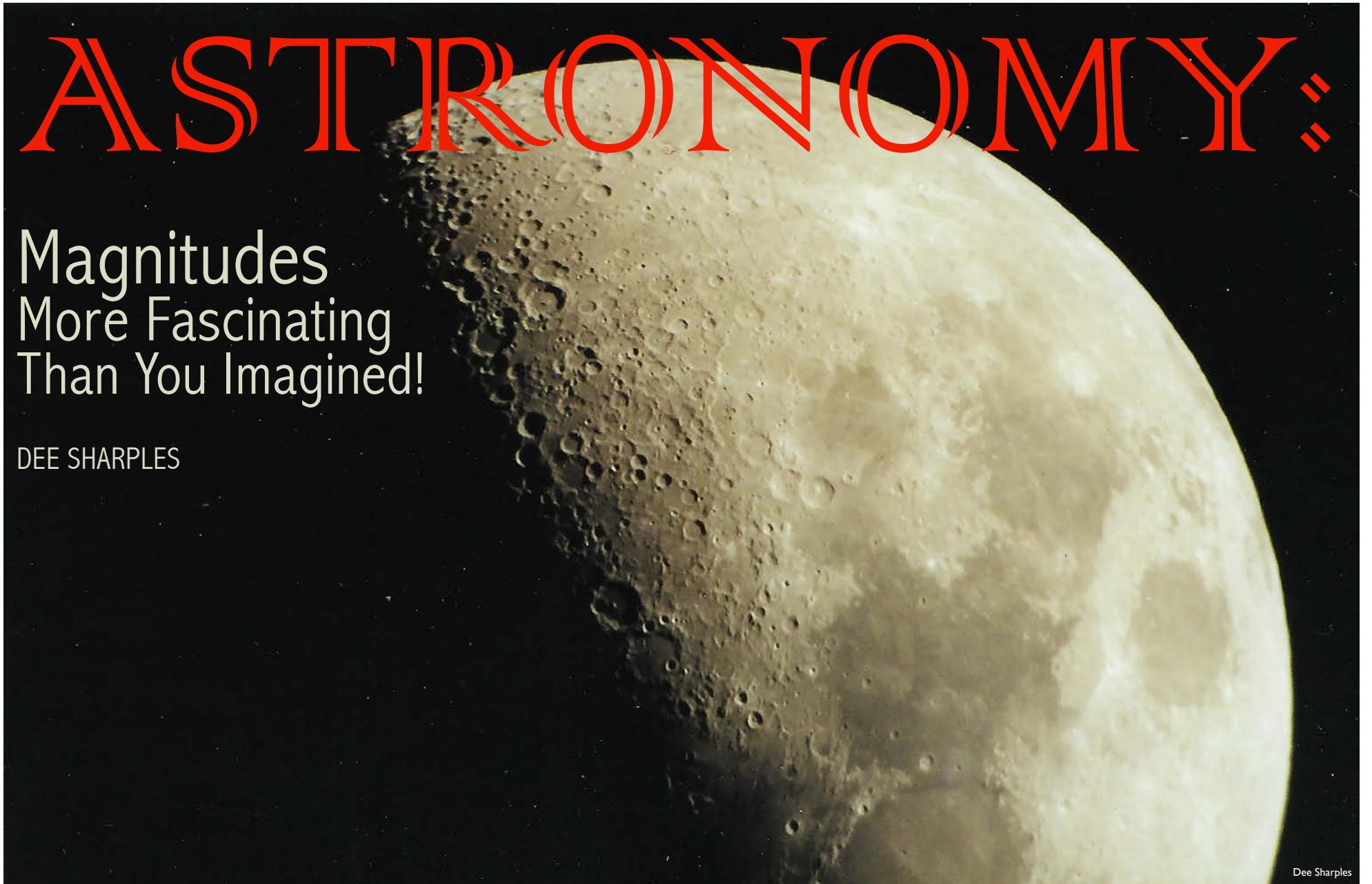




ASTRONOMY

Magnitudes More Fascinating Than You Imagined!

DEE SHARPLES



Dee Sharples

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: magnitude -26.7

Polaris, the North Star: magnitude 2.0

Being interested in all things astronomy began the summer I was 11 years old and discovered the science fiction shelves in the tiny branch library located in my city neighborhood. My fascination continued, ebbing and flowing with my age and what new discoveries and achievements were being made by the United States space program. It reignited when the first U.S. manned space flight blasted off in 1961 and became cemented firmly in my being when I witnessed the awe-inspiring moment when Neil Armstrong became the first human to step onto the surface of the Moon.

As an adult, daily life and responsibilities didn't leave me much spare time for developing my fascination with the universe. I read books by authors like Carl Sagan, who focused on educating the general public. "Sagan was perhaps the world's greatest popularizer of science, reaching millions of people through newspapers, magazines, and television broadcasts", as stated in his obituary published in the Cornell Chronicle on December 20, 1996. Neil deGrasse Tyson, director of New York City's Hayden Planetarium, currently writes books and hosts television programs appropriate for anyone fascinated by our amazing universe.

After becoming a member of the local astronomy club, the Astronomy Section of the Rochester Academy of Science (ASRAS), I discovered there were many ways I could explore astronomy, both as a hobby and making actual contributions to science.

My excitement just to be part of a group of like-minded astronomy enthusiasts blossomed immediately as I joined other members on observing nights at the Marian and Max Farash Center for Observational Astronomy, the ASRAS dark sky observing site in Ionia. I had my first opportunity to look through various telescopes, some smaller 4" to 8" easily transportable ones belonging to members and a huge club-owned telescope, so big we had to climb a 6' rolling step ladder to reach the eyepiece.

I was definitely hooked and had to have my own telescope. After checking out the various types, models, and sizes of telescopes owned by other members and comparing the pros, cons, and prices of each,

Continued on page 6

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Owl Light Literary: Turning Points—2021

Owl Light Literary: Turning Points is now available. See the order form on page 23 or order online at owllightnews.com/turningpoints/.

Turning Points is Canadice Press' first stand-alone literary journal. The journal will be published every other year (submissions for the 2023 journal will be accepted from June to December 2022 - theme TBD).

We will post submission calls here and on social media.

Thank you to everyone for your patience and support.

A special thank you to all who submitted work.

It will also be available at select independent retail locations.

Owl Light News is now available as a digital subscription. The cost is \$15 a year (on its own) or \$25 a year for both print and digital. If you are a current print subscriber and want to read us online as well, simply email me at editor@canadicepress.com and let me know, and I will add you to the online list.

Submissions are accepted ongoing for our monthly Pen & Prose. We are particularly interested in short fiction stories and hybrid submissions.

Correction: In the caption on the front page of our July Owl Light News the editor (that's me, D.E.) incorrectly put Dr. Robert Spence rather than Dr. Henry Spence. Robert Spence was a later occupant of the home, in the 1970s. Apologies to all. This has been corrected in the online versions. Speaking of front page oops...I also used an incorrect plural in the May issue. The correct heading should have said Children's Peace Park NOT Childrens' Peace Park (caught that one after we went to print and was secretly hoping no one else noticed). Also, in July's Creating Your Own Cuisine, step 4 should include grapes. "Toss Vegetables with Protein choice and 1 cup halved, seedless grapes, then add half to three quarters of the Dressing, stirring in completely. :-) Corrected version is posted on our free-for-all community pages at owllightnews.com/crafting-your-own-cuisine-2/



Where Inspiration & Inquiry Converge

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SUBMISSIONS—to editor@canadicepress.com

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

We 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.

FROM THE EDITOR

The Monster Mask

One of my neighborhood destinations as a child was to visit the Banks Family, their caretaker Ivers, and the barn kittens that inhabited dresser drawers in the farm's barn. I recall meeting Mrs. Banks in her entryway, standing at the base of the home's elegant wooden steps, and wondering, in a child-like way—as I watched her steady herself on poles attached to her arms—how she made her way upstairs. The house was lost in a fire many years ago—a smaller home now rests on the original stone foundation—but the memory remains.



The memory of a plane ride I took over the Finger Lakes as a child, after winning the ride by raising the most money for the local March of Dimes initiative, remains vivid as well. For an isolated rural child, it was an adventure beyond measure, but it was the sight of Mrs. Banks and children crippled by polio, not the prize, that inspired me to collect sponsors and walk for the cause.

I was born early in the 1960s, when polio vaccines were just being made available. People remembered, were still living with crippling remnants of the disease. There were still children in the US walking around with braces on their legs. There are still children contracting polio and suffering that fate; polio remains endemic in Afghanistan and Pakistan and those two “hot spots” continue to threaten other vulnerable regions. Vaccination is key, and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative is, per their website, “focusing on ‘every missed child’ (in Pakistan and Afghanistan) ensuring even the most vulnerable communities are served with vaccination services.”

It was also in the 1960s that stand-alone measles (1963), mumps (1967) and rubella vaccines (1969) were first licensed. (The MMR combine vaccine was licensed in 1971.) Getting these early immunizations was part of our childhood experience, and although I suspect these earlier vaccinations only had a fraction of the intensive oversight and statistical data that exists with the trials and administration for 2019-nCoV, I never recall our receiving the shots as children being questioned—it just was.

For many people, the same has been true with the COVID-19 vaccinations, it was never a question of if, always a question of when—and the sooner the better. Although I knew that vaccinations would be the key to lessening the domestic and global impact of the epidemic, I, nonetheless, questioned the efficacy and risks associated with the COVID-19 vaccination. I never get the flu shot despite being in a higher-risk age group and rarely get sick. I wash my hands, avoid getting coughed on, and boost my immunity by taking care of self. The thought of getting the vaccination frightened me.

Ultimately, my decision to get the COVID-19 vaccination was not about me. It harkened back to those earlier experiences, about the what ifs. What if too few people get vaccinated and this enables more virulent variants to adapt and spread—perhaps variants that impact children more directly? What if I get sick and get someone else sick who is older, more fragile, less able to survive? What if this is still a major threat as I age and become more vulnerable?

Although I question big medicine in the same way I question big business in general (money does talk), and hesitated at first to be part of this big “experiment,” as I have heard it described by some people around me who have refused the vaccine, like polio before, seeing the losses and devastation on the screen and close to home—like Mrs. Banks at the bottom of her steps and my schoolyard peers—it was clear that the personal risk (especially given the outcome of initial trials) far, far outweighed the risk.

Now that things are opening up, I am most fearful of the “masked monster” that is not masked. Less than 60% of New York State residents have received the vaccine (the percentage is even lower in the county where I live). Yet, when I venture out—into a world that has been shut down for over a year—I do so with apprehension, as even in crowded stores almost no one is wearing a mask. I can't tell people to wear masks any more than I can tell people to get vaccinated (or vote for that matter). Despite being vaccinated, I wore a mask when I initially ventured out. Then the mask slowly came off—in part due to the perceptions of those around me. The very thing that initially offered us all some protection has now become so politicized that it stands as a liability that makes us all more vulnerable, especially the unvaccinated, and increases the threat to those most near and dear.

As a child, the view from that little plane was breathtaking. As we flew over the Finger Lakes I asked the pilot to follow Six Mile Creek home. He flew low over our house and the farm on Banks Road. From up there, the people on the ground were mere dots—small, insignificant, and so very fragile.

D.E. Bentley
Editor Owl Light News

FROM OUR READERS

Down to Earth Astronomy

Dear Editor,
Thanks for Dee Sharples well informed and user-friendly astronomy columns — a must read for star junkies. You might say she brings the heavens down to earth for us rural stargazers!

Mike Chiariello
Franklinville, NY
July 22, 2021

Canandaigua Shoreline Concerns

To the Editor,
Perhaps I am simply a relic of the past, but I have to express my concern about the built environment around Canandaigua Lake. When in 1989, we began a Watershed Protection project to consider the impact of land uses in the Canandaigua Lake watershed and especially their influence on water quality, one of the things we quickly saw was that the lake's shoreline was important to its health and was already over-built. No room was being left for trees and other vegetation; wetlands and shoreline were being destroyed that normally would enhance aquatic life and water quality in the lake. Instead, municipalities around the lake had allowed homes (no longer just cottages) to be built cheek-by-jowl at the shoreline.

At that time, we could think of no remedy for this condition and so proceeded with developing other recommendations and best practices for large-scale landowners and services such as farmers, forest owners, lawn care companies, highway superintendents, and residential developers.

But looking back, it's impossible not to compare the condition of Canandaigua Lake now with when there were few cottages, little powerboat traffic, and most people came to the lake for their renewal, a time that's within my lifespan.

Now they come as year-round residents, to “make their mark”, as creators of monuments and castles, as dominators of the lake, landscape and watershed. I'm afraid the lack of concern with the health of the lake itself will end with the ruin of this precious resource, as drinking water, as a source of fun, and as a natural landscape offering renewal for our exhausted “batteries” and souls.

I don't mean this as a criticism of anyone, but I do feel the need, based on my long association with the lake, to offer this warning.

Sincerely,
Stephen Lewandowski,
Concerned Canandaigua Citizen
June 28, 2021

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.

Owl Light Renewals
Owl Light News renewal notices are emailed
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Watch for email invoices as your renewal date nears.
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Please let us know if your contact information or subscription status has changed so we can update our lists in a timely manner and keep the Owls coming. Thanks!

Pathways to Democracy

Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century



DOUG GARNAR

Less than two months before the January 6th “insurrection,” the American Academy of Arts and Sciences published a two-year study of the challenges facing our Constitutional Democracy. Drawing on existing quantitative and qualitative data focusing on civic engagement, consulting with numerous experts/scholars, and conducting close to 50 listening sessions with diverse groups of citizens, the Academy’s Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship developed a framework for examining the current crisis in our Constitutional Democracy. The Commission then offered six strategies and thirty-one recommendations for the reinvention and revitalization of our Constitutional Democracy.

The events leading up to the January 6th insurrection, the insurrection and its consequences, coupled with the Covid 19 Pandemic, suggest that our Democracy is in a crisis of unprecedented proportion since the Civil War. But we must remember that a crisis can be both a time of danger and a time of opportunity. Our civic actions or inactions can either fulfill John Adams’s dire forecast of 1814 or lead to a revitalized inclusive democracy able to wrestle with the great existential problems of the day. This “Pathways to Democracy” column and the forthcoming September issue will provide readers with an outline of the challenges facing our Constitutional Democracy and the strategies and recommendations offered by the Commission. The report by the Commission can be accessed in its entirety by going to www.amacd.org/ourcommonpurpose.

Citizens might reflect on Edward Bellamy’s *Look Backward*, written in 1888. Only *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and the *Bible* had larger printing success in the 19th Century. Hundreds of groups of American citizens gathered to deliberate Bellamy’s utopian vision. It gave rise to the American Progressive Movement which underlay American politics from Teddy Roosevelt to Franklin Roosevelt. It is the hope of this writer that readers of *Owl Light News* would create small groups to read and discuss the Commission’s strategies and recommendations and where there is consensus become politically engaged to challenge elected officials at all levels (local, state, and Federal).

The Commission identifies the following challenges facing our Constitutional Democracy:

- Overall distrust of the Federal Govt (only 17% believe it does the right thing).
- Over the last 30 years a growing public disenchantment with the media, business, and religious institutions.
- A growing distrust of our fellow citizens when it comes to politics.
- A growing economic inequality between the top 1% and the rest of the citizenry and the concern that money speaks to power.
- The US ranks 26th out of 32 OECD nations in voter participation.



“Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There was never a democracy yet that did not commit suicide.”

