



Small Town Hound

Finding Creative Venues and Adventures in Rural New York State

By Æsc



D.E. Bentley 2020

42°57'44"N 77°8'15"W

After taking care of the usual, with my human pulled behind, I went in search of adventure. Each town has its own history, and this one was no different. The tall, brick buildings speak of the past—in this case a past bathed in healing waters. I am a dog and, as such, I live in and am most excited about the present. I want to see what's happening here, and now...and I love to find and greet people. I headed toward a couple of pedestrians, ignoring—temporarily—the smell of food that also drifted my way.

My first destination was Main Street Arts, 20 West Main Street in Clifton Springs, NY (42°57'44"N 77°8'15"W). The wooden floors felt cool against my feet as I rushed in to meet Bradley Butler, Executive Director and Gallery Curator. He offered a grand

welcome to me and to my human companions. Then we all went exploring, taking in the eye candy that he had hung on the many walls and shelves. The gallery downstairs features two main rooms that are spacious and bright. The exhibition here was *Small Works 2020: A National Juried Exhibition of Work 12 Inches or Less*. Bradley told the people (he didn't think I was listening) that this was the seventh year of this exhibition. There were so many things here that I liked: *Tight Rope* by Kelly Roberts; *Chosen One* by Jay Michale Balmes; *Swim Swim, Quack Quack* by Sarah Hyatt; *Study #55* by John Aquilino; *Realm of Possibilities #81* by Diana Godfrey; *She Only Sees Goodness* by Helen Bishop-Santelli; and *Ritual* by JC Caballero. I would be remiss if I did not mention *Out of the Woodwork* by

Ray Easton; I hear owls near our home at night and I speak to them. My human stopped for a long time to look at the *Sugar Jar* by Caitlyn Marsh, and later she brought it home and gave it to my other human. There was so much to see, and I just sat and looked around, trying to take it all in.

I headed upstairs, where there was another

Clockwise, from top left: Æsc viewing the Small Works 2020 Exhibition in the downstairs Gallery at Main Street Arts; *Pattern Clash #3* cup (L) by Amber Hamblin and *Deadly Nights* (R) by Joey Chiarello; *She Only Sees Goodness* by Helen Bishop-Santelli; and Main Street's Pierce Block, which includes the gallery and many creative retailers.

exhibition (that's what I heard Bradley call the collections of things). This exhibition was of cups. I know about cups because my humans use them. Some of these cups looked like that, but others were *way* different. *The Cup, The Mug 2020* exhibition had so many colors and shapes. There was a cup with an owl and, yikes, a cat. (I have a cat at home, but we have not quite warmed up to each other.) These cats had faces like humans—they were made by Maliya Travers-Crumb. The *BulbBot Mugs* by Michael Klaptho were really cool, as was the *Pattern Clash #3* cup by Amber Hamblin.

Brad talked about a new art library they are setting up soon. I don't read much, but I don't eat books either—especially not art books; I love art.

On my way upstairs I had noticed a back exit. I was curious, so we went out to look after saying goodbye—some young people were coming in for an after-school workshop, another thing they do there (I would have loved to visit with the kids...did I mention I like people).

Our next stop was Sulphur Books at 18 East Main Street. Sulphur Books is a store operated by the gallery. We were greeted—while mostly I was greeted—by Sarah Butler. Sarah manages Sulphur Books, and she is also Assistant Director of Main Street Arts.

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D.E. Bentley 2020



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FROM THE NEWSROOM

*NEW OWL LIGHT FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE:



- Small Town Hound, By Æsc. Æsc lives with his two humans and his two canine friends, Winnie and Mars, in Canadice, NY. When not writing, his favorite pastime is finding people. One never knows what he will sniff out next, but it is sure to be an adventure!
- Fantastic Flora, By SALLY L. WHITE. Sally L White, a recent transplant from Colorado, is still adjusting her botanical expectations to this new environment. Although she grew up in the Southern Tier, that was before she studied botany in college and grad school. Much is familiar but she finds even more to remember and relearn. This column is part of her effort to expand her understanding of our local flora. We look forward to exploring and learning more about the regions' flora with her in each new issue of *Owl Light News*.

A few of our regular contributors are taking a holiday break and will be back soon.

CORRECTION: Apologies to Caledonia (and Stephen Lewandowski) for our creative headline spelling in the December issue. Yikes! Who snuck that extra "N" in there and how did I miss that one in my final read?! Please let us know if you see anything we might have missed so we can set the record straight.

Publication of *Owl Light Literary: Turning Points* is happening in 2021. See advance sale information on page 23 or follow the advance sales link at owllightnews.com. *Turning Points* will be Canadice Press' first stand-alone literary journal, and we want to take it slow and give it our best go given the challenges of 2020. Selected authors have been notified and names posted on our FB site. We will also post information there about upcoming author readings (in person and/or via Zoom) once the book is released. Thank you to all who submitted writing. And thank you to everyone for your patience and support as we move forward with this exciting project. Stay tuned!



Where Inspiration & Inquiry Converge

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SUBMISSIONS—to editor@canadicepress.com

We are actively seeking submissions for front page feature articles. Articles should reflect on rural life in New York State. They should be timely, and the original work of the authors(s). Submitted pieces should be around 2000 words and include original images (photos or illustrations). Authors/artists will receive full credit (in print and online). We are also looking for reviews of local arts (visual, performing, literary) as well as original short stories and poetry for Pen & Prose—our monthly literary arts section.

We except submission on a rolling basis. Please specify the type of submission in the subject line of the email (i.e. news story, feature story, press release, poetry, editorial, opinion, fiction etc.). Include your name and phone number in the email, as well as a word doc attachment of the submission. Feel free to contact us in advance with queries, if desired. All submissions will be considered on a case by case basis for publication in future issues (in print and/or online). The general deadline for all content for upcoming issues is the 10th of each month. *Owl Light News* pages fill up FAST!
We place online content ongoing and welcome community press releases.

Seek Out Something New

The New Year—2021 in particular—is an ideal time to reflect on the past and seek out something new: a new way of doing things; a new perspective on how to live; or a new adventure. Perhaps this year I will settle with “explore more” as a resolution and challenge myself to step outside of my comfort zone—which has admittedly narrowed a bit more with COVID-19. My adventures will, inevitably, include Æsc, who is always looking for action and something to do. To occupy himself some as of late, Æsc has decided to share his rural adventures with *Owl Light* readers in “Small Town Hound.” His first outing is featured on the front page of this issue. In *Owl Light News* in print, our goal is to keep things light while being willing to explore more, to delve deeper into issues that need a closer look. Another new contributor, Sally L. White, will be exploring and sharing reflections on the “Fantastic Flora” across our region.

News dominates our lives, yet many of us no longer take the time to read...or even to listen. At *Owl Light News*—where inspiration & inquiry converge—we are reinvigorating exchange and reinventing what news is, and how it is told. Before planes and trains and automobiles, before the Internet, it took days or weeks, and in some cases months, for news to reach more rural areas. Now we can see (and organize) live social protests taking place around the world—and closer to home; we can buy anything, anywhere; and we can connect instantly and simultaneously with millions of people.

Despite this resource and our potential to come together as a people, as a nation we are still detached and isolated. Isolation has long been associated with life in rural places—many of us who live out here prefer the quiet and solitude of faraway spaces. To us solitude is nothing new. Yet, it need not define us. There is a togetherness that comes from being a bit more spread out geographically that is often lacking in suburban and exurban areas.

An aspect of rural life that is often misunderstood, particularly by those more attuned to urban



environs, is the rich and inspiring culture found nestled comfortably within the landscape—and accessible along our less traveled by-ways. There is something about rural spaces that has inspired artists of all genres across time. Nature inspires art: from the earliest cave painters—who painted flora and fauna on walls using pigments from the earth—to today’s muralists creating with aerosol cans. The natural world offers imagery, spiritual renewal, and space: to design, to grow, to move, to compose, to slow down, to listen and reflect, and to share ideas.

The spirit found in rural living runs deep. It fills our senses as we stroll in quiet country cemeteries. It lingers and evolves in historic buildings reborn. It cascades down precipices and culminates in clear pools where water voices tumble over glacial rocks—whispers of times past. It rushes across open fields and echoes across the valleys. It settles into the most surprising places and blooms into a thousand possibilities.

Everywhere we travel across New York State, including the Finger Lakes Region—where Canadice Press is located—we discover something new. Art is a part of everything we do, and it is a part of

everything that the many contributors to *Owl Light News* offer readers. We are not looking to share the struggles and travesties of up-to-the-minute news, except, perhaps, in reflections on how we live, how we survive and grow in troubled times. Rather we are a reflective “slow” news source, meant to be read during quiet owl* hours, incrementally, with intent. Some readers have their favorite feature authors. Others turn to the cartoons or the crossword puzzle to fuel their imaginations. Many read it all, page by page. On every page of *Owl Light News* is something original and inviting that we do not find anywhere else. There is a sense of purpose and a deliberateness that guides and nourishes our inner muse.

There is an openness that invites and celebrates diversity and creativity. It is noteworthy, relevant, and topically timely. It offers something new. Now more than ever, perhaps that is what we are looking for. ✨

D.E. Bentley
Editor, *Owl Light News*

*Owllight: dusk, dawn; the time of half-light when magical things can (and do) happen.

HAPPY 2021!

from everyone at
Owl Light News

Wishing one and all a year filled
with joy, good health, and peace!

FROM OUR READERS

Good Morning,

I have enjoyed reading *Owl Light* and in particular loved the article in your October 2020 issue about discovering the gravesite for Homer Blake. Like so many people these days, I am interested in my family history and genealogy, and this article shed light on this pursuit. David Pierce captured the detective aspect of this interest, and shared a fascinating story to boot. I look forward to reading more!

Thank you for the outstanding work you do that enables a city girl like me to live vicariously in central New York State!

Best regards from Brooklyn,
Wendy Guida
12-11-20

EVENTS—owllightnews.com/events

Calendar items (for community arts-related and social events) may be entered for free online at: owllightnews.com/events/community/add. If you have a cancellation or edit on a previously added event, please e-mail us at editor@canadicepress.com or message us on [fb@canadicepress](https://www.facebook.com/canadicepress). Once your venue/contact information has been added by you once, it will be available in a pull down for subsequent entries. * Posted events must be open to all individuals and must offer some direct community enrichment (we review before posting goes live).

OPINION By LEN GELLER

Trump's Election Trutherism

In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, various conspiracy theories arose challenging the official government account that the twin towers of the World Trade Center were brought down by planes hijacked by al-Qaeda. Some suggested that the government had foreknowledge of the attacks but did nothing to prevent them or made sure that the hijacked flights were not intercepted by U.S. defenses. Some claimed that dark elements within the U.S. government itself actually planned and carried out the attacks. Others claimed that explosives planted inside the towers (Controlled Demolition Theory) brought them down. Other conspiracy theories also challenged the official accounts of the Pentagon attack and the Flight 93 crash. All of these theories have come to be known as part of the 9/11 Truth Movement, and those advancing the theories as 9/11 Truthers.

Fast forward to December 2020, and we are witnessing another truther conspiracy theory, this time being advanced by the outgoing President of the United States with the support of the right-wing media and his minions on social media. The central allegation of this new truther theory is that Donald Trump actually won the 2020 presidential election by millions of votes, but the election was stolen from him by means of a nefarious plot involving the Democratic Party in possible cahoots with Venezuelan and Chinese communists and even certain Republican officials. Sound crazy? Well, it is, but this truther conspiracy theory is different. Its purpose has nothing to do with truth and evidence but instead has one single overriding aim: to advance the political aims of Trump and his followers. To put it bluntly, it's a political weapon in the service of power. In what follows, "election trutherism" refers not only to this deranged conspiracy theory but also to the larger power play of which it is an essential tool.

Diving deeper into the election truther conspiracy theory, the first thing to notice is that this is a strategy months in the making when the Trump White House began to see steady poll numbers showing that he might lose his re-election bid. Of all the Democratic candidates vying for the nomination, Trump feared Joe Biden the most, and this was confirmed by his attempt to bribe the Ukrainian president to announce an investigation into Hunter Biden, hoping to smear his father, a bribery scheme for which he was eventually impeached. For months prior to the election, Trump claimed repeatedly that if he did not win, the election had to be rigged, since there was no way he could lose to an old man like Biden suffering from early-onset Alzheimer's or some other form of dementia. Throughout this period, Trump and his supporters on right-wing news networks and social media tried to portray Biden as mentally challenged with one foot in the grave. But this gaslighting fell flat on its face when Biden won the Democratic primary, appeared perfectly lucid, coherent, and rational in all his public appearances (despite some gaffes), and ended up trouncing Trump in the first debate, as Trump made a fool of himself with constant interruptions and incoherent rants. While a portion of Trump's base may have been hoodwinked by this gaslighting, most Americans were not.

JOIN THE OWL LIGHT CONVERSATION

We welcome commentary from our readers.

Many of our regular contributors include direct contact information with their BIO information, and are happy to hear from other members of the Owl Light community. You can also send emails (with the title of the article in the subject line) to editor@canadicepress.com.

As our slogan states, Owl Light News is where "Inspiration & Inquiry Converge." As such, we welcome creative content and ideas along with active inquiry and commentary around the things that matter in the more rural places we live in—"where trees outnumber people."

Letters to the editor and longer opinion pieces can be emailed to editor@canadicepress.com. We ask that letters be topical, with sound arguments focused on ideas and information that inspires discussion and fosters positive community growth. Open exchange and change requires a willingness on the part of many to share divergent thoughts and listen carefully; to explore the validity as well as the weaknesses in dissenting views.

We look forward to hearing from you.

How are we to understand Trump's pre-election prediction of a rigged election if he were to lose? Did Trump have a precognitive ability to know the future? Of course not. Trump's pre-election statements about a possible rigged election were not meant to be truth claims at all, since he certainly had no evidence to back them up, but a message to his base that he would contest a lost election no matter what. And that's exactly what he has done, despite the fact that he lost 306-232 in the Electoral College, by over seven million votes in the popular vote, and five key states that he won in 2016. What this shows is that Trump's allegations of a stolen election are not concerned at all with truth and evidence but with trying to delegitimize the incoming Biden administration and stay politically relevant by retaining power over his base, the right-wing media, and the GOP. From Trump's win-at-all-cost point of view, he had nothing to lose by contesting the election, regardless of how fair it was and by how much he lost. Not only would his base not perceive him as a loser, but he would remain politically relevant, continue to control the news cycle until he leaves the White House, and possibly overturn the election if state legislatures and the courts went along with his attempts to undermine the law.

The downside of this strategy for us but not for him is that contesting a free and fair election and never conceding defeat will further divide the nation, undermine the legitimacy of our democratic election system, and encourage political violence among those supporters who don't understand the grift but are true believers in the conspiracy. That's the problem with false and deceitful conspiracy theories: there are always some poor souls who not only believe the false claims but feel it is their patriotic duty to act on them. Remember Edgar Maddison Welch, the guy who fell for the Pizzagate conspiracy hoax and shot up Comet Ping Pong in Washington D.C. with an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle in order to break up an alleged pedophilia ring and rescue its fake victims? Well, it can certainly happen again, especially if a true believer feels the election has been stolen and his or her country is under attack.

