

EAST MONTPELIER SIGNPOST



Volume XXIX—Number Three

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Photo by Wendy Soliday

Richard and Susan Riley: Centered in Music and Art

by Richard Saudek

The red schoolhouse in East Montpelier Center is a beloved community landmark. Its outward appearance hasn't changed much since the mid-1860s, but inside, it has been adapted to accommodate the creative energy of its owners. Since 2012, musician Richard Riley and artist Susan Bull Riley have adapted the interior to accommodate an art studio and a baby grand piano in order to pursue the professions they love.

Susan and Dick met when they (literally) shared a music stand while playing Baroque instruments at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. Over nearly 40 years of marriage, their work took them to Maryland, upstate New York,

Continued on page 5

Mothers Gatherings and Moon-Belly Wellness: Specializing in Support

by Sarah Graves

Watching Victoria Capitanelli with her two children, it is instantly clear that she loves being a mother. She relates to her children with deep respect and joy, and her kind smile and sparkling brown eyes make all children warm up to her quickly. It's no wonder, then, that her massage practice, Moon Belly Wellness, focuses on women, children, and prenatal and postpartum

Continued on page 6



Photo by Will Duane

IN THIS ISSUE

3 — WCSU Becomes WCUUSD

8 — The New Flying Fish on Center Road

4 — Trail Stewards! New Trails! Parking! Signs!

10 — The Vanishing Dairy Farms of East Montpelier

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Top of the Signpost

Writing this shortly after Thanksgiving with a record amount of November snow on the ground, it's hard to focus on Town Meeting Day, which I always think of as a precursor of spring. It's downright disconcerting—almost a form of denial—to be thinking about spring when winter hasn't formally begun yet.

But the purpose of this leap into time travel is to remind all East Montpelier citizens to consider contributing to our town by seeking election to one of the many offices that continue to make this place we call home run smoothly. We are still a very small town (under 2700 residents), and we are largely responsible for governing ourselves. What that means is that many enthusiastic and hard-working folks are willing to spend their time and offer their skills to keep East Montpelier functioning for all of us. As one who has been involved in local government for many decades, I can report that not only is the effort well worthwhile, but that you will gain as much as you give. Petitions to run for office require signatures of one percent of eligible voters (the Town Clerk recommends 30 signatures just to make sure) and are due on January 28. Below are the offices that we will be electing at Town Meeting on March 5, 2019. Brief descriptions of these jobs may be found on the EM Signpost website at www.emsignpost.com.

Town Moderator, 1-year term

Selectboard Member, one 3-year term, one 2-year term

Lister, 3-year term

Auditor, 3-year term

First Constable, 1-year term

Second Constable, 1-year term

Cemetery Commissioner, 5-year term

Planning Commissioner, three 3-year terms

School Moderator, 1-year term

EM Elementary School Director, two positions, terms end 12/31/19

U-32 School Director, term ends 12/31/19

WCUUSD School Directors, ten positions, two from each town

— *Edie Miller is a Signpost volunteer.*

Many Faces Make Town Meeting Potluck...

Without a doubt, one of the best parts of Town Meeting is the potluck lunch—a veritable feast of the best home cooking in East Montpelier. In the background (or foreground), making the potluck come together, are many volunteers who help set up before, serve during, and clean up after the event. Some of them are stalwarts, helping year after year; others are new. Their help is invaluable. Please volunteer for one of three available shifts. Give Sue Racanelli a call, 802-225-6032 or email, racanellis@gmx.com.

WCSU Becomes WCUUSD

The State Board of Education has issued its final plan for consolidated school governance requiring the five towns in the Washington Central Supervisory Union to form a single merged district by July 1, 2019 with one board, one budget, and shared assets and debt. To comply with this timetable, each local elementary school board has designated two of its members to be members of a Transitional Board which will do preparatory work prior to the initiation of the new district which will formally begin on July 1, 2019. EMES members are Flor Diaz Smith and Darci Coleman-Graves.

