

# Chip Notes

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BIRDS OF VERMONT MUSEUM  
Volume 26 • Our 25th Anniversary Year

Fall 2012



## THE BIRD CARVER'S DAUGHTER

### *Part 4: The Summer of Pies*

One summer day when I was in my early teens, my father greeted me in the doorway of his shop with two aluminum pie pans in his hands. He was looking really excited. Since the pie pans were empty, I got a feeling that this had something to do with *The Birds in Their Habitats* thing that he had going.

As soon as I got inside, he asked, "Want to make some leaves?"

He sounded exactly the same way he'd sounded when he'd asked me a few months ago if I wanted to paint some mud. Here we go again, I thought. I was a teenager, and I had, quite frankly, a lot more important things on my mind than birds. Like the novel I was writing, and my friends, and well, boys. But I knew that "No," would not be the right answer.

"Okay," I said as non-enthusiastically as I could. The next thing I knew, I was sitting on a stool beside him at his workbench. He handed me a cutting board covered with a thin piece of black rubber. What that had to do with leaves, I had no idea. Then I noticed a pile of silvery, oblong shapes on the bench between us. Each one was slightly different, but in general, they were about three inches long and maybe half an inch across. One end of each was pointed, and the other end was rounded. They reminded me of long fake fingernails, except they had delicately jagged edges.

"Watch," my father said. He laid down the rubber-covered board, put a fingernail on it, then picked up a long, narrow tool like an oversized pencil with a very sharp tip. He pressed the tip gently to one end of the fingernail and drew a fine line all the way up the middle to the other end. Then he drew in a lot of little lines running from the center line out to the jagged edges. And when he held it up, the fingernail looked like a pretty, silver leaf.



*Pie-pan leaves (photo by M.V. Barnes)*

"I'll paint it green," he said, as though that would explain everything.

I just looked at him. The word "habitat" formed in my mind. This had to do with habitats, I knew it!

"I've got some more nests," he said, "and the limbs they were built on. But the leaves have all dried up and fallen off, and besides, they have to look like spring, if I'm going to carve eggs to go in the nests."

I guess that made sense. "But how are you going to get the leaves to stick onto the branch?"

"Glue," he said, as though he'd already got it all figured out. Then he added, "But it's all got to look real, so I'll make some more branches out of wire and wrap them with cotton and coat them with glue, too, and paint them to look like bark, and then glue on more leaves."

I think I might have been staring at him.

"I'll cut the leaves out," he went on as though I was really thrilled about this, "and you can press in the veins. Here." He handed me the sharp tool and pushed the

*Continued on page 2*

### *The Bird Carver's Daughter* (continued from page 1)

pile of fingernails toward me. There were maybe three dozen there.

"That's a lot," I said.

He was busy picking up the pie pans and pretended he hadn't heard me the way that people who are hard of hearing are really good at doing. In a minute, he was carefully cutting out more leaves from the bottom of the pan.

I gave into peer pressure and got to work. My first center vein came out a little crooked, but hey, nature's not perfect. After my fifth leaf, I had the technique down. I was creating some pretty awesome looking leaves that any nest with wooden eggs ought to be proud of.

The problem was that my father was cutting out more leaves faster than I could press veins into them, so my pile was getting bigger, not smaller. And then he bent down and pulled out a couple more empty pans from beneath the bench.

"Hey, where'd you get all those?" I asked.

He smiled. "Gale's been buying one of every brand she can find. Some pans are a lot better than others. They don't have so much writing and stuff on the bottom, so I've got more space to cut. I think we've got it figured out now."

I just stared at him. Most people bought pies based on how luscious they looked. Gale was buying pies based on what the bottom of the pan looked like?

Then he grinned. "There's a blueberry pie we've got to eat up for lunch."

The day suddenly got a whole lot better.

"Hold on," he said as I was about to jump up. "We've

got to get another dozen leaves done first. But then there's a cherry pie for dinner."

I gaped at him.

"And maybe you'd like to have some of your friends come up next weekend? I've got plenty of sharp tools. Tell them there'll be lots of pie."

I decided that leaves might be okay after all.

