



OWLLIGHT

Q2
2022

Where Inspiration & Inquiry Converge

On Trees and Transience

DERRICK GENTRY

In Fond Memory of Sam Hall

A brush pile, from a bird's point of view, is surely a poor substitute for a standing tree. P. 7

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FRONT On Trees and Transience

– DERRICK GENTRY

A gentle reminder about the passing of time and impermanence of all living things, including the trees.

In Memoriam – SAM HALL (1934 - 2022) 32 - 33

BEE LINES

SAM HALL

1934-2022



GUEST CONTRIBUTORS

From our Readers 4

Readers Weigh in on *Owl Light* Changes

First Transitional Shift – MERTON BARTELS 15

Fred the Stupid Fly – WILLIAM GENTRY 39

They Call Me Mother Street – MICHAEL GIGADET 40

A Look Back – KATHY GEARINGER 41

Kitten-Kitten

Johnny Cake

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Check out our fantastic sponsors on pages 58-60

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Correction: We misspelled Rachael Ikin's first name in the bylines on pages 40 and 41 in the Q1 issue. The correct spelling of her name is Rachael. She can be found online at [fb@RachaelIkinsPoetryandBooks](https://fb.com/RachaelIkinsPoetryandBooks).

OWL LIGHT REGULARS

From the Editor - Threads Across Time 3

Owl Light Question: Q2 - What is a Cooperative? 4

Pathways to Democracy – DOUG GARNAR 5

American Democracy: A Time of Hope or Despair?

Not What I Expected – KURT STAUDTER 10

A Lifetime of Trash

Small Town Hound – Æsc 12

Shop Stops, Earth Day 2022, and Spring!

Side Street Sounds – STEVE WEST 14

Gigs That Feed the Soul...and Bring the Past Alive Through Music!

Night Sky – DEE SHARPLES 16

The Human Search for Alien Life

Plus ...What to Look for in the Night Sky – 19

Dragonfly Tales – STEVE MELCHER 20

Plant a Tree – Plant a Mop

Heartwood – T.TOURIS 24

Arts and Craft Swing Seat

And for anyone Jonesing for the *Light Lens*, check out the Arts and Crafts related throwback sidebar by T.Touris on page 55.

Fantastic Flora – SALLY L.WHITE 26

When Beans Grow on Trees

Inspiring Excursions – BILL WATERHOUSE 28 New!

The Wonders (and Challenges) of Spring Hiking – Mud is Just Part of the Fun

The Discerning Reader – MARY DRAKE 36

Reviews of: *Piranesi* by Susanna Clarke; *The Book of Form and Emptiness* by Ruth Ozeki; and *Keep Sharp: Build a Better Brain at Any Age* by Dr. Sanjay Gupta

Plus ...Where the Path Leads – 39

Crafting Your Own Cuisine – EILEEN PERKINS 42

Mexican Black Bean and Rice Salad

Plus ... Cookbook Review – *the DEFINED DISH* by Alex Snodgrass 43

Puzzle – GEORGE URICH 45

Have a Drink!

Richmond History – JOY LEWIS 46

A Legacy of Names

Exploring NY's Buried Past – DAVID PIERCE 48

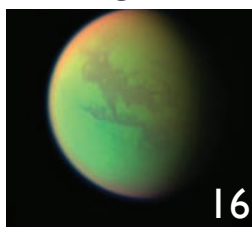
The Search for Emma J. Winch (1850-1933)

Making Lemonade – BARB STAHL 52

From My Family History

Warsaw Wendy – WENDY SCHREINER 54

Springtime Excitement!



Meet the
Owl Light
Regulars
pages 56-57



The OWL LIGHT

Where Inspiration & Inquiry Converge

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From the Editor

Threads Across Time

I recall enjoying the creation of timelines as a child. There was something reassuring and fascinating about seeing these events arranged in a thread across time. There are, as far as I can tell, only two distinct events that can be tied to a specific point: birth, and death. Even these represent a progression leading up and to the recorded (official) moment in time.

Spring equinox arrived on March 20, 2022 and the days have been getting longer. I notice and rejoice in the additional light but there is a lingering fog from recent life events that has resulted in a pale hue cast on many things we do.

As I worked on this current issue, I received news of several deaths—some tragic and unexpected, some culminations of gradual life progressions. These losses included Sam Hall, author of *Owl Light's* “Bee Lines” column—a regular part of *Owl Light* since 2017, soon after we first went to print.

There are also the wider repercussions of humanity's struggles against the forces of nature and against our own better natures: most recently evident with Covid-19 and the Russian invasion of the Ukraine. Some of these effects are felt quite close to home. We have, as of late, been traveling into southeastern and western parts of New York to spend time with relatives on the decline, their timelines far nearer the ends than the beginnings. Both of the care facilities we travel to now require Covid tests before entry, and notices of “Red Units” and “Yellow Units” greet us upon entering—along with paperwork and trepidation. Add to this the sometimes present, sometimes not states of the people in these facilities that offer glimpses into our own crystal balls.

Seeing a map of Russian forces circling the Ukraine, no matter how far and remote this may be from us geographically, is disorienting at best. Seeing the human toll of such action, even if by remote video, is maddening. There is no way to grasp through images the impact of missiles falling on neighborhood enclaves, the fear and desperation of families racing underground and toward borders to find sanctuary. Nonetheless, these images and the realities on the ground can be felt, even here in our rural land where—despite the increased prevalence of people declaring their “side” through divisive flags and banners in our own civil war, of sorts—we have relative freedom and safety. A hard-won freedom and safety, made possible by those who came before (by those residing now in private and institutional homes for the elderly).



I often think of spring as a time of renewal. I love it when life begins unfolding again and a green cast settles over the land. I love the spring rains and the warm breezes that transition us from winter to the balmy days of summer. Yes, there is a reassurance in this cycling of our planet in its continuing journey through space and time. Yet, I am finding it a bit more difficult to find solace in the songs of the birds and the warming temperatures that usher us toward the summer segment of our seasonal timeline.

This shadow in time, like a slow moving storm cloud, has lingered into 2022, making it much more challenging to see the sparks of light that propel us forward, the rays that offer up moments of inspiration and reflection. I feel this in my travels, hear it in conversations overheard, and feel it as I write. Believing *is* challenging right now and this is evident in how we approach all aspects of our lives, from work to politics, to the ways we create and grow.

It is evident in our lead story—a welcome, albeit true to life, reflection “On Trees and Transience” from Derrick Gentry, and is echoed throughout this issue in subtle ways. The surest way to understand and feel is with eyes open. There lies within the definitive beginning and ends of the timeline a hopefulness that draws us deeper into our experiences and, in the best of times (even in the worst of times), can bring us closer to one another. ✨

D.E. Bentley, Editor

From our Readers

Readers Weigh in on *Owl Light* Changes

"I received the first quarterly formatted issue of *Owl Light*. You should be proud of the diverse content that warmly covers rural America and much more. Your readers need something unique that does not resemble the noted big name magazines. Your quarterly points out a wide array of topics evident by rural living.

Those city slickers in the metroplex of the concrete and macadam jungle are missing much more than they maybe can realize. Now that you have raised this publication to a new level, please keep up the good work. I am working my way through the *Owl Light* - love it."

"My mom so enjoyed the Burma Shave article that she had me order the book with the signs in it. YEAH!"

"Love the new format!!"

"Just received my *Owl Light* in the mail. Looks fabulous!!"

"We especially enjoy the poetry and the puzzle."

"What a beautiful thing you've been putting out onto the world. I'm so happy to support you! I enjoyed the articles on bees and Burma Shave signs, and others. So very nice to see recipes with simple ingredients, and I'm a sucker for crossword puzzles."

"I really love the look and feel of the publication... great fonts that I didn't have to get the microscope out to read, wonderful paper, super color, and ink that doesn't smell like toxic waste. It's a keeper!"

Owl Light Question for Q2: **What is a Cooperative?**

Canadice Press (which publishes *Owl Light* and *Owl Light Literary*) is exploring becoming a media **cooperative** and **we want to hear from you**.

Cooperative is defined as:

"involving mutual assistance in working toward a common goal."

***Owl Light* Readers, Contributors, and Sponsors:**

What do you think of when you hear the word **cooperative**?

What roles could different **cooperative** members have, and what benefits?

What matters the most and how could a **cooperative** build positive changes?

Respond to our quarterly questions by commenting at owllightnews.com/Community-Question, by sending comments to editor@canadicepress.com, or by mail (see contact information on page 2)

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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.

PATHWAYS TO DEMOCRACY

DOUG GARNAR



American Democracy: A Time of Hope or Despair?

“Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”

Winston Churchill, House of Commons, November 11, 1947

On February 17, 1941 Henry Luce, media magnate and founder/owner of *Time & Life* magazines, published an editorial calling on America to assume the role of global leadership for the planet, despite the formidable authoritarian powers of the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and the Empire of Japan. Essential to his argument was that American economic, political and cultural values gave America an exceptional role to play in elevating humanity from the lives of beasts to lives slightly lower than angels. The idea of “American Exceptionalism” has a long history dating back to the Pilgrims and their “City on a Hill”. In Luce’s latest version from this time forward the concept of the “American Century” would become the dominant political paradigm.

The defeat of the totalitarian Axis Powers left only the Soviet Union with its acquisition of nuclear weapons (1949) to stand in the way of a “Pax Americana.” A “Bi-Polar” world ushered in by the nuclear weapons revolution led to the concept of two Superpowers, the Soviet Union and America, and a Cold war between the two that lasted from 1947 to 1989. The fall of the Berlin Wall and two years later the peaceful collapse of the Soviet Empire, that led political pundits of the time to argue that history had come to an end, resulting in the triumph of liberal/democratic capitalism. Some even argued that America had become the world’s first “Hyper Power.” President George H. W Bush’s coalition of Western powers, along with Japan and the acquiescence of China and Russia, led to the decisive defeat of

Saddam Hussein’s effort to take over Kuwait. How America would continue to develop a New World Order would occupy white male foreign policy planners (Colin Powell and Madeline Albright notwithstanding) for the next decade. Then came 9/11 and for the next 20 years Democratic and Republican Washington elites continued to forge policies, both domestic but more so military/foreign policy, predicated on the idea that the American Century would continue for the foreseeable future. But the two decades that followed have demolished a new world order based on a Pax Americana—a state of relative international peace regarded as overseen by the US.

Heraclitus, an ancient Greek philosopher, argued that the world is in a constant state of change—that one could never twice step into a river in the same exact place. The last 20 years would drive this home in ways we are still grappling with today.

Consider the following issues:

- Climate change induced by the human use of fossil fuel—droughts, rising temperatures; increasing numbers of severe hurricanes now costing on the average (per event) of \$1 billion in property damage; extreme weather patterns etc.
- Rise of pandemics, COVID-19 and its multiple variants are only the latest.
- Less than 25 years from now America will be a majority

Continued on page 6

Pathways from 5

nation of minorities, resulting in severe white angst over their identity.

- A growing divide in America of not Blue vs. Red States, but one rooted in urban vs. rural.
- A sense that American Democracy is teetering on collapse with the January 6, 2021, insurrection as only the latest piece of evidence.
- Racism/sexism still abound, joined by a chorus of cries to have schools and legislatures dictate how history will be taught and demands that books need to be banned.
- The best the Republican and Democratic parties could offer American voters in 2020 were a failed incumbent and an uninspiring career politician.

Unlike the rhetoric of JFK, the torch has not been passed to a new generation of political leaders who can envision the means to tackle the aforementioned problems. So, what course of action might American citizens embrace to help reinvent our democracy?

Consider the following:

- Dr. David Mathews of the Kettering Foundation has argued that we need to envision a new relationship between citizens and government/public institutions—one rooted in the idea that citizens work with government/public institutions. Voting is not the beginning and end of being a citizen.
- Activities which explore the rich potential of citizens working with governmental/public institutions include among other things: working on local boards dealing with election practices, environmental issues, community policing, school curriculum etc..
- Faith communities can play a useful role in working with public entities. A small example is that my church is beginning conversations with our local high school (across the street from the church) about how in the event of a school emergency students can be taken to the church in the short term. I am hopeful that such conversations might lead to other discussions, such as how the church can provide space for after school activities (a computer lab; badminton and tutoring of student among other things).
- Working with government/public institutions and not for profits, citizens could promote community summits to begin discussion of major issues. In Broome County, substance abuse, homelessness and poverty (including food insufficiency) continue to plague the area. A one

size fits all plan to tackle these issues is doomed to failure given the rural/urban dichotomy of the area. Recognizing the diversity of the county is important

- The power of education to promote civically engaged students should be cultivated. A K-15 civic education/engagement thread could be developed. Teaching young children how to identify a problem and develop a solution is an ongoing process which can be reinforced in middle school through the senior year's Participation in Government course. At the community college there is now a SUNY general education requirement to promote civically engaged students.
- The arts (plays, dance, and music in particular) offer creative lenses to look at important civic issues.
- The importance of understanding history can't be underestimated. All history is a series of endless revisions—some useful while others are detrimental to society. One example is the growing belief among some in our country that the Holocaust did not occur. Drawing on the 1st Amendment, such dangerous myths are spread. This is complemented by the banning of books such as *Maus*, *Brave New World*, *The 1619 Project*, *1984*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Color Purple*, *Captain Underpants* (series) and the list goes on.
- Promotion of community conversations focusing on the end of the Pax Americana. A great book to use for such deliberation is Andrew Bacevich's *After The Apocalypse: America's Role In a World Transformed*. Bacevich ends his book by observing, "The facts, the facts, the facts, and then the feelings with no room for illusions."

There are endless activities citizen can choose from to improve communities, but they all require one important feature—the sacrifice of time. In the mid 1980s Neil Postman wrote a seminal work, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. Core to Postman's book was the idea that TV, and now all forms of social media create a distraction from what really matters. Consider the recently concluded Super Bowl or the recent emergence of electronic sports betting in NYS, which has seen over 2 billion dollars wagered in its first month of existence. There are pockets of engaged citizens ranging from children to senior citizens but many more are needed. As the snows and cold nights recede with the arrival of spring, so let our democracy reinvent itself and may the readers of this column be part of that renewal! 🌱

• Questions or observations about this column may be directed to Doug Garnar at garnardc@sunybroome.edu

All Things Must Pass

Is it not a maimed and imperfect Nature that I am conversant with? I am reminded that this my life in nature ... is lamentably incomplete.”

— Henry David Thoreau

Rising at most five or six feet off the ground, far below the lofty heights of a leafed-out canopy, a modest-sized piling up of branches nevertheless offers hundreds of linear feet of perching real estate and forms a dense thicket of protection from earthbound predators (such as my outdoor roaming cat). Perhaps the juncos act a bit more on edge down this low to the ground; they disperse in a flurry of panic every time I approach. With every passing week of their winter residency, though, they seem a little more comfortable with my presence, remaining perched for longer as I trudge through the snow on my well-worn path to the woods.

The brush piles distributed about my property are, without exception, popular and noisy gathering places for the avian demographic. In fact, I often see more birds down low in brush piles than perched up on high in the branches of living trees. So I could be wrong: these piles may be a preferred habitat, and not a down-market compromise.

The chickadees, famous for their long-term memory, will not be able to return to these remembered places next winter. Or at least not to the exact same spots. Even the tallest of brush piles shrink down in size more rapidly than one might expect. In any case, I have Springtime plans to convert these small-diameter branches, with their high cambium to cellulose ratio,

into ramial wood chip mulch to feed the fungal-dominated soil around my young apple trees. In the meantime, and for as long as possible, these piles are for the birds: left here intentionally to provide a useful habitat, and – I must add – fashioned with good intent as a feeble offering to atone for the brush piler’s troubled conscience.

For I cannot tell a lie about the source of this woody debris. Here, for example, rising up like a massive funeral pyre, lie the remains of the oldest, most majestic, most beautifully proportioned tree that I have thus far cut down this winter. It had put on one last spectacular show of Fall leaves only a few months ago. But like most other ash trees in the vicinity, this one had telltale signs of senescence: More and more branches in the crown bare of leaves; the “D”-shaped holes in the bark indicating where the emerald ash borer larvae have made their exit once their damage has been done; and, even more visible, the pockmarks and flayed strips made by the woodpeckers who have a sure sense for when a tree is on its way out.

Taking down such a large tree, one that still puts on leaves and shows some vital signs, is a morally ambiguous task. I had been postponing this particular item on the agenda for some time. One frigid and quiet morning in February, I decided I could put it off no longer.

There is nothing quite like the sound of a large tree being felled in the dead of winter. The downed tree always makes a much louder impact than expected, then followed by a brief but violent flutter of branches that is nothing like the sound they make when agitated on a windy day. And then there is the almost sublime period of silence that follows, intensified by the crisp cold air and the thick blanket of sound-dampening snow that lies on the ground. Finally, a moment of silent contemplation. In a matter of seconds, the better part of a century’s steady growth has come to an abrupt end, a massive and imposing presence converted into one to two face cords in a short afternoon’s work, all of which provides less than a month’s heat for a small household.

In normal times, taking down trees in the winter feels a bit more like a regular “pruning” of the woods, the making of minor edits here and there to an established woodland ecosystem. We tell ourselves stories to help us make sense of, or in some cases rationalize, the normal practice of woodland management: We are *opening up the canopy*, letting in more light for new growth while *harvesting fuelwood* in the process, judiciously *removing invasive species*. Sometimes, the felling of a tree for firewood is simply a matter of fortuitous natural

Continued on page 8

Transience from P. 7

selection – trees blown down by the wind, or trees that have succumbed to disease or simply died of old age and natural causes. It is all good, healthy, low-impact intervention.

These past several seasons have not been normal ones for people living in wooded areas east of the Mississippi. In many places where the white ash grows, woodland management can feel and look more like clear cutting. Sometimes there is not much left behind. Once the ash is removed, we realize that our woodland was not quite as biodiverse and resilient as we thought. We have all had to look for a different story these past few seasons, suddenly made to play the role of landscape designers and charged with making thorough revisions rather than minor edits. Rather than managing wooded land, our thoughts now turn to the weightier question of how to *recreate* a healthy woodland ecosystem.

Spring in any year is a time for atonement and renewal, for thinking about the future and giving back what was taken. I have spent much of this winter thinking about regenerative plans for the post-ash era, and how to be the best possible steward for my own wooded property. My homework has involved considering which tree species to plant and where, along with various other factors such as longevity and diversity, aesthetics and functionality, my needs and the needs of other creatures who live alongside me in this ecosystem (including the birds, of course). And I am thinking both about trees that I want to be there long after my four score years, as well as trees that will not be standing nearly as long and with which I will have a different but no less meaningful relationship. Above all else, I have been thinking about trees and the dimension of *time*.

What We Want Our Trees to Stand For

Over this past winter, it was announced that the tallest known tree in New York state, the white pine known as Tree 103, had died of natural causes and could no longer hold itself upright. It had been growing atop a hill in the Adirondacks since the mid-1600s. That is twice the lifespan of the oldest ash trees, even longer than most oaks have been around. Our Methuselah of the East was nevertheless a whippersnapper compared to the sequoia redwoods of the West, which (as everyone knows) live for thousands of years.

It was decided that the remains of Tree 103 would be left where they lie, to feed the soil where it once stood.

Trees have long been symbols of both transience and longevity, serving as images of the sacred as well as reminders of the sin of desecration. Back when I was a city dweller, long before I learned how to do a properly angled hinge cut, my wife and I would mark our calendars every year to attend the April cherry blossom festival at the Brooklyn Botanical Garden. We were joined by thousands of fellow spectators. The Brooklyn festival did not involve a Japanese tea ceremony, and the absence of hot dog stands expressed a collective desire to distinguish this occasion from a gathering at Coney Island.

The first recorded mention of Japan's Springtime Sakura ritual appears in the oldest surviving text in Japanese literature, the *Kojiki*, completed in 712 CE. The annual tradition of gathering to view of the first cherry blossoms of the year has made popular a Japanese concept that pretty much everyone in the world can relate to, even if the Japanese word for it – *mono no aware* – is notoriously difficult to translate into English. Let's review the options. *Mono no aware* has often been badly translated as "the sadness of things"; once *very* badly translated as "the 'ahh-ness of things, life, and love"; and, at the end of the day, more or less decently translated as "the heightened awareness of impermanence."



Tree 103, which had been growing in the Adirondacks since the 1600s

The most famous Japanese-style cherry blossom festival in the United States is probably the one in Washington D.C.. The annual tradition began in the early years of the 20th century, with a gift of cherry trees from Japan to the United States that was meant at the time to commemorate the beginning of a beautiful friendship between the two nations that was expected to last long into the new century. When the first batch of 2000 trees arrived from Japan in 1910, the Department of Agriculture discovered that they were infested with insects and had them promptly burned (the chestnut blight having been discovered only a few years earlier on Japanese chestnut trees brought over to the Bronx Zoo). The mayor of Tokyo decided to re-send the gift and upped the number to a pest-free batch of 3000 trees, which arrived in 1912 and have remained a major tourist attraction ever since.

People in the West, in Europe and in North America, have adopted somewhat different attitudes toward trees. On the one hand, there is the Japanese embrace of transience, *mono no aware*. Then there is the more typically Western attitude that has been characterized as a triumphalist monumentalism, tinged with a bit of guilt-driven desire to Build Back Better and atone for the loss and desecration of past monuments. Junichiro Tanazaki's classic 1933 book *In Praise of Shadows* is an extended meditation upon these different world views, which are, to a surprising extent, reflected in our different attitudes toward trees.

