

Chip Notes

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BIRDS OF VERMONT MUSEUM

Volume 29

Winter 2015



Bob Spear (Caleb Kenna photo, 2012)

BOB SPEAR (1920—2014)

I met Bob back in the 1970's when he was the director at the Green Mountain Audubon Center. Although I am not a teacher, I was taking a two-week summer course at Audubon to help teachers learn about the natural world around them and hopefully, pass their newfound appreciation on

the base on which I would subsequently build my nature appreciation and especially, my love of birds.

Bob is no longer with us, but I like to think of him walking the trails of heaven and telling a lot more people up there all about the natural world, how to carve birds, what it was like living on a Vermont back road with a beautiful view of Camel's Hump, and how he started a Museum. For those of us left down here on earth, he showed us the way to do it and he left us a wonderful legacy in his carvings to share with others who are just starting out to learn or maybe already know a lot and just want to come to the Museum to enjoy looking, meeting friends, and especially marveling at the beautiful birds and little corners of Vermont life he created around them. Thank you, Bob. We miss you.

— Shirley Johnson 

to their students. I had recently moved to Vermont from Iowa and Maine and really wanted to learn about our local plants, animals, birds, habitat, etc., and I remember being so impressed by Bob. He seemed to be able to answer any question that I or anyone else in the group would pose for him. I learned a lot in those two weeks and I thank Bob for giving me



Bob Spear (Art Gill photo, ~2002)

THE LEGACY

Next Steps for the Museum

It is the end of an era, but Bob, Gale, staff, and the Board prepared for this change when the Museum was initially founded. From the charter to the bylaws to the formal donation of the carvings, the Museum has always been its own legal entity, one shaped by Bob and his vision. This is a quality we will never lose.

Together, we continue to provide education, nurture an appreciation of the environment, and study birds and their habitat using woodcarvings and other museum resources. Bob Spear, the founding members, and the dedicated Board, volunteers, and staff intended –then and now–to keep on carving, researching, teaching, and celebrating natural history and art.

Come on over and visit, re-visit, and share the future with us.



THE CARVER'S DAUGHTER

Remembrance: Tales of my Father

In place of a regular Carver's Daughter installment, I want to offer a few tidbits of information about my father that most people probably don't know. Bear in mind that these are family stories and may have been embellished through the years. (But not by me, *of course!*)

Our name shouldn't be Spear. My great-grandmother, Julia Spear, eloped with a man from Canada named Ovitt, and disappeared for an entire year. One day she reappeared on her parents' doorstep with a newborn baby and moved back in, simply saying that she was divorced. She took back the name Spear for herself and her baby, who was my grandfather, the first Robert Newell Spear.

My father did not grow up in Vermont, though he was born here. He was raised until he was about sixteen in Wyben, Massachusetts, where his family moved so that his mother could continue teaching after she got married. Vermont then had a law that only single women could teach school.

My father was kidnapped when he was a baby. One day his mother was sitting on a train platform, with my father in a basket at her feet. A woman passing by suddenly snatched him, basket and all, and raced off into the crowd. His mother tore after them, screaming. Fortunately, some people farther down the platform were able to stop the woman. The woman was, as they said back then, "mentally deranged," and had stolen my father because he was such a cute baby. He slept through the entire experience.

My grandmother was my father's early teacher, in a one-room schoolhouse. After her death, my grandfather moved to Colchester with his son and daughter. My father became friends with Charles Smith, and the two boys explored Lake Champlain together. Their role model was Yan, the hero of Ernest Thompson Seton's *Two Little Savages*, a popular boy's book of the time. They pitched a tent halfway between their houses and slept in it all summer. They were avid

skaters in the winter and built their own iceboat, which, my father said, "went like a bat out of hell." I'm sure they had no safety equipment.

One winter a Model T broke through the lake ice and sank near their fishing shanty. A man struggled to the surface, and the boys shoved their sled out to him. He

grabbed on and they pulled him to safety—but he had a heart attack and died before they could get him into the warmth of their shanty. My father made me promise never to ride in a car on the ice. I never will.

My father claimed to have paddled the first canoe on Malletts Bay since the Indians left. It was made of black canvas stretched over a wooden frame.

It weighed about a thousand pounds when dry and twice that wet, and he claimed it was the best paddling canoe he ever had. Drivers on Lakeshore Drive used to stop and stare at him in his funny boat with points at both ends.

As a young man, my father frequented a roller-skating rink at Clarey's Bayside in Colchester. Years later, when Gale accepted an invitation to a roller-skating party for herself and my father, she was afraid he would be in for a miserable afternoon. But when she looked up from lacing her skates, my father was already on the floor, weaving in and out between people, skating backward on one foot. With a huge grin on his face, of course.

