



OWLLIGHT

Q4
2022

Where Inspiration & Inquiry Converge



BOG

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RAY ROPER - Ray Roper is a member of Tannersville Cranberry Bog Stewardship Committee and owner of Terratracks Photography - terratracks.photography.

Cover Image: A community of pitcher plants at Tannersville Cranberry Bog. D.E. Bentley

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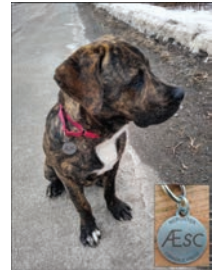
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The OWL LIGHT

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D.E. BENTLEY

Editor and Publisher

T. TOURIS

Technical Support / Morale Building

EMILY PECORA

Copy Editor

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Contact us:

Phone: 585-358-1065

Email: editor@canadicepress.com

Mail to: 5584 Canadice Lake Road, Springwater, NY 14560

Online: [f](https://www.facebook.com/canadicepress) [i](https://www.instagram.com/canadicepress) @canadicepress

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From the Editor

On Not Getting Bugged Down

I could make any number of jokes here about getting bogged down or swamped. I am often busy, by default, and slowing down enough to enjoy the places and spaces that offer the greatest opportunities for reflection, joy, and creative inspiration takes active planning. It also drives challenging changes, including our decision to end *Owl Light* with this final issue of 2022.

Our Q4 front page article touches on some of the things that I believe are most important to preserve and cherish. We live on the border of a delightful swamp which dips into our property and we have dug additional vernal pools to encourage swamp creatures to move closer to us. As I walk the shoreline of our small pond, multiple Green Frogs, *Lithobates clamitans*, leap into the pond's center where they stretch out and float most luxuriously, waiting for us to move on. We also own a section of swamp in Brockport, NY, which might inspire comments like, "If you believe *that*, I have some fantastic swamp land you just might want."

We love swamps and bogs, lakes and rivers, and meandering streams. Land acquisition is, for us, about preservation, and if I was in the millionaire/billionaire clubs, I would buy as much land (and water) as I could, before others who confuse development with progress do. Thankfully for us all (and all the species that we threaten with our oft errant and inconsiderate behaviors and greed) there are other like-minded folks who have acted by forming larger groups of like-minded folks to safeguard large parcels of land, thereby investing in the future of threatened and endangered species and offering some hope for the human species and more than "tree museum" (thanks Joni!) trees for the generations following in our soiled footsteps. Carole King—a contemporary of Joni's—brings trees front and center when she points out, in an August 25, 2022 *New York Times* Opinion Piece, that, "It Costs Nothing to Leave Our Trees as They Are." She asks President Joe Biden to take steps to stop logging operations in America's National Forests (land that belongs to us all). Let's hope that he listens and is able to bypass the quagmire of political bipartisanship to bring that small wish to fruition.

I understand that change is inevitable. I was, from an early age, cognizant of the passing of time. The older I get the more I realize the impermanence in all things. Fields I once ran through and trees I once climbed have been replaced by housing developments. Buildings that have stood for centuries have fallen into disrepair. Trains have been replaced by interstates; their tracks turned into trails. Forests



become shopping malls, and more shopping malls until they, too, fall into obsolescence. Mountains pushed into existence gradually wear to dust. Although some changes are inevitable (and welcomed) with the passing of time, there are also many obvious negative changes accelerated by us. As I spoke with the various environmentalists for this issue's feature article, I was both enlightened by their past and continuing work and saddened by how so many of our fellow humans fail to see the negative impacts on our planet, our species — and all the species we share this one world with— of our personal greed.

One of our goals in starting Canadice Press was to offer ideas and insights, to help foster positive social and environmental change. We contributed to this important objective for five years, a very short time given the history of newspapers in the Americas. Many that have shut down, including notable local examples, published for much longer timeframes.*

We all live in a time when what might have taken decades—changes both positive and not so good—now happen seemingly overnight. Our lives, too, seem to be moving at a faster pace with more complications than in those earlier times. Nonetheless, we are gradually finding ways of slowing down, finding a pace that offers us time to linger in the *Owl Light*. For me, that includes creating more, in a variety of mediums.

To say I will miss *Owl Light* does not even touch on the loss (for me and for many who have joined us in this part of our journey). It is never easy letting go, moving on (especially when it is something as cherished to all of us as the *Owl* has become). We never know what lies ahead, but to steal a line from *Illusions* by Richard Bach, "The river delights to lift us free, if only we dare let go. Our true work is this voyage, this adventure." ✨

**Including the Chronicle-Express 1824-2022. This 198-year-old Yates County weekly newspaper ceased publication on Sept. 14, 2022, after almost 200 years in print.*

BOG TIME – a Journey Back

D.E. BENTLEY

A rising mist surrounds you as you step out of the time machine onto a massive ice cube, a floating frozen island. Pockets of water—an expanding liquid ring teeming with Microbial life—define the perimeter of a deep circular depression.

As ice cracks beneath your feet, you step hurriedly back into the time machine and whirl forward another 10,000 years. Your ice island has melted into an expansive lake. At the water's edge, a woolly mammoth mother nuzzles a calf and they drink from the lake. Vast grassland surrounds them. Patches of sphagnum moss cluster on the shoreline; the mosses, too, are thirsty.¹



In the late 70's, the first sections of boardwalk were piled in a nearby field to be flown in by helicopter to the bog.

The island of ice has—over thousands of years—transitioned, first, into a living lake, which has now, through eutrophication, become a fifty or more feet deep floating island of decomposed plant materials—mostly peat moss. You reach out to a nearby sapling for support as you step out on to what you believed was solid ground; it gives way beneath your feet as you balance precariously on a living, floating island.

Time spins wildly behind you and the whirl of the time machine is gradually replaced by the hum of a helicopter hovering just overhead. It circles around and drops a bundle of lumber to a group of people waiting below before lifting off and reloading for a return trip. The dropped materials are the first sections of a floating walkway that now loops 1500' into the bog's interior, offering visitors safe access to the bog while protecting the rare and delicate landscape that depends on this unique ecosystem for its very survival.



¹ Sphagnum mosses can hold up to 20 times their own weight in water. ipcc.ie/a-to-z-peatlands/sphagnum-moss-the-bog-builder



Stacks of boardwalk sections were attached by cable to the helicopter. They were flown to the bog and detached while the helicopter hovered overhead. The sections were then joined together on a system of floating drums. Images courtesy of David Buck

It is 1979 CE, and the once-upon-a-time remnants of the last ice age have vanished. The Bog bears little resemblance to the earlier watery time or the times that followed, when there was an abundance of grassland for the mammoths. A small forest of black spruce seedlings is interspersed with cranberry bushes (the bog’s namesake) and carnivorous and other flowering plants. Layers upon layers upon layers of the past are visible for all who visit.

Fast forward to April 1, 2022, when my time machine (a Tacoma 4X4) leaves me in a parking lot next to an informational billboard. I have arrived at Tannersville Cranberry Bog in Monroe County Pennsylvania, one of only two late-succession boreal ‘kettle’ bogs in the state. I found Tannersville Bog while searching for a day hike, during a ten day spring trip to Pennsylvania for a Search and Rescue (SAR) training. Having grown up in the Finger Lakes, surrounded by the tall falls and deep gorges carved by the retreat of our last ice age—and further inspired by bog visits in Scotland in 2018—this glacial wonder drew me closer (as it has done for so many of those who have cherished and protected it through the years).

The Bog was just minutes from my lodging (and a stone’s throw from a gated community, one of many such

developments that are encroaching on and threatening the wildlands of northeastern Pennsylvania—more about that in afterthoughts). I drove to the site on April 1st and, after a series of phone calls to Monroe County Conservation Districts’ Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center (Kettle Creek)—the bog and community’s educational stewards—I received permission and strolled along Cranberry Creek through a shady, peaceful grove of ferns and moss-blanketed roots to the beginning of the boardwalk.

Cranberry Bog, one of The Nature Conservancy’s (TNC) first preserves in Pennsylvania, is the southernmost low-altitude boreal bog on the Eastern Seaboard (similar bogs can be found in the Adirondacks of New York, and in the Canadian wilderness). The early acquisition and preservation of the “Cranberry” (as it is sometimes affectionately called) was made possible by Professor William A. Niering (1924 – 1999). Niering, born in Scotrun, a small town in the Poconos, was a well know biologist and Lucretia L. Allyn Professor of Botany at Connecticut College. He initiated the purchase of the first 63 acres of the Tannersville Cranberry bog near his home in the Poconos, one of many concerned citizens who stepped in to make the initial and later acquisitions possible.

Continued on page 22

PATHWAYS TO DEMOCRACY

Final Perspectives

DOUG GARNAR

garnardc@sunybroome.edu



For more than three years I have written a column entitled, “Pathways to Democracy” in the pages of *Owl Light*. Many of my columns have focused on deliberative forums developed by the National Issues Forums Institute. I have struggled to write this column so please indulge me one last time.

This column is broken into three parts: newspaper/magazine headlines; an eclectic list of readings for adults and children; and the proverbial list of actions that citizens might draw upon to strengthen a democracy that by many accounts is in deep trouble. Guiding my last column is what world are we passing on to our children, our grandchildren, and children yet to be born? And what obligations do we have to all other life forms who share this beautiful blue/green planet with us? For some, democracy on its best days is simply a method of determining who gets the power to make decisions impacting the public—it is also a participatory method for solving public problems.

Newspaper/magazine headlines provide snapshots of a world in constant motion and change.

Consider the following:

- “Jury Orders Alex Jones To Pay Sandy Hook Parents \$49 Million Dollars”
- “Tops Employees Recount the Horror of The Buffalo Shooting And Some Remain Determined To Reopen The Store For The Community”
- “How to Do More Good, A Growing Movement Seeks To Improve The World Today And For Future Generations To Come”
- “How the GOP Lost Its Mind, It Did Not Start (And Won’t End) With Trump”
- “In Afghanistan, Underground Schools Offer Hope for Girls”
- Drought Threatens the Colorado River’s Hydropower, Major Source of Renewable Energy”
- “Abortion: What the Kansas Referendum Reveals”
- “Did Pelosi’s Trip Make Taiwan Less Secure?”
- “CPAC: Embracing Orban as a Role Model”
- “First Images from The James Webb Telescope, The Dawn of a New Era In Astronomy”

The headlines reflect a host of issues ranging from attacks on democracy and climate concerns, great powers competition to women’s issues (abortion and the right to an education), racism and the unfolding power of telescopes.

I spent 70 years in a classroom from 1950 to 2020, as both a student and a teacher. Essential to this world are books.

I can remember reading, in a 9th grade advanced algebra class, Eugen Kogon’s *The Theory and Practice of Hell* (an early Holocaust memoir). I received only a “C” in the course, but it launched me on a six decade journey exploring Nazism, the Holocaust, and mass movements which have led to death/destruction). The following books (some for adults and some for children) are my last suggestions for readings, designed to offer new insights to the human experience.

For young adults and adult readers:

- *The True Believer: Thoughts on The Nature of Mass Movement*, Eric Hoffer—written in 1950 the author makes the case that all mass movements leading to violence are rooted in the harnessing of fear/hatred by their leaders.
- *The Next Great Migration, The Beauty and Terror of Life on The Move*, Sonia Shaf—a persuasive argument that humanity and most other animals are migratory; provides a new way of looking at the ecological/political turbulence of our time—a vision of hope and understanding.
- *The Sword and The Shield, The Revolutionary Lives Of Malcom X And Martin Luther King Jr.*, Peniel E. Joseph—the author reconciles the two lives of arguably the most iconic African American leaders of their times.
- *The Cold War’s Killing Fields, Rethinking the Long Peace*, Paul Thomas Chamberlin—in a well-documented volume, the author disproves the idea that the Cold War was a long period of relative peace; rather, it was a conflict over the post-colonial war resulting in the deaths of some 14 million people
- *What Should We Do? A Theory of Civic Life*, Peter Levine—one of the leading philosophers of civic life reveals what it truly means to cooperate, deliberate and activate and challenges us to do all three more mindfully.



Community action can bring about positive changes.
Above: A group of children unveiled a plaque at a children's peace park in Ostingingo Park, Broome Co., NY and read it to the audience.

A short video of the Dedication on 5-8-21 can be seen at:
youtube.com/watch?v=MRkZ3zypBh0
 (by Vera Scroggins).

All images courtesy of Helen McLean



- *The Sixth Extinction, An Unnatural History*, Elizabeth Kolbert—perhaps the most talented contemporary climate journalist of our time, Kolbert makes a powerful case that humanity is triggering a 6th great extinction that will not only claim many life forms but humanity itself.
- *Searching for Utopia, The History Of An Idea*, Gregory Claeys—a profusely illustrated history of the western idea of Utopia from Biblical times through 2001, *A Space Odyssey*.
- *No One Is Too Small To Make A Difference*, Greta Thurnberg—a 15 year old girl decided to drop out of school and lead a children's crusade to save the planet from human greed. *Time* magazine named her "Person of the Year" in 2019. Should humanity wake up to the existential threat of climate change it will remember the life of Greta.
- *The Afghanistan Papers: A Secret History of The War*, Craig Whitlock—the author's searing indictment of the deceit, blunders, and hubris by both military and elected officials is an incredible cautionary tale based on thousands of declassified interviews of soldiers serving in Afghanistan.
- *Two Wheels Good: The History and Mystery of The Bicycle*, Jody Rosen—one of the best books I have read in a long time, makes a convincing case that the bike is the story of modern life.

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter."

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

- *Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century*—2020 report by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences offering 6 strategies and 31 recommendations on how to strengthen our democracy. A great table setter for community conversations about reviving a democracy in serious trouble.

Some old and newer books appropriate for younger readers:

- *The Story of Ferdinand the Bull*, Munro Leaf—turned into an animated short film by Walt Disney and won an Oscar in 1938. Hitler banned the book!
- *The Man Who Planted Trees*, Jean Giono—turned into an Oscar winning short film in 1988.
- *The Water Protectors*, Carol Lindstrom/illustrated by Michaela Goade—a native American tale about the sanctity of water and the continuing threat of the "Snake". It won the 2020 Caldecott gold medal.

Continued on page 8

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- *All the Colors We Are: The Story of How We Get Our Skin Color/Todos los colores de nuestra piel:La historia de por qué tenemos diferentes colores de piel*, Katie Kissinger/photographer Chris Bohnhoff—written in both English and Spanish, the book does an excellent job in explaining the nature of the various skin colors of humanity.
- *Change Sings: A Children's Anthem*, words by Amanda Gorman/pictures by Loren Long—a great book by the young American Poet Laureate, Amanda Gorman, who celebrates the coming changes necessary for our society.
- *The Lorax*, Dr Seuss—written in 1971 a simple child's tale of greed and redemption and Mother Earth.

Lenin, the Russian leader once posed the question, “What is to be done?”

What follows is a palate of civic activities and you are free to add your own:

- Make a habit of reading such papers as the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*; viewing PBS news/special topics.
- Make a list of who represents you at the local/state and Federal levels (be sure to have contact information for each). usa.gov/elected-officials
- Identify “civic spaces” in your community where people can come and talk about the issues of the day (i.e. schools, libraries, faith centers, colleges etc.).
- After the November elections convene (could be any civic venue), initiate a discussion of what citizens think the top three agenda items should be at the local, state, and Federal levels for the new year. Be sure to invite representatives from all three levels of govt., but **only as observers**. Take notes and see that they are given to elected officials.
- Volunteer time at a school by reading to young children or doing tutoring.
- Identify opportunities where you might do volunteer service on an advisory board (i.e. school, municipal setting or a not for profit).
- Where possible, plant trees in a park or on public space

in memory of murdered children/adults—be sure to develop good contacts with the print/electronic media to keep them informed of such activities.

- Ring church bells to commemorate historical events—my church has a bell larger than the Liberty bell on its front lawn and it is rung on Hiroshima Day and Armistice Day.
- Utilize “deliberative” forums in civic venues to promote democratic conversation. The National Issues Forums Institute (nifi.org) has a wealth of such forums to draw on and you can also develop you own.
- Encourage public and private schools to consider using “Public Achievement” strategies and deliberative forums (K-12). Feel free to contact me (garnardc@suny-broome.edu) for more information on these strategies.
- Host a Children's Peace Festival featuring a variety of games, music, dancing, storytelling, rock painting, all emphasizing peace themes.
- Finally, consider creating a “time capsule” to be opened say 50-75 years from now. SUNY Broome Community College is doing this to celebrate its first 75 years and it will be opened in 50 years. What goes in a time capsule can speak volumes about a community and it can be a way of bringing people together to reflect on the history of an organization/community.

All of the above actions require among other things, TIME.

We need to recognize that a democracy requires time and work on the part of its citizenry, and we need to also recognize that Democracy is not a finished product, rather an evolving process. 🌱

“All good thoughts and ideas mean nothing without action.”

— Mahatma Gandhi

Strongmen and Democracy

LEN GELLER

Review of Ruth Ben-Ghiat's *Strongmen: Mussolini to the Present*

W.W. Norton & Company, Paper Edition, 2021

(Kindle version from Amazon also available)

In her review of *Strongmen*, Sarah Kendzior says that “everyone who cares about American democracy should read this book.” She is right. Not only does *Strongmen* give us a detailed historical account of why some 20th and 21st century democracies have failed and been replaced by authoritarian rule under a strongman leader, but it also shows us how contemporary strongmen, including Putin in Russia, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Orbán in Hungary, and Trump in the U.S, have borrowed from a playbook that has deep roots in the fascist movements of 1919-1945 and subsequent strongman eras of the 20th and 21st centuries.

At first it may seem that Ben-Ghiat, a professor of history and Italian studies at NYU, has overlooked a significant number of strongmen like Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Xi Jinping; however, that omission is deliberate because these leaders did not ascend to power in a democracy but in an autocracy. Ben-Ghiat is interested only in strongmen who come to power in a democracy and then use or try to use that power to overthrow democratic institutions. Two major questions run through the book: Why do democracies fail? And how can the knowledge gleaned from these failures help avoid such failures in the future?

Authoritarianism is the archenemy of democracy. Ben-Ghiat defines it as “a political system in which executive power is asserted at the expense of the legislative and judicial branches of government.” Strongman authoritarianism is that form of autocracy in

which executive power is vested in and exercised by a single male leader rather than a junta or committee. While some strongmen have gained power through democratic elections once in power, the successful ones have significantly eroded and hollowed out democratic institutions through corruption, propaganda, disinformation, threats, and violence where the legislature and judiciary are democratic in name only (Berlusconi, Putin, and Orbán), while those who were unsuccessful did not fail through want of effort (Trump).

Strongman authoritarianism is not only the foe of democracy but the enemy of an open society in which all citizens are guaranteed not just the right to vote in free and fair elections but also the liberty of political speech and expression including the right to peaceful assembly and protest, the liberty of association, including religion, and the liberty to direct their own lives as they see fit provided this liberty does not harm others. Tolerance and pluralism are essential to an open society, and whenever strongmen come to power, certain groups are always scapegoated and persecuted, whether it be the Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, and the disabled under Hitler; the Jews and African-Italians under Mussolini; the LGBTQ+ community under Mobutu, Amin, Putin, and Orbán; non-white and non-Christian immigrants under Berlusconi and Orbán; or Muslims, BLM protesters, and Latino immigrants under Trump. The strongman always needs a scapegoat for the perceived evils in society (real and

imagined), and historically the Jews, the LGBTQ+ community, and immigrants, especially those who are non-white have been the default targets.

Ben-Ghiat divides the collapse of democracies and authoritarian ascendancy into three distinct periods of strongman rule: the fascist period, 1919-1945; the age of military coups, 1950-1990; and the new authoritarian age, 1990 to the present. Her major argument is that while the historical circumstances and causes of strongman ascendancy vary from period to period, the methods used by the strongman and his supporters to gain and remain in power are common to all three periods.

It is no accident that world-historical events have preceded each of these strongman epochs: the fascist era arising out of the ruins of World War I, the age of military coups emerging from the devastation of World War II, and the new authoritarian age following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. Despite the historical differences in strongmen regimes throughout these three periods, most share the following important features in common: the utopian promise of national greatness coupled with a nostalgia for a lost past and a manufactured national crisis that only the strongman can solve; a keen sense of victimhood and grievance over perceived wrongs; the scapegoating and persecution of individuals and groups seen as responsible for these perceived wrongs; the creation of a cult of male virility accompanied

Continued on page 18

NOT WHAT I EXPECTED!

KURT STAUDTER



The Elusive Empty Nest

A couple of years before I retired there was a brief moment when we finally experienced being empty nesters, but in retrospect we squandered that opportunity. Technically we weren't totally free of children; a granddaughter was finishing up their last few years of college, and then would return home to wait out the pandemic before grad school. The youngest daughter had moved onto a farm they worked at, and until the end of the semester we would have the house to ourselves – Paradise!

