

## Bragg Farm Sugar House Labor Day 2023

by Erik Esselstyn

photo by Anthony Pagani



*Bragg Farm Sugarhouse & Gift Shop*

Another super-hot afternoon in the Vermont summer of the endless monsoon; time for a cooling creemee. Wending eastward out of East Montpelier Village on Route 14N; the road rises gradually through a few sweeping turns and after a mile brings you to the Bragg Farm Sugarhouse and Gift Shop. We were the twenty-seventh vehicle in the busy parking area. 'Midst the mud dusty cars and pickups from Vermont, there is a sprinkling of the shiny out-of-staters from Georgia, Oklahoma, Illinois, and South Dakota. What is the magic that brings dozens of people streaming to this chimneyed, single-story, tin-roofed, wooden building in rural Vermont?

In the heat of summer, one obvious part of the magic is Bragg Farm's creemees. The blend of gray-haired elders and children rocking contentedly on the shaded front porch, creemees in hand, underscores that answer. However, a deeper look would point to more than four decades of Doug and Barb Bragg nurturing a 1970s simple, springtime sugar shack into a year-round mecca for folks of all ages in

search of something special. Doug's family moved to East Montpelier from Waitsfield when he was ten, continuing in the dairy business. In 1976, Doug and his brother, Dan, built the first sugarhouse right behind the farmhouse, using timber cut from their family's farmland. The syrup was then sold from the front porch of the farmhouse.

Soon crafts made by Doug's mom, Jinnie, were added to the front porch, along with maple candy and maple cream. Local craft shows and local farmers' markets were added to the retail efforts. In 1991, Doug's parents, Bob and Jinnie Bragg, sold five acres of a former dairy pasture to Doug and Barb. With the help of a 4% loan from the Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA), the younger couple was able to build a new sugarhouse and gift shop. Doug made clear that maple syrup remains Bragg Farm's principal business.

When the business first launched in the 1970s, every customer was handed a list cataloging the prices of various popular items and maple syrup for shipping. Over time, the Christmas time period became the busiest season. Doug reflects with quiet pride that he follows the footsteps of his great-great-grandfather who made syrup that was shipped to Boston by train when the family lived in Waitsfield.

And you'll catch a gleam in his eye when asked about winning the annual Vermont Maple Festival Quality Award offered through the University of Vermont Extension Service. The recognition, presented as the C. Blake Roy Award, involves statewide competition of three grades of syrup: Golden Delicate, Amber Rich, and Dark Robust. Each grade produces a winner and then those top-grade winners compete for best in Vermont maple syrup. I learned that in recent years Bragg Farm Sugarhouse overall has earned the C. Blake Roy Award four times for Golden Delicate; then I watched Doug's ready smile deepen a bit.

*Bragg Farm, continued on p. 2*

We certainly are learning our lessons on how to manage the unexpected. Though I've lived in East Montpelier for more than 40 years, I don't recall any catastrophes that rival those of the past three and a half years: the Covid pandemic, the holiday windstorm of last December, and the flood in July. Each has left its mark.

Many people are still feeling the results of the pandemic—and may continue to do so for years—because of the loss of in-person school or job. The windstorm was perhaps less disruptive in an ongoing way, but many remember a holiday without electricity and a chilly house for up to six days while managing with the wood stove. And the flood in July continues to be felt as houses, roads, and

bridges still need more permanent repairs, and some of our favorite businesses are gone.

In spite of all this, there is much to be thankful for this Thanksgiving as we recall the many who helped us through these unexpected events: school teachers and administrators, emergency personnel, linemen both local and from away, road crews, and our own town office people, who seemed to keep their hands on the tiller as we sailed on through tough times. For me, just being in East Montpelier kept me sane. We still have our kind neighbors, our fields and forests, our mountain views, our familiar roads, and our long-standing landmarks. We are lucky to call this home.

—Barb Ploof is a long-time Signpost volunteer.

