

EAST MONTPELIER Signpost

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Volume 37 / Number 1

NEWS OF OUR COMMUNITY

September-October 2026

How Did You Get to East Montpelier?

Each year the September-October issue of the Signpost is written largely by its readers in response to a question. Here are this year's responses to the query, "How did you get to East Montpelier?"

The Templeton(Chapell) family Came Early

Our journey to East Montpelier began 238 years ago, and nine generations later we are still here. Our family—the Templetons (Chapells)—along with the Dodge family (Austin Cleaves) were related by marriage and arrived in town in 1788. The Peck family (Bairs) arrived the same year from Royalston, Mass. These three families were the original settlers of what is now East Montpelier.

The early Templeton family members were all raised on either the current Templeton Farm on Center Road or the original Templeton Farm on Johnson Road close to Dodge Road. My grandmother Alice was a ninth generation descendant and was a dairy farmer until her death in 1979. During the '60s and '70s our family made frequent trips to the farm to visit her. During this time, my sister Brenda and I would spend a portion of our summers here at the farm. Alice loved her animals and her farm and instilled these values in my sister and me. During those years, small dairy farms dotted the roads of the town, and we knew a number of those families. We were blessed to experience this lifestyle during this period of time.

My parents, Roger and Gen Chapell, inherited the property, and in 1982, they moved back to the farm. In 1988, my family moved to town and, with my sister, built our present home on the farm. It was wonderful to realize my dream of having our sons Ryan and Seth live on the farm and be part of their grandparents' lives.

Today my wife, Sherry, sons Ryan and Seth, daughters-in-law Natalie and Michelle along with ninth generation granddaughters Sofia and Breanna are all involved with Templeton Farm. The farm is now diversified—producing grass-fed



beef, hay, and maple syrup, as well as housing Ryan's Green Mountain Stump Grinding, including its composting and topsoil business. I am sure our ancestors look down upon us with a smile, never having imagined that the original family would still be living and farming here after 238 years.

—Bruce Chapell

A Good Referral

During 1992, I was carpooling to a work meeting with Renee Kievit-Kylar. I was telling her that I was looking to move half way between Chelsea (where I worked) and St. Johnsbury (where my husband worked). At the time, we lived in Tunbridge. Newspapers were how we looked for house listings. Renee very enthusiastically said, "Oh, move to East Montpelier. We have a town newsletter—the *Signpost*!"

—Shari Young

Our daughter, Leah, who grew up in East Montpelier and now lives in Durham, North Carolina, recently told us about a conversation with a friend who grew up near Durham. The friend said only two people in her life had known her since she was born—the parents of her childhood best friend. Leah was shocked. Having grown up in a close-knit neighborhood and the wider East Montpelier community, Leah couldn't count the number of people who have known her, and with whom she still has connections, since she was born.

Several people from elsewhere have told us, with a hint of envy, how wonderful our community is. Wondering what is different here, we've come to realize that our friends and family from afar belong to communities of choice: their religious community, work community, gym community, etc. Although in East Montpelier, we may also belong to those types of communities, our neighbors and our town are of central importance to us. These local connections are like family connections. We don't choose our family, and we don't pick our neighbors. And yet, we are a neighborly people, reaching out to the folks up the road with a helping hand or a casserole, even if we do not know them well.

When a need arises in our community, we respond. Whether it's a close friend or neighbor we don't see often, we show up. (Did we learn this at Town Meeting where we argue all morning and then catch up with each other over lunch?) To illustrate: shortly after moving to East Montpelier, my friend's infant daughter became seriously ill. To her surprise, many people from her new neighborhood showed up bringing food, helping with her older child, mowing the

lawn—showing they cared, each in their own way, for these new neighbors with a sudden need.

Our future will present many challenges, including possible floods and other catastrophic events. Together, we can meet those challenges with strength and good cheer. Getting to know our neighbors is a wonderful first step.

Some East Montpelier neighborhoods have regular gatherings. East Montpelier's Emergency Preparedness Committee is working to strengthen neighborhood connections for anyone who wishes to either join an existing neighborhood cluster or start a new one. For more information, please contact Jen Devine at manager@eastmontpeliervt.org

—Rachael Grossman is the Signpost's business manager and lives with her husband, Paul Erlbaum, on Brazier Road



Woodcut by Myrrh Brooks

Gone But Not Forgotten

Conrad Ormsbee, longtime EM resident and active town volunteer, died in Worcester, Massachusetts, on June 16, 2026. In addition to serving as a selectboard member, a Justice of the Peace, and as a member of the zoning board, he was an active member in the Four Corners Schoolhouse Association (4CSH) and the EM Historical Society.

