

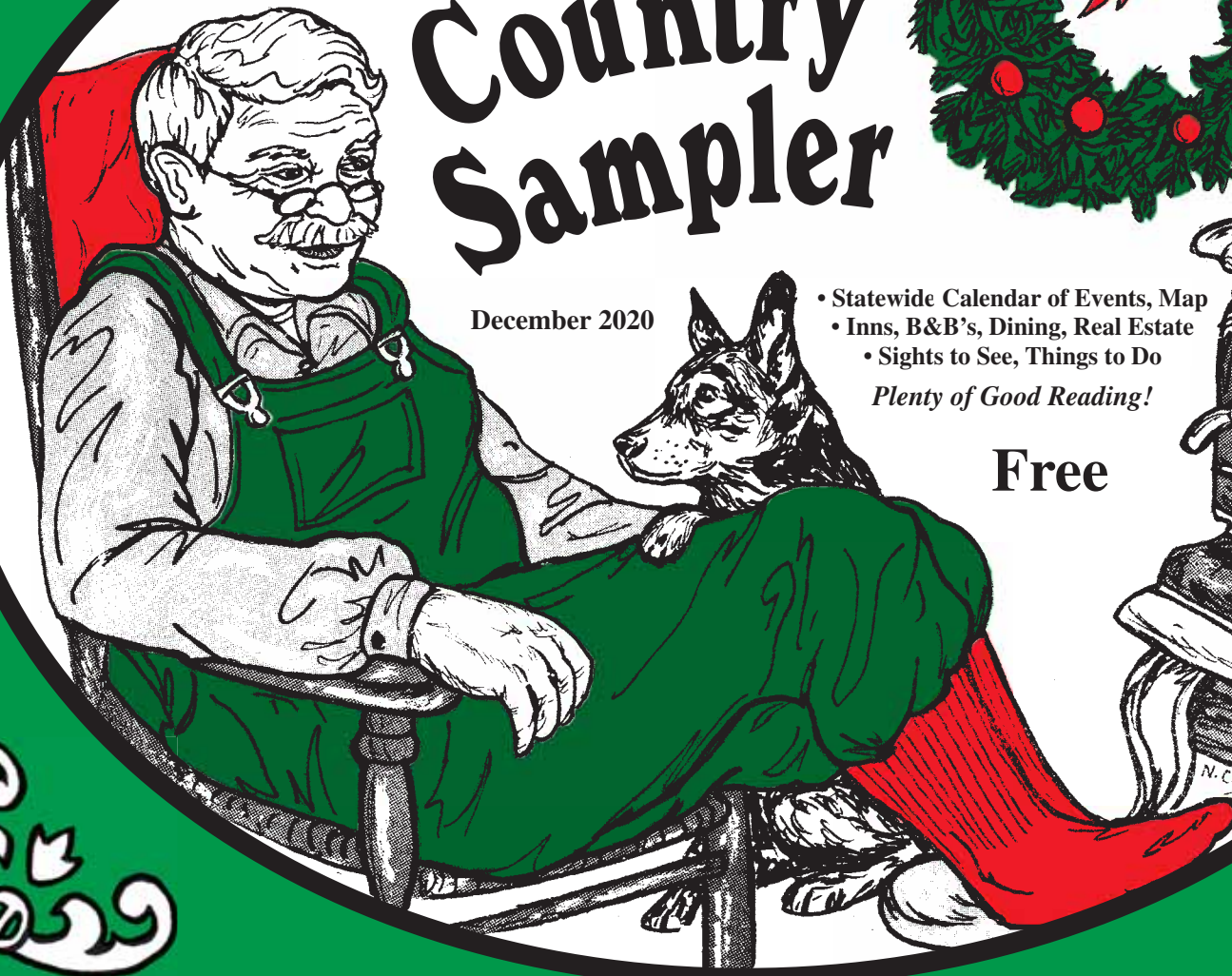
Vermont Country Sampler

December 2020

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

Plenty of Good Reading!

Free



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**GREEN
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RANDOLPH, VERMONT



Late Fall Journal

Bare Trees and Frost

by Bill Felker

Several years ago, I took our two bulldogs out for a walk in the woods. It had snowed a few more inches over night, for a total of several feet in some places, and we were the first to navigate the path.

The dogs worked their way through the high snow, the puppy, six months old, breaking trail with his chest. The older bulldog was invigorated by the cold, ranged on ahead, leaping fallen trees, racing back from time to time for reassurance and to check the puppy.

Above the dam, the river was frozen over. Below, in the open channel that led to the mill, the water was black and the current strong and loud. Halfway to the old sycamore where vultures used to roost, a formation of geese flew over heading north.

Then at the bend of the river, suddenly there was a whinny of robins as we walked into a large flock that had been here feeding on honeysuckle berries since October. On both sides of the path, birds moved through the undergrowth, calling and playing. I felt surround

by and included in several separate societies then; I was part of the flocks and part of the pack.

Making my way through the snow, I thought back about the year I used to take a litter of puppies out through the overgrown fields of a farm I rented. On those walks, I experienced an excitement forgotten until today's outing in the snow, and I recognize now how important that excitement was and how I miss it.

I think that when I am lonely, it is because I've slipped too far away from some prerequisite communion, a hard running with the pack, a romp with my clan. I think we were all made to dance and cavort together in community of species.

Although the lesson for me has much to do with my relationships with people (or the lack of relationships), I do not seem to learn that lesson from or with other people. I only glimpse its truth in these woods with the dogs and with the robins, recalling our ancestry and our innate design, what we must have been and still could be.




Woodland moose in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.

photo by Nancy Cassidy



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English Nursery Rhyme
~ CIRCA 1764 ~

They hang the man and flog the woman
That steal the goose from off the common
But let the greater villain loose
That steal the common from the goose
The law demands that we atone
When we take things we do not own
But leaves the lords and ladies fine
Who take things that are yours and mine

Vermont Country Sampler
December 2020, Vol. XXXVI

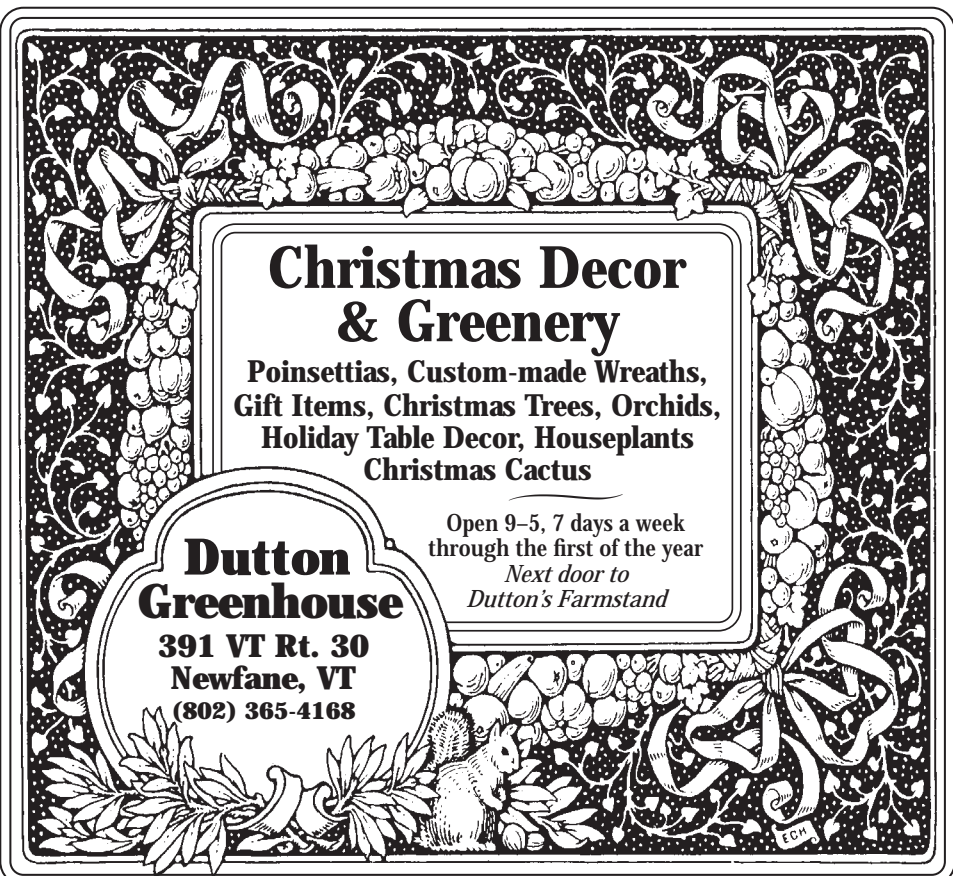
This issue is Late-November thru mid-December
And December is mid-December thru mid-January

The Vermont Country Sampler is distributed free over-the-counter in and out of Vermont, and by paid subscription, \$24/12 issues.

Advertising rates on request. Deadline 15th of the preceding month.

Calendar of Events published free of charge.

Vermont Country Sampler
(802) 772-7463
3048 Middle Rd., N. Clarendon, VT 05759
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Trimming the Christmas tree with old-time ornaments in the 1890s farmhouse at Billings Farm & Museum in Woodstock, VT.

photo by Billings Farm & Museum

Woodstock, VT

Christmas at the Farm Featured at Billings Farm & Museum

Experience the traditions of a late 19th-century Vermont Christmas with a visit to the Billings Farm & Museum this holiday season. Christmas at the Farm will be featured December 5 & 6, 11, 12 & 13, and daily December 19 through January 3, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (excluding Christmas Day).

In 1890, Christmas celebrations were much simpler than they would become in the 20th century. Learn about a Victorian Christmas with a viewing of our authentically decorated exhibit of the farmhouse parlor. Enjoy holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations of holiday foods and gingerbread ornaments. Warm up with a cup of Wassail along with cider donuts served at the Dairy Bar.

New this year! Take a snowshoe trek around the farm fields. Bring your own snowshoes or rent from the Nordic Center at the Woodstock Inn & Resort.

Make your own holiday gifts with Chef Emery! Billings Backyard returns December 5th with a class on making Holiday Teas and Cookies. In this online class from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., Chef Emery will prepare two different types of holiday cookies and two herbal teas. The recipes feature dried herbs from the garden, local jams and dried fruits. Online registration is open.

Travel the world from home. In December the Woodstock Vermont Film Series will feature amazing documentaries to be viewed online, including "Once Were Brothers: Robbie Robertson and The Band" from December 3-6, "The Last Ice" from December 17-20, and "The Woman Who Loves Giraffes" streaming from December 31-January 3.

Ahead of the holidays, Family Wednesdays provide a fun, educational, and safe environment for students learning from home. Each week will focus on a different farm theme, and families will have the opportunity to learn more about the animals, see objects from the collections up close, pick up a craft to make at home, hear stories read aloud, and more. Check out Chickens on December 2, learn about Draft Animal Power on December 9 and get the story on Giddy Goats on December 16.

Get off to a healthy start in the new year with new wellness cooking demonstrations and recipes using vegetables grown

in the summer garden, offered daily January 2-5, 2021. See the website: billingsfarm.org for specific events and times each day.

Billings Farm & Museum is located at 69 Old River Rd. off Rt. 12 just north of the village in Woodstock, VT. Open daily April through October, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekends November through February, and Christmas & vacation weeks, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission: adults \$16; 62 & over \$14; children 5-15 \$8; children 3-4 \$4; children 2 & under are free. For info call (802) 457-2355 or go to www.billingsfarm.org.



Vermont Foodbank
www.vtfoodbank.org

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Springfield, VT

Book Your Own Open House At Gallery at the VAULT

Are you longing for some old-fashioned holiday shopping and wondering where are how? You and your small group (of up to five people) are invited to make an appointment to have the beautiful Gallery at the VAULT in downtown Springfield, VT all to yourselves for an hour.

Appointments will be on Sundays from 12 noon to 4 p.m. through December 13th. We'll open the gallery just for you! After you shop, enjoy a meal at the Copper Fox Restaurant, right next door.

You'll find a wide variety of beautiful handmade creations from our 125 craftspeople and artists. Peruse and select your gifts from an array of jewelry, woodenware, glass, scarves, mittens, hats, gifts for babies and children, prints, photographs, pottery, hummingbird feeders, clay wren houses, quilted runners and potholders, holiday

ornaments, as well as craft kits. Enjoy the new Open Wall show *People Places and Things*.

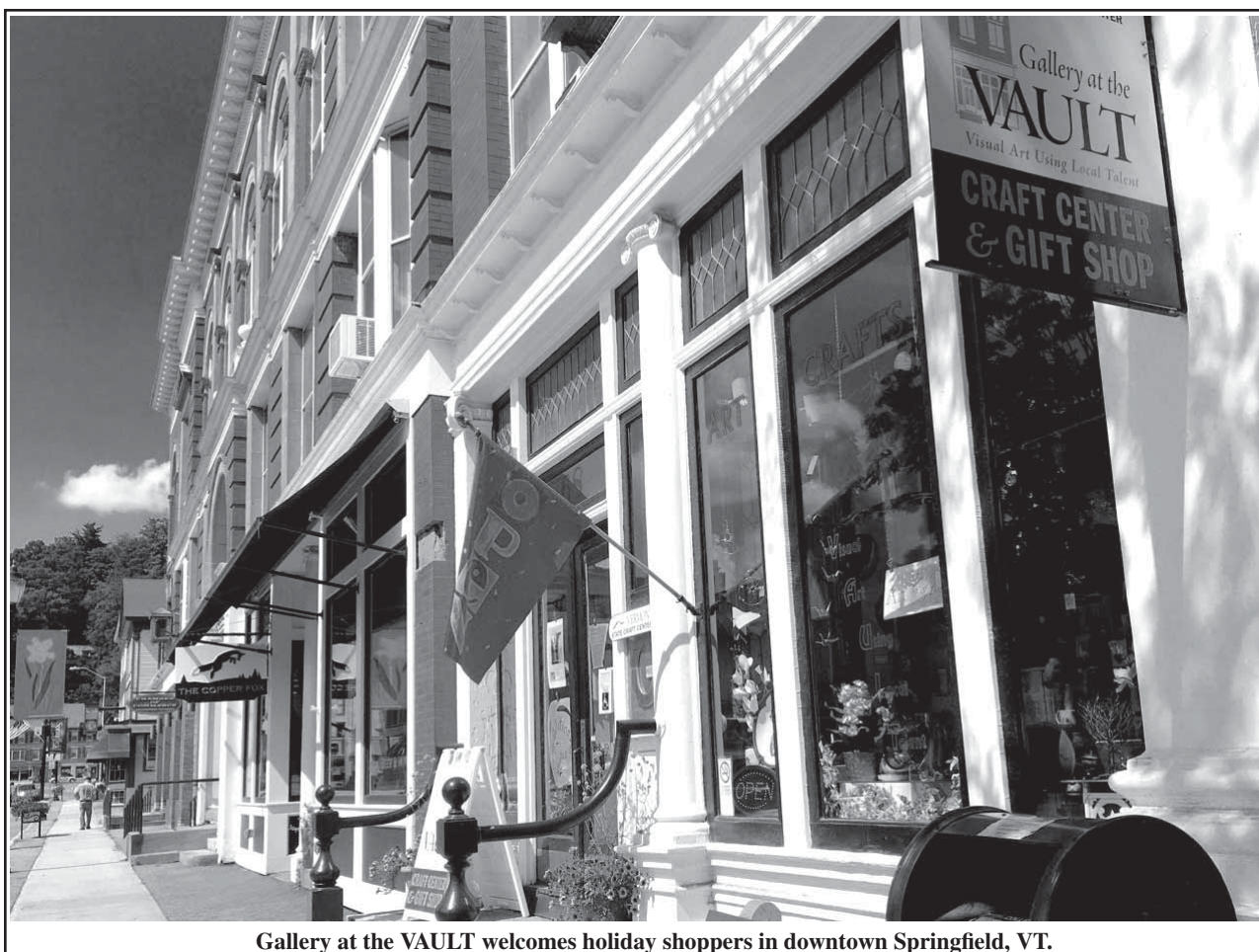
To make an appointment, email dkemble@vermontel.net and include your preferred Sunday and time and contact information.

There is no charge for this "concierge" service but donations to VAULT, a non-profit community arts center and Vermont State Craft Center, are always appreciated!

Gallery at the VAULT is located on 68 Main St. in Springfield, VT's historic downtown, in a 1909 bank with a real vault.

The gallery is open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Fridays 11 a.m. until 7 p.m.

Visit www.galleryvault.org for more information on workshops and current exhibits.



Gallery at the VAULT welcomes holiday shoppers in downtown Springfield, VT.

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Chester, VT

St. Luke's Christmas Market

Celebrate the holiday season joyfully and safely during the coronavirus, by visiting St. Luke's Christmas Market: Culinary Classics & Crafts To Go!

The event will take place in Willard Hall at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 313 Main Street (Route 11 West) in Chester, VT, on December 5, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The market is open to the public and will feature a

special pickup time of 9:30-10 a.m. for those who order items in advance.

This covid-conscious market—with required masks, social distancing, limited occupancy, and one-way traffic flow—will make the event as safe as possible while allowing shoppers to choose from different pre-made frozen soups and meals, a wide variety of pre-wrapped baked goods, homemade jams and

preserves, and handmade chocolates in designer tins.

Christmas-oriented decorations, including live evergreen wreaths and sprays, and other quilted, artistic, or handmade creations, plus selections geared to pets and other animals, will provide unusual and appealing gifts for people to purchase.

For more info, visit www.stlukeseiscopalvt.org. Clos-

er to the date of the event, a partial listing of available frozen soups and meals will be posted on the website. To order food in advance, please contact Lillian Willis at lbwillisct@comcast.net or (802) 875-1340 or Eileen Widger at twidger@sbcglobal.net or (802) 875-4604. For information on crafts, please contact Pat Fromberger at panjoe@vermontel.net or (802) 875-3548.

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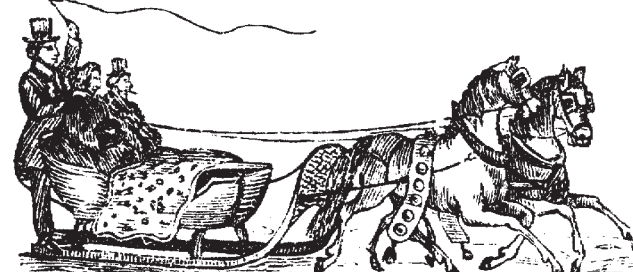
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Way Back Then

Restoring Old Houses Through the Years

by Charles C. Sutton

Every time I decided to restore an old rundown house to become a place to live, my family told me I was “being a fool,” while friends commented I was “behaving crazy.”

I will take credit for both remarks as I (with much trepidation) did purchase and restore four derelict buildings starting in 1960.

The first adventure (or misadventure) was a Greek Revival house with attached large barn in Bar Mills, Maine. Next was a small run-down house in the woods along the Saco River in nearby Hollis Center, Maine.

This was followed by an 1880s Victorian row house bordering a park in East Bridgeport, CT, an area devastated by fires and neglect.

My final restoration was a Danby, VT, colonial which was ‘on-its-knees.’ That endless work began in 1986, and still needed constant attention many years later.

Not falling down, yet

I had enough sense not to buy buildings that weren’t still structurally sound or with leaking roofs. The Danby house was a close call as its west wing had peeled way from the main building and water and snow were getting in. There were no floors left there so weather damage was limited.

All the restorations needed new wiring, baths and kitchens, heating systems, floors sanded, walls replastered or sheet-rocked, as well as general repairs. There were always large amounts of dirt, dust, and debris to deal with. The row house in Bridgeport had a fire on the second floor the night before I signed the purchase papers. A bad omen or not? But the sale price at least was reduced.

Stories about these restorations, humorous or not, could fill a book. But for now let’s concentrate on a few anecdotes including some about the homeless wildlife who found the abandoned properties an ideal place to live.

Poor timing

The timing before Christmas couldn’t have been worse for settling my family into the unheated, rundown house in Bar Mills except it had been purchased for only \$5,500! (Of course that was 60 years ago). Fortunately there was a large wood stove in the would-be kitchen that we ran night and day for token heat. We also made use of four fireplaces and a Franklin stove.

Unwanted surprises were discovering that the septic system consisted of some orange crates and no leach field. Also, the 130-ft. artesian well went dry. The property was a home to woodchucks who enjoyed eating my string beans before I could and once a fox somehow got into the cellar and was trapped in an old cistern. Game wardens came to the rescue and fished the fox out.

The house was named the Old Crow Place after its owner, a Mr. Crow who had a business transporting flocks of chickens. Townspeople told us of seeing many chickens looking out the upstairs bedroom windows. Yes, there was a lot of “chicken dust” in the cracks between the floor boards.

Wildlife in and out

My next home—a small cottage—was easier. We fixed the usual wiring and plumbing, put in heat and did repairs. Also we added on a bedroom-bath wing. The building had a small living room with a workable fireplace. We repainted the walls and cathedral ceiling with hard-to-find gray barn boards, to which one visitor exclaimed: “you went to a lot of trouble to turn a barn inside out.”

One winter we were overrun with field mice who ate all my kitchen herbs.

Being so-called ‘flat landers’ we were easy prey to some teasing. Consider being advised to put human hair around one’s garden to discourage hungry wildlife. Didn’t work at all even though I used a bag full of human hair sweepings from a barber shop.

Back to Connecticut

When the time came to change newspaper jobs from the Biddeford Journal in Maine to the Bridgeport Post in Connecticut I once again was into a major restoration project—converting a row house into three apartments of which I would live in one and rent the other two for income, as my marriage and life in Maine had dissolved.

I had two cats. One day, I couldn’t find one of them until I heard pitiable cries coming from the bathroom. The cat, seeking a hide-away, had been closed up in a wall by one of the carpenters working on the place. We cut a hole in the sheet rock and out sprang a grateful cat.



The old Greek Revival in Danby, VT, the last in a lifetime of restorations.

There were many alley cats living in backyard rubble so I shouldn’t have been surprised to have one cat bring her kittens by mouth one at a time to a new home behind a woodpile in my back yard. The cat showed good taste as I had made a garden of flowers and vegetables, some fruit trees, and even a small patch of green grass.

I had good tenants—one was a college friend who had fallen on hard times. The other was a couple and their young daughter. One day they asked if they could use my apartment as it looked nicer and was in better shape than theirs. They wanted to get married there before a justice of the peace.

After a few years in Bridgeport when the newspaper started to downsize I knew it was time to move on. So I criss-crossed the country in a VW camper until ending up in Vermont.

Vermont finale

My next and last restoration project happened by chance after I spotted a For Sale sign on an old house while driving through Danby, VT. It needed a lot of work. This turned out to be the perfect place for me in a mid-life crisis with no job, no money and by then no family. Time to start all over. As it turned out, I also restored my life, meeting Cathy O’Kane, who became my partner and wife. Cathy had started The Vermont Country Sampler, now 37 years ago. We met when I answered her ad for a writer.

The unlivable property included a post & bean barn and two acres of land. While work progressed (at a snail’s pace at first) I rented a room which included two meals a day (good home cooking) from a dairy farm family who lived nearby. Their plumber son also worked on my house.

Journals of those days tell the same wintry tale. I would go to my ice-cold house, light up a potbelly stove, have a picnic lunch, and do (as it turned out) as little work as possible. Too cold and too much debris and wreckage.

When the restoration began in earnest in early spring I made a small apartment in the west wing which had been detaching from the main building. I lived there while work progressed on the rest of the house. The antique building did have some good features—wide floor boards, original small-paned windows, plaster walls, and some custom woodwork.

We had continuing episodes with wildlife—after all this had been home for the homeless. Once we were over-run with earwigs, apparently being on a migratory path; as well

as a family of possums in the cellar. Their babies were small enough to work their way up under the kitchen sink in search of food. We fed them some food on the cellar steps until one day they all just disappeared except for one. We eventually relocated it with a Havahart trap. We also had a family of foxes for an afternoon. Mother fox left her offspring sunning on the stone backyard steps to the garden, probably on her way to scout out a new burrow. I will always remember seeing the whole family of foxes frolicking in the newly mowed grass in the back field. They were gone after that afternoon.

Our home for more than 20 years, the Danby house was too hard to heat and no longer suitable for people aging as we are. Like those animals, we too, had to move on to a newer and more livable habitat.

Looking forward to your life when you are young, the horizon extends in a haze. Looking back on your life, this horizon has become peaks and valleys. As you get older you may not be able to restore old houses or climb mountains but you discover that the peaks and valleys are still there, albeit of a different nature, but still worth the climbing.

The Night Is Freezing Fast

The night is freezing fast,
To-morrow comes December;
And winterfalls of old
Are with me from the past;
And chiefly I remember
How Dick would hate the cold.

Fall, winter, fall; for he,
Prompt hand and headpiece clever,
Has woven a winter robe,
And made of earth and sea
His overcoat for ever,
And wears the turning globe.



—A.E. HOUSMAN
Cambridge, England 1859-1936

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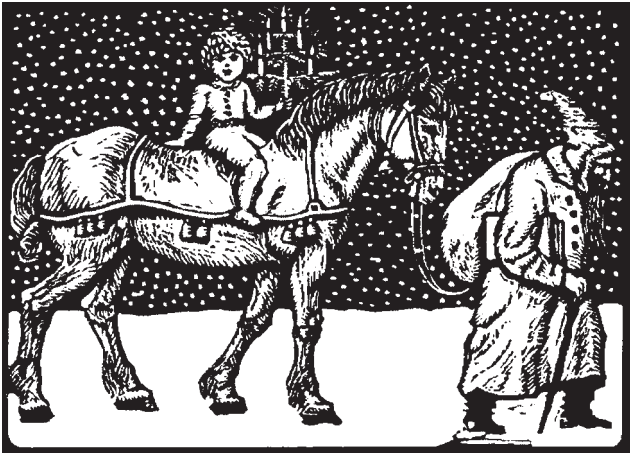
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The Natural Calendar Early Winter

by Bill Felker

Notes on the Progress of the Year

November 29: 1st Week in December

The Season of Heightened Seasonal Affective Disorders starts on December 3, peaks on January 3 and then gradually declines through February 19.

