

# EAST MONTPELIER SIGNPOST

Volume XI, No. 4

March—April 2001

## A Writing Way of Life Richard and Joyce Wolkomir by Joanna Day

For writers Joyce and Richard Wolkomir work is “not a regular day at the office.” It might be a flight in a B-52 bomber or a trip to Disney World to research “The Sociology of Vacations.” Other days find them buried in the logistics of arranging a two-week out-of-state interview or reviewing increasingly complex contracts.

Writing has been the Wolkomirs’ life for their 36 years of marriage. They met in the early 1960s at Syracuse University as journalism majors—in a magazine-writing class. Joyce was an editor at *Scholastic Magazines* and Richard was an editor at McGraw-Hill Publishing Company in New York City. They lived in Greenwich Village for a while, but “the relentlessness of the concrete city got to us,” according to Richard, and they started thinking about the outdoors and a more rural lifestyle.



The Wolkomirs moved to East Montpelier in 1967, purchasing their house and three acres on County Road. They acquired neighboring parcels of land over the years and now enjoy the beauty and privacy of their just under 26 acres. The move to Vermont from New York City wasn’t as much of a shock as you’d think; they were used to rural ways. Joyce grew up in the Finger Lakes region of New York and Richard is from a small town south of Albany.

Richard worked for the Vermont Education Association as a public relations specialist and newsletter editor when Weston Cate was the Association’s executive director. Joyce worked for the Montpelier Public Schools as an information specialist. By 1977 Richard was working full-time at magazine writing. Joyce continued public relations work until 1986 when she and Richard became full-time writing partners.

Joyce is a long-time contributor to *Vermont Life* and has also written for *The Christian Science Monitor*, *McCall’s*, *Woman’s Day*, and *TV Guide*. Richard has been a columnist for *Playboy* and writes frequently for *Geo* (a major German magazine). He is the author of a series of children’s stories for *Boy’s Life* magazine and was for many years a writer for *Omni Magazine*. Together they have contributed to magazines ranging from *National Wildlife* to *Good Housekeeping*.

Joyce’s and Richard’s constant travel (and at-home) companion is their 13-year-old dog, a Pembroke Welsh Corgie, Nosmo King. Adopted from previous owners (who had just quit smoking, hence the name), Nosmo King was featured in an essay they wrote in the book *Chicken Soup for the Pet Lover’s Soul*. A mighty canine, you can tell he holds a special place in the Wolkomirs’ household.

Individually and in collaboration, Richard and Joyce are long-time contributing writers to *Smithsonian*. Twenty-four years ago, Richard was doing work with *Reader’s Digest*. An editor at *Reader’s Digest*, who was a trustee of the then Sterling School in Craftsbury, wanted *Smithsonian* to run an article on the school. That connection started Richard’s and Joyce’s *Smithsonian* association.

(Continued on page 2)



## Top of the Signpost

We're within a week or two of probably the most important event in the life of our town. You may consider Town Meeting mostly a time for neighbors to meet and socialize, or you may see it as your best chance to choose our leaders and discuss issues which will affect the future of the town. Either way it is important, for it sets the tone for the year ahead. Will we make wise decisions on the use of our land, the way we budget our town and school dollars, the candidates who will carry the town into the future? Our votes hold more power than we realize.

There have been some encouraging signs during the past year. Much discussion took place at last year's town and school meetings on how to get more people involved in town affairs. That was hopeful in itself, then the volunteer Take Part committee formed after March meetings met all year, creating some promising initiatives. Here are some of them. Budget meetings of school and town boards were scheduled to encourage people to make their concerns known before the final vote at Town Meeting. A booklet, "About East Montpelier", with information about how the town is run, was mailed to every household. Informal surveys set out to assess why people did or didn't take part in town affairs. The committee explored the civics education in our school classes and how it might be strengthened. Out of that study came a commitment from the

Commissioner of Education to increase the state's emphasis on civics education statewide. Our district representatives Alfano and Osman were immensely helpful and explored with the committee how, through legislative change, it might be possible for towns to discuss articles on the Australian ballot in Town Meeting. They have introduced a bill to make such a change. We thank them.