The family asked that donations in Conrads's name be directed to the EM Signpost and to the 4CSH.

Notes may be sent to Anne Ormsbee at 9 Sky Farm Lane, Sterling MA 01564.

Remaining family in EM are niece Linda Ormsbee and nephew Ed Piro.

EAST
MONTPELIER

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Coast to Coast

The year was 2012. Tom and I were retired from teaching in California, and had lived in Oregon since 2009. Our retirement mantra was “puppies, chickens, and bees”—all of which came to be.

Family status: one daughter lived and worked in Oakland, CA, and was happily single. Our son was a teacher near Lake Tahoe and had met a girl that he liked. Another daughter and son-in-law lived in Montpelier—she, a UVM professor and he, an environmental lawyer.

The best news of that year, however, was that the Montpelier couple produced our first grandson. Blissful, we immediately booked flights to Vermont to meet the newest family member. The hard part was knowing we had to leave this bundle of love and head home.

So it went, back and forth, across the country. By the toddler's first birthday, we had made the decision to move to Vermont in 2013 to be closer to our only grandchild.

We loved Vermont. Having previously lived in cold-weather states, we “got” snow and were ready for four (or six) seasons. We moved to East Montpelier, just 2.5 miles from our Montpelier family. No more frequent cross-country flights. Still, we would see our West Coast family periodically.

In early 2015, our second grandson was born in Vermont. We relished the relationships we were nurturing and were happy to help with childcare. Meanwhile, 3,000 miles away, the relationship between our son and the “girl he liked” had bloomed, and they were married in 2018.

Twenty months later, a boy was born to the Tahoe couple. Naturally, we flew to meet our third grandboy. Ironically, cross-country flights were, once again, part of our lives. Two and a half years later, our second California grandson was born.

We have never looked back on our decision to move to Vermont. Our proximity to family has made for exceptional

relationships. We cherish all four of our grandboys and even encouraged our West Coast family to move east. But they are happy in Tahoe, and we see them as much as possible, including their visit to Vermont this summer.

—Merry Schmidt

A State of Mind

I grew up in Newtown, Connecticut, a place similar to Montpelier with a population (then) of about 8000. After college, while working in New York, I met a couple who owned a ski home in Vermont and came up weekends in the summer as well as winter. The company I was working for closed its doors, and I was out of a job, so I decided to live at the ski house until I figured out my next steps. I cooked meals for the weekend skiers. The Warren Store was recently under new ownership, and I was asked to run its More Store—the clothing and gift part of the store. It didn't take me long to realize I would never go back to NYC: It was time to move back to the country. This was in 1969 when I was in my late 20s and learning about life.

I was then asked to manage a greenhouse in Waitsfield. Though I was reluctant to leave the store and the tight community of Warren, the time seemed right to move on. I met my son's father, who bought the greenhouse and turned it into Flash Gardens. I became pregnant, the dad left, and it was time to move once again. I was looking for a house to purchase, when an acquaintance told me about a little run-down old house in a tiny village north of Montpelier. I took a look at it and said, “That's it!” We had some renovations done to make it liveable—barely—and my one-and-a-half-year-old baby and I moved to the East Montpelier side of downtown Adamant in spring 1976.

I wish I had before and after pictures. There was hardly any grass, certainly no flowers and all swamp bushes out back. But slowly over these past 50, years we've made our little paradise. We are surrounded by flowers, Bishop's Weed, lawn and pond. Our oh-so-cold house is now warm. I have wonderful neighbors close by. I love East Montpelier and all that we do here. I look forward to each *Signpost* to learn even more about our neighbors. And I feel lucky to also have another community—Adamant. What a great place to raise a child, to feel safe and wanted. Those Calais folks are pretty nice, too, though they try to claim Adamant is only in Calais. It is not! Adamant is a “state of mind” and a good number of people from East Montpelier live, work, shop there, and help make it a special place.

I am glad my son Porter went to East Montpelier Elementary School. He still keeps in touch with many of his classmates, all middle-aged now! How did that happen so quickly?

