

Chip Notes

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BIRDS OF VERMONT MUSEUM

Volume 39

Summer 2025



SHIRLEY JOHNSON RETIRES

Our newsletter is not long enough to thank Shirley Johnson for all she has done for the Museum and the birding community of Vermont.

Shirley joined the Birds of Vermont Museum's Board of Trustees in 2004 and became Board Chair in 2008. Under her leadership, the Museum became fiscally solvent while weathering a flood and the loss of Bob Spear. In December 2014, when she decided it was time to retire from the Board Chair position, she continued on in other board roles until she retired from the board last December.

Throughout the last 20 years, Shirley has helped the Museum in myriad ways. Over the years, visitors would find her gardening, painting, decorating photo-op boards, washing windows, working on mailings, identifying birds at the viewing window, or giving museum tours. On volunteer work days, she often enlisted her husband Bob as well. Together they have chainsawed and cleared brush on probably every Museum trail.

In addition to her Museum work, Shirley served on the Green Mountain Audubon's board and for 20 years coordinated the Burlington Christmas Bird Count. After a day of birding, the Burlington Christmas Bird counters



Bob Spear and Shirley met during his tenure at the Green Mountain Audubon Center, and remained friends. Here they are sharing a joke at one of Bob's many birthday parties.

often convened at Shirley's house for a potluck dinner. Her feeders were somewhat well-known to birders in the area. Shirley's daughter, Jennifer Muse, told Museum staff that she had at least 15 feeders up at one time, and Jennifer and her sister affectionately called the feeding station "the Shelburne road of fast food restaurants for birds." Jennifer noted that even when her mom was traveling, Shirley made sure those feeders were full and the birds would not go hungry.

Jennifer also shared that when she and her sister were young, their mom would take the girls on field trips and to presentations to learn about birds, wildflowers, and gardening. When asked if she remembered when her mom started as a birder she said, "somewhere along the way, her love of gardening transitioned to also loving birds." Although both of Shirley's daughters are currently avid gardeners, Jennifer confessed that she too is getting more "into" birds.

In addition to birding in Vermont, Shirley and Bob traveled the world to bird.

Shirley makes beautiful scrapbooks about her travels. She has given numerous programs about these destinations to members of her communities. Some of you may recall her *Birds of the Galapagos* program she gave here some years ago.

Although she accomplished a great deal in her official capacities at the Museum, Shirley is most known for the connections she made with staff and visitors, her compassion, her infectious love of birds, and (of course) her brownie recipe.



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... "Shirley Johnson" continued on page 4

FOREST SIT

On Thursday, May 15, 2025, the Birds of Vermont Museum introduced a new opportunity, dubbed the “Forest Sit,” to experience the property’s natural spaces (where Forest Bathing meets the Big Sit).

We met outside the museum by the entrance bench, welcomed each other, and walked out to the month’s sit spot: the meadow in front of Gale’s Retreat. Our friendly facilitator guided attendees with a brief settling-in reading and music. The remainder of the hour was filled by each in attendance silently with their own mode of expression, through drawing, writing, birding, or simply sensing the environment’s abundant elements. There were no rules. We all came away with gratitude and calmness for the opportunity to walk away from daily existence and walk into sublime reverie.

We have scheduled additional Forest Sit sessions on Thursdays during the summer months: June 19th (stone wall above pond) , July 17th (treehouse), August 14th (next to pond), and September 8th (next to creek). Together, let’s rest, restore our spirits, watch birds or butterflies, do a little nature journaling, or whatever is comfortable and quiet for each. These programs are free, but we do ask that you pre-register.

Below is an excerpt from one attendee’s journal (shared with permission):

Birds calling from the pines to one another, “I am here. I am *here*. Can you find me?” Calls close in, momentary silence. Who makes the first move?

Emerald green flies alight on my leg. A real stop or a taste test?

Tiny, hovering flies pass, and pause, and ponder perhaps. Then move on.

Sherman Hollow Brook gently yet powerfully flowing below my perch. The rocks and substrate create the water’s song – the flow is steady and calming, the music is as cleansing as the cool water.

A breeze picks up where I sit, the unfurling ferns, oak shoots, and young shrubs quake just a bit while wild strawberry, meadow grass, and maple sprouts stand still.



Sit. Reflect. Dream. Draw. Or just sit.
One of the participants in May, at the stump circle near Gale’s Retreat.

