



# Finger Lakes



# Weather with Drew Montreuil

## FLX Weather Offers Weather Predictions Focused on the Finger Lakes

EILEEN PERKINS shoots the breeze with DREW MONTREUIL of FLX WEATHER

The first Earth Day, back in 1970, set into motion a huge shift in the way that we view the world, awakening an awareness of how we share our environment. It sent out a clarion call to reform our mindless utilization of the earth's resources. Each year, on Earth Day, we commemorate our connection with Mother Earth, but there is a daily way to acknowledge this connection, and that is by simply paying more than passing attention to our weather. For us gardeners and farmers of the Finger Lakes, reliable weather prediction isn't simply a matter of curiosity; it can bear on protecting our bounty from threatening weather extremes. We are fortunate to have a weather service that is actually dedicated to our area!

I discovered FLX Weather after moving to the Finger Lakes, and our family now considers Drew Montreuil, the meteorologist at the center of it all, our "weather guy." We were immediately impressed to find a weather tracking service that did not seem to be bolstered by hype and drama, one that sorted out the seeming mysterious aspects of what we were witnessing and made a point to designate the likely reliability of some forecasts, especially when very complex influences were in force. These attributes communicated to us that FLX Weather is apparently no ordinary weather service. Drew agreed to introduce himself and share information about FLX Weather with *Owl Light News* readers. I was quite pleased that he was so forthcoming about his experience and himself as a person.



Please tell us a little bit about yourself, Drew. What personal qualities caused you to become interested in a career focused on the weather in the first place?

Weather has truly been a life-long passion of mine. As far back as I can remember, I've been fascinated by the weather, keeping records of it, and trying to learn more about it. I've always been very statistically and scientifically oriented. It became my career goal in 4th grade when a local TV meteorologist visited my school. I held that goal with an unwavering determination through middle and high school and launched my first weather website in 2006 as a Junior in High School. I had no idea that I would still be running an expanded version of that site fifteen years later, let alone making a living off it!

You have a B.S. degree in Meteorology from SUNY Oswego, and a M.S. degree in Atmospheric Sciences from Cornell University. Your education points to a real appreciation for our Finger Lakes area. What prompted you to settle here?



You mention in your online bio that, in addition to your weather business, you are the dad of four young boys, and that you and your wife run a goat milk soap business called Ye Olde Goat Cart. That sounds like a bit of a hectic life! What does your routine look like?

Yes, life can certainly be hectic with all that we are juggling! I started working full time on my own businesses in 2018 and am still figuring out strategies for keeping everything organized and efficient. My day-to-day routine can vary quite a bit depending on what is going on with the weather. On a normal day, I start off with a lengthy period of forecasting, blogging, and updating my forecasts. I'll have another forecasting session in the afternoon, once the new model data become available. Usually, I finish up with a bit more forecasting for some of my clients in the evening.

Continued on page 6

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## FROM THE NEWSROOM

\*ON THE FRONT COVER: This issue's front cover features a rain storm near Groton, NY. Image courtesy of Drew Montreuil, FLX Weather

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## Owl Light Literary: Turning Points—Summer 2021

See advance sale information on page 23  
or order online at [owllightnews.com/turningpoints/](http://owllightnews.com/turningpoints/).

Turning Points is Canadice Press' first stand-alone literary journal. We want to take it slow and give it our best, given the challenges of 2020 that are continuing into 2021. We will post information 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!

## Letters to the Editor and Opinion Pieces

Letters to the editor and longer opinion pieces can be emailed to [editor@canadicepress.com](mailto: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. Short, concise letters under 500 words are more likely to be published. We look forward to hearing from you.



Where Inspiration & Inquiry Converge

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[owllightnews.com](http://owllightnews.com)

Published Monthly by Canadice Press

ISSN 2690-5604 (Print) • ISSN 2690-5620 (Online)

Available by subscription (print and online pdf).

\*Submissions via email to: [editor@canadicepress.com](mailto:editor@canadicepress.com)

or—last resort—via our postal address.

5584 Canadice Lake Road, Springwater, NY 14560

• Copy Edit: Emily Pecora

• Technical Support: Sally Gardner and T.Touris

  @CanadicePress



Canadice Press is a print alternative/arts press. We publish *Owl Light News* and *Owl Light Literary*—a literary/arts journal (inaugural issue out in 2021). Community news content and our community calendar are available online (with no paywall or intrusive popups) at [owllightnews.com](http://owllightnews.com).

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- Our monthly crossword puzzle from George Urich continues this issue with puzzle # 12. Thank you George for a year of puzzles. (Can you believe it has already been a year?)

Thank you to ALL of the incredible contributors (and behind the scenes folks) who make the Owl the Owl!

## SUBMISSIONS—to [editor@canadicepress.com](mailto: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 accept 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.

## Tunnel Vision

I am seeing winter as a long tunnel, with the light of spring, of summer, glowing in the visible distance, getting brighter as the days get longer and the times of darkness shorter. I don't recall thinking of this analogy in the past, so perhaps it goes beyond the mere changing of the seasons and encompasses more. These have been dark times. They are dark not only from the perspective of those living them, but from the perspective of future generations—children too young to fully understand, children as yet unborn—looking back in time, back into the tunnel.

Yet, there is a light now that radiates outward. A warmth present in the turning of the seasons that offers hope. Recently, when the temperature warmed into the high sixties, I watched as the honey bees ventured out in search of nectar, and freedom. These are the winter bees, who live longer than their summer counterparts and sacrifice themselves to the wellbeing of the spring brood. Still, they welcome the freedom of flight after months clustered and confined by the cold. Like a switch flipped, the ice recedes from area lakes and ponds and the life below picks up speed, while the greening world above is reflected on the water's surface. It takes so little warmth and light to melt away the vestiges of winter.

In many ways we have been immune here to the travesty of these cold times. We have been able to isolate comfortably in a way not accessible to so many. Yet, to truly escape it all we would have to imagine a world even smaller than the world in which we live. We would have to pretend that poverty and prejudice are imaginary constructs. That living in a democracy is equivalent to equality and freedom for all. We would have to forget that there are oppressors and oppressed—not only in our time, but stretching back to the earliest periods in the history of humankind.

We would have to denounce social media—all media—to stay protected and unaware in our safe cocoons of ignorance. Imagining, instead, a reality where health care workers are not on the frontlines; a reality where everyday people are not dying every day. We would have to fictionalize overheard stories about trips to drugstores and domes for vaccination 1...and vaccination 2. We would have to look to a future where robots are already manufacturing necessities and luxuries for daily consumption rather than the tens of thousands of workers who perform these menial tasks day in and day out so that we can have packages conveniently dropped at our doorsteps. We would have to forget.

More than that, once we reemerged we would have to turn away from food lines and homeless people in the streets, and turn a blind eye to storefronts dark and shuttered. We would have to look through and beyond the plexiglass panels that divide us. Ignore the bottles of sanitizer and the signs that tell us to "social distance," "wear masks," or, in the case of Florida, to "vacation responsibly."

We would have to pretend too much.

It has been a darker winter than most and yet...yet, it already seems brighter in so many ways. There is something about spring. We can feel the closeness of the sun even as the temperature fluctuates and the warmth that melted the ice from the surface of our pond is replaced, again, with a biting wind from the north. Sap drips from buckets and the sweet steam rises into the air. Fields and woodlands are filled with the sounds of migratory birds not heard or seen for months. I stop to listen, wishing I knew who offered up this, or that, magical melody. The building of nests has begun. Creatures are again venturing tentatively out of their winter shelters. There is activity everywhere.

I waver—unpredictable, like the weather— between overcast memories and a euphoria that lightens my steps, that energizes everything I do. It is a tentative energy that intensifies on warm days and is tempered by the cooler nights and days between. Still, it is there. With the light of spring, of summer glowing in the visible distance, getting brighter as the days get longer and the times of darkness shorter...we step cautiously out of the tunnel into the light. 🦉

D.E. Bentley—Editor, *Owl Light News*



## "The Search for Osteologist Charles Edmund Mirguet"

(David Pierce—February 2021, front page)

brings to the surface ancestral connections among readers.



First, I want to thank you for putting me in touch with David Pierce. To my surprise, David's wife is a cousin of mine who I have had no contact with in probably thirty or more years. The article has given me information on my grandfather that I never knew because I was born 8 years after his death. Contacting Mr. Pierce has opened a whole new world to me and my family about a man I knew very little about and pictures we have never seen of both the Mirguet and McMaster family. Thank you for your wonderful newspaper and the noteworthy articles. Keep up the good work.

—Patrick McMaster

Hello, Charles Mirguet is my great grandfather, thank you so much for this article! My father, Patrick McMaster told me that he has been in touch with you [David Pierce] and you are corresponding; that is fantastic. He could not wait to tell me about this and you absolutely are giving him a thrill, thank you again!

—Greg McMaster

Thank you so much for this article. Charles Edmund Mirguet is my 2nd great grandfather of my paternal side. Being an adoptee, and only have reunited with cousins on my paternal side three years ago. These stories have filled in the blanks that I missed out on for the 45 years till I was "found".

It is stories like the one Mr. Pierce has written, that give me insight to the rich family history of the ancestors of my birth family (on both sides) and gives me insight to where some of my interests come from. I have developed a love of archeology (and have during my vacations traveled to various archeological sites around the world), and in my professional life do work with bones, as an orthopedic nurse.

Adam L. Davis

Greetings!

I write to you in search of a connection to David Pierce, who wrote an article appearing in your February 2021 paper about my great-great grandfather, Edmund Mirguet.

His article comports with my family lore and I thank him for his work. There are questions, however, as my d'émolument research has run into some roadblocks and he may have uncovered sources that have escaped me.

Thank you for your attention to my request. You have a lovely publication! I live in Wisconsin and it is always good to hear news from home.

Best wishes, Ruth Ann Schmitt



## A reader comments on "The Fallen Man" (March 2021, page 3)

Hi, I just read "The Fallen Man" in the March 2021 issue of *Owl Light News*. It is lovely. Thank you for sharing it in the paper.

Isadora Kunitz,, Grateful Subscriber  
Rochester, NY

Thank You from the Editor of *Owl Light News*!  
We appreciate your thoughtful words and continued support of our monthly newspaper and contributors.

## Letters to the Editor and Opinion Pieces

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. Short, concise letters under 500 words are more likely to be published.

We look forward to hearing from you.

# Pathways to Democracy

The Issue of Policing: A Draft NIFI Publication for Community Deliberation

DOUG GARNAR



“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”

– Martin Luther King, Jr.—1963 “I have a Dream Speech”

**T**his past summer the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Rayshard Brooks—all in a long string of killings by police officers—led to massive demonstrations by citizens of all colors voicing their concerns about the unjust treatment of racial minorities.

Now, the majority of American citizens, including police chiefs and police officers, are calling for change. The Federal government has taken some steps for review and reform. But major decisions will have to be made at the state and local levels. Making such decisions would be best served by thoughtful deliberative discussion involving a wide spectrum of community members, elected officials, law enforcement professionals, people of color, and others.

While communities differ, nearly all of them face complex questions including the following:

- What kinds of changes would make our communities safer and more just for everyone?
- What law enforcement functions do we value and want to enhance and what ones do we wish to change?
- How can we enable local police depts. to provide adequate training, transparency and accountability to serve all members of the community equitably and well?
- How can some community issues be handled without involving law enforcement and how can we be sure that these alternatives are reliable, effective and practical?

What follows is a “draft” publication by the National Issues Forums Institute (nifi.org). The hope is that interested communities would use the following deliberation to promote a major conversation on the issue of policing. NIFI has developed a three-option approach to start the conversation. But it is important to understand that it can be modified as a community sees fit.



The three options include:

## OPTION ONE—Increase Accountability

This option argues that a law-abiding community needs police who are well-trained, thoughtful, and accountable, and who do not rely exclusively on force and intimidation. To do so requires a rethinking of how police are hired, trained, supervised, and disciplined. Consider the following actions:

- Officers who fail to report suspected police misconduct should be fired and those who do should be promoted.
- End access to military grade weaponry.
- Make police disciplinary records available in a public database so journalists and citizens have access to them and that officers with repeated offenses will not be hired elsewhere.
- Create diverse, multiracial and independent review boards that can investigate complaints from the public and recommend that an officer be disciplined or removed if warranted.

As with all NIFI forums, drawbacks are provided for each action.

A primary drawback of this option is that many of these reforms have been tried in the past with little success. Unless we understand the effects of racism in law enforcement and significantly reduce police department responsibilities, abusive policing will continue.

## OPTION TWO—Confront Persistent Racial Discrimination in Policing

This option argues that law enforcement agencies, like other institutions reflect a long history of constant racial injustice/discrimination. Police behaviors suspecting minority groups are not just the behavior of a few rogue law enforcement people. We must recognize widespread racial discrimination and biased thinking among police. Consider the following:

- Transform police education to put less training on the use of weapons and more focus on understanding the impact of racial prejudice and underlying problems facing a community the police serve.
- Reorganize police departments and make all officers reapply to serve in new precincts focused on non-violent/unbiased law enforcement.
- Stiffen police recruiting requirements and conduct extensive background checks to weed applicants with a history of racial bias.
- Require officers to live in the communities they serve so they develop strong ties with the residents.
- Establish truth/reconciliation commissions to conduct open public hearings that expose instances of police abuse/discrimination and which provide police officers and victims an opportunity to talk together to find a better path forward.

This guide includes counterpoints for each action.

A major drawback of this option is that while we should fire officers who abuse and mistreat citizens, we should not assume all officers are racists. By stereotyping all officers, we alienate those who are well-intentioned and want to work with communities to end misconduct and reform policing practices.

## OPTION THREE—De-Escalate to Create New Responses to Nonviolent Problems

Nonpartisan policy institutes and national newspapers have found more than ever that the vast majority of police work does not deal with traditional crime/violence; rather it deals with a whole host of social problems ranging from mental health crisis, drug abuse cases, to domestic disputes. This approach argues that such social problems should be dealt with by skilled community members, wellness and health professionals, and social services. Consider the following:

- Provide more counseling for police and first responders to help them handle the pressures of their work.
- Move truancy back to the schools.
- Move domestic abuse cases from law enforcement to special family counselors and courts.
- In first response practices include social workers, mental health/drug counselors to help ward off a rapid escalation scenario.
- Expand neighborhood watch programs that help communities protect themselves.

Counterpoints for each action are offered.

A primary drawback of this option is that often mental health, drug-related, and domestic disputes may lead to violence; counseling does not always work. Communities might be subject to more disorderly conduct, schools would be less safe and, as a result, there would be an increase in illegal drug use and petty crime.

In the early part of the 20th century, the American educational philosopher, John Dewey argued among other things that all education should be focused on creating engaged citizens. Dr. David Mathews, chair of the Kettering Foundation (kettering.org) has argued that democracy at its core is “problem solving: with engaged citizens being the major catalyst.” I am hopeful that some of the readers of the *Owl Light News*, might consider promoting in their local communities a deliberative conversation using the aforementioned draft on policing.

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# Supporting Black Farmers in the Finger Lakes and Southern Tier

ESSAY from **REBEKAH WILLIAMS**

This year during Black History Month, the New York State Agriculture Commissioner announced that up to \$50,000 in grant funding was available to support projects that engage communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BI-POC) involved in agriculture in the Genesee Valley. The funding was provided by the Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority (GVRMA), in collaboration with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. According to the press release circulated by NYSDAM the funding is meant to “strengthen New York State’s diverse agricultural industry and spur economic growth,” and the GVRMA “solicits applications each year to assist in the development of agriculture and agriculture-related businesses in nine counties in the Finger Lakes and Southern Tier regions: Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates.”

