

# EAST MONTPELIER Signpost

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Volume 31 / Number 3

NEWS OF OUR COMMUNITY

January–February 2021

## The Lorax of East Montpelier

*"I am the Lorax. I speak for the trees. I speak for the trees for the trees have no tongues."*

—Dr. Seuss, The Lorax

By Renee Kievit-Kylar

"We love trees" are the first words Nate Ebert uses to talk about his business, Foxfire Tree Care, which he founded in 2017. Nate is an arborist (sometimes called an arboriculturist), a specialist in the cultivation and care of trees and shrubs, including tree surgery, the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of tree diseases, and the control of pests.

Nate learned his trade from a neighbor who hired him to prune and remove trees. The enterprise was a small, one-man operation, using a beat-up old chipper and huge truck that didn't dump. He learned the basics of tree care, including rigging and pruning.

Actually, the deep roots of his career go back even further to when he was a teenager. He was an avid mountain biker, and the trails near his home were his stomping grounds. Then, seemingly overnight, the hundreds of acres of forest that hosted these trails were clear-cut. His sanctuary had become a giant corporate industrial park, which inspired his environmental activism. He learned to climb trees as part of forest defense campaigns. Years of advocating for forests deepened his love and curiosity about trees.

He continued his studies about trees and the basics of arboriculture and eventually joined a company in Minneapolis, where he gained experience and passed his arborist exam. Fifteen years later, he was certified by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). This means that he has been trained and is knowledgeable in all aspects of arboriculture and has agreed to adhere to the code of ethics that strengthens the credibility of the workforce. Nate and his partner, Usnea Granger, left Minneapolis a few years ago, looking for a change and for a new home.

Nate had visited Vermont years before, and after meeting with friends living in Vermont, it became



*Nate Ebert, aided by a crane, takes down a large pine tree.*

Photo by Jim Deshler

apparent that this was a place that would make them both happy. Since moving to Vermont, besides founding Foxfire Tree Care, he has completed a Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) certification through the ISA. Nathan is also the vice chair of the Barre Tree Advisory Committee.

Nate believes that trees enhance our lives and the planet. He says, "I love trees because for so much of their lives, they seem to defy gravity. Upwards they climb, somehow moving water out to the tips of the branches.

*continued on pg 7*

# You are Needed

Welcome to 2021. As I write this, snowflakes are drifting down, so stick-season trees are actually starting to look festive. We are planning how to celebrate Christmas/Hannukah/Kwanzaa/Solstice feasts—with decorations, more screen time with our beloveds—perhaps this time wearing ugly sweaters. Despite the uptick in Covid-19 cases (temporary, we trust), there is plenty to be grateful for. We had a long, warm fall in which to get outdoors, enjoy our gorgeous landscapes, and safely visit with friends and family. We have experienced a steady hand on the helm from our state and local governments. Our health care providers have made needed adaptations, so we've been able to get the care we needed and also to feel secure that they will be there for us, whatever comes. Our teachers and schools have been amazing, too—upbeat, creative, always caring. Personally, by taking a break from the 24-hour news cycle, I have even managed to stay centered and sane. I hope you have, too.

Speaking of steady hands-on local government, let's remember that we need to do our part. Think of it as a tug-of-war. We can stand by and cheer those who have hands on the rope and are heaving away, but at some point, it behooves us to grab the end of that rope and help keep our team from getting dragged into the mud. Even as we wonder whether and how town meeting will work in these times, consider being a candidate for town or school board offices. Who will volunteer for the various committees and boards? How can each of us lend a hand? Please think about what you might be able to do for our East Montpelier community. Every little bit helps. Winter sets in, but spring is not far behind. Plant a seed; put it under the grow lights. Watch it grow. You can do this. You are needed.

In closing, thank you to everyone for caring and for doing your part to keep all of us safe. Onward!

—Ann Stanton

## Consider ...

We will elect the following town officers this year. Due to the pandemic restrictions, voter signatures are not required for potential candidates. Those interested in running for public office simply have to contact town clerk, Rosie Laquerre, by the **January 25 deadline** and complete a candidate consent form.

Petitions to include articles on the Town Meeting Warning DO still require signatures and are due to the town clerk by **January 14**.

