

Vermont Country Sampler

December 2017

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

Free



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December Journal

Attachment and Befriending

by Bill Felker

On a recent trip to see the last trees of late fall, I paid attention to the way I missed home and summer, and I thought about what caused the discomfort at leaving both behind.

Since my wife died five years ago, I have tried to understand how to come to terms with home. I have become overly attached to the place where I live and to my story contained in its rooms and gardens. It is hard for me to go away.

On the other hand, once I am on the road and look closely at the different landscape, I like the freedom and take comfort in what I find. I do not become detached so

much as I befriend the new space and time.

Spring and summer have always been my favorite seasons, and I miss them now. But when I am too sad to see the leaves come down or too fearful of abandoning the safety of my yard, the grip is too strong.

Homesickness comes from holding on and from being held too much. Befriending is an open acceptance of what appears on the other side of home.

Each pole is a mentor. Each year, I learn from autumn and the road not to hold summer and my home too close and to make friends with the cold and absence.



Decorating the 1890 Farmhouse for Christmas at Billings Farm & Museum in Woodstock, VT. photo by Billings Farm & Museum

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

Cut Your Own Christmas Tree With a \$5.00 Permit on the Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont

U.S. Forest Service officials in Vermont are encouraging the public to purchase Christmas tree removal permits should they be interested in a five-dollar tree for the holidays.

This year, all fourth graders can take advantage of the Every Kid in a Park Initiative and get a free Christmas tree voucher found here: www.everykidinapark.gov. Fourth graders that present a printed copy of the voucher may redeem it for an EKIP Pass and a Christmas tree removal permit at one of the U.S. Forest offices listed below.

This is a one-time opportunity for anyone with a permit to cut down a Christmas tree on national forest land during the 2017 holiday season.

Christmas trees for personal use may be cut on the

Green Mountain National Forest, subject to the following conditions:

- A "Christmas Tree Removal" permit must be purchased (\$5.00) at one of the Forest Service offices located in Rutland, Manchester Center, or Rochester, Vermont.

- The permit must be attached to the tree before transporting it from the site where it was cut.

- The permit holder is responsible for knowing that the tree comes from Forest Service land. Maps are available when you purchase your permit.

Trees over 20 feet tall are not designated for cutting by the Christmas tree permit.

- The height of the tree stump left after a tree has been cut should be six inches or less above the soil.

- Christmas trees shall not be cut in active timber sales, wilderness areas, campgrounds, picnic areas, or within 25 feet of any Forest Service, town, or state maintained road.

- Only one Christmas tree permit will be issued per household per year.

Permits are not refundable.

- Trees obtained under the Christmas tree permit may not be resold.

Here are the U.S. Forest Service Offices in Vermont:
Rutland Forest Supervisor's Office, 231 N. Main St., Rutland, VT, (802) 747-6700.

Manchester Ranger Station - 2538 Depot St., Manchester Center, VT, (802) 362-2307.

Rochester Ranger Station, 99 Ranger Rd., Rochester, VT, (802) 767-4261.

Visit www.fs.usda.gov.

Valley Town

In this deep-valley town
Our winter sun is set
By half-past two, or three;

While you can probably
Get where you have to get
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—JAMES HAYFORD
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Vermont Country Sampler
December 2017, Vol. XXXIII

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

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

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

photo by Billings Farm & Museum

Woodstock, VT

Christmas at the Farm Hosted by Billings Farm & Museum

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

Discover the traditions of a late 19th century Vermont Christmas with a visit to the Billings Farm & Museum this holiday season. Christmas at the Billings Farm will be fea-

tured on weekends in December and December 23 – January 1, 2018, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (excluding Christmas Day).

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

Highlights of the Holiday Season:

December 8, 9, & 10 – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Woodstock's Wassail Celebration. Make historic Christmas ornaments and dip candles.

Sunday, December 10 – Woodstock's Wassail Celebration. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Closed Christmas Day – Merry Christmas!

December 26 through January 1 – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Christmas Week. Make historic Christmas ornaments and

dip candles. Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides, if conditions permit: 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Billings Farm & Museum is open daily April 1 through October 31, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; weekends November through February; and Christmas & Presidents' weeks, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission: adults \$15; 62 & over \$14; children 5-15 \$8; 3-4 \$4; 2 & under, free. The dairy farm, farm life exhibits, restored and furnished farmhouse, and activities are included in the entrance fee. The Farm & Museum is located one-half mile north of the Woodstock village green on VT Rt. 12. For more information call (802) 457-2355 or visit www.billingsfarm.org.



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10th Anniversary for SO Vermont Arts & Living Magazine

SO Vermont Arts & Living magazine will celebrate its 10th anniversary with a special 10th Anniversary issue due out in January, 2018. The issue will feature a gatefold of past covers that showcases the works of prominent artists in the region, which has become the magazine's trademark.

"We'll take a look back at how the magazine started, and why, and where we are today," said owner and publisher Lynn Barrett. We're also announcing the SO Vermont Arts & Living Cultural Hero Award that will be given annually to the person or organization that has done the most to advance the arts and culture of Southern Vermont. Of course we'll recognize our community partners, writers, designers, and everyone involved with the magazine. It's hard to believe that 10 years have gone by. We've grown in terms of enhanced events, exhibitions, readership, content and social media. But, the start-up was a leap of faith."

Before moving to Vermont, Barrett specialized in marketing and public relations for CBS, other Fortune 500 companies and her own firm, Primetime Concepts in Manhattan. "Starting a publishing company was not on my list when I came here," she says.

Barrett's first foray into the magazine business came in 2005 with the Andy Warhol exhibition at the Brattleboro Museum when the Brattleboro Reformer invited her to sell ads and help produce Andy Warhol, The Jon Gould Collection. "I'd never sold an ad in my life, but I was game."

She subsequently worked with the daily newspaper to produce and market other publications centered around the arts and the local economy, including "Southern Vermont Arts," a glossy magazine that became the inspiration for her own publishing undertaking.

"The idea to publish a magazine to promote the arts and lifestyle of not just Brattleboro, but all of Southern Vermont, seemed like the next logical move," Barrett says. "Who else was going to promote Southern Vermont? The state's tourism marketing was focused north of Rt. 4."

She began publishing SO Vermont Arts & Living independently in 2008, bringing the same premise and mission to the new magazine, which she describes as "a postcard to the world about Southern Vermont."

The magazine focuses on the arts, culture, and lifestyle that chronicles the rural yet sophisticated world of Southern Vermont. It's distributed in two Welcome Centers and throughout Southern Vermont and the neighboring towns



SO Vermont Arts and Living Magazine is celebrating its 10th Anniversary this January.

along the borders of New York, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Target readers are residents and tourists who are drawn to cultural and lifestyle coverage and are looking for things to do in the region. "We reach them where they live and where they visit," she says.

The magazine's departments focus on a specific niche of Vermont's lifestyle including Personalities; Entrepreneurs; Spotlights on productions and openings (Museums, Art Galleries, Antiques, Theater, Dance, Music); Design Observed; Food & Wine; New and Notable and Calendar of Events. The magazine also offers editorial space in "Talk of the Arts" pages for cultural commentary.

SO Vermont Arts & Living's team is comprised of Jeff Potter, design; Martin Langeveld, website; Eric Pero, calendar listings; along with a host of seasoned professional writers, including Joyce Marcel, Jon Potter, Arlene Distler, Susan Smallheer, Meg Brazill, Kathleen Cox, Nicole Colson, Kevin O'Connor, and Marty Ramsburg—all experts on various aspects of the arts and its impact on the local economy and local culture.

"While the magazine has evolved over the last 10 years,

the editorial focus of the magazine remains true," she says.

Barrett says that the magazine wants to know: Who are we? Why do we come here? Why do we stay? How do we live? How do we work? How are we inspired? How do we inspire others? What do we care about? How do we play? Whom do we turn to for advice, information, and expertise? How are we fulfilling our dreams? What do we want for the future?

"These are the questions we try to answer," she says. "We love hearing from our readers and their stories. In fact, we want to hear from folks specifically about why they love Southern Vermont. And we want to know about their biggest challenges."

The magazine is "conducting a little kitchen research," says Barrett, who can be reached at vermontartsliving@gmail.com.

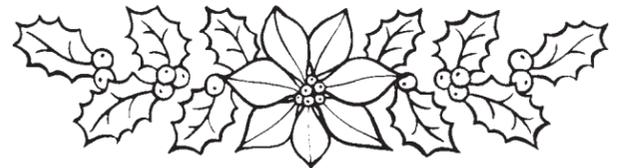
"With the world changing so fast, it's not easy to predict what will happen next," Barrett says, but she believes in the power of the magazine to help celebrate a region—and to get readers locally to perceive their own area as a special place with the capacity to capture visitors' hearts, minds, and spirits.

While many communities have turned to the arts to revitalize themselves and strengthen their economies, without a vehicle to promote the critical mass of activities, events, people, cultural experiences, and sense of place, many well intentioned efforts fall short of their full potential. Further, the lack of such a promotional tool diminishes all efforts to market the region as a vital, attractive destination. SO Vermont Arts & Living is that promotional tool that positively impacts the region," she believes.

And one editorial style decision reflects those values. "We believe in Southern Vermont with a capital S," Barrett says. "Southern Vermont is not just an adjective. Southern Vermont is a destination."

Subscribe! We'll mail you the next four issues if you send a check for \$25 made out to Primetime Concepts, Inc., 1484 Middle Rd., Dummerston Center, VT 05301. (802) 258-3992. prime@svcable.net. vermontartsliving.com.

For a list of outlets where you can pick up a copy, visit the website.



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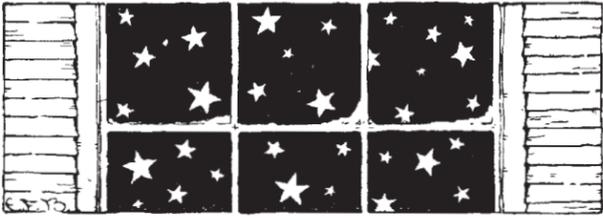
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Bellows Falls, VT

Stone Church Arts Winter Concerts and Retreats

Stone Church by Candlelight is a new concert series which will adorn the winter months, sponsored by Stone Church Arts, and taking place at Immanuel Episcopal Church in Bellows Falls, VT. Curated by Eugene Friesen, the Artistic Director, these special concerts, lit by candlelight, present world class solo artists in the warm acoustics of the church or chapel.

Áine Minogue Concert • December 9th

The first Stone Church by Candlelight concert is December 9th with Áine Minogue, Celtic harp and vocals.

What is it about Celtic music that truly does warm the heart and soul? Maybe it's all those days of damp, bone-chilling clouds and rain in Ireland and Scotland, where music has to stir the blood and inspire the spirit more than in other climates. Maybe it's the Celts' innate understanding of the forces of light and darkness, life and death, and their ability to walk between worlds with courage and will.

Áine Minogue, a wonderfully gifted Irish harper and singer, has created music that takes us wandering the winter landscapes of soul and settles us before a blazing fire. Áine brings a sumptuous feast of song, poetry, and dance music, perfect for celebrating the Winter time with joy.

This magical evening, graced by Áine's otherworldly voice of beauty and wisdom, is music our ancestors listened to, to warm their winter nights. Now it's your turn to enjoy.

Born and raised in Borrisokane, County Tipperary, Ireland, Áine Minogue is an award-winning harpist, singer, arranger and composer who has entertained Presidents and Prime Ministers, and has traveled extensively to perform at concerts across the United States and around the world.

At the age of 12, while at boarding school in County Galway, Áine discovered her true love – the harp. After completing school, she spent three years developing her incomparable talent as a harpist at Bunratty Castle, one of Ireland's most treasured landmarks and the perfect setting to accentuate the harp's emotional and lyrical connections to Irish history.

With a dozen solo album recordings to her credit, Áine has been nominated for several awards for her work as a record producer.

Áine's music, in varying styles including Celtic, World, Folk, Spiritual and New Age, has appeared on compilations for industry labels such as BMG, Decca, Universal, Virgin Records, Windham Hill and Putumayo.

She has a Master's Degree in Traditional Irish Harp Performance from the University of Limerick, Ireland. Her music is on Pandora, Spotify, iTunes, and Amazon. You can follow Áine on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Advance concert tickets are \$20 general admission, \$15 for seniors, and \$45 for reserved seats, up front. At the door, prices increase to \$25 general admission and \$20 for seniors.

"Following the Spiral:

Exploring Celtic Christian Heritage"

An Advent Retreat with James Ruff and Robert Bowler

Stone Church Arts' Advent retreat this year brings James Ruff, harper and singer and Gaelic speaker, to Stone Church Center. From December 15 at 4 p.m. through December 17 at 1 p.m., he will lead "Following the Spiral: Exploring Celtic Christian Heritage." Explore Celtic spirituality and tradition through early writings, prayers, Celtic harp music, songs, chants, and stories of Celtic saints. Our time together will open our hearts to Christ's presence in the beauty that surrounds and permeates all. Liz Rogers, caterer extraordinaire, will cook delectable meals, and Beau Bowler will serve as chaplain, leading Celtic morning and evening prayer times.

Things Celtic seem to be appearing frequently in our culture – in music, art, jewelry, movies – as well as in spirituality. In fact, Celtic spiritual tradition is deeply embedded in Anglican Christianity.

The ancient Celts prized deep connections with nature and the divine wisdom hidden within it – in the rocks, plants and animals that share our world, as well as in our souls and physical bodies. Due to current upheavals in our earth's climate as well as in human society, a deep yearning for a different way seems to be emerging in many of us, which may find resonance in the wisdom of our Celtic Christian ancestors.

In this introductory retreat, the traits that distinguish Celtic Christian spirituality, including images and ideas coming from earlier spiritual systems will be discussed. Selected writings from early Celtic Christian theologians that illuminate their thoughts and theology will be read and discussed. You will study and learn some prayers from the Carmina Gadelica, a collection of early Celtic prayers from the Hebrides, as well as some early Gaelic chants. You will hear and discuss stories of the Celtic saints. Through the

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Áine Minogue will be performing in Bellows Falls on December 9th.

beauty of prayer, chant, Celtic harp music and song, story, and time spent walking and praying in nature, we will seek to deepen our awareness of Christ's presence, within ourselves and in all that surrounds us.

Advent Retreat Faculty

James Ruff, our Retreat Leader, is a professional singer and harper specializing in music for voice and harp from Gaelic Scotland and Ireland. A speaker of Scottish Gaelic and a member of the Episcopal Church since 2000, he has also been involved with the Ceile De (Culdee) Order—a Celtic Christian monastic order centered in Scotland—since 2005. He has sung as soloist with many early music groups, opera companies and festivals throughout the US and in Europe. Ruff teaches Voice at Vassar College, and was Director of Music at Christ the King Episcopal Church in Stone Ridge, NY from 2004-2015.

Robert Bowler or "Beau" is the Director of Stone Church Center and will be host and Chaplain. He will sit in on the sessions, be available for private counsel, and lead Celtic Evening and Morning Prayer services. Beau majored in Religious Studies at Reed College, earned an M.Div. degree from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, was ordained as a Unitarian Universalist minister in 1994 and has been practicing Celtic spirituality with the Ceile De Order since 2007.

Regular tuition for this weekend retreat includes tuition, meals, and all other costs. There are three options: commuter, \$350; shared room, \$410; and single room, \$470. Early bird tuition is \$30 less for each option and available up to one week in advance. The early bird discount will be applied automatically to the regular tuition.

Immanuel Episcopal Church is located at 20 Church St. 802-460-0110. sca@sover.net. stonechurcharts.org.

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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
London, United Kingdom, 1830-1894

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Poor Will's Guide To Farming and Gardening

by Bill Felker

December 1: Order your pasture seeds and schedule your pasture frost seeding for January and February.

December 2: Tomorrow's Supermoon moon is likely to trigger a quick arrival of Early Winter.

December 3: Supermoon Day is likely to bring stress to livestock and family, very cold weather and difficult travel conditions.

December 4: As the chances for severe temperatures increase, protect rose bushes and new plantings with collars and mulch.

December 5: Continue to weigh pregnant ewes and does to monitor their health as a birthing time nears.

December 6: Explore the Hanukkah market in your area for sales of lambs and kids.

December 7: Even though the moon will be coming into its mild fourth quarter as the December 8 cold front arrives, that date is a major pivot for severe weather throughout the central states along the 40th Parallel.

December 8: Protect catfish, koi, tilapia and other fish you keep in small ponds. Often one or two trough heaters will keep the water from freezing all the way.

December 9: Monitor bee hives for proper ventilation.

December 10: The moon enters its weak final quarter today, improving lunar conditions for working with family and livestock.

December 11: Plan for the hothouse market, a winter period during which to market your fall lambs.

December 12: Prepare to lower Christmas tree prices in about ten days to move as many trees as you can.

December 13: Throughout much of the country, the sun begins to set later, starting its movement toward summer (even though the days continue to shorten).



Hayrack at rest in the snow in Central Vermont.

photo by Nancy Cassidy

December 14: As the weather gets colder, keep adequate ventilation in the barn.

December 15: Deer mating time finally comes to a close throughout much of the country.

December 16: Harvest mistletoe for Christmas and New Year's sales and celebrations

December 17: Take cuttings from mother plants for starting under the new moon.

December 18: Lunar apogee weakens the power of today's new moon, and lessens the chances that the December 20 cold front will bring a major snowfall.

December 19: Seed bedding plants for spring sales now as the moon waxes.

December 20: Consider adjusting travel plans to allow you to fly or drive before the arrival of the New Year's cold front – expected to be severe this year.

December 21: Mangoes bloom in the Deep South, orchids flower in warm homes everywhere.

December 22: Coyote attacks on your flock and herd often increase as the weather worsens.

December 23: As the full moon approaches, be especially careful of abortions in your more delicate livestock.

December 24: Save your best quality feed supplies for the coldest months closest to late winter and early spring birthing time.

December 25: This year, the Christmas cold front should

be relatively weak, reducing the likelihood of a white Christmas across the East.

December 26: Between today and the 29th, travel conditions should be the best of the holiday season.

December 27: In the heated chicken houses, pullets which will produce summer eggs are hatching.

December 28: Protect your pesticides from winter. Check containers for the recommended temperature ranges for the products you have on hand.

December 29: Listen for the tufted titmouse to begin mating calls, foretelling spring.

December 30: Chances for precipitation rise quickly as the last weather system of the year approaches.

December 31: Expect heavy precipitation and travel complications, especially since the first full moon of 2018 occurs tomorrow. That moon will be a Supermoon (full and at perigee), making deep cold and blizzard conditions likely.

Poor Will's Almanack for 2018 and Bill Felker's collection of essays, Home is the Prime Meridian: Almanac Essays on Time and Place and Spirit are now available. Order yours from Amazon, or for autographed copies, order from www.poorwillsalmanack.com.

God Bless the Little Things

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

—MARGARET MURRAY



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A Vermont Almanack for Early Winter

by Bill Felker

Absence and presence are two aspects of the same reality. Death or ending is the mirror of life or beginning. Winter absences fill the deceptive pod of summer presence, create wholeness from the part that seems so transitory or so broken, but is only incomplete.

—Felker December Daybook

The Sun's Progress

Winter solstice occurs at 11:28 a.m. on December 21. The Sun enters the deep winter constellation of Capricorn on the same day.

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

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

Phases of the Paperwhite Moon And the Bedding Plant Moon

December 3—The Paperwhite Moon is full at 10:47 a.m. and reaches perigee, its position closest to Earth, this day, as well. This is the only "Supermoon" (full at perigee) of 2017.

December 10—The moon enters its final quarter 2:51 a.m.

December 18—The Bedding Plant Moon is new at 1:30 a.m. and at apogee (when it is farthest from Earth).

December 26—The moon enters its second phase 4:20 a.m.

The Planets

Venus and Saturn in Ophiuchus are not visible this month. Mars, moving retrograde into Libra, lies low on the eastern horizon with Jupiter before dawn.

The Stars

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

The Shooting Stars

The Ursid Meteors fall after midnight at the rate of about five to ten per hour on December 21 and 22. The young moon will favor your search for these shooting stars.

Meteorology

Weather history indicates that cold waves will reach the Northeast around the dates listed below.

December 3—The first high-pressure system of December is normally one of the less violent fronts of the month. This year, however, full moon and lunar perigee on the 3rd should bring a fierce arrival to early winter.

December 8—The high-pressure system that typically arrives at the end of December's first week is a major pivot for severe weather. A secondary front often increases the assault on your homestead between the 11th and the 13th.

December 15—This the period between the passage of this front and the arrival of the New Year's front, sometimes offers a "halcyon" period of relatively gentle weather (sometimes called the Halcyon Days).

December 20—Even though lunar apogee occurs on December 18, new moon on that date may strengthen this front and contribute to more snow at higher elevations.

December 25—The Christmas cold front is one of the most consistent highs of the entire year, bearing precipitation five years in ten. It is typically followed by some of the brightest days of December. Travel and transport of livestock is recommended as this weather system moves east but before the arrival of the New Year's front.

December 31—The last front of the calendar year is typically windy and wet. After this weather system passes through, the chill of deep winter grips the nation for the next six to twelve weeks.



Jersey heifers in the early winter sun in Central Vermont.

photo by Nancy Cassidy

The Phases of Early Winter

Phase One—When pear leaves fall. When sunset reaches its earliest time of the year, the brittle leaves of the pear trees fall. This is the time during which the second bloom of forsythia ends, when witch hazel blossoms wither, and the last of the golden beeches, the willows, and oaks come down.

The development of winter wheat slows in the cold. New garlic shoots are firm and green, but they have stopped growing and remain at their middle-autumn height. The Christmas tree harvest is underway, and the last poinsettias have come north.

Phase Two—When the last gulls migrate. When the last gulls migrate, then the northern states are locked in winter cold. Throughout greenhouses and under grow lights, however, nursery workers and gardeners plant and care for the seeds of tender plants that will be set out when the danger of frost is past.