Black farmers and growers in the Finger Lakes and Southern Tier can also find support from other initiatives and networks in the state, including Black Farmer Fund (BFF), an emerging community investment fund that invests in Black food systems entrepreneurs in New York State. Black food systems entrepreneurs, including farmers, food distributors, caterers, restaurant owners, composters, vendors, and others were invited to complete an online form to be considered for deals capped at \$50,000 of blended capital (a mix of loans and grants). According to the BFF website: “Beyond making investments in these communities, we also emphasize building financial education and investment literacy and active involvement of the community when discussing and creating financing options.”

I am a facilitator and organizer with an organization called Food for the Spirit, which is seeking to connect with Black farmers, growers, and food pro-

cessors in this region. Through the development of a newly emerging NYS Black Farmers Co-op, Food for the Spirit will connect interested farmers with existing initiatives and networks, and provide them with support for marketing and product development.

An article on the *Food for the Spirit* website explains that in December 2020, a steering committee composed of farmers and stakeholders “met to discuss how a co-op might meaningfully address organizing and infrastructure gaps that have been barriers to Black farmers success. With only 139 Black farmers of the 57,000 NYS farmers accounted for by the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture, the steering committee found consensus around the idea of expanding those farmers’ visibility by way of umbrella marketing under a unique brand.”

At this point, some readers might be wondering what the big deal is. Why are people concerned with the low number of Black farmers in the state? Why are there resources and opportunities being developed explicitly for Black farmers?

According to Black Farmers United NYS, a statewide advocacy group of Black farmers and food systems actors:

“Black farmers have a long history in New York State, dating back to 1640 when the Dutch ceded sections of Manhattan stolen from the Lenape people to formerly enslaved black people to farm. By 1910, despite the legacy of slavery and racist policies, 295 black farmers lived and worked in New York State. Over the next 100 years, the number of black New Yorkers increased by 2,000% to 3,073,800. Yet the number of black New York farmers declined from 295 to 139, a 52% decrease.

Farming is big business in New York State—a \$42 billion industry on which every other sector relies. Yet black farmers’ contributions in New York are often undercounted, overlooked, and undervalued, to the detriment of the health and prosperity of black communities statewide. We have long felt the failures of food security approaches that relegate black people to consumers—ignoring the potential of black rural and urban farmers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, and other food and land workers who understand our needs and build power and wealth in our communities. Together, our group of more than 20 black farmers, educators, and food justice advocates from across the state developed 9 Solutions for Racial Inequity in New York Agriculture.”

Black Farmers United NYS is not alone in seeking to identify solutions for the declining numbers of Black farmers statewide. In 2020, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo pledged in his State of the State address “to ensure New York State agricultural industries represent an inclusive and viable career path for everyone.” Subsequently, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) established a Diversity and Racial Equity Workgroup, of which I am a member. The NYSDAM is working with members of the Diversity and Racial Equity Workgroup to create a strategic plan to address inequities in agriculture, and in March of 2021, we are in the midst of developing that plan.

Continued on page 12

## Pathways from page 4

The pandemic makes this a daunting task, but the use of Zoom can be a great venue option. Invitations to such a deliberation would include a spectrum of local citizens: police, elected officials, not for profits who deal with societal problems, representative minorities, people from various faith communities, young people, individuals impacted by the criminal justice system and by crime, the chamber of commerce, etc. The goal would be a wide cross section of people. A moderator/timekeeper/recorder are also needed. NIFI and Kettering would greatly appreciate hearing the results of such community forums, and are available to assist.

Finally, a book well worth reading on this complicated issue is Rosa Brooks’ new book, *Tangled Up in Blue*. Ms. Brooks has a law degree and was a tenured university professor who left her position to become a police officer. Her book is an amazing description of a difficult problem in our society and she offers some glimmers of hope. ✨

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](mailto:garnardc@sunybroome.edu)

Anyone interested in this draft forum should contact Doug Garnar—[garnardc@sunybroome.edu](mailto:garnardc@sunybroome.edu). He is also willing to help those interested in running this forum in their local community.

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# Side Street Sounds

## Friendship and Faith Keep Jim Drew on Track for CD Release



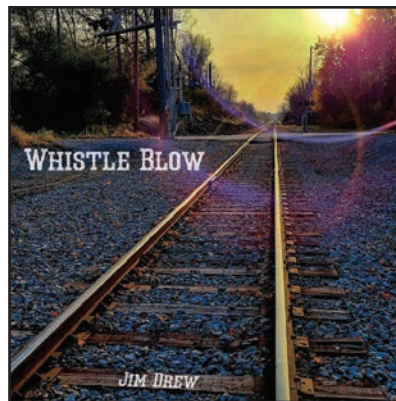
STEVE WEST

It's been a challenging year for singer/songwriter, Jim Drew. Like most musicians, the pandemic meant the loss of gigs and the income they brought. However, Covid-19 restrictions were just the start for him.

In April 2020, Jim suffered a stroke. The effects of the stroke initially left him struggling to speak and form coherent thoughts. With therapy, his speech has returned, but the correct words often still elude him. As Jim often puts it, "my brain gets crazy."

To add insult to injury, after working very hard in therapy to regain his driving privileges, Jim struck a deer on one of his first trips out, leaving his car totaled, and his family without any reliable transportation. Additionally, he was informed that a treatment to help improve his eyesight that had deteriorated due to the stroke was not covered by his insurance. Jim was faced with having to sell music equipment in order to pay for all those unexpected expenses. Friends helped find an affordable replacement for his car. In December, some fellow musicians organized a series of live-streamed concerts in support of a GoFundMe campaign for Jim's benefit. The concerts raised over \$2000 to help him pay for additional therapy. Jim had nearly completed a new album of songs before his stroke. Amazingly, his ability to play the guitar was largely unaffected, but his memory of the music he had written and recorded was foggy.

### Whistle Blow CD release March 20th



Jim Drew's guitar ability has been largely unaffected by the stroke. Image courtesy of Aaron Winters

He literally had to relearn his own songs. Over the course of the past year, he has been able to complete the album with the help of two of his Nashville idols, Randy Stonehill and Phil Keaggy, who both added vocals and instrumentals to the album. The hard work culminated in a CD release concert for the album—*Whistle Blow*—on March 20 at the Covenant Life Church in West Henrietta.

The one thing that has never wavered during the whole ordeal has been Jim's faith that he will be ok. Although it was written before his stroke, the song "It Always Come Back to Trusting You" is especially meaningful for him now. He believes that God has a plan, and he is simply fulfilling his part of that plan through his music. ✂

#### Live Music Updates:

The Town of Livonia has announced that there will be a full concert lineup at Vitale Park this summer. The Perry Farmer's Market will have live music each Saturday morning starting in June. National touring shows have also been announced at CMAC in Canandaigua and at Darien Lake. As the Covid-19 numbers continue to decline, more announcements are expected.

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

## FLX Weather from front

The soap business, our farmstead, and plenty of family time gets interspersed. When the weather gets active, though, it is constant monitoring, forecasting, and updating, no matter the time or day of the week.



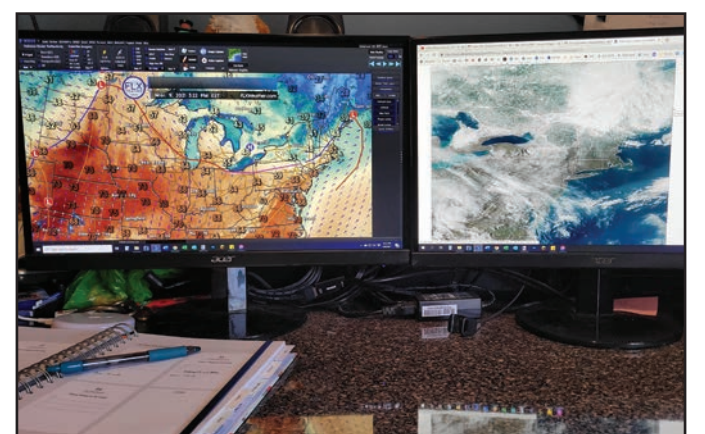
How do raising goats, soap making, and weather forecasting relate to one other in your lifestyle...we know how you got into weather. How about goats? Can you bring it together at your end?

The truth is that they do not relate too much, other than that the goats HATE rain and snow. Our soap business\* was a bit of a surprise to us, honestly! We first made soap for Christmas gifts one year. Everyone loved the soap and it was fun to make, so

we decided to make it a small hobby business. A year later, though, we got a grant that allowed us to build our small barn/workshop and get goats. Everything took off from there and it has become much more involved than we ever imagined. We have since added chickens and a couple pigs. The soap business and homestead give me and my wife (and someday the boys) a project to work on together. The kids are very interested in my weather forecasting, too, and they will often come into my office while I work and ask about the forecast.



Drew, please tell us about the inspiration for the way you approach your weather work.



The computer set up, showing a couple different current-weather data feeds.



Kids with kids: two of Drew's sons with 2020 goat kids and moms.



A selection of products from Ye Olde Goat Cart, which started as gift-giving and now includes a herd of resident goats, and chickens.

All images courtesy of FLX Weather.

My primary goal in weather forecasting is to provide people with the information they need, especially in times of severe weather. As I began daily forecasting in High School, I began to get a sense that some of the standard practices in forecasting for the public were unnecessary or confusing. Over the years, I've asked for and listened to feedback to shape my services. My forecasting style was further honed at SUNY Oswego as an undergrad. I learned valuable lessons on the importance of understanding the current conditions of the atmosphere, biases in the models, communicating the forecast to the public, and viewing meteorology as a science, not merely an entertaining segment on the evening news.

Continued on page 8

# Small Town Hound

## Destination Points North

Æsc

Sometimes it's nice to just get away—at least that is what my humans said as they loaded us all into the back seat and headed north. Although we often all travel together, this trip Mars—grey around the muzzle and slowing down—stayed with his younger human (who now has his own place) and Winnie and I had the back seat to ourselves. It still was not quite enough space for me and I was, admittedly, a little grouchy on the way there.



There, as it turned out, was one of the greatest adventures to date, as there was room to roam. I spent time with Winnie sniffing around in our cabin (\*The Apple) while our humans unloaded what seemed like a house full of stuff—humans sure don't travel light. Then we all took a walk down to the lake. This lake—like the lake I recently walked on near our house—was solid; you could walk right out on it. There were these things I have never seen before that would cross the lake sometimes, making humming sounds (my humans called them snowmobiles). Things looked and felt pretty similar to where we live, and I quickly settled in.

The next day was when the fun began. We went first to some trails near Rock Lake and walked for a long time through the snow and woods. My humans used big flat shoes. I love the snow and bound around through it with relative ease. I was always in the lead. At

one point we crossed a big trail and my human stopped me. I had to sit and wait while one of the snowmobiles went by. I also spent some time finding my one human who is always getting lost. He had gotten off the trail and was in behind a big rock. I went back and got the other human like I've been taught and showed her where he was. I am not much of an animal chasing dog, but on every trail, there were many animal tracks and scents, and Winnie was especially excited about this.

We did not encounter many people on the trails when walking (unlike at home when we often see people on our walks), but we met two people on our last night there, while out on the lake walking. They had the big flat shoes on too and were very friendly. I ran up and said hello, and they were super cool with that. They said they had traveled from a place called the Catskills (sounds a bit ominous) and we all visited a bit. I stopped back by their place the next morning hoping to run into them again.



There were not many places open at all, so when not out on trails or out on Indian Lake walking, we were in our cabin just relaxing by the fire. It was fun being there although I was missing Mars some. I would have liked to see more people and go into a few more places like I do in my adventures at home, but it was nice being out there where I could explore the wilds a bit. Still, I got to see some cool things: there was a thing that my humans said looked like a dinosaur along one trail, that was smiling like she was super happy; and while we were in the car I saw a large person out the window, bigger than any humans I know.

# The Light Lens

## Spring cleaning

T. TOURIS



The struggles of the past year and the horrific scene at the Capitol on January 6th have given many of us a bleak and despairing view of what goes on in Washington. Right now, the cherry blossoms are in bloom in our nation's capital. If you haven't had a chance to visit there during this time of year, make sure you put it on your bucket list. In looking through some photos taken a number of years ago, I came across some I had taken on a visit to the city. I had time to do a leisurely and unplanned tour of the National Mall and the cherry blossoms were in their full glory.

Many people have probably visited the city on a family vacation or class trip, which is fine, but if you're like me and tend to make vacations a photographic scavenger hunt, you'll miss an opportunity for a more meaningful experience. So, I encourage you to go in late-March or early-April, with no itinerary and an open mind. Take your time, stroll along the Tidal Basin and take in the floral show. Visit some monuments and maybe a museum or two. View things directly and frame what you're seeing through an historical lens, not your camera lens. Absorb the history and the sacrifices. Let the best ideals and aspirations wash away the grunge of recent conflict and hate. I hope you'll come away with hope. ✨

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.

We stopped at another place on the way back to get out of the truck a bit. It was a place named Inlet and the trail there was fun. This gave us all one more chance to stretch out and walk a bit. Our final stop was to pick up Mars. He looked like he had enjoyed his time. He does pretty long walks at home, but he would have had a tough time with the deeper snow and longer walks we took. Overall it was a grand adventure and I hope we go there again when it is a bit warmer.

\*Camp Driftwood at Indian Lake—[www.goodcabins.com/](http://www.goodcabins.com/)



Æsc is the "Small Town Hound—Finding Creative Venues and Adventures in NYS." He lives with his two humans and his two canine companions, Winnie and Mars, in Canadice, NY. When not writing, his favorite pastime is finding people.

## Weather from page 6

As a Junior and Senior, I did a research project on how people perceive weather forecasts, which further influenced me. In the years since, I've continued to evolve my vision and services, always keeping in mind that my primary mission is to keep people informed and safe.



What resources do you employ in your weather forecasting?

I would break down my resources into three categories: first is the current conditions. I am constantly monitoring the radar to view precipitation, the satellite to view cloud cover, temperatures, wind directions, and pressure trends. My computer set-up has two monitors, and one of those is almost always showing a map of the entire Great Lakes region and its current conditions. The insights gained from observing the current weather here and elsewhere are innumerable.

Second are computer models. There are many models available, but I have a few that I primarily focus on. These simulate the weather over different time frames and require careful analysis to sort through the trends and biases. Just because this data comes from a computer does not mean it is right, and it is rare that there is complete agreement on the different models, or even from one run to the next of a single model.

Lastly but no less important is my experience. All the data I look at runs through the lens of my experience. There are patterns to the weather and the models, and the more I forecast, the more I learn. This is what tends to set one forecast apart from others. Every meteorologist has their own set of past experiences to look back on and influence their decision making when it is time to publish a forecast.

You have three stated core values for your weather website. Please tell our readers what they are, and how they differentiate you from others who also provide a weather forecast product.

My three core values are Honesty, Accuracy, and Accessibility. These values developed organically over time, but since I put them down in writing have become the foundation of my company and services. I take them very seriously, which I think in and of itself differentiates me from other forecasts.

Honesty has become my calling-card as a forecaster. People that follow me know that I despise weather hype and that I only say what I actually think will happen. Sometimes, that means saying that I don't know, or that there are a few paths the weather could take. It is important to me that people have a meteorologist they can trust to give each forecast their best effort and to keep them, not the profit margins, in mind.

Accuracy is something that every meteorologist strives for. Getting a forecast wrong is not a pleasant experience, especially when you put that forecast in front of thousands of people. But I do not take accuracy as a badge to proclaim that my forecasts are better than everyone else's. Sometimes they are. Sometimes they aren't. For me, accuracy means that I strive to do my best every time and that I am not afraid to publish a forecast that is different from the consensus of other local forecasts that may be out there.

Accessibility has been a huge guide for how I shape my services. At its core, it means that I do not want someone to miss the information they need to stay safe because they did not pay for it. Again, it goes back to serving the public as best and as fully as I am able. Accessibility also means making forecast presentations clear through well designed graphics and web pages.

