The Barnard Bulletin

AUGUST 2024 Vol. XXXIX No. 8

VERMONT WRITING

BY MARGARET EDWARDS

This column, usually called A VERMONT WRITER, is an offering of the Danforth Library in Barnard that introduces Vermont writers deserving wider renown. This month the column describes and offers quotations from a short story by Vermont writer Dorothy Canfield Fisher. (Her biographical profile appeared in the July 2021 issue of The Barnard Bulletin.)

Dorothy Canfield Fisher 1879 – 1958

Dorothy Canfield Fisher, photo by Clara Sipprell (1940)

Dorothy Canfield Fisher, born in Kansas, and her husband John, both writers, moved to what had been Canfield family land near Arlington, Vermont, in 1907. This ancestral property would be their home for the rest of their lives. They produced a family, and John eventually became Dorothy's agent, for she was a dedicated, prolific writer. She was especially eloquent on the subject of educating the young. She praised the value of education and produced a great deal of morally uplifting fiction that celebrated positive aspects of the American character.

Eventually the didactic flavor of most of Dorothy Canfield Fisher's work proved off-putting to modern tastes, and the distinguished author —very popular and influential in her day—is no longer considered a major American talent. Even as, in her case, too much of the reformer got in the way of the storyteller, she still produced a volume of work that reflects genuine Vermont values in her ageless portraits of Vermont rural life.

Among Fisher's early stories is "The Bedquilt," first published in *Harper's Magazine* in 1906 and reprinted numerous times thereafter. Its main character, introduced in the first paragraph, is a humble soul:

> *Of all the Elwell family, Aunt Mehetabel was certainly the most unimportant member. It was in the New England days when an unmarried woman was an old maid at twenty, at forty was everyone's servant, and at sixty had gone through so much discipline that she could need no more in the next world. Aunt Mehetabel was sixty-eight.*

Mehetabel lived with her brother's family and made herself useful, always without complaint, taking as her own whatever chores were most tedious and boring. She washed the dirtiest of the clothes and ironed only dishcloths, towels, and sheets. She sat with the children, incessantly hulling the strawberries, never allowed to make the jam. She felt no resentment at this. Always timid and shy, she knew what she was: "an old maid dependent in a busy family." And most pathetically, as Fisher put it, "she had never for a moment known the pleasure of being important to anyone."

The one pleasure in Mehetabel's life was her skill with a needle and thread. She was particularly capable of mending quilts. And "in her bare little room under the eaves," she kept a "considerable store" of quilt patterns in a dresser drawer. These she shared with others, glad-

Cont. next page - Fisher

Fisher - Cont. from previous page

ly. And yet one day—she hardly knew how it happened to come to her—she had a "great idea" for a quilt. Perhaps she would dare to make one square, just to see what it was like. *Could she? Should she?*

"Accustomed to the most complete dependence on her brother and his wife, she dared not do even this without asking Sophia's permission." It's a permission that her sister-in-law gives dismissively, and Mehetabel begins at once to create a marvel. When the minister and his wife come for a visit, they admire "work as fine as ever they had seen." The Elwell family as a whole begins to take notice and then to take pride in the project. Her consistent and painstaking work amazed them.

> *The old woman sat up straighter and looked the world in the face. She was a part of it at last. She joined in the conversation and her remarks were listened to. The children were even told to mind her when she asked them to do some service for her, although this she did but seldom, the habit of self-effacement being too strong.*

Strangers from other towns hear about Mehetabel's quilt and, feeling curious, make trips to see it. The Elwells' house soon becomes a place of consequence, a destination of sorts, and the Elwells make sure Aunt Mehetabel is better dressed. "One of the girls made her a pretty little cap to wear on her thin, white hair."

Work on the quilt takes up years. After the first year, only a quarter of the quilt is finished. Two years pass and the quilt seems only halfway done. In the third year, Mehetabel comes down with pneumonia and everyone fears that she might not recover to finish her project. But finally, in the fourth year, "one could really see the grandeur of the whole design."

> *...and in September of the fifth year, the entire family watching her with eager and admiring eyes, Mehetabel quilted the last stitches in her creation. The girls held it up by the four corners, and they all looked at it in a solemn silence. Then Mr. Elwell ... exclaimed, 'By ginger! That's goin' to the county fair!'"*

Mehetabel blushes, but the family thrills to the idea. The chairman of the committee for their village accepts the offer with pleasure. The quilt is bundled off to the fair to hang in a place of honor in a glass case in "Agricultural Hall." A bit later Mehetabel's brother makes sure his sister can catch a ride to go see her creation being exhibited at the fair. He is taken aback at her wild glee at the very thought of going. Up to that moment, he hasn't understood how limited her spinster's life has been.

