

EAST MONTPELIER SIGNPOST

Volume 5, No. 4

March/April 1995

BIG & LITTLE CRITTERS & ORNERY HUMANS: RON GONYAW'S MET 'EM ALL!

East Montpelier's Ron Gonyaw is preparing to retire after 31 years as a game warden with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The retirement itself is not newsworthy, of course. People do that every day. But the long and faithful service to one employer reflects a dedication that demands our admiration and respect. When I gave some thought to what this particular retirement was all about, I started to feel just a little bit envious of what the years preceding this event must have been like.

Who wouldn't feel like the luckiest person alive to have your life's work allow you to immerse yourself in the great outdoors? Imagine the privilege of witnessing our magnificent wildlife day after day. To have been a sentinel for what is a part of the very heart and soul of Vermont.

Ron sat in my kitchen and immediately dispelled some of my fantasies. When I asked him how many years he had been with Fish and Wildlife, his answer (with a grin): "Too many." And then he brought me through his life.

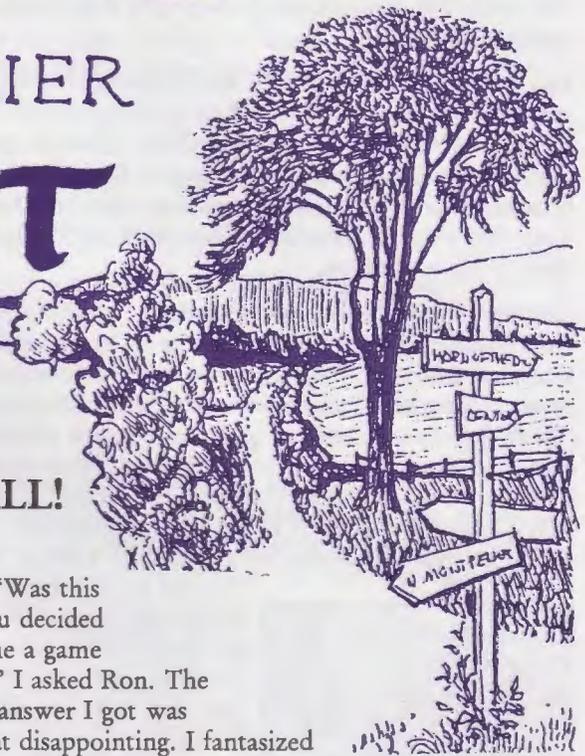
Ron was born in Albany, Vermont. He was a farm boy who grew up with "a fish pole in one hand and a gun in the

other." "Was this when you decided to become a game warden?" I asked Ron. The negative answer I got was somewhat disappointing. I fantasized a young Vermont boy flying into his dream. It was while Ron was in the Army that he got his feet wet in law enforcement. In April 1962 he began a two-year hitch as an Army MP. It was during this period that he began to give some thought to what he would do when he got out of the service. Fish and Wildlife won out over the Department of Public Safety and life on the road as a state trooper. That was in July 1964, three months after he married his wife Edith.

The odyssey of work and married life quickly included sons Jeffrey and Steven. Ron looked a little wistful recalling the times when he would have to withdraw from a planned family outing because of the dictates of his job. There was a time when he went three straight days without going to bed. It was during one of these times that Ron experienced the first taste of the danger that goes with the badge. Although Ron is a man who is reluctant to talk about himself, he pointed out a scar on his forehead, a souvenir from a very harrowing encounter with some deer jackers in Calais in 1966.

"There were some humorous times too," says Ron. Some of the funniest experiences, of course, were played out around the deer decoy. And then there was the night he knocked on the door of an old bus and was invited in by a man wearing only his long johns. Although it was not deer season, the room looked like a butcher shop. There were deer parts in the sink, on the counter, and blood everywhere. When the man realized who Ron was, he merely shrugged and said, "Guess you caught me with my pants down this time."

Because of all the speculation that mountain lions may be back in the state, I was interested in hearing Ron's point of view. I remembered that he tracked the famous East Montpelier cat. Ron contacted a tracker from one of the



Rocky Mountain states, and the two of them came to the conclusion that whatever it was that people saw, it was not a mountain lion. He also watched the deer yards, knowing that mountain lions would go there for their food. He never once saw a cat track.