Between December 5 and January 8, the Season of Solstice (or the Season of Sunstop), the time during which the sun holds within a degree of 23 degrees and 26 minutes (its solstice position), produces a period of solar stability similar to the one between June 5 and July 8.

Woodchuck and Bat Hibernating Season is underway throughout southwestern Ohio. Redpoll Season arrives in the Northeast, and Mistletoe Gathering Season and Brown Pelican Nesting Season commence along the Gulf of Mexico.

In most years, this week brings to a close the Season of Second Spring, the Season of Late Autumn Crocus Bloom, the Poinsettia Shipment Season, the Season of Bittersweet Berry Shedding, the Corn and Soybean Harvest Season. Leafdrop Season is complete for most deciduous trees. In the garden, Strawberry Mulching Season complements Herb Transplanting Season, the time to transfer of oregano, rosemary, parsley, thyme and sage to indoor pots.

Week One of December in the Field and Garden

Call in final bedding plant seed orders for delivery before new moon on December 14. Or plan further ahead to start your flowers under the new Snow Flea Moon, January 13.

Mulched parsley, carrots, beets, potatoes, chard, broccoli, kale, chives can still be brought in from the vegetable garden.

Growth of winter wheat slows in the cold. Some fields yellow from low nitrogen levels. The Christmas tree harvest is still in progress, and Christmas cacti often have reached full bloom.

It's time to plug in the electric bucket heaters and try to keep the water near 50 degrees for your livestock. Small fish ponds and water features may also benefit from heaters.

Maintain good ventilation in the barn for all your animals, and watch for stress from overcrowding. Keep on the lookout for pneumonia. Plant daffodils, tulips and other spring bulbs for forcing after you have chilled them for about thirteen weeks.

December 6: Week Two

The second major cold front of December ushers in the Season of Early Winter on the 8th. This three-week period usually puts an end to the milder weather of Late Autumn, creating a bridge to the harsher conditions of Deep Winter that develop by January 1.

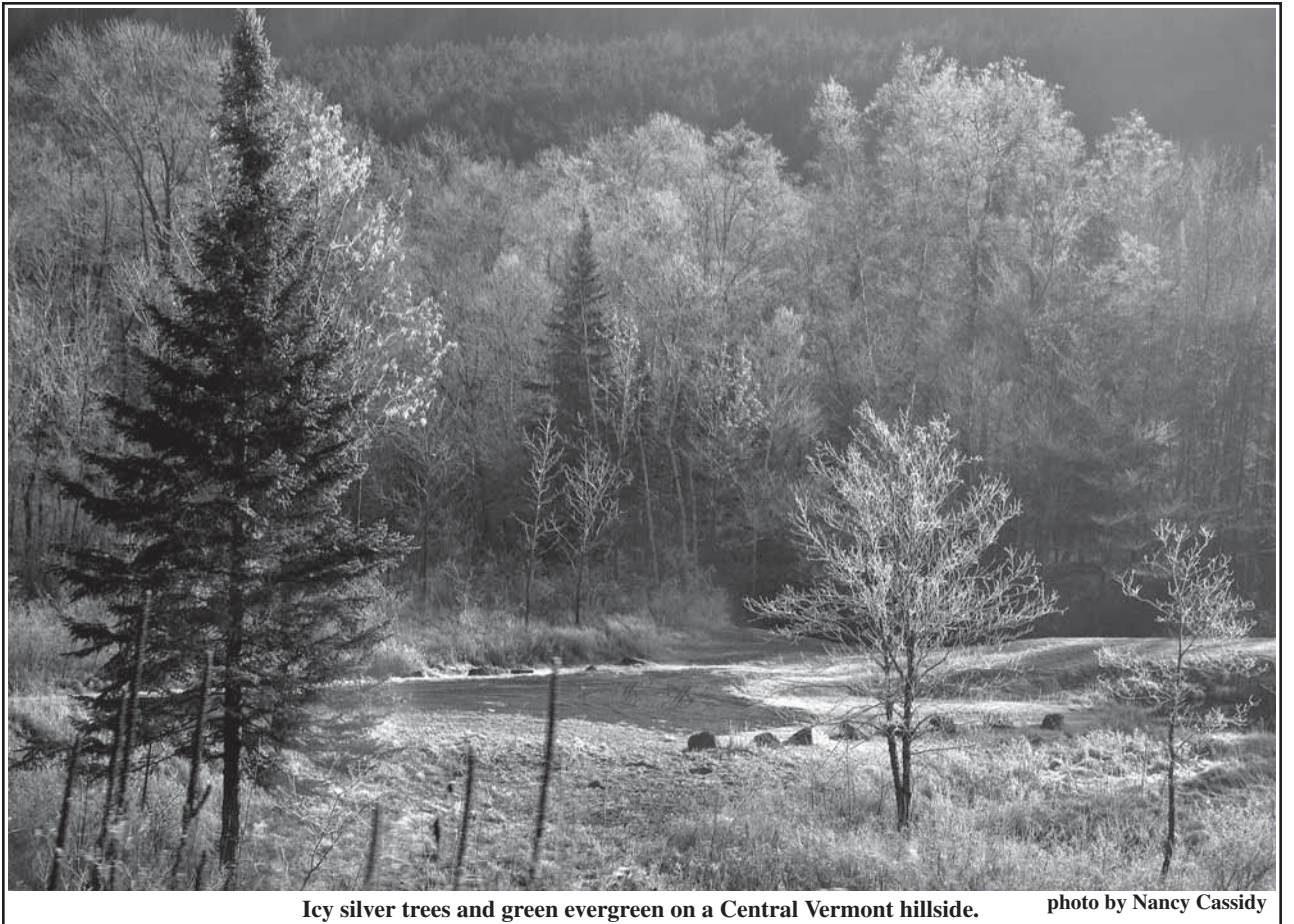
The second week of December brings Duck Migration Season and Honeysuckle Leafdrop Season to a close. For ducks along the northern Atlantic seaboard, the Season of Movement to Coastal Waters starts as ice covers inland ponds and lakes.

On the last day of the period, the Season of the Halcyon Days, a traditional two-week period of calm before the turbulence of winter, traditionally begins. According to Greek legend, the halcyon (kingfisher) built its nest on the surface of the ocean, and laid its eggs late in the fall. In order to ensure the brood would emerge safely, the bird calmed winds for a week before and after winter solstice. In the Lower Midwest, this period spans the milder (but often snowy) last two weeks of Early Winter.

Week Two of December in the Field and Garden

In the dark afternoons in December, orchids are in their prime. Under lights, in a greenhouse, or in a south window, many varieties bloom before Christmas.

The corn and soybean harvests are usually complete all around the county by the beginning of Early Winter, and growth of winter wheat slows in the cold. The Christmas tree harvest ends, and the last poinsettias come north. Deep



Icy silver trees and green evergreen on a Central Vermont hillside.

photo by Nancy Cassidy

snow sometimes covers the land from the Ohio Valley to the Canadian border.

Keep up weight and daily milking records for your herd and flock. An unexpected decline in either weight or milk production is often related to problems with feed or health. Since winter generally brings the highest prices for goat's milk, there is extra incentive to watch your production records. If you don't have goats, a daily weight record for you and your family is an excellent reminder to be moderate during the holidays ahead!

In the dark of the moon prune fruit-bearing bushes. Order legume seed for pastures. Schedule your frost seeding for January and February.

When beech leaves have all come down in the Lower Midwest, then mangoes are in full bloom throughout southern Florida, and Florida grapefruit will soon be ripe.

December 13: Week Three

This week brings the Season of the Shortest Days of the Year. The sun lies at its lowest point in the noon sky, and rises and sets at its farthest points south. Solar declination reaches 23 degrees, 26 minutes on December 21 and remains at that position on the 22nd and 23rd. The length of the night grows to 14 hours and 40 minutes (its longest time of all) on the 19th, and that amount of nightly darkness holds through Christmas. On the 26th, days begin to lengthen; they will continue to grow at the rate of seven minutes a week until January 15. After that, night recedes a little better than two minutes every day all the way to early summer.

Pruning Season gets underway as average highs remain in the 30s; it continues until highs climb once again past 40. Take out suckers, dead and crossing branches. Cut fruit trees down to the right level for picking, but don't prune what will bloom before June.

In the northern woods, White Ear Tuft Season marks the ears of red squirrels, and Wood Turtle Hibernation Season occurs along the rivers.

Week Three of December in the Field and Garden

Place measuring sticks beside a few of the garden bulbs that may have emerged. Mulch them to keep them protected. Then, track their growth as the year unfolds.

Curly dock could be growing back along streams and ponds. The new spears can be used for salad or stir fry.

Odds against the survival of garden vegetables rise sharply as the full force of the December 15 cold front settles across the area.

In protected areas of the garden, The mint may still be fragrant. Parsley and thyme are still green and firm for seasoning.

Tamp down the snow around younger fruit trees after each snow storm to protect them from mice working under the surface.

December 20: Week Four

Milder weather may open pussy willows and draw up snowdrops, crocus and aconites as the days expand, but along the Gulf of Mexico, the Season of the Rising Sun is already shortening the dormancy of trees and shrubs, hurrying the gestation of spring. Across coastal Georgia, sweet gums and yellow poplars finally lose their leaves, and their buds swell almost immediately to replace the loss. In central Florida, red maples open, and Jessamine produces its yellow blossoms.

The earliest of the permanent resident birds, the tufted titmouse, begin mating calls as December becomes January. Although the coldest weeks of winter keep the progress of spring confined to movement of the sun and the stars, the titmouse stakes out his territory, setting precedent for the cardinals and doves, which join him at the end of the year's first month

Week Four of December in the Field and Garden

Calculate livestock feed acreage required for the year ahead. As you sort receipts and records for taxes, plan to make improvements in 2021.

Rheumatism in livestock increases during the cold and damp weather of winter. A tablespoonful of paprika and one of molasses per day are considered helpful to reduce the stiffness in animals' joints. Try it for your own aches and pains!

Watch for mold in feed; be sure the grain and hay are "dry and sweet." Separate your thinnest pregnant does and ewes now and give them a little extra attention in order to improve their body condition and reduce risk of abortion.

Pullets (hens) which will produce summer eggs are hatching. Plan now to have broilers ready for market as early in the year as possible

The outside garden is almost always gone by now. Collards and kale, and well mulched carrots and beets can survive to this point in season, but January's cold spells eventually take them. Indoors, however, tomato and pepper plants, seeded in middle summer and brought inside before frost, should be continuing to produce fruit in a south window. Basil, parsley, rosemary, thyme and oregano can also be doing well indoors.

Keep plenty of lukewarm water available for your chickens when temperatures fall below freezing. Egg production can be expected to decline when highs stay below 30 degrees, but warm water will help keep the hens happier and, hopefully, laying a little. Warmer water is also recommended for pregnant ewes and does.

Green Mountain Club

Winter Outings on Zoom

Thursday, December 10, 6-7:30 pm. Artwork on the Long Trail. Join Green Mountain Club Field Staff Kati Christoffel as she leads us in a watercolor painting of a wintery scene on the Long Trail. As a former art instructor and Stratton Pond Caretaker, Kati has created many pieces of Long Trail landscapes.

You'll learn the basics of interpreting a landscape image and how to use watercolors, pen & ink, crayons or even finger-painting to create your own Long Trail piece of art. Invite your friends, invite your family and we'll see you on December 10th for an evening of artistic merriment!

To learn more about Caretaker and Artist Kati Christoffel visit page 12 of the Green Mountain Club's Spring 2020 Long Trail News and her Etsy Store Watercolor Wanderer. Register at www.greenmountainclub.org.

Thursday, December 17, 7-8 pm. Stonewalls & Cellar Holes. Led by Samantha Ford. Discover how to "read" old forested farmsteads and agricultural architecture to trace 300 years of land use

history in Vermont. Stone walls, cellar holes, old roads, and other mysteries "lost" in the woods reveal stories of the families who shaped the landscape as we see it today.

Sam's passion for history extends back nearly three decades, when her parents found her watching the History Channel instead of Saturday morning cartoons. When she graduated with her MS in Historic Preservation from the University of Vermont in 2013, Sam headed west to Jackson Hole, Wyoming. As the Director of Historical Research and Outreach at the Jackson Hole Historical Society & Museum, a staff training for local wildlife guides became a jumping off point into interpreting history for self-identified "non-historians."

Sam returned home to Vermont in 2015, where the history is deeper and the woods greener. Sam's happiest when others are inspired to share their own personal history with her during a walk in the woods. Sam is the owner of Turn Stone Research. Register at www.greenmountainclub.org.

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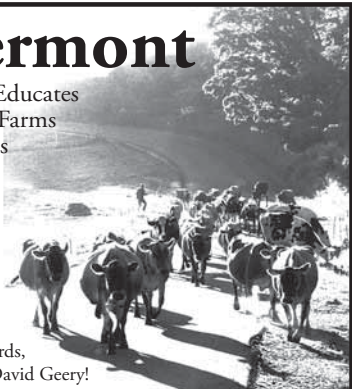
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A Vermont Almanack for Early Winter

by Bill Felker

Arrives the snow, and driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
Hides the hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,
And veils the farm—house at the garden's end.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Sun

Winter solstice occurs at 5:02 a.m. on December 21. The Sun enters the Deep Winter constellation of Capricorn on the same day.

December 23 is Spring Gnomon Day: Mark the furthest entry of the sun into your southernmost window today. Its position on the wall or floor is the starting point for measuring the advance of spring.

On December 24, the Sun begins to move toward summer solstice, but the days do not actually start to lengthen until December 26.

Phases of the Moon and Lore

December 7: The Manger Moon enters its fourth quarter at 7:27 p.m.

December 12: The Moon is at perigee (its position closest to Earth) at 3:43 p.m.

December 14: The Stell Moon (in which homesteaders provide their animals with stells or shelters) is new at 11:17 a.m.

December 21: The Moon enters its second quarter at 6:42 p.m.

December 24: The Moon reaches apogee (its position farthest from Earth) at 11:33 a.m.

December 29: The Moon is full at 10:29 p.m.

Tidal lunar influences have been shown to be greater at full moon and new moon times. You might expect more trouble with your children, parents, flock and herd, therefore, on or about December 14 and 29.

The moon exerts less influence on ocean tides and on human and animal behavior when it comes into its 2nd and 4th quarters. Therefore, it might make more sense to shop and then take care of your animals, family and other friends on or about December 7 and 21.

The Stars

An hour before sunrise, Orion has set. Sirius has moved deep into the west, Cancer and Gemini following it. The Big Dipper is overhead. June's Arcturus is coming in from the east, and August's Vega has come up in the northeast.

The Shooting Stars

The Geminid meteor shower lasts from December 7 to 17, and its peak occurs on December 13 and 14, bringing over 100 shooting stars per hour. The month's second shower, the Ursid meteors, will fall across the sky on December 21-22 at the rate of just a handful every hour.



The Planets

Venus is still the Morning Star before sunrise, having moved retrograde once more into Libra. Mars in Pisces lies in the eastern sky in the early evening and moves across the sky throughout the night. Jupiter and Saturn continue in Sagittarius. In the dusk on December 21, a "Grand Conjunction" of Jupiter and Saturn will occur in the far west.

Meteorology

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

It is probable that full moon on December 29, lunar perigee on December 12 and new moon on December 14 will bring stronger-than-average storms to the Northeast.

THE FRIENDLY BEASTS

Jesus our brother, strong and good
Was humbly born in a stable rude
And the friendly beasts around Him stood
Jesus our brother, strong and good

"I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown
"I carried His mother up hill and down
I carried His mother to Bethlehem town"
"I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown

"I," said the cow, all white and red
"I gave Him my manger for His bed
I gave Him my hay to pillow His head"
"I," said the cow, all white and red

"I," said the sheep with curly horn
"I gave Him my wool for His blanket warm
He wore my coat on Christmas morn"
"I," said the sheep with curly horn

"I," said the dove from the rafters high
"I cooed Him to sleep so that He would not cry
We cooed Him to sleep, my mate and I"
"I," said the dove from the rafters high

Thus every beast by some good spell
In the stable dark was glad to tell
Of the gift he gave Emmanuel
The gift he gave Emmanuel

—UNKNOWN

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

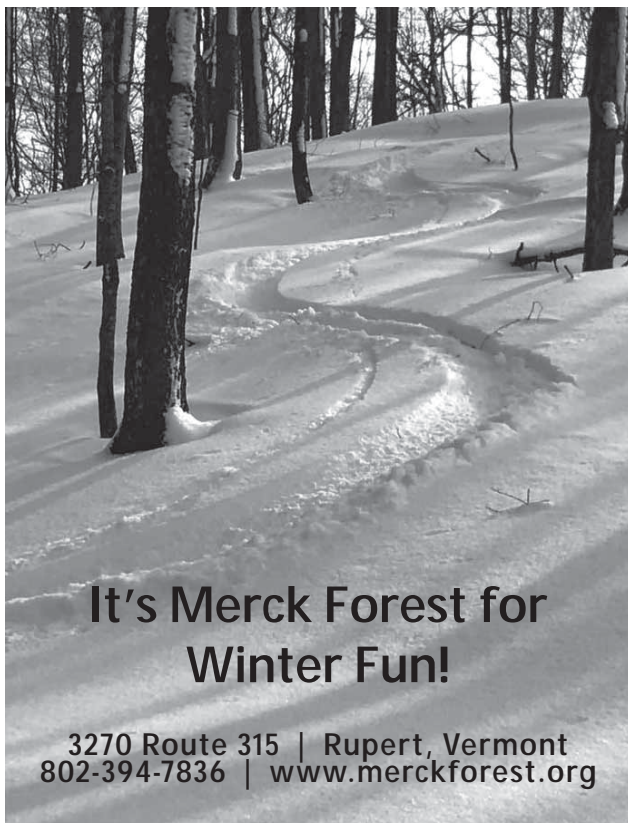


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— Bob Bushee, Owner —

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Ferne Mills Faivre, Allen A. Mills, Jr., and Kathy Mills Parker, sisters and brother, went out to gather butternuts for the family's Christmas recipes. Says Allen, "No butternuts this year but no dirty hands, either!"

Florence, VT

Holiday Treats from Whipple Hollow

Chocolate Butternut Fudge

- 5 lbs. sugar (10 cups)
- 2 cups broken butternut pieces (or walnuts)
- 1 lb. cocoa (2 cups)
- 1 lb. butter (2 cups)
- 1 pint milk (2 cups)

Bring all ingredients to boil, reserve nuts. Boil to soft-ball stage. Remove from heat and beat well—to creamy/smooth consistency and just beginning to harden. Add nuts if desired. Pour into greased square or rectangular pan. Cut when slightly cool/hardened. (You can cut recipe in half.)

Gramma Mills' Butternut Cake

- ¾ cup butter
- ½ cup maple syrup
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ cup milk
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 eggs (beaten)
- 2 cups flour
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ cup chopped butternuts

Cream butter and sugar. Add syrup slowly, beating constantly. Add eggs and vanilla. Beat until smooth. Add sifted flour, baking powder and salt alternately with milk. Fold in chopped butternuts. Bake at 375° for 35 minutes.

Maple Syrup Frosting

- 1 cup maple syrup
- 2 egg whites (beaten until stiff)

Boil syrup until it threads and then pour/dribble into beaten egg whites stirring constantly until thick enough to spread on cooled cake. Decorate with whole butternut meats.

Gramma Mills' Suet Pudding

- 1 cup ground suet (or Crisco shortening)
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 cup molasses
- 1 cup sour milk
- ½ cups flour

Mix all ingredients together well, pour into pan. Steam for three or four hours.

Kathy Mills Parker comments: My mom used to use coffee cans when they were made out of metal, and placed them in a large container of water. I have a crockpot in which I put about an inch of water. The crockpot has a metal pan with a cover that it came with which is about 3" high and that is what I steam my pudding in. I have to do it on high for about for six hours. I'm sure you could use any large pan with water and another smaller one placed in it for the pudding.

Pudding Sauce:

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg
- Whipped cream
- 2 tsp butter
- 1 quart sliced strawberries

Cream sugar and butter. Beat egg in well with sugar/butter mixture. Add 1 quart of sliced strawberries and stir well. Serve over warm Suet Pudding and top with whipped cream. You can use fresh strawberries or thawed frozen ones.

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Watering the Cow

I led the red Guernsey from her stable out into glistening daylight. She stood at the trough gulping pailfuls of ice cold water. Her broad back caught and held perfect snowflakes on the ends of her long, winter hair. They formed a gallery of crystal shapes. She was silver laden. We walked back carefully with our exquisite burden. We entered the dark, warm barn. Our treasure vanished. She shook, tumbling the stars.



—WILLIAM MUNDELL
 1912-1997, Newfane, VT

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Christmas in Whipple Hollow

by Allen A. Mills, Jr.

“Where in the world is Whipple Hollow?” It is the cut that runs north and south from the small village of Florence, VT; a once busy marble producing area, which is just west of the town of Pittsford. If you follow the Whipple Hollow Road from Florence through the foot hills on the east side of the Taconic Range you will come out in West Rutland and if you are really paying attention about four-and-a-half miles through the hollow you will see the Allen Mills Road. This half mile of dirt road leads to a very special and unique spot.

As I get older, it seems the preparations for Christmas begin earlier every year but with my mother, Ferne Mills, I’m not sure it ever stopped. She did not knit but crocheted instead. It seemed that her hands were never idle. She made hats, vests, pillow covers and many more items that she gave as gifts. Ferne had learned to crochet from her mother, Jesse Spaulding, who made lap robes and other things that she gave away as gifts. Of my three sisters, Kathy was the only one to take up the skill of crocheting. I am particularly proud to know that she makes little caps and sends them to the hospital for the newborn babies to wear home.

Harvesting the butternuts

As soon as Summer turned to Autumn, the nuts started to fall from the Butternut trees that grew in the pastures of the Valley farm. There were two trees that would yield extra large nuts. The Butternut meats were an essential ingredient for Mom’s Chocolate Butternut Fudge that she always made at Christmas time. The Butternut meats were used anywhere Walnut meats could be used but without the somewhat bitter taste and were used for Dad’s favorite: a white cake with butternut meats throughout and covered with maple frosting with butternut meats on top.

In preparation for Christmas, the Butternuts were gathered by the entire family as soon as they fell from the trees and before the squirrels could get them all. One year we gathered seven bushels of nuts from two trees. Before the nuts are dried they have a thick green furry husk with a sticky resin all over the husks. Allen and Ferne would wear gloves to gather the nuts but the children would soon have black sticky hands from handling the nuts. As a kid, I wondered why squirrels didn’t have black sticky fur from gathering butternuts. The nuts were then dried in the barn and Dad would crack them a bushel at a time and then Mom and the girls would pick out the meats from the now brown cracked shells.

Grandfather Waven’s Christmas gifts

Waven Spaulding, my grandfather, would get me to help him get several long slim White Birch poles. The poles were about three inches in diameter. He would cut the poles into lengths that we could handle being careful not to damage the white bark of the poles. When he got the poles home and in his wood shop, he would cut them to length, flatten, one side with his shaper, on the opposite side he would drill three holes for candles and then decorate them with greens and would give them as Christmas gifts. Another thing my grandfather, Waven, did was to get Spruce boughs and decorate them as sprays to give to people to decorate the door of their homes.

I can remember one year when deep snow came in early December, my grandfather and I borrowed my sister, Ferne Marie’s, Lightning Glider sled and went to the southern pasture and into the woods. We came to several large Spruce trees. I was a full-grown man at eight years old by then, so my grandfather told me to climb to the top of one of the trees. He tied a rope around my waist so he could send a small saw up for me to use to cut boughs loaded with cones for him to use for his Christmas sprays.

We started out of the woods with the sled loaded with boughs and in the far end of our meadow we met my father. He was driving Dick and Danny, our team of work horses, hooked to a huge sled. We loaded the boughs on the sled and climbed on ourselves. As we traveled across the snow-covered meadow with the horses trotting and the trace chains jingling, my grandfather in his big booming voice started singing “Jingle Bells”.

Cranberry-orange relish and butternut fudge

My mother would always make Cranberry and Orange Relish for Christmas Dinner which was one of my favorites of the season. I was allowed to help with this task. She would get her hand-cranked grinder and my job was to turn the crank as she fed whole raw cranberries and orange quarters into the top of the grinder. “Just turn slow and steady”, she would say and “No, keep those little fingers out of there”. She would then put in a moderate amount of sugar and stir. “Moderate” is a good word, it leaves a lot up to your own personal taste. I usually wanted more sugar.

The Christmas season was and still is a treat for all the senses as the familiar sights, smells, sounds, touch and taste start to appear as many of the old recipes begin to show up.

The one treat of the season that was simply irresistible was my mother’s Chocolate Butternut Fudge. She made great quantities of it for family and friends. She even had to calculate a pilferage factor as many of the pans of fudge cooling on the porch would get raided by the children and Allen as they left the house for play outside or chores at the barn.

A special Christmas lesson

It was the same year that I was eight years old, when my grandparents, Jessie and Waven, arrived at the farm wanting to take me to meet someone special. I eagerly hopped into the back seat of their big old Buick car. In the trunk of the car was one of the decorated sprays and I shared the back seat with Christmas gifts, fudge and cranberry orange relish.

