

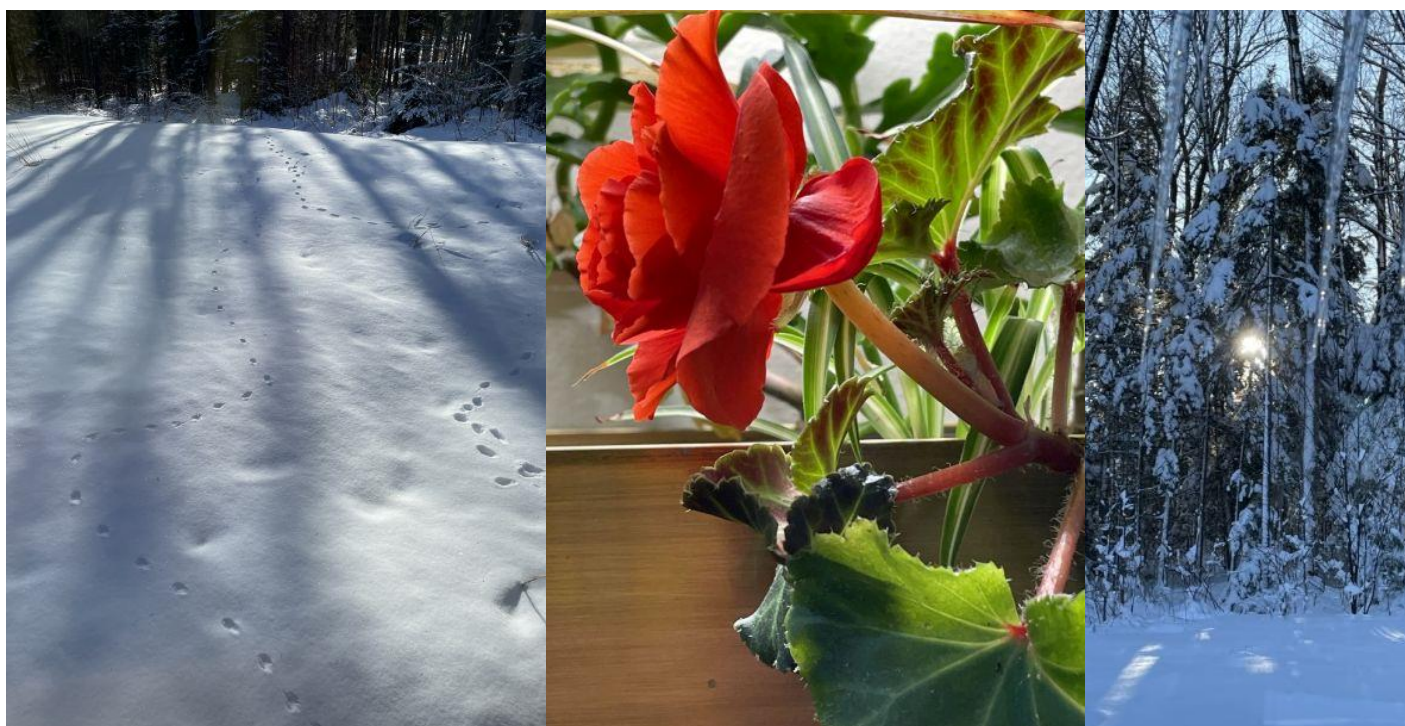
January 2023

HALIFAX NEWS

THE CLOSE OF AN INTERESTING YEAR

Laurel Copeland, Halifax, Vermont

Christmas day was quiet, if you don't count the yelps generated by a spilled drink that covered floor, table, and chair with a sticky red blush; the forgotten skillet setting off several smoke alarms for 15 frosty minutes while we frantically aired out the place; and a midnight raid on the Christmas tree mounted by our darling cat, Simba, who also offered up the part of the ornament she had eaten in a murky pool I cleaned up in the half-light of 4 A.M., not wanting to look too closely. Before you shed a light on something, think carefully whether you want to see it, no? New neighbors around the block had unwanted fireworks in their wall on the morning of Christmas Eve generating pre-dawn emailed requests for recommended electricians who might come that morning; one did! A week earlier we were madly shoveling out from 18 inches of snow. Before that came many trips to the post office, walks in the woods and on the roads, dogs delighting in the weather and each other, and the eternal exercise of stacking-moving-burning wood. Now we have only to bid farewell to the old year while contemplating the pros and cons of a forecast calling for 10 days of spring-like highs and lows. Crocuses bloomed in November; will other plants find the mid-winter spring confusing?

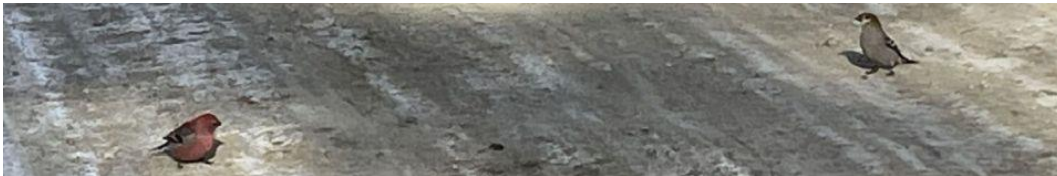


If you were stargazing around the winter solstice, you may have seen some showy fireballs, some falling for several counts—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6!—before disappearing from the night sky. These beauties were the Ursids, meteor showers named for their appearance in the constellation Ursa Minor. They were active December 17-26 this year. Next I will be watching for Quadrantids, active now through January 16th. They will peak January 3-4, 2023, and that is unfortunately when the moon is almost full (92%). Undaunted, I will attempt to see the full moon rising over Mount Monadnock, although the skies are expected to be cloudy. Why are the Quadrantids so named? Apparently in 1795, a French astronomer made up a constellation named Quadrans Muralis. If you make up a constellation, let me know—and give it a name with staying power. If you are curious about the many meteor showers we might glimpse, try this site hosted by the American Meteor Society:

<https://www.amsmeteors.org/meteor-showers/meteor-shower-calendar/>

Another activity, and one that does not require clear skies, is Feeder Watch. Feeder Watch is about birds, and it is hosted by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Feeder Watch uses citizen scientists to collect bird counts over a 2-day period in the winter or early spring. Their website provides step-by-step instructions and log sheets on which to record what you see; alternatively, you can use an app to log the birds you count. Says the site, “The FeederWatch season begins on November 1 and runs through the end of April. The last day to start a two-day count at the end of each season is April 29.” Visit <https://feederwatch.org/about/project-overview/> for details.

While you are thinking about birds, hear this: land-dwelling birds and shorebirds are still in decline, but waterbirds especially ducks have increased their numbers. Here is the story by Krishna Ramanujan, “Three Years After 3 Billion Birds Lost, America’s Birds Are Still In Decline,” reported in All About Birds, another project mounted by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/three-years-after-3-billion-birds-lost-americas-birds-are-still-in-decline/>.



TOWN NEWS

SORROW

We are sorry to report the passing of **Dorothy “Dot” Sexton Christie** (March 14, 1923 - December 11, 2022) of Tucker Road. She was a long-time resident of Halifax, living in the house once owned by the artist Kyra Markham. She was 99 years old (and would have been 100 in March). Joan remembers her riding her horse around Halifax. Our condolences go out to her family.

Long-time summer resident **Jean Anderson Klubko** (Apr 12, 1924-Dec 2, 2022) passed away; she owned the little red house second from the Community Hall on Brook Road. A resident of Rocky Hill, CT, she just loved her second hometown...Halifax. Heartfelt condolences to the family.