If pushing a stolen election conspiracy theory isn't bad enough, some truthers are also calling for violence against specific individuals, the imposition of martial law, and the suspension of the constitution to overturn a free and fair election. Cases in point include: Joe diGenova, an attorney for Trump's campaign, who says that Chris Krebs, former head of cybersecurity under Trump, "should be drawn and quartered. Taken out at dawn and shot" after Krebs publicly denied any widespread election fraud; Sidney Powell, former member of Trump's legal team, who retweets a call by "We the People" for the use of the Insurrection Act to suspend the December Electoral College vote in Congress and set up military tribunals to resolve the election dispute; newly pardoned Michael Flynn, Trump's former national security advisor, who endorses a manifesto urging Trump to declare martial law and suspend the constitution and civilian control of federal elections in order to have the military oversee a national revote; and an armed crowd that shows up at the home of Michigan's Secretary of State threatening violence while she is inside with her child. Moreover, Donald Trump and his minions are trying to pressure state officials in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Georgia, and Arizona to refuse to certify the election results, and if that doesn't work, to overthrow the duly certified results by appointing new sets of electors who would vote for Trump in the Electoral College. I'm not a legal expert, but all of these partisan efforts to undermine the constitution and violate state and federal law to overthrow a free and fair election look like sedition to me. These truthers may be crackpots, but they're dangerous crackpots.

It's impossible in this short article to consider the dozens if not hundreds of false allegations of election fraud voiced by Trump and his truther brigade on right-wing news outlets and social media. Suffice it to say that where the rubber meets the road and the Trump legal teams are called upon in court to provide evidence of fraud, they have come up empty. According to the *Associated Press*, as of December 4, fifty post-election lawsuits claiming election fraud have been filed by the truthers, and thirty have been denied, dismissed, settled or withdrawn, while twelve are active and pending. Except for one insignificant Trump victory in Pennsylvania, none of the lawsuits filed in the six key states of Arizona, Nevada, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin have been successful, and all six have certified the Biden victory. All of the major election officials in these states, Republicans and Democrats alike, have confirmed the absence of any election fraud, and in the two states where there was a recount (Wisconsin and Georgia), the difference was only a handful of votes, hardly enough to change the outcome. Moreover, Attorney General William Barr, head of the Justice Department and a Trump loyalist, has said explicitly that there is no evidence of widespread election fraud.

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Pathways to Democracy

Baker's Dozen—An Eclectic List of Books To Read In The Coming Months

By DOUG GARNAR



The Winter Solstice and vote of the Electoral College will have occurred by the time you read my January column in Owl Light. It will be cold outside. I have put together a sampler of titles ranging from contemporary issues such as racism and climate change to pandemics and “futures”, even a title dealing with the “original” Indiana Jones. Reading books in the depths of winter requires some cookies, so a recipe for “Candy Cane Delights” is included.

2020 will be remembered for a number of shattering events, but perhaps the most notable is the COVID-19 Pandemic, that has killed nearly 300,000 at the time I am writing this. But pandemics are not new events in human history. The historical record goes back to ancient Greece and Rome. The Black death of the 14th Century (1348-50) is perhaps the single greatest event, killing close to 40% of the European population. Norman Cantor's *In The Wake of The Plague: The Black Death And World It Made* is a brilliant volume capturing the devastating impact of plague. From discussion of the bi-medical features of the plague, Cantor moves on to its beneficial outcomes---the end of the old manorial feudal order in the west and the emergence of a class of small independent farmers. New scientific thinking and challenges to Christian theology also emerged in the plague's wake.

In the mid-1990s, a Pulitzer Prize winning young journalist, Laurie Garrett, wrote *The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in A World Out of Balance*. Based on interviews with expert virologists, molecular scientists, and medical doctors---coupled with field work in Sub-Saharan Africa, Western Europe, Central America, and the United States---Garrett charts a 50-year history of AIDS, Cholera, and TB resistant to drugs as well as Ebola, among other viral diseases. She reminds us how thin is the veneer that separates our high-tech society from personal and communal disaster. Today Ms. Barrett is a frequent commentator on the current pandemic.

While the current pandemic raged on this summer, so did growing protest over the issues of white privilege, structural racism and police violence against people of color. Isabel Wilkerson's new book, *Caste, The Origins of Our Discontent*, offers a stunning perspective on the racial divisions in our society. In a powerfully researched volume, the author draws on a wealth of stories of how Americans have been shaped by a hidden “caste system”, a rigid ranking of hierarchy of human beings. She makes interesting linkages with caste systems in India and during the Nazi period. She explores eight pillars which underlie the caste system in the United States; most prominent are divine will, bloodlines, and stigma. Wilkerson concludes her book with ways in which Americans can move beyond the artificial and destructive separation of human divisions, toward an understanding of our common humanity. She won the Pulitzer Prize for her first book, *The Warmth of Human Suns*, a book looking at the migration of Blacks moving to the north to find a better life. This book is a worthy successor.

Much has been written about America being a Christian Nation, resulting in sharp divisions in our society. Most of the Founding Fathers were nominal Christians/Deists. James Madison shaped the First Amendment to recognize multiple faith systems, based on his belief that by doing so no one faith could dominate society. Princeton historian Kevin Kruse's book, *One Nation Under God, How Corporate America Invented Christian America* shatters the myth that America was founded as a Christian nation and has been so down to the present.

Kruse argues that big business enlisted religious activists to attack FDR's “New Deal” as “pagan satanism.” From the mid 1930s through the early 1950s, this coalition fought for a “freedom under God.” This culminated in changes during the Eisenhower administration: including “under God” in the pledge of allegiance; making “In God We Trust” the official motto of America; and inaugural prayers/prayer breakfast becoming common traditions. Broad generalities were one thing, but Kruse points out the issue of school prayer became a political source of contention. By the time of Richard Nixon, a conflation of piety and patriotism became the sole property of the political right. The author concludes that an unholy alliance of money, religion and politics has created a “false origins” story which continues to define and divide Americans to the present day.

The 2020 election saw a number of key issues including climate change (hoax or pressing reality) and the issue of a “Green New Deal”. Naomi Klein's *On Fire, The Burning Case for A Green New Deal*, offers a vision of transforming our economies by the replacement of fossil fuels with renewable energies. Central to her vision is the idea that we need to understand the importance of ecological time and abandon our culture of the “perpetual now”. Klein paints a picture of social and ecological breakdown, as well as the power of people and movements to turn humanity's greatest disaster into our greatest opportunity.

In February of 2019, a group of English women generated an initiative inviting the British public to write a letter to the Earth---over a thousand letters were received. The women grouped them into five categories (love, loss, emergence, hope, and action). Letters could be written to Earth past, present, or future. Children submitted poems and pictures, while teens and adults offered pieces of hope, despair, love, and action. On April 12, 2019, in fifty-two venues around the Earth, the submissions were read and the letters have been published as an award-winning collection, *Letters to the Earth, Writing to a Planet in Crisis*. The project has been expanded world-wide and continues to this day as a remarkable effort to show how the power of culture can help transform our world at a critical moment in time.

As a student of European history (with a major emphasis on the Nazi period) I am interested in what we might learn from 20th century German history (1919-1945). Mark Twain observed that history does not repeat itself but there are repeating rhythms. Benjamin C. Hett's *The Death of Democracy, Hitler's Rise to Power and The Downfall of the Weimar Republic* provides a riveting account of Hitler's rise to power and the fatal mistakes made by the conservative power elite in thinking that they could destroy the Weimar Republic by allowing Hitler to come to power. They assumed that they could control him and won over an aging President Hindenburg to agree to Hitler becoming Chancellor. This book focuses on the conditions and cynical choices made by a power elite who were bitter opponents of one of the most advanced and liberal societies and unwittingly plunged it into a dictatorship of unprecedented cruelty and barbarism. Hett offers a powerful lesson for us today---embattled democracies can be seduced by the siren song of the strongman.

Volker Ulrich's *Hitler: Downfall 1939-45*, chronicles the second half of Hitler's Third Reich. The author makes a convincing argument that the fall of Hitler begins at his peak of power in 1939, when he decides to go to war over Poland. Driving Hitler's decisions are the twin goals of creating a vast East European Empire and the annihilation of the Jews. His persuasive oratorical powers are used time and time again to win over Nazi party members and convince the German Armed forces and the German people to follow him---the political messiah who can overcome all obstacles. Deep in a bunker on April 30, 1945, Hitler ends his life but, in the process, wishes to destroy what remains of the Third Reich as he orders a scorched earth policy to be implemented. Ullrich argues that Hitler's life “will remain a cautionary example for all time. If his life and career teaches us anything, it is how quickly democracy can be prised from its hinges when political institutions fail and civilizing forces in society are too weak to combat the lure of authoritarianism, how thin the mantle separating civilization from barbarism actually is, and what human beings are capable of when the rule of law and ethical norms are suspended and some people are granted unlimited power over the lives of others.”

Gardening is a hobby that many enjoy, and they look to those who came before as they plan their gardens and decide what they will grow. Public gardens, especially in urban areas, provide citizens with a unique opportunity to interact with nature. Fredrick Law Olmstead was perhaps the most important 19th century American landscape architect. Justin Martin's superb biography, *Genius of Place: The Life of Fredrick Law Olmstead*, chronicles Olmstead's creative life. His artistic contributions are evident in many cities: Central Park in NYC; the grounds of the US Capitol; Boston's Emerald Necklace; Stanford University's grounds; Delaware Park and the grounds of the former Buffalo State Asylum in Buffalo; and Genesee Valley Park, Island Park, Seneca Park and Maplewood Park in Rochester. But we also find that Olmstead lived a rich life of many ventures, including that of an abolitionist, as head of a Civil War medical outfit, as a California gold mine supervisor as well as an advocate for the natural preservation of Yosemite and Niagara Falls.

While a young boy, my older brother, on several occasions, took me to the American Museum of Natural History. There I saw such wonders as various dinosaurs and dinosaur eggs, a North American Indian exhibit, a huge blue whale made out of paper suspended from the ceiling, endless examples of mammals, snakes, birds and other exotic creatures. A planetarium with its myriad of star constellations excited my imagination. As I was preparing to sell my old schoolhouse, I ran across Roy Chapman Andrews' autobiography, *Under A Lucky Star---A Lifetime of Adventure*, written in 1943. Andrews chronicles his life from a young college grad sweeping floors to becoming director of the American Museum of Natural History. His multiple trips to the Gobi Desert in Mongolia in search of fossils is just one part of the book that reads like a script similar to an *Indiana Jones* film---both hated snakes!

Continued on page 12

Side Street Sounds

Potluck Jams Keep the Music *and* the Memories Alive

By **STEVE WEST**



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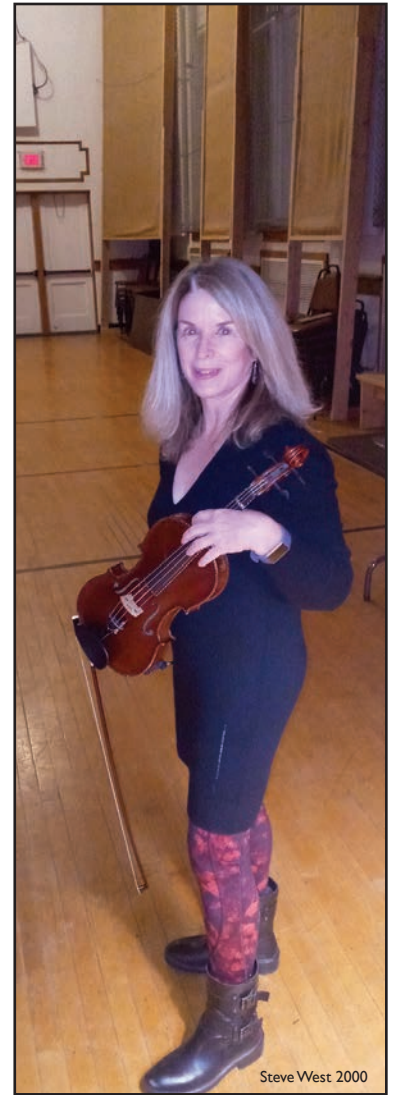
I hate the phrase, “the new normal.” It has an air of surrender to it. Members of the popular Potluck Jam in Livonia have certainly not given up, even as the way they gather has necessarily changed in the age of COVID-19.

The jam originated at the home of former Livonia town supervisor, Tim Wahl. As it grew in popularity, it outgrew Wahl’s living room and moved to the Livonia Inn. When the Inn closed for renovations in 2018, the twice monthly gathering of musicians moved to the Little Lakes Community Center. All levels of abilities have taken part in the jam, from absolute beginners to seasoned professionals. The common thread has been a love of music.

When the pandemic hit, like everything else, the jam was cancelled. In the summer, a few of the members tried Zoom meetings. They were a nice opportunity for members to see one another, the music wasn’t the same because the technology doesn’t allow for real time collaborations. Last month, group leader Bob Thompson decided that with some restrictions, limited in-person meetings of the Potluck group would be possible at the Little Lakes Community Center again. The number of participants is limited to about six. Masks are required whenever participants are not seated. In order to accommodate the extra distance between seats, the jam has been moved to the gym at the community center.



Members of the Potluck Jam gather in the gym at the Little Lakes Community Center. (above) Susan Cady White with the violin of her friend and teacher, the late Joe Dady. (right)



On the night I attended, the gathering was as much about seeing old friends as it was about catching up. Stories of the lost summer and memories of previous jams were shared. Jokes were told, and holiday songs were sung. An especially poignant moment occurred when Susan Cady White shared that she now has the violin of the late Joe Dady. Joe was a frequent attendee of the jam sessions. As Susan played his fiddle, everyone in the room agreed that we could feel his spirit smiling down on us.

Nobody is ready to concede that gathering in much smaller groups in the middle of a gym is “the new normal.” For now, they’re willing to settle for vaguely familiar. Everyone looks forward to returning to a real sense of normal, when musicians can gather and socialize in larger groups and share their music with one another. ✨

Steve West gigs (online performances and Live shows) and other info. can be found at: stevewestmusic.com/



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*www.mainstreetartscs.org.



Keeper of Evil Birds (oil on linen) by Robert Ernst Marx

*Appointments to see the exhibition are encouraged.

The Light Lens

Shelved Elves

By T. TOURIS

Every December there is a massive increase of seasonal workers to handle the holiday crush. They are usually under-paid and over-stressed during this time and to top it off, they are now facing a new threat from a deadly virus. I talked to one worker to get a first-hand perspective of what it's like to work under these conditions.

Me: So, is it right that you were once the personal dentist to Santa?

Herme: Yeah, I maintained the big guy's pearly whites. Truth be told, he says he flosses regularly, but I know he's lying. It's good to be the keeper of Naughty/Nice list—funny how "Kris Kringle" is always in the Nice column. Don't get me wrong, I did have a sweet gig during the Rudolph era. The United Federation of Elven Toy Workers provided great health and dental benefits and I had more clients than I could handle.

Me: So, what happened? Why are you sitting on this shelf surveilling little Bethany?

Herme: Well, things quickly went downhill soon after Rudolph flew the coop. He nearly popped his neon

As Santa-believing children everywhere looked to the sky in anticipation, T. Touris caught up with one weary displaced worker for an end of season interview.



nose when SC halved the reindeers' corn allotment as a cost cutting measure. The pressure from foreign toy manufacturers was becoming too much. And, without the prestige of having Rudolph behind the brand, Santa couldn't keep things going. He sold the workshop and remaining toy inventory to a hedge fund. With the money from that, SC transformed the organization into a global security provider. We monitor potentially dangerous kids like Bethany who could become tomorrow's hardened criminals.

