

Chip Notes

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BIRDS OF VERMONT MUSEUM
Volume 35

Summer 2021



EXPANDING VOICES: PERSPECTIVES ON BIRDING

Our 2021 art show, *Expanding Voices*, explores and reflects the past year. Visual arts, poetry, 3D, and prose pieces capture the variety of solitudes, connections, race issues, changes and changelessness, new skills, and understandings we experienced in 2020. Last year asked a lot of us—and taught us even more! Our habitual systems hit rock bottom under the weight of the pandemic, economic hardship, and social injustice. Voices rose, and long-time institutions were loudly questioned. New ways of experiencing and perceiving our world opened our minds to new comprehension.

How could our art, our creativity, our practices remain unaffected? How could our perceptions of birds, birding, and conservation remain the same?

These are the questions we asked artists to reflect on as they created art for this year's art show *Expanding Voices: perspectives on birding*. Forty artists, photographers, writers, and poets had their work selected for this year's show. They range from under 10 to over 80 and speak from their varied experiences of birding, the pandemic, faith, and social issues.

We are a museum about and for birds and conservation. We are part of a community of birders, artists, conservationists, and learners. Yet each of our experiences and perspectives may be unseen or unknown to someone else, even in the same community. We hope this show will speak to you—telling both your story and relaying others' points of view.

The show is open until October 31, 2021, and there is an artist reception on July 29.



Art, clockwise from upper right: No Bad Birds (N. Galper), Isolation 2020 (detail) (T. Valentinetti), Smothered (S. Rosedahl), Bird Song (detail) (C. McDowell), Traveling Home (M. Ottens)

HUMMINGBIRDS

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are tiny bundles of fluttering feathers and territorial might. Perfectly satisfied with consuming nectar and insects widely available in our home gardens, hummingbirds readily visit hummingbird feeders to take a sip of sugar water. If shrubs and small trees are near the feeder, the birds take advantage of a perch from which to safely rest and watch nearby activity.

While it's fun to watch these birds zip and dive up close, it's essential to provide them with a snack that is safe, free of mold and the effects of fermentation. Especially as summer heat hits temperatures of 80-90°F outside (26-33°C, we must be diligent in maintaining hummingbird feeders properly.

Preparing the sugar-water solution is easy: mix 1 cup of white granulated sugar in 4 cups of un-softened, non-distilled tap water. Do not use honey or red food coloring. Heat the solution just to boiling in a stainless steel pot or for three minutes in a microwave, stir, and heat one more minute. To make only two cups, use just ½ cup of sugar to 2 cups of water. Cool the solution before pouring into the feeder vessel. Store prepared solution in clear, clean glass jars (mason jars, for example) for up to two weeks in the refrigerator.

Empty out the feeder's sugar water every three to five days depending on outdoor temps (the warmer, the more frequently) to reduce the chance of fermentation in the solution. If black mold is found on the feeder or if the liquid appears cloudy, quickly dispose of that sugar water, clean the feeder thoroughly, and fill with fresh sugar water. Clean feeders using hot running water and a bottle brush or similar scrubber each time when making a

solution change. Be sure to use a tiny brush to clean out the sipping portals as well. Bird experts advise that hummingbird feeders be cleaned with a weak vinegar solution once per month by soaking the feeder in the vinegar water for an hour, scrubbing all parts with a brush, then thoroughly rinsing under running water before filling with fresh sugar water.

Feeding hummingbirds is a commitment. Once a female is brooding her eggs and raising her nestlings, she benefits from a reliable food source. Therefore, know that the enjoyment for us is well worth the effort, but proper feeder maintenance is critical to hummingbird welfare.

— Allison Gergely 



Female or juvenile Ruby-throated Hummingbird perched on a feeder at the Birds of Vermont Museum.



Thank you

On June 25 a group of **Eco-Americorps** members donated hours to help rid the Museum property of invasive plants. We are grateful to all their hard work and to **Elizabeth Spinney**, with Vermont Invasives, who helped locate and flag many individual plants and provided tools.