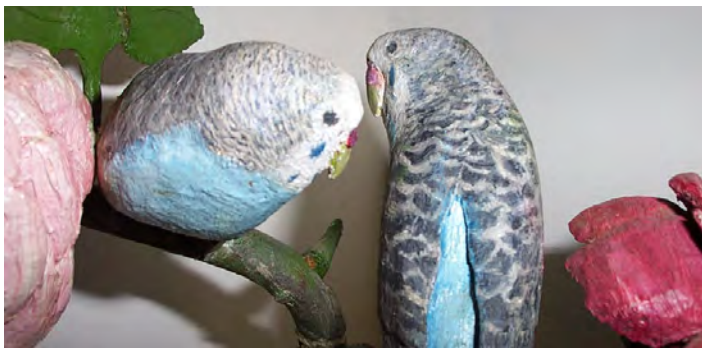
My father had a horse named Ned. He also had a cat he loved dearly, so much that after it died, he vowed he would never have another pet. He never did. (Though he was known to cuddle Gale's cat Hussy quite a bit.)

He built himself a darkroom, learned taxidermy and astronomy from books, made two guitars and a mandolin, played them all, and could cut down a tree with an ax, dropping it exactly where he wanted it every time.

My father as a boy smoked everything he could get hold of. When cigarettes were too expensive, he



Wyban farm during Bob's childhood (date unknown)



Parakeets, Bob's first carving (Erin Talmage photo, 2004)

smoked corn silk, which was all right, or rolled-up wild grapevine, which was pretty awful. Perhaps that was what cured him of the smoking habit before he became an adult.

My father was bullied in high school. He was young for his grade, small, shy, and smart, and therefore a target for tough Winooski boys. After he graduated, he vowed he would never set foot in another school as a student, and he pretty much didn't, aside from a few night classes in math at UVM and his training in the Navy later.

He worked in a sawmill and on the Blakely Farm in Colchester, plowing and haying with a team of horses. He cut ice with a crosscut saw on the lake. He preferred the end on top of the ice when he could get it.

During WWII, he enlisted in the Navy against his father's wishes. The results of his math tests landed him in Chicago for the duration of the war, putting his creative skills into the desperate need for radar development to detect German U-boats. It wasn't what he'd hoped for; he wanted to follow in the footsteps of his great-grandfather and hero, Alonzo Spear, who fought in every major battle of the Civil War. But in time, he realized the importance of his work and reflected on the American lives he'd helped to save. Though I'm sure he always regretted that he hadn't had a chance to take out Hitler with a well-thrown ax.

The need for radar experts on board ships grew desperate, though, by the end of war. My father had just been assigned to a ship in the South Pacific when the United States dropped the atomic bombs. Once, self-righteously, I criticized our country for causing such violence. My father quietly told me that if the United States hadn't dropped the bombs, I probably would not exist. Neither would the Birds of Vermont

Museum. I kept my mouth shut about that afterward.

My father used to have his own Boy Scout troop. He was like a magnet for troubled teenagers. When a parent thanked him from the bottom of her heart for turning her child's life around, he'd shrug and say, "Well, I just had him help me clear a trail or dig a pond."

My father almost blew up a man once. When he wanted to create a way down to the lakeshore from the property where he and my mother were building a camp, he got hold of dynamite somehow. He drilled into the ledge, planted the charge, and set it off. Rock rained down into the lake. And a man fishing in a rowboat shot out from behind a small island just offshore. My father said he was all right, but he was madder than a hornet.

My father was married twice before he met Gale—first to a woman named Eileen, then to my mother, Sally Stalker Spear. I am his only child. He wanted to name me Robin, whether I was a boy or a girl. They settled on Karen Joelle, but when he saw me for the first time, he said, "That's not a Karen Joelle. That's a Kari Jo." It stuck. And I was never quite sure what he'd meant. My parents separated when I was ten and later divorced. I only saw my father on weekends or school vacations while he was the director of the Green Mountain Audubon Nature Center.

My father hunted deer until, as he put it, he grew out of it.

My father voted Republican until, as he put it, he wised up.

He worked as a salesman at Sears for a short time before moving on to a career at General Electric doing further work with radar.

He disliked coffee and alcohol, except for an occasional beer.



Bob Spear at Green Mountain Nature Center (Kari Jo Spear photo, date unknown)

The Carver's Daughter (continued from page 3)

He could hardly swim a stroke and hated to get even his big toe wet.

