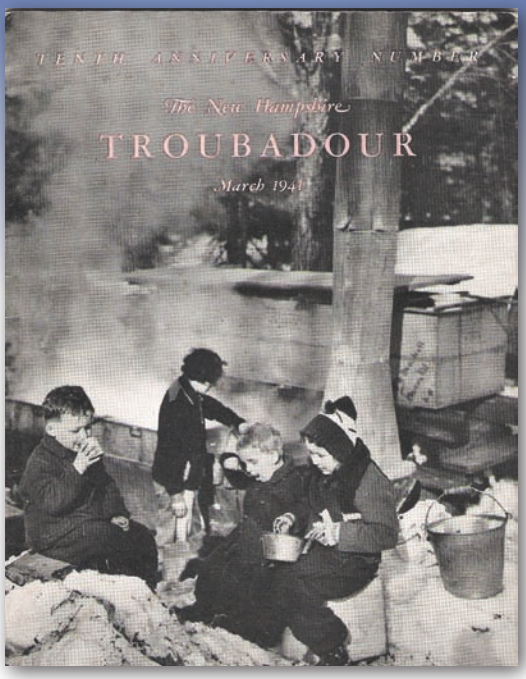


The March 1941 issue of the *Troubadour* was billed the "Tenth Anniversary Number", celebrating a decade of the state of NH's publishing efforts in bringing readers the warmest greetings and good wishes from the Granite State. This special edition featured an expanded thirty-two pages and re-printed several favorite short stories, poems and photographs from the *Troubadour*, dating back to the inaugural issue of March 1931.

The inside front cover of this issue offered a welcome from NH's 74th Governor, Robert Oscar Blood, who served two terms in office (1941-1945). Blood, a physician, was born in Enfield, NH in 1887 and graduated from Dartmouth Medical School in 1913. He established a long-running medical practice in Concord in 1915, which lasted until just a few years before his death in 1975. His words from the March 1941 *Troubadour* are below.

Greetings From Governor Robert O. Blood

"As the New Hampshire Troubadour celebrates its 10th birthday, I wish to take this occasion to offer my personal and official greetings. Like the Troubadours of ancient France who gave poetic expression to the life of their times, so this little magazine mirrors the life of the Granite State with rare fidelity. On these pages are reflected in miniature the beauty and grandeur of the Lakes, Mountains, Seacoast and Countryside of new Hampshire: and against this background appear men 'to match their mountains,' and the contributions of visitors who find in this little publication an attractive introduction to an attractive state. I congratulate all concerned!"

(Front cover photo: Taken on Rt. 126 in Stafford, NH; Back cover photo: Taken in Rye, NH near Wallis Sands State Park; photos by Mark Stevens: www.tinyurl.com/cryqal.)

Publisher's Note

The NH Troubadour comes to you every month singing the praises of New Hampshire, a state whose beauty and opportunities should tempt you to come and share those good things that make life here so delightful.

The NH Troubadour, 1931-1951

It is my pleasure to present you *The NH Troubadour* as a gift and a window for witnessing the extraordinary people, places, history and culture that make our Granite State so unique. This is a publication you can truly call your own. It is my hope that you enjoy it and share it; that you close each issue feeling a little better, a little wiser and a little prouder of life here in our wonderful state.

Robert J. Finlay

Letter from the Editor

One glance at this month's cover should melt away any lasting memories of an icy-blue winter in New Hampshire while offering you a glimpse into a Granite State spring where whispering warm breezes dance in and out of lush greenery and flowering buds. Credit photographer extraordinaire Mark Stevens for expressing the essence of the season that is upon us with his cover image titled "Spring Birches." We are fortunate to show off on the covers of many issues of the Troubadour the immense talents of Mr. Stevens, who always seems to capture the unique beauty of our state from behind his lens.

This month we treat you to even more impressive photographs, these standing tall atop the highest peak in the Eastern United States—the summit of our very own Mt. Washington. David Lazar braves the elements and opens the doors to the Mt. Washington Observatory to seek out the secrets behind the "world's worst weather" ("A Seat Atop the Clouds," pgs. 4-11).

Some say spring in New Hampshire is a paradox. Perhaps you agree. All you need to do is flip through the pages in this issue to find snow sharing space with fresh sod. After all, it is not uncommon to find, at the same time, perhaps just miles apart, one Granite Stater strapping a ski boot into a binding, while another tees up a dimpled ball on the links. And, there is the belief—though somewhat disputed—that on the first day of spring, or vernal equinox, there are exactly 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness. For some, this is a perfect balance or harmony in time.

You could advocate that New Hampshire provides the most wonderful symmetry, evidenced in all four of our distinct seasons. You could argue that nowhere else in this land will you simultaneously experience the sweet aroma drifting from a smoldering wood stove and the roar of a lawnmower engine coming to life. Yes, you could tout the many pleasures found within the changing seasons, their inevitable overlap, and the pure delight of those who witness this metamorphosis. For Granite Staters, however, no debate is necessary. We already understand.

—Michael DeBlasi

A Seat *Atop the Clouds*

by David Lazar

Mt. Washington Observatory offers unrivaled window into heavens, history

PINKHAM NOTCH — Joe Dodge was a young outdoorsman with a marriage to the mountains and an outsize affection for extreme weather when he and three fellow trekkers ascended the carriage trail to the summit of Mt. Washington in pursuit of history, science, and public service.

The year was 1932. America was plunged in Depression, and Dodge—who'd cemented a reputation constructing a hut system for hikers across New Hampshire's North Country—was undaunted by the snowcapped slab of granite that lay ahead. Instead, he believed in the value the notoriously hostile summit held in the field of weather observation and public education.

