

# Vermont Country Sampler

December 2021

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

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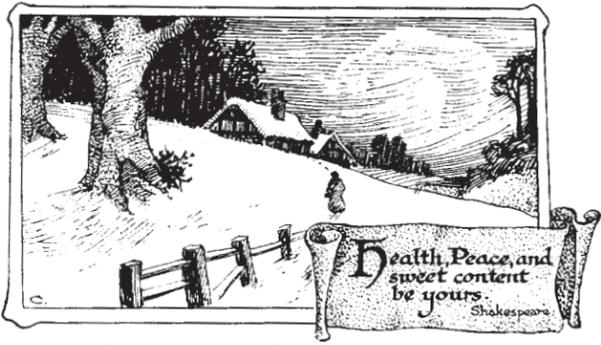
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**GREEN MOUNTAIN STOCK FARM**  
RANDOLPH, VERMONT



**December Journal**

**Winter Sun**

by Bill Felker

As the Sun moves across the early winter sky, it shines further and further into my south-facing windows. Paying attention to where and when it enters my house allows me to track the seasons toward and away from winter solstice. When I watch the sunlight move across my walls, I feel like I am not only following time made visible, but I am also finding myself.

My relationship with the Sun is different when I am outside. In the yard or the woods or on the road, the Sun is diffuse, has no limits. It shines everywhere, belongs to everything and to every

creature. Even the warmth of the Sun on my face on cold mornings sometimes seems accidental and impersonal.

But when I am inside, watching it on the wall in my room, the Sun feels more intimate. Shaped by the frame of my south windows, its light is not only tame but mine. It has come to me. I am the only one who sees it here now. It is not so vast and almighty as it appears filling the sky. It is not the indifferent prime mover of the day and night.

Instead, it seems a bright blessing and a personal ally against the winter ahead.



Goats frolic in the snow on a sunny winter day in Bethel, Vermont.

photo by Nancy Cassidy

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

You hunt your frock and belt your form  
And bring the headstalls in to warm;  
A crop of snow is jest the thing  
Until the wind begins to sing;  
The dog jumps in and makes a track

Around the little barn and back;  
The stock enjoy it, every head,  
The colt wakes up and kicks the shed;  
The hens come out, the flirty things,  
And powder up their bills and wings,  
Jim Blood goes by with face aglow,  
Hurrah! for good, old-fashioned snow.

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

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

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

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**Vermont Country Sampler**

December 2021, Vol. XXXVII

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Current and back issues of the Sampler  
and calendar are available online at  
[www.vermontcountrysampler.com](http://www.vermontcountrysampler.com)



Draft horses pull a wagon of visitors around the winter farm fields at Billings Farm & Museum in Woodstock, VT. photo by Billings Farm & Museum

Woodstock, VT

## Christmas at the Farm Hosted by Billings Farm & Museum

Billings Farm & Museum brings old-fashioned cheer to Woodstock, VT, with family-friendly festivities throughout the entire holiday season, including a decked-out historic barn for family photo opportunities, horse-drawn rides, and gingerbread houses.

### Historic New England Christmas

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

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

In Woodstock, turn-of-the-century businesses advertised their wares for Christmas gifts. Most gifts were useful domestic items. Homemade, handcrafted gifts included fancy mittens, satin bows, and stockings filled with candies, nuts, and raisins.

### Christmas on the Farm

Throughout December guests can dip candles, make s'mores, and snowshoe, weather permitting, from December 4-5 and December 18 - January 2. (Billings Farm is closed Christmas Day.)

Traditional nineteenth century decorations will adorn the 1890 Farm Manager's House where visitors can take a self-guided tour. Meet Jersey cows, goats and sheep in the barns. Find Billings Farm cheeses and other unique holiday

gifts in the Museum Gift Shop. Guests can enjoy daily horse-drawn wagon or sleigh rides from December 27-January 2, conditions permitting.

### Wassail Weekend, December 10th-12th

The town of Woodstock celebrates its annual tradition of Wassail Weekend from December 10-12.

At Billings Farm, there will be warm Wassail Punch, cider donuts, a gingerbread recreation of the historic 1890 Farm Manager's House, horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides on Sunday, and holiday stories. Travelers can warm up by an outdoor fire, take photos in front of Christmas trees in the decorated holiday barn, and learn about Wassail traditions. Voting for the gingerbread house contest begins on December 10.

### Billings Christmas Decor

Billings Farm will be transformed by the nearby Woodstock Inn & Resort's Master Gardener, Benjamin Pauly, who harvests natural materials to handcraft traditional décor. This year's decorations include 14 outdoor lighted trees, three indoor decorated trees, 100 swags and wreaths with bows, a decorated sleigh, giant grapevine wreaths decorated

with dried floral from the local Kelly Way Gardens, 5,000+ lights, and more.

### Visiting safely

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

Billings Farm & Museum is owned and operated by The Woodstock Foundation Inc., a charitable non-profit institution.

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

*Admission: adults 16-61 \$16; 62 & over \$14; students 16 & up \$9; children 4-15 \$8; children 3 and under are free.*

*Visit [www.billingsfarm.org](http://www.billingsfarm.org), or at [facebook.com/BillingsFarmMuseum/](https://facebook.com/BillingsFarmMuseum/) and [instagram.com/billingsfarm](https://instagram.com/billingsfarm). (802) 457-2355. Open weekends November through February 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. April through October open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.*

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## Brattleboro, VT

# Exhibit and Talk by Sculptor William Ransom At Brattleboro Museum & Art Center

The Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) will present a free talk by sculptor William Ransom on Thursday, December 2, at 7 p.m. via Zoom and Facebook Live. Register at [brattleboromuseum.org](http://brattleboromuseum.org). His sculpture exhibit, "William Ransom: Keep Up/Hold Up" is on view at BMAC through March 5, 2022.

Ransom will discuss the exhibit in the free talk. In a statement accompanying the exhibit, Ransom explains the origins of the title. "I am measured first by my blackness," Ransom writes. "Our national story predetermines through the weight of white supremacy and its deliberately established structures how my very existence is perceived. I am simultaneously compelled to keep up (maintain) my blackness and to hold up (check) my blackness."

Included in the exhibit are sculptures in which the literal tensions in the work—strips of wood held fast by metal clamps—are intended to reflect the artist's experiences as a Black man in America. "If the sculpture were unclamped, the compressed energy would release with force," BMAC Chief Curator Mara Williams writes in her curatorial statement, "suggesting that Black spirit and experience are artificially restricted by dominant society."

The exhibit also addresses the killings of Black men by police. "Taser" is for Daunte Wright, age 20, who was killed when a Minneapolis police officer stopped him for an "obstructed view"—the air freshener hanging from his rearview mirror. Philando Castile, age 32, is the subject of "88." Castile was driving a 1997 Oldsmobile Eighty Eight when he was pulled over for a broken tail

light and killed by a St. Anthony, Minnesota, police officer. "Token" is for George Floyd, age 42, killed by Minneapolis police during an arrest after a clerk suspected him of passing counterfeit money.

"History cannot be undone," Ransom writes in his statement, "but if we examine with clear-eyed focus the truths of history, we can see the ways in which the tensions of today are the direct result of the weight of the past."

Ransom grew up on a dairy farm in Vermont. He studied sculpture and architecture at Bennington College and received an M.F.A. in sculpture from Claremont Graduate University. His work has been included in exhibitions in Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago, among others. He has had solo exhibitions at Chime and Co., the Lenzner Family Gallery at Pitzer College, John Davis Gallery, and the Staniar Gallery at Washington and Lee University. After a decade in Los Angeles, Ransom returned with his family to Vermont, where he works as an artist and educator. He is a visiting faculty member at Bennington College for Fall 2021 and a lecturer in the studio art department at Dartmouth College.

*Founded in 1972, the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center presents exhibits of contemporary art, lectures, artist talks, film screenings, and other programs. Located in historic Union Station in Brattleboro, at Main St. and Rts. 119 and 142. Wheelchair accessible. Open Wednesday-Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is on a "pay-as-you-wish" basis. For more information, call (802) 257-0124 or visit [www.brattleboromuseum.org](http://www.brattleboromuseum.org).*



photo by Little Pond Digital  
Sculptor William Ransom will be exhibiting at Brattleboro Museum & Art Center.

## Chester, VT

# St. Luke's Annual Christmas Market

Celebrate the holiday season joyfully and safely 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 St. in Chester, VT, on December 4th, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event 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. Masks are required.

At the market shoppers may choose from a host of delicacies: frozen soups and meals, a wide variety of pre-wrapped baked goods, homemade jams and preserves, and handmade chocolates in designer tins. Christmas-orient-

ed decorations—including live evergreen wreaths and sprays—and other artistic or handmade creations, plus a variety of nutritious treats for pets, will provide appealing gifts. Special new items this year are homemade gingerbread-house kits, authentic English chunky orange marmalade and mincemeat, Cyrena's potholders in two sizes, and handmade soaps with no artificial or harsh ingredients.

Closer to the date of the event, a partial listing of available frozen soups, meals, cakes, and specialty items will be posted on the church website. To order food, gingerbread-house kits, or craft items in advance,



please contact Lillian Willis at [lbwillisct@comcast.net](mailto:lbwillisct@comcast.net) or (802) 875-1340.

Whether ordering in advance or browsing in person, welcome in early the Christmas spirit safely at St. Luke's Christmas Market.

*St. Luke's Episcopal Church is located at 313 Main St. (Route 11 West) in Chester, VT. Call (802) 875-6000. Email: [lbwillisct@comcast.net](mailto:lbwillisct@comcast.net). For more information, please visit [www.stlukesepiscopalvt.org](http://www.stlukesepiscopalvt.org).*

## The Christmas Bells 1864

"I heard the bells on Christmas Day  
Their old familiar carols play,  
And wild and sweet  
The words repeat  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!  
And thought how, as the day had come,  
The belfries of all Christendom  
Had rolled along  
The unbroken song  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!  
Till, ringing, singing on its way,  
The world revolved from night to day,  
A voice, a chime  
A chant sublime  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!  
Then from each black accursed mouth  
The cannon thundered in the South,  
And with the sound  
The carols drowned

Of peace on earth, good-will to men!  
It was as if an earthquake rent  
The hearth-stones of a continent,  
And made forlorn  
The households born  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!  
And in despair I bowed my head;  
"There is no peace on earth," I said;  
"For hate is strong,  
And mocks the song  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"  
Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:  
"God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!  
The Wrong shall fail,  
The Right prevail,  
With peace on earth, good-will to men!"

— HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW  
1802-1887, Cambridge, MA

## Book News

# American Christmas Stories

Edited by Connie Willis  
(\$29.95. Library of America Collection. [loa.org](http://loa.org). (800) 964-5778)

This wonderful collection of Christmas stories by American authors from the Civil War era to today will keep you occupied through the whole of December.

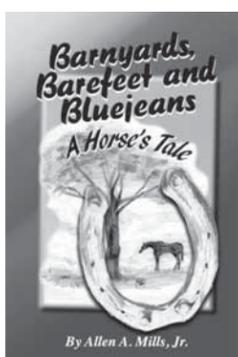
Part religious observance and part commercial extravaganza, a gift basket of cultural customs from many nations, Christmas grew into its modern form in America, and over the last 150 years the most magical time of the

year has proven to be glad tidings for American writers. Library of America and acclaimed author Connie Willis invite you to unwrap this diverse collection of fifty-nine enchanting and uniquely American stories about Christmas, literary gems that will delight.

Ranging from the advent of the American tradition of holiday storytelling in the wake of the Civil War to today, this is the best and widest-ranging anthology of American Christmas stories

ever assembled. Ghost stories, science fiction, fantasy, westerns, humor, and horror; tales of Christmas morning, trees, gifts, wise men, and family dinners everywhere from New York to Texas to outer space: this anthology is an epiphany, revealing the ways Christmas has evolved over time—and how the spirit of the holiday has remained the same.

From Louisa May Alcott to O. Henry to Joan Didion and John Updike, the range of authors is stellar!



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

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# The Christmas Revels Festival

## An Upper Valley Holiday Tradition Reinvented

The Christmas Revels, one of the region's most unique and popular holiday traditions since 1975, returns like you have never seen it before.

Over the weekend of December 17-19, Revels North will transform its annual stage production into The Christmas Revels Festival, a celebration of the winter solstice that brings iconic Revels songs, dances, and performances outdoors to Colburn Park in downtown Lebanon, NH while hosting three separate performers onstage at Lebanon Opera House.

Each day of the festival, Colburn Park will be the site of "Lighted Candles in the Winter Trees," a performance that will feature beloved Christmas Revels standards including "Dona Nobis Pacem," a comical Mummings' play, and "Lord of the Dance." These cherished favorites will be given new life outdoors thanks to thirty local singers, dancers and actors, ranging from twelve-year-olds to one longtime performer who was involved in the original performance in 1975.

Moments of magic and wonder will be provided by No Strings Marionette Company of Randolph, VT. This half-hour performance is free to all, beginning all three days of the festival at 4 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

The outdoor performances and events at The Christmas Revels Festival are free to all thanks to the generous support of festival underwriter Mascoma Bank, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, The Lane and Elizabeth C. Dwinell Charitable Trust, and individual donors.

Tickets are now on sale for The Christmas Revels Festival's reduced-capacity performances by three different artists at Lebanon Opera House. Visit [lebanonoperahouse.org](http://lebanonoperahouse.org).

• **Friday, December 17 at 7:30 p.m. Eden MacAdam-Somer.** Hailed by the New York Times as reflecting "astounding virtuosity and raw expression," Eden MacAdam-Somer's music transcends genre through soaring violin, vocals, and percussive dance, weaving in and out of the many cultures that have formed her experience, ranging from Appalachia to Afghanistan.

• **Saturday, December 18 at 1:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Richard Antoine White.** With over three decades of per-



"Lord of the Dance" will be performed outdoors this year at the Christmas Revels in Lebanon, NH.

photo courtesy of Evan Oxenham

forming on the world's classical music stages, tubist Dr. Richard Antoine White has matured into a musician known for his clear sound and stylistic flexibility. This performance will include a screening of the short documentary, "Hi I'm Richard Antoine White."

• **Sunday, December 19 at 1:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Còig.** With fiery Celtic rhythms at its musical core, Còig, one of Atlantic Canada's premier traditional groups, easily shifts between centuries-old tunes and contemporary compositions. With driving tunes, haunting ballads and infectious energy, Còig is an unparalleled musical force returning to Lebanon Opera House for the fourth time since 2017.

### Now in Lebanon, NH

Following decades of performances in Hanover, The Christmas Revels enjoyed a new beginning with its move to Lebanon Opera House in 2019, where its debut production in its new home was enthusiastically received. Over 3,000 people of all ages attended with audience members from over 150 New Hampshire and Vermont towns. In 2020, due to COVID-19 instead of returning to LOH Revels North produced an animated short, *The Christmas Revels: All Shall Be Well Again*, which can be viewed on NH PBS this December.

*Revels North is an Upper Valley non-profit arts organization. Learn more about Revels North and The Christmas Revels Festival at [www.revelsnorth.org](http://www.revelsnorth.org).*

*Lebanon Opera House is located at 51 North Park St. in Lebanon, NH. (603) 448-0400. [www.lebanonoperahouse.org](http://www.lebanonoperahouse.org).*



photo by Kamara Morozuk

Atlantic Canada's Coig will be performing at the Lebanon Opera House on December 19

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# The Natural Calendar

## Early Winter Journal

by Bill Felker

### Part I

Sometimes I am cheered because it seems winter will never come. In the garden, fresh rosemary, sage, parsley, thyme, oregano and fat chard are still good for picking. Strawberry leaves are turning red and orange. Dry pumpkin-brown heads of marigold quiver in the wind.

By the pond, lamb's ear is soft and velvety gray; blush covers the wild geraniums. By the front door, *Lamium purpureum*, deadnettle is full of new growth and purple flowers. Dusky forsythia still blocks the street from view, and pink azalea leaves forecast their spring blossoms.

New chickweed grows under the rhododendrons, along with new clover, new dandelions. Ground ivy is Deep Summer green. Under the apple tree, one wild strawberry flowers. To one side of the woodpile, very late blue forget-me-nots keep their petals. Along the north hedge, orange euonymus berries push out from their white pods, and late honeysuckle berries hold on. Bright sweet William leaves, tawny leaves of the goosefoot, feathery achillea, and comfrey, dock and garlic mustard are all vigorous. Two deep yellow roses are surrounded by mint. Three pale violet sweet rocket flowers nestle against the old stone wall.

### Part II

As Early Winter settles in, the colors of the newly revealed landscape compensate for autumn losses. Hawthorn berries, holly berries and rose hips stand out now. Coralberries still hold their magenta. All the bittersweet hulls have fallen from their vines, but many of the orange berries remain attached. Barberry shows off its scarlet fruit more clearly than at any other time of year.

Red-twigged dogwoods shine against the snow, and sometimes a last late yellow forsythia or witch hazel will flower. Blood-red staghorns remain on the sumacs. Brown-barked river birches, white birches and sycamores contrast with the black trunks of oaks and elms.

The champagne seed heads of the goldenrod and ironweed, the soft russet of the knotweed foliage, dead but hanging to its stubborn six-foot stalks, are set against the dove-colored



Two Herefords and a little white baby in a frosty winter field in Central Vermont. photo by Nancy Cassidy

sky, perfectly imaged in the gloss of the quiet river that inverts and so compounds their glory.

### Part III

As solstice approaches, the feathery heads of virgin's bower, soft and thick in late November, have blown away in the wind. Hosta pods are almost empty. The final Rose of Sharon seeds lie precariously in their open calices. Worn tufts of ironweed have almost disappeared.

Osage fruits lie all yellow on the ground. The shedding of the undergrowth reveals the lichens on the outcroppings of limestone bringing pale greens and pastels to the gray hillsides. The trees are black, the pasture chartreuse. On the sidewalks, walnut hulls, shredded by squirrels, stain the concrete purple.

Along the highways, staghorns still hold, blood red. The stems of great mullein and teasel stand dark and tall. Amaranth is bowing to set its seeds. Shriveled pokeberries dangle on their soft, wrinkled stems. Pale foxtail grasses bob and sway, cling to one another like lost caterpillars. In the gardens, snapdragons finally succumb to the cold, their foliage gray from frost. The crisp zinnias, once the color of summer, are dull and bent.

### Part IV

As winter sinks harder into the core of the landscape, milestones appear as promises and prophecies of the richness of the year already well advanced. The days begin to lengthen now, the earth tilting back toward summer even as the cold deepens.

The sparrows and the tufted titmice know, and they begin their mating calls as December ends.

Then in two or three weeks, foxes mate, owls mate, and migrating crows come back to breed, and then cardinals sing, then doves.

In four weeks, cardinals begin their territorial songs.

In five weeks, the doves join in, and bluebirds and the earliest flocks of robins return to the Lower Midwest.

In six weeks, in the warm winds of the Groundhog Day Thaw, opossums and raccoons and squirrels begin to court.

In seven weeks, the snowdrops have come up all budded—even if a foot of snow lies above them—and when the snow melts, yellow aconites emerge, then the tips of daffodils.

And in eight weeks, all the pussy willows will be out, and Virginia bluebells will push out of the ground, no matter what the weather is, and after that there's no holding back.

## In the Field and Garden

by Bill Felker

### Week One

If you have a shallow koi or goldfish pond, keep a waterfall running through the winter or use an electric heater to keep the surface of the pond from freezing.

Fertilize trees and bushes after leafdrop is complete. Prune fruit bearing bushes.

Bring in oregano, rosemary, parsley and thyme for winter seasonings. Stake weaker shrubs and trees. Mulch strawberries with straw. Prepare to transport goat and sheep cheese, Christmas cacti, dried flowers and grasses, poinsettias, mistletoe and ginseng to market.

Order legume seed for winter pastures. Schedule your frost seeding for January and February. Fertilize pastures now for improved winter hardiness and spring development. Order sunflower, beet, Jerusalem artichoke, pumpkin, comfrey, carrot, kale and turnip seeds for you and your livestock.

Taking advantage of the dark moon, however, get your bedding plants planted under lights with gentle radiant heat provided below the flats. Root grape vine cuttings, too.

### Week Two

Increase grain to feeder stock in order to have them at desirable market weight in Late Winter and Early Spring.

Review the use of fertilizer and the types of seeds you use. What grows best, and where does it grow best? What contributes to its growth?

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

Try to save your best quality feed supplies for the colder months, the months closest to birthing time. Watch for mold in feed; be sure the grain and hay are dry and sweet.

### Week Three

Avoid overcrowding in the barn in order to cut down on the possibility of pneumonia. And keep adequate ventilation in any closed area your animals use on a regular basis.

Heavy December snows may put pressure on coyotes to find suitable prey. Make sure your fences are adequate and that drifting snow does not cover them up.

Tamp down the snow around younger fruit trees after

each snowstorm to protect them from mice working under the surface.

Review this year's costs for hay and grain. If they are too high, experiment with a later breeding schedule so that lambs and kids will be about five or six weeks old at the time that pasture growth is strong.

In the greenhouse or south-window garden, hibiscus will bloom, open before dawn, fading and falling by three in the afternoon.

### Week Four

Separate your thinnest pregnant ewes and does now and give them a little extra attention in order to improve their body condition and reduce risk of abortion. Mark for culling ewes that failed to rear their October and November lambs.

Check gladiolus, dahlia and elephant ear bulbs brought in for the winter. They should be dry and firm.

Be especially careful of stressing pregnant animals this week; abortion risk can increase at full moon. Put off clipping hooves and hair until next week when the moon will be less powerful.

The period of winter stability is setting in. In most states, average high temperatures fluctuate only about two to three degrees between December 21 and the approach of early spring in the third week of February.

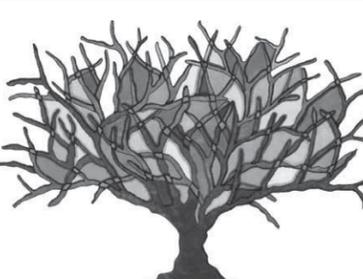
Force all the hardy bulbs you can for the coldest days of January. If you haven't already prepared your bulbs, go out, dig up a few that you can spare from your March or April garden, and tell them that it's spring.

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# A Vermont Almanack for Early Winter

by Bill Felker

When all the snowy hill  
And the bare woods are still,  
When snipes are silent in the frozen bogs,  
And all the garden garth is whelmed in mire,  
Lo, by the hearth, the laughter of the logs,  
More fair than roses, lo, the flowers of fire!

—R. L. Stevenson

## The Sun

Winter solstice occurs on December 21 at 10:59 a.m. The Sun enters the Deep Winter constellation of Capricorn at the same time.

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

As Early Winter moves south from Canada, sandhill cranes ride the cold waves toward the warmer temperatures of the Border States and the Deep South. Listen for their haunting cries high overhead.

