

EAST MONTPELIER SIGNPOST

Volume 4, No. 6

July/August 1994

BARBARA FITCH: LAUGHTER...THE BEST MEDICINE

Before she went back to school a few years ago, Becky Reed and I were talking about community, and conventional full-time employment and who designs and maintains the fabric of day to day life? Who fills in the gaps? Who does the myriad small (and not so small!) tasks which give the full-time downtown employed folk a community to "come home" to?

For almost 56 years here in East Montpelier, one answer has been Barbara Fitch. Perched high above the County Road, with a yard ablaze with flowers, a view all the way to Mt. Washington, and her family around her, she could just sit pretty and let the law of entropy suck the rest of us down the drain..

Not Barbara.

Do you know her laugh? It's the best laugh in town, isn't it? Laughter doesn't necessarily mean happy, nor does it necessarily mean nice. But in Barbara's case it means both. Not the cheap happiness that comes from good digestion and a sunny day--although that helps--but the meaningful happiness that comes from work well done and burdens cheerfully shouldered.

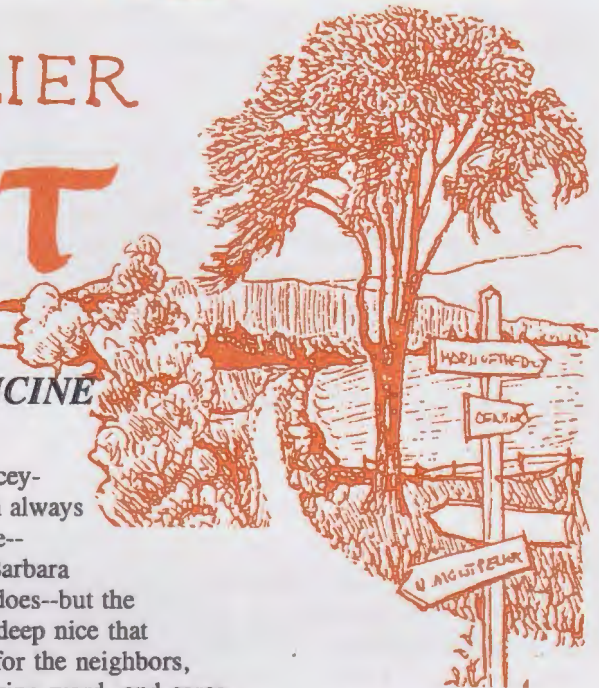
Not the nice-nice which always has a smile--although Barbara generally does--but the true bone-deep nice that looks out for the neighbors, has a cheering word, and cares.

The Fitches, in one form or another, have been here almost forever, in European settler terms. Benjamin Ellis settled the place around 1805, and then in his later years, had his nephew Harry Fitch come to look after him. Ready for a short, sloppy course in Fitches? This Harry was the father of at least Clyde, who moved up to Maple Corner and fathered at least Floyd and Stanley (and thereby the Calais Fitches) and Clarence, who stayed here, founded the Adamant Co-op and the Adamant Credit Union, was Postmaster at Adamant, and who fathered, well, at least Robert, Ellen, Arthur and George-- that's George who married Barbara.

The Casavoys, which is what Barbara was before she became a Fitch, haven't been here forever. Barbara was even born in West Chazy, New York. Eventually after several moves, they ended at the foot of Spruce Mountain in Plainfield--a place where they could watch the sun rise over the mountains and set over Bancroft Pond. Barbara still misses those sunsets, perched as she is halfway up the hill, practically in the sunset. But the Casavoys, latecomers and Plainfielders though they be, are very important to East Montpelier. One of the boys, Gordon, was responsible for Barbara meeting George, and the other girl, Madaline, is mother to Norman Dix.

About Barbara meeting George. Gordon, a few years older than Barbara, went to dances. When she was fourteen, Barbara started going to dances too. Her parents figured her brother would keep an eye on her. He was honest with them: he didn't find it easy. But he must have done a good job, because it was through the dances that she met George.