So with little more than borrowed weather instruments and enough food, coal and curiosity to survive the journey, Dodge and his friends Sal Pagliuca, Bob Monahan, and Alex McKenzie scaled the 6,288-foot peak that fall to reopen a tiny weather station last run by the U.S. Army's Signal Service in the 1880s. They would enter a completely different world up there—and over the course of the coming years, the record books as well.

The original crew of the Mt. Washington Observatory includes (from left) Alex McKenzie, Bob Monahan, Joe Dodge, and Sal Pagliuca. (Photo courtesy of the Mt. Washington Observatory).

On April 12, 1934, Bonnie and Clyde were in the midst of a legendary crime wave, Frank Capra's "It Happened One Night" was the #1 movie in America, and in Pinkham Notch, a large ridge of high pressure was barreling across Mt. Washington's icy summit, violently rattling the windows of the team's tiny outpost and pushing their instruments to the brink of endurance. By the time it was over, Dodge and his team—subsisting on a $500 grant from the state's Academy of Science—had recorded

The stone-walled Tip Top House was lone of two simple hotels that served summit visitors from the 1850s into the 1870s. The Tip Top House still stands today, operated as an historic site by Mount Washington State Park. (Photo courtesy of the Mt. Washington Observatory).

wind gusts of 231 mph, the strongest ever observed by humans. "There was no doubt this morning that a super-hurricane, Mt. Washington style, was in full development," Pagliuca wrote in his logbook. "'Will they believe it?' was our first thought. I felt then the responsibility of that startling measurement."

The storm would last just one day, but the legend and Granite State tradition it created live on three quarters of a century later in an institution and landscape like no other—a place that proudly declares itself "home of the world's worst weather." The Mt. Washington Observatory has indeed evolved beyond the tiny shack Dodge, his team and five felines occupied in those early years to become a world-class facility, the only permanently-staffed mountaintop observatory in the Western Hemisphere, with a mission based in research, observation, and education.

"Joe [Dodge] was always very interested in public education, particularly with respect to Mt. Washington," says Jack Middleton, a Manchester attorney who served as an observer in 1952 and went on to ask for Dodge's daughter's hand in marriage. "It was a spectacular geographic feature, it was home to some incredible weather, and the summit itself is such a unique place. The flora and fauna you find up there are actually replicated in Greenland. You would have to go a long way to find anything like it."

In the midst of constantly emerging technology and methods of gathering weather, the summit itself has remained remarkably the same in the 75 years since Joe Dodge's perfect storm—a subarctic and often unforgiving climate above the clouds, a sort of no-man's land in the cold season where winds can regularly top 100 mph, snow falls each month of the year, temperatures can fluctuate between 60° F in the summer to -50° F in the dead of winter, and thick rime ice (or wind-blown frozen fog) can coat surfaces at a clip of six inches

per hour. Mt. Washington observers—whose measurements of temperature, humidity, and wind speed are routed directly to the National Weather Service—jokingly pride themselves on being called "the world's worst weather observers" or some of its "highest paid meteorologists."

As such, the summit is a place that has always lent itself to real-world research. The Army Signal Service would, of course, use the summit throughout the 1870s and 1880s to offer forecasts to merchants, ship owners, farmers and others whose livelihoods depended on the weather; while the Air Force would use it some 60 years later—as WWII was closing and the Cold War was escalating —to research the effect of icing on airplane wings in the event of flights into frigid Russian airspace. Advertising companies used the summit's high winds to test the endurance of their signs; while as early as the 1950s, inventors were bringing contraptions to the top of the mountain to research the conversion of wind into energy and electricity. Landmark work in radio research performed on the summit, meanwhile, proved people could

Sal Pagliuca (left) and Alex McKenzie take advantage of good weather in 1932 to strenghten the guy wires holding the roof anemometer on the Mt. Washington Observatory. (Photo courtesy of the Mt. Washington Observatory).

Above the 4,000-foot tree line, Mt. Washington shifts from wooded rusticity to a stark palette of black and white, every surface shrouded in fog, snow and rim ice. (Photo: David Lazar.)

communicate on short wave radio at bands that hadn't been discovered before.

"It has always been a platform, a place for people to do research on what would work in adverse weather conditions," Middleton says.

It's also a place where visitors can enjoy views, depending on fog, of more than 90 miles in any direction, from the Atlantic, to the entire Presidential Range, the Monadnocks, and the Adirondacks. First climbed in the 17th century, the summit was named in 1784 for General, not President, George Washington. "So esteemed was he at that time that the highest peak in the colonies was chosen to bear the name of our greatest war hero," the Observatory's curator Peter Crane says. "First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen."

And first in tourism. Each spring, summer and fall, more than 250,000 hikers, tourists, and bumper sticker-seeking motorists make the ascent up the Mount Washington Auto Road, the same dramatic, winding ribbon of roadway (built in 1861 as a carriage trail) that brought Dodge's team and before them, the Signal Corps, to the summit. The ascent is breathtaking, arguably more so in winter,

Troubadour Treasures

The Buoyant Spring
by Edwin Osgood Grover

How the spirit of the buoyant spring stirs in the April air: earth and sky are palpitant with prophecy and expectation.

Now in very truth has come our resurrection season, the time of our renewing.

Our hearts beat to a quicker rhythm, our hopes build castles higher than the towers of Spain, our arms are strong like iron, our souls dare all and daring half achieve.

In our confident joy we see visions and dream dreams that lift us to the very gates of God's own heaven.

Yet we may not abide content within our dreaming, our laggard hands must do the bidding of our eager hearts.

We are fain for the golden summer of doing, of helping, fulfilling, and in the end for joy of dreams come true.

