

Chip Notes

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BIRDS OF VERMONT MUSEUM
Volume 27 • Our 26th Year

Winter 2013



WINTER DAYS WITH BOB

Bob came into the office as usual today, in his typical red chamois shirt. It's always a treat to see him. He did have a coat on (unzipped), acknowledging it was a bit cool out. A bit! I think it is less than 10 degrees Fahrenheit today, although sunny. No migrating to Florida for Bob this year!

Some days Bob brings a friend in: Gale, sometimes, or Nat. Those days we see him for a quick visit before they go off birding or take a trip to town for lunch. Other days I hear him puttering around in his workshop working on one of the half-dozen carvings he's got in progress. I rib him about his half-carved snow goose getting bored (I think he finds the Canada goose slightly more fun).

Sometimes he takes a chair by the viewing window and remains there for a gloriously long, restful time. I've never seen him doze off in those chairs, even when (as today) the bird traffic is a little slow. This persistence is why he, not I, is the one that sees the owls and ravens and sharp-shinned hawks when they come by.

We've been talking a little about the flocks of turkeys moving in response to Audubon Vermont's woodlot

demonstration project. Having corn spread around the feeders doesn't hurt, either. We speculate on installing a wood duck nest box by the pond. Sometimes I show him a sketch I've made or my own very amateurish and extremely slow carving progress. I always offer him coffee, and he always jokingly turns me down: "Never touch the stuff."

Maybe this is good advice for long and happy living! Bob Spear turns 93 this month, and we invite you all to celebrate. We sure will! Please think of him, and us, and if you are moved to, send a card or a birthday donation (\$93 or whatever is comfortable) to the

Birds of Vermont Museum. We're happy to receive postcards, checks, instructions to bill your credit card, or online donations (we use JustGive and Network for Good: see the links on our home page <http://www.birdsofvermont.org>).

I'll make sure Bob sees them, of course—if I can distract him from the next bird long enough!

***Happy Birthday,
Bob, and many
happy returns.***

*by Kir Talmage,
Outreach Coordinator*



THE BIRD CARVER'S DAUGHTER

Part 5: My Addiction

Addict

Main Entry:1 **ad*dict**
Pronunciation:*a*dikt

1 : to devote or surrender (oneself) to something habitually or excessively

I sat in my health class, knowing I was doomed. I had all the symptoms: obsession, distraction, longing... I began to feel huge tears welling up inside me. Life as I'd known it before was over.

My teacher led me into the hall. "What's the matter, dear?" she asked, putting her arm around me.

"I couldn't help it!" I sobbed. "It's not my fault! He made me do it!"

She looked very concerned. "Who did, dear?"

"My – my father!"

"What – did he do?"

"He – he gave me – *binoculars!*"

It happened on my birthday. We were sitting around the kitchen table, and there were two gifts from my father before me. Both were carefully wrapped in the comic pages from the newspaper—he and Gale were recycling before recycling was popular. Two innocent packages that were about to change my life forever.

Kid fashion, I opened the biggest one first. As the paper fell away—the last moments of my youthful innocence—I saw that I held a box containing a brand new pair of Nikon binoculars.

I looked up. I'd been hoping for books.

"They're the best," my father said excitedly. "Small and light, but with great optics. 8x24. That means they magnify eight times the naked eye. Twenty-four is the size of the objective lens. That means they have a superior light gathering ability."

He must have registered my lack of enthusiasm. "They're what everybody has now," he added.

I was pretty sure none of the kids at school had Nikon

8x24s with superior light gathering ability. He must mean his birding buddies—folks who wore mud boots year round, baggy clothes with lots of pockets, dorky hats, and were always talking about their all-important life lists.

"You'll need this, too," my father went on, pushing the other present toward me.

It was a book, but it wasn't fiction. It was *Birds of North America*.

"Wow," I said.

He chose to interpret that as excitement. "Figured you were old enough," he said. He dug my new binoculars out of their Styrofoam packaging as though he was dying to get his hands on them.

"This is where you focus," he said, like I didn't know what the knob in the middle was for. I'd played with his binoculars when I was younger. I liked looking through a lens backward—it made everything seem really far away. My father carried his binoculars with him wherever he went. I'd never seen him use them when he was actually driving, but I wouldn't put it past him if something for his life list flew over.