Maybe it was because Steven and Jeffrey had to do without a weekend dad quite a lot that Ron again committed himself. He began to coach Little League. This led to his coaching the Babe Ruth League and then Senior Babe Ruth. It was because of his efforts, along with Steve Phillips and Don Tosi, that there is a wonderful ball field for the kids and their families to enjoy.

Getting back to the retirement at hand, I asked Ron what he would miss. He said, "Meeting the people, and waking up knowing that today is going to be different than yesterday because every day is different in this job." Ron would also like to get the message out to the public that the rabies epidemic should be taken very seriously. He warns that if your pet has had an altercation with a rabid animal, don't bring it in the house. If it has had its shot, leave it outdoors, put on protective gloves and wash it outdoors.



You do not have to be bitten to contract rabies. If your skin has an abrasion or little cut, you need only to get the saliva into the cut to become infected.

I asked Ron what his plans for retirement were. "To do what I haven't been able to do for the past 30 years: go hunting and fishing." I can picture the reflections from Echo Lake on the face of a man sitting on the porch of a log cabin, fish pole in hand, a grin on his face. I wish him a sunset of easy living. He's earned it.

Paul Bagalio

Paul is a self-employed chemist who lives in the Horn of the Moon area. His hobby is big-game hunting.

Top of the Signpost

Jean Cate

It happened without fanfare and most of us never heard of it, but our town recently achieved an honor in which we may take pride. East Montpelier's Town Report for 1993 was judged to be "Outstanding" in the annual James P. Taylor Memorial Town Report Competition. What does this mean? A little history:

Early in this century, James P. Taylor made his mark in Vermont as a civic and state leader. Founder of the state Chamber of Commerce and prime mover in the creation of the Long Trail, he also believed intensely in strong, effective town government. To encourage understanding of town affairs, he created an annual Town Report contest with statewide judging and awards. This competition moved from the state Chamber to UVM Extension Service many years ago and continues to be a thoughtful evaluation of each town's annual report to its citizens. Detailed criteria guide the judging which is done by teams representing the League of Cities and Towns, Town Clerks, Auditors, State Records Division, Vermont Institute of Government and others. The first screen looks for completeness, and the winners receive an Award of Merit. There were 43 this year. Next come the reports judged Excellent on more quantitative criteria. Is the material interesting, understandable, with balance among text, charts, pictures? Another 34 received the Award of Excellence. The very highest praise came for those towns whose reports were "Outstanding." There were 16 of these, and East Montpelier's was one of them. How fine!

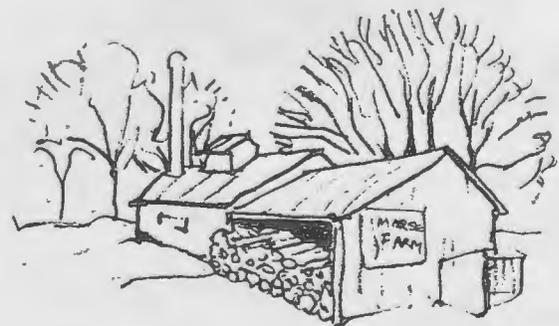
Much credit goes to the Auditors whose duty by law is to produce the annual Town Report. Few of us know how many hours of planning, choosing pictures, layout, and proofreading these people must do. Our record has been very good. We won a Merit Award in 1990, Excellent in 1992, and Outstanding in 1991 and 1993. How will this 1994 Town Report fare?

Next time you are poking around the Town Office, take a look at the certificates of award which Sylvia and Paulie have posted on the vault door. We're proud of them.

THANK YOU!

Christopher & Rebecca Grandall
Philip & Donna Leno
Conrad & Anne Ormsbee
Susan Page
Norma Raymond
E. May Slayton
Jerome & Katherine Vaughan

Your generous support is always a welcome sign of appreciation to those of us who put together the *Signpost*, and it also lessens the probability of coming up short of funds for the summer issues.





THE SELECTBOARD

Allan Couch, Edie Miller (Chair), Frank Pratt

November 30, 1994

► Discussion with Nona Estrin and Sandy Woodbeck regarding parking for public trails. Agreed that trail users must park outside of the traveled portion of town roads; should not park on both sides of the road; and should not park where sight distance is poor. Also no parking at the Town Garage and Fire Station.

► Approved Lister's recommendation for correction on Jan Otto's listing.

► Voted to ask Earl Smith to construct new roof on the Municipal Building for \$3000 as proposed.

► Voted to carry workers compensation coverage from VLCT.

