

## Meteorologists in the Family

by Lindy Biggs

Ari and Ashley Preston moved to East Montpelier in 2020 after building a house in the new Deerfield development off Towne Hill Road. They had been renting in Montpelier since 2017, when Ari started a position as a visiting professor of atmospheric sciences at Vermont State University-Lyndon (formerly Lyndon State College).

They moved to Vermont from Tallahassee, Florida, where they met at Florida State University while studying meteorology. Ari was set on a career in meteorology at eight years old when he saw the movie "Twister." After exploring other options, Ashley pursued a master's degree in meteorology. She had been looking for a field where she could apply her mathematics background.

Vermont was not an easy move for a Florida girl, but Ashley says she figured out quickly there's no point in fighting the winter. Like the rest of us, she didn't find the short days easy to get used to, but she now embraces its challenges. Ari grew up in Michigan, so Vermont winters aren't as big a challenge for him.

They both enjoy the snow, and Ari even loves driving in it.

In 2019, Ari was offered a tenure-track position at Lyndon, and that's when they started looking for more permanent housing. They knew they wanted a "newer build" with efficiency features. They bought a lot of land and most of the construction was completed before the pandemic struck. They were luckier than many and moved in June 2020.

Ari moved to Vermont with a job, even if temporary. He is now an associate professor and coordinator of the Lyndon Atmospheric Sciences Program. Ashley eventually found a job in the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation where she is an environmental analyst in the stormwater program. Ashley works from home most days, but Ari commutes to Lyndon four days most weeks of the school year.

Ari plays a unique role at Vermont State University. Most years, he goes "storm chasing" with a handful of Lyndon students through the SUNY Oswego Storm Forecasting and Observation Program. They typically fill two vans with students at the end of the spring semester and head west to the plains, also known as Tornado Alley, the only place to safely chase storms. This is one of a handful of programs that give students the opportunity to forecast a weather system in real time, which is important for future employment as broadcasters, forecasters, and researchers.

He told me that you can't chase storms anywhere that has hills or mountains because of limited visibility. I had a vision of wild and crazy people driving into tornadoes, but that's not the reality. They are very careful. They always have a south or east escape route planned in case a tornado heads toward them. They never chase at night, and they stay away from cities because of the potential safety issues that come with heavy traffic. Ari told me that storm chasing has

*Meteorologists, continued on p. 4*



photo courtesy of Ari Preston

Ashley Preston, holding their son, Henry, and Ari, holding their son, Liam, in their home on Deerfield Lane.

Change is in the Air...

We're in the middle of the growing season. Our gardens are thriving with old favorites as well as new experiments which we anxiously wait to taste. Trying new varieties is a regular part of gardening.

As in the garden, growth implies change in all areas of our lives. Elsewhere in this issue, we have expressed grateful thanks to two *Signpost* volunteers just as we eagerly look forward to the new thoughts and ideas that their successors may bring.

And in the broader arena of our school community, we are about to see significant changes—see article on pages 6-7. Change is always difficult, even when it leads to positive outcomes. The fact that some local schools—those sources of pride and cohesion in our small communities—may be repurposed or reconfigured will require difficult adjustments both of mind and activities even as the changes will be designed to bring needed benefits both to our children's education and to our taxpayers' pocketbooks.

The five towns of the WCUUSD have been linked for over fifty years through the joint use and support of U-32 High School. The creation of the unified PreK through 12

district, governed by one representative board, allows us the flexibility to develop school configurations and integrated curricula that will benefit all the children of our five-town school community. By this September, after seeking the thoughts and ideas of all residents of the district, the board hopes to bring a recommendation to the district for the required votes in November.

So, as we study and consider the possibilities for school change before us, let us remember how we make other decisions in our lives about change and growth. It's always a balance between risk and benefit. But the underlying fact is that without change, there cannot be growth. Growth is necessary for well-being; it's inevitable; and it's always difficult.

Think back to how tasty that newly-hybridized pepper turned out to be though we had wondered whether to abandon some of the older varieties to make room. There were probably some experimental duds as well; but with the best information, careful analysis, hard work, and good will, we can surely find that new prize.

