

Vermont Country Sampler

Free

December 2015

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



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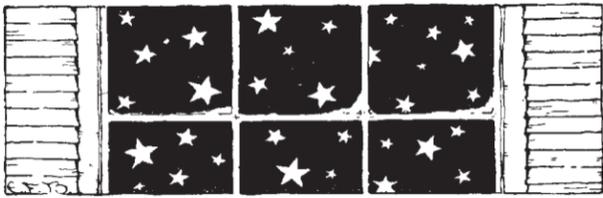
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December Notebook

Shirleys

by Bill Felker

At the end of July, I planted winter tomatoes for the greenhouse. I put in a package of the imported Shirleys (thirteen seeds—fifty cents a seed), a dozen Big Boys, and a half a dozen Gardener's Delights, a small early variety.

My greenhouse lies behind a south wall, twelve feet of glass tall, twenty-eight feet wide. When clouds permit, the sun shines on most of the plants from the middle of the morning until three or so in the afternoon, even on the shortest days of the year.

Tomatoes are tolerant of low winter light. Given a good start outside in the summer, they begin to climb by the beginning of October. They are over my head by the middle of November, reaching up to the top of the first tier of windows, shutting out the bare branches of the hedge outside, and the neighbor's house. I let their suckers go where they choose.

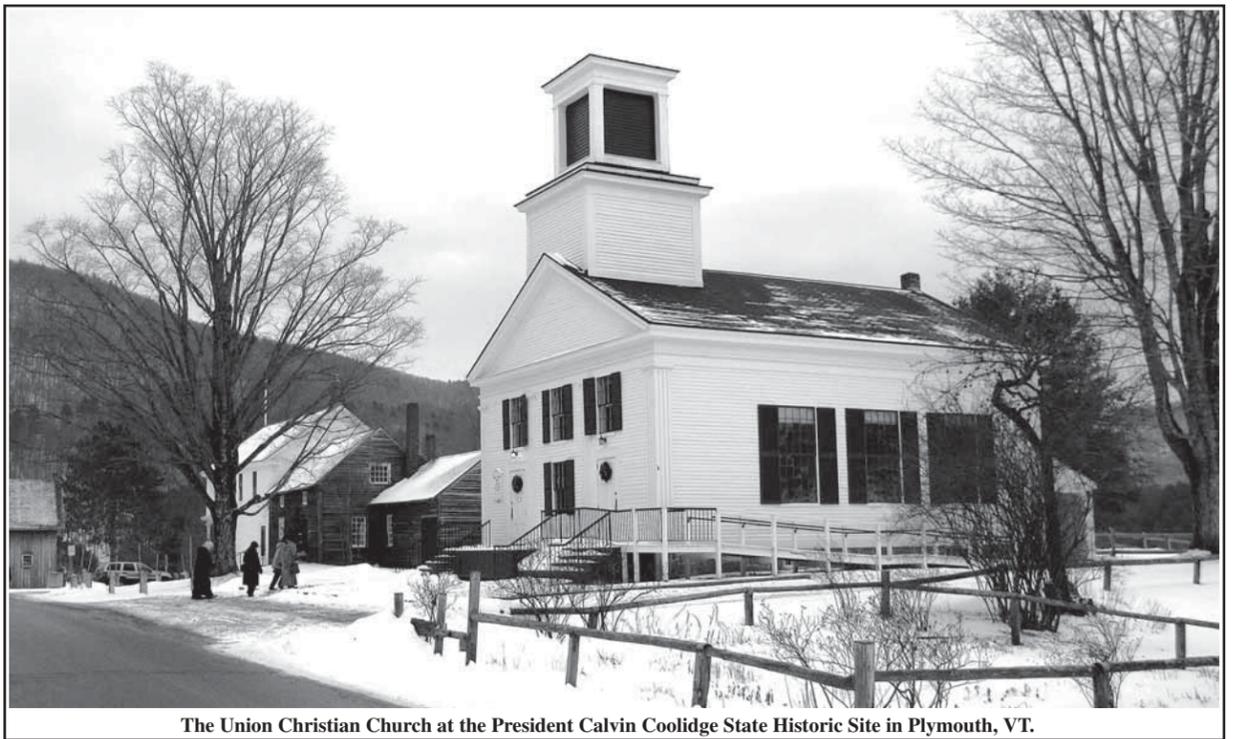
By December, the plants have risen to ten feet, and when I sit in the wicker chair

beneath them, they shade me from the noon, and they dapple the moonlight on the brick wall behind me.

At twelve feet, their peak in January, they are peerless allies, angels whose green wings protect me from the winter. Grown flat up against the glass, they are a living barrier, an insulation of spirit, as well as a gauge of a certain balance I keep with the outside.

Neither the tomatoes nor I were meant to last beyond a predetermined threshold. Our alliance is a fantasy that will blacken and wilt if something goes awry, or if just one stone breaks through our glass.

Now late at night, in the center of a storm, I sit in the thrill of that dark and peril, and I listen to the wind, and I wonder at the strength and fragility of the tomatoes. As the snow builds up on the windows, I wonder at our ingenuity, our ephemeral beauty, and our reckless defiance.



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

Plymouth, VT

Coolidge Holiday Open House Celebrating the Traditions of the Season

Feeling overwhelmed by the rush of holiday shopping, crowds, and decorating? Return to a simpler time on Saturday, December 5 at the Coolidge Holiday Open House at the President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site, in historic Plymouth Notch, VT.

This is a season's tradition in one of Vermont's most scenic villages. The Coolidge birthplace will be decorated as it would have been in 1872, the year the future president was born. Many of the museum buildings, including the Homestead where President Calvin Coolidge was sworn in as president of the United States, will be open that day, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event is free and features special presentations and a variety of family activities.

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

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

See winter exhibits at the Museum & Education Center, Aldrich House, Plymouth Cheese Factory, 1924 Summer White House office, and Union Christian Church.

Enjoy horse-drawn sleigh rides, old-time music, craft demonstrations, a homemade & hearty lunch at the Wilder House Restaurant. There will be a special cancellation at the historic Plymouth post office, and children's holiday activities. 10 am - 4 pm.

President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site is located at 3780 Rt. 100A in Plymouth, VT. For more information call (802) 672-3773. E-mail William.Jenney@vermont.gov. Visit historicsites.vermont.gov/coolidge.

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



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Top Ten Winter Festivities in Vermont

Winter can be a magical time in Vermont and although it may look like a long haul through ice and snow, it will be gone before you know it and sugaring and spring will be here. Enjoy the winter festivities while you can. Even if you don't ski or go on winter outings, there is plenty to do. Here are a few of the offerings coming up this season.

* * *

37th Annual Putney Craft Tour Putney, VT • November 27-29, 2015

Putney, Saxtons River, Westminster West, Bellows Falls Glassblowers, potters, jewelers, stained glass artists, fine art painters, woodworkers and weavers—even artisan cheese-makers and winemakers—welcome visitors into their studios to look around, ask questions and discover one-of-a-kind handcrafted objects. Part of the fun is meandering the back roads, following the map to find and view the works of 26 prominent craftspeople. (802) 387-4032. putneycrafts.com.

Festival of Trees & Lights and Members' Art Show at Helen Day Art Center Stowe, VT • December 4 – January 3, 2016

Opening Reception, 5-8 p.m., December 4. Exhibit runs to January 3. The Members' Art Show and Festival of Trees & Lights brings together the community to share and celebrate the season through decorated evergreens, a Hanukkah display and 100 members' artwork. (802) 253-8358. www.helenday.com.

Vermont International Festival Essex Junction, VT • December 4-6, 2015

A unique, unforgettable celebration of the cultures that make up our community. At the exposition, one will find crafts from all over the world, ethnic and gourmet foods, and traditional international music, dance and stories. Local cultural and ethnic organizations provide information about their programs with exhibits, demonstrations and workshops. 10 am – 6 pm at Champlain Valley Exposition. (802) 863-6713. www.vermontinternationalfestival.com.

Country Christmas Open House & Holiday Paint-In Waitsfield, VT • December 5-6, 2015

Waitsfield local businesses collaborate to create a festive setting that would make Norman Rockwell feel at home. Merchants offer shopping incentives while artists paint the holiday scene. Shoppers find bargains and perhaps purchase artwork while families enjoy refreshments next to a bonfire. (802) 496-3409. www.madrivervalley.com.

Woodstock Wassail Weekend Woodstock, VT • December 11-13, 2016

Woodstock Twinkling lights, costumes and carolers, the jingle of sleigh bells and over four hundred luminaries lighting the Green. These are the sights and sounds of Woodstock's Wassail Weekend. Visit Billings Farm and Museum, take a sleigh ride, go on a house tour, visit a holiday craft market—all within the beautiful village of Woodstock. (888) 496-6378. www.woodstockvt.com.

Billings Farm & Museum Sleigh Ride Week Woodstock, VT • February 13-21, 2016

Climb aboard the Billings Farm sleigh for a ride through the frosty farm fields. Sled with jack jumpers and in commemoration of President's Day, sample favorite cookies of Presidents. Hands-on activities on the weekends include making presidential silhouettes and presidential trivia. In the barns, discover Vermont dairying, past and present. Up-close programs with livestock will offered including "An Introduction to Milking" and "Milking the Herd" at 3:15 pm each day. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org.



The town of Woodstock celebrates its 32nd Annual Wassail Weekend on December 11, 12, 13 & 14, 2015. The highlight is the 32nd Annual Equestrian Parade on Saturday at 2 p.m. photo by Nancy Cassidy

Magic Hat Mardi Gras Parade Burlington, VT • March 5, 2016

Music, mayhem and more! Kick up your feet Friday night, then Saturday at noon downtown Burlington heats up with musical performances, a costume contest, family-friendly activities lining Church Street and culminates with a parade featuring dozens of floats. (802) 658-2739. www.magicat.net.

VT Open Snowboard & Music Festival Stratton Mountain • March 11-13, 2016

Stratton Mountain Celebrating the history and progression of a sport born and raised right here in Vermont, the VT Open at Stratton draws snowboarders ages 9 – 59 from throughout New England and beyond to compete in signature contests, with national TV coverage, including Big Air, Retro Halfpipe, Snurfer challenge and the Washed Up Cup where Olympic medalists join pioneers in the sport to run gates. (800) 787-2886. www.stratton.com.

Jay Peak & Ski the East's Extreme Competition Championships Jay Peak, VT • March 21-22, 2016

The Jay Peak Extreme Competition, in coordination with the Ski the East, has grown from a small grassroots competition to a large scale on-snow event in just the last four years. Athletes of all ages and abilities from all corners of New England come together during each Extreme Competition to test their skills on technical terrain featured at Jay Peak and to celebrate the unified love of skiing/riding in the state of Vermont. (802) 988-2611. jaypeakresort.com.





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Visit Billings Farm & Museum for the Holidays

Christmas at the Farm

Discover the traditions of a late 19th century Vermont Christmas with a visit to the Billings Farm & Museum, gateway to Vermont's rural heritage. Christmas at the Billings Farm will be featured on weekends in December and December 19 – January 3, 2016, (excluding Christmas Day) 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Tour the authentically decorated farmhouse, visit the dairy farm for interactive programs including "An Introduction to Milking" and "Milking the Herd" at 3:15 p.m. each day. Holiday activities, plus the Academy Award nominee film, *A Place in the Land* will be offered.

Highlights of the Holiday Season

December 5 & 6, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Making Christmas silhouettes & poppers; candle dipping.

December 11, 12 & 13, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Woodstock's Wassail Celebration. Make historic Christmas ornaments and pomanders and dip candles. On Sunday December 13, take a horse-drawn sleigh or wagon ride from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

December 19 to 24, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Make Christmas silhouettes and poppers and dip candles.

Closed Christmas Day – Merry Christmas!

December 26 to January 3, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Christmas Week. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides. Sledding with jack jumpers, if snow conditions permit. Make historic Christmas pomanders, ornaments and snowflakes and dip candles.

19th Century Vermont 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, ice to cut, and wood to saw. A few gifts, a special meal, and the gathering of friends, were noteworthy in an otherwise typical day.

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

In Woodstock, turn-of-the-century businesses advertised their wares for Christmas gifts. Most gifts were useful domes-

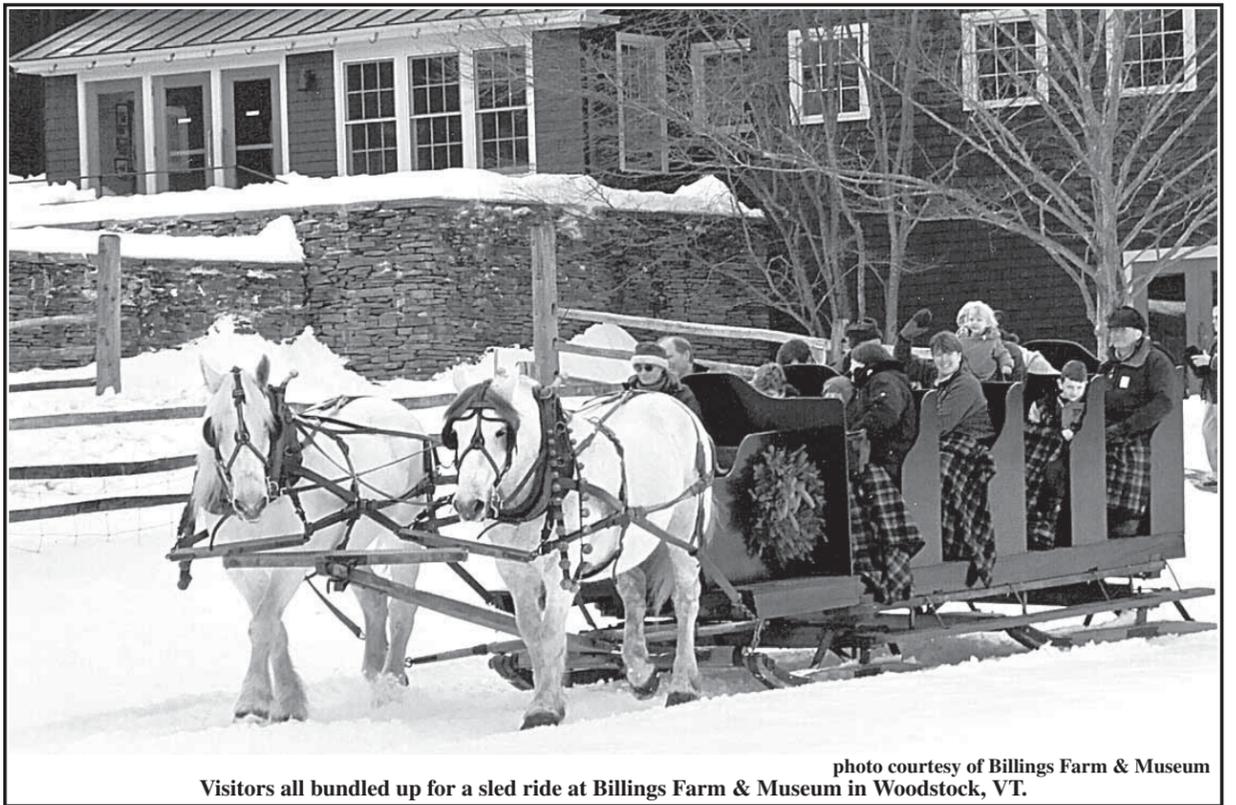


photo courtesy of Billings Farm & Museum
Visitors all bundled up for a sled ride at Billings Farm & Museum in Woodstock, VT.

tic items: fabric, clothing, umbrellas, linens, crockery, and carpet sweepers. Homemade, handcrafted items including fancy mittens, satin bows, and stockings filled with candies, nuts, and raisins were among the most common gifts given on Christmas Day.

The Billings Farm & Museum is owned and operated by The Woodstock Foundation, Inc., a charitable non-profit institution. Billings Farm is an operating Jersey dairy farm that continues a 144-year tradition of agricultural excellence

and offers farm programs and historical exhibits that explore Vermont's rural heritage and values. The Farm & Museum has served as a gateway to Vermont's rural heritage. Open daily May 1 through October 31, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekends Nov. – Feb., and Christmas & Presidents' weeks, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission: adults: \$14; 62 & over: \$13; children 5-15: \$8; 3-4: \$4; 2 & under: free.

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

37th Annual Beyond the Unicorn Christmas Craft Fair

Once again, the Beyond the Unicorn Christmas Craft Fair promises to bring together some of the most talented crafters and artisans from New England and New York.

The fair will be held on Saturday, December 5th from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Riverside Middle School on Rt. 11 west in Springfield, VT.

Sponsored by the Spring-

field High School Alumni Association, the fair has been one of the largest events in Springfield for many years.

This year's fair is bigger than ever with ninety talented crafters from all over the region who will showcase their handmade wares at the event.

Come browse and choose from among the crafts, gifts, art, jewelry, book signings, fresh balsam wreaths and

arrangements. Delicious food including breakfast and lunch will be prepared and served all day by the "Alumni Chefs" and food sales with pies and loaves of bread. Lovely gift wrapping is available.

Raffle drawings take place throughout the day with items donated by all 90 crafters! And there's a 50/50 raffle at the end of the day.

You'll have to see this for yourself, there is absolutely something for everyone. Come and spend the day, it's a community celebration!

Riverside Middle School is located at 13 Fairground Rd. in Springfield, VT. For info about the Craft Fair or to volunteer, contact Marie Gelineau at (802) 885-3579. mgelineau@vermontel.net.

The Barn

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

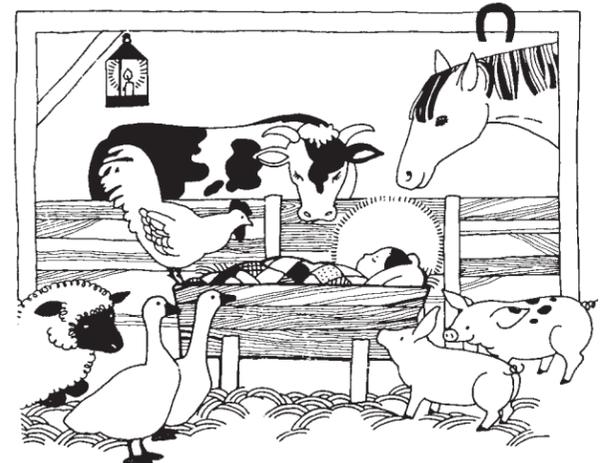
"Hush, little colt," said the mare
"And a story I will tell
Of a barn like this one of ours
And the wonders that there befell.
It was weather much like this
And the beasts stood as we stand now
In the warm good dark of the barn—
A horse and an ass and a cow."

"And sheep?" asked the colt. "Yes, sheep,
And a pig and a goat and a hen.
All of the beasts of the barnyard,
The usual servants of men."

And into their midst came a lady
And she was as cold as death
But the animals leaned above her
And made her warm with their breath.

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

—ELIZABETH COATSWORTH, 1893-1986



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30th Annual Overture to Christmas

Everyone is invited to the 30th Annual Overture to Christmas events in the beautiful town of Chester, VT on Saturday, December 5th, 2015. To foster the community spirit, especially during the holidays, the town of Chester is presenting a series of family events to help welcome in the holidays. The town will be decorated for the season and we hope everyone will drop by, share in the Christmas spirit.

Leading up to Overture to Christmas, a Gingerbread Workshop will be held on *Monday, November 30th* from 4-5 p.m. at the Fullerton Inn for children in grades K-2. The event is free. The "house" and decorating items will be provided. It is a great event and children are encouraged to come and decorate a gingerbread house for the season. On *Wednesday, December 2nd*, from 4-5 p.m., a Gingerbread Workshop will be held at the Fullerton Inn for children grades 3-6. Participants are encouraged to leave their finished houses on display at the Fullerton Inn as part of our Gingerbread House contest.

There is also an adult class and business class in the Gingerbread House Contest. Adults and businesses can participate by decorating a gingerbread house of their own design. Over the years, we have seen many colorful and creative designs from both the children and adults. All houses must be at the Fullerton Inn by noon on Saturday, December 5th for the final judging.

Saturday, December 5th Festivities

• *Saturday, December 5th* kicks off with a Breakfast at the Baptist Church from 8-10 a.m. hosted by the Chester Area Youth Group.

• From 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. the Holly Art Fair will be held at the Chester Andover Elementary School. The fair features crafts and storytelling. Author Karen Rose from Two Mountain Farm will be on hand to tell stories.

• Stop in to St. Luke's Church, on Main St. from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for the St. Luke's Christmas Tea and Sale. Enjoy tea, cookies, tea sandwiches, and shop for delightful holiday gifts.



Santa and Mrs. Claus visit the Fullerton Inn in Chester, VT.

• Be sure to stop by the Baptist Church between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to observe the Live Nativity Scene.

• At 3:45 p.m. Santa and Mrs. Claus make their way down Main St., beginning at the Chester Andover Elementary School. It's quite a spectacle. Santa and Mrs. Claus ride in Santa's sleigh and are accompanied by a parade of children in the Parade of Presents.

• Santa and Mrs. Claus stop by the town tree at 4 p.m. for the Lighting of the Chester Town Christmas Tree.

• After the tree lighting Santa and Mrs. Claus retire to the lobby of the Fullerton Inn at 40 the Green, in the center of Chester, to hold court for the children who wish to visit with Santa. Cookies, cocoa, books and candy canes are provided for all the children on Santa's "Nice" list, and who isn't nice these days!

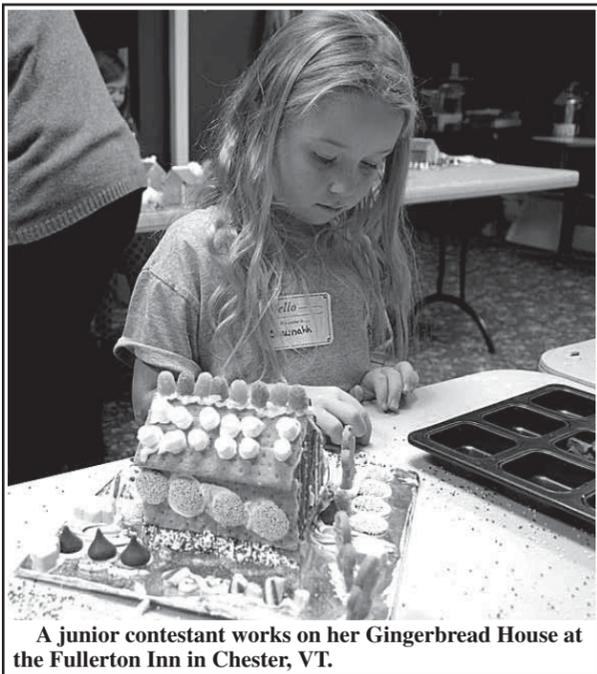
• From 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. luminaries will light up Main St.

• At 7:30 p.m. the Springfield Community Chorus will provide a free concert at the First Baptist Church. Everyone is welcome and it's free.

On Saturday, December 12th at 12 noon, the Annual Senior Citizens Christmas Dinner will be held at the Chester Andover Elementary School.

We hope we will see you in Chester to help us usher in the Holidays!

Chester, VT is located in southeastern Vermont on Rt. 11. For more information contact the Fullerton Inn at (802) 875-2444. www.fullertoninn.com.



A junior contestant works on her Gingerbread House at the Fullerton Inn in Chester, VT.

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The holidays, baking, and cold weather all seem to go hand-in-hand. We all get out our favorite treasured recipes this time of year. Some are collected from friends, books, and cookie exchanges and some are hand-me-downs from grandmas, aunts, and mothers.

The recipes or "rules" featured here are from the turn of the century and earlier, and are like those your grandma might have followed. Measurements and methods are simpler. Oven temperatures and time are "till done". Consider what baking delicate cookies in a wood-fired kitchen stove was like and you can see that regulating the temperature must have been pretty tricky.

Christmas Pudding

1 cupful chopped suet	1 teaspoonful cinnamon
½ cupful sugar	1 teaspoonful clove
½ cup Barbadoes molasses	½ teaspoonful salt
1 cupful sour milk	¼ cupfuls chopped raisins
1½ teaspoonfuls soda	3 cupfuls chopped currants
1 egg	½ cupful chopped figs
3½ cupfuls flour	½ cupful chopped candied orange peel
½ cupful chopped walnut meats	

Mix together the flour, spices, prepared fruits and salt. Combine the soda, sour milk and molasses, add the suet, sugar and the egg, unbeaten, and then beat in the flour mixture. Steam in a well-oiled and floured mould for four hours, then serve garnished with holly surrounded by portions of hard sauce, sprinkled with chopped pistachio nut meats, and capped with candied cherries. The pudding will be more attractive still, if blazing when brought to the table. Pour over three table-spoonfuls of good brandy, and ignite it just before sending to the table. Hard sauce can accompany. This amount will serve twelve people.

Hard Sauce

½ cupful butter	½ teaspoonful vanilla
2 cupfuls powdered sugar	¼ teaspoonful brandy

Beat the butter to a cream, and gradually work in the sugar and flavoring.

