The Barnard Bulletin

JANUARY 2025 **Happy New Year** Vol. XL No. 1

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.

Marguerite Hurrey Wolf **(1914 – 2017)**

A photo of Marguerite Hurrey Wolf in 1982

Marguerite Hurrey, born in Monclair, New Jersey, graduated from Mt. Holyoke College and married a medical student named George Wolf, who had grown up on a farm in the Midwest. While living in New York City, she and her doctor husband bought a small farm in Jericho, Vermont, to use as a summer place. In 1948, just after World War II, Vermont land with a dilapidated farmhouse was very cheap and as yet "undiscovered" by back-to-the-land enthusiasts in the 1960's. Mrs. Wolf (the name she preferred—never was she a "Ms.") later wrote frankly: "We felt it was the right place to balance our winter city life." They were "summer people," no question.

For the Wolf family, after two daughters were born, the 1950s was an era of intense domesticity. Yet not long after their first summer sojourns in rural Vermont, Marguerite Hurrey Wolf (which was to be her byline) began writing down her impressions, inspired by the richness of her Vermont experience. After twelve years of living in apartments, she found this sudden wealth of do-it-yourself chores—"to hammer a nail or plant a radish"—blissful.

As the years passed, her myriad impressions of life in Vermont appeared in newspapers and magazines: *The Burlington Free Press*, *Christian Home, New England Homestead*, and (inevitably) *Vermont Life*. In 1965 came her first published book, *Anything Can Happen in Vermont,* a collection of short pieces, none longer than three pages. In the twelve books she published during her long life, her anecdotes were presented as distinct chapters arranged somewhat loosely by theme. This was her preferred format, and living in Vermont was her favorite subject.

Vermonters don't readily open their ranks to people "from away." Author Marguerite was soon to discover that, in most minds of the locals, she would be forever a "flatlander"—no matter how long she might reside in Vermont, paying taxes, voting, and wintering (not just summering) here. This dismayed her. She would never achieve the rank of a "native," no matter how precisely she described the many aspects of Vermont she admired. Rather poignantly in her preface to her second book, *Vermont Is Always With You* (1969), she made a bid for more respect by proudly asserting: "…shortly after my first book came out, I learned that my ancestors had lived in Brattleboro, Vermont, for a hundred years. So [my] strong sense of returning home was not just wishful thinking but a birthright."

Mrs. Wolf's voluminous writing has been soft-pedaled by critics as "a delightful read," praised for its "merriment" and "gentle hilarity." They describe her books as setting forth "light-hearted pieces about people and places, especially about the Wolf family and their adventures in Vermont." But a more serious reader could praise her for some fairly graphic description of what is actually involved in the "adventure" of raising poultry, for one example. The chapter entitled "Which Came First, the Chicken or the Egg" starts off in characteristic fashion, with the writer getting right to the point: "I haven't the least idea which originally came first and I'm not going to be lured into one of those heated and pointless arguments about it. In our case the chicken came first because we wanted eggs and we didn't have time in those early years, when we only summered in Vermont, for day-old chickens to grow the five months they require before they will ovulate for the breakfast table."

Wolf goes on to describe in detail her husband's outfitting of a horse stall as a chicken coop, using a bit of "chicken wire and second-hand lumber." She describes taking a course in poultry raising at the Agricultural College at the University of Vermont. She scored sec-

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ond-highest on the final exam, but then had to confess: "On the practical side, my record was less distinguished. I was such a crusader that when we learned to caponize the young males, I not only removed the lima-bean-like testicles, I cut an artery as well and killed my young rooster!"

Wittiness and off-handed jokes constantly ornament Wolf's prose. A few of her chapter titles capture the tone: "Apres Ski, Le Deluge," "The Apples of My Eye," "The Burden of a Beast," "Out of the Sap Bucket, Into the Bean Pot," "On Looking a Gift House in the Mouth," "And a Little Child Shall Weed Them."

Wolf also mastered the art of the snappy opening, like this one: "Some of the fringe benefits of having a book published are very pleasant. The members of your immediate family discover that your range of usefulness reaches farther than the stove, sink, and taxi service." Or this: "When I was teaching nursery school at Sarah Lawrence College, the school medical advisor was a young pediatrician destined for wider recognition. His name was Benjamin Spock. At a meeting of the parents he said, 'It's too bad you can't start with a second child, because you are much more sensible with second sight.' " Or this: "There are some things that are as fun to do when you are seventy as when you were seven. Going barefoot is not one of them." Or this: "Between a rock and a hard place is a chronic location for most of us in Vermont."

