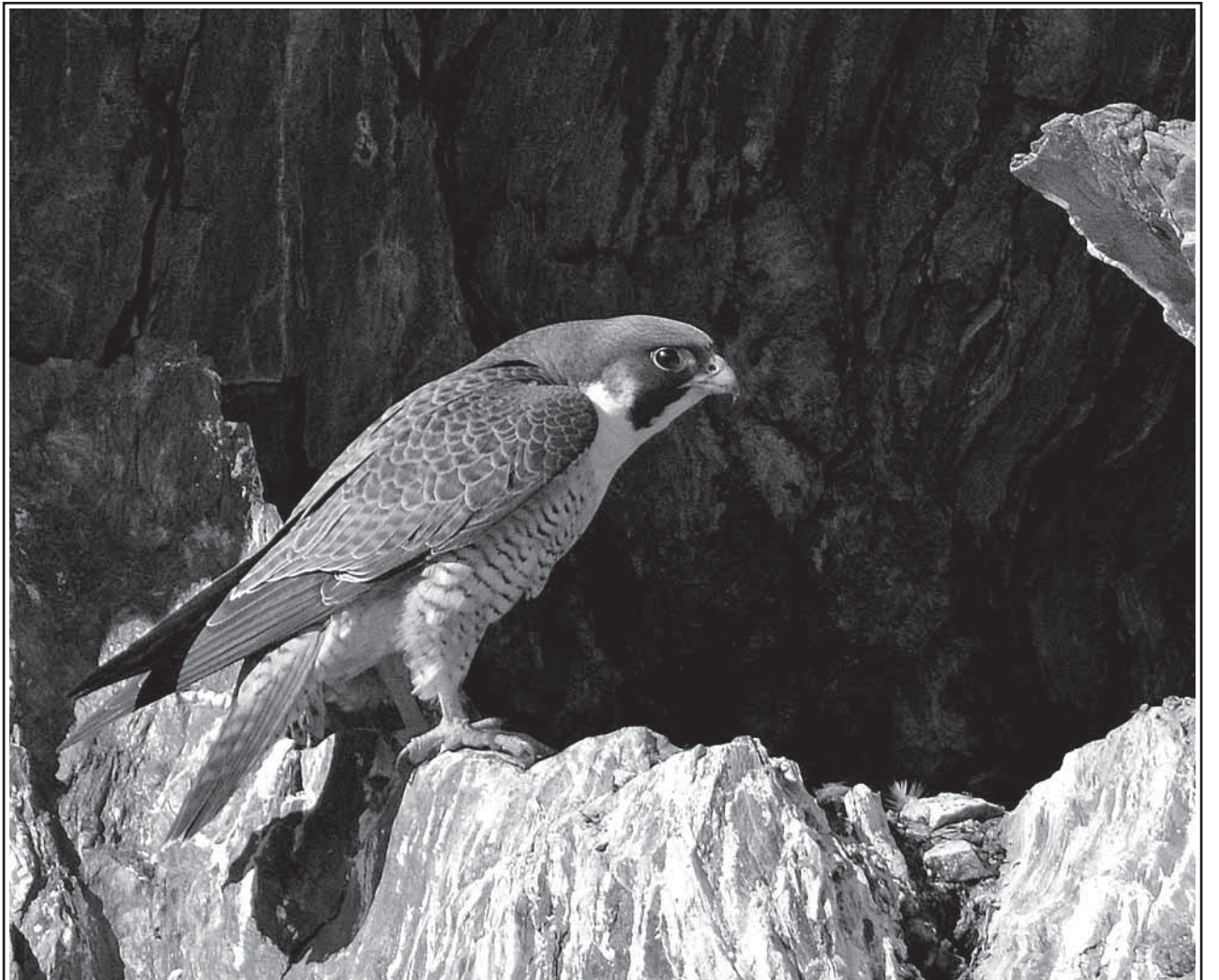
We close the portions of the cliffs where the birds are nesting and the trails leading to those cliff areas. These areas will be closed from April to August, but if a falcon pair doesn't nest or if the nest is not successful, they will be reopened sooner."

