

# EAST MONTPELIER SIGNPOST

Volume 1, No. 5

May/June 1991

## THE BRAZIER: A FARM FAMILY WEATHERS THE CHANGES

Lena, Henry, and Tom Brazier sit around the table in the kitchen of the family house built more than 100 years ago. "It's changed since Thomas Brazier came from Nottinghamshire, England, and bought the place," Tom says.

His mom and dad nod in agreement. The biggest change is that there were more farms -- about 175 dairy herds in East Montpelier back in 1890; now there are 14. "Farms were more self-sufficient then," adds Lena. "Why, now we have a garden in the summer, but even when Henry was a child here, they put up most of their vegetables, had 200 chickens, and eggs, too." Henry agrees and points out that the small outbuilding in the back was a brooder and part of what is now the heifer barn was the chicken house. Henry laughs, remembering a story. "I used to catch a ride to high school down in Montpelier on the milk truck. The truck would stop to pick up our milk and I'd ride down with him picking up milk cans from all the farms along the way. 'Course," he adds, "now there's no farms 'tween here and Montpelier."

'Here' for those who don't recognize the name is the 239-acre Brazier Farm in East Montpelier Center. The farm is located on a hilltop and is one of two farms in town that can be seen from as far away as Owl's Head. From Dodge Road, folks driving toward the Center can get a glimpse of

the farm with all the white buildings on the hill to the left.

It seems to be a view into the past, but as you get closer to the Center the present comes into focus.

Tom points out some of the most recent changes. "We went from a stanchion-type barn to a free stall in 1987-88 and built an addition to the barn. We had to do it because the stanchions in the old barn were too small for the cows. They were having a lot of injuries."

"Artificial breedin' has made them better and bigger," Lena says, and Tom continues, "Even Jerseys, which is what the barn was originally designed for are actually too big for those old 1938 stalls." Now about one-third of the herd is Holstein, two-thirds Jersey.

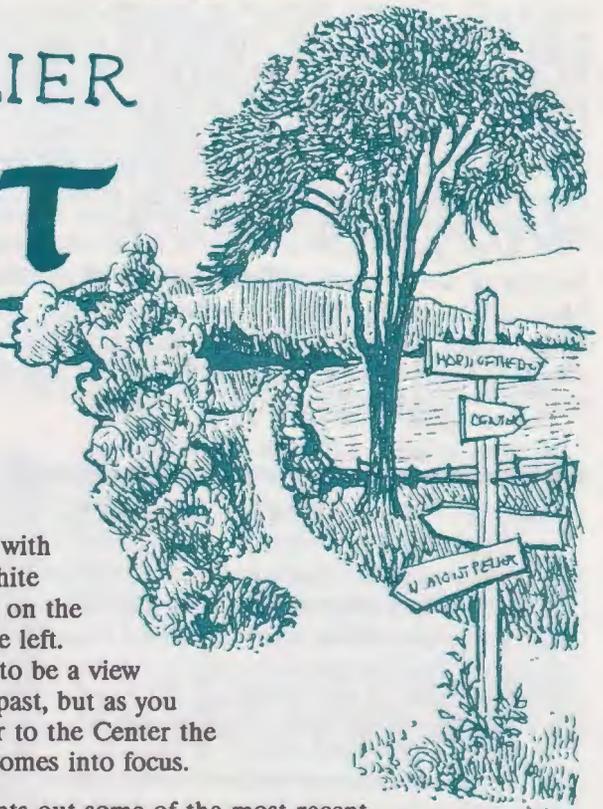
"We're also using the Voisin grazing system now. We were the first farm in this area to start it. We started with two paddocks in 1981 and every year, added a couple more. The major change was in '87; we went from 8 paddocks to 28; now we have 43 that we use."

"Last year," Tom adds, "our farm was one of eight farms in Washington County in a pilot program the Winooski Conservation District did to calculate the amount of feed the cows were getting out of the pastures. They did soil tests, analyzed forage samples, crop yields, and paddock yields. We had them test manure samples to see how much nutrients we were getting from manure versus what we had to buy. The program helped us fine tune our management; we get a yearly handbook and written records of crop statistics. And last year the Vermont Dairy Herd Improvement Association gave us an award for having the most improved dairy herd in the county."