—*Edie Miller is a longtime Signpost volunteer.*

's Your House Haunted?



Each year, the September-October issue of the *Signpost* features a “theme”— a topic about which readers are asked to comment. In the past you have shared thoughts on your favorite hiking, biking, and outdoor places, the origin of your street names, wild animals who visit you, as well as many more.

This year, we want to know if your house is haunted and how you know. Maybe East Montpelier resident Anna Wheeler, who was murdered in 1897, haunts it; or the Abenaki hunter who was killed by Jacob Fowler in 1780. Tell us your ghost story/tale of haunting in 200 words or less and send to [emillervt@comcast.net](mailto:emillervt@comcast.net) by July 31, 2024.

EAST  
MONTPELIER

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# Looking Both Ways with Rubin Bennett

by Ann Stanton



Rubin Bennett founded rbTechnologies 27 years ago, so he's been on top of technology revolutions for as long as we've had the Internet in our homes. I met with him recently to ask him about the future of broadband in East Montpelier, specifically, and in Vermont as a whole. Like the patient teacher he is, he began by providing a

short history of how we got here.

First, he noted that Vermont might finally have the right recipe to deliver on President Clinton's promise of the Internet as "a bridge to the twenty-first century." Because of our low population density, the cost per mile to install fiber optic lines is very expensive. Initially, state-allocated money allowed services to be delivered along the most populated corridors, but our mountainous terrain and long driveways left many households without access. A second round of funds provided Internet to schools and libraries. Along those corridors, Comcast, Consolidated, and FirstLight (formerly Sovernet) now compete for customers, providing package deals of Internet/TV/telephone or only Internet. Everyone else was and still is on their own with satellite dishes, DSL over phone lines, or nothing at all.

The pandemic brought these disparities into sharp focus. In homes with no Internet access, for example, someone had to drive children to a school parking lot or library to get assignments, do homework, etc. It became very clear, says Rubin, that "the Internet is a human right, necessary to participate in society"—in education, business, health care, and even church-going.

Since then, thirteen Communication Union Districts (CUDs) have been created throughout the state. Pandemic money for broadband is earmarked for these districts, and each CUD is responsible for laying fiber and connecting homes. In East Montpelier, CVFiber, consisting of 20 municipalities, is committed to "provid[ing] universal access to a reliable, secure, locally owned and governed communications network" (*CVFiber.net*). The infrastructure (fiber cable) is owned by CVFiber, which is locally governed by a group composed of representatives from the participating municipalities.

On Front Porch Forum, folks complain that CVFiber is supposed to be coming but is taking too long. Yes, the

process has taken more time than hoped, beginning with locating poles and laying cable—labor-intensive work. Potential users have to subscribe by going first to the website *CVFiber.net* to complete an online pre-signup for availability updates. Then the waiting begins. Check out their map to see if your area of East Montpelier is eligible for CV hookups. (Mine is not.) A friend in the Northeast Kingdom says that her wait is estimated at five years. We can hope our area will be fully serviced sooner than that! Until then, Rubin notes that Starlink works well for those who work from home and require fast, reliable Internet connections.

Asked about Artificial Intelligence (AI), Rubin describes AI as "a brilliant five-year-old that needs very specific constraints" but, Rubin feels, is less disruptive than many fear. This optimism is not shared by two "digital natives" of my acquaintance, who believe that their preschoolers will live in a world where "the middle will be hollowed out," as everyone from math tutors to storyboard artists in movie-making will be out of jobs. Basically, the white-collar middle class is at risk, according to these digital natives: an upcoming revolution similar in impact to the Industrial Revolution.

Be that as it may, Rubin noted that non-digital-natives, especially some elderly people, are at higher risk right now. For example, remember those grammatical errors and accented English that used to signal a scam? AI solved that. Rubin notes that fraud is now trickier to evade, especially for those of us who grew up in small towns where we knew almost everybody and were relatively safe from outsiders. These days, the Internet means that there is no geographical separation between each of us and the whole world. That's why it's called the World Wide Web. And broadband means it will arrive in our homes even faster. Meanwhile, I do my best to follow Rubin's advice to "operate with a healthy dose of paranoia." Also, check out this excellent site: [www.chase.com/digital/resources/privacy-security/security/how-to-spot-scams](http://www.chase.com/digital/resources/privacy-security/security/how-to-spot-scams).