Spritzbakelser Cookies

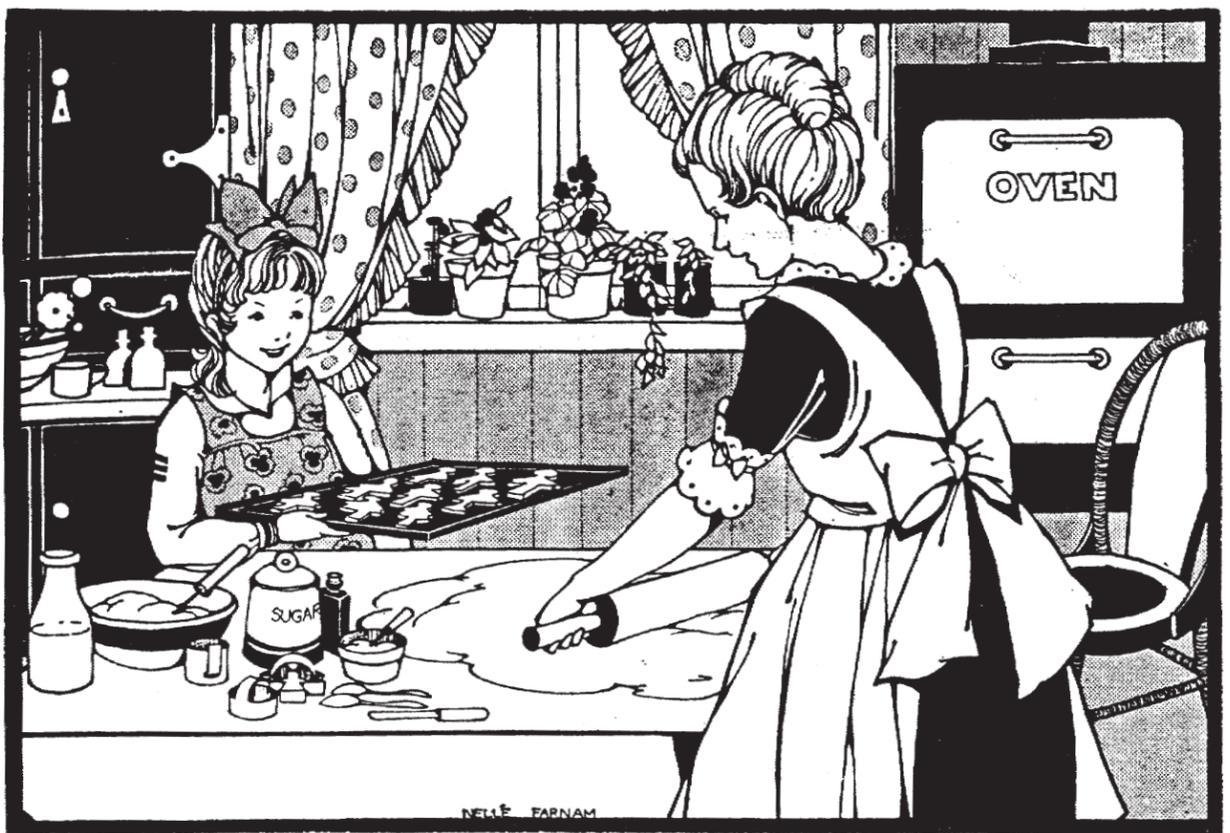
¾ cupful butter	2 teaspoons baking powder
¾ cupful sugar	About 3 cupfuls pastry flour
2 tbsp. minced almonds	¼ teaspoonful salt
2 eggs	1 tsp. grated orange rind

Cream the butter and sugar, add the eggs, well-beaten, then the almonds and orange rind. Mix and sift the baking powder with a cupful of the flour and beat it in. Add the remaining flour as needed to roll. Cut in fancy shapes and decorate, if desired. Bake in a quick oven.

Christmas Joys

1 cupful figs	1 cupful candied cherries
1 cup English walnut meats	1 tablespoonful lemon juice
½ cup candied orange peel	1 cupful stoned dates

Put the fruits and nuts through the food chopper, add the lemon juice and knead until thoroughly mixed. Toss on a board well-dusted with powdered sugar, roll out to ¼ inch thickness and cut into rounds with a small cutter. When they have stiffened, frost the tops with a plain orange icing, and decorate with bits of angelica and red cherries to for holly.



Frosted Ginger Nuts

4 tablespoonfuls butter	1 cupful pastry flour
1½ tsp. baking powder	½ cupful sugar
2 egg yolks	¼ teaspoonful salt
2 tablespoonfuls milk	¾ cupful chopped candied ginger
½ teaspoon lemon extract	

Cream the butter, add the sugar, egg yolks, well-beaten, the milk and the extract. Mix together the flour, salt, baking powder and the ginger. Add to the mixture and drop by tea-spoonfuls on a well-oiled pan, three inches apart. Bake in a moderate oven, and, when cooled, frost with plain white icing and decorate with candied cherries and angelica if desired.

Candied Christmas Cranberries

1 pint large cranberries	¾ cupful water
1¾ cupfuls sugar	

Make a syrup by boiling the water and sugar together for five minutes, add the cranberries and let stand a few hours. Then cook them gently till clear, drain, put on a large enamel dripping pan dusted with granulated sugar, sprinkle a little more sugar over them and dry very slowly in an oven at about 120°.

Wine Jelly

2 tablespoons gelatin	3½ cups sherry
½ cup cold water	Sugar
Juice of 2 lemons	

Soak the gelatin in the cold water. Heat the lemon juice and sherry, dissolve the gelatin in the sherry, add sugar to taste, and chill. Serves eight.

Cranberry Pie

1½ cups cranberries	2 tablespoons flour
1 cup sugar	or fine cracker crumbs
⅔ cup water	
1 tablespoon butter	

Cook the cranberries and sugar in the water for ten minutes. They may be either strained or used whole for the pie. Mix with the flour and butter. Cool before putting into the crust. Cover with strips of crust and bake until crust is brown.

Lebkuchen

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

Gingerbread

Mix together a half-cupful each of brown sugar and New Orleans molasses, and stir in a tablespoonful of melted butter, a teaspoonful of ground ginger and a teaspoonful of cinnamon. Set the bowl containing these ingredients at the side of the range until the contents are blood-warm; then remove from the range and beat with an egg-beater until the batter is light brown in color. Now stir in a cupful of sour milk and three cupfuls of sifted flour. Beat very hard, adding, last of all, a teaspoonful of baking-soda dissolved in hot water. Beat for two minutes longer and bake in deep muffin-tins, or in a shallow baking-pan.

Pumpkin Pie

1½ cups cooked pumpkin	1 tablespoon flour
¾ cup milk	1 teaspoon vanilla
2 eggs	½ cup sugar
	¼ teaspoon salt

Cut the pumpkin in small pieces; peel, wash and steam or stew until tender. Mash to a pulp; cook as dry as possible without scorching and rub through a colander or coarse sieve. Mix thoroughly with the milk and other ingredients; pour into an open crust and bake slowly for forty or fifty minutes. Spices may be used in addition to the vanilla for flavoring if desired. Squash pie may be made from this recipe, using less milk.

Pfeffernüsse (A German Recipe)

One pound of fine flour, sifted; one teaspoonful of baking-powder; one pound of sugar, sifted; four large eggs; three ounces of citron; the grated rind of one lemon; one grated nutmeg; one teaspoonful of cinnamon; one scant teaspoonful of ground cloves. Mix the baking-powder and spices and sift with the flour, then work in the beaten eggs and sugar; form into small balls and bake in a slow oven. Place in a pan sufficiently far apart to allow them to swell to the size of macaroons when baked.

Night Comes Early

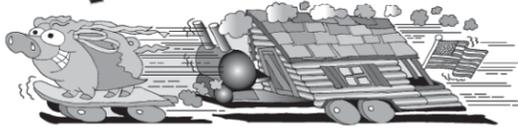
Night comes early in the hills.
You can never know,
Dweller in a city,
Beauty of the snow
When the white
is turning gray
Until you cannot see
Where it meets the river
And the lonely tree.
Night comes early
in the hills,



You can never know
How content the houses look
Roof-deep in the snow.

—NELLIE S. RICHARDSON

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A Vermont Almanack For Early Winter 2015

by Bill Felker

*Now I have told the year from dawn to dusk,
Its morning and its evening and its noon;
Once round the sun our slanting orbit rolled,
Four times the season changed, thirteen the moon...*

—VITA SACKVILLE-WEST

The Second Spring Moon And the Sparrow Flocking Moon

Winter ordinarily puts an end to second spring between December 8th and the 15th. As cold and snow settle in, sparrow flocks become larger in city and country yards, scavenging for seeds and suet at bird feeders.

December 3: The Second Spring Moon enters its final quarter at 2:40 a.m. *December 5:* Lunar Apogee. *December 11:* The Sparrow Flocking Moon is new at 5:29 a.m. *December 18:* The moon enters its second quarter at 10:14 a.m. *December 21:* Lunar Perigee. *December 25:* The moon is full at 6:11 a.m. *January 2:* The moon enters its last quarter at 12:30 a.m.

The Sun

In the first days of December, sunset time in much of the country is the earliest of the year. Setting time remains the same until the middle of December, when the sun starts to go down a minute later every few days. Sunset continues to move later in the day throughout the next six months, gaining about ten minutes in December, around half an hour each in January, February, March, April and May, and ten minutes in June.

The transition to the new cycle can be tracked by measuring the relative position of the sun as it intrudes into a room or lengthens a gnomon's shadow. Solar declination is 22 degrees, 22 minutes on December 5, approximately one degree from its declination at winter solstice. The sun's position remains within a degree of solstice until January 8, producing a period of solar stability similar to the one between June 4 and July 8.

Winter Solstice

Winter solstice occurs at 11:48 p.m. on December 21, and on December 24, the sun starts its ascent toward June, shifting from a declination of 23 degrees and 26 minutes to 23 degrees and 25 minutes. Although the days do not start to lengthen at the same rate at different locations in the United States, the 24th is the first day of the season during which the sun appears to rise a little higher each day. That time lasts until the sun stops at its highest point above the horizon between June 19 and 23, and then begins to fall back on June 24 toward winter solstice.

The Planets

Venus moves retrograde, backing up into Libra, low in the east before sunrise. Mars remains in Virgo, still the red morning star. Jupiter, keeping his place in Leo, rises after midnight and is overhead near dawn. Saturn finally joins the other major planets, rising behind Venus in Ophiuchus. So here is the order of their rising: Jupiter is the first, then Mars, then Venus, then Saturn.

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 fully visible behind them. Regulus, the brightest star of spring, will be just starting to rise along the eastern tree line.

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photo by Nancy Cassidy

A herd of mixed Jerseys wait together in a winter pasture in Central Vermont.

The Shooting Stars

December's shooting stars are the Geminids, appearing at the rate of about 40 to 50 per hour on December 13-14. Find them following behind Orion in Gemini. The Ursid meteors will appear late at night deep in the northeast around the Big Dipper and Little Dipper, the "Ursid" or "bear" constellations, between December 17th and 25th.

Most folk stories about shooting stars complement the notion of a Thin Time at the transition between late autumn and early winter, a time during which the barriers become more fragile between those living on this side of death and those on the other side. Such a spiritual aura around the meteoric prelude to winter solstice offers a secular mystique to the season of darkness, easily blending with religious liturgies that enhance awareness of the advent of the natural year.

Meteoric events were thought to be, in the words of Wil-

liam Ashworth Jr., "trans-factual." Ashworth noted that people found in their occurrence a "higher truth, the truth of the miraculous." Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights, and Christian Christmas with its star of wonder, dovetail easily with the appearance of December's meteors, follow the shooting starlight with hopeful and celebratory ceremonies which humans often use to face the coming cold and gloom.

Meteorology

Severe weather is most likely to occur during the following periods: December 1-3, 24-26, 31-January 1. New moon on December 11 is likely to bring stronger-than-average storms to Vermont as early winter settles in, increasing the likelihood of a very white Christmas. It is probable that full moon on Christmas Day will intensify the arrival of deep winter in the Northeast.

The Natural Calendar

by Bill Felker

The old year of sprouting, growing and producing fruit has fallen away with the leaves and the end of harvest, and the first week of early winter marks the beginning of a new cycle in Earth's spin around the sun.

Seasons are local, fluid constructs that take their own direction from both meteorological as well as geographical cues. Our winter no more actually starts at December solstice than summer starts at June solstice.

The "natural year" recognizes that process and gives it a shape closer to what actually occurs around us.

Even though pear trees sometimes hold out and a few honeysuckles and some privets keep their foliage, the buds of next spring are already showing, and the skunk cabbage of February and pussy willow catkins of March are poised to expand in each thaw to come.

Now begins the seeding time for the hostas and asters, for milkweed and bonaset, virgin's bower, winterberry, honeysuckle and bittersweet. Gauges of passage appear across the ground, the Osage fruits decaying, sometimes opened and scattered by squirrels, the hulls of black

walnuts pocked and stained, heaps of leaves darkening, settling, contracting, dissolving.

Lenten roses gradually emerge as crocus and snowdrops pierce the soft mulch and hold immune to cold beneath the snow. Sap quivers in the maples every thaw. Migrations overlap, the last sandhill cranes high over the first new bluebirds. The long nights urge the foxes to mate. Owls lay out their nests.

In all of this there is a correspondence with the new year's movement throughout the country. Gauges of a local season are always

gauges of another. Knowing home, a watcher measures faraway time. A parochial thermometer not only displays alternating waves of mild or bitter weather but counts out the days of the finite winter road that begins in the snow and ends on the warm beaches of the South. There bloom the camellia, bougainvillea, flame vine, Hong Kong orchid tree, jasmine, and powderpuff. Oranges, grapefruit, papayas, carambola and avocados are ripe for picking.



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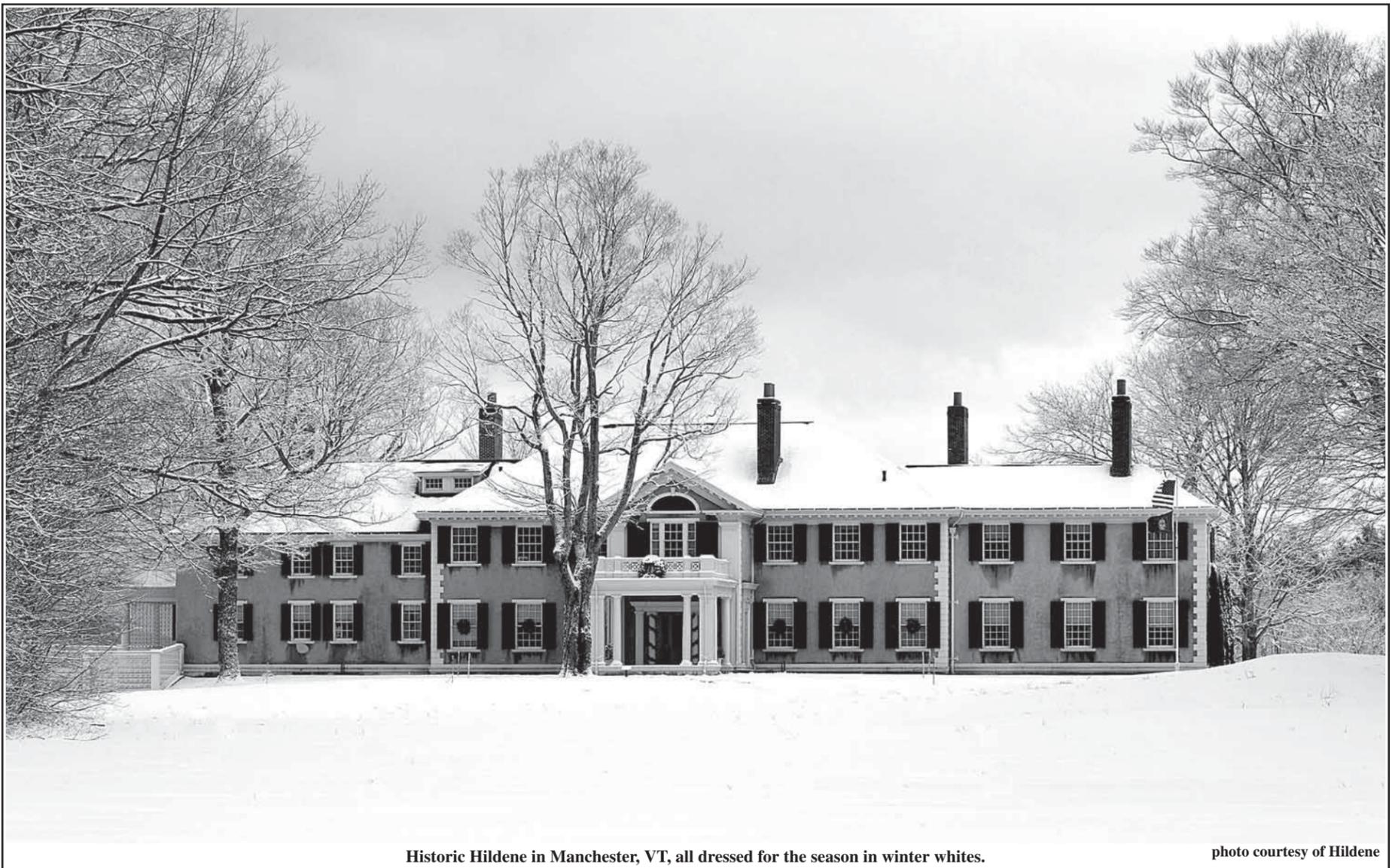
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Historic Hildene in Manchester, VT, all dressed for the season in winter whites.

photo courtesy of Hildene

Christmas Eve 1912 at the Lincoln Family Home

For guests who visit Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home in during the 2015 holiday season, December 4 through January 3, it will feel like they've stopped by as presidential son, Robert Lincoln, and wife Mary prepare their Manchester Village, Vermont home for a family Christmas, just as they did more than 100 years ago, Christmas Eve 1912. The mansion's windows are candlelit and there's a fresh scent of balsam amidst floral flourishes and satin ribbon. A selection of holiday tunes from the family's Aeolian pipe organ music fills the house on many weekends. The tree has been cut and brought in from the woods, its graceful boughs, hung with lovely period appropriate ornaments and candles. For nearly four decades, a visit to Hildene during the holidays has become a tradition for many families.

A century ago, Mary Harlan Lincoln, the lady of the house, personally conveyed her feelings about being in the family's Vermont home during the Christmas season in a thank you letter to a close friend, dated December 31, 1915. She described her Hildene surroundings this way, "You've no idea how beautiful it is up here today ... everything covered in the whitest, purest snow I ever saw, and this morning in a beautiful filmy white lace, studded with diamonds! ... Mr. Lincoln said he never in his whole life saw such a beautiful sight."

The musicality of the Lincoln family is celebrated in a special way during the holiday season on many weekends when area musicians bring the Aeolian pipe organ and Steinway to life with their music. Robert, wife Mary, and their daughters Mamie and Jessie all played. It is also known that Robert and his mother Mary Todd Lincoln took piano lessons together when he was a young man. Stories of Robert's social life in Manchester, include references to time spent with his friends and neighbors, the Ishams of nearby Ormsby Hill. If the piano was available, Robert would seize the opportunity to play.

Visiting Hildene this holiday season

Whether guests choose to visit some or all of the Lincoln family's estate, touring the home, visiting Hildene Farm goat dairy and cheese-making facility or boarding the Pullman palace car, Sunbeam, they will find holiday spirit aplenty.

December 5—Bird Walk: The Vermont Bird Place & Sky Watch and local birders conduct a free survey of the wild birds on the grounds of Hildene. For more info, call Randy Schmidt at (802) 362-2270 or randy@thevermontbirdplace.com. Meet at the Welcome Center Parking Lot, 8 a.m.

December 5, 6 & 7—The Museum Store, located in the historic carriage barn, now the Welcome Center, is also a popular destination for holiday shoppers. On Saturday, December 5 and Sunday, December 6, the store hosts its annual open house, "Our Home for the Holidays."

Neighbors and new friends alike are welcomed to the warmth of the Lincoln family's one hundred year old restored carriage barn dressed in all its holiday finery. The aroma of hot apple cider and fresh cider doughnuts wafts through the air as musical sounds of the season and Vermont specialty food tastings set the mood for a unique holiday shopping experience. The store is filled to the brim with items inspired by Lincoln family history, the estate's natural environment, gardens, life on the farm, and Vermont products. An expanded student-focused section features new choices for children with activity-oriented books, games and project kits on diverse topics from bees and bugs to environmental science, recycling, and sustainability.

Hildene is open from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. Admission is \$18 for adults and \$5 for children 6 to 14. Members, volunteers and children under 6 are free. Admission is not required for visiting the Welcome Center and The Museum Store.

Hildene is just off Rt. 7A, south of the village of Manchester, VT. For more info on Holidays at Hildene call (802) 362-1788. E-mail info@hildene.org. Or visit www.hildene.org.



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Bennington Museum's Festival Reimagined

November 27 to December 29

This year Bennington Museum introduces the creative and innovative Festival Reimagined, previously known as the Festival of Trees, on view from November 27 through December 29. Each piece on display is for sale by closed-bid auction through December 29. However, that is just the beginning, as the theme carries into the most anticipated celebration of the season, the Bennington Museum Gala.

The Gala

Saturday, December 5,

It's Cocktail Hour at Bennington Museum from 6-7 p.m. on Saturday, December 5. Join with others for a pre-Gala cocktail (cash bar). Be among the first guests to enjoy The Festival Reimagined featuring original works from contemporary artists.

The Gala runs from 7-10 p.m. Bennington Museum hosts the premiere event of the season and the museum's largest annual fundraiser. Enjoy creative cuisine, cash bar with wine, spirits and signature drinks created for the occasion, dancing to music by the Jeff McRae Band, and spirited bidding on unique and diverse items in the silent auction, all while supporting the region's foremost museum of art, history and innovation. Free child care on site is offered, but space is limited, so call early. Tickets for the Gala are \$90 per person and \$175 per person for a Platinum Museum Supporter and may be purchased by calling the museum at (802) 447-1571.

Over 60 items have been generously donated for the silent auction and are available to bid on from November 27 through the Gala on December 5. Stop in early and often at no charge to bid on that special gift while supporting the museum's largest annual fundraiser.

Family Day and Children's Shopping Day

Saturday, December 12, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Celebrate the season with \$3 admission to the museum for everyone (even Santa) on Family Day! Any child that brings new school supplies, hats, mittens, gloves, warm socks for children in need is admitted free. The discount applies to those under 18 only, but adults are welcome to bring a donation too! This year these items will be going to the children attending school in the Southwestern Vermont Supervisory Union.

Throughout the day enjoy crafts, a bake sale, and more. Some activities require a small additional fee, up to \$4, but many are free!

Visit with Santa from 1-3 p.m. and with Will Moses from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the museum shop. Of course, there is the Children's Shopping Boutique open from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Thanks to the donations of friends of the museum, we are pleased to offer this special shopping experience, just for children ages 4 to 12. Shoppers' Helpers are always on hand to help children pick out presents for their friends and family members. Gifts range in price from \$1 to \$10, and free gift-wrapping and gift tags are included.

Adults Can Go Shopping Too! For the adults, there will be plenty to see and enjoy. This year beginning on November 21, Cake Gallery has a pop-up shop adjacent to the museum shop, so the gift options are even more spectacular than before. Both specialize in beautiful and unusual items for every budget, and offer unique Vermont-made items not found at other locations. On November 27-29, the Museum Shop is offering 15% discounts on all merchandise.

St. Peter's Episcopal Church 75th Anniversary Christmas Tea

A Friday afternoon fundraiser organizer started in December, 1940, for a new church garden has become one the most anticipated Christmas events of the year.

This year, we celebrate our 75th anniversary of the St. Peter's Episcopal Church Christmas Tea in Bennington, VT. We will be serving our best cookies and tea sandwiches along with tea, coffee and punch. The tea takes place December 12, from 3-5 p.m.

The silver is sparkling and our parish hall has been transformed into a beautiful

candlelight tea room adorned with pine trees and wreaths. The centerpiece of the room is the breathtaking high tea table by Joyce Hall. After your trip to the tea table, wait staff will be available to serve you.

Although men have helped with the tea, even pouring tea, for at least one third of the Tea's history, the main organizational drive has come from the women of St. Peter's. Women have been a force to be reckoned

with since the parish was founded in 1834. It was difficult to find and pay for a



Visit Bennington Museum for the Festival Reimagined, a holiday gala celebration. photo courtesy of Bennington Museum

Remember to visit the Classroom Creations! Students from classrooms in Bennington, Shaftsbury, Pownal, and Woodford have worked hard to create an object inspired by the Memory Ware Tower. For \$1, you can purchase a chance to win the item of your choice. Winners will be notified on Thursday, December 17. Every year the children come up with creative new ideas. Visit their display and enjoy their contribution.

The Bennington Museum is located at 75 Main St. in Bennington, VT. It is open Thursday through Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information call: (802) 447-1571. E-mail: ssrano@benningtonmuseum.org. Visit: www.benningtonmuseum.org. On Facebook.

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You'll find all sorts of crafts and evergreens, just in time for Christmas. At some markets you can enjoy music and entertainment and most have snacks to enjoy while you shop.

