The Barnard Bulletin
JUNE 2023 Vol. XXXVIII No. 6

A VERMONT WRITER

BY MARGARET EDWARDS

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

Ann Davis Thomas **1905 – 2015**

Ann Thomas on her wedding day, 1952

As a child of six, Ann Davis found her calling. She would write poetry. She was born in London to parents who made sure she had the sort of education that fosters poets—first at Lady Margaret Hall and then on to Oxford, where she earned an MA with Honors in English Language and Literature. There her tutors were two of England's most fanciful authors: C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien.

Ann Davis's 1954 marriage to Englishman David Thomas coincided with their move to the United States. They spent some time in Boston but brought up their four young children mostly in a house they owned in Sneeden's Landing, in Palisades, New York. When they traveled back to Europe, they went to Italy, spending three years in Milan with the children. Another far flung and more lengthy adventure took them to Australia for twelve years, from 1971-1983.

In 1983, when David Thomas retired from his career as an advertising and marketing executive, he and Ann returned to the United States. While continuing his international consulting work, David briefly taught marketing at Simmons College. They rented in Cambridge, Massachusetts, before buying a house in nearby Somerville, Massachusetts. At the same time, they bought a getaway cabin in Denmark, Maine.

So far, there has been no mention of Vermont. So how can it be that Ann Thomas qualifies as "a Vermont writer"?

In 1986, the Thomases' daughter Miranda, a potter, married a fellow art student, Charles Shackleton, at that time a glassblower. The two of them were working for Simon Pearce in Quechee, Vermont. This was Ann Thomas's crucial link to Vermont, because eventually she and David would move here to be closer to family.

Very English—Ann with a cup of tea & a crown

All of her life in the United States, Ann Thomas remained an English subject with a green card. Under American law, she was not allowed to become a citizen because of her diagnosis of manic depression. Her first breakdown occurred in 1963. By then, writing poetry had become indispensable to Ann. She clung to sanity by reciting poems to herself. And she clung to sanity also by chemical means, taking lithium.

Cont. next page - Thomas

Thomas - Cont. from previous page

It is rare to find a poem about something as intimate as psychoactive medication. "In Praise of Lithium Silicates" shows Ann Thomas playfully appreciating the words for the chemicals she knows are upholding her:

In Praise of Lithium Silicates

From the Tamminen Mine
in Greenwood, and from
the tailings of Mount Apatite,
they face me as I write,
with the improbable
pale lilac glitter of lepidolite,
and encased in quartz,
the silvery pink sheen
of spodumene.

They face me as I write,
the guardians of
my sanity.

Right in front of her, literally on her desk, were samples of the chemicals—several rocks.

One definition of poetry is "heightened speech." By any definition, poetry must use words well-chosen and not arbitrary or ordinary. Readers expect the *extraordinary*, the "extra" along with the "ordinary," when reading a poem. They hope the poet will wrest something original and unforeseen out of the tedium of the everyday. Vermonters will recognize this New England imagery:

First March Song

Mud up to the hubcaps,
storm drains overflowing,
a gutsy wind blowing,
no sun for weeks.

Wet twigs down the flue pipe,
last year's matches not striking,
smoke up to the rafters,
the damper jammed closed.

Rust on the stove top,
pinhole in the ballsock,
the septic rain-filled,
the pump past its prime.

Mould in the hook rug,
quilts mouse- and moth-eaten,
house spiders on window sills
dead of the cold.

But where else on this planet
would you find us instead?
The Ides of Mud pass,
the road's open at last,

under slush there is greenness
and all summer's ahead.

In 2002, David and Ann Thomas came to Vermont to live after they sold their house in Somerville and bought a house on River Street in Woodstock.

Two good friends: at left, Pippa Shaplin of Burlington, Vt., and on the right, Ann Thomas, on her 70th birthday in November, 1996.

This move to Vermont put David and Ann closer to family—to their daughter Miranda, but also Charlotte (who had moved to Vermont in 1994), and to their sons-in-law Charlie and Ty, and to two of their seven grandchildren. Ann's imaginative involvement with all her grandchildren is a striking feature of her work. Here is a message meant for one of her granddaughters:

Sophie's Song

The goldenrod's in bloom, my love,
the fireweed's flossed and blown,

the seven stars are in the north,
the swallows southward flown,

and summer's come and gone, my love,
and summer's come and gone,

and Mummy's picking beans, my love,
and Daddy's picking corn.

Cont. next page - Thomas

Thomas - Cont. from previous page

There is deliberate humor in some of Ann Thomas's poems. Just as "Sophie's Song" (above) belongs to the tradition of light-hearted nursery rhymes, so this evocation of employees gone missing has the lyrical appeal of a folksong:

Labor Day Lament

Oh where have you
gone to, my five
vanished carpenters,
Fred, Eddie and Zack
and Larry and Don?