John Adams, Founding Father and 2nd U.S. President – 1814

- In 2020 the 26 smallest states (in terms of population) control the majority of votes in the Senate while representing only 18% of the population.
- Structural distortions such as the gerrymandering of congressional districts leads to a sense of disenfranchisement.
- In 2019 only 10% of the citizenry attended a public hearing or school board meeting.
- Fewer than 10% have become involved in marches, protests/demonstrations and less than 5% work for a political candidate.
- In 2017 47% of the citizenry were open to looking at alternatives to democracy such as a strong leader or rule by experts. 18-29-year-old citizens are even more dissatisfied with democracy.
- There is a lack of a sense of how to be civically engaged especially among citizens under 50.
- There is a sense among citizens under 50 that there is no common purpose to unite us.

THE WAY FORWARD

The first strategy offered by the Commission focuses on the achieving of voice and representation by offering the following recommendations:

- Substantially enlarge the House of Representatives through Federal Legislation to make it and the electoral college more representative of the nation’s population.
- Introduce ranked voting-choice voting in presidential, congressional and state elections.
- Amend or repeal the 1967 law that mandates single member districts for the House, so that states have the option to use multi-member districts on the condition that they adopt a non-winner-take-all election model.
- Pass strong campaign-finance disclosure laws in all

- 50 states that require full transparency for campaign donations including from 501 (C) (4) organizations and LLCs.
- Pass “clean election laws” at all levels which create mechanisms for public matching donations systems and democracy vouchers which amplify the power of small donors.
- Establish Federal legislation to create 18-year terms for Supreme Court justices so one nomination comes up in each term of Congress—Justices at the end of their term can choose to transition to an appeals court.

The second strategy is designed to make voting less burdensome and directly puts the burden on the citizen to vote. The following recommendations are offered by the Commission:

- Give citizens more choices about when/where they vote with state legislation in all states that support the implementation of voter centers and early voting.
- Change federal election day to Veterans Day to honor the service of veterans and to ensure voting can occur on a day most citizens have off. Align state election calendars with this new federal election day.
- Establish through state and federal legislation same day registration and universal automatic voter registration.
- Establish through state legislation the preregistration of 16 and 17-year-olds and provide opportunities for them to practice voting as part of the preregistration process.
- Establish through congressional legislation that voting in federal elections be a requirement of citizenship. All eligible voters would have to vote in person or by mail. Citizens who do not vote will receive a small citation/fine. Citizens may vote but include “none of the above.”

Continued on page 22

Hobbes and the Zombie Apocalypse

Review of *Black Summer*, A Netflix TV Series

- Created by Karl Schaefer and John Hyams and directed by Hyams and Abram Cox.
- The first season premiered April 11, 2019 and the second season was released on June 17, 2021.

LEN GELLER

In the 17th century the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) gave us a chilling vision of what life would be like without a central government to protect citizens and enforce the rule of law and a civil society to promote and enforce norms of behavior. He called this “the state of nature,” a hypothetical construct that refers to the human condition prior to the emergence of the state, the rule of law, and civil society. For Hobbes, the state of nature is governed by fear, distrust, paranoia, and violence that lead inevitably to what he calls a “war of all against all.” For most of those in the state of nature, life is “nasty, brutish, and short,” a living hell on earth.

Fast forward to the dystopian world of *Black Summer*, six weeks into a worldwide zombie apocalypse, and Hobbes’s hypothetical construct has become a living reality where government has collapsed, the rule of law has vanished, civil society is disintegrating, and the last remaining humans are trying to escape the rampaging undead and turning on one another with deceit, betrayal, and extreme violence in a desperate struggle to stay alive and avoid becoming mindless raging beasts themselves. No one is safe, not even for a moment, in this nightmarish world.

Of course, movies and shows in the zombie apocalypse genre have been with us for decades, and while some, like *The Walking Dead* and *Z Nation*, are of high quality, none has captured the Hobbesian vision on the ground like *Black Summer*. While there are other shows just as dark and gritty, none can match the show’s grim realism. *Black Summer* holds up a mirror to ourselves, and we are horrified by what we see.

The show has many strengths, especially in its writing, acting, and production. The writing and acting (even that of the undead) are first-rate, the rural landscape as the backdrop for the second season is spectacular, the technique of shadowing a character with a moving camera adds to the suspense and excitement of each scene, and the strategy of replacing a linear story-telling mode with a discontinuous mode where later events are presented first and the backstory is subsequently filled in is creative and challenging. Right from the first episode you realize this isn’t your typical zombie fare.

The show features a number of major characters, some whose narrative arc spans both seasons and some one season, along with a host of minor characters who may appear in one or more episodes. But *Black Summer* plays no favorites. Anyone, including any major character, can die at any moment, and of those that survive, there are no heroes or moral exemplars. And those who do show kindness and compassion often pay the ultimate price. Among the various narrative threads woven into the first two seasons, one of the most intriguing is the strong bond between Rose (Jaime King), a white middle-class woman who is separated from her daughter and frantically trying to find her, and Julius James (Justin Chu Cary)

aka “Spears,” a black man with a criminal past who has just murdered a soldier and taken his identity. Two people couldn’t be more different, and yet their common peril brings them together in a surprising way. Equally intriguing is the harrowing journey of Ooh Kyungsun (Christine Lee) aka “Sun,” a Korean woman who, despite not speaking English, being held captive by a small armed militia, and traumatized by the chaos and violence swirling around her, has an uncanny ability to stay alive and not give in to despair.

Whether by accident or design, the strongest characters so far in the series have been women: Rose, her daughter Anna (Zoe Marlett), and the resilient Sun. With the exception of Spears, whose instincts for survival are first-rate, the other male characters are either out of their depth or fall victim to bad luck or bad choices. But two who bear watching are Mance (Jesse Lipscombe), the compassionate leader of an unarmed rag-tag group who alone survives the zombie onslaught and bullets of rival groups, and Ray Nazeri (Bobby Naderi), a former police officer and authoritarian leader of the armed militia that captures Sun. Whatever course the series follows in season three (presumably there will be a third season), these characters and the potential conflict between them will play a prominent role, especially in relation to Rose and Anna.

For those viewers new to zombie apocalypse lore, *Black Summer* is a prequel to *Z Nation*, the Syfy series that ended in 2018 after five seasons. Both shows share the same fictional world, but *Black Summer* begins at the inception of the apocalypse, whereas *Z Nation* begins several years later. Despite this connection, Karl Schaefer, the co-creator of both series, has called *Black Summer* a “standalone spinoff.” And he’s absolutely right. Beyond sharing the same fictional world, the two shows have very little in common because of the different timelines and different characters. What *Z Nation* does provide is an explanation of the outbreak, but apart from that, the viewer can figure out what she needs to know from *Black Summer* itself.

Nevertheless, the following information will help viewers get up to speed on some of the more perplexing aspects of the series. In *Z Nation* the source of the zombie outbreak is a lab leak of a genetically engineered bacterium or virus (we are never told which) that becomes airborne and spreads rapidly around the world infecting all humans but remaining dormant until the person dies. Upon death, it activates primitive brain functions and reanimates the dead person into a zombie. Being attacked and bitten by a zombie does not infect you since you are already infected; however, a zombie attack is still lethal, because it will either kill you on the spot or create a wasting condition that will kill you later. The only way to prevent a dying person from becoming a

zombie is to destroy the brain through massive head trauma just prior to death. This explains why Rose, Spears, and other characters use kill shots to the head when dispatching enemies or euthanizing friends. The last thing they want is zombie reanimation. Similarly, the only way to kill a zombie is to destroy its brain, and the most efficient method is a bullet to the brain. This also explains why the rampaging zombies are so hard to kill. Unlike the zombies of *The Walking Dead* and most shows and movies in this genre, the zombies of *Black Summer* are very fast and agile, and unless you’re a crack shot, pumping bullets into other parts of the body will not stop them.

Hobbes’s problem is the fundamental question of *Black Summer*: How, if at all, can the remaining humans survive this nightmarish state of nature? Since the apocalypse is worldwide, so too is the state of nature, and there is nowhere to run. Clearly, the best option is to create a system of social cooperation for mutual defense and protection against the undead in which each gives up the right to wage war on others in exchange for others doing the same. But there is a major obstacle standing in the way. Why should one cooperate with a stranger if it is impossible to know if the other is bargaining in good faith, when most likely they are not? Time and again, we see good faith cooperators betrayed and murdered by those they naively trusted. Hardly any good deed goes unpunished in *Black Summer*. Given the precarious survival conditions in the state of nature, isn’t it safer and smarter for those with a moral compass to defect rather than cooperate? Without reciprocal trust, cooperation can’t work, and in the state of nature, trust and good will are in short supply.

This is a classic example of what game theorists call the Prisoner’s Dilemma, a social choice situation in which acting from rational self-interest not only fails to produce the best outcome but may also produce a bad outcome. Defecting rather than cooperating may save your skin in the short run but it won’t save you in the long run. Being on your own or with just one or two others is most likely a death sentence in the state of nature. You need the safety and protection of a group strong enough to defend itself against other groups and the undead, and this can only happen through mutual trust and cooperation.

This dilemma lies at the heart of *Black Summer*, and we see it in full relief in the last scene of the second season when two of the major characters face off against each other with guns drawn, setting up a third season that can’t come too soon. This is smart and riveting television, and if you have the stomach for it, you won’t be disappointed. 🦋

Len Geller writes on the media and politics and taught philosophy for many years in upstate New York. He lives in Seneca County.

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Astronomy from front

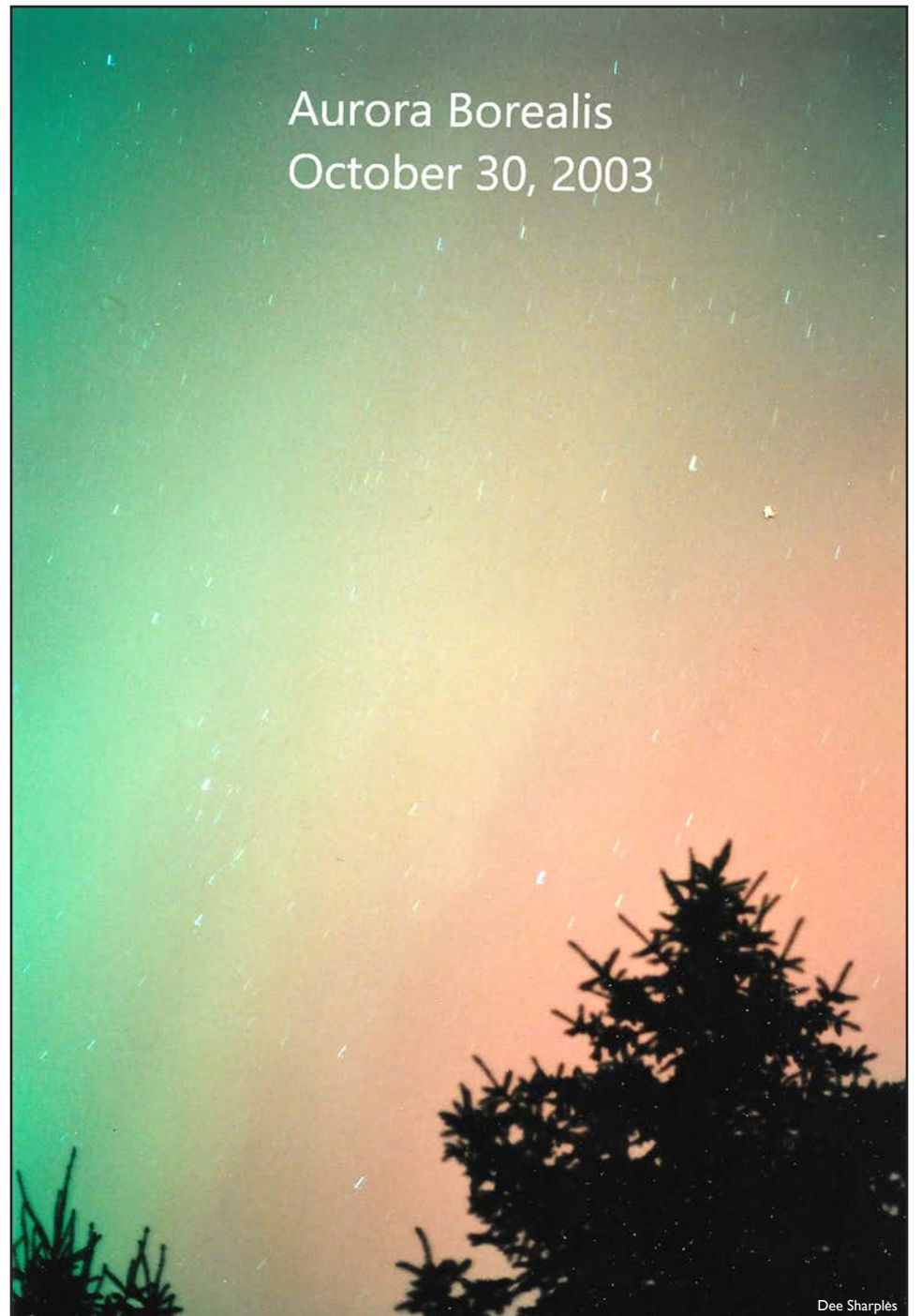
I made my decision to buy a Meade 8" Schmidt-Cassegrain. It was fairly heavy, but I was still able to carry and set it up in my backyard or at the observing site. It was capable of ample magnification, was motorized for tracking the stars as the Earth rotated, and able to accommodate a piggy-back camera and direct-through-the-eyepiece photography. At Ionia, I connected with two ASRAS members who had similar scopes and they became my mentors, teaching me how to set up, align, and use my telescope. They also showed me how to read a star chart, what easy-to-locate targets were best for beginners, such as planets, star clusters, and the brighter galaxies.

My enthusiasm fueled my capability to carry my heavy telescope outside to my backyard to observe every chance I had. Neighbors' house lights could be frustrating at times as I scouted for the best location in the yard to avoid them. I was also a little skittish about some nocturnal animal, like a skunk or a raccoon, surprising me.

That's when my husband built me a simple roll-off observatory which made a world of difference in my comfort level while enjoying the night sky. The height of the walls blocked any neighborhood light pollution allowing for more frequent and convenient observing sessions as my telescope now had a permanent home out there.



8" Meade SCT telescope



Astrophotography now entered the realm of possibilities. By mounting a 35mm camera on the optical tube of my telescope (piggy-back), I could now automatically track the movement of the stars for long exposure shots to capture fainter objects invisible to the naked eye. I was also able to take close-up pictures of the moon—like the one featured on the front page—by focusing the camera through the eyepiece.

The unusually perfect warm, clear weather for the peak of the Leonid meteor shower on November 18, 2001, allowed me to randomly snap pictures with my camera of the still dark, very early morning sky, and I was delighted to see how many meteors I had captured streaking across the sky.

On the night of October 30, 2003, as we were driving home, we noticed the sky looked strangely unusual. That was when I witnessed my first-ever observation of a rare colorful display of an Aurora Borealis. I hurried to mount my camera on a tripod and took photos as the sky to the north changed colors in waves of green and pink. It seemed that the night sky was offering me a rare gift.

I wanted to contribute to the science of astronomy in some way and was introduced to the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO) by another astronomy club member. By observing stars designated as "variable stars" because their magnitude brightened and dimmed on a periodic basis, I learned how to compare them to nearby stars that glittered at a stable, known magnitude. This organization encouraged amateur star gazers like me to submit their data which was entered into a database. The data is used by professional and amateur astronomers as well as students doing research on variable stars.

AAVSO also had a section dedicated to observing sunspots. I purchased a solar filter and counted the number of sunspots I could see on each clear day, reporting that number to the organization for research purposes.