**December 4:** The Sandhill Crane Migration Moon is new at 2:43 a.m.

**December 4:** Lunar Perigee (when the Moon is closest to Earth): 5 a.m.

**December 10:** Second Quarter: 8:36 p.m.

**December 17:** Lunar Apogee (when the Moon is farthest from Earth): 9 p.m.

**December 18:** Full Moon: 11:35 p.m.

**December 26:** Last Quarter: 9:24 p.m.

## The Planets

Venus remains in Sagittarius this month, barely visible near sunset in the far west. Mars, in Scorpio, is still the Morning Star in the east an hour or so before sunrise. Saturn travels across the southern sky in Capricorn after dark, leading on Jupiter that trails behind in Aquarius.

The Stars

Directly above you at 10:00 p.m., Perseus stands below the North Star. In front of Perseus, to the west, find Andromeda, and then the Great Square. East of Perseus is Capella, the brightest star of the Milky Way (except for Sirius in the far southeast).

By midnight, the Pleiades and Taurus will be almost directly overhead, Orion will be fully visible behind them. Regulus, the brightest star of spring, will be just starting to rise along the eastern tree line.

If you get up to do your chores around five or six o'clock in the morning, you will see the evening sky of mid-April. The



Milky Way, along with winter's Orion and Sirius, the Dog Star, will be setting in the far west. Above you will shine the corn-planting star, Regulus. Arcturus, the star that favors the seeding of squash and tomatoes will be the brightest light in the east, and the pointers of the Big Dipper will be positioned almost exactly north-south.

## The Shooting Stars

The Geminid meteor shower lasts from December 6 to 19, and its peak occurs on December 13 and 14, sometimes bringing up to 100 shooting stars per hour. The month's second shower, the Ursids, will fall across the sky on December 22-23 at the rate of just a handful every hour.

## Meteorology

Weather history suggests that the cold waves of Deep Winter approach 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.

New moon and lunar perigee on December 4 will strength-

en the first cold front of December and bring freezing temperatures well into the South. Even though perigee and new moon together will put an abrupt end to Late Fall, lunar phase and position do not auger a dangerous December. Full moon on the December 18 will have an effect on the two Christmas weather systems (the 20th and 25th), increasing the likelihood of snow before and after the winter solstice. Will there be a white Christmas? The full moon says there will!

## A Calendar of Feast Days

**November 28 – December 6, 2021.** Hanukkah (Jewish Festival of Lights). Traditional lamb dishes for this feast are commonly "finger foods" such as ribs and kibbeh (torpedo-shaped dumplings made with spiced ground lamb and bulgur wheat). This festival is eight days long and offers many possibilities to market.

**December 25, 2021.** Christmas. Milk-fed lambs below 20 pounds are favored for this market.

**December 26, 2021.** Kwanza. Market specialty items for this celebration throughout December.

# The Seasons of December

by Bill Felker

## The Time the Sandhill Cranes Depart

All but a few shriveled staghorns have fallen from the sumac when the sandhill cranes leave their last northern mating and feeding grounds for the South. Thistles are bedraggled, foliage curled and shriveled. Fields of dry goldenrod heads glow in the sun, more exotic than when they were in flower. Sharp burdock burrs are poised, waiting for you to brush against them. This week of the year in early December red and orange berries are unveiled by the end of leaf-fall on the crabapples, the honeysuckles and the hawthorns.

Mulched parsley, carrots, beets, potatoes, chard, broccoli, kale, chives can still be brought in from the vegetable garden. Once in a while, dandelions blossom, appear out of season like overwintering robins, stragglers showing up through the fall and winter. Motherwort is still strong. Moss has new sprouts, a promise of March on old logs. The grass along the freeways has turned pale, but winter wheat sometimes grows an inch or so, creating wide patches of deep green in the hibernating landscape.

Cardinals sing off and on throughout the day. Squirrels chatter. Opossums and raccoons increase their activity in the warmer evenings. Deer are mating. Improvident woolly bear caterpillars, the latest of the year, hurry across the roads when the sun shines to warm the blacktop. Sparrows fight for seeds. Crows congregate for winter as the sandhill cranes depart.

## When Sunset Reaches Its Earliest Time

In much of the nation, the season of earliest sunset time starts in early December and continues to midmonth. At this time, the years in which the hardy pear trees are completely bare become more frequent, and intrusions of bitter weather become more common. The high-pressure systems that arrive from the west leave deeper frost and flurries.

This is the time during which witch hazel blossoms wither, and the last of the golden beeches, the willows, and oaks come down. Development of winter wheat slows in the cold. New garlic shoots are firm and green, but they've stopped growing and remain at their middle-autumn height. The Christmas tree harvest is at its peak, and the last poinsettias have come north.

In colder years, frames of ice appear more frequently along the riverbanks and lakes. The color of fallen leaves becomes darker from rains and from freezing and thawing. South-window tomatoes sown in August could be ripening as Early Winter deepens. Marigolds, zinnias, impatiens and other bedding plants saved from a hard freeze may still be in

flower. Poinsettias, placed in the dark about seventeen hours a day through the autumn, should be turning red.

On the cusp of winter, Lenten roses gradually show their buds. Sap quivers in the maples every thaw. The long nights urge the foxes to mate. Owls lay out their nests.

## The Halcyon Days

The Halcyon Days, a traditional two-week period of calm before the turbulence of Deep Winter, begin in the middle of December. 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.

On the other hand, the season of double-digit below-zero temperatures spans the period between December 14 and March 22. Although such cold is relatively rare, each day in this three-month season carries up to a five-percent chance for a morning of -1 or below.

This week also 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. The length of the night grows to 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 several minutes a week until January 15. After that, night recedes around two minutes every day all the way to Early Summer.

In the northern woods, White ear tuft season marks the ears of red squirrels, and wood turtle hibernation season occurs along the rivers.

Bedding plant season starts at new moon time in around the time of the Halcyon Days; now is the time to prepare seeds and flats for May flowers and vegetables. This season peaks again at the new moon in January, February and March.

The season of slowing cold takes place between the Halcyon Days and the first week of the New Year, normal average temperatures dropping one degree every four days instead of one degree every three, signaling a slowdown in the chilling of the land. Soon the averages become steady; on January 28 they start to climb toward summer.

## The Time of the Great Snows

Toward the end of Early Winter, the major snow season arrives in the Northern Hemisphere, and autumn's fruits finally give way to the weather, measuring the advance of

the landscape back toward the sun. The feathery heads of virgin's bower, soft and thick in late November, have blown away in the wind. The hosta pods are almost empty. The final rose of Sharon seeds lie precariously in their open calices.

The heads of purple coneflowers and zinnias, tough and unyielding a month ago, crumble between your fingers. Honeysuckle and euonymus berries still hang to their branches, but their flush and firmness are gone. In the greenhouse, the fall blossoms wither on the Christmas cacti.

As the weather gets colder, wild game moves to areas where cover is thickest. For deer, mating season is over. White-tailed bucks have their gray winter coats now, and they are starting to drop their antlers. On the farm, expectant ewes, does and cows nurture their babies to be born a few weeks from now into Late Winter or Early Spring. Canadian geese gather in large flocks to wait for the lengthening days.

Now remnants of the past year no longer point to the warmth of last October. The sharp yucca, tall and bright green, does not look back to June, but forward to June. In the ponds, wild iris spears that braved weeks of ice stand strong around the broken strands of lizard's tail. As bamboo recovers from the weight of the snow, it shows sweet rockets, henbit, great mullein, celandine, wild lettuce, dock, sweet Williams and lamb's ear waiting for April and May.

Along the northern rivers, the apparent movement of the sun seems frozen in the long stillness of the landscape, but somewhere between Georgia's Marshes of Glynn and the Florida Everglades, that minute change undoes the advance of superficial cold and suddenly stirs the coals of far-off summer's core.

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

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

**Burlington Farmers' Market** at 345 Pine St. Saturdays, December 4 & 18. 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. (802) 560-5904. www.burlingtonfarmersmarket.org.

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

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

**Montpelier—Capital City Winter Farmers' Market.** At 133 State St. parking lot. 2nd and 4th Saturdays, January 8 through April 30. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (802) 498-8214. www.capitalcityfarmersmarket.com.

**Norwich Farmers' Winter Market** at Tracy Hall, 300 Main St. Saturdays December 11 & 18, January 8 & 22, February 12 & 26, March 12 & 26, and April 9 & 23. (802) 384-7447. norwichfarmersmarket.org.

**Putney Holiday Markets.** At Green Mountain Orchards, 130 West Hill Rd. Sundays thru December 19. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. putneyfarmersmarket.org.

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

**South Hero—Champlain Islands Holiday Farmers' Market.** At the South Hero Congregational Church, 24 South St. Saturdays December 6 & 18. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. www.champlainislandsfarmersmarket.org.

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

**Stowe Farmers' Market.** At Stowe Cider, 17 Town Farm Lane. Saturdays December 11. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. www.stowefarmersmarket.com.



Student works with draft horse in the winter woods at Sterling College in Craftsbury, VT. photo courtesy of Sterling College

## King John's Christmas

by A.A. Milne

King John was not a good man—  
He had his little ways.  
And sometimes no one spoke to him  
For days and days and days.  
And men who came across him,  
When walking in the town,  
Gave him a supercilious stare,  
Or passed with noses in the air—  
And bad King John stood dumbly there,  
Blushing beneath his crown.

King John was not a good man,  
And no good friends had he.  
He stayed in every afternoon...  
But no one came to tea.  
And, round about December,  
The cards upon his shelf  
Which wished him lots of Christmas cheer,  
And fortune in the coming year,  
Were never from his near and dear,  
But only from himself.

King John was not a good man,  
Yet had his hopes and fears.  
They'd given him no present now  
For years and years and years.  
But every year at Christmas,  
While minstrels stood about,  
Collecting tribute from the young  
For all the songs they might have sung,  
He stole away upstairs and hung  
A hopeful stocking out.

King John was not a good man,  
He lived his life aloof;  
Alone he thought a message out  
While climbing up the roof.  
He wrote it down and propped it  
Against the chimney stack:  
"TO ALL AND SUNDRY  
— NEAR AND FAR —  
F. Christmas in particular."  
And signed it not "Johannes R."  
But very humbly, "Jack."

"I want some crackers,  
And I want some candy;  
I think a box of chocolates  
Would come in handy;  
I don't mind oranges,  
I do like nuts!  
And I SHOULD like a pocket-knife  
That really cuts.

And, oh! Father Christmas, if you love me at all,  
Bring me a big, red, india-rubber ball!"

King John was not a good man—  
He wrote this message out,  
And gat him to this room again,  
Descending by the spout.  
And all that night he lay there,  
A prey to hopes and fears.  
"I think that's him a-coming now!"  
(Anxiety bedewed his brow.)  
"He'll bring one present, anyhow—  
The first I had for years."

"Forget about the crackers,  
And forget the candy;  
I'm sure a box of chocolates  
Would never come in handy;  
I don't like oranges,  
I don't want nuts,  
And I HAVE got a pocket-knife  
That almost cuts.  
But, oh! Father Christmas, if you love me at all,  
Bring me a big, red, india-rubber ball!"

King John was not a good man,  
Next morning when the sun  
Rose up to tell a waiting world  
That Christmas had begun,  
And people seized their stockings,  
And opened them with glee,  
And crackers, toys and games appeared,  
And lips with sticky sweets were smeared,  
King John said grimly: "As I feared,  
Nothing again for me!"

"I did want crackers,  
And I did want candy;  
I know a box of chocolates  
Would come in handy;  
I do love oranges,  
I did want nuts!  
And, oh! if Father Christmas, had loved me at all,  
He would have brought a big, red,  
india-rubber ball!"

King John stood by the window,  
And frowned to see below  
The happy bands of boys and girls  
All playing in the snow.  
A while he stood there watching,  
And envying them all...  
When through the window big and red  
There hurtled by his royal head,  
And bounced and fell upon the bed,  
An india-rubber ball!

AND, OH, FATHER CHRISTMAS,  
MY BLESSINGS ON YOU FALL  
FOR BRINGING HIM  
A BIG, RED,  
INDIA-RUBBER  
BALL!



From *Now We Are Six* by A.A. Milne, illustration by Ernest H. Shepard, published by Dutton/Penguin Group, us.penguinroup.com.

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# Merck Forest & Farmland Center Winter Activities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Fall Event Schedule

**December 4. Wreath-Making Workshop. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.** One of our favorite holiday events! Join Merck Forest elves in creating a holiday wreath from greens sourced at Merck Forest. Ribbons for bows and natural materials for decorating are provided. Bring along your own decorations to embellish your wreath. This is an indoor activity with limited registrations; masks and COVID certification will be required of all participants. Please pre-register.

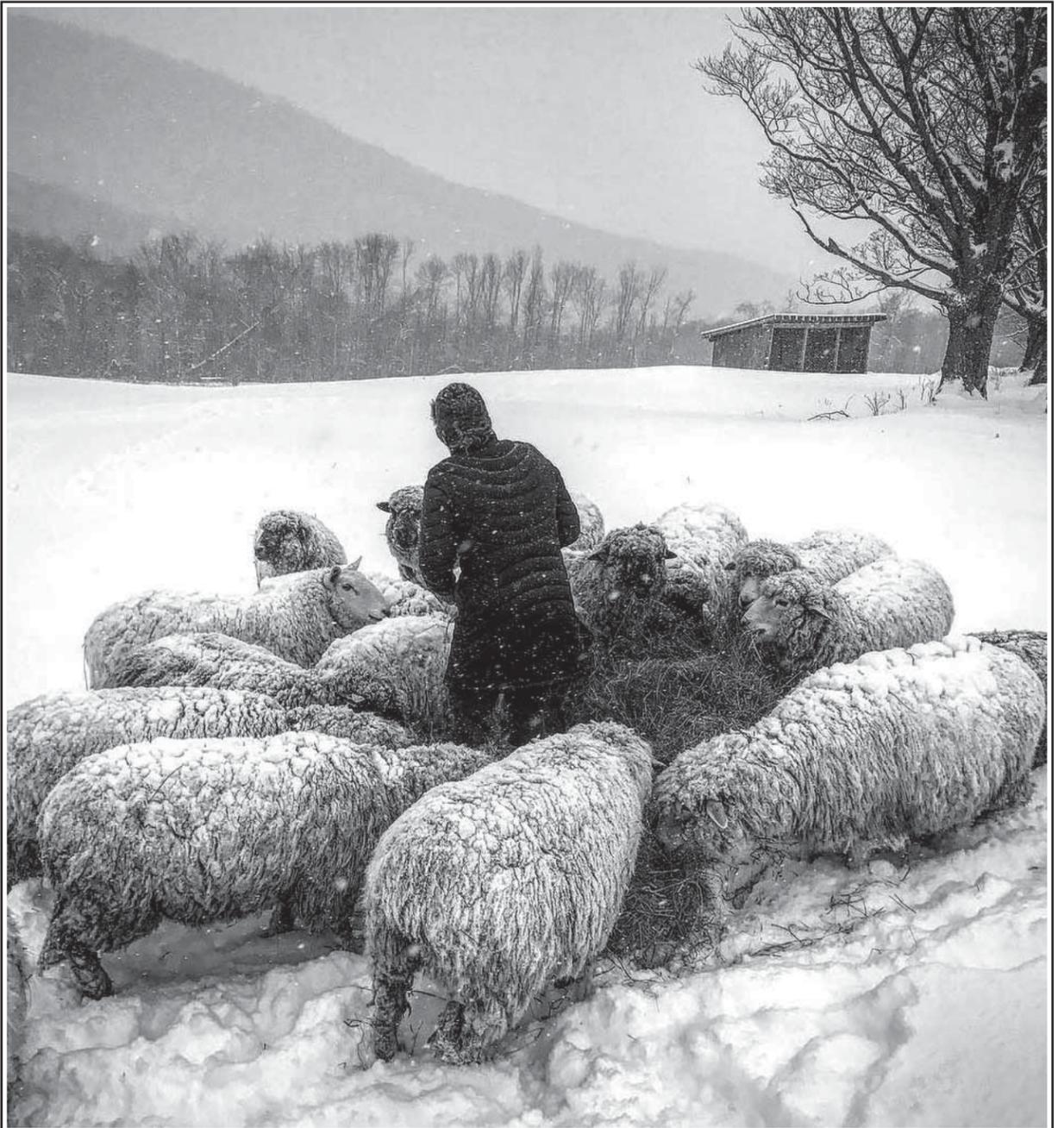
**December 4 & 5. Wreath-Making Workshop. 1-3 p.m.** One of our favorite holiday events! Join Merck Forest elves in creating a holiday wreath from greens sourced at Merck Forest. Ribbons for bows and natural materials for decorating are provided. Bring along your own decorations to embellish your wreath. This is an indoor activity with limited registrations; masks and COVID certification will be required of all participants. Please pre-register.

**December 11. Second Saturday Hike. 4-5:30 p.m.** Enjoy a guided hike with a MFFC staff member who will discuss the ecology, history, farming culture and forestry of the area. Wear proper hiking footwear for our rugged trails, and bring water, snacks and bug spray. Please arrive 15 minutes before hike begins at 4 p.m. Fee: \$5 per person, pre-registration is required. Event will be canceled in case of extreme weather.

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

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

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



Feeding sheep in the winter at Merck Forest and Farmland Center in Rupert, VT.

photo courtesy of Merck Forest & Farmland Center.

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# Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* by Middlebury Acting Company

Middlebury Acting Company is thrilled to present a holiday gift to our community, a pay-what-you-can production of Charles Dickens' beloved story, *A Christmas Carol*. Playing at the Town Hall Theater on December 3, 4, 9, 10, 11 at 7 p.m. and December 5 & 12 at 2 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

Adapted and directed by Gary Smith, this production stays true to the novella, and deftly integrates Dickens' witty, pointed, and socially conscious narrative with the heartwarming and familiar journey Ebenezer Scrooge makes from profiteer to philanthropist. Guided by his ghosts and all the story's unforgettable characters, Scrooge makes a courageous and uplifting transformation that in turn transforms the world around him—a journey from darkness to light.

Smith, a Middlebury Acting Company Board Member and professional actor/director most recently seen on stage in *Outside Mullingar*, feels strongly that Dickens' message of community spirit and generosity is as important as ever for our times. "Middlebury has never had a local, professional production of *A Christmas Carol*, so we look forward to es-

tablishing a new tradition in town that families can look forward to" says Smith.

With the generous support of The Vermont Arts Council, the Vermont Community Foundation, The Vermont Federal Credit Union, The National Bank of Middlebury and many others, they are able to bring the show to the Town Hall Theater Stage and offer it at whatever price audiences can afford.

*A Christmas Carol* features the superb Jordan Gullikson as Mr. Scrooge, supported by a cast of nine seasoned actors and five local children from Middlebury to Burlington.

Join us for a new holiday tradition in Middlebury as we offer our imaginative and theatrical version of this classic tale in the spirit of the transformed Scrooge!

Tickets can be purchased in advance or you can make a donation of your choice at the door. Attendees are required to be vaccinated, children excepted, and everyone must be masked indoors.

For more info or to purchase tickets call the Town Hall Theater Box Office at (802) 382-9222 or to townhalltheater.org. Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. in Middlebury, VT.



Ebenezer Scrooge, Tiny Tim and his dad as portrayed in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* in Middlebury this December.

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## Vermont Podcast

### New Podcast Shares Stories About Forest Connections

by Kate Forrer

A new Vermont podcast will give listeners an insight into the many connections that Vermonters have with forests, their management and the forest economy.

Heartwood: Stories from the Vermont Woods is hosted by Vermont Coverts, University of Vermont (UVM) Extension and the UVM Center for Research on Vermont. Initial funding was provided by a grant from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets and the Working Land Enterprise Board.

Five episodes, featuring stories from woodland owners, forestry professionals, wood product producers and others, currently are available with additional topics planned for later this fall. Listeners can receive notifications about future episodes by subscribing to the podcast on their podcast listening apps.

To listen, go to <http://ourvermontwoods.org/heartwood>.

**Episode 1:** Woods Connection. In this episode, landowners, resource professionals, wood product producers and members of the podcasting team talk about their connections to Vermont's woods.

**Episode 2:** Landowner Journey. Four woodland owners describe their journey as stewards of their woods and explain how their interests have manifested into actions in the woods.

**Episode 3:** Conversations with Professionals. In this epi-

sode, forest landowners are introduced to arborists, forestry consultants and other technical service providers who will walk their land to answer questions and offer advice.

**Episode 4:** Our Relationship with Wood. The roles of forestry professionals and other practitioners who harvest, process and market wood products are highlighted.

**Episode 5:** Our Identity, Our Forests. Vermonters' connections to the woods and the state's forests, the ecosystem services they provide and products created from forests, matter. Learn more in this podcast.

Anyone with a question about Vermont's forests or a story to share about a special tree or favorite woods is invited to call the storyline, hosted by UVM Extension. The number is (802) 476-2272 x 210. Callers are asked to leave their name (include spelling), town of residence and a brief message (two minutes or less) outlining their question or story.

For more information, contact Kate Forrer, UVM Extension community forestry specialist, at [katherine.forrer@uvm.edu](mailto:katherine.forrer@uvm.edu).

## Fair Haven, VT

### Fair Haven Memories Book II

The Fair Haven Historical Society presents *The Fair Haven Memories Book II*. The book came about from requests for historical information about sports, local architecture, and other features of life in Fair Haven.

Deedee Bruce joined Ceil Hunt and Lorraine Brown and shared much of their research and oral histories from the south side of town. The book includes little known facts from the Historical Society's collection as well as the history of many of our downtown buildings.

One of the highlights of the book is the photographs, many in color. The book makes a wonderful gift.

*The Fair Haven Memories Book II* is available for \$35 at the Fair Haven Historical Society, Fair Haven Town Office, 3 N. Park Pl., Mondays from 9-11 a.m. message at (802) 265-3010 x 8.

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## “We Don’t Go Far”

by Pamela Hayes Rehlen

My father always used to tell me that the garage-like building next to Sid and Mary Waite’s Castleton Main Street house was originally a livery stable. He’d had some bad experiences as a boy bringing his father’s work horses to livery stables, and as a consequence apparently never forgot any of them. It seemed unlikely to me.

But he was right. The garage was built by Mary Waite’s blacksmith great-grandfather, Michael O’Neill, who emigrated from County Cork, fought in the American Civil War, worked in the West Castleton slate quarries, lived for awhile in the long-grown-over and lost West Castleton slate village, and finally moved to town.

He set up his blacksmith shop next to a square single room building, moved on a wagon from the center of Castleton west along Main Street and up to the top of Diamond Hollow. Over the years, this initial one-room home has been subsumed into the much larger present-day house which is made up of a number of later additions.

He raised five children in this place and his descendants have now lived here for four generations.

Mary says, “We don’t go far.”