No beat-up trucks
in the driveway,
no jackhammers banging
to wake us at dawn,
from a boom box
no boom of an idiot tune,
and silent, dead silent
our party-line phone.

But the loon's cry
at night tells us winter
comes on, and the steps
are unfinished, and
the door's still unhung.

Oh where have you
gone to, my five
vanished carpenters,
Ed, Freddie, Zack, Larry
and pony-tailed Don?

Ann Thomas's talent was often an intense, almost ecstatic vision of what was before her. Her remarkable clarity turned the usual into the strange or the magical.

Eighth Grade Graduation Exercises
Hartland Elementary School, Vermont
Wednesday, June 17, 2009

They are all so beautiful,
coming in threes,
one step at a time
to Elgar's march,
with white flowers
pinned upon them,
some of the boys
already tall, the girls
in shimmering dresses,
who have known
each other since
they could walk
and talk, and now
must face new worlds
and separate spaces.

Then why should I be
so full of tears
as they step by
to Elgar's march,
with white flowers
pinned upon them,
into worlds that I
shall never know,
when they are all
so beautiful?

A person whose mind follows traditional patterns of thought finds the writing of poetry (and sometimes even the *reading* of poetry) difficult. A person whose mind naturally veers into uncharted territory—in this case, *verbal* as well as *emotional* territory—is at ease with poetry, and perhaps even feels compelled to write it. The upside of madness can be art.

The poems of Ann Thomas have such specificity that the images rooted in a Vermont experience may even have Vermont in their titles.

Shoeing, Taftsville, Vermont

The farrier's truck
packed with gas cylinders
and a portable anvil
backs up into the yard
under the horse skull
that's nailed up high enough
to be out of horse sight
and horse smell,
and with hiss and spurts
of blue fire the very old
mystery begins.

And up in the paddock
the young filly for whom
this is all new, gallops
screaming along
the line of wire fencing
at the stench of burnt horn,
and this terror inflicted
on her chestnut brother,
until it's all over,
and his hoof lies compliantly
on the leather apron
for the hammering in
of the crescent
of flat-headed nails.

Back again in the paddock
chestnut and grey filly
swish nose to tail
against the copper fly torment
from each other's eyes,
and high up on the hill
the very old man
who stinks up the valley

Cont. next page - Thomas

Thomas - Cont. from previous page

rendering cows and horses
down into glue, sits
on his bench in the last
of the sunlight, and
the skulls lie like conches
around the dirt of his yard.

Even if many of the poet's observations of nature do not spell out the name of where they occurred, this poem is enhanced by the evocation of the exact place. Grand Ma'am Hill is an actual hill in Bridgewater, the setting of the Shackletons' farm.

Grand Ma'am Hill

The green hills have turned blue.
Along the long wall
the rose pinks of summer
have faded and gone,
and until the snow comes,
yellow, purple and mauve
are the colors of fall

Ann Thomas with her two published books, circa 2014.

Many of the poems in Thomas's two self-published books, *A Safe House* (1996) and *All Summer's Ahead* (2013), acknowledge the mortality that informs all celebrations of the beautiful, the remarkable, and the sublime. This poem, with its first person narrator, makes the juxtaposition clear:

Crocus Through Window

First four spikes
and then always
in this sequence,
yellow, white, purple,
pale with mauve tracery,
up come the spearheads
of spring's first
insurgency. And none
that come after them,
daffodil, lily, tulip,
anemone, come up,
go down, with
just that same urgency,
or stand quite
so open mouthed
at the hatch doors
of light's kingdom.

They will hold
bridgeheads here
a little while longer,
opening their tents
by day, folding them
tight at night
in the garden's
cold tundra, until
the sleet flattens them
and they go back
to corm, leaving
limp sheaths
at the place
of their marching.

And undergrass
will be mined by them
all the bright summer,
drilling and sappering
for next spring's
emergency.

I count expectancy
of standing here
witness to
their here and hereafter
comings and goings
now on the fingers
of two lizard hands,
and I cannot see
otherwise
this band of crocuses
than through
the pane of glass
of my mortality.

Ann Thomas spent the last two years of her life in Mertens House in Woodstock, and the last poem she wrote, or began to write, was—fittingly—given its specific place and a date:

Billings Farm, Vermont

July 21, 2013

I wish that I was young again
with a baby in my arms
and a small boy trailing behind…

Shelved in the poetry section of Barnard's Danforth Library are both books of poetry, in paperback, by Ann Davis Thomas: *A Safe House* (1996) and *All Summer's Ahead* (2013).