The days became a blur of eating pies and making leaves with my friends and eating more pies. Soon pairs of warblers began to perch proudly around their nests surrounded by lush green habitats, and I got to buy new clothes because none of my old ones fit any longer.

The glorious summer of pies ended very abruptly one day when the UPS truck pulled up in front of the shop, and a delivery man staggered in. In his arms was the end of an era -- roll of aluminum sheeting the same thickness as what pie pans were made from. It was all shiny and pristine, unmarked with any lettering. It looked like it was five feet long and weighed a couple hundred pounds.

"I found it in a catalogue and Gale made me order it," my father said very glumly.

I could tell that even he could never make enough leaves to use it all up.

"Oh, well," he said. "There's still a few pies left in the house. Can't let them go to waste, can we?"

We laughed, and then went back to that day's quota of leaves before lunch.

I had no idea that we were getting closer and closer to having a museum in the family.

—Kari Jo Spear

This article is also online at <http://bovm.wordpress.com/2012/09/14/the-bird-carvers-daughter-part-4-the-summer-of-pies/>



Kari Jo Spear's young adult novels, *Under the Willow* and *Silent One*, are available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), [bn.com](http://bn.com), and in Phoenix Books (Essex, Vermont).



A few of the many, many leaves in the exhibits

## REAL-LIFE TREASURE HUNTING

With many acres of beautiful land I couldn't help but think the Birds of Vermont Museum property would be the perfect spot to place a geocache.

"Geocaching is a free real-life treasure hunt. Players try to locate hidden containers, called geocaches (cache), using a smartphone or GPS and can then share their experiences online."

—<http://www.geocaching.com/>

What's a cache? A hidden container found using GPS coordinates. Some finders exchange a "treasure" for one in the cache. Most finders sign the logbook in the cache. (Geocaching is much like Letterboxing in those respects). If you're a nature lover, with the urge to explore new parts of Vermont, then this is the activity for you! And now, best of all, you can find your first geocache right on the property of the Birds of Vermont Museum.

How do you know what to find? Set up an account online, at the official Geocache website, [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com). Then, visit the Birds of Vermont Museum gift shop for the coordinates to use to hunt up our cache (or enter our zip code online).

Here are a few things to remember:

- ◆ Set up your account first
- ◆ Bring your smart phone or GPS device
- ◆ Wear comfortable clothes fit for the weather and terrain (in our case, woods and meadows, and not-too-steep, trails)
- ◆ Bring a small item to leave behind in place of the one you take
- ◆ Bring water and a small snack

With my remaining time at the museum I hope to help spread the joy of geocaching to new and devoted visitors as well as continue to build upon my knowledge of entomology and ornithology.

—*Callie Frey, Summer Intern 2012*

This is an excerpt from Callie's essay. The full article about geocaching and her internship is online at <http://bovm.wordpress.com/2012/09/07/real-life-treasure-hunting-at-the-birds-of-vermont-museum/>

## INTERN EXPERIENCES



Great Blue Heron  
© 2012 Catherine Griset  
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This summer, Catherine Griset, a senior at the University of Vermont from Massachusetts, interned with us. She majors in Environmental Studies and minors in Wildlife Biology. Catherine's time at UVM led her to discover a passion for all things bird. It really began when she took Ornithology—that class reignited a childhood interest in backyard birds that quickly turned into a full birding obsession. Catherine has spent the past eight months birding

around Burlington, especially at the river deltas that open into Lake Champlain, such as LaPlatte River Marsh and Delta Park.

At the Museum, Catherine has enjoyed all the time she's spent talking to visitors. Conversations about the carvings and live birds seen at the Museum have been a highlight of her time with us. As a new birder, Catherine is excited by her interaction with so many others who share her passion around the Museum. Along with normal museum duties, feeding the birds, and walking the trails, she practiced her bird-illustration skills and assisted with several projects.

Catherine helped to create a traveling exhibit about owl biology (first displayed at the Colchester Library), designing two educational posters and molding owl eggs out of clay. Catherine finalized our new *Rare Birds* booklet, which includes information on birds occasionally recorded in Vermont, many of which are not part of the Museum's carved bird collection. She also updated many species signs throughout the museum, which is a huge and ongoing task.

