

Town Meeting Day is March 7 Before the Big Day

Voter Registration: at the Town Office Monday through Thursday until 5 pm, Friday until noon, or at the EMES polling place on voting day. Register online at olvr.vermont.gov

Early or Absentee Voting: Town and school ballots were sent to all active voters in February. Ballots may be hand-delivered to the Town Office through Monday, March 6 at 5 pm and may be deposited in the secure drop box outside the Office until 5 pm on March 7. Ballots may be delivered to the EMES polling place until 7 pm on March 7.

Ballots for the Central Vermont Career Center District were NOT mailed out but are available until March 6 from the Town Office and on March 7 at the EMES polling place. They should be returned with other ballots.

Pre-Town Meeting Forums: The WCUUSD meeting will take place on Monday, March 6 at 5:30 pm in room 128/131 at U-32. Remote access is available at <https://tinyurl.com/yckpbt48>

The Town forum takes place on Monday, March 6 at 6:30 pm at the Town Office with remote access at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84447068796>

Details are available on the East Montpelier town website at eastmontpeliervt.org

Town Meeting at EMES

7:00 am - 7:00 pm Polls are open

9:30 am Town Meeting begins

End of Town Meeting - potluck lunch begins

No childcare will be offered this year



photo by Alex Brown

Potluck Lunch is ON

Town Meeting Potluck Lunch—a tradition of Town Meeting Day—will be held Tuesday, March 7, following Town Meeting. However, with new strains of Covid hovering, we are making a few changes:

- Contact me if you plan on attending and how many will be in your party. This will help us make food arrangements. Email: racanellis@comcast.net.
- Bring only a main entrée that will feed at least eight people. Label it non-vegetarian, vegetarian, or vegan. Bread, desserts, beverages, and napkins will all be provided.
- Bring your own plates, cups/glasses, and utensils and take them home with you. We will not be washing any serving dishes or dinnerware. The kitchen will essentially be closed except for the warming ovens.
- Meals can also be purchased for \$5 per person. Reservations must be made in advance for this by emailing me at racanellis@comcast.net.

We look forward to seeing you. Any questions, please email me at racanellis@comcast.net.

—Sue Racanelli, Town Meeting Potluck Coordinator

With this issue, we enthusiastically welcome back an in-person Town Meeting. It's been two long years since we've walked the school halls, perusing posters, grabbing some Girl Scout cookies, and—most important of all—seeing the faces and hearing the voices and thoughts of fellow townspeople. The potluck is back, also, slightly modified. (Please bring your own plates, cups, and silverware—pack in and pack out.) In this issue you'll find candidate statements and photos to help you make decisions before the actual day. (Unfortunately, our publishing schedule can't meet the needs of early mail voters.)

The weather has been an affliction this year: a dry summer, very warm fall, a shortfall of snow, and the dreaded rain and ice combination. Worst of all was the Christmas windstorm that tore down trees and literally left us in the dark for days. This issue includes a special section lauding the extraordinary work of electrical linesmen and sharing some stories of stress and survival.

We applaud all of you for volunteering your time and talents to the town and your neighbors and for persevering despite it all. Onward!

—Ann Stanton is a longtime Signpost volunteer.



photos by Alex Brown

More than one way to vote. Norma Raymond (with Renee Kievit-Kylar) has done it in-person in East Montpelier for 74 years. What an example!

EAST
MONTPELIER

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Printed by L. Brown & Sons Printing 476-3164

They Want Your Vote

Job descriptions taken largely from the VLCT Resource Manual and Vermont Law

TOWN MODERATOR: one 1-year term

The moderator is the presiding officer of municipal meetings and shall decide questions of votes taken, except if Australian ballot is used. The moderator shall preserve order in the conduct of business and meetings.



Michael Duane: I am running for re-election for the position of Town Moderator. My wife Ellen Knoedler and I have lived in East Montpelier for the past 40 years. We raised our three children in East Montpelier, and we now have two grandchildren who also reside in our town and attend East Montpelier Elementary School. After 35

years of practicing law, I now spend my days gardening, babysitting, skiing, hiking, traveling, and cutting wood. I have been the Town Moderator since 2015. As Moderator, it has been my practice to attend the selectboard meetings when the annual Town Warning is being prepared so that I have an understanding of what issues may arise at the upcoming Town Meeting. I believe I have a pretty good grasp of Robert's Rules of Order and Vermont state laws as they pertain to Vermont Town meeting procedures. It would be my honor to serve as East Montpelier's Town Moderator for another term. Hopefully, we will return to our long-standing tradition of an in-person Town Meeting this year.

LISTER: one 3-year term

Listers are responsible for determining the value of the real and personal property in town. This is the value the selectboard or the town will use to set a tax rate necessary to raise the money to operate the town in the next year. It is also the basis for the determination of the property wealth of the municipality for purposes of setting state education property taxes.

Deborah Fillion,

3-year term: no statement

TOWN AUDITOR: one 3-year term

Town auditors are responsible for examining and adjusting the accounts of all town officers and all other persons authorized by law to draw orders on the town treasurer. Secondly, they are to report their findings in writing to the legal voters of the town

presenting an easy-to-understand picture of the town's finances.

