

Vermont Country Sampler

December 2018

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

Free



GREEN MOUNTAIN STOCK FARM RANDOLPH, VERMONT

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The beautiful, 1,300-acre Green Mountain Stock Farm property is divided into choice 10-plus acre building sites, which are protected from future subdivision to ensure privacy and protect view lines.

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PROPERTIES FOR SALE:

Lot 5 - "Upper Farm House"- \$350,000

An 1850's farmhouse sited on 10.31 acres with panoramic, 30+ mile views of the Green Mountains. Amenities include use of an extensive trail network for skiing, snowshoeing, biking and hiking. A must see home in a wonderful location! Plenty of room to expand or re-site the house.

Lot 12 - 10.47 acres - \$100,000

Privacy, privacy, privacy. High, hillside site with great views to the north and west. Variable terrain. High on the hillside, enjoying the twinkling night lights of the Town of Randolph. Driveway roughed in to proposed home site.

Lot 14-28 - 20.40 acres - \$200,000

Beautiful property with a combination of rolling fields, open woods and a lovely stream. Panoramic 180 degree views of the Green Mountains to the south, west and north from the house site.

Lot 109 - 18.41 acres - \$100,000

Beautiful building lot nestled in the woods with views over a ten acre field and the Green Mountains to the west in the distance.



Beautiful, 18-hole Montague Golf course and Brunswick School Randolph Campus

For Further Information and to Arrange a Tour:

Sam Sammis, Owner
2 South Main Street, Randolph, VT
Email: Sammis@NewEnglandLand.com
Mobile: (802) 522-8500
Web: GreenMountainStockFarm.com

**GREEN
MOUNTAIN
STOCK FARM**
RANDOLPH, VERMONT



December Journal

Empty Inventory

by Bill Felker

The inventory of late autumn is still rich in foliage and color, but the approach of early winter draws down the pigments and density and texture of the canopy and strips away all the floral barriers to winter. December spreads across the summer with accumulation of loss.

Instinctively and naturally, there is a taking stock of what appears to be no longer present, an inventory of emptiness, cued by a search for the truth, and by nostalgia and by the fragmentary reminders that bind the seasons into memory:

Shapes of absent plums and peaches, pears and cherries, broccoli and lettuce, raspberries and blackberries, strawberries and mulberries, and the cotton of cottonwoods. Bare landscapes of corn and soybeans and wheat. Empty shells of milkweed and hosta, empty canes and branches, seeds eaten, innumerable creatures gone, the harvest complete.

Faded colors of zinnias and

snapdragons, sunflowers and coneflowers, goldenrod and purple ironweed, dahlias and tulips. Vanished fragrances of blossoms from roses and Japanese honeysuckles and azaleas and apple trees and mock orange and lilacs, from alyssum and moon flowers and jasmine. Missing calls of doves and red-winged blackbirds and robins, of toads and frogs, katydids and crickets and cicadas.

All of which is fulfilling, not negative, not sad: Because it is the very kernel of the known universe that absence and presence are complementary, that they are two aspects of the same thing, that each is the key to other, and that we cannot understand them if we view them as separate. From a litany of sensations lost, absences flesh out past events and missing objects. They fill up the present's hollow and deceptive pod, create wholeness from the part that seems so transitory or so broken, but is only incomplete.



Brattleboro, VT

20th Annual Cotton Mill Open Studio and Holiday Sale

Celebrating its 20th year, Cotton Mill artisans in Brattleboro, VT open their studios from December 7-9 so the public can take a look behind the scenes of creative local businesses and meet the people behind them.

In addition, the weekend-long Cotton Mill Open Studio and Holiday Sale event showcases seasoned and emerging artists from Windham County offering exquisite handmade products from jam, to fine arts, to functional crafts.

Alongside holiday shopping, the event features live performances from the renowned Vermont Jazz Center, circus arts from New

England Center for Circus Arts (NECCA), Sandglass Theater puppetry, local music and kids activities. Two café areas are also offered with Titos Tacos and Vermont Crepes and Saxtons River Distillery, alongside an array of locally-produced artisan food items.

This year Cotton Mill Arts is partnering with Downtown Brattleboro Alliance to encourage event-goers to experience everything that downtown Brattleboro has to offer by providing a free shuttle between the Cotton Mill, two downtown Brattleboro locations, and free parking at Brattleboro Union High School.

Cotton Mill Open Studio welcomes visitors Friday, December 7 from 4-8 p.m.; Saturday, December 8 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, December 9 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Cotton Mill Open Studio and Holiday Sale is sponsored by Brattleboro Development, Credit Corporation (BDCC), Downtown Brattleboro Alliance, Vermont Public Radio, New England

Center for Circus Arts (NECCA), Sandglass Theater, Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, True North Granola, WR Metal Arts, and Storymatic Studios.

The Cotton Mill is located at 74 Cotton Mill Hill in Brattleboro, VT. For more information and detailed event schedule please email info@thecottonmill.org or visit www.thecottonmill.org.

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Useful Vermont Websites

Vermont Tourism Site: vermontvacation.com
Vermont Chamber of Commerce: visitvt.com
Vermont State Parks: vtstateparks.com
Green Mountain National Forest: fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl
Vermont Outdoor Guide Association: voga.org
Hunting & Fishing: vtfishandwildlife.com
Mountain Biking: vmba.org • Golfing: vtga.org
Four Wheeling: vtvasa.org
Snowmobiling: vtvast.org • Skiing: skivermont.com

Firs in Snow

These woodland chieftains hear and know
The slow, majestic speech of snow.


The white wind-cloud fleet, cruising by,
Dips them *salute* from seas of sky.

Star-clocks have ticked for their keen ears
Earth's moments thundering into years.

The lynx and wolf and shrewd fox pause
For housing here till hunger gnaws.

What outpost stands with surer tread,
Armored in hush, from foot to head?

Tonight the moon has garbed these firs
Like Gothic kings and emperors.



—J. CORSON MILLER
1932



The Holidays are Here!
Balsam Christmas Trees
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We have cut-your-own and pre-cut trees and make-your-own and ready-made wreaths.

Visit Our Gift Shop
Fresh Cider, Apples, Cider Donuts, Homemade Apple and Pumpkin Pies – be sure to order ahead!
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November 18–December 23

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Bravo!!!

The Exner Block provides live-work spaces for artists and retail spaces supporting the arts:

Vermont Country Sampler
December 2018, Vol. XXXIV

The Vermont Country Sampler is distributed free over-the-counter in and out of Vermont. Advertising rates on request. Deadline 10th of preceding month.

Calendar of Events published free of charge. Mail your information to us by the 15th of the preceding month.

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Strolling of the Heifers
Upcoming Events

At the River Garden
157 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT

Holiday Pop-Up Gift Shop
Fri. & Sat. December 21 & 22

Quilt Expo
Fri. & Sat. November 30 & December 1

See the complete schedule on our website!
www.strollingoftheheifers.com





Visitors all bundled up for a horse-drawn sled ride around the fields at Billings Farm & Museum in Woodstock, VT. photo courtesy of Billings Farm & Museum

Woodstock, VT

December Festivities at Billings Farm & Museum

The Billings Farm & Museum has served as a gateway to Vermont's rural heritage. Billings Farm is an operating Jersey dairy farm that continues a nearly 150-year tradition of agricultural excellence and offers farm programs and historical exhibits exploring Vermont's rural heritage. The Billings Farm & Museum is owned and operated by The Woodstock Foundation, Inc., a charitable non-profit institution.

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 and certainly today. 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 domes-

tic 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.

Christmas at the Billings Farm

Discover the traditions of a late 19th century Vermont Christmas with a visit to the Billings Farm & Museum this holiday season. Christmas at the Billings Farm will be featured on weekends in December and December 22 through January 1, 2019, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (excluding Christmas Day).

Tour the authentically decorated farmhouse, visit the dairy farm for interactive programs including An Introduction to Milking and Milking the Herd at 3:15 p.m. each day. Holiday programs, making historic Christmas ornaments and candle dipping, plus the Academy Award® nominee film, *A Place in the Land* will be offered.

Highlights of the Holiday Season

Woodstock's Wassail Celebration – December 7, 8, & 9, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Make historic Christmas ornaments and dip candles. On Sunday, December 9 horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides will be offered from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Closed Christmas Day—Merry Christmas!

Christmas Week—December 26 through January 1, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Make historic Christmas ornaments and dip candles. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides will be offered, if conditions permit from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Billings Farm & Museum hosts a year-round calendar of programs and family-friendly events. It is open daily April 1 through October 31, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekends November through February, and Christmas & Presidents' weeks, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Admission: adults: \$16; 62 & over: \$14; children 5-15: \$8; 3-4: \$4; 2 & under: free.

The Farm & Museum are located one-half mile north of the Woodstock village green on VT Rt. 12. For more information call (802) 457-2355 or visit www.billingsfarm.org.

The Community Asylum Seekers Project

The Community Asylum Seekers Project (CASP) supports those fleeing hardship elsewhere and seeking asylum in the United States. We provide basic needs and a supportive community to a growing number of guests.



Find out how you can help this effort at www.caspt.org

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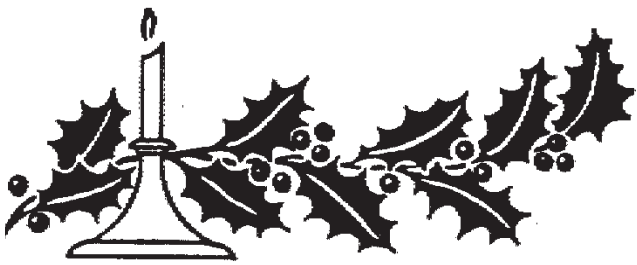
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Chester, VT

Annual Christmas Tea Hosted By St. Luke's Episcopal Church

One of the most festive events of Chester, VT's Overture to Christmas is the St. Luke's Christmas Tea and Sale. On Saturday, December first, Willard Hall will be filled with the sounds, smells and surprises of Christmas.

There will be something for everyone from 11 a.m. through 3 p.m. Delicious light sandwiches and scrumptious sweets cover the tea table where your choices of coffee, tea and hot spiced cider are poured by a hostess. You fill your plate (more than once) for \$8 and join friends at inviting little tables festively decorated to eat and chat.

Beforehand or after lunch,

you can shop at Grandma's Attic for little collectibles, check out and choose handmade ornaments and Christmas decorations, and take home some specially baked goodies from the Bake Table. There are always pleasant surprises like quilted pieces, painted items, candles and other crafts and art. You can stay as long as you want. Call a dear friend and make a date to attend the Annual Christmas Tea.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church is located at 313 Main St. in Chester, VT. For directions and information visit www.stlukesepiscopalvt.org.



THE BARN

"I am tired of this barn!" said the colt.
 "And every day it snows.
 Outside there's no grass any more
 And icicles grow on my nose.
 I am tired of hearing the cows
 breathing and talking together.
 I am sick of these clucking hens.
 I hate stables and winter weather!"

"Hush, little colt," said the mare
 "And a story I will tell
 Of a barn like this one of ours
 And the wonders that there befell.
 It was weather much like this
 And the beasts stood as we stand now
 In the warm good dark of the barn—
 A horse and an ass and a cow."

"And sheep?" asked the colt. "Yes, sheep,
 And a pig and a goat and a hen.
 All of the beasts of the barnyard,
 The usual servants of men.
 And into their midst came a lady
 And she was as cold as death
 But the animals leaned above her
 And made her warm with their breath."

"There was her baby born
 And laid to sleep in the hay
 While music flooded the rafters
 And the barn was as light as day.
 And angels and kings and shepherds
 Came to worship the babe from afar,
 But we looked at him first of all creatures
 By the bright strange light of a star!"

—ELIZABETH COATSWORTH
 Nobleboro, ME 1893-1986



Rev. Heidi Edson chats with two guests at the St. Luke's Annual Christmas Tea in Chester, VT.



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An Almanack Daybook For December

by Bill Felker

December 1: Place an entrance reducer in your hives to keep mice from coming in.

December 2: Wrap young outdoor transplants to protect them against frost cracking.

December 3: At the arrival of the early December cold front, leaves from the silver maple, pear and beech trees often fall overnight.

December 4: Monitor bee hives to ensure proper ventilation.

December 5: Black walnut hulls, shredded by squirrels, stain porches and driveways.

December 6: Early Winter, the first period of consistently cold temperatures before solstice, often begins about this time.

December 7: As the Moon waxes throughout early December, it pulls spring from the Gulf of Mexico, bringing jasmine into flower throughout the South.

December 8: Consider lowering the prices of your Christmas trees in about ten days to move as many trees as you can.

December 9: Coyote attacks on your flock and herd often increase as the weather worsens.

December 10: Order pasture seeds and schedule pasture frost seeding for February.

December 11: Consider wrapping your beehives in black roofing paper if the winter is colder than normal.

December 12: Lunar apogee occurs this morning, weakening the power of the new Moon.

December 13: The period between today and December 15, when the Moon enters its second quarter, should dilute the cold of the past week.

December 14: Consider selling to the Mardi Gras market throughout February. This market ends with the beginning of Christian Lent on March 5 (Mardi Gras).

December 15: Rheumatism increases as the winter grows colder, often foretelling precipitation.

December 16: Gather mistletoe as it becomes visible when the high trees lose all their leaves.

December 17: Make sure chicken bedding is dry, clean and deep to avoid winter diseases in your flock.

December 18: Think about covering the wattle of your rooster with Vaseline to help prevent frostbite.

December 19: As the full Moon approaches, be especially careful of abortions in your more delicate livestock.

December 20: Since the December 20 cold front will arrive near full moon, chances for snow increase.

December 21: Today is winter solstice.

December 22: Track the Sun's movement toward June by measuring how far sunlight enters a south window today.

December 23: If you intend to breed ewes in January and February, keep lights on to at night to create "16 hour days."

December 24: The Moon reaches perigee early this morning, strengthening the Christmas cold front.

December 25: Meteorological conditions remain challenging for the next few days until the Moon gradually moves farther from Earth and approaches its final quarter.

December 26: Take cuttings from Christmas cacti after all their blossoms fall.

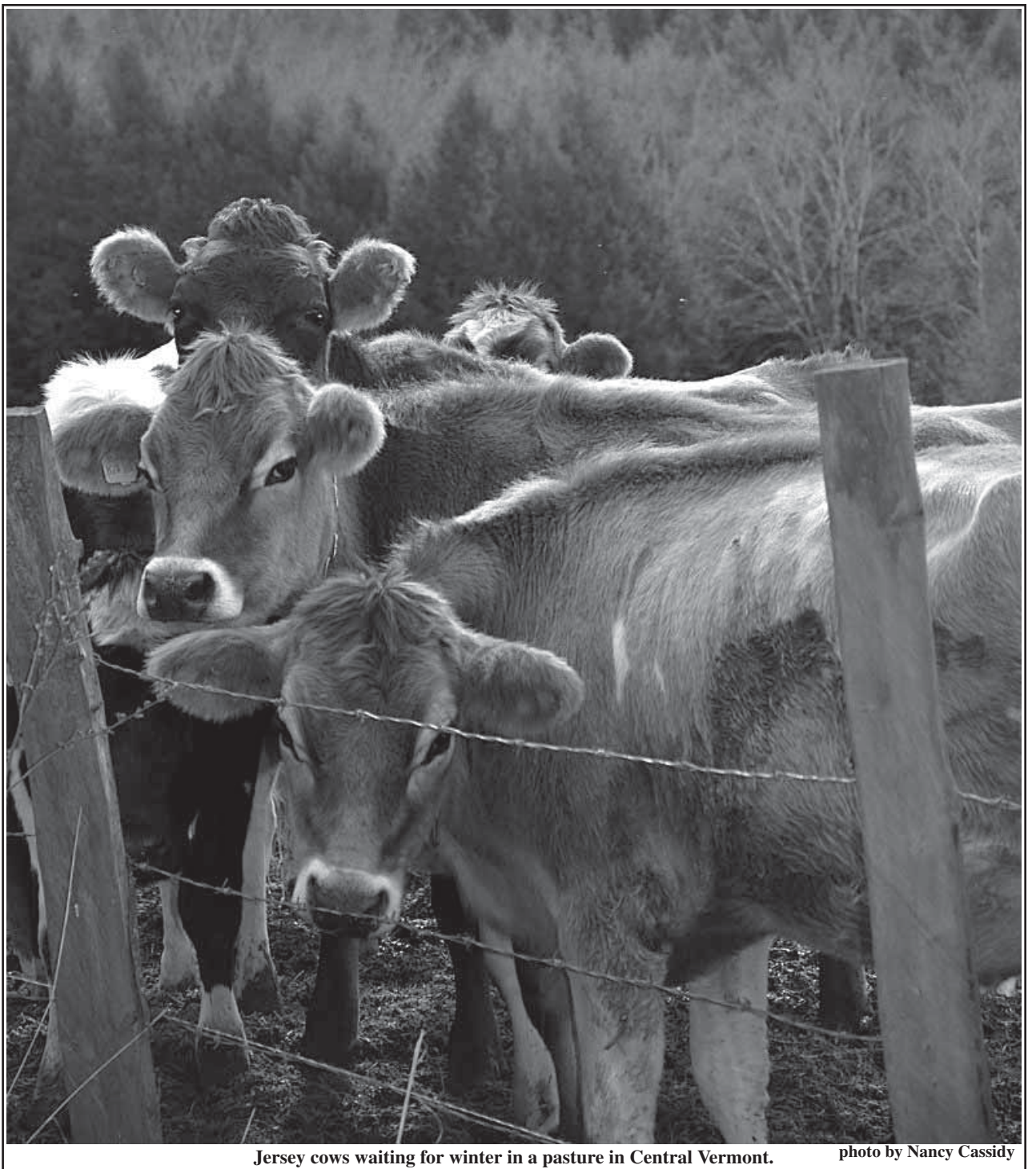
December 27: Lunar influence on the weather should be light until early the middle of the week ahead, favoring the close of holiday travel.

December 28: Prepare flats, containers and grow lights for the seeding of bedding plants at new Moon on January 5 of 2019.

December 29: The Moon enters its final quarter today, softening the final cold front of 2018.

December 30: Since the Moon will not turn new until January 5, it will be weak through the long New Year's weekend.

December 31: New Year's Eve will be wet, but the first cold front of 2019 is likely to be relatively mild.



Jersey cows waiting for winter in a pasture in Central Vermont.

photo by Nancy Cassidy



Est. 1952



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susan g. komen. NEW ENGLAND



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Sunday, January 6, 2019 • Stratton Mountain, Vermont



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Winter Treats!

by Ella Shannon Bowles
and Dorothy S. Towle

These recipes, gathered in the mid-1900s, were popular in the 1800s.

One of the great delights of our parents when they were children was visiting grandmother and being allowed to dip into the spicy cooky jar on the pantry shelf. Keeping that jar filled was one of great-grand mother's important responsibilities, even though cooky making a hundred years ago involved more work than it does now.

The first cookies were baked in sheets and cut into squares or oblongs when the pan was taken from the oven. Later on, dough rolled half an inch thick was placed in the pan, and a corrugated roller made of wood, ivory, or bone was run over the top. When baked, the cookies were cut along the grooves. Later still, flat cooky disks similar to butter prints with patterns on both sides were used. When done, the cookies were cut along the edge of the pattern.

Fancy-shaped cooky cutters are comparatively recent in date. No excitement compares to that we have all felt at Christmas time when mothers, aunts, and grandmothers made holiday cookies in the shape of birds, hearts, crescents, and stars. Somehow those cookies tasted better than any others we have eaten. The fragrance of spicy evergreens and freshly baked cookies has become to most of us a part of the lost romance of childhood.

No matter how busy grandmother was she always had time to make gingerbread men and monkey faces. We can all remember standing by the kitchen table when we were barely tall enough to see over the edge to watch her trim the gingerbread man's coat. Later came the never-to-be-forgotten day when, with her blue-checked gingham apron tied under our armpits, we were allowed to cut and trim the cookies ourselves.

AUNT HAT'S OLD-FASHIONED SOFT HERMITS

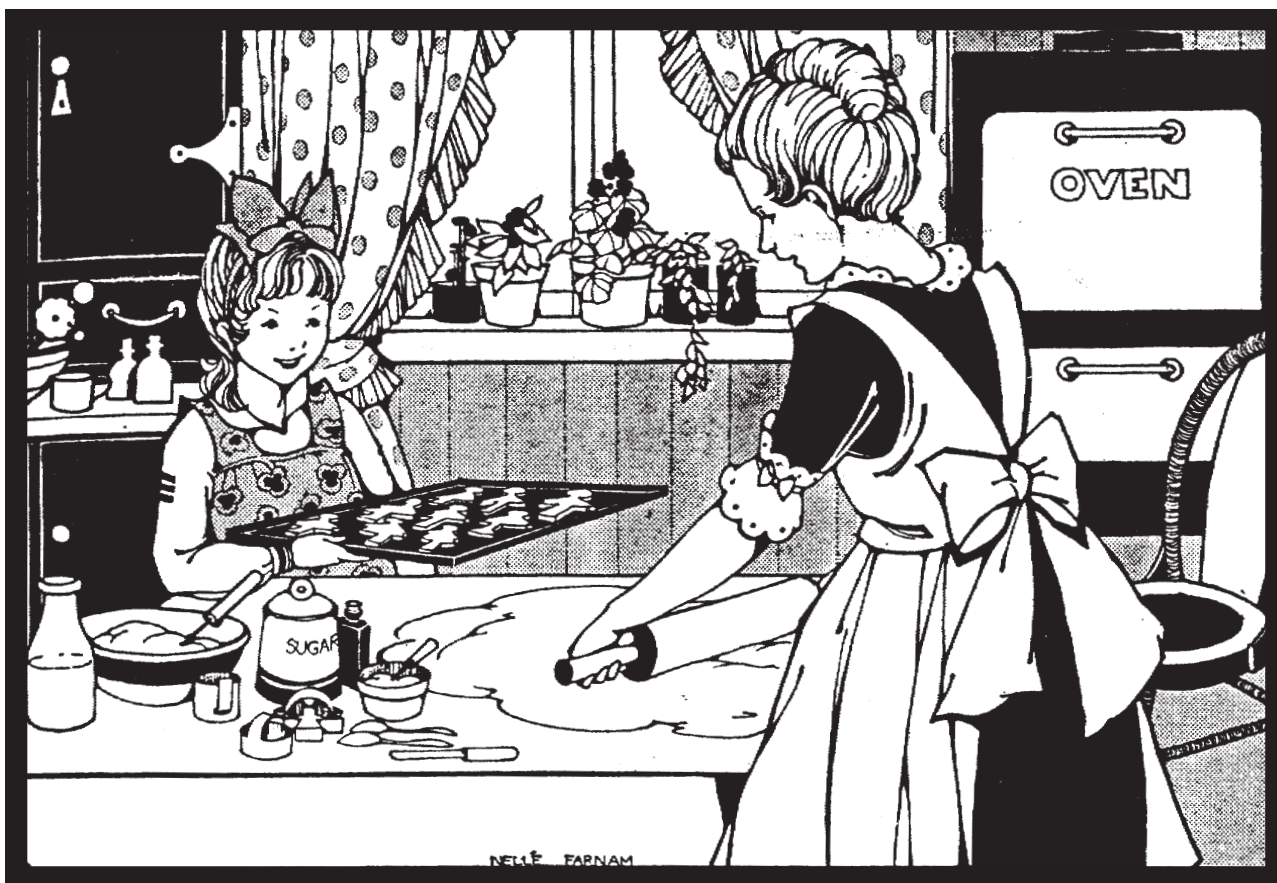
1 cup sugar	1 teaspoon cloves
½ cup shortening	1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ cup sour milk	½ teaspoon salt
½ cup molasses	½ teaspoon nutmeg
1 teaspoon soda	1 cup chopped raisins
1 teaspoon cold water	1 egg, well beaten
1 cup flour	Flour

Cream the sugar and shortening. Mix the sour milk and molasses, add the soda dissolved in the cold water, and mix this with the sugar and shortening. Sift the cup of flour with the spices and mix with the raisins. Add to the first mixture and stir in the well-beaten egg. Add enough flour to make a dough to spread about half an inch thick on a cooky sheet. Bake in a moderate oven, 375 degrees F., fifteen minutes. Cut in squares while hot. Makes six dozen.

BROWN SUGAR COOKIES

1½ cups brown sugar	1 tsp cinnamon or ginger
⅔ cup butter	½ teaspoon soda
2 eggs	4 cups flour
2 tablespoons milk	

Cream the sugar and butter. Add the eggs and milk. Sift the spice and soda with the flour. Mix well and roll thin. Bake in a hot oven, 400 degrees F., ten to twelve minutes. Makes five dozen.



BUTTERSCOTCH BARS

½ cup melted butter	1 teaspoon baking powder
1 cup brown sugar	½ teaspoon salt
1 egg	1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup flour	¾ cup nut meats

Mix the butter, brown sugar, and egg. Add the flour sifted with the other dry ingredients. Then add the flavoring and nut meats. Bake in a slow oven, 325 degrees F., for thirty minutes. Cut while hot. Makes one and a half dozen.