How Not To Conserve Birds

From January through June 2025, the US federal government—the executive and judicial branches especially—have moved quickly in their efforts to make changes in conservation policies and practices. Some Executive Orders, decisions by the Departments of Defense and Interior, decisions by the Supreme Court, and aspects of the H.R. 1 budget bill will impact birds, most probably causing harm.

Because we have limited space and because changes have happened quickly (and seem likely to continue doing so), we have posted an article on our website with links about these actions and expected impacts.

Visit <https://birdsofvermont.org/how-not-to-protect-birds-in-2025/> to read more regarding:

- Legal protections
- Land use by birds
- Air and water quality issues
- Ongoing data and research on birds

You may also find useful information through the American Birding Association, the National Audubon Society, the Nature Conservancy, and the Natural Resources Defense Council (to name a few). Contact your senators and representatives to remind them that birds and their habitats are important.



THE CARVER'S DAUGHTER:

Part 29: The One My Dad missed (sort of)

My father deeply loved national parks and monuments. Every trip my parents took me on involved visiting as many as possible. As a child, I saw geysers, huge cactus, hot springs, and deep canyons. I learned the importance of preserving unique places and creatures, and I learned history from seeing famous places with my own eyes.

Recently, the national parks started offering National Park Passports, which are books with information about the parks, a map, and blank pages where you can “cancel” your passport by marking it with a rubber stamp—just like old-fashioned passports were cancelled at the borders of different countries you visited. If these passports had been available when my father was traveling, he would have filled a dozen. He would have bought me one when I was born and given great thought about if I had to be able to remember being in the park for it to count, or if being old enough to breathe the air was enough.

Rather belatedly, I bought myself a passport book this winter when my husband and I were visiting Big Bend National Park. Because of the current political situation, we wanted to support places in this country set aside to be preserved for their beauty, wildlife, and history, so we decided to visit as many as possible on our annual winter trip.

As soon as I purchased my little blue passport book in one of Big Bend's information centers, I went to a table with an ink pad and cancellation stamp and proudly made my first cancellation in the Southwest section of the book.

One park down. Then I found out that each visitor center within the park had its own cancellation stamp. So we visited each one, and then my husband got hooked on the idea, and pretty soon he had his own book and was cancelling away, too.

Then I got to thinking about all the parks I'd been to as a kid, so I bought a set of national park stickers and began sticking them into my passport, one for each park I'd been to. That made the book feel more complete to me.

As my husband and I travelled farther west, I cancelled my passport in Saguaro National Park (both east and west sections), Chiricahua National Monument, Fort

Bowie National Monument, Montezuma Castle National Monument, Tuzigoot National Monument, Casa Grande National Monument, Death Valley National Park, White Sands National Park, and Waco Mammoth National Monument.

No, I'm not becoming obsessed with this, not like with birding, of course. (As we get ready to head into Hot Springs National Park. And maybe we'll stop at Smokey Mountain National Park and Shenandoah National Park on our way home!)

Each one is unique and fascinating, and I'm so glad they've been preserved for future generations. They also all have cool birds, of course. Passport in one hand, binoculars in the other.

The only place my father probably would not have cancelled his passport in was Death Valley National Park.



Death Valley National Park. Photo by Kari Jo Spear

... “Carver’s Daughter” continued on page 10

HEAT PUMPS & SOLAR

Over this past winter, the Museum worked with Building Energy of Hinesburg to install a heat pump system of two outdoor units and six indoor units. This new set-up is an incredible improvement for the Museum's indoor climate control.

Heat pump systems provide heating in the winter (and on cold spring days); this both extends the useful life of our 20-year-old oil furnace and provides more targeted and efficient warmth.

These units also allow us to monitor humidity more effectively. Having the right range of humidity is vital for the preservation of the woodcarvings, the health of the building, and the health of the humans in the building.

In addition, the heat pumps allow us to cool new areas of the building. If you have been here in the summer, you may have noticed it is typically quite cool downstairs, and considerably warmer upstairs. This is a consequence of the building (which used to be a barn) being partially underground; the downstairs warms and cools more slowly than the upstairs and stays cooler in the summer.

Using fans to move air around has historically helped even out these different zones somewhat. However, as climate change increases our average summer temperatures, we have an increased need to better cool the upstairs, protecting both visitors and the carvings.

This improvement is now in place. We're exploring when is best to change functions to heat, dehumidify, or cool-



ing to create the most even and pleasant experience for visitors, staff, interns, and volunteers, as well as to best protect the carvings and exhibits.