Carla Occaso,

3-year term: no statement

SELECTBOARD MEMBER: one 3-year term; one 2-year term

Selectboard members are responsible for general supervision of the affairs of the town and are responsible for seeing that all duties, not assigned by law to any particular officer, are carried out. The selectboard convenes town meetings and may enact ordinances and rules that regulate areas such as roads, traffic, waste disposal, animals, and nuisances as examples.

3-year term: No Candidate



Scott Hess, 2-year term: I've

spent over a decade on the planning commission and am looking for a new challenge. I began attending selectboard meetings remotely a few years ago to see if this would be a good fit and soon realized that a lot of the issues I've learned about on the planning commission are relevant to the selectboard (e.g., roads, zoning, items on the Town

Plan). In addition to town government, I have experience in commercial real estate and commodities. I serve on several non-profit boards, including Community Harvest of Central Vermont and the Vermont Alliance of Retired Americans. I am a panel member of the Vermont Professional Responsibility Program, which investigates complaints against attorneys. In my spare time, I run, hike, and substitute teach at elementary schools throughout the WCUUSD district.



Candidates continued p. 4

Candidates, continued from p. 3

PLANNING COMMISSIONER: *three 3-year terms; one 2 years of a 3-year term*

The Planning Commission is responsible for preparing and maintaining a current town plan and zoning regulations. It reviews significant developments and makes recommendations on issues including land development, transportation, economic and social development, historic, wetland and scenic preservation.

Clarice Cutler, 3-year term: Hello Neighbors, Clarice Cutler on Brazier Road here. My first three-year term on the planning commission is wrapping up, and I've decided to run again. During my past term, the PC recommended changes to the Town Plan and the Land Use and Development Regulations. These important documents are intended to help implement East Montpelier residents' vision for the future of the town. I enjoyed learning about these documents and their role, and hearing the thoughts and goals of neighbors. The PC is currently working to reestablish the Energy Committee and is taking a close look at obstacles to housing. I ask for your vote so I may continue to learn about and work on these issues. In addition to your vote, I ask that you continue to share your town goals and feedback with the commission and other boards, either through a conversation or during meetings and that you consider running or applying for a role with the town. Thank you!



Nikhil (Nik) Khosla, 3-year term: I've lived in East Montpelier since August of 2022. My family—wife Jada, 6-year-old twins, Niki and Julia, two dogs (Woody and Winona), and four cats (Ricky, Lucy, Smokey, and Bella)—are planting roots for generations to come as part of this amazing community.

I have a diverse background of experiences, having worked in technology, management consulting, commercial construction, and real estate development, to name a few. I believe diversity in thought and background yields progress, and I am driven to protect our picturesque environment whilst balancing how we look to grow and attract people to our beautiful community.

Ensuring we have the proper infrastructure, associated housing studies, and an appropriate long-range town planning view is critical to our growth and well-being. I'll continue to advocate for green/open spaces, protecting our environment and would like to explore ways of bringing our community together (parks/recreation areas).

If I am granted your support for the Planning Commission, I will bring my open-mindedness and pragmatism to ensure all issues are thoughtfully considered and that the goals of our community are advanced upon.



Maia Stone, 3-year term: I was appointed to the Planning Commission in November 2022 and am running to remain for a 3-year term.

I was born and raised in East Montpelier and have just returned home after living in Dresden, Germany, for the past nine years. In fact, I have just moved into the house I grew up in on Cummings Road. East Montpelier has provided an open, supportive, and strong community for me both as a child and as an adult. I would love the opportunity not only to understand more deeply the mechanisms behind the creation of the community but also to have the chance to be a part of the planning that helps it grow stronger. Now, with children of my own, I aim to engage my experience and perspective to support the vision of the Town Plan for the generations here now and those to come.

I would be grateful to be able to serve on the Planning Commission alongside the current, highly qualified members to gain as much insight as I can in starting my term.

2 years of a 3-year term: No Candidate

WASHINGTON CENTRAL UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT (WCUUSD)

The WCUUSD consists of the elementary schools of the five towns of Berlin, Calais, East Montpelier, Middlesex, and Worcester and U-32 Middle/High School. A single school board with representatives from the five towns is responsible for the entire pre-K through 12 school system. Voters from the five towns elect all members of the board, as well as a moderator, clerk, and treasurer for the school district.

In keeping with time and space limitations, the Signpost will continue to publish statements from those running as board members from East Montpelier, as well as the non-town-affiliated positions of moderator, clerk, and treasurer. It is hoped that information on other candidates will be available on the WCUUSD website.

Candidates continued p. 6

Town Offices

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Phone: 802-223-3313
Office Hours: Mon–Thurs 9 AM–5 PM
Fri 9 AM –12 PM

Town Clerk

Rosie Laquerre
clerk@eastmontpeliervt.org

Town Treasurer

Michele Pallas
treasurer@eastmontpeliervt.org

Town Administrator

Gina Jenkins
manager@eastmontpeliervt.org

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

Deborah Fillian
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
Judith Dillon Carl Etnier
Jon Jewett Amy Willis

Planning Commission

Zach Sullivan, Chair, zsullivan@gmail.com

Development Review Board

Steve Kappel, Chair
sjkappel@gmail.com

WCUUSD Board

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

State Representative

Ela Chapin, 802-552-0242
echapin@leg.state.vt.us



Lisa Masé's poem will be featured in PoemCity 2023, the Kellogg-Hubbard Library's community-wide celebration of National Poetry Month in April. Visit kellogg-hubbard.org/poemcity for more information about poems in downtown Montpelier and programs, including a reading by Masé on Monday, April 17, at 6:30 pm in the Hayes Room of the library. Masé will be reading with her poetry-writing group, FLOW (Four Lefts and a Write).

