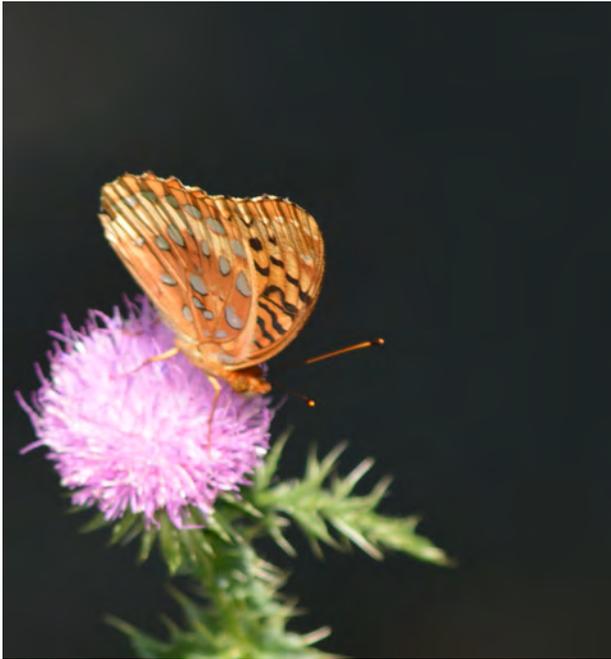


# Chip Notes

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BIRDS OF VERMONT MUSEUM  
Volume 30

Late Fall 2016



The work of this pollinator (a Great Spangled Fritillary) provided American Goldfinches thistle down later (which they would swoop over and grab at with their feet).

## TIME TO GROW

Last winter, the gardens phase of *Bridges to Birds* seemed so far away. Three seasons, a thousand plants, hundreds of volunteer hours, dozens of gallons of water, and a few generous donors later, we have a glorious start to our pollinator gardens. Come see them grow next spring!

As soon as the bridge and paths were completed this past May, it was time to get down and get dirty. Over the spring and summer, volunteers, equipped with a mix of seeds, sedges, grasses, shrubs, and perennials, fanned out into the seven or so areas that comprise our Pollinator Gardens.

There are different sections divided by the stream, the pathway, the Museum lawns, and a stone wall. Each garden area has its own purpose, design, and selection of plants, varying with presumed moisture, slope, visibility, drainage, and sun/shade balance.

When finished, these gardens might not look like a manicured English garden or even a structured domesticated flowerbed. Here, plants have been selected for their value to pollinators, place of origin (we chose predominantly native species and varieties), root structure capability, and aesthetic. We already see they can be

a haven to native pollinators, and provide food, shelter, and more for the birds; we expect these plants will hold and nurture the soil on the slopes. We continue to explore and expand how we work with these gardens to teach visitors from near and far about runoff mitigation, stream restoration, bird habitat, and pollinator conservation.

Many volunteers helped out this summer, but we owe a huge thank you to **Rita Sloan**, who planted, weeded, watered, and worked all summer and fall to keep the gardens growing and alive in this water-deprived year.

We are beyond grateful to **Anne Dannenberg** for the hours she has spent planning the garden, teaching us about pollinators and their plants, and all the “boots in the mud” work she did. It was not uncommon for staff to show up early in the morning to work, only to find Anne had arrived even earlier to “just get one or two plants in” before she headed off to start her work day elsewhere.

So many people brought this phase of *Bridges to Birds* to life. For a complete list of everyone who helped, please see page 6.



Helping pollinators means helping caterpillars too

## THE CARVER'S DAUGHTER

### *My Father and the Speedboat*

One family story from before I was born has always haunted me. I could never get my head around the fact that my quiet, slow-moving father had once owned a speedboat and raced around Lake Champlain in it. But as to why he no longer owned it by the time I was old enough to remember has become part of the mists of the past.

When I asked him, all he would say was, "I hit a rock." End of discussion. End, I assumed, of the speedboat. This helps explain why my father never had anything good to say about the smelly, gas wasting, pollution causing, noise makers that went so fast you couldn't tell a ring-billed from a herring gull.