CHARLES B. DANFORTH LIBRARY NEWS

Open Hours

Monday, Wednesday, and Thursdays 3-5 p.m.

Saturdays 10 a.m. – Noon

Free Membership

Quilt Installation & Talk, Sunday, May 21st at 4:00 p.m.

The Danforth Library invites the public to come welcome the generous donation of a handmade quilt created by Barnard resident Paula Audsley. This quilt will be installed to cover the large media center screen in Danforth's downstairs Holway Room.

In addition to the unveiling of the new quilt, a quilt expert and appraiser, Sandy Palmer, will give a short lecture about quilting and then describe what characteristics create value in a quilt. Please come and, if you have a treasured quilt, bring it to show. (Sandy appraises quilts only by special appointment.)

Refreshments to follow.

Library Trustee Update

We wish to thank Ellen Miles for her dedicated service as library trustee for the past five years. We will miss her energy, her insights, and her knowledge from working in public libraries for many years.

In turn, we welcome Kassie Tibbott, who was recently appointed to serve as Interim Trustee to complete Ellen's term ending in March 2024. Kassie has been a steady and dependable volunteer for several years now, and we are delighted to have her step into her new capacity as trustee.

Holway Room: Our community room is available for groups or classes. No rental charge.

To reserve the space, contact Judy Maynes (802) 234-6279 or judy.maynes@gmail.com

Book Donations: We accept book donations during open hours or by appointment. Clean, quality hardcover and paperbacks. No magazines or periodicals. Email us at CharlesDanforthLibrary@gmail.com

Come Join Us: we run on volunteer power and welcome new volunteers

The Charles B. Danforth Library *Phone: 802-234-9408 Email: charlesdanforthlibrary@gmail.com*

Trustees: *Berna Donlon, Margaret Edwards, Judy Maynes, Susan McNulty, and Kassie Tibbott*

SILVER LAKE STATE PARK OPENS

Silver Lake State Park opens for its 65th season on Friday, May 26th. Vermont State Parks and the Silver Lake crew are happy to welcome you back! Season passes are available online and at the gate. All park visitors, whether on foot or on wheels, must present a pass or pay the daily entry fee. For dog lovers, please remember that all dogs must be leashed while in the park. We're looking forward to seeing you!

Matt Livingston
Assistant Park Manager
Silver Lake State Park
Barnard, VT

MT TOM FARMER`S MARKET OPENS

The Mt. Tom Farmers Market will open Saturday May 20 at Saskadena Six ski area in South Pomfret, VT. Vendors will be offering a wide variety of locally produced products. The hours of operation will be 10:00 am to 1:00 pm every Saturday through October 14.

If you are interested in joining Mt. Farmers Market, contact Neil Lamson, foxxfarm22@gmail, or landline: 802.763.2070. The Daily fee is only $10 and the season fee is $40.

Neil Lamson
Fox Crossing Farm
(802) 763-2070
foxxfarm22@gmail.com

READY FOR MAPLE CREEMEE?

Hello friends and neighbors. We are so excited to be back! Silver Lake Syrups at 5613 Stage Road in Barnard will be open this Saturday and Sunday from noon - 6pm! Stop in for a Maple Creemee, stock up on Maple Syrup, homemade jams, VT raw honey, and so much more!

Payments accepted: CC – Venmo – Cash – ApplePay. There is WiFi in the sugarhouse.

Eric and Sonja Withington
(802) 234-1647

BARNARD INN RESTAURANT

2023 Summer Hours

Now booking for Graduation Dining, May & June. Reservations at https://barnardinn.com/reservations/

Wednesday - Saturday - outdoor seating in the perennial gardens

Wednesdays: Betterbite Burger Night, opens at 5:00, no reservations, available ToGo.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday: Lounge open at 5:00, no reservations, available ToGo.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday: Dining Room, reservations required.

Barnard Inn Restaurant Team

BARNARTS EVENTS SCHEDULE

RACE AROUND THE LAKE
10 K RUN, 5K RUN/WALK, VIRTUAL 10K/5K
MAY 21

10K Race begins at 10:30am. 5K Race begins at 11am.

At the Silver Lake State Park, North Road Barnard, VT.

Early Registration Fees:

- 10K Run: Adults $45, 12 & under $25;
- 5K Run/Walk: Adults $35, 12 & under $25;
- Virtual: $25 & $15 for 12 and under.

Sign up by April 30 to receive our free Race Around the Lake T-shirt!

After-Race activities include Chef's Table lunch, live music and awards ceremony along the lake front.

For more information and/or to register visit: https://barnarts.org/mainstage/race-around-the-lake/.