Me: Ah, I see. So, describe your average workday now.

Herme: Well, I sit on this shelf.

Me: Is that all?

Herme: Frankly, it's a bit embarrassing and I'm not proud of it. I sit here and stare at Bethany all day. Then when she goes to sleep, I have to file my nightly N/N report. After that I get instructions to go sit in some humiliating place and position until Bethany finds me in the morning.

Me: Sounds pretty creepy. Can't you find other work?

Herme: What other jobs are there for an over the hill elf dentist? I need to be careful too; My friend Hank got a job at an Amazon warehouse. He reports to a robot!

Me: I'm sorry things have gotten so bad. When do you think you'll be able to retire?

Herme: Retire and do what? Sit around all day sharpening my ears? No, an elf's gotta work! 🦋

T. Touris is a wanna-be-retired-computer-programmer. He spends his free time designing and working in wood, while dreaming up the next Light Lens.



Small Town Hound from front page

Our other travel companion, Laurie, commented, "what town visit would be complete without venturing into a bookstore." She is so right. Judging from this experience, if there is one thing that bookstore people love more than books, it's dogs. At least that was my take. Bradley was great, don't get me wrong, but Sarah really loves dogs—I could tell—and she gave me her undivided attention when I came in. After that, we quietly perused the interesting titles. As I walked from aisle to aisle, I could smell all the humans who had come before. I was doing great until this *thing* caught my eye.* I simply could not figure out what it was, and I rushed toward it tentatively. Then I did something that I do not often do; I barked, repeatedly, in a voice that even surprised me. My human said, "It's just a duck." It did not look anything like the ducks I had seen by Canadice outlet during our walks.

Anyway, this seemed like a good time to leave the store (nothing calmed me down, nothing). We did a little reassuring walk to one of the brick buildings, over a bridge, and across Sulphur Creek. It was a pretty nice day and there were three—that's three—humans sitting outside. I got to visit with all of them; they were grand.

Remember that food smell I mentioned earlier? That ended up being our final stop, (well, the humans' final stop—restaurants are a bit tricky when it comes to dogs). The people (who I did not get to meet) at Warfield's Bakery and Restaurant, as it was called, said I could relax in the



Scones and brownies

garden—provided I exhibited proper English Garden etiquette, of course. I was fascinated with the fountain (all fountains, as it turns out; more about that later). I got to look in through the glass while the humans took turns going inside. The humans shared brownies—which I passed on—and my human took home some pumpkin scones, which I got a small taste of. There were many other smells coming out that made me wish I could explore more.

As we walked back toward the truck, the humans talked a little about the tall brick buildings all along Main Street, and the history that built such a place. It turns out the Sulfur Springs that the town and the bookstore are named after drew people to the area starting in the 1800s. In 1849, a human named Dr. Henry Foster came here, and things really started picking up then. The town was called Sulphur Springs back then. Clifton, BTW, is short for cliff town. There is so much history here, but that is for another visit. It was time to go home. I am sure I will visit again, and you should too.



*There is a happy ending to my tale of the thing I saw. It turned out to be a *stuffed* toy duck (silly me), which is why it did not look like the ducks I had seen at the outlet. I took my person back there a few weeks later, and she bought that toy duck for me. At first, I was not sure how I felt about that, but now I love seeing it, and I get to hold it after I work. 🦋



There was just something about that duck. That's one of my humans, BTW.

•To learn more about Main Street Arts And Sulphur Books, and their support of literary and visual arts, go to mainstreetartscs.org. The Heavy Metal exhibition runs through January 8, 2021. Heavy Metal honors the 95th birthday of Robert Ernst Marx. It includes a collection of new and recent paintings with metal leaf along with bronze sculpture. See image adjoining page.

- An Exhibition from January 16 - February 19, 2021 features paintings, prints, and installation works by Sara Baker Michalak, Bill Santelli, and Mizin Shin.

•To learn more about Warfield's Bakery and Restaurant visit warfields.com.

Æsc lives with his two humans and his two canine friends, Winnie and Mars, in Canadice, NY. When not writing, his favorite pastime is finding people. Fan mail to Attn. Æsc at editor@canadicepress.com.

Take Back the Economy

As the union steward, I'm permitted to have a bulletin board prominently located in the work-place at National Grid. I have all sorts of stuff on the board including a cartoon by Jeff Danziger that shows two linemen hanging off a pole during a snowstorm. One says, "You can't retire, we don't have anyone to replace you," to which the other responds, "For crying out loud I'm 92." Also on the board is a graph that shows the share of wealth across the population from the 1920s to the present, and another study presents the growth in wages since the 1960s. As we debate the kind of nation we want after COVID-19 one thing is for sure: we need to unravel the rigging of the economy which heavily favors the top one percent.

The stagnation of wages and worker's share of the wealth are not the disease but symptoms of a cancer that rots the very soul of the nation. As a child of the late 1950s and 1960s I remember when my father provided for the family as a single wage earner. There was no outside childcare. My mom raised us until we were old enough to care for ourselves before she returned to college and eventually the workplace. The two-wage family would go on to be the norm as wages failed to grow with inflation. There were a couple of reasons for this: first, was the decline of union density; and second, globalism.

Basically, the war on the working class began with the rise in Conservatism in the 1970s, but it would come out of the shadows with Ronald Reagan. I remember sitting with my dad while he was reading the *Wall Street Journal*, and we had a discussion in the early 80s about how corporations should be done paying for their employees the day they stop working. No pensions, no retiree healthcare, no nothing the day they walk out with the gold watch. Oh, I'm sorry, that was a while ago; now-a-days there's no

gold watch either. When Reagan busted the air traffic controllers' union and opened the flood gates for corporate America's war on unions, jobs went offshore, unions were crushed, and what jobs remained were automated.

In the last 40 years there has been a transfer of wealth upwards. According to the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), "Newly available wage data tell a familiar story: in every period since 1979, wages for the bottom 90% were continuously redistributed upward to the top 10% and frequently to the very highest 1.0% and 0.1%. This unceasing growth of wage inequality that undercuts wage growth for the bottom 90% reaffirms the need to place generating robust wage growth for the vast majority and worker power at the center of economic policymaking." Returning to the chart that hangs in my workplace, the gap between the rich and us working stiffs is the same now as it was in the Roaring '20s.

EPI added, "The vast majority of working people across the United States, the bottom 90%, earned \$30,880 a year in annual wages in 1979, up slightly to \$38,923 in 2019. But the top 0.1% realized a much steeper increase: collecting \$648,725 in wages in 1979 and a staggering average annual wage of nearly \$2.9 million in 2019."

Let me spell it out for you. Over the course of the last 40 years when labor saving technology was introduced and permitted you to effectively do the job of three people you didn't share in the savings. When we went from one of the least productive workforces in the industrialized world to the most productive, those gains went to the owners and shareholders. Unions that were the great equalizer in getting our fair share were forced to give away hard-fought gains in order to keep decent healthcare. Finally, we saw union density in the 1950s go from one-in-three, to around one-in-ten today. While there's renewed interest in unions, employers are permitted to violate labor law with impunity as they fight organizing

drives, and the National Labor Relations Board lets them get away with it. Unless the scale is tipped again in favor of workers as it was in the New Deal nothing will change.

Right now, because of COVID-19, 26.1 million Americans have been hit by the downturn, and aren't earning enough to live on. Congress needs to step in and help. Direct aid to workers will boost the economy in the short term. The minimum wage needs to be raised to \$15 an hour – not someday, maybe in the future, but now. If the minimum wage had kept pace with the demand of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, which was just \$2, we'd have a minimum wage of almost \$15 now. Just do it and quit screwing around. Finally, we need to bring back unions in this country. Look around: Canada and Germany have union density like we used to, and the gap between the rich and working folks is a fraction of what it is here. In Germany there are even union representatives that sit on the board of directors. The workers voice has to be heard at the highest levels.

What a wonderful present in American for us all to share the wealth. It would make the anguish we've endured through the pandemic worth the trouble. You believe in Santa, don't you? ❄️

Kurt Staudter, Springfield, VT. Over the course of thirty years Kurt's career working for National Grid and New England Power has given him a unique perspective on the Connecticut River. From operating the Bellows Falls Hydro Plant in the 1990s, to his job now in Substation Operations & Maintenance, every day his work takes him someplace along the river. He is an elected Executive Board Member of IBEW Local 486. A longtime activist and political columnist for the Vermont Standard, Kurt along with his wife Patti also ran the Vermont Brewers Association representing the growing number of craft breweries in the state for almost seven years. He has a Bachelors of Arts degree from the National Labor College, and participated with a fellowship in the Harvard Trade Union Program.

Trutherism from page 4

And finally, the Supreme Court of the United States has rejected a Texas lawsuit asking the Court to overturn the election results and disenfranchise millions of voters in the battleground states of Georgia, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania. In that same week, the Court also threw out a lawsuit by Pennsylvania Republicans to do the same to millions of voters in that state. Unless all of these officials are also part of the conspiracy, which is clearly absurd, what more evidence does one need to put election denialism to rest?

Despite losing the election, Trump and this conspiracy theory are not going away. As he leaves office, he will still be in control of the GOP and the right-wing media because he still has a very loyal if not cult-like following among his base, and it's very likely that going forward, he will use election denialism as a loyalty test for GOP candidates and office holders. Trump's base does not see him as a pathetic sore loser who is trying to hijack the election, but as a courageous victim fighting back against the dark forces of a deep state bent on stealing their country. It's also very likely that the right-wing news media will continue to act as propaganda vehicles for Trump and election trutherism, where there is already fierce competition for the millions of viewers eager to consume this fake news.

The problem is not just Donald Trump or the right-wing propaganda machine but the millions of Trump supporters who have become election truthers. Of these, I suspect that only a fraction are true believers (but even 20% of 70 million is still a whopping 14 million people), but that's all you need to fundraise millions of dollars to support dozens of bogus election legal challenges, future legal defenses against lawsuits and criminal charges, and an ongoing campaign for the

presidency in 2024. Only one month out from the election, Trump has received \$207 million from his supporters by using the stolen election conspiracy theory as bait, only 25% of which has gone for legal expenses to overturn the election. By early January, it may be around \$300 million, most of which will probably go to "Save America," Trump's new political action committee.

As for the rest of the truthers, some are cynical nonbelievers who don't want to cross Donald Trump because it's either political suicide or advantageous to their careers, but I suspect many have gone along with the ruse not out of conviction or careerism but as a badge of loyalty to a movement and cause they believe in. Barring unforeseen events like death or imprisonment, it is still very likely that once Trump is out of office, much of MAGA world, true believers and nonbelievers alike, will remain loyal to their leader as he launches a vendetta tour against Republican officials and Supreme Court justices who refused to help him overturn the election, plays the victim card to the hilt as he deals with civil lawsuits and criminal charges, and revs up his followers with a politics of grievance that will fester for years. Election trutherism will be used as a Republican loyalty test, and the assault on truth will continue unabated. And if that's not enough to divide our country, expect the anti-vaxxer movement and its debunked theories to join the conspiracy train in 2021. But that's another story. ❄️

Len Geller is a free-lance writer who has a keen interest in New York politics. He has contributed in the past on articles related to the Safe Act, Gun laws in NYS, and the proposed Romulus, NY trash incinerator. He lives in Seneca County.

The Night Sky

Colder Nights—A Great Time for “Armchair Astronomy”

By DEE SHARPLES



January, a month of cold days and colder nights. Not ideal weather for a night sky observer in our area. Perhaps it's a good time to explore the world of “armchair astronomy”.

That's what I considered myself for many years before I purchased a telescope and became an observational astronomer twenty years ago. I spent many enjoyable hours reading books and science magazines about the universe, thrilled as the secrets of our solar system were being revealed by the increasing number of space missions.

A great introductory book for anyone interested in learning the basics of astronomy, and one of my favorites which I still use as a reference today, is *Night-Watch – a Practical Guide to Viewing the Universe*, written by Terence Dickinson. It contains basic information on backyard astronomy, the planets, sun, moon, galaxies, and my favorite part—easy to understand star charts of the constellations. This book is available on Amazon.com, in bookstores, or through your library.

Televised programs such as *Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey Mini-Series 2014* hosted by Neil deGrasse Tyson and the NOVA documentary *The Planets* are great viewing, and both educational and entertaining.

January does offer some sights in the night sky worth a trip outside in the early evening after the sun sets. The planet Mars will be easy to spot high in the southern sky. It's quite bright at the beginning of the month, shining at magnitude -0.3, looking like a distinctly reddish star. If you own binoculars and want a challenge, from January 18th to the 22nd, see if you can spot the distant ice giant planet Uranus which will be below and within 2 degrees of Mars shining like a very dim star at only magnitude 5.8. By January 31st, Mars will have dimmed to magnitude 0.4.

Magnitude

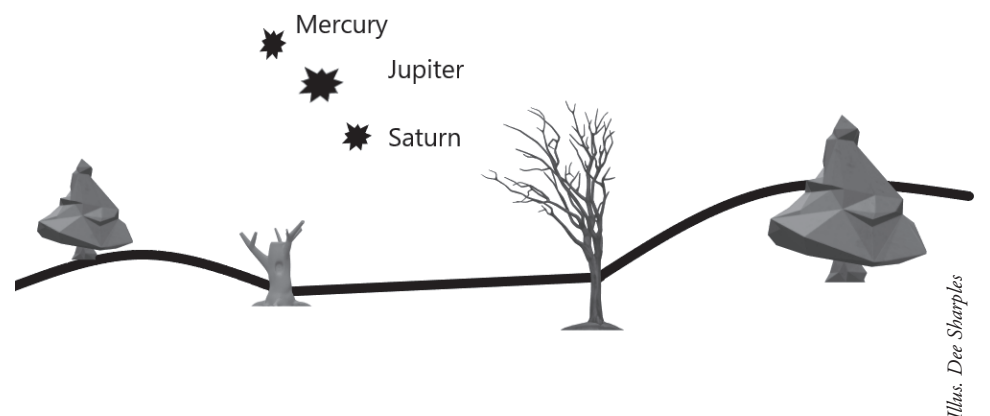
Magnitude measures the apparent brightness of a celestial object and is expressed by a decimal. An object with a negative number like our Sun is brighter.

- Sun: -26.7
- Full Moon: -12.6
- Venus: -3.9
- Jupiter: -2.0
- Mercury: -0.9
- Mars: -0.3 (dims to 0.4)
- Bright star: 0.0
- Saturn: 0.6
- Dimmest star visible with the unaided eye: 6.0-6.5

How to measure degrees in the sky

A simple “ruler” is to hold your arm straight out and make a fist. The area of the sky covered by your fist measures about 10°. Start at the horizon and by moving your fist up and counting how many “fist-widths” it takes to reach an object in the sky, you'll have an approximation of its height. To measure 1°, hold your little finger out at arm's length. The area of the sky covered by your finger is about 1°. Also use this method to measure how far apart two objects are from each other in the sky.

Low in the southwest
January 13 about 5:00 PM



On January 13th about 20 minutes after the sun has set, look very low in the southwest to see three planets lined up in a row. Elusive Mercury, the tiny planet closest to the sun, shines brightly at magnitude -0.9, even brighter Jupiter at magnitude -2.0 is below, and dimmer Saturn at magnitude 0.6 is closest to the horizon. You'll have to catch them right after twilight when the sky is dark but before they set below the horizon.