First a little background: When I met Patti she was a single mother with a delightful two year-old girl. We would add to the family on the honeymoon and give birth to a total of three more kids, one just about every other year. Our thinking was that we were young, in our mid to late twenties, and we'd still be healthy enough to enjoy some of the things we missed out on by having a family so young. Something to look forward to and it didn't seem too far away.

So the first time we had the house to ourselves you'd think we would break out the champagne and throw some steaks on the grill, but we didn't. No, we packed up the car and drove down to Virginia to visit my parents. The trip was uneventful with the exception of a text we got with a picture from our daughter Emily (the honeymoon baby.) In the picture our grandson Oliver is under the covers snoozing in what looked like our master bedroom. The caption read, "And then he found one that was just right."

Patti would call Emily immediately as I could feel my tenuous grasp on our empty nest slipping away. We would return home to a one year-old bouncing off the walls and toys all over the floor as far as the eye could see; there also was the faint lingering smell of something having been burned. Thankfully the cat and dog made it through unscathed. There was a short discussion on the way home of changing the locks before we left town again.

Fresh off the end of an awful relationship, Emily needed to regroup and what better place to do that than at home. She was finishing her degree at Norwich while working at the hospital; there was always a need to keep Oliver occu-

ried while she worked. It was at this point I realized that child rearing is a young persons' sport.

As you might expect, this was a wonderful opportunity to get to know our grandson, but it came with tradeoffs. I had to move my office out of the repurposed bedroom and restore it back to its original use. The office is now in the basement, which is fine, it only floods once or twice a year, and Patti tells me that's what boots are for.

There are more multigenerational households than you'd expect. While there's an abundance of jobs available to our youth, few entry level jobs pay a livable wage: If you can't afford rent or to buy a house, they end up back home until they're ready to head out on their own again. Then the Great Recession, and again with the COVID, family members lost jobs or couldn't work, and now we're seeing unprecedented numbers of multigenerational households.

In 1990 polling by the Pew Research Center, they found in 14% of households Americans live with other generations under the same roof. Today it has risen to 19% of the households. Think about that: One-fifth of the population is living in multigenerational situations today. Pew also points out that some ethnic and racial groups are more apt to live in multigenerational households: Asians at 29%, Hispanics at 27% and Blacks at 26%. Other interesting points are that men are more likely to return home than women, as are those with just a high school diploma.

British insurance company Aviva did a study on kids returning home after they've left, and reports that 42% of 25 to 34 year-olds will return home once, another 7% will come back twice, and from that point on it's another 1% for those that come back three or more times. For this reason they've called these kids "the boomerang generation." Low wage jobs, student loans, and a housing market as hot as a bottle rocket, it would seem these kids are home for good, but looking at the percentages, eventually they move out (or perhaps the parents just finally get the locksmith to come around.)

Emily would eventually find her soul mate, marry and move out, and I was beginning to make plans to move my

office out of the swamp, but my offspring had other plans. Another daughter had a paycheck dispute with her farmer, she made the choice to take the farm housing in pay, and before Emily's bed had even cooled off, Sarah had moved back home. For those of you keeping score, that left us with a daughter and granddaughter at home.

Then we got a call from Orion. He escaped Vermont and brought his family to Florida. It turned out that rents around Jacksonville were crazy and increasing by double digits – they decided their Plan B was to move back to Vermont. They needed to come home for a while until they found a house, and jobs. As you might expect they had no trouble finding jobs: After a six-year hiatus from brewing beer, he landed a job as an assistant brewer, and his significant other, Blake found her dream job of being an aid for developmentally disabled children. The two boys, 9 and 5, were registered for school, and have been enjoying Parks and Rec. programs and meeting other kids.

Armed now with gainful employment, the house hunt has begun in earnest. Yet, just this morning Orion saw on the news that one couple had been house hunting since last fall and finally nabbed a house. Last fall! Evidently the market here in Vermont is hot, and cash offers and forgoing house inspections can get you to the top of the list of offers. But why would you buy a house without an inspection?

Meanwhile at Casa de Staudter, the boys have taken over the living room, and now it looks more like a gymnasium with the furniture pushed to the walls. Before they arrived the living room had been a nice, quiet room with soft couches and a soothing northern light for reading and petting the cat with my morning coffee. Have you heard of an Oculus? It's a type of virtual reality device. You wear a headset with controllers in your hands, and you swing like you don't care. The cat appears now only briefly and cautiously, and never during Oculus time.

Since the purchase of this device, controllers have been pushed through windows, knocked over lamps, and god forbid if the 5 year-old Maddox gets within arm's reach; he gets cold-cocked. It's bad enough that with the wild flailing arm movements and jumping around that someone might get hurt, but there's a fair bit of yelling that goes along with the game. The game is played online with others, and as you might expect there's a fair amount of trash talk between the players; we're thankful we can hear just Jackson. Luckily the batteries have a limited useful life.

One of the many benefits of a multi generational household besides shared expenses, chores, and the unlikelihood for the household to be in poverty or to live with food insecurity, is childcare. For the six years they lived in the Sunshine State only one of them could work because of the cost

of childcare. In a low wage state like Florida the cost of childcare for two kids will easily outpace what one could earn; now they can both work and leave the child rearing to the grandparents. Remind me again why I retired?



No, living with your grandchildren gives one unprecedented access to these young minds, and we're creating a bond with them that others will envy.

The good news is that over 56% of multigenerational families have a somewhat positive experience with the exception of one group. If you are the adult child moving in with parents the situation can be somewhat unbearable for around half of you. The survey said that 54% find the financial benefits to be helpful, but the situation is "somewhat stressful." So far it's been a very positive experience.

There's no doubt that opportunities that existed for my parents were numerous and more fairly compensated than they were for me and my brothers. Before you could have a career with one employer, and today workers can have more than ten different career paths, not just job changes, but career changes over the course of their working life. For the kids today there are lots of jobs, but few will have the gold ring at the end like a pension and retiree healthcare, or even pay enough to achieve the American Dream of home ownership. No matter how hard these kids work it seems three steps back for every step forward. It's the very least we can do to give them a helping hand, no matter how long it takes for them to get settled. We may be the last generation that can help financially.

I've started a tradition where on Saturday mornings I cook up pancakes and some sort of breakfast meat. Up before the crowd, the food and maple syrup is waiting for them as they shuffle out of bed and start their day. This was something my father did when we were kids and we still cherish those times together. Now we're starting the Saturday breakfasts again with a new generation. The house was so quiet during the pandemic as the grandkids stayed in their own little bubbles, and it's now wonderful beyond description how great it is to hear youthful voices laughing and having a good time again, and of course the occasional death yell of a dreaded Oculus opponent being dispatched. You know, I'm getting the feeling that this might be the best retirement ever. 🦉

SMALL TOWN HOUND

Æsc



Æsc Looks Back

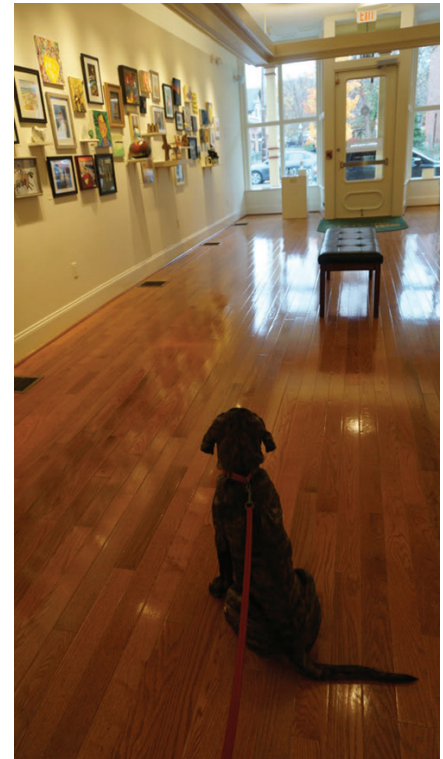
As you likely know, this will be our last *Owl Light*. I have been a part of the *Owl Light* since I was ten weeks old, when my humans brought me home. My earliest work was helping with the community deliveries of the earlier newspaper. I would hold the papers in place in the back seat as my human drove from place to place dropping off the Owls, with the help of other delivery people in our wide distribution area. We published 6000 a month back then. As the stacks of newspapers were pulled out, I got to get out of the truck and visit with all the humans (and my back seat space slowly expanded until I, again, had the entire seat to myself).

My first ever story was about the Main Street Gallery in Clifton Springs. I loved being in the gallery and felt so important sitting and looking at the art. We also went to Sulfur Books. The people there really loved me up and that was when I found my duck...which I still have and get to visit with when my humans do “find” activities with me. Our adventures will continue and this past quarter was no exception.

Health is so important, and as a (very) big dog my humans are often making adjustments here and there to try and help me be my best and live a good long (big) dog life. I turned two on July 2, 2022 and was enjoying summer (as long as I stayed in the shade). Our walks have been shorter and with AC out in the truck, my humans have only taken me places where I can easily go inside to enjoy the cool air.

We did have some family guests in late July, and that is when things got a little weird. I was down by the pond retrieving my floating blue “bone” when I felt a little off. I went in through the doggie door and that is when it hit me. I went back out and, the way my human tells it, I stumbled around then fell down at the edge of the deck, with my head drooped over the side.

I don't remember much, but apparently my humans and two relatives carried me, on my doggie bed, to the truck and off to the vets for an emergency visit. I was a bit awake when I got there and recognized the people and place, although was still a bit wobbly. They took blood and gave me some pills and sent me for an ultrasound (my belly was shaved—all the rage—although I did not like the buzzy thing, at all). Everything looked okay there and, based on the description my human gave, the general consensus was that I had a seizure. Perhaps the excitement of visitors and the heat got to me? Nobody really knows for sure; paws crossed, I have not had any repeat episodes.



Annalisa made this awesome drawing of Cat Stevens when she visited. That was a very strange day indeed!



Alright, confession, although I love going into ESL in Geneseo, I was not too keen on having my photo taken.

Photos D.E. Bentley

It sounds like the humans may also take some trips without me and I recently made a visit to a new lodging where I might stay when they go travel places or modes (like flying) that are ill suited for me.

As I have often shared, I love being at home. Winnie is slowing down some (she still likes longer walks than me but is not as interested in playing these days) so I would love a big companion canine I can get together with from time to time. There is Cat Stevens, but he just wants to claw out my eyes when I try to be friendly.

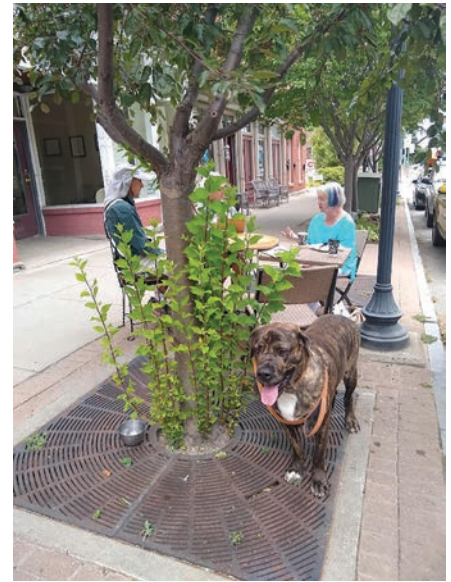


• [facebook.com/SmallTownHoundNY](https://www.facebook.com/SmallTownHoundNY)

After all that, I finally got out with my humans some to check out some of my favorite haunts. I did my usual Saturday trips with Todd to take care of the recycling – and say hi to the doggie biscuit guys.

I also went to ESL in Canandaigua. The tellers and other folks there always love me up and it was cool and comfortable waiting in line.

Since I am a writer, I went along with the editor to the August Canadice Lake Writers' Group meeting in Dansville, NY. Mary, the human companion of my friends Harry and Phil, was there. It was great to see her (she *so* gets me) and we talked about getting together for a walk with the boys. I sometimes see them at Vitale Park in Lakeville and after a recent Geneseo trip my human took me on a walk there. I love being near the water and can't wait to return to the ocean, like when we visited Maine.



As we say farewell, for now, I will take a moment to remember my pal Mars (he is the one in the back). It's just Winnie and I now, but that guy, he could have been a show dog!

I once encountered a cat in Sodus that walked right up to me when I was street walking. We said hello and he was great with me (and I responded in kind).

I wish Cat was like that.

I do love my time here with the humans and I enjoy my country-dog life.

One thing I do not enjoy is thunderstorms. When they come, I hide in the wine cellar downstairs, and take the time to learn a little about wines. I also like it down there when it is hot outside. I live the life of canine leisure and will have even more time to lounge about and take hikes with the humans as the Owl, most sadly, comes to an end.

Signing off... Aesc, the Small Town Hound





SIDE STREET SOUNDS

STEVE WEST

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

Local Live Music – Refurbished Theaters and Craft Beverage Venues offer an Abundance of Options as Summer Fades into Fall

Summer of 2022 saw a full return to live music. While Covid-19 has not disappeared, most of the restrictions on gatherings that New Yorkers lived with for the past two years were lifted. Music lovers found no shortage of venues and events to whet their appetites for live entertainment while soaking up the sun. Large venues like CMAC, Darien Lake, and Art Park had full lineups of major touring acts. Festivals like the Rochester International Jazz Festival and the Corn Hill Arts Festival returned after a two year hiatus. Mid-sized venues such as the The Wadsworth Homestead in Geneseo and Lincoln Hill Farm in Canandaigua hosted concerts featuring local and regional acts throughout the summer. The proliferation of craft breweries, wineries, cideries, and distilleries provided a seemingly endless array of choices for music out on their lawns and patios.

Alas, seasons change. While there are plenty of Autumn festivals featuring live music, the number of options for outdoor entertainment becomes more limited as temperatures drop. Spending more time indoors doesn't mean you have to forego live music. You just have to look for it.

A good place to start is the craft breweries. As mentioned above, many craft breweries spend the summer hosting live music outside. While not all of these venues have the space for full bands, many have solo or duo acoustic performances in the cooler months.

Several mid-sized venues have started new concert series. In particular, two refurbished movie theaters in Livingston County have a full slate of shows scheduled. The Riviera Theater in Geneseo hosts the "Geneseo Jam Kitchen" concert series featuring local and regional bands. Details can be found at geneseojamkitchen.com. The Park Theater in Avon has recently opened after sitting dormant for several years. The remodeled theater has both stadium seating and table seating. A full lineup of shows can be found at avonparktheater.com. The Fort Hill Performing Arts Center in Canan-



State Theatre in Ithaca

daigua, which was featured in the *Owl Light* earlier this year, is hosting a number of tribute acts celebrating the music of The Beatles, Fleetwood Mac, Styx, and Elton John. Rock legend Roger McGuinne of The Byrds will also be performing a show there this fall. Show information can be found at fhpac.org. Fanatics in Lima continues to bring in the best touring blues acts. The Smith Opera House in Geneva has a full lineup of concerts scheduled. The State Theatre in Ithaca continues to host national headliners.

All of these are wonderful options. Of course, my own bias is local musicians. With ticket prices soaring for concerts, listening to live, local music can be a great alternative for budget conscious music lovers. The local musicians are the ones who are keeping the music scene alive in every town. Without local players, we'd be subjected to juke boxes and DJs everywhere we go. Admittedly, you're bound to run across a performer from time to time who leaves no doubt as to why they're not famous, but you also just might find yourself listening to someone who is on the cusp of being discovered. You can brag that you saw them before they hit the charts. 🎸

Putting Things to Bed

THE HOMESTEAD GARDENER, FALL 2022

DERRICK GENTRY

So here we are, my friends: the final issue of the *Owl Light*, and this the final installment of the on-again/off-again Homestead Gardener. It's been a good run, and a fun ride the whole way. When things come to an end, we are naturally put in a reflective mood, which naturally tempts one to adopt a confessional mode. I will do a bit of leisurely reflecting in a moment. But first, the dramatic end-of-journey confession...

I must confess to you, dear readers of the Homestead Gardener, that *I do not know what I am talking about* when it comes to gardening or homesteading. I have no special qualifications; I am not a certified master gardener, nor do I have any formal training in horticulture or permaculture (not to mention commercial agriculture). Sometimes I don't even feel like a *good* gardener. I am simply an amateur, a garden-variety one. In fact, I recall the self-introductory sentence that opened my debut piece a few years back: "I am an amateur gardener, as all gardeners are..." That now strikes me as both confession and starting premise.

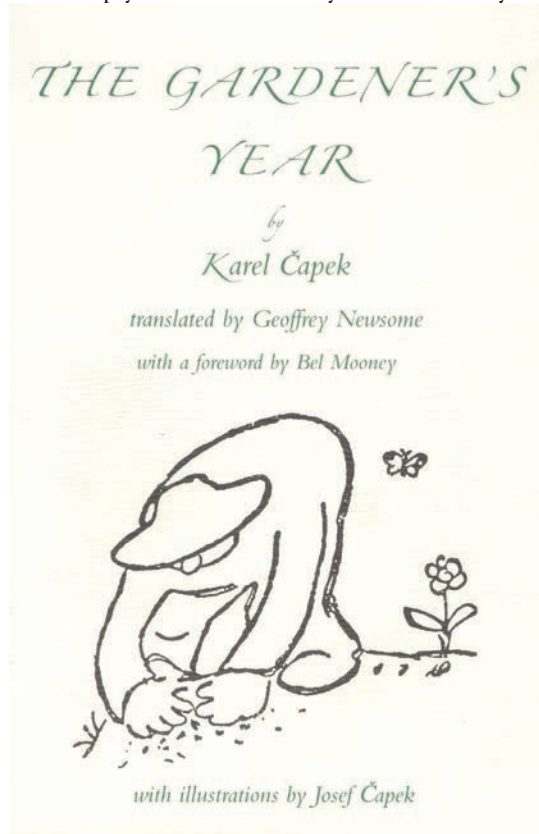
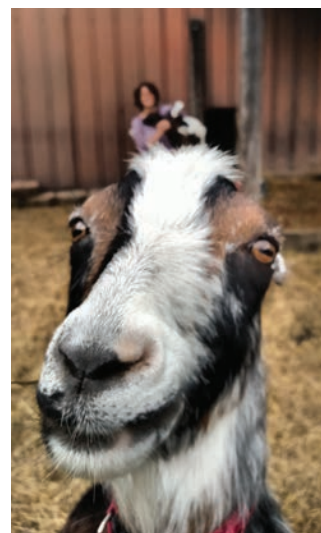
So, what motivates an amateur like myself to write for a general audience? Well, I must further confess that after all this time I am still not entirely sure why I have written and continued to write in a public forum (albeit a small one). I am not even sure how to label what I have done. The Homestead Gardener has certainly never been about offering practical information, like so many gardening vlogs and blogs these days (and there are scores of them out there, with far more followers and Youtube subscribers than my modest readership). If you want advice – expert or otherwise – on how to prune peppers or how to cold stratify seeds, then I would advise that you look elsewhere.

I suppose most of what I have written falls within the tradition of essay, a genre of writing that has long been notoriously difficult to define. Some would say that the essay's free-form indefinability is part of its charm. And from the very beginning, the practice of essay writing – like the practice of gardening – has allied itself with amateurism and the commonplace.

The Latin root of the word "amateur" simply means "love." (And by the way, the French origin of the word "essay" means "to try out"...). To be an amateur is *to do something out of love* – as opposed to doing something for power or money or prestige or a sense of mastery. There is something liberating about being motivated by love and pleasure and play. Perhaps that is why gardening has always attracted the very young and the very old – those with a waning or undeveloped sense of worldly ambition, who appreciate love and pleasure and play as guiding principles to a far greater degree than middle-of-the-journey folks do.

I do love being outside and working in the garden. Of that I am sure. And in addition to reading good essays, I also love reading the work of garden writers who are far better at it than I am – writers like Eleanor Perenyi and Karel Čapek and many others. I love the human-scale homeliness of gardening for much the same reasons I love the grounded, first-person quality of essay writing at its best. It is therefore little wonder to me that the essay offers such a congenial form for exploring the subject of gardening.

