

Book & Leaf Press Release (Final)

10 Park Street

Brandon, Vermont

Barnyards, Barefeet and Bluejeans: A Horse's Tale

by Allen A. Mills, Jr.

With an **Open Mic for all writers**

Saturday, March 30, 2019 at 2:00PM

Contact: B. Amore (amoreb@earthlink.net)

Book & Leaf is presenting a very special reading, and Open Mic, on Saturday, March 30th, at 2 PM. **Allen A. Mills, Jr.**, a Florence native, will be reading some of his favorite stories from **Barnyards, Barefeet and Bluejeans: A Horse's Tale**. The Allen Mills Farm in Whipple Hollow, Florence has been in the Mills family for five generations. The 280-acre homestead is tucked into the beautiful Florence Valley which figures prominently in the book.

When Mills' daughters began asking questions about the farm's history, he began to recall the years he worked with his father, and the 30 to 40 milking cows that provided their livelihood during the forties and fifties. What started out as a book of memories developed into a "kind of history book" that chronicled a way of life that has now largely disappeared. The Mills farm is still worked for agricultural purposes by the fifth generation of the Mills Family.

In a unique turn of perspective, **Allen A. Mills Jr.** decides to narrate his book from the view of his childhood companion, a large draft horse named Dick. Allen confides his observations and deepest feelings to Dick, who always patiently listened and accepted him. In turn, Dick chronicles not only the adventures and misadventures of the Mills siblings, but also the rich family life, which filled the farmhouse with warmth, challenges, and always, love.

Shelly Williams, Head Librarian at the Maclure Library in Pittsford, writes, *One of the main themes in **Barnyards, Barefeet and Bluejeans** was the view of the weather. The weather rules farming . . . Weather is on every farmer's mind, and we take for granted what early farmers had to read the tealeaves, to deduce. Told with an incredible sense of humor and enough stories to last a lifetime, Allen brought us back in time and gave a story we will never forget.*"

The book became a family affair. Written by Allen during the dawn hours that have always been part of his work life, it was transcribed onto a computer by his sister Kathy. One daughter edited and proofread the manuscript, the other daughter, Vanessa, provided the cover illustrations. It is a rare volume, written with honesty and humor. Allen A. Mills, Jr. not only entertains, but also instructs along the way. The stories endlessly prove Allen's dictum, that "In farming, there are no endings, only beginnings."

Please join us in welcoming **Allen A. Mills, Jr.**, to Book & Leaf, for an afternoon of Vermont storytelling. You are sure to be transported into memories, and adventures that delight and entertain. The public is also invited to participate in the **Open Mic** from 2-2:30 before the reading. Support Vermont talent and keep expanding our community of lovers of the written word!

Bio below:

BIO:

Allen A. Mills, Jr., the author of ***Barnyards, Barefeet and Bluejeans***, and his wife, Bobbie, live in a house they built on the farm where the stories take place. The farm is located in a hidden valley off the Whipple Hollow Road in Florence, Vermont. It is one of the six farms originally owned by his Great-Grandfather, Austin Allen Mills. the land is still worked for agricultural purposes by the fifth generation of the Mills Family.

Allen has three sisters, all of whom appear in the book. Ferne is a retired teacher and local figure in Brandon. Kathy did all the typing of the original manuscript and lives in the original old farmhouse. Jan spends her time chasing golf balls on the courses near her two homes, one in North Carolina and the other in Florida.

Allen and Bobbie have two daughters. The youngest did all the proofreading of the book, and the eldest, Vanessa, created the cover image and the illustrations. They also have two grandsons, Ian and Carson Holmquist who live in Pittsford. Allen's greatest pride is his wife, daughters and grandsons.

Allen was educated in local schools of Florence, Pittsford, and graduated from Otter Valley Union High School in 1963. He spent six years in the Vermont Army National Guard, attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant – E6 in the 45th Engineers Division. He worked for 35 years at General Electric Co. in Rutland, Vermont, and then as a Machine Setup and Group Leader for the Large Engine Machine Group. Allen retired in 2000, after having attained many awards for Quality Control and Cost Saving Practices while working at G. E.

Barnyards, Barefeet and Bluejeans: A Horse' Tale, is Allen's first book – but not his last!