

Vermont Country Sampler

December
2014

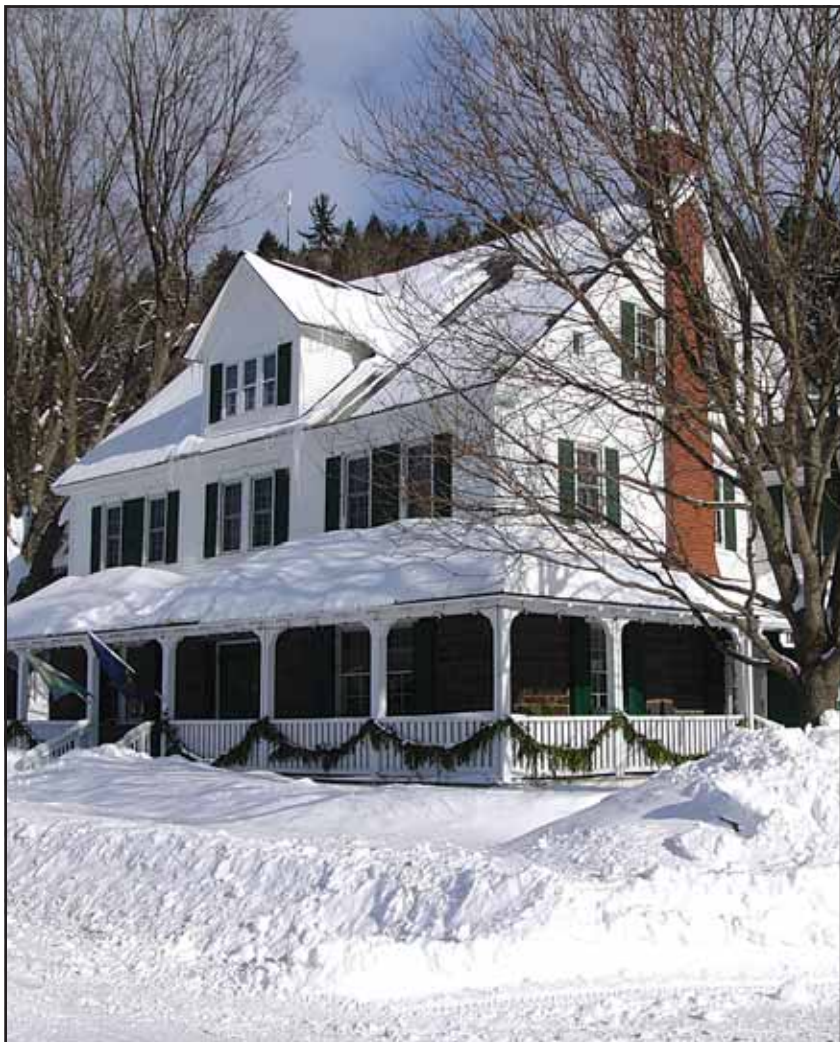
- Statewide Calendar of Events, Map
- Inns, B&B's, Dining, Real Estate
- Sights to See, Things to Do
- Plenty of Good Reading!

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A Litany After Winter Solstice

You white sky of snow:
Pray for us. Pray for us. Graciously hear us.

You deep killing freeze:
Pray for us. Pray for us. Graciously hear us.

All of you seeds, scattered and longing:
Pray for us. Pray for us. Graciously hear us.

All of you leaves taken from summer:
Pray for us. Pray for us. Graciously hear us.

All of you shriveled colors and scents,
Petals and blossoms and berries and fruits:
Pray for us. Pray for us. Graciously hear us.

All of you ragweed, ironweed, goldenrod broken,
blackened euonymus,
burdock and pokeweed,
hollow and empty,
sweet rocket, ragwort, celandine, poppies and thistles
curling and waiting:
Pray for us. Pray for us. Graciously hear us.

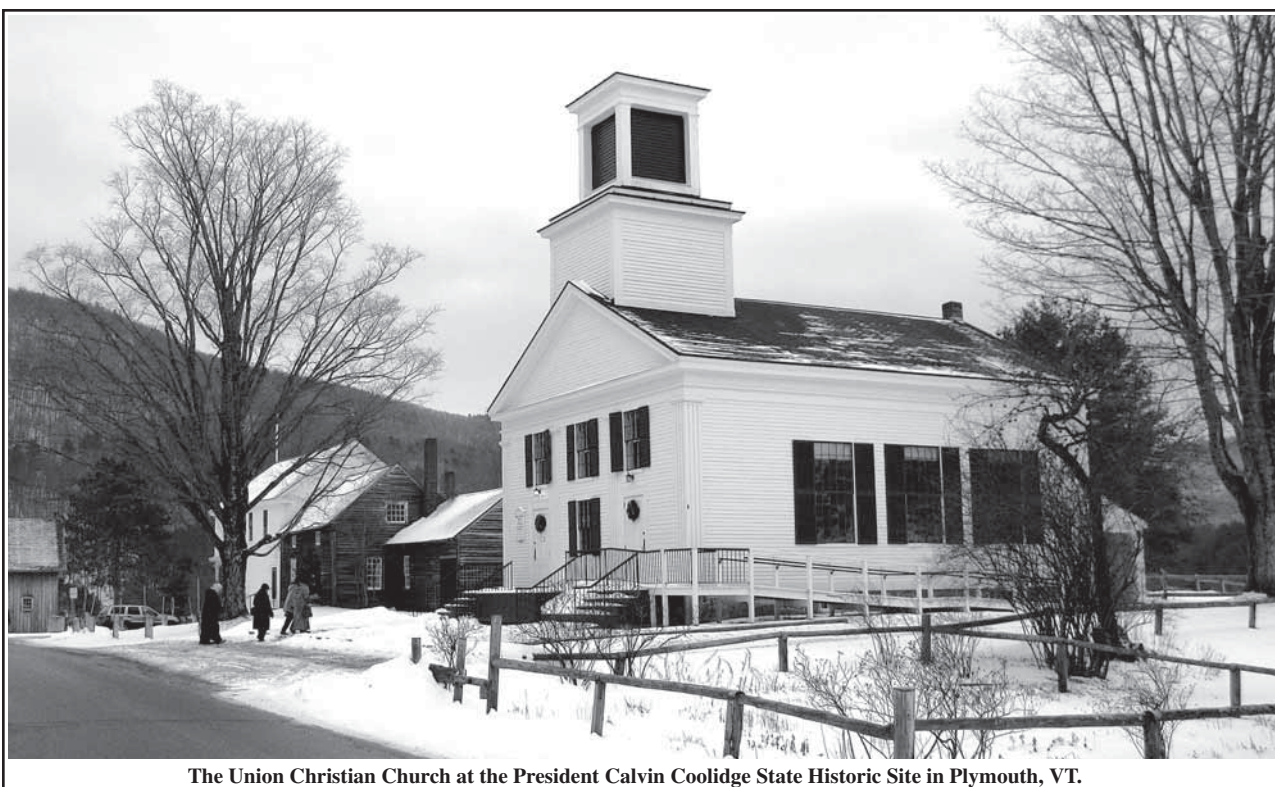
All of you frogs and all of you toads,
Burrowed and patient, hidden and mute:
Pray for us. Pray for us. Graciously hear us.

All of you silenced cicadas and katydids,
All of you crickets still prowling the dark,
All of you ravening mice in the cupboards:
Pray for us. Pray for us. Graciously hear us.

All of you creatures gone or to come,
All of you wings of the birds that have vanished,
All of you mating calls still to be sung:
Pray for us. Pray for us. Graciously hear us.

All of you crocus, ready to rise,
Snowdrops, hepaticas, twinleaf, and bloodroot,
Anemones, cress and bluebells and squills:
Pray for us. Pray for us. Graciously hear us.
Pray for us. Pray for us. Graciously hear us.

—BILL FELKER



The Union Christian Church at the President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site in Plymouth, VT.

Plymouth, VT

Coolidge Holiday Open House Celebrating the Traditions of the Season

Feeling overwhelmed by the rush of holiday shopping, crowds, and decorating? Return to a simpler time on Saturday, December 6 at the Coolidge Holiday Open House at the President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site, in historic Plymouth Notch, VT.

Many of the museum buildings, including the Homestead where President Calvin Coolidge was sworn in as president of the United States, will be open that day, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event is free and features special presentations and a variety of family activities.

An open house highlight will be a baking demonstration by culinary artist and author of several books, Gesine Bullock-Prado at 2 p.m. Bullock-Prado will delight us with her lively presentations of elegant holiday confections. This year, she is making “clever and easy holiday treats” such as reindeer palmier, gingerbread Christmas village, candy cane toboggan, and stocking cookies. Copies of her latest book, *Bake It Like You Mean It: Gorgeous Cakes From Inside Out* (reviewed in this issue of the Sampler on p. 28), will be available for signing.

Steve Morse of Montpelier will perform holiday organ and piano music throughout the day and will lead caroling in the village church at 1 p.m. Site Administrator Bill Jenney will provide special tours of the Coolidge Homestead at 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

There will be horse-drawn sleigh rides (or wagon rides, depending on weather) with Fred DePaul. A resident of Plymouth Notch, DePaul is well known for his local lore and engaging humor.

The Coolidge Foundation invites holiday makers of all ages to create decorations, cards, gift tags, and little books using papers, rubber stamps, punches, ribbons, and other embellishments. Terry Gulick of Springfield invites everyone to try their hand at making fresh evergreen wreaths. Gulick will also have wreaths for sale, donating proceeds to the Coolidge Site’s garden fund.

Fiber Arts in Vermont, a nonprofit group based in Proctorsville, will offer textile demonstrations (spinning, weaving, felting, etc.); the group will also have a raffle for a beautiful

hand-woven wool blanket—a realistic copy of one made by Calvin Coolidge’s grandmother—to support the conservation of the Site’s textile collection.

Other artisans include The Chocolatorium with chocolate making & sampling, Dolores Furnari showing how to do thorem painting, Ellen Denton demonstrating creating holiday cards from nature, Leah Karo showing rug hooking, Evelyn Gant with lace making, and Marianne Fassett doing paper quilting—take home a quilted tree or snowflake ornament!

The Coolidge birthplace will be decorated as it would have been in 1872, the year the future president was born. Also open are the Coolidge Museum & Education Center, Aldrich House, Coolidge Hall (the 1924 Summer White House office), Wilder House Restaurant (serving a homemade & hearty lunch), Union Christian Church.

The Florence Cilley General Store will be open and will tempt the discerning shopper with old-fashioned toys and unusual gift items. Coolidge memorabilia and a wide variety of Vermont-made crafts can also be found in the shop at the Museum & Education Center. It is the perfect time to pick up those unique stocking stuffers!

Open House visitors can purchase cheese and watch it being made at the Plymouth Cheese Factory. Under the management of Plymouth Artisan Cheese, the factory is producing several varieties of the famous “granular curd” Plymouth Cheese, based on the 1890 recipe. The factory will also have a wine tasting that day.

The Plymouth Post Office has a special holiday cancellation (the newest in the series of covers designed by John Lutz) from 1-4 p.m. The lighting ceremony for the Plymouth Memory Tree, a project that offers financial assistance to area residents in need, is at 3 p.m. Donations to this fund can be made by contacting Al Poirier: arpolby@yahoo.com.

President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site is located at 3780 Rt. 100A in Plymouth, VT.

For further information about the Coolidge Holiday Open House, call (802) 672-3773, or visit www.historicsites.vermont.gov/coolidge.

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Vermont Country Sampler • Charles Sutton
PO Box 197, N. Clarendon, VT 05759 • (802) 772-7463
www.vermontcountry sampler.com



photo by Billings Farm & Museum

Visitors enjoy a horse-drawn wagon ride around the farm on Thanksgiving Weekend at Billings Farm & Museum in Woodstock, VT.

Vermont Chamber of Commerce

Top Ten Winter Festivities in Vermont

**Thanksgiving Weekend
At Billings Farm & Museum**

Woodstock, VT • November 28-30, 2014

Featuring traditional cooking and preparation of a late 19th century Thanksgiving dinner in the restored 1890 Farm House. Enjoy horse-drawn wagon rides, farm tours and hands-on food preparation and preservation. Admission. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org.

Manchester Merriment

Manchester, VT • November 28, 2014 to January 1, 2015

Tours of decorated inns, wine tastings at local restaurants, the Lighted Tractor Parade, and the Elf Express Train ride. Horse-drawn wagon rides and tree lightings round out the six-week celebration. Some events charge admission. (802) 362-6313. www.visitmanchestervt.com.

36th Annual Putney Craft Tour

Putney, VT • November 28-30, 2014

Meet 28 of Vermont's most prominent artisans on this self-guided tour. Visit and buy direct from the artisans and sample specialty food products. Meander the back roads and find that perfect one-of-a-kind piece. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. Free admission. (802) 387-4032. www.putneycrafts.com.

Country Christmas Open House & Holiday Paint-In

Warren & Waitsfield, VT • December 6-7, 2014

A festive setting that would make Norman Rockwell feel right at home. Shoppers find bargains while artists paint the holiday scene. Enjoy refreshments next to a bonfire. Free admission. (802) 496-3409. www.madrivervalley.com.

Christmas in Weston

Weston, VT • December 6, 2014

Experience a colonial Christmas from yesteryear. Tour the village in one of three horse-drawn wagons, stopping by many of the shops, galleries, museums and inns. Visit Santa at The Vermont Country Store! 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. No admission. www.weston-vermont.com/things-to-do-in-weston-vermont/christmas-in-weston.

First Night Burlington

Burlington, VT • December 31, 2014

A celebration of the New Year, presenting more than 100 performances of music, dance, theater, comedy, and other performing arts in up to 20 venues in downtown Burlington on New Year's Eve. 2 p.m. to 12 a.m. Admission is with a First Night button. (802) 863-6005. www.firstnightburlington.com.

Stowe Winter Carnival

Stowe, VT • January 17-25, 2014

Celebrate the outdoors in winter. Over 15 family events and competitive sporting events for tourists and locals alike, to chase away the winter blues. Ice carving demonstrations and competitions, and ski races, snow golf and snow volleyball. Participant entry fees for sporting events. (802) 777-5510. www.stowewintercarnival.com.

Montshire Igloo Build

Norwich, VT • February 14, 2015

Learn to build an igloo and other snow dwellings from expert Dr. Bert Yankielun, engineer, adventurer, inventor and author. Discover the structural secrets of building with snow and try your own hand at building an igloo strong enough to support the weight of a polar bear! Also indoor activities and presentations throughout the day. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Admission. (802) 649-2200. www.montshire.org.

20th Annual Magic Hat Mardi Gras

Burlington, VT • February 27-28, 2015

Friday night music at Higher Ground. Festivities start at noon downtown with musical performances, a costume contest, free photo booth, and family-friendly activities. A parade with floats down Main St. with beads, moonpies, and Lake Champlain Chocolates! Live music on the Church Street Stage. (802) 658-2739. www.magicchat.net.

Green Mountain Film Festival

Montpelier, VT • March 20-29, 2015

Downtown Montpelier turns into a cinephile's dream bringing foreign and independent films to Vermont, taking each viewer on a journey around the world. Special guests, discussions and a 48-hour film slam. Admission. (802) 262-3423. www.gmffestival.org.





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Seasons of Early Winter

by Bill Felker

The Week the Pear Leaves Fall

When sunset reaches its earliest time of the year, the brittle leaves of the pear trees fall. This is the time during which witch hazel blossoms wither, and the last of the golden beeches, the willows, osage and oaks come down.

The corn and soybean harvests are usually complete all around the county, and development of winter wheat ceases in the cold. New garlic shoots are firm and green, but they've stopped growing and remain at their middle-autumn height. The Christmas tree harvest has begun, and the last poinsettias have come north.

Even though this is one more week of endings, it is not a week of stasis. Spruces are growing new needles. If snow is delayed, caraway and henbit can be flowering in the sun, and a dandelion or a periwinkle will open in scattered fields and lawns. In the warmest microclimates, fresh chickweed, which sprouted at the end of the summer, could be blossoming. Catnip sometimes grows back beside thistle, moneywort, chickweed, wild geranium, leafcup, henbit and yarrow.

In greenhouses and sunrooms, tomatoes sown in July will be getting ripe as December approaches. Marigolds, zinnias, impatiens and other bedding plants saved from the cold may still be flowering. Yellow and pink hibiscus flowers will blossom, opening before dawn, fading and falling by three in the afternoon.

The Season of Winter Clarity

Early winter brings a clarity and new vision that the other seasons lack. The final leaves of the year come down; they leave the world completely bare and revealed for the first time since April. The year seems finite and approachable now, its secrets open. In the hundred days that lie ahead, there is enough time to look at everything, time to enumerate at leisure the complex remnants of the summer, rebuild the past and document its progress with simple, reassuring measurements, examining seed pods, collecting the dead grasses, hunting for cocoons.

In winter, most things can be listed on one or two hands. Instead of the thousands of species of insects, some spinning craneflies and a few pale moths are usually the only bugs about. The absence of migratory birds magnifies the rattle



Young Holstein and Jersey heifers gather in their pasture in the early winter in East Brookfield, VT. photo by Nancy Cassidy

of the remaining downy woodpeckers, isolates the calling of the crows, the chatter of sparrows, chickadees, titmice and kingfishers. Solitary sparrow hawks are back to hunt mice. Only a few ducks overwinter on the rivers. When a cardinal sings, it is a welcome lonely prophesy of spring, as precious for its rarity as for its beauty.

Instead of hundreds of wild flowers changing the landscape weekly, winter brings the gift of constancy. Basal leaves of thistle and garlic mustard lie flat, close to the ground; they remain passive and unmoving under the snow until March. Sleek heads of ironweed, dry and soft, wait for sparrows week after week. Only one flower blossoms in the warmest years: the skunk cabbage in the swamp; it often stays in bloom all winter, long enough for almost anyone to find it.

A Week of Winter Color

As early winter settles in across the center of the Northern Hemisphere, the colors of the newly revealed landscape catch the eye more easily. Hawthorn berries, holly berries and rose hips stand out now. Brown-barked river birches, white birches and sycamores contrast with the black trunks

of oaks and elms. Red-twigged dogwoods shine against the snow. Raspberry bushes keep some purple to their leaves. Japanese honeysuckle, like the pines, spruce and juniper, is still green. All the bittersweet hulls have fallen from their vines, but many of the orange berries remain attached.

The clear springs that wander through the river bottoms are streaked with cress, ragwort and buttercup foliage, oases of summer, almost never overcome by winter. Now barberry shows off its scarlet berries better than at any other time of year. Clumps of orange mushrooms sometimes grow on a fallen tree. Blood-red staghorns remain on the sumacs. Hardy flowering cabbage and kale show off their rainbows.

The leaves dapple the ground with brindle chromatics, bronze, cinnamon, hazel, fawn, chocolate. The champagne seed heads of the goldenrod and ironweed, the soft russet of the knotweed foliage, dead but hanging to its stubborn six-foot stalks, are set against the dove-colored sky.

The Week the Days Begin to Lengthen

As daylight starts to increase, spring is waiting: new daffodil and tulip leaves lie just below the surface of the mulch, and the tips of crocus crouch in their beds. With each thaw, dock, leafcup, buttercup, mint, ragwort, sweet rocket, plantain, thistles, great mullein, moneywort, red clover, celandine, forget-me-not, wild onion, henbit, and ground ivy foliage push every-so-gradually toward March. Multiflora rose buds swell in the sun. One or two pussy willow catkins crack in the sun. In warmer, southern exposures, moss can be long and flushed.

Sometimes a fat camel cricket will emerge in your kitchen at night, searching for sustenance. In the warmth of greenhouses, bedding plant seeding is fully underway, and young plants scheduled to be sold in April and May can have four to six leaves by now. In the chicken house, pullets which will produce summer eggs are hatching. White-tailed bucks in their gray winter coats are starting to drop their antlers. On farms, expectant ewes, does and cows quietly nurture their babies to be born in early spring.

Advice From Poor Robin's Almanac

Now that the time has come wherein
Our Saviour Christ was born,
The larder's full of beef and pork,
The granary's full of corn,
As God hath plenty to thee sent,
Take comfort of thy labours,
And let it never thee repent
To feed thy needy neighbours.



—ANON.

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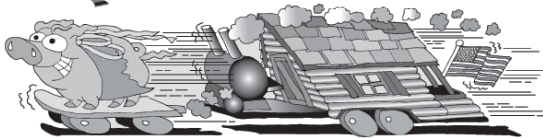
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Christmas at Billings Farm & Museum

Discover the traditions of a late 19th century Vermont Christmas with a visit to the Billings Farm & Museum, gateway to Vermont's rural heritage. Christmas at the Billings Farm will be featured on weekends in December and December 20 – January 1, 2015, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (excluding Christmas Day).

Tours of the authentically decorated farmhouse, visits to the dairy farm for interactive programs including Introduction to Milking and Milking the Herd at 3:15 p.m. each day, holiday activities, plus the Academy Award® nominee film, *A Place in the Land* will be offered.

Like most New England states, Vermont did not widely celebrate Christmas until late in the 19th century. It was not until 1890, when the farmhouse at the Billings Farm was completed, that Christmas became recognized as a holiday in all states. At that time, celebrations were much simpler than they would become in the 20th century. Families enjoyed the holiday, but still had cows to milk, ice to cut, and wood to saw. A few gifts, a special meal, and the gathering of friends, were noteworthy in an otherwise typical day.

Decorations of the period included fresh greens draped over mantels, windows, and staircases throughout the house. Small trees, packed in a jar or butter tub and placed on a tabletop were common. Many of the ornaments reflected an agricultural tradition, including strands of cranberries, popcorn, or dried apples that circled the tree. Apples studded with cloves, "exotic" oranges, silvered (foil-covered) chestnuts, painted pinecones, and acorns complemented the handmade paper ornaments, which rounded out many a tree's decorations.

In Woodstock, turn-of-the-century businesses advertised their wares for Christmas gifts. Most gifts were useful domestic items: fabric, clothing, umbrellas, linens, crockery, and carpet sweepers. Homemade, handcrafted items including fancy mittens, satin bows, and stockings filled with candies, nuts, and raisins were among the most common gifts given on Christmas Day.



photo by Billings Farm & Museum
Christmas in the 1890s farmhouse at Billings Farm & Museum in Woodstock, VT.

Highlights of the Holiday Season

December 6 & 7: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Making Christmas silhouettes & poppers; candle dipping.

December 12, 13, & 14: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Woodstock's Wassail Celebration—Making historic Christmas ornaments and pomanders and candle dipping. Sunday, December 14—Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides, 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

December 20 to 24: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Making Christmas silhouettes & poppers and candle dipping.

Closed Christmas Day—Merry Christmas!

December 26 to January 1: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Christmas Week—Making historic Christmas pomanders, ornaments or, snowflakes; candle dipping. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides. Sledding with jack jumpers, if snow conditions permit from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The Billings Farm & Museum is owned and operated by The Woodstock Foundation, Inc., a charitable non-profit institution founded by Mary French and Laurance Spelman Rockefeller.

Billings Farm is an operating Jersey dairy farm that continues a 143-year tradition of agricultural excellence and offers farm programs and historical exhibits that explore Vermont's rural heritage and values. Open daily May 1 through October 31, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekends Nov. – Feb., and Christmas & Presidents' weeks, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission: adults: \$14; 62 & over: \$13; children 5-15: \$8; 3-4: \$4; 2 & under: free. The Farm & Museum is one-half mile north of the Woodstock village green on Rt. 12. For information call (802) 457-2355 or visit www.billingsfarm.org.