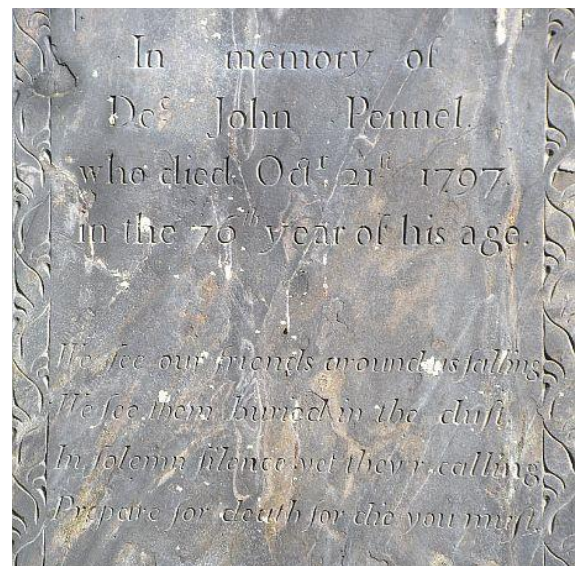
SENIOR MEAL IN HALIFAX – FRIDAY, JANUARY 20 AT 12:00 NOON

The January meal is Friday the 20th served at noon at the Halifax Community Hall, 20 Brook Road, West Halifax, Vermont. The menu: ham, scalloped potatoes, vegetable, rolls and dessert. All seniors are welcome. For those age 60 and over, there is a free-will fee of \$3.00. For those under 60, it is \$4.00. Last month’s meal had to be canceled because of snow; let’s hope it is a good weather day this month. This is the 23rd year for senior meals in Halifax. Come on out and enjoy a good hot meal with us. Call Joan to let her know you are coming (802-368-7733). – *Joan Courser*

MORE MUSINGS ON ROAD NAMES.

Of the family surnames used to name roads in Halifax, the one with the most variations in spelling originated with early settler, Captain John Pennell. Born in Yorkshire, England, in 1721, where the name is spelled Pennell, he moved from Colrain, Mass., where the name was spelled Pennill. According to Patrie’s town history, John Pennill Jr. moved to Halifax in 1764. The historic house that he built on Pennel Hill still stands, and he is buried in Pennel Hill Cemetery.

One often hears the name pronounced “panel.” Historian Rev. Hubbard Eastman, writing for The Vermont Gazetteer, said, “The first cemetery that was opened was on PANNEL hill. John



PANNEL, a grandson of Captain PANNEL, was killed by the fall of a tree in 1773, which was the occasion of the following lines:

*Mr. John PANNEL, killed by a tree,
In seventeen hundred and seventy-three,
When, his father did come,
He said, Oh my son,
Your glass is run.
Your work is done.”*

Family gravestones in Halifax use the **Pennel** spelling. But gravestones for family members who relocated to and died in Truxton, New York, say **Pennell**. – Constance Lancaster

JOAN’S SIGHTINGS. I am having to fill my four feeders three to four times a day, there are so many birds! A large flock of Evening Grosbeaks comes at least twice a day, along with Sparrows, Blue Jays, Chickadees, Juncos, Cardinals, Woodpeckers, Mourning Doves, and others. I am enjoying all of them! I am seeing Fox tracks down at the barn area. I am sure it is hard for the wild animals to get food with all the snow and ice we have. I am concerned especially for the wild turkeys. I remember feeding a large flock most all winter last year. I wish they would come again; at least I would know some are not starving.



– Joan Courser

Wishing you a healthy happy 2023!

Elsewhere Around Town. Up on Hanson Road the barred owl has been frequently sighted; John Zeber caught this image of it (grey on grey!). With the deep snow and arctic temperatures, the birds are pretty quiet—other than crows, ravens, turkeys, and chickadees. Grey foxes come by at night, small rodents leave intriguing paths in the snow, and I had a lucky encounter with a pair of Pine Grosbeaks while walking on the road (bottom photo). They were eating something off the road and let me approach quite closely. After they flew up into the pines, they called to each other. Meanwhile squirrels seem to be waiting for better weather. Was the two-day rain “better” weather? Next week we will get a chance to revisit that question.