Phase Three—When pruning time begins. When winter moves all the way down from Canada, then lakes and rivers start to freeze. Under the auspices of the cold, the season of winter pruning commences. It is time to force more bulbs so that they bloom in deep winter, to seed more bedding plants, to nurse annuals brought in from the cold.

Phase Four—When Spring starts north again. In central Florida, red maples open, and Jessamine produces its yellow blossoms. No matter the dramatic differences between the last phase of early winter in the North and South, this time is the gateway to the coldest time of year as well as the door to spring.



The Farmer's Field

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

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

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

—ELLA WARNER FISHER, 1853-1937

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Winter Festivities at Merck Forest and Farmland Center

Plan to come to Merck Forest and Farmland Center in Rupert, VT this winter for some holiday fun! Whether you take a sleigh ride, a hike through the winter landscape, visit with the animals, or make a wreath to decorate your home, you'll find exhilarating winter activities at Merck. The property is open free to the public daily, from dawn to dusk, year-round.

For outdoor events, please dress for the weather: sturdy shoes/boots, layered clothing, snow/rain gear, flashlight or headlamp, snacks and water. Outdoor events are held weather-permitting.

Advance reservations—made on a first-come first-served basis—are necessary for many events due to space limitations or scheduling considerations. Payment in full is due upon registration.

Winter Sleigh Rides. Our Suffolk Punch draft horses, Arch & Fern, are looking forward to welcoming you to a special experience at Merck Forest, once there's a snowpack. On Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and selected Saturdays through the winter, they will draw our newly-redesigned sweetheart sleigh across the winter landscape at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. The trip costs \$150 (flat rate) for a one-hour ride for up to five adults. Sleigh rides will run only if weather permits; no rides will be scheduled for Christmas or New Year's day. Call (802) 394-7836 for reservations and additional information. 24-hour advance notice is required.

Wreath-Making Workshop. December 2, 10 a.m. to 12 noon or 1-3 p.m. \$25 per wreath. Ring in the holidays with this popular family event. Space is limited, so pre-registration is suggested.

Winter Tree ID Walk. Saturday, December 9, 1-3 p.m. Free. Co-sponsored with the Vermont Woodlands Association. Looking to learn more about how to identify trees and shrubs in our winter landscape? Winter tree identification can be tricky, but with some key tips from Forester Kyle Mason, attendees of this hands-on workshop will be well on their way to expanding their skills as naturalists. Dress for the weather and remember to bring water and snacks. The program is free and family friendly. If you have questions call (802) 747-7900 or email silvia@vermontwoodlands.org.

Merck Forest & Farmland Center is located at 3270 Rt. 315 in Rupert, VT. (802) 394-7836. www.merckforest.org. When you go: Merck is located between Rupert and Dorset, at the top of the very large hill on Rt. 315 (Rupert Mountain Rd). Please do not rely solely on your GPS. Once you reach the top of the big hill on Rt. 315, turn into Merck Forest's driveway. If you start going downhill, you've missed the driveway.

Merck Forest and Farmland Center is a non-profit educational organization located in the Taconic Mountains of southwestern Vermont.



photo by Merck Forest and Farmland Center
Suffolk Punch draft horse Fern pulls the sleigh on a ride through the winter woods at Merck Forest and Farmland Center.



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"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!"

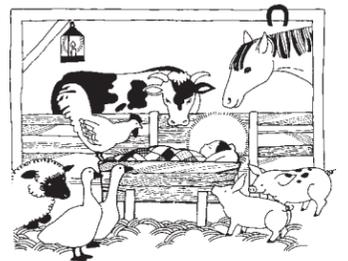
"Hush, little colt," said the mare
"And a story I will tell
Of a barn like this one of ours

The Barn

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.

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



"There was her baby born
And laid to sleep in the hay

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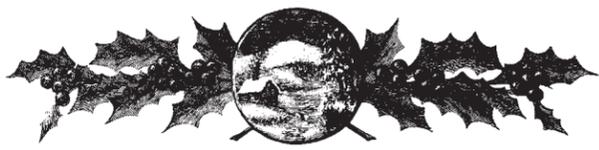
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Bennington, VT

Holiday Festival at Bennington Museum!

Each December the Bennington Museum's Festival draws its inspiration from one of the objects in the Museum's outstanding collection.

For 2017, the annual festival of the season celebrates the creativity of a wide range of regional artists as they respond to Nichols Goddard's Musical Tall Case Clock, ca. 1810, one of the centerpieces of the Museum's newest exhibition, Early Vermont. Few American clocks of the early nineteenth century are more sophisticated, mechanically complex, or beautiful than this one. A set of ten bells and hammers play seven tunes. The movement features a day of the month wheel and moon dial with a depiction of a burning ship. All this lends itself to wonderful interpretations such as collage art, paintings, woodwork, textiles, sculpture, and more.

Surprises will delight visitors in the galleries, as well as those who join us at the Gala on December 1 and on Family Day on December 9. The exhibition is open November 24 through December 29. The original artwork created by the regional artists is available to own through a closed-bid auction taking place November 24 through December 28 at 4 p.m.

The Gala • December 1st

Bennington Museum hosts the premiere event of the season and the Museum's biggest annual fundraiser, the Gala, taking place from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Put on your most festive attire and join us to enjoy delectable "bites", cash bar, easy listening jazz and seasonal favorites from Jay Sager, Matt Edwards, Mowgli Giannitti, and Krista Speroni. There will be spirited bidding on unique and diverse items in the silent auction, open for viewing and bidding November 24 through the Gala on December 1. Tickets for the Gala are \$100 per person and \$200 per person for a Gala Benefactor. Reservations may be made by calling the museum at (802) 447-1571 x 204.

Family Day • December 9th

Celebrate the season from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with \$3 admission to the museum for everyone! Any child that brings new school supplies or a non-perishable school snack for children in the Seedlings Program is admitted free. Due to the generous support of local businesses and friends of the Museum, all crafts and visits with Santa are free! Every child can create a wonderful craft and get to tell Santa and Mrs. Claus what is on their list. Craft activities are available all day while visits with Santa are from 1-3 p.m.

The Children's Shopping Boutique • December 9th

A wide range of gifts ranging from \$1 to \$10 are offered from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Shoppers' Helpers are on hand to help children ages 4-12 select presents for their friends



photo by Bennington Museum

Santa listens to a young child's wishes at Bennington Museum during Family Day, this year on December 9th.

and family members. Free gift-wrapping and gift tags are included. Also on view are Classroom Creations! Students from the region have worked hard to create an object inspired by the Musical Tall Case Clock and these are all available for you to win. Place your bid for any that inspire you.

Adults Can Go Shopping Too!

The Museum Store is offering an expanded selection of artisan products just in time for the holidays. On November 24-26 and again on December 9, museum members receive a 25% discount while not-yet-members receive 15%.

The Bennington Museum is located at 75 Main St., Bennington, VT. (802) 447-1571. www.benningtonmuseum.org.



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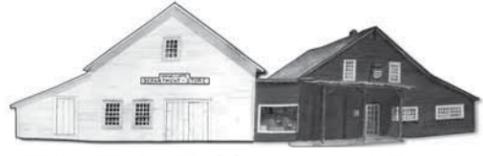
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Henry Sheldon Museum Holiday Open House and Holiday Season

Trains, Trees, and Topiaries!

The Sheldon Museum in Middlebury, VT is bursting with creativity and excitement this holiday season! Don't miss the amazing operating train layout, miniature Christmas tree display, festive topiaries and the exhibit "Draw Me a Story - Tell Me a Tale" that celebrates the imagination of 20 esteemed contemporary Vermont children's book artists/authors.

Lionel Train Layout running through January 13!

In what has become an annual holiday tradition in Middlebury, the elaborate Lionel train layout is sure to delight all ages. Over the years, the assemblage has grown and stands three levels high, with tracks running Lionel O gauge trains, Lionel 027 gauge trains and an upper track running HO trains. The backdrop of the Green Mountains painted by local artist Gayl Braisted adds atmosphere. Last year Gabe the Lamplighter was added to the display. Come see if there is something new this year! The train layout is made possible by a team of volunteer engineers who operate the trains December 2 through January 13, 2018.

Annual Holiday Open House

On Saturday, December 2, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday, December 3 from 12 noon to 4 p.m., the community is invited to the Sheldon Museum's Annual Holiday Open House. Admission to the Holiday Open House is by donation. Carols played on the Sheldon's 1831 piano, and of course the trains all add to this festive event. This year the Middlebury Garden Club has added a whimsical touch to their annual decorations with amusing topiaries. The topiaries will be raffled to support the Sheldon with a drawing on January 16, 2018.

Miniature Christmas Tree Display and Raffle

Also on view are 20 colorful, decorative miniature Christmas Trees by generous local artists, to be raffled in support of the Sheldon archives. Ornaments featured on the diverse trees will delight children and adults and will enhance the holiday home decorations of the lucky raffle winners.

Here's just a sampling of the fabulous trees:

- Otter Creek Bakery has decorated a sweet tree full of gingerbread cookies and a bread and cranberry garland.
- Three trees decorated by the volunteers at Round Robin include "Connie's Feliz Navidad," a flamboyant, feathers-and-tinsel tree in homage to long-time Round Robin and Sheldon Museum volunteer Connie Staats.
- The staff of the National Bank of Middlebury has donated four festive trees.



Families enjoy the elaborate model train layout at the Sheldon Museum in Middlebury, VT.

• Sandy Jackson of SAR (some assembly required) titled her tree "What Can You Do with a Piece of Paper?" featuring doves, trees, stars, and snowflake Sliceforms ornaments which are 3D and made using tools found on the company's website, www.someassemblyrequired.com.

The other trees are just as creative, so be sure to visit the Sheldon during the holiday season to see all of them and buy some raffle tickets!

The Henry Sheldon Museum is located at One Park Street in downtown Middlebury, VT across from the Ilsley Library. Holiday Museum hours: Tues.-Sat. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sundays, December 3, 10 and 17 from 12-4 pm. The trains will run through January 13, 2018. Volunteer engineers will

run the trains Tues.-Fri. 1-4 p.m.; Saturdays 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Sundays (Dec. 3, 12-4 p.m. and Dec. 10, and 17, 1-3 p.m.) Please refer to the Sheldon's website for an up-to-date schedule or call the Sheldon ahead of time to confirm that the engineer is present. Holiday hours: The Sheldon will be closed on December 24 and 25, and reopen on Tuesday, December 26.

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, (802) 388-2117 or visit www.henrysheldonmuseum.org.

The Sheldon Museum, the oldest community-based Museum in the country, has welcomed visitors and researchers since 1882.



A decorated tree at Sheldon Museum in Middlebury, VT.



→ Christmas Morning ←

If Bethlehem were here today,
Or this were very long ago,
There wouldn't be a winter time
Nor any cold or snow.

I'd run out through the garden gate,
And down along the pasture walk;
And off beside the cattle barns
I'd hear a kind of gentle talk.

I'd move the heavy iron chain
And pull away the wooden pin;

I'd push the door a little bit
And tiptoe very softly in.
The pigeons and the yellow hens
And all the cows would stand away;
Their eyes would open wide to see
A lady in the manger hay.

If this were very long ago
And Bethlehem were here today.

And Mother held my hand and smiled —
I mean the lady would — and she
Would take the woolly blankets off
Her little boy so I could see.

His shut-up eyes would be asleep,
And he would look like our John,
And he would be all crumpled too,
And have a pinkish color on.

I'd watch his breath go in and out.
His little clothes would be all white.
I'd slip my finger in his hand
To feel how he could hold it tight.

And she would smile and say, "Take care,"
The mother, Mary, would, "Take care,"
And I would kiss his little hand
And touch his hair.

While Mary put the blankets back
The gentle talk would soon begin.
And when I'd tiptoe softly out
I'd meet the wise men coming in.

— ELIZABETH MADDOX ROBERTS

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Pam Ellis Remembers Old Ed

by Pamela Hayes Rehlen

Back in the early sixties when Pam Ellis was a little girl, her grandfather's sweetheart and the apple of his eye, every year at Christmastime the two of them would chose a day to drive over to Rutland together to look for gifts.

They walked past the Economy Department Store, past Montgomery Ward, past Carbine Anderson, Wilson and Grace, The Fashion Shop, Sterns, David's Shoes, Woolworths, Fishmans, Carroll's Cut Rate, the Paramount Theater and The Grand. They looked into all the holiday windows that lined Merchant's Row and Center Street.

One year, little Pam picked out a dress for her mother and a new living room sofa for her parents. When they finished their Christmas shopping, they had hamburgers and milkshakes for lunch at the Bardwell Hotel restaurant.

It always astonished Pam that if she arrived back home secretly wishing for a particular thing for herself, under her grandfather's tree in the big house at the top of Ellis Orchard that gift would be waiting for her on Christmas morning.

The season had been a sad time for Ed Ellis—known to anyone in town as Old Ed—because both his wife Wilma and his three-year-old daughter Alice died at this time of year. But his little granddaughter changed that.

"It always astonished Pam that if she arrived back home secretly wishing for a particular thing... that gift would be waiting for her on Christmas morning."

Pam arrived in Castleton when she was seven days old. Her parents, Young Ed Ellis and his wife Bonnie, were told that they'd never be able to have children, and a Burlington adoption had been arranged.

Her grandparents lived in the big, austere house with a wide porch at the top of their apple orchard, and her patrician grandfather was easily the most important person in Castleton—standing a rung above any other town leader—and active in every aspect of community life.

A political man, and a strong conservative at the time when Vermont was a politically-conservative state, Old Ed put his hand to a lot of enterprises. His father had owned hotels. He himself was born in a long-gone family hotel at Castleton Corners. His brother George was a Wall Street investor and a railroad tycoon who'd built a sometimes-visited Glenbrook estate, now the site of the Castleton University gym and sports complex.

After his wife died, Old Ed was left alone and lonely. At that time, Pam's parents were living in an Elm Street apartment, and Pam began to visit and keep her grandfather company. During those years, she remembers going to stay overnight in his big house where she slept in a one-time maid's room and was scared of the night-long clanking and hissing of the old steam radiators.

On Sundays, she and Old Ed sometimes drove down the hill and through the orchard to attend the Federated Church



Old Ed Ellis (on left) up at the Castleton Slate Quarry, many years ago.

and sit in the Ellis pew. Politically Important men arrived in town, and her grandfather liked to have her—wearing her white socks and black patent shoes, a camel hair overcoat and cotton gloves—at his side when he went to meet them.

In the summertime, Old Ed moved out to his Crystal Haven cottage on Lake Bomoseen's east shore. Every night at six there was a cocktail hour, and when Pam was visiting, she went around holding her little Shirley Temple drink, clinking glasses with the important guests—Uncle George Ellis and his second wife, Aunt Peggy, Judge Jones from Rutland, and Castleton's Father Cronin.

To all of them, she would clink and pipe, "Cheers" until Aunt Peggy laughed and began calling her "My little Cheers

girl." When she was ten, Pam's life changed. By then, her parents had moved from their apartment to a house at the end of Castleton's Main Street with a yard that backed up onto railroad tracks and the beginning of the orchard.

Pam's parents adopted Martin, another infant from Burlington, and soon after her mother became pregnant and filled the new house with three young children, Roger, Jill, and a third generation, Youngest Ed.

Old Ed died of leukemia in March 1973 when Pam was seventeen, and three months later, she married Pat Traverse. Olaf Johnson returned to the Federated Church from Eagle Bridge, New York to conduct the wedding ceremony between her and the son of Castleton's fire chief. Afterward, there was a big reception up at her grandfather's house where her grandfather no longer was.

Every Memorial Day, Pam and her brother Martin have made a ritual of going to Castleton's Hillside Cemetery to a set-apart spot under a stand of Norfolk pines to visit the Ellis family graves.

Pam misses her grandfather and the time in her life when he lived at the top of the orchard with the town water house above him and below, his apple barn, garages, sheds, out-buildings, and packing house, the orchard trees in the spring a low-hanging cloud of white, sweet-smelling, blossoms, and every year at Christmas what she secretly wanted most waiting for her under the tree.

All this she misses. How could she not?

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

Native Greens for the Holidays

One of the most enjoyable activities of the holiday season is decorating the home with greens fresh from the garden or landscape. We in New England are fortunate to have an abundant supply of evergreen materials. These include balsam fir, spruce, pine, cedar, hemlock, and juniper, to name a few.

Balsam fir is a native species with luxuriant, green, blunt, glossy needles from three-fifths inch to one inch long. Its branches are used for roping and wreaths, its needles for balsam pillows. It's a popular Christmas tree because it doesn't shed its needles readily. Balsam can be used both inside and out.

Spruce is another native tree found throughout northern New England that makes

a beautiful Christmas tree but will shed its needles after it dries out. Boughs can be used for wreaths, swags and other outdoor decorations. Spruce pinecones are also useful.

Beware. It's easy to confuse spruce and fir with one another when choosing or cutting greens. To be sure you're selecting fir boughs, more desirable for indoor decorating, grab the needles. If it hurts, it's a spruce (square needles); if it doesn't, it's a fir (flat needles).

Pine is very abundant at lower altitudes throughout Vermont and New Hampshire. White pines have a wonderful, soft and feathery texture. Unfortunately, they're very resinous, but they do last a long time indoors and don't drop their

needles. Pine also can be used for making wreaths and roping and the cones are used in many decorations.

When pruning boughs or foliage from outdoor plants, don't prune an excessive amount from any one individual plant. Greens should be pruned off carefully, so the symmetry of the plant isn't destroyed. Use sharp pruning shears.

Prune branches as close as possible to the trunk or a main branch, but don't cut the branch collar. The branch collar is the point of attachment to the parent branch or trunk. Slant the cut slightly outward and

downward. Make a smooth cut. Don't leave a stub. Stubs, if left on the plant, die back anyway and their presence affords an opportunity for disease or insect infestation. Don't break off branches as this will leave ragged ends which don't heal properly.

So now put your jacket on, find your pruning tools and head outside. Gather up your greens and bring a little of New England's wonderful winter landscape inside your home!

Thank you to Margaret Pratt Hagen UNH Cooperative Extension, for this helpful information.



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Late Afternoon

The snow was falling softly when she came
To the edge of the slope and saw the blurred grey sky
Reach down to somber pines. No sumac-flame
Beside the path this time: she snowshoed by
Dark leafless clumps and ghosts of goldenrod,
Following the hush that called her from the wood,
Finding in whiteness deep on leaves and sod
A soundlessness she somehow understood.

The wood seemed waiting for the falling snow,
Breathless and still and lovely in its sure
Welcoming of further white, and so
She found a beauty she could not endure.
Her quick hand shut her eyes out from the sight:
The woods would take the kiss of snow all night.

—FRANCES M. FROST
St. Albans, VT, 1929

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Vermont Country Calendar

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

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23

BURLINGTON. 24th Annual Free Thanksgiving Community Dinner and Coat Drive. Coat drive starts at 8 am. Dinner from 10 am – 5 pm. Sweetwaters, 120 Church St. (802) 864-9800. www.sweetwatersvt.com.

MONTPELIER. 45th Annual Free Community Thanksgiving Dinner. Everyone is welcome. For more information call (802) 229-9151. 11:30 am – 2 pm. Bethany Church, 115 Main St. www.wcysb.org.

WELLS. Free Thanksgiving Dinner. Turkey and all the fixings, dessert and drinks. Takeouts available. Please call ahead so we know how many turkeys to cook. 3 pm. Wells Village School, Rt. 30. (802) 645-0934.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. Also open November 25, 26; December 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23.

KILLINGTON. Audi FIS Ski World Cup Weekend. U.S. Ski Team superstars compete against the best women's technical alpine skiers in the world. Free standing room access near the base. 7 am – 6 pm. Killington Resort, 4763 Killington Rd. killington.com. Through November 26.

PUTNEY. 39th Annual Putney Craft Tour. Craft, culinary and performance weekend. Meander through the beautiful Vermont countryside, following a map, and view the works where they are conceived and created. 10 am – 5 pm. Brochure and map available online. Start at The Gleanery Restaurant, 133 Main St. in Putney for information, maps, and an artisans' preview. (802) 387-4032. www.putneycrafts.com. Also November 25 & 26.

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. A "Live Nativity Reenactment" with a wonderful narrative including Christmas music and then a "lights-on ceremony" when the lights on the trees, shrubs and buildings are turned on for all to see and enjoy. We serve hot apple cider and donuts these first two days of our celebration. 7 pm. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. Also November 25.

STOWE. Performance: Acrobats & Warriors of Tianjin, China. More than 50 artists grace our stage! Tickets: \$20-\$55. 7:30 pm. Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center, 122 Hourglass Dr. (802) 760-4634. sprucepeakarts.org.

TINMOUTH. 13th Annual Turkey Trot Contra Dance. Music by Shindy—The Excellent Band, with David Kaynor calling. Refreshments. Admission: \$10-\$12, \$8 for teens, 12 and under free. 8-11 pm. Tinmouth Community Center, 573 Rt. 140. tinmouthdance@gmail.org. tinmouthcontradance.org.

WOODSTOCK. Celebrate Thanksgiving Traditions at Billings Farm & Museum. Costumed interpreters prepare traditional Thanksgiving fare. Enjoy spiced cider. Activities for all ages. Horse-drawn wagon rides, farm tours. Introduction to Milking and Milking the Herd programs. Adults \$15, 62 & up \$14, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am – 5 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Through November 26.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. Also open November 26; December 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23.