All townspeople of Berlin, Calais, East Montpelier, Middlesex and Worcester are encouraged to attend the first organizational meeting of the newly merged Washington Central Unified Union School District (WCUUSD) on Monday, January 14, 2019 at 6 p.m. at the U-32 auditorium. The designated Transitional Board members will be sworn in and will hold their first formal meeting directly following the organizational meeting. There is a significant list of required actions to be taken at this organizational meeting, all related to deciding how the merged district will operate (Australian balloting vs on the floor, Robert's Rules or other rules of order, etc.) including the election of the district officers of moderator, clerk, and treasurer. The agenda and more information are available at www.WCSU32.org. The site will be kept up-to-date as new information becomes available.

Also coming up, but without a specific date as of the writing of this article, is a public hearing on the proposed new Articles of Agreement that specify in detail what the WCUUSD is and how it will function including board representation, processes for changing school class configurations, and real estate transactions. These Articles require a positive vote of the public to take effect. That vote will take place in mid-February. Look for announcements of these two dates.

On Town Meeting Day, March 5, 2019, initial members of the merged district board, with terms of one, two, or three years, will be chosen—two board members from each town, elected by the combined votes from all towns. The newly elected board will take over and continue the work of the Transition Board. At Town Meeting, each local school district will also re-elect members of its local elementary and high school boards who remain responsible for the education of the students under their authority until July 1, 2019. Members of the local and the merged boards will work together to effect the transition to the new governance structure without adversely impacting the education of all our children. The work of the local boards will effectively be transferred to the WCUUSD board as of July 1, 2019, and those boards and the local districts they represent will cease to exist as of December 2019.

Information is on the WCSU website at www.wcsu32.org. Your school board members can help with questions.

— Flor Diaz Smith is vice-chair of the EMES school board. She has been active in the Act 46 deliberations from the very beginning.

Potluck Details

Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2019.

Location: East Montpelier Elementary School Cafeteria. Drop off food and collect lunch tickets, 9:00–11:30 a.m.

Food: Your choice of appetizers, salads, main dishes, sides, bread/rolls, dessert. Label your dish, vegetarian, vegan, meat, gluten-free, nuts; your contribution should feed 8–10 guests.

Cost: Free with a food contribution or if you can't bring a dish, \$5 for the best meal in town!

Contact: Sue Racanelli, 802-225-6032 or racanellis@gmx.com





Trail Stewards! New Trails! Parking! Signs!

Trees on Trails—New Trail Stewards are Ready

If a tree falls in the woods, does anyone hear it? Well, we can say for sure that if it falls on one of our East Montpelier trails, it gets noticed.

East Montpelier Trails, Inc. (EMTI) now has volunteer trail stewards for all sections of our trails in town. A list of these folks can be found in the sidebar and on the website. And boy are they busy! Every time we get a good blow, it seems that some section of trail gets blocked. Now with active trail stewards, we have monitors who are walking the trails regularly and either clear the trees themselves or alert EMTI to do so. And there are also tree fairies—anonymous folks who discover downed trees, go back and grab a saw, and cut them up, even before EMTI crews can come out and take care of them. Thank you, tree fairies.

New Trail Section and Trail Improvements

Our trail partner, Greg Western of Cross Vermont Trail and local volunteers spearheaded the completion of the Mallory Brook extension across Minister Brook and southward (the “lollipop” trail) and constructed 200 feet of new boardwalk on the Karen Clark Trail. Both of these projects will serve to reduce erosion and harden the trails for future use by bikes.

Volunteers constructed a new 48” wide boardwalk bridge on the Sparrow Farm trail.

We have installed four new trailhead signs, with updated maps, on the Ormsbee and Karen Clark Trails. These signs are posted at the parking areas to orient trail users and to show how each trail fits into the trail network. We have four more signs in the works: one for each of the Haggett, Templeton, Center, and Dodge Road parking areas.

We continue to monitor the bridge replacement on the Mallory Brook Trail. This construction is complicated by its remote location and various safety and aesthetic concerns.