NH Troubadour
April, 1946

The Observatory first occupied by Dodge, Monahan, Pagliuca and MacKenzie dated back to the weather bureau of the U.S. Army's Signal Service in the 1800s. (Photos courtesy of the Mt. Washington Observatory).

when the road is closed and access is offered through the Observatory's winter DayTrips and EduTrips via snow tractor—a program that provides an exclusive window into the Observatory's inner workings and to the region's most arresting vistas. About 2,000 people reach the summit in the cold season. It is a terrain that above the 4,000-foot tree line transforms from wooded rusticity to a stark palette of black and white, every tree and surface shrouded in snow, fog or rime ice; a terrain that magnifies man's smallness in the face of nature. At the summit itself, the landscape can border on polar or downright post-apocalyptic—from the Cog Railway (Sylvester Marsh's spectacular 1869 contraption for transporting tourists up the mountainside) to its rebuilt stage office (still chained to the ground), and the Tip Top House (the stone lodge built in 1854 that for many years housed Observatory employees), no structure is spared a burial in rime ice. But for the occasional hiker, tourist, or Marty, the Observatory's celebrated feline mascot, signs of life are all but nonexistent.

From the earliest days cats have always provided practical and emotional companionship for the Observatory's workers. Today, Marty—a Maine coon cat rescued from an area shelter—serves the Observatory's famed feline ascot, having received 8,000 votes in an online 'primary election.' (Photo courtesy of the Mt. Washington Observatory).

"Our education programs really try and connect people with a place that is otherwise incredibly remote," says the Observatory's executive director Scot Henley. "For New Englanders and people from abroad, this is that one crazy outlier they see on their

weather reports—the 32 degree reading when every other place around it is 72. It gives them the opportunity to experience that one digit on the map, to meet our meteorologists, and to find out for themselves, 'What exactly can Mother Nature dish out up there?'"

In the years since Dodge and his team observed their world record windstorm, Mother Nature has apparently dished out even worse weather elsewhere. This past January, the world learned of a 1996 tropical cyclone off the northeast coast of Australia that reports suggest reached wind speeds of 253 mph. The news, while a blow to the pride of Granite Staters who'd enjoyed the exclusivity of such an unlikely honor, was tempered, they argue, by the fact that the Australian cyclone was not observed by humans.

For retired observers like Goreham's Guy Gosselin, who scaled the mountain in 1961 and personally endured the ferocity of 184 mph winds, that's no small distinction.

"It is truly an eye-opening experience," says Gosselin, who retired in 1996 as the Observatory's executive director. "The weather was awesome in the dictionary sense… it also takes a lot out of you. You're in a constant battle with wind and temperature. At times, you pretty much have to crawl along.

"I don't think you can leave there without an appreciation for the experience of being in a very unusual climate," he

In the winter, the Mt. Washington Observatory offers special DayTrip and EduTrip tours to the summit via snow tractor, led by historians like Peter Crane, an accomplished trekker who's scaled every 4,000 foot summit in the Presidential Range in every month of the year. (Photos: David Lazar).

Then as now, observers atop Mt. Washington have always experimented with new instruments for measuring weather, including this heated thermometer in 1937. (Photo courtesy of the Mt. Washington Observatory).

continues. "It doesn't make any difference what the weather happens to be while you're up there. It's always going to be a very different environment… Joe Dodge's first love was the weather. The Observatory and the work it has been able to accomplish remain a great tribute to him and his vision."

It is a vision—and a view—that, thanks to Dodge and his fellow trekkers, will continue to connect visitors with awe and wonder for generations to come.

Troubadour Treasures

Fret not, my soul.
While stand I at my menial task,
You know you can but softly ask,
And then upon our unseen wings
We'll fly, to where all lovely things
Are free. Early in the morning air
We'll trudge along, without a care,
And climb the hills, a breathless task,
In glorious sunshine we will bask
Upon the summit. Oh lovely view,
My soul, then I shall be alone with you.
The birds and beasts and all we see
So rapt in quiet simplicity—
Then we can gaze upon such beauty unsurpassed.
Fret not, my soul. This utter peace
Is Nature's way to give release.
And one day, soul, perhaps we'll see
The Heaven New Hampshire means to me.
–By Lillian Gibbs (of Liverpool, England)

NH Troubadour
March, 1950

Special thanks to Jack Middleton, Guy Gosselin, Cara Rudio, Peter Crane, and the entire staff of the Mt. Washington Observatory for their assistance and generosity with this story.

Each tourist season, more than 250,000 visitors make the hike or drive to the Mt. Washington summit. In the (winter, those numbers drop to 2,000. The cold season transforms the summit into one part winter wonderland, one part lunar landscape, affording views of up to 90 miles and an experience like no other in New England. Structures, from the stage house of the Cog Railway, to the radio towers of WHOM and WPKQ are buried in rim ice, rendering them all but unrecognizable. (Photos: David Lazar.)

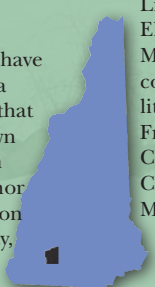
welcome to Hancock

Nearly two centuries after its installation into a soaring white steeple, the Paul Revere bell of Hancock's town meetinghouse continues to proudly ring day and night—one of countless charms that still call visitors from far and wide to this cozy, postcard village in the shadow of the Monadnocks.

First settled in 1764, Hancock was set off from Peterborough and incorporated in 1779, earning its name for a certain Founding Father and Bay State governor with a very large signature, who owned some 1,875 acres in the community. For a century or so, Hancock quietly flourished as a peaceful farming town along the banks of the Contoocook. With the introduction of rail travel to the region in the 1870s came a torrent of vacationers in the summer and fall seasons, captivated by the town's breathtaking foliage, abundant nature, and stunning architecture.

