

EAST MONTPELIER Signpost

Volume XIII, No. 5

May/June 2003

A FAMILY PORTRAIT – ALBIE AND BETTY JEROME

by Karen Salvador Blosser

When Albert (Albie) Jerome came home to Center Road in East Montpelier in January 1945 while on leave during his 3½ years with the US Navy, he didn't know he would have his first date with his future wife. Betty and another girl working at Bernadini's newspaper store were both interested in him, but Albie says "there was no decision to be made" between the two. A blind date began what will be celebrated as 57 years of marriage this August.

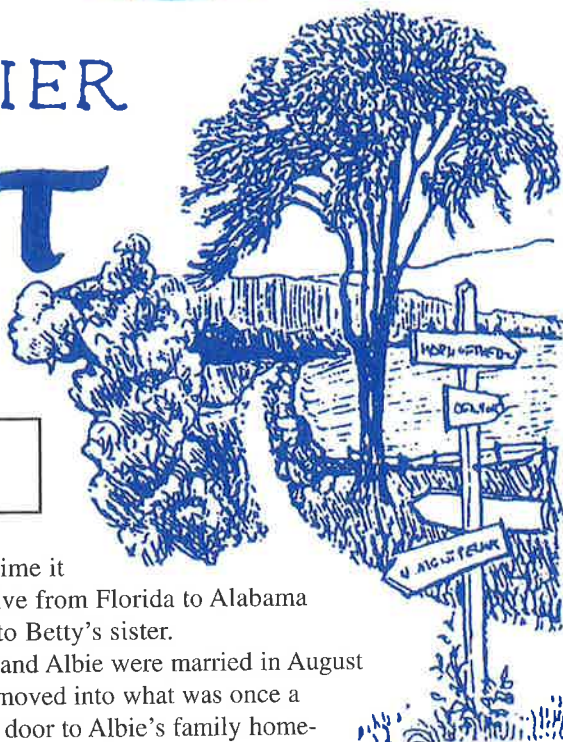
Albie returned to the USS KIDD stationed in the South Pacific (he disliked being surrounded by water) where he spent his free time playing cards, cribbage and poker, and reading the letters Betty wrote. Those letters are now stored in the attic and will be read by their children at a later date. Betty wrote to Albie frequently. Albie "lost his pen overboard" but would occasionally write to let her know he was safe. Betty continues to write, making daily journal entries the family uses as a resource. Most recently a daughter asked Betty to look up the

length of time it took to drive from Florida to Alabama on a visit to Betty's sister.

Betty and Albie were married in August 1946 and moved into what was once a camp next door to Albie's family home-
stead. Betty now understands why her mother was discouraged after first seeing the home where the Jeromes brought their first child. Memories include a kitchen with a black cast iron sink and hand pump, a two seater out-house, a spring that failed in their first two years of home ownership and a heating system comprised of two fireplaces, one as long as their living room wall. From those sparse beginnings, the tidy home we now see is the result of many years of hard work and loving attention.

Center Road was raised up five to six feet and paved in the early 1950s, but Albie remembers the long runs he and a friend would enjoy on a traverse (a six- to eight-seater toboggan-like sled) when the snow-covered road had just the right amount of ice on it. If the conditions were perfect, they could ride all the way down to Main Street in Montpelier. That was during the years when there were mostly small farms on the road. The water from the hills on both sides of the hollow form the brook running through the Jerome property. In Albie's youth, a dam built farther down the brook created a swimming hole in the summer and supplied much needed ice for local iceboxes in the winter. In the 1950s, Albie built his own dam behind the house. He makes needed repairs in late spring before replacing the plug to form the swimming hole that more than once was jumped into, clothes and all, on a hot day.

When asked about their children, Betty references the end wall of the living room, where there is a photo gallery of children and grandchildren. Sadly, one son died at 8½ months of age. A grown family of four boys and four girls has produced 14 grandchildren. Five of the children live in central Vermont, two others are within a couple of hours' drive and one son lives in Maui. Betty and Albie have visited David in that tropical paradise, but Albie says he doesn't like being surrounded by water



Continued on page 3

TOP OF THE SIGNPOST

As I write, March is about to merge into April. Before we change the calendar page and adjust the clock to Daylight Saving Time, let's look back at Town Meeting and the changes it brought. Each year this home rule ritual confirms the town's will — in its choice of leaders for the years ahead and in its budget vote. Looking at the numbers, we find that of the 2011 voters on the checklist, 525 voted by Australian ballot and 225 attended some or all of the meeting. Not as many as one might hope, but better than in some years and in some places.

Then take a look at the margin by which the winning candidates were elected. Of the contested races, the margin for Selectperson was 67 votes out of the 475 cast; for EMES School Board, the margin was just 3 votes out of 445! That suggests two things to me. As this column suggested in the last issue, it would be good to nominate a larger field of candidates.

The other observation from these figures is that candidates and their supporters need to make a greater effort to become known to townspeople. If candidates are not known to a voter, that person will often simply not cast a vote in that race. How much better if candidates had appeared at the Pre-Town Meeting Forum and made their positions known. Another route might be the introduction of each candidate through the media. I'm thinking that such a service might be offered by the *Signpost* — quite in line with our mission to create better understanding of town government.

We always need to look for ways to make Town Meeting more effective, lest we allow it to become so out-of-date that no one comes. It's still "the best show in town," and, more importantly, it still has the potential for making any town a more vital, effective community.