The old woman is someone "who had never seen anything more exciting than a church supper," "who had never been more than six miles from home," and yet she is about to travel thirty miles to see the county fair. She hardly sleeps that night. The next day, the whole family helps her into the friend's buggy and waves as she leaves the yard.

Fisher's story skips any narrative of events at the fair but picks up instead "on her return home that evening." Mehetabal is exhausted but smiling, and she pronounces the fair "just perfect!" The family, in a state of keen excitement, waits for her to finish her supper before begging her to tell them "all about it."

Mehetabel describes the prominent glass case where her quilt has been placed, then admits she didn't go see the horse races or the prize ox, nor did she examine the display of preserves, nor did she visit the pens of livestock. "Why should I?" Instead she stayed by her quilt to overhear everyone's praise of it. And then, while holding onto the sandwich she had brought along for her lunch,

Cont. next page - Fisher

Fisher - Cont. from previous page

she saw "the head of the hull [whole] concern come in and open the glass door and pin 'First Prize' right in the middle of the quilt!"

> *She fell into a reverie where she saw again the glorious creation of her hand and brain hanging before all the world with the mark of highest approval on it. She longed to make her listeners see the splendid vision with her. She struggled for words…*

The climax of the story—and its final image—is Mehetabel as she sits "staring into the fire" while "on her tired old face" is an expression of "the supreme content of an artist who has realized his ideal."

A handmade "bedquilt" was considered a humble object, as Fisher was no doubt aware, but she was also attuned to its being the perfect embodiment of feminine, domestic artistry. A patchwork quilt, a composition made out of throwaway scraps of fabric, honors every frugal and industrious New Englander's determination to "make it do or do without." It also honors a free spirit of individual creativity.

Quilt-making, or quilting, in New England has retained its high status as a craft well into this twenty-first century, and every year local exhibitions of quilts made in Vermont are impressive. For proof, check out the current quilt show at Woodstock's Billings Farm and Museum.

All quilt illustrations are taken from *The Quilt Engagement Calendar Treasury* by Cyril I. Nelson and Carter Houck (first published in 1982 by E. P. Dutton, Inc., New York). A copy of this book belongs to Barnard's Danforth Library and is available for circulation among current members.

A Vermont Quilt Sampler Exhibition

Open Daily 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Through September 2, 2024

Come view this incredible annual quilt exhibition featuring quilters from across Vermont. From first time to seasoned quilters using traditional to modern approaches, this "sampler" represents Vermont quilting today. Beyond simply creating beautiful designs, the quilters in this exhibition stitch their unique stories, perspectives and inspirations into their work. Each quilt contains layers of meaning, connection, and emotion.

Billings Farm & Museum
Woodstock, Vermont

AUDITIONS!

YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN
BY MEL BROOKS

Directed by Linda Treash

Music Direction by Carol Cronce

Choreography by Claire Shillen

The infamous Dr. Frankenstein's grandson, Victor Fronk -en-steen, inherits his family estate in Transylvania and is determined to not continue his grandfather's legacy of terrifying science. With the help of Eye-gor and the influence of his grandfather's lover/housekeeper Frau Blücher (horse noises), one thing leads to another and there's a monster on the loose, hilarity ensues, and punny songs are sung.

Based on Mel Brooks' beloved 1974 film, the 2017 West End version of Young Frankenstein is a great entry point into community theater, especially for fans of the movie, musicals, and horor comedy.

Auditions for 8 leads and an ensemble:

Tuesday, July 23rd 6-9PM, or by appointment

Audition Location

First Universalist Church & Society of Barnard
(6211 VT-12, Barnard)

All ages, genders, & experience levels welcome!

Rehearsals begin in September on evenings and weekends (2-3x a week)

Production Dates: Oct 25-Nov 3

Production Location: Barnard Town Hall

Interested? Fill out the audition form:
https://forms.gle/qcrLpD6JbP1YvB616

More info & character descriptions: https://barnarts.org/mainstage/young-frankenstein/

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

CHARLES B. DANFORTH LIBRARY

Open Hours

3 - 5 p.m., Mondays and Wednesdays

4 - 6 p.m., Thursdays

10 a.m. - Noon, Saturdays

More new books are coming soon!