She met him when she was about fifteen. Gordon was dating George's sister Ellen and that's what led to Barbara and George's first date: Gordon and Ellen were going to a Prom at Lyndon Institute, and Barbara wanted to go too--so she asked George. But he wasn't the only young man she saw....



Barbara Fitch

When she was eighteen, she left home and went to help out a young woman who was severely depressed. The woman was recently divorced, had a four year old son, and ran the Plainfield telephone office. For helping her out—cooking, child care, and one shift a week as telephone operator—Barbara received two dollars a week and board and room. It sounds dreary, doesn't it? But not for Barbara! Within a short time she had her boss perked up and going to dances with her!

Maybe George figured this was too good a manager to pass up. Two years after Barbara took the job they were married and moved into the house their daughter Kathy now lives in with her husband George Doner (Fancy Feathers Farm). This was in 1938. They were married from the Casavoy place in Plainfield by Rev. Arthur Hewitt. Decorations were a white birch trellis and ferns in sap buckets. At the last moment, they had to move the service and the sap buckets indoors because it began to sprinkle. Barbara's dress was from mail order: \$3.98. She still has it.

And they kept on dancing. Right on through her pregnancy with Kathy, up until Kathy was five or six, at least once or twice a week.

Once in East Montpelier, Barbara settled right into the community. She joined Home Dem which now, over 55 years later, is liberated from the Extension Service and called the Friendly Circle. It draws members from Barre, Worcester, East Montpelier, and Calais. Not all have been members as long as Barbara, but many have been active for thirty or forty years.

When my father first taught at the Morse School, he boarded with George's parents. Barbara, with George on the School Board, continued the tradition and boarded Phyllis Andrews until she got married, and Avis Spicer.

Barbara not only fed the teachers at home; she fed everyone at school. She supplied Hot Lunch at the Morse School for twelve years—I recall resisting the adjustment when I transferred over to Wilma Anderson's cooking at the Center School in 1953. At first she did the cooking right there in the kitchen at the school. After Bruce came along she cooked at home and brought lunch down in her car—the same car that was later her school bus, bringing the Tobys and other kids from Adamant and the Horn to the Morse School. That was during the time we were shuffling grades all over town before the Elementary School was built.

There was even less time for dancing once the older generation began to crumble. Clarence, widowed in 1956, moved in with Barbara and George in 1959. In 1962 while Barbara was recuperating from a broken leg, they moved back over to the bigger house, the one they are in now, so Barbara's mother could live with them. She was with them for five years, Clarence for ten—and the last five bedridden. It was five years after his death before Barbara could sleep through the night and not wake thinking he had called her. And she liked him the whole time. And George helped out, doing the washing and changing, while Barbara did the cooking and cleaning.

She never learned to milk cows, you know. Back as a girl in Plainfield, she'd seen that the young men who called to take Madaline out had to wait while she finished up milking. This

was not for Barbara. So she never learned and saw no need to once she married. She helped out with chores when there was an evening meeting to go to, and later on, with Bruce in high school, she fed the calves—but her heart, we suspect, was still on the dance floor, anywhere there were people, and fun and laughter.

And that's where you can find her still, where there are people and fun and laughter. At church suppers. On the annual bus trips with the Morses. And for fifteen years of Saturday nights, playing cards with the Fitches and the Grahams.

She's still having a good time, is still her own boss, and is still arranging the flowers at the Adamant Church—a task my mother asked her to take over “for a little while”—in 1962.

And she sets out her tomatoes and petunias and pansies, admires the hummingbird at its feeder, watches the progress of the three baby robins in the rhododendron bush, and enjoys the deer coming out to feed in the deepening dusk. And appreciates George doing the supper dishes. It's good for his arthritic hands, they agree. And laugh.

Martha Holden

Martha lives on Templeton Road and is secretary at Christ Church Episcopal in Montpelier. Her father, John Holden, was featured in our very first Signpost.

TOP OF THE SIGNPOST

We don't want to call this a questionnaire or a poll but we would really like to know what you think. Is our local newspaper serving the purpose for which it was founded? Are we doing the job?