### SEATS OPEN:

Town Moderator, 1-year term  
Selectboard Member, two 2-year terms  
Lister, 3-year term  
Auditor, 3-year term  
First Constable, 1-year term  
Second Constable, 1-year term  
Planning Commissioner,  
three 3-year terms

### East Montpelier *Signpost*

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# Thank you, Rosie

Hats off to our Town Clerk, Rosie Laquerre, and all who helped assure that East Montpelier voters could cast ballots easily and safely and be confident their votes would count. Currently our voter checklist shows just over 2,300 registered voters. In the August primary elections, EM had a 43% turnout, and 64% of those voted by absentee ballot while the rest came to the polls in person. In November's presidential election, we matched the relatively high 77% voting rate of 2016 with 79% of those voting submitting absentee ballots and 21% coming to the polling place. I can attest personally, that as one falling into a Covid-19-vulnerable age group, I had no qualms about either casting my vote or helping to process ballots after the polls closed. Thanks to Rosie and the many people who made this possible.

—Edie Miller

## Got Purple Paws?

This year's tag is a purple paw print. If your dog's tag is not purple, you need to re-license no later than April 1. Licensing your dog ensures that rabies vaccines are up to date and allows town officials to assist in identifying and/or locating your pup if it gets away from you. A portion of the fees collected go toward the state's low-cost spay/neuter and rabies mitigation programs.

Licenses are \$9 for spayed/neutered dogs and \$13 for unaltered dogs. Licensing can be performed curbside at the Town Office or by mail or drop-off with payment and copy of current rabies vaccination. **Please call 223-3313 X 201 or X 202** with any questions about licensing your dog.



Photos by Terry J. Allen



*A little snow and cold didn't keep EM voters from the polls.*

## Twin Valley Senior Center

Happy New Year with wishes for happiness, peace, comfort, and good health. We hope, also, that 2021 will be a turnaround from the challenges posed by the pandemic in 2020.

After closing in March, TVSC was forced to cancel all activities and major events such as the Veterans' and Hunters' breakfasts, and Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. Not only are they major fundraising occasions, but even more importantly, they also provide opportunities for socializing.

We are grateful for your continued support which allowed us to purchase the property at our current location last June. This major step will allow us to expand to meet the growing needs of TVSC, and we will be planning for those needs this coming year. One idea near the top of the list is an outdoor pavilion which would allow us to hold many of our activities and fundraisers outside in appropriate

weather. Your donations allowed us to apply for a large grant to fund such a pavilion, and we will learn soon whether our project was chosen.

We continue to prepare and deliver meals to the homebound and look forward to the time when we can welcome all members back for our full range of activities.

We are always seeking members for our board of directors. This is your opportunity to have a voice about the overall operations of the center and to continue to move the center in the best direction for your community. Ideally, we would like a representative from each community. We always welcome people with financial, public relations, technology, and social media skills. If interested, please contact me at **223-3322** or **twinvalleyseniors@myfairpoint.net**

*—Rita Copeland is executive director of TVSC*

# U-32 Education During the Pandemic



Photo from the U-32 Chronicle

*Students, teachers, and staff at U-32 navigate the challenges of school during a pandemic with a sense of community and resolve. The voices and stories of U-32 students can be found at <https://u32chronicle.com>*

By Merry Schmidt

In my 40-year career, I taught every grade level from 6th to community college. Inevitably there were disruptions—storm closures, a teacher strike, a flood, or tragedies involving students or staff. But nothing like the current pandemic had such a long-term effect on schools. I spoke to Meaghan “Meg” Falby, the health teacher at U-32. She graciously offered her perspective on how Covid-19 has shaped the school year. Using as many of Meg’s own words as possible, the following represents the essence of our conversation:

## *What is U-32’s basic design for learning?*

**Meg Falby:** Middle School students are full-time, in-person. Students in grades 9 and 10 are in-person learners for one week, while those in grades 11 and 12 are remote learners. The next week, they switch, and so on. I alternate between teaching three classes in-person one week and remotely the next, too. I

also teach two sections of fully remote students every week.

## *What preparations did U-32 undertake prior to this school year?*

**MF:** The administration pushed back the start of school by two weeks. This allowed for curriculum planning and connecting professionally with colleagues. We were getting ourselves ready to determine how best to approach social and emotional learning with our students and ourselves. We also underwent training for a new LMS (learning management system) called “Canvas,” the vehicle for disseminating class material. It was welcome training after the difficult spring we had.

