



# EAST MONTPELIER SIGNPOST



Volume XX—Number Four

March/April 2010

## Town Meeting Day—March 2

### Mark Your Calendar

Voting Dates and Places

**Voter Registration** for the upcoming Town/School Meeting at the Town Office is during regular office hours, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon. – Thurs., and Fri., 9 a.m. to noon.

Last day to register is Wed., February 24 by 5 p.m.

**Town Forum:** Sat., February 27, 9:30 a.m. to noon, EMES gym. This will be your only opportunity to discuss all school district and town warning articles, including the budget items that are to be voted on by Australian ballot. The candidates for offices will be introduced. Remember to bring your copy of the Town Report. The school articles will be discussed first, followed by the town articles.

**School/Town Meeting Day:** Tues., March 2, 9:30 a.m. at EMES. The Town and School Meetings are both warned for 9:30 a.m. The Town Meeting will be recessed until the completion of the School Meeting. Babysitting will be available beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the kindergarten room.

**Australian Ballot:** Tues., March 2, at EMES, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

**Early or Absentee Voting:** Available Wed., February 10 through Mon., March 1. Call the Town Clerk's Office at 223-3313 or go to the office to obtain ballots and vote. All ballots must be returned by 7 p.m. on March 2 to be counted.



### Choosing Service to the Town

Descriptions taken largely from the VLCT Resource Manual

**Town and School District Moderator:** *elected separately; may be one or two individuals*

*The moderator is the presiding officer of municipal and school meetings and shall decide questions of votes taken, except if Australian ballot is used. The moderator shall preserve order in the conduct of business and meetings.*

**Michael Dworkin:** For the last few years, I've been honored to be elected Moderator for our Town and School Meetings. I have enjoyed doing this, and I hope I've been doing a fair job. If you think so, I'd appreciate your vote in this year's election (to be moderator for the 2011 Town and School Meetings).

However, here's a very early "heads up" notice that I will NOT be running in NEXT year's election, since that will be for 2012, a year in which I may be on a sabbatical too far way to come to Town and School meetings. Our

# Signpost Volunteers

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**Signpost**

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# Top of the Signpost

## You Decide

Will you be at East Montpelier Elementary School on March 2? I fervently hope so.

One of the great pleasures—and responsibilities—of living in rural Vermont and East Montpelier, in particular, is that local government not only encourages, but actually requires individual participation. I became aware of the rarity of our exercise in direct democracy a few years ago. I presented a mock town meeting session at a national conference to demonstrate how local school decisions are made in most Vermont communities. Afterwards, I was deluged with questions about whether the session actually reflected reality. Many people could not fathom that our process is more than a quaint reminder of the past.

It is so easy to be involved in making local decisions in our town. You have not only a vote, but also a real opportunity to influence the way things happen and exactly what happens. East Montpelier's school budget—by far our largest public expense—is determined on the floor at Town/School Meeting. The school board will present the results of its considerable research and work; then it's up to us to decide if we agree. We can discuss priorities and preferences; we can vote a smaller or a larger bottom line. You can imagine that our school board pays close attention to these discussions, because in the end the bottom line decision is ours. And while our municipal budget is voted by Australian Ballot, I can tell you from experience that the selectboard listens very carefully to citizen input at the pre-Town Meeting forum (February 27) as those monies are spent during the year.

Municipal and school governments in East Montpelier depend on volunteers. We all suffer if we don't participate because that means that decisions will be made by fewer people and may not take all perspectives into account. Look at the list of appointed boards and committees in your Town Report and find an area that interests you. Then sign up. It's much better to work the system than complain that it doesn't work. Do your part; you'll like it.

*—Edie Miller is a former selectboard member and involved citizen*

## Join Us for Lunch on Town Meeting Day

Town Meeting potluck lunch has become a wonderful tradition in East Montpelier. Join us and catch up with old friends and meet new neighbors. Here's how it works: Bring a dish to share—salad, main dish, bread, or dessert. Bring enough food for four times as many people as in your group. This is a true potluck. If you can't possibly bring a dish to share, \$5.00 will buy you the best lunch you'll eat all year! (We hope we don't run out of food.) Dishes should be dropped off in the kitchen in the morning.

Being part of the kitchen crew is a great way to meet your neighbors or catch up with old friends. Volunteers are needed throughout the day. To volunteer, or for more information, contact Rachael Grossman at 223-3177.



## Town Offices and Candidate Statements (continued)



town is full of good folks who may want to think about running next year to be Moderator in 2012; if so, I'll be happy to talk about what it is like.

For this election, to serve in 2011, all I can say is that I have tried to follow up on the good examples I saw in past decades—able moderators who helped us consider, debate, learn from each other, and decide things. I try to listen for “the sense of the meeting,” to apply the rules with fairness, efficiency, and common sense, and to help us all move to clear resolutions of the issues before us.