We traveled to Whitehall, New York and stopped at a big



The extended Mills and Spaulding family gathers for Christmas dinner, circa 1950. Front row: Allen Mills, Jr., Janice Mills, Herb Spaulding, Butch Spaulding, and Spot the dog. 2nd row: Ferne Marie Mills, Donna Spaulding, Ronald Smith, Lynne Smith, Patty Spaulding & Nina Spaulding. Last row: Gertrude Spaulding, Herb Spaulding, Margret Spaulding, Glenn Spaulding (in back between Herb and Margret), Gussie Smith, Robert Smith, Kathy Mills, Waven Spaulding, Ferne Mills, and Allen Mills, Sr.

old house in the village. As we entered the house each one of us carrying some of the gifts and me with the decorated spray; it seemed very dark and quiet inside. There in the living room sitting in a rocking chair with the rays of the sun coming through the window was the oldest person I had ever seen. My grandparents, I knew were old, but she was way older than they were. Her name was Nelly Hoey.

I gave her the spray first and then she was given all the other gifts, the last being a lap robe my grandmother had made for her. It was then I saw tears come into the woman’s eyes and started running down her wrinkled cheeks. “What was this about, an adult crying?” I thought. My grandfather sensing my discomfort look me outside to hang the spray on the old woman’s door. I asked him what was wrong with Nellie Hoey and why was she crying. He told me everyone cries and that sometimes it is because people feel joy and thankfulness. Maybe this was what Christmas was all about and maybe my grandparents had taught me a lesson.

Gifts of Christmas joy for everyone

Every Christmas, my parents would pack their car full of all the things that my mother had made, which were sweet breads, cookies, sometimes pies, and always some Chocolate Butternut Fudge and deliver them to anyone in the local community who they thought might be alone or needed a visit. They had at least ten different places where they gave these gifts. One of their stops was at the neat little farm of Abel and Nellie Brown. My sister Jan, who was not in school yet, went with them. Abel admired my cute little pigtailed sister and gave her a newborn Jersey calf. My sister named the calf Bambi because it looked like the little deer. She raised the calf and it became the only Jersey cow among my father’s herd of Holsteins.

My mother would usually start making the Chocolate Butternut Fudge on a weekend afternoon before Christmas. This way she knew she would have help stirring the pot. As the fudge cooked on the wood-fired kitchen stove, family members switched off and on with the stirring process. At a certain point in the process, my mother would go outside, get her dish pan full of snow, take the pan of molten fudge and place it in the pan of snow to cool more quickly, and then kept stirring until it was ready to be poured into the fudge pans and left to cool.

Our very own, very large Christmas tree!

The excitement at Christmas kept budding as my sisters and I headed out to the spruces to get our own Christmas tree. Many trees would be rejected as they were too tiny, too little, or too small. My sister, Ferne’s main criteria was HUGE! After switching off the sawing process between all of us children, the tree finally fell. It took all of us to drag the huge tree and were finally helped by my father who came with the horses and sled to help us get it back to the house.

After cutting several feet off both the bottom and top of the tree, it finally stood in the dining room. When the tree was decorated and even though it looked like it came from the basement and went right through the roof, my sister, Ferne said, “There, that’s the perfect tree.”

Christmas day with the whole family

With a farm family there were no days off or holidays when the normal work was not done but we enjoyed our festivities in addition to the work. We always celebrated Christmas on Christmas Eve as we went to my grandparents, Waven’s and Jessie’s, for the great family Christmas dinner. While the evening milking and chores were being done on Christmas Eve, Santa Claus would come to our house.

Christmas morning was a time of great hustle on the farm.

The milking, feeding and cleaning had to be done before going to our grandparent’s house. My mother would be busy cooking food to add to the Christmas dinner, and gifts and Chocolate Butternut Fudge had to be packed up for the trip. My sister would give the animals some extra treats and pats as I did on Christmas morning. I would pat the horses and talk to them as they were such hard working, devoted animals.

Christmas day we celebrated with my grandparents, Waven and Jessie and the entire Spaulding family. Aunts and uncles would bring more gifts and food to add to the celebration. For us children, it was a great time to be with our cousins.

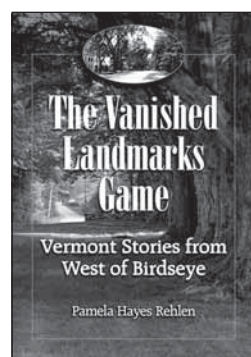
The Christmas meal always ended with my grandmother’s Suet Pudding. I looked forward to this treat every year. The recipe has been handed down and continues even now.

In the late afternoon we went home and did the farm chores and evening milking that awaited us before we could rest. Plant seeds of joy—they will grow in any season—and share the Harvest. *Merry Christmas from the Whipple Hollow Farm!*

Allen A. Mills, Jr. has written a book about his childhood on the family farm in Florence VT, *Barnyards, Barefeet and Bluejeans—A Horse’s Tale*. It can be ordered from Allen A. Mills, Jr., 362 Allen Mills Rd., Florence, VT 05744, for \$20 plus \$5 for P&H or call (802) 438-5653.



Captivating Stories from Castleton



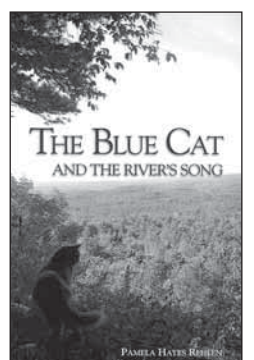
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The Blue Cat

And The River’s Song
by Pamela Hayes Rehlen
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Winter comes to the gardens and yards of Hildene in Manchester, VT.

photo by Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home

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Manchester, VT

Hildene Hosts Annual "Our Home For The Holidays"

From December 3 through January 1, it is Christmas Eve 1912 at Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home in Manchester, VT. The setting: Presidential son Robert Lincoln and wife Mary have prepared their Manchester, Vermont home for a family Christmas.

To kick off an authentic holiday season in Robert and Mary's home, The Museum Store welcomes visitors to its annual open house, "Our Home for the Holidays." Located in the Welcome Center, the store is a popular destination for holiday shoppers, filled to the brim with items inspired by Lincoln family history, the estate's natural environment, gardens, life on the farm and more.

In addition to a wonderful collection of Vermont prod-

ucts, shoppers can access an ever-growing line of Hildene Estate products including: "Maple Rum Leaf," a soft ripened, bloomy rind cheese wrapped in rum soaked maple leaves harvested from Hildene; aged cow and goat milk artisanal cheeses; self-care products such as goat's milk soap in assorted scents; beeswax lip balm and salve, and historic Hildene peony seeds. Knitters this year will find signature luxury yarns in a variety of natural colorways, spun with fleece from Hildene's resident flocks of alpaca and Corriedale sheep. Those who appreciate history, stories, and the creative, are bound to enjoy Hildene's new "farm to fiber to hat story," with its original design the "Railsplitter Cap." An

expanded student-focused section features new choices for children with activity-oriented books, games and project kits on diverse topics from bees and bugs to environmental science, farm life, the night sky, and sustainability.

Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home is currently open Thursday - Monday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information and Covid pro-

ocols, go to hildene.org/visiting/hours. Admission is not required for The Museum Store. Admission is required to tour the estate: \$23 for adults and \$6 for children 6 to 16. Members and children under 6 are free. Hildene is closed December 22-26.

Hildene, 1005 Hildene Rd., off Rt. 7A south of the village, Manchester, VT. (800) 578-1788. www.hildene.org.

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Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor,
Thee, my soul's Glory and Crown.

Fair are the meadows, fairer still the woodlands,
Robed in the blooming garb of spring:
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,
Who makes the woeful heart to sing.

Fair is the sunshine, fairer still the moonlight,
And all the twinkling, starry host:
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer,
Than all the angels heaven can boast.

—FROM THE GERMAN, 17th Century

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Christmas At Castleton State College

by Pamela Hayes Rehlen

Memories of Christmas season my freshman year at Castleton State College always come back to me.

I arrived at that little, isolated, teachers' institution when there were long, golden, September afternoons. As the year darkened and closed down, I'd walk to the town library after a school cafeteria dinner and see piles of leaves burning along Castleton's Main Street. I'd smell the thin, acrid smoke with its yearning, teasing scent of things past and gone, and see the tiny bright sparks that flew away into the dark.

By November, the leaves were all down, sodden, blackened, frosted over with slivered, bluish ice, and the air had turned thin and sharp.

That first year, I'd been assigned an out-of-the-way, second floor, room in Leavenworth Hall, and I was alone because at the last minute, the girl who was supposed to live with me had gotten cold feet about going away to school.

Because of my isolated, no-roommate, situation, I wasn't much aware of the real life of the dorm. But when everyone returned to school after Thanksgiving, I realized that the atmosphere of Leavenworth had changed, and the building had begun to buzz.

My next door neighbor, a former cheer leader from Proctor High, stopped me in the hall, gave me a Secret Santa assignment and sent me upstairs to see dorm-power-person Patty Aguglia.

Going into Patty's place was like visiting the home of an Italian grandmother who would have been no part of my heritage. I remember her thick rug, her thriving plants, her heaped-with-wool knitting basket, the stern crucifix hanging over her bed with its tufted chenille spread.

I wanted to stay in that cozy room, but instead I was sent off to Rutland, probably on the college Special Events bus, to buy a \$1 or less gift at Woolworth's or Fishman's.

The school and the town of Castleton had some interdependence, and there were long-time ways of doing things, so someone local may have cut down the tree that maintenance men dragged in and set up against the west wall of the downstairs lounge, close to the long-unused fireplace of which Santa could be expected to soon avail himself.

Our housemother, Mrs. Cleary, lived in a neat two-room apartment separated from the lounge by French doors. Normally, she closed or opened this public-space-abutting barrier according to her mood, or in response to what she felt that day about we girls' behavior.

Now, in December, they were always wide open. Her little portable Motorola radio played the Rutland station's Christmas music. She had her own minute tree, and she put bowls of ribbon candy and red and green foil-covered chocolate kisses on the tables at each end of her classic mid-century sofa.



The girls of Leavenworth Hall in the 1960s at Castleton State College in Castleton, VT. Pam Rehlen is in the front row second from the right (little pan collared blouse.) photo from the author's collection

She and all the other dorm residents seemed full of happy excitement. Conspiratorial groups of girls ran up and down the stairs, opening doors, letting big icy drafts into downstairs hallways. There was a building-wide, deep-forest smell from the Christmas tree and all the evergreen decorations.

I'd come back from my first class on knife-sharp mornings, on days of hard, brilliant, sun, or dark days when there was a trace of snow in the air, and I'd stop on my way upstairs to my room to look in at the lounge with its evergreen branches piled along the fireplace mantle and tacked up over the front door, and the decorated tree and Mother Cleary's cheery living quarters looking like a furniture store Christmas display room.

Finally, one evening near the end of the month, just before we headed home, we all came downstairs to the lounge and gathered around the tree. The girls brought in cookies they'd secretly baked off-campus and food sent from home.

We found out our Secret Santas, the dorm residents who, without our ever knowing who they were, had been doing little favors for us all of December. We exchanged gifts and cards, and we sang carols. We pulled out a big soft chair and put it in the middle and Mother Cleary came and joined us.

Near the end of the party, Joe Jardine, the school's philosophy professor, a small dark man and a bachelor, walked

though the lounge very slowly, on the way to a dim hallway leading to his back-of-the-building-apartment, and with Charlie Chaplinesque exaggeration ogled all of us sitting around in our nightgowns and robes, sending everyone into a titter-storm of alarm.

Castleton State College in the early 1960s was an isolated place, a little enclosed world with many rituals that supported its sense of self as an institution that prepared socially-refined and professionally-committed Vermont teachers.

I wasn't going to be a teacher. In so many ways, I never should have been there, and I wasn't there very long, but while I was, I now realize the uniqueness of my experience.

Life in the school felt rooted and secure – and happy – and that Christmas my freshman year was one of the best and most memorable I've ever experienced.

*Pamela Hayes Rehlen has written and lived most of her life in Castleton, Vermont. She is the author of stories, article, 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 back issues of these columns are available to read under the archives, usually on p. 11, at www.vermontcountry sampler.com.

Green Mountain Gardener

Winterberry, Our Native Holly

by Dr. Leonard Perry, Extension Professor, University of Vermont

If you are looking for an easy care, native ornamental plant to add color to the late fall and early winter landscape, consider the winterberry. Also known as winterberry holly or North American holly (*Ilex verticillata*), this relative of the evergreen hollies is "deciduous" (losing its leaves in winter). It loses its dull green leaves in autumn, leaving an abundance of attractive scarlet berries on every stem and branch. These are attractive in arrangements, or just left in the landscape, if they aren't devoured by birds.

This shrub is generally found in swampy areas, wet thickets, and low woodlands, and is often seen in masses in such areas from highways. Winterberry can grow up to 10 to 15 feet tall, although they are generally half that height. Winterberry is hardy for USDA hardiness zones 4 to 9 (to -20F average minimum temperature in winter, or lower), which includes much of New England except for the coldest regions. Plant in full sunlight. This plant prefers acidic to slightly acidic, wet soil—conditions which mimic its natural habitat. Planting it near a pond or stream is perfect or in drier soil or partial shade. It is ideal for wildlife landscaping as its dense, twiggy growth provides nesting sites for songbirds. Fruit are eaten by red squirrels, cedar waxwings, catbirds, thrushes, and other birds. It is surprisingly disease-resistant, prone only

to occasional leaf spots or powdery mildew.

One thing to keep in mind is that you will need to plant both male and female plants for fruit production. Purchase at least one male plant for every three to four female plants, and plant close together. This shrub is at its most attractive stage from September through mid-winter when its branches are covered with brightly colored berries. In summer, this plant has only tiny white flowers. Leaves are pale to dark green and elliptical to round in shape, depending on cultivar. 'Winter Red' is a favorite for cutting for arrangements as it is multi-stemmed with

an abundance of bright red, medium-sized berries and dark green leaves that turn bronze in autumn. It can grow to nine feet tall. 'Winter Gold' has a similar growth habit and produces attractive peach to gold-orange berries that get paler as they age. A good male cultivar for pollinating these is 'Southern Gentleman'. These are only a few of the good winterberries available. Check with your local full service garden center or nursery for their recommendations.

For more information contact Leonard Perry, (802) 656-0479. www.perrysperennials.info.

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Statewide

December is the Start of Bird Feeding Season

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department recommends Vermonters wait to put up bird feeders until December 1st to avoid attracting bears.

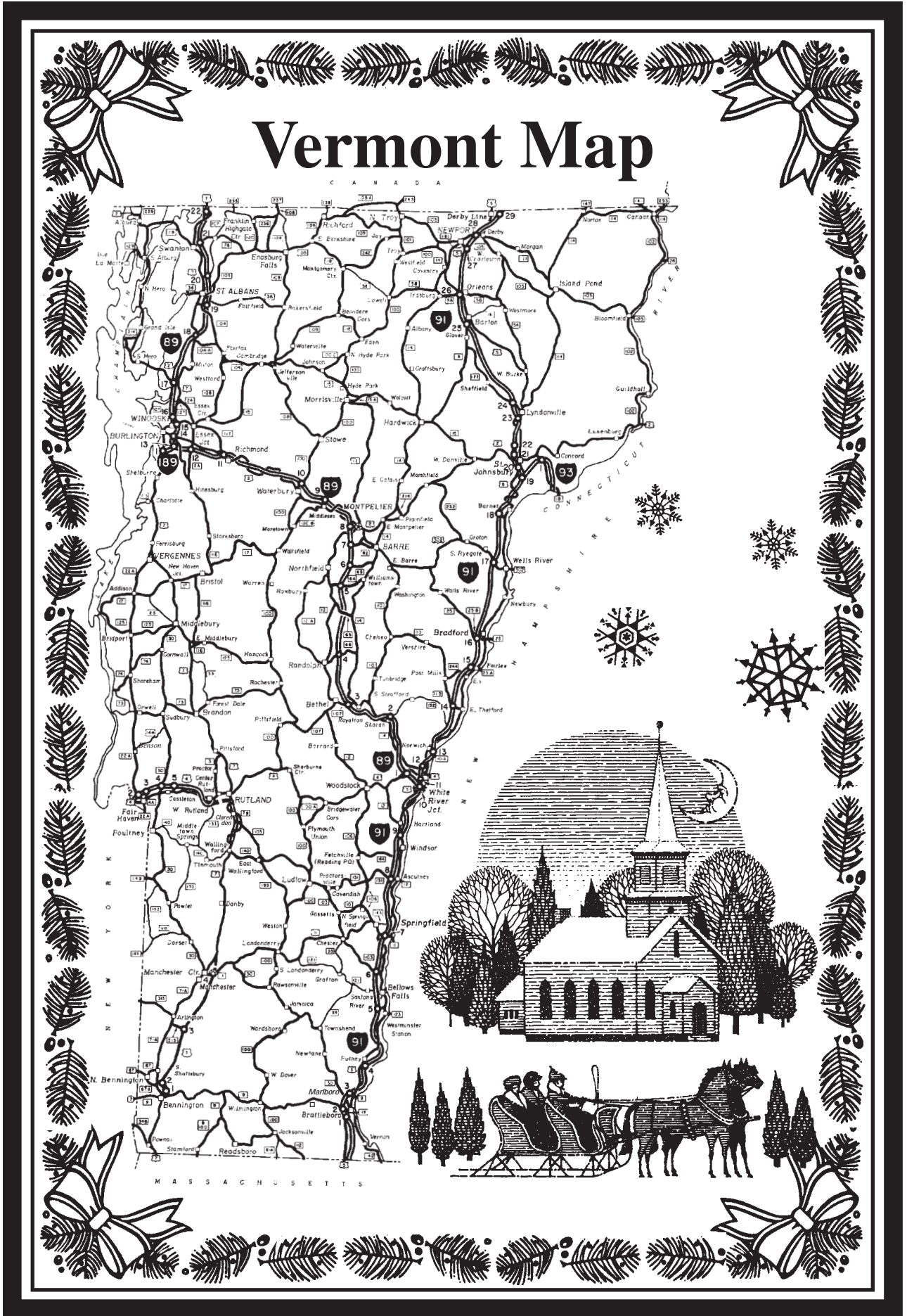
Doug Morin, Vermont Fish and Wildlife's bird project leader said, "This may be a particularly good winter for attracting winter birds arriving from Canada, including Evening Grosbeaks and Common Redpolls. Black oil sunflower is a good seed choice that will attract a variety of birds, and folks may want to try other seeds or suet to attract certain species. Thistle, for example, attracts many of the finches. Gardeners will find leaving late-blooming flowers uncut provides seeds which can also attract birds."

While watching your bird feeders, you can participate in one or more bird monitoring projects by looking up the Audubon Christmas Bird Count, the Great Backyard Bird Count and Project Feeder Watch—all three collect important information to understand bird populations.

The Fish and Wildlife De-

partment offers these tips for bird-friendly bird feeding:

- Keep cats inside. Domestic cats are the leading cause of bird death in North America, and feeders can make birds particularly easy prey.
 - Place feeders closer than 4 feet or farther than 10 feet from a window. Being close to, or far from a window reduces bird collisions.
 - Clean feeders regularly. To eliminate harmful bacteria and viruses, feeders should be washed every few weeks with a 10 percent bleach solution, then rinsed and allowed to dry before refilling.
 - Feed birds only between December 1st and April 1st, but remove feeders if you see signs of bears. Most bears should be in dens during this time, but some delay entering their dens while even those that have dened may re-emerge to feed if there is a period of warm weather.
- Bears that learn to get food from people continue to do so, leading to property damage and dangerous encounters with people which can result in the bear's demise.



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Vermont Country Calendar

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

ONGOING ACTIVITIES 2020

BAKERSFIELD. Christmas Tree Farm. Over 20,000 trees, from 3–15 feet. Choose and saw down your tree, or fresh-cut choices. Free candy canes, life-size dancing and singing bear, snowman and Santa. Hand saws provided. Sleds for moving trees. Dog friendly. Cost: pre-cut \$15 and up, choose & cut \$30–\$45. Open daily 8 am – 5 pm. Bakersfield Christmas Tree Farm, 405 Fairfield Rd. (802) 827-3042. gafoote@myfairpoint.net. bakersfieldtreefarm.com. *November 27 through December 24.*

BENNINGTON. Exhibit. Vermont Utopias: Imagining the Future. 25 contemporary artists from the region respond to the simple prompt of “What is your vision for the future of Vermont?” 10 am – 4 pm daily. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. ajones@benningtonmuseum.org. benningtonmuseum.org. *Through December 28.*

BENNINGTON. Bennington Museum. The southern Vermont institution best known for housing several works by Grandma Moses. Exhibit: “Vermont Utopias: Imagining the Future”. 25 contemporary artists from the region respond to the simple prompt of “What is your vision for the future of Vermont?” Runs November 27 through December 28. Covid precautions in place. Visit the gift shop. Museum open year round Friday 1-8 pm, Saturday through Monday 1-6 pm. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. www.benningtonmuseum.org.

BENNINGTON. Exhibit and Closed-Bid Auction. Vermont Utopias: Imagining the Future. Creations by 25 contemporary artists responding to the simple prompt: “What is your vision for the future of Vermont?” Works available for purchase, proceeds benefit the Museum and participating artists. Auction closes December 21. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. benningtonmuseum.org. *Through December 28.*

BENNINGTON. Farmers Market: New Winter Location. Online pre-ordering and curbside pickup service. Pre-order your Holiday pies with our vendors. Every other Saturday. Bennington High School and Junior High School, 650 Main St. BenningtonFarmersMarket@gmail.com. *December 5 & 19, January 9 & 23, February 6 & 20, March 6 & 20, April 3 & 17.*

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. Please wear masks inside museum. Open Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4 pm. 212 Union St. at the corner of Valentine St. (802) 681-3767. www.dollhouseandtoymuseumofvermont.com.

BERLIN. Kids Trade and Play. Kids Clothing exchange, newborn to junior size 12. Bring what you no longer need and take home what you do. Cost: \$3/family. 9:30–11:30 am. Central Vermont Capitol City Grange, 6612 VT Rte 12. merrykaysings@gmail.com. capitalcitygrange.org. *Second Saturday of every month.*

BERLIN. Kids Trade and Play. Kids Clothing exchange, newborn to junior size 12. Bring what you no longer need and take home what you do. Cost: \$3/family. 9:30–11:30 am. Central Vermont Capitol City Grange, 6612 VT Rte 12. merrykaysings@gmail.com. capitalcitygrange.org. *Second Saturday of every month.*

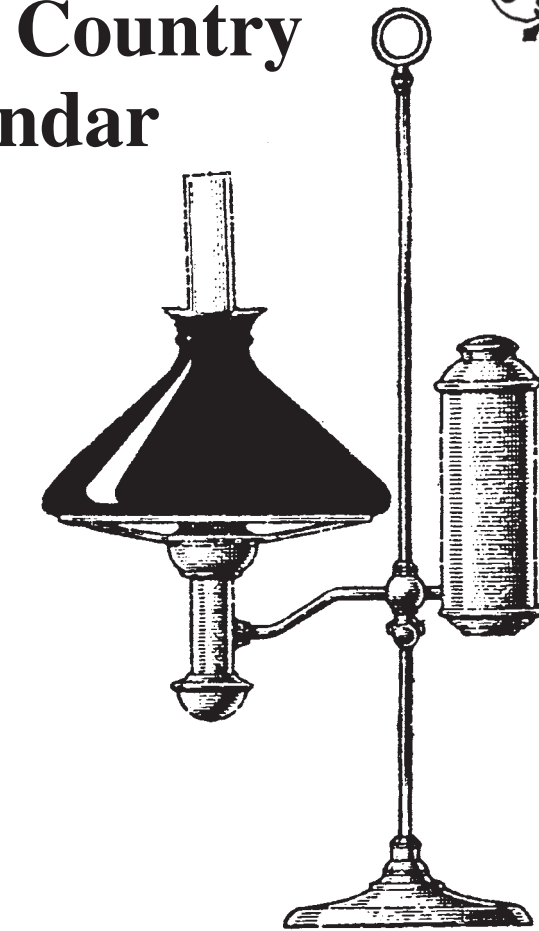
BRANDON. Compass Music and Arts Center. Wear your face mask and when you enter sanitize your hands. Maintain the six-foot social distancing. Revised opening hours: Tuesday–Friday 10 am – 4 pm. Visit The Phonograph Rooms, Divine Art Records CD store, Compass Treasure Chest, Compass Farmers’ Market, Bagatelles (collectables, books and gifts), Artist galleries and studios. Compass Music and Arts Center/Brandon Music, 333 Jones Dr. cmaact.org.

BRATTLEBORO. Presentation: From The Beginning. “Photography’s Coming of Age” is part of “2020 Vision: Seeing the World Through Technology.” Starting with the first photograph captured in 1827, this unique exhibition features a wide variety of photographic technologies dating from the mid-1800’s to today, showcasing a timeline of cameras as well as sample photographs from each era. Noon–5 pm. Vermont Center for Photography, 49 Flat St. (802) 251-6051. vcphoto.org.