After Michael, his son John owned the property and put a gas pump out in front by the road. His wife sold newspapers.

They passed the building on to their daughter, the decades-long town post mistress Agnes O’Neill, and when she retired and moved out to a little place on Lake Bomoseen, she sold to her niece Mary and Mary’s husband Sid.

Mary O’Neill Waite, now seventy-seven, grew up in the golden, mid-fifties, era of Castleton’s big Irish clans: the O’Neills, the Broughs, the Burkes, the Eagans, the O’Rourkes, the Dorans, the McCarthys, the Hanleys, the Gradys, the Kellys. They started out as horse handlers, slate quarriers, railroad men and small farmers.

Mary was born in Lebanon, Missouri where her father Ed, a civil engineer, was stationed during World War Two. But her mother, upset that Mary hadn’t been born in Vermont—which says something about the family’s sense of place—got on a train (not an easy thing for a woman alone with a newborn to do in that chaotic time) and brought Mary back home to be baptized by Father O’Brian at Saint John’s Catholic Church.

The family returned to Castleton and eventually bought and settled down in the one-time Archie Walker house on South Street close to the center of town.

Mary had become older sister to Eddie, David, and Ann and remembers growing up in a community full of cousins where she could walk home from the Village School and every house she passed was lived in by people who were related to her or that she knew well.

One of her closest friends was Nancy Dunlop Ruby, whose father ‘Dubber’ worked in Harold Eddy’s little grocery market in the center of Castleton.

The two girls’ grandmothers lived at the top of Diamond Hollow, Nellie O’Neil in the house where

Mary lives today, and Nancy’s grandmother in a tiny fairytale-cottage-style place directly across the street.

After Mary and Nancy’s regular visits, the old ladies would bicker about which of their granddaughters was superior, but later call a truce and settle down together to listen to ‘Search for Tomorrow.’

Thinking back to that time, Mary says, “My grandmothers were my life.”

Her mother’s mother, Grandmother Brough, lived at the end of Glenbrook Road in a little in-town farmstead next to the Castleton Normal School. Behind the house was a two-story barn with a hay mow, where she kept a horse for herself and where Mary’s mother, Veronica, also kept her horse, Bill.

### God Bless the Little Things

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



—MARGARET MURRAY  
1863-1963, Welwyn, United Kingdom

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photo courtesy of O’Neill family collection  
Sunday night gatherings around Aunt Agnes O’Neill’s Stromberg Carlson television. The young O’Neills are on the left, top to bottom: Eddie, Mary, David and baby Ann.

Uncle Charlie Brough’s family lived directly across the street, and Mary has an old photograph of herself leading Bill down Glenbrook Road with eight little cousins—holding on tight—strung along his back.

Aunt Agnes insisted that Mary, Eddie, David and Ann go to Rutland’s Mount Saint Joseph Academy, and afterward Mary graduated from the Jeanne Mance School of Nursing in Burlington.

She worked in the intensive and cardiac care unit for Rutland Hospital for the next five years, then went to the Castleton Medical Center for eighteen years and moved on to being, for twenty-two years, the Fair Haven grade school nurse.

The three children she and Sid raised are married and live in Rutland, in Burlington, and in Aunt Agnes’s one-time house out on Lake Bomoseen.

Mary remembers when Aunt Agnes was the first person in Castleton to have a TV, and every Sunday night she would invite all the O’Neill relatives, along with Main-Streeter Frank Graziano and his daughter Marsha, over for a Boston Beans, and bread from Fair Haven’s Barsalow’s Bakery, supper to watch ‘Zoo Parade.’

Mary says that Frank—a middle-aged man, a pillar of the community—would become upset and have to go home whenever snakes were shown.

She laughs fondly. Looking back. It’s almost-unbelievable, her 1950s world growing up in Castleton.

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

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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 can be read in the archives, usually on page 11, at [vermontcountrysampler.com](http://vermontcountrysampler.com).

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### The Farmer's Field

The branches are bare and a sodden sky  
Hangs over the field where furrows lie  
In long straight lines of grey black soil,  
Turned, one by one, with patient toil.  
In the snug warm stable munching hay  
The old plow horses are tied away...  
The cows are milked and the barn closed tight,  
For the farmer says it will freeze to-night.

He eats his supper with a relish keen  
And talks to the family in between...  
"The fall's work is finished, the plowing done,  
To-morrow I'll take my dog and gun  
And a whole day off, if the weather is fair,  
To chase the red foxes away to their lair."  
Then he goes to bed for a well earned rest  
And the clouds roll back from a star decked west.

Before the rising of the tardy sun  
The farmer is off with his dog and gun...  
A neighbor's boy his chores will do,  
In fact the neighbor goes hunting too.  
On the grey black furrows in the morning light  
The frost lies heavy...It glistens white...  
A herald of promise...The Farmer knows  
He welcomes the shield of winter snows.

—ELLA WARNER FISHER  
Ferrisburg, VT 1853-1937

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**Vermont Map**

# Vermont Country Calendar

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

## ONGOING ACTIVITIES 2021

**BARRE.** Art Exhibits. Wednesday–Friday 11:30 am – 5 pm, Saturday 11:30 am – 4 pm, and by appointment. Studio Place Arts, 201 N. Main St. (802) 479-7069. www.studioplacesarts.com.

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

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

**BRANDON.** The Guild Gallery. Tuesday–Saturday 10 am – 5 pm, Sunday 10 am – 4 pm. Brandon Artists Guild, 7 Center St. (802) 247-4956. brandonartistsguild.org.

**BRATTLEBORO.** Brattleboro Winter Farmers' Market. SNAP/EBT shoppers turn \$10 into \$30! Saturdays 10 am – 2 pm. C.F. Church Building, 80 Flat St. (802) 275-2835. farmersmarket@postoisolutions.org. *Through March 9.*

**BRATTLEBORO.** Live Music. Stone Church presents rock, jazz, folk, Americana concerts. Thurs. Fri. and Sat. The Stone Church, 210 Main St. (802) 579-9960. stonechurchvt.com.

**BRATTLEBORO.** Vermont Jazz Center. Concerts online and in-person, classes, workshops. Vermont Jazz Center, 72 Cotton Mill Hill. (802) 254-9088. www.vtjazz.org.

**BRATTLEBORO.** Retreat Farm. Labyrinth garden, arts installations, walking paths and trails. No restrooms or public facilities. Free. Open dawn to dusk. 45 Farmhouse Square. (802) 490-2270. www.retreatfarm.org.

**BROOKFIELD.** Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or choose & cut trees. Wreaths, kissing balls and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with maple and more. Friday, Saturday & Sunday, 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. *November 26 through December 19.*

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

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

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

**DUMMERSTON.** Elysian Hills Christmas Trees. Certified organically-grown, fresh-cut, Vermont-grown trees. Retail tree sales and choose and cut-your-own tree, hand saws provided. Wreaths, centerpieces & holiday greenery. Organic produce, local maple syrup, honey and more in the farm store! Sat. and Sun. 10 am to 4 pm, Mon. thru Fri. 12-4 pm. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 223 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. *November 27 through December 24 or till sold out.*

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

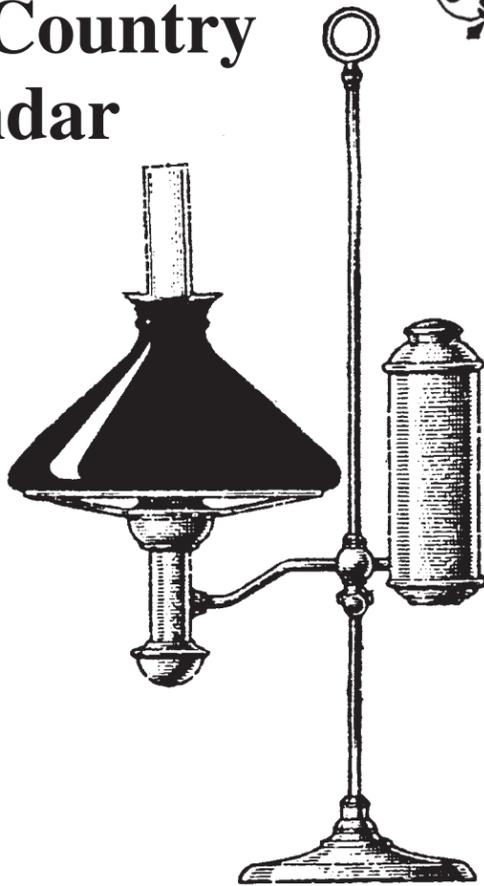
**ESSEX JUNCTION.** Vermont Genealogy Library. Classes, archives, research, books. Open Tuesday 3-9:30 pm and Saturday 10 am to 4 pm. Vermont Genealogy Library, 57 River Rd. (Rt. 117). mail@vtgenlib.org. www.vtgenlib.org.

**FERRISBURGH.** Rokeby Museum. Exhibit: "Free & Safe", interpretive trail, and agricultural outbuildings. Adults \$10, seniors \$9, students \$8, under 5 free. Daily 10 am – 5 pm. Rokeby Museum, 4334 Rt. 7. (802) 877-3406. www.rokeby.org.

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

**GRAFTON.** Horse-Drawn Sleigh Rides. Adult \$20, youth \$12, 5 & under free. Advance reservations required. 11 am – 4 pm (final ride 3:30 pm). (802) 843-2400. The Grafton Inn, Outdoor Center, 783 Townshend Rd. graftoninnvermont.com. *December 11, 24-26, 29-31; January 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; February 12, 19-20, 26.*

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



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

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

**LEBANON, NH.** Christmas Show and Sale. Handmade gifts by members of the Lebanon Art & Crafts Association. Free admission. 10 am – 6 pm. Upper Valley Plaza, 250 Plainfield Rd. (603) 448-0745. laca@lebanonartandcrafts.org. www.lebanonartandcrafts.org. *Daily through December 24, open till 8 pm on Thursdays.*

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

**MANCHESTER.** Hildene Holidays. Robert Todd Lincoln and Mary's home is decorated as though it were Christmas Eve 1912. Current COVID protocols. Admission \$23 adults, \$6 youth, under 5 no charge. Thurs – Mon, 10 am – 4 pm. Hildene, 1005 Hildene Rd. off Rt. 7A. (802) 367-7960. hildene.org. *December 2-January 1.*

**MANCHESTER.** Art Exhibits, Classes, Programs. Wednesday–Saturday 10 am – 4 pm, Sunday 12 noon – 4 pm. Southern Vermont Arts Center, 930 SVAC Dr. (802) 362-1405. svac.org.

**MANCHESTER.** Dutton's Farmstand. Holiday decor, wreaths. Produce. Our own maple syrup, apples, cider. Baked goods, pies, bread, cookies, creemees! Daily 9 am – 7 pm. Dutton's Farmstand, 2083 Depot St., Rts. 11/30. (802) 362-3083. www.duttonberryfarm.com.

**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.** Exhibit: "Henry at 200". Celebrating Henry Sheldon, the museum founder and collector of New England history. Art Exhibit. "Sightlines: Picturing the Battell Wilderness". Caleb Kenna and Jill Madden explore the Joseph Battell and Breadloaf Wilderness areas of the Green Mountains. Henry Sheldon Museum, 1 Park St. (802) 388-2117. henrysheldonmuseum.org. *Exhibit through December 31.*

**MONTPELIER.** Vermont History Museum. 10 am to 5 pm. Wednesdays-Saturdays. 109 State St. (802) 479-8500. vermonthistory.org/museum.

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

**MONTPELIER.** Nature programs online and in person. North Branch Nature Center, 713 Elm St. www.northbranchnaturecenter.org. (802) 229-6206.

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

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

Rutland, VT

## The Nutcracker Comes to The Paramount

Miss Lorraine's School of Dance presents *The Nutcracker* at the Paramount Theatre in Rutland, VT on December 18 at 6 pm and December 21 at 1 pm.

Experience the magic as dance students come together to create this holiday favorite—the most-performed ballet in the world. Lavish costumes, soaring scores and imaginative choreography is sure to put you the entire family into the spirit of the season. All set to Tchaikovsky's classic score.

Subject to change, the Paramount requires patrons aged 12 and older to present proof of vaccination or negative results of a Covid-10 PCR test administered within 72 hours for admittance to events at The Paramount. Paper or digital copies are



acceptable. Masks are required to be worn at all times while at the venue. Children under the age of twelve will be permitted to enter without testing but need to wear a mask.

*Tickets to The Nutcracker are \$25 & \$35. The Paramount Theatre is located at 30 Center St. in Rutland, VT. (802) 775-0903. boxoffice@paramountvt.org. www.paramountvt.org.*

## RUTLAND COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY



Closed for visiting. Adoptions by appointment only.

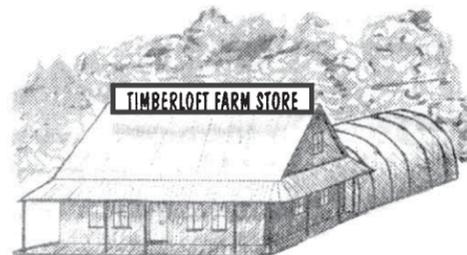
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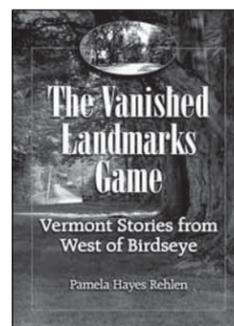
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by Pamela Hayes Rehlen

\$20 (plus \$5 s&h)

Old-time and present-time people and places from west of Vermont's Birdseye Mountain. Here are their stories.

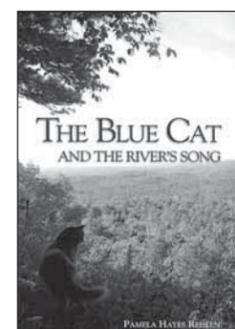
### The Blue Cat

And The River's Song

by Pamela Hayes Rehlen

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# Vermont Country Calendar

(Ongoing Activities 2021, continued)

**NORWICH.** 19th Annual Gingerbread Festival. Houses will be displayed in Norwich, White River Junction, Hanover, Lebanon, and West Lebanon. Online auction of the gingerbread houses will run from December 1-8 at 4:30 pm. Free. (802) 649-3268. halii@the-family-place.org. familyplacevt.org. *Through December 8.*

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

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

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

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

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

**ONLINE.** Middlebury Collage Exhibit: "Itty Bitty: Tiny Texts in Special Collections". Books from the 17th to 21st centuries that measure between 1.8 and 10 centimeters, from religious manuscripts to cookbooks, children's books to Shakespeare. View the works online at go.middlebury.edu/tinybooks. Davis Family Library, Middlebury College, 110 Storrs Ave. (802) 443-5494. www.middlebury.edu. *Exhibit through May 31, 2022.*

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

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

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

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

**RANDOLPH.** Artisan Holiday Market. Local artisans and specialty vendors. Also online shopping at chandler-arts.org. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 11 am to 6 pm; Friday 11 am to 7 pm; Saturday 10 am to 6 pm; Sunday 12-4 pm; Christmas Eve, Friday, December 24 10 am to 4 pm. Chandler Center for the Arts, 71 N. Main St. (802) 728-9878. chandler-arts.org. *Through December 24.*

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

**RUTLAND.** Vermont Winter Farmers' Market. Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm. At Vermont Farmer's Food Center, 251 West St. (802) 417-8661. vtfarmersmarket.org. *Saturdays through May 7, 2022.*

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

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

**ST. ALBANS.** The 14th Annual Festival of Trees. Theme: "A Traditional Vermont Christmas." A week long event ushering in the holiday season with activities, entertainment, dancing, and more all in our historic Downtown. www.vtfestivaloftrees.com. *November 27 through December 31.*

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

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

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

**SHELburne.** Horse-Drawn Sleigh or Wagon Rides. Weather-permitting. Giddy-up on these 20-minute rides from the Farm Store & Welcome Center. Adults \$10, children (3-17) \$8, children under 3 free. Registration at cwright@shelburnefarms.org or (802) 985-8686. 11 am – 2 pm every half hour. Meet at our Farm Store & Welcome Center, Shelburne Farms, 1611 Harbor Rd. www.shelburnefarms.org. *December 11, 19-23, 26-30, January 2.*

**SHELburne.** Shelburne Farms. Walking trails. Programs and activities for the whole family. Welcome Center parking lot. Admission by donation. Shelburne Farms, 1611 Harbor Rd. (802) 985-8686. www.shelburnefarms.org.

**SHELburne.** Winter Lights at Shelburne Museum. See the Museum's buildings and campus bedecked in beautiful holiday lights. Adults \$15, ages 3-17 \$10, 2 and younger free. 5-8 pm. Shelburne Museum, 6000 Shelburne Rd. (802) 985-3346. shelburnemuseum.org/visit/winter-lights. *November 26 & 27 and weekends through January 1.*

**SOUTH ROYALTON.** Christmas Light Display and Nativity. Free drive-thru. Art display and apple cider, free at the local church, on site. Dusk to 10 pm. At the Joseph Smith Birthplace, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 357 LDS Lane off Dairy Hill Rd. off Rt. 14 between South Royalton and Sharon. (802) 763-7742. *From the day after Thanksgiving through New Year's Day.*

**STARKSBORO.** Horse-Drawn Ride with Balsam Fir Christmas Tree. Scenic ride to the tree lot where families can cut their own trees. Hot cocoa and cookie in our cabin. Final ride back down to the house where your tree is waiting to be taken home. 30-minutes. Saturday and Sunday 10 am – 4 pm, weekdays by appointment. Cost: \$85. The Russell Farm, 1248 VT Rt. 116. (802) 453-2208. maplehillside@gmail.com. www.therussellfarm.com.

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

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

**VERMONT FARMERS MARKET** Every Saturday! **shop-eat-enjoy**

Indoor Winter Market  
Every Saturday  
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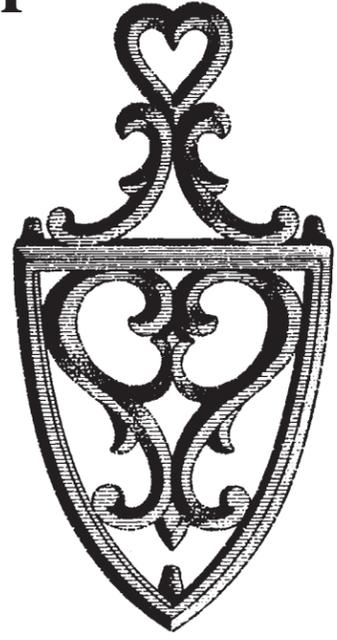


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# Vermont Country Calendar



**STATEWIDE.** The 251 Club. Since 1954, organization of Vermont enthusiasts whose objective is to visit the state's 251 towns and cities. New memberships welcome. (802) 233-8649. [www.vt251.com](http://www.vt251.com).

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

**STOWE.** Exhibits. Helen Day Art Center, 5 School St. (802) 253-8358. [helenday.com](http://helenday.com).

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

**WEST BRATTLEBORO.** Dutton's Farmstand. Holiday decor, wreaths. Season's best fruits and vegetables. Our own maple syrup, apples, cider. Baked goods, creamees! Dutton's Farmstand, 308 Marlboro Rd. (802) 254-0254. [www.duttonberryfarm.com](http://www.duttonberryfarm.com).

**WEST MARLBORO.** Southern Vermont Natural History Museum. 600 mounted specimens of native northeastern birds and mammals, close to 250 species represented. Northeastern Mineralogy Collection. Wed. thru Mon. 10 am to 4 pm. Southern Vermont Natural History Museum, 7599 Rt. 9. (802) 464-0048. [www.vermontmuseum.org](http://www.vermontmuseum.org).

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

**WOODSTOCK.** Private Winter Horse-Drawn Sleigh Rides. Experience the beauty of our Farm with your own private ride (can have 10 adults and 5 children per party). \$350 per ride. Approximately 30 minutes. call for a reservation time. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. [www.billingsfarm.org/winter-sleigh-rides](http://www.billingsfarm.org/winter-sleigh-rides). Available December, January, and February.

**WOODSTOCK.** Horse-Drawn Winter Group Sleigh Rides. \$5 per person. 30 minutes. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. [www.billingsfarm.org/winter-sleigh-rides](http://www.billingsfarm.org/winter-sleigh-rides). Available December 27-January 2, January 15-17, February 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24, & 25.

**WOODSTOCK.** Woodstock History Center. Free admission. Open Wed-Sat. Woodstock History Center, 26 Elm St. (802) 457-1822. [www.woodstockhistorycenter.org](http://www.woodstockhistorycenter.org).

**WOODSTOCK.** Thanksgiving at the Farm. Traditions, programs, and activities. Horse-drawn and tractor-drawn wagon rides. Adults \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 and under free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Rd. off Rt.12. (802) 457-2355. [www.billingsfarm.org](http://www.billingsfarm.org). November 26, 27 & 28.

**WOODSTOCK.** Christmas at the Farm. Enjoy Victorian Christmas traditions. Holiday activities, stories and cooking demonstrations. Toast s' mores by our fire pit. Coffee and hot cider. Take a snowshoe trek along our Ottauquechee River Trail. Bring your own snowshoes or rent. Sleigh rides from December 27 - January 2, conditions permitting. Dairy Bar weekends and holidays 11 am - 4 pm. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. [www.billingsfarm.org](http://www.billingsfarm.org). December 4, 5, 18-24; December 26-January 2.

## FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26

**NORWICH.** Montshire Museum Four-Day Holiday Sale. Science kits, puzzles, games, ukuleles, art supplies, nature guides, art calendars, toys, books, journals and jewelry. Raffle. Admission free. 10 am - 5 pm. Montshire Museum of Science, 1 Montshire Rd. (802) 649-2200. [www.montshire.org](http://www.montshire.org). Thru November 29.

**PUTNEY.** The 43rd Annual Putney Craft Tour. Visit 19 artists' studios. Arts and crafts for sale. For a complete list go to [www.putneycrafts.com](http://www.putneycrafts.com). The tour includes wine and cheese tastings. 10 am to 5 pm each day. Start at Putney Winery & Spirits at 8 Bellows Falls Rd. for info, maps, and a preview exhibition of the artisans' works. [www.putneycrafts.com](http://www.putneycrafts.com). Also November 27 & 28.

**SHELburne.** Winter Lights at Shelburne Museum. See the Museum's buildings and campus bedecked in beautiful holiday lights. Adult tickets are \$15, ages 3-17 are \$10, those 2 and younger are free. 5-8 pm. Shelburne Museum, 6000 Shelburne Rd. (802) 985-3346. [shelburnemuseum.org](http://shelburnemuseum.org). Also November 27 and weekends through January 1.

**ST. ALBANS.** Downtown St. Albans Holiday Tree Walk. Walk through downtown where the Festival of Trees committee and local businesses will be displaying holiday trees in their windows. 12 am to 11:45 pm. [vtfestivaloftrees@gmail.com](mailto:vtfestivaloftrees@gmail.com). [www.vtfestivaloftrees.com](http://www.vtfestivaloftrees.com). Thru December 31.