He was a lousy cook. Aside from frying hamburgers, all he ever fixed himself for dinner was a can of Dinty Moore beef stew. And ice cream, of course.

He was so squeamish that he used to leave movies during gory parts. Once when I cut my finger, he had to go sit in the shade while I put on a Band-Aid.

He could mentally fight every battle of the Civil War and tell you where all the Vermont troops had stood in each one. He was also an expert on the American Revolution, which was far simpler and lacking in brilliant generals.

He designed and built a house, a camp, a museum, Gale's retreat, countless bird blinds, and a bridge that withstood a flood that took out all the ground around it.

He sat through *The Nutcracker* ballet at least fifteen times, doing grandfather duty. And honestly said he liked it.



Gale + Bob, ~1990s

He occasionally liked to travel, driving across the country from one National Park to the next, giving all cities a wide berth. He went to the South American tropics several times, but never farther from home than that. I did hear him say once that he'd like to go to Africa.

He had a unique sense of humor and delivered all his lines as a straight, deadpan part of his normal conversation. To a group

of volunteers he was training to work in the nature center's sugar orchard, I heard him say, "Audubon only allows us to run over three kids with the tractor per year. Choose them wisely."

And to a student who pointed to a fat, furry woodchuck under the feeders and asked what it was, he said, "That's a chipmunk. They lose their stripes when they get that big."

He never went anywhere without his binoculars, even in an ambulance to the hospital. They see peregrine falcons around there, you know.




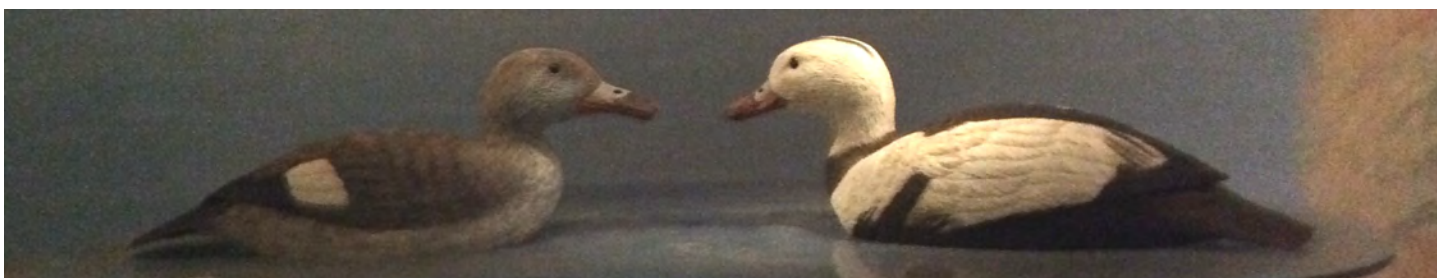
Bob Spear
(Hugh Putnam photo ~1976)

I asked him, when I was a child and first grappling with the idea of death, if he would ever die. He told me yes, but not for a long, long time. He was right.

At the end, when we were told he had only months to live, he did things his own way and wrapped everything up in three days. I was with him when he passed. He did it with the least amount of fuss possible, a recording of birdsongs playing quietly in the background. A few days later, Gale and I scattered his ashes at his favorite places around the museum grounds, as he'd requested. Then I sprinkled the rest into the brook, knowing they would wash down through the nature center and eventually into the lake, where he'd once paddled his odd boat with the points at both ends and raced an iceboat into the stars.

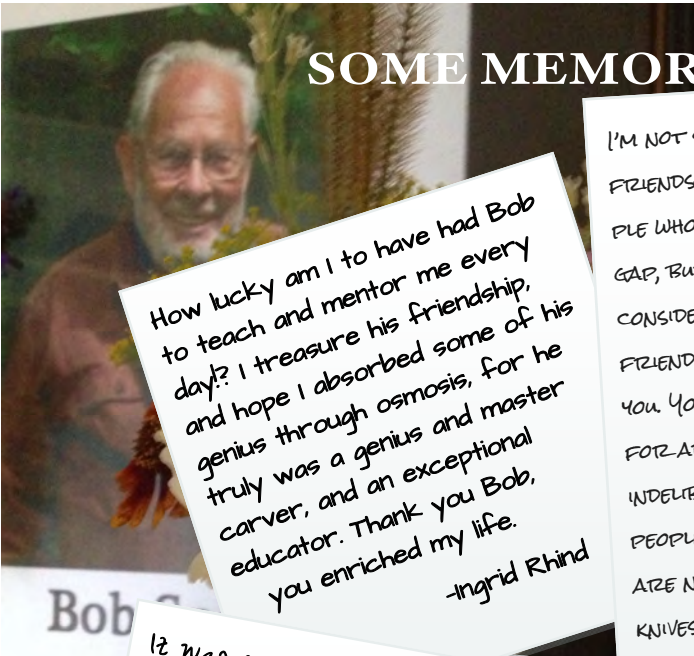
And one other thing I know for certain: as a friend said, he will have already added a Labrador Duck and a Passenger Pigeon to his lifelist.