BRATTLEBORO. Exhibit. “Figuration Never Died: New York Painterly Painting, 1950–1970.” 20 works by 10 New York artists who played a significant role in this midcentury movement. Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 10 Vernon St. (802) 257-0124. brattleboromuseum.org. *Through February 14.*

BRATTLEBORO. Exhibit: “Our Storied Landscape: Revealing the Brattleboro Words Trail.” Community-created, audio-based tours aggregating the unique cultural heritage of the area. Wednesday–Sunday, 10 am – 4 pm. Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 10 Vernon St. (802) 257-0124. info@brattleboromuseum.org. brattleboromuseum.org. brattleborowords.org. *December 15 through February 14.*

BRATTLEBORO. Retreat Farm. Animals grazing on pasture, growing food. Labyrinth garden, arts installations, walking paths and trails. Historic cow tunnel, pollinator pathway. Meadows waterfront trail. Forest playground,



storybook walk. Woodlands Interpretive trail. Living sculpture, the Fiddlehead. Learn about the significance of this site to the Abenaki people. No restrooms or public facilities available. Free and open from dawn to dusk. Retreat Farm, 45 Farmhouse Square, (802) 490-2270. www.retreatfarm.org.

BRATTLEBORO. Winter Farmers Market. Convenient parking. Curbside pickup. Credit, debit, and EBT accepted. Every Saturday, 10 am – 2 pm. CF Church Building, 80 Flat St. (802) 869-2141. brattleborowinterfarmersmarket.org. *Through March.*

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. *November 27, 28 & 29; December 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19. Closing early afternoon on December 20.*

BROWNINGTON. Online Exhibit: “From Blackboard to Whiteboard: 200 Years of Innovation in Education.” Part of 2020 Vision: Seeing the World Through Technology, a statewide initiative of the Vermont Curators Group. Old Stone House Museum, 109 Old Stone House Rd. (802) 754-2022. oldstonehousemuseum.org. *Through December 1.*

BURLINGTON. Burlington Farmer’s Market Holiday Markets. Face coverings required. 11 am – 2 pm. 345 Pine St. (802) 310-5172. burlingtonfarmersmarket.org. *November 21 & December 19.*

BURLINGTON. ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain. “Return of the Butterflies” opens at ECHO for a seven month exhibit run. ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, 1 College St. (802) 864-1848. www.echovermont.org.

BURLINGTON. Exhibit: ‘Take Flight.’ Traveling exhibit explores the forces behind aerodynamics. Make your own paper copters, rockets, planes and other flying machines and learn about the concepts behind flight. Admission charged; Get tickets online. Friday–Monday, 10 am – 4 pm. ECHO Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, 1 College St. (802) 864-1848. echovermont.org.

BURLINGTON. 4-H at Home. University of Vermont Extension is offering a smorgasbord of programs and activities for kids of all ages with topics ranging from veterinary science, civic engagement and environmental leadership to gardening and nutrition, babysitting and learning to code. Virtual program descriptions and links at www.uvm.edu/extension/youth/4-h-home. Free. Bookmark page as it is updated as new opportunities become available.

BURLINGTON. Exhibit: “Dishes,” a collection of original mosaics by Vermont artist Mary Lacy. Soapbox Arts, 266 Pine St. (802) 324-0014. soapboxarts.com. *Through November 21.*

BURLINGTON. Watershed Science. Virtual programs explore Lake Champlain. Topics include virtual fish dissection, lake exploration, stream monitoring and stewardship, and watershed explorer challenge. Designed for use by classroom teachers, remote learners, home school groups, families and anyone interested in scientific exploration of the Lake Champlain. This is a Lake Champlain Sea Grant program hosted by UVM in partnership with the State University of New York Plattsburgh. (802) 391-4410.

COLCHESTER. Sam Mazza’s Farm Market. A magical time. Vermont Christmas trees and wreaths, colorful poinsettias, Vermont gift baskets and gift department to ease the holiday shopping rush. Order your holiday pies. We now have meat pies! Open 7 am to 7 pm. Sam Mazza’s Farm Market, 277 Lavigne Rd. (802) 655-3440. sammazzafarms.com.



A LITANY After Winter Solstice

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

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

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

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

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

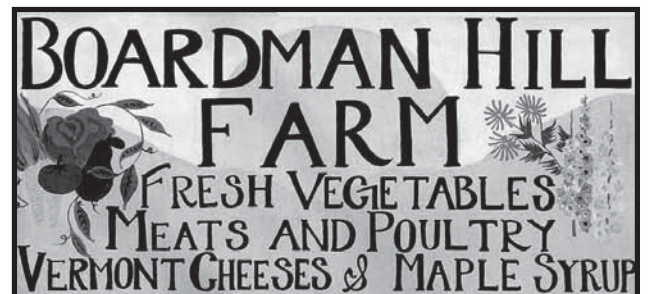
All of you frogs and all of you toads,
Burrowed and patient, hidden and mute:
Pray for us. Pray for us. Graciously hear us.

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

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

All of you crocus, ready to rise,
Snowdrops, hepaticas, twinleaf, and bloodroot,
Anemonies, 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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Vermont Country Calendar

CHARLOTTE. Clemmons Family Farm. 148-acre historic farm, African-American owned land and cultural heritage resource. K-12 field trips, on-farm arts engagements. Cooking classes and pop-up meals. Music, dance and theater programs for children. Art exhibits and cultural events. Book talks and literary arts events. Holistic health and healing events. Multicultural community gatherings and community service activities. Outreach to local primary schools. Family stories and storytelling that trace more than 150 years of African-American history. Guided tours of the property and historic buildings, beautiful indoor and outdoor venues to rent for retreats and special events in a working landscape. (765) 560-5445. clemmonsfamilyfarm.org.

DORSET. Dorset Winter Farmers Market. Open Sundays 10 am – 2 pm. At JK Adams Kitchen Store, 1430 VT Rt. 30. marketmanager@dorsetfarmersmarket.com.

DUMMERSTON. Elysian Hills Christmas Trees at Walker Farm. Fresh-cut, Vermont grown trees – the nicest trees around! Wreaths, center pieces & holiday greenery. Certified organically grown trees. Retail tree sales and choose and cut-your-own tree, hand saws provided. Free hot cider, hot chocolate & pretzels in our farm store. Walker Farm fresh Certified Organic spinach, lettuce, greens, winter squash, sweet potatoes, onions, local maple syrup, honey and more available in the farm store for your holiday dinners! Farm store and retail tree lot open Saturday and Sunday 10 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday 12-4 pm. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 223 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. walkerfarmvt@gmail.com. elysianhillstreefarm.com. November 28 through December 24 or till sold out.

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

ESSEX JUNCTION. Winter Lights in the Park. Walk through Maple Street Park and enjoy the bright lights and winter tunes. Hidden ornaments in the trees; pick up a scavenger hunt list on your way into the park. Free on-site parking. Additional overflow parking across the street at ADL Middle School. Free. 5-8 pm. Maple Street Park, 75 Maple St. (802) 878-1375. recreation@ejrp.org. ejrp.org. Through January 11.

FERRISBURGH. Rokeby Museum. The Robinsons were leaders of radical abolition in Vermont. Their home in Ferrisburgh is now the Rokeby Museum. The historic home that was once part of the Civil War-era Underground Railroad. Open weekends from 10 am – 4 pm until December 6. During this time you can visit our exhibit Free

& Safe, explore the farm's outbuildings, and wander the interpretive trail. Holiday Open House December 5 from 10 am to 4 pm. Admission: adults \$10, seniors \$8, students \$5, under 5 free. Rokeby Museum, 4334 Rt. 7. (802) 877-3406. info@rokeby.org. rokeby.org. Through December 6.

GLOVER. Exhibit: "A Frayed Knot: the human art of tying and untying" explores everything knotty in a collection of objects and artifacts. Visitors sign up for a two-hour slot, wear masks on premises, and use hand sanitizer before and after viewing. The Museum of Everyday Life, 3482 Dry Pond Rd. museumofeverydaylife.org. Through December 31.

HARTFORD. Public Skating. Weekends through March at Wendell A. Barwood Arena. Public skate hours vary and daily reservations for a pass required. Drop-in public skating not permitted. COVID-19 guidance procedures. No annual season passes. Purchase daily admission online at hartfordrec.com. Info (802) 295-5036.

HARTFORD. Light Up Decorating Contest. Town-wide holiday decoration celebration. Decorations must be visible from the road. Sign up your home or business for a chance to win prizes. Registration deadline: December 10; judging on December 16. Hartford Parks & Recreation. (802) 295-5036. recreation@hartford-vt.org. hartford-vt.org.

HARTFORD. Tree of the Month. The Hartford Tree Board is highlighting the dominant vegetation in healthy stream riparian zones as the Tree of the Month. These valuable zones are the messy, wooded buffers between running water and lawns and fields. Check out our sign on the Quechee Green near the river. (802) 295-5036. hartfordvt.myrec.com.

HINESBURG. Yates Family Orchard. 22 apple varieties of apples, plums, and pears. Farm stand with fresh pressed cider, cider donuts, orchard raw honey, orchard-made jams, preserves, maple syrup, and more. 9:30 am – 6 pm. Yates Family Orchard, 1074 Davis Rd. (802) 373-7437. info@yatesfamilyorchard.com. yatesfamilyorchard.com. Through November.

HUNTINGTON. Birds of Vermont Museum. Discover birds: indoors as lifelike woodcarvings, and outdoors in their wild feathered selves. Winter hours by appointment for individuals, families, or groups, and for special events through April 30, 2021. The museum's 100 acres of trails are always open. Admission: adults \$7, seniors \$6, children 3-17 \$3.50. Birds of Vermont Museum, 900 Sherman Hollow Rd. (802) 434-2167. museum@birdsofvermont.org. www.birdsofvermont.org.

LUDLOW. Black River Academy Museum. Open 12-4 pm, Tuesday-Saturday. Black River Academy Museum, 14 High St. (802) 228-5050, www.bramvt.org.

MANCHESTER. Dutton's Farmstand. Christmas trees, wreaths, centerpieces, and other holiday decor. Our own apples, cider, winter squash, and all your favorite fruit, and vegetables. Our own maple syrup, fruit pies, cookies including snickerdoodles, bread, homemade baked goods, creemees! Open daily 9 am – 7 pm. Dutton's Farmstand. 2083 Depot St. (Rts. 11/30). (802) 362-3083. duttonberryfarm.com.

MANCHESTER. Cross-Country Skiing & Snowshoeing. 12 miles of ski trails, varying levels of difficulty. Ski and snowshoe rentals for children and adults. Most trails natural and ungroomed. Rates: adults \$23, youth \$6. Ski or snowshoe rental \$15. MicroSpikes rental \$5. 9:30 am – 4:30 pm. Pavilion adjacent to the Welcome Center, Hildene, 1005 Hildene Rd. (800) 578-1788. info@hildene.org. hildene.org. Mid-December through mid-March.

MANCHESTER. Hildene – The Lincoln Family Home. Robert and Mary's home is decorated as though it were Christmas Eve 1912. As of December 5th and through the month, you'll experience the time, traditions, and nostalgia of holidays past. Limited capacities in the home. Masks and social distancing required. Admission: \$23 adults, \$6 youth, under 5 no charge. Open Thurs – Mon, 10 am – 4 pm. Hildene, 1005 Hildene Rd. off Rt. 7A south of the village. (800) 578-1788. hildene.org.

MANCHESTER. Southern Vermont Art Center. Fall/Winter Member Exhibition, Theme: "Hope", in response to the 2020 health pandemic. All artwork for sale. Entrance limited to the number allowed by current COVID-19 regulations. Social distancing, masks required. 10 am – 5 pm daily. Yester House, Southern Vermont Arts Center, 930 Southern Vermont Arts Center Dr. (802) 367-1302. acrites@svac.org. svac.org. Through January 3.

MENDON. Mendon Mountain Orchards. Family-run motel and 26-acre heirloom apple orchard. Bakery and country store. Apple pies and cider. Mendon Mountain Orchard, 16 US Rt. 4. (802) 775-5477. www.mendonorchards.com.

MIDDLEBURY. Multi-Artists Show. New work from Joe Bolger, Scott Addis and Philip Frey and including small works by Sage Tucker-Ketcham, Penny Billings, Woody Jackson and Jane Davies. Edgewater Gallery at Middlebury Falls, 1 Mill St. 802-458-0098. www.edgewatergallery.com. Through December 31.

MIDDLEBURY. A Sculpture Haven. Stroll or have a picnic in the Sheldon Museum's Sculpture Garden where five new sculptures by three Vermont artists have been added to this in-town, outdoor oasis. Sun-rise to sun-set. Museum itself is temporarily closed. (802) 388-2117. henrysheldonmuseum.com.

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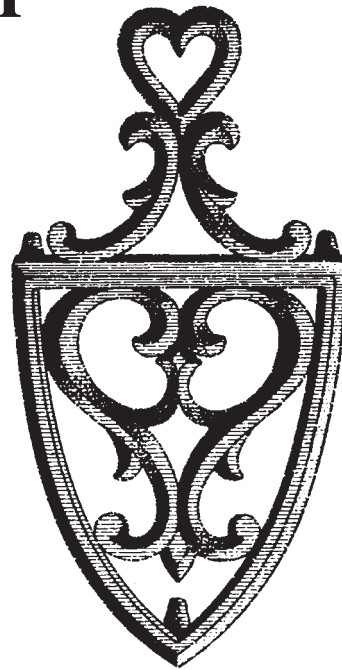
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Vermont Country Calendar



MIDDLEBURY. Middlebury Farmer's Market. Indoors for the winter, Local agricultural products including vegetables, fruit, and CBD. Every Saturday 9 am – 12:30 pm at the VFW on Exchange St. Covid protocols posted. (802) 673-4158. middleburyfarmersmkt@yahoo.com. middleburyfarmersmarket.org.

MIDDLEBURY. Werner's Christmas Tree Farm. 3'-12' Trees: Balsam fir, Fraser Fir, Balsam Fraser Cross, Canaan Fir, Concolor Fir, Scotch Pine, Blue Spruce. Cut your own or pre-cut trees. Hot cocoa and cookies, ponies to pet. Large scale indoor/outdoor train. Werner's Christmas Tree Farm, 429 Painter Rd. Two miles from the center of Middlebury. Look for our farm sign. (802) 388-7781. WernerTreeFarm@yahoo.com. wernertreefarm.com.

MILTON. Choose-and-Cut Christmas Tree Farm. Over 10,000 trees, up to 14 foot. Bring your sled or snow tube for sliding on the 1/4 mile hill. Cross-country ski trails. Warming barn. Dog friendly. Cost: 5'-8' \$40, plus \$6/foot over 8'. Weekends 10 am – 4 pm. Sharp Christmas Tree Farm, 204 Cobble Hill Rd. (802) 891-6225. sharpark.com. November 27 through December 24.

MONTPELIER. Exhibit: Innovation in Vermont History. Objects from local historical societies and museums around the state provide an overview of innovation, invention, and technology throughout Vermont history. Tuesday-Saturday, 10 am – 4 pm. Vermont History Museum, 109 State St. (802) 828-2291. vermonthistory.org. Through February 6.

MONTPELIER. Exhibit: The State of Sculpture 2019. Overview of Vermont Sculptors. Vermont Arts Council Sculpture Garden, 136 State St. Through August 2021.

MONTPELIER. Exhibit. *When Women Lead: Governor Madeline Kunin of Vermont.* Explores the career of Gov. Madeleine Kunin and showcases the three inaugural gowns she wore in 1985, 1987, and 1989. Tuesday-Saturday, 10 am – 4 pm. Vermont History Museum, 109 State St. vermonthistory.org. Through January.

MONTPELIER. T.W. Wood 125th Anniversary Exhibit: "Thomas Waterman Wood and the Landscape," paintings by Wood and some of his contemporaries. Open by appointment. Private tour on December 12 with curator Phillip Robertson. T.W. Wood Gallery, 46 Barre St. (802) 262-6035. twwoodgallery.org. Through December 24.

MONTPELIER. The Artist Relief Initiative is extending its offer to accept applications and distribute unrestricted \$5,000 grants through December 31 to U.S. artists in all disciplines facing dire financial situations. Applicants demonstrating the most severe needs in four

categories — rent, food, medical and dependent care — will be prioritized. CERF+ (Craft Emergency Relief Fund+) is a field partner in this national effort. 535 Stone Cutters Way. (802) 221-2306.

MONTPELIER. Vermont History Museum. Run by the Vermont Historical Society. Open 10 am to 5 pm. Wednesdays-Saturdays. Vermont History Museum, 109 State St. (802) 479-8500. vermonthistory.org/museum.

MONTPELIER. Winter programs online and in person. Winter Owl Exploration, December 12, 3-9 pm, \$25. North Branch Nature Ctr., 713 Elm St. northbranchnaturecenter.org.

MORRISVILLE. Paines Christmas Trees. Fraser fir and limited selection of Balsam fir. Tag and cut your own tree, or pre-cut from \$5 to \$35. Cost: 4'-5' \$32, 6'-8' \$42, 9'-11' \$65, over 12' \$90. 9am – 5 pm daily. Paines Christmas Trees, 4904 Laporte Rd. (802) 888-5632. tom@paineschristmastrees.com. painestreefarm.com. Through December 24.

NEWFANE. Dutton's Farmstand. Holiday decor. Apples, winter squash, fruit, and vegetables. Maple syrup, homemade baked goods. Dutton's Farmstand, 391 & 407 Rt. 30. (802) 365-4168. www.duttonberryfarm.com. On Facebook.

NEWPORT, NH. Annual Gallery of Gifts: Handmade for the Holidays. More than 100 artists and crafters. Handmade gifts including pottery, woodworking, artisan baskets, metalworking. Health safeguards in place. Masks required. Individual private shopping appointments available. Free. Tuesday-Friday, 11 am – 4 pm, Saturday, 10 am – 2 pm. Library Arts Center, 58 N. Main St. (603) 863-3040. libraryartscenter.org. Through December 23.

NO. SPRINGFIELD. Displays and exhibits about the town's history, monthly programs, and items and documents available for viewing and research. Free. Saturdays 1-4 pm, or by appointment. Springfield Art and Historical Society, 65 Rt. 106. (802) 886-7935. sahs@vermontel.net.

ONLINE. Strolling of the Heifers Online Auction. Bidding runs through 11 pm December 6. Vermont-made products, art, craft, food, lift tickets, the pottery of Laura Zindel, museum passes and even The Latchis theater all to yourself for a night. (802) 275-8059 or (802) 257-2699. 32auctions.com/strollingoftheheifers. Through December 6.

ONLINE. Virtual Cinema Screening, November: Estonian Folklore. A breathtaking dark fairytale about tender feelings in a brutal metaphysical environment, where ghosts roam free and people have to find their way through a chaotic jungle of co-existing and competing religious beliefs. Virtual Tickets: \$4.99 for 3 days of viewing. epsilonspires.org. Through December 12.

ONLINE. "Lake Lessons." Place-based, hands-on STEM and local history/ecology workshop for area schools. "History from Home," virtual tour, digital exhibition, and "Northwest Passages" podcast. Free. Saint Albans Museum, 9 Church St. (802) 527-7933. alex@stamuseum.org. www.stamuseum.org.

ONLINE. 4-H at Home. University of Vermont Extension is offering a smorgasbord of programs and activities for kids of all ages with topics ranging from veterinary science, civic engagement and environmental leadership to gardening and nutrition, babysitting and learning to code. Free. Virtual program descriptions and links at www.uvm.edu/extension/youth/4-h-home.

ONLINE. After-School Youth Class: Art Adventures for ages 6-9, with Allison Zito. Discover great works of art, observe nature, and refine skills while exploring new and familiar art materials, methods, and techniques. Live, via Zoom. Wednesdays, 3:30-5 pm. AVA Gallery and Art Center. avagallery.org. Through December 9.

ONLINE. After-School Youth Class: Drawing, Painting, and Sculpting for ages 10-13, with Karl Neubauer. Figure drawing, designing and building imaginative sculptures, vehicles, and houses. Live, via Zoom. Thursday, 3:30-5 pm. AVA Gallery and Art Center. avagallery.org. Through December 17.



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Vermont Country Calendar

ONLINE. Call for Creatures: GLASSTASTIC 2021. Your imaginary creature could be turned into a glass sculpture and exhibited at BMAC. Brattleboro Museum and Art Center, 10 Vernon St. (802) 257-0124. gallery@brattleboromuseum.org. brattleboromuseum.org. *Deadline: December 8.*

ONLINE. Chef Talk Tuesday. Chef Dante will focus on a different topic each week with special guests. Tune in and get your questions answered live! Tuesdays, 2-2:30 pm. The Essex Resort and Spa. facebook.com/events/297876411605308.

ONLINE. Puppet Show: *Treasure Hunt*. Filmed version of one of No Strings Marionettes most popular puppet shows. Puppeteers available for live talk-back on two separate dates. No charge, donate button available. Chandler Center for the Arts. chandler-arts.org. *Through January 1.*

ONLINE. Comics Classes. Virtual online class will teach the basics of cartooning to children ages 9-13. November 20, December 4, 11, 18. 3-4 pm. To register (802) 295-5036. hartfordvt.myrec.com.

ONLINE. UVM Extension Master Gardener Course. Six-week online course. Learn to create a healthy, sustainable home landscape & grow your own food. Become a volunteer and teach others environmentally friendly, research-based practices. Lecture recordings, live Q&A webinars, discussion forums, and weekly activities. Fee: In-State \$400 (\$27 per module), Out of State \$550 (\$39 per module). Scholarships available. (802) 656-9562. master.gardener@uvm.edu. uvm.edu/mastergardener. *Opens January 8 (Track 1) or January 15 (Tracks 2 & 3), through week of May 21.*

ONLINE. Daily Virtual Community Gathering. Pride Center of Vermont staff and community members come together via Zoom for a loosely structured meetup including a game of Jeopardy on Amazon Echo. Free. Fridays, 1:30 pm, Mondays–Thursdays 5:30 pm. (802) 860-7812. pridecentervt.org. *Through December 17.*

ONLINE. Exhibit: “Drawing on the Past,” Miriam Adams’ graphite and watercolor drawings on paper of everyday objects presented by the Henry Sheldon Museum. Part of “2020 Vision: Seeing the World Through Technology,” a statewide initiative of the Vermont Curators Group. henrysheldonmuseum.org. *Through December 31.*

ONLINE. Exhibit: “Painting at Home With Grandma Moses.” Paintings and archival materials from the collections of the Shelburne and Bennington Museums that highlight Anna Mary Robertson’s artistic process and inspirations. (802) 985-3346. *Through June 16, 2021.*

ONLINE. Revels North has produced a 15–20-minute film called *The Christmas Revels: All Shall Be Well Again*. The film is available for free through local media resources such as CATV and on social media platforms such as Facebook. Revels North. (866) 556-3083. info@revelsnorth.org. revelsnorth.org.

ONLINE. The Revels North Virtual Singers choral group will meet via Zoom on Monday evenings for 10 weeks. Newcomers welcome. Everyone aged 8 and up is welcome in this non-auditioned chorus (children under 12 must participate with a parent/guardian). (866) 556-3083. info@revelsnorth.org. vimeo.com/462416811. revelsnorth.org. *Through December 7.*

ONLINE. The Lake Champlain Digital Museum: Digital Exhibits, Virtual Shipwreck Tours, 360° Panoramas. Dig into local history in digital exhibit experiences. Dive underwater on a tour of a Lake Champlain shipwreck. High-definition 360° panoramas of some of the spaces on campus. Lake Champlain Maritime Museum. (802) 475-2022. lcmm.org.

PUTNEY. Green Mountain Orchards. Open till Christmas. Holiday baked goods, apples, cider. Green Mountain Orchards, 130 West Hill Rd. Exit 4 off I-91, North on Rt. 5, left at Putney General Store, left after 1 mile on West Hill Rd., 3/4 mile on right. (802) 387-5851. mail@greentmtorchards.com.

PEACHAM. Peacham Corner Guild. Cooperative shop showcasing the fine arts, crafts, antiques, vintage items, and specialty food products created by its members. Thursday – Sunday, 10 am – 4 pm. Peacham Corner Guild, 643 Bayley Hazen Rd. (802) 592-3332. peachamcornerguild.com. *Through December 20.*

PUTNEY. Putney Farmers’ Market. Local produce, artisan craft goods, prepared food, and more. Covid protocols. Every Sunday, 11 am – 1 pm. At Green Mountain Orchards, 130 West Hill Rd. putneyfarmersmarket.org. *Thru December 20.*

QUECHEE. VINS Nature Center. Outdoor exhibits are open daily with educators presenting in person. Admission: adults: \$17.50, seniors (62 plus) \$16.50, college students \$16.50, educators & veterans: \$16.50, youth (4-17) \$15, children 3 & under free. Open daily 10 am – 4 pm. COVID protocols in place. Vermont Institute of Natural Science, 149 Natures Way, off Rt. 4. (802) 359-5000. www.vinsweb.org.

RANDOLPH. Holiday Artisans Market. Items from 30+ local vendors. Masks required, 8 shoppers at a time, one-way shopping. Participating in the Randolph Bucks program. Thursdays & Fridays 12 noon – 6 pm, Saturdays & Sundays 10 am – 4 pm. Chandler Gallery, 71 N. Main St. (802) 728-9878. chandlerartisansmarket.org. *Through December 24.*

RUTLAND. Call to Black Artists. We are honored to invite Black artists to submit artwork or other creations to display. Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St. (802) 775-0356. chaffeeartcenter.org. *Through December 31.*

RUTLAND. Vermont Indoor Winter Farmers’ Market. Farm fresh veggies, fruits, artisan cheeses, and more. Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm at the Farmers Food Center, 251 West St. (802) 342-4727. vtfarmersmarket.org. *Thru May 1.*

RUTLAND. Wonderfeet Kids’ Museum. Covid protocols in place. Fri-Sun, 10 am – 12 noon and 2-4 pm. Wonderfeet Kids’ Museum, 11 Center St. (802) 282-2678. wonderfeetkidsmuseum.org.