Western cultures do have a peculiar guilt complex about trees that is not too hard to explain. A good deal of our bad conscience regarding trees comes from the cultural guilt we feel about having clear cut so much old growth in such a short amount of time. In the eastern United States, most of the reckless clear cutting had taken place by the middle of the 19th century. England had felled most of its old-growth trees by the mid-1600s, when the resident islanders began to realize that ships constructed of old-growth English oak rot much faster than oak trees can grow in the soils of England. The crisis prompted the English author John Evelyn to write his book *Sylva, or A Discourse of Forest-Trees and the Propagation of Timber in His Majesty's Dominions*, as a somewhat belated plea for long-term woodlot management.

And more recently, there has been a lingering and vaguely post-colonial guilt over the role we have played in importing insects and fungi, like the chestnut blight fungus and the emerald ash borer and the spotted lantern fly. There is a painful irony in the fact that at the exact moment the white ash population in North America is being decimated by an insect, the ash trees in England and Europe are dying *en masse* due to the spread of a fungal disease.

Rebecca Solnit's recent book *Orwell's Roses* deals with these Western themes of guilt and atonement and trees as monuments. Solnit took her inspiration from a famously guilt-ridden Westerner, George Orwell, and an obscure essay he published in 1946 in which he reflected upon his visit to a small plot of land where, exactly ten years before, he had planted seven rose bushes, two gooseberries, and five fruit trees. With the exception of one dead fruit tree and one dead rose bush,



Cherry blossoms overlooking the Jefferson Memorial in D.C.
Image courtesy of T.Touris

Orwell discovered that all of what he had planted was still flourishing on its own a decade later.

The discovery was enough to set Orwell the essayist off on a discursive flight. His once-forgotten essay from 1946 offers a basic outline of the Western "monumentalist" view of tree planting as atonement:

The planting of a tree, especially one of the long-living hardwood trees, is a gift which you can make to posterity at almost no cost and with almost no trouble, and if the tree takes root it will far outlive the visible effect of any of your other actions, good or evil [...] Even an apple tree is liable to live for about 100 years, so that the Cox [Cox's Orange Pippin] I planted in 1936 may still be bearing fruit well into the 21st century. An oak or a beech may live for hundreds of years and be a pleasure to thousands or tens of thousands of people before it is finally sawn up into timber. I am not suggesting that one can discharge all one's obligations towards society by means of a private re-afforestation scheme.

Continued on page 18

NOT WHAT I EXPECTED!



KURT STAUDTER

A Lifetime of Trash

In our almost 40 years of marriage, and over three decades in the same house, I've been branded a hoarder. Personally, I believe that I've been wrongly accused by my wife Patti and family. Do I have some collections? Yes, but I've seen the hoarder shows on TV, and my house and collections look nothing like those shows.

We've clearly uncluttered hallways and rooms, and even though we raised four kids and three grandchildren in our house, at no time in all those years did any of the children become hopelessly trapped underneath one of my collections. While Patti will disagree, there's just too much uncluttered space for us to be considered hoarders.

Before we go any further, let me tell you about what I collect: large collections of music and books. There are easily thousands of LP records, CDs, cassette tapes and books. One might even say that having extensive collections of these things would make for a nurturing environment to raise kids, and I will tell you it was mission accomplished: All of the kids raised in our house derive a great deal of pleasure from listening to music, and are all avid readers. Now it's come full circle; all of the best books and music in my life now come through the kids and grandchildren. Patti has long ago forbid me from adding to the collections unless I get rid of something, so with a little help from the kids, the collections are still growing.

For years Patti has been badgering me about cleaning up my office, workshop, and basement, and my retort has always been, "I'll get to all of that after I retire." Now while this always seemed to placate Patti, lately, now that I've retired, she has raised the issue again. Just in time, there was a stretch of very cold weather, and there you have it, the perfect storm to get some house cleaning done. We don't go outside here when we have temps in the negative teens. Not having to go out in bad weather is one of the true joys of retirement.

The music collection has never been organized. So the first order of the day was to put the collection in alphabetical order. This labor of love took two weeks, and I was rewarded with rediscovering records I haven't listened to in

years. The first find was Neil Young's *Time Fades Away*, next came *Shoot out the Lights* by Richard and Linda Thompson, followed by a collection of late Beethoven string quartets. Sorting records, listening to music, and going through my collection; for the life of me, I haven't a clue why I waited so long to do this – This is great!

After the music was sorted, it was time to take on the files in my office. Before I retired from the electric company we replaced a number of substations, and after the company sold one of their companies we shared an office with, let's just say that I carted away four file cabinets. One five-drawer file cabinet became home to my CDs. Two four-drawer file cabinets became the home for all our important papers, and one two-drawer unit is where we keep all the owners' manuals.

As a columnist for coming up on a quarter-century, I have extensive files on any number of subjects. It's this research that has never made it into any order, and two weeks later they're now in files, and stats on the workforce, or healthcare reform, and many other subjects are now at my fingertips. While I do like my paper records, today careful internet research yields quicker and more thorough results, and takes up no space at all.

With all the papers now cozy in files, my desk and other work surfaces are free of clutter. Huge amounts of paper collected over the years have now been shuffled off to recycling. I'm going to guess that all told there was easily over 100 pounds of paper. Also headed for reuse hopefully is a dozen pieces of non-working stereo equipment, which will be given to a guy that repairs the equipment and sells it in my go-to record shop.

With the office put in order, and now a much better place to hear the muse and crank out some writing, it was time to make Patti happy and take on the workbench. Now with a quick trip back to the office, one finds that the surface that I use for drawing and to make watercolors is now covered with junk that Patti leaves on the desks. This is part of the reason we have no clutter around the house, Patti takes things and puts them in my office or on the workbench. This happens

in the bedroom as well: on our shared dresser it's always my half that gets piled with things like used bras, cards for the grandkids, nighttime snacks, and new books. OK, some of the stuff is mine, but that doesn't change the fact that she piles stuff on any surface that I clean off.

The workbench is piled three foot high with junk. Some of it came home with me after the gig with the electric company ended and other stuff comes from Patti's beloved home improvement projects. Patti has the same affliction that many of my apprentices at the electric company had: The false belief that the job is done even if you don't clean up afterwards. So the next order of business was to put away tools and materials from a number of projects. With that done, it was time to sort boxes that have been in storage for years.

I don't know where they all came from, but for years I think Patti has been breeding drop cloths. Stuffed in nooks and crannies in the basement were more drop cloths than I've ever seen, and they all had one thing in common – they weren't folded. When Patti found me folding drop cloths, she gave me permission to throw most of them away. I ended up filling two trash bags with unfolded drop cloths.

Now along with the workbench two other work surfaces are now free of clutter. Already I see Patti lurking in the shadows with boxes of Christmas decorations that she's looking to store. I quickly put boxes back on shelves that I've cleaned out before she has the chance to claim the space.

Back a few years ago we built huge shelving units in the basement, and all that's left to do now is to go through that

stuff. The kids and grandchildren have a ton of their things in our basement, and as we get to cleaning up the area we've taken up a new strategy when it comes to reuniting our offspring with their belongings. We tried calling the kids and telling them to come get their stuff, but that has proven to be a less than effective solution: They've become adept at avoiding our repeated requests. Instead we've taken up drive-by drop offs of their things when they're at work. This is highly effective.

My biggest disappointment was that I haven't found any treasures yet. Well, that's not true. In my work stuff I found a couple of old mercury switches that I replaced years ago. Together, there's around a half-pound of quicksilver. Patti wasn't as enthusiastic as I was about the mercury; horrified, she dismissed it as more hazardous waste she'll have to pay to get rid of.

Thankfully, we've had lots of very cold weather so the basement project is coming along quite nicely. I'll keep you posted of any treasures we might find. Although at this point I hold out little hope of finding anything but trash. I mean, I've spent a lifetime collecting things that I might need someday maybe. Through this process I've come to realize that I've accumulated way too many things, and I need to downsize. As we tackle the shelves there's no doubt that we'll come across things that we don't need any more. With any luck we'll find new homes for these things, and perhaps make a little money on the side: Just something to do on a cold winter's day. Then there's always putting the stuff on a snow bank with a free sign on it. ❄️

Submissions for *Owl Light* (quarterly) and *Owl Light Literary*

Submissions/queries to editor@canadicepress.com

We accept submission for *Owl Light* (quarterly) on a rolling basis. Include your name and phone number (and a short cover note if you wish) in the email, as well as a word doc attachment of the submission. Please specify the type of submission in the subject line of the email (i.e. investigative, feature, press release, poetry, editorial, opinion, fiction etc.) and let us know it is a submission. Feature articles should reflect on life in New York State, with a focus on innovation in rural areas. They should be timely, relevant, and the original work of the authors(s)/artist(s). Submitted pieces should be around 2000 - 3000 words and include original images (photos/ills.). Authors/artists will receive full credit, publication in print and online, and copies of the published issue.

We also welcome reviews of local arts (visual, performing, culinary, literary...) as well as original short stories, poetry, hybrid writing that touch on the culture and complexities of rural life.

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.

Submissions for *Owl Light Literary: Fiction 2023* will be accepted from July - October 2022. We will post a notice with details in the Q3 print issue as well as online. We are focusing the 2023 journal on short fiction. Total word count (5,000 words or less) may be a single story or up to three flash fictions (each 500 words or less) or three prose poems.

SMALL TOWN HOUND Æsc



Shop Stops, Earth Day 2022, and Spring!

I procrastinated a bit this quarter with getting the writing done (yes! my editor did complain). The truth is, I was waiting for a few more outings to give me something to share. And, more importantly, some places to share. I so look forward to the warmer weather when I can hang out outside on patios and decks with



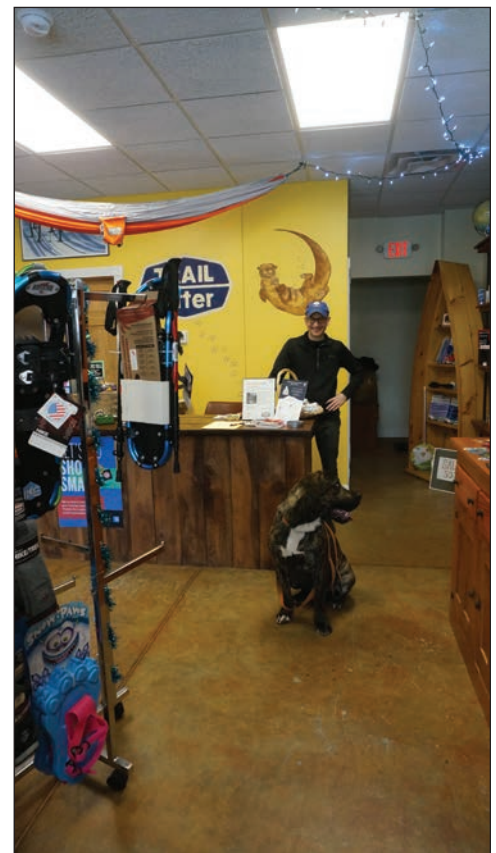
my humans and walk into shops, galleries, and drinking establishments without muddying up the floor.

I did have some great winter outings with Winnie and the humans. I do love the snow and the cooler weather. I put my nose into snow drifts, eat pond-sicles, and take my toys outside—especially the one eared blue elephant that Winnie and I both love and that has, now, disappeared (I think the humans took it, but *please* don't tell them I said so).



One place we went that was new to me was Cumming Nature Center. We walked all along the trails and Winnie and I sniffed and explored. My human said I needed a picture from there, which I obligingly gave, but I was not too keen about it as you can see from the shot. The humans made up for it as they had brought my vest and duckie and we did a SAR training. I need to do more of these with different people hiding, so if you live near us and want to be found, let the humans know for sure.

I did get out to a couple of exciting inside places too. One place I visited a couple times is the Trail Otter, in Leicester, NY. I met one of the co-owners, Bill, and he took the time out to make a canine feel right at home. I love this place, as it is all about being outside hiking and camping, and who does not love that! There is a bit more exciting news about Trail Otter as well. Bill is going to be writing a regular piece for the *Owl Light*. His and Sonni's store is near Letchworth State Park (which we will be spending some time at for sure) and they love to help humans get active in the great outdoors and active humans means active dogs too.



Hanging out a bit at Trail Otter with Bill Waterhouse. Photos D.E. Bentley

My humans do so many different things that require this, or that, to be picked up. My one human needed to trade one tank in for another (they both look the same, so I am still trying to figure out why the trade in, but I think one was empty and one was full and if it is anything like my water dish, full is great). We picked the tank up from a place called Jackson Welding Company, in Avon, NY. The man there was named Greg. Greg said that he does not want a new family dog, as they want to travel and dogs take time and energy. I so respect this. Fact: some people who get dogs don't really have a place in their hearts or homes for them. If you are thinking of finding a dog (or other animal) to share time with, please make sure you are at a place in your life when you have the time to share. He does love dogs and just loved me up. He knew how to scratch behind my ears just right. I sniffed all around and got a little weirded out by the face shields there. Overall it was a great visit. I waited (mostly) patiently while the humans talked.



Chilling at Jackson Welding Co. in Avon, NY. Photos D.E. Bentley



I also did my Saturday morning errands run, which includes a recycling stop (the best part is the treats!). I also got to hang out in the parking lot of Pops Bakery and Deli in Honeoye. The aromas rising out of this relatively new establishment are fantastic. This visit I also got some lovin' from the woman behind the counter, when she brought the to-go sandwiches out to my human.

Even during the coldest times, when the humans are hibernating, they still get us out for walks near home almost every day. Our regular loop is just about three miles and includes a good-sized hill. I have been doing some important work lately on these walks. April 22, 2022 is Earth Day. The theme for this year is "Invest In Our Planet." Since I love getting out in nature as much as the next dog, I take this seriously. One way I have been helping lately is to clean up roadside trash while we are walking. Humans (some!) dump so much trash. I have been picking up empties and carrying them home (with permission). My humans do this too, as do many other humans who walk in our area. If everyone did this, things would stay cleaned up. Better yet...don't throw the trash to begin with (just a thought).



Although winter has been a blast, I do love the warmer weather (not too warm). My humans do tend to go out more and take me more places when it is warmer, and I love every adventure there is to be had. I would love to come visit you, so if you are a business or organization that is dog-friendly, let my humans know and we will try to stop in and say hi. I am the Small



• facebook.com/SmallTownHoundNY

Town Hound signing off until next time. I am looking forward to outside dining and visits to breweries and wineries, and art galleries. 🐾

Mentioned in this piece: **Cumming Nature Center**
6472 Gulick Rd, Naples
fb@CummingNatureCenter

Trail Otter
134 Main Street, Leicester
fb@trailotterllc

Jackson Welding and Gas Products
1735 Lakeville Rd, Avon
jacksonweldingsupply.com/

Pop's Bakery and Deli
8608 Main St, Honeoye
fb@pop's bakery and deli

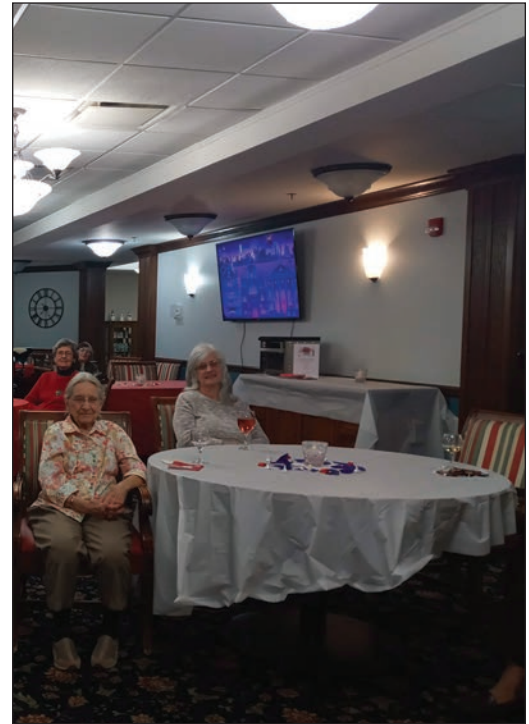




SIDE STREET SOUNDS

STEVE WEST

**Gigs That Feed the Soul...
and Bring the Past Alive Through Music!**



An engaged audience at Quail Summit in Canandaigua during a recent performance by Steve West. Photos courtesy of Steve West

Some of the least glamorous, yet most rewarding, types of shows that I play are for senior citizens. The one thing most working musicians want more than anything else is to have an interested audience. In my experience, I seldom have a more attentive audience than when I'm playing for senior citizens. I often say that the pay for these gigs isn't great, but the compensation is immeasurable.

There are different types of senior citizen shows. Community senior centers and senior citizen groups are often more social in nature. Audience members live in their own homes and are typically in good health. These shows are part of broader programs that bring seniors out for social interaction with others in the community. They may be at churches, libraries, or, in some cases, municipal buildings. Shows at assisted living facilities are done on site. Audience members are usually in good health but may need some

basic level of service that such places can offer. There is often a dedicated recreation coordinator on site who books musicians as part of a broader program to keep the residents engaged and active. Nursing home shows are usually smaller. A performer may play for just one floor or even hallway in a building. Residents require a greater level of care. Some may not be as responsive as their counterparts in the other types of shows, but it's still moving to see someone respond to a familiar song.

Wendy Ubbinkis is the recreation coordinator at Quail Summit in Canandaigua. She says that music is such an important part of keeping seniors engaged. "Songs can bring up powerful memories for people. Music can take them back to a certain time or place." This is especially true when playing in Alzheimer and memory care facilities. Often, those residents respond to music from their youth when

other types of communication can't reach them as well. As a musician, it can be a moving experience.

As one might expect, oldies are the standard type of music at these shows. Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, and Nat King Cole have all been standard fare for quite some time. As the ranks of senior citizens have changed from "The Greatest Generation" to "Baby Boomers," the music has moved more in the direction of Elvis and The Beatles. As one resident recently pointed out to me, "The Rolling Stones are older than some of the people living in this place. Bing Crosby was my parents' music."

While playing senior facilities can be a great way for some musicians to supplement their income between the higher profile gigs, there are some who play these facilities exclusively. There are scores of nursing homes and assisted

living facilities in our region. The typical show lasts about an hour. It's not uncommon for some musicians to schedule up to three shows a day and never have to worry about lugging lots of equipment home at 3 in the morning.

For working musicians, there are gigs that feed your family and there are gigs that feed your soul. When you're playing in some bar while half the patrons are watching the game on TV and people are talking over your songs while trying to get lucky, the best you can do is keep plugging along and realize you're probably feeding your family. When you're playing a song for an audience that listens intently to every song and sings along, like you often see when playing for seniors, you're feeding your soul. 🎸

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

First Transitional Shift

Note the contrasting brightness in our living rooms
from low, dark January clouds that make days gloomy
or the contrasting brilliant illuminance off winter snow
Either way we linger before going outdoors

Buildings hooded in thin and thick blankets of white
show thick lengthy icicles on the south side
The deer amble through yards foraging for feed buried
as night skies reveal the overhead honking of geese

Mother Nature joyfully plays the role of the she-devil
while delivering weather extremes that baffle us
Yet she teases all while shifting from chilling old Pisces
to the intermittent sun rays yielding momentary warmth

Aries still held in check as the days not long enough yet,
even though daylight savings time has commenced
Soon the yearly cycle makes day and night equally divided
announcing the first equinox: *it is Spring!*

Merton Bartels 2/15/2022

Note Spring began 3/20/2022 as per the almanac

Merton Bartels, a retired technical writer and editor with a half century of experience, is a member of Macedon's Wayne Writers Guild. He specializes in 600 word essays, people characterization poems, and observations of New York State. He also enjoys creating duologues.



D.E. Bentley



The Human Search for Alien Life

Are we alone in the universe? Are there any other life forms out there or is Earth unique?

These are two of the big questions humans have been asking for thousands of years.

Since the beginning of the space age on October 4, 1957, when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the world's first artificial satellite, fantastic inroads have been made in answering these questions. Space missions from several countries across the globe have since blasted off from Earth to explore our solar system's planets and moons. Powerful Earth-based telescopes such as the Hale Telescope with its new instrument called the New Mexico Exoplanet Spectroscopic Survey Instrument (NESSI) and space telescopes such as the Hubble Space Telescope and the newly launched James Webb Space Telescope are leading the search for exoplanets, which are planets orbiting stars far beyond our solar system.

In 1992, when the first exoplanet was confirmed, it was the beginning of a new era in space exploration. Today, astronomers have announced the existence of over 4,900 planets orbiting other stars in just our Milky Way galaxy. There are another 8,400 candidates which need further study before they can be confirmed as exoplanets. According to the European Space Agency (ESA) website, 'Astronomers estimate there are about 100 thousand million stars in the Milky Way galaxy alone. And there are millions upon millions of other galaxies in the universe!' They, too, are likely to have planets orbiting them.

What would conditions have to be like on these worlds in order to support some form of carbon-based life as found on Earth? In addition, scientists have speculated that alien life could be based on completely different chemical elements than life on Earth. Many theories exist which we've only just begun to research.