—Alison Underhill



The Yellow Schoolhouse

In 2000, after our son Fergus was born in Seattle, my husband Rob and I moved back east, to Vermont. We rented in Calais that year, falling in love with all the back roads, but bought our first house in Northfield. When Norah was born in 2003, I started dreaming about life north of Montpelier. I house-hunted over coffee every morning. In 2004, I spotted a new East Montpelier listing on Center Road. The kids and I had an event that day at the Old Meeting House, so I called our agent, who stated “That house is too small! As your kids grow, you’ll feel crowded.” When I persisted, she suggested I drive by and then call her.

Midday, we left the OMH and drove two miles north. I pulled over by the weathered rail fence, gazed at the little house under the trees, looked eastward at the mountains, and started to cry. I knew we were home. Immediately, I called the agent and pushed for a viewing. I called my husband at work in Burlington, insisting he leave early. He hesitated, suggesting if I liked it, he’d schedule another time. But I knew how special this house was and promised him he’d have no regrets.

Twenty-two years later, we are still in love with this house and this town. We never felt too crowded. The kids—plus assorted dogs, cats, guinea pigs, chickens, and goats—flourished. Fergus is home again for now, part of the vibrant central Vermont theater community. Norah loves bringing friends up from Boston, so proud of where she grew up. As for me, nearly every time I walk up to the house, I pause and savor how lucky I am to call this home.

—Lauren Quinn

Coming Back Forever

Thirty-eight years ago, Ann was due for a sabbatical leave from Wells College in Aurora, NY and was planning to spend it in a second-home rental in Marshfield where Mary Belenky, Ann’s collaborator, lived. Just before we were ready

to move, the owners decided not to rent to us because we had a three-year-old and there was a pond on the property. What to do? Mary heard from Tarin Chaplin that she would be away for the year, so we could rent her converted schoolhouse, which was next door to the Old Meeting House. We agreed, and our lives changed for good.

Across the street was a small friend (Sarah Waterman) for our Nora to play with. Nora went to the Goddard College preschool two days a week. We attended the Old Meeting House, impressed by its talented young minister (Hamilton Throckmorton) and the choir, which contained folks with amazing voices, including outstanding soprano Celina Moore. By Town Meeting Day, we knew almost half the people in the gym!

Back in upstate NY, we couldn’t get East Montpelier and Vermont out of our heads. Our great good luck held. There was a job for Ann at Vermont College, and a house for sale just up the road from Sarah Waterman and her family. We even got to live in the same neighborhood. We’ve been here ever since, so grateful to be part of this beautiful place with its wonderful inhabitants.

—Ann Stanton and David Connor

Creating a Community Hub Over Three Generations

In 1971, following their purchase of C.P. Dudley Store, Ernie and Gloria Biron arrived in East Montpelier. Previously they had owned Ernie’s Variety in Montpelier. Moving into the home upstairs, they raised their four children. During the summer of 1980, Ernie had a tragic accident and could no longer run the store. Son Jeff took over as manager when he was about 18 years old. Robin, an employee who had grown up on Johnson Road, joined him in management after they wed.



Jeff and Robin raised their daughters, Angela and Celine, amongst all of us shoppers. The girls began working in the store as children. In 2016, the unexpected struck. Jeff became ill, and Angela took over as manager as she was graduating high school, a sad parallel. Robin returned to work alongside Angela and Celine. The girls inherited the store in 2017. Angela attended Colby College, where she majored in Biology while managing the store remotely. In 2026, after 55 years of ownership, the Biron family decided to sell the store to another East Montpelier family, the Halls and Purchases of Fairmont Farm. The families have worked together closely to achieve a smooth transition.

Celine has followed her love of animals to work in veterinary medicine. Angela is pursuing graduate education in human medicine.

Celine described this transition: "There are no words to say how much East Montpelier has meant to us. Our lives have revolved around it, as our family business has been such a central part of our town. We are holding so much gratitude for the community that helped us grow up. We have been fortunate to know and love many generations of East Montpelier folks. There is no place like home!"

—written by Erica Zimmerman who has known the Biron sisters since they were children

How We Got Here

I had lived in a bunch of places, and Molly had lived in a bunch of other places. We found each other in 1983 in Newburyport, Massachusetts. Back then, Newburyport was still a vibrant, slightly wild place with a variety of interesting characters. We bought a five-acre farm and house and rehabbed the heck out of it and the adjacent barn and added sheep, horses and chickens. Our daughter was in a good grade school, what could be better?