Bragg Farm, continued from p. 1

photos by Jeff Whinings



Establishing a viable retail business means providing an appealing environment and offering desirable products and customer service. During my Labor Day visit, I watched eager youngsters competing for the highest arcs on the swing set. And nearby, toddlers and their parents were petting two goats and admiring two miniature horses that board at

Bragg Farm during the summer. More families sit under shading umbrellas at the picnic tables, on rocking chairs in the shade beneath the overhanging roof, and on the padded chairs inside near the mugs, marmalades, green Vermont hoodies, and place settings. When the temperature hovers near ninety degrees, maple creemees are every visitor's primary target.

Keeping things local seems to be part of the Bragg Farm

ethos. It all begins in the sugarbush in a neighboring farmer's maple forest which provides the sap. Local hard wood logs are sawed to fit the firebox. Doug learned that maple creemee recipes are closely guarded and no standard recipe formula exists. He and Barb worked diligently to achieve a recipe they believed best captured the essence of their own Vermont maple syrup.

As I was leaving, an assortment of refrigerator magnets for sale caught my eye, especially this one: LIFE'S TOO SHORT FOR FAKE MAPLE SYRUP. That little phrase, for me, captures the enduring Vermont appeal of Bragg Farm Sugarhouse. And at the door, another eye-catcher, a sign touting Bragg's unique creemees, stopped me in my tracks: YOU'VE JUST GOTTA HAVE ONE!

I did. It was yummy.

—Erik Esselstyn lives in North Montpelier.

As a boy on his family's Hudson Valley farm, he emptied the sap buckets during the maple syrup operations.

EAST  
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# Old, Historic Barn: Still Serving

by Liz Benjamin

The white barn at Templeton Farm, owned by the Chapell family, on the corner of Center Road and Templeton Road, is a long-standing East Montpelier landmark. It is an English bank barn (a style describing that it was built into the bank of the land).

Templeton Farm was settled by John Templeton, Jr. in 1810 and has been passed down through the family for five generations. The original barn was likely built soon after 1810, approximately 200 feet south of the present barn.

In the winter of 1866-1867, Bruce Chapell's great-great grandfather, Hiram Templeton, purchased 100,000 board feet of lumber from a mill in Elmore, VT. During that winter, the lumber was transported to East Montpelier on sleds pulled by teams of oxen. The following August, Hiram and his son Lee, and an army of carpenters, tore down the original barn and

used many of the 8x8 beams in constructing the present three and one-half story barn. The granite pieces that undergird it were most likely mined from the Adamant quarry. Dairy cows were housed in the upper level of the barn until 1982. Pigs and sheep lived in the lower level, and horses in the horse barn to the right. Today the lower portion of the barn provides shelter

to the Templeton Farm beef herd; maple sugaring and farm machinery are stored in the barn as well. It is an old barn re-purposed for the 21st Century.

Farmers in the past worked from dawn until sundown. Bruce considers that getting electricity in the late 1930s, via the Washington Electric Coop, was the most important technology improvement to make the farm run well.

In the early 1990s, Bruce, his sister, and his children started buying five-gallon pails of white paint, which were given to Bruce's parents, Roger and Gen, as Christmas gifts. That is when the transformation of the old gray barn began. Over 300 gallons of white paint have been applied to the barn over the years.

During the summer of 1979, a portion of the wooden stable floor collapsed under the weight of the milking herd. Bruce's grandmother, Alice Chapell, decided to repair the flooring. Many repairs to the barn have been done over

the last 30-plus years, including roofing and siding and re-grading the barnyard to prevent further damage to the foundation.

The farmland was conserved with the Vermont Land Trust in 1994. In 1999, the Chapells received a grant from the Freeman Foundation to restore the barn, including replacing rotten beams, adding an all-new electrical system, working on the foundation, and, of course, painting.

In 2017, it was discovered that the sills under the horse barn section were rotted. They had to jack up the barn to replace them. The roof on the horse barn needed to be replaced, and the cupola was nearly collapsing. Bruce applied to the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation Barn Preservation Grant program to rehabilitate this historic building. Since its inception, the program has provided over

\$3 million towards the preservation of over 360 historic barns and agricultural outbuildings around the state.