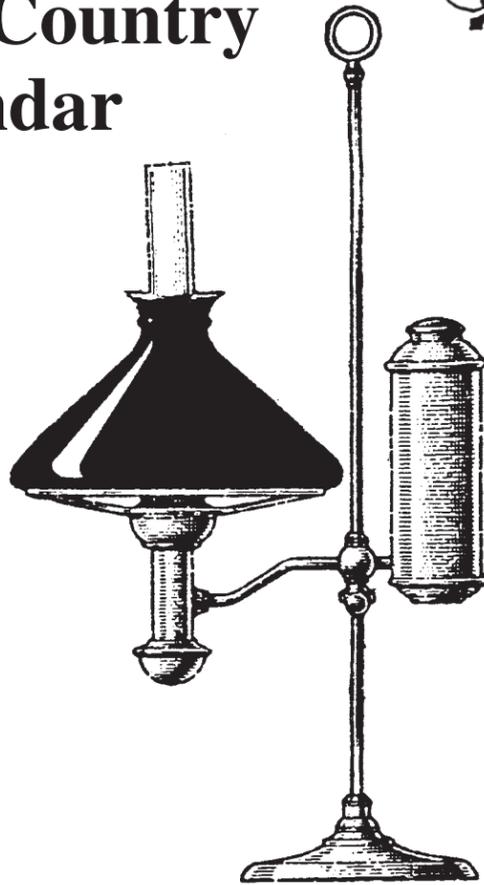
BURLINGTON. 28th Annual Women's Festival of Crafts. Browse over 50 booths of beautiful crafts including pottery, jewelry, recycles art, herbal products, greeting cards, clothing, and more. Free. 10 am – 5 pm. Burlington City Hall, 149 Church St. (802) 864-7528. www.womensfestivalofcrafts.com. Also November 26.

BURLINGTON. Up Close with Sled Dogs. Come see the October Siberians Sled Dogs at ECHO! Admission \$14.50-\$11.50. Presentations at 11 am, 12:30 pm, and 2 pm. At ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, 1 College St. (802) 864-1848. www.echovermont.org.

EAST ST. JOHNSBURY. Christkindlmarkt Sale. Decorations, ornaments, and delicious Christmas food. 9 am – 1 pm. Third Congregational Church, Route 2.

KILLINGTON. Audi FIS Ski World Cup Weekend. U.S. Ski Team superstars compete against the best women's technical alpine skiers in the world. Free standing room access near the base. 7 am – 6 pm. Killington Resort, 4763 Killington Rd. killington.com. Also Nov. 26.

LYNDONVILLE. Northeast Kingdom Craft Fair. Handmade products and artisan pieces. Authors' table. Rotunda Café. Free. 9 am – 3 pm. Rita Bole Gym, Lyndon State College. (802) 274-8935.



MIDDLEBURY. The Bow Wow Film Festival. Devoted entirely to dogs! Tickets \$10, children 12 and under \$5. 2 & 5 pm. Town Hall Theater, 68 South Pleasant St. Box office: (802) 382-9222. townhalltheater.org.

MONTPELIER. Morse Farm Annual Holiday Open House. Discounts store wide, yard sale, silver dollar pancakes, free samples, hay rides from 12-4 pm, and more! 9 am – 6 pm. Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks, 1168 County Rd. (800) 242-2740. morsefarm.com.

NORWICH. "Giving Thanks" Family Dance and Contra Dance. Music by Upper Valley All-Stars, Nils Fredland calling. Sponsored by Muskeg Music. Potluck 5:30-6:30 pm. Family dance 6:30-7:30 pm (sponsored by Revels North, separate admission). Dance at 8 pm, 7:45 pm for walk-through. Potluck snacks, please bring finger food to share. Admission \$10, students 6, under 16 free. 8-11 pm. Tracy Hall, 300 Main St. (802) 649-1419. uvdm.org.

PUTNEY. 39th Annual Putney Craft Tour. Craft, Culinary and Performance Weekend. Meander through the beautiful Vermont countryside, following the map to find these 24 prominent craftspeople and view their works. 10 am – 5 pm. Brochure and map online. Visitors may start at The Gleanery Restaurant, 133 Main St. in Putney for information, maps, and a preview of the artisans' works. (802) 387-4032. putneycrafts.com. Also November 26.

QUECHEE. Program: Turkeys & Turkey Vultures. Discover the similarities and differences between Wild Turkeys and Turkey Vultures, and meet a live Turkey Vulture. Adults \$14.50, seniors (62 plus) \$13.50, youth (4-17) \$12.50, children 3 and under free. 10 am – 4 pm. Vermont Institute of Natural Science, 149 Nature's Way, off Rt. 4. (802) 359-5000. www.vinsweb.org.

RANDOLPH. Performance: No Strings Marionette Company's *Cunning Little Vixen*. On a stroll in the woods on a summer morning, forester Bartos encounters a fox kit. Tickets: \$7. 11 am. Chandler Center for the Arts, 71-73 Main St. (802) 728-6464. chandler-arts.org.

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

RUTLAND. Downtown Rutland Holiday Stroll. A day of events, sales and treats leading up to the annual Tree Lighting in Depot Park. Follow Santa to the The Paramount Theatre to meet Saint Nick and watch free movies. 8 am – 8 pm. 48 Merchants Row. (802) 773-9380.

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. A "Live Nativity Reenactment" with a wonderful narrative including Christmas music and then a "lights-on ceremony" when the lights on the trees, shrubs and buildings are turned on for all to see and enjoy. We serve hot apple cider and donuts these first two days of our celebration. 7 pm. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial.

ST. ALBANS. Ninth Annual Festival of Trees. Tree Lighting Ceremony. A family event with a Gala, pet memorial and prayer, caroling, visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, refreshments. Fireworks. Free. 4:45 pm. Downtown. (802) 309-4487. festivaloftreesvt.com. Through Dec. 3.

WOODSTOCK. Thanksgiving Traditions at Billings Farm & Museum. Costumed interpreters demonstrate preparing traditional Thanksgiving fare. Relax in the Victorian parlor. Enjoy spiced cider. Hands-on activities for all ages—making the perfect piecrust and peeling apples for drying. Horse-drawn wagon rides, farm tours. Introduction to Milking and Milking the Herd programs. Admission: adults \$15, 62 & up \$14, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. Open 10 am – 5 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org. Also November 26.

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Vermont Country Calendar

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26

BARRE. Greater Barre Craft Guild's 37th Annual Winter Festival of Vermont Crafters. Central Vermont's largest craft show. 100 crafters, artists, & specialty food vendors. 9 am – 3 pm. Barre Auditorium, 16 Auditorium Hill.

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. Also open December 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23.

BURLINGTON. 28th Annual Women's Festival of Crafts. Free admission. 10 am – 4 pm. Burlington City Hall. 149 Church St. (802) 864-7528. womensfestivalofcrafts.com.

KILLINGTON. Audi FIS Ski World Cup Weekend. 7 am – 1 pm. Killington Resort, 4763 Killington Rd. killington.com.

PUTNEY. 39th Annual Putney Craft Tour. Meander through the beautiful Vermont countryside, following the map to find these 24 prominent craftspeople. 10 am – 5 pm. Brochure and map available online. Visitors may start at The Gleaney Restaurant, 133 Main St. in Putney for information, maps, and a preview exhibition. (802) 387-4032. putneycrafts.com.

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. We serve hot apple cider and cookies as refreshments each night. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. Through January 1, 2018.

ST. ALBANS. Ninth Annual Festival of Trees. Taylor Park and downtown. (802) 309-4487. www.festivaloftreesvt.com. Through December 3.

WOODSTOCK. Celebrate Thanksgiving Traditions at Billings Farm & Museum. Horse-drawn wagon rides, farm tours. Adults \$15, 62 & up \$14, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. Open 10 am – 5 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29

BURLINGTON. Book & Author Event. Join BillMcKibben for a talk on his new novel, *Radio Free Vermont*. Tickets: \$3, with a coupon for \$5 off a copy of the book.

Proceeds go to the Vermont Foodbank. 7 pm. Phoenix Books Burlington, 191 Bank St. (802) 448-3350. www.phoenixbooks.biz.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. 3-6 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. (802) 342-4727. vtfarmersmarket.org. Wednesdays through December.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30

ST. JOHNSBURY. "A Cape Breton Christmas". Two of the planet's very best fiddle players, MacMaster and Leahy, performing seasonal offerings. Tickets: \$57, \$47, \$37, \$27, \$15 (students free). 7 pm. Fuller Hall, St. Johnsbury Academy, 1000 Main St. (802) 748-2600. catamountarts.org.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1

BRATTLEBORO. 19th Annual Cotton Mill Open Studio and Holiday Sale. 50+ artists and artisans from the Cotton Mill and surrounding communities. Elevator for the handicapped. Free admission and raffle. 11 am – 4 pm. Cotton Mill, 74 Cotton Mill Hill. (802) 257-7731. thecottonmill.org. Through December 3.

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. lhstrees.com. Also open December 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22 & 23.

BURLINGTON. Concert: Natalie MacMaster & Donnell Leahy—A Celtic Family Christmas. Cape Breton fiddling tradition. Husband and wife duo present a concert accompanied by an array of musicians as well as their own children. Tickets: \$15–\$52. 8 pm. MainStage, Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (888) 974-3698. www.flynncenter.org.

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Hot apple cider and cookies served. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. Through January 1, 2018.

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION. A Tribute to Howard Frank Mosher: Screening of *Where the Rivers Flow North*, with Rip Torn, Tantoo Cardinal, and Michael J. Fox. Director Jay Craven will be our guest. Tickets \$12, \$50. 7:30 pm, pre-screening benefit reception at 6:30 pm. Briggs Opera House, 5 South Main St. (802) 478-0191. info@wrif.org. www.wrif.org.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2

BELMONT. Festival of Lights Silent Auction. Beautifully decorated one-of-a-kind wreaths, gift baskets and donated items. Hors d'oeuvres, wine and other refreshments. "Penny Sale" style raffle, wine and cheese baskets raffle, door prizes. Free "adults only" event. 6-8 pm. Mount Holly Community Historical Museum, Perkins House, on the Green. (802) 259-2646. mounthollyvtmuseum.org.

NORWICH. Contra Dance. Featuring music by Upper Valley All-Stars, Nils Fredland calling. Admission: \$10, students \$6, seniors by donation, under 12 free. Sponsored by Muskeg Music. Dance starts at 8 pm, 7:45 pm for walk-through. Bring clean, soft-soled shoes. Potluck snacks. 8-11 pm. Tracy Hall, 300 Main St. (802) 649-1419. uvdm.org.

BRATTLEBORO. 19th Annual Cotton Mill Open Studio and Holiday Sale. 50+ artists and artisans from the Cotton Mill and surrounding communities. Free admission and raffle. An elevator operator is available for handicap accessibility. 11 am – 4 pm. Cotton Mill, 74 Cotton Mill Hill. (802) 257-7731. thecottonmill.org. Also December 3.

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. Bake sale by the East Randolph Fire Department Auxiliary with hot dishes, drinks, and plenty of delicious snacks. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. lhstrees.com. Also December 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23.

CLAREMONT, NH. Performance: *Clara's Cracked Christmas*. Presented by Stardancer Studios. A modern twist on the traditional classic ballet, *Nutcracker*. 6 pm. Claremont Opera House, 58 Opera House Square. (603) 542-4433. claremontoperahouse.info. Also December 3.

COLCHESTER. Genealogy Class. Quebec Coroner's Inquests: A Unique Genealogical Resource. Denyse Beaugrand-Champagne will discuss the introduction and development of these records over the past 250 years, the information one may find in them, and how to locate them online and in repositories. Cost: \$10. 10:30 am – 12 noon. Vermont Genealogy Library, 377 Hegeman Ave., across from the State Police in Fort Ethan Allen. (802) 310-9285. aljohn1927@aol.com. www.vtgenlib.org.

ESSEX JUNCTION. 25th Annual Vermont International Festival. Admission: \$7, seniors and children \$5, under 6 free. 5-8 pm at Champlain Valley Exposition, 105 Pearl Street. (802) 863-6713. www.vermontinternationalfestival.com. Also December 3.

Rutland, VT

Vermont Farmers Market Holiday Shopping!

'Tis the season when the list of gifts, decorations and provisions for festive gatherings grows longer as the days grow shorter—so many purchases, so little time! And so many choices for your shopping needs.

This year, before you go online or get in line, why not visit Vermont's first, largest and most diverse all-winter farmers market in full swing at the Vermont Farmers Food Center in Rutland, VT?

With its incredible variety of locally handmade products, including leather, glass

and wood crafts, knitted, felted and crocheted items, the market is one-stop gift shopping at its finest. Cheeses, meats and an ever-changing bounty of seasonally available fruits and vegetables complete your holiday table.

Thanks to all the prepared and preserved foods, and baked goods of all kinds, you can count on some of your purchases not making it home. With Rutland's own talented singers and strummers providing background music, you can take a break, have a seat, visit with friends

or make new ones, and enjoy some lunch—or dessert.

And the best part is being able to have a conversation with the farmer, baker, or artisan whose heart and hard work went into what you're buying. When you shop at the farmers market, you're not just buying local products, but enjoying local stories, local connections, and well-being for one and all.

—Gabriella Mirollo

This year's Christmas Fair is held on December 16th at the Holiday Inn in Rutland, VT from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and features an expanded selection of holiday vendors, while the farmers market has its regular hours on the same day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Vermont Farmers Food Center. Meet up with family and friends, make a day of

it and visit both locations. Prepare to smile a lot. You'll cross a lot off your holiday shopping list and will definitely bring home some new stories to tell.

The Winter Vermont Farmers Market is at the The Vermont Farmers Food Center at 251 West St. in Rutland. (802) 342-4727, email wintermarketmanager@vtfarmersmarket.org or visit www.vtfarmersmarket.org.

Check the Vermont Farmers Market Facebook page for updates on special happenings and lots of photos of what's available from week to week.

For more information on the Christmas Holiday Fair call (802) 342-4727. special showsmanager@vtfarmersmarket.org. www.vtfarmersmarket.org.



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Winter Vermont Farmers Market

Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm, starting November 4th

Wednesdays 3-6 pm, starting November 8th

**At the Vermont Farmers Food Center
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DEC. 2-3 / 9-10 / 16-17
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Saturday, DEC. 23
HOURS: 10 AM - 4 PM

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facebook.com/RutlandAreaFleaMarket

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Thank you, Friends, for your continued support! We all wish for you a joyous Holiday Season & Happy New Year!
Roseanne, Julia, Beth, Rose, Debbie, Brenda, Barb, Kim, Roger, Val, Brandon, Eric, Martha and Tucker

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Vermont Country Calendar

HARTFORD. Old-Fashioned Christmas, hosted by the Hartford Historical Society, Greater Hartford UCC and the Hartford Library. Antique toy display, evergreen centerpiece craft, free hand-knit hats and mittens for children, refreshments, museum tours. Tales by storyteller Simon Brooks, dollhouse and "tin house" displays, Christmas ornament crafts, quilt raffle, wassail and refreshments. Ringing of the church bells at 4 pm, bell choir concert, Christmas caroling, free soup and sandwich supper. Free. 1-7 pm. Maple St., Hartford Village. (802) 296-2568.

LEBANON, NH. AVA Holiday Exhibition and Open House. Unique gifts, artwork in all media, handmade ornaments and fine jewelry. 2-5 pm demonstrations in clay, metal and wood. 5-7 pm opening receptions for the holiday exhibition and sale and "William N. Peabody: Seasons." 11 am - 7 pm. AVA Gallery and Art Center, 11 Bank St. (603) 448-3117. info@avagallery.org. avagallery.org.

LUNENBURG. Lunenburg Gingerbread Bazaar. Door prizes, fun contests for all ages, cookie decorating with Mrs. Claus. 8th grade cookie walk, bake sale table, Christmas and gift items, fabulous fudge, Lunenburg T-shirts, and other Lunenburg gift items. Homemade soup luncheon 11 am - 2 pm. Gingerbread Creation contest. 10 am - 3 pm. Lunenburg Primary School, 49 Bobbin Mill Rd., off Route 2 in the center of town. (802) 892-6654. www.topofthecommon.org.

LYNDONVILLE. Burklyn Arts Council Christmas Market. 10 am - 4 pm. Lyndon Town School, 2591 Lily Pond Rd. (802) 626-9631. burklynarts40@gmail.com. www.burklynarts.org.

MANCHESTER. Our House for the Holidays? Hildene, the Lincoln Family Home, is decorated throughout the month as they might have done in 1912. Museum Store, 100 year old Carriage Barn. Apple cider, Vermont tastings & fresh cider doughnuts. 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. Museum Store, Hildene, off Rt. 7A, just south of the village. (802) 362-1788. hildene.org. Also December 3.

MIDDLEBURY. Annual Holiday Open House. Elaborate model train layout, carols played on the Sheldon's 1831 piano, Miniature Christmas tree raffle: 20 creative trees decorated by local artists. Exhibits: "Draw Me a Story - Tell Me a Tale", celebrating the imagination of 20 esteemed contemporary Vermont children's book artists/authors; Middlebury Garden Club's amusing topiaries. Admission by donation. 10 am - 4 pm. Henry Sheldon Museum, One Park St. (802) 388-2117. www.henrysheldonmuseum.org. Also December 3.

MONTPELIER. Morse Farm Hay Rides at the Farm. Hop on board for a free hay ride around the farm! We'll have the tractor running and ready for passengers in the wagon from 12-4 pm. Rides load approximately every half hour. No reservations. Balsam wreaths for sale. Visit our gift shop. Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks, 1168 County Rd. (800) 242-2740. morsefarm.com. Also December 9 & 16.

PLYMOUTH. Coolidge Holiday Open House. Kick off the holiday season in one of Vermont's most scenic villages. Visit the Coolidge Birthplace, decorated as it would have been in 1872 when Calvin was born. Winter exhibits at the Museum & Education Center, Aldrich House, Plymouth Cheese Factory, and 1924 Summer White House office. Sleigh rides, old-time music, craft demonstrations, chocolate making & sampling with The Chocolatorium, 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. historicssites.vermont.gov.

RANDOLPH. Concert: Johnny Cash Tribute Show. Tickets: \$20. 7:30 pm. Chandler Music Hall, 71 N. Main St. (802) 728-6464. www.chandler-arts.org.

RUPERT. Merck Forest Hike. We will begin by hiking to the newly-renovated Clark's Clearing Cabin and then decide where to go from there. Moderate, four miles. 10 am - 2:30 pm. Sponsored by the Green Mountain Club. Contact leaders for meeting location and details: Larry Walter and Vivian Bebee, (802) 775-3855. greenmountainclub.org.

RUPERT. Holiday Wreath-Making Workshop. Ring in the holidays with this marvelous family event. Fee: \$25 per wreath. 10 am - 12 pm or 1-3 pm. Merck Forest and Farmland Center, 3270 Rt. 315, west of Manchester. (802) 394-7836. merckforest.org.

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

RUTLAND. Annual Festival of Trees. You don't want to miss this great Rutland tradition! Auctioneer Bob Prozzo will present a huge selection of assorted auction items including vacation getaways, sport ticket packages, gift certificates, one-of-a-kind experiences, home furnishings and more. Cash bar available featuring a delicious assortment of wines, beer and soft drinks. Catered by Roots the Restaurant. Tickets \$10. Doors and cash bar at 5:30 pm, live auction at 6:45 pm. Paramount Theater, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountlive.org.

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Hot apple cider and cookies served. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. Through January 1, 2018.

ST. ALBANS. Ninth Annual Festival of Trees. Free. 4:45 pm. Taylor Park and downtown. (802) 309-4487. www.festivaloftreesvt.com. Also December 3.

STOWE. A Traditional Christmas. Main Street tree lighting, a children's lantern parade, a Vermont children's author reading, an art gallery full of festooned trees, classic holiday decorations, wagon rides, live reindeer, visits with Santa & Mrs. Claus, carolers, candy cane pulling, holiday cookie decorating, gingerbread house decorating, a holiday show at the Town Hall theatre, free public ice skating! (802) 253-7321. gostowe.com. Also December 3.

VERGENNES. Book & Author Event. "Vermont Wild, Adventures of Fish & Game Wardens." Volume 5 is hot off the press. Join author Megan Price, at Bixby Library for a holiday signing of her best selling, memorable game warden adventures enjoyed by ages 9 to 99. All volumes will be for sale and the author will sign and dedicate books for those wanting a memorable "real Vermont" gift. Free. 11 am - 2 pm. Bixby Library, 258 Main St. (802) 877-2211. pinemartentv@gmail.com. vermontwild.com.

WATERBURY. 8th Annual River of Light Parade. Theme: "Ripples and Rhythms, Waves of Sound and Light." Bring your lanterns and join the parade or line the parade route for an enchanting evening of music, light, and community spirit. Free. 5 pm. Departs from the Thatcher Brook Primary School on Stowe St. ariveroflightinwaterbury.org.

WEST RUTLAND. St. Bridget's Christmas Sale. Homemade crafts, photography, maple products, and jams, Avon, bake sale, white elephant and a huge basket raffle. 9 am - 2 pm. Parish of St. Bridget, 38 Church St. For more information call Peg Harvey at (802) 438-5771.

WESTON. Christmas in Weston. Museum tours, horse drawn wagon rides, caroling, petting zoo, Santa, crafts and activities for the whole family. 11 am - 5 pm. In the village. (802) 824-0034. weston-vermont.com.

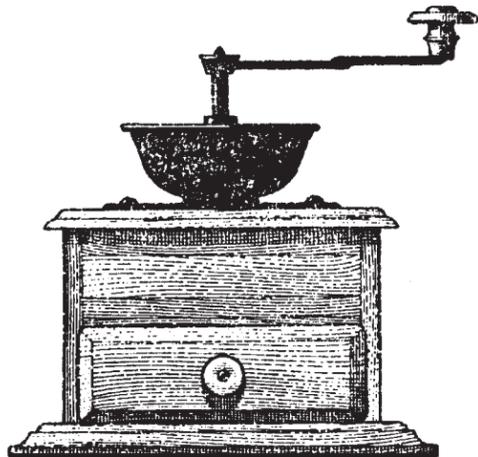
WOODSTOCK. Christmas at Billings Farm. Learn how Christmas was celebrated in late 19th century Woodstock. Adults \$15, 62 & up \$14, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Also December 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24, and Dec 26-Jan 1.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

BRATTLEBORO. 19th Annual Cotton Mill Open Studio and Holiday Sale. 50+ artists and artisans from the Cotton Mill and surrounding communities. Culinary delights, exhilarating circus acts, music and dance performances, and pottery demonstrations. Shop the three floors of the mill for a variety of artistic creations. Free admission and raffle. An elevator operator is available for handicap accessibility. 11 am - 4 pm. Cotton Mill, 74 Cotton Mill Hill. (802) 257-7731. www.thecottonmill.org.