But to reduce these mind-boggling numbers and questions to something more within our grasp, we only need to look in our own neighborhood. To date, observations and information gathered from all of the space missions and telescopes tantalizingly suggest that besides Earth, there are four other worlds in our solar system which have conditions suggesting evidence for some form of life, either now, in the past, or in the future. They are the planet Mars; Europa (one

of Jupiter's moons); and Titan and Enceladus (both moons orbiting Saturn). Scientists describe the ingredients needed for life as: liquid water, a source of energy (like sunlight or chemical energy), and the right chemical ingredients.

Titan, one of these worlds, was studied in greater detail during the very successful Cassini/Huygens space mission launched to the Saturnian system from Cape Canaveral on October 15, 1997. The mission was a joint endeavor by the National Aeronautical and Space Agency (NASA), the European Space Agency (ESA), and the Italian Space Agency (ASI). Huygens was the space probe designed to land on the moon Titan and Cassini was the 'mother ship', the main spacecraft which would study Saturn, its rings, and some of its moons.



Titan is 3,200 miles in diameter, larger than the planet Mercury and is the 2nd largest moon in the solar system after Ganymede, one of the moons of Jupiter. Its atmosphere is comprised of nitrogen, methane, traces of ammonia, argon, and ethane with a surface temperature of minus 290 degrees Fahrenheit which, although extremely cold, still allows liquid methane and ethane to exist. Orbiting Saturn in almost 16 Earth-days, Titan is tidally locked, keeping one face positioned toward the planet just as our Moon does with Earth.

The Huygens probe separated from the Cassini spacecraft on December 25, 2004. It was to become the first human-made object to land on a world in the outer solar system. Its Entry Assembly Module was equipped with a heat shield which acted as a brake and thermal protection to safeguard the delicate instruments from the high temperatures encountered during its plunge through Titan's thick atmosphere. The Entry Assembly Module was built like a shellfish 9' wide, weighing 700 lbs. The Descent Module which was the lander was only 4' wide and carried the scientific instruments which would do all the work. (See image on page 16.) Three parachutes released in sequence controlled its trip to the surface. When Huygens was released from Cassini, it began a 21-day final journey toward its encounter with Titan. On January 14, 2005, after a harrowing 2 hour 27 minute descent, the lander successfully touched down on the surface of Titan.



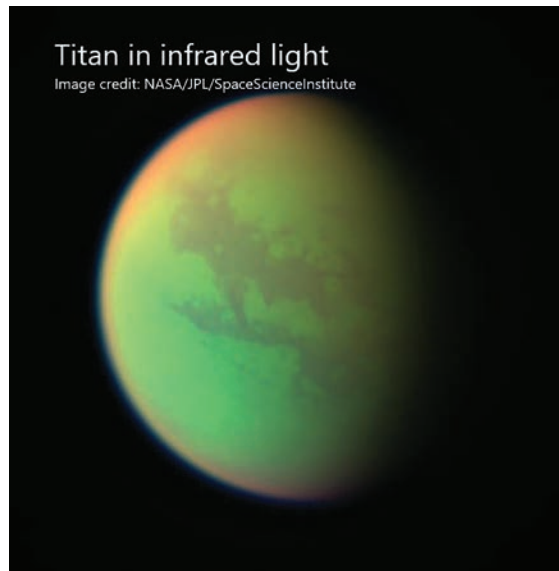
Surface of Titan
Image credit: NASA, JPL, ESA,
Univ. of Arizona

The first image taken by Huygens was awe inspiring, revealing a landscape filled with debris. A summary of the caption released with the image from photojournal.jpl.nasa.gov stated: "This image was returned on January 14, 2005, by the ESA's Huygens probe after its successful landing on Titan. This is the colorized view after processing and gives a better indication of the actual color of the surface. Initially thought to be rocks or ice chunks, the objects imaged are more the size of pebbles 2"-4" in diameter at a distance of approximately 33" from Huygens."

No evidence of surface liquid was found at the time of the landing. The landing site itself resembled a dried-up riverbed, with small rock-like objects resting on a dark grainy surface. The landing area showed signs of flash flooding by liquid methane/ethane (not water) which deposited these objects.

An infrared image taken by Cassini provided another view of Titan's surface. This explanation of the various colors was provided by NASA: "Green represents areas where Cassini is able to see down to the surface. Red represents areas high in Titan's stratosphere where atmospheric methane is absorbing sunlight. Blue along the moon's outer edge represents visible violet wavelengths at which the upper atmosphere and detached hazes are better seen."

Scientists believe Titan may resemble early Earth, with a complex weather system and a landscape created by flowing liquid and volcanic activity. Its atmosphere is mostly nitrogen, similar to Earth. The weather consists of wind, rain, and dust storms with surface features that change with the seasons. Titan is thought to have a prebiotic environment rich in complex organic compounds, but life as we know it cannot exist on its super cold surface. However, the moon seems to possess a global salty ocean beneath its miles-thick ice shell where conditions are potentially suitable for microbial life. Titan's environment could become much more habitable in the distant future. As our sun transitions into an expanding red giant star five billion years from now, its surface temperature could rise high enough for Titan to maintain liquid water on its surface.



Titan in infrared light
Image credit: NASA/JPL/SpaceScienceInstitute



Jets erupting from Enceladus
Image credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/Space
Science Institute

One of Saturn's smaller moons Enceladus, only 313 miles wide, about the size of Arizona, was also a target for exploration. In 2005, the Cassini spacecraft imaged Enceladus and recorded eruptions from the moon's surface traveling at approximately 800 miles per hour. Cassini flew 46 miles above the surface of the moon through these plumes analyzing their composition.

The jets erupt from fractures in the crust and contain water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, and a few other gases, along with salts, silica, and a high density of organic material. Scientists have determined that the moon possesses most of the chemical ingredients needed for life in the mineral-rich water from a warm salty ocean hidden beneath its minus 330° F. icy surface.

Continued on page 18

Transience from P. 9

Still, it might not be a bad idea, every time you commit an anti-social act, to make a note of it in your diary, and then, at the appropriate season, push an acorn into the ground.

When Rebecca Solnit, brimming with ideas for a new book, returned to the same site less than two decades into the 21st century, she discovered only a few of Orwell's rose bushes were still living. There was no trace at all of the Cox's Orange Pippin or any of the other long-lived hardwood trees.

“...Under Whose Shade We Do Not Expect to Sit”

The Japanese Sakura festival focuses attention on the spectacle of the transitory blossoms, poignant reminders that all things must pass. But what about the passing of the trees themselves? Some well-maintained Yoshino cherries can reach a ripe old age of 150 years. A wild black cherry can live up to

100 years or more. But they are the exceptions. The sweet and sour fruit-producing trees – like the Montmorency trees I planted last spring – will be well past its prime by the time your newborn baby finishes college.

Cherry trees in general are also highly susceptible to diseases. There are only a couple of dozen cherry trees that remain alive from the original batch of 3000 planted in D.C. in 1912, and even their survival is largely due to the rather lavish attention they receive (being pruned two or three times a year).

The 100-year-old or more apple trees that Orwell had in mind are ones grafted onto standard rootstock. The rootstock determines the vigor, size, and longevity of the tree (as well as other qualities, such as cold hardiness). Apples on standard stock (such as Antonovka) are much less popular today than they were in the 1930s; Fedco Trees is one of the only major nurseries that still sells trees on standard stock and advocates for

that long-term option. More popular today are apples on dwarf and semi-dwarf stock, which are smaller in size and produce fruit earlier, but do not live nearly as long. A semi-dwarf tree on M111 stock will live maybe two to three decades, while a dwarf tree will live between one and two.

There is also a significant difference on the temporal scale between the long-lived fruit trees that Orwell had in mind and, say, a relatively short-lived peach tree. You can confidently plant a peach tree within the future shade of a standard apple tree, knowing that by the time the apple begins producing shade and fruit the peach tree will be long gone.

And if you decide to plant a Cox's Orange Pippin, that most iconic of English heirloom apples, you should be prepared to deal with the slings and arrows of apple scab and the other life-shortening diseases to which the Cox's Orange is notoriously vulnerable.

Continued on page 23

Night Sky from p.17

Enceladus is locked in an orbital resonance with Dione, a slightly larger moon of Saturn. When two or more moons line up with their parent planet, they experience a gravitational interaction. Enceladus orbits Saturn twice every time Dione orbits once. Dione's gravity stretches the orbit of Enceladus into an elliptical shape, so Enceladus is sometimes closer and other times farther from Saturn. This causes tides which flex its icy surface and create friction producing heat inside the moon. Evidence suggests there are hydrothermal vents deep beneath Enceladus' icy shell, not unlike the hydrothermal vents that exist on the floors of Earth's oceans. With its global ocean, unique chemistry, and internal heat, Enceladus has become a promising candidate in our search for worlds where a form of life could exist.

On September 15, 2017, Cassini ended its mission after acquiring enormous amounts of data and images. It was directed to destroy itself by plunging into Saturn to ensure it didn't contaminate Titan or Enceladus which could possess the prebiotic chemistry to create life. ❧

Strasenburgh Planetarium

Strasenburgh Planetarium offers the public an opportunity to observe the night sky through two large telescopes on most Saturday nights when the skies are clear. Volunteers from the Astronomy Section of the Rochester Academy of Science will operate the telescopes from dark to 10PM. You will need to climb 60 steps to the telescope observation deck at the back of the planetarium. Call the planetarium on Saturday after 6:00 PM at 585-697-1945 to confirm this event will take place. If it's cloudy, it will be canceled.

Observing and parking are free.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN THE NIGHT SKY

Entire month of April: The planets Venus and Jupiter will be bright in the early morning southeastern sky before the sun rises. Mars and Saturn will join them, but both are much fainter.

April 10-30: Bright Mercury shines low in the western sky just after the sun sets, then slowly climbs higher throughout the month. Use binoculars to look for the beautiful Pleiades star cluster nearby.

April 21-22: Lyrid meteor shower. Best observing will be on April 21, 10:00 PM to 3:00 AM on the 22nd when the Moon begins to rise. (Sporadic meteors can be spotted April 16-25 when the shower is active.)

May 1: Venus and Jupiter have a spectacular morning approach visible in the eastern sky approximately 30-45 minutes before sunrise.

May 7: Eta Aquarids Meteor Shower peaks after midnight May 7 and continues into the early morning hours. (Active April 19 to May 28.) The meteors are caused by dust

particles left behind by Comet Halley which burn up in our atmosphere as Earth travels through them. Meteors will appear to originate from the constellation Aquarius but can be seen streaking across the sky in any direction.

May 15-16: Total lunar eclipse. The Moon will pass through the Earth's shadow between 10:22 PM on May 15 through 1:55 AM May 16. The sunlight illuminating the Moon will be blocked as the Earth passes between the Moon and the Sun. The Moon will be 30 degrees above the southern horizon.

May 29: Bright Jupiter has a close encounter with dimmer Mars before the Sun rises.

June 14: Supermoon. A full moon will be near its closest approach to Earth and may look slightly larger and brighter than usual.

June 21: Summer Solstice occurs at 5:13 AM. The Northern Hemisphere will experience its greatest tilt toward the Sun in 2022 officially announcing the first day of summer.

Magnitude

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

Sun: -26.7

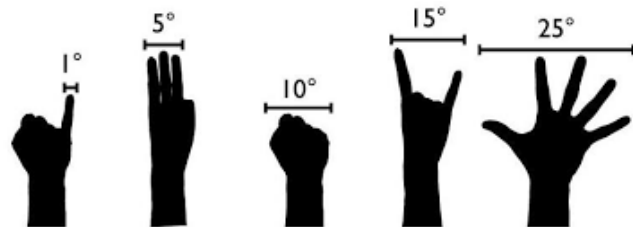
Full Moon: -12.6

Dimmest star visible with the unaided eye: 6.0 to 6.5

PLANETS	APRIL 2022	MAY 2022	JUNE 2022
Jupiter	-2.04	-2.12	-2.26
Mars	1.06	0.87	0.66
Mercury	-2.07	0.60	2.63
Saturn	0.86	0.85	0.75
Venus	-4.39	-4.12	-3.94

How to measure degrees in the sky

A simple “ruler” is to hold your arm straight out, close one eye, and make a fist. The area of the sky covered by your fist measures about 10°. Start at the horizon and by moving your fist up and counting how many “fist-widths” it takes to reach an object in the sky, you’ll have an approximation of its height. Hold three fingers up to the sky – the width of your three fingers measures 5°. The width of your little finger held at arm’s length will measure 1°. You can also use this method to measure how far apart two objects are from each other in the sky.



• Listen to learn more: “Dee’s Sky This Month” — describing what can be seen in the sky— on the ASRAS website, rochesterastronomy.org

DRAGONFLY TALES

STEVE MELCHER



Plant a Tree – Plant a Mop

• [Learn More: fb @ Odonata Sanctuary](#)

Protect and Plant

A bit of History for those of us who fell asleep in middle school earth science class.

There shouldn't be any debate about sea levels rising, but you might have a few questions.

Where is all that water coming from? **Melting glaciers**
Why are the glaciers melting? **Rising temperatures**

Why is the temperature rising?

One of my first jobs out of college was working at the Wallops Island National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) flight station as a wetland scientist schlepper. We were charged with mucking through the salt marshes making measurements of critical habitats and measuring sea levels. You may not be familiar with the barrier island called Wallops Island but you may have heard of the more famous bigger sisters just to the North: Chincoteague and Assateague. Chincoteague, pronounced 'Shinkoteak' is the home of the famous 'Chincoteague Pony, (Misty of Chincoteague) and Assateague is the home of the famous Assateague Lighthouse where Verner von Braun stayed after WWII for a time. The locals have developed a way to pronounce the islands' names without moving their lips, probably to prevent the ever present mosquitoes and deer flies from becoming an unwanted snack. NASA still has an active meteorological missile program on the island and the radar array is still used to track those missiles, satellites, and even migrating birds and butterflies. Wallops Island Flight Facility is famous for being seen on national news every December 24th tracking some guy in a sleigh pulled by eight flying ungulates!

The scientists stayed in a nearby abandoned Navy base and dined and had drinks at the Rocket Club, of which I still treasure a few swizzle sticks from Stingers, Side Cars and even a drink called "The Rocket". Scientists from all over the globe came to the island to study evidence of the Holocene transgression. This sounds like something from the middle ages published by the Vatican but it's actually a geological phenomenon. In this case, the Holocene is the time period or epoch that began about 10,000 years ago, at the ending of the last ice age. A marine transgression

occurs when sea level rises. Sea level can rise because the land is sinking or when glaciers melt. The Holocene epoch has been a time of rising sea level so much so that NASA was concerned about losing the missile bases and Santa Claus trackers (radar dishes) to the salt water waves of the Atlantic. So, they hired some scientists to make some baseline measurements to see how much time they had and then brought in the Army Corps of Engineers to shore up the eroding island. Data shows an average rate of sea level rise of 0.06 inches per year from early measurements in the late 1800's. However, since the 1950's, the average sea level has risen at a rate twice as much, or 0.12-0.14 inches per year. This is all relative of course. A rise of 0.14 inches doesn't seem like much to a fjord in Norway but is critical to an island where the highest point (Goddard Mountain) is three feet above mean high tide. A storm could come through and knock out an entire communications array. Assateague Island, just to the North, was "born" during the 1933 Chesapeake-Potomac hurricane. Fenwick Island was split in two by the storm, creating a whole new island we now call Assateague. Wallops Island was already kidney shaped and in danger of splitting in two when I arrived in 1974. In the '70's we were measuring rates of 8 inches per year on the barrier islands. This was primarily due to a loss of critical wetland habitat which acts as a sponge to absorb storm surges in addition to sea level rise. This was the beginning of our understanding of the dangers of sea level rise, which is just one aspect of what has become known as the Climate Crisis.

The Big Picture

We knew sea level was rising due to melting glaciers. We knew glaciers were melting due to rising global temperatures. These were all "natural" phenomena. But when we put the numbers together, we found there was something missing. We found that man's activities, especially burning fuels, was contributing as well. The missing factor was listed in the environmental accounting program as "inadvertent climate modification." Today we realize just how much the industrial revolution has contributed to climate change; scientists are thinking of changing the name from the Holocene to the Anthropocene (human dominated) Epoch.

For those of us who fell asleep in high school chemistry class

Temperatures are rising due to a number of factors, some natural, some manmade. Cities, pavements and land stripped of forests absorb more heat than undisturbed areas. The glaciers are reflectors of heat and they are melting which means more radiant energy is absorbed. The contributing factors scientists use to measure temperature changes are called “radiative forcings”. Greenhouse gases are one of the major radiative forcings. Remember the Greenhouse Effect? The five main gases responsible for the greenhouse effect are water vapor (H_2O), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), ozone (O_3) and carbon dioxide (CO_2).

We’re going to concentrate on the increased concentration of the last gas on that list: Carbon Dioxide. There have always been natural sources of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere such as animal and plant respiration, decomposition of organic matter, forest fires and volcanoes. The greatest natural source of CO_2 is from the oceans. These are all natural sources of carbon dioxide. However, there is the human contribution; the “inadvertent climate modification” factors. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports that it is “extremely likely that more than half of the observed increase in global average surface temperature” from 1951-2020 was caused by human activity. About a third of all the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is manmade. Where does the manmade carbon dioxide come from? Electricity generation and building heating by combustion of fossil fuels are the largest producers of anthropogenic (man-made) carbon dioxide. There are charts and data tables online for you to peruse to find out other man-made sources of greenhouse gases and how you can reduce your carbon footprint.

Spigot and the Mop: The Carbon Cycle and Carbon Sinks Another science lesson

Carbon sinks and spigots in the same article, amazing. In a simplified version of the carbon cycle, carbon dioxide is emitted by natural sources, absorbed by plants and the ocean and then returned to the atmosphere to be cycled back into plants. A simple example would be a tree decomposing and releasing carbon dioxide and then another tree absorbing the carbon dioxide during photosynthesis. The decomposing tree is the spigot and the living tree is the mop. Nature has always had a big enough mop to clean up what was coming out of the spigot until the industrial revolution. We now contribute so much carbon dioxide to

the cycle that nature’s mop is unable to absorb it all. We not only have to turn the valve on the spigot to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but we also have to restore the mop by protecting nature’s carbon sinks. The atmosphere, the oceans, soil and forests are our planet’s largest carbon sinks. The oceans are at a critical point of no return, what scientists refer to as a tipping point. If the oceans become so acidic that the inhabitants cannot survive the oceans will “reboot.” Rebooting is an unfortunate term borrowed from the computer geeks that involves a total shutdown and restart of the system, something that may take several minutes on your laptop but several thousand years for our oceans. We are quickly approaching that tipping point, corroborated by the massive loss of corals around the world. Restoring the mop involves building it back as well as protecting it from further loss. When we clear cut forests, which are major carbon sinks, we are removing strands from the mop nature uses to absorb the carbon dioxide. We’re asking nature to continue the carbon cycle with a smaller and smaller mop as we clear cut more and more forests. According to the World Wildlife Federation half of the forests that originally covered 48 percent of the Earth’s land surface are gone. The federation goes on to suggest that we set aside tracts of old growth forest that are strategic carbon reserves to help reduce the effects of climate change and treat them as we would endangered species. Global deforestation is responsible for 10-20% of worldwide CO_2 emissions. Because of droughts, fires and clearing for plantations, parts of the Amazon Rainforest have become carbon negative: emitting more carbon than they store.

But What Can I do?

“The frog does not drink up the pond in which he lives.”
– *Sioux*

“Take only what you need and leave the land as you found it.” – *Arapaho*

Every shroomer (folks that harvest wild mushrooms) knows that you don’t harvest all the mushrooms in a fairy ring. Leave some to propagate for your next trip into the woods. I’m sure the early hunting gathering inhabitants of the Finger Lakes did the same. When they came upon a patch of wild leeks in the forest, they probably learned that if you harvest them all you won’t have any there on your trip through the next season. Do what you can to protect the mop and to protect those remaining forests by not contributing to the sources of deforestation and contributing to those organizations that are trying to protect them.

Continued on page 22

MOP from p.21

Plant a Plant

“A man doesn’t plant a tree for himself. He plants it for posterity.” – *Alexander Smith*

Plant a tree, plant a mop. Think ahead; at least seven generations.

We need to protect and preserve the mop but also build back the mop. As advanced as we think we are, we need to change our thinking of how we treat the Earth. One way is to plant trees, not for paper production but for carbon sinks of future generations.

Hundreds of years ago the Iroquois tried to teach the invaders from the East such chestnuts as “don’t poop on your plate, don’t pee upstream from the village, and don’t take more than you need.” Thinking of a bountiful life for your grandkids was around long before trust funds were developed. A “Great Law of the Iroquois” was to think and make decisions for those who will be around in Seven Generations. Imagine thinking that the decision you make today will impact your progeny in 140 years. Imagine if our ancestors from polluted towns like Pittsburgh in 1880 had thought about the consequences of burning fossil fuels and what effects it might have on the world of their progeny in Honeoye Falls today.

