



# The Barnard Bulletin

JULY 2022

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## A VERMONT WRITER

BY MARGARET EDWARDS

*This column is an offering of The Danforth Library in Barnard and a chance to introduce a Vermont writer who deserves wider renown.*

**William Mundell**

**1912 – 1997**



No poet has ever fit the mold of Vermont poet as well as William Daniel Mundell, “a hill-country native of the oldest stock,” whose only extended trip away from his roots was his stint in the U. S. Marine Corps as a World War II radio operator in the Pacific. He was born in South Newfane in a 200-year-old farmhouse that was rightly named “Brookside” for Hunter’s Brook coursing nearby. He died in that same house, in the very room (though not perhaps in the same bed) where he’d been born. All his life, he wrote his poems at the same desk where he’d begun writing as a schoolchild. Images from his country boy youth were ever-present to him.

*Trails of sled roads  
Out of the lamp-lit town  
Could take us, a winter night,  
On rails afire with moonlight,  
Toward horizons of ghostly trees  
Until shadows, feigning  
A forest of ghoulish shapes,  
Turned us around to contemplate  
The expanse of slanted field  
And the far-away town.*

*We were falling stars raining  
Above the white homes and the steeples  
While a greater darkness fell...*

[-- first lines of “The Sliders” 1970]

Mundell was an excellent student in the same small one-room schoolhouse that his mother had attended. He did well enough at Brattleboro High School to receive a scholarship to Middlebury College in 1934. After two years there, he had to drop out, as America’s deepening Depression curtailed the higher education of many. He was largely self-educated as a writer—voracious in reading literature, and well prepared at his start with a superlative background in the writing of English. He insisted that his fine craftsmanship with words was the result of one-room schoolhouse rigor.

There is much to be said for a writer’s life that includes jobs and skills in rich variety. Mundell was, in the words of Prof. William Judd of Marlboro College, “a professional carpenter and road-builder, a skilled stonemason, a designer-builder of ski trails and residential developments.” He was someone who had “served as a radar technician” and town selectman, “supervised a WPA program,” and “run his own contractor’s business,” as well as built and then managed a Vermont ski area (one of the earliest) while captaining a ski patrol. He was known as an excellent mineralogist; he had won prizes as a photographer; and he farmed.

All this had little to do with his abiding passion: writing poetry. Doubtless winning the Stephen Vincent Benet Award in 1968, a national honor, and serving as Vermont Poet Laureate from 1989 until his death, meant more to Mundell than his other accomplishments. From what is evident in his writing, his experience in human relationships was limited. He never married but lived long with his ancient mother. He was shy to express outright his great ambition; yet even so, in his poem titled “Prophecy,” he admits “I shall be legend/ among the unnumbered” and “a strange breath/ left in the wind’s wake.”

Vermont’s legendary poet whom any rival had to match (if not to master) was, of course, Robert Frost. Mundell’s friend John Williams Andrews of East Dover, Vermont, wrote a preface to Mundell’s first book of poems, *Hill Journey* (published by Stephen Greene

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Press of Brattleboro, Vermont, in 1970). In it, Andrews addressed such a rivalry head on: "Inevitably, when one thinks of poetry and non-urban New England, one thinks of Robert Frost. Frost wrote magnificently of these hills and valleys; so does Mundell...with this difference. Frost was a transplant—from California. He adopted this countryside and wrote, looking. William Mundell *is* New England. He *is* Vermont. He and his poems are as native as the soils they spring from."

This misbegotten reasoning is sweetly naïve, but certainly understandable. One feels that by all logic a born-and-raised-Vermont like Mundell should have, as a poet, the firmer grasp of the subject, the keener insight into its meaning, the more well-tuned ear, the larger and more subtle vocabulary, and a greater authenticity than any "flatlander" could acquire. But the literary expertise that leads to greatness is—as the Greeks well understood—a gift from fickle gods. There is no such thing as *deserving* to be the best Vermont poet, as if it were a birthright.