This year, Bruce applied, again, to this program for a grant for the barn—to repair the cupola, a portion of the horse barn roof, and the stone foundation. He is very thankful to the governor and the legislature for their great support in maintaining these



photo by Bruce Chapell

Colin Blackwell installing the new cupola.

historic barns.

Colin Blackwell, a neighbor and friend of the family, worked on repairing the cupola this past summer. He used a power lift to ascend 80 feet in the air, a ten-minute trip each way. Colin said that repairing the cupola was a really fun job that called for lots of creative thinking. He had to make a little house (the cupola) on top of a big house (the barn). He said the views from up there—of Cabot, Hunger Mountain, and the Plainfield Range—are spectacular. Colin feels really connected to the old barns around here, and we are very lucky that he, and the Chapell family, feel the same way.

*—Liz Benjamin lives at the Templeton Farm, across from the old white barn. She enjoys walking, the views, and engaging with her neighbors, including the cattle.*



# East Montpelier Trails Update

by Mary Stone

## We are almost finished:

East Montpelier Trails organization (EMTI) was established in 1992 with the goal of creating a trail network for recreation and the enjoyment of our beautiful and varied natural environment here in East Montpelier. We set out to establish a trail “necklace” that would meander through fields and forests from the Montpelier border to the west, head north to touch the Calais border, then travel through the heart of town connecting with the elementary school, on to U-32, and then back to Montpelier and Berlin on the Route 2 corridor (now the Cross Vermont Trail). Just a few short stretches remain to complete the circle.

## The new trail:

As of September, we anticipate an October “soft opening” of the new Bobolink Trail which connects the Mallory Brook Trail to Towne Hill Road at the Bobolink sheep farm followed by a spring/summer of 2024 opening of the Sparrow Farm North Trail. Our heartfelt thanks go to the landowners, Carol Dickson and Bruce Howlett, for donating a 10-year easement for this section. Highlights of the new Bobolink Trail are views of the hills to the east, a gorgeous fern understory, and the lovely (as yet unnamed) stream flowing down to the farm.

Crossing this stream is an awesome new footbridge constructed by Josh Ryan, his daughter Avery, and the Timber and Stone crew. Josh donated his labor and use of his equipment, and Colin Blackwell donated all of the cedar used on the posts and rails. We are eternally grateful to each of them and to the townspeople for their generosity in funding EMTI each year. Underlain with steel I-beams and decked with black locust, this bridge will last well into the future. Be sure to get out to see it. A very special thanks goes to EMTI board member Allan Serrano for his perseverance and hard work digging out the new trail surface throughout the field season, logging over 100 hours on the trail.

## What's ahead:

As we move forward, we see the importance of folks being able to access trails from their homes and neighborhoods. Many are asking us to assist in getting connectors to the main trail system, or even offering to open their private trails to public use. We are super encouraged by this but also concerned about our ability to maintain a growing network. The floods of 2023 presented a huge demand for volunteer hours, and we know that East Montpelier showed up in full force to assist in the recovery of our beloved downtowns in Montpelier and Barre. We experienced a lot of destruction from the windstorm of December 2022, but were fortunate to see very little damage due to flooding. With 17 miles of trail and more destructive weather events ahead, we need help now more than ever. Not all help requires physical labor! We are working on ways for the community to help keep this amazing trail network safe and accessible and will keep you posted as to how you can help in a spring issue of the *Signpost*.

—Mary Stone, EMTI co-chair



Ginny Burley walking among the ferns.