Besides actually tracking the weather, you also have made a commitment to educating the public about what you do, including making presentations to groups and teaching school children. Do you have any memorable experiences that our readers might enjoy hearing about?

Educating the public is a huge part of what I love to do. When the local TV meteorologist came to my school when I was in 4th grade, it was a revelation to me. I would love to be able to pay that forward and inspire others in the way I was inspired. Plus, I love talking about the weather with people and teaching them about it. Many people are fascinated by what they learn, but it also helps them understand and use the forecasts better, keeping them well prepared and safe. I've spoken to preschool groups, to all grades of school, to a group of seniors in assisted living, in libraries, to community groups, and even in bars on two different occasions!



How do you make money running a weather business?

I have three revenue streams for my business, though one has really taken off to become the primary means with which I support my family.

Early on, I relied on clients for most of my revenue. My clientele has been varied, ranging from writing weather blogs, providing forecasts for radio, forecasting snow for school districts, and providing 24-7 weather support for summer camps. I still hold a few clients, some which I have worked with for many years. My focus has shifted away from adding new clients though, as the client work takes time away from the work I do for the public.

Continued on back

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# Bee Lines

## Spring Surprises and Queen Conundrums

SAM HALL



As I'm starting to write this note, the temperature is 25 degrees with an icy wind blowing at about 15 mph from the west-north-west making it feel like zero or below. However, a few days from now it is predicted to be in the 50s. I am looking forward to it and the bees have been spending the last several days getting ready. Normally, in January we have the "January thaw." This year it was only about a day and really was not that warm. Most of my bees did not do any substantial "cleansing flights" that day and I'm hoping they are okay. The cleansing flights are when they leave the hive and defecate for the first time in several months.

Today, March 10th, the temperature is supposed to reach 60. Yesterday it was 45° in my yard and while the bees were not flying far, they were out. It appears I have fifteen colonies that have survived this far. I have four that are dead outs. I believe the large survival number is due to three things. First instead of wrapping exposed hives in tar paper I used "Bee Cozy" wraps, which gave them much more protection due to the quilt like quality of the fabric. They cost around \$25 but you can reuse them for five years or perhaps longer. Spread over five years, the cost is about \$5 per year. Compared to the costs of a new nuc at roughly \$150+ it makes sense to try them. Secondly, I left a lot more honey on than I usually do as I was lazy and didn't want to feed if I could avoid it. Thirdly, it was a milder than normal winter.

There was a surprise—no, shock is the more appropriate adjective. I had an eight frame colony with one deep and a honey super on top. I did not wrap or insulate this colony as it was not strong, and I did not expect it would make it. I saw a lot of dead bees (hundreds if not a couple of thousands) outside in front of the hive. There were a lot of feces that looked like they had a bout of dysentery or maybe nosema.

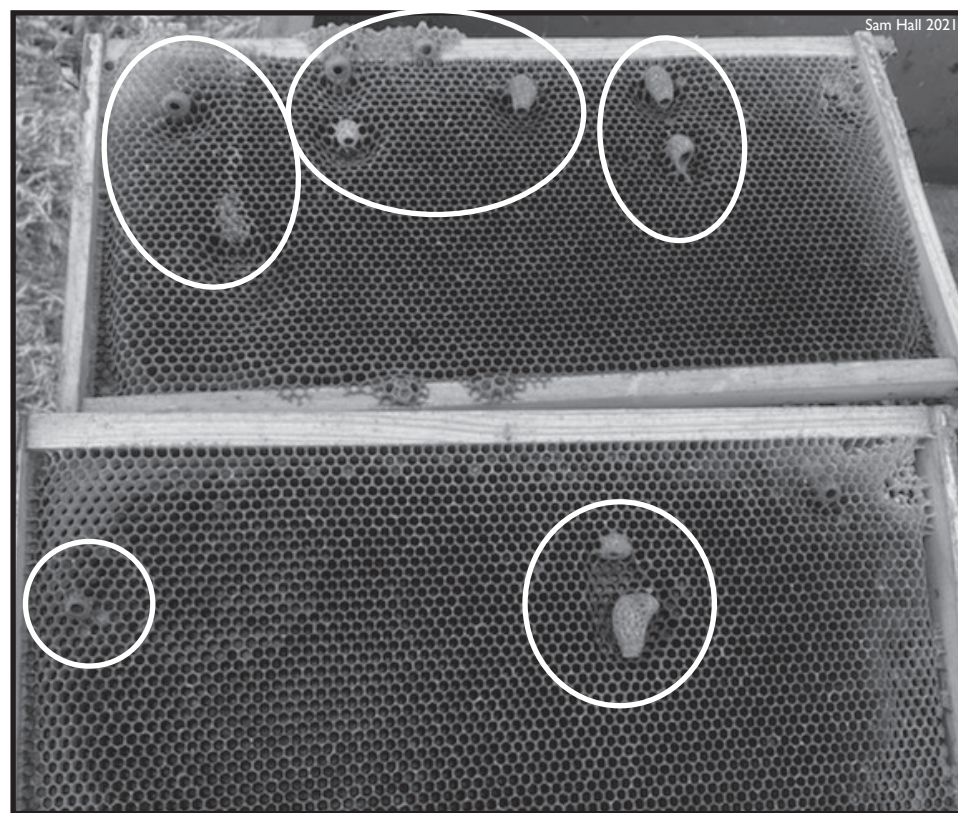
To my surprise, the bees who were only going in and out of the honey super on top did not seem agitated like robber bees—which is what I thought they were. When I removed the honey super and started to go through the bottom deep, I ran into sealed brood and a fair number of bees and, finally, ran onto a great looking unmarked queen. I immediately closed the hive back up, got some 2 to 1 syrup which I had in a Boardman feeder and started feeding them. No bees were going in and out of the bottom deep from the landing or bottom board even though there was no entrance reducer on.



The amount of feces made me suspect a bout of dysentery, or maybe nosema.

Currently there is very little for the bees to bring in except for skunk cabbage; the catkins on the willows are not ready yet. I have prepared a 1 to 1 syrup of sugar and water which I have put into a yard feeder so all can access it.

My #3 colony struggled all of last year trying to find the right queen. They would raise their own then dispose of her. I introduced a purchased queen which they released, and I saw her for a while on the frames then she eventually disappeared. When I took this dead out apart the frames told the story of their search for a queen with a number of empty unused queen cells. Not sure what the story is but I do have a theory. I have read and heard about super sisters in a colony. The queen is the mother of all but the bees have different fathers. A group of workers that were fathered by sperm from the same drone are referred to as "super sisters." One of the things they will do when the colony is going to swarm and several swarm queen cells have been filled and sealed (one of which contains a sister) is to go around putting more wax on the tips of the other queen cells trying to insure their sister queen will emerge first and thence dispose of her rivals. In the case of my conundrum, what if there were two sets of super sisters in the same colony? It would explain I believe what happened in #3. The pictures I took of the frames are shown below. I would be interested if anyone has another more plausible explanation.



Frames from the #3 colony showing multiple queen cells.

The eastern side of my double nuc box has survived but not the one that was facing west in spite of my putting straw bales three-deep to block out the western wind and putting it in a better location.

Honey bees never will cease to be a fascination for me and I hope for you. Having 15 colonies survive means I will be making a lot of splits, but I don't kid myself; in spite of my best efforts there will be swarming, probably lots of it. I will admit that there is something of awe I feel inside myself when I see a swarm in a bush or tree. This is nature doing her (or is it his) thing. 🐝

Sam Hall is a Western NY beekeeper who first worked bees as a child growing up on a "dirt farm" in Allegany County, NY. He has kept bees for most of his adult life and believes that his mistakes "far outnumber his successes." Samhall@Rochesterrr.com

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# The Homestead Gardener

## The Fireplace in the Library (A Shoulder-Season Reverie)

DERRICK GENTRY

It is the muted voice of the dying winter embers  
Which enchants this heart of mine,  
This heart which like the covered flame  
Sings as it is consumed.

—Paul-Jean Toulet

In the south-facing room where I now sit typing these words, the shambolic haven for half-read books that we somewhat pompously refer to as “the library,” there is a certain slant of light late winter mornings and afternoons that forms a little patch of passive radiant solar heat on the floor of the room. My dog and my cat like to curl up or stretch out in that oasis. (I am seeing a bit more of the latter than the former these days). The woodstove, generating mostly convective heat, is located two rooms and about 70 feet away. The day your dog prefers passive solar to stretching out beside the woodstove in the other room, that is a sign you have entered what is known in temperate climes as “shoulder season,” that betwixt and between period, lasting a couple of months, stretching awkwardly between one season that has ended and another that is struggling to be born.

Our house, an early post-colonial structure built in 1821, is turning 200 years old this season. We are not sure how to throw a bicentennial party for a non-person, even though it feels like we ought to mark the occasion in some way. Not all of the house is the same age, of course: the windows of the south-facing room that let in the light are now double-paned modern windows with much better R values, and most of the original plaster and period wallpaper has been replaced with drywall and Valspar paint with an egg-shell finish. But the structure of the house remains, and many of its original features are still in place after two centuries.

They did not have diesel-fueled excavating equipment back in 1821, and careful thought therefore had to be given to the local topography of the site where a house would be built. Our house was wisely built into the side of a hill. The massive rock foundation forms a multi-room basement that is remarkably well insulated during the winter—in fact, even on the coldest days in January, the basement is barely cool enough to serve as a root cellar and apple closet.

In the basement, on the side where the west chimney stands, there is an old-fashioned fireplace once used for cooking, with side compartments for baking and an iron swivel-crane, still attached and ready to be used, that once held heavy cast-iron pots above the flame. Our house was a major stop on the Underground Railroad during the 1850s, and when I am in what used to be the cooking area of the basement I sometimes try to envision newly arrived guests gathered around the fire in the basement and enjoying a meal before departing on the next leg of their dramatic journey. These guests may have been offered familiar cornbread, but probably not the sweet potatoes they grew and cooked down south. I wonder how these recent refugees from a different latitude responded to the colder temperatures they were encountering as they moved farther and farther North.

I often wonder, more generally, how people back then kept themselves warm in the dead of winter. The answer, it seems, is that they mostly didn’t—or,

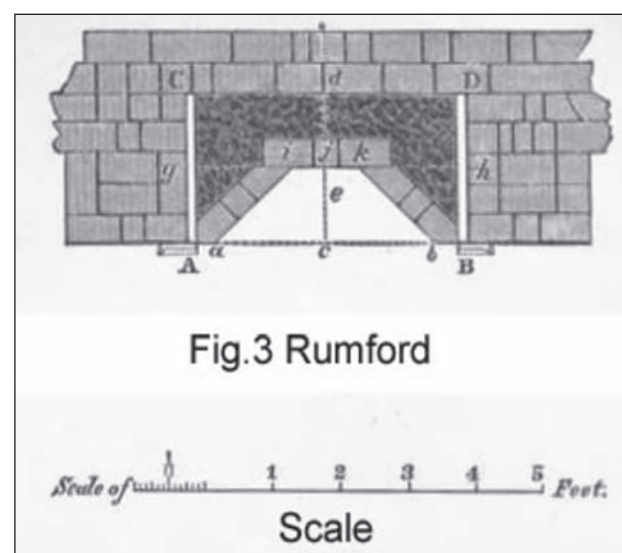
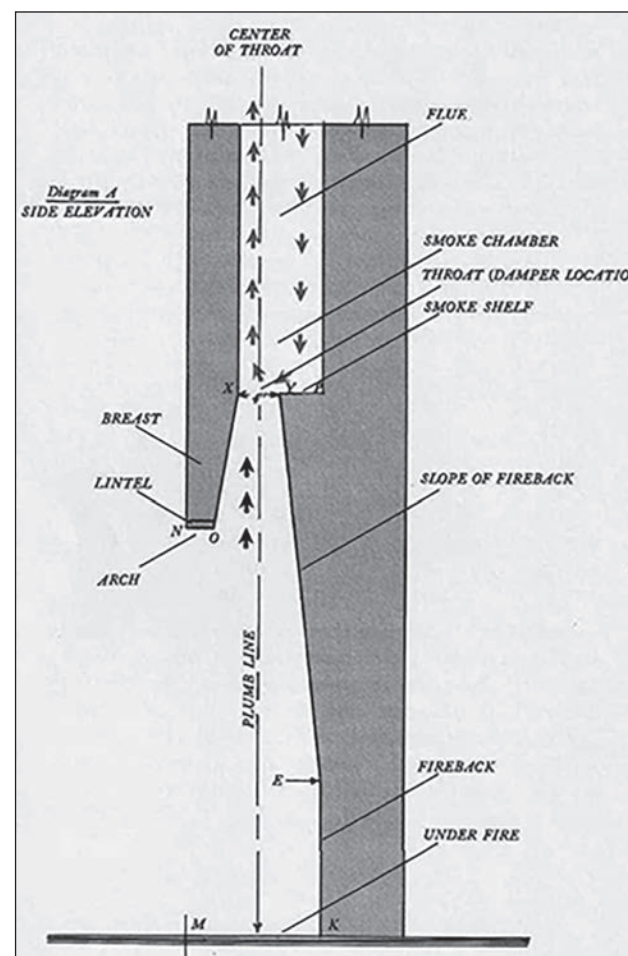


in many cases, not much warmer than is necessary to avoid freezing to death.

One of the books my wife is currently reading, that is now sitting open on the table beside the library fireplace, is titled *At Home: The American Family 1750-1870*. It contains some rather chilling accounts of how people kept marginally warm when burning wood and snuggling were the only source of heat. In the late 1700s, for example, Jane Mecom told her brother Ben (Ben Franklin, that is) how she had endured a Boston winter with only twelve cords of firewood, “as we kept but won Fire Exept on some Extyroidenary ocations.” (These period accounts also tell us something about how people lived and communicated before standard spelling...) Abigail Adams, trying to keep a family of eighteen warm at a home just north of New York City, reported burning 40 to 50 face cords a year, “as we are obliged to keep six fires constantly, & occasionally more.” Writing a bit later in the 19th century, Harriet Beecher Stowe writes of her aunt standing with her back to the fire while a wet dishcloth in her hand froze stiff in the cold air of the room. Perhaps most distressing to our ancestors, there were some days during the season that were cold enough to freeze rum stored in bottles inside the house.

As the 40 to 50-cord heating budget suggests, Americans back then may have had to work within the limits of their excavating technology, but in the 1700s and early 1800s there was still a lavish quantity of firewood to burn. (I looked at my wife in disbelief when she first read that figure to me: I have a hard-enough time gathering 10 cords per season, and I simply cannot imagine the task of cutting, splitting and stacking up 40-50.) Why did they burn so much wood and still struggle to stay warm? It certainly had nothing to do with the quality of the firewood. It simply had to do with the fact that the energy efficiency of the early fireplace was ridiculously low by our standards. Something close to 90% of the heat generated from burning wood literally went up in smoke and out the chimney. And to add insult to inefficiency, much of the smoke would pour into the poorly heated room in the absence of a strong updraft in a standard, poorly designed chimney.

That is why the Rumford fireplace represented such a breakthrough in the early 1800s. (The oft-reproduced schematic is reproduced once again on this page.) Named after the American-born scientist and inventor Benjamin Thomson (later renamed Count Rumford), the Rumford fireplace had angled sides that reflected more heat into the room. More importantly, the new chimney had a much narrower passage, generating a stronger updraft of air that pulled the smoke up and out. The narrower chimney was also designed



Above: American-born scientist and inventor Benjamin Thomson (AKA Count Rumford).

Right: Schematics of the Rumford fireplace, which revolutionized wood-fueled heat in the 1800s.