NEW HAMPSHIRE FILLED COOKIES

4 cups flour	1 cup sour cream
2 teaspoons baking powder	1 cup sugar
½ teaspoon salt	1 egg, beaten
½ teaspoon soda	1 teaspoon lemon extract

Sift the first four ingredients. Mix the sour cream, sugar, egg, and flavoring. Add to the flour mixture, roll thin, and cut in rounds. Place a teaspoon of filling on half the cookies and cover with the others. Sprinkle with sugar, and bake ten minutes in a hot oven, 400 degrees F. Makes three dozen.

Filling—cook until thick and cool before using:

1 cup chopped raisins	2 tablespoons flour
½ cup sugar	Juice of ½ lemon
½ teaspoon salt	¼ cup boiling water

HARRIET'S OLD-FASHIONED MOLASSES COOKIES

1 cup lard	3 teaspoons soda
4½ cups flour	¼ cup cold water
2 cups dark molasses	1 teaspoon salt
¼ cup sugar	1 tablespoon ginger
1 egg	1 tablespoon cinnamon

Cut the lard into the flour. Add the rest of the ingredients, including the soda dissolved in the water. The dough should be quite soft. Roll a little more than one-quarter inch thick. Cut and bake in a hot oven, 400 degrees F., for eight to ten minutes. Makes five dozen.

DAISY WOODWARD'S SOUR CREAM COOKIES

1 cup sugar	½ teaspoon salt
1 egg	Flour
1 cup thick sour cream	1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon soda	

Cream the sugar and egg. Add soda dissolved in sour cream. Sift the salt with the flour and mix well. Add the vanilla. Use just enough flour to roll. This should be soft dough. This is important! Cut and bake in a moderate oven, 375 degrees F., ten to twelve minutes. May be sprinkled with nutmeg. Makes five dozen.

Manchester, VT

The Shires Annual Holiday Inn Tours

Continuing a decade's long tradition, The Shires' Holiday Inn Tours, coordinated by The Shires of Vermont, will be offered to the public on two Saturdays, December 1st and 8th from 12 noon to 4 p.m.

See how the local inns decorate for the holidays. Walk through history and learn more about some of Southern Vermont's most famous inns during this magical time of year.

Putting real meaning behind the word hospitality, sixteen local lodging properties from historic hotels to inns and B and B's will open their doors to visitors from near and far.

The popular annual event provides a chance for visitors to enjoy the festive holiday atmosphere unique to each establishment.

Proceeds from this year's ticket sales will enable The Shires of Vermont to present donations to the Manchester Community Food Cupboard and to the Arlington Food Shelf.

The 16 properties participating in the 2018 tour are:

- The Four Chimneys' Inn, 21 West Rd., Bennington
- The Inn on Covered Bridge Green, 3587 River Rd., Arlington
- West Mountain Inn, 144 West Mountain Inn Rd., Arlington

- The Arlington Inn, 3904 VT Rt. 7A, Arlington
- The Deming House, 3929 VT Rt. 7A, Arlington
- Ira Allen House, 6311 VT Rt. 7A, Sunderland
- Hill Farm Inn, 658 Hill Farm Rd., Sunderland
- The Inn at Ormsby Hill, 1842 Main St., Manchester Center
- The Kimpton Taconic Hotel, 3835 Main St., Manchester Center
- The Inn at Manchester, 3839 Main St., Manchester Center
- The Reluctant Panther, 39 West Rd., Manchester
- Wilburton Inn, 257 Wilburton Dr., Manchester
- Marble West Inn, 1847

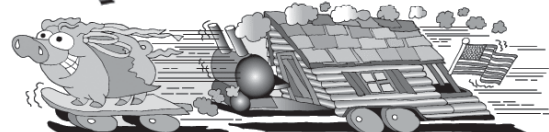
- Dorset West Rd., Dorset
- The Wilson House, 378 Village St., East Dorset
- The Barrows House, 3156 VT Rt. 30, Dorset
- The Dorset Inn, 8 Church St., Dorset.

Tickets may be purchased at any of the Inns. One person tour is \$15, couple tour is \$25. The tickets include all the inns listed.

For more info contact Elizabeth Berger at the Arlington Inn (802) 375-6532. E-mail: Stay@arlingtoninn.com.



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A Vermont Almanack for Early Winter

by Bill Felker

The sun and the stars are pieces of our inner habitat as well as segments of the greater landscape. They are part of the concentric circles of our awareness, and of the contours of our brain. They bend and soften linear time. They connect us with the round, rotating years, with the rest of our lives, as well as with others.

—Leon Quel

The Sun's Progress

Winter solstice occurs at 5:23 p.m. on December 21. The Sun enters the Deep Winter sign of Capricorn on the same day.

On the 24th the Sun begins its movements toward summer solstice, rising just slightly from the declination of 23 degrees, 26 minutes to 23 degrees, 25 minutes. (There are 60 minutes in a degree.)

On Christmas, the Sun moves another minute. On the 26th, it rises a full two minutes, and then its ascent takes on greater and greater momentum, changing more than five minutes in a day by January 1, about ten minutes in a day by January 15, up to 20 minutes a day by February 1.

Phases of the Flowering Jessamine Moon

Although the bright yellow jessamine flowers do not appear in the Northeast during December, they do start to bloom in the South at this time of year, a sign that spring will not stay away too long.

December 7: The Shattering Ginkgo Moon becomes the Flowering Jessamine Moon at 2:20 a.m.

December 12: The Moon reaches apogee at 7:25 a.m.

December 15: The Moon enters its second quarter at 6:49 a.m.

December 22: The Moon is full at 12:48 p.m.

December 24: The Moon reaches perigee at 4:52 a.m.

December 29: The Moon enters final quarter at 4:34 a.m.

The Planets

Venus and Jupiter in Ophiuchus are the Morning Stars of this December. (Venus is the brighter of the two.) Saturn in Sagittarius skims the western horizon at dusk and disappears from the night sky by the middle of the month. Red Mars travels with Aquarius in the southwestern sky after dark.

The Stars

December brings back Orion as an easy marker of sky time. By 11:00 p.m., it has emerged from the east, following a cluster of seven stars, the Pleiades and the red eye of Taurus, Aldebaran. A few hours before dawn, all those stars have moved to fill up the southern sky, prophesying spring.

The Shooting Stars

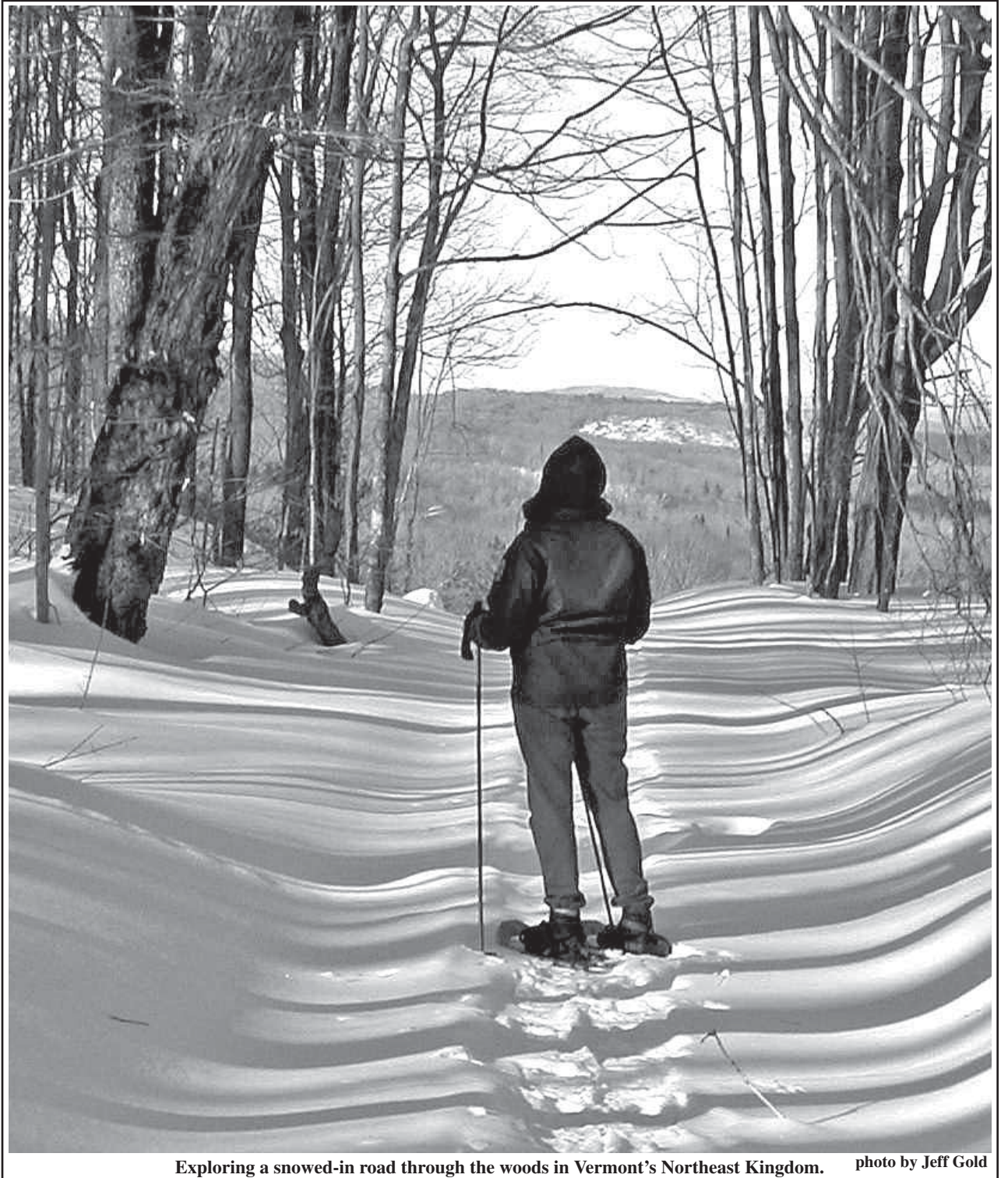
The Geminid meteor show peaks on December 13 – 14 near Gemini, with the crescent Moon interfering only a little with meteor viewing.

The Ursid Meteors fall after midnight at the rate of about five to ten per hour on December 21 and 22, but bright full moonlight is likely to obscure many of them.

Meteorology

Weather history suggests that cold waves usually reach Vermont on or about December 2, 8, 15, 20, 25 and 29. Snow or rain often falls prior to the passage of each major front.

It is probable that full Moon on December 22, combined with lunar perigee on December 24, will bring stronger-than-average storms to the United States, complicating Christmas travel.



Exploring a snowed-in road through the woods in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. photo by Jeff Gold



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Dorset Equine Rescue Helps Horses in Need

The Dorset Equine Rescue is a non-profit organization dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation and re-homing of neglected, abused and slaughter bound horses of all breeds and sizes. Nestled in the beautiful Green Mountains in East Dorset, VT, the rescue began in 2012 when the founder, Jennifer Straub, acquired her first two rescue horses.

Although she had been a horse owner for most of her life, it wasn't until she adopted her first two mini horses, "Daisy" and "Duke", that she realized the severity of the situation that so many of these majestic animals face. Horses were being neglected and needed help not only all over the country, but even right here in New England.

Saving horses from slaughter

Much like dogs and cats, we have a huge overpopulation of horses. Approximately 90,000 to 140,000 horses are shipped out of the United States to Mexico and Canada every year for slaughter. The animals often arrive at the slaughterhouse injured from transport in overstuffed trailers. They may have had nothing to drink or eat for days and can be severely dehydrated. Jennifer had to do something to help.

Horses come to Dorset Equine Rescue from a variety of situations, including owner surrenders where there has been a loss of job, serious illness, divorce, loss of interest or death of the owner. They help not only the horses in these tough situations, but also the folks who have fallen on hard times and have no other options for their horses. They also receive horses through law enforcement who seize animals because of severe neglect or abuse.

When they have room, Dorset Equine Rescue acquires horses from auction or kill pens to protect them from ending up on a slaughter truck bound for Mexico or Canada.

Rehabilitation and training

Each incoming horse to their rescue goes through a 30-day quarantine to protect the horses already on the farm from contagious illness. During this time, they are thoroughly evaluated by their team of skilled equine experts, including veterinarians, a trainer and a farrier.

When each horse is ready, they start on a training program. Horses are happier and healthier when they have a job. The trainer evaluates each horse's abilities and physical condition learning what they are capable, the better to match them with their future adopter.

Sometimes age or injury prevents a horse from being rideable, but that does not mean they are useless. They can make the best companions to our younger horses that are insecure and need stability. Some end up being good lead line horses, or therapy horses for people to pet and brush, or they get adopted as a companion to another horse who is alone. All



Jen Straub with rescue horse Buttercup in East Dorset, VT.

photo by Lisa Cuman Photography

of their horses, including the ones who are not rideable, are brought into the barn regularly and taught to have excellent manners so they are a pleasure to be around and well behaved for the vet and the farrier.

Adoption procedures

When a Dorset Equine Rescue horse is ready for adoption, it is listed on their website and on social media. Anyone who is interested in one of their horses is asked to fill out an adoption application and provide references. They require a barn check before the home is approved and every home is required to provide a level of care including shelter, a good sized turnout area, and basic vaccinations. After a home is approved, the new owner will sign a contract to help insure the horse continues to be well cared for. They strive to make sure each horse and adopter is compatible and have the best chance of developing a lifelong partnership.

The Dorset Equine Rescue runs completely on donations. Since their founding, they have been able to help over 100 horses in need. Please consider sending a contribution today so they can continue to help these amazing animals.

You can also make a huge difference in a rescue horse's life with a monthly sponsorship donation, which is tax-deductible. Sponsorship opportunities start at \$200 a month which covers hay and grain for one horse. Other levels are also available to include medical and training expenses. For a list of horses available for sponsorship visit their website.

Dorset Equine Rescue is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity organization and donations are tax deductible in accordance with the law. Donations can be mailed to The Dorset Equine Rescue or can be made through our website with a credit card.

Dorset Equine Rescue, P.O. Box 92, East Dorset, VT 05253. (802) 366-1300. inquiries@dorsetequinerescue.org. For more information visit www.dorsetequinerescue.org.




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Winter Events at Merck Forest & Farmland Center

Winter is coming to Merck Forest and Farmland Center. There are plenty of family-centered fun activities and events to take part in, or you can just enjoy a stroll around the farm, or an invigorating hike or x-c ski along our 30+ miles of trails.

Winter Event Schedule

To learn more about the details of an event that interests you, please call the Visitor Center at (802) 394-7836. Advance reservations—made on a first-come first-served basis—are necessary for many events due to space limitations or scheduling considerations. For outdoor events, please dress for the weather: sturdy shoes/boots, layered clothing, snow/rain gear, flashlight/headlamp, snacks and water. Outdoor events are held weather-permitting.

Wreath-Making Workshop. December 1st, 1-3 p.m. Gather up friends and/or family and kick off the holiday season with Merck Forest's popular Wreath-Making Workshop. Wreaths are created on 14-inch frames; finished dimensions are limited only by your creativity. Ribbons, evergreens boughs, other natural materials and tools will be furnished, but you are encouraged to bring along your own decorations to personalize your creation. Register soon, these workshops fill up and each workshop only accommodates 10 working groups; the fee is \$25 per wreath.

Guided Full Cold Moon Hike. December 22nd, 6-7:30 p.m. Join Merck Forest staff on a guided hike in the evening landscape to view the Full Cold Moon. This hike will be of moderate difficulty; participants must have appropriate footgear, headlamps, water and snacks. Reservations are requested; please reserve your spot in the group by calling 802-394-7836. Fee: \$5 per person. Held weather-permitting.

Guided Full Wolf Moon Hike. January 19th, 4-5:30 p.m. Join Merck Forest staff on a guided hike in the evening landscape to view the Full Wolf Moon. This hike will be of moderate difficulty; participants must have appropriate footgear, headlamps, water and snacks. Reservations are requested, please reserve your spot in the group by calling 802-394-7836. Fee: \$5 per person. Held weather-permitting.

Animal Tracking Workshop. January 26th, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. We'll hike out into the snowfields and woods in search of...whatever has come before! Participants must have appropriate footgear, headlamps, water and snacks. Reservations are requested; fee: \$5 per person. Held weather-permitting.

Soap Felting Workshop. February 9th, 1-3 p.m. Just in time for Valentine's Day: Merck Forest's Soap Felting Workshop! Attendees will felt three bars of Kirk's 100% Pure



The snowy road into Merck Forest and Farmland Center in Rupert, VT.

photo by Merck Forest and Farmland Center

Coconut Castile soap, scented or unscented, using natural-colored wool with natural- and brightly-colored wool and silk. One of these handmade scrubbies (or the set of three) would be a luxurious—and personal—gift for a loved one. Fee (\$30/person) includes materials. Pre-registration is suggested; call (802) 394-7836 to reserve your place in the class.

Full Snow Moon Guided Hike. February 16th, 4-5:30 p.m. Join Merck Forest staff on a guided hike in the evening landscape to view the Full Snow Moon. This hike will be of moderate difficulty; participants must have appropriate footgear, headlamps, water and snacks. Reservations are requested, please reserve your spot in the group by calling 802-394-7836. Fee: \$5 per person. Held weather-permitting.

Owl Presentation and Guided Walk. February 23rd, 4-6 p.m. Whooo's looking for company in our late winter landscape? Well, the Barred owls are, the Great Horned owls, and whooo knows whooo else. If we're lucky we'll be able

to listen in on the conversation of one or another feathered couple. We'll start in the Visitor Center with a presentation featuring owls native to the Northeast, then we'll hike out in hopes of finding some courting couples. Participants must have appropriate footgear, headlamps, water and snacks. Reservations are requested; fee: \$5 per person. Held weather-permitting.

Merck Forest and Farmland Center is a non-profit educational organization in the Taconic Hills of southwestern Vermont. The Center's mission is the sustainable management of its forest, the promotion of innovative agricultural practices on its upland farm, the education of local students in outdoor exploration and the study of natural sciences, and the creation of recreational opportunities. The property is open free to the public daily, from dawn to dusk, year-round.

Merck Forest and Farmland Center is located at the top of the very large hill at 3270 Rt. 315 in Rupert, VT. Once you reach the top of the big hill turn into Merck Forest's driveway. (802) 394-7836. merckforest.org.

Paths

by Esther B. Stebbins, circa 1938

For the morning, a climbing path—in the evening, a strolling way.

Paths among the pines for moods, and a birch-lined trail for lovers and youth and Spring. But in winter, a wheel-rutted old wood road between stumps of hemlock and spruce.

Paths are not idle ways—they go places. And in friendly fashion, they ask you to come along. If you cannot spare time from today's rush of little things, another day will do.

Paths wait. I have known a

path to wait for years, a path that deserved better things. For did it not lead straight up to a wild strawberry patch in June!

And once a cowpath stumbled headlong into a magnificent bed of maidenhair just at the edge of a hemlock grove.

Paths do not promise rashly—they know unerringly where the arbutus is blossoming under pine needles in April, and how easiest to find the red raspberry clearing in July.

A winding footpath across a meadow leads inevitably to

a cold spring beside an old barway.

A short way up the mountain road there is a gap in a tumble-down stone wall—you remember—a dim, narrow way—up and over rocks still mossy from spring freshet waters, into birch thickets and over rotted logs, out into quick patches of sun-

light, back into moist fern-bordered semi-darkness, and always up until it frets itself through one last brier tangle and bids you look up the river valley to the blue hills. Along bleak ledges to dusky spruce woods below. Out toward the sunshine and clouds.

Do that at least once in a lifetime.



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Fair Haven, VT

Marble Mansion Tour by the Fair Haven Historical Society

Enjoy a Christmas season tour of The Marble Mansion Inn in Fair Haven, VT on December 8th from 12-8 p.m.

The Fair Haven Historical Society will have mugs, shirts, and books including the two newest: *Memories of Fair Haven* and *The Saga of Nifty Snifty* available for purchase.

The white marble structure is known as the Allen house or The Marble Mansion. It overlooks the Fair Haven Park. This elegant mansion takes the visitors back to another era. It has an Italianate wrap around porch and is topped with a belvedere.

Currently a bed and breakfast inn, the house will be fully decorated for the holidays. Visitors are guided through all three floors and sometimes the belvedere. After the tour visitors are invited to have tea and refreshments in the sun room. Donations are accepted for the Historical society.

The Marble Mansion Inn is located at 12 West Park Place in Fair Haven, VT. Contact the inn at (802) 265-4556. To reach the historical society call (802) 265-3843 x 8. visit www.marblemansioninn.com.



The historic Marble Mansion Inn in Fair Haven, VT, all dressed up for the Christmas season. photo courtesy of The Marble Mansion Inn

Christmas Bells 1864

"I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"



And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Then from each black accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn
The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

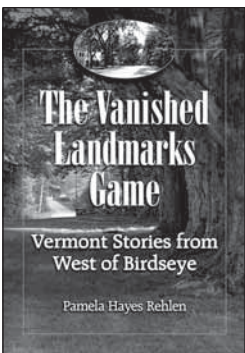
Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!"

BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW
Cambridge, MA 1807-1882



Guests enjoy the decorations at The Marble Inn in Fair Haven, VT.. photo courtesy of The Marble Mansion Inn

Captivating Stories from Castleton

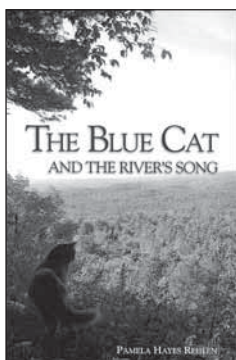


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A Man of Probity

by Pamela Hayes Rehlen

From the late 1940s to the early 1960s, Olaf Johnson was minister at the Castleton Federated Church. He and his wife Elizabeth and their four sons lived across the street from the church in the architecturally-grand, but shabby, Manse.

Olaf was a handsome man who had grown up on a brutally marginal hill farm in Shrewsbury. My Aunt Bertha Hinkley Gibbs grew up on an equally poor farm close to his and had known him all her life.

Aunt Bertha was a little contemptuous of Olaf because he was so humble, self-giving, and virtuous—I always thought that was a strange a thing to hold against a minister. But I believe what she really disapproved of was that he was willing to make do with so little.

Olaf had been preceded in his Federated church ministry by Max Clough, a much more urbane figure. Max married my parents, baptized me, visited my family for years, and baptized my first child, so I knew both these men.

At one time, Castleton's (Methodist/Congregational) Federated Church was a powerhouse. Except for the big tribes

“Olaf was a handsome man who had grown up on a brutally marginal hill farm in Shrewsbury.”

of, largely Irish, Catholics who gathered with Father O'Brian down the street at Saint John's, almost every religiously-inclined person in town attended the Federated.

I remember the family pews—always filled—of Castleton's prominent people. Most of these pews have been unclaimed for decades. No one now knows where, for example, the Ellises or the Browns sat every Sunday.

Things were in the process of changing by the time Olaf Johnson arrived to take Max Clough's place.

Somehow, the grand Gone with the Wind-style Manse strongly appealed to him and his family. Uncomplaining, they endured the cold and drafts created by an erratic hot air furnace and rickety, ill-fitting, storm windows, old wood floors covered with linoleum, meager furnishings and the cheapest wall paper from Sears.

To make ends meet, they rented out their best upstairs bedroom to Castleton Normal School students. Olaf's wife Elizabeth gave music lessons on a piano in the corner of the living room.

It's true that Olaf's sermons were invariable long, unenlightening, drones, and I sat through a great many of them, but that was only a small part of his ministry.

During the 1950s, Main Street social drinking was out of a Cheever short story, and there was also American Legion



It's Andrew (not looking as handsome as he was) in white and his (estranged) wife standing in front of him and Olie (Olaf Jr.) on the far right with his wife and adopted, or foster, Asian kids. One of the other sons was dead by this time, and one was, I think, in Texas and couldn't make it back to the memorial service. The two Johnson boys and their families came over to the Manse afterward, and that's when this picture was taken. They all loved the Manse.

drinking, but the Johnsons didn't drink, and Olaf took on the job of giving rides home to those who needed them.

He looked out for Johnny Gray, a local man, a definitional 'lunatic,' who became wild and walked down the center of Main Street on nights when the moon was full. Every winter, Olaf flooded Betty Harrington Zahnleiter's South Street empty lot to create and maintain a town skating rink.

He kept the books for the Castleton Village School lunch program. As a top-hated town crier, he led off Colonial Day parades. He directed the local 4-H, and in the 1950s joined Bill Hart and George Harrington putting on variety shows upstairs in the old, town-center, Village School.

But what stays with me, thinking about Olaf and his life in Castleton, was a night years ago when there was a knock on our back door, and I went to it and found Andrew Johnson standing there.

Andrew, who closely resembled his father, was in Burlington, but searching for a job in Rutland. He was on his own, a little melancholy, and wanted to know if there was anyone in town who would rent a room to him in the way that his family had once rented rooms.