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The next best time is now. There are still tall trees along a section of the Pennsylvania Turnpike where it crosses the Susquehanna River into Cumberland County that were planted by my father while he was a teen working with the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) back in the 30’s, almost 100 years ago. He joined FDR’s “tree army” and planted trees in Pennsylvania before joining the regular army and blowing up trees in Europe. His father, my grandfather, had a farm and clown camp near where the Yellow Breeches Creek enters the river. Pop Melcher grew strawberries and future gymnastic clowns and entertained guests from his earlier days as a Coney Island Kop. In the 50’s I picked strawberries alongside the likes of Charlie Chaplin, Chester Conklin, Snub Pollard and Buster Keaton, in sight of rows of spruce and oak trees planted a generation earlier by my Dad. Thank you, Dad; and thank you FDR for the CCC’s efforts.

“Forests are the lungs of our land.” – *FDR*

Some of those trees still stand, but only on the steep hillsides where it was unprofitable to plant houses. The last crop on many farms just like ours was a housing development; another reason to support your local farm and preserve green space.



The trees my father planted were probably 18 inch bare root saplings. He didn’t directly benefit from the shade of that tree, the carbon absorbed or the oxygen it provided. It takes around twenty years for a tree to become mature enough to absorb significant amounts of carbon dioxide. The year I was born in the 50’s, an acre of those trees was absorbing twice the carbon dioxide produced by the average car at that time. Forests are a proven and effective drought preventing, flood mitigating, and carbon storing system. We need to preserve our old growth forests as well as plant a diversity of trees to create new forests to become the carbon sinks of generations to come.

Planting a Tree

“When one plants a tree they plant themselves. Every root is an anchor, over which rests with grateful interests, and becomes sufficiently calm to feel the joy of living.”

– *John Muir*

The European Union has goal of planting 3 billion trees by 2030. The World Wildlife Federation started its 1 trillion trees campaign just a few years ago. The Bonn Challenge wants to restore 350 million hectares of forest by 2030. Odonata Sanctuary, in your backyard, wants to plant 500 trees a year. The oxygen you breath could be coming from a tree planted at Odonata Sanctuary. We recently received a check from Ms. Leonard’s HFL 2nd grade class. They had a fund raiser and decided to donate the money to a local sanctuary. Along with helping to pay a vet bill for Hank the donkey and a new heat lamp for Charlotte the pig, part of those funds will be used to purchase trees from the Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District’s Conservation Tree and Shrub Program.

Continued on page 34



Embracing Ephemeral Trees

I am certainly planting trees on my property that I hope will last well into the 22nd century and beyond – various oaks, hickories, Northern Pecan, Hybrid chestnuts, Hazelnuts (which I have learned, to my surprise, can live more than 500 years). Not every tree is meant to outlive us, however. When thinking about the trees I want to plant in my regenerative project on my property, I must first consider the many trees I do not need to plant – the class of naturally vigorous trees that do not need care but do need taking care of. The trees I speak of would mostly be classified as invasive species. I prefer to call them ephemeral trees, and I must say that on the whole I welcome their presence.

Ephemeral Trees do not live long, are fast growing, and require that we live with them in a different way than we live with oak or hickory. We might even think of ephemeral trees as falling somewhere along the spectrum of annuals and perennials (in a manner of speaking). As a general rule, the fastest growing semi-invasive trees – and on my property that includes black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), box elder (*Acer negundo*), and willow (varieties in the genus *Salix*) – are the ones that require managing and harvesting. Black locust and willow grow at an almost frightening speed, and locust is notorious for its suckering habit. One nice feature of locust and willow is that their leaves cast a dappled shade that allows other things to grow under their canopy (unlike, say, the broad-leafed and highly invasive Norway maple).

There are several uses for black locust and willow trees on the homestead. In

the summertime, black locust growth – the leafed out suckers down low and leafy branches up high – provide excellent and nutritious food for goats. Locust, which is in the legume family, offers goats the same high levels of protein as alfalfa, and my goats consume it more eagerly than just about any other food on their menu. Willow branches are also excellent food for goats, with important medicinal properties to boot. If you do not have goats, then the trimmings from locust make a chop-and-drop mulch that is nitrogen rich.

Locust is an excellent fuelwood and is famously rot-resistant. Locust will season when left lying on the ground for long periods, whereas most other wood will begin to rot and degrade if not cut up and stacked right away. There is anecdotal evidence of locust fence posts that have been in the ground for more than half a century and show no signs of deterioration.

Ephemeral trees remind us that the largest and most mature-looking trees are not necessarily the oldest ones in the landscape. Willow trees put out on a lot of biomass within a very short time and can grow quite large. A locust tree can grow more than two feet a year, willows three to four feet.

Box elder can grow to huge proportions very rapidly. But as a low-density and rather soft hardwood, it is also weak structurally and easily blows down or collapses of its own weight (which is why they are not good trees to plant around your house). I must say that among my valued ephemeral trees, Box Elder is somewhat of an outlier in terms of practical use; it is not palatable fodder for animals, has negligible value as firewood, and rots quickly. It does, however, have a good deal of ecological value as hosts for birds and insects (including, of course, the ubiquitous box elder bug)!

Cycling and Sequestering Carbon at Home

One obvious use of trees is as a source of heat and energy. Trees long ago arrived at an elegant low-tech solution to the problem of long-term solar energy storage. The ash dieback in the eastern regions of North America has certainly produced a windfall of firewood. The surplus of dead and dying trees, all of it to be harvested on a tight schedule, has undermined the usual pleasures of scavenging and selecting fuelwood. Ash firewood improves with seasoning, even though it can be burned soon after harvesting. But like all firewood, ash will begin to degrade after a certain number of years even when kept under ideal conditions (well-ventilated and up off the ground). There is a lot of ash firewood now, to be sure. But I still think about where our firewood will come from ten or twenty years from now. Proper woodland management depends on a diversity of species, as well as differences in lifespans and time scales. In woodlot management, planning for the future means thinking in time scales of decades and quarter and half centuries.

The gold standard for high BTU's is oak, a slow burning firewood that checks off just about all the boxes in terms of home heating needs (although oak requires 2-3 years of drying out and therefore a good deal of patience). The problem with oak is that it is slow growing and long-lived and provides ecosystem services that are unequalled by any other tree species. For many reasons, then, they are better left standing to live out their long lives. The same could be said about hickories, which do not even begin to produce hickory nuts until they have matured to about 40 years.

Continued on page 31



Swing Seat — Based on a 1905 Arts and Crafts Design

Swing Seat

In the beginning months of 2021, I had been trying to figure out a wedding gift to make for my son and lovely future daughter-in-law. Having visited their new house in North Carolina the previous year, I thought something that they could enjoy in their backyard or nice covered patio would be the ticket. Hmm, picnic table, Adirondack chairs, barbecue station? A bit unimaginative. What's a woodworker to do? Maybe stepping back a century would help.



Art and Crafts 1880 to 1920

The Arts and Crafts movement began in the mid-19th century in Britain. It was a reaction to the rapidly advancing Industrial Revolution and the ornate, excessive styles of the Victorian era. During this period, products that had been traditionally made by local craftsmen or in the home were disappearing and being replaced by gaudy, cheaply made, factory produced items. This rapid shift to consumerism left many unsettled.

Some of you may be familiar with Arts and Crafts furniture from this period. The most famous creators and purveyors of the style is, of course, the Stickley Furniture company, founded and headquartered in the Syracuse area. While you may be familiar with the furniture style you may not be aware of the fascinating history of the company's founder Gustav Stickley.

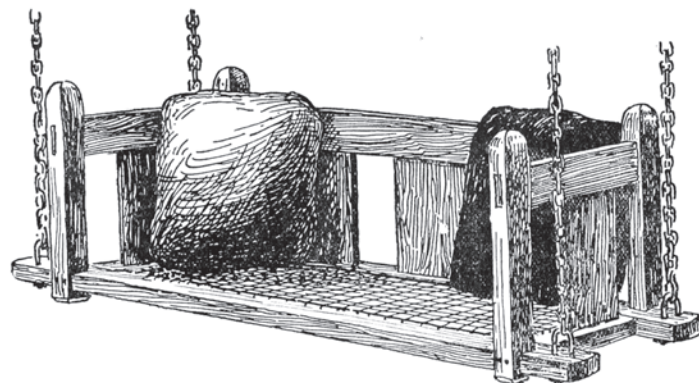
In addition to running his successful furniture company, in 1902 Stickley started a magazine called *The Craftsman*. In its pages were a variety of articles on arts and creative pursuits that encouraged readers to push back against the encroaching tide of mass production. Instead, readers would be inspired to create and appreciate art and well-crafted items with simpler aesthetics. In the words of one of the founders of the Arts and Crafts movement, William Morris: "Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful." This would very much be the ethos of the publication in the years to come.

Having grown to appreciate and admire the Arts and Crafts style over the years, I decided to review the historical record (i.e. Google) for some piece that might fit the bill for the rapidly approaching wedding day. Coming across the archives for *The Craftsman*, I focused in on a series of articles titled: "Home Training in Cabinet Work". Finally, in the November 1905 issue, I came across this:

HOME TRAINING IN CABINET WORK. PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF STRUCTURAL WOOD WORKINGS: EIGHTH OF THE SERIES

SWING SEAT

A swing seat made on the lines of this one is a very simple piece to construct. The posts are halved into the seat rails and fastened with two dowel pins. The back and end slats are tenoned into the seat rails and the seat itself is made comfortable by weaving in a bottom of cane. This will stand the weather, and if the swing were used on an exposed porch there would be no fear of warping as in a broad wood seat. Use oak or chestnut fumed brown for the wood with wrought iron chains.



On first sight, I knew this was a gift worthy of the occasion.
But could I get it built in time?

The mighty white oak – May 2018

In 2017 our neighbors, Jim and Bonnie, had generously offered some logs from a large white oak tree they had taken down. In the spring, I repaid their generosity by arranging for a wood splitting party and getting Jim, his friend and some of my gullible family members to spend a morning swinging sledgehammers. A good time was had by all in my estimation. And, no extremities were damaged in the process. By lunchtime there were some nice splits of white oak waiting to be lumbered up into boards to air dry.



A relaxing day at the lumber yard with a friend of Jim's taking a swing.



Quartersawn white oak: note the growth rings are almost perpendicular to the board face. Observe the pronounced patterns of the ray flecks.



Plain sawn oak: note the growth ring direction and no ray flecks on the face.

Preparing the wood – March 2021

One of the hallmarks of Arts and Crafts furniture is the unique and beautiful grain patterns that white oak exhibits. When oak is quartersawn, the rays that radiate from the center of the tree appear as beautiful fleck patterns. When boards are plain sawn, a more typical grain pattern will show with none of the ray flecks. Most lumber is not quartersawn, as the lumber yield is less and it is a bit more involved milling process. However, to be truly an Arts and Crafts piece, quartersawn lumber should be used.

Anyone who has experienced a wooden door or drawer sticking during the more humid months has witnessed wood expansion. Wood can expand and contract significantly with changes in humidity and this is an important factor when designing and building with wood. Wood that has been dried and stored outdoors will typically hold around 12% to 14% water by weight. Store it indoors for a while and the moisture content drops to around 6% to 8%. This is the level you want lumber to be at before you start working it.

In March 2021, I hauled some quartersawn white oak boards into the shop. Checking it with a moisture meter showed a moisture content of around 15%—too high. With the May 1st wedding date quickly approaching, I had to get the level down fast. I stacked the wood with spacers and placed a fan and a small space heater to blow on the stack. By the end of March, the wood was at 6%. Finally, the project was ready to get into full swing (make up your own pun if you wish).

Wood you buy from a reputable lumber shop is usually going to be good stuff. Properly dried, free of knots and generally straight. Wood you cut yourself from a neighbor's tree is probably going to have plenty of defects. So, part of the challenge is to identify enough usable wood in your pile to get what you need for the project. I would estimate that of the stack I had only about 60% was usable.

Continued on page 51



When Beans Grow on Trees

• sallyl.white11@gmail.com

Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), and the Locusts (Black Locust, *Robinia pseudoacacia*; Honey Locust, *Gleditsia triacanthos*) —Pea Family (Fabaceae)



Spring splendor: The brilliant, and abundant, flowers of eastern redbud in early May, before leaves appear, make it a highlight in the landscape. Redbud is virtually cloaked in flowers, thanks to its ability to produce flowers on older branches, and even the trunk (cauliflory).



Can you imagine a prettier sight in early spring than an Eastern Redbud tree in full bloom? Seeing its magnificent magenta flowers, I was delighted to find it here in my new backyard. Our tree met her demise in a major snowstorm of March 2018, but thanks to prolific seed production over the years, we welcomed several shrubby offspring, some already half grown.

In the tropical forests where they evolved, woody legumes are exceedingly abundant. In temperate zones, we have only a few. Of more than 150 legumes, only eight woody species are listed in New York's Flora Atlas. There's some debate as to whether they're native, but they are probably here to stay. Our conditions may, if climate change proceeds unchecked, grow more hospitable to them.

Eastern redbud is not just a pretty springtime face—it's also an intriguing tree. As a smallish understory tree, eastern redbud occurs in open woods, edges, and hedgerows. Some of its qualities are unusual in our landscape and even in its own family. Unlike many other legumes, eastern redbud has "entire" leaves, each one a single, lovely, heart-shaped piece. Until you

see that "butterfly" flower, you might not think it's in the pea family at all. More surprising, the flowers arise directly from the stem or trunk of the tree, a feature called cauliflory that is also found in tropical trees and shrubs such as cacao (which gives us chocolate), coffee, figs, and papaya.

Cauliflory is one way plants may improve their chances of finding pollinators. Flowers are offered not at the tips of branches, but often on the branches and even lower on the trunk. This habit makes them accessible to low-flying insect pollinators, putting the nectar and pollen buffet in reach of guests that are unlikely to access high tropical canopies. Redbud attracts low fliers like carpenter bees and honeybees.

Eastern redbud is the only tree in our area that exhibits cauliflory (literally, stem-flowering). The classic butterfly-shaped, or papilionaceous, flower is characteristic of legumes in temperate regions, but in the tropics, this large, diverse family displays more variety in flower types.



Distinctive pod fruits, each holding up to ten seeds, reveal redbud's affinity to the pea or bean family. (Pods or beans are called "legumes" and, in fact, define the family.) Pods of redbud are two to four inches long, dainty compared to the robust pods of honey locust, and ripen to brown. Seeds are eaten by songbirds. The pods arise directly from the main stems rather than the new growth, as the flowers did. Early June.



The "entire" leaves of redbud are bright green and heart-shaped and appear after the flowers. Leaves are eaten by several kinds of caterpillars and, as here, carved by leafcutter bees (likely genus *Megachile*).

Beauty and the Beasts

More robust than the dainty redbuds, black locust and honey locust are overstory trees that may reach, in the latter, 100 feet in height. Black locust is smaller and sometimes considered invasive. In New York State, it is "regulated" due to its root sprouting habit, but not prohibited. (It's okay to plant, but only in your yard.) Like redbud, locusts are not universally considered native here in New York, but are native to states south and west of us. As pioneer species, they can escape and establish populations in areas where they may seem to be naturally occurring.



Flowers of black locust and honey locust are fragrant, and borne high in the canopy (here, black locust, taken in late May). The leaves are compound (composed of numerous leaflets), as is typical of most temperate legumes (e.g. clover or beans).

Fantastic Flora photographs courtesy of Hadi Soetrismo (QKALightPhotography.com) and Sally L. White, unless noted otherwise.



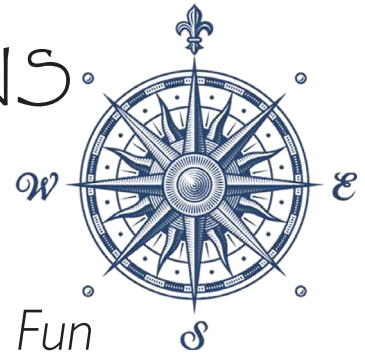
The fragrant flowers and sweet pods of honey locust come at a price. In the wild, impressive thorns protect the branches, and even the trunks, of honey locusts.

Both locusts have durable wood used for fenceposts, tool handles, and even mine timbers. Although eaten by wildlife and livestock, honey locust pods can become a nuisance in captivity, littering lawns and sidewalks when they ripen and fall. The trees are armed by formidable thorns. Now that they've been tamed by plant breeders, honey locusts make wonderful street trees or decorative accents in home landscapes. Your local nursery can likely provide thornless varieties as well as trees that don't produce those messy pods, making these variants popular in more urban settings.

Eastern redbud is earliest to flower of the three species, and perhaps most spectacular, bringing its bright pink touch of spring to our landscapes when other trees are still somber. Keep an eye out for it as you travel the roadsides this spring—I can't wait to spot more locations for this charming tree. 🌸

INSPIRING EXCURSIONS

BILL WATERHOUSE



The Wonders (and Challenges) of Spring Hiking – *Mud is Just Part of the Fun*

Has it happened yet? Have you gone outside one day with snow still on the ground but the smell of spring in the air? I certainly hope so!

The trails are snow-laden as I write in early February. Two storms placed more than a few inches of fluffy white across our region and has me pondering what might be happening by the time you're reading this in early spring. What animals scurrying under that insulating blanket are now feeling sunshine, what buried seed, cone or fungi is now cracking its winter shell, and what patient flower bulb is now pushing up through the leaf litter?



Relaxing on the Greenway in Letchworth.

Spring is when many people think of heading outside more. My partner Sonni and I have been fortunate to have explored Letchworth State Park throughout winter. When we arrived in Dansville three years ago, we had the idea of starting an outfitter business. We both had “indoor” jobs in the past and we were looking to do something that would keep us hiking, healthy, and outdoors. Upstate New York is full of great trails and hidden waterfalls, so we took the plunge and started Trail Otter in Leicester, minutes from Letchworth State Park. We have no regrets, as it's been so rewarding meeting other hikers, backpackers, and area explorers. We are truly fortunate to have such adventurous people in this area.

We realize that not everyone has the confidence or experience to get out there alone so we have focused on programs to help transition new hikers outside and to help more experienced hikers build additional skills. Our goal is to inspire others, as we have been inspired by those before us. One way we have inspired people this winter is with a *Hike Letchworth Winter 50 Challenge*. This winter-only event challenged participants to hike 50 miles during the winter calendar season on any of the open trails inside Letchworth State Park. We also hosted free Sunday hikes for those trying to complete the challenge. We have been impressed with the number of participants and they have been a source of camaraderie and inspiration for attaining our personal goals.

Inspired by the initial responses to our recent outings, we are creating three new challenges. *Letchworth's Hiked 'Em All Challenge* will motivate hikers to traverse all 28 trails in the park, and the Genesee Valley Greenway State Park will have two challenges, one for hikers and another for bicyclists. Each of these challenges will allow you to get outside and experience the upcoming woodland rebirth.

Although it's now easy to watch anything on YouTube, we find it much more enjoyable to experience springtime in the woods in person. We understand that getting out of the house and going hiking can be daunting, especially if you've never experienced this. Spring can bring variable conditions, with snow changing to spring mud. But choosing to disconnect from the artificial internet and experience the very real sun, soil and smells of springtime can be very rewarding as long as you are prepared.

What might you want to consider when wandering out for springtime hikes?

Spring means rains, and streams can be bursting with water, sometimes unexpectedly. If you're hiking near any of our hundreds of gullies, water levels may require you to ford across streams. This can get very tricky and potentially dangerous, especially if the water is high and flowing quickly. Always use your best judgment and err on the side of safety. If you do decide to cross, one trick we use for keeping our feet dry is to put your feet and socks inside bread bags. Your feet may perspire a little more but they will be much drier than your boots, especially if water goes over the top of them.

Microspikes may be the best item to keep in your backpack for spring conditions. Icy mornings are not uncommon and having super-grippers for your feet with you could mean the difference between confidence and panic, especially if you're walking a very strong dog. Carry them until there is no chance of overnight ground ice.



Springtime hiking pleasures include an abundance of sunshine, as seen on this trail to the Sonyea Waterfall, and woodland blooms, such as trilliums.

If there isn't ice, you can almost bet there will be mud in early spring. Anyone who has hiked the east side of Letchworth in springtime can attest to very swampy conditions. One person walking along a trail won't make much of a mess, but high traffic will soon turn a wet spot into a mucky boot swallowing slip and slide. We try to avoid wet and muddy trails until the ground frost has disappeared and we're walking on soil instead of mud. There's debate around whether one should walk through the mud or around the mud. Most experts recommend that you walk through the mud. I would agree, unless you're not sure how deep the mud may be. Unfortunately, bread bags won't keep mud from oozing over your boot tops, and cleanup, well, that's another story. There are many Letchworth trails that allow for spring season outing without going knee deep in muck. Stop into Trail Otter and we can provide you with a map of the drier trails.

Continued on page 28

Excursions from p.27

Regardless of when you are heading out, always carry the 10 Essentials:

- **Navigation:** Bring a compass (and possibly a GPS) and understand how to use them
- **Insulation / Rain Gear:** Winter gear in cold weather, waterproof gear any time of year
- **Light Source:** Bring a headlamp/flashlight, and don't forget extra batteries
- **First Aid Kit:** Make your own or purchase a pre-made kit
- **Emergency Kit:** Place whistle and knife / multi-tool in your pocket, duct tape
- **Fire Starter:** Waterproof matches, fire starters, and a lighter (we wrap it with our duct tape)
- **Nutrition:** Bring high protein and high calorie foods, and pack extra just in case
- **Water:** Figure on 2 liters per person per day, and/or pack a water filtration system
- **Sun & Insect Protection:** Wear sunscreen, a hat, sunglasses (even in winter), and spray for ticks & mosquitoes
- **Emergency Shelter:** Bring a space blanket or bivy sack

Source: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
dec.ny.gov/outdoor/28708.html

In addition to the above 10 Essentials, obtain a map and plan your trip before heading out on the trail. Place it in a waterproof baggie to keep it dry on the trail. State land and park maps can be obtained from dec.ny.gov and parks.ny.gov. If heading our way, we'll provide you with a free Letchworth map and gladly point you in the right direction based on your ability and time constraints.