Charles B. Danforth Library,
P.O. Box 204, Barnard, VT 05031

6208 VT Route 12 Phone: 802-234-9408

Email: charlesdanforthlibrary@gmail.com

Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/charlesdanforthlibrary/

Trustees: Berna Donlon, Margaret Edwards, Judy Maynes, Susan McNulty, and Susan Salter Reynolds

THE STORY OF THE BARNARD PANTHER CONTINUES

On Sunday, August 4, at 2pm The Barnard Historical Society will be presenting a program celebrating the donation by Joe Ladouceur of the shotgun that was instrumental in capturing the Barnard Panther. Joe also has prepared a permanent exhibit to accompany the shotgun.

The shotgun and exhibit will be kept in the Barnard Historical Society Building - the former village schoolhouse - 6415 Route 12 Barnard, VT 05031.

We hope you can join us at the Historical Society building for a brief presentation, refreshments,and a visit to the collection of local articles from the 200+ years of Barnard History of which YOU are a part!

Paige Gibbs- President, Barnard Historical Society

FALL GLAD RAGS SALE & DONATIONS

Our Fall 2024 Sale dates will be Friday Sept. 20 - 2 PM - 6 PM, Saturday Sept. 21 - 9 AM - 2 PM, Sunday Sept. 22 - 10 AM - 1 PM (when everything is half price)

We recommend bringing your own shopping bags.

Our summer Saturday collection dates will be 7/27, 8/3 & 8/17. The hours will be from 10-1. We are looking for fall and winter clothes please.

For more information about making donations please visit our website at https://www.gladrags.org/donateinfo

For the latest information join our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/groups/145529065206

BEACH AREA AT THE BARNARD GENERAL STORE

The Barnard Community Trust will be putting up signs at the lake front reminding folks not to have fires and to dispose of their trash, but in the meantime, if you see any irresponsible behavior, please contact me at the number below.

Thank you!

Teo Zagar, Barnard Community Trust, 802-234-9125

ZACK'S PLACE 65 GOLF BALL DROP

Happy 65th Birthday to Norm Frates, Jr., Zack's Place Founder and Board President. Help Zack's Place celebrate by buying 65 (or more!) golf balls this weekend.

The Golf Ball Drop will be held on September 12, 2024 at the Woodstock Country Club. Come and see the golf balls drop from a helicopter on to the 8th hole green between 5:30-6PM. Golf Balls are $50 and you can win up to $5000 for closest to the pin.

1st Place wins $5000	2nd Place wins $2000
3rd Place wins $500	4th Place wins $100 There are ten 4th place winners

Use this link to purchase your golf ball
https://zacksplacevt.org/helicopter-golf-ball-drop/

AT ARTISTREE

Music On The Hill Summer Concert Series

You are invited to Artistree's Summer Concert Series. Performances of live music every Wednesday at 6:30pm until September 11th, at our hillside venue in South Pomfret.

Upcoming Schedule:

June 26: Sandiland & Vincent
July 3: Bow Thayer & Krishna Guthrie
July 10: Beecharmer
July 17: Rose Hip Jam
July 24: Laurie Goldsmith Trio
July 31: Michelle Fay Band
August 7: Los Lorcas
August 14: Panhandlers
August 21: Grey Cats
August 28: Prickly Heat Tantalizers
September 4: Route 5 Jive Trio
September 11: The Sidewinders

Pack a picnic, bring a blanket, and unwind to the tunes under the open sky. Whether you're a fan of rock, jazz, folk, or classical, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

This years Summer Concert Series is FREE thanks to Haystack Needle

Please note that all events are weather dependent, so check our website for any updates. No reservations are required – just bring your friends and family for a memorable evening. No pets, other than Service dogs, are allowed.

Summer Camps for kids are underway at Artistree!

We also have workshops grown ups! Sign up today and explore your artistic potential!