The *Signpost's* first issue (Sep./Oct. 1990) was an act of faith — the conviction of a few people that a news-paper could help us to know what was going on in town and thereby bind us neighbor to neighbor. The months have rolled into years, four in fact.

We believe that any publication should know what its audience thinks of it. Conventional newspapers avidly count subscriptions as a measure of their readers' support. Their advertising sales are a further yardstick. Since we don't have these reference points, we come to you directly to ask:

- ▶ Are we serving in the best possible way?
- ▶ Is a town newspaper really worth the effort?
- ▶ What changes/additions would you like to see in content or emphasis?
- ▶ Specifically, who would you like to see featured in our business or personal profiles?
- ▶ Would you like to help produce the *Signpost*?

Your replies will be greatly appreciated - signed or anonymous! Mail them to Box 80, East Montpelier.

When you see the September-October *Signpost* with its new color masthead, you will move with us into our fifth year. Hopefully your suggestions will guide us. Thank you.



THE SELECTBOARD

Allan Couch, Edie Miller, Frank Pratt

March 23, 1994

- ▶ Selectman Couch appointed to Four Corners Schoolhouse Association.
- ▶ Ed Blackwell has agreed to serve as Regional Planning representative.
- ▶ Received a complaint from a resident regarding cars parking on road to access snowmobile trails. Notices are to be posted in windshields warning about parking on roadway being a violation of motor vehicle regulations.
- ▶ Agreed to put out a bid for a second office computer.
- ▶ Signed contract with Humane Society to continue kennel services for stray dogs.
- ▶ Reviewed liquor license renewal application for Cuzzins Two.

March 30, 1994

- ▶ Executive session re: pending legal matter between Town of East Montpelier v. Deane Hedges.

April 13, 1994

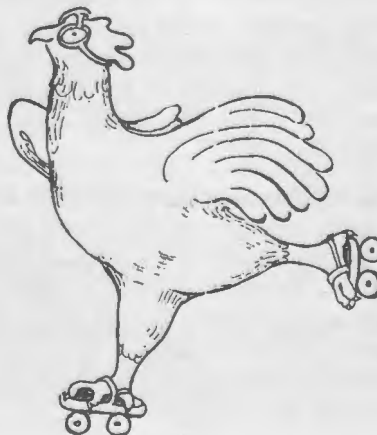
- ▶ Mike Garand and Bill Bryant received certificates for completion of the ten workshops of the Vermont Roads Scholar Program from St. Michael's College.
- ▶ Voted to purchase new air compressor for Town Garage.
- ▶ Cross Vermont Trail: proposal for trail to link Connecticut River and Lake Champlain using old railbed. Major portions of railbed in E. Montpelier are privately owned. Group would like town approval to apply for AOT Planning Grant to study feasibility of the trail.
- ▶ Paul Cate reappointed Town Tree Warden for a one-year period.
- ▶ Agreed to contact Calais about filing a joint application to Vermont Municipal Equipment loan fund for \$60,000 for the needed financing of a new fire truck.
- ▶ Approved note with Chittenden Bank for the anticipated borrowing of \$200,000 at 3.25%.

April 27, 1994

- ▶ Heard report from Austin Cleaves and Court Perry on progress of East Montpelier Fire and Emergency Medical Services Task Force. One goal is to have Volunteer Fire Department behind recommendations. No problems noted with current services but is time to put an agreement between Town and Fire Department in place.
- ▶ Cross Vermont Trail: voted to sign notice of support for the grant application to study feasibility of proposed trail among seven communities.

May 11, 1994

- ▶ Heard monthly road report from Mike Garand. Board reaffirmed its policy that the town will install replacement driveway culverts when the property owner buys the new culvert.
- ▶ Tom Brazier has offered the Town gravel to be spread on a section of Brazier Road. Will accept gravel and use only after other projects in the workplan are completed.
- ▶ Received dog complaint on Horn of the Moon Road; referred to town attorney.
- ▶ Miller & Morse sewage permit appeal: received independent report from engineer Skip Flanders who concurred with Mr. Czaplinski's findings. Voted to table the matter pending receipt of the withdrawing of the appeal.
- ▶ Agreed to place the Town's 1981 International dump truck in State auction to be sold to the highest bidder.