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Bennington Museum Celebrates Festival of Trees

November 28 through December 30

You are invited to come and enjoy the Bennington Museum, all dressed up for the holiday season. The 18th Annual Festival of Trees will be on display from November 28 through December 30.

The museum is pleased to present a community-created exhibit of uniquely designed and decorated holiday trees. Some are whimsical, others are elegantly created, and all are inspired by the theme "Reflections" and take inspiration from an object from the collection that reflects or is reflective and rarely on exhibit in the galleries.

Artists and designers, local businesses, non-profit and service organizations, and students in Bennington and surrounding communities designed and created their displays for you to enjoy. The museum will be further adorned with decorations created by Joyce Hall and Hyacinthe Burnham. Added to these are the tabletop trees, decorated by elementary school classes from Bennington and surrounding communities.

Annual Holiday Gala

Saturday, December 6, 7-10 p.m.

On Saturday, December 6 from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m., Bennington Museum hosts the premiere event of Bennington's Holiday Season and the museum's largest annual fundraiser, the Holiday Gala. After enjoying all the wonderful displays, continue celebrating as you enjoy innovative cuisine created by Chef Greg Roach of Wild Oats Market in Williamstown, cash bar with wine, spirits and signature drinks created for the occasion, dancing to music by the Jeff McRae Band, and spirited bidding on unique and diverse items in the silent auction, all while supporting the region's foremost museum of art, history and innovation. Free childcare on site is offered, but space is limited, so call early. Tickets for the Gala are \$70 per person for reservations paid for by November 14; \$85 per person after November 14 and \$150 per person for a Platinum Museum Supporter. Tickets may be purchased by calling the museum at (802) 447-1571.

Close to 50 auction items are in the silent auction which will be open from November 24 through the Gala on December 6. Stop in early and often at no charge to bid on that special gift while supporting the museum's largest annual fundraiser.

Family Day and Children's Shopping Day

Saturday, December 13, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Bring your family and friends and enjoy the museum while it is all dressed up for the holiday season. Admission to the museum is \$3 for everyone (even Santa) on Family Day! Any child that brings a personal care item for an adult or child is admitted free. The discount applies to those under 18 only, but adults are welcome to bring a donation too!

Visit with Santa from 1-3 p.m. Enjoy holiday-themed crafts and more. Some activities require a small additional fee, up to \$4, but many are free! Thanks to the donations of friends of the museum, we are pleased to offer Children's Shopping Boutique, just for kids. Children, ages 4 to 12, are invited to do their holiday shopping with us. Shoppers' Helpers will be on hand to help children pick out presents



The Festival of Trees makes a grand display at the Bennington Museum.

photo courtesy of Bennington Museum

for their friends and family members. Gifts range in price from \$1-\$7. Free gift-wrapping and gift tags are included. Explore the galleries, and then while the children are in the Children's Shopping Boutique, indulge in a little shopping of your own. Specializing in Vermont-made products, the museum gift shop has items for every budget. Visit with Will Moses from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. when he will be in the museum gift shop for a book signing. Have some coffee and tea to warm you up.

Visit the Children's Forest! Students from classrooms in Bennington, Shaftsbury, Woodford, North Bennington, and Pownal have worked hard to decorate miniature trees that are on display. For \$1, you can purchase a chance to win the tree of your choice. Winners will be drawn and notified on December 16.

There are so many ways to celebrate the holidays at the Bennington Museum!

The museum is open every day except Wednesday through December from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is adults \$10, seniors and students 18 and over \$9, children and students under 18 free. The museum is wheelchair accessible.

Bennington Museum is located at 75 Main St. (Rt. 9) in Bennington, VT. For more information call (802) 447-1571. Visit www.benningtonmuseum.org.

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A Vermont Almanack for Early Winter

by Bill Felker

But let the months go round, a few short months,
And all shall be restored. These naked shoots
Barren as lances, among which the wind
Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
And more aspiring and with ampler spread
Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.

—William Cowper

The Phases of the Sandhill Crane Migration Moon And the Marauding Mouse Moon

As the sandhill cranes complete their migration to the warmer areas of the country, Early Winter settles across North America, and mice, having escaped the cold by entering your house, often emerge on colder evenings to explore your silverware drawers and pantry. *December 6:* The Sandhill Crane Migration Moon is full at 7:27 a.m. *December 14:* The moon enters its final quarter at 7:51 a.m. *December 21:* The Marauding Mouse Moon is new at 8:36 p.m. *December 28:* Moon enters its second quarter at 1:31 p.m.

The Sun

December 5, 2014 through January 8, 2015: Sun Standing Still Time. During this period, the sun's declination remains at its lowest point of the year. *December 21:* Sun enters Capricorn. *December 21:* Winter Solstice at 6:03 p.m. *December 24:* The sun begins its ascent toward June today, shifting from a declination of 23 degrees and 26 minutes to 23 degrees and 25 minutes. This day is the first day of the Season of the Rising Sun, a period which divides the year into two equal halves and which lasts until the sun stops at its highest point above the horizon between June 19 and 23 and then begins to fall back towards winter solstice on June 24.

The Planets

Venus on December 5, low in the southwest in Sagittarius. Mars continues as a less obvious evening star, moving retrograde once again and visible in Capricorn after sundown. Still in Leo, Jupiter rises after midnight, moving into the western half of the sky by sunrise. After disappearing in mid-November, Saturn reappears in the morning in late December in Libra, low in the southeast before sunup.

The Stars

December northeast, Libra in the southeast, the Milky Way along the northern horizon, Centaurus, Corvus, Crater and Sextans along the southern tree line.

The Shooting Stars

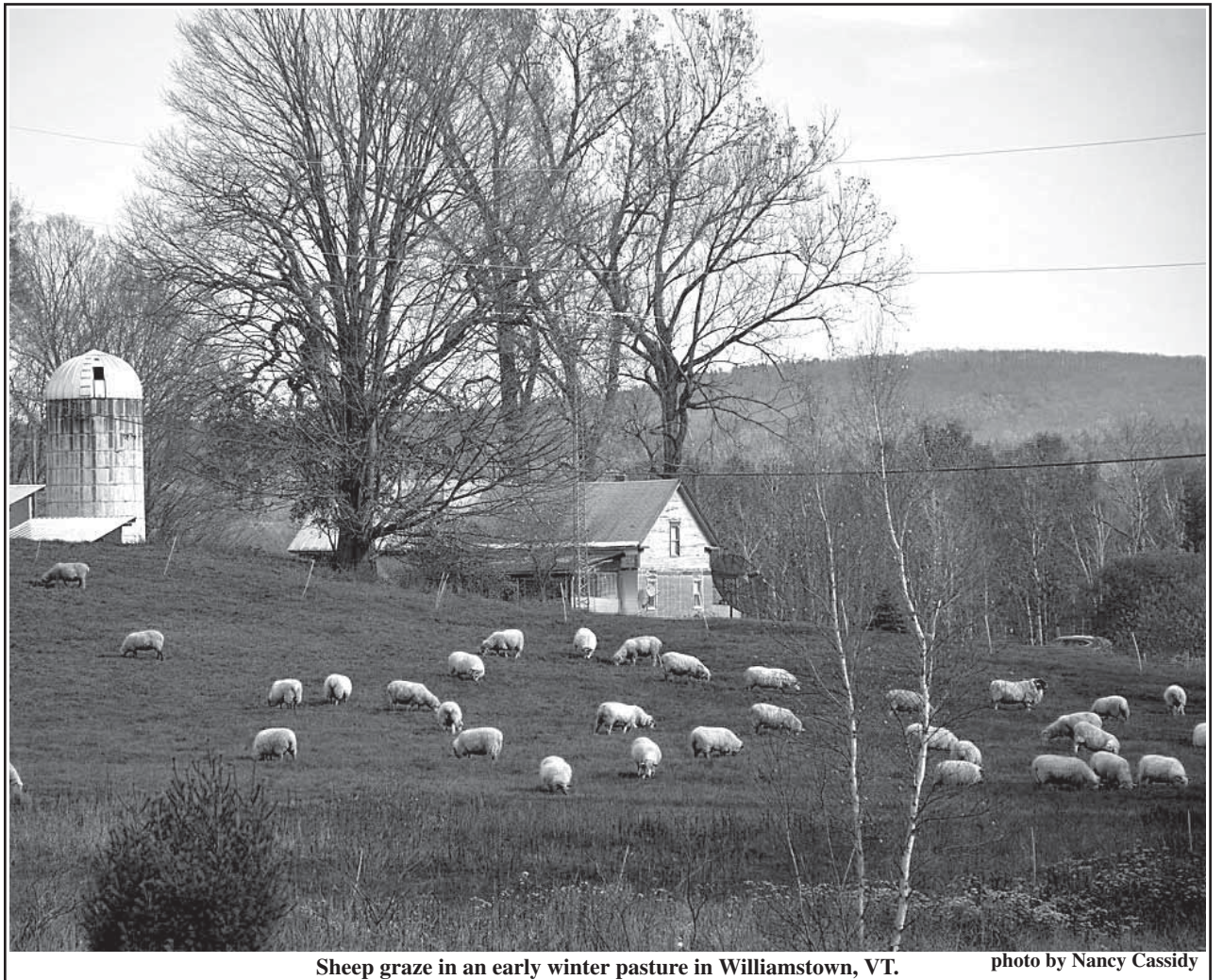
The Geminids appear in Gemini on December 13th and 14th: The rising moon may interfere with meteor watching. The Ursids (near the Little Dipper) fall between December 17th and 25th. The dark moon will favor viewing of these shooting stars as Christmas approaches.

Meteorology

Severer during the following periods: December 1-3, 24-26, 31-January 1. It is probable that full moon on December 6 will intensify. New moon on December 21 is likely to bring stronger-than-average storms to Vermont as deep winter approaches, increasing the likelihood of a very white Christmas.

Peak Activity Times for Livestock, Fish, Game and Dieters

Fish, game, livestock and people barometer is falling one to three days before the weather systems that arrive near the following dates: *December 2, 7, 13, 17, 23, & 30.*



Sheep graze in an early winter pasture in Williamstown, VT.

photo by Nancy Cassidy

God Bless the Little Things

God Bless the little things this Christmastide
All the little wild things that live outside
Little cold robins and rabbits in the snow
Give them good faring and a warm place to go
All the little young things for His sake who died
Who was a little thing at Christmastide.

—MARGARET MURRAY



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Anna's Real German Christmas Cookies

by Charles Sutton

Every Christmas in my early childhood a neighbor, Anna, would bring us a tin gift box filled with her delicious homemade German Christmas cookies—all colorfully decorated and with an unforgettable taste and flavor. Mother would hide them and ration them out carefully. They were just too good to eat up all at once, something my brother Fred and I could have managed easily.

Anna, from Germany, and her partner Frank, from the Philippines, were housekeepers for a well-to-do neighbor, Mr. Baldrige, whose estate included a dairy herd, riding horses, and kennel filled with beagles trained to hunt.

We got to know Anna and Frank, as my brother and I would go to Mr. Baldrige's farm two or three times a week to pick up quarts of milk in our small four-wheel tin cart (made in USA, not China). On the way to the barns we would have to pass a giant bull that was housed in a wooden pen quite close to the road. We were safe enough, we figured, but still we always pulled the cart along the opposite side of the road when going back and forth past the bull.

The farm estate included a separate house for Anna and Frank, several barns and buildings, a dairy, stalls for horse, and a kennel for the large number of beagles that had been trained to hunt. Their dog master and horse trainer, Dick, was friendly and obliging although Fred and I, for the most part, stayed away from the kennels because the closer we got the louder the beagles yapped.

A small herd of Guernsey cows were managed by a farmer, Clyde, who did the milking by hand as that was before milking machines were available. The raw milk was stored in a cooler in large milk cans. Those familiar cans along with maple sugar buckets are now collected as antiques. The milk

was put in regular glass milk bottles where the cream floated to the top, unpasteurized and unhomogenized.

Our parents didn't worry about drinking raw milk because Clyde kept the place spotlessly clean. Having worked later myself on dairy farms and seeing firsthand what a mess cows can leave, especially in the spring after eating all that green grass, this cow housing was hospital-clean and kept white with layers of lime.

On our trips to the estate Anna would often come out of their house and give us bouquets of flowers to give to Mother. She kept up a friendship with Mother for many years, always remembering to bring flowers in season and her German cookies at Christmas.

"Fred and I were well into our second helping when Mother unexpectedly showed up and ended our dessert binge."

One fall Mr. Baldrige invited our family and other neighbors to follow a hunt to see his horses and dogs in action firsthand. The neighborly group would be on foot slowly moving through the countryside. The hunt would run back and forth in a zigzag pattern in front of us.

Fred and I enjoyed watching the horses and riders maneuver with the dogs which were continually yapping and louder than ever. We did see them get a rabbit and to our amazement, dog master Dick went into the middle of the pack pushing the dogs aside and giving them orders.

We learned later he was only trying to retrieve a rabbit's paw—a trophy of the hunt, but not a good luck symbol for the dead rabbit. The dogs had not been fed for a day or two before the hunt so they were extra eager to take down a rabbit or fox. My brother and I didn't say much but I'm sure we felt badly for the rabbit. After all we were keeping alive a menagerie of animals at home including snakes and turtles, tropical fish, and even white mice and horned lizards.



photo by Elizabeth Sutton
Charles Sutton, circa 1939.

The hunting party moved back to Mr. Baldriges mansion for the celebratory post-hunt meal. The large dining room table was filled with foods: a roast ham at one end and a roast turkey at the other. In between were platters of fall vegetables, breads and rolls, condiments, and hors d'oeuvres.

The guests seemed more interested in having drinks and there we saw Frank in butler's garb manning the bar. Anna was busy making sure the guests knew there was food, too. At one point the dog master Dick came in still splattered with some blood and mud to receive thanks and praise from us spectators.

Meanwhile Fred and I had discovered a buffet with the desserts: cakes and cookies and pumpkin pies and even a plum pudding. We quickly got onto the plum pudding which had been generously flavored with brandy. We were years away from alcoholic beverages and didn't like the taste of what we called grown-up drinks. But this plum pudding was something special.

Fred and I were well into our second helping when mother unexpectedly showed up and ended our dessert binge. Here was a case when mothers seem to know their children may be in trouble or in some kind of mischief. Even out of sight we knew mother was watching over us. When I was little I once pulled the hair aside on the back of her head because I was sure she had eyes there, too.

It was not long after this that Mr. Baldrige died and the estate and farm were sold off. He was thoughtful enough to give Anna and Frank their house for keeps and provided an income to see them into old age. I gather he looked after the needs of farmer Clyde and the master of the dogs, Dick, too.

A Christmas never comes and goes that I don't think of Anna and her German Christmas cookies. You see stollen and pfefferneusse and springerle and lebkuchen during the holidays at some bakeries. But none have ever matched the real German Christmas cookies that Anna made.



Charles' older brother Freddie Sutton, circa 1939. photo by Elizabeth Sutton

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Sweet Treats for the Holiday Season

Whether we bake them or whether we buy them, Christmas cookies spell the magic of the season. We all have our traditional favorites but we also search for that long-lost flavor of the past—something our great aunt used to make, or our grandmother, perhaps now deceased, used to talk about, something we can't quite remember but hunger for. Here are a few recipes that might fill the bill.

Orange Pfeffernüsse

A new twist on an old holiday favorite, with a zesty orange flavor. This German favorite is a great cookie with which to celebrate the season.

2½ cups flour	1 cup honey
½ teaspoon baking soda	1 egg
½ teaspoon salt	Grated rind of one orange
¼ teaspoon black pepper	4 tablespoons butter,
½ teaspoon baking powder	melted and cooled
1 teaspoon cinnamon	Confectioners' sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a medium bowl, combine flour, baking soda, salt, black pepper, baking powder, and cinnamon. With a wooden spoon, mix until blended. Add honey, egg, rind, and butter. Stir until well blended. Roll dough into 1-inch balls and place on a parchment-lined cookie sheet, spacing each 2 inches apart. Bake 12–15 minutes or until golden brown. Remove cookie sheet from the oven. Carefully roll warm cookies in confectioners' sugar. Cool completely. Yield: 40 cookies.

—Sweet Maria's Cookie Jar by Maria Bruscano Sanchez

Kipfel

These rich cookies from the former Yugoslavia have two attributes much-beloved in Eastern European cooking and baking: the use of sour cream in the pastry dough and a plump, dumpling-like shape. Preparation time 35 minutes. Bake 10-12 minutes.

½ cup butter	¼ cups ground nuts
2 cups all-purpose flour	½ cup granulated sugar
¼ cup granulated sugar	1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 egg yolks	¾ tsp. ground cinnamon
½ cup dairy sour cream	Sifted powdered sugar
2 egg whites	Ground cinnamon

In a medium mixing bowl cut butter into flour until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in the ¼ cup granulated sugar. Make a well in the center. Combine egg yolks and sour cream. Add to flour mixture. Stir until mixture forms a ball. Divide dough in half. Keeping half of the dough tightly covered, on a lightly floured surface, roll other half of dough to ⅛-inch thickness. Cut into 4-inch rounds. For the filling, beat egg whites slightly. Add ground nuts, the ½ cup granulated sugar, lemon juice, and cinnamon. Spread a rounded teaspoon of filling onto each round to within ¼ inch of edge. Roll up jelly-roll style; with seam sides down, press ends with tines of a fork to seal. Place on an ungreased cookie sheet, seam sides down. Bake in a 375° oven for 10–12 minutes or until lightly browned. Transfer cookies to a wire rack and cool. Sprinkle with a mixture of powdered sugar and cinnamon. Makes about 30 cookies.

—Cookies for Christmas by Jennifer Dorland Darling

Apricot Linzer Bars

Instead of the traditional raspberry-and-almond of the Viennese linzertorte these bars use apricots and hazelnuts.

1 cup hazelnuts (filberts)	¼ cups all-purpose flour
¾ cup butter, softened	1 cup granulated sugar
4 teaspoons unsweetened cocoa powder	¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼–½ teaspoon ground cloves	1 egg
1 egg yolk	½ cup apricot preserves

Powdered sugar

Grease and flour an 11x7x1½-inch baking pan. Blend or process hazelnuts until nuts are ground. Stir flour into ground hazelnuts; set aside. For batter, in a large mixing bowl beat butter with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 30 seconds. Add granulated sugar, cocoa powder, cinnamon, cloves, and salt. Beat until combined, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Beat in egg and egg yolk until combined. Beat in as much of the flour-nut mixture as you can with the mixer. Using a wooden spoon, stir in any remaining flour-nut mixture. Evenly spread about 2 cups of the batter into the prepared pan. Spoon apricot preserved over batter to within ½ inch of edges. Drop remaining batter by spoonfuls over the preserves. Bake in 350° oven for 35–40 minutes or until lightly browned and a wooden toothpick inserted into batter comes out clean. Cool completely in pan on a wire rack. Sift powdered sugar over top before cutting into bars. Store in the refrigerator or freezer. Makes 15–24 bars.

—Cookies for Christmas by Jennifer Dorland Darling



www.wendyedelson.com

Crispy St. Nicholas Cookies

These are Hungarian Christmas cookies.

2½ cups all-purpose flour	1 large egg
1 tsp. ground cinnamon	2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest
½ teaspoon baking powder	2 or 3 cookie sheets or jelly roll pans covered with parchment or foil
½ teaspoon salt	1 cup sugar
8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened	

Combine flour, cinnamon, baking powder, and salt; stir well to mix. Beat together the butter and sugar until light and whitened. Beat in the egg and lemon zest and continue beating until smooth and light. Scrape down the bowl and beater with a large rubber spatula and add the flour mixture. Continue mixing until the dough is smooth. Scrape the dough onto a piece of plastic wrap and press it into a square or rectangle about ½ inch thick. Wrap and chill until firm, about an hour or two. When you are ready to bake the cookies, set racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven and preheat to 350°. On a floured surface, roll out a third of the dough at a time until it is about ⅛ inch thick. Use a cutter 2–3 inches in diameter, or any kind of decorative cutter you wish. Dip it frequently in flour. As they are cut, place the cookies on the prepared pans about an inch apart in all directions. Repeat with the remaining dough. Save, press together, chill, and reroll the scraps to make more cookies. Bake the cookies 15–20 minutes, or until they first become dull and dry-looking and feel slightly firm when pressed with a fingertip. If you overbake the cookies, they will be very dry. Slide the papers from the pans onto racks. Store the cooled cookies between sheets of parchment or wax paper in a tin or plastic container with a tight-fitting cover. Makes about 36 cookies.

—Cookies Unlimited by Nick Malgieri

Lebkuchen

Boil four pounds of honey with an equal amount of sugar, then add one pound of split almonds, one pound of citron cut small, the grated rinds of four lemons, half an ounce of nutmeg, half an ounce of cloves, three ounces of cinnamon. The mass should be stirred whilst the above substances are added. Then add one tumbler of brandy, and stir into the mixture six pounds of flour. Roll out to a quarter inch thickness, keeping the dough warm; cut into small cakes, bake at once in a hot oven and ice with lemon icing.

—Mrs. Rorer's New Cook Book, 1902

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December 6, Hike Mt. Moosalamoo, Salisbury, VT. Tired of shopping 'til you drop? Holiday Musak getting you down? Then dash over the river and through the woods to a winter wonderland on Mt. Moosalamoo. Fa la la la la la la la. No purchase necessary. Leader: Mary Lou Recor, (802) 660-2834 or mlrecor@myfairpoint.net

December 7, Snowshoe in Woodstock, VT. Snowshoe or Hike to Winturi Shelter via the Appalachian Trail. Bring lunch and water. Moderate. 7.6 miles. Leader: Michael Chernick, (802) 249-0520 or chernick5@comcast.net.

December 13, Hike or Snowshoe Raven Ridge Natural Area in Monkton, VT. We'll trek the 2.5 mile loop trail, which was completed last July by The Nature Conservancy. Several great summit views to the west. Leader: Ruth Penfield (802) 388-5407 or ruthpenfield@gmail.com.

December 20, Texas Falls, Green Mountain National Forest, Hancock, VT. Hike or Snowshoe on the Texas Falls Nature Trail. Trail meanders through the forest along Texas Brook. Moderate difficulty. Leader: Beth Eliason, (802) 989-3909 or betheliason@gmail.com.



Northwoods moose on a cold winter day.

photo by Nancy Cassidy

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A Christmas Party At the Higley House

by Pamela Hayes Rehlen

On a frigid Sunday afternoon, an Open banner snaps in the sharp wind which whips around the Castleton Historical Society's big brick Higley House on Main St. in Castleton, VT. Snow covers the ground, and ice-filled tire tracks run up close to the front porch.

The annual Christmas Open House and Carol Sing is always scheduled for a Sunday, and usually about fourteen people show up, but given the particular busyness of the season and the terrible cold, this day only eleven Historical Society members struggle against the balky front door and push into the wide entrance hall.

Before anyone arrives, my husband, who is a member of the board, goes down, as he does every year, and turns on the heat and snaps up the window shades so that winter light floods the east parlor, furnished with Higley family antiques, and the west music room, with its upright piano and 1950s photos of last occupants Edna and Mary Higley.

The Higleys were old-time Vermont Yankee aristocrats, high thinkers and plain liverers—and musical. This is the kind of genteel party that the social Misses Higley would have themselves thrown.

Their financially-successful nephew, Stuart Higley, the last Higley bearing the family name, wound up living far away in New Canaan, Connecticut. In 1993, as a memorial to his aunts, he deeded his handsome family place over to the Castleton Historical Society.

The present society is small. There are about sixty members on the rolls, but many are people who live somewhere else. They support this organization because they approve of it, and because their families, or their forebears, once lived in town.