Robert Frost was a formidable lyricist, a brilliant rhymester, a keen observer, and a fierce outsider bent on proving himself among American poets the very best, word for word. Even his least poems have a bright lightness with a dark edge. He would never have allowed himself such a sentimental lapse as Mundell's "Weather Change," here quoted complete:

*Sapphire stars  
of treasure-laden night,  
I drop you coin by coin,  
spendthrift, on daylight's street.*

*Now before the great  
grey bank of evening  
I stand in poverty.  
O passers-by,  
lend me the currency of smiles.*

It would be unfair to judge the work of William Mundell by such an inferior, throw-away example. He truly was a fine recorder of the voices, images, sounds, moods and values of rural New England. He would tell people that his subject was "vanishing Vermont," and indeed a current of stoic nostalgia gives most of his writing much of its force. Here is a sampler of some of the poems by which he deserves to be remembered:

#### HORSE STORY

*One day when Pa and I was hauling wood  
we came across Sam Jones and his big team  
stuck almost to the hub with near a load on.  
Sam sure was stuck but gosh it didn't seem  
he'd be so willing to give up and ask for help.  
Pa didn't hesitate; he saw the chance  
to make a pleasant story he could tell.  
"Gosh, Sam," he said, "you've seen my horses  
prance,  
.you've seen 'em draw and know the loads we haul.  
I dare you let me hitch my team on there*

*and show you what a mated pair can do."  
Pa knowing Sam wa'n't one to take a dare.  
A bit excited like, Pa hitched them on.  
You should have seen the spirit that they showed,  
the way they danced and looked behind 'em like.  
You'd know they sensed it wa'n't the usual load.  
Pa knew every trick that starts a team:  
the Gee and Haw—the Woops, come here!—Let's go!  
the sidewise draw and then the steady pull,  
the seesaw back and then the sudden Whoa!  
I saw Pa tighten on the reins a bit.  
The way he looked I knew that he was ready.  
"Come here!" he called. And how those horses  
pulled.  
You never saw two horses pull so steady.  
You know—arched necks, low stance, their feet out  
wide,  
weight throwed ahead, and even on the draw.  
You'd know to see the way their heads were held  
they'd pull more'n any team you ever saw.  
They came up easy till the tugs were tight.  
Well, you should've been there. Then I guess you  
wouldn't  
been s'prised to hear how far they pulled that load:  
they just couldn't budge it and I knew they couldn't.*

#### SPRING SONG

*Knee deep, knee deep!  
Knee deep, knee deep!  
The cow is out.  
The peepers peep.*

*Knee deep, knee deep!  
The swamp is wide.  
The pasture's on  
the other side.*

*Knee deep, knee deep!  
But some deceive.  
A boy could wade,  
but don't believe.*

*She's over there;  
The cow is found.  
Knee deep, knee deep!  
Better go round.*

*Better go round!  
Better go round!  
Better go round!  
Echoes the sound.*

*She's over there.  
The voices now:  
Dan Dow, Dan Dow  
Here is your cow.*

*Dan Dow, your cow.  
She's there—one leap.  
Better go round.  
Knee deep, knee deep!*

*Cont. next page - Mundell*

Mundell - Cont. from previous page

### GIB'S BARN

*Time wrought the silver finish of Gib's barn.  
The weather working always at the wood's deep grain:  
the kiln-sun drawing the last resin of the boards,  
the dry fibers drinking only the varnish of rain.*

*Some loved it for its age and lonely place,  
a farm left backward by the main highways.  
Birds loved it for its eaves and pigeons' cote  
and for its empty scaffold on foul days.*

*Its wood was fit for violins and sounding pins.  
It was itself a silent instrument at last.  
The huge beams, taut, between the floor and roof  
trembled inaudibly to echoes of its past.*

*Lying now a puzzle of bent beams,  
at times some loose board creaks as though its stable  
door  
was opened, and one hears pitchforks rasp the wood  
and horses stomping on the thick-planked floor.*

### SALT-LICK PASTURES

*My graceful deer  
leap from the thicket of combers  
electric with old fear of open space.  
They run on the sea-sloped meadow.  
The dry sand barks at their heels.*

*They cannot feed in salt-lick pastures;  
they must find hemlock cover,  
the high stand of oak.  
I hear them again, rested,  
working the forest for acorns.  
Leaves pile about them like broken waves.*

