

# Chip Notes

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BIRDS OF VERMONT MUSEUM  
Volume 29

Late Fall 2015

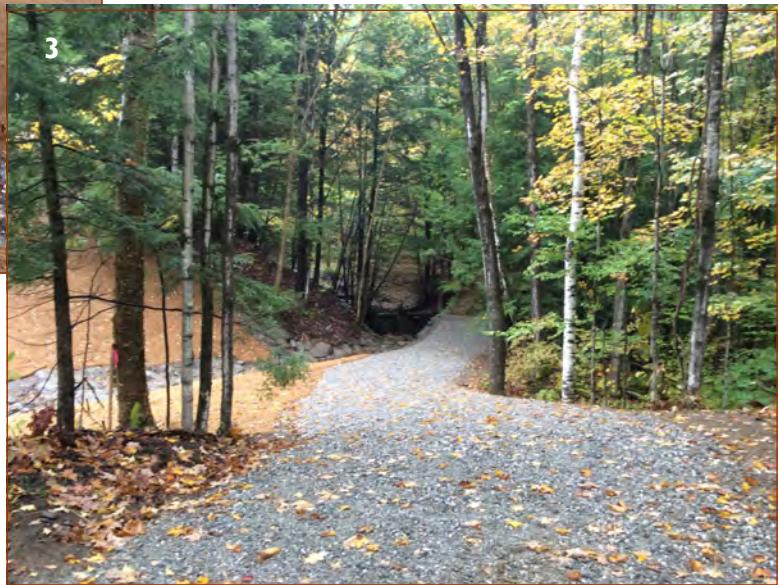


## BRIDGES TO BIRDS: *Bridge Phase Construction Update*

It has been enthralling and encouraging to see the changes between our main entrance and the parking lot this fall!

The excavator and earth moving work began in September, with the replacement of the culvert under Sherman Hollow Road. Bridge site work and stream step pool construction followed.

These photos show (1) one of the first days of earthmoving; (2) the new, larger, deeper, and more wildlife-friendly road culvert with large boulders to



create step pools and a more erosion-resistant streambed. The stakes mark the bridge site corridor, and the smooth areas are netting; (3) the renovated gravel path from the Museum's front "yard" to Bob's bridge that crosses Sherman Hollow Brook.

This phase is being funded by many, *many* individual donors, the Vermont Department of Transportation though a Vermont Better Back Roads grant, and the Department of Environmental Conservation's Ecosystems Restoration Program. John Scott Excavating, Grover Engineering, Engineering Ventures, and Timber and Stone derive especial thanks.

Additional details and color photos are at <https://bovm.wordpress.com/tag/bridges-to-birds/>

Up next: the piers to support the bridge.



# THE CARVERS DAUGHTER

## *Part 10: Canoe Lessons*

In one thing, my father and I were always in perfect accord. He may have dragged me kicking and screaming into the world of birding, but I always loved to canoe. From the time I was old enough to reach over the gunwale, I had a paddle in my hands. My first one was a blue plastic badminton racquet attached to a thwart with a string. I paddled my little heart out with it, stirring up white water and getting soaking wet while my father paddled serenely along in the stern. I always wondered why everybody laughed when they saw us coming.

When I was old enough to graduate to a wooden paddle, my father had me sit in the bow. I'd hardly learned the basic strokes when he put me in the stern and took the bow himself.

"Wait, this is where you steer from," I said.

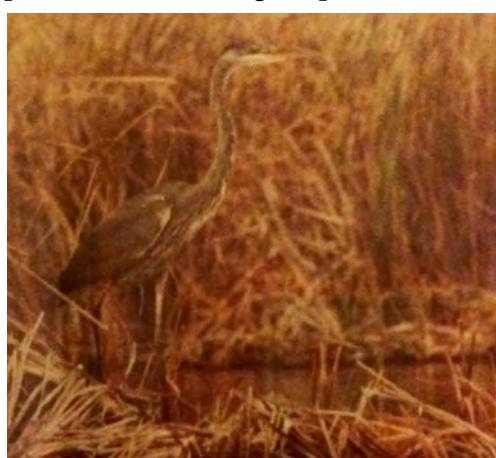
"Yeah," he said and demonstrated the J-stroke.