Common & Rumford fireplace diagrams: Rumford, Benjamin, Graf von, Not In Copyright, Internet Archive

to divert and trap the hot air in its passage upward in a chamber where, under ideal conditions, the exhaust would undergo secondary combustion that generated even more heat (and less smoke).

In the early 1800s, the Rumford design was what we would now call an energy-efficiency retrofit innovation. It was a big hit. Thomas Jefferson, who just loved this sort of thing, immediately had all his fireplaces at Monticello retrofitted. By the mid-1800s, Thoreau listed the Rumford fireplace on his list of modern conveniences that were taken for granted. Rumford, by the way, also invented a number of other homely modern conveniences, including the double boiler and the coffee percolator.

Continued on page 12

# Dragonfly Tales

## Odonata Sanctuary to Become Part of Bobolink Project

STEVE MELCHER

The populations of more than 75 percent of songbirds and other birds that rely on agricultural habitat in North America have significantly declined since 1966. According to Audubon, North America has lost more than 1 in 4 birds in the last 50 years. Birds that were common, even considered abundant when I was a kid in the 60's, are becoming a rare site. Grasslands are disappearing in North America and with those grasslands disappears the nesting habitat of many species of birds. Grassland bird populations collectively have declined by 53% in my lifetime. One of those birds is the Bobolink.

Bobolinks are the champions of migration, traveling roughly 12,000 miles round-trip from central South America each year. They return in the spring to their shrinking grassland nesting grounds in the North. One of the prime nesting grounds is right here at Odonata Sanctuary. At the Sanctuary we manage thirty acres for grassland nesting species that include the Meadowlark, Dickcissel, and Bobolink. Management is simply a matter of mowing the fields in a timely manner, which is when the Bobolinks aren't there! By mowing before they arrive in the spring or after they leave in the fall, we save valuable habitat for a bird that may become one more species on the extinction list; a list of species at risk of extinction due directly to a human activity. The Bobolink Project pays farmers not to mow during the prime Bobolink breeding times. (The former Federal Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program—WHIP—paid farmers to do this in the past but their funding was shifted to building a wall to prevent other migrants from coming north.) Farmers determine how much they would make from a cutting of hay and then are offered that much per acre not to cut during critical times. The farmer still has a harvest of hay and the Bobolinks are ensured a safe breeding season. On small areas like ours, we use the "If it's low (the land)

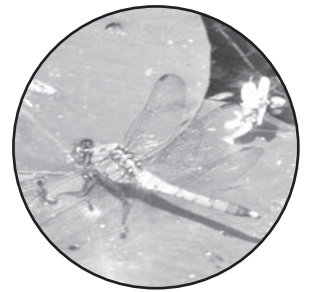
let it grow and don't mow" mantra. On larger farms they can leave a decent sized area in the middle of their fields where the prime nesting sites would be found. The project has also experimented with leaving patches the size of a minivan for Bobolinks to feel protected enough to set up housekeeping.

The Audubon Societies of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont have created a *Best Management Practices for Grassland Birds* guide for the project in addition to providing funds specifically donated for the project to farmers. The Universities of Connecticut and Vermont provide ecological expertise to further study the plight of the Bobolink.



### But the Name - Bobolink?

Where did this hemispheric traveler get this name?  
Most would argue that it is not from their songs.



Sir Robert of Lincoln  
*excerpt from William Cullen Bryant's  
poem from the 1800's.*

Robert of Lincoln is gayly drest,  
Wearing a bright black wedding-coat;  
White are his shoulders and white his crest.  
Hear him call in his merry note:  
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,  
Spink, spank, spink;  
Look, what a nice new coat is mine,  
Sure there was never a bird so fine.  
Chee, chee, chee.

Even Bryant describes the calls and songs of the Bobolink as "Spink, spank, spink" and "Chee, chee, chee." My fairly well-trained musical ear has never heard "Bob-o-link," in a song or call. I would describe it as a phone transmission signal from the old days of AT&T. In 1909, F. Schuyler Mathews described the song as "a mad, wreckless, song fantasia, an outbreak of pentup irrepressible glee." Another poet describes the song as "a bubbling delirium of ecstatic music that flows from the gifted throat of the bird like sparkling champagne." The song of the male sounds more like something from an 80's Muzzy computer game than "Bob O Link." I think this is an example of Occam's (more commonly spelled Occam's) razor where "the simplest solution should be the best." However, I believe this is also an example of folks agreeing to an explanation without doing further research or critical thinking; something that is becoming all too common in an age of the Giants of Kandahar. Birders use phrases to remember the songs of birds like "Poor Sam, Peabody, Peabody, Peabody" or "My sweet Canada, Canada, Canada" (if you're across the border) for the White Throated Sparrow. It's not known as the Sam Peabody bird. The Barred Owls' hoots are described as "Who cooks for You? Who cooks for you-all," and it is not known as the Creole Chef Bird. If we agree that the song or call does not sound like "Bob O Link" (we'd have to lose two syllables from "Robert O Lincoln"), then what is another possible explanation? I think that the birds in the Northeast were nicknamed using the common name Bob, or after birds from the old world like our Robin. Bob, Joe and John were common names given to new kids on the block and easy to remember. I once worked with a fisherman in his 80's who called everyone Bob because it was easier than remembering their real names. He also talked with the distinctive Eastern Shore accent where they keep their lips shut to avoid inhaling mosquitoes and for some reason, he couldn't count over seven. If there were more than seven flounder in a trawl he would say, "Them's alot of flatfish...more 'n seven" Perhaps, long ago there was a man in Lincoln, Mass that dressed with a yellow hat and black frock like our friend the Bobolink. Someone saw our bird monkeying around in the field and named for it for Curious George's friend. In Jamaica they are called 'Butterbirds' probably because of the yellow helmet worn by the males, or possibly because they were eaten after fattened up on rice.

Continued on page 23

### HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION DAY

Saturday, April 24, 2021  
7:00 am to 3:00 pm

Casella Recycling Facility & Landfill  
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**PRE-REGISTRATION** and  
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To pre-register call Cornell Cooperative

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Time slots are every 15 minutes starting at 7:00 am and the last one at 2:45 pm.

No business or farm waste will be accepted.

#### Materials Accepted at the Event:

Acids, Adhesives, Aerosols, Antifreeze, Batteries, Boric Acid, Brake Fluid, Cements, Charcoal Lighters, Chlorine, Cleaning Fluid, Degreasers, Disinfectants, Drain Cleaners, Dry Gas, Dyes, Epoxies, Fiberglass Resins, Flea Powders, Furniture Strippers, Hair Removers, Herbicides, Insect Repellents, Lacquers, Lubricants, Mothballs or Flakes, Motor Oil, Nail Polish Removers, Oven Cleaners, Only Oil-based Paints, Paint Removers, Paint Thinners, Permanent Solutions, Pesticides, Photo chemicals, Rat Poisons, Rug & Upholstery Cleaners, Rust Solvents, Wood Preservatives, Spot Removers, Tub and Tile Cleaners, Turpentine, Varnish, Weed Killers, Wood Polishes & Stains. Products containing mercury, LED lightbulbs, and florescent light tubes will also be accepted.

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NO LATEX PAINT, Household Electronics (TVs -flat screen and CRTs, computer monitors, cell phones, DVD players, VCRs, etc.) Automobile and truck tires, Compressed Gas Cylinders, Explosives or Shock-Sensitive Materials, Ammunition, Radioactive Wastes, Pathological Wastes, Infectious Waste, Medicines, PCB's, Freon containing devices (i.e. Air conditioners, dehumidifiers).



## Supporting Black Farmers from page 5

When I was asked by NYSDAM to serve on their Diversity and Inclusion Workgroup, I agreed because I want to ensure that farmers and growers in our region are connected and considered in their planning process. Without representation from our local community, Black farmers and growers and processors in our region will be left out and unable to access these important resources. I hope that through opportunities such as the grant offered through the Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority, and the emerging Black Farmers Co-op supported by Food for the Spirit, we will be able to connect more people in our region to these efforts.



Rebekah Williams shoulders some of the tools of the trade. Image courtesy of Rebekah Williams

If you or someone you know can benefit from connecting with the networks and opportunities mentioned in this article, please reach out to me at [Rebekah@foodforthespirit.org](mailto:Rebekah@foodforthespirit.org). I hope to hear from you. 🌱

Rebekah Williams is a community organizer and trainer living in the Finger Lakes region. She is co-founder of an emerging not-for-profit organization, Food for the Spirit, which is committed to racial healing towards ecological justice and equitable food systems, and she is employed by the Massachusetts Avenue Project in Buffalo. Rebekah also serves on the board of the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group and she supports several local, state, and national initiatives including: Anchors in Action Alliance, Black Farmer Fund Pilot Community, Black Farmers United NYS, Good Food Buffalo Coalition, New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets Diversity and Racial Equity Workgroup, and the Rochester Folk Art Guild.

## Homestead Gardener from page 10



Back to the present, in the front-parlor library of the home where I sit with dog and cat on this sunny late winter day, the *At Home* book I quoted from earlier now sits open on a table that stands in front of an unused fireplace that is one of the earliest examples of the Rumford design. (I promise I did not put the book or the table there myself! I do not engineer poetic irony...) Our Rumford fireplace has not had a fire in it for many years. The smart-design brick chimney has been blocked off for years, and the purely decorative fireplace is simply an interesting relic and sometimes an interesting conversation piece for those who do not know the history.

Continued on page 22

## Just Plant It: COVID-19 Victory Gardens



Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Ontario County



### Cornell Cooperative Extension Offers Gardening Course

The COVID-19 pandemic launched us into unprecedented times. Last year, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County launched a series of gardening topics and activities, entitled *Just Plant It: Victory Gardening*. This course was an online, go at your own pace learning experience, where participants could access gardening resources and participate in forum discussions. This year, CCE Ontario is relaunching this course. Participants can expect the same great resources and a few new ones, but with one exciting addition—live Zoom sessions each month! Participants will be able to interact and ask questions directly with Russell Welser, Cornell Cooperative Extension Horticultural Resource Educator.

Participants will have access to the online course when they register for one or all of the live Zoom sessions. There is a fee of \$10 per family per session or \$50 for all six classes. The following sessions will be offered at 6:30 pm on the following Wednesday evenings:

April 14: Soil preparation

May 12: Planting and Transplanting

June 9: Garden Care: Weeding, Watering, Pests, Diseases

July 14: Fall Planting and More About Garden Care

August 11: Harvesting, Freezing, and Canning Your Produce

September 8: Putting Your Garden to Bed

Whether you are brand new to gardening or have been gardening for years, we would be excited to have you join us and learn more about gardening. You can register for this course by using the registration link: [cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6Q2xQJRrvqRBgW](https://cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Q2xQJRrvqRBgW)

If you have questions, please email Sarah Wilhelm at [sab423@cornell.edu](mailto:sab423@cornell.edu)

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# Crafting Your Own Cuisine

EILEEN PERKINS

## RECIPE

This is a month when we, in our part of the world, look longingly forward to lengthening daylight hours, and less time ruled by the darkness of apparent night. Our focus may turn away from the more sedentary activities that held our attention for the past several months and turn toward engaging new projects. Having this easy-to-make dish squirreled away in the freezer may come in especially handy when we might feel like spending less time in the kitchen yet want a meal that covers all bases nutritionally, and “hits the spot”. Greens are identified in some cultures as being especially good for supporting the internal cleansing process associated with detoxing; here they lend a lightness to what might otherwise be a heavy meal.



Greens and Beans—a meal that covers all bases nutritionally, and “hits the spot”—can be embellished with grated Italian cheese, cherry tomatoes and/or kalamata olives.

Eileen Perkins 2021



## Greens and Beans

Serve with cooked Italian sausage, bacon, or a smoky flavored meat analog.  
(Serves 2-4)

### Ingredients

- 15 oz. bag cleaned, chopped escarole, or a 1 lb. head of escarole washed well and chopped
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil or other fat of choice
- 2-3 large cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 can or 2 cups cannellini or another white bean, drained and rinsed
- 1 scallion (white and light green parts), chopped
- 1 cup chicken or vegetable broth (if using vegetable broth, double the quantity of scallion)
- 1/4- 1/2 cup fennel bulb, with fronds, chopped (if omitting, double the quantity of fennel seed)
- 3/4 tsp. fennel seed
- 1/2-1 tsp. oregano
- 1/4 tsp. hot pepper flakes
- 1/2-1 tsp salt (start with the lesser amount)

(Optional- top with grated Italian cheese, cherry tomatoes and/or kalamata olives.)

### Procedure

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Stir in escarole and bring water back to a boil, for about two more minutes. Drain greens, press out excess water, and set aside.

In large frying pan, sauté garlic over medium heat for 1-1 1/2 minutes, stirring often and taking care not to burn. Add escarole, stir 1 minute, then add broth, scallion, beans, fennel bulb\*, fennel seed, oregano, and hot pepper flakes. Stir to combine and cook covered for about 5 minutes on medium heat, or until greens are cooked to your liking. Serve with desired toppings or accompaniments.

\*fennel bulb makes a great addition to tossed salad and serves as a refreshing dipper for hummus

## COOKBOOK REVIEW

### *Biscuits, Pancakes and Quick Breads—120 Recipes to Make in No Time Flat*

By Beverly Cox

I have my own copy of this, and it was the Irish Soda Bread that sold me on it. That said, I almost didn't review it for you, because I suspected it would be a little harder to find than are most selections I make for this column. After discovering it can be found in most of the public library systems I checked, and that Abe Books\*, an online used and new book seller, seems to have plenty available for sale, I went ahead with making this introduction to a fine cooking resource for those who can consume gluten.

At the onset, the author notes that “throughout history, bread in its many forms, has been the essential comfort food. For each of the world's great civilizations there has been a traditional carbohydrate staple without which people can't imagine living. Even when times are rough, if people have their bread, living seems possible.” She continues, “These days the world often seems an uncertain place. Perhaps that has always been so, but in this age of mass media coverage we seem to be bombarded constantly with alarming news” (and that was 17 years ago!) ...” We want comfort foods

and the stability and security they represent, but in the twenty first century how do we fit them into our busy schedules?” A solution can perhaps be found in this collection she has assembled for us.

Although the book contains mostly stand alone, sure-to-be-remembered carb rich recipes that fly independent of her “basic mixes”, the group of timesaving mixes alone may be worth the price of the book. They have the additional value of providing control over the quality of ingredients put into them, and for convenience, the mixes can be frozen for up to three months. Check out her offering awaiting your own creative applications: Always-Ready Flaky Biscuit Mix; Always-Ready Fluffy Biscuit Mix; Kid's Everyday Pancake Mix \*Ancient Wisdom Power Grains Pancake Mix; Quick & Healthy Whole-Wheat Pancake Mix; Always-Ready Sweet Quick Bread Mix.

Also included in the book are knowledgeable tips for meeting with success when whipping up crepes, both dessert and savory varieties. Of her Cornmeal Crepes, she has this to say, “These delicate golden

crepes are versatile. I like to use them in place of tortillas in some Mexican and Southwestern dishes because they are flexible and easy to roll.” This particular formula does not utilize one of her mixes, but she does provide instructions how you can make them ahead and freeze them for up to one month.

All and all, if you value carbohydrate rich comfort foods, at the very least, consider looking for this title in your local public library system's collection. 🦉

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.

