The Barnard Bulletin
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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.

Carl Zuckmayer **1896 – 1977**

Carl Zuckmayer in 1920, age 24

Suppose Carl Zuckmayer had never fled Hitler to come to the USA and find his way to Vermont? Suppose he had not spent the years of World War II, along with his wife and children, making his living on a subsistence farm here in Barnard? He was an urban person, born in Germany, who lived for a time in Vienna, and wrote all of his famous plays in German. Decades after the war, when he and his wife had returned to Europe and settled in a German-speaking part of Switzerland, he wrote in German his memoir *A Part of Myself* (from which all the quotations in this profile are taken). Although he learned English while "in exile," he never became proficient enough to compose with confidence in our language. His only claim to being considered "a Vermont writer" comes from his having observed and celebrated so well what he came to call his "second home."

Through most of the 1930s, Zuckmayer, like many other Germans, could not quite believe the catastrophe that was enveloping his country, and he kept postponing his departure until his safety, and his family's safety, became acutely threatened. He was not Jewish, but his wife, Anne Herdan Zuckmayer, had a Jewish grandparent, which made her vulnerable to Nazi condemnation. Zuckmayer's theater works had been officially banned by the Third Reich—yet still he lingered.

Eventually Zuckmayer got lucky because he had a friend—the American journalist Dorothy Thompson. They had met in 1925 when she interviewed him after the success of his play "The Merry Vineyard." She was living in Berlin at the time, sending her copy to lesser-known American newspapers. But then, as Zuckmayer has described it, "The rapid upward curve of her career coincided with the rise of Hitler…She denounced and fought [Nazism] as a peril to the whole world…when the world was still shrugging its shoulders indifferently."

Thompson had visited Carl and Alice at their Henndorf home in Austria, and so it happened that the couple and their daughters were in Vermont visiting her when war broke out in Europe on September 1, 1939. Thompson, now banished from Germany and based in New York City, had rented the Zuckmayers a small cottage near her summer home in Barnard. All at once, any return to Europe by ship had become far too dangerous, and the family, "distraught and depressed," found themselves refugees. Both parents spent hours every day beside the cottage's radio listening to the war news and to the vicious propaganda emanating from Germany.

Clearly the Zuckmayers had to stay put. The first task was for Carl to find a way to make a living in America. Because by profession he was a playwright, it was easy to imagine that he might become a screenwriter—so off he went to Hollywood, an interval he remembered as "a wild, confused dream."

> *I crossed the Golden Gate Bridge at twilight, swam in the Pacific near the old missionary settlements of Carmel and Monterey. The sensational landscape intoxicated me; every look and every pause was a discovery. I felt the headiness at seeing these vast expanses as it must have been felt, little more than a hundred years earlier, by those who were seeing this land for the first time. But I also felt panic, a sense of being lost in this tremendous, merciless vastness. In the West I did not feel at home as I did in the forests of Vermont, which remained friendly to me even when I lost my way in their pathless thickets. [In the West] I knew I would not remain.*

After less than a year, he quit his job of writing for a film studio, and the Zuckmayer family spent a dismal Christmas in cheap accommodations in San Francisco,

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before returning east. In New York City, he tried teaching college—a part-time, poorly paid position that had been provided to him by a professor friend. That job, too, proved insufficient. Zuckmayer was required to give a lecture once a week in English. "The students," he recalled, "were kind and friendly. They pretended not to notice my mispronunciations…Nevertheless, this work was an agony."

Meanwhile "every morning," he wrote, "we turned on the radio to hear the latest news. It was preceded by a commercial which always began with the impassioned slogan: 'Better to have it and not to need it than to need it and not to have it.' There followed an invitation to purchase an idyllic cemetery plot with a view of the Hudson Valley." Norway, Denmark, Holland and Belgium fell to Hitler's army. Then came the day when they heard Paris had fallen. That was when "all prospect of returning to Europe seemed gone forever, and the prospects we had in New York…were black indeed." They were so poor that, to their shame, they had to rely on the charity of friends.

The Zuckmayers gave up their New York apartment in the spring of 1941 having decided to try farming. They had never farmed but were sure they could learn. Carl wrote, "Our European friends shook their heads, but Americans gave us encouragement." In one of his many summer walks through the woods near Barnard, he had come upon a place where "suddenly the woods opened out."