With help from the owners of Bobolink Farm (formerly the Hawkins Farm), we scouted and flagged a potential route for a new trail to connect the Mallory Brook Trail with the Karen Clark Trail. When constructed, this would give us a continuous trail from Haggett Road all the way to the U-32 trail system and the Winooski River.

Winter Trails Use

The closing of the Morse Farm ski center is a great loss for all of us. Thank you, Burr and partners, for the amazing years of winter skiing fun. Your wonderful trails and warm welcome will be sorely missed. As a reminder, with a few exceptions—the stairways on the Mallory Brook Trail come to mind—our town trails are great for skiing. And all are great for snowshoeing. Some trails also connect to our network of VAST trails in town. In addition, the Onion River Nordic Club is working to provide a groomed public

ski trail system on the Karen Clark Trail, with connection to the trails at U-32. The U-32 ski trails are also a great place to ski.

Next Steps—What’s Up For 2019?

- We’ll need volunteers for our annual trail work on National Trails Day (Saturday June 1, 2019). It’s not too soon to put this on your calendar.
- We plan to build additional 48” wide boardwalks over wet areas along the Sparrow farm fence line.
- We hope to be able to announce the completion of the Mallory Bridge and the reopening of the full length of trail.
- We’ll continue working towards construction of a new “Bobolink Trail.”
- And in conjunction with willing landowners, we will continue to expand the EMTI trail system.

Trail Stewards:

1. Haggett to Templeton – Rick Hopkins
2. Templeton to Center – Norm Carter
3. Center to Dodge – Tom Schmidt
4. Johnson to Cherry Tree Hill – Becca Jordan, Sam Campbell-Nelson
5. School House Rd./Wheeler Rd. to U-32 (Clark Trail) – Nona Estrin and Charles Johnson
6. Sparrow Farm Rd. to Montpelier – Geoff Beyer, Lauren Padilla, and as backup, Dave Webb
7. Ormsbee, Center Rd. to Powder Horn Glen Rd. – Jennifer Boyer, Loring Starr.

If you encounter them on the trail, there’s the opportunity to thank them or to volunteer to help clear up after a storm or on special projects.

As always, profound thanks to our many partners, including the Vermont Land Trust, the Montpelier Area Mountain Bike Association (MAMBA), the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST), the Trust for Public Lands, Cross Vermont Trail, and all of the town landowners who generously share their land with all of us. Thanks for your interest in East Montpelier Trails.

Our website is <http://emtrails.org>. We often have more work to do than volunteers to do it. If you would like to get more involved as a trail volunteer, please contact Dave Webb, our volunteer coordinator at: dhwebb67@gmail.com or 802-279-2198.

Finally, we are always happy to get financial support, which adds to our resources for planning, repair, and new projects. We are a 501(c)(3) organization, so your donation is tax deductible. You may send checks to:

East Montpelier Trails
c/o Richard Brock
234 Cutler Heights Road
Montpelier VT 05602

— Loring Starr is an active member of EMTI.

Virginia, Massachusetts, Vermont, and elsewhere. Then, after a deliberate search through northern New England, they found East Montpelier Center, where they intend to make their permanent home because, as Susan says, “So much about this place is fabulous!” They enjoy their neighbors, the scenery, the wildlife, and the opportunity to pursue their chosen artistic careers.

Dick grew up in Baltimore, where he vividly remembers being overwhelmed by the glory of the music of Bach—“without any doubt the greatest composer.” He attended Marlboro College but transferred to the New England Conservatory to pursue his passion for music. After the Conservatory and a degree in the study of choral conducting at the Peabody Institute, he taught, conducted, and sang in cities and towns throughout the East. For ten years, he served on the music faculty of Cornell University, where he prepared and conducted over 200 works of a wide variety of classical and modern composers. After Cornell, he became director of the Brattleboro Music Center, helping to establish an impressive new performance space for the Center.

