

February 2022

HALIFAX NEWS

MAMMAL IN THE AIR!

by Laurel Copeland, Halifax, Vermont

A friend in West Halifax recently reported a bat in the house. A bat in the winter? But more to the point, how to get it out of the warm, cozy house? I remember having bats in the barn here on Hanson Road, in the summertime. As kids, we girls and our girlfriends who came to visit for the summer slept on cots in a room off the back of the barn. The separation let us giggle and chatter into the wee hours. It also meant that the bathroom was a ways off. One midnight, we were awakened by a scream. Once we'd got the lights on, we learned that our friend Kim had gotten up for a potty break, picked her way through the dark barn heading for the kitchen door, and stepped on something squishy. You guessed it: a dead bat. The next day, Kim spent about a second thinking up how to torment her younger brother, Tad, with whom she had a healthy rivalry. She packaged up that dead bat and posted it to her brother in Illinois. Some days passed. Then Kim got a pretty testy letter from her mother (this was before we had a telephone). It seems Mom had received the package addressed to her son, and, because Tad was at summer camp, had tossed it on the dashboard of her car. She would be picking him up in a couple days, so this way she wouldn't forget the little package from his sister (how nice). Well, when she opened up the car to head out to get Tad, the smell was—indescribable.



Bats are mammals, the only mammals capable of sustained and true flight. Several mammals can glide: **marsupial gliders** (Australia & New Guinea), **greater gliders** (eastern Australia), **colugos or flying lemurs** (Southeast Asia; in spite of the common name, they are not actually lemurs), **sifaka** (Madagascar; actual lemurs), **pygmy scaly-tailed flying squirrel** (central Africa; not squirrels but rodents), **feathertail gliders** that look like mice (Australia; see picture at right by Elias Neideck), and **flying squirrels** (common in Vermont). Vermont's flying squirrels include the smaller, white-bellied Southern Flying Squirrel (pictured below; photo by US Fish & Wildlife Service) and the larger, darker Northern Flying Squirrel. Vermont Fish & Wildlife is currently monitoring flying squirrels as part of the New England Flying Squirrel Network, and they are looking for citizen scientists to help. Here is a link to a WCAX news story about their efforts: <https://www.wcax.com/2021/12/08/wildlife-watch-keeping-track-flying-squirrels/>. Want to help? Follow this link to the New England Flying Squirrel Network: <https://sites.google.com/view/nefsn>.



Northern Flying Squirrel

These seven types of mammals glide, but bats flap and flutter their adapted forelimbs to execute acrobatic moves in true flight. Their flying expertise lets them out-manuever insects—and evade capture. Bats comprise the taxonomic order Chiroptera, a word that means “hand-wing”—that is, their hands have become wings. To be able to fly efficiently, bats' skeletons are quite delicate. This means they do not make good fossils. Still, fossil evidence that has survived suggests there were bats in Wyoming 52 million years ago. Those early bats had long tails and no echolocation, a radar-like ability to detect objects even in the dark. Today's bats in the USA have short tails and use

echolocation. The long tail was designed to stabilize the animals during flight; this explains why several of the gliding mammals have long tails today.



Feathertail glider or pygmy gliding possum; head and body combined measure 2 ½ to 3 inches

Bats typically sleep all day and are active dusk to dawn. Bats that stay in cold climates over the winter hibernate or enter a state of torpor with greatly reduced metabolism. There are not enough insects to eat when it is cold out, so they reduce their need for food and take a long slumber, often in attics which are cold enough to keep them quiet and warm enough to keep them from freezing. Our friend's bat may have been slumbering in an attic space, awakened, seen light or felt warmth, and entered his living space. But how to remove it? A warmed-up bat in a comfy house is not likely to fly out the window into the icy air of Halifax in January. The beleaguered friend was advised to call Andy Rice, our constable and animal control officer. Andy knew that there is a wildlife rehabilitator who specializes in bats right nearby in Colrain, MA. Advice on bat removal starts with being very quiet so the bat will settle, looking for it on curtains and boxes and dark spaces, and being completely covered with thick garments when approaching a bat to protect yourself against possible rabies exposure. This bat was finally found in a cat box; out went the box and the bat.