> *I saw a big pond fed by a brook that descended the forested slope, and a bit beyond the pond, standing on a cleared hill, a solitary farmhouse with a shingled wooden roof...and shingled exterior walls. The shape and proportions of the house appealed to me, with its large attached shed, a somewhat dilapidated barn, and a corn crib on stone pillars that reminded me of the barns or mazots of the Valais. Everything was totally utilitarian and, for that reason, uniquely and unintentionally beautiful.*

The house, though clearly shuttered and uninhabited, was not derelict. This was because, as Zuckmayer would learn, a man named Joseph Ward tended the place. It belonged to him and he'd been born there. Ward, with his wife and their children, now lived in Woodstock where he owned and ran a store. But he liked to come out and do some work at the old house when he could. Zuckmayer had first come upon him as he was scything grass.

The two men talked and struck a deal. Zuckmayer took a two-year lease on the place with its 180 acres; he had just enough money to make the move and to buy rudimentary equipment, because a Viking Press editor had given him an advance. Ward, in turn, looked forward to making the place habitable again, for he liked the idea of his old family house being lived in and its fields cleared and planted. Backwoods Farm would be its name.

Zuckmayer's portrait of his new landlord is a marvel of crisp dialogue and keen descriptive asides that brim with affectionate gratitude:

> *In this period of our lives [Mr. Ward] played the part of God, by helping as God does when He is so disposed—by vanishing and becoming invisible like God when it seems well to Him to leave His children to fend for themselves…At first he came every day and created for us the home we had dreamed of—not by magic or a miracle, but by performing an almost inconceivable amount of work. But for him it was recreation, part of his summer holiday...He was exceedingly thrifty about everything, including his personal habits. His lunch consisted of a peanut butter sandwich made of ordinary pre-sliced white bread… At most he might also have an apple in the fall, and then a cheap cigar. For beverage he had his good spring water…He simply loved being abstemious and felt the better for it.*

The arduous work on the Vermont farm, as well as the "steep learning curve" that such work required, redeemed Carl Zuckmayer in his own estimation. He had felt deeply humiliated by his descent from the position of a respected (even idolized) European artist with a wide reputation, to that of an impoverished nobody in the USA where his plays were virtually unknown. Earlier in his account, he described without flinching the horror he felt when dealing with the American immigration authorities. He was shocked by being treated with cold officiousness and outright contempt.

At Backwoods Farm, Zuckmayer's halting English was not a problem. And his other talents—beyond the literary—soon came to his rescue. He learned from a local doctor that goat's milk fetched a high price and was hard to come by, yet was often prescribed for patients with gastric disorders. At once he could see the advantage of milking goats, which are many times more easily fed and handled than cattle. So the Zuckmayers bought goats and soon were familiar with their care. When they learned that keeping a ram on the premises could spoil the taste of the goat milk, they improvised. Lacking a truck, they put the does in the back of their Oldsmobile (its rear seats removed) and ferried them to another farm to be bred.

> *I had never milked but learned the technique in a single day…I suddenly acquired the feeling in my fingers of how to make the heavy udders flow. Thereafter I only had to touch them and the milk shot out of the teats. Soon the goats jumped onto the milking stand of their own accord as soon as I called their names. And I learned how to treat the goats when they came down with bloat from eating too much wet grass, for the nearest veterinarian was hard to reach and overworked. Once, in the depths of winter, I had to clean out a goat that was carrying two dead kids and was on the point of dying. She survived. When the veterinarian came two days later, he could hardly believe I had done it myself and*

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had not been assisted by another vet. I began to realize that my childhood dream of being the director of a zoo had not been so utterly unreasonable. From the first day I began farming, I knew how to handle animals as if I had done nothing else all my life.

Carl Zuckmayer c. 1941

The "lost" playwright soon prided himself on being "a heat artist," and he described with delight the consummate skill with which he tended and banked the fire in the farmhouse's huge fireplace. (Alice came up with a witty name for him: the *pyromantic*.) He learned the ways of wild animals he encountered, respected and didn't fear them, and he became familiar with a variety of animal tracks.

Zuckmayer marveled at the remarkable fitness and strength he achieved through constant exertion. Often he had to carry heavy supplies on foot—since winter weather shut down their farm road and their car had to be parked miles away near the snow-cleared main road. He celebrated the amazing number of skills his callused hands had learned, for soon he was able to fix and repair almost anything on the farm. His sense of accomplishment made him proud of himself again.