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# The Night Sky

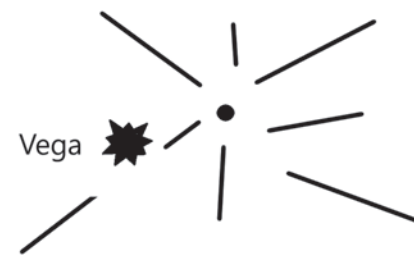
## Lyrid Meteor Shower and Exploring the Kuiper Belt

DEE SHARPLES



Two celestial events take place in the early morning hours of April. All month the planets Jupiter and Saturn can be found in the southeast one hour before the sun rises. On April 6, a crescent moon joins them making it easier to find the planets and creating a beautiful sight. They'll be low near the horizon early in the month, only about 10 degrees (or one fist-width), so you'll need a view free from obstacles like houses and trees. The two planets will rise higher in the early morning sky as the month progresses, reaching a height of 20 degrees above the horizon by the end of April.

The Lyrid meteor shower peaks in the early morning hours on April 22nd. Although you'll be able to spot some meteors during the active period from April 14-30, you'll witness the maximum rate of 18 meteors per hour around 4:30 AM on the 22nd. The meteors will appear to originate from the constellation Lyra near the very bright star Vega high in the east. An added bonus is that Jupiter and Saturn will be in that same direction but closer to the horizon at that same time.



Vega  
Jupiter  
Saturn

### 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  
Jupiter: -2.1  
Vega: 0.0  
Saturn: 0.6  
Aldebaran: 0.9  
Mars: 1.3-1.6  
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.



Lyrid meteor shower  
April 22 - Looking east at 4:30 AM

Illus. Dee Sharples

The planet Mars is the only planet visible in the evening sky. You can find it high in the western sky after the sun sets. It glows at magnitude 1.3 at the beginning of the month and becomes dimmer by the end. It will shine with an orange hue caused by the reflection of the sun off of its rusty colored surface. Compare it to the nearby cool star Aldebaran shining with a reddish glow caused by its "cool" surface temperature of only 6,700 degrees Fahrenheit. The Sun, our own star, is hotter with a surface temperature of 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit. The coolest stars glow red, intermediate stars like our Sun are yellow, hotter stars appear white, and the hottest stars are blue.

Continued on back

## Upright Women Indeed

REVIEW from MAUREEN MCCARRON

It is not often that librarians are depicted as super heroines. To my delight, two recent books do just that: *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* by Kim Michele Richardson and *The Giver of Stars* by Jojo Moyes are colorful fictions describing the very real lack of library services in rural Appalachia in the 1930's. "Because of the Great Depression and a lack of budget money, The American Library Association estimated in May 1936 that around a third of all Americans no longer had 'reasonable' access to public library materials."

Consequently, Eleanor Roosevelt herself started "The Pack Horse Library Project," a Works Progress Administration (WPA) program that delivered books to remote regions in the Appalachian Mountains between 1935 to 1943. Pack horse librarians were known by many different names including "book women," "book ladies," and "packsaddle librarians." The project helped employ around 200 people and reached around 100,000 residents in rural Kentucky. ([en.wikipedia.org Pack\\_Horse\\_Library\\_Project](http://en.wikipedia.org/Pack_Horse_Library_Project).)

So, it was with dismay that I learned that these books about the Pack Horse Library Project are embroiled in a publishing controversy that, before the wholesale consolidation of media, I believe, would have never occurred.

*The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* by native Kentuckian Kim Michele Richardson was published in May 2019 and *The Giver of Stars* by UK writer Jojo Moyes was published only five months later, in October 2019. Both books are about fictional characters employed by the Pack Horse Library Project. Although I have read and liked several of Moyes' books, I was very dismayed to learn in late 2019 that Moyes was accused of serious plagiarism. I refer readers to the very detailed comparison of both books in the review by Tomi Obaro in *buzzfeednews.com* (October 7, 2019.)

Obaro published Richardson's detailed accusations (quoting both chapters and page numbers) including numerous and striking similarities between the two books. Those semblances include: similar characters, plot conflicts, and romantic liaisons; fatal mule trappings; references to the same Pulitzer Prize winning book of 1932 and the *Women's Home Companion*; poetry books as romantic gifts; legal challenges, including jail time for characters; the month and the weather at weddings; and the age and sex of the infant character in both books. As other reviewers have pointed out, historical events can be legitimately interpreted by different writers through different lenses and coincidence is always a possible explanation for the similarities between these books.

### Referenced in this Review:

*The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* by Kim Michele Richardson  
*The Giver of Stars* by Jojo Moyes  
Review by Tomi Obaro, *buzzfeednews.com* (October 7, 2019)  
*Upright Women Wanted* by Sarah Gailey

One of the most striking differences is Richardson's casting of Cussy Mary Carter, as her main pack horse librarian character. Cussy was named after the village of Cussy in north west France, from where, we are told, one of her ancestors emigrated. Cussy is described as one of the Blue People of Kentucky. There were, actually, very real Kentucky Blue People, descended from the French orphan Martin Fugate, who researchers speculated had the rare blood disorder called congenital methemoglobinemia. At mild levels this condition can make Caucasian skin look "blue" due to an enzyme deficiency that alters hemoglobin, reducing its oxygen-carrying ability in the blood—hence the "blue" tinge it lends to white skin. Fugate, who from historical records at the time was described as "looking blue," immigrated to rural eastern Kentucky in 1820 and married a normal-looking local woman who, against incredible genetic odds, also carried the recessive gene for methemoglobinemia. Out of their seven children, four appeared "blue." In the 19th and early 20th centuries there was no known diagnosis or treatment for such conditions and this striking personal appearance could and did invite ridicule and social shunning.

Continued on page 19

# Etched in Stone – Exploring New York’s Buried Past

## The Search for Naples Poet and Activist

### Esther Ingraham Pierce (1864 – 1951)



DAVID PIERCE

#### MOTIVATION

Inevitably, the day to day lives of our ancestors fade over time along with the cemeteries and gravestones that mark their final resting places. Older burial grounds become neglected, forgotten and many, for better or worse, fall into ruin; some disappear forever. Sharing New York’s buried past helps preserve the rich histories of brave men and women who have gone before us. Lives of great expectation, long lives and short lives, lives of joy and sorrow, lives of triumph and tragedy, lives of gain and loss...are all shared and preserved when descendants honor their ancestors through recognition, research, and reverence.



#### THE CEMETERY

Not often enough, my wanderings take me to Naples, New York, the spiritual, deep rooted setting of the Pierce family ancestry. Five generations of the Pierce family called Naples their home, beginning as far back as the year 1814. Nearly every visit to Naples includes a stop at Rose Ridge Cemetery. Rose Ridge sits serenely above the Village of Naples on County Road 33. The cemetery is a fitting, final resting place for many of these ancestors, including Esther Ingraham Pierce, who lies in Section F with her husband Warren L. Pierce (1860 – 1933).

#### Esther’s Early Life

Esther Sarah Ingraham was born April 13, 1864 in Naples, New York. She was the youngest of five children born to Zenas Ingraham and Emily Jane Lamphier Ingraham. As the baby of the family, she was affectionately called “Ettie”. In 1865, when Esther was a year and a half old, tragedy struck the family when her father Zenas passed away unexpectedly at age 34. Esther never had the opportunity to know her father. Esther’s mother Emily was left to provide for her five young children. While the exact location of their family home is unknown, the family lived in the North central vicinity of the Town of Naples in an area commonly referred to as West Hollow.

#### John Wesley Porter

John Wesley Porter (1843 – 1915) also lived in the vicinity of West Hollow, in the Town of Naples. John was a Civil War veteran, having served in Company G of the 148th New York Infantry Regiment. In his 1915 obituary, John was described as a “prosperous, energetic farmer and a kind neighbor and friend to all, ever ready to help in charitable work or lend assistance.” This description holds true. After the death of Zenas Ingraham, John Porter, a neighbor of the Ingraham family, selflessly lent assistance to Emily Ingraham and her five young children who were in great need. An entry in the Porter Family Bible documents the November 21, 1869 marriage of John Porter and Emily Ingraham in Naples, Ontario County, NY. John was the only father Esther ever knew.

#### Esther’s Adult Life

Not far from John Porter’s farm, the Pierce family also had a farm on what is now Gulick Road in Naples. In those early days, neighbors relied on each other for support and for socialization. This is the setting wherein Esther met her husband Warren Pierce. They were married on February 21, 1883 and set up residence on the Pierce Farm. Esther and Warren had five sons, of which, only three survived to adulthood. Esther would sit in the parlor of the home playing the organ and singing. The parlor was a room reserved only for the most special events and Sundays. When her husband Warren passed away in 1933, he was laid out, at home, in that special parlor.

#### Esther's Poetry

The Pierce Homestead was the place where Esther wrote many of her original poems. Throughout her entire adult life, Esther was a prolific writer. She wrote dozens of poems, many based on social conditions and the challenges of life, along with some witty humorous life-affirming prose. Some of Esther’s poems reflect the sadness she endured due to the loss of her two sons. When reading her writing one can feel her hard and sorrowful experiences that included the loss of her father, two children and her husband. Her poetry also provided thought provoking verses on Woman’s work, motherhood, woman’s rights, the joy of children, life decisions, the journey of life, being remembered, and prophetic pieces on the passage of time, the end of life, and the afterlife.



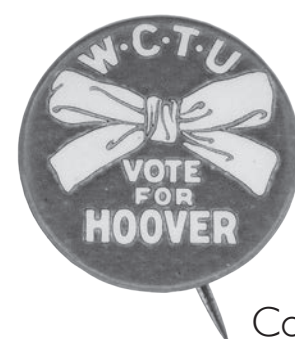
The Pierce Farm Homestead, Naples, NY  
The home from whence the poetry flowed...



Esther Pierce and Family, circa 1896  
Esther and Warren had five sons, two of whom are shown here. End of life and the struggles and conflicts of the times, including temperance were explored by Esther in her poetry.

#### The Activist

Esther was an active member of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). She expressed her belief that alcohol was evil and was the cause of many societal problems. The WCTU met in churches and homes. After her husband Warren died, as the Great Depression raged on, Esther moved out of the Pierce farm to allow her son Floyd and his family to have a home. She became a housekeeper for Melvin Wood, an insurance broker in South Bristol. There she kept a room in exchange for her housework. She hosted meetings of the WCTU there during the 1940’s. The WCTU was known to run meetings at churches that ended with a march to a local saloon to demonstrate. They spoke out to the owners of establishments to “close down and stop the madness that drinking caused.” The main goal of the WCTU, at the time Esther took part in it, was to prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages. Esther felt so strongly about alcohol that she wouldn’t drink root beer because it had the name beer in it. The influence the WCTU had on Esther is readily observed in her writing.



The WCTU was an important mission in Esther’s life and gave her a voice in society. Several of Esther’s poems are written about the evils of drinking.

Continued on page 17

# The Monthly Read

## The Means to an End

### A Review of *Agent Running in the Field* By John le Carré

*Agent Running in the Field*  
288 pages  
Viking Press  
(2019)



MARY DRAKE

**A**gent Running in the Field is the last book written by the British author John le Carré, who recently died at the age of 89. During his long and distinguished career, he wrote twenty-two novels that raised the spy genre from commercial fiction to the level of literature. Some of his better-known titles are *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* and *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, both of which have been made into movies, along with many others.

Books with unusual titles can often arouse your interest before you even open them. On the face of it, this title may seem straightforward, but the verb “run” can be used in many different ways. Does it mean the agent is literally running away from something? And if so, who is the agent and what is he running from? Or is it used as a noun, in the sense of a job someone does—agent running—a term used in spy lingo to refer to managing agents in the field?

Perhaps it is used in both senses. Nat, the protagonist of the book, is a British secret agent who has spent his entire career as an agent runner—he convinces people with valuable information to betray their country and give that information to Britain. To do this, he must be persuasive (we’re told that Nat is charismatic) and he must travel extensively, infiltrating many subcultures. He goes by a variety of names and assumes different covers. He considers that “lying for [his] country is [his] chosen profession.” He has spent “a lifetime devoted to stealth,” to the point that now he’s “at a loss to know the difference between what I feel and what I’m pretending to feel.”

Nat is also an agent running out of time. His usefulness to the government is declining and he feels his career is slipping. For decades he’s been a foreign diplomat and “one foreign posting would follow on the heels of the last and I [became] a de facto absentee husband and father.” Now he’s ordered back to Britain, where his ever-patient wife has been raising their child who is now nineteen and doesn’t even know what her father has done all his life. Back in his own country, Nat is given a relatively unimportant job, but he manages fairly well until he makes the biggest mistake of his life. Then he’s literally running to fix what went wrong and the people affected by it.

This book is so full of twists and turns that sometimes your brain has to run to keep up with the action: Wait, what is project Rosebud again? Who is the guy called “Scarecrow” that Nat talks to in the car? Why does Nat go to that remote town in Eastern Europe to see a former Russian mafioso? And how does he expect his German ex-lover Reni to help him? Readers must pay close attention to the plot, the characters, and their motivations, and will find the book easier to understand if it is read within the space of a few days. If you put the book down for a while, however, expect to be confused when you pick it back up.

Part of the book’s intricacy seems to stem from the nature of espionage, where everything is secretive, people often don’t reveal their true identities, and there’s abundant use of codenames like Stardust, Rosebud, or Jericho. There’s also the spy lingo, like “political strategy,” which is a euphemism for conspiracy and espionage or “extra-legal measures,” which means assassination. American readers might be confused by the hierarchy of British government: What is the difference between MI5 and MI6? What is the Head Office? The Directorate? Lastly, there’s some unfamiliar British vocabulary, like satnav for GPS, ruction for quarrel, and apparatchik for communist. And what, pray tell, is the

difference between teatime and dinner time?

But aside from all the details, le Carré doesn’t just use the spy genre to entertain. He also uses it to examine relevant topics of the day and how human beings behave. He first began writing in 1950 during the Cold War between Russia and the United States. Espionage was a widespread strategy for keeping ahead of one’s enemies, but with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, le Carré turned to other national and world topics. *Agent Running in the Field* concerns one of modern Britain’s most pressing concerns—Brexit, Britain’s departure from the European Union. Nat wonders how he’s “somehow failed to notice that the country’s in free fall,” and he doesn’t disagree when his friend Ed holds forth that,

It is my considered opinion that for Britain and Europe, and for liberal democracy across the entire world as a whole, Britain’s departure from the European Union in the time of Donald Trump, and Britain’s consequent unqualified dependence on the United States in an era when the US is heading straight down the road to institutional racism and neo-fascism is an unmitigated clusterfuck bar none.

Nat is amazed that a man as young as Ed can possess “true conviction, driven not by motives of gain or envy or revenge or self-aggrandizement.” Still Nat, the long-time agent handler who thinks he knows people and has seen it all, fails to see who Ed really is and what he’s capable of. “Only in its aftermath,” he says, “did I recall the sense of moral commitment that Ed imparted.” He was a “real thinking man with a crazy mission to save Europe singlehanded.”

Ed is a decent person, one who eventually acts on his convictions. But in the last line of the book, Nat, the spy who lies for a living, asserts that “I had wanted to tell him I was a decent man, but it was too late.” It’s up to the reader to decide whether or not this is true. Is Nat a “good guy” and does his work for the greater good of Britain justify his lying and manipulation? In other words, do the ends justify the means?