Charted by the Stars

To the stars, do we look like stars
as we buzz around in cars after dark,
stopping only for traffic lights?

I want stars to see me when I am
by a bonfire, sparks sending signals
coded by my celestial body that say:
My bones are made from your dust.
My compass steers by your trusted
revolutions.

What if I could grow so bright
that I rewired electricity
to the frequency of sun drying a leaf,
so brilliant that the internet's algorithm
remembered itself as a prayer
from the ancestors?

—Lisa Masé is a nutritionist, herbalist, poet, and
parent living in occupied Abenaki land.
She is passionate about PoemCity and taking
her children on the poetry walk in Montpelier.

Candidates, continued from p. 4

WCUUSD SCHOOL DIRECTOR from East Montpelier:
one 3-year term

School directors are responsible for managing the general affairs of the school district by developing policies and hiring able administrators to assure the soundness of the physical assets as well as the educational content and methods presented in student classrooms. They are responsible for convening school district meetings.



Eric Andersen: As the father of a sixth-grader at EMES and graduate of public schools myself, I deeply understand the importance of a great education and the support our educators and young students need from the community. I believe in growing opportunities for all students through our schools, while responsibly managing

resources. I've appreciated the chance to support and connect more with our school system by serving on the school board for the last year.

I live with my wife and 12-year-old daughter on our fledgling organic flower and berry farm, Anderbell Acres. My work experience includes 20+ years managing operations and finances of small businesses and nonprofits. I most enjoy riding my John Deere in the fields, getting my hands dirty, and biking and exploring all the wonders that Vermont offers with my family. Before moving to East Montpelier, my daughter attended Union Elementary School, and I was an active participant in the parents' group in Montpelier, serving as treasurer for the Montpelier - Roxbury Public Schools Partners in Education (MRPSPIE) organization. My family and I are deeply grateful for the safe and caring learning environment our local schools and community provide, and I aim to support that through continued service on the school board. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me at eandersen@u32.org with questions or your ideas on how the board can improve our local schools, or stop by the farm to chat.

WCUUSD SCHOOL DIRECTORS

from other towns but elected by all district voters:

Berlin: **Diane Nichols-Fleming**

Calais: **no candidate**

Middlesex: **Joshua Sevits**

Worcester: **Mckalyn Garrity Leclerc**

WCUUSD MODERATOR: one 1-year term
No candidate

WCUUSD CLERK: one 1-year term



Rosalie "Rosie" Laquerre: 2023 marks the second year I have run for WCUUSD clerk. Over the past year, I worked with the Board chair and WCUUSD Central Office staff to prepare for meetings with selectboards throughout the district to gain the permission needed to mail ballots to all voters in the district. I also ensured that

WCUUSD purchased an election tabulator of their own so that co-mingling of ballots can be done more efficiently. As clerk I prepare the School District Warning and ensure documentation including oaths of office and sample ballots are kept for their records. In keeping with best practices as a town clerk, I comply with the state's requirements of attending election-related training at least once every two years. Depending on what occurs during the legislative session, there are frequently more training opportunities available.

I live in Berlin and am the appointed town clerk in East Montpelier. What I like most about East Montpelier is the spirit of community. It takes many hands to do the work of the town, and we're fortunate to have several volunteers who not only share their time but their expertise as well. Should you have any questions about the duties of the WCUUSD clerk, please feel free to contact me. I appreciate your confidence in my ability to perform these duties over the course of the next year.

WCUUSD TREASURER: one 1-year term

Mary Ormsby: No statement

CENTRAL VERMONT CAREER CENTER SCHOOL DISTRICT (CVCCSD) Board: 3-year term representing WCUUSD

CVCCSD comprises the six school districts (18 individual towns) that send students to the Central Vermont Career Center in Barre—formerly known as the Barre Vocational Center. It is overseen by a board representing all six districts. CVCCSD has a separate ballot.

Terri Steele: No Statement



Green Up Day 2023

Saturday, May 6

9:00 am - 2:00 pm

East Montpelier Elementary School

There are several ways you can participate in Green Up Day this year:

- Students can enter Green Up Vermont contests: essays/poems due March 1, video and jingles due April 1. Find details at greenupvermont.org.
- When doing your taxes this year, remember to donate to Green Up Vermont on Line 23 of your Vermont return. Your donation helps keep Green Up Day alive.
- The Green Up crew needs volunteers to help sort and recycle trash at the school. To volunteer call Chris Racanelli at (802) 793-6687 or Erin Borland (970) 631-3789.



Justin Sayers and Ross Mroczek
at Green Up Day 2022



photoS by Chris Racanelli

Bob Onne and Doug Kievet-Kyler
at Green Up Day 2022

New Face at Green Up

by Chris Racanelli, Green Up Day Co-Coordinator

Erin Borland will join the East Montpelier Green Up Day as co-coordinator and then take over from me as coordinator next year—a smooth transition.

Erin and husband, Matt, moved to East Montpelier a few years ago. They were looking for a quiet place with a bit of land where they could have a nice garden, house, chickens, and some space to breathe.