**WOODSTOCK.** Thanksgiving at the Farm. Adults \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 and under free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Rd. off Rt.12. (802) 457-2355. [www.billingsfarm.org](http://www.billingsfarm.org). Also November 27 & 28.

## SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27

**GREENSBORO.** Bread and Puppet Theater: The Domestic Resurrection Obligation Show. The Bread & Puppet Press Store and Cheap Art Emporium open after the performances. Masks and proof of vaccination or test within 72 hours required. Tickets \$15. 7 pm. Highland Center for the Arts, 2875 Hardwick St. (802) 533-2000. [boxoffice@highlandartsvt.org](mailto:boxoffice@highlandartsvt.org). [www.highlandartsvt.org](http://www.highlandartsvt.org). Also November 28.

**PAWLET.** Coffee House Open Mic. Sign up to be included on the roster for this two-hour coffee house event. Free. 7 pm. Pawlet Town Hall, 122 School St. (802) 325-3123.

**PUTNEY.** The 43rd Annual Putney Craft Tour. Visit 19 artists' studios. Arts and crafts for sale. For a complete list of artisans go to [www.putneycrafts.com](http://www.putneycrafts.com). Includes wine and cheese tastings. 10 am to 5 pm each day. Start at Putney Winery & Spirits at 8 Bellows Falls Rd. for info, maps, and a preview exhibition of the artisans' works. [www.putneycrafts.com](http://www.putneycrafts.com). Also November 28.

**RUTLAND.** Holiday Stroll. Join us for sales, specials, and promotions held throughout the historic district. Shop hours will vary. 7 am - 8 pm. Downtown. (802) 773-9380. [info@downtownrutland.com](mailto:info@downtownrutland.com). [www.downtownrutland.com/holidaystroll](http://www.downtownrutland.com/holidaystroll).

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# Vermont Country Calendar

(Ongoing activities 2021, continued)

**RUTLAND.** Vermont Winter Farmers' Market. 10 am to 2 pm. At Vermont Farmer's Food Center, 251 West St. (802) 417-8661. [vtfarmersmarket.org](http://vtfarmersmarket.org). Saturdays through May 7.

**SHELburnE.** Winter Lights at Shelburne Museum. See the Museum's buildings and campus bedecked in beautiful holiday lights. Adults \$15, ages 3-17 \$10, 2 and younger are free. 5-8 pm. Shelburne Museum, 6000 Shelburne Rd. (802) 985-3346. [shelburnemuseum.org/visit/winter-lights](http://shelburnemuseum.org/visit/winter-lights). Also weekends through January 1.

**ST. ALBANS.** Downtown Tree Lighting and Fireworks! Christmas tree and downtown decorations will light up at 5 pm. Holiday music. Santa arrives a few minutes later on a fire truck! The St. Albans Fire Department hosts a bonfire in Taylor Park. Free cider and cookies or doughnuts. Fireworks display at 6 pm. Free. 5-7 pm. In Taylor Park. [vtfestivaloftrees@gmail.com](mailto:vtfestivaloftrees@gmail.com). [www.vtfestivaloftrees.com](http://www.vtfestivaloftrees.com).

**WOODSTOCK.** Thanksgiving at the Farm. Adults \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 and under free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Rd. off Rt.12. (802) 457-2355. [www.billingsfarm.org](http://www.billingsfarm.org). Also November 28.

## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28

**GREENSBORO.** Bread and Puppet Theater: The Domestic Resurrection Obligation Show. The Bread & Puppet Press Store and Cheap Art Emporium after the performances. Masks and proof of vaccination or test within 72 hours required. Tickets \$15. 7 pm. Highland Center for the Arts, 2875 Hardwick St. (802) 533-2000. [highlandartsvt.org](http://highlandartsvt.org).

**PUTNEY.** The 43rd Annual Putney Craft Tour. Visit 19 artists' studios. Arts and crafts for sale. For a complete list go to [www.putneycrafts.com](http://www.putneycrafts.com). Tour includes wine and cheese tastings. 10 am to 5 pm. Start at Putney Winery & Spirits at 8 Bellows Falls Rd. for info, maps, and a preview exhibition of the artisans' works. [www.putneycrafts.com](http://www.putneycrafts.com).

**WOODSTOCK.** Thanksgiving at the Farm. Adults \$16, seniors 62 and over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 and under free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Rd. off Rt.12. (802) 457-2355. [www.billingsfarm.org](http://www.billingsfarm.org).

## TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30

**BURLINGTON.** Concert: Hot Tuna with special guests, the David Grisman Trio. Tickets: \$48.50 - \$69.50 online sale only. 8 pm. Main Stage, The Flynn, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. [www.flynnvt.org](http://www.flynnvt.org).

## WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1

**HANOVER, NH.** Holiday Market. Wide variety of products locally grown or created! Presented by The Hanover Parks and Recreation Dept. Free admission. 4-7 pm. R.W. Black Community Center, 48 Lebanon St. (603) 643-5315. [judy.stevens@hanovernh.org](mailto:judy.stevens@hanovernh.org). Also December 8 & 15.

**ONLINE.** First Wednesdays Talk: "Learning Hidden History with Picture Books and Graphic Novels". Latinx scholar Laura Jiménez describes how contemporary authors and illustrators use visual literature to center narratives previously unseen in mainstream publishing. Free, advance registration required. 7 pm. Sponsored by Brooks Memorial Library. (802) 254-5290. [brookslibraryvt.org](http://brookslibraryvt.org). [vermonthumanities.org](http://vermonthumanities.org).

## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2

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

**MIDDLEBURY.** Screening. Warren Miller's "Winter Starts Now". The 72nd annual ski and snowboard film will chase winter from coast to coast with friends old and new. Tickets \$21. 6 and 9 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. [tickets@townhalltheater.org](mailto:tickets@townhalltheater.org). [townhalltheater.org](http://townhalltheater.org).

## FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3

**BURLINGTON.** Concert. Mt. Joy. Hear pieces from the band's newest album, *Rearrange Us*. Presented by Higher Ground. Tickets. 8 pm. Flynn Center, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. [www.flynnvt.org](http://www.flynnvt.org).

**BURLINGTON.** Vermont Clay Guild Pottery Sale. Ceramic works in a variety of styles. Free admission. 5-7 pm. Queen City Brewery, 703B Pine St. (802) 540-0280. [vermontclayguild@gmail.com](mailto:vermontclayguild@gmail.com). [queencitybrewery.com](http://queencitybrewery.com).

**HANOVER, NH.** Author Event. The bestselling novelist Jodi Picoult presents her new book *Wish You Were Here!* Tickets required for this in-person event which includes one signed copy of her new novel. Proof of Covid-19 vaccination, masks, and a valid ID required. Sponsored by Norwich Bookstore and Still North Books & Bar. 7 pm in the Grand Ballroom at Hanover Inn Dartmouth, 2 E. Wheelock St. (802) 649-1114. [norwichbookstore.com](http://norwichbookstore.com)

**HANOVER, NH.** Performance. Viva MOMIX. Costumes, choreography, lights, sets and sounds are crafted to absorb audiences. Tickets \$25-\$45, advance registration required. 7:30 pm. The Moore Theater, Hopkins Center, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. [hop.box@dartmouth.edu](mailto:hop.box@dartmouth.edu). [dartmouth.edu](http://dartmouth.edu). Also December 4.

**HANOVER, NH.** Dartmouth Annual Christmas Tree Lighting. Free. 5 pm. On the Green, with cookies and hot chocolate. Dartmouth College, 1 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-3749.

**LEBANON, NH.** Performance. *The Hello Girls*. Lebanon High School's drama club tells the story of America's first female soldiers during World War I. Tickets \$4. 7 pm. (603) 448-0400. [lebanonoperahouse.org](http://lebanonoperahouse.org). Also Dec 4 & 5.

**LEBANON, NH.** The Anonymous Coffeehouse. Several acoustic acts. Guests may come and go as they please. Baked goods and non-alcoholic drinks available. Free, donations welcome. 7:30 pm. At First Congregational Church of Lebanon, 10 S. Park St. (603) 448-4281.

**MIDDLEBURY.** Performance. *A Christmas Carol*. Middlebury Acting Company proudly presents an original adaptation, true to the novella. Tickets \$6-\$32. 7 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. [tickets@townhalltheater.org](mailto:tickets@townhalltheater.org). [www.townhalltheater.org](http://www.townhalltheater.org). Also December 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 & 12.

**RUTLAND.** Rutland Theatre Presents *Matilda the Musical*. Tickets \$10-\$12 plus tax. 7 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. [www.paramountvt.org](http://www.paramountvt.org). Also December 4.

**ST. ALBANS.** The Traveling Storyteller's Holiday Puppet Show. Ernie the Traveling Storyteller will be recounting the story of "Nanook", a polar bear in Alaska, in a dramatic performance for younger children. Children's craft project. Free. 4:30-5:30 pm. At St. Albans City Hall, 100 N. Main St. [www.vtfestivaloftrees.com](http://www.vtfestivaloftrees.com).

**STOWE.** A Traditional Christmas. Children's Lantern Parade & Tree Lighting at 4:30 pm. Art show opening reception and festival of trees and light, 5-7 pm. Free. In the Village. [aimee@stoweivibrancy.com](mailto:aimee@stoweivibrancy.com). [www.stoweivibrancy.com](http://www.stoweivibrancy.com). Through December 5.

**VERGENNES.** Performance. *Broadway Direct*. Tickets \$10-\$20. 7:30 pm. The Vergennes Opera House, 120 Main St. (802) 877-6737. [www.vergennesoperahouse.org](http://www.vergennesoperahouse.org).

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4

**BENNINGTON.** Family Day at Bennington Museum. "Snowflake" Bentley. Enjoy a children's shopping boutique, bake sale, hot chocolate and a firepit in the courtyard, photos with Santa, and classroom creations. Admission \$3, or free if you bring non-perishable food items. 10 am - 4 pm. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. [www.benningtonmuseum.org](http://www.benningtonmuseum.org). [dmallory@benningtonmuseum.org](mailto:dmallory@benningtonmuseum.org).

## Florence, VT

# The Spirit of Santa

by Allen A. Mills

The Spirit of Santa is a wonderful and magical feeling that usually begins with most of us in our early childhood and then can seem less important as we get older and get involved with our own personal agendas.

I would guess that with my wife, Bobbie, who is the second youngest in her family of six, four sisters and one brother, the Spirit of Santa began back then.

I also believe that because Bobbie, who was only a nine-year old girl, when her oldest sister, Alice Provin, began having children of her own, the Spirit of Santa became ingrained in her. By seeing first-hand the excitement of her nieces and nephews while she was still a child herself, the Spirit of Santa became a part of her.

My wife was able to satisfy her Christmas and Santa Spirit, with her many nieces and nephews. After we were married and with the arrival of our own daughters, her excitement

grew even greater and then as the years passed and our grandsons were born the excitement of Christmas was taken to a whole new level.

During all this time, with my mother-in-law's Christmas list, with her own six children, grandchildren and great-grand children and spouses, was rapidly approaching one hundred. She truly needed a Christmas Elf. Who better than my wife, Bobbie.

After my mother-in-law passed away and our grandchildren had grown somewhat away from Santa; what was my Christmas Elf going to do now.

For many years Bobbie ran her own beauty shop and as everyone knows, beauty shops are a wealth of information, much more so and more reliable than the internet or Facebook. One of Bobbie's customers told her about a project in Rutland that she might be interested in. It was called "Dolls and More". Bobbie found out that they find good used dolls that have been left behind by growing children, and clean and refurbish them, make outfits for them, and give the dolls away to children who won't otherwise get toys for Christmas.

My wife met the Director of the program at that time. I believe she had started the Dolls and More Project quite a few years before Bobbie joined. The Director was a woman of boundless energy and a giving spirit that seemed bigger than herself. Bobbie met many of the volunteers with many talents working on numerous projects to put together

Christmas presents for needy children in the Rutland area. My wife is a very good seamstress, a skill that she learned from her grandmother and older sister. This talent was put to immediate use in making outfits for dolls. Bobbie sees a certain character in the dolls she works on and then makes appropriate outfits for them.

The "More" part of Dolls and More, I guess is where I came into the program. I helped a man who was very clever at making wooden toys and even though I have limited wood working skills, I have made some cradles and foot stools. My daughter painted some of the cradles and then decorated them. My grandson put bicycles together that were donated to the program by local businesses and then, of course, couldn't help trying them out as he test rode them around inside our house.

Dolls and More has grown into a legion of volunteers, each bringing their own talents and ideas to the project. It is a part of the RSVP Program located in Rutland and allows many seniors, some with disabilities, to feel the Spirit of Christmas as they give of themselves to children.

The Dolls and More project supplies many community groups and organizations with gifts for needy children. There is a new director of the project now and she has had many new challenges to face. Along with the new job, she has had to deal with our current COVID pandemic. She has had to keep the program together while following COVID guidelines and keeping her volunteers safe. This year, the Dolls and More project is having a drive-by distribution.

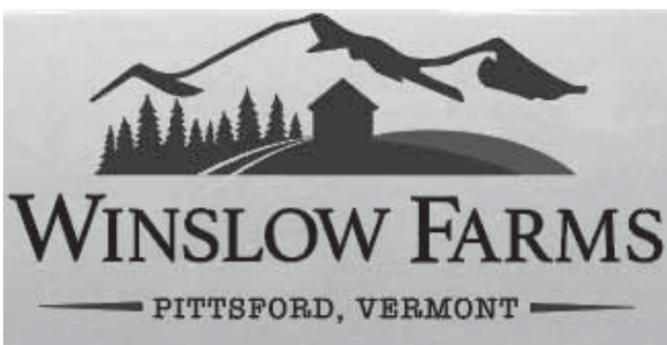
I do know that as soon as the greens and glitter of the Christmas season are taken down, Dolls and More will be back together working on next year's Christmas gifts for needy children.

**"My mother-in-law's Christmas list was approaching one hundred. She needed a Christmas Elf..."**

## Useful Vermont Websites

Vermont State Parks: [vtstateparks.com](http://vtstateparks.com)  
 Green Mountain National Forest: [fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl](http://fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl)  
 Vermont Recreation Planner: [vermontvacation.com](http://vermontvacation.com)  
 Hunting & Fishing: [vtfishandwildlife.com](http://vtfishandwildlife.com)  
 Vermont Recreation & Travel: [voga.org](http://voga.org)  
 Things to Do: [findandgoseek.net](http://findandgoseek.net)  
 Mountain Biking: [vmba.org](http://vmba.org)

802-773-1003



Choose and Cut Christmas Trees

Fri, Sat, Sun 10-4  
 after Thanksgiving

West Field—415 US Route 7  
 East Field—Channing Lane

For more information about the RSVP Operation Dolls & More Program or to volunteer call (802) 775-8220

RSVP Operation Dolls & More has collaborated with the Trinity Church of Rutland to offer this holiday program to area youth. They provide over 10,000 new and restored dolls, toys and books which are distributed through 50+ nonprofit organizations to over 2,000 Rutland County children. RSVP volunteers provide hours of dedicated service ensuring the success of this program each year.

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

# Vermont Country Calendar



**Fairest Lord  
Jesus**

Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature,  
O thou of God and man the Son,  
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

**BURLINGTON.** Warren Miller's "Winter Starts Now". 72nd annual ski and snowboard film, Tickets \$23, available online only. 4 & 7 pm. Flynn Center, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. [www.flynnvt.org](http://www.flynnvt.org).

**BURLINGTON.** Vermont Clay Guild Pottery Sale. Ceramic works in a variety of styles by members of the nonprofit clay artists group. Free admission. 10 am – 3 pm. Queen City Brewery, 703B Pine St. (802) 540-0280. [vermontclayguild@gmail.com](mailto:vermontclayguild@gmail.com). [queencitybrewery.com](http://queencitybrewery.com).

**CHESTER.** St. Luke's Christmas Market. Culinary classics & crafts to go! Frozen soups and meals, pre-wrapped baked goods, homemade jams and preserves, authentic English chunky marmalade and mincemeat, handmade chocolates in designer tins. Christmas-oriented decorations (including live evergreen wreaths and sprays), gingerbread-house kits, crafts, soap, and special pet treats. All welcome. Masks required. Pick-up time for advance orders is 9:30-10 am. For info and a partial list of food and crafts, visit [www.stlukesepiscopalvt.org](http://www.stlukesepiscopalvt.org). To order food or gingerbread-house kits in advance, contact Lillian Willis at [lbwillisct@comcast.net](mailto:lbwillisct@comcast.net) (802) 875-1340. 10 am – 2 pm. At Willard Hall, St. Luke's Church, 313 Main St.

**ESSEX JUNCTION.** A Holiday Market. Explore artisans and vendors selling handmade gifts, clothing, woodcrafts, jewelry, mead, wine, and more. Free admission. 11 am – 6 pm. Champlain Valley Expo, 105 Pearl St. [www.vtgatherings.com](http://www.vtgatherings.com).

**GREENSBORO.** Winterzauber. A festive, outdoor artisan market for the whole family to celebrate the magic of the season. Free admission. 11 am – 3 pm. Highland Center for the Arts, 2875 Hardwick St. (802) 533-2000. [boxoffice@highlandartsvt.org](mailto:boxoffice@highlandartsvt.org). [www.highlandartsvt.org](http://www.highlandartsvt.org).

**HANOVER, NH.** Performance. Viva Momix. Costumes, choreography, lights, sets and sounds are crafted to absorb audiences. Tickets \$25-\$45, advance registration required. 2 pm and 7:30 pm. The Moore Theater, Hopkins Center, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. [hop.box@dartmouth.edu](mailto:hop.box@dartmouth.edu). [www.hop.dartmouth.edu](http://www.hop.dartmouth.edu).

**HANOVER, NH.** Screening. Met Opera in HD: "Eurydice". Enjoy this spin on the Ancient Greek myth of Orpheus. Tickets \$22, advance registration required. 1-4 pm. Spaulding Auditorium, Hopkins Center, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. [hop.box@dartmouth.edu](mailto:hop.box@dartmouth.edu). [www.hop.dartmouth.edu](http://www.hop.dartmouth.edu).

**HARTFORD.** Merry & Bright Celebration. Pictures with Santa, ugly sweater contest, food drive, bake sale, raffles, crafts for kids and angel wish tree, annual tree lighting and carol sing-a-long. Free. Brunch: adults \$10, children \$5. 10:30 am – 1 pm, Tree lighting 4:30-5:15 pm. Cornerstone Community Center, 14 Elk St. (802) 295-5654.

**LEBANON, NH.** Performance. *The Hello Girls*. Lebanon High School's drama club tells the story of America's first female soldiers during World War I. Tickets \$4. Show starts at 7 pm. (603) 448-0400. [info@lebanonoperahouse.org](mailto:info@lebanonoperahouse.org). [www.lebanonoperahouse.org](http://www.lebanonoperahouse.org). Also December 5.

**LINCOLN.** Concert. Ripton Community Coffee House on the Road presents Cloudbelly, with Corey Laitman and Anand Nayak. No open mic; two sets of music with a break. Show proof of vaccination before entering, and remain masked while in the building. Tickets: generous admission \$15-\$20, general \$10. Doors open at 7 pm; music begins at 7:30 pm. Burnham Hall, 52 Burnham Hall. Also live-streaming. (802) 388-9782. [rcchfolks@gmail.com](mailto:rcchfolks@gmail.com). [www.rcch.org](http://www.rcch.org).

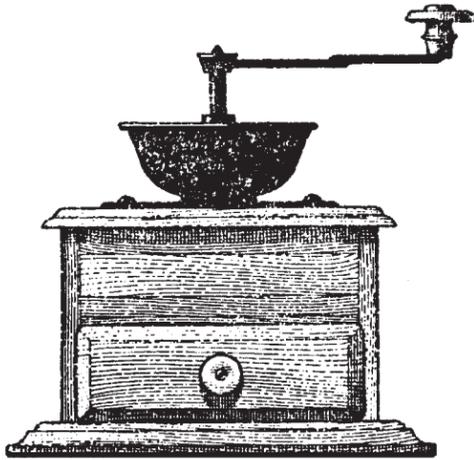
**LUNENBURG.** 12th Annual Lunenburg Gingerbread Bazaar. Gingerbread Creations Contest, door prizes, cookie decorating with Mrs. Claus, and ornament crafting by the Girl Scouts with a take-along option, too. Local vendors offer holiday fresh greenery, Christmas and gift items, fudge, and maple syrup. 8th grade cookie walk, and nonprofit raffles including the Historical Society Maple Festival quilt. A homemade soup luncheon offered from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., take-outs available. Sponsored by The Top of the Common Committee. 10 am – 2 pm. At the Gilman School, 2720 River Rd. (802) 892-6654. [www.topofthecommon.org](http://www.topofthecommon.org).

**LYME, NH.** 7th Annual Christmas Tree Festival. Over 70 trees decorated to view and bid on with Santa arriving at 3 pm. Gifts for kids, live music and hot cocoa. 2-4 pm. On the common, Rt. 10/Main St. (603) 795-4295. [pandtlcs@gmail.com](mailto:pandtlcs@gmail.com).

**MANCHESTER.** Hildene's Our Home for the Holidays! The spirit of the season abounds in our 115-year-old Carriage Barn. Fragrance of pine boughs and sounds of the season. Masks required regardless of vaccination status. 10 am – 4 pm. Hildene, 1005 Hildene Rd. off Rt. 7A. 802-362-1564. [hildene.org](http://hildene.org). Also December 5.

**MIDDLEBURY.** Performance. *A Christmas Carol*. Middlebury Acting Company presents an original adaptation, true to the novella. Tickets \$6-\$32. 7 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. [tickets@townhalltheater.org](mailto:tickets@townhalltheater.org). [www.townhalltheater.org](http://www.townhalltheater.org). Also December 5, 9, 10, 11 & 12.

**PEACHAM.** Concert. Boston Brass for the Holidays. The lively ensemble gets revelers in the holiday spirit. Tickets \$20-\$40. 7 pm. Peacham Congregational Church, 56 Church St. (802) 748-2600. [info@catamountarts.org](mailto:info@catamountarts.org). [www.catamountarts.org](http://www.catamountarts.org).



**FERRISBURG.** Rokeby Holiday Open House. Sale prices in the museum store, hand-made door swags, and the exhibit *Free & Safe*. Pop-up shop by the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum! 11 am – 2 pm. Rokeby Museum, 4334 Rt. 7. (802) 877-3406. [rokeby.org](http://rokeby.org).

**MORRISVILLE.** 21st Annual Festival of Lights. Meet Santa, soup & songs, luminary-making, holiday artisan fair, horse & cart rides, s'mores at Oxbow Park. *Frozen Nutcracker* performance 1 & 5 pm. Free holiday movies. Raffle. Morristown Alliance for Culture & Commerce. [maccdirector@gmail.com](mailto:maccdirector@gmail.com).

