

## Pandemic Town Meeting: *One More Time*

A year ago, when the Town of East Montpelier changed the format of the 2021 Town Meeting Day to accommodate the reality of the pandemic, we all looked forward to meeting as a community in 2022. However, the battle against the Covid-19 and its various mutations continues. The Selectboard has decided, once again, that a traditional in-person meeting cannot be held safely. Instead, we will have opportunities to discuss our town's business virtually; and to ensure citizens can vote easily and without risk, school and town ballots will be mailed to all active voters. All issues that would traditionally be voted on the floor at Town Meeting will be included on the paper ballot.

Your ballots will look a bit different this year due to a nationwide paper shortage. They will arrive in a business size envelope that carries the "Election Mail" indicia and the town's return address. Inside you will find two ballots (white for the town and gray for the school), a very small certificate envelope and a return envelope addressed to the town clerk.

- Complete the certificate envelope
- Complete both school and town ballots; fold and place in certificate envelope
- Put that sealed certificate envelope into the return envelope
- You may mail the completed ballot packet, bring it to the town office, or drop it in the secure drop box outside the town office building (see photo)

If you receive a ballot that doesn't belong to you, please write "RETURN TO SENDER" on it and put it back in your mailbox. Alternatively, bring it to the town office.

The ballot for the Central Vermont Career Center is not available to be mailed with your other ballots and **MUST** be requested separately from the town clerk's office for early or absentee voting. Alternatively, you may choose to come to



photo by Alex Brown

the polls on Town Meeting Day to vote this ballot in person.

**In-person voting** will be available on Tuesday, March 1, 2022, at the East Montpelier Elementary School from 7 am–7 pm. Covid-19 safety precautions will be in place, and curbside voting will be available for those who wish to vote in person but do not want to enter the building. School restrooms will not be available for public use. If you come to the polls on March 1, please bring your ballot with you. You may simply hand it in or vote your ballot on site. If you forget to bring your mailed ballot with you, we will ask you to sign a form stating that you have not yet voted before giving you another ballot.

Call the town clerk at 802-223-3313 if you have questions related to voting. See details about Town Meeting informational forums on page 7.

It's that time of the year, and once again, the legislature has passed—and Governor Scott signed—a bill allowing voting by mail and Town Meeting Day to be rescheduled. In East Montpelier, once again we'll have a Zoom forum, ballots mailed to everyone, and in-person voting on Tuesday, March 1st, Town Meeting Day.

So let us invoke some gratitude to counter that gloomy prospect. Recently returning from a trip to metropolitan Washington, D.C., I am newly appreciative of clean air, respectful (and limited) traffic, dark silence at night, chickadee chirps, and moonlight on snow. And that's not to mention our numerous sources of locally grown food; and the hardworking folks at retail establishments, in local and state government offices, and in the health sector. Most especially, we have schools that are carefully maintaining in-person school learning. Remote schooling didn't really work for children

or their parents. Nationwide, there's widespread evidence that remote schooling resulted in significant learning loss and mental health issues in children and adolescents. Meanwhile, our offspring have been in school, with relatively few remote days, thanks to the dizzying decision-making of school administrations and the tenacious efforts of their dedicated teachers. We are so lucky to have them. And we are grateful.

Then there are our neighbors—a whole panoply of people whom we know, care about, and depend upon. We enjoy connections ranging from simple texts and calls, to greetings on the street, to the joy of small gatherings. Our strong community has held together over these two years. We can count on that, whatever may come. And that knowledge/ those practices counter whatever the pandemic may throw our way.

—Ann Stanton is a longtime Signpost volunteer.

## Thanks to All, Coming and Going

Thank you to Renee Kievit-Kylar for her work as the *Signpost* Features Co-editor. She has been a terrific volunteer, and we appreciate the work she has done organizing the featured articles on East Montpelier community members and businesses. Rachel Senechal will be joining the *Signpost* in that role. Thank you, Renee, and welcome Rachel! The *Signpost* wouldn't exist without the contributions of each volunteer.

And a special thanks to Jennifer Boyer, our longtime webmaster, who recently found a better, more secure server for our website, [www.emsignpost.com](http://www.emsignpost.com). Check out her great work, which features a complete archive (over 30 years) of the *Signpost*.

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### East Montpelier Signpost

PO Box 184  
East Montpelier VT 05651

### [www.emsignpost.com](http://www.emsignpost.com)

*Signpost* Archive  
Business Supporters  
Links to Other Town Information

### Signpost Volunteers

**Terry J. Allen**  
Design & Photography  
229-0303 tallen@igc.org

**Lyn Blackwell**  
Proofreader  
229-9588 lyn.blackwell3@gmail.com

**Jennifer Boyer**  
Webmaster  
522-3841 vtpots@gmail.com

**Alex Brown**  
Production, Mailing, Photography  
223-0430 alexbrown802vt@gmail.com

**Patty Connor**  
Layout & Design  
279-1928 pattyconnor@gmail.com

**Hilari Farrington**  
Features Co-editor  
223-4039 benedictandhilari@gmail.com

**Rachael Grossman**  
Business Manager  
223-3177 garlicmountain@gmail.com

**Rosie Laquerre**  
Town Records  
778-0273 clerk@eastmontpeliervt.org

**Edie Miller**  
Copy Coordinator  
229-0677 Signposteam@comcast.net

**Carolyn Pastore**  
Copy Editor  
223-7463 cwpas44@yahoo.com

**Barbara Ploof**  
Copy Editor  
223-6934 Signpostbcp@hotmail.com

**Kate Rader**  
Records Editor  
229-4737 raderca2015@gmail.com

**Mary Redmond**  
Copy Editor  
229-0437 marycampbellvt@gmail.com

**Merry Schmidt**  
Copy Editor  
223-2550 merryryschmidt@gmail.com

**Rachel Senechal**  
Features Co-Editor  
223-0539 Rachel.senechal@gmail.com

**Michelle Singer**  
Managing Editor  
595-9141 jmsinger98@hotmail.com

**Ann Stanton**  
E.M. Eats Coordinator, Copy Editor  
223-5321 profstanton@aol.com

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# Central VT Career Center School District: You Decide

by Flor Diaz Smith

The Central Vermont Career Center (CVCC) is a regional career and technical education school that provides students from Cabot, Harwood, Montpelier, Spaulding, Twinfield, and U-32 high schools (representing 18 towns in all) with opportunities to experience real world technical work in preparation for postsecondary education and careers. It has, most recently, been operated by the Barre Unified Union School District board with a regional advisory board (RAB). Under this structure, Barre voters have had sole responsibility for the CVCC budget.