New bridge on Bobolink Trail

Photos by Mary Stone

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# WCUUSD Strategic Plan

## Your Involvement Needed

*The Washington Central Unified Union School District (WCUUSD) school board is in the middle of a strategic planning process that it hopes to conclude early in 2024. The timing is good because the board foresees the possibility of significant changes necessitated by economic and demographic conditions in addition to the impact of the pandemic. Student needs are changing and so must their education. Our consolidated governance model allows for a broad array of opportunities and options.*

*Given the importance of the plan, the widest possible community participation will be critical as we define explicitly what we want to accomplish and how best to do it.*

Your board is making steady progress on developing the strategic plan that will guide our actions in the near future as well as in the longer term as we strive to better educate our students and provide accountability to our community. Below is a summary of core beliefs developed from the input of citizens of our five towns, faculty, staff, and students during recent community forums. The complete draft is available at Vision & Core Beliefs on the district's website.

- **Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction:** Materials, resources, books, and lessons should help our students understand their capacities, build on their strengths and experiences, and prepare them to grow and thrive as community members and lifelong learners.
- **Wellbeing:** We believe that schools must create a space where all students feel safe and valued.
- **Humanity, Justice, Community & Belonging:** We strive to create a welcoming environment by honoring diversity, seeking fairness, and celebrating the different experiences we all bring to this community.
- **Community Engagement & Relationships:** The community must play a significant role in our schools. We encourage the airing of differences and agreements in the service of creating the best possible schools for our children.
- **Transparent & Responsible Governance:** All decisions about our schools must center on student needs. The board will take action using reliable data and input from the community and will communicate decisions and processes in a clear and timely way.

As we develop the 2024-25 school year budget, the finance committee has added a second monthly meeting and expanded its membership so it can more thoroughly examine options to restructure and best serve all our students. Looking ahead, we know that enrollments will continue to decline, that our federal emergency funds related to Covid will end in September 2024, and that expenses for all stakeholders will continue to rise. The committee will analyze existing data, look at the structures we have in place, and evaluate opportunities to better serve all students in a sustainable fashion.

Become involved and let us know what is missing, what is confusing, and what actions should be taken. We, the school board, hope you will join us in taking responsibility and ownership for ongoing improvement and sustainability for our school district.

You can read the current draft of the strategic plan, learn more about the process, the schedule, and provide your thoughts to us online using this link.  
<https://communityhub.thoughtexchange.com/wcsu32/project/strategic-planning/>

—Flor Diaz Smith from East Montpelier is chair of the WCUUSD Board

# A Local Icon Celebrates its Bicentennial

by Tom Schmidt



*Photograph taken in the mid-1920s, near the time of the Old Meeting House centennial, by local resident Ruth Paine, who was a church leader from 1914 to her death in 1963.*

*The Old Meeting House, a historic fixture in East Montpelier Center since its beginnings in 1823, is commemorating its bicentennial. Two hundred meals have been donated to the Onion River Food Shelf, and a number of special events have taken place including music, art shows, installation of a new minister, and the introduction of a new book written by member Tom Schmidt.*

On 17 September, my book *Presence in the Center: A Bicentennial History of the Old Meeting House*, was presented at the church's formal celebration of its 200 years in East Montpelier. Following are a few summary highlights uncovered by recent research into the storied past of this community landmark.

- The church began in a grove of trees, twenty years before the building was constructed, when a group of enthusiastic Methodists, converted by “circuit riders” passing through the area, began to meet on the very spot where the meeting house would be built
- Life in the 1820s was not as primitive as it was for the first settlers of the 1790s, but conditions were still basic. While few local farmers still lived in log

cabins, a typical house was no bigger than a two-car garage, with an “open concept” design where families with up to a dozen children worked, ate, and slept together. Their primary “cash crop” was not plants or animals but ash from burning the virgin hardwood forest, which they processed and exported to England for commercial use.

- While the church celebrated its centennial in 1923, that date (and 2023 for the bicentennial) is either a year late, or three years early. The meeting house was commissioned in April 1822 and framed by August 1822; then, due to financial constraints, it took three years to finish and was dedicated in January 1826. There are no records of any developments during 1823.
- Parley and Rebecca Davis, who leased the land for the meeting house, were Universalists, but the church founders were Methodists, so a compromise agreement allowed other sects to use the building when the Methodists weren't using it. The groups did not worship together and competed fiercely for members.