*Their low rustling is the returning  
of the sea.*

### HILL JOURNEY

*The field-bound cattle, in the mirrors of their eyes,  
Bear me up to the hunted hills and would  
Follow me over the wall and the topmost rail  
To hear the hillside wind go over the shed of pines  
And walk in the acorn-fall on the runs of the deer.*

*I am lost above orchard and field, and leaves like ap-  
ples  
Shaken by the wand of my hand fall to a carpet of  
light.*

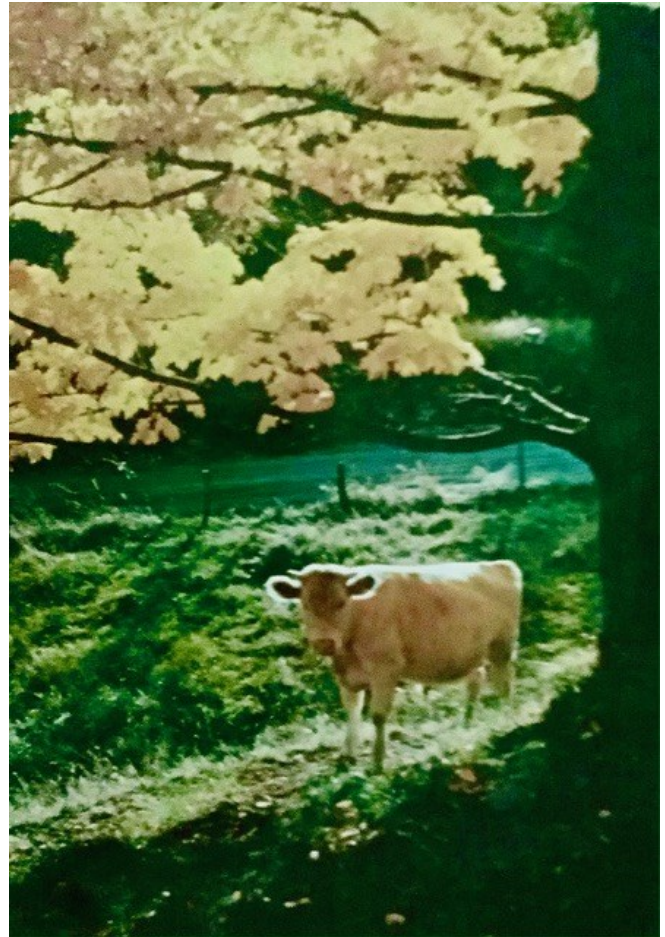
*I make songs out of the notes of ripe berries;  
I sit at the hallowed tables of unharvested stumps  
And drink from the earthen cup of the blue-sky spring.*

*I walk the round roads of fallen trees through valleys of  
fern*

*And rest on islands of ledges above the waves of moss.  
I read the revelations of the day  
On parchments of the silver birches  
And time sits with me in the hammocks of stone.*

*I shall go down again to the valley of concern.*

*I shall return to the rage of change.  
But it is today that is forever and forever,  
And I can hold the sun and the moment still  
In the wink of my eyes.*



This photograph taken by William Mundell adorned the back cover of his first book of poems, published in 1970.

The Danforth Library of Barnard, Vermont, owns the two books of poetry by William Mundell from which the poems for this profile were drawn: *Hill Journey: Poems of Farm and Forest*, illustrated with his own photographs (The Stephen Greene Press, Brattleboro, Vermont, 1970); and *Plowman's Earth* (The Stephen Green Press, 1973). These two of the six books of poems Mundell wrote and published in his lifetime are shelved in the Poetry section and can circulate.

### MOONLIGHTING FARM CSA SHARES

Moonlighting Farm is offering market shares this year! These shares will work like credit for all vegetables at the Barnard townhall market stand or any other farmers markets the farm participate in.

You can purchase a share in any amount that works for you and you will get 10% additional credit (a \$200 share will purchase \$220 of produce). You can also arrange a pickup during the week if you can't make it to the market. Contact [moonlightingfarm@gmail.com](mailto:moonlightingfarm@gmail.com)



## DANFORTH LIBRARY NEWS

**Open Hours: Weds 3-5 p.m. and Saturdays 10 - Noon**

**BOOKSTOCK is BACK: Woodstock, June 24 – 26.**

**Info:** [Bookstock VT – Be part of the story](#)

### June Book Display

**June is the perfect time to celebrate *National Great Outdoors Month*.** There is still time to check out our June book display for ideas. Danforth also has a [State Park Pass](#) for free admission to any Vermont State Park's Day-Use area, and a separate pass for free admission to select [Vermont Historic Sites](#).