PLANNING COMMISSION

Chair: Ed Blackwell

April 21, 1994

- ▶ Approved preliminary site plan review of a six-lot subdivision off Route 14 as requested by Rick and Mary Tousignant.
- ▶ Nona Estrin gave report on trails and recreation. Sandy Woodbeck spoke on East Montpelier Trails, Inc., a non-profit organization being created to work with residents to create trails for recreation use.

May 5, 1994

- ▶ Public hearing for the preliminary plat review on the Sparrow subdivision. Much discussed by concerned citizens and neighbors.
- ▶ Heard from officials from Vt. Fish and Wildlife and Agency of Transportation regarding Rte 2 bypass. Probably will be 24-30 months before project can go to Act 250.

May 19, 1994

- ▶ Sparrow subdivision: Vermont Land Trust and neighbors could not raise enough money to purchase the four lots in question. Voted to accept preliminary plat review.

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Chair: Jeff Cueto

April 11, 1994

- ▶ Public hearing on Donna Perry application to operate a Bed and Breakfast at her home on Dodge Road. Two of the five bedrooms would be used to house four guests. Application approved.

May 23, 1994

- ▶ Public hearing on Chester Cookson proposal to build one dwelling on each subdivided lot across from Trout Lily. This area is zoned commercial. Approved conditional use permit.

**EAST MONTPELIER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Jan Aldrich, Jim Hiner,
Tony Klein, Sue Stephen, Nancy Thomas

April 7, 1994

- ▶ Approved use of the Family Room for a pre-school program for 94-95 school year.
- ▶ Accepted recommendation for two Second/Third Grade and one Second Grade classroom configurations for 94-95.
- ▶ Laura Johnson contract: Approved extended contract through June 1996, with an increase for her fine performance evaluation reported by Superintendent George Olive.

May 5, 1994

- ▶ Kathy Christy presented outline of the drug education curriculum "Here's Looking at You 2000" taught to fifth and sixth graders.
- ▶ Laura Johnson has tentative job description for the library position. Laura and a committee will finalize description, screen and interview candidates, and make recommendations to the Board.
- ▶ Put lunchroom tables and warming oven out to bid; they are old and need to be replaced.



**THANKS FOR YOUR
SUPPORT!**

James & Gladys Brock
Richard & Lorraine Copping
Thomas & Mildred DelGrego
Irv & Wendi Deutsch
Nona Estrin
David & Darlene Grundy
Bernard & Marcia Guilmette
James & Lois Hanna
Arthur F. Heitmann
Ellen C. Hill
William & Mary Porter
W. K. Pratt & Eva G. Pierce
Samual & Barbara Starr
Ronald & Geneva Woodward

**FOUR CORNERS
SCHOOLHOUSE
ASSOCIATION**

President: Don Donnelly

Our annual Sugar-on-Snow party was held on Sunday afternoon, April 10th, hosted by the Paul Cate family. Drizzly rain made it practical to enjoy the syrup, pickles, and donuts inside. There was great rapport of all ages discussing East Montpelier doings. **Join us next year!**

The Four Corners Schoolhouse Annual Meeting was held on April 20th. Officers elected for the ensuing year were Donald Donnelly, President; Ginny Burley, Vice President; and Marion Codling, Clerk/Treasurer.

During our fund-raising for the heating system in late February, many of you pledged funds for this project. To those who may have overlooked forwarding their pledge during these busy days, we would appreciate your taking a few minutes to forward your check so that we can make a decision on estimates for this work and proceed with the contract for it. (Four Corners Schoolhouse Assoc., P.O.Box 63, East Montpelier, VT 05651). To those who have already done so... many thanks!

A SCHOOL DAY THEN...