Since April 2021, CVCC has had a governance committee exploring the creation of a new CVCC district (CVCCD) which would be governed by a board representative of all its sending schools. The committee has developed articles of agreement and bylaws for a potential new CVCCD. Some key points of those documents include:

- A 10-member board
- Four at-large members representing the four largest districts
- Six members appointed by the sending school districts
- The current bargaining agreement, once reached, would be retained for its duration
- Votes for the new governance model and for the at-large board members will be co-mingled across the 18 towns before counting

This proposal is designed to capitalize on state data that show that students who attend career and technical education programs are more likely to stay in Vermont. This new representative district will allow us to make the decisions necessary to support students across Central Vermont to access our programming. The proposed formation plan report has been approved by the Agency of Education and the State Board of Education.

On Town Meeting Day, March 1, 2022, the 18 sending towns will vote on the new governance structure and elect the at-large board members who will serve should this plan be approved by voters. Upon approval, a transition board—both elected and appointed board members—would begin preparing for the opening of the new district on July 1, 2022.

Ballots to vote on the possible formation of the Central Vermont Career Center School District are available by request or at the polls on Town Meeting Day. If you would like a ballot mailed to you, please contact the clerk's office by calling 802-223-3313 x201 or x202, or by emailing [clerk@eastmontpeliervt.org](mailto:clerk@eastmontpeliervt.org).

*—Flor Diaz Smith is chair of the Central Vermont Career Center §1572 Governance Study Committee.*



photo by Gary Ann Lewis

*“Turkeys Against Woods in Snow”*

# They Want Your Vote

Job descriptions taken largely from the VLCT Resource Manual and Vermont Law

**TOWN MODERATOR:** *one 1-year term*

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



**Michael Duane:** I am running for re-election for the position of town moderator, which I have held since 2015. My wife, Ellen Knoedler, and I have lived in East Montpelier for the past 40 years. We raised our three children in East Montpelier, and we now have two grandchildren who also reside in our town and attend East Montpelier

Elementary School. I am a retired attorney after 35 years of practicing law and now spend my days gardening, babysitting, skiing, hiking, traveling, and cutting wood. As moderator, it has been my practice to attend the Selectboard meetings when the annual Town Warning is being prepared so that I have an understanding of what issues may arise at the upcoming Town Meeting. I believe I have a pretty good grasp of Robert's Rules of Order and Vermont state laws as they pertain to Vermont town meeting procedures. It would be my honor to serve as East Montpelier's town moderator for another term.

**SELECTBOARD MEMBER:** *one 3-year term; one 2-year term*

*Selectboard members are responsible for general supervision of the affairs of the town and are responsible for seeing that all duties, not assigned by law to any particular officer, are carried out. The selectboard convenes town meetings and may enact ordinances and rules that regulate areas such as roads, traffic, waste disposal, animals, and nuisances as examples.*



**Carlton "Carl" Etnier,**  
3-year term: no statement



**Jon Jewett,** 2-year term: I'm running for a second 2-year term on the East Montpelier Selectboard, and I would appreciate your vote on Town Meeting Day. My wife, Sylvia, and I have lived in East Montpelier for more than 40 years. East Montpelier has been a great place to live and raise our family. I retired from being Town

Manager in Hardwick in 2018 and wanted to give back to the community where we have lived for so long with service on the Selectboard.

The last two years have been a significant learning event for all of us in managing our day-to-day lives. During this pandemic, we have given up a lot to keep ourselves, our families, and others safe. For those of us in government, the challenge has been to keep our offices open, providing the necessary services we all depend on. This work has not been easy and has required many difficult decisions by the Selectboard. In addition to the on-going pandemic, the next two years will likely see a significant transition in staffing in East Montpelier's Town Office as key employees retire and others move on to new opportunities. I would like to help the town work through these staffing changes to hire new employees that can carry on the town's important duties as we (hopefully) come out of the pandemic and return to more normal lives.

I want to add that I am personally proud of the town's continued support of our aging residents through our appropriations to the Montpelier Senior Activities Center, the Twin Valley Senior Center, and Vermont Home Health and Hospice program. Programs provided by the Twin Valley Senior Center help to keep older Vermonters healthier and independent longer, so they can stay at home. Thank you for your support.

**LISTER:** *one 3-year term; one year of a 3-year term*  
*Listers are responsible for determining the value of the real and personal property in town. This is the value the selectboard or the town will use to set a tax rate necessary to raise the money to operate the town in the next year. It is also the basis for the determination of the property wealth of the municipality for purposes of setting state education property taxes.*



**Deborah Fillion**, one year of a 3-year term: In my role as town auditor, I have worked with the listers to review their annual changes to the grand list and have come to understand the importance of their responsibility. Back in 2009, I spent several months working with the town listers and Vermont Appraisal Company

to assist in East Montpelier's town-wide reappraisal. I went on some residential site visits and did a lot of data entry and analysis. The project involved all of us learning the new computer assisted mass appraisal program called CAMA. It was quite a change from recording the specifications of a structure in pencil on a traditional lister's card. But the job is still the same. Town listers determine everyone's fair basis for taxation and maintain the grand list in an equitable and transparent way. It's a job that requires judgment based on experience. Listers Ross Hazel and Chris Racanelli together have 25 years of experience. I look forward to working with them on your behalf.



**Chris Racanelli**, 3-year term: This is my third term as lister. In the six years I have been a lister, it has been good meeting neighbors in the community while learning how to evaluate properties and land here in East Montpelier. I look forward to another term and appreciate your vote. Thank you.

