

EAST MONTPELIER SIGNPOST

Volume 6, No. 5

May/June, 1996

Al Couch - The Road More Traveled By

Back when he served as my platoon leader in mandatory Reserve Officer Training Corps at UVM I must admit I didn't think too much of Al Couch. But that was in 1958 when I was a very green freshman and he was an officer in the corps, so that was probably to be expected. However, after several years of serving with Al on the East Montpelier Planning Commission and the town Selectboard, I have developed much respect and admiration for this man.

Allan Couch was born in the southern Vermont village of North Bennington (we still consider that area to be a part of Vermont) on February 7, 1937. He attended schools in North Bennington and received an engineering degree from the University of Vermont in 1960. Al then spent six months training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and Fort Dix, New Jersey, before joining an artillery reserve unit in the Vermont National Guard at Montpelier, attaining the rank of captain.

Al took to the roads, so to speak. His career with the Vermont Highway Department began with the Bridge Division. From Bridge Division to Structures for five years, to Construction for five years, back to Structures for three years and in Maintenance for six years. He then became District Engineer in the Rutland District for five years followed by an appointment as Regional Construction Engineer, his current position. It is evident that Al has seen it all and done it all when it comes to constructing and maintaining our Vermont highways.

Of course those of you who know Al know that he isn't always on the road. He and his wife of twenty-nine years, the

former Nancy Tucker, built a fine home on Cummings Road in 1968 and are the parents of two sons, Jeff, 23, and David, 19.

Town service has always been high on Al's list of priorities. He first volunteered as a Planning Commission member for the period 1972 - 1978, back when the planning concept was quite new to East Montpelier—having been established just a few years before. He then became a member of the Selectboard from 1984 through the 1996 town meeting.

Reflecting on his many years of service on the Selectboard, Al remembers his earlier years when only one meeting per month, held in the morning for three hours, was sufficient to take care of town business. Today two meetings a month are needed. These are held in the evening and often last for four hours or more.

He notes how many of the issues dealt with have become more complex, often needing the advice of counsel and consideration over multiple meetings. He reflects that as money became tighter demand for services seemed to increase.

He especially enjoyed working with the other members of the board as well as with many others who volunteered for service on other town boards. He says he will miss having a feel of the pulse of the town and hearing the issues directly rather than from another's point of view.

Al and Nancy are members of Bethany Church in Montpelier where Al is presently a member of the Stewards. For recreation he enjoys snowmobiling, hunting and boating. He also likes to "tinker" around the home as well as working in his

(Continued on page 2)



(Continued from page 1)

vegetable garden. His lawn and the area surrounding his home are always impeccably kept, which must be another of his pleasures.

Al's term on the Selectboard ended in March of this year. His expertise on things related to roads will certainly be missed by future town Selectboards especially when it comes time to file the annual road report with the State spelling out plans for the ensuing year regarding gravel, paving and culverts to be replaced, for example. But knowing how much service to the town and the greater community means to Al, a phone call or a Fax is probably all that is needed when his advice is sought.

Austin C. Cleaves is a principal in Fairmont Farms, and a former member of the Planning Commission and Selectboard.



SIGNPOST CONTRIBUTORS

Our thanks to these generous townspeople:

Frieda Battles	Philip and Donna Leno
Allen and Maybeth Butler	Marian Lord
Dwight and Irene Clark	Robert and Judith Nist
K. Putnam and Susan Clayton	Conrad and Anne Ormsbee
Marion Codling	Susan Page
Gladys Dunkling	Manuel and Marilyn Piro
Bernard and Marcia Guilmette	Stephen and Louise Rauh
Fred and Joyce Jacek	Dean and Susan Shattuck

We also made \$75.00 from the Potluck Dinner at Town Meeting.

Things still look tight for our publication budget. We can afford to print and mail this issue, but will be scrambling to pay for printing the summer issue. Any contributions will be gratefully appreciated!



Top of the Signpost:



How many of you readers stirred out of your warm houses at least one night this past month to search the sky for a view of Hyakutake? One doesn't need to be an astronomer to be fascinated by this phantom of the night. How can ordinary folks comprehend that this newly discovered comet is reckoned to be more than nine million miles from us, that its blurry halo is somewhere around a million miles across? It is a miracle in itself that human persistence, coupled with science and modern equipment, can have isolated such a distant mere speck in the night sky.