Now, after settling in, Erin would like to get to know the community, and Green Up Day seemed like a good fit. “I was looking for a volunteer opportunity where I can help make a difference in our little town. I am hoping to make Green Up fun and help the next generation of Vermonters grow up with a respect and appreciation for the environment we live in.” She recalls participating in Green Up Day in Norwich as a high school student, “It was fun doing it with friends.”

Erin spent her early years in the New England area, including Vermont. As she got older, she wanted to live

in Central Vermont but had things to do before settling down. She went to Colorado State University and became a virologist. This took her to different parts of the world where she did diagnostics, research, and clinical practice. Her travel included frequent visits to East Africa, where she supported the research and diagnostic initiatives at the Uganda Virus Research Institute.

Erin has done a lot of volunteer work including rehabilitating injured birds of prey at the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program, as well as flying airborne search and rescue or photography missions with Civil Air Patrol, the auxiliary of the United States Air Force. In her free time, she loves hiking the trails, skiing the mountains, and gardening.

Green Up Day in East Montpelier is in good hands. I am excited to welcome and work with Erin.

—Chris Racanelli has done an outstanding job of leading EM's Green Up Day effort for many years.



Stories from the Christmas 2022 Storm

None of us will forget the Christmas 2022 storm. Planning for this Signpost issue, we wanted to be sure that posterity won't forget either; hence, these additional pages. Besides sharing readers' stories, we especially want to recognize and thank the dedicated workers who cleaned up: the East Montpelier road crew, the chainsaw brigades, and Washington Electric Coop and Green Mountain Power workers. They left their warm homes and holiday gatherings for hours and days of frigid and often dangerous work. Public service at its best! We are awed and very grateful.

Tumbling Like Toothpicks

The Friday before Christmas it started raining, and then the wind picked up. I went outside to take some photos. The wind started to sound like a train going through, and I realized I should go in. While standing at the kitchen sink, I looked out at our stand of old growth pines (ranging from 70 to 100 feet tall) on the ridge across the yard. I was stunned as these age-old trees started toppling over like toothpicks. There seemed to have been three separate blasts that came through, each taking down another batch of trees. Remarkably, there was a beautiful rainbow in the midst of the storm. We lost our power and hooked up the generator, which provided five-and-a-half days of precious power.

We went out to inspect the damage after the storm had passed. Giant trees were lying in piles everywhere including ten across the driveway that prevented us from leaving. The back portion of the woods lost most of its trees. We lost about two hundred trees all together.

Our daughter, Lexi, was scheduled to arrive the next morning from Maine with her dog, Roo. With both ends of Bliss Road and our driveway impassable, we wanted her to delay her arrival until Sunday, Christmas day. We had no phone or internet, but found that, on occasion, a text

message would go through. We were finally able to notify her. Rob spent all day Saturday with his chain saw and tractor clearing large logs from the driveway. There was still much more cleaning up to do in the days ahead.

Lexi arrived on Christmas. We cooked our Christmas ham dinner on the grill outside. Although the holiday did not go as planned, we were happy to be safe and together. And a shout out to Washington Electric Coop and the town highway crew for coming through after an extraordinary storm!

—Robin Hall, Bliss Road



before and...



Rainbow after the storm on Bliss Road
- photo by Robin Hall



Hall driveway after - cleared at last.
- photos by Robin Hall

The Arrival of "When"

Thursday night I walked back from working at the Adamant Coop; it was cold—wind blowing and snowing hard. When I got home the lights flickered just a bit—a warning to "Be Prepared!" I filled some more jugs of water (I usually keep a few in the pantry for "Just In Case"), brought out some candles and flashlights, and wondered "When." Sometime later, it was "When": no power. The wind was so loud; I kept hoping my roof wouldn't blow off or a tree fall on the house. Hoping it wasn't for long, I didn't open the fridge to help keep everything frozen and cold. By next morning, when I learned everyone was out, I took action. I put all my frozen items in boxes and coolers and put them out on the back porch. Luckily, it was very cold, zero-degree temperatures, so we had instant freezers. I lost none of my summer's work of frozen sauces, fruits, veggies, and more. Refrigerated items went in a corner of the pantry that had gotten pretty cold. I was in pretty good shape for food.

I was one of the lucky ones. I have a 1920s gas cookstove and a gas fireplace-type stove, neither of which need any new-fangled computer chips (i.e. electricity) to work. My kitchen was toasty; the rest of the house was getting chilly but not unbearable—mostly around 55-58 degrees. I worried most about my two six-inch koi in the living room; they were chilly, but they survived. When the fallen trees had

been cleared from the roads, and the plows had gone by, I did go into town a couple of times to charge up my various devices, so I was able to watch a movie, listen to a book, and once the Internet came back on, I was in touch with the outside world.

It was a strange few days. Christmas was dark in the village of Adamant where there is usually light in every window. Many relatives of neighbors had to postpone their holiday visits. Then the generators got going. It was a bit noisy but also reassuring that those without propane were staying warm and able to cook some meals. Otherwise, I was going to bring them all to my kitchen!

