

## Keeping Cool in East Montpelier

by Hilari Farrington

*“Summer afternoon—summer afternoon;  
to me those have always been the two most  
beautiful words in the English language.”*

—Henry James

Everyone has a favorite way to get cool on those sweltering days in July and August. There are maple creemees, lazy afternoons on the porch with a frosty glass of lemonade, a refreshing wade in a nearby river or brook. If you're lucky, you have a pond of your own to swim in or friends who welcome you to theirs.

Perhaps one of the most well-known places for the general public to swim in East Montpelier is at Coburn Pond, down a narrow trail beyond the boulders on the south side of Coburn Road.

With that in mind, we thought it was a good time to interview Renée Carpenter, one of the founding members of “Friends of Coburn Pond,” a group of volunteers organized to protect this popular six-acre swimming hole for swimming, fishing, and outdoor recreation.

### *Tell us about yourself.*

Where did you grow up? I grew up in the greater Boston area. In my mid-teens I started hiking the long Trail in summer and visiting the Mad River area in the winters. I moved to East Corinth in my late teens in the early 1970's.

### *When did you learn about Coburn Pond as a place to swim?*

You know, I don't remember. It certainly was around the



Renée Carpenter

Coburn Pond

time that my children were young and we were living in North Montpelier village. Even then it was a popular place for families to go, so I probably learned about it just through word of mouth. In fact, when I lived in North Montpelier I could kayak down the Kingsbury branch to Coburn Pond.

### *Describe the swimming and what makes it appealing.*

The quality of the water is wonderful. The temperature warms quickly in spring and stays warm into late fall. Being aquifer-fed, the water is very clear. It's also a popular place to fish.

The shape of the pond is quite long and narrow, so you can have a significant swim going from one end to the other. Quite a few people come by after their day's work to refresh.

*continued p. 14*

# Looking Back and Forward

Thirty years ago, Jean Cate assembled a band of community volunteers, Cherie Langer (Staples), Janet MacLeod, Becky Reed, Anne Sherman, Sylvia Tosi, Fred Tubbs, and Janice Waterman, to create a newspaper to foster ‘community-ism’ and to keep people in touch with what’s going on in town.”

Now that we are presenting the final issue of our thirtieth anniversary year, we note both similarities and differences. It is obvious that in all the important ways, there has been little change: our mission of “community-ism” remains constant; our volunteers are multigenerational; and we continue to be well supported by the town. Perusing the complete online archive (completed this year in honor of our anniversary), we note similarities, also, in the type of things covered.

Life in East Montpelier in 2020 is not much different from that in 1990 in terms of values and activities, especially those out-of-doors that take advantage of our natural surroundings. Now, during the pandemic, the importance of community values, of neighbors sharing and doing for neighbors, have never been more evident nor more essential.

In 1990, Town Clerk Sylvia Tosi and Planning Commission Chair Johanna DeMartino, representing East Montpelier, traveled to Washington, D.C. to accept a “National Pride Award,” given for the town’s “outstanding contributions to protecting and enhancing public resources.” We move into the future seeking to continue that legacy by remaining true to East Montpelier’s core values while reflecting current interests and culture.



Terry J. Allen

Signpost staff Zooms along

When *Signpost* volunteers meet every other month to plan upcoming issues, it is with a sense of pride that has not diminished. We continue to find much to celebrate in East Montpelier and more connections to make.

With regard to keeping up with the times, we have tried to do that as well—effecting both a change in leadership this year and a new and more modern look to our publication.

Here’s to the next 30 years of our community.

—*Edie Miller & Michelle Singer are longtime Signpost volunteers*

EAST  
MONTPELIER

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### www.emSignpost.com

Signpost Archive  
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Links to Other Town Information

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# Go Native!

by Renée Kievit-Kylar

If summer isn't coming quickly enough for you, take a few minutes on the website for Turtle Hill Native Plants ([turtlehillnatives.com](http://turtlehillnatives.com)) and enjoy a feast for your eyes! On four acres on North Street in East Montpelier, Erin O'Hara has created a natural paradise. Most of the plants he grows and sells are native to the Eastern US, which means they are locally adaptive, hardy, and, of course, attractive. Why native plants? It turns out that 90% of herbivorous (plant-eating) insects are "plant specialists," meaning they rely on one specific type of plant or plant group to survive. If you take away the host plant, you take away the insect that has adapted to its unique chemical composition, often after having evolved to do this over millions of years.

Erin has studied botanical medicines and permaculture in British Columbia, upstate New York, and Albuquerque, New Mexico. He moved to Montpelier in 2007 to work for Restorative Formulations, a company that makes herbal formulas, but also because he thought Vermont would make a good place to settle down and buy land. Since moving to Vermont, he has completed the UVM Master Gardener program and has spent extensive time out in the gardens to learn about plant/insect relationships and to better understand the role of plants in our lives, landscapes, and the entire ecological system. Erin purchased the land in East Montpelier in 2009 and initially focused on edible and medicinal plants. This quickly expanded to include wildlife-friendly native species. In 2015, he downsized his desk job in Montpelier, and Turtle Hill Native Plants was born. Since then, he has turned the land from a tangle of brambles and tree stumps to beds of native wildflowers and a new frog pond.