Meanwhile, back on the earth, I was introduced recently to a short list of nature's basic truths which require neither science nor technology to understand. This little list of fundamentals was spelled out to me by a friend who may never have peered through a high powered telescope, but who keenly observes how people and nature interact. Thus I call these truths the "Four Laws of Ecology". They are really pretty simple:

1. Everything is connected to everything else.
2. Everything must go somewhere.
3. Nature knows best.
4. There is no free lunch.

Do these statements make sense to you? Do they help you understand some of the problems we face in running our lives, our town, our world? Do they suggest to you, as they do to me, why some of the shortcuts we are tempted to take don't really work in the long run? How they may create larger problems of their own? I find that these four statements are pretty good guides to helping us make choices that will be healthy for people and for our planet. And in the long run we know that our people choices are what decides what happens to our planet. We do not have forever to decide whether to trash or treasure this earth of ours.

These reflections took me back to the heavens. I learned that our spectacular new comet got its name, Hyakutake, from the Japanese amateur astronomer who singled it out of the skies. His name brought back to me a dimly remembered Japanese word which my mother used often to get us girls moving: "Hyaku!" It means "Quick", "Hurry Up". Perhaps that is good advice for us all - a warning that our planet is indeed in our hands. Treat it wisely!

Jean Cate



THE TOWN WEATHERVANE



SELECTBOARD

Frank Pratt, (Chair), Thomas Brazier, Edie Miller

January 24, 1996

- Public Hearing regarding proposed application to Vermont Community Development Program for a community development block grant to the Town to make a loan to Fairmont Farm, Inc., to improve manure handling practices.
- A draft Town Meeting Warning was reviewed.
- Continued work on 1996 budget.

January 26, 1996

- Voted to sign the necessary documents to apply for community block development grant.

January 31, 1996

- Met with Jeff and Robin Biron concerning possible impacts of proposed Agency of Transportation improvements to the Routes 2 and 14 intersection on Dudley's Store.
- Finalized 1996 budget.

February 14, 1996

- Met with Sam Lewis and Paul Mucci from AOT Planning Division and Steve Gladczuk of the Regional Planning Commission concerning Routes 2 and 14 intersection and Route 14 bridge over the Winooski River. Town still supports a bypass project, but would like to see the bridge project scheduled in the next few years. Will continue to work with AOT on possible changes to the intersections.
- Reviewed monthly Road Dept. Report. Mike Garand noted that 750 tons of salt had been used. 500 tons is usual.
- Ginger Hopkins appointed to Recreation Board.
- Gerald Jourdan has decided to shorten shared portion of his proposed road to 650 feet, built to town standards.
- Annual Certificate of Highway Mileage for highway maintenance aid from the State was reviewed and approved.
- Bill Bryant reported on progress of E-911 Committee. Selectboard will solicit suggestions for names for new roads from residents. Voted to adopt the State standard of 5.28 feet for assigning locatable addresses.
- Reviewed a memorandum from Health Officer Paul White concerning a dog bite incident.
- Received signed contract for tax stabilization from E. E. Packard Enterprises, Inc., for first of their three buildings.

February 28, 1996

- Hearing re Dog Bite Complaint. Dog belonging to Carson and Donna Stone bit son of Cheryl Baker. Voted to order that dog be kept on a chain at all times when outdoors.
- Renewal agreement for pound services provided by Central Vermont Humane Society reviewed. Will ask for information on services provided last year.
- Signed grant applications to AOT for Town Highway Bridge and Culvert Program and Class 2 Town Highway Paving Program for paving County Road and repair of the Coburn covered bridge.
- Approved right-of-way for G. Jourdan's development road.
- Probate Court has notified the town regarding the Estate of Carleton Smith. Mr. Smith has left a bequest of \$50,000 to the Town,

the income of which is to be used for recreation purposes. The Estate is not yet settled.

- Water sample from repaired well at Town Garage and Fire Station is now normal for sodium and chloride.