Wednesday afternoon (day six) the power came on. What a relief! I had been telling myself how lucky I was to have what I have, but it was getting old! And I did feel concern for those without. We've experienced outages before, though not usually for this long, and made it through. We're Vermonters. This is what happens, and it will happen again. We just need to be prepared for "Just In Case." All the while, all those line workers were working extremely long hours, leaving their Christmas celebrations, trying to get power back to us; they should be commended and are very much appreciated.

—Alison Underhill, Adamant Center

The Movie Without an End

After five days without power over Christmas, my adventure continued New Year's Eve. At around 9:30 pm there was a loud thump, and the lights flickered off and back on. This gave me pause, but I was grateful to have power. An hour later there it goes again . . . the power was out and this time didn't come back.

I had started watching "Yesterday," a movie with a world-wide power outage as its premise, but that's just a funny aside. Anyway, before too long I see the bright flashing lights of emergency vehicles lining the road and five flashlights shining all around. My dog and I went outside to investigate, and I smelled smoke. Turns out, there was a small ground fire in my woods. My best guess is that the fire had its roots with the Christmas storm when a huge white pine fell in that very spot, pinning wires to the ground. We had watched workers with chainsaws take an hour to cut the tree before the wires sprung back up like rubber bands. That tree fall must have compromised the coating on the wire that led to the fire. Thanks to the crew working on

yet ANOTHER holiday, they put the fire out (with a little help from the rain) and restored power just before the ball dropped in Time's Square.

OK—back to the movie, or so I thought. . . Just after midnight, I see the sky light up as bright as day and hear pops like fireworks—as if to say Happy New Year—and then an explosion. My power was out again. This time it was the transformer at the end of my driveway. I think the tree that fell the week before had tugged that wire, exposing it, and, because of the rain, it exploded. The heroes returned for round two, and power was back within an hour. I didn't get to watch the end of the movie; turns out it was only free until midnight. Oh well . . .

I won't forget this holiday and am so grateful to live in this place with crew members from WEC, the fire department, and others willing to leave their own celebrations to take care of others. Happy New Year everyone!

—Margaret Gibson, Bliss Road

All He Wants...

How does that song go, "All I want for Christmas is my.."? All I really wanted was some good ol' fashioned family time with maybe a few cocktail sauce-dipped shrimp thrown in. Instead, I spent Christmas with a different family member of sorts, a guy named Murphy, that's "Murphy" of "Murphy's Law"! My power went out around 8:00 am on December 23. "No problem, I said to myself. It'll be back on soon." You see, in my 69 years at this Green Mountain Power location, I had never seen a power loss of more than a very-manageable few hours. In fact, because of that good fortune, I never bought a generator. Stupid, stupid! My hope was powering down with the approaching dusk that same day. "Has the patron saint of electrification forsaken

me?" I asked myself. The next morning, I had my answer: cold, forlorn, and worried, I dug in like a true Vermont woodchuck. Finally, three days later—and what would prove to be many dollars short—the lights came back to life around 9:00 pm, December 25. And that, my dear friends, was my shortchanged and, hopefully, unique Christmas. And the dollars-short part? Repair jobs needed on six burst pipes now glare at me through ragged holes in my living room floor and bathroom wall. Completion dates to come. Will I now spring for a generator, you ask? You betcha! I can already hear its soothing but powerful hum.

—Burr Morse, County Road



Tree threatens the Schmidt home.
-photo by Merry Schmidt



Damage on the trails by EMTI.
- photo by Jennifer Boyer



New Year's Eve at the Gibson-McCoys.
-photo by Margaret Gibson

EM Trails Weather the Storm

You've all seen the damage from the December storm, and the town trails sustained their share. The storm took down healthy trees as well as dead wood, leaving a tangle of trees on the ground. Many were pulled out by the roots, and some were hanging precariously above our heads. We've received reports of downed trees from our trail stewards and trail walkers.

Anyone with knowledge of downed trees on the trails should report them to Allan Serrano at allanserrano@gmail.com. He'd also like to know who wants to help with the cleanup, especially if you have a chainsaw. Please continue to use caution while walking and, especially, while clearing any debris. Clearing could take a long time and may require that the Trails Committee hire professional help. Stay safe!

Thank you to the unknown caretakers who have cleared debris from the trails, some with chainsaws. Safety comes first, and we presume that anyone using a chainsaw has had training and experience with proper use of power equipment. In most cases we also need permission from the landowner before cutting into a large swath of downed trees.

—Jennifer Boyer for East Montpelier Trails, Inc.

A Hero Emerged

My hero, my son! A number of years ago my son, Ben, worked for a large company that manufactures generators—for homes as well as for airplanes and ocean liners. One of his final acts before leaving that job was to purchase a generator for his parents. While this wonderful appliance has been used for short periods of time a few times in the ensuing years, it really proved its value starting two days before Christmas 2022 when the power went off and stayed off—for five full days. Not only did the generator perform flawlessly and allow our household full of kids, grandkids, and others to function normally, but it provided a stopping-off spot for neighbors who did not have the same luxury. As a silver lining, our fortunate situation gave me an extra opportunity to visit with friends and neighbors as they came to fill water buckets, charge phones, and sometimes just to warm up. Thanks, Ben.