He was waiting for me to do the obvious, so I picked them up. Well, I thought, this wasn't the end of the world. I got dragged on bird walks all the time, and it would be good not to have to stand around getting cold or swatting bugs, pretending I could see what everybody was so excited about. At least the binoculars were light, so my neck wouldn't break. I raised them and turned to the window where a bunch of chickadees swarmed like bees around a feeder.

I looked, focused, and then—holy cow! I could see their eyeballs! And all the little feathers on their heads stood out. Their sharp beaks dug into the seeds they anchored to the branches of a lilac with their feet.

My father chuckled. I lowered my binoculars quickly. Ten minutes had gone by. Huh.

Then my father pushed the bird book toward me. "This is where you mark your life list," he said, point-

ing out pages and pages of bird names in the back. Each name had a little box in front of it to be filled it.

Like I was going to start a life list. The kids at school would never let me live it down. Not that anyone knew what a life list was, anyway.

“You’ve already got a bigger one than a lot of people,” my father said, tapping his finger part way down a page. “Start here. You’ve seen Common Loons when we’ve been canoeing.”

“You mean, I can count species I’ve already seen?”

“Sure.” He pushed a pen at me.

Dutifully, I filled in the box next to Common Loon. “Hey, can I count the Red-throated Loon we saw on Chincoteague?” I could remember him dragging my attention away from the wild ponies for that.

“Of course.”

I filled in that one, too, and then flipped back a few pages. “I’ve seen lots of gulls.”

“Ah, but were they Ring-billed, or Herring?”

I didn’t know gulls came in different flavors. According to the book, there were at least half a dozen in Vermont regularly!

“Burger King parking lot,” my father said. “We’ll eat there tonight and you can get two, maybe three species of gulls.”

Well, I wasn’t going to say no to French fries.

“And look! There are sparrows under the lilac. You can get two—no *three*—species right now!”

I had my binoculars up before I’d even realized it. When I looked down a few minutes later, my father had my book open to the sparrow section. He had a grin on his face.

Darn it, I thought. He’s done it to me again.

—*Kari Jo Spear*

This article is also online at <http://bovm.wordpress.com/2013/02/28/the-bird-carvers-daughter-part-5-my-addiction/>

Kari Jo Spear’s young adult novels, *Under the Willow* and *Silent One*, are available at amazon.com, bn.com, and in Phoenix Books (Essex and Burlington, Vermont).



The dangers of addictions
photo © 2012 Alaria Lanpher. Used by permission

THANKS!

The following people have given us new opportunities, much-needed funds, and extra dedication.

- ◆ Norcross Foundation
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- ◆ Bill Mayville
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- ◆ Mark Paul
- ◆ Kari Jo Spear
- ◆ David Tuttle
- ◆ Ali Wagner and the Hinesbirders
- ◆ Western Slopes Business Association
- ◆ All the Supporters of our Annual Appeal

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS, WINTER–SPRING 2013

The Great Backyard Bird Count

Friday–Monday, February 15–18

Museum Open: February 16 • 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

“The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual 4-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are.” — <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>

See birds at our feeding station, explore the museum exhibits, drink some bird-friendly coffee, and record some data for this long-running, kid-friendly, citizen-science project.

Free for Members • All ages welcome.

Bob Spear’s Birthday

Thursday, February 21

Happy 93rd Birthday to our Founder! Incredible! Please consider sending at \$93 donation in honor of Bob. We will be having cake at 2:00 on February 16th as part of our Great Backyard Bird Count celebration. (We plan to celebrate again this summer.)

Bird Monitoring Walks

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

February 23, March 30, April 27, May 25 (starts at 7:30 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.

Four-season Birding in the Hogback Ecoregion

(Hogback Community College Course: First Session)

Saturday, February 23 • 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Learn with life-long birder Jim Andrews to locate and identify many of our local bird species by field marks, form, song, and habitat as a first step to knowledge of their natural history and conservation. (Note: the Birds of Vermont Museum is not affiliated with this course, but we think it’s a good idea.)

Fee: \$160 for 4 sessions (this is the first) • Best for teens and adults. Please *pre-register with the Hogback Community College at* <http://www.familyforests.org/public-education/events.shtml#Birding>



Common Redpoll

Photo by Bob Johnson and used by permission

Barred Owl

Carving Class

Saturday, February 23 •

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Carve and paint a Barred Owl 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.*



Owl Prowl

Sunday, February 24 • 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

(Note: the almost-full moon rises around 4:45pm; the sun sets around 5:30 p.m.)