— Jean Cate

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE SIGNPOST

The *Signpost*, mailed free of charge to all East Montpelier residents six times a year, is funded entirely by the Rally Day auction, our contributors, and our advertisers. It is published by an all-volunteer staff.

We always appreciate your contributions in any amount and we thank these recent supporters:

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East Montpelier, VT 05651

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And thank you for your support of the *Signpost*.

— Charlotte MacLeay

TALENT SEARCH

With the *Signpost's* next issue, we extend thanks and good-bye to Margaret Richey, who has been on our staff for over seven years. The Richeys, Alban and Margaret, are moving to Barre, and we are looking for someone to do her job. Faithfully all these years, Margaret has collected minutes from our official town bodies — Selectboard, Planning Commission, and schools, for example. She then pares them down to their essentials for our pages. Keeping our readers abreast of official town business is an important part of our mission, and we're sure some one of you might like to help us. You can visit with Margaret about the process, or with any of the rest of the staff.

Thanks.

EAST MONTPELIER SIGNPOST

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and is content to enjoy his home. Family time when the children were young included drives on dirt roads when "Albie would try to get us lost." They laugh, remembering drives when it would take them "three times around" to find a familiar landmark. Even so, Albie says, "you're never lost as long as you have a tankful of gas!"

The Jerome house is a frequent gathering place for this closely knit family. Sunday dinner remains a tradition, with everyone bringing an edible contribution. It isn't uncommon to see many cars in the driveway, but contact is also maintained through frequent phone, email and Instant Message conversations, the latter especially with the grandchildren. Albie and Betty proudly state that all of their grandchildren who so far have graduated from high school have gone on to college. They make special note that one granddaughter is at Boston University studying aeronautical engineering on a full tuition scholarship.

Reflecting back on earlier years, Betty describes working outside the home before and in between child-rearing years. She was bookkeeper for the Vermont Farm Bureau and several small businesses and worked at Paul's Bakery. She knits and used to make clothes for the children and recalls canning 500 quarts of vegetables, fruits, and jelly per year. That she is a valuable resource is apparent. While I was visiting, Betty's sister called from Alabama asking how she could determine if home-canned vegetables given to her were safe. I could tell that Betty knew her stuff from the questions asked and the advice given. Betty's



physical activity is limited until she has surgery to correct spinal stenosis. While she is waiting for tests to be done and a surgical date to be set, the love of her family is evident. Albie does the household work, and the children bring in meals Saturday and Sunday that often last all week.

Albie worked as a stonecutter, making valuable contributions to several local granite sheds. Betty says "they couldn't get along without him." His comfort and skill with stone are evident in the

stonework around their home. Both have contributed to their community as volunteers at Central Vermont Medical Center for years and don't seem to have any problem keeping busy.

In the neatly kept home at the bottom of the Center Road hill where it is hard to hold a vehicle at the 35 MPH speed limit, Albie and Betty Jerome enjoy passing time surrounded by water (still, Albie!) in the brook that makes its way through their property. I was fortunate to be asked to interview my neighbors. I was able to listen to fond memories, learn about changes that have occurred in the community and feel the warmth of a loving family.

Karen Salvador Blosser grew up in South Barre and has lived in East Montpelier since 1982 after living in California for eight years. She and her daughter Erin live on Center Road. Karen has been the State Farm Insurance Agent in Montpelier since 1984.

CHURCH BELLS

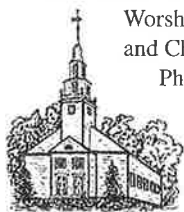


Old Brick Church

Angelo Tillas, Pastor
Sunday Services - 10:00AM
Phone: 223-1232

Old Meeting House

Rev. Susan Cooke Kittredge, Pastor
Rev. David W. Connor, Associate Pastor
Worship, Church School
and Child Care - 9:30AM
Phone: 229-9593



Crossroads Christian Church

Rev. Bob Walton, Pastor
Worship & Sunday School - 9:30AM
Phone: 476-4843
229-9389



RALLY DAY 2003 FIREWORKS

For five years, Northstar Fireworks owners David and Deedee Swenson have generously donated the entire annual fireworks show to our town. This year, the Rally Day Committee is looking for ways to help pay some of their out-of-pocket costs. We're soliciting meals, labor, equipment, and cash in any amount. Tax-deductible contributions may be sent to:

"East Montpelier Fireworks Fund"
c/o Town Clerk, P.O. Box 157
East Montpelier, VT 05651

For more information and details on how you can help, ask for a form at the Town Clerk's Office or see the January/February *Signpost*.

Many thanks to these recent contributors:

Barbara Fitch
Valerie & William Smith
Alison Underhill
Doris Washburn
Lisa Wernhoff & Michele Curran
Erica Zimmerman & Kevin McCollister

— Rally Day Committee

IN THE NEWS

TOWN MEETING 2003 AUSTRALIAN BALLOT RESULTS

Elected Officials

Moderator: Marty Miller

Town Clerk, 3 years: Sylvia M. Tosi

Town/School Treasurer, 3 years:

Sylvia M. Tosi

Selectperson, 3 years: Martha Holden

Lister, 3 years: No candidate (person to be appointed)

Auditor, 3 years: Shirley M. King

Trustee of Public Funds, 3 years:

Teresa "Terri" Conti

Town Law Agent: Dennis Carver

Town Grand Juror: Tim Carver

First Constable: Dennis Carver

Second Constable: Timothy Meehan

Planning Commissioners, 3 years:

Deborah Fillion, John "Jack" Pauly,
and Tracy Phillips

Cemetery Commission, 5 years:

Frederick C. Strong

School Director, 3 years: Joe Buley, Jr.