### Display Titles

Explore the diversity of Vermont's ecosystems with *Wetland, Woodland, Wildland: A Guide to the Natural Communities of Vermont*. Expanded 2nd Edition. 2019. Eliz Thompson, Eric Sorenson, and Robert Zaino.

Search hiking options with the *Green Mountain Club's Day Hiker's Guide to Vermont: Trips Beyond the Long Trail*. Vermont Hiking Trails Series Volume 2.

*Vermont Almanac: Stories From & For the Land*. Volume I. (2021) (Volume 2 coming soon).

*Fishes of Vermont*, by Richard Langdon. A field guide to the fish species of Vermont, complete with distribution maps, life histories and photos.

Take an arm chair hike with Vermont author Celia Ryker, by reading *Walking Home: Trail Stories*.

Tape into your inner sleuth with *Tracking and the Art of Seeing: How to Read Animal Tracks and Signs*, by Paul Rezendes.

For the kids: *The Weather Story with Frances Fox*, by Cyrena-Marie Arnold.  
*Camp Out! The Ultimate Children's Guide*, by Lynn

Brunelle. Includes 174 activities, games, skills, projects, songs, and more.

**For more ideas**, this website is full of inspiration for wherever you might be traveling: [What to See & Do in Vermont | Must See Attractions for 2022 \(onlyinyourstate.com\)](#)

**The Charles B. Danforth Library**

Phone: 802-234-9408.

Email: [charlesdanforthlibrary@gmail.com](mailto:charlesdanforthlibrary@gmail.com)

## ARTISTREE - MUSIC ON THE HILL

Music on the Hill is back at Artistree again this summer!

Starting June 22 and running through early September - Join us on the hillside each Wednesday starting at 6pm! Bring a chair or blanket, a picnic dinner, and an appetite for great music! (maybe some bug spray too...)

See the full line up for Summer Concerts here: <https://artistreecommunityartscenter.thundertix.com/events?genre=summerhillside>

Artistree Community Arts Center & Gallery  
2095 Pomfret Road/PO Box 158  
South Pomfret, VT 05067  
802.457.3500 ext. 111

Support Artistree!

<https://artistreecommunityartscenter-bloom.kindful.com/>  
[www.artistreevt.org](http://www.artistreevt.org)

## BARNARD FIRE AND RESCUE FLEA MARKET & CHICKEN BARBECUE JULY 2, 2022

Happy early summer from Barnard Fire and Rescue! This summer's flea market and chicken barbecue will be held at the Barnard Town Hall on Saturday, July 2nd.

Donations for the flea market can be dropped off behind the town hall beginning on Tuesday afternoon, June 21st. Please do not drop donations any earlier than June 21st. The firemen will begin collecting donations (in Barnard only) on that evening up until Friday, July 1st. Call Fire Chief Scott Mills at 234-9073, or any Barnard fireman, to arrange pick-up of your donations.

Donations may include furniture, appliances, in good working order, and other household items will be gratefully accepted. No clothing, bedding, linens or electronics please.

The flea market will begin at 10:00 am followed by the barbecue where fire department tee shirts and raffle prizes will be available.

Thank you for your continued support of your fire department!

**NEWS FROM BARNARTS**  
**FIVE WOMEN WEARING THE SAME DRESS**

Written by Alan Ball and directed by Jill Clough  
 Performances will be outdoors at Feast & Field in Barnard, June 24 - July 3.

**BARNARTS THURSDAY NIGHT MUSIC SERIES 2022**

Opens Thursday, May 26th, in partnership with our friends at Feast & Field!