– Laurel Copeland





Hanson Road was a shining path after a snowstorm.

Curling off our roof, the Ice Monster looked ready to climb inside (photo: J Zeber).

Stained-glass cookies on a stormy afternoon.

Deep snow made the bird bath difficult to access.

Horses in the snow on Collins Road.



FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS.

On December 1, three firemen and one member of the road crew responded to tree and wires down in the road. They put traffic cones up to slow people down and warn them of the narrowed driving lane.
On December 2, one truck and five men responded to Readsboro on a mutual aid call.
On December 13, two men responded to assist the ambulance personnel on Branch Road.
On December, five men and one truck responded to a mutual aid call in Colrain, MA.
On December 15, four men responded to Shearer Hill Road to assist the ambulance personnel.
On December 21, one truck and three men responded to Heath, MA, to ‘cover’ their station.
On December 26, three men responded to a residence on Plumb Lane to assist the ambulance personnel.

The firemen had over 100 calls in 2022.

The fire department is still doing their monthly 50/50 raffle. They would like to have more people to buy tickets (\$10 a ticket). Call a fireman if you are interested.

Emergency services — call 911

New Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — call 988

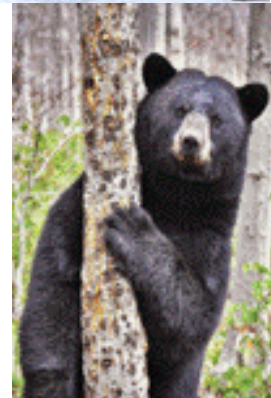
Veterans Crisis line — call 988 then press 1, or you can text 838255

Remember to call the Fire Department BEFORE you light an outdoor fire!
Call Wayne (802) 368-7733 or Malcolm (802) 368-2484



WILDLIFE CONNECTIVITY PROJECT

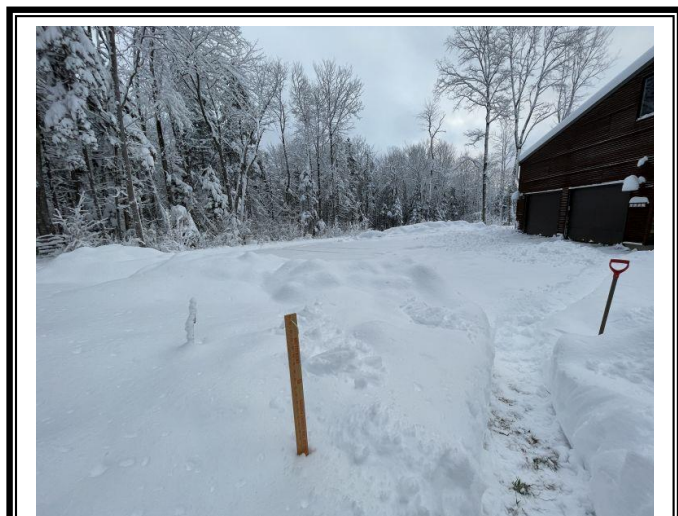
Have you seen any of these 5 animals crossing a road? As part of a wildlife connectivity project, I am interested in where five wide-ranging mammals cross the road. If you see one on or crossing a road, or if you see tracks that suggest one crossed the road, let me know (LaurelACopeland@gmail.com, 368-2439). Include **date, time, & location**. The 5 animals are **Moose** (tracks #9), **Bobcat** (tracks #7), **River Otter** (tracks #23), **Fisher** (photo with ruler), and **Black Bear** (tracks #35).



Newsletter
P O Box 27
West Halifax VT 05358



A Christmas Tree in the Woods on Hanson Road



18 inches of snow Dec 16-17

Halifax News

JANUARY 2023

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