► Voted to adopt traffic ordinance. Will order additional speed limit signs.

► Heard report from Conrad Ormsbee, Central Vt. Solid Waste Management District rep. Discussed letter from District asking about future direction of solid waste issues and expenses. District hopes to open a household hazardous waste collection facility at former C.V. Landfill.

Budget was reviewed, with proposed increase in per capita fee from \$0.75 to \$1.50. Both Mr. Ormsbee and Mr. Cate (alternate rep) expressed reservations about the budget. Selectboard expressed its support for a "no" vote on proposed budget. Votes are weighed by town's population, and it's likely to pass; however, EM would be noted as a protest vote against the overall level of District spending.

Mandatory recycling will begin July 1995. Mr. Ormsbee voted against the mandatory recycling as he doesn't feel the District is ready to successfully implement such a program.

► Voted to adopt the Development Roads Policy.

► Voted to authorize purchase of safety chaps for road crew.

December 7, 1994

► Met with the Solid Waste Ordinance Study Committee to discuss its objectives. Selectboard would like to see a balance between avoiding unnecessary additional law and the need to be able to effectively stop illegal dumping.

► Discussed salary rates of the road crew in comparison to other municipalities. Will discuss during annual pay adjustment meeting.

► Approved the sale of the Town gravel pit to Richard and Mary Tousignant for the sum of \$7000 with restrictions on development.

► Signed note to finance new fire truck.

► Arrangements made for the removal of old diesel tanks at the Town Garage.

► Appointed Jonathan Winston as the Town's contact person for the State E-911 Board.

► Reviewed and approved a 2nd Class Liquor License Application for East Montpelier Discount Foods on Route 14.

December 21, 1994

► Met with Town Sewage officer to discuss failed septic system of Richard and Sally Longhi on Cherry Tree Hill Road. This system is near Crystal Springs water line. Options for repair presented. Suggested a January 25th deadline for developing a plan of action.

► Met with Tom Brazier, representative to the Montpelier Ambulance Advisory Committee. The City has proposed a substantial increase, and the committee has recommended a 5% increase. Discussions will continue with the city.

► Appointed Steve Rauh to fill vacant seat on Planning Commission until Town Meeting.

► Annual salary adjustments discussed in executive session. Voted to give a 3.5% increase in pay to Town Clerk, Asst. Clerk, and Administrative Assistant; a 4.5% increase to the road

crew. These adjustments will bring Town employees into the middle range compared with similar towns.

► Agreed to reimburse road employees for Commercial Drivers License renewals.

► Work session on 1995 budget. Expect current budget to be under-expanded. Discussed making a double payment on the loan for 1993 dump truck and replacement of 1983 truck.

► Lister Rosie Cueto had spoken of need for a second computer in the town office. Voted to approve purchase of a new computer and monitor for up to \$1900.

► Reviewed Lylehaven tax appeal prepared by the Listers and agreed with the offer.

January 4, 1995

► Discussed road budget with Mike Garand. He felt 1983 dump truck should be replaced as well as miscellaneous other items.

► Appointed Ed Blackwell as Acting Zoning Administrator in Roger Chapell's absence.

► Asked town attorney to seek a release from Linda Royce so Town can do necessary drainage work on the swale on her property.

► Appointed Bill Bryant as census liaison to the U.S. Census Bureau.

January 11, 1995

► 1995 Fire Department budget presented by Jonathan Winston. Reflects an increase of about \$6000 mainly due to cost of equipping new fire truck and increases in insurance.

► Agreed to remove the underground gasoline and heating fuel tanks at the Fire Station.

► Fire Department arranged for a \$1/year lease of second bay at Washington Electric Coop garage on Route 14 for rescue vehicle, allowing better access to Routes 2 and 14.

► Voted to replace 35-year-old furnace in Municipal Building.



- ▶ Continued to work on the budget.
- ▶ Received letter of complaint from Norm Rice about his dog being attacked by two of Nona Estrin's dogs. Agreed to send a letter advising that dogs be kept tied and not allowed to run loose off her property.
- ▶ Agreed to provide letter for Act 250 application concerning the Town's intent to accept the proposed Tousignant development road as a town highway.