Continued on page 29



THE NIGHT SKY

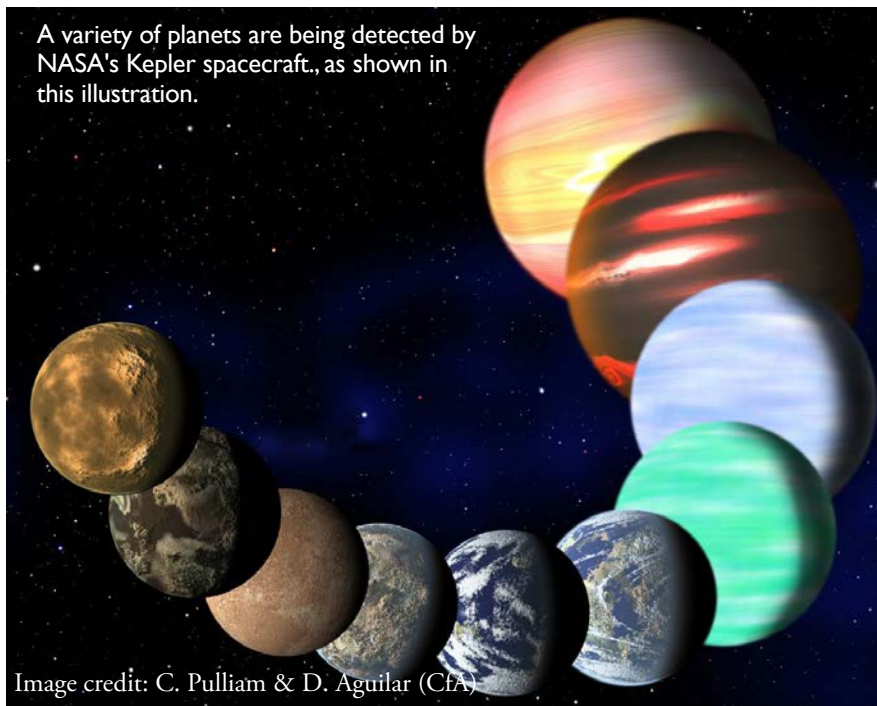
DEE SHARPLES



Exoplanets

Exoplanets are planets that orbit other stars in the universe, not the Sun, like they do in our solar system. The team of Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz shared the Nobel Prize in Physics for their 1995 discovery of a Jupiter-like exoplanet orbiting a nearby star. As of August 23, 2022, 5,071 exoplanets have been confirmed and another 8,870 need to be confirmed. So far scientists have categorized exoplanets into the following types: Gas giant, Neptunian, super-Earth, and terrestrial.

Hot Jupiters are a class of gas giant exoplanets that are physically similar to our own solar system's Jupiter but that have very short orbital periods around their host stars (e.g. 10 days). The close proximity to their stars and high surface-atmosphere temperatures resulted in their informal name "hot Jupiters".



A variety of planets are being detected by NASA's Kepler spacecraft, as shown in this illustration.

Image credit: C. Pulliam & D. Aguilar (CfA)

As of August 23, 2022, 5,071 exoplanets have been confirmed, including some that are potentially habitable.

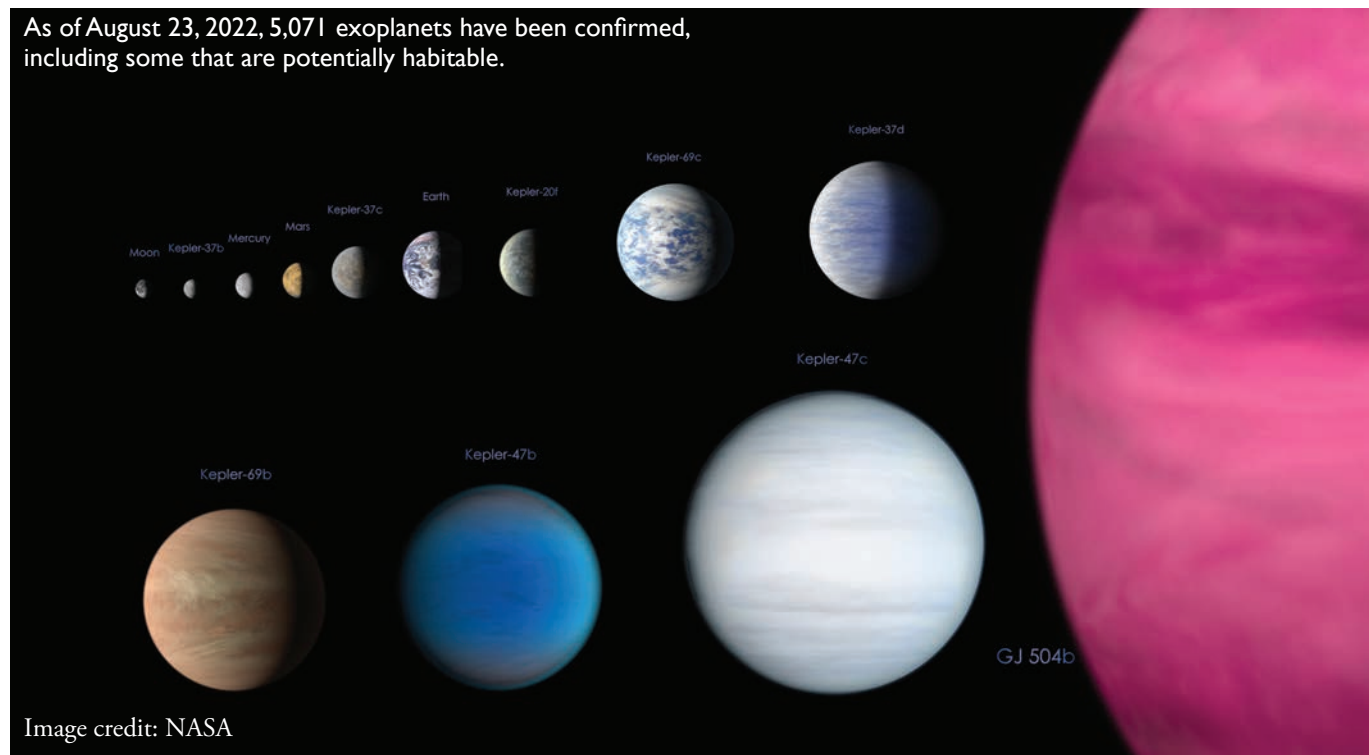
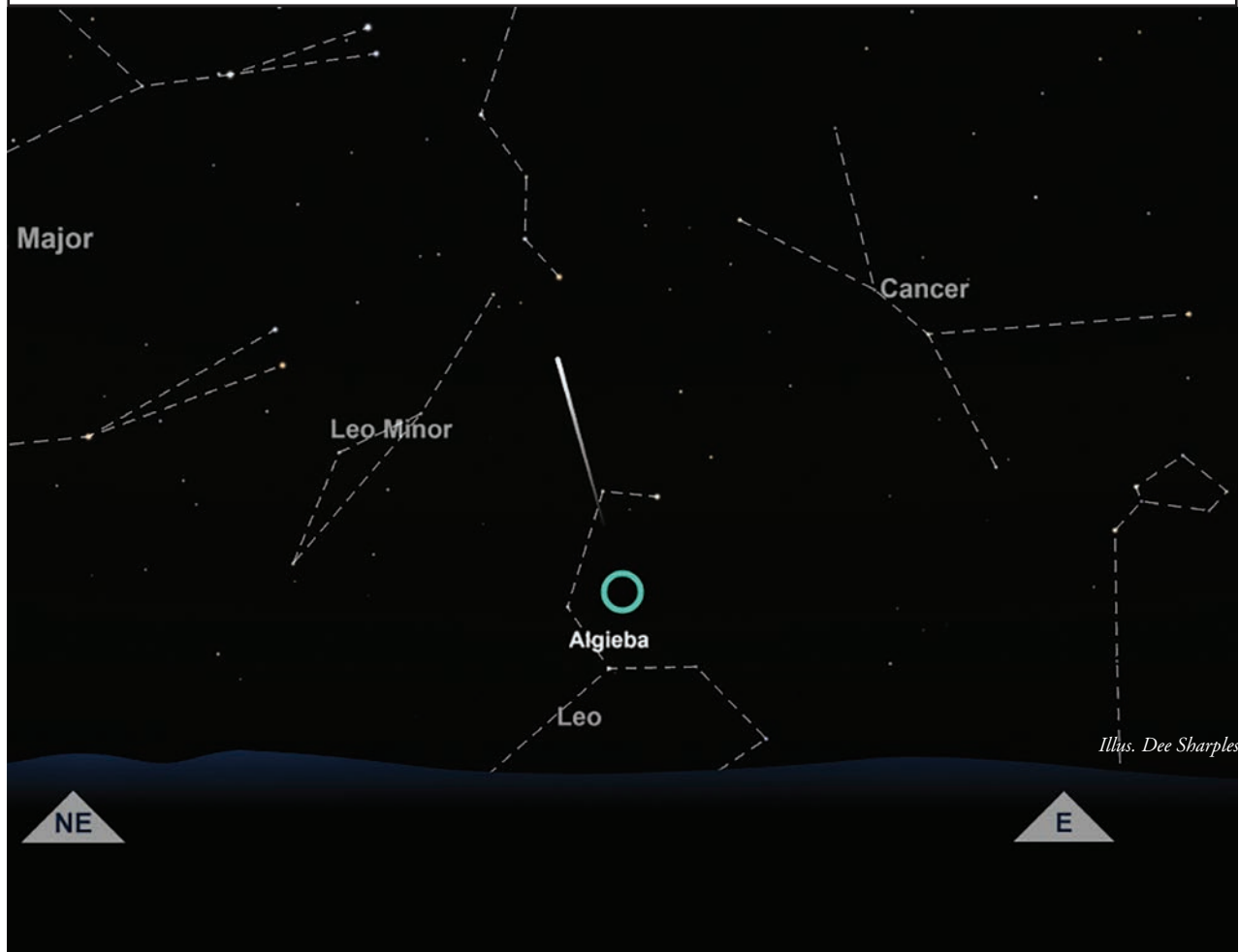


Image credit: NASA

The Leonids in November

In 2022, the Leonids will peak on the night between Nov 17–18. The Leonid meteor shower is annually active in the month of November and it usually peaks around November 17 or 18. The shower is called Leonids because its radiant, or the point in the

sky from where the meteors will appear to emerge, is in the constellation Leo. The Leonids occur when the Earth passes through the debris left by Comet Tempel-Tuttle. The comet takes around 33 years to make one orbit around the Sun.



Exoplanets from p.16

The easiest way to detect exoplanets is by astronomers using the transit method, which is watching the star dim as the planet crosses in front of it as seen from Earth; 76.5% of exoplanets have been discovered this way. Other methods used are radial velocity, microlensing, and imaging.

Exoplanets are a new and exciting branch of astronomy, and as our technology improves, so too will our understanding and knowledge of this fascinating subject. 🦉

A plethora of information about exoplanets can be found at this NASA website - *Exoplanet Exploration: Planets Beyond our Solar System* ([nasa.gov](https://www.nasa.gov/exoplanet-exploration))

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.

Strongmen from p.9

by the demeaning and exploitation of women, especially those who are young and attractive; the extensive use of propaganda, including disinformation, false narratives, and concealment of the truth, to arouse and motivate supporters, justify policies, and smear opponents; the use of state power to increase the strongman's wealth and that of his cronies at the expense of the nation; the demand for absolute loyalty among government employees and party officials plus the threat of punishment for disloyalty; and finally, the explicit use of state-sponsored violence including the use of paramilitary groups to achieve one's aims.

One of Ben-Ghiat's important contributions to strongman history is her emphasis on the role that the misogynist cult of male virility plays in this brand of authoritarianism. From Mussolini to Trump, strongmen in all eras have cultivated a hypermasculine persona that not only attracts millions of men and women but enables them to dominate the men and women around them. The cult of virility includes not only machismo body displays (Mussolini and Putin), or macho tough-guy behavior at rallies (Hitler and Trump), or male bonding with other strongmen (Mussolini with Hitler, Berlusconi with Putin and Gaddafi, Trump with Putin and Kim Jong-un), but also using state power and resources to procure young women for sex (Mussolini, Mobutu, Gaddafi, and Berlusconi) and in some cases to kidnap and imprison young women as sex slaves (Gaddafi). Strongmen in all eras have bragged incessantly about their ability to seduce and dominate women (Mussolini, Berlusconi, Trump), and it is not uncommon for strongmen to have numerous mistresses and extra-marital affairs, the most extreme example of which is Mussolini who Ben-Ghiat estimates

had extra-marital sex with up to four women daily during his twenty-three years in power. Compared with Mussolini, Trump's affairs with porn stars and beauty queens seem hardly worth mentioning.

The reader may wonder why Ben-Ghiat includes Donald Trump in the category of authoritarian strongmen. If the reasons were not obvious before the January 6th insurrection, they are certainly obvious now. The one thing authoritarians prize the most is power, and the one thing they fear the most is losing power. Trump's invention of the Big Lie that the 2020 election was stolen by a vast conspiracy of enemies was not only a red herring to deflect blame for losing the election as an incumbent president, but also a sham excuse for the January 6th insurrection at the Capitol. It really boils down to one simple but unassailable fact: like most authoritarian strongmen, Trump simply could not accept losing power, scheming with Rudy Giuliani, John Eastman, Michael Flynn, Roger Stone, and other associates to overthrow the election, including running a fake elector scheme to pressure Mike Pence to deny Electoral College votes to Biden, urging the Department of Justice to launch sham investigations into voter fraud, pressuring state election officials in key states to "find the votes" to overturn the election results, including the infamous taped call to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to "find 11,780 votes," and as a last desperate resort, giving the ok to far-right militia groups like the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys to storm the Capitol while doing nothing to stop it for over three hours until it was obvious that the coup attempt had failed. Given all the evidence marshalled by The House Select Committee on the January 6 Attack, it is obvious that

Trump was the head of a criminal conspiracy to overturn the election, to say nothing of using the stolen election lie to scam \$250 million from donors for an "Election Defense Fund" that did not exist.

But the Big Lie and the January 6th insurrection are not the only reasons for Ben-Ghiat's inclusion of Trump in the category of strongmen. In fact, Trump checks all the boxes mentioned above for features shared with other strongmen past and present. For example, Trump's campaign slogan of "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) repeats the "utopia, nostalgia, crisis" meme used by Mussolini, Hitler, Putin, and countless other far-right strongmen. For Trump and his supporters, the utopia is predominantly a White male-dominated Christian society that excludes Muslims and immigrants of color, and where fundamental legal rights essential to an open society—such as the right to privacy, abortion, gay and interracial marriage, and an array of LGBTQ+ rights—will no longer be guaranteed by the federal government but will be left up to the states, some of which would like nothing better than to impose racist, sexist, and homophobic laws on its citizens. The nostalgia is not just for a return to White, male, heterosexual supremacy but also for a post-World War II America that is lost forever, a time when America dominated the world economically, the rise of multinational corporations was in its infancy, and the rise of Japan, China, and the EU as major economic rivals leading to a vast network of global economic interdependence among nations was still decades away.

All strongmen need a crisis or series of crises to gain and hold on to power, and Trump found an easy one that had been used successfully by Berlusconi,

Duterte, and other strongmen since 1990: xenophobia and the crisis of illegal immigration. For Trump, the crisis was the illegal immigration of Latinos from Central America and Mexico on our southern border. At 64 rallies held between February 2017 and August 2019, he mentioned immigrants more than 500 times, labeling them criminals (189 times), killers (32 times), and predators (31 times). In addition, nearly 2200 Facebook ads between January and August 2019 warned of the dire consequences of an immigrant invasion. By demonizing Latino immigrants and stoking xenophobic fear, Trump and his acolytes created a climate favorable to the mass detention and incarceration of Latino immigrants, including the separation of thousands of children from their families.

In the final section of her book, Ben-Ghiat discusses the modes of resistance to strongman rule and how strongmen lose power. This review is running out of room, so I can only encourage the reader to take a deep dive into this last section and explore the various forms of resistance to strongman rule and the major ways such rule comes to an end. All strongmen will eventually lose power, even those who have ruled for decades (Mobutu and Gaddafi). Some will be overthrown and assassinated (Mussolini and Gadd-

afi), some will commit suicide (Hitler), and some will die in office (Franco), but most will exit peacefully, either forced to resign (Berlusconi) and/or forced into exile (Amin and Mobutu) or defeated at the polls (Pinochet and Trump). The longer the strongman rules, the greater the state corruption and incompetence, and the more his support will erode. Unless he can silence his critics and control the legislature, the judiciary, and the media (as Putin, Erdoğan, and Orbán have done), this erosion will reach a breaking point when even conservative elites and the military will no longer support him. If he were smart, he would follow Seinfeld's example and get out when he is on top, but of course, his megalomania and addiction to power make that impossible. Strongmen try to hold on to power for as long as they can, which makes organized resistance even more crucial in removing them from office.

If Trump wins the GOP nomination for president in 2024, and it is likely that he will unless he is indicted for crimes involving the January 6 insurrection, then, as Ben-Ghiat warns, one of the major issues on the table will be the choice between democracy and autocracy. Trump has learned from his mistakes, and almost certainly the authoritarian policies and tendencies of his first administration will rush back on steroids if he regains the presiden-

cy. If Trump fails to run or loses the nomination, and the GOP selects a lighter version of Trump like DeSantis, the picture is less clear. Will the lighter version turn away from the strongman agenda and be less authoritarian? We do not know, but one thing we do know is that Donald Trump currently dominates the GOP because an overwhelming majority of Republicans support him. The desire for a strongman leader who projects a powerful male image, owns the libs, demonizes opponents, tells supporters what they want to hear regardless of the truth, and is in bed with White nationalist and other far-right extremists, is now part of the GOP's DNA and is not going away. As Ben-Ghiat points out, the strongman depends completely on his supporters in a democracy. Without them, he is nothing. In the years to come, we can expect to see many of the same features of the authoritarian playbook regardless of who wins the GOP nomination (hint: it will not be Mike Pence, Mike Pompeo, Nikki Haley, Ted Cruz, or Marco Rubio). That is why it would be foolish to ignore Ben-Ghiat's final words: "The story of the strongman, rife with tragedy, also offers lessons in hope and resiliency. It urges us to invest in democracy and protect it rather than take our freedoms for granted. The costs of not doing so are far too great."✿

DRAGONFLY TALES

STEVE MELCHER



• Learn More: fb @ Odonata Sanctuary

The Last Straw

That Hayride you went on was probably actually a straw ride

Yes, this is the last issue of the *Owl Light* as we know it so I want to keep my topic light. I've talked about everything from the importance of a plant based diet to Global Warming but today I'd like to discuss the dichotomy of hay and straw. Most folks use them interchangeably but there is a difference; they are as different as potatoes and bed sheets. So, as the last straw article, I'd like to explain the differences between hay and straw.

Most of us think of straw used in scarecrows or something we ask for with our milk shake or something y'all woke folks carry around with you for multiple uses. In today's world of words with multiple meanings it's difficult to keep up with current uses of what was once thought of a common verbiage. The Scarecrow that didn't have a brain has become the 'straw man', that, according to *Wikipedia*, is: *a form of argument and an informal fallacy of having the impression of refuting an argument, whereas the real subject of the argument was not addressed or refuted, but instead replaced with a false one.*



Scarecrow and friends, from the collection of Barb Kennerson. See owllightnews.com/collecting-in-the-land-of-oz/ Image D.E. Bentley

One who engages in this fallacy is said to be “attacking a straw man”. Whew...all I wanted to tell folks was there is a difference between hay and straw and now I have grown wary of ways I use those words. So, the Wicked Witch of the West was engaging in “a form of argument and an informal fallacy” when she threatened our friendly neighborhood Scarecrow with, “How about a little fire, Scarecrow?”, which ultimately lead to her demise when the Tin Man threw some water on them both.

Which brings me to a misuse of straw; when it is used as an absorbent material.

Those clean, crisp golden strands of straw make a lively background for the pictures of eggs, but straw shouldn't be used in chicken coops or chicken runs for many reasons. Straw is perfect for bedding for your four and two legged critters like sheep, goats, pigs or cows, and teenagers. Straw is a great insulator—look at straw-bale homes—and relatively comfortable as bedding, but straw is not so great at absorbing liquids like poop, pee and guano. I know many of you are saying, *Well, my grandpa used straw in his chicken coop for 40 years*, and that was probably because that was what he had and chickens were not the most valuable critter in the barnyard. If a chicken got sick, they were probably served for dinner that Sunday. The more valuable long lived animals like the family dairy cow, had a stall lined with straw to sleep on hence the term bedding. Straw was strewn on the floor of the chicken coop and stuffed into the nest-boxes because that was what farmer Jones had on hand. However, the egg farmer down the road, whose income depended on healthy productive, relatively long lived chickens used sand for litter.

The primary goal of litter is to keep the coop dry, clean and reduce the smell of that plethora of poop. Sand has been used for hundreds of years as the best litter to line chicken coops. You can treat it like kitty litter and scoop through the poop and just remove the clumps or you can scoop out the top layer adding another layer after each cleaning. The

University of Auburn's Department of Poultry Science (yes, there is such a place) carried out scientific studies to show that sand outperformed straw and pine shavings with lower bacterial counts, lower fungal populations, lower moisture levels and better 'smell' absorption. Sand was found to lack binding sites for bacteria so there was less chance for the bacteria to grow and feed on an organic substance. Straw was also found to be a poor choice for litter because it formed heavy smelly mats, provided a medium for harmful bacteria, insects and ammonia, and can cause crop impaction. Hardwood shavings can harbor disease-causing molds and fungi as well as emitting toxic phenol fumes. The last thing anyone wants is a toxic environment for their girls. Sand, on the other hand, desiccates droppings leading to a drier coop which means less risk of respiratory diseases, fewer biting flies, less bacterial growth, lower risk of frostbite and reduced bumble-foot infections. There is no risk of crop impaction, as a matter of fact, I use a variety of sand grain sizes as litter in my coops. The larger grains seem to clump well with the poop and the smaller size, 'dust' becomes the hot tub area for the girls to relax and take a bath.