And yet and yet—the area started changing drastically. What were *normal* houses were being torn down to be replaced by McMansions for strangers to live in. While this was happening, Molly graduated from Vermont College's low residency program in Montpelier. Coming home one time she remarked, "You know I really liked it there." She'd been a commercial potter for 20 years and was ready for a change. I was tired of chasing consulting projects so, maybe it was time for something new. We agreed we had one more move left in us. I had lived in New Jersey, Virginia, Michigan, Maine, and Massachusetts. New England was the only place we considered and Vermont the prime candidate because of many visits. When someone asked me why, I said, "When I see people crossing the street in Montpelier, they're smiling, they look happy". After two years of looking and one ridiculous showing in Randolph in 1998, Molly talked with a realtor who knew of a possibility in East Montpelier. A week later while

with the realtor, she crested the hill on Jacob's Road and saw the red barn on Sanders Circle. A few days later I walked the land with the owner, talked about plans for animals and that was that, deal done. And we began to build.

—John Ordway & Molly Power

Living in Grammy's & Papa's House

I grew up in Central Vermont and spent most summer days with my grandparents in East Montpelier. Though they had retired from teaching, their love for it never really left. Papa had an enormous garden where he taught me how to plant things, pull weeds, pick off beetles, and harvest everything (while eating half of it out in the field). We did various science experiments, like magnetizing nails with a battery and old wire he had lying around. We used an old workbook from the 80s to learn basic architectural drawing. Grammy taught me how to sew and bake pies, and she made sure we had regular trips to the library. When we would stay for dinner, they would often turn on music and slow dance in the kitchen as we all cleaned up. The love they had for each other was always so apparent. They loved each other and everyone around them more than anyone else I've ever known.

When my husband and I had children, we knew we wanted to share the same excitement for life and love of family and community that I experienced here as a child. Our son was born when we were living in the Philly suburbs—a place where mentions of dirt roads and feet of snow usually led to looks of concern and "I'm so sorry." We knew we wanted to come home to Vermont. We bought my grandparents' house on Clark Road in 2023 and are now raising the third generation of my family here. The house is again filled with garden adventures, chaotic baking experiments, and the (unceasing) noise of small children.

—Jaye (Grundy) Weinert





World Travelers Settle Down

It was February 1995, and we had abruptly returned from Kazakhstan to help take care of Kevin's ailing mom in Chicago. Sadly, she passed away shortly after we arrived. Since the Peace Corps' bureaucracy had forced us to leave our jobs when we came back to the States, we were adrift and unsure of our next move. One morning we spotted an employment posting from a young environmental and community development organization in Montpelier that was working in the former Soviet Union. The job search had officially closed, but the position was still unfilled, as few Americans in those days had experience working in that region. They invited Kevin to an interview if we could get to their office in two days. We hopped into a borrowed ten-year-old Tercel and drove for sixteen hours.

While Kevin was interviewing on College Street, Erica went for a drive—heading uphill out of town for a mile, taking a right fork, past a tidy neighborhood, lovely old farms, and pretty views—with the Tercel somehow handling all the hills. And then the road narrowed to practically a single track and became a gorgeous one-lane road lined with grandmother maple trees, only a few miles from the Capitol. A town that preserves such a place? We could live here!

And, in fact, a month later we moved into Kirby and Madeleine's apartment in the Parley Davis house on Center Road in East Montpelier Center. A year later, we moved to a half-finished converted shed just over the hill on County Road. And then eight years later, we headed right back over the hill to the Center Farm, originally the Clough Tavern, on—yes—Center Road, where we have raised our family and many animals over the past 22 years.

Thirty-one years later we are still here in East Montpelier. How remarkable that after traveling halfway around the world, a tiny road led us home.

—Erica Zimmerman and Kevin McCollister

East Montpelier Called

I first came to East Montpelier in 1969 to teach a combined first, second, and third grade class at EMES, after being hired during a phone conversation with Principal Cora Copping. Though I had not met Cora, I had met Superintendent Pete Johnson during a previous winter trip. That summer, my husband, Harold, and I drove back up from Long Island to see the school and find a place to live. We had to exit I-89 at Sharon since the Interstate was not yet completed. Driving to Montpelier along a two-lane country road, we wondered what we'd gotten ourselves into.