March 13, 1996

- Newly elected Selectman Thomas Brazier was officially sworn in. Frank Pratt was elected chairperson.
 - Road Department Foreman Mike Garand presented written report. He has had estimates for repairing the 1986 Ford dump truck. Voted to authorize Mike Garand to post roads for mud season in accordance with state statutes.
 - Lynne Goodson, Director of the Humane Society, talked with Bill Bryant. 21 East Montpelier dogs were taken in during 1995, some from residents, the remainder from the Constable. Annual fee is increased from \$1,000 to \$1,200. The Board voted to renew contract but to ask Humane Society to keep track of number of East Montpelier animals brought in by Constable and number brought in by residents.
 - Tom Brazier reported on status of committee working on ambulance service issues.
 - Approved a revised agreement with the Sheriff's Department for traffic patrol services.
- ### March 20, 1996
- Selectboard met with Richard Hall and Austin Cleaves to plan presentation on March 21 to Vermont Community Development Board for its pending grant application.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Stephen Rauh, Chair

February 1, 1996

- Approved request by Tim Carver to amend subdivision permit 62-92 which would eliminate lot 9, and allocate that acreage to lots 4 and 8. Approved subject to filing of an amended plat plan.
- Approved final plat plan review of nine lot subdivision submitted by Gerald Jourdan.

February 15, 1996

- Meeting canceled for lack of quorum.

March 7, 1996

- Matt Curtis, a member of the Boy Scouts of America, observed the meeting as part of the requirements of his Citizenship in the Community merit badge.
- Addressed concerns expressed by Mrs. Shapiro about the permit recently granted to Mark Lane to establish a firing range in conjunction with his gun repair business on Gould Hill Road. Use of the firing range is limited to the testing of guns Mr. Lane repairs. The permit does not allow use of the range for a gun club or commercial firing range.
- Reviewed proposed changes to the Zoning Regulations.

March 21, 1996

- Approved CV Landfill application to construct a 30' x 50' slab for the storage of household hazardous waste.
- Approved preliminary sketch plan for proposed land development project on land owned by Earth Construction on Route 2 at Coburn Road.
- Richard Curtis was thanked for his service as Chair of the Planning Commission this past year. Stephen S. Rauh was elected to serve in that position.
- Reviewed proposed changes to the Zoning Regulations.





THE TOWN WEATHERVANE



EAST MONTPELIER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

*Jan Aldrich (Chair), Loring Starr, Susan Stephen, Nancy Thomas,
Paul White*

February 1, 1996

- Approved Internet Policy. Discussion of a virus checker.
- Discussed proposed changes to pupil placement guidelines—would remove option to request a teacher. After much discussion it was decided to add "parent input" and "appeals may be made to the principal and his/her decision is final" into the placement process.
- Laura Johnson reported that lunch counts are increasing each week, and asked the board to approve the proposed budget for Hot Lunch. The board voted to do this and asked for figures on income and expense on a regular basis to try to balance the Food Service budget. Bids had been received for soundproofing the gymnasium. The board will look at these in April or May.

March 7, 1996

- Jan Aldrich was elected Chairperson of the Board, Nancy Thomas Vice-Chairperson. Loring Starr was welcomed to the Board and elected Clerk. Jan Aldrich will continue as representative to the Negotiating Committee. Susan Stephen will continue to serve on the Four Corners Schoolhouse board.
- Approved the establishment of the "East Montpelier Elementary School Support Group". Volunteers are needed. The group will consist of three parents, three staff members, and three community-at-large members.
- Approved the Teacher Evaluation Document.
- Waived tuition for a family moving out of town.
- Discussion of reviewing use of specialists' time.

U-32 BOARD MINUTES

Peter Bluhm (Chair).

Ginny Burley and Tony Klein, East Montpelier members

February 13, 1996

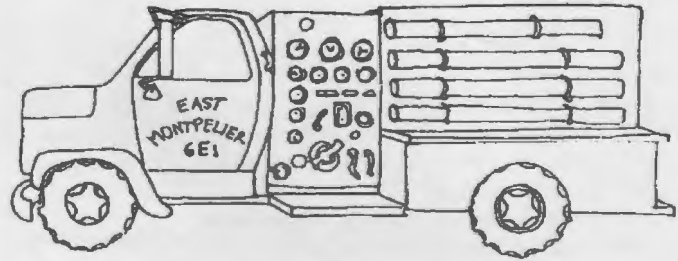
- Discussed increase in U-32 assessments to elementary schools, impact on assessments of changes to special education.
- Discussed drop-out rate in the alternative program, and reasonable expectations for program's impact on students.
- Update on proposal for community-built building on the grounds. Andy Shapiro showed blueprints and outlined labor and materials that have been pledged.
- Discussed possible consultant to help with long-range planning.