SHELBURNE. Shelburne Farms. Walking trails open in the winter. The view east from Sheep’s Knoll along the Farm Trail is spectacular. Use at your own risk as trails are not maintained. Park at the Welcome Center parking lot. Admission by donation. Shelburne Farms, 1611 Harbor Rd. (802) 985-8686. shelburnefarms.org.

SHOREHAM. Champlain Orchards. Open year-round 9 am – 4 pm daily. Covid protocols in place. Champlain Orchards, 2955 Rt. 74W. (802) 897-2777. champlainorchards.com.

SOUTH POMFRET. Annual Holiday Small Works and Cup Show. Gallery hours: Tuesday through Sunday 11 am – 5 pm, Thursdays until 7:30 pm. ArtisTree Community Gallery, 2095 Pomfret Rd. (802) 457-3500. artistreevt.org. *Through December 23.*

SOUTH ROYALTON. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial. Includes historic artifacts, films, sculptures, hiking paths and screenings of Meet the Mormons. Free. Monday-Saturday 9 am – 5 pm, Sunday 1:30-5 pm November through April. 357 LDS Lane off Rt. 14. (802) 763-7742.

SPRINGFIELD. Open Wall Show: “People, Places & Things.” Photographs, paintings, paper sculpture, artist cut-out book, encostics, cyanotype, jewelry, fiber art, needlework. Wednesday and Saturday 11 am – 5 pm, Friday 11 am – 7 pm. Gallery at the VAULT, 68 Main St. (802) 885-7111, galleryvault.org. *Until December 26.*

SPRINGFIELD. Book Your Own Gallery Open House. Handmade creations from 125 craftspeople and artists: jewelry, woodenware, glass, scarves, gifts for babies and children, prints, pottery, hummingbird feeders, clay wren houses, holiday ornaments, craft kits. Open Wall show: *People Places and Things*. Small groups (up to 5 total) by appointment have the gallery all to themselves for an hour. Sundays 12 noon – 4 pm. Gallery at the VAULT, 68 Main St. dkemble@vermontel.net. galleryvault.org. *Through December 13.*

➔ The Stock In the Tie-Up ◀



I’m workin’ this week in the wood-lot; a hearty old job, you can bet.
I finish my chores with a lantern, and marm has the table all set
By the time I get in with the milkin’ and after I wash at the sink,
And marm sets a saucer o’ strainin’s for the cat and the kittens to drink,
Your uncle is ready for supper, with an appetite whet to an edge
That’ll cut like a bush-scythe in swale-grass, and couldn’t be dulled on a ledge.
And marm, she slats open the oven, and pulls out a heapin’-full tin
Of the rippin’-est cream-tartar biskit a man ever pushed at his chin.
We pile some more wood on the fire, and open the damper full blare,
And pull up and pitch into supper – and comfort – and taste good – wal’ there!
And the wind swooshes over the chimbley, and scrapes at the shingles cross-grain,
But good double winders and bankin’ are mighty good friends here, I say!
I look ‘crost the table to mother, and marm she looks over at me,
And passes another hot biskit and says, “ Won’t ye have some more tea?”
And while I am stirrin’ the sugar, I relish the sound of the storm.
For, thank the good Lord, we are cozy, and the stock in the tie-up is warm.

I tell ye, the song o’ the fire and the shirruping hiss o’ the tea,
The roar of the wind in the chimbley, they sound dreadful cheerful to me.
But they’d harrer me, plague me, and fret me, unless as I set here I knew
That the critters are munchin’ their fodder and bedded and comf’ table, too.
These biskits are light as a feather, but, boy, they’d be heavier’n lead
If I thought that my hosses was shiv’rin’, if I thought that my cattle warn’t fed.
There’s men in the neighborhood ‘round me who pray, somewhat louder than me,
They wear better clothes, sir, on Sunday — chip in for the heathen Chinee,
But the cracks in the sides o’ their tie-ups are wide as the door o’ their pew,
And the winter comes in there a-howlin’, with the sleet and the snow peltin’ through.

Step in there, sir, ary a mornin’ and look at their critters! ’Twould seem
As if they were bilers or engines, and all o’ them chockfull o’ steam.
I’ve got an old-fashioned religion that calkalates Sundays for rest,
But if there warn’t time, sir, on week days to batten a tie-up, I’m blest
I’d use up a Sunday or such-like, and let the durned heathen folks go
While I fastened some boards on the lintel to keep out the frost and the snow.
I’d stand all the frowns of the parson before I’d have courage to face
The dumb holler eyes o’ the critters hooked up in a frosty old place.
And I’ll bet ye that in the Hereafter the men who have stayed on their knees
And let some poor, fuzzy old cattle stand out in a tie-up and freeze,
Will find that the heat o’ the Hot Place is keyed to an extra degree
For the men who forgot to consider that critters have feelin’s same’s we.

I dasn’t go thinkin’ o’ tie-ups where winter goes whistlin’ through.
Where cattle are humped at their stanchions with scarcely the gumption to moo.
But I’m glad for the sake of Hereafter that mine ain’t the sin and the guilt,
And I tell you I relish my feelin’s when I pull up the big patchwork quilt.
I can laugh at the pelt o’ the snowflakes, and grin at the slat o’ the storm,
And thank the good Lord I can sleep now, the stock in the tie-up is warm.

—HOLMAN F. DAY
1865-1935, Vassalboro, Maine

photo by Nancy Cassidy

Vermont Country Calendar

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ST. ALBANS. Study History at Home. St. Albans Museum is sponsoring an on-going home study program of historical topics including agriculture, railroads, women's issues, Vermont history. St. Albans Museum, 9 Church St. (802) 527-7933.

ST. JOHNSBURY. Exhibit. Inside Out: Hidden Art in Natural History Collections. Using x-ray technology, interior structures of natural history specimens from taxidermed mounts to seashells are revealed on the resulting radiographs. Admission: adults \$9, seniors (65+) and children (5-17) \$7, 4 and younger free. Wednesday-Sunday, 10 am - 5 pm. Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium, 1302 Main St. (802) 748-2372. bharris@fairbanksmuseum.org. www.fairbanksmuseum.org. *Through December 31.*

ST. JOHNSBURY. Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium. Exhibits, programs, special events, wildflower table, collections, Star Space Astronomy Tours. Admission: adults \$9, seniors and children under 17 \$7, ages 4 and under free. Open Wednesday through Sunday 10 am - 5 pm. COVID protocols in place. 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. Hike the trails, run and play, open dawn to dusk seven days a week! Gallery and Dog Chapel open Fri 10 am - 4 pm. Sat & Sun 11 am - 5 pm. Dog Mountain, 143 Parks Rd. off Spaulding Rd. (800) 449-2580. contact@dogmt.com. www.dogmt.com.

ST. JOHNSBURY. Exhibit: "Kingdom COVID Chronicles." A collection of journals created by local residents in the early weeks of the Stay Home, Stay Safe initiative. Catamount Arts, 115 Eastern Ave. (802) 748-2600. catamountarts.org. *Through January 1.*

STATEWIDE. Kids: Become a certified Watershed Explorer. Fun activities that teach about watershed science and the Lake Champlain Basin. For grades 5-8 and upper elementary or early high school students. 11 indoor and outdoor activities with a glossary and links to additional resources. Free copies of activities booklet available at libraries and other sites throughout Vermont. watershd@uvm.edu. go.uvm.edu/wse-challenge.

STATEWIDE. Vermont State Parks. Vermont has 55 developed and staffed state parks and other undeveloped state park lands. Visit our website for information and COVID precautions. (888) 409-7579. vtstateparks.com.

STOWE. Exhibit: Performative Acts. Photographs from Donna Ann McAdams' expansive oeuvre over the last forty years. Timed ticket entry only. Reserve your private viewing experience here: <https://bit.ly/hdacticket>. Helen Day Art Center, 5 School St. (802) 253-8358. helenday.com. *Through December 31.*

TICONDEROGA, NY. Fort Ticonderoga National Historic Landmark. Now in Winter Quarters. Visit calendar for virtual events. Fort Ticonderoga, 84 Montcalm St. (518) 585-2821. fort@fort-ticonderoga.org. fortticonderoga.org.

VERGENNES. Youth Rowing. The Champlain Longboats youth rowing league meets March through May and September through November. Rowing teams organized by school meet after school for practice two to three times a week. Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, 4472 Basin Harbor Rd. (802) 475-2022 x 113.

WAITSFIELD. Exhibit: Triad 2020: Art During COVID-19. Large-scale new paintings by career artists Patrick Dunfey, Pam Glick, and Richard Jacobs. Gallery open anytime by appointment only; grounds only open Saturday and Sunday 12 noon - 5 pm. Bundy Modern, 361 Bundy Rd. (802) 777-2713. *Through June 25, 2021.*

WALDEN. Cottage Rental. Quiet country cottage located on a working tree farm. 40 acres of Christmas trees plus 40 acres of managed forest. Small pond and year-round stream. Abundant wildlife, scenic mountain views. Pet friendly. Far View Tree Farm, 1879 Bayley-Hazen Rd. (802) 563-2028. pwclark@farviewtreefarm.com. farviewtreefarm.com.

WATERVILLE. Choose & Cut Christmas Trees. 10-acre plantation. Spectacular views of Mt. Mansfield and Cold Hollow. Visit with llamas and mini donkeys. Holiday music. Cost: choose & cut from \$30, pre-cut prices vary. Open daily except Mondays, 9 am - 5 pm. Northern Vermont Llama Company, 766 Lapland Rd. (802) 644-2257. northernvntllamaco@myfairpoint.net. northernvermontllamaco.com/Christmas_Trees.html. *Through December 24.*

WEST BRATTLEBORO. Dutton's Farmstand. Holiday decor. Apples, winter squash, fruit, and vegetables. Maple

syrup, homemade baked goods. Dutton's Farmstand, 308 Marlboro Rd. (802) 254-0254. www.duttonberryfarm.com. On Facebook.

WEST LEBANON, NH. Annual Show of Handmade Gifts. Family-friendly gifts by members of the Lebanon Art & Crafts Association. Free admission. Saturday-Wednesday 10 am - 6 pm, Thursday & Friday 10 am - 8 pm. Upper Valley Plaza next to CVS, 250 Plainfield Rd., Rte 12A. (603) 448-0745. laca@lebanonartandcrafts.org. lebanonartandcrafts.org. *Through December 24.*

WEST MARLBORO. Southern Vermont Natural History Museum. This collection of live animals and taxidermy exhibits is open daily 10 am to 4 pm by appointment. Over 600 mounted specimens of native northeastern birds and mammals, close to 250 species are represented. The Museum houses a northeastern Mineralogy Collection & live animal exhibits. On-site and regional educational programs. Southern Vermont Natural History Museum, 7599 Rt. 9. (802) 464-0048. vermontmuseum.org.

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION. Winter Online Cartooning Workshops. Starting January 11 include Digital Coloring for Comics with Ngozi Ukazu; Graphic Memoirs with Melanie Gillman '12; and Introduction to Hand-Drawn Animation with Alec Longstreth. The Center for Cartoon Studies, 94 S. Main St. (802) 295-3319. www.cartoonstudies.org.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm - A Victorian Christmas. Experience the traditions of a late 19th-century Christmas. Authentically decorated exhibit of the farmhouse parlor. Enjoy holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations of holiday foods and gingerbread ornaments. Warm up with a cup of Wassail along with cider donuts served at the Dairy Bar. Snowshoe trek available in farm fields. Admission: adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. off Rt. 12, just north of the village in Woodstock. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *December 5 & 6; 11, 12 & 13; and daily December 19 - January 3 (excluding Christmas Day).*

WOODSTOCK. Family Wednesdays. Family friendly programs, story readings, artifact explorations and on-site or take-home crafts. Each Wednesday will focus on a different farm theme: check out chickens on December 2, draft animal power on December 9, and giddy goats on December 16. 10 am - 4 pm (excluding Christmas Day). Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org.

WOODSTOCK. Billings Farm & Museum. Open for public onsite events as well as online. Admission \$16 adults ages 16-61, \$14 seniors ages 62 and over, \$9 students ages 16 & up, \$8 children ages 5-15, \$4 children ages 3-4. Open Thursday thru Sunday, 10 am - 4 pm. 69 Old River Rd. off Rt. 12 just north of the village in Woodstock. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org.

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

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1

KILLINGTON. Advent Quiet Day. A morning of meditation and centering as we begin the season of Advent. Both online and in-person (limited to 25 people). In-person bonfire and hot drinks. Meditation in the woods. Images of the Madonna and Child fill the church building. Donation. 9 am - 12 noon. Mission Farm, Mission Farm Rd. eventbrite.com/e/advent-quiet-day-tickets-124569716375.

ONLINE. "Together in a Sudden Strangeness:" America's Poets Respond to the Pandemic. 7 pm. Phoenix Books Zoom Channel. (802) 872-7111. phoenixbooks.biz.

ONLINE. Chef Talk Tuesday. Chef Dante will focus on a different topic each week with special guests. Tune in and get your questions answered live! 2-2:30 pm. The Essex Resort and Spa. facebook.com/events/297876411605308. *Every Tuesday.*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2

MONTPELIER. Naturalist Journeys. Online Course: Slugs, Seed Dispersers & Stone Walls: Community Ecology of Northeastern Herbaceous Flora with Nathan Kiel - Naturalist Journeys Online Presentation Series. 5-6 pm. (802) 229-6206. www.northbranchnaturecenter.org.

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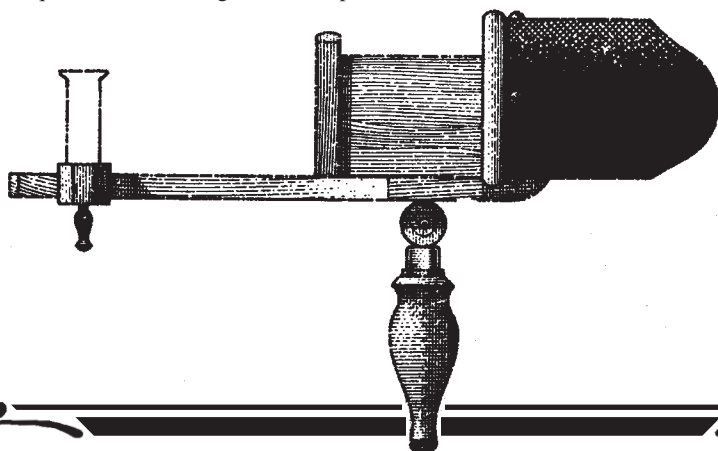
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Vermont Country Calendar

ONLINE. First Wednesdays Talk: *The Legacy of Nicholas Black Elk.* Historian Damian Costello explores the life of the man behind the famous book *Black Elk Speaks*. Online, via Zoom, advance registration required. Sponsored by Vermont Humanities. Free. 7 pm. Brooks Memorial Library, Brattleboro. (802) 254-5290. vermonthumanities.org. vermonthumanities.org/first-wednesdays.

ONLINE COURSE. Naturalist Journeys Online Presentation Series. Slugs, Seed Dispersers & Stone Walls: Community Ecology of Northeastern Herbaceous Flora. With Nathan Kiel. 5-6 pm. northbranchnaturecenter.org.

ONLINE. First Wednesdays Talk. *After "Migrant Mother: The Promise and Peril of the First Green New Deal."* Middlebury professor Kathryn Morse explores the Farm Security Administration's successes and failures in relation to our current environmental and social crises. Online, via Zoom, advance registration required. Sponsored by Vermont Humanities. Free. 7 pm. Brownell Library, Essex Junction. (802) 878-6955. brownelllibrary.org.

ONLINE. First Wednesdays Talk. Cartoonist Glynnis Fawkes explains the research and design processes she followed to create her graphic biography, *Charlotte Brontë Before Jane Eyre*. Online, via Zoom, advance registration required. Sponsored by Vermont Humanities. Free. 7 pm. First Congregational Church of Manchester. (802) 362-2607. info@vermonthumanities.org. vermonthumanities.org/first-wednesdays. mclvt.org.

ONLINE. First Wednesdays Talk: *The United States and the World in 2021.* Stanley R. Sloan considers our country's relationship with allies and adversaries, as well as the impact of the Covid-19 crisis. Online, via Zoom, advance registration required. Sponsored by Vermont Humanities. Free. 7 pm. Kellogg-Hubbard Library, Montpelier. (802) 223-3338. vermonthumanities.org/first-wednesdays. kellogg-hubbard.org.

ONLINE. First Wednesdays Talk. *Martin Luther King: Dare to Dream.* Actor David Mills portrays Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. surmounting his early uncertainties and transforming into a world-renowned civil rights icon. Online, via Zoom, advance registration required. Sponsored by Vermont Humanities. Free. 7 pm. Goodrich Memorial Library, Newport. (802) 334-7902. info@vermonthumanities.org. vermonthumanities.org/first-wednesdays. goodrichlibrary.org.

ONLINE. First Wednesdays Talk: *Celebrating E. B. White.* Drawing on his stories, essays, poems, and letters, Dartmouth professor Nancy Jay Crumrine celebrates White's versatility and enormous legacy. Online, via Zoom, advance registration required. Sponsored by Vermont Humanities. Free. 7 pm. Rutland Free Library. (802) 773-1860. rutlandfree.org.

ONLINE. First Wednesdays Talk. *Environment and Race: The Hidden Connections.* Kemi Fuentes-George describes how racism shapes—and is shaped by—environmental management, and highlights ways towards a more just environmentalism. Online, via Zoom, advance registration required. Sponsored by Vermont Humanities. Free. 7 pm. St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. (802) 748-8291. info@vermonthumanities.org. stjathenaeum.org.

WOODSTOCK. Family Wednesdays. Family friendly programs, story readings, artifact explorations and on-site or take-home crafts. Each Wednesday will focus on a different farm theme: check out chickens on December 2, draft animal power on December 9, and giddy goats on December 16. 10 am – 4 pm (excluding Christmas Day). Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3

ONLINE. Artist Talk: *Resisting Abstract Expressionism.* Curator Karen Wilkin discusses Figuration Never Died: New York Painterly Painting, 1950–1970. 7 pm. Brattleboro Museum and Art Center, 10 Vernon St. (802) 257-0124. gallery@brattleboromuseum.org. brattleboromuseum.org.

ONLINE. Virtual Lecture: *Hoedowns, Reels, and Frolics: Roots and Branches of Southern Appalachian Dance* by scholar of traditional music and dance, Phil Jamison. Proceeds benefit the Putney Historical Society. Tickets: Zoom presentation \$10, Zoom plus a 2021 Putney Historical Society calendar \$22. 7:30 pm. Next Stage Arts Project and Putney Historical Society. nextstagearts.org.

ONLINE. 11th Annual Woodstock Vermont Film Series. *Once Were Brothers: Robbie Robertson and the Band.* A tale of the creation of one of the most enduring groups in the history of popular music. Stream on demand. Tickets: \$12, 8 films \$88, 15 films \$150. (802) 457-5303. billingsfarm.org/filmseries. *Through December 6.*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or choose & cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. Bring your whole

family for a fun Christmas tree experience in a virus responsive way. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. *Also December 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19. Closing early afternoon on December 20.*

BURLINGTON. Concert. Cellist Zoë Keating online at 7:30 pm at University of Vermont Recital Hall. Known for her use of sampling technology, the cellist and composer creates layers of sound. \$20. (802) 656-4455. www.uvm.edu.

HANOVER, NH. Community Dinner. Takeout meal sponsored by Hanover Community Kitchen. Free. 5 pm. Our Savior Lutheran Church, 5 Summer St. (603) 643-3703. oschanover.org. *Also December 11, 18, 25; January 1 & 8.*

KILLINGTON. Vermont Holiday Festival Light & Music Spectacular. Holiday-themed family-friendly light show from the comfort of your car. Fee: \$25 per car. 5 & 7 pm. Snowshed Base Lodge, 3861 Killington Rd. eventbrite.com/e/volunteers-vermont-holiday-festival-light-music-spectacular-tickets-129581348301. *Also December 5.*

MONTPELIER. Art Walk. A fun and casual way to experience art, meet local artists, and explore downtown shops, restaurants, and galleries. Many participating venues will have the artist in attendance and refreshments. Guidebooks available at participating venues. 4-8 pm. montpelierlive.com/507/Tropical-Weekend.

ONLINE. Holiday Music Festival: Favorite Christmas Carols with Jennifer Hansen. Sing your favorite seasonal carols while Upper Valley Music Center staff provide accompaniment. RSVP for Zoom login info. Free. 7-8 pm. Upper Valley Music Center. (603) 448-1642. uvmusic.org.

ONLINE. Comics Class. Virtual online class will teach the basics of cartooning to children ages 9-13. 3-4 pm. To register (802) 295-5036. hartfordvt.myrec.com. *Also December 11 & 18.*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or choose & cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. Bring your whole family for a fun Christmas tree experience in a virus responsive way. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. *Also December 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19. Closing early afternoon December 20.*

Statewide

Christmas Tree Permits Available On-line from U.S. Forest Service

U.S. Forest Service officials in Vermont are welcoming the public to select and cut a Christmas tree on the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) with the purchase of a \$5.00 permit. For the first time, permits will now be available for purchase either on-line (an additional \$2.50 service fee applies) or still available in-person at a GMNF office.

In support of the Every Kid Outdoors initiative, this year the Forest Service will provide all fourth and fifth grade students with a free Christmas tree voucher by registering here: everykidoutdoors.gov. Fourth and fifth graders who register must present a printed voucher to redeem a Christmas tree permit. Christmas trees for personal use may be cut on the GMNF, subject to the following conditions:

Christmas tree fees and availability

- Permits can be purchased either online or in-person at a GMNF office.
- Purchasing permits in-person can be done by calling one of our offices located in Manchester, Rochester and Rutland, Vermont. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, please

confirm that our office locations are open by making an appointment prior to travel.

- Permit cost is \$5.00 and is non-refundable. On-line permits require an additional \$2.50 service fee.
- Only one permit issued per household per year.
- Trees obtained under the Christmas tree permit may not be resold.

Permit conditions

Permit is not valid in: Congressionally-designated wilderness areas; active timber sale areas; and developed recreation sites including campgrounds, picnic areas, and day use sites; and the following management areas as designated by the 2006 Forest Plan: Ecological Special Areas, Existing and Candidate Research Natural Areas, Alpine / subalpine Special Areas, and the Robert Frost Recreation Special Area (see maps). Permit must be attached to the tree before transporting it from the site where it was cut.

Planning Your Trip

- Before you leave home, be sure to measure the space where you plan to place the tree in your home (height and width) and measure the space in your vehicle where you will be transporting the tree.
- Cell service may be spotty or unavailable. Be sure someone knows where you are and when to expect you back.
- Check the latest weather conditions, forest warnings and road closures before you leave on your trip.
- Bring a map with you. Don't rely on GPS because it may not be up to date with Forest Service roads. Roads may not

be plowed. Carry tire chains, shovel(s) and a tow chain. Be sure your vehicle has a full tank of gas. Bring a spare key and give it to someone else in your party. Don't get locked out of your car. Park in areas so that traffic can get by safely, and do not block gates.

- Dress warmly and take extra dry clothes. Expect winter weather, including cold temperatures, snow and winds.
- Start your day early. Be sure to find your tree and leave the woods before dark.

Rules for harvesting

Trees may only be cut within designated areas as indicated in maps (links available below). Trees over 20 feet tall are not covered by the permit. The tree must be cut at a point no higher than 6 inches off the ground. Permit holders must remove all trash and litter resulting from their activities. This includes removing all woody debris from road surfaces, ditches, and culvert openings where cutting took place.

Helpful cutting tips

- Carry your tree carefully out of the woods. Dragging the tree will rub off needles and bark.
- If the tree is too big to transport inside of your vehicle, wrap it in canvas to prevent wind damage.
- Once home, cut the bottom of the trunk off and place the freshly cut trunk in a bucket of water. Replenish water.
- If storing your tree outside for a few days before putting it in the house, keep it in an area protected from the wind, such as the north or east side of your house or under a shaded tree.
- Tools you might want to consider bringing with you include a measuring tape to ensure you select a tree that fits in your home; handsaw to cut your tree; gloves to protect your hands; boots to protect your feet; a tarp to sit on and / or to move your tree once it's cut; and rope or straps to secure your tree to your vehicle.
- Choose a tree from a dense forested area, which will give the remaining trees more space to grow.
- Cut the leftover branches from the stump and scatter.

U.S. Forest Service Offices in Vermont:
 Rutland, VT – Forest Supervisor's Office, 231 North Main Street, Rutland, VT. (802) 747-6700.
 Manchester, VT – Manchester Ranger Station, 2538 Depot St., Manchester Center, VT. (802) 362-2307.
 Rochester, VT – Rochester Ranger Station, 99 Ranger Rd., Rochester, VT. (802) 767-4261.



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Vermont Country Calendar

BURLINGTON. Holiday Artist Market. Shop locally-made fine art and artisan objects in a safe environment. 10 am – 3 pm. City Hall Park, 149 Church St. (802) 865-7166. www.enjoyburlington.com. Also December 6.

CASTLETON. Tree of Remembrance. The tree will be lit with hundreds of bulbs in remembrance of loved ones who are no longer with us. Lights may also be purchased and anyone can send in names of those they wish to honor or memorialize during the 2020 holiday season. No limit to the number of honorees and donations are gratefully accepted. This 5:30 pm event is sponsored by The Castleton Woman's Club and the Castleton Free Library. To participate call (802) 265-7913 or (802) 468-5574.