Bellows Falls Winter Farmers' Market at the Bellows Falls Amtrak Station, Depot St. November 20 & December 18, 4-7 p.m. Rachel Ware, (802) 463-2018. bellowsfallsmarket@gmail.com. www.bffarmersmarket.com.

Bennington-Walloomsac Holiday and Winter Farmers Markets at First Baptist Church, 601 Main St. November 7, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.; November 21 & 28, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.; December 12, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.; December 19, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. January through April, first and third Saturdays, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. info@walloomsac.org. On Facebook.

Brattleboro Winter Farmers' Market at River Garden, 153 Main St. Holiday markets December 5, 12 & 19, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Saturdays, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., November 7, 2015 through March 26, 2016. Accepts EBT and debit cards. Sherry Maher, (802) 869-2141. farmersmarket@postoilolutions.org. www.postoilolutions.org.

Burlington Winter Farmers' Market at Memorial Auditorium, corner of Main St. and S. Union. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. November 7, 14 & 21; December 5, 12, 19; January 9 & 23; February 6 & 20; March 5 & 19; April 2. Accepts EBT and debit cards. Chris Wagner, (802) 310-5172. info@burlingtonfarmersmarket.org. burlingtonfarmersmarket.org.

Champlain Islands—So. Hero Winter Farmers' Market at South Hero Congregational Church on South St. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. October 24, November 7 & 21 and December 5 & 19. Denise Boutin, (802) 372-3291. deniseboutin@gmail.com. www.champlainislandsfarmersmarket.com.

Dorset Winter Farmers' Market at J.K. Adams Kitchen Store and Factory on Rt. 30. Sundays from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., October 18 through May 4. (802) 353-9656. marketmanager@dorsetfarmersmarket.com. www.dorsetfarmersmarket.com.

Groton Growers' Winter Farmers Market at Groton Community Building Gym. Every third Saturday, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., from October through May. Mary Berlejung and Sandi Adams. (802) 584-3595 or (802) 633-3031. grotongrowers@gmail.com. www.grotongrowers.org.



Scotch Highland cattle out in a snowstorm in Central Vermont.

photo by Nancy Cassidy

Hartland Winter Farmers' Market at Damon Hall, Rts. 5 & 12, Hartland Three Corners. Friday afternoons, November 20 and December 18, 4-7 p.m. hartlandfarmersmarket@gmail.com. www.hartlandfarmersmarket.com.

Londonderry—West River Winter Farmers' Market. Floodbrook Union School. Saturdays 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. thru January 2. Jenny Strecker. (802) 875-5004. westriverfarmersmarket@gmail.com. www.westriverfarmersmarket.com.

Middlebury Winter Farmer's Market at Mary Hogan Elementary School, 201 Mary Hogan Dr. Saturdays, November 7, 14, 21, 28; December 12, 19, 26; March 5, 12, 19, 26; April 2, 9, 23, 30. 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. middleburyfarmersmkt@yahoo.com. middleburyfarmersmarket.org.

Montpelier Capital City Winter Farmers' Market. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. December 5 & 19 and January 9 & 23 at Montpelier City Hall; February 6 & 20 and March 5 & 19, April 2 & 16 at Montpelier High School cafeteria. Carolyn Grodinsky, (802) 223-2958. manager@montpelierfarmersmarket.com. www.montpelierfarmersmarket.com.

Northfield Winter Farmers' Market. Norwich University's Plumley Armory. 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. November 8 & 22, December 6, January 3, February 7, March 6, and April 3. northfieldfarmersmarketvt@gmail.com. northfieldfarmersmarketvt.com.

Norwich Farmers' Winter Market at Tracy Hall, 300 Main St. 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., November 7 & 21; December 12 (till 2 pm) & 19; January 9 & 23; February 13 & 27; March 19 & 26; April 9 & 23. Steve Hoffman, (802) 384-7447. manager@norwichfarmersmarket.org. norwichfarmersmarket.org.

Rutland Winter Farmers' Market, Food Center Building at 251 West St. Saturdays, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., Wednesdays 3-6 p.m. November 4 through May 7. (802) 342-4727. info@vtfarmersmarket.org. www.vtfarmersmarket.org.

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

The Bobolink Project Winds Up Another Successful Year

The bobolink is a small New World ground nesting blackbird with a bright yellow cap, weighing only about an ounce, and with a bubbling, tinkling song. It can migrate 12,000 miles round trip from the Champlain Valley to Argentina and back each year, an astounding feat.

Bobolinks have experienced a significant decline in population in the Northeast over the past several years. The Bobolink Project is dedicated to compensating farmers who delay mowing their fields until after the Bobolink's nesting season is over. This has helped ensure

a greater survival rate. Project researchers estimated that 197 pairs of bobolinks raised approximately 550 fledglings on these hayfields this year, which also supported savannah sparrows, eastern meadowlarks and northern harriers.

The project has had a third successful year. Nearly \$50,000 was raised through private donations to protect grassland bird nesting habitat on 549 acres in 13 hayfields in nine towns in Vermont's Champlain Valley.

Since its pilot year in 2013, the Bobolink Project, a collaborative effort of Univer-

sity of Vermont (UVM) Extension, UVM's Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources and the University of Connecticut, has raised \$114,450 to ensure that more than 1,000 acres in Addison and Chittenden Counties are safe habitat for ground-nesting birds.

Administrative costs were covered by a U.S.D.A. grant through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture so all money raised went

directly to Vermont farmers. The project's success has drawn interest from sources in other states, including water companies, land trusts and communities that realize that they can manage some of their grassland areas for the benefit of the birds.

To learn more, visit www.bobolinkproject.com or contact Stephen Swallow at (860) 486-1917 or stephen.swallow@uconn.edu.

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West Pawlet Volunteer Fire Department Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, December 13th, a Pancake Breakfast, a charity fund-raiser event, will be held at the West Pawlet Volunteer Fire Department in West Pawlet, VT. Sponsored by the department's firemen, the breakfast is open from 7:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

The breakfast menu includes pancakes of several varieties including regular, chocolate chip, blueberry and cranberry; Belgian waffles with fresh Vermont maple syrup or strawberries and whipped cream; West Pawlet's world-famous home fries, scrambled eggs, sausage and bacon. The menu's beverages include coffee, tea, milk and orange juice.

Breakfast prices are \$8 for adults and children age 12 years and up, \$5 for 5-12 years and free to children under the age of 5 years.

Megan Price will sign her newest book, *Vermont Wild—Adventures of Fish & Game Wardens, Volume Four*.

West Pawlet Fire House, 2806 VT Rt. 153, West Pawlet, VT. For info contact: Antonio Landon at (802) 345-4312.

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Staff Christmas At the Diner

by Pamela Hayes Rehlen

The Castleton Village Store's annual Christmas party has been going on for years. This is our business, and there was a time when we held the party at our house, but it's a big gathering that gets pretty raucous as the night goes on, so we finally moved it down to our Birdseye Diner which has turned out to be just the place for it.

Planning-wise, the first thing that has to be hammered out is a party date, and that's usually negotiated in the kitchen with my husband, top cook Jean Hayes, and Debbie Griffin, the head waitress version of Horace Rumpole's wife, "She who must be obeyed."

Amidst shouted orders and the crash of dishes, the three of them settle on a mid-December, week-day night. It's always about the same date because at the store we have a number of college-student employees whom we want to include and who will be heading out of town for Christmas school vacation.

Everyone seems to look forward to this gathering, particularly since waitress Debbie's DJ brother-in-law from Whitehall started bringing over his Karaoke set-up for after-dinner entertainment.

The day of the party is invariably cold and dark. We're like little kids, particularly elated the years when we hear that snow is on the way. There's a lot of anticipatory excitement, and a sign goes up on the front door of the Castleton Village Store saying that we'll be closing early.

Most employees bring a pot luck dish. A lot of people break out their Santa hats, and the female cooks let down their hair and look unimaginably soft and gentle.

We employ more than fifty people in our businesses. They're all invited, and everyone is free to bring a spouse or significant other, but I'm always surprised at how many choose to come alone.

On any year, I head down to the diner early to take in the atmosphere of holiday excitement and find Debbie, very much in charge, standing with her friend and fellow Whitehall waitress Dulcie at the door and acting as official hostess.

Dulcie's son was once one of our young cooks. He's moved on to work in the Glens Falls Post Office, but at Christmas time he used to always be in the kitchen stirring his mother's sweet and sour meatballs.

The diner interior is warm and bright, icicle lights hanging at the windows and along the ceiling in the dining room, where a lot of equipment is set up and being tested by DJ Paul. A cluster of employees' red felt Christmas stockings



The counter grouping of diner Christmas party veterans are left to right: Rob Staudter (wine manager) Laura Steere, and Holly Hitchcock, then three student store staff.

are tacked up on the wall behind the cash register. I can't help thinking that this is a festive staff-hall scene right out of Downton Abbey. The guests begin to arrive, my sister Holly wearing on her jacket a little Santa pin with a light-up red nose, and underneath her jacket a Christmas bulbs necklace she tells people she bought 35 years ago at Wanamakers in Philadelphia when she was fashion director for the La Mode Button Company.

Martin, our twenty-year, store-errand-runner, and odd-job-doer, who has some learning challenges, follows Holly in. He's wearing a red and green elf hat, and always a loner, sets himself up in a far booth with a copy of *The Christmas Carol*, which he says he's now read four times.

One year, no one thought to put a sign on the front door, and a stranger arrived. When asked if he was a customer, he said, "I hope to be." But not that night. We had to turn him away, although some years we've just let walk-in strangers join us at the employees' buffet.

This evening, more employees materialize on the dark front steps. Our cook Janel's four-year-old son Aiden—"very sociable," Janel tells us—runs past holding a red balloon chasing his diminutive contemporary, a daughter of waitress Paula.

As soon as they finish eating, everyone crowds into the

Karaoke dining room. Because he's learned over the years that no one is going to let him off the hook, my husband—sporting the Christmas tie I gave him years ago that he used to scorn, but now likes—gets right up and sings the crowd favorite "Desperado." He's soon joined by the cooks, and when it comes to that gratifying refrain, "You better let somebody love you," the whole house joins in with a roar.

Cute little waitress Meghan, wearing black lace tights and high heeled cowboy boots, a member of the Rutland band *Satin and Steel*, is too shy to bring in her saxophone, but she decides to sing instead and hits a homer with, "I said hey what's going on?"

Later, waitress Paula gets up to belt out, "I'm sexy and I know it." Then the whole crowd joins in a powerful, hip-thrusting, fist-pumping rendition of "YMCA" by the Village People.

It will go on for hours, and then everyone pitches in to clean up. It's always that kind of evening. Staff Christmas at the diner, I don't see how it could get much better.

Pamela Hayes Rehlen has written and lived most of her life in Castleton Vermont. She is the author of many stories, articles, essays, magazine features, and of two books: The Blue Cat and the River's Song (\$17 plus shipping and handling) and The Vanished Landmarks Game—Vermont Stories from West of Birdseye (\$20 plus shipping and handling) available at the Castleton Village Store, P. O. Box 275 Castleton, Vermont 05735, and at a number of Vermont bookstores. To reach the store, call (802) 468-2213.

"...their whispering, gently-jostling spirits fill the pews around me like the cast of Our Town."

In the Bleak Midwinter

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

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

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

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

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

—CHRISTINA ROSSETTI
1872



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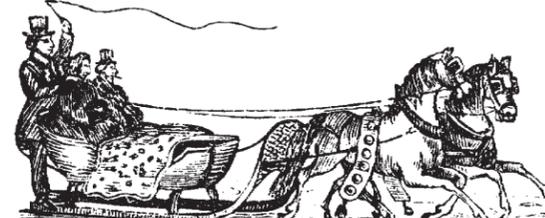


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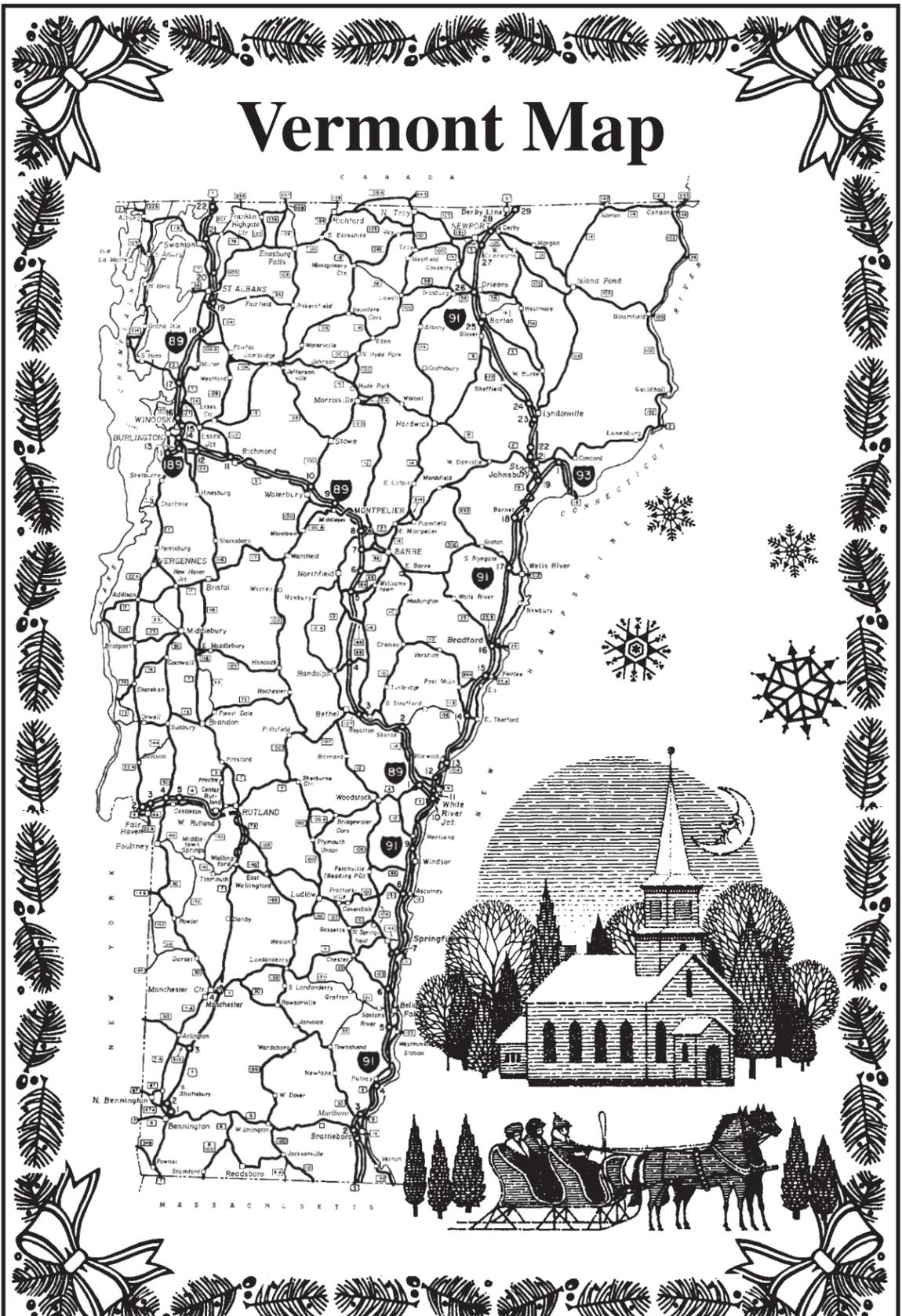
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— JOHN CLARE

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Vermont Country Calendar

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

DAILY EVENTS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1

CASTLETON. Concert: Castleton Jazz Ensemble & Jazz Combo. A mix of jazz standards, pop covers, and fusion pieces. Tickets: \$10 adults, \$5 students and children. 7:30 pm. Casella Theater at Castleton University, 62 Alumni Dr. (800) 639-8521. castleton.edu.

DUMMERSTON. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Christmas Tree Sales. Ready-cut or cut-your-own. Open Saturdays and Sundays 10 am - 4 pm, Mondays through Thursdays 12-4 pm, Fridays 12-7 pm through December 24. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 209 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. *Thru Dec. 24.*

RUTLAND. Santa's Arrival and Tree Lighting. Join us for Christmas carols led by local choral groups, hot chocolate and goodies. Follow Santa to the Paramount Theatre after for a meet & greet and winter movie double feature, *A Charlie Brown Christmas* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. Free! 6:30 pm. Depot Park. (802) 773-9380. www.rutlanddowntown.com.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2

RUTLAND. Concert: Brandi Carlile's Winter Acoustic Tour. Seattle-based alternative country and folk rock singer-songwriter. Tickets: \$82.75, \$62.75, \$53.75, \$42.75. 8 pm. Paramount Theater, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountlive.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm and Wednesdays 3-6 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 342-4727. www.vtfarmersmarket.org. *Wednesdays and Saturdays through May 7.*

SPRINGFIELD. Holiday Open House. Start your holiday shopping at Gallery at the VAULT. Refreshments too! Sale: 3-7 pm. Regular hours Tues.-Sat. 11-5. Open until 7 pm beginning Dec. 8, Sat. until 5 pm and Christmas Eve until 2 pm. Gallery at the VAULT, 68 Main St. (802) 855-7111. galleryvault.org.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3

BARNARD. Feast and Field Farmers Market. Music by Off the Rails. 5-7:30 pm. Town Hall, 115 North Rd. (802) 999-3391.

NORWICH. Norwich Square Annual Holiday Festivities. Featuring sales, wine, cheese, and seasonal refreshments. 4-8 pm. Norwich Bookstore, 291 Main St. (802) 649-1114. norwichbookstore.com.

STOWE. A Dickens Christmas Festival. Welcome reception at the Vermont Ski & Snowboard Museum at 5:30 pm. stoweibrancy.com. *Through December 5.*

LEBANON, NH. Performance: City Center Ballet presents *Clara's Dream & Clara's Tea*. Tickets: adults \$15-\$25, seniors (60+) \$12-\$20, children (18 & under) \$7.50-\$12.50. 7:30 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 N. Park St. (603) 448-0400. lebanonoperahouse.org. *Also December 4, 5 & 6.*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4

BRATTLEBORO. 17th Annual Cotton Mill Open Studios and Holiday Sale. 10-5 pm. Cotton Mill Hill. (802) 257-7731. info@brattleborodevelopment.com. *Also December 5 & 6.*

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. Hot beverages and on the weekends, hot food. Bake sale on some weekends. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. *Also December 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19 & 20.*

BURLINGTON. A Cape Breton Holiday Concert with Coig. Young Cape Breton musicians Rachel Davis, Crissy Crowley, Jason Roach and Darren McMullen. Tickets: \$35 adult, \$10 student. 7:30 pm; pre-concert talk at 6:30 pm. UVM Music Recital Hall, 384 S. Prospect St. (802) 656-4455. www.uvm.edu/laneseries.

MANCHESTER. Tractor Parade Weekend. First Friday Christmas Stroll with businesses open til 9 pm. (802) 362-6313. visitmanchestervt.com. *Also December 5.*

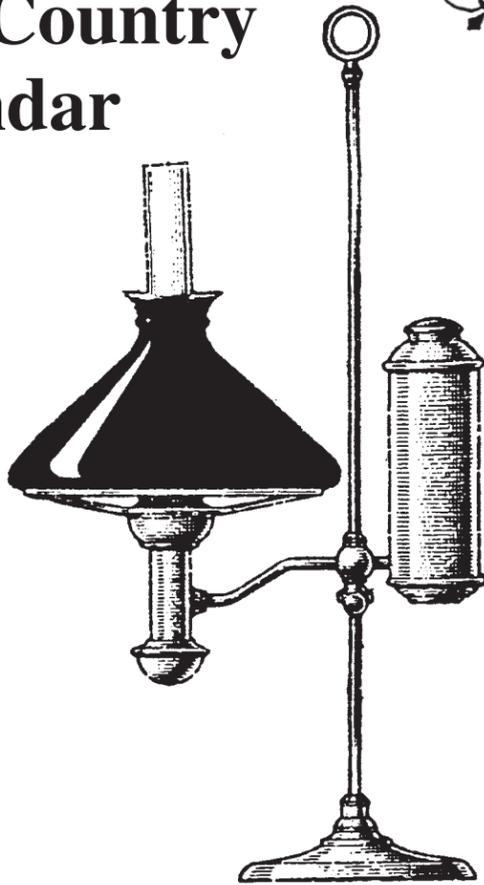
SHELburne. Evening Artisan Market. Free admission. 6:30-9 pm. Lake Champlain Waldorf School, 359 Turtle Lane. (802) 985-2827. www.lakechamplainwaldorfschool.org.

STOWE. Festival of Trees & Lights and Art Show. Opening reception, 5-8 pm. Helen Day Art Center, 90 Pond St. (802) 253-8358. www.helenday.com. *Through January 1.*

STOWE. A Dickens Christmas Festival. stoweibrancy.com. *Also December 5.*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5

BRANDON. Delights of December: Holiday Reception. Christmas family favorites from yesteryear in the Phonograph Museum.



Gift shops and "The Art of Giving—The Giving of Art" holiday show. Shop the Compass Treasure Chest and Local Farmer's Market. The café will be serving lunch. 12 noon - 5 pm. Compass Music and Arts Center, 333 Jones Dr. (802) 247-4295. cmacvt.org.

BRATTLEBORO. 45th Annual Community Messiah Sing: A Benefit for the Homeless. Friends of Music at Guilford. Admission by donation. 1-3 pm. Centre Congregational Church, 193 Main St. (802) 254-3600. www.fomag.org.

BRATTLEBORO. 17th Annual Cotton Mill Open Studios and Holiday Sale. 10-5 pm. Cotton Mill Hill. (802) 257-7731. *Also December 6.*

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. Hot beverages and on the weekends, hot food. Bake sale on some weekends. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. *Also December 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19 & 20.*

BURLINGTON. A Feast of Carols Concert with Bella Voce and the Essex Children's Choir. Tickets: \$18, senior citizens and students \$15. 8 pm. First Baptist Church, 81 St. Paul St. (802) 999-8881. www.bellavocevt.org. *Also December 6.*

BURLINGTON. VSO Masterworks: The Vermont Symphony Orchestra Chorus joins the Orchestra for Schubert, Sibelius, and Dvorak. Tickets: adults \$61-\$16, students \$9. 8 pm. Flynn MainStage, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. box@flynncenter.org. flynnitix.org.

CHESTER. St. Luke's Annual Christmas Tea & Sale. Savor a cup of hot tea or mulled cider, tea sandwiches, cookies, and delicious holiday foods. Shop for great gift-giving items: original handmade ornaments, hand-quilted gift items, angel table, tree toppers, boxwood tabletop trees, holiday baked goods, handknit gifts, Grandma's Attic Treasure Room & much more! 11 am - 3 pm. Willard Hall, St. Luke's Church, 313 Main St. (802) 875-6000. www.stlukesepiscopalvt.org.

CHESTER. 30th Annual Overture to Christmas. Breakfast at the Baptist Church, Holly Art Fair, St. Luke's Christmas Tea and Sale. Live Nativity Scene at the Baptist Church. Parade of Presents with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Lighting of the Town Christmas Tree. Santa and Mrs. Claus host children in the lobby of the Fullerton Inn with cookies, cocoa, books and candy canes. Luminaries light up Main St. Springfield Community Chorus performs a free concert at the First Baptist Church, 7:30 pm. (802) 875-2444. www.fullertoninn.com.

ESSEX JUNCTION. Vermont International Festival. Crafts, ethnic foods, international music, dance and stories. 10 am - 6 pm at Champlain Valley Exposition. (802) 863-6713. vermontinternationalfestival.com. *Also December 6.*

HANOVER, NH. Musical: Theatreworks USA's *Skippyjon Jones Snow What*. While his sisters curl up to Mother Cat's reading of Snow White, Skippy assumes his alter ego and charges into his closet—er, the wilderness—to fight a dragon and save a princepsca frozen in a block of ice. Tickets: \$18/\$23, 18 & under \$13/\$18. 3 pm. Hopkins Center for the Arts. (603) 646-2422. hop.dartmouth.edu.

KILLINGTON. Vermont Holiday Festival. Holiday fun and entertainment for all ages! Free. 4-8 pm. Killington Grand Hotel, 228 E. Mountain Rd. (802) 422-5001. killington.com.

LEBANON, NH. Performance: City Center Ballet presents *Clara's Dream & Clara's Tea*. Tickets: adults \$15-\$25, seniors (60+) \$12-\$20, children (18 & under) \$7.50-\$12.50. 1 & 4 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 N. Park St. (603) 448-0400. lebanonoperahouse.org. *Also December 6.*

Valediction for the Year

Each phase of the year is a promise
of the phase to come
and a repetition of a previous phase,
a sure turn of the wheel of the year.
The most difficult thing for me in winter
is to stay where I am
and to keep from looking ahead into spring.
It is hard to hold steady,
to accept the bare tangle of branches,
the soft secrecy of the buds,
the sleek cones of the catkins
which perfectly contain both birth and death.
It is hard to remain in place
in the certainty of these things here and now:
the cold river, the crisp wind, the finite sky,
the everlasting bouquets of spent flowers,
the darkening hulls of black walnuts
and osage fruits,
the settling leaves, the low sun,
Orion in the night,
the mornings without birdsong,
the falling seeds of the winterberry,
the withering bittersweet
and honeysuckle berries,
not seeing past the horizon,
not finding God-to-come,
free from the need for summer,
self-sufficient, knowing that the center
is here as well as there
in this tight and impeccable close,
as well as in the far green paradise of June.