Most importantly, tell someone where you're going and what time you'll return so they can send help if you don't arrive back by your expected time. At the very least it could save you a night in the woods, and possibly save your life.

Later sunsets and earlier sunrises provide weekday opportunities to explore trails before or after work without headlamp illumination. Warmer weather allows lighter jackets and regular boots. There are so many great benefits to spring hikes. Just don't let your guard down too much. Remember to always anticipate an unexpected night in the woods. That way if something does go wrong, you are prepared.

So, go on! Get outside! The springtime birds, emerging plants, and bursting trees await your visit. The buried squirrel nuts, maple helicopters and billions (trillions?) of seeds bursting through to sunshine. 🌱



Bloodroot in bloom
All photos courtesy of Sonja Olbert

We will be sharing trail tips and tricks with you about the wonderful worlds of hiking and backpacking in upcoming *Owl Light* issues.

If there is a topic of interest that you would like to see covered, let us know?

Email info@trailotter.com

or call us at (585) 382-5055

Better yet, stop in to see us and share your favorite outdoor adventure story (maybe it will make it into the *Owl Light*) or talk with us about your next adventure. We'd love to help!

Transience from P. 23

Are there any fast-growing, short-lived hardwoods that might substitute for oak and hickory? There are indeed. Above all, I am fascinated by black locust. It is intuitively tempting to see a straightforward correlation: to think that slow growing trees, like oaks and hickories, are energy dense fuelwood because it takes so long for them to grow and store away all that energy; whereas the fast growing trees grow fast, are not as dense, and store little energy. Fast-growing hardwoods like locust and mulberry disprove that hypothesis. Locust wood is very close to oak in terms of BTU's but grows almost as fast as willow and box elder. Go figure.

Regardless of the wood I am burning, and in spite of the easy rationale for harvesting and controlling black locust, I do confess to feeling the need to do some sort of penance for the trees I have cut down and used for the short-term benefit warming myself. I find it helpful to think about burning fuelwood in the temporal context of carbon cycling. If you burn wood, then of course the stored carbon is emitted right away as it goes up in smoke. If you let wood rot on the ground, the process is slower. If you chop the wood and place it in the soil as mulch, the rate of release is somewhere in between (though mulch on the ground melts away much faster than one might expect).

It is also important to recognize that while fast-growing ephemeral trees sequester a lot of carbon in their biomass, that carbon is also cycled back much more quickly than carbon sequestered in slower-growing trees with longer lifespans. There is something of a tradeoff and a larger balancing out.



For the past several years, I have been sequestering small but significant amounts of carbon that will remain locked up and stable for much longer periods. The making of *biochar* – essentially high-quality, pure charcoal for use as a soil amendment – is a form of carbon sequestration that can be carried out at home. There are many ways to produce large

amounts of biochar at a time: the so-called “trench method,” which is essentially a carefully monitored brush pile burn, and then there are various biochar retort designs made from 50-gallon metal drums, along with many other options you can readily find in a quick *YouTube* search.

All of these methods, however, require the burning of fuel in order to produce the heat for pyrolysis to occur. I am not comfortable with the idea of expending so much energy for

this sole purpose, in effect emitting carbon to sequester some. Sean Dembrosky, who has a popular *YouTube* channel, turned me on to a simple and more multifunctional home-scale method for making biochar over the winter in the woodstove using a stainless-steel steam pan with a tight-fitting lid (the kind used in restaurants and hotels). You simply fill the steam pan with properly sized biomass, put on a semi-tight lid, and place the pan inside a burning woodstove that has reached at least 300 degrees F. As the biomass undergoes thermal decomposition and converts to biochar in the absence of oxygen, the volatile gases that escape from around the edges of the semi-tight lid are burned and produce a significant amount of additional heat (a relatively clean burn as well).

This added heat saves additional fuelwood, and after a couple of hours you get a nice batch of good-quality biochar that you can incorporate in your soil in the Spring. And if the ancient *terra preta* biochar discovered in the Amazon Basin is any indication, the biochar you put in your soil will may remain there for over a millennium.

Continued on page 34

BEE LINES

SAM HALL

1934-2022



Queen Rearing 101 Reprinted from the May 2019 Owl Light

At this time of year as a beekeeper, it is hard to contain my excitement that, after our long winter, spring is arriving and with it those temperatures that are going to allow the bees to be out and about. They already have been out off and on as the temperatures rise to above 45 degrees, which seems to be the temp that my bees require to get out of the hive and start looking around.

This is the time to also start thinking about what you might want to accomplish in the apiary in addition to keeping your bees simply alive, though that will always be at the foremost concern. If you have more than one colony you should consider raising a few of your own queens. The queens you produce will be better than any that you can buy. They will be born in the mini-ecosystem that is your bee yard.

The Miller Method

The easiest way to raise a few queens is the old Miller method. Take a frame of undrawn foundation and cut the foundation so there is three points facing downward like

saw teeth, without the points of the teeth touching the bottom of the frame. Put this frame into the center of the colony that has your best queen, which usually will be your strongest colony. The bees will fairly quickly draw out the comb and the queen will lay eggs in the newly drawn comb. Take a look every few days to see how things are going.

At this point select another one of your other colonies to be made queenless or set up a queenless nuc. As soon as you see fresh eggs in the saw shaped comb, make either the colony or the nuc queenless for 24 hours and then put in the saw-toothed frame with the fresh eggs on it. The bees very quickly realize they are queenless and will welcome the frame with fresh eggs. In about a week or less the bees will have built three or more queen cells along the edges of the saw like teeth comb.



A lovely queen cell.

Continued on page 44

In Memoriam – Samuel M. Hall

It is with sadness that we share news of the passing of one of our long time *Owl Light* contributors, Sam Hall. Sam, an avid beekeeper who shared his love and knowledge of bees widely and generously, offered us his first “Bee Lines” column beginning in 2017—soon after we started publishing *Owl Light*—and into 2022. He will be greatly missed by all, and our thoughts are with his family and many, many friends as they “tell the bees,” and celebrate his life and many contributions!

I first met Sam many years ago at beekeeping events that I attended as a “newbee” beekeeper. After moving to Canadice, with my colonies, I would encounter Sam at meetings of the Ontario Finger Lakes Beekeepers—held in the auditorium of the Canandaigua VA—or at Patty’s Place and Dalai Java’s in Canandaigua (always actively engaged in conversation with a coterie of friends). As I am sure is true of anyone who had the pleasure of speaking with him, our conversations were always delightful. He was so knowledgeable and offered so much to anyone he encountered. He had a way with people that carried over into everything he did.

Sam also had a way with bees. He shared his reverence for these creatures (and all living things) in his column, “Bee Lines.” A lifelong learner, he often shared observations about the life of his bees that offered him—and readers—new avenues for exploration. He also shared his perpetual amazement with these small creatures:

“Not sure why even though I have been associated with honey bees periodically since I was a child on a farm in Allegany County, I still am filled with awe and wonder when I pull a frame of bees out of their hive. Perhaps they show me what humanity could be.”

Although I never visited Sam’s apiary (a regret for sure), I learned much from him through our conversations, in “Bee Lines,” and from his engaging bee club write ups. Every time I placed one of his articles, his gentle and generous character and love of bees (of all living things) was evident and reminded me to pause in the moment, to always remain open to learning new things—and to spend more time with the bees. 🐝

D.E. Bentley, Editor

SAMUEL M. HALL

June 4, 1934 - February 3, 2022

Canandaigua – Samuel M. Hall, age 87, passed away on February 3, 2022. He is survived by four daughters, Becky (David) Spanagel, Lisa (Lori) Gnau, Laura (Michael) Colcord and Lindsey (Greg) Meeker; nine grandchildren, Alan, Andy and Angela Noviasky, Paul Spanagel, Max and Lex Colcord, Cameron Newhook, Teaghan and Anouk Meeker; sister-in-law, Edith Zimmerman; niece, Nancy Fellom; nephew, David Fellom; cousins and extended family members. He was predeceased by his wife, Helen Hall in 2014.

Born in the middle of the Great Depression in Allegany County, the part of New York's Southern Tier that he always referred to as "Appalachia," Sam was the youngest child of a farming family. He began his education in Wiscoy's one-room schoolhouse. Both he and his future life partner Helen attended that school together, just one grade apart.

As a navigator in the U.S. Air Force Sam was sent to Texas for training. Then he and his bride spent several years at American bases around the Pacific. After his military service, Sam returned to western New York to pursue his vocation in earnest, studying law at the University of Buffalo. Upon passing the bar in 1962, Sam devoted his long career as an attorney to making "The Law" work for his clients. Sam believed with all his heart that lawyers should also help improve society through their advocacy of people's needs while enacting justice, highlighting concerns, and pointing out necessary political and systemic changes.

Moving his young family to Canandaigua in the mid-1960s, Sam rapidly became a pillar of the community in many ways, including several decades of committed involvement in the First United Methodist Church. He also spearheaded a transformation in local politics while serving as Chairman of the Democratic Party's City Committee through the late 1970s, inaugurating power shifts that culminated in the election of Canandaigua's first woman mayor. Sam later helped to set the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canandaigua on a firmer footing in the early years of the 21st century.

Despite his impressive professional and civic accomplishments, Sam would protest that he had never been a distinguished student. His voracious appetite for reading and his skill as an attentive, friendly, and curious conversationalist more than made up for these alleged scholarly deficiencies. Gregarious and kind, upright, honorable, and ever-caring, Sam's mind was equipped with a double-edged razor capable of deploying both wit and humor with equal sharpness. Sometimes for fun, Sam liked to test the credulity of his close friends and family by making provocative or even outrageous assertions, stretching the truth just to see when a person would dare to challenge his veracity. Far beyond that playful kind of occasional intellectual jousting, however, Sam was universally known for his extraordinary spirit of generosity towards the families of friends and strangers alike.

In mid-life Sam reconnected with elements of his rural childhood after purchasing a piece of land in Gorham where he planned to start an orchard of fruit trees. This little farming side project blossomed into Sam's avocation as he became one of New York State's leading experts and promoters of beekeeping. Turning his full attention to the plight of pollinators helped Sam to become an influential educator. He loved to share everything from practical tips for relocating an unwelcome swarm, to research on techniques for breeding and establishing disease-resistant Queens. Although the pandemic curtailed his sociability, Sam continued as a regular morning patron at the Dalai Java coffee shop, and he could also be seen walking several miles every day in the company of a devoted canine companion. Sam will be deeply missed by all who knew him, but his legacy lives on in all of us.



A graveside service with military honors was held Monday, February 21 at Gorham Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinsons Research, Attn: Donation Processing, P.O. Box 5014, Hagerstown, MD 21741. Condolences may be offered at www.johnsonkennedy.com.

"Anyone who thinks they are too small to make a difference, has never met a honey bee."

Mop from p.22

I'm hoping that the class of 2032 will come and visit the trees they planted and perhaps even bring their grandchildren in 60 years to breathe in the oxygen and experience the shinrin-yoku they helped create.

"Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago." – Warren Buffett

shinrin-yoku

In 1982, the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries created the term shinrin-yoku, which translates to "forest bathing" or "absorbing the forest atmosphere." The practice encourages people to simply spend time in nature — no actual bathing required.

"I know something about Forests. I'm raising one." – SA Melcher 1995 *Nature Study Journal*

This essay is dedicated to one of my 'nature heroes' recently retired from the Ganondagan State Historic Site: Peter Jemison

Writers Time to turn the page



and share what has emerged after months ... and months of writing in isolation!

Canadice Lake Writers' Group meets the third Monday each month.

**Next Meeting April 18th, Noon-1:30 PM
in person at MacFadden's Coffee Co.
211 Main Street, Dansville, NY**

All levels/genres are welcome.

Group size will be limited to 8-10 and meetings will include active, supportive group critique of works in progress.

EMAIL editor@canadicepress.com

Transience from P. 31

Asking Too Much of Trees

I have been speaking of carbon cycling and sequestering and offsetting at the scale of the small-property homestead. At that local scale, we can make complex stewardship decisions, monitoring the results and making adjustments and, in general, holding ourselves accountable. There may be mistakes and regrets and a learning curves, but in general we can see the impact we are having. We also have an intimate awareness of our resource dependence. As Aldo Leopold famously put it: "If one has cut, split, hauled and piled his own good oak, he will remember where the heat comes from."

Far more problematic, from both an ecological and a logical point of view, are the recent claims that have been made for tree planting on a large scale as a means of atoning for our global disruption of the carbon cycle. As valuable as they are, trees have a very limited ability to serve as carbon sinks and simply cannot deal with the emitted amount of carbon we want them to sequester. Studies have shown that more than 80% of large-scale biodiversity offset sites have a high probability of failure.

Instead of pushing an acorn into the ground as symbolic atonement for our sins, the offset mentality is giving us a convenient rationale for continuing with business as usual, obscuring the fundamental difference between "net zero emissions" and the close-to-absolute zero emissions, the radical reduction in energy use, that is urgently required of a relatively small percentage of people in the so-called developed world.

To put it bluntly, the trees will not save our asses. And that is probably just as well. We already ask too much of them as it is, and for too long we have typecast them in symbolic roles within stories that have evolved far more recently than the evolutionary time span of the trees themselves. Trees, after all, have spent most of their time on Earth without swings attached to them.

An Early Spring

One of the most massive reforestation projects is currently underway near the Arctic Circle in Norway, where the tree line is rapidly advancing northward as the climate warms and the tundra thaws. The downy birch tree (*Betula pubescens*) is the most rapidly spreading pioneer species, thriving under the new conditions. As they take root, the birches create further warming in the soil and help accelerate the release of carbon and methane that have been sequestered since long before a human first planted a tree.

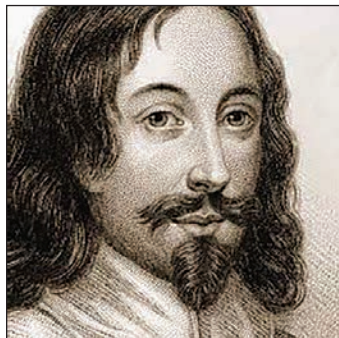
No humans planted these trees, though in a sense we have. The birches are signs of an ecosystem seriously off balance, and it is hard not to infer that we have already passed an irreversible tipping point.

These Norwegian birches multiplying like rabbits are surely a poor substitute for the millennia-old sequoia redwoods lost in recent years to intense wildfires in California.

Meanwhile, the cherries have been blossoming much earlier than usual. Last year in Kyoto, they peaked on March 26, which is the earliest recorded date in 1,209 years. There are records that do go back that far. The Japanese were pioneers in what is now called phenology, or the careful recording of seasonal events, such as blossoming periods and bird migrations and last frost dates. The ancient Sakura tradition has provided a serendipitous wealth of recorded data for tracking climate change over the past several centuries.

The notion of carbon offsets and the related goal of net-zero emissions have been compared to the logic of medieval Catholic indulgences. I wonder, though, if a more apt analogy is with Kubler-Ross's stages of grief, the third stage of which is *bargaining*. *Acceptance* is the fifth and final stage of Kubler-Ross' stages of grief. And it seems that the Japanese, as a culture, were also pioneers in the sense of arriving at that stage long ago. As an embrace of transience and impermanence, the attitude of *mono no aware* is in many ways the opposite of despair.

One of the most poetic meditations on *mono no aware* was actually penned by a Westerner, Sir Thomas Browne,



Sir Thomas Browne

whose 1658 essay *Urn Burial* was inspired by the unearthing of artifacts in an ancient Roman-era burial site in Norfolk, England. Browne was fascinated by the funerary practices of different cultures, and the essay contains long digressions on the ritual of cremation and, more generally, the uncanny process of combustion. The *Urn Burial*, incidentally, was written only a few years before John Evelyn wrote his manifesto on regenerative reforestation. It is hard to think of two contemporary writers more different from each other in temperament. Evelyn was a cheerful, pragmatic, reformer type (and a busy phenologist as well). Browne, by contrast, was the brooding type: someone we can easily imagine sitting up late by the fireplace transfixed by the embers and the coals, perhaps thinking about ancient oak trees, contemplating matter and memory and the essential unreality of both.



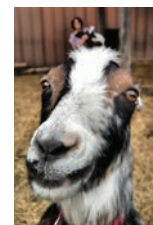
cabinet.ox.ac.uk

“If we begin to die when we live,” Browne wrote, “and long life be but a prolongation of death, our life is a sad composition; we live with death, and die not in a moment.”

This may sound at first like a morbid rumination. But the longer I live with this book and the closer I approach my own moment, the more I have come to see in these words the articulation of a healthy and life-affirming attitude. A life composed thus, lived according to this view, does not seem so sad to me. Simple sadness, moreover, fails to capture the meaning of *mono no aware*, just as it fails to describe the complex emotion that Browne was exploring.

Yes, the cherry blossoms will likely be coming early again this year as well, and it should come as no surprise if they bloom even earlier in the coming years. At least we can mark the occasion earlier and free up time for more activities. After drawing a good proper sigh, we can then rise up and get back out there to plant some more trees while we still can. Not every tree breaks dormancy at the same time. There is work to be done. In two or three decades, if all goes well, the trees we plant today might just have branches high enough for someone to hang a swing upon. 🌸

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

MARY DRAKE



Who You Were, Are, and Want to Be

Piranesi by Susanna Clarke
FANTASY, FICTION
272 pages
Bloomsbury (2020)

Perhaps, like me, you may have recently been feeling that “The world is too much with us,” as poet William Wordsworth said over two hundred years ago. And he didn’t even live during a pandemic. That’s why fantasy novels can help you escape to a place where neither microbes nor the laws of physics apply. Plus, you never know what you will find.

But that can also be one of the drawbacks of fantasy: the world it represents is so completely unfamiliar that it is hard to envision. This is the case with Susanna Clarke’s most recent fantasy novel, *Piranesi*.

Clarke made a name for herself back in 2004 when her first fantasy novel, *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*, was an unexpected success, despite being 782 pages and having 388 footnotes. The story caught popular imagination so much that it inspired a made-for-TV movie by the BBC.

But besides both books being fantasies, Clarke’s first novel and this one bear little resemblance to each other. Whereas *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* takes place in the past, this one occurs in the near future.

The main character goes by the name of Piranesi, although he suspects that isn’t his real name. (The real

Piranesi, by the way, was a talented eighteenth-century artist whose etchings of medieval prisons are so intricate that you might get lost in them, like you would get lost in a labyrinth.) The House where this Piranesi lives is similarly labyrinthine with seemingly endless Halls, Vestibules, and Passageways; some rooms are filled with clouds and streams; others, with tidal oceans. It’s described as “an infinite series of classical buildings knitted together” where there is “limitless space.” And all throughout the House there are millions of statues of animals, people, mythical creatures engaged in every type of activity: fighting, resting, working, or simply living. There’s a statue of an Angel caught on a Rose Bush; an Octopus tearing a Man apart; people being carried off by Centaurs or Satyrs; a half-reclining man with thick serpents entwined in his limbs; and a young woman carrying a beehive. It requires a stretch of imagination to envision it.

But what is even harder to imagine is how Piranesi lives and functions within the House. He must feed himself (he fishes), make his own clothes and shoes (from seaweed), and occupy himself to avoid loneliness and boredom (he observes the birds, keeps a Table of Tides, has begun a catalogue “to record the Position, Size and Subject of each Statue”). Who is this strange man who regards himself as a scientist and an explorer? How did he come to be here? More importantly, where is

everyone else? He lives almost by himself in the seemingly endless House, which he has nonetheless explored, named and organized (the Nine-Hundred-and-Sixtieth Hall to the West, the Eight-Hundred and Ninetieth Hall to the North and the Seven-Hundred-and-Sixty-Eighth Hall to the South). He doesn’t recall ever having ever left the House, yet to him it is no prison. On the contrary, the more he explores it, the greater his reverence for it. “It is my belief,” he says, “that the World (or, if you will, the House, since the two are for all practical purposes identical) wishes an Inhabitant for Itself to be a witness to its Beauty and the recipient of its Mercies.”

But Piranesi isn’t completely alone. There have been those before him, as evidenced by 13 skeletons, plus periodically he meets and talks with “the Other.” But the Other doesn’t live in the House; he comes and goes. But when he’s there, the Other only goes into two of the myriad Halls, and he has no respect for the House. The Other says that “There isn’t even anything alive. Just endless dreary rooms all the same, full of decaying figures covered with bird shit.” Plus he claims that it makes people forget who they are and go mad. Eventually Piranesi figures out that the Other is using him to explore the House in order to find the “Great and Secret Knowledge” that the Other believes is hidden somewhere within the House.

Continued on page 37

A plot emerges involving the Other, the Other's mysterious rivals, and Piranesi. When Piranesi finds inexplicable entries in his journal, he wonders if he may be forgetting things, as the Other has accused him of, and whether he might be losing his sanity. At this point, we may begin to wonder if Piranesi is an unreliable narrator? Can we trust what he says? Is something else going on?