"The biggest change from when Henry and I had the farm," says Lena, "was in 1973 -- a twister came through and took our wooden silo down. We had to go in debt for a cement silo..." she stops, takes a breath, "that was the first time we had any debt at all, the beginning of it."



The Brazier Family



"Everything is changed, just from 1987 to now." Tom says with a sigh. "There's more stress because of economics. Profit margins are smaller. The price we're receiving now for milk is what farmers were paid in 1979. Used to be 100 pounds of milk would buy 130 to 170 pounds of grain. Now 100 pounds buys about 114 pounds of grain. Dairy farmers need to band together now to be a real force. Hopefully, there's a way agriculture can rebound so people can keep their farms up; but I'm not sure."

In spite of the economics, Tom's sister Nancy might have liked to be a farmer, too, but asthma keeps her out of the barn. Tom's not sure he and Ann will encourage baby daughter Jenna to be a farmer; although for now he still likes it. "I wouldn't be doing it if I didn't."

Sheila D'Amico

### FROM THE TOP OF THE SIGNPOST

Anne Sherman just may have the most pleasurable job in this business of getting out a town newspaper. Of course she has to keep the books, and I don't consider that great fun, but she also receives the mail. Yes, that return address on the the *Signpost* is Anne's. After the last issue she received these heartening messages:

*"Being a business person, mom, homemaker and wife does not leave me the time to always attend town functions or keep abreast of what is happening with my neighbors. You people are doing an incredible job."*

*---"...we especially like the...town records"---"If someone in town has no idea of what is going on, it's their own fault. You should be commended on your efforts."---*

*"Please continue the personal and business profiles. People are what make this town special."---*  
*"While I really find the high quality paper used very pleasing to read and handle, I wonder about using recycled paper..." (THIS IS RECYCLED PAPER!) ---"Since I generally wind up reading it while I'm in Southern California, it's a pleasant reminder of home. Keep it going."*

Thanks, everyone, for the kind words. We do plan to "keep it going." Financially, we are just barely keeping ahead of our costs. Did you know that each issue costs nearly \$500? Our printing bill is about \$350 and the postage \$150. The recent postal increase will make it more, but we are doing the paperwork to establish non-profit status so we can mail at a more favorable rate.

Contributions from our neighbors have totalled \$1,926 since last summer, a wonderful vote of confidence. That leaves us a checkbook balance just sufficient to pay for this issue, but from all the comments we've heard, we think the *Signpost* is worth investing in.

If you've been thinking that this is a nice little paper and you enjoy reading it, now would be an excellent time to act out your appreciation and send us a contribution. Thanks for making this all possible!

Jean Cate, Publisher

### IN MEMORIAM: ROBERT L. PARKER

March 23, 1935 - March 30, 1991



Bob Parker

On March 30, 1991, First Assistant Chief Robert L. Parker died in the line of duty of a natural causes. He was the first on the scene of a reported structure fire on Route 2, in East Montpelier. News of his death spread quickly throughout Vermont, New England and the nation. Flags were lowered to half mast at the National Fallen Firefighters' Memorial at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and remained lowered until after his funeral April 3, 1991, when over 150 firefighters from Vermont and New England paid their respects.

Bob was a founding member of the Fire Department and served as First Assistant Chief throughout his twenty-six years of service under

four chiefs. He was a person who cared deeply about his community, often sacrificing his time to help those in need. He did this unselfishly, responding to calls for help any time of the day or night, no matter what the weather.

He was not one to stand back and let others do the work, but would often be found "sizing up" the situation, assigning personnel to various duties and usually physically assisting in extinguishing the fire. He was always among the first on the scene and one of the last to leave. Bob accepted not only the challenge of being a firefighter but won the respect and admiration of all who served with him. When needed, Bob would assume the role of Acting Chief, asserting a quiet leadership, one of action, not words.

In 1990, he was honored by the East Montpelier Fire Department with Second Assistant Chief Elliot Morse (a close friend and also founding member of the EMFD) as Firefighters of the Year, so chosen for their commitment to duty, twenty-six years of continuous service, and leadership abilities.

Robert Parker will be honored later this year at memorial services to be held at the Vermont State Firefighters' Conference and at the National Fire Academy. To Bob, a final salute. He will be sorely missed.