— Kari Jo Spear 



Labrador Ducks, carved by Bob Spear (Erin Talmage photo, 2015)

SOME MEMORIES FROM OUR SCRAPBOOKS



How lucky am I to have had Bob to teach and mentor me every day? I treasure his friendship, and hope I absorbed some of his genius through osmosis, for he truly was a genius and master carver, and an exceptional educator. Thank you Bob, you enriched my life.

—Ingrid Rhind

It was such an inspiration to come here and spend time with him. It's great how he has such a legacy with this museum. Thanks for all of this Bob —Jonathan Comeau

My children adored this man and his carving talent. Their eyes would light up each time they had the good fortune of going on a field trip to this museum to see Bob in action. —R F Sander, via WCAX



I'M NOT SURE HOW COMMON IT IS FOR A FRIENDSHIP TO FORM BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE WHO HAVE AN OVER-SEVENTY YEAR AGE GAP, BUT WHEN I WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD I CONSIDERED BOB ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS... BOB, THANK YOU FOR BEING YOU. YOUR KINDNESS, PATIENCE, AND LOVE FOR ART AND NATURE HAVE LEFT AN INDELIBLE MARK IN THE LIVES OF SO MANY PEOPLE... I MISS YOU BUT HOPE WHERE YOU ARE NOW IS FULL OF NATURAL BEAUTY, KNIVES ARE ALWAYS SHARP, AND BOWLS OVERFLOWING WITH CHOCOLATE.

—HANNAH MILLETZ

While Bob will no longer come to the Museum each day, his presence will be felt for generations to come. His contributions and simple gifts will be here for us to enjoy every day. Godspeed my friend. I will cherish our time together the rest of my life.

—Dave Johnson

What a guy! Bob wore so many hats, all in an understated way. The ultimate creative spirit staying true to his goals

—Libby Davison

His true gift, creating beautiful carvings and giving an infinite number of people an open door into the world and beauty of birds and wildlife will go on indefinitely. They can revisit Bob's treasures and deepen their knowledge of birds and their habitats, and then go on to see what has changed at the museum, opening the door to deepening insight.

—good memories, especially those of my Dad and Bob talking and talking...

—Gregory Hurd

His contributions to conservation in Vermont will be long remembered

—Vermont Fish and Wildlife (via facebook)

We have warm memories of Bob visiting the Wendell Gilley Museum when the Bods of Vermont Museum was just being "hatched"

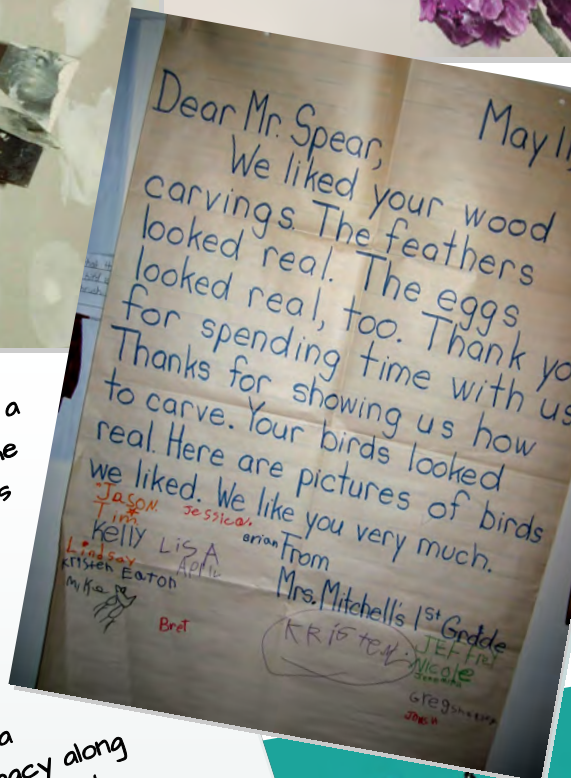
—Wendell Gilley Museum (on facebook)



Vermont is fortunate to have had Bob Spear as a long time ambassador for what makes this state so special. His work and spirit will bring us together again and again.