After managing and overseeing music programs, he decided that making music was what he loved most. So he and Susan left Brattleboro for Burlington, where he is in his sixth season as director of the Burlington Choral Society. Now in East Montpelier, he has taken on the role of music director at the Montpelier Unitarian Universalist Church. He is now much in demand, with

a reputation as an outstanding choral conductor. He is said to combine precision and clarity with a natural kindness for the performers and love for the music. Musicians in the area happily swear by him.

Upon graduation from Dartmouth, Susan enrolled in the New England Conservatory to study Baroque music, particularly the Baroque flute. This led to that fateful day when she found herself making music next to her future husband. After receiving a master’s degree in music performance, she freelanced as a flutist. Later she became a reading specialist—work that enabled her to be home with their daughters, Lissa and Hannah (now ages 32 and 29 respectively), as much as possible. But from her earliest days, she had a yen to paint; so after much introspection, she took the plunge, setting up as a full-time artist.

Now, within the schoolhouse walls is a handsome, professional artist’s studio, with beautiful watercolors on the walls, tables, chairs, and floor. The works include recognizable homes and farms in the neighborhood, Montpelier scenes, and paintings of Mt. Mansfield. Susan often adds a few finely-painted birds around her flowers or even intense Northern Lights over the mountains.

In February, her work will be on display (and for sale) at the Central Vermont Medical Center.

— *Richard Saudek and his wife, Karen, have lived in East Montpelier Center for more than 44 years. He practices law in Montpelier.*



"Farm Against Mountains" by Susan Bull Riley



"Iris" by Susan Bull Riley

mothers. Victoria graduated from Boulder College of Massage and Therapy in Boulder, Colorado, where she received over 750 hours of training, with a focus on prenatal and postpartum massage. Victoria also has an associate's degree in early childhood education. After she moved to East Montpelier with her husband, Will Duane, she opened a massage practice with those specialties here in Vermont but decided to work only part-time after her first child, Penny, was born.

However, she recently has added another dimension to her own mothering of Penny and James: Mothers Gatherings. Victoria knew that the first few postpartum months, also known as the "fourth trimester," can be difficult, particularly for those who have suffered from traumatic birth experiences, as Victoria did, and are in the process of healing. She herself had the love and support of her in-laws, Michael Duane and Ellen Knoedler, who live right next door. "It was really an instant community that I had," she says, "but not everyone has that type of access, so I really wanted to pay it forward and provide a community for people who might not have what I did. So many people ask, 'How are you enjoying motherhood?' What new moms aren't being asked is, 'How are you not enjoying motherhood?'" Victoria notes, "that's an important question too."

Beyond offering therapeutic massage for new and expectant moms in her private practice, Victoria wanted to provide a supportive space for mothers dealing with the exhaustion, sleep deprivation, and identity shift that so often accompany new motherhood. Hence, Mothers Gatherings began in the

Four Corners Schoolhouse. Here, moms and their children get together with others in their community, free of charge. Children play, snacks and coffee are provided, and Victoria even sets up her massage chair for a small fee. Moms get a chance to chat, and the children are cared for by the group as a whole, giving both moms and children time to socialize and providing the mothers with some much needed self-care.

"It takes a village to raise a child" is a familiar adage, suggesting that many people are needed to support a child. It can also be said that it takes a village to support a family. Community and a sense of belonging are paramount to healthy relationships and, therefore, healthy families. Victoria's commitment to creating a space for women to support one another bodes well for our village and our families.

So what's next for Victoria and Moon Belly Wellness? For now she is focusing on growing her independent practice, caring for her two beautiful children, and continuing the Mothers Gatherings. Be sure to check her Facebook page for dates about upcoming gatherings. For her private practice, now located at 250 Main Street, Montpelier, in the old NECI building, she would like to incorporate pediatric massage and partner with the hospital, nearby birth centers, or a pediatrician. She would also like to work with new parents to teach baby massage techniques. For more information, see her website: moonbellywellnessvt.com.