Chickens, like most critters, love to roll in the dust and take dirt baths. Chickens will care for their skin and feathers, digging shallow ditches in the sand, and roll and fluff to their heart's content. This is not only great exercise for the birds but serves to repel parasites and cool the body during those warm July days.

Sand reduces Coccidiosis problems because the bacteria requires a warm, damp environment to 'sporulate'. I use fine sand as well as some wood ash in one corner of the coop where the hot tub is. It's not an actual hot tub, folks, just a term I'm using to describe the small shallow rubber tub I keep full of fine sand and ash where they love to bathe. I've been asked about diatomaceous earth (DE) but have found research showing it to be unhealthy for humans, chickens and the environment. You can do your own research on DE.

I think sand makes for a cleaner looking coop as well. You could add some branches and stumps or stoups for the chickens to perch on during the day or genuflect before entering, or a small volleyball net to keep them active...but remember, chickens can be very competitive and sometimes can act cruelly to the weaker members of the team.

Some definitions

Hay is for Horses! Remember that admonition? Today they say, Sup. Should we say Sup is a Stand Up Paddleboard! Hay, by the way, is different from straw and is usually not used for bedding. Anatomically, **straw** is yellow and made from grain crops like wheat by removing the grain and the chaff. Straw should have no seeds (Ha!) and is used for animal bedding, compost and mulch. Hay is yellow or green and is made from dried grasses or legumes like alfalfa, has seeds and is used as animal feed.

- **Coop:** where I bought my books while attending Harvard.
- **Crop:** where the chicken temporarily stores food, which can become impacted as opposed to Crap, which is what comes out the other end.
- **Gizzard:** aka gullet or craw is anatomically called the ventriculus and is the hind part of the stomach which is especially modified for grinding. This is why you need to provide some true 'grit' for your girls. **What type of sand?** Funny you should ask. There is a difference. Use washed construction sand that has a variety of particle sizes and not play sand. When I was teaching in UAE, I asked a local about the huge piles of sand that seemed different from the surrounding sand in the deserts. Turns out the piles of sand were imported from New Jersey because the local sand (aeolian-wind-blown sand) was unsuitable for construction purposes. Don't forget a dish of crushed oyster shells to provide chickens with the nutrients they need for hard, healthy egg shells.
- **Sandbox:** A place in the Metaverse where you can play, create and own the future.

Quotes

- "No Straw, please!" Attributed to Joe Rosenshein at Critic's Diner in Honeoye Falls.
- "Let's make hay while it lasts." James Lovelock
- "The straw that broke the camel's back" attributed to Charles Dickens but from an Arab proverb concerning increasing a camel's load until it can't stand or walk any further *or* a quote from the attorney general concerning current legal actions against a former president. 🐾

BOG from p. 5



Above: Experimental clearing helped in reestablishing earlier-succession bog plants. The new areas cleared, as shown here, will expand on these successful management strategies.

After a loop along the bog's boardwalk and some quiet time listening to the gentle water voices rising from the bog's platform overlooking the meandering Cranberry Creek, I headed back toward the parking area and encountered a bog walker named David Buck. David, I discovered as our conversation evolved, is a bog enthusiast who was involved in the earliest phase of construction of the floating pathway that expands educational outreach in the bog—while safeguarding visitors and the delicate ecosystem that sustains the bog's most vulnerable and important inhabitants. Due to David's past involvement and extensive bog-related knowledge, my initial foray into Cranberry Bog—like the moss that gradually sucked up the lake that was—has expanded and grown.

I learned more about the boardwalk in late May, when David visited us in Canadice, NY and shared a video of the boardwalk being dropped into the bog by helicopter—section by section. The video also included an early educational walk through the bog, led by Don Miller. I learned more during a subsequent phone interview with Don Miller, who worked as Head Naturalist/Conservation Education Director at Meesing Nature Center, part of the Monroe County Conservation District (MCCD), from 1977 to 1984, during the period when the first 100' of the boardwalk was installed. Miller elaborated on the boardwalk, which is supported by the Follansbee Company floating dock system drums. At the time of the initial installation, the Follansbee Docks³ was a new dock system company in West Virginia with military contracts and the use of their drums at the Bog was one of the first non-military uses of this new lightweight air filled ABS plastic drum system.

Another name that kept coming up was that of Jim Ross, the 5th president of TNC (1958-1959). Ross, a local publisher (Dowden, Hutchinson, and Ross) was also an early member of the bog committee, and, as president of the Nature Conservancy when the Bog was acquired, was influential in helping to secure funds for the boardwalk and additional buffer lands to protect the Bog.

On the day I first visited the Bog, a group of TNC workers and volunteers were on site, working on the second phase of a preservation project. I spoke with Josephine Gingerich, who was overseeing the volunteer work as TNC's Land Steward in Pennsylvania.² She explained that the current work being done involved clearing an area in the center of the bog's boardwalk.

The goal of the planned clearing is to increase habitat for endangered native plant species, including cranberries, the bog's namesake, and to encourage the re-establishment of plant species unique to the bog—some of which have not been seen for decades. An earlier clearing initiative, in 2012, Gingerich explained, had proved successful—resulting in an increase in endangered flowering bog plants—and was now being expanded. I walked the boardwalk and took photographs while brush was moved to a chipping site above the bog. Some of the clearing that was taking place was to remove invasive species, not native to the original bog ecosystem, and to replicate clearing that might have occurred due to naturally-occurring fires.

After a loop along the



Cranberry Creek viewed from the boardwalk, late March 2022.

² Gingerich was with TNC for 5 years; she left to pursue exciting new adventures soon after we met in late March.

³ marinadockage.com/buyers_guide/follansbee-dock-systems

The wood walkway is made of pressure treated lumber and, given the potential hazards inherent with this type of wood treatment, two years of water testing⁴ was required following the installation, to assess the potential impacts before TNC would give the go-ahead for the remaining sections. Don recalled helping cut rectangular holes in the bog mat in winter for the floating drums (an improved design—now filled with foam for better buoyancy). David, Don shared, was instrumental in making all this happen, with the support of a very active (monthly) local Bog Committee (established in 1977). Working with the County Commissioners, they were able to get the Monroe County Vo-tech School to build the 10' long decking sections. The sections

were then stockpiled in the Bryson sisters field, adjacent to the Bog. In the end, the remaining sections were also approved and added. The educational access and outreach made possible through the boardwalk is a defining characteristic that differentiates the Cranberry Bog from TNC's original emphasis on land preservation.

"Once a bog enthusiast always a bog enthusiast" soon became my mantra as David introduced me to a widening circle of bog-loving conservationists. The importance of education as part of the Bog preservation mission was evident among all who I spoke with, including Roger Spotts, the Monroe County Conservation District's Environmental Education Coordinator since 1984. Spotts manages the bog's educational programs, land stewardship, and acquisition efforts. In addition to regularly scheduled walks open to the general public, MCCC has facilitated nature walks there for thousands of Monroe County (PA) elementary school children over the years. Due to that educational object and the collective work to make the bog more accessible to all, four thousand people a year are able to tour the bog.

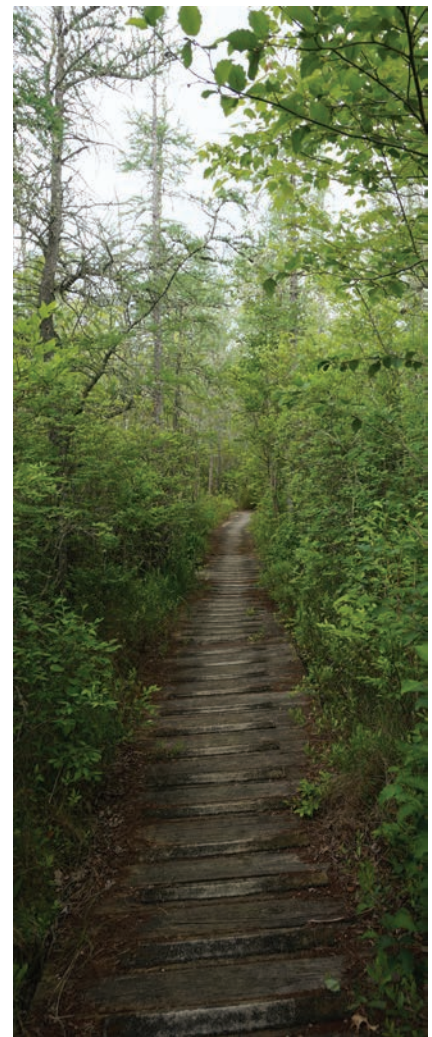
This educational focus came even more into view when, on June 1st, Todd Touris and I were invited into the bog to join a who's-who group of early bog enthusiasts: Dr. Ray Milewski, a botanist and retired East Stroudsburg University professor—who was influential in the restoration initiative and is also the current chair of the Tannersville Cranberry Bog Stewardship Committee; Rob Baxter, a long-time realtor and environmental activist involved with the bog for 40+ years; Melody Buck, a botany student of Frank Buser, who assumed an active early role in the bog—including helping with the earliest boardwalk installation; Don Miller, who first visited the Bog as an East Stroudsburg University (ESU) student with Professor Frank Buser in a Summer Botany course in 1972 and has, over the past 45 years, led many other walks into the Bog; and David, our host, a former chairman of the bog's preservation committee and lifelong bog-enthusiast.

Continued on page 33



D.E. Bentley

Left to Right: Dr. Ray Milewski, Rob Baxter, Melody Buck, Don Miller, and David Buck



⁴ Testing was donated by Prosser Labs.



Black Spruce Cookies

Wetlands are one of my favorite places to explore. The diversity of plant and animal life one can see on just a short paddle or walk through a wetland environment is incredible. So, when we were invited to explore the Tannersville Cranberry Bog, in the heart of the Pocono Mountains, Pennsylvania, I was excited.

I won't go into details about the bog trip,* but I was not disappointed. I had never seen a pitcher plant in the wild until that day, nor a bog rosemary.

During our slow stroll along the boardwalk that runs through the bog, we were fortunate enough to be accompanied by a small group of people that have played a critical role over the years in preserving it. Many had helped construct the original boardwalk in 1979. In sharing their deep knowledge of the plants and bog history, it became clear that this was a place near and dear to their hearts.

Now I have been known to purloin small logs and pieces of wood during my travels. So, when I saw a short, small log of black spruce lying along the boardwalk, I knew I had to have it. Thoughts of what to make from it immediately began to run through my head as I lugged it back to the truck (with the blessings of my hosts). The log, about 4 inches in diameter, was not going to yield much lumber. Maybe a small picture frame? Yawn. I wasn't coming up with anything very interesting.



work of the people involved.

I began by breaking down the log into cross sections about 1 inch thick, these are often called tree cookies by tree lovers. After cutting a baker's dozen using a simple sled and the bandsaw, I then ran them through the drum sander. This made quick work of getting to a nice, smooth surface.

Every child is amazed when they first learn about counting a tree's rings to determine its age. When I cut a cross section of the log and examined the rings, I felt that same feeling of wonder. From what had appeared to be a log from a small, young spruce tree, I counted 65 growth rings. Some of the rings were so close together I had to use a magnifying glass to count them. By an amazing coincidence, 65 years ago was the year 1957—the year the Nature Conservancy purchased the bog. That small tree had been there for every year of the bog preservation effort and through all the hard

Continued on back

Painters Celebrate Genesee Valley

BENJAMIN GAJEWSKI

The Genesee Valley 100 show will be open Nov. 16 - Dec 31

Painters often surround themselves in the landscape to gain inspiration for their art. This year, over 100 artists are doing so to support the local land conservation efforts of Genesee Valley Conservancy.

For the Genesee Valley 100: Community Painting Project artists were asked to paint a piece inspired by the Genesee Valley by Genesee Valley Conservancy, a local non-profit working in the Genesee River watershed to protect the habitat, open space and farmland of the region.

The collective display of all pieces will hang as a large mosaic at Silver Lake Brewing Project in Perry from November 16 thru December 31. The mosaic itself is a piece of art as the collection of pieces makes up a truly impressive hanging. As you walk closer to observe each individual one-square-foot painting, you'll step into a world as diverse as the Genesee Valley: animals, people, farmland, forests, streams, and much more. Individual pieces will be available for purchase online during the run of the show with proceeds split between the local artist and Genesee Valley Conservancy to support ongoing local conservation efforts.



A View of Little Mill Creek, Judy Soprano



Winter Epaulets, Roy Grisewood

One recent conservation project of the Conservancy's, featured in at least two paintings, is the acquisition of The Gully Preserve in Wayland. Last year, this 20-acre parcel featuring a high quality trout stream, cascading and falling through a stunning hemlock forest, was donated to the Conservancy so the property would remain open and accessible to the public.

Now that the place is owned by the Conservancy, staff are working on various improvements at this property. Treatments to save the hemlocks from the deadly hemlock wooly adelgid invasive species have begun. A kiosk with educational signs talking about the water quality and its value to trout and as the drinking water source for Dansville are in the works. A trail system is also being developed to establish safe and accessible trails for the community to use.

Genesee Valley Conservancy began the Genesee Valley 100 project in 2018 to engage with artists that appreciate the value of having open undeveloped landscapes in the community. The project aims to raise awareness of the important resources we have in the Genesee Valley to the greater community. Working farms, intact forestland, vast undeveloped open spaces, the landscapes here define our rural community character, our lifestyle, and are so important today and into the future.

The Genesee Valley 100 is supported by local solar installer Steed Energy, who installed an 18 panel array on the Conservancy's office in Geneseo. The system offsets 100% of the organization's electricity and prevents 2.4 tons of carbon pollution annually.

Silver Lake Brewing Project is pleased to play gallery for this colorful show, giving visitors an opportunity to view local art and taste their own locally created drinkable works of art!



Favorite View , Mary Lee Page

Genesee Valley Conservancy is a nationally accredited non-profit conservation organization working to protect the habitat, open space, and farmland in the Genesee River watershed. Over 26,282 acres of natural habitat, productive farm, and forest land have been conserved by Genesee Valley Conservancy's work with private landowners. The organization also owns nature preserves open to the public year-round for recreation and education. For more information visit www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org

FANTASTIC FLORA

• sallyl.white11@gmail.com

SALLY L. WHITE



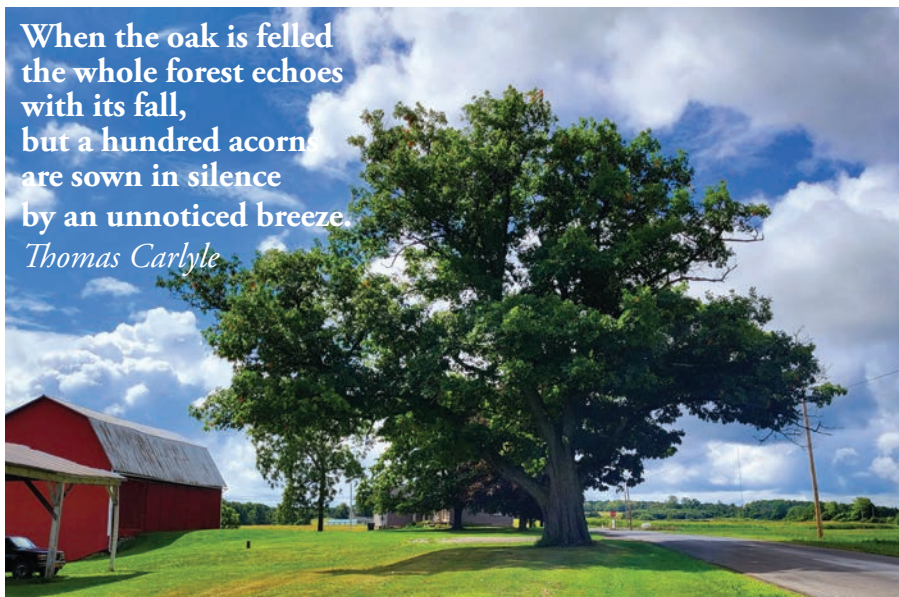
Great Oaks and Little Acorns

White Oak, *Quercus alba*; Red Oak, *Quercus rubra*;
Beech Family, *Fagaceae*

With ninety species of oaks in the United States alone and even more in Mexico, many North American ecosystems are built around the presence of these elegant trees, from live oaks in the southeast, to the scrub oaks of the west and southwest. White oak and northern red oak make up a major part of dry upland forests between and around the Finger Lakes, as they have for thousands of years. Oaks are native to the Northern Hemisphere, occurring across temperate parts of Europe and Asia as well as our continent.

“Oak,” generically speaking, is the national tree, so designated in 2004 after a decisive vote organized by the National Arbor Day Foundation. Oaks are so widespread in North America that six states and the District of Columbia have honored various oaks as their state tree. Their beauty and shade, as well as their widely used lumber, no doubt contributed to their popularity.

When the oak is felled
the whole forest echoes
with its fall,
but a hundred acorns
are sown in silence
by an unnoticed breeze
Thomas Carlyle



Oaks grown in open spaces achieve considerable size and spread in comparison with forest-grown specimens, which grow taller to reach sunlight. Trees like this may be 100 feet tall and just as wide, while forest trees may reach 200 ft in height. White oaks can live two or three centuries, although older specimens are known.



Leaves of white oak (left) have rounded lobes, and red oak has pointed or bristle-tipped leaves, making it easy to separate these two major groups. Note also differences in color and depth of lobes, with white oak indented almost to the midvein of the leaf.

Most of the nine species of oaks native to the Finger Lakes belong to the red oak group. Northern red oak is one of the top twelve tree species in the state and occurs in small or substantial amounts in almost 70% of New York’s forests; we’ll encounter it often. Others in the red oak group are pin oak (*Q. palustris*), black oak (*Q. velutina*), and scarlet oak (*Q. coccinea*).

White oaks, in contrast, have gently rounded leaf lobes rather than the points or bristles that characterize the red oak group. These include chestnut oak (*Q. montana*), bur oak (*Q. macrocarpa*) and swamp white oak (*Q. palustris*) in addition to our abundant white oak, *Quercus alba*.

Identifying species can be tricky, due in part to the tendency of the species to interbreed, or hybridize, muddling the characteristics. Thirteen of our thirty forms are hybrids rather than true species; all but three are native. Leaf forms also tend to be highly variable between trees, adding to the potential challenge.

Ecologists are still wrestling with whether these oaks are foundation species, those that “uniquely control” local plant and animal communities, or merely dominant, establishing structure and supporting entire food webs, but ultimately replaceable in terms of their roles in the forest. They may be either, depending on the locality. Significant among their ecosystem services, oaks provide nutritional support for more than forty species of eastern mammals and birds via their buds, leaves, and acorns. Oaks are also rich in relationships with insects and fungi, from native gall wasps and leaf miners to the invasive spongy moth that defoliates trees during cyclic outbreaks and the fungi often found at their base or on their trunks.

Packets of dense nutrition, acorns are a huge contribution to food chains, beginning well before they ripen. An acorn weevil may lay an egg in the developing acorn. The growing larva, safe in its hard shell, will consume the acorn from the inside, leaving a small exit hole when it emerges. Some years, it’s challenging to find acorns that haven’t been lost to these beetles. On the tree, acorns may also be targeted by birds such as woodpeckers and jays, grackles and nuthatches.



This year, our oaks leafed out in mid-May. As the leaves expand, mature oak trees bloom in separate male and female flowers. Here the male flowers, in long catkins, prepare to shed pollen. In fossil samples, an abundance of oak pollen indicates warmer, drier conditions in the past.



In the summer of 2019, red oaks bent under the load of acorns; the following spring, we found hundreds of them germinating below the trees, getting a taproot down into the ground. Red oak acorns develop over a period of 18 months, so these acorns are from flowers pollinated in the spring of 2018 and ripened during the wet summer of 2019. This year, the same branches have NO acorns. In contrast, white oak acorns are produced in one season and germinate shortly after dropping.