January 18, 1995

- ▶ Marion Codling presented a budget request of \$2700 for Four Corners Schoolhouse operating expenses. Voted to put request on the Town Meeting Warning.
- ▶ Met with Tom Brazier to discuss the City of Montpelier's demand for increase in the Ambulance Service subsidy paid by outlying towns. Advisory Board members feel the rate increase is not justified. Much of the difference of opinion concerns what portion of the personnel expenses should be assigned to the Fire Dept. v. the Ambulance budget. Will send letter to the City about these concerns.
- ▶ Draft of Town Meeting Warning discussed. Selectboard is considering an article for the return of town budget votes from Australian ballot to floor vote.
- ▶ Voted to approve the Final Decision and Order for the acceptance of Richard Casavant's "Pines" development road as a town highway.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Chair: Ed Blackwell

November 3, 1994

- ▶ Voted to accept the Potter final plat subdivision.
- ▶ Approved Raymond subdivision sketch plan and approved warning for public hearing for plat review.
- ▶ Approved change-of-use permit for Cheryl Potter to sell antiques, used furniture and yarn at business in the Village and approved additional signs.
- ▶ Discussed changes to zoning regulations.

November 17, 1994

- ▶ Letter of support sent for grant application to Department of Education for upgrading town maps using Geographic Information. This will be a joint effort between Planning Commission, U-32, and EMES.
- ▶ Approved application of Doug Bragg to add an addition to the gift shop and sugar house.

December 1, 1994

- ▶ Public hearing for preliminary plat review of the Raymond subdivision on Towne Hill Road for a five-lot subdivision. No public comment. Approved.
- ▶ Reviewed zoning regulations.

December 15, 1994

- ▶ Ed Blackwell discussed the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission's efforts to define and identify growth centers in each of the region's towns. Selectboard will be asked to describe areas which the town wants to designate as growth centers. Areas designated may gain some additional priority in formula for allocating state and federal highway funds.

January 5, 1995

- ▶ Steve Rauh sworn in as new member appointed by Selectboard.
- ▶ Approved the final plat review on the Raymond subdivision.

January 19, 1995

- ▶ Agreed to accept 60 foot right-of-way when a survey for the Kenneth Baird Estate's land is received.
- ▶ Ed Blackwell, Acting Zoning Administrator, visited proposed building site owned by Virginia Breer and determined that the area staked out for house construction was in conformance with required setbacks. Building permit will be approved.
- ▶ Discussed regulations for storing commercial equipment on residential property. Present definition acceptable, though not entirely satisfactory. Will discuss again when zoning regulations revised.



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Chair: Jeff Cueto

November 14, 1994

- ▶ Met with Warren Noyes to discuss structure constructed at the Creamery in the Village's floodplain. Conditional use permit indicated that the structure not be enclosed so that flood waters would not be impeded. Noyes stated that he needed to enclose the structure in order to secure its contents from theft. Board will consider an amendment request if applicant can show how he proposes to enclose building and meet zoning regulations and flood hazard bylaws.
- ▶ Deliberative session on the C.V. Landfill application. C.V. is asking for a conditional use permit for a transfer station. The project has received Act 250 approval. Granted the Conditional Use Permit with two conditions.

December 12, 1994

- ▶ Heard from Mr. Noyes re: request to enclose his lumber storage building. The original permit states the building is for lumber storage only; can be enclosed only after BOA approval and the building is stabilized on concrete posts in case of floods. Site visit made; building does have sides. Board offered some solutions. Noyes agreed and will correct the violation. Thirty days given to correct problem.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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

December 1, 1994

- ▶ Heard report from Bruce Chapell and Chris Crandell about a federal program with new regulations for water testing which are quite costly. They will help the school develop a wellhead protection plan and suggested the Board try to get a waiver on this regulation. Board will follow up and thanked the men for their efforts.
- ▶ Heard a proposal to include nursing services for the Preschool program. Agreed that health information would be gathered by preschool teachers and given to the nurse, who would treat preschoolers on the same basis as other students.

- ▶ Laura reported on how portfolios are scored.
- ▶ Voted to accept the copier bid from McAuliffe's.
- ▶ Discussed a three-year plan for re-doing the primary rooms for \$5000 each. May need separate ballot so that needed repairs are clearly explained.
- ▶ Budget discussions. Accepted proposed budget of \$1,252,018 which will be further discussed at next meeting.

January 5, 1995

- ▶ Budget discussions continued. There is a fund balance of \$81,948; \$10,000 needed to cover expenses for this year, \$25,000 suggested to be put in a contingency fund. No decision made. Agreed to have one more meeting to finalize budget figures.
- ▶ Library budget increase reflects new technology equipment. Created a separate category for technology.
- ▶ Voted to have Bruce Chapell submit application to the State for waiver from new water regulations and copy to the Governor.