Le Carré, whose real name is David John Moore Cornwell, spent a lifetime concerned with honesty. His con man father was his first and perhaps most influential example of what it meant not to be honest. Then he and his brother were sent to an exclusive prep school where they felt like they must pretend that their home life was as normal as everyone else’s and that they also had all the advantages of wealth. In college he spied on Communist groups on campus, then spent part of his adult life as a British foreign “diplomat,” which gave him an insider’s knowledge of the world of espionage. But as soon as one of his novels hit it big, le Carré quit spying and became a full-time author. His obituary in *The Guardian* compares him to Charles Dickens: both authors had difficult childhoods, and both argued in their work for moral causes while simultaneously managing to entertain. You won’t find any James Bond type of character in le Carré’s spy novels, just real people with real problems who have something to say to us all. ✎

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

## *Where the Path Leads—Chapter 13: Into Blackwood* – MARY DRAKE

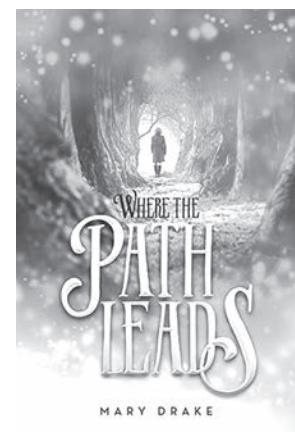
**I**n last month’s installment, Emily gets a day off to enjoy the May Day feast, during which she learns something about her mentor Sophia’s special qualities. It also provides her with the opportunity to get closer to the noble Arthur whom she’s attracted to. But all too soon she must return to her unpleasant job in the water meadow, which causes her new troubles.

**E**mily squinted as the summer sun shone on the water meadow; cicadas whined loudly from the trees, and the sky was cloudless. It would be another hot day. Even the morning hadn’t been cool. Insects hovered in clouds over the mud, grown stickier and drier from draining, making plants harder to uproot and the remaining water difficult to channel.

“We need to weed our own fields,” Cyril said to Isaac. The two were working near her. “But we’ll not have time today, what with working here.”

**Read Online:** [www.owllightnews.com/where-the-path-leads-chapter\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](http://www.owllightnews.com/where-the-path-leads-chapter_____).

If you want to find out more about the book, go to [marydrake.online](http://marydrake.online), also available as an ebook on Amazon.





## Etched in Stone from page 15

The Beasts of Today, an original poem by Esther Pierce

Oh things have got in a terrible state  
When the voter of today  
Calls the drunkard a beast then laughs  
At his fate  
Don't we know he is but the beast's prey

Our Country is full of these beasts running wild  
And what must we do? I say  
While they take from the home, Father,  
Mother or Child  
In the cruelest kind of way

I've heard tell years ago when the country was new  
And wild beasts marauded the town  
How men with their muskets and dogs  
Brave and true  
Would tramp till they hunted them down

But what shall we do to get rid of these beasts  
That so soon will our country devour  
Shall we let them go on with their  
Ravishing Feast,  
Doing nothing to crush its power

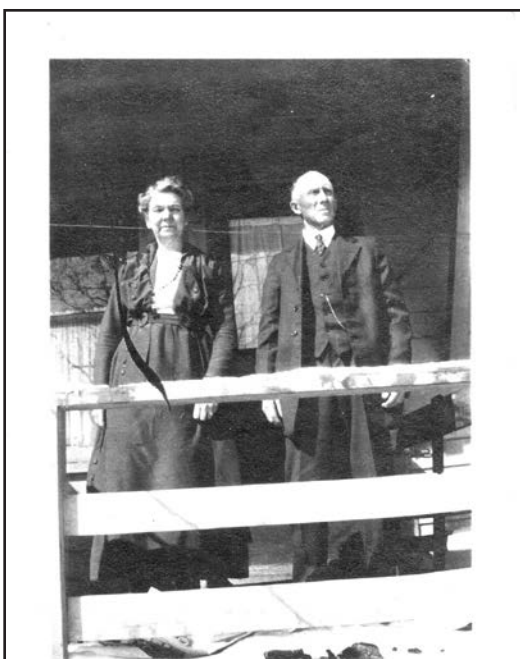
Young man what we need is the courage to shoot  
With the ballot and not the gun  
And clear up our land of its black  
Dingy soot  
Then the victory soon will be won

Come join in the conflict and fight if you may  
Till we put down the monsters who run  
Our laws by high license while in God  
We will trust  
To drive out the saloon and the rum

Other related poem titles include, "I love the Temperance Cause," "Love to Our Social Movement," "The Addicts of our Day," "Alcohol Isn't the Answer," and "A True Tragedy."

### The Mystery of Prophecy

In 2011, while researching for a Master's Degree project in Publishing and Journalism at Rosemont College in Pennsylvania, Esther's 2X great granddaughter



Esther and Warren Pierce abt. 1930

Megan Pierce discovered the old, worn, vintage composition book containing the handwritten, original poetry works of Esther Pierce carefully tucked away among our family history collection. Her project involved transcribing the old-style, faded cursive handwriting from the late 1800's and early 1900's and rewriting the original poems to reflect a modern-day experience. She discovered that many aspects of modern-day social issues and experiences are not that much different, despite the passage of time. The final outcome of this project was a book, appropriately titled *Esther's Message*.

Continued on page 21

## POEMS from DAVID MICHAEL NIXON

### You're Not Sisyphus

I'm not your stone to roll back up  
the hill, each time my weight  
becomes too much. Next time you can't  
muscle me up, just step aside  
and let me go. I'll lie at the base  
of the hill and you'll be free.

### In the Pines

She reached her hand and hauled me up  
into her hammock in the pines.

The night grew cold enough to see  
a halo form around the moon.

Beneath her crazy quilt, we found  
a midnight sun against that freeze.

### Life Game

The game goes on.  
Or is it far  
beyond mere play?  
Day after day  
we dodge each star  
that falls, each con

that tries to trick  
us where we live.  
We spin beyond  
the fetid ponds,  
the flashing shivs,  
but plague is quick.

David Michael Nixon has had four poetry chapbooks and two full-length poetry books published. *Stephen Forgives the Stones: New and Selected Poems* (FootHills Publishing, 2018) is his latest book. His poems have appeared in many periodicals and anthologies, including *Yankee*, *Kayak*, *HazMat Review*, *Waterways*, *Home Planet News*, *Potato Eyes*, and *Le Mot Juste*. He has given many poetry readings, and has performed as an a cappella singer. David lives in Rochester, New York (Hilton, New York during the pandemic). He can be reached at [dmnpoet45@gmail.com](mailto:dmnpoet45@gmail.com).

# Fantastic Flora

## Making Music from Confusion: Eastern Red Cedar

— *Juniperus virginianus*, Pinaceae

SALLY L. WHITE



When I returned to New York, I had trouble warming up to “Eastern Red Cedar” at first. Not the plant, which is attractive and reminiscent of our Rocky Mountain Juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*), but the name. As botany students we learned that the cedars were exotic plants of faraway places, like Lebanon. True cedars, in fact, belong to a different group (*Cedrus* spp.) and do not naturally occur in the Western Hemisphere. More than a dozen types of other woody plants, especially in the Cypress family, are called by the name cedar.

The Eastern red cedar is also known as Virginia juniper, eastern juniper, aromatic cedar, and pencil cedar. (This noun is partly why botanists focus on those pesky Latin names.) The trees may reach 60 feet in height and three feet in trunk diameter, but such records are set farther south where conditions are ideal. In New York, ours are sizable but not often comparable to our hardwood and pine forests.



Junipers advancing into the edge of a field. Sun-loving Eastern red cedars readily spread into abandoned fields and neglected pastures. Considered unwelcome “invasives” elsewhere, we welcome them in our yard.

Here I am, surrounded by “cedars.” Our yard, recovering from agriculture, is fringed with groves of red cedar, most sprouting when these vineyards were abandoned 25 or 30 years ago. Eastern red cedar is a pioneer species. The trees thrive on sun and creep into old fields and neglected places. The vast numbers of seedlings we find in our yard attest to their colonizing powers. We’ve only been here a few years, and already open spots are closing in.

The “cedars,” mismatched group that they are, have a few qualities in common: the wood is soft, easy to work, often aromatic; and resistant to rot. Our red cedar occurs throughout the eastern half of the U.S., but other junipers take over in the West. “Western red cedar,” however, is an entirely different tree native to Washington and Oregon, *Thuja plicata*, which we know in our backyards here as arborvitae.



Hadi Soetrisno



Tentacled orange alien? No, galls of the *Gymnosporangium fungus*, or cedar-apple rust, whose spores travel from cedars to apple trees—and back again—in a cycle of infection. When dry, the galls on cedar may be mistaken for small cones (above). During warm spring rains, however, galls produce gelatinous structures full of spores that will be carried to the apple trees by wind. (top).

A hardy species, these local junipers that we call cedars are useful in our home landscapes. Not only are they attractive (and green in winter!) but they offer many benefits to birds and other wildlife, and to us. Even in Colorado, we never had to water or prune them—the ultimate care-free landscape plant. Though we planted none, they kept popping up in the shade of other trees, not a congenial environment for them. But the birds wanted them there, because that’s where they deposited the seeds after eating the fleshy blue “berries.” Cedar waxwings earned their name by their fondness for these fruits (which are actually small round cones); they can “process” the seeds in as little as twelve minutes. Flocks of waxwings sometimes visit us during winter weather to get their share. Red cedar fruits are also favored by finches, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, blue jays, cardinals, and woodpeckers (among others).

Another value of junipers (red cedars) in winter is due to their compact, dense foliage. These trees provide safe cover from storms, insulating birds and small mammals from wind and cold. With branches often reaching the ground, the eastern trees can harbor even deer, who may also browse the twigs. In Colorado deer often nibble these small trees as far as they can reach, and ground-hugging branches are rare.

Rocky Mountain Junipers were once so valued for fence posts and railroad ties that loggers denuded the lower foothills slopes before 1900. Because Colorado trees are small, other than that tidbit, I hadn’t thought much about their value as lumber. I was



Hadi Soetrisno

This array of flutes includes, left, two flutes in progress, one of Eastern red cedar and one of Western red cedar; a finished flute of Spanish cedar; and right, two beautifully crafted flutes of Eastern red cedar.

surprised to learn that our unassuming, but larger, eastern red cedar is the exact species commonly used in cedar chests and for lining closets, where its pleasant aroma (to us) repels moths and other insects. Red cedar is turned into paneling, cabinets, furniture, animal bedding, and toys—a very useful tree indeed. We may also spot it trimming watercraft on our many lakes. Until replaced by an African juniper, red cedar often gave us pencils.

Native Americans called red cedar the “Tree of Life,” and used it as incense in ceremonies and sweat lodges. After speaking to the plant and leaving offerings, and following other principles of the “honorable harvest,” original peoples throughout the eastern United States used its leaves, bark, berries, and twigs to prepare medicines for a variety of ailments, from treating asthma and easing childbirth, to colds, fevers, and pneumonia. Its boughs might make mats for bedding or roofs, and the durable wood became bows and lances.

The wood of red cedar was especially prized for its musical contributions. Recently my husband gave us beautiful Native American flutes, crafted in Arizona of, you guessed it, aromatic cedar, known here as Eastern red cedar. Already we’re enjoying making simple melodies, although we’ll never achieve virtuoso status, all thanks to this versatile tree! 🌲

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.

## Rumor has it this big guy is a sweetie!



**Rumor** may look familiar to you if you follow us (facebook@bchumanesoc). He was posted on February 5 because he had been found outside, cold and scared in the town of Maine.

Unfortunately, Rumor became a stray and we are now looking for his new forever home. Since coming here, Rumor has had a gentle and sweet disposition. He seems like somewhat of a space cadet and can often be found looking up at the sky or looking back at the person walking him, as if to say, "I forgot you were there for a minute!"

Rumor would do best with a family with teens and no little kids. He seems to like the dogs he has met, but sadly was not a fan of cats. Rumor is fun, spunky and takes treats so gently. And to tug on your heartstrings he makes the cutest puppy eyes! Walks are by far one of his favorite activities and don't be alarmed when he bounces up for a hug mid walk. The love this guy has to give is just too much to bottle up?? Please consider opening your heart and home to this big goof.

If you'd like to meet him, please make an appointment on our website [bchumanesoc.com](http://bchumanesoc.com)  
 • Email: [info@bchumanesoc.com](mailto:info@bchumanesoc.com) • Phone: (607) 724-3709

**Do you have a 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 (along with a picture). Email to [editor@canadicepress.com](mailto:editor@canadicepress.com)**

## Upright from page 14



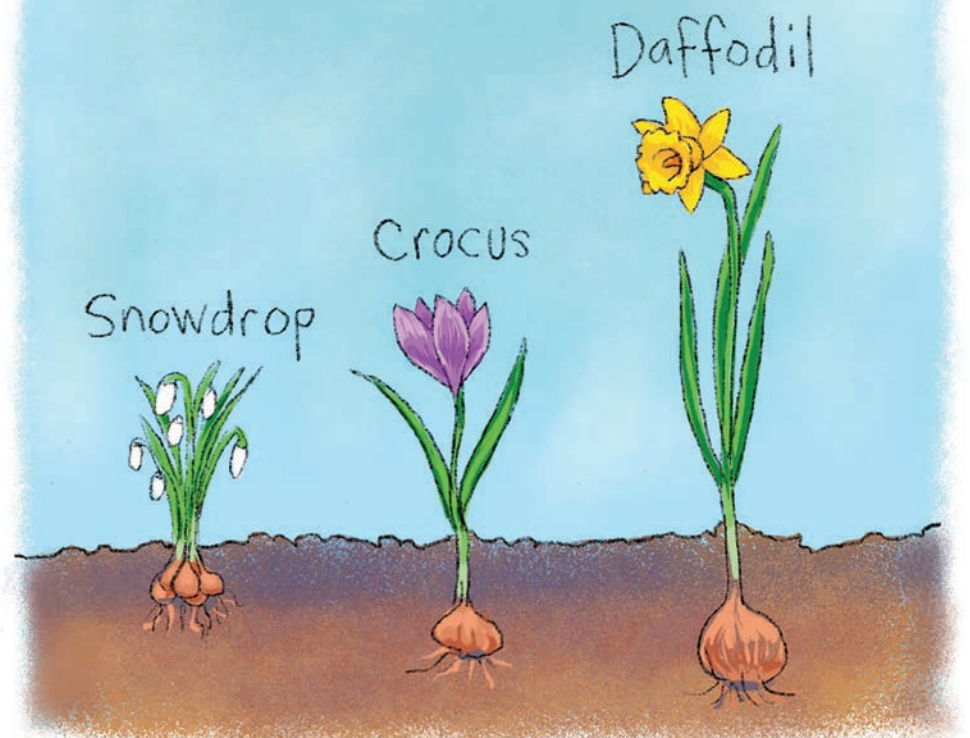
"Works Progress Administration Pack Horse Librarians make regular calls at mountain schools where children are furnished with books for themselves and books to read to their illiterate parents and elders." Public Domain, 1938

Nevertheless, the Fugates met and married other local people and continued to have "blue" children into the mid 20th century when the condition was documented, and treatments were prescribed. In Richardson's book, a local doctor helps diagnose Cussy's condition and prescribes a treatment. However, as the author herself points out, that actual medical work occurred in the 1970's, not the 1930's.

Richardson uses the blue-looking skin from methemoglobinemia to explain the profound social rejection her character Cussy experiences. In Moyes' book, one of her main characters is an English woman who, after she moves to eastern Kentucky with her affluent American husband, is trapped in an abusive marriage. Another pack horse librarian character in Moyes' book is a survivor of chronic childhood domestic abuse. In both books the female characters are ostracized due to or by their experiences and rail against the social conditions of the time, which tolerated marital and domestic abuse against women with little recourse for the survivors. Both books also feature sympathetic African American women characters portrayed as working in the WPA pack horse library program.

Continued on page 20

## INCANDESCENT BULBS



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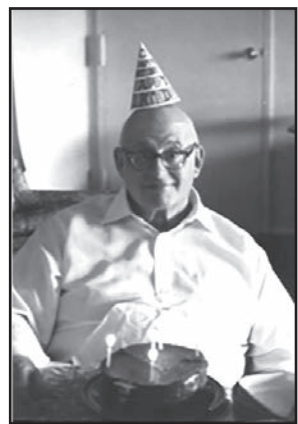
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# Making Lemonade

## 24 Hour Humor

BARB STAHL

One of my favorite things is humor. I believe myself to be humorous at times and to possess the personality quality of “sense of humor.” Humor has been present throughout my life with family members, and I dedicate this to the memory of my dad who first taught me to laugh at many things. Mom was the serious one who was continually amazed that he and I could laugh uproariously over *The Three Stooges*. I can still see her shaking her head in disbelief.