As to background, I and my wife (Loring Starr) have lived and raised our children (Sam and Alice) on Powder Horn Glen Road since we came back to Vermont in 1984. At various times over those 26 years, I have tried to be helpful in town affairs, ranging from serving on the Conservation Advisory Committee, to helping with *Signpost* silent-auctions, to scooping ice cream and judging baked goods on Rally Day weekends. Also, for decades, I've walked, driven, and snow-shoed across enough of East Montpelier to know how much we owe to those who have built and sustained a wonderful community for us to live in.

If you elect me again this year, I'll try to run the 2011 meetings and forum (but NOT the 2012 ones) in ways that help us all listen to each other on the path to good decisions.

**Selectboard Member:** *elect one three-year term, one two-year term*

*Selectboard members are responsible for general supervision of the affairs of the Town and are responsible for seeing that all duties, not assigned by law to any particular officer, are carried out. The Selectboard convenes Town Meetings and may enact*

*ordinances and rules that regulate areas such as roads, traffic, waste disposal, animals, and nuisances as examples.*

**C. Bruce Johnson:** (three-year term) I had the pleasure of serving as the town's zoning administrator from 2006–2009 and would welcome the opportunity to put the knowledge gained from those years to use for the benefit of the community. My training and experience as an engineer and attorney should also be an asset as we strive to move forward in an era of economic and technologic complexity. My wife, Lindy, and I live on Sodom Pond Road with our two sons (U-32 students), two cats, and way too many chickens. I'd appreciate your support on March 2nd.

**Jamie Laquerre:** (three-year term) No statement submitted.

**Carl Etnier:** (two-year term) East Montpelier is a vibrant town with many assets. The Select Board has the opportunity to position us to be even stronger in the future.

The town needs to explore imaginative ways for providing essential services while keeping taxes down in these difficult economic times. For example, the new fire station's design uses energy efficiency and renewable fuel (wood pellets) to insulate the Fire Department from future oil price shocks. Attracting and retaining strong town employees and consultants is a similarly smart investment.

We should also explore ways to help residents keep their own costs down, such as Vermont's new PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) program, which allows the town to assist property owners in installing energy efficiency and renewable energy—at no up-front cost. It's not quite developed enough for us to start the program in March, but we should seriously consider it for the next Town Meeting ballot.

I moved to East Montpelier in 1998 (full time in 2001). I've served as sewage officer and a member of the Selectboard's wastewater advisory committee and am currently a member of the Energy Committee. I've also been part of the Fire Department Auxiliary and assisted the Department with scene support.

**Seth B. Gardner:** (two-year term) I am running for the Selectboard because I want to make a contribution of my time to the town. In the 23 years that I have lived in East Montpelier, I have certainly seen the need for people to run for town office. I think it is important for citizens to give to the town in this way.

I own and operate the McKnight Farm, an organic dairy farm on Snow Hill Road. The business and management skills that it takes to run this dairy farm are also skills that I can bring to the Selectboard. I am a frugal steward of the dairy farm, surviving and even thriving in a business where many

## Town Offices and Candidate Statements (continued)



people have left or failed. My farm has limited resources, but within those limits it continues to prosper. This type of management can benefit the town as it, too, does not have unlimited financial resources. At this time, with government getting bigger and deficits ballooning, it is important to run our town as efficiently and cost effectively as possible.

I can bring to the Selectboard common sense, practicality, and strong and creative problem-solving capabilities. I'm a can-do person with a strong work ethic. I feel that I can make decisions that will benefit the majority of the citizens in this town and that I will do what is necessary to see those decisions through to their conclusion.

Thank you for considering me for Selectboard.

**Lister:** elect one three-year term

*Listers are responsible for determining the value of the real and personal property in town. This is the value the Selectboard or the Town will use to set a tax rate necessary to raise the money to operate the town in the next year. It is also the basis for the determination of the property wealth of the municipality for purposes of setting state education property taxes.*

**Putnam Clayton:** No statement submitted.

**Auditor:** elect one three-year term, one two-year term

*Town Auditors are responsible for examining and adjusting the accounts of all Town and Town school district officers and all other persons authorized by law to draw orders on the Town treasurer. Secondly, they report their findings in writing to the legal voters of the Town.*

**Deborah Fillion:** (three-year term) No statement submitted.

**Charlotte (Cherie) Staples:** (two-year term) I have served two appointments as auditor in 2008 and 2009 (due to auditor resignations). I am a bookkeeper who works for Capital Stationers and the Winooski Natural Resource Conservation District and provides bookkeeping services for several small

business clients. Additionally, I am a photographer and have had several local exhibits. I have also done some writing in the past (SkyEarth Letters in seekermagazine.com) and sing in the Onion River Chorus and the Old Meeting House choir. I'm currently chair of the East Montpelier Senior Living Initiative.