So what species are considered native and would also be attractive and interesting enough to put in one's gardens? Turtle Hill will be offering at least 40 species this growing season, and that includes types of Aster, Milkweed, Echinacea, Bee Balm, and Penstemon, to name a few. Some of these plants are native to our exact location, while some are "near natives," which means species that are seen less frequently in this area and are somewhat different from what you see growing all the time around here. But the beauty and utility of these plants are only part of the story. These plants will attract native pollinators such as butterflies and bees, which are responsible for the majority of pollination services needed by flowering plants. Birds also depend on moth and butterfly larvae to feed their young. Having a variety of flowers that bloom throughout the season is important for attracting the maximum number of pollinators. Did you know that



*Erin O'Hara pruning an apple tree*

butterflies and moths have a long proboscis (mouth part) so they can reach deeply into a flower? But they need a place to land while they sip that sweet nectar, so that has to be a consideration when you plant a native garden. Some bees are short-tongued and can only reach into short flowers. Who knew? And how many realize that there are over 4,000 species of native bees?

Native plants are the key to saving birds and pollinators and increasing biodiversity, the variety of life in a habitat or natural area. And why should we care about biodiversity? The more diverse an environment is, the more productive. The plants will grow better and feed more insects and animals. There will be fewer pest outbreaks, and invasive species will be deterred. Overall, the habitat will be healthier in every way.

Besides using flowers for landscaping clients, in 2017, Erin began to have yearly plant sales for the general public. Because he and his wife are building an addition to their tiny house, plant sales to individuals may be somewhat limited this year, but it will be back to a full schedule in 2021.

As time goes on, and Erin learns more about the fascinating relationships between plants and animals, his appreciation of the role of plants in our lives, landscapes, and earth's ecological health continues to deepen and widen. If you would like to start a conversation about turning your property into a botanical haven for wildlife and people, Turtle Hill Native Plants is the place to go.

—Renée Kievit-Kylar is features co-editor of the Signpost. She and her husband, Doug, live on Brazier Rd.

# Benches, Bridges, and Vistas



Josh Ryan

*Bench on Ormsbee Trail*

Increased trail use this spring and early summer reflects that East Montpelier’s wonderful trails are serving the needs of all of us who have had to spend so much time at home for so long.

Trails are living, changing things, continuous works in progress that can be significantly altered by just one downed tree. In addition to routine maintenance, we are always making improvements. Benches make great “outing destinations,” and we have several that take advantage of scenic vistas. The newest bench is now installed on the

Ormsbee Trail, looking east toward the mountains. We also have benches at Esther’s Rock; on the Town Forest-County Road-Peck Farm Trail; and behind Fairmont Farm, on the Templeton-Fairmont Trail, between Center and Dodge Roads.

Boardwalks and bridges are fun, too. National Trails Day in June saw work on the boardwalk that goes through a wet section on the County Road to the Town Forest trail segment, which involved lots of lumber hauling, chain saw work, wet boots, masks, and bug dope.

Well, actually, this time no bridges. Sadly, the Mallory Brook bridge is a thing of the past. Crossing is possible only during low-water flow by “foraging” or “rock-hopping.” We have marked a new section of trail which takes you to a better location for doing this. There may be times when it is not possible to cross at all. Regular users of this trail will agree that the Mallory Brook stream flow responds quickly and dramatically to heavy or sustained rain events.

See [emtrails.org](http://emtrails.org) for trail maps and information on our work and our partners.

—Loring Starr lives on Powder Horn Glen Road, and is a trail steward for the Ormsbee Trail.



Katie Cate

Kipton Cate, 7, and Adler Cate, 5, hold a sign during the EMES teacher parade in May. EMES teachers led a car caravan through many of their students’ streets on two consecutive Fridays in May to visit and say hi from a safe distance.



Hilary Paquet

Emmeline, Patrick, and Jasper Paquet greet an EMES parade of teachers and staff in May.

# Cooling Off in Crystal Pool

Before many of today's East Montpelier residents came to town, there was a local swimming hole on the Sibley farm that provided a great place to cool off on a hot summer day. Crystal Pool was created in the early 1930s by Jeff Sibley's father, George, and his grandfather, Roy. They built an earthen dam across a brook on their property using horses to drag in the dirt. Neighbors from nearby farms came to lend a hand when they could spare the time.

Unfortunately, the very next spring the dam washed out. The Sibleys decided to try again, but this time used concrete which provided a lasting barrier. The pool covered about two acres and was 12 feet deep at the diving board. A bath house was built and a snack bar was opened, creating a public gathering place that served the townspeople for many years. A small admission fee was charged, and people came from neighboring towns as well as East Montpelier to enjoy the beach, which could accommodate nearly 30 people. Jeff says the number of out-of-towners who came was evidenced by the many would-be swimmers who stopped to ask directions at the Bill and Marion Barclay home. Many were from Montpelier, including quite a group who worked at National Life.

Jeff says he never learned to swim while the swimming pool was in existence, so the only thing he clearly remembers is, as a little tyke, reaching up to an ashtray on the dock and being burned by a cigarette. But many others have fond memories of swimming, diving, and gathering with friends on a summer afternoon.

The pool was used in winter by neighbors for ice harvesting and skating and could provide a source of water for fire trucks if there were a fire on the farm.