School Director, 2 years: Julia Longhi

Haynes (final result of recount)

All of the Town's warned Australian Ballot articles were passed.

Art. 5, Town Budget: Yes 435, No 76

Art. 6, Capital Reserve Fund:

Yes 392, No 108

Art. 7, EMFD Fire Truck:

Yes 407, No 103

Art. 8, EMFD Breathing Apparatus:

Yes 437, No 76

Art. 9, Kellogg-Hubbard Library,

amended to \$9,000: Yes (voice vote)

All of the School District's Articles were approved as warned.

A few extra copies of the Town Report are available at the Town Clerk's Office.

GREEN UP DAY IS COMING

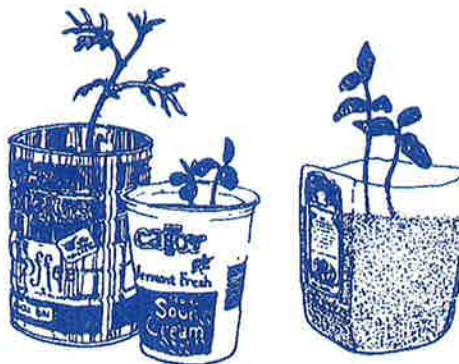


Vermont's unique "Green Up Day" is May 3, 2003. Each first Saturday in May, thousands of volunteers pick up winter's refuse to "Green Up" our beautiful state. Vermont was the first state to do this, and it's been a tradition for over 30 years.

Thanks to the efforts of more than 60 East Montpelier residents, 1.2 tons of trash were cleared from the roadsides of our town on Green Up Day 2002. You're invited to join your neighbors in this effort this year.

Here's how it works: You can pick up Green Up Day disposal bags at the East Montpelier town clerk's office or the elementary school beginning a week before the event. On May 3rd, green up your selected roadside and bring in the bags for free disposal.

As the *Signpost* went to press, the drop-off site in town had not yet been finalized. This location will be announced soon in the local press and the EMES newsletter. For more information, please contact Bill Merrylees at 223-4951 or email <b merry@together.net>. Up to date information will also be available at the Town Clerk's Office. We hope to see you on May 3rd for Green Up Day, rain or shine!



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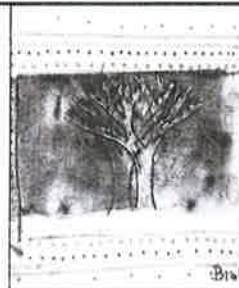
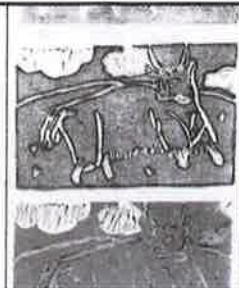
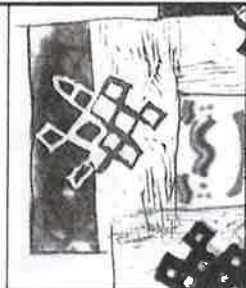
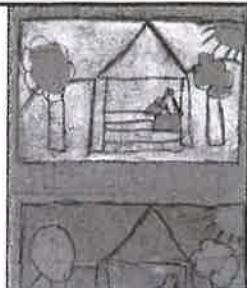
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What is KiDs FiRsT?

Kids First is an idea that was born last Spring to celebrate the children's artwork in the East Montpelier Elementary School with a visible project. And what project could be more visible than a colorful sculpture that catches your eye, is expressive, and vibrates joy.

What materials are you using?

A group of parents and teachers discussed several possibilities with materials, like papier-maché, wire, clay, or wood. We finally decided on a fabric sculpture that includes the natural element of the wind.

Why fabric?

Well, with the fabric we were able to cover several printing techniques; beginning with the Kindergartners, we started with potato prints; then we used fun household objects; and finally, we carved symbols and pictures into foam and linoleum pads.

So, why using fabric?

Here in Vermont, we have several textile artists. One is Judith Wrend (Public Building in Middlesex), another is Catherine Hall (downtown Burlington).

I'm always excited by the freshness of their outdoor fabric art. With the influence of nature and the environment of seasonal changes, these printed and painted shapes will change and fade.

I'd like the children to understand that art forms generally do not have to be permanent. Being exposed to seasonal changes, the prints will fade, the textile will get ripped, etc. And then, we can re-use or re-cycle what's left from one sculpture for the beginning of the next.

How is this project financed?

Kids First is supported by generous funding from PTNO (Parents Teachers Neighbors Organization). This grant led to the first discussion of parents and local artists. I've had help from John Reynolds and Ellen Magrun — Ellen cut all 300 pieces of muslin! My hope is that Kids First will be one of many sculptures that we can build on our school lawn; the sculptures can take on a different form every year or two. I look forward to a series of exciting, thought-provoking, meaningful, and expressive sculptures.

What do you like best about Kids First?

Well, there are several things: I love the children's artwork and welcome any opportunity to show their talents. Also, driving by any school building, I always imagine a colorful project that describes the children in that building who are learning and full of wonders.



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THE TOWN WEATHERVANE



Selectboard

Edie Miller, Chair

Tom Brazier, Martha Holden

January 17, 2003

- > Viewed Salt Shed. Voted to borrow additional funds needed for the fire engine/pumper, salt shed, and breathing apparatus, reducing Capital Reserve Contribution from \$98,000 to \$58,000.
- > Discussed speed limits.