## *What was it like to be shut down in the spring?*

**MF:** It was devastating. I didn’t understand how to do my job, how to make it work. During my first Zoom meeting with students I held back tears. It was so hard. I decided to make videos instead. Teaching health through a

screen was so difficult for me. However, a colleague who teaches physics had a different, better experience, largely because of the content.

## *What are some of the things that worked immediately this year?*

**MF:** A key component of the start of the year was the TA (Teacher Advisor) system. The need to establish relationships and connections was critical; after that, the teaching would come. Teachers have the same advisees from 7th to 12th grade, a practice which has been especially helpful during the transition.

## *What didn’t work as well?*

**MF:** Teachers no longer have their own classrooms. Student “pods” stay in one room, and teachers move from room to room. Losing my own room, a space I could decorate and arrange to suit my teaching, was hard. We also used to have “callback,” a 30-minute time each day for students to check in and get help as needed. Since you can’t mix pods, callback couldn’t work. Losing

that piece was difficult; some kids were at a loss without it. Also, virtual classes don't work well for everyone, teachers or students.

**What problems have come up since the beginning of the school year?**

**MF:** Our principal, Steven Deller-Pate, has done a great job of being human and supportive. He is honest about not knowing all the answers. Naturally, there have been things to iron out, like recording classes and covering all the usual content. Many teachers have had to revamp curricula as the year progresses. We are realizing that virtual teaching takes longer than in-person.

**Do most teachers prefer in-person or remote learning?**

**MF:** In-person, without a doubt. And the same is true for the vast majority of students. After a week of remote learning, where home situations can vary dramatically, some students find it hard to turn on and be present when they return to in-person learning.

**Overall, how well have teachers and students adjusted?**

**MF:** Under the circumstances, tremendously! There is a sense of community across the board. Everyone is pulling their own weight. Teachers, students, administrators, paraeducators, assistants, cafeteria and janitorial staff—everyone deserves credit.

**What has been the most difficult thing?**

**MF:** Transitioning to a way of teaching you've never done. Sometimes I feel like a first-year teacher.

**Does it take more or less time to do your job?**

**MF:** More, by far. For one thing, computer assessments take much longer than paper ones; and general curriculum planning is also much more time consuming.

**Have there been any particular mental health or social issues related to the pandemic?**

**MF:** Since I teach health, I hear more about that than many other teachers. For the most part, remote learning is impersonal, and students are not meant to stare at a screen all day. Anxiety is higher; everyone can feel when something is off. Teachers are exhausted, but during our weekly Zoom faculty meetings we focus on our own social and mental health. We're all reading a book entitled *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators*. My teaching pod crew (five teachers and a paraeducator) often Zoom in our "office" room together during the weekly meetings. I embrace and appreciate the time and space to connect with my pod members about my own mental and emotional health.

**How safe or protected do you feel on campus?**

**MF:** I feel safe. When I move to various classrooms during the day, there is little or no traffic in the hallways. I'm not sure how the students would answer, but I think they recognize the transmission risks if they were to go "across pods" or not practice social distancing.

**Have there been any bright spots for you in the gloom of Covid-19?**

**MF:** As the only health teacher, I am usually an island of one. But now I get to be in a pod with teachers of other subjects. We share the same kids, so the collegial interactions about situations in other disciplines are a welcome change for me.

**Any closing thoughts?**

**MF:** It sounds trite, but we all need to be patient, do our best.

—Merry Schmidt is a retired teacher. Meg Falby has taught for nineteen years, the last seven at U-32. She was honored as the SHAPE VT (Society of Health and Physical Educators) Vermont Health Teacher of the Year in 2019.

## Paulie's Recipe Tasty Tomato Soup

Recipe contributed by Alice Angney to *Gather Round the Table*, a new cookbook assembled by the Old Meeting House. For information about purchasing one, contact **Lori at 229-9593 or admin@oldmeetinghouse.org**.

