

EAST MONTPELIER SIGNPOST

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November/December 1994

ERNEST DODGE: JUST A TIME AGO

SCENE I: Ernest Dodge is in a deep sleep in his easy chair in the Dodge living room. He is dreaming of a conversation that he is having with his great-great-great-grandfather Solomon Dodge. The visit takes place at the site of Solomon's original homestead which was located in the back of Fairmont Farm on Lyle Young Road.

Ernest: My gracious! This is a beautiful view from up here. Let's see, there's Spruce, Hardwood Mountain, and Owl's Head. Lord! Who's this old man walking toward me?

Solomon: I'm Solomon Dodge; John Templeton and I were the first settlers of these parts. I'm old and tired. Can I have a seat?

Ernest: Why, sure, take a seat. I'm 75 years old; guess that makes me just a young fellow. Gosh, you must be about 235 years old! And "these parts" as you refer to is now called East Montpelier. The folks that lived in Montpelier and East Montpelier had a "wing-ding" many years ago. So each town decided to go their separate ways.

Solomon: Probably over politics or jealousy of some sort. That crowd in Montpelier were stiff-necked folks in my day.



Ernest: Well, our differences aren't much today. We have the Republican and Democratic parties, but they sort of blend together. I refer to them as the "demicans" and the "republicrats."

Solomon: Hmmmm. Demicans and republicrats, I'm not familiar with those terms. By the way, I don't see any house or barn here.

Ernest: Well, where your home and barns once stood is all farmland now. I'm your great-great-great-grandson. You have many fine relatives in the area, but I'm the only one in town that bears your name.

Solomon: As the saying goes, "You're an apple that didn't fall very far from the tree."

Ernest: Well, yes, but I must explain. You see most of my growing-up years I spent in Worcester. I worked in the woods a lot as a young lad.

Solomon: Huh! That's not new for me. That's about all I ever did. This land was just trees, trees, and more trees when I lived here.

Ernest: You and your kin and people like you did a fine job of clearing this area. Through your efforts, many acres of fine agricultural land are now used for farming.

Solomon: In my day it was hard to get enough hay to winter our oxen and family cow. Do you have a family? You know, my wife and I had eleven children. It was a vicious cycle. We needed children to help to clear the land to grow more food to feed more children to help clear more land.

Ernest: Well, times have changed. Children aren't thought of as potential laborers as they once were. Our children are Jerry and Lucretia, and we have six grandchildren. My wife Estelle and I have been married 55 years and we've lived in town since 1951.

Solomon: Well, this area is a good place to live out your life.

Ernest: Yes, it is, but I had a chance to see many parts of our world. In 1942 I joined the Merchant Marine and



served three years. We shipped cargo to such places as the British Isles, Russia, Newfoundland, Italy, Rotterdam, and the Azores. Then I returned home to Connecticut and Estelle. You know, she is the great-great-granddaughter of David Parsons, although their name got changed to Persons. He must have been an acquaintance of yours since he settled the Hawkins' farm.

Solomon: Why yes, David was a good friend of mine.

Ernest: In past years many dairy farms were in the area. In fact, that's why my wife and I live in East Montpelier.

Solomon: Oh really? What is a "dairy" farm? And why did you move here?

Ernest: Many families made their living milking dairy cows and selling the milk for market. That's what we call a dairy farm. Many farmers chose not to keep their own breeding bull, so a breeding cooperative was formed, and I was hired to be an artificial breeder technician.

Solomon: Wait a minute. I'm totally lost. What's an "artificial?" You mean you took the place of the bull, like...like driving an ox-cart with a bull from farm to farm to breed the farmer's cows. Impossible! He must have been some tired bull by the end of the day.

Ernest: Well, no. The bulls were kept in a central place, and glass vials of semen were sent by mail or bus each day. I used to use a microscope to see when the semen was no longer usable. Anyway, we moved to East Montpelier onto what was once called the Stephen Foster Farm to live in a more central place in my working area. I was employed by the Cooperative about five years, and then I farmed until 1983, when we sold the place and built our new home a ways further out Foster Road.