February 27, 1996

- Andy Shapiro has been contacted by community corrections with a proposal to trade labor in building trusses for lumber from U-32 grounds. Board supports the concept.

March 14, 1996

- Peter Bluhm was elected Chair. Ginny Burley was elected Vice Chair. Marilyn Miller was elected Clerk.
- Voted to have 6,000 board feet of lumber cut from U-32 property for use in building new building.
- School was not closed on a recent date after Director of Transportation and Principal recommended such closing. Board directed the Superintendent to review the closure of school process when school has already started.
- John Coolidge reported that U-32 students, players and fans received the Good Sportsmanship Award for Vt. Principal's Assn. tournament final game. This is an honor for U-32.



EAST MONTPELIER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Jonathan Winston, President Michael Bliss

With the passage of winter and the coming of spring, we are experiencing Vermont's fifth season, mud season. As this season progresses from the melting of winter snow to the greening of the landscape, the Fire Department is preparing for what is known as "grass fire season". Every year people are reminded that the burning of grass and other winter debris is prohibited unless a burning permit is obtained from the Town Forest Fire Warden, Bob VanZandt, 454-7101, or his assistant Chris Reed, 223-7707.

Before issuing a permit they consider: wind levels, dryness of the ground cover, what is to be burned, where the burning is to take place, and the amount of yard debris to be burned. They also may want to visit the site and suggest how to burn yard debris safely. If grass or brush is burned without a permit, a reprimand, citation and/or fine may be levied. If an unpermitted fire gets out of control, the person responsible may also be liable for fire suppression costs as well as damages incurred to all property. So please, if you have grass or brush to burn, obtain a permit and burn safely.

EAST MONTPELIER FIRE DEPARTMENT

AUXILIARY

Karen VanZandt, President

The East Montpelier Fire Department Auxiliary exists primarily to serve the Fire Department members at the fire scenes and controlled burns. The members also participate in community functions and services. We recently held a rabies clinic with the assistance of Dr. and Mrs. Tom Stuwe, residents of Adamant. Approximately one hundred cats and dogs were vaccinated. We will participate in the East Calais Fourth of July parade.

FOUR CORNERS SCHOOLHOUSE

Ginny Burley and Ruth Frost, Co-Chairs

- **THANK YOU** to the East Montpelier townspeople for approving our Operating Expense item at town meeting; and to the Road Commissioner and Crew for the fine job done in plowing the Four Corners Schoolhouse driveway this winter.
- Our Landscaping Committee is searching for old-fashioned lemon lilies for foundation planting. If you can furnish any, please phone Paul Cate at 223-6466 or Ruth Frost at 223-6892.
- A Basketry Workshop by Carole Casavant is being held on Saturday, May 18th, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. For registration and information phone Marion Codling at 223-2058.
- Paul Cate is leading a Bird and Wildflower Walk on Saturday, May 25th, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. For information and registration, please phone Paul Cate at 223-6466.
- Marion Codling or any board member may be contacted if you wish to use the schoolhouse.



RECREATION BOARD

Pat Fitzsimmons and Rachel Senechal, Co-Chairs

- On **May 4th** the ANNUAL WORK DAY at the recreation fields will begin at 9:00 a.m. We need lots of people to rake the fields, paint benches, BUILD bleachers and a score board catwalk and so on. If you are interested in helping, just show up at the fields next to the Elementary School on Saturday, May 4th.
- We are also holding our semi-annual SPORTS CONSIGNMENT SALE on the same day, **May 4th**. Look through your house, attic to cellar, for spring and summer sports equipment that you would like to sell. Seller receives 80% of the sale price, recreation board receives 20%. You can drop off your items at the Elementary School 8:30 to 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 4th. The sale will take place between 10:15 a.m. and 1 p.m. Questions? Please call Pat Fitzsimmons at 229-6156 or Rachel Senechal at 223-0539.
- SUMMER RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES: Interested in receiving a list of summer and sports camps? Just drop by the Town Office. This is our first attempt at compiling such a list. If you know of summer camps that we omitted please contact Jon Dunkling at 223-7493 and we will add them next year.
- FIELD OF DREAMS: Jon Dunkling and Dave Burley are working on a scale drawing of the recreation fields and acreage behind it. A preliminary drawing was presented at the March 18th meeting. Future drawings will be on display for townspeople to review and make comment.
- The recreation board meets the third Monday of the month at the Town Office, 7:00 p.m. All people are welcome.