**INGREDIENTS:**

1 medium onion  
6 T. butter  
1 (29 oz.) can diced tomatoes  
2 (29 oz.) cans tomato sauce  
6 T. sugar  
2 T. "Better Than Bouillon" reduced sodium seasoned vegetable base  
Freshly ground black pepper to taste  
1 ½ c. heavy cream  
¼ c. chopped flat leaf parsley  
¼ c. chopped basil

Dice the onion and sauté in the butter in a large pot or Dutch oven, until translucent. Add all the tomatoes, add sugar, bouillon, and ground pepper to taste. Bring almost to a boil. Add the cream but do not let it boil after adding the cream. Add the chopped parsley and basil. Serve warm. Serves 8.

**PAULIE'S COMMENT:** This is delicious tomato soup. If you want to make it smooth and creamy you could put it in a blender or use an immersion blender.

# Who Knew?

Well, I didn't, but I do now.

It had been a particularly harsh and frigid week in deepest winter, burying even the tallest of the meadow grasses in several feet of snow. Nevertheless, "cabin fever" demanded that I venture out. So I geared up and headed to the meadow on our snowshoe path.

Within a minute I came across a sight that prompted a doubletake. On the surface of the snow there was a splash of blue the color of windshield washer fluid. My first thought was, "Why would anyone dump windshield fluid next to a path in our yard?" I quickly realized that a) the blue splash was near no road, and b) there were no footprints. However, there were deer hoofprints. The conclusion I came to sounded wacky, so I told no one until I could get back to the house to Google the possibility that deer pee could be blue.

Lo and behold, it is possible. Several hunters and woods people had asked the same question. The answer seemed to be that when deer eat something that they're not used to eating because of starving conditions prompting dramatic dietary changes, their urine can, in fact, be blue. I even asked a couple of neighbors native or near-native to Vermont if they'd heard of such a thing, and neither had.

In order to be precise, I went to the NWDC (Northeast Wildlife Disease Cooperative) website for further explanation. According to Walter Cottrell, NWDC Field Veterinarian, "there is a condition called porphyria...a group of disorders that result from a buildup of natural chemicals that produce porphyrin. Porphyrins... [include] heme, the red pigment that colors red blood cells. When ...excreted in the urine and exposed to UV light they turn 'glass cleaner blue.' These conditions can be brought on by reducing total caloric intake to starvation levels or following an unbalanced diet. . . . For now, porphyria is the most plausible explanation for this reported observation." <https://www.northeastwildlife.org/news/white-tailed-deer-blue-urine>

So now I know. And if you didn't know this before, you do, too.

#### NONA ESTRIN, OUR RESIDENT NATURALIST, COMMENTS:

This one really stumped me too. I've never seen windshield-wiper-colored deer urine before. I have heard of the disease, porphyria, once—purportedly the disease of King George III that caused his madness and, more memorably, blue urine. (That claim is now disputed.) How strange to think of it happening in our "back pasture" deer! I wonder if it causes them to make bad decisions?



Photo by Terry J. Allen

*When deer are malnourished or eat atypical foods, they can develop porphyria, a condition that can result in a striking blue urine.*

Do they have outbursts of temper or inappropriate reactions? With unpredictable winters involving more and more ice and less access to browse, perhaps it's surprising that we don't see it more often. I will look more carefully when I ski through the deer yard this year. Very strange... and likely to remain so? Let me know if you see instances of this.

—Merry Schmidt is a Signpost volunteer, freelance editor, and watercolorist. She and her husband, Tom, love to walk or cycle the local roads and trails and remain fascinated by what they see in their own backyard.

*Continued from pg 1*

"It's pretty fascinating. I find it so magical and inspiring that research indicates trees will share resources through their root systems, even among different species. We truly have a great deal to learn from these magnificent organisms," Nate explains.

With that in mind, Foxfire has a strong focus on sustainability and the environment and strives to preserve natural resources, reducing the company's carbon footprint wherever possible. They strive to work efficiently, while causing the least disturbance to the surroundings. Foxfire often repurposes debris from pruning and removal, uses biodegradable oils in their saws, and uses battery-operated tools when possible. And, Nate pays his employees a living wage.

Foxfire Tree Care provides a variety of services, including tree planting, pruning, maintenance, and preservation; brush chipping, and emergency storm clean-up. Pruning reduces the potential for limbs or entire trees to damage homes and structures. It also keeps trees healthy by removing dying, diseased, or dead wood. Sometimes people want trees pruned to increase light or enhance their view.