You may know that heat pump systems can be expensive. We are grateful to the Vermont Arts Council and the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan for grants that funded this work, and to Carol Talmage for assisting with grant applications.

The next step is to use solar energy to reduce the carbon impact of the electricity used to run the heat pumps. Taking advantage of our south-facing roof (see photo above), prices before tariffs increase them, and funding though the Inflation Reduction Act, we have decided to go ahead and install solar panels this summer. We need to raise another \$40,000 to complete the project. If anyone has the capacity to help us directly fund or assist with fundraising for this project, thank you in advance and please reach out.

Shirley Johnson *(continued)*

Her friend, Ali Wagner, dedicated the Lincoln's Sparrow carving to Shirley and Bob, and perhaps summed it up best:

"Dedicated to Shirley and Bob Johnson. In appreciation for their kindness, generosity, and friendship"

From all of us, **thank you, Shirley** for all you have done for the Museum and for the birds. And we hope you know we will never stop calling you.



Ali Wagner (knitting) and Shirley Johnson participate in the annual Big Sit.

Our expectation is that the solar panels will be able to generate most of the energy needed to heat, cool and dehumidify the building, reducing our use of fossil fuels and improving our ability to preserve the collections for future generations.

To learn more about Vermont Arts Council and their important work please visit their website at www.vermontartscouncil.org.

To learn more about the Community Fund of Southeast Michigan, visit cfsem.org.

To learn more about Building Energy, visit www.buildingenergyvt.com.

BIRDS *and* MYTH: *meanings, metaphors, and guides*

The Birds of Vermont Museum has been hosting themed community art shows since 2014. Each winter, the staff develops a bird-related theme for the exhibit and invites submissions in varied media. Our 2025 art show, *Birds and Myth: meanings, metaphors, and guides*, is centered on the ideas of birds as they appear in myths, both old and modern.

Birds from myth may be symbols, guides, teachers, and/or part of an artist's cultural and ecological background. We asked creatives to bring such birds into their work. The resulting show brings together pieces that explore old legends, represent individual belief, explore misconceptions, and invent new guides. *Birds and Myth* immerses us in histories, hopes, and imagination.



Baba Yaga Treehouse
Jessica Wilson

Over 50 artists, photographers, and poets of all ages exhibit their work this year. Most are from Vermont. The show runs from May 1 to October 31 at the Birds of Vermont Museum in Huntington. There will be an informal reception/meet the artists on Thursday, July 24, at 3pm. For reception details, see <https://birdsofvermont.org/special-upcoming/>.

Come for Baba Yaga, detour through nursery tales, and inspire your heart with *Hope Rises from the Ashes* and other guides.



Hope Rises from the Ashes
Cat McKeen

Exhibiting artists and writers:

Alice C (Burlington)
Alison Forrest (Huntington)
Alyssa B (Colchester)
Amanda Makepeace (Watkinsville, GA)
Anita Michele (Swanton)
Annette Goynes (Richford)
Aprille Soons Palmer (South Hero)
Cat McKeen (Essex Junction)
Chris Selin (South Burlington)
Dara Theodora (Fairfax)
Deana Allgaier (Huntington)
Deb Runge (Williston)
Denise Letendre (Castleton)
Elisabeth Mazzilli (Moretown)
Elodie Parthenay (Longueuil, QC)
Greg Didyoung (Wilmington)
Hannah Mahar (Grand Isle)
Heather Rusch Zelonis (Bristol)

Henry S (Jericho)
Jamie Quint (Richmond)
Jennefer Jolls (Williamstown)
Jessica Wilson (Saint Albans)
Jo Marsan (Johnson)
JoAnne Wazny (Enosburg Falls)
Judy Crocker (Burlington)
Julia S C (South Hero)
Julie Dunigan (South Hero)
Karla Van Vliet (Bristol)
Katrina Meyers (Colchester)
Kay Johnson (Hinesburg)
Kristen Donegan (Essex)
Kristin Dexter (Essex Junction)
Lily Hinrichsen (Bristol)
Lisa Acerbo (Trumbull, CT)
Marcia Vogler (Charlotte)
Miriam Adams (Hinesburg)