**Cemetery Commissioner:** elect one five-year term  
*The cemetery commissioners are responsible for the care and management of the Town's cemeteries.*

**Elliott Morse:** I am pleased to serve as a Cemetery Commissioner. It makes a big difference in our town to keep our cemeteries looking nice so we can be proud of them.

**Town Law Agent:** elect one one-year term

*As in most Vermont towns, this is an inactive office in East Montpelier. Although statute provides that an agent to prosecute and defend suits shall be elected, no statute provides the agent with any independent authority to act.*

No candidate

**Town Grand Juror:** elect one one-year term

*As in most Vermont towns, this is an inactive office in East Montpelier whose duties have been taken over by the State's Attorney. The grand juror is responsible for inquiring into and providing information to the proper authorities of criminal offenses that may occur in the town in which he or she has been elected.*

No candidate

**Trustee for Public Funds:** elect one three-year term

*The Trustee is given responsibility for managing public funds. In actuality, this is an inactive position in East Montpelier and other towns. In EM the position has been commonly held by the Town Treasurer who exercises this responsibility as Treasurer.*

No candidate

## Town Offices and Candidate Statements (continued)

### **First Constable:** elect one one-year term

*East Montpelier has voted to prohibit constables from exercising any law enforcement authority. The constables serve as animal control officers and may be called on to serve civil or criminal process and to aid first responders when necessary.*

**Sandy F. Conti:** I have been the First Constable for the last three years and have found it interesting and challenging. I enjoy the variety of calls and situations that I have been summoned to. I am also Animal Control officer and find that interesting too. I would appreciate your vote to continue serving as First Constable.

### **Second Constable:** elect one one-year term

Same as First Constable

**Paul Haynes:** No statement submitted

### **Collector of Delinquent Taxes:** elect one three-year term

*The CDT is authorized to work with delinquent tax payers to arrange payment due to the Town and is authorized to collect penalty and interest and sell property at auction if necessary to assure settlement of the Town's claim.*

**Karen M. Gramer:** I have been your Collector of Delinquent Taxes for the last two years, and believe I have served the taxpayers of East Montpelier well. I successfully collected delinquent taxes due the Town of East Montpelier and have conducted one tax sale.

My unique work experience as a real estate paralegal for over 20 years, interacting with the public, and working in many of the town clerk's offices in the State of Vermont have given me the knowledge to thoroughly understand the complex tax collection process. After the Treasurer submits the Warrant to me for collection, I notify taxpayers monthly via US mail of their delinquent accounts. I also speak with them frequently

in order to work on timely payment arrangements balancing the taxpayers' ability to pay along with the town's need for revenue. I have written a collection policy which is distributed to delinquent taxpayers. My detailed Collection Reports are submitted biweekly to the Town, and frequent meetings with the Treasurer and monthly reconciliations ensure accurate financial calculation and recordation of delinquent taxes.

My first two years as Collector of Delinquent Taxes have been a mutually successful experience, and I look forward to continuing to serve the taxpayers of East Montpelier.

### **Planning Commissioner:** elect three three-year terms

*The Planning Commission is responsible for preparing and maintaining a current Town Plan and Zoning regulations. It reviews significant developments and makes recommendations on issues including land development, transportation, economic and social development, historic, wetland and scenic preservation.*

**Kim B. Watson:** Thank you for letting me support the community as a planning commissioner for the last three years. I wish to continue in that role and still have a strong interest in zoning and planning in our community. I believe that people have a right to do what they want with their property while ensuring that land and property values in East Montpelier are preserved. I want to support the work of our Selectboard and the Zoning Administrator and encourage business ownership in East Montpelier.

I have lived in East Montpelier for over 24 years and worked for the last 29 years in the environmental chemistry field and environmental project management; balancing environmental issues with business strategies. I currently work as a Quality Assurance Manager and Health and Safety Officer for Stone Environmental in Montpelier and have part ownership in Capitol Grounds Café and Roastery in downtown Montpelier and the roasting operation in East Montpelier Village.