TWIN VALLEY SENIORS

- During April and May, Ameri-corps volunteers will be knocking on doors giving information about the Twin Valley Senior Center. The goal of this effort is to invite people, age 60 and over, to the Center and to inform people of the services available through the Central Vermont Council on Aging. Another purpose will be to see if people are interested in a once-a-month senior meal in our town. Possible locations: Old Brick Church or Four Corners Schoolhouse. If you know someone who might be interested in a visit please call Rachel Senechal or Kathy Paquet at 479-0531 (or call Rachel at home, 223-0539).
- On April 17th the Twin Valley Seniors met with Kathy Christy and Steve Moran's classes of 5th and 6th graders at E. Montpelier Elementary School. The students presented projects on The Decades and lunch was served in the classroom. The seniors were pleased to see Carol Sanders again. Carol is currently cooking at the Elementary School and used to cook at Twin Valley Senior Center.
- The Twin Valley Senior Center meets at Goddard College on Mondays and at the Plainfield Fire Station on Wednesdays and Fridays. Some door-to-door transportation is available from CVTA WHEELS. For reservations call Martin at 454-8600.

CHURCH BELLS

Church Services:

Old Brick Church: Sunday Services at 11 a.m.

Old Meeting House: Worship and Sunday School at 9:30 a.m.

OLD MEETING HOUSE NEWS:

- Mark your calendars, we're doing **Oliver!** The musical based on Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* will feature some East Montpelier folks including David Connor, Wendy Soliday, Nancy Thomas, Luke MacDonald, Joe Davidian, Sarah Waterman, Nora Connor, Hannah Satterlee, Steve and Pam Somers and Jessica Goodine.
- Performances will be held at 7 pm on June 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.**
- There will be a matinee on June 8 at 1. Hope to see you there.**
- Children's Sunday will be held on June 2. Confirmation will be held on June 9 with the confirmands and their mentors leading worship services.
- The Search Committee has completed the ministerial profile and hopes to be hearing from potential candidates soon. Worship service is held at 9:30 a.m. with Sunday school and child-care held simultaneously.



Property tax warning:

The voters at Town Meeting changed the way property tax payments are received. Taxes are due November 15. To avoid penalty and interest, they must be in the Town Clerk's office by 5:00 p.m. on that date. The change? **Payments received by mail after that deadline, regardless of the post-mark date, will be considered late.** Sylvia will keep the office open until 5:00 on the 15th, which is a Friday.



Formerly The IDEAS Camp presents

HEARTSENER

Exploring environmental & artistic expression for 6 to 12 year olds

HEARTSENER is a summer day camp for boys and girls. It's about discovering their personal expression through various art experiments, exploring the natural world, and interacting with others in a small group setting. For more information and our brochure, call Heidemarie Heiss Holmes at 802/223-1227.

EAST MONTPELIER TRAILS NEWS

Sandy Woodbeck, Chair

East
Montpelier
Trail



Sparrow Farm Trail News:

Erica Zimmerman answered the *Signpost* ad for volunteer trails grant coordinator. Her first grant was funded for bridges for the Sparrow Farm-Montpelier Trail. Chris Hammer has volunteered to oversee actual construction and coordination with the Montpelier

end. Dave Burley and Jamie Shanley will be assisting with bridge and trail design. Actual construction will start July 1. **We need volunteers**—this is exciting work, with a bridge to show for your efforts! Call Chris at 454-1882 to get schedule.

June 1st Dedication of the new one-mile section of the **Cross-Vermont Trail** in East Montpelier: Begins with a walk in from Montpelier City Hall—leave at 11:30 a.m. to arrive at the Agway parking lot on Gallison Hill Rd. at 12:15, then continuing on the new trail section to the hydro dam, arriving at 1:00. Lots of hoopla! Raffle, kids' activities, refreshments, and a new updated trails map. (This is the section of the trail that's flat, easy walking, nice views of the river. Great for strolling!)