Today, Linda Splatt, retired Castleton Elementary School music teacher arrives promptly at two. She's fresh from playing the piano at her Rt. 30 Fellowship Bible Church.

Off in the front parlor, Linda warms up, and is soon belting out a ragtime Merry Christmas Polka. The radiators click and bubble.

The Higley House's main room, the original kitchen, is a big space with a massive walled-up fireplace and views out two back windows toward a long, low carriage shed. Today, it has a table covered by a poinsettias-printed cloth and holding a cinnamon-scented candle which glows next to a miniature Christmas tree.

All the women in this room are wearing yuletide red. Carol Thompson has a sparkly snowflake on her sweater. Jeanette and Phil Ranney arrive and settle down with Carol on a bench in front of the closed-up fireplace which the Higley ladies decommissioned when fireplaces were no longer needed and not particularly valued.

Linda Splatt suggests it's time to sing, and everyone moves, and groups themselves in front of her piano, their backs to windows filled with fading winter light. There are the soft sounds of radiators pinging and whistling. The gentle aroma of cinnamon candle creeps into the room.

Linda plays The First Noel, and then pulls out, and rifles through, her 1951 Winter Time Songbook. Five of the eleven Historical Society members sitting around the room have belonged for decades to church choirs and think they can handle anything Linda throws at them, but singing her next selection, It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas, when they reach the line "a pair of Hopalong boots and a pistol that shoots is the wish of Barney and Ben," they stumble and falter, finally admit defeat, and everyone laughs.

Janet Ranney calls for a pause in the singing and uses this break to recount the Christmas sleigh ride she took with her husband Philip sixty years ago at his parents' Scotch Hill farm in Fair Haven. The

"After 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' there's some companionable old timers' talk about Vermont things..."



radiators click away. Outside, it grows darker. After "O Little Town of Bethlehem," there's some companionable old timers' talk about Vermont things like spruce gum and Moxie.

For "Silent Night", the men sing the first verse in sweet, determined voices that quaver a little, and then the women come in more confidently for the second.

It's time to visit the refreshment table. A top hat from the Historical Society's costume collection is passed around holding slips of paper for a door prize, and Violet Lamthier wins a quart of maple syrup from the Castleton Village Store. A label on the top hat—which I have no memory—identifies it as being found in the Manse and donated to the Historical Society in 2002 by Pamela Rehlen.

It's almost four. The party's breaking up. In the front parlor, the room with the origi-

nal Higley furnishings and a replica of the Caswell/Blue Cat carpet, its grown warm and dark, and on a table in the far corner an old lamp with a low wattage bulb glows like an ember.

This is how many Vermont parlors would have looked in the 1930s. And this gathering is just the kind of Christmas party that would have been held here.

Pamela Hayes Rehlen has written and lived most of her life in Castleton, VT. She is the author of many stories, articles, essays and magazine features and of two books, The Blue Cat and the River's Song, and The Vanished Landmarks Game—Vermont Stories From West of Birdseye, available at the Castleton Village Store and at a number of Vermont bookstores.

Fireside Chant

Apple wood for fragrance,
Ash for violet glow,
Hornbeam, larch and sassafras,
Such lovely words to know.
Sycamore's serenity,
Hickory's embrace,
Oak to scatter golden sparks
Before the watcher's face.

Juniper for incense,
Birch for flame and flare—

Someone to come walking in
With snowflakes in her hair.
Darkness past the windows,
Wind above the eaves,
And friend to friend relating
The thoughts the heart believes.

Hemlock, spruce and poplar.
Say them softly now:
Chestnut, pine and mountain ash,
Beech and cherry bough.

—ESTHER WOOD

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Vermont Map

Oh Sweet Content

The Professor and his wife had stayed
 Much later than they ever had since they bought the place.
 For the first time there were no waiting classes
 For the Professor to get back to.
 The long awaited retirement
 Which he'd looked forward to and dreaded had come.
 The week before the opening of the University
 He had found himself in the hurried state of mind
 That those days had brought on for nearly a half-century.
 Then he gradually realized he didn't have to go to anything.
 Today life still seemed good to him
 As he turned from the fire
 To his favorite view down the valley.
 The cold gray clouds portended snow
 And the warmth of the fire was cheering.
 He almost wished they hadn't planned to go South,
 Even though that had long been a cherished part
 Of the retirement years' plan.

He tried to imagine how it would look
 When snow covered the valley.
 He recalled his boyhood days on hills not so far away.
 John Burke came in with an armful of wood,
 Maple, fresh cut and smelling of sap.
 The Professor spoke of that smell
 Which reminded him of maple sugar time.
 "Do you find yourself sort of dreading the winter, John?"
 John leaned over the hearth
 And shook the snow and sawdust
 From his sheep-lined coat.
 "Wal, Perfessor, it's this way with me."
 He took off his cap and leaned against the mantel.
 "Come late November, settin' by th' kitchin stove,
 I sez t' myself, I sez:
 "M' shed's full o' wood and th' barn's full o' hay;
 We got a barr'l o' flour in th' buttry
 And a crock 'er more o' pork
 And some fair cider down cellar.
 And settin' there b' the kitchin stove
 I hitches up m' heavy wool socks
 And I sez t' m' self, I sez,
 "LET 'ER SNOW b' Judast, LET 'ER SNOW!"

—WALTER HARD

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Vermont Country Calendar

See the end of the daily event calendar for ongoing activities, museums, exhibits, and galleries, and horseback riding and wagon rides.

DAILY EVENTS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27

BURLINGTON. 25th Annual Free Thanksgiving Community Dinner and Coat Drive. Coat drive starts at 10 am (last year 100 were given away). Dinner from 10 am on. Sweetwaters, 120 Church St. (802) 864-9800. www.sweetwatersvt.com.

MONTPELIER. 42nd Annual Free Community Thanksgiving Dinner. Everyone is welcome. Hosted by Washington County Youth Service Bureau. 11 am – 3 pm. Bethany Church, 115 Main St. For delivery to the homebound in the Montpelier area, for more information, to volunteer or to make a donation, call (802) 229-9151. www.wcysb.org.

WELLS. Free Community Thanksgiving Dinner. Everyone is invited, Wells residents and beyond are welcome. Reservations not necessary but it helps if you call to let us know you are coming so we know how many turkeys to roast. Donations accepted but this dinner is free. If you want to donate food, call to let us know. Serving at 3 pm at Wells Village School, Rt. 30. (802) 645-0934.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28

CHESTER. Thanksgiving Open House at 103 Artisans Marketplace. Free refreshments, raffles, door prizes, hot mulled cider, and holiday cheer! We're filled to the brim with gifts for everyone on your list, from stocking stuffers to one of a kind pieces for that special someone! Three raffle prizes: first prize a blown glass bowl by artist Daniel Reed; second prize, a basket filled with Vermont specialty foods; third prize, a box of our delicious chocolates. 10 am – 5 pm. 103 Artisans Marketplace, Rt. 103 & 7 Pine View Rd. (802) 875-7400. www.103artisansmarketplace.com. *Through November 30.*

DORSET. 3 Pears Gallery Open House Holiday Weekend. Celebrating our first year anniversary on the Dorset Green. Holiday open house serving heirloom Christmas treats and refreshments. Our 10 signature Christmas trees are exquisitely decorated with fine art and artisan décor, adorned with affordably priced works of art and stocking stuffers that are perfect for gifts. The Upstairs Little Pear's Children's Boutique offers handsewn, handcrafted toys, clothes & decor. Free and casual. 11 am – 6 pm. 3 Pears Gallery, 41 Church St. (802) 770-8820. On Facebook. *Also November 29 & 30.*

POULTNEY. Annual Christmas Craft Fair. Beautiful handcrafted items and gifts, quilts, soap, jewelry and paintings, home baked goods and country treats, locally produced specialty foods, local fall apples and fresh cider, fresh balsam wreaths, maple syrup and Christmas decorations. Free admission. Sponsored by the Lakes Region Farmers Market. 10 am – 4 pm. Poultnery High School Gym, 153 E. Main St. (Rt. 140) just off Rt. 30. For information call Jamie Condrill at (802) 287-9570. *Also November 29.*

PUTNEY. 36th Annual Putney Craft Tour. Thanksgiving weekend open studios—a Top Ten Winter Event. Free. 10 am – 5 pm. For a complete listing of artists and a map, go to www.putneycrafts.com. (802) 258-3992. prime@svcable.net. *Through November 30.*

WOODSTOCK. Thanksgiving Weekend at Billings Farm & Museum. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am – 3:30 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org. *Through November 30.*

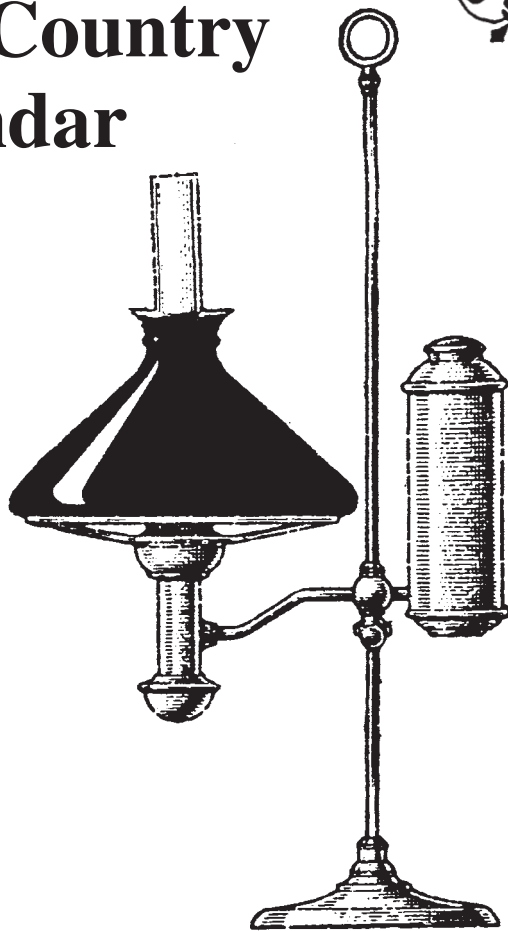
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29

BELMONT. Holiday Open House. Many gift ideas—shop locally. Refreshments and raffle, win a holiday needlepoint pillow! 10 am – 4 pm. Stouffer Gallery & Gift Shop, 250 Maple Hill Rd. (802) 259-2686. www.stephaniestouffer.com. *Also November 30.*

BENNINGTON. "Reflections" Festival of Trees. Admission: adults \$10, seniors and students 18 and over \$9, children and students under 18 are free. Open every day except Wednesday 10 am – 5 pm, closing at 1 pm on December 24 & 31. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. benningtonmuseum.org. *Through December 30.*

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DORSET. Chamber Music Concert—Manchester Music Festival Presents French Delights. Tickets: adults \$30; 18 and under \$13. 4 pm at United Church of Dorset and East Rupert, 143 Church St. For tickets or information call (802) 362-1956. www.mmfv.org.



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LUDLOW. 35th Annual Ludlow Christmas Craft Fair. Free admission and free parking. 10 am – 4 pm. Black River High School, 43 Main St. (802) 228-2701.

POULTNEY. Annual Christmas Craft Fair. Beautiful handcrafted items and gifts, quilts, soap, jewelry and paintings, home baked goods and country treats, locally produced specialty foods, local fall apples and fresh cider, fresh balsam wreaths, maple syrup and Christmas decorations. Free admission. Sponsored by the Lakes Region Farmers Market. 10 am – 4 pm. Poultnery High School Gym, 153 E. Main St. (Rt. 140) just off Rt. 30. For info call Jamie Condrill at (802) 287-9570.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Local produce, crafts, prepared foods. Live music. EBT and debit cards. Saturdays 10 am – 2 pm and Wednesdays 4-7 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. For info contact Doug Patac (802) 753-7269, info@vtfarmersmarket.org. www.vtfarmersmarket.org. *Through May 2.*

RUTLAND. Rutland Area Flea Market. Indoors, year-round, clean & friendly! Cozy cafe offers refreshments and light lunch. 9 am – 3 pm. 200 West St. corner of Forest St. (802) 770-9104. On Facebook.

WOODSTOCK. Thanksgiving Weekend at Billings Farm & Museum. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am – 3:30 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also November 30.*

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Vermont Country Calendar

(November 30, continued)

PUTNEY. 36th Annual Putney Craft Tour. Free. 10 am – 5 pm. For a complete listing of artists and a map, go to putneycrafts.com. (802) 258-3992. prime@svcable.net.

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2

CASTLETON. 5th Annual Advent Concert. With Heidi Soons and Ladies' Night Out Women's Chorus. Free will offering. 7 pm. Federated Church of Castleton, Main St. (802) 775-8004.

RUTLAND. Santa's Arrival, Tree Lighting and Winter Movie Series Kick-Off. Celebrate with Christmas carols. See the films, *Frosty the Snowman* and *'Twas the Night Before Christmas!* Free. 6:30 pm. Depot Park in downtown. (802) 773-9380. www.rutlanddowntown.com.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3

RUTLAND. Concert: Dark Star Orchestra. Performing the Grateful Dead's music. Tickets \$29.50-\$34.75. 8 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. www.paramountvt.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. EBT and debit cards. Saturdays 10 am – 2 pm and Wednesdays 4-7 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 753-7269, info@vtfarmersmarket.org. vtfarmersmarket.org. Through May 2.

SAXTONS RIVER. Annual Holiday Open House. Artist of the month is Jane Parhilia. Refreshments, raffle (drawing on December 14). Free. 5-7 pm. River Artisans Cooperative, 26B Main St. (802) 869-2099. www.riverartisans.com.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5

KILLINGTON. Vermont Holiday Festival. Santa's Workshop, \$10. Festival of Trees & Jack Frost Marketplace. Sleigh rides. Grand Ballroom, Killington Grand Resort Hotel. killingtonchamber.com. Also December 6.

LITTLETON, NH. Concert: Kitka. Eight-member San Francisco women's vocal ensemble that brings unusual seasonal harmonies to traditional ballads, sacred music, and Eastern Europe folk songs. Free admission. 7 pm. Latchis Theater, 48 Main St. (802) 748-2600. catamountarts.org.

POULTNEY. Shakespeare On Main Street presents *A Christmas Carol: Readers Style.* Tickets: adults: \$10, youth \$5, children under 12 free. 7 pm. Poultney High School, 154 East Main St. (802) 315-0019.

RANDOLPH. Concert: The Party Crashers. Funk, soul, R&B, and rock; an evening of dancing. Tickets: \$19 or two for \$35, price includes one drink from the cash bar. 7:30 pm. Chandler Music Hall, 71-73 Main St. (802) 864-5741. www.chandler-arts.org.

RUTLAND. Concert: Leann Rimes: One Christmas. With guest Levi Hummon. Tickets \$48.50-\$68.50. 8 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. www.paramountvt.org.

RUTLAND. Holiday Boutique & Gingerbread House Contest. Opening reception 5-7 pm. Free. Chaffee Downtown, 75 Merchants Row. (802) 775-0356. On exhibit through December 20.

RUTLAND. Holiday Open House. Join Revolutionary War re-enactors in period clothing. 18th century refreshments. 10 am – 7 pm. The Antique Shop, 45 Main St. (802) 747-7800.

STOWE. A Traditional Christmas in Stowe. Friday evening: caroling, tree lighting, Children's Lantern Parade, Members Art Show and Festival of Lights at Helen Day Art Center. Saturday: arrival of Santa, food and family activities, holiday shopping. Town Hall Theater, 2nd floor, 10 am - 4 pm. (802) 253-2275. www.stoweibrancy.com. Also December 6.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

ARLINGTON. Concert—The Bennington County Choral Society presents "The Majesty of Music." 7:30 pm at St. James Episcopal Church, Rt. 7A. (802) 375-9952.

BENSON. Community Craft Fair. To benefit Benson First Response. 10 am - 4 pm. Benson Village School. (802) 537-3521.

BURLINGTON. Masterworks Series Concert: The Vermont Symphony Orchestra performs Rimsky-Korsakov's Capriccio Espagnol, Tchaikovsky's Suite from Swan Lake, and Stravinsky's Rite of Spring. Tickets: \$61-\$16, students \$9. 8 pm; Musically Speaking pre-concert talk at 7 pm. Flynn Center for the Performing Arts. (802) 864-5741 x 16. www.flynnitix.org. www.vso.org.

CHESTER. Overture to Christmas. Pancake Breakfast, holiday crafts & costume making, Christmas puppet show, St. Luke's Annual Christmas Sale and Tea, Live Nativity, Santa and Mrs. Claus arrival with the Parade of Presents, lighting of the town Christmas Tree with Santa and Mrs. Claus and the Elves, and a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus at the Fullerton Inn, with cookies, cocoa, books and candy canes. Springfield Community Chorus performs Handel's Messiah at First Baptist Church, 162 Main St., free, 7:30 pm. (802) 875-2444. chestervermont.org.

ESSEX JUNCTION. 22nd Annual Vermont International Festival. Admission \$7, children 6-12 \$5, seniors \$5, under 6 free, families \$20. 10 am – 6 pm. Champlain Valley Exposition, Rt. 15/Pearl St. (802) 863-6713. vermontinternationalfestival.com. Also December 7.

FAIR HAVEN. Christmas Tour of the Historic Marble Mansion. Tours of the festively decorated mansion will include drinks and holiday music, hourly door prizes and a silent auction at the end of each tour. Tickets \$7, \$5 for seniors, children under 12 free. All proceeds benefit Fair Haven Historical Society. Noon to 4 pm. Marble Mansion, 12W Park Place. (802) 265-3240.

LUNENBURG. The Lunenburg Gingerbread Bazaar. Free games and contests for all ages, free cookie decorating with Mrs. Claus, the Pocket Lady with affordable grab bag items, vendors offering Christmas and gift items, Cookie Walk, baked goods including pies, fudge, raffles, and Lunenburg Tees in a new color. Luncheon 11 am – 2 pm. 10 am – 3 pm at the Lunenburg Primary School, on Bobbin Mill Rd., off Rt. 2 in the center of town. For info call Chris at (802) 892-6654. www.topofthecommon.org.

MANCHESTER CENTER. Annual Inn Tours. Visit any or all of 15 of the region's beautifully decorated inns and lodgings. Noon to 4 pm. Admission \$15/person. Tickets and list of inns available at Manchester and the Mountains Regional Chamber of Commerce, 39 Bonnet St. (802) 362-6313. visitmanchestervt.com. Also December 13.

MANCHESTER CENTER. Annual Lighted Tractor Parade. Please plan on being on or near The Roundabout at approximately 5 pm for the best viewing! Downtown. (802) 362-6313. visitmanchestervt.com.

MANCHESTER. Hildene—Our House for the Holidays. The Museum Store welcomes neighbors & new friends. Dressed in holiday finery, the spirit of the season abounds in our 100 year old Carriage Barn! Apple cider, Vermont tastings & fresh cider doughnuts. Open 9:30 am – 4 pm. Hildene, off Rte. 7A, just south of the village. (802) 362-1788. www.hildene.org. Also December 7.

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Vermont Country Calendar

(Saturday, December 6, continued)

MANCHESTER CENTER. Book & Author Event. Jon Katz presents *Saving Simon: How a Rescue Donkey Taught Me the Meaning of Compassion*. Free and open to the public. 6 pm. Northshire Bookstore, 4869 Main St. (802) 362-2200. northshire.com.

MIDDLEBURY. Henry Sheldon Museum Annual Holiday Open House. The Judd-Harris House will be decked out with beautiful floral arrangements. An elaborate electric train layout will entertain all ages. A craft activity and carols played on the Sheldon's 1831 piano add to the festive atmosphere. Admission by donation. 10 am - 4 pm. Henry Sheldon Museum, 1 Park St. (802) 388-2117. henrysheldonmuseum.org. Also December 7.

PITTSFORD. 3rd Annual Pittsford Farmers Market Craft Show. Jewelry, pottery, crafts, knit & crochet items, food and more. 9:30 am - 2 pm. Lothrop School Gym, 3447 Rt. 7. (802) 483-2829. Also December 20.

PLYMOUTH. Coolidge Holiday Open House. Visit the Coolidge Birthplace, decorated as it would have been in the late 19th century. Winter exhibits at the Museum & Education Center, Aldrich House, Plymouth Cheese Factory, and 1924 Summer White House office. Baking demonstration and book signing by Gesine Bullock-Prado. Sleigh rides, old-time music, craft demonstrations, lunch at the Wilder House Restaurant, special cancellation at the historic Plymouth post office, and children's holiday activities. Adults \$8, children 6-14 \$2, under 6 free; family pass \$20. 10 am - 4 pm. President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site, 3780 Rt. 100A. (802) 672-3773. historicssites.vermont.gov.

RICHMOND. Richmond Holiday Market. Find some wonderful holiday gifts. Sponsored by the Birds of Vermont Museum. 9 am - 2:30 pm. Richmond Library, Bridge St. (802) 434-2167. www.birdsofvermont.org. museum@birdsofvermont.org.

RUTLAND. Annual Festival of Trees. Take in the sights and the lights and join auctioneer Bob Prozzo as he presents a huge selection to bid on. Catered by Roots the Restaurant and with a cash bar. Tickets \$10. 5:30 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountvt.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Local produce, crafts, prepared foods. Live music. EBT and debit cards. Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm and Wednesdays 4-7 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. For info contact Doug Patac (802) 753-7269, info@vtfarmersmarket.org. www.vtfarmersmarket.org. Through May 2.

RUTLAND. The Santa Train. Departing the Downtown Rutland, Vermont Amtrak station at 10 am, 12 pm, 1:30 pm, 3 pm and 4:30 pm. An 45-minute ride will take you through a magical Santa's Village that you'll never forget. Our beautifully decorated Santa Train will include refreshments, stories, songs and more. Tickets \$16. Purchase at etix.com.

SHREWSBURY. Shrewsbury Library's Silent Auction and Annual Cookie Swap. Bake 3-4 dozen of your favorite cookie recipe to share. Silent auction upstairs. 7 pm. In the Great Room, Shrewsbury Library, 98 Town Hill Rd. (802) 492-3410.

STOWE. Stowe Community Church Christmas Fair. 9:30 am - 2 pm. Stowe Community Church, 137 Main St. (802) 253-7257. stowechurch.org.

STOWE. A Traditional Christmas in Stowe. Arrival of Santa, food and family activities throughout town, holiday shopping. Town Hall Theater, 2nd floor, 10 am - 4 pm. (802) 253-2275. www.stovevibrancy.com.

ST. ALBANS. Annual Holiday Concert: "Heavenly Light." Presented by The Vermont Choral Union. and Tickets: \$15; \$10 seniors/students; \$40 families; free ages 15 and under when accompanied by a ticketed adult. 7 pm. At the First Congregational Church of St. Albans, 27 Church St. (802) 524-4555.

STOWE. Stowe Community Church Fair. Free. 9:30 am - 2 pm. Stowe Community Church, 137 Main St. (802) 253-7257. info@stowechurch.org. www.stowechurch.org.

VERGENNES. Holiday Stroll. Holiday happenings all over the Little City! (802) 388-7951 x 1. www.addisoncounty.com.

WAITSFIELD. Merry Market. Waitsfield United Church, Rt. 100. (802) 496-3065. www.waitsfieldchurch.org.

WALLINGFORD. Annual Christmas Bazaar. 9 am - 2 pm. St. Patrick's Church, 28 N. Main St. (802) 446-2872.

WARREN & WAITSFIELD. Country Christmas Open House & Holiday Paint-In. Enjoy refreshments next to a bonfire and perhaps purchase a piece of art. Free admission. (802) 496-3409. www.madrivervalley.com. Also December 7.