## Town Offices

PO Box 157, East Montpelier, VT 05651  
Phone: 802-223-3313  
Office Hours: Mon–Thurs 9 AM–5 PM  
Friday 9 AM–12 PM

Town Clerk/Treasurer: Terri Conti  
[eastmonttct@comcast.net](mailto:eastmonttct@comcast.net)

Town Administrator: Craig Kleman  
[eastmontadmin@comcast.net](mailto:eastmontadmin@comcast.net)

Zoning Admin: Dina Bookmyer-Baker  
[eastmontza@comcast.net](mailto:eastmontza@comcast.net)

Collector of Delinquent Taxes: Karen Gramer  
[karengramer@comcast.net](mailto:karengramer@comcast.net)

Fire Warden: Jon Boucher 223-7902

First Constable/Animal Control Officer:  
Sandy Conti 479-3169

2nd Constable: Paul Haynes 223-1651

Listers: Ross Hazel & Renée Carpenter  
[eastmontlstr@comcast.net](mailto:eastmontlstr@comcast.net) or 223-3313 ext.206

Health Officer: Dave Grundy 476-4300

Service Officer: Rachael Grossman 223-3177

### Selectboard

Rob Chickering, Chair  
[rchickering2009@gmail.com](mailto:rchickering2009@gmail.com)

Peter Hill Don Welch  
Tracy Phillips Duane Wells

### Planning Commission

Rick Hopkins, Chair, 229-4375  
Seth Gardner Mark Lane  
Jack Pauly Gene Troia  
Kim Watson Carol Welch  
Ken Santor Jean Vissering

### Zoning Board of Adjustment

Richard Curtis, Chair  
Jeff Cueto Jane Grinde  
Steve Kappel Cliff King  
Mark Lane Gray Ricker  
Ken Santor Stanley Pierce

### State Representative

Tony Klein, 793-6032  
[twk@tonyklein.com](mailto:twk@tonyklein.com)

### U-32 Jr./Sr. High School

Ginny Burley  
Emily Goyette

### Elementary School

Janice Aldrich, Chair  
[Janice\\_Aldrich@hotmail.com](mailto:Janice_Aldrich@hotmail.com)  
Andrea Colnes  
Rosie Laquerre  
Michele Leno  
Trevor Lewis

## Town Weathervane

To allow space for all the Town Meeting-related information, minutes from public meetings and land transfer information has been posted on our website this month. Go to [www.emsignpost.com](http://www.emsignpost.com).

### MILESTONES

#### Births:

- Hazel Blossom VanderPyl, daughter born September 14, 2009, to Erin Blaze Clark & Bobic J. VanderPyl.
- Kyle Logan Leighty, son born September 29, 2009, to Emily Pierson & Levi Erikson Leighty.
- Chase Riley Pickel & Charlie Ross Pickel, twin sons born October 5, 2009, to Marlana Jean & Christopher Pickel.

- Clara Lorelei Gosbee, daughter born November 6, 2009, to Christina Lynn Gay & Dain Merrill Gosbee.
- Natalie Ann Dulac, daughter born January 20, 2010, to Marcia Tosi & Zachary Dulac of Arundel, ME. Grandparents, Donald & Sylvia Tosi of E. Montpelier and Gregory & Olive Dulac of New Portland, ME.

#### Deaths

- Virginia DeMott Thompson, died December 28, 2009, mother of Sloan Goodall.
- Patricia Ann Merriam, died January 11, 2010, spouse of Wesley A. Merriam.
- Phyllis O. Duso died January 25, 2010, long-time resident of East Montpelier.

## Lending a Helping Hand

While the newspapers tell us that the economy is on its way to recovery, unemployment remains high and wages are low. One reason I am so proud to live in Vermont is that our state has a long history of lending a helping hand. Our numerous state agencies and non-profit organizations are ready to assist us when times are tough. As our communities have repeatedly shown, individually and collectively we take care of each other.

If you or someone you know needs assistance, there are a variety of resources available. While there are too many to list for this article, here are a few numbers to keep handy.

**211:** This is the first number to call. You will get a real person at the other end of the line who will refer you to an appropriate agency. Their website, [www.vermont211.org](http://www.vermont211.org), is user-friendly and easy to navigate.

**Central Vermont Community Action Council:** 479-1053: Assistance with food, tax preparation, fuel assistance, and more.

**Department of Economic Services:** 1-800-479-6151: Assistance with 3 Squares Vermont (formerly known as food stamps), emergency assistance, and fuel assistance.

**WIC (Women, Infants and Children):** 1-800-649-4357: Serves income-eligible pregnant women, women who are breastfeeding or who have a new baby, and infants and children up to age 5 who are nutritionally or medically at risk.

**Community Lunches:** Community lunches are held in downtown Montpelier, Monday through Saturday at one of the churches. A dinner is held on the third Sunday of each month at the Bethany Church. For information, call 229-9158.

**Emergency Food Shelves:** Trinity Church, Montpelier - 223-7725 and the Onion River Food Shelf in Marshfield - 426-4097.

**Green Mountain Transportation Agency:** 223-7287: Bus service within and between Montpelier and Barre. Service also includes Central Vermont Medical Center, Walmart, Shaws, and National Life. Also provides transportation to medical appointments.