If you're an early morning riser, the brilliant planet Venus rises an hour before the sun. It will be low in the southeast just as the sky starts to brighten with a new day.

Recently we've had a different meteor shower every month. In January, it's the Quadrantids which is active from December 28th to January 12th. When it peaks on January 3rd, the moon will drown out all but the brightest meteors which will appear to originate from high in the eastern sky in the early morning hours.

Earth will reach perihelion on January 2nd which means it will lie closer to the sun than at any other day of the year. Although being at its closest at 91.4 million miles, this has no effect on warming up our northern hemisphere which is tipped away from the sun locking us in cold winter temperatures for another couple months.

Dee Sharples is an amateur astronomer who enjoys observing planets, star clusters and the Moon through her telescope. She is a member of ASRAS (Astronomy Section of the Rochester Academy of Science) and records “Dee's Sky This Month,” describing what can be seen in the sky on the ASRAS website, rochesterastronomy.org.

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The Homestead Gardener

A Review of Chris Smaje's *A Small Farm Future*

By **DERRICK GENTRY**

(Brace yourselves, dear reader, for a lengthy subtitle ... see you on the other side):

A *Small Farm Future: Making the Case for a Society Built Around Local Economies, Self-Provisioning, Agricultural Diversity, and a Shared Earth* (good to see you again!) is the long-awaited full-length motion picture version of a long-running and widely-read blog series by the same title. Its author, Chris Smaje, is a small-scale farmer himself, who for the past 15 years has run a small CSA-type operation just outside the town of Frome in the eastern part of Somerset, England. Over the past couple of years, since he signed the contract for the book, Small Farm blog followers (like myself) have occasionally wondered how Chris was able to write the book, keep up with the blog, and also stay on top of things at the farm. In the acknowledgements page of the recently published book, he writes: "I owe an ironic apology to my neglected garden, as I busied myself instead making a case on paper to tend the soil."

Take heart, readers, take heart Chris: The garden will come back next season, and the book was certainly well worth the wait. Many of the blog entries are little masterpieces of the genre. But while those who have read the blog can trace the origins and evolution of much of what is now in these 20 chapters, the book is far more than the sum of its blog entry parts. There is a fully developed architectural unity, a very carefully constructed argument, and much that is genuinely new.

So, what kind of a future does this book envision, and how does it differ from the past and the present?

Let's start with the present: The extended opening chapter with the title "Ten Crises," which reviews some of the well-known existential crises faced by our civilization as it moves forward on its current trajectory. There are sections on the climate crisis, over-population, over-consumption, biodiversity loss, and the other familiar issues that presently weigh on people's minds in these early decades of the 21st century, and for which there are no easy solutions other than a complete rethinking of the project of civilization itself.

It is refreshing to read a book that begins with the premise (less and less controversial as time goes by) that we cannot preserve any form of civilization without fundamentally changing the way we live. There is no beating around the bush: The small farm future that Smaje contemplates is essentially a post-collapse world. These ten crises are therefore not just "problems to solve," but signs and symptoms of a deeply unsustainable civilizational model that is moving steadily toward collapse. Smaje acknowledges that a deus ex machina technological fix is within the realm of possibility; but it is extremely unlikely and, in any case, will not address the underlying logic of the system that created these crises in the first place. It is not the end of the world that lies ahead of us; but it will very likely be the end of this world.

The Ten Crises chapter is also about the ways in which a capitalist consumer mindset has given us a limited and biased conception of these problems. Smaje challenges the premises of modern-day conscientious consumerism (what he calls "shopping aisle ethics"):

"[T]he small farm future I'm describing isn't the

same as a green consumerism future, where shoppers with lives much like the ones most people live in rich countries today buy their food in stores like the ones they shop in today, except that the food is more local, more sustainable, more organic, or whatever ... it's a future where you or your descendants are trying to figure out how to furnish your needs from your locality, probably by furnishing many of them for yourself, because you have few other choices" (p. 9)

And while this may sound at first like a bleak vision of a hardscrabble future, that is not what Smaje hopes for and has in mind:

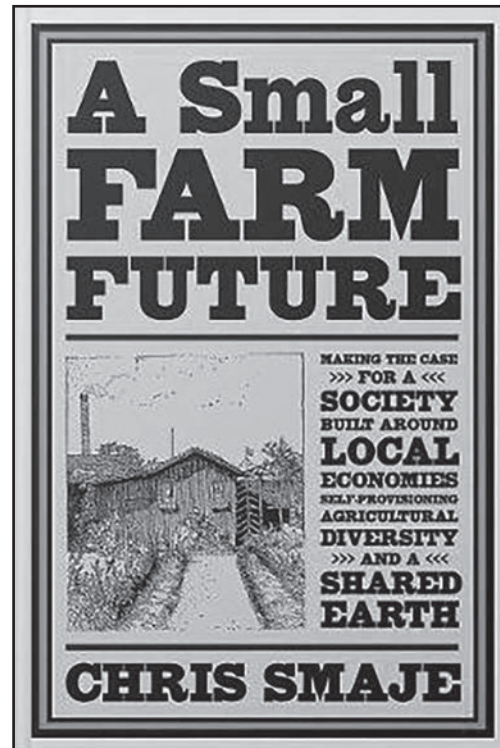
"There certainly may be some dystopian or apocalyptic futures awaiting us unless we play our present hand of cards with skill. But a small farm future only represents a decline from the large farm present if you consider the latter to be a lofty civilizational summit to which humanity has laboriously climbed. That's a view I resist. If we play our cards well, the small farm future I describe here could make for a much more congenial life for most of the world's people than the one they experience today. But we do need to play them well." (p. 9)

Most of the book is dedicated to exploring various ways of "playing our cards right." And a fundamental premise of the subsequent exploration is that in the real world, as in the garden, there are no simple solutions to problems; there are only trade-offs.

Part 2 of the book, titled "Small Farm Ecology," contains what are perhaps some of the least original parts of the book, consisting of brief chapters that touch upon agroforestry, the role of animal husbandry in the small-scale farm, etc.. One thing I do regret is the absence of Smaje's wonderful analysis of the energy efficiency of the scythe, which was published as a blog entry. There is a chapter titled "Can Alternative Agriculture Feed Us?" (The short answer is yes, because we will have few other choices...). All of the issues covered in Part 2 have been dealt with at greater length and in greater depth by other authors, and Smaje only touches upon them here (briefly, though intelligently). Part Two is full of insights and thoroughly worth reading, but in the remainder of this review I will focus my attention on the truly remarkable second half of the book (Parts 3 and 4).

☪

Smaje nowhere mentions the word "prepper," a term that is hard to avoid in discussions on adapting to a post-collapse world. There are good reasons for avoiding it. "Prepping" is a problematic term designating a problematic mindset, one that invites us to indulge in survivalist fantasies of absolute autonomy and self-reliance, with the added bonus of relieving us of the burden of social or political obligations. But as Smaje reminds us, a re-localized and decentralized



Chelsea Green Publishing (2020)



Chris Smaje

still preserve the civic virtues and "progressive" values we hold dear? And, even more important, how can we treat this as an opportunity to transition to a more just society, one based on a deep sense of what Smaje calls "non-hierarchical decency"?

In the nine chapters that comprise parts 3 and 4 of the book, Smaje tries to paint an honest picture of the challenges we face in reimagining civilized life in a decentralized world. Each of these highly complex issues deserves a book-length treatment; Smaje knows this, and his task here is simply to map out some of the issues that we should not relieve ourselves of the burden thinking about. While his discussion is informed by present hopes and ideals, it is also grounded in a non-utopian recognition of our problematic history and its unresolved (and never fully resolvable) tensions and conflicting interests.

A good amount of space is devoted to the vexing problem of land rights and land access. Smaje reviews a number of redistribution models – the Usufruct system, the idea of the commons – as well as policies such as inheritance laws that will obviously require the existence of some centralized system of enforcement.

There is a fine chapter on politics at the household level. Smaje considers how a small farm future might transform traditional gender roles ... or, if we are not careful, how it might revive and reinforce an imbalance of power that we have seen in patriarchal cultures. While most small-scale farmers in the world right now are women, Smaje points out that this is no model for the future if women are unequally burdened with most of the work on the homestead (which is now often the case).

Continued on page 14

Dragonfly Tales

Happy New Year! Feed the Birds!

By STEVE MELCHER

We have an arch here at Odonata that is dedicated to passages. The order 'Odonata', the dragonflies, probably demonstrates the best example of metamorphosis, the process of transformation from an immature form to an adult form in two or more distinct stages. The changes that a dragonfly goes through in a lifetime are mind boggling. Most start out as aquatic critters and may spend years under water until they finally emerge to become the masters of flight we see in the marshes of the world. We're all going through many changes now. This has been a very stressful time for most of us. I am amazed that the mail still gets delivered, trash gets collected, food is on the shelves in our local stores, and health care workers and teachers have adjusted and are still taking care of us. Life goes on.

On the arch are several bird feeders. When not serving as a 'Gateway to the Future', the arch serves as a food court for finches and other feather friends. Feeding the birds in the winter can be a rewarding and safe way to endure these dark winter months. There are plenty of 'how to books and sites' available online. You can get excellent advice from 'The Bird House' and 'Birds Unlimited' who both have curbside pick-up available for seed, suet and feeders, and are just a phone call or email away. When you really get set up and want to become involved in a global way, please explore Cornell's 'Project FeederWatch'. This citizen science effort offers a way to "Embrace the Winter. Count feeder birds for science!". The project lists three simple steps: "1. Put up a feeder. 2. Count birds 3. Enter your data." That information becomes collated with thousands of other FeederWatch friends. This valuable data is used to study trends in climate, habitat and species changes. There is a section to post questions and blog with fellow citizen scientists online as well as post photos for further identification or just for fun. Amazing photos have been posted using just a smart phone camera. There are only a handful of bird species that will come to your feeder in the winter so identifying them is as easy as having a bird guidebook or online source. Of course, there are apps for that too on your smartphone such as Cornell's own 'Merlin', Smart Bird, and the ubiquitous iNaturalist. My only concern is that you feed the birds quality bird seed. The folks at the Bird House and Birds Unlimited will be able to help you with this. Keep it simple. Hang your 'easy to fill feeder' low enough for you to reach but high enough with a pulley that the deer, or bears in some areas, can't easily

get to it if they are a problem for you. Squirrels will figure a way to get to the feeder, so you may have a 'squirrel feeder' once in a while. You may even have an occasional falcon fly through the food court. Exciting! Pick a sturdy feeder. A plank of wood on a high stump works! Find something easy to fill during those winter days when your fingers are freezing. The type of feed you put out will attract different species. Woodpeckers are attracted to suet. We make our own suet here by replacing the animal fat with peanut butter that doesn't contain the artificial sweetener, Xylitol, which can be dangerous to the pups. We start feeding the birds here at Odonata Sanctuary in the winter and primarily focus on bluebirds. We wait until we think most of the birds that are going on vacation have left. A fellow bluebird feeder recently asked, "What should I do when we go on vacation in the winter?". Bluebirds have become year-round residents here in the Finger Lakes of New York. We're still not sure what triggers some to migrate and some to remain. The native birds that you are feeding in the winter have not migrated, not because you are feeding them, but because nature must be providing enough food for them. Think of your feeder as a restaurant. 'Andy's Feeder' is full today with a free flow of fried mealworm fritters! If your restaurant is closed, the winter birds will find food in nature's abundant grocery store. Water is very important as well. We keep several clay pot saucers filled with water that the birds can access.

I wish you all well and good luck as we pass through into 2021. Feeding the birds is a wonderful family experience as well as something you can share with neighbors and friends. Most of all, I hope feeding the birds becomes a gateway to wanting to know more about your world of nature and how you are a vital part of the web that connects us all.

Janus was (is?) the Roman god of gates, doors and transitions. He was represented by a two-faced entity looking into the future and the past. Janus represents the middle ground between dualities like life and death, war and peace, and youth and adulthood.



An inexpensive bird feeder: Black Capped Chickadee, meal worms, human hand.

He could see from one condition to another. Hopefully he sees an end to this current pandemic in the near future and we can all look into the past and learn how to deal with the next imminent novel virus threat. We walked through a door into the next decade and many were and are still being challenged by suggestions and mandates to keep us safe.



The shrines of Janus were gateways through which citizens and soldiers would march during this time of year. The way one passed under the gaze of Janus at the gateway would determine the future for that individual or army for that coming year. If one had the right mindset while passing through the gate of Janus, good fortune was sure to follow. What were you thinking as you passed under the gate into 2021? Did you pass through with anger and blame? Did you hold your breath and close your eyes and 'hope for the best'? Or were you singing 'Change is Gonna Come'? I'm suggesting we wear a mask and sing a song or say a prayer as we pass through the gate. Don't forget to fill your bird feeder with fresh bird seed as you pass under the arch.

Hopefully we'll see you at the sanctuary sometime in 2021.✿

Steve Melcher is the primary caretaker, hoof trimmer & poop scooper at Odonata Sanctuary, Mendon. His studies included using members of the Order "Odonata," as bioindicators of freshwater ecosystems. He has written/coauthored in journals, magazines, and books re: environmental literacy and ecological issues. Steve now works with environmental and educational organizations whose goal is to have "no child left inside". Learn more: fb @ Odonata Sanctuary.

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REFLECTIONS

By **BETH SLEBODA**

Ready

Ready to launch.
Ready to fly.
Ready to plant
and multiply.



Bored?

Don't be bored.
Stuck inside?
Look around.
You will find

something, there,
that you can do.
Yes, you CAN!
It's up to you!

Take that old potato that got lost in the bottom of the bin...you know, the one with the wrinkled skin and green shoots...yes! Don't throw it out. With a quick slice, a few toothpicks, and a glass of water, you can make a very entertaining thing on which to focus. Mother Nature will create a slow motion growth show. Try it. You'll like it. And don't forget to smile.

Watch closely, now.
Observe the change,
as roots and buds
do rearrange.
Growth...familiar,
yet, so strange.



Pathways from page 5

Andrews was the premier explorer of the early 20th century and *TIME* magazine featured him on their cover in 1923. The book is a time capsule describing a fascinating man of science living in a period of American history when there were still many undiscovered worlds to explore.

Fast forward to the future and two more books: one written thirty plus years ago and one in 2020. The first, *A Short History of The Future* by W. Warren Wagar, was first published in 1989. It is a classic example of a futures work in the tradition of H.G Wells. Wagar lays out a "history" of the next two hundred years divided into three periods: Earth Inc.; Red Earth; and the House of the Earth. Wagar does not profess to predict the future, rather he lays out one possible future running two centuries. Some of Earth Inc. sounds like a "breaking news" headline flashing across the screen. This book was a core reading in a course Wagar taught for over 30 years called "*A History of the Future.*" The course drew standing-room-only classes in excess of 300 students each term. He conveys a wealth of ideas and imagination in a very creative text—it is well worth searching for a copy to read.

Fareed Zakaria's new book, *Ten Lessons for A Post-Pandemic World*, presents a challenging series of essays designed to show that, at the very least, we will never go back to a pre-COVID-19 world. In ten lucid short chapters, looking at such issues as: Markets Are Not Enough; What Matters is not the Quantity of Government but the Quality; and Life is Digital, to such themes as People Should Listen to Experts—and Experts Should Listen to People; and Inequality Will Get Worse, among others. He offers 244 pages of insightful observation and, in many ways, a "sequel" to Cantor's volume on *The Black Death*.