When open, the pool had to be dredged every couple of years to remove the silt and leeches that came in from the brook. In 1952, the Sibleys closed Crystal Pool due to the high cost of insurance as well as the work of ongoing maintenance.

*—Jeff Sibley is one of the current owners of the Sibley farm, along with his wife Bonnie, and their sons, Scott and Eric. Jeff was interviewed by Barbara Ploof, a Signpost volunteer.*



Courtesy of the Sibley family



**VOTE BY MAIL:** Written ballots for the August 11 statewide primary are available after July 11. Contact Town Clerk Rosie Laquerre at 223-3313 x201 or [clerk@eastmontpeliervt.org](mailto:clerk@eastmontpeliervt.org) to request a ballot.

# The Robins Came



Carolyn Pastore

with beaks wide open pointing to the sky. Somehow, she has been able to find enough worms to feed the four of them.

I'm not sure how long it will be before they become fledglings as they try to leave the nest, but they have gotten so big that mama can no longer fit in the nest. Their little bald heads now have tufts of feathers, and they are starting to flap their feathered wings. Watching this wonder of nature while staying at home has been a reminder that our world and its natural beauties will go on.

As I was writing this, my fledglings flew away. They never were really mine.

—Carolyn Pastore is a Signpost copy editor and retired teacher

It seemed that spring would never come this year. Then, one April day, I saw movement outside my living room window. At first there were just a few long pieces of dried grass atop the post holding my granddad's farm bell. Little by little more dried materials appeared, and I watched as a pair of robins built a beautiful nest. By early May, I noticed the female was constantly sitting in the nest. Could it be that she had laid some eggs? When she flew away briefly, I took my chance and climbed a step ladder to have a look. There in the nest were four incredibly beautiful blue eggs.

My robin observations became an important part of my daily routines during the Covid-19 restrictions. I looked forward to sharing some uplifting news with my friends and family. Three days later it snowed again! That tenacious mama stayed put. She had chosen her nesting spot well, as the bell provided a roof over her. The male robin even came and perched on the edge of the nest for shelter from the snow. Over the next days, she rarely left the nest. Then, just after Mother's Day, I spotted tiny yellow beaks lifted skyward when the mama flew out of the nest.

"The eggs have hatched!" I proudly proclaimed to my neighbors. Personally, watching this tiny miracle of birth gave me hope of positive things to come.

The nestlings, as newly hatched birds are called, are still in the nest. They've been quite amusing to watch as they raise their sleepy heads when mama brings food, always

## NONA ESTRIN, OUR RESIDENT NATURALIST, COMMENTS:

When humans first came to this continent, robins must have been rare inhabitants of occasional forest edges. First, clearings by Native Americans and later, by Europeans created more habitat; and today, robins have fully attached their wellbeing to ours. Theirs were the first bird songs I marveled at as a child, and it still can stop me in full run, to listen. What a singer this New World thrush is! Then too, they generously share their family life with us, as this lovely account describes. I worry though, that recent world-wide loss of insect life (worms are only for slightly older nestlings) could be the reason we now have fewer robins nesting on our "block." Another reason to banish pesticides and herbicides from our gardens.



# Where to Buy Food in East Montpelier

Never has eating local been of so much interest! In the midst of much flux, here's a list of commercial East Montpelier food sources. For hours of operation and safety practices, check websites or contact by telephone. This info was gathered at the end of May, so check for updates.

**Comprehensive grocery stores** stock fresh produce, dairy, eggs, grocery staples, snack food, household and cleaning supplies, pet food, and beverages, including beer and wine.

- **ADAMANT COOP:** [adamantcoop.org](http://adamantcoop.org) Phone: 223-5760. 1313 Haggett Rd., Adamant. See website for list of specific products carried. Order by phone and pick up at back door. Pay by credit card, check, or store account.
- **C.P. DUDLEY GENERAL STORE:** Phone: 223-2792. 2915 US2. Deli and fresh meat case. All employees are masked and cash register stations have plexiglass shields. Customer masks are recommended but not required. Cash accepted. Curbside service is available.
- **PLAINFIELD HARDWARE AND GENERAL STORE:** Phone: 454-1000. 4723 US2. See Facebook page for list of items carried. Deli is open, and local meats are available. Masks are required to enter store. Employees are masked and gloved. Curbside service available.

## Specialized outlets stock more limited products.

- **BRAGG FARM:** Phone: 223-5757. 1005 VT14. Creemees. Maple products (syrup, snacks, spun sugar), crackers, Cabot cheese, jams, mustards, Manghis bakery products. Employees are masked and gloved. Customers



Terry J. Allen

A family farm: Sofia, Seth, Breanna, Natalie, and Bruce Chapell and Sherry Miller

are encouraged to wear masks. Cash accepted. Curbside service available.

- **MCKNIGHT FARM:** Phone: 272-3478. 440 Snow Hill Rd. On-site self-service store. Organic beef, raw milk, farm-raised pork, chicken, eggs.
- **MORSE FARM:** Phone: 223-2740. 1168 County Rd. Creemees. Grass-fed beef, sausage, dairy (milk, cheese, butter), eggs, maple syrup, snacks, pancake mix. Employees are masked and gloved. Hand sanitizer is available for customers, who are required to wear masks indoors. Pickup of orders at creemee window is available.
- **TEMPLETON FARM:** [templetonfarm.com](http://templetonfarm.com) Phone: 223-0169. 3410 Center Rd. Self-service store on site, 8 am to 9 pm. Grass-fed beef and maple syrup.