**Central Vermont Council on Aging:** 800-642-5119: Offers numerous programs for seniors such as case management, help with tax preparation, home-delivered meals, referral to legal services and more.

**Office of Vermont Health Access:** 1-800-250-8427: Health insurance info including Medicaid, Catamount, Dr. Dynasaur, and prescription plans.

There are many more resources available. As the Town Service Officer, I am happy to assist you in finding the services you or a friend may be trying to access. Please feel free to call me at 223-3177. *—Rachael Grossman, Town Service Officer*

## Town Offices and Candidate Statements (continued)

**Kenneth Santor:** I am looking forward to another three years. I have lived in East Montpelier most of my life on the County Road. I have been on the Planning Commission the past eleven years. I feel that in the past I have been fair and consistent on the procedures of the zoning and subdivision regulations.

I was one of the nine person Planning Commission board that worked for multiple years on the revised and updated zoning and subdivision regulations.

I am currently also serving as a member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment. And I would appreciate your vote to continue.



**School Director:** School Directors are responsible for managing the general affairs of the school district by developing policies and hiring able administrators to assure the soundness of the physical assets as well as the educational content and methods presented in student classrooms. They are responsible for convening School District Meetings.

**East Montpelier Elementary School Director:** elect one three-year term, one two-year term

**Andrea Colnes:** (three-year term) It's hard to believe that my term as EMES school board member is drawing to a close. Three years seemed like a long time when I joined the board in 2007, but my daughter is approaching 4th grade and much has been accomplished at EMES over the past few years. As a community, we faced some significant challenges including transition of our principal, budget constraints, and facility issues. It has been inspiring to watch our community draw together over these difficult issues and continue to invest in and strengthen our elementary school and our deep commitment to the future of our children and our town.

As I look toward the next few years, it seems clear it will be a particularly challenging—and potentially rewarding—time of growth and change for education in Vermont and at EMES.

We face budget constraints, significant facility issues, choices about how to potentially reconfigure or merge schools in our Washington Central district with those in Montpelier, issues of administrative consolidation and more. The choices we make over these next few years will do much to shape EMES for decades to come. In running for the EMES board for a second term, it is my hope to continue to support full community participation in understanding these issues and to develop creative, forward-thinking options to take our school to where it needs to be to prepare our children to take their place in the world.

It has been an honor to serve the community as a member of EMES Board, and I look forward to the possibility of continuing to give back to my community in this way if elected for another term.

**Trevor Lewis:** (two-year term) In my two years on the School Board so far, I have learned a lot, and it has increased my already-existing admiration for the range and depth of challenges met every day by teachers and School leadership. In the past two years, the School has found new, solid academic leadership. Faculty and student morale and proactive collaboration between the Board, Principal, and faculty/staff all seem to be on an upswing. Although my son will move on to U-32 for Middle School in just a few months, I hope (and believe) that these healthy trends can continue.

At the same time, it has hit home that the School's physical plant is declining due to frugal though well-intentioned choices, which will be more expensive to remedy in the long haul. While the current economic and job climate is severe for many of us (including myself), it is exceedingly important that we proceed not only with caution, but also with foresight, so that we avoid any further "band-aids on top of band-aids." We are fortunate to have a number of exceptionally talented and dedicated community members with professional experience in the design, construction, and maintenance of buildings who, through the Facilities Committee, are examining options. Almost any work done will result in lower energy use and decreased operational costs.

No ground will be broken, nor debt incurred, until the community is on board with moving forward. If re-elected, I hope to continue to learn and contribute to the School's forward progress in these challenging times, seeking solutions to serve both students and taxpayers.

**U-32 School Director:** elect one three-year term

**Virginia (Ginny) Burley:** Thank you to the voters of East Montpelier for electing me to the U-32 Board of Directors for the past 15 years. During that time the school has seen many changes. The facility is one of the best in the state, and the establishment of a capital fund will ensure that it is respon-

## Candidate Statements (continued)

sibly maintained. Principal Keith Gerritt's goal to "raise U-32 to the next level" will result in more AP level courses at U-32, and increased opportunities through technology and distance learning are on the horizon. Student achievement is high, and the gap between low and high achievers is narrowing. Athletics, music, and drama thrive. The website, newsletter, and parent groups have improved communication. Every year, we have presented very responsible budgets while maintaining the quality programs the community expects.

Recently Washington Central Supervisory Union has begun discussions with Montpelier Public Schools to see if collaboration or merger would bring about greater opportunities and cost savings. I'm looking forward to continuing to participate in this initiative. It's exciting to explore new educational frontiers.