Bill George



**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

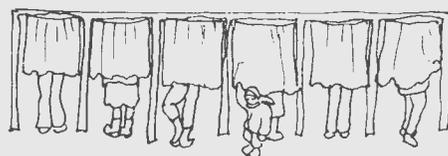
*Weston Cate, Allan Couch, Austin Cleaves*

**February 13, 1991**

- \* Bernie Chenette updated Selectmen on progress of Town Sewage Study Committee.
- \* Approved posting of weight limits on gravel roads from January 1 to May 15 and from November 15 to December 31 to prevent road abuse.
- \* Reviewed ideas submitted by Ag and Open Space Committee to raise money for the Conservation Fund.
- \* Town will receive \$5,438 from State for Act 200 Fund.
- \* Reviewed and approved bills to be paid.

**February 27, 1991**

- \* Heard update from Butch Davis on bridges/culvert work needing to be done.
- \* Discussed repaving; agreed that County Road from where they left off to Barnes Road would be done this summer.
- \* Highway allotment from state to town for fiscal year 1992 is \$103,704.
- \* Approved highway permit for A.G. Anderson Co. Inc. with restrictions on muddy roads in springtime.



**March 12, 1991**

- \* Austin Cleaves will be Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. Sylvia Tosi will be temporary secretary/clerk of Board until new Administrative Assistant comes on board.
- \* Approval given to complete application for VSAC student to apply for a job with the town this summer.
- \* Approved for Central Vermont Solid Waste Mgmt. District to serve as Agent for town in negotiation with CV Landfill contract renewal.
- \* Approved Riverbend Store beverage license application.

- \* Heard request from Ag and Open Space Committee and Conservation Advisory Committee to put a flyer in tax bill on fundraising ideas for Conservation Fund. No final decision made on this.

- \* Approved resolution thanking those who participated in the re-enactment of town's first Town Meeting in 1849.

- \* Discussion on how to handle expiring Planning Commission member terms.

- \* Voted yes to both questions on Washington Electric Co-op vote on hydro power.

- \* Weston Cate will work on job description for Administrative Assistant.

- \* Voted that a Solid Waste Advisory Committee be set up to advise Selectmen.

**March 22, 1991**

- \* Special meeting to review petition received to reconsider vote on Article 11 at Town Meeting. Eighty signatures needed; 92 on petition.

- \* Selectmen approved warning for the special meeting. Meeting will be held April 25, 1991 at 7:30 p.m. at EMES.

**March 27, 1991**

- \* Heard about new product for dust control. Company rep. could not inform Selectmen of contents of product therefore no order placed.

- \* Al Couch reappointed as alternate rep. to Central Vermont Solid Waste District.

- \* Approved beverage license for Dudley's Store.

- \* Selectmen will attend Planning Commission meeting in regard to the district landfill negotiations.

- \* Discussed Mr. Miller's letter of concern re: overcrowding of Town Meeting. Will look into an alternative seating plan.

- \* Road permits granted to Blue Seal Feeds, Dubois Construction, Ellery Packard, Anderson Supply Corp., and Earl Shatney.

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

*Chair: Johanna DeMartino*

**January 17, 1991**

- \* Discussed disposal of fill at Selectmen's request. Regulation in place was reviewed and deemed acceptable.

- \* Continued discussion of Town Plan.

**January 19, 1991**

- \* Special meeting devoted to discussion of Town Plan.

- \* Voted to request Selectmen to include in the warning for Town Meeting an article calling for \$10,000 for Conservation Fund.

**February 7, 1991**

- \* Heard an update on development and progress of the landfill in town by Austin Cleaves and Gene Forbes (engineer employed by Solid Waste District). If site is given final approval by the District, then a bond vote is expected in September. Planning Commission made it clear that they felt a locally held public meeting should be arranged in the near future to discuss project.

- \* Zoning Administrator reported little business but many inquiries.

**February 21, 1991**

- \* Heard proposed plans from Larry Brown re: additional building for printing business. Since Mr. Brown proposes to build in Zone D, he was advised to present his case to the Board of Adjustment.

- \* Granted Jim Kelley a permit to build a retail showroom behind his house with conditions.