Those who read my column on a regular basis know that I work with the National Issues Forums Institute and the Kettering Foundation. I would encourage all to read Dr. David Mathews' *The Ecology of Democracy*. This 175 page volume offers concrete suggestions for citizens, govt. entities, and not for profits on how to reshape our democracy based on the core idea that at its heart is "problem solving" with engaged citizens working to tackle the "wicked problems" (those issues which defy simple solutions). I would encourage citizens interested in forming "civic problem-solving groups" to contact the Kettering Foundation for copies of this book, and to learn more about how you can use Issues Forums to work toward desired change.

Time for a cookie recipe!

"Candy Cane Delights"

Heat oven to 375°F—makes about 4 dozen cookies

Ingredients

- ½ cup soft butter
- ½ cup shortening
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 ½ tsp almond extract
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 ½ cups flour
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp red food coloring
- ½ cup crushed peppermint candy
- ½ cup granulated sugar

Method

- Mix thoroughly butter, shortening, egg.
- Add confectioners' sugar and extracts.
- Blend in flour and salt.
- Divide dough in half and blend in food coloring to one half. Shape 1 tsp of dough from each half into 4-inch ropes; for smooth even ropes roll them back and forth on a lightly floured board. Place ropes side by side, press together lightly, and twist. Curve top down to form a handle. Complete cookies one at a time and place on an ungreased cookie sheet.
- Bake for 9 minutes. Mix candy and granulated sugar and immediately sprinkle on cookies.



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Doug Garnar works with the Kettering Foundation and NIFI (National Issues Forums Institute) to help citizens find "pathways to democracy." He has taught since 1971 at SUNY Broome Community College. He lives in Binghamton, NY.

Doug Garnar at garnardc@sunybroome.edu

Crafting Your Own Cuisine

By EILEEN PERKINS

RECIPE

A version of this recipe appeared often on our table, when the kids were growing up, and although we referred to as “Brown Rice Pudding”, it is, in fact, a fancied-up custard. I see others refer to custard as dessert, and certainly it is desirable enough to be thought of as a treat, but given that custard is packed with both carbs and protein, I think it can be viewed as very worthy breakfast fare. We’ve upped the nutritional ante, here, with the addition of rice, dried fruit and nuts, making this custard truly worthy of a regular spot on the menu....and it has the additional attraction of being able to utilize rice, which many folks just might have ample supply of in their pantries these days!

Breakfast Rice Custard (Serves 3-4)

Ingredients

- 2 large eggs
- ¼ cup sugar, white or brown
- 1 ½ cups milk, any unsweetened variety (I prefer oat or whole cow’s milk)
- ¼ cup raisins or other dried fruit such as chopped apricots
- ¾ cup plain cooked rice, your choice
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. ground nutmeg, divided
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. real vanilla extract
- 2 tsp. Meyers dark rum or Grand Marnier liqueur (optional) or cool water
- 2 Tbsp. butter or non-dairy buttery flavored spread
- ¼ to ½ cup walnuts chopped coarsely

Method

- Boil a quart or two of water and set aside. Preheat oven to 350°. Put butter in 1 qt. casserole dish and place in the oven to melt. Remove when liquefied and tilt around sides of dish. Set aside. Place fruit in small bowl and cover with hot water; drain well after 10 minutes. Stir in the liquor or water. Set aside.
- In a medium sized bowl, whisk eggs until well blended, and then add sugar, milk, salt, half the nutmeg, cinnamon, and vanilla, combining thoroughly. Set aside.
- Add rice to hydrated fruit and stir well. Spread in the bottom of the prepared casserole dish. Top with egg mixture, the rest of the nutmeg, and finally the walnuts.
- Put a paper towel in the bottom of the baking pan and nestle the custard atop it, adding the hot water, as described above.
- Place carefully in the oven. Bake approximately 55-60 minutes, or until a thin knife or temperature probe poked down halfway into the center of the custard comes out clean. The temp. of the finished custard should be 175°-180° (no higher if you can help it) If you are unfamiliar what “clean” looks like in this sense, I recommend you test the custard after it has cooked about 25 minutes. You will see what “not clean” looks like, for contrast. The custard firms up somewhat as it cools.
- Remove both pans from the oven taking care to not slosh the hot water. Carefully remove the casserole from the water bath to stop it from cooking. Cool and refrigerate. Before serving, sprinkle with a bit of salt to provide a savory contrast for the sweet flavors.

Note: this can be made using (4) six inch custard cups, if you decrease the butter (only butter the cups and skip putting them into the oven prior to filling) and shorten the baking time (start checking doneness at 30 minutes).

This cooks in the oven utilizing a simple steaming method. It amounts to putting the assembled casserole in a baking pan of somewhat larger circumference, and at least an inch or two higher than the casserole dish itself, and filling the pan with hot water up to about half as high as the casserole dish itself. It is important to remember you are working both with hot pans and hot water. The method is simple, but it is necessary to pay sufficient attention to protect your safety. I have never cooked this in the oven, without the water bath, but I suppose it could be done, perhaps at 325° although the custard may not be as delicate, and the baking time would be different. I like to make sure that I have only one rack in the oven, to insure easy access to the custard, for testing doneness and removing the water-filled pan from the oven.



Custard shown here was made using oat milk and brown rice.

COOKBOOK REVIEW

This Will Make It Taste Good- A New Path to Simple Cooking by Vivian Howard

This book made me smile. I ordered it through our local public library system with a mission. Covid-prompted limitations have encouraged folks, more than ever, to delve into the rich and potentially confusing world of food-prep culture. Since Howard has racked up experience as a successful restaurateur, PBS celebrity and author of the award winning cookbook, “Deep Run Roots,” I was expecting to be impressed, and I was. I wouldn’t call the food offered in this book “simple”, but she does reveal a very clear path to making delicious food with efficiency and style. I think that makes this offering appropriate for cooks of all skill levels. She suggests that “This book will change the way you cook.” and I do see that potential within its pages. Do note, it’s for omnivores, with at least half of the recipes potentially vegetarian or gluten free.

Peppered with nostalgic looking photos of both the author and her creations, this collection is a witty and epicurean sojourn. She introduces the book with a description of “How This Works”, relating the bones of her clever system of utilizing what seems comparable to “flavor bombs”- her “flavor heroes”. She begins, “Unfolding in front of you are ten chapters of recipes, each organized around one of my flavor heroes. Within each chapter I’ll introduce you to each MVP’s persona and function. You’ll also learn how to prepare, store, and deploy that hero in a cornucopia of approachable ways. In addition to fully fleshed out, approachable, easy-to-shop-for recipes that call on that chapter’s hero, you’ll find “no brainer” suggestions for how to use it, at the top of each chapter.”

Truthfully, I think her use of acronyms is a little much, and difficult to follow if you don’t keep pace with her personality. But that personality is entertaining and knowledgeable. I picked up some tips and a light heart here. A brand new book, it will be easy for you to find. Even if you have a couple decades of cooking under your belt, I think you should at the very least give it a look. 🍴

Eileen Perkins is a native of Rochester N.Y., who cooked professionally, in a wide range of venues, for many years, before moving to the Finger Lakes. She and her husband owned and operated “Eileen’s Bakery an’ Soup Kitchen”, a business that emphasized vegetarian cuisine and the craft of artisan baking. Recipe adaptation for people with special dietary needs is a passion she enjoys sharing. Among Eileen’s current priorities is preservation of food from the garden, developing more comprehensive communication skills, her Falun Gong practice, and educating compassionate people about human rights in Communist-ruled China, and elsewhere.

Homestead Gardener from page 10

On the other hand, most of the work that will need to be done in the future (by men and women) falls into the category of the “care economy” and is work that has traditionally been characterized as feminine and maternal: animal husbandry, plant cultivation, caring for children and the elderly and the sick.

In the climactic chapter of the book, aptly and ominously named “Dispossessions,” Smaje attempts to comprehend past, present, and future within a single vision. At the heart of this brief but intense chapter is the question of how to conceive of a localism that is not a nativism. Smaje shifts briefly into personal narrative mode, considering “the ghosts of class conflicts past” that still haunt the countryside where he lives and still inform some common attitudes toward outsiders:

“I feel these ghosts around me as I work my holding—family ghosts of ancestors who left the land as labourers ... But I also feel the different ghosts of an occasionally hostile localism directed at a stranger like me born and raised into another emptied farm-scape fully a hundred miles from where I now live and where, even there, other people still had a better claim to be a ‘real’ local than me.”

Smaje argues that we need to bury these ghosts as we move into a future already haunted by uncertainty. This is sentiment that I fully share, though it is of course easier said than done. As William Faulkner famously noted, “the past is never dead ... it’s not even the past.”

In my own country, the one where Faulkner’s ghosts still roam about, it is impossible to imagine a post-collapse future without also pondering all of the mutual animosities that now exist between various groups of people, with the fault lines often coinciding with the urban/rural cultural divide.

The historical precedents are not particularly encouraging. The Homestead Acts, the most radical land reform measures in United States history, ended up being early experiments in the “redlining” and further disenfranchisement of African Americans. In more recent history, the Back to Land movement of the 70s coincided in this country with the “white flight” from urban centers. And in even more recent history, pre-existing social inequalities have been on display this past year in the post-COVID-19 exodus from the cities to the countryside undertaken by those who have the means to do so (which raised concerns about “rural gentrification” and the dynamics of crisis-fueled internal migration).

All of this suggests that we have a lot of work to do at the cultural and social levels. That is the central and sobering message of the second half of *Small Farm Future*, and Smaje—a social scientist by train-

ing—faces these issues head on and discusses them in an admirably honest way.



Part 3 of the book commences with Chapter 16, titled “From Religion to Science (and Back)” – a intricately argued and subtly paced chapter that (for me, at least) requires multiple readings to fully appreciate its many layers. It fully repays the effort of re-reading. Smaje opens this chapter by shifting the focus from big-picture issues to more intimate questions about value and meaning and day-to-day lived experience. A small farm future is likely something we will need to adapt to, whether we want to or not. That is one of the premises of the book. Smaje acknowledges, however, that making a virtue out of what is in any case necessary will not suffice. What we need, Smaje argues, are new stories, new poetry, and values of a more intrinsic and spiritual nature:

“[A]ny vision for the future has to engage individual motivations more personally. It has to work like a story or a song of life: this is who I am, this what I do, this has meaning.” (p. 215)

If I have any criticism of Smaje, it is that while he takes the power of religion and the power of storytelling seriously, he does not fully connect this recognition with his far more emphatic critical distancing from stories that capture common desires for authentic living and nostalgic yearning for a past that never existed. “I want to tell a story about going ‘forwards’ into an agrarian future,” Smaje tells us, “not going ‘back’ to an agrarian past.” (p 216) Fair enough. Methinks, however, that Smaje doth protest too much. If you want to disabuse people of their problematic pet notions (such as “prepping”) and poo-poo the jargon of authenticity, then you need to have some equally compelling notions on hand to take their place. Most people sitting at their laptops, unhappy with their sedentary jobs, do not stare out the window daydreaming of things like “self-provisioning” or reflecting critically upon the concept of “the wild.” While Smaje is absolutely right about the danger of romanticizing the past and rightly distances himself from easy appeals to simplicity and authenticity, the established language of “back to the land” and “self-reliance” and “private edens” nevertheless has a power that cannot be dismissed. (I would also point out that Biblical stories about a return to an imagined Promised Land were adapted by the rhetoric of the Civil Rights movements to powerful effect.)

An alternative to the story of unlimited growth and linear progress would involve some story about working within limits—which, of course, is the beginning of tragedy and comedy, as well as traditional morality. “Live within your harvest” is the motto of

many a homesteader, and as Wendell Berry observed, “a morality without limits is no morality at all.” But frugality and morality and politics are one thing; the meaning and value-generating stories we tell ourselves and identify with, the songs we sing to and dance to, are a fundamentally different matter. We do need to “reconstruct our desires,” as Barbara Kingsolver recently put it. But that project is best understood as an exuberant Nietzschean call for radical value creation by embracing limits, rather than a Puritan demand for sacrifice and self-restraint and resignation.

Throughout the book, Smaje does make a strong cumulative case for thinking of limits in this value-generating way. In fact, it is an integral part of his critique of deep ecology, rewilding, and decoupling, all of which are based on the widely held conviction that nature has an intrinsic and given value. Smaje challenges this assumption, arguing that these values are not simply out there and “given” but come about through rituals and practices by value-creating humans interacting with nature.

This is a central and important theme in the book. But it is also a subtle and gradually worked out theme, and I wish it were a bit more in the foreground (like the discussion of trade-offs that opens the book). I cannot help but think that had Smaje given this anti-foundationalism more emphasis, he might have spared himself the need to devote so much space and energy to qualifying himself and making it clear what he is not saying (with regard to nostalgia and ‘turn-ing the clock back,’ etc.)

These are minor quibbles about the exposition of a powerful and extraordinarily complex argument. Not even a long book review can begin to do justice to its longer-form subject, and that is particularly true with a book as densely argued and as carefully constructed as Smaje’s. If you are looking for easy answers about the One Thing that will solve all our problems, then there are plenty of books and documentary films out there that will satisfy that need. But if you seek instead the consolation of clarity and honesty and real-world complexity, and you want to begin the important work of imagining a positive future worth bringing about, then Smaje’s *Small Farm Future* is an essential read for these times.✦

*Derrick Gentry lives in Honeoye with his wife and son, and numerous furred and feathered friends. He teaches in the Humanities Department at Finger Lakes Community College.
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Richmond History

The Philanthropist - John Cushing Evans (1918-2008)

By JOY LEWIS



"Jack" Evans was born in Buffalo, the only child of John Evans and Grace Covey. He was of mature years when he wrote a detailed memoir of his family and his Hemlock boyhood called "Hemlock Memories." In one piece he mentions that "near the end of World War I, Grandpa [Covey] took the engineer's position at Hemlock...I was a few months old. My father was in the Army in Spartanburg, South Carolina. My mother and I came along with her parents."

The living arrangement proved satisfactory and when Mr. Evans completed his military service he came home to his father-in-law's house on Hemlock's Main Street. Jack's father was employed by the "railway mail branch of the postal service" and was away from home for long stretches of time. Young Jack became particularly close to his grandfather, reveling in tales of ole-timey railroading.

John Covey, born in the opening year of the Civil War, had grown up on a farm south of Buffalo. He was fascinated by the new-fangled railroad and determined to find his place in its organization. In his early twenties he was married to Emma VanSice, and in due time they became parents of three children: George, Ansel, and Grace. John was yet a young man when he'd earned the job of railroad engineer. For more than forty years he was master of the great steam locomotive – first on the Buffalo/Sayre, Pennsylvania, run on the Lehigh mainline, then from 1919 as engineer on the Rochester run out of Hemlock. All his days Jack remembered his grandfather at work, dressed "in his two-piece blue denim overalls, wearing heavy leather gloves with large stiff black cuffs, and his striped denim cap with the long visor." In the cab his

left hand "grasped the throttle, his right arm rested on the windowsill of the cab, ready at any instant to reach for the air valve to apply the brakes."