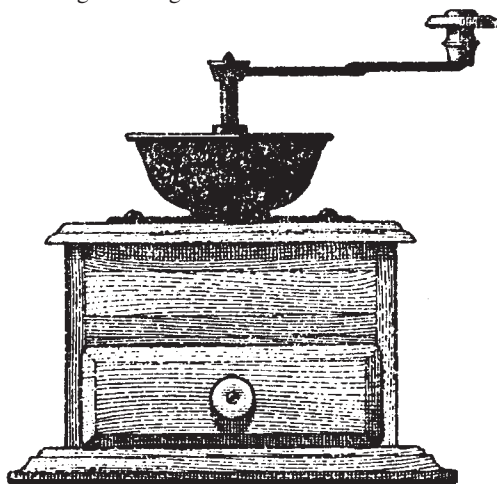
WATERBURY. Annual River of Light Community Lantern Procession. Lanterns made by pupils of Thatcher Brook Primary School and artists from Central Vermont illuminate the streets. Free. Starts at 5 pm. Thatcher Brook Primary School, 47 Stowe St. (802) 778-0334. mmonley@wdsdvt.net. ariveroflightinwaterbury.wordpress.com.

WELLS RIVER. 67th Annual Christmas Concert—Messiah by George Frederic Handel. Tickets \$5-\$10. 2:30 pm. Wells River Congregational Church, 76 S. Main St. (802) 748-2600. catamountarts.org. Also December 7 at St. Johnsbury.

WESTON. 31st Annual Old-Fashioned Christmas in Weston. Tour the village by foot or in one of three horse-drawn wagons, stopping by many of the shops, galleries, museums and inns. Visit Santa at The Vermont Country Store, caroling, and more! No admission. 11 am - 5 pm. (802) 824-3669. weston-vermont.com.

WEST RUTLAND. Christmas Sale. 9 am - 2:30 pm. Parish Hall, St. Bridget's Church, 28 Church St. (802) 438-2490.

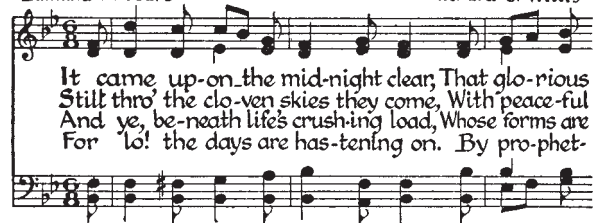
WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org. Also December 7.



It Came upon the Midnight Clear

Edmund H. Sears

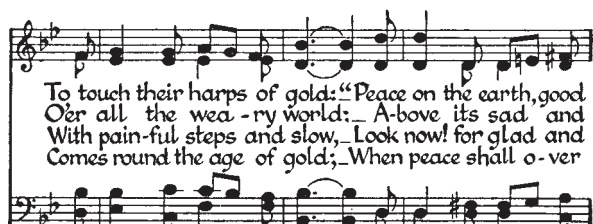
Richard S. Willis



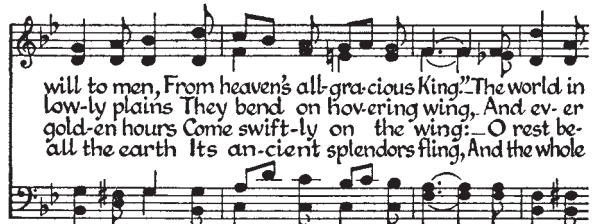
It came up-on the mid-night clear; That glo-ri-ous
Still thro' the clo-ven skies they come, With peace-ful
And ye, be-neath life's crush-ing load, Whose forms are
For 'lo! the days are has-tening on. By pro-phet-



song of old, From an-gels bend-ing near the earth
wings un-furled, And still the heav-en-ly mu-sic floats
bend-ing low, Who toil a-long the climb-ing way
bards fore-told, When with the ev-er-cir-cling years



To touch their harps of gold: "Peace on the earth, good
O'er all the wea-ry world: A-bove its sad, and
With pain-ful steps and slow, Look now! for glad and
Comes round the age of gold; When peace shall o-ver



will to men, From heav-en's all-gra-cious King." The world in
low-ly plains They bend on hover-ing wing, And ev-er
gold-en hours Come swift-ly on the wing: O rest be-
all the earth Its an-cient splen-dors fling, And the whole

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Vermont Country Calendar

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7

BARRE. Concert: Handel's Messiah. The Vermont Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Lisa Jablow. Tickets: \$15, seniors & students \$12, under 12 \$5, family (2 adults, 2 kids) \$32. 2 pm. Barre Opera House, 6 N. Main St. (802) 476-8188. www.barreoperahouse.org.

BENNINGTON. Concert—The Bennington County Choral Society presents "The Majesty of Music." 3 pm at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 200 Pleasant St. (802) 442-2911.

BURLINGTON. A Ceremony of Carols Concert with Bella Voce. Tickets: \$18, senior citizens and students \$15. 3 pm. First Baptist Church, 81 St. Paul St. (802) 999-8881. www.bellavocevt.org.

BURLINGTON. Annual Holiday Concert: "Heavenly Light." With the Vermont Choral Union. Tickets: \$17; \$12 seniors/students; \$40 families; free ages 15 and under when accompanied by a ticketed adult. 3 pm. St. Paul's Cathedral, 2 Cherry St. (802) 524-4555.

CHESTER. Springfield Community Chorus "Sounds of the Season" Christmas Concert. 7:30 pm at the First Baptist Church of Chester, 162 Main St. (802) 875-2638. *Also December 8 in Springfield.*

ENOSBURG FALLS. Community Christmas Concert. Enosburg Opera House, 99 Depot St. (802) 933-6171. www.enosburgoperahouse.org.

ESSEX JUNCTION. 22nd Annual Vermont International Festival. Admission \$7, children 6-12 \$5, seniors \$5, under 6 free, families \$20. 10 am - 5 pm. Champlain Valley Exposition, Rt. 15/Pearl St. (802) 863-6713. vermontinternationalfestival.com.

MANCHESTER. Hildene—Our House for the Holidays. The Museum Store welcomes neighbors & new friends. Dressed in holiday finery, the spirit of the season abounds in our 100 year old Carriage Barn! Apple cider, Vermont tastings & fresh cider doughnuts. Open 9:30 am - 4 pm. Hildene, off Rte. 7A, just south of the village. (802) 362-1788. www.hildene.org.

MIDDLEBURY. Henry Sheldon Museum Annual Holiday Open House. The Judd-Harris House will be decked out with beautiful floral arrangements. An elaborate electric train layout will entertain all ages. A craft activity and carols played on the Sheldon's 1831 piano add to the festive atmosphere. Admission by donation. 12-4 pm. Henry Sheldon Museum, 1 Park St. (802) 388-2117. henrysheldonmuseum.org.

MIDDLETOWN SPRINGS. 20th Annual Holiday Craft Fair. 10 am - 3 pm at Middletown Springs Elementary School on South St.

RUTLAND. Handel's Messiah. Annual presentation by Rutland Area Chorus and Orchestra under the direction of Rip Jackson. 3:30 and 7 pm. Grace Congregational Church, 8 Court St. (802) 775-4301 x 208. dchart6010@aol.com. www.gracechurchvt.org.

SAXTONS RIVER. River Artisans will be open till 5:30 pm for the tree lighting festivities. River Artisans Cooperative, 26B Main St. (802) 869-2099. shop@riverartisans.com. www.riverartisans.com.

SAXTONS RIVER. Tree Lighting at 5:30 pm. Cookies, visit with Santa, and horse-drawn wagon rides afterwards. Handbell concert at Christ Church at 4 pm. Free. (802) 869-2960.

SPRINGFIELD. Springfield Community Chorus to Perform Handel's Messiah. Free. 3 pm. At the First Congregational Church, UCC, 77 Main St. (802) 885-5728.

ST. JOHNSBURY. 67th Annual Christmas Concert—Messiah by George Frederic Handel. Tickets \$5-\$10. 2:30 pm. North Congregational Church, 1325 Main St. (802) 748-2600. catamountarts.org.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9

RUTLAND. Winter Movie Series: *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*. Bring the family downtown to enjoy this holiday classic in high definition on the big screen! Free. 7 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 773-9380. www.rutlanddowntown.com.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10

BURLINGTON. 10th Annual Winter Tales. Local storytellers interspersed with poetry and folk songs written and performed by Patti Casey. Tickets \$32/\$28.80. 7:30 pm. Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynncenter.org. *Through December 14.*

RUTLAND. Shakespeare on Main Street presents *A Christmas Carol: Readers Style*. Tickets: adults \$10, youth \$5, children under 12 free. 7 pm. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St. (802) 315-0019.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. EBT and debit cards. Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm and Wednesdays 4-7 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 753-7269. www.vtfarmersmarket.org. *Through May 2.*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11

BURLINGTON. 10th Annual Winter Tales. Local storytellers interspersed with poetry and folk songs written and performed by Patti Casey. Tickets \$32/\$28.80. 7:30 pm. Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynncenter.org. *Through December 14.*

RUTLAND. Santa Phone Calls. Special arrangements have been made to transfer phone calls from Santa in the North Pole to Rutland City children, 5:30-7:30 pm. Visit rutlandrec.com to fill out a special Santa's Elf form. Or stop by 16 North St. Extension. (802) 773-1822.

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION. Upper Valley Seed Savers meet on the second Thursday of the month at 5 pm at Upper Valley Food Coop, through the winter. Our mission is to further knowledge about seed saving and to work on projects that will help develop a body of locally-adapted open-pollinated vegetable seeds. For information, or if you can't come to meetings but would like to receive a monthly email with our minutes which contain information on our projects, please contact Sylvia Davatz at sdav@valley.net or call (802) 436-3262.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12

BARRE. Vermont Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops Concert. Two sleigh rides, a skating party, and a sojourn through the Twelve Days of Christmas in a joyful holiday journey with the VSO and VSO Chorus. Enjoy "Lightning Galop," a fanfare by Burlington composer T.L. Read, excerpts from Messiah and the Nutcracker—shepherds, carols, a singalong, and a celestial harp! Tickets \$30 adults, \$24 seniors, \$9 students. 7:30 pm. Barre Opera House, 6 N. Main St. (802) 864-5741. www.barreoperahouse.org. www.vso.org.

BURLINGTON. 10th Annual Winter Tales. Local storytellers interspersed with poetry and folk songs written and performed by Patti Casey. Tickets \$32/\$28.80. 7:30 pm. Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynncenter.org. *Through December 14.*

BURLINGTON. Performance: *A Christmas Carol*. Nebraska Theatre Caravan's beautifully staged musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic features. Tickets \$15-\$42. 7 pm. Flynn Center for the Performing Arts Main Stage, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynncenter.org.

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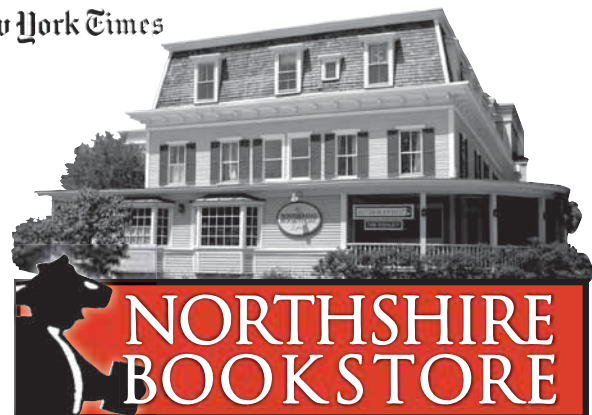
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Vermont Country Calendar



LUDLOW. Annual Christmas Open House. Play directed by Stephanie Rowe. Black River Academy Museum, 14 High St. (802) 228-5050. bramvt.org. Also December 13.

RUTLAND. Twelve Days Before Christmas: Late Night Shopping. Participating businesses will be open later so you can get that holiday shopping done! Come down for dinner then visit over 19 stores. Downtown. (802) 773-9380. www.rutlanddowntown.com.

STOWE. Festival of Trees and Light. Reception 6-8 pm. On exhibit through Family Day at 1 pm on December 14. Helen Day Art Center, 90 Pond St. (802) 253-8358. helenday.com.

WALLINGFORD. Shakespeare On Main Street presents *A Christmas Carol*: Readers Style. Tickets at the door: adults: \$10, youth \$5, children under 12 free. 7 pm. Wallingford Town Hall, 75 School St. (802) 315-0019.

WOODSTOCK. Concert: The Hot Club of San Francisco Presents Cool Yule. Tickets: \$28 adult, \$27 senior, \$20 college student (with I.D.), \$18 children 5-18. 7:30 pm. Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green. (802) 457-3981. info@pentanglearts.org. www.pentanglearts.org.

WOODSTOCK. 30th Annual Wassail Weekend. Sunrise Chorus on the steps of the Norman Williams Public Library, 4 pm. The Snow Queen presented the Yoh Theatre Players, tickets \$10/\$8, (802) 457-1317. Hot Club of San Francisco presents Cool Yule, tickets \$28/\$26, (802) 457-3981. (802) 457-3555. info@woodstockvt.com. www.woodstockvt.com. Through December 14.

WOODSTOCK. Wassail Weekend Open House. See the 1807 Dana House decorated for the holidays, while you enjoy hot cider, seasonal treats, Celtic harp music, and stories for the young-at-heart. All are welcome. Free, with donations accepted. 5-7 pm. Woodstock History Center, 26 Elm St. (802) 457-1822. woodstockhistorical.org.

WOODSTOCK. Billings Farm & Museum Wassail Weekend. Sunday horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides on Sunday (weather permitting). Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. billingsfarm.org. Through December 14.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13

BELLOWS FALLS. Concert: Hungrytown. Traditional folk duo. Tickets: \$17/\$13. 7:30 pm at Immanuel Episcopal Church, 20 Church St. (802) 463-3100. www.immanuelretreat.org.

BELMONT. Christmas in Mount Holly. The true Christmas spirit resonates with carolers, a Christmas skit, refreshments and, a visit from Santa. Free! 4-8 pm. Mount Holly Library, 26 Maple Hill Rd. (802) 259-2562. mounthollyvt.org.

BENNINGTON. 74th Annual Christmas Tea. The hall will be aglow with candles, decorated with wreaths and greens. The Victorian tea table will be full of trays of cookies and tea sandwiches, tea, coffee and punch. There will be entertainment. The Christmas Shop will be open with small gifts, jelly and jams, breads, and Christmas tree ornaments. Cost: \$6. 3-5:30 pm. Parish Hall, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 200 Pleasant St. (802) 442-2911. stpetersvt.org.

BENNINGTON. Family Day and Children's Shopping Day. Children ages 4 to 12 are invited to do their holiday shopping with us, gifts \$1-\$7. Free gift-wrapping and gift tags included. Visit with Santa 1-3 pm. See the Children's Forest! Admission \$3. 10 am - 5 pm. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. benningtonmuseum.org.

BRANDON. Concert: Holiday Jazz and Love Songs with Sarah Stone and Fred Barnes. Tickets: \$15; pre-concert dinner available for \$20. Reservations required. 7:30 pm. Brandon Music, 62 Country Club Rd. (802) 465-4071. info@brandon-music.net. www.brandon-music.net

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.floatingbridgefoodandfarms.com. www.lhstrees.com. Also December 14, 20 & 21.

BURLINGTON. 10th Annual Winter Tales. Local storytellers, poetry and folk songs written and performed by Patti Casey. Tickets \$37.50/\$33.75. 2 & 7:30 pm. Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. flynncenter.org. Also December 14.

BURLINGTON. Browse and Listen—Full Circle: Medieval, Renaissance, Celtic, and Holiday Music. Free. 1-3 pm. Phoenix Books Burlington, 191 Bank St. (802) 448-3350. www.phoenixbooks.biz.

BURLINGTON. Vermont Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops Concert. Two sleigh rides, a skating party, and a sojourn through the Twelve Days of Christmas in a joyful holiday journey with the VSO and VSO Chorus. Enjoy "Lightning Galop," a fanfare by Burlington composer T.L. Read, excerpts from Messiah and the Nutcracker—shepherds, carols, a singalong, and a celestial harp! Tickets \$52-\$15, \$9 students. 7:30 pm. Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (802) 864-5741. www.flynntix.org. www.vso.org.

CHESTER. Overture to Christmas. Annie Hawkins, storyteller and author at the Whiting Library. Annual Senior Citizens Christmas Dinner at noon. Children's musical story time with Paul and Norma Ippolito at the Hugging Bear Inn. Shops will be open late. (802) 875-2444.

LUDLOW. Annual Ludlow and Black River Community Christmas Celebration. Plays, music, sing-alongs, choral pieces, and skits! Free, donations appreciated. 7-8:30 pm. Ludlow Town Hall Auditorium, 37 Depot St. (802) 228-7239. www.foia.us.

MANCHESTER. Horse-Drawn Wagon Rides. Fee. 11:30 am and 2:30 pm at the Orvis Flagship Store parking lot on Rt. 7A. By advance reservation only. Call (802) 362-6313. visitmanchestervt.com.

MANCHESTER CENTER. Annual Inn Tours. Visit any or all of 15 beautifully decorated inns. Noon to 4 pm. \$15/person. Tickets and list of inns at Manchester and the Mountains Regional Chamber of Commerce, 39 Bonnet St. (802) 362-6313. visitmanchestervt.com.

MONTPELIER. 10th Annual Touch of Vermont Holiday Gift Market. Wares from nearly 40 Vermont artisans. Free admission. 9 am - 4 pm. Montpelier City Hall, 39 Main St. (802) 310-1725. info@touchofvt.org. www.touchofvt.org.

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Vermont Country Calendar

(Saturday, December 13, continued)

MONTPELIER. Kellogg-Hubbard Holiday Book Sale. Thousands of books, from shiny new bestsellers to antique curiosities. Also find CDs, DVDs, maps, sheet music, and more. Hardcover \$2 each, softcover \$1 each. Hours: Mon-Thurs 10 am – 8 pm, Fri 10 am – 5:30 pm, Sat 10 am – 5:30 pm. Kellogg-Hubbard Library, 135 Main St. (802) 223-3338. kellogghubbard.org. *December 13 - January 17.*

NEWFANE. Annual Cookie Sale. 10 am – 1 pm. Newfane Congregational Church, 11 Church St. (802) 365-4079.

NORTHFIELD. Holiday Market. Wreaths, candles, soap, winter produce, pizzas, sweet treats and much more. Workshops and complimentary demonstrations. 10 am – 4 pm. Green Mountain Girls Farm, 923 Loop Rd. (802) 505-9840. floatingbridgefoodandfarms.com. *Also December 14.*

NORWICH. Contradance with Northern Spy and caller David Millstone. No partner necessary. Beginners and singles always welcome. Please bring a change of clean shoes for the dance floor. Admission \$8 (Students \$5, under 16 free). 8 pm. Tracy Hall, 300 Main St. (802) 785-4607. rbarrows@cs.dartmouth.edu. *Second Saturdays.*

RUTLAND. Annual Holiday Fair of Vermont. Sponsored by the Vermont Farmers Market. The largest holiday show of its kind in Southern Vermont. Over sixty vendors with every kind of Vermont-made crafts, Christmas decor, baked goods, gourmet specialty foods, jams and jellies, everything maple. Gift boxes and shipping available. Free admission and parking. 9 am – 4 pm. The Holiday Inn, Rt. 7 South. For info call Doug Patac at (802) 753-7269 or visit vtfarmersmarket.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Local produce, crafts, prepared foods. Live music. EBT and debit cards. Saturdays 10 am – 2 pm and Wednesdays 4-7 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. For info contact Doug Patac (802) 753-7269, info@vtfarmersmarket.org. www.vtfarmersmarket.org. *Through May 2.*

SAXTONS RIVER. Cookie Exchange and Tea Tastings. Free. 4-6 pm. River Artisans Cooperative, 26B Main St. (802) 869-2099. www.riverartisans.com.

STOWE. An Irish Christmas In America. This tenth US tour features Celtic dancers from Waterbury's Heather Morris School of Dance! Recommended for 7+ years. Tickets: \$20/\$32/\$38/\$46. 7 pm. Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center, 122 Hourglass Dr. (802) 760-4634. sprucepeakarts.org.

ST. ALBANS. Carol Ann Jones Holiday Concert & Singalong. Tickets \$15. 7 pm. St. Albans Historical Museum, 9 Church St. (802) 527-7933. stamuseum.org.

ST. JOHNSBURY. Victorian Holiday Open House. The Victorian gallery sparkles with lights, and holiday music fills the air. Make crafts with natural materials for decorating and giving, and enjoy sweet treats made by the Museum's staff, trustees and friends, and sing with us. Free. 1:30-4 pm. Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium, 1302 Main St. (802) 748-2372. www.fairbanksmuseum.org.

WEST RUTLAND. Marsh Monitoring Bird Walk. This month's walk is held in conjunction with the Great Backyard Bird Count. To date 145 species, from Least Bittern to Rusty Blackbird, have been recorded at this Important Bird Area (IBA). Join us for this 3.7-mile loop around the marsh (or go halfway). Meet at the West Rutland Price Chopper parking lot at 8 am. Leader Roy Pilcher, (802) 775-3461. rutlandcountyaudubon.org.

WOODSTOCK. 30th Annual Wassail Weekend. Holiday Craft Fair, 10 am – 4 pm. Wassail Cafe on the Green, 11 am – 2 pm. Reading of *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, 1:30 pm, free. Annual Wassail Parade, 2 pm, sponsored by High Horses Therapeutic Riding Program. Yule Log and Memory Tree Lighting, Carol Sing, free, 2:30 pm. Concert with The Ten at the Congregational Church. Lighting of the Luminaries, 4 pm. Concert with Sly Voxes, a capella group, at the library. Wassail Feast at 6 pm at the Woodstock Inn. Performance of The Snow Queen, \$8/\$10. (802) 457-3555. info@woodstockvt.com. www.woodstockvt.com. *Through December 14.*

WOODSTOCK. 13th Annual Holiday House Tour. Woodstock's most charming houses deck their halls and open their doors for this holiday tradition. Tickets \$30 adult, \$18 youth, \$15 volunteers. 9:30 am – 2 pm, at your own pace. All tours begin at Woodstock Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green. (802) 457-3981. info@pentanglearts.org. pentanglearts.org.

WOODSTOCK. Dana House Museum Open House. Interpretive staff will be available to answer your questions about Woodstock's history and the collection. Admission by donation. Times to be announced. Woodstock History Center, 26 Elm St. (802) 457-1822. woodstockhistorical.org.

WOODSTOCK. Billings Farm & Museum Wassail Weekend. Tour the festively decorated 1890 Farm House; make a historic ornament as a memento of your visit. Sunday: horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides (weather permitting). Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also December 14.*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.floatingbridgefoodandfarms.com. www.lhstrees.com. *Also December 20 & 21.*

BURLINGTON. 10th Annual Winter Tales. Local storytellers interspersed with poetry and folk songs written and performed by the incomparable Patti Casey. Tickets \$37.50; Sunday night Gala \$50. 2 & 6 pm. Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynncenter.org.

NEWPORT. Holiday Concert: Holidays with the Lake Region High School Select Chorus. Suggested donation \$5. 4 pm. St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 44 Second St. (802) 334-7365. www.nowplayingnewport.com.

NORTHFIELD. Holiday Market. Wreaths, candles, soap, winter produce, pizzas, sweet treats and much more. Slice of Life workshops and complimentary demonstrations. 11 am – 3 pm. Green Mountain Girls Farm, 923 Loop Rd. (802) 505-9840. www.floatingbridgefoodandfarms.com.