**March 7, 1991**

- \* Weston Cate resigned as clerk. As a newly-elected Selectman he will remain as a non-voting member of commission.

- \* Voted to pay tuition for John Riley to attend a workshop on writing zoning regulations.

- \* Voted to grant permit for a lighted sign at Creamery Store.

**EAST MONTPELIER  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BOARD**

*Janice Aldrich, Phil Cookson, Rich Davidian,  
Tony Klein, Burr Morse*

**February 7, 1991**

\* Heard from a group of concerned parents about ensuring that milk served at school is without BGH (bovine growth hormone). Laura will contact milk supplier requesting notification if BGH milk is used.

**March 7, 1991**

\* Board approved use of school building as an emergency site for the American Red Cross.

\* Board reorganized:  
Tony Klein, Chair;  
Burr Morse, Vice Chair;  
Janice Aldrich, Clerk.

**RECREATION COMMITTEE**

*Jack Pauly, Judy Cookson, Charlie Burbo*

By the time you receive this newsletter, our baseball program should be in full "swing". We have over 100 youngsters registered for Tee Ball and minor and major league teams. Our children are lucky to have good facilities and willing volunteers to run these programs. Thanks to everyone.

Swimming sign-up will be held on a date that will be announced in the *World, The Times Argus* and the school newsletter. Swimming lessons are open to all children of East Montpelier from children going into Kindergarten through High School.

**No late swimming registrations will be accepted this year.** If you can't come to registration, please have a friend bring it in.

The concession at Little League games helps keep swimming costs low. We always need more volunteers. Please let Judy Cookson or Jean Burbo know if you can help out. You don't need to be the parent of a ball player to "pitch in".

**NEXT ISSUE**

**Deadline for next issue is June 1. Please get your copy to Janice Waterman, RR 1, Box 4330, Montpelier, 05602, 223-5826.**

**ELECTION RESULTS  
TOWN MEETING  
March 5, 1991**

Moderator: Martin K. Miller  
Town Clerk: Sylvia Tosi  
Town Treasurer: Sylvia Tosi  
Selectman: Weston Cate, Jr.  
Lister: James V. Goodall  
Auditor:  
3 years: Fred Tubbs  
2 years: Mary Ellen Hill  
Trustee of Public Funds:  
Pauline E. Coburn

First Constable: Dennis Carver  
Second Constable: Arthur Montague  
Town Law Agent: H. Roger Chapell  
Town Grand Juror: Tim Carver  
Cemetery Commissioner:  
Carroll Witham, Jr.

School Directors:  
3 years: Harry Morse, Jr.  
2 years: Janice Aldrich



**BICENTENNIAL  
COMMITTEE**

The Bicentennial Committee '91 met on April 9 and planned our Town Float which will be in the Montpelier Bicentennial Parade on July 13.

A committee will be formed to plan for the Town Honor Roll which will be dedicated on November 11th.

Please keep the date of July 12 open to join Montpelier with their Star Ball; black tie dress or period costumes are suggested. What do you think early settlers Parley Davis, Stephen Foster, and Nahum Kelton would have worn to the ball?

To celebrate the Bicentennial, Rally Day will become a Rally Weekend on September 7 & 8, with a wide range of events on Saturday and an old-fashioned church service, special music, and lunch at the Old Meeting House on Sunday. The Rally Day and Bicentennial Committees are planning these events together. We'll be meeting on May 8 and would welcome additional workers. (It's time to be looking for your Bicentennial costume for these events!)

*Gladys Dunkling*

DENNIS R. HAWKINS 223-3994	HUGH M. HAWKINS 229-0114
Driveway and Lawn Construction Mowing, Bush Hogging Snow Plowing Sanding	229-4166 WHOLESALE - RETAIL
Top Soil Bark Mulch Sawdust, Hay Lime, Gravel Field Re seeding	



Norman C. Rice  
President  
(802) 229-1506

**DUNROVEN ASSOCIATES**

RR 1 Box 110 East Montpelier, Vermont 05651

SURVEYING AND MAPPING  
SITE ENGINEERING  
ENVIRONMENTAL PERMIT PROCESSING  
SOIL AND PERCOLATION TESTS  
SEPTIC SYSTEM DESIGN



*Pick Your Own  
**STRAWBERRIES**  
Picking starts 1st day of summer.  
**TUBBS' BERRY FARM**  
Route 2, East Montpelier*

**CHURCH CHIMES**

**OLD MEETING HOUSE  
OLD BRICK CHURCH**

Thanks to all who've dropped their returnable bottles off at the OMH Community Hall. We have given \$107.00 to the Food Shelf so far.