—*Eddie Miller, Murray Road*

The Meanings of Light

I have always thought of the holidays of the Winter Solstice, Hanukkah, and Christmas as being about light; but it wasn't until the great power outage of December 2022 that I really understood what that meant. When we lost power on Cherry Tree Hill Road, it was just past the Winter Solstice, right in the middle of Hanukkah, and two days before Christmas. That first evening as we sat by the woodstove for warmth and cooked dinner on our gas stove, we understood in a new way how early the sun went down and how very dark it was after that. We played a board game for as long as we could and still went to bed early. The next day I realized that I had no idea what color pieces I had been playing with because I couldn't see them clearly enough in the candlelight!

Once we realized that the power was going to be off for an extended amount of time, we had to think about the fish tank and how to keep the temperature-controlled water from getting too cold and killing the fish. We carefully surrounded the tank with pillar candles, which lent

their warmth through the glass. We had to keep so many candles burning continuously that the scented ones became almost unbearably obnoxious overnight. I haven't lit a candle for ambiance since the power outage, and I'll never buy cheap scented candles again.

When the outage lasted into the second evening, we all became very aware of time. At two o'clock we knew we had only two hours of daylight left, and we had a much better sense of the miracle of the light that night when we needed all those menorah candles that were lit. The power came back on that night, and what a relief! Not just for light, but hot water, power for our dying cell phones, the refrigerator, and so many other things. The crews that worked nonstop were the true Hanukkah miracle.

We were lucky, we lost power for only a few days. It was a holiday season to remember and wouldn't you know it—all the fish made it.

—*Michelle Singer,
Cherry Tree Hill Road*

Music in the Storm

My family and I moved to Vermont in the winter of 2018—shortly before Covid hit.

During the storm, in addition to removing downed trees and branches, trying to figure out how best to bleed the pipes as night fell towards eight degrees, checking in with neighbors, tending to the animals, and eating by candlelight what food could not be salvaged, as a sound artist I also did what sound artists do: I made some recordings. You may listen to them at this link, but I recommend ear buds or headphones for subtle listening during the quiet tracks. sonicanta.bandcamp.com/album/122222

The backstory: We have a piano in the barn some dear friends gifted us. I plan on eventually removing the harp to take advantage of the aeolian sounds that strings and the strong winds of storms produce. But on the first day of the storm, after battening down a section of metal roofing on the barn that threatened to take wing, I turned on the recorder in the hayloft as the wind and rain picked up. Then I went downstairs and improvised a bit with the storm.

I also documented the sound of creaking trees becoming caked in ice, snapping branches, generator drones, the moment power returned, and the unexpectedly melodic bell tones of water returning to heating pipes.

The storm provided an energy that, in retrospect, fueled improvisation and challenged my abilities in both survival and musing. I find myself grateful for that duality of experience and perspective living in Vermont provides.

—*Glenn Weyant, Johnson Road*

TOWN WEATHERVANE

BIRTHS

- Axel Robert Somers, a son, was born to Samantha Reed & Alexander Somers
- Luna Rose Johnson, a daughter, was born to Cheyenne Merchant
- Izaiah Jaymz Lane, a son, was born to Brianna Lane

MARRIAGES

- James Webster & Shellie Janawicz married in December

DEATHS—survivors living in East Montpelier are listed when known

- Ellen Leonard died in December

LAND TRANSFERS

Transfers relative to estate planning or corrective deeds are not included in this listing. For further information, please contact the Town Clerk.

- Joshua & Marie Bernier to Benjamin & Birgit McCall, 1.2 acres of open land on Stoney Corners Rd
- Austin Cleaves to Paul & Lynn Guare, corrective deed for 16.90 acres on Dodge Rd
- Katina Johnson to Bridget Grant, a mobile home on Sandy Pines Rd
- Clifton King to Richard Hall, 7 acres and dwelling on Vincent Flats Rd
- Morris Properties LLC to 4233 US2 LLC, 1.58 acres and mobile home on US2
- Robert Phillips, II to Jessica Taylor, 5.10 acres of open land on Mays Way
- Kurt Poulin to Double U Investments LLC, 10.10 acres on Chickering Lane
- Village Homes to Scott Tassej, a mobile home on Robinson Rd

The following are excerpts from minutes of EM's and WCUUSD's governing boards. Complete minutes are on the town and school websites. Unless otherwise noted, all meetings were held in person with a remote participation option available.

SELECTBOARD

November 28, 2022

Motions Passed

- to adopt the amended Declaration of Inclusion
- to authorize Town Administrator Jenkins to sign the Avenu quote for document digitization for \$8,521.41

- to authorize Road Foreman Perry to proceed with the purchase of a truck plow up to \$9,000, and that the town utilize money from the capital reserve for the purchase and return any funds from the sale of the old pickup and plow to the capital reserve

December 5, 2022

Motion Passed

- to increase the per capita assessment cap for Wrightsville Beach Recreation District from \$1.50 to \$4, with the understanding that it will be \$2.50 in 2023 and that it will not increase more than 3% in following years
- to approve mailing the WCUUSD annual meeting ballots to all active non-challenged voters on the checklist, consistent with the November 16, 2022 request from the WCUUSD board
- to mail town meeting ballots for 2023 to all active non-challenged voters on the checklist
- to appoint Maia Stone to the Planning Commission for the remainder of the term of the open seat
- to approve transferring the remainder of the balance in the Emergency Service Facility fund totaling \$6,754 to the East Montpelier Fire Department

December 19, 2022

Motions Passed

- to approve the curb cuts authorized in permits 22-075 and 22-076
- to clarify that the selectboard's motion to transfer the remainder of the balance in the Emergency Service Facility fund to the East Montpelier Fire Department includes all funds in the balance

January 3, 2023

Motions Passed

- Discussion of FY24 Budget Development, 2023 Town Meeting Warning, various Town Meeting reports, and proposal for County Road closures in 2023

January 17, 2023

Motions Passed

- Discussion of Town Meeting Warning, Town Meeting reports, and budget development.