Solomon: Microscope? What's that? I mean, it sounds like an interesting life, though. I never did get around much. You know, eleven children and all those trees to cut.

Ernest: I guess I'm lucky to be right here, snow-machining in the winter, cutting wood and traveling in the summer. Estelle, the children, and I even drove to Alaska one summer. We had a wonderful time. It's a beautiful state. Oh, we do a little sugaring, too. Last winter Estelle and I rode my snow-machine to Hardwick three times for a meal of pizza, and I rode up once by myself.

Solomon: Pizza? Pizza what? I'm a meat and potatoes man myself. I just walked a few hundred feet from the woods to our home. I never had to travel that far for food on a snow...what?

Ernest: I guess I can't explain. You probably wouldn't understand. I might add, though, one of my proudest accomplishments is serving as a member of the East Montpelier Fire Department for 17 years. And Estelle was very helpful taking over the farm chores whenever I was called out on fires when I was farming.

Solomon: Well, I'm right proud of you, even though I don't understand all these new words. You've been a real servant to the community. You see, I...

Ernest: I know...you had eleven children and had all those trees to cut.

John S. Hall

John lives on Putnam Road and is a partner in Fairmont Farm.

Note: The dialogue is both fact and fiction, of course.

Ernest's, though, is factual.



Top of the Signpost

Calvin Coolidge, our own homegrown Vermont president, made this terse comment in a speech to the Society of American Newspaper Editors in 1925: "The business of America is business." And so it still is.

Seventy years ago small towns like East Montpelier were sprinkled with woolen mills, grain mills, small factories, and neighborhood stores. Most people worked right in town, and their newest gadget - that wonderful Model T car - was used largely for Sunday drives and family outings.

1925 now seems a very long time ago. We've seen businesses move into the population centers, Montpelier, Barre, and Burlington, and we consider East Montpelier a bedroom town. Does everyone commute to work in 1994? The streams of traffic past my house on County Road each day suggest that they do.

There is, however, another story, and that story has become quite real to us *Signpost* volunteers. We thought initially that we would "use up" all the businesses in town in the first few issues of business profiles. Not so. As we go into Year Five, we find there are still many of them out there yet to be written up in our columns. Often our *Signpost* people themselves know little about them and are eager to know more. Hopefully our readers feel the same.

More surprising even than the print shops, garages and roadside stands whose shingles hang in all parts of town are the multitude of home industries hidden away in private homes. East Montpelier people are in the business of: clothing alterations, computer services, child care, music lessons, woodworking, horseback riding instruction, antiques and more.

Would you like to hear about these hidden talents? The *Signpost* plans to feature home industries in its special issue next September-October. You can help us by alerting us to businesses we should include. We will also feature the many East Montpelier residents who operate businesses in Montpelier, Barre, or elsewhere outside town. These fellow townspeople contribute much to the business vitality of the area, and they have a story to tell. We salute you all.

Jean Cate



THE SELECTBOARD

Allan Couch, Edie Miller, Frank Pratt

July 27, 1994

- ▶ Decided to turn Linda Royce's drainage and swimming pool damage claim over to Vermont League of Cities and Towns for review.
- ▶ Approved the Conservation Fund Policy with one change - deleted the reference to use the fund as a revolving loan fund.

August 10, 1994

- ▶ Authorized road crew to obtain rabies vaccinations at town expense.
- ▶ Mike Garand expressed concern about security and safety at the Town Garage. Decided to post no trespassing signs and will consider installing motion sensor lights.
- ▶ Approved quote of \$385 for installation of heating oil tank at Town Garage. This will allow separation from the underground diesel fuel tanks which are planned for replacement with above-ground tank.
- ▶ The Crystal Springs water system line in the municipal building parking lot has been relocated in accordance with the court stipulation in E. Montpelier v. Hedges.