NORWICH. Contradance with Northern Spy. caller: David Millstone. No partner necessary. Beginners and singles always welcome. All dances taught and called. Please bring a change of clean shoes for the dance floor. Admission \$8 (students \$5, under 16 free). 8 pm. Tracy Hall, 300 Main St. (802) 785-4607. rbarrows@cs.dartmouth.edu. *Second Saturday dances continue through June 2015.*

RUTLAND. Vermont Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops Concert. Two sleigh rides, a skating party, and a sojourn through the Twelve Days of Christmas in a joyful holiday journey with the VSO and the VSO Chorus. Enjoy "Lightning Galop," a fanfare by Burlington composer T.L. Read, excerpts from Messiah and the Nutcracker—shepherds, carols, a sing-along, and a celestial harp! Tickets \$32-\$26, \$9 students; AARP members \$20 adults, \$16 seniors. 3 pm. Paramount Theater, 30 Center St. (802) 864-5741. www.paramountvt.org. www.vso.org.

STOWE. Family Day at Festival of Trees and Light. Come celebrate the season and join the holiday fun! Create holiday decorations, play dreidel games, and decorate gingerbread houses with NECI students. Enjoy seasonal treats and listen to the delightful sounds of the guitar with Javier Bustamante at this yearly gathering. 1 pm. Helen Day Art Center, 90 Pond St. (802) 253-8358. helenday.com.

Grand Finale Christmas Holiday Fair

We invite you folks from all around to join us here at the Holiday Inn in Rutland, VT on Saturday, December 13 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for our final great Holiday Fair of the season.

We have over sixty vendors with a vast variety of Vermont-made or produced creations. You'll find handmade Balsam wreaths, Christmas decor, handcrafted items in fabric, fiber, wooden ware, pottery, glass, soaps, jewelry, and much more.

Our country bakers will tease you with mouth-watering maple bread, a varieties of pies, fudge, pastries, cookies, cider doughnuts, and even gluten-free goodies.

Vermont is a leader in gourmet specialty foods and you won't be disappointed here. You'll see all sorts of maple syrup and maple sugar products as well as maple pepper and maple mustard. Shop from 100 exquisite varieties of jams and jellies, pickles, salsas, marinades

and more; plenty of Vermont cheeses and wines; and even a few fall veggies and fresh fall apples. And don't miss the delicious prepared foods.

Many vendors have various types of gift boxes. There is still time to ship items to friends and relatives who live away. Many small items will fit into post office flat rate boxes for the same low price to all 50 states!

Talk to our vendors if you want a specific item just for you. Many will make it and in time for Christmas. The same applies to our baker and

specialty and prepared food folks. Need a special treat for the holidays? Talk to our vendors. We think that you will like their prices. There are so many great Christmas gifts to be found here, all local, homemade and handmade.

And remember, it's always "Free Admission!"

The Holiday Inn is located about one mile south of Rutland, VT, on the west side of Rt. 7. For more information call Doug Patac at (802) 753-7269. Visit www.vtfarmersmarket.org.

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Saturday at the Rutland Farmers Market, 251 West St., 10-2

Vermont Country Calendar



ST. JOHNSBURY. Caroling Party & Potluck. The North and South Congregational Churches, Lower Waterford and E. St. Johnsbury Congregational Churches join together for an evening of food, caroling, and fellowship. Gather at North Congregational Church, 1325 Main St., St. Johnsbury at 4 pm for a potluck dinner. After dinner the group will make its way through the town regaling folks with joyous songs of the Christmas season. Then all will head to North Congregational Church, 1325 Main St., St. Johnsbury for dessert and hot chocolate. (802) 748-3315. southcongregationalchurch.org.

WEST PAWLET. Pancake Breakfast. Sponsored by the West Pawlet Volunteer Fire Department. \$8 for 12 years and up, \$5 for 5-12 years and free to children under 5. 7:30-11 am. At the West Pawlet Fire House, 2806 Rt. 153. (802) 345-4312.

WOODSTOCK. Billings Farm & Museum Wassail Weekend. Make historic Christmas ornaments and pomanders, candle dipping. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides (weather permitting) 10 am - 3:30 pm. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org.

WOODSTOCK. 30th Annual Messiah Sing. Features a world-class ensemble with four soloists. Audience joins in for the choruses, so bring your libretto! Free, suggested donation. 4 pm at Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Church, South St. (802) 457-3981. www.pentanglearts.org.

WOODSTOCK. 30th Annual Wassail Weekend. Holiday Craft Fair, 10 am - 2 pm. Performance of the Snow Queen at 5:30 pm, \$8/\$10. (802) 457-3555. info@woodstockvt.com. www.woodstockvt.com. *Through December 14.*

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15

BRATTLEBORO. Concert: Nowell Sing We Clear. Traditional music of the British Isles and North America for the winter holiday season. 7:30 pm. Latchis Theater, 48 Main St. For tickets call (802) 254-9019. nowellsingweclear.co.

DANBY. Film Discussion. Freedom and Unity: The Vermont Movie. Part Three: "Refuge, Reinvention, and Revolution" explores innovation, interstates, and counter-culture. Led by Tom Fels. Free. 7 pm. Mount Tabor/Danby Historical Society, 74 S Main St. (802) 293-2265. www.vermonthumanities.org.

RUTLAND. Rutland Library December Book Sale. Sponsored by The Friends of the Rutland Free Library. 4-8 pm. In the basement, Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St. (802) 773-1860. rutlandfree.org.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17

EAST CHARLESTON. Island Pond Bird Count. Participate in the longest run Citizen Science survey in the world, the 115th Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count! Pot-luck to follow. Free. 7:30 am - 4 pm. Northwoods Stewardship Center, 154 Leadership Dr. (802) 723-6551 x 115. northwoodscenter.org. audubon.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Local produce, crafts, prepared foods. Live music. EBT and debit cards. Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm and Wednesdays 4-7 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. For info contact Doug Patac (802) 753-7269, info@vtfarmersmarket.org www.vtfarmersmarket.org. *Through May 2.*

WARREN. Concert: Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet with Counterpoint. A perfect blend of brass, voices, and good cheer! A highlight will be Noel Canadien, virtuoso medley of French Canadian carols. Traditional favorites include Sleigh Ride and Ding Dong Merrily on High. 7:30 pm. Warren United Church, 339 Main St. (802) 864-5741. www.vso.org.

WINDSOR. Stuffed Animal Repair. Sue Spear, stuffed animal repair specialist, will fix up stuffed friends. Free. 6-8 pm. Windsor Public Library, 43 State St. (802) 674-2556. *Each Wednesday.*

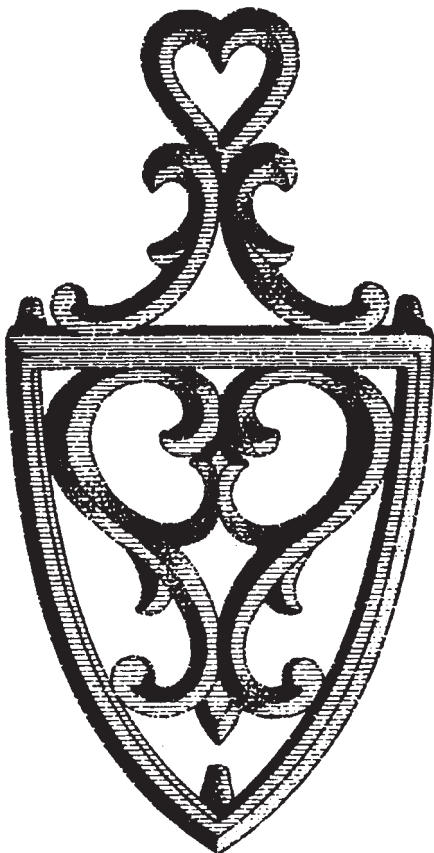
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18

BRANDON. Moonlight Madness. Sales, specials, and holiday festivities. Stores and restaurants will be open. 4-9 pm. (802) 247-5941. www.brandon.org.

BRATTLEBORO. Social Singing from The Sacred Harp. Free and open to the public, no experience necessary, loaner books provided. 7-9 pm. Kidsplayce, 20 Elliott St. For information e-mail cuvlever@gmail.com. *First and third Thursdays.*

BURLINGTON. Performance: Flynn Show Choirs. 70 of Vermont's best young singers, actors, and dancers, aged 9-18. Tickets \$12-\$16. 6 & 8 pm. Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynncenter.org. *Also December 19.*

HANOVER, NH. 40th Anniversary Christmas Revels: Haddon Hall. Drama and processions, festive dance and glorious carols, and music from the middle ages to the early twentieth century. Tickets: \$8-\$38. Thursday & Friday 7 pm, Saturday 2 pm & 7 pm, Sunday 1 pm & 5 pm. Spaulding Auditorium, Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College. (603) 646-2422. www.hop.dartmouth.edu. revelsnorth.org. *Through December 21.*



LEBANON, NH. Performance: *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. Tickets \$0-\$15. 10 am. Lebanon Opera House, 51 North Park St. (603) 448-0400. info@lebanonoperahouse.org. lebanonoperahouse.org. *Also December 19, 20 & 21.*

ST. JOHNSBURY. Concert: Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet with Counterpoint. A perfect blend of brass, voices, and good cheer! A highlight will be "Noel Canadien", virtuoso medley of French Canadian carols. Traditional favorites include "Sleigh Ride" and "Ding Dong Merrily on High". Tickets \$24 adults, \$20 seniors & students, free under 18. 7:30 pm. The North Congregational Church, 1325 Main St. (802) 864-5741 x 10. grace@vso.org. www.catamountarts.org. www.vso.org.

WOODSTOCK. Hand-in-Hand Community Meal. All are welcome. Free, donations accepted. Every Thursday, 5-7 pm in the Social Hall of the North Universalist Chapel Society, 7 Church St. (802) 457-2557.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19

BELLOWS FALLS. Bellows Falls Winter Farmers' Market. At the Amtrack Station, Depot St. 4-6:30 pm. Rachel Ware, (802) 463-2018. bellowsfallsmarket@gmail.com. bffarmersmarket.com.

BELLOWS FALLS. BF3F—Third Friday Art Walk. Stores and galleries in town and in the surrounding area host special exhibits and events. 5-8 pm. Flyer available at Village Square Booksellers, 32 The Square. (802) 463-9404. villagesquarebooks.com. *Third Fridays.*

BURLINGTON. Performance: Flynn Show Choirs. 70 of Vermont's best young singers, actors, and dancers, aged 9-18. Tickets \$12-\$16. 6 & 8 pm. Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynncenter.org.

ENFIELD, NH. Christmas Lights Display. 5-9 pm through December 31. Santa program Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 pm till December 25. Free. La Salette Shrine, 410 Rt. 4A. (603) 632-7087. www.lasaletteofenfield.org.

ENOSBURG FALLS. Performance: Greedy Greta Visits Christmas. Tickets \$12. 7:30 pm. Enosburg Opera House, 99 Depot St. (802) 933-6171. enosburgoperahouse.org. *Also December 20.*

HANOVER, NH. 40th Anniversary Christmas Revels: Haddon Hall. Drama and processions, festive dance and glorious carols, and music from the middle ages to the early twentieth century. Tickets: \$8-\$38. 7 pm, Sat 2 pm & 7 pm, Sun 1 pm & 5 pm. Spaulding Auditorium, Dartmouth College. (603) 646-2422. www.hop.dartmouth.edu. revelsnorth.org. *Through December 21.*

HARTLAND. Winter Farmers' Market. Friday afternoons 4-7 pm, at Damon Hall, Rts. 5 & 12, Hartland Three Corners. hartlandfarmersmarket@gmail.com. www.hartlandfarmersmarket.com. *Also December 26.*

JAY. Concert: Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet with Counterpoint. A perfect blend of brass, voices, and good cheer! A highlight will be Noel Canadien, virtuoso medley of French Canadian carols. Traditional favorites include Sleigh Ride and Ding Dong Merrily on High. \$35 VIP (includes private bar and pre-show appetizers) \$25 adults, \$15 under 18. 7:30 pm. Jay Peak Resort, 830 Jay Peak Rd. (802) 864-5741. jaypeakresort.com. vso.org.

MIDDLEBURY. "Night Fires." The annual winter solstice celebration performed by Theatre Group, Ltd. delivers a heartfelt pageant of singing, dancing, storytelling, and visual magic. Tickets \$24/\$20. 8 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. www.townhalltheater.org. *Thru Dec. 21.*

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Sundays by appointments

Vermont Country Calendar

(Friday, December 19, continued)

POULTNEY. The Poultney Public Library Hosts Favorite Holiday Movies. With candy and popcorn. Free. 6 pm. Poultney Public Library, 205 Main St. (802) 287-5556.

RUTLAND. Rutland Youth Theatre Presents *Shrek the Musical*. Tickets \$12/\$10. 7 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountvt.org. Also Dec. 20.

TINMOUTH. Contra Dance. With Pete's Posse, calling by Adina Gordon. Beginners, come at 8. Refreshments. Admission: \$9, teens \$7, 12 and under free. 8-11 pm. Tinmouth Community Center, Rt. 140. (802) 235-2718. www.tinmouthvt.org. Continues third Friday of each month.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20

BELLOWS FALLS. Concert: Mili Bermejo, vocals; Dan Greenspan, bass, and Jiri Nedoma, piano. Tickets: \$17/\$13. 7:30 pm at Immanuel Episcopal Church, 20 Church St. (802) 463-3100. www.immanuelretreat.org.

BENNINGTON. Walloomsac Holiday and Winter Farmers Markets. 10 am – 2 pm at First Baptist Church, 601 Main St. info@walloomsac.org. On Facebook. Also January through April 1st and 3rd Saturdays, 10 am – 1 pm.

BRANDON. Concert: Dickerson & Nop. Tickets: \$15; pre-concert dinner available for \$20. Reservations required. 7:30 pm. Brandon Music, 62 Country Club Rd. (802) 465-4071. www.brandon-music.net

BRATTLEBORO. Winter Farmers' Market. Holiday markets on December 6, 13 & 20, 10 am – 3 pm. Winter markets Saturdays, 10 am – 2 pm, November through March. At the River Garden, 153 Main St. For info call Sherry Maher, (802) 869-2141. farmersmarket@postsoilsolutions.org. www.postsoilsolutions.org.

BRATTLEBORO. 115th Annual Christmas Bird Count for Brattleboro Area. Whether the day is mild or frigid, clear or cloudy, on Count Day, people in seven teams will scour a prescribed area around Brattleboro counting birds. You can join one of the seven field teams that count birds. If you are a beginning birder, don't worry; you will be in a group that includes experienced birdwatchers. Or if your home is within the boundaries of the Brattleboro Area Count, you can stay home and report the birds that visit your feeder. To join a team or do a feeder count contact Chris Petrak at chrsptrk@svcable.net. Afterwards join us for the CBC "Compilation Pot Luck" at 6 pm. Call (802) 254-9087 for location and directions. www.sevtaudubon.org.

BRISTOL. Mt. Abe Christmas Bird Count. For details call Randy or Cathy Durand at (802) 453-4370.

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. Also December 21.

BURLINGTON. Winter Farmers' Market at Memorial Auditorium, corner of Main St. and S. Union. 10 am – 2 pm every other Saturday, starting November 8 through April. Chris Wagner, (802) 310-5172. burlingtonfarmersmarket.org. Also January 3, 17, 31; February 14 & 28; March 14 & 28; April 11.

BURLINGTON. Performance: Vermont's Own *Nutcracker*. Produced by Vermont Ballet Theater with special guest artist Samuel Wilson of the Dance Theatre of Harlem. Tickets \$22-\$35. 2 & 7 pm. Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynncenter.org. Also December 21.

ENFIELD, NH. Christmas Lights Display. 5-9 pm through December 31. Santa program Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 pm till December 25. Free. La Salette Shrine, 410 Rt. 4A. (603) 632-7087. www.lasaletteofenfield.org.

ENOSBURG FALLS. Performance: *Greedy Greta Visits Christmas*. Tickets \$12. 7:30 pm. Enosburg Opera House, 99 Depot St. (802) 933-6171. www.enosburgoperahouse.org.

GRAFTON. Concert: Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet with Counterpoint. A perfect blend of brass, voices, and good cheer! A highlight will be Noel Canadien, virtuoso medley of French Canadian carols. Traditional favorites include Sleigh Ride and Ding Dong Merrily on High. Tickets free (available to Grafton residents on Dec. 2 from 10-4 at the Grafton Historical Society). 5 pm. The White Church, 162 Main St. (802) 864-5741. vso.org.

GROTON. Groton Growers' Winter Farmers Market. Every third Saturday, 10 am – 1 pm at Groton Community Building Gym. Mary Berlejung and Sandi Adams. (802) 584-3595 or (802) 633-3031. grotongrowers@gmail.com. www.grotongrowers.org. Third Saturdays through May.

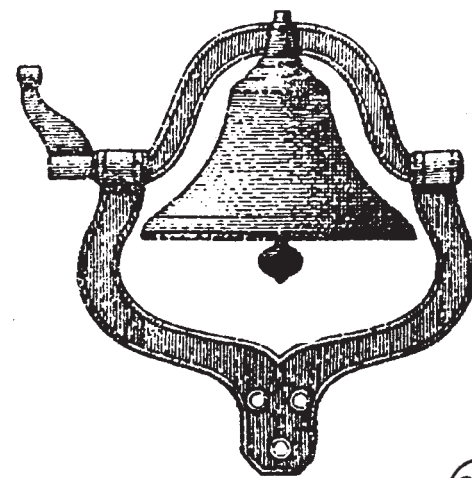
HANCOCK. Hike or Snowshoe on the Texas Falls Nature Trail in the Green Mountain National Forest. Trail meanders through the forest along Texas Brook. Sponsored by the Green Mountain Club. Contact leader for more information, meeting time and place: Beth Eliason, betheliason@gmail.com, (802) 989-3909. www.greenmountainclub.org.

HANOVER, NH. 40th Anniversary Christmas Revels: Haddon Hall. Drama and processions, festive dance and glorious carols, and music from the middle ages to the early twentieth century. Tickets: \$8-\$38. 2 pm & 7 pm, Sun 1 pm & 5 pm. Spaulding Auditorium, Dartmouth College. (603) 646-2422. www.hop.dartmouth.edu. revelsnorth.org. Also December 21.

LEBANON, NH. Performance: Amahl and the Night Visitors. Tickets \$0-\$17.50. 5 & 7 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 North Park St. (603) 448-0400. info@lebanonoperahouse.org. www.lebanonoperahouse.org. Also December 21.

LUDLOW. Fletcher Farm Annual Holiday Cookie Sale. All cookies made by members of the Society of Vermont Artists & Craftsmen. Cookies sold by the pound and packed in tins. Select several different kinds for gift giving or holiday entertaining. 10 am – 2 pm. Meadowview Room of Fletcher Farm for the Arts & Crafts, 611 Rt. 103 S. (802) 228-8770. www.fletcherfarm.org.

MANCHESTER. Manchester Lions Club Elf Express Train Ride. One hour enchanting journey through the Green Mountains of Southern Vermont. Refreshments will be served on decorated trains. Holiday melodies and dance routines by the elves. Purchase tickets online or at The Manchester and The Mountains Regional Chamber of Commerce, 39 Bonnet St. Tickets \$25 adults (age 13 and over), \$20 (ages 2-12), under 2 free sitting on parent's lap. Departing at 10 am, 11:30 am, 1 pm, 2:30 pm, and 4 pm. Board at r.k. Miles, Routes 11/30. (802) 362-6313. manchesterlionselftrain.com.



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(excludes Christmas Day)

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- Dairy Farm
- Holiday Activities & Programs

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Gifts from the Farm

With chilly December and the holidays upon us, it's time to think about curling up with a soft Vermont-made mohair, wool, or alpaca blanket. Find out about the hand-made, homegrown gifts that our friends and neighbors are creating for us—throws, comforters, blankets, mittens, scarves, yarn, sheepskins! You can order directly from the farm, sometimes with a visit, or you can find these goods at a holiday fair or winter farmers market. Here are some of the many places you can explore. Be sure to call ahead.

Alpacas of Windmill Hill Farm

Laura M. Solomon, 842 Grassy Brook Rd., Brookline, VT 05345. (802) 348-9300. trelex88@gmail.com. www.windmillhillartisans.etsy.com. We use hand-spun yarn from our organically-raised alpacas to hand-knit and hand-crochet blankets. It sizes in natural colors including grey, white, fawn, black, or a combination. One-of-a-kind alpaca designer creations. Alpaca yarns and kits for sale. Shipping or pick-up at the farm by appointment.

Broadbrook Mountain Farm

Holly Nash Wolff, 260 Nash Rd., Royalton, VT 05068. (802) 763-7282. hollynashwolff@. Natural-colored blankets made from premium, silky fleece from our 100% purebred Romney Sheep. Our flock is naturally raised on grass and organic hay; no pesticides or chemicals used. Very strong fiber from a calm, healthy flock. Queen-sized blankets are \$325 each; single-sized are \$200.

Maple Ridge Sheep Farm

Linda Doane, 1187 Connecticut Corners, Braintree, VT 05060. (802) 728-3081. mrsf@mrsf.com. mrsf.com. We have the oldest flock of Shetland Sheep in the USA, raised with grass-based, organic and humane guidelines. The Maple Ridge Coverlet is made exclusively of Shetland wool grown on our farm. They come in traditional coverlet weave (white with a natural color) or in checkerboard twill

weave (white with red, green, blue, black, or gray). We offer hand spinners' fleeces, yarn, rovings, quilting and felting batts, and finished wool products.

Stonethrow Farm

Katherine Smith, 136 Jack Perry Rd., Wallingford, VT 05773-9350. (802) 446-3325. katsmith@vermontel.net. I am a handspinner with a mixed flock of Angora goats, Blueface Leicester, Romney and Cormo sheep and their crosses. I have lustrous coated fleeces for hand-spinning as well as roving, clouds, and pin-drafted sliver. Three styles of luxury yarn, machine-spun using my homegrown soft mohair. Limited amounts of handspun yarn and died mohair locks. Sheepskins. Registered breeding stock available as well as crossbred sheep for the handspinners flock.

Tamarack Tunis

Ben Machin and Grace Bowmer, 913 Young Rd., Corinth, VT 05039. (802) 793-4250. ben@tamaracktunis.com. grace@tamaracktunis.com. www.tamaracktunis.com. Tunis is one of the oldest American livestock breeds, dating to the 1700s. Tamarack Tunis is a grass-based farm raising heritage Tunis lamb. We produce yarn, wool comforters, and lambskins.

Vermont Grand View Farm

Kim and Chuck Goodling, 1638 Scales Hill Rd., Washington, VT 05675. (802) 685-4693. kingoodling@yahoo.com. www.grandviewfarmvt.net. We are home to Vermont's first flock of Gotland sheep, originating from the Gotland Islands in Sweden. We offer wool products such as yarn CSA shares, handwoven blankets and rugs, and knitting kits. Visit our online store at woolhandcrafts.etsy.com. We also offer B&Bfarm stays and fiber art classes.

For more useful information, subscribe to *Tidbits*, a free web publication, from Valley Food & Farm. Call (802) 291-9100. Visit www.vitalcommunities.org.

Vermont Country Calendar

MIDDLEBURY. "Night Fires." The annual winter solstice celebration performed by Theatre Group, Ltd. delivers a heartfelt pageant of singing, dancing, storytelling, and visual magic. Tickets \$24/\$20. 4 & 8 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. www.townhalltheater.org. Also December 21.