Spencer Hardy from the Vermont Center for Ecostudies joined the group for a lesson about native bees, and **Ben and Jerry's** donated ice cream for a sweet treat at the end of a productive day.

Photo provided by Eco-Americorps.

THE CARVER'S DAUGHTER

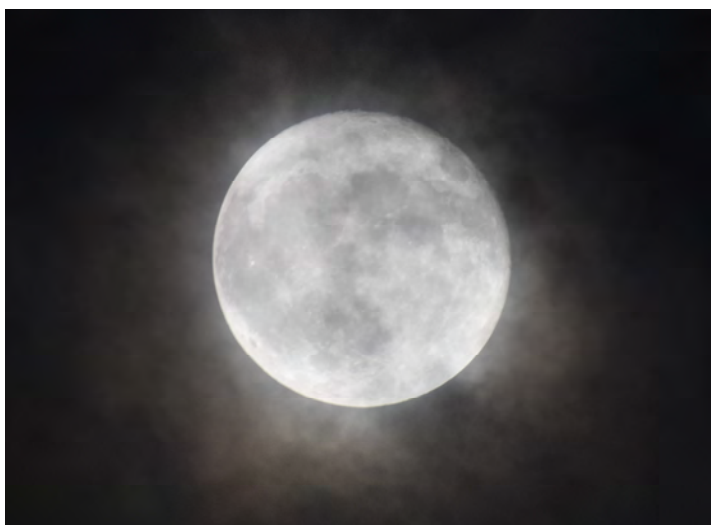
Part 21: My Father and the Universe

If my father had a third passion, after birds and the Civil War, it was astronomy. Had NASA put out a call for birders in space, he would have been first in line.

When we went for walks together, and there weren't any birds around at the moment, he told me about the birth and deaths of stars, the mystery of black holes, and what might happen when our sun "goes supernova". He was a good storyteller and I would listen with both ears. He stretched my young mind with the concepts of infinity and light speed.

I was six in 1969, and since the moon landing happened in July, we were living in our summer camp where we had no television, just books and the lake for entertainment. But the moon landing was not something to be missed, so my parents woke me in the wee hours of the morning, and I stumbled by flashlight along the path to our neighbors' camp. We gathered around their little black and white TV and watched the now famous footstep and heard the now famous words. Later, we headed back to our camp, and there was the moon, hanging over the lake. Its reflection danced across the water right toward us. We stopped and stared. For the first time ever in the whole history of the world, we could think, "there are people up there, right now!" I remember my father just looking, and looking, and looking. It was a moment I'll never forget.

We watched every launch and landing and splashdown after that, and my father knew all the statistics and names and details. I was ten when Skylab blasted into space, and my father's eyes lit up whenever he talked about it.



Full Moon photograph © James Grant, and used with permission

People were actually living in space for weeks at a time!

One cold night in the middle of winter, my father bundled up and headed out into the field across from our house with his trusty spotting scope over his shoulder. The last time he'd done this had been in the fall, and there'd been a full moon. We'd explored the craters through his scope and talked about asteroids, and once a V of migrating geese had passed across the moon's disk, so high their voices didn't even reach down to where we were.

I thought tonight probably had something to do with owls, since the moon hadn't risen yet and the migrating geese were long gone. I bundled up and followed him. It was so cold that I immediately lost feeling in my toes and fingers and nose. The snow was knee deep. In the moving circle of light from the flashlight he carried, I tried to step in his footprints. I noticed that he started taking shorter strides for me. Finally, we reached a certain spot that looked just like any other spot in the middle of the snowy field in the dark. But he packed down the snow with his feet, set up the scope, and checked his watch.

"Got a few minutes," he said, and turned off the flashlight.

A barred owl hooted from the trees. We listened, and another answered it. I thought my father was going to point the scope in their direction, even though it was really too dark to see much, but he didn't. The only light came from the houses along the road in the distance. As my eyes got used to the darkness, the stars got brighter and there seemed to be more of them. My father pointed out the Big Dipper and the North Star and the Pleiades, and I tried to dance feeling back into my toes.