—Ben & Jerry's

BOB SPEAR



He was an inspiration to so many people and a true super hero to the hundreds of campers and students who visited the Museum each year. Bob's love for birds and the natural world has left a remarkable legacy along Sherman Hollow Road.

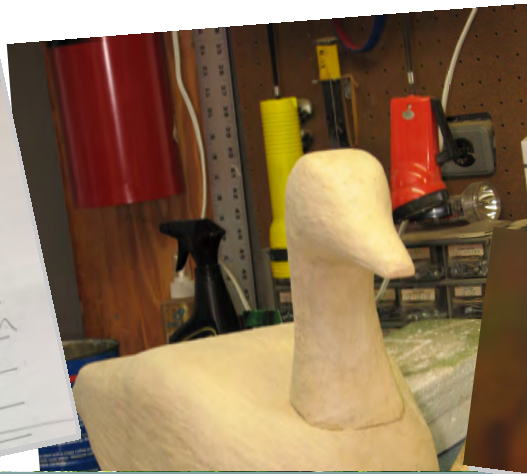
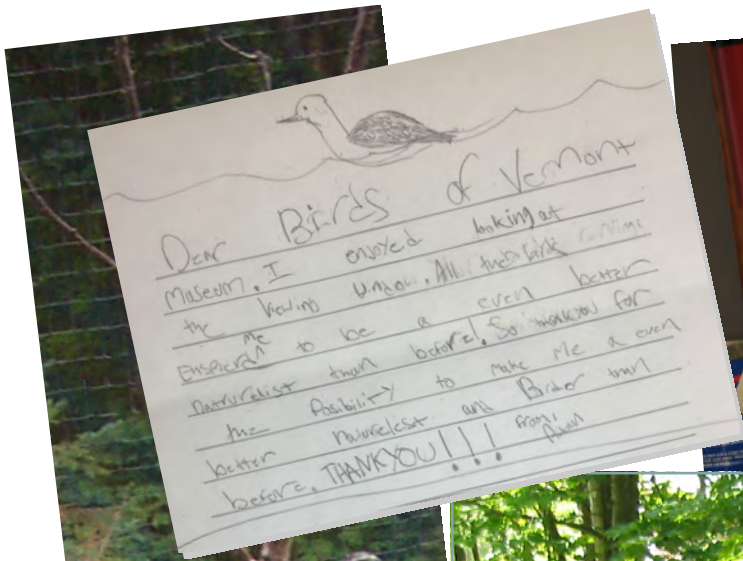
—Kim Guertin

"A bearded, genial man with the silhouette of a Buddha, Spear combines the objectivity of scientist, the vision of an artist, the dedication of a teacher, and the patience of someone who has attained enlightenment. His tanned face is unlined, his demeanor imperturbable, even in the midst of crises. He is helpful to beginners, whether birders or woodcarvers. ...He climbed Camel's Hump last September at the age of 86. He takes obvious pleasure in showing visitors through the museum. The 2006 Governor's Heritage Award honoring him as a 'traditional artist' summarized his vocation this way: 'Building public awareness of nature—through advocacy, outreach, research, organization-building, and, of course, woodcarving—has been Bob's life work.'"

—Mel Huff, *Vermont Today*, April 2007



TEACHER, CARVER, AND SO MUCH MORE



"But for all the variety of his life's work, it is all welded with his undefinable spirit, his total embrace of nature and Vermont. He does not just see things, he touches and understands them. Adults who have talked with him know that. Children who have hiked with him sense it and stay close to him. And his birds of Vermont are perhaps where all his feelings take shape."

—Charles W Johnson,
Vermont Life, 1981



Bob Spence

VOLUNTEERS!

During 2014, the Birds of Vermont Museum's volunteer list swelled to 75 people, including local Rotarians and youth groups, families, and individuals. A quick calendar survey revealed that this past year, Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays were the most common volunteer work days at the Museum.

Our volunteers put in *over 1200 hours* of heavy lifting and hauling of construction materials from overflowing storage sheds; cleaning and cooking again and again for many ongoing and special occasions; connecting to the community through outreach programs for libraries and local organizations; controlling honeysuckle and blackberry sprawl as well as designing, digging, and planting our new pollinator gardens; creating and installing an array of outdoor signs; making repairs to trail structures and birdfeeders; skillfully replacing the workshop door and the Museum mailbox support; constructing and positioning safety barriers around the flooded walkway damage; carving Wetland Diorama ducks and carving or crocheting birds for flood fundraisers; fashioning popsicle stick soap carving tools; leading bird walks and Big Sits; welcoming and engaging Museum visitors; serving as facilitators and Museum representatives at festivals and off-site events; donating and pricing used books to add to our fundraising efforts; gift wrapping books at Barnes & Noble's annual holiday fundraiser or selling gift shop items at the Richmond holiday market; writing articles for the newsletter or blog, or reviews to tourist networks; dedicating many hours of time, discussion, and support on behalf of the Museum as Board members; and helping in myriad ways to prepare and host Bob's memorial gathering.