Check out the line up:

Family Workshop: Japanese is on the Menu: Onigiri | Sun., July 21 • 10:30am-12:00pm

Encaustic Printmaking: Monotypes with Hot Wax | Sat, July 27 • 9:00am - 4:00pm

Cook it Speak it: Japanese: Vegetarian Dumplings | Sat, July 27 • 10:00am - 12:00pm

Cook it Speak it: Japanese: Vegetarian Dumplings | Sun, July 28 • 10:00am - 12:00pm

SEE ALL WORKSHOPS: https://artistreevt.org/workshops-for-all

Artistree Community Arts Center & Gallery
2095 Pomfret Road/PO Box 158
South Pomfret, VT 05067
802.457.3500 ext. 129

Support Artistree at https://artistreecommunityartscenter-bloom.kindful.com/ and www.artistreevt.org

BARNARTS 2024
FEAST & FIELD MUSIC SERIES

2024 Feast & Field Music Series

July 25	Espiral 7, Afro-Latin/jazz
Aug 1	Bomba de Aqui Puerto Rican bomba
Aug 8	Timbermash old-timey folk
Aug 15	Afro-Semitic Experience funk/jazz/world beat
Aug 22	Zikina Music Afro-folk
Aug 29	Pointe Noire Cajun Band Cajun
Sept 5	Mames Babegenush Balkan jazz/Nordic folk
Sept 12	Pluto Rising new wave/retro soul
Sept 19	Funky Flats funk/soul
Sept 26	Dance Party DJ

Doors open & food is available at 5:30pm

Music Starts at 6pm music with another set at 7:30p

Feast & Field features locally sourced food and drink from the Feast and Field Farmers and our hosts: Fable Farm, Eastman Farm & Kiss the Cow.

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

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

"AC IPHPBD 1945, I QMYLXY

IYLR JASMD VADG IC

IYDAQANAIS SXH JADNGXT

QAUX ICT I DGAYT ACCACHB

QMY VIBGACHDMC IHIACBD

KMBDMC. DGAB VMPST DPYC

MPD DM KX KXYD BGXJIYT'B

MCSR LIEMY SXIHPX HILX, ICT

AD YXLIACB MCX MQ DGX

GXIYDVIYLACH LMLXCDB AC

KIBXKISS GABDMYR."

-HXMYHX UXNBXR

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 first 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: Monday & Wednesdays 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.; Thursdays 4:00 - 6:00 p.m., & Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to Noon. Phone: 802-234-9408. Email: charlesdanforthlibrary@gmail.com. ECF Wi-Fi.

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

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, selectboard@barnardvt.us, 234-2911 x 2, Cell 603-762-5280. By phone at any time, in person by appointment.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR, 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 and 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

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

MT. TOM FARMERS MARKET AT SASKADENA SIX

Mt. Tom Farmers Market will be open every Saturday from 10 am to 1 pm in the Saskadena Six parking lot. Woodstock Resorts has generously donated this great location.

Mt. Tom Farmers Market is an old-fashioned market where vendors sell right out of their trucks and cars. We have been operating since 1982, which makes Mt. Tom Farmers Market the oldest operating open-air market in the area.

Farmers markets are great places to get the freshest local products and support local businesses. Truly local business at its best!

Contact Neil Lamson tel (802) 763-2070 or email foxxfarm22@gmail.com for more information.

Hope to see you at Mt. Tom Farmers Market!

Neil Lamson
Manager, Mt. Tom Farmers Market
foxxfarm22@gmail.com
(802) 763-2070

"A VERMONT QUILT SAMPLER"

The Exhibition will be opening June 29 – Sept 2. This exhibition highlights a variety of quilting techniques, styles, and stories celebrating the talent, creativity, and storytelling of quilters in Vermont. Open daily, 10:00AM-5:00PM starting June 29 and is included with admission. https://billingsfarm.org/quilt-exhibition/

Billings Farm and Museum, Woodstock, VT, info@billingsfarm.org

SILVER LAKE SYRUPS IS OPEN

Silver Lake Syrups at 5613 Stage Road is open for the season, and will be serving Maple Creemees!

Also available is fresh Maple Syrup, along with Maple Pecan Pies, Raw Honey, Fresh Eggs, and so much more.

July and August hours are - Friday 3pm-8pm, Saturday, Sunday, 12pm - 8pm.

Cash - Check - Credit Card - Apple Pay.

Sonja & Eric Withington 802-234-1647

CRYPTOGRAM ANSWER

In August 1945, a former Army pilot with an artificial leg pitched five and a third innings for Washington against Boston. This would turn out to be Bert Shepard's only major league game, and it remains one of the heartwarming moments in baseball history.

- George Vecsey