January 23, 1995

- ▶ Voted to accept George Matkowski's proposal for his return to 8 hours/day with unpaid summer vacation.
- ▶ Voted to reduce professional salary increase from 3% to 2% for 1996.
- ▶ Voted to add \$4000 for the LEAP program, two printers and field trips. Total budget would be \$1,494,720. Voted to use \$15,000 for maintenance; \$25,000 as a contingency fund; and \$51,752 to be used to reduce taxes.

**FOUR CORNERS
SCHOOLHOUSE
ASSOCIATION**

Co-Presidents: Ginny Burley & Ruth Frost

- ▶ Work on the bathroom tiling and painting is completed.
- ▶ Peter Hill resigned his position as Director, and Hobie Guion has been elected as new Director.
- ▶ Met with the Selectboard to review request for town funding in the 1995 budget.

- ▶ Received a matching grant from the Division for Historic Preservation and Vt. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for building renovations in 1995. These funds will be used for major capital improvements. A phone-a-thon will be used to raise the matching funds.



**TOWN MEETING
POTLUCK**

An experiment is being tried at Town Meeting this year. In the twin interests of sociability and good eating, we are trying a real old-fashioned potluck. This means that every family planning to eat at the school during the lunch break should bring a hot dish, a salad, some kind of bread/roll/muffins, or a desert, enough for four servings for each family member. Thus if there are four of you, bring a cake, salad, etc. to serve 16. That way there should be plenty of food for everyone. Your food should be brought to the cafeteria window as you arrive. The oven will be ready for hot dishes.

If you find it impossible to bring food but want to eat with us, please call the coordinators by March 1 and plan to contribute \$3.00 for each person. We will use the money for coffee, milk, napkins, etc. We hope that most folks will enter into the spirit of bringing potluck and help make this experiment a success.

"Potluck" means taking whatever comes. If it's all desserts, what fun! Of course it never is, and meals usually balance out surprising well. Call Rachel at 223-3177 or Jean at 223-2951 for information or offers of help.

**TOWN MEETING
& FORUM**

Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 7, beginning at 9:30 a.m. The voting booths will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. for items to be voted by Australian ballot:

- U-32 District:
 - All articles in the Warning Elementary School:
 - Moderator and School Directors
 - Town: All officers
 - Article 14 (purchase of new dump truck)
 - Article 15 (town budget)

Absentee ballots can be picked up at, or requested to be mailed by, the Town Clerk's office. They must be received at the Town Clerk's office by 5:00 p.m. March 6.

A Forum will be held on Thursday, March 2, at 7:30 p.m. at the Elementary School. Discussion of all the articles will take place, and **this is the time to discuss the Town Budget and the dump truck purchase.**

The information meeting for the U-32 District will be held on Tuesday, February 28 at 7:30 p.m at U-32.

CANDIDATES

- Moderator Martin Miller
- Selectman (3 yrs) Edith Miller
- Lister (3 yrs) Steven Sinclair
- Auditor (3 yrs) MaryEllen Hill
- Trustee of Public Funds (3 yrs) Sylvia Tosi
- Town Law Agent . . . Earl Montague
- Town Grand Juror Tim Carver
- First Constable Dennis Carver
- Second Constable . . Arthur Montague
- Planning Commissioner (3 yrs) David Hudson
- (vote Stephen Rauh
- for three only) No Candidate
- Planning Commissioner (1 yr) Edward Blackwell
- (vote for Charles Codling
- one only) Cemetery Commissioner (5 yrs) Elliott Morse
- Elementary School Director (3 yrs) Loring Starr
- (vote for Paul White, Jr.
- one only) Elementary School Director (2 yrs) Janice Aldrich
- U-32 School Director (3 yrs) Virginia Burley
- (vote for Mark Milazzo
- one only)



MAPLE SUGARLIPS

★ The last issue of the Signpost welcomed Sara Hartson, "grandson" of Paulie and Dave Coburn. Ooops...our apologies Sara...we hear you are indeed a granddaughter.

★ L.Brown and Sons, Inc., our Signpost printer, purchased Modern Printing and has moved to Barre. They assure us that our mailing system remains intact. We thank them for giving us such good service, but we miss being able to just go over to Route 14 and drop off the issue!