Continued on back



Roll-off observatory

My roll-off observatory looks like a garden shed but has a metal track on the top of the two side walls. The unattached roof has six wheels allowing me to manually roll the roof onto a support structure to the rear. The telescope has a permanent home protected from the weather, is easily accessible, and gives me a secure location for observing sessions.

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OR see form on page 23.

Bee Lines

Swarm Trapping and an Unwavering Fascination with Bees

SAM HALL



Supposedly, the swarming time for bees in western NY is from roughly May 15 through June 15. I think that for probably a variety of reasons this is no longer exactly true. I'm not going to say that climate change is a factor but I'm not going to say that it is not. My lilac bushes seem to bloom a bit earlier than they used to.

This summer I have been using three swarm traps that I got at Kim Carpenter's Bee Store in Canandaigua. The traps have space for 5 deep frames. They are baited with soaplike cakes flavored with lemon grass, a favorite attraction for bees, that you hang from the end of one of the frames. I placed two of the traps on Gorham Street in Canandaigua, the other in my bee yard in Gorham.

The first swarm entered one of the traps on Gorham Street about June 16th. I say about as I didn't check every day and the 16th was the day I took the colony out of the trap. It was definitely an "after" swarm. When an extremely large colony with a huge population swarms after it has sent out the prime (first) swarm it may send out "after" swarms, each one smaller than the one before. This first swarm covered barely two frames in the trap with bees. I put them in an eight frame hive and immediately started feeding them syrup and provided them with a pollen patty. They have come along nicely and are nearly ready for either a honey super or a second deep depending on what I want their future to be.

This past Tuesday the other trap that I had on Gorham Street on July 6th had a swarm in it. I did not immediately take them out of the trap but finally got to it on July 11th between rain showers. I knew from the activity at the entrance that this was a much larger swarm than the first one. The bees in the trap filled 4½ of the 5 frames in the trap. Also several of the frames had additional comb added to the bottom of the frames for additional space for honey storage or for the queen to lay in. This was definitely a prime swarm. The queen is humongous. I believe that if I had delayed much longer they would have swarmed out of the trap or absconded completely.

While I have enjoyed getting swarms out of the



Left: One of the purchased swarm traps mounted on a tree. Above: I transferred the swarm into an eight frame hive ("deep") that either a honey super or additional deep can be added to.

traps it has brought the number of colonies that I am taking care of to 24. Fortunately, I'm loving it. Another old saying that I think we'll see retired is "a swarm of bees in June is worth a silver spoon, a swarm of bees in July ain't worth a fly". We are seeing later falls and earlier springs with milder winters. It certainly isn't good for everything but it might be for the bees.

This is also the time to make sure you have adequate honey supers on. Remember the bees can't fill them if they aren't there. Because I am a small beekeeper, I don't necessarily wait until the entire honey super is capped but may pull out fully capped frames of honey from different supers to fill my 12 frame extractor. When I say "capped," I mean the bees have closed the cells that are full of honey with beeswax. If the cell is capped it means the bees have reduced the moisture in that honey to an acceptable moisture content of under 17.8%. Years ago I invested in a refractometer which measures exactly the moisture content. I believe that it has saved me from making mistakes. Too much moisture in honey will cause it to ferment and the resulting product is not mead, it is unusable.

So far this year I have extracted a little over a 100 lbs of honey. I have given a lot back to the bees in that instead of washing out honey buckets and the sieves, I put them a long ways from the bee yard and the bees come and clean them up better than my washing them. I keep the cleaning area about a quarter of a mile from the yard so that robbing is not encouraged. There will always be a little wax in the pails after the bees have finished. This wax goes right into the solar wax melter to form loaves. I will use this wax to coat new frames of undrawn comb in the spring or sooner if I need it.

My fascination with honey bees and indeed the natural world continues and hopefully it always will. I hope yours will too. 🐝

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@Rochester.rr.com

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The Light Lens

Walkway to Nowhere

T. TOURIS

Well, at long last, Congress may actually pass something to address our country's crumbling infrastructure. Maybe they can tuck a few dollars in the bill for our infrastructure.

You see, my partner in life and I are collectors—collectors of ideas. We often have long deliberations on improving our home infrastructure.

It usually goes something like this:

"Wouldn't it be cool to have a covered walkway between the house and the office?"
"Yes, we could use the three pallets of bluestone we've bought at auction over the past five years."

"Let's go out and take a look and talk about it."

A couple of hours later ...

"Some great ideas, but we really can't do it this year. We've got too many other things to finish up."

A couple of years later ...

"We really should use those five pallets of bluestone for something!"
"Let's go out and talk about that walkway ..."

And so it goes—rinse and repeat.

So, Senator Schumer, if you're reading this, as you should be; I've got some shovel-ready projects waiting. You can even come out for a publicity photo-op. I'll set aside a shovel for you.



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.

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Farmington Farmers' Market (Fridays)
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Contact: farmingtonfarmmarket@gmail.com
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Please Take it Slow on our Rural Roads

The Monthly Read

Is Smaller Better?

A Review of *Radio Free Vermont: A Fable of Resistance* by Bill McKibben

Radio Free Vermont
224 pages
Blue Rider Press
(Penguin Random House)
(2017)



MARY DRAKE

Some states are known for their distinct aura. Maine is home to the literary scene since many notable writers live there. Texas brings to mind the tough independence of cowboys. Alaska has what's left of unspoiled Nature. California makes you think of glitzy movie stars. And Vermont is noted for—what—maple syrup? But it has a lot more than that.

Although it's one of the smallest and least populated states, if you've ever visited there you will recognize that the Green Mountain state has a distinct attitude. Vermont is proud of its mountains, its hardy inhabitants, and its self-sufficiency.

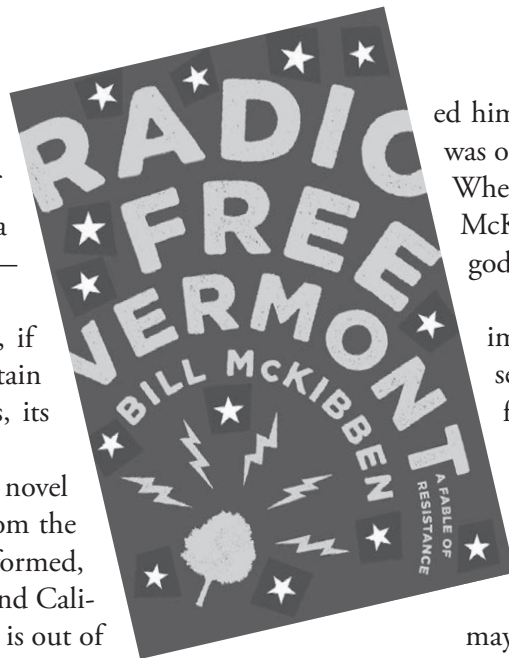
So, it should come as no surprise that Bill McKibben's 2017 novel *Radio Free Vermont* is a fictional account of Vermont seceding from the union to stand on its own. After all, ever since the union was formed, states have been talking about leaving, most recently both Texas and California. So has New York City, which feels that the rest of the state is out of touch with its needs. On an even broader scale, the division of red and blue states has been suggested. And in 2003, Vermont had its own failed secessionist movement, called the Second Vermont Republic.

It's an intriguing concept, but McKibben is not seriously suggesting it. Rather, in a quirky, humorous way he's exploring the idea of resistance.

It all starts when Vern Barclay, the seventy-two-year-old host on a local radio talk show, gets accidentally involved in the sabotage of a new Wal-Mart. At the store's opening, he's interviewing employees, although we're told that some have been planted there to disparage the superstore's effect on the local economy and environment, when the computers that control the sewage system are hacked, its direction is reversed, and sewage backs up into the perfect new store.

Vern whisks away Perry, the young hacker, and they join forces by association. The two go into hiding after being accused of domestic terrorism. That's when Perry, who provides the young person's computer know-how as well up-to-date music selections, enables them to go online, hi-jack the airwaves, and produce *Radio Free Vermont*, a broadcast that is "underground, underpowered, and underfoot." They urge Vermonters to consider secession from corporate America, as personified in the book by WalMart, Starbucks, and Coors (Did you know that Vermont is home to more microbreweries than any other state?) and from the federal government; both oppress the native independence of Vermonters to decide things for themselves. As the movement gathers steam, secessionists vote on a Vermont anthem and design a new flag.

However, McKibben subtitles the book, *A Fable of Resistance*. The term "fable" implies some supernatural element. In Vermont history, that supernatural element is Ethan Allen. He's not the furniture manufacturer; he's the real-life frontiersman who in Vermont history has achieved the status of a legend. The book is liberally sprinkled with lore about this local hero. He led the Green Mountain Boys during the Revolution and helped capture Fort Ticonderoga from the British. He devoted



himself to achieving statehood for Vermont, whose territory was originally claimed by both New York and New Hampshire. When New Yorkers came to assert their claim to Vermont land, McKibben immortalizes Ethan Allen's famous retort that, "The gods of the valleys are not the gods of the hills."

So what, McKibben wonders, are some of the practical implications of a state leaving the union? Well, there's social security to consider. Those monthly checks come from the federal government. And what about federal farm subsidies? Would farmers go out of business? To these questions, Vern replies that many small Vermont family farms have already gone out of business, and besides, the federal subsidies "go to the big guys." And if you're counting on social security to live on in your old age, well, "you may want to think again."

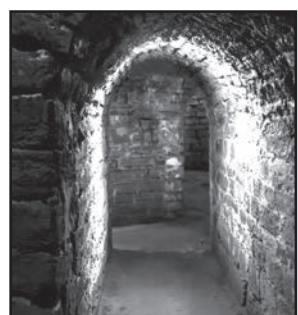
Like Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, *Radio Free Vermont* is not meant to be taken seriously; it's a satire that pokes fun at politics and human nature while at the same time bringing attention to serious issues, like global warming and uncontrolled expansion. Since January is now brown rather than white, those who move to Vermont must learn how to drive in the mud. The book has been classified as part of a new subgenre called climate fiction. And as exemplified by his own small state, McKibben wants us to consider that bigger may not always be better. Speaking of the US, Vern opines that, "Maybe after a few hundred years of growing steadily bigger we're now big enough."

The protagonist, Vern is a folksy, funny, and fair. He tells us that he began his radio career "long before Rush Limbaugh or his type; I didn't shout, I didn't take positions, I just brought on interesting people to interview and I took phone calls." That doesn't mean he hasn't thought about the issues, just "the way I saw the job, it was pretty important not to have those opinions too strongly." Difficult, controversial issues in the novel are discussed calmly and rationally. There's no one right answer, and people never get so worked up that they storm the capitol.

In 1989, long before global warming was a common topic, Bill McKibben wrote *The End of Nature*, which discussed the issue in terms anyone could understand. It established him as an educator and environmentalist, and he's become an activist in the prevention of climate change. He founded the climate campaign 350.org, a global, grassroots organization that urges "stepping back from oil, gas and coal." He has written seventeen books in all, on such diverse topics as human engineering, the economy, and de-commercializing Christmas. If his books are as well crafted, gently funny and reasonable as *Radio Free Vermont*, then they must be a pleasure to read. ✎

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

Where the Path Leads — YA FANTASY by MARY DRAKE (marydrake.online) Chapter 17: *Another Chance*



Emily fails to free Sophia, imprisoned by the harsh overseer, but he gives her another chance to save her friend if she brings back to him a magical item contained deep within Blackwood Forest.

Brutus Morantur paced restlessly in front of her as Emily stood stiffly, trying to work the kinks out of her neck and shoulders from being cramped inside the wardrobe. She looked nervously around the cavernous room, edging her way nearer to the darkness and out of the pool of light cast by the fireplace. He looked every bit the lord of the manor, a man of great physical strength, richly clad in a scarlet tunic with gold embroidery.

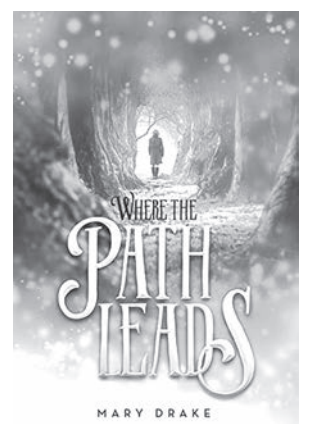
"So, you are the girl causing all the trouble among the laborers."

How was she to answer that? She had just presented another point of view.

"I didn't mean any harm. I'm sorry."

He took a deep draught from a goblet before answering and sat down in a massive oak chair. "You pretend to be unaware of the seriousness of your crimes."

Continued online...owllightnews.com/where-the-path-leads-chapter_____.



Available as an ebook on Amazon and soon to be released in print.

Fiction from D.E. BENTLEY

Retrograde Blues

— an excerpt from a work in progress.

**“Extinction is the rule.
Survival is the exception.”**

Carl Sagan

The scent mist lingered, like the vestiges of the distant ship we thought we had seen. It had not been a ship but rather a Fata Morgana, conjured from the oppressive warm air that took over the days as soon as the owl grey turned to white. I pushed the cork forcefully back in, fearful I had released a genie, ill prepared to offer up wishes. What would I wish: for time to reverse itself to the moment before the events that brought us here—as the lights intensified and spread across the northern horizon, melting into an unspeakable kaleidoscope of colors as night fell; for the radio silence to be replaced with preposterous propaganda disguised as news; the engines to roar and spew CO2 into the atmosphere; for life to turn back—to what, street wars?

“Pull it out again, pull it out; there is something inside”

A congregation of faces had gathered, their eyes idolizing the blue bottle pulled from the sand. As I again pulled the cork from the neck of the bottle, their nostrils twitched, rabbit-like, and they breathed in deeply the memory that the scent conjured.

“Wine, its wine” came the chorused chime of anticipation.

“Read it, read it,” came the next chorus, as the Merlot mist whisked away westward.



Keepsakes (Ruth)

Caressing the edge of the candleholder, I could feel the weight of years flowing through the metal into my hands. The delicate fern leaf pattern carved into the base below the bobèche had faded with the touches of time. A moss green patina had settled into the engraved lines, contrasting with the golden hue of the metal.

We had found the candleholders in a small antique shop on our way back from a bluegrass festival in the Catskills. Dell and I were young then, naive, mesmerized by dreams. Our conversation about the lively Punch Brothers show we were returning home from was silenced when we stepped into the roadside shop. Objects leaped into view at every turn—beseeching us to take them home, make them our own—as periodic bulbs, hanging from wires overhead, led us deeper into literary catacombs. We both jumped when she spoke, the proprietor, a petite woman with grey hair, some of which escaped from a tight bun pinned at the base of her neck. It wrapped itself around long silver earrings and the tendrils terminated just below her jagged shoulder blades.

“I know what you young people need, a nice pair of candle holders.”

She had been right. We sat up most of the night, sipping Finger Lakes wine, talking and laughing while the flickering candlelight cast dancing shadows on the walls.

I use candlesticks sparingly now, salvaging the last of the wax I made back in the old days, when Dell and I kept bees. I had planned to raise bees again last

spring, on Wellen’s land. Wellen is our son, if anyone reads this, just so you know who I am talking about. When I was packing for the move, before I knew that here was where I would remain—for now—I sat there at the table, tenderly caressing those candlesticks, feeling a past that I now live in more fully than the present.

My gaze moved away from the page and drifted south, zeroing in on a vanishing point beyond the water. My thoughts churned like the distant waves until a tug on my shirt reeled me back in. I had not seen my son there, among the other faces.

“Do you think she’s gone too? When was it papa, how long?”