Andrew came in and sat with us in our end-of-the-day, darkened kitchen and talked about his father and about his

Castleton childhood, which was a time of terrific innocence, a childhood much like that of Ralphie's in A Christmas Story.

He told us that when Olaf was a member of the town fire department sometimes, as a special treat, he would take his son along with him on an early morning call-out. I thought listening to Andrew that it wouldn't have been easy to get the full attention of a man who was a small town minister and the parent of four boys.

Olaf said that if Andrew could be up and dressed in the time that it took his father to go and get the car and pull it out from the long rambling shed-garage that at that time was at the back of the Manse, turn it around, and start down the driveway, he could come along with him.

And Andrew said that long ago in that grand-seeming house he would leap up and pull on some clothes and run across the cold, shabby, rooms and down the curving Thomas Dake stair case and out the back door and leap into the frigid car, and he and his father would drive off together to fight a fire and aid the town.

And sitting there in our shadowy kitchen, I think Andrew realized that on those mornings he'd known perfect happiness.

Pamela Hayes Rehlen has written and lived most of her life in Castleton, Vermont. She is the author of stories, articles, essays, magazine features, and of two books: *The Blue Cat and the River's Song* (\$17 plus shipping and handling) and *The Vanished Landmarks Game—Vermont Stories from West of Birdseye* (\$20 plus shipping and handling.) available at the Castleton Village Store, P. O. Box 275, Castleton, Vermont 05735, and at a number of Vermont booksellers. To reach the store, call (802) 468-2213. All the back issues of these columns are available to read under the archives at www.vermontcountry sampler.com.

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.

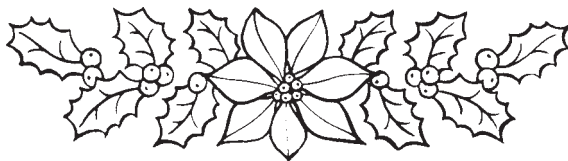
All of you frogs and all of you toads,
Burrowed and patient, hidden and mute:
Pray for us. Pray for us. Graciously hear us.

All of you silenced cicadas and katydid,
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



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Rutland, VT

Elisabeth von Trapp to Perform At Trinity Episcopal Church

Trinity Episcopal Church presents "The Holidays Are Alive" with Elisabeth von Trapp in concert and dinner Friday, December 14th at 7 p.m. The world-traveling Waitsfield, Vermont singer-songwriter and granddaughter of Maria Von Trapp, matriarch of the Trapp Family Singers will perform in the sanctuary and a fundraising dinner and raffle will follow.

"Von Trapp reveals her penchant for beautiful melancholy...These songs are majestic, haunting...like a civilized cabaret in which only the serious, bittersweet music is allowed...her vocal and songwriting style are timeless, elegant and often magnificent, Von Trapp's

voice is a sanctuary." —*Seven Days*

Trinity Church welcomes concert goers to continue the festivities and enjoy a dinner immediately following the concert. The dinner, provided by Table 24 in the parish hall, includes a sit down three-course dinner. Advanced ticket purchase only.

Concert tickets \$25 (students/seniors \$20). Concert and dinner \$60 (students/seniors \$50). To see a video of Elisabeth von Trapp singing, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9EAcCU9j4k.

Trinity Episcopal Church, 85 West St., Rutland. office@trinitychurchrutland.org. trinitychurchrutland.org.

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Vermont Map



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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.

— ANONYMOUS

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Vermont Country Calendar

See the end of the daily event calendar for ongoing activities; and museums, exhibits, and galleries.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29

CHESTER. 34th Annual "Overture to Christmas." 10 am – 6 pm. (802) 380-6940. *Through December 2.*

MIDDLEBURY. Musical: Middlebury Community Players' production of *The Drowsy Chaperone*, the funniest musical of the last twenty years. Tickets: Thursday shows \$15, all other performances \$23 (student \$18). 8 pm Thursday–Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. Town Hall Theater. (802) 382-9222. townhalltheater.org. *Through December 9.*

RUTLAND. The Rutland County Farmer's Market Christmas Craft Fair. Reasonable-priced Christmas wreaths and decor; crafts in fiber, fabric, wood and glass; jewelry; baked goods and specialty foods with the flavor of Vermont; prepared foods, apples, cider and veggies. Free admission. 9 am – 2 pm. At the Athletic Center at College of St. Joseph, 71 Clement Rd. (802) 773-4813. *Through December 2.*

ST. ALBANS. Festival of Trees: Eighth Annual Running of the Bells. 6:30 am – 8 pm. People's Trust Company parking lot. (802) 309-4487. stafestivaloftrees@yahoo.com. vtfestivaloftrees.com.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30

BRATTLEBORO. Fifth Annual Brattleboro-West Arts Fine Art and Craft Sale. Original works: paintings, pastels, photography, botanical etchings, pottery, textiles, woodworking, jewelry, glass. 4-8 pm. 118 Elliot St. brattleboro-west-arts.com. *Through December 2.*

BRATTLEBORO. Strolling of the Heifers Quilt Expo. Beautiful handcrafted quilts from local quilters, quilted crafts, quilting supplies and more. 11 am – 4 pm. The River Garden, 157 Main St. strollingoftheheifers.com. *Also December 1.*

BRATTLEBORO. Special Film Screening: *The Quilts of Gee's Bend*. 28-minute documentary short film, presented by the director, Vanessa Vadim. Set in the quilt-makers' homes and yards, and told through the women's voices. 5 pm. Latchis Theatre, 50 Main St. (802) 246-1500. www.strollingoftheheifers.com.

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. Come and enjoy our electric train layout. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. *Open Fri., Sat. & Sun., December 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23.*

BURLINGTON. Lane Series Concert: Cellist Inbal Segev and pianist Alon Goldstein perform works by Schumann, Brahms, and Dvorák. Tickets: adults \$35, students \$5. 7:30 pm; pre-show talk with artists at 6:30 pm. UVM Recital Hall, 392 South Prospect St. (802) 656-3131. uvm.edu/laneseries.

CALAIS. Concert: The Sky Blue Boys & Cookie will rock the joint with a slew of cool new songs. Never a cover charge, always fine food and drinks at the Whammy. 7:30 pm. The Whammy Bar at the Maple Corner Store, 31 West County Rd. (802) 229-4329. www.banjodan.com.

CHESTER. 34th Annual "Overture to Christmas." Elves Workshop for grades 3-6. (802) 380-6940. www.meetchestervermont.com. *Through December 2.*

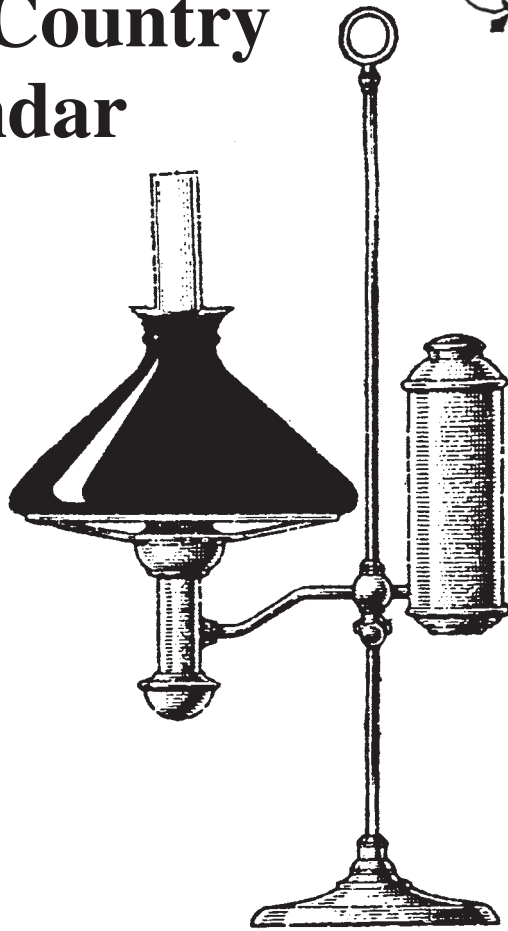
ESSEX JUNCTION. 26th Annual Vermont International Festival. Crafts, ethnic goods, food, international music, dance and stories. Tickets: adults \$7, ages 6-12 or senior (65+) \$5, family (2 adults and their children) \$20, under 6 free. 5-8 pm. Champlain Valley Exposition, 105 Pearl St. (802) 863-6713. *Through December 2.*

HANOVER, NH. Play: "Coriolanus." This modern adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy by the Ontario-based Stratford Festival theater company explores the age-old tensions that still tear at the heart of democracy. Tickets: \$25-\$80. Friday at 8 pm, Saturday at 2 pm & 8 pm, Sunday at 2 pm. Hopkins Center for the Arts, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.dartmouth.edu.

MIDDLEBURY. Concert. Jupiter String Quartet celebrates Debussy in this centenary year of his passing, with a program of Ravel and Debussy's solitary string quartets, plus Dutilleux's *Ainsi la nuit*. Tickets: \$28, youth \$6. 7:30-9:30 pm. Mahaney Center for the Arts, Robison Hall, 72 Porter Field Rd. (802) 443-3168.

NORWICH. Author Event: New Yorker cartoonist and Vermont Cartoonist Laureate Ed Koren discusses his new book, *Koren in the Wild*, a look at country life, exurbanites and the ironies of living in the boonies. Free. Reservations recommended. 7 pm. Norwich Bookstore, 291 Main St. (802) 649-1114. norwichbookstore.com.

RUTLAND. The Rutland County Farmer's Market Christmas Craft Fair. Reasonable-priced Christmas wreaths and decor; crafts in fiber, fabric, wood and glass; jewelry; baked goods and specialty foods with the flavor of Vermont; prepared foods, apples, cider and veggies. Free admission. 9 am – 2 pm. At the Athletic Center at College of St. Joseph, 71 Clement Rd. (802) 773-4813. *Through December 2.*



ST. ALBANS. Festival of Trees: Fundraising Gala—"A Journey Thru Time." 7 pm – midnight. St. Albans City Hall. (802) 309-4487. stafestivaloftrees@yahoo.com. vtfestivaloftrees.com.

STOWE. Opening Reception for Members' Art Show and Festival of Trees & Light. Decorated evergreens, Hanukkah display, and over 100 artworks. Donations welcome. 5-7 pm. Helen Day Art Center, 90 Pond St. (802) 253-8358. mail@helenday.com. helenday.com. *Show runs through December 29.*

STOWE. A Traditional Christmas in Stowe. Tree lightings, lantern parade, wagon rides, Santa and reindeer visits, carolers. Candy cane pulling, wreath making, gingerbread and cookie decorating. Performances, ice skating and more. 7 am – 8 pm. (802) 585-5131. *Through December 2.*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1

ARLINGTON. The Shires' Holiday Inn Tour. Sixteen hotels, inns and B&Bs open their doors to visitors, to enjoy the festive holiday atmosphere unique to each one. Tickets: \$15, couple \$25. Proceeds to Manchester Community Food Cupboard and Arlington Food Shelf. 12 noon – 4 pm. (802) 375-6532. Stay@arlingtoninn.com. *Also December 8.*

BELLOWS FALLS. Concert: Rhythm Future Quartet, acoustic jazz ensemble, has a straightforward agenda: to keep the spirit of Gypsy jazz alive and expanding. Tickets: \$15, \$20, \$35. 7:30 pm. The Chapel at Immanuel Episcopal Church, 20 Church St. Tickets and information: (802) 460-0110. stonechurcharts.org.

BENNINGTON. Family Day. Children's shopping boutique (10:30 am – 3:30 pm). Santa and Mrs. Claus (1-3 pm). Crafts. Will Moses book signing. Classroom Creations. Special sales for grownups in the museum store. 10 am – 5 pm. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. sstrano@benningtonmuseum.org. benningtonmuseum.org.

BRATTLEBORO. Brattleboro Winter Farmers' Market 13th season. Saturdays 10 am – 2 pm. New location—Church Building, 80 Flat St. (802) 869-2141. farmersmarket@posttoilsolutions.org. *Saturdays, November 3 through March 10.*

BRATTLEBORO. 48th Community Messiah Sing: A Benefit for the Homeless. We provide the conductor and four soloists. Between 200 and 300 singers come to sing the full Christmas portion and a few favorite passages in Parts II and III, including the Hallelujah Chorus. Admission free, all door donations go to Groundworks. 1 pm. Centre Congregational Church, 193 Main St. (802) 257-2616. GalleryWalk.org.

BRATTLEBORO. Fifth Annual Brattleboro-West Arts Fine Art and Craft Sale. Original works: paintings, pastels, photography, botanical etchings, pottery, textiles, woodworking, jewelry, glass. 10 am – 6 pm. 118 Elliot St. brattleboro-west-arts.com. *Also December 2.*

BRATTLEBORO. Strolling of the Heifers Quilt Expo. Beautiful handcrafted quilts from local quilters, quilted crafts, quilting supplies and more. 11 am – 4 pm. The River Garden, 157 Main St. strollingoftheheifers.com.

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. *Open Fri., Sat. & Sun., December 2, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23.*

CHESTER. 34th Annual "Overture to Christmas." Kids Craft Bazaar, 1 pm. (802) 380-6940. *Through December 2.*



Interlude

I'll dream the northern winter through,
And hope to waken in the spring
When that first faint soft twittering
Comes in my elm beside the way,
When piles of snow slip fast, and gray
Of winter turns to sunny hours,
And little buds swell full to flowers,
And roses bloom, for they too slept
And waited while the winter crept
Upon them in their blooming prime.

So I shall sleep through winter time
And wake, earth's nectar in each vein
When Spring comes winging North again!

—NELLIE S. RICHARDSON
Springfield, VT 1936

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Vermont Country Calendar

(Saturday, December 1, continued)

CHESTER. St. Luke's Christmas Tea and Sale. Delicious light sandwiches and scrumptious sweets cover the tea table where your choices of coffee, tea and hot spiced cider are poured by a hostess. You fill your plate (more than once) for \$8 and join friends at inviting festively decorated little tables. Shop at Grandma's Attic for little collectibles, handmade ornaments, Christmas decorations, quilted pieces, painted items, candles and other crafts and art. Take home baked goodies from the Bake Table. 11 am – 3 pm. Willard Hall, St. Luke's, 313 Main St. www.stlukeseiscopalvt.org.

COLCHESTER. Workshop: 50 Ways To Prove He's Dead. Finding a date of death for an ancestor can be very important to our genealogy searches. Three of our staff members will show you more than 50 ways to locate a death date as well as how to glean as much information as possible from the source. Classes at the VT Genealogy Library are \$10. 10:30 to 12 noon. VT Genealogy Library, Hegeman Ave., Fort Ethan Allen. (802) 310-9285. www.vtgenlib.org.

DUMMERSTON. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Christmas Tree Sales. Fresh Balsam wreaths, centerpiece and greenery. Country Store. Free hot cider, hot chocolate & pretzels. Open Saturdays and Sundays 10 am – 4 pm, Mondays through Fridays 12-4 pm, through December 25. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 209 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. *Through December 25.*

ESSEX JCT. Book & Author Event. Stephen Russell Payne presents his novel, *Life on a Cliff*. Free. 3-6 pm. Phoenix Books Essex, 2 Carmichael St. (802) 872-7111. phoenixbooks.biz.

ESSEX JUNCTION. 26th Annual Vermont International Festival. Crafts, ethnic goods, food, international music, dance and stories. Tickets: adults \$7, ages 6-12 or senior (65+) \$5, family (2 adults and their children) \$20, under 6 free. 10 am – 6 pm. Champlain Valley Exposition, 105 Pearl St. (802) 863-6713. *Also December 2.*

GRAFTON. Candlelit Christmas Concert: Seraphic Fire, vocal ensemble. Tickets: \$15. 7-8:30 pm. Grafton Community Church, 55 Main St. (305) 285-9060. SeraphicFire.org.

GRAFTON. Second Annual Christmas in Grafton Festival. Horse-drawn hayrides, cookie decorating, Christmas tree lighting. Free events, concerts and caroling, food and fun. Saturday concert: Seraphic Fire, 7 pm at the White Church, tickets \$15 at seraphicfire.org. (802) 258-3992. graftonvermont.org. *Also Dec. 2.*

LITTLETON, NH. North Country Chorus 71st Annual Christmas Concert. 7:30 pm. First Congregational Church. www.northcountrychorus.org. *Also December 2.*

LUNENBURG. Lunenburg Gingerbread Bazaar. Festive family event to usher in the Christmas Season. Free and affordable activities for all ages! Door prizes, free cookie stacking and gingerbread creations contests, fudge, Cookie Walk, homemade soup luncheon 11 am – 2 pm, bake sale table, free fun activities with Mrs. Claus, and a great assortment of vendors with Christmas theme and gift items in a wide price range. Sponsored by the Top of the Common Committee, not the Kingdom East School District. 10 am – 3 pm at Primary School on Bobbin Mill Rd. (802) 892-6654. www.topofthecommon.org.

LYNDONVILLE. The North Pole Express. Heated vintage coaches. Narration, hot cocoa, gingerbread cookies and caroling. Pajamas encouraged but not required. Cost: \$25. Rides at 12 noon, 2 pm, 4 pm, 6 pm. Reservations required. 1000 Broad St. (802) 626-1400. thelyndonfreighthouse.com.

MIDDLEBURY. Sheldon Museum's Annual Holiday Open House. Enjoy the elaborate model train layout, carols played on the Sheldon's 1831 piano, and a Miniature Christmas Tree Raffle featuring 20 creative trees decorated by local artists. Two holiday exhibits. Admission by donation. 10 am – 4 pm: Henry Sheldon Museum, One Park St. (802) 388-2117. www.HenrySheldonMuseum.org. *Also December 2.*

NORWICH. 16th Annual Gingerbread Festival. Display of over 80 gingerbread houses, a silent auction of the houses and other items. Handcrafts and gift items, a cafe serving lunch. Gingerbread house-making demonstration, cookie decorating and activities for children. Admission: \$5; \$10 per family. 10 am – 3 pm. Tracy Hall, 300 Main St. (802) 649-3268. gingerbread@the-family-place.org. familyplacevt.org.

PITTSFORD. Holiday Art & Craft Show and Basket Raffle. Proceeds benefit the Maclure Library. 9 am – 2 pm. Lothrop Elementary School Gym, 3447 Rt. 7. Contact: Tammy Hitchcock, tamara.hitchcock@gmail.com or contact@maclurelibrary.org.

PLYMOUTH. Coolidge Holiday Open House. Visit the Coolidge Birthplace, decorated as it would have been in 1872. Winter exhibits at the Museum & Education Center, Aldrich House, Plymouth Cheese Factory, and 1924 Summer White House office. Sleigh rides, old-time music, craft demonstrations, chocolate making & sampling, lunch at the Wilder House Restaurant, special cancellation at the historic Plymouth post office, and children's holiday activities. 10 am – 4 pm. President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site, 3780 Route 100A. (802) 672-3773. william.jenney@vermont.gov. historicsites.vermont.gov.

POULTNEY. Santa Story Time at the Poultney Public Library at 6 pm. Santa arrives atop a Fire Dept. truck at 6:30 pm. Children march down Main St. to the Poultney Town Office for free cookies and cocoa and a chance to meet Santa Claus himself. At 7pm Santa lights the Memory Lights on the town tree. Free. (802) 287-5556.

PROCTORSVILLE. The Innulgence Tour. Ten Vermont inns, decorates for the season, open their doors for guests to enjoy some inn-dulgent treats. Self-guided tour can be completed in one or two days. Tickets: \$20. Complimentary goodies at each inn. 12 noon – 5 pm. Golden Stage Inn Bed and Breakfast, 399 Depot St. (802) 226-7744. Facebook and Instagram: @InnulgenceTour. *Through December 2.*

RANDOLPH. Concert. Country singer Lorrie Morgan in a special tribute to firefighters. Tickets: \$75 VIP, \$60, \$50, \$40. 7:30 pm. Main Hall, Chandler Center for the Arts, 71-73 Main St. (802) 728-6464. chandler-arts.org.

RIPTON. Concert: Amy Rigby. \$10 general admission or \$15 generous admission/\$3 kids under 12. Doors open at 7 pm. 7:30 pm open mic followed by featured performers. The Ripton Community Coffee House, Rt. 125. (802) 349-3364. rcchfolks@gmail.com. www.rcch.org.

RUPERT. Wreath-Making Workshop. We furnish the materials and tools, you provide the merriment. Reservations requested. Fee: \$25 per wreath. 10 am – 12 noon or 1-3 pm. Merck Forest & Farmland Center, 3270 Rt. 315. Located between Rupert and Dorset, at the top of the very large hill. (802) 394-7836. merckforest.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. 10 am – 2 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 342-4727. info@vtfarmersmarket.org. www.vtfarmersmarket.org. *Saturdays through early May.*

RUTLAND. Festival of Trees. Auction items include vacation getaways, sport ticket packages, gift certificates, one-of-a-kind experiences, home furnishings and more. Hundreds of silent-auction items. Delicious hors d'oeuvres, towering dessert table. Tickets: \$10. Cash bar open at 5:30 pm. Live auction at 6:45 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountvt.org.

RUTLAND. The Rutland County Farmer's Market Christmas Craft Fair. Reasonable-priced Christmas wreaths and decor; crafts in fiber, fabric, wood and glass; jewelry; baked goods and specialty foods with the flavor of Vermont; prepared foods, apples, cider and veggies. Free admission. 9 am – 2 pm. At the Athletic Center at College of St. Joseph, 71 Clement Rd. (802) 773-4813. *Also December 2.*

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through May 4th

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For Your Holiday Table.

Order Your Vermont Holiday Turkey!

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— Holiday Craft Fairs —
Christmas Holiday Show • December 8
from 9 am to 4 pm
Holiday Inn, Rt. 7 South, Rutland, VT



The First Snow in Vermont



There's nothing anywhere I go
That beats a batch of country snow,
The sort for which you don't prepare,
But when you wake you feel its there;
There's lots more light inside the room,
That noise is grandpa with his broom;
A-towards the barn your eye you cast
And say, "Well, wife, it's here at last;
The way the hitching post sticks through
It's sifted down a foot or two"—
There's nothing like it, high or low,
A fall of good domestic snow.



You hunt your frock and belt your form
And bring the headstalls in to warm;
A crop of snow is jest the thing
Until the wind begins to sing;
The dog jumps in and makes a track
Around the little barn and back;
The stock enjoy it, every head,
The colt wakes up and kicks the shed;
The hens come out, the flirty things,
And powder up their bills and wings,



Jim Blood goes by with face aglow,
Hurrah! for good, old-fashioned snow.



The chores done up—it's middling still—
You guess you'll slip a grist to mill,
And drive around and see Sim Dorr
And get that buck you bargained for,
And find Mel Meiggs, he's pretty good
At helping haul the winter wood,
And fetch the mail and 'range with Rice
To blacksmith up for snow and ice;
It's some expense, but what of that!
A hoss can't haul that's laying flat;
The snow is here and wise men know
That there's a business side top snow.



Tomorrow, if the stage gets through,
You'll see the wood teams starting, too;
You'll see the boys with dovetailed heads
Discussing various sorts of sleds,
And talking 'bout the outs and ins
Of wooden versus iron pins;
Besides, 'twill take 'em several days
To settle on the neatest sleighs;
But life's a joy, though chillblains bite,
The world is loveliest when it's white;
There's nothing from LaMotte to Stowe
That beats good, old, domestic snow.



—DANIEL L. CADY
West Windsor, VT 1861-1934

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RUTLAND COUNTY
HUMANE SOCIETY



Hours: Wed-Sat 12-5, closed Sun thru Tues.

765 Stevens Road, Pittsford, VT
(802) 483-6700 • www.rchsvt.org

Vermont Country Calendar

SHELburne. Deck the Halls. Festive trees, art activities, sounds of the season with area musicians, gifts at our Museum Store. Cost: adults \$10, children \$5, under 5 free. 10 am – 4 pm. Shelburne Museum, Route 7. (802) 985-3346. info@shelburnemuseum.org. shelburnemuseum.org.

ST. ALBANS. Festival of Trees. 8 am, Breakfast with Santa at St. Mary's Parish Hall. 9 am – 12 noon, Journey to the North Pole, starting at City Hall. 9 am – 3 pm, Fifth Annual Arts and Crafts Show at St. Paul's United Methodist Church. 9 am – 5 pm, Tree Showcase & Live Entertainment at City Hall. 7:30 pm, Concert by the Vermont Choral Union at Historical Museum. (802) 309-4487. stafestivaloftrees@yahoo.com. vtfestivaloftrees.com.

STOWE. A Traditional Christmas in Stowe. Tree lightings, lantern parade, wagon rides, Santa and reindeer visits, carolers. Candy cane pulling, wreath making, gingerbread and cookie decorating. Performances, ice skating and more. 7 am – 8 pm. (802) 585-5131. Also December 2.

WATERBURY. 9th Annual River of Light Parade. Bring your lanterns and join the parade or line the parade route for an enchanting evening of music, light, and community spirit. Free. 5 pm. Visit website for parking areas around town. Departs from the Thatcher Brook Primary School on Stowe St. mmonley@wvsu.org. www.ariveroflightinwaterbury.org.