Wolf is an adept storyteller, and her economy of presentation leads her to structure some of her brief "chapters" almost as jokes. Here's how she maneuvers a plot to get a laugh at the end:

> *[Consider] Mr. and Mrs. Noah. I can't believe that the loading of the Ark proceeded without a hitch. Those pictures of the animals, two by two, marching meekly up the ramp into the Barnboat are a figure of the imagination… Have you ever tried to lure two sheep out of a small enclosure? Our sheep... managed to trample down a fence that enclosed a salad garden…*
>
> *The garden is very small, probably only eight by ten feet. When we found [the sheep] in there happily finishing off the lettuce, dill and endive, the fence looked intact; but then we could see where they had bent it down and leaped over it. Do you think they would leap back out? Of course not! George had me hold up one side of the fence, and he got inside, intending to shoo them out. But they galloped round the periphery like circus horses, completely ignoring the wide exit I was so kindly providing for them... Never overestimate the common sense of sheep. George finally grabbed each sheep one at a time and shoved them through the opening.*
>
> *When we had acquired these sheep as lambs, we had planned to put them in the back of the truck for the ten-mile ride to our house. But the [sellers] thought the lambs might jump out the back…so we lifted them both into the cab. George drove and I sat next to him with the two lambs and my legs competing for the space under the dashboard. I had brought newspapers for the floor of the cab in case they joined us up front, but it never occurred to me to load them in so that they would face the back of the cab. They tucked their snub noses under the dashboard and their wooly stubs of tails twitched merrily right in my lap.*

Illustration by Adelaide Murphey for Marguerite Hurrey Wolf's *The Sheep's in the Meadow, Raccoon's in the Corn* (1979)

> *Before we had turned out of the driveway, a shower of "raisins" rained down into my skirt. I opened the window and threw out a handful. "What are you doing?" George shouted over the "maaas" and "baaas"…Maybe the excitement of the ride relaxed their sphincters, for the next nine miles I was hard pressed to keep up with the production of blessedly dry sheep manure…Why didn't I put the newspaper on my lap? Because eight lamb hooves had it firmly fastened to the floor. Why didn't I put the newspaper on my lap before we started? Well, never overestimate the common sense of the shepherdess either!*

Mrs. Wolf, the woeful shepherdess, often found herself at a loss when problems with livestock arose. There was rarely a dull moment in her caring for chickens and raising pigs. Though she cultivated an attitude short on empathy with the farm animals meant for sacrifice, she

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went long on respect for their wild cousins—such as skunks. In one of her later books she recounts a story from her father's boyhood that could easily have happened in Vermont:

> *One evening when he went out to get the kindling and get logs for the next morning, he heard something moving in the woodpile. He saw the rear end of a skunk protruding from between the logs.*

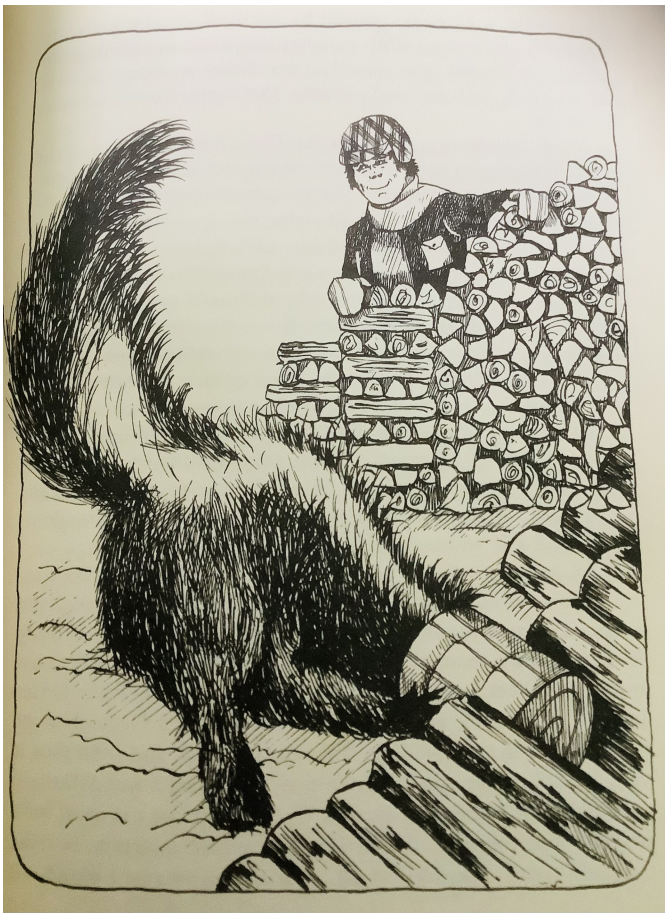

Illustration by Sue Storey for Marguerite Hurrey Wolf's *Seasoned in Vermont* (1982)