Children's Day Services will be held at the respective churches on June 3. The OMH Sunday School is planning a performance of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" for that day and also on Saturday, June 8 at 6:00.

The Mission Committee coordinated the preparation of Easter Baskets for the children who are under the care of Marie Tomberg, our Partner in Service from the Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services.

Lee Hunn and Becky Reed of the Missions Committee were interviewed on "Across the Fence" (Channel 3) recently. They and Marie Tomberg described the Partners in Service program.

Services are held at 9:30 a.m. at the Old Meeting House and at 11:00 a.m. at the Old Brick Church. Sunday School is held during the services. All are welcome.

## WHY DOES U-32 NEED A JUNIOR HIGH SPACE?

Sue Clayton

Children between the ages of 10 and 15 experience the most rapid and dramatic physical, emotional and intellectual growth since the first two years of life. Their bodies, relationships and thoughts mature at rates dictating change almost overnight.

What experience do these children have in our schools? For the most part, they leave an intimate elementary school environment with one teacher and a self-contained classroom and enter a school roughly four times the size to which they are accustomed, where no adults know them. They spend the first week of school with maps in hand to find their classes. Despite the valiant efforts of teachers to provide a welcoming atmosphere, U-32 remains an intimidating fortress. The TA system, where one teacher takes the responsibility for getting to know and keeping track of a group of students, is generally considered to be a success. But since junior high students encounter about half a dozen teachers a day (but not always the same half-dozen all year), the TA cannot be the mentor an ideal system would suggest. And since the junior high schedule is so closely wedded to the senior high system of nine "bands" or periods of class time, it is difficult to use time in a middle-level teaching way.

According to Chris Stevenson, associate professor of Education and Social Services at the University of Vermont, "middle level students learn best by doing. Such [hands-on] learning has relevance that textbooks, workbooks or instructional kits cannot accomplish." (*Burlington Free Press*)

In order to provide this kind of "learn by doing" education, U-32 must provide adequate space and time for students and teachers to interact. Right now, the seventh grade has claimed an absurdly overcrowded area as "core" space, and the eighth grade lacks even that. Time is regularly punctuated by the bells ringing for the senior high classes, and sometimes interrupted by students passing through one class area to get to the

next, a situation caused by U-32's open classrooms.

Junior high children are characterized by fidgets. Although they can spend an inordinate amount of time sitting in front of the TV or Nintendo, they often have more energy than at any other time in their life. Physical activity has been shown not only to release pent-up energy levels and lower aggression, but also to positively affect intellectual development.

Yet, even though the junior high students have priority in physical education space, they are scheduled for four periods a week instead of the state-recommended five classes. The priorities for junior high end at physical education classes. Sports and after-school activities belong to the senior high. A student who may have been actively involved in sixth grade soccer or basketball, finds herself or himself in seventh grade on the same team with all the players she or he used to play against. Even with split teams, where and when can teams practice? And what about an intramural program? Right now, there is no possibility. The gym is almost completely utilized, sometimes from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

U-32 has a present student enrollment of 819, the largest population in the past ten years. That enrollment is projected to increase to 834 in the next three years. Crowded conditions do not make teaching any easier nor do they make students feel secure.

It is particularly important for this age child to feel secure. Studies indicate that most cases of drop-outs, teen pregnancy, suicide, drug and alcohol abuse begin with the low self-esteem which developed in children ages 10-15. Like early intervention in preschool children, investment in middle school age children pays direct dividends.