Then he said, "There it is!" and swung the scope around to the south. I followed his gesture, and then I saw it, a tiny moving point of light, tracing a slow arc across the sky. He focused on it and then stepped aside quickly and let me look.

"You'll have to keep moving the scope to keep it in the frame," he said.

And I looked, and moved the scope, and then stepped back so he could have another turn. A few moments after that, its arc complete, Skylab sank behind the treeline to the north and disappeared.

... continued on page 7

BIRDS, TREATS, ART, WOOD : EVENTS SCHEDULE



Recognition (K. Guttman)

ARTIST RECEPTION for the EXPANDING VOICES SHOW

Thursday, July 29 • 3 – 5 pm

Meet some artists, photographers and poets. Enjoy cool drinks, admire art, discuss conservation, or relax in a pollinator sanctuary.

Drinks are non-alcoholic; please bring your own cup.

Please register in advance

POP-UP SOAP CARVING

Thursdays, July 15, 22 • 2 – 3 pm

Sundays, August 1, 15 • 2 – 3 pm

Sunday, September 12 • 2 – 3 pm

New: drop-in sessions! Stop by and try your hand at soap carving. Tools and materials provided.

Included with admission, all ages

BIRD MONITORING WALKS

Saturdays, July 31, August 28 • 7:30 – 8:30 am

Saturdays, September 25, October 30 • 8 – 9 am

Attend our monthly monitoring walk outdoors on the museum's forest and meadow trails. Please bring your own binoculars and dress for the weather.

Suggested donation: \$5

STORIES in the FOREST

Thursday, August 12 • 11am

This family-friendly walk introduces forests' stories as stages and layers of distinctive plant growth and habitat. The lives of trees, shrubs, birds, and other wildlife inspire nature's stories within a forest.

Suggested donation: \$10

A GNOME'S EYE VIEW

Tuesday, August 17 • 2 – 3 pm

Get down on the forest floor and imagine the world from the height of a gnome, a mouse, or a junco. Examine the sounds, scents, and colors up close and tiny.

Suggested donation: \$5 • Great for kids

INSECTS of the DAY

Sunday, August 19 • 2 – 3 pm

Which wonderful, weird, and wild insects are out during the day? Explore with James Grant, wildlife photographer.

Suggested donation: \$5

ICE CREAM SOCIAL THANK YOU for MEMBERS and VOLUNTEERS

Sunday, August 22 • 3–4 pm

Old fashioned ice cream social to thank all of volunteers and members who have helped us get through the last year and a half. Poetry reading at 3:30.

Please register in advance



BELLAMY EAGLE: 3-DAY WOODCARVING SEMINAR with MATTHEW STRONG

Wednesday – Friday, August 18–20

The Green Mountain Woodcarvers are hosting a three-day carving class at the museum. Starting from a blank, we each will carve the eagle head, wings, and shield, assemble the parts, and—if time permits—paint.

Contact Barbara Taylor at brwoodtaylor@comcast.net to register.

\$125 plus materials for the 3 days

Please check our website for updates or additions

<https://www.birdsofvermont.org/events>

Advance registration required for most events.

To register, visit <https://www.birdsofvermont.org/special-upcoming/> then click or tap on the event name. Or call (802) 434-2167.

WOOD CARVING DEMONSTRATION

Saturday, August 7 • 1 –2 pm

Sunday, August 29 • 1 –2 pm

Museum staff will demonstrate basic skills, show resources and talk about the process, and answer questions. Drop in during your visit.

Included with admission

MOTHS in the EVENING

Friday, August 27 • 7:30pm

Join Vermont Entomological Society entomologists for a twilight walk to find out what attracts moths, what they do in the wild, and how they differ from butterflies.

Free, donations welcome

CARVING CLASS: TOUCAN

Saturday, September 18 • 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

Carve and paint a toucan with Dave Tuttle of the Green Mountain Woodcarvers. Wood blank and paint provided. Bring mask, tools, gloves, and lunch.

\$35 for Museum and GMWC members • \$45 for everyone else. Registration required.

The BIG SIT!