The boy had a deep reverence for his grandfather's locomotive, a respect shared by many passengers. At the end of every trip Engineer Covey would hurriedly disembark and commence faithfully to oil his engine. "Although he stood six feet in height he appeared tiny and obscure beside the locomotive. [Passengers as they passed by] always paused a moment to pay tribute to that behemoth of the rails, that magnificent iron horse...They admired the massive elegance



4599 Main Street, Hemlock, NY—
the home where Jack Evans grew up.

Photo courtesy of Joy Lewis

of it all, the coal black locomotive with its contrasting nickel-plated whistle, bell, cylinder heads, and hand rails – a decorated black monster on wheels." It was the thrill of Jack's young life whenever he was allowed to ride the rails with his Grandpa.

Jack wrote extensively of his Hemlock boyhood. He had detailed memories of delivering the Times-

Union newspaper at age eleven, attending the Little World's Fair every autumn, feeding and milking Dr. Trott's cow which was kept in the Coveys' barn in exchange for some of the milk. He and his friend Bruce Wemett once climbed the abandoned water tower on Railroad Avenue, which was full of pigeons and danger. They fashioned a homemade rowboat and took her sailing on the mill pond. "One drizzly Saturday in April I caught seventeen catfish in that tub while floating beneath the umbrella," he remembered.

He and his friends swam in the creek on Adams Road, jumping off the railroad trestle into the murky water below. With Bruce and other boys, he "ice skated [on the mill pond] in winter, boated and fished in summer." The dam which formed the pond provided a canny boy with "a clandestine route into the fairgrounds, thereby avoiding paying the admission charge."

Vividly Jack remembered the first barnstormer to fly into Hemlock Airport in his WWI biplane, a Jenny. The year was 1929 and Jack was ten years old. Children and adults alike flocked up the hill to see the plane, a two-seater with an open cockpit, a wooden fabric-covered frame painted with a colorful American flag, a six-cylinder engine, and a two-blade propeller. The sight of that plane and the daring pilot outfitted in his "brown leather flight jacket and leather helmet with goggles" was one Jack never forgot.

1930 brought deep sorrow to the Covey and Evans families. Jack was twelve years old in the fall of that year when his beloved Grandfather Covey died after a four-day siege of "intestinal grippe." His obituary gave the details of his life and family, but it is Jack's eulogy that bears witness to his grandfather's lifework:

Continued on page 21

The Little Lakes Community Association presents its 6th Annual Sustainability Series—January through May, 2021



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Little Lakes Community Center

4705 S. Main Street, Hemlock

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- 2/18/21 - Combining Community Choice Aggregation and Community Solar—Ben Frevert, Roctricity, Rochester NY
- 3/18/21 - Extending The Table for Pollinators, People, and The Planet—Patty Love of Barefoot Permaculture, Rochester NY
- 4/15/21 - 7 Keys to Resilient Gardening in a Changing Climate—Petra Page-Mann of Fruition Seeds, Naples, NY
- 5/2021 - Planning Meeting for LLCC Landscape Design

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The Monthly Read

Being “Normal” Is All Relative

A Review of *Bad Dirt—Wyoming Stories* By Annie Proulx

Bad Dirt
219 page
Scribner
(2004)

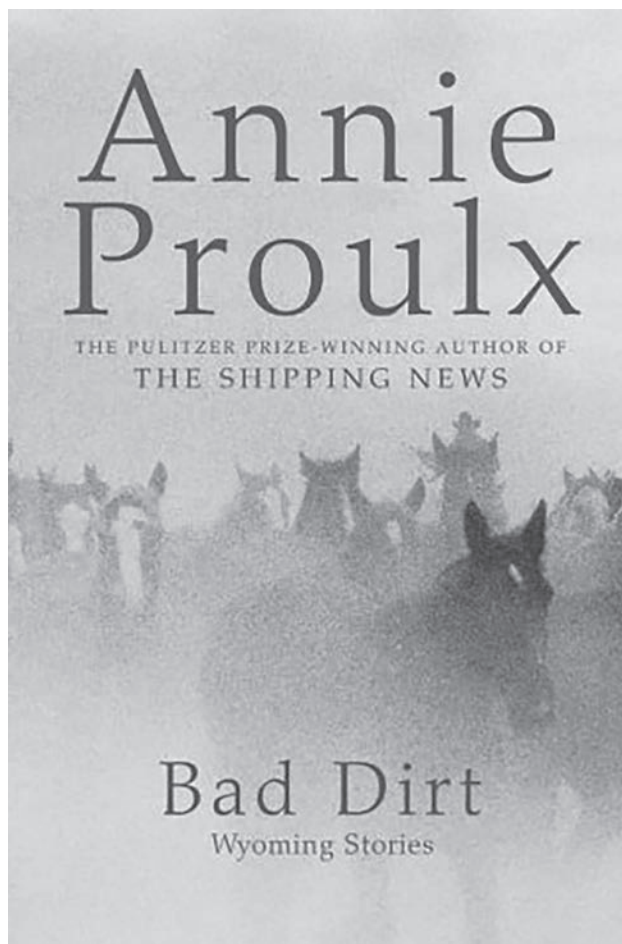


By MARY DRAKE

Like many of Annie Proulx's books, *Bad Dirt* has a peculiar title that piques your curiosity, and maybe that's the point. Because if you think the title is odd, wait until you meet some of the characters in this collection of Wyoming short stories. We're told that everyone in these communities, "tries to be a character and with some success. There is little more to it than being broke, proud, ingenious, and setting your heels against civilized society's pull."

That pretty well describes Creel Zmundzinski, the orphaned bad boy who grew up to become a Wyoming game and fish warden with a chip on his shoulder who "continued to cause trouble whenever a chance came." Or the Wyoming transplant Mitchell Fair whose own wife saw him "as a weird stranger, his narrow head and smooth Nordic features startlingly similar to a photograph she had seen of a preserved corpse pulled from a Scandinavian bog." Or Willy Huson, the former airplane mechanic who now tinkers "in a minimal way" on trucks and lawn mowers which he might never fix or might continue to work on longer than necessary, adding switches and lights that serve no purpose. Most of what he does manage to fix doesn't run "longer than five days or fifty miles," but folks are content because that's just what it takes to get their car to a nearby town with a real garage.

And if the characters aren't oddball enough, there are the "real west" Wyoming towns with names like Elk Tooth, Swift Fox, Ham's Fork, Antler Spring and Greybull. They are a far cry from what you saw on *Bonanza* or *Gunsmoke*. Most of the action in this book takes place near the "almost gone town" of Elk Tooth, population eighty, which sports a junkyard and three bars—Silvertip, the Pee Wee, and Muddy's Hole. Patrons of these establishments always notice newcomers but make a point of not speaking to them. "They stayed cool when strangers invaded the bar but took in every nuance of outlandish behavior and speech for later dissection." The rural Wyoming setting becomes a character in itself, challenging inhabitants to survive the isolation, brutal winters, and harsh demands of ranching. The wild landscape allows a down-on-his-luck misfit like Buddy Millar to explore "a new set of bad dirt roads" as he runs away from his troubles, but it also strains Gilbert Wolfscale with "the downward ranching spiral of too much work, not enough money, and drought." For all the rugged beauty of the landscape, there are punishing disadvantages one must bear.



In "Man Crawling Out of the Trees" we learn how Wyoming might feel to newcomers. Mitchell and Eugenie Fair are "tolerably content" in their marriage but want to get away from New York City, so they move to Wyoming because of its "low property taxes and no income tax" and also because "the state's entire population could fit into a phone booth." They buy a log cabin among other log cabins situated on the dividedup parcels of a former ranch and try to fit in as "Westerners," outfitting themselves in fringed suede skirts and cowboy boots. But try as they might to mingle with the locals, they are isolated not only by the heavy snow and violent winds of winter but also by the snub of local residents who "talk about them behind their backs." Then one bitterly cold day when Eugenie is alone, she watches a man crawl through the trees towards her house. Terrified by his ferocious look and maniacal howls, she does the sensible thing and calls the sheriff, only to learn later that he was a skier who had broken his leg and crawled down the mountain for help. A shocked Mitchell realizes she has broken the "cardinal rule of the country—that you give aid and help to a stranger, even your bitterest enemy when he is down." For her, the Wyoming experience is over.

Living in Wyoming and owning 640 acres, author Annie Proulx may have watched newcomers get chewed up and spit out. She herself, however, may have fit in with the hard-bitten old timers since she describes herself as "bossy, impatient, reclusively shy, short tempered and single-minded." Certainly, the West fascinates her. *Bad Dirt* is the second volume of her Wyoming stories, the first being *Close Range* and the third, *Fine Just the Way It Is*. A prolific writer of many acclaimed novels and non-fiction books, including a memoir of her life in Wyoming, Proulx is thought to excel in the short story form which, rather than telling a complete story, offers more of an impression, a slice of life. If there is a common thread running through all the *Bad Dirt* stories, it's that life is hard, and you might be surprised at what people do to survive. ❧

Mary Drake is a novelist and freelance writer living in western New York. Visit her online at marydrake.online to learn more about her books. See her YA story excerpt below.

Where the Path Leads—Chapter 10: The Water Meadow – By MARY DRAKE

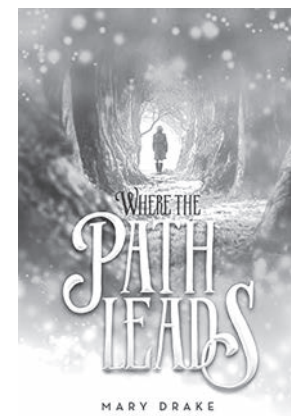
In the previous chapter, Emily is surprised that the loom is ready for weaving and that the cow is expecting a calf. But when she discovers where she must work to earn her keep, it is an unpleasant surprise.

Once the Bailiff discovered Emily staying with Sophia, everything changed. Rather than let him take Blossom, and her unborn calf, to pay for Emily's residency and protection fee, she opted to pay in services rendered, although she thought grimly that really the protection she needed was from the one she was paying. She would never finish weaving the "unlovely" homespun cloth, but her frustrations at the loom were as nothing compared to what awaited her in the water meadow.

The sun had never felt so hot on her back before, but then she didn't go outdoors a lot. She liked nature, just not all the dirt and insects and poison ivy. These feelings might have begun when she was little, and her mother cleaned on Saturdays and sent her outside. Emily had felt like an exile then and couldn't wait to get back inside. She felt that way now.

Read Online: www.owllightnews.com/where-the-path-leads-chapter_____.

If you want to find out more about the book, go to marydrake.online, also available as an ebook on Amazon.



Subscribe online at www.owllightnews.com/subscribe.

a pandemic tale

By the middle of May, the third pandemic month when Momma and Poppa were home fighting boredom and each other, the super told Grandma, “For each rat you kill, you can have another day til’ your rent is due.”

Grandma’s big spankin’ spoon burn my butt yesterday. Today it was Poppa’s stirrer for rat pie. He stir a new can of baking soda and a cup of powder sugar into two pounds of corn meal flour. Poppa stirred Momma’s half pound of our dinner hamburger into that pie.

Momma cooks that pie in Gramma’s Sunday pot. She leave steamin’ rat dessert in a pie tin on the steppin’ stool stair in the middle of the kitchen floor.

I went to bed with an empty stomach jealous of dem rats. All night I hear’d them scratchin’ an’ squeakin’; pie tin a clankin’. They louder’n gramma’s stomach growl in bed next to me.

First up in the morning, it’s quiet. Sure, I knew we had rats but this was a party mess. Peekin’ ‘round the corner I see dem rats half exploded in circles and layers up to the pie tin.

Momma said, “That’s a dead rat mountain.”

Poppa say, “Get the fish buckets boy, we gotta count ‘em.”

I’m the best at counting, so tossing on gloves I go “1, 2, 3, 4, ...”

They’re in pieces but not too heavy and I got a rhythm.

“Where’d dey come from?”

“Keep count’n boy.”

“... 57, 58, 59, ...”

Overwhelmed by these soft small deaths, I say, “There’s too many.”

“Don’t stop count’n. They probably come from the whole building.”

“... 94, 95, 96, 97!”

Poppa said, “Now we take the buckets to the super.”

Grandma say, “Hey! Don’t throw ‘em out. Bring ‘em back.”

The super gave us three months before we have to pay rent.

When I set the buckets on the kitchen floor, Grandma says, “We haint wast’n that meat. We got two weeks dinner here. It’s time we had my Gigi’s Four and Twenty casserole.”

Dishing some of the rat pie into a bowl, Momma chopped tails. Grandma tossed in salt, pepper, celery, poppy seed, butter, nuts (to hide teeth) and more sugar.

Next came baking a casserole in the oven. Grandma baked ten. The first was our dinner. That was so good, I pushed back the thought of eating rats.

Our freezer would only hold four. For the price of one, Grandma borrowed space for the rest (don’t tell anybody what’s in it) in her girlfriend’s freezer.

When she returned, I said, “Grandma why’s it called four and twenty casserole.”

“Boy, I’m not sure but sometimes Momma made it with blackbirds instead of rats.”

Dr. Scott W. Williams, Professor Emeritus University of Buffalo, SUNY; Member of The Rochester Folk Art Guild in Middlesex and part time resident of Canandaigua.

Turning Points—Canadice Press’ first *Owl Light Literary* collection—will be published in 2021.

ADVANCE ORDERS can now be placed online: *
owllightnews.com/turningpoints

This softbound journal will feature poetry, short stories, and creative non-fiction from ten authors, with illustrations by artist Sally Gardner.



Chosen pieces—selected by judges George Guida, David Michael Nixon, and Steve Melcher—include work from published and emerging authors.

One of our goals since launching Canadice Press in 2017 has been to support authors across genres. *Owl Light News* currently hosts *nineteen* regular contributors, with additional guest contributors in each issue. With *Owl Light Literary*, more voices will be shared. We are excited!

Owl Light Literary: Turning Points is \$15 per copy.

(Current *Owl Light News* subscribers receive a \$5 discount on their order).

Advance sale copies may also be ordered using the form on page 23! Follow facebook.com/canadicepress for updates and information about publication/delivery schedule and readings by the authors.

Mother Goose nursery rhyme,
Sing a Song of Sixpence:

Sing a song of sixpence,
A pocket full of rye.
Four and twenty blackbirds,
Baked in a pie.



When the pie was opened,
The birds began to sing;
Wasn't that a dainty dish,
To set before the king?

The king was in the counting-house
Counting out his money,
The queen was in the parlor
Eating bread and honey,

The maid was in the garden
Hanging out the clothes,
There came a little blackbird
And snapped off her nose.

There are many variants, and the origins of the rhyme are not definitively known. The above version is taken from Iona and Peter Opie’s *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (*Oxford Dictionary of Nusery Rhymes*).

Owl Light News welcomes submissions of poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, and hybrid literary art for our monthly "Pen and Prose."
Submissions to editor@canadicepress.com.

Making Lemonade

Dancing Away the Pandemic

By **BARB STAHL**

I feel Better When I'm Dancing just like Meghan Trainor! Dancing has become a very important activity in my life! In the early days of the pandemic, a group of us set up a daily Zoom meeting for dancing. Most of us had never heard the word Zoom before, so there was a steep learning curve. Then we had to figure out how to play music so all could hear the dance tunes. At first, we blasted our home CD players really loud, or tried to have Alexa furnish our music. A number of technical problems made those early attempts difficult for dancing.