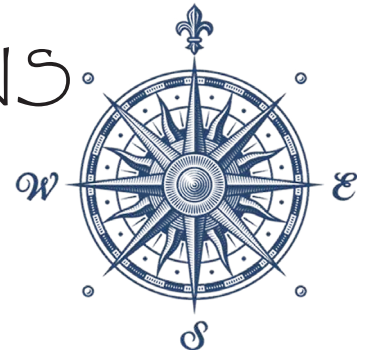


D.E. Bentley

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INSPIRING EXCURSIONS

BILL WATERHOUSE



Why We Hike

One day we won't be able to climb that mountain, hill or trail. Many store patrons who've been slowed by age stop by to reminisce of past experiences. "I used to hike all the time, but now those days are over" they say. Many in their seventies, eighties. Some even as young as sixty. They stop in to see new gear that makes life easier in the woods. Most reply "I wish I had that!" or "Makes things a lot easier than back in my day!" How fun would it be to go back in time and enjoy a hike with them, as they all seem to have great stories and memories.

At the moment I'm considering becoming an Adirondack 46'ers, hiking all the North Country's High Peaks. Too many customers have stared into the distance while describing awe inspiring views from High Peaks summits. Other novices stop by with logistical questions, asking if they're capable of climbing the mountains or where to stay. My curiosity and thirst for hiking knowledge has been activated, so now I feel the pull of the Adirondacks. There's a sticker that reads: "The mountains are calling me, and I must go." I'm feeling the pull, and luckily, I'm still able to consider it.

But Nature has a way of making time move forward, weakening muscles, brittling bones, and throwing one off balance. A few friends who've stayed active their whole lives are now breaking down. Hip and knee replacements, back issues. A friend who just turned 50 has too many neck problems to check off his bucket list item of walking the Appalachian Trail. I'll hike portions of it with him once he's able to get started. Hopefully sooner rather than never.

Someday I won't have the ability to reach Mt. Marcy's peak. Letchworth's incredibly picturesque Gorge Trail will be too long, too steep, too tiring to complete. The Cranberry 50 miles will become the Cranberry 50 steps to reach Otto's Abode in Wanakena from my parked car, talking with Proprietor Nolan about the good ol' days. Until then, I'll stay in the here and now, creating good ol' day stories. Hopefully you can too.

Many thanks to Darlene, for allowing me to contribute to this fine periodical. It's been a pleasure getting to know her and her very friendly pup. I can only wish her and all the *Owl Light* contributors the very best in the future.

For the final issue, here's a poem that sums it all up for me: Bidding farewell without end!

Stages

Hermann Hesse

As every flower fades
and as all youth
Departs, so life at every stage
So every virtue, so our grasp
of truth,
Blooms in its day and may not
last forever.
Since life may summon us at every age
Be ready, heart, for parting,
new endeavor,
Be ready bravely and without remorse
To find new light that old ties
cannot give.
In all beginnings dwells a magic force
For guarding us and helping us to live.
Serenely let us move to distant places
And let no sentiments of home detain us.
The Cosmic Spirit seeks not to restrain us
But lifts us stage by stage to wider spaces
If we accept a home of our own making,
Familiar habit makes for indolence,
We must prepare for parting
and leave-taking
Or else remain the slaves of permanence.
Even the hour of our death may send
Us speeding on to fresh and newer spaces,
And life may summon us to newer races.
So be it, hear: bid farewell without end.

If you have questions about hiking adventures in Letchworth and the surrounding areas, 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 or talk with us about how we can support your next journey. We'd love to help!

Homestead from p.15

It occurs to me that a gardener cannot really be a “master gardener,” in much the same way the modest and humble essay – however good – can never really be called a “master-piece.” The label just doesn’t fit.

I am also fascinated by the fact that while there are similarities between the experience of a nature walk and a walk in the garden, and some affinities between nature writing and garden writing, it must be said that gardening is not really “about” nature. Gardening is about the gardener’s *relationship to* and *embeddedness within* nature. And while I enjoy the genre of nature writing as well, I have a deep distrust of some of its absurdly masculine core values: whether it is the extreme-sport quest for the sight of a rare snow leopard, or the romanticizing of the radical otherness of nature that offers an escape from the all-too-human and the finite first-person point of view. In nature writing, we are reminded that tall mountains and wild spaces can strike a sublime, exhilarating terror in the beholder. Garden spaces do not normally terrify or exhilarate, unless it is the ineffable terror experienced at the sight of an unweeded garden when one returns from a two-week summer vacation.

Yes, I will always be drawn instead to the unheroic, anti-sublime writing that has bad knees and dirt on its hands and an earth-bound sense of humor. Karel Čapek, one of the great garden writers, captures the image of gardeners in the springtime, “presenting their rumps to the splendid azure sky.” “In this position,” he writes, “they enjoy Spring, while over their behinds the sun describes his glorious circuit, the clouds swim, and the birds of heaven mate.” I love it.

What Is Left Unsaid

I have been revisiting and reflecting upon my own modest contributions to the genre, partly in an effort to see if there is anything they all have in common in terms of theme or purpose. (Authors are not always fully conscious of such things.) I find that some of what I wrote now makes me wince with embarrassment; much of it seems way too long; and one or two things seem to hold up pretty well on a second reading. But I have found it just as interesting to reflect upon what did *not* make it to print, whether in the form of sketches and notes or in the form of nearly finished pieces.

For quite some time, I have had stashed away in my proverbial desk drawer an unfinished draft with a fully conscious and overt theme, a piece with the working title of “In Praise of Amateurism” (alternative title: “In Defense of Amateurism”). For nearly two years, I had meant to bring this to final publishable form. It never came to pass. I see in my notes dating from the early months of 2020 that I was going

to open with a quote from former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg, who caused a tempest in a teapot with some comments he made during his brief and expensive run for the presidency in the pre-pandemic months of that year (a time which now seems like decades ago, does it not?). In a recorded speech in February of 2020, Bloomberg the city boy billionaire claimed that he could “teach anybody, even people in this room, to be a farmer. It’s a process. You dig a hole, you put seed in, you put dirt on top. Add water, up comes corn.” He compared this quaint form of labor with the skill set demanded by the information economy, a form of work which requires “a lot more grey matter.”

That was not exactly the wisest rhetoric to employ as a response to the resurgence of political populism, and you may have noticed that our current president is not Michael Bloomberg. However, I was much more interested in the critical response to what Bloomberg said, most of which went to great lengths to defend the special level of expertise attached to the practice of farming. I could not help but wonder: What exactly is wrong with doing something that anyone can be taught to do? The incident got me to thinking about the logic of amateurism and specialized expertise, and about the ways we value things as a culture.

I still stand by the questions I raised and the points I was trying to make. But on some level, I was never satisfied with the piece as a whole. I suppose I could not decide whether I was praising or defending; and the defensiveness gave the piece a polemical tone that threatened to turn into the kind of self-righteous and self-satisfied tone that I try to avoid (and which is poison to the traditional essay). In the ensuing months of the pandemic, moreover, the issue of expertise and amateurism had itself become a politically fraught issue, one that I did not quite know how to navigate. I suppose there is something at odds between polemics and the playful reverie of the essay.

There is a lot in that aborted draft that I do like, however. Much of it was devoted to a non-defensive argument in celebration of the role of amateurs in the heyday of homesteading in 19th century America. In particular, I wanted to talk about the inherently small scale, homely activity of growing heirloom apples and (more generally) the role that individual, amateur orchardists played in promoting biodiversity in the 19th century – something that was lost in the 20th century as more people shifted to urban centers and homesteading and local economies were replaced by commercial economies of scale. In 1900, before commercial growing and the Granny Smith, Red Delicious and Honeycrisp came to dominate

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Pitcher Plant



Grass Pink Orchid | *Calopogon tuberosa*



Rose Pogonia | *Pogonia ophioglossoides*

Terratracks by Ray Roper

WWW.TERRATRACKS.PHOTOGRAPHY

STEPHEN LEWANDOWSKI

ROUND ABOUT

“The Creator would appear as endowed with a passion for stars, on the one hand, and for beetles on the other, because they are so numerous.”

-apocryphally J. B. S. Haldane, geneticist

I hear a revised version
words of that Shaker hymn
Simple Gifts.
They sing
“Til we come down
where we want to be.”
It seems that we can’t live
with “by turning and turning,
come ‘round right,” so
we change “ought” to “want”
alter the words to suit
ourselves.

*

In a car
on an actual turnabout
intersection, navigating
something new, maybe
the first time, nerves object.
Keep moving and once
you enter the circle
the right-of-way is yours.
You could spend all day
doing just this.

*

There could be another
interpretation of what
Haldane might have said
about the proliferation
and diversity of Creation:
the Creator is as likely to appear
as an arthropod, great maple
or virus as in
some human shape.

SMOOTH POLISHED STONE

Disinterred by the claw
of backhoe standing idly
by a ten foot deep hole
speaking for itself
a layer of modern fill over
marshy clay soil on top
of pure, dark sand running
quick in the rain.

This handful of
light striped granite
marked like a snake
worked by abrasives
adhering to its surface,
feels like a useful stone
kept in the dark 10,000 years.

Stephen Lewandowski has retired after a forty year career with various conservation agencies while publishing fifteen large and small books of poetry and essays. His most recent is *Hard Work in Low Places*, a collection of poems published by Tiger Bark Press in Rochester, NY. He hopes his poetry will interest students of natural history, biological sciences, watersheds and macroinvertebrates. He has spent the majority of his life in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York whose preservation and protection he alternately desires and despairs of.

Oaks from p.27

Even when the ripened acorn makes it to the ground, it's still not safe. We might think of squirrels first, as their use of acorns is obvious. Although white oak acorns are more palatable, they germinate soon after they fall. For winter use squirrels prefer red oak acorns, which keep longer in storage; these get planted in scattered sites where the squirrels hope to find them again.

For acorns, travel any distance away from the parent tree depends on where the squirrels take them. I did an informal survey in our side yard: Out of ten seedling trees, I found one maple, one larch, one white oak, and seven red oaks. These seedlings are growing hundreds of feet from the nearest mature oaks. It's clear where ecological succession—and the helpful squirrels—will take us if we, as landowners here, don't intervene soon!

If acorns land near the route of a foraging wild turkey, however, their days are up; they become part of his daily calories. I was surprised to learn the extent to which deer, bears, and even wood ducks also eat acorns. Deer and rodents may browse seedlings. Given all these threats, how and when can an acorn become an oak tree?

Oaks and other nut trees sometimes beat the system by producing exceptionally large crops of nuts in certain years. The theory is that seed predators can't keep up, and more seeds will escape to become, with time and good fortune, mature trees. When trees overwhelm hungry predators, we call it a "mast year," and these may occur somewhat regularly or even be synchronized within and among nut-producing species like hickories and oaks. Populations of rodents, birds, and other seed predators must survive lean years in between as well. By being undependable, trees improve their chance of reproductive success.



So, we still have oaks, and entire forests of them! Despite the many animals they support along the way, oaks have managed to grow and reproduce, to expand into available habitats, and to thrive even in environments managed or disrupted by humans. An oak needs to produce successful offspring—trees that survive—only once in its long lifetime. It can afford to be patient and feed a few squirrels along the way. 🌳

Every acorn on the ground is just as alive as the three-hundred-year-old oak tree that towers over it.

—Hope Jahren

Images courtesy of Hadi Soetrisno (QKALightPhotography.com) and Sally L. White, unless noted otherwise.

BOG from p. 23

We were treated to a delightful educational experience as we listened to these co-boggers reflect on the Bog's educational roots and on the geological roots that created such a magical place. My head was spinning as the group's members shared their vast knowledge of the flora and fauna unique to, and dependent upon, the Bog's delicate ecosystem.

Cranberry Bog's water is replenished through precipitation alone. Ombrotrophic bogs have few nutrients, which greatly limits plant diversity and slows growth. Carnivorous plants, such as sundews and pitcher plants, have adapted to the nutrient deficiency by trapping insects and dissolving them for nutrients. Invasive bushes, such as Japanese barberry, English privet, multiflora rose, highbush blueberry, sheep laurel, and leatherleaf, as well as stilt grass, have also adapted to the bog environment. As they take a greater foothold, their presence threatens some of the native plant species.

The desire to turn back time and restore the Bog to earlier periods in its succession have prompted the more active management approach evident during my initial bog visit. Roger Spotts cited the success of the trial clearings in 2012, when Dr. Ray Milewski and students from East Stroudsburg University established several small study plots at the preserve. Their research suggests that removing woody, shade producing vegetation allows rare bog plants to reestablish themselves. These study plots are the basis for expanded cutting to create a larger clearing in the center of the boardwalk. The clearing involves the removal of invasive species by hand.

Ray Milewski shared with us additional insight into the scientific hypotheses that he and his students followed and used in the original managed clearings:

Over the years as shrubs have come to dominate the bog community, various distinctive bog plant species have become reduced in numbers or have disappeared from the community. A theoretical framework for managing of plant communities developed by European researchers, for example Grime, reduces dominance by increasing disturbance. Because of the small seed strategies found among plants in field communities, disturbance results in weedy species becoming established. In comparison, though, the reproductive strategies of plants in bog communities is one of persistent propagules which can germinate many years later. More than 12 years ago I set up a research project in the bog in which shrubs and trees were removed from one area. Afterwards we saw the establishment of populations of open sphagnum mat species such as bog rosemary and cranberry in this plot. This year we saw the blooming of decent sized populations of two bog orchids, the grass pink and rose pogonia in this research area. Grass pink orchids have not been seen in this particular bog since at least the 1950s. It is heartening to see how successful this management project has turned out.

Images of grass pink and rose pogonia orchids can be found on page 30.

Continued on page 34



D.E. Bentley

Tannersville Cranberry Bog hosts many different species of ferns, both along the boardwalk and along the wooded trails surrounding the bog.

BOG from p. 33



David Buck holds a handful of spaghnum moss (*Sphagnum flexuosum*).

Based on the results of the earlier test plots, the clearing will offer space and light for the continued reestablishment of orchids, bog rosemary, and carnivorous sundew and pitcher plants. It also benefits the bog's cranberry plants, which, in turn, benefits the Bog Copper butterfly (*Lycaena epixanthe*) that feeds almost exclusively on the native cranberries. The Bog Copper is a Pennsylvania species of concern, with a state ranking of S2 (imperiled).⁵

After our walk, we settled in for continuing conversation at Cook's Corners Family Restaurant in nearby Henryville. The group would have rather gathered at the Tannersville Inn. It was at this 100-year-old Inn that the earliest members of the Tannersville Cranberry Bog Stewardship Committee and other co-collaborators met to share their love of the Bog and plan for its future preservation and educational accessibility. Now permanently closed, Tannersville Inn is slated to be razed and Wawa (an East Coast convenience store chain) wants to build a convenience store on the site. David took us by the Inn, on our way to the bog. For the five individuals who led us into the Bog, the bog walk was a reunion, a chance to reflect back on times past. For me, it was a chance to take a closer look, to let the Bog weave its magic on me as it has with so many who came before. The stop at Cook's Corners also gave me the opportunity to sample shoofly pie (a marvelous, delicious concoction of molasses that is, I was told, as old as the Pennsylvania hills).

The clearing also includes the removal of some black spruce and tamarack trees, growing at the southern limit of their ranges. Although the spruce trees being removed are only around 4" in diameter and a mere 15-20 feet in height, some are more than fifty years old (see "Heartwood" p. 24). The black spruce were seedlings in the seventies when the earliest members of the Bog Stewardship Committee put the boardwalk in place. Some early bog preservationists, including David Miller—although in agreement on the need to clear out woody invasives—question the need to remove the trees as well. Nonetheless, David was on hand, helping with the clearing (and encouraging me to join in as well).



These oak trees have adapted to the challenges of the bog environment: their gracefull roots spread and sink into the soft soil substrate as mosses and lichens create lacework on their bark.

⁵ The Bog Copper are given this name because their coloration ranges from orange-red to brown, usually with a copper tinge and dark markings. The Bog Copper is the smallest of the United States coppers and is found throughout northeastern North America. This species is restricted to acid bogs with cranberries (*Vaccinium macrocarpon* and *V. oxycoccos*). The bog substrate, usually *Sphagnum* moss, must be saturated or nearly so most or all of the year and the area must be sunny

Understanding the past helps inform and safeguard the future. Science, combined with human imagination, offers us all opportunities to explore more and to collectively safeguard and build a better tomorrow. While stopped along the boardwalk, we were alerted to a corner area where scientists have taken 10' core samples of bog layers. These are being analyzed for clues, including pollen analysis, to gain a better understanding of how the flora has evolved over time and for insight into the human impact on flora. Concern for and action on behalf of our environment begins with scientific curiosity and interaction with the natural world. Our understanding of humanity's role in environmental degradation and our active responses to environmental challenges has evolved in much the same way that bogs change, slowly, and incrementally. It was the establishment of the Union of Concerned Scientists in 1969 that offered a stepping stone for the development of The Nature Conservancy, which has, according to its website (*nature.org*) "protected more than 125 million acres of land." Many other national and regional organizations also take active roles in preserving what remains. Humans have accelerated extinction around the globe and increasing numbers of individuals believe that we have entered a new age: the Anthropocene or "Age of Humans."⁶ That is, an age when human-induced impacts have permanently altered our world (and possibly our geological record, what future humans will discover as they, in turn, dig up and explore the past).

Don Miller begins his informative foray, often, with:

In just 1000' of a "dry foot" walk all who visit are transported back 10-15,000 years in time as the glaciers carved out and then retreated from Monroe County in the Poconos of Pennsylvania to create this landscape. And you are also transported several hundred miles north to similar Bog wetland landscapes of the Canadian Maritime provinces.

His words offer an introduction to a very special ecosystem that is being actively managed to maintain a diversity of species. For the immediate future, Tannersville Cranberry Bog will continue to educate people of all ages and cement in them (as it has for all those who shared their stories of this magical place) a love of and appreciation for the natural world.

If we were able to climb aboard our time machine and travel thousands of years forward in time we would see (given the natural progression of succession and void of human intervention) a forested world—perhaps one with new flora and fauna adapted to a human-influenced environment. The near future of the Bog will be determined by today's and tomorrow's bog enthusiasts and preservationists. The educational mission that has been established at Tannersville Cranberry Bog increases the chances that future generations will value and set aside even more land for those yet to come.

As Don Miller puts it: "I still to this day run into former students, now in their 40s and 50s, who remember and talk about their first visit to the Bog in Tannersville. I think the unique Bog and its well-trod floating boardwalk did in fact work its 'memory magic.' And those who before us took wet footed students into the Bog, I believe are smiling down on our boardwalk efforts and accomplishments." ❧

See Afterthoughts on page 41

⁶ First mentioned by Nobel Prize-winning, atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen and biologist Eugene Stoermer. Possible affirming signals of human influence include things like plutonium, concrete, plastic, nitrogen, fly ash, and carbon isotopes. (*smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/where-world-anthropocene-180960241/*)



D.E. Bentley

The pitcher plants were in full bloom when I returned to the bog in June.

THE DISCERNING READER



MARY DRAKE

The Lost Man

A 22-Hour Literary Trip

The Lost Man
by Jane Harper
FICTION 340 pages
Flatiron Books (2019)

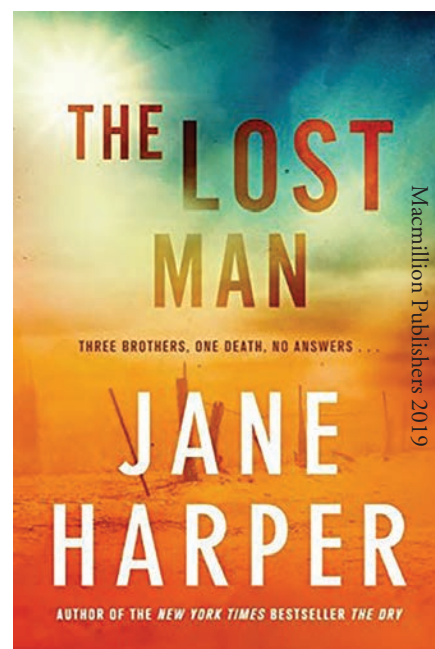
Maybe one of the exotic places you've always hoped to visit is Australia, the land down under, so called because it's down under the equator. It's home to many natural wonders, including the Great Barrier Reef and the Outback. The latter is the setting for Jane Harper's most recent book, *The Lost Man*. It's the story of three brothers and their family who live on sweeping cattle ranches in a vast, sparsely populated, and semi-arid Outback. Set in western Queensland, the second largest state in Australia, the book has been called "deeply atmospheric," meaning that Harper describes the landscape vividly; it is almost like one of the characters. This story would not be the same story anywhere else.

The landscape acts upon the characters, and the first thing it does, right at the beginning, is kill someone. The death is both horrifying and puzzling, which is why the book is considered a mystery, both a crime thriller and a suspense. But it is also a character study of three brothers, Nathan, Cameron, and Bub, who have endured the isolation of the Outback and abuse at the hands of their father. The brothers live on vast, adjoining cattle ranches—over 800,000 acres, and it takes hours to drive from Nathan's house to Cam's. Cameron dies right at the beginning of the book, and the rest of the book is

concerned with Nathan trying to figure out how and why his brother died.