Troubadour Town Facts: Hancock

- Population of 1,801 (2008 census)
- Though Hancock was named for the 1st Governor of Massachusetts, there is no official record of John Hancock having ever visited the town.
- Hancock is the oldest town in America to host a National Radio Astronomy Observatory antenna. This is part of the United States' Very Long Baseline Array, a system of ten radio telescopes in the U.S. controlled remotely and working together as the world's largest dedicated, full-time astronomical instrument, using the technique of very long baseline interferometry.
- The tradition of Old Home Day may have originated in Hancock in 1879, with a family picnic. In the 130 years since, that picnic has grown to include a full town celebration, including a parade, each August. It is believed that NH Governor Frank Rollins, in his 1899 proclamation making Old Home Day a state holiday, drew inspiration from the townspeople in Hancock and envisioned the gatherings as a way to encourage others who had moved away to come back and visit. Today, better than 50 towns in NH send out invitations throughout the country to relatives and Granite State descendents to return for local Old Home Day celebrations.
- Notable residents of Hancock have included: Person Colby Cheney, 43rd Governor of NH and U.S. Senator; Joseph Grew, U.S. Ambassador to Japan; Jay Pierrepont Moffat, U.S. Ambassador to Canada; Noted artist Lilla Cabot Perry, a protégé of Claude Monet; Elizabeth Yates, recipient of a Newbery Medal, recognizing the most distinguished contribution to American children's literature, for her 1951 novel "Amos Fortune, Free Man"; Philanthropist and educator Charles E. Merrill Jr., founder of the Commonwealth School in Boston and son of Merrill-Lynch co-founder Charles E. Merrill.



- Michael DeBlasi

Little has changed since then. And that's just the way locals and visitors like it. Indeed, much of Hancock's Main Street remains as it was back in 1779, every immaculately preserved clapboard and brick structure – from the meetinghouse and its vestry to the town post office, all separated by simple gravel paths —listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Then as now, no visit to town is complete without a swim or skate on Norway Pond or Lake Nubanusit; or without gaping at Elephant Rock and the countless other geological and wooded wonders that line Hancock's plentiful back roads.

Nature-minded travelers will want to lace up their boots for a visit to the Harris Center for Conservation Education, a hidden treasure on the old Briggs family summer estate which serves 26 schools throughout the Monadnock region and safeguards more than 11,000 acres locally through conservation easements (www.harriscenter.org.) The friendly staff there will be happy to lead a hike or walk you through a wildlife viewing in the center's Supersanctuary. Finally, no hungry visitor can afford to leave without stopping by Fiddleheads, a Hancock eating institution, where the lure of Sherry Williams' gourmet goodies—from pizzas to pancakes—has locals devotedly lining up to her counter morning, noon, and night.

- David Lazar

by Becky Rule

Knit-Wit

SOMETHING ABOUT THE CLICK of knitting needles calms a person down. No doubt that's why the knitting ladies are such a staple of town meetings. If you sit and knit, you're not so apt to get knotted up in controversy. Remember the old saying: Sometimes I sits and thinks; sometimes I just sits. A variation might be: Sometimes I sits and stews; sometimes I sits and knits. Of course, it is possible to sit, stew, and knit all at the same time. But that takes talent.

The women's club sponsored a knitting group on Tuesday afternoons. After about three weeks, the instructor came by the table where Mavis was clicking and chatting with her friends. "I'm not much of a knitter," Mavis admitted, holding out her two feet of scarf.

"You're not a knitter at all," the instructor said. "You're a purler."

A few years back, I told stories at an evening meeting of the New England Handspinners Association at Loon Mountain Resort. It was the only performance I ever did where no one in the audience looked at me the whole time. They were all busy spinning, weaving, and, yes, knitting, usually with yarn they'd spun themselves with wool from their own sheep. As usual, I invited stories from the group. A spinner told this true, cautionary tale.

Each year she visited an old friend in Connecticut. On one visit she learned that the friends husband, Clarence, had suffered a serious back injury in a motorcycle accident, was unable to work, and going quietly crazy from boredom. So the spinner taught him to knit.

When she returned a year later, he'd knit up a storm. He'd knit scarves for all the family, a shawl for his wife, a blanket for the dog, and covers for the kitchen appliances. His back still troubled him, but he loved knitting!

The spinner said, "Clarence, it's time for you to learn to purl."

When she returned the following year, he'd mastered the mitten. Afghans draped the easy chairs and the couch. He was halfway through a spread for the king-sized bed. She was impressed. "How's your back doing, Clarence?" she asked.

"Healed!" he said.

"Unfortunately," his wife added, "he still can't go back to work. He's got carpal tunnel in both hands."

Becky Rule has lived all her life (so far) in New Hampshire. She has written several popular books set in her home state, including her latest collection of stories, "Live Free and Eat Pie" (Islandport Press), and hosts live storytelling events, many sponsored by the New Hampshire Humanities Council. She posts stories regularly on her website, www.livefreeandeatpie.com.