The girls, dressed in long skirts and bonnets, sit on one side of the room, the boys on the other. All the desks are neatly arranged in rows, from the "kindergarteners" in the front to the "sixth graders" in the rear. At the front of the schoolhouse stands "Miss Sarah," the teacher; on her desk are a hand-bell, a quill pen, and an apple. 1894? No, 1994!

One day this May the walls of the Four Corners Schoolhouse, the town's last remaining one-room schoolhouse, rang with the sounds of children's voices once again as Robin Gannon engaged two fourth-grade classes in an historical simulation designed to give them a taste of life in the old days.



The Fourth Grade Class at Four Corners

Meeting in graded groups, students would "toe the line" (literally stand with their toes on a mark) and recite their lessons while other grades worked quietly at their desks. The inevitable eruption of lively spirits led to the inevitable consequence: time in the corner, wearing the dunce cap. A more serious transgression, such as failure to study one's lessons, required a more serious punishment: five swats across the knuckles with the teacher's stick (simulated, of course, in 1994).

Along with recitation, students heard a Bible passage, chanted poetry while they marched around the room, had a social studies lesson, and sang. Fingernails were inspected, and a nail-biter might be asked to wear a sign to humiliate him and get him to change his behavior. The drinking pail and dipper were present but deemed too risky under modern notions of sanitation.

Penmanship lessons were conducted with quill pens, and the teacher thanked one student's uncle for shooting the turkey which provided the quills. Paper cups stood in for inkwells as the students struggled to master the scratchy pens. The teacher explained that generally only the boys would be taught much math, since they were the ones who would be conducting any business; the girls' time was more suitably devoted to embroidery and useful household arts. At recess time students played old-fashioned games with hoops and sticks and marbles.

History really came alive for these students in this experience of the past.

Virginia Burley

EAST MONTPELIER TRAILS

Work/Walk Days for New Trails

We'll make it fun and get it done - everything from cutting, hauling and branch clean-up to marking new trails. Or just come and explore these beautiful and varied new town trails. Work as long or as short a time as you wish, with maybe a picnic lunch or trail snack. We're on schedule whether it shines or mists, but not downpours.

Center Road to Templeton:

Contact: Ruth Coppersmith 223-2962

Templeton Road to Town Forest on Haggatt Road: Sat. July 23 (tentative)

Contact: Chris Abrams 223-4038 or Nona Estrin 223-7745

East Montpelier Trails Inc. Informational Meeting

East Montpelier Trails Inc. is a new volunteer organization through which interested landowners and users can conserve recreational trails and open land. It grew out of local interest in recreation and the range of options available to landowners for conservation.

CONGRATULATIONS TO SIXTH GRADERS MOVING UP!

Darcie Baker	Nicole LaPerle
N.J. Bartrum	Ian Lemieux
Niko Beardsworth	Julia Ljungvall
Kate Biggam	Erin McCormack
Tom Brownell	Mark Miller
Aaron Burley	Mark Pauly
Lisa Carriveau	Chad Perry
Austin Cate	Melissa Perry
Chris Cerutti	Larry Reed
Ryan Chapell	Chelsea Robinson
Jim Cook	Sarah Robinson
Crystal Davis	Sara Rooney
Sarah Eaton	Graham Rufenacht
Tom Fitzsimmons	Megan Sala
Charlene Franks	Richard Saudek
Jennifer Gannon	Jessica Spangler
Emille Hart	Zoe Stone
Courtney Holt	Josh Thompson
Sam Howard	Kyle Tousignant
Leah Johnson	Naomi Watker
Erin Kelly	Christine West

The new organization represents the East Montpelier Gully Jumpers Snowmobile Club, a landowners group; the East Montpelier Trail Committee, an environmental education group; and other user groups.

Join us at an informational meeting and learn about the role of this group in the town: **THURSDAY, JULY 28, Four Corners School, 7 p.m.**



RALLY DAY THE 6TH YEAR!

Circle Saturday, September 10, on your calendar. That's when East Montpelier will celebrate its sixth Rally Day.