It's obvious that he died from heat exposure and dehydration, and some are quick to label the death a suicide, but Nathan doesn't think the circumstances add up. The sun and heat are brutal in this harsh environment and everyone knows the dangers. Nathan and Cam have grown up knowing that the first rule of living in this isolated area is always to be prepared. So how did Cam end up so many miles from his vehicle? It's not broken down and it's well stocked with food and water. The keys are just lying on the seat. So why would he have just walked away?

But lately the two brothers have grown estranged. So Nathan begins poking around into the dynamics of his brother's family life. One is reminded of Tolstoy's famous quote: "All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Families are unhappy for many different reasons, and Nathan eventually discovers several reasons for unhappiness simmering just beneath the surface. It surprises him, since Cam has always been the most personable and generally well liked of the brothers. But it soon becomes clear that he was no angel. We're told that lately he has seemed distracted. Plus all three brothers bear scars, both literal and figurative, from the harsh discipline suffered at the hands



of their abusive father. Is it inevitable that the sins of the father ooze down from one generation to the next?

The plot can sometimes bog down a little in the time spent describing family interactions. Kirkus reviews describes the book as "A twisty slow burner by an author at the top of her game." Twisty, yes. Often you can't see where the author is going. But also sometimes slow. Do we really need to know how the Christmas tree is decorated or how Nathan teaches his niece to play the guitar? Yet the minutiae of everyday life are what go into drawing the entire picture. It's because the author goes back into Nathan's memories of himself and Cam as teenagers that we come to appreciate the full extent of the brothers' emotional scars and why they have grown apart. People—even family—can grow apart when life gets in the way, but how much more

likely are they to grow apart when they had a father who encouraged competition and distrust.

Living on a ranch on the Outback is a harsh, lonely life. Besides the brothers' houses being four hours apart, the landscape itself "is almost as alien as the moon's surface," and the "effects of long-term isolation are always a concern." It's even more of a concern for Nathan who has been isolated more than most, ostracized by the local community for what in rural areas is considered an unforgivable offense—refusing aid to someone in need. Now

others question his emotional stability, and another variable is thrown into the equation—whether he's a reliable narrator.

Men who work on cattle ranches in the Outback can seem like modern-day cowboys in SUV's, and Harper portrays them as tough and often taciturn. Australian narrator Stephen Shanahan, who has narrated all of Harper's audiobooks, really uses his deep voice and thick Australian accent to become Nathan Bright, making all of Nathan's anger, doubt and curiosity believable.

This is author Jane Harper's fourth book, her first three being *The Dry*, *Force of Nature*, and *The Survivors*. Her books have won many awards, and to many she has become identified with Australia, where she lives; most of her books are set in the Australian Outback or the Bush. Harper has said that she's less interested in the crimes that occur in her books and more in "the ripple effects," which is another way of saying that it's really the people who matter. And who can argue with that? ✎

Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance

Fact That Reads Like Fiction

There are a lot of good books out there, but do you ever notice how certain ones are overrun with recommendations and heaped with awards. Everyone jumps onto the bandwagon of a particular book, which then goes on to become a best-seller.

This is what happened with *Grit*, the non-fiction book whose short, catchy title belies the extensive research that went into it. Angela Duckworth, a professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, has spent years defining and researching the term "grit," which essentially means stick-to-it-iveness. Grit might just seem like another word for perseverance, but don't forget it also includes passion. Not many of us would deny that these are both qualities worth having, but when the two occur together and you have grit—Wow! Watch out. Nothing can stand in your way.

So how do you become gritty? Maybe you already have it. In the book, Duckworth includes a Grit grid,

ten simple statements like "I am a hard worker" and "My interests change from year to year," which you use to rate yourself on a scale of 1 - 5. Like many psychological assessments, you probably know what the best answer would be, but heh, it's only helpful if you're honest. The good news is that even if your score is fair to middling, grit can be developed.

And if it can be developed, why not start learning it at a young age, in school? When Duckworth proclaimed that grit is a more reliable predictor of success than either talent or I.Q, she got the attention of many educators. Now, across the country, schools have begun trying to grow and measure the grit of their students. It's considered a "non-cognitive" skill, one of those subjective qualities that must be hard to gauge, kind of like measuring how much sunlight is coming in a window. But that's what scientists and educators do; they test, measure, and grade their findings. You're not alone if grit reminds you a lot of what used to be

called "effort" on report cards. In any case, Duckworth, a former teacher herself, has the noble motivation of wanting more than anything to "use psychological science to help kids thrive."

Some of the "grit paragons" of success that Duckworth holds up in the book as examples are people like Kit Cole, thirty-five-year old president of the Cinnabon bakery chain under whose direction "sales grew faster than they had in more than a decade, and within four years exceeded one billion dollars"; Super Bowl-winning coach of the Seattle Seahawks, Pete Carroll who professes to be building a team with "the grittiest culture in the NFL"; and thirteen-year-old Anurag Kashyap who out spelled thousands of others to win the Scripps National Spelling Bee, a tense, three-day competition held in Washington, DC, and broadcast on ESPN. These are in addition to the usual examples of success, such as Woody Allen, Warren Buffet, Maya

Continued on page 38

Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance
by Angela Duckworth
NONFICTION 282 pages
Scribner (2016)

Reader from p.37

Angelou, and Bill Gates.

Admittedly, some of the grit paragon that Duckworth profiles pursue artistic or intellectual goals (like being a champion speller), but as is quite common in a capitalistic culture, proof of success often has to do with how much money you have made. Some critics have observed that in her studies of grit, Duckworth has made no mention of any moral component; you could be gritty and successful but completely amoral. Perhaps it is just assumed that a gritty person will, hopefully, be ethi-

cal. In any case, grit seems like enough of an imprecise term without dragging morality into the discussion.

In a society that loves “the natural,” that is obsessed with inherited talent, Duckworth’s message is encouraging: effort counts twice as much as talent. So you don’t have to be born with a talent for whatever you want to do. It’s helpful if you are, but if not, all you have to do is care passionately about something and then work twice as hard. For the most part, the author ignores the question of luck, although

she does mention the importance of supportive parenting, coaching, and mentoring for young people to develop grit. Another thing that’s not mentioned is the usefulness of money in pursuing one’s goals; years of training are often costly. Maybe, like the moral component we hope is a part of grit, it is just assumed.

Reading *Grit* is like an extended pep talk that gives you ample food for thought and may even inspire you to keep plugging away. ✎

An Elegant Defense: *The Extraordinary New Science of the Immune System, A Tale in Four Lives*

If you’re one of the 50 million Americans who suffer from an autoimmune disease (that’s 20 percent of the population, by the way, and growing) then you’ll want to read *An Elegant Defense*. You might also want to read it if you’re curious about vaccines, their history, and how they work. In fact, this book could hardly have come at a better time, since COVID has us all wondering if our immune systems are up to the challenge of fending off the virus.

Author Matt Richtel says that, in the popular imagination:

The immune system is often described with the language of war, one that pits our internal forces against evil disease by using powerful cells capable of surveillance and spying This defense apparatus also enjoys a status virtually unrivaled by any other facet of human biology. It roams the body freely, moving through and across organ systems. Like police in a time of martial law

An Elegant Defense: The Extraordinary New Science of the Immune System, A Tale in Four Lives by Matt Richtel
NONFICTION 409 pages HarperCollins (2019)

But the war metaphor is inaccurate, he maintains; the body is more like a “raucous festival,” at which “just about every organism that wants to” can get in, including the bad guys like invading bacteria, viruses, and parasites. And rather than being like police, the immune system resembles a “peace-keeping force that more than anything else seeks to create harmony . . . tossing out the bad guys while doing as little damage to other cells as possible.” Except, of course, in the case of autoimmunity, in which case the immune system becomes like an “out of control police state.”

To describe its distinctive nature and features, Richtel goes far back in time to the history of how the immune system was discovered, and how we learned its functioning. After all, it’s invisible to the human eye and it

courses throughout our bodies, affecting literally everything. How did we learn of its existence, its elegant (which here means ingenious) and intricate workings? In a word—piecemeal.

It took centuries.

The science of immunology developed through “a combination of accident, brilliantly conceived experimentation, and controversy,” says Richtel. It can be traced as far back as the sixteenth century with the discovery of a small organ in a chicken that is comparable to the human thymus, source of our T-cells which fight infection. The seventeenth-century saw the discovery of “milky veins,” containing white blood cells; in the nineteenth-century phagocytes, the “devourer of cells,” were discovered; and finally came the theory of antibodies. It wasn’t until the twentieth century that scientists put

together the two halves of the immune system—the other half being the B-cells, which come from bone marrow and which generate antibodies.

As you might expect, there's a lot of science in this book. Richtel strives, and for the most part succeeds, in making it understandable, but still, at times, your eyes might glaze over. That's why he has ingeniously chosen to personalize the science of immunology by showing its application to four people who suffer from disease. They are the author's childhood friend Jason, who had Hodgkin's lymphoma; Bob Hoff, a gay man who contracted HIV and whose immune system amazingly kept it in check; Linda Bowman, a successful business woman whose life

and career were sidelined by rheumatoid arthritis, and Merredith Branscombe, who has a particularly virulent case of lupus. The author gives a lot of background and personal detail about each person, so we come to feel like we know them and we care about their fates. Through these people, Richtel discusses the clinical application of immune system science which, for so long, remained a subject only studied in the laboratory.

There's so much information included in this book that you might be tempted to skip ahead to chapters of specific interest, like the ones on transplants, inflammation, or vaccines, but then you'll miss the big picture. And although Richtel mentions dozens of

world-renowned scientists, one name keeps coming up that should be familiar to all of us, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health and whom Richtel calls "one of the leading scientific lights in the world."

Since this book concerns such a detailed medical subject, you might expect the author to be a doctor or researcher, but in fact he's a Pulitzer-Prize-winning journalist from the New York Times who's done extensive interviews with world-renowned scientists. Perhaps the fact that he's primarily a writer is what makes this book so compulsively readable as well as enlightening. 🦉

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 30, Forgotten About**, p. 286, Annamund directs Arthur and Emily to an underground cave where they are safe from molten lava and the flames of a burning forest. And who should they discover is hiding there also but Emily's nemesis, Simon Poyntz. In a moment of spite towards Emily, Simon tells them that the Seneschal, who was holding Sophia prisoner, has allowed her to starve to death in her tower room.

The story continues online with new chapters each month.

Next Up in October: Chapter 31, An Uneasy Alliance, p. 295

Struggling not to despair over Sophia's death, Emily continues to hide out with Arthur and Simon. Hearing a strange whooshing sound during the night, she sneaks off to explore the cave and discovers an underground lake with a fantastical light display.

Monthly installments will continue online.

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

If you simply can't wait to see how Emily navigates each exciting turn in the path, the book is available as an e-book on Amazon **and in print**.

Visit marydrake.online to learn more.



THE CONSCIOUS CROW

Reminding You To Grow!



Onward We Go ...

Manipulated by mystery and fueled by the scent of uncertainty, we walk into the unknown. Seldom do we know the reasons why or where the road will go, albeit, we walk on.

Each pocket of life we greet offers insight, as well as challenge. Illuminated by a twinkle that is hard to see. Something once concealed, slowly brought to light, beaming into our consciousness. An awareness gradually revealed through time. Similar to the song “Scarlet Begonias,” Grateful Dead beckons this, and “Once in a while you can get shown the light in the strangest of places if you look at it right.” A page turns and we discover something new. From painful lessons witnessed time and time again, a sense of grace emerges. Through trial and error, we see countless avenues born out of nowhere. Through hardship, a sense of strength. Step further back and we see. Though sometimes lessons are concealed in such a way that we struggle to find the right light to shine upon this mystery and challenge. Sometimes they remain unclear. Pieces of the puzzle left to the imagination.

The fact we happen upon challenge in our lives is not by accident. Hardship is not by punishment. It is the way. There cannot be light without dark. Day without night. Struggle without achievement. Lack of appreciation for one would cease without the other. Like an old adage that lives on forever.

Ease and hardship have their rightful places among the rich and ragged

experiences of our total human existence. We come upon these episodes of painful frustration to teach us. To help us. To breathe new life into the spaces we have long covered with cobwebs. To enhance our journey and awaken the sleeping parts that we have buried deep within us. To question the things we never took the time to seriously engage in. To bring meaning to our days. And when push comes to shove, they offer inspiration and determination, instigating change. A newness. Something blooms and becomes. These are the balances of life. Equinoxes. Flowing tides. Push and pull. Happy and sad. If we do not experience trials of exhaustion, we do not fully appreciate the glory of rest that emerges thereafter. Accomplishment. Or the sense of knowing our actions were worthy in creating something new.

These challenging and confusing parts of our journey are not to be ignored or slighted. They are to be cherished and revered as sacred pieces along the way of our becoming. Growing pains. Stepping stones. An essential piece to the puzzle that we may never fully see, but trust, despite its lack of apparent form. But as concrete as daylight precedes night: change arrives at our doorstep. And when that door closes, inevitably, remarkably, another one opens. Though we do not always believe it as so.

Swirling interfaces of life’s mysterious ways oscillate into an elixir of gratitude. The struggle and pain turned magically into reward and exhilaration. After time, we pay homage

to the beginning of the beginning. We are humbled. Just when we think we have something understood or figured out- there is always something more to uncover. Always something more to glean. And appreciation for where it took us to, though we could have never predicted the outcome.

Clouds pass and the sun shines. Nature changes her positions. A new vista of opportunity lies beyond. Boundless essence turning once more into a never-ending game of hide and seek. Finding form in the spaces where it once belonged and will go once more; hidden away from sight. Concealed from our knowledge. We close a chapter saying goodbye to one segment and ceaselessly welcome the next. Though we never fully know, we try. Elizabeth Gilbert in her book *Committed* speaks to the raw essence of life and how we persevere through. She quotes, “Sometimes life is messy and botched. We do our best. We don’t always know the right move.” Though we never fully know- we carry on all the same. We carry on because it is what we do. We learn because we can’t stop. Even if we wanted to. And we find challenge after reward, again and again, because that is how this cookie of our so-called- life crumbles.

Down along the path of our experience we find the crumbs that accumulated along our journey. Down trodden days. Days we wake up wondering what good ever came from any of it. Dismal and dismay. Doubt. And then come the days where we can so easily find these “hidden” crumbs, as

if in plain sight right in front of us all along. We learn through all of it. We do not judge the way. We are the way. We are like the ebb and the flow of the ocean. Moving on.

On your journey one day you hear words echo into the ether, from some nearby bird as it sings, as if speaking directly to you. So, you pause. And you listen;

“Onward, you go. Let go. Let go. Let go. The murk of the old. Expectations. The heaviness in your step. Future and past. Wishing you were somewhere else. Wishing you were something else.

Revel in wherever it has taken you to now, and wherever you may find yourself tomorrow. The road is open

and we may never know the toll. Turning to find unstable steps and uncertain days, questioning plenty. No knowing where it will lead. Forever in-between.

Here, is where you are. So for Now: enjoy the scene as it passes. Because it always passes along.

Look through the looking glass and find a new song. Move with the change and as it moves you, be strong.

You'll find the answers after not too long. And even if you don't understand why, turn to the sky. Keep on keeping on like a bird in flight. Learn to listen with a new sound and sight.”

We persist. We search for the right light to shine upon our experiences, until “Finer and finer becomes the veil, more and more of the light shines

forth; For it is .. nature to shine,” says Swami Vivekananda in Jnana-Yoga. We uncover the tale of our lives as it weaves and wanders around us like a magnetic wind, wanting us to understand. Wanting us to shine. Beckoning us to simply: pause. Look at it differently, and it shall appear different. Or maybe it is we who become different along the way. Despite the unknown, onward we go.... ❧

-Conscious Crow - An evanescent, winged-warrior flying from here to there; In pursuit of adventure. In search of truth. Drawn to the never-ending quest of trying to understand the hidden intricacies of this thing we call life.

Find her in the sky or at:

BOG from p. 35

AFTERTHOUGHTS

A follow up conversation with Don Miller and David Buck offered a greater understanding of how development in PA, as in many regions of NYS, threatens natural areas. There was considerable new housing development visible near where I was staying, minutes from the Bog. I asked Don, who in addition to his educational role at TCB has been on the board of the Pocono Heritage Land Trust (phlt.org) since its founding in 1984 and on the board of the Brodhead Watershed Association since 1991, to elaborate on current challenges in the Delaware Valley region of PA. As a New York resident who spoke out against fracking and attended related public meetings, I recalled how the impact in Pennsylvania was often cited in public discussions. In the southern parts of Pennsylvania, I had passed rigging areas and encountered heavy truck traffic associated with fracking, but, according to Don and David, fracking is not a direct risk in the Delaware Valley. The only possible (direct regional) concern is the possibility of waste water being shipped to smaller municipalities in Pennsylvania (and New York) for processing, including sites in the Delaware Valley that are being looked at for disposal.

Don cited the big box distribution industry and housing development as the greatest risks to natural areas in the Poconos. The Interstates have enabled the development of major

industrial hubs as rural areas zoned commercial without the expectation of development have, in some instances, miscalculated the potential impact of big box distribution and large-scale housing development. In a May 5, 2022 posting, the Supply Chain Digest cited a report from Colliers that defined a big box distribution center as a distribution center (DC) over 200,000 square feet. Companies like Amazon, Walmart, Gamestop, Chewy, and UPS currently have DCs in Pennsylvania (or have plans for them). Some of these centers are more than a million square feet in space.

The increased impervious surfaces from massive parking lots and access roads (coupled with a lack of regulation due to their status as private) results in higher chlorides from road salts that can threaten wetlands and residential wells (how most people in PA get their drinking water). Grits are less effective in PA due to extreme freeze/thaw cycles and these carry their own risks (including potential heavy metals found in some recycled anti-skid materials).

As metropolitan areas become more populated, populations will continue to move outward and forested areas (and wetlands) will be threatened. Newer initiatives, such as the Our Pocono Waters (OPW), which educates the community on the importance of protecting “Exceptional Value” (EV) streams⁷, are part of a growing preservation movement. ❧

⁷ While only 2% of Pennsylvania streams are classified “Exceptional Value,” 80% are located in the Poconos, primarily within Monroe, Pike and Wayne counties.

CRAFTING YOUR OWN CUISINE

EILEEN PERKINS



Eileen Perkins 2022

Salmon Cakes

(Makes about 7 servings of 3 cakes)

I have been making these for years, at the request of my husband who, in our early time together waxed sentimental about the dish from his childhood. Well, I wasn't part of his life at that time, but I did figure out this formula, the results of which we both enjoy.

This recipe has a number of things going for it. It works with the convenience and economy of canned salmon, which admittedly benefits from some assertive flavorings. It also can be stretched economically by decreasing the salmon and increasing the grated carrot, proportionately. Don't forget the merits of serving with a splash of lemon juice and a spicy tartar sauce! I do fry these guys in oil, but you might experiment with spraying them with oil and baking on a parchment lined cookie sheet. Be careful to not break the cakes when flipping.

PROCEDURE

- Combine all ingredients, except cooking oil, adjusting quantities of salmon liquid and breadcrumbs in the mixture, until mixture holds together well when squeezed.
- Divide mixture into $\frac{1}{4}$ cup portions and roll into balls, flatten each with the palm of the hand to uniform thickness; Or, for fish-like shape, make $\frac{1}{2}$ cup portions into balls, flatten, and carefully divide in half after chilling (Note, round salmon cakes are less fragile)
- Cover a cookie sheet with parchment or wax paper, spread the cakes out on it, and refrigerate an hour or two.
- Coat each cake with breadcrumbs and set aside
- Heat a 10 inch frying pan, over medium heat, add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil and when a breadcrumb tossed in sizzles, carefully add half the salmon cakes to the pan. Cook until brown on one side then carefully flip. It may take 3-4 min. on each side. Lower heat if cakes appear to be browning too fast. Cook second batch the same way. Drain on paper towels.
- Drizzle with lemon juice just before serving. (To freeze, do so flat on a cookie sheet before storing.)

INGREDIENTS

- 3 (15 oz.) cans of salmon, drained well, deboned if preferred*, and pressed dry (reserve liquid)
- 2 Tbsp. to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup reserved salmon liquid
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup (rounded to heaping) yellow onion or scallion, minced
- 2 Tbsp. carrot, coarsely grated
- 1 Tbsp. butter
- $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ground black pepper
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped (1 Tbsp. dried dill may be substituted, but I like that flavor in my tartar sauce accompaniment.)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ cup plain bread crumbs, plus more for coating the patties (maybe an additional 2 cups).
- 2 eggs
- Cooking oil for frying, about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- Lemon juice, to taste, as a liquid garnish

* Some people do say that the bones, which tend to be soft, are edible and nutritious.