With an outstanding facility, talented faculty, and excellent programs, U-32 is a good school, and its students do very well in their post-secondary activities; but there is always more to do to make it better. I believe that the stability, consistency, experience, and leadership I bring to this position will help make U-32 better than ever, and I would like to keep working to bring good value to the townspeople I represent. I appreciate your support.

## Thank you *Signpost* supporters

Contributions are always welcome. Please mail them to:  
PO Box 184, East Montpelier, VT 05651

Malcolm & Diana Fielder  
Lois McKnight  
Marty & Edie Miller  
Kris Christiansen

Alice & Richard Angney  
Bob & Lois Webster  
Chuck & Martha Haynes

## Terri Conti Honored



Terri Conti recently received a plaque in recognition of her dedicated service on the E.M. Recreation Committee from 1994 to 2009. Terri was inspirational in starting the annual Easter Egg Hunt on EMES grounds and has been managing the swimming lessons program. Terri also spent several volunteer hours investing in the town's 12-acre recre-

ational fields, which led to many improvements: the creation of the sign at the entrance, the installation of a new backstop for the softball field, the fence separating the fields from the parking area, and the bleachers. In addition Terri attended many volunteer workbees, and she and her husband, Sandy, have volunteered their time to remove trash from the fields for many years. Thank you Terri!

—Patrick McCoy, Co-chair, Recreation Committee

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## Village Residents Consider Forming A Fire District

The Hedges family has decided to retire from operating the Crystal Springs Water System in the Village of East Montpelier. In response to these circumstances, some customers on the Crystal Springs Water System have formed a committee to investigate the possible purchase of the water system. The Committee has determined the best solution is to form a Fire District.

We ask that all Crystal Springs customers attend our informational meeting on Wednesday, March 10, at 7:00 p.m., at the East Montpelier Elementary School. The Committee wishes to discuss the future of this water system and requests that you attend. Discussion will be focused on the system being transferred from the Company to a Fire District. In attendance will be a representative from the Water Supply Division of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and representatives from the Vermont Department of Public Service.

The meeting facility is wheelchair accessible. If you need any other accommodation because of a disability, please contact a committee member immediately or before Friday, March 5. If you are not able to attend this meeting, but would like to comment on the future of this water system, please relay your comments to one of the listed Committee members.

Steve Gilman, Chair: 223-0803

Bob Morey: 229-0092

Rubin Bennett: 249-1101

Ed Burgess: 229-6693

Robert Bisson: 223-6233

—Steve Gilman, Chair, Fire District Committee

# East Montpelier Elementary School News

## From the Principal

Our new well project, under the direction of the Facilities Committee, is in the final phases of installation. The Facilities Committee undertook this new well project to provide EMES with a lasting and safe source of water. The overall cost to EMES for the project will come in at a fraction of the overall amount due to financial planning that took advantage of federal reimbursement and grant programs. A big "thank you" to the Facilities Committee!

The EMES School Board Facilities Committee continues to meet every first and third Wednesday from 5:30-6:30 p.m. A recent presentation by Tim Pedrotty of VSBIT (Vermont School Board Insurance Trust) shared custodial, maintenance, and safety issues. Mr. Pedrotty and architect Tracy Montminy reported that the cost of a phase-by-phase approach would be much greater than completing necessary and recommended repairs and remodeling items at one time. While the bond amount for doing it once would be lumped together at voting time (perhaps creating some sense of sticker-shock), it would save the community from a much greater, overall price tag should a phase-by-phase approach be adopted.

With regard to the school budget for the 2010–2011 school year, the school board will present a budget that reflects an overall increase of less than 0.5%. Keeping the budget as close to "flat" as possible (as requested by the VT Dept. of Education) required us to make changes with regard to staffing and programs. It created opportunities for us to think outside of the box. Using difficult times to create wonderful things is an intentional choice (rather than focus on doom and gloom). While reducing our paraprofessional work force by three positions and making small cuts to counseling services is difficult, changing our model for library services will allow us to provide some services that are greatly needed. With new expectations for teachers in the area of technology integration, a proposed Technology Integration position will support the embedded use of technology in the classroom. This will create clearly defined roles for library instruction, library support, and technology integration.

With all of the facilities issues and the budget work it would be easy to forget that wonderful things are happening at EMES! Everyday I am reminded of why we are here: it's the teaching and learning that make our work so exciting! Thank you all for your continued support for EMES.

—Roddy Cooke, EMES Principal

## From the School Board

On behalf of the school board for East Montpelier Elementary School, I would like to thank all who participated in our November community meetings to address necessary repairs and possible renovations at the school. We begin the new year grateful for the community's input and feeling better informed of their concerns. In response to what we heard from community members at the November meetings, we are taking steps to develop multiple options that will identify the school's immediate and critical needs vs. renovations that may be considered in the longer term, as well as associated costs. We share the community's caution in these difficult economic times, and we support the community's interest in providing the best possible learning environment for our children. The EMES Facilities Committee is consulting with building and maintenance specialists to develop an action plan and we are preparing an informational sheet to address "Frequently Asked Questions," which will be available at Town Meeting.