A few statistics from *The Kids in Our Backyard* by the Children's Forum give this picture:

**\* Dropouts cost Vermont at least \$150 million annually in reduced taxes and**

**increased costs for welfare, health care and employment subsidies.**

**\* Approximately 17% of all students who enter the ninth grade in Vermont do not graduate from high school.**

**\* More than 94,000 Vermonters are without a high school diploma.**

**\* High school dropouts are 3 times more likely to be unemployed than graduates.**

**\* 44% of the parents receiving ANFC benefits have not completed high school.**

**\* Non-graduates will earn, in their working lives, an average of \$250,000 less than high school graduates-- about \$9,000 less per year.**

**\* About half of Vermont's pregnant teens (72 out of 147) dropped out of school last year. Of these, two-thirds said they dropped out before becoming pregnant.**

**\* 85% of Vermont's prison population does not have a high school diploma. Of the Vermont prison population under 21, 90% do not have a high school diploma.**

**\* One out of every 2 Vermont boys who drop out of school will be convicted of a crime.**

Will building a junior high at U-32 solve all these problems? No, just as finding a cure for cancer will not find all the causes of cancer. But building the needed space and funding the needed programs is a step in the right direction. Research has shown that for every \$1 spent in prevention, \$6 is saved in rehabilitation.

During the month of May, the U-32 Board will hold public meetings in the five district towns to discuss plans for an addition to the school. **There will be one at the Elementary School on May 6 at 7:30.**

When economic times are tight, we must be sure we use our money wisely. Building a junior high at U-32 may be one of the best investments central Vermont residents can make.

If you have questions or want more information, call your U-32 Board representatives Sue Clayton at 223-7423, or Richard Angney at 223-7717.



♥ Remember to bring your returnables to the ongoing bottle drop at M & M Beverage in Montpelier to raise money for U-32 Project Graduation.

♥ Fifth and sixth grade basketball teams won first place in boys and girls division in Montpelier Tournament.

♥ Thanks to the Girls Scouts who babysat at Town Meeting so parents could attend the meeting.

♥ PTO thanks all who contributed to Town Meeting dinner; we raised \$831.00. Cookbooks still available for \$5.00 each at the school.

♥ Grand total of Grand Union tapes was \$314,250 from which the school received an Apple II computer with extra disk drive and two printers. These items would have cost over \$3000. Thanks to all who contributed.

♥ Mary Lou and Roy Potter are recovering from their car accident. Mary Lou is home and doing well. Roy is in the rehabilitation unit at the Medical Center of Vermont and recuperating slowly.

♥ Did you know what a Voisin grazing system was? Instead of pasturing cows in one big field, the field is fenced into small "paddocks". The cows graze for 2-3 days in one paddock and then move on to the next. If you want to know why, ask your neighboring farmer. (It originated in New Zealand.)

♥ Like to play volleyball? Join the group that plays Monday nights at the Elementary School from 7-9.

♥ Ever been to Owl's Head? It's a 10-minute hike in Groton State Park.

PASSINGS

Edith E. Coburn passed away on February 16, 1991. The mother of David Coburn, she lived on Daggett Road with David and Pauline Coburn.

BIRTHS

(Received by the Town Clerk by Mar. 31)

♥ Kahli McAllister born 12/17/90 to Rose Marie and Richard McAllister.

LAND TRANSFERS

(As recorded 2/1/91-3/31/91)

Dwelling and 3 acres on Fair Road from Emma Lund to Emma Lund Grant & Paul Grant.

Dwelling and 10.5 acres on Putnam Road from Edward Zuraw to Edward V. Zuraw & Barbara A. Stalling.

Dwelling and .62 acres from Dewey O. Lee to Pauline Lee.

Building and 14.3 acres on U.S. Route 2 from Robert P. & Beverly M. Ba Ross to Kevin Bailey & Brian J. Bailey.

10.4 acres on Horn of the Moon Road from Edwin P. & Nellie E. Clark to K. Putnam & Susan Clayton.

24.5 acres on Chickering Road from Arthur W. & Joanne N. Chickering to The Nature Conservancy.

Conservation easement on 17.4 acres on Chickering Road from Arthur W. & Joanne N. Chickering to The Nature Conservancy.

12 acres on Horn of the Moon Road from Edwin P. & Nellie E. Clark to Edwin A. & Diana Clark.

10 acres on North Street from Dorothy J. Sparrow to David H. & Pamela A. Sparrow.

House and 215 acres on Putnam Road from Ernest & Estella Dodge to John & Donna Hall.

House and 215 acres on Putnam Road from John & Donna Hall to John & Donna Hall and J. Stuart & Robyn Hall.