PLANNING COMMISSION

December 1, 2022

Motions Passed

- to go into executive session to discuss filling the vacant PC seat at 7:23 pm and exited at 7:26 pm
- to recommend that the selectboard appoint Maia Stone to the open PC seat

December 15, 2022

- to discuss action items from Town Plan and potential additional projects, assessment of process on Town Plan goals, and Energy Committee selection process

January 5, 2023

- to discuss Work Plan for housing need analysis

January 19, 2023 (U)

Motions passed:

- to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters; entered at 7:25 pm and exited at 8:00 pm
- to recommend Andy Shapiro, Ben McCall, Austin Cate, Emily Levin, Stephen Miracle, Tom Fisher, and Rick Barstow to the selectboard as members for the Energy Committee

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

December 6, 2022

Motions Passed

- to accept the preliminary and final plans for application #22-074 as submitted by Sherwood Morse, Elliott Morse, and Susan Shattuck for a proposed 3-lot subdivision of an existing 67-acre parcel which lies on both sides of Cummings Rd
- to approve the boundary line adjustment for John and Christine Beling's parcel as outlined in application #22-073

WCUUSD

December 1, 2022

Special Board Meeting (virtual only)

Motions Passed

- to enter into executive session for the purpose of considering student discipline matters to include Meagan Roy, Steven Dellinger-Pate, Amy Molina, and student family members;

TOWN WEATHERVANE

entered executive session at 7:32 pm and exited at 8:20 pm

- to affirm the administration's decision

December 7, 2022 Community Forum

Motions Passed

- to prequalify Dirt Tech Company, LLC, Engineers Construction, Inc., Farrington Construction Co. Inc., G.W. Tatro Construction, Inc., J. Hutchins, Inc., J.A. McDonald, Inc., Kingsbury Companies, and S.D. Ireland Brothers Corporation as bidders for the U-32 Parking Lot and Sidewalk replacement project
- to appoint Alex Donelson as long-term substitute for U-32 Math teacher
- to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing negotiations, and to include Meagan Roy; entered executive session at 8:09 pm and exited at 8:30 pm

December 15, 2022

Special Board Meeting (virtual only)

Motions Passed

- to enter into executive session for the purpose of considering student discipline matters to include Meagan Roy, Steven Dellinger-Pate, Jess Wills, Chris Blackburn, and student family members; entered executive session at 7:15 pm and exited at 7:50 pm
- to affirm the administration's decision
- to enter into executive session for the purpose of considering student discipline matters to include Meagan Roy, Steven Dellinger-Pate, Jess Wills, Nate Lovitz, Brittany Perry, and student family members; entered executive session at 8:05 pm and exited at 8:35 pm
- to affirm the administration's decision

December 21, 2022 (virtual only)

Motions Passed

- to mail ballots for the WCUUSD Annual Meeting to all active, non-challenged voters in the school district in accordance with the votes of the selectboards of the five towns
- to accept the extended absence request from Daisy Scarzello
- to approve 0.25 FTE unpaid leave of absence for Kate McCann, January 4 through the end of legislative session

- to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing negotiations strategy to include Superintendent Roy; entered executive session at 9:46 pm and exited at 9:57 pm

January 4, 2023

Motions Passed

- to increase the board member stipend from \$1,050 to \$1,100, and chairperson stipend from \$2,100 to \$2,200
- to join on behalf of U-32 the Winooski Valley & Statewide Choice of Public High School Collaborative for the 2022-23 school year, and to abide by the conditions outlined in the Articles of Agreement; U-32 will agree to accept no more than 10 students and will send no more than 40 students for 2023-24 school year

January 11, 2023 (virtual only)

Motions Passed

- to announce tuition for 2023-24: \$22,808 elementary, \$21,413 secondary
- [most of the meeting was devoted to discussing Budget Draft #3, including public comment]

January 12, 2023

Special Board Meeting (virtual only)

Motions Passed

- to enter into executive session for the purpose of considering student discipline matters to include Meagan Roy, Steven Dellinger-Pate, Jess Wills, JB Hilferty, and student family members; entered executive session at 7:00 pm and exited at 8:18 pm
- to affirm the administration's decision as modified by the Board

January 18, 2023 Community Forum

Motions Passed

- to approve the [budget] warning as printed with the following as Article 6: *Shall the voters of the Washington Central Unified Union School District approve the school board to expend \$38,921,331 which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$22,268 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per*

equalized pupil is 12.86% higher than spending for the current year.

- to authorize the allocation of \$69,747 additional capital reserve funds to the completion of the 2023 Mechanical Projects
- to approve awarding the 2023 Mechanical Projects contract to Thomas Mechanical, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$1,181,712 (this includes the 5% contingency).
- to approve Samantha Mishkin's (Music Teacher Rumney/East Montpelier) request to extend medical leave with a return date of May 22, 2023
- to approve a decrease in FTE for Mary Carpenter, Calais Elementary Interventionist- from 1.0 FTE to 0.50 FTE for the remainder of FY23



Bliss Road pole down.



