

## SHELF LIFE SUMMIT TALKS

Tom Slayton, retired editor of *Vermont Life*, still writes regularly for this magazine, but on sunny days we don't expect to hear from him. He's probably hiking.

An avid outdoorsman with a reporter's sensibility, Slayton served as editor of "A Century in the Mountains" — the Green Mountain Club's celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Long Trail — and he has shaped this pleasing coffee-table book with a thoughtful cast of mind and an eye for stirring photography.

Using a range of writers organized by topic, the book begins with Vermont environmentalist Bill McKibben, who strikes a reverential note — setting the tone for what is to come — and points out that "the idea that people would go take long hikes in the wilderness, which we think of as obvious, was not so clear when the club began."

Envisioned as a footpath atop the spine of the Green Mountains from Massachusetts to Quebec, the trail, much like Vermont itself, was hacked out of the wild by people who saw its possibilities and were not going to be deterred.

In describing this saga, the Long Trail emerges as not just a great place to go hiking but a deep part of our heritage and an emblem of some of Vermonters' best traits: ingenuity, grit, volunteerism, good cheer and a love of outdoor adventure.

The book is brimming with portraits of the Vermont spirit in action, and it can hardly fail to motivate you to get out and get walking, on the Long Trail, anywhere, in our inspiring mountains.

• **"A CENTURY IN THE MOUNTAINS: CELEBRATING VERMONT'S LONG TRAIL"**

EDITED BY TOM SLAYTON, 192 pages, hardcover, \$38.95, The Green Mountain Club Inc., Waterbury Center

— *Bill Anderson*



## SHELF LIFE HERD MENTALITY

A novelist and journalist who grew up in the suburbs and lived in Manhattan, Brad Kessler says that nevertheless "my whole life it seemed I'd been searching for a retreat in the mountains, a patch of land where I could grow my own food. ... Ever since reading 'Walden' as a teen I'd nursed Thoreau's old dream of self-reliance ..."

Beginning in the '90s, Kessler and his wife, photographer Dona Ann McAdams, started to look for such a retreat, eventually finding it in a decaying farmhouse on 75 acres near the southwestern Vermont village of Sandgate. From there, it wasn't long before they were raising, without much prior knowledge of how to do it, dairy goats.

One fears the worst in a book with such a setup: lightly comedic fish-out-of-water antics, or a lecturing faux farmer.

Yet Kessler, following his inspiration, composes clear Thoreau-like reflections on the turning of the seasons, the craft of cheesemaking and, most of all, the threads of human history that can be traced through our "ancient continuous relationship" with herd animals. Some parts of the book, particularly the section on breeding, are screechingly raw, but the overall mood is calm, informative and heartfelt.

Kessler's audience will surely include some yearning urbanites, stranded among skyscrapers as he once was, but here in Vermont most of us see goats, herd animals and pastoral activities quite regularly. Thanks to Kessler's memoir, we can appreciate them all the more.

• **"GOAT SONG: A SEASONAL LIFE, A SHORT HISTORY OF HERDING, AND THE ART OF MAKING CHEESE"**

BY BRAD KESSLER, 239 pages, hardcover, \$24, Scribner, New York

— *Bill Anderson*



## SHELF LIFE HOME COOKING

We've come a long way toward bringing fresh, seasonal foods into every corner of the food system, and "Cooking Close to Home: A Year of Seasonal Recipes" is testament to that. Co-authors Diane Imrie and Richard Jarmusz met through their jobs at Fletcher Allen Health Care, Vermont's largest hospital, where Imrie is director of Nutrition Services and Jarmusz is executive chef. Their book is not affiliated with the hospital, but it shows, as the authors write, the depth to which food professionals across all segments of society now agree that "eating fresh, unprocessed food simply means better nutrition."

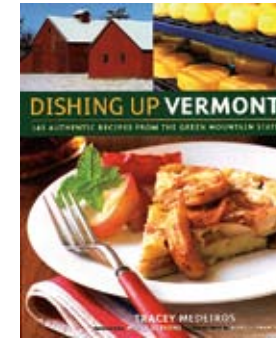
At a practical level, the recipes in the book — enhanced with beautiful food photography by Andrew Wellman of West Berlin — provide a nice variety of ways to use seasonal Vermont ingredients.

For those faced with overabundant community-supported-agriculture farm shares of less familiar vegetables like fennel, there are interesting options like the simple Carrot and Roasted Fennel Soup and Slow-Cooked Fennel and Shallots Over Mixed Greens With Raspberry Dressing. Useful "Harvest Hints" are plentiful, ranging from tips on how to hide eggplant in tomato sauce for picky eaters to how to freeze a summer surplus of grilled peppers. I learned, among other things, that there is a Northeast-hardy variety of kiwifruit, although I am skeptical of the hint that reminded me "when eating sweets, the key is moderation," and the suggestion that just one or two of the Maple Oatmeal Pecan Cookies with Dark Chocolate "will be plenty." They're full of fiber and the right kind of fat, so eating a few more couldn't be that bad.

• **"COOKING CLOSE TO HOME: A YEAR OF SEASONAL RECIPES"**

BY DIANE IMRIE AND RICHARD JARMUSZ, paperbound, \$24.95, www.cookingclosetohome.com

— *Melissa Pasanen*



## SHELF LIFE ICONS ON THE MENU

Many beloved state icons appear in "Dishing Up Vermont: 145 Authentic Recipes From the Green Mountain State." There are bushels of apples, jugs of maple syrup and dairy in many different forms, along with stories about the people who grow, craft and cook our fresh local foods.

Inspired by the homegrown ingredients, food traditions and culinary innovation across Vermont, author Tracey Medeiros of Essex Junction worked with the Vermont Fresh Network (VFN), the country's first statewide farm-to-restaurant organization, to collect recipes that showcase both the raw materials and food talent all around us.

Medeiros — a culinary school graduate, recipe developer and food stylist — has compiled an appealing and varied collection of Vermont recipes. Some highlights include a ham-studded Cream of Garlic Soup from Hemingway's Restaurant in Killington, Rack of Lamb with Maple-Walnut Crust from Trapp Family Lodge in Stowe and Penny Cluse Café's Swiss Chard Pie, a favorite at the downtown eatery in Burlington. Cabot Creamery contributes a rich Cheddar Winter Squash Gratin, South Royalton's Fat Rooster Farm shares Maple-Glazed Chicken with Roasted Garlic and Lemon Purée, and Stevens Orchard in Orwell offers up a simple and fun Flip-Over Apple Cake.

Some proceeds from "Dishing Up Vermont" will be donated to the nonprofit VFN, and in the foreword, Williston-based food writer and former VFN board member Molly Stevens praises the book for providing "a window into the vibrant and vital network of chefs, farmers, growers and producers that define VFN. ... We invite you to get to know those who grow your food."

• **"DISHING UP VERMONT: 145 AUTHENTIC RECIPES FROM THE GREEN MOUNTAIN STATE"**

BY TRACEY MEDEIROS, 288 pages, paperbound, \$19.95, Storey Publishing, North Adams, Mass.

— *Melissa Pasanen*