January 20, 2003

- > Discussed resolution provided by Representative Tony Klein regarding Act 60. Voted to accept resolution that calls on "the Governor and the members of the Vermont Legislature to take the necessary action to increase the education block grant or reduce the statewide property tax rate in an effort to reverse the trend of increasing school property taxes."

February 3, 2003

- > Approved access of driveway entering off VT14S for John Anderson.
- > Moved to direct Road Foreman Mike Garand to put up "no parking" signs at access to trails on County Road, Center Road, and Dodge Road.

February 17, 2003

- > Voted to accept the State Trooper Law Enforcement contract.
- > Discussed Animal Control Ordinance for any Dog or Wolf-Hybrid. Prohibition against roaming or creating a nuisance. Must be licensed annually, wear a collar with license tag attached. Voted to accept.
- > Reviewed letter of resignation from Zoning Board of Adjustment member Claudia Bristow.

■ A New Look On Our Roads

Those who weren't at Town Meeting may find some surprises when they travel our town's roads. As of April 1st, 2003, the Selectboard has signed a law enforcement contract with the State Police for 40 hours per month in order to provide more effective local law enforcement. Speed enforcement is part of that contract and a number of warnings and tickets have been issued since April 1st.

Also discussed: Speed limits on dirt and paved roads. Prior to changing speed limits, the Selectboard will hear public comments at one of their regular meetings.

March 18, 2003

- > State Police Lt. Harrington discussed law enforcement and speed enforcement.
- > Edie Miller elected as Chair of the Selectboard.
- > Annual liquor licenses approved and signed for Riverbend and Dudley's stores.
- > Access permit applications for Dexter and Susan Merritt onto Coburn Road were approved with conditions.
- > Made Town appointments.
- > Signed annual Summary of Receipts and Expenditures for Fairmont Farm prepared by Marlene Betit for Agency of Commerce and Community Development.
- > Sewage Officer Richard Czaplinski would like to come to future meeting to discuss new sewage regulations and his revised information sheet.
- > Approved application for 2003 Class 2 Roadway Program to reclaim and pave 1.5 miles of County Road (Hooper Hollow).

Planning Commission

Carol Welch, Chair

January 2, 2003

- > Hearing on proposal of John Anderson (Vermont Concrete Cutting, Inc.) to construct a 15,700 square foot commercial building on VT14S.
- > Hearing on site plan review of Anthony Austin's proposal to operate an auto sales and repair lot at 1548 US2. Approved.
- > Briefly reviewed time line for Town Plan.

January 16, 2003

- > John Anderson submitted an amended site plan. Plans for landscaping and lighting discussed. Voted to approve plan.
- > Appointed Deborah Fillion as Acting Zoning Administrator.
- > Lyn Blackwell updated PC on gravel pit swimming hole located off US2 and Coburn Road. CVRPC will claim party status at Act 250 hearings in the fall.

February 6, 2003

- > James and Sheila LaPerle present with questions about possible development of Arsene LaPerle property on US2. Procedures explained.
- > Ben Graham and Amber Wiggett inquired about feasibility of developing a Sustainable Community on Morris Wyman's land located off US2 in Zone A. Discussed procedures with PC.

■ Progress on the Town Plan

The Selectboard conducted an informational meeting and two hearings to take public comments on the draft Town Plan. Copies available at Town Office or www.madriver.com/~fillion

- > Dexter and Susan Merritt presented sketch plan for subdivision of their property on VT14N and Coburn Road.

February 20, 2003

- > Hearing on Blair Bessett's commercial change of use application to conduct used car sales at 1528 US2. Approved.
- > Sketch plan review of subdivision plans for 13.6-acre property owned by Edwin Clark on Horn of the Moon Road. Clark will need to acquire at least 0.4 acre to comply with 7-acre minimum lot size in Zone E.
- > Merritt Sketch Plan review continued. Approved with recommendations.
- > John Anderson (Vermont Concrete Cutting, Inc.) sign permit approved.

March 6, 2003

- > Hearing on Casey Northrup's commercial change of use application to conduct auto repair and sales at Danforth property on US2. Approved. Sign permit application pending more information.
- > John Hull and Pat Sikora inquired about conducting a business at LaPerle property on US2. Procedures explained.
- > Clark sketch plan review continued. Two 7-acre lots will be created. Approved.

March 20, 2003

- > Met with John Sanfacon to discuss the Zoning Administrator position: its requirements and the question of his availability.
- > Budget allocations. Voted to have PC members take minutes and hire Terri Conti to work on database of zoning permits.
- > Discussed making permit applications and regulations clearer, more user-friendly.

East Montpelier Revolving Loan Fund Committee

PUBLIC FORUM

**Wednesday, May 7, at 7:00 PM
at the Elementary School**

Presentation on the policies for the use of the Fairmont Farm loan repayments to assist with the rehabilitation and development of housing in town. Plan to attend and share your views.

— David A. Coburn, Chair



THE TOWN WEATHERVANE



Board of Adjustment *Jeff Cueto, Chair*

January 13, 2003

- > Reviewed draft decision to approve a cell tower at Swenson property on VT14S.
- > Discussed resignation of Gene Troia as Zoning Administrator.
- > Elected Jeff Cueto as Chair and Sandy Conti as Vice-Chair.

January 27, 2003

- > Granted Diana Chace dimensional variance to extend her home located on Sparrow Farm Road. Proposed addition would have 46-ft. front yard setback.