— Sarah Graves grew up in East Montpelier. She is the mother of two children, her partner is a rock star, and she loves to knit and bake pies.

Major Improvements at the Recreation Field

Under the aegis of the East Montpelier Recreation Board, Selectboard, and involved community members, a significant improvement project is underway at the recreation field on Vincent Flats Road, providing much needed upgrades to drainage, aesthetics and, most importantly, safety.

Much of the work has been done by the East Montpelier road crew led by Road Foreman Guthrie Perry, along with outside contractors when necessary, and volunteer personnel

when practical. Fill and gravel will raise and level the Recreation Field driveway. Roadside ditching along with cleaning and/or replacement of culverts will improve water flow and keep it away from the field. Trees, brush, and the fence between the road and the field have been removed.

This will result in:

- Improved sight lines for entering and exiting vehicles
- Greatly improved drainage
- Removal of the dangers posed by dead and dying trees, large patches of poison ivy, and old, sharp-edged chain link fencing

While the area between Vincent Flats Road and the Recreation Field may seem barren, please be assured that it will not look that way forever. The trees and underbrush will be replaced with new trees and vegetation, appropriate in size and numbers, to fill in some of the space while still allowing for much improved lines of sight between the road and fields. Because wintery weather came early, the planting portion of the project will take place this spring. There will also be new fencing, which will incorporate the existing granite posts if possible.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact the project coordinator, East Montpelier Recreation Board Vice-Chair Paul Winters, at 802-917-3848 or paul.winters@vtc.vsc.edu.

Thank you, Signpost Supporters!

Joanne Bair

Elaine Manghi-Buck

Conrad and Anne Ormsbee

Doris Washburn

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Friends of Coburn Pond Awarded \$1600 Grant

Having protected a favorite community resource—the six-acre Coburn Pond swimming hole in East Montpelier (also known as “Trojan,” after the Twinfield HS mascot)—the Friends of Coburn Pond will use the recently received \$1600 grant from the New England Grassroots Environment Fund (NEGEF) for outreach and program development, as they seek to protect public access in perpetuity.

The 76-acre property that contains Coburn Pond was purchased by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) in the 1990s for the purpose of compensating for wetlands slated to be destroyed during an expansion of US2 East from Cabot to Danville. The VTrans plan was to fill in the swimming hole and construct wetlands south of the pond. Starting in 2005, a group of EM citizens organized as Friends of Coburn Pond to protect the well-loved, historic swimming hole from being filled in as constructed wetlands. They were joined by the EM Selectboard and Planning Commission, as well as other local groups and professionals who donated money and expertise during a four-year-long Act 250 review process, which resulted in the protection of the Coburn Pond.

NEGEF seeks to energize and nurture long-term civic engagement in local initiatives that create and maintain healthy, just, safe, and environmentally sustainable communities. People who use the pond and surrounding property for swimming, picnics, fishing, dog walking, horseback riding, winter recreation, meeting up with friends, and various other activities are being sought to engage with the process of planning for the future of the pond and surrounding property. For details, please contact Renée Carpenter at 454-7303. For more information about Friends of Coburn Pond, visit: <https://eastmontpeliervt.org/community/friends-of-coburn-pond>. To find out more about the grant-making activities of NEGEF, visit: www.grassrootsfund.org.

Still Enough

by Tom Schmidt

I dared one winter step
outside at 2 a.m.,
long enough to lift
my weary gaze above
the ghost of Spruce Mountain
to the moonless sky afire
in milky myriad sparks
that trembled overhead;
the silent meadow,
miles from machines,
still between earth and sky
as it was once
for Templeton and Dodge,
for the first Abenaki.

It was then I heard
above and beneath
all things
a tiny glancing *tk*
high in a nearby birch,
tk . . . tk . . . twice more
halfway down the tree,
then a final *tk*
onto the crusted snow.

A leaf,
a single leaf,
the last leaf,
I heard fall
in the darkness.

That is all
and enough.