The Internet is a powerful tool, putting the world at our fingertips, literally. Much of that access is positive—opening myriad opportunities for communication, information, entertainment, affinity groups, etc. Now and into the future, access has become, in Rubin's words, "a human right in order to participate in society." We, in turn, need to inform ourselves and make sure that we and our children and grandchildren know how to use it safely and responsibly. Onward, into the future, with hope and paranoia.

—Ann Stanton lives on the corner of Center and Bliss with her husband, David Connor.



Ari Preston (2nd from right) poses with his students while chasing storms in 2023.



Photos courtesy of Ari Preston

Ari helps a student position the camera for cloud photogrammetry.

become popular and that there might be upwards of 1,000 people chasing an individual storm. They don't want to get caught up in that.

Peak tornado season is typically mid-April to mid-June. Ari and students chase for ten days, though there is no guarantee that there will be tornadoes. The students get to launch weather balloons, interpret radar data, and forecast where storms will develop. Inherently, storm chasing is dangerous, which can take a physical and mental toll on those who participate. When I asked Ashley if she had ever gone on a trip, her response was a resounding, "No!" With recent tornado outbreaks and the movie sequel to "Twister" coming out this summer, storm chasing is more popular than ever. With that comes great responsibility—something Ari reminds his students.

In response to my question about why they chose East Montpelier, they mentioned several things that were important to them. They wanted to be close to Montpelier while shortening Ari's commute; they loved the beautiful landscape; and they liked what they heard about East Montpelier schools since they were planning to have a family. Their first son, Liam, was born in late 2021, and in the fall of 2023, along came Henry.

As a wrap-up, we talked about their loves and dreams for the town, as well as possible worries. Ari said the flood damage of 2023 was worse than any storm he has seen in the plains and was like a hurricane storm surge. They are concerned with the warmer winters, especially the last few. Finding childcare was very difficult for them, but they finally worked it out. As a final thought, they both said that Vermont is such a special place that it's worth dealing with the challenges.

—Lindy Biggs lives in the White Pine Cohousing in East Montpelier. She is a retired history professor and is now in her second career as a clinical herbalist.

## Farewell and Thank You, Beth and Kate

Kate Rader has been our faithful reporter of the activities of East Montpelier's governing boards and committees for several years. She read all the minutes of their meetings and noted items she felt were of particular importance and interest to East Montpelier residents. Her goal was to encourage citizens to be aware and engaged in local governance. Many thanks to Kate for keeping us up to date.

Longtime EMES teacher Beth Parker will soon be entering a new chapter of her career as she becomes principal of Woodbury Elementary School and Lakeside Elementary School in Greensboro. For several years Beth has been writing articles for the *Signpost* about the happenings at EMES and has kept us well informed. Thank you, Beth, and the best to you in your career as a principal.

—The Signpost Staff

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Fri 9 AM –12 PM

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treasurer@eastmontpeliervt.org

### Town Administrator

Jennifer Devine  
manager@eastmontpeliervt.org

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EMFD 225-6247

### First Constable

Jon Boucher 917-4855

### Animal Control Officers

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

### Listers

Deborah Fillion  
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  
Zoe Christiansen Carl Etnier  
Scott Hess Tom Brazier

### Planning Commission

Zach Sullivan, Chair, zsullivan@gmail.com

### Development Review Board

Steve Kappel, Chair  
sjkappel@gmail.com

### WCUUSD Board

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Flor Diaz Smith, fdiazsmith@u32.org  
Zach Sullivan, zsullivan@u32.org

### State Representative

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

# Another Successful Green Up Day

Thank you all volunteers who helped with Green Up Day on May 4th. We had a great turnout with at least 82 volunteers participating. Collectively, we removed 1.35 tons of trash and 1.58 tons of tires from an estimated 68 miles of East Montpelier's roadways. That's impressive work, and everyone should be proud of these efforts.

I want to thank all who gave us pointers on roads that needed a little TLC—especially the brave folks who went out there and tackled them.