February 24, 2003

- > Hearing on application of Peter Hill to conduct an auto repair shop as a Home Occupation located at 830 Snow Hill Road. Approved.
- > Discussion of ATC/Spectrum cell tower application and progress of archeological survey for VT Division for Historical Preservation. Tom Brazier reported that Devon has filed bankruptcy and is reorganizing under Chapter 11.
- > Acting Zoning Administrator updated the board on the status of the draft Town Plan.
- > Planning Commission has begun process of revising permit applications and Zoning Bylaws; requests BOA's recommendations.

Elementary School

Jan Aldrich, Chair
Julia Longhi Haynes, Bob Rikken
Joe Buley, Nancy Thomas

January 2, 2003

- > Approved FY04 budget.
- > Approved the Town District Warning.
- > Kathy Topping will work with fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students and teachers one half day each week the next trimester on math problem solving and concepts.
- > Jim Shea drew sketches of a proposal for leveling the upper playground field for extra sports field.

January 28, 2003

- > Accepted resignation of Christine Royer as food service cook and agent.

February 6, 2003

- > Ashton Troia, a student at U-32, is working toward Eagle Scout rank. Presented a proposal to build a kickback

board to be used for baseball, soccer, and in other ways by students and community. Discussed possible funding.

- > Capital Improvement Committee looking at safety issues related to vehicle and pedestrian traffic flow at the school.
- > A box will be placed at the school for questions and suggestions. Board will respond to two questions each week in newsletter.
- > Anticipated enrollment for kindergarten next fall was 18 children while budget was developed, now up to 24.

February 20, 2003

- > Approved hiring of Robert G. Lynde for position of food service cook and agent.

U-32 Jr. Sr. High School

Tony Klein, Chair
Ginny Burley
East Montpelier Members

January 22, 2003

- > Toured new U-32/Kellogg-Hubbard "Van Go" Bookmobile. Will hold 2,000 volumes and computer access.
- > Reviewed 2003-2004 calendar draft. Tried to incorporate results of last year's calendar survey.

February 5, 2003

- > Discussed possible use of facility on Sundays. Due to budget restraints it will remain closed on Sundays.
- > Set tuition rate for FY2003-04 at \$9,505.

February 25, 2003

- > Annual Budget Information Meeting. Lori Bibeau gave an overview of the budget and impact on each town. Discussion on why more citizens do not attend.

■ The East Montpelier School Board of Directors welcomes comments and questions regarding the elementary school. Please contact them at the phone numbers and e-mail addresses below:

Janice Aldrich 229-0406
<Janice_Aldrich@hotmail.com>

Joe Buley 223-7970
<jbuleyjr@adelphia.net>

Julia Haynes 223-1651 <Julia@cvsha.org>

Bob Rikken 223-4262
<RRikken@adelphia.net>

Nancy Thomas 223-1007
<nthomas@danvillek12vt.org>

- > Regular meeting convened. Discussed closing Program Manager's stipend at end of February. Approved.
- > NEASC committee reports have been completed and have begun to be reviewed at faculty meetings.
- > Approved appointment of H. Herbert Durgin Jr. as a custodian.

March 6, 2003

- > Annual Reorganizational Meeting
- > Re-elected Tony Klein as Chairperson, Ginny Burley as Vice-Chairperson, and Stuart Savage as Clerk.
- > Meetings will continue to be held the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 6:00 PM.
- > Barry Kopecky discussed Community Liaison Committee survey results in regard to trimester system. Results appear to show issues are more related to scheduling than to actual trimester system. Will be further discussion.
- > Accepted Rosie Laquerre's resignation as Secretary to the Board with regret.

MILESTONES

Births

- > Zachary Alexander Holm, born February 11, son to Jeanne & Jeffrey Ian Holm.
- > Allyson Jill Scribner, born February 13, daughter to Tracy Alyn Cano-Scribner and Joshua Richard Scribner.
- > Jacob Gibson McCoy, born March 7, son to Margaret & Patrick Whitney McCoy.

Deaths

- > Mary Theresa Codling, died January 17, mother of Theresa Goslant.
- > Ivana Rus, died February 21, mother of Ivan Rus, grandmother to Michael Rus and Thomas Rus.
- > Robert Winston Day, died March 4, spouse of Anne Day.

Property Transfers

- > Mabel C. Wright and Sarah W. Pinardi to Sarah W. & James R. Pinardi & Mabel C. Wright, 3.41 acres & dwelling, Barnes Rd.
- > Laura Rae Brown to Laura R. Brown, Trustee of the Laura R. Brown Revocable Trust, 16.57 acres & dwelling.
- > Phyllis & Deborah Straw to Chandra M. Ryan, mobile home, Sandy Pines Tr. Park.
- > Norman Ferland to Norman Ferland, Monica L. Richardson, Michelle Tavaglione and John T. Ferland, 2.3 acres & dwelling, US2, Village.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN TOWN

EMES CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

The Capital Improvement Committee of the East Montpelier Elementary School is pleased to report the completion of two construction projects. The first construction project, health and safety improvements to the school, included adding hot water feeds and faucets to the bathrooms outside the gymnasium, replacing the original motors in eleven classroom heating units, adding additional interior emergency lighting as required by the Fire Marshall and exterior lighting over the main doors and new vinyl flooring to replace some of the carpet. The second construction project, the expanded wood chip facility, addressed the inadequate storage for wood chips and the use of the dual-fuel furnace. Both of these projects were completed on schedule and within budget.

We wish to thank the townspeople for their support for addressing these health and safety concerns, and the economizing effort of using a sustainable resource for heat. We would especially like to acknowledge the generous gift of \$20,000 from the Town Forest Committee.