## Paulie's Recipe Grape-Nuts Puff Pudding



- ½ c. butter
- 2 c. sugar
- 4 Tbsp. flour
- 4 eggs
- 6 Tbsp. Grape-Nuts
- 2 c. milk
- \*3 lemons

Cream sugar and butter thoroughly; add well-beaten egg yolks, flour, Grape-Nuts, milk, lemon juice and grated rind. Fold in beaten egg whites. Pour into buttered baking dish; place in pan of hot water. Bake at 375 degrees, 50-60 minutes. When done, pudding will have crust on top and jelly below. Serve hot or cold, plain, or with whipped cream.

—Laura Johnson, former teacher and EMES principal

*Paulie's note:* This recipe is from *East Montpelier, Vermont Presents Personal Recipes*. This cookbook was sponsored by the Brick Church Club in the early 1980s.

## Town Offices

PO Box 157, East Montpelier, VT 05651  
Phone: 802-223-3313  
Office Hours: Mon–Thurs 9 AM–5 PM

### Town Clerk

Rosie Laquerre  
clerk@eastmontpeliervt.org

### Town Treasurer

Don Welch  
treasurer@eastmontpeliervt.org

### Town/Zoning Administrator

Bruce Johnson, manager@eastmontpeliervt.org  
Hours: Mon–Fri 9 AM–5 PM

### Fire Permits

EMFD 225-6247

### First Constable

Jon Boucher 917-4855

### Animal Control Officers

Lead: Carl Etnier 552-4343  
Assistant: Amber Perry 498-5140

### Listers

Rob Chickering,  
Ross Hazel, Chris Racanelli  
223-3313 x206,  
listers@eastmontpeliervt.org

### Health Officer

Ginny Burley 272-4045

### Service Officer

Rachael Grossman 223-3177

### Selectboard

Seth Gardner, Chair  
sethbgardner@hotmail.com  
Carl Etnier Gene Troia  
Amy Willis Casey Northrup

### Planning Commission

Julie Potter, Chair, 262-6119

### Development Review Board

Steve Kappel, Chair  
sjkappel@gmail.com

### WCUUSD Board

Flor Diaz Smith, fdiazsmith@u32.org  
Lindy Johnson, lindyjvt@gmail.com  
Stephen Looke

### State Representative

Kimberly Jessup, 249-9306  
jessupkimberly@gmail.com

# Planning Commission Starts Over on Zoning Update

After much discussion about how best to address public feedback on the draft of its recent comprehensive zoning update, the planning commission (PC) has decided to start over.

Some of the proposed changes were generally well received, including the creation of East Montpelier Village zoning to align with the Village Master Plan and the 2018 Town Plan. Significant changes proposed for the more rural parts of town were not as well received. The PC ultimately concluded that there were too many concerns raised about the proposal to resolve by editing the consultant's draft. So, the PC is changing its approach: instead of comprehensively rewriting the town's zoning, the PC will develop specific amendments to our existing regulations.

The town plan identifies 19 zoning-related actions for the town to take. The PC will review and prioritize these

specific actions and draft amendments to our current zoning. The grant which paid for an expert consultant to assist the PC has expired, so the PC will be doing this work ourselves. We do not have a schedule for this new approach, but it will, likely, take more than a year.

When the proposed amendments are ready, the PC will present the changes to the public prior to holding the required formal public hearings. In line with state statute, the PC will then forward the final proposed amendments to the selectboard. The selectboard will also hold public hearings before deciding to adopt or reject the proposal.

The PC meets on the first and third Thursday at 7 pm. Whether the meetings are remote or in person, the public is welcome to attend.

—Julie Potter is chair of the planning commission



East Montpelier's Ela Chapin (right with Black Lives Matter sign) is one of the 5,000 who gathered in Montpelier on June 6 to protest violence against black people.

# EM Town Office Carries On



Terry J. Allen

*Bruce Johnson, East Montpelier Town & Zoning Administrator, collected tax payments in person behind a protective shield he and his wife, Lindy, built at the town office. The plexiglass “window” may serve double duty by being installed in front of the town clerk’s counter once people are allowed back in the building.*

On March 17, the EM Town Office building was closed to the public until further notice. However, the office staff is still on duty and ready to provide service, just with limited in-person options at this point.

Social distancing has been foremost for us in the office. In the early weeks of the stay-at-home order, various staff members took turns coming to the office to ensure a minimum number of people in the building. Currently, everyone has returned to work full time, with a slightly different office configuration. All employees are screened for symptoms and temperature before entering the building, and masks are worn when in the presence of others.

The entire office has remained operational throughout. In the clerk’s office, real estate transactions were initially carried out via e-mail. We began offering in-person appointments to researchers in mid-April and continue to do so. Due to Governor Scott’s “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order, direct access to the town records is currently limited to one person at a time. Please call to make an appointment.

Notary services and marriage licenses are offered curbside, and as of May 28, officiants may perform marriages when

there are fewer than 25 people, and social distancing is practiced.

We are all available by phone or email every day. It is most helpful to call ahead to make an appointment for curbside service. Please contact us by phone or email at the options on page 8. Regular office hours will remain the same: M-Th 9-5; F 9-noon.