Some of the day's events need nothing but your enthusiastic attendance. Then there are others which you definitely need to plan ahead for, like these:

⊕ Raise your biggest and best **veggies and flowers** to enter in the Town Fair. Youth and adult beauties will be judged separately. The **baking contest** will specialize in **cookies** this year, so practice up!

♪ Let your talent **SHINE** at the annual Rally Day **variety show**. If you have an act, or know of one, call Ginny Burley at 229-0826. The show is in the evening, and music, dancing, drama - all **VARIETIES** wanted. Call soon.

☺ The **Signpost Auction** is already lining up **donations, both products and services**. Anything from car lubes to rug cleaning, from maple syrup to Christmas trees - everything sells and keeps the **Signpost** coming. Call Loring Starr (229-0007).

★ This is the year for a **PARADE** again. Town clown Charlie Codling is putting it together and wants lots of paraders and floats. Room for jazzy bikes, horses, family floats, whatever. Call Charlie by mid-August (229-9622).

☺ Lots of **volunteers** are needed on the 10th and beforehand. If you can help, call Jean Cate (223-2951).

And remember that your **Rally Day program is mailed to you in your tax notice in August. DON'T FORGET TO PEEK.**

Items for next issue due
August 1, 1994 to
Janice Waterman, 223-5826
RD 1, Box 4330
Montpelier, VT 05602

THE BITE IS WORSE THAN THE BARK

It won't be long before school lets out for the summer. We all know that means taking extra care to watch out for children playing outside, but it is also the time of year when dogs are on the loose.

Your dog is very protective of you and the members of your family. That's one of the reasons over 2,500 letter carriers were bitten by dogs last year. All dogs are territorial by nature, and even the most gentle pet will bite if it feels its domain or owners are being threatened by the presence of a rural carrier or other delivery person.

A dog can be a good friend, but even good friends sometimes hurt each other. Your rural carrier has been delivering your parcels directly to the door of your house. **Please help your rural carrier deliver mail safely by keeping your dog fenced, leashed or inside your home if you will not be home to accept delivery of your parcel.**

Another choice would be to notify your Postmaster and rural carrier that your dog will be loose and that, instead of delivering the parcel, a notice can be left stating there is a parcel held at the Post Office for pickup.

Thank you for being a good neighbor.
Linda Kirkpatrick, Postmaster

CHURCH CHIMES Old Brick Church Old Meeting House

Church services for the summer will be held at 9:30. From June 19 through July 31, they will be at the Old Meeting House. For the Sundays in August, they will be at the Old Brick Church. The first service in September will be at the Covenant Hills Campground in Marshfield.



★ Recreation news. Still room on the 2nd swimming lesson session at Wedgewood on July 25 and August 5. Price \$11.00. Call Judy Cookson for information 479-2915.

★ A program and parade, WOMEN IN WARTIME, were held on May 27th and May 28th in Essex Junction. Gladys Dunking was an Honorary Marshall in the parade and Mable "Chris" Wright marched in the Color Guard. The featured speaker was Diane Carlson Evans, founder of the Vietnam Women's Memorial in Washington, D.C. Both Gladys and Chris are Army veterans—WAC—who were stationed in England and served with the troops in France. They followed the invasion Army by about six weeks, going in by landing barge over the same beachhead. Gladys had her story told in the Boston Herald recently...complete with pictures.

★ Ellen Hill has passed on her job of Window Display Arranger for the historical window in the town office to Conrad Ormsbee. He has already been scouting the job, and a new display will be put up soon.

★ Roadside mowing on town roads will begin in August.

★ Watch out for moose in your travels this summer. Sign on the Interstate near Littleton, N.H. said 211 collisions had happened. Wasn't specific as to where or over what period.

MILESTONES

(Received by the Town Clerk by June 1)

MARRIAGES

♥ Wesley Herbert Guyette, Jr. and Michele Mae Welch, March 19, 1994.

BIRTHS

• Alexander Kenneth Ferno, born December 10, 1993, to Jennifer L. and Kenneth E. Ferno.