Sunday, October 10 • Dawn – Dusk

How many birds can we perceive from a 17-foot diameter circle? Can we beat last year's record?

Pledges welcome, call +1 (802) 434-2167

RACE AROUND BIRDS

Main Race: *Sunday, November 6*

Virtual/self-timed: *Saturday–Saturday, October 23 – November 5*

Run or walk our Second Annual *Race Around Birds*. Details and registration info will be posted on our website.



NATALIA PAES

Birds, Seed Dispersal, and Ecological Restoration in the Tropics

Recently, a University of Vermont graduate student offered to give a talk at the museum. It was entirely unexpected and we were excited to say yes!

Natalia Paes is passionate about birds and has been studying them for 11 years in the São Paulo region of Brazil. Currently, she is a Ph.D. student at the University of Campinas in Brazil and an International student at UVM in the Gund Institute for Environment. She has focused her studies on the economic and ecological aspects of seed dispersal provided by birds in areas under restoration process in one of the most threatened biomes in the world, the Atlantic Forest. Her professional experience includes the development of public policies for bird conservation.

On July 10, Natalia spoke about the seed dispersal service provided by birds in the tropical forest and how birds can guide the ecological process and even economic investments in ecological restoration of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest. She was able to pack the house on quite short notice, even drawing attendees from Rhode Island. This was part of her Ph.D.



work, and we are honored to have hosted her. We wish her great success in her future.

OFF-SITE EVENTS

- August 24 *Citizen Science at the Milton Library*
- September 25 *Audubon's Bird Festival* — We will be there, soap carving
- October 2 *Dead Creek Wildlife Festival* — join us to learn about birds, soap carving, and more
- December 4 *Richmond Holiday Fair*

SUMMER INTERN: JAMES GRANT



James holding an unidentified species of stonefly found in the upland garden section of the pollinator sanctuary

James Grant is one of the interns working at the Birds of Vermont Museum this summer. James is a rising junior at the University of Vermont, majoring in Biological Sciences. He brings with him a variety of experiences and interests, from studying dolphins in Panama to macro-photography of spiders.

While at the museum, James is collecting and documenting insects that are using the pollinator sanctuary. From this work, he is selecting observations of bees in order to contribute to the Vermont Wild Bee Survey (see <https://val.vtcostudies.org/projects/vtbees/> for more).

James is an experienced wildlife photographer. You can see James’s work on his Instagram feed at https://www.instagram.com/jcg_wildlife/ or @jcg_wildlife. You may also join him August 19 for a public program about the *Insects of the Day* (visit <https://birdsofvermont.org/special-upcoming/> to register).

When not working, James can be found outside biking, skiing and running. He plans to compete in the museum’s second annual *Race Around Birds* trail run this coming November.



2021 Raffle! Loon by David Tuttle

To enter the raffle, photocopy or cut out this ticket, fill it out (print or type, please!), and send it in with \$1 to enter. Or send 6 (six) tickets in with \$5, for extra chances to win.

Send tickets by *October 15* for the drawing on November 1.

Birds of Vermont Museum, attn. raffle
900 Sherman Hollow Road
Huntington, Vermont 05462

If possible, please plan to pick up the carving if you win.



2021 Raffle: *Loon* (a woodcarving by David Tuttle)

Name:
Address:

Phone / Email:

Please be sure we can read your writing. Thanks!



We send thanks to

- » Pampers Company, for sending us a Koala Kare baby changing table, and Ryan Elliott, for installing it
- » Early Birder Morning Walks leaders: Ali Wagner, Tom Jiamachello, Bill and Mae Mayville
- » Legal support: David Sunshine
- » Retreat work: Brian Werneke, Magnus Stien
- » Invasives removal: Liz Shields, Elizabeth Spinney, Dustin Bowman, and Eco-Americorps participants
- » Bob Lindemann and the Green Mountain Wood-carvers
- » Dave Tuttle, for teaching classes and making things for the gift shop
- » Essex High School Library
- » Becky and David Cozzens, for gift shop support and carpentry projects galore
- » Visitor Service Volunteers: Jodi Pierce, Lauren Bostwick, Dick Affolter, and Jayne Sheridan
- » Behind-the-scenes and Garden Volunteers: Lily Hinrichsen, Erny Palola, John Gergely, Shirley Johnson, Rita Sloan, Anne Dannenberg, Steve Smith, Barbara Forauer, and Jim Morris
- » Citizen Science Volunteers: Michele Patenaude, Megan Pratt, and Debbie Duvall
- » And additional thanks to Spencer Hardy, Kari-Jo Spear, Evergreen Erb, Hank Kaestner, and Nina Ridhibhinyo for various amazing help and support
- » Northeast Delta Dental, for over ten years of supporting the *Chip Notes* newsletter