—BILL FELKER

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Vermont Country Calendar

(December 5, continued)

LUNENBURG. Annual Gingerbread Bazaar. Door prizes, free cookie stacking, fabulous Fudge Shop, the new baked goods table, homemade soup and sandwich luncheon, fun activities with Mrs. Claus, the "Pocket Lady" with her grab bag items, and vendors with Christmas theme and gift items. 10 am – 3 pm. Lunenburg Primary School, 49 Bobbin Mill Rd. (802) 892-6654. questions@topofthecommon.com. www.topofthecommon.org.

LYNDONVILLE. Santa Claus is Coming to Town. Holiday crafts for children at the Cobleigh Public Library, 10–11:30 am. Santa will arrive at the Darling Inn at noon to visit with children with free hot cocoa, cookies and candy canes. Take pictures with Santa and real, live reindeer from the Vermont Reindeer Farm. (802) 626-9696.

MANCHESTER. Choral Society Concert. The Bennington County Choral Society performs "Music of the French Cathedrals," in a concert featuring more than 100 performers. Program includes Massenet, Poulenc, and Fauré. Tickets \$15 adults, students \$10. Concert 7:30 pm. Southern Vermont Arts Center, 930 Southern Vermont Arts Center Dr. (802) 362-1905. bcscmusic.wordpress.com. Also December 6 & 12.

MANCHESTER. Tractor Parade Weekend. Hooked on the Holidays at the American Museum of Fly Fishing, 10 am – 4 pm. 6th Annual Lighted Tractor Parade departing from Dorr Farm on Rt. 30 at 5 pm. Hildene Museum store open. (802) 362-6313. visitmanchestervt.com.

MANCHESTER. Hildene Holiday House. Robert and Mary Lincoln's home is decorated as they might have done in the early 1900's. Apple cider, Vermont tastings & fresh cider doughnuts. Distinctive holiday gifts. Open daily 9:30 am-4:30 pm. Admission \$18 adults, children 6 to 14, \$5, under 6, free. No admission charged for welcome center and museum store. Rt. 7A. (802) 362-1788. www.hildene.org. Also December 6.

MIDDLEBURY. Henry Sheldon Museum Holiday Open House and Model Train Show. Elaborate electric train layout, carols played on the Sheldon's 1831 piano. Twelve Days of Christmas tree raffle featuring creative miniature trees decorated by local artists. Admission by donation. 10 am – 4 pm. Henry Sheldon Museum, 1 Park St. (802) 388-2117. HenrySheldonMuseum.org. Also December 6.

MONTPELIER. Horse Drawn Wagon Rides. Leave from City Center, 11 am to 2 pm. Free. (802) 223-9604. montpelierlive.org. Also December 12 and 19.

MONTPELIER. Cookie Decorating. Chef Kat and New England Culinary Institute students help kids and families make beautiful holiday cookies. 12:30-4 pm. New England Culinary Institute Center, 56 College St. (802) 223-9604. montpelierlive.org.

MORRISVILLE. 16th Annual Festival of Lights. Meet Santa & Mrs. Claus, enjoy free movies, sleigh rides, campfire, make lanterns and felt balls, decorate holiday cookies, see puppet shows, and join The Polar Express – climb aboard for music, crafts, refreshments and fun! Then on to pizza making and a community parade with tree lighting and caroling. 9:30 am – 6 pm. Sponsored by the Morrystown Alliance for Culture & Commerce. Oxbow Riverfront Park, 74 Pleasant St. (802) 279-2926. www.riverartsvt.org.

PEACHAM. High Holiday Tea. Sample a variety of teas as well as many sweet and savory delights! Festive holiday music and a raffle. Suggested donation: \$10. Proceeds benefit Peacham Library. 2-4 pm. Peacham Library, 656 Bayley Hazen Rd. (802) 592-3216. peachamlibrary.org.

PITTSFORD. St. Alphonsus Catholic Church Christmas Fair. White elephant table, baked goods, antiques, silent auction, teacup raffle, traditional raffle, Christmas decorations, handmade items, and jewelry. Lunch available. 9 am – 2 pm. St. Alphonsus Catholic Church, 2918 US Rt. 7. (802) 483-2301.

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

PLYMOUTH. Coolidge Annual Holiday Open House. Visit the Coolidge Birthplace, decorated as it would have been in the late 19th century. See the winter exhibits at the Museum & Education Center, Aldrich House, Plymouth Cheese Factory, and 1924 Summer White House office. Enjoy horse-drawn sleigh rides, old-time music, craft demonstrations, lunch at the Wilder House Restaurant, special cancellation at the historic Plymouth post office, and children's holiday activities. 10 am – 4 pm. President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site, 3780 Rt. 100A. (802) 672-3773. www.historicsites.vermont.gov/coolidge.

POULTNEY. Santa Claus is coming to Poultney! Come for Story Time at 5–6:30 pm at the library. At 6:30 pm Santa arrives atop a Poultney Fire Department truck to lead the children down the street to the Town Office for cocoa and cookies, dedication, and town tree lighting. 5 pm at the Poultney Public Library, 205 Main St. (802) 287-5556. poultneypubliclibrary.com. www.poultneyvt.com.

RANDOLPH. Classical Concert. With Pianist Simone Dinnerstein performing a new work by Philip Lasser, *The Bruegel Suite*; Schumann's *Scenes from Childhood*; Bach's *French Suite #5*; and *Four Impromptus, Op 90* by Schubert. Tickets: adults \$40, students \$5. To purchase go online or call the box office weekdays 3-6 pm at (802) 728-6464. Concert at 7:30, reception follows. Chandler Center for the Arts, 71-73 Main St. For information call (802) 728-9878. emily@chandler-arts.org. chandler-arts.org.

RICHMOND. Holiday Market. Visit with the folks from the Birds of Vermont Museum and find some wonderful holiday gifts at the market. 9 am – 2:30 pm. At the Richmond Town Hall, Library and Congregational Church, on Bridge St. (802) 434-2167. www.birdsofvermont.org.

RUPERT. Wreath-Making Workshop. Merck Forest supplies guests with a wreath-making frame, tools, and boughs. Coffee and tea are available in the Visitor Center. Fee: \$20 per person. Pre-register. 1-4 pm. Merck Forest and Farmland Center, Rt. 315. (802) 394-7836. merckforest.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Saturdays 10 am – 2 pm and Wednesdays 3-6 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. (802) 342-4727. info@vtfarmersmarket.org www.vtfarmersmarket.org. Wednesdays and Saturdays through May 7.

RUTLAND. Holiday Train Rides. The 45-minute ride will take you through a magical Santa's Village in a beautifully decorated train. Included will be refreshments, stories, songs and more. Tickets \$16. Sponsored by Catamount Radio. The Santa Train will depart from downtown Rutland's Amtrak station, 25 Evelyn St., at 10 am, 12 pm, 1:30 pm, 3 pm and 4:30 pm. (802) 775-7500. catamountradio.com.

RUTLAND. Chaffee Art Center's Annual Holiday Boutique. Gallery open 12-6 pm Thursdays and Fridays, and 12-4 pm Saturdays. The Chaffee Art Center, 16 S Main St. (802) 775-0356. chaffeeartcenter.org. Thru Dec. 18.

RUTLAND. 13th Annual Festival of Trees: Live Benefit Auction. Catered by Roots the Restaurant. Cash bar featuring an assortment of wines, beer and soft drinks. Admission \$10. 6-11 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. www.paramountlivevt.org.

SHELBURNE. Annual Holiday Fair. Artisan market, holiday singing, children's craft making, storytelling, magical activities, games, African drumming, homemade bistro food and more! Free admission. 10:30 am – 3 pm. Lake Champlain Waldorf School, 359 Turtle Lane. (802) 985-2827. www.lakechamplainwaldorfschool.org.

Birding Hot Spots in Rutland County

Rutland County Audubon Society has developed a list of places to bird in our area—places that are special to us and are representative of a variety of habitats.

These birding hotspots are places that are publicly accessible; some large, some small. A few involve hiking and others can be canoed.

The spots are selected because they host special birds or habitats. Some are chosen because they are a good place to take kids or a

place for a quick break from our everyday lives. We hope you will visit these places and report sightings to www.ebird.org so we can increase the knowledge of the birds of Rutland County.

If there is a place that is special to you, please let us know!

Aitken State Forest

Aitken State Forest in Mendon was monitored by Rutland County Audubon during the 2008-09 season

for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation. Seventy-five species were tallied. Birding is at its best May through July although it is a pleasant place for a walk at other seasons.

Sixteen species of warblers are present including Nashville, Magnolia, Louisiana Waterthrush, Mourning and Canada warbler. Black-throated Blue Warblers are numerous as well as American Redstart and Ovenbird. Winter Wren and Scarlet Tanager are also abundant May through September.

Resident species include Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Downy, Hairy and Pileated woodpeckers, Red-breasted and White-breasted nuthatches, and Brown Creeper.

The area is heavily hunted during deer season; wear



orange or avoid the area. The trails to the top of Bald Mountain can be confusing so consult the map on the information kiosk.

Directions: Take Killington Ave east from the city of Rutland. At the top of the hill, turn right onto Notch Rd. Continue on Notch past the intersection with Wheelerville Rd. An information kiosk is on the right side of Notch Rd. with pullouts along the road for parking.

For more information visit rutlandcountyaudubon.org.

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Vermont Country Calendar

SHREWSBURY. Shrewsbury Library's Silent Auction and Annual Cookie Swap. Bake a 3-6 dozen of your favorite cookie recipe to share. Silent auction upstairs. 7 pm. In the Great Room, Shrewsbury Library, 98 Town Hill Rd. (802) 492-3410.

SPRINGFIELD. 37th Annual Beyond the Unicorn Christmas Craft Fair. Ninety talented crafters from all over the region will showcase their handmade wares. Food sales with pies and loaves of bread, book signings, gift wrapping and raffle drawings throughout the day (items donated by all 90 crafters)! 9 am - 4 pm. Riverside Middle School on Rt. 11 west. (802) 885-3579. mgelineau@vermontel.net.

SPRINGFIELD. Workshop: Still Life in Pastel. With Robert Carsten. Working from objects or from your photos, you will create strong still life compositions. All levels of artist are welcome. Fee \$80. 9:30 am - 4 pm. Gallery at the VAULT, 68 Main St. (802) 885-7111. galleryvault@vermontel.net. www.galleryvault.org.

ST. ALBANS. Book & Author Event. Meet author Megan Price and get signed copies of her latest collection of Fish & Game Warden stories, the new *Vermont Wild, Volume 4*, and all the other volumes! Eloquent Page, 70 N. Main St. Call for time. (802) 527-7243. www.vermontwild.com.

STOWE. A Dickens Christmas Festival. Victorian Vendors Marketplace and Annual Christmas Bazaar at Stowe Community Church, 10 am - 4 pm. Santa Claus and his Reindeer, Christmas cookie making, free wagon rides, Main Stage performances, strolling carolers and Dickens actors. Crafts at the Rec Center 12-3 pm. Dickens Dancing Ice Show & Family Skate at Stowe Arena, 4:30 pm. stoweivibrancy.com.

VERGENNES. Holiday Stroll. Holiday happenings all over the Little City! Breakfast with Santa, holiday craft fair. Make decorations in Santa's workshop, decorate cookies. Music by the Champlain Brass Quintet, Victory Baptist Church Choir, Dickens Carolers, Addison County Gospel Choir. Lighted SD Ireland Holiday Truck. Bixby Library silent auction. City Park tree lighting. 7:30 am - 5:30 pm. (802) 388-7951. www.addisoncounty.com.

WAITSFIELD. 17th Annual Country Christmas Open House & Holiday Paint-In. Refreshments next to a bonfire. Streets will be lit for the Festival of Lights, music will be playing from the church steeple, and shops will be aglow. (802) 496-3409. madrivervalley.com. Also December 6.

WATERBURY. The River of Light Annual Community Lantern Parade. Along Main Street culminating with a fiery finale with bonfires, hot chocolate, and entertainment provided by Ingis Solus. Music by Sambatucada, Brass Balagan, and the Crossett Brook Middle School Junk Band. 5-6 pm. (802) 778-0334.

WATERBURY. Bridgeside Books Annual Holiday Open House. Delicious treats, along with warm mulled cider. Catch the best seat in town for the River of Light Lantern parade, and nibbles and libations beginning at 4:30 pm. The River of Light parade begins at 5 pm and winds its way past Bridgeside Books around 5:20 pm. Bridgeside Books, Stowe St. (802) 244-1441. bridgesidebooks.com.

WELLS RIVER. North Country Chorus Holiday Concert. Featuring J.S. Bach's *Magnificat* and *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, a cantata composed by Matthew Harris based on the text by Dylan Thomas. Tickets \$12 adults, \$5 students. 7:30 pm. Wells River Congregational Church, 76 S. Main St. northcountrychorus.org.

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

WEST PAWLET. Christmas Craft Fair and Flea Market. Large bake sale, luncheon and raffles. Luncheon menu includes hamburgers, hot dogs, corn chowder, sandwiches, beverages and more. Santa will arrive at 12:30 pm. 9 am - 3 pm. West Pawlet Volunteer Fire Station, 2806 VT Rt. 153 (Main Street). (802) 645-0244 or (802) 645-0398.

WEST RUTLAND. St. Bridget's Christmas Sale. Homemade crafts, photography, Pampered Chef, Avon, bake sale, white elephant and huge basket raffle. 9 am - 2:30 pm. Parish Hall, St. Bridget's Catholic Church, 28 Church St. (802) 438-5771 or (802) 438-2490.

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

WOODSTOCK. Annual Thompson Senior Center Holiday Bazaar & Cookie Walk. 9 am - 1 pm. Tickets \$5, or 6 for \$20. The Thompson Senior Center, 99 Senior Way. (802) 457-3277. thompsonseniorcenter.org..

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6

BENNINGTON. Choral Society Concert. The Bennington County Choral Society performs "Music of the French Cathedrals," featuring more than 100 performers. Program includes Massenet, Poulenc, and Fauré. Tickets \$15 adults, students \$10. Concert 3 pm. Mount Anthony Union High School, 301 Park St. (802) 362-1905. bccsmusic.wordpress.com. Also December 12.

BRATTLEBORO. 17th Annual Cotton Mill Open Studios and Holiday Sale. 10-5 pm. Cotton Mill Hill. (802) 257-7731. info@brattleborodevelopment.com.

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. Hot beverages and on the weekends, hot food. Bake sale on some weekends. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. Also December 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19 & 20.

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

ESSEX JUNCTION. Vermont International Festival. Crafts from all over the world, ethnic and gourmet foods, and international music, dance and stories. 10 am - 6 pm at Champlain Valley Exposition, 105 Pearl St. (802) 863-6713. www.vermontinternationalfestival.com.

LEBANON, NH. Performance: City Center Ballet presents *Clara's Dream & Clara's Tea*. Tickets: adults \$15-\$25, seniors (60+) \$12-\$20, children (18 & under) \$7.50-\$12.50. 3 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 N. Park St. (603) 448-0400. lebanonoperahouse.org.

LUDLOW. Museum Silent Auction. A festival of lights silent auction and dinner to benefit Mount Holly Community Historical Museum with auction and hors d'oeuvres at 6 pm followed by buffet dinner. \$45 per person, cash bar. Harry's Café, 68 Rt. 100, across Rt. 103 from the Jackson Gore access road. (802) 259-2136. www.mounthollyvtmuseum.org.

MANCHESTER. Hildene Holiday House. Robert and Mary Lincoln's home is decorated as they might have done in the early 1900's. Unusual gifts, apple cider, Vermont tastings & fresh cider doughnuts. Open daily 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. Admission \$18 adults, children 6 to 14, \$5, under 6, free. No admission charged for welcome center and museum store. Rt. 7A. (802) 362-1788. hildene.org.

MIDDLEBURY. Henry Sheldon Museum Holiday Open House and Model Train Show. Elaborate electric train layout, carols played on the Sheldon's 1831 piano. Twelve Days of Christmas tree raffle featuring creative miniature trees decorated by local artists. Also on view through December 31, "Warren Kimble All-American Artist: An Eclectic Retrospective". Admission by donation. 12-4 pm. Henry Sheldon Museum, 1 Park St. (802) 388-2117. www.HenrySheldonMuseum.org.

MILTON. Holiday Concert & Sing-Along. Milton Community Band and special guests of the Colchester Community Chorus. Narration of *Twas the Night Before Christmas* by John Lindsay, and a sing-along. Free. Sponsored by the Town of Milton's Recreation Dept. 2 pm. 17 Rebecca Lander Drive (802) 893-4922 miltonvt.org.

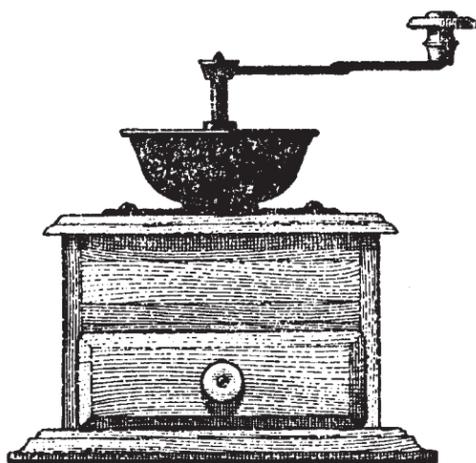
PEACHAM. North Country Chorus Holiday Concert. J.S. Bach's *Magnificat* and *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, a cantata composed by Matthew Harris based on the text by Dylan Thomas. Tickets \$12 adults, \$5 students. 7:30 pm. Peacham Congregational Church. northcountrychorus.org.

RUTLAND. Handels' *Messiah*. Annual presentation by Rutland Area Chorus and Orchestra. 3:30 and 7 pm. Grace Congregational Church, 8 Court St. (802) 775-4301 x 208. dchart6010@aol.com. www.gracechurchvt.org.

RUTLAND. Meet the Grinch! Children and kids-at-heart will get to meet Dr. Seuss's meanest and greenest creation. Bring a camera and get a photo taken with the Grinch. Grow your heart three sizes by bringing a nonperishable donation for our local food shelf. 12-1 pm. Phoenix Books, 2 Center St. (802) 855-8078. www.phoenixbooks.biz.

STOWE. Stowe Vibrancy Presents *A Christmas Carol: The Musical*. 7 pm. Stowe Town Hall Theater, 67 Main St. (802) 253-3961. stowetheatre.com. Also December 10-13.

WAITSFIELD. 17th Annual Country Christmas Open House & Holiday Paint-In. Refreshments next to a bonfire. Streets lit for the Festival of Lights, music playing from the church steeple. (802) 496-3409. www.madrivervalley.com.



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Vermont Country Calendar

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Linger in the cozy farmhouse kitchen as treats are baked in the woodstove. Holiday programs. Adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. Hot beverages and on the weekends, hot food. Bake sale on some weekends. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. lhstrees.com. Also December 12, 13, 14, 19, 20.

DUMMERSTON. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Christmas Tree Sales. Ready-cut or cut-your-own. Open Saturdays and Sundays 10 am - 4 pm, Mondays through Thursdays 12-4 pm, Fridays 12-7 pm through December 24. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 209 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. Through December 24.

RICHMOND. Workshop: Winter Birds. Co-sponsored by the Birds of Vermont Museum and the Richmond Community Senior Center. Free. 1-3 pm. Richmond Free Library. (802) 434-2167. www.birdsofvermont.org.

WOODSTOCK. Concert: Judy Collins Holidays & Hits. Tickets \$49.50 reserved seating. 7:30 pm. Woodstock Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green (802) 457-3981. www.kconcerts.com.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8

BURLINGTON. Acoustic Concert: Dirk Powell and Riley Baugus, two of the most respected Old Time musicians in the world. Donation \$20. 6 pm, doors open at 5:30 pm. Burlington Violin Shop, 23 Church St. (802) 233-5293. www.youngtraditionvermont.org.

DUMMERSTON. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Christmas Tree Sales. Ready-cut or cut-your-own. Open Saturdays and Sundays 10 am - 4 pm, Mondays through Thursdays 12-4 pm, Fridays 12-7 pm through December 24. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 209 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. Through December 24.

RUTLAND. Free Movie. *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.* One of Rutland's free winter movie series every Tuesday in December. Concession stand by Roots the Restaurant. 7 pm. At the Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 773-9380. rutlanddowntown.com

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9

BURLINGTON. 11th Annual Winter Tales. Produced by Vermont Stage. Tickets: \$28.80-\$55. 8 pm. FlynnSpace, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. box@flynncenter.org. flynnntix.org. Also December 10, 11, 12 & 13.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Local produce, crafts, prepared foods. Live music. EBT and debit cards. Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm and Wednesdays 3-6 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 342-4727. info@vtfarmersmarket.org. www.vtfarmersmarket.org. *Wednesdays and Saturdays through May 7.*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10

BURLINGTON. 11th Annual Winter Tales. Produced by Vermont Stage. Tickets: \$28.80-\$55. 7:30 pm. FlynnSpace, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. box@flynncenter.org. flynnntix.org. Also December 11, 12 & 13.

PUTNEY. A Thousand Cranes Workshop. This residency performance with the Nasher Sculpture Center of Dallas, the East Coast Chamber Orchestra (ECCO) and harpist Sivan Magen perform Chris Theofanidis' new work *A Thousand Cranes* for its world premiere on Nasher's Soundings series. Free. 8 pm. At Next Stage, Yellow Barn, 15 Kimball Hill Rd. (802) 387-6637. www.nextstagearts.org. yellowbarn.org.

STOWE. Stowe Vibrancy Presents *A Christmas Carol: The Musical.* 7 pm. Stowe Town Hall Theater, 67 Main St. For tickets call (802) 253-3961. info@stowetheatre.com. stowetheatre.com. Also December 11, 12 & 13.

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

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11

BARRE. Vermont Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops. Music from favorite Christmas movies, a masquerade ball, a fractured fairy tale, and of course the *Nutcracker*. Plus an amazing youth soloist, the VSO brass, and a carol singalong. Tickets: adult \$28.30, seniors \$22.64, 18 and under \$8.49. 7:30 pm. Barre Opera House, 6 N. Main St. (802) 476-8188. www.barreoperahouse.org. vso.org.

BELLOWS FALLS. Advent Retreat: Journeys with Celtic Christians. Explore how Celtic notions of hospitality, transition, blessing, forgiveness, nature and community, can shape our own personal faith. Registration: \$120-\$340. 5 pm Friday through 2 pm Sunday. Immanuel Retreat Center, 12 & 14 Church St. (802) 460-0110. stonechurcharts.org.

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. Hot beverages and on the weekends, hot food. Bake sale on some weekends. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. lhstrees.com. Also December 12, 13, 18, 19 & 20.

BURLINGTON. 11th Annual Winter Tales. Produced by Vermont Stage. Tickets: \$28.80-\$55. 7:30 pm. FlynnSpace, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. flynnntix.org. Also December 12 & 13.

BURLINGTON. Nebraska Theatre Caravan presents *A Christmas Carol.* Featuring a 24-member cast, a live orchestra, colorful costumes, spirited dancing, and show-stopping special effects. Tickets: \$15-\$45. 7 pm. Flynn MainStage, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. flynnntix.org.

CLAREMONT, NH. Ballet: *Clara's Cracked Christmas.* A modern twist on the Nutcracker presented by Stardancer Studios. 6 pm. Claremont Opera House, 58 Claremont Opera House Square. For tickets call (603) 5542-4433. Also December 12 & 13.

DUMMERSTON. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Christmas Tree Sales. Ready-cut or cut-your-own. Open Saturdays and Sundays 10 am - 4 pm, Mondays through Thursdays 12-4 pm, Fridays 12-7 pm through December 24. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 209 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. Through December 24.

GUILFORD. 43rd Annual Christmas at Christ Church. The Guilford Chamber Players present a program of sacred and secular holiday songs. Don McLean reads *The Christmas Lie*, set in Canada's Alberta. Everyone sings a few traditional carols. Donation. 8 pm. Christ Church, Rt. 5 South and Melendy Hill Rd. (802) 254-3600. www.fomag.org. Also December 12.

MANCHESTER. Inn Tour Weekend. Historic Walking Tours of Bonnet St. and Main St., 2-4 pm, leaving from the visitor's center. (802) 362-6313. visitmanchestervt.com.

MANCHESTER CENTER. Book & Author Event. Terence Hawkins presents *American Neolithic.* Free. 7 pm. Northshire Bookstore, 4869 Main St. (802) 362-2200. www.northshire.com.

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Vermont Country Calendar



wetpaintplayers.com. 2 & 7 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 N. Park St. (603) 448-0400. lebanonoperahouse.org. Also December 13.

LUDLOW. Full Moon Snowshoe Hike. This guided snowshoe hike up the mountain will offer a nighttime perspective of Okemo's Jackson Gore under the light of a full moon. Return to the fire pit at the Jackson Gore Inn to roast marshmallows and share stories. Free for participants with snowshoes. Rental snowshoes available on site. Registration and snowshoe fitting at 7 pm. 111 Jackson Gore Road. Hike starts at 7:30. (802) 228-1956. www.okemo.com.