WESTON. Christmas in Weston. Experience an Old-Fashioned Vermont Christmas. Visit shops, galleries and restaurants. Museum tours, horse drawn wagon rides, caroling, petting zoo, Santa, crafts and activities for the whole family. 11 am – 4 pm. In the village. (802) 824-0034. weston-vermont.com.

WEST RUTLAND. St. Bridget's Christmas Bazaar. Vendor tables with varied homemade crafts, photography, silver and other jewelry, jams and jellies, maple products, felt hats, and decorations, white elephant, bake sale, and eleven large baskets and three trees for raffle. 9 am – 2 pm. The Parish of St. Bridget, Parish Hall, 28 Church St. Please call Peg at (802) 438-5771 for information.

WESTMINSTER. The Pinnacle. Loop trail to a ridge top and eventual summit of the Pinnacle with lean-to and beautiful views. The peak is 1,683 feet high, but the elevation gain for this hike is 643 feet. Moderate, 3.9 miles. Newcomers and non-members welcome. Free. Sponsored by the Green Mountain Club. 9 am. Contact leaders for meeting location and details: Larry Walter & Vivian Bebee, (802) 775-3855. greenmountainclub.org.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Experience the traditions of a 19th century Vermont Christmas. Visit the authentically decorated farmhouse and the dairy farm for interactive programs; farm life exhibits, holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Adults 16-61 \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, student 16 and up \$9, children 5-15 \$8, children 3-4 \$4. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Also December 2, 15-16, 22- January 1.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2

BRATTLEBORO. Fifth Annual Brattleboro-West Arts Fine Art and Craft Sale. Original works: paintings, pastels, photography, botanical etchings, pottery, textiles, woodworking, jewelry, glass. 11 am – 5 pm. 118 Elliot St. brattleboro-west-arts.com.

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. Open Fri., Sat. & Sun., December 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23.

ENFIELD, NH. Festival of Trees. A display of more than 50 decorated holiday tabletop trees designed and donated by local artists, businesses and individuals. Vote for your favorite trees with raffle tickets to win or donate to local Meals-on-Wheels. Free. 10 am – 5 pm. Enfield Shaker Museum, 447 Rt. 4A. (603) 632-4346. events@shakermuseum.org. shakermuseum.org. Through December 5.

ESSEX JUNCTION. 26th Annual Vermont International Festival. Crafts, ethnic goods, food, international music, dance and stories. Exhibits and demonstrations by cultural and ethnic organizations. Tickets: adults \$7, ages 6-12 or senior (65+) \$5, family (2 adults and their children) \$20, under 6 free. 10 am – 4 pm. Champlain Valley Exposition, 105 Pearl St. (802) 863-6713.

JERICHO. Concert: The Zeichner Trio, traditional Irish & Appalachian music. Lively fiddle tunes, mournful ballads, lyrical bagpipes and timeless banjo. Free. 2 pm. Deborah Rawson Memorial Library, 8 River Rd. (802) 899-4962. zeichnertriomusic.wixsite.com.

JOHNSON. Early Winter Hike on the Laraway Loop. Incorporates the Davis Neighborhood Trail, the Long Trail and an abandoned gravel road. Difficult hike, 8 miles, 1600' elevation gain. Newcomers and non-members welcome. Free. Sponsored by the Green Mountain Club. Contact leader for meeting location and details: Mary Lou Recor, mlrecor@myfairpoint.net. greenmountainclub.org.

MIDDLEBURY. Sheldon Museum's annual Holiday Open House. Enjoy the elaborate model train layout, carols played on the Sheldon's 1831 piano, bell ringing by the Weybridge Parish Bells, and a Miniature Christmas Tree Raffle featuring 20 creative trees decorated by local artists including. On view are two holiday exhibits: Ho Ho Historical Holidays to You, featuring classic Christmas images, antiques postcards, seasonal cards, written holiday memories, and toys from the Sheldon's collections and Over-the-Top Holiday, a glittering holiday display of numerous lighted trees, old sleds, traditional Santas, paper chains and games. Admission by donation. 12-4 pm. Henry Sheldon Museum, One Park St. (802) 388-2117. www.HenrySheldonMuseum.org.

PEACHAM. Concert: North Country Chorus perform *Laud to the Nativity* by Respighi and *Lux Aeterna* by Morten Lauridsen. Accompaniment by organ, piano and woodwinds. Tickets: adults \$15 (\$18 at the door), students \$5. 3 pm. Peacham Congregational Church. (802) 748-2600. northcountrychorus.org.

PROCTORSVILLE. The InnDulgence Tour. Ten Vermont inns, decorates for the season, open their doors for guests to enjoy some inn-dulgent treats. Self-guided tour can be completed in one or two days. Tickets: \$20. Complimentary goodies at each inn. 12 noon – 5 pm. Golden Stage Inn Bed and Breakfast, 399 Depot St. (802) 226-7744. Facebook and Instagram: @InndulgenceTour.

RUTLAND. Concert: Handel's *Messiah*. Part one and the Hallelujah Chorus. *Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland* by Bach. Directed by Alastair Stout. Featuring Rutland Area Chorus and Orchestra. Freewill offering. 3:30 and 7 pm. Grace Congregational UCC, 8 Court St. (802) 775-4301. www.gracechurchvt.org.

RUTLAND. The Rutland County Farmer's Market Christmas Craft Fair. Reasonable-priced Christmas wreaths and decor; crafts in fiber, fabric, wood and glass; jewelry; baked goods and specialty foods with the flavor of Vermont; prepared foods, apples, cider and veggies. Free admission. 9 am – 2 pm. At the Athletic Center at College of St. Joseph, 71 Clement Rd. (802) 773-4813.

STOWE. A Traditional Christmas in Stowe. Tree lightings, lantern parade, wagon rides, Santa and reindeer visits, carolers. Candy cane pulling, wreath making, gingerbread and cookie decorating. Performances, ice skating and more. 7 am – 8 pm. (802) 585-5131.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Experience the traditions of a 19th century Vermont Christmas. Visit the authentically decorated farmhouse and the dairy farm for interactive programs; farm life exhibits, holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Adults 16-61 \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, student 16 and up \$9, children 5-15 \$8, children 3-4 \$4. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Also December 15-16, 22- January 1.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4

MIDDLEBURY. 69th Annual Installment Ski and Snowboard Film, Face of Winter. Tickets: \$20. 7:30 pm, doors open 6:30. Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. townhalltheater.org. Also December 5.

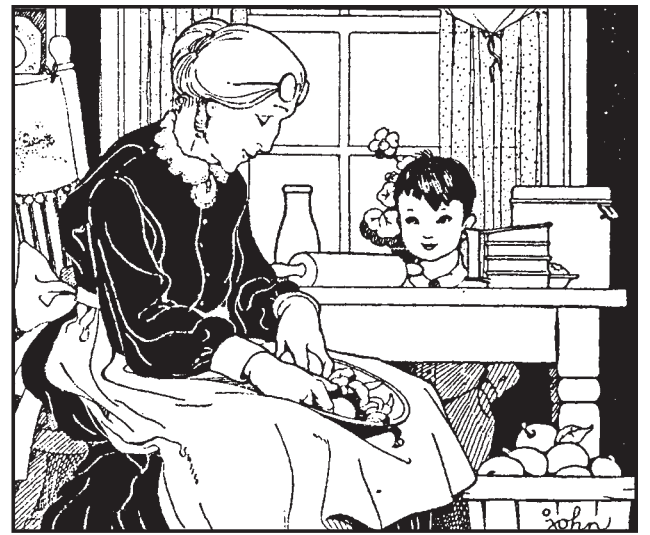
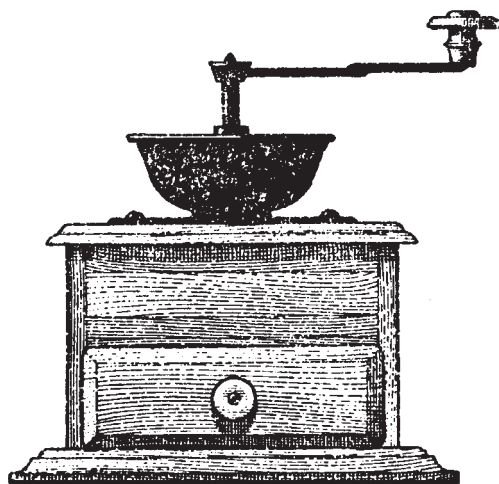
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6

HANOVER, NH. Performance: Cirque Mechanics' 42 Ft. Old-time circus with a classic 42-foot ring, a galloping metal horse and a rotating tent frame serving strongmen, tumblers and aerialists. Tickets: \$18/\$28/\$40, 18 and under \$13/\$18. 7 pm. Moore Theater, Hopkins Center. (603) 646-2422. hop.dartmouth.edu. Through December 8.

RANDOLPH. Chandler Daytime Performance: *The Gift of the Magi*. Viva la Musica Opera Company's presentation of O'Henry's classic holiday tale. Tickets: \$8. 10 am. Main Hall, Chandler Center for the Arts, 71-73 Main St. (802) 728-6464. chandler-arts.org.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7

BENNINGTON. Festival Gala. Groove to the tunes of the 60s and 70s plus seasonal favorites. Delicious bites of the 60s with a modern twist. Cash bar. Silent auction. 7-10 pm. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. benningtonmuseum.org.



Vermont Cider & Apples A Treat for All Seasons

Fresh cider, apple pies and fresh apples that store well are a good reason to visit an orchard farm store during the winter.

Some orchards press fresh apple cider long after their trees are bare and the orchards are knee-deep in snow.

The Apple Barn and Country Bake Shop. Rt. 7 south, Bennington, VT. (802) 447-7780. Fresh apples, pears, Vermont products, maple syrup, jams. Full country bake shop with pies, pastries, and homemade bread. Cider mill. Open 7 days a week 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. May through November 28.

Cold Hollow Cider Mill. 3600 Waterbury-Stowe Rd., Waterbury Center, VT. (800) 327-7537. www.coldhollow.com. Apples, cider, hard cider, baked goods, cider jelly, applesauces, apple butters, Vermont foods, crafts, and other products. Apple Core Luncheonette and Brew. Open daily 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., except Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Dutton's Farm Stand, Rt. 11/30, 2083 Depot St., Manchester, VT, (802) 362-3083. 2nd location at 407 Rt. 30 in Newfane, VT, (802) 365-4168. And third location at 308 Marlboro Rd., West Brattleboro, VT, (802) 254-0254. Over 30 varieties of apples! Fresh-pressed cider, fall produce, jams, cheeses. Pies, cookies and baked goods. Our own maple syrup, fudge, and creemees. Holiday decor, Christmas wreaths and trees. Open year round, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, except Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Green Mountain Orchards. 130 West Hill Rd., Putney, VT. (802) 387-5851. www.greenmountainorchards.com. Apples year round, our own cider, baked goods from our own bakery including apple and blueberry pies, jams and butters, and Vermont products. Pick-your-own apples, blueberries and more in season. Open seven days a week, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Mendon Mountain Orchard. 1894 US Rt. 4, Mendon, VT. (802) 775-5477. www.mendonorchards.com. Apples and cider. Our own baked goods including many varieties of pies, turnovers, and cheesecake and carrot cake. Pick-your-own apples in season. Pasture-raised meats. Open daily 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.



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Vermont Country Calendar

(Friday, December 7, continued)

BRATTLEBORO. 20th Anniversary Cotton Mill Open Studio & Holiday Sale. Holiday shopping, live performances from the Vermont Jazz Center, dance, circus, puppetry, and local musicians. Two café areas, locally-produced food items. 4-8 pm. The Cotton Mill, 74 Cotton Mill Hill. (802) 380-7766. info@thecottonmill.org. thecottonmill.org. Through December 9.

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. Open Fri., Sat. & Sun., December 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23.

BURLINGTON. Lane Series Concert: A Celtic Christmas. Còig, traditional band. Tickets: adults \$40, students \$10. 7:30 pm. UVM Recital Hall, 392 South Prospect St. (802) 656-3131. uvm.edu/laneseries.

GREENSBORO. Ballet: *The Nutcracker*. Ballet Wolcott's Youth Company and students, joined by community members. 7 pm. Highland Center for the Arts, 2875 Hardwick St. (802) 533-2000. highlandartsvt.org. Also December 8.

GUILFORD. 46th Christmas at Christ Church: "Joyeux Noël": A French Christmas. The Guilford Chamber Singers perform traditional French carols and Poulenc's Four Christmas Motets, with instrumental interlude. Don McLean reads "Alone," a new winter story by Mimi Morton. Traditional carols. 7:30 pm. Christ Church, cor. Rt. 5 South and Melendy Hill Rd. (802) 257-2616. GalleryWalk.org. Also December 8.

HANOVER, NH. Montshire Makers @ the Hop. Experiment with the science of balance and play by using unique paper and metal materials to create a work of art that balances. Cost: \$18, includes a ticket to see Cirque Mechanics' 42FT: A Menagerie of Mechanical Marvels at 8 pm. Registration is required. 6:15-7:45 pm. Room 59, Hopkins Center for the Arts. (603) 646-2422. hop.dartmouth.edu. montshire.org.

NORTHFIELD. Second Annual Common Spirit Celebration. Old-fashioned, European-style, outdoor Holiday Farmers' Market. Tree lighting ceremony. Santa's arrival. Cookies with Santa at the American Legion. Art Walk. 4-7 pm, on and around the Town Common. (802) 485-8586. northfieldfarmersmarketvt@gmail.com. northfieldfarmersmarketvt.org.

RUTLAND. Friends of the Rutland Free Library Book Sale. Thousands of organized, gently-used books, CDs, DVDs and puzzles for all ages. Rare and antique books at discounted prices. Most items \$.25 – \$ 3. 10 am – 4 pm. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St. (802) 773-1860. rutlandfree.org. Also December 8.

WILLISTON. Brick Church Music Series Concert: Cantiamo, Bella Voce Women's Chorus of Vermont's chamber ensemble, sings a cappella choral holiday music, sing-alongs, and candlelit Christmas carols. Tickets: \$15, children/seniors \$13. Doors open at 6:30 pm, concert at 7 pm. Old Brick Church, 100 Library Ln. (802) 764-1141. rmcguire@willistonvt.org. willistonvt.org.

WOODSTOCK. 34th Annual Wassail Weekend. Historic decorated homes, breakfast with Santa. Wassail Parade Saturday at 2 pm. Traditional Wassail, carols around the bonfire with over 400 luminarias. 5-9 pm. Woodstock Village Green, 1 The Green. (802) 457-3555. (888) 496-6378. woodstockvt.com. Through December 9.

WOODSTOCK. Wassail Weekend at Billings Farm. Tour the festively decorated 1890 Farm House and farm barns. Adults 16-61 \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, student 16 and up \$9, children 5-15 \$8, children 3-4 \$4. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Also December 8 & 9.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8

ARLINGTON. The Shires' Holiday Inn Tour. Sixteen hotels, inns and B&Bs open their doors to visitors, to enjoy the festive holiday atmosphere unique to each one. Tickets: \$15, couple \$25. Proceeds to Manchester Community Food Cupboard and Arlington Food Shelf. 12 noon – 4 pm. (802) 375-6532. Stay@arlingtoninn.com.

BARRE. Bluegrass Concert: The Gibson Brothers: A North Country Christmas. 7 pm. Barre Opera House. City Hall, 6 N. Main St. (802) 476-8188. barreoperahouse.org.

BELMONT. Festival of Lights Silent Auction, presented by The Mount Holly Community Historical Museum. Hors d'oeuvres, wine and other refreshments. Silent auction of wreaths, gift baskets and donated items. Wine and cheese basket raffles, door prizes. 6-8 pm. The Odd Fellows Hall, Lake Rd. (802) 259-3722.

BRATTLEBORO. 20th Anniversary Cotton Mill Open Studio & Holiday Sale. Holiday shopping, live performances from the Vermont Jazz Center, dance, circus, puppetry, and local musicians. Two café areas, locally-produced food items. 10 am – 5 pm. The Cotton Mill, 74 Cotton Mill Hill. (802) 380-7766. thecottonmill.org. Also December 9.

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. Open Fri., Sat. & Sun., December 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23.

BURLINGTON. Concert: David Mallett. Fundraiser for Protect Our Wildlife. 7:30 pm. Main Street Landing Performing Arts Center, 60 Lake St. (802) 249-8262.

BURLINGTON. Hemp Holiday Weekend. Hemp/CBD farmer's market. 20+ vendors selling Vermont-made CBD and hemp products. Cultivation demo, cannabis-themed storytelling booth, gift-wrapping station. 12-4 pm. Contois Auditorium. headyvermont.com.

FAIR HAVEN. Marble Mansion Tour. Guided tours of The Marble Mansion, decorated for Christmas. Refreshments served. Mugs, shirts, and books available for purchase. The two newest books: Memories of Fair Haven and The Saga of Nifty Snifty. Admission by donation. 12 noon – 8 pm. Fair Haven Historical Society, 12 West Park Place. (802) 265-3010 ext. 8. lorfrabr@icloud.com.

GREENSBORO. Ballet: *The Nutcracker*. Ballet Wolcott's Youth Company and students, joined by community members. 2 pm. Highland Center for the Arts, 2875 Hardwick St. (802) 533-2000. highlandartsvt.org.

GUILFORD. 46th Christmas at Christ Church: "Joyeux Noël": A French Christmas. The Guilford Chamber Singers perform traditional French carols and Poulenc's Four Christmas Motets, with instrumental interlude. Don McLean reads "Alone," a new winter story by Mimi Morton. Traditional carols. Door donations go to FOMAG and the Christ Church Preservation Fund. 4 pm. Christ Church, cor. Rt. 5 South and Melendy Hill Rd. (802) 257-2616. GalleryWalk.org.

MANCHESTER. Canine Christmas Doggie Slumber Party. Pet portraits beside the Christmas tree, caroling beside the fire. Doggie PJ party, and organic dog treats. Doggie sing-along and pet portraits on Saturday, 2-4 pm, \$25 for 1 adult and dog, additional people \$15 per person. Dogs under 25 pounds only. PJ party for guests only 8-9 pm. The Wilburton Inn, 257 Wilburton Dr. (802) 362-2500. Also December 9.

MONTPELIER. Bethany Christmas Sale. Decorations, ornaments, wrappings, trimmings, tableware, lights, and lots more. 9 am – 4 pm. Bethany Church, 115 Main St. (802) 223-2424.

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580 Route 140W, Tinmouth, VT
vermontwreath.com • (802) 446-3333 • vtwreaths@vermontel.net

Vermont Country Calendar



MONTPELIER. Vermont Fiddle Orchestra Concert. 2 pm. Unitarian Church. (802) 229-4191. www.vermontfiddleorchestra.org.

NORWICH. Visit the Montshire's Science Discovery Lab to explore the scientific principles of balance. Learn all about how our own bodies balance. Create whimsical balancing toys. Free with museum admission. 3:30-4:45 pm. Montshire Museum of Science. montshire.org.

RANDOLPH. Concert: Rani Arbo & Daisy Mayhem. Seasonal fare for the holidays and solstice. Tickets: \$28. 7:30 pm. Live & Upstairs, Chandler Center for the Arts, 71-73 Main St. (802) 728-6464. chandler-arts.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. 10 am - 2 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 342-4727. vtfarmersmarket.org. Saturdays through early May.

RUTLAND. Friends of the Rutland Free Library Book Sale. Thousands of organized, gently-used books, CDs, DVDs and puzzles for all ages. Rare and antique books at discounted prices. Most items \$.25 - \$3. 10 am - 2 pm. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St. (802) 773-1860. rutlandfree.org.

SO. BURLINGTON. Winter Centerpiece Workshop. Make a fresh arrangement for the holiday table with aromatic greens and cuttings. Bring a medium size container that holds water and a pair of pruners. Feel free to bring cuttings from your own garden. Class limit: 12. Pre-registration with payment required. Fee: \$35, includes materials cost. 9-11 am. UVM Horticulture Center, 65 Green Mountain Dr. info@friendsofthehortfarm.org. fhfv.org.

ST. ALBANS. Holiday Concert: Carol Ann Jones Quartet. Sing along to holiday classics and contemporary favorites—and be ready for a surprise (or a snowball fight). Light refreshments available. Tickets: \$15. Proceeds benefit the Saint Albans Museum. 7 pm; doors open 6:30 pm. Saint Albans Museum, 9 Church St. (802) 527-7933. museum@stamuseum.org. stamuseum.org.

ST. JOHNSBURY. Annual Victorian Holiday Open House. Make crafts. Sweet treats. Free. Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium. 1:30-4 pm. (802) 748-7121. discoverstjohnsbury.com.

STOWE. Family Day: An afternoon full of sweet treats and seasonal art activities. Create holiday decorations, play dreidel games and decorate gingerbread houses with NECI students. Free. 1-4 pm. Helen Day Art Center, 90 Pond St. (802) 253-8358. programs@helenday.com. www.helenday.com.

WOODSTOCK. Concert: Nova Scotia's powerhouse Còig presents an evening of fiery Celtic holiday tunes from their 2015 album Carols. 8 pm. 31 The Green. (802) 457-3981.

WOODSTOCK. 17th Annual Holiday House Tour. Woodstock's most charming houses deck their halls and open their doors. Docents at each location provide historical information and answer questions. Reception at The Prince and The Pauper Restaurant. 9:30 am - 2 pm. 31 The Green. (802) 457-3981.

WOODSTOCK. 34th Annual Wassail Weekend. Historic decorated homes, breakfast with Santa. Wassail Parade Saturday at 2 pm. Traditional Wassail, carols around the bonfire with over 400 luminarias. 5-9 pm. Woodstock Village Green, 1 The Green. (802) 457-3555. (888) 496-6378. woodstockvt.com. Also December 9.

WOODSTOCK. 35th Annual Woodstock Messiah Sing. World-class ensemble and four featured soloists perform the Christmas portions of Handel's Messiah. The audience joins in for the choruses, so bring your libretto. 4-6 pm. 31 The Green. (802) 457-3981.

WOODSTOCK. Wassail Weekend at Billings Farm. Tour the festively decorated 1890 Farm House and farm barns. Make an historic ornament. Adults 16-61 \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, student 16 and up \$9, children 5-15 \$8, children 3-4 \$4. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Also December 9.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9

BURLINGTON. Hemp Holiday Weekend. 8 am CBD brunch at Skinny Pancake: hemp-themed menu with products from Vermont growers and product-makers. 2 pm and 5 pm screenings of cannabis activist Rick Trojan's powerful documentary "Hemp Road Trip" at The Film House at Main Street Landing. Tickets: \$10. (802) 391-4251. info@headyvermont.com. headyvermont.com.

BRATTLEBORO. 20th Anniversary Cotton Mill Open Studio & Holiday Sale. Holiday shopping, live performances from the Vermont Jazz Center, dance, circus, puppetry, and local musicians. Two café areas, locally-produced food items. 11 am - 4 pm. The Cotton Mill, 74 Cotton Mill Hill. (802) 380-7766. info@thecottonmill.org. thecottonmill.org.

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. Open Fri., Sat. & Sun., December 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23.

NORWICH. English Country Dance. Dances taught by David Millstone. Live period music by Thal Aylward (violin and viola) and Carol Compton (piano and recorders). All dances taught beforehand and prompted to live music. Bring soft-soled shoes to change into at the hall, no high heels. Potluck snacks at the break - bring something to share. Hosted by Muskeg Music. Admission: \$10. 1-4 pm. Tracy Hall, 300 Main St. (603) 448-2950. davidmillstone7@gmail.com.

RANDOLPH. Concert: The Borromeo String Quartet. One of today's most critically acclaimed classical ensembles performs music by Haydn, Beethoven, and Ligeti. Tickets: \$45 day of show, student \$15. 7:30 pm. Main Hall, Chandler Center for the Arts, 71-73 Main St. (802) 728-6464. chandler-arts.org.

WINDSOR. Holiday Open House. Light refreshments, tours of the Inn and a special gift. 2-4 pm. Adult storytelling with Windsor Public Library at 4 pm. Windsor Mansion Inn, 153 Pembroke Rd. (802) 674-4112.

WOODSTOCK. 34th Annual Wassail Weekend. Historic decorated homes, breakfast with Santa. Traditional Wassail, carols around the bonfire with over 400 luminarias. 5-9 pm. Woodstock Village Green, 1 The Green. (802) 457-3555. (888) 496-6378. www.woodstockvt.com.