Bob Spear's spirit and passion created an incredible legacy. Our volunteers bring that same spirit and passion to every task they tackle. The Museum's mission and voice are stronger than ever ***thanks to all our volunteers!***

Interested in joining the (work) party on April 11? We always appreciate willing hands and established or yet-to-be-discovered talents. Please check our website, subscribe to the events calendar, or contact the Museum to sign up .



Email us at museum@birdsofvermont.org with any questions or comments.

CLASSES, BIRDS & MORE

A BOUQUET OF FEATHERS

Friday, February 27 •

10:30am – 5:00pm

Vermont Flower Show's Family Room, Champlain Valley Expo

Make a bouquet of paper feathers! Craft with us and get ready for spring. Birding and feeding tips too: just ask!

Included with admission



BIRD MONITORING WALKS

Last Saturdays, February 28, March 28, April 25, May 30 • 8:00am (7:30am in May)

Experienced birders lead a monthly walk on the Museum property. End the walk with cocoa, coffee and tea at the Bird Viewing Window inside the Museum.

Most fun for adults, older children, and somewhat more experienced birders. Please bring your own binoculars and dress for the weather.

Free • Please pre-register



WREN CARVING CLASS with DAVID TUTTLE

Saturday, February 28 • 9:00am – 3:00pm in the workshop at the Museum

Carve and paint a wren. Wood blank, eyes, snacks, and coffee provided. No carving experience required! Bring tools and gloves if

you can or let us know. Great for teens and adults. Please bring your lunch.

\$25 for Museum and GMWC members • \$35 for everyone else • Please pre-register

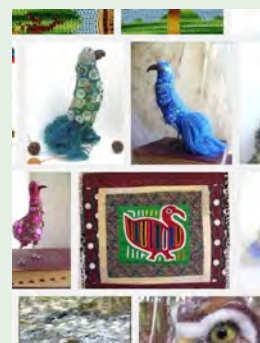
BIRDS of a FIBER:

2015 Community Art Show
Sunday, March 1: Submissions due

Saturday, March 21: Acceptances go out

April: Install/hang works
(volunteers welcome!)

Friday, May 1: Show opens!



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

EVENTS, WINTER – SPRING 2015

VOLUNTEER WORK PARTY

Saturday, April 11 • 10:00am – 2:00pm

Get in shape with a one-day intensive mostly-trail work event? You help, we feed you! Lots to do, indoors and out.

All welcome • Please-pre-register (so we make enough sandwiches)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD FELTING CLASS

with SUSI RYAN

Sunday, April 19 • 1:00pm – 3:00pm

Celebrate spring and birds returning with your own small bluebird. Susi Ryan of The Felted Gnome Knows will guide 4-8 participants in the craft of felting a bluebird you can hang.



\$35 (includes materials) • Minimum age: 8 (felting needles are sharp!)
Maximum enrollment: 8 people • Please pre-register

OPENING DAY for 2015 SEASON

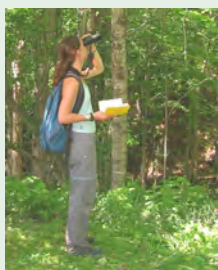
Friday, May 1 • 10:00am – 4:00pm

Enjoy our opening day and the return to daily hours. Discover new exhibits and reacquaint yourself with old favorites. Go birding from the Treehouse!

Regular admission (*Free* for members!)

EARLY BIRDERS MORNING WALKS

Sundays, May–June • 7:00am – 9:00am



Join other birders for an early morning ramble in our forest and meadows every Sunday from early May through June. Listen and watch for returning migrants, year-round residents. No birding experience necessary; please bring binoculars.

Free, donations welcome •

Pre-registration is helpful but not required

LIVE BIRDS with CRAIG NEWMAN

Sunday, May 17 • Time TBD

Share a visit to the Museum with Craig Newman and some live birds from Outreach for Earth Stewardship. Who will come today: an owl, a hawk, a ... ?