This book reads like a jigsaw puzzle. After you have assembled the border on the outside and gotten a sense of the House and the characters, then you have to put together the picture and figure out the plot. That's when it becomes suspenseful, watching the picture come into view. Piranesi is very intriguing and satisfying read if you can get past the slow, strange beginning. By the end it becomes clear that Piranesi is one of the most noble characters in fiction—honest, trusting, well intentioned, kind.

Like any good novel, Clarke's story has many layers of meaning. It's more than an entertaining mystery that involves magic. It's also about the power of knowledge and the lengths ambitious people will go to get that power.



The Book of Form and Emptiness

by Ruth Ozeki

FICTION, MAGICAL REALISM,
COMING OF AGE

560 pages

Penguin Random House (2021)

You may think *The Book of Form and Emptiness* has an interesting title, or maybe you don't. Which does the book have, "form" or "emptiness"? Is it there or not there? It's like a Zen koan, a "paradoxical anecdote or riddle, used . . . to demonstrate the inadequacy of logical reasoning to provoke enlightenment." In

other words, there's no real answer to a koan. The riddle can have two answers, but no solution. The "Book" in *The Book of Form and Emptiness* is both a character, who comments, explains, and offers guidance, and it is not a character, not literally there.

The novel has two main characters, Benny, a 13-year-old boy, and Annabelle, his mother. The story opens with them both reeling from the death of Kenji, the father/husband, a Japanese-American jazz musician who suffered an ignominious death after passing out from drink and drugs in the alley behind his house and subsequently being run over by a truck carrying chickens.

Things go downhill from there.

Annabelle gains weight, begins hoarding, and is eventually threatened with the loss of her job, her house, and maybe even her son. There is great irony and symbolism in Annabelle's hoarding, because she is inundated with "things," and Benny suddenly can't tolerate being around them. He begins to hear the voices of inanimate objects complaining to him, everything from a table leg to scissors to a piece of wilted lettuce protest loudly over their plight, how they're treated, what they'd really like to be doing. (The scissors tell him they'd really like to stab someone. You can see why this is a problem.)

Thrown into the mix are highly idiosyncratic characters, like the beautiful but troubled Alice, a drug addict/performance artist that Benny falls in love with when they meet in a psych ward; an alcoholic, hobo, poet from Slovenia who counsels the young people: and Aiken, a former fashion writer turned Zen Buddhist nun in Japan who authors a book called "Tidy Magic" that keeps following Annabelle around, from the time it falls into her cart at the store to the many times it mysteriously appears in whatever room

of the house Annabelle happens to be in. It's trying to give her a message.

From all the novel's references to Zen Buddhism, it comes as no surprise to learn that Ruth Ozeki, the author, was ordained as a Zen Buddhist priest in 2010. The novel has a message: no matter how confused and troubled, we can all find enlightenment, although sometimes we will have to suffer in this world. The book doesn't have a happily-ever-after ending, but the characters do learn how to cope, and they remember to be loving to one another.

And what happens to the Book? Well, the Book is all about Benny's life. The hobo tells Benny, "God is a story. . . . I believe in stories, and God knows this. Stories are real, my boy. They matter. If you lose your belief in your story, you vill[sic] lose yourself." Benny does not stop believing in himself or his Book. But the chapters sprinkled throughout the novel in which the Book speaks can be somewhat distracting; they take the reader outside the story as the Book comments on what's happening. It is Ozeki's mouthpiece for much of the Zen philosophy, and she also anthropomorphizes the Book, giving it human characteristics. For instance, the Book tells us that books in general like to occasionally be taken down off the shelf, dusted, and perused. (One might wonder what this means for Kindles?) Zen philosophy, like Native American traditions or Nature religions, invest everything in the world, including inanimate objects, with a spirit. Part of human life is caring for objects which can't care for themselves, and in this view tidying can be considered a spiritual exercise.

There is a lot to take away from this novel, but just be prepared for a long read. However, as the snow piles up outside, you might just want to settle before a cozy fire and dig in.



Continued on page 38

Reader from p.37

Keep Sharp: Build a Better Brain at Any Age

by Dr. Sanjay Gupta
NON-FICTION, SELF HELP
336 pages
Simon & Schuster (2022)

Knowledge is powerful, but the reverse is also true: lack of knowledge can render us powerless. We spend a lifetime gaining the knowledge that helps make us who we are; the last thing we want is to lose it. For many people, losing their memories to dementia or Alzheimer's disease is one of their greatest fears about aging.

But dementia doesn't necessarily come with aging, says Dr. Sanjay Gupta, neurosurgeon and chief medical correspondent for CNN. We commonly think that our fate lies in our genes. But Dr. Gupta brings the hopeful message that "Typical age-related changes in the brain are not the same as changes that are caused by disease. The former can be slowed down and the latter can be avoided."

While there still is no cure for dementia (the medical community continues to work hard in that direction) Dr. Gupta says we can still "Keep Sharp" if we take certain steps, and the sooner we start, the better. He especially encourages young people in their twenties or thirties to get on

board since "A thirty-year-old can be on the road to Alzheimer's disease but not know it. People often don't think or worry about dementia until after they turn fifty." But we can all benefit from looking out for our brains now since, as the subtitle says, you can start "at Any Age."

Not surprisingly, the single best thing you can do for your brain (as well as your body) is exercise.

Perhaps because he's a neurosurgeon, Dr. Gupta couldn't resist beginning the book with several chapters of detailed information on how the brain works, and you might get a little bogged down in beta-amyloid plaques and neurofibrillary tangles, especially if you're eager to find out what you need to do to help prevent dementia. But it's good to learn how our brain works, since learning builds new neural pathways in the brain. And Dr. Gupta is encouraged by recent research which shows that we can continue to grow new brain cells, a process called neurogenesis, throughout our lives. So we can keep learning during our entire life and needn't consider old age as a time of mental decline. Gupta says we "can actually get sharper, can get better as you get older."

Many people do crossword puzzles to bolster their memory, and although

this is good, Gupta suggests that our brains will benefit even more if we learn something completely new. We may be reluctant to do this, especially as we get older; however, it's precisely what makes our brains more resilient, better able to handle life's stresses. And don't believe the old saying that "you can't teach an old dog new tricks."

Not surprisingly, the single best thing you can do for your brain (as well as your body) is exercise. "Our brains can be extraordinarily selfish and demanding," Gupta says. "Of the total blood and oxygen that is produced in our bodies, the brain steals 20 percent of it, despite being only roughly 2.5 percent of you body weight." Therefore, aerobic activity which oxygenates the blood pumping through your body is also excellent for the brain. It helps improve the brain's "function and resiliency to disease." Since "the brain is a highly vascular organ," Dr. Gupta says there is a direct correlation between what is good for the heart and what is good for the brain.

There's really nothing new in Dr. Gupta's five pillars of brain health—Move, Discover, Relax, Nourish, and Connect—but it's good to hear all this again from someone so knowledgeable and to have it backed up by the most current brain research. If a busy doctor, journalist, and father of three can exercise five times a week and eat healthy food, then all my excuses begin to sound pretty flimsy.

☪

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Where the Path Leads is a YA novel of medieval time travel in which 13-year-old Emily enters a labyrinth at a Renaissance Faire and is magically transported to a place that resembles the Middle Ages. Trouble ensues, and Emily is forced on a quest for a magical object that may save her friend and mentor, Sophia.

Where we are in the story:

In Chapter 24, Emily and her new forest guide, Annamund, can't seem to stop getting on each other's nerves. The situation is only made worse by the appearance of Arthur Longsword, the Baron's second son, whom they are both attracted to.

The story continues online with new chapters each month.

Chapter 25 – From Stolen Heart

The Baron's son Arthur has left his home in disgust after discovering his mother's infidelity. Emily and Annamund have begun to argue over everything, including him, until Emily discovers that there's a physical reason for their disagreements.

Chapter 26 –The Gigelorum

Sophia appears in a vision explaining what Emily needs to do to end her arguing with Annamund, but Emily's not sure if she can stomach the cure. Meanwhile, as they near the withered area surrounding the cypress tree, she is haunted by spirits who convincingly express the same doubts she is feeling.

Chapter 27– Shadow Wights

In Chapter 25: Being very near the goal of her quest, Emily is warned that she will have to confront a dragon and she is advised to turn around. Her rational self scoffs at the thought of a mythical creature, but when she finally arrives, what she finds is beyond her wildest imaginings.

Monthly installments online.

If you are just joining us, you can begin your journey at: owlightnews.com/where-the-path-leads-chapter-1



Fred the Stupid Fly

By William Gentry

William Gentry is a 10-year-old kid who doodles. A LOT. He likes playing games, reading, and of course, drawing. He mostly likes drawing because he also likes viewing it. He loves reading comic strips and graphic novels. And, trust me, he has a 17th favorite comic strip (no joke!) He lives with his mother and father (of course), and is really happy to be submitting a comic strip to this newspaper.

They Call Me Mother Street

MICHAEL GIGADET

Ever'body calls me Mother, even them who ain't no kin to me. I's born Sadie over in the Meade's Chapel community and married into the Street family back when Mr. Harding was running the country a'fore he up and died mighty odd-like accordin' to some. Ne'er had no children myself, but them Streets a' big family, and I raised a good bit of 'em includin' Mr. Street's passel, so they just took to callin' me Mother. All of 'em's farmers here 'bout.

I'm not one to go braggin' 'bout 'em all comin' to my house after church Sundays for dinner, but they do. Always have, and I 'xpect they always will. It's my cookin' which I learnt from Mama Pose who was not my mother. She was Mr. Street's mother what lived with us until she died back when Mr. Truman was runnin' things. Ever'body 'round here called her Mama Pose even them no kin to us. That's the kind'a people we are out here.

Whatever you're a cookin', Mama Pose put bacon grease or buttermilk in it. You wouldn't put grease in a cake or a biscuit, just buttermilk. Grease goes in your squash and your beans, such as that.

I can't tolerate buttermilk to drink it, never could abide it. Mr. Street crumbles cornbread in his'n 'though I can't imagine why you'd want to make it harder to swallow. I serve it at the table ever' Sunday for them that's partial to it; I drink sweet tea myself.

Ever'time I see a carton of buttermilk I think of poor Linda Lou Veach. Bless her heart. Gettin' yourself cremated and buried in a milk carton.

We had words 'bout it agin this past Sunday dinner. My sister Earline said she heard it was a milk jug. No

sir I said, Reba Lee, that's the Veach's youngest girl, told me plainly it was a milk carton. It were my feelin' if it had been a milk jug the troubles might ne'er started.

"Well people just don't buy milk in cartons these days," Sister says. "Ever'thin's plastic."

Well, buttermilk comes in cartons, I tell her, and ever'body knows how Frank Earl, that's Reba Lee's husband, drinks that sour milk 'count of his stomach. So it makes perfect good sense to me that Reba Lee would have a buttermilk carton to bury her momma in.

Now Uncle Bud's got to join in. That's my husband's brother who ain't my uncle; we just call him that. He says, "Seein' how Linda Lou abandoned them babies and took to high livin' in California, she's lucky she got buried a'tall."

Mrs. Veach come back home just long enough to die, you see.

Them kids refused to claim her body down at the county, and I declare, the county up and cremated her and sent 'em a bill. Then the county called Reba Lee and said they had Linda Lou down there in a paper bag and she better come collect her or they'd bury her and bill 'em again.

Them kids said they ain't payin', so Reba Lee, who was never right after she got hypnotized at that school assembly show, grabbed herself a milk carton and got her mama which I'm thinkin' was the right decent thing to do, considerin'.

Reba Lee's the one raises them Yorkie dogs. Them dogs were the only thing she ever got excited about, always walkin' 'round with her eyes half closed like she just woke up...pore thing. I wondered if she was just nat-

urally that way and people just convinced her she's still hypnotized. You know how people'll do.

"Her father's side of the family was always sleepy," says Earline's son Rap "...knew all them boys in school."

Well sir, Reba Lee poured Linda Lou outta that sack and into the carton right there at the counter. I asked her why she did what she did, and she said it weren't dignified to carry your momma's ashes around in a paper bag.

Them kids weren't 'bout to pay to bury Mrs. Veach at a reg'lar cemetery so Reba Lee buried her under a willer tree on her place. Whenever the wind blowed, that willer'd wave 'round, and Frank Earl'd say, "Reba Lee! Linda Lou is waving at ya'."

I'm not one to pass judgment, but that man ain't ne'er had a lick a' sense.

The kids decided that Linda Lou's spirit wouldn't rest 'cause she's buried in a milk carton, so they bought em' a cheap urn. Still, they wouldn't pay to bury her in a cemetery after she'd run off on 'em and all.

So they buried her in Reba Lee's pet cemetery. Every dog has his own headstone with its name on there and some writing like: 'A Good Friend,' 'Gone But Not Forgotten' and 'A Friend to Me.'

Later Reba Lee bought her a concrete angel from that blind man down on the bypass. The blind man sells them wooden birdhouses, wind chimes and yard twirlers which he makes hisself 'though nobody knows how he done it being blind and all. We's all worried over him maybe cuttin' off a hand and worsenin' his situation. No one knew the blind man's name although Uncle Bud maintained he was one of them Ellises lives over near Murfreesboro.

Continued on page 41

A Look Back

KATHY GEARINGER

Kitten-Kitten



“Cats are a very mysterious kind of folk. There is always more passing in their minds than we are aware of.”

Sir Walter Scott

For anyone who has ever owned a cat as a pet, this story is for you, although I doubt if we can ever really “own” a cat; they are very independent.

Do not question their intelligence!

When I was a young girl about age twelve, I had a black and white female cat. She was very small when I got her; she would lie on her back in my arms and hold a doll bottle full of milk between her front paws.

I never thought of a good name for her so I just called her “Kitten -Kitten.”

She and I spent a lot of time in my upstairs bedroom. Instead of going downstairs to let her out, I would put her in a basket with a rope tied to the handle. She didn’t seem to mind being lowered to the ground.

After a time, I would call her. She would jump back in the basket and I would pull her back up to my bedroom!

I loved that cat!

My mom would always let us kids have a dog and a cat. She had the dog spayed, but not our female cats. We enjoyed watching them give birth and playing with the kittens, and then we would find homes for them.

When Kitten-Kitten got pregnant by a long-haired neighborhood black cat, I was especially excited anticipating her babies. But when she was close to giving birth she disappeared. I called and called, and searched the area, asking people if they had seen her.

I never found her and still wonder what happened to her.

So ends the story of Kitten- Kitten.

Johnny Cake

When I was growing up in Mansfield, Pennsylvania in the 50s and 60s, my mom would put the roast and potatoes in the oven on Sunday mornings, before we left for church.

The house smelled so good when we arrived home.

My grandmother lived with us, so there were seven of us gathered around the table: my parents, two older sisters,

one younger brother, and me and my grandma.

It was a nice filling meal, so our tradition was to have apples and popcorn in the evening while watching TV. If we didn’t have a roast on Sunday, my mom would make leftovers. If we had a ham during the week, she would cut it into chunks, make white sauce, and we would have it served over slices of corn muffins, which we called Johnny Cake.

The meal I always dreaded was egg-plant, which my mom would dip in eggs and breadcrumbs. I tried to eat it, but it did something to my tongue. I couldn’t do it. I was glad we were past the stage of making me stay at the table until I finished my dinner! ❧

Kathy Gearinger is a resident of Lima, NY who likes to reflect on and share stories from her childhood.

Mother Street from p. 40

Reba Lee said the angel’s wings were lopsided, but no one would say anything to the blind man about his angels havin’ crooked wings ‘cause they’s afraid of hurtin’ his feelings.

We got to studyin’ ‘bout it Sunday and worryin’ whether the blind man was still alive or whether he got hisself run over by a truck like Uncle

Bud said, so after dinner we drove over there a’lookin’ for him. We sent Rap in to spy about, and the blind man sold him a goose wind twirler with wings that rotate like windmills, and him not havin’ two nickels to rub together.

And that there’s ‘nother reason I don’t drink buttermilk. ❧

Michael Gigandet is a lawyer living on a farm in middle Tennessee. He has been published by the *Dead Mule School of Southern Literature*, *Reedsy*, *Spelk Fiction*, *OrangeBlushZine*, and *Potato Soup Journal*. He has published stories in collections by *Palm Sized Press*, *Pure Slush*, and *Down In The Dirt*.

CRAFTING YOUR OWN CUISINE

EILEEN PERKINS

Mexican Black Bean and Rice Salad

(Yields about four vegetarian meal salads. Also makes a great side accompaniment for Chicken, Shrimp, Pork and Fish.)

This dish was a year round favorite in our cafe for over six years. Containing many flavors, it utilizes pantry staples of rice and black beans (perhaps in plentiful supply, these days!), and makes a light, satisfying, Spring meal, all on its own. It also is a good buffet offering, sure to please vegetarians and meat eaters alike.



Gently mix together in a bowl:

- 1-2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups bell pepper, assorted colors, diced
- ½ - 1 cup onion, minced
- ¼ - ½ cup scallion and/or cilantro, chopped
- 1 ½ tsp salt (more to taste)
- ¼-½ tsp cayenne pepper flakes
- 2 cups cooked rice (brown or white), cooled
- 2 cups cooked dried black beans (16 oz. can), rinsed & well drained
- 1 cup cumin dressing

Chill until cold, then arrange mixture on romaine lettuce. Offer grated mild cheddar cheese for topping, along with additional dressing. This salad also makes a great wrap filling, and is delicious with corn and fresh tomatoes, so keep the recipe handy for summer time garden bounty!

Cumin Dressing

- 1 Tbsp (heaping) ground cumin seed, lightly toasted in a dry pan until brown and just starting to become fragrant. (Stir and watch carefully, since it burns quickly. Toss in trash and begin again if over cooked, as overcooking ruins the dressing's flavor.)
- ¼ cup + 2 tsp lemon juice
- ¼ cup tamari or good quality soy sauce
- ¾ tsp salt (more to taste)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced if not using blender or food processor
- 2 cups canola or other neutral flavored oil

Using a bowl and whisk, blender or food processor, thoroughly combine all ingredients except oil. Slowly dribble in oil, mixing in completely. Shake dressing well before serving.



Cuminum cyminum – Franz Eugen Köhler, Köhler's Medizinal -Pflanzen (1 January 1897)

COOKBOOK REVIEW

the DEFINED DISH

HEALTHY AND WHOLESOME WEEKNIGHT RECIPES

by Alex Snodgrass

Reviewed by EILEEN PERKINS

Springtime calls to my mind an idiom my father was fond of using, that of “turning over a new leaf”. For anyone unfamiliar with this old saying, it might be characterized as “starting to behave in a better way”, and *The Defined Dish* seems an excellent resource for moving a person in that very direction. The book is endorsed by the Whole30 * diet plan, with a forward by the plan’s co-creator, Melissa Urban. Although I am personally unfamiliar with that eating regime, I noticed that the recipes in this book are very user friendly, containing many notations and ingredients appropriate for folks seeking Paleo, Gluten-Free, Dairy-Free, and Grain-Free support. On a whole, the offering seems balanced, although many recipes do contain meat, they often (particularly in the soup section) have names that focus more on vegetables and other ingredients. Enticing and realistic photos, illustrating every single recipe, give one’s salivary glands a chance to vote on what’s to be on the menu tonight, too.

At the onset, the author recommends having on hand seven ingredients she frequently uses in the book: Ghee (think Clarified Butter), Coconut Milk, Arrowroot Starch, Tapioca Starch, Almond Flour (yay!), Coconut Aminos, and “Red Boat” Fish Sauce (brand specific, because she notes that other brands often contain sugar). This might sound like an exotic list of ingredients to some folks, who are just wading into this kind of culinary adventure, but I urge taking the plunge. This really is a short list of staples to invest in. Consider that it’s supporting a move towards a healthier relationship with food, and the discovery of new, time saving favorites. (If you tend to rely on restaurants for tasty Oriental take out, you might just save some money with this book too. See the “Better Than Takeout” chapter.) Although nearly every recipe in the book contains meat, I can actually see how, with some knowledgeable substitutions, many of the formulas might be readily converted to plant-based use. This book will also be of special value, if one is endeavoring to avoid gluten, dairy products and/or grains. Doing without ingredients in those categories is not as easy as it might sound.

Recipes that especially captured my attention included “Mongolian Beef Stir-Fry” (in 30 minutes), “Enchiladas con Carne” (in 35 minutes!), “Mexican Cabbage Soup” (in 40 minutes), “Tom Kha Gai Soup” (a Thai favorite of mine, in 30 minutes), and “Sheet Pan Halibut with Italian Salsa Verde and Asparagus” (in 30 minutes). There are also some recipes utilizing “lettuce cups” which, as a rule, I enjoy for succulent fillings. I think these qualify: “Oven-Baked Chicken Kofta Wraps” (in 60 minutes), “Salmon Satay Lettuce Cups” (in 40 minutes plus marinating time), and “Easy Ground Turkey Curry Lettuce Cups” (just 20 minutes away!). Gathering ingredients ahead of time will contribute to the success of the author’s time estimates.

The word “wholesome” in connection with the word “recipe”, perfectly applicable to the contents of this book, used to provoke imaginings of bland, uninteresting fare. “The Defined Dish” shows just how much times have changed, since the food here is only interesting and flavorful. See for yourself. Sometimes change is good. Published in 2019, this book can be borrowed from some N.Y. state Public Library systems and is easy to track down for purchase, both used and new.