Town Health Officer Ginny Burley and Town Service Officer Rachael Grossman (see page 8 for contact information) are coordinating the town’s volunteer support efforts. Please contact them directly (or contact the town office, and we will pass messages along) with offers of support or to request assistance.

The state health department is maintaining an excellent information page on Covid-19 on their website at [healthvermont.gov](http://healthvermont.gov). You may also call 2-1-1 (the Vermont 211 database) for additional information on Covid-19 and assistance options.

While our doors may be locked, we are still here for you. Note that this article is current as of June 8; please check with us to see if there are changes when you read this in July.

—Rosie Laquerre is town clerk and a Signpost volunteer.

# Town Weathervane

## BIRTHS

- Allisandra Kathleen Bigras, a daughter, was born to Cassandra Perry & Tylor Bigras in May 2020
- Hazel Laura Hall, a daughter, was born to Elizabeth & Richard Hall III in May 2020

## MARRIAGES (as names appear on licenses)

- Casey Winterson & Jacob Newland married in February
- Hannah Phillips & Gustave Goodwin married in March

## DEATHS (survivors living in East Montpelier are listed, when known)

- Thomas Morrill, father of Tanis Roberts, died in March
- Regina Olsacher, died in March
- Shirley Granger, widow of Robert Granger, aunt of Brent & Susan Gagne, died in March
- Johanna Davies, mother of Lola & Stephen Clark and grandmother of Corey Clark, died in May
- Elizabeth “Betsy” Morse, wife of Burr and mother of Robinson & Thomas & their spouses, and grandmother of Caitrin, died in May
- Paul Grant Sr., husband of Emma, father of Heather, and grandfather of Bridget & Hailey, died in May

## LAND TRANSFERS (Transfers relative to estate planning are not included in this listing.)

- Estate of Todd M. Field to Heidi MacAskill, 3.1 acres and dwelling on Phillips Rd.
- Estate of David Keefe to Roy Datema III, 10.2 acres and dwelling on Taylor Rd.
- 1900 Capital Trust to Mahalo, LLC, 1.85 acres and dwelling on Old Railroad Ln.
- John Haywood II & India Haywood to John Boyd III & Larissa Boyd, 1.1 acres and dwelling on Putnam Rd.
- Jeffrey M Laquerre to Jessica Adam, 3.02 acres and dwelling on Mays Way
- Laura Medalie to David Kissner, 3.5 acres and dwelling on Barnes Rd.
- Elizabeth Scoville-Kappell to Steven Kappell, 2.2 acres and dwelling on North St.

- Estate of Daniel Ambrose Neary, Jr. to Carla Occaso, 10.66 acres and dwelling on Perkins Rd.
- Paul Bagalio to Federal National Mortgage Association, 17.4 acres on Jacobs Rd.
- Harper Properties to Winterwood Timber Frames LLC, an easement on US2

## SELECTBOARD

March 30, 2020

### Discussion

- Warrant procedures for town expenditures

### Motions Passed

- that Complete Streets principles will not be applied to the County Rd. from Powder Horn Glen Rd. to Horn of the Moon Rd. due to disproportionate cost relative to probable use (19 VSA §309d(2))
- to authorize TA Johnson to complete and submit a FY2021 VTrans Class 2 Roadway Paving Program grant application for the proposed paving project on County Rd.
- to approve the FY2021 highway financial plan and certify that the town will raise by municipal taxes at least \$300 per mile for each mile of Class 1, 2 & 3 town highways.
- to certify that EM is in compliance with the state expectations for town road & bridge standards and highway network inventories
- to authorize Chair Gardner to sign the letter to VTrans requesting a study of the stretch of US2 from Mekkelsen’s RVs to Codling Rd.
- to appoint Rebecca Schrader as the Revolving Loan Fund advisor for a term ending March 2021
- to approve requested residential curb cut for the Coe Towne Hill Rd. parcel

April 13, 2020 (This and subsequent meetings were conducted remotely using the Zoom conferencing platform.)

### Motions Passed

- to adopt the 2020 EM Local Emergency Management Plan
- to authorize the sharing of the 2020 EM Local Emergency Management Plan with LEPC #5 members and Washington County municipal officials.

- to accept the 2020 NEMRC annual disaster recovery contract
- to authorize TA Johnson to complete the agreement to place the town’s digitized land records online
- to authorize TA Johnson to offer a 3-year contract at \$10,200/year for lawn mowing and general maintenance of town-owned properties to Creative Visions LLC
- to authorize Chair Gardner to sign a letter in support of the VLCT effort to encourage the state to enact Covid-19 property tax reforms and distribute the letter to Washington County Sens. Cummings, Perchlik, and Pollina, Rep. Jessup, and Gov. Scott
- to authorize the hiring of Dillon Mears as a part-time road crew member at \$18/hour for a maximum of 350 hours in any 12-month period
- to authorize TA Johnson to cast town’s ballot for the 2020 WEC Annual Meeting

May 4, 2020

### Discussion

- town employee Northeast Delta Dental Plan
- town management in light of Covid-19

### Motions Passed:

- to accept the Resilient Roads Committee recommendation to award the ash tree management pilot project contract to Vermont Arborists, Inc. and authorize TA Johnson to complete the necessary contract documents.