My mother didn't like to talk about the rock and boat incident much either, but her version was more detailed than his. According to her, it happened one summer evening in Malletts Bay, near my family's camp. She, my father, my uncle Frank, my grandmother, and one of my great aunts were out in the boat, enjoying the sunset. The 1950s style boat was made of dark wood and had two bench seats running across the middle with a steering wheel in the front. My father was operating it.

Suddenly, according to my mother, there was a jolt. The boat's speed and direction didn't change. The boat just no longer had a bottom. She could see the water rushing by below her feet, as if the floor had been peeled away by

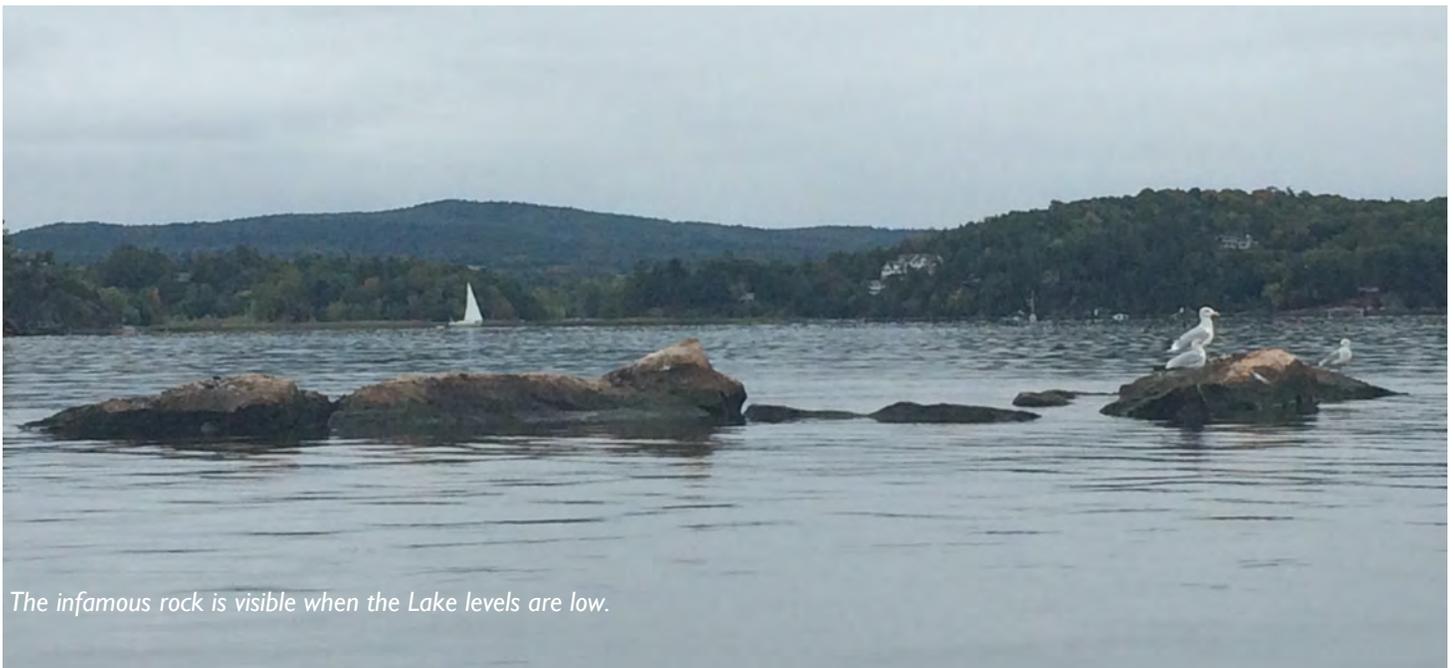
a giant can opener. She said my father looked down, killed the engine, and the boat promptly sank out from under them.

Yup, hit a rock.

Fortunately, no one was hurt. Someone rescued them from the water as it was getting dark and returned them, tired and wet, to camp. The waiting relatives had become frantic, knowing that something had happened, but not what.