Catherine hopes to stay involved with the Birds of Vermont community and is especially excited to bird during fall migration.

—*Catherine Griset, Summer Intern 2012*



## CARVERS, NEW AND NOT-SO-NEW

It's a great year for sharing carving with young, old, and in-between. From soap to wood to foam, we continue to teach and explore the art form.

**Soap carving** | We've been (and will be) soap carving with children (and some adults) all over. We had over 50 kids try their hands at this during Herrick's Cove Wildlife Festival last May. We carved during our Sunday for Fledglings programs, with visiting Scout and camp groups, and at the Green Mountain Woodcarvers annual show. We'll be doing it again at Dead Creek Wildlife Festival and during our own Fall Festival this October.

Soap carving is fun, fairly easy, and comparatively quick to completion, which makes it a great way to introduce carving (not to mention spatial thinking) to young people. Have you tried it?

**In-the-round** | When you're ready for a greater challenge, take a one-day class with us. We held a Heron carving class last spring, and will be offering a Nuthatch class this fall with David Tuttle of the Green Mountain Woodcarvers. These are the "typical" carvings people imagine, resulting in a three-dimensional (sometimes free-standing) bird. We also contributed

some wood to the 100 Birds Project. Explore that endeavor at <http://100birds.mischel.com>.

This fall, try two other carving approaches with us.

**Chip carving** | September 29 is the one-day "Chip Carving" class, in which David Tuttle will guide us in embellishing a wooden plaque with a heron or other patterns. Look for more info online, or call to register.

**Relief** | During our Fall Festival on October 13, we'll host a "Spirit Faces" carving workshop, where we discover what faces can emerge from bark-clad cottonwood. This is a two-hour workshop taught by Mark Paul. Please call to register and find out what tools you will need for the class.

**Styrofoam?!** In addition to classes, feel free to call or email us with questions. A carver from New York, who visited last year, did. Thanks to emailed information from our former Curator and carver Ingrid R., he's now planning to try foam-carving in the style of our overhead raptors. (Not seen them? Next time you're in the Nesting Gallery, look up!)



### Zachary

We'd like to extend our condolences to Carol Winfield, Wildlife Rehabilitator, on the passing of Zachary the Turkey Vulture. Carol worked with Zachary for nearly twenty years.

Zachary came to many of our festivals with Carol, and helped teach many, many people about birds, food webs, caretaking, weird nature tricks, and conservation. We are grateful that Carol could share him with us, and we will miss him.



## A FABULOUS WEEKEND

### *Fall Festival, Big Sit, Book Sale, and more*

Saturday and Sunday, October 13 and 14, will be wonderful. This is the weekend of our annual Fall Festival and the *Big Sit!* birding event: a great time to enjoy birds, our new labyrinth, music, carving, books, food, and more.

#### *Fall Festival (October 13)*

Saturday's detailed schedule will be posted at the Museum (and probably online as well). To whet your interest, some of our plans for the Fall Festival include:

**Woodcarving:** "Spirit Faces" carving workshop with Mark Paul. This 2-hour workshop is limited to 10 people, and there is a suggested donation of \$10. Wood will be supplied. Please sign up soon to reserve your place!

The Green Mountain Woodcarvers Annual Meeting will follow the workshop.

**Art Contest:** We'll announce the results of the annual youth art contest. All winners coming to the festival will be able to collect their prizes.

**Soap Carving:** Try some new templates from our collection, or develop your own style.

**Crafts:** We'll have some special, seasonal craft projects for kids to discover.

Other highlights include live birds, live music, fresh

cider, face painting, and our annual Used Books sale. We'll even be on the radio, as The Point 104.7FM will carry a live broadcast from the Museum.



*Spirit Face carved by Mark Paul*

#### *The Big Sit! (October 14)*

Sunday is that annual birding event involving *sedentary* (more or less) observing. None of this gallivanting up and down beaches and mountains today (unless you want to).

Birding Teams make a 17-foot diameter circle, and observe from within it from sunrise to sunset. We've recorded as many as 31 species in one day.