The Capital Improvement Committee is now examining the safety concerns related to pedestrian access and traffic flow at the elementary school. We welcome ideas regarding this issue. Please contact Michelle McFadden at 476-7682.

FOUR CORNERS SCHOOLHOUSE

Rachel Y. Senechal, President

As many of you may recall from reading the last issue of the *Signpost*, the Four

Corners Schoolhouse Association sponsored a great pruning workshop at the end of February. Elaine Manghi recently reported that she stuck her plum and cherry stems in water and now they're blooming and very fragrant. Isn't that a wonderful benefit to winter pruning!

The FCSA will sponsor a free workshop by Lydia Faesy on building a garden greenhouse at her home, 515 Kelton Rd., at 10:00 am on Saturday, May 3rd. Enrollment is limited to 20. If you're interested in attending, or if you have suggestions for other workshops, please call Rachel Senechal at 223-0539, or email at <senechal55@hotmail.com>.

The Van Go bookmobile has added the Schoolhouse to their East Montpelier route. See the Kellogg-Library report on the facing page for dates and times.

◆◆◆

RECREATION BOARD

*Ginger Hopkins and Terri Conti,
Co-Chairs*

The Recreation Board would like to thank all those who contributed goods to the Onion River Food Shelf. We collected more than 125 lbs. of non-perishable items during Town Meeting that will directly help support the many needy families in Washington County. We hope the citizens of East Montpelier will continue to show their support during every election that is held at the elementary school. The need to assist our neighbors never seems to diminish and the generosity in our town is just wonderful. Thank you!

Please come out and support our town in the Greening Up/Cleaning Up of the field area next to the elementary school

on Saturday, May 3, from 9:00 until about 2:00. Bring rakes, shovels, etc. and help transform the field into a space we can all enjoy during the spring and summer season. Call Ginger Hopkins at 229-4375 for additional information.

EAST MONTPELIER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Anne Ormsbee, Treasurer

The history of a long-established home on Center Road was celebrated when John Ostrum and Nancy Cresswell hosted a Society meeting in February. Many remember it as the home of Carroll Badger. The labors of John and Nancy in the house reflect lots of skill and hard work. In March, Audrey Daniels Lafirira remembered her late mother-in-law, Luvia Lafirira. Many recalled Luvia's gift of clairvoyance and her ability to find lost articles, animals, and even people. Many thanks to Audrey, John, and Nancy.

Upcoming programs include the Nye Organ Co. and Nye family of North Montpelier on May 19 at the Old Brick Church at 7:00 PM and a box social on June 16. Vermont History Expo will be held on June 21-22 in Tunbridge. There is more information on the Expo website at www.vermonthistory.org.

If you haven't done so already, take a look at the EMHS exhibit at the Town Office and discover the women who were the first eight in town to take the Freeman's Oath (in 1918). This entitled them to vote at Town Meeting. Women could not vote in state or national elections until passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920.

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THINGS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST



RECIPES FROM THE COMMUNITY COOK BOOK

*"Taste-Tested" with hints and update as needed
by Paulie Coburn*

FILLED COOKIES – HELEN SPARROW

1 egg	1/2 cup sweet milk
1 cup sugar	3 1/2 cups flour
1/2 cup butter or lard	3 tsp. baking powder

Cookie dough: Roll thin & put 1 tsp. filling between 2 cookies.

Filling: Combine the following ingredients and cook until thick.

3/4 cup sugar	1 cup chopped raisins
1 Tbl. flour	1 cup boiling water

Paulie's Comments

This recipe makes 20 two-inch cookies. It will make 24 if rolled very thin. Bake for 15–18 minutes at 350°. Figs, dates, apples, apricots can be used for the filling. Jam or jelly could be used but the top would have to be carefully sealed with egg or water to keep it from running out during cooking. These are a big favorite of children of all ages.

Helen Sparrow and her mother moved to North Village in the 1930s and lived in the apartment house by the "whistling bridge." She worked in the woolen mill and in later years was postmaster and co-owner of the North Montpelier Store. Helen was noted for her cooking ability, her beautiful quilts, and her work in the church. The latter included being one of the founders of a small lending library in the village.

The Community Cook Book was "sponsored" in the early 1940s by The Friendly Circle.

ALDRICH PUBLIC LIBRARY

Although the "official" library for East Montpelier residents is the Kellogg-Hubbard Library in Montpelier, many East Montpelier residents take advantage of the resources and programs provided by the Aldrich Public Library in Barre. If you haven't visited the Library since their recent renovation, it's well worth the trip.

WOMEN'S WORK CELEBRATION

May 2–31 exhibit: "Art Runs in the Family"

"Art Runs in the Family" features the work of mothers and their children, including children's art inspired by their mothers and women's art inspired by their children. Join us for the opening reception on Friday evening, May 2, and hear members of the Academy Street Poets read from their own works of poetry. For details, call Wanda, 229-6202.

ALDRICH LIBRARY READING CIRCLE BOOK CLUB

Second Wednesday of every month at 6:30 PM

Upcoming titles are: *Needle's Eye* by Margaret Crabble on May 14; *Mistress of Spices* by Chitra Divakarumi on June 11. To participate, call Pat, 476-8732.

KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY NEWS

To our neighbors in East Montpelier,
Thank all of you for your support for the work of the Kellogg-Hubbard Library this year. We were surprised and touched by how many people spoke at Town Meeting of their belief in the library. Our town, along with Calais, Middlesex, Montpelier, and Worcester, have all shown how important good public library service is to their residents.

