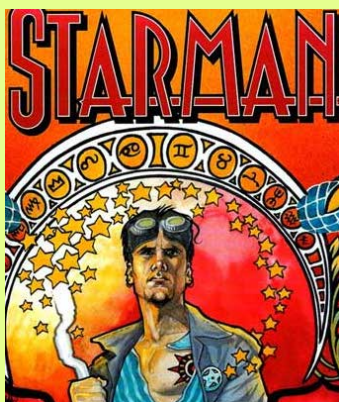


# HILLTOPPER

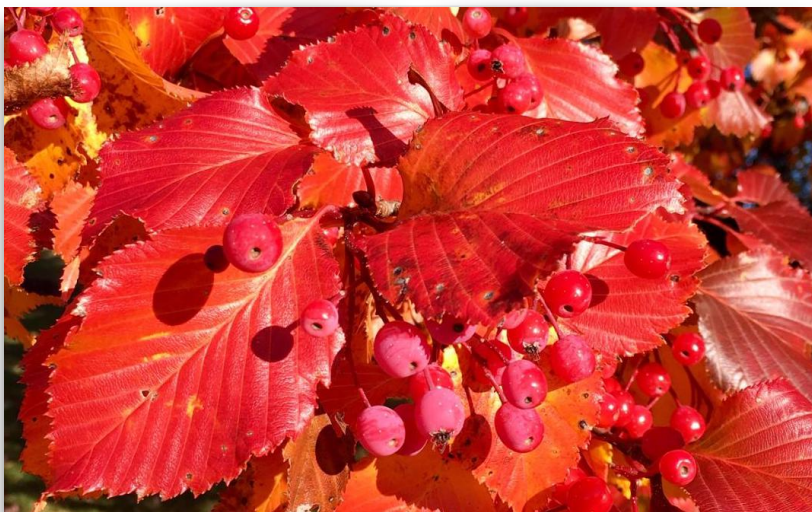
Ralph Perkins & Joan Ebbeson, editors  
Ann Paulson & Jan Hostage, photographers  
Please send your news, views and photos to  
[rlphprkns@yahoo.com](mailto:rlphprkns@yahoo.com) or mailbox #1. Thanks,  
Lee Rogers, for contributing to this issue.

## COMING EVENTS

Due to COVID 19 concerns, monthly social events are on hold, with occasional outdoor exceptions (see below).. Watch for notices on the Hilltop House bulletin board and mail cubbies.



**MARVEL COMICS** has its Starman, and Hilltop has ours: Tom Vannatta. His super powers? Entertaining and educating us about astronomy. His avocation began at age 16 while working at a Boy Scout camp as life guard and swim teacher. The waterfront director shared his interest, leading Tom to use his summer salary to buy a telescope. Since then, he's taught courses on astronomy and cosmology at Colby-Sawyer College's ALL and led other sessions, including short-notice (because of weather) events at Hilltop. In October, Tom showed us Mars, Jupiter with its moons, and Saturn with its rings. Tom also explained "double stars" and showed us two of them, one a stunning gold and blue pair that form the "eye" of Cygnus, the swan constellation,



## November Color

Who says November lacks color? The leaves and berries shown above in true-life color (no photo shopping!) prove otherwise. Look for them as you walk around Hilltop. Not just leaves change color in New England; some animals do, too. See Field Notes, page 2, to learn more.

But first, please take a moment to quiz your knowledge of neighbors, both human and canine. Nearly two years ago, we ran a quiz asking Hilltoppers to match dogs and owners. By popular request, we have a sequel this month. (A hint: not to scale.)



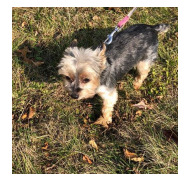
Kami



Molly



Kira



Lexi

**Who's Whose? (The sequel)** Can you match the dogs shown above with their owners below? See Hilltop House bulletin board for answers.