#AskBob

Q: If you could have dinner with anyone in history, it would be...?

A: Abraham Lincoln, for his clarity of vision and determination in holding our nation intact during its most difficult period.

The Carver's Daughter *continued from page 3*


There had been three people inside that point of light, living and breathing in space, and looking down at the Earth. I imagined what Earth would look like from up there, and what it must feel like, knowing you were only one of three people out of billions who weren't living on the planet. What would it feel like to have that much courage? And what would your life be like, after that, when you returned home?

That night, after we trudged back across the field in our footsteps, and my toes and fingers and nose had warmed up, I wrote my first science fiction story. It was about a man who had the courage to leave his planet behind and look for others. The story was never published, or really even finished, but I have never forgotten that man who showed me that I could leave my own world without my father's spotting scope, and that I didn't need darkness to see the stars. I can do it with a keyboard, and I can soar through the universe inside my head. And I can even bring other people with me and show them what I imagine.

But I could never do it if my father hadn't stretched my mind with his long conversations and given me the

opportunities to watch history happening. And, of course, he showed me the importance of listening to owls and the beauty of a V of geese against the full moon, too.

Actually, a birder in space might not be a bad idea. We have keen powers of observation and endless patience. We're impervious to cold, never daunted by challenges, and we think being weightless would be awesome. And everyone knows that all space vessels have ice cream.

— *Kari Jo Spear* 

Kari Jo Spear, daughter of Bob Spear, is a writer of young adult novels and more. Her newest book, *The Carver's Daughter: A Memoir* is available in print and as an eBook from all major on-line booksellers. You can also find it at Phoenix Books in Burlington and Essex, Vermont, and of course in the gift shop at the Birds of Vermont Museum—now in-person and online.

Kari Jo is on the web at <https://carversdaughter.blogspot.com/>. You can also follow her on Facebook as Carver's Daughter <https://www.facebook.com/Carvers-Daughter-105285684579200>.

Birds of Vermont Museum
900 Sherman Hollow Road
Huntington, Vermont 05462
www.birdsofvermont.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

SAVE THE DATES

July 29	Artist Reception
August 22	Member and Volunteer Recognition
September 18	Toucan Carving Class
October 10	the Big Sit!
November 5	Race Around Birds
<i>Last Saturdays</i>	Bird Monitoring Walks

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

Volunteers always needed



#AskBob

Q: What is your favorite food?

A: Ice Cream, especially Ben and Jerry's Cherry Garcia.

#AskBob comes from a collection of answers given in 1989 to John Johnson of the Burlington Free Press.

Board of Trustees 2021

William Mayville, President
Shirley Johnson, Secretary
Brian Werneke, Treasurer

Becky Cozzens	Mae Mayville	Kari Jo Spear
James Osborn	Ginger Lubkowitz	David Sunshine
Elizabeth Spinney	Zac Cota-Weaver	Spencer Hardy

Museum Staff

Erin Talmage, Executive Director
Allison Gergely, Museum Educator
Kir Talmage, Outreach & IT Coordinator

Interns

James Grant, Leah Boget

Please send comments or changes of address to

Birds of Vermont Museum
900 Sherman Hollow Road • Huntington, VT 05462
museum@birdsofvermont.org • (802) 434-2167

If you'd like to receive a color PDF edition emailed, instead of a paper edition posted by mail, please contact us.

Visit our website to download back issues.

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.