My Dad (George DeLong)—with far too few candles on his cake—humored us all with his corny jokes. Photo courtesy of Barb Stahl

My Dad’s brand of humor basically was corny jokes or well-worn phrases. My children put everyone they could remember for his 70th birthday into a book shaped like a sandwich. (It should be noted that he very regularly repeated them, so it was not difficult for them to recall several.)

One of his common statements was “I’d rather be rich than good looking.” And always on anyone’s birthday, he would repeatedly say, “What do you think— this is your birthday or something?” When you had a cold, he would continually say “Starve a fever to feed a cold,” (I think) which I never could understand then, nor do I now.

Then, into my life came my husband, Dick. He loved telling long, long, long stories that ended by twisting a well-known phrase such as “Boy foot bear with teak of Chan,” or “Look at the orange marmalade.” He was especially famous for continually changing, and expanding, the story line, but my three children and I could soon figure out where he was headed and would simultaneously groan together. I never could (and still can’t) reconstruct the opening tales that led up to any punchline (and for this you are probably grateful!).

My children, and still as well-matured adults, can spit forth puns suddenly out of nowhere in the middle of a conversation. We can be discussing literally anything at all and usually my son starts it by launching the first pun, then the girls are off and running with pun after pun which can continue for an amazing

## Knock Knock!



amount of time. This is another talent I am not good at and on the rare occasion that I utter a good pun, it is entirely accidental.

My son can also come up with palindromes instantly. One time in his younger days we were driving through Cohocton and he announced, “Not Cohocton is a palindrome.” I never, ever would have connected that on my own, yet now if I’m anywhere in the vicinity I think of his statement.

I remember a time when it was of utmost importance for one of our kids to be the one to deliver the last and final “noogies.” (Oh wait, that is still true!)

Then along came the grandchildren whom I remember as always having a huge supply of “knock-knock jokes” with which to quiz me. Again, I am terrible with the openings of them, but can often remember the finale such as the answer, “Orange you glad I didn’t say banana?”

In their youth the now around thirty-something-year old grandchildren extensively quoted *The Simpsons*. Their humor has recently become more questionably sophisticated, such as using trick boxes that might be labeled “Gravy Fountain” for giving “very, and most unusual surprise” gifts. (Don’t ask!) My granddaughter does a lot of Improv and uses that as a diversion from her intense doctoral clinical psychology work.

My eighteen-year-old grandson is excellent with snappy word pictures which can be seen in a recent thank-you note (yes, you did read that correctly) for the investments I had established and contributed to for birthdays, holidays, etc. His note ends with, “It’s been a great learning experience watching it grow over the years. I look forward to taking all that cash to Vegas!” (Well, I hope that was humor!)

I love all of these different kinds of humor because to me they signify family sharing, love, and togetherness. I truly believe that “laughter is the best medicine,” and have been fortunate to enjoy it throughout my life. 🐾

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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

## Upright from page 19

However, as reviewer Tomi Obaro writes in *buzzfeed-news.com*, African Americans were never employed in that WPA program.

Nevertheless, Richardson casts the blue skin color of a person with methemoglobinemia as the explanation for why two of her characters are accused of “racial mixing” when they marry, and the husband character is prosecuted for miscegenation and imprisoned. Granted, this book is set in the early 20th century, and while it is well documented that African Americans and other people of color experienced that form of discrimination (anti-miscegenation laws were in effect in Kentucky from 1866 until 1967), I found Ms. Richardson’s use of methemoglobinemia as grounds for invoking those laws, even in a fiction, rather incredulous.

Moyes’ book is distinguished by how she depicts the friendship of five pack horse librarians in her fictional town of Baileyville, Kentucky. Both books do a good job of illustrating the poverty and limited literacy experience of their library patrons, and both show the pack horse librarians improving both the literacy and the emotional life of the isolated families on their routes. Both books describe the Pack Horse Library Project as improving impoverished rural schools in eastern Kentucky at the time.

There are many reviews of these two books online. I found them divided into two camps: well-established authors, published by large media compa-

nies, tend to give Moyes the benefit of the doubt and refrain from the plagiarism charges. Less well-established authors, especially those who are loyal fans of Richardson, have “cried foul”.

However, no reviews I found questioned the role of the publishers involved. I have always thought a publisher did some “due diligence” before publishing a book. According to Melissa Gouty ([literaturelust.com](http://literaturelust.com)) Moyes sent a rough draft of *The Giver of Stars* to her editor at Penguin Random House in October 2018, a full year after Richardson’s completed book had already been sold to her publisher, Sourcebooks. Did the Penguin Random House editors do even a simple Google search on the unusual topic? Why didn’t Sourcebooks, who already had the copyright, raise the issue with Penguin Random House?

A possible clue is the timing of Sourcebooks’ sale of a significant minority ownership of their stock to Penguin Random House on May 22, 2019. Richardson’s *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* was released by Sourcebooks just fifteen days earlier on May 7, 2019. Did either of these publishers care? Apparently not. Since, after the fact, *Sourcebooks* gave Richardson the option of seeking her own legal counsel.

Moyes, whose book has definite cinematic qualities, sold the movie rights in June 2019 ([the-bibliofile.com/giver-of-stars-movie-release-cast-trailer-film/](http://the-bibliofile.com/giver-of-stars-movie-release-cast-trailer-film/)) just after *The Book Woman* was published but also well before her own novel, *The Giver of Stars*, released by

Penguin Random House on October 2, 2019. The high-minded advise us to read both books and come to our own conclusions.

So, it appears that even the topic of librarians themselves is not free of controversy. This is probably no surprise to actual librarians. However, this conflict reminded me of a third recent book, by Sarah Gailey, whose title (from the recruitment poster for the librarians in her book) is practical advice: *Upright Women Wanted*. Gailey reinvents the pulp Western, in a near-future dystopian American Southwest. Her itinerant librarians also serve heroically, along with a good dash of edge-of-your-seat adventure.

Fortunately, for us here in the Finger Lakes, many of our libraries weathered the Great Depression without closing. Communication with the county historians of Livingston, Steuben and Ontario counties also told me that the WPA Pack Horse Library Project did not need to operate in our rural areas. Some rural parts of New York State did have book mobiles (library vans). My local library currently runs a “delivery program for shut-ins,” and so the tradition of getting books out to those who need them most is alive and well. Read on!

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Maureen is a retired speech pathologist, living in Conesus, NY who now spends her free time reading to her heart’s content.



# Nursery Rhymes ©

## Owl Light Puzzle 12 – By GEORGE URICH

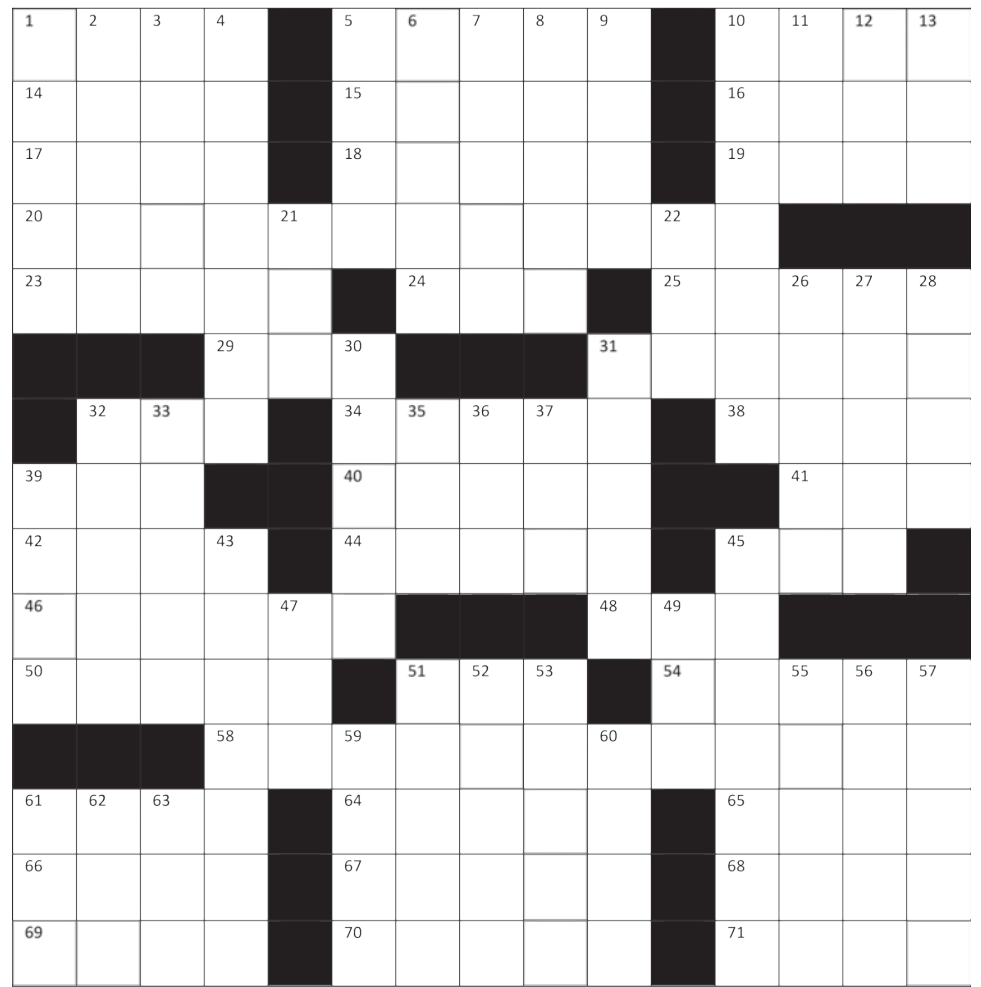
### ACROSS

- 1 He went up the hill for water
- 5 Brown spot on a banana
- 10 Set of type of a particular face and size
- 14 Eight in Spanish
- 15 Got ticketed because he \_\_\_\_ d light
- 16 Swamp grass
- 17 Commotion
- 18 Latin year
- 19 Summer beverages
- 20 He fell of the wall
- 23 Street name for methamphetamine
- 24 Brother or sister, casually
- 25 Gasoline brand
- 29 Military landing craft, designation
- 31 Song from “Fiddler on the Roof, Sunrise, \_\_\_\_\_
- 32 In the way of
- 34 \_\_\_\_\_ of old Smokey
- 38 Manner of walking
- 39 Possible degree for at a dig, Abbr
- 40 What may be served with a sandwich, \_ \_\_\_\_\_ pickle
- 41 Soft drinks that were spun off to Dr Pepper Snapple Group
- 42 Other in Spanish
- 44 \_\_\_\_\_ Ana wind
- 45 Prefix meaning equal
- 46 She sat on a Tuffet, Miss \_\_\_\_\_
- 48 Abbreviation on a business card
- 50 Most radio have, AM \_\_\_\_\_
- 51 \_\_\_\_ a mouse
- 54 Great care in a hospital, Abbr and Air rifle ammo
- 58 What 46 Across eats
- 61 Large island south of Florida
- 64 Polish word meaning spicy
- 65 Big war in the forties, backwards
- 66 Avails oneself
- 67 Slang word for fancy German automobile

- 68 Romance novelist, \_\_\_\_ Roberts
- 69 Root vegetable
- 70 Sound made by animal that followed Mary to school
- 71 Cart for delivering heavy loads

### DOWN

- 1 Quarterback Allen and singer Groban
- 2 Misbehave
- 3 Join or interrupt a conversation, \_\_\_\_\_ in
- 4 Religious movement in Sweden during the 1920s
- 5 What cheap fabrics do coming apart at the edges
- 6 Upscale clothing retailer, \_\_\_\_\_ End
- 7 Boredom or lack of excitement
- 8 Topping for a pie
- 9 Former Bills quarter back, Jack \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 The process of 5 Down
- 11 British reference tome, Abbr.
- 12 Originally called
- 13 Football statistic
- 21 Same as 13 Down
- 22 University in Ft Worth, Abbr.
- 26 Former Russian rulers
- 27 Insurance company using a gecko to advertise
- 28 The family of New York Giants Hall of Famer, Mel
- 30 Act of drinking in honor of something
- 31 He could eat no fat, Jack \_\_\_\_\_
- 32 Amaze or stupefy
- 33 A possible rural address in California
- 35 Hush hush Government agency, Abbr.
- 36 A lot
- 37 Umps call, y're \_\_\_\_
- 39 Where Andy Worhol's Campbell Soup Can are Displayed, Abbr.
- 43 Discarded or rejected



- 45 “It’s an \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ that blows nobody any good”
- 47 Large flightless bird
- 49 Airport schedule entry
- 51 Unsuccessful Ford model
- 52 First name in cosmetics
- 53 In Hinduism, a person’s past action viewed as deciding fate in future existence
- 55 Famous American Tenor, Lauritz Mel \_\_\_\_\_

- 56 In line at Christmas time, waiting for a gift to \_\_\_\_ pped
- 57 Minor road or pathway
- 59 President Johnson’s oldest daughter surname
- 60 Clean and orderly
- 61 Baby bear
- 62 Take advantage of
- 63 Pollen gatherer



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](mailto:gurich@frontier.com)



## Etched in Stone from page 17

One of Esther’s poems entitled “When I Am Gone” created a wondrous prediction of exactly what might, and actually did, happen years after she put down her pen for the last time. Her 2X great granddaughter Megan fulfilled her prophecy!

The verse reads:

Some day perchance when I am cold and stiff  
 And my vacant place, some other one  
 Shall fill.  
 Forgotten and alone I lie.  
 This little book will peep from out of the dust  
 Of some dark corner, and time gathered must  
 Removing from it cover, there my  
 Name you’ll see  
 Insuring once again life’s memory

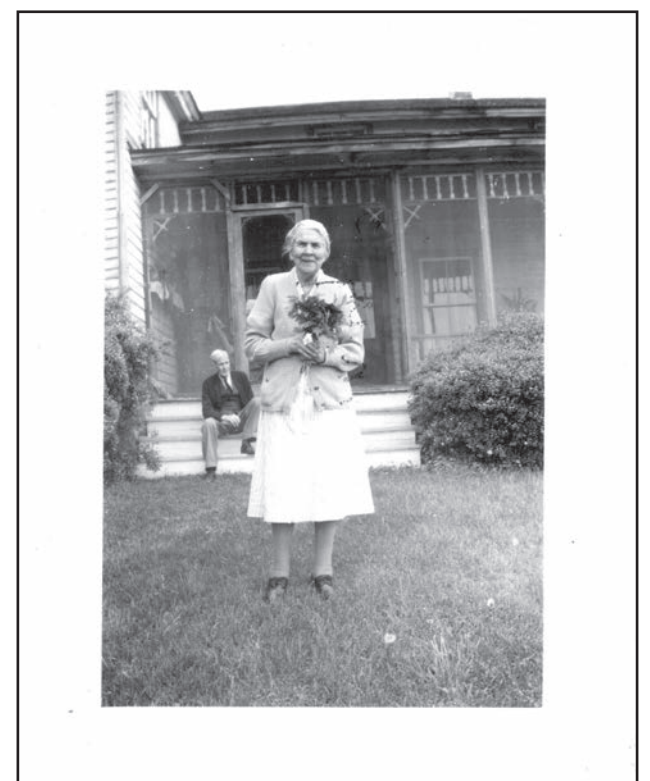
Esther Ingraham Pierce passed away on May 21, 1951 at the age of 87. Her final stanza in the tattered composition book reads:

Though here we may not understand  
 Why sorrows press us so,  
 But in another better land  
 There sometime we shall know

Esther Pierce understood and professed the passage of time. She looked forward, trustingly, to a future that she would never experience in earthly form.