“I don’t know Sepia.” Knowing that by too he meant like his mother—lost in the pandemic the year before the flares.

“Ruth is such a beautiful name?”

“Yes Sepia, Ruth is a beautiful name. She had a son; did you hear that?”

“Yes, Papa, I heard, an adult son.”

“Yes Sepia, an adult son,” I confirmed as he reached his still small hand toward mine.

The unfolding of the papers, the reading—or attempted reading—of the tattered water-logged messages inside the bottles, had become a ritual, as in storytelling of times past, memories absorbed and abstracted by the retelling. For every question answered, there were more that bobbed to the surface. This was our thirst, and I became the eternal spring, creating lives from the inked images captured within. I am not sure how it was that I become the storyteller, but so it was.



Remembrance (Luke)

Darkness, a wall close enough to touch, surrounded me as an owl’s screech startled me into consciousness. My nostrils expanded and I traced the lingering scent of coffee to a paper cup, collapsed and empty in my hand. Thick webs broke into fragments of memory as I reached out. My hand settled on a bed of moss, moist from the misted night air. Tree roots protruded from the earth beyond, framing my seat. I remembered, then, having leaned against the tree as my heart raced, too exhausted to not close my eyes yet fearful that in closing them, in drifting off to sleep, that moment might very well be my last. A crescent moon had been visible overhead; and the owl—I had heard the owl as grief and exhaustion gathered forces and slumber triumphed.

As the light of morning suppressed the shadows, the stones came into view. Perhaps it was merely the timing of the visit that set a dark mood upon me then. Animated by the dancing shadows of oak leaves, the stones now seemed friendlier, not at all menacing. The wind stung my cheeks then continued on and—along with a piercing stab through my left knee, as I pushed off the side of the tree and stood—further reassured me that despite having woken in the land of the dead, I was very much among the living.

Amazing what a bit of shut eye can accomplish, I thought with a smile, as I retraced my steps, past the rows of stones to the small stream, to quell the thirst from the long sleep. It had been more than twenty years since I had been here, just before I headed north. I had lingered then until after dark on a no-moon night; layers of stars and planets had blanketed the sky; fireflies in the adjoining fields had flitted about in a brilliant dance of desire. There were no clearly defined borders now; multi-flora roses and honeysuckles huddled at the sidelines, like spectators

at a roller derby event I had attended in Ontario. Tall grasses and mixed wildflowers, as one might see roadside, crowded around the stones: Queen Anne’s lace, white sweet clover, asters, burdocks and goldenrods. Minute clusters of nurtured flowers were interspersed among the encroaching wilds. . . .

The gentle melody from a grove of quaking aspens pushed from the west, ruffled the hair on the left side of my face.

I need to turn into the wind more.

Now a bit more to the left.

Weaving between monuments as I ascended the hill I spotted what I had been looking for: the weeping tree Liliana had planted, its ill kept branches forming a dense, protective umbrella over our father’s gravestone. The stone stood upright, much as I remembered it. There was a slight chip on one corner, and the rain-pelted surface provided a welcome substrate for the lichen clinging defiantly to one edge. Next to dad was our mother’s stone; newer and machine etched in a modern lettering style; it looked just like the pictures Liliana had posted. It was Liliana who had finally brought me back home. A decade my senior, dead now less than a month, she had asked for no stone, no service. Her children and wife had spread her ashes in the creek near our childhood home. Mom’s sister Ruth (in her late 80s at the time) had been there as well as the wind carried Liliana away.

“Ruth?”

“What’s that?” He was always there; always listening; always questioning the stories.

“Luke said his aunt’s name was Ruth; is that the Ruth with the candle holders, from the blue bottle?”

He hadn’t made the connection, any connections between the bottles.

“Is it dad?”

“I don’t know Sepia.”

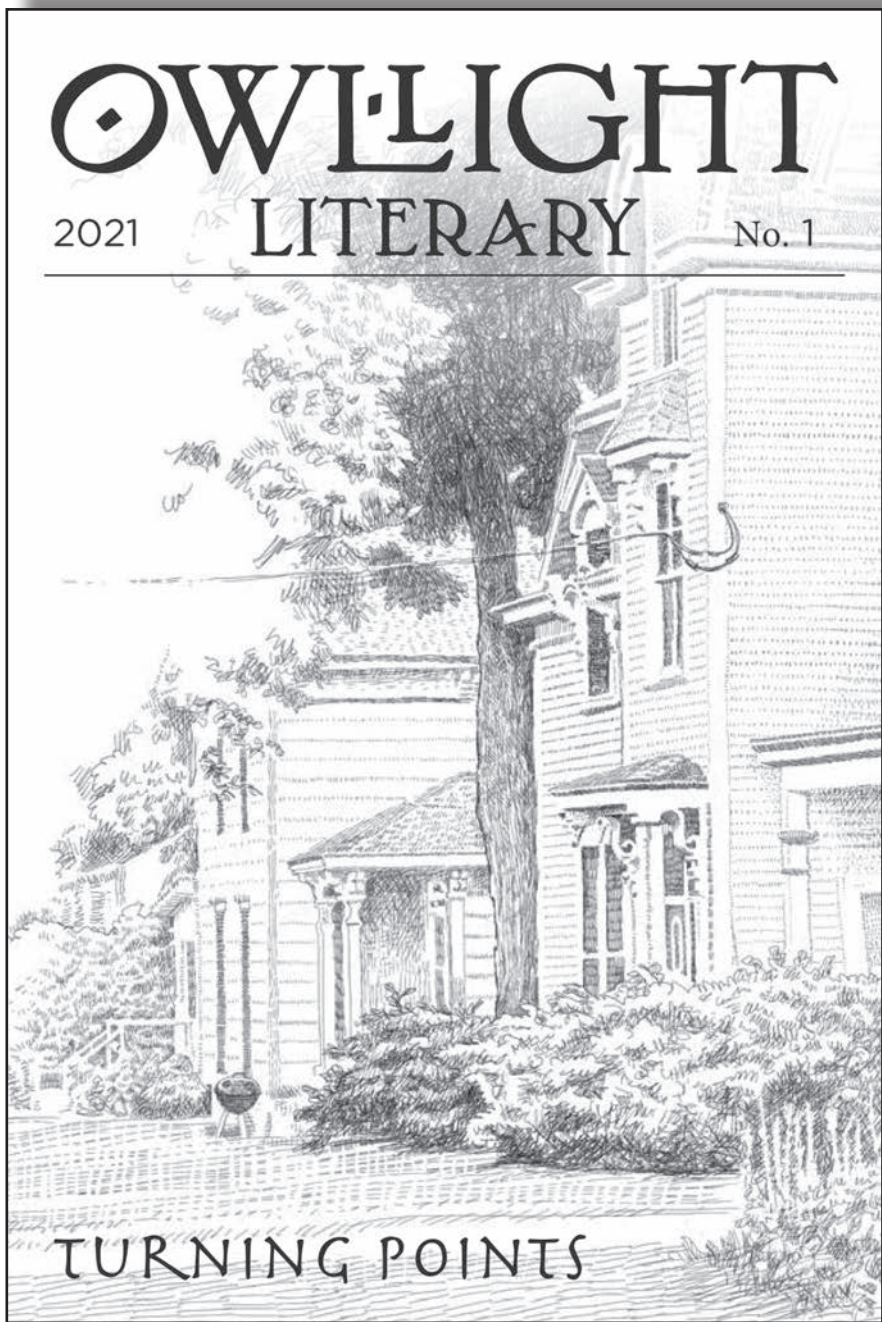
This is how the stories grew; how they brought the lives alive and connected us—connected them—as weeks morphed into years and the only news came from across the water.



Unforeseen Circumstances (Mia)

Laughter in the adjoining room aroused me while strangely sending a chill down my spine. Like old friends, we share and embrace possibilities while slowly settling into a life together. Minutes before arriving here, I had been thinking about dinner, about a possible future with Micah as the first snows in a decade pelted the glass on my windshield. Moments later, I was scrambling down and back up a snowy hill, supporting the man whose laughter now melts into one with the laughter of my friend Alto. Will’s story, our story now, is stranger than most. And yet, so much of what I once saw in that light of strangeness now seems quite normal. ❧

Retrograde Blues started as a series of connected short stories. It is now morphing into...something else. It is a near future tale set in and around the Finger Lakes and Lake Ontario, told from the perspective of a self-appointed griot. I have had little time to work on this lately. Although I love the art of bringing other authors’s voices to the masses (or at least to our community of readers) :-) it is equally thrilling to have a few minutes to revisit and live with a story created from the mist of my mind. I love fiction, and hope to see it regularly on *Owl Light News* pages, as well as in future *Owl Light Literary* journals. D.E.



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PEN & PROSE

Prose Poetry from ANNE RUFLIN

Good Question

Summer in the Bristol Hills. Early morning birds call up the sun. Heat and horseflies rising with it. The red mare carries me swishing and swashing through the shimmering meadow. We are in search of an easy amble, something less buggy. At the trail head we turn into the woods. Inhale, exhale the cool breath of trees.

With a combined age of 86, we know dips and rises, how a path can shift and change with the seasons. We haven't ridden this route since last Fall. Winter storms and Spring rains have left it rutted, littered with leaves and broken branches. There's a widow maker – a tree snapped off near its base and now tangled in the arms of another. Any movement may fell it fully. Carefully we pick our way around. Clip clop down into the rocky stream bed, splish-splash out onto the spongy path.

A crow caws. Alarm! Alarm! Alarm!

We pause. The mare's ears perk and swivel. I look up, around, down. There it is. Right next to her right front hoof. A big bear track – its right front paw slightly pigeon-toed, traveling the opposite direction from us. So fresh the mud still holds the pattern of its sole and shows the length of its claws. Perhaps it just stepped into the woods. Perhaps it's watching us now.

Crow. Are you warning us? Or the bear?

Anne Ruflin is a retired health care executive and member of the Bristol Bookends II Memoir Group with the Bristol Library. She lives in the Bristol Hills with her husband, several horses, dogs, and cats. Her creative nonfiction piece, Summer in Your Veins, was selected for inclusion in Canadice Presses' inaugural journal, Owl Light Literary: Turning Points.

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Side Street Sounds

STEVE WEST



Ben's second release under the name Benny Bleu, *Swatting the Flies*, is the end product of his time alone without much to do except play. He wrote and recorded most of the album while in Maine.

When he was finally able to return home, he rented a cabin in Springwater, NY in order to keep the same feel while he finished writing the rest of the songs. He put the finishing touches on the recordings at Aaron Lipp's Temple Cabin Studio. Haravich sang and played most of the instruments on the album himself, but he enlisted some help from his bandmates and friends to add some extra instrumentation to a few songs.

With six of the songs being instrumental, he describes it as sort of a background soundtrack. Closer scrutiny finds it to be much more than that. Each song paints a scene in the listener's mind, transporting them to a different time and place. There are cajun influenced songs that make you want to do the two-step. His take on the Townes Van Zandt classic "Pancho and Lefty" is stripped down and poignant. "Acorns and Hazelnuts" perfectly captures the playfulness of his dogs, after whom the song is named. There are some traditional Americana songs that will take you to the heart of Appalachia, and the Caribbean style "Belamina" will have you thinking of sitting on a beach sipping rum from a coconut shell.

Long time readers of *Owl Light News* will recognize Ben as the writer of "That Finger Lakes Sound," a predecessor to this column. After leaving the area for a while, he is back living in Hemlock, NY and enjoying the local music scene. He can be seen playing with Benny and the Blue Lemons, The Brothers Blue, The Crowddiddies, and the Temple Cabin Band. You can find out where to see him perform and buy his latest album from his website, www.bennybleu.com

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

Ben Haravitch, spent a good portion of 2020 in relative isolation. He had just gone to visit his mother in Maine when the pandemic took hold. As he tells it, "I sort of got stuck there." He lived in a cabin for much of the year. Luckily, he had his guitar, banjo, and fiddle as well as some recording equipment with him.



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Small Town Hound

Off to Everywhere *Except* the Races

Æsc

First, I have some super exciting news to share. I recently got assessed as a possible trainee for canine search and rescue (K9 SAR), and I was accepted to train with the Massasauga Search and Rescue Team (MSART)—along with my human partner. Before we work more on the locating part of things, we need to first work on becoming a better team. I am excited and nervous at the same time, but we are both going to give it our best. I will share some about my training here and on social media, so stay tuned for more and wish us success.

My human likes a book called *The Art of Racing in the Rain* (by Garth Stein) which she gets sad reading. The story is told by a dog, Enzo, whose human is a race car driver. Enzo is a deep dog (it sounds like there is a bit too much anthropomorphism going on there...dogs are very different than humans and I have to remind my human of that from time to time). Anyway... I have never been to the races, but during our most recent road adventures people kept asking us the same question “Are you here for the races?”

We were not.

Our primary reason for visiting Watkins Glen, NY was to join in a groundbreaking for Seneca Sunrise Coffee’s expansion. Mindi and Jochen Beheydt, the owners of Seneca Sunrise Coffee, are celebrating the building of a new roastery at their current location, 806 N Decatur Street, Watkins Glen. The new building will be bigger than the 400-square foot apartment the small-batch coffee roaster occupies and—more importantly—will provide them with a more efficient production space and ample storage for raw coffee beans, allowing Seneca Sunrise Coffee to grow its wholesale business. A small retail space will be located at the front of the building where visitors can purchase bags of freshly roasted beans, other local products and coffee to-go.

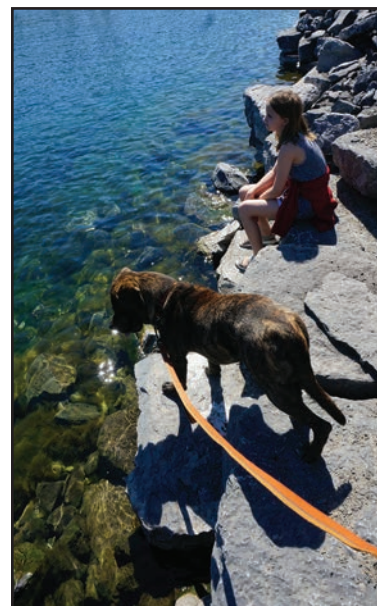


Pictured left to right: Andrew Hintenach III, of Skyhigh Architecture (the project's architect), Jochen Beheydt, Kassady Cerny (project manager with SCOPED), Æsc, and Mindi Beheydt.

42.3806°N 76.8733°W

The expansion project represents a capital investment of \$700,000, part of which is funded through a \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant awarded to Watkins Glen by the State of New York. I got there after the shovels hit the dirt, but I am a not half-bad digger and got in a little dig when we arrived—without getting dirty, as there was so much more to do.

I adore meeting new people, and I had the opportunity to meet two new people this trip (in addition to the people at the groundbreaking). One was a kid—Yah! We ventured together to a number of downtown destinations. First, we grabbed some take out at a place called Thai Elephants. We ordered at a little window then enjoyed the food picnic-style at Lafayette Park. We then walked north on North Franklin Street, past the movie theatre, and toward Seneca Lake. We cut across the railroad tracks and ventured out along the rocks. It was hot out, but there was a wistful wind blowing across the lake that cooled us off.



The kid and I just stayed there for a bit, marveling at the light dancing across the water.

I love that there are two sides to every stree; there were many more things to see on the other side. My human is not a big shopper, but we do, nonetheless, venture into various shops when we go places. Wags to Riches, one of our shop stops, is, I was surprised to learn, a shop dedicated to the welfare of animals.