**FIRST CONSTABLE:** *one 1-year term*  
 East Montpelier has voted to prohibit constables from exercising any law enforcement authority. The constables serve as animal control officers and may be called on to serve a civil or criminal process and to aid first responders when necessary.



**Johnathan Boucher:**  
 no statement

**TOWN AUDITOR:** *one 3-year term*  
 Town auditors are responsible for examining and adjusting the accounts of all town officers and all other persons authorized by law to draw orders on the town treasurer. Secondly, they are to report their findings in writing to the legal voters of the town presenting an easy-to-understand picture of the town's finances.



**Deborah Fillion:** In my 21 years as an auditor for the Town of East Montpelier, I've found a lot of satisfaction not only in getting a bunch of numbers to add up perfectly and suddenly make sense, but also in presenting them in a clear, user-friendly way so that townspeople can make informed choices when voting. One of the biggest rewards of

this office is putting together the annual town report, which centers on connecting our community members with one another. And it's fun to discover just the right photo for the cover (I've featured my dog on the cover only twice, so far). I'm grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with those who provide reports of their activities, as well as my fellow auditors past and present, and the townspeople who support our work. The auditors have been more active at times when our support was needed in observing the town's financial processes. This coming year, with a new town treasurer to be hired, I look forward to helping in whatever ways may prove useful to our new colleague.

**PLANNING COMMISSIONER:** *three 3-year terms; one year of a 3-year term*  
 The Planning Commission is responsible for preparing and maintaining a current town plan and zoning regulations. It reviews significant developments and makes recommendations on issues including land development, transportation, economic and social development, historic, wetland and scenic preservation.

**Spencer Hardy**, one year of a 3-year term: In November, I was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Planning Commission and am now running to serve the remainder of the term. While I've only lived in town for a year, I've grown up in Vermont and gotten to know many different parts of the state. I have found the East Montpelier community very welcoming, and I appreciate the abundant



*Candidates, continued p. 6*

Candidates, continued from p. 5

open space, vibrant village, and working landscape of my new home. I currently coordinate an inventory of the state's wild bees for the Vermont Center for Ecostudies (a Hartford based non-profit). Through this work I spend a lot of time thinking about how to maintain healthy pollinator populations in a rapidly changing landscape and how to meaningfully engage the broader community with the natural world. I also own a cooperative vegetable farm with my partner, Jacqueline Huettenmoser, and two friends. This has provided first-hand experience on how challenging land access can be for young farmers and how many pressures our open lands face. I joined the Planning Commission to advocate for the maintenance of our natural and agricultural landscape alongside intentional, equitable growth of our population centers. If honored with your vote, I intend to listen thoughtfully and provide input where my experiences and background can support the goals of the community.

**Zachary Sullivan**, 3-year term: I've lived in East



Montpelier since 2014 and have served on the Planning Commission for three years, serving as chair for the past year. I enjoy being able to use my background in public policy to help plan for the town's future. I am particularly interested in balancing the needs to encourage development, maintain the rural character of the town, and

protect contiguous forest and agricultural land. I believe that there are creative ways of doing this that will allow us to make gains in all of these areas. I am also interested in making East Montpelier a more affordable place to move to, especially for young families, and in creating land use plans that will make that more feasible. Finally, I am dedicated to continuing to improve the town's planning documents to give East Montpelier a strong foundation from which to engage with state regulators in areas such as commercial energy development, to ensure that the town's interests are given weight by the state, and to help residents understand how they can engage in these processes.



**Kim Watson**, 3-year term: Thank you for letting me support the community as a planning commissioner and as a member of the Development Review Board for the last 15 years. I wish to continue in that role for another three years, and I would appreciate your vote. I have a strong interest in

guiding development of residences, home businesses, and other allowed uses in ways that minimize their impact on the working and natural environment. I have lived in East Montpelier for over 36 years and have worked for the last 41 years in environmental consulting. I will continue to serve as best as I can.

**WASHINGTON CENTRAL UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT (WCUUSD)**

*The relatively new WCUUSD consists of the elementary schools of the five towns of the former Washington Central Supervisory Union (Berlin, Calais, East Montpelier, Middlesex, and Worcester) and U-32 Middle/High School. A single school board with representatives from the five towns is responsible for the entire pre-K through 12 school system. Now, all voters from the five towns elect all members of the board, as well as a moderator, clerk, and treasurer for the school district.*

*In keeping with time and space limitations, the Signpost will continue to publish statements from those running as board members from East Montpelier, as well as the non-town-affiliated positions of moderator, clerk, and treasurer. It is hoped that information on other candidates will be available on the WCUUSD website.*

**WCUUSD SCHOOL DIRECTOR (from East Montpelier): one 3-year term**

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



**Flor Diaz Smith:** Since moving to Vermont from Guatemala City in 1997, I have been dedicated to serving our community and volunteering in our schools. In 2009 I became a citizen in order to run for the East Montpelier School Board. I value and understand the importance of collaboration among all members of the school

community and the townspeople we serve for the common goal of supporting the best educational outcomes for all our kids. It is not easy to represent all voices in our five towns, but I am a patient listener and a good communicator. I believe education is the most important gift we give our children, and a strong public education is the basis of our

democracy and the key to successful communities.

If elected, I will continue to support our district in creating a district culture of cultural humility that creates inclusive educational opportunities that are relevant both historically and culturally and that also address the impacts of bias, prejudice, and discrimination. I also see that we have many opportunities as a district to collaborate in supporting the best educational outcomes and opportunities for all our kids without taxing people out of their homes. I look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with all of you.

I live with my husband, Dan, and we have two kids: Mia (19) a graduate of East Montpelier Elementary and U-32, now attending Colorado College, and Lincoln (16), a tenth grader at U-32.

Thank you for your consideration. You can contact me at 802-249-2279 or at diazsmith.flor@gmail.com.