Extra special THANK YOUs to:

-Chris Racanelli for filling in for me when I couldn't be present at EMES on Green Up Day

-Alicia Lyford and the amazing staff at East Montpelier Elementary School for hosting us in the parking lot again this year

-Guthrie Perry and the road crews for delivering trucks for our use, telling us where the trouble spots were, and making everything so easy for us

-Hunger Mountain Co-op for donating a \$50 gift card to help provide snacks for the volunteers that stopped by the school

-All the volunteers who helped at the EMES collection site, drove personal trucks and trailers to pick up large items like tires, collected bags from cars, separated recyclables and deposit bottles from trash, and hauled tires into the trailers. This includes Chris Racanelli, Paul Erlbaum, Martha Allen, Tim Jerman, the Lawler Family, and others who helped throughout the day

-Our intrepid road crews, who did all the heavy lifting and were our eyes and ears about town. Your contributions were vital! An extra special thank you to Bob Onne and Jeff Melin for volunteering for innumerable heavy item pickups and for putting their pickup trucks to work for us!

-Bragg Farm, Dudley Store, East Montpelier Elementary School, Fox Market, Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks, North Country Federal Credit Union, East Montpelier Town Office, Orchard Valley School, and the East Montpelier Post Office for hanging posters or distributing green bags

-And to anyone I missed. Green Up Day 2024 was a wild ride and a LOT of people came out to make this day a success!

Unfortunately, I will not be able to coordinate Green Up Day 2025 since my husband and I will be leaving Central Vermont for the Upper Valley in June. I have a chronic medical condition which unexpectedly became harder to manage, making for a difficult but necessary decision to leave our amazing community to be closer to family and DHMC. I cannot thank you all enough for giving me the opportunity to give back to our lovely town. We are looking for a new coordinator to take my place starting in 2025. If you are interested, please contact Town Administrator Jennifer Devine at 223-3313.



*Showing some good, old fashioned East Montpelier ingenuity for getting a large dump of trash up the hill for disposal.*

—Erin Borland, 2024 Green Up Day Coordinator for East Montpelier

# The Changing Educational Picture

One of the benefits of having a single five-town school board managing the PreK through 12 education of all its students is the potential for offering—in different ways—integrated high quality educational programs at sustainable costs in the face of decreasing student population.

Together, all five towns are currently using only 48% of our elementary school capacity. This is projected to drop to 43% usage in two years. Our board has come to the conclusion that maintaining our district's six schools as they are will not meet our overarching goals in the future. That consensus was building even before our district's voters shared their concerns this March about our increasing costs.

The time has now come to make significant change in how we are delivering education to the students of the Washington Central Unified Union School District (WCUUSD). The school board's Configuration Committee has been working for some time to develop options that will meet the goals of the recently developed strategic plan.

The board sees the following process to enable our community to make this decision:

- (1) Gather community input on the viable configuration options to inform the board as we determine which option to bring to a vote.
- (2) Inform the public on the details of the selected configuration: the general structure, the financial model, the benefits, and the costs of the selected configuration; and
- (3) Continue to engage the community on the transition to the new configuration.

The possible plans developed by the committee involve school closures. \*\* (see below)

WCUUSD's Articles of Agreement, adopted in 2019 when our single board became operational, require votes of both the union board and the town(s) where a closure will take place before such a closure can happen.

The board's timeline is designed to align with this requirement, allowing the board the possibility of a new

configuration as early as the 2025-26 school year. Any actual timeline for implementation would be guided by the vote and by the board's transition discussions. The board hopes to schedule the vote on school closures on November 5, 2024—Election Day. In order to move forward with such a vote, the board plans to consider September 18, 2024, as our deadline for making a final decision on adopting a new configuration. This timeline allows for a robust voter turnout and also gives the district time to plan a thoughtful transition before the beginning of the 2025-26 school year when changes could take effect.

Some important things to remember: The district has not yet chosen a configuration to recommend and adopt. We will be hosting community forums in our district towns, engaging with stakeholder groups including town representatives, school staff, parents, etc. (If you think we need to connect with a specific constituency, tell us!) So we can share our most detailed, accurate, and current financial models for these configurations, those models are being actively developed. But we are not going to wait to have them finished before we schedule public forums.