Join birders and friends for an evening excursion in the world of owls. Why wait for spring to find a mate and nest? Come out in February, the night before the full moon, and if we are lucky, we'll hear some hoot and holler at each other.

There will be a short presentation before the outing, and hot chocolate and cider afterwards. Whether we hear any owls, of course, is up to the birds!

Great for older kids and anyone comfortable in the evening forest. Please wear *warm* and quiet clothes. Flashlights may be covered with red plastic, if you wish to bring one. (This keeps the light visible without damaging your night vision.)

Limit: 20 • Suggested donation: \$7.50 per person.

Pre-registration is strongly recommended.

Cold Winter, Warm Birds

school vacation program

Wednesday, February 27 • 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Join other 6–12 years old to investigate how certain birds can keep warm in Vermont winters. Experiment indoors and out, and follow-up with a cup of hot chocolate or warm cider.

Enrollment limited to 15 • \$15 (\$10 for Museum members or sibling)
Please *pre-register.*

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

Email us at 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

Early Birder Morning Walks

Sundays, May 12 – June 30 • 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Enjoy the start of the day with us, birds, and other woodland inhabitants. Walks are led by experienced birders familiar with Vermont birds. Come to several walks to hear the changes in who calls and when!

Finish the walk with bird-friendly coffee at the viewing window inside the Museum. Bring binoculars and good walking shoes.

Free, donations welcome • Best for adults and older children

Bird Day Festival!

Saturday, May 18

Annual celebration of migratory birds! Birds, music, birds, crafts, birds, walks, birds, face painting, birds, bird food, birds, carving, birds, treats! And did we say birds? Stay tuned for more details.

Storytime in the Nestlings Nook

Second Tuesdays, May–September • 10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Join us for stories about birds and more. Intended for pre-schoolers but all ages are welcome. Stories are followed by a craft project, music or nature walk, depending on the topic and the weather. Got a favorite book about birds? Share it with us!

Free with admission; donations welcome

Sundays for Fledglings

Sundays, resuming in May • 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Outdoor science and play for kids ages 5-12. Our popular program will resume this spring.

Free with admission • *Pre-registering is helpful.*

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



February: Great Backyard Bird Count
Carving Class
Owl Prowl
and more

March: Sugarmakers' Open House Weekend
Bird Monitoring Walk

April: School Vacation Programs
Bird Monitoring Walk

May: Open!
Volunteer Work Days
Early Birder Walks
Bird Day Festival
And More!

Visit Our Friends and Volunteers Out and About

The Vermont Flower Show

Friday, March 1

The theme of the 2013 Vermont Flower Show is "The Road Not Taken". But come take ours: birding, carving, and conservation come together where "natural history meets art". Visit our table, visit the Museum, and join us! There's more about the Flower Show is here:
<http://greenworksvermont.org/vermont-flower-show/>

Herrick's Cove Wildlife Festival

Sunday, May 5

Demonstrations, education, storytelling, adventures, birds, and much more. More about the Festival online at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Herricks-Cove-Wildlife-Festival/>

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>

A BIRD AND BUTTERFLY GARDEN BOOKLET

Eve Moeykens-Arballo, Intern

Thanks to the Essex High School's *Linking Learning To Life* program, we were fortunate to have a new intern, Eve Moeykens-Arballo, work with us this winter.

This was a different type of internship, as Eve did not have transportation to the Museum. Eve worked almost completely independently and our meetings were held at a local bakery in Richmond, to discuss the project and sample local baked goods. Although the weather was cold, snowy, and gray, Eve chose to create a garden brochure that will be used this spring (and beyond) as the Museum expands our educational bird-friendly gardens.

As a senior at high school, Eve possesses a great deal of self-motivation, independence, a broad spectrum of interests, and an eye for detail. These traits will benefit her through the future, as she plans to travel and attend college.

We wish her the best of luck with all her endeavors and hope that she will come visit the Museum in the spring!



Eve holding a draft of her booklet, spurring our longing for spring and gardening.



2012 ART CONTEST

The 2012 Art Contest was as popular and colorful as ever in our 25th year. First, second, and third prize winners were each awarded a bird-shaped trophy in recognition of their achievement. Honorable mention and special entry artists were also recognized. Here we present a sampling of winning entries, used by permission of artists and parents.