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Vermont Country Calendar

(Sunday, December 9, continued)

WOODSTOCK. Wassail Weekend at Billings Farm. Tour the festively decorated 1890 Farm House and farm barns. Make an historic ornament. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides, weather permitting. Adults 16-61 \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, student 16 and up \$9, children 5-15 \$8, children 3-4 \$4. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13

HANOVER, NH. 44th Annual Christmas Revels: A Venetian Celebration of the Winter Solstice. Time-travel to Renaissance Venice and celebrate the season with music, dance and laughter. Tickets: \$25-\$46, 18 & under \$8. 6 pm. Spaulding Auditorium, Hopkins Center for the Arts, 44 E Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.dartmouth.edu. revelsnorth.org. *Through December 16.*

QUECHEE. Eyeing the Stars—Geminid Meteor Shower Viewing. View our night sky with a map of the constellations. Hear stories from Greek Mythology. Afterwards, cocoa and a chance glimpse a shooting star. Tickets: adults \$8, youth \$5, reservations required. 7-8:30 pm. VINS Nature Center, 149 Natures Way. (802) 359-5000. sstrew@vinsweb.org. vinsweb.org.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14

BARNARD. Eighth Annual Winter Carols. BarnArts Youth and BarnArts Chorale. 7 pm. First Universalist Church. info@barnarts.org. barnarts.org.

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 15, 16, 21, 22, 23.*

HANOVER, NH. 44th Annual Christmas Revels: A Venetian Celebration of the Winter Solstice. Time-travel to Renaissance Venice and celebrate the season with music, dance and laughter. Tickets: \$25-\$46, 18 & under \$8. 7 pm. Spaulding Auditorium, Hopkins Center for the Arts, 44 E Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.dartmouth.edu. revelsnorth.org. *Through December 16.*

MIDDLEBURY. Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival Screening: Can You Ever Forgive Me?, directed by Marielle Heller (narrative drama). Tickets: \$13, series pass for all seven films \$75. 7 pm. Town Hall Theater. (802) 382-9222. townhalltheater.org. middfilmfest.org.

RUTLAND. “The Holidays Are Alive.” Concert with Elisabeth von Trapp, songwriter and granddaughter of Maria Von Trapp, followed by sit-down, 3-course dinner. Tickets: concert \$25, students/seniors \$20; concert and dinner \$60, students/seniors \$50, advance purchase only. 7 pm. Trinity Episcopal Church, 85 West St. office@trinitychurchrutland.org. trinitychurchrutland.org.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15

BELLOWS FALLS. The Fire and the Ecstasy: The Music of Hildegard of Bingen, performed by Ruth Cunningham and Melinda Gardiner. 7:30 pm. Immanuel Episcopal Church, 20 Church St. Tickets and information: (802) 460-0110. stonechurcharts.org.

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 16, 21, 22, 23.*

BURLINGTON. Holiday Ice Skating Show—*The Gift*. Local skaters from Leddy Park Arena group skating lessons and the Champlain Valley Skating Club will skate to music of the season. Admission by voluntary donation. 2-3:30 pm. Leddy Park Arena, 126 Leddy Park Rd. (802) 865-7558. sjennings@burlingtonvt.gov. enjoyburlington.com.

HANOVER, NH. 44th Annual Christmas Revels: A Venetian Celebration of the Winter Solstice. Time-travel to Renaissance Venice and celebrate the season with music, dance and laughter. Tickets: \$25-\$46, 18 & under \$8. 1 pm and 5 pm. Spaulding Auditorium, Hopkins Center, 44 E Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.dartmouth.edu. revelsnorth.org. *Also December 16.*

LUDLOW. Vertical Ski Challenge. Free, fun race on Okemo’s Bull Run, open to all ages and abilities. Race registration starts at 7:30 am. Vertical Challenge Race starts at 11 am and concludes at 1 pm. Okemo Mountain Resort, 77 Okemo Ridge Rd. (802) 228-1600. skiverticalchallenge.com.

LUDLOW. Annual December Demo. Test-drive the latest ski and snowboard equipment for free. Registration from 8 am – 1 pm. Credit card required and snowboarders must provide their own bindings. Jackson Gore Inn at Okemo, 111 Jackson Gore Rd. (802) 228-1600.

MONTPELIER. Touch of Vermont Holiday Gift Market. Buy your holiday gifts from Vermont craftspeople while helping to raise money with a raffle benefiting Good Beginnings of Central Vermont. 9 am – 4 pm. Montpelier City Hall, 39 Main St. (802) 310-1725.

RANDOLPH. Concert: Donna the Buffalo. Wildly eclectic cult band weaves together a soulful mix of Cajun, zydeco, rock, folk, reggae, and country to stir up its own, singular Americana musical stew. Tickets: \$38, \$33, \$28. 7:30 pm. Main Hall, Chandler Center for the Arts, 71-73 Main St. (802) 728-6464. chandler-arts.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers’ Market. 10 am – 2 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 342-4727. vtfarmersmarket.org. *Saturdays through early May.*

SHOREHAM. Holiday Breakfast. Blueberry pancakes, French toast, sausages, home fries, egg dishes, and beverage. Cost: adults \$8, children under 12 \$4, families \$20. 8:30-10:30 am. Shoreham Congregational Church, 28 School Rd. (802) 897-2687.

STRATTON MOUNTAIN. Demo Fest. Come try the latest gear from Rossignol. 8 am – 2 pm. Stratton Mountain Resort, 5 Village Lodge Rd. (800) 787-2886.

WATERBURY CENTER. Santa Claus Is Coming To Town. Kids eat free at Apple Core Luncheonette with the purchase of an adult entree. Adults enjoy a taste of one of our hard ciders. 11 am – 2 pm. Cold Hollow Cider Mill, 3600 Waterbury-Stowe Rd. (802) 244-8771.

WEST DOVER. Demo Day. Try out this year’s newest skis on snow for free. Head over to the Cape House Demo Center (located behind the Waffle Cabin on Main St.) to sign up, and then you can test out as many pairs as you’d like from the representatives located on the snow in front of the Bluebird Express. 8 am – 1:30 pm. Mount Snow Resort, 39 Mount Snow Rd. (802) 464-4203.

WEST RUTLAND. West Rutland Marsh Monitoring Walk. A monthly bird monitoring walk at this Important Bird Area (IBA). 3.7-mile loop around the marsh (on dirt and paved roads) or go halfway. Kids, new birders and non-members always welcome. Learn from our friendly bird experts and join us for brunch afterwards. Meet at the Marsh Boardwalk on Marble St. at 8 am. For questions e-mail birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org. www.rutlandcountyaudubon.org.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Experience the traditions of a 19th century Vermont Christmas. Visit the authentically decorated farmhouse and the dairy farm for interactive programs; farm life exhibits, holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Adults 16-61 \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, student 16 and up \$9, children 5-15 \$8, children 3-4 \$4. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. *Also December 15-16, 22 thru January 1.*

Way Back Then

It’s Still Merry Christmas!

by Charles Sutton

One of the best Christmas memories of growing up in the “old days” was making the list of what one would like to receive. Of course kids (and grown-ups sometimes, too) still make lists, but the contents were different from then to now. Today the list might include a new cell phone or other electronic wonders. These devices are even better than toys, and more of a necessity of life, like food and shelter. They are more useful, essential and expensive than when I was a boy growing up during World War II.

The Christmas wish list of some 80 decades ago did not include items one was sure to get anyway, posing as Christmas gifts. They included clothing like socks and sweaters, neckties (what child wears those now), handkerchiefs, warm mittens and hats. These usually came from well-meaning relatives, all wrapped in appealing Christmas gift paper. The one happily received exception would be a pair of high-gut boots that had pockets on the side for jackknives.

Outdoor gear was always welcome—like hockey skates, fishing equipment, bicycles (no fancy three or more speeds then), wooden skis with leather straps, baseballs and bats, footballs and basketballs.

My bother Fred, a budding naturalist, would have been pleased with gifts of snakes, lizards, turtles, or even white mice but would be lucky if he got some tropical fish.

Although this was years before computers and associated games, we thrived on monopoly, checkers, Chinese checkers, and even playing cards. Our Christmas list would also include erector sets, trains, tinker toys, Lincoln log sets, junior chemistry sets, marbles, jacks, pick-up sticks, and U.S. commemorative postage stamps.

This being during World War II (1941-45), my brother Fred and I had a large collection of lead soldiers and model war warplanes such as American P-40s and P-51s and Brit-

ish Spitfires. Those soldiers, an early collector’s item, were scarce as all metals were used in the war effort rather than being used for toys.

We were always glad to get money for Christmas, which we were allowed to keep (no matter the amount) and spend as we saw fit. Our grandfather always gave all his grandchildren crisply-minted \$5 or \$10 bills in special see-through envelopes.

Lists or no lists the best gifts were ones that came as a surprise. One Christmas it was a strange device called a Pogo Stick which would allow one to jump up and down in one place because it was spring-loaded. Skilled Pogo Stick users could jump in different directions. Not me.

Another surprise Christmas gift was a toy called a Slinky—a coil of wire that could “walk” down steps. Kids still play with these today.

Our Christmas wish-lists included more than just what we hoped to get. My brother and I would conspire and deliberate on what to get Mother and Father, with help from the other parent to think up a perfect gift. They were the hardest to buy for because there was always the anxiety of whether the gift would say how much we appreciated them. And of course we were in on something to give our grandparents and a token gift, even during the war, for our teachers.

Preparing the Christmas wish list was a lot easier than the required thank-you letters that Mother made sure we did right after Christmas. The letter had to say something nice about each item even if it was something we really didn’t want. There had to be family news but we were allowed to go on at some length about holiday meals, an acceptable way to pad out the letter. Unlike today when thank-you’s are e-mailed, back then we wrote them neatly by hand in pen and ink on nice note paper.

Times may have changed but there is still the mystery and wonder of the dark time of the year—and it’s still Merry Christmas!



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Vermont Country Calendar

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16

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, 22, 23.

HANOVER, NH. 44th Annual Christmas Revels: A Venetian Celebration of the Winter Solstice. Time-travel to Renaissance Venice and celebrate the season with music, dance and laughter. Tickets: \$25-\$46, 18 & under \$8. 1 pm and 5 pm. Spaulding Auditorium, Hopkins Center for the Arts, 44 E Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.dartmouth.edu. revelsnorth.org.

PAWLET. Holiday Tea. Tablecloths and teapots will grace the tables in the program room and the children's room. Guests are encouraged to add their favorite cookies and recipes to the cookie share. Free. 2-4 pm. Pawlet Public Library, 141 School St. (802) 325-3123. pawletpubliclibrary.wordpress.com.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Experience the traditions of a 19th century Vermont Christmas. Visit the authentically decorated farmhouse and the dairy farm for interactive programs; farm life exhibits, holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Adults 16-61 \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, student 16 and up \$9, children 5-15 \$8, children 3-4 \$4. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Also December 22- January 1.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19

BELLOWS FALLS. Concert: Sultans of String, Christmas Caravan. Celebrate the season with an adventurous musical trip around the world. Tickets: \$15, \$20, \$35. Immanuel Episcopal Church, 20 Church St. Tickets and information: (802) 460-0110. stonechurcharts.org.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20

DORSET. Third Thursday Luncheon Lecture: Judy Harwood — Dorset Road Names. Dorset Historical Society, Rt. 30 at Kent Hill Rd. (802) 867-0331. info@dorsetvthistory.org. www.dorsetvthistory.org.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21

BRATTLEBORO. Strolling of the Heifers presents Pop-Up Holiday Gift Shop. Over 40 local artisans in one place. Art, crafts, textiles, specialty food, wellness and more. Friday 1-5 pm, Saturday 12 noon – 4 pm. 157 Main St. strollingoftheheifers.com. Also December 22.

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 22, 23.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22

BARRE. 12th Annual *Green Mountain Nutcracker*, performed by Moving Light Dance Company, all-ages, 60-member cast of professional company dancers and local students. Tickets: \$18-\$28. 7 pm. Barre Opera House, 6 N. Main St. (802) 476-8188. barreoperahouse.org. movinglightdance.com. Also December 23.

BRATTLEBORO. Strolling of the Heifers presents Pop-Up Holiday Gift Shop. Over 40 local artisans in one place. Art, crafts, textiles, specialty food, wellness. 12 noon – 4 pm. 157 Main St. strollingoftheheifers.com.

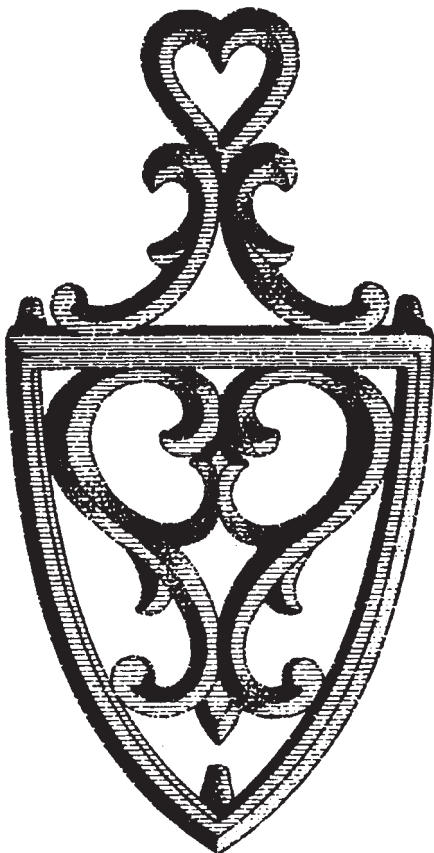
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BURLINGTON. Vermont's Own *Nutcracker*. Presented by Vermont Ballet Theater. Tickets: \$38-\$21.60. 2 & 7 pm. MainStage, Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (888) 974-3698. www.flynncenter.org. Also December 23.

RUPERT. Full Cold Moon Walk. Staff-guided hike, moderate difficulty, will take place weather-permitting. Dress appropriately for the weather with sturdy footwear, headlamps, water and snacks. Reservations requested. Fee: \$5 per person. 6 pm. Merck Forest & Farmland Center, 3270 Rt. 315. Located between Rupert and Dorset, at the top of the very large hill. (802) 394-7836. merckforest.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Local produce, crafts, prepared foods. 10 am – 2 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 342-4727. info@vtfarmersmarket.org. www.vtfarmersmarket.org. Saturdays through early May.

WOODSTOCK. Billings Christmas at the Farm. Experience the traditions of a 19th century Vermont Christmas. Visit the authentically decorated farmhouse and the dairy farm for interactive programs; farm life exhibits, holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Adults 16-61 \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, student 16 and up \$9, children 5-15 \$8, children 3-4 \$4. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Thru January 1.



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MONDAY, DECEMBER 24

WOODSTOCK. Billings Christmas at the Farm. Experience the traditions of a 19th century Vermont Christmas. Visit the authentically decorated farmhouse and the dairy farm for interactive programs; farm life exhibits, holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Adults 16-61 \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, student 16 and up \$9, children 5-15 \$8, children 3-4 \$4. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Through January 1 excluding Christmas Day.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26

WOODSTOCK. Billings Christmas at the Farm. Experience the traditions of a 19th century Vermont Christmas. Visit the authentically decorated farmhouse and the dairy farm for interactive programs; farm life exhibits, holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides, weather permitting. Adults 16-61 \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, student 16 and up \$9, children 5-15 \$8, children 3-4 \$4. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Through January 1.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27

LUDLOW. Okemo Torchlight Parade and Fireworks Display. Torchlight parade of skiers and riders traversing Okemo's Open Slope trail. Snowshoe tours up the mountain at 6 pm, snowshoe rentals \$15, for reservations call (802) 228-1558. Parade at 7:30 pm in the Okemo Clock Tower base area, Okemo Mountain Resort, 77 Okemo Ridge Rd. (802) 228-1600. info@okemo.com. okemo.com.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Experience the traditions of a 19th century Vermont Christmas. Visit the authentically decorated farmhouse and the dairy farm for interactive programs; farm life exhibits, holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Adults 16-61 \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, student 16 and up \$9, children 5-15 \$8, children 3-4 \$4. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Through January 1.



The 2019 Vermont Fish & Wildlife Calendar is Available

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department announces the release of the colorful 2019 Fish & Wildlife Calendar. The calendar is filled with stunning photos of Vermont wildlife, including moose, bald eagle, longnose gar, white-tailed deer, and yellow warbler. It includes photos by many well-known Vermont photographers including Roger Irwin, Jim Block, and Kurt Budliger.

"This year's calendar features the wild places that are crucial for wildlife to thrive, with tips for managing habitat on your property," said Susan Warner, Vermont Fish & Wildlife's director of outreach and education. "Vermont's working landscape and healthy fish and wildlife populations are a testament to the foresight of citizens who care about the state's natural heritage. This fish and wildlife calendar

is a yearlong celebration of Vermont's commitment to conservation."

The calendar includes hunting, fishing and trapping season dates for each month, along with beautiful photography, and makes the perfect gift for any outdoor recreationist. These calendars usually sell out early.

The calendars are available online at www.VermontLifeCatalog.com or at the following Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department offices:

- 1 National Life Dr., Montpelier, VT. (802) 828-1000.
- 374 Emerson Falls Rd., Suite #4, St. Johnsbury, VT. (802) 751-0100.
- 100 Mineral St., Springfield, VT. (802) 289-0603
- 111 West St., Essex Junction, VT. (802) 878-1564

For more information contact vtfishandwildlife.com.

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Vermont Country Calendar

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29

BURLINGTON. Reindeer Up Close. Vermont Reindeer Farm with live reindeer. Admission: adults 18-59 \$14.50, children 3-17 \$11.50, seniors and college students \$12.50, 2 and younger free. Presentations at 11 am - 2:30 pm. ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center/Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, One College St. (877) 324-6386. www.echovermont.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. 10 am - 2 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 342-4727. vtfarmersmarket.org. Saturdays through early May.

WEST RUTLAND. Annual Christmas Bird Count and Potluck. Join one of eight field teams, or if you live within the count circle, count birds at your feeder (contact us to find out if you live within the circle). The count is followed by a potluck supper where we'll tally the day's sightings, Proctor Library, 6 pm. Bring a dish to share (beverages and utensils provided). For more details contact birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org. www.rutlandcountyaudubon.org.

WOODSTOCK. Billings Christmas at the Farm. Experience the traditions of a 19th century Vermont Christmas. Visit the authentically decorated farmhouse and the dairy farm for interactive programs. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides, weather permitting. Adults 16-61 \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, student 16 and up \$9, children 5-15 \$8, children 3-4 \$4. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Through January 1.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Experience the traditions of a 19th century Vermont Christmas. Visit the authentically decorated farmhouse and the dairy farm for interactive programs. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides, weather permitting. Adults 16-61 \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, student 16 and up \$9, children 5-15 \$8, children 3-4 \$4. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Through January 1.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31

LUDLOW. Family New Year's Eve. Early evening ice skating, snow tubing, mountain coaster rides, horse-drawn wagon rides, party-hat decorating, bingo games and trivia tournament. DJ dance party. Party games, balloons, noisemakers and fireworks. Pizza party dinner in the Roundhouse. 5-9 pm. Jackson Gore Inn at Okemo, 111 Jackson Gore Rd. (802) 228-1600. okemo.com.

MONTPELIER. New Year's Eve Celebration. Something for everyone. Many restaurants and bars offering a special dinner, music or just a drink. Purchase tickets online. (802) 223-9604. montpelierlive.org.

ST. ALBANS. Last Night St. Albans. A safe, affordable New Year's Eve alternative. Activities for children and teens: sledding, making snowmen, children's carnival, ice skating and teen dance, countdown to 2019, early evening fireworks in Taylor Park. Later evening activities generally 21+: paint & sip event; beer, chocolate and cheese tasting; comedy performance. Live music and dance at City Hall, 2019 countdown and fireworks at midnight. Most events free; Last Night Button: \$5; family \$20. Beginning at 4:30 pm, at locations throughout the City and Town. (802) 524-2444. fcrecvt.com. lastnightvt.com.

ST. JOHNSBURY. First Night North. Special Supporter Buttons \$26 each. Standard Buttons. 4 pm - midnight. Various locations in St. Johnsbury. 115 Eastern Ave. (802) 748-2600.

ST. JOHNSBURY. First Night St. J. The Sky Blue Boys & Cookie will be alternating sets with Vermont's finest bluegrass band, Bob Amos & Catamount Crossing. North Congregational Church. firstnightstj.com. banjodan.com.

WEST DOVER. Mount Snow Torchlight Parade & Fireworks. Mount Snow Ski & Snowboard School instructors will descend the Canyon ski trail in a beautiful torchlight glow. Huge fireworks display. The best place to watch is between the Clocktower and the Cape House. Free s'mores at the top of the Tubing hill at 3 pm, and then head to the Base Area at 4:45 pm for a bonfire! Mount Snow, 39 Mount Snow Rd. 5:45 pm. (802) 464-4191. mountsnow.com.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Experience the traditions of a 19th century Vermont Christmas. Visit the authentically decorated farmhouse and the dairy farm for interactive programs. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides, weather permitting. Adults 16-61 \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, student 16 and up \$9, children 5-15 \$8, children 3-4 \$4. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Through January 1.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 1

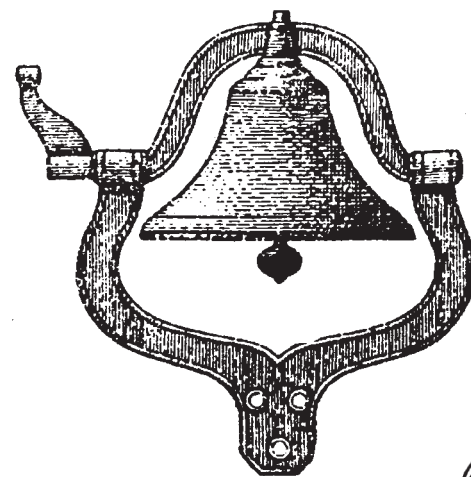
SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Hot apple cider and cookies served. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial.

WOODSTOCK. Billings Christmas at the Farm. Experience the traditions of a 19th century Vermont Christmas. Visit the authentically decorated farmhouse and the dairy farm for interactive programs; farm life exhibits, holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides, weather permitting. Adults 16-61 \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, student 16 and up \$9, children 5-15 \$8, children 3-4 \$4. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES 2018

BAKERSFIELD. Bakersfield Christmas Tree Farm. Free candy canes, life-size dancing and singing bear, snowman and Santa. Sleds available for moving trees and for kids to use when the ground is white. Dog friendly. Cost: pre-cut \$15 and up; choose & cut <11' \$30, >11' \$45. Open daily through December 24th, 8 am - 5 pm. Bakersfield Christmas Tree Farm, 405 Fairfield Rd., just outside Bakersfield on Route 36. 45 minutes northeast of Burlington. (802) 827-3042. gafote@myfairpoint.net. www.bakersfieldtreefarm.com.

BELLOWS FALLS. Labyrinth Walk and Celtic Evening Prayer. All are welcome. Song and chant, verbal and silent prayer, readings, stories or lives of Celtic saints, a brief homily or meditation, and some evenings we will have communion. A social time follows the service. 7 pm at Currier Hall, Immanuel Retreat Center, 12 Church St. (802) 460-0110. www.stonechurcharts.org. First and Third Thursdays.



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December Weekends & Dec. 22 - Jan. 1, 2019

10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

(excludes Christmas Day)



802-457-2355 • billingsfarm.org
69 Old River Road • Woodstock, VT

VT Fish & Wildlife Dept.

Attracting Birds to Your Yard Naturally

Vermonters love to see birds around their home, and putting out bird feeders is a popular way to attract our feathered friends to back yards. Vermont is among the top states in the country for people who report feeding and watching birds near their home.

However, birds aren't the only wildlife attracted by birdseed. Vermont's abundant bear population is increasingly coming into conflict with people as they raid people's bird feeders, often leading the bear to continue to seek food sources in residential areas. As a result, the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department urges Vermonters to hold off on putting bird feeders out until snow is well-established. With plenty of seeds and berries on the

landscape, birds have enough native foods to tide them over until bears are hibernating.

"Nature provides birds with ample natural food options, from flowers to seeds to fruits and insects," says John Buck, Vermont Fish & Wildlife's migratory bird biologist. "Vermonters can plant a variety of native plants that will naturally attract birds from spring through fall. These natural food sources are healthy for birds and provide bird-lovers with a safe alternative to putting out bird feeders."

As Vermonters put their gardens and yards to bed this fall, Buck has several recommendations for fall plantings, as well as seeds to procure for the spring, that will safely encourage birds in backyards:

- Maintain natural diversity in your yard by adding fruiting shrubs, mixed-age trees, tall grasses, and bare patches to welcome several species and fulfill multiple habitat requirements.

- Plant a variety of native plants to provide food sources for birds, such as dogwood, choke cherry, or highbush blueberry. For a list of local native shrubs that attract birds and wildlife go to vtfishandwildlife.com.

- Purchase seeds for spring planting including black-eyed Susan, milkweed, and coneflowers.

- Help birds overcome parasites by providing dust

baths made of equal parts fine sand and wood ash in a bird bath or small planter.

- Provide water year-round.

Encourage birds to backyards with natural gardens of flowers, seeds, and berries instead of store-bought seeds.

More information is available in the online publication, Backyard Wildlife Habitat in Vermont by Steve Parren and illustrated by Libby Walker Davidson. You can get a free copy by going to <http://tinyurl.com/VtBackyardHabitat>

For more information visit www.vtfishandwildlife.com.

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Sat., Dec. 8th • 8 pm

Music by Peter MacFarlane

and Rick Klein

David Millstone calling

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under 16 free.