August 25, 1994

- ▶ Heard a concern from Richard Cassavant re: apparent zoning violation on Fair Road. Paul and Emma Grant have begun a recycling business on their property in a residential zone. Zoning Administrator has issued a notice of violation.
- ▶ Town notified that a Barre Town woman was bitten by a dog when on Country Club Road. The dog, owned by Roland Cliche, was to be quarantined and confined for ten days in accordance with regulations. Town Health Officer Paul White will submit necessary report to Dept. of Health. Dog is not licensed and has not been confined. Constable Dennis Carver will impound dog and take to Humane Society.
- ▶ Approved low bid from G.M.Bowen for septic system at municipal building.

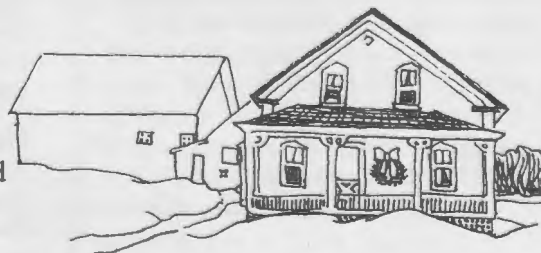
- ▶ Discussion of proposed traffic and solid waste ordinances.
- ▶ Accepted resignation of Ken Lorden from road department. Will advertise for position in Times Argus.
- ▶ Winooski Hydro tax appeal is currently before the Board of Civil Authority. The Board asked for assistance, and Selectboard agreed to hire Dexter Merritt to help review.

September 7, 1994

- ▶ Executive session to review applications for vacant position of truck driver/equipment operator for town. Interviews set for September 12.

September 14, 1994

- ▶ Tree Warden Paul Cate met with Selectboard to discuss roadside tree cutting and planting. Would be willing to assist road department. Board liked concept of encouraging replanting but hesitant to allocate town funds for this.
- ▶ Mike Garand reports a considerable problem with beavers in culverts. Local game warden has given permission to have them trapped. Selectboard agreed.
- ▶ Proposed ordinances on traffic and solid waste were reviewed. Public hearing to be held October 12.
- ▶ Voted to appoint Weston Cate, Jr. to the U-32 School Board through March Town Meeting.



PLANNING COMMISSION

Chair: Ed Blackwell

July 21, 1994

- ▶ Approved preliminary sketch plan submitted by Rich Tousignant for five-lot subdivision of six acres.
- ▶ Discussion of Brazier Road with Selectboard and Chris Pratt, who wants permission to improve 450 feet of Class 4 road (T.H.45) at own expense and to make improvements on a 2/10-mile segment of Brazier Road. Approved, subject to an agreement with Selectboard.

- ▶ Complaint received from neighbors re: trailer for storage at Brown Printing. Roger Chapell reported that the trailer is a registered motor vehicle over which the Planning Commission has no jurisdiction.

August 4, 1994

- ▶ Approved site plan review of creamery building on Route 2.
- ▶ Approved preliminary sketch plan review for Cheryl Potter to subdivide 51 acres of her property into five lots.
- ▶ Voted to have Dave Hudson represent Planning Commission on Act 250 hearing for Larry Brown for new road approval.

August 18, 1994

- ▶ Public Hearing on Tousignant subdivision. Approved to accept the preliminary plat. No public members present.

September 1, 1994

- ▶ Approved preliminary plat review on Potter subdivision off Towne Hill Road.
- ▶ Approved request of Alice Wright to sell plants from her home off Route 14 as a home occupation.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL U-32 DISTRICT SCHOOL MEETING
November 22, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.

The principal matter to be taken up is whether or not the U-32 budget will be voted by Australian ballot in the future, along with other items.

NOTICE OF GENERAL ELECTIONS

Tuesday, November 8
7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
At the EMES Gymnasium

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Chair: Jeff Cueto

July 25, 1994

► Public hearing on application of Christopher and Rebecca Crandell to construct addition to home on Powder Horn Glen with inadequate setback. Application approved.

► Re: Request from Mr. Duhamel about trailer on Larry Brown's property. Board unanimously agreed that since trailer is licensed and registered with the State, it is not jurisdiction of zoning board.

August 8, 1994

► Public hearing on application of Michael and Marlene McCarty to construct a second dwelling on their 78 acre lot on Jacobs Road. Recessed until additional information is received.