EMES felt like a special place, with its lush green fields and surrounding woods. Principal Copping introduced us to the school, noting that most of the teachers and students had come from one-room schoolhouses just a few years before. We loved it. Now could we find a place to live?

The next day as we came out of the Coffee Corner (at the corner of State and Main), a man was standing by our car admiring our beagle, Blue. When we mentioned that we were looking for an apartment, he said he had one available and would be okay with Blue, too. We followed him to the "meadow" area off Elm Street, to a Victorian home with a turret and a lovely second-floor apartment. We were hooked, but still not sure if we'd survive more than a year.

Fast forward nine years. We'd started our family, moved twice, and were looking for land in EM where I was teaching in a modular classroom. I had gotten to know many wonderful families of my students and others in the community. If only we could find that special piece of land. Finally, one summer day in 1978, IT HAPPENED! We drove down Powder Horn Glen Road, and there, at the end of the road, was a hockey stick in the ground with "For Sale" and a phone number written on it. We bought it that very day. We broke ground in November, just before a big snowstorm, and worked on our house all winter. It has been 47 years since we moved in (1979), and it is still one of my favorite spots in East Montpelier.

I've seen many changes in our town, but to me, the constant is the people. My own neighborhood has seen a transition as young families have moved in and become part of our extended families. Powder Horn Glen is a great place to be.

—Carolyn Pastore

Beauty and Snow

My husband, Wayne Hamilton, dreamt of living in Vermont for its beauty and snow. Our impetus for moving here included his vision of skiing every winter weekend. In September of 1990, our family of four arrived in East Montpelier, where my cousin, Mary Senechal, and her husband, Hamilton Throckmorton, lived.

Wayne gave me directions to a house that was for sale on Quaker Road. I found my way to Quaker but came across

another for-sale sign for a house on McKnight Road. I drove to the bottom of that driveway, liked the house and land, and saw that it was on a dead-end road. I called Wayne and told him that was the house we should buy. I continued driving back to Maine, where the kids and I were still living.

On the day we bought the house, Hannah and Tom stayed with Mary while we signed the papers in Montpelier. Hannah, then 5, was starting kindergarten that day. We drove to McKnight Road and waited for the school bus to pick her up. Hannah didn't see our new house until the end of the school day.



Wayne, Tom, and I drove up to our new home. It was my first time seeing the inside of the house. The owners were nervous that I wasn't planning to see the inside of the house until after we purchased it. For me, it was all about the location—which was perfect.

On the first night in our house, at about two am, I awoke with a start, sat up in bed, and exclaimed, "WHAT WAS THAT?" The coyotes were howling in the woods behind our house. Wayne was nervous about how I would react to the coyotes. I have grown to love howling coyotes.

I am truly grateful that I live in East Montpelier, surrounded by beauty and wonderful neighbors.

—Rachel Senechal

A Really Nice Place

How did a Jewish kid from suburban New Jersey end up in Vermont? It started when I was nine years old...

That summer my parents sent me to West Fairlee to a "summer camp" that was, in fact, a small dairy farm run by Moe and Margaret Eaton. To earn extra money to pay the medical expenses of a disabled child, the Eatons took in about

25 kids during the summer. They treated all of us as their own, telling us from day one: "Either help with farm chores or stay out of the way... there are 600 acres of forest, so get lost... come back for meals, unless you tell Margaret you are going to miss a meal or be camping for a few days." There were a few teen counselors who split their time between farm chores and keeping kids occupied. Nothing was compulsory.

It took three days for my nine-year-old mind to get the message. That morning, I tentatively walked away from the farm, up the dirt road. Alone. No cars. No sidewalk. No people. On my left, tall weeds and forest, on my right, a cow pasture. After about a quarter mile, I saw an older couple sitting on a porch. The man beckoned to me. Without a thought about warnings not to speak with strangers, I immediately walked to the couple. "Hello there," the man said. "You must be one of those Elmwood Farm kids. What's your name, son? Would you like a glass of lemonade?" Seeing my hesitation, my silent unsure politeness, he did not wait for an answer. He poured me a glass, handing it to me as I said my name.