The shop is operated by—and shop sales benefit—the Humane Society of Schuyler County (that’s humane with an “e” not human). They have clothes and accessories for humans and dogs. Being dog people, they welcomed me!



One of the customers, along with the woman from behind the counter, just loved me up.

We stopped in a couple other shops and passed any number of people on the street who wanted to stop and visit with me. We also took turns ducking into a phone booth to have our pictures taken. Oddly, the phone was gone and there were, instead, papers to help people learn more about Watkins Glen. (No! I

did not eat the paper; I am way past that.) There were a number of great dog-friendly shops along the way, something I am always looking for, given that I am a dog. One place had a bowl of nice, cool water outside for dogs like me to use.

Before we said goodbye, we gave the kid and her mom a ride in the back of the truck. It reminded me of a scene from *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, when Enzo rode in the race car. We had so much fun, and I so want to meet up with that kid and her people again real soon. Hopefully we can travel there sometime. They live in New Hampshire. New Hampshire is the state where my friend Winnie was in foster care (Winnie later smelled them on me and was very disappointed she did not come along, as she met them when she was first adopted by our people.)

Continued on page 19



PAKKO
DA
PUDGY
PIGEON!
PIPER DAVIS

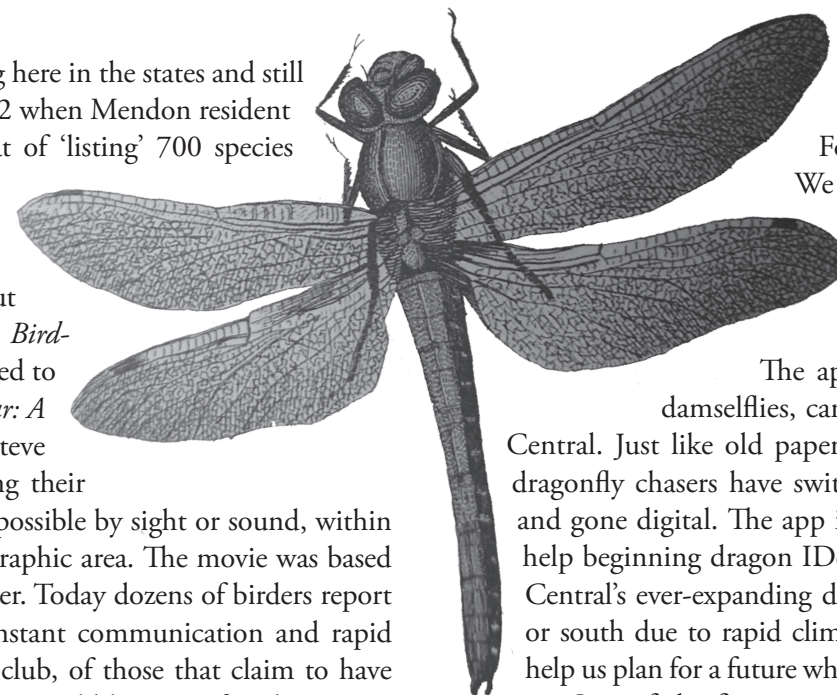
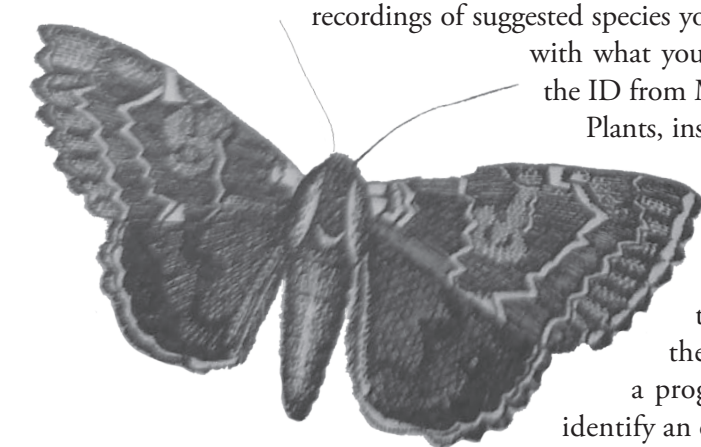
Piper Davis, author and illustrator of Pakko Da Pudgy Pigeon, is a high school senior. She loves art, writing, photography, and making people smile. She hopes you enjoy this comic strip series! If you are interested in seeing more from her, feel free to check out her socials: Youtube: Wandering Phoenix Productions, And on instagram: @wandering_pheonix_productions.

Dragonfly Tales

Curious About the Natural World? There Is An App For That!

STEVE MELCHER

Imagine birding (formerly called bird watching here in the states and still called 'Twitching' in Europe) back in the 1972 when Mendon resident Joe Taylor accomplished the improbable feat of 'listing' 700 species found within the boundaries of North America. Birders who had listed over 600 species became part of the coveted 600 Club. Jean Platt, a charter member of the 600 Club, wrote about his adventures in his 1973 book, *Adventures in Birding* describing the journey he and his wife incurred to join the elite group. The 2011 movie *The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature and Fowl Obsession* starred Steve Martin, Jack Black and Owen Wilson following their attempts to identify as many species of birds as possible by sight or sound, within a single calendar year and within a specific geographic area. The movie was based on the real-life story of real-life birder Greg Miller. Today dozens of birders report lists of over 800 species. In today's world of instant communication and rapid transit, birders are seeking to be part of a new club, of those that claim to have seen 900 species. In the last century (1970s), Joe would be part of a phone tree, something you'll have to explain to your kids. Frank, in Boston, would report seeing a Black-bellied Whistling Duck (yes, there is such a critter – *Dendrocygna autumnalis*) and Joe would call the five birders on his list who would call the five birders on their list. Then Joe and his wife Helen would hop in the family station wagon and do some 'Russian birding,' i.e. Driveup N. Chekov, to add *Dendrocygna autumnalis* to his list. Or, if a Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy Owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum cactorum*) had been seen in a Texas landfill, he might borrow the company jet (Bausch and Lomb) and zip down to add the currently threatened critter to his list. I'm amazed that all this was done with land lines and letters. Flying to Florida where a rare bird had been blown in by a storm and seen 'recently,' i.e. that week, equipped with bulky Bausch & Lomb 10x40 binos (binoculars) and an F3 Nikon camera loaded with Kodachrome, seems impossible in today's world of light weight optics and a 2,778 x 1,284-pixel resolution camera in your smartphone nestled in your shirt pocket. Back then, you'd have to have photographic proof or endorsement and consensus to add that bird to your list. Today, the ABA and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology have their own 'Rare Bird Alert' posts where I can log onto my computer and find the odd bird that has been reported in my area. Then, I can venture out in the comfort of my air-conditioned car and use my smart phone to snap an image of said rarity. If I'm not sure of the identity? There's an app for that. One app that I've been involved with since its inception is called iNaturalist, which has over 4 million users now. This form of citizen science recently became popular, exploiting a renewed interest in nature and the power and capabilities of smart phones. The data is not being collected by the butterfly-net-carrying guy in khaki shorts and pith helmet, but by the family out wondering through the natural world on a walk in their neighborhood park. The beauty of these apps is that the photo you take of a plant, insect or bird will be digitally compared to literally millions of images and then added to the data base. There are currently over 70 million entries in the banks of iNaturalist that will be used to identify the object in your photo. And we're not just limited to images today. Cornell's birding app, called Merlin, helps you identify a bird not only through a picture you've taken but now by its song! If you can get a fairly clear recording of the song or call you hear deep in the pricker bushes, the wizardry of Merlin helps you to discover its identity. Simply hold out your phone, tap record, and you'll get suggestions in real time, along with recordings of suggested species you can play to compare with what you're hearing to confirm the ID from Merlin's website.



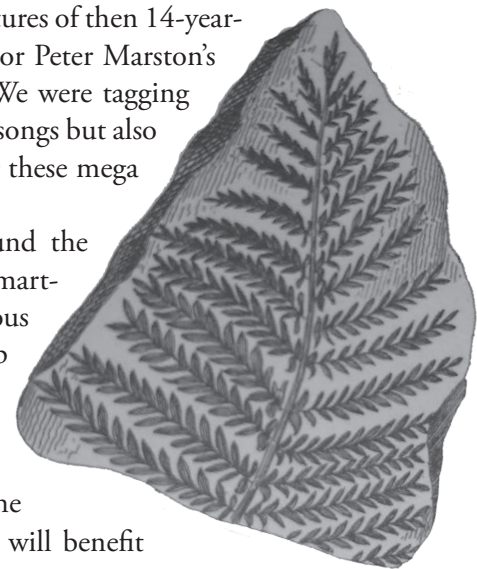
Plants, insects, birds and popular songs (*Shazam*) have their digital ID apps, why not dragonflies? The same folks that created 'Birds in the Hand' have crafted a program to do just that - identify an odonate by comparing it to a bank of stored images.

We worked on developing the program through a grant from the National Science Foundation; a wonderful use of my tax dollars. We spoke in past issues of *Dragonfly Tales* of the use of dragonflies as bioindicators or indicators of the health of the environment. Why not use our interest in nature and available technology to keep track of our changing environment?

The app used to identify Odonates, dragonflies and damselflies, can be found at a new site online called Odonata Central. Just like old paper birding records that were kept by listers, the dragonfly chasers have switched to using the computer and smartphones and gone digital. The app is fairly new but there are plenty of mentors to help beginning dragon IDers to enter valuable information into Odonata Central's ever-expanding database. We're finding species are moving north or south due to rapid climate changes. The dragonfly's range changes will help us plan for a future where we can't ignore drastic changes in our climate.

One of the first examples of 'digital ID' that I was involved with is the fluke ID program used to keep track of right whales. Right whales, so called because they didn't sink, so they were the 'right' whale to harpoon, have several distinguishing features that help us identify individual whales. Callosities are patches of skin where thousands of crustaceans called cyamids, or whale lice, have set up housekeeping and appear in large white patches. Each right whale has a unique pattern of these callosities that enables us to track them during their migration up and down the East Coast. 'Back in the Day' we would take a photograph of the right whale's fluke and callosities and keep a hard copy in a huge 3-ring binder at the New England Aquarium in Boston. The flukes were also highly individualized due to unique scratches, chips, nips and colorations. These photographs are now digitized and catalogued online through the NARWC (North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium). Right whale #1045 is the oldest match in the catalog, first photographed in 1935 and last seen in 1995, probably over 60 years old. Back in the 80s, we filmed an educational TV series called *Voyage of the Mimi* featuring the adventures of then 14-year-old Ben Affleck sailing on MIT professor Peter Marston's converted French fishing boat—Mimi. We were tagging humpback whales and listening to their songs but also used the fluke photos to aid in tracking these mega singers of the sea.

You no longer need to carry around the bulky books if you have access to a smartphone and the right apps. If you're curious about the fellow travelers on Spaceship Earth, take advantage of the many nature-oriented organizations that lead trips in the Finger Lakes region. In the meantime, find an app and add to the knowledge of the natural world which will benefit all of Earth's passengers.



Recommended Apps

— all are iOS and Android friendly unless indicated otherwise.

LeafSnap Plant Identification

Developed by the Smithsonian Institution, Columbia University and the University of Maryland, LeafSnap can identify thousands of plants, flowers, fruits and trees.

Virginia Tech Tree ID

Known for its dendrology department, Virginia Tech developed this app with fact sheets about more than 900 woody plants with over 6,000 color photos of leaves, flowers, fruit, and bark. The app also uses your GPS to give you an idea of what trees you'll find in your area.

Continued on page 15

Dragonfly from page 14

Shroomify - USA Mushroom Identification

Drawing from a database of over 400 common fungi and 1,000 images this app will offer suggestions of what the wild mushroom in front of you might be. It also offers a Top 20 listing for each month, explaining which mushroom species you're likely to encounter.

The Audubon Bird Guide app

You can turn your phone into a portable field guide for bird identification of more than 800 species of North American birds. There are also videos and audio clips as well as range maps for each species.

Merlin Bird ID by Cornell Lab of Ornithology

The prima app for bird ID, Merlin allows you to upload a photo or answer 5 questions about a bird you see and uses artificial intelligence to help you identify it.

Audubon Society Native Plants Database

Enter your zip and you'll be given a list of native plants for that area and the types of birds that they will attract.

iNaturalist

iNaturalist is a joint venture between the California Academy of Sciences and the National Geographic Society offering information about plants and animals in North America and throughout the world. iNaturalist is a wonderful example of 'crowd sourced' citizen science identifications; upload a photo and you can connect with professional and amateur naturalists who will provide the answer you seek. Those photos and information you upload will help increase the database of the location and seasonal timing of different species.

Seek by iNaturalist

If you were to choose one app for your already overloaded smart phone, Seek would be my recommendation. The app uses image recognition to identify plants and animals that are in the photo frame of your smartphone. Designed to encourage families to get outside and learn more about nature, awarding the observer with badges for observing specific species or participating in challenges.

"All of you were born on the planet we call spaceship Earth and most of you will die here. Aren't you interested in getting to know your fellow travelers?"

S. A. Melcher, Beirut, Lebanon.

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

When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer

Walt Whitman - 1819-1892

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,

When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,

When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,

When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,

How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,

Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,

In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,

Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

This poem is in the public domain.

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Saturday, September 11, 2021

7:00 am to 3:00 pm

**Farmington Highway Department
985 Hook Rd, Farmington, NY 14425**

PRE-REGISTRATION and
PROOF of RESIDENCY are required.

Registration open Aug. 9th – Sept. 8th

To pre-register call Cornell Cooperative

Extension of Ontario County at (585) 394-3977 x427

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.

*Casella reserves the right to reject any waste unidentified, deemed unacceptable by the disposal form, or of excessive volume**

For information and other recycling events visit: OntarioCountyRecycles.org/150/Events

FREE to
Ontario
County
Residents
ONLY



Materials NOT Accepted at the Event:
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).



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Phelps & Gorham – Adventure and Gamble

A Battle For Land: Intrigue, Adventure, and Contention Helped Define Western New York

LLOYD LILL

The development of Western New York was one of intrigue, adventure, and contention. Following the Battle of Yorktown in October 1781, America gained its Independence. With a military advantage, General Washington, combined with the large French force commanded by Comte de Rochambeau, defeated the British Army Commanded by General Charles Cornwallis, October 19, 1781. The British government negotiated the end of the conflict with the Americans, concluding with the Paris Peace Treaty, September 3, 1783. Representing the United States were Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and John Adams.

Following the successful Sullivan-Clinton campaign, the soldier diaries described the beautiful and fertile land and clear water resources in Western New York. The problem was ownership of the lands. Western New York was claimed by the State of Massachusetts based on a document dating 1629 made by Charles I. New York claimed the same area based on an agreement with Charles II in 1664. New York also had a signed document, with Henry Hudson's 1609 New Netherland agreement, giving the land to New York.

In December 1787, the State of New York reached an agreement with the State of Massachusetts for the land in Western New York. The State of Massachusetts approved the sale to the Phelps-Gorham associates for \$ 1,000,000 payable in three annual installments. The State would receive consolidated securities or 2,000 pounds of specie. It is important to note at this time in American history currency was scarce, and in many places non-existent.