New Year's Eve Special Dance

Mon., Dec. 31st • 8 pm

Music by Calliope • Nils Fredland Calling

Admission \$12 adults, \$10 students

Beginners & singles welcome. All dances taught. Please bring soft-soled shoes. Yummy potluck snacks at the break.

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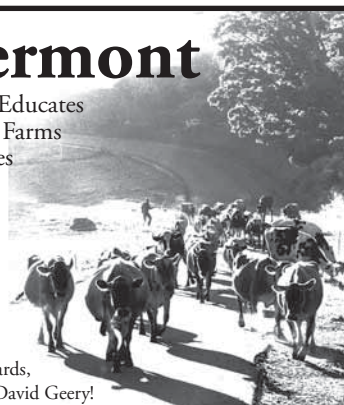
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Check out our local artist notecards, including this photo from John David Geery!



Vermont Country Calendar

BRATTLEBORO. The Cotton Mill. Housed in a 3-story, 145,000 square foot renovated mill building dating back to 1910, The Cotton Mill is home to over 60 small businesses and artists' studios. Painters, dancers, jewelry makers, circus performers, jam and granola makers, filmmakers, bodyworkers, woodworkers, jazz musicians, toymakers and many others form a vibrant & bustling community just minutes from downtown. 74 Cotton Mill Hill. info@thecottonmill.org. www.thecottonmill.org.

BRATTLEBORO. Brattleboro Winter Farmers' Market 13th season. Fresh produce, syrup, local meats, eggs cheese and other farm products. Yummy treats, delicious pies, pickles and preserves, and beautiful handmade gifts. Saturdays 10 am – 2 pm. Church Building, 80 Flat St. (802) 869-2141. farmersmarket@postoilolutions.org. Saturdays through March 10.

BURLINGTON. Free Miniature Horse Rides. Free rides in holiday carriages pulled by miniature horses from the Green Mountain Miniature Horse and Donkey Association. 11 am – 3 pm. Church Street Marketplace, 2 Church St. (802) 863-1648. churchstmarketplace.com. Every Saturday, December 1-29.

CASTLETON. Coffee Hour. Enjoy homemade goodies, hot brew and good company. Free. 9-11 am. Castleton Community Center, 2108 Main St. (802) 468-3093. Continues on Fridays.

CHESTER. Monthly Square Dance and Rounds. Refreshments on sale in the kitchen. 50/50 tickets on sale; drawing held for free admittance for the next month's dance. \$5 donation at the door. 7-11 pm. Breakfast 8-9:30 am for \$7. Gassetts Grange Hall, junction of Rt. 10 & 103N. (802) 875-2637. Monthly on first Saturdays.

DUMMERSTON. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Christmas Tree Sales. Ready-cut or cut-your-own. Fresh Balsam wreaths, centerpieces, and greenery! Country Store open with fresh certified organic produce. Free hot cider, hot chocolate & pretzels. Open Saturdays and Sundays 10 am – 4 pm, Mondays through Fridays 12-4 pm, through December 25. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 209 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. Through December 25.

ESSEX JUNCTION. Winter Lights in the Park. Bright lights and winter tunes on display. Hidden ornaments in the trees. Pick up a scavenger hunt list on your way into the park. Free. 5-8 pm. Maple Street Park, 75 Maple St. (802) 878-1375. recreation@ejrp.org. ejrp.org. December 1-31.

HANOVER, NH. Public Astronomical Observing. Dartmouth Department of Physics and Astronomy offers free viewing through its astronomical telescopes, under good weather conditions. If weather is questionable, call to confirm. Free. 8-10 pm. Shattuck Observatory, 15 Observatory Rd. (603) 646-9100 x 2. Tressena.A.Manning@dartmouth.edu. Friday nights in good weather.

MIDDLEBURY. Werner's Christmas Tree Farm. Several different types of trees, 3'-12'. Cut your own or pre-cut trees available. Hot cocoa and cookies, ponies in the barn to pet. Large scale indoor/outdoor train. Two miles from the center of Middlebury; look for our farm sign. 429 Painter Rd. (802) 388-7781. wernertreefarm.com.

MILTON. Sharp Christmas Tree Farm. Over 10,000 choose-and-cut trees. Sled or snow tube sliding on 1/4-mile hill. Cross-country ski trails; bring your own gear. Snow tubes for rent. Warming barn with hot chocolate and WiFi. Dog friendly. Cost: 5'-8' \$40, over 8' \$40 + \$6/ft. Open weekends 10 am – 4 pm, Thanksgiving to Christmas. 204 Cobble Hill Rd., at the end of Cobble Hill Road in southern Milton. (802) 891-6225. sharpark@comcast.net. sharpark.com.

MILTON. Children Read to Cleo the Therapy Dog. 10-11 am. Milton Public Library, 39 Bombadier Rd. (802) 893-4644. library@town.milton.vt.us. miltonlibraryvt.org. First and third Saturdays.

ORLEANS. Vermont Reindeer Farm. Come see the only live reindeer in the whole state of Vermont! Many other farm animals to pet & feed. Nature trail, Reindeer games & gift shop. Vermont Reindeer Farm, 3108 Chilafoux Rd (in West Charleston). (802) 754-9583. On Facebook.

PLAINFIELD, NH. The Attic Shop. New and used items include antiques, books, gift items, collectables, jewelry, furniture, glassware, artwork, and gently used clothes. Free coffee. Free admission. 10 am – 3 pm. Blow-Me-Down Grange, 1107 Rt. 12A. (603) 448-0773. Every Saturday.

POULTNEY. Weekly Game Night. Games for young children as well as adults. Bring your own or play ours. Experienced game players help new players get started. 7-10 pm. Poultney Public Library, 205 Main St. (518) 282-9089 or (802) 287-5556. poultneypubliclibrary.com. Ongoing every Thursday.

POULTNEY. Check Out a Bike at the Poultney Public Library. Five bicycles available to be checked out for two days, with a helmet and a lock. A current Poultney Public Library patron over the age of 18 will need to sign a borrower agreement form. Poultney Public Library, 205 Main St. (802) 287-5556. poultneypubliclibrary.com.

POULTNEY. Stone Valley Arts. A non-profit community arts center. visual art shows, literary events, music concerts, dance performances, guest speakers, and classes in dance, drawing, music, scriptwriting, yoga and meditation. Stone Valley Arts, 145 E. Main St. (802) 884-8052. stonevalleyartscenter@gmail.com. stonevalleyarts.org.

QUECHEE. Vermont Institute of Natural Science. Wildlife exhibits, workshops, and special events. Wildlife rehabilitation. Admission: adults: \$15.50, seniors (62 plus) \$14.50, youth (4-17): \$13.50, children 3 and under free. Open 7 days a week 10 am – 5 pm. Vermont Institute of Natural Science, 6565 Woodstock Rd. (802) 359-5000. info@vinsweb.org. www.vinsweb.org.

RANDOLPH. 17th Annual Holiday Market. Juried show, offering a beautiful and eclectic selection of fine art, crafts, and local products. Thursdays and Fridays 12 noon – 6 pm, Saturdays 9 am – 6 pm, Sundays 11 am – 5 pm, and during performances. Chandler Center for the Arts, 71-73 Main St. (802) 728-9878. chandler-arts.org. Through December 23.

RANDOLPH CENTER. Silloway Maple Sugarhouse Tour. Open year 'round. Tour our solar powered, wood-fired maple sugarhouse. Hear how syrup used to be made, compared with today's modern ways. See the reverse osmosis machine, where part of the water is removed before boiling. Sample maple candy, shop for syrup, cream, and sugar – ship or bring home. Take your children and dogs on a self-guided hike to see the tubing system in the woods. 7 am – 8 pm. Silloway Maple, 1303 Boudro Rd. Call ahead and we'll meet you at the sugarhouse! (802) 272-6249 or (802) 249-0504.

RUPERT. Merck Forest and Farmland. Camping, cabins, 30 miles of trails, farm, workshops and seasonal events. Visitor's Center and store with certified organic maple syrup, our own 100% wool blankets, and more. Free. Open year round, dawn to dusk. 3270 Rt. 315, west of Manchester. (802) 394-7836. merckforest.org.

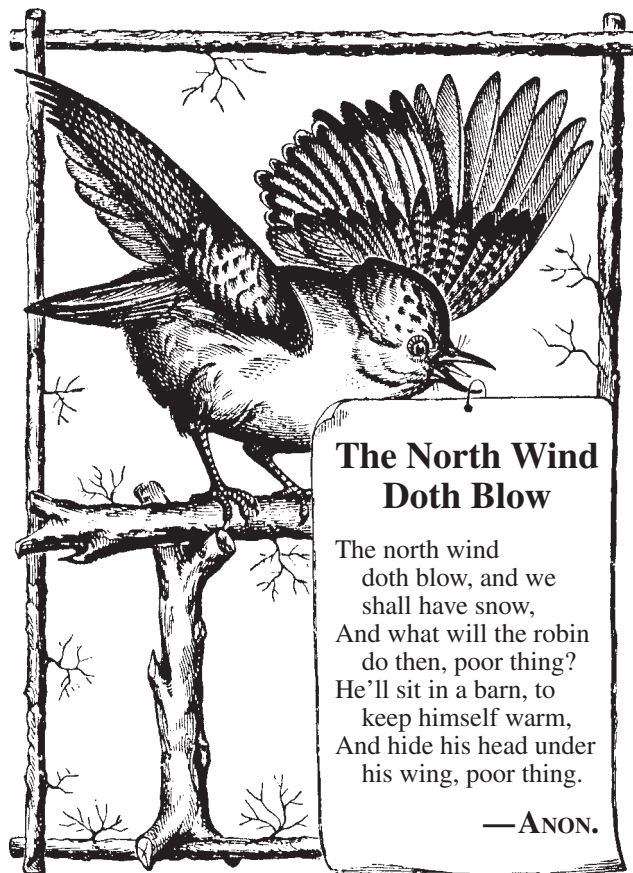
RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Local produce, crafts, prepared foods. Live music. EBT and debit cards. 10 am – 2 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 342-4727. info@vtfarmersmarket.org. www.vtfarmersmarket.org. Saturdays through early May.

RUTLAND. Rutland Area Flea Market. Indoors, year-round, clean & friendly! Cozy cafe offers refreshments and light lunch. 10 am – 4 pm. 200 West St. corner of Forest St. (802) 770-9104. On Facebook. Every Saturday and Sunday.

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Hot apple cider and cookies served. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. Through January 1.

STARKSBORO. Dave Russell's Christmas Tree Farm. Horse drawn sleigh ride to cut your tree. Pack a picnic to eat by the pond. Relax inside the cabin. Balsam Fir trees. Large unpruned trees, 15'-25'. Prices include baling. Open Saturday & Sunday through Christmas, 10 am – 4 pm; Weekdays by appointment. 1248 VT Rt. 116. (802) 453-2208. therussellfarm.com.

STATEWIDE. University of Vermont (UVM) Extension Master Gardener Online Course. 16-week non-credit course on vegetable and flower gardening, sustainable landscaping, lawn care, insect and disease problems, composting, rain gardens, and related topics. Fee: \$425 to become a certified Master Gardener Volunteer, or \$475 to expand your gardening know-how. (802) 656-9562. mastergardener@uvm.edu. uvm.edu/mastergardener. Consecutive Thursday nights 6-7 pm, January 18 through May 10.



The North Wind Doth Blow

The north wind
doth blow, and we
shall have snow,
And what will the robin
do then, poor thing?
He'll sit in a barn, to
keep himself warm,
And hide his head under
his wing, poor thing.

—ANON.

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Vermont Country Calendar

(Ongoing activities 2018, continued)

STATEWIDE. Salvation Farms. Volunteer opportunities to glean and process Vermont raised, surplus fruits and vegetables for use by vulnerable populations. For more information contact (802) 522-3148. info@ourfarmsourfood.org. salvationfarms.wordpress.com.

ST. ALBANS. Book Cellar—Library Used Book Sale. \$3 per bag of books! Sponsored by Friends of the St. Albans Free Library. Tuesdays from 10 am - 8 pm. Held in the library basement. St. Albans Free Library, 11 Maiden Lane. (802) 524-1507. stalbansfreelibrary.org.

ST. JOHNSBURY. Northern Vermont Songwriters. Songwriters may bring a song to share, performed live for the group, or a recording. Bring 6 copies of lyrics. Or bring lyrics only, or simply listen and comment. Free. 6:45-8:30 pm. Catamount Outback Artspace, the wooden octagonal building behind Catamount Arts, 115 Eastern Ave. (802) 467-9859. jakarns33@gmail.com. *Third Thursday of every month.*

WATERVILLE. Northern Vermont Llama Company. 10-acre plantation with spectacular views of Mt. Mansfield and Cold Hollow. Llamas and mini donkeys, holiday music. Cost: Choose-and-cut trees start at \$30; prices vary for pre-cut. Open daily except Mondays, Thanksgiving through Christmas, 9 am - 5 pm. 766 Lapland Rd. (802) 644-2257. northernvtllamaco@myfairpoint.net. northernvermontllamaco.com.

WEST RUTLAND. Vermont Herbal General Store. Owned and operated by a registered pharmacist. Tai' Chi Gung classes, Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5 pm at the store. Free intro classes. Meditations at the store Wednesdays at 5 pm. Usul & Karuna Reiki Healings & Classes. Handmade Herbal Medicines, Oils, Essences, Crystals, Gemstones & Books. Teas, Lotions, and Capsules. All are welcome. Open Tuesday & Wednesday 1-6, Thursday 11 am - 4:30 pm, Saturday 1-6 pm, Sunday 1-4 pm, closed Friday and Monday. Vermont Herbal General Store, 578 Main St. (802) 438-2766. info@vermonthherbal.com. On Facebook and Twitter. www.vermonthherbal.com.

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION. Newberry Market. A year-round, public indoor market with vendors offering local products, cheeses, clothing, gifts, pottery, and specialty foods. Free admission. Open every Thursday year round 11 am - 6 pm. Newberry Market, 19 South Main St.

For information contact: Betsy Briggs Wheeler at (802) 299-0212. newberrymarketwjr.com.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Experience the traditions of a 19th-century Vermont Christmas. Authentically decorated farmhouse and dairy farm. Farm life exhibits, holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides (conditions permitting). 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 5302 River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. *December weekends and December 22 through January 1.*

WOODSTOCK. Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park. 20 miles of trails and carriage roads are open year-round. Gardens and mansion. Vermont's only national park. Guided tours \$4/\$8, under 15 free. Walk the grounds free. Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park, 54 Elm St. (802) 457-3368 x 22. nps.gov/mabi.

MUSEUMS, EXHIBITS & GALLERIES

ARLINGTON. Visit the Canfield Gallery and the Russell Collection. Library hours: Tues & Thurs 9 am - 8 pm, Wed 9 am - 5 pm, Fri 2-6 pm, Sat 10 am - 3 pm. The Russell Collection is open Tues 9 am - 5 pm. Martha Canfield Memorial Library, 528 East Arlington Rd. (802) 375-6153. marthacanfieldlibrary.org.

BARRE. Vermont History Center and Leahy Library. Thousands of books, manuscripts, photographs, maps, audio, video and film recordings, and many other items which shed light on the lives and times of past Vermonters. Exhibit: "Anything for Speed: Automobile Racing in Vermont" open thru March 2019. Over a century of the history and evolution of racing in Vermont, through objects, photographs and recollections. Admission: Adult \$7, seniors \$5, students free, families \$20. Admission includes both the Vermont History Museum in Montpelier and the Vermont History Center in Barre. Open Monday-Friday, 9 am - 4 pm. Vermont History Center, 60 Washington St. (802) 479-8500. info@vermonthhistory.org. vermonthhistory.org. *Exhibit through March 30, 2019.*

BELLOWS FALLS. River Artisans Cooperative. Really Handmade... Really Vermont. River Artisans is the longest continually operating craft cooperative in the state of Vermont. The works of 30+ of New England's finest craftspeople await you in our shop located in this historic riverside village. The shop is open year round Wednesday through Monday 10 am - 4 pm (closed Tuesday). River Artisans Cooperative, 28 the Square. (802) 460-0059.

BENNINGTON. The Dollhouse and Toy Museum of Vermont. Dolls and dollhouses, puppets, trucks and trains, toys, and educational displays. Museum shop. Admission is \$2 for children three and older, \$4 for adults and \$10 for families. Open Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4 pm. 212 Union St. at the corner of Valentine St. (802) 681-3767. www.dollhouseandtoymuseumofvermont.com.

BENNINGTON. Laumeister Art Center. Permanent collections, theater productions, workshops. Open Wed-Mon, 10 am - 5 pm. Laumeister Art Center, 44 Gypsy Lane. (802) 442-7158. artcenter@svc.edu. www.artcenter.svc.edu.

BENNINGTON. Bennington Museum. Founding documents, fine art, Bennington Pottery, the 1924 Wasp Touring Car, Vermont furniture, and the Bennington Flag—one of America's oldest flags. Lectures, workshops, concerts, films, and the George Aiken Wildflower Trail. Admission: adults \$10, seniors and students over 18 \$9. Admission is never charged for younger students, museum members, or to visit the museum shop. Open 10 am - 5 pm every day except Wednesdays. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. www.benningtonmuseum.org.

BRANDON. The Stephanie Stouffer Galleries. Compass is now the sole agent for Stouffer's original artwork, and also retails some of the commercial products which carry Stouffer's iconic designs. Visitors can browse galleries dedicated to Stouffer's 'everyday' collection and holiday and Christmas collections. Open Monday - Saturday from 10 am-5 pm. At The Compass Music and Arts Center, located in Park Village at 333 Jones Dr. (Park Village used to be the Brandon Training School, located 1.5 miles north of downtown Brandon off of Arnold District Rd., off Rt. 7). (802) 247-4295. www.cmacvt.org.

BRANDON. Exhibit: Opera at-a-glance. Listening room where visitors can relax and sample different operas. Compass Music and Arts Center, 333 Jones Dr. (802) 247-4295. edna@cmacvt.org. cmacvt.org. barnopera.com.

BRANDON. Compass Music and Arts Center. Arts businesses and studios, workshops & classes, exhibits, concerts, and community events. A gift shop features art and music related books, collectibles, and the music of the classical recording company, Divine Art Records. Artisan food and crafts, Treasure Chest, and more. Open Mon-Sat, 10 am - 5 pm. Compass Music and Arts Center, 333 Jones Drive, Park Village, 1.5 miles north of downtown off Rt. 7. (802) 247-4295. www.cmacvt.org.

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Northfield, VT

Second Annual Common Spirit Celebration on December 7th

Share good cheer and celebrate community spirit at the 2nd annual Common Spirit Celebration, an afternoon of fun family activities on and around the town Common in Northfield, VT on Friday, December 7th from 4-7 p.m.

This year's event features the traditional as well as the new. There will be an old-fashioned, European-style, outdoor Holiday Farmers' Market, Christmas on the Common Tree Lighting Ceremony, Santa's Arrival with the Northfield Fire Department, Cookies with Santa at the American Legion, and an Art Walk staged by the Paine Mountain Arts Council and hosted by businesses around the Common. A limited-edition, Common Spirit souvenir mug by local

potter Peter Evans will be available.

The Common Spirit is a charming alternative to the holiday big-box and online shopping frenzy. Sing along with the carolers, enjoy the tree lights and Santa's arrival. Stroll around the farm, food and craft stands. Buy local for your gift list and to stock your holiday pantry.

This special holiday event is part of the Northfield Farmers' Market winter season held on the first Sundays of the month at Norwich University's Plumley Armory through April 7th.

For information contact Cassie Morse, Market Manager at (802) 485-8586. northfieldfarmersmarketvt@gmail.com.

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Vermont Country Calendar

BRATTLEBORO. Five New Exhibits: "Emily Mason: To Another Place," 50 paintings and drawings; Michael Poster's "If she has a pulse, she has a chance," 32 photographic portraits of people in recovery; Orly Cogan's "Don't Call Me Princess," painted and embroidered linen pieces; Robert Perkins' "Every Day;" and "Heaven, Earth, Home," sculptures and drawings by Elizabeth Turk. Open every day except Tuesday, 11 am – 5 pm. Admission: adults \$8, seniors \$6, students \$4, 18 and under free. Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 10 Vernon St. (802) 257-0124. brattleboromuseum.org.

BURLINGTON. ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center. Exhibits, workshops, programs, café, gift shop, story hour. Admission: \$9.50 adults, \$7 ages 3-17, \$8 seniors and students, under 3 free. Monday–Sunday, 10 am – 5 pm. ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center at Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, One College St. (877) 324-6385. info@echovermont.org. echovermont.org.

BURLINGTON. Fleming Museum of Art. More than 20,000 objects that span the history of civilization, from early Mesopotamia through contemporary America. Admission: adults \$5, family \$10, students and seniors \$3, children 6 and under free. Tue, Thu, Fri 10 am – 4 pm, Wed 10 am – 7 pm, Sat–Sun noon – 4 pm. Fleming Museum of Art, 61 Colchester Ave. (802) 656-0750. fleming@uvm.edu. www.flemingmuseum.org.

CENTER RUTLAND. The Rutland Railroad Museum. Housed in the Rutland Depot, built in 1917. See railroad artifacts and historical exhibits including HO & N scale model railroad layouts and a children's layout. The museum is also available to educational groups and schools for tours by appointment. Open Saturdays from 11 am – 1 pm. Rutland Railway Association, 79 Depot Lane. For information call John Schaub at (802) 768-8427. info@rutlandrailroadmuseum.org. rutlandrailroadmuseum.org.

MANCHESTER. Southern Vermont Art Center. Galleries, exhibits, classes, performances, gift shop, café, botany trail. Free admission to some exhibits. Open Tues–Sat 10 am – 5 pm. Yester House Galleries, Southern Vermont Arts Center, West Rd. (802) 362-1405. www.svac.org.

MANCHESTER. Hildene House Tours of Robert and Mary Lincoln's home. The museum store in our 100-year-old carriage barn welcomes visitors for distinctive gifts. Tours daily at 2 pm with a prior reservation, not recommended for children under 10. Admission \$20 adults; children 6 to 14, \$5; under 6, free. A fee of \$7.50 for the tour is added to the general admission. No admission charged for Welcome Center and Museum Store. Open daily year round 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home, Rt. 7A, south of the village. (802) 362-1788. info@hildene.org. www.hildene.org.

MARLBORO. Southern Vermont Natural History Museum. Perched on an overlook—on a clear day the horizon is 100 miles away! See mounted specimens of over 600 native New England birds and mammals, a Raptor Center with live hawks and owls, amphibian and reptile exhibit and fall wildflower exhibit. Hogback Mountain Gift Shop next door. Admission: adults \$5, seniors \$3, children 5-12 \$2, kids 4 and under are free. Open 10 am – 4 pm weekdays, 10 am – 5 pm weekends. Rt. 9, Hogback Mountain. (802) 464-0048. www.vermontmuseum.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. Admission: adults \$5; youth (6-18) \$3, seniors \$4.50, family \$12. Open Tues–Sat 10 am – 5 pm and select Sundays in December 1-4 pm. The Henry Sheldon Museum, One Park St., across from the Ilsley Library. (802) 388-2117. henrysheldonmuseum.org.

MIDDLEBURY. Exhibit: Growing Food, Growing Farmers. Researchers Greg Sharrow and Andy Kolovos explore the grass-roots food movement at Boardman Hill Farm, where Greg and Gay Cox have lived and farmed for more than three decades. Vermont Folklife Center, 88 Main St. (802) 388-4964. *Through December 31.*

MIDDLEBURY. Middlebury College Museum of Art. Free. Tuesday through Friday 10 am–5 pm, Saturday and Sunday 12–5 pm, closed Mondays. 72 Porter Field Rd. (802) 443-3168. museum.middlebury.edu.

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. www.vermontfolklifecenter.org.

MONTPELIER. Exhibit: Seeds of Renewal, exploring Abenaki agricultural history, cuisine, and ceremony. Admission: adults \$7, families \$20, seniors, students,

children \$5, under 6 free. 10 am – 4 pm, Tuesday–Saturday. Calder Gallery at the Vermont History Museum, 109 State St. (802) 479-8500. vermonthistory.org. *Through April 2019.*

MONTPELIER. Vermont History Museum & Bookstore. One admission fee gives access to both the Vermont History Museum in Montpelier and the Vermont Heritage Galleries in Barre. Admission: adults: \$7; families: \$20; students, children, seniors: \$5; members and children under 6: free. Open 9 am – 4 pm, Tuesday through Saturday. Pavilion Building, 109 State St. (802) 828-2291. info@vermonthistory.org. www.vermonthistory.org.

NORWICH. Montshire Museum of Science. 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.

RUTLAND. Chaffee Art Center. Exhibits, workshops, classes, Art in the Park October 6 & 7 in Main Street Park. Open Mon–Fri 10 am – 5 pm, Sat 9 am – 3 pm. Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St. (802) 775-0356. info@chaffeeartcenter.org. www.chaffeeartcenter.org.

SAXTONS RIVER. Main Street Arts. Exhibits, concerts, lectures, workshops, and classes for adults, teens and children. Main Street Arts, 35 Main St. (802) 869-2960. www.mainstreetarts.org.