♥ Amanda Rae Martin, born January 13, 1994, to Heidi Marie Duff and Robert John Martin.

♥ Calvin Rochat McEathron, born January 22, 1994, to Julie Manns Rochat and Mark Howard McEathron.

♥ Aidan Rhys Stone, born February 7, 1994, to Marcella and James Stone.

♥ Sean Robert Sinclair, born April 14, 1994, to Susan Elizabeth and Steven James Sinclair.

PASSINGS

Nellie E. Clark, died February 7, 1994. Wife of Edwin Clark and mother of Mary Jane Porter, Linda Royce and Edwin A. Clark.

Leona Alice Lawson, died March 6, 1994. Lived at Hampshire House on Fair Road.

Edward Warren Schnitger, died March 11, 1994. Husband of Carolyn Schnitger.

Hilda Jane Barney, died April 22, 1994. Mother of Robert Barney and Gladys Johnson.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 1994 U-32 SENIORS!

- Ralph "Chip" Allen
Kelly Brownell
Karen Carver
Sara Ceppetelli
Joshua Cookson
Sara Danforth
Kellie Davis
Daniel Ethier
Ramon Hill
Jessica Klein
Aaron Lemieux
Jamie Libertoff
Lisa McCarthy
Amy Merritt
Sheri Murray
Kathleen Nelson
Sara O'Hare
Scot Page
Eric Pauly
Megan Reed
Kimberly Sheppard
Jesse Snipper
William Thomas
Abigail Wilson
Jeny Yahn

LAND TRANSFERS

(Received between April 1 and June 1)

S. G. Twombly Co., Ltd. to Joan & Larry Fitch; 10.2 acres on Lyle Young Road.

Lucille Cerutti to Maurice & Sue Cerutti; 0.5 acres and dwelling in North Montpelier.

Arthur D. Rice to Landmark Homes, Inc.; 0.78 acres off Route 14 and Paul Square.

Thomas & Ivan Rus & Hilde Sibley to Michael Rus; 0.25 acres and multi-family dwelling in East Montpelier Village.

Diana Antonovich to Miriam Antonovich; 57 acres on Upper North Street (half interest in property).

Michael, Ivan & Thomas Rus & Hilde Sibley to Ivan & Thomas Rus; 20 acres with dwelling, barn and mobile home on Rt 14 north of East Montpelier Village.

Gregory & Debbie Graves to David Gallison, Jr. & Janelle Ann Stewart; 1.4 acres with dwelling on Adamant Road.

Stanley & Janet George to Alan Phin, II & Kimberly Phin; 10 acres with dwelling on Schoolhouse Road.

Elaine Parker & Meredith Trudeau to Meredith Trudeau; 10.1 acres with dwelling on Route 214.

Elaine Parker & Meredith Trudeau to Elaine Parker; 2 acres on Route 214.

Craig & Susan Mugford to Brian & Rhonda Kimball; easement for septic system on Haggett Road.



If you'd like a print of the photo on page 4, of the fourth graders at the Four Corners Schoolhouse, give Don Donnelly a call at 223-8697. It will be in black and white, and the photographer will make a contribution to the Schoolhouse fund for each print.

AT THE END OF THE (LONG) DAY, IT'S STILL FARMING

It's spring, and the farmers around Vermont are putting in long hours. Although they've been out of the milking business for several years, Dennis and Sonny (Hugh Jr.) Hawkins still very much consider themselves farmers. In fact, the brothers feel like they're as much involved with farming now as they ever were.

Born on the family dairy farm on Towne Hill Road, Dennis and Sonny are both graduates of Vermont Technical College's general farm management program and ran a dairy operation on the farm for a number of years.

The decision to get out of the business of producing milk was made in the 1980s, about the time of the whole-herd buyout. Although they did not participate in that program, it stimulated their thinking about the business of farming. Selling milk was only marginally profitable, and what they really enjoyed was the field work and the machinery. They now run Land Care Agri-Services and Echo Valley Farm, names for the two major components of their multi-faceted business operation.