What about candidates? Having some contests for town offices is a good measure of interest in taking part. At the close of the day on January 29, the town office reported contests in races for six offices. Candidates' names are on page 3. Part of the credit for this interest may go to the EMES School Board who held a well-attended open candidate meeting in mid January. Present and past officers described their jobs and explained how to run for office. Several attendees took petitions at that meeting. It is hoped that such a meeting will become an annual affair.

This is only a beginning. It will take years for some of these initiatives to bear fruit, but we hope that a seed has been planted. Persistent interest by all of us will help make Town Meeting a more vital part of our lives.

Jean Cate

(Continued from page 1)

Joyce's *Smithsonian* article on Central Vermont Hospital is her personal favorite. She was diagnosed with leukemia in August 1996 and underwent seven months of treatment at CVH. "The Quality of Mercy" describes the caring nursing staff at the hospital. Throughout the article is a narrative about "the woman with leukemia." Only at the end of the article, in the author credit, is the reader told that "the woman" is Joyce. Joyce describes her struggle with leukemia as having "tumbled into this alternative universe, the planet of the sick." The article drew a large response from nurses around the country. Happily, today Joyce is four and one-half years in complete remission. (The April 1998 article is mounted on panels inside the main entrance at CVH.)

Richard's most memorable article was about B-52 bombers. Preparation included a flight of "terrain following," which involves going up and down the sides of mountains at low altitudes. They encountered a thunderstorm, changed the flight plan, and were to fly to Michigan instead of New York. The aircraft was low on fuel and there was talk of ditching. They landed with only a few drops left in the tanks. Intense research!

The Wolkomirs have also looked in their own back yard for story ideas; they found many. In *Smithsonian* they have detailed the work of Washington County State's Attorney Terry Trono, the Montpelier Police Department, Central Vermont Hospital, Montpelier High School, Adult Basic Education, and, most recently, snowshoeing. They like the in-depth, behind-the-scenes views these local articles provide.

It's not all writing and travel all the time for Joyce and Richard. The logistics of setting travel itineraries and interview schedules entails a lot of non-writing work. And there is a constant stream of reading: they receive five newspapers a day and subscribe to 30 to 40 magazines and journals for ideas. Each

new subject requires extensive reading and, sometimes, video watching (as in the case of their vacation article where they "had" to rent "Vegas Vacation" and "European Vacation" with Chevy Chase.)

The mechanics of journalism have changed since their New York City days. Using the Web means less time spent in libraries researching; e-mail and faxes have made it easier to reach people; and word processors have put an end to late-night typing and retyping of articles.

Spare time is tight, but the Wolkomirs do get to enjoy the outdoors. Their property includes a pond fed by a stream and waterfall. They have watched families of otters playing in the water, herds of deer outside their window in the moonlight, wild turkeys, moose, ducks and ducklings, and baby foxes cavorting on their deck.

The physical beauty of East Montpelier is one attraction for the Wolkomirs. They are also fond of the people, not least among them the Morses and the Cates. And they are appreciative of the fact that East Montpelier hasn't succumbed to sprawl, as have other Vermont towns.

Another thing the Wolkomirs like about East Montpelier is the *Signpost*. "The newsletter helps us be more of a community," was one of the Wolkomirs' final comments. And without people like the Wolkomirs, East Montpelier would be a much less interesting community.

Joanna Day edits and designs for her business, Publications Services. She and her husband, Edward, live in East Montpelier Center.



## TOWN/SCHOOL MEETING 2001

### CANDIDATES FOR TOWN AND SCHOOL OFFICES

Moderator for 1 yr.	Martin "Marty" Miller
Selectperson for 3 yrs.	Edith Miller
Lister for 3 yrs.	Earl Montague
Auditor for 3 yrs.	Gen Chapell
Trustee of Public Funds for 3 yrs.	Sylvia M. Tosi
Town Law Agent for 1 yr.	Dennis Carver
Town Grand Juror for 1 yr.	Tim Carver
First Constable for 1 yr.	Dennis Carver
Second Constable for 1 yr.	Timothy Meehan
Planning Commission for 3 yrs: Vote for Three	Alex Brown Tim Carver Robert Chickering Richmond "Rick" Hopkins David Sparrow Carol Welch
Cemetery Commissioner for 5 yrs.	Maurice Cerutti
School Director for 3 yrs. Vote for one	Brian Bishop Robert J. Rikken
School Director for 2 yrs. Vote for one	Richard W. Curtis Lucy Ferrada
U-32 Director for 3 yr. Vote for one	Virginia "Ginny" Burley Real Ouimet



Babysitting will be available at Town Meeting during the day.