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. Bake sale by the East Randolph Fire Department Auxiliary with hot dishes, drinks, and plenty of delicious snacks. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. Also open December 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22 & 23.

MANCHESTER. Our House for the Holidays? Hildene, the Lincoln Family Home, is decorated throughout the month as they might have done in 1912. Museum Store, 100 year old Carriage Barn. Apple cider, Vermont tastings & fresh cider doughnuts. Distinctive items for holiday gift giving. 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. Museum Store, Hildene, off Rt. 7A, just south of the village. (802) 362-1788. www.hildene.org.

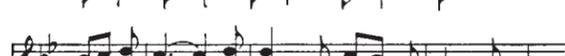


It Came upon the Midnight Clear

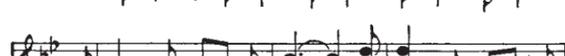
Edmund H. Sears Richard S. Willis



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-ten-ing on. By pro-phet-



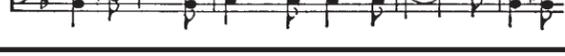
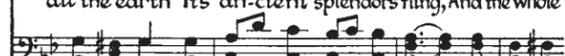
song of old, - From an-gels bend-ing near the earth
wings un-furled, And still the heav-en-ly mu-sic floats
bend-ing low, - Who toil a-long the climb-ing way
bards fore-told, When with the ev-er-cir-cling years



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



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




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Vermont Country Calendar

(Sunday, December 3, continued)

MIDDLEBURY. Annual Holiday Open House. Elaborate model train layout, carols played on the Sheldon's 1831 piano, Miniature Christmas tree raffle: 20 creative trees decorated by local artists. Exhibits: "Draw Me a Story - Tell Me a Tale", celebrating the imagination of 20 esteemed contemporary Vermont children's book artists/authors; Middlebury Garden Club's amusing topiaries. Admission by donation. 12-4 pm. Henry Sheldon Museum, One Park St. (802) 388-2117. henrysheldonmuseum.org. Also December 3.

SO. BURLINGTON. Vermont Holiday Craft Shop. "Vermont Wild, Adventures of Fish & Game Wardens" Volume 5 is hot off the press. Join author Megan Price, at this pop up holidays-only shop for the signing of her best-selling, true game warden adventures enjoyed by ages 9 to 99. Store adjoins the mall's food court. All volumes will be for sale and the author will sign and dedicate books for those wanting a memorable "real Vermont" gift. Free. 11 am - 2 pm. University Mall, 155 Dorset St. (802) 863-1066. pinemartentv@gmail.com. www.vermontwild.com.

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Hot apple cider and cookies served. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. Through January 1, 2018.

ST. ALBANS. Ninth Annual Festival of Trees. Tree lighting ceremony. A family event, Gala, refreshments, fireworks display. Free. 4:45 pm. Taylor Park and downtown. (802) 309-4487. festivaloftreesvt.com.

STOWE. A Traditional Christmas. Main Street tree lighting, a children's lantern parade, a Vermont children's author reading, an art gallery full of festooned trees, classic holiday decorations, wagon rides, live reindeer, visits with Santa & Mrs. Claus, carolers, candy cane pulling, holiday cookie decorating, gingerbread house decorating, a holiday show at the Town Hall theatre, free public ice skating, and much more! (802) 253-7321. gostowe.com.

WEST RUTLAND. Vermont Herbal General Store's Herbs and Gemstones Workshop. Everyone will get samples to experiment with: make tea, sachets, carry the stones in your pocket. Fee: \$20 prepay, \$25 at the door. 2 noon - 3 pm. Vermont Herbal General Store, 578 Main St. (802) 438-2766. info@vermonthherbal.com. On Facebook and Twitter. www.vermonthherbal.com.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at Billings Farm. Learn how Christmas was celebrated in late 19th century Woodstock. Adults \$15, 62 & up \$14, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Also December 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24, and Dec 26-Jan 1.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5

BURLINGTON. Book & Author Event. Join Mark Bray for a discussion of his book *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook*. Born out of resistance to Mussolini and Hitler in Europe, the antifa movement has suddenly burst into the headlines. But what is it, precisely? Tickets: \$3, with a coupon for \$5 off a copy of the book. Proceeds go to the Vermont Foodbank. 7 pm. Phoenix Books Burlington, 191 Bank St. (802) 448-3350. www.phoenixbooks.biz.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6

BRANDON. Holiday Celebration. Meet artist Stephanie Stoffer, and view her "Holiday Legacy" exhibit. Shop for the holidays with special deals and more. Enjoy a fabulous meal by SoundBite's chef Vicky Regia. Beginning at 2 pm. Compass Music and Arts Center, 333 Jones Drive, Park Village, 1.5 miles north of downtown off Rt. 7. (802) 247-4295. www.cmacvt.org.

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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7

BURLINGTON. 13th Annual Winter Tales, produced by Vermont Stage. Holiday tradition featuring brand new stories, poetry by the Young Writers Project, and songs by Patti Casey and Pete Sutherland. Tickets: adults \$32, students \$28.80. 7:30 pm. FlynnSpace, Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (888) 974-3698. www.flynncenter.org. Through December 10.

CALAIS. Concert. The Vermont Bluegrass Pioneers, the real deal with high-energy traditional bluegrass music. Free! 7:30 pm. The Whammy Bar, at Maple Corner Store, 31 W. County Rd. (802) 229-4329. www.skyblueboys.com.

LEBANON, NH. *Clara's Dream, A Nutcracker Story*. Presented by City Center Ballet. Tickets: adults \$43/\$31/\$24, students 18 and under \$24/\$18/\$14. 7 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 N. Park St. (603) 448-0400. info@lebanonoperahouse.org. lebanonoperahouse.org. Also December 9 & 10.

RUTLAND. Concert: The Vienna Boys Choir. 100 singers perform classic Christmas carols, including favorites such as "Stille Nacht" (Silent Night), "Sleigh Ride" (Troika), and "Carol of the Bells." Tickets: \$40-\$54. 7 pm. Paramount Theater, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountlive.org.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8

BRATTLEBORO. Fourth Annual *A Christmas Carol*. Presented by Vermont Theatre Company. Tickets: \$5 to \$15. Bring a non-perishable food item to get \$1 off your ticket. 7 pm. Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 10 Vernon St. (802) 380-5090. Through December 12.

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. lhtrees.com. Also December 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22 & 23.

BURLINGTON. Performance: *A Christmas Carol*. Presented by Nebraska Theatre Caravan. Weaving traditional Christmas carols into the narrative, this classic features a 24-member ensemble and Broadway-style scenery. Tickets \$15-\$45. 7 pm. Flynn MainStage, Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (888) 974-3698. www.flynncenter.org.

BURLINGTON. 13th Annual Winter Tales. Produced by Vermont Stage. Holiday tradition featuring brand new stories, poetry by the Young Writers Project, and songs by Patti Casey and Pete Sutherland. Tickets: adults \$37.50, students \$33.75. 7:30 pm. FlynnSpace, Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (888) 974-3698. www.flynncenter.org. Through December 10.

RANDOLPH. The Turning of the Year: A Celtic/Americana Holiday Celebration. All-Ireland accordion champion John Whelan, with American roots band Low Lily and Scottish-style fiddler Katie McNally. Traditional and original music from Ireland, Scotland, and America. Tickets: adults \$22, students \$10. 7:30 pm. Chandler Music Hall, 71 N. Main St. (802) 728-6464. www.chandler-arts.org.

RUTLAND. Friends of the Rutland Free Library Book Sale. Thousands of organized, gently-used books, CDs, DVDs and puzzles for all ages. Most items \$.25-\$3. This month's highlight: Family recipes from community cookbooks. All holiday books (crafts, food, novels): Buy One, Get One Free and rare and collectible books for holiday giving: most never previously offered for sale. 10 am - 4 pm. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St. (802) 773-1860. rutlandfree.org. Also Dec. 9.



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The Tinmouth Contra Dance

Friday, December 15 • 8-11 p.m.

Music by
the Cabin Hunters
with Mary Wesley calling
Next Dance January 20
tinmouthcontradance.org



\$10-\$12 adults, \$8 teens, free for children 12 and under. All dances taught and beginners are welcome. Please bring clean, non-marring shoes.

Tinmouth Community Center
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Vermont Farmer's Market presents its
Christmas Holiday Fair
Holiday Inn, Rte. 7, Rutland, VT
Saturday, December 16th • 9 am - 4 pm

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COUNTRY BAKER'S TREATS
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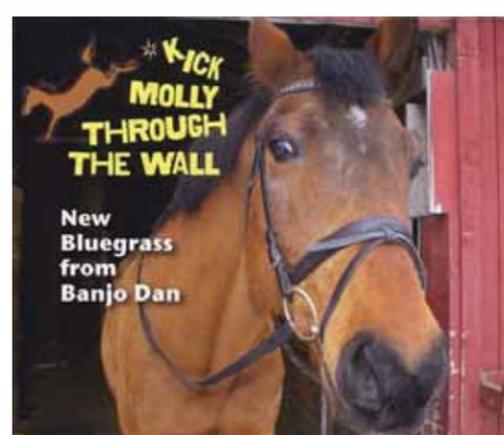
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FALL VEGGIES
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Vermont Country Calendar



SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Hot apple cider and cookies served. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. *Through January 1, 2018.*

WOODSTOCK. 34th Annual Wassail Weekend. Twinkling lights and decorated historic homes. Woodstock Elementary School chorus performs on the steps of the Norman Williams Public Library at 4 pm. Woodstock History Center Open House includes a tour, holiday music, and light refreshments from 5-7 pm. Billings Farm & Museum's Christmas at the Farm open 10 am - 4 pm. Woodstock Village Green, 21 The Green. (802) 457-3555. woodstockvt.com. *Through December 10.*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9

BELLOWS FALLS. The New Stone Church by Candlelight Concert Series: "To Warm a Winter's Night". Song, poetry, and dance music, with Aine Minogue, Celtic harp & vocals. Tickets: \$25 general admission, \$20 for seniors. 7:30 pm. Stone Church Arts, 20 Church St. (802) 460-0110. sca@sover.net. www.stonechurcharts.org.

BENNINGTON. The Festival—Time for the Holidays! Family Day. Children's shopping, Santa, crafts, bake sale and more. Admission: \$3; children who bring school supplies or individual non-perishable school snacks for the Seedlings Program are admitted free. 10 am - 5 pm. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. benningtonmuseum.org.

BRATTLEBORO. Performance: *A Christmas Carol*. Vermont Theatre Company presents its fourth annual production of the classic by Charles Dickens. Tickets: \$5-\$15; Bring a non-perishable food item to get \$1 off your ticket. 7 pm. Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 10 Vernon St. (802) 380-5090. jessicagelter@gmail.com. *Through December 12.*

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. Bake sale by the Williamstown Youth Group (who have been doing this for 20+ years at the Christmas Barn) with hot dishes, drinks, and plenty of delectable treats. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. *Also open December 10, 15, 16, 17, 22 & 23.*

BURLINGTON. Holiday Pops. Presented by Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Anne Decker, conductor. Festive music from around the world, carol singalong, and special appearance by the Bronze Ambassadors, student bell choir from Newport. Tickets: adults \$52/\$42/\$27/\$15, students \$10. 7:30 pm. Flynn MainStage, Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (888) 974-3698. www.flynncenter.org.

BURLINGTON. 13th Annual Winter Tales. Produced by Vermont Stage. Holiday tradition featuring brand new stories, poetry by the Young Writers Project, and songs by Patti Casey and Pete Sutherland. Tickets: Saturday matinee, adults \$32, students \$28.80. Saturday night: adults \$37.50, students \$33.75. 2 pm & 7:30 pm, FlynnSpace, Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (888) 974-3698. www.flynncenter.org. *Also December 10.*

ESSEX. Book & Author Event. "Vermont Wild, Adventures of Fish & Game Wardens" Volume 5 is hot off the press. Join author Megan Price, at Phoenix Books for the signing of her best selling true game warden adventures, enjoyed by ages 9 to 99. All volumes will be for sale and the author will sign and dedicate books for those wanting a memorable "real Vermont" gift. Free. 1-4 pm. Phoenix Books, 2 Carmichael St. (802) 872-7111. pinemartenvt@gmail.com. www.vermontwild.com. www.phoenixbooks.biz.

LEBANON, NH. *Clara's Dream, A Nutcracker Story*. Presented by City Center Ballet. Tickets: adults \$43/\$31/\$24, students 18 and under \$24/\$18/\$14. 1 pm & 4 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 N. Park St. (603) 448-0400. www.lebanonoperahouse.org. *Also December 10.*

MONTPELIER. Concert: The Sky Blue Boys open for acclaimed folksinger Dave Mallet in a concert to benefit our excellent free community newspaper, The Montpelier Bridge. Tickets: \$20. 7:30 pm. Unitarian Church, 130 Main St. (802) 249-8262. www.skyblueboys.com.

MONTPELIER. Morse Farm Hay Rides at the Farm. Hop on board for a free hay ride around the farm! We'll have the tractor running and ready for passengers in the wagon from 12-4 pm. Rides load approximately every half hour. No reservations. Balsam wreaths for sale. Visit our gift shop. Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks, 1168 County Rd. (800) 242-2740. morsefarm.com. *Also December 16.*

NORWICH. Contra Dance. Featuring music by Shindy with Dana Dwinell-Yardley calling. Beginners welcome, no partner needed. Admission: \$10, students \$6, seniors by donation, under 16 free. Sponsored by Muskeg Music. Dance starts at 8 pm. 7:45 pm for walk-through. Bring clean, soft-soled shoes. Potluck snacks. 8-11 pm. Tracy Hall, 300 Main St. (802) 649-1419. uvdm.org.

RUTLAND. Friends of the Rutland Free Library Book Sale. Thousands of organized, gently-used books, CDs, DVDs and puzzles for all ages. Most items \$.25-\$3. This month's highlight: Family recipes from community cookbooks. All holiday books (crafts, food, novels): Buy One, Get One Free and rare and collectible books for holiday giving: most never previously offered for sale. 10 am - 2 pm. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St. (802) 773-1860. rutlandfree.org.

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Hot apple cider and cookies served. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. *Through January 1, 2018.*

SPRINGFIELD. Holiday Open House. Paint a watercolor of your favorite winter tree with artist Nancy Lanoue (free, all materials provided). Music by Kathi Byam, flute, and Karen Engdal, violin. Gifts from the creations of 160 artists, in a historic 1907 bank with a real vault. 20% off Danforth Ornaments. Refreshments, crafts, and gift-wrapping station. 12 noon - 4 pm. Gallery at the VAULT, 68 Main St. (802) 885-7111. galleryvault.org.

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4:00 PM SUNDAYS IN DECEMBER

Seasons Screenings

3rd THE GRISWALD'S CHRISTMAS VACATION

10th HOME ALONE

17th HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS + A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS

25th A CHRISTMAS STORY

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Vermont Country Calendar

(Saturday, December 9, continued)

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

ST. JOHNSBURY. Annual Victorian Holiday Celebration. Horse-drawn sleigh rides, Arts and crafts activities at Catamount Arts, "Simple Gifts" booth, pictures with Santa Claus, roving carolers, hot cocoa at the Welcome Center, cookie walk. Planetarium show at the Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium. Good Shepherd Christmas Bazaar. History & Heritage Center open house. Story time at the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. 10 am – 4 pm. (802) 748-7121. discoverstjohnsbury.com.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at Billings Farm. Learn how Christmas was celebrated in late 19th century Woodstock. Adults \$15, 62 & up \$14, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Also December 3, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24, and December 26-January 1.

WOODSTOCK. 34th Annual Wassail Weekend. Breakfast with Santa, 8-11 am at the Woodstock Little Theatre. Annual House Tours—Woodstock's most charming houses deck their halls and open their doors; tours at your own pace, 9:30 am – 1:30 pm, leave from 31 The Green, for tickets call (802) 457-3981. 34th Annual Equestrian Parade with riders in Victorian era costumes, at 2 pm—watch the parade from the Village Green. Concert: Christmas with the Celts, hosted by Pentangle at the Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green at 8 pm, tickets \$40, kids 5-17 \$20, call (802) 457-3981. Concert: The Ten a capella men's choir holiday concert, 3 pm at the Congregational Church, 36 Elm St. (802) 457-3555. Lighting of the Memory Tree, Bon Fire, Carol Sing, and lighting of 400 luminaries 3-10 pm on the Village Green. Wrensong Choir Group performs holiday music on the steps of the Norman Williams Public Library at 3 pm. Holiday Craft Fair 10 am – 4 pm at the Masonic Lodge, 32 Pleasant St. Concert: Cello by Candlelight with Eugene Friesen at 7:30 pm at the North Universalist Chapel Society, 7 Church St. (802) 457-2557. For more info call (802) 457-3555. woodstockvt.com. Also December 10.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

BRATTLEBORO. Fourth Annual *A Christmas Carol*. By Charles Dickens. Presented by Vermont Theatre Company. Tickets: \$5-\$15; Bring a non-perishable food item to get \$1 off your ticket. 3 pm. Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 10 Vernon St. (802) 380-5090. Through December 12.

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. Bake sale by the Royalton Pre-School with hot dishes, drinks, and plenty of scrumptious delights. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. Also open December 15, 16, 17, 22 & 23.

BURLINGTON. 13th Annual Winter Tales. Produced by Vermont Stage. Holiday tradition featuring brand new stories, poetry by the Young Writers Project, and songs by Patti Casey and Pete Sutherland. Tickets: Sunday matinee: adults \$32, students \$28.80. Sunday night Gala: \$55. 2 pm & 6 pm. FlynnSpace, Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (888) 974-3698. www.flynncenter.org.

LEBANON, NH. *Clara's Dream, A Nutcracker Story*. Presented by City Center Ballet. Tickets: adults \$43/\$31/\$24, students 18 and under \$24/\$18/\$14. 3 pm. Lebanon Opera House, 51 N. Park St. (603) 448-0400. info@lebanonoperahouse.org. lebanonoperahouse.org.

MIDDLEBURY. Lessons and Carols for Advent and Christmas. Bible readings of Advent and Christmas and carols performed by the College Choir with the congregation. Preceded by performances on the chapel carillon. Donations collected for area charities. A Music Department event. 4-5 pm. Middlebury College, 14 Old Chapel Rd. (802) 443-5000.

RANDOLPH. Randolph Singers Christmas Concert: "Handel with Care." Pieces from Handel's Coronation Anthems, The Messiah and the Chandos Anthems, traditional Christmas carols and a piece by the Randolph Singers Children's Choir. Admission by donation. 4 pm. Chandler Center for the Arts, 71-73 Main St. (802) 728-9878. outreach@chandler-arts.org. chandler-arts.org.

RUTLAND. Vermont Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops Concert. Festive music from around the world, a carol singalong, and a special appearance by the Bronze Ambassadors, a nationally-recognized student bell choir from Newport. Tickets: \$32, \$20, \$26, \$16, \$10, 3 pm. Paramount Theater, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountlive.org.

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Hot apple cider and cookies served. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. Through January 1, 2018.

WEST BURKE. Visit from Santa and Holiday Festivities. 11 am – 1 pm Santa at Mike's Gas in West Burke, with gifts for the kids, cookies, cider, and cocoa. Wagon rides. 2-5 pm holiday party & tree lighting celebration at Burke Mountain Club and East Burke Library in East Burke Village, with snacks, cookies, and live music including a performance from the Newark Balkan Chorus. (802) 626-4124. burkevermont.com.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at Billings Farm. Adults \$15, 62 & up \$14, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Also December 16, 17, 23, 24, and Dec 26-Jan 1.

WOODSTOCK. 33rd Annual Wassail Weekend. Holiday Craft Fair 10 am – 4 pm at the Masonic Lodge, 32 Pleasant St. (802) 457-3555. woodstockvt.com.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. 3-6 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. (802) 342-4727. vtfarmersmarket.org. Wednesdays through December.

ST. JOHNSBURY. Concert: The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge. "A Seasonal Celebration Of One That Is So Fair and Bright." Tickets: \$35, \$25, \$15, students free. 7 pm. United Community Church, 1325 Main St. (802) 748-6200. catamountarts.org.

WARREN. Concert: Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet & Counterpoint. Traditional favorites, a singalong, a brand-new student composition, and a bit of silliness from PDQ Bach and Tom Lehrer. 7:30 pm. Warren United Church. (802) 864-5741 x 10. grace@vso.org. vso.org.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14

HANOVER, NH. The Christmas Revels: A Nordic Celebration of the Winter Solstice. A young girl's quest unfolds through gorgeous traditional songs, dances and pageantry performed by a cast of talented locals and thrilling guest musicians and dancers. Tickets: \$8-\$46. 6 pm. Spaulding Auditorium, Hopkins Center for the Arts, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.dartmouth.edu. Through December 17.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. 9 am – 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. lhstrees.com. Also open December 16, 17, 22 & 23.