CHESTER. Christmas Market. Pre-made frozen soups and meals, pre-wrapped baked goods, homemade jams and preserves, handmade chocolates in designer tins. Christmas-oriented decorations, live evergreen wreaths and sprays. Quilted, artistic, and handmade creations, gifts for pets and other animals. Required masks, social distancing, one-way traffic. 10 am – 2 pm. Willard Hall, St. Luke's Church, 313 Main St. (Route 11W). (802) 875-6000. lbwillisct@comcast.net. stlukesepiscopalvt.org.

DUMMERSTON. Elysian Hills Christmas Trees at Walker Farm. Fresh-cut, Vermont grown trees! Wreaths, center pieces & holiday greenery. Retail tree sales and choose and cut-your-own tree, hand saws provided. Free hot cider, hot chocolate & pretzels in our farm store. Walker Farm fresh produce, maple syrup & honey! Retail tree lot and farm store open Saturday and Sunday 10 am – 4 pm, Monday through Friday 12-4 pm. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 223 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. walkerfarmvt@gmail.com. elysianhillstreefarm.com. November 28 through December 24 or till sold out.

ESSEX JUNCTION. Winter Lights in the Park. Walk through Maple Street Park and enjoy the bright lights and winter tunes. Hidden ornaments in the trees; pick up a scavenger hunt list on your way into the park. Free on-site parking. Additional overflow parking across the street at ADL Middle School. Free. 5-8 pm. Maple Street Park, 75 Maple St. (802) 878-1375. recreation@ejrp.org. ejrp.org. November 26 through January 11.

FERRISBURGH. Rokeby Museum Holiday Open House. Explore the museum free and browse books and craft items. Hot apple cider available. Festive wreaths for sale, proceeds to Rokeby Museum's COVID recovery. 10 am – 4 pm. Rokeby Museum, 4334 Rt. 7. (802) 877-3406. director@rokeby.org. www.rokeby.org.

KILLINGTON. Vermont Holiday Festival Light & Music Spectacular. Holiday-themed family-friendly light show from the comfort of your car. Dazzling, larger-than-life holiday themed displays. Bring home a keepsake ornament. Fee: \$25 per car. 6 pm. Snowshed Base Lodge, Killington Resort, 3861 Killington Rd. eventbrite.com/e/volunteers-vermont-holiday-festival-light-music-spectacular-tickets-129581348301.

LYME, NH. Tree Festival and Cookie Sale. Over 50 decorated trees donated by local growers will transform the Lyme Common. Decorations and lights available for take-aways. Music, food and shopping specials. 3-6 pm. Free. On the common, Rt. 10 North. Sponsored by The Utility Club. (603) 795-4295. pandtlcs@gmail.com.

MANCHESTER. Hildene – The Lincoln Family Home. Robert and Mary's home is decorated as though it were Christmas Eve 1912. As of December 5th and through the month, you'll experience the time, traditions, and nostalgia of holidays past. Limited capacities in the home. Masks and social distancing required. Admission: \$23 adults, \$6 youth, under 5 no charge. Open Thurs – Mon, 10 am – 4 pm. Hildene, 1005 Hildene Rd. off Rt. 7A south of the village. (800) 578-1788. hildene.org.

MANCHESTER. Hildene – The Lincoln Family Home. The Museum Store welcomes neighbors and new friends. Dressed in all its holiday finery, the spirit of the season abounds in our 115 year old Carriage Barn. The crisp fragrance of pine boughs, sounds of the season, and take-away treats, offer an abundance of holiday spirit. Open Saturday – Monday, 10 am – 4 pm. Hildene, 1005 Hildene Rd. off Rt. 7A south of the village. For information call (802) 362-1564, or email themuseumstore@hildene.org. www.hildene.org. Also December 6 & 7.

MIDDLEBURY. Visit with Santa. Social-distanced visit with Santa Claus. Family photo opportunity. Fun animals and characters. Mailbox for wishlists, letters, and gifts. Goodie bag includes annual Santa Scoot car, activity sheets. Free. Sign up for a time slot. Each ticket is for a carload. 10 am – 1 pm. Maple Landmark Woodcraft, 1297 Exchange St. eventbrite.com/e/visit-with-santa-at-maple-landmark-tickets-127753677689.

MILTON. Holiday Tree Lighting. Roaming Santa Claus. SD Ireland Concrete truck covered in hundreds of Christmas lights. Bring your own hot cocoa. Free. 7 pm. Municipal Building. miltonvt.gov.

NORTH HERO. Champlain Islands Christmas Parade. Parked parade at Knight Point State Park. Floats, tractors, boats, fire trucks and more, parked and shining bright. Take a slow cruise around the loop and dazzle in the light displays. Free. 5-7 pm. Knight Point State Park, 44 Knight Point Rd. thislandernewspaper.com/parade.

ONLINE. Make Holiday Cookies. An online class on making two herbal holiday teas and two types of cookies with Chef Emery. 10 am – 12 pm. Adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. Call to pre-register. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org.

WOODSTOCK. Decorating Contest: "Deck the Doors" for residents and businesses. Santa out and about 12 noon – 2 pm. Scavenger hunt in the downtown area. Shops stay open in the evening until 7 pm. (802) 457-3555. info@woodstockvt.com. woodstockvt.com. Also December 12.

WOODSTOCK. Wassail Weekend. Twinkling lights, historic decorated homes and unique local shops to celebrate the holiday. No parade this year. Wagon rides throughout the town and holiday decorations at Billings Farm will take one back to an historic 19th century Christmas. 10 am – 6:30 pm. (802) 457-3555. Through December 12.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm – A Victorian Christmas. Experience the traditions of a late 19th-century Christmas. Authentically decorated exhibit of the farmhouse parlor. Enjoy holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations of holiday foods and gingerbread ornaments. Warm up with a cup of Wassail along with cider donuts served at the Dairy Bar. Snowshoe trek available in farm fields. Admission: adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. off Rt. 12, just north of the village in Woodstock. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. Also December 6; 11, 12 & 13; and daily December 19 – January 3 (excluding Christmas Day).

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or choose & cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. Bring your whole family for a fun Christmas tree experience in a virus responsive way. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. Also December 11, 12, 13, 18, 19. Closing early afternoon on December 20.

BURLINGTON. Holiday Artist Market. Shop locally-made fine art and artisan objects in a safe environment. 10 am – 3 pm. City Hall Park, 149 Church St. (802) 865-7166. www.enjoyburlington.com.

DUMMERSTON. Elysian Hills Christmas Trees at Walker Farm. Fresh-cut, Vermont grown trees! Wreaths, center pieces & holiday greenery. Retail tree sales and choose and cut-your-own tree, hand saws provided. Free hot cider, hot chocolate & pretzels in our farm store. Walker Farm fresh produce, maple syrup & honey! Retail tree lot and farm store open Saturday and Sunday 10 am – 4 pm, Monday through Friday 12-4 pm. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 223 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. walkerfarmvt@gmail.com. elysianhillstreefarm.com. November 28 through December 24 or till sold out.

ESSEX JUNCTION. Winter Lights in the Park. Walk through Maple Street Park and enjoy the bright lights and winter tunes. Hidden ornaments in the trees; pick up a scavenger hunt list on your way into the park. Free on-site parking. Additional overflow parking across the street at ADL Middle School. Free. 5-8 pm. Maple Street Park, 75 Maple St. (802) 878-1375. recreation@ejrp.org. ejrp.org. November 26 through January 11.

MANCHESTER. Hildene – The Lincoln Family Home. The Museum Store welcomes neighbors and new friends. Dressed in all its holiday finery, the spirit of the season abounds in our 115 year old Carriage Barn. The crisp fragrance of pine boughs, sounds of the season, and take-away treats, offer an abundance of holiday spirit. Open Saturday – Monday, 10 am – 4 pm. Hildene, 1005 Hildene Rd. off Rt. 7A south of the village. For information call (802) 362-1564, or email themuseumstore@hildene.org. www.hildene.org. Also December 7.



Facts About Christmas Trees

by Dr. Leonard Perry
Horticulture Professor Emeritus
University of Vermont

Knowing a few facts about Christmas trees and their production will give you a new appreciation of them this holiday season, and why many prefer them over artificial ones.

- About 25 to 30 million real trees are sold in this country every year.

- Real trees are grown on farms like other crops. To ensure enough trees for harvest, growers plant on average three seedlings for every tree harvested.

- Christmas tree farms stabilize soil, protect water supplies, and provide refuge for wildlife. Often these trees can be grown on poor soils where other crops won't grow. About 350,000 acres are used in this country to grow Christmas trees, preserving much green space.

- An acre of Christmas trees produces enough daily oxygen for 18 people. The trees on farms in this country currently provide enough oxygen for 18 million people a day.

- There are an estimated 350 million trees growing on farms in all 50 states, with more if you include the many farms in Canada.

- These trees are grown by over 15,000 farms in this country, which employ over 100,000 people either full or part-time.

- Time to grow a tree (six to seven feet) for sale can vary from four to 15 years, depending on species and climate, with the average being 7.

- Of those buying real trees, about one-quarter cut their own at local farms. This upward trend parallels the interest by many in supporting local business and agriculture. Also, cutting your own tree ensures that you will have the freshest one possible.

- Top selling trees include balsam fir, Fraser fir, and Scotch pine.

- The top tree growing states nationwide are Oregon, North Carolina, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Washington.

- While many real trees in the north are locally grown, supporting local and regional agriculture, over 80 percent of artificial trees worldwide are made in China.

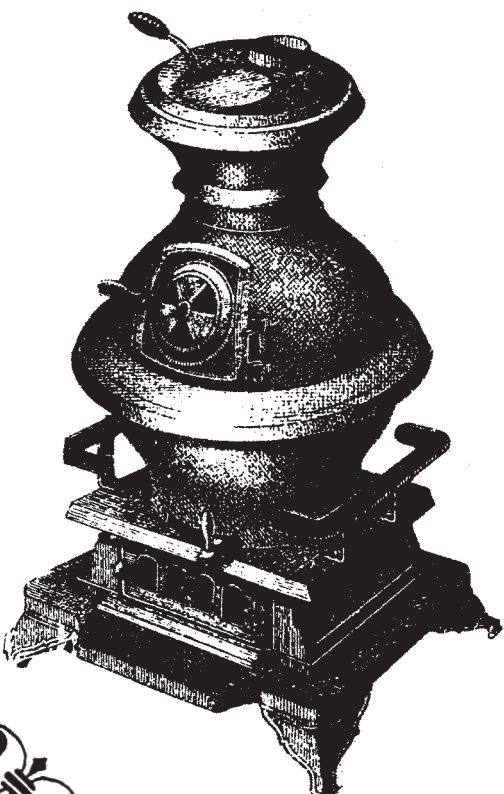
- No chemicals and few pesticides (if any) are used on real trees, with studies showing no residues on harvested trees. Artificial trees are often plastic, and may contain the dangerous chemical PVC. Manufacture of PVC creates the most toxic man-made chemicals, dioxins. Artificial trees also may contain metal toxins such as lead.

- Christmas trees in home, both real and artificial, account for less than one-tenth of one percent of all home fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Real trees kept fresh are difficult to ignite.

- Real Christmas trees are recyclable, often chipped into mulch at one of the more than 4,000 recycling centers nationwide. The average family uses an artificial tree for six to nine years before discarding, where it will remain in landfills for centuries, as they are not recyclable.

- A study by Swedish researchers found that, considering all the inputs, a real tree is five times more environmentally compatible than an artificial one.

More facts on Christmas trees, including their history, species, and how to care for them, are available from the National Christmas Tree Association (www.realchristmastrees.org).



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10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

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Vermont Country Calendar

WILLISTON. Community Tree Lighting. Hot cocoa and sweet treats, caroling, and a special visit from the SD Ireland Holiday Truck. Donations of new hats, mittens, gloves and socks collected for the Williston Community Food Shelf. Free; please bring one non-perishable item to support the Williston Food Shelf. 4:30-5:30 pm. Gazebo on the Town Green, 195 Central School Dr. nicole.s.morris@comcast.net.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm – A Victorian Christmas. Authentically decorated exhibit of the farmhouse parlor. Holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations of holiday foods and gingerbread ornaments. Warm up with a cup of Wassail along with cider donuts served at the Dairy Bar. Snowshoe trek in farm fields. Adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. Also December 11, 12 & 13; and daily December 19 – January 3 (excluding Christmas Day).

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7

HARTFORD. Dismas House Quilt Tour and Raffle. View the quilt and the story and have a chance to win the quilt. Money raised goes to supporting residents' transition to the community in a healthy supportive way. Free. Hartford Dismas House. (802) 698-8661. dismasofvt.org/hartford-dismas/quilt-raffle. Through December 14.

MANCHESTER. Hildene – The Lincoln Family Home. The Museum Store welcomes neighbors and new friends. Dressed in all its holiday finery, the spirit of the season abounds in our 115 year old Carriage Barn. The crisp fragrance of pine boughs, sounds of the season, and take-away treats, offer an abundance of holiday spirit. Open Saturday – Monday, 10 am – 4 pm. Hildene, 1005 Hildene Rd. off Rt. 7A south of the village. For information call (802) 362-1564. www.hildene.org.

ONLINE. Virtual Visiting Artist Talk: Rubens Ghenov. The work of Rubens Ghenov lies at the intersection of fact and fiction where painting, storytelling and sound comprise the preponderance of his work. Free, register in advance to secure your spot. 7-8 pm. Vermont Studio Center. (802) 635-2727. vermontstudiocenter.org. rubensghenov.com.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8

MONTPELIER. Naturalist Journeys. Course: Winter Ecology with Jason Mazurowski. Students will learn how to read the winter

landscape, explore ice age relics clinging to alpine summits, decipher animal tracks, tackle the challenge of winter tree ID, and discuss the implications of Lake Champlain's warming waters. \$60 through January 31. North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm Street. (802) 229-6206. www.northbranchnaturecenter.org.

ONLINE. Panel Discussion: "Upper Valley Farms and the Pandemic: What's Been Going On?" A panel of four Upper Valley farmers will share what our farmers have been facing and how they have contributed to our community resilience during this unprecedented year. All levels of farming knowledge welcome. 6:30-8 pm. Vital Communities. (802) 291-9100 x108. vitalcommunities.org.

ONLINE. Book Discussion: "The Nicest Kids in Town." Dartmouth professor Matthew Delmont uses American Bandstand to discuss the fight for civil rights, the dawn of rock 'n' roll, and the emergence of televised youth culture. Free. 6 pm. Sponsored by the Lebanon Opera House. www.lebanonoperahouse.org.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9

ONLINE. Naturalist Journeys. Course: From 'Sangers to Sochan: Plant Gathering in the Southern Appalachian National Parks with Maria Dunlavy. Online Presentation 7-8 pm. North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm St., Montpelier. www.northbranch.com.

ONLINE. Launch Event. Print Town: Brattleboro's Legacy of Words, published by the Vermont Historical Society with an introduction by Tom Bodett. Zoom event. Limited first edition copies available for a \$40 donation. Free. 7-8 pm. Brattleboro Words Project. brattleborowords@gmail.com. brattleborowords.org.

WOODSTOCK. Family Wednesdays. Family friendly programs, story readings, artifact explorations and on-site or take-home crafts. Each Wednesday will focus on a different farm theme: draft animal power on December 9, and giddy goats on December 16. 10 am – 4 pm (excluding Christmas Day). Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10

ONLINE. Ask a Naturalist: Winter in Vermont. Naturalists from Audubon Vermont, Birds of Vermont Museum, and Vermont Reptile and Amphibian Atlas talk about what is happening outside. Bring a question or two on migration,

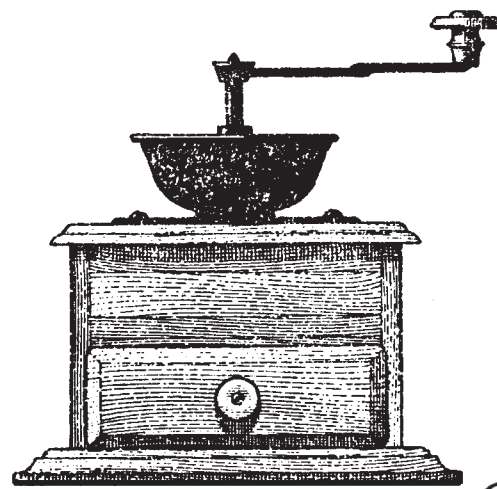
hibernation, plants, wildlife, etc. Free, donations welcome. 5:30-6:30 pm. Birds of Vermont Museum. (802) 434-2167. museum@birdsofvermont.org. vt.audubon.org.

ONLINE. Workshop: Artwork on the Long Trail. Kati Christoffel leads a watercolor painting of a wintery scene on the Long Trail. Learn the basics of interpreting a landscape image and how to use watercolors, pen & ink, crayons or even finger-painting to create your own piece of art. Hosted on Zoom. Free, suggested donation \$8. 6-7:30 pm. Green Mountain Club. (802) 244-7037. greenmountainclub.org/education/workshops.

ONLINE. Artist Talk: Andy Yoder discusses Overboard, which consists of replicas of Nike shoes made out of recycled materials. 7 pm. Brattleboro Museum and Art Center, 10 Vernon St. (802) 257-0124. www.brattleboromuseum.org.

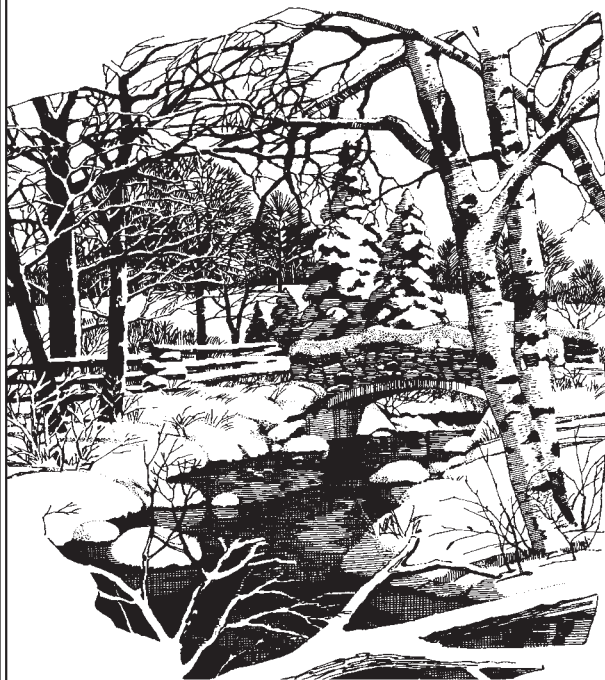
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or choose & cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. Bring your whole family for a fun Christmas tree experience in a virus responsive way. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. Also December 12, 13, 18, 19. Closing early afternoon on December 20.



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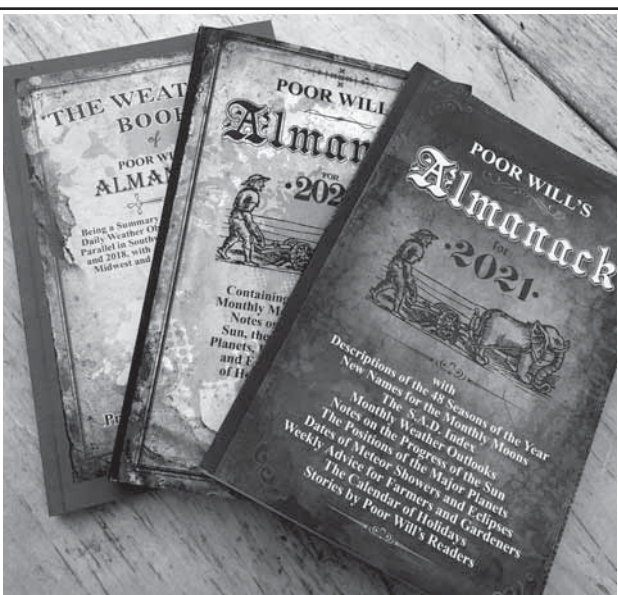
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- Mike McPhetres -



Poor Will's Almanack for 2021 is not your grandfather's almanac. It is a guide to living in sync with nature—that is, with descriptions of the 48 seasons of the year; the Seasonal Affective Disorder Index (which measures the forces that cause seasonal stress); the weather systems that cross the continent, and the winter forecast; animal and fish activity times; notes on the stars and sun and the moon. Besides that, Poor Will's Almanack contains 30 stories by Poor Will's readers range from outhouse tales to a sheep dog that helps deliver lambs!

If you order in December or January, I'll send you the Poor Will's Almanack for 2020, too, with its 60 amazing outhouse stories! Or, if you wish, I'll include The Weather Book of Poor Will's Almanack, a detailed approach to weather along the 40th Parallel. Send \$20.00 for your autographed copies to Bill Felker, P.O. 431, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387.

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 choretime. 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
Orleans, VT 1984



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Vermont Country Calendar

HANOVER, NH. Takeout Community Dinner. Takeout meal sponsored by Hanover Community Kitchen. Free. 5 pm. Our Savior Lutheran Church, 5 Summer St. (603) 643-3703. office@oslchanover.org. oslchanover.org. *Also December 18 & 25; January 1 & 8.*

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm – A Victorian Christmas. Authentically decorated farmhouse parlor. Holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations of holiday foods and gingerbread ornaments. Enjoy a cup of Wassail along with cider donuts at the Dairy Bar. Snowshoe trek in farm fields. Adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also December 12 & 13; and daily December 19 – January 3 (excluding Christmas Day).*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12

BERLIN. Kids Trade and Play. Kids Clothing exchange, newborn to junior size 12. Bring what you no longer need and take home what you do. Cost: \$3/family. 9:30-11:30 am. Central Vermont Capitol City Grange, 6612 VT Rt. 12. capitalcitygrange.org. *Second Saturday of every month.*

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or choose & cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. Bring your whole family for a fun Christmas tree experience in a virus responsive way. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. *Also December 13, 18, 19. Closing early afternoon on December 20.*

BURLINGTON. Concert. Violinist Cho-Liang Lin online at 7:30 p.m. at University of Vermont Recital Hall, 384 S. Prospect St. She performs joyful, uplifting, and comforting songs and tunes from the Cape Breton Celtic tradition. \$20. (802) 656-4455. www.uvm.edu.com.

DUMMERSTON. Elysian Hills Christmas Trees at Walker Farm. Fresh-cut, Vermont grown trees! Wreaths, center pieces & holiday greenery. Retail tree sales and choose and cut-your-own tree, hand saws provided. Free hot cider, hot chocolate & pretzels in our farm store. Walker Farm fresh produce, maple syrup & honey! Retail tree lot and farm store open Saturday and Sunday 10 am – 4 pm, Monday through Friday 12-4 pm. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 223 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. walkerfarmvt@gmail.com. elysianhillstreefarm.com. *November 28 through December 24 or till sold out.*

ESSEX JUNCTION. Winter Lights in the Park. Walk through Maple Street Park and enjoy the bright lights and winter tunes. Hidden ornaments in the trees; pick up a scavenger hunt list on your way into the park. Free on-site parking. Additional overflow parking across the street at ADL Middle School. Free. 5-8 pm. Maple Street Park, 75 Maple St. (802) 878-1375. recreation@ejrp.org. ejrp.org. *November 26 through January 11.*

HUNTINGTON. Winter Forest Bathing. Folks unplug, slow down and experience nature through a guided mindfulness practice. Meet in front of the sugarhouse. \$25-\$30. 10 am – 12 pm. Green Mountain Audubon Center, 255 Sherman Hollow Rd. Register at vt.audubon.org.

MANCHESTER. Bird Walk at Hildene – The Lincoln Family Home. The public is welcome to join a local birding group to conduct a survey of the wild birds present on the grounds of Hildene. For info, contact Stephanie at (802) 367-7960. Meet in the Welcome Center parking lot at 8 am. Participants are asked to wear a mask and practice social distancing. Free. www.hildene.org.

MONTPELIER. Guided Tour of the T.W. Wood Gallery 125th Anniversary Exhibits. Nuquist Gallery: Thomas Waterman Wood and the Landscape. Wood Room: Realism and Narrative: The Paintings of Thomas Waterman Wood. WPA Room: Social Realism to Abstraction: Paintings of the WPA Collection. Free. 11 am and 2 pm. T.W. Wood Gallery, Center for Arts and Learning, 46 Barre St. eventbrite.com/e/125th-anniversary-guided-tour-tickets-117444089433.

MONTPELIER. Naturalist Journey: Winter Owl Exploration in Addison County. Personal vehicle required. Help us look for the seven owl species encountered in Vermont including the migratory short-eared owl – one of the most sought after by birders. Fee \$25. 3-9 pm. North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm St. To pre-register go to: www.northbranchnaturecenter.org.

ONLINE. Hop@Home Performance: Taylor Mac's Holiday Sauce...Pandemic! Music, film, burlesque, and random acts of fabulousness reframe the songs you love and the holidays you hate. Contains provocative adult themes. Ticket also provides post-show, on-demand access to the broadcast. 7 pm ET. Hopkins Center for the Arts. (603) 646-2422. hop.dartmouth.edu.

ONLINE. Holiday Music Festival: Christmas, Hanukkah, and more with Jane Woods. Sing your favorite seasonal carols while Upper Valley Music Center staff provide accompaniment. RSVP to receive Zoom login info. Free. 7-8 pm. Upper Valley Music Center. (603) 448-1642. info@uvmusic.org. uvmusic.org.

ONLINE. Comics Class. Virtual online class will teach the basics of cartooning to children from the ages of 9 to 13. 3-4 p.m. To register call (802) 295-5036. www.hartfordvt.myrec.com. *Also December 18.*

RANDOLPH. Christmas Concert. Natalie MacMaster & Donnell Leahy's Celtic Family Christmas. Streamed live at 7:30 pm from their home. Mostly music, it will also include candid moments around the kitchen, decorating the tree, and other bits of Christmas chaos! \$20. Sponsored by Chandler Center for the Arts, 71 North Main St. (802) 278-9878. www.chandler-arts.org.