SUNDAYS for FLEDGLINGS:

KIDS + BIRDS = FUN

Will resume in May • 2 – 3pm

Birds from feathers to flying, from art to zoology. Kids can earn a Junior Birder Badge! Perfect for kids aged 5-9 (siblings welcome).

Free with admission, donations welcome

STORYTIME in the NESTLINGS NOOK

Second Tuesdays, May –
October • 10:30 – 11:30am

Stories of birds followed by a craft project, music, or nature walk. Ideal for pre-schoolers but all ages are welcome.

Free with admission



OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS

We'll be at Herrick's Cove Wildlife Festival at the beginning of May—a long and wonderful day, volunteers welcome there and at the Museum. Even more classes, walks, carvings and talks are in the works!

THE LANGUAGE OF BIRDS, INDOORS?

Devices, coding, and printing wanted

Wish list: donate your old smartphone, tablet, or the like to the Museum! We have dozens of ways to use these.

Indoor bird songs: Help needed to replace iFlyer barcode system with scannable codes that let smartphone and tablet users hear bird song and calls via the Maccauley library recordings. Get in touch with Kir Talmage at the Museum if you are intrigued.

Volunteer /Intern app builder: We have ideas, a little skill, and not enough time. Can you code? Email Kir at webmistress@birdsofvermont.org if you want to check out this project.



We're online! Like, share, subscribe, follow, or tweet to us at any time.



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>

CARVING REPORT

Dick Allen is working on a Canvasback Drake, and once Matt Strong's wood shop warms back up he will continue working on a female Merganser. We're incredibly excited to see these!



Canvasback Drake, unpainted (Dick Allen photo)

BIRDING REPORT

Our favorite bird story recently is this: in the days around Bob's memorial service, a barred owl took up temporary watch outside Gale's house. Staff and visitors noticed it hunting along the stone wall, preening on a pine bough, and hunting along the verge of the meadow.

We keep a fairly informal record of birds seen at the Museum on our blog, at <http://bovm.wordpress.com/?s=Through+the+Window>

Bird monitoring walk records are uploaded to Vermont eBird at <http://ebird.org/content/vt/>.

We encourage you all to keep an eye on these, since they generally are updated several times between newsletters.



TRAVELING LIBRARY EXHIBITS

Looking for a special topic for your local library?
Reserve a traveling display!

What is A Bird? : From eggs to feathers, unique characteristics make a bird

Migration : Why, where, and how

Cold Winters, Warm

Birds : You can't stay warm with bare feet in snow, can you?

Owls : Mysteries of nocturnal, winged hunters

Perilous Passages: the Passenger Pigeon : Abundance, extinction, and why

Woodcarving : Tools and techniques, from blanks to lifelike birds

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TRUSTEES

A non-profit institution must have a Board, both for legal requirements and to create a fully functioning organization. For a small organization, an active, passionate Board is essential. The Board of Trustees for the Birds of Vermont Museum is and has been exceptional. Its members' hard work, dedication, ideas, and time ensure the Museum's existence and growth.

Looking back over the years, there were times when there were no paid staff members and *all* the work was done by volunteers and Board remembers. Over the years the Board guided the Museum's changes and growth. It continues to do so.

We cannot thank you all enough.

Who are those "all"? In alphabetical order (names in bold are individuals who served as president):

Adams, David (2006-2009)	Laughlin, Sally (1993)
Allen Dick (2007- 2015)	Lawrence, Gale (1986-1990)
Bailey, Cinda (1986 -1989)	Letsinger, Mary Kay (1988-1989)
Bailey, Peter (1986-1989)	
Claghorn, David (1993-2000)	Lowe, Jackie (2006-2007)
Coman, Patricia (2000-2002)	Lubkowitz, Ginger (2015)
Coon, Judy (1993-1995)	Marshall, Elaine (1990-1995)
Cozzens, Becky (1988-2015)	Marshall, Ray (1990-1995)
Davis, Deborah (Raven) (1986-1988)	Mayville, Bill (2011-2015)
Everts, Ed (1986-1988)	Mayville, Mae (2008-2015)
Frazier, Charlie (2000-2002)	Mixer, Dick (1990-1992)
Hackett, Stephen (1995)	Osborn, Jim (2004-2015)
Handy, Jane (1990-1994)	Page, Stephen (2005-2009)
Hansen, Marty (1988-2011)	Passmore, Allen (1993)
Harvey, Moe (1991-1993)	Pruitt, Tom (1991-1996)
Hedlund, Charles (2002-2004)	Quintin, June (2001-2004)
Huyler, Jane (1990-1992)	Reynolds, Craig (1996-2014)
Incerpi, Angelo (2001-2014)	Russell, Mary Jane (2005-2007)
Jervis, Bob (2000-2004)	Simmons, William (1996-2002)
Johnson, Bob (2000-2007)	
Johnson, Charles (2005-2007)	Spear, Bob (1986-2014)
Johnson, Shirley (2004 -2015)	Spear, Kari Jo (2010-2015)
Kelley, Jason (1995-1997)	Steady, Pat (1992)
Kellogg, Dick (1990-1991)	Sunshine, David (1991-2015)
Lambert, Bobbie (1994-1996)	Valentine, Brian (2010-2015)
Landa, Jeff (2005-2007)	Van Der Vliet, Dann (2007-2014)
Lapointe, Frank (1988)	