MANCHESTER. Inn Tour Weekend. Historic Walking Tours of Bonnet St., Main St., and Manchester Village, 10 am - 2 pm, leaving from the Equinox Hotel. Inn Tours with 13 participating inns, 1-5 pm, tickets \$15/\$35. Community Potluck at the Manchester Library, 6-8 pm. (802) 362-6313. visitmanchestertv.com.

MONTPELIER. Touch of Vermont Holiday Gift Market. Nearly 50 Vermont artisans helping to raise funds to benefit the Family Center of Washington County. Raffle prizes from each vendor as well as prizes worth over \$250. 9 am - 4 pm. Free. Montpelier City Hall, 39 Main St. (802) 310-1725 touchofvt.org.

RUTLAND. *Elf, The Musical, Jr.* Presented by Rutland Youth Theatre, the story of Buddy, a young orphan who mistakenly crawls into Santa's bag of gifts and is transported to the North Pole. Tickets: Adults \$10, Seniors/under 12 \$8. 7 pm. Paramount Theater, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountlive.org. Also December 12.

STOWE. Stowe Vibrancy Presents *A Christmas Carol: The Musical.* 7 pm. Stowe Town Hall Theater, 67 Main St. For tickets call (802) 253-3961. info@stowetheatre.com. stowetheatre.com. Also December 12 & 13.

WOODSTOCK. Wassail Weekend. Christmas at Billings Farm, \$4-\$14, 10 am - 4 pm. Woodstock Elementary School Sunrise Chorus, free, at Norman Williams Library, 4 pm. Open House at Dana House Museum, free, 5-7 pm. Performance of Woven by the Yoh Theatre Players, Yoh Theatre, tickets \$10 adults, \$8 students, (802) 457-1317, 7:30 pm. Concert: La Voz de Tres, tickets \$25, (802) 457-3981, Town Hall Theatre, 7:30 pm. (888) 496-6378. woodstockvt.com. Also December 12 & 13.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12

BELLOWS FALLS. Concert: Atlantic Crossing. Tickets: \$17, senior & student/child \$13, premium \$35. 7:30 pm. Immanuel Episcopal Church, 12 Church St. (802) 460-0110. sca@sover.net. www.stonechurcharts.org.

BENNINGTON. St. Peter's Episcopal Church 75th Anniversary Christmas Tea. Fundraiser, with our best cookies and tea sandwiches along with tea, coffee and punch. The parish hall has been transformed into a beautiful candlelight tea room adorned with pine trees and wreaths, and the breathtaking high tea table by Joyce Hall. 3-5 pm. St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 200 Pleasant St. (802) 442-2911.

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. Hot beverages and on the weekends, hot food. Bake sale on some weekends. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. Also December 13, 18, 19 & 20.

BURLINGTON. 11th Annual Winter Tales. Produced by Vermont Stage. Featuring brand new stories from members of the Burlington Writers Workshop, poetry brought to you by the Young Writers Project, and songs written and performed by Patti Casey. Tickets: \$28.80-\$55. 2 & 7:30 pm. FlynnSpace, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. box@flynncenter.org. flynnntix.org. Also December 13.

BURLINGTON. Vermont Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops. Music from favorite Christmas movies, a masquerade ball, a fractured fairy tale, and of course the *Nutcracker*. Plus an amazing youth soloist, the VSO brass, and a carol singalong. Tickets: Adults \$52/\$42/\$27/\$15, Students \$9 in all sections. 5 7:30 pm. Flynn MainStage, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. box@flynncenter.org. flynnntix.org.

CLAREMONT, NH. Ballet: *Clara's Cracked Christmas.* A modern twist on the Nutcracker presented by Stardancer Studios. Contemporary and classical music. 1 pm. Claremont Opera House, 58 Claremont Opera House Square. For tickets call (603) 554-4433. Also December 13.

DANBY. Benefit Bingo. To benefit Project Currier Excellence (PCE). \$20 for book of 10 games, three boards per game. Additional board \$8. Wear a Santa hat and get two extra tickets for two games. Door prizes, \$2,000 raffle winner drawing, pie/cake auction. Refreshments available. Starting 6 pm. Doors open 5:30 pm. Currier Memorial School, 234 N. Main St. (802) 293-5191.

DUMMERSTON. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Christmas Tree Sales. Ready-cut or cut-your-own. Fresh Balsam wreaths, centerpieces, and greenery! Country Store open with fresh certified organic produce. Free hot cider, hot chocolate & pretzels. Open Saturdays and Sundays 10 am - 4 pm, Mondays through Thursdays 12-4 pm, Fridays 12-7 pm through December 24. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 209 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. Through December 24.

ENFIELD, NH. Christmas Lights Display. 5-9 pm. Santa program Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 pm through Dec. 19. Christmas concerts 5:15 Dec. 12 & 19. Nativity display, over 450 Creches. No admission charged, donations accepted. Refreshments in cafeteria. La Salette Shrine, 410 Rt. 4A. (603) 632-7087. www.lasaletteofenfield.org. Through December 31.

ESSEX. Book & Author Event. Meet author Megan Price and get signed copies of her latest collection of Fish & Game Warden stories, the new *Vermont Wild, Volume 4*, and all the other volumes! 1-3 pm. Phoenix Bookstore, 21 Essex Way, #407. (802) 872-7111. www.vermontwild.com.

GUILFORD. 43rd Annual Christmas at Christ Church. The Guilford Chamber Players present a program of sacred and secular holiday songs. Don McLean reads The Christmas Lie, set in Canada's Alberta. Everyone sings a few traditional carols. Donation. 4 pm. Christ Church, Rt. 5 South and Melendy Hill Rd. (802) 254-3600. www.fomag.org.

LEBANON, NH. Performance: Lebanon High School Wet Paint Players present *Xanadu*. To order tickets contact



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Vermont Country Calendar

(December 12, continued)

MONTPELIER. Horse Drawn Wagon Rides. Leave from City Center, 11 am to 2 pm. Free. (802) 223-9604. montpelierlive.org. Also December 19.

MOUNT HOLLY. Christmas in Mount Holly. The true Christmas spirit resonates through the library with carolers, a Christmas skit, refreshments and, of course, a visit from Santa. Free! 6-8 pm. At the Mount Holly Town Library, 26 Maple Hill Rd. (802) 259-2562. mounthollyvt.org.

PEACHAM. Santa, Crafts and Latkes. A party for the whole family. Start the morning with crafts, followed by a visit from the man in red, and end with a feast of latkes and applesauce. 10 am – 12 pm. Peacham Library, 656 Bayley-Hazen Rd. (802) 592-3216. peachamlibrary.org.

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

PUTNEY. Choral Society Concert. The Bennington County Choral Society performs “Music of the French Cathedrals,” joined by soprano soloist Eleanor Macchia, The Putney School Madrigals and the Putney Community Orchestra in a concert featuring more than 100 performers. Program includes Massenet, Poulenc, and Fauré. Tickets \$15 adults at door, students \$10 at door. Pre-performance discussion at 12:15 pm. Concert 3 pm. Calder Hall, Michael S. Currier Center at The Putney School, 418 Houghton Brook Rd. (802) 362-1905. bccsmusic.wordpress.com.

RANDOLPH. Concert: The Glenn Miller Orchestra. The 18-member group plays Miller’s trademark songs, using his original arrangements, as well as newer music arranged and played in the Miller style. Tickets: adults \$25, students \$5 with an adult. 7:30 pm. Chandler Center for the Arts, 71-73 Main St. (802) 431-0204. chandler-arts.org. www.glennmillerorchestra.com.

RANDOLPH CENTER. Floating Bridge Food & Farms Annual Holiday Shop. Make this year a localvore holiday. New location! At the Red Schoolhouse at the Vermont Technical College Campus. (802) 276-0787. floatingbridgefoodandfarms.com. Also December 13.

ROCKINGHAM. Wagon Rides. Let’s hope for a light snow to get us all in the Christmas spirit! 11 am – 4 pm. Vermont Country Store, 1292 Rockingham Rd. (802) 463-2224. www.vermontcountrystore.com.

RUTLAND. *Elf, The Musical, Jr.* Presented by Rutland Youth Theatre, the story of Buddy, a young orphan who mistakenly crawls into Santa’s bag of gifts and is transported to the North Pole. Tickets: adults \$10, seniors/under 12 \$8. 2 & 7 pm. Paramount Theater, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountlive.org.

RUTLAND. Book & Author Event. Andrea Chesman presents her new book, *The Backyard Homestead Book of Kitchen Know-How: Field-to-Table Cooking Skills*. Andrea is bringing samples of sourdough starter for attendees who purchase a book (while supplies last.) Free, everyone is welcome. 3 pm. Phoenix Books, 2 Center St. (802) 855-8078. www.phoenixbooks.biz.

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

RUTLAND. *A Christmas Carol.* Readers Theatre Style. Director Gary Meitrott adapts Readers Theater to include costuming and movement by the actors, adding a dramatic element to the performance. With simple, yet elegant, Victorian furniture and costuming, five actors bring all of the characters to life using Dickens’ original words. \$15 adults, \$9 youth, children under 12 free. 7:30- 9:30 pm. Brick Box, Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 282-2581. www.ShakespeareOnMainStreet.org. Also December 13.

RUTLAND. Vermont Farmers Market Christmas Holiday Show. A diverse group of craft and food creators, offering reasonable-priced Christmas wreaths and decor; crafts in fiber, fabric, wood and glass; jewelry; baked goods and specialty foods; prepared foods, apples, cider and veggies. Free admission. 9 am – 4 pm. Holiday Inn, 476 Holiday Dr. off Rt. 7 south. (802) 753-7269. wintermarketmanager@vtfarmersmarket.org. vtfarmersmarket.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers’ Market. Local produce, crafts, prepared foods. Live music. EBT and debit cards. Saturdays 10 am – 2 pm and Wednesdays 3-6 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 342-4727. info@vtfarmersmarket.org. www.vtfarmersmarket.org. *Wednesdays and Saturdays through May 7.*

SHELBURNE. Holiday Pop Up Market. Sip and shop at Shelburne Vineyard. Vermont vendors will be selling art, crafts, jewelry, books and specialty foods in the vineyard’s tasting room. Southern Smoke VT serving BBQ and soups to go. Also, wine by the glass, by the bottle and by the gift box or certificate. Open daily 11 am – 5 pm. Shelburne Vineyard, 6308 Shelburne Rd. (802) 985-8222. shelburnevineyard.com.

SHELBURNE. Winter Gifts Workshop. Learn how to make easy, holiday goodies to give as gifts, and create “green” crafts with natural and recycled materials. Children ages 5 and up. Registration required. Cost: \$23 adult & child, \$17 each additional child. Two sessions available: 9:30-11:30 am & 12:30-2:30 pm. Shelburne Farms, 1611 Harbor Rd. (802) 985-8686. registration@shelburnefarms.org. www.shelburnefarms.org.

SHOREHAM. Hard Cider Tastings. At our farm market. Free. 12-4 pm. Champlain Orchards, 3597 Rt. 74 West. (802) 897-2777. www.champlainorchards.com.

STOWE. Concert: McLean Avenue Band—Christmas in Ireland. Tickets: \$20-\$54. 7 pm. Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center, 122 Hourglass Dr. (802) 760-4634. sprucepeakarts.org.

STOWE. Stowe Vibrancy Presents *A Christmas Carol: The Musical*. 7 pm. Stowe Town Hall Theater, 67 Main St. For tickets call (802) 253-3961. info@stowetheatre.com. stowetheatre.com. Also December 13.

ST. JOHNSBURY. Victorian Holiday Open House. Ring in the holiday season with platters of holiday sweets, crafts for giving and for decorating, special planetarium presentations. Free. 1:30-4 pm. Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium, 1302 Main St. (802) 748-2372. discoverstjohnsbury.com.

ST. JOHNSBURY. Concert: Anonymous 4—The Last Noel. Works from their vast, revered catalogue of sacred Christmas music. Tickets: \$39, \$29, \$15, seniors \$3 off, students 18 and under free with paying adult. 7 pm. North Congregational Church. (802) 748-2600. adreakane@hotmail.com. kcpresents.org.

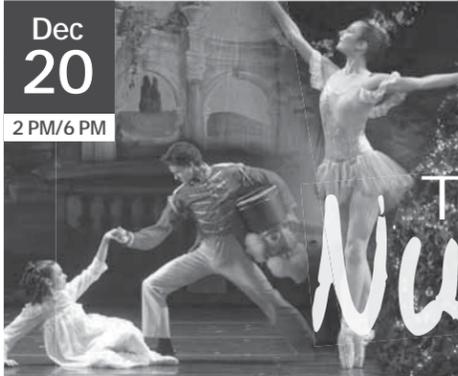
WOODSTOCK. Wassail Weekend. Breakfast with Santa, \$8 adults, \$4 children 10 and under, at the Little Theater. 14th Annual Holiday House Tour, tickets \$35 (802) 457-3981. Dana House Museum decorated for the season, 10 am – 2 pm. Christmas at Billings Farm, \$4-\$14, 10 am – 4 pm. Wassail Craft Fair at the Masonic Lodge, 10 am – 4 pm. Wassail Café on the Green 11 am – 2 pm. Reading of *A Child’s Christmas in Wales* at the Norman Williams Library, free, 12 & 1 pm. 31st Annual Wassail Parade with all kinds of horses and carriages, 2 pm, around town. Yule Log and Memory Tree Lighting, and Carol Sing, free, 2:30 pm. Concert by The Ten, a capella group at the Congregational Church, free, limited seating, 3 pm. Sly Voices, a capella group at Norman Williams Library, free, 3 pm. Lighting of the Luminaries on the Green at 4 pm. Wassail Feast at the Woodstock Inn at 6 pm. Barnarts presents “A Holiday Cabaret Evening” at Artistree, \$20 includes dessert table. (888) 496-6378. www.woodstockvt.com. Also December 13.

2015/2016 SEASON

Dec 20
2 PM/6 PM

Albany Berkshire Ballet

The Nutcracker



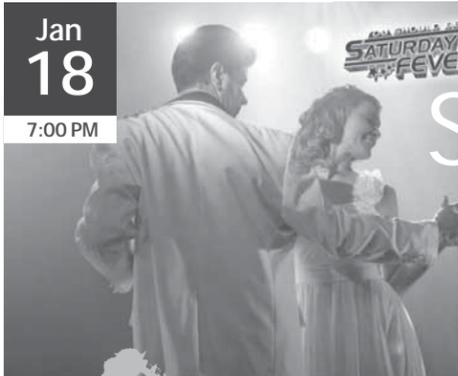
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Jim BREUER



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Vermont Farmers Market Christmas Holiday Show Coming to Rutland December 12!

The Vermont Farmers Market will present their Christmas Holiday Show on Saturday, December 12, 2015 at the Holiday Inn in Rutland, VT. The annual craft show will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This is one of the largest holiday shows in Southern Vermont with over sixty vendors presenting every kind of Vermont-made craft, lots of food items, and a wide range of Christmas décor.

Step into a hall filled with the sights and smells of Christmas including fresh balsam handmade wreaths!

Crafters will be displaying folk art, pottery, wooden ware, photography, herbal items, fabrics, jewelry, candles, doll clothes, dog items, handbags, recycled crafts, soaps, paintings, felt totes, hats, and quilts.

The Country Bakers bring you that exquisite taste of

Vermont for your holiday meals and parties. Home baked goods including gluten-free, many varieties of pies, fudge, cookies, pastries, cider donuts, and much more.

The Gourmet Specialty Food folks have jams and jellies, over 100 varieties—the most you can find anywhere. Have you tried cranberry/raspberry jam, horseradish jam, garlic jam, ginger marmalade or pear almond jam?

You’ll find maple syrup, maple sugar and maple-flavored products such as maple dressings, maple mustard and maple-coated nuts, maple pepper, and cinnamon flavored maple sugar!

And there will be cheeses, honey, prepared foods, apples and fresh-pressed cider!

Pick-up fall veggies and meats for your holiday table grown by local farmers—brussels sprouts, potatoes and winter squash.

If you wish to pick up bakery items just before the holidays, talk to our vendors. Many will take orders, or make it special for you.

If you would like a custom-made craft designed to your wishes some of our crafters will do that. Talk to them, have it created!

You may wish to ship specialty foods or craft items, to friends and relatives across the country.

Small items travel best by the U.S. Postal Service in low-fee, flat rate boxes, usually in three days or less in the 48 states. It’s time to make these plans now! Folks everywhere love receiving Vermont gifts, something that is really grown or made in America, and from this special place—Vermont!

The Vermont Farmers Market Christmas Holiday Show is always admission free. Come join thousands of others for this unique Vermont holiday shopping experience.

The Holiday Inn is on Rt. 7 south in Rutland, VT. For more information call (802) 342-4727 or visit www.vtfarmersmarket.org.



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Vermont Country Calendar

WOODSTOCK. 14th Annual House Tour. The town's most charming houses deck their halls and open their doors for what has become a quintessential holiday tradition. Docents provide historical information and answer questions. Some homes to feature live performances by local musicians. Tickets \$35. 9:30 am and 1:30 pm. Start at Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green. (802) 457-3981. info@woodstockvt.com.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Learn how Christmas was celebrated in late 19th century Woodstock in the farmhouse. Linger in the cozy kitchen as treats are baked in the woodstove. Holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Don't miss a winter visit to the farm. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. Hot beverages and on the weekends, hot food. Bake sale on some weekends. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. Also December 18, 19, 20.

BURLINGTON. 11th Annual Winter Tales. Produced by Vermont Stage. Tickets: \$28.80-\$55. 2 & 6 pm. FlynnSpace, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. box@flynncenter.org. flynnitix.org.

CLAREMONT, NH. Ballet: *Clara's Cracked Christmas*. A modern twist on the Nutcracker presented by Stardancer Studios. 1 pm. Claremont Opera House, 58 Claremont Opera House Square. For tickets call (603) 5542-4433.

DUMMERSTON. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Christmas Tree Sales. Ready-cut or cut-your-own. Open Saturdays and Sundays 10 am - 4 pm, Mondays through Thursdays 12-4 pm, Fridays 12-7 pm through December 24. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 209 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. Through December 24.

LEBANON, NH. AVA's Annual Holiday Exhibition and Sale. 12-4 pm. AVA Gallery and Art Center, 11 Bank St. (603) 448-3117. avagallery.org. Also open December 14, 11 am - 5 pm; December 20, 12-4 pm; December 21, 11 am - 5 pm; and December 24, 11 am - 3 pm.

RUTLAND. A Christmas Carol: Readers Theatre Style. Director Gary Meitrott adapts Readers Theater to include costuming and movement by the actors, adding a dramatic element to the performance. \$15 adults, \$9 youth, children under 12 free. 2 pm. Brick Box, Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 282-2581. www.ShakespeareOnMainStreet.org.

RUTLAND. Vermont Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops Concert. Music from favorite Christmas movies, a masquerade ball, a fractured fairy tale, and of course the *Nutcracker*. Plus an amazing youth soloist, the VSO brass, and a carol singalong. Tickets: adults \$32-\$20; AARP \$26-\$16; students \$9. 3 pm. Paramount Theater, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountlive.org.

RUTLAND. Book & Author Event. Meet author Megan Price and get signed copies of her latest collection of Fish & Game Warden stories, the new *Vermont Wild, Volume 4*, and all the other volumes! Free. 1-3 pm. Phoenix Book Store, 2 Center St. (802) 855-8078. vermontwild.com.

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

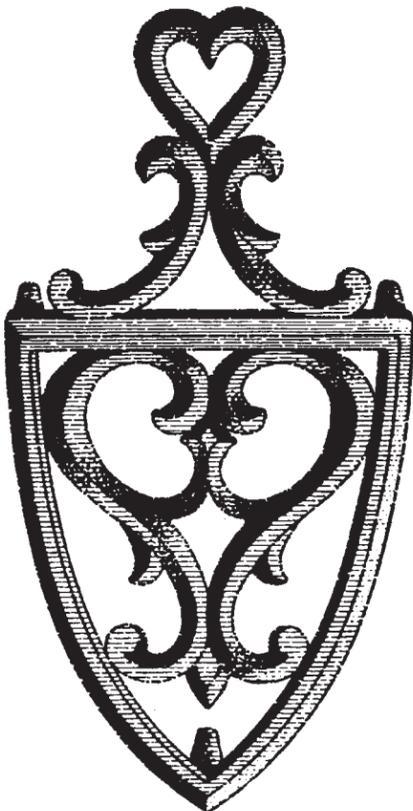
WEST PAWLET. Pancake Breakfast. To benefit the West Pawlet Volunteer Fire Dept. \$8 for ages 12 and up; \$5 for 5-12; free under 5 yrs. Megan Price will be available to sign her newest book, *Vermont Wild - Adventures of Fish & Game Wardens, Volume Four*. 7:30-11 am. West Pawlet Volunteer Fire Department, VT Rt. 153, Main St. (802) 345-4312.

WOODSTOCK. Wassail Weekend. Wassail Craft Fair at the Masonic Lodge, 10 am - 2 pm. Pentangle Messiah Sing, suggested donation \$10, 4 pm. Performance of *Woven* by Yoh Theatre Players at Yoh Theatre, tickets \$10 adults, \$8 students (802) 457-1317. Visit Billings Farm and Museum, take a sleigh ride, 10 am - 4 pm. (888) 496-6378. www.woodstockvt.com.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Don't miss a winter visit to the farm. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16

DUMMERSTON. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Christmas Tree Sales. Ready-cut or cut-your-own. Open Saturdays and Sundays 10 am - 4 pm, Mondays through Thursdays 12-4 pm, Fridays 12-7 pm through December 24. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 209 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. Through December 24.



WARREN. Holidays with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet/Counterpoint. Enjoy the spirit of the season with a perfect blend of voice and brass. 7:30 pm. Warren United Church, 339 Main St. (802) 864-5741. vso.org.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17

DUMMERSTON. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Christmas Tree Sales. Ready-cut or cut-your-own. Open Saturdays and Sundays 10 am - 4 pm, Mondays through Thursdays 12-4 pm, Fridays 12-7 pm through December 24. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 209 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. Through December 24.

HANOVER, NH. The Christmas Revels: A Scottish Highlands Celebration of the Winter Solstice. Lovely Gaelic melodies and crowd-pleasing carols, traditional Highland and Scottish country dancing, and foot-stomping instrumentals. Tickets: \$7.20 - \$44. 6 pm. Hopkins Center for the Arts, 2 East Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. revelsnorth.org/christmas-revels/christmas-revels-2015. Also December 18, 19 & 20.

ST. JOHNSBURY. Holidays with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet/Counterpoint. 7:30 pm. The North Congregational Church, 1325 Main St. For tickets call (802) 864-5741. vso.org.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18

BARNARD. 5th Annual Winter Carols. Choir and instrumental performances and community sing-alongs in a candle lit 18th Century Church. Free. 7 pm. First Universalist Church, 6211 VT Rt. 12. (802) 234-1645. info@barnarts.org. www.barnarts.org.

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. Hot beverages and on the weekends, hot food. Bake sale on some weekends. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. lhstrees.com. Also December 19 & 20.

HANOVER, NH. The Christmas Revels: A Scottish Highlands Celebration of the Winter Solstice. Lovely Gaelic melodies and crowd-pleasing carols, traditional Highland and Scottish country dancing, and foot-stomping instrumentals. Tickets: \$7.20 - \$44. 7 pm. Hopkins Center for the Arts, 2 East Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. revelsnorth.org/christmas-revels/christmas-revels-2015. Also December 19 & 20.

JAY. Holidays with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet/Counterpoint. Enjoy the spirit of the season with a perfect blend of voice and brass. 7:30 pm. Jay Peak Resort, 1144 Access Rd. (802) 864-5741. vso.org.

LEBANON, NH. Performance: Opera North presents *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. Tickets: \$22.50 for adults, children free (accompanied by adult, ticket required). 7 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 N. Park St. (603) 448-0400. lebanonoperahouse.org. Also December 19.

MANCHESTER CENTER. Book & Author Event. Jonathan Tahini presents *The Essential Bernie Sanders*. Free and open to the public. 7 pm. Northshire Bookstore, 4869 Main St. (802) 362-2200. www.northshire.com.

MIDDLEBURY. Annual Night Fires. A winter solstice celebration for our times, rooted in ancient traditions—a heartfelt pageant of singing, dancing, storytelling, chanting and visual magic. Presented by Theatre Group, Ltd. Pre-show singing begins approximately twenty minutes before the show. Tickets: \$25, seniors \$21, students \$20. 8 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. (802) 388-1436. www.townhalltheater.org. Also December 19 & 20.

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Vermont Country Calendar

RUTLAND. Gingerbread Cookie House Reception. Awards for the gingerbread contest will be shared during our cocoa, cookie, wine and cheese reception from 4-6 pm. The Chaffee Art Center, 16 S Main St. (802) 775-0356. www.chaffeeartcenter.org.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19

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

BURLINGTON. Vermont's Own *Nutcracker* presented by Vermont Ballet Theater. Tickets: \$36/\$31/\$23. 2 & 7 pm. Flynn MainStage, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. box@flynncenter.org. flynncenter.org. Also December 20.