**



"Caterpillars and Leaf" by Susan Bull Riley



Pop Quiz: What is mastic, berbere spice blend, and za'atar? Most of us may not know the answers, but Helen Labun does. Helen even

knows how to use them. A self-taught cook, Helen started cooking as a child, and from the beginning, she began inventing recipes. Her originality paid off and she became a pro while offering pop-up dinners and hosting dinner parties. Many of us remember the amazing, exotic dinners-to-go from Hel's Kitchen. It was always a fabulous treat to stop by and pick up creative, delicious food for dinner.

Helen offers this advice for spicing up your cooking:

"I'm a big fan of using local ingredients with non-local spices, especially in winter when the range of local foods narrows. Spices add wonderful flavor to storage crops. With delightful cookbooks in abundance and internet access, there is no shortage of interesting recipes. Some things that I'd recommend getting familiar with are mastic, aji amarillo paste, za'atar, Sichuan peppercorns, black salt, black cardamom, tamarind paste, guava paste, berbere spice blend, Chinese black vinegar, and kecap manis. All can be purchased locally, in Burlington, or online. I'm happy to talk with you about spices and creative cooking. You can email me at: helen.labun@gmail.com."

These days, Helen has traded her apron in to promote fresh food. She is the Executive Director of the Vermont Fresh Network, a statewide nonprofit that strengthens the local food system through farmer-chef connections.



Here is a simple recipe from Helen: Kecap Manis (a sweet fermented soy sauce) and Brussel Sprouts

Heat an oven to 475 degrees. Trim the sprouts and cut them in half lengthwise. In a large bowl, toss sprouts with enough olive oil to coat and a generous pinch of black pepper. Don't add salt because you're about to add a soy sauce that's salty. Dump sprouts onto a rimmed baking sheet and spread them out to one layer. Drizzle with a generous amount of kecap manis. Stir to be sure they're evenly coated. Cover the baking sheet with tinfoil. Bake 10 minutes. Take the foil off, stir again, bake another 10–15 minutes until the outsides of the sprouts are browned and crispy. Bon Appetit!

— Rachael Grossman is coordinator of East Montpelier Eats.

The New Flying Fish on Center Road

Perhaps you've noticed that the top of the steeple of the Old Meeting House was missing something for more than a year. Sometime, probably during a wind storm, the old weathervane had started to lean. Southgate Steeplejacks was called to take a look and found that the wooden supports had begun to rot, and to avert serious damage, the mast and the weathervane needed to be removed.

The weathervane, in the shape of a fish, was probably put there around 1823 when the building was built. In the 1960s when there was renewed interest in the church, it was noted that the fish did not turn with the wind, so people questioned whether it was actually a weathervane. And some wondered why it was in the shape of a fish. It turns out that many old New England churches had a fish on their steeples because the fish is an ancient symbol adopted by early Christians as a secret symbol for the location of their clandestine meetings. The Greek word for fish, ichthys, is an acronym for the Greek phrase, 'Jesus Christ, God's son.' There are also many references to fish in the New Testament.

The new weathervane and mast have been constructed true to the dimensions of the old ones. Coincidentally, on the same day that the statue of Ceres was returned to the dome of the



Photo by Alex Brown

Capitol in Montpelier, the new fish was placed on the top of the meeting house steeple, properly constructed so it will again turn in the wind.

— Barbara Ploof is a long-time member of the Old Meeting House.

The Artist, the Co-op, and its 2019 Calendar: The Ever-shifting Landscape of East Montpelier

Almost every day, and often more than once, Janet MacLeod, the Adamant Co-op's resident artist, heads down her driveway, turns right onto Templeton Road, then a quick left onto Center Road at the Templeton barn, past the Chapells' cows enjoying a munch or a dip in the creek, up the hill to the Blackwell barn, and then past the Bair farm where, in the fall, amber pumpkins line up on stone walls. Her ride ends at the Adamant Co-op.