May 18, 2020 (unapproved)

### Discussion

- Town management in light of Covid-19

### Motions Passed

- to approve the updated Recreation Board Policies & Procedures making the non-voting youth member position a permanent part of the board membership.
- to appoint Claire Obeldobel as the Recreation Board’s youth member for the term June 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021
- to authorize Chair Gardner to sign the letter of support for CVFiber’s application to the Northern Borders Regional Commission grant program
- to adopt as presented the alterations to the town’s delinquent property tax interest and penalty protocol
- to approve “Cote Drive” as the name for the private road serving 4023 &

4027 US2 and the East Montpelier Acres LLC development

- to adopt the revised selectboard meeting schedule as presented (see website for dates)

## PLANNING COMMISSION

**May 7, 2020** (This and subsequent meetings were conducted remotely using the Zoom conferencing platform.)

### Motions Passed:

- to end an online meeting if a quorum cannot be maintained. Meeting to be continued until the next regularly scheduled meeting date
- to elect following officers: Julie Potter, chair; Zach Sullivan, vice chair; Kim Watson, secretary

## WCUUSD

**April 1, 2020**

### Motions Passed

- to approve the 2020-21 school year calendar as presented
- to approve the hire of Hunter Hedenberg
- to approve the hire of Bradley Parker
- to approve Bill Deiss's resignation with regret and with thanks for his work

**April 15, 2020**

### Discussion

- Board operations
- The board went into executive session at 7:41 pm for purpose of legal counsel; the board exited at 9:01 pm.

### Motions Passed

- during school closure or dismissal, all employee compensation will continue to be funded in the same manner as it is funded when there is not a school closure. Employees paid with federal funds and multiple funding sources will continue to be paid from the same sources they are paid from when there is not a school closure. This motion will authorize the superintendent to execute procedure effective March 16, 2020 through the mandated school closure or dismissal. This procedure may be amended on the advice of counsel as conditions of law and regulation change
- to hire the following: Sarah Glynn, Sean McIntire, Melissa Wheeler, David Matthias, and Alan Hefernen.
- to accept the retirements, with appreciation, effective June 30, of: Paula Emery, Kit Walker, and Margarite Desch.



Terry J. Allen

*McKnight Farm cows crossing Snow Hill Rd. on their way to the first Spring pasture*

- to accept the following resignations: Sarah Richardson, Elizabeth Wirth (reducing to 0.5), and Sam Mishken (reducing to 0.6)

- to approve the request for 1-year leave of absence by Jill Abair
- to accept the resignation of Sheila Patterson, with appreciation

**May 6, 2020** (by video conference)

### Discussion

- Covid-19 update
- Future planning literacy and special education review

### Motions Passed

- to adopt policies C1 and C4. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet indicated that key phrases in both of these policies are "as required by law."
- to accept the bid from Beauregard Construction for the roof project [for Rumney School], for \$39,500
- to accept the recommendation of the administration to hire the following: Julia Pritchard, special service coordinator (WCUUSD/U-32); Jamie Spector, school social worker/behavior specialist (WCUUSD); Alison Byrnes, math teacher (U-32); Hayley Fitzgerald, special education (WCUUSD/U-32); Michael Sutherby, PE teacher (Rumney/Doty); Bonne Dunham, assoc. school nurse (Rumney); Amy Urling, science teacher (U-32); Noelle Pinard, classroom teacher 2<sup>nd</sup> grade (EMES); James Warden, classroom teacher 5/6 grade (Calais)
- to approve resignation of Brianne Healy
- to approve leave of absence request of Christine Hertz Hausman, and to grant request to reduce FTE from 1.0 to 0.5
- to approve the change in FTE status of Maria Melekos, to a combined 1.0 FTE

Board entered executive session at 9:52 pm for a contractual matter; exited 10:18 pm

**May 20, 2020** (unapproved)

### Motions Passed

- that Jill Olsen serve on [Board Steering] Team as Middlesex representative
- that Diane Nichols-Fleming serve on this team as Berlin representative
- to approve the board committee schedules as presented
- to approve the CV Fiber Letter of Support as presented
- to direct the superintendent and counsel to finalize a contract with Kingsbury Hydroelectric for a maximum of 2 years, and for the superintendent to sign on the board's behalf
- to approve the three motions [for early retirement] as suggested, including timelines, criteria and maximum numbers
- to approve the Annual Fiscal Management Questionnaire as presented
- to authorize the planning of the summer meals, in coordination with the community connections program calendar, with location at EMES
- to approve the second reading of policies B3, C1, & C4
- to approve the following hires: Tess Prestage (U-32 science, 1.0 FTE), Patty Abraham (Berlin phys. ed. 0.8 FTE), Danielle Jesmonth (Berlin 3/4 grade, 1.0 FTE)
- to approve retirement (effective June 30) of John Fish (Calais phys. ed., 0.6 FTE)
- to approve the resignations (effective June 30) of Alexandra Morse (Calais/E Montpelier art teacher, 0.4/0.5 FTE) and Deborah Gale (WCUUSD EEE, 1.0 FTE)

# Thank You For Greening Up!

by Chris Racanelli, Green Up Coordinator

On Saturday, May 30, the Green Up spirit was strong and well. Traditionally held the first Saturday in May, Green Up Day was delayed this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. That did not stop East Montpelierites from commencing cleanup efforts earlier in the month. And, at the end of the day, we removed lots of trash and a mountain of tires.