**RUTLAND.** Rutland Theatre Presents *Matilda the Musical*. Tickets \$10-\$12 plus tax. 2 & 7 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. [paramountvt.org](http://paramountvt.org). Also December 4.

**RUTLAND.** Vermont Winter Farmers' Market. Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm. At Vermont Farmer's Food Center, 251 West St. (802) 417-8661. [vtfarmersmarket.org](http://vtfarmersmarket.org). Saturdays through May 7, 2022.

**RUTLAND.** Rutland County Audubon Birdseed Sale. Stock up on birdseed and save some dough. Membership in Audubon not required, but you can join at the sales. Learn more about feeding birds. 8 am – 4:30 pm. At Garlands Farm and Garden, 70 Park St. [birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org](mailto:birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org). Also December 5.

**ST. ALBANS.** World Premiere of "Missa Pandemica: Mass in Time of Pandemic." Performed by the Vermont Choral Union. Composed by VCU member Maarten van Ryckevorsel. Tickets \$15-\$40, see website to purchase: [www.vtchoralunion.org](http://www.vtchoralunion.org). 7:30 pm. At the First Congregational Church of St. Albans, 27 Church St. [vtfestivaloftrees.com](http://vtfestivaloftrees.com).

**ST. ALBANS.** Santa's Workshop. Visit with Santa & make gifts. Free for kids under 14. 10 am – 2 pm. St. Albans Museum, 9 Church St. (802) 527-7933. [www.vtfestivaloftrees.com](http://www.vtfestivaloftrees.com).

**ST. ALBANS.** Tree Showcase with Dance & Music Performances, Train & Doll Displays. Local dancers and musicians. Join us at City Hall decorated for the season as we enjoy "A Traditional Vermont Christmas". Model train display offered by Jim Murphy and a beautiful doll collection from Mrs. Scangas. Crafts and gifts available for purchase. The First Congregational Church cookie sale, 10 am – 2 pm. Christmas Tree raffle. Free admission. 10 am – 4 pm. St. Albans City Hall, 100 N. Main St. [vtfestivaloftrees.com](http://vtfestivaloftrees.com).

**ST. ALBANS.** 8th Annual Arts & Crafts Show. 9 am – 3 pm. St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 11 Church St. (802) 524-5632. [www.vtfestivaloftrees.com](http://www.vtfestivaloftrees.com).

**ST. ALBANS.** St. Albans Festival of Trees Take-Out Dinner. Choice of boneless pork loin with rice pilaf and maple glazed carrots or breaded chicken parmesan with creamy mashed potatoes and broccoli. Dessert including opera cake. Tickets \$20. 4-6 pm. Martha's Community Kitchen, 139 Lake St. (802) 524-9749. [www.vtfestivaloftrees.com](http://www.vtfestivaloftrees.com).

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

**SOUTH BURLINGTON.** Workshop: Create a Winter Centerpiece. Make a holiday arrangement with greens and cuttings of wine-red dogwoods, fir, pine, cedar, and more. by Friends of the Horticultural Farm. Admission \$35. 9-11 am, 1-4 pm. Held inside the Hort Farm Blasberg Building, 65 Green Mountain Dr. [www.fhfv.org](http://www.fhfv.org).

**SPRINGFIELD.** Workshop. Joyful Calligraphy. Join Instructor Jorika Stockwell and develop basic pen skills by learning several different styles and scripts of calligraphy through writing the word "joy". Cost \$45, register by December 1. 11 am – 3 pm. Gallery at the VAULT, 68 Main St. [www.galleryvault.org](http://www.galleryvault.org).

**STOWE.** A Traditional Christmas. Holiday Bazaar with live music. Stowe Community Church Christmas Fair. Gingerbread ornament decorating and wine tasting, Santa Stroll, hay rides. Spruce Peak Performing Arts presents Orebolo. Free. In the Village. [aimee@stoweivbrancy.com](mailto:aimee@stoweivbrancy.com).

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802-855-8155 • [hncblossomsnmore.com](http://hncblossomsnmore.com)  
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# Vermont Country Calendar

(Saturday, December 4, continued)

**STRAFFORD.** Strafford Holiday Craft Fair. Shop high quality crafts and support local artisans. Free admission. 10 am – 3 pm. Barrett Memorial Hall, 248 Rt. 132. (802) 765-4076. kurmacdavid@gmail.com.

**UNDERHILL.** Early Winter Hike to Butler Lodge via Nebraska Notch. Moderate hike/snowshoe. moderate pace. 6.2 miles. 1700' elevation gain. Sponsored by the Green Mountain Club. Non-members and newcomers welcome. Contact leader by December 2: David Hathaway, david.hathaway.78@gmail.com or (802) 899-9982. www.greenmountainclub.org.

**WOODSTOCK.** Christmas at the Farm. Enjoy Victorian Christmas traditions. Holiday activities, stories and cooking demonstrations. Toast s'mores by our fire pit. Coffee and hot cider. Take a snowshoe trek along our Ottauquechee River Trail. Bring your own snowshoes or rent from the Nordic Center. Dairy Bar weekends and holidays 11 am – 4 pm. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. Also December 5, 18-24; December 26-January 2.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5

**BURLINGTON.** World Premiere of "Missa Pandemica: Mass in Time of Pandemic." Performed by the Vermont Choral Union. Composed by Vermont Choral Union member Maarten van Ryckevorsel. Tickets are \$15-\$40, see website to purchase: www.vtchoralunion.org. 3 pm. At the Cathedral of St. Joseph, 29 Allen St. www.vtfestivaloftrees.com.

**LEBANON, NH.** Performance. *The Hello Girls.* Lebanon High School's drama club tells the story of America's first female soldiers during World War I. Tickets \$4. Show starts at 1 pm. (603) 448-0400. info@lebanonoperahouse.org. www.lebanonoperahouse.org.

**LYNDON CENTER.** 40th Anniversary Show: Viva Momix Forever. Athletic dance, riveting music, outrageous costumes, inventive props, and pure talent. Masks, proof of vaccination (or negative PCR test), and valid ID required. Tickets: \$52, \$42, \$32, \$15; students free. 7 pm. Lyndon Institute Auditorium, 168 Institute Circle. (802) 748-2600. www.catamountarts.org.

**MANCHESTER.** Hildene's Our Home for the Holidays! The spirit of the season abounds in our 115-year-old Carriage Barn. Masks currently required regardless of vaccination status. 10 am – 4 pm. Hildene, 1005 Hildene Rd. off Rt. 7A. 802-362-1564. themuseumstore@hildene.org. www.hildene.org. Also December 5.

**MIDDLEBURY.** Performance. *A Christmas Carol.* Middlebury Acting Company presents an original adaptation, true to the novella, Tickets pay what you can or \$6-\$32. 2 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. tickets@townhalltheater.org. www.townhalltheater.org. Also December 9, 10, 11 & 12.

**RUTLAND.** Screening. Metropolitan Opera performs *Eurydice.* Tickets \$23. 12:55 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountvt.org.

**RUTLAND.** Performance. *The Messiah.* Join musicians, Rutland Area Chorus and Festival Orchestra for a performance of George Frederic Handel's *Messiah.* Tickets are free, reserved in advance. 3:30 & 7 pm. Grace Congregational UCC, 8 Court St. (802) 775-4301. www.gracechurchvt.org.

**RUTLAND.** Holiday Stroll. Join us for a whole week of sales, specials, and promotions held throughout the historic district. Shop hours vary. (802) 773-9380. info@downtownrutland.com. downtownrutland.com.

**RUTLAND.** Rutland County Audubon Birdseed Sale. Stock up on birdseed and save some dough. Membership in Audubon not required, but you can join at the sales. Learn more about feeding birds. 10 am – 3 pm. At Garlands Farm and Garden, 70 Park St. birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org.

**ST. ALBANS.** St. Albans Festival of Trees. 12-1 pm, Bellows Free Academy Orchestra. 2-4 pm, 40th U.S. Army Band. Tree showcase, model train display, and a beautiful display of dolls. Crafts and gifts for purchase. Cookie sale by the Northside Baptist Church. Christmas tree raffle. Free admission. 10 am – 4 pm. At St. Albans City Hall, 100 N. Main St. vtfestivaloftrees.com.

**ST. JOHNSBURY.** Workshop: Birch Bark Ornaments. For adults and high school students. Instructor: Penny Hewitt. Masks, proof of vaccination (or negative PCR test), and valid ID required. Fee: \$45 + \$28 materials fee, payable to instructor. Registration deadline: November 29. 1-5 pm. Catamount Arts Cabaret Room, 115 Eastern Ave. (802) 748-2600. catamountarts.org.

**SHELburne.** Campfire with Abenaki Chief Don Stevens. Gather around a campfire to learn more about Abenaki culture with Chief Don Stevens of the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk-Abenaki Nation. Stories, artifacts, drumming, songs, and culture of the Abenaki. For ages 6 and up. \$5, registration required. 1 pm. Shelburne Farms, 1611 Harbor Rd. (802) 985-8686. shelburnefarms.org.

**Stowe.** A Traditional Christmas. Holiday skate, concessions, crafts, and more. At the Stowe Ice Arena. Free. aimee@stovevibrancy.com. www.stovevibrancy.com.

**Stowe.** Winter Outing to Mt. Mansfield. Snowshoe or hike. Five miles. 3000' elevation gain. Sponsored by the Green Mountain Club. Non-members and newcomers welcome. Leader: Lisa Hardy, ndlisa827@aol.com. www.greenmountainclub.org.

**Weston.** Fourth Annual Winter Cabaret. Covid requirements. Tickets: \$25-\$45. 3 pm. Walker Farm, 703 Main St. westonplayhouse.org.

**WOODSTOCK.** Christmas at the Farm. Victorian Christmas traditions. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. Also December 18-24; December 26-January 2.

## MONDAY, DECEMBER 6

**ONLINE.** Artful Insects Workshop. Meet the museum's live insect collection up close on your screen and learn about their intricate beauty, anatomy, and adaptations during this three week series. For ages 9-12. Fee: \$45-\$105. Montshire Museum of Science, 1 Montshire Rd. (802) 649-2200. honor.hingston-cox@montshire.org. montshire.org.

## WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8

**HANOVER, NH.** Holiday Market. Wide variety of products locally grown or created! Presented by the Hanover Parks and Recreation Dept. Free admission. 4-7 pm. R.W. Black Community Center, 48 Lebanon St. (603) 643-5315. judy.stevens@hanovernh.org. Also December 15.

**MIDDLEBURY.** Screening. Metropolitan Opera performs *Eurydice.* Adult \$24, student \$10. 7 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. tickets@townhalltheater.org. www.townhalltheater.org.

## Way Back Then

# 20th Century a Time for Steam-Powered Locomotives

by Charles C. Sutton

Growing up and having an electric train set with its engine, passenger cars, cabooses, stations, tunnels, RR-crossing signs, even water towers was as exciting as it could be.

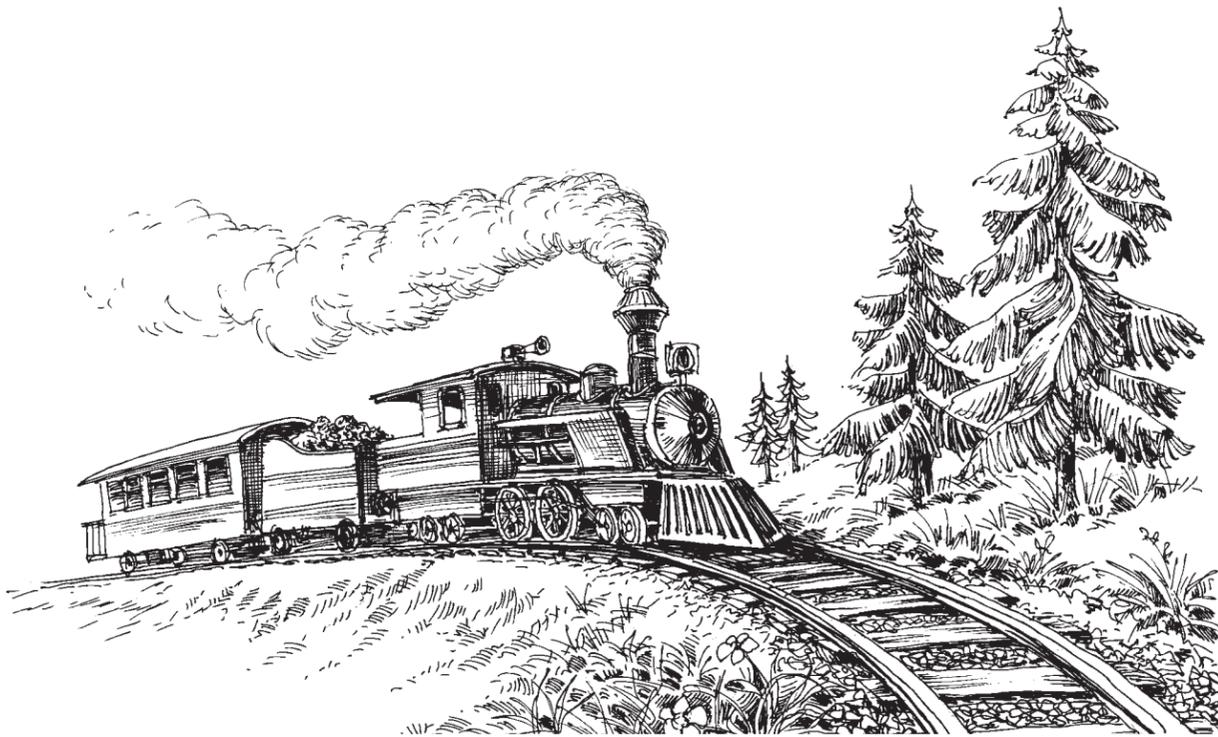
Brother Fred and I got our first train set one Christmas while visiting our grandparents (my mother's mother and father) in Syracuse, NY. To our surprise and delight an electric-operated toy train was running at full speed, non-stop around the Christmas tree when the whole family assembled there after breakfast.

We were used to riding on adult-sized electric trains on the New York, New Haven and Hartford RR to and from New York's Grand Central Station (itself an enchanting place). For the day's long trip to Syracuse we boarded the New York Central RR's famous 20th Century Limited—destination Chicago. The train stopped briefly at Harmon, a Hudson River town 32 miles north of the city, to switch engines from electric to a mighty, steam-powered locomotive fueled by coal. Passengers could get snacks at the station but for us boys we would hurry up front to admire the train's giant wheels which were much taller than us.

We were intrigued by the stokers covered with black coal soot who had the physically-demanding job of shoveling coal into the engine's furnace to boil water into steam, hence the name steam locomotives. Stokers, also called firemen or water tenders, were on our list of what we would like to be when we grew up.

This being a day-long trip we came equipped with books, chess set, drawing paper and plenty of treats. Included was a large jar of sliced tomatoes in French dressing which mother would later make into sandwiches with her homemade bread. We had grown the tomatoes in our wartime Victory Garden. We uprooted the vines when frost came and hung them in the cellar to ripen well into the winter.

We had four seats, two each, facing each other. Usually we had the use of all four seats, but on one trip the forth seat was taken by a middle-aged man who paled at the thought of having to put up with a couple of boys wiggling around for the long train ride. Mother was polite and tried to reassure him that her sons were well-behaved, but he quickly disappeared taking refuge the dining car and in the sight-seeing lounge car at the end of the train.



We never ate in the dining car as we were on a wartime budget no matter how inviting it was with its white linen tablecloths, waiters scurrying about, and the aroma of good cooking.

These usually were daylong trips but we did make one run at night and it was a thrill to see the porter converting our seats into beds as well as pulling one down from an overhead compartment. Curtains appeared out of nowhere to give us privacy for the night.

In the summer we also took the same train as far as Utica where we changed to another steam-engined locomotive for the trip to Big Moose in the Adirondacks.

My grandparents had a cottage on the lake at Big Moose, and we took all our meals within walking distance at the big lakeside inn. It's hard to believe today but the hotel lacked 'modern' amenities like television, telephones in the bedrooms, air conditioning, and of course, no WiFi! But its cellar was home to 10 slot machines—one-armed bandits—with their familiar display of oranges, lemons and other fruits. And sometimes but rarely if three fruits were matched in a row, there would be coin winnings. Fred and I didn't have much money to play the slots, but that is where we met an

elderly man, a Mr. Crowley, who was glad to give us some coins and watch us play.

Mr. Crowley had huge bushy eyebrows, so much so that we privately called him Mr. Eyebrows. The winnings we made with Mr. Crowley's coins, we offered to give back to him—after all it was his money. "No," he said, "you boys keep it, but save some. You'll need it later, don't spent it all here."

That was good advice from a man who rose from brakeman to become president of the New York Central Railroad. He came to Big Moose

in a private railroad car which waited on a siding while he and his wife took their vacation there.

Sadly, the Big Moose Hotel was closed down after World War II and never reopened. Eventually it was torn down.

When at our grandparents in Syracuse at night we could hear the rapid and breathy "chuff, chuff, chuffing" of locomotives signaling that their era was not yet over. A reassuring sound for two small boys about to go asleep.

Charles C. Sutton is the co-publisher with Catherine O'Kane, of the *Vermont Country Sampler*, now in its 37th year. He is now 90 (some retirement!).

**"We did make one run at night and it was a thrill to see the porter converting our seats into beds..."**

## Useful Vermont Websites

Vermont State Parks: vtstateparks.com  
Green Mountain National Forest: fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl  
Vermont Outdoor Guide Association: voga.org  
Hunting & Fishing: vtfishandwildlife.com  
Things to Do: findandgoseek.net  
Mountain Biking: vmba.org

# Vermont Country Calendar

## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9

**MIDDLEBURY.** Performance. *A Christmas Carol*. Middlebury Acting Company proudly presents an original adaptation, true to the novella. Tickets pay what you can or \$6-\$32. 7 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. tickets@townhalltheater.org. www.townhalltheater.org. Also December 11 & 12.

## FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10

**BARRE.** Vermont Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops. Features favorites like *White Christmas* and *Sleigh Ride*, as well as music from the *Nutcracker* and *Polar Express* suites, contemplative and festive carols, and a dash of warm-weather cheer from Brazil. Tickets \$8.35-\$54.23, available online only. 7:30 pm. Barre Opera House, 6 N. Main St #4. (802) 864-5741. www.vso.org.

**BENNINGTON.** Transient Beauty Gala. A winter gala to benefit Bennington Museum. Tickets \$100, or table reservations, purchase tickets online. 6-9 pm. Ada and Paul Paresky Wing, Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. administration@benningtonmuseum.org. www.benningtonmuseum.org.

**BURLINGTON.** Concert. Ayodele Casel. Ayodele and her Afro-Latinx-infused percussive style tap-dancing. Come witness New York Times "Biggest Breakout Stars of 2019." Tickets \$20. 7:30 pm. Flynn Center, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynnvt.org.

**RANDOLPH.** Winter Solstice Mini-Fest. Featuring Matt Flinner and Low Lily. Tickets are in-person \$10-\$50, livestream \$20. 7 pm. Chandler Center for the Arts, 71 N. Main St. (802) 728-9878. www.chandler-arts.org.

**ST. ALBANS.** The 2021 Holiday Tractor Parade. We are back and ready to roll! The 2021 Tractor Parade will be held on Friday, December 10th. The route will be the same. This year, we will not be hosting any pre-parade events at the store. Event By St. Albans Creamery & Supply. 6 pm. Downtown St. Albans. (802) 524-6581. www.vtfestivaloftrees.com.

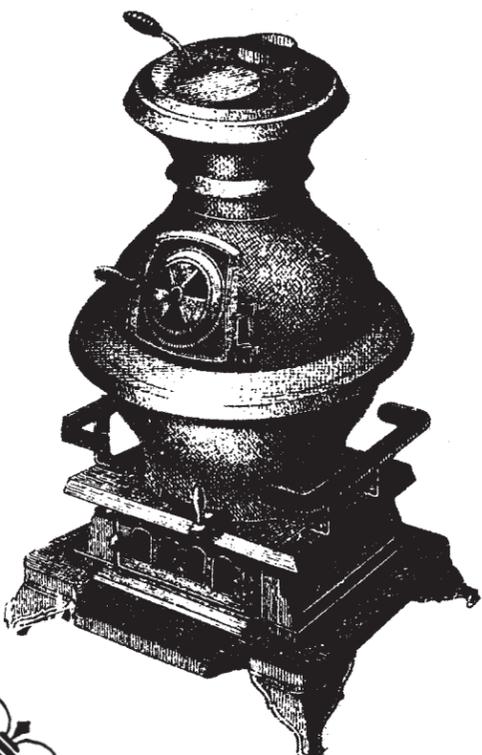
**SOUTH POMFRET.** Holiday Movies after School: How the Grinch Stole Christmas. Chill out with a holiday movie and popcorn and hot cocoa for kids only; feel free to bring blankets or pillows to get cozy during the show! Admission \$10. 3:30 pm. Artistree, The Hayloft, 2095 Pomfret Rd. (802) 457-3500. www.artistreevt.org/holiday-movies-after-school-how-the-grinch-stole-christmas.html

**WOODSTOCK.** Wassail Weekend at Billings Farm. Wassail punch, cider donuts, candle dipping, and a gingerbread recreation of the historic 1890 Farm Manager's House. Warm up by an outdoor fire, take photos in front of Christmas trees in the decorated holiday barn, and learn about Wassail traditions. Admission: adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am-4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. Also December 11 & 12.

**WOODSTOCK.** Concert. Irish Christmas in America. This hugely popular show brings a fascinating performance of music, song, dance and beloved stories of seasonal traditions. Tickets \$40 for adults, \$25 for kids (16 and under). 7:30 pm. Woodstock Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green. (802) 457-3981. www.irishchristmasinamerica.com.

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11

**BARRE.** Concert. A Còig Christmas. Nova Scotia's powerhouse group Còig presents an evening of fiery Celtic holiday tunes. Tickets \$15-\$35. 7:30 pm. Barre Opera House, 6 N. Main St. (802) 476-8188. staff@barreoperahouse.org. www.barreoperahouse.org.



**BRADFORD.** Makers on Main Artisan Market. Hosted by The Space on Main, second Saturday of each month. Free admission. 11 am - 3 pm. The Space On Main, 174 Main St. (802) 449-6246. thespaceonmain@gmail.com. www.thespaceonmain.org. Second Saturdays.

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

**BURLINGTON.** Vermont Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops. The program features favorites like *White Christmas* and *Sleigh Ride*, as well as music from the *Nutcracker* and *Polar Express* suites, contemplative and festive carols, and a dash of warm-weather cheer from Brazil. Brought to you by the Vermont Symphony Orchestra. Tickets \$8.35 - \$54.23, available online only. 7:30 pm. Flynn Center, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynnvt.org.