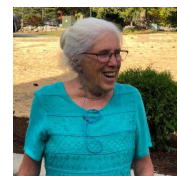
Diana



Pat



Suzanne



Kaaren

## Ralph's Field Notes: Animals Change Color, Too

One of the treats of living in New England (especially at Hilltop) is the brilliant fall foliage display, as the trees jettison their leaves, revealing their true colors. Less well known is that several of our warm-blooded animals do, too.

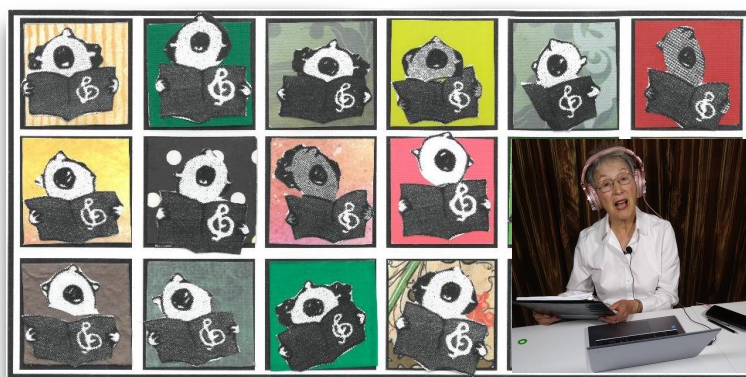
Let's start with the birds. The goldfinch keeps its black and white wings, but in the fall, everything else goes - the black cap in males, and the yellow color - all in females and most in males.

Many birds practice "dressing to kill in spring, dressing to chill in fall." Confusing fall warblers are a good example of this, as are most waterfowl. Gone is the male mallard's iridescent green head; he can be mistaken for a female after his spring breeding show is over.

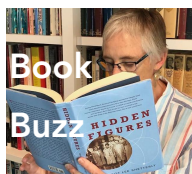
Among hooved animals, deer lead the parade. The white-tailed deer has a very reddish coat in spring and summer, but changes it for a thick gray-brown in one in fall (also its guard hairs in winter are some 2 inches longer and hollow (to better provide insulation).

One of our most famous changers is the snowshoe hare, which switches from brown to mostly off-white. Its yellow under hairs give a yellowish or dirty look in winter.

Lastly are two of our native weasels- the ermine or short-tailed weasel, and the somewhat larger long-tailed weasel. Both turn completely white, except for a black tipped tail -which, some believe, is to distract predators -



**Can't Stop Her!** Have you ever heard the old Quaker song "I Cannot Keep From Singing"? It would be an appropriate theme song for Hilltop resident Nina Rogers. Her usual venues limited by coronavirus guidelines, she continues to exercise her talents at a social distance by participating in virtual group singing. She sang with 17,350 other singers from around the world, in the Eric Whitacre International Choir. Currently, she is part of St. Andrew's Church virtual choir and is practicing for a virtual performance with the Troubadours and for Kearsarge Chorale's virtual concert in December. The process involves listening to accompaniment on one digital device while making audio (and sometimes video) recordings of herself on a second. She thanks tech-savvy spouse Lee for his help.



Looking for a book? Don't overlook the Hilltop Library. No sign out, no overdue fees, and nearly unlimited access for us residents.

Paul and Ann Linehan have taken over maintaining it, and a box for sharing our magazines has been added.

Ann Paulson recommends a book this month: **Spying on the South** by Tony Horwitz, whose books she finds "always readable and interesting." This, his final book, describes dual journeys through Appalachia, down the Mississippi and across Texas - the first by famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead just before the Civil War, the second a recent trip by Horwitz - comparing attitudes of the inhabitants about politics and segregation.

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So, how will climate change affect these animals that change with the seasons? Nobody really knows, but we can make a few guesses based upon what we think is going on. Relocating animals between parts of the country shows that the changes are genetic - controlled by changing daylight. Therefore, new timing for color change will have to evolve, and this will take time. Can these changes keep up with the rate of climate change? Time will tell.