He made introductions: Earl and Marjorie Pape. They asked where I was from and how I liked the farm. There was an easy flow of conversation, with pauses to listen to the sounds of a summer day—insects, birds, cows. After a time, Mr. Pape looked at his watch and said, "It's getting to be lunchtime. They'll be wondering where you are, Paul. It sure has been good to meet you." We said our goodbyes, and the Papes said I should come back to visit again soon.

As I walked back to the farm, I knew I had just had a wonderful new experience—exploring alone, meeting people on my own. As I walked, I thought that Vermont seemed like a really nice place, a place I'd like to live as a grown up. I decided then, walking back to the farm, that, as an adult, I would live in Vermont.

For several years as a young adult, I traveled all over the continental U.S. As I suspected, no place fit like Vermont.

In 1980, a friend took me on a ride to his favorite road in the area: Brazier Road in East Montpelier. Rachael and I have lived on Brazier Road since 1982.

—Paul Erlbaum

Across the Border

I was planning to move from Ottawa, Ontario to Vermont in 2014 and was looking for a place to live near my brother, Joey, a farmer in Plainfield. Joey took me to see the apartment Ruth and Sara had in their home in Adamant. Immediately, I liked both of them and the apartment. Because Ruth's mother needed the (accessible) apartment later on, I moved not far away to the Templeton Farm and have been very happily in the Adamant neighborhood ever since.

—Liz Benjamin

Building More Than a Park Shelter

by Nick Van Den Berg



Photo by Laura Stone.

Nick, Jack, & Russell Van Den Berg building the rec field fence

When Calais craftsman Justin Hepburn begins raising the timber frame for East Montpelier's new park shelter, he'll be creating more than a pavilion. He'll be leaving a lasting mark on the very recreation fields where he spent countless hours playing youth sports as a child—a structure that will serve families throughout the region for generations to come.

Thanks to the dedication of volunteers, generous donors, local businesses, and grant partners, the East Montpelier Recreation Board is moving forward with construction of a new timber frame park shelter at the recreation fields located on Vincent Flats Road, adjacent to the elementary school.

While the shelter itself has not yet been built, visitors may have noticed the first visible sign of progress. The aging wooden fence separating the parking lot from the playing fields has been replaced with a new chain-link fence. Remarkably, the entire installation was completed by volunteers, demonstrating the strong community spirit that has driven this project from the beginning. Construction of the concrete foundation is planned for 2026, with raising of the timber frame to follow in the spring of 2027.

The shelter will provide a welcoming place for families, athletes, spectators, school groups, and community organizations to gather in comfort during sporting events, summer camps, concerts, celebrations, and other community activities.

Designed as a traditional timber-frame pavilion, it will reflect Vermont craftsmanship while providing a durable, low-maintenance facility that will serve for generations.

The total project cost is approximately \$120,000. We are grateful to have secured a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant that will provide half of the project's funding. The remaining funds are being raised through community donations, business sponsorships, volunteer efforts, and in-kind contributions.

We would like to recognize and sincerely thank our current corporate sponsors for helping make this project possible: Vermont Salumi, Central VT Chiropractic, Partners in Integrative Healing, RB Technologies, Mike Brown Trucking, Gendron Concrete, Brothers Roofing and Stone Petal Landscaping. Their generosity has provided tremendous momentum as we continue working toward our fundraising goal.

This shelter represents far more than a building. It is an investment in our community—a place where neighbors will gather, children will play, families will celebrate milestones, and memories will be made for decades to come.

If you would like to help bring this vision to life, please consider making a donation, becoming a business sponsor, or sharing information about the project with others. Every contribution, no matter the size, helps create a lasting asset for the people of East Montpelier.

—Nick Van Den Berg is treasurer of the EM Recreation Board

You may write a check to the East Montpelier Recreation Committee noting it's for the "park shelter" and mail it to P.O. Box 571, East Montpelier, VT 05651.

Or you may use the QR codes below:



Use this code for the business sponsorship page on the EM recreation website.



Use this code for the page for individual donation.

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Summer Celebrations with Our Historical Society

by Sandal Cate



Our town had a fine opportunity to “wave a flag” on June 30 when, with the help of Guthrie Perry, town road foreman, we installed a ‘Betsy Ross style 250th flag’ on the Coburn Covered Bridge. The flag was a gift from the VT Covered Bridge Society which provided them for every such bridge in Vermont. Viewers gathered to hear three short historical presentations by Andy Christensen, Tim Jerman, and Sandal Cate, before Guthrie scrambled up a ladder to post the flag (see photo on page 11). Lemonade and socializing followed. The flag will remain up through next year, so if you have a chance to drive through the bridge, take a peek. Also, note the water stains from the 2023 flood, and be thankful we haven’t had a repeat of such a disaster this year.