- June 23: Low Lily, folk
- June 30: Mal Maiz, cumbia
- July 7: Bow Thayer and Krishna Guthrie, folk/rock/blues
- July 14: E.T.E, Quebecois
- July 21: Ben Krakauer, bluegrass/jazz/new acoustic
- July 28: Dobet Gnahoré, Côte D'Ivoire, Dance
- August 4: Strangled Darlings, indie-folk
- August 11: Zili Misik, New World Soul
- August 18: Myra Flynn, indie-soul
- August 25: Mister Chris & Friends, kids music & music for all ages
- September 1: TBA
- September 8: Wright, Burds and Park
- September 15: Puuluup, Estonian Zombie-folk
- September 22: The Beecharmers, folk/Americana
- September 29: DJ Dance Party

Full Feast & Field event info coming soon!

**SUMMER YOUTH THEATER**  
**SEUSSICAL**

Performances: Barnard Town Hall August 5, 6, & 7

For more info go to:  
<http://www.barnarts.org/mainstage/seussical/>  
 PO Box 41  
 Barnard, VT 05031  
[info@barnarts.org](mailto:info@barnarts.org) [www.barnarts.org](http://www.barnarts.org)  
 802-234-1645 (voice mail)

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**  
**FOR THE BARNARD STREET DANCE**

We are planning a Street Dance for Saturday, Aug 27th at the Barnard Town Hall. We need a planning committee! And volunteers.

Be part of bringing back this great, community-building tradition in Barnard. Join the committee or just volunteer at the event.

Being on a local organizing committee is a great way to get to know your neighbors and become more involved in the community. We need a team to make the event run smoothly, involve lots of town groups and make for a fun day for everyone!

Please contact: Linda Treash  
 ltresh@hotmail.com. 802-558-5354

**IT IS TIME FOR THE ZACK'S PLACE**  
**HELICOPTER GOLF BALL DROP!**

Only 500 chances to win 1st place prize money of \$5000, 2nd Place \$2000, 3rd Place \$500 and 10-4th place winners of \$100

Zack's Place is once again selling golf balls for the Helicopter Golf Ball Drop on September 8th 2022! Golf Balls are \$50.00 each and we have a limit of 500. For the past 3 years we have sold out of balls, so don't delay go online and order now : [Purchase your golf ball here.](#)

How the Helicopter Golf Ball drop works, is on September 8th between 5:30P and 6P, a Helicopter is going to hover over the Woodstock Country Club and drop 500 balls. The ball that is closest to the hole wins \$5000, 2nd place is \$2000 and third place \$500.00 and 4th place has 10 winners at \$100 each. You can buy the balls online.

If this event is successful it will raise \$17,000 of much needed funds for Zack's Place. Zack's Place and we hope you will join in supporting Zack's Place by purchasing a Golf Ball.....And you could possibly win!!!

To buy a golf ball go to: <http://www.zacksplacevt.org/golf-ball-drop.php>

[Visit Zack's Place](#) or to register a team or sponsor. go to: [http://www.zacksplacevt.org/golf\\_tournament.php](http://www.zacksplacevt.org/golf_tournament.php)

**TRANSFER STATION SUMMER HOURS**

Beginning May 25, in addition to the normal Saturday hours, the Transfer Station will be open Wednesdays, 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM through September.

**LOCAL CRYPTOGRAM**

A cryptogram is a code in which one letter is substituted for another. For example, the word "Church" could be written BWMSBW. The letter B would be the letter C and would be so throughout the entire message. In this message B = O. The solution is found by trial and error. The CRYPTOGRAM answer is on the last page.

"HDOLV M PKMWOP OILMNORP,  
 OF M KMHOW REQYDK AIK  
 QBKORPFMR. OL CENX, OF  
 MNKDMWX UIKKODW PBMP  
 PBDKD MKD ILNX ILD  
 BELWKDW AIKPX ROS  
 RBIJJOLV WMXR NDAP."  
 - CIBL UMPDKR

THE PLANNING COMMISSION meets on the Monday prior to the first Wednesday of every month at 7 PM in the Town Office.

BARNARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION meets the second Monday of the month, 7:00pm, Town Hall.

BEES MEETINGS are held at 6:30pm on the 2nd Thursday of each month in the library at the school.

DANFORTH LIBRARY HOURS: Wednesdays 3:00 - 5:00 p.m., Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to Noon. ECFiber Wi-Fi access available .