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Wednesday | December 27, 2017 | 2 & 7 PM



RECYCLED PERCUSSION

Saturday | January 13, 2018 | 7:30 PM



CANDID CAMERA: 8 Decades of Smiles with Host Peter Funt

Sunday | January 14, 2018 | 4:00 PM

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National Theatre Live
Saturday, December 9
2:00 PM



OBSESSION

National Theatre Live
Sunday, January 7
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SAINT JOAN

National Theatre Live
Saturday, January 20
2:00 PM



TOSCA: Puccini

The Metropolitan Opera
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Saturday, January 27
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Vermont Country Calendar

HANOVER, NH. The Christmas Revels: A Nordic Celebration of the Winter Solstice. A young girl's quest unfolds through gorgeous traditional songs, dances and pageantry performed by a cast of talented locals and thrilling guest musicians and dancers. Tickets: \$11-\$48. 7 pm. Spaulding Auditorium, Hopkins Center for the Arts, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.dartmouth.edu. *Through December 17.*

JERICHO. Concert: The Sky Blue Boys with Carrie Cook. Come for a fine meal and drinks; we'll entertain you with some great new songs. No cover. 6:30-9:30 pm. Jericho Café and Tavern, 30 Rt. 15. (802) 899-2223. www.skyblueboys.com.

RUTLAND. Concert: Scotty McCreery. Country music singer/songwriter. Tickets: \$45-\$65. 8 pm. Paramount Theater, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountlive.org.

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Hot apple cider and cookies served. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. *Through January 1, 2018.*

TINMOUTH. Contra Dance. Music by the Cabin Hunters with Mary Wesley calling. 8 pm beginner's lesson to learn the moves. Refreshments. Admission: \$10-\$12, \$8 for teens, free for children 12 and under. 8-11 pm. Tinmouth Community Center, 573 Rt. 140. tinmouthcontradance.org.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

BRATTLEBORO. Concert: An Evening with Guy Davis. The great American blues musician has spent his musical life carrying his message of the blues around the world, earning him the title "An Ambassador of the Blues". 8-10 pm. Robert H. Gibson River Garden, 157 Main St. (802) 275-8152. slowlivingsummit.org.

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. *Also December 17, 22 & 23.*

BURLINGTON. Vermont Ballet Theater performs Vermont's Own "Nutcracker." Set to Tchaikovsky's beloved score and performed by VBT's extraordinary dancers and special guest artist Samuel Wilson. Tickets: adults \$37/\$32/\$24; students, seniors and children under 12 \$32.40/\$27.90/\$20.70. 2 pm and 7 pm. Flynn MainStage, Flynn Center, 153 Main St. (888) 974-3698. flynncenter.org. *Also December 17.*

GRAFTON. Concert: Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet & Counterpoint. Traditional favorites, a singalong, a brand-new student composition, and a bit of silliness from PDQ Bach and Tom Lehrer. 5 pm. The White Church. (802) 864-5741 x 10. vso.org.

HANOVER, NH. The Christmas Revels: A Nordic Celebration of the Winter Solstice. A young girl's quest unfolds through gorgeous traditional songs, dances and pageantry performed by a cast of talented locals and thrilling guest musicians and dancers. Tickets: \$11-\$48. 1 & 5 pm. Spaulding Auditorium, Hopkins Center, 4 E. Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.dartmouth.edu. *Also December 17.*

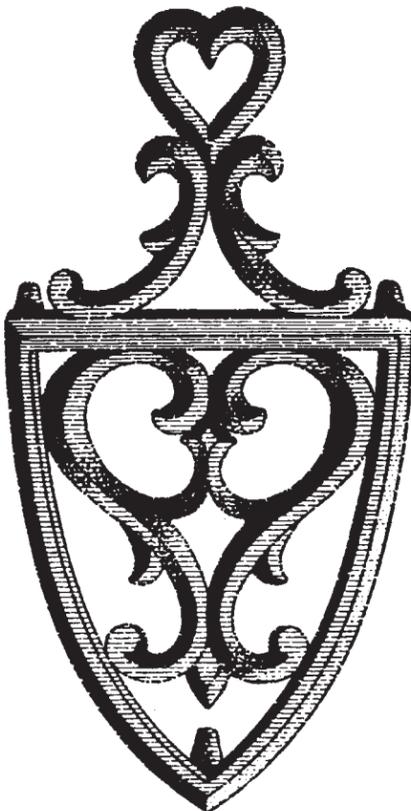
MONTPELIER. Morse Farm Hay Rides at the Farm. Hop on board for a free hay ride around the farm! We'll have the tractor running and ready for passengers in the wagon from 12-4 pm. Rides load approximately every half hour. No reservations. Balsam wreaths for sale. Visit our gift shop. Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks, 1168 County Rd. (800) 242-2740. morsefarm.com.

MONTPELIER. 13th Annual Touch of Vermont Holiday Gift Market. Nearly 50 Vermont artisans. Free admission. 9 am - 4 pm. Montpelier City Hall. (802) 310-1725. info@touchofvt.org. touchofvt.org.

RUTLAND. Book & Author Event. "Vermont Wild, Adventures of Fish & Game Wardens" Volume 5 is hot off the press. Join author Megan Price, at Phoenix Books for the signing of her best selling true game warden adventures, enjoyed by ages 9 to 99. All volumes will be for sale and the author will sign and dedicate books for those wanting a memorable "real Vermont" gift. Free. 1-4 pm. Phoenix Books Rutland, 2 Center St. (802) 855-8078. pinemartenvt@gmail.com. www.vermontwild.com. www.phoenixbooks.biz.

RUTLAND. Vermont Farmers Market Christmas Holiday Fair. Craft and food creators, offering Christmas wreaths and decor; crafts in fiber, fabric, wood and glass; jewelry; baked goods and specialty foods with the flavor of Vermont; prepared foods, apples, cider and veggies. Free admission. 9 am - 5 pm. Holiday Inn, 476 Holiday Dr. (802) 342-4727. vtfarmersmarket.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Local produce, crafts, prepared foods. Winter veggies and holiday goods. Live music. EBT and debit cards. 10 am - 2 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 342-4727. vtfarmersmarket.org. *Saturdays through April.*



SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Christmas musical concert by the Cerutti family at 7 pm. We serve hot apple cider and cookies as refreshments each night. Live music in the Residence and Visitor's Center. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. *Through January 1, 2018.*

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

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at Billings Farm. Learn how Christmas was celebrated in late 19th century Woodstock in the farmhouse and linger in the cozy kitchen as treats are baked in the woodstove. Holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Admission: adults \$15, 62 & up \$14, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also December 17, 23, 24, and December 26 thru January 1.*

WOODSTOCK. Eighth Annual Woodstock Vermont Film Series Screening: *Kedi*. A film about the respect, love, and adoration the people of Istanbul show toward the stray cats that roam freely on the city's streets. Tickets: adults (16 & up) \$132 for 15-film package or \$11 per film, refreshments included. 3 pm & 5 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, one-half mile north of the Woodstock village green on Vermont Route 12. (802) 457-2355. www.billingsfarm.org/filmfest.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

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. Bake sale by the Randolph High School Service Learning Project with hot dishes, drinks, and plenty of mouth watering goodies. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. *Also open December 22 & 23.*

BURLINGTON. Concert: The VT Bluegrass Pioneers at the weekly Bluegrass Brunch. 12 noon - 3 pm. The Skinny Pancake, 60 Lake St. (802) 540-0188. skyblueboys.com.

BURLINGTON. Vermont Ballet Theater performs Vermont's Own "Nutcracker." Director Alexander Nagiba's stellar choreography set to Tchaikovsky's beloved score and performed by VBT's extraordinary dancers and special guest artist Samuel Wilson. Tickets: adults \$37/\$32/\$24; students, seniors and children under 12 are \$32.40/\$27.90/\$20.70. 1 pm and 6 pm. Flynn MainStage, Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (888) 974-3698. www.flynncenter.org.

HANOVER, NH. The Christmas Revels: A Nordic Celebration of the Winter Solstice. A young girl's quest unfolds through gorgeous traditional songs, dances and pageantry performed by a cast of talented locals and thrilling guest musicians and dancers. Tickets: \$11-\$48. 1 & 5 pm. Spaulding Auditorium, Hopkins Center for the Arts, 4 East Wheelock St. (603) 646-2422. hop.dartmouth.edu.

LEBANON, NH. 2017 Messiah Sing with Orchestra. \$15 fee to play or sing. Orchestral musicians, please pre-register; others may register on-site. \$10 suggested donation to attend. 6:30-9:30 pm. First Congregational Church, 10 S. Park St. www.uvmusic.org.



"Wildlife Santa", an illustration by Stephanie Stouffer.

Brandon, VT

Stephanie Stouffer's "Holiday Legacy" Exhibit at Compass

The Compass Music and Arts Center is presenting a special "Holiday Legacy" exhibit of Stephanie Stouffer's original paintings and products displaying her designs. The exhibit runs through December 31 and is a testament to the legacy Stouffer has created during her 35-year career.

Attend the holiday event on December 6 between 2-8 p.m. and meet Stephanie Stouffer while you view the exhibit. Visitors will also be able to shop for the holidays, take advantage of special deals, get a fabulous meal provided by SoundBite Cafe's chef Vicky Regia, and more.

You may recognize many of the images on the cards or gifts you receive during the holiday season as a design by artist Stephanie Stouffer. Stouffer's designs are seen internationally but she has been a long-time resident of Vermont, working out of her Belmont, VT studio.

Stouffer created over 430 paintings for the international 'high-end' card company Caspari, of which approximately 75% were used for their boxed holiday cards and related products like napkins, wrapping paper, and plates.

Chances are you've seen, if not purchased, one of her

designs before. You'll find iconic Christmas and holiday imagery, such as Santa, snowmen, winter scenes, the Nutcracker, amaryllis, partridges in pear trees, and images of Peace in Stouffer's illustrations. The way she brings them to life, her style and sense of whimsy have made these designs so popular.

Santa is often shown interacting with animals, a signature element in Stouffer's designs. The use of animals extends into her iconic images of Peace as well. Depicting the idea of Peace offered Stouffer the chance to create art "that came from my heart", she says.

Stephanie Stouffer's original paintings, from which cards and product designs were produced, are being presented in this exhibit and available for viewing only at Compass.

The Compass Music and Arts Center is located in Park Village at 333 Jones Dr., Brandon VT located 1.5 miles north of downtown Brandon off Arnold District Rd., off Rt. 7.

The center is open Monday-Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (802) 247-4295. E-mail: info@cmactv.org. www.cmactv.org. On Facebook.

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Vermont Country Calendar

(Sunday, December 17, continued)

MANCHESTER. Concert: Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet & Counterpoint. Traditional favorites, a singalong, a brand-new student composition, and a bit of silliness from PDQ Bach and Tom Lehrer. 4 pm. Manchester First Congregational Church. (802) 864-5741 x 10. vso.org.

RUTLAND. Performance: *The Nutcracker*. Dozens of area dance students come together to create this holiday favorite live on stage. Tickets: \$25-\$35. 1 pm & 6 pm. Paramount Theater, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountlive.org.

SO. HERO. Holiday Lights Holiday Concert. With Solaris Vocal Ensemble and guest instrumentalists the Green Taylor String Quartet. Tickets \$20 & \$15 on website or at flyntix.org. 7:30 pm. South Hero Congregational Church, 24 South St. www.solarisensemble.org.

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Hot apple cider and cookies served. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. *Through January 1, 2018.*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22

BROOKFIELD. Christmas Tree Cutting. Already-cut or Choose & Cut. Wreaths and evergreen brush. Christmas Barn with local farm goodies, maple, and more. See our electric train layout. 9 am - 4 pm. L.H. Stowell & Son Christmas Trees, 1591 Twin Ponds Rd. (802) 276-3382. www.lhstrees.com. *Also open December 23.*

BURLINGTON. Shen Yun Performing Arts. Classical Chinese dance, beautifully diverse ethnic and folk traditions, enchanting orchestral sound. A New-York-based, non-profit dance and music company. Tickets: \$83-\$123. 7:30 pm. Flynn MainStage, Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (888) 974-3698. www.flynncenter.org. ShenYun.com/Burlington. *Also December 23.*

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23

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

BURLINGTON. Shen Yun Performing Arts. Classical Chinese dance, beautifully diverse ethnic and folk traditions, enchanting orchestral sound. A New-York-based, non-profit dance and music company. Tickets: \$83-\$123. 2 pm. Flynn MainStage, Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, 153 Main St. (888) 974-3698. www.flynncenter.org. ShenYun.com/Burlington.

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

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Christmas musical concert by the Parker family at 7 pm at the Church building, the white building on your left as you drive up LDS Lane. We serve hot apple cider and cookies as refreshments each night. Live music in the Residence and Visitor's Center. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. *Through January 1, 2018.*

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at Billings Farm. Learn how Christmas was celebrated in late 19th century Woodstock in the farmhouse and linger in the cozy kitchen as treats are baked in the woodstove. Holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Admission: adults \$15, 62 & up \$14, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am - 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org. *Also December 24, and Dec 26-Jan 1.*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Hot apple cider and cookies served. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. *Through January 1, 2018.*

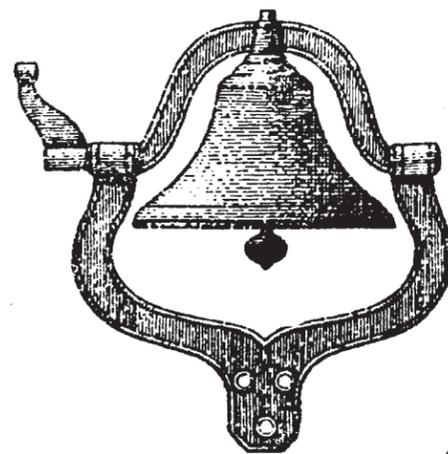
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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27

LUDLOW. Okemo Torchlight Parade and Fireworks Display. Torchlight parade of skiers and riders traversing Okemo's Open Slope trail. Naturalist Joe Karl leads a snowshoe hike up the mountain at 7 pm. 7:30 p.m. in the Okemo Clock Tower base area, Okemo Mountain Resort, 77 Okemo Ridge Rd. (802) 228-1600. info@okemo.com. okemo.com.

RUTLAND. Performance: *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. Now, the live on stage adaptation of the classic animated television special brings all your favorite characters to life - all set to the unforgettable sounds of the Vince Guaraldi musical score. Tickets: \$24-\$34. 2 pm & 7 pm. Paramount Theater, 30 Center St. (802) 775-0903. paramountlive.org.

RUTLAND. Winter Vermont Farmers' Market. Local produce, crafts, prepared foods. Winter veggies and lots more! EBT and debit cards. 3-6 pm. Vermont Farmers, Food Center at 251 West St. in downtown Rutland. (802) 342-4727. info@vtfarmersmarket.org. vtfarmersmarket.org.



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Way Back Then

Going Home for Christmas

by Charles Sutton

If you live into your 90s most of your close friends and relatives are gone but it doesn't have to be a lonely time if one is resourceful.

My mother had suffered a severe right side stroke and was physically incapacitated, but was mentally alert, loved to read, and watch TV only if it weren't boring. She was still living in the family home in Fairfield, CT and had a live-in housekeeper who treated Mother as if she were her own.

Mother once enjoyed classical music and the opera, and earlier in life played the piano quite well. However, old age and the stroke did something to her hearing that scrambled the music and made it discordant and nothing she wanted to hear.

I visited her just about every month and for most of the major holidays for several years—holidays were an especially hard time for her.

My wife Catherine was understanding about me being away as we had both looked after her mother in her final years. We would have our Christmas together when I came home from Connecticut. My sister lived in England came to see mother infrequently and usually not at Christmas, and my brother had died, so my visits were much appreciated.

The trip to Mother's from Vermont was 180 miles. I usually took her some maple syrup and a small spruce Christmas tree for her bedroom. On the return trip, if I had time, I would go into Bridgeport which had many ethnic stores and bring home real Portuguese rolls and Italian bakery cookies and pastries.

On the way down in the winter I often took a coffee break at Jiminy Peak ski area in the Berkshires near the Massachusetts border. I

rested in the car and could hear the swish of skis and see the skiers coming down on the lighted night trails.

My parents had both enjoyed cooking and tried many recipes from Gourmet Magazine. So when I arrived for a holiday weekend one way to please Mother was to cook something special for her from the old days—dishes which the housekeeper didn't make, like bouillabaisse, a French fish stew.

I also made the housekeeper happy as she could go home and spend most of the holiday with her family and I'd do the night watch.

On Christmas Eve I would decorate the tree with one string of tiny lights and Mother's collection of ornaments that were all kinds of birds.

During the football season Mother and I would watch the pro games on Sundays. She watched them herself with no particular favorite teams, but would turn the game off if it became one-sided. She didn't watch the

college games on Saturdays as they just weren't as exciting to her as the pros. She had gotten hooked on football when she and Father used to come watch me play during high school.

During my visits we would talk about the old days. I'd help her with some paperwork and there'd be chores to do around the house.

In 2001 I had visited her for Christmas and was due to see her again in February to watch Super Bowl XXXVI between New England and St. Louis. But in January Mother called one late afternoon when I was out. She told my wife to tell me, "Not to worry, not to worry." I came home to find that Mother had died that afternoon. She must have known and wanted to tell me she would be all right.

Mother lived till she was 97 and enjoyed a lifetime of Christmas holidays, some that were large family gatherings, but the ones I remember the most were when it was just the two of us.

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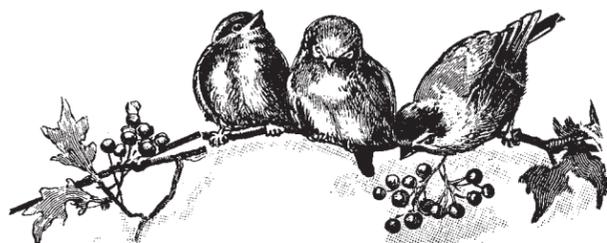
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Vermont Country Calendar



A Litany After Winter Solstice

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—BILL FELKER

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at Billings Farm. Learn how Christmas was celebrated in late 19th century Woodstock. Admission: adults \$15, 62 & up \$14, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. info@billingsfarm.org. www.billingsfarm.org. Also December 26-January 1.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30

PROCTOR. Christmas Bird Count & Potluck. An annual tradition in Rutland County and across the country. Join us in the field, or if you live within the count circle, count birds at your feeder. The day winds up with a potluck supper and a countdown of the day's birds at 6 pm at the Proctor Library. Bring a dish to share (beverages and utensils provided). For more info contact birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org.

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

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Hot apple cider and cookies served. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. Through January 1, 2018.

STOWE. Concert: Beethoven's Ninth Symphony—Green Mountain Mahler Festival. Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125 "the Choral," is one of Beethoven's greatest works. Tickets: \$25, \$20 for 60+, \$10 under 18. 7 pm. Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center, 122 Hourglass Dr. (802) 760-4634. sprucepeakarts.org.

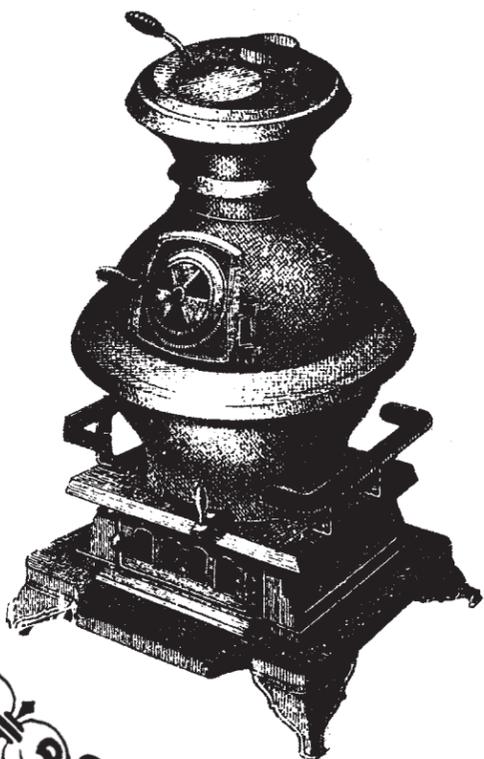
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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

BELMONT. New Year's Eve at Star Lake. Welcome in the New Year with good friends, good cheer, fireworks, a bonfire and skating (if possible). Co-sponsored with the Mount Holly Snow Flyers. Free! 9–10:30 pm. Star Lake, 25 Lake St. (802) 259-9130.

BURLINGTON. 35th Annual 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. First Night Buttons: adult (age 13+) \$18; child (age 3–12) \$5; student with valid ID \$10; family pack (two adult, two child) \$42. Buttons are available at the FlynnTix Box Office at 153 Main St. (802) 863-5966. box@flynncenter.org or from the First Night website at www.firstnightburlington.com. Festival 11 am December 31 to 12:30 am January 1. (802) 863-6005.

BURLINGTON. Concert: The Sky Blue Boys with Carrie Cook are delighted to be part of First Night Burlington, that wonderful all-ages celebration with music, dance and art events occurring throughout the city all day. 9–10:30 pm. First Congregational Church Sanctuary, 38 S. Winooski Ave. www.skyblueboys.com. www.firstnightburlington.org.



LUDLOW. Okemo's Family New Year's Eve. Early evening ice skating, snow tubing, mountain coaster rides. Horse-drawn wagon rides, party-hat decorating, bingo games, trivia tournament. DJ dance party. Party games, balloons, noisemakers and fireworks. Pizza party dinner. Tickets prices vary. Jackson Gore Inn at Okemo, 111 Jackson Gore Rd. (802) 228-1600. info@okemo.com. okemo.com.

MONTPELIER. New Year's Eve Celebration. 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 at 7:30 pm, best viewing from the State House lawn. Dave Keller's New Year's Eve extravaganza concert, 8 pm – 1 am at City Hall. Purchase tickets online. (802) 223-9604. montpelierlive.org.

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Hot apple cider and cookies served. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. Also January 1, 2018.

ST. JOHNSBURY. First Night North in St. Johnsbury. 100 shows by 250 musicians, dancers, comedians, magicians, puppeteers, storytellers, circus, fire artists, fireworks, and more! Food and free shuttle. Button admission \$22, \$14, 5 and under free available by calling Catamount or at local businesses. 4 pm – 12 midnight. (802) 748-2600 x 2. info@firstnightstj.com. www.firstnightnorth.org.

WAITSFIELD. Mad River Glen New Year's Family Celebration. Potluck dinner (last names starting 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, and torchlight parade. 6:30–10:30 pm. Baseball, Mad River Glen Cooperative, 57 Schuss Pass Rd. (802) 496-3551. ski@madriverglen.com. www.madriverglen.com.