Nancy Leeman (Huntington)
Nancy Stone (Williston)
Nicole Gadouas (Swanton)
Olin P (Middlebury)
Patrick McAllister (Burlington)
Pedro Salas (Starksboro)
Peter Aldrich (Essex Junction)
Richard Crocker (Burlington)
Sandra Morris (East Middlebury)
Sandra VanVooren (East Hartford, CT)
Sarah Rosedahl (North Hero)
Steven Farrar (Richmond)
Theo Chang Andreu (South Burlington)
Todd Kiel (Bolton)
Tonya Whitney (Williston)
Tricia Knoll (Williston)
Viviane P (Richmond)
William Chaiken (posthumous)



From left to right: King Wren (Annette Goynes); Eight Blessings on the Wind (Amanda Makepeace); Galway Shawl, Cardinal (Dara Theodora); Firehawk (Hannah Mahar)

ABBY PHILIPS, INTERN



Abby Philips is a rising senior at the University of Vermont pursuing dual degrees in Environmental Studies and Community and International Development. She believes in the power of strong community networks to foster and build up sustainable development, as well as shaping communication to be increasingly accessible and equitable.

In the future, she wants to help build social and resilient communities to fight climate injustice. In her

opinion, BOVM is a great model of how a strong community center can connect people to nature and help inspire political action.

She began birding two years ago after taking a class at UVM focusing on the intersection of birding, social justice, and environmental action. Since then, she has channeled her love of birds and nature into her aspirations for a more healthy and happy world. When she is not birding, Abby's other hobbies include working out, fiber arts, reading, writing for *The Cynic* and playing music on WRUV at UVM. Her favorite birds are the gray catbird and the pileated woodpecker.

Originally from New Jersey, Abby witnessed firsthand the impact a lack of green spaces had on her community. "We have a duty to protect our natural spaces," she said. "Birds are often the lifeblood of an ecosystem; they are gentle and delicate creatures. I always think about a canary in a coal mine, and how birds can highlight early signs of danger. If they don't survive and thrive, neither can we." At the museum, Abby hopes to bring these passions to life as a Communications Intern. In this role, she will assist around the museum and develop a project over the course of her internship to benefit some area of the museum's communication. Her goals for the summer are to be a passionate and hardworking member of the community and to add twenty birds to her life list. If you see her around the museum, say hello!



EV MCINDOO, INTERN

I owe a lot to environmental education organizations. They're what made me passionate about the natural world in the first place, which is an interest that's carried me through three years (and, if all goes well, the fourth year!) of a biology degree at UVM. I'm also a studio art major and have just started to learn to carve, which made the museum internship an ideal way for me to spend my summer.



My time so far at the museum has been peaceful and deeply enjoyable. I'm mostly doing trail maintenance so far, but I'm starting to work on my project for the summer. I'm thinking about making fairy houses hidden throughout the trails, as well as an illustrated fairy field guide and/or activity book. I'm hoping this project could provide a fun opportunity for conservation education for kids. I'm looking forward to working on it and spending the rest of the summer here!



Example of Ev's work-in-progress: an activity page that invites us to blend new myths with nature observations.

BOARD MEMBER COMINGS AND GOINGS

In March we welcomed two new Board members, John Peckham and Taran Catania.

Taran comes to the Museum with a strong birding background, but also with a great deal of experience in leadership and management, corporate social responsibility, and knowledge of environmental policy. She is currently the Chief of Staff for 1% for the Planet in Burlington.

John is an avid conservationist with a focus in restoration, remediation, and preservation of wildlands for all. He currently works for the State of Vermont as Wetlands Ecologist. In his spare time he focuses on wildlife photography, and you can see his pictures at johnspeckham.myportfolio.com.

We recently said good-bye to retiring board members Ginger Lubkowitz and Spencer Hardy. Thank you both for your time on the board. We have greatly appreciated your effort and expertise.

In addition to serving on the board, both Ginger and Spencer volunteered in different capacities. Ginger helped out at numerous events including time-keeping for the Race Around Birds and assisting with other events. Spencer led several summer insect walks.

We are grateful for their knowledge and time and hope to see them often in future.



Taran Catania
celebrating a shorebird



John Peckham
taking an unusual view



Ginger Lubkowitz
volunteering on Race day



Spencer Hardy
showing us a Vermont bee



2025 Raffle! Loon carved by "Kent" and painted by Richard J. Derry

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 about 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.



2025 Raffle: *Loon* by Kent and Derry

Name:

Address:

Phone / Email:

Please be sure we can read your writing. Thanks!