RUPERT. Saturday Hike. Guided hike through farmland and woods 4-5:30 pm. Fee \$5. Merck Forest & Farmland Center, 3270 Rt. 315. www.herckforest.org. *Also Jan. 9.*

RUTLAND. Virtual Craft Fair. Support local and virtually shop some of the most talented vendors from across the state of Vermont. From artisan crafts, specialty foods, maple and honey, CBD products, and everything in between, our vendors have that unique gift you've been searching for. Join us on Facebook and Instagram all day to learn more about our vendors, browse items for sale, view stories, and even live updates from our show manager. We hope to see you there! 9 am – 4 pm. Hosted by the Vermont Farmers Market. (802) 282-2163. www.vtfarmersmarket.org.

WOODSTOCK. Wassail Weekend. Twinkling lights, historic decorated homes and unique local shops to celebrate the holiday. No parade this year. Wagon rides throughout the town and holiday decorations at Billings Farm will take one back to an historic 19th century Christmas. 10 am – 6:30 pm. (802) 457-3555.

WOODSTOCK. Decorating Contest: "Deck the Doors" for residents and businesses. Santa out and about 12 noon – 2 pm. Scavenger hunt in the downtown area. Shops stay open in the evening until 7 pm. (802) 457-3555. info@woodstockvt.com. woodstockvt.com.

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or choose & cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. Bring your whole family for a fun Christmas tree experience in a virus responsive way. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. *Also December 18, 19. Closing early afternoon on December 20.*

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ONLINE. Handel's Messiah Sing: Hallelujah Chorus. Practice your voice part in separate sections, then come together to sing along with excellent recorded performances. Performances of selected movements by UVMC voice student soloists. RSVP to receive Zoom login info. Free. 3-4 pm. Upper Valley Music Center. (603) 448-1642. info@uvmusic.org. uvmusic.org.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm – A Victorian Christmas. Authentically decorated farmhouse parlor. Holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations of holiday foods and gingerbread ornaments. Enjoy a cup of Wassail along with cider donuts at the Dairy Bar. Snowshoe trek in farm fields. Adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also daily December 19 – January 3 (excluding Christmas Day).*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15

ONLINE. Lebanon Opera House on Location: Dan and Claudia Zanes Holiday Sing-Along. Joyful multicultural wintertime party includes Christmas and Hanukkah classics in English and Hebrew, plus holiday songs from Korea, Tunisia, and Haiti. Free. 6 pm. Lebanon Opera House. info@lebanonoperahouse.org. lebanonoperahouse.org.

ONLINE. Launch Event. Brattleboro Words Trail, community-created, audio-based tours aggregating the unique cultural heritage of the area. Learn about using the Trail and hear favorite stories from some of the scores of writers, scholars, producers and community members who've brought the Trail to life. Free. 7-8:30 pm. Brattleboro Words Project. brattleborowords@gmail.com. brattleborowords.org.



VT Fish & Wildlife Dept.

Vermont Fish and Wildlife's 2021 Calendar Now Available

The calendar is filled with stunning photos of Vermont wildlife, including white-tailed deer, moose, a bald eagle, spruce grouse, swallowtail butterfly, peregrine falcon, woodcock and bobcat. It includes photos by many Vermont photographers including Roger Irwin, Tony Smith, Tyler Pockette, Kurt Budliger, Ian Clark, Chris Ingram, and Josh Blouin.

"Sandbar Wildlife Management Area in Milton was the state's first Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in 1920," said F&W Commissioner Louis Porter. "100 years later Vermont has 100 WMAs protecting more than 130,000 acres of lands and waters that provide critical habitat for native plants and animals and opportunities for wildlife-based recreation."

"As we move into a new decade, we invite you to join our efforts to conserve and protect Vermont's precious natural resources through the purchase of a Vermont Habitat Stamp. For more information about wildlife and projects throughout Vermont, visit our website, www.vtfishandwildlife.com, and in the meantime, be sure to get out to explore and enjoy Vermont for yourself."

The calendar includes hunting, fishing and trapping season dates for each month, along with beautiful photography, and it makes the perfect gift for any outdoor recreationist.

The calendar is available for \$15 from Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department at www.vtfishandwildlife.com.



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Watch Eva Sollberger's "Stuck in Vermont"
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From November 27 through December 20

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Vermont Country Calendar

ONLINE. Concert: 'Tis the Session. Amy Cann, Carol Compton, Jeremiah McLane, and Ben Van Vliet will take turns leading tunes from many different traditions, including English, Irish, and Old Time Appalachian. Grab your instruments and play along. Sheet music and recordings of tunes available in advance. RSVP to receive Zoom login info. Free. 7-8 pm. Upper Valley Music Center. (603) 448-1642. info@uvmusic.org. uvmusic.org.

STATEWIDE. 'Wildlife on the Move: Protecting Landscape Connections One Parcel at a Time.' Free. Vermont Land Trust presentation online 12-1 pm. (802) 745-6304

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16

ONLINE. "State House to Farm House." A virtual Vermont opportunity for farmers and farm workers to engage with legislators. 10 am – 12 noon. Vital Communities. (802) 291-9100 x108. vitalcommunities.org.

WOODSTOCK. Family Wednesdays. Family friendly programs, story readings, artifact explorations and on-site or take-home crafts. Each Wednesday focuses on a farm theme: giddy goats today. 10 am – 4 pm (excluding Christmas Day). Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17

HANOVER, NH. Monthly Grab & Go Lunch. Prepared by the Hartford Area Career & Technology Center's Culinary Arts program. Price: \$6, registration required. 12-12:30 pm. R.W. Black Community Center, 48 Lebanon St. (603) 643-5315. judy.stevens@hanovernh.org. *Third Thursday of the month.*

ONLINE. Museum ABCs – For the Birds. For children ages 3 to 5 and their adult companions. Join Linda and Deana on Facebook for a story about birds and information about how birds survive in the wintertime. Stop by the Library or Museum to pick up an activity bag with a wooden birdfeeder to decorate, plus materials to make another fun feeder you can hang from a tree. Free. 1:30-2:30 pm. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. benningtonmuseum.org.

ONLINE. Workshop: Stonewalls & Cellar Holes, with Samantha Ford. Discover how to "read" old forested farmscapes and agricultural architecture to trace 300 years of land

use history in Vermont. Hosted on Zoom. Free, donations welcome. 7-8 pm. Green Mountain Club. (802) 244-7037. greenmountainclub.org/education/speaker-series.

ONLINE. 11th Annual Woodstock Vermont Film Series: *The Last Ice.* The story of the Inuit communities fighting to protect the rapidly disappearing Arctic that has been their home for centuries. Tickets: \$12, 8 films \$88, 15 films \$150. (802) 457-5303. billingsfarm.org/filmseries. *Through December 20.*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or choose & cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. Bring your whole family for a fun Christmas tree experience in a virus responsive way. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. lhstrees.com. *Also December 19 & 20. Closing early afternoon on December 20.*

HANOVER, NH. Takeout Community Dinner. Takeout meal sponsored by Hanover Community Kitchen. Free. 5 pm. Our Savior Lutheran Church, 5 Summer St. (603) 643-3703. office@oslchanover.org. oslchanover.org. *Also December 25, January 1 and 8.*

ONLINE. Willem Lange performs Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." Live and on stage at Lost Nation Theater. Free, donations gratefully accepted. Pre-registration required to get the link to the live reading. 7 pm. info@lostonationtheater.org. lostnationtheater.org.

ONLINE. Comics Class. Virtual online class will teach the basics of cartooning to children ages 9-13. 3-4 p.m. To register (802) 295-5036. hartfordvt.myrec.com.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or choose & cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. Bring your whole family for a fun Christmas tree experience in a virus responsive way. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. *Closing early afternoon December 20.*

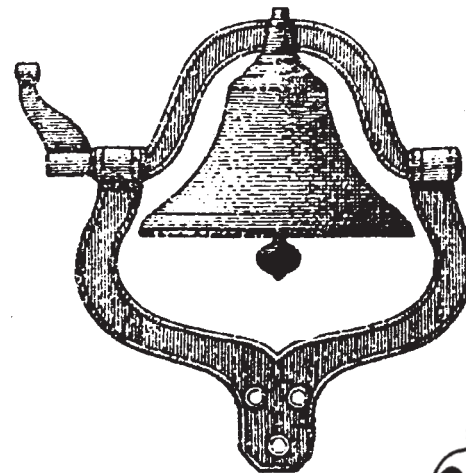
BURLINGTON. Burlington Farmer's Market Holiday Market. Face coverings required. 11 am – 2 pm. 345 Pine St. (802) 310-5172. burlingtonfarmersmarket.org.

DUMMERSTON. Elysian Hills Christmas Trees at Walker Farm. Fresh-cut, Vermont grown trees! Wreaths, center pieces & holiday greenery. Retail tree lot and farm store open Saturday and Sunday 10 am – 4 pm, Monday through Friday 12-4 pm. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 223 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. *November 28 through December 24 or till sold out.*

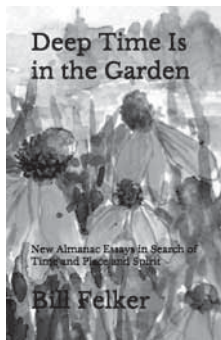
ESSEX JUNCTION. Winter Lights in the Park. Walk through Maple Street Park and enjoy the bright lights and winter tunes. Free on-site parking. Additional overflow parking across the street at ADL Middle School. Free. 5-8 pm. Maple Street Park, 75 Maple St. (802) 878-1375. ejrp.org. *Through January 11.*

ONLINE. Vermont Symphony Orchestra Concert: *Music for Days Like This.* This concert for cello quartet and two percussionists features a new commission by Molly Joyce and music by Mozart, Guillaume, and Pärt. Tickets starting at \$5. 7:30 pm. (802) 864-5741 x 110. vso.org/events.

PLAINFIELD. 60th Annual Bird Count. The Plainfield count encompasses a 7.5-mile radius around Plainfield, including the towns of Montpelier, East Montpelier and Calais. The Christmas bird count, organized by the National Audubon Society, has been getting birdwatchers outside recording species in their backyards and towns for over a century! 7 am – 5 pm. Sponsored North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm St. www.northbranchnaturecenter.org. *Also December 20.*



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At Christmas, Now

God, now at Christmas time, when we are sad
About a world that has gone warring mad,
Lay thy hand gently on each mourner's head,
Bowed down with grief for their beloved dead.
I do not ask to make them smile again,
But soothe them as a mother does the pain
Of her small child, until it falls asleep,
A respite from the time it wakes to weep.

God, at this Christmas time I want no gift
Other than see the war's grim shadow lift,
As did a fog that menaced earth one day,
And, windswept in a twinkling, rolled away,
Leaving the world all beautiful and bright—
This is the gift I ask for, God, tonight.

—NELLIE S. RICHARDSON
Springfield, VT 1944

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Vermont Country Calendar

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm – A Victorian Christmas. Holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations. Enjoy a cup of Wassail along with cider donuts at the Dairy Bar. Snowshoe trek in farm fields. Adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Thru January 3 (closed Christmas Day).*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or choose & cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. Bring your whole family for a fun Christmas tree experience in a virus responsive way. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. *Closing early in the afternoon.*

DUMMERSTON. Elysian Hills Christmas Trees at Walker Farm. Fresh-cut, Vermont grown trees! Wreaths, center pieces & holiday greenery. Retail tree sales and choose and cut-your-own tree, hand saws provided. Free hot cider, hot chocolate & pretzels in our farm store. Walker Farm fresh produce, maple syrup & honey! Retail tree lot and farm store open Saturday and Sunday 10 am – 4 pm, Monday through Friday 12-4 pm. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 223 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. walkerfarmvt@gmail.com. elysianhillstreefarm.com. *November 28 through December 24 or till sold out.*

ESSEX JUNCTION. Winter Lights in the Park. Walk through Maple Street Park and enjoy the bright lights and winter tunes. Hidden ornaments in the trees; pick up a scavenger hunt list on your way into the park. Free on-site parking. Additional overflow parking across the street at ADL Middle School. Free. 5-8 pm. Maple Street Park, 75 Maple St. (802) 878-1375. recreation@ejrp.org. ejrp.org. *November 26 through January 11.*

PLAINFIELD. 60th Annual Bird Count. The Plainfield count encompasses a 7.5-mile radius around Plainfield, including the towns of Montpelier, East Montpelier and Calais. The Christmas bird count, organized by the National Audubon Society, has been getting birdwatchers outside recording species in their backyards and towns for over a century! 7 am – 5 pm. Sponsored North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm St. northbranchnaturecenter.org.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm – A Victorian Christmas. Authentically decorated farmhouse parlor. Holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations of holiday foods and gingerbread ornaments. Enjoy a cup of Wassail along with cider donuts at the Dairy Bar. Snowshoe trek in farm fields. Adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also daily through January 3 (excluding Christmas Day).*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22

ONLINE. Chef Talk Tuesday. Chef Dante will focus on a different topic each week with special guests. Tune in and get your questions answered live! 2-2:30 pm. The Essex Resort and Spa. facebook.com/events/297876411605308. *Every Tuesday.*

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm – A Victorian Christmas. Authentically decorated farmhouse parlor. Holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations and gingerbread ornaments. Enjoy a cup of Wassail and cider donuts at the Dairy Bar. Snowshoe trek in farm fields. Adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also daily through January 3 (excluding Christmas Day).*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm – A Victorian Christmas. Authentically decorated farmhouse parlor. Holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations and gingerbread ornaments. Enjoy a cup of Wassail and cider donuts at the Dairy Bar. Snowshoe trek in farm fields. Adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also daily through January 3 (excluding Christmas Day).*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm – A Victorian Christmas. Authentically decorated farmhouse parlor. Holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations and gingerbread ornaments. Enjoy a cup of Wassail and cider donuts at the Dairy Bar. Snowshoe trek in farm fields. Adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also daily through January 3 (excluding Christmas Day).*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25

HANOVER, NH. Takeout Community Dinner. Takeout meal sponsored by Hanover Community Kitchen. Free. 5 pm. Our Savior Lutheran Church, 5 Summer St. (603) 643-3703. office@oslchanover.org. oslchanover.org. *Also January 1 and 8.*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26

ESSEX JUNCTION. Winter Lights in the Park. Walk through Maple Street Park and enjoy the bright lights and winter tunes. Hidden ornaments in the trees; pick up a scavenger

hunt list on your way into the park. Free on-site parking. Additional overflow parking across the street at ADL Middle School. Free. 5-8 pm. Maple Street Park, 75 Maple St. (802) 878-1375. recreation@ejrp.org. ejrp.org. *Through January 11.*

HUNTINGTON. Bird Monitoring Walk, outdoors on trails in forest and meadow. Birders—current, experienced, newbie and would-be—welcome. Bring your own binoculars, dress for weather. Face masks required within 6 feet of each other. Max: 5 people; register in advance and get a confirmation. Free, suggested donation. \$5. 8-9 am. Birds of Vermont Museum, 900 Sherman Hollow Rd. (802) 434-2167. birdsofvermont.org.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm – A Victorian Christmas. Authentically decorated farmhouse parlor. Holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations and gingerbread ornaments. Enjoy a cup of Wassail and cider donuts at the Dairy Bar. Snowshoe trek in farm fields. Adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also daily through January 3.*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27

ESSEX JUNCTION. Winter Lights in the Park. Walk through Maple Street Park and enjoy the bright lights and winter tunes. Hidden ornaments in the trees; pick up a scavenger hunt list on your way into the park. Free on-site parking. Additional overflow parking across the street at ADL Middle School. Free. 5-8 pm. Maple Street Park, 75 Maple St. (802) 878-1375. recreation@ejrp.org. ejrp.org. *November 26 through January 11.*

ONLINE. Virtual Jam Session: Zoom Tunes. Participants individually play the “tune of the month” using an inexpensive app (iReal Pro) as a source of accompaniment. During the Zoom Tunes jam, participants divide into breakout rooms supervised by one of the coaches. Fee: \$15. 7-9:30 pm. Vermont Jazz Center gingervjc@gmail.com. vtjazz.org. *Last Sunday of each month.*

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm – A Victorian Christmas. Authentically decorated farmhouse parlor. Holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations and gingerbread ornaments. Enjoy a cup of Wassail and cider donuts at the Dairy Bar. Snowshoe trek in farm fields. Adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also daily through January 3.*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm – A Victorian Christmas. Authentically decorated farmhouse parlor. Holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations and gingerbread ornaments. Enjoy a cup of Wassail and cider donuts at the Dairy Bar. Snowshoe trek in farm fields. Adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also daily through January 3.*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30

MANCHESTER. New Year's Family Concert. Taconic musicians present a 45-minute, family-friendly concert to ring out the year. Free-will offering. Reservations required; link will open in mid December. Location TBA. Sponsored by Taconic Music. (802) 362-7162. directors@taconicmusic.org. taconicmusic.org.

ONLINE. Chef Talk Tuesday. Chef Dante will focus on a different topic each week with special guests. Tune in and get your questions answered live! 2-2:30 pm. The Essex Resort and Spa. facebook.com/events/297876411605308. *Every Tuesday.*

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm – A Victorian Christmas. Authentically decorated farmhouse parlor. Holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations and gingerbread ornaments. Enjoy a cup of Wassail and cider donuts at the Dairy Bar. Snowshoe trek in farm fields. Adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also daily through January 3.*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31

MANCHESTER. New Year's Celebration Concerts. Taconic String Band with Matthew Gold and Michael Rudiakov perform Bach, Viennese waltzes, tangos, Broadway tunes, and the traditional Radetzky March. Tickets: \$25. Reservations required; link will open in mid December. 3 pm and 5:30 pm. Inn at Manchester Celebration Barn. (802) 362-7162. directors@taconicmusic.org. taconicmusic.org.

ONLINE. 11th Annual Woodstock Vermont Film Series: *The Woman Who Loves Giraffes.* Anne Innis Dagg (now 85) offers an intimate window into her life as a young woman, juxtaposed with the devastating reality that giraffes are facing today. Tickets: \$12, 8 films \$88, 15 films \$150. (802) 457-5303. billingsfarm.org/filmseries. *Through January 3.*

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm – A Victorian Christmas. Authentically decorated 1980 farmhouse parlor. Holiday stories, candle dipping and cooking demonstrations including gingerbread ornaments. Enjoy a cup of Wassail and cider donuts at the Dairy Bar. Snowshoe trek in farm fields. Adults \$14-\$16; children \$4-\$9. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also daily through January 3.*

NEWS FROM VERMONT

Dot and Harry Continue To Inspire Us All!

by Burr Morse

“Buy me a ticket on the last train home” sings Al Stewart in his song “Time Passages”. And I say “indeed, time passes all too quickly these days”. In dog years, my Black Lab Averill and I are about the same age. Yesterday Avie tried to navigate the steep stairway that leads to our business office and had to abort her attempt on step number two...yikes...how far behind am I? That’s wicked scary!

Seems as though we’re never quite prepared for it when, without warning, that fast-forward button gets pushed...reminds me of an experience we had with our dad one time after his life got set at “warp speed”.

The ravages of strokes had confined him to a wheelchair and, although he had lived quite comfortably for the ten years after those strokes started, he was in pretty tough shape the day of his brother’s 70th birthday celebration.

We all arrived at the Adament Community Hall early enough to lift him up the three steep steps to the old one-room schoolhouse. Our Uncle Bernard was twelve years younger than our dad and was still in pretty good health.

Many of us took turns at the microphone with stories about Bernard’s life, a life that demanded song and stories often humorous and off-color. Just as things were getting quite raucous, we realized that Harry Morse was being wheeled up to the mic.

All of a sudden the place became “pin drop” quiet as Harry’s feeble voice cut through: “Swing low, sweet chariot, Comin’ for to carry me home”. Although our

dad’s voice was weak, he could still carry a tune with the best of ‘em...”A band of angels comin’ after me, Comin’ for to carry me home”. I looked around me at lots of teary-eyes and at the faces of burly men, now softened and calmed...”If you get there before I do...Tell all my friends I’m comin’ too”. It was only nine months before our dad got “carried home”.

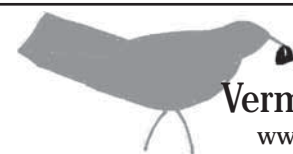
Our lives are all precious like gold, but when that fast-forward button gets pushed, the warning is served...as Robert Frost wrote, “nothing gold can stay”.

Whether it’s a last train or a sweet chariot, my own fare has been paid and that’s OK. I’m still in the pre-“warp speed” stage and having a great life...so full in fact, that I intend to stay away from that man with the ticket punch as long as I can!

Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks is located at 1168 County Rd., Montpelier, VT. Open year-round 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week. Order Cabot cheddar cheese and maple products at (800) 242-2740 or morsefarm.com.

Free sugar house tours and tasting, multimedia displays in a real woodshed theater, a nature trail, country store, and an outdoor Vermont farm life museum make up the Morse Farm experience, and sprinkled throughout, are whimsical carved folklife characters created by Burr Morse.

COVID-19 restrictions in place. Masks required in-store. One-way traffic, six-feet apart recommended. Sneeze guards between cashier and customer. Cashiers and servers wear masks.



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North Country Book News

Children's Book Reviews by Charles Sutton

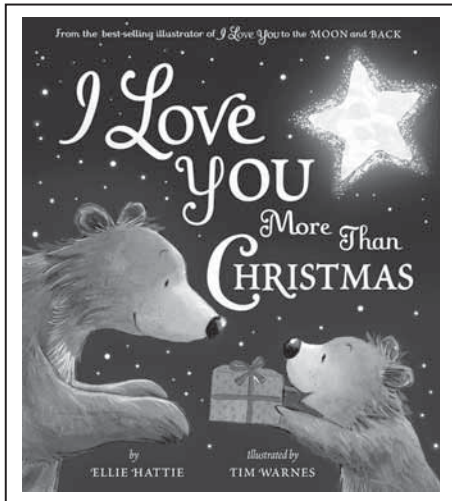
The Light of Peace in the Dark of the Year

There are so many fun things going on at Christmas time like tree decorating, wrapping presents, making holiday cookies and so much more that it is easy to let the real meaning of Christmas slip by.

The choice between what is truly important or fun-giving distractions is heartwarmingly told in this large, beautifully illustrated children's picture book, *I Love You More Than Christmas* by Ellie Hattie and illustrated by Tim Warnes (\$17.99. Little Tiger Press. www.tigertalebooks.com).

Here we meet a Father Bear, Mommy Bear and Little Bear who are so busy or interrupted that there is no time to express what they really love more than Christmas—their love for each other. This true-to-life story ends with "Because as everyone knows, the gift of Christmas is only as wonderful as the love that it's wrapped in. Merry Christmas, everyone!"

Illustrator Tim Warnes, who lives in the south of England, has a lovely website filled with articles about children's book recommendations that is worth visiting: www.timwarnes.com.



The mountainous country of Switzerland has a long tradition of unusual and eye-catching celebrations, some for religious holidays, some for seasons of the year, and some going back to ancient times. The Christmas season provides a surprising number of these as one will see in *Festivals & Traditions in Switzerland* by Barbara Piatti and illustrated by Yvonne Rogenmoser (\$30. North/South Books, Inc. www.northsouth.com).

In Switzerland the Christmas season begins on St. Nicholas Day (December 6) when the first Santa Claus, Nicholas of Myra from Turkey, died more than two thousand years ago on that date. Today this Santa visits not on reindeer but by donkey, carriage, train or boat.

In Kussnacht am Rigi, the St. Nicholas parade features 1,400 boys and men carrying bells and dressed in white shepherds smocks. They pass out candies, nuts and fruits. Some have unusual headdresses with tissue paper which are lit inside by candles and look like church stained-glass windows.

Swiss Christmas traditions include celebrating the birth of Jesus, gathering with friends and family, all dressed up, going to church, sharing presents, Christmas cookies, and special dinners. Other traditions are the Yule log cake, a delicious spongy cake with buttery cream filling frosted in chocolate with little marzipan woodland creatures all around, that looks like the branch of a tree. In Appenzell they burn frankincense. "And shhhh! On Christmas Eve it is said the animals in the stall can speak human language. Be as quiet as you can and listen to what they have to say."

This is a handsomely-illustrated book you can share with your whole family to learn about each of the seasons and holidays all through the year in long-surviving Switzerland.

We know how important evergreen trees are to brighten our Christmas, but these balsam and Fraser firs, white pines and cedars are appreciated the rest of the year, too. A Christmas

tree farm provides the setting for this story about how animals all enjoy the trees year round, before the big December event!

In *Who Would Like a Christmas Tree?—A Tree for Each Season* by Ellen Bryan Obed and illustrated by Anne Hunter (\$12.95, papercover. Islandport Press. www.islandportpress.com), one will see a variety of animal visitors in and among these trees year-round. See black-capped chickadees (January); meadow voles (February); white-tail deer (March); American woodcock (April); American robin (May); balsam twig aphid (June); wildflowers (July); monarch butterfly and common milkweed (August); black and yellow garden spiders (September); red fox and field mice (October); wild turkey (November); and families gathering (December).