Surprisingly, it was really easy to make the canoe go where I wanted it to, unlike riding a bike, or doing math. My father preferred to hug the shoreline (watching for shorebirds wasn't enough for him—he wanted to see warblers, too.) I ran him into a few low hanging limbs at first, but he didn't mind, even when they had spiders (which always seemed to find their way back along the length of the canoe to my bare toes).

Soon he began giving me complex directions like, "Bring us in sideways next to that log. Back up a little. Hold it right there." It took me a while to notice he wasn't paddling—he was looking through his binoculars into the trees. Huh.

Once I got really good at steering, he taught me how to paddle without taking the paddle out of the water. "It's

the way the Indians used to do it," he said. "You don't make any noise at all. Take a regular stroke and then sort of glide the paddle up ahead of you through the



Can you spot the heron?

water, angled a little. That's it."

My paddle slid through the water like a silent knife, completely eliminating the thunk of the blade breaking the surface and the silvery rain of drops coming off the edge when it swept forward. I imagined Indians sneaking up on their enemies, soundless in the night.

"Works great to get close to a heron," my father said.

That, too.

The first time I ever paddled solo was on a field trip. There were seven or eight canoes, and we spent the day making our way down Otter Creek. We had spotted a car where we planned to take out. The problem was we couldn't see the road from the creek. By late afternoon, everyone was tired, hot, hungry, sunburned, bug bitten, sick of sitting, and had to pee (at least, I did). But we couldn't find the car. A discussion broke out over whether we'd passed it, or if it was still ahead. My father told everybody to rest in the shade, and he'd go on downstream a ways. Since I was paddling with him, that meant me, too. So we kept going. And going. And going.

My father didn't usually get lost (except in the mall parking lot) and pretty soon he was frowning. At last, he told me to land us on a tiny strip of sand and he'd walk across a field, find the road, and look around for the car that had to be somewhere nearby. I waited about fifteen minutes, and then I heard him shout from a long distance farther down the creek that he'd found the car, and to save time, I should paddle back and get the others.

I yelled back that I would. And then the canoe got a whole lot bigger and heavier and kind of scary. He'd told me the best place to paddle solo was kneeling in the center with the boat facing the other way around, going stern first. That kept the canoe level. So I climbed into the center and knelt down, resting my butt on the edge of a thwart, and pushed off. I felt like I was paddling through molasses, until I remembered I was going against the current. Not to mention I was dead tired. But I was used to being the only one paddling a good deal of the time while he was birding, so soon I had some momentum going. I kept close to shore, and after a while, my heart rate settled back down.

At long last, the other canoes came into sight, nosed into shore where a collection of people who looked like they

... continued on page 3

## FAREWELL, MARTY



Sad news came in October that Marty Hansen, long-time birder, friend, and supporter of the Museum, had been fatally injured while crossing a street.

Marty Hansen lived for many years in Connecticut, where she worked with the local Audubon Society—and met her future husband, Russ. Later, they both taught in nearby Lakeville.

Summertime for Marty and Russ Hansen meant life in Lincoln, Vermont—and a long-term friendship with Bob Spear, our founding director, and Gale Lawrence, his partner and a writer-naturalist. Winters for the Hansens meant “migrating” to their other home in Texas. Even after Russ passed away, Marty continued to visit Vermont each summer.

Marty and Russ supported the Museum in a variety of ways including Marty’s service on the Board of Trustees from 1988 to 2011 and Russ’ display of remarkable photographs. These show birds in flight, and are currently exhibited on a wall of our Nesting Gallery.

Friends and colleagues recently celebrated Marty’s life in Lincoln, Vermont. Since both Marty and the *Merlin* have regularly made seasonal stops in Vermont and Texas, Gale Lawrence has begun a sponsorship of the Merlin carving in Marty’s honor; contact the Museum if you would to contribute to this remembrance.

Marty will be greatly missed, but her spirit will always soar with us.



### *The Carver’s Daughter: Canoe Lessons* (continued)

were shipwreck survivors were collapsed in the shade. They saw me coming, and someone shouted, “Oh my God, where’s your father?” They were jumping up like they thought he’d fallen overboard and had been eaten by a giant snapping turtle just because I was a kid paddling alone.

I yelled back, “He walked to the road and found the car. He says keep coming.”

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 from *the Carver’s Daughter* can be found in the Museum’s blog, at <https://bovm.wordpress.com/tag/carvers-daughter>

## STEWART KIRKALDY

Last May, the Museum lost a very dear friend, benefactor, and beloved volunteer.



