

# Monarch Mentors

An educational program of the Blue Ridge Monarch and Milkweed Association

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"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world;  
Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead

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## An Epiphany

### about monarchs, journeys, & cold mountains

When I was a child, January 6, Epiphany, was called Old Christmas and the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas. In Mexico, near the overwintering monarch sanctuaries it is called Three Kings Day, and commemorates the *Journey* of the Magi who sought the Christ child some two thousand years ago. In olden Europe, January 6 was the day when families removed the Christmas trees from their homes and burned them on bonfires for good luck in the New Year.

This holiday, I heard a Joni Mitchell song called River and it has given me pause. *"It's coming on Christmas, they're cutting down the trees, they're putting up reindeer, singing songs of joy and peace, I wish I had a river- I could sail away on..."* If you know this song, its hauntingly beautiful melody may linger in your head for days.

How does these fit into a newsletter about monarch butterflies? Well, they are musings on recurring words this holiday season: journeys, trees, monarchs, rivers, songs of joy and peace...

The image of *journeying* shows up in the Christmas release of the movie "Cold Mountain": It is the *journey* of Inman, trying to find his wounded way home from the war. Both the movie and novel mention the *journeys* of 18<sup>th</sup> century naturalist/explorer William Bartram & his book TRAVELS.

If you go to this website: [www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/air](http://www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/air), first of all, prepare to have your breath briefly taken away. It is the website for the National Forests in North Carolina where the U.S. Forest Service (and cooperators) monitor the air quality of the Shining Rock Wilderness Area. A photo is snapped every half hour of daylight of Cold Mountain, which is about 5 miles as the crow flies from the camera location.

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