Many, many thanks to all of you who made Green Up's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary a success, including those who emailed me informing me of areas you had cleared and "hot spots" requiring care and all of you who walked our neighborhoods picking and dropping off trash while paying heed to social distancing and mask-wearing safety protocols.

Special thanks to Robert Duncan, Bob Onne, and Barry Rufenacht who drove their personal trucks along the roadsides picking up tires and large, abandoned items and bringing these to EMES. I am also very grateful to all the volunteers who worked with me onsite collecting bags from cars,



*Bob Onne picking up old tires along the roadside*



*Paul Erlbaum & Steve Campbell social distancing*

separating bottles and cans from trash, and placing trash and tires in the red dump trucks: Dave and Ginny Burley, Steve Campbell, Rob Chickering, Michael Duane, Paul Erlbaum, Carl Etnier, Emily Goyette, Ed Johnson, and Bill Merrilees. And a tip of the hat to Guthrie Perry and the road crew for dropping off and hauling away two dump trucks to start and end our Green Up efforts.

Thanks, also, to Bragg Farm, Dudley Store, East Montpelier Home Center, Morse Farm, Paquet's Apple Shack, and town officers for distributing Green Up bags and hanging posters. Finally, much appreciation to principal Alicia Lyford and her staff at East Montpelier Elementary School for hosting Green Up Day.

Although the pandemic prevented us from hosting lunch this year, we remained strong and resilient, easily adapting to changing circumstances and greening up!

---

## TVSC Meals on Wheels

We are grateful to every taxpayer in East Montpelier. Plainfield, Marshfield, Cabot, Woodbury, and Calais for your continuing Town Meeting Day support of Twin Valley Senior Center, which cannot exist without community donations.

Especially important during this time of pandemic are the dedicated and caring staff and volunteers who prepare, package, and deliver between three and seven meals weekly to participants, allowing them to remain in their own homes and have healthful meals regardless of ability to pay.

We are here to help anyone needing good, nutritious food. If you are age 60 + and just getting by or need well-balanced meals, then please contact us. We will work with others as well. We can be reached at 802-223-3322 or email [Twinvalleyseniors@myfairpoint.net](mailto:Twinvalleyseniors@myfairpoint.net). Arrangements can be made quickly and remotely.

—Rita Copeland is executive director of TVSC

## Rachel's Pathway Poem

Rachel Senechal was one of 35 participants who contributed an original poem and photograph for the Spring Photo Haiku StoryWalk, organized by Anne Ferguson. Visit [kelloggghubbard.org/adult-programs](http://kelloggghubbard.org/adult-programs) for more information about Montpelier locations where the Haiku StoryWalk can be found.

**Hawks guard chartreuse trees**  
**Ephemerals paint woods floor**  
**Strings sing water notes**



Terry J. Allen

## Comings and Goings

The *Signpost* extends its thanks and congratulations to Kathy Topping, our U-32 coordinator, who is retiring this year. We thank her for her work on the *Signpost* and wish her a happy retirement after 47 years of teaching at U-32. She will be missed.

We also are happy to welcome Kristen Munson who will join the *Signpost* team working on layout and design. Kristen recently moved to East Montpelier from northern Utah with her husband and two sons. She is the managing editor for *Utah State Magazine*. Welcome Kristen!



## EM Fire Dept. Birthdays

Our fire department will bring a fire truck to wish a local resident happy birthday. You can contact the station at 225-6247, extension #1, to arrange a fire truck birthday greeting.

Please give at least a couple of days' notice, so they can plan.

## Your Stories Needed

Traditionally, the September/October *Signpost* features a theme about which townspeople share their thoughts. This tradition will continue in 2020, and you will not be surprised about the theme we're asking you to write about. Please limit your contributions to no more than 250 words and submit by August 3 to Edie Miller at [signposteam@comcast.net](mailto:signposteam@comcast.net). Please send photos as well.

Despite all the sadness, difficulty, loss, and frustration of the coronavirus, there has been a noticeable silver lining to the clouds of Covid-19. We have read about, heard of, and witnessed a phenomenon in communities everywhere that is nothing short of inspirational: creativity abounds!

From teachers who develop stimulating online lessons for their students to people signing up for online classes; from home-bound folks sewing and offering protective masks to children practicing new skills; from men and women having culinary adventures to first-time gardeners starting their seeds—all are practicing creativity. It's impressive. So, tell us how you have expressed your creativity during the pandemic. What talents have you explored; what skills have you adapted or acquired? Who knows? Your ingenuity may inspire others.

# Congratulations MILO!

EAST MONTEPELIER'S #1 DOG

April 1, 2020–March 31, 2021



Get your license on time, and your pooch will be entered to win prizes\* and the title of next year's #1 dog.

*\*Thanks to: Agway, Fertile Acres Farm, and Plainfield Hardware and General Store for providing the prizes.*

Milo, big brother to Figaro and Fiona, lives on Dalmatian East Plantation on Haggett Road.

People who grew up here but moved away often come back for a swim and to meet up with friends when they're visiting.