3 acres and house on County Road from Ronald C. & Martha J. Kowalkowski to William M. & Verna E. Brownell.

78.85 acres on Perkins Road from Sheldon A. & Stephanie A. Kietel to Carleton F. Tenney.

One acre and house on North Street from William J. & Cecile M. Williams to Norman Kelley & Douglas Schaefer.

10 acres on Fitch Road from George H. & Barbara Fitch to Bruce & Claudia Fitch.

Tidbits from the TWIN TOWN CRIER, an East Montpelier newspaper published in 1945

"In the inside [of the new creamery] nearly all the finish coat of cement is now on. It looks just grand and very smooth...On the left as you enter the main part, you see a heavy insulated steel door. It is the door to the refrigerator room. The room is lined with two thicknesses of cork all about 4 inches thick, and on the walls, the cork is covered with asphalt."

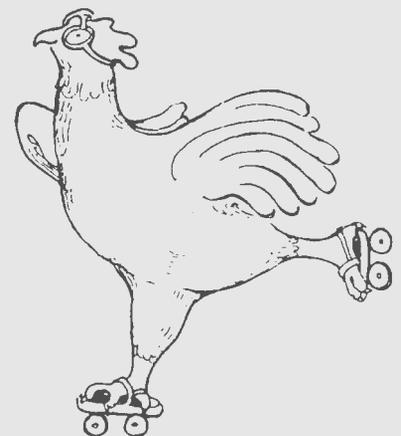
"The dance at the Center sponsored by the P.T.A. was very well attended. Ray Austin and his Green Mt. Rangers furnished the music."

"The County Road Home Demonstration Group held their meeting at Charles Ormsbee's on May 4th."

"We also notice the young kids (boys and girls) swapping marbles and boys walking away with pockets bulging. Ten small marbles for three big red ones..."

"Pfc. Chas. W. Codling, Jr., who has spent the last 32 months in England, Italy, Africa and Sicily is spending a 21 day furlough with his relatives in town."

"The North Montpelier Library has had some new shelves built and now all the books are on them. About 100 new books have been catalogued and added which makes a total of about 950 books available. Among the new books are many boys' books which we are sure will be well liked."



## A PORTRAIT OF ELLEN C. HILL

Ellen Hill's roots are deep in East Montpelier. In 1788 two brothers, Nathaniel and Hiram Peck, walked from Royalston, Massachusetts, to settle in the north part of the town of Montpelier, now called Center Road. Nathaniel purchased land from Jacob Davis for forty-five pounds and built a log cabin. Other family members arrived and built homes nearby, but they eventually moved on. Nathaniel cast his lot with East Montpelier, serving as school trustee and helping build the Methodist Meetinghouse. His son Addison built the classic brick house near the site of the original log cabin. Addison was Ellen's great-grandfather.

Ellen, however, was born in Brooklyn, New York, where her father, James Currie, was a research chemist. Her mother, Martha Bailey, was daughter of long-time East Montpelier schoolteacher Ellen Peck Bailey, Addison's daughter. Ellen was five years old before she ever visited East Montpelier. The trip from Brooklyn in their trusty Essex car took two days. On those early summertime visits they stayed with "Uncle Hiram" and "Aunt Ida" Sparrow in the village, but the brick house was later modernized so they could spend all summer. And what summers they were, filled with picnics, swimming in Crystal Pool, and excursions to Burke and Spruce Mountains!

After graduation from Shore Road Academy in Bay Ridge, New York, Ellen attended Middlebury College, earning a degree in Sociology in 1941. She and a college classmate renovated an old house in Maryland on the Choptank River, then she worked for an insurance company on Wall Street. In 1942 she married Vermonter James Hill, an army officer, and lived in Oregon during the war years.

Soon after the war, the lure of Vermont brought them back to East Montpelier, where Ellen has lived ever since. They first bought a farm on Templeton Road where they raised Jersey cattle, and later moved back to the ancestral farm on Center Road. The family grew to four sons and one daughter, several of whom still live nearby. Ellen's daughter, Joanne Hill Bair, and her family now live in Addison Peck's brick house on Center Road.