★ The Town of East Montpelier has received the outstanding award for its Town Report at the recent meeting of Vermont League of Cities and Towns. Kudos to Auditors Anne Sherman, Holly Edwards and MaryEllen Hill.

★ THANK YOU EMES FAST SQUAD! The Signpost received a letter from Rachel Grossman expressing her appreciation to the fast squad. Excerpts from the letter follow: I broke my ankle while skating on a friend's pond...located at the bottom of a steep embankment...responded within five minutes. I am grateful to live in a town where I am assured that assistance is no more than five minutes away. My heartfelt thanks to the men and women who volunteer their time...their quick response, professional expertise and caring attitude benefit all of us in East Montpelier.

★ The historical window at the Municipal Building has recently been changed to show memorabilia from the World War II era. Conrad and Anne Ormsbee and Marilyn Piro collected and set up the exhibit which will be in place for about two months.

★ Zoning Administrator Roger Chapell and his wife Gen have gone to Cape Coral, Florida, for a winter break. Ed Blackwell is filling in Roger's position while he's away.

★ We hope you've enjoyed the "South Pacific" article on page 7. Its authors, William and Beth Carpenter, are 12 and 14 years old, respectively, and are the first youth authors the Signpost has had. We think they did just fine.

★ Bill George has just returned from a hospital in Boston and is recuperating at home.

● Rejane Murphy to Nancy Metcalf; mobile home in Sandy Pines Park.

Looking to expand our maple sugar operation by leasing 100-300 maple trees. We tap conservatively to maintain tree health. We would also be interested in purchasing sap.

Please call:
Bruce & Janet Chapell & Sons
Templeton Farm
East Montpelier, 223-0169

MILESTONES

(Received by the Town Clerk by February 1)

BIRTHS

♥ Korey Paul Witham, born November 18, 1994, to Penny Jean Copeland & Robert Edward Witham.

♥ Timothy Michael Lemieux, born November 29, 1994, to Melissa Ann Chateauvert & William E. Lemieux.

♥ Justin Lawrence Duhaime, born December 8, 1994, to Heather Wilson Newslow & Lawrence R. Duhaime.

MARRIAGES

♥ Timothy J. Vilbrin and Irene M. Cook; December 31, 1994.

PASSINGS

● Forest Barton Lawson; December 22, 1994. Husband of Hilda Lawson, father of Stuart F. Lawson.

LAND TRANSFERS

● P&G Sales, Inc., dba Ray's Homes, to Robert Quinlan, Jr; mobile home in Sandy Pines Park.

● Carol Poor to George Sanders, Jr. & Carol Sanders; mobile home in Sandy Pines Park.

● Patricia Slopnick to Peter Nolan & Lisa Rossetti; dwelling and 1.4 acres on Cherry Tree Hill Road.

● Doris Tumulty to Richard & Mary Tousignant; 71.5 acres on Route 14.

● Bambie Russ to Margaret Bardosi; ½ interest in dwelling and 3 acres on Route 14 south.

CHURCH CHIMES

Old Brick Church
Old Meeting House

A special service was held on February 12 in honor of Rev. Hamilton Coe Throckmorton, who has moved with his family to the pastorate at the Barrington Congregational Church in Rhode Island.

Interviewing for an interim minister is taking place, and one should be in place by early March.

A discussion series will be held during Lent. Each Thursday night meeting will be led by church members who will present a variety of topics. The series will begin on March 9 at the Old Brick Church and be from 7:15 to 9.



News for the next Signpost
due April 1 to
Janice Waterman,
RR 1, Box 4330,
Montpelier, VT 05602,
223-5826.

SOUTH PACIFIC: THINKING BIG IN A SMALL WAY!

When you walk into the South Pacific Bead Co., you will see a large display of drawers, each neatly marked with the name of its contents. Then if you let your eyes wander around the shop, they will pick out the other displays: on the back wall hang strands of all different colors, sizes, and types of stone beads; on the wall to the right that has a dark colored background, many small pendants, necklaces, earrings, and other jewelry are arranged; and nestled snugly under the shelves of beads are many rocks and goods of all different shapes and sizes. When we saw this, a few questions came to mind. What gave the owner the idea of this shop? What was his dream? And how did he turn it into reality?