**Whole30*, I have discovered, is a thirty day “elimination diet” targeted at uncovering food sensitivities and improving health through dietary reform. The author of this book states that she was motivated to try *Whole30*, and clean up her diet, because she was experiencing postpartum anxiety. The diet also has a reputation for supporting a decrease in bodily inflammation.

ONLINE FINDS: “*Chef Jana*” on *YourTube* is a must visit channel for aspiring vegans longing for familiar comfort foods. *Jana* is one creative epicurean, and I think she may have invented analog foods for most popular animal product dishes... I am inspired. A carton of plain almond yogurt is in my fridge, at this moment, waiting to be transformed into non-dairy soft cheese, thanks to *Chef Jana*. And I now eye green banana peels with an appreciation for their full potential! Check out her channel to see what I mean. 🌱

Bee Lines from p.22

Make up queenless nucs or splits for as many queens that you want to have. This method can produce easily three to five queens. The queen cells will be sealed about 8 days after the eggs have been laid. Wait until day 11 or 12 and very carefully cut the queen cells off of the comb. To me this is the part of this process that is the most difficult using the Miller method.

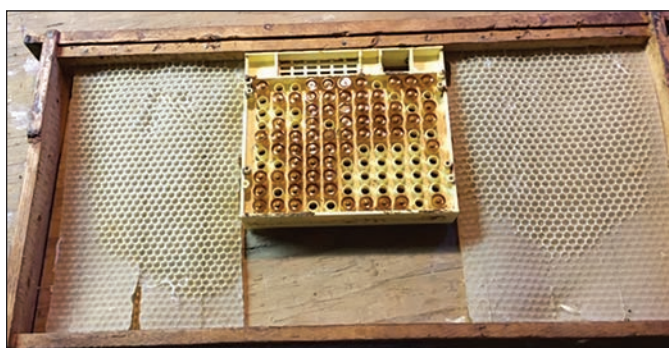
It is very easy to damage a queen cell removing it from the surrounding comb. I have tried using an Exacto knife, a surgeon's scalpel and fishing line. None really are perfect. Once a cell is even slightly damaged it is useless. If possible, have a friend help because having someone hold the frame while you remove the cells can be the difference between success and failure. Because of this part of the procedure, I no longer use this method.

Put the cells into your queenless colonies or nucs and wait for nature to complete the process of producing a mated laying queen. The queen will emerge on or about the 16th day after the egg was laid. The mating of the virgin queen occurs when she flies to a drone congregation area, which will happen a few days after she has emerged. Remember she is an insect with an ecto-skeleton, which must dry before she can fly. In a later note I will talk more extensively about the mating process, which is nature at its best to insure the survival of a species.

The beauty of the Miller method is that no special equipment is required and you don't need numerous colonies. If you have never raised queens it is a good place to start.

The Nicot box method

The Nicot box method is my preferred queen rearing system. The picture below of my Nicot box shows the box surrounded on each side by primarily drawn comb. You can get the box from any bee supply house. You then adapt your own frame for the box as shown. Plastic queen cell cups are placed on the back of the box so they are held in place by the back piece.



A queen depositing an egg in a cell.

After you have placed all of the queen cups in the box then leaving the front of the box off, place it in the colony for 24 hours so the bees can really clean it, which they will. Then place the front of the box on. It has a hole at the top so you can put the queen into the box. After you have placed the queen in the box return it to the colony and wait 24 hours then check to see if she has laid enough eggs into the queen cups for your purposes. If not, wait

another 24 hours. I have never had to wait more than 48 hours to have as many eggs as I wanted. I would never leave the queen so contained for more than 48 hours, as it will slow down the production of brood for the colony.

Now simply transfer the egg-filled queen cups into the cell holders on the holder frame as shown and place in a nuc or colony that has been queenless for at least 24 hours. The bees will draw out the elongated queen cells allowing for the lengthy abdomen of the queen as she develops. As in the Miller method, on or about the 11th or 12th day put the capped queen cells into the queenless colony or into mating nucs. If you have to leave them after the cells are capped, put cell guards over them as, if one of the queens should emerge a little early, she will sting the other queens to death in their cells.

The Nicot method has never failed to produce the queens I need. I time the emerging of the queens so it is after the summer solstice, because for reasons I do not know it appears to be true that queens emerging after the summer solstice have a better chance of making it through western New York winters.

There are numerous videos online that you can look at to ascertain which method you want to use. To me raising my own queens is one of the real moments in beekeeping. As I now am entering my 85th year [in 2019, when the piece was written], I do not understand why I am still in awe when I pull a frame of brood covered with bees out of the hive and hold it up to the sun. I think it is perhaps that at that moment I am in touch with the Universe.

Hopefully you can feel the same. 🐝

Sam Hall was a Western NY beekeeper who first worked bees as a child growing up on a "dirt farm" in Allegany County, NY. He kept bees for most of his adult life and believed that his mistakes "far outnumbered his successes." [Anyone who knew him would most likely disagree.]

PUZZLE[©]

#21



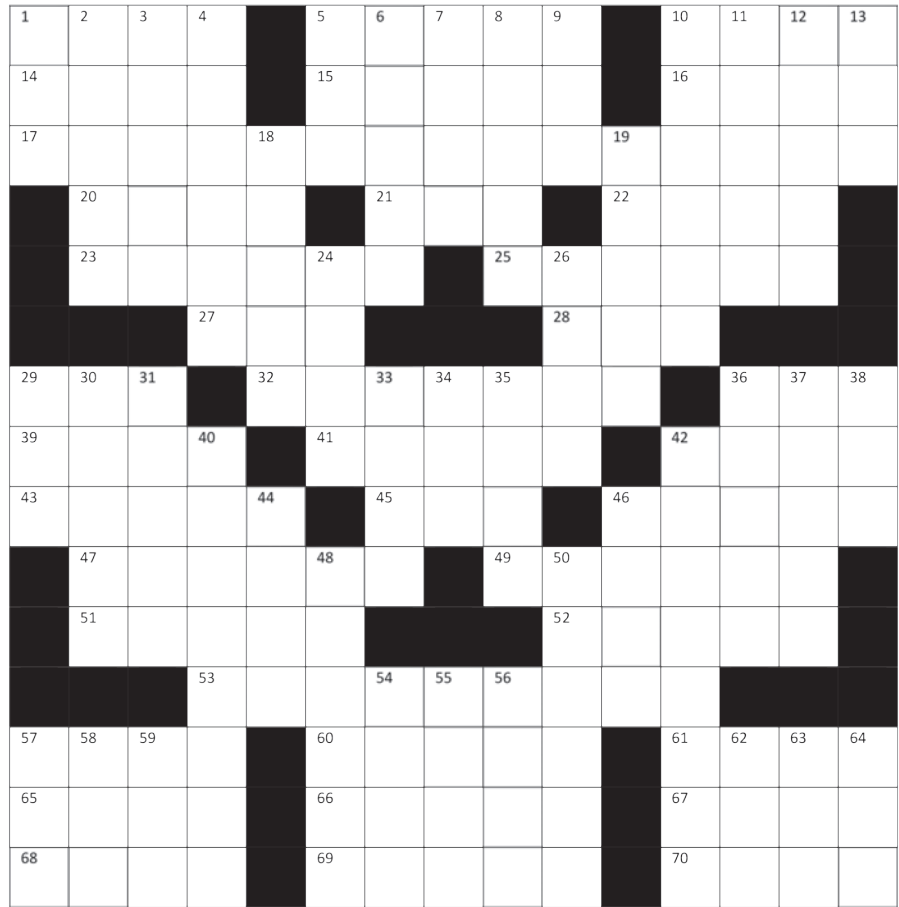
GEORGE
URICH

• gurich@frontier.com

Have a Drink!

ACROSS

- 1 What the star of “M*A*S*H” son’s initials might be
- 5 Attacks
- 10 One of six military services, Abbr.
- 14 Letter sequence
- 15 Boss of the herd, _____ male
- 16 Soda brand
- 17 Popular beer, misspelled
- 20 1954 film, _____ Window
- 21 Suffix forming nouns
- 22 Equal
- 23 With 46 Across, a summer drink
- 25 Commit to custody
- 27 Part of Old MacDonald refrain
- 28 Cap
- 29 _____ Little Teapot
- 32 A strong sweet alcoholic drink
- 36 Psychedelic drug, Abbr.
- 39 Revolution counting device
- 41 Child, _____g_____
- 42 Heap of things lying one on top of each other
- 43 School in Orangeburg, SC
- 45 Cousin in the “Addams Family”
- 46 See 23 Across
- 47 Brief period of time
- 49 Often the state in the shower
- 51 Sports venue
- 52 Mammal waste product
- 53 Whiskey and sweet vermouth
- 57 With 61 Across, popular soft drink
- 60 One playing in the string section , _____st
- 61 See 57 Across
- 65 Brave
- 66 Strong desire
- 67 Pub servings
- 68 German WWII battleship, Graf _____
- 69 What an irate bee might do
- 70 Brooklyn cagers



DOWN

- 1 One possible GI recruit assignment
- 2 In the manner of former presidential attorney, Abbr
- 3 Architect of Louvre Pyramid introducing himself
- 4 Mad
- 5 _____itat For Humanity
- 6 Drivers license, passport, SSN
- 7 Archaic spelling of the act of vomiting
- 8 German gentleman
- 9 Roof goo
- 10 Take apart a necklace
- 11 Turkish town in the Black Sea region
- 12 Combination of notes
- 13 Popular card game, _____ rummy
- 18 What hikers walk on
- 19 Two entries, Apple product _____ad and space station
- 24 Pinot _____
- 26 Remove by washing with a solvent, _____e
- 29 _____ a girl, birth announcement
- 30 _____ Mia
- 31 Treaty , _____d
- 33 Stop
- 34 Cause pain, h_____
- 35 Dines
- 36 Bedding material
- 37 Playground device
- 38 Last month of the yr.
- 40 Locally sourced
- 42 Popular drinks
- 44 _____ Horne
- 46 Scarlett’s estate
- 48 Belong to the Speaker of the House
- 50 Trip taken for pleasure
- 54 Gas line antifreeze brand
- 55 Jai _____
- 56 Care given by health care professional, _____c, by _____
- 57 Broadcast station
- 58 What you don’t want to hear during surgery, _____s
- 59 Ohio airport designation
- 62 Soccer cheer
- 63 Allow
- 64 Stupid or foolish person

RICHMOND HISTORY

A Legacy of Names

JOY LEWIS

• historian@townofrichmond.org



Families of European descent began the migration to the wilderness of western New York late in the eighteenth century. With them they brought the trappings of modern civilization: their iron pots and hand-forged plowshares; spinning wheels and looms; flatware, porcelain dishes, window glass, and stoneware jugs. They brought into the backcountry knowledge of time-honored technologies; they built wooden frame houses, grist mills, and barns. They were current on farming procedures, bringing along their sturdiest cattle, sheep, and mules. Endeavoring to graft the old ways onto the new environment, they retained their traditions, including baby-naming practices.

Among Richmond citizens of two hundred years ago there may be found five distinct naming patterns, names representing various origins and ideals: Classical, Patriotic, Dutch, Surnames, and by far the largest category, Christian. In addition to the common biblical names many modern parents still use – David, Mary, Elizabeth, Michael – there were to be found among early families such Old Testament names as Bathsheba, Barzillai, Eliphelet (a son of Israel’s King David), Perez and Peleg, Ichabod, Jemima and Kezia (daughters of Job).

The story of Ichabod, grandson of Eli the priest, may be found in the book of First Samuel. His name was bestowed upon a baby boy born in Massachusetts in 1779. As a young man Ichabod Holden made his way to western New York where he founded the settlement of Jacksonville just beyond Richmond’s western border in Livonia.

“Names are important keys to what a society values.”
David S. Slawson



Above: Grave of Ichabod Perry (1759-1839), a Revolutionary War hero buried in Allens Hill Cemetery. In Richmond, NY 200 years ago, Christian names, like Ichabod, were by far the most common.

Below: Grave of Mercy Hazen (1761-1838) in the Pitts Cemetery; her given name is an example of “attribute” names given to Puritan daughters.



Barzillai Briggs (1792-1868), named in honor of a compatriot of King David, was, in 1817, a charter member of the Richmond Baptist Church. His wife, Speedie Short, had not a biblical name, but an interesting one nonetheless. Speedie is a surname of Anglo-Saxon origin, from a root word which means “good fortune.”

New Testament names given to babies of that era included Rhoda, Dorcas, Thaddeus (an apostle), and particular friends of Saint Paul: Zenas, Erastus, Tryphena, Persis, Philemon and Onesimus. Persis Doolittle, born in 1830, was the daughter of Dr. Willard Doolittle and his first wife Emeline Barnard. She grew up, married her cousin Daniel Short, and raised five children in Richmond. Philemon Wright was the Postmaster at Richmond Mills in the 1860s.

Up until about mid-century old-fashioned Puritan names were still given to many Richmond daughters, such names as Content, Charity, Mercy, Submit, Freelove, Desire and Delight, Prudence and Patience, Silence. Submit Garlinghouse (1791-1861), it was said, made the best butter in Allen’s Hill. Boys were named Noble, Oliver (honoring Cromwell), William, and Orange – both names in honor of the Protestant king who ousted the Catholic James II in 1688.

Other Christian-themed names were popular throughout the century. Sophronia Baker (1802-1870) was born in Richmond, the youngest daughter of William Baker and his second wife Margaret Andrus. She was named for Sophronia of Cyprus, a pious woman of the third century.

Married to Isaac Green, Sophronia raised four children on a farm in Rush. Two of her sons, Isaac and David, returned to their family's roots in Richmond when grown. Ephrata, a Hebrew word meaning "fruitful," was the name given to baby Effie Guerin in 1839. Her family came from New Jersey and settled in Hemlock, where she grew to womanhood and married Alan-son Moffitt. Uriel Akin (1783-1822), named for one of the seven Archangels, was a blacksmith in Allen's Hill. He is buried in the cemetery there.

Many of Richmond's earliest settlers were named in honor of classical heroes: Leonidas, Seneca, Zoroaster, Solon, Theophilus, and Socrates. Leonidas Wilbur and Zoroaster Paul were both doctors in Richmond. Dr. Paul (1811-1869) was named in honor of a Persian mystic who lived several hundred years before the birth of Christ. He and his wife Susan had their home in Honeoye for more than a quarter century. Following Dr. Paul was Dr. Wilbur (1832-1911). Named in honor of Leonidas, the fifth century B.C. Spartan king who made a heroic stand at the Battle of Thermopylae, Dr. Wilbur was well-beloved by his patients.

Theophilus Short bore an ancient Greek name (and it might be argued, a biblical one as well, as Saint Luke addressed his two New Testament books to a certain Theophilus). Born in Massachusetts in 1771, Theo came with his parents and siblings to settle at the foot of Hemlock Lake before 1800. A few years later he purchased land in Manchester and founded the village of Shortsville. His cousin, Seneca T. Short (1829-1906), was born in Richmond. His namesake, Lucius Annaeus Seneca, was a Roman philosopher, statesman, and poet of the early first century. Solon of Athens, a sixth century B.C. Greek poet and statesman, is perhaps not as well-remembered today as Socrates, another



Grave of Heyltje Wheeler Fitch Clark (1732-1805) in the Richmond Center Cemetery, one of a handful of early settlers whose names reflected Dutch heritage.

Athenian who lived two hundred years later. Both men, however, were revered in the early 1800s, and a few baby boys of that time were named in their honor, including Socrates Hopkins (1790-1842) of Bloomfield and Solon Barnard (1844-1877) of Richmond.

Patriotic names abounded all through the nineteenth century; baby boys were named for presidents – Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison; or statesmen – Benjamin Franklin, Henry Clay, Alexander Hamilton. Baby girls were named America or Columbia.

Some people living in Richmond then had names reflecting their Dutch heritage: Cornelia/ Cornelius, Heyltje ("Alta"), Jesina ("Sinai"), Garaudus, and Rensselaer. Heyltje Wheeler was married to William Fitch. Four of their six daughters married men who were early settlers of Richmond: Abiel married Nathaniel Harmon; Margaret was the wife of Philip Reed; Jesina married Lemuel Chipman and his brother

Cyrus married youngest Fitch daughter Anna. Heyltje, twice widowed, came with her daughter Abiel to Richmond in 1795. She died May 26, 1805, and was the first person to be buried in the Richmond Center Cemetery.

It may seem odd today, but many sons, and some daughters, were given as a first name the surname of their mother or grandmother. Such local examples include Billings, Wheeler, Fitch, Walker, Pitts, and Belknap. "Orsamus" was a surname originating in Connecticut, whose roots have not been fully traced. The name, as a given name, traveled first to Vermont then to New York, where it gained in popularity. Two notable holders of the name were men of Richmond: Orsamus Turner and Orsamus Smith.

Turner (1801-1855), born in Allen's Hill, was the son of Roswell Turner and Katy Allen. In his later years he produced two important volumes: *Pioneer History of the Holland Purchase of Western New York* (1849) and *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase and Morris' Reserve* (1852). Orsamus Smith (1798-1878) was born in eastern New York; he was about ten when he came with his parents to Allen's Hill. He became an eminent Episcopal minister, serving for a number of years in Moravia, Cayuga County. On February 5, 1826, he officiated at the marriage of Mr. Millard Fillmore and Miss Abigail Powers. A quarter century later Fillmore was inaugurated the thirteenth president of the United States.

Naming trends are an interesting study, as changing patterns may be discerned through time. Our forebears, by leaving behind established communities and moving beyond known boundaries, sought to unite tradition with progress. The values and customs they brought with them to the wilderness are clearly reflected in the names they chose for their sons and daughters. ❀



EXPLORING NEW YORK'S BURIED PAST

DAVID PIERCE

The Search for Emma J. Winch (1850-1933) —Schoolteacher, Community Member, and News Correspondent— and the Winch Family Farm, Canadice, NY

Canadice Corners Cemetery

The Canadice Corners is the final resting place of Emma J. Winch. The Cemetery is located next to the Methodist Church in Canadice, NY, at the intersection of County Road 37 and Canadice Hill Road. Unlike many of the cemeteries I have visited, Canadice Corners is still an active cemetery. The passage of time, however, has worn many gravestones to the point of being illegible. The cemetery was originally managed by the Methodist Church as a churchyard cemetery. Over time, the church was unable to continue maintenance of the cemetery, and operations were transferred to a Cemetery Association, which is still operating.

With Honeoye Lake stretching out below, the rolling hillsides of Canadice surround the cemetery. The setting of Canadice Corners Cemetery gives the visitor a feeling of going back in time, to the small, white steepled churches of 18th and 19th century New England. The early inhabitants of Canadice came from various New England states to make a home and to farm the virgin, fertile farmlands of the region. Such was the experience of the Winch Family.



Winch Family Plot in Canadice Corners Cemetery
— Photo by author.

Emma J. Winch is my first cousin, three time removed. She was born in November of 1850 in Canadice, NY, the daughter of Lorenzo Winch and Abigail Jane Doolittle. Lorenzo Winch is described in his obituary as “one of the old residents of Canadice. He moved to Canadice many years ago. He was one of the most prominent citizens of the town and has a wide acquaintance.” Members of the Winch family were descended from families of the early Massachusetts settlers, including lineage to the Mayflower voyage of 1620.

Little information is known about Emma’s childhood. She was born on the Winch Farm in Canadice, and lived there nearly 75 years, until it was sold in 1924. Emma was a correspondent for the *Livonia Gazette*. In recognition of the farm remaining in the Winch Family for 96 years, the *Livonia Gazette* asked Emma to prepare this historical sketch of the family farm.



For Ninety Six Years

*This is the Length of Time the Winch Farm at Canadice
Has Been in the Family*

A Brief Historical Sketch

By Emma J. Winch

The Winch farm, or “Oak Opening”, as it is called, was so named from having been an opening in a grove of oak timber on the hill. It is situated on the hill or upper road, one and a half miles south of Canadice church. But do not imagine as some do when they get there that you have reached the highest land in the vicinity, for if you really wish to get as high as possible, you will have to travel two miles further south.

The farm lies nearly midway between Honeoye Lake on the east and Canadice on the west. The deed for the

farm calls for 144 acres more or less, and comprises several different tracts purchased from as many different people. It lies on both sides of the highway. It is well watered with plenty of material for wood, produces good crops, and has been called the most desirable farm on the hill.

That Indians roamed all over the land in earlier times is certain by the Indian relics that are found. In working on different parts of the farm, evidences are found of ancient dwellings of early settlers who have been here. A blacksmith shop stood on the road north of the present house. The first schoolhouse on the hill was built on this farm. The frame is still in use, after serving as a school house, a dwelling house, and then a shop.

Nearly a century ago, John Winch senior, Mary Thompson, his wife and two sons, Amasa aged 9 and Lorenzo 2, came from New Hampshire to New York state. John's father, Luther Winch, came soon after, making his home with his son. He now lies in Canadice cemetery. The family experienced, in common with others, all the hardships of pioneer life. After spending probably about a year on what is now the Edgar Hoagland farm, he came to Oak Opening, where the rest of his life was spent. He died at the age of 89. He was a staunch Methodist his life through. He was the second supervisor of the town, held the offices of justice of the peace and notary public and for many years was a pension agent.