**BURLINGTON.** Concert. Vermont Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops. Features favorites like *Rocket Sleigh*, *White Christmas*, and *Sleigh Ride*, as well as music from the *Nutcracker* and *Polar Express* suites, contemplative and festive carols, and a dash of warm-weather cheer from Brazil. Tickets \$8.35-\$54.23, available online only. 7:30 pm. Flynn Center, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynnvt.org.

**CRAFTSBURY.** The Rodrigues Sprints. Join Craftsbury Outdoor Center at the Outdoor Center for a season-opening freestyle sprint competition held in memory of our friend and mentor Jim Rodrigues, Event details on the website. \$25 registration fee, register in advance. 7 am - 3 pm. Craftsbury Outdoor Center, 535 Lost Nation Rd. (802) 586-7767. www.craftsbury.com.

**GRAFTON.** Christmas in Grafton Village. Holiday cheer, shopping, and delicious food. Grafton Fire & Rescue Christmas Tree Sale outside Phelps Barn 9 am - 3 pm. Sleigh rides through Grafton Trails and Outdoor Center 10 am - 2 pm, by reservation. Arts & Crafts at the Grafton Chapel 10 am - 3 pm. Buy wreaths from the Grafton Historical Society 10 am - 3 pm. Nature Center and Museum offers winter hike/snowshoe at 11 am. Hike the trails, and stop by the cabin to learn about the Center's outdoor activities. Raffle. (802) 843-2248. www.graftoninnvermont.com.

**GRAFTON.** Horse-Drawn Sleigh Rides. Adult \$20, youth \$12, 5 & under free. Advance reservations. 11 am - 4 pm (final ride 3:30 pm). (802) 843-2400. The Grafton Inn, Outdoor Center, 783 Townshend Rd. www.graftoninnvermont.com. Also December 24-26, 29-31; January 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; February 12, 19-20, 26.

**GRAFTON.** Winter Hike/Snowshoe with a Naturalist. Through forests, fields, and Grafton Town Forest. Geared towards families with older children (8+) and adults. Snowshoe rentals available by reservation. Sliding scale \$5-\$15. 10 am - 12 noon. The Nature Museum, 186 Townshend Rd. (802) 843-2111. www.nature-museum.org.

**LEBANON, NH.** Drive-Thru Live Nativity. Drive-through live nativity. See, hear, and feel the story of Christmas. Free. 5-7 pm. Wellspring Worship Center, 407 N. Main St. (603) 643-2700. nativity@wellspringworship.org.

**LEBANON, NH.** Concert. *All is Calm*. An A Cappella performance. A beautifully profound a cappella chamber opera. A testament to humanity and unity about the Christmas Truce of 1914. Tickets \$50. 5 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 N Park St. (603) 448-0400. info@lebanonoperahouse.org. www.lebanonoperahouse.org.

**MANCHESTER.** Bird Walk. Join a local birding group to conduct a survey of the wild birds present on the grounds of Hildene, attendees asked to wear a mask. Free. 8 am. Meet at the Welcome Center, Hildene, 1005 Hildene Rd. off Rt. 7A. (802) 367-7960. stephanie@hildene.org. hildene.org.

**MIDDLEBURY.** Performance. *A Christmas Carol*. Presented by the Middlebury Acting Company. Tickets pay what you can or \$6-\$32. 7 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. tickets@townhalltheater.org. www.townhalltheater.org. Also December 12.

**MORRISVILLE.** Cookie Decorating Workshop. Free, with \$5 suggested donation. 10 am - 12 pm. River Arts, 74 Pleasant St. (802) 888-1261. riverartsvt.org.

**NORWICH.** Astronomy Day. A full day of activities for learners of all ages, covering topics from stars to planets, comets to meteorites. Free with museum admission. Montshire Museum, 1 Montshire Rd. (802) 649-2200. montshire@montshire.org. www.montshire.org.

**ONLINE.** HopStop Family Workshop: Make a Snowflake. Join the Claffin Jewelry Studio to make paper snowflakes. Free, advanced registration required. 11 am - 12 pm. (603) 646-2422. hop.box@dartmouth.edu. hop.dartmouth.edu.

**ORFORD, NH.** Holiday Celebration. Story time, crafts, an outdoor fire pit, hot chocolate and cookies. Learn how to make upcycled cloth gift bags. Free. Orford Social Library, 573 Rt. 10. (603) 353-9756. orfordsoclib@gmail.com.

**PUTNEY.** Concert. Soggy Po' Boys. Jazz messy, mixing brass-fueled mayhem with spirituals, old-school funk, and the Caribbean side of the New Orleans tradition. Tickets \$18. 7:30 pm. Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill. (386) 295-3687. keith@nextstagearts.org. www.nextstagearts.org.



Lunch time!

## VT Fish & Wildlife Dept.

### December is the Start of Bird Feeding Season

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department recommends Vermonters put up bird feeders after December 1 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 Purple Finches. 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 understanding bird populations.

The Fish and Wildlife Department offers these tips for bird-friendly bird feeding:

- Keep cats inside. Do-

mestic 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 1 and April 1 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 will continue to do so, potentially leading to property damage and dangerous encounters with people which can result in the bear's demise.

For more info about wildlife in Vermont visit the VT Fish & Wildlife Department at [vtfishandwildlife.com](http://vtfishandwildlife.com).

## Poulin Grain Dealer



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[www.uvm.edu/sustainableagriculture](http://www.uvm.edu/sustainableagriculture)  
(802) 656-545

# Vermont Country Calendar

(Saturday, December 11, continued)

**RUTLAND.** Vermont Winter Farmers' Market. Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm. At Vermont Farmer's Food Center, 251 West St. (802) 417-8661. [vtfarmersmarket.org](http://vtfarmersmarket.org). *Saturdays through May 7, 2022.*

**RUTLAND.** Screening. Metropolitan Opera performs *The Magic Flute*. Tickets \$24.38. 12:55 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. [paramountvt.org](http://paramountvt.org).

**RUTLAND.** Christmas Holiday Fair. Distinctive crafts, handmade clothes, baked goods, fudge, gourmet specialty foods, wreaths & holiday decorations, maple syrup, cider, squash. Hosted by The Vermont Farmers Market. 9 am – 4 pm. At the Holiday Inn, Rt. 7. (802) 282-2163. [www.vtfarmersmarket.org](http://www.vtfarmersmarket.org).

**ST. JOHNSBURY.** Screening. Metropolitan Opera performs *The Magic Flute*. Masks, proof of vaccination (or negative PCR test), and valid ID required. Tickets: \$16-\$25. 12:55 pm. Catamount Arts Center, 115 Eastern Ave. (802) 748-2600. [catamountarts.org](http://catamountarts.org). *Also December 18.*

**SHELburne.** Horse-Drawn Sleigh or Wagon Rides. Adults \$10, children (3-17) \$8, children under 3 free. Register at [cwright@shelburnefarms.org](mailto:cwright@shelburnefarms.org) or (802) 985-8686. 11 am – 2 pm every half hour. Meet at our Farm Store & Welcome Center, Shelburne Farms, 1611 Harbor Rd. [shelburnefarms.org](http://shelburnefarms.org). *Dec. 19-23, 26-30, Jan. 2.*

**SOUTH BURLINGTON.** Children's Author Event. Ashley Wolff, Vermont author and illustrator of over 70 books, will be reading aloud, drawing pictures and signing books. Shelburne's Flying Pig Bookstore will be there, too, with a full range of her storybooks available for purchase and signing. 11 am. South Burlington Public Library, 180 Market St. (802) 846-4140. [ashleywolff.com](http://ashleywolff.com).

**SOUTH POMFRET.** Holiday Cabaret – Together Again! Dessert table, cash bar. \$25. 7:30 pm. In the Hayloft at ArtisTree, 2095 Pomfret Rd. (802) 457-3500. [barnarts.org](http://barnarts.org).

**SPRINGFIELD.** Workshop. Make Your Own Winter Holiday Crafts, Decorations, and Gifts. Join Instructor Christine Mix to discover new and old ideas using ornaments, small swags, paper lanterns, little boxes, etc. using materials found in nature or around the home. \$25, register by Dec. 8. 11 am – 3 pm. Gallery at the VAULT, 68 Main St. [www.galleryvault.org](http://www.galleryvault.org).

**WEST RUTLAND.** Audubon West Rutland Marsh Monitoring Walk. Join us for the full 3.7 mile loop in this National Audubon IBA (Important Bird Area), or go halfway. Meet at the marsh boardwalk on Marble Street at 8 am. More info at [birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org](mailto:birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org). [rutlandcountyaudubon.org](http://rutlandcountyaudubon.org).

**WOODSTOCK.** Wassail Weekend at Billings Farm. Enjoy Wassail punch, cider donuts, candle dipping, and a gingerbread recreation of the historic 1890 Farm Manager's House. Warm up by an outdoor fire, take photos in front of Christmas trees in the decorated holiday barn, and learn about Wassail traditions. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am-4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. [billingsfarm.org](http://billingsfarm.org). *Also December 12.*

**WOODSTOCK.** Concert: Whiffenpoofs. Celebrate the season with these internationally acclaimed a cappella singers from Yale University. Adults \$35, kids under 16 \$25. 7:30 pm. Woodstock Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green. (802) 457-3981. [director@pentanglearts.org](mailto:director@pentanglearts.org). [whiffenpoofs.com](http://whiffenpoofs.com).

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12

**BENNINGTON.** Presentation. Snowflake Bentley. In this program, Bentley's great-grandniece, Sue Richardson, will talk about the extraordinary gift that "Willie" gave us through the beauty of his photographs, but also the struggles he faced in perfecting his process. Free admission, donations welcome. 2 pm. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. [www.benningtonmuseum.org](http://www.benningtonmuseum.org).

**BURLINGTON.** Concert. OrchestraPalooza. Players from our youngest string orchestra up through our most advanced ensemble perform a variety of masterpieces, spanning classical to contemporary. Tickets \$15-\$20, online sale only. 4 pm. Flynn Center, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. [www.flynnvt.org](http://www.flynnvt.org).

**CRAFTSBURY.** The Kendall Classic. Held in honor of Tom Kendall, a longtime timer and booster of XC ski racing in the U.S., the Kendall Classic will donate 25% of proceeds to the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Register in advance. 7 am – 3 pm. Craftsbury Outdoor Center, 535 Lost Nation Rd. (802) 586-7767. [www.craftsbury.com](http://www.craftsbury.com).

**ESSEX JUNCTION.** WOKO Gigantic Indoor Flea Market. Features tag sale items, crafts, antiques, and more. Admission \$3. 8:30 am – 2 pm. Champlain Valley Expo, 105 Pearl St. (802) 878-5545. [www.cveexpo.org](http://www.cveexpo.org).

**MIDDLEBURY.** Performance. *A Christmas Carol*. Presented by the Middlebury Acting Company. Tickets \$6-\$32 or pay what you can. 2 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. [tickets@townhalltheater.org](mailto:tickets@townhalltheater.org). [www.townhalltheater.org](http://www.townhalltheater.org).

**ONLINE.** Talk. "The Far Traveler: Voyages of a Viking Woman". Author Nancy Marie Brown tells how the story of Gudrid the Far-Traveler, sister-in-law of the explorer Leif Eiriksson, is being proved true by recent archaeological digs in Newfoundland, Greenland, and Iceland. Free, advance registration required. 2 pm. Sponsored by Deborah Rawson Memorial Library. (802) 899-4962. [program\\_assistant@drml.org](mailto:program_assistant@drml.org). [www.vermonthumanities.org](http://www.vermonthumanities.org).

**PUTNEY.** Concert. Kaleta & Super Yamba Band. Fronted by Afrobeat and Juju veteran Leon Ligan-Majek a.k.a. Kaleta. Tickets \$18. 5 pm. Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill. (386) 295-3687. [www.nextstagearts.org](http://www.nextstagearts.org).

**RUTLAND.** Concert. The Vermont Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops. Favorites like White Christmas and Sleigh Ride, and from the Nutcracker and Polar Express suites, contemplative and festive carols, and a dash of warm-weather cheer from Brazil. Tickets range \$10-\$32. 3 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. [www.paramountvt.org](http://www.paramountvt.org).

**WOODSTOCK.** Cookies with Santa. Enjoy holiday cookies and treats as you see Santa and make your Christmas wish! Free. 11:30 am – 12 pm. Woodstock Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green. (802) 457-3981. [director@pentanglearts.org](mailto:director@pentanglearts.org). [www.pentanglearts.org](http://www.pentanglearts.org).

**WOODSTOCK.** Community Messiah Sing. Listen as a world-class ensemble and four featured soloists perform a stirring rendition of the Christmas portions of Handel's *Messiah*. Free, \$10 suggested donation. 4 pm. Our Lady of the Snows Roman Catholic Church, 7 South St. (802) 457-3981. [www.pentanglearts.org](http://www.pentanglearts.org).

**WOODSTOCK.** Wassail Weekend at Billings Farm. Enjoy Wassail punch, cider donuts, candle dipping, and a gingerbread recreation of the historic 1890 Farm Manager's House. Warm up by an outdoor fire, take photos in front of Christmas trees in the decorated holiday barn, and learn about Wassail traditions. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am-4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. [www.billingsfarm.org](http://www.billingsfarm.org).



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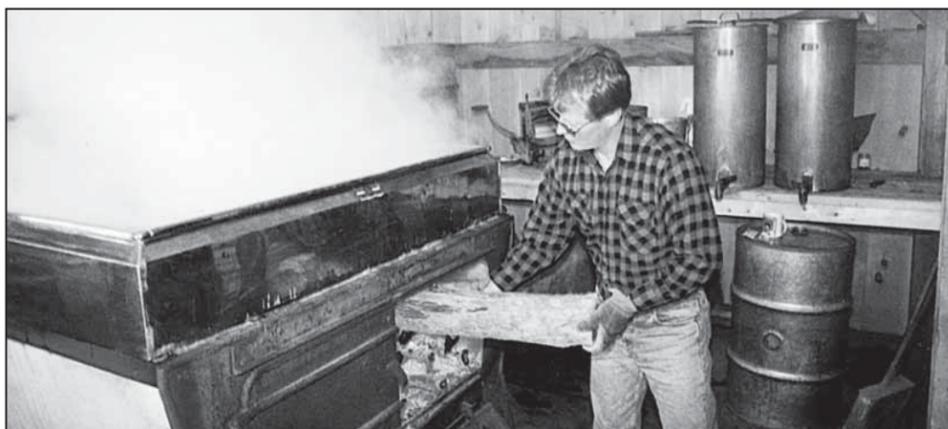
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# Vermont Country Calendar

**WOODSTOCK.** Holiday Movie: *White Christmas*. Singers Bing Crosby and Phil Davis join sister act Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen to perform a Christmas show in rural Vermont. Tickets: 7:30 pm. Woodstock Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green. (802) 457-3981. pentanglearts.org.

**WOODSTOCK.** Performance. *A Christmas Carol*. Catch the holiday spirit with this classic story of a man whose cold heart is warmed after a Christmas Eve encounter with the supernatural. Presented by Theaterworks USA. Tickets \$15 adults, \$5 kids under 16. 1 pm. Woodstock Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green. (802) 457-3981. pentanglearts.org.

## MONDAY, DECEMBER 13

**LEBANON, NH.** Concert. Leo Kottke and Mike Gordon. The unlikely partnership between acoustic guitar pioneer Leo Kottke and Phish bassist Mike Gordon continues. Tickets \$38-\$58. 7:30 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 N Park St. (603) 448-0400. www.lebanonoperahouse.org.

## TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14

**BURLINGTON.** Concert. Mannheim Steamroller Christmas. Experience the music that has become the hallmark of the holidays and a tradition for multi-generational families. Tickets \$56.75-\$77.75, online sale only. 7:30 pm. Flynn Center, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynnvt.org.

## WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15

**HANOVER, NH.** Holiday Market. Wide variety of products locally grown or created! Presented by The Hanover Parks and Recreation Dept. Free admission. 4-7 pm. R.W. Black Community Center, 48 Lebanon St. (603) 643-5315. judy.stevens@hanovernh.org.

**WATERBURY.** Snow Ball: Winter Solstice. Come join the community to create the dance, or bring a blanket and picnic dinner and witness the creativity. Free. 5-7-30 pm. Waterbury Center, 317 Howard Ave. www.discoverwaterbury.com.

## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16

**BENNINGTON.** Museum ABCs: Snowflake Bentley. Learn about the Vermonter called Snowflake Bentley, see art inspired by his snowflake pictures, and create snowy art to bring home. For children ages 3-5. Free. 1:30-2:30 pm. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. benningtonmuseum.org.

**ST. JOHNSBURY.** Performance: *Skylight*. With Bill Nighy and Carey Mulligan, broadcast live from the West End by National Theatre Live. Masks, proof of vaccination (or negative PCR test), and valid ID required. Tickets: adults \$21, students \$7. 7 pm. Catamount Arts Center, 115 Eastern Ave. (802) 748-2600. www.catamountarts.org.

## FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17

**LEBANON, NH.** The Christmas Revels Festival. Each day of the festival will feature a free outdoor performance that includes many songs, dances, and themes. Outdoor event is free, indoor concert ticket prices vary. Colburn Park, 51 N Park St. (603) 448-0400. info@lebanonoperahouse.org. www.lebanonoperahouse.org. Also December 18 & 19.

**LEBANON, NH.** Concert. The Christmas Revels Festival. Eden MacAdam-Somer transcends genre through soaring violin, vocals, and percussive dance. Tickets \$11-\$37. 7:30 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 N Park St. (603) 448-0400. info@lebanonoperahouse.org. lebanonoperahouse.org.

**MONTPELIER.** *A Christmas Carol* with Willem Lange. Famed & beloved yankee storyteller performs his reading of "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens. Tickets \$10-\$20. 7 pm. Lost Nation Theater, 39 Main St. (802) 229-0492. www.lostnationtheater.org.

**NEWPORT.** Holiday Concert with Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet & Counterpoint Chorus. 7:30 pm. United Church of Newport, 63 3rd St. (802) 864-5741.

**PUTNEY.** Concert: Bigyuki. Japanese keyboardist & songwriter infusing elements of jazz, classical, hip-hop, soul, rock, dance, & electronica. \$18. 7:30 pm. Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill. (386) 295-3687. nextstagearts.org.

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18

**BARRE.** Sip & Shop Vermont Holiday Market Craft Fair. 10 am - 7 pm. Canadian Club, 414 E Montpelier Rd.

**BENNINGTON.** Music at the Museum: The Fretless. Juno award-winning quartet mainstreaming traditional folk music. Free. 2 pm. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. www.benningtonmuseum.org.

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

**BURLINGTON.** Holiday Ice Skating Show: The Gift. The Holiday ice show features skaters from the local figure skating club and skaters from Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront programs. Presented by North Country Federal Credit Union and the Champlain Valley Skating Club. No tickets necessary. Free. 1 pm. Gordon H. Paquette Ice Arena, 216 Leddy Park Rd. www.enjoyburlington.com.



**BURLINGTON.** Performance. Vermont Ballet Theater's own *Nutcracker*. Tickets \$19.43-\$44, online sale only. 2 & 7 pm. Flynn Center, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynnvt.org. www.vbts.org.

**BESSEX JUNCTION.** Winter Lights in the Park. Take a walk through Maple Street Park and enjoy the winter tunes and bright lights on display. Free. 5-8 pm. Maple Street Park and Pool, 75 Maple St. (802) 878-1375. recreation@ejrp.org. www.essexrec.org.

**GRAFTON.** Vermont Symphony Orchestra Holiday Concert with Brass Quintet & Counterpoint Chorus. Under the direction of Nathaniel G. Lew, to ring in the holidays in style! Tickets available. 5 pm. Grafton Community Church, 55 Main St. (802) 843-2447. www.vso.org.

**LEBANON, NH.** The Christmas Revels Festival. Each day of the festival will feature a free outdoor performance that includes many songs, dances, and themes. Outdoor event is free, indoor concert ticket prices vary. Colburn Park, 51 N Park St. (603) 448-0400. info@lebanonoperahouse.org. www.lebanonoperahouse.org. Also December 19.

**LEBANON, NH.** The Christmas Revels Festival Concert with Richard Antoine White. Dr. White will share his music and remarkable life story, including a screening of the short documentary, *Hi, I'm Richard Antoine White*. Tickets: \$8-\$37. 1:30 & 7:30 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 N. Park St. (603) 448-0400. info@lebanonoperahouse.org. www.lebanonoperahouse.org.

**MONTPELIER.** On-Demand Recording. *A Christmas Carol* with Willem Lange. Famed & beloved yankee storyteller performs his reading of "A Christmas Carol: a ghost story" by Charles Dickens. Tickets \$15. A link will be sent. Lost Nation Theater, 39 Main St. (802) 229-0492. www.lostnationtheater.org. Available thru December 25.

**MOUNT HOLLY.** Holidays in Mount Holly. Get in the spirit with caroling, a reading of 'Twas the Night Before Christmas, and a visit from a special guest (ho ho ho!). Sponsored by the Mount Holly Community Association. 4-6 pm. At the Library, Maple Hill Rd. mhcavt.org.

**PUTNEY.** Concert. The GrooveBarbers. Holiday acapella. Enjoy holiday season acapella! Admission \$18. 7:30 pm. Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill. (386) 295-3687. keith@nextstagearts.org. www.nextstagearts.org.

**QUECHEE.** Special Event.: Vermont Institute of Natural Science *After Dark*. Celebrate December's full moon, the Cold Moon. Stroll on the illuminated Forest Canopy Walk and gaze at the stars from the top of the 100-ft Treehouse platform. Warm up around the campfire with s'mores or cocoa. Moonlit walk on the nature trails before wishing our birds goodnight. Entirely outdoors; dress for the weather and bring a flashlight. If snow cover, snowshoes welcome; available for use at no cost. Adults \$17.50, youth (4-17) \$15. 6 pm. Vermont Institute of Natural Science Nature Center, 149 Natures Way off VT Rt. 4. (802) 359-5000. www.vinsweb.org.

**RUTLAND.** Vermont Winter Farmers' Market. Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm, At Vermont Farmer's Food Center, 251 West St. (802) 417-8661. vtfarmersmarket.org. Saturdays through May 7, 2022.

**RUTLAND.** Performance. Miss Lorraine's School of Dance presents *The Nutcracker*: Experience the magic as dozens of area dance students come together to create this holiday favorite - the most-performed ballet in the world. Tickets \$25 & \$35. 6 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. www.paramountvt.org. Also December 19.

**ST. JOHNSBURY.** Screening. Metropolitan Opera performs *The Magic Flute*. Masks, proof of vaccination (or negative PCR test), and valid ID required. Tickets: \$16-\$25. 12:55 pm. Catamount Arts Center, 115 Eastern Ave. (802) 748-2600. catamountarts.org. Also December 18.