Dr. Stewart Kirkaldy was a man of many talents and passions who discovered the Museum over a decade ago and quickly became a fixture at the front desk, viewing window, and in the Museum library.

Stewart’s delight in introducing visitors to the Museum was contagious. His ability to spot and identify birds was renowned. Even in his later years, Stewart was gently adept at bringing people (especially children) and birds closer together—in front of the viewing window and during birding drives through Vermont.

From a career as a family practitioner in Westport, Massachusetts, to retirement in Middlebury, Vermont, as a grandfather, avid reader and thinker, advocate for social justice and peace, and a bit of a humorist and poet as well, Stewart never stopped doing, learning, and sharing. Stewart’s admiration for Bob Spear and his life’s work inspired all of us. We believe Stewart would have been at the Museum every week *whether or not* Beaudry’s Store enticed him with their incomparable BLT sandwiches!

A sponsorship of the *Snowy Owl* was established in Stewart’s honor. If you would like to contribute funds toward this sponsorship, please contact the Museum.

Fly high, Stewart. We miss you.

—Kari Jo Spear



## PROGRAMS TO SHARE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Did you know the Museum offers special programs? Call us to schedule one of these for your group, library, senior center, or after-school event.

### *Children's Programs*

#### **SOAP CARVING**

Carve out a new hobby with a bar of soap, a popsicle stick tool, and inspiration from wooden bird carvings! Every child is allowed to bring home their carving and one tool.

*Designed for 6 and older – limit 12*



#### **BLOCK AND BIRD**

You think you can't draw a bird? We bet you can! From simple shapes to loose sketches, we will look at the basic shapes of birds and practice drawing them, while learning a little bird biology at the same time.

*Designed for 5-10 year olds, all older beginners welcome – limit 10*

#### **BEGINNING BIRD WATCHING**

From super silly eyebrows to bellies and rumps, we will teach you some of the field marks and features used to describe and identify birds. We will share how every person's observations can help bird conservation.

*Designed for 10 and older – limit 15*

#### **EGG-STATIC!**

Ever wonder why birds lay eggs? How do bird eggs differ from other animals' eggs? How do eggs survive to hatching? Make your own egg to color and take home!

*Designed for 5-10 year olds – limit 12*

#### **BIRDS OF A FEATHER**

Feathers: unique and amazing! How do they help birds survive? How can birds fly? How and why are they so colorful? This STEM-based program includes model-making, field work, and investigations about adaptations.

*Designed for 8 and up – limit 15*

### *Adult Programs*

#### **LEARNING TO SEE**

In this interactive program we use bird carvings and other items to teach techniques for sketching birds that will ultimately help you become a better birder.

#### **NATURE AT NIGHT**

Was that a bird? An insect? An amphibian? With photos and sounds we will follow the noises of nature through the year and into the night.

#### **FROM WOOD TO WONDER**

What happens when you combine an idea, some blocks of wood, and an old foundation with tenacity, creativity, and a community of bird lovers? You get a one-of-a-kind Museum on a dirt road in Vermont.

#### **WINTER BIRD FEEDING**

Vermont in Winter: cold, muddy, slushy, icy, snowy. But there are still birds! Which ones? How come? What do they eat? How do they shelter from the weather? And how can you get involved?

#### **PERILOUS PASSAGES**

Imagine the sights and sounds of two billion passenger pigeons flocking overhead...or the relentless onslaught of hunters gunning down pigeons for food and sport. The journey of the passenger pigeon from abundance to destruction provides an opportunity to reflect and debate the notions of progress and de-extinction.

#### **WHICH WARBLER WAS THAT?**

Brush up on warbler identification by sight, sound, and habitat. We share a wide selection of life-size carved reproductions and audio guides with this presentation.



*Photo by Caleb Kenna, © 2012 and used by permission.*

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



## EVENTS ACROSS THE WINTER

### LET US WRAP YOUR BIRD BOOKS & MORE

*Saturday, December 19 • 10 am - 10 pm*

at Barnes and Noble, South Burlington, Vermont

Let us wrap your books and other gifts! (They don't even have to be about birds.) *Volunteers needed!* Call or email us by December 18th, (802) 434-2167 to reserve a time.