August 15, 1994

► Continued McCarty hearing, Approved application for second dwelling with conditions re: setback.

September 12, 1994

► Public hearing on Paul and Emma Grant recycling business in Zone B and D on 3.2 acre lot. Great deal of testimony from neighbors both pro and con. Voted to schedule a site visit.

September 26, 1994

► Site visit to Grants re: junk yard and recycling business. Denied permit because junk yard is not allowed in Zone B.

► Reviewed CV Landfill transfer station information. This represents a change in use and would require a conditional use permit.

► Convened Rus hearing - expansion of business on Rt. 14. Postponed hearing.

► Convened Dennis and Ruth Farnham hearing for addition to house without adequate setback. All criteria met; application approved.

The **Board of Civil Authority** met August 29, 1994, and approved 33 applications for addition to Checklist and voted to change polling hours for all elections to 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

EAST MONTPELIER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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

September 8, 1994

► Agreed to request of Margurite Hurlbert to charge \$25 for use of kitchen to outside groups.

► Approved moving the trailer from school; person willing to take for cost of moving it.

► Fund balance of \$77,000.

► Kevin Wood presented technology proposal. Cost of technology equipment is \$56,436 plus \$5,800 for software, wiring, license, etc. for total of \$62,236. Package approved. Some of the money from fund balance will be used to fund technology purchases.

► Will set aside \$25,000 from fund balance for emergency contingency fund.

► Approved reimbursement to PTO for funding given to teachers for classroom supplies (\$1,070).

► Enrollment is 213 students this year.

► Discussion about difficulty of getting PTO officers and volunteers for sport programs.

Other News

News from the Library: Are you interested in *volunteering in the library*? Are you interested in learning *how to check books in and out on the computer*? Are you interested in *substituting in the library*? Please stop in or call me at 223-2947, and let me know if you are interested in any of these wonderful opportunities! It is important that volunteers and substitutes know how to use the computers. I would like to hold an evening workshop if there are enough people interested. **It's easy! It's fun! We'd love to have you!**

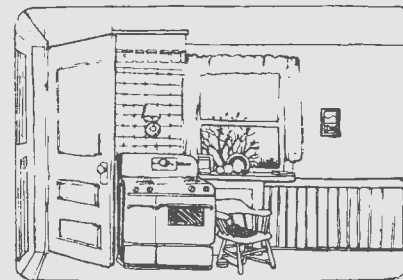
Ellen Knoedler, Librarian.

Community Artist-in-Residence

Any of you with children in the Elementary School are aware of the effect of an artist-in-residence. Briefly, an artist or group of artists go into the school for an extended period of time - three days to a few weeks - and work in their specialty. The children may discover new dimensions in their own creativity and artistic ability.

There is an opportunity to bring such an experience to the entire community, and we are looking for people interested in being on the steering committee which would apply for a grant to fund such a residency.

If you are interested in this project and/or serving on the steering committee that will design it, call Gail England (in the evening) at 223-2168.



FOUR CORNERS SCHOOLHOUSE ASSOCIATION

President: Don Donnelly

Rally Day Quilt Exhibit: Our first exhibit was well attended. Special thanks go to the many volunteers who helped to make the event successful and to the owners of the quilts for lending their treasures.

Paper Airplane Competition: Although windy and not too well attended, the children who flew their paper airplanes had fun.

Landscape Committee: Recently Paul Cate and Ruth Frost have improved the grounds considerably by planting a few bulbs and removing unwanted and unsightly brush/weeds on the front lawn. This initial work is in preparation for future planting after current necessary projects on and in the building are completed.

Halloween Party on Oct. 31 from 3:30-4:30, with refreshments and games, spook house, pumpkin-painting, for preschoolers through sixth graders, with 25 cents admission.

The Armchair Travelers Series continues this year. In October Jean Cate showed slides from her trip to India. "Windows on the World" by the students who went to France is planned for Sunday, November 6. For further information call Rachael Grossman as 223-3177.