WEST DOVER. Mount Snow Torchlight Parade & Fireworks. Mount Snow Ski & Snowboard School instructors will descend the Canyon ski trail in a beautiful torchlight glow. Immediately following will be a huge fireworks display. The best place to watch our instructors descend is between the Clocktower and the Cape House. Beforehand join us for free s'mores at the top of the Tubing hill at 3 pm, and then head to the Base Area at 4:45 pm for a bonfire! Mount Snow, 39 Mount Snow Rd. 5:45 pm. (802) 464-4191. www.mountsnow.com. Also January 14 and February 21.

WOODSTOCK. Christmas at Billings Farm. Learn how Christmas was celebrated in late 19th century Woodstock in the farmhouse and linger in the cozy kitchen as treats are baked in the woodstove. Holiday programs and making historic ornaments. Admission: adults \$15, 62 & up \$14, ages 5-15 \$8, 3-4 \$4, under 3 free. 10 am – 4 pm. Billings Farm & Museum, Rt. 12 & River Rd. (802) 457-2355. billingsfarm.org. Also December 26-January 1.

MONDAY, JANUARY 1

BURLINGTON. Run Vermont's 30th Annual First Run 5k and Youth Fun Run. Presented by UVM Medical Center. Prizes awarded in several costume categories. 9 am. At Champlain Valley Expo. (802) 863-8412. www.runvermont.org/events/first-run.

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ONGOING ACTIVITIES 2017

BENNINGTON. The Festival—Time for the Holidays! Closed-bid auction of original works by regional artists, as they respond to Nichols Goddard's Musical Clock, ca.1810. Paintings, woodwork, textiles, sculpture, and more. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. benningtonmuseum.org. November 24 through December 30.

MANCHESTER. \$5 Christmas Trees available on the Green Mountain National Forest. A "Christmas Tree Removal" permit must be purchased (\$5). Fourth graders can get a free Christmas tree voucher here: www.everykidinapark.gov. Maps are available when you purchase your permit. Manchester Ranger Station, 2538 Depot St. (802) 362-2307. www.fs.usda.gov.

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

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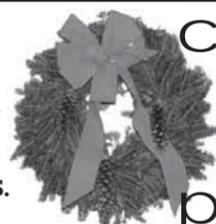


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Vermont Country Calendar

(Ongoing activities 2017, continued)

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

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

PUTNEY. Green Mountain Orchards Farm Store. Horse-drawn wagon rides by reservation. Farm store with our own bakery. 130 West Hill Rd. (exit 4, I-91), look for signs in Putney Village. (802) 387-5851. greenmtorchards.com.

PUTNEY. Hidden Springs Maple. Family maple farm where they started making maple syrup over 50 years ago. Our sugar bush spans over 1,000 acres. Maple Syrup Tasting Table, samples, hand-dipped ice cream, sales table, gifts. Hidden Springs Maple, 162 Westminster Rd. (802) 387-5200. www.hidden Springsmaple.com.

QUECHEE. Vermont Institute of Natural Science. Wildlife exhibits, workshops, and special events. Wildlife rehabilitation. Admission: adults: \$14.50, seniors (62 plus) \$13.50, youth (4-17): \$12.50, children 3 and under free. Open April 9 - October 31: 10 am – 5 pm. November 1-April 8: 10 am – 4 pm. Vermont Institute of Natural Science, 6565 Woodstock Rd. (802) 359-5000. info@vinsweb.org. www.vinsweb.org.

RANDOLPH. 16th Annual Holiday Artisans Market. Juried show offers a beautiful and eclectic selection of fine art, crafts, and local products. Wednesday–Sunday 12 noon – 6 pm, Christmas Eve 12 noon – 3 pm, and during performances. Chandler Center for the Arts, 71-73 Main St. (802) 728-9878. chandler-arts.org. *Through December 24.*

ROCHESTER. \$5 Christmas Trees available on the Green Mountain National Forest. A “Christmas Tree Removal” permit must be purchased (\$5). Fourth graders can get a free Christmas tree voucher here: www.everykidinapark.gov. Maps are available when you purchase your permit. Rochester Ranger Station, 99 Ranger Rd. (802) 767-4261. www.fs.usda.gov.

RUPERT. Winter Sleigh Rides. Suffolk Punch draft horses, Arch & Fern, will draw our newly-redesigned sweetheart sleigh across the winter landscape at 10 am, 11 am, 1 pm and 2 pm. Cost: \$150 for a one-hour ride for up to five adults. Only if weather permits; no rides on Christmas or New Year’s day. 24-hour advance notice required. Merck Forest and Farmland Center, 3270 Rt. 315, west of Manchester. (802) 394-7836. merckforest.org. *Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and selected Saturdays through the winter.*

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

RUTLAND. \$5 Christmas Trees available on the Green Mountain National Forest. A “Christmas Tree Removal” permit must be purchased (\$5). Fourth graders can get a free Christmas tree voucher here: www.everykidinapark.gov. Maps are available when you purchase your permit. Rutland Forest Supervisor’s Office, 231 North Main St. (802) 747-6700. www.fs.usda.gov.

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

SO. ROYALTON. Christmas Celebration. The Christmas lights are turned on at about 4:30 pm each evening. It is dark by 5 pm and it is better to come after that time. Hot apple cider and cookies served. Open seven days a week 9 am to 9 pm, grounds open till 10 pm, but Monday through Thursday is less busy. Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial, 357 LDS Lane. (802) 763-7742. www.lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial. *November 24 through January 1.*

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

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION. Newberry Market. A year-round, public indoor market with vendors offering local products, cheeses, clothing, gifts, pottery, and specialty foods. Free admission. Open every Thursday year round 11 am – 6 pm. Newberry Market, 19 South Main St. For information contact: Betsy Briggs Wheeler at (802) 299-0212. newberrymarketwrj@gmail.com. www.newberrymarketwrj.com.

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. www.vermonthhistory.org.

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

BENNINGTON. Bennington Center for the Arts. Small Works Show, through December 23. Permanent collections, theater productions, workshops. Admission: 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. thebennington.org.

BENNINGTON. Exhibit: *Photographs by Laura Gilpin and Her Circle: Gertrude Käsebier, Clarence H. White, and Clara Sipprell*, October 7 through December 30. Founding documents, fine art, Bennington Pottery, the 1924 Wasp Touring Car, Vermont furniture, and the Bennington Flag—one of America’s oldest flags. Lectures, workshops, concerts, films, and the George Aiken Wildflower Trail. Admission: adults \$10, seniors and students over 18 \$9. Admission is never charged to visit the museum shop. Open 10 am – 5 pm every day except Wednesdays. Bennington Museum, 75 Main St. (802) 447-1571. www.benningtonmuseum.org.

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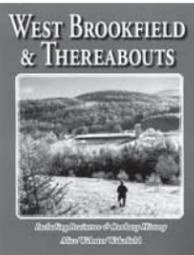
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Randolph, VT

16th Annual Chandler Holiday Artisans Market

Chandler Center for the Arts in Randolph, VT will host its Annual Holiday Artisans Market through Christmas Eve.

Chandler’s Main Gallery offers the perfect setting for showcasing the skill and creativity of Vermont artisans and specialty food producers. Browse through jewelry, fabric art, handmade stationery, pottery, holiday ornaments, dolls, and more. Other products include hand-knit sweaters, organic lotions, herbal soaps, candies, and scented candles.

Many favorites will be returning to show their latest work, including whimsical pottery by Su Shannon; the masterful goat’s-milk caramel makers of Fat Toad Farm; fabric art and apparel by Sue Cass; and handmade journals and cards by Elissa Campbell. Celebrated artists showcasing their work for the first time at Chandler this year include watercolorist

and contemporary jewelry maker Amy Hook-Therrien and woodcraft by Jerry Casseles.

“Chandler is delighted to mark its 16th Annual Holiday Artisans’ Market,” said Anne Barrett, coordinator of this year’s event. “We’ve got a wonderful variety of crafts, fine art, and specialty food items from talented, local makers—items that you just can’t get in a chain store.”

Chandler Center for the Arts is located at 71-73 Main St. in Randolph, VT. The Holiday Artisans Market will be open Wednesday through Sunday from 12-6 p.m., with extended hours during all performances at Chandler. The market will be closed on November 22 and on Thanksgiving Day. We’ll be open Christmas Eve from 12-3 p.m.

For questions call (802) 355-5557 or chandlermarket@gmail.com.

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Vermont Country Calendar

BRANDON. Exhibit: "Holiday Legacy". Artist Stephanie Stouffer's original paintings and products displaying her designs. Open daily 10 am – 5 pm, 11 am – 3 pm on Sundays. Compass Music and Arts Center, 333 Jones Drive, Park Village, 1.5 miles north of downtown off Rt. 7. (802) 247-4295. www.cmacvt.org. *Through December 31.*

BRANDON. Exhibit: "Winter in Vermont." An ensemble show by the membership of season-appropriate artwork. The show includes a Christmas tree full of for sale ornaments. Brandon Artists Guild, 7 Center St. (802) 247-4956. *Through January 3.*

BRATTLEBORO. Exhibits: "Constellations". The colorful, rigorously patterned paintings of Roger Sandes, through January 8. Open daily 11am – 5pm, closed Tues. Admission: \$8 adults, \$6 seniors, \$4 students, free for youth 18 and under. Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 10 Vernon St. (802) 257-0124. brattleboromuseum.org.

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

BURLINGTON. Fleming Museum of Art. Adults \$5, family \$10, students and seniors \$3, children 6 and under free. Tue, Thu, Fri 10 am – 4 pm, Wed 10 am – 7 pm, Sat-Sun noon – 4 pm. Fleming Museum of Art, 61 Colchester Ave. (802) 656-0750. fleming@uvm.edu. www.flemingmuseum.org.

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

CHESTER. 103 Artisans Marketplace. Owned by artists Elise & Payne Junker, exclusive showroom of Junker Studio metalwork. Open Thursday through Sunday 10 am – 5 pm, Tuesday and Wednesday by chance. Located at 7 Pineview Dr. and Rt. 103, south of town—look for the life-size moose! (802) 875-7400. 103artisansmarketplace.com.

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. Hildene Holiday House Tours. Robert and Mary Lincoln's home is decorated throughout December as it might have been during the holidays in the early 1900's. The museum store welcomes visitors for distinctive holiday gifts. Dressed in holiday finery, the spirit of the season abounds in our 100-year-old carriage barn! Apple cider, Vermont tastings & fresh cider doughnuts. Admission \$20 adults; children 6 to 14, \$5; under 6, free. A fee of \$7.50 for the tour is added to the general admission. No admission charged for Welcome Center and Museum Store. Open daily 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home, Rt. 7A, south of the village. (802) 362-1788. www.hildene.org.

MARLBORO. Southern Vermont Natural History Museum. Perched on an overlook—on a clear day the horizon is 100 miles away! See mounted specimens of over 600 native New England birds and mammals, a Raptor Center with live hawks and owls, amphibian and reptile exhibit and fall wildflower exhibit. Admission: adults \$5, seniors \$3, children 5-12 \$2, kids 4 and under are free. Open 10 am – 4 pm weekdays, 10 am – 5 pm weekends. Rt. 9, Hogback Mountain. (802) 464-0048. museum@sover.net. www.vermontmuseum.org.

MIDDLEBURY. Amazing Operating Electric Train Layout. Three levels high, with tracks running Lionel O gauge trains, Lionel O27 gauge trains and an upper track running HO trains. Admission: adults \$5; youth (6-18) \$3, seniors \$4.50, family \$12. Volunteer engineers will run the trains Tue-Fri 1-4 pm, Sat 11 am – 2 pm, Sun Dec. 3 12 noon – 4 pm, Dec. 10 & 17 1-3 pm, closed on December 24 & 25. Henry Sheldon Museum, One Park St., across from the Ilsley Library. (802) 388-2117. henrysheldonmuseum.org. *Train layout runs December 2 through January 13.*

MIDDLEBURY. Vermont Folklife Center. Gallery, archives & research center, programs, and Heritage Shop.

Free admission. Open Tues-Sat 10 am – 5 pm. Vermont Folklife Center, 88 Main St. (802) 388-4964. info@vermontfolklifecenter.org. www.vermontfolklifecenter.org.

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 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. chaffeeartcenter.org.

RUTLAND. Inaugural Exhibition: 34 local artists from all over Rutland County with work ranging from landscape paintings to conceptual sculptures to collage work and even performance art. 77 Gallery, 77 Grove St. (603) 732-8606. the77gallery@gmail.com. vitalsparknorth.com. facebook.com/vtallygallery. *Through March 30.*

SHELburne. Shelburne Museum. Renowned for its collection of American folk art and quilts. Historic houses and community buildings. Admission through April 30: adult \$10, ages 5-17 \$5, under 5 free. Open daily 10 am – 5 pm through December 30. Winter Season with only Pizzagalli Center and Webb Gallery open: January 2 – April 30 Wednesday – Sunday, 10 am – 5 pm. Shelburne Museum, 6000 Shelburne Rd. (802) 985-3346. shelburnemuseum.org.

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

SPRINGFIELD. Wildlands Exhibition. Celebrates our public lands and national parks, and the beauty and experiences we enjoy in our publicly owned wild spaces. The 10 artists in Wildlands share a deep love of the land. 9 am – 5 pm. The Great Hall, 100 River St. (802) 258-3992. www.vermontartsliving.com. *Through March 30.*

SPRINGFIELD. Gallery at the VAULT. A Vermont State Craft Center featuring fine art and hand-crafted gifts from over 125 local and regional artists and craftsmen. Classes, workshops. Open Wall Exhibit: "Magical Light" through December 28. Tuesday – Saturday 11 am – 5 pm. Gallery at the VAULT, 68 Main St. (802) 885-7111. www.galleryvault.org.

STOWE. Members' Art Show and Festival of Trees & Light. Decorated evergreens, a Hanukkah display, and over 100 artworks by our members. 5-7 pm. Helen Day Art Center, 90 Pond St. (802) 253-8358. gallery@helenday.com. helenday.com. *Through December 30.*

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

ST. JOHNSBURY. The Stephen Huneck Gallery at Dog Mountain and Dog Chapel. Free. Gallery open Mon. & Wed. 11 am – 4 pm; Fri., Sat. & Sun. 10 am – 5 pm. Closed Tues. & Thurs. After November call the Gallery at (800) 449-2580 to find out about hours for the winter. Dog Chapel open seven days a week from dawn to dusk. Dog Mountain, 143 Parks Rd. off Spaulding Rd. (800) 449-2580. www.dogmt.com.

WEST RUTLAND. Carving Studio and Sculpture Center Gallery. Annual Members' Exhibition, June 10 through July 9. Hours are Monday-Friday, 10 am-1 pm, or by appointment. 636 Marble St. (802) 438-2097. info@carvingstudio.org. carvingstudio.org.

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

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



Fairest Lord Jesus

Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature,
O thou of God and man the Son,
Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor,
Thee, my soul's Glory and Crown.

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

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

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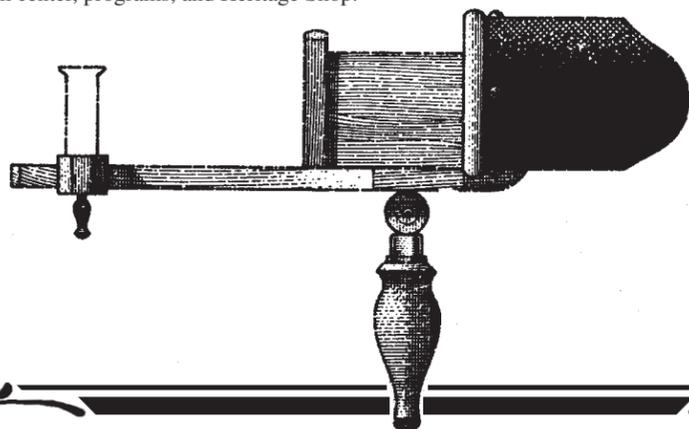


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Christmas Revels Heads to Nordic Lands this December

This December, take a whirlwind trip to Nordic lands as the Christmas Revels spins a poignant tale told through the lively and enchanting music, dance and storytelling of that region. As the winter solstice brings with it long nights of frosty breath and nose-nipping cold, gather with us before a warming hearth as we weave a tale of adventure, enchantment, and self-discovery.

"The Christmas Revels: A Nordic Celebration of the Winter Solstice" is presented Thursday through Sunday, December 14-17, in Spaulding Auditorium of the Hopkins Center for the Arts in Hanover, NH.

A beloved Upper Valley tradition for the whole family for 43 years, The Christmas Revels each December celebrates the holiday season with glorious carols, festive dance, and traditions that span the centuries and the globe. Recent performances have featured the stories, music and traditions of the Québécois, Ireland, Appalachia, and England.

The show is performed by a large, auditioned case of singers, dancers and actors from the Upper Valley, as well as guest artists renowned in the tradition of that year's show. Those guest artists not only share their virtuosity and authenticity as performers in the show but also help the local cast capture the nuances of that year's style of dance and music.

This year's guest artists include show-stopping Norwegian dancer Tom Løvli, who has won dance competitions throughout his home country and frequently performs abroad; Loretta Kelley, a legend on the richly resonant Nordic hardanger fiddle (hardingfele) for more than 30 years; and Merja Soria, a native of Finland who weaves spells with the haunting songs of Finland's indigenous Suomi people, accompanying herself on the harp-like kantele. They are joined by Swedish-music duo Lydia Ievins on five-string fiddle and nyckelharpa and Andrea Larson on fiddle; and double-bassist Corey di Mario. Ievins and Larson are also experts in Scandinavian social dancing.

The music, dance and pageantry unfold through a new story written by Revels North Artistic Director Nils Fredland. When a young girl goes in search of her Nordic heritage, she is drawn into the mystical and fantastical stories of her father's Finnish homeland, as well as the masterful craftsmanship of her mother's Scandinavian musical and dance traditions. As we are swept along on her journey through epic folklore, alongside heroes and magical creatures, and across the vast and vibrant landscape of the Nordic region, we are treated to a smorgasbord of the music and dance of the five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden).



photo by Erin Sutherland and Washington Revels
Dancers circle round in the Christmas Revels in Hanover, NH.

The six performances take place Thursday, December 14, 6 pm; Friday, December 15, 7 pm; Saturday and Sunday, December 16 & 17, 1 pm & 5 pm. Tickets on December 14 are \$25-46 for adults and \$8 for 18 and under and for other performances are \$27-48 for adults and \$11-20 for 18 and under.

The Christmas Revels is a production of Revels North, a grassroots community arts nonprofit organization founded in 1974. Revels North has provided over 11,000 individuals in the community the opportunity to connect in meaningful ways as it brings traditions to life through music, dance, song and theater, in programs throughout the year.

Spaulding Auditorium in the Hopkins Center for the Arts is located at 4 East Wheelock St. in Hanover, NH. (603) 646-2422. hop.dartmouth.edu.

For more information about Revels North call (866) 556-3083, contact info@revelsnorth.org, or visit www.revelsnorth.org.



photo by Erin Sutherland and Washington Revels
Dancing lady in the Christmas Revels in Hanover, NH.



photo by Erin Sutherland and Washington Revels
A gnome enjoys his repast in the Christmas Revels at the Hopkins Center in Hanover, NH.



Beggar's Rhyme

Christmas is coming, the geese are getting fat,
Please to put a penny in the old man's hat;
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny will do,
If you haven't got a ha'penny, God bless you.

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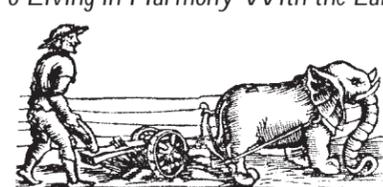
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Randolph, VT

Chandler Music Hall Presents Great Entertainment

An extraordinary array of acclaimed artists will grace the main stage at the Chandler Music Hall in Randolph, VT during the coming months.

The 2017-18 Chandler MainStage Series

Folk and Traditional

The Turning of the Year, a musical celebration of the holidays with Irish accordionist John Whelan, Scottish-American fiddler Katie McNally, and American roots band Low Lily will be presented on December 8.

Folk and singer-songwriter legend Tom Rush is coming February 23, 2018. New World Festival favorites De Temps Antan will grace the stage at Chandler on April 6. The season culminates with an enchanted evening on April 13 with three critically acclaimed singer-songwriters, touring as The Texas Troubadours: Chandler favorite Ruthie Foster, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, and Carrie Rodriguez.

Classical Concerts

Classical music—long a Chandler tradition—will again have a strong presence on the main stage. The eclectic Sixth Floor Trio performs on January 12, and includes Teddy Abrams (clarinet, piano), Harrison Hollingsworth (bassoon, violin), and Johnny Tessier (clarinet) serving up a heady mix of music that interweaves classical sounds with hints of bluegrass, klezmer, jazz, and alt-rock.

Chandler's classical bill wraps up with Camerata New England, performing a trio of wondrous works, including piano quintets by Shostakovich and Dvorak on April 20.

Daytime Performance Series

Chandler's Daytime Performance Series for regional school students and home schoolers features Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great on January 26 and a compelling dance theater work by choreographer and storyteller Lida Winfield – In Search of Air: Growing Up Dyslexic on March 23.

Contemporary Dance

Contemporary dance glides across Chandler's main stage for the first time in many years next spring. In its first-ever commission of an artistic work, Chandler will present the world premiere of a new work by Vermont dancer and theater artist Tracy Penfield, who is collaborating with California-based dance maker Tamara Hurwitz Pullman on a powerful dance theater work dubbed The Passing Project, on April 28. Passing will investigate the theme of dying in an uplifting,



De Temps Antan will be performing at Chandler Music Hall in Randolph, VT on April 6.

illuminating, multidisciplinary collage of seven dancers, four musicians, a soundscape, and a sculptural set. Far from being macabre or morbid, Passing is a moving examination of what is passed on to us, what we leave behind, and how life continues.