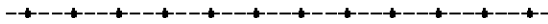


SHE LEADS, HE LEADS

Shirley Johnson was no stranger to birds, conservation, and Vermont when she joined the Birds of Vermont Museum's board in 2004. In addition to volunteering for the Museum, she served on the Board of Audubon Vermont for over 10 years, and is currently on the Board of the Green Mountain Audubon Society and helps coordinate the Burlington Christmas Bird Count.

Since joining the Birds of Vermont Museum, she has helped the Museum in countless ways. From small errands to strategic vision, a thousand things get done, and done well. In addition to clearing trails, inventorying the gift shop, speaking of her birding adventures, cleaning the Museum, finding interns, leading bird walks, and being an advocate for the Museum, she took on the role of President of the Board in May 2007. At that time, she was told it would be "just until November." Nine years of leadership later, Shirley decided it was time to step down. As she said, it is time for new ideas. Luckily for us, Shirley will still be an active Board member and has agreed to be Board Secretary (this relieves Becky Cozzens, who has been filling that role since 1988!).

We are very grateful to Shirley's leadership the past few years, grateful she is merely shifting her role, not stepping away, and—most of all—we are grateful for her deep friendship and commitment toward not only us, but to the whole of Vermont's natural world.



If someone had told **Bill Mayville** ten years that he would become the Board President of a non-profit focused on bird conservation he would have never believed them. At that point, his life was mostly family, work, and football. Unbeknownst to him, his wife Mae's classes with Michelle Patneau would soon affect his life in new and exciting ways. Students



Incoming Board President Bill Mayville and outgoing President Shirley Johnson

ventured to different places, and Bill joined Mae on these outings, including visiting the Birds of Vermont Museum.

Bill says he "just fell in love with the place", and was especially enthralled by the bird viewing window. After that the couple started birding. Bill recounted the day he first met Gale—and his first Blackburnian Warbler. "It was fun, back then, everything was a life bird." These days, Bill and Mae are spotted on bird walks, attending bird talks, and peering through binoculars all over Vermont. The couple also chooses most travel destinations based solely on the birds they might see. Even during a recent trip to Florida to see the family, they still snuck in time to get two life birds.

Mae joined the Birds of Vermont Museum's Board in 2008, and Bill joined in 2011. They are both tireless advocates of the Museum and volunteer in myriad ways.

Bill became president of the Board in December 2014. During recent planning discussions of upcoming meetings Bill promised to attend them all, "unless there is a rare bird that I *have* to go see."



Many Thanks To:

- ◆ Bob Spear
- ◆ Northeast Delta Dental, *for sponsoring* Chip Notes
- ◆ Ben & Jerry's (*for the ice cream served at the memorial service for Bob*)
- ◆ Angelo Incerpi, Dann Van Der Vliet, and Craig Reynolds
- ◆ Stewart Kirkaldy
- ◆ George W. Mergens Foundation
- ◆ Jane Vossler, Velma Plouffe, and the Community Senior Center
- ◆ Beaudry's Store
- ◆ Jane and Candace Adelson, Alice Seidenberg, Dick Park, and Rich Melnick
- ◆ Michaela Stickney
- ◆ Jeff Landa
- ◆ Bryan Pfeiffer

SAVE THE DATES

Feb 28	Wren Carving Class
March 1	Submissions due for <i>Birds of a Fiber</i>
April 11	Volunteer Work Party
April 19	Eastern Bluebird Felting Class
May 1	Open Daily hours resume <i>Birds of a Fiber</i> art exhibit opens
May 17	Live Birds with Craig Newman
<i>Repeated:</i>	Bird Monitoring Walks (<i>Last Saturdays</i>) Nestlings (<i>Second Tuesdays</i> , May–October) Fledglings (<i>alternate Sundays</i> , May–October) Early Birders (<i>Saturdays</i> , May–June)

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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