The first home of the family was over the brow of the hill in the orchard near a never failing spring. He probably only lived there about a year, when he built the present frame house near the road. The house was a good one for those times and with paint and many other repairs still does good service. When his oldest son Amasa married, the father built an addition to the home and the young couple set up housekeeping in the old home, helping care for the farm.

Not long after Lorenzo followed the example of his brother and married. Then a new house was built a little south of the old home and in the new house Lorenzo and wife set up housekeeping. In time the father and the mother became too feeble to do the work of the farm and the sons carried on the work together for many years. The old people died, the mother in 1870 and the father in 1882.

Sometime before the death of the father, the sons dissolved partnership and Amasa and his family bought a farm near the church known at that time as the Austin farm. Amasa spent the remainder of his life there, dying in 1896. Lorenzo remained on the home farm and moved to the old homestead. Lorenzo remained on the home farm till his death, which occurred in 1902. For

some years before his death, he was enfeebled by age and his oldest son, Wilbur, carried on the farm and has continued to care for it till the present time. At the death of his mother, which occurred about 6 years ago, to settle up the estate Wilbur and his sister Emma purchased the farm and have remained there but they expect to leave the old home in the fall.

It might be an item of interest to some to know that all the deceased members of the John Winch family lie in Canadice cemetery with one exception, John Winch, junior, who lives in Hillsdale, Mich., where he married.



Emma J. Winch Circa 1900
— Photo Courtesy of Canadice Historian Margaret Bott

In her adult life, Emma was a school teacher and also taught Sunday School. Up until the Second World War, teachers were forbidden to marry. In fact, many teacher contracts had a clause that if the teacher were to marry, they would lose their job. As a result, Emma never married. She taught at School # 7 at Canadice Center.

Continued on page 50

Emma Winch from p. 49



Emma also taught for several years in other area schools, including District Number 8 School in Richmond, NY. In the 1890's the area of southwest Richmond, southeastern Livonia and northeastern Canadice acquired the name "Toad Hill" because of the numerous amphibians populating that area. The School became commonly known as "Toad Hill School." The official designation of District Number 8 School was forgotten and replaced in the community by "Toad Hill District."



Cut Stereoscope Card of Toad Hill School, Richmond, NY - Courtesy of Richmond Historian Joy Lewis



Top: School #7 at Canadice Center

Above: Emma J. Winch School Class early 1900's
- Images courtesy of Canadice Historian Margaret Bott

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.

Since Emma was single, and having no family, she became very active in the Canadice Church Ladies Aid, later known as the Women's Society of Christian Service.

The Ladies Aid met often at members' homes and sponsored public dinners, perhaps raising \$5.00 total which was a large sum at the time. From one end of the town to the other, many homes were opened to all, to come for dinners. The Ladies Aid group worked diligently to help with the expense of these dinners. Many activities were planned. Families opened their homes for socials. Refreshments were served. There were ice cream socials with home-made ice cream, bake sales, raffles, and fairs held throughout the years to help finance the church.

In her later years, Emma suffered from severe sciatic arthritis, thought to have been caused by an accident where she was thrown from a buggy on her way home from church.

Emma died December 13, 1933 at the age of 83. Her obituary shared that:

"The community mourns the passing Tuesday, Dec. 12, of Emma J. Winch, 83, a life-long resident of this place and a devout Christian. She was Sunday School Superintendent and teacher for many years, the latter office which she held at the time of her death. She was very active until about two weeks ago, when she was taken ill with the grip, which developed into pneumonia."

She was buried in the Winch Family plot, in the churchyard of the Church she served so faithfully, completing her journey here on Earth, now preserved as a small piece of New York's buried past. ❀

Heartwood from p.39

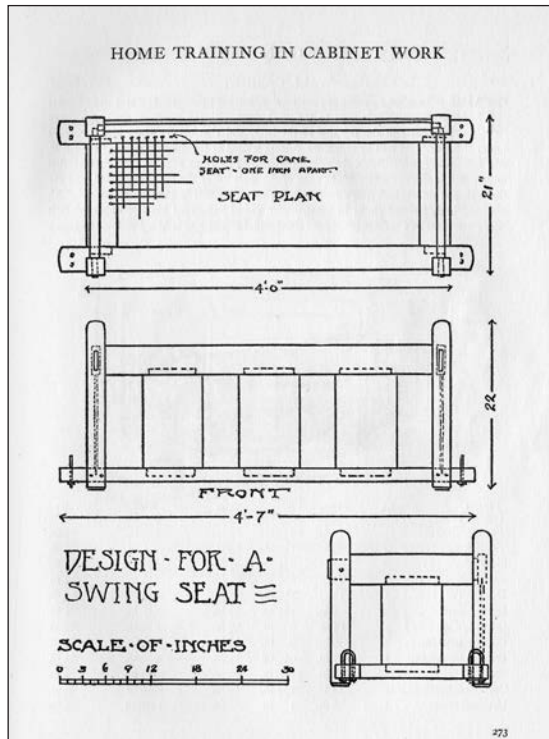
After roughly marking out the usable portions of the boards, I carefully broke them down and dimensioned them into a stack of what now looked like lumber suitable for furniture making.



Boards, flat, square and ready to turn into a swing

Construction April 21 – 28, 2021

Keep in mind, most Arts and Crafts furniture designs were meant to be makeable by a reasonably skilled amateur woodworker. The swing seat is no different and the construction was fairly straightforward. While there are a quite a few mortises and tenon joints, the use of a modern tool called a Domino joiner made fairly quick work of these.



From the November 1905 Issue of The Craftsman



Mahogany tint
An alarmingly pink hue had me worried.

Traditional Arts and Crafts pieces typically have a dark brown finish. This is not the natural color of white oak and one technique used for pieces is to darken them using ammonia fumes. I had wanted to use this somewhat complicated and not so pleasant method, but my time had run out. After some quick experiments, I settled on a finish consisting of a coat of a mahogany tint, followed by coat of golden oak stain. A couple coats of Marine Waterlox offered it some protection outside.

For special pieces, I sometimes like to add an accent or embellishment. With my carving skills being pretty limited, I wisely decided to have an engraved copper plate made to commemorate the special occasion. Twisted Willow Fabrication in Geneseo did an awesome job on a tight time frame.

Continued on back

MAKING LEMONADE

BARB STAHL



From My Family History



Remember that family history I have been writing? Well, I am now in the process of editing it and putting it in chapter order. It has been a huge job, but perhaps a side benefit is that I have uncovered topics for my “Making Lemonade” column that I am excited about. I hope you might agree with me!

Here goes.....
My great-grandfather from Naples has been occupying my thoughts recently. His name was Martin Lyon and his love was being a musician. He was even able to earn some money that way. In reading several years (1871-1933) of his diaries, I learned that in the early years he had what was called the Lyon Band that traveled, playing in several towns in Pennsylvania. He had business cards made saying “Prof. Mart Lyon.” He entered many “Fiddle Contests” and won cash prizes for his effort. He often won first prize and noted “not liking to come in second or third.” According to his diaries he also tuned pianos or repaired organs and gave fiddle lessons. He played at the Naples Town Hall, and earned some money doing so.



Martin Lyon was an accomplished fiddler and entered many “Fiddle Contests, winning cash prizes.



His occupational work was wallpapering and painting for folks in the area. In fact, I discovered that he had wallpapered the house we lived in years ago on Gulick Road. He usually had to walk to jobs, but sometimes apparently borrowed a horse or horse and buggy.

He earned about \$300 per year and in 1905 his taxes were \$4.00, rising to \$12.00 by 1925.

My great-grandfather, Martin Lyon founded the Lyon Band, that, according to his diary entries, traveled and played in several Pennsylvania towns. His musical interests often meant time away from his wife, Aurelia Ketch Lyon.

Most of his daily entries were what the temperature was, where he was working, how much he earned, and where he played his music. It was frustrating that he usually didn't comment on how he felt about things – rather, it was all pretty much “matter of fact.” And I wanted to know what he was thinking!

In his dairies I noted that he was often away from home working or playing at musical events. Therefore, his wife, Aurelia Ketch Lyon, spent a lot of time alone it appears. Recently I gave two of her quilts to the Ontario County Historical Society for their upcoming (May 27th opening) “Fibers of Our Lives: From Practical Craft to Decorative Art in Ontario County,” exhibit. I'm guessing she had lots of time to make quilts! I also believe she would be thrilled to know they became of historical significance and may be on display.

Recently, Ken Poole, wrote a book, *Naples Community Bands; a Musical History 1875-2005* (see details below). Martin was the snare drummer in the Sutton Band and the Dunton Band. In the photo below on the right, he is on the far-left edge with his snare drum. Ken has gotten many positive reactions to his book, plus from people such as myself giving him information about some of the members. He plans to write a new version to include newly discovered information. For a



All images courtesy of Barb Stahl.

small town, the music that was produced and shared in Naples is very impressive.

Both my son and I did inherit some of Martin's musical talent. My son even played guitar while marching with the Naples High School Band in the late 1970s and early 1980s. That was certainly most unusual for marching bands then. Naples was always the best place to watch your kids in a parade because you could stand on Main Street and the parade would go by -- turn around -- and come back past, so you could see both sides of them!

I played the bassoon in the 1950s in the Dansville Central High School Band and became a majorette so I could march! I never mastered twirling a baton, but I could step high in those long-ago days!

Music has, and continues to be, a very important part of my life!

Poole, Kenton, *Naples Community Bands; A Musical History 1875-2005*, Naples Historical Society, 2021. (Available for purchase from Naples Historical Society or Ontario County Historical Society.)

• Email comment to: makinglemonadeowl@gmail.com

Ontario County Historical Society Announcement

Wilma Townsend, Curator at The Ontario County Historical Society is preparing an exhibit entitled “Fibers of Our Lives: From Practical Craft to Decorative Art in Ontario County,” opening May 27th, 2022. The exhibit will look at early production and use of natural fibers (wool, flax) for making yarn, thread, and fabric, and the shift to using manufactured materials. Early spinning and weaving equipment, early sewing machines, and needlework tools and accessories will be featured, as well as the resulting practical and decorative items created: samplers, clothing, quilts, knit and crocheted items, lace, tatting, etc. The time period will span the late 18th century to about 1930. The Ontario County Arts Council will have complementary exhibits in the adjacent gallery on current artistic use of fiber.

The Historical Museum is located at 55 North Main Street, Canandaigua, NY. • www.ochs.org 585-394-4975

WARSAW WENDY

Springtime Excitement!

WENDY SCHREINER



I thought I had Audrey II from Little Shop of Horrors on my hands, as the blooms were so mammoth and amazing!

It's Thursday, December 2nd, 2021. David Ouellet's "Wonderword" in the *Buffalo News* features words like Flower, Gardening, Nursery, Outdoor, Plant, Soil, and Spring among others. The high temperature for the day was fifty. Fifty degrees in December. Was it Global Warming? Indian Summer? Or just plain Crazy? Whatever the case, I wasn't about to argue. Even the sky looked a bit brighter that day and not so grey. It was an ideal day to be writing about spring.

March 20th is the official start of spring, but some of the fun places around my neighborhood—like Yummies (the ice cream stand) here in Warsaw and the Charcoal Coral in Perry—both open their doors for the season right around St. Patrick's Day (March 17th). For me, these two openings signify the beginning of spring. My husband Dave and I, along with our two black and white shih tzu's Daisy Mae and Paisley Rae, pile into our SUV and go to these fun spots. Not sure what says "warm weather" more than ice cream does. Even if it's still cold outside on opening day, we are excited that spring and summer will be on the way! At the Charcoal Corral we order up some hotdogs and cheeseburgers and know that these "picnic" foods symbolize the fun spring and summer events to come.

In the outside garden the green grass begins to glisten with spring's raindrops. Soon, little purple crocuses appear and the daffodils pop through earth below. A little while later pretty pink and purple hyacinths show up. Their strong

fragrance scents the air. The tulips join them in their spring sunshine dance of joy. They sway back and forth in the gentle breeze waving hello to all those who pass by. I clip a few and place them in a vase, bringing inside the "Joy of Spring."



Late last summer I planted more daffodil and tulip bulbs (sixty of one kind and seventy two of the other). It will be interesting to see what blooms this spring. It was a big project, as I recall now, to go around and dig and place the bulbs in the ground. I planted around every tree that I could find. I also placed some along the neighboring fence and up our long driveway heading to the three garages. I also put a few here and there: like one on each side of the end of the ramp on our side door entrance that we rarely use and one on each corner of the outside of the dog pen.

Spring from p.48

I love flowers and I especially love springtime. I can't wait to see what will blossom new this year.

I did notice nature's animals had disturbed some of my planting of the bulbs by digging them out of the ground. When I found these uncovered bulbs, I tried to replant them. It will definitely be interesting to see how nature took its toll. The anticipation over the long winter of waiting for the new flowers to appear has helped me get through my least favorite season, winter.

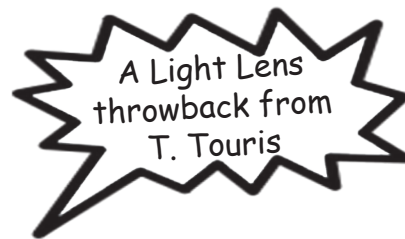
I do have my cheerful fake yellow and orange sunflowers that I see when I look out my window. They don't like the snow much either. These fake "sun-

nies" help me navigate winter, as I am not a fan of snow, cold, skiing or any part of it except perhaps hot cocoa with marshmallows.

The spring rains will arrive, and eventually real gerbera daisies will replace these fake flowers. Last year I purchased gerbera daisies at Plants & Stuff on opening day and some of these hung on all the way through October. They were so pretty. The bright pink were the biggest and survived the longest! I thought I had Audrey II from *Little Shop of Horrors* on my hands, as the blooms were so mammoth and amazing! Other colors I chose were yellow, orange, red, burgundy, light pink, and white.



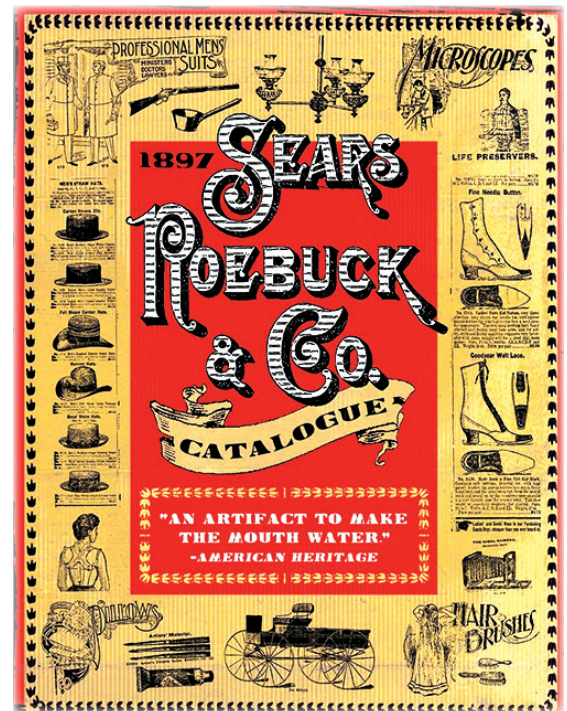
How many flowers can one garden hold? I'm sure after spring has sprung, I'll find a spot or two where I missed placing a bulb! Then I'll have to go and plant some more happiness, spreading springtime joy around some more! 🌸



Stickley's Transformation

I don't have any evidence to back it up, but I think some people such as Gustav Stickley finally had enough of the industrial revolution and the out-of-control urge of keeping up with the latest styles, fads and cheap products. His breaking point may have gone something like this:

After a long night combing through the 1897 Sear Roebuck & Co. Catalogue, Gustav placed an order for a dozen boxes of Dr. Chaise's Nerve and Brain Pills for himself and an order of Dr. Rose's French Arsenic Complexion Wafers for his wife. After the shipment arrived, he soon realized that the pills did not in fact give him "a new lease on life" as claimed, and his wife's complexion was turning an alarming shade of gray. Enraged, he spent a few hours tearing the 700-page catalogue into pieces and vowed to stop worshipping at the altar of modern corporate America and its false prophets.



Meet the Owl Light Regulars

Æsc is the "Small Town Hound—Finding Creative Venues and Adventures in NYS." He lives with his two humans, his canine companion Winnie, and Cat Stevens in Canadice, NY. When not writing, his favorite pastime is finding people. He loves hearing from his fans:

• [fb@SmallTownHoundNY](#).

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.

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](#)

Joy Lewis has served as Town of Richmond Historian since 2013. She offers reflections on the history of Richmond, NY in every issue of the *Owl Light*.

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• [historian@townofrichmond.org](#)

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 goals are to have "no child left inside."

• [fb@Odonata Sanctuary](#).

Eileen Perkins, a native of Rochester NY, 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.

David Pierce and his wife Colleen live in the Town of Canandaigua. David has enjoyed exploring local 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. 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. • [piercedave54@gmail.com](#)

Wendy Schreiner resides in Warsaw, NY with her husband Dave and two adorable shih tzus, Daisy Mae and Paisley Rae. She facilitates Warsaw's Write Connection Writing Club at the Warsaw Public Library, which is in its 11th year. Her poetry, articles and concert reviews have appeared in several newspapers and publications throughout the years.

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](#).

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. • [making-lemonadeowl@gmail.com](#)

Kurt Staudter's thirty year career working for National Grid and New England Power has given him a unique perspective on the Connecticut River. From operating the Bellows Falls Hydro Plant in the 1990s, to his job in Substation Operations & Maintenance, every day his work took him someplace along the river. He is a longtime activist and political columnist for the Vermont Standard, Kurt along with his wife Patti also ran the Vermont Brewers Association representing the growing number of craft breweries in the state for almost seven years. He has a BA degree from the National Labor College, and participated with a fellowship in the Harvard Trade Union Program. • [staudter@sover.net](#)

T. Touris is a soon-to-be-retired-computer-programmer. He spends his free time designing and working in wood on his small woodland lot in Canadice, NY.

George Urich is a retired Xerox engineer living in Canandaigua, NY. He solves and creates crossword puzzles to keep his brain active. • gurich@frontier.com

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

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.

Bill Waterhouse is the owner of Trail Otter LLC, an outdoor adventure company located in Leicester New York. A native of Dansville, he and his partner Sonni Olbert are having too much fun exploring all the nooks and crannies of area trails and waterfalls. He loves having fellow hikers and backpackers stop into Trail Otter to share trail stories and favorite places to escape civilization. Although he doesn't mind crowds, his favorite places are the rustic east side of The Grand Canyon of the East (Letchworth), the quieter western side of the Adirondacks, and The Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania (Pine Creek). He's always on the lookout for good espresso, fun folks to hang out with, and very dark beer. Email: info@trailotter.com

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Quarterly Inserts:

We also offer quarterly inserts in each issue with a theme relevant to that quarter. Ad prices vary depending on size. Please contact editor@canadicepress.com for additional information about the next quarterly theme and how you can be included.



We decided to postpone our Owl Light Live at the Park event for the time being. We will be planning some "Meet the Owl" events during the summer months (when we can be outside or venues can be a bit more open). We will post updates on fb and IG @canadicepress and through sponsoring venues (including, we hope, at the lovely "Reimagined and Renewed" Park Theater).



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Paper & Ink

have shown to be better than Screens
as published in *Scientific American* magazine
by Ferris Jabr, "Why the Brain Prefers Paper"

- Focusing on 2D screens is NOT how 3D brains work
- Transmitted light (screens) and reflective light (paper) are each processed in different regions of the visual cortex of the brain, which determine how much information is stored in long-term memory
- Screens inhibit comprehension by preventing people from intuiting and mentally mapping long texts

The OWL LIGHT News

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Solution to Owl Light Puzzle 2 I (found on page 45)

1	A	2	A	3	I	4	I	5	H	6	A	7	S	8	A	9	T	10	U	11	S	12	C	13	G				
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23	P	24	A	25	P	26	S	27	T	28	B	29	L	30	U	31	E	32	R	33	I	34	B	35	B	36	O	37	N
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Featuring ten authors—
with illustrations and cover
by Sally Gardner.

OWL LIGHT
2021 LITERARY No. 1



TURNING POINTS

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The OWL LIGHT
Q2 2022
Where Inspiration & Inquiry Converge

**On
Trees and
Transience** DERRICK GENTRY
In Fond Memory of Sam Hall

A brush pile, from a bird's point of view, is surely a poor substitute for a standing tree. P. 7

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Heartwood from p.51



The happy couple, exhibiting very little stress before their momentous day.



The final finish. A simple, carved accent. The unfinished copper nameplate will age to a nice patina. **Right:** The swing seat hung with beeswax finished iron chain. Leather pillows made by D.E. Bentley.

The wedding gift – April 30th, 2021

With the finish barely dry, we loaded up the swing seat into the back seat of our Toyota Tacoma and hit the road on April 29th. I figured that the following morning of the 30th, would be a good time to present the swing to the soon-to-be newlyweds. What more could they possibly have to do the day before the wedding they had been planning for so long?

The May 1st wedding was a beautiful celebration with family and friends. I hope the swing seat will be part of many happy occasions to come for this special couple. 🌿



Note: Issues of *The Craftsman* can be read online at: digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dll/Q5VII6GNL36H78T