American entrepreneurs and land speculators were eagerly considering establishing businesses to sell land to prospective buyers. Oliver Phelps, from Massachusetts, started negotiations to purchase land from the Iroquois and was unsuccessful. New York quickly moved to prohibit individuals from purchasing land from the Iroquois. To raise money to purchase land in Western New York, Phelps formed a syndicate, with Nathaniel Gorham and several others, to purchase land and sell it to perspective buyers. (Ownership in the syndicate was Phelps 33%, Gorham 33%, others 33%.) Oliver Phelps was in constant contact with the partners in the syndicate. In a letter to Samuel Flowers, Phelps wrote "I am pleased with what I have seen of the country. The place Ka-na-da-sa (Geneva) is situated at the foot of Seneca Lake, on a beautiful hill which overlooks the lake" After forming the syndicate, Oliver Phelps returned to negotiations and secured 2,000,000 acres, which was one-third of the initial territory he sought. Following the agreement, Phelps hired Hugh Maxwell, a war veteran and an experienced surveyor. The surveying team began at the south end of New York State, to Lake Ontario, from Seneca Lake to Genesee River, and an area east of the Genesee, twelve miles by twenty-six miles. Maxwell and his associates started their

survey in June and reached Seneca Lake in late July. The survey team found that Geneva was a mile west of Seneca Lake. Phelps knew something was wrong and was upset that the survey did not include the Indian village Ka-na-da-sa (Geneva), and asked that the survey be repeated. It never was.

The syndicate operated two offices to promote sale of the lands, one in Suffield, Massachusetts, and the other in Canandaigua, a growing frontier town. William Walker, the Phelps Gorham sales agent, immediately had a home built of hewed logs in Canandaigua. A new resident Joseph Smith, anticipating a growing community, opened a tavern, which was an immediate success. Over fourteen individuals purchased land in Canandaigua in 1789.

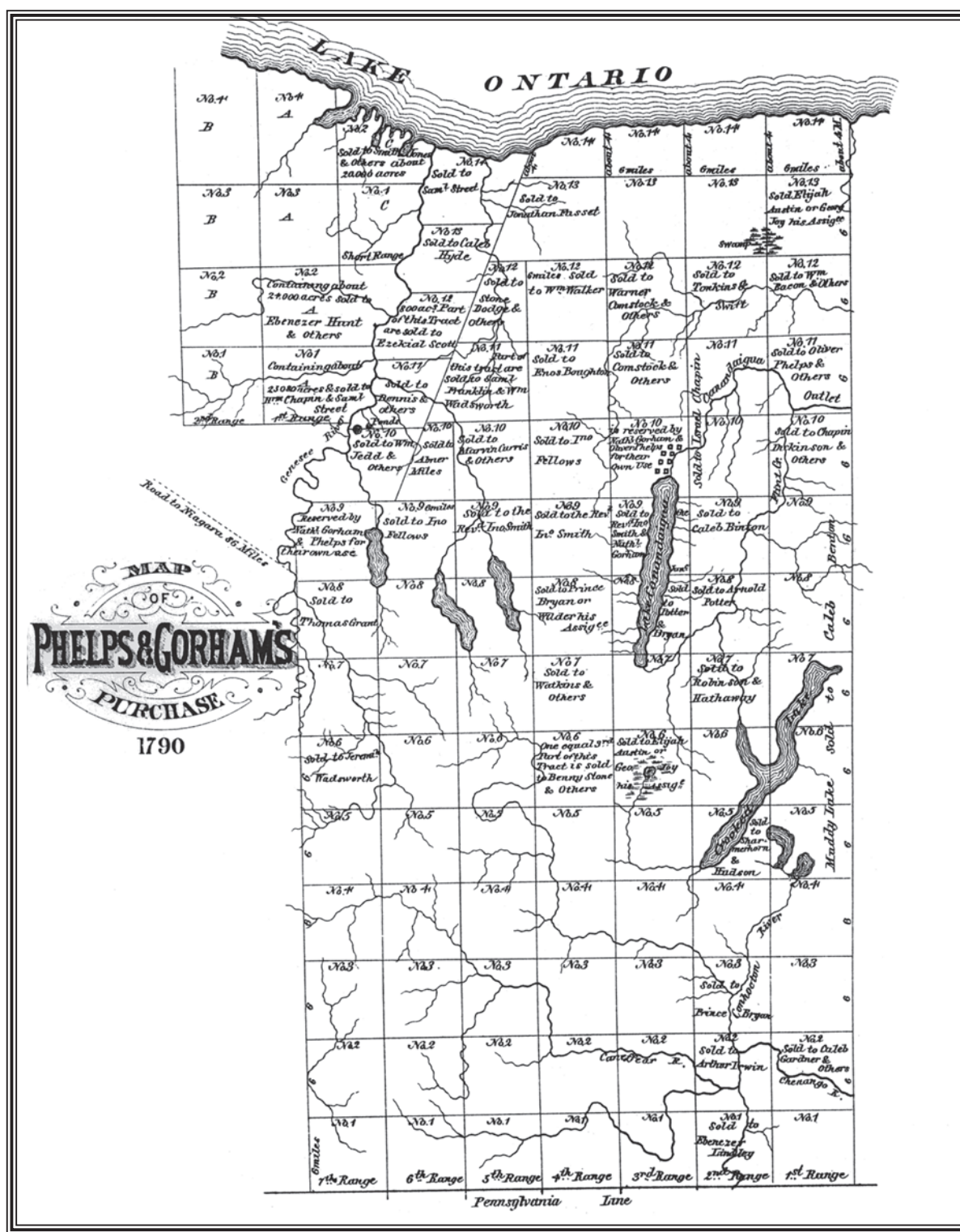
Land sales were seldom made for individuals or families, and it is estimated that more than half of the sales were for speculation. Early sales were usually resold, and in many cases the money to secure the land was seldom near the sale price.

For example, Captain Simon Stane, an Army veteran and resident from Salem Massachusetts, purchased a tract of land at Big Spring (the future sight of Northfield, latter Pittsford, New York) containing 13,296 acres valued at \$4,786, and made a down payment of \$ 30.

Due to limited sales, the syndicate was unable to make their second payment. All unsold land was transferred back to Massachusetts, who quickly sold it to Robert Moses, the individual responsible for financing the American Revolution. At this time Robert Moses was thought to be the wealthiest man in the United States. Moses found an agent in London, Sir William Pulteney of Pulteney Associates, to purchase the agreement, and the Pulteney syndicate immediately started advertising and selling land to British and Scottish citizens in Western New York.

Nathaniel Gorham (1738 – 1789), entrepreneur, died in Charlestown, Massachusetts. Oliver Phelps (1749 – 1808), entrepreneur, due to financial difficulties sold his home in Suffield Massachusetts. He relocated to Canandaigua, New York, and served one term in the U.S. House of Representatives. Phelps died in debtor's prison and is buried in the Pioneer Cemetery in Canandaigua.

This is an historical overview using research from multiple online and print sources. For additional information, please contact the author at: llill@frontiernet.net



History of Ontario County 1788 - 1876, Professor W. H. McINTOSH, Everts, Ensign & Everts, PA, 1876, plate 111

Lloyd Lill taught Economics and Finance studies, undergraduate and graduate, at Niagara University, St. John Fisher College, and SUNY Empire State College.

Etched in Stone – Exploring New York’s Buried Past

The Search for American Civil War Heroine Irena Joyner Totman (1814 – 1865)



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.

Early History of Bristol, New York

The history of Bristol was first recorded in 1669, when the explorer Robert de LaSalle wrote to his homeland describing his visit to the Burning Springs, where the Seneca Indians had escorted him to see this "magical burning water." This was actually natural gas bubbling to the surface that had probably been ignited by lightning. In 1779, General Sullivan traveled through the Bristol area. His soldiers were so impressed with the fertile land that many of them returned when Bristol County, Massachusetts purchased this land for settlement. The present towns of Richmond, Bristol, and South Bristol were all part of this purchase.

Members of the Gooding Family were the first settlers of Bristol, followed by many others from the Dighton township in Bristol County, Massachusetts. Gamaliel Wilder brought many settlers from Connecticut. Many pioneers of Bristol can be traced back to the Mayflower Voyage of 1620. In 1789 the town was formed. Town meetings were held regularly at the old Methodist Episcopal Church in Bristol Center.

Bristol Hills Historical Society

The Bristol Hills Historical Society is currently in the process of applying for placement of the Bristol Center Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1846, and the adjacent Bristol Center Cemetery onto the National Register of Historic Places. This historic Church building in Bristol Center has been maintained by the Historical Society since 1975. Funding for the upkeep of the Church is provided through special donations and through its general membership fund. With each repair and improvement, every effort is made to maintain the church's original design elements. During the early 1990's the eight sagging stained glass windows were cleaned and re-hung. The building needs ongoing, continual interior and exterior repairs. This landmark building hosts a number of community events and weddings throughout the year.

To learn more about the Bristol Hills Historical Society, or to join in on their activities, visit their website at: bristolhillshistory.org.

Bristol Center Cemetery

Established in 1802, this truly historic Cemetery graces the sloping hillside between State Route 64 and County Road 32 in the heart of Bristol Center, New York. The last names of Gooding, Wilder and other Revolutionary-era pioneers appear on the gravestones of this age-old sacred graveyard. Standing among the final resting places of over four hundred souls, one is mindfully transported back to an early 18th Century New England rural Cemetery. Designs and concepts of the Cemetery were brought to the Bristol Hills by the optimistic and courageous New England pioneers who made Bristol their new home.

Bristol Center Cemetery, and other long-standing, timeworn cemeteries of our region, are the only repositories of early American public art. The stonework and etchings are stunning in their detail. Each stone tells a story. Cemeteries are outdoor museums where the public can come together with the past. For these reasons, maintenance of cemetery properties is critical to preserving American cultural heritage.

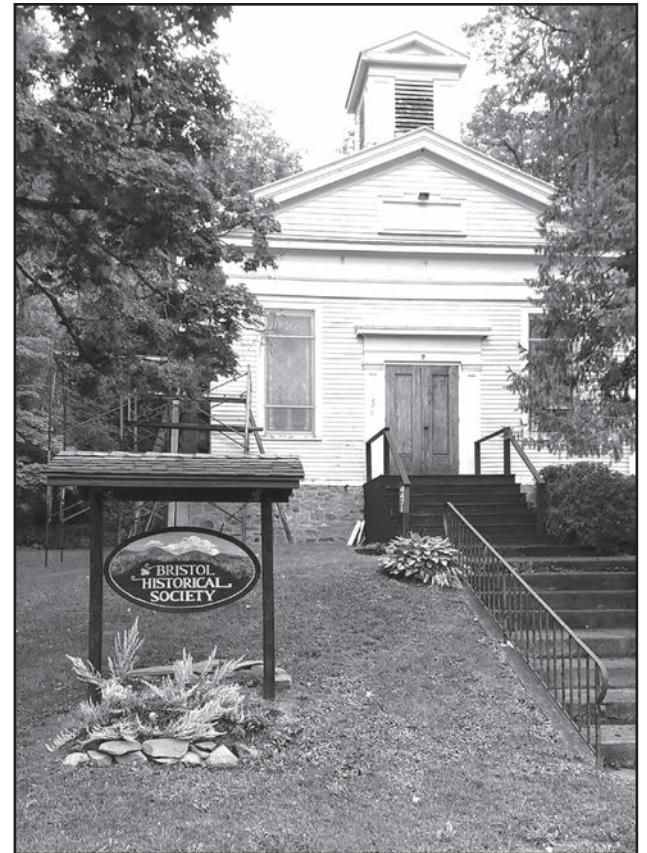


An uncovered row marker

Through the graciousness of the Bristol Hills Historical Society, I have had the good fortune to spend many hours studying the Bristol Center Cemetery records. I have also made numerous visits to the sacred grounds. I am currently working on an initiative to uncover long buried cast iron row markers in the Cemetery, and to create better definition of the Northern and Southern boundaries of the Cemetery parcel. This is my contribution to elevate the grounds to a level worthy of National Register of Historic Places designation. Through this work, I am reminded once again of my motivation for writing "Etched In Stone": to preserve the rich histories of brave men and women who have gone before us.



Irena Joyner Totman and her son Levi
Courtesy of the Bristol Hills Historical Society



Bristol Ctr. Methodist Episcopal Church, built 1846
Courtesy of the Bristol Hills Historical Society



Bristol Center Cemetery
David Pierce

Irena Joyner Totman, Row C, Lot 4

The Finger Lakes region of New York is famous for beautiful landscapes, agricultural bounty, entrepreneurial spirit, and historic heroes who changed America. One such hero is Irena Joyner Totman, a Civil War veteran from Bristol, NY. Irena was born on October 20, 1814 in Sullivan, Madison County, NY. She married Ward Totman in 1831. The family moved to Bristol, NY in an oxcart from Jefferson County NY, with three daughters, the youngest just months old. They had seven children, built a log cabin, and farmed the land. These were humble beginnings for a woman who made a heroic journey.

In August of 1862, Irena not only encouraged her son, Levi Ward Totman, to join the Grand Army of the Republic, but she followed him to Rochester for his enlistment. She proudly stood next to him for his induction photo. It is recorded that her husband, Ward Totman, was not as happy about the enlistment into Company K, First NY Mounted Rifle.

Continued on page 22

Fantastic Flora

A Pollinator's Paradise: Meet the Milkweeds

Common Milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*; Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata* (Family Apocynaceae)



SALLY L. WHITE

Monarch butterflies represent only one of milkweed's many stories. Large and spectacular, they attract publicity, and concerns for their conservation have made them familiar to most of us. Milkweeds have a fascination all their own, for us and for the many insect species that appreciate them.



Greenish buds and pink-white opening flowers of common milkweed. Its large paired leaves and milky sap make it easily recognizable roadside.

Milkweeds were once regarded as a distinct family, but DNA technology revealed that they are actually cousins of Dogbane. It's as if your parents kicked you out and you were adopted by a distant cousin who turned out to be your aunt. You're still related, but some of the family resemblance is lost. A "bane" can be a simple annoyance, as we use it now, or, in the old days when plants were being named (in English), "bane" meant a poison (scourge, ruin, destruction, plague), something causing death. Best to avoid plants with "bane" in their names.

Here in New York, we have eleven species of milkweeds (genus *Asclepias*), plus a few subspecies and hybrids. All of them are native. Most are very attractive to insect pollinators. Milkweeds are easy to recognize, with robust stems, thick paired leaves, and milky sap all contributing to their character, their gestalt, so to speak. Their flowers are so strange they're unmistakable, as are the pods. The dogbanes proper (genus *Apocynum*) have only two species here that are, to my eye, a bit more delicate than our milkweeds; their pods are long, narrow, and come in pairs. They too have milky sap.

Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) is the one we're most likely to see. Because it tolerates drought, it pops up in available spots around homes, in gardens, and along roadsides. Once established, underground rhizomes help it spread into a colony of identical plants, or clones.

More spectacular, but preferring wetter habitats, is the Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), a tall striking plant with narrow leaves and bright pink flowers. It's likely to be found around ponds or streams. I planted just four of them in 2018, and thanks to their profusion of seeds, I have shared them with several friends and still need to find homes for dozens before they get much bigger!

Like all plants, milkweeds produce chemicals for their own use and some specifically to deter predators. The milky sap, or latex, that gives milkweeds their name is loaded with cardiac glycosides, compounds that affect heart function, making them toxic to most species of birds and mammals. Monarch butterflies are just one of a dozen or so insects that have adapted to not only tolerate but actively use this toxin in their own defense. Specialist bugs, beetles, moths, and flies rely solely on various kinds of milkweed and feed on different parts of the plant. Dozens more are attracted to the profuse nectar milkweeds produce and may or may not provide pollination services in the process.

When we started photographing insects on our swamp milkweed plants, we quickly learned a lot and accumulated a substantial collection. Honeybees of course, mining bees, bumblebees, paper wasps, digger wasps, milkweed



Individual plants may set only a handful of pods, thanks to the complex pollen transport system. Large insects like bumblebees are good pollinators.