### BIRD MONITORING WALKS

*Last Saturdays, December 26, January 30, February 27, March 26, April 30 • 8:00 – 9:00am*

Experienced birders, walks in the woods, and bird-friendly coffee. Every month. Please bring your own binoculars and dress for the weather.

*Free • Please pre-register*

### THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

*Friday-Sunday, February 12-15 • All Day, All Night with OPEN MUSEUM Saturday, February 13 • 10am - 3pm*

Discover the Great Backyard Bird Count, local birds, and new birding friends.

### BROOK TROUT CARVING CLASS

*Saturday, February 20 • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm*

Carve and paint a Brook Trout with David Tuttle of the Green Mountain Woodcarvers. Wood blank, eyes, snacks, and coffee provided.

\$30 for Museum and GMWC members • \$40 for everyone else. Please pre-register.

### BOARD MEETINGS

*Tuesday, March 15 • 4:00pm – 5:30pm*

### DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY ENLIGHTENMENT (YOUR CAMERA AND YOU)

*Saturday, April 9 • 9:00am - 1:00pm*

Give Bryan Pfeiffer four hours and he'll give you command of your digital camera. You'll understand the dials, buttons and menus on your point-and-shoot or digital SLR camera.

### SPRING VOLUNTEER WORK PARTY

*PROBABLY Saturday, April 16 • 9:00am - 2:00pm*

Trade ya! Please help us prepare the Museum for our spring opening, and we'll feed you!

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

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>

### We Are Thankful for...

- ◆ Carol McDowell, Libby Davidson, David Tuttle, and Denver Holt, for making the *Bridges to Birds* thank-you gifts possible
- ◆ Those who donated in memory of a loved one: Gerry and Linda Hamelin, Sandy Gratton, Pat Leo, Gale Lawrence, Shirley and Bob Johnson, Cynthia and Kurtis Kling, Kathryn Raymond, Gloria Scribner, June Kingsbury, Marcia and Gary Duffy, Doug Buck, Lorraine and Larry Stub, Anne Kennison, Barbara Brosnan, John Chamberlain, Tony Foote, Jan Albers, and Andrew Kirkaldy
- ◆ Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains Troop 30949 and Cub Scout Pack 620 (Jericho / Underhill)
- ◆ Jeanette Malone and Girl Quest
- ◆ The Estate of Barbara Ovitt
- ◆ Erny and Darlene Palola
- ◆ Kate Schubart

- ◆ Bird Carving Sponsors: Ali Wagner, Lori and Gaylan Herr, and Linda and Kerry Hurd
- ◆ Workshop Teachers: Elizabeth Spinney, David Tuttle, Susi Ryan, Libby Davidson, Michael Sabourin and VES, and Angelo Incerpi
- ◆ Contributors to the Big Sit!: Jim Osborn, Nancy Perlee, Michele Patenaude, Linda and Kerry Hurd, Bill and Mae Mayville, Elizabeth and Patrick Spinney
- ◆ John Gergely
- ◆ The Green Mountain Wood Carvers
- ◆ New England Wood Carvers and Jerry Grimes
- ◆ Docent Volunteers: Dick Affolter, Kari Jo Spear, Shirley Johnson, Rita Sloane, Valeria and Ali, and Janice Parker
- ◆ Anne Dannenburg
- ◆ Marie and Haley Dupont
- ◆ All the Volunteers who came to the Fall Volunteer Work Day or helped with Special Projects

## INTERN SUMMER

An Alabama native, **Emma Herr** applied for our summer Education Internship even before she had finalized her move to Vermont. Emma was immediately drawn to the museum's apparently serene atmosphere and obvious passion for local wildlife and art.

Emma found the Museum to be a wonderful way to become more acquainted with Vermont, and an ideal introduction to the museum field, her preferred career path. She especially enjoyed working on her central project: updating and adding carving and species information for the wetland bird dioramas. She was also introduced to the art of woodcarving, which quickly became a new hobby, leading to many peaceful hours carving in the workshop.

With plans to transfer to Johnson State College for anthropology and art history, Emma is endlessly grateful for the opportunity to work with the Museum, and hopes to continue carving as well as to remain involved with the museum's work and principles.

—*Emma Herr*



**Anna Veitch** first visited the Birds of Vermont Museum on a date and was captivated by all the bird knowledge that was there. She was so amazed that she came back for an internship.