Why are we considering a new configuration? And why are we considering these specific changes? People have asked us these important questions. The overarching goals for our district's configuration are that they should

- (a) allow class sizes that meet the state's Education Quality Standards and are sufficient to provide rich instruction;
- (b) maintain full time nursing and counseling in every school;
- (c) maintain or expand enrichment opportunities that are consistent across the system (music, art, world language, etc.);
- (d) limit or eliminate shared staff positions across schools and very small FTE (full time equivalent) positions. While cost savings are obviously very important, our primary focus is on the well-being of our students



Four Corners Schoolhouse c. 1911



Four Corners Schoolhouse 1950s

# Letter to/from the Editor

and the opportunities we provide them.

Make no mistake, even with expanded enrichment opportunities at our schools, the two configuration options under consideration result in significant savings. They would both establish a new, lower baseline of spending. While they wouldn't assure costs won't rise in an uncertain future, our hope is that they would put us in a more resilient place to face that future.

We understand that there will be significant impacts from any reconfiguration in our district. Our board is made up of community members from every town, and we feel passionate about the health and vibrancy of our communities. Any school closure will affect us all, but of course it will most affect the towns where closures occur. We can disagree with each other about whether most effects are positive or negative. Our job as school board members is to balance many viewpoints and ultimately advocate for what, in the long term, is in the best interests of students in our district. We hope people continue to engage in a constructive dialogue with us throughout this process.

## \*\*Potential New School Configurations

- A. All models foresee the movement of sixth graders to U-32 to create a middle school of grades 6-8 in addition to a 9-12 high school.
- B. In addition, there are two possible models for configuring grades PreK through 5.
- C. Three PreK-5 elementary schools to be located at Berlin Elementary, East Montpelier Elementary (EMES), and Rumney (Middlesex) Elementary.
- D. Two K-5 elementary schools to be located at EMES and Rumney plus one early education center (Birth-PreK) at Berlin Elementary.

For complete information on the details of each configuration and how each meets the goals set by the board, please read the complete presentation at: <https://tinyurl.com/ConfigOptions>

*The WCUUSD School Board*



My daughter, Ruby, just arrived back from a semester abroad in Ireland. Of her many adventures, she was excited about seeing the bogs, and I heard about her classmates who had studied the important part bogs play in Irish history and culture.

We even watched a video of Ruby jumping in the bog (don't jump feet first!). Hearing her talk jogged something in my mind...bogs...Wait! I told her. East Montpelier has a bog. We MUST go see it.

Of course, I was remembering Sue Chickering's article in the May/June 2024 *Signpost* "Chickering Bog: Local Treasure." I've lived in East Montpelier for almost 20 years now, and my kids have grown up here. But, I have never visited Chickering Bog. With Ruby home for a month before her summer work in Burlington, it seemed like the perfect time.

We went out on a cool May morning and found the parking lot off Lightning Ridge Road, just as Sue described. I had brought the *Signpost* with us, and it was a good thing, because I relied on Sue's directions for finding the trailhead. Ruby and I had packed sandwiches from Fox Market and had a lovely walk, stopping to see the very flower that was captured on the *Signpost* cover.

When we got to the boardwalk, we were blown away. We had the place to ourselves. It was so wonderful, and so peaceful, I thought to myself, I should write a letter to the editor of the *Signpost*, telling them how much I appreciate the article that brought us to this beautiful place after living here so long. Then I had to chuckle. I'm the editor of the *Signpost*. It would, essentially, be a letter to myself. But, then again, the *Signpost* has always been a team of volunteers. I'm grateful to the entire staff for coming up with the article idea, shepherding it in, editing, laying out, and in all other ways getting the *Signpost* into our hands. It knocked about in my mind until the perfect moment when my daughter and I could have an adventure in our own backyard.

And to learn, of course, that it's not a bog...it's a fen.