The farm was now in running order. We sold goat milk, several dozen eggs a week, from time to time a sizable number of broilers. Our geese went chiefly to the more prosperous exiles in New York, who around Christmas preferred them to the customary American turkey. Ours was not an "efficiency" farm; it was no egg factory with hens shut into mass prisons. That would not have been our style. It was, rather, an old-fashioned farm in the style of the early settlers.

But the downside of farming, as Zuckmayer readily admitted, was its harsh, relentless nature. It absorbed most of his time and tired his body so thoroughly that bed and sleep were sacred. He found that he had become a writer who didn't write. And for two long years this problem persisted. "Our existence involved me in a multitude of problems…the life seemed unreal, strange, spellbound. I did not know what had died within me, what was asleep, and what was still awake."

Salvation was unexpected. On a random day when Zuckmayer was in the woods marking trees for cutting, he kicked over a stone and a spring bubbled up. As he dipped his hands in the water and raised them to splash and cool his face, he knew that "some tight knot" inside him had been released and he would write again.

From the time of the Christmas holidays in 1942 through half of January 1943, Carl Zuckmayer began working feverishly on a new play, "The Devil's General." It would take him more than two years to complete it, but this was to be the play performed in Munich soon after the war, the play that restored Carl Zuckmayer to his place in the pantheon of foremost modern German playwrights. The story follows a young German caught up in the fascist movement who gradually loses his faith in it and turns against the Nazis. Of course, it was written in German; it investigated German sensibilities; and it involved only German characters—but all of it was composed in Vermont, where a spring of water under a stone in a forest had brought it forth.

In the somber paragraph that opens his memoir's chapter entitled "Departure and Return," Zuckmayer wrote:

Going into exile is "the journey of no return." Anyone who sets out on it dreaming of coming home is lost. He may return, but the place he will find is no longer the one he left, and he himself is no longer the one who left. He may return to the people he missed, the places he loved and did not forget, to the region where his own language is spoken. But he never returns home… You cannot go back to the land of your childhood, where you were wholly at home; neither can you go back to a country you were forced to leave. For you want to find its former image, and that is gone forever.

In 1945, Zuckmayer left Vermont in the turbulent aftermath of the war, and thanks to well-placed connections, he secured for himself a U. S. government job that took him to Germany. He was being sent there "to visit the larger cities in the American Occupation Zone of Germany and Austria—and in the other zones as well—and draw up a detailed report on the status of all cultural institutions, together with proposals for their improvement…" This job was a good fit.

While Alice remained in the U.S., Carl arrived at the Berlin airport "in fog and rain." And that very day, he found himself walking through the blasted, war-torn city of Frankfurt.

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Zuckmayer - Cont. from previous page

> *I walked through the shattered Old Town, stood on the ruins of the Romerberg, and felt as if I were in a nightmare from which I could not awaken. I no longer knew a soul in this city where many of my friends had lived…The theaters were destroyed… The rubble crunched underfoot and I was alone.*

But in the hotel requisitioned by the American army where he had been assigned a room, Zuckmayer came to the attention of "the old, starved-looking desk clerk" who immediately asked, "Are you by any chance the *Merry Vineyard* Zuckmayer?" Learning that indeed this was the very man who had written the famous play, the clerk rejoiced, saying, "What a pleasure you've come home!" and promised him a white towel in his room. "We never give them out nowadays, because the soldiers take them. But you'll get a towel and two pillows." Of that moment in the hotel, Zuckmayer observed, "This was my welcome home."

The Danforth Library of Barnard, Vermont, does not yet own a copy of Carl Zuckmayer's *A Part of Myself*, translated from the German by Richard and Clara Winston, and published in 1966 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., of New York. This is a rare book, out of print, that the Danforth trustees are nonetheless hoping to acquire. All of the quotations cited in this essay are taken from the seventh chapter of this memoir.

CHARLES B. DANFORTH LIBRARY NEWS

6208 Rt. 12, Barnard, Vt, across from the church

Library Open Hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Thursdays 3:00 – 5:00 pm and Saturdays 10 am – Noon

Additional Services and Offerings: Notary Service – Monday 3-5 pm; Tech support, cover letter and resume assistance – Thursday 3-5 pm

Free Classes: NOW available for all cardholders, FREE access to hundreds of classes through "Universal Class" and "Learning Express." Check out their offerings at: https://www.universalclass.com/vermontstate and https://www.learningexpresshub.com

To register for free classes, you'll need a personal account that is connected to the Danforth Library. BEFORE creating a personal account and to guarantee free class registration, please call us at 802-234-9408 or email us at charlesdanforthlibrary@gmail.com. We will give you a SPECIFIC LINK to use for creating your personal account.