The big push lately has been getting corn planted. As Dennis explains to a client over the telephone, "If I don't get the seed in, I can't sell the silage in the fall." Land Care, the "farmer side" of the Hawkins' business, is very much in demand these days. There's corn to be planted and manure to be spread for as many as twenty-five farms extending from Cabot to South Royalton.

"Farmers are trying to cut down on their overhead, including equipment cost," Dennis explains. "That's where Land Care comes in." Through Land Care, farmers can hire the extra help they need, without having to invest in expensive equipment that will sit idle most of the year. The Hawkins can sell corn silage, hay, haylage, sawdust, trucking, planting, brush cutting and just about any other aspect of a farm.

The other major part of the Hawkins' operations, Echo Valley Farm, is focused on landscape maintenance, especially that involving commercial properties and condominium complexes. Lawn mowing, snow plowing and sanding, even lawn and driveway construction are part of the service mix that Dennis and Sonny can offer.



Sonny and Dennis Hawkins

They supply sawdust to about 25 horse owners in central Vermont. Last year, when several landfills were closed down, the Hawkins provided mulch hay and labor for the "capping" process. They've retained a link with dairy farming by keeping and raising about 100 replacement heifers to sell to farmers.

The two brothers live side-by-side off Towne Hill Road on the family farm, but there's no evidence of tension between them. Dennis states, "Some days we spend twelve hours working on the same project without getting a chance to talk. I may be in the truck and Hugh may be on the tractor. We get along pretty well." Last winter they sold the main house where their parents Hugh Sr. and Marah lived and the barn and land on the west side of the road. They then put in a mobile home on the east side for their parents.

Where will Dennis and Sonny Hawkins' business take them in the future? "Everything we do is in demand," says Dennis. "It's taken some time to build the business. We like our current mix of services, but we will follow the market."

Steve Justis

Steve lives in the Center and works for the Dept. of Agriculture and also raises trees and shrubs for nursery stock.



EAST MONTPELIER SIGNPOST CONTRIBUTION FORM

Yes, I want to help keep the Signpost coming! Here is my contribution toward that effort.

Name(s): _____ Address: _____

Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Enclosed \$ _____

We thank you for your help! Please mail this with your check to Anne Sherman, RD 1, Box 80, East Montpelier, VT 05651.

COMMITTEE MEETING CALENDAR

Selectboard	2nd & 4th Wednesday	7:15	Town Office
Planning Commission	1st & 3rd Thursday	7:30	"
Zoning Board of Adjustment	2nd & 4th Monday	7:30	"
Conservation Fund Advisory Comm.	2nd Thursday	7:30	"
Volunteer Fire Department	Every Tuesday	7:00	Fire Station, Templeton Rd.
U-32 School Board	2nd Tuesday & 4th Wednesday	7:30	U-32
Elementary School Board	1st Thursday	6:30	Elementary School
Town Clerk's Office Hours	Monday-Thursday: 9-5, Friday: 9-12		Town Office
Zoning Administrator	Tuesday & Thursday	1:00-2:30,	Town Office
Four Corners Schoolhouse Ass'n.	3rd Wednesday	7:30	Four Corners Schoolhouse
PTO Meeting	2nd Tuesday	7:00	Elementary School

Meeting times are subject to change

EVENTS CALENDAR

July 2, 5:30-7:00	Strawberry Festival	Old Brick Church
July 23	Trail Work	Out in the Woods
July 28, 7:00 p.m.	East Montpelier Trails	Four Corners Schoolhouse
Aug. 3, 7:00 p.m.	Rally Day Planning	Town Office
Sept. 10, All Day	Rally Day	Elementary School

SUMMER TIME! AHHHHH....

EAST MONTPELIER SIGNPOST

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<i>David Coburn, Copy Editor, 223-6886</i>	<i>Mary Stone, Photographer, 223-2319</i>	<i>Sylvia Tosi, Town Records, 223-3240</i>
<i>Anne Sherman, Business Manager, 223-2693</i>		<i>Janice Waterman, News Editor, 223-5826</i>

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