### 2001 TOWN/SCHOOL MEETING

#### Voting Information

- Absentee Ballots are available for voting after February 14.
- Australian Ballot voting at Elementary School is from 7am to 7pm on Town Meeting Day, March 6.
- U-32 High School warning will also be voted at Town Meeting as an Australian Ballot.
- Town/School Forum is February 24, at 9:30 am at the East Montpelier Elementary School.
- Town Office will be open for Voter Registration on February 24, from 10 am to 12 noon.
- Town Meeting Day is March 6. Meeting convenes at 9:30.

#### CRIBBED FROM THE WARNING

- Article 7:** A new 16-yard dump truck—not to exceed \$85,000
- Article 8:** Paving on Gallison Hill Road—\$70,000
- Article 9:** Assistance to the Kellogg-Hubbard Library—\$4,700
- Article 10:** To maintain the town cemeteries—\$7,000
- Article 11:** Four Corners Schoolhouse Association—\$2,825
- Article 13:** Twin Valley Intergenerational Community Center at Goddard College—\$6,500\*
- Article 14:** Livable Wage resolution\*
- Article 15:** Change the number of Justices of the Peace from seven to ten
- Article 16:** Rescue the old tanker truck—\$5,000 from the Capital Reserve Fund
- Article 17:** Industrial/Commercial property tax stabilization
- Article 18:** Agricultural land tax abatement contract extension  
\* by petition

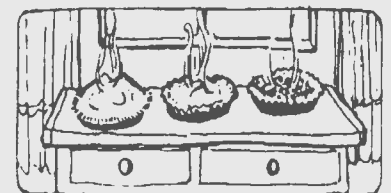
*See the Town Report for the details...*

## See you at Town Meeting . . . . .

### TOWN MEETING POTLUCK

For the seventh year, we look forward to the Super Town Meeting Potluck on March 6. Mostly we're old hands at this and remember that we should bring a hot dish, a salad, some breadstuff, OR a dessert (not ALL of them). Bring enough for four servings times the number of family members. Thus a couple would bring enough for eight, a family of four would bring a dish for sixteen. When you arrive, please bring your food to the kitchen window.

If you absolutely can't bring food, PLEASE call Rachael Grossman (223-3177) or Jean Cate (223-2951) by Monday the 5th. We want you to eat with us anyway, but you will be charged a small fee. Don't miss sharing this townwide potluck.





MILESTONES

Births

- >Callista Lillian Gallagher, November 15, 2000, daughter to Vanessa Jean & Brian James Gallagher.
>Cheyenne Sierra Croteau, November 18, 2000, daughter to Kathleen Ann & Wilham Joseph Croteau Jr.
>Katharine Grace Benedict, December 12, 2000, daughter to Shelley Lynne & Anthony Moses Benedict.
>Noah Ethan Levine, December 22, 2000, son to Lisa Senecal and Fredric Michael Levine.

Deaths

- >Svea S. Reynolds, November 22, 2000, mother of Ruth Frost.
>Luella S. Isaak, December 5, 2000, mother of Lauren Isaak.
>Carlton R. Ryan, December 20, 2000, spouse of Elaine P. Ryan.
>James McInnes Galloway, Jr., January 31, 2001.

Marriages

- >Gregory William McNaughton to Ricka Jean Dailey, January 13, 2001.

Land Transfers

- >Ray F. Langer to Ray F. Langer & Barry F. Langer, Trustees, Vincent Flats Rd., 20 acres & dwelling.
>Gloria A. Biron to Gloria A. Biron, Trustee of the Gloria A. Biron Living Trust, Village and Lyle Young Rd., 6 parcels.
>Grace Black Wood to Andrew L. Colnes, Jacobs Rd., 13 acres.
>Stephen P. & Rebecca R. Miracle to Kirby Scarborough & Madeline Mongan, easement off Barnes Rd.
>Lloyd B. Eldred to Helen B. Eldred, Snow Hill Rd., 15.5 acres & dwelling.
>Helen B. Eldred to Michelle L. and Anthony G. Lavigne, Snow Hill Rd., 8.4 acres.
>Donald H. and Marjorie R. Donnelly to Ronald N. and Marlene B. Kirkpatrick, Elisha Smith Rd., 1.08 acres.
>Harry and Elizabeth Morse to New England Telephone & Telegraph Co., easement on east side of County Rd.
>Freda G. McHugh to Dennis L. McHugh, VT 14N, 0.63 acres and dwelling.
>Richard G. Casavant to Fecteau