Recently, I emailed my uncle Frank, who now lives in Nevada, to see what he remembered about the accident. He gave me the most detailed account I'd heard about what he called "The Great Boat Wreck Caper." He described a late afternoon ride in the family's new boat along the shore of the bay, where they had slowed down to look at the trees and cliffs. (I suspect there might have been looking for cliff swallows too, but that's just speculation.) Then, "Bob, who was driving, picked up speed, and as we hit full speed we hit the submerged rock or ledge. After a few seconds of bewilderment, we looked down and saw the water pouring into the boat through a large gash in the bottom. It quickly became evident that we couldn't stay in the boat, so we abandoned ship."

The boat sank by the stern, looking "exactly like the pictures of ships that had been torpedoed." But it didn't, as the other stories had implied, go straight to the



*The infamous rock is visible when the Lake levels are low.*

### *My Father and the Speedboat* (continued)

bottom. It remained floating with the bow just above the surface. The survivors weren't picked up immediately by a rescue boat. They actually swam back and stood on the guilty iceberg (I mean, rock) while someone on shore launched a boat and came out to them. (I am sorely tempted to make a comment about a flock of gulls vying for positions, but I won't.) Once they were aboard, the rescuer towed the disabled boat to the nearest beach, where they removed the motor. Then the rescuer returned the bedraggled shipwreck survivors, along with the motor, back to camp. My uncle stayed up late disassembling and drying it.

My uncle went on to write, "The next morning, Bob woke me up early so we could take his canoe back to where we had beached the boat. We hooked a line to it and towed it back to camp." (I sense this might have been the moment when the canoe rose to the top of my father's list of worthwhile boats.) Then he and my uncle returned (again by canoe) to the site of the disaster one last time to dive for loose articles that had fallen out of the boat, including my uncle's wallet, which had gone spiraling down to the bottom of the lake like the Heart of the Ocean. (Yes, he found it, along with his car keys, still in the pocket of a pair of pants he'd thrown in the boat at the last minute.)

My uncle finished with, "Over the next few days Bob worked out that we could screw a plywood patch into the

hole in the bottom and cover it with fiberglass. It didn't look great but it worked fine so we were back in business." (Add speedboat repair to my father's resume.) Still, I infer that the family's interest in speedboats had ebbed, and my uncle told me that the boat was sold a few years later.

But even though my father didn't talk about those days much, I can remember him pointing to a marker on the map of the lake that hung on the camp wall. The mark denoted a dangerous shallow spot in the middle of otherwise deep water. My father smiled a little and said, "Yep, I found that one."

Like my father, I have chosen quiet, reflective paddling over speed. A few weeks ago, I paddled my trusty kayak deeper into Malletts Bay than I'd ever gone before. The lake level was at a near record low. As I came around a point of land, I saw a dark ledge of rock breaking the surface. Next to it was a white buoy with the word "DANGER" in red on the side. And I realized what I must be looking at. The infamous rock ledge that had torpedoed my father's boat was actually above surface for the first time in years.

I paddled around it and photographed it with my cell phone. Then I just drifted a while and listened to the gurgle of water and the cries of the gulls and looked deep into the reflections on the water's surface.

— Kari Jo Spear 

Kari Jo Spear, daughter of Bob Spear, is a teacher, a blogger, and an author of young adult novels. She can be found online at <http://karijospear.blogspot.com/>

Earlier stories in the *Carver's Daughter* series are also on our blog, at <https://bovm.wordpress.com/tag/carvers-daughter>

### *Carving Report*

We're thrilled to add **Jim Mitchell's Black Duck** (pictured) to the Museum collection. Earlier this year, he contributed the male **Horned Grebe**. Both can be found in the Spring Wetland Diorama.

**Dave Tuttle** continues to be deeply generous with his time and skill with carving classes. His **Brook Trout** is installed "underwater" in the Spring Wetland Diorama.

**Green Mountain Woodcarvers** have donated small carved-bird ornaments as a fundraiser for the Museum; stop by and find one for you or your family!