**STOWE.** Spruce Peaks Lights Festival. Celebrate winter and the festive holidays with a day full of beautiful performances and family-friendly activities. Free. 9 am - 7 pm. Spruce Peak Village, 7412 Mountain Rd. (802) 282-4625. www.sprucepeak.com.

## Randolph, VT

### Winter Solstice Mini-Fest with Matt Flinner and Low Lily

Multi-award-winning bluegrass mandolinist Matt Flinner teams up with American Roots band Low Lily to mark the Winter Solstice in a performance at Chandler Main Stage in Randolph VT on December 10 at 7 p.m. This high-energy show will feature instrumentals alongside impeccably arranged songs to celebrate the season. Between them, the musicians play mandolins, guitars, fiddle, banjo, double bass, and sing in three- and four-part vocal harmonies.

Grammy-nominated mandolinist Matt Flinner has made a career out of playing acoustic music in new ways. Whether it's with his own Matt Flinner Trio or with many other groups, Flinner's style and compositional ability have established him as one of the most accomplished and musically diverse mandolinists in the world.

Flinner's compositions have been performed by the Ying Quartet, the Nashville Chamber Orchestra, the Chatterbird Ensemble and the Modern Mandolin Quartet. Flinner currently lives in Ripton, VT.

With a vocal blend that has been dubbed "outstanding" and "meticulous," Low Lily's cohesive sound comes naturally for musicians whose lives have been entwined on the road and onstage for almost two decades. Setting down roots in Brattleboro, VT, the band garnered two No. 1 songs on international folk radio and two Independent Music Award wins.

Chosen as Falcon Ridge Folk Festival's "Most Wanted Band" of 2016, Low Lily plays acoustic music that is deeply rooted in tradition yet sounds refreshingly contemporary.

Flynn has toured with Ruth Moody, John Whelan, Cathie Ryan and Aoife Clancy. Liz has toured with Tom Chapin, Livingston Taylor, Melanie, and Long Time Courting. And Lissa has toured as a solo act as well as with Solas and Childsplay.

*Tickets to the Winter Solstice Mini-Fest are \$10-\$50. Livestream is \$20. Chandler Music Hall is located at 71 N. Main St. in Randolph, VT. (802) 728-9878. www.chandler-arts.org.*



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# Vermont Country Calendar

(Saturday, December 18, continued)

**WOODSTOCK.** Christmas at the Farm. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Thru Dec. 24 and Dec. 26-Jan. 2.*

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19

**LEBANON, NH.** The Christmas Revels Festival. Free outdoor performances that include songs, dances, and themes. Outdoor event is free, indoor concert ticket prices vary. Colburn Park, 51 N Park St. (603) 448-0400. info@lebanonoperahouse.org. www.lebanonoperahouse.org.

**LEBANON, NH.** The Christmas Revels Festival Concert. With fiery Celtic rhythms at its musical core, Còig easily shifts between centuries-old tunes and contemporary compositions. Tickets \$11-\$37. 1:30 & 7:30 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 N. Park St. (603) 448-0400. info@lebanonoperahouse.org. www.lebanonoperahouse.org.

**MANCHESTER.** Vermont Symphony Orchestra Holiday Concert with Brass Quintet & Counterpoint Chorus. Tickets available in early December. 4 pm. Manchester First Congregational Church, 3624 Main St. (802) 864-5741.

**POULTNEY.** Poultney Music Jam. Free, donations welcome. 4-6 pm. Stone Valley Arts, 145 E. Main St. www.stonevalleyarts.org.

**RUTLAND.** Performance. Miss Lorraine's School of Dance presents *The Nutcracker*. Experience the magic as dozens of area dance students come together to create this holiday favorite – the most-performed ballet in the world. Tickets \$25 & \$35. 1 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. www.paramountvt.org.

**ST. JOHNSBURY.** On-Screen Ballet: *The Nutcracker*. On Christmas Eve. Masks, proof of vaccination (or negative PCR test), and valid ID required. Tickets: adults \$18, students \$6. 12:55 pm. Catamount Arts Center, 115 Eastern Ave. (802) 748-2600. catamountarts.org.

**WATERBURY.** Reindeer Rendezvous. Meet Dasher & Cupid from the Vermont Reindeer Farm in Waterbury before they trek to the North Pole to help Santa. Free. 11 am – 2 pm. Bridgeside Books, 29 Stowe St. (802) 244-1441. www.bridgesidebooks.com.

**WOODSTOCK.** Christmas at the Farm. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Thru Dec. 24 and Dec. 26-Jan. 2.*

## WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22

**SOUTH POMFRET.** Christmas at the Grange. Fun-filled evening of Christmas songs and holiday Broadway hits! Tickets \$35-\$40. 7:30 pm. The Grange Theatre, 65 Stage Rd. (802) 457-3500. info@artstreevt.org. www.artstreevt.org.

**WOODSTOCK.** Christmas at the Farm. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Thru Dec. 24 and Dec. 26-Jan. 2.*

## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23

**WOODSTOCK.** Christmas at the Farm. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Thru Dec. 24 and Dec. 26-Jan. 2.*

## FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24

**RUTLAND.** Holiday Farmers' Market. 10 am to 2 pm. At Vermont Farmer's Food Center, 251 West St. (802) 417-8661. vtfarmersmarket.org. *Friday December 31 then Saturdays through May 7, 2022.*

**WOODSTOCK.** Christmas at the Farm. Victorian Christmas traditions. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also December 26-January 2.*

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25

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

**ONLINE.** Vermont Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops. Contemplative and festive carols, and a dash of warm-weather cheer from Brazil. Tickets start at \$10. 9 am. (802) 864-5741 x 110. www.vso.org.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

**BRADFORD.** All-Day Gaming. 12-Hour Tabletop Game Day. Come for a game or two, or stay all day. Board games to try. Or bring your favorites. Open to everyone (children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult). Price \$5, children 12 & under free. 9 am – 9 pm. The Space On Main, 174 Main St. (802) 449-6246. thespaceonmain@gmail.com. thespaceonmain.org/gaming. *Last Sundays.*

**WOODSTOCK.** Christmas at the Farm. Victorian Christmas traditions. Guests can dip candles, make s'mores, and snowshoe, weather permitting Horse-drawn sleigh rides around the farm. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Through January 2.*

## MONDAY, DECEMBER 27

**BURLINGTON.** Reindeer Live at ECHO. Come get an up-close look at these incredible reindeer from Vermont Reindeer Farm during this special one-day event. Free with museum admission. 10 am – 3 pm. ECHO, 1 College St. (802) 864-1848. info@echovermont.org. www.echovermont.org.

**WOODSTOCK.** Christmas at the Farm. Victorian Christmas traditions. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Through January 2.*

## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30

**BURLINGTON.** Sled Dogs Live at ECHO. Learn about the incredible October Siberians Sled Dogs huskies before meeting them up-close on the terrace. Free with museum admission. 10 am – 3 pm. ECHO, 1 College St. (802) 864-1848. info@echovermont.org. www.echovermont.org.

**MANCHESTER.** New Year's Family Concert. Join the Taconic String Band for their popular end-of-year concert for the young and young-at-heart. Currently scheduled as a live event, the concert will also be livestreamed. 3 pm. Inn at Manchester Celebration Barn, 3967 Main St. For more information and tickets mid-December go to www.taconicmusic.org.

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### Lunenburg, VT

## 12th Annual Lunenburg Gingerbread Bazaar

The Top of the Common Committee is sponsoring the 12th Annual Lunenburg Gingerbread Bazaar on Saturday, December 4th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the school gym in Gilman, VT.

There are many free activities to enjoy – Gingerbread Creations Contest for all ages, door prizes, cookie decorating with Mrs. Claus, and an ornament crafting activity offered by the Girl Scouts. Mrs. Claus and The Girl Scouts are providing a take-along option, too.

Local vendors offer fresh greenery, Christmas and gift items, fudge, and maple syrup. Support the 8th grade

cookie walk, and raffles, including the Historical Society Maple Festival quilt. A homemade soup luncheon is offered from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., take-outs available.

Enjoy this affordable family fun to usher in the Christmas season!

The Gilman School is lo-

cated at 2720 River Rd. in Gilman, VT in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.

For more information and to check out how to enter the Gingerbread Creations Contest, and for the door prize drawing with the option of not coming on site call Chris at (802) 892-6654 or visit www.topofthecommon.org.

### Important Wonder

I think the snow looks lovely when  
It's scattering softly down,  
And covering up the fields and hills  
Grown weatherbeaten brown.  
It seems to be a resting time,  
And so I sit and dream  
In my good chair, and then pick up  
The long-unfinished seam  
That doesn't matter when it's done.  
Yet, all the while I sew,  
At every other stitch I look  
Out at the falling snow,  
And wonder what the people do  
Who cannot let a seam  
Lie idly on their knees and watch  
The snow—and dream.

—NELLY S. RICHARDSON  
1876-1970, Springfield, VT



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# Vermont Country Calendar



**MIDDLEBURY.** Screening. *Shepherd: The Story of a Jewish Dog.* From award-winning director Lynn Roth, this film portrays the timeless and unbreakable bond between a boy and his faithful dog as it is put to the ultimate test in 1930's Germany. By Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival Selects. Adult \$16, children under 12 \$7. Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. tickets@townhalltheater.org. ownhalltheater.org.

**WOODSTOCK.** Christmas at the Farm. Victorian Christmas traditions. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. *Thru Jan. 2.*

## FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31

**BENNINGTON.** "Noon" Year's Eve Party for Kids. Welcome in the "Noon" Year with music, dancing, party hats, noisemakers, sparkling grape juice, and the countdown to Noon! Tickets \$5/per child, limited, purchase online. 11 am - 12:30 pm. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802)447-1571. www.benningtonmuseum.org.

**BURLINGTON.** Performance. *Burlington Does Broadway.* Presented by Lyric Theatre Company and the VSO. Tickets \$35-\$65, online sale only. 7:30 pm. Flynn Center, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. www.flynnvt.org.

**CLAREMONT, NH.** First Night. 6-10 pm. Free, fun community event. The evening kicks off at 6 pm with events at Arrowhead Lodge, the Claremont Savings Bank Community Center and Myer Maple Lanes. Fireworks at Arrowhead starting at 10 pm. Hosted by Claremont Parks & Recreation Dept. www.claremontparks.com.

**LUDLOW.** Okemo Family New Year's Eve Party. Midnight arrives early! Enjoy a variety of fun, family friendly activities capped off by a fireworks show. Free admission. A la carte food service, cash bar. Snow tubing Park & Timber Ripper Mountain Coaster 12-8 pm. Ice skating at the Ice House 12-9 pm. (Ticket cost for outdoor activities). NYE Kid's Night Out, supervised activities for 3-6 year olds, \$75, 5-8:45 pm, reservations (802) 228-1600. 5:30-9 pm. Jackson Gore Inn, 111 Jackson Gore Rd. (802) 228-1400. www.okemo.com.

**MANCHESTER.** New Year's Celebration. Taconic Music's annual event featuring the Taconic String Band playing Viennese waltzes, tangos, Broadway tunes and more, ending with the traditional Radetzky March. 5 pm. Inn at Manchester Celebration Barn, 3967 Main St. For more information and tickets mid-December go to taconicmusic.org

**MOUNT HOLLY.** New Year's Eve. Celebrate the New Year mountain-style with friends, fireworks, and a bonfire. Sponsored by the Mount Holly Community Association. 9-10 pm. At Star Lake, 37 Lake St. www.mhcavt.org.

**RUTLAND.** Holiday Farmers' Market. 10 am to 2 pm. At Vermont Farmer's Food Center, 251 West St. (802) 417-8661. vtfarmersmarket.org. *After today, Saturdays through May 7, 2022.*

**ST. JOHNSBURY.** First Night North. A New Year's Eve Celebration of the Arts. 60+ performers, 200+ artists. Storytelling, hypnosis, dance, circus, comedy, magic. Pancake supper 6-8 pm at St. Johnsbury School. Food trucks. Masks, proof of covid vaccination or 72-hour negative PR test will be required for all attendees including children. Buy an admission button. (802) 748-2600 x111. avanzandt@catamountarts.org. www.firstnightnorth.org.

**STRATTON.** New Years Eve Fireworks Hike. Watch the celebration from mid-mountain. Moderate exertion, must be at least 12 years old. After the fireworks, finish the evening in the Courtyard with a fire and hot chocolate. Happens regardless of weather. Hiking route not lit up. Dress appropriately, as temperatures cool down at night, and the we will be gaining elevation. Hiking on snow and variable surfaces. Extra layers strongly recommended. Fee \$75 plus tax. 7-9 pm; meet at 7 pm in the Courtyard, 5 Village Lodge Rd. www.stratton.com.

**WARREN.** New Year's Eve Fireworks and Torchlight Parade. Enjoy the light show with a torchlight parade on Spring Fling and awesome fireworks display to follow. Free. 7-8 pm. Lincoln Peak Courtyard at the Sugarbush, 1840 Sugarbush Access Rd. (802) 583-6300. www.sugarbush.com.

**WARREN.** New Year's Eve Fireworks Snowshoe Tour. Enjoy a guided snowshoe tour to the top of the Gate House Quad to watch the New Year's Eve Fireworks display. Cost \$79 for tour with snowshoe rental, \$64 for tour only. 5:30-8:30 pm. The Farmhouse at Sugarbush, Gatehouse Lane. (802) 583-6590. www.sugarbush.com.

**WOODSTOCK.** Christmas at the Farm. Victorian Christmas traditions. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Through January 2.*

## SATURDAY, JANUARY 1

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

**BROOKLINE.** Tracking Walk. With Phillip Hamilton. Each animal track is a mystery just waiting to be solved. 8 am - 5 pm. Putney Mountain Trailhead, 443 Putney Mountain Rd. www.putneymountain.org. *Thru January 31.*

**MANCHESTER.** Hildene Holidays. Christmas Eve in 1912. Robert and Mary's home is decorated as though it were Christmas Eve 1912. Experience the time, traditions, and nostalgia of holidays past. Current COVID protocols suggest there will be limited capacities in the home; masks and social distancing required. Admission: \$23 adults, \$6 youth, under 5 no charge. Thurs - Mon, 10 am - 4 pm. Hildene, 1005 Hildene Rd. off Rt. 7A south of the village. (802) 367-7960. www.hildene.org.

**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*. Free, advance registration required. 7 pm. St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. (802) 748-8291. info@vermonthumanities.org. stjathenaeum.org. vermonthumanities.org.

**ST. JOHNSBURY.** On-Screen Opera: *Cinderella.* Laurent Pelly's storybook staging of Massenet's *Cendrillon* with an all-new English translation in an abridged 90-minute adaptation, with mezzo-soprano Isabel Leonard as its rags-to-riches princess. Masks, proof of vaccination (or negative PCR test), and valid ID required. Tickets: adults \$25, students \$16. 12:55 pm. Catamount Arts Center, 115 Eastern Ave. (802) 748-2600. catamountarts.org. *Also January 8.*

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

**WAITSFIELD.** Naturalist Snowshoe Program. Join one of Mad River Glen's Naturalists for a guided snowshoe trek on Stark Mountain! Two-hour programs. \$25 per person (minimum of \$50 for 1 or 2 people). Tubbs Snowshoes rentals available. 10:30 am. For reservations and info call (802) 496-3551 x 125. naturalist@madriverglen.com. www.madriverglen.com. *Every Saturday and Sunday.*

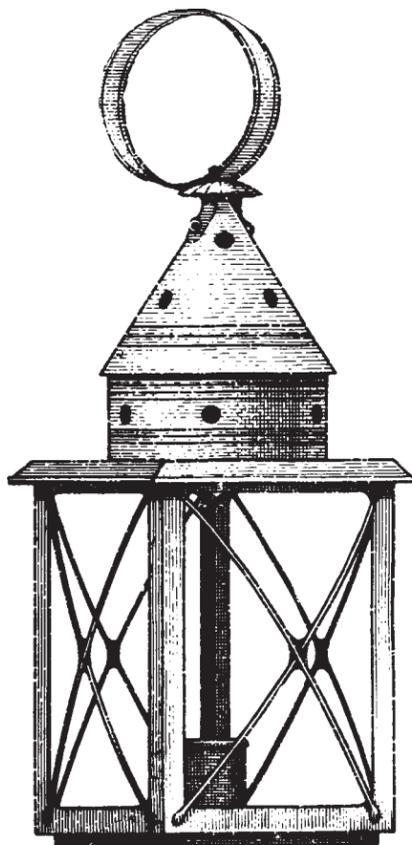
**WOODSTOCK.** Christmas at the Farm. Victorian Christmas traditions. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Through January 2.*

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 2

**MIDDLEBURY.** On-Screen Opera: *Cinderella.* Laurent Pelly's storybook staging of Massenet's *Cendrillon* with an all-new English translation in an abridged 90-minute adaptation, with mezzo-soprano Isabel Leonard as its rags-to-riches princess. Tickets are adult \$24, student \$10. 1 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. (802) 382-9222. tickets@townhalltheater.org. www.townhalltheater.org.

**RUTLAND.** Christmas Bird Count. Join birdwatchers across the country in this annual tradition. For information on ow to participate contact birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org. rutlandcountyaudubon.org.

**WOODSTOCK.** Christmas at the Farm. Victorian Christmas traditions. Adults \$16, seniors 62 & over \$14, students 16 & up \$9, children 4-15 \$8, children 3 & under free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org.



## Randolph, VT

### Artisan Holiday Market at Chandler Center for the Arts

The Annual Artisan Holiday Market in the Gallery at Chandler Center for the Arts is open for the season and runs through Christmas Eve, December 24. The market, will offer online shopping at chandler-arts.org.

The Artisan Holiday Market is open for in-person shopping during the following hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Friday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday 12-4 p.m.; Christmas Eve, Friday, December 24 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The market will also be open during all Chandler performances, and until 8 p.m. on Friday, December 3 for visitors to downtown Randolph for the annual tree lighting and other festivities. Market volunteers have

been decorating the Chandler Gallery for the holidays, a tradition in central Vermont. Among this year's unique inventory of goods and gift ideas are candles, rugs, quilts and blankets, books, chocolates, maple syrup and candy, jewelry, scarves, pottery, body care, cards, mittens, sweaters, holiday ornaments, jams and jellies, paintings, and more.

Curbside pickup will be available during the market, and a one-way route through the market will encourage social distancing.

*Chandler Center for the Arts is located at 71 N. Main St. in Randolph. For more information, call (802) 728-9878, email outreach@chandler-arts.org, or visit chandler-arts.org.*

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# North Country Book News

Book Review by Charles Sutton

## Advent Festive German Bakes to Celebrate the Coming of Christmas

by Anja Dunk

(\$25. Hardie Grant Publishers. [www.quadrille.com](http://www.quadrille.com))

If you look forward to treats for Christmas like the fruited Stollen, jam-sandwiched Linzer cookies, or Pfefferneuse then you will want to bake these and other German pastries that are traditional for the 25 days leading up to Christmas.

**In Advent—Festive German Bakes to Celebrate The Coming of Christmas** by Anja Dunk you will be introduced to these irresistible mouth-watering sweets during this magical and ritual time beginning the first of December.

As a warm-up to Christmas family and friends in Germany exchange packets of colorful homemade biscuits (cookies) for once-a-year household's Bunter Teller get-togethers. Anja notes it's inevitable that every Bunter Teller biscuit has its own story which is shared at that time.

Here are some of her great variety of 'must-have' treats for each day of Advent.

**Day 1.** Salt Dough (Salzteig). Can be eaten but is made into tree decorations, wreaths and ornaments.

**Day 2.** Spice Cake (Lebkuhengewurz). Several choices featuring nuts or honey.

**Day 3.** Advent Breakfast (Aventsfrihstuck). A day for oatmeal-based Museli breakfast rolls, seeded or spiced rye rolls or poppy seed rolls.

**Day 4.** Twice Baked Biscuits (Zwiback und Biscotti). The usual staple for teething babies and toddlers can also be made into walnut and cinnamon or candied fruit rusks.

**Day 5.** Sweet Fruit Breads (SuBe Fruschtebrote). Made with dried pears and other fruits, raises and currants.

**Day 6.** Marzipan Biscuits (Marzipanplatzchen). Choice of spiced bites made with gingerbread dough or with almond-sand shaped into domes.

**Day 7.** Christmas Markets (Weihnachtsmarkte). Pop-up wooden huts featuring cinnamon roasted almonds, fried dough, quark (type of soft cheese) fritters, German pizza (Flammkuchn) and potato cakes.

**Day 8.** Stollen. A yeast cake, a longtime tradition of Christmas with many varieties, one with poppy seeds on top.

**Day 9.** Patterned Biscuits (Spritzgebäck). Several shortbread recipes including those with spices, vanilla, chocolate or marzipan.

**Day 10.** Spiced Biscuits (Gewurzplatzchen). Unique to Advent are these biscuits flavored with spices and almonds, white or brown pepper and spices and aniseed. There's a special star-shaped cinnamon one (Zimtsterne).

**Day 11.** Nut Biscuits (Nubplatzchen). Choice of cherry and almond Florentines; nut batons, and hazelnut crescents.

**Day 12.** Chocolate Biscuits (Schokoladenplatzchen). There are countless recipes featuring chocolates, the author's favorites are chocolate peppermint biscuits, spiced chocolate hearts and chocolate and vanilla shortbreads.

**Day 13.** Macaroons (Makronen). Anja says she could have written an entire book on macaroons just for Christmas. (Hopefully she will). She offers a macaroon-flavored chocolate kiss. Photographs of her coconut macaroons are a to-be-tasted sight.

**Day 14.** Layered Biscuits (Doppeldecker). Her prize Linzer will bring out the nuttiness of hazelnuts.

**Day 15.** Wreaths and Plaits (Kranz und Zöpfe). Anja introduces us to Onion Plait (Zwiebelzoph), a kind of savory "evening bread" called Abendbrot. It is topped with cold meats, cheeses, and fresh vegetables.

**Day 16.** Meringues (Baiser). This can stay fresh for weeks. Ones shown here are mushroom-shaped and a meringue wreath with hot raspberries.

**Day 17.** Coffee and Cake (Kaffee und Kuchen). With your coffee you can have oat waffles, marzipan snowflake cake or Gugelhupf, a German fruit cake.

**Day 18.** Tree Decorations (Baumschmuck). Edible tree ornaments offer magical spells and flavors. Offerings include spiced biscuits, dried apple rings, dried orange slices and chocolate sprinkle wreaths.

**Day 19.** Butter Biscuits (Butterplatzchen). Add your own ingredients, but the author has suggestions: vanilla crescents, sandy shortbread (looks like sand), iced orange biscuits, and coffee fondant biscuits.