- Residential Inc., Pine Ridge Rd., 0.67 acres.
>Fecteau Homes to Randolph S. Donald, Pine Ridge Rd., mobile home.
>Fecteau Residential Inc. to Randolph Donald, Pine Ridge Rd., 0.67 acres.
>Bernard & Nancy Salerno to Janet H. Peduzzi, Sandy Pines Tr. Park, mobile home.
>Lynda Marie Woods and Albert F. LaBounty to Irene E. Stotts, Center Rd., 2 acres and dwelling.
>Irene E. Stotts to Irene E. Stotts and Rebecca S. Reed, Center Rd., 2 acres and dwelling.
>Gerald C. Jourdan Jr and Jill E. Jourdan to Nicole Sue Noury and Marc William Sancibrian, Clark Rd., 4.8 acres.
>Irving Deutsch to Derek T. and Tonia T. Pryce, 10 acres and dwelling, Kelton Rd.
>Mark D. and Kelly A. Codling to Aaron W. and Nicole Codling, 10 acres and mobile home, Walbridge Rd.
>Donald E. Cote to Alfred and Brenda Prive, 10.6 acres and mobile home, County Rd.
>Ray's Homes to Brenda J. & Alfred C. Prive, mobile home, County Rd.
>Roger E. Ehret, Jr. and Rose Sze-Ming Ehret to Glen A. Ehret and Kristie L. Ferguson, 10.1 acres and dwelling, VT RT 14 N.
>Ina Jeane Thompson a.k.a Jeane Thompson to Elizabeth Fukushima, 0.54 acres and dwelling, Factory St.

SELECTBOARD

Edie Miller, Chair, Tom Brazier, Tim Meehan

November 15, 2000

- >Road Foreman Mike Garand presented the proposed road budget for 2001.
>Discussion of Bridge #74 by the Carpet

EAST MONTPELIER TOWN OFFICE

Phone: 223-3313
Email: EastMont@together.net
Clerk-Treasurer - Sylvia Tosi
Asst. Clerk-Treasurer - Pauline Coburn
Asst. Clerk - Ginger Hopkins
Administrative Assistant - Marlene Betit (W & Th 9-5)
PO Box 157, E. Montpelier, VT 05651
(Office Hours: M-Th 9-5, F 9-12 noon)

- Barn. Hope to get done as soon as possible due to safety concerns.
>Discussion of Bridge #68 replacement at intersection VT 2 and 14.
>Moved to appoint Gene Troia as Acting Zoning Administrator.
>Vtrans has requested reshaping intersection of VT 14 and Coburn Road from "Y" to "T" shaped. Ms Betit will contact abutters for their response.
December 6, 2000
>Discussed need for signal at Bridge #68 intersection.
>Discussed preliminary Town Budget for 2001.

December 20, 2000

- >John Audy and Ty Rolland presented the Fire Department draft budget.
>Sylvia Tosi requested increase in office supplies of \$500 for computerized cards for land records and for envelopes and postage for delinquent taxpayers. VLCT says towns not allowed to charge postage to delinquent taxpayers.
>Will add 10% to fuel oil line item.
>Agreed to increase salaries by 4%.

January 3, 2001

- >Voted to purchase a truck from Clark's Truck Center and the body from Hill-Martin for a total cost of \$108,703 contingent upon voter approval at Town Meeting.
>Voted to appoint Bill Merrylees as Green-up chairman.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Carol Welch, Chair

December 7, 2001

- >Approved the preliminary and final plans for a subdivision by Maurice and Arsene Laperle.
>Reviewed sign application request by David and Elizabeth Swenson. Approved.

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Claudia Bristow, Chair

January 8, 2001

- >John Buswell and Allan Hedding requested approval of their change of use application for property on VT 14 to used car sales. Approved with conditions.