School-related discussions will occur at 9:30 a.m. at both the pre-Town Meeting forum on Saturday, February 27, and on Town Meeting Day, Tuesday, March 2. Please take advantage of these important opportunities to learn more about what is happening at the school and to voice your concerns.

Remember, school board meetings are open to the public, as are related committee meetings. Regular EMES board meetings are held the third Monday of the month, beginning at 6:30 p.m. and EMES Facilities Committee meetings are held the first and third Wednesdays of the month, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. I encourage all East Montpelier residents to become involved with the school and join us in making these meetings both informative and productive.

Your continued input will play a critical role as we explore all options and form a plan for the future of our school.

—Michele Leno, Chair EMES Facilities Committee

### Ginger Snap

She has soft, thick ginger hair.

She has a very beautiful trot.

When I ride her she gives me warmth in the cool air.

I've never had trouble when she needs to be caught.

She's very calm and easy to ride.

When I catch her she will stand and linger.

She doesn't shift my weight to the side.

Yes, that's my pony Ginger!

—Stella Gardner, Grade 4, EMES

## Think Gardens

Let's see if I got this right. Every year, millions of us sprinkle precious water on our lawns, spread hundreds of pounds of commercial fertilizer (made from precious fossil fuels), spray hundreds of gallons of pesticides and fungicides (again made from precious fossil fuels) all to make the grass grow higher. Then, we drive over the lawn with a mower powered by (you guessed it, precious fossil fuels) so as to cut the grass down, only to send the clippings to the dump (sorry, sanitary land fill), where it takes up precious space and turns into a gloppy mess. While doing all this, we send noxious fumes in the air as lawn mowers do not have the pollution containment requirements of cars.

I would like to suggest an alternative. Turn some (or all) of your lawn into a productive garden. It's easy to do, and the rewards are psychological, spiritual, and monetary. One garden writer converted only 100 square feet of lawn into a garden that produced over \$500 worth of produce in the first year.

The process can be fairly simple. It's easy to avoid the unnecessary, back-breaking work of digging up the sod and turning it into the sub-soil. Instead, spread eight or ten layers of newspaper over the spot you have chosen. The *Times Argus* uses soy-based ink, so there is no worry about toxic inks. Cover the paper with any of last year's leaves you can find to a depth of about two to three inches. Then cover the leaves with a layer of soil or, better still, compost, and you have an instant garden.

If you are new to gardening, start with some easy things to grow such as lettuce, green beans, onions from sets, potatoes, chard, and tomatoes. After avoiding the toxic and expensive "lawn" chemicals, those precious grass clippings can be spread on your garden as labor and water-saving mulch, the gardener's (and soil's) best friend.

Your East Montpelier Energy Committee is ready to assist with helpful hints and even site visits to help you along the way. Contact me at 476-4300 or at ddgrundy@comcast.net.

—David Grundy, Energy Committee Chair

## Emergency Facility Update



As of this writing the building is framed; the roof is on; the sprinkler tanks, sewer tanks, power, and well are installed. The contractors have been doing a great job (even working in the -20° weather). In the weeks to come work will continue to focus on getting the interior rough-ins completed. I would like to thank the selectboards and all of the EMFD staff for the incredible amount of time devoted to this project. Don Welch has not missed a day; he takes pictures daily of the project and has become a regular at the site. We are eager for the day when we can move our operations into the building. Currently we are working out of three locations; this has proven to be very challenging and is requiring huge amounts of extra time and commitment from the staff and members of EMFD.

As always, if you should have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us at 223-5586 or me directly at 223-7899.

—John Audy, Chief EMFD

Photos in this issue were submitted by Gary Lewis and Wendy Soliday, as well as by our *Signpost* photographer, Terry Allen.

## Safety Message From EMFD

EMFD has responded to more chimney fires this season than in the past three to four years combined. Most of these calls could have been prevented by having a routine chimney cleaning and burning dry wood. If you suspect a chimney fire, immediately close the stove down as tight as you can by closing dampers and regulators and call 911 with no delay. If a fire were to spread from your chimney, it could grow three to four times in size every minute. We treat chimney fires as structure fires and do a FULL response until we have confirmed that it has not extended into the house. Once we have the fire out in your chimney we will NOT clean it, and we do not have the equipment to see if any damage has been done to the chimney during the event. You must check this yourself.