EVENTS

BIRDS and MYTH ART SHOW

May – October • open when museum is open

What legends, beliefs, representations, truth, insight, guidance, metaphors, or meanings influence your understanding of birds, ourselves, our shared world?

Included with admission



Rust Bird
Henry S

A NATURALIST'S GUIDE to DRAWING and PAINTING BIRDS

Tuesday, July 8 or Saturday, August 9 • 10:00 am—1:00 pm

Exhibiting artist Chris Selin leads a workshop on drawing and painting birds in natural habitats. In cooperation with the Davis Studio.

Register online at davisstudiovt.com • \$68

OVER THE “HUMP” CONCERT: BLUES FOR BREAKFAST

Wednesday, July 9 • 5:30 pm
Huntington Rec Field

Enjoy “grateful americana” music, local art, and delicious foods. Plenty of listening and picnic space!

Free to attend. Benefitting the Birds of Vermont Museum

BUTTERFLY and BUG WALK

Saturday, July 12 • 10:00 am

Explore the museum grounds with entomologists and make friends with butterflies and other insects.

Register by phone • max 20 •
Free, suggested: \$5-\$10



FOREST SITS

Thursdays, July 17, August 14, and September 18 • 10:00 am

Together let's rest, restore spirit, watch birds or butterflies, journal, and experience the quiet.

Register by phone • max 8 • *Suggested: \$10*

ARTIST RECEPTION for BIRDS and MYTH

Thursday, July 24 • 3:00 pm

You're invited to a low-key, informal gathering. Meet artists, examine art, and consider myths.

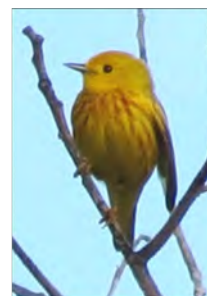
Register so we have enough refreshments • *Included with admission*

BIRD MONITORING WALKS

Last Saturdays, July 26, August 30,
September 27 • 7:30 am (8 am in Sept.)

All birders welcome at the monthly monitoring walks.

Register by phone • max 12
Free, donations welcome



BIRD-CRAFT for COMMUNITY and CONSERVATION

Sunday, August 3 • 10:30 am

“Craft for a cause” by creating soft-sculpture replicas of real birds lost to collisions. Learn ways to protect birds in the built environment.

Included with admission • Register or drop-in

SUNSET BIRD/NATURE WALKS

Thursdays, August 7 and 28 • 7:00 pm

Join us for an evening walk. We may see birds, moths, frogs, insects.

Register by phone • max 8 • *Free, donations welcome*

TREE IDENTIFICATION for BIRDERS and FRIENDS

Sunday, August 17 • 3:00 pm

Have you ever noticed a bird, then wondered what kind of tree it was in, or why it was there? Take a walk with a forester and find out.

Register by phone • max 12 • *Suggested: \$10 - \$30*

Please check our website for updates or additions
<https://www.birdsofvermont.org/events>
Advance registration required for most events.

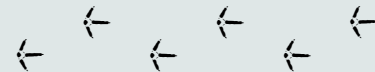
To register, call (802) 434-2167 or visit
<https://www.birdsofvermont.org/special-upcoming/>
then click or tap on the event name

Thank You to all those who contribute their valuable time to the museum

- ↓ Board members: Becky Cozzens, Bill Mayville, Brian Werneke, David Sunshine, Jim Osborn, John Broschious, John Peckham, Kari Jo Spear, Mae Mayville, Taran Catania, and Zac Cota-Weaver
- ↓ Docents: Dick Affolter, Bobbi LoCicero, Evergreen Erb, Gail Yanowitch, and Stevie Spencer
- ↓ Interns: Abby Philips and Ev McIndoo
- ↓ Special donations: Janne Giles, Kerry Hurd, Linda Hurd, and Mark Paul
- ↓ Special projects: Alice Dodge, Amy Seidl, Anne Dannenberg, Britt Nielsen, Carol Talmage, David Cozzens, John Gergely, Juno Stahl, Louanne Nielsen,

Megan Pratt, Michele Patenaude, Rebecca Murphy, Rita Sloan, Ryan Elliott, Sarah Hooghuis with the Audubon Vermont Junior Conservation Technicians, and Susan McCown

- ↓ Volunteer Work Day: Anisha Paul, Bill Mayville, Bobbi LoCicero, Chris LaNeuville, Gail Yanowitch, Jamie Quint, Jim Morris, Kerry Hurd, Linda Hurd, Liz Lee, Mae Mayville, Megan Pierce, Rogan Poquette, and Wil Musselman
- ↓ Walk Leaders: Ali Wagner, Bill Mayville, Mae Mayville, Pat Phillips, Sam Darmstadt, and Tom Jiamachello



GREAT BLUE HERON 3-DAY WOODCARVING SEMINAR

*Wednesday—Friday,
August 20 – 22*

Matt Strong and Bob Lindemann teach the carving and painting of a small Heron. Class is suitable for both novice and more experienced carvers.