There's a mix of cultures. People come out with their dogs, friends and families; they bring people with special needs, and guests from out of town. It is a popular place for Goddard students (pre-Covid), farm workers, seniors...almost every demographic. People bring chairs, coolers, books and music, or just themselves. There's something for everyone.

## *Is the pond deep?*

It's super deep in the middle—something like 25 feet. But, some edges are child-friendly with such gradual inclines we call them "beaches." Other places that are steep enough above deep water so that teenagers and others can jump in.

## *What can you tell us about the history of the pond?*

In geological terms, it was an esker, a long ridge of gravel and sand, deposited by the runoff from a melting glacier. That made it useful as a sand and gravel quarry for many decades. When they dug into the aquifer, the quarry flooded and gave us the pond. Since then, it has been naturalizing. There are two beaver lodges, many birds, and enough fish to make it a good spot for fishing. It has been a popular recreation area for local folks for generations.

## *Who owns the property where the pond is located?*

The Agency of Transportation purchased it in the 1980s turning into a constructed wetland. Because we were able to document existing use, and it was identified as an important resource in our town plan, our group was able to prevent that from happening using the Act 250 process. VTrans was permitted to construct a wetland south of the pond. Unfortunately, they excavated too deeply and into the shoreline,

creating a seasonal outlet/inflow at the southern end of the pond. This endangers the fish population in spring when they swim through and later get stranded in the constructed wetlands; and it compromises the water quality and ecosystems when the water level is low and the wetlands backwash sediment into the pond. We are still working on that issue.

## *Has the use of the pond changed or increased since Friends of Coburn Pond was organized?*

I think that more people feel a greater sense of responsibility for the pond. Most people take out what they bring in, and some pick up litter that less responsible people have left behind. Ninety percent of the people who use the pond are careful, considerate, and respectful.

## *With social distancing much in the fore, what are your thoughts about how we'll balance the desire to cool off with the need to prevent people from gathering in crowds?*

The shoreline of Coburn Pond is a series of curves and scallops, so even when you'd think that it would be really crowded, it's fairly easy to find a private spot. That said, on hot days the north beach, which is the first one you come to on the path, can seem pretty full. We've considered putting up some laminated signs to remind people to maintain social distancing. One swimmer suggested a playful reminder.

For more information on Friends of Coburn Pond or to get involved, check out their website or Facebook page.

In closing, we wish you all a very happy summer. Remember to maintain social distance, even while you're enjoying the sun and the water. Stay cool and stay safe!

*—Hilari is a performer and teacher of Celtic music and Signpost features editor*

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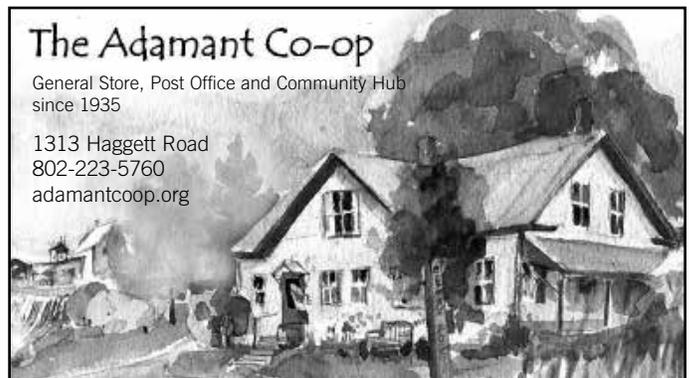
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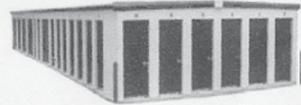




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### CALENDAR

*Keep in touch with event sponsors about possible cancellations due to COVID-19 situation.*

**Mon. July 20, 6 pm**, EM & Calais Hist.Soc., Reed/Doyle home on VT214, annual summer croquet game and ice cream social. Bring a lawn chair, bug spray, and mask. Contact Sandal Cate, sandal@sover.net for info.

**Mon. Aug. 17, 5 pm**, EM & Calais Hist. Soc. meeting, Old West Church, discussion of "Life on the Calais Poor Farm," former home of Forrest and Betty Davis.

### IMPORTANT DATES

**Tues. Aug. 11**, Statewide primary election, 7 am-7 pm, EMES. Covid-19 safety measures will be in place. Volunteers will be needed to assist with this election. Contact Town Clerk Rosie Laquerre to be added to the training roster and schedule.

**Mon. Sept. 7**, Labor Day, Town Office closed

**Deadline for contributions for the next issue of the Signpost is Monday, August 3.**

### COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Conservation Fund Advisory Committee  
Development Review Board (DRB)  
East Montpelier Fire Department (EMFD)  
East Montpelier Historical Society  
East Montpelier Senior Living Initiative  
Four Corners Schoolhouse Assn  
Planning Commission (PC)  
Recreation Board  
Selectboard  
WCUUSD Board Meeting

as needed  
1st Tues. 7 pm  
every Tues. 7 pm  
3rd Mon. 7/6 pm  
as needed  
2nd Wed. 7 pm  
1st & 3rd Thurs. 7 pm  
2nd Mon. 7:15 pm.  
1st & 3rd Mon. 6:30 pm  
3rd Wed. 5:30 pm

contact: [blusig@aol.com](mailto:blusig@aol.com) / 229-5441  
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Town Office building  
one of the district elementary schools