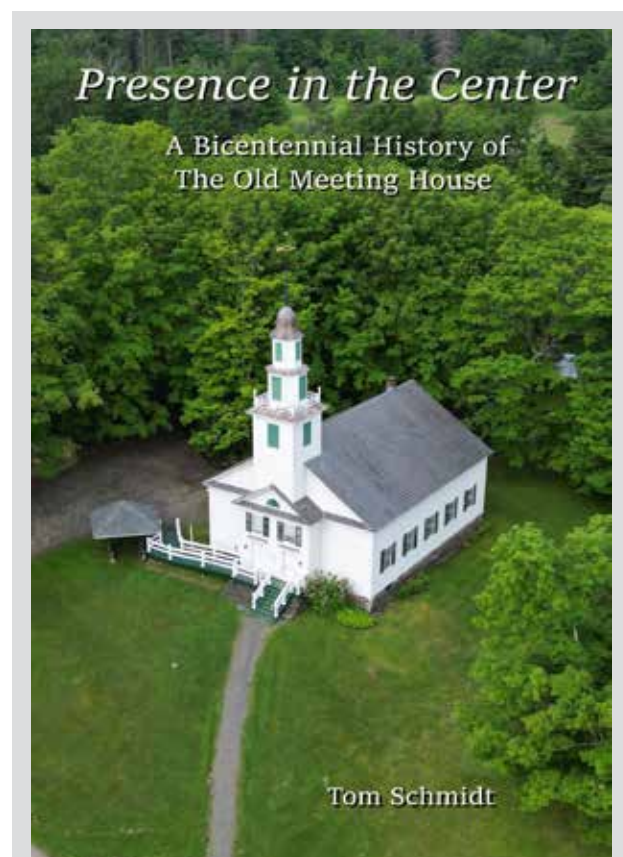


- A remarkable discovery made in 2023 was that the unusual interior design of the church, with its pulpit on the entry end, a gracefully curving balcony, and an acoustically perfect vaulted ceiling, was provided by Rebecca Davis, copied from her childhood church in Mont Vernon, New Hampshire.
- There were no woodstoves in the church for the first thirty years; members walked, or rode in open wagons and sleighs, from up to five miles away, in all weather, huddling through lengthy services under blankets around portable tins containing hot coals.
- The original congregation was about 150 strong, with at least a dozen families in attendance with six or more children, who were expected to sit quietly through hour-long sermons. Among the prominent early family names were Morse, Templeton, Peck, Cutler, Cummings, Stevens, and Nutt.
- Montpelier held its town meetings in the church from 1828 to 1848, as did East Montpelier from 1848 to 1890, until a town hall was built in the East Village. The town paid the church up to \$50 per year which was its primary source of maintenance revenue in the late 19th century.
- The Methodist denomination of the Center church was an instrument of social change in the early to mid-19th century, promoting both temperance and the abolition of slavery. Center Road was an important route north to Canada for fugitive slaves, who were openly housed by at least two local families.
- After the church declined in the 1860s, partly due to the growth of the town of Montpelier, the Methodist denomination abandoned the church. Devoted neighbors maintained the building in its original state and sponsored periodic guest preachers. Important family names during this period include Ormsbee, Goodwin, Brazier, Strong, Witham, and Barnes.
- The dismantling of the Universalist church in North Montpelier resulted in the gift of an historic bell to the Center meeting house. Too heavy to hoist into the belfry, it sat in the narthex for ten years until a separate structure was built for it in 1966.
- Contrary to the assumption of many, the Old Meeting House was not “resurrected” in 1966, because there was no “corpse”—just an underfed body of supporters keeping the church alive with periodic maintenance and services. They even bought the old house adjacent to the church for use as a Sunday school building and community hall. Interest in the church slowly grew through the 1940s and 1950s, from a handful of people with occasional

visiting pastors, to a part-time pastor, to formal “reconstitution” with bylaws and a full-time pastor (shared with the Old Brick Church) in 1966.