On July 20 we joined with the Calais Historical Society to have an ice cream social and the annual croquet competition. More than two dozen people joined in, with 12 spry folks ages 18 to 80 tapping the wooden balls through the wickets. East Montpelier retained the trophy but just barely! As always, thanks to Chris Reed and Teresa Doyle for sharing their well-manicured lawn and tasty treats with our attendees. Please check the Signpost calendar for future events.

—Sandal Cate is president of the EM Historial Society

Is HomeShare Vermont the Right Program for You?

Have you wondered if HomeShare Vermont might be right for you? On September 22, Ric Cengeri, Outreach and Communications Specialist, will be in East Montpelier (see calendar listing) to explain how HomeShare Vermont, for over 40 years, has been matching people who have room in their homes with those seeking an affordable place to live. They conduct background and reference checks and then help create compatible matches. Homeshare hosts can ask for rent and/or help with household tasks, such as cooking, yardwork, housekeeping, snow removal, pet care, or running errands. For guests, this is an affordable alternative to renting. Guests pay an average of \$380/month while providing an average of 7.5 hours of help per week for their hosts.

Ric will provide take-home materials and answer your questions. If you plan on attending, please reserve your spot by calling 802-229-9593 or contacting catherine.cerulli@oldmeetinghouse.org.

Vermont 250: Local Revolutionary Soldiers' Stories

by Tim Jerman

The current Montpelier and East Montpelier Historical Societies (we were one community until 1848) have identified 49 local soldiers who fought in the American Revolution. Most of them had enlisted in other states and moved to Vermont between 1780 and 1820 during the land rush following the war. This is part two of a three-part article focusing on the human drama of two local soldiers who survived their service—brothers Joseph and Ziba Woodworth.

Part Two: Ziba Woodworth survives.

The attack on Fort Griswold was initially repulsed by Colonel Ledyard's men, but the superior numbers of British attackers turned the tide. Then, in a confusion which has been argued about for two centuries, the hundred or so Americans in the fort surrendered but were set upon by British troops swarming into the fort. With bullets and bayonets, those troops slaughtered most of the remaining garrison, who had surrendered. Colonel Ledyard himself presented his sword to a British officer, who promptly ran him through and killed him instantly. In a family memoir, Ziba's niece described the moment, after Ziba was both shot and bayoneted at Fort Griswold, when he determined to devote the rest of his life to God should he be spared.

"My uncles, Asael and Ziba Woodworth, were only boys of 19 and 17 years of age when both were in the action at Fort Griswold, and both were wounded. Asael was wounded in the neck and was taken to the hospital. Ziba was shot in the groin and fell among the dead and dying. He was so weak from loss of blood he could not move as much as a finger, nor so much as groan. When men came to take away the dead to bury them, he was thrown upon the cart among them. He was perfectly conscious all the time, and he prayed for strength to make some sign. He said he made a vow, a promise to God, if He would spare his life he would devote it to His service. And he groaned aloud."

Ziba was saved, fulfilled his vow, and became a Freewill Baptist preacher. Eighty-five soldiers were not as lucky. Ziba took months to recover and never regained full use of his leg. An interesting sidebar is that the first British officer over the ramparts of the Fort, Major Montgomery, was impaled with a ten-foot pike (spear) wielded by Jordan Freeman, a free black man who had been a slave belonging to Colonel Ledyard. He also did not survive the massacre. While this was going on, Benedict Arnold was across the river from Groton directing the burning of the town of New London.

The Battle of Groton Heights, or Fort Griswold, is well-documented but not as well-known as it should be. It is well worth a Google search, as it is an active state park today. Fortunately, the British victory did not accomplish its mission, and the war effectively ended soon after at Yorktown.