Dog Wolf-hybrid licenses are available now. They need to have a current Rabies vaccination signed by authorized veterinarian. New licenses and renewed licenses are due by April 2; after that date a late fee will be added.



**EAST MONTPELIER  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

*Jan Aldrich, Chair, Lisa Rice, Cheryl Rus, Anna Saxman, Nancy Thomas*

**December 7, 2000**

>Steve Sinclair and Linda Hall gave an update of the Before School Student Care program. Will continue to investigate options.

>Rachael Grossman gave an update on the Afterschool Activities Program. At present, there is a well attended Studio Arts Program. There will be cross country skiing, a school newspaper, cooking with a chef, and a drama club. A writing program will be held in the fall.

>Kathy Christy has received National Board Teacher Certification.

>Tracy Storey presented information on wood chip storage for the school

**December 21, 2000**

>Approved \$2400 to hire a consultant to do a study for before school student care services.

>Discussed School Community Forum to be held on January 4th.

**January 4, 2001**

>Forum held before regular board meeting.

>Mike Berry, Jamie O'Hare and Lisa Rice reported on visit to Rutland School

District to observe full day kindergarten program.

>Carol Randall reported that Washington Central Supervisory District Union is setting up a study committee to study preschool and full day kindergarten program.

>State mandate to have a foreign language program in place by 2005.

>Nancy Thomas reported on technology and possible improvements.

>Anna Saxman and Rachael Grossman reported on the outside of school time activities.

>Regular board meeting called to order at 8:00 pm.

>Discussed scheduling of Town Forum.

>EMES has received a grant of \$880 to continue mentoring program with Norwich University.

>Approved \$1,921,149 for the FY02 budget to be warned for the Town Meeting March 6, 2001.

**U-32 JR. SR. HIGH SCHOOL**

*Tony Klein, Chair, and Ginny Burley  
East Montpelier members*

**November 15, 2000**

>Dot Blake reported that the play was very successful. The football and boys cross-country teams were crowned state champions.

>Friends of Football representatives presented their request for fully-funded varsity status.

**December 6, 2000**

>Eric Zencey reported on the possibility of reopening the strings program.

>Approved the Middle School winter coaches as presented.

>Discussed budget.

**December 20, 2000**

>Jon Winston reported on building project. Old furnace is not working well, however the wood chip facility is up and running.

>Community Liaison Committee recommended keeping soda out of the school.

>Reviewed draft warning for Annual Meeting.

**January 3, 2001**

>Approved the Educational Support Personnel Contract as negotiated between the bargaining unit and Board subcommittee.

**January 10, 2001**

>Approved FY 2002 Final Budget of \$8,720,126.

>There was general discussion regarding the construction project and the increase in costs.

**THANK YOU TO THESE LOYAL SUPPORTERS!**

The *Signpost* welcomes contributions. Any amount would be gratefully received \$5, \$10, \$25, even \$50. Send your donation to Anne Sherman, The *Signpost*, 315 Putnam Road, East Montpelier, VT 05651-4119.

Richard & Alice Angney  
Frances Donaghy  
Stephen Jerome  
Margaret & Alban Richey

Frieda Battles  
Albert & Elizabeth Jerome  
Dorothy Mix  
Samuel & Barbara Starr



**CHURCH BELLS**



**OLD BRICK CHURCH**

*Rev. Marcheta Townsend, Pastor*

Worship, Sunday School and Child Care 10:00 a.m.

**OLD MEETING HOUSE**

*Rev. David W. Connor and Rev. Susan Cooke Kittredge,  
Co-Pastors*

Worship, Sunday School and Child Care 9:30 a.m.

**CROSSROADS CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

*Rev. Bob Walton*

Worship and Sunday School - 9:30 a.m.