## Cliffs and overlooks to avoid

- Barnet Roadcut in Barnet** – Rt. 5 pullout closed
- Bolton Notch in Bolton** – upper west cliff closed
- Deer Leap in Bristol** – closed
- Fairlee Palisades in Fairlee** – cliff top closed
- Marshfield Mt. in Marshfield** – portions closed to climbing
- Mt. Horrid in Goshen** – Great Cliff overlook closed
- Nichols Ledge in Woodbury** – cliff top closed
- Rattlesnake Point in Salisbury** – cliff top closed
- Snake Mt. in Addison** – overlook south of pond closed
- Table Mt. in Manchester** – closed

"The areas closed include the portions of the cliffs where the birds are nesting and the trails leading to the cliff tops or overlooks," said Buck. "In many cases the lower portions of the trails are still open. We will update the closure list as more nesting data are reported."

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department partners with Audubon Vermont to monitor the sites throughout the nesting season. These sites will remain closed until August 1, but if



Peregrine falcon lands by it's nest.

photo courtesy of Doug Gimler

a falcon pair doesn't nest or if the nest is not successful, the sites will be reopened sooner.

According to Margaret Fowle with Audubon Vermont, 36 of the 40 territorial pairs monitored in 2014 attempted to nest. Twenty-seven nesting pairs were successful, producing at least 50 young falcons. The peregrine's recovery is a great success story," said Fowle. "The population continues to do well thanks to our many volunteers and partners."

"We appreciate the public's support in respecting the cliff closures," said Buck. "The peregrine falcon was removed from the endangered species list in 2005 due, in part, to people respecting the falcon's nesting period. Continued

respect for the falcon will help ensure that peregrines remain part of Vermont's landscape."

What you can do to help Vermont peregrines:

- Respect cliff closures, and retreat if you see peregrines
- Report any disturbance of nesting peregrines to your local game warden
- Report any sightings by calling Vermont Fish & Wildlife at (802) 828-1000 or e-mailing [fwinformation@state.vt.us](mailto:fwinformation@state.vt.us).

Updated information on cliff closures is listed on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department website at [www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com) or by calling (802) 828-1000.

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## Berryman

I will tell you what he told me  
in the years just after the war  
as we then called  
the second world war

don't lose your arrogance yet he said  
you can do that when you're older  
lose it too soon and you may  
merely replace it with vanity

just one time he suggested  
changing the usual order  
of the same words in a line of verse  
why point out a thing twice

he suggested I pray to the Muse  
get down on my knees and pray  
right there in the corner and he  
said he meant it literally

it was in the days before the beard  
and the drink but he was deep  
in tides of his own through which he sailed  
chin sideways and head tilted like a tacking sloop

he was far older than the dates allowed for  
much older than I was he was in his thirties  
he snapped down his nose with an accent  
I think he had affected in England

as for publishing he advised me  
to paper my wall with rejection slips  
his lips and the bones of his long fingers trembled  
with the vehemence of his views about poetry

he said the great presence  
that permitted everything and transmuted it  
in poetry was passion  
passion was genius and he praised movement and invention

I had hardly begun to read  
I asked how can you ever be sure  
that what you write is really  
any good at all and he said you can't

you can't you can never be sure  
you die without knowing  
whether anything you wrote was any good  
if you have to be sure don't write

— W.S. MERWIN  
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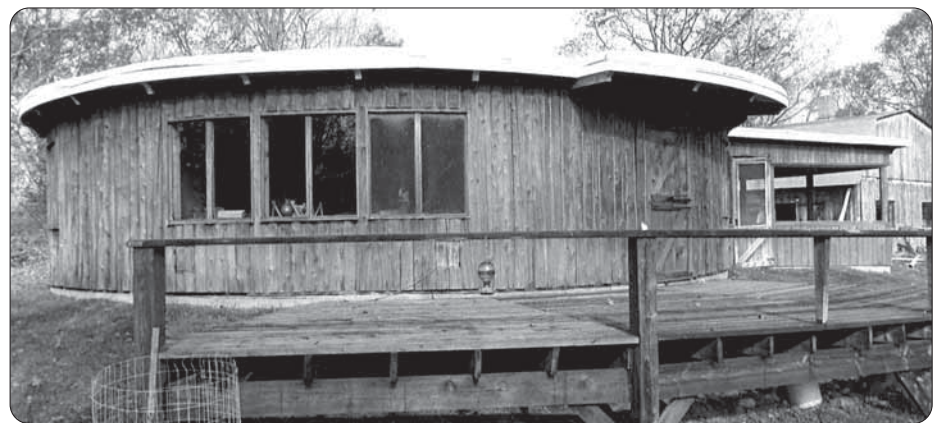
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