- The Old Meeting House and the Old Brick Church in the East Village shared a pastor for thirty years. This proved increasingly difficult as the financial status of the two groups changed and their beliefs increasingly diverged. The Old Meeting House congregation, in a very close vote, chose to become independent in 1995.
- Although technically multi-denominational, the Old Meeting House is informally aligned with the United Church of Christ, which has supplied most of its pastors for the past forty years. In 2003, it declared itself officially “open and affirming” to all people who share its vision to seek and to serve God, and to care for one another, the needy, and the marginalized.

—Tom Schmidt is an author, poet, retired professor, and doting grandfather who lives with his wife, Merry, on DeRonde Road.



To purchase a copy of *Presence in the Center: A Bicentennial History of the Old Meeting House*, contact Tom Schmidt at [tomschmidt55@gmail.com](mailto:tomschmidt55@gmail.com). The book is priced at \$25.

Signpost excerpts of town and school meetings are available on the Signpost website at [emsignpost.com](http://emsignpost.com); and complete minutes are available on the WCUUSD and Town of East Montpelier websites.

#### BIRTHS

- Easton Bruleigh, born to Cassandra & Ryan Bruleigh in July
- Ramona S.P. Buckridge, born to Kate Phillips & Christopher Buckridge in August
- Joseph Laquerre, born to J. Jarrett & Whitney Laquerre in August
- Declan Ledwidge & Darragh Ledwidge, born to Rachael & Thomas Ledwidge in August

- Dean Rus, born to Alexandra Freeman and Michael Rus II in July
- Maeve Tittmann, born to Elaine Murphy & Henry Tittmann in August

#### MARRIAGES

- Clark Haywood and Jessica Lynch married in September
- Elizabeth Janawicz and David Halford married in August
- Ernest Laplant & Victoria Hebert married in July

- Michelle Lavigne & Matthew Peake married in September
- Sierra Wells and Russell Thongs married in June
- Mary Young & Michael Bender married in July

**DEATHS**—survivors living in East Montpelier are listed when known

- Joshua Barnett died in July
- Bernard Corliss, husband to Edna and father to Brenda Bolio and Vickie LaRose, died in August

## And Looking Ahead: Town Meeting— More than a Good Lunch

by Michael Duane

Town Meeting is much more than a real great lunch. Following the December 16, 1773, Boston Tea Party revolt, the autocratic King of England decided to crack down on the unruly American colonists. The first order of business was the enactment in early 1774 of the King and Parliament's four "Coercive Acts," commonly known as the "Intolerable Acts." These Acts closed the port of Boston; trials were moved to England; and the Acts allowed for British soldiers to be quartered in private homes. Most importantly, the "Government Act," banned Town Meeting, thereby removing the ability of Massachusetts colonists to continue to engage in limited self-rule and self-government.

Of all the onerous Intolerable Acts, it was the "Government Act" that caused the most outrage among the people. The British suspected that Town Meeting was used by the colonists to plan the Boston Tea Party. The Act was designed to take away the colonists' democratic rights to hold Town Meeting and to elect their own local officials. It sparked outright rebellion in many rural Massachusetts towns where 5,000 armed farmers shut down the British courts, which were the royal institutions of Crown authority. By taking control of the royal courts, these farmers had, in essence, established the first popularly elected independent government in America.

In *America's Hidden History*, Kenneth C. Davis writes that the prevailing political philosophy among early colonial leaders was of a classical republican tradition. It was believed that people achieved their greatest fulfillment by participating in a self-governing republic. Personal liberty

and private rights were to be achieved, and protected, by political liberty. The Town Meeting form of government was the vehicle by which that freedom was obtained. By banning the all-important Town Meeting, the British thus lit the fuse for the American Revolution.