During her internship, Anna added 14 new birds to her life list, including many warblers! She worked at the front desk, helped fill feeders, joined bird walks, marked invasive plant species along the trails, and recorded bird counts. Her primary project was designing a native habitat for birds and insects. Once the bridge is in place, the Museum will follow her garden plan to attract and support the wildlife in the riparian area between stream and parking area, near the entrance to this bridge.

Anna truly enjoyed her Museum days, noting the countless birders and nature lovers that came in just to talk or share a photo. The wealth of knowledge was incredible and encouraged her to follow her passion and keep birding. She even bought her own pair of binoculars! She writes, "it was fun being able to explore Vermont and I am thankful for all the tips and birding places people told me about. [I] will surely come back to visit this amazing place and even more amazing people." As a junior in college, she is studying Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Connecticut and plans to focus in Ornithology.

—*Anna Veitch*

### Carving Report

Dick Allen's Canvasback Drake arrived in the Wetland Diorama last spring. He also carved the ornaments we'll send as thank-you gifts after the Annual Appeal..

We talk and meet many carvers each year, but rarely does one show up who carves life-size and biologically accurate Vermont birds, in a style similar to Bob Spear—and offers to donate and carve some for the collection.

This year the rare thing happened. Jim Mitchell, a wood carver from Hartland, Vermont, called, visited, then offered to donate two carvings. His Northern Pintail

(carved in basswood and painted with oils) and a Ring-necked Duck (carved in

Tupelo and painted with acrylics) are displayed in our Spring Wetland Diorama.



Jim Mitchell

Like most artists, he has a long list of projects he is working on. Jim tells us he is "hoping for a long winter".

### Birding report

Early Birders had a great time in May and June! We keep a fairly informal record of birds seen from the Museum on our blog, at <http://bovm.wordpress.com/?s=Through+the+Window>. Bird monitoring and Early Birder records are uploaded to eBird, at <http://ebird.org/ebird/vt/hotspot/L282687>

This year's Big Sit! did not break any records, but participants clearly enjoyed themselves. Our results (and others) can be seen at <http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bigsitlive/>

We encourage you to keep an eye on these online reports, since they generally are updated several times between newsletters, with more detail.

## THE ART AND ARTISTS OF *BIRDS OF A FIBER*



In selecting art for the *Birds of a Fiber* exhibit, we hoped to allow the variety of media to hint at the diversity of birds. We had hooked rugs and traditional penny rugs, photographs rendered in cross-stitch, crocheted and fabric sculptures, needle felted miniatures, multimedia collages, paper sculpture, and quilts.

We hope you had a chance to see some of these works for yourself! There is not enough room to show all the works, nor are these to scale with each other, but all the artists are listed below.

**Ann Wetzel**, penny rug

**Carol McDowell**, quilted art

**Dawn Littlepage**, textile collage

**Elizabeth Spinney**, crochet

**Erin Talmage**, recycled paper

**Eve Gagne**, cross stitch

**Katherine Guttman**, mixed media (fiber, glass, and metal)

**Kir Talmage**, needle felted wool

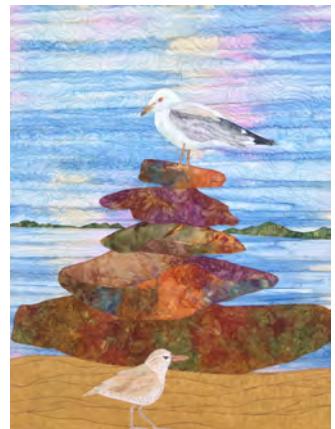
**Marya Lowe**, quilted art

**Morgan Barnes**, needle felted wool

**Nancy Tomczak**, mixed media (fiber and watercolor)

**Robin Hadden**, rug hooking

**Girl Quest participants**, fiber birds/mixed media



## SAVE THE DATES

- Dec 19      Gift Wrapping  
Dec 25      Bird Monitoring Walk  
Feb 12-15    Great Backyard Bird Count  
Feb 20      Carving Class: Brook Trout  
Mar 15      Board Meeting  
April 9      Digital Photography Workshop  
April 16      Volunteer Work Party

We are open by appointment from November 1 to April 30.

Please call to schedule your visit!

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.*

## Board of Trustees 2015

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*Please send comments or changes of address to*

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