PITTSFORD. 3rd Annual Pittsford Farmers Market Craft Show. Jewelry, pottery, crafts, knit & crochet items, food and more. 9:30 am - 2 pm. Lothrop School Gym, 3447 Rt. 7. (802) 483-2829. Also December 20.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. EBT and debit cards. Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm and Wednesdays 4-7 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 753-7269. www.vtfarmersmarket.org. Through May 2.

RUTLAND. Rutland Youth Theatre Presents *Shrek the Musical*. Tickets \$12/\$10. 2 & 7 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. www.paramountvt.org.

SO. HERO. Winter Farmers' Market. 10 am - 2 pm. Also So. Hero Cookie Walk 10 am - 2 pm—choose from 100 dozen cookies! At Congregational Church of South Hero, UCC, 24 South St. Denise Boutin, (802) 372-3291. champlainislandsfarmersmarket.com.

WATERBURY. Concert: Holiday Lights. With the Solaris Vocal Ensemble. Admission. 7:30 pm. Waterbury Congregational Church at The White Meeting House, 8 N. Main St. (802) 244-6606. www.solarisensemble.org.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Dec. 26 - Jan. 1: horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides (weather permitting). Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org. Through January 1.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

BURLINGTON. Performance: Vermont's Own *Nutcracker*. Produced by Vermont Ballet Theater with special guest artist Samuel Wilson of the Dance Theatre of Harlem. Tickets \$22-\$35. 1 & 6:30 pm. Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynncenter.org.

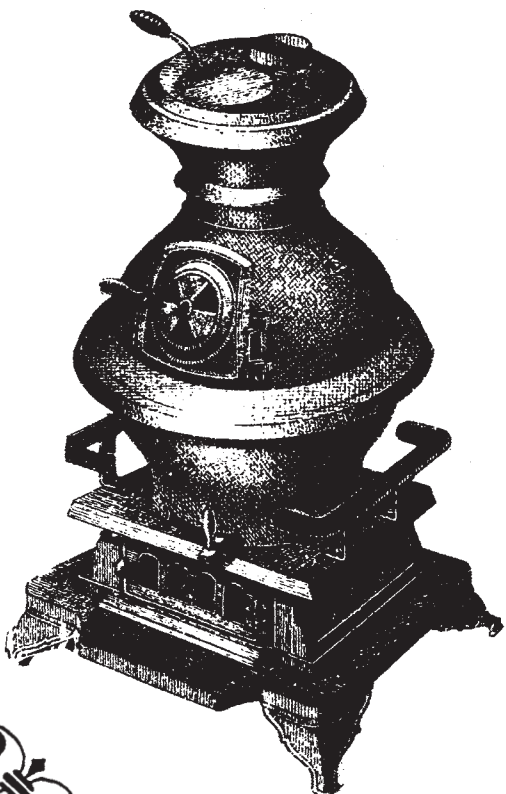
CANAAN. Christmas Music Concert. 4:30 pm. Grace Community Church, 300 Gale St. (802) 266-3071. kennstransky@gmail.com. thegracecommunitychurch.org.

HANOVER, NH. 40th Anniversary Christmas Revels: Haddon Hall. Drama and processions, festive dance and glorious carols, and music from the middle ages to the early twentieth century. Tickets: \$8-\$38. 1 pm & 5 pm. Spaulding Auditorium, Dartmouth College. (603) 646-2422. www.hop.dartmouth.edu.revelsnorth.org.

LEBANON, NH. Performance: *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. Tickets \$0-\$17.50. 2 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 North Park St. (603) 448-0400. www.lebanonoperahouse.org.

MANCHESTER. Concert: Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet with Counterpoint. A perfect blend of brass, voices, and good cheer! A highlight will be Noel Canadien, virtuoso medley of French Canadian carols. Traditional favorites include Sleigh Ride and Ding Dong Merrily on High. Tickets \$24 adults, \$20 seniors/students, free under 18. 4 pm. First Congregational Church, 3624 Main St. (802) 864-5741. www.vso.org. www.fccmanchester.org.

MIDDLEBURY. Annual Messiah Sing. College-Community Chorus. Musical scores provided. Donation \$5 adult/\$10 family. 2 pm. Middlebury Congregational Church, Main St. (802) 989-7355. www.middlebury.edu.



MIDDLEBURY. "Night Fires." The annual winter solstice celebration performed by Theatre Group, Ltd. delivers a heartfelt pageant of singing, dancing, storytelling, and visual magic. Tickets \$24/\$20. 2 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. www.townhalltheater.org.

RUTLAND. Performance: *The Nutcracker*. Presented by the Albany Berkshire Ballet and dance students from area schools. Tickets \$29.50-\$39.50. 2 & 6 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountvt.org.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Holiday programs, make historic ornaments. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Through January 1.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 22

BRANDON. Concert: Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet with Counterpoint. A perfect blend of brass, voices, and good cheer! A highlight will be Noel Canadien, virtuoso medley of French Canadian carols. Traditional favorites include Sleigh Ride and Ding Dong Merrily on High. Tickets \$24 adults, \$20 seniors/students, free under 18. 7 pm. Brandon Congregational Church, 1 Park St. (802) 864-5741. www.vso.org.

STOWE. Messiah Community Sing-In. Singers and listeners are both welcome. Scores available but bring your own if you have one. Suggested donation: \$8 at the door. 7 pm; doors open at 6:30 pm. Stowe Community Church, 137 Main St. (802) 253-7257.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Holiday programs, make historic ornaments. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. Through January 1.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23

RUTLAND. Winter Movie Series: *Home Alone*. Don't miss this holiday favorite in high definition on the big screen! Free. 7 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 773-9380. www.rutlanddowntown.com.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. EBT and debit cards. Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm and Wednesdays 4-7 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. For info contact Doug Patac (802) 753-7269. vtfarmersmarket.org. Through May 2.

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION. Performance: *A Christmas Carol*. Presented by the Northern Stage. Tickets \$14-\$54. 2 pm. Briggs Opera House, 5 S. Main St. (802) 291-9009. northernstage.org. Through December 28.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Holiday programs, make historic ornaments. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org. Through January 1.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25

Merry Christmas

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides. Holiday programs, make historic ornaments. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org. Through January 1.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27

PROCTOR. Christmas Bird Count. Join us for the highlight of our year and annual Rutland County Audubon Society tradition for over 40 years. The countdown and potluck will follow at the Proctor Library at 6 pm. Bring a dish to share. Beverages and utensils provided. shamwarivt@aol.com. rutlandcountyaudubon.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Local produce, crafts, prepared foods. Live music. EBT and debit cards. Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm and Wednesdays 4-7 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. For info contact Doug Patac (802) 753-7269. info@vtfarmersmarket.org. vtfarmersmarket.org. Through May 2.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides. Holiday programs, make historic ornaments. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org. Through January 1.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28

ARLINGTON. Messiah Sing-a-long. 3 pm. St. James Episcopal Church, Rt. 7A. (802) 375-9952. www.stjamesarlingtonvt.org.

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION. Performance: *A Christmas Carol*. Presented by the Northern Stage. Tickets \$14-\$54. 2 pm. Briggs Opera House, 5 S. Main St. (802) 291-9009. northernstage.org. Through December 28.



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Vermont Country Calendar

(Sunday, December 28, continued)

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides. Holiday programs, make historic ornaments. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org. *Through January 1.*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30

RUTLAND. Winter Movie Series: *Ice Age*. Ray Romano, John Leguizamo and Denis Leary star in this animated comedy, full of adventure. Free. 7 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 773-9380. www.rutlanddowntown.com.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31

BELMONT. New Year's Eve at Star Lake. Welcome in the New Year with good friends, good cheer, fireworks, a bonfire and skating. Co-sponsored with the Mount Holly Sno*Drifters. Free! 9-11 pm. (802) 259-2562. mounthollyvt.org.

BRATTLEBORO. Last Night Horse-Drawn Rides. In conjunction with Brattleboro's Last Night Celebration. Sleigh or wagon, rain or shine, 20 minute rides, on a no-reservations-needed basis. Adults \$8, under 12 \$4. Call for times. Fair Winds Farm, 511 Upper Dummerston Rd., off Rt. 30. (802) 254-9067. www.fairwindsfarm.org.

BURLINGTON. First Night Burlington. A celebration of the New Year, presenting more than 100 performances of music, dance, theater, comedy, and other performing arts in 20 venues. 2 pm to 12 am. Admission is with a First Night button. (802) 863-6005. www.firstnightburlington.com.

MANCHESTER. Manchester Music Festival New Year's Eve Concerts. Family concert at 4 pm—tickets: adults \$13; 18 and under free. Full concert at 6 pm—tickets: adults \$30; 18 and under \$13. At the First Congregational Church, 3624 Main St. (802) 362-1956. www.mmfvt.org.

NORWICH. Special New Year's Eve Contra Dance with Cuckoo's Nest. Ruth Sylvester, caller. All dances taught. Beginners are welcome—no partner is necessary. Please bring a separate pair of soft-soled shoes for dancing. Potluck finger food at the break and singing at midnight! Admission \$15, students \$10, under 16 & seniors half price. 8 pm, beginners session 7:45 pm. Tracy Hall, 300 Main St. (802) 785-4607. rbarrows@cs.dartmouth.edu.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Local produce, crafts, prepared foods. Live music. EBT and debit cards. Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm and Wednesdays 4-7 pm. Vermont Farmers Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. For information contact Doug Patac at (802) 753-7269, info@vtfarmersmarket.org. www.vtfarmersmarket.org. *Through May 2.*

RUTLAND. New Year's Early Eve Event for Families. Live music, local foods, family crafts, face painting. 3-4 pm. Fox Room, Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St. (802) 773-1860. rutlandfree.org.

ST. JOHNSBURY. 22nd Annual First Night. More than 220 entertainers, artists and musicians, performing at 18 venues on and near Main St. Free pancake supper, fireworks, great food, free shuttle. Button admission \$13, \$20. 4-12 pm, midnight. (802) 748-2600. info@catamountarts.org. www.catamountarts.org. www.firstnightstj.com.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

MONTPELIER. Kellogg-Hubbard Holiday Book Sale. Thousands of books, from shiny new bestsellers to antique curiosities. Also find CDs, DVDs, maps, sheet music, and more. Books are organized by subject for easy browsing. Hardcover \$2 each, softcovers \$1 each. Hours: Mon-Thurs 10 am - 8 pm, Fri 10 am - 5:30 pm, Sat 10 am - 5:30 pm. Kellogg-Hubbard Library, 135 Main St. (802) 223-3338. www.kellogghubbard.org. *December 13 through January 17.*

PROCTOR. Marble Cafe and Gift Shop. Enjoy pastries, soups and sandwiches. Free wifi. Open Tuesday thru Saturday year round from 9 am - 3 pm. At the Marble Museum, 52 Main St. (The museum itself will reopen in the Spring). (802) 459-2750. www.vermontmarblegifts.com.

RUPERT. Merck Forest and Farmland. Camping, cabins, trails, farm, workshops and seasonal events. Visitor's Center and store with certified organic maple syrup, our own 100% wool blankets, and more. Open year round, dawn to dusk. 3270 Rt. 315, west of Manchester. (802) 394-7836. merckforest.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Local produce, crafts, prepared foods. Live music. EBT and debit cards. Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm and Wednesdays 4-7 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. For information contact Doug Patac at (802) 753-7269. info@vtfarmersmarket.org. www.vtfarmersmarket.org. *Through May 2.*

RUTLAND. Himalayan Salt Cave. Come relax in the only public Himalayan Salt Cave in North America. Mon-Fri 10 am - 7 pm, Sat & Sun 10 am - 6 pm. \$12. Pyramid Holistic Wellness Center, 120 Merchants Row. For reservations call (802) 775-8080. www.pyramidvt.com.

WEST RUTLAND. Vermont Herbal General Store. Tai' Chi Gung intro classes, Wed at 6 pm. Free intro classes. Reiki healings, Chinese ear coning, handmade herbal remedies, teas, and lotions. Crystals, stones, and books. All are welcome. Open Tues & Wed 1-6, Thurs-Sat 12-6, Sun 1-4, closed Fri. Vermont Herbal General Store, 518 Main St. (802) 438-2766. info@vermonthherbal.com. www.vermonthherbal.com.

MUSEUMS, EXHIBITS & GALLERIES

BARRE. Vermont History Center and Leahy Library. Adults: \$5; families: \$12; students, children, seniors: \$3; members and children under 6: free. Monday through Friday, 9 am - 4 pm. Vermont Historical Society, 60 Washington St. (802) 479-8500. vermonthhistory.org.

BELMONT. Stephanie Stouffer Studio and Gallery Gift Shop. Hooked pillows and rugs, tapestries, holiday cards, and stoneware. Free admission. Call for appointment. Stephanie Stouffer Studio and Gallery Gift Shop, 250 Maple Hill Rd. (802) 259-2686. stouffer@vermontel.net. www.stephaniestouffer.com.

BENNINGTON. Bennington Center for the Arts. Admission: adults \$9, seniors & students \$8, families \$20, under 12 are free. Open Wed-Mon, 10 am - 5 pm. 44 Gypsy Lane. (802) 442-7158. thebennington.org.

BENNINGTON. Bennington Museum. Exhibits and programs, founding documents, fine art, and more. See Bennington Pottery, the 1924 Wasp Touring Car, Vermont furniture, and the Bennington Flag—one of America's oldest flags. Admission \$10, children under 18 free. Free admission to the Gift Shop. Open 10 am - 5 pm every day except Wednesdays. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. www.benningtonmuseum.org.

BRANDON. Compass Music and Arts Center. Arts businesses and studios, classes & workshops, exhibits, concerts, and community events. A gift shop. Onsite café. 10 am - 5 pm daily. Compass Music and Arts Center, 333 Jones Drive, Park Village, 1.5 miles north of downtown. (802) 247-4295. www.cmacvt.org.

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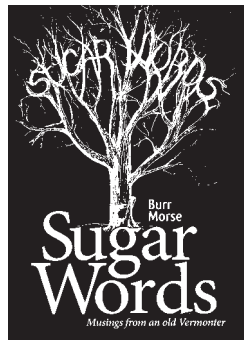
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BRATTLEBORO. Brattleboro Museum & Art Center. Exhibits and programs. Open 11-5. Closed Tues & Wed. Admission \$6/\$4/\$3. 10 Vernon St. (802) 257-0124. www.brattleboromuseum.org.

BURLINGTON. ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center. Admission: \$9.50 adults, \$7 ages 3-17, \$8 seniors and students, under 3 free. Monday-Sunday, 10 am - 5 pm. At Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, One College St. (877) 324-6385. www.echovermont.org.

CHESTER. 103 Artisans Marketplace. Hand crafted gifts, decorative accessories, small batch Chocolates and Vermont Maple products. Thanksgiving Open House November 28-30. Owned by artists Elise & Payne Junker, exclusive showroom of Junker Studio metalwork. Open every day 10 am - 5 pm, closed Tuesday. Located on Rt. 103, south of town—look for the life-size moose! (802) 875-7400. Gallery103.com.

ENOSBURG FALLS. Art Exhibit. Featured artist reception first Sunday of every month, 1-3 pm. Open Wednesday through Saturday, 10 am - 5 pm, Sunday 10-2 pm. Artist In Residence—a Cooperative Gallery, 321 Main St. (802) 933-6403. www.artistinresidencecoop.com.

GRAFTON. Art Exhibits. Open daily 10 am - 5 pm. Gallery North Star, 151 Townshend Rd. (802) 843-2465. gallery@gnsgraffton.com. www.gnsgraffton.com.

MANCHESTER. Visit Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home. Summer home of presidential son, Robert Lincoln. Museum store and welcome center. "Our House for the Holidays", December 6 & 7. Admission: \$18 adults, \$5 children 6-14, under 6 free. Open daily 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. Hildene, off Rt. 7A. (802) 362-1788. hildene.org.

MIDDLEBURY. Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont. The oldest chartered community history museum in the United States, welcoming visitors since 1882. Exhibits, research center, and museum shop. On view through January 3, 2015 are two exhibits: a *Retrospective of Watercolors by Arthur Healy*, an esteemed Middlebury College studio and history of art professor; and *Charity & Sylvia: A Weybridge Couple*, which celebrates the lives of two mid-19th century women who shared a house and partnered as couturiers in rural Vermont. Admission: adults \$5, youth 6-18 \$3, senior \$4.50, family \$12, under 6 free. Open Tues-Sat 10 am - 5 pm. Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont History, One Park St. (803) 388-2117. www.henrysheldonmuseum.org.

MIDDLEBURY. Vermont Folklife Center. Gallery, archives & research center, programs, and Heritage Shop. Free admission. Open Tues-Sat 10 am - 5 pm. Vermont Folklife Center, 88 Main St., (802) 388-4964. info@vermontfolklifecenter.org. www.vermontfolklifecenter.org.

MONTPELIER. Vermont History Museum & Bookstore. One admission fee gives access to both the Vermont History Museum and the Vermont Heritage Galleries. Adults: \$5; families: \$12; students, children, seniors: \$3; members and children under 6: free. Open 9 am - 4 pm, Tuesday through Saturday. Pavilion Building, 109 State St. (802) 828-2291. www.vermonthistory.org.

NORWICH. Montshire Museum of Science. Exhibits, trails, programs, and museum store. Open 10 am - 5 pm daily. Admission \$14 adults, \$11 children 2-17, under 2 free. Open daily 10 am - 5 pm. One Montshire Rd. (802) 649-2200. www.montshire.org.

PITTSFORD. New England Maple Museum. World's largest maple museum. Tour through Vermont's famous maple industry and visit our gift shop. Admission: adults \$5, children \$1, under 6 free. Call for hours open during December. New England Maple Museum, 4578 Rt. 7, north of the village. (802) 483-9414. info@maplemuseum.com. www.maplemuseum.com.

RUTLAND. Chaffee Downtown Art Center. Exhibits, workshops, classes. Open Tuesday-Friday 12-6 pm, and Saturday 10 am - 5 pm. Chaffee Downtown Gallery, 75 Merchants Row. (802) 775-0062. info@chaffeeartcenter.org. www.chaffeeartcenter.org.

SAXTONS RIVER. River Artisans Cooperative. 40 craftspeople keep the shelves stocked with a wide variety of handcrafted items. Open to new members. Year round, weekdays from 12-5 pm and weekends from 10 am - 3 pm. 26B Main St. (802) 869-2099. www.riverartisans.com.

SHOREHAM. Shoreham Bell Museum. See 5-6,000 bells collected from all over the world. Open most afternoons by appointment or chance year round. Free admission, donations accepted. Shoreham Bell Museum, 127 Smith St. off Rt. 74 west. For information call Judy Blake at (802) 897-2780. vtcat@shorehambellmuseum.com. www.shorehambellmuseum.com.

SO. STRAFFORD. Mixed Media Works by Late Artist Harlow Lent. On exhibit in Cafe 232 through the winter. The paintings, completed from 1990-1992 incorporate oil and acrylic on foil and can be viewed during café winter hours: Wednesday through Friday 6 am - 2 pm; Saturday 7 am - 2 pm; and Sunday 8 am - 1 pm. 8-1. Free wifi. Cafe 232, 232 Rt. 132, (802) 765-9232. (802) 885-6156. www.nlwatercolor.com. cafe232.com.

SPRINGFIELD. Gallery at the VAULT. A Vermont State Craft Center featuring fine art and hand-crafted gifts from over 125 local and regional artists and craftsmen. Exhibits, classes, workshops. 6th Tuesday - Saturday 11 am - 5 pm. 68 Main St. (802) 885-7111. galleryvault.org.

SPRINGFIELD. The Great Hall Presents: Fibrations! New England Fiber Art & Mixed-Media Invitational Exhibition. Wine and light refreshments will be served. The Great Hall, 100 River St. (802) 885-3061. bob@springfielddevelopment.org. jam@vermontel.net. *Through Spring 2015*.

SPRINGFIELD. Plein Air Exhibit. Open 8 am - 5 pm Monday through Friday. Art on the River Gallery, 100 River St. *Through mid-March*.

ST. JOHNSBURY. Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium. Admission: adults \$8, seniors and children under 17 \$6, under 5 free. Winter hours: Tues-Sat 9 am - 5 pm, Sun 1-5 pm. Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium, 1302 Main St. (802) 748-2372. fairbanksmuseum.org

ST. JOHNSBURY. The Stephen Huneck Gallery at Dog Mountain and Dog Chapel. Free. Winter hours through April 30: Thursday through Monday 11 am - 4 pm. Dog Mountain, 143 Parks Rd. off Spaulding Rd. (800) 449-2580. contact@dogmt.com. www.dogmt.com.

WOODSTOCK. Billings Farm & Museum. Visit the Jersey herd, draft horses, oxen, and sheep and tour the restored and furnished 1890 Farm House. Open November-February Weekends, 10 am to 4 pm; Christmas and February Vacation Weeks, 10 am to 4 pm. Admission: adults \$14, age 62 & up \$13, children ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org.

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CHITTENDEN. Horse-Drawn Sleigh Rides. 30-minute rides Wednesday through Sunday. \$30 for 15 years and older, \$20 for 4 - 14 years, 3 and under free. Private rides available. To reserve, call the Nordic Ski & Snowshoe Center at (802) 483-6089 from 9 am - 5 pm or after hours call the front desk at (802) 483-2311. Mountain Top Inn & Resort, 195 Mountain Top Rd. www.mountaintopin.com. *December through March*.

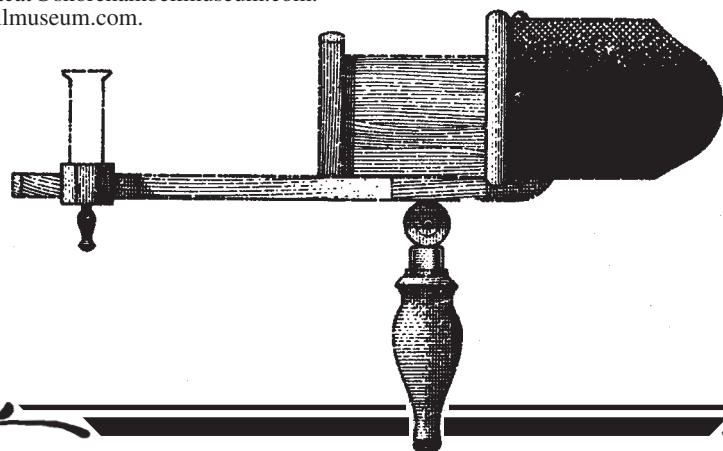
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The Revels Teens Chorus performs in this year's Christmas Revels: Haddon Hall—A Celebration of the Winter Solstice. photo by Stefan Strong

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December Journal

Watching Winter Koi

by Bill Felker

Every winter, the two koi in my small pond stop feeding when the water temperature reaches the low 40s. Both fish are about a foot long. Zelda is a golden orange. Emmett is white with black markings. They lie side by side in the deepest water near the pump, slowly moving their fins but not responding when I walk close to them or when I put a rake near them to remove leaves. They will remain almost motionless until April when the high, warm sun and singing toads arouse them.

Zelda and Emmett seem to have no worries. This is their eighth winter in the pond. They seem to know that there is nothing they can do to change the course of the season. They do not challenge the narrow boundaries of their habitat. There is nothing they can do to alter their future. There is nothing they can do if the pump stops working or if the pond freezes solid because the heater stops working or if I simply forget about them. Day after day, they remain motionless facing west waiting for spring as though they really do know that

April will bring the mild west winds that will eventually quicken them.

I tend to identify with plants and animals, often more than with other people. I look for human parallels in almost every life form I find. Sometimes I take away lessons from my encounters. Sometimes I philosophize unreasonable connections between species.