In the not-exactly-carving category: **Dave and Becky Cozzens** have been contributing wildly popular little Bird House kits to our gift shop. Each kit makes a small, decorative nest box with pole and bird. We keep selling out!

Last but not least, thank you to **Dick Allen** for preparing Baltimore Orioles for our 2016 Annual Appeal Ornaments.



## WINTER WITH THE MUSEUM

### **RICHMOND HOLIDAY MARKET**

*Saturday, Dec 3 • 9:00am – 3:30pm*

Visit with us (and find some wonderful holiday gifts) at the Richmond Holiday Market!

### **117<sup>th</sup> CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

*Dec 14 – January 5*

Share in one of the longest-running citizen science programs ever (before it was even called citizen science): the Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Join a nearby “circle” to locate, identify, and record birds, contributing to a vast and necessary data set that helps us better protect birds, habitats, and more. Find your circles at <http://vt.audubon.org/audubon-christmas-bird-count-0> or <http://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count>

### **VOLUNTEER: WRAP A (BIRD) BOOK**

*Monday, Dec 19 • 10:00am – 10:00pm*

Each year, our local Barnes and Noble invites us to wrap books and more in exchange for donations to the Museum. Please come lend us a helping hand, share good cheer, and promote the Birds of Vermont Museum!.

*Please call to sign up.*

### **BIRD MONITORING WALKS**

*Last Saturdays, Dec 31, Jan 28, Feb 25 • 8:00 – 9:00am*

Enjoy birds, friends, and citizen science on our monthly monitoring walk on the Museum’s grounds. Please bring your own binoculars and dress for the weather. Coffee and conversation follow.

*Free • pre-registration appreciated*

### **MUSEUM COMMUNITY SURVEY**

*January 2017*

Watch for our Museum Community Survey in your mail or email this month. We invite each of you to contribute your thoughts about the Museum’s future as we embark on the next iteration of our strategic planning.

*Thank you!*

### **GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT**

*Friday – Monday, Feb 17 – 20*

Share in a more stationary Bird Count, focused on a snapshot in time, and with online, real-time data sharing. This count is a terrific opportunity to introduce kids and others to birds, citizen science, and crowd-sourced data. For count sign up, see <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/about/>

### **GBBC at the MUSEUM**

*Saturday, Feb 18 • 10:00am – 3:00pm*

The Birds of Vermont Museum is open for one day during the Great Backyard Bird Count! Join birders for an early morning walk (starts at Audubon), then meet up in the Museum to find out about the GBBC, share stories and observations with other birders, and ask your bird questions. Midday, we’ll host Audubon Vermont’s *Birding for Beginners*, with both indoor and outdoor activities.

*Admission is free for members*

### **SNOWY OWL CARVING WORKSHOP**

*Saturday, Feb 18 • 9:30am – 3:30 pm*

Carve and paint a Snowy Owl with David Tuttle. Wood blank, eyes, snacks, and coffee provided.

*\$30 for Museum, GMWC members •*

*\$40 for everyone else*

*Please pre-register; space is limited*

### **ART SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR “BIRDING BY THE NUMBERS”**

*2017 Community Art Exhibition*

*Tuesday, March 21*

We seek art that incorporates a sense of number and connects to birds. We are open to any media. Let your art—from imaginary to irrational, with birds silly and significant—populate our creative space!

Museum seeks art for “*Birding by the Numbers*”. Send up to 3 images of your work(s) to the Museum by March 21.

### **OPENING DAY of the 30TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR**

*Monday, May 1 • 10:00am – 4:00pm*

The year 2017 marks the Museum’s 30th Anniversary. We first opened to the public in June of 1987. Join us, visit often, and celebrate with us!

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

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

## BIRDING BY THE NUMBERS:

### *a Call to Artists for our 30th anniversary*

We at the Museum like to say we are “where natural history meets art.” But flip through the files of time while birding in the last 30 years... what would ornithology be without math? What new facts and figures about feathered phenomena do you most appreciate? Join us as we play with birds and numbers!