LABOR and LOVE

by Ron Roberts

CHIQUITA

HOW THE HOURS FLY WITH REVERIE OF REFUGE
WHEN THE TIRES CUT UPON THE DIRT
IT'S SOON THAT LAST TURNS ARRIVAL
WITH SOLACE OF ITS SINGING GRAVEL
PEBBLES CLICK AWAKENING THE MIND WE RISE AS A LONE FADED STEEPLE STANDS
KICKED UP ITS AS IF THEY SANG A WELCOME HYMN
AND HOW IT GOES I DON'T RECALL FOR IT'S BEEN JUST TOO LONG
ITS GRAVEL ROADS AND FORGOTTEN TOWNS THAT AWAIT CERTAIN REVIVAL
WE'RE GUIDED BY THE GUARD OF THE WANDERING WIDOWED WALLS
ROCK LADEN FIELDS WAS BOUNTIES DEMISE AGAINST MANS WONDROUS WILL
FOR IT'S NATURES CLAIM THAT SHALL LAST REMAIN
IN TRANQUIL TRAVERSE WE NOW USE THIS FORLORN PATH NOT AS PAST TRAVAIL
FOR IT MAKES OUR LIVES OF COMFORT SEEM EVER SO TRIVIAL
HAVE WE LOST THE DIGNITY OF TOIL AND SHUNNED ITS HONEST FEEL
ONLY TO DECEIVE OUR SOULS OF TRUE WORTH FOR OUR OWN INDULGENCE
OR BLIND OUR WAY TO THE GRAVEL OF TIME AS IT CLICKS ITS FAINT FAREWELL

A native of New Hampshire, Ron Roberts recently retired from a life of working with his hands. From his early days on a family farm to a career as an industrial welder boilermaker, he has always felt a kinship to the land. Comfortable working with timber, granite and soil, Ron, with his wife of 32 years, raised their family in a home he designed and built in Stratham. Only recently has he turned his artistic talents from timber frames and barn raising to poetry and photography as displayed here, from his self-published book "LABOR and LOVE."

Your Troubadour

"Your Troubadour" is designed specifically for you, the reader, to share a bit of your memories, moments, stories and smiles about this state. We encourage you to submit to us your essays, poems, recipes, photographs and more—provided of course, they maintain the standards and decency we have come to expect here in NH. Send your treasures for publication electronically to: **submissions@nhtroubadour.com** or mail to: **NH Troubadour, 29 Armory Road, Milford, NH 03055**.

Travelling Over Snow

by Cristy McGuinness

I snap the last buckle
Tightly in place
And get ready to head out
To the vast, white gleaming space.

The mountains stand tall
In all their glory;
Cloaked in fresh powdery air,
About to unfold the day's story,

Ski poles drape around each wrist;
Ready to guide the way.
Sliding one foot in front of the other,
I descend for the first run of the day.

The wind charges at my face;
Watery eyes search and stare
As I fly down the trail that's
Marked by a blue square.

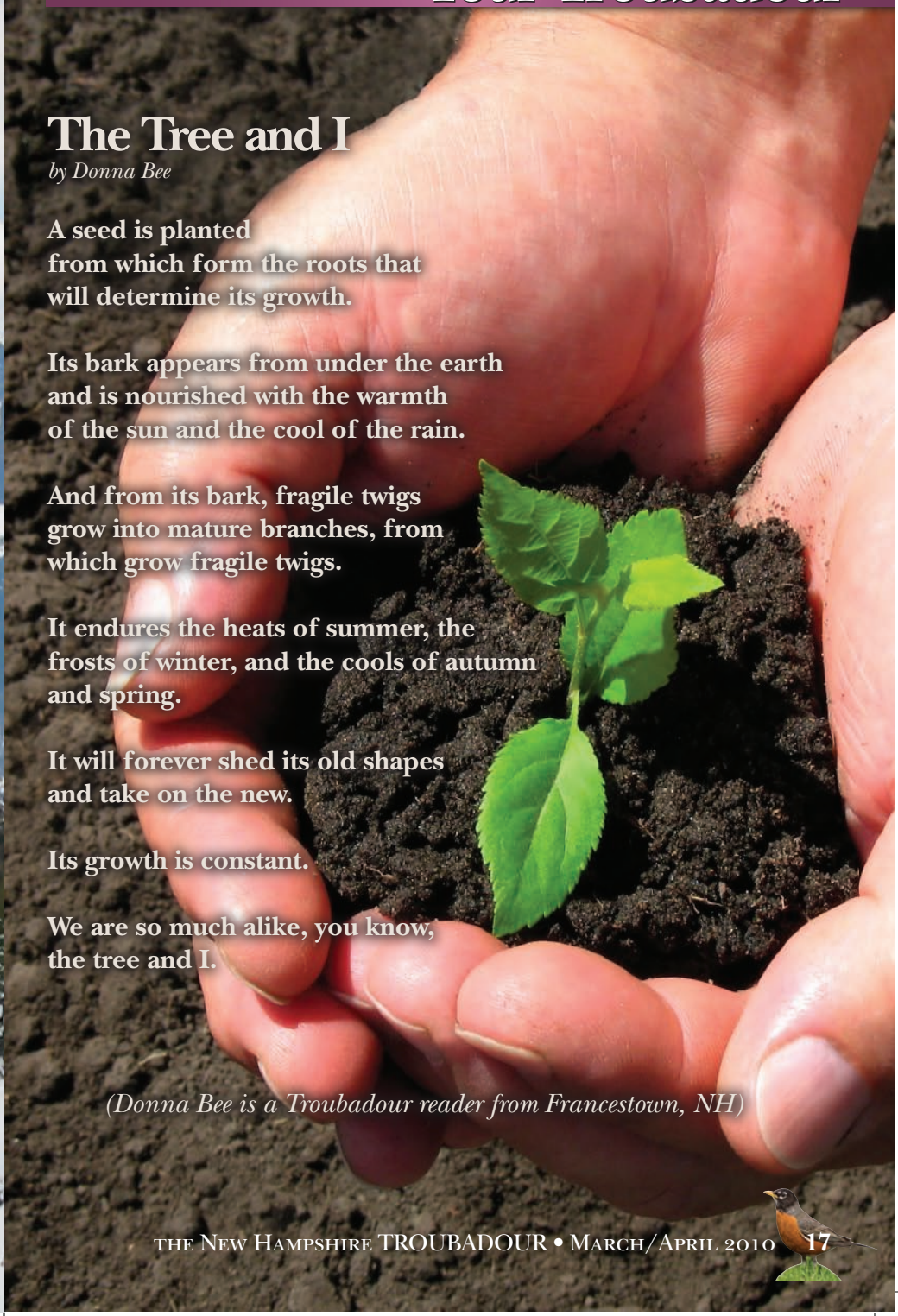
My hips turn left,
But want to shift right
"Where did these moguls come from
And why is the lodge so far outta sight?"