Feel free to drop by and join our local team, the Loonatics, in their annual effort. Sit with us for an hour or six. Chairs, coffee, tea, cider, and various other treats

usually appear for the birders. Please bring your own binoculars.



## WISH LIST

- ◆ Regular indoor and outdoor volunteers
- ◆ Gift certificates to *Guy's Farm and Yard* for bird seed (\$10-\$100)
- ◆ Bookshelf (\$180)
- ◆ Sponsor an intern for a season (\$500-2500)
- ◆ Lighting for Russ Hansen's Photography Exhibit in the Nesting Birds Gallery (\$250—an additional \$250 has already been pledged!)
- ◆ Updated introductory video (\$3000)

Of course we welcome any and all contributions! Checks may be made out to the *Birds of Vermont Museum* and mailed to us at 900 Sherman Hollow Road, Huntington, VT 05462. If you wish to donate an item on the list, please call us at (802) 434-2167.

## THANKS!

For support in so many ways, we'd like to especially recognize:

- ◆ Jim & Kris Andrews
- ◆ Art Contest Prize Donors
- ◆ Joyce & Ross Bell
- ◆ John Carpenter
- ◆ Shirley Herman of Huntington, remembered through memorial donation
- ◆ Shirley & Bob Johnson
- ◆ Amy Klinger of AsGood&Better
- ◆ Norcross Foundation
- ◆ Northeast Delta Dental
- ◆ Michelle Patenaude
- ◆ Roy Pilcher
- ◆ Hub Vogelmann
- ◆ Barbara Walling

*Thanks to so many more of you for all that you do for and with us.*

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS, FALL 2012

### "The Delight of Decoys"

*decoys carved by selected artists*

Daily, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

This year's visiting art exhibit is a showcase of several decoy carvers and their work. Come see this if you haven't yet!

Free with admission



### "Migration Ahoy!"

*library exhibit*

Daily in September • 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Discover more about birds, migration, and woodcarvings at the Dorothy Alling Memorial Library in Williston.

### Storytime in the Nestlings Nook

Tuesdays, September 11 and October 9 • 10:30 – 11:15 a.m.

Join us for stories about birds and more, followed by a craft project, music, or nature walk, depending on the topics and weather. Got a favorite book about birds? Share it with us!

Free with admission • Great for pre-schoolers



### Birding the Basin Field Trip

Sunday, September 16 • 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Seek migratory birds (and maybe a few reptiles) during a glorious fall field trip along the back roads and water bodies around Orwell, Vermont. Led by Jim and Kris Andrews. We will be birding by car as well as walking along a few back roads.

Best for adults and older children • \$20 for Museum members; \$25 for non-members. Please *pre-register*.

### Sundays for Fledglings

Sundays, through October 28 • 2:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Find out about Birds from Art to Zoology! Hike, create, explore, carve, act, write, and investigate with us. Each month has a theme to jive with the life cycles of birds.

Free with admission • Designed for ages 5-9

### Heron Chip Carving Class

Saturday, September 29 • 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Learn to chip-carve a heron with a border. Chip carving knives will be needed. Wood, snack, and coffee provided. Please bring your lunch. Taught by David Tuttle of the Green Mountain Woodcarvers.



\$25 for members of the Museum or the Green Mountain Wood carvers / \$35 non-members • Best for teens and adults. *Pre-register*.

### Bird's Book Exchange

Weekends through October 14 • 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Our Used Book sale opens Labor Day weekend! Bird books are just the beginning. Come by and buy to support the Museum. Call us if you have books to donate.

### Bird Monitoring Walks

Last Saturdays, monthly • 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Join experienced birders on the monthly bird monitoring walk on the Museum's property. Please bring binoculars.

Free (donations welcome) • Best for adults and older children with some birding experience.

### Spirit Faces Carving Workshop with Mark Paul

Saturday, October 13 • 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Discover the faces in cottonwood with Mark Paul. You will need a good carving knife, an assortment of gouges, a "V" tool, and veiner. Workshop limited to 10 people.

Suggested donation \$10 (includes Fall Festival admission) • Best for teens and adults. Please *pre-register*.

### Fall Festival

Saturday, October 13, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Celebrate our 25th year! Birds, music, carving, kid crafts, and beautiful foliage. More details on page 5.