September is National Library Card Sign-up Month!

Perhaps you have not visited Barnard's lovely library. If so, we invite you to stop in, get to know us, and sign up for a free membership card. No overdue fees. We are open to all full-time and part-time residents.

Book Displays

Vermont Authors

This month's display features Vermont Authors. What a literary state we live in! Fiction, nonfiction, poetry, photography, nature guides, children's books; our Vermont collection has something for everyone! Come in and browse our display, but don't forget to see what else awaits in our special section devoted to Vermont.

Banned Books Week: September 18-24th

Danforth joins other libraries nationwide to celebrate the freedom to read. Browse our special book display and learn more about banned books. You might be surprised to see what has been banned over the years. As the American Library Association says: "Books unite us. Books encourage boundless exploration and allow readers to spread their wings. Stories give flight to new ideas and perspectives. Reading – especially books that set us free – expands our worldview. Censorship, on the other hand, locks away our freedom and divides us from humanity in our own cages."

Community Space!

Our clean, bright community room is available for your group or class. Start a reading group! A baby play group! Children's story time! Movie club! No rental fees. To book the Holway room, contact Ellen Miles: 802-279-7227 or ellenmiles.vt@gmail.com

Consider Volunteering

Our wonderful new volunteers, Kassie Tibbott, and Amy Maddox have allowed us to expand our open hours to include Mondays and Thursdays. We run entirely on volunteer power, so if you would like to consider devoting a few hours of your time to community service, we would love to talk with you about the possibilities.

Trustees: Berna Donlon, Margaret Edwards, Judy Maynes, Susan McNulty, and Ellen Miles

Volunteers: Kassie Tibbott and Amy Maddox

Contact us by Phone: 802-234-9408 or email: charlesdanforthlibrary@gmail.com

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LAST GLAD RAGS DONATION DAY

The available Glad Rags storage space in Simmons House is almost full. Therefore we are only accepting donations on one more Saturday, at the Simmons House, next to the Masonic Lodge, on Saturday, September 24th from 10 AM to 1 PM.

Thank you for considering our organization for your donations.

The next sale days will be Saturday, November 12, 9:00am to 2:00pm, and Sunday November 13, 10:00am to 1:00pm at the Masonic Lodge located at 30 Pleasant St, Woodstock, Vermont.

Visit https://www.gladrags.org/, for more information.

VEGGIEVANGO FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Presented by the VT Foodbank and Sponsored by the WCUD School Nutrition Program

VVG Back to School Edition! With school back in session, we are asking for your patience as the parking lot will be full when you arrive to collect the food items.

Everyone is welcome, but please note our new distribution policy. Cars will be limited to picking up food for 5 famillies or less. All VVG sites are seeing an increase in participation and need ensure food can last at each site. Please plan accordingly.

Mark your calendars for future distributions: October 12th, November 9th, and December 14th. Distribution hours are 10am - 11am at the Woodstock Union HS/MS parking lot (toward the Union Arena).

If you are in need of additional food throughout the month, the Windsor Community Food Shelf is well stocked for you and welcomes Vermont residents. Please visit http://woodstockfoodshelf.org/ for more information on hours of operation.

We are thankful for our community partners and the volunteers that keep VVG operating during these continued challenging times.

The distribution site is located near the Union Arena entrance. We ask for your patience while we direct traffic. We welcome families to pick up and deliver to other families as well. Each car can pick up for 5 families or less.

Please contact Gretchen Czaja-WCUD School Nutrition Program Director with any questions, gczaja@wcsu.net, or at 802-457-1317, ext. 1123

Follow us on Instagram @vtschoolmeals and the WCUD School Nutrition Program website,

https://www.wcsu.net/wcud-school-nutrition-program

Gretchen Czaja - WCUD School Nutrition Program Director.

ANNUAL CHICKEN PIE SUPPER

TAKE OUT OR DINE-IN

Saturday, September 24, Prosper Community House, 3 miles north of Woodstock on Route 12

Take out for $17.00 or Dine in for $16, both include chicken, biscuits, slaw, squash, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, breads and pies.