Panic sets in and
Sucks away at my breath;
Half-way down the mountain
I am struck by images of death.

I spread my wings,
Close my eyes,
And glide in the sugary snow;
Freeing myself to the open blue skies.

The end is near
With people down below,
I sigh with relief
And finally start to slow.

(Cristy McGuinness is a Troubadour reader from Hooksett, NH)



The Tree and I

by Donna Bee

A seed is planted
from which form the roots that
will determine its growth.

Its bark appears from under the earth
and is nourished with the warmth
of the sun and the cool of the rain.

And from its bark, fragile twigs
grow into mature branches, from
which grow fragile twigs.

It endures the heats of summer, the
frosts of winter, and the cools of autumn
and spring.

It will forever shed its old shapes
and take on the new.

Its growth is constant.

We are so much alike, you know,
the tree and I.

(Donna Bee is a Troubadour reader from Francestown, NH)

Your Troubadour

Awaiting Spring

by Peggy Perry

Under the March crescent moon
Blue-shadowed snow lies cold and deep
Silent forest shelters those who sleep
Random playful wind lifts and icy drift
And sends it floating to the
Soundless sky.

Motionless at the window, I think I see
There in the garden, beneath a white
Comforter, a vision of last summer's plants
Dormant and waiting
And beneath the leafless trees
Creatures snugly dreaming, as I do
Of the warm March breeze
That will predictably surprise us
Tomorrow.

(Peggy Perry is a Troubadour reader from Freedom, NH)

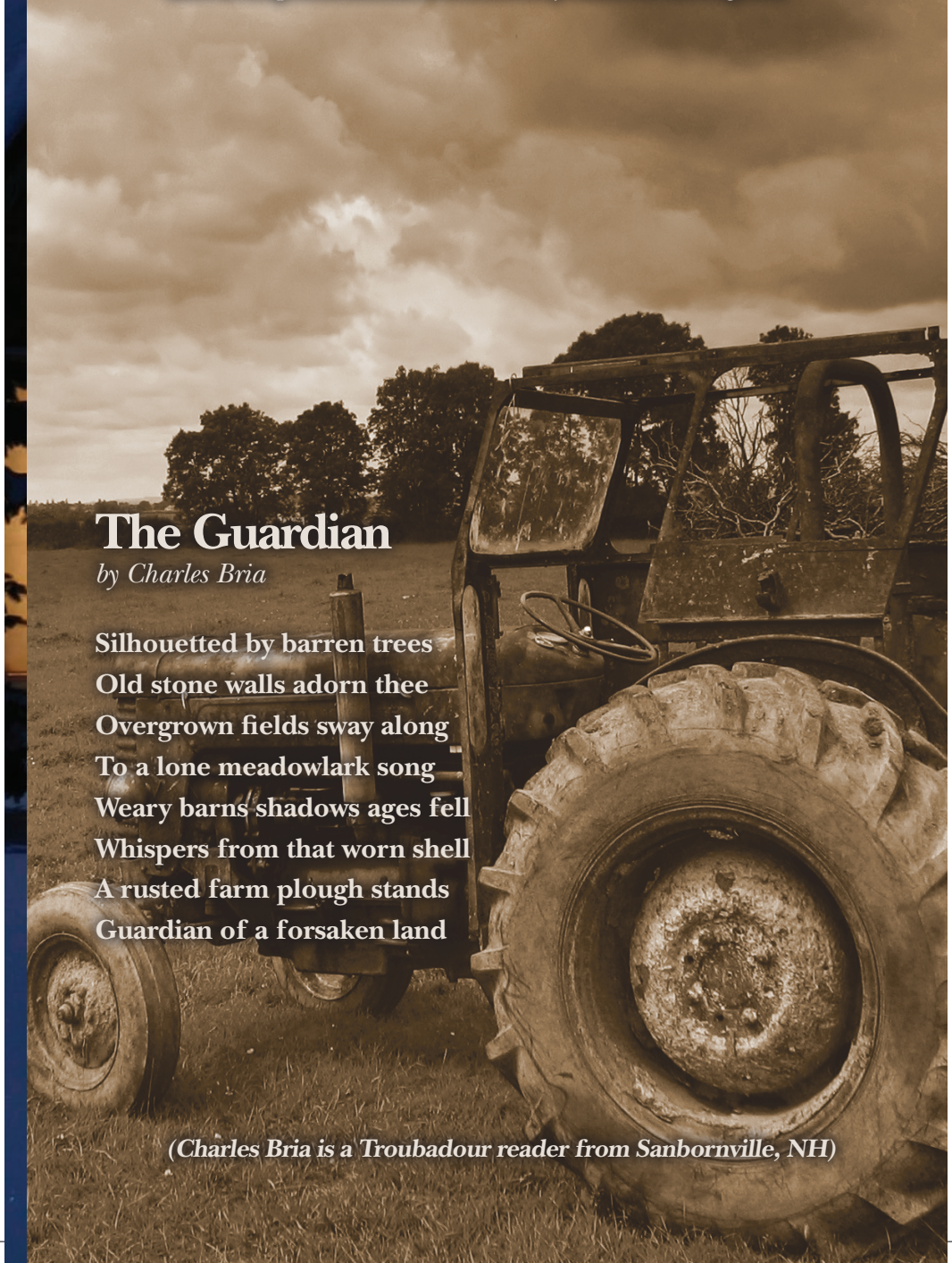
Troubadour Treasures

Front Cover. Giant snow sculpture of Eleazar Wheelock on the Dartmouth College Campus at the 29th Winter Carnival. Designed and supervised by Richard L. Brooks, author of "Art Below Freezing" in our January issue. The statue was thirty-six and a half feet high, not including the base, and was estimated to weigh forty tons. That upheld tankard is a large flour barrel and a man's head could be stuck into Eleazar's open mouth. Baker Library in background. Photo by Fred W. Davis, Concord.