COOKBOOK REVIEW

On Rice-60 Fast and Easy Toppings That Make the Meal

by Rick Rodgers

Reviewed by EILEEN PERKINS

I was drawn to reviewing this vintage book, at this time, as much for the concept of making simple meals, as for the recipes contained in it. I've long been a fan of "meal soups". However, let's face it, to make one's own soup does take a bit of time. Rice toppings take potentially much less time, and actually can even be created by repurposing left overs.

But imagining you want to start out fresh, this cookbook has plenty of good, internationally inspired ideas. Its author has written a number of cookbooks, and articles for cooking magazines, with one of his claims to fame being meticulous instructions that are easy to follow.

We've been conditioned to think of pasta as *the* natural partner for sauces, aka "toppings". But that is actually closing off to a lot of other potentially easy and economical meals. At the start of his book, the author offers a "glossary of grains". He makes very clear that all rice is not the same, or simply, white or brown, as some may think. There is a bounty of varieties to choose from, each with its own desirable qualities, and he states that there are over 120,000 known rice varieties, which is a little hard for me to believe, after viewing the offering in grocery stores, here in the United States, but taking into account what a *staple* rice is in the big wide world, I do believe I can stretch my imagination and consider it possible.

"A Repertory of Rice Recipes" begins with instructions for making and keeping the perfect pot of rice, regardless of variety chosen. And contrary to what the book's title suggests, it is not only about making complete meals utilizing beds of rice. Included in the "other grains" introductory section is millet, quinoa, amaranth, buckwheat, barley, oats, triticale, wheat berries, and rye berries, all with cooking instructions.

That said, the techniques in this cook book, beyond the expertise shared for cooking perfect rice, are nothing fancy. Notations are made for dishes that "can

be cooked in under 30 minutes". While there are exceptions, for everyday cooking, he said he tries to be mindful to minimize fat content. Because he's created recipes that draw from cuisines all over the world, it's a good idea to read a recipe through, and make sure all the ingredients are at hand, before launching into it.

Recipes are grouped by categories of Seafood, Poultry, Vegetarian, "From the Range" (beef, pork and lamb) and Desserts. Here is a sampling of mouth-watering recipes from each chapter: "Salmon Filets on Broccoli Rabe" (that includes anchovies, and pine nuts); Vegan-friendly, "Sushi Rice Bowl" and "Lentil and Swiss Chard Stew"; "Chicken Sausage with White Beans and Rosemary"; "Korean Beef on Fiery Chinese Cabbage"; "Pork Fajita Stir-fry"; "Ground Beef and Squash Picadillo", and "Easy Chocolate Rice Pudding with Cherries" My list could easily stretch on and on. Many, many beautiful photos depicting mostly toppings on *perfectly* cooked rice (you can *see* the rice is exceptional!) The dessert chapter is small, and not actually consisting of the "topping" theme, but each recipe does sound worth trying.

All-in-all, I like this book and plan to do some cooking from it. Since it is an old title, I suggest you check your library or used book sellers for it. I've noticed "Like new" copies available online for six dollars and change.

ONLINE FIND

If you are interested in adding more vegetarian meals to your routine, I recommend looking into the work of vegetarian chef, Andrea Hayley-Sankaran and her "vegetarian food blog for conscious eaters", known as "Buttered Veg" ...When I first saw the name's respectful reference to *BUTTER*, I anticipated being a kindred-food-spirit, and I am! She is very much about approaching healthful eating delightfully. And Andrea really cares about people and their health. This web site is a pearl. See for yourself - butteredveg.com.

From a “Falun Gong” Practitioner

EILEEN PERKINS

Those of you who have followed my *Owl Light* food column, “Crafting Your Own Cuisine”, may have been mystified, upon reading in my bio, that I practice Falun Gong (also known as Falun Dafa). With the final issue of the *Owl* upon us, I wanted to answer this matter with some information here.

Falun Gong has very ancient roots, but modern practice of it was brought to the public, in China, by Mr. Li Hongzhi, in 1992, and it received tremendous government support at the onset. It became extremely popular, with an estimated 70-100 million people practicing it, in China alone. By government count, practitioners even outnumbered those who belonged to the CCP, the Chinese Communist Party. That presented a problem, especially since the practice’s teacher wanted to keep the practice free of political influence, for it to remain free of formal membership, and free of charge. Long story short, a brutal effort to discredit and eradicate the practice, and all who supported it in China, was launched on July 20, 1999, and continues today.

This all sounds like a long way away and pretty disturbing, the kind of thing that might make a person want to turn and run the other way. And, admittedly, it is. However, a very big question is central to this matter. What would make so many people cleave to a practice so faithfully as to be willing to die for it?

I knew nothing about the practice, when it was mentioned by someone I met at a lecture series I happened to be taking in the summer of 2017. She said she used to have “Mast Cell Activation Syndrome”, a compromised immunity type disease, as well as food allergies, but that she no longer had these problems after practicing Falun Dafa. Thinking that curious and probably unbelievable, I pushed the conversation to the back of my mind.

A few months later, I was surfing the web, searching for something like a proverbial “light at the end of the tunnel”,

I realized later. Witnessing how, in the world of today, good and evil almost seemed tangled into ambiguity, I felt without hope for humanity. It was then that I happened to see something about Falun Gong, and I experienced a *spark* of hope alight in me. I learned that the practice is grounded in

the virtues of Truthfulness, Compassion and Tolerance; it cultivates both body and mind. What’s more, countless individuals had been healed of infirmities, from doing this practice, as my colleague at the workshop said she had. Though the practice started in China, now many millions of people are doing it world-wide. There is reason to hope!

I took up the practice in October of 2017, and have found it to be an excellent decision. Falun Dafa is a

self-cultivation method of the Buddha school, grounded, as I said, in the principles of Truthfulness, Compassion and Tolerance....and I don’t mean they are virtues up on a pedestal to pull out one day a week. The practice is literally grounded in them, we live them as best we can, and are continually challenged to get better at it. Falun Dafa focuses on both one’s body and mind. The practice entails doing qigong-like exercises, meditation, and striving to be a better and better person according to the rooting virtues.

One thing that I think is unique about this practice is that it allows me to seriously practice from “where” I am, both in terms of setting — that is out in society and not in a monastic setting — and “where” I am emotionally and psychologically. I didn’t need to reach some idealized circumstantial starting point to begin this practice. I did need to make a commitment to pursue my spiritual unfoldment via simply one path, and to allow my heart to love it. And I do. ✨

One thing that I think is unique about this practice is that it allows me to seriously practice from “where” I am, both in terms of setting — that is out in society and not in a monastic setting — and “where” I am emotionally and psychologically.

*If you would like to find out more, please visit:
“learnfalungong.com” and “falundafa.org”*

PUZZLE[©]

#23

By **GEORGE URICH**
 Edited by
Marilyn Clary



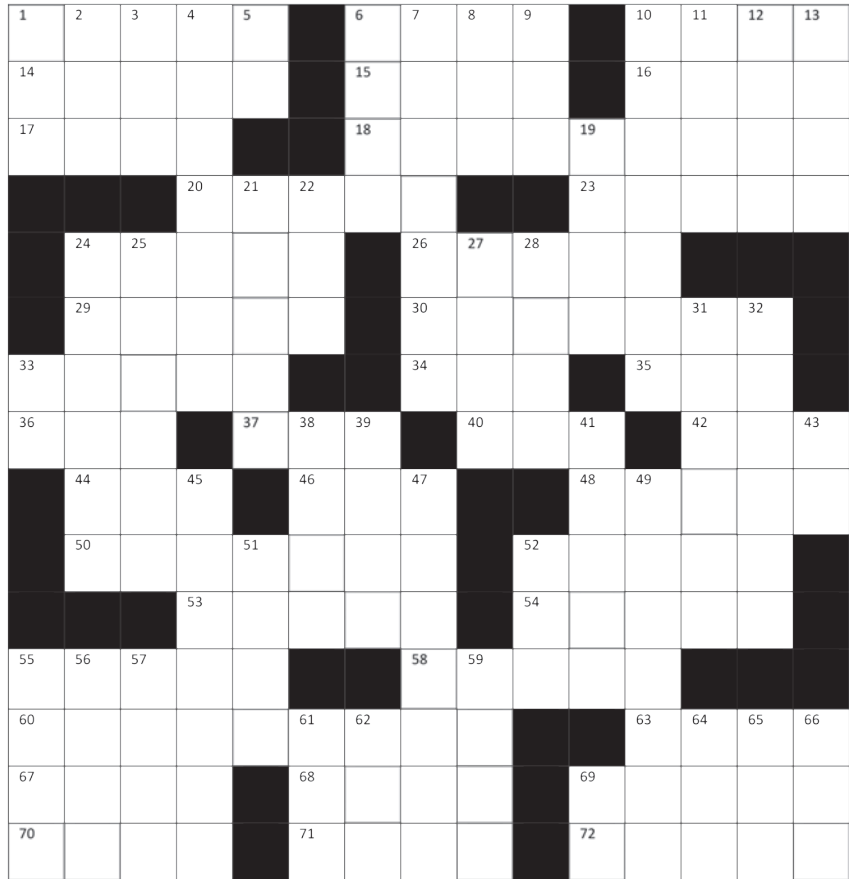
• gurich@frontier.com

Big Names!

ACROSS

- 1 Pond growth
- 6 Decision about achieving something
- 10 Facial feature
- 14 Maker of Miracle Whip Salad Dressing
- 15 Reduce tension
- 16 Movie interrupter
- 17 City of big tourist attraction in India
- 18 Big name in flour
- 20 Shot a type of police gun
- 23 Daughter of Elvis Presley and daughter of Steve Jobs
- 24 One of the three Musketeers
- 26 Home improvement store
- 29 Stinks
- 30 ___ Preminger in Steuben County town, ___octon
- 33 Woman who wants to introduce herself to Dr. Zhivago, but cannot find a letter in her name
- 34 Mental sharpness
- 35 Yoko ___
- 36 WiFi source, Abbr.
- 37 Coloring, d___ng
- 40 Pouch within an animal or plant
- 42 Ambulance destinations, Abbr.
- 44 Big name in chips
- 46 German oh
- 48 type of ray
- 50 You would chalk its tip
- 52 Gala, an affair ___ ___s and tails
- 53 Motel for a tryst
- 54 Pain pill brand
- 55 Bygone anesthesia
- 58 Big name in butter, Land O

- 60 What most bills contain, oops
- 63 Italian sports car, ___Romeo
- 67 Annum
- 68 Prayer leader is a mosque



- 69 Big name in canned veggies
- 70 Computer storage device, Abbr.
- 71 How office computers are connected together, Abbr.
- 72 Big name in dairy spokes cow

DOWN

- 1 Alias
- 2 Shirt size
- 3 Long nosed fish
- 4 Another name for a dad
- 5 UFO pilot
- 6 ___ Le Pew
- 7 On sick list
- 8 With what Amer. deaf people communicate
- 9 Pickles grandson, ___son
- 10 Big name in crackers
- 11 Responsibility
- 12 Florida city, ___sota
- 13 Ice cream brand
- 19 Snails pace, last two letters interchanged
- 21 Astronaut's 'good'
- 22 What a Draft Board is part of, Abbr.
- 24 Policeman's demand
- 25 Relate
- 27 Elevator pioneer

- 28 Singer James
- 31 Two entries, Song from Chorus Line and Roman 1002
- 32 Big name in meats
- 33 Set of three concepts in psychoanalytic theory, ___ ego and super-ego
- 38 Key stroke on a computer
- 39 Intelligence measure, phonetically
- 41 Letter sequence scrambled
- 43 Brazil's continent, Abbr.
- 45 Two words, area and fire crime, ___on
- 47 Big name is mayonnaise
- 49 What an excursion on the sea to watch Jeopardy, might be called
- 51 Tactile signing, ___ alphabet
- 52 Acorn source
- 55 Same as 13-Down
- 56 A day of the week, Abbr.
- 57 Part of the body that contains the cranium
- 59 Money sources, Abbr.
- 61 Squeak eliminator
- 62 Actress Thurman
- 64 Weight units, Abbr.
- 65 Federal police
- 66 Yes vote
- 69 ___Bron James

RICHMOND HISTORY

The Aeronaut – Ira Jerome Thurston

JOY LEWIS

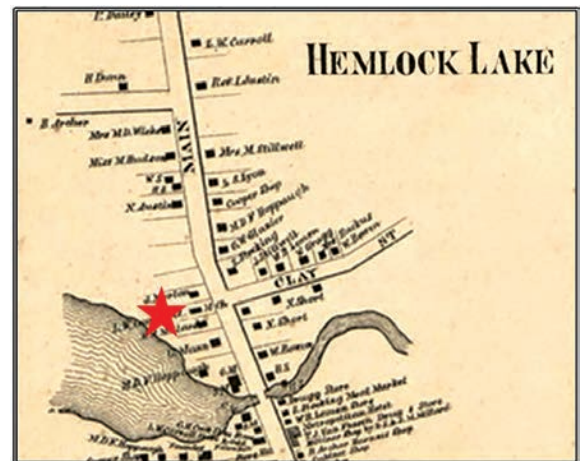
• historian@townofrichmond.org



The man was a tinkerer. A workman. And a daydreamer. He wondered about things. He asked questions. How does it work? What happens when this valve is open? Or this lever is moved? Can the thing be made to work more efficiently? Or cheaper?

Who's to say where Ira Thurston first heard of balloon flight? Perhaps a newspaper account caught his attention. Maybe he read something as a youngster that inspired him. How are we to know what prompted him to build a lighter-than-air ship in the backyard of his Hemlock home?

The year was 1848, little more than half a century after balloon experiments began. The Montgolfier brothers in France launched the first manned hot-air balloon at Versailles in 1783, and within a year or so other Frenchmen were sending aloft hydrogen balloons over the Paris skies. The earliest flight of a gas-filled balloon in the United States was witnessed by President Washington in 1793.



Above: Hemlock Lake Village -- The star marks Ira Thurston's home and the site of his first balloon launch;
Below: Illus. of a Paris balloon similar to Ira Thurston's.



Born in Springfield (Otsego County), New York, in 1813, Ira Jerome Thurston was a curious boy. And adventurous, if the events of his later life are anything to judge by. He married at age twenty-three; his wife Adaline gave birth to a daughter, Helen, fourteen months later. The baby was yet a nursling when Ira and Adaline came to live in Hemlock. With them were Ira's older brother Silas and Silas' newly-wed wife Nancy.

Silas' farm on Main Street (still a large property in the center of the village) was one small part of his extensive holdings; his descendants and heirs populated Hemlock for more than a century. Ira's property was in back of where the Methodist Church stands today – there was no church on site in Ira's day. He built a small house for his family and planted an extensive orchard. Ira, by profession, was a nurseryman. A successful one, it would seem.

Ira's apple and peach trees flourished. Baby Helen grew to be a toddler and welcomed a baby brother, Orlando. The boy was about a year old when Ira's daydream took flight. Livonia historian Frank Connor wrote in 1930 in a piece he called *The Balloonist*: "Thurston [made] a trip to New York City and purchase[d] the silk and oil cloth necessary to make a balloon and Mrs. McMaster [a neighbor] cut and sew[ed] the cloth together." The completed envelope (as the skin of the balloon was called) was painted with a waterproofing mixture of rubber and turpentine, then hung in a tall oak to shroud it in rope netting. A wicker-work basket – "a car" in the lingo of the time – was attached below the neck of the balloon. The entire outfit cost Ira nearly a thousand dollars.

The first ascent took place in the spring of 1848 in Thurston's backyard, right beside the Mill Pond. A descriptive account of the pre-flight procedure was found in a letter written by James Griffing in August 1851. The young man was in Penn Yan that summer when he witnessed Ira's performance:

"Oh, friend! Did you ever see a person ascend in a balloon high in the upper air until like a distant note in a sunbeam he appeared to the astonishment of all the gazers below? If you have not, Oh, how I wish you were with me last Wednesday... The news was circulated for more than a score of miles around. [Every one of the thousands gathered there was] right upon the tiptop of expectation. The balloon was truly huge, extending thirty feet from the ground, shaped ovally, goose egg-like. At precisely four o'clock P.M. two small balloons were sent up to ascertain the direction and strength of the wind. Soon appeared Mr. Thurston, the Aeronaut, dressed for the occasion with thick clothing to resist the exceeding cold temperature far above the region of the clouds. After bidding his friends goodbye, and seating himself in a small car for his reception, the ropes were cut."

The balloon lifted into the sky, swiftly ascending to a dizzying height. The onlookers were amazed; a spontaneous cry arose from the crowd. After about fifteen minutes Ira adjusted the ballast, opened a valve to release some of the hydrogen, and floated back to earth. This was the first of many such flights. Mr. Connor wrote: Ira "was one of the first in New York state to take up this kind of work and traveled extensively giving exhibitions," for which each spectator paid a quarter.

After several years of showing off his balloon all around New York State, Ira moved his family to Adrian (Lenawee County), Michigan, fifty miles west of Toledo, Ohio. Sadly, little Orlando had died at age four; there remained only his wife and daughter Helen, now in her early adolescence. They'd been in Michigan a few years when Adaline died in February 1858. Helen, now twenty, was left alone to look after her father.

On the morning of September 16, 1858, Ira prepared for his thirty-seventh balloon launch at the Lenawee County Fair. At 11:00 AM the balloon climbed into the sky. A local newspaper reported: "Ira Thurston, a well-known and experienced balloonist, lifted off from Adrian and complet-



Oakwood Cemetery in Adrian, Michigan, where Ira Thurston was laid to rest. Images courtesy of Joy Lewis

ed Michigan's first hot-air balloon flight by landing seventeen miles away in Riga Township." It was 1:00 when the balloon came back to earth.

Within moments the wonder of the crowd changed to alarm, for something went horrifically wrong with the tie-down procedure. The balloon, only partially deflated, lay along the ground. Ira, attempting to open the release valve, asked a friend, William Bannister, to untie the neck of the balloon before unhooking the basket. But, mistakenly, Will unhooked the basket first. Without the weight of the car, the balloon very quickly began to ascend – one report said it "shot up like a rocket." Ira grabbed one of the ropes, Will grabbed another, both men attempting to bring the balloon to heel.

They were unsuccessful. About twelve feet above the ground, Will let go his rope, landing unharmed. Ira called to the awe-struck crowd, "It will be all right!" He got himself situated on the ring below the neck of the balloon as the contraption continued to ascend, yet he was unable to reach the release valve. He was "carried out of sight in a very short time."

Four days later what remained of the balloon was found in a nearby swamp. The next day William Bannister's wife Lucinda gave birth to a son; they named him Thurston. Ira's shattered body was recovered half a year later on March 6, 1859, about three miles from his unintended departure point. His brother Silas came from Hemlock to see Ira fittingly buried. ❧

ETCHED IN STONE

— EXPLORING NEW YORK'S

• piercedave54@gmail.com



BURIED PAST

DAVID PIERCE

The Search for Finality – A Farewell to *Owl Light*



Gravestone of Homer Blake (1788 - 1859). Located in the Canadice Hollow Cemetery in Canadice NY.

It was a warm day in Summer of 2020 when I joined Darlene and Todd on a walking tour of Canadice Hollow Cemetery in search of the final resting place of my 3X Great Grandfather Reverend Homer Blake. The search was successful and the experience launched my new endeavor as a writer for *Owl Light*. Since then, my *Owl Light* writing has taken me on a journey through time.

As written in my premier *Owl Light* article, Homer put his pen to paper, in a genealogy record to his children in the mid 1850's, in hopes of never being forgotten, as many of our early settlers and ancestors have been:

Homer Blake was born April 13, 1788 in the Town of Nassau County of Rensselaer State of New York ... But inasmuch as my Fore Fathers are All gone to the Eternal Worlds and I am hastening to follow them, I wish to leave these lines for my Dear Children to look at when I am gone and sincerely hope that we may All glorify God Our Savior.

Inspiration and inquiry led me next to my 4X Great Grandfather Benjamin Lamphier who lies in in the Schenk Hill Cemetery in Jasper, NY. Benjamin was a pioneer of Naples, New York. His encounter with wolves graphically illustrated the peril of early settlers of this area as reported in this excerpt from *The Naples Record*, Wednesday, November 1, 1898.

“Mr. Lamphier felt that he must return home and he immediately started at a rapid pace. He was congratulating himself that he was only a mile from his house, and that he would soon be there, when a wolf a short distance from him gave a certain howl that made his blood curdle in his veins, for he knew too well its meaning. This was answered by the howling of other wolves in the distance and from every direction. His dog was with him – a large and powerful animal, but he had no weapon except his ax. Occasionally when the moon would shine out from under a cloud, he would see the wolves in groups sneaking along, their numbers continually increasing.”

Benjamin and his dog survived the attack, being rescued by a determined Mrs. Lamphier carrying a fat pine torch.