The first Town Meeting, in what is now Vermont, was held in Bennington in 1762, even before we were the republic of Vermont. The earliest settlers, who migrated largely from southern New England, brought their town meeting tradition with them. Town meeting was the only form of government these first settlers could rely on as New York and New Hampshire were busy arguing over who controlled the region.

The tradition continued in Montpelier (which at that time included the current East Montpelier), where the first Town Meeting was held in the Center in 1792. After East Montpelier became a separate town in 1848, our first Town Meeting was held on March 6, 1849.

As we think from time to time about the fragility of our precious democratic values, including the erosion of our unique tradition of the peaceful transfer of power and the rise of autocracy around the globe, it might be helpful to consider the history of Town Meeting while we also enjoy our lunch.

—Michael Duane is a long-time  
East Montpelier Town Moderator.



# News from EMES

by Beth Parker

Last year, as East Montpelier Elementary School (EMES) physical education teacher Mike Blanchard spoke with Principal Alicia Lyford about updating the school's playground, "adaptive *and* inclusive" was a priority. Mr. B (as the students know him) said that it was important to design a space where children could not only access equipment but also play together inclusively.

Let's rewind to the fall of 2019, when phase one of the plan began. With the help of Timber & Stone (Josh Ryan) and Brown's Trucking (Mike Brown), the first phase of our accessible path was built. This path created access for all people to wheel, walk, or run to the playground. Mr. B states, "The accessible trail was a gateway to an inclusive playground where all kids can play together."

Shortly after the path was built, a group of EMES students called the Techno Turtles identified an issue with our existing cabin in the woods: it wasn't accessible for all students. This robotics team developed plans for a new cabin that would be a place where everyone could play and have fun. Unfortunately, Covid got in the way of putting their plans in motion, though the idea was not forgotten.

During the 2022-2023 school year, it was determined not only did our cabin have accessibility issues, but also that our playground had limited options for students with accessibility challenges. Paired with this challenge was the ongoing issue of not having enough storage for PE equipment. Late last fall, phase two was set in motion. Principal Lyford and Mike Blanchard met regularly to plan for the changes they hoped would take place over

the summer of 2023. First, they examined the current playground to see what parts all students could access and what areas were not accessible for all. Mrs. Lyford notes that students' voices were critical in this phase, since they would be the ones using this space daily.

Every student in the school wrote about what each would like to see on the playground. The big takeaway from the students was that they wanted more options like tetherball, more swings, a permanent 4-square court, and more opportunities to climb. In surveying the staff, it was determined that the Xwave and twisty slide felt unsafe. With all this information, the legwork began by first selecting equipment that would meet these needs, then finally, seeking school board approval.

In late spring, Josh Ryan and his crew returned to extend our accessible path around the perimeter of the playground, and our old PE shed was repurposed as an accessible cabin in the woods. Over the summer, a new PE shed arrived, one that can handle all of the outdoor PE equipment; and on September 19, Pettinelli & Associates from Burlington installed several new pieces of equipment for children to enjoy.

There is still one piece of equipment to come...stay tuned. In the meantime, I am proud to say that EMES is committed to providing inclusive play for all!

—Beth Parker is a behavior instructional interventionist and professional development coach at EMES.



When asked, "What do you like about the new playground equipment?" there were many responses.

# La Cantine: New Eatery in Town

photo by Terry Allen



First, we noticed the archway for Fontaine Meadows, followed by construction and the announcement of an upcoming farmstand. Almost overnight, a bright red food truck appeared with the name La Cantine. Adrift one evening, I went down to explore.

It was a warm, sunny evening (a miracle in itself!). After easy entry into the graveled parking lot, I beheld the food truck beside a grassy meadow graced with picnic tables, play structures for children, and a cornhole game. Everything sat atop a hill with expansive views—a lovely setting, perfect complement to my supper of a “cowboy” burger, French fries, and a creemee for dessert. (The food truck also serves poutine, loaded tater tots, BLTs, grilled cheese, Italian sausage, and hot dogs, as well as drinks.) After my repast, I moseyed over to the farmstand and chatted with Sharon Bissell, Marc Fontaine’s partner, who was painting walls, in preparation for its opening. She put me in touch with Marc

for all the details.