Foxfire can also help people determine which trees will grow well in their landscape and will last for years to come. For those old sugar maples or other much-loved trees that might be in decline or have defects, the company provides preservation assistance.

In the midst of the emerald ash borer infestation, much of its work includes helping people identify trees that will be hazardous when infected and remove them.

Vermont has clearly become home to Nate and Usnea. When they are not making fabulous gardens on their land and enjoying what Vermont has to offer, Usnea spends some of their time as a bosun of a Greenpeace ship. Nate gives much credit to his "amazing, small crew" of workers, who have a passion for safety and a yearning to learn, as well as a deep respect for the land. Contact him at [nate@foxfire.com](mailto:nate@foxfire.com) or 802-322-3769.

And as Dr. Seuss summarizes at the end of *The Lorax*, "UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better, It's not."

*—Renee Kievit-Kylar has lived with her husband, Doug, on Brazier Road for 35 years. They used Foxfire Tree Service this past spring and note that watching Nate and his crew scamper up a tree, was something to see!*

# Author in Our Midst

"After decades launching scholarly airplanes from ivory tower windows, Tom Schmidt now pens poems in a tree house he built overlooking a bee-loud glade in East Montpelier." Such is the bio blurb for a local poet whose journey as a writer meandered from a Cambridge PhD dissertation about ancient attitudes toward wealth, through a dozen nonfiction and fiction books, and most recently to two collections of poetry. Tom's latest, *Like, A Metaphor*, due out next June, emerges from his encounters with students over the years, whose true stories he renders in the students' own voices. This sample from the collection was inspired by an essay from a rural community college student.

## Vanilla, but Stars

You said write something that people might not believe,  
So here goes, but first you need to know that  
My husband John works hauling gravel for Copeland,  
Our girl Emily is ten, she's into Taylor Swift  
And our boy Jason is six, he's into monster trucks and dinosaurs,  
We rent a little house here in town where we both grew up.  
I'm hoping to get my associate's degree, I'm not sure for what  
But John says I'm the smart one, and anyway, all this so far  
Is about as vanilla as it gets, but that's the point, how it started.

Me and John were up in the Siskiyous right after his discharge  
Camping on a summer night at the very top of Bolan Mountain.  
It was about two in the morning, we were looking up at the sky  
When this huge shooting star came down right in front of us  
In slow motion, like it was going to land in Bolan Lake below,  
And just seconds later a second shooting star, also in slow motion,  
But then, when our eyes followed the second star down, we saw  
In a clearing twenty feet away two deer, a buck and a doe  
With their heads up, I swear, they were staring at those stars too.

We sat there and didn't say anything for maybe ten minutes,  
The deer slowly walked away, and John turned to me and said  
Will you marry me, and I said yes, and that's pretty much it.  
We didn't tell anybody at first, we wanted it to be our secret.  
Later when we told a few, we could tell they didn't believe us,  
And hey, if we weren't both there we probably wouldn't either.  
So we keep it now like a little treasure in a box. We have that  
When John gets his hours cut back, when the kids have the flu,  
When it rains, when it's all just vanilla. We still have the stars.

## Town Offices

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# Then and Now

**"Is there a felicity in the world," said Marianne, "superior to this? Margaret, we will walk here at least two hours."**

—Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*

Years ago, reading these lines gave me pause thinking, "Excited about a two-hour walk in the downs? Sheesh! Times must have been dull back then." When Covid-19 hit in March, those lines came rushing back to me, and they immediately made sense. Getting out for a walk became the "felicity" of my world too. It quickly became apparent, by the number of friends and neighbors whom I encountered on the muddy dirt roads and in the woods, that I was not alone in my need to venture outside. As I stopped to talk with others, I realized this time was also becoming the way East Montpelierites were connecting, sharing stories, checking in with each other, and visiting. It morphed into our social outlet (while at a safe, other-side-of-the-road" distance). On one of these jaunts, I found myself listening to the sagacious Andy Christiansen as he shared how he was looking back at old newspapers to research the local stories of the 1918 pandemic.

As I continued to walk the roads and visit with others on their own outings, I became curious about how people in East Montpelier connected with their fellow townspeople in the past.