For any use of the schoolhouse, please call Marion Codling at 223-2058.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

On May 19, the East Montpelier Fire Department held its annual meeting and elected the following officers: Fire Chief, Michael Garand; Corporation President, Jon Winston; Vice President, Deborah Schick; Board of Directors, Michael Bliss, Greg Pelchuck, Robert VanZandt, and Elliott Morse; Chaplain, Jay Copping.

The following ground officers were appointed: 1st Assistant Chief, Elliott Morse; 2nd Assistant Chief and EMS Officer, Jon Winston; 1st Captain, Bill George; 2nd Captain, Robert VanZandt; Lieutenant, Tom Brazier. Others were also appointed to serve: Administrative, Bill George; Recording Secretary, Forest Davis; Training Officer, Robert VanZandt; Truck Officer, Karl Houppi; Equipment Officer, Robert Brown; and Building Officer, Ty Roland.

Ronald Holmquest, Robin Copping, and John Knudsen have just completed the State's Basic Firefighter course - over 80 hours of instruction.

Completing the Basic Emergency Medical Technician course this June were Robin Copping and Heather Brown. Jay Copping completed the Emergency Medical Technician Intermediate Course.

The EMFD Auxiliary elected Karen VanZandt, President; Laura Garand, Vice President; Kristi Smith, Treasurer; and Debbie Graves, Secretary.

After fifteen years of service, First Assistant Chief Ric Geisler resigned from the department. Ric is now living in New Zealand.

On June 5, the 30th anniversary of the department was celebrated. All past chiefs were present as well as several charter members, two of whom, Elliott Morse and Henry Brazier, are still serving. Robert VanZandt was presented with the EMFD Firefighter of the Year Award for his outstanding work within the department.

Work on the pumper/tanker approved at Town Meeting is progressing. The truck committee met with a representative of Emergency One to go over final design changes to this apparatus. The fire department is expecting delivery in late November.



HOW WE RALLIED!

Rally Day seemed to be the best ever in its sixth year. Good brisk weather, lots of participation, and more towns-people than ever helping to make it happen were the ingredients. We'll try to list winners of the various events. Please forgive us if we left anyone out:

Road Race:

1K boys: 1. N.J. Bartrum; 2. Niko Beardsworth; 3. Chad Perry.

1K girls: 1. Jessica Goodine; 2. Kaitlin Harvie; 3. Melissa Perry.

5K Male 13-40: 1. Ben Reed; 2. Michael Hill; 3. David Welch; 4. Josh Goodine. **Masters:** 1. Charles Johnson; 2. Hamilton Throckmorton; 3. Barry Rufenacht.

Female 13-40: 1. Sarah Czok; 2. Zephyr Teachout; 3. Melissa Rice. **Masters:** 1. Mary Senechal; 2. Sue Stephen, Ellen Knoedler, Dianne Wilson, Pam Somers.

Hoop Shoot by grade/age:

4-David Weinbaum, 5-Ian Goyette
7-12-Tom Brownell,

under 40-Hamilton Throckmorton, over 40-Malcolm Fielder.

Vegetables:

Adult: 1. Bruce Weston; 2. Charles Codling; 3. Anne Ormsbee
Children: 1. Daniel O'Hare; 2. Tomasen Weinbaum; 3. Logan Cate
4. Robert Fitch

Flowers:

Adult: 1. Loretta Friihauf; 2. Sylvia Tosi; 3. Barbara Fitch
Children: 1. Danielle Chaloux; 2. Robert Fitch; 3. Brooke Gannon
4. Cassie Burley

Cookies:

Adult: 1. Janice Waterman; 2. Anne Ormsbee; 3. Robin Gannon
Children: 1. Hannah Burley; 2. Jordan Kane; 3. Logan Cate; 4. Austin Cate

Adults received ribbons, and children received ribbons and gifts from the following: Morse Farm, Danforth's, Bragg Farm, C.P. Dudley Store, Video Box Office, South Pacific Wholesalers, Legare's, and Creamery Store.

OUR APPRECIATION...