Luckily one of our group offered to be our Disc Jockey (DJ) and feed the music through her laptop and, in turn, "share" the music to everyone. Turns out she is an excellent DJ, whom we call Dancing Queen. She makes a playlist each day and amazingly it most often has a recognizable theme. Who knew there were enough danceable songs for forty minutes about such themes as Halloween, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving or Christmas? There are!

As of this writing, I have had perfect attendance every day (except Sundays) at 1 pm for 37 weeks during the pandemic. Therefore, I have danced for 37 weeks x 6 days, for 222 days total. Impressed? I am. For me, the importance of dancing while coping with the pandemic is also impressive.

There are so many special and important stories on that Zoom screen. Dancing has become much, much more than moving our arms, feet and bodies to a lively tune! Most of us are retirees from education, medical, or legal fields.

Our numbers daily run between eight and twelve. Our contact list is long, and people show up when they can. There are no rules beyond having fun and exercising while seeing other smiling faces. No one leads the steps. Some of our dancers are from out-of-state—relatives or friends of the original dancers. We have sister combos, and friends since kindergarten who now live states apart. We represent six states. I see my oldest daughter most everyday dancing.

The more theatrical dancers like to wear goofy hats, ham it up in a multitude of ways, or dance with something like a silly prop or flowers. Others simply like to dance. The main thing is to enjoy that forty minutes until we get kicked off Zoom.

We have to mute ourselves because some of us like to belt out lyrics to favorite songs. Some people dance up close to their laptop or iPad, others might disappear from sight, or even dance their way into different rooms. One of our dancers cleans her house while dancing! Another found her lost vacuum while dancing. And those two are sisters!

One story was particularly touching. A dancer told me recently that because she lost a very close friend to COVID-19, if it hadn't been for our dancing it was



Happy New Year!



difficult to get up in the mornings. Another touching story happened the day one of our dancers, who is a grandmother, danced with her grandson who was in a wheelchair. He was smiling the whole time, lifting his hands and waving his arms in time with the beat as she danced around him.

Some of us act out parts of a song—we tend to really pay attention to the words and may act accordingly! Every once in a while, I pick Tarzan up to dance with me. He's not crazy about it but watches the screen for a few minutes before he dashes off for some peace and quiet (see screen shot).

There are several places people choose to dance—outside on a porch during nice weather, in the kitchen where the floor is smooth, and we have two people who have joined us from their cars (not while driving)!!

While our lives have been on hold and travel not possible, dancing has kept our minds and bodies active. For someone who lives alone to be able to see smiling faces on a computer screen has been important, something to look forward to each day. It has been a real boost when we needed it most. I know there are many different stories on that screen, and I'm very glad to be one of them! I dedicate this with gratitude to our very clever "Dancing Queen."

Barb Stahl is a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, retired school library media specialist, and a western New York/Finger Lakes area lover who did a previous column for Canandaigua Daily Messenger. She loves her family, circle of friends, reading, writing, history, music, theater, and Tarzan the cat who critiques her articles. Contact: makinglemonadeOwl@gmail.com

Tarzan's Fan Mail from Oreo Cookie

After mentioning shelters in his article on the front page of the December Owl Light News, Tarzan—who co-writes "Making Lemonade" with his human Barb Stahl—received a fan letter from a cat named Oreo Cookie

Dear Mr. Tarzan,

I heard you are worried about all the cats having a warm place and enough food. I am writing to put your concerns to rest, at least with regards to me. Also, I think our ancestors might have immigrated over here on the same ship, based on our similar looks.

I am a Working Cat from the Lollypop Farm Working Cat Program. The Woman adopted me and brought me to her barn just before Thanksgiving. They called me "Mickey" at Lollypop, but I hated that name. The Woman here calls me Oreo Cookie. I am not sure what that means, but it sounds sweet when she says it.

I am not a fan of people. I lived on the streets before. And I hissed and spit at the people at Lollypop. So that's how I got to be a working cat. But I do like to watch The Woman from a distance. Would you believe this—she feeds me wet food twice a day! On a schedule!

There are two other beings in the barn too. One is an old mare named FiFi. She lost her job as a camp horse when the pandemic closed down the camp in May. She has a long story and she just loves to talk about herself—blah blah blah. And there is a miniature horse named June who also came from Lollypop Farm in October. June's previous person got too old to take care of her. June doesn't like to talk about that, but she says The Woman is good for treats and scratches. We'll see. The barn seems full to me now, and I hope The Woman won't bring anymore homeless critters here.

Also, I have noticed two dogs here that are not rescues. They are something called therapy dogs, but they are also out of work due to the pandemic. Supposedly if you pet them you will feel better. I do not trust them one bit.

I've heard a rumor that there is another cat that The Woman let move into the house a few years ago, and that cat is now the boss of the two dogs and also The Woman and The Man who live there! Can you believe that?

The Woman says she hopes I will stay and that I will not break her heart and get lost or run away or anything. I am the boss of me, though, and I will decide what I do next. For now, I'm staying in the warm hay and eating the good food.

I am sure you will get many letters and I understand if you can't respond. I do appreciate your concern for all cats everywhere, and on behalf of working cats who finally get homes, I'm sending you wishes for a very good holiday.

Regards,
Oreo Cookie

Dear Oreo Cookie,

Yours is the first letter I received responding to the Owl Light article I wrote. Thank you so much for such a nice letter.

I hope you stay with The Woman. It sounds like you have many other interesting friends there. Plus, if you get fed two meals a day on time, that's perfect.

I became an indoor cat when Barb got me. I was about one-year-old when I got lost and was living in the meadow behind her house. I was covered in mud and had burdocks all over me. The hawks were swooping down at me. Another lady actually found me, got me cleaned up, and gave me to Barb.

We do look like we have the same ancestors. Barb keeps telling me how handsome I am, and I know she would say the same about you.

Continued on page 19

Oreo Cookie from page 18

Enjoy your holidays, and I believe you have found the perfect home.

Keep well and keep reading,
Tarzan

Dear Oreo Cookie,

Barb wants me to ask if you would allow your fan letter to me to be published in the Owl Light? She thinks it might be helpful for Lollypop Farm. They do so much for our animal friends. What do you think?

Your buddy,
Tarzan



Oreo Cookie surveying his domain from the loft.

Dear Tarzan,

The Woman says it would be fine and nice if there is space. She likes to help all the animals and all the animal shelters, too.

BTW, The Woman is very trainable. When I meow at her, she now leaves me a little extra treat. Also, to keep her motivated, I sometimes come a little closer to her. You can see, I am very beautiful. They say I am about three years old, so I am very wise, too.

Yours in warmth,
Oreo Cookie

Dear Oreo Cookie,

Thanks for letting Barb see if the Owl Light would like to publish our emails. As you can see, they were thrilled to hear from you and your human.

Your Buddy,
Tarzan

A special thank you to "The Woman" (Anne Ruflin) for assisting with the email correspondence and for taking my photo to share. To learn more about Lollypop Farm and other animals they care for, visit them online (have a human help you) at lollypop.org!

SEARCHING FOR A FOREVER HOME!

Meet Mr. Tumnus

You don't have to go far to find this fairytail creature. He is here, just waiting for you to take him home! Meet Mr. Tumnus! He is a peach of a man and loves attention. What does he love more than attention you may ask, well we have an answer. FEATHER TOYS! This guy goes wild for feather toys. He also loves having his chin rubbed and his tom cat cheeks scratched. This guy was recently neutered and may calm down eventually, but so far he is not a fan of sharing attention with other male cats. He also is not a fan of dogs. He finds them repulsive, so if you have a canine companion, sadly Mr. Tumnus is not the one. He does great with female cats and humans! Mr. Tumnus would be good with kids as well. If you would like to add this feather loving friend to your family, please contact the shelter to set up an appointment to meet him!



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Do you have a fun story about your pet that might be of interest to other pet owners? Or a pet in need of a forever home? Feel free to share it (along with a picture). Email to editor@canadicepress.com

Pakko's Post-Holiday Celebratory Song



TUNE IN MONTHLY FOR PAKO DA PUDGY PIGEON!

By PIPER DAVIS





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POETRY By WENDY SCHREINER

Winter's Chill

Winter's Chill
fills the air
snowflakes fluttering
all around
intricate patterns
about
each one different
from the next
kids make
snow angels
in the snow
me, I prefer
hot cocoa
and marshmallows
and being warm inside
away from
Winter's Chill



Wendy Schreiner resides in Warsaw, NY with her husband Dave and two adorable shih tzus Daisy Mae and Paisley Rae. She is a freelance writer for Warsaw's Country Courier and is a substitute teacher at Warsaw Central School District. She also facilitates Warsaw's Write Connection writing club at the Warsaw Public Library which is in its tenth year.

Museum Association of NY Announces
Finger Lakes Museum as Partner for
Building Capacity, Creating Sustainability,
Growing Accessibility

Branchport, NY – The Museum Association of New York (MANY) has announced that 98 museums from across New York State have been selected to participate in “Building Capacity, Creating Sustainability, Growing Accessibility”. This IMLS CARES Act grant project will be working with museums impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, training over 200 staff on best practices for sharing their collections and reaching audiences virtually. The Finger Lakes Museum is a proud recipient of this grant project and, over the next 2 years, will be preparing content for the community with stories of how the Finger Lakes region is unique and special.

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services [CAGML-246991-OMLS-20].

The Finger Lakes Museum is a 501(c)(3), not-for-profit organization and is chartered by the New York State Education Department. See www.FingerLakesMuseum.org for more information or to contribute.

About IMLS

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's approximately 120,000 libraries and 35,000 museums and related organizations. The agency's mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Its grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit www.imls.gov and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.




About MANY

The Museum Association of New York inspires, connects, and strengthens New York's cultural community statewide by advocating, educating, collaborating, and supporting professional standards and organizational development. MANY ensures that New York State museums operate at their full potential as economic drivers and essential components of their communities. To learn more, visit www.nysmuseums.org and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.



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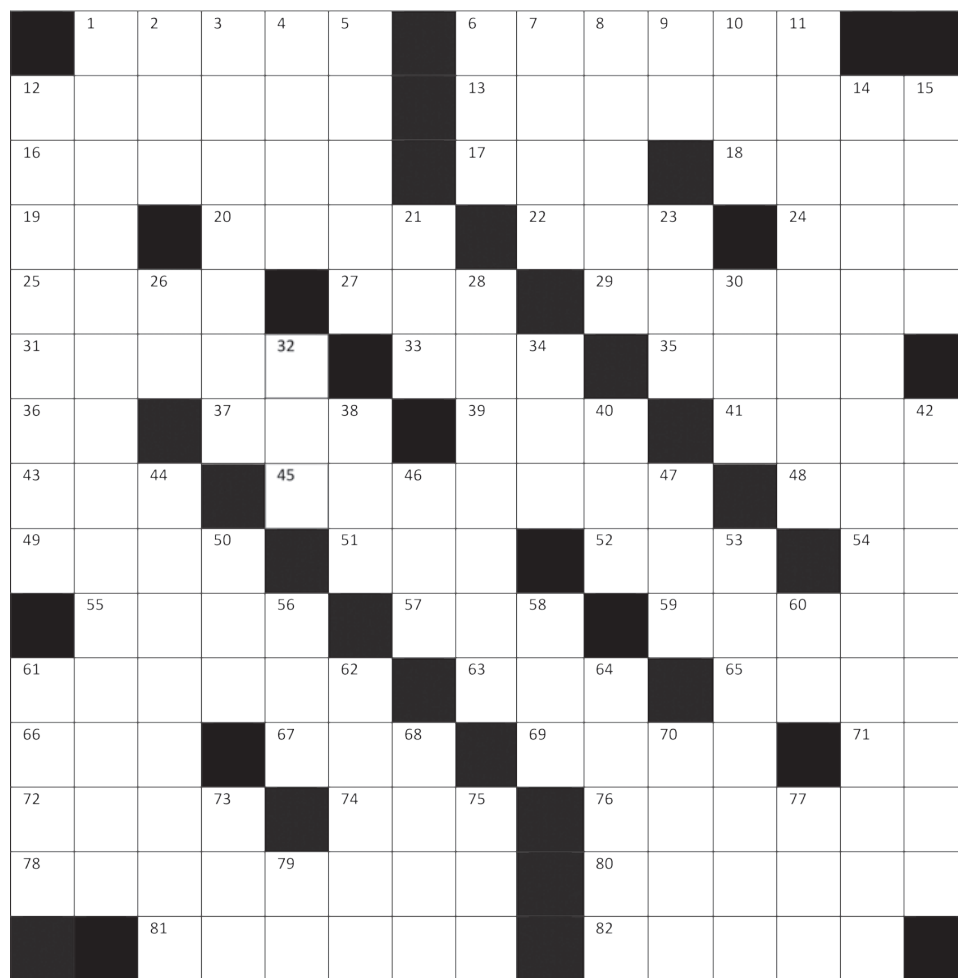
ACROSS

- 1 An extremely easy task
- 6 Spring birds
- 12 Bird used in mines
- 13 "Fear of Flying" author, _____ Jong and Sgt. Friday portrayer Jack W_____
- 16 What ain't is a contraction for
- 17 New to Society
- 18 Brazen boldness
- 19 Part of a postal address
- 20 Federal workplace safety Org.
- 22 "on in years"
- 24 Sweet _____
- 25 Lowers illumination
- 27 Hearing device
- 29 Performed on line
- 31 Close to the center
- 33 Green Bay Quarterback _____ on Rogers
- 35 TV, _____ Tube
- 36 Survey choice
- 37 Ohio city airport designation
- 39 Charged atom
- 41 Great lake
- 43 Jungfrau
- 45 Bird of the family with Martins and Saw-wings
- 48 Notable time period
- 49 What many people get to go to college
- 51 A tide (see 13 Across)
- 52 Lower right corner of Monopoly boards
- 54 Creator of the Grinch, Init.
- 55 Something easy
- 57 You get a charge out of it in the water
- 59 One instructed in mysteries
- 61 Expressed an opinion
- 63 Family member

- 65 Answer to "What would you use to cut that limb?"
- 66 Type of welding
- 67 Send money before receiving goods, Abbr.
- 69 _____ Abby
- 71 Prefix meaning again
- 72 High School Junior, generally
- 74 Maker of ATMs
- 76 Commotion or Uproar
- 78 They give you shots
- 80 Self esteem and something recently legalized
- 81 CIA agents
- 82 Propel a dingy toward

DOWN

- 1 Two common birds
- 2 Chemical suffix
- 3 Tiny part of a min.
- 4 Bing _____ by
- 5 Small port or harbor
- 6 Some states
- 7 Popular cookie
- 8 Widely read book
- 9 Hip Hop artist, Init.
- 10 Old horse
- 11 Where one could buy conk shells
- 12 Four major points on a compass are known as _____ Directions
- 14 Two colorful birds
- 15 Past tense of an old cure
- 21 Highest bond rating
- 23 "A little _____ will do ya"
- 26 Postal designation for a midwestern state
- 28 Train tracks substructure
- 30 First person to break the 4 minute mile Sebastian _____



- 32 Literary Initials
- 34 Expensive watch _____ ex
- 38 Female sheep
- 40 Holiday drink
- 42 Two cardinal directions
- 44 Persons with uncontrollable fears or anxiety
- 46 Face on a penny
- 47 Great sorrow
- 50 Island off Cape Cod, _____ tucket
- 53 Very common bird
- 56 type of rally
- 58 Young boy
- 60 Nazi industrialist credited with saving Jews, Init.
- 61 Horse fodder
- 62 Dimly lit
- 64 Table
- 68 PC brand
- 70 Big name in Ratchet Straps
- 73 Puppy bite
- 75 Democratic Party operative around the time of Johnson and Carter, Init.
- 77 German grandfather
- 79 Symbol for nickel



George Urich is a retired Xerox engineer living in Canandaigua, NY. He solves and creates crossword puzzles to keep his brain active. A new puzzle will be shared each month, for the puzzling enjoyment of Owl Light readers. Email George at gurich@frontier.com

History from page 15

"The period in which Grandpa grew and prospered corresponded with the crescendo of the American railroads. The railroad did not offer me the lifelong opportunity that it did to Grandpa, but the railroad, with its many attendant experiences, did offer me an exciting, enlightening and happy beginning. I learned many things from the railroad – about machines and personalities and their meshing together, about attention to duty and punctuality. I reveled in the pastimes it provided – walking the track, riding the rails, diving off the trestle, fishing in the pond and exploring the railroad property. Ah! The railroad, what memories...".