Inspired by Andy, I began to look into the newspapers to see what I could find. If we are having our social connection out on our walks, what was it like for those who lived in this town before us? Read on to see what I found in archives of *The Barre Daily Times* and the *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*.

February 1881 seemed to be a time when people were socializing at balls and at shows:

**February 02:** *The East Montpelier annual ball came off at the Pavilion last evening. This company has invariably*

*borne away the palm for numbers as well as superior dancing, and last evening about one hundred couples coming from East Montpelier, Barre, Plainfield, Marshfield, sustained in all respects the name and fame of the East Montpelier Annual.*

I can only imagine the fame the East Montpelier Annual Ball had in Central Vermont! Later in the month the entertainment moved to North Montpelier, and I was struck by the tone of joy and mirth used to describe this event. It must have been just the happening needed on a cold February night.

*The North Montpelier dramatic and musical club will appear on their stage in Union Vestry Hall, North Montpelier on Friday and Saturday evenings, February 25 and 26th and by special request will present the following program: Friday evening, the justly popular drama in five acts entitled "Ten Nights in a Ball-room" followed by the very laughable farce "Dying for Love," will be presented. Saturday evening the programme will consist of the thrillingly interesting play in five acts entitled "Little Sunshine" followed by the roaring farce "Miss Tibber's Back Hair." The members of the organization have spared neither pains nor expense in the preparation of these plays and solicit the patronage of all lovers of the dramas. Nye's orchestra will furnish music selected from an exceptional fine programme.*

Moving to 100 years ago, in 1921, the January 8 edition of *The Barre Daily Times* recounted a different type of social gathering when it reported on the meeting of the local East Montpelier Grange or Agricultural Social Club. Look at all those familiar names! I would love to dig more into the Grange and find out what duties 'Ceres' fulfilled.



*Walking on Guyette Rd. From left, Ellen Knoedler, Ginny Callan, Michael Duane, and Cort Richardson. Photo by Terry J. Allen.*

*East Montpelier Grange held its regular meeting Wednesday evening, Jan 6, when the following officers were installed by the District Deputy R.C. Collins and wife: master, C. A Badger; overseer, H. Kelton; lecturer, Mrs. Badger; steward, E. Howland; chaplain, Mrs. Sibley; assistant steward, Mr. Wheeler; gatekeeper, Mr. Buck; treasurer and secretary, Mr. and Mrs. G.H Clark; Pomona, Mrs. Collins; Flora, Mrs. Buck; Ceres, Mrs. Kelton; lady assistant steward, Mrs. Young.*

*Refreshments were served and a social time was enjoyed by all. The next meeting (Jan. 19) will be an all-day meeting, opening at 11 o'clock for a business meeting and after dinner the session will be open to the public. At 1:30 a good program with speakers will be provided and a good attendance is hoped for. Come, all Grangers, past and present; bring your friends and help to set up our grange in its feet again.*

And lest we think times are so different now, I leave you with this wildlife sighting from 1921 that could have come straight from a current day Front Porch Forum posting.

*While traveling on the road from East Montpelier to Adamant on Jan. 3 Charles Briggs saw a good-sized live snake in the vicinity of a spring, a rather unusual sight for this season of the year.*

Maybe times around town have not changed that much after all.

*—Nora Duane grew up in East Montpelier exploring the back roads and the trails, just like she does now.*

## Town Weathervane

### BIRTHS

- Emma Elizabeth Dodge, a daughter, born to Ashley Weston and Shawn Dodge in October
- Miles Callahan Mroczek, a son, born to Devon & Ross Mroczek in October

### MARRIAGES

- Matthew DiGiovanni and Lauren Oates married in October
- Brandon Wood and Emilli da Costa married in November

### DEATHS

*Survivors living in East Montpelier are listed, when known.*

- Diane C. Brown, spouse of Larry Brown, died in November
- Marshall Clark, III, spouse of Roger McLeon, died in September
- Donald Smith died in October

### LAND TRANSFERS

*Transfers relative to estate planning or corrective deeds are not included in this listing.*