In the case of the koi, I wonder if they have reached enlightenment and if they have transcended passion and desire. Do they instinctively count their breaths or the cold fronts or the sunsets? Do they remember spring and the warmth of the water? Do they have dreams of finding food among the lizard's tail and the water willow and the wild iris?

I find myself jealous of their winter season, of their apparent indifference to danger, of their ability to use the cold to their advantage. I am jealous of their single-mindedness, of their resignation, of their deep patience, endurance and trust, of their seeming indifference to "all that can fall away."

I am jealous of their bodies that simply tell them to look west, to expect without questioning or analysis of precedent. Watching the koi every day, I pick through the pieces of their mentoring, place them one way and then another and then another in the scattered puzzle of my mind.



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Green and Red: Decorating the Garden for the Holidays

by Judith Irven

*The holly and the ivy, when they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
The holly bears the crown.*

A thousand years ago around the winter solstice, when the nights were long and days were dreary, Northern Europeans cheered their spirits by crafting simple decorations from the green leaves and red berries of nearby holly bushes.

Soon Christianity embraced the tradition which continues to this day. And now, all across the world, the holiday season is symbolized by the red and green of the lowly holly.

Growing up in England, it seemed as if every Christmas card that plopped through our mail slot featured a sprig of spiny-leaved holly and its juicy-looking fruit. And all along the back fence of my parent's garden there was a row of huge English Holly bushes (*Ilex aquifolium*). Each Christmas we gathered armfuls of green branches laden with red berries, before carefully placing a single sprig atop each picture in the house.

Unfortunately those spiny evergreen hollies of my youth do not appreciate Vermont's frigid winters. Nevertheless there are plenty of other evergreens, both needle-leaved and broadleaved types, as well as plants with red fruits and stems, that are happy in our climate. All look lovely against the snow, where they help us extend our seasonal celebrations out into our gardens.

Conifers in winter

The traditional Christmas tree, with its conical shape and green needlelike leaves is called a conifer (i.e. it produces cones). And there is no better way to foster the spirit of the winter holidays in the garden than to plant a conifer near your house where you can appreciate it from your windows and even decorate it with lights.

However our commercially produced Christmas trees are forest natives which, if left to grow unchecked, will ultimately reach fifty feet and higher, meaning they will soon be much too large for that spot outside your window!

But if you go to a good local nursery you can find dozens, or even hundreds, of varieties of slow-growing evergreens that will remain garden-sized. These are known as 'cultivars' or 'cultivated varieties', and most coniferous cultivars were derived from genetic mutants called 'witches brooms'. Some grow faster than others, so it pays to think about the space you have available and then talk to the staff at the nursery about the final size of the one you choose.

There are flat ones and round ones, fat ones and skinny ones. There are also those, like the Montgomery Spruce (which eventually tops out at between five and six feet tall) that are cone shaped and would look really nice dressed up in holiday lights.

Broad-leaved evergreens

But don't stop with the conifers! Some broad-leaved evergreens also grow well in Vermont. The only caveat is that you must plant them in a sheltered spot away from winter sun and wind (either of which will damage their leaves).

One is the well-known boxwood, with its petite rounded leaves. Some cultivars are hardier than others. One called 'Green Velvet' matures at about four feet high, and grows beautifully in my Zone 4 garden. Try planting a low hedge of Green Velvet Boxwood around some of the flower beds near your house; it will make the shapes of the beds stand out against the snow.

I also like the broad-leaved evergreen Andromeda, *Pieris 'Brouwers Beauty'*. This is a cross between our native Andromeda, *Pieris floribunda*, and the Japanese *Pieris japonica*. Since Brouwers Beauty only grows about 5 feet high (considerably smaller than either parent) it is nice for smaller gardens. And, another big plus, deer find it distasteful!

And finally, I would include a truly hardy evergreen Rhododendron, such as R. 'Boule de Neige' or R. Mikelli. These are both listed as hardy to Zone 3 and again are nicely sized for smaller gardens. However, with these you will need to guard against the hungry deer.

Red berries and fruits

Even though the spiny leaved 'Christmas card' holly only survives in the warmest corners of Vermont, our native Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), also a type of holly, grows readily throughout the state.

As its name suggests, in wintertime the plants are graced with bright red berries. But, unlike other hollies, winterberries are deciduous meaning, as a defense against our colder winters, they lose their leaves in winter, all the better to show off their fruit against the snow. These berries are a rich source of food for the birds in the coldest part of the year and, for us humans, they create a wonderful symbol of the season.

Winterberries grow well in moist locations in sun or part shade. Most cultivars are slow growing, but some will eventually become quite large. So check the information supplied by the nursery and space your plants accordingly!!



A cheery chickadee pauses in the winter crabapples in Judith Irven's garden. photo by Dick Conrad

It is also important to realize that (as with almost all species of *Ilex*) winterberries are dioecious, meaning that the male and female flowers are borne on separate plants, with the wind carrying the pollen between them. So, for a group of female bushes to set fruit, you need a compatible male (a variety that flowers at the same time) in a nearby spot. Again, if you buy your plants from a nursery with knowledgeable staff, they will tell you which varieties go together.

I also have several crab apples in my garden that, much to my delight, keep their fruit in winter. This picture shows a chickadee amongst the red fruit of a Sargent's Crab Apple outside my kitchen window in late December. This lovely little tree grows only ten feet tall and in springtime is covered with white flowers. But in winter, when it stands alone, I like it the best.

If you are buying a crab apple for your garden, check whether the cultivar you are considering has 'persistent fruit', meaning the fruit will remain on the tree in winter. Some choices include 'Donald Wyman', Prairie Fire, Red Jade and Red Jewel'.

Red stems and twigs

And last, but not least, some shrubs drop their leaves in fall to expose their beautiful red stems in winter. Our native Redosier or Red-twigged dogwood, (*Cornus sericea*, also called *Cornus stolonifera*) is one such plant. It colonizes boggy areas around Vermont, and cultivars are sometimes sold for gardens. But for most garden situations I feel they are much too aggressive.

Instead I prefer the Tatarian Dogwoods, either *Cornus alba 'Sibirica'* which becomes a 9' high shrub, or its slightly

smaller cousin, *Cornus alba 'Ivory Halo'*. In the summer both have variegated leaves and create a nice backdrop in a garden bed. But for me it is their red stems in wintertime that makes them extra special.

And finally, the young growth on my high-bush blueberry plants also turns a lovely red in winter, which always feels like an especially nice bonus after all the fruit they gave me during July and August.

So this winter, as you drive around our beautiful state, look for plants that stand out in other gardens, and then make plans to include some in your own garden next spring. Next holiday season you will be glad you did!

Judith Irven and Dick Conrad live in Goshen where together they nurture a large garden. Judith is a landscape designer and Vermont Certified Horticulturist who also teaches Sustainable Home Landscaping for the Vermont Master Gardener program. You can subscribe to her blog about her Vermont gardening life at www.northcountryreflections.com. Dick is a landscape and garden photographer; you can see more of his photographs at northcountryimpressions.com.

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Slanted Toward Optimism

by Burr Morse

Recently I wrote about my dad's and my failed attempt at putting a Plymouth slant six engine into our old Allis Chalmers tractor. This particular project was doomed from the start, and, in a way, was really not so much about extending the useful lives of old tractors, but about my father's optimism.

I got a lot of feedback about that story but none was funnier than a message from my brother-in-law, Chuck Parker. Chuck worked here on our farm back when he was a teenager. He was intimate with some of our "farmer-toggling" ways, not to mention an early education in psychology. You see my father and I, except for our common goal of keeping our family farm alive, stood at odds in our outlook on life—he had "bumper crops" of optimism and I wore my pessimism like a badge of honor.

Chuck, also a "glass-half-full" sort of guy, wrote, "Really loved this story that I remember quite well. It reminds me of how much your father's eternal optimism was not to be persuaded by reality. I have these

"With perfect timing, Dad powered the bus and, just like that, we inched steadily forward to solid ground."

experiences on a regular basis. Harry and I always believed there was a pony in this pile of horsesh-- somewhere. God bless Harry Morse, he was an inspiration to many of us."

Chuck reminded me of another of Harry's capers involving a Plymouth slant six. Back in the early seventies, Dad had taken on a job driving school bus to supplement our farm income. One mud season, I got a message to call him at a home somewhere on his route. "I'm stuck with the bus ovah by Hawkins—bring th' Duster and a rugged chain," he said. "Oh c'mon Dad, don't be ridiculous!" I replied, hitting the roof, "you need to call a wrecker, a big wrecker."

"No, no," he said, "That'd cost money." He went on to say that he'd just dropped off the last kid and the bus was "light's-a-feather." He repeated, "come ovah with the Duster!"

Knowing it was senseless arguing with him, I threw a chain in the trunk and headed out. When I got there, the massive yellow school bus stood grounded in middle of the road. I turned the Duster around and backed

up to the thing. Our salutation was short and simple, a huge grin from him, a defeated shrug from me. We hooked up the chain and took our positions. I inched the Duster forward until the chain was taut and then floored it. With perfect timing, Dad powered the bus and, just like that, we inched steadily forward to solid ground.

By a "wing and a prayer" and a Plymouth Duster, the bus got unstuck that day. My doomsday attitude was foiled by Harry's heavy dose of optimism but often it went the other way. I remember times when, because of Harry's "enthusiasm", we planted acres of a given crop when a single garden row would have been enough. And, yes, I was always quick with those biting words "I told you so!"

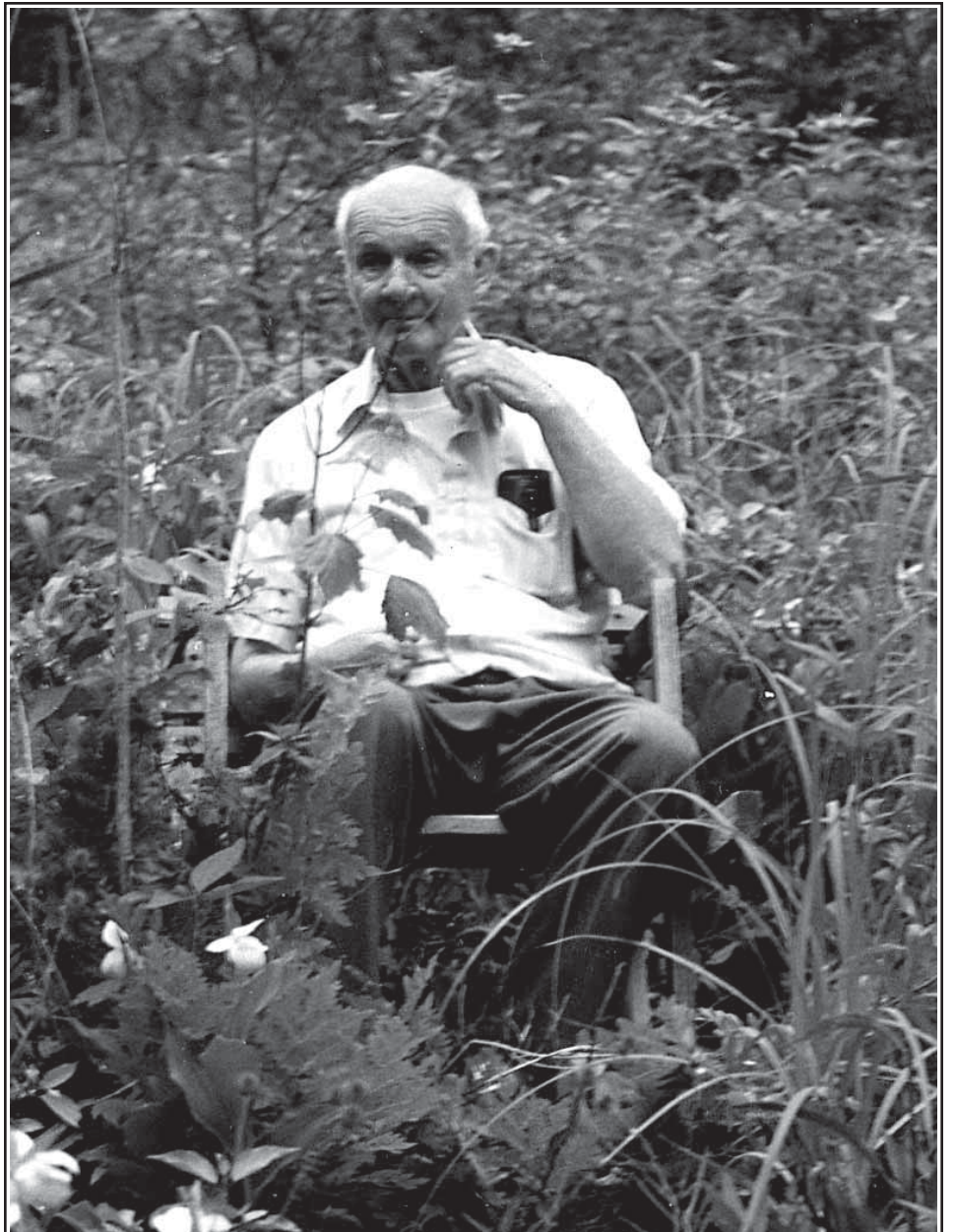
Now that Dad is gone and I'm the old man around here, I find myself reflecting on those days a lot. I'm still here doing my part and being chased by that pesky pal pessimism—guess that's my lot in life. I see merits in both ways but if I'd had a choice, I think I would have gone the "Harry Morse route". I didn't, however, get to choose which of his genes became my own.

Helen Keller once said, "No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit." And yes, it bothers me that I will forever be denied those achievements. In the words of another great optimist, Popeye, "I yam what I yam." Guess I'll go to work now and see what needs fixing...if possible.

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Harry Morse, the eternal optimist, at Morse Farm, Montpelier, VT. photo courtesy of Burr Morse

Vermont Big Game Records Now Published in An Heirloom Quality Hardcover Volume

The Vermont Big Game Trophy Club is proud to announce the publication of Records of Vermont Big Game, from Vermont's only official record-keeping organization for big game animals harvested in Vermont. The book includes record keeping of the both the Vermont Big Game Trophy Club and the now defunct Vermont Trophy Program, which was run by the Fish and Wildlife Department for approximately 20 years.

Utilizing the Boone and Crockett scoring system for deer, game animals have been

harvested in Vermont dating as far back as 1897. In addition to the lists of the highest scoring trophies ever killed in Vermont, there are dozens of stories detailing the hunts that led to these trophies.

But this book is much more. In keeping with the Club's mission, also included are historical chapters featuring catamount hunts and extremely large deer harvested when Vermont deer hunting was in its infancy. The book was compiled and edited by Curtis Smiley, President of Vermont Big Game Trophy Club, a project taking over six years to complete.

With hundreds of full color and historical black and

white photos, and dozens of feature stories, this hardcover, heirloom-quality book is a must-have for all Vermont sportsmen and women.

The book is available at select sporting goods shops and taxidermists or you can order directly from the club.

Vermont Big Game Records may be purchased for \$35 plus \$5 shipping. Write to The Vermont Big Game Trophy Club, PO Box 109, Fairfax, VT 05454. (802) 849-2986.

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Holiday Music with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra

The Vermont Symphony Orchestra will present its annual holiday concerts bringing festive cheer to communities around the state.

The Orchestra with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra Chorus directed by José Daniel Flores-Caraballo, will present three Holiday Pops concerts in Barre, Burlington and Rutland.

A quintet made up of members of the VSO brass section pairs with the beloved Counterpoint Chorus. They will perform in six communities throughout Vermont.

The Vermont Symphony Orchestra in its 80th year, embarks on a joyful seasonal journey. Two sleigh rides, a skating party, and a sojourn through the Twelve Days of Christmas (cleverly adapted to various musical styles) are part of our holiday journey with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. "Lightning Galop," a fanfare by Burlington composer T.L. Read, starts us off at a festive clip. Excerpts from Messiah and the Nutcracker are along the way, as are shepherds, traditional carols, a sing-along, and a celestial harp.

Holiday Pops performances are Friday, December 12, 7:30 p.m. at the Barre Opera House in Barre, VT; Saturday, December 13, 7:30 p.m. at the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts in Burlington, VT; and Sunday, December 14, 3 p.m. at the Paramount Theatre

in Rutland, VT (the first of three concerts in the Sunday Matinee Series).

Counterpoint Chorus joins the VSO Brass Quintet for another heart-warming celebration of the holiday season. Nathaniel Lew conducts this program which includes holiday delights such as Noel Canadien, a virtuoso medley of French Canadian carols for the combined groups. Traditional favorites include arrangements of Sleigh Ride and Ding Dong Merrily on High. Be sure to come and enjoy this seasonal treat—a perfect blend of brass, voices, and good cheer.

VSO Brass Quintet/Counterpoint performances are Wednesday, December 17, 7:30 p.m., Warren United Church, Warren, VT; Thursday, December 18, 7:30 p.m., North Church, St. Johnsbury, VT; Friday, December 19, 7:30 p.m., Jay Peak Resort, Jay, VT; Saturday, December 20, 5 p.m., The White Church, Grafton, VT; Sunday, December 21, 4 p.m., First Congregational Church, Manchester, VT; and Monday, December 22, 7 p.m., Congregational Church, Brandon, VT.

Join the Vermont Symphony Orchestra for holiday music that will warm your soul.

For tickets and additional information please visit www.vso.org or call (800) 876-9293 x 10.



Members of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Section perform a holiday favorite. photo by Lee Krohn

In the Bleak Midwinter

In the bleak mid-winter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter, long ago.


Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when He comes to reign.
In the bleak mid-winter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim, worship night and day,
A breastful of milk, and a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels fall before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But His mother only, in her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yet what can I give Him: give my heart.

—CHRISTINA ROSSETTI
1872



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North Country Book News

Book Reviews

Splendid Ideas for Cakes and Other Holiday Treats

For some really good advice on baking cakes at all levels of expertise you'll be well instructed and entertained by *Bake It Like You Mean It—Gorgeous Cakes from Inside Out* by Gesine Bullock-Prado with photos by Tina Rupp (Stewart, Tabori & Chang, \$29.95, www.abramsbooks.com).

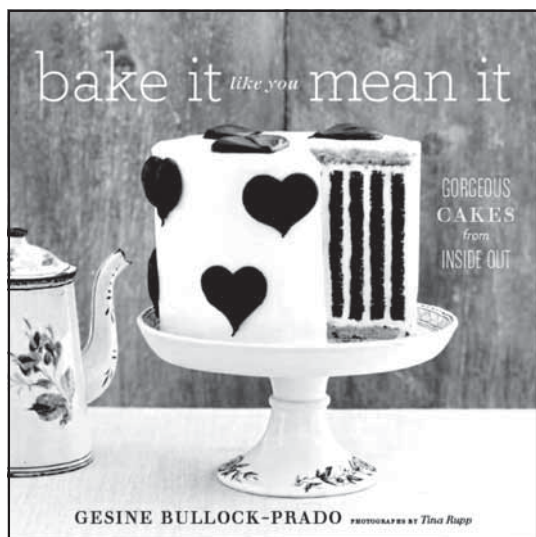
Thanks to this Hartford, Vermont-based cake baker and author, you can start on a baking adventure with a pound cake "because," she writes, "there's something so damned beautiful about a recipe that is so insanely simple yet mind-blowing delicious. It is the classic pound cake that always contains one pound each of flour, sugar, butter and eggs. Period. That's it. No leavening. No fancy stuff. What results, with the proper technique, is a dense but moist loaf of decadence."

She'll take you a step further with her pound cake called Vermont Sandtorte Cakelets made with maple sugar. She says the sandtorte is a Viennese answer to the traditional English pound cake getting its sand name from a cinnamon and sugar glazed topping.

Gesine makes a special 'Vermont' cake honoring her adopted state of Vermont. "I've combined lovely, tart, black currant mousse with shades of green gooseberry and dark chocolate that evoke the colors that make the Green Mountains sing."

She also has created her own Baked Alaska aptly named Baked Vermont which features maple infused meringue.

As an aside, we learn that Gesine, when she is not creating delicious cakes, looks after a small menagerie of animals at their home that includes chickens, ducks, geese, sheep, three dogs and a hive of bees. This is her third cookbook.



mooncakes, corn meal cakes, tamales, fritters and tortes. She decided to research the history of each cake, its place in the culture of its origin, and what the cakes celebrated and how they evolved.

This being the Christmas season, we like perusing the recipes for cakes made for this occasion in 24 countries around the world. Cuba makes figure-eight shaped bunuelos, a fried Christmas treat; the Greeks make a hard-formed sweet bread called Christopsomo; the Swedes enjoy saffron buns or 'Lucia cats'; the Koreans make a saeng cream sponge cake; for Ukrainians it's Pampushky, Christmas donuts made with poppyseeds, prunes and cherries; in Spain they feature a tortell, a Spanish version of king cake filled with marzipan and candied and dried fruits.

You likely heard the expression, the 'world's my oyster.' But after this enchanting cook book, you will want to say 'the world's my cake,' too.

When we were very young many of us can remember mother baking something special that required her beating egg whites and sugar until stiff and very white.

She was making meringues to top her homemade lemon meringue pie or to be part of a spectacular floating island.

At last we have a masterpiece 222-page cookbook, *Meringue* by Linda K. Jackson & Jennifer Evans Gardner with photos by Alexandra DeFurio (*Gibbs Smith*, \$24.99, www.gibbs-smith.com) devoted exclusively to this egg-white wonder.

The authors explain nothing could be so simple as meringues: eggs whites, sugar, a pinch of cream of tartar or a dash of vinegar. "The meringue is magical and versatile. It can be spooned onto pies, or piped into another number of beautiful shapes (even Christmas candy canes). It can be baked or poached, whipped into silly frostings, or folded into cakes to make them fluffier."

Their varied shapes include meringues that look like mushrooms used to garnish a *Buche de Noel*, the classic French Christmas cake which looks like a yule log.

The authors have devoted a chapter to recipes that are easy to follow for youngsters as young as five years old. They include s'moringues made with graham crackers, milk chocolate, and meringues; meringue pizza; apple cinnamon nests; chocolate kisses; very vanilla cups and snowballs.

Tempting for adults would be Nocciala Baci (kisses filled with hazelnut and chocolate meringues; blood orange curd meringue tart with dark chocolate; brown sugar plum Pavlova, named after the Russian ballerina; and Croquem-bouche, a tower of cream-filled profiteroles drizzled with caramel. The trick is to built the tower and not have it crumble.

From simple to complex, you'll have a marvelous time with these recipes as you create something very beautiful to view and to eat.



Book Review by Charles Sutton

Christmas Truce

by Aaron Shepherd

Pictures by Wendy Edelson

(Skyhook Press, Friday Harbor, WA)

This Christmas will be the 100th anniversary of one of the most extraordinary events in World War I history if not in all of mankind's continual wars.

British soldiers who had been fighting the Germans in one bloody battle after another awoke on the Christmas morning of 1914, and peering over their trenches were amazed to see that the Germans had placed Christmas trees all along their trenches, lit by candle or lantern like beacons of goodwill. Then the German soldiers started singing in German the familiar carol Silent Night, Holy Night (*Stille nacht, Heilige nacht*)...the British soldiers returned the favor with the 'First Nowell' and others to which the Germans replied with still more German carols. Both sides then applauded each other for harmonizing across No Man's Land.

Remarkable as that was and even harder to imagine today, the Christmas celebration continued.

Award-winning author Aaron Shepard retells this story through fictionalized letters written by the British soldier Tom to his sister Janet back in England.

The author draws upon diaries, letters and other historical accounts of this 'spontaneous' truce.