MILESTONES

LAND TRANSFERS

- ☞ Bernard X. & Donald S. Chenette to John W. Couture & Susan C. Thayer; dwelling and 1.8 acres on Quaker Road.
- ☞ Elaine Parker to Elaine Parker & Margaret Davis; dwelling and 2 acres on Rt. 214.
- ☞ Philip J. & Ellen A. Wolff to Leonard U. & Priscilla S. Wilson; dwelling and 3 acres on Murray Road.
- ☞ Kenneth J. & Edith J. Persin and Milton F. & Bernice A. Persin to Karl E. & Lois Strassberger; dwelling and 0.2 acres on Quaker Road.
- ☞ Augusta Barstow to Richard I. & Linda E. Barstow; 3/8 interest in 40 acres on Sodom Pond Road.
- ☞ Ann T. Stone to Charles J. Stone, Jr. & Ann Stone Guerlain; 29.3 acres on County Road.
- ☞ Estate of Louise Y. Keller to Marcia K. Guilmette; 35% interest in dwelling and 2 acres on County Road.
- ☞ Mary L. Baird to Robert E. & Judith A. Nist and Harry & Elizabeth Morse; 13.4 acres on County Road. (Corrective deed)
- ☞ Harry & Elizabeth Morse to Robert E. & Judith A. Nist; 6.7 acres on County Road.
- ☞ Robert E. & Judith A. Nist to Harry & Elizabeth Morse; 6.7 acres on County Road.

MOOSELIPS



- Heartfelt thanks to **Kevin Wood** for computerizing all the *Signpost* graphics! He has scanned, printed, and stored on diskettes all 99 pictures drawn for us over the years by **Janet MacLeod**. What a treasure!
- Watch for the upcoming exhibit in the Town Office prepared by Anne and Conrad Ormsbee on the work of East Montpelier poet and publisher **Walter John Coates**.
- **Tim Carver** has expanded his Christmas tree business to include sale of trees for planting. His tree farm is now a year-round venture.
- **Notice from Vermont State Division of Property Valuation and Review:** If the Legislature votes funding, new aerial photographs of Washington County will take place this spring. Crews will place white plastic targets on the ground. They will be "X"s or "T"s 4 feet wide by 30 feet long. **The placement of these targets is very important and should not be disturbed.** They will be picked up as soon as the photography is completed. The aerial photography will be used to generate digital orthophotography of the same geographic area. Two copies of the maps will be given to the town.
- Any of you who go away regularly in winter time, and have trouble getting the *Signpost*, please call Dave Coburn (223-6886).

- ☞ Richard G. & Carole A. Casavant to David L. & Judith A. Joly; 1.03 acres off Paul's Square.
- ☞ Chester J. & Judith V. Cookson and Steven & Janet Hoyes to Andrew Ibe; dwelling and 1.36 acres on Rt. 2 East.
- ☞ Frank A. & Hazel G. Cate to Howard Bank, trustee of the Frank A. Cate Trust; 4.2 acres in East Village.
- ☞ Thom H. & Sharon J. Walker to Christopher S. Grimand & Adele M. O'Connor; 32.5 acres on Horn of the Moon Road.

MARRIAGES

- ♥ Sean D. Ryan to Rebecca Lyn Godin; January 1, 1996.
- ♥ Phillip Mark Reynolds to Debra Carol Weiner; February 16, 1996.
- ♥ Frank R. Pratt to Annette C. Chapman; February 24, 1996.
- ♥ Paul Michael Gallagher to Torrey Jean LaMere; February 28, 1996.

♥♥♥ We gave a new baby the wrong name last issue. Julie Rochat and Mark McEathron's son is Austin, not Justin. Sorry!

A LITTLE POCKET OF PARADISE: COLD POCKET FARM

There is no greater delight than entering a greenhouse on the first day of Spring, when the weather is *triste* and more snow is predicted. Immediately, the moist and humid air embraces me with memories of exotic vacation places, and the rows of little green plants, nicely ordered, promise that there will be Spring.

I had just stepped into the greenhouse of the "Cold Pocket Farm", owned and operated by Dennis and Bonnie White, located on the County Road in East Montpelier and opened for business in May 1994. The name "Cold Pocket" actually was a phrase Dennis used over and over again throughout the years when growing his vegetable gardens. This is definitely a cold pocket area! In fact, from the front to the back of the property, there are at least three very cold pockets, given the lay of the land. The trick was to discover which crops would survive the frost in those pockets.