> *In the dim light from the kerosene lamp in the kitchen he could see that the skunk had his head stuck in a small cream can, which was jammed between two logs. He apparently had tried to get the last licks out of the cream can and then couldn't remove his head. With more brains than my father had hitherto attributed to a skunk, the small creature had wedged the can between the logs and was now trying to extricate himself by wildly digging his heels into the earth and pulling. With a mighty heave and an audible grunt he pulled himself free, glared at my father as though it were all his fault, and scuttled off into the night.*

This is one of several "skunk stories" that are related to the reader in a lively chapter called "A Skunk by Any Other Name."

Mrs. Wolf was keenly aware of a writer's luck in suddenly coming across a ready-made story, one needing no writerly inspiration. When she found a clearly legible letter dated 1849 in an attic trunk in a very old house, she had the good sense to quote it in full in a chapter she entitled "Ghosts in the Attic." The letter had been written by an eleven-year-old girl, Lissie Fay—granddaughter of house owner John Fay—to her elder brother Fred, who was then far away, participating in the California Gold Rush. The young girl reminisces about her "breaking" two silver spoons (coin silver being notoriously weak) as she was cooking. Her brother had been the sole witness, and he had helped her hide the ruined spoons somewhere in one of the walls of the house. But where exactly? That was not revealed. And Mrs. Wolf proved herself wise enough to leave the mystery alone.

Illustration by Mary MacDonnell for Marguerite Hurrey Wolf's *At Home in Vermont* (1990)

It's remarkable that Mrs. Wolf found such an unending source of topics in her beloved state. When her teenaged daughters began begging for a riding horse, pointing out that their farm had an empty stall in its barn and acres of pasture, Mrs. Wolf found her resistance crumbling. She was assured that she would never have to saddle the horse, or feed it, or shovel manure. Eventually the family was loaned a horse named Lady. All went well for months as the children and their friends took turns riding in large circles around the fields.

Then came a day when the saddle girth was insufficiently snug, the saddle slipped and the rider fell; and the horse, with stirrups trailing madly, galloped down the road in a panic. Mrs. Wolf, back from doing an errand in the truck, saw the frightened horse, and turned around and followed it. A man in a green car took it on himself

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to guide the mare into a parking lot where she could be corralled.

In all the relief and confusion afterward, as everyone from the farm showed up and comforted the horse, the young man who had saved the day—"my knight of the Hinesburg Road"—"the cowboy in the green sedan"—disappeared "unknown" and "inadequately thanked." The writer concludes: "I wonder who he was. I'll probably never find out and he will join the ever-swelling ranks of quiet Vermonters who simply reach out a hand to start a car or stop a horse, and go quietly on their way."

Such behavior was typical of old Vermont. And in a contrast of old and new Vermont, Mrs. Wolf writes almost bitterly about skiing, lamenting that her children are more intent on wearing the costly, "chic" ski clothes sold at the slope's expensive shop than on concentrating to improve their downhill runs.