BURLINGTON. Program: Birds with VINS At ECHO. As part of the Wild Lights winter festival, meet live falcons, hawks, and owls from the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS). Programs at 11 am, 12:30 pm, and 2 pm. Admission: adults 18-59 \$13.50, children 3-17 \$10.50, seniors and college students \$11.50, 2 and younger free. ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center/ Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, One College St. (877) 324-6386. www.echovermont.org. vinsweb.org.

BRATTLEBORO. Winter Farmers' Market. Saturdays, 10 am - 2 pm. At River Garden, 153 Main St. Sherry Maher. (802) 869-2141. farmersmarket@postsoilsolutions.org. www.postsoilsolutions.org. Every Saturday through March 2016.

BURLINGTON. Holiday Skating Show: *The Gift*. Soloists from the Champlain Valley Skating Club and skaters from the Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront group lessons. Donations accepted at the door. 3-5 pm. Champlain Valley Skating Club, 216 Leddy Park Rd. (802) 865-7558. sjennings@burlingtonvt.gov. www.enjoyburlington.com.

DUMMERSTON. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Christmas Tree Sales. Ready-cut or cut-your-own. Open Saturdays and Sundays 10 am - 4 pm, Mondays through Thursdays 12-4 pm, Fridays 12-7 pm through December 24. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 209 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. Through December 24.

GRAFTON. Holidays with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet/Counterpoint. Enjoy the spirit of the season with a perfect blend of voice and brass. 5 pm. The White Church, 55 Main St. For tickets call (802) 864-5741. vso.org.

HANOVER, NH. The Christmas Revels: A Scottish Highlands Celebration of the Winter Solstice. Lovely Gaelic melodies and crowd-pleasing carols, traditional Highland and Scottish country dancing, and foot-stomping instrumentals. Tickets: \$7.20 - \$44. 1 & 5 pm. Hopkins Center for the Arts, 2 East Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. info@revelsnorth.org. revelsnorth.org/christmas-revels/christmas-revels-2015. Also December 20.

LEBANON, NH. Performance: Opera North presents *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. Tickets: \$22.50 for adults, children free (accompanied by adult, ticket required). 5 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 N. Park St. (603) 448-0400. lebanonoperahouse.org.

MANCHESTER. Elf Express Weekend. Green Mountain Train Rides with Christopher Pop-in-kins. Tickets: adults (13 and over) \$25, kids 2-12 \$20, under 2 (lap rider) free, online at www.manchesterlionselftrain.com or at the Manchester and the Mountains Regional Chamber of Commerce. Sponsored by The Manchester Lions Club. Departures at 10 & 11:30 am; 1, 2:30 & 4 pm. R.K. Miles Depot Station, 670 Depot St. (802) 362-6313. visitmanchestervt.com. Also December 20.

MIDDLEBURY. Annual Night Fires. A winter solstice celebration for our times, rooted in ancient traditions—a heartfelt pageant of singing, dancing, storytelling, chanting and visual magic. Presented by Theatre Group, Ltd. Pre-show singing begins approximately twenty minutes before the show. Tickets: \$25, seniors \$21, students \$20. 4 & 8 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. (802) 388-1436. www.townhalltheater.org. Also December 20.

MONTPELIER. Horse Drawn Wagon Rides. Leave from City Center, 11 am to 2 pm. Free. (802) 223-9604. montpelierlive.org.

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

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm and Wednesdays 3-6 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 342-4727. www.vtfarmersmarket.org. Wednesdays and Saturdays through May 7.

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

SO. BURLINGTON. Gift Wrapping by the Birds of Vermont Museum. For a small donation we'll wrap your books and other gifts. Chat with us and enjoy a cuppa joe. 10 am - 10 pm. Barnes and Noble Booksellers, 102 Dorset St. (802) 434-2167. www.birdsofvermont.org.

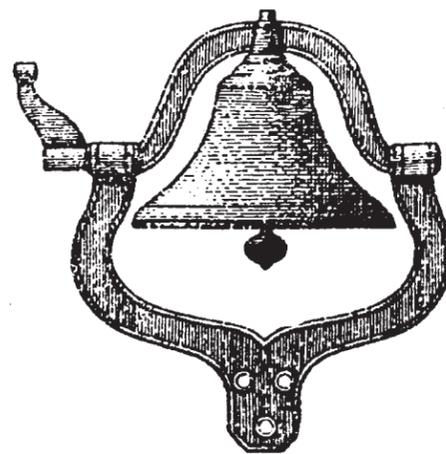
STOWE. Concert: The Gathering—presented by Will Ackerman, Founder of Windham Hill Records. Tickets: \$20-\$35. 7:30 pm. Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center, 122 Hourglass Dr. (802) 760-4634. sprucepeakarts.org.

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

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. Hot beverages and on the weekends, hot food. Bake sale on some weekends. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. Call ahead, may be closing early. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com.

BURLINGTON. Vermont's Own *Nutcracker* presented by Vermont Ballet Theater. Tickets: \$36/\$31/\$23. 1 & 6 pm. Flynn MainStage, 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. box@flynncenter.org. flynncenter.org.



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Holiday Open House and Model Trains Presented by Henry Sheldon Museum in Middlebury, VT

This holiday season the Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont History is pleased to present Holiday Trains. In what has become an annual holiday tradition in Middlebury, the Mid-Vermont Train Club's elaborate electric train layout is sure to delight all ages. Over the years, the assemblage has grown and stands three levels high, with tracks running 027 gauge trains, Lionel

and an upper track running HO trains. The backdrop of the green mountains painted by local artist Gayl Braisted adds atmosphere. New this year is a Lionel milk car that delivers milk cans! The exhibit is made possible by a team of volunteer engineers who operate the trains and by a generous grant from Macy's. The trains will run November 28 through January 9, 2016.

On Saturday, December 5, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday, December 6, from 12 noon to 4 p.m., the community is invited to the Sheldon Museum's annual Holiday Open House. The Judd-Harris House is decked out with beautiful floral arrangements enhanced with natural botanical designs by members of the Middlebury Garden Club. Carols played on the Sheldon's 1831 piano, a 12 Days of Christmas Tree Raffle, and of course the trains will all add to the fes-

tive event. The tree raffle features creative miniature trees decorated by the following local artists: Bobbie Brooker; Adèle Connors; Advertisers Workshop, Lake Placid, NY; Cacklin' Hens; Nancie Dunn, Sweet Cecily; Warren Kimble; Michael Manley; Otter Creek Kitchenware & Electronics; Sarah Pope; Sarah Stahl; The Vermont Book Shop; Ashley Wolff.

Admission to the Holiday Open House is by donation. Also on view during the holidays, is the exhibit Warren Kimble American Artist: An Eclectic Retrospective. The exhibit closes on December 31, 2015.

In conjunction with the train exhibit, the Sheldon presents a talk by Paul Bortz entitled "115 Years of Exciting Toy Train History" on Wednesday, December 16 at noon. Bortz is an enthusiastic collector of over 500 model trains. He will trace the histo-

ry of the toy train and bring a selection from his collection for everyone to see. Free with regular Museum admission.

The Henry Sheldon Museum is located at One Park Street in downtown Middlebury, VT across from the Ilsley Library.

Holiday Museum hours are Tues.-Sat. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays, December 6, 13, & 20, from 12-4 p.m.

The trains will run November 28, 2015 through January 9, 2016. Engineers will run the trains Tues.-Fri. 1 to 4 p.m.; Saturdays 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Sundays 1-3 p.m. Research Center hours are Thurs. and Fri. 1-5 p.m. and by appointment.

Regular admission to the Museum is \$5 adults; \$3 youth (6-18); \$4.50 seniors; \$12 family. For more information, call the Henry Sheldon Museum at (802) 388-2117 or visit www.henrysheldonmuseum.org.

Christmas at the Billings Farm

Gateway to Vermont's Rural Heritage

Dec. Weekends & Dec. 19 - Jan. 3, 2016
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Vermont Country Calendar

DUMMERSTON. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Christmas Tree Sales. Ready-cut or cut-your-own. Fresh Balsam wreaths, centerpieces, and greenery! Country Store open with fresh certified organic produce. Free hot cider, hot chocolate & pretzels. Open Saturdays and Sundays 10 am - 4 pm, Mondays through Thursdays 12-4 pm, Fridays 12-7 pm through December 24. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 209 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. *Through December 24.*

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MONTGOMERY. Carols and Candles—An Annual Community Sing-along. 5 pm at Pratt Hall, 2044 N. Main St. www.montgomeryhistoricalsociety.org.

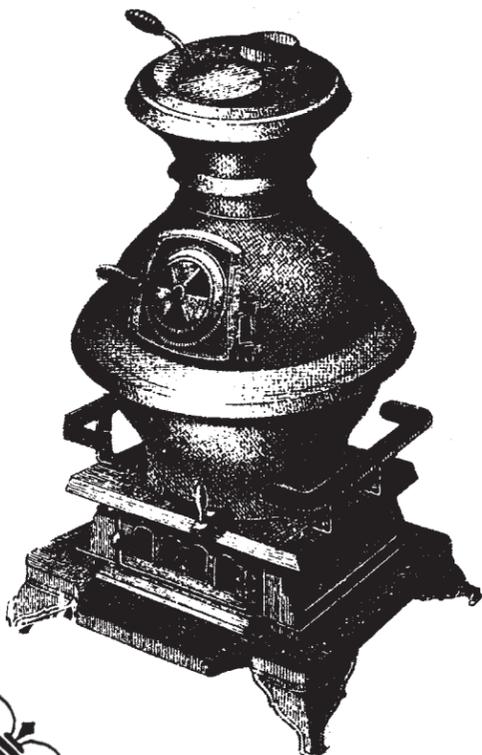
RUTLAND. Albany Berkshire Ballet: *The Nutcracker*. Tickets: \$29.50-\$39.50. 2 pm and 6 pm. Paramount Theater, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountlive.org.

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MONDAY, DECEMBER 21

BRANDON. Holidays with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet/Counterpoint. Enjoy the spirit of the season with a perfect blend of voice and brass. 7 pm. Congregational Church, 1 Carver St. For tickets call (802) 864-5741. www.vso.org.

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. Hot beverages and on the weekends, hot food. Bake sale on some weekends. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com.



DUMMERSTON. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Christmas Tree Sales. Ready-cut or cut-your-own. Open Mondays through Thursdays 12-4 pm. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 209 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. *Through December 24.*

LEBANON, NH. AVA's Annual Holiday Exhibition and Sale. 11 am - 5 pm. AVA Gallery and Art Center, 11 Bank St. (603) 448-3117. avagallery.org. *Also open December 24, 11 am - 3 pm.*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24

DUMMERSTON. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Christmas Tree Sales. Ready-cut or cut-your-own. Fresh Balsam wreaths, centerpieces, and greenery! Country Store open with fresh certified organic produce. Free hot cider, hot chocolate & pretzels. Open Saturdays and Sundays 10 am - 4 pm, Mondays through Thursdays 12-4 pm, Fridays 12-7 pm through December 24. Walker Farm's Elysian Hills Tree Farm, 209 Knapp Rd. (802) 254-2051. elysianhillstreefarm.com. *Through December 24.*

LEBANON, NH. AVA's Annual Holiday Exhibition and Sale. 11 am - 3 pm. AVA Gallery and Art Center, 11 Bank St. (603) 448-3117. avagallery.org.

SHELBURNE. Horse-Drawn Sleigh Rides. 20-minute rides from the Welcome Center (weather permitting). If there's not enough snow, we'll have wagon rides. Fee: \$10 adult, \$8 children, 2 and under free. 11 am - 2 pm every half-hour, first come, first served. Shelburne Farms, 1611 Harbor Rd. off Rt. 7. (802) 985-8686. www.shelburnefarms.org. *Everyday through January 1 except closed Christmas.*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25

Merry Christmas!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26

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

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Local produce, crafts, prepared foods. Live music. EBT and debit cards. Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm and Wednesdays 3-6 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 342-4727. info@vtfarmersmarket.org. www.vtfarmersmarket.org. *Wednesdays and Saturdays through May 7.*

SHELBURNE. Horse-Drawn Sleigh Rides. 20-minute rides from the Welcome Center (weather permitting). If there's not enough snow, we'll have wagon rides. Fee: \$10 adult, \$8 children, 2 and under free. 11 am - 2 pm every half-hour, first come, first served. Shelburne Farms, 1611 Harbor Rd. off Rt. 7. (802) 985-8686. www.shelburnefarms.org. *Daily through January 1.*

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides, weather permitting. Don't miss a winter visit to the farm. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. billingsfarm.org. *Through January 3.*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27

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

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

SHELBURNE. Horse-Drawn Sleigh Rides. 20-minute rides from the Welcome Center (weather permitting). If there's not enough snow, we'll have wagon rides. Fee: \$10 adult, \$8 children, 2 and under free. 11 am - 2 pm every half-hour, first come, first served. Shelburne Farms, 1611 Harbor Rd. off Rt. 7. (802) 985-8686. www.shelburnefarms.org. *Daily through January 1.*

STOWE. Performance: Mirage! A Circus Life. A stunning display of circus arts featuring trapezists, jugglers, contortionists and more. Tickets: \$20-\$48. 7 pm. Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center, 122 Hourglass Dr. (802) 760-4634. sprucepeakarts.org.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides, weather permitting. Don't miss a winter visit to the farm. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. *Through January 3.*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29

ENFIELD, NH. Christmas Illuminations Display. Nativity display of over 450 creches open 4-8:45 pm. 5-9 pm. Free. La Salette Shrine, 410 Rt. 4A. (603) 632-7087. www.lasaletteofenfield.org. *Through December 31.*

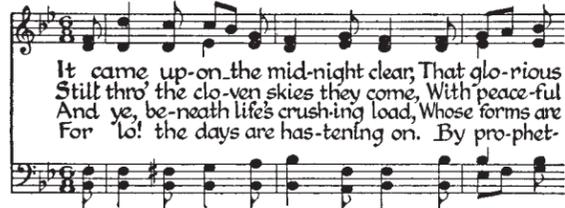
RUTLAND. Free Movie: *Frozen*. A feature movie in Rutland's winter movie series every Tuesday in December. Concession stand by Roots the Restaurant. 7 pm. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. (802) 773-9380. rutlanddowntown.com.



It Came upon the Midnight Clear

Edmund H. Sears

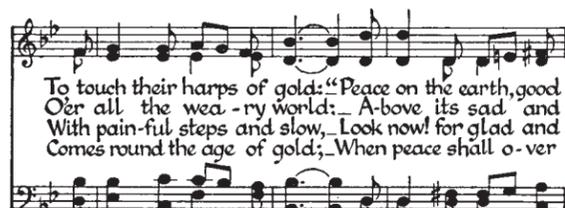
Richard S. Willis



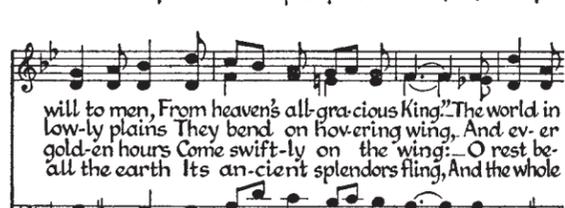
It came up-on the mid-night clear, That glo-ri-ous
Still thro' the clo-ven skies they come, With peace-ful
And ye, be-neath life's crush-ing load, Whose forms are
For lo! the days are has-tening on. By pro-phet-



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



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



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



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Vermont Country Calendar

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30

ENFIELD, NH. Christmas Illuminations Display. Nativity display of over 450 creches open 4-8:45 pm. 5-9 pm. Free. La Salette Shrine, 410 Rt. 4A. (603) 632-7087. lasaletteofenfield.org. *Also December 31.*

STOWE. Concert: Adam Ezra Group. They are committed to changing the world with their songs and their actions along the way—activists and community leaders as much as they are musicians and songwriters. Tickets: \$20-\$40. 7:30 pm. Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center, 122 Hourglass Dr. (802) 760-4634. sprucepeakarts.org.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31

BELMONT. New Year's Eve at Star Lake. Good friends, cheer, fireworks, a bonfire, and skating. Co-sponsored with the Mount Holly Community Association and the Mount Holly Sno-drifters. Free. 9-11:55 pm. Star Lake Rd. (802) 259-2562. www.mounthollyvt.org.

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

BURLINGTON. First Night Burlington. Alcohol-free New Year's eve celebration and Vermont's largest one-day arts festival, attracting 20,000 people. Musical performances, dance, theater, circus arts, puppetry, visual arts, storytelling, comedy, fireworks and a parade. A First Night Burlington button admits one to all events all sites, on a first-come, first-served basis. Adult button \$15, children \$5. Festival 11 am, December 31 to 12:30 am, January 1. (802) 863-6005. www.firstnightburlington.com.

CHITTENDEN. Horse-Drawn Sleigh Rides. 30-minute rides Wednesday through Sunday 11 am - 6 pm. \$30 for 15 years and older, \$20 for 4-14 years, 3 and under free. Private rides available. To reserve, call the Nordic Ski & Snowshoe Center at (802) 483-6089 from 9 am - 5 pm or after hours call the front desk at (802) 483-2311. Mountain Top Inn & Resort, 195 Mountain Top Rd. www.mountaintopin.com. *December through March.*

ENFIELD, NH. Christmas Illuminations Display. Nativity display of over 450 creches open 4-8:45 pm. 5-9 pm. Free. La Salette Shrine, 410 Rt. 4A. (603) 632-7087.

MANCHESTER. Manchester Music Festival 5th Annual New Year's Eve Family Concert. 3:30 pm—tickets: adults \$13; 18 and under free. At the First Congregational Church, 3624 Main St. For tickets or information call (802) 362-1956. www.mmfvt.org.

MANCHESTER. 5th Annual New Year's Eve Bash. Sponsored by the Manchester Music Festival. Ring in the New Year with a special celebration. The nine-piece Manchester Festival Strings and a surprise guest will take you on a musical trip around the world: from classical to Broadway, waltzes to tangos, Beatles to Jazz there will be something for everyone! Tickets: adults \$30; students and children \$13. 5:30 pm. At the First Congregational Church, 3624 Main St. For tickets or information call (802) 362-1956. www.mmfvt.org.

MONTPELIER. New Year's Eve Celebration. Central Vermont Runners NYE 5K, 2 pm at the Pavilion. Marko the Magician at Montpelier High School 4:30-5:15 pm (magic show). 5:45-7 pm (hypnosis magic show). 7:30 pm fireworks, best viewing from the State House lawn. Dave Keller's New Years Eve extravaganza concert, 8 pm. City Hall. (802) 223-9604. montpelierlive.org.

RUTLAND. New Year's Early Eve Event for Families. Live music, local foods, family crafts. 3:30-4:30 pm. Fox Room, Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St. (802) 773-1860. rutlandfree.org.

ST. JOHNSBURY. 23rd Annual First Night St. Johnsbury. A New Year's Eve festival of the arts. Street entertainment, music, dance, magic, circus, fireworks, food, free shuttle. Button admission \$20, \$13, 5 and under free. 4 pm - 12 midnight. (802) 748-2600. info@firstnightstj.com. www.firstnightstj.com.

STOWE. Stowe Vibrancy Presents *A Christmas Carol: The Musical*. 7 pm. Stowe Town Hall Theater, 67 Main St. For tickets call (802) 253-3961. info@stowetheatre.com. stowetheatre.com.

WAITSFIELD. New Year's Family Celebration. Bonfire (bring Christmas trees and wood if you got it), potluck dinner (families with last names starting in A to M bring heavy appetizers, chili, soups, stew, etc; N to Z please bring a dessert). Flag football in the snow (we hope!), kids movie upstairs and a torchlight parade! Please, no sledding. 6:30-10:30 pm. The Basebox, Mad River Glen Cooperative, 57 Schuss Pass Rd. (802) 496-3551. www.madriverglen.com.

WEST DOVER. New Year's Eve Torchlight Parade, Fireworks, & Santa! Ski & Snowboard School instructors will descend the Canyon ski trail in a beautiful torchlight glow, followed by a huge fireworks display. 5:45 pm. Canyon Express, Mount Snow, 39 Mount Snow Rd. (800) 245-7669. www.mountsnow.com. *Also January 17 & February 17.*

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at the Farm. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides, weather permitting. Don't miss a winter visit to the farm. Admission: adults \$14, 62 & up \$13, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org. *Through January 3.*

ONGOING ACTIVITIES 2015

ENFIELD, NH. Opening Day of Christmas Illuminations Display, Nov. 28, 2:30-9 pm on opening day; Plainfield Chimers at 4:15 pm, Opening Service 5 pm. Children's Day Nov. 29, 3-5 pm. Then from Dec. 4-31, 5-9 pm. Santa program Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 pm Dec. 4-19. Christmas concerts 5:15 Dec. 5, 12 & 19. Nativity display, over 450 Creches. No admission charged, donations accepted. Refreshments in cafeteria. La Salette Shrine, 410 Rt. 4A. (603) 632-7087. www.lasaletteofenfield.org. *Through December 31.*

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

WEST RUTLAND. Vermont Herbal General Store. Owned and operated by a registered pharmacist. Tai' Chi Gung classes, Tuesdays at 5 pm at the store. Free intro classes. Usul & Karuna Reiki Healings & Classes. Handmade Herbal Medicines, Oils, Essences, Crystals, Gemstones & Books. Teas, Lotions, and Capsules. All are welcome. Open Tuesday & Wednesday 1-6, Thursday-Saturday 12-6, Sunday 1-4, closed Friday. Vermont Herbal General Store, 578 Main St. (802) 438-2766. info@vermontherbal.com. On Facebook and Twitter. www.vermontherbal.com.

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

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Vermont Country Calendar

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

MUSEUMS, EXHIBITS & GALLERIES

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

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

BENNINGTON. Bennington Center for the Arts. Small Works Show *May 23-December 20*. Permanent collections, theater productions, workshops. Adults \$9, seniors & students \$8, families \$20, under 12 are free. Open Wed-Mon, 10 am – 5 pm. Bennington Center for the Arts, 44 Gypsy Lane. (802) 442-7158. www.thebennington.org.

BENNINGTON. "Festival of Trees Reimagined". Work by 21 area artists using our Memory Ware Tower as inspiration. A closed bid auction of the artwork will open November 27 and close December 29! Gala December 5 and Family Day December 12. Adults \$10, seniors and students 18 and over \$9, children and students under 18 free. Open every day except Wednesday 10 am – 5 pm, closing at 1 pm on December 24 & 31. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. www.benningtonmuseum.org. *Nov. 27 thru Dec. 29.*

BRANDON. Compass Music and Arts Center. Arts businesses and studios, classes & workshops, exhibits, concerts, and community events. A gift shop features art and music related books, collectibles, and the music of the classical recording company, Divine Art Records. Onsite café. Juried Exhibit: "Winter as Prism or Prison." Holiday Show: The Art of Giving—The Giving of Art. A selection of handcrafted, one-of-a-kind artwork, jewelry and other gifts. Open daily 10 am – 5 pm. Compass Music and Arts Center, 333 Jones Dr. (802) 247-4295. www.cmactv.org. *January 15 through March 26.*

BRATTLEBORO. Brattleboro Museum & Art Center. Current exhibit: "Shedding Light on the Working Forest" through January 3. Open daily 11-5, closed Tues. \$8 adults, \$6 seniors, \$4 students, youth 18 and under free. 10 Vernon St. (802) 257-0124. brattleboromuseum.org.

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

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

HUNTINGTON. Birds of Vermont Museum. Features over 500 carved wooden birds, representing 259 species. Museum, special events and bird walks, exhibits, children's programs, gift shop, video, restrooms and trails with maps available. Special Gift Shop Sale Days November 27-28, 10 am – 4 pm. Admission: adult \$7, senior \$6, child 3-17 \$3.50. Open by appointment. The Birds of Vermont Museum, 900 Sherman Hollow Rd. (802) 434-2167. birdsofvermont.org. *By appt. November 1 through May 1.*

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

MANCHESTER. Visit Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home. Summer home of presidential son, Robert Lincoln. House, gardens, Pullman car, working farm and cheese-making facility, floating boardwalk, walking trails, museum store and welcome center. Holiday Open House December 5 & 6. Admission: \$18 adults, \$5 children 6-14, under 6 free. Open daily 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. Hildene, off Rt. 7A, just south of the village. (802) 362-1788. www.hildene.org.

MIDDLEBURY. Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont. The oldest chartered community history museum in the United States, welcoming visitors since 1882. Exhibits, research center, and museum shop. Adults \$5, youth 6-18 \$3, senior \$4.50, family \$ 12, under 6 free. Open Tues-Sat 10 am – 5 pm. Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont History, One Park St. (803) 388-2117. www.henrysheldonmuseum.org.

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

MIDDLEBURY. The National Museum of the Morgan Horse. Exhibit: Stacey Stanhope Dundon's oil paintings, functional pottery, and full size horse heads, and local artist Gayl Braisted's paintings of barns. Gift shop full of Morgan horse t-shirts, books, and posters. Open Tuesday-Friday 1-5 pm, Saturday 10 am – 5 pm. The National Museum of the Morgan Horse, 34 Main St. (802) 388-1639. www.morganhorse.com/museum.