As the years went on Ellen began to realize what a wealth of East Montpelier history was secreted in the corners of the brick house. Research became a high priority in her life. With Bob and Lois Webster she inventoried the gravestones in town, publishing "The Cemeteries of East Montpelier, Vermont, 1794-1973". The long forgotten Doty Cemetery at the corner of Center and Dodge Roads was uncovered during this research.

During the 1976 Bicentennial, Ellen was a member of the town committee and compiled "Revolutionary War Soldiers of East Montpelier", a valuable historical and genealogical tool, and a pageant called "Early East Montpelier". But her most ambitious project was the co-authorship with Marilyn Blackwell of the East Montpelier town history entitled *Across the Onion*. Published in 1983, this thorough and very readable book is in its second printing and is still available at the Town Clerk's office.

Now one would presume that in all these years Ellen's time was spent just researching and writing. Not so. She has a curious, seeking mind and an itchy foot. In 1967 she and Myrtle Ormsbee went to Ireland; the next year she rafted down the Salmon River in Idaho. Florence Coutant and Ellen toured Great Britain in 1978 and Alaska in 1985. Where else? Oregon, Scotland, China, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines, and numerous expeditions on the lakes and rivers of Vermont.

Ellen still does research, plants a vegetable garden, tends her flower beds, and plays the organ at the United Methodist Church in Adamant. In June she will join her Middlebury classmates for their 50th reunion. She has catalogued over 700 photographs of East Montpelier and maintains the historical exhibit in the municipal building. The town is much indebted to Ellen for keeping its history alive and well.

What's ahead? Ellen Hill will find something! She's not ready for the rocking chair yet!

Flo Young



Ellen Hill

*"...several factors make East Montpelier's history unique. The town contains some of the best agricultural land in central Vermont, a factor crucial to its history from early settlement to the present. The earliest pioneers first sighted this land, lying 'across the Onion,' as they forded the river with ox-team and goods. The Onion River, called the Winooski River by the second half of the nineteenth century, continued to play an integral part in the development of both the early town of Montpelier and the area that became East Montpelier.*

*For over forty years the town's farmers lived in the state capital as it rapidly became a political and commercial center. At a point when Montpelier had gained considerable prestige, most of the farmers were obliged to manage their own affairs. No other town in the state experienced such an abrupt and dramatic change as occurred in 1848 when Montpelier was divided."*

Excerpted from the dustjacket of *Across the Onion*

## COMMITTEE MEETING CALENDAR

Selectmen	2nd & 4th Wednesday	7:00	Municipal Building
Planning Commission	1st, 3rd, 4th Thursday	7:30	"
Zoning Board of Adjustment	2nd & 4th Monday	7:30	"
Conservation Fund Advisory Comm.	3rd Tuesday	7:00	"
Agland and Open Space	1st Tuesday	7:30	"
Volunteer Fire Department	Every Tuesday	7:00	Fire Station, Templeton Rd.
U-32 School Board	2nd & 4th Tuesday	7:30	U-32
Elementary School Board	1st Thursday	7:30	Elementary School
Town Clerk's Office Hours	Monday-Thursday: 9-5, Friday: 9-12		Municipal Building
Zoning Administrator	Tuesday & Thursday	1:00-2:30	Municipal Building

Meeting times are subject to change

## EVENTS CALENDAR

May 4, Saturday	Green Up Day	On the road again
May 6, Monday, 7:30	Forum on Junior High School	Elementary School
May 8, Wednesday, 7:30	Rally Day & Bicentennial Committees	Municipal Building
May 13, Monday	Grandparents Day	Elementary School
May 18, Saturday	PTO Fleamarket	Elementary School
June 8, Saturday, 6:00	"Joseph & the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat"	Old Meeting House
June 11, Tuesday	Last Day of School	
June 11, Tuesday	6th Grade Graduation	Elementary School
June 16, Sunday, 11:00	Senior Graduation	U-32 High School

## SIGNPOST STAFF

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<i>Fred Tubbs, Copy Editor, 454-8462</i>		<i>Sylvia Tosi, Town Records, 223-3240</i>
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**INSIDE:**

*THE BRAZIERS  
IN MEMORY OF  
ROBERT PARKER  
NEED FOR NEW  
JUNIOR HIGH?  
ELLEN HILL*