Less than two weeks after Mr. Covey died the family endured another blow when on September 23, his widow succumbed to pneumonia. Jack's Uncle George, his mother's brother, died later that same day. Not surprisingly, Jack wrote little of this heartbreaking time.

He and his parents continued to live in Hemlock until Jack graduated from Hemlock High School; he was valedictorian of the class of 1935. He went on to graduate from the University of Rochester, class of 1939, with a Bachelor of Science degree. He married Madlyn Horacek and fathered five children. His employment history included some years at Kodak and a stint as professor at the U of R Institute of Optics before founding his own optics-producing company in 1967, Velmex.

Continued on back

Livonia Kevin W. Honeoye

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Recently Passed Legislation Further Establishes New York State's Commitment to the Environment

CUOMO SIGNS LEGISLATION TO PREVENT LARGE SCALE ILLEGAL WASTE DUMPING Legislation Designates A Scheme to Defraud by Disposal of Solid Waste; Imposes Stiffer Penalties on Offenders

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo on December 15, 2020 signed legislation (S6758-B/A10803a) to strengthen penalties against the illegal disposal of construction debris, demolition debris, and other hazardous substances. The legislation also designates fraudulent schemes involving the disposal of solid waste as a new crime. These strengthened penalties will provide strong new tools for law enforcement to use as they work to stop unlawful waste dumping activities.

"Illegal dumping is a significant problem and too often its costs are unjustly passed on to the community," Governor Cuomo said. "Not only does this legislation strengthen criminal penalties to ensure sanctions do not simply become another cost of doing business, but it further discourages large-scale illegal dumping by holding developers and waste haulers accountable for creating the problem in the first place."

With this signing, a number of technical changes to legislative language have been agreed to following negotiations with the legislature. The law goes into effect on January 1.

Senator Todd Kaminsky, Chair of the Environmental Conservation Committee said, "As Long Islanders have seen repeatedly, the previous criminal penalties did little to deter bad actors from dumping waste illegally. For too long, Long Island, and especially its minority communities, has been a dumping ground of hazardous waste from New York City's construction industry. It threatens the safety and the environment of the whole region. This bill will finally give prosecutors the tools they need to go after these very serious offenses. Thank you to Governor Cuomo and District Attorney Sini for helping set new standards that protect our communities and its resources."

Assemblyman Steve Englebright, Chair of the Committee on Environmental Conservation said, "Dumping of waste on Long Island has been a problem for a very long time. It is particularly dangerous as many wastes are toxic and end up in our water supply. This new law creates new tougher penalties including a felony to help deter this activity. I want to thank Senate Sponsor Todd Kaminsky, Suffolk County District Attorney Tim Sini, and Governor Cuomo for working together

NYS REGULATIONS TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS NOW FINALIZED Key Milestone in Implementation of Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act

Regulations Combat Climate Change by Requiring Decreases in Methane and Other Greenhouse Gases 40 Percent by 2030, 85 Percent by 2050

New York's Climate Act Sets Nation's Most Comprehensive Greenhouse Gas Limits

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the finalization of regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions statewide and implement the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. As the first regulatory requirement of the Climate Act, the adoption of these regulations marks a critical milestone in realizing New York's nation-leading clean energy and climate agenda.

"New York has firmly established itself as a national leader in combatting climate change and with these new regulations in place, we are once again blazing the trail to a cleaner and greener future," Governor Cuomo said. "Climate change is here, it is real, and in the absence of federal leadership, states need to step up and implement real solutions that protect our environment, public health and economy. By implementing these ambitious emission limits on greenhouse gases, New York isn't only taking a tremendous step towards reducing its carbon footprint, but we have set an example for the rest of the country to follow as well."

The regulations, which will be effective after publication in the State Register on December 30, establish limits on the statewide emissions of greenhouse gases 40 percent by 2030, 85 percent by 2050, as well emissions associated with imported electricity and fossil fuels. The greenhouse gases covered by this regulation are carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and nitrogen trifluoride. As required by the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, these emissions will be measured in carbon dioxide-equivalent units using a 20-year Global Warming Potential. The final regulation includes a table of all affected gases and their carbon dioxide equivalent value.

Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner and CLCPA Climate Action Council Co-Chair Basil Seggos said, "Today's announcement marks the successful completion of the first regulatory requirement of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, laying the foundation of New York's climate strategy. Greenhouse gases from a variety of sources are accelerating the costly economic, public health, and environmental impacts of climate change here in New York and across the globe. Directed by Governor Cuomo and with strong partners across the state, we will continue to advance New York's vision for a more sustainable future."



Acting President and CEO of NYSEERDA and CLCPA Climate Action Council Co-Chair Doreen M. Harris said, "Under Governor Cuomo's leadership, New York State is sending a strong signal to other states across the country that we remain committed to our aggressive climate goals. These final regulations will inform our State's scoping plan and help formulate the strategies needed to execute it as we work diligently to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - ensuring that every New Yorker will benefit from a clean, green, and healthier future."

The regulations are available on DEC's website here and will be published in the State Register on Dec. 30. DEC released the draft regulations for public comment in August.

Signed into law in 2019, Governor Cuomo's nation-leading climate agenda is the most aggressive climate and clean energy initiative in the nation, calling for an orderly and just transition to clean energy that creates jobs and continues fostering a green economy as New York State builds back better as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. The CLCPA places New York on a path to reach its mandated goals of economy wide carbon neutrality and achieving a zero-emissions electricity sector by 2040, faster than any other state.

The initiative builds on New York's unprecedented ramp-up of clean energy, including a \$3.9-billion investment in 67 large-scale renewable projects across the state, the creation of more than 150,000 jobs in New York's clean energy sector, a commitment to develop over 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind by 2035, and 1,800 percent growth in the distributed solar sector since 2011. New York's Climate Action Council is working on a scoping plan to build on this progress and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 85 by 2050, while ensuring that at least 40 percent of the benefits of clean energy investments benefit disadvantaged communities, and advancing progress toward the State's 2025 energy efficiency target of reducing on-site energy consumption by 185 TBtus.

For more information about the CLCPA and the Climate Action Council, visit www.climate.ny.gov.

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Solution to Owl Light Puzzle 9 (found on page 21)

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36	N	A	C	L	E	37	I	O	N	40	E	R	I	E		
43	A	L	P	44	S	W	A	L	L	O	W	47	E	R	A	
49	L	O	A	N	50	E	B	B	51	G	O	S	52	D	S	
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DEC ANNOUNCES CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM GRANTS

Funding for 50 Land Trusts to Protect Open Spaces, Improve Water Quality, and Support Local Economies

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos today announced more than \$2.2 million in Conservation Partnership Program grants for 50 not-for-profit land trusts across the state. A total of 69 grants funded through New York's Environmental Protection Fund will leverage an additional \$2.6 million in private and local funding to support projects that protect water quality and farmland, boost public access for outdoor recreation, and conserve open space to benefit community health, tourism, and economic development. The Land Trust Alliance administers the Conservation Partnership Program in coordination with DEC.

"Over the last year, New Yorkers young and old have been exploring the outdoors in record numbers," said Commissioner Seggos. "Land trusts across the state help to preserve and manage some of the special, natural places that the public has come to love. The grants announced today support forest management, conservation agriculture, coastal and wetlands restoration, and other activities that are essential to help address climate change and preserve the ecosystems we depend on. We commend the Land Trust Alliance for administering this important program."

In addition, the \$2.2 million in Conservation Partnership Program grants and \$2.6 million in private and local funding will increase state lands' resilience to the changing climate and contribute to climate solutions by storing carbon. Natural climate solutions will have a significant role in addressing risks associated with climate change.

The grant awards announced today range from \$3,161 to \$100,000, and include grantees from: the Western New York/Finger Lakes/Southern Tier – (total \$268,393); Central New York/Mohawk Valley – (total \$170,450); North Country – (total \$351,649); Capital District – (total \$647,946); Mid-Hudson – (total \$636,644); New York City – (total \$24,418); and Long Island – (total \$150,500). This year's grantees include 34 accredited land trusts that have secured independent verification that their work and operations meet high standards for land conservation, stewardship, and nonprofit management. Accredited grantees include Adirondack Land Trust, Agricultural Stewardship Association, Cazenovia Preservation Foundation, Champlain Area Trails, Columbia Land Conservancy, Dutchess Land Conservancy, Finger Lakes Land Trust, Genesee Land Trust, Greene Land Trust, Huyck Preserve, Hudson Highlands Land Trust, Indian River Lakes Conservancy, Lake George Land Conservancy, Mianus River Gorge, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, Mohonk Preserve, Northeast Wilderness Trust, North Shore Land Alliance, Open Space Institute, Orange County Land Trust, Otsego Land Trust, Peconic Land Trust, Rensselaer Land Trust, Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, Saratoga PLAN (Saratoga Preserving Land and Nature), Scenic Hudson Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Thousand Islands Land Trust, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, Wallkill Valley Land Trust, Westchester Land Trust, Western New York Land Conservancy, Winnakee Land Trust, and Woodstock Land Conservancy.

Since the Conservation Partnership Program's inception in 2002, and including this year's grants, the program has awarded 997 grants totaling \$21.7 million to 91 land trusts. Cumulatively, the State's investment has leveraged \$23.8 million in additional funding from local and private sources.

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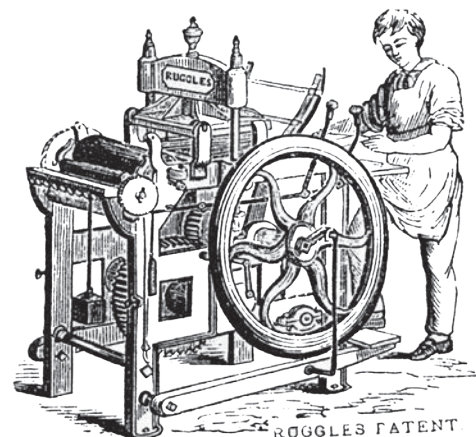
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Fantastic Flora

Holly—Aquifoliaceae

By SALLY L. WHITE

Most likely, one of the plants decorating your halls this past month was the bright and beautiful holly. The holly growing at our front doors, with glossy leaves and red berries, is probably English or European holly. In the milder climates of England and southern Europe, where it is native, this holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) can grow into a tree some 70 feet tall.

Living in Colorado, I saw only small twigs of that actual holly on sale each year; here it's easier to find. Other places can have too much; English holly has become an invasive "weed" in the Pacific Northwest (where it's commercially cultivated) and California. In New York, it seems that rarely happens.

Of the seven species occurring in New York, six are native, but only two are known from our region. With its evergreen leaves and red berries and large size, American holly most resembles the familiar English holly. This species, *Ilex opaca*, is the most common native holly nationwide, but it naturally occurs in our area only from eastern New York down to Long Island.

Close relatives provide other options: winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), with its red to orange fruits, occurs sporadically in western NY and across the Finger Lakes. It's known to occur in Ontario and Monroe counties, for example, but not reported in Yates. Although it drops its leaves come fall, it retains winter interest because of the fruits. These also make it a great plant for wildlife. Holly berries are especially popular with birds, but berries of all species are toxic to humans (and dogs!).

Other native species of holly occur in milder areas, especially in southern states. For anyone looking for the upside of climate change, these southern hollies may be a gardening opportunity, especially those found in nearby states. Inkberry (*I. glabra*), smooth winter-berry (*I. laevigata*), mountain winterberry (*I. montana*), and others could step up, along with American holly, as our landscapes shift.



The year-round greenery and spectacular berries of hollies brighten our winter landscape while providing birds with a winter-time treat.

Holiday decorating is over! Why talk about holly now? If you wish to emulate those Olde English Christmases, you'll leave your holiday greens in place a bit longer, as they did. In fact, greens were so important in freshening homes that different plants were used throughout the year, as noted in Robert Herrick's poem, *Down with the Rosemary and Bays*.

The Christmas greens remained in place until Candlemas Eve, February 1st, when they were burned and replaced with another winter evergreen, common boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*), a familiar plant used in hedges (also not native).

Down with the rosemary and bays,
Down with the mistletoe;
Instead of holly now upraise
The greener box for show.

Natives are usually better, but whichever holly you choose, you'll be giving wildlife a treat. Our native species prefer moist to wet soils and require a male pollinator nearby to ensure lots of those red fruits to brighten your halls. Their beauty makes them popular, so breeders developed a variety of cultivars you'll be able to choose from if you decide to purchase some for your landscape. ❁

Sally L White, a recent transplant from Colorado, is still adjusting her botanical expectations to this new environment. Although she grew up in the Southern Tier, that was before she studied botany in college and grad school. Much is familiar but she finds even more to remember and relearn. This column is part of her effort to expand her understanding of our local flora.

History from page 21

In 1983 Velmex purchased the empty Hemlock School building on Main Street where Jack had long-ago attended. At first thought, Jack considered whether the building might be used for manufacturing, but that venture never came to be. After upgrading the five-decades-old building with a new heating system, windows, and doors, the Jack Evans Community Center was created. In 1996 the building was donated to the town of Livonia.

As maintenance costs escalated the town, in the fall of 2016, decided to close the building. Two score local residents lamented that decision and over the course of eighteen months the building was purchased, refurbished, and rechristened the Little Lakes Community Center. Today the building houses several enterprises, including an artist's studio, a photographer, a yoga instructor, a dance studio, a community meeting room and catering kitchen, and a local history room.

Jack Evans' legacy and vision lives on. He had a generous affection for his hometown and the scenes of his youth. His death on September 20, 2008, was mourned by many. His obituary noted that "Jack's philanthropic interest included sponsorship of engineering students at the University of Rochester; donations to the town of Richmond recreational facilities adjacent to Sandy Bottom Beach; and local community sports teams." ❁



Above, Hemlock School as it looks today. Photo courtesy of Lance Michel and Gina Horan—Studio 23 (currently located in room 23 of LLCC); and (L) in 1930, one year after its completion. Photo courtesy of Joy Lewis

Joy Lewis has served as Town of Richmond, Historian since 2013. She offers reflections on the history of Richmond, NY in every other issue of *Owl Light News*. The Honeoye-Richmond Historical Society Museum is open by appointment only. Please call Joy Lewis at 585-229-7303 to set up a time to visit. Social Distancing, including wearing masks, is in force at the Town Hall.