MONTPELIER. Vermont History Museum & Bookstore. Adults \$5, families \$12, students, children, seniors \$3, under 6 free. Open 9 am – 4 pm, Tuesday through Saturday. Pavilion Building, 109 State St. (802) 828-2291. vhs-info@state.vt.us. www.vermonthistory.org.

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

RUTLAND. Chaffee Art Center's Annual Holiday Boutique. Shop from the Holiday Boutique which covers the art center walls and gift shop. Gallery open 12-6 pm Thursdays and Fridays, and 12-4 pm Saturdays. The Chaffee Art Center, 16 S Main St. (802) 775-0356. info@chaffeeartcenter.org. www.chaffeeartcenter.org. *November 19 through December 18.*

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

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

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

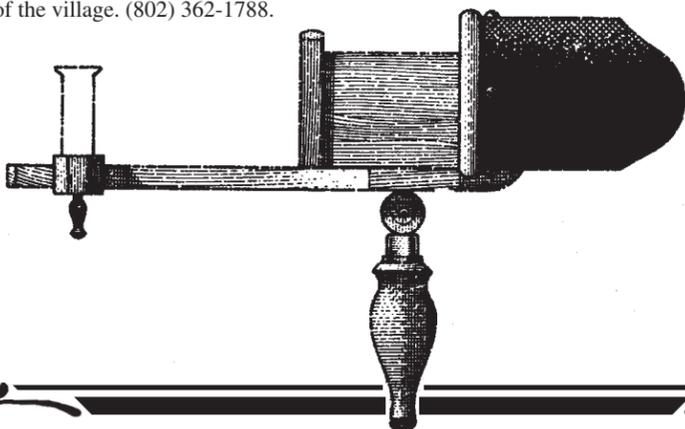
SPRINGFIELD. Gallery at the VAULT. A Vermont State Craft Center featuring fine art and hand-crafted gifts from over 125 local and regional artists and craftsmen. Exhibits, classes, workshops. Tuesday - Saturday 11 am – 5 pm. Gallery at the VAULT, 68 Main St. (802) 885-7111. galleryvault.org.

SPRINGFIELD. Art Exhibit Feather & Fur—Portraits of Field, Forest & Farm. Gallery hours are 9 am – 5 pm Mon-Fri. The Great Hall, One Hundred, River St. (802) 258-3992. www.facebook.com/GreatHallSpringfield. *Through the end of April.*

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

ST. JOHNSBURY. The Stephen Huneck Gallery at Dog Mountain and Dog Chapel. Free. Winter hours: Thursday - Monday: 11 am - 4 pm. Closed Tuesday and Wednesday. Dog Mountain, 143 Parks Rd. off Spaulding Rd. (800) 449-2580. contact@dogmt.com. www.dogmt.com. *November 1 through May 14.*

WOODSTOCK. Billings Farm & Museum. Visit the Jersey herd, draft horses, oxen, and sheep and tour the restored and furnished 1890 Farm House. Admission: adults \$14, age 62 & up \$13, children ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. Open weekends November through February and Christmas and vacation weeks, 10 am – 4 pm. Open May 1 through October 31, 10 am – 5 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org.



In the Stable

By rights this factory should close tonight
So that we too could have our holiday,
But you ladies would get too full of milk
If we should skip our evening choretime. So
Let's get to work as usual, you and I.
Our customers will want their Christmas milk.
We should be glad of their demand and our
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Pianist Simone Dinnerstein at Chandler Music Hall

—Saturday, December 5th—

Acclaimed pianist Simone Dinnerstein makes her eighth appearance on the stage in a solo recital at Chandler Music Hall in Randolph, VT on Saturday, December 5 at 7:30 p.m. The program will include a new work by Philip Lasser, *The Bruegel Suite*, which enjoyed its world premiere earlier this year in Toronto; as well as Schumann's *Scenes from Childhood*; Bach's *French Suite #5*; and *Four Impromptus, Op. 90* by Schubert. The audience is invited to a complimentary reception following the concert.

Dinnerstein says, "I have had the pleasure of performing at the Chandler Center several times in the past few years and I always look forward to returning. It is a beautiful, woody hall in a warm and vibrant community—exactly the perfect atmosphere for making music!"

The Bruegel Suite

Philip Lasser joins Dinnerstein on the trip to Vermont and they will be hosted by VPR classical host, Walter Parker, in the studio in Colchester at noon on Friday, December 4th.

Lasser speaks of the genesis of the Bruegel Suite for solo piano: "The idea for the Bruegel Suite dates back to 2008 when Simone Dinnerstein and I visited the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. We discovered that we both loved the paintings of Pieter Bruegel and spent hours feasting our eyes on his works at the museum." And of his pianist friend he writes, "Simone has now performed many works of mine both small and large ranging from solo works to my *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* 'The Circle and the Child.'" Simone is more than a pianist, she is a poet at the piano and this is truly a blessing for music."

Albums, festivals and performances

Dinnerstein is famous for having self-released a successful album of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* in 2007, which ranked No. 1 on the U.S. Billboard Classical Chart in its first week of sales and was named to many "Best of 2007" lists including those of The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, and The New Yorker. She has since gone on to release a string of critically acclaimed solo albums. Earlier this year, Sony Classical released her latest album, *Broadway-Lafayette*, which celebrates the musical link between France and the U.S. She has received a National Museum of Women in the Arts Award and the Classical Recording Foundation Award.

Dinnerstein's performances have taken her around the world since her triumphant New York recital debut at Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall in 2005, to venues including the Kennedy Center, Vienna Konzerthaus, Berlin Philhar-



Simone Dinnerstein in concert at Chandler Music Hall of December 5. photo courtesy of Chandler Music Hall

monic, Metropolitan Museum, and Wigmore Hall. She has appeared at festivals including the Lincoln Center Mostly Mozart Festival; the Aspen, Verbier, and Ravinia festivals; and the Stuttgart Bach Festival. And she performed with many orchestras worldwide including the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Staatskapelle Berlin, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Atlanta Symphony, Kristjan Järvi's Absolute Ensemble, Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, and the Tokyo Symphony. She also recently made her Italian Debut with RAI Turin under Jeffrey Tate.

Trip to Cuba

In June Dinnerstein traveled to Cuba to perform a Mozart concerto with the Cuban Youth Orchestra, and was moved by this experience and plans a recording of Mozart concertos with the ensemble. "This is such an exciting time for relations between the United States and Cuba, a time for new friendships and collaborations. I would love the opportunity to bring these talented students to the U.S. so that our audiences can discover Cuba's flourishing musical youth."

She has also founded a concert series hosted by NYC

public schools featuring musicians who perform for free to help raise funds for the schools. Last year she launched the "Bachpacking" initiative, bringing a digital piano into public schools, presenting interactive performances and encouraging the students to engage in discussions.

Simone Dinnerstein is a graduate of The Juilliard School where she was a student of Peter Serkin. She also studied with Solomon Mikowsky at the Manhattan School of Music and in London with Maria Curcio. She lives in Brooklyn, New York with her husband and son, is managed by Ekonomisk Management and is a Sony Classical artist.

Tickets for the Dinnerstein concert are \$40 adults, \$5 students. They are available online at www.chandler-arts.org or by calling the box office at (802) 728-6464 weekdays from 3-6 p.m.

Chandler Center for the Arts is located at 71-73 Main St., Randolph, VT. Chandler's Main Hall and galleries are handicapped accessible.

For information call (802) 728-9878. E-mail emily@chandler-arts.org. Visit chandler-arts.org.

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With lovely Gaelic melodies and crowd-pleasing carols, traditional Highland and Scottish country dancing, and foot-stomping instrumentals, The Christmas Revels is sure to have audiences singing and dancing along as they are swept away to a fantastic and mystical place. Performances take place on December 17 at 6 p.m., December 18 at 7 p.m., December 19 at 1 p.m. & 5 p.m., and December 20 at 1 p.m. & 5 p.m. Tickets are \$44 adults, \$20 children. Thursday evening children's tickets are \$8.

Hopkins Center for the Arts, 2 East Wheelock St., Hanover, NH. Box office: (603) 646-2422, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mon-Fri and Sat. 1-6 p.m. www.hop.dartmouth.edu.

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Winter In Old Vermont

by Edna Johnson Warren

Circa 1913

It is wintertime and we awoken to find the dear old earth covered with one of the prettiest of all elements—snow.

There is nothing so grand as a tramp in the woods on a snowy day. The pines, spruces and hemlocks with their rich green shades—settled in a little clump here and there throughout the woods—give an invitation to sit down on the log near by and view the landscape. The flakes of snow which alight on one's garments are of every conceivable shape; examine them closely before they melt. The most perfect of stars is often found.

A rabbit may scurry by and attract your attention for a few moments, possibly trying to find shelter or food. Overhead a squirrel may be seen dropping a portion of some nut he is eating and then scampering from sight into a dense growth of the trees which keep their foliage during the winter.

Just a little farther down the path you wander, and the ice edged brook babbles its winter song. All nature is

alive with that thrill which nothing but a cold winter's day can impart. The lower branches of the trees are shaken by the flutter of a winter bird and the snow falls down in little gusts almost like a shower of cotton. What could be more exquisite?

But the clouds are beginning to lighten and in the western horizon a coloring which is not transferable to canvas is greeting your watchful eyes. The time has passed quickly. The days darken early and the late afternoon shadows are beginning to threaten the wonderful sights which the daylight revealed.

So the steps which were recently taken, are hurriedly retraced, only to find farther on, that they are partially if not entirely obliterated by the snow which fell behind you.

At last the road leading away from the woods is reached and a last look behind shows the golden sun brightening the snow-covered trees like sparkling jewels, giving an inward rapture and a thought of the beautiful day tomorrow.



Moose with a snowy nose in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.

photo by Nancy Cassidy

Chandler's 14th Annual Artisans Holiday Market in Randolph, VT

Chandler Center for the Arts is presenting their 14th Annual Artisans Holiday Market running through December 23, 2015. Shop for special and unique holiday gifts from juried Vermont and New Hampshire artists, craftspeople, and specialty food producers.

The works of more than 40 artisans and food producers represent a broad range of talent in the region. Prices range from \$5 or less to "wish list" items.

There will be a "gift-sized art" selection in the Downstairs Gallery. Small framed

works of art no larger than 9"x12" will be available.

The market will be open Wednesdays 5-7 p.m., Thursdays and Fridays 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturdays 9 a.m.-3 p.m., and Sundays 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Last-minute shopping hours will be available Monday and Tuesday December 22 and 23, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Chandler Center for the Arts is located at 71-73 Main St. in Randolph, VT.

For more information, contact Emily Crosby at (802) 431-0204 or www.chandler-arts.org.

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The Living Landscape

A beautiful gardening book that is sure to please

Reviewed by Judith Irven

Winter is the gardener's downtime. This is our 'quiet season' with plenty of time to curl up by the wood-stove, peruse gardening magazines and dream of summers yet to come.

And, with the holidays just around the corner, *The Living Landscape: Designing for Beauty and Biodiversity in the Home Garden* by Rick Darke and Doug Tallamy (Timber Press, \$39.95, www.timberpress.com) would make the perfect gift for the gardener in your life (or even to buy for your own winter reading pleasure).

We gardeners want lots of beautiful plants arranged in pleasing ways, but we also want our gardens to be full of birds, butterflies and pollinators. And, as wild areas are increasingly converted to human housing, many species of animals and plants will become more dependent on home gardens for their very survival.

This book takes you all the way from concepts to practicalities, showing you how to create a garden that is both wildlife-friendly and natural looking. And, to stimulate the creative juices, it is also copiously illustrated with stunning photographs.

The authors, friends who live a short distance apart across the Pennsylvania/Delaware border, have already written a pair of highly acclaimed books—*The American Woodland Garden* (Darke) and *Bringing Nature Home* (Tallamy).

The Living Landscape, as far as I know, is their first joint venture and draws heavily on these earlier books. Here are some highlights:

The layered landscape: in nature and in the garden

Before starting on our journey towards a wildlife friendly garden, it is helpful to understand the composition of the natural landscape and the living creatures it supports.

Here in Vermont we can readily observe the structure of our deciduous forests, and appreciate their physical layers, which are a bit like a sandwich. In addition, each layer becomes a unique habitat zone for a different mix of wildlife. And the layered landscape is also something we can emulate in our gardens, albeit on a much smaller scale.

The top layer of the forest is created by the canopy of our tallest trees—especially oaks, maples and ash. Below



photo by Dick Conrad

The layered landscape—trees, shrubs and perennials—can be seen in Judith's garden.

this we find smaller trees such as serviceberries and pagoda dogwoods, which constitute the understory layer. Move a bit further down and a mix of winterberries, red-twigged dogwoods and several species of viburnums form the shrub layer. Occasionally one is lucky enough to come across some beautiful wild azaleas in bloom.

The layer just above the ground is home to herbaceous wildflowers and ferns. Many of our woodland wildflowers are nature's opportunists. They bloom in early spring, in those few short weeks after the ground thaws but before the canopy trees leaf out and shade the ground. After flowering and setting seed they then go dormant until next year.

And finally we should not forget the all-important ground layer, where fallen leaves and other forest debris collect and decompose. This lowest layer contains an abundance of fungi and bacteria, as well as earthworms, insects and other animals, all of which in turn provide food for other wildlife.

Go beyond the forests and the composition of the landscape changes. The open spaces in our landscape, including meadows and wetlands, support a mix of plants and animals not found in the forests.

As we observe the landscape we also see what Darke calls the 'lateral layers'. These are demarcations in the vegetation where, for instance, the forest gives way to open land. There is more sunlight here than in the forest interior, making it especially suitable for some of the shrubs and understory trees. And, as any avid birder will tell you, these lateral layers also create their own unique habitat for wildlife.

In addition to his writing, Darke is also a skilled photographer. And through his pictures he shows us how to apply the concept of layering to our own home landscapes, and create gardens inspired by our beloved Vermont countryside.

The interconnected food web

We all want to attract birds, butterflies, bees and other pollinators to our gardens. What does it take to make this happen?

It turns out that Doug Tallamy (who is a professor in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware) has done extensive research on the feeding interdependencies between various kinds of plants, insects and birds. He calls this the interconnected food web.

We are probably aware that songbirds consume an abundance of insects, most often at the larval stage of their lifecycle. Indeed, as he points out, a single nesting pair of chickadees requires several thousand caterpillars just to raise one year's family.

And many of those insects feed on plants. So, if we want the birds, we need the insects. Of course, we may not be pleased when voracious caterpillars chew holes in our kale. But speaking personally, I want my garden to produce enough insect larvae so that the bluebirds can raise their families each summer. And I accept that holes in my kale may be the price I must pay for that.

However most of us are probably not aware of the highly specific food requirements of many insects.

It turns out that many insects have evolved over centuries to primarily consume the native plants of a region. And indeed, some caterpillars are only able to consume the leaves of a single native plant species.

Thus a female swallowtail butterfly, while enjoying the nectar she finds in the lilac flowers, will lay her eggs on the native black cherry which has the leaves that her emerging caterpillars are able to eat.

As we follow along with Doug Tallamy's explanation we realize that, to create lowest tier of the food web in our gardens, we need to have a diversification of native plants. These in turn will feed many kinds of insect larvae in the second tier, which then become a valuable source of food for songbirds and other members of the third tier.

From the ground up:

Creating a wildlife friendly garden

A wildlife friendly garden must offer both shelter and food for the organisms at each level of the food web.

- Shelter is provided by a layered structure—including some tall trees surrounded by lower-growing understory trees and shrubs.
- Food is derived from a mixture of native plants that in turn support the varied eating preferences of a whole range of invertebrate species.

The second half of the *Living Landscape* is devoted to the practical application of these twin concepts to the creation of real gardens. The authors describe an abundance of native plants—perennials, shrubs and trees—that can be used to create a layered structure in mid-Atlantic region gardens. Many of these will also thrive in our more northerly climate.

They also enumerate plenty of practical gardening techniques, such as ways to reduce mechanical disturbance of the soil (in order to conserve the ground layer life), and how to grow a carpet of wildflowers beneath the trees (in place of the ubiquitous mulch).

And finally, at the back of the book, there are the all-important lists of plants mentioned in the book. Look especially for the specific list of plants that thrive in New England, coupled with their ecological function (wildlife cover, nesting sites, food for birds and food for mammals) and their landscape function (bloom season, fall foliage, fragrance, etc).

If you get a chance to read this lovely book I would love to hear your thoughts and reactions. Email me at judithirven@gmail.com. Happy winter reading!!

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

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

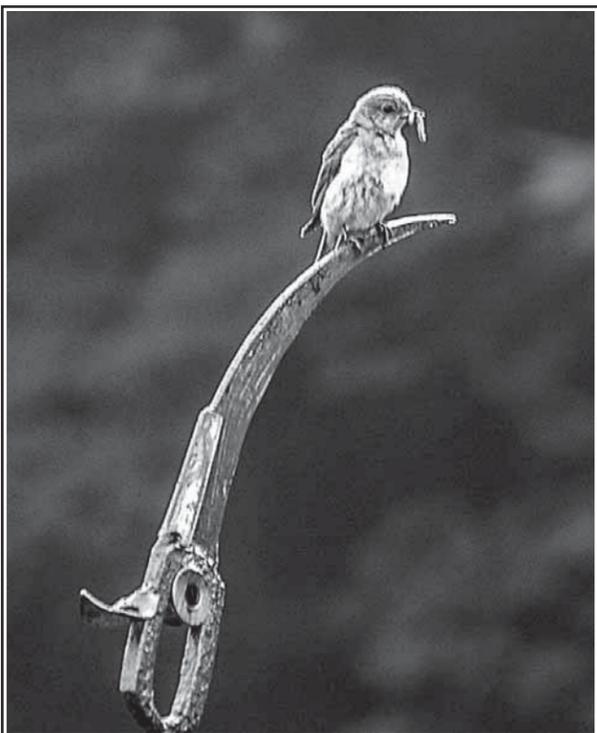


photo by Dick Conrad

This male bluebird has just caught a nice juicy caterpillar for his growing family in Judith's garden.

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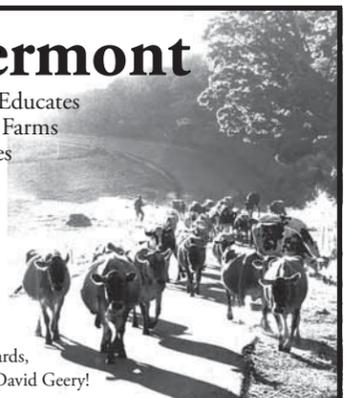
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Generation of Hope

by Burr Morse

I wake up most mornings crusty-eyed and in the doldrums. I stumble to the coffee pot, pour a cup, and then stumble back to bed. My routine includes laying there as long as necessary, sipping. Powered by Maxwell House, I gradually "percolate" and face south like a sunflower. Our view of the meadows and mountains is magnificent.

This morning, a skimming of fresh snow highlights Tommy's beef cows as they group and chow down at their circular hay feeder. Beyond them is a field of Balsam Christmas trees planted in straight rows and promising financial rewards in about five years. Both the cows and the trees are part of a new generation at Morse Farm...a new generation of hope.

Many of my contemporaries are facing both old age and the extinction of their farms but I have a son to carry on. He came to me years ago wanting to join on here. We went for a walk in the woods where I used words like "hard life", "bills to pay", and "commitment". It was summertime and as we walked under the canopy of new maple leaves he stayed by my side, listening, hearing, soul searching.

When we reached the end of the woods and came out into a clearing, he pointed..."that's where the new Christmas trees will grow and I want to start a small herd of beef cows". In those words, I had my answer.

Now, ten years later, he's tubing up a new maple sugarbush over in the next town. We both saw the handwriting on the wall: a farm with both the man and the maples growing old...branch out young man, branch out... and he's doing just that.

As I sit here writing this cold December day, my old dog Averill lies on the floor nearby. That same floor was recently littered with books and toys late one Saturday night, accoutrements of our 22-month-old granddaughter Caitrin. Cait, our only grandchild,

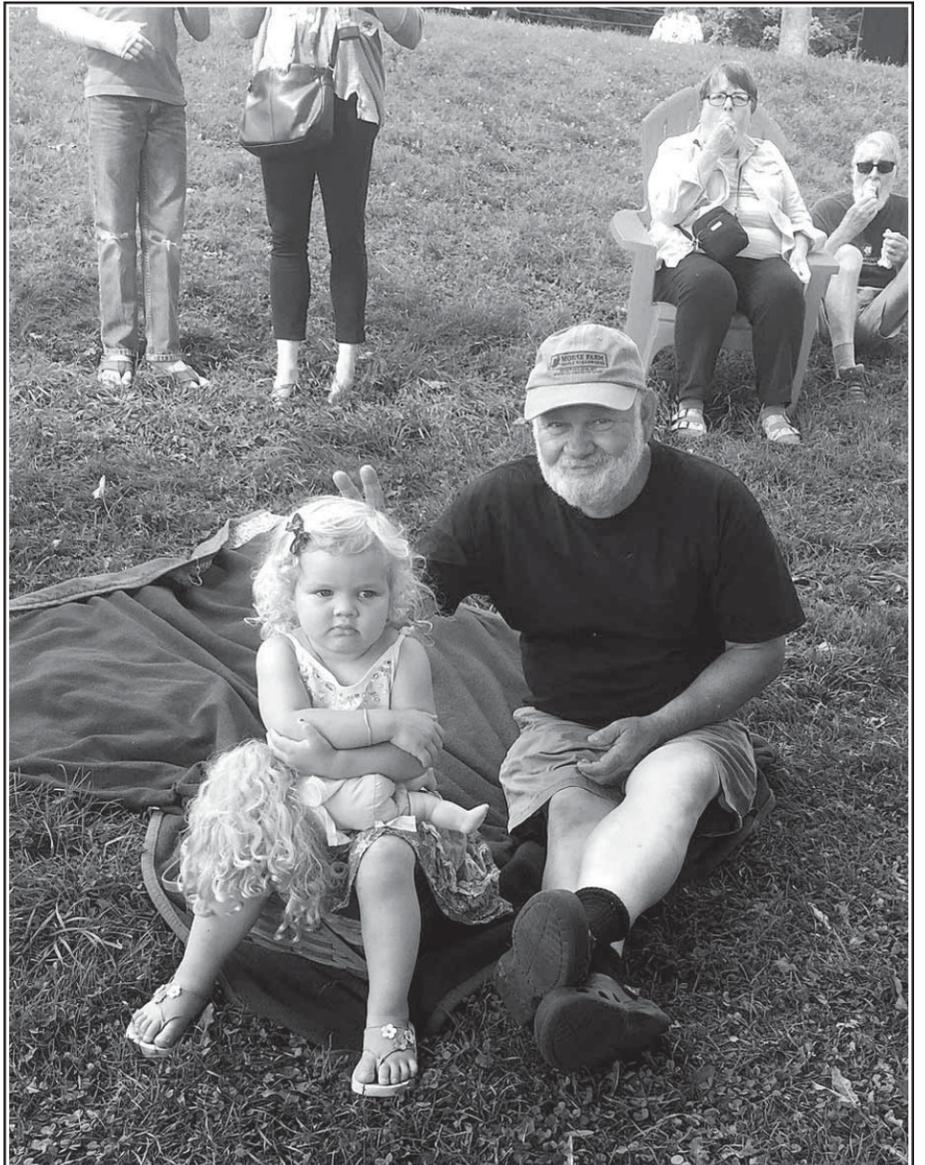
is the light of our lives and we always relish babysitting for her. Betsy spends every Monday with her and in their almost two years together, they have developed a special relationship. Cait views her "Baabaa" as provider of unique toys, games, and music but Baabaa's home is no place for sleep!

That Saturday night, Cait was still up at 10 p.m., rubbing her eyes and drowsy but unwilling to give in to the sandman. I, loved by her but still given "wide berth", sprawled in our La-Z-Boy providing moral support in a tired way for Betsy. About 10:30 p.m., Cait approached me with her arms raised..."up Boo" (yup, I'm "Boo" and I love it). I picked her up and she settled into my lap. She sat, still resisting, but the angle of her tilt gradually increased. By 10:45 p.m., she was nuzzled firmly against my chest, sound asleep.

Cait and I stayed like that until 1 a.m. when Tommy and his wife Monika crept in. "Sorry we're so late" Tom said as he gently lifted Cait off but no apology was necessary; that little girl, my granddaughter, had finally placed her trust in me.

One word kept coming to mind, "perfect" and it keeps coming back as memories of that evening return. It's just perfect to have the new additions to our farm "blossoming" before my eyes. It not only allows me to step aside one of these days and do some fishing and maybe even learn to play golf but it keeps this "patch of land" open and thriving into the future. Who knows, maybe Caitrin Morse will be take over for her dad Tommy one day...a new generation of hope.

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Caitrin Morse with her grandfather Burr Morse of Morse Farm in Montpelier, VT



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North Country Book News

Book Reviews by Charles Sutton

Splendid Holiday Treats—Cakes, Pies, Candies!