Registration information at greenmountainwoodcarvers.org/class/class.html

GREEN MOUNTAIN WOODCARVERS 52nd ANNUAL SHOW

Saturday, August 23 • 10:00 am

Demonstrations and vendors of wood carvings and other artistry in wood! Join a wood carving club, try soap carving, and have fun.

Included with admission

MINI VULTURE NEEDLE FELTING WORKSHOP

Saturday, September 6 • 1:00 pm

Needle-felt a thumb-sized vulture in honor of International Vulture Appreciation Day.

Register by phone • ages 10+ • \$25-\$45 (*includes admission, your vulture, and a felting needle to take home*). Discount for members.

#AskBob

Q: Whom would you most like to meet?

A: My great-grandfather, Alonzo Spear, who served in the 2nd Vermont Regiment from first Bull Run to Appomattox in the Civil War.

MEANDER for MUSHROOMS

Saturday, September 27 • 2 – 4 pm

Explore and learn about mushrooms: what they are, how to identify them, and the essential roles they play.

*Outdoors, with Meg Madden •
Register by phone or at our website •
\$20—\$40*



GMWC CARVE-IN and ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, October 11 • 10 am – 2:00 pm

The Green Mountain Woodcarvers meet to carve together and conduct their annual meeting. Stop by the workshop to say hi!

THE BIG SIT!

Saturday, October 12 • Dawn to Dusk

How many birds can we identify from a 17-foot diameter circle from sunrise to sunset?

Outdoors

DALA HORSE CARVING CLASS

Saturday, October 25 • 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

Carve and paint a traditional Swedish Dala Horse with Bob Lindemann during this one-day carving class. Wood blank and paint provided.

Register by phone or on our website • \$35 for members (\$45 for non-members)

More details, registrations, and changes at
<https://www.birdsofvermont.org/special-upcoming>

Be A Member



The One My Dad missed (sort of) (continued)

This is because he wouldn't have wanted to. We were on a very tight schedule to get home to Vermont from visiting my aunt and uncle in Los Angeles, and the one day we could spend in the park turned out to be a very hot one. My parents were worried that our heavily loaded station wagon would overheat and break down. Back in the 1960s, this was a common thing, and it could lead to a dangerous situation. So we drove straight through the park starting at three in the morning. We didn't stop at any of the scenic points or explore any of the canyons.

I was about four years old on our Death Valley Day. My parents got me out of my cozy sleeping bag in the middle of the night and stuffed me into the back of the station wagon along with the rest of our camping gear. I curled up in my spot between rolled up sleeping bags and soft pillows, pulled a blanket over my head, snuggled up with my little red deer they had bought for me in Los Angeles, and went back to sleep.

The next thing I knew, a strange man with a brown hat was standing outside my father's open window. It was still dark. They were talking about how much water my parents needed for themselves and for the car. Did they have enough? And was the gas tank full? The man leaned inside to look at the gauge on the dash, and then he shone his flashlight around the inside of the car. He jumped when he saw me.

"Didn't know you had a kid back there," he said.

"And a deer," I said, half asleep.

"Pardon?" He looked at my father.

"Show him," my father said, and I held up my little red deer. It was about the size of my hand, and my hand wasn't very big.

"Oh, okay," the man said, and smiled. "Hope you and the deer have a safe trip. Stay cool."

"Thank you," my father said, and we drove on.

"What did he mean, that the car needed to have water?" I asked.

"Oh," my father said. "Cars have a thing called a radiator, and there's water inside it that moves to keep things cool. Sometimes you have to add more water to it, if it gets really hot. Remember we told you it's going to be very hot down in the valley? That's why we're leaving before the sun rises."

"How do we know if it needs more to drink? The radiator thing."

"Oh, it probably won't," my father said. "Now, are you ready for a donut?"