The 'enemy' soldiers' carol singing soon led to a meeting in the No Man's Land between the trenches. Some of the Germans had worked in England and became translators. And we learn:

"Even those who couldn't converse could still exchange gifts—our cigarettes for their

cigars, our tea for their coffee, our corned beef for their sausage." Badges and buttons were exchanged. One young British soldier walked off with the "infamous spiked helmet!"

Our letter-writer concludes: "One cannot help imagine what would happen if the spirit shown here were caught by the nations of the world. Of course, disputes must always arise. But what if our leaders were to offer well wishes in place of warnings? Songs in place of slurs? Presents in place of reprisals. Wouldn't all war end at once?"

The author is pessimistic about there ever being another Christmas truce because of the conditions of war where killings are done at great distances, "and even when soldiers come face to face, their languages and cultures are so divergent as to make friendly communication unlikely."

What he hopes is what happened then may inspire peacemakers today, but the best time, he feels, to make peace is long before armies go to war.

The Christmas Truce is sensitively illustrated in full-page watercolors by Vermont artist Wendy Edelson, taking us within an unprecedented time frame when enemies for one brief moment in time are no longer enemies.

We are grateful that this Christmas story does not depict the horrors that went on in those trenches. Ten million soldiers from the combatant nations and six million civilians were killed, and 20 million wounded, making it the most deadly war in history.

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The Yule Tomte and the Little Rabbits

A Christmas Story for Advent

There's a tradition in Sweden that a Yule Tomte, a small gnome who usually avoids humans, will bring presents to children for Christmas. Much as we leave out cookies and milk for our Santa, the Swedish children leave a bowl of porridge for their tomte as a special gift to him.

You'll enjoy being part in this tradition through the adventures of a family of rabbits and their animal friends: an owl, forest mice, jackdaws, badgers and voles, in *The Yule Tomte and the Little Rabbits—A Christmas Story for Advent* by Ulf Stark and illustrated by Eva Ericsson (Floris Books, \$24.95, florisbooks.co.uk).

This story was originally published in Swedish in 2012. This English version has just been published by Floris Books. It is told through 25 chapters—one for each day of Advent, with beautiful illustrations.

We are introduced to Grump, the Yule Tomte. However, we see him being kind-hearted enough to look after a bee he has rescued from a spider's web. He prefers being alone, but aware that Christmas is coming (and his duties) he lights the first candle in an Advent candlestick.

Placing the bee in a lantern for warmth, tomte gives the bee a tour of the abandoned farm where he now lives. His home is a former dog kennel which he has made nice inside with tables and chairs and a wood stove from a doll's house. This tomte doesn't take well to misfortunes and is put into a terrible mental state when a wind storm blows away his mittens and his prized red hat. "I don't care about my hat," he shouted in a rage. "I'm not going to be a tomte anymore."

Nearby in a burrow under an enormous oak tree live a lively family of rabbits of all ages,

but often getting on each other's nerves. The family's full attention is aroused after two of the children find the tomte's red hat in the woods. They've never heard of Christmas but the excitement builds and they make elaborate preparations as they believe the hat is a sign the tomte will come. They make the burrow made bigger and deeper with the help of the voles and badger.

Snow has come by now and the rabbit children have fun playing in it, some for the very first time. Birds help decorate a Christmas tree with frozen rowan berries and wild red apples. But still everyone is eagerly awaiting the arrival of the tomte... but he does not come.

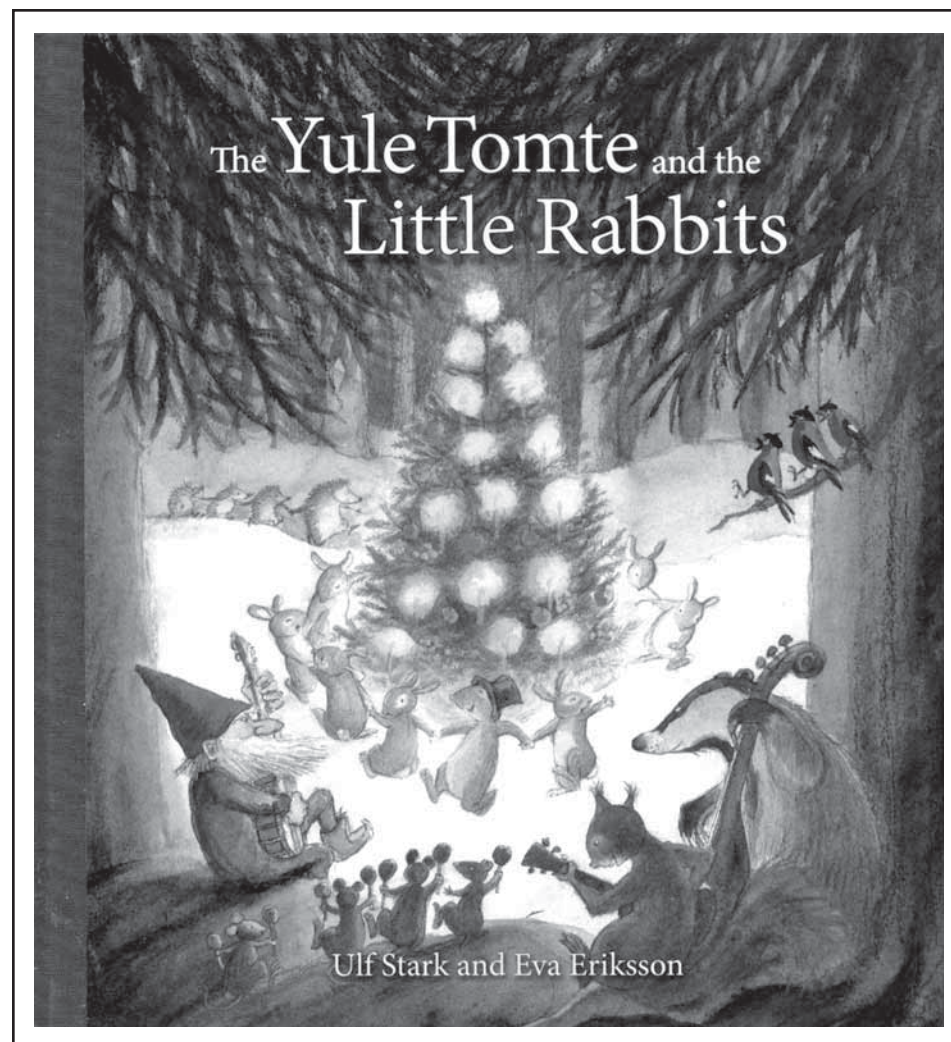
Soon we are up to the 20th day of Advent and still no tomte. Hoping they can help, rabbits Barty and Binney sneak out to find the missing guest, but are soon in the midst of a worsening

blizzard. Half-frozen, they find the tomte, but we have a moment of despair when he shouts, "Go away!"

But that's not in the Christmas spirit, so he relents and takes in the grateful freezing rabbits, gives them a warm bath and warm food, and beds with plenty of blankets for the night.

On Advent day 24, you'll be delighted to see the tomte with the two rabbits on a sled being pulled by a red fox to the burrow homestead. The Yule Tomte gets his red hat back. There is dancing around the Christmas tree and a Christmas dinner of pine nut pies, root spaghetti, mushroom and chestnut stew, rose hip biscuits, carrot cupcakes, and rowanberry jelly.

Binny asks Grump, "Why do we celebrate Christmas?" "Because a child has come to earth," says the tomte.



On the morning of the 25th, the tomte makes an ice house, lights candles, and wakes everyone.

The story ends with Christmas day: "Up you get!" he roars. "Time for morning service!" "What's that," asks Binny. "It is a special occasion. You sit still in a special place. There is no dancing. No eating. No presentations. All you do is sit and be happy. It is perfectly all right to be quiet. But you may sing, too."

Everyone found cushions of grass and moss, and they made their way to the tomte's ice house. The stars twinkled through the icy roof, and the candles glowed on the floor. There they sat, feeling happy about all the children that had ever been born...

"Will you come back again next year?" Binny asked. "I might," he said in a kind voice. "Or I might not," he added. Because at that very moment, he remembered that he was supposed to be grumpy.

Christmas Tales of Wonder and Merriment

In Denmark, especially if you are a farmer, you'd best not forget to leave a bowl of steaming rice pudding topped with butter in your barn on Christmas eve for the tiny nisse, a gnome-like creature that inhabits the woods and forests and is rumored to look after the family and their livestock.

But what if you forget, even with good reason, what could the nisse possibly do? In *Winterfrost* by Michele Houts (Candlewick Press, \$16.99, www.candlewick.com), one finds out quickly that the neglected nisse can be resentful and will play magical tricks on those who were so forgetful.

In this adventure story for middle readers, a 12-year-old Danish girl, Bettina, has to look after the family farm and her new baby sister when the parents are called away suddenly. With so many new responsibilities, she forgets to put the pudding out on Christmas eve, causing the local nisse to show his disfavor by disappearing the baby sister Pia.

The author, now living on an Ohio grain and livestock farm, spent 20 years in Denmark where she became fascinated with the stories and folklore surrounding the nisse. That inspired her to write this book taking the reader into a mysterious world. Bettina must retrieve her baby sister before the parents return. Admire how she has to compromise and negotiate with the nisses for Pia's safe return. We, too, will end up with new respect for other worldly beings and their needs...at least on Christmas Eve.

Most of us have a collection of Christmas books that are "keepers" and if we do, we probably have a copy of 'Twas The Night Before Christmas. This popular story has been printed in many editions and versions over the years, including foreign translations and in Braille. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt has now published the original 1912 version of *'Twas the Night Before Christmas—A Visit from St. Nicholas* by Clement C. Moore in a Holiday Classic hardcover edition with pictures by Jessie Willcox Smith (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$8.99 hardcover, hnh.com), perfect to keep and

to give. We learn that Dr. Moore wrote the poem for his children as a present which they would read each Christmas. Dr. Moore may have been a scholar of Hebrew by profession, but he will forever be famous for the poem credited with popularizing Santa that is enjoyed by millions year after year.

Well-known author-illustrator Jan Brett surprised even herself on one summer night coming up with the idea there might be a Santa out there who just gives presents to animals. Now in another of her enchanting Christmas tales, *The Animals' Santa* (G.P. Putnam's Sons, \$17.99, www.penguin.com/youngreaders), Brett takes us to the Arctic north at Christmastime where Little Snow rabbit asks her brother Big Snowshoe who the animals' Santa might be, since he has never been seen. In a delightful series of wintery drawings we see forest animals dressed in vests and other bright, warm clothing, trying to guess who he might be—a badger, polar bear, moose and wolf. (He does exist since the porcupine, squirrels and ravens saved small gifts from him last Christmas). With the magical arrival of the animals' own Santa, Brett shows us that he can come in many different sizes and shapes.

Regardless of your age, never believe you are too old not to be able to help out in some way and be needed, too. This is the lesson of *Old Dog Cora and the Christmas Tree* by Consie Powell (Raven Productions, \$14.95 hardcover, www.ravenwords.com).

Cora, an aging Newfoundland, is being replaced by two younger Newfies, Minx and Ebony, for this year's trek into the woods to haul home a Christmas tree on a toboggan. Cora tags along but is told several times to get out of the way and not interfere with the younger dogs hitching up to the fallen Christmas tree. Hurt feelings or not, Cora is determined to help and takes a shortcut through the woods, joining the younger dogs as their team leader, breaking the way through

the deep snow for the trip home. The happy dogs, all of them, are last seen together under the Christmas tree.

Bright full-color illustrations grace this story and make the white winter woodlands with the big black Newfoundlands especially appealing.

Some of the most appreciated Christmas presents are those handmade gifts that children make for their parents or siblings. Children who have had a difficult time creating 'that' perfect gift will relate to the heroic efforts of one small mouse in *Something for Christmas* written and illustrated by Palmer Brown (New York Review Children's Collection, \$12.95, www.nyrb.com).

The little mouse is frustrated at every turn in making or finding the perfect secret gift for her mother. Materials can't be found to make a pincushion, penwiper or plum pudding; nor does she want to give as a gift her very own red carpet-slippers, blue night-shirt, or a jar of whisker-wax. But the disappointed little mouse finds she can give the best Christmas present of all to her mother—her love. This is a little book with cute drawings, but with a big message for the holiday season. Thanks goes to New York Review of Books for this and their other children's classic reprints.



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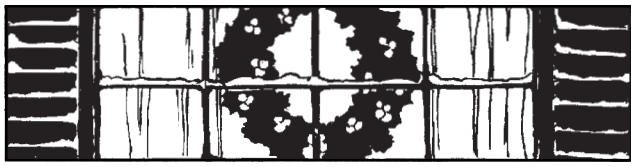
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Bellows Falls Winter Farmers' Market at the Bellows Falls Amtrak Station, Depot St. December 19, 4-6:30 p.m. Rachel Ware, (802) 463-2018. bellowsfallsmarket@gmail.com. www.bffarmersmarket.com.

Bennington-Walloomsac Holiday and Winter Farmers Markets at First Baptist Church, 601 Main St. December 13, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.; December 20, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. January through April, first and third Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. info@walloomsac.org. On Facebook.

Bradford Farmers Market, Grace United Methodist Church. Second and fourth Saturdays from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., through April. Iris Johnson, (802) 222-4495. hellobradfordfarmers@gmail.com. facebook.com/bradfordfarmersmarket.

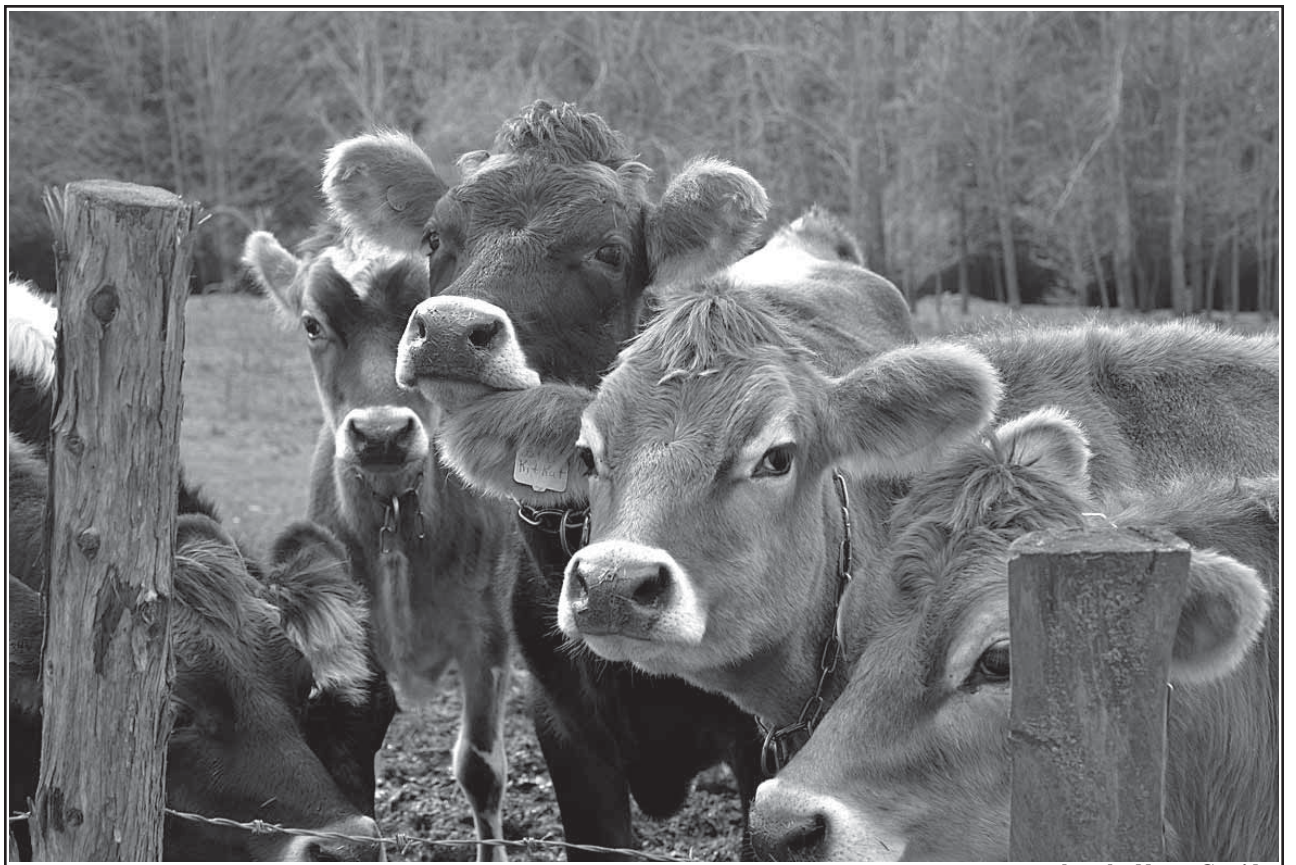
Brattleboro Winter Farmers' Market at River Garden, 153 Main St. Holiday markets December 6, 13 & 20, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., through March 2015. Accepts EBT and debit cards. Sherry Maher, (802) 869-2141. farmersmarket@postoilssolutions.org. www.postoilssolutions.org.

Burlington Winter Farmers' Market at Memorial Auditorium, corner of Main St. and S. Union. 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. every other Saturday, November 22 through April 11. Accepts EBT and debit cards. Chris Wagner, (802) 310-5172. info@burlingtonfarmersmarket.org. burlingtonfarmersmarket.org.

Champlain Islands—South Hero Winter Farmers' Market at South Hero Congregational Church on South St. 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. December 6 & 20. Denise Boutin, (802) 372-3291. deniseboutin@gmail.com. www.champlainislandsfarmersmarket.com.

Dorset Winter Farmers' Market at J.K. Adams Kitchen Store and Factory on Rt. 30. Sundays from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., through May 5. Carol Adinolfi. marketmanager@dorsetfarmersmarket.com. www.dorsetfarmersmarket.com.

Groton Growers' Winter Farmers Market at Groton Community Building Gym. Every third Saturday, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., through May. Mary Berlejung and Sandi Adams.



A herd of young Jerseys hanging out together in the early winter pasture in Central Vermont. photo by Nancy Cassidy

(802) 584-3595 or (802) 633-3031. grotongrowers@gmail.com. www.grotongrowers.org.

Hardwick Framers Market. Hardwick Elementary. Saturday, December 20, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. hardwickfarmersmarket@gmail.com. www.hardwickfarmersmarketvt.com.

Hartland Winter Farmers' Market at Damon Hall, Rts. 5 & 12, Hartland Three Corners. December 19, 4-7 p.m. hartlandfarmersmarket@gmail.com. www.hartlandfarmersmarket.com.

Londonderry—West River Winter Farmers' Market. Floodbrook Union School. Saturdays 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. thru January 3. Jenny Strecker. (802) 875-5004. westriverfarmersmarket@gmail.com. www.westriverfarmersmarket.com.

Middlebury Winter Farmer's Market at Mary Hogan Elementary School, 201 Mary Hogan Dr. Holiday market, Saturday, December 6., 9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. Indoor markets Saturdays through December 27; closed January & February; then open March 7 through April 25, 9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. Jeremy Gildrien & Sharon Kerwin, (802) 989-7223. middleburyfarmersmarket.org.

Montpelier—Capital City Winter Farmers' Market. All markets run from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. December 6 & 20 and January 3 & 17 at Montpelier City Hall; February 7 & 21 and March 21 at Montpelier High School on Bailey Ave.; March 7 at Montpelier City Hall; March 21 and April 11 & 25 at Montpelier High School. Carolyn Grodinsky, (802) 223-2958. manager@montpelierfarmersmarket.com. www.montpelierfarmersmarket.com.

Northfield Winter Farmers' Market. Norwich University's Plumley Armory. 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. December 14, January 4, February 1, March 1, and April 4. Crystal Peterson. (802) 485-5563. northfieldfarmersmarketvt@gmail.com. northfieldfarmersmarketvt.com.

Norwich Farmers' Winter Market at Tracy Hall, 300 Main St. Holiday Market December 6, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Winter markets 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., December 6 & 20; January 10 & 24; February 14 & 28; March 14 & 28; April 11 & 25. Steve Hoffman, (802) 384-7447. manager@norwichfarmersmarket.org. norwichfarmersmarket.org.

Putney Holiday Farmers Markets at Green Mountain Orchards, 130 West Hill Rd. Sundays, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., December 7, 14 & 21. Marisa Miller. (802) 387-4052. putneyfarmersmarket@gmail.com. www.putneyfarmersmarket.org.

Rutland Winter Farmers' Market. Food Center Building at 251 West St. Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Wednesdays 4-7 p.m. through May 2. Doug Patac, (802) 753-7269. info@vtfarmersmarket.org. www.vtfarmersmarket.org

Sharon Sprouts Farmers' Markets at Sharon Elementary School. February 14, March 14, 10 am – 1 pm. local lunch 11:30 am – 1 pm. Donna Foster, (802) 763-8280. vtfoster@myfairpoint.net.

So. Hero—Champlain Islands Farmers' Market. So. Hero Congregational Church, 24 South St. Saturday. 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. December 6 & 20. Denise Boutin, (802) 372-3291. champlainislandsfarmersmarket.com.

St. Johnsbury—Caledonia Winter Farmers Market at St. Johnsbury Welcome Center, Railroad St. First and third Saturdays, through April 18, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Elizabeth Everts, (802) 592-3088.

Lunenburg Gingerbread Bazaar Coming December 6

Looking for a place where you'll find affordable family fun to usher in the Christmas season – something for every member of the family? The Lunenburg Gingerbread Bazaar is the place! Stop by on Saturday, December 6th, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Lunenburg Primary School, located on Bobbin Mill Road, off Route 2 in the center of town.

You'll find door prizes, free games and contests offering great prizes to the winners, free cookie decorating with Mrs. Claus, and the Pocket Lady with affordable grab bag items. Shop vendors offering a wide price range of Christmas theme and gift items, the famous 8th

grade Cookie Walk, fabulous fudges, Lunenburg Tees in a new color, and baked goods including pies. Enjoy raffles and the homemade soup luncheon offered from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

It's not too late to enter the Gingerbread contest! Specifics for vendors and the contest can be found by calling Chris at (802) 892-6654 or visiting www.topofthecommon.org.

Lunenburg Primary School is located on Bobbin Mill Rd., off Rt. 2 in the center of Lunenburg, VT (in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom near the New Hampshire border). (802) 892-6654. www.topofthecommon.org.

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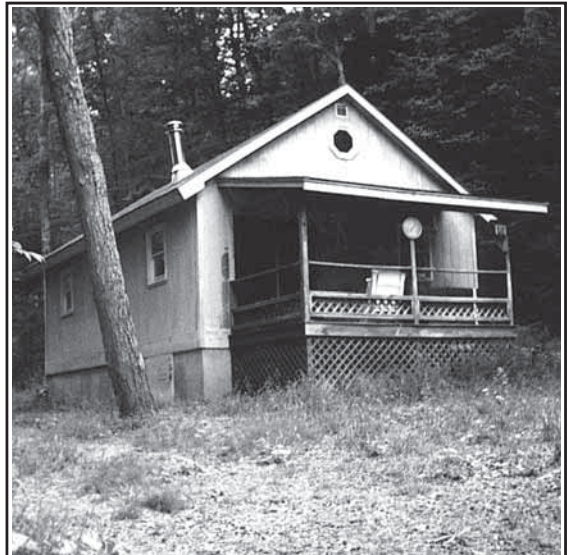
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2085 Royalton. 6 acres – driveway and pond – 24x18' horse barn – in-ground septic design – good gravel road...**Price \$74,900.**

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