Fast forward to the early 20th Century. While my previous articles lacked visuals, my article on family member and famed Osteologist Charles Edmund Mirguet provided a wealth of historic images and landed me on the front page of *Owl Light*, a distinction I will always cherish.

Also, my article on my Great Grandmother Esther Inghram Pierce, of Naples, New York highlighted a turn of the 20th Century activist and poet who wrote:

“Some day perchance when I am cold and stiff
And my vacant place, some other one
Shall fill.

Forgotten and alone I lie.

This little book will peep from out of the dust
Of some dark corner, and time gathered must
Removing from its cover, there my

Name you'll see

Insuring once again life's memory”

- Esther Pierce



Esther Ingraham Pierce,
1950

Perchance one day, years from now, a copy of *Owl Light* will peep out of the dust, insuring once again fond memories of authentic printed media of olden days... very much like Esther's poetry, a historical discovery.



As my literary journey continued, I recounted the courageous story of Civil War nurse Airen Totman who transported me to front lines of the Civil War, where she cared for her injured son and other brave soldiers in a place few women tread in those times. My readers and I became educated on front line medical bravery and inadequacies. Continuing on, I shared the stories of Canadice farmers, Amasa Winch and Alvah Doolittle who both made their mark on their families, community, and church. Both men were farmers and exceptional businessmen. Alvah kept a journal that provided first hand insight into the challenges of life in the 19th Century. Amasa, although losing three of his four daughters in their childhood, persevered and carved out a successful life including serving two terms in the New York State Assembly representing the western district of Ontario County. We explored the life of country schoolteacher Miss Emma Winch and gained insight into the life of women in the late 1800's.

Emma remained single her entire life as a result of her choice to teach. Female 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. Emma remained very independent and led a successful life in community and as a correspondent for the *Livonia Gazette*. All these articles provided worthwhile knowledge and insight during my *Owl Light* tenure.

Later,, my focus shifted from exploring people to discovering new places and concepts. I researched cemeteries and discovered gravestones beneath the Brambles along my *Owl Light* journey.

I also gained new appreciation for the beauty of Funerary Art, a truly historic early American art form.

Over the past two years, it has been my distinct honor and pleasure to become a member of the *Owl Light* literary family. While the pandemic did put a damper on interaction with other writers, I gained the opportunity to meet amazing people through their writings. Dear readers, remember the *Owl* as the light of Canadice Press shifts in new directions. Ponder that in the twilight hours known as Owl Light, that dusky



Beth Thomas

uncertain time of day that hovers between light and dark, the paths through the woods, and through our literary minds, take on a mystical quality.

“Sometimes things are most beautiful when they're coming to an end” – Kyra Jackson.

With heartfelt gratitude to Darlene for discovering the writer inside me, Farewell *Owl Light*, etched in print, [and in the digital ether], but not Etched In Stone. 🌿

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.

Homestead from p.29

the marketplace, there were an estimated 14,000 different varieties of apples grown on homesteads all across America. The dramatic loss of crop biodiversity correlates directly with the decline in homesteading and the marginalization of the amateur grower.

These apple varieties had memorable names and stories associated with them. There was the Hubbardston Nonesuch, for example, and the Westfield-Seek-No-Further (both still grown by a handful of amateur orchardists, including myself).

Then there is the much-loved Northern Spy apple, which originated not far from where I now live, over in the town of East Bloomfield, where it sprang into existence purely by chance in the 1840s in the seedling orchard of one Herman Chapin. (Yes, people back then had seedling orchards on their homesteads – amateur laboratories for the creation of new varieties.) The first Northern Spy tree, possibly named after a popular abolitionist novel at the time, was almost lost to history. A rabbit nibbled away at the trunk of the original tree, which never produced fruit. Chapin's brother-in-law, Humphrey Roswell, grafted a small branch taken from the root sprouts of the damaged tree, and every lover of the Northern Spy is now indebted to Humphrey's heroic intervention. (It is not clear, though, why he chose to graft a non-descript tree whose fruit he had not tasted.)

The Northern Spy also has the property of setting blossoms two or three weeks after most other varieties, which means that you will not lose all of your apple crop in a year with an unexpected late Spring frost. That was a nice feature in the nineteenth century, a feature worth preserving along with flavor and storage life, at a time when biodiversity meant having *something* in the cellar, even in a bad year.

And then there is the Northern Spy's cohort late-bloomer (and fellow pollinator), the Ashmead's Kernel, with fruit smaller in size, but which also (like the Spy) keeps for a remarkably long time in a common fruit cellar, is remarkably disease resistant, and perhaps most importantly tastes unlike anything available in the produce section of Wegmans. With climate instability a reality that we will likely expe-



George Wilson of Honeoye NY circa 1940.

rience more of in coming years, these qualities – late-blooming, good-tasting, good-storing – may enjoy a resurgence in popularity.

Long before Youtube, amateur orchardists would share information and experiences in small local and regional publications that were in many respects more closely related to the genre of the seed catalog (and with a similar readership) than they were to trade or academic journals. This fact is worth mentioning in the final issue of this small, local publication – one of the last remaining specimens of a rapidly dying breed.

Awhile back, I recall reading a piece on the *Owl Light* by historian Joy Lewis that profiled George Wilson, a former slave who after the Civil War ended up by chance in my hometown where he started his own orchard homestead. He lived into the middle of the 20th century, to the age of 94. I wonder what varieties of fruit trees Mr. Wilson planted, and whether there are any of his old trees still standing on his former property (which is a short walk from where my new

orchard is growing).

What There is Left to Say

Gardening, unlike farming, is a decidedly amateur activity. Even so-called market gardening is more of a hobby than a business proposition: the vast majority of small-scale commercial growers make well under \$10,000 a year (and that is before deducting expenses). From an economic point of view, small-scale agriculture is a fringe activity at best. Small may be beautiful, and human-scale pursuits may be convivial. But there is simply no money in being small. Homesteading, moreover, is essentially a personal decision to opt out of the larger economy in favor of developing an alternative localized economy – a decision, it must be said, that has no impact whatsoever upon the larger economy. As someone recently put it, Goldman Sachs does not care if you or I raise chickens.

Money is not everything, of course, as the editor of the *Owl Light* or any small press knows full well. Part of my

motivation to write for the *Owl Light* has been to support small-scale local journalism. It is easy to draw a parallel between the decline of small-scale local journalism and the decline in biodiversity that accompanied the shift away from homesteading toward large-scale commercial growing. However, I do not feel justified in making such a claim. Although we are losing local journalism, and the loss is a significant one, the sharing of anecdotal wisdom among amateurs is undergoing a fantastic renaissance due to the Internet. The essay, moreover, is alive and well in the many outstanding podcasts and blogs and vlogs being produced by creative individuals and shared with large audiences worldwide. On the whole, there is as much new to celebrate as there are losses to lament.

And there are increasing numbers of people today who are taking up the cause of small-scale amateurism. William James, more than a century ago, captured the spirit of our own time in a confession that he shared with a friend in a private letter that went unpublished during his lifetime:

As for me, my bed is made: I am against bigness and greatness in all their forms, and with the invisible molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual, stealing in through the crannies of the world like so many soft rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, and yet rending the hardest monuments of man's pride, if you give them time ... So I am against all big organizations as such, national ones first and foremost; against all big successes and big results; and in favor of the eternal forces of truth which always work in the individual and immediately unsuccessful way, under-dogs always, till history comes, after they are long dead, and puts them on the top.

It is no surprise that William James was a founding member of the Anti-Imperialist League. The only surprise is that James did not seem to have any interest in gardening.

As someone recently put it, Goldman Sachs does not care if you or I raise chickens.

I do not need to remind my readers in 2022 of the forces of imperialist bigness and greatness that imperil the well-being of the planet and the future of all creatures great and small. Now, of course, these forces are responsible for the widespread use of neonicotinoids and other "successes" of large-scale commercial agriculture.

And in heroic opposition to that trend are the marginal but growing band of amateur gardeners: the heirloom seed savers and weeders by hand; those who raise small flocks of chickens and other animals that serve many functions on the homestead; the happy, hard-working homesteaders who may represent the last best hope for promoting the twin causes of

biodiversity and ecological sanity. I hope history will one day put them (us) on top and make their con-

vivial and human-scale practices a *common* practice.

We shall see. In the meantime, the underdogs will continue to enjoy what they do, their butts raised to the splendid azure sky while bent over some garden bed, their spirits kept high with seasonal reminders that there are far more things to celebrate than to lament (even in a dry year like this one).

I am an amateur, and like all amateurs, I have loved every minute of it. That includes my little foray into amateur garden writing, as a member of the small but tight family of *Owl Light* writers. Thanks for the memories, and happy gardening to you in whatever small corner of the world you find yourself... 🌿

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

Email: Derrick.Gentry@flcc.edu.

MAKING LEMONADE BARB STAHL



Woodlawn Chapel Comes Alive

Attendees at the Recent Finger Lakes Brass Quintet Concert at the restored Woodlawn Chapel were greeted by Mary Clark Thompson (played by Barb Stahl) and Frederick Ferris Thompson (played by Dave Hewson)

What do I write? How do I say it? First, I must thank our tireless editor, Darlene, for the dedication she had to this *Owl Light* publication. She cheerfully gave me a “platform” to air my concerns and attempts to solve them, while allowing me to share some ancestral and regional history. Tarzan and I have enjoyed this opportunity very much! He is looking forward to writing some more now that he’s gotten some experience!

Before writing for *Owl*, I had researched and written historical



books about Mary Clark and Frederick Ferris Thompson of Sonnenberg fame. This writing will revisit that history in a different way—from their graves! There, did that get your attention?

After Frederick died in 1899, Mary inherited a huge amount of money. She lived until 1923, traveling extensively while contributing to organizations in New York City, where they had lived part of the time, and gave numerous, incredible “gifts” to the Canandaigua area.



One of those gifts was given in 1909 when she had a beautiful chapel built at Woodlawn Cemetery. Frederick’s and her final resting places are very near that Chapel.

Over the years the chapel had fallen into serious disrepair. It was recently brought back to “life.”

Counter clockwise from Left:

The restored chapel as it looks today; a marker commemorating the date the chapel was built; and Dave Hewson and Barb Stahl as Frederick and Mary. Images courtesy of Amy Ogden.



During the past several years, I have had the opportunity to play the role of Mary Clark Thompson and was thrilled with the opportunity to do so once again. We quickly fell into our roles as Frederick and Mary, and ad-libbed for the day. Frederick" often made the comment that "Mary had certainly used his money well!" During the concert Frederick and Mary discovered they really liked that modern music, which was nothing like those waltzes they remembered. In fact, Frederick liked it so much he was tapping his foot right on Mary's foot. They both decided that besides funerals the chapel could be a perfect place for weddings, plays, presentations, and happy events. In the concert's audience were a playwright, director of plays, lovers of music, and folks interested in the history of the cemetery and its many "residents."

Mary and Frederick even imagined that maybe there would be a story about them performed on that stage, and they could come over, like today, to watch it. It was an exciting day indeed as these historic figures from the past returned from the grave!

And what a fantastic restoration has taken place! It includes restoration, completed by Britol-based Parsons Pipe Organ Builders in 2021, of the chapel's Hook & Hastings Pipe Organ.

In recognition of the Chapel's restoration, and Frederick and Mary's contribution, the Woodlawn trustees asked "Mary and Frederick" to "come from our graves" and greet people who were attending the Finger Lakes Brass Quintet Concert in the newly restored chapel.



Top Left: The Finger Lakes Brass Quintet perform in the restored chapel; **Above:** Dave Hewson and Barb Stahl pose at the chapel entrance, clearly enjoying their roles.

ANNE RUFLIN

A Smalltown Secret

The waves warned of a storm crashing in, and I, at the age of invincibility, found it irresistible. I dove into it, was swept up in the recklessness of it, was dragged along the bottom of it, was tumbled with the shells and sand and seaweed of it.

Is this how I die, I wondered? No. The ocean shoved me to its surface, and another wave lifted and carried me forward, forward, forward, finally tossing me scrapped, gritty and gasping on the cold sand of Old Orchard Beach, Maine.

Please! Don't tell my mother.

Anne Ruffin is an emerging author, a retiree, and a member of the Bristol Library memoir group Bristol Bookends 2. When not obsessing over her next writing assignment, Anne enjoys horseback riding, dog walking, and eating chocolate. She lives in the Bristol Hills with her husband, horses, dogs, and cat.



WARSAW WENDY

WENDY SCHREINER

Fall, to me, Means Baking



Fall Baking

Wendy Schreiner

apple pie
chunky pecan pie bars
gingersnaps
fall baking
makes my
kitchen
smell of
cinnamon spice
my husband walks in the door
at lunch time
and says
“it sure smells good in here”
as he sneaks
a cookie from the counter

Fall makes me think of baking. I usually make at least one apple pie in the fall. It's best that I stop at only one, because my husband doesn't really like apple pie — his favorite is banana cream. So, I usually end up eating most if not all of the apple pie by myself, which is not a good thing.

I guess I should plan to have some guests over for dinner when I bake my yearly apple pie so that I don't have to eat it all by myself over the course of a few days. Sometimes, my husband gives in and has a piece of my apple pie. I think he does this because he feels bad for me if he says he doesn't want any. I mean who doesn't love apple pie? I joke and say that's how I get my fruit — in the form of pies! It's really not a joke. I don't think I have ever met a pie I didn't like.

In 2007, there was a movie about pies, called “Waitress,” starring Keri Russell. Yes, I fell in love with this movie because of all the delicious pies. I guess my dream job was always to own a small bakery/café.

Anyway, fall always makes me think about baking. Along

with apple pie, I love to make chunky pecan pie bars. These are very rich. I usually give some away. I don't think my husband likes these either. I do make a very yummy tasting banana bread that my husband does like. Also, I have a super delicious recipe for ginger snaps. These cookies I make quite often. Perhaps, maybe too often. My husband loves these and so do some of my other relatives. I insist that they have to be good for you. After all, they have molasses, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and cloves in them, so I must be right. I don't mention the sugar and butter content. But, truthfully, I think they really must be one of the “healthier” cookie choices out there — I'm sticking with that theory anyway! HAPPY BAKING! 🍪

Two-Crust Apple Pie – 425 degrees, 50 minutes to 1 hour

For crust – 2 cups flour, 1 teaspoon salt, 2/3 cup shortening (I use butter), 5–7 tablespoons of ice water (I use 6 tablespoons).

In bowl, combine flour and salt – mix well. With a fork, cut in shortening until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Sprinkle with water one tablespoon at a time while tossing and mixing lightly with a fork. Add water until dough is just moist enough to form a ball when lightly pressed together.

Shape into two balls. Flatten and roll onto floured surface. Do the same to each ball – One for bottom of pie dish and one for the top of the pie.

Filling – ¾ cup sugar (I use ½ cup), 2 tablespoons flour, ¾ teaspoon cinnamon, ¼ teaspoon salt (I don't use any salt), 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg, 1 tablespoon lemon juice if desired, 6 cups thinly sliced, peeled apples (I use 12 apples)

Prepare piecrust for a two-crust pie as noted above. Use a 9-inch glass pie pan.

In large bowl. Combine all filling ingredients except lemon juice and apples. Mix well. Add lemon juice and apples to mix and toss gently. Spoon into crust lined pie dish. Add top crust, cut slits into the top crust. Bake at 400 degrees for 50 minutes to 1 hour. Helpful Hint – I place foil around the edges of the pie so they don't burn.

Chunky Pecan Pie Bars – 350 degrees (greased 13x9 pan)

Crust – 1 ½ cups flour, ½ cup butter (softened), ¼ cup light brown sugar

Filling – 3 eggs, ¾ cup light corn syrup, ¾ cup granulated sugar, 2 tablespoons butter (salted), 1 teaspoon vanilla extract, 1 ¾ semi sweet chocolate chunks,

1 ½ cup coarsely chopped pecans

For Crust – Beat flour, butter, and brown sugar in bowl until crumbly. Press in greased 13x9 pan. Bake for twelve to fifteen minutes or until light brown.

For Filling - Beat eggs, corn syrup, granulated sugar, butter and vanilla with wire whisk. Stir in semi sweet chocolate chunks and pecans. Pour mixture over baked crust. Bake for twenty-five to thirty minutes. Cool in pan on wire rack. Cut into bars. ENJOY!

BANANA BREAD – 350 degrees, 50 to 60 minutes

Ingredients - ¾ cup sugar, ½ cup butter (softened), 2 eggs, 1 cup (2 medium) mashed bananas, 1/3 cup milk, 1 teaspoon vanilla, 2 cups flour, 1 teaspoon baking soda, ½ teaspoon salt (I don't use salt)

In a bowl beat sugar, butter, eggs, mashed bananas, milk and vanilla together until combined well. In a separate bowl, mix flour, baking soda and salt. Add the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients until just mixed in. Pour batter into a greased bottom loaf pan and bake at 350 degrees for 50 to 60 minutes. YUMMY!

GINGERSNAPS – 350 degrees, 8 – 12 minutes

Ingredients - 1 cup sugar, ¾ cup butter (I use salted butter), ¼ cup molasses, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, ½ teaspoon salt (I never use salt) ½ teaspoon cloves, ½ teaspoon ginger, ¼ teaspoon nutmeg, 1 egg, 2 ¼ cup flour, 2 teaspoon baking soda. (Additional ¼ cup sugar to roll cookie balls into before baking)

Combine 1 cup sugar, butter, molasses and egg – beat until light and fluffy. Add flour, baking soda, cinnamon, salt,

ginger, cloves and nutmeg. Mix well. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for one hour.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees, shape dough into one inch balls, roll into ¼ cup of white sugar. Bake at 350 degrees on ungreased cookie sheets for eight to twelve minutes. These are so flavorful. Probably my favorite cookie to bake - ENJOY!

Meet the Owl Light Authors

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*.

• 585-229-1128 • [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, Paisley Rae, and the newest addition, Maisey Kae. 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.

• [makinglemonadeowl@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 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: stevestmusic.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



This is the final *Owl Light* in print. Our online site will stay live into 2023, with an archive of articles, stories, poems, and sponsors from our *five plus* years in print.
owllightnews.com

Canadice Press will remain, and future projects are not out of the question—after a lengthy break!

If you have any questions (or if your subscription ran into 2023 and you would like a refund) please call (leave a message) or send an email.

Thank you everyone for loving the *Owl*!

*Darlene, Todd, Æsc, the Small Town Hound,
and the entire Owl family*

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Solution to Owl Light Puzzle 23 (found on page 45)

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Featuring ten authors—
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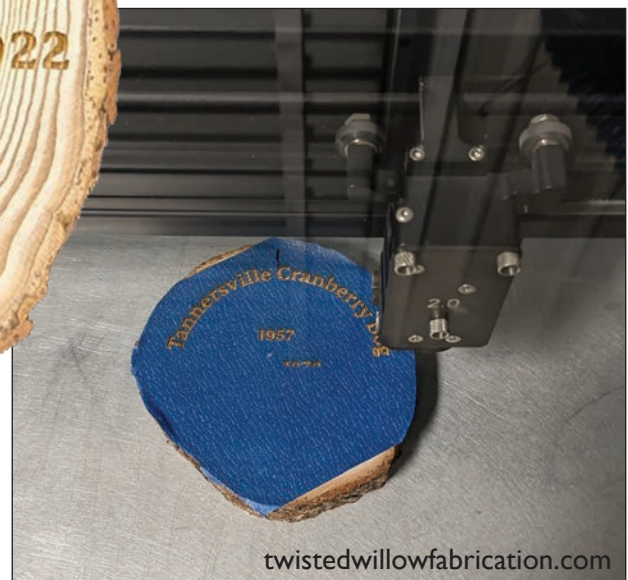
Cookies from p.24



Then it was off to the computer for some simple graphic design.

With a stack of cookies and the design in hand, I dropped in for a visit to our friends at Twisted Willow Fabrication. I knew they could do a great job of engraving the design onto the wood with their state-of-the-art laser setup. Who doesn't love lasers?

In a few days, we had a stack of beautifully engraved cookies. A couple coats of finish and they will be ready to share; a thank you to all who have helped safeguard the unique and incredible spot known as Tannersville Cranberry Bog. 🌲



The wood cookies were engraved with a laser engraving system at Twisted Willow Fabrication.
Images courtesy of Mandy Mothersell

Visiting the Bog

The Boardwalk Trail is accessible by guided tour only* (dogs are not allowed on the boardwalk trail).

For additional information about regularly scheduled Bog walks contact the Bog's stewards at: Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center, 570-629-3061.

Additional information about restoration projects and a schedule of upcoming tours can also be found at: [nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/places-we-protect/tannersville-cranberry-bog-preserve/](https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/places-we-protect/tannersville-cranberry-bog-preserve/)

*There are two Public Trails – the North Wood Trail and the Fern Ridge Trail – that are accessible anytime (dogs are allowed on leash).