Wildlife rehabilitators who work with rabies vectors—bats, foxes, racoons, skunks, and woodchucks—are few and far between. But there is one in Colrain. Good to know. Contact info for Halifax animal control officer Andy Rice is 802-380-1986, 802-257-7982, halifaxconstable@gmail.com.

* ~ *

A Clutch of Cranberries



In mud and snow
I find them crisped
In New Year's Eve
Icy armature

I pluck all I can carry
But like the winterberries
And prairiefire crabs
so many remain—
Hanging on
Flash frozen
Preserved possibly
For a February thaw

I picked a ton before Thanksgiving
Cranberry cake and chutneys
Surprised
The excavator
And a circus of pickups
Crisscrossing the chimney lot
Didn't crush them
Digging stones and ditches
Hauling and harrowing

I for one
Would relish that
- Gregg Orifici

And the critters—
Where are the critters?
A moveable feast
Of berries so plump and juicy

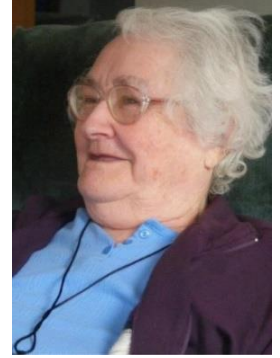
You can't even call them sour
A deep red you can't miss
Or resist—
A blue jay would blush from gorging
Mice could collect them at leisure
Under the icy brickle
Bejeweling underground tunnels with edible rubies
A jagged glaze from sharp hawk or owl eyes



TOWN NEWS

SORROW

We honor the memory of Virginia A. Stone, 89, a resident of Larrabee Road, who passed away November 9, 2021, at her son Craig's home surrounded by her family. Our sympathies go out to her sons Craig Stone (Rebecca) and Keith Stone (Vicki) both of Halifax, her grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and her beloved dogs Molly May, Molly Moo, Gracie, Sadie, and Jacoby. She was preceded in death by her husband James Stone (d. 2005) whom she married in Jacksonville on June 5, 1955. Memorial gifts in Virginia's memory may be made to the Halifax Volunteer Fire Department, Bayada Hospice, or Deerfield Valley Rescue, c/o Covey-Allen & Shea Funeral Home P.O. Box 215 Wilmington, VT 05363. To send the family personal condolences, please visit www.sheafuneralhomes.com.



We offer our sympathies to Diana & Lee Todd and their family for the loss of Diana's mother, Gisela Robeck, age 92. Gisela died December 14, 2021, with her family by her side. She grew up in Germany, raised her family in several cities in the US, worked for many years in Boston, and retired first to Hawaii and then to Brattleboro.

We are sad to report that Earl Holtz died December 31, 2021, at age 75. For two and half years, he lived with a rare form of leukemia (CMML) that he managed with a healthy lifestyle and positive attitude. Earl served the town of Halifax as tree warden, selectman, broadband committee chair, and interim select board member. Interested persons may make a donation to CMML research (<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/chronic-myelomonocytic-leukemia.html>), or Bayada hospice of Brattleboro VT. Our condolences go out to his family.



SENIOR MEAL – FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, at the Halifax Community Hall at 20 Brook Road in West Halifax, serving at noon. Menu: fruit cup, corn chowder, Johnny cake, roll, and dessert. All seniors are welcome. A call to Joan is appreciated: 802-368-7733. Free-will donation of \$3.00 is not mandatory. Take-out is available.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

1/3/22: three Halifax men, Whitingham Ambulance, and Deerfield Valley Rescue responded to Hatch School Road; the person was transported to Brattleboro Hospital.