After grabbing one of the world's best scones and a cup of tea, sitting in front of the fire and chatting with all and sundry, Janet climbs the steep stairs to her studio, in what was once the living quarters for Minnie Horr, who operated both the store and the post office out of her house, until the Co-op purchased the building in 1940 for \$600.

Janet, who studied art at the Rhode Island School of Design, has lived in East Montpelier for most of her life. Her artwork rises out of the community and landscape that surround and support her. It has always been important to Janet to remove the barriers that so often exist between ordinary life and art—to involve others in the beauty and fun of creation. If you stop by the Co-op sometime, you're likely to see faces you recognize and buildings you've driven by hundreds of times, but perhaps never really stopped to see. And although Janet has made the trip and stood at her window looking across at Sodom Pond thousands

of times, each time is new—the quality of light shifting with the weather and season, the faces of neighbors shifting with age, the community shifting and growing.

The Co-op itself is a wonderful, quirky blend of grocery store, post office, community center, and gallery. On your way to the two-seater outhouse in the barn, you'll stroll past papier maché creatures from Black Fly Festivals past. As you pick up your mail,



"Barn" by Janet MacLeod

you'll find jewelry, pottery, textiles, and paintings by local artists. A recent featured item is the Adamant Co-op 2019 Calendar, in which each month is commemorated with one of Janet's paintings of East Montpelier. Next year's calendar is already in progress and will showcase the barns, big and small, which grace our landscape.

— *Thirteen years ago Eva Gumprecht was lucky enough to wander into the Adamant communal web. Aside from writing, Eva also bakes goodies for the store.*



"Fitch Barn" by Janet MacLeod

Town Weathervane: Due to lack of space, births, deaths, marriages, land transfers and summaries of the minutes of public meetings may be found on the Signpost website at www.emsignpost.com.

The Vanishing Dairy Farms of East Montpelier



As a member of the East Montpelier Historical Society, I have volunteered to fill the display case at the Town Office with objects and materials related to some aspect of town history. I try to think of things that would draw interest. Driving by the farm in the picture above, as I have for most of my life, made me think of the many farms in town that are no longer operating. It's sad that there are so few farms left.

With my husband, Moe Brown, and Audry LaFirira, I put together a list of the dairy farms in East Montpelier that we remember. I started the list by reading the most recent town assessment from 2009 that helped us recall which properties used to be dairy farms. Moe used to make deliveries to them, so he knew the locations. Much has changed. We can easily list the current dairy farms because there are only three.

The largest is Fairmont Farm with around 950 milking cows in East Montpelier. (Fairmont Farm also has about 550 cows in Craftsbury.) This used to be the Austin Cleaves Farm and the John and Donna Hall Farm that combined in 1993. Land from other smaller farms has also been incorporated into the farm, including the Cary and Sandy Smith Farm on Country Club Road, the Ormsbee Farm on the Center Road, the Barclay Farm on Vincent Flats Road, the Sibley Farm on Sibley Road, and the land and barns of the Lyle Haven Farm (former LaFirira Farm) on Route 14 South. Acreage that was once part of many other farms and homesteads is also rented by Fairmont Farm.

A second sizable farm in current operation is the McKnight Farm with about 350 milking cows on Snow Hill Road. Owned by Seth Gardner, it includes the Clark Farm on Codling Road and the land from the Codling Farm now owned by Ed Deegan. Land and barns of the Christiansen Farm on Hammett Hill Road are leased to the McKnight Farm. Gardner farms other parcels of land around town as well.

One small family farm is left, the Butler Farm. It is on the Center Road and is run by Gary Butler who milks about 35 cows. His parents, Allen and Maybeth Butler, owned the farm before him.

We've compiled a list of all the former dairy farms we remember in East Montpelier. Some now produce other agricultural products but do not have dairy cows. There are well over 50. We want to honor those who had small working farms, families who worked hard doing their best to make a good life farming. Please forgive me if I've missed some farms. My heart is in the right place. This list is available at the Town Office, and we invite you to add any other information you may remember by contacting me at bbrowntwo@aol.com. It is also available on the Signpost website at www.emsignpost.com. My thanks to Moe Brown, Audrey LaFirira, Mary Garcia, Austin Cleaves, and John Hall for added information.