NH Troubadour
March, 1938

Your Troubadour

All entries become property of The Troubadour and are subject to editing for content and space; views displayed here do not necessarily reflect those of this publication and are submitted by readers of this magazine.



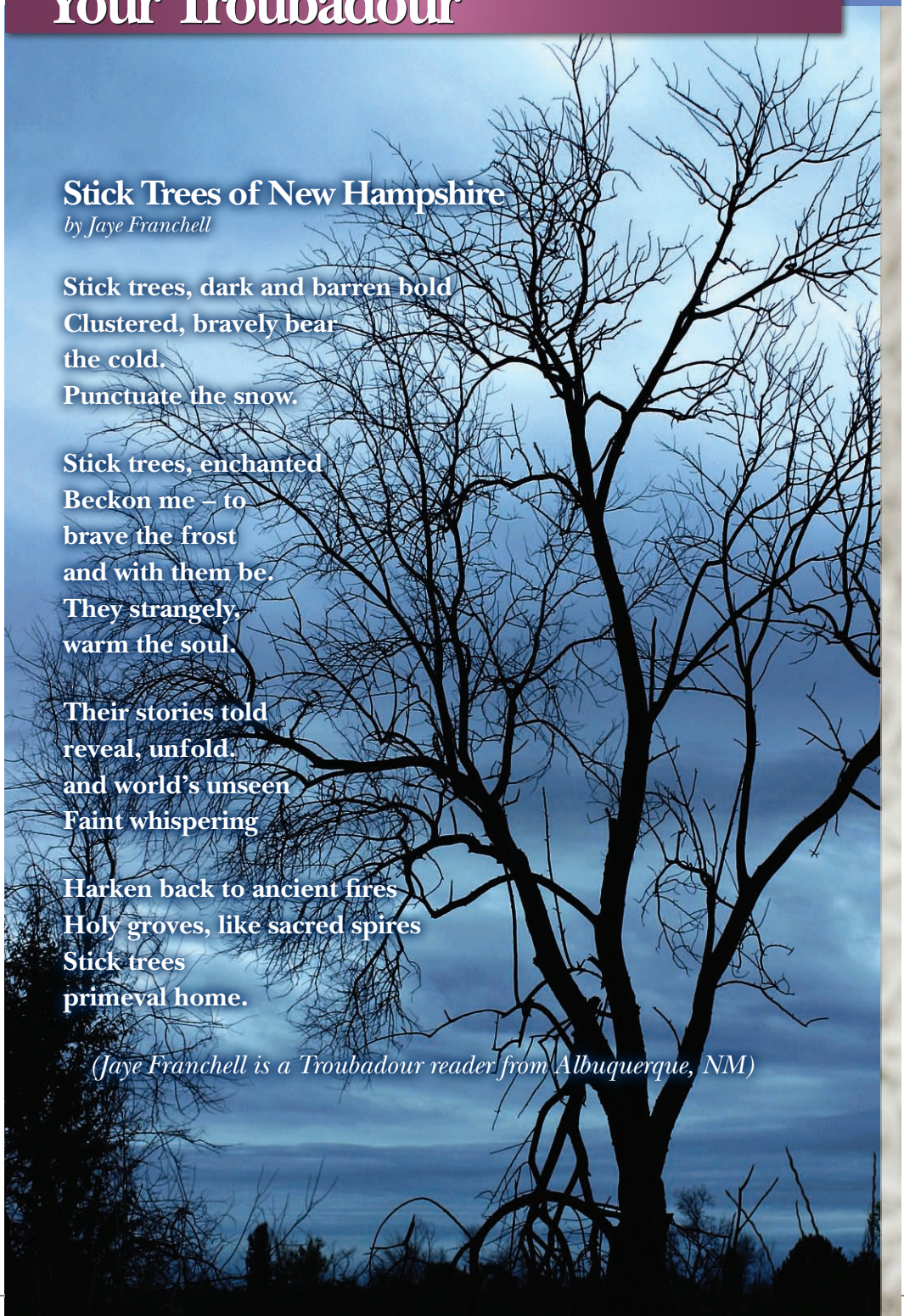
The Guardian

by Charles Bria

Silhouetted by barren trees
Old stone walls adorn thee
Overgrown fields sway along
To a lone meadowlark song
Weary barns shadows ages fell
Whispers from that worn shell
A rusted farm plough stands
Guardian of a forsaken land

(Charles Bria is a Troubadour reader from Sanbornville, NH)

Your Troubadour



Stick Trees of New Hampshire

by Jaye Franchell

Stick trees, dark and barren bold
Clustered, bravely bear
the cold.
Punctuate the snow.

Stick trees, enchanted
Beckon me – to
brave the frost
and with them be.
They strangely,
warm the soul.

Their stories told
reveal, unfold.
and world's unseen
Faint whispering

Harken back to ancient fires
Holy groves, like sacred spires
Stick trees
primeval home.