1/4/22: six men and one fire truck responded to an alarm on Jacksonville Stage Road; the cause was blowback from the furnace.

1/7/22: seven men and one truck responded to Reed Hill Road for a reported motor vehicle crash; nothing was found.

1/19/22: ten men and two trucks responded to Route 112 for a chimney fire.

Somewhere atop Halifax on a bleak January day



1/21/22: one man responded to Collins Road for a person having breathing problems dizziness; the patient was transported to Brattleboro Hospital by Deerfield Valley Rescue.

1/26/22: five men responded to an automatic alarm on Jacksonville Stage Road. They were turned back.

2022 HALIFAX FIREMEN'S MONTHLY RAFFLE

Tickets are available for this monthly raffle. Call Wayne at 802-368-7733. Help support your firemen for \$10.00 a month.

BUZZZZ! ABOUT A BAKERY!



The North River Bakery opened in Jacksonville just after Christmas. It is next door to the North River Hall (Stone Soldier Pottery) at 22 Gates Pond Road, Whitingham VT 05342-9708. Contact: Shelly@NorthRiverBakery.com or 802-368-7724 or on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/North-River-Bakery-103372482223980>. Hours are Thursday-Friday-Saturday-Sunday 6 AM – 4 PM. I stopped for coffee and got distracted by the wonderful pastries and desserts. Mmmmm! A sampling of them is pictured. Flaky turnovers. Delicious cannoli. And mini cheesecakes!!



JOAN'S SIGHTINGS. We have seen fox tracks around our place but have not seen the fox yet. Coopers' Coop is having trouble with a Bobcat at their place killing chickens and ducks. Some are still seeing wild turkey. There was a hawk flying over our place, checking out my chickens, I suppose. I'd like it to dine elsewhere! It was bad enough that a darn weasel killed my oldest chicken, one I got when I first got chickens in 2016. She hadn't laid an egg in ages but was a pet. No more of the original chickens left; that makes me sad. 😞

Wayne shot the weasel. Guess that is all part of having animals! I am enjoying the birds at my feeders. Still seem to have lots of Blue Jays; they sure do eat a lot of sunflower seeds. Still have two White-breasted Nuthatch and two Red-breasted ones also. A lot of Juncos, a few Sparrows, two pair of Cardinals. No Grosbeaks this winter at my feeders. – *Joan Courser*



On Hanson Road, tracks in the snow



testify to frequent visits from the red fox. The corvids—ravens, crows, and blue jays—visit and argue amongst themselves. Up on Whitneyville Road I saw tracks of deer, turkeys, coyotes, dogs, and a bobcat (photo far below). The juncos and

chickadees are flitting around on sunny days. Some tiny rodent has left a leaping trail across the snowy yard, hoping to evade our barred owl, perhaps. I took a photo of the owl during a snowstorm. It's on a tree but scarcely distinguishable from tree or snow (photo at right). Can you spot it? It is on a snowy tree branch, right of center...





INDOOR AMUSEMENTS A neighbor gets too much help doing floor exercises... a cat discovers a ladder.



Barred owl: Can you see me now?

WILDLIFE. If you see one of these 5 mammals on or crossing a road, or if you see tracks or scat that suggest one crossed the road, let me know. The mammals are **moose, black bear, bobcat (pictured below right), river otter (below left), fisher (bottom)**. Include **date, time, & location (address or landmarks or smart-phone photo of the location)**. I'm at LaurelACopeland@gmail.com, 802-368-2439 voicemail, 210-488-1701 text/call. Thank you! – *Laurel Copeland*



Bobcat tracks in Halifax at left
Sketch of ideal bobcat prints below right



Newsletter
P O Box 27
West Halifax VT 05358



January Sky on Shearer Hill



Paperwhites against winter's trees—
ghosts of spring?

Halifax News

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story to Laurel LaurelACopeland@gmail.com or
Joan JWCinVt@gmail.com (PO Box 27 05358).