—Michelle Singer, Managing Editor, *The Signpost*



*Ruby (left) and her mother, Michelle Singer, exploring the Chickering Bog.*

photo by Ruby Singer

# TOWN WEATHERVANE

## BIRTHS

- Cooper J. Brown was born in May to Kelsey Shea and Kyle Brown
- Roksana S. Cabe was born in April to Julia & Dillon Cabe
- Sofia A. Ludwig was born in April to Emily Alfano & Griffin Ludwig
- Tulia M. Woodard was born in April to Hanna Comi & Henry Woodard

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

- Wayne Hamilton, husband of Rachel Senechal, died in March
- Brian Gibbs of Plainfield, died in East Montpelier in April
- Pauline Shepard died in May

## LAND TRANSFERS

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

- Steven & Joanne Chadwick to John & Patricia Robbins, 10.75 acres & dwelling on Jourdan Rd.
- Kathleen Doner to Wade Hodge & Whitney Aldrich, 6.29 acres & dwelling on Doner Rd.
- Peter & Cathleen Heitmann to Peter & Ellen Heitmann, 17 acres & dwelling on Gallison Hill Rd.
- Judith Hinds Revocable Trust to Nathan & Megan Koenemann, 1.9 acres & dwelling on North St.
- Jon & Sylvia Jewett to Nicholas & Carrie Becker, 6.41 acres & dwelling on Quaker Rd.
- Margaret McDowell to David Lowther, 77 acres & dwelling on Horn of the Moon Rd.
- William Pollock to Hoyt Battey IV & Katherine Battey, 3.40 acres & dwelling on Wheeler Rd.
- Barbara Stalling to Deborah & Mitchell Graves & Bailee Graves, mobile home on Sandy Pines 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

**March 27, 2024**

### Motions Passed

- to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Entered 5:01pm; exited at 5:33 pm
- to move forward with final applicants for town administrator

**April 1, 2024 (Unapproved)**

### Motion Passed

- to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Entered at 6:48 pm; exited at 8:00 pm
- to approve the long version of the 2024 Town Meeting minutes as amended
- to appoint Celina Moore Barton and Glenn Weyant to the Planning Commission
- to authorize TA Jenkins to sign the Public Assistance Sub-recipient Grant agreement
- to appoint Jon Boucher as Second Animal Control Officer

**April 22, 2024 (Unapproved)**

### Motion Passed

- to authorize the SB Chair to sign a letter of interest to Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) for the creation of design ideas for traffic calming for EM Village
- to approve the Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) as amended, and authorize the SB chair and Road Foreman to sign off
- to accept the proposed charge for the Energy Committee
- to appoint Stephanie Minor to the Recreation Board
- to authorize Town Clerk Laquerre to approve liquor license applications submitted by Fontaine Meadows, C.P. Dudley Store, and Fox Market for further processing
- to approve votes for the three candidates from East Montpelier, Olivia Campbell Andersen, Ian Buchanan, and Steven Knowlton to the board of Washington Electric Co-operative
- to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Entered at 7:37 pm; exited at 8:04 pm

## PLANNING COMMISSION

**April 4, 2024**

### Motions Passed

- to postpone the election of officers to the next meeting in April and to allow the current slate of officers to continue their positions until the 2nd meeting in April (April 18, 2024), due to storm and power outages

**April 18, 2024**

### Motions Passed

- to elect officers as follows: Zach Sullivan, Chair; Ben McCall, Vice-Chair; Kim Watson, Corresponding Secretary
- to adopt Rules of Procedure

**May 2, 2024**

### Discussion

- Schedule for Town Plan updates
- Housing Study

## DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

**April 2, 2024**

### Motions Passed

- to waive the surveying requirements of Lot #1 in accordance with the LUDR Section 6.2 (B) [for Plan #20=0004, modification to Subdivision Plan #20-020, located at 440 and 450 Fitch Rd. and 101 Doner Rd.
- to approve the revised survey of the Doner lot in accordance to Application #24-004, Modification to Subdivision Plan #20-020, 450 Fitch Rd/440 Fitch Rd. 101Doner Rd.

**May 7, 2024**

### Motions Passed

- to approve application #24-007 for a 2-lot subdivision as shown on the plan identified as "Survey of Property Belonging to Donald & Cynthia Drinkwine" property located at 4474 Coburn Rd.
- to continue the public hearing for application #24-012 for Modification to Subdivision/PRD & Change of Use to June 4, 2024. Prior to the public hearing, a site visit will commence at 6 pm at the subject property, 170 Cherry Tree Hill Rd.