(Jaye Franchell is a Troubadour reader from Albuquerque, NM)

Survivalists

by Pamela MacBean

A bird feeder pregnant with sunflower seeds
spills over onto ripples of white
whispering over the glassy skin of snow.

now birds sway in naked branches
wrapped in swirls of icy breezes,
waiting for a peering cat
sitting on an icicle-fringed porch
to dash back into a warm house.

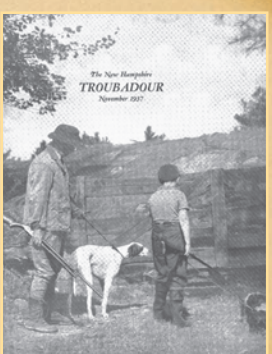
And as a door quickly opens, closes
the danger passes with a disappearing tail,
and upon a significant sign,
wings hug tiny bodies as they dive-bomb
from frosty tipped trees
to alight upon cold metal perches.
tussling, flapping, twittering,
scattering seeds on drifts below,
they fight for the right to exist another day.

(Pamela MacBean is a Troubadour reader from Dalton, NH)

Troubadour Treasures

The Troubadour may be quite
small,
As publications go,
Yet winter, summer, spring and
fall,
The freshening rain, the silent
snow
Forever from its pages call—
The heart's true song embracing
all
These things we love and know.

Prescott Hoard
Mt. Vernon, New York



NH Troubadour
April, 1938

Our New Hampshire

by Robert J. Finlay

Say what you will about the blessing of four distinct seasons in New England—the arrival of spring can seldom come a moment too soon.

I say this not to disparage the postcard beauty of our winters, simultaneously serene and character-building as they may be. But as someone who confesses to spending more than a few days each cold season thawing in a certain snowbird-infested southern locale, the notion of cracking a window and seeing sunlight after 5 pm couldn't find a more welcoming set of arms.

Springtime in New Hampshire has a uniquely restorative effect. It is the time when we tuck away our flannels, turn off our heat, and allow our homes to breathe in that first crisp breath of fresh air. It is a time when our lawns finally begin to unburden themselves and offer us that first glimpse of green; a time when our towns and village greens shake off their coating of sand and salt and start anew for the year.

The poet ee cummings, who spent many a spring and summer writing on his family farm in Madison, would say that "The earth laughs in flowers." To visit towns like Walpole, Washington, and Portsmouth, where purple lilacs proliferate wildly on rolling hills and in city parks, is to witness this annual miracle. In countless other towns across the state, from Berlin to Mason, another miracle is in full bloom as smokestacks stir to life and syrup season gives us the ideal excuse to load up on sticky, sugary, pancake-topping perfection.

Finally, it comes in the smiles of neighbors and friends, no longer clenched against the bracing winter wind, but in sheer wonder at the natural beauty surrounding us, finally unmasked, returning to life, and consigning that unnamed snowbird-infested southern locale to distant memory.

Do you know of a special person, organization or tradition in your community that deserves to be trumpeted on these pages? Would you like to join our mailing list? Contact us at www.nhtroubadour.com or by telephone at 603.673.0100.

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PRINTER Spectrum Marketing Companies • **DESIGNER** Christine Donati

Troubadour Trumpets

Recognizing Those Who Make a Difference

Their conversation a spirited weave of sewing patterns, family life and even international politics, the ladies of Fremont's Giving Hands knitting group like to joke they accomplish more than the intricate scarves, mittens, winter caps and washcloths that each Wednesday blanket their table at the Fremont Public Library.

"We solve a lot of the world's problems here!" quips co-founder Theresa Rowell. "But mostly, we laugh a lot." They also make a lot of days brighter. Since May 2008, this gathering of a dozen or so retirees, part-time workers and stay-at-home moms has been setting up shop weekly, armed with needles, yarn, and a limitless supply of goodwill. Over that time, Giving Hands has donated thousands of pieces of homespun handiwork to those in need—from brightly-colored caps and washcloths for chemotherapy patients at Exeter Hospital, to helmet liners for soldiers overseas, and limb, wrist and thigh covers for amputees in area hospitals.

Since 2008, Fremont's Giving Hands knitting group has donated thousands of mittens, scarves, hats and facecloths to those in need. (Photo: David Lazar)

"Everyone has something within them," co-founder Nancy LeCain says. "Someone may be a deacon at their church. Someone may be vacuuming floors or teaching Sunday school. We knit. There's very much a joy that comes through giving." Launched by Rowell, LeCain, and fellow Fremont neighbor Meredith Patrick, Giving Hands began as a sort of home-based ministry—a way of using their fellowship and love of crocheting and knitting to help make a difference in the community. Word wove its way into the community, however, and soon other local knitters were voicing a desire to contribute. So the ladies of Giving Hands settled on a sun-drenched table at the Freemont library, where each Wednesday morning, the "quiet" rule is discreetly eased for a couple of hours. A typical session will find locals and those from as far away as Londonderry, Kingston, and Bedford weaving scarves, mittens and hats for grateful families through Portsmouth's Operation Blessing charity, caps for infants through Newton's Neighbors Helping Newborns program, or hats for sailors through Portsmouth's Seafarer's Friend —each piece lovingly wrapped and sealed with a Giving Hands label and card. Some, meanwhile, prefer to do their needlework from home and drop off bagfuls of finished goods each Wednesday.

"Bad things happen," says Patrick, a retired medical office manager and former owner of a Plaistow knitting shop. "We just want people to know that they're not alone; that there are people out in the community who love and want to help them. It's a little thing. But there's nothing like a warm hat in winter."

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Volume 2 • Issue 4 © *2010*

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