This is the perfect time of year to get out the cookbooks and find some inviting and unusual recipes for the Christmas holidays. Here are four new cookbooks with a whole palette of temptations.



It's not often a cookbook with hand-me-down family holiday recipes includes stories about the family, their Christmas adventures and what the tradition means to them.

In *An Old-Fashioned Christmas—Sweet Traditions for Hearth and Home* by Ellen Stimson (\$24.95, W.W. Norton & Co., www.countrymanpress.com), we learn right away of a tradition where each family member gets to buy one special Christmas tree ornament each year and we see many of them (some heirlooms) pictured here interspersed among the recipes. The family always goes out for Christmas eve dinner and has one special holiday adventure like sleigh riding, dogsledding, a trip to New York City, or going to a resort.

The family moved to Dorset, VT in 2003, from Missouri. The author's mother operated a pastry shop in the basement of their home in St. Louis, and that's where young Ellen first learned to cook and to love good food. She also learned Slovak cooking from her extended family, and some of these dishes are featured in her book. One favorite is Grandma Rimarchik's Slovak nut roll, a regular treat for Christmas morning. Ellen writes: "I practically married John (her husband) because of his nut roll. He showed up at my house during our first Christmas season with a big grin. He had flour all over his shirt and a nut roll in his arms. He told me he had been baking with his grandma all day. I remember clearly thinking, this...this is the kind of man you marry."

Ellen also gives us grandma's Slovak green bean and potato soup. "It is oddly satisfying," she writes, "and my vegetarian daughter loves it and so do my big strapping sons."

The author has her own take on many traditional Christmas foods and offers her own unique recipes for the holidays including candied bacon-wrapped water chestnuts; root beer pulled pork; oysters with strawberry mignonette and roquefort and walnut gougères (cheese puffs).

The cookbook has recipes for party foods, Christmas morning, the day after Christmas, and even treats for four-legged friends.



Many families have a tradition of making Christmas sugar cookies covered with red and green sprinkles. One will find these and many other suggestions for the holidays in *Cookies, Cookies and More Cookies* by Lilach German (\$12.95, Charlesbridge Publishing, www.charlesbridge.com). The author, a Cordon-Blue trained baker, makes cookie baking easy with her ready-to-follow recipes, tips on tools, techniques and just the right ingredients.

You might try her Christmas meringue snow sandwiches or gingerbread men which can be made ahead of time and stored in the freezer. Other seasonal delights include Linzer Sables using homemade seasonal jam; traditional French

Madelaine cookies with a sponge cake texture; and Marzipan made with almonds and pistachios.

Full-page illustrations show how mouth-watering her cookies can be. The book is divided into sections: basic recipes, classic cookies, cookies of kids, cookies for occasions, cookies for the health conscious, cookies for chocolate lovers and cookies for the connoisseur. Among the ones your children might be tempted to make are milk chocolate & cornflake fingers, sprinkled chocolate balls, and pretzel cookies (a lemon flavored sugar cookie in pretzel shape).

The author became a cookie-maker as a young girl helping her grandmother cut cookies out of homemade dough. "I would make the dough into abstract shapes of my liking," she writes, "and I clearly remember impatiently waiting for the cookie to finish baking." You will, too, but it's worth the wait.



Many of us never have tried baking a pie from scratch based on the experience of having eaten many pies with iffy pie crusts or over-sweetened fillings. Seems like a risky task, but not so according to *Pies, Pies and More Pies* by Viola Goren (\$12.95, Charlesbridge Publishing, www.charlesbridge.com), a highly trained skilled pastry chef who says preparing a pie is 'easy as pie.'

She carefully prepares you—the would-be baker—on how to make pastry dough, fillings and toppings, baking hints and times, and finally, finishing touches and serving. Large close-up illustrations help show how the pies are made well as the ready-to-eat ones right out of the oven.

For the upcoming holidays she shows how to make panforte, a traditional Italian fruit pie whose filling includes almonds, hazelnuts, figs and raisins; a Linzer pie, the classic Austrian pastry made with nutty dough, sweet jam and a lattice topping; and a chocolate pecan pie with enough filling leftover for rolling truffles.

In addition to desserts, the author has tempting recipes for holiday meals with a pie theme: puff pastry with brie and mushrooms; cheese and fresh herb pie; shrimp and pepper tartlets; and Tiropita, a traditional Greek tart made with feta and cheddar cheeses and phyllo dough. Tempted? You have 65 choices!



Because most food stores today have long aisles devoted to candies, boxed or bagged, one rarely ever think of making candy at home. You'll think differently and will give candy-making a try after reading *The Sweet Book of Candy Making* by Elizabeth LaBau (\$24.99, Quayside Publishing, www.quarrybooks.com).

The author, a food writer and candy-recipe maker, got hooked on candy as a young girl at Halloween, collecting as much candy as possible in a pillowcase. She hid this in her bedroom and hoped it would last until Easter candy times.

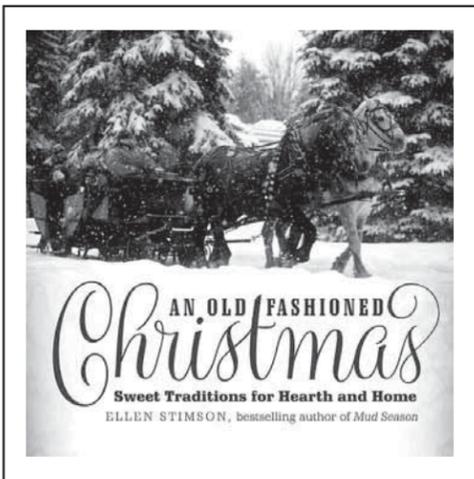
She teaches candy-making techniques carefully for each type of candy, what ingredients work best and equipment needed. She is extra helpful providing 'troubleshooting' advice for each candy. For instance, what to do if your fudge turns out too grainy or too hard or too soft.

Candy recipes are arranged by types: sugar candies, fondants, caramels, toffee, fudge, truffles, chocolate candies, marshmallows and fruit and nut candies.

She won't let the would-be candy-maker be scared off by the sight and apparent complexity of the candy. For instance, she says truffles are the best con game around. "They have a gourmet, elegant, expensive reputation, but in reality they are one of the easiest, most accessible candies to make."

After that encouragement, why not try her mint chocolate chip truffles and even pink grapefruit truffles.

Any of her candies are a Christmas treat. How about peppermint swirl marshmallows, vanilla honey fudge, or glazed fruit? "Making candy at home is a magical process but also fun," says the author.



Book News

"Vermont Wild"

Adventures of Fish & Game Wardens, Vol IV

A terrified taxidermist turned federal witness, ice shanty explosion, a language barrier that ends in longjohns and encounters with numerous ingenious poachers, are just some of the stories in the newly released, *Vermont Wild, Adventures of Fish & Game Wardens, Volume Four*, in stores now. The new volume features a charging bull moose on the cover!

Fans have made the *Vermont Wild* adventure series a best seller for many Green Mountain bookstores, Kinney Drugs and many specialty shops around the state. The book's author is Megan Price, a former reporter and state legislator.

The stories in this volume were contributed by retired Vermont game wardens Eric Nuse of Johnson, John Kapusta of Hardwick, Ken Denton of Cabot, Norm Brown of Wells and Bob Lutz of Fairfax. Retired deputy wardens Walt Ackermann of Cabot and Terry Williams of Poultnery are also included.

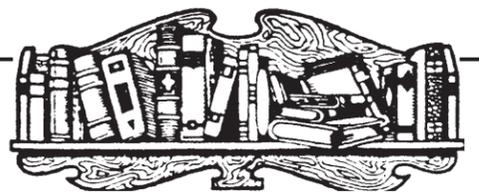
All the books feature true, always humorous, and occasionally harrowing, adventures from the game warden's

careers. Readers can pick up any volume and enjoy a story. There is no need to start at beginning. Eye catching cover art is created by Carrie Cook of Cambridge, VT. The new book's interior illustrations were drawn by Bob Lutz and Jacob Grant of Lyndon, VT.

All the books are family-friendly, with no bad language or gratuitous violence. Readers aged 9 to 99 enjoy these true stories from some of Vermont's best woodsmen. Many parents say the *Vermont Wild* series are the only books their sons will read.

The books are designed to be stuffed into a backpack and read out loud around a campfire or enjoyed snuggled in front of a woodstove with a mug of hot chocolate. The covers are specially made to be water resistant and the print larger than in many books, so it can be easily read by youngsters and older fans.

Readers can find the books at select shops and bookstores statewide or order online from the publisher at www.vermontwild.com.



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# A Children's Christmas

## Tales of Light in the Dark of the Year

December is here and with it comes all the mystery and magic of the season. Children can't wait to get out and go sledding, and hold their breath for Christmas Eve. We celebrate the longest night of the year with Winter Solstice, and remember the birth of Jesus, and wish for peace on Earth. As we head into Advent (this year from November 29 through December 24) it seems we are each waiting for our own heart's wish. Here are some stories about those wishes and about the promise of Christmas.

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One way of celebrating these special days is through reading *24 Stories for Advent* by Brigitte Weninger and Eve Tharlet (*North-South Books, \$19.95, www.northsouth.com*).

This delightful book, first published in Switzerland, offers a story for each day of Advent. The authors draw upon a wide range of folk and fairy stories with young children, animals, elves and gnomes, and a few adults referred to as the Big People. Here is a sample of some of what you and your family will enjoy:

- *The Snowgirl Snegurochka*. A childless Russian couple make a snowman resembling the girl child they never had. The snowgirl comes to life and gives the couple great joy and pleasure until next spring when sadly it's time for her to melt away. But we learn that "if someone makes a wish with all their heart at just the right moment, Snegurochka may once again turn into a snowgirl."

- *A Christmas Tree for Everyone*. A young brother and sister accompany their father to harvest the perfect Christmas tree. The ones they find aren't right—too big, crooked, and one even has two tops. But when they do find the perfect, beautiful tree, the children get a message from the tree that it is still a child and shouldn't be cut down. "The fir tree says that he'd really like to be a Christmas tree, but not in our living room." The tree is spared and friends and villagers come and decorate it and have a party there. Happy ending!

- *A New Bed for Father Bear*. In this amusing story Father Bear is encouraged by a rabbit friend to get a new bed for this winter's hibernation, not the prickly pile of straw he's been using. He tries out the beds used by a wild boar, frog, and even a stork. We see the bear trying out and liking the stork's nest atop a chimney, but he decides it's no place to be this winter. None of the beds are right for him. But he does get ideas for making his straw bed more comfy, and in the end he is seen happily asleep with winter on the way.

- *Martin's Scarf*. The tiny boy Martin is off to the marketplace for a celebration with other children who will be carrying lanterns and singing songs. He wraps up in his favorite, bright-striped scarf which his mom doesn't like. "Ugh! Must you wear the silly thing?"

Before going with the other children, Martin helps a homeless man get warm clothes at a church's second-hand store. And when the man bends down to thank the boy, Martin says, "Wait. There's something missing..." And around his neck Martin carefully winds his favorite, bright-striped scarf. Happy man, happy boy.

Illustrator Eve Tharlet has filled this 124-page book with captivating drawings, humorous or serious as needed, many in snowbound settings.

i i i

Learning how Christmas is celebrated in other countries makes one realize how

much the holiday is celebrated and revered throughout the world. In *Tom's Christmas Fish* by Marit Tornqvist & Rita Tornqvist-Verschuur (*Floris Books, \$17.95, www.florisbooks.co.uk*), one is taken to Prague, Czechoslovakia, where fish is the traditional Christmas meal. We meet Tom who lives with his grandfather, and the upcoming Christmas will be the first since grandma has died.

"Let's pretend I am Grandma," said Tom. "I'll buy the fish and you buy the tree. The your legs won't get too tired. I'm sure I can find my way home."

In the marketplace the reluctant grandfather says yes and Tom goes off to buy and bring home a fish—a live carp. There follows an amusing and heart-warming story as Tom gets the carp, keeps it alive on the way home, and houses it in the bathtub. He names the fish Peppo. We'll see the touching end of the story for you, but this fish doesn't become the Christmas meal.

The art work—amazingly sensitive to the story's plot—was done by Marit Tornqvist. Her mother Rita wrote the story. The book was originally published in Swedish.

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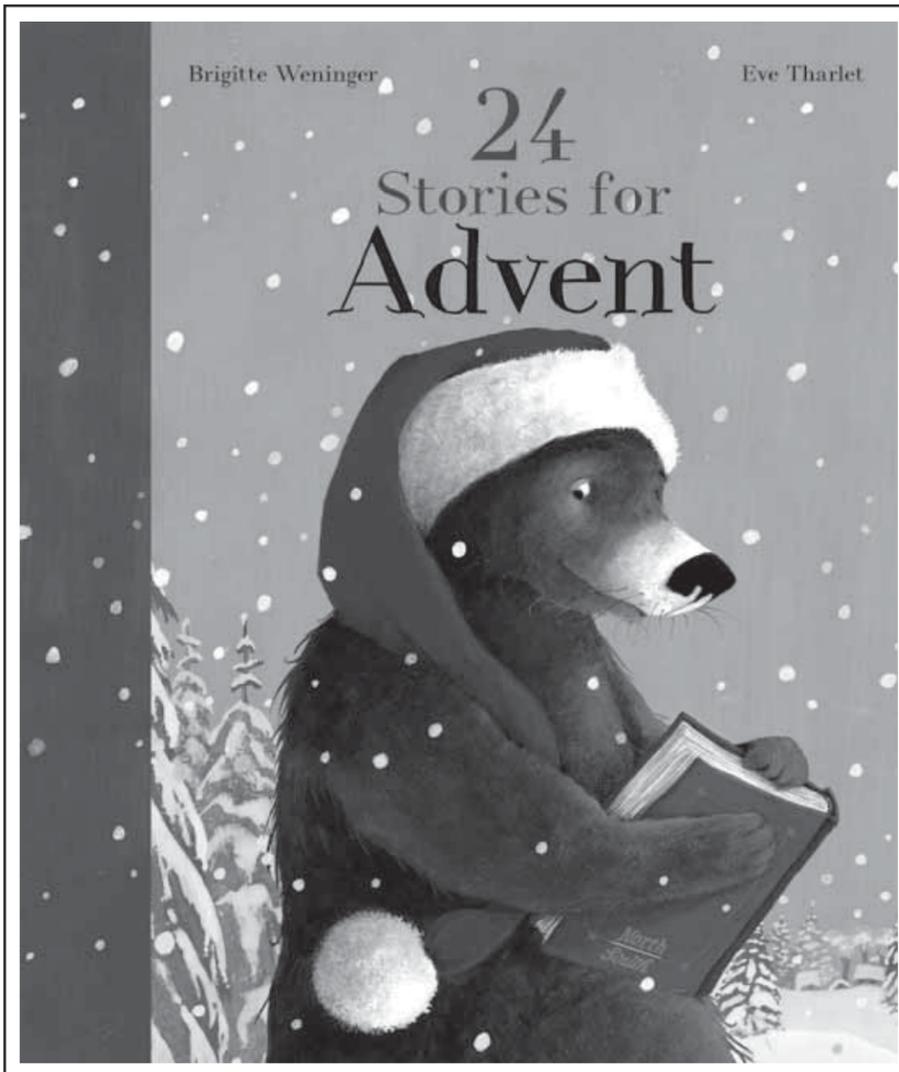
Twenty years ago an elementary school librarian felt the Christmas books she was reading to the children were not presenting the spirit of hope that is Christmas. That revelation led to *The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey* by Susan Wojciechowski and illustrated by P.J. Lynch (*Candlewick Press, \$17.99, www.candlewick.com*).

This deluxe 20th Anniversary edition of this classic story portrays a joyless wood-carver, Toomey, finally finding some happiness after years of despair following the death of his wife and baby child. It is through the carving of a nativity scene for a widow McDowell and her son Thomas that a friendship evolves, and starting that Christmas no one in town ever called him 'Mr. Gloomy' again.

Lynch's illustrations capture the subtle changes in mood and bearing as Toomey makes friends with life again and a friendship with the widow and her son.

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It's an adventure to go to a tree farm to select and cut one's own Christmas tree, but imagine how scary such an outing was for daughter Zoe and her pet dog Enzo when they got separated from her father, Denny, and lost in a snowstorm. In *Enzo and The Christmas Tree Hunt* by Garth Stein and illustrated by R.W. Alley (*HarperCollins Publishers, \$17.99, www.harpercollinschildrens.com*), you will hang onto every moment of the drama as Enzo lets out a mighty howl as an SOS. This story is extra special because it is told by Enzo: "I let out a long howl, the cry of my brothers and sisters—the Newfoundland dogs, those who are known for their giant size, their strength, their intelligence." Soon we see the Newfies racing to the lost girl and dog with a wagon attached to their strong shoulders. A happy ending, for sure, but also next to where Enzo and Zoe were huddled in the storm was the 'perfect' Christmas tree. That goes home, too!



Artist Alley's captivating illustrations make you feel like you are there, too, among the people, dogs and the snowstorm.

i i i

Children of all ages, who have a hard time waiting for Christmas, will sympathize with the frustration of four impatient goslings, especially one named Ollie in *Merry Christmas, Ollie!* by Olivier Dunrea (*Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$12.99, www.hmco.com*).

Ollie and his companions are colorfully illustrated waiting in the snow, peeking over a wall, peering around a beehive, and wondering and asking "Is Christmas ever coming or even is it here yet?" They did hang up their stockings and boots in the barn as expected. "I want Christmas!" Ollie shouts. And finally, "Christmas is here!"

This is a Level One Reader for ages 4-6, and one of Olivier Dunrea enchanting Ollie series.

i i i

If gingerbread is one of your Christmas treats, then you'll be especially amused by *The Gingerbread Man Loose at Christmas* by Laura Murray and illustrated by Mike Lowery (*G.P. Putnam's Sons, \$16.99, www.penguin.com*).

The gingerbread man has been in 'sticky' situations before in school and on a fire-truck, but for this holiday he has joined his classmates at school making goodies and practicing songs to thank community helpers and shopkeepers. On their present-giving trek through town Gingerbread Man gets left behind in a snowstorm trying to find the bakery where his gift to the baker-lady is a

card with a recipe inside. The Gingerbread Man's story is told in poems, making it an ideal read-through for the holidays.

i i i

Since the mid-19th century holiday revelers have enjoyed singing "Jingle Bells" while envisioning sleighs rising along in the wintry landscape. You will especially be taken with *Jingle Bells—A Magical Cut-Paper Edition* by James Lord Pierpont and illustrated by Niroot Puttapipat (*Candlewick Press, \$19.99, www.candlewick.com*), for its beautiful illustrations of this classic Christmas song.

The paper cuts accompanying the song are exquisite with the sleigh, people, animals, homes and trees silhouetted against the snow-white background. The art work includes an amazing pop-up finale. This is a book you'll want to give to friends and family and keep for Christmases to come!

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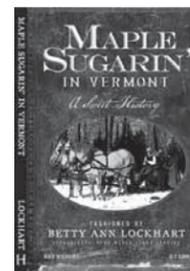
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# Night in Camp

— 1884 —

by Nessmuk (George W. Sears)

The simplest and most primitive of all camps is the "Indian camp." It is easily and quickly made. It is warm and comfortable, and stands a pretty heavy rain when properly put up.

This is how it is made: Let us say you are out and have slightly missed your way. The coming gloom warns you that night is shutting down. You are no tenderfoot. You know that a place of rest is essential to health and comfort through the long, cold, December night.

You dive down the first little hollow until you strike a rill of water, for water is a prime necessity. As you draw your hatchet you take in the whole situation at a glance. The little stream is gurgling downward in a half-choked frozen way. There is a huge sodden hemlock lying across it. One clip of the hatchet shows it will peel. There is plenty of smaller timber standing around; long, slim poles, with a tuft of foliage on top. Five minutes suffice to drop one of these, cut a twelve-foot pole from it, sharpen the pole at each end, jam one end into the ground and the other into the rough bark of a scraggy hemlock, and there is your ridge pole. Now go—with your hatchet—for the bushiest and most promising young hemlocks within reach. Drop them and draw them to camp rapidly.

*"You awaken with a sense of chilliness to find the fire burned low, and daylight breaking. You have slept better than you would in your own room at home."*

Next, you need a fire. There are fifty hard, resinous limbs sticking up from the prone hemlock. Lop off a few of these and split the largest into match timber. Reduce the splinters to shavings, scrape the wet leaves from your prospective fireplace, and strike a match on the balloon part of your trousers. If you are a woodsman you will strike but one. Feed the fire slowly at first; it will gain fast. When you have a blaze ten feet high, look at your watch. It is 6 p.m. You don't want to turn in before 10 o'clock, and you have four hours to kill before bedtime.

Now, tackle the old hemlock. Take off every dry limb, and then peel the bark and bring it to camp. You will find



Making a primitive camp near Little Rock Pond, Mt. Tabor, VT, circa 1890.

this takes an hour or more. Next, strip every limb from your young hemlocks, and shingle them onto your ridge-pole. This will make a sort of bear den, very well calculated to give you a comfortable night's rest. The bright fire will soon dry the ground that is to be your bed, and you will have plenty of time to drop another small hemlock and make a bed of browse a foot thick. You do it. Then you make your pillow.

Now, this pillow is essential to comfort and very simple. It is half a yard of muslin, sewed up as a bag, and filled with moss or hemlock browse. You can empty it and put it in your pocket, where it takes up about as much room as a handkerchief. You have other little muslin bags—an' you

be wise. One holds a couple of ounces of good tea; another, sugar; another is kept to put your loose duffle in: money, match safe, pocket-knife. You have a pat of butter and a bit of pork, with a liberal slice of brown bread; and before turning in you make a cup of tea, broil a slice of pork, and indulge in a supper.

Ten o'clock comes. The time has not passed tediously. You are warm, dry and well-fed. Your old friends, the owls, come near the fire-light and salute you with their strange wild notes; a distant fox sets up for himself with his odd, barking cry and you turn in, not ready to sleep just yet.

But you drop off and it is two bells in the morning watch when you waken with a sense of chill and darkness. The fire has burned low, and snow is falling. The owls have left, and a deep silence broods over the cold, still forest. You rouse the fire, and, as the bright light shines to the furthest recesses of your forest den, get out the little pipe, and reduce a bit of navy plug to its lowest denomination. The smoke curls lazily upward; the fire makes you warm and drowsy, and again you lie down—to again awaken with a sense of chilliness—to find the fire burned low, and daylight breaking.

You have slept better than you would in your own room at home. You have slept in an "Indian camp."

*George Washington Sears (1821–1890) wrote under the name of Nessmuk for Field and Stream magazine in the late 1800s and authored Woodcraft and other popular books.*

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| <p><b>HOLIDAY POPS</b></p> <p>December 11, 7:30 pm<br/>Barre Opera House<br/>Barre</p> | <p>December 17, 7:30 pm<br/>North Church<br/>St. Johnsbury</p>                                           |
| <p>December 12, 7:30 pm<br/>Flynn Center<br/>Burlington</p>                            | <p>December 18, 7:30 pm<br/>Jay Peak Resort<br/>Jay</p>                                                  |
| <p>December 13, 3:00 pm<br/>Paramount Theatre<br/>Rutland</p>                          | <p>December 19, 5:00 pm<br/>The White Church<br/>Grafton</p>                                             |
| <p>Tickets and more information:<br/><b>vso.org</b></p>                                | <p>December 20, 4:00 pm<br/>1st Congregational Church<br/>Manchester</p>                                 |
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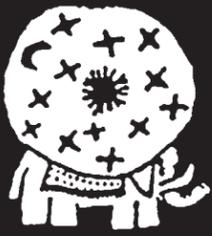
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**2107 Orange.** 2 BR camp – old Glenwood cookstove plus gas cookstove and gas refrigerator – total 4 rooms plus one-half bath – 175 acres plus two-acre pond plus brook...Priced below town appraisal at \$269,000.

**2015 Washington.** 16 x 24 ft. cabin with full cement basement – attached storage building – 15½ surveyed acres – top of hill with excellent views – private drive.....Price \$90,000.

**2106 Washington.** 10 acres surveyed – 330 ft. frontage on TR #56 – borders the Corinth town line. Mostly hardwood – very private...Priced to sell at \$29,500.

**2111 Orange.** 22.2 acres surveyed – 1,587 ft. frontage on the Notch Rd – private – good brook.....Priced below town appraisal at \$25,000.

**2108 Williamstown.** 2 bedroom village home – town water and sewer – oil/hot water heat, and a fireplace.....Priced \$4,500 below the town assessment at \$79,500.



**2125 Chelsea.** 2 story, 4 bedroom, farm house cape – 2 car garage in addition to several other outbuildings – main barn is 34 x 158 ft. with 84 ties – the first branch of the White River runs through the property – 247 acres – (Broker-Owner).....Price \$395,000.



**2109 Chelsea.** 3 bedroom home – 1,248 sq. ft. full cement basement – drilled well 40 GPM – .8 acre all open, flat and tillable – built in 1972. ...Priced below the town assessment at \$115,000.

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**2094 Chelsea.** 30 acres of land – driveway and campsite on good trout brook – year-round gravel road – close to village.....Price \$49,500.

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