**A FUN-RAISER**

**Community Contra Dance**

March 17 from 6:30 to 8:30 East Montpelier Elementary School

Larry Becker is the caller

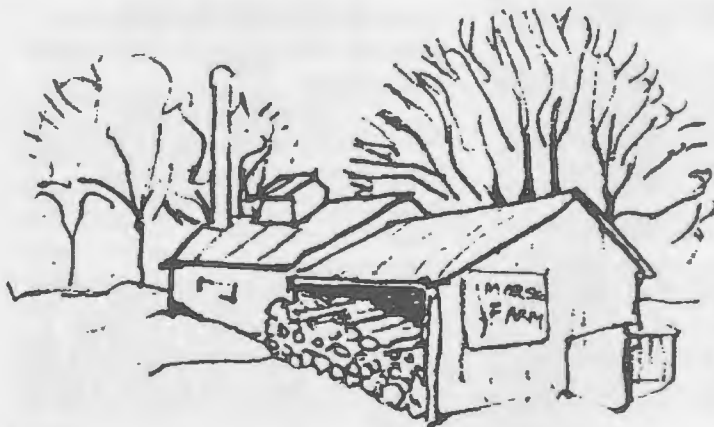
- Adults \$2.00
- Kids \$1.00
- The Whole Family \$5.00



Organized by the After School Activities Program

**An evening just for fun — no dancing skills required**





**BITS AND PIECES**

- ◆ This note from Steve and Alice Nichols of Drake Road: "We would like to thank the East Montpelier and Plainfield Fire Departments for the "FAST" response that they gave to our neighbors on Drake Road. A fire started in the home of Marc Eagle, Sherry Young and family on December 28 in the early morning hours. This could have resulted in a bad fire and loss of a home. It is wonderful to see what a great team both Fire Departments make. It is great to live in a town with such support from both towns. Thank you!"
- ◆ Kudos LIKEWISE to Mike Garand and his crew for keeping our roads plowed, salted and sanded during these winter storms.
- ◆ "The Friendly Circle Club" sponsor of the Fitch scholarship has \$500 for a student at U-32 who plans to become a teacher. This money goes to the book store of the university or college of their choice. Apply to chairperson, Kathy Doner, 320 Fitch Road, Montpelier, 05602 or by phone 223-3366 for forms.
- ◆ Changes to the display case in the Town Office: the display of Roger and Gen Chapell's barn restoration was replaced by one of Bonnie and Jeff Sibley's barn on Sibley Rd. It has before and after pictures with brief explanation of the repairs.



**EAST MONTPELIER TRAILS**



*Jamie Shanley, chair*

The Committee has been meeting regularly throughout the fall and winter. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 7, at 7:30 pm at the home of Chris Abrams, Secretary, 925 Center Road. The Committee is looking for new members and board members. All interested persons are encouraged to attend.

For more information call Jamie Shanley at 223-4856.

**FOUR CORNERS SCHOOLHOUSE ASSOCIATION**

*Rachel Senechal, President*

- ♣ A Whist Party was held at the schoolhouse on December 2nd, planned by Elaine Manghi and Stanley Christiansen, Board members. Twenty-two townspeople, old and young, attended, and seemed to enjoy the evening. We visited while having refreshments of hot chocolate, cider, donuts and cookies.
- ♥ Another Whist Party is being planned for the evening of March 10th at the schoolhouse. Please phone Elaine Manghi between 6 and 8 pm or Stanley Christiansen for more details.
- ◆ For use of the building, call Elaine 229-5811—6 to 8 pm.

**VERMONT EARTH INSTITUTE PRESENTATION**

On Thursday, March 15, 7:00 PM at the Four Corners Schoolhouse in East Montpelier, there will be a presentation of two courses on sustainable living offered by the Vermont Earth Institute.

Richard Czaplinski, who is the Central Vermont contact for the Institute, will briefly outline courses on "Voluntary Simplicity" and "Choices for Sustainable Living." The courses are self directed and the only cost is \$15 for a course book which contains readings and discussion questions for eight sessions.

No matter what our style or level of living, there always seems to be more to learn about how to live more lightly on the earth. Please come, bring your friends and enjoy an evening of discussion.

For more information, call Richard Czaplinski at 229-4534 or email him at rczaplinski@madriver.com

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1 mile north of E. Montpelier Village on Rt. 14 (follow signs)

## ENTERTAINMENT, WITH A BANG

by Steve Sinclair

"Fireworks aren't just for the Fourth of July anymore," said Dave Swenson, owner of Northstar Firework Displays in East Montpelier. "Fireworks add so much to any occasion - we've done weddings, anniversaries, family reunions, graduation ceremonies, not to mention summer fairs and New Year's celebrations," he said. Northstar even provided fireworks for a funeral, a request from the family of a woman in New York who enjoyed watching them when she was alive. When asked if he did any events for celebrities, Dave mentioned rather matter-of-factly that Northstar has done the fireworks for several concerts of the Vermont-based band, Phish.