**WCUUSD SCHOOL DIRECTORS**

from other towns but elected by all district voters:

- Berlin: **Jonathan Goddard**
- Calais: **Daniel Keeney, Margrette “Maggie” Weiss**
- Middlesex: **Ursula Stanley**
- Worcester: **Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Natasha Eckart**
- Baning, Mckalyn Garrity LeClerc**

**WCUUSD MODERATOR: one 1-year term**

No candidate

**WCUUSD CLERK: one 1-year term**



**Rosalie “Rosie” Laquerre:**

I’m running for my second year as the WCUUSD School Clerk. As East Montpelier Town Clerk, I receive specialized training in election law and procedure through the secretary of state’s office. I look forward to working with the towns’ justices of the peace to ensure fair and accurate election results

of school elections for the voters of the five towns. Earlier in my career, I worked at U-32 for two years and at the superintendent’s office for seven years. This experience has given me valuable insight into the budget and administrative processes used by the district.

I live in Berlin. During my spare time, I enjoy reading, crafting, sewing, and spending time outdoors. I take this responsibility seriously and appreciate the confidence that has been placed in me to perform the duties of School District Clerk over the last year.

**WCUUSD TREASURER: one 1-year term**

**Mary Ormsby:** No statement

**CENTRAL VERMONT CAREER CENTER DISTRICT**

**(CVCCD) Board:** four 1-year terms (see article on page 3)

Harwood Unified Union School District: **Jim Halavonich**

Barre Unified Union School District: **J. Guy Isabelle**

WCUUSD: **Rosemary Morse** (write-in)

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# Informational Meetings

The Washington Central Unified Union School District (WCUUSD) will hold a virtual informational meeting on Monday, February 28, at 6:30 pm, at which time the School Board will review the ballot articles and respond to questions. You may participate online or by phone. Please visit the school district website at [wcsu32.org](http://wcsu32.org) to access meeting documents and participation options. Click on ‘school board,’ then ‘budget resources’.

The Selectboard will hold this year’s informational meeting on Monday, February 28, at 7:30 pm via Zoom to review the ballot articles and respond to questions. You may participate online or by phone. Meeting documents and meeting access options are found on the town’s website at [eastmontpeliervt.org](http://eastmontpeliervt.org).

# Resilient Roads Team Completes Arbor Day Project

by Steve Justis

Last spring, East Montpelier's Resilient Roads Committee (RRC) was awarded a 2021 Arbor Day Tree Planting Grant, one of 16 administered by the Vermont Department of Forests - Parks and Recreation. Time having taken its toll on the trees in East Montpelier Center, home of the historic Old Meeting House and the Parley Davis House, the RRC decided to apply the \$1,100 grant to the section of Center Road between Brazier and Bliss Roads. The team engaged with residents in the area on several occasions to plan what work should be done and the placement of new trees.

Based on information from the Department of Forests & Parks and discussions with professionals in Vermont's nursery industry, the RRC decided to purchase seven sugar maples (*Acer saccharum* cv. 'Fall Fiesta') from the E.C. Brown Nursery in East Thetford. The 'Fall Fiesta' cultivar has been noted to be more vigorous and symmetrical in growth than the species, and its thicker leaves have been reported to give it good resistance to leaf scorch. It is also more heat, wind, and drought tolerant—characteristics the team hopes will make them more resistant to pressures from climate change (and road de-icing salt).

The first Arbor Day in Vermont was proclaimed by Governor Samuel E. Pingree in 1886, and the Vermont legislature has designated the first Friday in May as Vermont's Arbor Day. As was the case with so many activities, the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted normal nursery supply channels, making even sugar maples difficult to obtain this past spring. That, coupled with unusually hot and dry conditions in early summer, resulted in tree planting being deferred until September. Fortunately, the terms of the grant allowed leeway in planting, so the mission was completed successfully within the required time.

In preparation, the town's highway crew delivered a load of wood chips to the Center to use as mulch on the newly planted trees. Over a dozen community members



*Arbor Day 2020 Planting (pictured left to right) Malcolm Fielder, Charlie Waterman, Steve Justis & Jeff Cueto.*

photo by Susan Bull Riley

participated in planting day activities, either siting, planting, amending the soil, mulching, staking or—equally as important—providing coffee, cider, pastries, and lunch for the entire group.

The RRC team currently includes Jeff Cueto (chair), Paul Cate (EM tree warden), Mark Lane, Guthrie Perry, and Steve Justis. Other recent RRC activities include developing a town ash tree management plan and a shade tree preservation plan; overseeing protection of or removal of hazardous/at-risk ash trees along town rights-of-way (ROWs); planting red, swamp white, and English oaks on the U-32 campus; and removal of invasive species in or near town ROWs.

For more information about the Resilient Roads Committee and their activities and plans, please visit the East Montpelier website at [eastmontpeliervt.org/boards-commission/roadside-vegetation-management](http://eastmontpeliervt.org/boards-commission/roadside-vegetation-management)

*—Steve Justis is an agricultural development specialist who has lived on Center Road with his wife, Laurie, for 40 years.*



## Town Offices

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

### Town Clerk

Rosie Laquerre  
clerk@eastmontpeliervt.org

### Town Treasurer

Don Welch  
treasurer@eastmontpeliervt.org

### Town/Zoning Administrator

Bruce Johnson,  
manager@eastmontpeliervt.org

### Fire Permits

EMFD 225-6247

### First Constable

Jon Boucher 917-4855

### Animal Control Officers

Lead: Carl Etnier 552-4343  
Assistant: Amber Perry 498-5140

### Listers

Ross Hazel  
Chris Racanelli  
223-3313 x206,  
listers@eastmontpeliervt.org

### Health Officer

Ginny Burley 272-4045

### Service Officer

Rachael Grossman 223-3177

### Selectboard

Seth Gardner, Chair  
sethbgardner@hotmail.com  
Judith Dillon Carl Etnier  
Jon Jewett Amy Willis

### Planning Commission

Zach Sullivan, zsullivan@gmail.com

### Development Review Board

Steve Kappel, Chair  
sjkappel@gmail.com

### WCUUSD Board

Flor Diaz Smith, fdiazsmith@u32.org  
Lindy Johnson, lindyjvt@gmail.com  
Stephen Looke, stlooke@u32.org

### State Representative

Kimberly Jessup, 249-9306  
jessupkimberly@gmail.com

# Green Up Day

Green Up Day for 2022 is on Saturday, May 7th. Collections will happen in the parking lot of the East Montpelier Elementary School from 9 am - 1 pm.