Marc explained that it all began with a sawmill he originally put together as a hobby. Soon, he had neighbors and friends as customers. He loved getting to know folks and the sense of community his hobby created. Building community in East Montpelier became his vision. What better way than food? Hence, the farmstand and the food truck.

“Why that name La Cantine?” I asked. Marc hails from Quebec, and the name honors his uncle, who had a restaurant by that name back in Marc’s childhood. That’s also why he serves poutine and hopes to offer more French pies from Quebec.

La Cantine is seasonal, open 11-7, seven days a week, until the ground freezes; it will re-open on May 1. So, bundle up and enjoy the food and the stick-season view in November. The farmstand will be open all winter. Meanwhile, stay tuned for all that Marc has in mind and has yet to build: a covered pavilion and maybe even (it’s rumored) a miniature golf course. Big dreams coming true in our little town!

—Ann Stanton is Signpost’s managing editor.

## Paulie’s Recipe Quick Pasta with Garlic

### INGREDIENTS

3 to 4 cloves garlic, crushed  
 ¼ c olive oil  
 ½ to ¾ lbs linguini  
 1 to 2 T dried parsley (could use fresh)  
 freshly ground black pepper  
 ¼ to ½ c grated Parmesan cheese  
 1 to 2 c diced cooked chicken or cooked shrimp

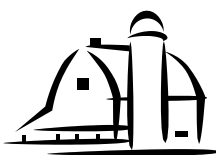
**DIRECTIONS** Sauté garlic in olive oil over medium heat until golden brown and set aside. Cook pasta and drain. In a large bowl mix together pasta, garlic, oil, parsley, black pepper and parmesan cheese. Add cooked chicken or shrimp and serve.



Comment from Paulie Coburn: During the holidays (or anytime) it is nice to have a quick and tasty main dish that can be put together in just a few minutes.

To make the dish creamier save a little hot water from the pasta and add it to the finished dish.

Submitted by Becky Crandall  
 From East Montpelier Fire Department  
 Auxiliary’s Country Kitchen Favorites



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## IMPORTANT DATES

**Wed. Nov. 1, 6:15 pm**, WCUUSD Board Meeting, Doty Elementary School, Worcester - Budget presentation: Connecting our Vision to Budget Realities

**Wed. Nov. 15**, First installment of taxes due at Town Office

**Mon. Nov. 20, 7:00 pm**, East Montpelier and Calais Historical Societies meeting, Unitarian Church, Montpelier: *From the Parlor to the Polling Place: Stories & Songs from the Suffragists* presented by singer Linda Radtke and pianist Cameron Steinmetz. Goodwill donations accepted. For information contact Sandal Cate at [sandal.cate@gmail.com](mailto:sandal.cate@gmail.com)

**Thurs./Fri. Nov. 23/24**, Thanksgiving, Town Offices CLOSED

**Mon. Dec. 18**, Petitions for local offices available at Town Clerk's office

**Mon. Dec. 25**, Christmas, Town Offices CLOSED

**Mon. Jan. 1**, New Year's Day, Town Offices CLOSED

**Jan. 18, 2024, 5:00 pm**, Deadline for petitions for Town Meeting Warning; must be accompanied by at least 104 signatures (5% of voters)

**Jan. 29, 5:00 pm**, Deadline for candidate petitions to be delivered to the Town Clerk

**Feb. 14**, Ballots for local issues are available

**Tues. Mar. 5**, Town Meeting Day

## SUBMISSIONS DUE

**Monday, November 27**

**JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024 SIGNPOST**

*Thank you for your support*

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BECKY & ROB BROWN

ELAINE MANGHI-BUCK & GEORGE BUCK

CYNTHIA TOMASZEWICZ

CARROLL, SUSAN, & BRADLEY WITHAM

## 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

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