The winners are:

Traditional Drawing

Ages 0-5: Jenny, Josh, Celine, Lucy, Chloe, Becca, Evan

Ages 6-8: Hiba, Morgan, Makenna, Josie, Elodie, Maxx, Hugo, Mazzy, Mollie, Jon

Ages 9-13: Georgia, Eilidh, Harry, Nathaniel, Emma, Josie, Michel, Ben, Sierra, Elena, Abhi

Ages 14-18: Shayna

3D Sculpture

Model Magic® was the medium of choice this year, with one painting on mini canvas.

Ages 0-5: Evelynne

Ages 6-8: Malachi, Judah, Anna, Morgan

Ages 9-13: Isaiah, Haley

A special thanks to Lisa Foley and her art class for *Pen and Ink Hidden Bird Patterns*. Several students won special recognition for their imaginative and skilled artwork. We're looking forward to what her students produce in the future!

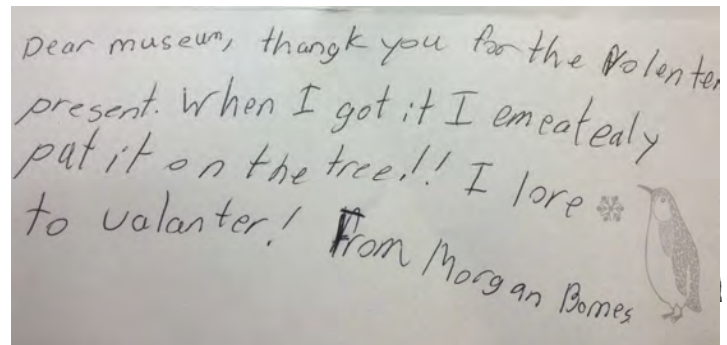


VOLUNTEERS OF 2012

What a fun and activity-packed 25th anniversary year! Thanks to everyone in our Museum community, the Birds of Vermont Museum kept to a very busy schedule in 2012 that could only have been achieved with the help of our new and returning volunteers. Over 1200 hours were spent performing trail work, welcoming visitors and school groups, staffing the gift shop, feeding the birds, leading bird walks, designing and presenting programs, creating educational displays or activities, entering data into the computer, staffing fairs, identifying and counting birds, constructing and riding on the Fourth of July float, helping with mailings, updating records and resources, producing and analyzing surveys, judging the art contest, sharing observations, wisdom, and bird jokes, and promoting the Museum and its mission.

We enjoy meeting new helpers each year at our spring Work Day as we prepare the property outdoors and spruce up the indoors for the new season. We look forward to seeing long time volunteers migrate back to the Museum when opening day arrives. The Museum has always benefited from family groups, whose members range from preschool to retirement age, some responding to one-time jobs and others to season-long service. Our summer and winter internships continue to attract high school and college age students who dazzle us with their energy, creativity, technical skills, and enthusiasm.

As the 2013 season approaches, be assured that we always welcome newcomers to our volunteer staff anytime and, as always we thank everyone who has performed a task (none too small!) that helps us realize the Museum's mission. Please keep an eye on the Museum website or online updates when special needs arise, or just call to schedule your time to volunteer. Thank you!



FAREWELL, FRIEND

We were saddened to hear of the passing of long-time volunteer and friend, Allen Mable, this past December.

Allen volunteered with Museum for 16 years! He helped with everything from the front desk to shows and fairs, parking cars, directing visitors, keeping up with day-to-day maintenance, and making us laugh. About 10 years ago he covered the Museum by himself for a week. After that, he was often referred to as *Number One!*

He would come in each day armed with newspapers and snacks to share (you couldn't say no). His generosity was endless. His perspective on day-to-day activities and his stories would always lighten our day.

We greatly appreciate his time, his loyalty, his friendship, and his humor. We miss him.



SAVE THE DATES

Feb 23 Barred Owl Carving Class
Feb 24 Owl Prowl
Feb 27 Cold Winter, Warm Birds
March 1 Flower Show
May 1 Opening Day

Monthly: Bird Monitoring Walks (*Last Saturdays*)
Nestlings (*Second Tuesdays, May—October*)
Weekly: Early Birder Morning Walks (*mid-May—June*)
Fledglings (*Most Sundays, May—October*)

Details inside and on our website! To register,
call (802) 434-2167 or email 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

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