February 27

Under Steam

Ian Clark – Steam Train Enthusiast & Professional Photographer

Once more common than automobiles, steam locomotives have become nearly extinct in North America. Join Ian as he travels from the west coast of the U.S. across the country tracking down our last steam locomotives, photographing them in museums and on excursions with the engines fired up and working under steam power. We’ll see images of 64 locomotives from 34 railroads in 19 states. Through a layman’s explanation of the various wheel arrangements and locomotive configurations we’ll hear how the steam engines got their names.

March 12

Vermont Raptors

Mike Clough – Director Southern Vermont Natural History Museum

Co-Sponsored by the Ascutney Mountain Audubon Society

Experience the awe of seeing live hawks, owls, and falcons up close as we observe the specific amazing adaptations of these magnificent birds of prey. We’ll learn the life history of some of our local raptors as we examine rehabilitated, non-releasable birds who serve as education ambassadors to acquaint us with some of the important predators that help maintain nature’s ecological balance.
March 26

Justin Morgan’s Horse: Making an American Myth

Amanda Gustin - Vermont Historical Society

All Morgan horses today trace their lineage back to a single horse: a mystery stallion named Figure, owned by singing teacher Justin Morgan in the late 18th century. Come learn who Figure really was and hear the stories that people have told about him in the two centuries since he lived and worked in Vermont. We’ll explore this fascinating story and how it is tied up with the idea of Vermont identity, the relationship between humans and animals, and the creation of an American myth.

April 9

So Many Reasons to Love Trees

John Snell – Montpelier Tree Board Director

Co-Sponsored by the Springfield Garden Club

In all seasons, trees are our intriguing partners in life. We’ll have a good excuse to enjoy photographs of trees while looking closely at many of the things we don’t always pay attention to – from bark and leaves to shade and shapes, from seeds and fruits to wood and CO2. Along with our speaker, we’ll marvel at these living things and their long lives.

April 23

Mind Magic

Dr. Steve Taubman – Author, Inspirational Speaker, Mentalist

We’ll be treated to a healthy dose of psychology and theater, drawing on Dr. Steve’s laser-sharp observational skills and his refined sense of the absurd as he combines elements of comedy and mindreading. Woven into the laughter and astonishment, Dr. Steve delivers timeless wisdom about leadership, resilience and success.

May 7

“Freedom is Indivisible”:

John F. Kennedy’s Reliance on Proverbs

Prof. Wolfgang Mieder - University of Vermont German and Proverb Professor Emeritus

Enjoy Professor Mieder weave the story of how President John F. Kennedy effectively used Biblical and folk proverbs into rhetorical prowess in his speeches. JFK was also able to create his own moralistic remarks that have become proverbial, such as “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country” that he cited in his memorable inaugural address of January 20, 1961. His oral and written messages are replete with proverbial wisdom that adds a certain traditional authority to his speeches and writings. The maritime proverb “A rising tide lifts all the boats” was clearly one of his favorite expressions. Its metaphor served him well to express his optimistic worldview and his commitment to the well-being of not only the American nation but the world community where everybody is in the same boat and rowing as a team towards a future of equality, freedom, and peace.

A special thank you to our local benefactor: Barbara Sanderson!