The years ahead will be challenging as the Board of Trustees works to find a fair and sustainable way to fund the Kellogg-Hubbard for the future. Committees are being established to increase the endowment, step up fundraising and to work with our communities to find a reasonable formula for community support. You are invited to take part in any these committees. Please phone the library or get in touch with us personally.

— Hilari Farrington, Director 223-3338

Petie Ferris, Vice-President, Board of Trustees

☞ Visit us at our website:
www.kellogghubbard.lib.vt.us



VAN GO BOOKMOBILE NEWS

The Bookmobile will be coming to the Four Corners Schoolhouse on Fridays beginning April 18. The new East Montpelier schedule:

- 10:35 to 11:15 PM at Four Corners Schoolhouse;
- 11:30 to 12:00 noon at VT14 parking lot across the road from the Old Brick Church.

Suggestions for our upcoming summer schedule will be most welcome. Call Sarah Severns, our Bookmobile Coordinator, at 223-4665 with your ideas and questions.

The Van Go Bookmobile is a partnership between the Kellogg-Hubbard Library, the U-32 Library, and Wheels Transportation.

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A PASSION FOR FARMING — THE GARDNER FAMILY

by Jim Shea

As I walk into the home of Seth and Michelle Gardner, their phone rings. I overhear Michelle speaking with someone from East Montpelier Elementary School. Michelle is agreeing to be a substitute teacher at the elementary school for the following day. Michelle makes a quick call to a daycare provider, arranges care for her younger daughter and then calls the school to confirm that she can be the substitute teacher. It all happens quickly. A sudden shift to keep things flowing. This is how life works for Seth and Michelle Gardner.

Seth and Michelle live on Snow Hill Road, in East Montpelier. They own the farm known as McKnight Farm. They live in the white farmhouse on the north side of the road, and their barn is across the dirt road.

Seth and Michelle have two young daughters: Sophia, age 6½ and Stella, age 3. In addition, Seth has 2 daughters from a prior marriage; Meg is 20 years old, and has her own painting business. Molly is nearly 18 and is planning on studying horticulture after she graduates from Spaulding. You may also see Meg or Molly working at Pizza Joe's.

Let me give you some background on Seth and Michelle. Michelle was born at Central Vermont Hospital and has lived in East Montpelier since she was 1½ years old. Her maiden name was Michelle Biron. She graduated from Montpelier High School in 1987 and received her college degree from (the now defunct) Trinity College in 1991. Michelle has her Bachelor of Science degree in biology, as well as her Bachelor of Arts degree in early childhood and elementary education. After graduating from Trinity, Michelle worked briefly at Dudley's General store, a store that was owned by her family.

Seth was born in Massachusetts, but his family moved quite a bit while he was growing up. In 1962, Seth's parents moved the family to Cabot. They then moved to Pennsylvania and then to Walden, Vermont. Seth spent two years at Cabot High School. Then his family moved to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. After com-



pleting high school in Nova Scotia, Seth went to Dawson Creek, British Columbia, to learn how to become a farrier (a person skilled at shoeing horses). Upon completing his farrier apprenticeship in British Columbia, at the age of 19, Seth moved back to Cabot, where he began his farrier business. He remained in Cabot for 12 years. Seth moved to East Montpelier in 1987. He then began playing polo with a group of men in Waitsfield.

In July of 1992, Seth purchased the McKnight Farm. In August of 1992, Seth was running late for a polo match in Waitsfield, when he realized he had forgotten his red polo shirt. He quickly stopped into Dudley's General Store to purchase a red shirt. Seth, however, started to chat with the cashier, a young woman. He became so engaged in the conversation with this young cashier that he left the store, completely forgetting to bring the red shirt with him. This cashier ran out after Seth and gave him the shirt. As you can probably guess, the cashier was Michelle Biron.

Seth and Michelle were married in 1995. They have dedicated themselves to maintaining the farm and preserving that way of life. It's not an easy task, but one they feel is important to Vermont.

The McKnight Farm was first settled in 1776 by Lemuel McKnight. Lemuel married a woman named Anna Putnam. Seth found the gravestone of Anna Putnam which was lying broken in his field. If you enter Seth and Michelle's home, you will see Anna's gravestone resting on their front porch. The farm remained in the McKnight family until 1982.

When Seth first bought the McKnight Farm, he had only ten heifers. He did not buy the farm with the intention of operating a dairy farm. He simply wanted to protect the barn and the open land. His plan was to board horses in the barn. In an attempt to preserve the history of the farm, Seth purchased 20 milkers. And each year his herd of cows has grown. Today Seth and



Michelle have 250 cows, 132 of which are milkers. In addition, they rent land from approximately ten different landowners in the area to grow hay. All in all, they are stewards of approximately 600 acres of farmland in this area.

Michelle notes that farming has certainly changed in East Montpelier over the years. In 1880 there were 185 farms in town. Today there are only five. Both Seth and Michelle believe there will be even fewer farms in East Montpelier in just a few years. You can tell, just by listening to Seth and Michelle speak, that they are committed to this way of life. Michelle says, "Farming is a way of life that is being lost. We're pretty passionate about taking care of the land and preserving farming."