# TOWN WEATHERVANE

## WCUUSD

**April 3, 2024**

### Discussion

- Extensive discussion/public comment on a FY26 budget

### Motions Passed

- to move the vote on which budget to present to the votes to 4/10/24

**April 10, 2024**

### Motions Passed

- to accept the 8% budget increase version, as presented tonight
- to amend the current pending motion to accept the cuts in the 6% budget but restore nursing and counseling at Doty and Calais
- to amend the motion to add 0.2 FTE nurse position to Rumney and vote on amended motion
- to appoint Michelle Ksepka to the principal search committee
- to accept the resignations of Jes Wills and Kerra Holden, with many thanks for their services

**April 17, 2024**

### Discussion

- of proposed new budget and article of the district Warning

**April 18, 2024 (Virtual Only)**

### Motions Passed

- to move into executive session to consider the discipline of a student. Entered at 8:49 am

- to affirm the administration's recommendation regarding the student matter with amendments

**May 1, 2024**

### Motions Passed

- to move into executive session to consider a student matter. [No times given]
- to affirm the administration's recommendation

**May 22, 2024**

### Motions Passed

- to approve the raising of the Progress Pride Flag and the Black Lives Matter flags in support for the issues and related matters
- to appoint Elizabeth Brown and Patrick Whalley to the WCUUSD Board
- to appoint Patrick Whalley as CVCC representative
- to approve awarding the Berlin Walk-in Cooler and Freezer Replacement Project contract to VHV Company in an amount not to exceed \$57,056
- to accept Annual Fiscal Management Questionnaire as presented
- to authorize the appointed Superintendent to sign all contracts and accept grants on behalf of Washington Central Unified Union School District effective throughout FY4-25

- to approve the revised Five-year Capital Improvement Plan, Budget and Timeline and authorize the use of capital reserve funds, not to exceed \$50,000, to develop the necessary scope and budget for the FY25-26 approved capital improvement projects
- to accept new hires as presented: Rebecca Tatistcheff, Julia Pritchard, Jennifer Pelletier, Liza Semler, Scott Benerofe, Nicole Mintken, Cathie Ely, Lydia Faesy
- to accept resignations as presented: Steven Dellinger-Pate, Christine McGrath, Samantha Mishkin, Bethany Parker, Christina Pollard, Amy Jo Young, and Benton Larrow
- to approve a change in position for Tyler Smith, and to accept his request for leave of absence
- to go into executive session to consider a student residency request Entered at 9:05 pm; exited at 9:15 pm
- to accept the student residency request

**May 23, 2024**

### Motions Passed

- to enter into executive session to consider a personnel matter
- to adopt the recommendation of the superintendent in this disciplinary action for the reasons outlined in her letters of April 19 and May 9, 2024

photo by Gary Ann Lewis



Male turkey fanning his tail

photo by Patty Connor



Bobcat sighting in the side yard of a Cherry Tree Hill Rd. home.

# Why Wilderness?

by Tom Schmidt

1788

A darksome chaos of unending trees,  
 The trackless haunt of wolves and catamounts,  
 Where Abenaki lurks, chill brings disease,  
 Demonic spirits wander, quick to pounce.  
 An axe stroke poorly aimed, a falling limb,  
 A sharp stone through a shoe, a sudden squall,  
 A few steps from the trail in twilight's dim—  
 A pilgrim lost, and silence covers all.  
 Yet God ordains against this forest foe  
 To send His servants armed with sharpened blade  
 To slay the daunting giants, lay them low,  
 Let blessed light root out the gloomy shade.  
 God's paths, by His good will, we shall make straight,  
 Proclaim His reign, the darkness subjugate.