Green trash bags are available at Town Offices, Dudley's Store, Bragg Farm, and Morse Farm.

There are several ways that you can participate in Green Up Day this year:

1. Students can enter the following Green Up Vermont contests. Details are available at [greenupvermont.org](http://greenupvermont.org) or call 802-522-7245.
  - Writing Contest - essays/poems are due March 1st
  - Video Contest - entries are due April 1st
  - Jingle Contest - entries are due April 1st
2. When completing your tax forms this year, remember to donate to Green Up Vermont on Line 23 of your Vermont tax return forms. This program helps keep Green Up Day alive.
3. The Green Up crew is always seeking volunteers to help sort and recycle trash at the school on Green Up Day. If you have a few hours to spare, call Chris Racanelli at 802-793-6687.

*Together We Keep Vermont Clean*



Paul Erlbaum and Steve Campbell practice social distancing at Green Up Day 2020.

photo by Chris Racanelli

## TOWN WEATHERVANE

### BIRTHS

- Maeve Byrnes-Hershey, born to Alison Byrnes & David Hershey
- Liam Stroman Preston, born to Ashley & David Preston
- June Southern, born to Laura Greenwood & Patrick Southern
- Aria Rae Thomas, born to Ashley Hedges & Joseph Thomas

### MARRIAGES

- Shannon Searles and Rome Cottrell were married in October

### DEATHS—survivors living in East Montpelier are listed when known

- K. Putnam Clayton, husband of Sue, father of Rick & Kate, and brother of Barbara Ploof died in January
- Lawrence LaPerle died in December
- Paul Mascitti, father of Mikeljon, died in December
- Leanne Ponder, wife of Tim Jennings, died in December

### LAND TRANSFERS

*Transfers relative to estate planning or corrective deeds are not included in this listing. For further info on land transactions, please contact the Town Clerk.*

- Estate of Glenn D. Bailey to Donald & Pauline Pernini, 9.95 acres of open land on Fitch Rd.
- Isaac & Eri Chavez to Victoria Mansuri, 0.62 acres and dwelling on Johnson Rd.
- John Riley & Ellen Rozsa-Riley to Kyle Komline & Herrie Son, 34 acres of open land on Old Trail Rd.
- Susan Martin to Tressa Kreis, 9.25 acres of open land on Chickering Rd.
- Michael & Jamie O'Hare to Matthew & Sharon Huck Family Trust, 10.00 acres of open land on Dodge Rd.
- Joseph & Heather Waffern to Timothy Jerman & Martha Allen, 3.40 acres & dwelling on Boulder Ridge Rd.

*The following are excerpts from minutes of EM's and WCUUSD governing boards. Complete minutes are available on the town and school websites. All town meetings were held in person at the town office building with a remote participation option using the Zoom conferencing platform.*

### SELECTBOARD

#### NOVEMBER 19, 2021

##### Discussion

- Existing town office positions and future needs
- Possible enactment of a town mask mandate

**Motion Passed** to enter executive session at 7:32 pm to discuss personnel matters, exited at 7:43 pm, no action taken.

#### December 6, 2021

##### Discussion

- Town Meeting Warning
- FY23 budget development

##### Motions Passed

- to utilize ORCA Media to record Selectboard meetings and provide online public access to the recordings
- to authorize the submission of the proposed application to the 2022 Communities Caring for Canopy Grant Program
- to adopt the FY23 Capital Improvement Plan as presented with the understanding that the actual FY23 budget's capital reserve fund line item will be set at a later date
- to accept the FY23 Funding Request Study Committee report and set the joint social organization funding request article for 2023 Town Meeting at \$23,466
- to approve the mailing of the WCUUSD annual meeting ballot to all active registered voters
- to authorize the mailing of the 2022 Town Meeting ballot to all active registered voters
- to accept the Avenu sales order agreement for land records digitization and to utilize ARPA funding if allowable, otherwise utilize town land records restoration funds
- to adopt the Town of East Montpelier COVID-19 Rule: Wearing Face Coverings Required
- to appoint [Amy] Willis, [Seth] Gardner, [Kim] Watson, [Norman] Hill, [Rosie] Laquerre, [Ryan] Black-Deegan and [Rachael] Grossman to the Treasurer Selection Committee

- to enter executive session at 9:15 pm to discuss personnel matters, and exited at 9:42 pm, no action taken

#### December 9, 2021

##### Discussion

- East Montpelier Fire Department service and budget update
- Presentation of the proposed FY23 ambulance and emergency services budget and updated capital plan by the East Montpelier Fire Department

#### DECEMBER 20, 2021

##### Discussion

- EMFD FY23 budget and capital requests
- FY23 budget development
- Town Meeting Warning

##### Motion Passed by consensus

- to place four articles on the draft Town Warning for the support of 1) Green Mountain Transit US2 Commuter Bus; 2) Central VT Home Health & Hospice; 3) Montpelier Senior Activity Center; and 4) Kellogg-Hubbard Library

#### January 10, 2022 (includes Special Joint Meeting with Calais Selectboard)

##### Discussion

- 2022 Town Meeting Warning
- Development of 2021 Selectboard report for Annual Report
- Recruitment of Town Treasurer candidates

##### Motions Passed

- to include in the town's FY23 general fund budget the EMFD operating budget requests of \$125,673 for the fire service and \$242,167 for the ambulance service (special joint meeting with Calais Selectboard)
- to accept the Sheldon Trucks quote of \$140,900 for the Mack 10-wheel truck chassis coupled with the Tenco quote of \$99,648 for the truck body, plows, and accessory elements
- to extend for an additional 30 days the Town of East Montpelier's Covid-19 Rule "Wearing Face Coverings Required"
- to waive the zoning fees for the forthcoming shed application by the Central VT Humane Society

## TOWN WEATHERVANE

- to enter executive session at 8:39 pm to discuss personnel matters; exited at 8:51 pm, no action taken
- Possible enactment of town mask mandate