To give you a taste of what life is like for Seth and Michelle, consider this: Seth's alarm clock goes off at 3:00 am each day. He is out in the barn milking by 4:00 am. He usually completes his work by 7:00 or 8:00 pm. It's a long day. I can personally attest that their work is not easy. On Rally Day last summer, Seth asked me if I could help him unload some hay across town, in exchange for the hay bales he provided us for the races. All I had to do, I was told, was unload some bales of hay from the wagon. Sounded simple. Without going into the details, it was by far one of the hardest days of physical labor I've had in my life. It was back-breaking work. Sweat was pouring off my head. And I had to do it for only three hours! If I spent a month working with Seth and Michelle, I could certainly give up my membership at First In Fitness. In fact, Seth has even informed me that he'd be willing to call his barn a "fitness center," and he would charge me "a minimal monthly fee" to exercise each morning with a shovel in his fitness center.

I made the mistake of asking Seth if milking was a lucrative profession. Seth explains that the price of milk is so low right now that it is below the cost of production. Basically, Seth and Michelle are losing money with every gallon of milk they sell. In an attempt to describe his hourly wage, Seth states with a laugh, "I'm trying to get my hourly wage up to \$0 per hour!"

Despite this financial hardship, it is clear that Seth and Michelle love farming. When I ask them how they afford to stay in the dairy business, they each quickly give me a list of other moneymaking endeavors that they do, just to help pay the bills. Michelle is often a substitute teacher at the elementary school, and she is the Superintendent for the Sunday School at the Old Meeting House. She has also become quite knowledgeable about the Federal Programs that assist dairy farmers. In addition to milking, Seth has a lucrative farrier business. He also sells horse hay, cow hay, and mulch hay. And he occasionally sells a bull. Seth and Michelle have become quite creative and flexible in finding ways to keep the farm running. As Seth puts it, "To survive in the dairy business in New England, you have to look at all your options. You have to be flexible, be willing to think outside the box, diversify." Judging by what Seth and Michelle have accomplished so far, if there is any way that a small family farm can survive in Vermont, Seth and Michelle will find that way.

Jim Shea sits behind a desk most of the time working as a Vermont Assistant Attorney General. His wife, Harriott, is a local pediatrician. They have two sons, Ryan and Jack. They are glad they live right beside McKnight Farm.

CIRCUS SMIRKUS AT EMES

by Ellen Knoedler



East Montpelier students recently spent two exciting weeks with Jesse Dryden, a Smirko-in-Residence, learning a wide variety of circus skills. Cooperation, not competition, was the motto. Students worked with Jesse and physical education teacher, Steve Towne, during PE classes practicing juggling, learning to use a diablo and pedalo, making human pyramids, and learning many more circus skills. Everyone worked very hard to prepare for a final culminating circus presentation held Friday, April 4th, at U-32. There was even a surprise performance by the EMES teachers! The EMES PTNO, LEAP (Learning Enrichment Activities Program), and the School Board provided funding for this wonderful residency. A special thank-you goes to Tom and Linda McSweeney for hosting Jesse during his stay in East Montpelier. An evening of fun and laughs was had by all.

by Iris

by Austen

by Brian



by Sandy

by Rachel

by Ben

Second-grade students drew clowns to adorn the school walls.

COMMITTEE MEETING CALENDAR

Selectboard	1st & 3rd Monday	6:30	Town Office
Planning Commission (PC)	1st & 3rd Tuesday	7:30	Town Office
Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA)	2nd & 4th Monday	7:30	Town Office
Conservation Fund Advisory Comm.	2nd Thursday	7:30	Town Office
U-32 Board	1st & 3rd Wednesday	6:30	U-32 High School
Elementary School Board (EMES)	1st Thursday	6:30	Elementary School
Recreation Board	3rd Monday	6:30	Town Office
Revolving Loan Committee	2nd Wednesday	6:30	Town Office
Volunteer Fire Department	Every Tuesday	7:00	Fire Station, Templeton Rd.
Four Corners Schoolhouse Assoc.	2nd Wednesday	7:00	Four Corners Schoolhouse

EAST MONTPELIER TOWN OFFICE

PO Box 157, East Montpelier, Vt 05651
Office Hours: M–Th 9:00–5:00; F 9:00–Noon
Phone: 802-223-3313

Clerk/Treasurer – Sylvia Tosi

email: eastmont1@adelphia.net

Asst. Clerk/Treasurer – Terri Conti

email: eastmont2@adelphia.net

Asst. Clerk – Ginger Hopkins

Town Administrator – Marlene Betit

email: eastmontpe@adelphia.net

(M–Tu 9:00–5:00; W 9:00–12:00)

Chief Lister – Rosie Cueto

(M–F 9:00–11:30)

Acting Zoning Administrator – Deborah Fillion

(Tu & Th 3:30–5:00)

email: eastmont3@adelphia.net

EVENTS CALENDAR

May 3	Four Corners Schoolhouse: Greenhouse Workshop	10:00 am	Faesy residence
May 3	Green Up Day	All day	All over Town
May 7	Revolving Loan Fund Forum	7:00 pm	EMES
May 19	Historical Society meeting – Nye Organ Co.	7:00 pm	Four Corners Schoolhouse
June 1	Deadline for items for the next issue of the <i>Signpost</i>		To Grundys: see below
June 16	Historical Society meeting – Box Social	7:00 pm	Four Corners Schoolhouse
June 19	Sixth-Grade Graduation	T.B.A.	EMES
June 20	Last Day of School & U-32 High School Graduation	T.B.A.	U-32
June 21–22	Vermont History Expo		Tunbridge, VT
Fridays	Van Go Bookmobile	10:35 – 11:15 am	Four Corners Schoolhouse
		11:30 – noon	VT14 Parking Lot



Deadline for next issue: June 1 to Dave & Darlene Grundy — phone 476-4300 or email <ddgrundy@aol.com>

East Montpelier Signpost

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