The second major problem we have is finding you. Keep in mind that your 911 call is answered in Williston; the information is transferred to the Montpelier Police Dispatcher who then transfers it to us via pagers. It is imperative that you give good directions. We have many roads that are named the same and/or alike in the two towns (Bliss Road East Montpelier; Bliss and Bliss Pond road in Calais.) Delays in sorting out confusing information could have a very negative impact on the outcome of the event. Make sure your house number is posted and visible to us, and if you can help by having someone at the end of the driveway or by marking the spot with flashing lights or some other way, that will help us find you.

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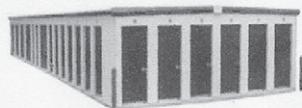
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- Up-to-date calendar listings
- *Signpost* archive
- Organizations in town

Volume XX—Number Four  
March/April 2010

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## EVENTS

**Central Vermont Education Fair:** Sat. Mar. 13: 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Unitarian Church, Montpelier: visit with schools; nature, arts and advocacy organizations, seminars. Free

**At the Kellogg–Hubbard Library** For complete information go to [www.emsignpost.com](http://www.emsignpost.com) and then to the library link.

**Welfare Brat with Dr. Mary Childer:** Wed. Mar. 3, 7 p.m.

**TedX Lunches:** Mon. Mar. 8 and 22, 12–1 p.m. View a short film from Ted.com and discuss it while eating lunch.

**Life in Washington County:** Wed. Mar. 10, 7 p.m. documentary about life in the early 20th century with Senator Bill Doyle

**Must Party = Drinking? How did our Kids Become Drinkers? What's the Solution?:** Thurs. Mar. 11, 6:30–8:30 p.m. The film *Spin the Bottle* critiques the role of popular culture in glamorizing excessive drinking.

**Transition Town Montpelier, Tackling Climate Change and Peak Oil:** Thurs. Mar. 18, 6:00–8:00 p.m.

**A Pioneer Love Story: The Letters of Minnie Hobart with author Priscilla Wilson:** Mon. Mar. 22, 7 p.m. Research for this book was done here at the KHL!

**Kyoto & Environs: Steeped in Ancient Wildness with Jim Kelso:** Wed. Mar. 31, 7 p.m.

**The Unseen Alistair Cooke with daughter Susan Cooke Kittredge:** Wed. Apr. 7, 7 p.m.

**Healthy Mistrust: Protecting Children From Sexual Predators:** Thurs. Apr. 8, 6:30–8:30 p.m. Co-sponsored by KHL and The Montpelier Community Justice Center.

**The Red Book with Jungian analyst Chessie Stevenson:** Wed. Apr. 14, 7 p.m.

**Transition Town Montpelier w/Tom Stearns, High Mowing Seeds:** Thurs. Apr. 15, 6 p.m.

**Earth Day Program—Witnessing the Melting of the Big Ice:** Thurs. Apr. 22, 7 p.m. with Jane English, Jeremy Seeger, and Tina Bielenberg

## NOTICES

**Sat. Feb. 27, 9:30 a.m.: Town & School Pre-Meeting Forum – EMES**

**Tues. Mar. 2, 9:30 a.m. Town & School Meeting,** Voting for Town & School Australian ballot items 7 a.m.–7 p.m.; potluck lunch at noon – EMES.

**Wed. Mar 10, at 7:00 p.m.:** Meeting of users of Crystal Springs Water System – EMES

**Thurs. Mar. 11, 6–8 p.m.:** Rabies Clinic – East Montpelier Village Fire Station

**Thurs. Apr. 1 (5 p.m.):** last day to register dogs with up-to-date rabies vaccination without penalty.

**Mon. May 17 (5 p.m.):** 2nd installment of property taxes due.

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Deadline for Next Issue: April 1, 2010, to Barbara Ploof: 223-6934, [signpostbcn@hotmail.com](mailto:signpostbcn@hotmail.com)

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Selectboard	1st & 3rd Mon	7:00	Town Office Building
Planning Commission (PC)	1st & 3rd Thurs	7:30	Town Office Building
Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA)	1st & 3rd Tues	7:30	Town Office Building
Conservation Fund Advisory Committee	2nd Thurs	7:30	Town Office Building
U-32 School Board	1st & 3rd Wed	6:00	U-32 School
Elementary School Board (EMES)	3rd Thurs	6:30	Elementary School
Recreation Board	3rd Wed	7:15	Elementary School
Volunteer Fire Department (EMFD)	Every Tues	7:00	Fire Station, Templeton Rd.
Four Corners Schoolhouse Association	2nd Wed	7:00	Four Corners School
East Montpelier Senior Living Initiative (EMSLI)	2nd & 4th Tues	6:30	Town Office Building
EMES Parent Teacher Neighbor Org. (PTNO)	1st Wed	6:30	Elementary School