Willis Backus was born in Heaton Hospital in Montpelier. He first started selling jewelry in Hawaii in 1975. The business failed that year and, after starting again in 1976, failed again. In 1977 Willis left Hawaii and went to Boston. He started business there as a vendor. "I brought a card table on the subway with a "Stop and Shop" bag and set up until I saw the cops coming. Then I would throw everything into the bag, run 'til I found another place to be, and wait for the cops to come again." Willis told us of various other arrangements of doing business in the Boston area; one was selling jewelry from push carts near store fronts.

After 17 years, Willis came to Montpelier and opened a wholesale shop on the second floor of the "Critics Choice" building on Main Street. This offered more stability than vending carts. His wholesale business grew, and computers began to make organizing easier, but he still felt limited leasing a building that belonged to someone else.

Willis finally found the perfect building that he had spent years searching for, the beautiful white cape in East Montpelier Village. In 1992 after buying the building, the South Pacific Bead Co. moved to East Montpelier, and it is now their permanent location.

"Here we can help people in the front and do the wholesale in the back," says Willis contentedly. As he took us on a tour of the back of the building, it was obvious that the company is very well organized. The computers each serve their particular purposes; the file cabinets are accessible for use, and there are rooms full of merchandise ready to be shipped or to restock the store area. "We're mostly a wholesale business," Willis tells us. In Montpelier the space was such that it discouraged "walk-ins." But here Willis seems to really enjoy the interactions with people, especially children, who come in to buy beads. That is made obvious by the signs posted on many of the shelves and containers that read "Please touch the beads."

"This is just a big joke," explains Willis. "There is a store in Burlington which has signs that are pretty tough on kids. In

my experience, I have had adults drop things but I have never had a kid drop anything or break anything. Kids don't drop stuff they like. Kids are great, so I want them to be happy."

There is a mix of kids and adults that come into the store, but there are definitely lots of kids. "Parents bring their kids in on 'bad' days; when the weather is beautiful, we don't really get many kids. They just don't come in."

Willis orders his stones, beads, and findings mostly from Chinese connections in New York and some from Boston. His favorite stone is one called Amazonite, a turquoise-green stone that looks like it has been through a lightning storm. "From living in Hawaii, I already got along real well with Oriental people, so my peer group is the Chinese really."

Willis has a good sense of humor. He told us that he's always wanted to be a comedy writer. With South Pacific as his business, he can exercise his creative humor by writing and designing his monthly catalog. For example, one catalog has a soldier on the front wiping "beads" of sweat off his face while the Beadmeister (from the South Pacific Army)

gives him orders. "I'm the Beadmeister," says Willis, "and as long as I keep writing my catalog, I'm a published writer each month."

When asked what kind of people are employed, Willis replied laughingly, "My beloved nephew," pointing to a recently vacated computer station. Then he gets more serious. "Generally it's just a cross-mix. It's not people

with college educations; it's local folks . . . I have a limited number of people I can manage. I have fewer people now working for me than I have probably had. I've got three full-time and probably five part-time, as opposed to like eight full-time last year."

When we started, we asked what he liked most about the business. Willis alternated between gentle humor and deep seriousness. "It's something one can do without a lot of education," he said. "You learn along the way." He emphasized that he started small and poor - one winter he went without a coat - and he worked hard to build his business to success.

"I've arranged my life pretty much the way I want it to be. I can't get up in the morning so I sleep late. Sleeping late is an important part of my daily life. I play basketball four times a week in the day, and I work at night. I work pretty much every day of the week. I work Saturdays and Sundays, and I still work 50 hours a week or so, but my schedule is pretty much my own and my son's."

William and Beth Carpenter

Beth and William are enrolled in Kingsbury Branch Community School as home schooling students. (Special thanks to Radio Shack for the donation of equipment for this interview.)



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

Meeting times are subject to change

EVENTS CALENDAR

Thursday, Mar. 2, 7:30 p.m.	Town Forum/Australian Ballot Informational Meeting	EMES
Monday, Mar. 6, 5:00 p.m.	Absentee Ballots Due at Town Clerk's	Municipal Building
Tuesday, Mar. 7, 9:30 a.m.	TOWN MEETING	EMES
Tuesday, Mar. 7, 1:00 p.m.	EMES SCHOOL MEETING	EMES

**SUCH A STRANGE WINTER! BUT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT SUGARIN'.
MUST BE SPRING'S JUST AROUND THE CORNER.**



EAST MONTPELIER SIGNPOST

Published six times a year; mailed without charge to all residents of East Montpelier.
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