In the woods.

photos by Greg Wimer

Land Records Preservation: Stay Tuned

In East Montpelier, the preservation of land records has been a way of life since the first deed was recorded on January 4, 1849. Town clerks throughout the decades have hand-written, typed, copied, and scanned these important documents into bound books almost every day since then. Vermont is one of the handful of states that still records land records at the town level. Most states record these documents in county offices.

During the 1990s, state government, realizing that floods, fires, and other natural disasters could destroy local land records, paid for these documents to be microfilmed. More than fifteen years later, technology made it possible to

scan original documents into digital formats. At that time, East Montpelier made the decision to digitize both new documents and those older records that had been saved on microfilm. During the pandemic, digital preservation continued, which brings us to the milestone that was achieved on December 28, 2022. East Montpelier's land records are now digitized all the way back to that first deed in book 1, on page 1. In a future issue of the *Signpost*, you'll hear more about this milestone, how it was achieved, and why it's important.

—Rosie Laquerre, EM Town Clerk

Paulie's Recipe Pumpkin Black Bean Soup

INGREDIENTS

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 ½ c drained, diced canned tomatoes | Juice of ½ lemon |
| 2-15 oz cans black beans, drained and rinsed | ½ t freshly ground black pepper |
| 2 T olive oil | 1 - 15 oz can pumpkin |
| 1 large onion, finely chopped | 2 T dry sherry |
| 1 t cumin | 1 c crumbled queso fresco (or cheddar or jack cheese) |
| 3 cloves garlic, minced | ½ c sliced green onions |
| 3 c chicken (or vegetable) broth | Pumpkin seeds optional for garnish |
| 2 T sherry vinegar (or balsamic) | |

DIRECTIONS Process the tomatoes and black beans in a food processor until about half the beans are smooth. Set aside. Heat oil in a large soup pot and sauté the onion until they just begin to brown. Add cumin and garlic and sauté an additional minute.

Add the bean and tomato mixture, broth, vinegar, lemon juice, pepper, and pumpkin. Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer for 20 minutes.

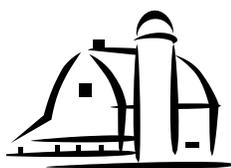
Stir in sherry. Ladle into soup bowls and garnish with cheese, green onions, and pumpkin seeds if desired. Serves: 6



Comment
from Paulie
Coburn:

Boy was this good! Easy and flavorful. Using some soup that I had left over, I added a sliced sausage link and poured it over rice, making a delicious meal.

*Recipe is from
Gather Round the Table,
Collected Recipes from the
Old Meeting House, 2020.
Recipe contributed by
Marcia Clark.*



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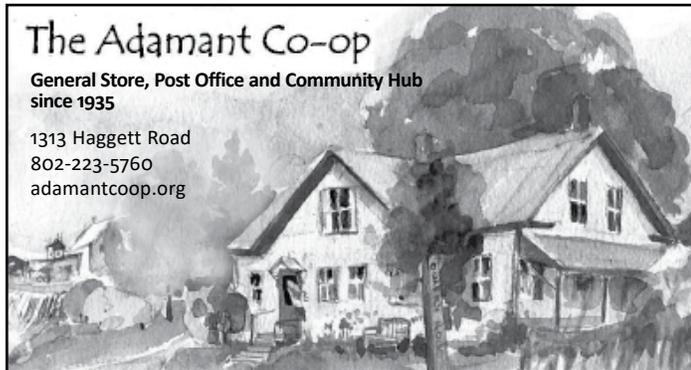
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IMPORTANT DATES

Mon. Mar. 6, 5:30 pm, WCUUSD Meeting, U-32 Room 128/131 plus online option at <https://tinyurl.com/yckpbt48>

Mon. Mar. 6, 6:30 pm, Pre-Town Meeting Forum, EM Town Office plus online option at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84447068796>, see town website for details

Tues. Mar. 7, 9:30 am, Town Meeting Day, EMES, polls open for town and school ballots, 7:00 am - 7:00 pm

Tues. Mar. 7, after Town Meeting, Potluck Lunch, EMES

Tues. Mar. 7, Town Offices CLOSED for Town Meeting

Mon. Mar. 20, EM & Calais Historical Society Meeting, program and location TBD

Sat. Mar. 25, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, Rabies Clinic, EMFD, 54 Village Acres, East Montpelier

Mon. Apr. 17, EM & Calais Historical Society Meeting, program and location TBD. See Front Porch Forum for details or contact Sandal Cate, sandal.cate@gmail.com

Mon. May 15, 2nd installment of taxes due by 5 pm



Covid Home Tests Available

There is a limited number of Covid test kits available at the Town Office. Please inquire at the Clerk's office if you need testing kits for home use.

Thank you for your support

DIANA AND MALCOLM FIELDER

HARRIET HAGGETT

ANNE & CONRAD ORMSBEE

LORING STARR

DORIS WASHBURN

SUBMISSIONS FOR MAY-JUNE 2023

SIGNPOST DUE:

April 3, 2023

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

as needed
1st Tues. 7 pm
every Tues. 7 pm
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
TBD

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