So depressed you won't make a sound, even a cheerful ring? Such is the dilemma for *The Little Bell That Wouldn't Ring—A Christmas Story* by Heike Conradi and illustrated by Maja Dusikova (\$17.95. NorthSouth Books, Inc. www.northsouth.com) about a new little bell put in a church tower with three old, experienced bells. She won't ring with them, nor for countless friendly birds and other animals who collect words to brighten the little bell's mood. Among the words to tempt her are Merry Christmas

in foreign languages (Buon Natale, Joyeux Noel and others) and cheesy names from a family of mice (Cheddar, Camembert, Gorgonzola). Nothing works until Christmas Eve when the bell finally rings after the "right" words are said. What would be your guess be? "What's that?" Ringlebert the dove asked suddenly. A tiny light was crossing the night sky. "It's a light from Bethlehem", explained Carol the crow. "Every year it goes all around the world with a message of peace for everyone...the little bell listened very carefully then swung, swung and swung...Peace on earth-de-ding-dang-di-dong! Perhaps you can hear the little bell ringing to wish you peace."

One of the themes of the Christmas season is to share with those in need. This may mean bringing good wishes and cheer to those who are seasonally depressed.

In *Merry Christmas Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister (\$9.95. Board Book. NorthSouth Books, Inc. www.northsouth.com) a brightly colored rainbow fish leads a school of others to wish a Merry Christmas and cheer up fish who are unhappy. Rainbow & friends visit a striped fish, a large purple octopus, a scary-looking moray, and a sea horse—and everyone is glad to see them! After each visit that night, a special mysterious light shone for a long time. We see this on the last page with the fish gathered around a sparkly star on the ocean floor.

A non-Christmas Rainbow Fish edition is also available in nine other languages: French, German, Italian, Japanese, Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic, Russian and Korean. These bilingual translations are an excellent way to introduce children to other languages at an early age and to surmount language barriers. They are ideal for children growing up in a bilingual environment or whose language is not the local one.

Book Review

The Shortest Day

by Susan Cooper

(\$17.99. Candlewick Press. www.candlewick.com)

The day is so short it might just pass us by. That's that once-a-year winter solstice when darkness has more time here and now than light.

British author Susan Cooper's celebratory poem *The Shortest Day*, originally written for the theater, is available now as a picture book to match the beauty of her words. Winter solstice arrives on December 21st this year.

The poem captures the joy and magic that from that day forward the world will be a little bit lighter and brighter.

From ancient times the winter solstice was called Yule, a celebration of Goddess moon's energy which will give birth to the sun. The poem's message, especially appreciated this year, is to give thanks, love, and hope for peace. The poem ends with "Welcome, Yule!"



Book Review by Charles Sutton

Migrants

Migrants fleeing for their lives from wars and other conflicts always have death at their heels. This unending story is vividly told—without a word—about a group of 30 animals seeking a safe refuge.

In *Migrants* by Issa Watanabe (\$18.70. Gecko Press. www.geckopress.com) the animals including babies and children are pursued by Death itself—a skeleton impersonating the Grim Reaper, in a flowery smock. Death trails the group, seems to want to be part of it, or at least accepted by it, and even tries to offer the group the return of a satchel that was left behind. Once a big white bear glowers at Death even though Death offers him a leafy bouquet. All to no avail.

Death has a red-broken blue bird as its helper. (Author Watanabe says that the bird is a blue ibis, which in many cultures represents the one who communicates between life and death, the past and the present).

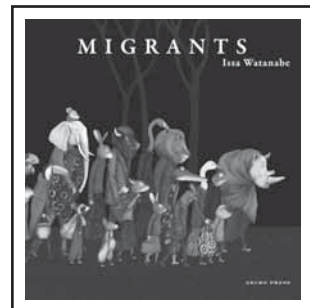
The most deaths occur when the animals' would-be rescue boat is swamped in heavy seas. Later a motionless and sad group of survivors must watch the waters' edge for any others, but only their clothing appears.

The continuing tragedy comes through with scenes where Death assists, in a somber and caring way, with a crossing over—this time a bundled rabbit laid out on the ground, past help.

The migrants do their best to be as normal as possible, with a soup-kitchen

gathering for a meal, and putting the children to bed at night among blankets on the ground.

The art work highlights the contrast between life and



death by always showing a black background, night or day, behind the troupe of animals dressed in colorful human clothes, and walking along, as if people, with little arms and legs, but always with looks of sadness, exasperation, horror, and above all an intention to keep going, to survive. As it is with humans. When the migrants do find a new home in a forest there can be relief, but no joy.

We thank author Issa Watanabe for having the animal kingdom show what's happening tragically, daily, in the "real" world.

Issa Watanabe was born in Peru in 1980, the daughter of an illustrator and a poet. She studied Literature and Fine Arts and Illustration. Watanabe has led and developed several projects to promote social integration through art.

For an interview with the artist go to Gecko's website at geckopress.com and navigate to Migrants Q&A with Issa Watanabe.



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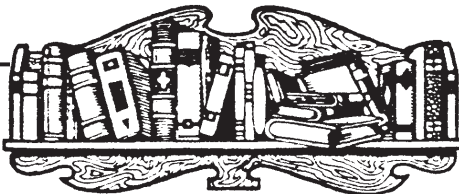
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The Birder's Guide To Africa

by Michael Mills, with photographs by Tasso Leventis

(\$49.95. Go-Away-Birding, www.goawaybirding.com)

Although birds—the great aviators—can travel thousands of miles it is still a surprise that many species of the same bird family can be seen in countries all over the world.

This fascinating book, the first comprehensive and detailed summary of bird watching in the African region, will tempt world travelers who are serious birders to go to Africa and enchant the rest of us armchair birders with their stories. We who remain behind see most of our birds this time of year at the bird feeder, but with this book we can be our best arm-chair birder!

Why Africa? With 68 territories, 142 bird families and 2,792 bird species, Africa provides one of the world's best bird watching areas with many endemic (native to the region) birds. Remarkable color photographs (144 pages of them) show these birds close up in their natural habitat, sometimes singing or eating bugs.

In Africa this bird land habitat covers a wide area of possibilities—savannas, desert, lake frontage, grasslands, woodlands, bush velds, ocean sand flats, mountains, jungles and much more.

What's amazing is this one-of-a-kind 540-page guide/encyclopedia lists every possible bird for each region on that continent.

The No.1 birding area in Africa—Madagascar—is an Indian Ocean island off the East Coast, home to 671 species of birds.

The listings for all countries and territories includes data on habitat; what area, site and when they can best be seen; local climate; paper-work needed to get there, like visas and money considerations; how safe the area is regarding crime, terrorism and civil wars; other attractions like mammal watching in many places or famous sites like Victoria Falls in Zambia. There are excellent write-ups on the geography of Africa with up-to-date maps.

Along with Madagascar, the top birding countries are South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Angola, Cameroon, Uganda and Zambia. Also, ranking high on the best area for birding are lesser known countries like the Portuguese islands of Sao Tome & Principe in the Indian Ocean; Comoros—volcano islands northwest of Madagascar and politically part of France; and Gabon in central Africa where there are 114 species of birds plus the Western gorilla. The Spanish Canary Islands (100 km west of Morocco) are also ideal for birding.

The book tells us how birds are grouped

into 240 families, each of which contains many species which number more than 10,000 worldwide. Half of the families (actually 142 of them) are to be found in Africa, making it the richest 'family home' globally. Reason enough to go birding there!

Surprisingly Africa is home to many species familiar to us including owls, kingfishers, pigeons, sparrows, starlings, hawks, geese, cat birds, eagles, sandpipers, wrens and others—even robins, but no chickadees or nuthatches.

Many of the African birds are named considering how their appearance is or how they behave—the ant picker, bee eater, crab plover, fin foot, fluff tail, flycatcher, tree creeper, puff-back, wag tail, oystercatcher and others including ox pecker. What's that? Red or yellow ox peckers are widely seen in large game

Book Review by Charles Sutton

parks of South and East Africa where they actually do feed on the backs of wild mammals and domestic livestock. They look harmless enough as pictured in the book and help to keep the itchy bug and parasite populations down.

With such a treasure of ornithological know-how, one would want to see what is written about birds that are curiosities to us. Our list includes storks which have the reputation there to being the ugliest bird on the continent. We see pictured the fabulous Marabou Stork which can live near humans.

The Shoebill stork, a rare and strange-looking bird is a major draw for birders to Uganda where it is easily seen.

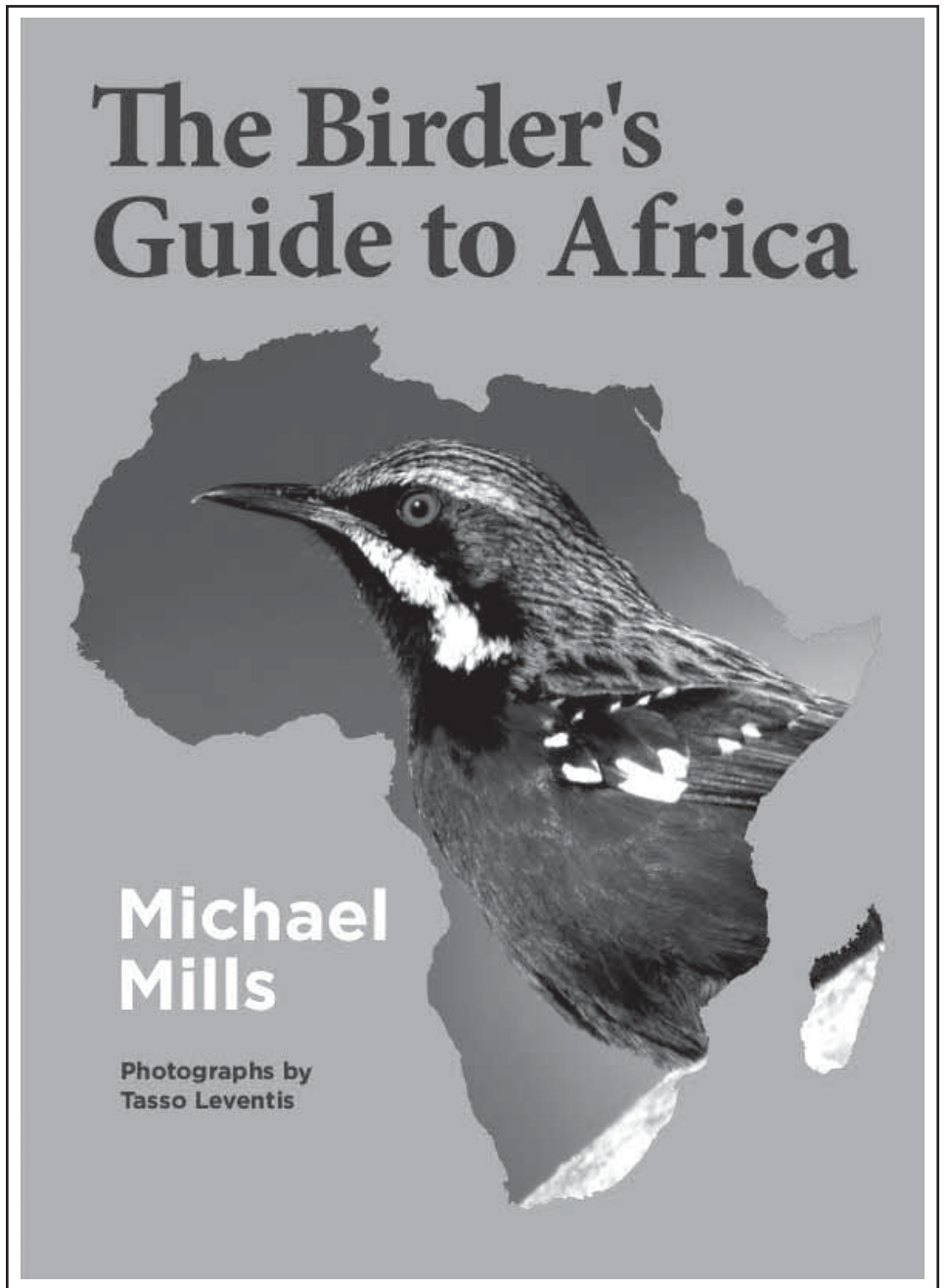
Birders going to South Africa will be able to view seven species of the pelagic albatrosses. Metaphorically the bird has become an omen thanks to the poem, *The Rime of The Ancient Mariner* by Samuel T. Coleridge.

One may never actually see a live ostrich but shown here are three ostriches prancing around an African savannas. They are safeguarded in parks because otherwise they are hunted for food.

Declining wetland habitats has made the tall, elegant crane an endangered species worldwide. Africa is still home to half of the world species.

The incredible snake-eating Secretary bird is one of the continent's most unique birds earning it a double-page photograph. It is also a declining species.

Also deserving a spectacular photograph is the Turacos or go-away-bird, who possesses two color pigments unique to birds, the reds the greens that make them such a



showcase. They are found in wooded habitats through the Afrotropics.

After studying this book one can only have the highest respect and appreciation for its two creators.

Michael Mills is a freelance South African bird guide and bird conservationist with a close working relationship with Birding Africa. Since completing his Masters in Conservation Biology at the Percy FitzPatrick Institute/University of Cape Town, Michael has split his time between conducting bird conservation and research projects in Angola for the A. P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute in collaboration with the BirdLife network, and guiding bird watching tours around Africa. He has a strong interest in recording bird vocalizations and believes in the importance of publishing his research

findings. When not exploring regions of Africa, he can be found dancing in a tutu with his partner Catherine and daughter Erin.

Tasso Leventis is a businessman with widespread involvement in wildlife conservation, substantially in Africa. His commitments to bird conservation have included the establishment of an avian research institute in Nigeria, as well as participation in and support for international and national conservation non-government organizations such as BirdLife International and a number of BirdLife's many country partner organizations. As an avowed amateur, he has enjoyed the challenge of attempting to photograph wildlife, birds in particular, and is happy to have contributed the vast majority of photographs for the book. He lives in London with his wife Myriam, their three grown up children and (so far) three grandchildren.

Book News

Pie Academy

by Ken Haedrich

Master the Perfect Crust and 255 Amazing Fillings, with Fruits, Nuts, Creams, Custards, Ice Cream, and More; Expert Techniques for Making Fabulous Pies from Scratch.

Trusted cookbook author and pie expert Ken Haedrich delivers the only pie cookbook you'll ever need: *Pie Academy* (\$35, Storey Books, www.storey.com).

Novice and experienced bakers will discover the secrets to baking a pie from scratch, with recipes, crust

savvy, tips and tutorials, advice about tools and ingredients, and more. Foolproof step-by-step photos give you the confidence you need to choose and prepare the best crust for different types of fillings.

Learn how to make pie dough using butter, lard, or both; how to work with all-purpose, whole-wheat, or gluten-free flour; how to roll out dough; which pie pan to use; and how to add flawless finishing details like fluting and lattice tops.

Next are 255 recipes for every kind and style of pie, from classic apple pie and pumpkin pie to summer berry, fruit, nut, custard, chiffon, and cream pies, freezer pies, slab pies, hand pies, turnovers, and much more.

This beast of a collection, with gorgeous color photos throughout, weighs in at nearly four pounds and serves up forty years of pie wisdom in a single, satisfying package.

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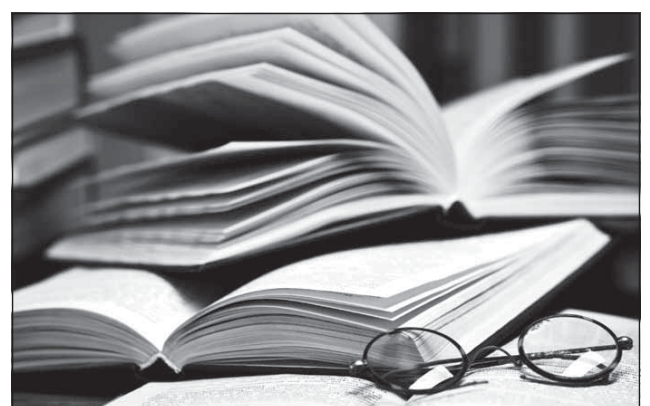
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North Country Reflections

A Walk in the Park

by Judith Irven

Next summer plan to visit some great gardens

As the year of 2020 gradually retreats in my rear-view mirror, I am eagerly giving thought to the year ahead! And I am ever hopeful that, by next summer, it will once again be possible to visit beautiful gardens, both in Vermont and beyond, an activity I have sorely missed this past year.

Some of my most special childhood memories are of the many happy hours I spent with my mother at the magnificent garden at Sissinghurst (about 20 miles from our home in southeast England). Here we would wander through the different garden spaces, embrace the sights and smells of growing things and, all the while, chat together about who knows what!

At that stage in my life I had no interest whatsoever in actual gardening; nothing could persuade me to dig the earth and then wait interminably for the flowers or vegetables to mature. But, despite my teenage apathy towards physical gardening, those 'garden days' with my mother were indeed cherished times to savor forever.

But, as I have grown older and wiser, I have also become a passionate gardener! So today, whenever I visit public gardens, I am ever alert for new and exciting plant combinations to try in my own garden. But, even now, I still delight in the beauty and serenity that only a lovely garden can offer.

So, for gardeners and the non-gardeners alike, I would like to suggest four special garden destinations along the Maine coast that would make wonderful additions to your travel plans for the year ahead.

I have also written a longer description of these lovely gardens, complete with plenty of photographs, at <https://northcountryreflections.com/garden-talks-seminars-workshop/>

Mount Desert Island, Maine

Many people make a point of visiting the stunning Arcadia National Park on Mount Desert Island. But few visitors are aware that, just beyond the park's boundaries along the southern coast of the island, three exquisite gardens with a rich shared history, await your discovery.

All three gardens are beautifully maintained by the Land and Garden Preserve, which also has many lovely pictures on their website: <http://gardenpreserve.org/index.html>

Two of these gardens, Asticou Azalea Garden and Thuya Garden, in the little village of Northeast Harbor, were created a little over sixty years ago by Charles Savage, a self-taught but extremely skillful landscape designer.

Although a life-long native of Northeast Harbor, Charles always mingled comfortably with the well-to-do 'summer folk' visiting their nearby expansive properties. And among his very special summer friends were two respected landscape architects, Joseph Curtis and Beatrix Farrand, and the philanthropist, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Not only was JDR instrumental in developing the carriage road system in Arcadia National Park, but he also financed the three gardens which are the subject of this story.



photo by Dick Conrad

Asticou Azalea Garden on Mount Desert Island in Maine, showing one of the meticulously raked paths that lead the visitor around this lovely garden.

The impetus for creating both Asticou and Thuya gardens was Beatrix Farrand's sudden decision to completely destroy her renowned collection of mature shrubs and perennials when she decided she needed to move to a smaller home. Absolutely horrified, Charles persuaded his friend, JDR, to purchase and then move the entire plant collection to a new garden to be created in the swampy land at the head of the Northeast Harbor inlet.

First Charles oversaw the extensive site preparation—draining the land, creating rocky waterways and finally the Great Pond. Then he managed the relocation of hundreds of full size plants—azaleas, evergreens and more—from the Farrand property.

The result was Asticou Azalea Garden, a serene 'stroll garden' based on Japanese design ideals, which also reflects the topography and plants of the Maine coast.

On our visit we entered through the formal Japanese gateway to discover magnificent carpets of pincushion moss on either side of the gravel pathway. Then, in complete disbelief, we watched as an attendant gently brushed the moss to remove any stray pine needles that might have dropped the previous night!

From there we walked along a wide flowing sandy path, edged with azaleas, that followed a small brook strewn with weathered Maine boulders. We soon discovered the perfectly raked sand garden with carefully positioned rocks, in its entirety signifying coastal islands in a shimmering sea. Finally we arrived at the Great Pond, complete with a grand collection of elegantly pruned evergreens and yet more azaleas.

Our visit to Asticou was in September, just as the autumnal hues were coming in. However, to see the azaleas in bloom, plan your visit for late May or June.

Beatrix Farrand's plant collection was also the basis of Charles Savage's second great creation, Thuya Garden, which surrounds Thuya Lodge, the longtime home of Savage's landscape architect friend, Joseph Curtis.

By contrast with Asticou, Thuya is set high on an enclosed hilltop. Visitors approach the garden via a steep rocky staircase to reach a pair of grand carved gates that mark the garden's entrance. (For people unable to make the climb, there is handicap parking available at Thuya Lodge)

Although Thuya and Asticou are the creation of a single designer using the same collection of Farrand plants, these two gardens feel a world apart. Asticou offers a journey of discovery through serene flowing spaces. By contrast, Thuya has the feel of an English country garden. When sitting in the Lower Pavilion, at a single glance you can see the full expanse of the largest perennial bed. There are also waves

of colorful flowers that remind us of early twentieth century gardens created by English notables Gertrude Jekyll and William Robinson.

The third garden, known as 'the Abby Garden', was created by Beatrix Farrand twenty years before either Asticou or Thuya. She designed and developed this beautiful garden for Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, the artistic wife of JDR, to grace their country home in Seal Harbor. While it features a grand English flower garden, it is set within a serene Asian inspired landscape.

The Abby Garden has only recently been opened to the public (by advance registration only) and I am hoping to be able see it myself for the first time next summer.

Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens

It is an easy three-hour drive from Mount Desert Island to Boothbay Harbor and the beautiful Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens.

The Botanical Gardens encompass some 20 acres of cultivated areas within an expansive 250 acre site, so you should set aside a full day for exploration. Indeed shuttle buses are available to take visitors to and from the farther reaches of the site.

The Botanical Gardens are actually made up of a number of individual garden spaces, like a collection of 'Gardens within a Garden', each with its own personality, look and feel. The entire site is beautifully laid out, so that you can effortlessly move about both within the individual garden spaces and, equally important, between them.

Dick and I especially enjoyed the Sensory Garden, designed to appeal to all our senses. In addition to the visual treat of lots of colorful flowers, there is water to hear, stones to touch, leaves to smell and herbs to taste.

Another highlight is the Children's Garden, a lively, imaginative space to be enjoyed by kids of all ages (including ourselves). We were particularly taken by playful labyrinth cut into the lawn, and the whimsical child-sized barn, complete with a shaggy grass roof, where small classes were conducted throughout the season. Nearby two chatty chickens and their handsome rooster scratched away in the dirt.

We also loved the long serpentine walkway, surrounded by native plants of the Maine forests, leading down to a gentle Meditation Garden by the sea.

Like many of our own gardens, the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens are relatively young, which means that the shrubs and trees still have some growing to do.

But these gardens are anything but sparse. Far from it—every last growing space is filled to the brim with beautiful perennials and colorful annuals—a perfect lesson on how we can create fullness in even the youngest garden.

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.

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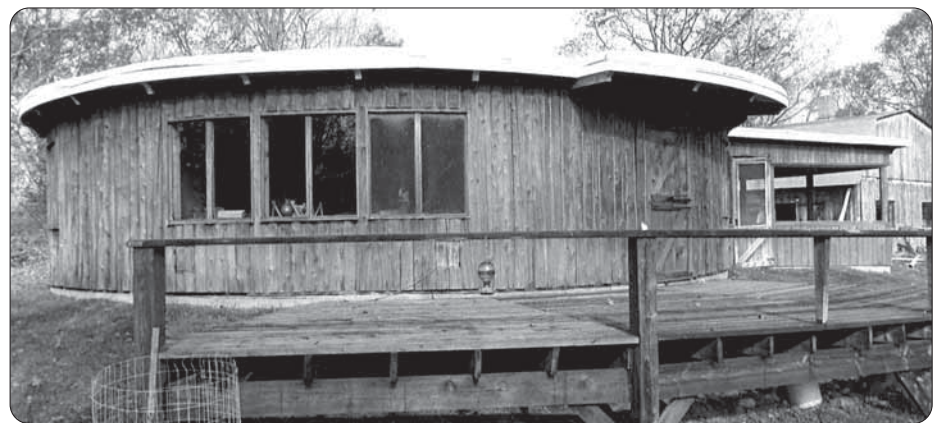
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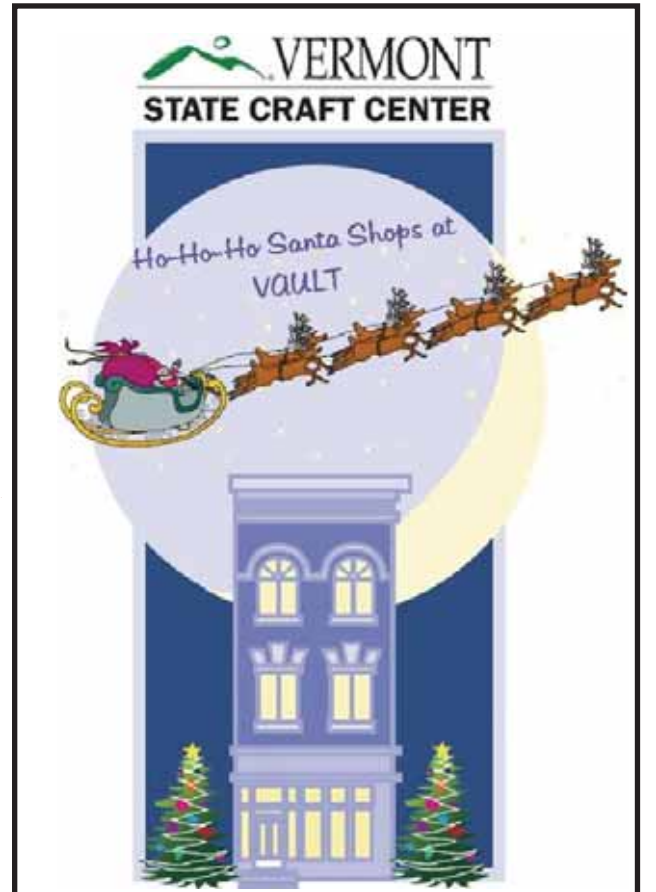
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