"Deer wants to go back to sleep," I said. "But I'd like a donut. Please."

We drove and drove. As soon as the sun rose, the air started to get hot. We had all the windows down because cars did not have air conditioning back then. The breeze was hot too, and it blew in dust. Outside there were jagged mountains of bare rock, and some of them had snow on their tops. My father said the air was much colder up there. I sat in my spot and hoped Deer wouldn't get too hot. Every little while, my father pulled over and we all drank a cup of water. I gave Deer a drink from mine when my parents weren't looking, but it just got his nose wet.

Then we saw a car parked beside the road. A man opened the hood and a huge cloud of smoke came out. I stared in horror.

"It's all right," my father said, stopping our car. "It's just steam. Like from the teakettle at home. I'll see if they need any help. Their radiator probably needs more water."

My father walked over to the car with the steam coming out. It looked scary to me. My mother started singing songs and tried to get me to sing, too. After a while, my



Kari Jo at the very warm Death Valley National Park

father came back. He opened our hood and stared underneath it for a moment. I looked for steam, but I didn't see any.

"Don't worry," my mother said. "We'll be out of the valley soon, and when we come to a store, we'll stop and get ice cream."

I knew Deer liked ice cream, but I couldn't get the idea of a steaming car out of my head. My father patted our hood gently after he closed it.

In a few minutes, we were on the road again. It went up and down a lot, and whenever we went up a steep hill, my father would pull over and stop. He'd get out and say he was looking for birds, even though he never saw any except for a couple of ravens.

"Maybe we should—give the radiator thing a drink?" I asked, tentatively.

"It's fine," my father said. "But we should have another drink."

I sat with Deer, sipped water, and hoped we would get out of Death Valley really soon.

At last, my father pointed to a sign. "That's it. We're out!" he said, and pretty soon the air got cooler and everything looked greener. When we came to a store, we all

went in because we needed a bathroom really badly after all the water we'd been drinking. I was glad to see there was ice cream. Deer and I celebrated being out of the valley.

Now, years later, I thought about my father as I cancelled my passport in the visitor's center at Death Valley National Park. I thought about how much he would have enjoyed hiking into the canyons, gazing at the beautiful colors on the Artist Palette hillside, looking out over Badwater Basin with its frosting of salt, and staring into the depths of the Ubehebe Crater. Most of all, he would have loved looking up at all the stars at night, and listening to the absolute quiet of the place.

I also thought about hot water exploding out of car radiators, and I appreciated how he'd chosen our safety over everything else.

And I'm really thankful that technology has progressed to the point that no one asked my husband and me if we had enough water for our RV as we headed in, though they still cautioned us about carrying enough water for people and pets.

And, I added to myself, for Deer friends.

— Kari Jo Spear 

Kari Jo Spear, daughter of Bob Spear, is a writer of young adult novels and more. Her young adult novel, *Under the Willow*, is available through amazon.

Her collection of stories, *The Carver's Daughter: A Memoir*, is available in the museum, as well as from all major online booksellers, including bookshop.org. An eBook version is available also.

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

Remembering Lynn Tuttle (1939—2025)

Lynn Tuttle joined her woodcarving husband Dave Tuttle most of days when he taught carving classes at the Museum. Lynn spent her time chatting with students, volunteers, and staff. Her humor and grace added joy to every day she spent at the museum. She also enjoyed dropping by the Waterbury Flea Market during carving classes.

We remember her for the love she shared about her family, her great stories, and her delightful apple Kuchken. Others knew her as a teacher, a mom, a grandma, and for her work within her community.

Lynn passed away in June 2025. The entire Museum community sends our deepest condolences to her family and friends. Her obituary is published at <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/brattleboro/name/lynn-tuttle-obituary?id=58540715>.



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

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SAVE THE DATES

Last Saturdays Bird Monitoring Walks

July 12 Bug & Butterfly Walk

July 17, Aug 15 Forest Sit

July 24 Artist Reception

August 3 Bird Craft

August 17 Tree ID for Birders

August 23 Woodcarvers Show & Sale

September 6 Mini Vulture Needle Felting

More events and all the details inside and on our website.
To register, visit <https://birdsofvermont.org/special-upcoming/> or
call (802) 434-2167 or email museum@birdsofvermont.org

#AskBob

Q: What is your pet peeve?

A: Those, who from ignorance or greed, damage the earth.

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

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to study birds and their habitats using woodcarvings and other Museum resources.*