Many generous gifts were donated to the *Signpost* Auction on Rally Day. \$1400 was raised, enough to cover nearly three issues. **We thank you:**

Abbie's Place

Joyce Bean

Karen Blosser

Ginny Callan

Ann Carr & Donna Perry

Cate Farm

Weston & Jean Cate

Al and Nancy Couch

The Drawing Board (Brown)

Michael Dworkin

Bruce Fitch Family

Hallmark Farm

Heidimarie Heiss-Holmes

Ginger Hopkins

Jan's Beauty Boutique

Steve & Laurie Justis

Legare's Market

Mekkelsen's

Morse Farm

Marion Palmer

Delia Robinson

Cheryl Rus

Loring & Barbara Starr

T & M Motor Sports

Utton's Muffler

Jean Vissering

Washington Electric Coop

Carroll Witham

George & Patty Annis

Ben & Jerry's

Bragg Farm

Capital Market (Sikora)

Carver Family Tree Farm

Sandal Cate

Chapell Family

The Country Store (Shouldice)

Dudley's Store

Paul Erlbaum

James Goodall

Hawkins Brothers

Ellen Hill

Horn of the Moon Cafe

Charles Johnson

Sandy LaPerle

Janet MacLeod

Dexter Merritt

Northlight Studio Press

Robin's Peach Tree

Linda Royce

South Pacific Wholesale Co.

Mary Stone

Thistle Hill Pottery

Video Box Office

Doris Washburn

Wedgewood Fitness Center



★ The handsome T-shirts awarded to all the runners in the Rally Day Road were designed by Janet MacLeod, an East Montpelierite in her heart. Though now living in Massachusetts, she still does the artwork for the *Signpost*.

★ For Sale at Town Clerk's Office *Across the Onion* by Ellen Hill and Marilyn Blackwell; *Cemeteries in East Montpelier* by Ellen Hill.

★ Conrad Ormsbee and Marilyn Piro have put up a display on "putting food by" at the Town Office, illustrating preserving techniques.

★ Betty and Al Jerome wish to express their deepfelt thanks to all the friends and relatives who helped them recover from their fire and put up the new garage and porch.

MILESTONES

(Received by the Town Clerk by October 1)

BIRTHS

- ♥ Kevin Matthew Spidle, son of Shannon & David Spidle, born July 19.
- ♥ Bryce Henry Schnaars, son of Mary & Henry Schnaars, born July 20.
- ♥ Adam Thomas Riggen, son of Susan & Robert Riggen, born August 11.

MARRIAGES

- ♥ David Roger Gallison, Jr. to Janelle Ann Stewart, June 16, 1994.
- ♥ Kenneth C. Moll to Barbara B. Korecki, June 18, 1994.
- ♥ Dean Paul Aylward to Kimberly Anne Sicely, July 20, 1994.
- ♥ Joseph Archie Cerasoli to Mary Anne Dickey, August 13, 1994.
- ♥ Roger Paul Houle to Anne D. LeBlanc, August 20, 1994.

PASSINGS

- Henry Joseph Fortier, husband of Simone Fortier; died August 20, 1994.
- Eudora E. Lane, wife of Edward G. Lane; died August 30, 1994.
- Daniel R. Kelley, born June 3, 1994, son of William & Janet Kelley; died September 10, 1994.