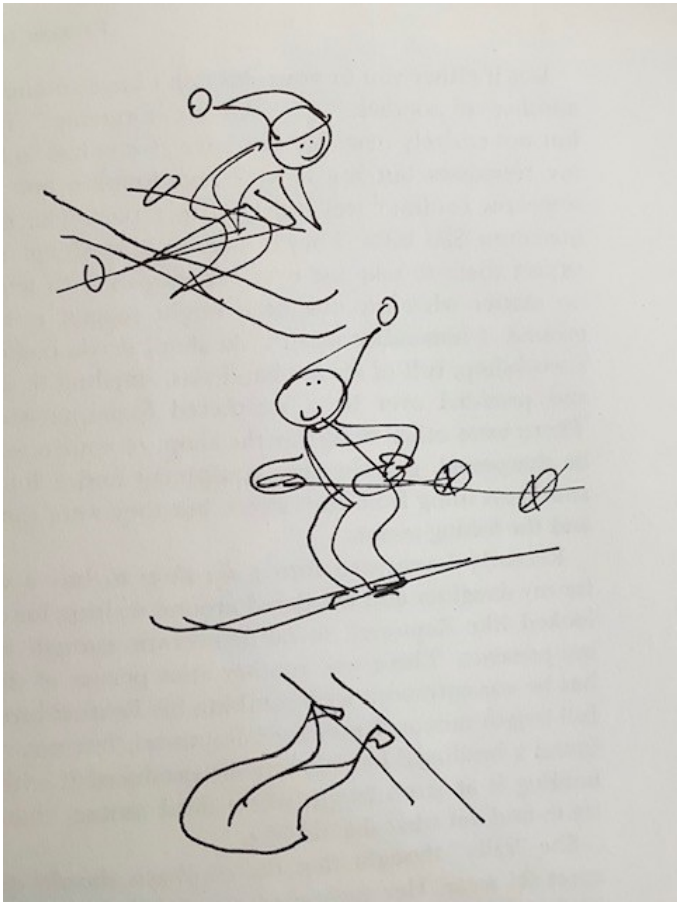

Illustration by George Daly for Marguerite Hurrey Wolf's *Vermont is Always with You* (1969)

This author never tires of Vermont topics that are all too familiar, but with each flurry of her enthusiasm, she manages to put her own spin on them. Zucchini are prolific, agreed. Even so, she tells us this in specific terms: "Zucchini rounds replace crackers as carriers for cheese or dips with drinks during their seasonal overabundance, and slivers of zucchini find their way into tossed salads and substitute for noodles in lasagna...Four plants of butterbush winter squash produce 12 squash. Four plants of zucchini probably produce 200. For over two months our cupboard is never bare of the slender green phalanxes. Zucchini would be a good symbol of July—green, fast-growing, and burgeoning with life."

"Burgeoning with life" is also a good summary of the effect of Marguerite Hurrey Wolf's impressive output. She died in Vermont—at Wake Robin, a residence for seniors—when she was just shy of 103. She had lost her husband George more than a decade before, and one of her daughters had produced a great-grandson.

Marguerite Hurrey Wolf in 2012

Barnard's Danforth Library owns Marguerite Hurrey Wolf's second book, a hard cover copy of *Vermont is Always with You*, published in 1969. The Norman Williams Public Library in Woodstock owns six of her books: *The Sheep's in the Meadow*; *Raccoon's in the Corn* (1979); *Seasoned in Vermont* (1982); *RFD Vermont* (1987); *At Home in Vermont* (1990); *Postmark Vermont* (1994); *and A Window on Vermont* (1998). To round out this shared collection, the Danforth trustees hope to purchase Wolf's first book, *Anything Can Happen in Vermont* (1965), and also her final book, *Isn't Pushing Ninety Exercise Enough?* (2012).

The Barnard Bulletin wishes everybody a happy, safe and prosperous new year

Danforth Library News

6208 Vermont Route 12

Wishing you a happy & healthy holiday and a peaceful new year that is full of love, kindness, and great books!

Open Hours
Mondays 3:00 – 5:00 p.m., Wednesdays 3:00 – 5:00 p.m., and Saturdays 10:00 a.m. – Noon

We purchase new books each month based on what we hope our readers will like, but we would love to hear directly from you. Send us an email with a list of genres or subjects you and your family like and/or your favorite authors. If there is a specific book that you would like us to consider purchasing, send the title and author information to us at: charlesdanforthlibrary@gmail.com

Volunteers: Danforth runs entirely on volunteer power, and we welcome new volunteers at any time. If you have a couple of hours to spare once a month, consider helping us cover Open Hours. Alternatively, perhaps you would be interested in hosting a book group, a knitting club, a children's story hour, or a game or movie night. Have other ideas? Let us know what might be of interest.

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

Phone: 802-234-9408 **Email:** charlesdanforthlibrary@gmail.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/charlesdanforthlibrary/

BARNARTS EVENTS 2025

Antigone by Sophokles, Translated by Anne Carson, February 14-16 & 20-23, Barnard Town Hall.

Starring:
Antigone ~ Bridgette Hammond
Ismene ~ Julianne Borger
Kreon ~ Kevin Donohue
Haimon ~ Aaron Michael Hodge
Eurydike/Chorus ~ Laura Montgomery
Teiresias/Chorus ~ Kyle Huck
Guard/Chorus ~ Olivia Piepmeier
Messenger/Chorus ~ Dory Psomas
Polyneikes/Chorus ~ Fergus Ryan
Chorus Lead ~ Chelsea Paige

Crew:
Erin Bennett ~ Director
August Doughty ~ Costume Designer & Stage Manager
Linda Treash ~ Set Designer & Producer
Corey Doughty ~ Lighting Designer

In the aftermath of a bitter war, Antigone grieves for two lost brothers. King Kreon honors one with a proper burial, but forbids the burial of the other. Despite warnings and threats, unshakable Antigone defies the king's law. In Anne Carson's vivid, modern translation, Sophokles' tragedy becomes a tale rich with beauty and humor that asks us to reconsider the arbiters of right and wrong.