The greenhouse was something the Whites hoped for upon retirement. Well, retirement came a little bit earlier than was expected for Dennis. Following a twenty-three year career as a semi-conductor engineer with IBM, Dennis took early retirement. Bonnie continues to work full-time at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont as well as working in the greenhouse when time permits. She runs the store on weekends.

The Whites say it has been a very interesting and extremely challenging business so far. Dennis starts 90% of the plants from seed about mid-December. He uses a small room in the basement which he designed and built years ago when he first came to East Montpelier. The room is insulated, heated and filled with grow-lux lights. When the seedlings are ready for transplant, they are transported (very carefully in the dead of winter) to the potting shed in the store area and transplanted into flats and pots. These are moved into the main greenhouse sometime in mid-February. At this point the gas company thinks that the Whites are its best customers!

As Dennis told me, he has a 175,000 BTU (stands for British Thermal Unit as a measure of heat) heater in the greenhouse. During the day, he retains the solar heat (when the sun shines) and is able to do two things: to pump the excess heat into the gravel of the floor through a series of tubes to give up heat, and secondly to use big water bladders that keep a thousand gallons of water which heat up during the day (a big waterbed). At night, the water gives off 8,400 BTU's per degree of dropping temperature. This is an amazing system and it shows the engineer's hand every step of the way.

And so the growing cycle continues. At a rapid pace the transplanting and the race for watering begins, not to forget fertilizing, pinching back and any number of other things that are required to produce healthy, quality plants. "It's fun to be working in the potting shed with the wood stove right behind us and a howling snow storm going on outside," say the Whites. "The greenhouse is warm and snug and you can hear the snow pelting on the plastic."

Dennis first participated in the Farmers' Market in Montpelier. In 1995 he continued with the Montpelier market on Saturday and went to the Stowe market on Sunday. This year he will add the Waterbury market on Wednesday afternoons. Dennis really enjoys participating in the market atmosphere, and they have been a great way to advertise as well as being a profitable part of the business.



The cutting garden is an extension of the greenhouse and blooms as long as Jack Frost doesn't show up. It's an experience not to be missed and it is available again this year. It works as an honor system - you go into the gardens and cut your own bouquet. Many people have enjoyed doing this and use the flowers for a variety of occasions, even weddings. Some folks especially like the flowers for drying and utilize many parts of the plants for their art work.

Flora, fleur, Blumen, flowers...they start with geraniums, pansies, petunias, vinca, verbena, marigolds, impatiens, salvia, and many new varieties of bedding plants and hanging pots in the greenhouse. The flower garden is filled with snapdragons, zinnias, gladiolus, salvia, statice, sunflowers, strawflowers, dahlias, coneflowers and many more varieties for personal selection. Not to forget the many vegetables and herbs that I often pick up to speed along my own garden. Or the helpful tips and pointers from the Whites.

Today I yearn to see the sign of the "Cold Pocket Farm" telling that the Whites are open for business again. I look forward to being invited into the greenhouse again so that I can marvel over the seedlings, then matured, with all their colors, shapes and textures that only nature offers us so generously.

Heidemarie Heiss Holmes is an artist and teacher. She operates HEARTSENER, a summer day camp for girls and boys, and is a neighbor of the Whites.

COMMITTEE MEETING CALENDAR

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

Meeting times are subject to change

EVENTS CALENDAR

Saturday, May 4	Field of Dreams Sports Equipment Sale; Recreation Field work day	Elementary School
Thursday, May 9	New Kindergarten Parents' Meeting	Elementary School, 7 p.m.
Tuesday, May 14	Dance recital	U-32 High School, 7:30 p.m.
Wed. & Thurs., May 22 & 23	Spring Arts Music Festival and Art Exhibit.	U-32, 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, June 1	Gala Trail Opening	Cross Vermont Trail
June 6, 7, 8	Musical, <i>1940's Radio Hour</i>	U-32
June 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9	Performances of <i>Oliver!</i>	Old Meeting House
Friday, June 21	Graduation, U-32	U-32, 6:30 p.m.

EAST MONTPELIER SIGNPOST

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