SELECTBOARD meets the first and third Wednesday of the month at the Town offices at 7:00pm.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, Rob Ramrath, [selectboard@barnardvt.us](mailto:selectboard@barnardvt.us), 234-2911 x 2, Cell 603-762-5280. By phone at any time, in person by appointment.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR, Rob Ramrath, [zoning@barnardvt.us](mailto:zoning@barnardvt.us), 234-2911 x 2, Cell 603-762-5280. By phone at any time, in person by appointment.

TOWN CLERK office hours are Monday & Tuesday, 8:00am-3:30pm. Public access is restricted. Call 234-9211 for an appointment.

THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:00pm at the Barnard Town Hall as necessary.

THE BARNARD ENERGY COMMITTEE meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7:00pm at the Town Hall

YOGA CLASSES offered at Danforth Library, Mondays 9:00am - 10:30am with Amanda Anderson. Classes are by donation; for more information contact [Amanda@innerliftyoga.com](mailto:Amanda@innerliftyoga.com). Yoga Classes are also offered on Thursdays from 9-10:30 with Beth Umba. Contact Beth at: [bethumba@gmail.com](mailto:bethumba@gmail.com).

BARNARD GENERAL STORE, Monday-Saturday: 7am-7pm, Sundays: 8am-6pm.  
<https://www.facebook.com/barnardgeneralstore>

BARNARD LISTSERV: to subscribe please send an email to: [barnard-subscribe@lists.vitalcommunities.org](mailto:barnard-subscribe@lists.vitalcommunities.org)

RECYCLING Click [here](#) for Hours and Regulations

THE BARNARD INN is running a "Feeding Neighbors & Sustaining Community" campaign. Purchase an e-Gift Card and in turn the chefs will feed neighbors. Whole chicken dinners (serves 4-6) and individual sized meals to help feed Vermonters in need. Thank you and please stay safe. E-Gift Cards are available at [www.barnardinn.com](http://www.barnardinn.com).

ECFIBER Governing Board meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7pm in 012 Oakes Hall, Vermont Law School. More information at <https://www.ecfiber.net/>

HISTORICAL SOCIETY Programs to be announced. Questions? Email: [historicalbarnard1761@gmail.com](mailto:historicalbarnard1761@gmail.com)

## EAST BARNARD CHURCH SUMMER CALENDAR

SUNDAYS AT 10:00 AM

**June 19: A Welcome to the Summer** with Rev. Dr. Claire Bamberg. Claire will begin our summer gatherings with a welcome to the diverse experiences ahead.

**June 26: Labyrinths: An introduction and a walk along the path** led by Heather Leavitt

**July 3: Spiritual Spaces: Transformations through Art and Aesthetics** with Adam Robbins

**July 10: An Old-Fashioned Hymn Sing** led by Forrest Newton

**July 17: Finding Realistic Hope in These Times of Pessimism and Fear** with Larry Daloz, environmentalist and activist

**July 24: Friends Meeting** led by Asa Leavitt

**July 31: Some Great Poems and the Idea of the Sacred** with Sophia Stone

**August 7: What the Lakota Sioux Have to Say About God and the World** with Tom Powers

**August 14: "By Breath" Meditation in Word and Music** with Sara Thomsen

**August 21: Friends Meeting** led by Asa Leavitt

**August 28: Closing Summer Service** with Rev. Jane Huber

### Events

**Every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.**

**"The Traveling Front Porch," Music and Words into the Twilight** with Randy Leavitt and guests

**Friday, July 22 at 7:00 p.m.** at the East Barnard Community Hall

**Death Cafe: An opportunity to talk about death in a safe and supportive community** Led by Heather Leavitt and Mollie McHugh

**Friday, August 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.**

**A Film: "Hello Bookstore: A Documentary of a Community Working Together to Save What They Love."** Discussion with Matt Tannenbaum, bookstore owner, who is featured in the film. <http://hello-bookstore.com>

**Saturday, August 13 at 7:00 p.m.**

**Concert with Singer-Songwriter Sara Thomsen** By donation

The Church is always open to the community. Feel free to enter at any time and use the space for quiet contemplation, meditation, and music.

### CRYPTOGRAM ANSWER

"Being a traditionalist, I'm a rabid sucker for Christmas. In July, I'm already worried that there are only one hundred forty six shopping days left."

- John Waters