Family Performances

The 2017-18 season also includes the return of Chandler's annual, ever-popular series of performances specially selected for families. This season's offerings include the return of the No Strings Marionettes on November 25; the Mini Mud Youth Variety Show on March 24, 2018; and The Next Generation on May 18. The Chandler Family Series will also feature the debut Chandler performance by Jeh

Kulu Dance & Drum Theater on March 11, bringing its high-spirited celebration of West African music and dance to central Vermont.

Join your friends and neighbors at Chandler for world-class music, award-winning festivals, innovative theater, and outstanding folkloric and contemporary dance this season.

Chandler Music Hall is fully accessible and equipped for the hearing impaired.

Chandler Center for the Arts is located at 71-73 Main St., Randolph, VT. Box office hours are 12-4 p.m. Monday through Friday and 1.5 hours before the show on the day of a performance. For tickets call (802) 728-6464. For information call (802) 728-9878. chandler-arts.org.

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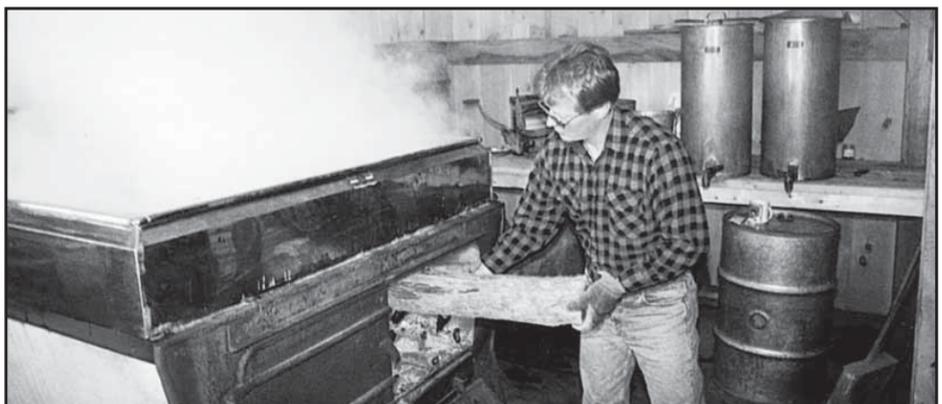


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Old-Fashioned Holiday Treats, circa 1902

PUMPKIN PIE (Like Mother Makes)

One quart of milk, three small cupfuls of boiled and strained pumpkin, one and one-half cupfuls of brown sugar, one-half cupful of molasses, the yolks and whites of three eggs beaten separately, a little salt, one level tablespoonful each of ginger and cinnamon. Beat all together and bake with an under crust; enough for three pies. Hubbard squash may be substituted for pumpkin if latter is not at hand.

—Amy Brooks

STOLLA (RAISED CAKE)

Take nine cups of flour and set with two cents' worth of yeast, three cups of milk. Set this about one hour before making stiff. Put the yeast and milk in the center of the flour. When raised add two eggs, one and one-quarter cups of butter, one and one-half cups of sugar, salt, rind of a lemon, a little sugared or candied orange, one-quarter of a pound of citron, one-quarter of a pound of almonds, two tablespoonfuls of brandy, one pound of seedless raisins. Cream the butter and sugar, then add the eggs, and mix this with the other ingredients, and then work all the flour in. Let rise over night. In the morning make into loaves and let rise again. Then bake a little more than an hour.

—Mrs. Casper

BLACK FRUIT CAKE

One pound of butter, two pounds of raisins, stoned, two pounds of currants carefully washed and one pound of dark brown sugar, one-half pound of citron, one teaspoonful each of cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg, cloves and soda, one tablespoonful of New Orleans or black molasses, seven eggs, one pound of flour and enough sour milk to mix it quite still. Bake slowly.

—I. M. Dell

FAIRY GINGER COOKIES

One cupful of butter, two cupfuls of sugar, one cupful of milk, four cupfuls of flour, one-third teaspoonful of soda, one tablespoonful of ginger. Beat the butter to a cream; add the sugar, gradually, and when light, the ginger and the milk in which the soda has been dissolved, and finally the flour. Turn baking pans upside down and wipe the bottoms very clean. Butter them and spread the cake very thin upon them. Bake in a moderate oven until brown. While still hot cut into squares and slip from the pan. Keep in a tin box. Remember to spread it as thin as a wafer and cut it the instant it is taken from the oven.

—J.I.C.

MINCE PIES

Four pounds of lean boiled beef when cold, chopped fine, twice as much of chopped green tart apples, one pound of chopped suet, three pounds of raisins, seeded, two pounds of currants picked over, washed and dried, one-half pound of citron, cut up fine, one pound of brown sugar, one quart of cooking molasses, two quarts of sweet cider, one pint of boiled cider, one tablespoonful of salt, one tablespoonful of pepper, one tablespoonful of mace, one tablespoonful of allspice and four tablespoonfuls of cinnamon, two grated nutmegs, one tablespoonful of cloves; mix thoroughly and warm it on the range until heated through. Remove from the fire and when nearly cool, stir in a pint of good brandy and one pint of Madeira wine. Put into a crock, cover it tightly and set in a cold place where it will not freeze, but keep perfectly cold. Will keep good all winter.

—Chef de Cuisine, Astor House, N.Y.



The Old Christ Church rests in the winter snows, Rt. 12 between Bethel and Randolph, VT.

photo by Nancy Cassidy

ENGLISH PLUM PUDDING

Take one and one-half pounds of suet, one and one-half pounds of dry light brown sugar, one and one-half pounds of currants washed and dried thoroughly, one and one-half pounds of raisins, four nutmegs grated and sifted through a small tea strainer and thoroughly mixed, so they will not be lumpy; one-quarter of a pound of candied lemon peel, one-quarter of a pound of citron, one heaping teaspoonful of fine salt, mixed in the same way as the nutmegs, baker's bread enough to make a quantity equal in bulk to the suet. Use only the crumb of the loaf, rejecting the crust. It will take nearly one and one-half loaves of ordinary size, one-half pint of flour, nine eggs beaten very light and milk enough to wet the mixture. Chop the suet first, then add the bread-crumbs, sliced citron and peel, raisins and currants. Sift the salt and nutmegs in, stirring thoroughly. Next add the sugar and next sift in the flour. Then pour in the eggs, mixing thoroughly as before. Now comes the milk. You only need sufficient milk to wet the pudding about as moist as mince meat for pies should be made.

Then butter your tin basin well, put in your pudding, leaving room for a stiff batter of flour and water which must be spread over the whole top of the pudding to exclude the air and water. Then take stout, unbleached cotton, tie it firmly over the top, round the rim of the basin, and bring the corners that hang down back again over the top, pinning them securely. Then put the pudding into boiling water and let it boil without cessation, eleven hours.

The best way is to make them two or three days before needed, and then put them on again the day they are to be eaten, and boil from two to three hours more. A pudding prepared and cooked in this way is "fit to set before a king." Use cold sauce made of sugar, butter and wine, or hot brandy sauce. These puddings will keep a year.

—Annie R. White

SAND COOKIES

One-half pound of powdered sugar, five eggs, beaten separately. Stir yolks and sugar one hour, then one-half pound of corn-starch, flavored with lemon. Bake thirty-five minutes.

—Mrs. Lizzie Mooney

These recipes were contributed by "one thousand homemakers" to *Woman's Favorite Cookbook* by Annie R. Gregory, circa 1902.



little tree

little tree
little silent Christmas tree
you are so little
you are more like a flower
who found you in the green forest
and were you very sorry to come away?
see i will comfort you
because you smell so sweetly
i will kiss your cool bark
and hug you safe and tight
just as your mother would,
only don't be afraid
look the spangles
that sleep all the year in a dark box
dreaming of being taken out and allowed to shine,
the balls the chains red and gold the fluffy threads,
put up your little arms
and i'll give them all to you to hold
every finger shall have its ring
and there won't be a single place dark or unhappy
then when you're quite dressed
you'll stand in the window for everyone to see
and how they'll stare!
oh but you'll be very proud
and my little sister and i will take hands
and looking up at our beautiful tree
we'll dance and sing
"Noel Noel"

— E.E. CUMMINGS
(1894-1962)

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Christmas Trees

A Tale in Every Sale

by Burr Morse

I can't let a Christmas season go by without writing a column on the "psychology" of Christmas tree shopping. Over the years I've accumulated a whole forest full of stories—yes, it was way back in 1966 when Dad and I loaded our first retail Christmas tree onto an aging Studebaker!

Since I'll never use anyone's real name in a Christmas tree story, today I'm thinking of the "Balsams", a local family whose history of tree shopping brings a whole new meaning to the term "family tree". This couple started coming up here when their kids were just saplings and they required the real deal: no selecting from our displayed, pre-cut trees for them! They always brought their own saw and only needed access to the Morse wilds and a promise that there were big ones, huge ones out there.

I especially remember one of their treks. It was snowing hard that day and the Balsam family had been gone a long time when the father suddenly emerged from the blizzard hunched over and looking stressed. "We're having a terrible time gettin' that tree down. Got a sharp saw we can borrow... and, oh...mind if I take th' Subaru out there?" I said "Hell, I don't care if y'go out with a bulldozer just as long's you fix up the mess!" He thanked me, got in his Subaru and drove slowly back into the blizzard.

I was busy with other tree customers when suddenly a huge, prostrate conifer appeared in the distance. It seemingly moved without the aid of human hands or machine power

"It was snowing hard that day and the Balsam family had been gone a long time when the father suddenly emerged from the blizzard...looking stressed."

and as it crept toward us, folks gasped like they were seeing a yuletide Trojan Horse about to invade the Morse tree lot. It had come out of the deep woods, following a path that is normally only tractor accessible but I knew it could only be the Balsam family.

As it pulled up, a hand holding some cash reached out through massive boughs. "Keep the change" said a tired-sounding voice...I can't get out of the car. I knew there was a Subaru in there somewhere and in the Subaru was a family of wide-eyed "saplings" who would always cherish the experience. We all watched as the "tree" turned south on County Road and headed off toward Montpelier.

The other day a young couple drove into our yard in a Saab with Massachusetts plates. I could see from a distance that the young man was one of the Balsam "saplings" now grown up and married. When they went to select their tree I backed off, extending them proper "Balsam" reverence. I only approached when I noticed they had made a selection and he was in the process of tying the large, perfect Fraser Fir on to the Saab's roof (no easy matter on a car with no roof rack). We exchanged pleasantries but I offered no help...offering Christmas tree help to a Balsam would be like asking Santa if he might prefer oxen to reindeer. I did note that the young man's wife remained rather aloof to the process and when he asked her for help, she declined—that's where I almost stepped in."See here young lady," I would have said, "You're a Balsam now and Balsams support each other in this sacred process!" Instead I made a joke about how it's always the



passenger's job to reattach trees that fall off travelling cars. She smiled and then began helping.

I won't, however, stop writing Christmas tree stories because, damn it all, I enjoy it! Like a customer recently. The woman had "very specific" requirements of her Christmas tree and she had me twirling just about every tree in the yard. She kept coming back to one in particular, however, but said "the top just doesn't 'work' for me...it's too sparse at the top". I developed my most angelic smile, tipped my hat

and said "me too, but folks can still enjoy me." She laughed and bought the tree.

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Ring Out, Wild Bells

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we See no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

—ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

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North Country Book News

Book Reviews by Charles Sutton

Scandinavian Holidays

A young Swedish girl had the good fortune to start a career in baking at Holgers Konditori (bakery) in Saffle, Sweden, (founded in 1903) and is still famous for its 'semior' a bun made with almond paste and topped with whipped cream. This led her to a career as a food writer, stylist and recipe developer contributing to more than 30 cookbooks.

In her cookbook *Holiday Cookies—Showstopping Recipes to Sweeten the Season* by Elisabet der Nederlanden (\$20. Ten Speed Press. www.tenspeed.com) the author shares many Advent and Christmas recipes that she has tried and collected over the years, including ones from her mother and grandmother.

One of her favorite times during Advent is St. Lucia Day when girls dressed in white lead a candlelight procession, everyone in the group sings, and later eat pepparkakor, a gingery cookie with "plenty of snap." The cookies are shaped into goats, pigs, hearts, stars and gingerbread people.

A recipe for that cookie is joined with other Swedish favorites: icebox pinwheel cookies, thumbprints with spicy plum jam, black and whites, and molasses spice cookies.

Some 50 holiday recipes in all are grouped under these headings: Very Merry Classics, Cookie Exchange Party, Warm Holiday Spice, Holiday Confections, Decorated Delights, and Around the World. You will be tempted to try some holiday favorites from other countries like South American Alfajores (a shortbread-type sandwich), Hungarian Kiffles (a cookie made from cream cheese dough and filled with fruit jams) Dutch Speculass (a spiced cookie shaped with wooden molds), and Danish Butter Wreaths (a flakey, buttery Scandinavian cookie). This 162-page book is handsomely laid out with beautiful photographs of delicious-looking cookies. We especially admired the Gingerbread House, 3-D Christmas Trees (made of different-sizes cookies, Peppermint Bark, and Glazed Eggnog Madeleines.

"Christmas is my favorite time of year. I thrive in the winter months. I love the cold, the blue winter sky, and especially, the magical atmosphere when the world goes quiet, covered in snow."

So writes the author of this beautiful cookbook and photo essay about the snowy days leading up to and after Christmas. What's unusual about *Scandinavian Christmas* by Trine Hahnemann and photographs by Lars Ranek (\$19.95. Sterling Publishing. www.sterlingpublishing.com) is the joy and enthusiasm over each carefully prepared treat for holiday events.

Trine notes the reason why you have to bake so many different things is that "you need enough to last for the whole month of December. You can't run out of cakes or, especially, cookies...and should have at least three or four kinds ready."



So she gets us started with Lucia and Pulla Breads, Spiced Christmas Cake, Red Currant-Almond Cupcakes and a special Pepper Nut Cookie (no pepper in it), but the kind the "nissers" (elves) like to sneak in and steal.

The author loves giving gifts for Christmas from her kitchen that include chutneys, jams and jellies (apple, red and black currant), a lingonberry compote, sea buckthorn vinegar, and glogg extract.

During Advent the author urges readers to go outside "Serve hot drinks, salmon sandwiches, and "nisse" (elf) cake, make a stew and bake bread over an open fire." There are photos of the author and her family bundled up, playing in the snow, huddled around a fire, and picnicking. Among the Advent foods she recommends are Apple Aebleskive—a light cardamom-flavored donut containing cubes of apples; Elderberry and Rum Toddy; Lamb Stew and Christmas Porridge made from short-grain rice.

You will be intrigued by The Christmas Eve feast. A duck or goose are slow-roasted over an outdoor grill. Other meats include cured lamb chops, pork roast with spices and crisp crackling, and spiced quince ham. Vegetables include kale salad with pomegranate, warm chicory salad and Brussels sprouts with clementines. And rice pudding with hot cherry sauce for dessert.

The author has written five cookbooks in her native Danish and two in English. She started her career as a caterer for rock stars, including Elton John, the Rolling Stones and Bruce Springsteen. Today she owns and runs a cafe in Denmark's House of Parliament.

Book Review

Cookie Baking Tips

'Tis the season for cookie-making, but bakers be cautious as recipes may seem familiar and uncomplicated, but improvising could alter the results for better...or worse. Such is among the advice on baking perfect cookies in *Holiday Cookies—The Ultimate Goopy, Crispy Crunchy Treats* by Alice Medrich (\$12.95. Artisan Books. www.artisanbooks.com). Before giving us the recipes for 50 of her tempting favorite cookies Alice offers 12 pages of questions and answers about cookie baking with the following examples: What makes cookies tough and what to do about it? How soft is softened butter?

What's the best way to melt chocolate? How do I toast coconut and nuts? Why chill and rest cookie dough? What is the best way to cool cookies? What is the best way to prepare cookie sheets? And much more.

Among the recipes that intrigued us were Chunky Hazelnut Meringues, Currant and Nib Rugelach, Brownie Bow Ties, Cardamom Caramel Palmiers, and Very Fancy Lemon Bars.

The author is credited with popularizing chocolate truffles in the United States when she began making and selling them in the dessert shop, Chocolat which she founded in Berkeley, CA.



Book Review

Christmas Around the World

On Christmas eve children worldwide will be leaving snacks for Santa's visit.

In America Santa will find a glass of milk, a plate of cookies (usually iced sugar cookies or chocolate chip cookies) and sometimes decorated gingerbread people. Some thoughtful children also leave carrots or hay for Santa's reindeer.

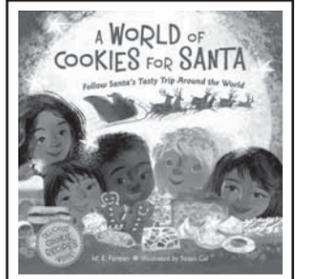
In *A World of Cookies for Santa—Follow Santa's Tasty Trip Around the World*

by M.E. Furman and Illustrated by Susan Gal (\$16.99. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. www.hmhc.com) we learn what Santa can expect visiting, say, 30 foreign countries.

This fascinating book gives Santa's name in the local language of each country visited, where children leave shoes if they can't hang stockings on a chimney. We read about the delightful snacks they have for Santa and his reindeer or donkey. One might be challenged to try baking at least one every Christmas. The rest of the family will enjoy something new, too.

Here's some of what Santa will be eating: Alaska—Candy-like Eskimo cookies sometimes called "nobakes"; Hawaii—Pineapple, Coconut, Macadamia Bars; Canada—Spicy Hermit cookies; Mexico—Crum-

bly, nutty Mexican Wedding Cookies (elsewhere also called Snowballs, Russian



tea cakes and Spanish polvorones); Basque Country (between France and Spain) Almond Tile Cookies; Philippine Islands—a gluten-free crisp cookie called Puto Seko; Christmas Island—Coconut Macaroons; and New Zealand—sweet crisp Anzac Biscuits.

If you are curious what Santa is called in other countries, here are some of his names: Ded Moroz, grandfather frost (Russia), Baba Noel (Egypt), Pere Noel (France), Sinterklas (Indonesia), Julenissen—Christmas elf (Norway), Julemand—Christmas man (Denmark); and Kersvader—Father Christmas (South Africa).

This book shows happy kids and all their treats for Santa, including a piñata in Mexico filled with small toys and treats. Recipes included for nine of the cookies.

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Christmas from the Heart

For Little Ones and Those Who Love Them

Tales of Christmas, heartfelt and fanciful about this time of year and are such fun to read to the kids in our lives and to enjoy ourselves. As the Earth spins toward the winter Solstice, the dark of the year, and the coming birth of the Christ Child, we could all use stories of joy and contemplation, of generosity, and love. Merry Christmas and happy reading!

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

A squirrel promises to wake Gus when Santa arrives, but forgets. So Gus is not there when Santa opens his sack containing carrots, red apples and bread, but also sausage and a slab of bacon for the foxes; bags of seeds and fat for the birds; nuts for the squirrels, and cheese for the crow. When Santa is about to leave, "Did I forget anyone?", a lone owl remembers Gus's wish, hoo-hoos him awake and leads him to a loving Santa. "Gus, I was waiting for you. Now here you are with me," stroking him gently. Gus is given dried apples, pears and plums. And best of all when all the other animals are leaving he creeps into Sant Claus's pocket and happily falls asleep there.

You will appreciate the charming and lavish drawings of an European-style Santa by the German artist Eleonore Schmid (1939-2003). Her woodland scenes and the animals including tiny Gus are enchanting. The book's Swiss title is *Wach Auf Sieben-schläfer Sankt Nikolaus Ist Da*.

Imagine trying to maintain Christmas joy and cheer in the midst of a violent blizzard which takes down a Michigan family's fruitful and beloved apple tree. In this classic late 19th century story, *Apple Tree Christmas* by Trinka Hakes Noble (\$16.95. *Sleeping Bear Press*. www.sleepingbearpress.com) we find the downed tree had provided sweet apples, apple butter, and apple pies for years for the Ansterburg family. Its twisting wild grape vines that wound around the tree made a swing for daughter Josie and a ladder to a welcoming branch for daughter Katrina where she sat and sketched to her heart's content and dreamed of being an artist.

The girls are heartbroken over the loss of the tree, especially as it was part of their home and having father start to cut the tree up for firewood made them despair. But not for long. When Christmas day dawns in their home in the end of the barn, with the animals underneath, there is a pretty evergreen tree decorated with apples from "the tree" and hanging from a beam is Josie's swing made from a vine from the fallen apple tree. For Katrina, father has made a drawing board from the very same tree limb that had been the girl's studio. Merry Christmas everyone!

This story offers a glimpse into how we lived in the post-pioneer era, that while a simpler time, had its own struggles. The detailed drawings show us a lot, and some things which we wish we could do today in our too-busy lives.

The birth of the Christ Child on Christmas eve is a familiar and welcoming story with many retellings from different viewpoints.

In *The Christmas Star* by Marcus Pfister (\$17.95. *NorthSouth Books*. www.northsouth.com) the Star of Bethlehem is a constellation of stars forming a comet-like mass that leads the followers to the stable. In this story three shepherds and their flock of sheep follow the star to see the "newborn King." They are joined by three Kings who pledged to give the Child, The Prince of Peace, their gifts, faith and their love. The bright light in the sky also attracts an array of animals who have been told by an owl that a Holy Child has been born who will love and care for all living things. The animals, the Kings, and the shepherds all arrive at the tiny stable where the Holy Child awaits them peacefully asleep.

You will savor this especially beautiful Christmas book. The art work is embellished using a hologram foil stamping technique wherein the gold stars really glitter. The same technique was used in Marcus Pfister's highly popular *Rainbow Fish* series. 49 books of the Swiss author and illustrator have been published and have been translated into more than 50 languages.