Free with your Museum or Green Mountain Woodcarver membership card / \$2 for everyone else over 3.

### Big Sit!

Sunday, October 14, Dawn–Dusk



Please call (802) 434-2167 to pre-register and to confirm times (sometimes they change).

Email us at [museum@birdsofvermont.org](mailto:museum@birdsofvermont.org) with any questions or comments.

Interested in volunteering? Watch the website, subscribe to the events calendar, or let us email you with possibilities. You can also call (802) 434-2167 or email [museum@birdsofvermont.org](mailto:museum@birdsofvermont.org)

How many birds can we perceive from a 17-foot diameter circle? Can we beat last year's record? Why not—it was only 21 species!

*Free!* Snacks and coffee provided.



### **Potluck Birding**

*Saturday, October 27, 5:30p.m. – 9:00p.m.*

An experimental evening of tasty food and delightful birds by *you*.

5:30-6:15: Potluck dinner : bring a dish to share

6:30-9:00: Share your favorite birding images.

Up to 15 images per presenter pre-arranged on a flash drive or CD. Please sign up for a presenting time-slot so we can coordinate hard- and software!

*Free* for participants; donations welcome



### **Winter Birds Presentation**

*Wednesday, November 7 • 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.*

Vermont in Winter: cold, muddy, slushy, icy, snowy. But there are still birds! Which ones? How come? What do they eat? How do they shelter from the weather? And how can you get involved with birds, birding, and conservation? Join us to find out. Requested by the Milton Historical Society and open to the public.

*Free!* • Best for adults and older kids

### **Nuthatch Carving Class**

*Saturday, November 10 • 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.*

Carve and paint a nuthatch with David Tuttle of the Green Mountain Woodcarvers. Wood blank, eyes, snacks, and coffee provided. Beginners are welcome. Bring tools and gloves if you have them; if you don't, let us know.

\$25 for members of the Museum or the Green Mountain Wood carvers / \$35 non-members • Best for teens and adults. Please *pre-register* .

### *Visit Our Friends and Volunteers Out and About*

#### *Shelburne Farms Harvest Festival*

Saturday, September 15

Demonstrations, raffle tickets, and much more

#### *Dead Creek Wildlife Festival*

Saturday, October 6

Birding tips, field guides, soap carving, etc.

#### *NEMA Conference: Innovation and the Future of Museums*

November 7-9 • Museums and culture, technology, collaboration and change.

### **Find us online for more information, updates, changes, and additions**



- September: Museum Day  
Library programs and exhibits  
Woodcraft Festivals  
Carving Demonstrations
- October: GMWC Annual Meeting  
Internship Fairs  
Carving Demonstrations  
Gift Shop Sale
- November: Nuthatch Carving Class  
Gift Shop Sale  
Where Natural History meets Art  
*(for Elder Education Enrichment)*
- December: Annual Appeal
- January: National Bird Day  
Winter Bird Feeding  
*(for Milton Historical Society)*

All events are at the Birds of Vermont Museum unless noted otherwise.

Check our website for updates and additions:  
<http://www.birdsofvermont.org/events.php>

## SAVE THE DATES

Sept 16     Birding the Basin  
Sept 29     Chip Carving Class  
Oct 6        Dead Creek Wildlife Festival  
Oct 13      Fall Festival  
Oct 14      the Big Sit  
Oct 27      Potluck Birding  
Oct 30-31   Gift Shop Sale

*Monthly:*     Bird Monitoring Walks (*Last Saturdays*)  
                  Nestlings (*Second Tuesdays*)  
*Weekly:*        Bird's Book Exchange (*Most Weekends*)  
                  Fledglings (*Most Sundays*)

Details inside and on our website! To register,  
call (802) 434-2167 or email [museum@birdsofvermont.org](mailto:museum@birdsofvermont.org)

*The mission of the Birds of Vermont  
Museum is to provide education, to nurture an  
appreciation of the environment, and  
to study birds and their habitats using  
woodcarvings and other Museum resources.*

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*Please send comments or changes of address to*

The Birds of Vermont Museum  
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