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.

SPRINGFIELD. The Great Hall Presents "Healing: The Transformative Imagery of Art." Great Hall, One Hundred River St. (802) 885 3061, bob@springfielddevelopment.org. ninajamison150@gmail.com. *Through March 30.*

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. Classes, workshops. Tuesday – Saturday 11 am – 5 pm. Gallery at the VAULT, 68 Main St. (802) 885-7111. galleryvault.org.

STOWE. Members' Art Show and Festival of Trees & Light. Decorated evergreens, Hanukkah display, and over 100 artworks. Donations welcome. Tuesday–Saturday, 10 am – 5 pm. Helen Day Art Center, 90 Pond St. (802) 253-8358. mail@helenday.com. helenday.com. *Through December 29.*

STOWE. Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum. Exhibits, events, and gift store. Suggested admission donation: \$5 per person. Open Wednesdays–Sundays, 12 noon – 5 pm. The Perkins Building, One South Main St. (802) 253-9911. info@vtssm.com. vtssm.com.

ST. JOHNSBURY. Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium. Exhibits, programs, special events, wildflower table, collections. Admission: adults \$8, seniors and children under 17 \$6, under 5 free. Open every day 9 am – 5 pm. Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium, 1302 Main St. (802) 748-2372. www.fairbanksmuseum.org.

ST. JOHNSBURY. The Stephen Huneck Gallery at Dog Mountain and Dog Chapel. Free. Gallery open 7 days a week in the summer. Dog Chapel open seven days a week from dawn to dusk. Dog Mountain, 143 Parks Rd. off Spaulding Rd. (800) 449-2580. contact@dogmt.com. www.dogmt.com.

WEST RUTLAND. Carving Studio and Sculpture Center Gallery. Hours are Monday–Friday, 10 am–1 pm, or by appointment. 636 Marble St. (802) 438-2097. info@carvingstudio.org. carvingstudio.org.

WOODSTOCK. ArtisTree Community Art Center. Exhibits, classes, music, special events. Tues 11 am – 8 pm, Wed–Sat 11 am – 4 pm. Mount Tom Building, 1206 Rt. 12. (802) 457-3500. info@artistreevt.org. www.artistreevt.org.

WOODSTOCK. Billings Farm & Museum. Visit the Jersey herd, draft horses, oxen, and sheep and tour the restored and furnished 1890 Farm House. Admission: adults \$15, 62 & up \$14, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. Open Saturday and Sunday, November through February from 10 am – 4 pm. Also open February vacation week from 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org.

In the Stable

By rights this factory should close tonight
So that we too could have our holiday,
But you ladies would get too full of milk
If we should skip our evening chortime. So
Let's get to work as usual, you and I.
Our customers will want their Christmas milk.
We should be glad of their demand and our
Supply—which brings me in not quite enough
To buy you ladies all gold chokers. However,
Maybe you'll take the Christmas thought for the deed.
I can put extra molasses on your feed,
And after, fork you out some premium hay.

—JAMES HAYFORD
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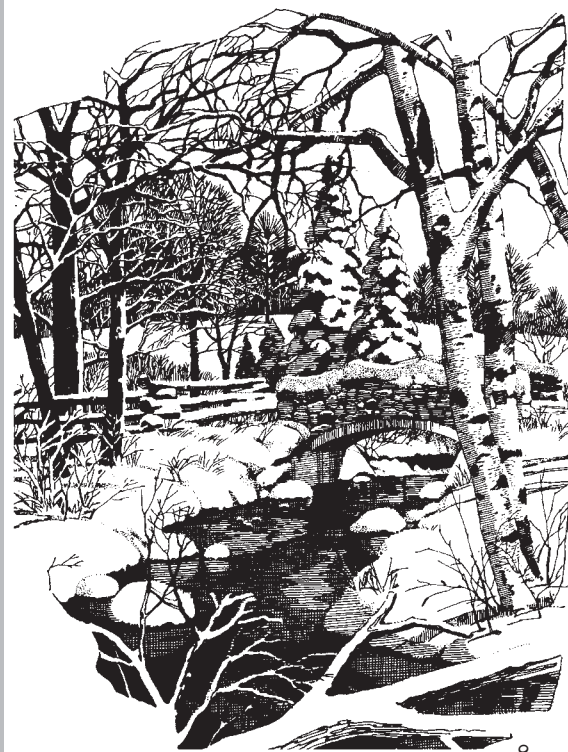
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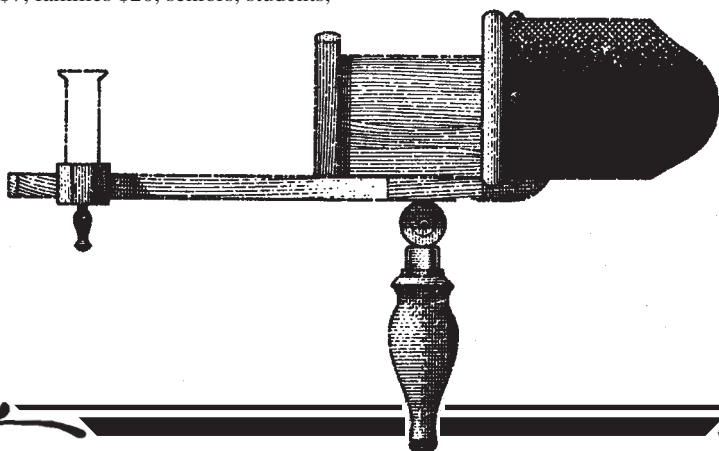
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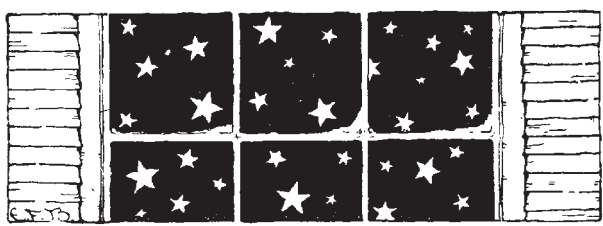
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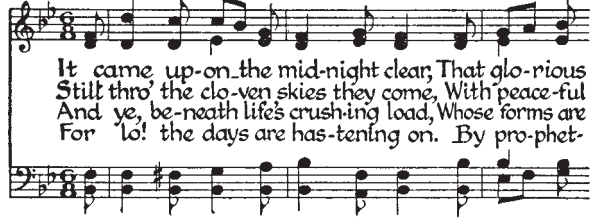
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It Came upon the Midnight Clear

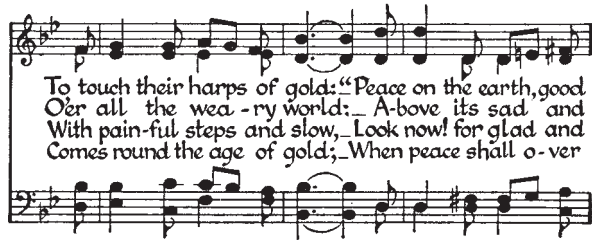
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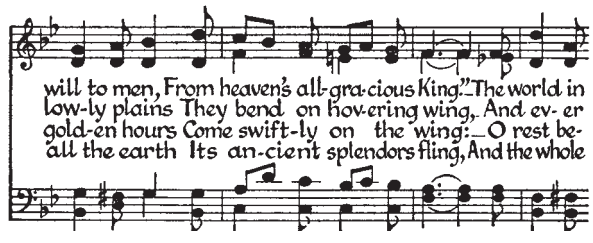
It came up-on the mid-night clear, That glo-ri-ous
Still thro' the clo-ven skies they come, With peace-ful
And ye, be-neath life's crush-ing load, Whose forms are
For 'lo! the days are has-tening on. By pro-phet-



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



Randolph, VT

Come to Chandler's 17th Annual Holiday Artisans Market

The Annual Holiday Artisans Market will be open from Friday, November 16 through Sunday, December 23rd in the Gallery at the Chandler Center for the Arts in Randolph, VT. The popular annual market features the creations of 50+ artisans and crafters from throughout central Vermont and the Upper Valley.

The lights are going up and the Chandler Gallery will be transformed into a warm, welcoming, country-store-style atmosphere, steeped in the tradition of small-town

Vermont. This year, the Artisans Market welcomes back several popular artisans and crafters, while also introducing many new ones.

Market organizers invite you to shop at Chandler for all of your gift-giving needs. Stop by and enjoy a cup of warm cider while perusing a delightful array of gift items, including handcrafted pottery; jewelry; locally made pickles, spices, and sweets; and other sensuous and sumptuous fare. Pick up a pair of Green Mountain Glove Company work gloves

for a loved one, an apron or a pair of socks for Mom or Dad, or handcrafted soaps and lotions for a favorite family member or friend.

The Holiday Artisans Market hours are Thursday and Friday, 12-6 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hours are extended on those evenings when there are performances in Chandler Music Hall. A gift-wrapping service is available each Saturday. Weekends may also feature

a strolling musician or an artisan demonstration as part of the festivities.

The Chandler Holiday Artisans Market benefits Chandler Center for the Arts and the many artisans, crafters, and food purveyors who take part in the annual holiday tradition.

Chandler Center for the Arts is located at 71-73 Main St. in Randolph, VT. (802) 728-9878. www.chandler-arts.org.

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Christmas Revels: A Venetian Celebration of the Winter Solstice at the Hopkins Center in Hanover, NH.

photo by Revels North

Hanover, NH

Christmas Revels Sails to Venice

This December, experience the intrigue and sumptuous beauty of Renaissance Venice as the Christmas Revels evokes that time and place with lively and enchanting music, dance and storytelling. The Christmas Revels: A Venetian Celebration of the Winter Solstice is presented Thursday through Sunday, December 13-16, in Spaulding Auditorium of the Hopkins Center for the Arts in Hanover, NH. The Christmas Revels is a joint production of the Hop and the Upper Valley arts organization Revels North.

A beloved Upper Valley tradition for the whole family for 44 years, The Christmas Revels each December explores and celebrates a different cultural heritage through the lens of its winter solstice and holiday traditions, with a large cast of local and visiting performers. This year's show takes us to the bustling maritime city of Venice during the Renaissance. As la Vigilia di Natale (Christmas Eve) approaches, the city administrator, the Doge, is too overwhelmed to feel the spirit. Will a tatty

troupe of comedians, fresh off an unsuccessful European tour, succeed in changing his mind?

"The show is going to be funny, colorful and light-hearted, featuring a wide selection of Italian Renaissance music along with the favorite songs the audience has sung along with for decades," said Nils Fredland, Artistic Director of Revels North. "We have a skilled multigenerational cast of singers, actors, dancers and musicians from throughout the Upper Valley and beyond. This December's performance is tailor-made for Spaulding Auditorium and its audience."

The six performances take place Thursday, December 13, 6 pm; Friday, December 14, 7 pm; Saturday and Sunday, December 15 & 16, 1 pm & 5 pm. Tickets on December 13 are \$25-46 for adults and \$8 for 18 and under and for other performances are \$27-48 for adults and \$11-20 for 18 and under.

The Christmas Revels is a production of Revels North, a grassroots community arts nonprofit organization. Rev-

els North is a non-profit arts organization providing year-round, multi-generational programming that celebrates the power of traditional song, dance, storytelling and ritual. Carol Langstaff brought the Revels from Cambridge, Mass., to Hanover, New Hampshire, and in 1974 Revels North was founded.

With its own rich traditions and events, Revels North is a cultural institution in the Upper Valley.

The Hopkins Center for the Arts is located at 4 East Wheelock St. in Hanover, NH. For tickets and information call (603) 646-2422. Visit hop.dartmouth.edu.



Revels North Artistic Director Nils Fredland rehearses with the performers in the Christmas Revels.



The chorus sings in the Christmas Revels: A Venetian Celebration of the Winter Solstice.

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The Green Mountain Nutcracker presented by The Moving Light Dance Company at the Barre Opera House on December 22 & 23.

Barre, VT

12th Annual The Green Mountain Nutcracker

Experience the joy of a traditional holiday story with a unique Vermont twist. The Green Mountain Nutcracker, Vermont's only interpretation of the holiday tale told with a local twist, presented by the Moving Light Dance Company, returns to the Barre Opera House for two shows on Saturday, December 22 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, December 23 at 2 p.m.

This familiar-made-fantastical rendition of the classic ballet, set in the 1970s in Vermont, delights audiences with its many local references, including a Maple Sugar Fairy instead of a Sugar Plum Fairy, Loggers instead of Russian dancers, Winter Birds instead of Tea, The North Wind and Leaves instead of Flowers, and Moose instead of Reindeer.

This one-of-a-kind production is now in its twelfth year and features an all-ages, 60-member cast of professional company dancers and local students, all-original choreography by Christine Harris, Willow Wonder, Avi Waring, Natalie Wheeler and Vladimir Roje, set to both Tchaikovsky's familiar score and original music by Vermont musician, Colin McCaffrey, as well as an variety of locally made sets and costumes.

"The Green Mountain Nutcracker really is a celebration of what it is to be living in Vermont—the snow, the leaves, the community, the culture, the stacking wood," said co-director, Avi Waring. "It's an exalting of those qualities. Vermonters are hardworking people; dancers are hardworking people, and there's joy in hard work. I think you feel that in our 'Nutcracker.'"

Moving Light Dance Company

Moving Light Dance was founded by Christine Harris in 2000. One ballet class of ten students held at the Plainfield Town Hall quickly grew into a popular school and company, now located in Montpelier, drawing scores of students and dancers from central Vermont and beyond.

The company presents two staged professional productions each year with casts ranging in age from four into the fifties. Many of the students from the school, which includes classes in ballet, modern and contemporary

dance, grow up performing in these productions. The unique opportunity for children to perform and collaborate with adults in community productions, versus simply learning technique and showcasing skills at recitals, is reflective of the school's philosophy (and the character of Vermont) of inclusion, hard work, and collaboration. The school and company is regionally known for its signature mix of innovative choreography and genres, creative interpretations of classic tales and ballets, and all-ages and -abilities casting.

"I started this school not knowing where this would take me, much less take so many others," said Harris. "It's truly a homegrown effort and has organically evolved into a full-scale school and professional company, with many dancers and attendees returning year after year. It's been a joy to watch these children growing up in dance and to be a part of such a rich cultural experience."

Join friends and family and create your own annual tradition at one of Vermont's most cherished holiday events. Two performances only: Saturday, December 22 at 7 p.m.; and Sunday, December 23 at 2 p.m. Tickets: \$18-\$28. To order tickets call (802) 476-8188 or visit barreoperahouse.org.

Barre Opera House is located at 6 N. Main St. in Barre, VT. (802) 476-8188. barreoperahouse.org. For more info about Moving Light Dance, visit movinglightdance.com.



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Vermonters Ain't Nuthin' If They Ain't Quirky!

by Burr Morse

I've recently been reading *The Cow That Tried to Swallow a Potato: A Quirky History of Worcester, Vermont* by J. David Book with Douglas E. Hull and Dell Waterhouse. It's indeed a "must" read for anyone who values Vermont life the way it used to be. The word "quirky", however, drew me directly to Webster's before I opened up to page one. I mean one normally thinks "quintessential" or "quaint" with these history books of Vermont towns but, "quirky"? I found, though, quicker'n a freshet off Hunger Mountain, that "quirky" fits to a tee: "Characterized by peculiar or unexpected traits." And sure enough that's Worcester!

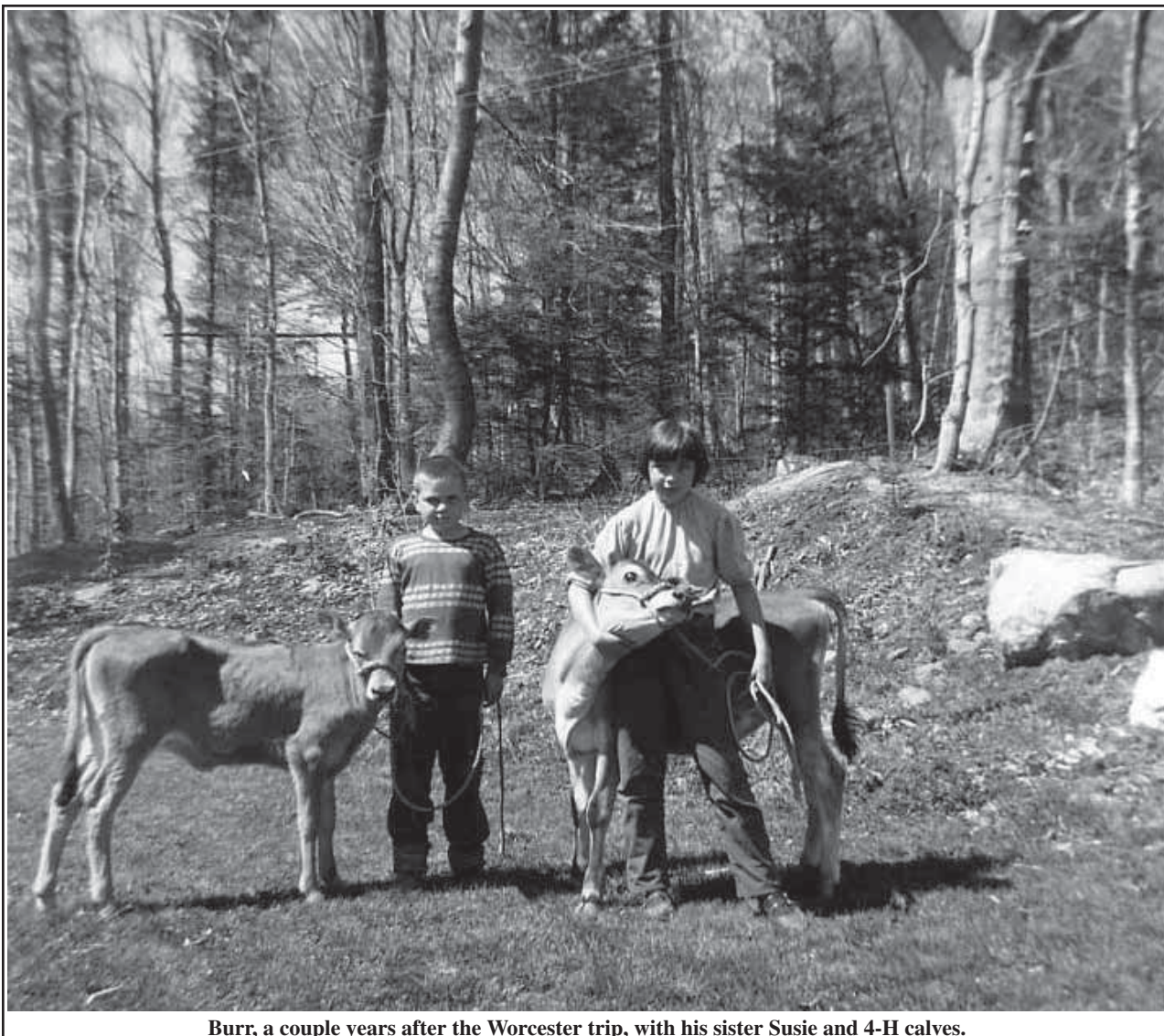
My first introduction to Worcester was as a four-year-old. My dad, Harry Morse, Sr., no doubt would have said something in his witty, exaggerated way like, "Goin' ovah to 'Sweeet Rooster'", followed by the part I remember as clear as it happened yesterday. We climbed high up into our vintage Dodge cab-over farm truck heavily loaded with fresh-cut logs. I remember proudly sitting beside my dad as he shifted the gears and rounded the corners on the way to a place called "Rooster" in a huge truck...can't get any better than that for a four-year-old boy!

"I remember sitting proudly beside my dad as he shifted the gears and rounded the corners..."

Ladd's Sawmill, our destination, stood as the sole survivor of multiple mills that had once taken advantage of the North Branch's unique water-power offerings. By that time, 1952, internal combustion engines and electrification had already rendered water-power obsolete but the array of North Branch mills in Worcester once upon a time created a commerce Mecca equal to no other in our whole area.

Speaking of water "power" back in the 1800's, Minister Brook, one of the North Branch's tributaries, was thought to hold huge gold deposits. Several "Wild West" style sluicing/dredging operations were set up there, only to be eventually dismantled and abandoned...not enough gold in "them thar" Worcester Hills to be worth the effort. Once again, "quirky" fits Worcester like a thick leather mink-catching glove.

"Mink-catching glove?", you ask. Yup, Worcester also was a huge center for mink ranching. Back in the first part of the 20th Century, Worcester entrepreneur Earl Maxham turned his dissatisfaction with traditional farming into an investment in mink ranching. At the height of his career, in addition to his huge Worcester ranch, he had even branched



Burr, a couple years after the Worcester trip, with his sister Susie and 4-H calves.

out as far as Newfoundland! He was also a land-baron, tree farmer, store owner, and water system operator. Late in Earl's life, social attitudes turned against the business of harvesting fur, forcing David, Earl's chip off the ol' block son into "damage control". David turned the Maxham knowledge of raising carnivorous animals into, what else, the pet food industry! At one time, David had a large processing plant in Worcester and a fleet of tractor trailers busy hauling food byproduct for cats and dogs all over the US.

Where "quirky" fits the Maxham clan like that same leather glove, down through history there were many other Worcester families well worthy of the description. In fact, whether human or geological, that place on earth which lies in a thin valley between the Worcester Range and Gould

Hill, Worcester, Vermont, begged a special narrative, a narrative special enough to be deftly crafted by J. David Book, Douglas E. Hull, and Dell Waterhouse. *The Cow That Swallowed a Potato: A Quirky History of Worcester, Vermont* is a must read!

Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks is located at 1168 County Rd., Montpelier, VT and is open year-round. Visitors welcome! Come see the Country Store with Vermont products and gifts, maple, and pasture-raised local beef and bacon. Tour the Sugarhouse, Woodshed Theater, Outdoor Farmhouse Museum and more. Order Cabot cheddar cheese, maple products, and Balsam wreaths at (800) 242-2740 or www.morsefarm.com.

Fragrant Paperwhites

by Dr. Leonard Perry

Extension Professor Emeritus, University of Vermont

A popular and easy-to-plant flower bulb for late fall and the holidays is the paperwhite narcissus. Sweet smelling paperwhites can be coaxed into bloom with very little effort. Prepotted paperwhites can be purchased at many garden stores. All you do is add water! These potted bulbs make a nice gift, or a fun activity for children.

The correct term is actually "forcing" as you are forcing the spring-flowering bulbs to fast-forward their natural growth cycles and bloom in winter instead. Paperwhites produce small, star-shaped white or yellow and white flowers that will last for several weeks.

If purchasing locally, choose healthy bulbs with no soft spots. Store in a cool, dry place. Paperwhites will bloom about four to six weeks after planting, so plan accordingly if you want flow-

ers for the holidays or other special occasions. For continuous bloom throughout the winter, plant bulbs every two weeks from late fall through February.

Use shallow containers, about three to four inches deep, without drainage holes. You can find these specially designed containers for forcing at many garden centers. Add about two inches of washed pebbles, or large glass beads similar to marbles (available at craft stores and some garden stores) in the bottom of the container. If using the colorful glass beads, use a clear container so they can be seen. Or, similar to other forcing bulbs, you can plant in pots with soil.

Gently place the bulbs, pointed side up on the gravel or beads. They should be close, but not touching. (Five bulbs will fit nicely in a six-inch pot.) Then add enough

pebbles around the bulbs to hold them in place. If using soil, make sure the bulb tops are at or above the surface.

The tricky part is watering the bulbs if not in soil. You want to add just enough water so it reaches the base of the bulbs. You don't want the bulbs to sit in water as this will cause rot. Maintain this level of water throughout the growing period. Don't fertilize—the bulb already contains the nutrients it needs.

Place the container in a cool, dark place (about 50 degrees F) for a few weeks until green shoots appear (but don't forget about them).

Then move to full, bright light (generally, a window with southern exposure). Too little light, and the plants will grow leggy as they stretch to reach the light. Initially, room temperature should be 60 to 65 degrees.

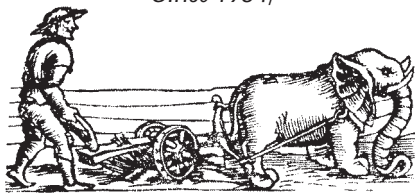
To prolong bloom, after the plants begin to flower, remove them from direct sunlight and place in a cooler, less sunny part of your home. They provide easy, inexpensive, cheery, and long-lasting flowers.

Leonard Perry is an Extension Professor Emeritus at UVM. perrysperennials.info.

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North Country Book News

Book Review by Charles Sutton

On Christmas—A Seasonal Anthology

Christmas time is also story-time and one of the best reads for this occasion is *On Christmas—A Seasonal Anthology* introduced by Gyles Brandreth (\$18.95. *New York Review of Books*. www.nottinghilleditions.com).

This collection of 33 Christmas stories (dated 1263 through 2016) by such writers as Charles Dickens, Anton Chekhov, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Anthony Trollope, Robert Benchley, O'Henry, C.W. Lewis and others less well-known, reflect the publisher's goal to "shift perspectives, prompt arguments, make imaginative leaps, and reveal truth" by restoring the art of the essay.