- Noam Almeleh to Rick Kulawitz, 42.11 acres and dwelling on Chickering Rd
- Ryan Alter to Samira Kadrick, a mobile home on Sandy Pines Rd
- Glen & Janice Bamforth to Adam Stanforth & Dawn Oille-Stanforth, 7.00 acres & dwelling on Evergreen Ln
- Alfred & Joanne Commot to Robert & Elaine Shortsleeve, a mobile home on Robinson Rd
- Rene Crete to Mark, Wendy & Matt Bradley, 0.35 acres and commercial dwelling on US2
- Leslie Drown to Leslie Drown & Keith Gomo, 37 acres and dwelling on VT14S
- Bruce & Claudia Fitch to Robert & Christine Fitch, 15.94 acres and dwelling on Fitch Rd
- Richard Herrmann to Robert & Leonora Light, 16.2 acres and dwelling on McKnight Rd
- Brooke MacDonald to Andrew Morse, 3.2 acres and dwelling on Brazier Rd
- Jonathan Marshall to Joellen Bower & Julie Shaw, a Mobile Home on Robinson Rd

- Roderick & Emily O'Brien to Amber & Krissy Doiron, 1 acre and dwelling on Bliss Rd
- Stephen & Lisa Pratt to Justin Michaels & Michelle Gilmour, 10.1 acres and dwelling on US2
- Estate of Vera Pratt to Jonathan Lash, a one-third interest of 489 acres open land on Cherry Tree Hill Rd
- The Sherman Family Trust to Diana Batzel & Tracey Hambleton, 1.6 acres and dwelling on Putnam Rd
- Jessica Taylor to Susan Martin, 9.25 acres of open land off Chickering Rd
- Duane Wells to RAB Construction, Inc., 3 acres of open land on Captain Kidd Rd
- Richard & Joyce Wolkomir to Darci Coleman Graves & Elisha Coleman, 6.40 acres of open land off County Rd
- Betty Wood to Carl Benson & Sally McLelland, 0.99 acres and dwelling on Taylor Rd

**Following are excerpts from minutes of EM's governing boards. Complete minutes are on the town and school websites. All meetings were held online using the Zoom conferencing platform with public participation options provided.**

### SELECTBOARD

**October 5, 2020**

Discussion about Hasland property WEC conceptual proposal for office building use

### Motions Passed

- to adopt the 2020-21 Winter Roads Policy as presented
- to send a letter, bearing Chair Gardner's signature, to the East Montpelier Fire Department supporting the town employees' handling of the incident in question
- The Board entered Executive Session at 7:33 pm for the evaluation of public employee and exited at 7:50 pm

*continued on pg 10*

## **October 19, 2020**

**Discussion** of proposed stipend allocation for elected and appointed officers; CV Solid Waste Management District Hearings

### **Motions Passed**

- to set the 2021 employee health benefit at a maximum of 90% of the premium cost of the BCBS Platinum Plan, allow employees to choose between the BCBS and MVP Platinum Plans
- to authorize the submission of the Emerald Ash Borer Management Grant application to the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program
- to accept the Center for Tech and Civic Life grant of \$5,000 and authorize TA Johnson to complete the necessary paperwork

## **October 26, 2020**

### **Motions Passed**

- to authorize the purchase of the \$29,600 Kubota BX2380 tractor with snowblower from Champlain Valley Equipment utilizing the capital reserve fund
- to allow the installation of a Little Lending Library structure off the road but within the road right-of-way at 100 Brazier Road

## **November 2, 2020**

**Discussion** of preliminary discussion of the 2021 Town Meeting and FY22 budget development

**Motion Passed** to authorize the purchase of the 2012 log grapple at a cost of \$7,500 utilizing the capital reserve fund

## **November 16, 2020 (unapproved)**

**Discussion** of Center Road Mallory Brook culver replacement engineering study status. Conversations with Town Constable Jon Boucher; Town Tree Warden Paul Cate. Discussion with Recreation Board regarding potential installation of ice rink at Recreation Field. Proposed AT&T tower east of Jacobs Road

**Motion Passed** to recommend the reappointment of Ginny Burley as the town's health officer

## **PLANNING COMMISSION**

Meetings of October 15, November 5 and 19 focused on Village zoning and cell towers. No significant actions taken.