— *Barbara Brown and her husband Maurice live in the Village on Route 2. She came to live in East Montpelier from Barre when she married Maurice who has lived here all his life.*

Is Your Dog #1? We think so!

Introducing the first East Montpelier #1 Dog Tag Raffle.

Traditionally, the Town Clerk's dog has received the #1 tag each year when new licenses are issued. This year, every dog licensed between January 2 and April 1 will be automatically entered to win a prize package including the following:

- The East Montpelier #1 tag
- A travel bag filled with canine goodies and more from local vendors
- A photo of their dog featured on the town clerk's webpage and in the Town Office reception area.

Here's how it works:

License your dog before April 2. You will be given a new tag at that time. On April 2, the Town Clerk will draw a random tag number from those already licensed. The dog with the chosen tag number (and their owner) will trade the old tag in for the #1 tag and receive the prize package.

Licensing your dog ensures that rabies vaccines are up to date and allows town officials to assist in identifying and/or locating your pup if it gets away from you. A portion of the fees collected go toward the state's low-cost spay/neuter program.

Licenses are \$9 for spayed/neutered dogs and \$13 for unaltered dogs.

Please call 802-223-3313 X 201 with questions about licensing your dog.



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CALENDAR

Mon. Jan. 14, 6 p.m. U-32 auditorium, WCUUSD organizational meeting, Transitional Board meeting to follow.

Sat. Feb. 2, 10 a.m.–2p.m. Orchard Valley School Winter Fair, crafts, storytelling, snow cave, food and more. All welcome, no admission, fees for activities.

Sat. Mar. 2, 9:30 a.m. Pre-Town Meeting forum, EMES

Tues. Mar. 5 Town Meeting Day, EMES

Sat. May 4 Green Up Day

Green Up Day: Volunteer and Make It Happen

We need a Co-coordinator for clean-up activities and a Lunch Coordinator. It's fun and not overly time-consuming. Call Chris Racanelli, 793-6687

IMPORTANT DATES

Thurs. Jan. 17 at the Town Office, last day to submit petitions for articles to be included in the Warning for the Town Meeting. Petitions require no fewer than 112 signatures (5% of eligible EM voters). The Town Clerk recommends 125 signatures.

Mon. Jan. 28 at the Town Office, last day to submit petitions nominating candidates for town offices. Petitions require no fewer than 22 signatures (1% of eligible EM voters). The Town Clerk recommends 30 signatures.

Tues. Mar. 5 Town Meeting Day, Town Office closed

The deadline for the next issue of the Signpost is January 28

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Conservation Fund Advisory Committee

Development Review Board (DRB)

East Montpelier Elementary School (EMES) Board

East Montpelier Fire Department (EMFD)

East Montpelier Historical Society

East Montpelier Senior Living Initiative

Four Corners Schoolhouse Association

EMES Parent Teacher Neighbor Org. (PTNO)

Planning Commission (PC)

Recreation Board

Selectboard

U-32 School Board

as needed

1st Tues. 7:00 p.m.

3rd Mon. 5:30 p.m.

Every Tues. 7:00 p.m.

3rd Mon. 7:00/6:00 p.m.

as needed

2nd Wed. 7:00 p.m.

2nd Wed. 6:30 p.m.

1st & 3rd Thurs. 7:00 p.m.

2nd Mon. 7:15 p.m.

1st & 3rd Mon. 6:30 p.m.

1st Wed. 6:00 p.m.

contact: blusig@aol.com / 229-5441

Town Office Building

Elementary School

EMFD Community Room

Four Corners Schoolhouse/E. Calais

contact: rhazel@ezcloud.com

Four Corners Schoolhouse

Elementary School, Art Room

Town Office Building

Elementary School

Town Office Building

U-32 School