Brightly striped monarch caterpillars are showing off their warning coloration. Bad taste doesn't always deter pollinators.

Diverse kinds of flower visitors come for the nectar, supplies of which are refilled regularly. This hummingbird clearwing moth may not carry pollen away.

tussock moth caterpillars, ants, hummingbird moths, longhorned beetles, milkweed bugs, and a variety of unnamed flies showed up. Milkweeds are a smorgasbord for insects, an entire ecosystem in miniature!

Pollinating milkweed is complicated. The pollen is packed into sacs of sorts, called pollinia. Effective pollinators must be strong enough to pull these sacs out of the crevices they hide in, and somehow deposit them into different slits on different plants. For the smaller insects, this can be deadly. They may get a leg stuck in the slit and be fatally trapped. The intricate process also means success is rare. Despite the hundreds of

small flowers on each plant, only a handful of mature pods develops. But so many pollen grains are packed into those sacs that each successful pod is effectively pollinated, packed with about two hundred seeds with feathery parachutes. This wind-borne abundance has enabled swamp milkweed to expand into all but four of the lower 48 states. In the West, our "common" milkweed is replaced by a similar species, showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*), but the two species overlap mid-continent for full coverage.

Milkweeds reward our attention and are a huge asset in gardens as well as in the wild, especially the native species. I've been pleased to see improved tolerance for these so-called "weeds," even along our roadsides. More and more, I spot milkweed in gardens where it's either intentionally planted, tolerated, or encouraged. These graceful native plants will enrich your backyard wildlife habitat and provide fascinating entertainment all season long. 🦋

Sally L. White is a lifelong naturalist and writer. After 40 years in Colorado, she's getting reacquainted with New York's native flora, exploring one plant at a time and sharing special stories of each. Once a place of youthful memories, the Keuka Lake area is again her home.

Crafting Your Own Cuisine

EILEEN PERKINS

RECIPE

This recipe was created with bountiful summer vegetables from upper and mid New York State in mind. It is designed to provide both plant-based and animal-based options, which is handy if you are feeding a blend of vegans and meat eaters. If that flexibility is not needed, simply double the protein of choice, i.e., beans or ground beef.



Plated tacos — shown here with a choice of either plant-based or meat fillings and a variety of toppings.

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.

Check out Eileen's cookbook review on page 20!

Taco Filling for a Diverse Group

(Makes about 22 tacos- fillings freeze well)

Ingredients

- 2 lb. (4 cups cooked) ground beef, browned in a bit of oil and drained
- 2 cans or 4 cups cooked black beans, drained and rinsed
- 3 lb. fresh tomatoes (5 large) peeled and diced with juice, approximately 4 ½ cups OR (1) 28oz. can and (1) 14 oz. can of diced tomatoes in juice

- 3 cups onion, diced
- 1 cup red bell pepper, diced small
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. ground coriander seed
- 2 Tbsp. ground cumin seed
- 4 tsp. smoked paprika
- ½ tsp. chipotle powder, or to taste
- 2 tsp. oregano
- 1 Tbsp. or more of preferred fat
- 2 tsp. salt



Procedure

1. Warm fat in large skillet, and sauté onions over medium heat until beginning to brown.
2. Add garlic, and spices, stirring constantly for about 1 minute. You may need to add a bit more fat if spices seem to brown dry. What we want is a kind of bubbling action releasing the spices' flavors.
3. Add bell pepper, and tomatoes with juice, and cook over medium high heat for around 25 minutes, or until most of the water in the juice has evaporated.
4. Stir in the salt.
5. Divide mixture equally into two pans, in preparation for adding protein choice. (If making all plant-based or animal-based, skip this step.)
6. Stir either beans or beef into each pan. Heat to serving temp and add garlic salt to taste, starting with ½ tsp. per pan.
7. Serve with warm corn tortillas. Good toppings are hot sauce, lettuce, fresh tomatoes, sliced avocado, sour cream, chopped cilantro, chopped ripe black olives, chopped scallion, and shredded cheese (a non-dairy taste preference of mine is "Violife" Epic Mature Cheddar.) ✂

Small Town Hound from page 13

Although most of my adventures this month were in Watkins Glen, there is one final place I visited recently near Seneca Lake. It was on the way back from visiting a couple I will be staying with in August, when the humans are away. I can't wait! (Not that I will not miss the humans, but I had so much fun



there.) We stopped into Seneca Lake Brewing Company which is, as it turns out, NY State's oldest dedicated Cask Ale Brewery (my humans like cask ales). We hung out a bit at the Beerocracy, their British-style pub, while we waited for some take out (so we could all eat together when we got back home to the other human). I met a great human at the pub, named Liz. There was another dog too, and the humans were cool with us hanging out while we waited for our order. The bangers and mash my human got for the other human (and my human's Beanie Burger too, of course) smelled wonderful. (I did have a wee sample of my human's stout and I admit it must be a bit of an acquired taste.) Still, I will stop there again, if only to visit with Liz and enjoy the view while the humans sip ales.



Well, that is enough for now; back to work on training. Trying to figure out what humans want is tricky, and I heard that one of the things my human needs to focus more on is not using too many words for the same thing (like "whistle, whistle, come Æsc" instead of just saying "Æsc come." Now, in her defense, I am taking full advantage of her inconsistency to do what I want to do (smell around for human scents mostly). Nonetheless, I will expect more from her (as she will from me) as we work together to try and become an awesome team. Until next time Bow Wow!



Æsc is the "Small Town Hound—Finding Creative Venues and Adventures in NYS." He lives with his two humans and his canine companion Winnie in Canadice, NY. When not writing, his favorite pastime is finding people. He loves hearing from his fans: smalltownhound@canadicepress.com. [facebook.com/SmallTownHoundNY](https://www.facebook.com/SmallTownHoundNY)

Making Lemonade

A Card Tsunami for an Eighty-Year-Old (That's a Good Thing!)

BARB STAHL

I can just hear you asking, Barb, what's it like to be 80 years old? For starters, like most everything else, it's a "mixed bag." There are definitely wonderful parts, and if you read my last month's "Making Lemonade" you know at almost the exact same day as I turned 80, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. That kind of thing can certainly complicate the answer. (Please note, I am healing nicely from the surgery, and expect to return to the joys of 80 years of age.)

This must start with a tribute to a close friend who organized a birthday card bonanza for me. My daughter called it a "card tsunami." My friend contacted several people who were part of my life at different times and in different places due to my career as a school library media specialist. They were given my address and asked to spread the word and send me a birthday card. Consequently, I got an astonishing number of cards from people I had known over the years. They came from friends in my current neighborhood, locations where I had been a school library media specialist, groups where I had done volunteer work, book clubs, organizations, church, and people I had met through out-of-town family members.

Perhaps the most touching cards contained a special memory or a funny moment shared. One such memory that made me laugh out loud was a fellow teacher reminding me that I told her about a "new happening" which was that there was this amazing new thing called the "World Wide Web." Another very special card from a mom told me that I had made a difference in her young daughter's life with an enrichment program we called Rubato. And then I received a card from her daughter with a newsy message of her education and career along with a photo of her lovely family. It doesn't get better than that! I urge everyone to send a note to a teacher, or any-



one, who "made a difference" or "made memories" in their lives, because there is absolutely nothing anyone likes to know more than that! Another nice surprise was the married couple who each sent a separate card complete with a lengthy note penned by each.

One friend told me that she had had a card in her birthday card collection for years and years until now because she never could decide who (or dare) to send it to. She sent it to me and that caused me to laugh out loud. (You will have to ask me what that one said.)

There were lots of funny cards and I can't quote them all, but one of them had this message..... Priceless!!

*How old did you say you are?
Yikes, that must be a jillion in dog years!
(Hallmark)*

Kindness and thoughtfulness have been abundant toward me given my combination of "old" age and cancer surgery. In addition to the birthday cards,



I also received many get-well cards, flower arrangements, cookies and other baked goods (my freezer is chocked full, which I love, as I can pull out a small serving of dessert daily). What's not to love about that? I have enjoyed heart-to-heart talks on numerous porch visits and have had wonderful, cheerful telephone calls. There were many offers of help, errands to be run, taking my garbage and recycles to the Transfer Station, or transporting me to doctor's appointments.

To wrap up I would like to stress the point that emails and texts are fine for day-to-day information sharing, but there is absolutely no substitute for a real card in a real envelope sent in the mail or handed to a person. OK, I know I just very graphically showed my age, but hey, I can get away with saying that because I'm 80 years old now.....!!! If you are wondering how to celebrate someone's special birthday, this is a fantastic idea and you can utilize the convenience of emails and texts to organize a tsunami of real paper cards in real envelopes with addresses and stamps! By the way my mail carrier got quite a kick out of the many deliveries and now waves to me whenever I'm on the porch!

And my final words on this amazing gift is to convey a huge "Thank You," to the friend that organized the card tsunami for this 80-year-old! 🐾

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

COOKBOOK REVIEW

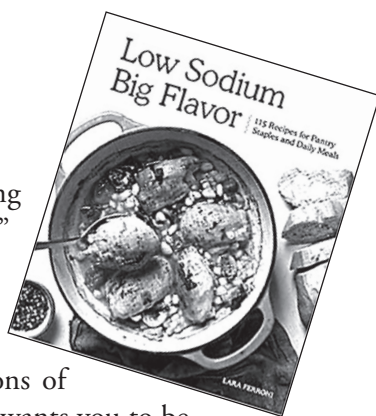
Low Sodium Big Flavor – 115 Recipes for Pantry Staples and Daily Meals

by Lara Ferroni

Reviewed by EILEEN PERKINS

As is not uncommon, I came upon this inspiring cookbook while checking the "What's New" shelves of my local public library. (I cannot encourage you enough to, from time to time, do the same. This process is so much more satisfying than being riveted to page after page of online suggestions of what Amazon thinks you are looking for, or perhaps wants you to be looking for. How many excellent small publishers do not generate sufficient profit to even come up in an Amazon search, I wonder. Good librarians track down what their people want, and that sometimes requires searching high and low when a patron has a particular interest; the rest of us can discover stuff we never would have known existed, thanks to one person's request at a local public library.)

This cookbook's shape and weight offer an impression of hopeful containment for what might be a hugely discouraging dietary limitation. Conforming to a low sodium dietary routine requires leaving behind lots of familiar foods, and it may



be difficult to not feel deprived when replacing favorite pantry staples with health supportive ones. One thing I like, here, is that its author is an obvious foodie, who began her low sodium odyssey with no idea of how much sodium was in food. Her diagnosis of Meniere's disease gave her no choice but to unravel this initially occult question.

In the book's introduction, the author describes herself pre-diagnosis: "I'm a food writer, recipe developer, and photographer, and I really love to eat good food. Until my diagnosis, I always had the luxury of consuming what I wanted without having to think about it. Now I had to make changes, and my first thought was What the @#!%\$ am I going to eat?"

I believe that her dilemma was a gift to the many readers who will pick up this book and breath a sigh of relief, seeking to come to terms with a similar low sodium challenge. Consider her words in the "Staples" chapter:

"Just leaving out the salt when you cook, or at the dinner table, isn't enough if the ingredients you use are high in sodium... Many of the recipes in this section- including most of the condiments and many of the baked goods- can be made ahead of time and kept in your pantry or freezer, so they are just as convenient as those purchased premade." I think it behooves a person embarking on this journey to take these words and this chapter very seriously. Any dietary change is glued together with commonly used building blocks and lacking workable replacements can make transition much more difficult than need be. Scan the offering in this part of the book and choose items that approximate what you have enjoyed in the past but what might be off-limits now. I bet with time you may come to prefer your new staples! Get ready to find satisfying replacements for all kinds of breads, seasoning mixtures, condiments, sauces, meats, beans and desserts that you prefer.

Continued on page 22

Weather or Knot®

Owl Light Puzzle 16 – By **GEORGE URICH**



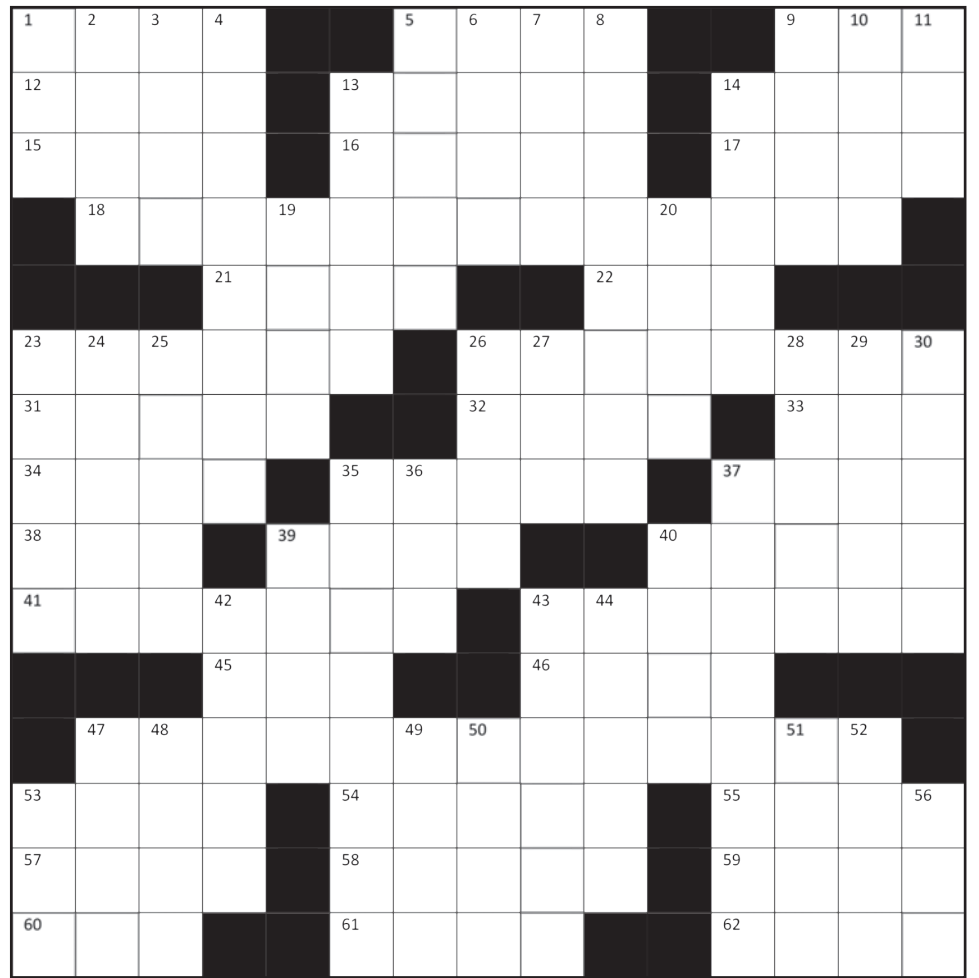
ACROSS

- 1 Confront
- 5 Winter precipitation
- 9 Rock band, The ____
- 12 Possible rhyme scheme
- 13 What may be heard at roll call
- 14 Hotel employee
- 15 Substance of a speech
- 16 Raises
- 17 Music, painting and such
- 18 Violent weather
- 21 An inert gas
- 22 British music label
- 23 Not too bright, _____head
- 26 Very violent weather
- 31 Copied John Lennon's love
- 32 Breakable, fra_____
- 33 Genetic stuff
- 34 Participant in a Henrietta Institute athletic event, _____acer
- 35 British tabloid, _____ Mail
- 37 Midday
- 38 Here to Pierre
- 39 Duffer's sport
- 40 American pioneer, Daniel _____
- 41 South Pacific ocean hurricane
- 43 Edible pod
- 45 Good place to apply for a job, Abbr.
- 46 Toy train sound
- 47 Belt on earth between the frigid and torrid zone
- 53 Lost fish
- 54 Having a sound basis in logic
- 55 Barrier