### PLANNING COMMISSION

**DECEMBER 2, 2021**

#### Discussion

- CVRPC comments on proposed town plan
- Review zoning updates
- Process for zoning and town plan amendment hearings

**DECEMBER 16, 2021**

#### Discussion

- Alternatives to traditional holiday party pending changed pandemic status
- March 2022 municipal elections
- Town Plan amendment report
- Zoning update hearing schedule

**Motion Passed** to approve the draft LUDR amendments with proposed changes as discussed tonight at the public hearing draft along with the draft change report

**JANUARY 6, 2022**

#### Discussion

- Annual report for Town Meeting
- Next projects for the Planning Commission meeting

### DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

**December 7, 2021 (U)**

**Discussion** of the biennial review of permit compliance for the Casella Waste Management, Inc. transfer station facility located at 418 US2

#### Motions Passed

- to approve Application #21-062 for a boundary adjustment to transfer 0.70 acres from The Hanger Building LLC property at 1970 VT15S to the Bennett Family Trust property at 80 Carleton Blvd, with conditions
- to approve Application #21-032 submitted by R & J East Montpelier LLC, to construct two 18' x 40' additions to the existing structure, expand the existing Green Mountain Day Spa business use and make site improvements to the commercial property located at 1528 US2

### WCUUSD

**NOVEMBER 17, 2021**

#### Discussion

- Community forum debrief/discuss December forum
- Board attendance at staff meetings
- FY23 General Fund budget Draft #1

#### Motions Passed

- to enter executive session at 5:04 pm to discuss personnel and student matters, to include Interim Superintendent Jen Miller-Arsenault, Principal Steven Dellinger-Pate, Alan Hefferon, Jes Wills, and Ellen Cooke; exited at 5:48
- to accept the administration's recommendation regarding the student matter
- to enter executive session at 5:49 pm to include Interim Superintendent Jen Miller-Arsenault, IT Director Mark Kline, and Michelle Ksepka to consider security and emergency response measures taken by the administration and its contracted experts in response to the attack on the District's IT system; exited at 5:55, no action taken
- to support Vishakha Joshi Amicus Brief as presented
- to authorize the Superintendent to complete bidding for the projects listed on the WCUUSD Capital Improvement Project Plan, FY23 budget column, for a total estimated cost of \$1,533,863

• to authorize the Superintendent to sign a limited contract with Jeff Forward, Forward Thinking Consultants LLC, at a rate of \$100/Hour, not to exceed \$2,000 for identifying the right net metering partners for WCUUSD

• to authorize the Superintendent to sign a one-month extension to the current net metering agreement with Kingsbury Hydro Electric

• to authorize the Superintendent to sign a 36-month lease agreement with Hillyard and All Lines Leasing Company for \$971.22/month for 2 Trident ride-on auto scrubbers and 1 Trident walk behind auto scrubber, with the option to purchase the equipment for \$1 at the end of the lease

- to award the bid to First Student based on the bus bid, with direction for selecting diesel buses
- to award the copier and printer bid to Symquest with Konica Minolta copiers and printers and approve and authorize the Superintendent to sign the proposed tax-exempt lease with M.S.T. Government Leasing, LLC, for the purposes of leasing, refinancing, and funding photocopy equipment leases including consultant fees, and related costs of issuances of such leases in an amount not to exceed \$183,517.21 and an annual interest rate of 3.290% through August 1, 2025
- to approve the hire of Lauren Keissling, School Psychologist

**December 1, 2021**

#### Discussion

- Superintendent search working session facilitated by Michael Deweese
- Community budget forum

#### Motions Passed

- to authorize the Board Chair to sign the COVID-19 MOU
- to approve the charge of the Search Committee, as presented and discussed
- to approve the nomination of Jacob Kaplan for music teacher at Calais and Doty for the remainder of the school year

**December 9, 2021**

#### Motions Passed

- to enter executive session at 5:37 pm, for a student matter and invite Jennifer Miller-Arsenault, Steven Dellinger Pate, Jessica Wills, the student, and the student's family [no exit time given]
- to accept Administration's recommendation on the student matter

**December 15, 2021**

**Discussion** of school board goals

#### Motions Passed

- to approve the draft [Annual Warning] as presented
- to appoint (in several motions) to the superintendent screening committee: Yolanda Bansah and Guin Baer,

*Weatherwane, continued p. 12*

*Weathervane, continued from p. 11*

Michelle Ksepka (U-32 students), Jen Miller-Arsenault, Ursula Stanley, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, and Flor Diaz Smith

- to continue board meetings remotely, to be reconsidered in March
- to authorize the Superintendent to sign a 36-month lease agreement for \$1308.19/ month plus \$150 one-time document fee, for 2 Trident ride-on auto scrubbers and 1 Trident walk behind auto scrubber, with the option to purchase the equipment for \$1 at the end of the lease
- to remove the 3% parameter that had originally been provided for budget creation
- to adopt [policy] D7 [Special Education]
- to approve extended leave of absence/ Diane Nichols-Fleming
- to approve the following long term subs: Kieran Owen and Katja Bracklemanns-Puig

**JANUARY 5, 2022**

**Discussion** on staff vacancies

**Motions Passed**

- to approve the ballot [for Central Vermont Career Center] with noted edits
- to approve the hire of Jenna Howard, Calais School Literacy Interventionist
- to approve the resignation of Erica Moore, U-32 Social worker

**JANUARY 12, 2022**

**Discussion**

- Community budget forum – presentation
- Update on vacancies

**Motions Passed**

- to enter executive session at 5:33 pm to discuss a personnel matter and a student matter, to include, for the student matter, Jen Miller- Arsenault, Steven Dellinger-Pate, Amy Molina, and the family of the student, and exited at 6:05 pm
- to accept the superintendent's recommendation regarding the student matter
- to approve FY23 budget draft #3 as presented tonight in the amount of \$36,169,267
- to approve & announce FY23 district tuition rate \$21,253 for elementary students; \$20,338 for secondary students
- to approve change, 1.0 to 0.80 for Amy Koenigbauer, for remainder of school year