2024

Too few these trees that hum their leafy hymns,  
 Uplifting spirits rooted in the ground,  
 Enrobed in light, with healing in their limbs,  
 They proffer peace and mysteries profound.  
 A mycorrhizal network no one sees,  
 A symbiosis of the great and small,  
 A wood wide web, low fungi and high trees—  
 A pilgrim finds that silence covers all.  
 Yet we must guard the forest from the foe—  
 Ourselves—prevent the poisons, still the saw,  
 Sustain the splendid giants, let them grow,  
 Let wooded glades again enkindle awe.  
 May carbon footprints tread more lightly here,  
 And what we once diminished, now revere.



## Paulie's Recipe

### Bismarks

Submitted by Wendy Soliday  
 to *Gather Round the Table*, recipes from The Old Meeting House

#### INGREDIENTS

3 T butter  
 2 eggs  
 ½ cup flour  
 ½ cup milk  
 Dash of salt

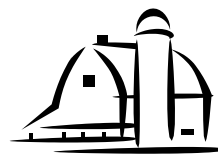
#### DIRECTIONS

In a 10-12" cast iron frying pan, put the butter and set in a very hot oven (450°) while you mix the rest of the ingredients. When butter is almost sizzling, pour in the mixed ingredients and bake 10-12 minutes without opening the oven door. Voila...when you do (after 10 minutes, at least), there will be a giant poofy pancake/popover. Cut into wedges and serve with syrup. Bacon doesn't hurt either.

*Wendy's comments: Even your kids can make this, and it is a stunning looking breakfast treat. Be warned: my children routinely ate one of these EACH, which is why I have three cast iron frying pans. I have tried doubling this and using a flat casserole dish, but it is never as magical.*



photo by Gary Ann Lewis



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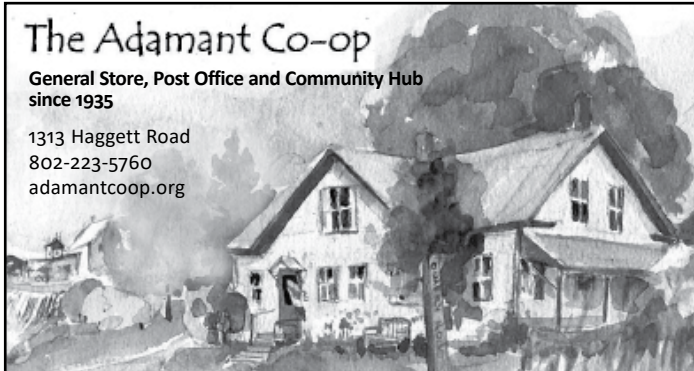
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## IMPORTANT DATES

**Thurs. July 4, Independence Day,** Town Office closed

**Mon. July 15, 5 pm, Meeting of the EM & Calais Historical Societies,** Old West Church in Calais. Learn about the role of the Poor Farm in town life in past times. BYO picnic supper and lawn chair. The Medad Wright house which served needy town folks is right next door. All welcome. Contact Sandal Cate: [sandal.cate@gmail.com](mailto:sandal.cate@gmail.com)

**Mon. Aug. 19, 5 pm, Meeting of the EM & Calais Historical Societies,** Dwinell Family Homestead, 4610 Rte. 14, E. Calais. Bring a lawn chair and BYO picnic supper to be followed by tour of the historic home. All welcome. Contact Sandal Cate: [sandal.cate@gmail.com](mailto:sandal.cate@gmail.com)

**Mon. Sept. 2, Labor Day,** Town Office closed

## SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2024 SIGNPOST Submissions Due: July 31, 2024

**HELP WANTED** The *Signpost* is looking for a new Records Editor. For more information about this volunteer position contact [michellealsinger@gmail.com](mailto:michellealsinger@gmail.com).

## EARLY PRIMARY BALLOTS BY REQUEST ONLY

The statewide primary election is on Tuesday, August 13. East Montpelier Elementary School will be open for voting between 7:00 am and 7:00 pm. Early/write-in ballots should be available by the second week of July and **must** be requested from the Town Clerk's Office. You may also request ballots electronically on your account at [mvp.vermont.gov](http://mvp.vermont.gov).



*The Center Road Pond, Watercolor by Susan Bull Riley*

## 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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EMFD Community Room  
Four Corners Schoolhouse  
Town Office Building  
Elementary School  
Town Office Building  
one of the district elementary schools  
Old Brick Church/E. Calais