LAND TRANSFERS

- Marie Claire Sallies to Jeffrey Richardson, Betty Richardson & Caroline LaCourse; mobile home in Sandy Pines Park.
- Bill & Sharon Freeman to Robert Halpert & Anne E. Saxman; 10.6 acres and dwelling on Bliss Road.
- Roy & Harriet Haggett to William & Ruth Potter, 7.17 acres on Haggett Road.
- Silvia Narma to James Bryan Shenley; 7.6 acres and dwelling on Hill Road.
- Marc & Pamela Hull to Miriam & Robert Averill; 14 acres and dwelling on County Road.
- Robert & Elizabeth Wechsler to Thomas & Heather Herzig; 1 acre and dwelling on Cummings Road.
- George Lane, Minnie Lane & Cynthia Sealey to Brian & Vanessa Gallagher, 1.8 acres and dwelling in the Village.
- Town of East Montpelier to State of Vermont; easement at intersection of Towne Hill Road and U.S. Route 2.
- David & Diana Corl to Ernest & Marie Audino; 18.1 acres on Horn of the Moon Road.
- Barbara Sawyer to Patricia Renzello; mobile home in Sandy Pines Park.
- Philip & Ellen Wolff to John & Malcolm Graves; 0.89 acres and dwelling in the Village.
- Landmark Homes, Inc. to Arthur & Lisa Rice; 0.78 acres and dwelling in Casavant development off Route 14.
- Cecile Rock to John & Linda Russell; 1 acre and mobile home on Lyle Young Road.
- Norman & Dorothy Dailey to Nancy Brooks; mobile home in Sandy Pines Park.
- Philip & Maureen Gates to James & Joni Perkins Clemons; 22.25 acres and dwelling on Guyette Road.
- Philip & Maureen Gates to Mark & Susan Stephen; 0.51 acre and office in the Village.

- Norman Bloom & Christina Johnston to Michael & Charlene Hopkins; 19 acres and dwelling on Coburn Bridge Road.
- Roy & Joanne Bair to Vt. Land Trust, Inc. et al.; trail easement on Center Road.
- Roger & Genevieve Chapell to Vt. Land Trust, Inc. et al.; trail easement on Center Road.

**THE SIGNPOST ALSO
THANKS THESE
SPECIAL SUPPORTERS**

Frieda Battles
Harold & Joyce Bean
Allen & Ida Bolio
Charles & Claudia Bristow
L. Brown & Sons Printing
Dwight & Irene Clark
Charles & Marlene Codling
Ernest & Estelle Dodge
Roy & Harriet Haggett
Hugh & Marah Hawkins
Robert & Nancy Henning
Richard & Esther Hill
Lois R. McKnight
Josephine Michaud
Elliot & Florence Morse
Eva Pierce & William Pratt
Samuel & Barbara Starr

(Dick Blake : continued from page 7)

"What about mileage?" I ask. Dick says mileage is not an issue; well-maintained cars with high mileage may have more years left in them than those with low mileage driven in stop and start driving or by drivers that are hard on cars. Some customers request high mileage cars; they feel they're "broken in" and have "all the kinks out."

It seemed clear to me that Dick Blake's and Bob Loso's ability to produce satisfied customers over the years has created what is now a tradition that will last as long as Dick Blake wants it to. "Would you buy a used car from this man?" The answer of most is, "Again and again."

David Connor

Dave lives in East Montpelier Center and works at the Family Center in Morrisville.

DICK BLAKE: FROM SOUTH TO NORTH, USED CARS ARE GOOD CARS

A couple of weeks ago, I had the pleasure of interviewing a man who has been in business in East Montpelier for over thirty years and who has loyal customers from several states, some of whom are so sure of this man's integrity and judgement that they make major purchases from him sight unseen. No, he's not a stockbroker or an art dealer but Dick Blake of Blake & Loso Used Car Dealership. In a business that many still view with suspicion and skepticism (remember: "Would you buy a used car from this man?"), Dick Blake stands tall.

A native Vermonter, Dick always has had a fascination and love of cars. After high school, he worked several years on a farm before coming to this area in the 1950s to take a job at the former Cadillac-Olds dealership in downtown Barre. There he learned the automobile business from the inside - cleaning cars, running errands, driving the wrecker - and worked as a wholesaler. He also met and became friends with a co-worker, Bob Loso, who did body work there. In 1959 Bob left and opened his own body shop on Rt. 14 in East Montpelier. Shortly thereafter, Dick talked Bob into going into the used car business. So on January 1, 1960, Bob and Dick started Blake & Loso Used Cars at the small garage that is currently occupied by A & T Transmission.

Each man sold his own car to start the business. Dick remembers his first sale: a 1955 Plymouth - which may explain why he's still partial to Chrysler products. Thus began a long and successful partnership which lasted 25 years until Bob's health problems caused him to sell his share to Dick in 1985.