*We seek bird-focused art that incorporates a feeling for number with artistic expression. We are open to any media. Let your art—from imaginary to irrational, with birds silly and significant—populate our creative space!*

Here is a tiny fraction of funky factoids to tickle your fancy and perhaps illustrate what we mean:

- ↓ There are over 25,000 feathers on a Tundra Swan, some 80% of them on its head and neck alone.
- ↓ It takes four and twenty blackbirds to make a pie suitable for a king.
- ↓ Barred Owls are home-bodies. Of 158 banded Barred Owls, none had moved more than 6 miles.
- ↓ Bob Spear spent 1,230 hours carving and painting the Wild Turkey: that’s almost 31 weeks of a full-time job (assuming no coffee breaks).

The show runs from May 1 to October 31 in the Museum’s multi-purpose room, halls, and foyer. Most art will be hung on the walls. We have shelf space for three-dimensional works and some ceiling space if your work is suitable there. Feel free to visit and scope out the options! In choosing works for a show, we strive to integrate variety into a harmonious whole.

Both new and returning artists are invited to submit up to 3 works, by sending not more than **three (3) .jpps** showing your work to [museum@birdsofvermont.org](mailto:museum@birdsofvermont.org). Please put “*Submission for Birding by the Numbers*” in the email subject. If you do not have email, you may send up to three prints to the Museum, *attention Birding by the Numbers*. **Please include your contact information and a description of work (media, artwork size, when made, etc.).**

Entries are due by **Tuesday, March 21, 2017.**

Museum staff will select pieces by March 29 and will let artists know by email if possible. The Museum asks for permission to reproduce images of the selected works in print and online as part of publicity for the exhibit; if you prefer partial or cropped images for this, or have preferred images, please tell us or supply them.

Selected pieces should arrive at the Museum during the

first weeks of April and be ready to hang (if applicable). Artists are responsible for shipping, or drop-off/pick-up. Pick-up should occur by November 30, 2017.

Artists who show their work here are invited to sell originals, prints, and/or cards through us on consignment. Details are available on request.

We are always thrilled to arrange artist workshops at the Museum with our exhibitors. Please tell us if you are interested in showing your techniques or leading a class.

Please call or email Kir Talmage or Allison Gergely with any questions. We can be reached at 802 434-2167 or [museum@birdsofvermont.org](mailto:museum@birdsofvermont.org).



October 9: Thank you, Jim Osborn and the Big Sitters, for your time, humor, expertise, and snacks!

## THANK YOU, EVERYONE

We are grateful to *so many* people and organizations who have gone above and beyond: they have contributed time, money, plants, auction items, trail work, museum maintenance, and so much more.

- ◆ Anne Dannenburg
- ◆ Rita Sloan
- ◆ Magnus Stien
- ◆ Plant donors:  
Jane Sorensen of Riverberry Farm  
North Creek Nursery  
Paul Wiczorek of Lincoln Hill  
Nursery  
Red Wagon Nursery  
Arcana Gardens  
High Mowing Seeds  
Rich Dube  
Vermont Wetland Nursery  
Eva Dannenburg
- ◆ Vermont Electric Co-operative
- ◆ Lynn Sipsey
- ◆ Monica Loscalzo
- ◆ Dwight Cargill
- ◆ Addie Vander Els
- ◆ Debbie Duvall
- ◆ Sabine Riesing
- ◆ Erny and Darlene Palola
- ◆ Kerry and Linda Hurd and the  
rest of the Big Sit! sitters
- ◆ Shirley Zundell
- ◆ Dick Affolter
- ◆ Bob Johnson
- ◆ Lori Hinrichsen
- ◆ Bobbie Summers
- ◆ Marie and Haley Dupont
- ◆ Artists of *In Layers*:  
Alison Forest  
Allison Gergely  
Carmella Cyr  
Carol McDowell  
Cat McKeen  
Cilla Kimberly  
Colin Talmage  
Corey Armpriester  
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- ◆ Will Davis
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- ◆ Elizabeth Schlichter
- ◆ Ingrid and Graeme Rhind
- ◆ The Family of Bob Coon
- ◆ Ruth Drake

Thanks also to all who visited on our Black BIRD days (our alternative to Black Friday) and to those who donated for #GivingTuesday.



## STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Birds of Vermont Museum is starting our next strategic planning process. This five-year plan will give us specific guidance for the short term and a more general outlook beyond. The process of planning allows us to discuss and define the Museum's vision, review our mission, and identify particular ways to reach our objectives. We also use this time to recognize our strengths and opportunities, coordinate with our partners, and prioritize clear and realistic goals.

As part of our strategic planning, we look both backwards and forwards. Where have we come from? Where are we



### ***BioBlitzing:*** *an intern explores the territory*

On October 14, Monica participated in a BioBlitz through the trails around the museum. Her goal was to observe 200 species of birds, plants, animals, and fungi in a single day! She took pictures and recorded the species of the life she saw, then uploaded the information to the iNaturalist website so that the snapshot of Vermont wildlife in our woods can be accessed by researchers from around the world.

Some of the highlights of her observations are: a pond full of Eastern Newts, wide diversity among the fungi, a White-tailed Deer, a family of Hermit Thrushes, and the tracks of black bear, raccoon, and wood duck.



## **MONICA LOSCALZO, INTERN**

We are singing the praises of our winter Communications Intern, Monica Loscalzo. Monica brings talent and experience in research, database management, statistical analysis, problem-solving, and social media to our old, new, and ever-expanding projects. In fact, she found out about us through our social media efforts on tumblr at <http://birdsofvermont.tumblr.com/>.

Monica earned her B.A. from UVM with honors in Sociology and Biology. She was awarded a Masters Degree in Public Health from Boston University's School of Public Health and ultimately seeks work in health education and health marketing. While growing up in Central Connecticut, Monica was introduced to birding by her very enthusiastic father and describes herself as an outdoor adventurer.

At the Museum, Monica has immersed herself in a variety of tasks, including reorganizing the library and poring over every edition of *Chip Notes*, helping maintain our archives, and along the way gaining insight into the many people who have supported the Birds of Vermont Museum (for "a real gem", see "Strategic Planning" in this issue of *Chip Notes*).

All of our interns are required to spend a significant amount of time working on a special project. Monica has chosen to update signage for exhibited carvings by including the carver's name and the number of hours required for each. In addition, Monica will update the text on the information cards. This project is the second step of one begun by Emma Herr, a previous intern.

We feel very lucky that Monica will be with us for the off-season, helping develop and streamline ways for us to bring you closer to birds.



## **THEY CAME, THEY BUILT, & BIRDERS LOVE IT**

Reuse, recycle: Bob's old woodshed near the parking lot has been turned into a bird blind, thanks to the Center for Technology, Essex. (We did have to buy a few extra materials.)

Shaun Rouleau, Brian Japp, and their students dismantled the old shed and built the bird blind. They adapted Bob Spear's original bird blind design to the sloped site near the puddle (oh, sorry, *pond*... yes, it was a dry year). Phoebes, among others, love it!



going? We will write more about this in future newsletters; we will also be sending out a survey that invites each of you to share your thoughts, suggestions, and hopes for our future.

Our intern Monica recently found an article summarizing the 1993 strategic plan in *Chip Notes* (Vol. 7, Fall 1993). One of our favorite items from the section *Our Vision for the Museum in 50 Years* is "**Not too big or fancy**".

So far, we are right on track!



## SAVE THE DATES

- Dec 3 Richmond Holiday Market
- Dec 14 - 117th Christmas Bird Count  
Jan 5 *Join a circle near you*
- Dec 19 Volunteer: Book Wrapping Fundraiser
- Feb 17-20 Great Backyard Bird Count
- Feb 18 Museum open for GBBC and  
Snowy Owl Carving Class
- Mar 21 Deadline for submissions to *Birding By The Numbers* community art show
- May 1 Opening Day for our 30th Anniversary season

*Last Saturdays* Bird Monitoring Walks

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

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

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