Take out starts at 5:00

Dine in, with limited seating, at 6:00 and 7:00

For take-out or dine-in reservations call 457-2217 no later than September 22nd

A bit of History: In 1958 thirteen homemakers provided 56 chickens, five women provided 15 cabbages and another five, 65 pounds of squash, not to mention 34 assorted pies. We've been a country tradition since the 1920's, nearly 100 years of community suppers. What better way to celebrate the start of fall!

NEWS FROM BARNARTS

THE ADDAMS FAMILY

Performance dates: Oct 21-30, Barnard Town Hall

BARNARTS THURSDAY NIGHT MUSIC SERIES 2022

Thursday evenings, in partnership with our friends at Feast & Field!

September 22: The Beecharmers, roots Americana
September 29: DJ Dance Party

Gates open at 5:30, music 6-8:30

Locally sourced food and drink from The Feast and Field Farmers

Reservations are requested but walk-ins are welcome

Suggested entry: $5-$20/per person

No one is turned away for lack of funds

BARNARD 2022 TAX RATES

Town Municipal	State Homestead	State Non-Homestead
0.5032	1.7043	1.6487

Tax billing and payment information can be found at https://barnardvt.us/taxes. The first Property Tax Payment for 2022 was due September 7, 2022. The second Payment is due February, 15, 2023

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 I = E. The solution is found by trial and error. The CRYPTOGRAM answer is on the last page.

"D M Y K I P Y D K A I P S F X T G X H I

D M Y K I P Y S F P S T M U U I Y Q X G G

Z I T F D Y S, Z M S Q F I J Q I F P C I F P A

D M Y T Q X J L D K O G I P T M Y I, D M Y

K X G G D K K Y M X S, P J A D M Y

T Q I G S I Y D K F I P S, Q I T P R Q I

F P C I F P A D M Y A P R."

- N D F J A D J J I, 1620

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: Mondays and Wednesdays 3:00 - 5:00 p.m., Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to Noon. ECFiber Wi-Fi. Contact us: phone: 802-234-9408. Email: charlesdanforthlibrary@gmail.com.

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

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, Rob Ramrath, 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, 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. Yoga Classes are also offered on Thursdays from 9-10:30 with Beth Umba. Contact Beth at: 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

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.

ECFIBER Governing Board meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7pm via. Zoom. Contact the clerk of the District. secretary@ecfiber.net, for meeting information or visit https://www.ecfiber.net/virtual-meetings/

HISTORICAL SOCIETY Programs to be announced. Questions? Email: historicalbarnard1761@gmail.com

SUSTAINABLE WOODSTOCK EVENT A WINDOWDRESSERS (WD) BUILD

Help your neighbors stay warm this winter.
Join in at a Community Barn Raising-Style event.

When: Thursday October 27th- Wednesday November 2nd

Where: North Chapel Unitarian Church, Woodstock

Sustainable Woodstock is seeking volunteers for a Window Dressers (WD) build during the week of October 27th - November 2nd!

WD is a nonprofit that brings volunteers together to build insulating window inserts for a participating town's residents. In Woodstock, we are making donation-only inserts for income-sensitive folks in our area.

The households that receive inserts are expected to participate in the Community Build where the inserts are made. However, we also need members of the community to contribute to the effort as well!

What to expect as a volunteer:

Shifts are 4 hours long, and volunteers typically learn one or two simple steps in the insert-building process. You will be trained at the beginning of your shift on how to do your task. Volunteering for multiple shifts is encouraged! Lunch is provided to all Participants.

Not interested in building inserts? Volunteer to bring a lunch dish that serves 8 people on one or more of the days!

Sign up to volunteer at: https://signup.com/go/DgNsbFQ

For more information on Window Dressers, visit:
https://windowdressers.org/.

Questions? Contact:
Jenevra Wetmore
Program Director
Sustainable Woodstock

MT. TOM FARMERS MARKET

Is open every Saturday from 10 am to 1 pm, through mid October, at the Saskadena Six parking lot in South Pomfret.. Woodstock Resorts has generously donated the new location. See https://www.facebook.com/MtTomFarmersMarket/ for more information

CRYPTOGRAM ANSWER

"Our fear of death is like our fear that summer will be short, but when we have had our swing of pleasure, our fill of fruit, and our swelter of heat, we say we have had our day."

- John Donne, 1620

Upcoming National Holliday

Columbus Day – October 10th, 2022