The writers do this by expressing their thoughts on Christmas with joy, nostalgia, grumpiness and wit. Well covered are the traditions of Christmas from its beginnings and spiritual evolution to its more material life with family gatherings, festivities, the exchange of presents, and sumptuous foods and beverages.

One of the book's most touching essays by Paul Fournier entitled "Christmas, Cologne Cathedral (1918)" is about the writer's father, a captain in the Canadian Army, age 24, who served in the trenches of World War I. His father recalls that after the Armistice he and other Canadians joined German soldiers for a Christmas service in the great Cathedral at

Cologne. And he writes: "A few days before, these uniforms would have been bloodied with anger and reeked of cannon smok—yet here, they had come to adore a child." Unbelievably too, after the Mass, an elderly German couple invited the author's father to their home for a meal for which they dug up a hidden bottle of rare brandy from their backyard for the occasion. The German, with tears streaming down his hard, old face also blessed the young officer.

For unusual Christmas foods, feast on the essay from "Christmas in Ritual and Tradition, Christian and Pagan" by folklorist Clement S. Miles (1912). He describes these Christmas delights: the English wassail-bowl—a beaker of hot spiced ale and toasted apples; Swedish and Danish Yule Boar, a loaf made of corn; German biscuits such as pfefermusse and spekulatius; the Tyrol zelten, a pie filled with dried pear slices, nuts, figs, and raisins; and Romanian turte, made of thin dry leaves of dough, with melted sugar or honey, powdered walnut, or the juice of hemp-seed. This is just a small sampling of treats described from around the world.

The anthology was compiled by Gyles Brandreth, an English writer, broadcaster and former Member of Parliament, who has long been fascinated by Christmas. He has written books on the history of Christmas traditions, a history of Christmas pantomime, and a novel about the mystery of Santa Claus, *Who Is Night Saint?* His forebears include the Victorian journalist, George R. Sims, author of the celebrated ballad "It is Chistmas Day in the Workhouse."



Book News

New Yorker Cartoonist & VT Cartoonist Laureate Edward Koren Launches New Book

In his newest collection, *In the Wild*, recently released by Button Street Press, the acclaimed New Yorker cartoonist illustrates country life, exurbanites and the ironies of living in the boonies. His cartoons have Vermonters looking at city folk, and city folk looking at Vermonters.

Koren's humor, his humanoid, fuzzy, puzzled and brave creatures will delight the reader, country dweller or not. In this latest collection of cartoons on country life, drawn from his porch in Vermont, nothing is sacred: vegetarians, parenting, animals, gourmands, country stores...all are examined with the unique perspective and creativity of this brilliant observer (and artist) of "the wild."

Edward Koren has long been associated with *The New Yorker* magazine, where he has published over 1100 cartoons, as well as numerous covers and illustrations. He has also contributed to many other publications, written and illustrated several books for children, and illustrated many more in various genres.

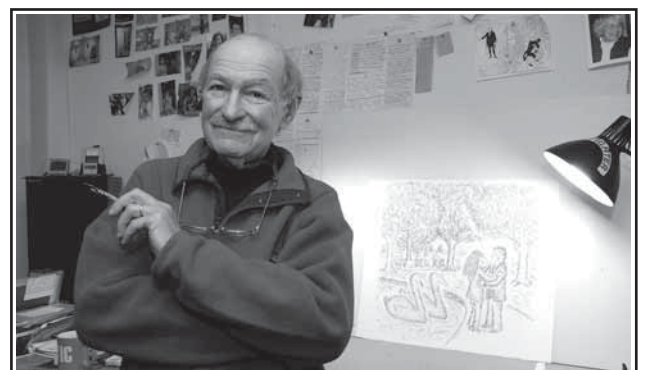
Koren has deep roots in both New York City and

Vermont, where he lives with his family and has been a member of the Brookfield Vermont Volunteer Fire Department for 30 years. He received The Vermont Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts, and served a three-year term as Vermont's second Cartoonist Laureate (Vermont is the only state in the nation with a Cartoonist Laureate).

Friends Ben Cohen (co-founder of Ben and Jerry's) and writer Howard Norman contributed introductory pieces to the book, providing great behind-the-scenes insights.

New York and Vermont intertwine in Koren's life and work, where he gleefully practices his exquisite talent for noticing. As he writes in his Artist Notes about his exhibition at Columbia University: "I can never quite believe my luck in stumbling upon riveting mini-dramas taking place within earshot (and eyeshot), a comedy of manners that seems inexhaustible. All kinds of wonderful moments of comedy happen right under my nose."

For more information visit www.edwardkoren.com and buttonstreetpress.com.



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Merriment, Wonder, and the Magic of Christmas

Winter is upon us and with it the dark time of the year, when we celebrate Advent, Winter Solstice, and Christmas. For some it is a time of joy, for others a time of reflection. For kids, it can be sledding and Christmas trees and presents to give and get, hopefully. Here are some stories that celebrate all of this and are worth sharing.

We know the animal kingdom gets ready for winter in late summer and by fall they have built their winter quarters and stored food. In *The Winter Fox* by Timothy Knapman and illustrated by Rebecca Harry (\$14.99. Candlewick Press. www.candlewick.com) one small fox doesn't listen to his friends, an owl, a squirrel and a rabbit, who urge him to stop playing and get ready for winter, as they are doing. When winter comes with its cold and snow the now lonely fox has no place to go. However, a box of presents with toys and food is dropped on him from Santa. The fox, who really has heart, shares these gifts with his animal friends, and they in turn help him find winter quarters nearby. The pictures glisten with winter and our animal friends are a delight to see.

In 1912 President Teddy Roosevelt, an environmentalist, banned Christmas trees from the White House, but his nephews, undeterred, hid a tree in a closet and brought it out Christmas Eve! Such interesting folklore and stories are highlighted in this timely *O Christmas Tree—Its History and Holiday Traditions* by Jacqueline Farmer and illustrated by Joanne Friar (\$16.95. Charlesbridge. www.charlesbridge.com). We learn that U.S. President Calvin Coolidge of Vermont began the tree-lighting ceremony on the White House lawn in 1922.

This colorfully illustrated book reminds us that German settlers brought the Christmas tree tradition to America but it wasn't always welcomed because of its non-Christian origins. In 1659 Christmas was banned in Massachusetts and not until 1856 did it become a legal state holiday.

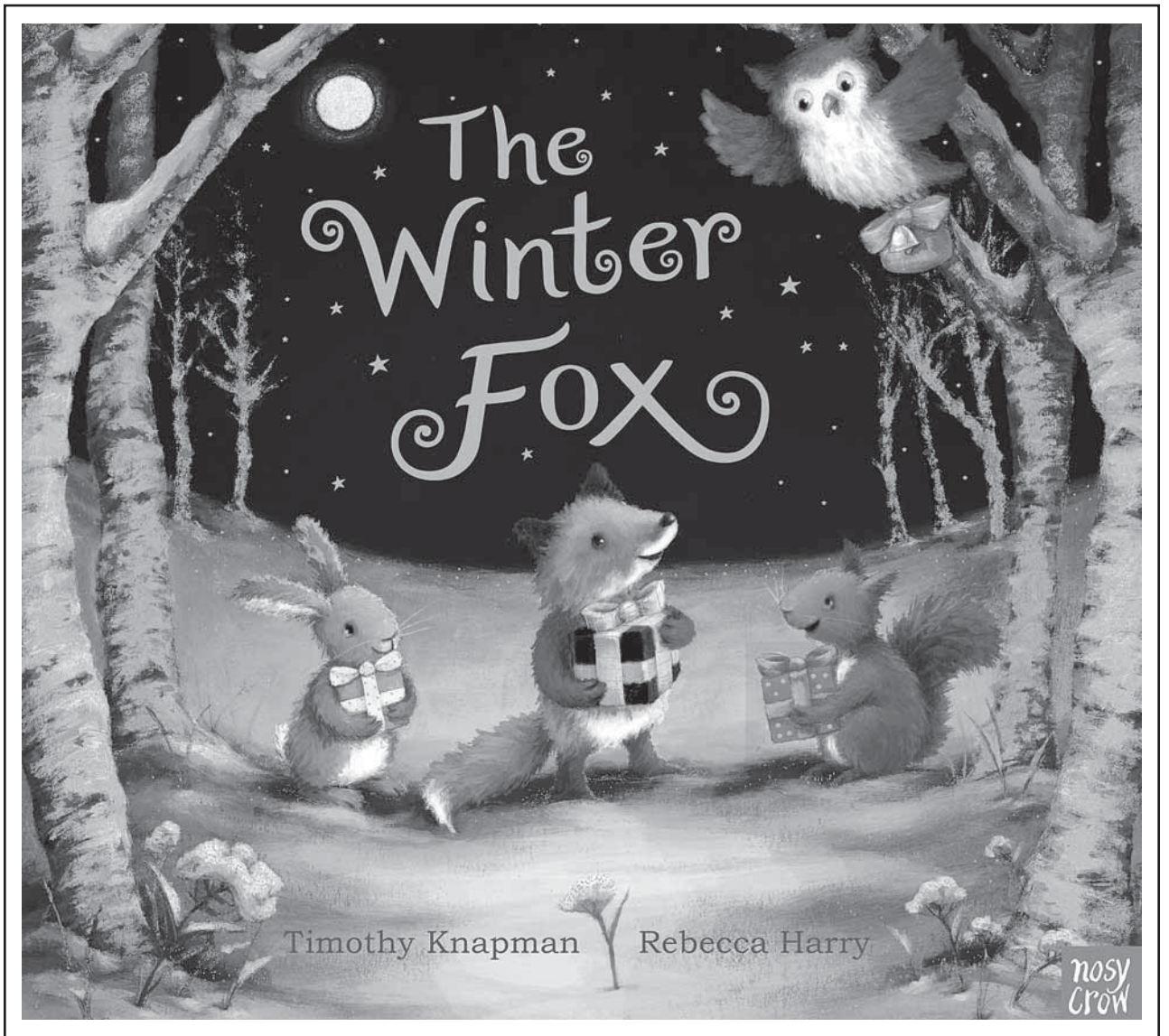
The book covers the evolution of Christmas tree decorations and lights (from candles to electric bulbs), popular varieties of evergreen trees, the advent of aluminum or plastic trees, and the growing of trees on special tree farms (21,000 such farms in the U.S. today).

One has never worried the Santa wouldn't have reindeers available for his annual Christmas trips to deliver gifts. But suppose his regulars like Prancer and Dasher and the others are laid up and staying in bed? In this very amusing and timely story *Reindolphins—A Christmas Tale* by Kevin Brougner and illustrated by Lisa Santa Cruz (\$14.95. Missing Piece Press. www.missingpiecepress.com) how this problem is solved by Santa and his elves will keep you amused and laughing from start—the reindeers in bed with chicken pox—until the finale when a fleet of eight dolphins prove to be the best animals to come to the rescue. In the meantime the try-outs for the mission are displayed in handsome double-spread pages providing ample room for elephants, skunks, rabbits, pigs, cats, and many jungle animals have test flights. The drama is told in humorous little poems. All animals are wondrously illustrated against the backdrop of the North Pole village.

Many of us will be singing the famous carol Silent Night during the upcoming holidays. We may enjoy its comforting musical voice and message but did you ever wonder about its origins? Now, thanks to *Silent Night—The Wonderful Story of the Beloved Christmas Carol* by Brigitte Weninger and illustrated by Julie Winter-Litty (\$18.95. NorthSouth Books. www.northsouth.com) we learn that the beloved carol was composed by a young priest Josef Mohr (also a guitarist) and school teacher friend Franz Xaver Gruber. And it was first performed in the Church of St. Nicholas in the little Austrian mountain village of Oberndorf in 1818 for its Christmas Eve midnight mass. Song and music were only put together earlier that day as something special for the event because the church organ was found broken and not working. The song is popular all over the world today and has been translated into more than 140 different languages.

This book review writer had the privilege of attending such a Christmas Eve midnight mass in a tiny mountain church in Bad Gastein, Austria, many years ago. I sang along the best I could in German: "Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!..." Just as seen in this thoughtful book today the congregation then packed the unheated and candle-lit church with good will and song.

If you love cats or know someone who does, be sure to enjoy the book, *What Cats Want for Christmas* by Kandy Radzinski (\$16.95. Sleeping Bear Press. www.sleepingbearpress.com). In it an enchanting variety of cats have written their requests in Dear Santa letters neatly printed or in leg-



ible script. Some examples: Gracie would like "a big silver dish filled with little silver fish." "Rita would like a different hairdo." Miss Kitty would like a "gingerbread house and tucked inside—a chocolate mouse and fish eggs and snails... and barbecued whales."

The author-artist gives each cat a full two-page color spread done in a style described as "quirky realism." You'll love her cats!

An elderly man whose wife died the previous spring has decided to skip getting a Christmas tree as the holiday is meaningless without her. In *Winter's Gift* by Jane Monroe Donovan (\$16.95. Sleeping Bear Press. www.sleepingbearpress.com) a lost horse finds its way into his yard during a heavy snowstorm. By some miracle the old man hears her cries and rescues the mare. To his surprise on Christmas morning the mare has produced a wonderful foal, one with a white star on its forehead.

Unusually beautiful illustrations capture the plight of the lost mare in the snow and the joy of the old man rescuing the mare and tending her in his barn. This is a story of hope no matter how bad things seem to be or really are.

Children aren't the only ones longing for Santa's visit, animals of the forest will come "hopping, bounding and flying" to greet him with a donkey carrying a big bag of gifts for his annual visit. However, in *Santa Claus and the Dormouse* by Eleonore Schmid (\$17.95. North-South Books. www.northsouth.com) an adorable dormouse called Gus misses the event because his breed of mouse-like rodent needs a long winter's hibernation and they are always sound asleep at Christmas. This year Gus is determined to be awake and see Santa. But through the fall days and colder weather he fights off sleep.

A squirrel promises to wake him when Santa arrives, but doesn't. So Gus is not there for the delightful scene when Santa opens his sack containing carrots, red apples and bread, but also sausage and a slab of bacon for the foxes, bags of seeds and fat for the birds; nuts for the squirrels and cheese for the crow. When Santa is about to leave a lone owl remembers Gus's wish, whoops him awake and leads him to a loving Santa. "Gus, I was waiting for you. Now here you

are with me," says Santa stroking him gently. Gus is given dried apples, pears and plums. And best of all when all the other animals leave he creeps into Santa Claus's pocket and happily falls asleep there.

You will appreciate the charming and lavish European-style drawings by the Swiss artist Eleonore Schmid (1939-2003). Her animals including tiny Gus are enchanting.

That "good things often come in small packages" may be hard to believe at Christmastime when you—Sophie—get a present in a small package while your baby sister gets something in a great big box. In *Sophie's Christmas Surprise* by Rosemary Wells (\$6.99. Boardbook. Viking. www.penguinrandomhouse.com) the envious Sophie tries to figure out what might be in the big box not for her. "Maybe a zoo full of talking animals or a remote control rocket ship," she wonders while expecting in her small box there may be just some crayons. During the present opening Sophie is surprised and delighted to get a small box camera in her small package. One that takes real pictures, too! You'll be surprised, too, by what the big box contained, to the delight of everyone.

We're familiar with families gathering for Christmas with someone always coming from afar. Find how this is true in the animal kingdom in *Coming Home* by Michael Morpurgo and illustrated by Kerry Hyndman (\$17.99. Candlewick Press. www.candlewick.com). A plump robin, lost and alone, goes on a perilous journey to get home to his mate...just in time for Christmas. The bird must cross mountains, thick forests, and even a sea. The robin escapes an attack by a hungry hawk, and later is helped by an escort of thrushes. A small boat in a stormy sea also provides a place to rest thanks to its friendly skipper. The artist captures the robin's determination despite its tininess in such a big none-too-friendly world. His mate asks what kept him so long. He replies just "oh this and that...this and that."

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North Country Reflections

Pleasures of The Winter Garden

by Judith Irven

Winter is the season of short days and dark nights when, even at midday, the sun gives little warmth as it rides low in the sky.

By now my fall garden chores are done, my tools hang neatly in the toolshed and I have mostly retreated indoors.

I am lucky enough to have a small cool greenhouse which becomes my indoor winter garden and, from October till May, is home for my potted camellias. Camellias flower from December to April—when our outdoor gardens are covered with snow—making their beautiful blooms all the more special.

And yes, even though the summer flowers are but a distant memory, my outdoor winter garden also provides me plenty of enjoyment.

Seeing the garden's skeleton

Twenty years ago, when we first moved to Goshen, I wanted a garden that would give pleasure in every season.

I started by drawing a pleasing spatial design for my new garden (akin to the floor plan for a house). Using gently curving lines I sketched in the shapes of the flowerbeds and a circular patio.

Then I accentuated my spatial design with vertical elements including: a gazebo and an arbor; several stone walls; plus plenty of shrubs and small trees. Together these vertical elements became the framework or skeleton of my garden.

Fast forward twenty years! Often in the summer, when my attention is focussed on the interplay of colors and textures among the flowers and leaves, I barely notice the garden's framework.

But now, when the trees are bare and the perennials below ground, I love to gaze out at the winter garden, revisiting the details of its underlying skeleton and imagining possible changes.

Here are some of the things that catch my eye: the perfect alignment of the gazebo and the arbor; a low clipped hedge surrounding the circular patio; a set of stone steps leading to a hidden bench; a cluster of carefully pruned crab apples and azaleas; and the shape of the central bed accentuated by blueberry bushes and a fringed evergreen.

Of course, every garden is unique and every garden is different. Perhaps, if you set aside some time this winter and consider its skeleton, you too will see your garden in a whole new way.



Wild turkeys feeding in Judith's yard in Goshen, VT.

photo by Dick Conrad

Shapely silhouettes

In winter I also enjoy looking at deciduous shrubs and trees and their interior shapes, almost like abstract pieces of art. And—if things are not to my liking—I may use the winter months to undertake some judicious pruning.

For instance: near my study window there is a small tree that goes by the fanciful name of Seven Son Flower (*Hep-tacodium miconioides*).

All year long this little tree is a source of pleasure. It has handsome green leaves all spring and summer. Then in September, when it is covered with clusters of white flowers, it becomes an amazing late-season magnet for bees and butterflies—a delight for insects as well as for people. Finally in winter its curving trunk with exfoliating bark and angular branches form a dramatic silhouette against the snow.

But the devil is in the details—this fall I was frustrated to see its shape marred by a number of vertical suckers. So I decided to give it a haircut. In less than an hour, all the suckers were on the ground and my little tree had a clean spare silhouette that I will appreciate all winter long.

You can actually use winter to prune many kinds of shrubs and small trees. (The main caveat is to avoid pruning spring flowering shrubs as they have already formed their flower buds for next season. Thus winter pruning will inevitably result in losing some of next season's flowers.)

So, if you enjoy getting outside on a sunny day in winter, why not invest in a good pruning book and make a new year's resolution to shape up the interiors of all your woody plants.

Garden visitors

Whatever the season, I delight in sharing my garden with wildlife—many familiar, some less so.

In late October Dick and I watched in fascination as a little chipmunk busily worked on his (or her) winter home. First a sizable hole appeared at the corner of the little kitchen garden near our back door. Then the owner, emerging backwards, used his strong back legs to propel showers of soil out of the hole. After that, he used his nose as a little bulldozer, carefully rearranging the fresh soil into a smooth two-foot diameter circle.

For almost a fortnight he continued this excavation project, at which point I imagine his winter home was complete. But even in mid November on sunny days I would still see the chipmunk high up in the outer branches of a nearby crab apple, stuffing his cheeks with fruit that presumably he then stored in his larder.

Apparently chipmunks, although solitary creatures, make extensive dens that often extend a couple of feet below ground. So now, all winter long, I will picture our little guy—or gal—snuggled down in his cozy nest next to his well-stocked larder.

By mid-November I assume that the local bear (whom I actually met up close a couple of months ago as I was hiking along the ski trail above our house) will be in hibernation for the next few months. So, much to the delight of the chicka-

dees, goldfinch, nuthatch and woodpeckers, I recently hung up our winter bird-feeders. It was amazing how quickly the word spread—within an hour we had a steady stream of customers feasting at our restaurant.

Once they have identified a good food source, small birds like chickadees will remain in its vicinity all winter. And, if that food source should disappear, they may be unable to find a new one. So, if we humans start feeding wild birds at the beginning of winter, it is important for us to continue until spring.

Recently Dick and I have also been thrilled to watch a large crowd of wild turkeys stroll out of the forest and around the garden on a daily basis. Turkeys are opportunistic feeders. This crowd enjoyed pecking though my strictly organic lawn, eating grass and looking for bugs.

Turkeys also love fruit! For a couple of weeks they foraged daily beneath our crab apples trees until the soil was picked clean. Sometimes a particularly bold bird even flew up into the branches to eat, at the same time knocking fruit to the ground that was snapped up by the rest of the flock.

Of course, even for the most welcoming gardener, sometimes our wildlife visitors wear out their welcome. I am particularly fond of a handsome row of winterberries (*Ilex verticillata*) that I planted many years ago to frame the corner of our driveway. Every October, after the leaves have fallen, these six bushes are completely covered with bright red berries—an amazing sight.

However this November my bushes were discovered by a voracious crowd of cedar waxwings. Dozens of birds came each day, perching high up in the maple trees and then swooping down to feast on the berries.

I tried shooing them away, making noises with a child's air horn or a loud bell—all to no avail. Sadly I realized I had met my match and ten days later the bushes were bare!

I consoled myself by thinking about how, for almost a month, we had enjoyed the sight of the berry-laden bushes. Then, I looked at how I had previously pruned the bushes into stunning abstract silhouettes which, I philosophically reminded myself, will remain a source of pleasure all winter long.

Judith Irven and her husband Dick Conrad live in Goshen, VT where together they nurture a large garden. You can subscribe to Judith's blog about her Vermont gardening life at www.northcountryreflections.com.

Dick Conrad is a landscape and garden photographer; to see his photographs go to northcountryimpressions.com.

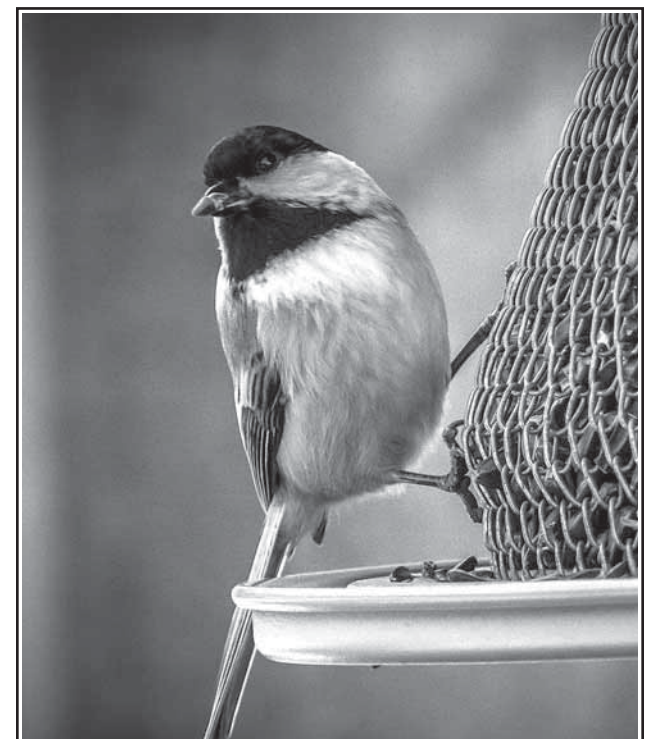


photo by Dick Conrad

A chickadee at Judith and Dick's bird feeder.

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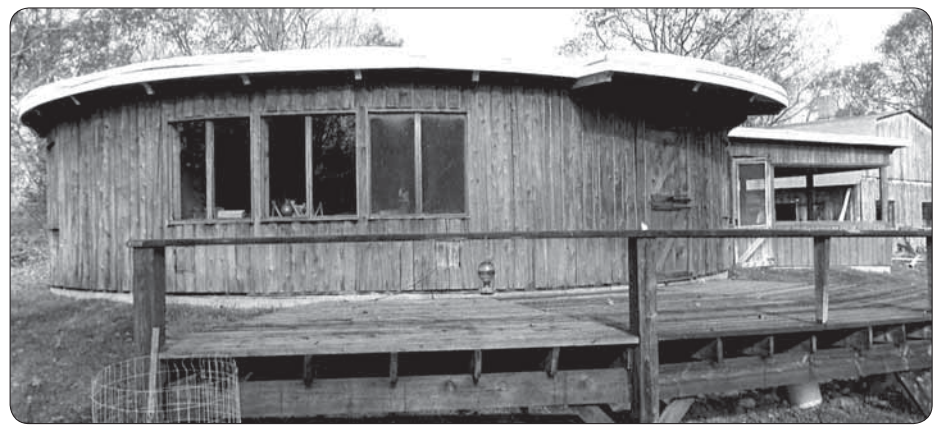
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