Growing up in Newbury, Vermont, Dave Swenson always loved fireworks and decided that it was something he wanted to pursue as a career. Given the opportunity to apprentice with the previous owner of Northstar, Dave began his formal training in 1983. In 1986, he purchased the business, running it out of Montpelier, before moving his family and the business to East Montpelier in 1997. He and his wife, Elizabeth, an instructional assistant at Union Elementary, and three children, who attend U-32 high school, live on Fair Road.

Rally Day 2000 was one of Northstar's biggest displays. A show takes a lot of planning and preparation. Dave said that about two weeks of planning went into the show. It then takes his crew over two days worth of set-up in the field and another couple of days to clean up! Northstar averages about 130 shows a year, producing shows in Vermont, all over New England and New York, and all the way down to Florida.

Besides his two fulltime employees, Dave has a cadre of trained assistants that help out with loading trucks, transporting to the site, set-up and take down. And if you are a fireworks aficionado, Dave said he is always looking for helpers to train!

Little help is needed during the actual presentation, as more and more of the displays are electronic, where preloaded fireworks are set off with flip switches versus lighting with a flare.

"Putting on a display for Rally Day is a way for us to give something back to the community", said Dave. "When we first moved here, the townspeople opened their arms to us and were very generous with their encouragement and support". Dave said that he is still amazed, after three years worth of displays for Rally Day, at the level of community spirit in East Montpelier. Rally Day isn't Northstar's only philanthropic event. Dave said he is also involved with the Make a Wish Foundation, the John LeClair Foundation, Camp Ta-Kum-Ta, and the Central Vermont Memorial Civic Center, to name a few.

I noticed a U.S. passport on Dave's desk and discovered that 80 percent of the fireworks Northstar uses are made in China. With an over 1000 year tradition in manufacturing, the Chinese product is superior to anything you can buy stateside. Dave plans on visiting the three major manufacturing plants he deals with, discussing new products, and checking standards and specifications.



The fireworks take a long journey before ending up over the skies of East Montpelier. They are shipped on container vessels out of Hong Kong, traveling first to Los Angeles. They continue on rail to New York City, where they go through U.S. Customs. Finally, they make their way up to Vermont on trucks. It is illegal to use fireworks in Vermont, as with much of New England, without a permit and necessary licenses. And even if you purchase them elsewhere, it is still against the law to set off fireworks in Vermont without a permit.

Dave said that fireworks are a manufactured product with inherent dangers, but through training and common sense, he and his staff have been injury free. He is a member of the American Pyrotechnics Association and the Pyrotechnics Guild International, organizations dedicated to promoting safety and training.

What's the signature of Northstar Firework Displays? "We like a big finale," said Dave Swenson. "It's the last thing people remember, so I really like to put a lot of attention into the last couple of minutes," he said. "We're really entertainers, it's what we like to do!"

East Montpelier has a variety of interesting residents and businesses, but you'd be hard pressed to find something as unique. "Not many people say they can get paid for having fun," Dave said. Yes indeed, entertainment with a BANG!

*Steve Sinclair works with the Vermont Division of Forests. He enjoys viewing the Rally Day fireworks with his wife, Sue, and two children from the porch of their house off Route 14 N.*



## COMMITTEE MEETING CALENDAR

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

**Meeting times are subject to change.**

## EVENTS CALENDAR

after February 14	Absentee Ballots available	During business hours	Town Office
February 24	Town/School Meeting Forum	9:30 am	EMES
February 24	Voter registration	10:00 am to Noon	Town Office
March 6	Town/School Meeting	9:30 am	EMES
	Australian Ballot Voting	7:00 am to 7:00 pm	EMES
March 7	Trails Committee	7:30 pm	Abrams home—925 Center Rd.
March 10	Whist Party		Four Corners School
March 15	Vermont Earth Institute presentation	7:00 pm	Four Corners School
March 17	Contra Dance	6:30-8:30	EMES
April 2	Dog licenses due	9:00-5:00	Town Office

## EAST MONTPELIER SIGNPOST

Published six times a year; mailed out free of charge to all residents of East Montpelier.  
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**Jean Cate, Publisher**  
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