**Day 20.** Gingerbread House (Hexenhaus). The name translates witch house "because gingerbread houses conjure up deep dark woods full of mystery." Her basic recipe combines ginger, cinnamon and cloves.

**Day 21.** Christmas Confections (Weihnachtskonfekt). Lovely boxed gifts contain brandy-flavored Swiss peaks, espresso refrigerator chocolates, rum balls, almond chocolates and peppermint fondants.

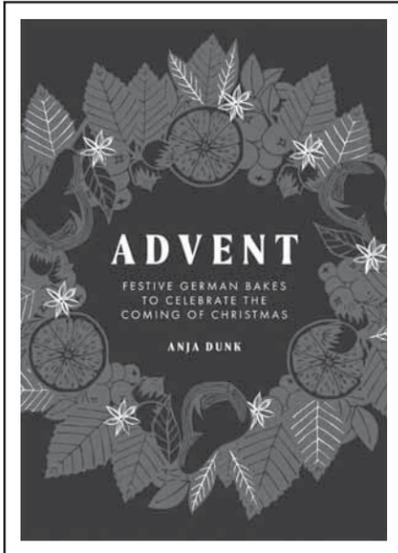
**Day 22.** Marzipan Sweets (Marzipankonfekt). Tempting photographs show Marzipan and almond stuffed dates, chocolate-covered walnut marzipan, and marzipan shaped like "potatoes."

**Day 23.** Festive Drinks (Weihnachtsgetranke). Beverages include mulled wine, non-alcoholic punch, Christmas schnapps and "fire tongs" punch (tongs are actually used holding a rum-based sugar cone).

**Day 24.** Carnival and New Year's Eve (Carnival und Silvester). Country-wide celebrations start in November lasting through New Year's Eve. Among food for these events are jam-filled donuts (Berliner), caraway cheese straws (Kastangen mix Kennel) and lucky charms. (Glücksbringer), mushroom-resembling biscuits topped by glaze.

An artistic counterpoint to the many stunning color photographs are the author's own 24 black and white linocuts inspired by her love of old Advent calendars. These mostly outdoors wintery scenes will hearten you to taste you some Kaffee und Stollen.

Anja Dunk was born in Wales to a German mother and Welsh father. She is a freelance cook, food writer and artist. Her other books are *Do Preserve: Make your own jams, chutneys, pickles and cordials* (2016) and *Strudel, Noodles and Dumplings: The new taste of German Cooking* (2018).



Book Reviews by Charles Sutton

## Christmas Cookbooks to Delight

If you have a favorite taste in Christmas cookies—perhaps it's a nutty flavor, then *The Christmas Cookie Cookbook* (\$19.95 compiled by Cider Mill Press. [www.cidermillpress.com](http://www.cidermillpress.com)) could be just the right book for the ingredients you want the most. There are recipes using almonds, pecans, pine nuts, peanuts, walnuts, pistachios, hazelnuts, macadamia and cashews among 100 cookie recipes.

And also enjoy traditional ingredients like chocolate, jams, raisins, berries and other fruits. There is a bonus chapter on cookies from around the world. Try Polish Chrusciki—"angel wings" with strong nutmeg and vanilla flavors. Incidentally, when you serve them say *Wesołych Swiat* which is Merry Christmas in Polish.

Cookbooks are more enjoyable when the author-cook includes anecdotes and family experiences in the kitchen. These comments compliment all 60 recipes in *The Easy Christmas Cookie Cookbook* by Carroll Pellegrinelli with photographs by Helene Dujardin (\$13.99. Rockridge Press. [www.rockridgepress.com](http://www.rockridgepress.com)).

Pellegrinelli writes about her Greek mother-in-law making traditional Chocolate-Dipped Almond Cookies (Amygdalota) which symbolize new beginnings and prosperity, ideal themes for Christmas and New Years. There are other Christmas cookies made in foreign lands including Austrian, Dutch, and German treats and Italian Neapolitan Cookies—the first Christmas cookie the author learned to bake.

It wouldn't be Christmas if reindeer weren't here for Santa, and for us to admire their grace and beauty. A cookbook for Christmas cookies, cakes, candy and other great treats, aptly named *Reindeer Food* by Cayla Gallagher (\$19.99. Skyhorse Publishing. [www.skyhorsepublishing.com](http://www.skyhorsepublishing.com)), is a feast for the eyes. The book is a treasure house of the most original, wildly-decorated holiday treats. Buy this just to gaze at, even if you never bake a thing. Or surprise someone with a treat from one of the 85 original designs.

When the Scandinavian Cafe opened in London its owners had no idea that at Christmastime scores of people from Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland would hasten there looking for the Christmas foods of their homelands. In *Scandikitchen Christmas* by Bronte Aurell (\$19.95. Ryland Peters & Small. [www.rylandpeters.com](http://www.rylandpeters.com)) you will find recipes and stories about these traditional foods from dinner to desserts. Who can resist their Lucia buns, glogg, Swedish toffee, gravlax (cured salmon), and treats made from lingon, cloud and sea buckthorn berries! Be encouraged to try her menu and recipes for a Swedish smorgasbord on Christmas Eve.

You can count on cookie cookbooks displaying eye-catching trays of colorful treats, but what about a book that takes you beyond bite-size and shows these sweet masterpieces in generous full pages? You'll enjoy these mouth-watering photos in *Baking for the Holidays* by Sarah Kieffer (\$24.95. Chronicle Books. [www.chroniclbooks.com](http://www.chroniclbooks.com)). The author, who hosts the Vanilla Bean Blog, also gives remarkably detailed instructions so there's no flubbing up.

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# Merriment, Wonder, and the Magic of Christmas

A very old man living in a cold, uninventing city remembers what Christmas was like years ago when people would hang cheerful gold stars in their windows. But that doesn't happen any more, so we see in *The Star Tree* written and illustrated by Gisela Colle (\$17.95. North/South. [www.northsouth.com](http://www.northsouth.com)) that this old man hasn't given up on spreading cheer. He starts cutting out a large number of old-fashioned stars from gold paper.

He feels displaying these stars would be lost among the garish and glittering lights of the city so he makes his way at night out of the city and into the countryside where he decorates trees with his gold stars. Some families also seeking the touch of a real Christmas go into the county where they come upon a trail of gold stars. The star-maker joins them in singing carols and he passes out stars to the children which they display at home, a sign for others to put up gold stars, too, and the whole city shines with the glow of Christmas stars. Charming and simple impressionist art work carries a golden message for all of us.

For many years artist Jan Brett enjoyed hearing Tchaikovsky's enchanting *Nutcracker Suite* performed at Symphony Hall in Boston. Now in Jan Brett's *The Nutcracker* (\$18.99. Penguin Random House. [www.penguin.com/kids](http://www.penguin.com/kids)) she creates a background of snowy Russian scenes for E.T.A. Hoffmann's 1816 story *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*. The work is most famous today as a ballet, especially its Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Jan Brett gives us radiant double-page spreads of this drama with a plethora of countless animals playing musical instruments including the celesta (a bell-piano) noted for its twinkling notes.

Jan helps us through a harrowing invasion of mice led by their wicked king. Admire heroine Marie toppling the King Mouse with one blow of her slipper. The life-like Nutcracker toy "looks like a real boy," she muses, "who has traveled from a place far away." The nutcracker (shchelkunchik in Russian) does crack a hazelnut, and true to the Russian theme the animal orchestra plays the Waltz of the Flowers, the Danse Arabe performed by two foxes, and the Russian Trepak featuring four bears doing squat-kicks amid an energetic rhythm.

Of the many of Jan Brett's Christmas themes, you will admire her giant candle-lit Christmas tree and, for humor, its 14 flower-decorated hedgehogs making merry in a gingerbread house.

If you are a special flower grown only for Christmas what happens to you after Christmas? Find out for one small Mexican plant known for its large red, modified leaves surrounding small yellow buds or flowers. You will meet this plant with a pretty smile on her face in *Zetta The Poinsettia* by Alma Hammond and illustrated by Zuzana Svobodova (\$10.99. Paper. Sweetbeet Books. [www.sweetbooks.com](http://www.sweetbooks.com)).

She worries she won't be rescued from sitting alone on a box at the Miller Plant and Seed Store, but a little girl gets her mother to purchase Zetta who then gets a home with a place on the mantel with other holiday trimmings. She enjoys all the seasonal happenings with "gift wrap crackling," "hot cocoa lapping," and holiday slippers "tippy-tapping." But one day all these Christmas things including a dead Christmas tree are

taken away. Fortunately for Zetta she gets a save and a new place by a sunny window. In the spring she is planted outside where she will continue to brighten the lives of others through all the seasons.

Poinsettias are the top seller of all plants with some 34 million sold each year. California grows the most followed by North Carolina and Texas. Dr. Joel Roberts Poinsett, a physician, botanist, and the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico, introduced the plant to the U.S. in 1828. He also was a founder of the Smithsonian Institution.

If you are bound to the North Pole to be the new sleigh for Santa you had better be able to fly through the air and be no stranger to snow and cold. See if one such candidate succeeds in *Little Red Sleigh* by Erin Guendelsberger and illustrated by Elizaveta Tretyakova (\$17.99. Source Books. [www.sourcebookskids.com](http://www.sourcebookskids.com)).

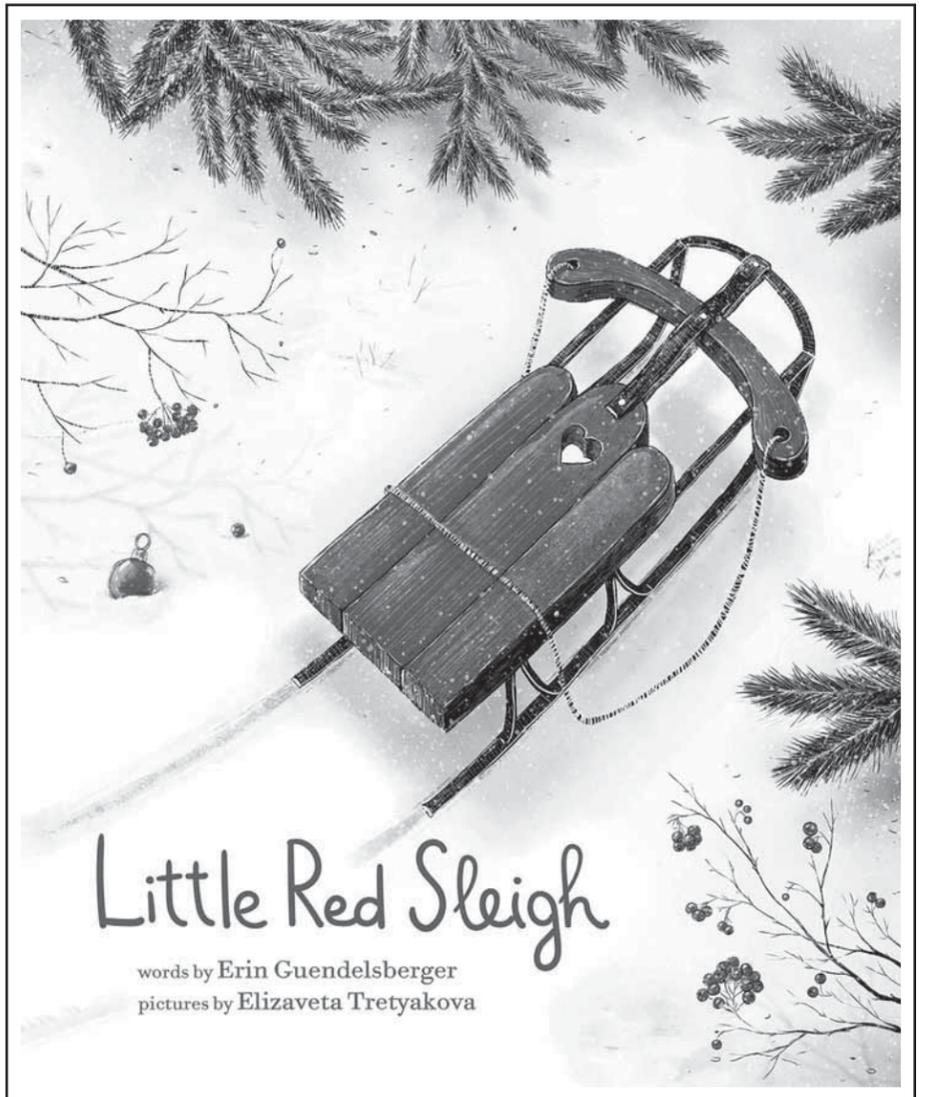
Undaunted, having been told she is too small, too young, and can't fly, she leaves anyway, chasing her dream. Initially going through mud and grime, the little red sleigh gets a ride on a friendly train heading North. Helpful only up to a point, she then hitches a ride on a big yellow truck loaded with Christmas trees for Santa. A sudden surprise snow storm halts the truck's trip and the disappointed little red sleigh takes shelter in a village. A little girl finds her and takes her sledding the next day with other children. The red sleigh

really gets to "fly" down a snow-covered hill, but still never makes it to Santa's. However, Santa comes to the home that has adopted her on Christmas Eve and leaves a note thanking her for bringing joy, as he does, to many children there. He invites her to try again next year. This is a Christmas message of wishes and dreams that sort of come true.

Do days ever go by more slowly when you are counting them until Christmas? Even if you only have five left to go, it's still an exhausting ordeal with sleepless nights, visions of favorite toys and being constantly reminded that 'tis the season" with snowflakes coming in the window at night. But it's only a few days, isn't that better? Never easy at all as we follow what one anxious little boy must go through in *5 More Sleeps 'til Christmas* by Jimmy Fallon (\$18.99. Macmillan Publishing Group. [www.mackids.com](http://www.mackids.com)).

The countdown for his ordeal isn't helped by problems with insomnia.

"I can't sleep a wink!" is the nightly refrain. You will sympathize with the boy in his over-sized reading glasses as he fights for sleep night after night. He even counts imaginary sheep that fly in through the window, but he exclaims, "But it's not working. We're still up! We cannot fall asleep!" He does get



some restless sleep, but never enough, then thankfully and finally Christmas arrives. No more counting the days.

This pre-Christmas tale is enhanced by verses of rhymes and large-scale drawings of a persevering little boy. Author and comedian Jimmy Fallon, the host of NBC's *The Tonight Show*, an Emmy and Grammy award winner, is also the author of other children's books: *Your Baby's First Word Will Be DADA*, *Everything is MAMA*, and *This Is BABY*.

One of our most famous storytellers J. K. Rowling, creator of the Harry Potter books, brings us a touching and dramatic adventure in *The Christmas Pig* (\$24.99. Scholastic. [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com)). This is a 288-page book for readers 8-12. Our heroes are Jack who has lost his childhood toy-companion-friend DP (Dur Pig) and its annoying

unlikely replacement Christmas Pig. The duo go on a frightening trip into the Land of the Lost Things, Mislaid, Disposable and Bother-Its-Gone and Wastes of the Unlamented hoping that DP be found and can return safely home to Jack. Read on, wait and see!

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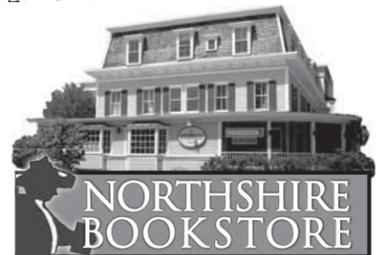
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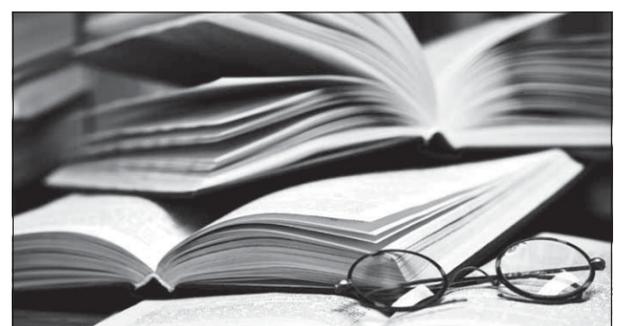
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**North Country Reflections**

# A Few of My Favorite Things

by Judith Irven

It's early December and the annual catalog avalanche is well underway, not only in our physical mailbox at the road, but also in its electronic equivalent.

In the commercial world I am surely marked as an avid gardener! So now whole catalogs, devoted to clever tools and gadgets designed to solve any garden problem one might ever encounter, arrive by the dozen, to be followed in January by plenty of seed catalogs, with their tantalizing pictures of unblemished peppers and frilly lettuces.

But over the years I have learned to avoid rash purchases of new garden gadgets that ultimately get little use but still take up valuable space in the tool shed.

Now, when I head out into the garden, rather than hauling a heavy cartload of tools with me, I work on the principle that 'fewer is easier'.

I rely on a small number of easily carried tools to accomplish all my everyday gardening tasks, along with a few more which I keep on hand for specialized jobs like pruning.

So, with the holiday season around the corner and people asking what you want for Christmas, I thought you might enjoy hearing about my favorite tools and how I use them. Or perhaps you will glean some gift ideas to give your own favorite gardener!!

### Pruners at the ready

I rarely step into the garden without my hand pruners, so useful for tidying-up perennials and grooming shrubs. I carry them in a leather holster slung on an old belt, where they are always handy. And, when not in use, the whole assembly hangs on the hook beside the back door, readily available at a moment's notice.

I mostly use my hand pruners to cut soft, live plant tissue, and for this purpose the bypass design (where the blades pass across each other in a scissor-like motion) is the best. I prefer this to the anvil design, which tends to crush the stem.

Pruners come in many shapes and weights, and of course peoples' hands vary widely in strength and size. Since you use your pruners a lot, it is important find a pair that truly matches your hand. Take the time to shop for them in person at a store that offers several brands which you can really hold and feel before you buy.

Felco is usually considered the 'gold standard' for pruners and they are certainly beautifully made. However, after trying out the motion and weight of several different brands and models, I finished up buying an ergonomically designed Bahco pruner with its distinctively angled blade assembly, and I have been very happy with my choice.

### A steel hook with many uses

My 'Cobra head' weeder, an unlikely looking tool that I received as a gift, is now one of my 'must-have' garden tools. I use it for all kinds of weeding and cultivating, as well as for digging holes and transplanting small plants. And, by pushing the tool deep into the soil, I can lasso those stubborn dandelion taproots, usually getting them out intact.

Because I find my cobra-head weeder so indispensable, I added a small loop to my garden belt that allows me to carry it 'hands free' next to my pruners.

### A new addition

This fall I discovered the Japanese 'sickle-saw', a new tool that promises to join my list of 'indispensables' at least during the fall clean-up. The sickle-saw has a curved handle



Judith has been putting her pruners to good use to shape up these old lilacs in front of the barn. Now they look especially nice in the snow. photo by Judith Irven

with an extremely sharp 6" serrated blade that make short work of slicing through large clumps of perennials like Shasta Daisy stems and Siberian Iris leaves.

### Clean hands, warm hands

'Dirt under the fingernails' may describe a real gardener. But since I also like to bake bread, if at all possible I would rather keep my fingernails clean. So finding garden gloves that were durable yet breathable, and flexible enough that I can feel the soil, was a must for me.

The Atlas brand '370 Garden Club' mesh gloves provide all that functionality. They have a flexible coating of nitrile on the palms and fingertips, they wash well and besides they come in pretty colors. I buy mine in packets of six from the Palmflex website so I always have a clean pair ready for use.

I balance these out with a lined waterproof glove for cold weather work. Vinylove 360, also by Atlas and available through the Palmflex website, fit my hands perfectly.

### Strong and sturdy

A good fork and spade are two larger items that are crucial for the gardener's toolkit. I use mine to prepare the soil for a new bed, to move (or remove) any larger plants, and also to lift and divide over-grown perennials.

So my fork and spade must be both strong and sturdy, while not overly heavy to use. From personal experience I can attest to the false economy of buying cheap thin forks, which sooner or later will bend or break.

Ten years ago I felt a bit extravagant when I purchased a digging fork and narrow transplanting spade, each forged from a single piece of steel with a smooth ash handle, made by Spear and Jackson. I bought them at Gardener's Supply in Burlington, where I was able to try the various makes and models to find tools that were compatible with my body and my stamina.

Spear and Jackson has been making tools in England for over 100 years and their products come with a 15-year guarantee (not bad considering the stress many of us put on our garden tools). I use my fork and spade constantly and still they retain their original shape and strength.

### Last but not least

My final recommendation is to invest in a battery-powered string trimmer. Oh, I can hear you say—'an electric trimmer, that sounds really flimsy. Surely a gasoline engine would be preferable'.

The answer is that, while a gasoline powered trimmer works best for longer jobs like edging beds, you will be amazed at the host of smaller tasks where the lightweight versatility of an electric trimmer is very welcome. For example: I have several stepping stone paths that meander through my beds. But, rather than attempting to weed between the stones, I use my Black and Decker electric trimmer to give each path a monthly haircut. The delightful discovery is

that, over time, an inviting velvet carpet of moss is gradually replacing the weeds.

### Golden rules for garden tools

Seek out quality tools properly proportioned for your own body.

Look for a few versatile tools to accommodate all your everyday gardening needs.

Judith Irven and her husband Dick Conrad live in Goshen, VT where together they nurture a large garden. You can subscribe to Judith's blog about her Vermont gardening life at [www.northcountryreflections.com](http://www.northcountryreflections.com). Dick Conrad is a landscape and garden photographer. To see his photographs go to [northcountryimpressions.com](http://northcountryimpressions.com).

## A LITANY

### After Winter Solstice

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All of you crocus, ready to rise,  
Snowdrops, hepaticas, twinleaf, and bloodroot,  
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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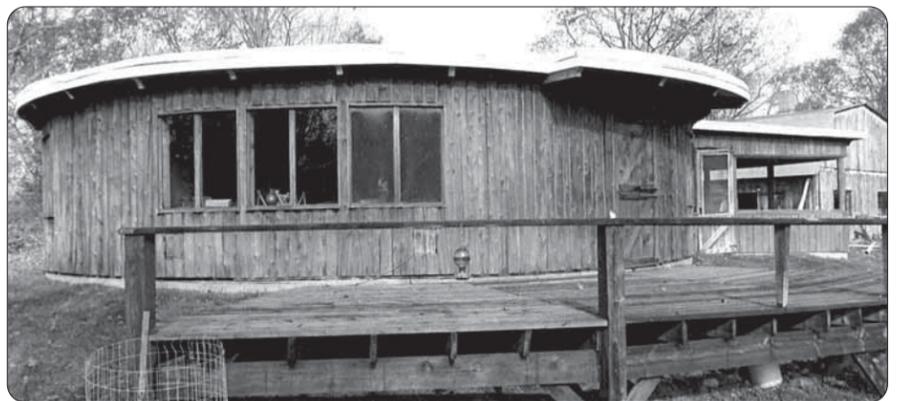
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