ARCADIA
JUNE 16-25

A play by Tom Stoppard, directed by Christopher Peirce.

Visit https://barnarts.org/mainstage/arcadia/ for more information.

BARNARTS 12TH ANNUAL
SUMMER YOUTH THEATER: NEWSIES

Camp Dates: July 17-Aug 6.

Performance Weekend: Aug 4-6.

Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:30am-3:30pm (possibly ending at 4/4:30 final week).

Camp Location: Barnard Academy.

Performance Location: Barnard Town Hall.

More information at: https://barnarts.org/mainstage/newsies/.

BarnArts Center for the Arts info@barnarts.org
PO Box 41 802-234-1645
Barnard, VT 05031 (BarnArts voice mail)
www.barnarts.org

FEAST & FIELD MUSIC SERIES
2023 Season Calendar

May 25: Young Tradition VT traditional/fiddle

June 1: Bow, Jack & Krishna blues/rock

June 8: Michael Zsoldos and Friends jazz/funk

June 15: Beecharmer singer-songwriter/Americana

June 22: Ladles folk/pop

June 29: Cachitas Now! Argentine cumbia

July 6: Joe K. Walsh, Grant Gordy & Ben Krakauer blue-grass/jazz

July 13: Sabouyouma Afro-funk

July 20: Nomfusi South African Afro-soul

July 27: Tommy Crawford & Friends kids/singer-songwriter

August 3: Bandits on the Run pop/folk

August 10: Miss Tess honky tonk/blues

August 17: Fabiola Méndez folkloric/Latin/jazz

August 24: Pointe Noir Cajun Band Cajun

August 31: Billy Wylder rock/world

Sept. 7: Spencer Lewis and the New Old Vermonters folk

September 14: TBA

September 21: Jenni & the Jazz Junketeers jazz/swing/soul

September 28: DJ dance Party

If you are interested in being a sponsor of a future music event, contact info (at) barnarts.org

Feast and Field is located at 1525 Royalton Turnpike, Barnard, VT.

More information at https://barnarts.org/mainstage/music-on-the-farm/

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

"R U R N Y Y J, R U R N Y Y J J L Y

S U R Y R D M J L Y D S K H U N D M T,

R U R N Y Y J J L Y V F A A U V D H R,

R U A F D S J U R Y Y;

R U K H D J L Y F M V T F E J L Y

L O C C D M T - K D S V F T U D M T

A S U C A H U N Y S J U A H U N Y S,

F - L O M J D M T N D J L J L Y K Y Y."

- M U S F Q Y S S E, D M G O M Y

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, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, 3:00 - 5:00 pm, Saturdays 10:00 am 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—Wednesday, 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

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

DELECTABLE MOUNTAIN QUILTERS (DMQ) meet the 1st Tuesday of every month at the Bethel Library from 1-3pm. Contact: Mary Croft 802-763-7074

HOME ENERGY UPGRADE

Information Now Available On-Line

The Energy Committee kicked off the Home Energy Upgrade campaign on March 1. If you missed that event, you read the handout on the energy page of the town website. Click here to view the PDF.

How do you take action? The first step is to schedule a home energy audit. An audit report will give you a roadmap of changes that will make your home more energy efficient.

You can use any auditor who is on the Efficiency Excellence Network; full details are in the handout. The Barnard Bonus offers a $500 rebate to any resident on this cost.

Earthshare, an auditor with whom we've had a good experience, is now scheduling audits in June.

We anticipate that Efficiency Vermont's incentives will go up in mid-summer. In addition, the Barnard Bonus offers up to $2,000 to middle income residents when you make upgrades recommended in the audit report.

All of these funds are available on a first-come, first-serve funds.

Now is a great time to act.

You can pick up a print copy of the handout at the Town Clerk's office (open M-W) or contact us and we'll mail one to you: BarnardBonus@icloud.com.

Thanks for your interest! — Barnard Energy Committee

GLAD RAGS FALL SALE DONATIONS

The donation dates for the Fall sales have been set! The donation collection dates for our Fall sales will be **SIX** Saturdays this summer.

June - 3rd & 17th
July – 8th & 22nd
August – 5th & 19th

From 10AM to 1PM at the Simmons House in Woodstock, VT. The Fall sales are Friday - Sunday, **SEPTEMBER 22-24, 2023**

For more information visit https://www.gladrags.org or https://www.facebook.com/groups/145529065206

CRYPTOGRAM ANSWER

"So sweet, so sweet the roses in their blowing,
So sweet the daffodils, so fair to see;
So blithe and gay the humming-bird a going
From flower to flower, a-hunting with the bee."
- Nora Perry, In June