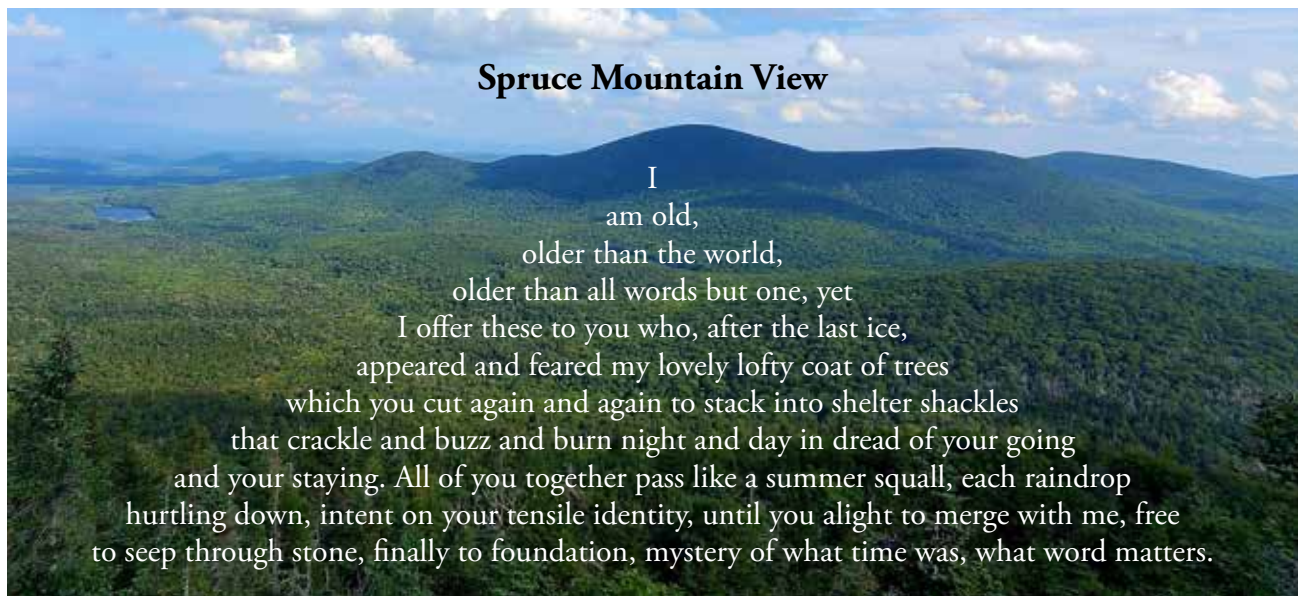
**JANUARY 19, 2022**

**Motions Passed**

- to approve the MOU dated 1-19-22, as amended tonight by the chair and the board's attorney regarding conveying a portion of the Berlin Elementary School Property to the Town of Berlin, and

authorizing the chair of the board to sign that MOU on behalf of the board

- to present the following article to voters at the Annual Meeting: "Shall the school district authorize the board of directors to convey approximately 3.8-acres of undeveloped land that is now part of the Berlin Elementary School Property to the Town of Berlin for use as part of the New Town Center?"
- to mail Annual Meeting ballots to all active registered voters in the district
- to adopt the [Annual Meeting] warning, with the amendment of Article 9 as discussed earlier in the meeting
- to adopt the two goals as presented in the board packet
- to use \$5K out of the fund balance to contribute to the Coalition of Vermont Student Equity
- to authorize the superintendent to sign the 10-year contract with Kingsbury Hydro Electric
- to authorize the use of \$325,468 of general operating fund balance as offsetting revenue for the FY23 General Fund Budget
- to award the bid for the U-32 roofing project to Evergreen Roofing LLC in the amount of \$270K, which includes 10% contingency



*Poem written by Tom Schmidt who lives on DeRonde Road. April is National Poetry Month.*

# The EMES Five-Star Restaurant

by Ann Stanton

We now know that an in-person Town Meeting won't happen in 2022, so we won't be enjoying potluck lunch in the EMES cafeteria. Annie Finnegan and Jen Wiater have, for many years., guided us through serving those wonderful lunches. But they can be found at EMES—every day—on the job. Their job is to plan, cook, and serve breakfast and lunch to East Montpelier School students: breakfast for 65 or 70 and lunch for around 120 children. Essentially, they run a restaurant

a hot item and a sandwich-of-the-day. Hot items might be chicken and veggie stir fry, pizza, or meatloaf. EMES boasts the only salad bar in the district, offering fresh vegetables and fruit as well as proteins such as cheese or smoked ham. “What is the most popular lunch item?” I asked. “Brunch-for-lunch,” they agreed, with waffles as the centerpiece.

Every day is different. The lunch menu is sent to classrooms and is also posted on the EMES website. After teachers submit student orders, the food is prepared. Unlike most restaurants, this one has a budget of \$2.50 to \$3 per person for lunch, reimbursed by the USDA, with all students getting free food during Covid. On remote schooling days, Annie and Jen make up individual bags that are delivered to students' homes.

Amazed, I ask how they pull all of this off. They laugh, “We work really well together. It's like a dance. Sometimes it's a cha-cha and sometimes it's a waltz.” Besides the daily dance, these remarkable women provided a Harvest Feast for families in the fall, staying late to make up meals for families to take out. Added to that, they also made a special holiday meal for the children on December 21st. Most recently, they gave out take-out pizza kits.

Although we citizens are not feasting together on Town Meeting Day, our young children do that every school day. Heathy choices, homemade food: it's an ongoing labor of love from Team Annie and Jen.

—Ann Stanton is a longtime Signpost volunteer and coordinator for East Montpelier Eats.



photo by Alicia Lyford

out of the school kitchen, just the two of them.