Masquerade Jazz & Funk, Winter Music Carnival March 1 Barnard Town Hall.

Spring Global Music Residency, w/Pamyua (inuit/soul) May 1-10, Various Schools & a Saturday performance.

Race Around the Lake 5k/10k Fundraiser, May 18, Silver Lake State Park.

Feast & Field Music Series, May 29-Sept. 25, Fable Farm

The Sound of Music by Rogers & Hammerstein, June 20 -29, Outdoor Summer Theater.

Roald Dahl's Matilda BarnArts SYT, August 1-3, Barnard Town Hall.

Barnard Street Dance, August 23, Barnard Town Hall.

Haunted Village Theater, Oct. 18, Village of Barnard.

Fall Global Music Residency, tba October/November Various Schools & Venues.

Holiday Cabaret dinner & dance, Wassail Weekend, December 13, Barnard Town Hall.

Winter Carols, December 19, First Universalist Church of Barnard.

Plus Artist Visits & Workshops year round.

Website: https://barnarts.org/ Email: info@barnarts.org

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

"V L Z T D V I C V L M, I V T L F V

X V S K M V P Q L X M L D N D V I X K K G

Z K D H L B D B D E 365 X A L D G U L E V Q.

A V H P Q S B A A H T V R I B H T L A A

H T V S K M E K H H V D H T B D E Q S M K R

A L Q H C V L M. H T V I K M N Q I V

S K M E K H H K Q L C, H T V A K F V I V

S K M E K H H K Q T K I, L D N H T V

Z T L M B H C I V S K M E K H H K

K S S V M."

- U V E E C H K D V C T K M H K D

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: Mondays and Wednesdays 3:00 – 5:00 PM; Saturdays 10:00 AM to Noon. Phone: 802-234-9408. ECFiber Wi-Fi. Email: charlesdanforthlibrary@gmail.com.

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

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, selectboard@barnardvt.us, 234-9211 x 2. By phone at any time, or by appointment. Office hours coming soon

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR, zoning@barnardvt.us, 234-9211 x 2. By phone at any time, or by appointment. Office hours coming soon.

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

AT ARTISTREE

The final days of the SMALL WORKS Exhibit are December 19, 20 & 21. Enjoy a 15% discount on your favorite pieces! The galleryis open from 10 AM to 6 PM.

Artistree is also seeking a part-time Events Coordinator to handle private event logistics, assist with concerts, manage community and donor events, and oversee guest space scheduling, and a full-time Programming Director to lead the planning and delivery of diverse, year-round arts programs for children and adults

Events Coordinator Responsibilities:
* Coordinate logistics for private events at Artistree.
* Assist with door management at concerts.
* Plan and execute annual community and donor events.
* Manage scheduling and interactions for overnight guest spaces.
* Collaborate with staff on event planning and execution.

Schedule and Compensation:
* Approximately 24 hours/week, $20–$22/hour based on experience.
* Variable hours based on events, with occasional evenings/weekends.

Qualifications:
* 2+ years of event coordination or similar experience.
* Strong organizational, communication, and problem-solving skills.
* Enthusiastic, adaptable, and people-oriented with a passion for the arts.
* Proficiency with office technology; CPR/AED/First Aid certification preferred.

Programming Director Responsibilities:
* Plan and manage annual programming and daily operations.
* Collaborate with staff to maximize enrollment and facility usage.
* Liaise with schools and organizations to enhance community engagement.
* Collect and analyze program data and feedback to refine offerings.
* Develop and manage budgets; support special events and projects.

Qualifications:
* 5+ years in arts programming/administration and team leadership.
* Strong financial, organizational, and communication skills.
* Experience working with diverse stakeholders and managing budgets.
* Bachelor's degree or equivalent professional experience.

See the full job description at https://artistreevt.org/employment. To apply, send a resume, cover letter, and references to info@artistreevt.org.

Learn more about Artistree at artistreevt.org.

CRYPTOGRAM ANSWER

"Each New Year, we have before us a brand new book containing 365 blank pages. Let us fill them with all the forgotten things from last year. The words we forgot to say, the love we forgot to show, and the charity we forgot to offer."

- Peggy Toney Horton