
Around the Place

December 2018

We are deep into mid-winter now, with early sunsets, late sunrises, and temperatures cold enough at times to cause a thin layer of ice to cover the north end of our pond.

Our skylscapes, routinely beautiful, brought us some spectacular autumnal moonrises. Full moons glide above the eastern mountains, first showing as a bright glow illuminating the night sky and then as a gigantic reddish disk, rising surprisingly quickly into the sky where it loses its color as it climbs higher and higher.



Although we live in a dry area—less than eight inches of rain each year—we enjoy an ever-changing drama of clouds forming, disappearing and reforming to the west around Mt. Wheeler and then moving east across the valley. Sometimes our clouds look like high-flying saucers. Other times low clouds wreath Mt. Wheeler, giving the hope of rain (or snow), although more often than not we receive no precipitation from these dramatic displays.

When winter conditions are just right, our valley—and Home Farm—are surrounded in fog that freezes on each surface, forming delicate ice crystals. This hoarfrost is called *pogonip* in the Shoshone language. We had three or four pogonip days in early December, leaving each twig, weed stalk and fence wire encased in glittering white.

We humans tend to have fewer outside activities in the wintertime. Hoses have been drained and put away. Tools and mowers have been stored in sheds. The garden has been harvested, with our food room full of onions and garlic. Leaves have been raked or blown off our lawns. We busy ourselves with inside activities: cleaning, sorting, organizing our residences and School buildings, along with maintenance chores, such as painting and minor repairs.

However, the animal world is still active outdoors. Pinion jays move in big blue flocks from place to place around the farm, looking for seeds and other good things to eat. Our resident deer herd (about eight at the moment, does and fawns led by a big buck with an imposing set of antlers) browse during the day and bed down in the east meadow at night. They seem invisible in the dark, until our headlights catch pairs of bright eyes reflecting back at us.

Our owl family—two adults and a juvenile—can be heard hooting and calling to one another during the hours from dusk to dawn. The juvenile no longer makes its odd baby squawks—it hoots in new grown-up fashion. The owls seem to enjoy resting in the area around the Centrum. It is fun to stand under the big pine tree in the Centrum yard and look straight up to see a motionless mass of feathers with two eyes peering calmly back down.





The coyotes, too, are active in winter, calling to each other during the day as well as in the night. Several coyotes have been seen near our residences, which is a bit unusual. Perhaps they have been following rabbits or other prey which have hidden themselves near our buildings.

At this time of year, the words from one of Vitvan's Christmas talks come to my mind.

"We know that the Wise Ones of all times understood the birth of a great power in human consciousness, the coming of a real great light in the individualizing process; that sooner or later everyone will reach the point where this great force awakens and enters his consciousness; a great and true light is born. This is the occasion which we observe, either memory of its having occurred or in anticipation of its coming and its fulfillment in us, as it has been fulfilled in all of the Illuminati of all times."

May you and yours enjoy Love and Peace this season.

Susan Wetmore