“That I might gather up each broken fragment of the past and join them link by link in one perfect chain at last”

Esther’s poetry is her legacy; her assurance that she would never be forgotten. Her writings will live on for future generations to enjoy and share. While she now rests in Rose Ridge Cemetery below her etched stone, at least for now her life journey will be preserved as a small piece of New York’s buried past. 🌸



Esther Pierce circa 1950  
 All article images courtesy of David Pierce.

# The Conscious Crow

## The Nature of Change

Everything changes like the weather. Patterns and movements direct the course of our every action and thought as we stream into oscillation, mimicking the laws of nature. Everything in life is in an impermanent state and constant fluctuation. We are immersed within a series of fleeting moments repetitively changing and re-arranging within the blink of an eye and truly much further than the eye can see. Although it appears otherwise and feels everlasting, life changes in an instant, without warning or explanation. It transpires and re-configures itself in an organic, surprising manner that is something we can never truly account for, plan, control, or ever completely understand. The great mystery that exists, that we have the honor and unique opportunity to witness, is the never knowing of what is going to happen and Being with this mystery as it unravels itself through and around us.

Any state or thought of Being we experience is like a passing cloud. It arises, and then it changes. Since there is absolutely no separation between what is and what is not: we, alongside nature, continuously shift, change and rearrange on very finite levels as our cells, neurons, atoms and electrons weave consistently and intentionally in progression. Though our experiences can feel so permanent and unchanged, the world we see and everything in its wake, is in fact redirecting itself and moving in a fluid wave of motion onto the next shifting phase for every single new point in time.

The downfall we experience as humans is fixating onto every single passing thought, feeling, and experience, and then forming a deep attachment. We do not see or comprehend enough—the full spectrum of life in its cyclic continuity and impermanent fluidity—to remember that everything we encounter is incredibly fleeting, even and especially our human experience. We fall prey to wanting everything that is joyous and wondrous to last forever and never have any pain or suffering. We attach to every situation and immediately associate with every up and down, thinking it is the be all end all, when it is really just the beginning.



Our experiences and thoughts are steppingstones that help us to realize where we are unconscious in our mental faculties and in need of a mindful adjustment. In order to evolve consciously and effectively, we must bring the unconscious, conscious. The trick is remembering every single thing in every single moment is fleeting. The good, the bad, the day-to-day occurrences all pass on like clouds just as everything will. In his newest album *In and Through the Body*, Trevor Hall speaks to these changing factors of life in his song "Khan," where he poetically mentions the nature of "Everything passing and changing," with "...all of these patterns of weather, nothing is lasting forever." Every experience and storm that rises to the surface we can learn to "watch it come now and watch it go," and not "...hold onto the high and low," but ride it out gracefully and let it go to let it grow." To remind ourselves that we are dealing with the details of a present moment that will never remain fixed because we are constantly arriving at a new point in space that is by nature, incredibly different from any other we have experienced. It is an illusion that makes us believe it is the same when it is definitely not.

In this adaptable way we are akin to the transient nature of the earth's elements. There is no separation between us and the great force that sustains us throughout all of our days. We are made of the same wavering forces. As we walk along on this path of uncertainty, we must remain mindful that change is a part of nature, and we are just as much a part of nature as anything else. Everything moves, everything flows, everything changes and goes. May we be gentle with the passing tides as they move us along our way, weaving us in and out of our everyday experiences, bidding farewell to the now as it arises into our recognition and quickly passes along the horizon to the past. ✨

## The Conscious Crow—Reminding you to Grow

## Homestead Gardener from page 12

There is another interesting story to tell about this south-facing room with a Rumford fireplace, particularly for those who appreciate the poetic ironies of history. One of the earliest and most illustrious guests at this house after it was built was Gilbert du Motier, better known as the Marquis de Lafayette. Lafayette stayed here as an invited guest during his Grand Tour of the United States in 1824, and he very likely warmed himself beside the Rumford fireplace in the front parlor room that is now our library.

Rumford and Lafayette, the Count and the Marquis, were both refugees of different revolutions. They both learned the hard way that not every revolution goes quite the way we want it to go (and not every disruptive change is geared toward human-scale betterment).

Rumford was born without a title in Massachusetts colony, under the name Benjamin Thompson. Both a native-born American and British subject, Thompson expressed sympathy for the loyalist cause in the early years of the American Revolution. This view did not endear him to his neighbors. He learned that while tolerance of the most unpopular opinions is the true test of the principle of free speech, in America and elsewhere in the world you can make things much easier for yourself, and get much nicer treatment from neighbors and co-workers, if you adhere to popular opinion. A mob of his neighbors gathered at his home and asked Thompson to rethink his opinions or get out of the country that was about to be formed.

Upon leaving America for England, Rumford wrote to his father-in-law in Concord, Massachusetts: "Though I foresee and realize the distress, poverty and wretchedness that must unavoidably attend my Pilgrimage in unknown lands, destitute of fortune, friends, and acquaintances, yet all these evils appear to me more tolerable than the treatment which I met with from the hands of mine ungrateful countrymen."

Rumford was wrong; he went on to enjoy great success and fame in Europe (the land of opportunity, where apparently you can grow up to become a Count).

The fortunes of the Marquis de Lafayette took a similarly dramatic turn once the American Revolution that brought him fame was over. When he returned to France in the political hotbed of the 1780s and 1790s, Lafayette was regarded as a hero of the *last* revolution, one that took place in a different country and looked less radical than the one shaping up in Lafayette's home country (home of another efficiency innovation of the 1790s: the guillotine). Lafayette also came from an aristocratic line and had a stand-out title to go with his name, which also looked

bad in the context of the new revolution. In 1791, a mob of revolutionaries gathered around his home and inspired him to flee France for his safety. He was arrested while in flight and spent five years in prison, including a full year in solitary confinement. The new regime seized all of his property, leaving him homeless and penniless, and shortly thereafter he was stripped of his French citizenship. (And though he remained an honorary citizen of the United States, that was a privilege he was not allowed to enjoy while imprisoned in his home country.)

Back in Paris, his wife Adrienne, the Marquise de Lafayette, narrowly escaped the guillotine as a result of the shrewd intervention of her close friend, Elizabeth Monroe, who was the wife of the then-ambassador to France from the United States. Adrienne was imprisoned for many years and died in 1807 of complications from an illness that stemmed from her time in prison. Her dying words to her husband were "Je suis toute à vous" ("I am all yours").

Rumford, who had left his first wife behind in America, went on to marry the widow of the scientist Antoine Lavoisier, who had been sent to the guillotine in 1794. The former Benjamin Thompson of Woburn Massachusetts died in Paris in 1814.

In 1824, invited by Elizabeth Monroe and her husband (who had since gone on to become president), the now elderly and widowed Marquis de Lafayette made his solitary return visit to the United States, to the country that he loved and where he perhaps felt most at home. He received a hero's welcome when he arrived in New York City in August.

I hope the Marquis was able to enjoy some peace and rest during the time he stayed at my house in this late season of his life. It must have been October or November by the time he had made his way north to my part of the state. And I hope he was able to stay warm and comfortable as he sat by the fire, courtesy of Benjamin Thompson. From where I sit by the window, I can almost imagine the Marquis, looking tired but content, seated by the fireplace in a state of reflective reverie, which is what fires in the fireplace tend to inspire (then and now). ✨

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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. Email: [Derrick.Gentry@fccc.edu](mailto:Derrick.Gentry@fccc.edu).

# Turning Points

—Canadice Press' first Owl Light Literary collection—  
will be published in 2021.

ADVANCE ORDERS can now be placed online: \*  
owllightnews.com/turningpoints (or mail in form on p. 23).

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



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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.

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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.

Solution to Owl Light Puzzle 12 (found on page 21)

1	J	A	C	K		5	F	L	E	C	K		10	F	O	N	T							
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66	U	S	E	S		67		68	B	E	E	M	A		69					68	N	O	R	A
69	B	E	E	T		70		71	B	L	E	A	T		72					71	D	R	A	Y

## Bobolink from page 11

The names Rice Bird or Reed Bird come from their scientific name, *oryzivorus* meaning “rice eating” and refers to their appetite for rice and other grains. I’ve heard them called skunk blackbirds across the border in Canada, and sombrero amarillo (yellow hats) in Costa Rica.

Regardless of how they got their names, the bottom line is for us to support local farmers and land owners here in the Finger Lakes by introducing them to the Bobolink Project and encouraging them to save and even create more habitat for this marvelous songbird. This summer when you drive by a hay field, stop and roll your window down and listen for the unique song of the butterbird and tell me what you think it sounds like. Ask your kids to listen to the song as well: it may be the last time they hear it. 🐦

• *Canary in the coal mine. A recent study from Cornell finds that since 1970 nearly 3 billion birds are gone from North America. “A staggering loss that suggests the very fabric of North America’s ecosystem is unraveling.” —John Fitzpatrick, Director, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology*

• *The Bobolink is one of the world’s most impressive songbird migrants, traveling some 12,500 miles (20,000 kilometers) to and from southern South America every year. Bobolinks molt twice a year, completely changing all their feathers on both the breeding and wintering grounds. During its lifetime, a Bobolink may travel the same distance as four or five laps around the world!*

FFF (for further findings)

- *The Bobolink Project—bobolinkproject.com/index.php*
  - *Cornell Lab of Ornithology—birds.cornell.edu/home/bring-birds-back/ MOre about*
  - *William Cullen Bryant: poetryfoundation.org/poets/william-cullen-bryant*
- "Sir Robert of Lincoln" in its entirety: norcrosswildlife.org/who-is-sir-robert-of-lincoln/ It can also be found in the online posting of this article at owllightnews.com/ dragon-fly-tales-bobolink-project/*

Steve Melcher is the primary caretaker, hoof trimmer & poop scooper at Odonata Sanctuary, Mendon. His studies included using members of the Order "Odonata," as bio-indicators 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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**Weather** from page 8



Above: Clouds near Groton, NY. Right: Weather instruments on a roof at FLX Weather (wind gage, rain gauge, thermometer and hygrometer (humidity)). Images courtesy of Drew Montreuil at FLX Weather



Forecasts, & Information. Email me—drew.montreuil@flxweather.com.

My second source is advertising. For a long time, I sold advertising to local businesses and had ads served by Google on my website. I never cared for the Google ads—they were distracting, at times offensive despite carefully setting the filters, and tended to break the layout and user experience of my website (thus reducing accessibility!). I was glad to finally be at a point financially where I could turn those off for good last fall. I love supporting other local businesses by giving them a platform to tap into my captive, local audience though. I view these local ads as a win for everyone. I get the finances I need, other local businesses get the exposure they need, and my users get to discover new local businesses to love and support.

Lastly is through free will contributions from my users. This is now my primary source of funds, which is a truly humbling experience. It is one thing to realize that people listen to me and trust my predictions. It is entirely another when they back that up with generous contributions! Over the course of a year, I have hundreds of people that pay me directly out of their own desire to keep my business running. Most contributions are small, but together the community makes a huge difference and allows me to do the work I need to keep them informed and safe. I am incredibly thankful for this support

How can people reach you?

My website is [flxweather.com](http://flxweather.com). I now have an app in both major app stores called FLX Weather. Facebook via Messenger or in my Facebook Group: Finger Lakes Weather—Reports,

Thank you very much Drew, for taking time out from your busy routine to share with *Owl Light* readers. We wish you the ongoing success that your amazing enterprise deserves.

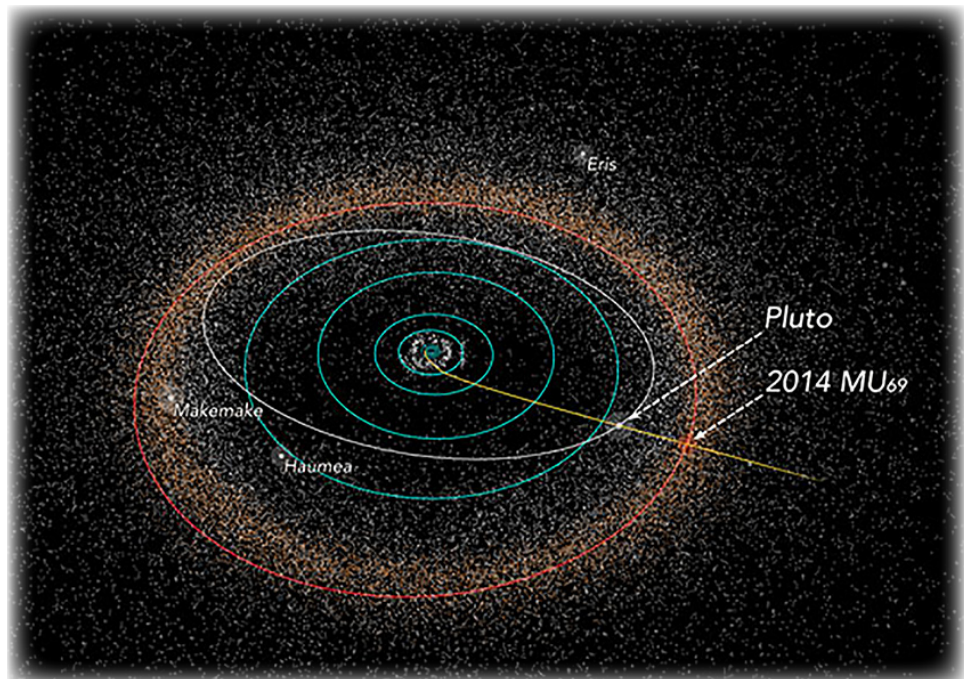
*The farm's soap products can be found online at: [yeoldegoatcart.com/](http://yeoldegoatcart.com/)*

About the Interviewer:

Eileen Perkins is a regular contributor. She offers *Owl Light's* readers monthly recipes and cookbook reviews in "Crafting Your Own Cuisine." (Page 13)

**Night Sky** from page 14

After its awe-inspiring landing in Jezero crater on the surface of Mars on February 18, NASA's Perseverance lander is poised to explore the "red planet" and search for evidence of microbial life. Evidence from previous missions to Mars points toward a time about 4 billion years ago when Mars was warmer and wetter and had a thicker atmosphere. NASA has a wealth of information and actual images taken by Perseverance, as well as artists' concepts, on their website—[nasa.gov/perseverancelimages](http://nasa.gov/perseverancelimages).



Kuiper Belt: a disc-like zone of hundreds of thousands of small icy, rocky worlds. NASA (New Horizons' journey from Earth to the Kuiper Belt)

The New Horizons spacecraft flew past the dwarf planet Pluto in July 2015. It continues its journey today through the Kuiper Belt, a disc-like zone of hundreds of thousands of small icy, rocky worlds which were created around the same time as our solar system around four billion years ago. Pluto is one of the larger objects in the Kuiper Belt along with others discovered in the last 20 years. The larger ones have been designated dwarf planets like Pluto and named by the International Astronomical Union (IAU) - Eris, Makemake, and Haumea.

New Horizons recently made a fly-by of the farthest object ever to be imaged by a spacecraft. The Kuiper Belt object (2014MU69) is 4.1 billion miles from Earth and has officially been named Arrokoth by the IAU. Two reddish colored lobes of different sizes make up this object, making it look very much like a snowman. It's likely that two separate objects which were circling each other slowly joined together over eons to create Arrokoth.



Arrokoth: Likely created as two objects circling each other joined. NASA-Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, Southwest Research Institute—Roman Tkachenko

Today there's a growing wealth of knowledge about our solar system and the universe which scientists continue to unravel. It's a fascinating subject to explore, no matter if you're a professional or an amateur.

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](http://rochesterastronomy.org).