The Christmas season is a time when friends get together. But not so for Gingerbread Baby as we see in *Gingerbread Friends* by Jan Brett (\$17.99 hardcover, \$8.99 board book. *G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers*. www.putnam.com) who may live in the boy Matti's bedroom where there are toys and treats...but no friend of his own.

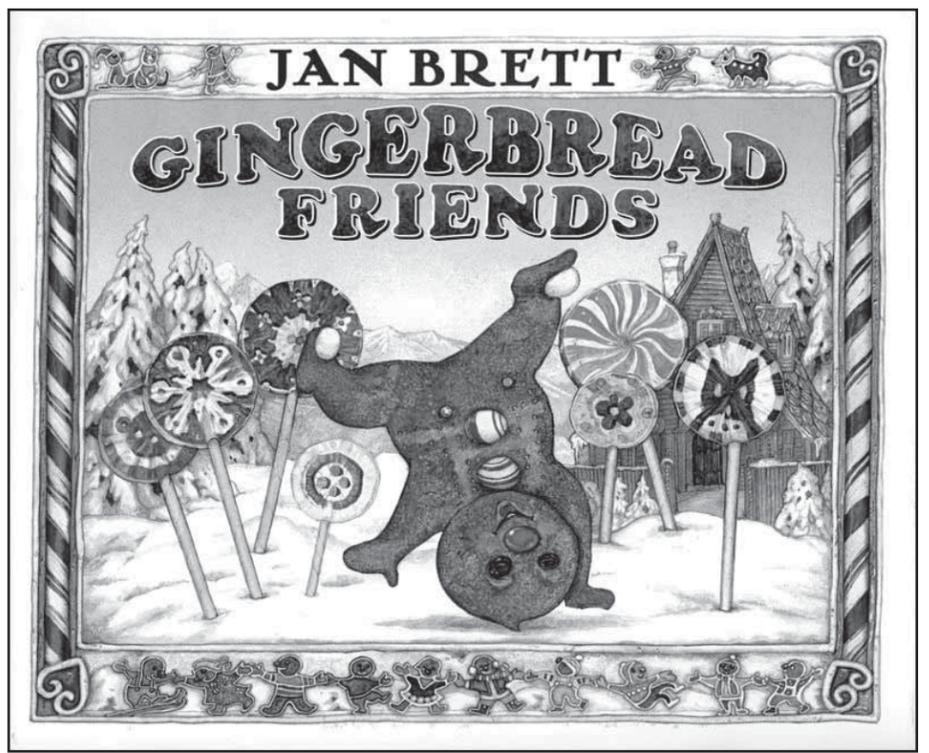
Artist Jan Brett has us follow Gingerbread Baby to town in search of a friend. He rides over the snow in a chair on skis pulled by a colorful rooster. He finds a bakery but none of the baked decorations (man and woman on cake, sugar cookie girl, seven white swans, dancers on top of a cake) will move let alone make friends! Gingerbread Baby creeps into a mouse hole and takes a nap until awakened by mama mouse nibbling on his marshmallow pom-pom. It's time for Gingerbread Baby to flee and he is chased by the baker, his wife, the mouse, a cat, and even a fox on his way home. Safely there he really does find friends, a bunch of them...like him, made of Gingerbread! There is a clever fold-out of the final scene.

Every year starting in 1931 a tall handsome Christmas tree (usually a Norway spruce) is put up at Rockefeller Center in New York City overlooking the public ice-skating rink and decorated with 45,000 multicolored lights. Suppose one Christmas a nesting cardinal named Lulu fails to get out when the tree was cut down and hauled on a flatbed truck to New York City.

In *Red & Lulu* by Matt Tavares (\$17.99. *Candlewick Press*. www.candlewick.com) you will join Lulu's mate Red, following the truck to the city, barely able to keep up and getting lost among the noise and skyscrapers.

For days Red searches the city for Lulu with no luck. On Christmas Eve he hears the refrain "O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, Thy leaves are so unchanging..." sung by carolers just like back home, and following the song, there he finds Lulu in the their familiar tree. You will have to see what Red and Lulu do when Christmas is over and the tree is taken down and away. Maybe the city isn't so bad a place to live after all, even for a pair of country cardinals.

If you are a cat lover, you can celebrate the season with an ever-surprising number



and variety of felines in *The Twelve Days of Christmas Cats* by Don Daily (\$18.95. *Applesauce Press*. www.cidemillpress.com).

Starting out on the first day of Christmas with one tiny kitten in a fir tree you end up with your true love giving you 12 dapper dancers, that is, six happy cat couples dressed for the season. There are so many days and so many splendid felines!

The cats easily fill full-page drawings, but with the five golden king lions a double spread is needed as they are enjoying lots of holiday food and drink. This picture book will keep big and little lovers of kitties absorbed for hours. There is much detail to explore in the drawings.

The author and artist Don Daily (1939-2002) is well-known for his whimsical art in such books as *Brer Rabbit*, *The Jungle Book*, and *The Wind in the Willows*.

Christmas can be a noisy and busy time. Bells and music! Wrapping and unwrapping presents! Wows and thank yous! But there is quiet, too, if you listen for it. In *The Christmas Quiet Book* by Deborah Underwood and illustrated by Renata Liwska (\$12.99 hardcover, \$7.99 paperback. *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt*. www.hmhc.com), one will be amazed at how these quiet moments can be so quiet as we follow a family of rabbits doing Christmas things as quietly as possible. There is a charming drawing for each quiet time. Some that touched us most were: Snow angel quiet; Listening for sleigh bells quiet; Early Christmas gift quiet; Mistletoe quiet; and Searching for present quiet. Enjoy these moments and look for them in your own Christmas.

Bear and Mouse are an odd couple of friends but friends spend Christmas together. In *A Christmas for Bear* by Bonney Becker and illustrated by Kady MacDonald Denton (\$16.99. *Candlewick Press*. www.candlewickpress.com), you will be delighted by this couple sharing such an event. "Bear had never had a real Christmas. He'd never had

a tree with a sparkling star, or candy canes, or even gingerbread bears. But he'd read all about it. Clearly, the most important thing was pickles." The tiny mouse only wants to open presents (there seem to be none), and the giant bear puts on Christmas with an outlay of pickles, cookies, herbal tea, and the reading of a poem, but no presents. A surprise and a happy ending is keyed to "stockings being hung by the chimney with care." Maybe the disappointed mouse will finally find a present there? There's a surprise for bear, too. You will love this endearing couple and their true friendship.

Don't miss the other Bear and Mouse books: *A Visitor for Bear*, *A Birthday for Bear*, *The Sniffles for Bear* and *Library Book for Bear*.

Never believe you are too old (regardless of one's age) not to be able to help out in some way. This is the lesson of *Old Dog Cora and the Christmas Tree* by Consie Powell (\$14.95. *Raven Publications*. www.ravenwords.com).

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

The family realizes Cora still needs to do a job, even if she is getting older, and vows to let Cora help out. Mom looks into Cora's deep brown eyes, "Don't you worry, old puppy," she whispered. "Next time, we'll put your harness on you and you can help without being hitched."

The happy dogs—all of them—are last seen together under the Christmas tree. Bright full-color illustrations grace this story and make the white winter woodlands contrasted with the big black Newfoundlands especially appealing.



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North Country Reflections

Sleeping Beauty The Garden in Winter

by Judith Irven

By now winter has settled in across the north-country and a light snow covers the hills. It will be six more months before the snowdrops and daffodils pop up to tell us that spring has arrived and summer is not far behind.

But, without the distractions of colorful flowers or brilliant autumn leaves, our snow-covered gardens have an elegant beauty all their own. So, rather than mourn the loss of summer's color, let's celebrate the variety and beauty we enjoy with each and every season.

As the French would say: 'Vive la Différence' which translates to 'Long live the difference'!

Early winter

Today, as I sit at my computer in my study, basking in the warmth of an ancient Jotul wood stove, my eyes drift out across my sleeping garden to the distant hills beyond. Now that the flowers are gone and autumn leaves have scattered to the four winds, what do I see and what draws me to this scene?

Firstly, I like to think of my garden as an enormous 'picture on the ground' where the piece-parts—lawn, flower beds, garden paths and a large circular patio—all blend together to create a seamlessly flowing, abstract image.

This 'picture on the ground' is further accentuated with plenty of above ground features that will stand out all winter, including a number of small trees and shrubs, as well as a gazebo, garden benches, several wrought-iron sculptures by Vermont sculptor Bill Heise, and a row of free standing trellises. Also, to further dramatize my winter garden, I planted many of the trees and shrubs in clusters of three or more, and I outlined the edges of some of the paths as well as our circular patio with low-growing shrubs.

While I enjoy my 'garden picture' in every season, it become absolutely mesmerizing at this time of year when the flowers are dormant and the scene is highlighted by the light snows of early winter.

Eventually of course, as winter progresses, the shapes on the ground become blurred under the deeper snow. But even then, the trees and shrubs, as well as the gazebo, and all the wrought iron elements and benches, will continue to reflect the underlying design of my garden.

How did this design come about?

At the outset, before there was a garden, our property consisted of a big wide meadow interspersed with a few huge rocks, leading down to a small pond—it was like a huge blank canvas waiting for a picture.

Initially I spent time at my drafting table, first drawing this meadow to scale, and then experimenting with different designs for my garden-to-be. To start with I focussed on creating a pleasing ground plan where everything fit together in a satisfying manner, and which also included all the features that Dick and I eventually wanted to incorporate in our garden. Eventually the final ground plan emerged!

After that, still at my drafting table, I added a selection of woody plants which I drew in as circles to represent at their full grown size. That way I knew how close I should plant them so that, as they matured, they would just touch one another, without becoming a tangled mess.

Then, over the course of several years, we implemented the various piece-parts of the final design on the ground and gradually the new garden was born.

Woody plants create the winter scene

It goes without saying that trees and shrubs always play a stellar role the winter garden. With its branches etched by the snow, a single beautiful serviceberry or crab apple becomes a living sculpture, while a group of three or five spireas will catch and hold the snow all across the tips of their finely divided branches.

Thus some of my favorite woody plants for winter include not only small trees like crab apples and serviceberries, but also shrubs such as evergreen boxwoods, red-twigged dogwoods, high-bushed blueberries that also have reddish branches in winter, ninebarks and low-growing spireas. I also love our native winterberries with beautiful red berries that

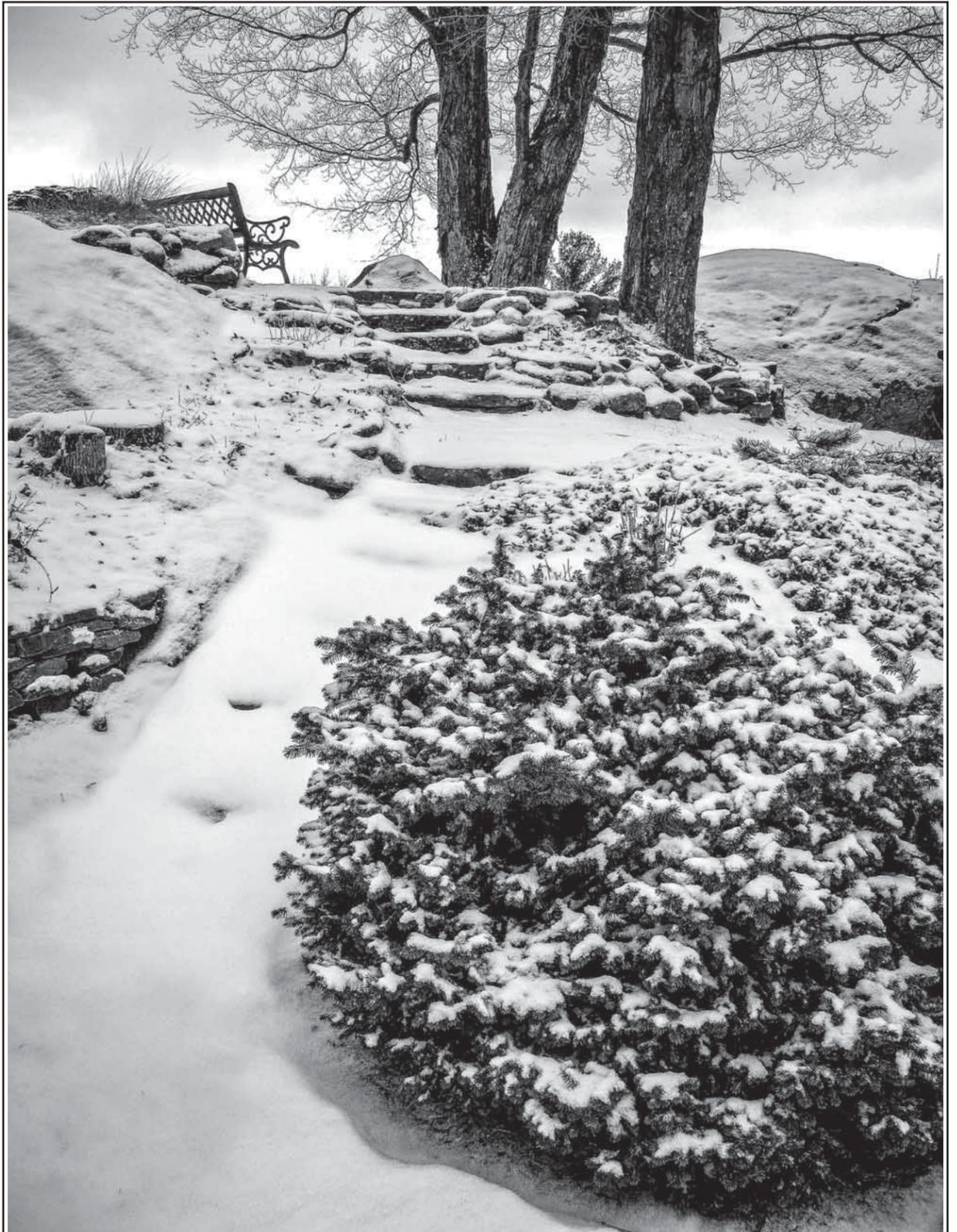


photo by Dick Conrad

Steps lead to a small upper patio in Judith and Dick's winter garden in Goshen, VT.

usually last well into February—unless discovered in December by a flock of hungry robins looking for a holiday feast.

The book *Landscape Plants for Vermont*, available through the UVM Extension Master Gardener website, lists these and many more trees and shrubs for our climate, and also has a most useful chart at the back listing those with multi-season interest. So next spring, when shopping for a pretty shrub or tree, look for one that will give you flowers in summer and then go on to light up your winter landscape.

Evergreens are winter queens

When it comes to trees and shrubs in winter, we always think of evergreens, which will stand out beautifully in the snow. However in a garden setting it is best to select only slow growing cultivars that, over the years, will stay within bounds.

Slow growing evergreen cultivars are actually strange genetic mutations that originated among the branches of huge forest-sized trees. The best have been asexually cloned and can now be purchased at local nurseries.

These slow-growing evergreen cultivars offer gardeners a remarkable variety of shapes and sizes—including upright growers that may be either stiff and formal to weeping or cascading. Then there are those that grow primarily outwards which will never get very tall.

They also vary in texture—from ones that are stiff and sharp such as spruces, to those with soft needles like pines or hemlocks pines. Colors vary too, from yellow-green to dark blue-gray. Indeed one can make an entire garden composition of contrasting dwarf evergreens. And let's not forget the non-coniferous evergreens that have broad shiny leaves like rhododendrons.

It is important to remember that slow growing conifers are just that—they will actually keep growing, both upwards

and outwards, for their entire lives, howbeit very slowly. So, whenever you buy a slow-growing conifer, be sure to check the anticipated growth rate (both height and width) of that particular cultivar; these may anywhere from less than an inch a year, or perhaps a few inches a year, up to two feet or more in just twelve months (which may soon outgrow the allotted space in your garden).

I love to browse through the conifer offerings at specialty nurseries that carry many varieties to choose from. Here on the west side of Vermont I am particularly partial to Rockdale Nursery in Bristol, which offers over two hundred different cultivars of evergreen shrubs and small trees for sale and where Ed Burke (the owner) or Amy Rose-White (the nursery manager) will happily help you select the best ones for your space.

Perennials are the supporting cast

And finally, a number of ornamental grasses like Miscanthus, Little Bluestem and Blue Oat Grass, as well as perennials such as Echinacea, Rudbeckia, Achillea and Astilbe, have strong skeletons that will withstand all but the heaviest snowfalls.

So, if you have not tried this before, next fall when you cut back your perennials, leave the more robust to grace your winter garden. In addition to looking nice for people, they often provide food for birds and other wildlife during the coldest months when they need it most.

Judith Irven and Dick Conrad live in Goshen where together they nurture a large garden. Judith is a landscape designer and Vermont Certified Horticulturist. She also teaches Sustainable Home Landscaping for the Vermont Master Gardener program. She writes about her Vermont gardening life at www.northcountryreflections.com. Dick is a landscape and garden photographer; you can see his photographs at The Brandon Artists Guild and at www.northcountryimpressions.com. You can reach Judith at judithirven@gmail.com.



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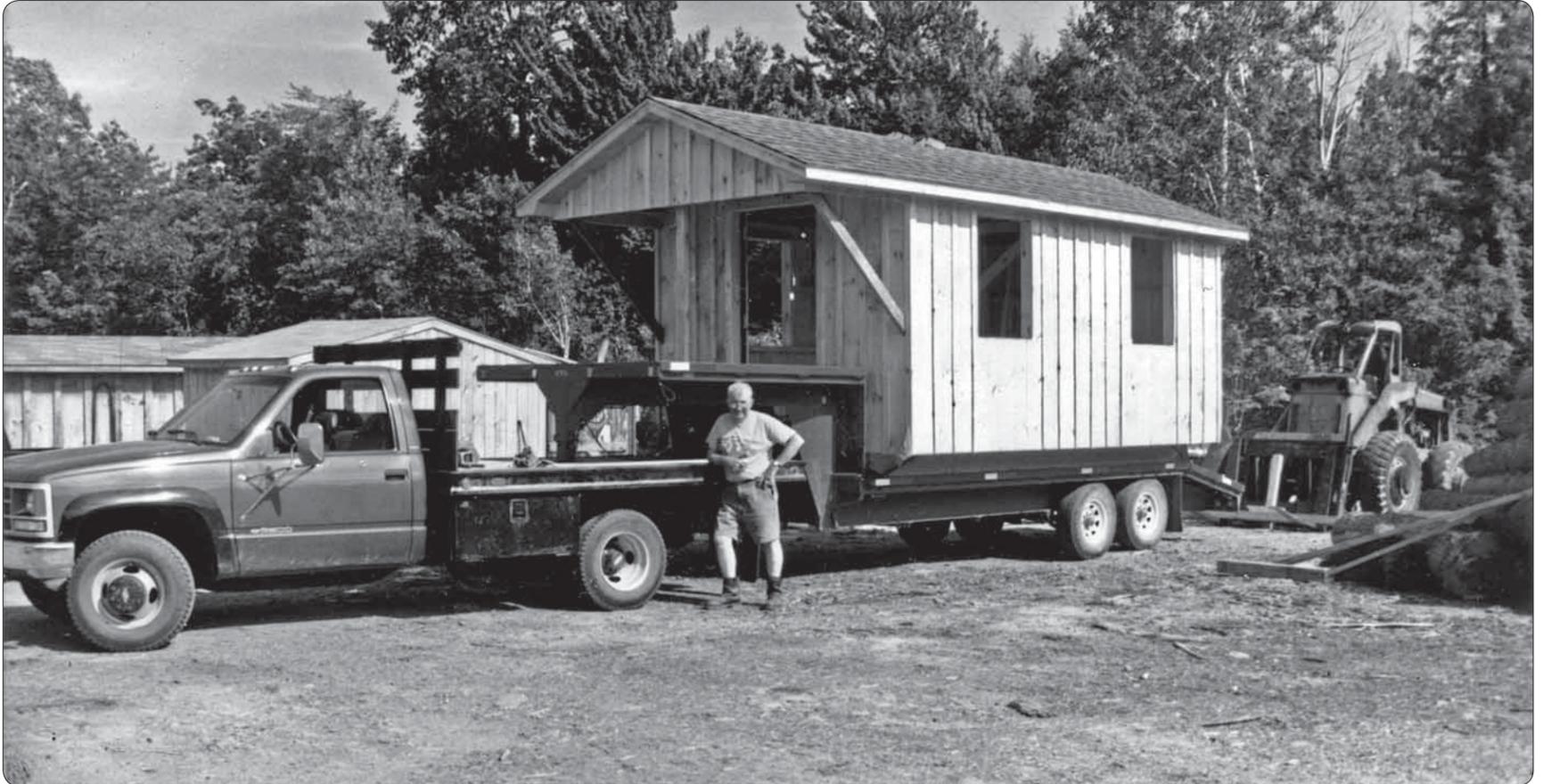
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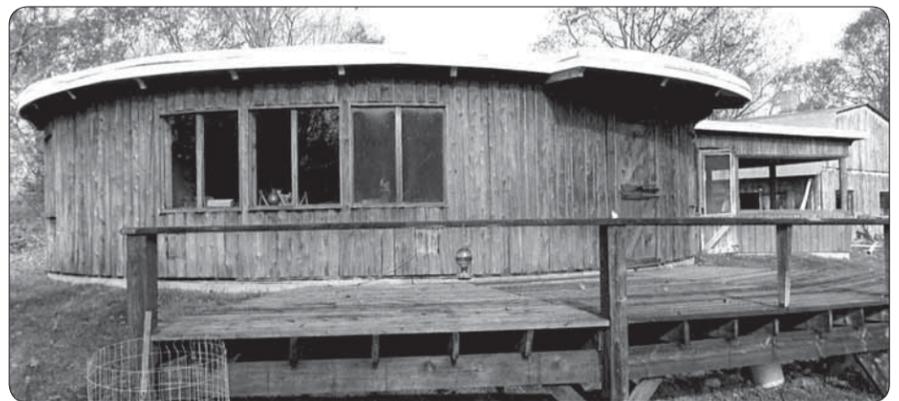
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