## **DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD**

### **October 6, 2020 (unapproved)**

**Discussion** of setback waiver concept contained in Sec. 3.14 of E. Montpelier Land Use and Development Regulations

### **Motions Passed**

- to accept the frontage as presented in Application #20-043 submitted by Henry Morse, Jr for property located at 918 County Road, as it complies with the town regulations
- to approve Application #20-043 as presented with the condition that the small shed is removed

### **July 7, 2020 (Unapproved)**

**Motion Passed** to approve Application #20-020 for the Fitch subdivision as presented, for property located at the end of Fitch Rd

## **WCUUSD**

### **October 7, 2020**

- to accept the nomination of Jason Kelley for Math Teacher at U-32
- to accept the resignation of Mary Lynn Crosson-Stewart, School Nurse

### **October 21, 2020**

**Discussion** and first reading for policies to be adopted on 11/4/20: C7 Student Attendance; C20 Student Conduct and Discipline; C46 Interrogation or Searches of Students by Law Enforcement or Other Non-School Personnel; C49 Kindergarten Entrance Age; D3 Responsible Computer, Internet & Network Use; D4 Title Comparability; D5 Animal Dissection; D6 Class Size; E1 Title 1 Parent Involvement Compacts; E45 Role of Religion in School; F1 Travel Reimbursement

### **Motions Passed**

- to approve both job descriptions: Clerk of the Works and Director of Facilities as provided, with noted addition of "other duties as assigned by the superintendent."
- to move forward with the bid process for the curriculum review
- to change the 2020-21 school year calendar to add early release days to elementary and middle schools on November 4th and November 18th
- to approve the two [student achievement] goals as presented in writing (with more detail) in a memo, dated October 2020, from the

Education Quality Committee to the School Board

- The board entered executive session at 9:00 pm to discuss negotiations and superintendent evaluation and exited at 10:10 pm

### **November 4, 2020 (Unapproved)**

**Discussion** WCUUSD Budget Draft #1 First Reading for policy to be adopted 11/18/20: C12 Prevention of Sexual Harassment as Prohibited by Title IX

### **Motions Passed**

- to approve the job description for Business Administrator
- to adopt the following policies: C7 Student Attendance; C20 Student Conduct and Discipline; C46 Interrogation or Searches of Students by Law Enforcement or Other Non-School Personnel; C49 Kindergarten Entrance Age; D3 Responsible Computer, Internet & Network Use; D4 Title Comparability; D5 Animal Dissection; D6 Class Size; E1 Title 1 Parent Involvement Compacts; E45 Role of Religion in School; F1 Travel Reimbursement
- to approve Casey LeClerc for the position of School Nurse at U-32

### **November 18, 2020 (Unapproved)**

**Discussion** of board size

### **Motions Passed**

- to authorize the superintendent to create early release dates on Wednesdays as needed, from November 18, 2020 through the end of the school year, June 2021
- that WCUUSD would continue to provide the EV unit and the electricity service to the community, but the district would not pay for the Assure service agreement, maintenance costs or the Network Service costs. We would ask the town to pick up these costs. If the town refuses to pick up the Assure, maintenance or Network Service costs, WCUUSD would eliminate the EV charge
- to purchase 2017 Toyota Sienna in the amount of \$17,984.00
- to approve the second reading and adoption of Policy C12
- to approve Board Norms, with two edits as agreed upon
- to approve the resignation of Damian Middleton at Calais, effective June 30, 2021



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## CALENDAR

**Stay in touch with the Town Website and Front Porch Forum for details on Town Meeting Day which are yet to be decided.**

Deadline for contributions for the next *Signpost* issue is January 25, 2021.

## IMPORTANT DATES

- Thurs. Dec. 31 & Fri. Jan. 1,** New Year's Holiday: Town Offices closed
- Mon. Jan. 4,** Dog Licensing begins
- Thurs. Jan. 14,** Petitions for articles for Town Meeting Warning due by 5 pm
- Mon. Jan. 18,** Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: Town Offices open
- Mon. Jan. 25,** Candidate Consent Forms due to Town Clerk by 5:00 pm. Contact town clerk for form
- Mon. Feb. 15,** Presidents' Day: Town Offices open
- Tues. March 2,** Town Meeting (Format to be decided)
- Thurs. April 1,** New dog licenses due

## 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  
suspended  
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

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