In the early years Dick and Bob got most of their cars from southern New England and New York. They concentrated on midsize and larger American cars which had been well maintained by their owners and were in good to excellent condition, rejecting cars with rust, cars that were over ten years old, and cars that had been in accidents. In 1988 Dick decided to go south to find better vehicles. Ever since then, Blake and Loso have sold southern cars purchased from automobile dealers in North Carolina. For over ten years they employed a "buyer" who would send cars north on tractor trailers, but in 1979 Dick started making his own purchases. Since then he has made hundreds of round trips to North Carolina in ever-larger car carriers. His current six-car carrier is equipped with cellular phone and CB. He goes down about twice a month in good weather and monthly in the dead of winter.

Fourteen years ago, he met his second wife Dixie in North Carolina and brought her back to Vermont. Sometimes she accompanies him on his long hauls. They both regaled me

with stories of their adventures "on the road" over the years. They also take advantage of getting down south to indulge their passion for stock car racing. (Dixie is second cousin of racer Morgan Shepherd.) They usually get to Daytona 500 and several other Winston Cup races each year.

Of course, as most everyone knows, Dick has manned the Blake & Loso wrecker at Thunder Road for 34 years. His son Randy just finished his fourth year driving at the Flying Tiger "B" Division; he's finished first twice and second the other two years. Dick had race cars at the track in the '60s and '70s with drivers Merlin Bean and George Horn. Some people may remember that he bought a perfect replica of the "Dukes of Hazard" car - a '68 Dodge Charger complete with Confederate flag on the top. Dick used to give kids rides in it at Thunder Road.



His other hobbies are all related to cars and driving. He has two antique cars: a fully restored 1969 Dodge Charger and an almost-restored 1951 Chevy pickup, not to mention an 1979 Lincoln Mark V in mint condition. He drives these in parades and shows if he can find the time. His other passion is snowmobiling. I could not get him to recommend a particular automobile, but he had no hesitation in endorsing Ski-Doos. He's had some 25 of them over the years; it's his major winter pastime.

In 1990 Dick sold the business, and he and Dixie headed south to live in Virginia. But circumstances changed, and they returned to East

Montpelier, purchased an excellent home across Rt. 14 from the old business site, and reopened Blake & Loso.

A friendly, unassuming man, Dick Blake has a warm smile and a relaxed style that bespeaks confidence and pleasure in what he does and how he lives. Blake & Loso enjoys an excellent reputation for quality, reliability, service, and integrity. From the beginning, Dick and Bob offered 30 day warranties on their cars. Dick says, "I want satisfied customers." He says that to make a living in used cars, one has to count on repeat business from regular customers. Some people have bought cars from him since the 1960s, and several simply phone in their request for a vehicle and purchase on Dick's say-so. Recently Dick delivered a car to a man in New Hampshire who signed the papers and paid for the car without even trying it out!

Dick currently keeps 20 to 25 cars, trucks, vans, etc. on the Blake & Loso lot. He employs three people besides himself. What does he look for in a used car? "Originality, no bodywork, no repainting, no rust, clean interior."

(continued on page 6)



COMMITTEE MEETING CALENDAR

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

Meeting times are subject to change

EVENTS CALENDAR

Monday, October 31, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.	Halloween Party	Four Corners Schoolhouse
Sunday, November 6, 4:00 p.m.	Travelogue: "Windows on the World" Students' trip to France.	Four Corners Schoolhouse
Tuesday, November 22, 7:30 p.m.	Special U-32 School District Meeting	U-32
Wednesday, November 23, 7:30 p.m.	Thanksgiving Eve Service	Old Meeting House
Thursday, December 1	Signpost news due to Janice Waterman	RR 1, Box 4330, 05602
Friday, December 9, 4:30 - 8:00	Holiday Fair	EMES
Sunday, December 18, 9:30 a.m.	Christmas Pageant	Old Meeting House
Sunday, December 18, 7:30 p.m.	Christmas Candlelight Service	Old Meeting House
Saturday, December 24, 7:30 p.m.	Christmas Eve Service	Old Brick Church

EAST MONTPELIER SIGNPOST

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