They make almost everything from scratch every day. Operating on the premise that children need healthy choices, they set out quite a variety of offerings, including vegetarian and gluten-free items. Breakfast will have three to five options, including cereal, muffins, yogurt parfaits, and one hot item, such as scrambled eggs. Lunch includes

## Seasonal Recipe Sugar on Snow

**PREPARE:** Plan to have packed containers of snow. Ideally, it will be granular snow, also known as corn snow or spring-skiing snow. But any will work, as will ice shavings done with a machine. You will need a bowl of it indoors when cooking the syrup. Use a nice quality of syrup, either Golden Color, Delicate Taste (Fancy), or Amber Color, Rich Taste (Medium Amber). Plan on 1/4 - 1/2 cup per person.

**COOK:** In a heavy pan, heat syrup to 22° above the boiling temperature of water for your setting, most likely 234° F. Watch the syrup carefully, especially when it starts to boil/foam. You can use a tiny dab of butter to settle it down. When it

reaches 232°, spoon a bit of it onto the snow in the bowl. When it no longer sinks in but stays on top and is like a soft taffy, it is ready to serve.

**SERVE:** Put it into a ceramic pitcher to share or in ceramic coffee cups for each person. Serve with plain raised doughnuts, dill pickle spears, and cider, coffee, or milk. If this can be served outside on a nicer spring day, so much the better! Some folks like to dip their doughnut right into the hot syrup, skipping the snow!

If there is syrup left over, it can be cooled and reheated for another gathering, or put into a sturdy mixing bowl and stirred with a strong spoon until it crystalizes.

This can be spread on toast.

—from *The Old Meeting House Cookbook*, contributed by Sandal & Paul Cate



photo by Sandal Cate

Paul and Sandal Cate supplied sugar on snow for dessert at The Old Meeting House Cafe in the spring of 2019.

# The Gift That Keeps on Giving

by Mary Stone

The second year of the pandemic presented many rewards but also challenges to East Montpelier Trails, Inc. (EMTI). Our network of trails continues to provide a healthy escape for all of us who are largely homebound—for exercise and exploration as well as a safe way to spend time with friends. More folks than ever are using the trails. The downside of that good news is that there has been some vandalism of private property along the trails and misuse of the parking areas—including illegal activity and trash dumping. We are doing our best to address these troubling issues and appreciate community cooperation in deterring and reporting incidents such as these to us and to the proper authorities.

On the brighter side, we had a wonderful turnout of volunteers on the three major work days scheduled this year. Many new faces joined those who regularly help out every year. Together, we rerouted the Lollipop Loop of the Mallory Brook Trail, south of Minister Road. The field presented problems with exposure to deer ticks so we rerouted the trail from the open field to higher ground under a sweet mixed pine forest. This loop trail will connect to the new Bobolink Trail, slated for construction in 2022 (with a grant pending at the time of this writing). The new trail section will lead to Schoolhouse Road and then to the Clark Trail, U-32 trails, and down to the new bridge across the Winooski River. Congratulations to the Cross Vermont Trail



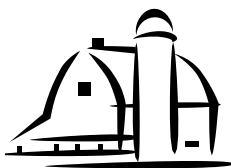
*Signs of wildlife spotted on the Town Forest Trail.*

Association, which pulled off this amazing bridge project first envisioned and initiated almost 30 years ago.

Another new trail construction project is taking place on “Sparrow Farm North,” where we are excited to be working with the new landowners of a property conserved with a trail easement over 25 years ago! The trail is not yet open for public use, but please stay tuned for more work opportunities in 2022. Your participation will be rewarded with the feeling of pride and goodwill that comes from working with other community members and their families and the knowledge that the trails will be available for use for generations to come.

The board sends heartfelt thanks to founding board member Madeleine Mongan, who stepped down during the year. A warm welcome to Matt DiGiovanni, Trish Dwyer, Jody Stryker, and Allan Serrano who join Jennifer Boyer, Richard Brock, Sue Chickering, Nona Estrin, Rick Hopkins, Lauren Padilla, Mary Stone, and Dave Webb on the EMTI board. The East Montpelier Trails network truly is a treasure made by the generosity of our landowners, the trail stewards, and the untold volunteers and trail users who use and look after the trails, clearing fallen branches, cleaning up the parking areas, and reporting problems as well as positive experiences. Check out our website at [emtrail.org](http://emtrail.org).

*—Mary Stone is the president of EMTI.*



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## Free AARP Tax Preparation at Twin Valley Senior Center

Twin Valley Senior Center in East Montpelier will once again be hosting AARP to provide free tax preparation for low to moderate income taxpayers, starting February 15. AARP volunteers will prepare and electronically file federal and Vermont state income tax returns, including the homestead declaration and property tax credit forms and renter credit forms for most taxpayers. Please call Twin Valley Senior Center at 802-223-3322 to schedule an appointment or to answer questions about this service. COVID guidelines will be followed, and masks will be required.

### IMPORTANT DATES

- Mon. Feb. 21, Presidents' Day** Town Office closed
- Mon. Feb. 28, 6:30 pm**, Virtual WCUUSD Forum
- Mon. Feb. 28, 7:30 pm**, Virtual Town Forum
- Tues. Mar. 1, Town Meeting Day**, Town Office closed
- Tues. Mar. 1, 7 am - 7 pm**, In-person Voting, EMES
- Fri. Apr. 1**, Renewal of dog licenses due, Town Office
- Sat. May 7, Green Up Day**

### MAY-JUNE SIGNPOST SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

April 4, 2022

*Many thanks to our supporters*

ALICE AND RICHARD ANGNEY

ELAINE MANGHI-BUCK

DORIS WASHBURN

PATRICIA WOODARD

### COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Conservation Fund Advisory Committee  
Development Review Board (DRB)  
East Montpelier Fire Department (EMFD)  
Four Corners Schoolhouse Assn  
Planning Commission (PC)  
Recreation Board  
Selectboard  
WCUUSD Board Meeting  
East Montpelier Historical Society

as needed  
1st Tues. 7 pm  
every Tues. 7 pm  
2nd Wed. 7 pm  
1st & 3rd Thurs. 7 pm  
2nd Mon. 7:15 pm  
1st & 3rd Mon. 6:30 pm  
3rd Wed. 5:30 pm  
TBD

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Town Office Building  
one of the district elementary schools  
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