- 57 Small remaining quantity of something, ____ ant
- 58 Two cubed
- 59 Bullets and bombs
- 60 Japanese airline, Abbr.
- 61 More of 33 Across
- 62 Buy back, ____n

DOWN

- 1 WWI name for a cigarette
- 2 A little
- 3 Trucker's communication device exhibit, ____ow
- 4 Dining idea, lets ____ the stars
- 5 Actor, Charlie _____, played in "Platoon," "Wall Street" et al
- 6 Close to
- 7 Bobby of hockey fame and family
- 8 Wind description
- 9 Temperature description
- 10 It makes performers into stars 11 Takes too much meth
- 13 Fervor
- 14 Ave _____
- 19 Requirement
- 20 First two letters of city and its state
- 23 Type of column
- 24 What salt makes winter sidewalks
- 25 Observed, last letter missing
- 26 A workers exclamation
- 27 Black gold
- 28 Sag
- 29 Under the influence of drugs



- 30 Girl's name meaning, origin and popularity
- 35 Repeated on act
- 36 Pub fare
- 37 Army general's message to his troops
- 39 Sticky stuff
- 40 Hard liquor, last letter missing, informally
- 42 Citrus fruit
- 43 Three element symbols on the Periodic Table

- 44 What NY dairy farmers want
- 47 Adolescent
- 48 Jane Austin wrote it
- 49 Form of precipitation
- 50 Aquatic plant, last letter missing
- 51 What one is known by
- 52 Red Muppet
- 53 Gun lobby, Abbr.
- 56 Opposite of high



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

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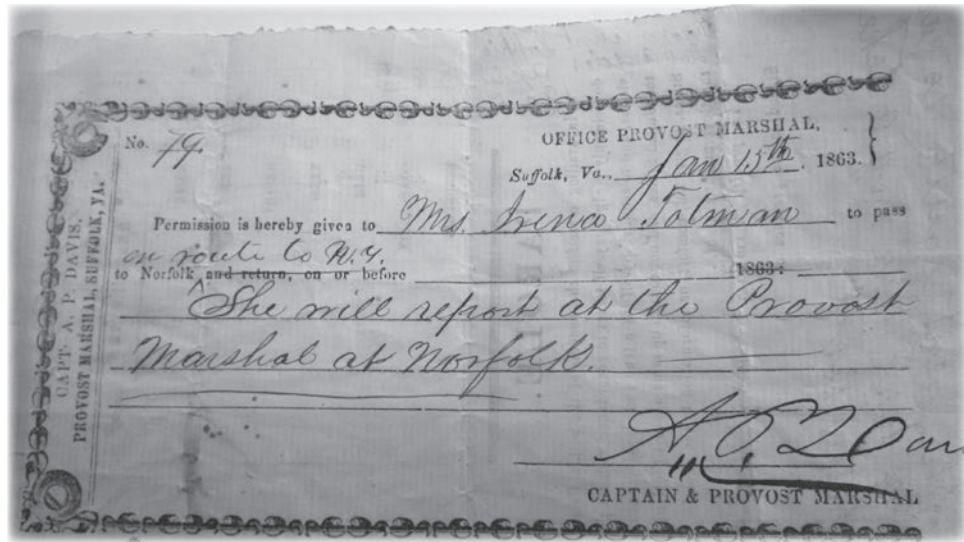
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Etched in Stone from page 17

His absence from the photos and journal entries suggest that he would have preferred his son to remain home to help on the farm. It took a great deal of courage and strength of character to disagree with her husband and send her oldest son off to war, especially after losing two sons in infancy.

Later that year while fighting in Virginia, Levi became ill with typhus. Irena took it upon herself to travel to Virginia in January of 1863 to nurse him back to health. Her military pass issued by the provost Marshal, Capt. A.P. Davis, orders her to report to the Provost Marshal at Norfolk. Taking this piece of paper, amounts to a passport to allow her to travel to the front lines of combat. She took her medical supplies to the field hospital to find her son and nurse him, and his friends as well.



Irena Joyner Totman's travel authorization to the front lines
Courtesy of the Bristol Hills Historical Society

Family journals report that Irena paid \$10 to practice medicine in Bristol, NY. She was regularly called upon to doctor someone, and therefore her experience was officially recognized and welcomed upon her arrival in Virginia. According to family sources, she stayed for months and cared for other wounded men in Levi's company, and, recognizing the great need for nurses, trained women to help her. Some journal entries suggest that she wore herself to exhaustion. Other entries say that when she brought the seriously ill Levi home to recover, she succumbed to stomach cancer in July of 1865.



Gravestone of Irena Joyner Totman

Levi returned to the war in 1864 and fought at Gainesford, Blackwater Bridge, Edenton Rd. and Laurel Hill. After his discharge on June 12, 1865, he returned home to Bristol. Soon after, he and his younger brother headed to medical school to become doctors in Irena's memory.

Irena Joyner Totman deserves deep respect and admiration for her Civil War service and for her tenure as an unofficial doctor in the small pioneer town of Bristol. Her service to our patriots in war, and to those who were ill at home, is a remarkable example of the indelible American Spirit. For her commitment, courage and independent life-force, Irena Joyner Totman has earned the title American Heroine.

Irena is now at rest in Bristol Center Cemetery along with her husband Ward and other family members. The etching on her gravestone provide names and dates, but do not reflect her outstanding life journey. Her story, now told, will preserve her memory as a small piece of New York's buried past. 🌿

David and his wife Colleen live in the Town of Canandaigua. David has enjoyed exploring his family history for many years, documenting people, place and events as far back as 1590. He is a certified member of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants, having documented his ancestry back 10 generations to Francis Cooke and Peter Browne, two of the original passengers on the Mayflower voyage of 1620. He is currently researching a third path back to Mayflower passenger George Soule, who was an indentured servant of the Winthrop Family. Many of his ancestors lived in historic Ontario County communities for well over 200 years, providing a fitting backdrop for his research on the inhabitants of this magnificent region of New York State.

Pathways to Democracy from page 4

- State legislatures or offices of secretaries of state provide paid voter orientation for first time voters— analogous to jury orientation and jury pay.
- Restore federal and state voting rights to citizens with felony convictions immediately/automatically after their release from prison.

Strategy Three focuses on ensuring the responsiveness of political institutions by offering the following recommendations:

- Adopt formats, processes and technologies that are designed to encourage widespread participation of citizens in public hearings and meetings at the local/ state level.
- Design structured and engaging mechanisms for every member of Congress to interact directly with a random sample of their constituents in an informed and substantive conversation about policy areas under consideration.
- Promote experimentation with citizen assemblies to interact directly with Congress as an institution on issues of Congress's choosing.
- Expand the breadth of participatory opportunities at municipal and state levels for citizens to shape decision making, budgeting and other policy making processes.

In the September issue of *Owl Light News*, attention will be paid to the Commission's three final strategies and thirteen recommendations.

The strategies include:

- Dramatically expand civic bridging capacity.
- Build civic information architecture that supports the common purpose.
- Inspire a culture of commitment to American constitutional democracy and one another.

The work of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences is illustrative of one of several non-partisan organization who have much to offer American citizens as they wrestle with a democracy in deep turmoil. 🌿

Questions / reactions to this column should be directed to Doug Garnar at garnardc@sunybroome.edu.

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. garnardc@sunybroome.edu

Cookbook from page 20

From there, let yourself go and have fun with the explorations of a culinary professional who understands your challenges, and is equipped to help. Sodium content is provided for every recipe, so you can be aware of your progress. Although I do not need to limit sodium in my own diet, I am interested in trying some of the recipes she puts forth, although of note is that provisions for other dietary limitations beyond salt, are not provided. I am going to sample one of her more exotic formulas, for something utilizing plums, called Tkemali Sauce. It contains lots of herbs and spices (including one of my favorites, fennel seed) and can be used as a marinade, salad dressing and dip which she says will keep in a jar for a month. In my experience, dressings can provide simple steamed veggies with a wide range of expressions on a plate. I am going to enjoy adding this to my repertoire of seasoning magic this season!

Whether or not sodium is a problem for you, I think there is much to be gained by taking a look at this book. Even though these recipes may not be particularly helpful for those with food sensitivities, the collection will provide some ideas for what allergy friendly replacements to focus on, if you feel cast adrift in a new dietary world.. And if you don't have special diet needs, your can fully enjoy the author's imagination and expertise. 🌿

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Owl at Home

It won't be long before you are packing up picnic baskets and stowing away boats to head back to ... wherever fall and winter finds you. Perhaps, like us, you live in the Finger Lakes year-round. Maybe you head further south for the winter. Wherever you go, the Owl can go too! Read us in print or online this winter.

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Solution to Owl Light Puzzle 16 (found on page 21)

1	F	A	C	E		5	S	N	O	W		9	W	H	O		
12	A	B	B	A		13	A	H	E	R	E		14	M	A	I	D
15	G	I	S	T		16	R	E	A	R	S		17	A	R	T	S
	18	T	H	U	N	D	E	R	S	T		20	O	R	M	S	
					21	N	E	O	N			22	E	M	I		
23	D	U	N	D	E	R		26	T	O	R	N	A	D	O	S	
31	O	N	O	E	D			32	G	I	L	E		33	R	N	A
34	R	I	T	R		35	D	A	I	L	Y		37	N	O	O	N
38	I	C	I		39	G	O	L	F			40	B	O	O	N	E
41	C	Y	C	L	O	N	E			43	S	N	O	W	P	E	A
				45	E	O	E			46	T	O	O	T			
	47	T	E	M	P	e	R	A	T	E	Z	O	N	E			
53	N	E	M	O		54	V	A	L	I	D		55	W	A	L	L
57	R	E	M	N		58	E	I	G	H	T		59	A	M	M	O
60	A	N	A			61	R	N	A	S			62	R	E	O	W

Honeoye-Richmond Historical Society Museum Open for the Summer

Saturday mornings, 9:30 to 11:30

The museum provides a wonderful & enlightening glimpse into the past and is open free of charge. (donations appreciated)

There are several new exhibits, including a display of the Hemlock Fair and an exhibit on Richmond barns.

The museum is located at 8690 Main St., Honeoye (in the back section of the Richmond Town Hall). Please follow current CDC guidelines when entering the building.

Information: Town of Richmond Historian, Joy Lewis, 585-229-1128 - historian@townofrichmond.org

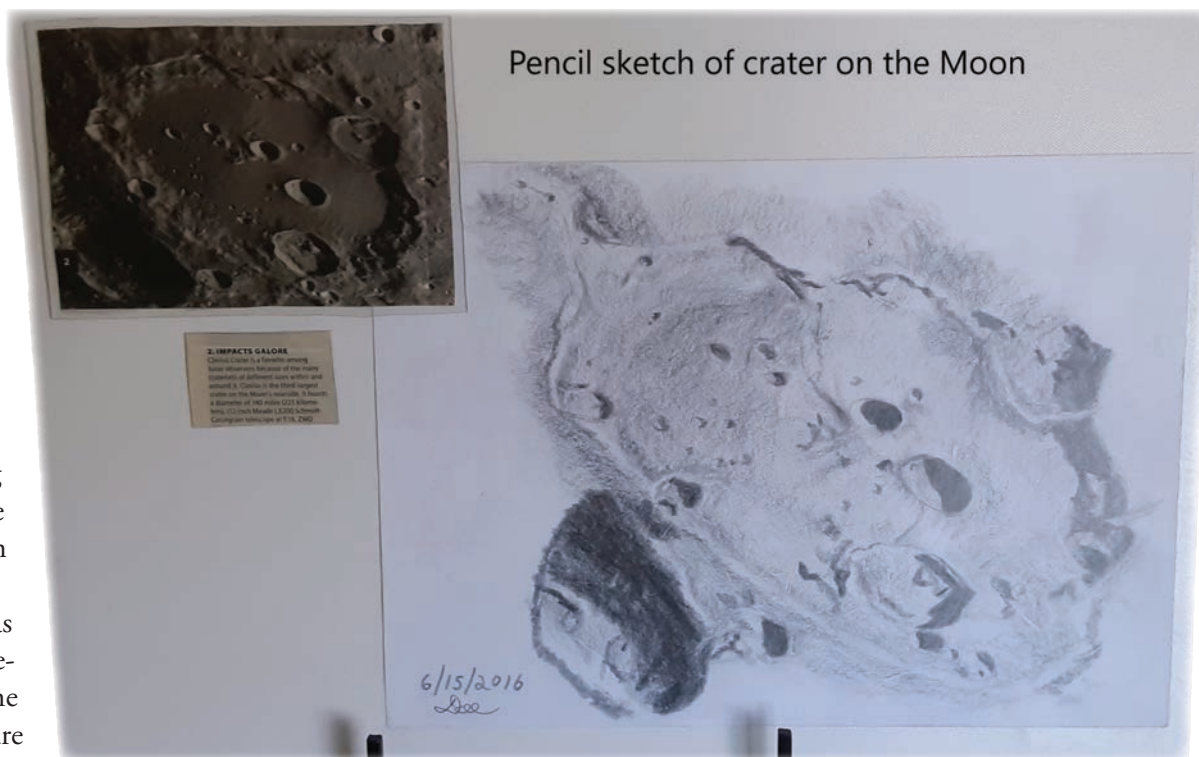


ASTRONOMY from page 6

Observing a star field through my telescope on a warm summer evening is therapeutically relaxing for me. I found that sketching what I saw through the eyepiece slowed down my experience and enhanced the feeling of peace that always washes over me when I look up at the stars.

I registered to take a pencil sketching class and was invited to pick any subject. I brought in a photograph from a magazine of a crater on the Moon, and over the next six weeks, I learned how to duplicate the shapes, tones, shadows, and topography of the crater. I've also sketched Moon craters as I was observing them through my eyepiece. This takes about 45 minutes to frame out and then I enhance the shadows and tones after I close down my observing session for the night.

Sharing astronomy experiences with family and friends has always been a highlight of my observing. When I locate an especially pretty nebula or star cluster, I'll rouse my family out of the house to come and take a look. It feels like I've found a treasure and I want to share it with others.



Most recently I enjoyed the annular solar eclipse from the comfort of my backyard. It sometimes is hard to set an alarm to wake you at 5:15 AM, but I find it's always worth it.

This month, the peak of the Perseid meteor shower is in the early morning hours of August 12 and 13. You should be able to see about one meteor per minute under a very dark, clear sky away from city lights. Look northeast about halfway up from the horizon around 4:00 A.M. on either morning. I still chuckle when I remember the year my 14-year-old son and I relaxed in lawn chairs watching the sky to spot a Perseid meteor. It wasn't long before the still morning air was punctuated by the sound of heavy breathing as my son dozed off under the stars.

Sharing my life-long love for astronomy is definitely a magnitude -26.7 experience for me, a personal joy, just as dazzling as our Sun!



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.

Dee shares her fascination with astronomy in every issue of *Owl Light News*—in print and Online—with her monthly column, "The Night Sky."



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We all love what we do—and we love sharing it with you—but the time we spend in the *Owl Light* is so much more rewarding if we know that it is a shared journey.

Do you use our monthly crossword puzzle, follow The Night Sky to guide your celestial explorations, or look forward to hearing from a contributor? Would you like to learn more or join a conversation about something found in the *Owl Light*? Is there something you would like to see more of? If so, you can respond directly to many contributors,

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