Ziba was able to marry and live in Connecticut after the

horror of his experience. His first wife Lucretia died shortly after he returned from a trip to Vermont. His second wife was Lucy Palmer from New Hampshire. Sadly, of their five children only one, son John, lived past childhood. Ziba moved to Vermont in 1790, before Joseph did. He was one of the first 27 inhabitants of Montpelier, settling first on the Onion River about a mile east of the village, then about a mile and a half above the village near Cummings Road off North Street. Beginning in 1802, he obtained a perpetual lease from the University of Vermont on land that was set aside and labeled "college" on the original first division (in 1787) of Montpelier property, all of lot 37. He died in 1826. Both brothers are listed as buried in Green Mount Cemetery in Montpelier. Joseph is not recorded there; more research needed.

—Tim Jerman lives in East Montpelier and is a member of Montpelier and East Montpelier Historical Societies. In 2025 he helped coordinate the 200th anniversary celebration of General Lafayette's 1825 Vermont visit.

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Photos by Jeb Wallace-Brodeur

The Vermont 250th Anniversary Commission is marking the nation's semi-quincentennial with a statewide historic bridge flag display with 88 bridges, including East Montpelier's historic Coburn Bridge. Vermont 250 banners were also distributed to towns with the sponsorship of the Vermont town clerks. The commemorative flags are intended to fly from July 4, 2026, through December 31, 2027. The project received support from the Vermont Covered Bridge Society and the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation.

Baked French Toast

Back-to-School Celebration Breakfast

Prepared the night before

- 2 T maple syrup
- 1 C. brown sugar
- 6 T melted butter
- 12 slices firm white or wheat bread, crusts removed
- 5 large eggs
- 1 1/2 C. milk
- 1 tsp vanilla

Cinnamon and/or nutmeg to taste

Mix maple syrup, brown sugar, and melted butter in the bottom of a 9x13 baking dish. Cover with bread, two slices deep.

Lightly beat eggs and mix with milk and vanilla. Pour this mixture over the bread and dust lightly with cinnamon and nutmeg. Cover pan and refrigerate overnight.

Bake at 350 for 45 minutes. Invert on a serving platter and serve with yoghurt or sour cream and fresh fruit of choice. Serves 6

—Recipe from Rona Kinsley, *Gather Round the Table, The Old Meeting House* cookbook

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MARRIAGES

- Alice Sky married Ethan O'Hara in June

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

- Virginia Bragg, mother of Debra Curtis and Doug Bragg, died in June
- Kenneth Hertz, husband of Catherine Rader, died in July
- Ruth Sanborn, mother of Edmund, died in June
- Earl Smith, husband of Kristin, died in June

LAND TRANSFERS

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

- AEC Realty of Vermont LLC to E. E. Packard Enterprises, an easement on Packard Rd.
- E. E. Packard Enterprises Inc. to Ellery Packard III, an easement on Packard Rd.
- Marc Fontaine & Sharon Bissell to Robert Stringer & Corinne Novetti, multi-family dwelling and 18.8 acres on Fontaine Ln.
- Sandra Gill to Dustyn Michaud, a mobile home on Mugford Rd.
- Jonathan & Rebecca Kelley to Cristy Duncan, a single-family dwelling on 4.97 acres on L. Brown Rd.
- Craig & Sheila Palmer to Richardson Aronson & Todd Darling, 5.59 acres & dwelling on VT14S
- Pine State Trading Co. to Seafarer Holdings, Inc., a commercial building with 4.6 acres
- Patrick & Betty Sikora to Brad & Whitney Whited, a dwelling and 15.31 acres on Sanders Cir.
- Washington Electric Co-Operative, Inc. to Cross Vermont Trail Association, an easement

The following are highlights from the 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 options for remote attendance.

SELECTBOARD

June 1, 2026

Special joint meeting with Calais SB

- Designated Joe Brooks to represent East Montpelier SB and Barbara McAndrews to represent Calais SB to make recommendations regarding East Montpelier emergency medical

June 1, 2026

Regular Meeting

- Accepted the 2026 LEMP adoption form and authorized Chair to sign the shelter MOU
- Agreed to sign the work application order for public ROW by North East Kingdom Broadband
- Passed motion to impound unlicensed dogs
- Approved extension of the DREAM grant
- Agreed to support V-Trans Student Safety Scoping Study Grant

June 15, 2026

- Advised guests of their rights regarding trespass of neighbors' animals on their property
- Authorized the Treas to invest \$1,000,000 from checking account into existing Osaic Investment Account with the intention of earning more interest
- Agreed to engage auditors Sullivan and Powers for \$21,000
- Authorized Chair to sign the certificates of appointment for the following: Rosalie F. Laquerre as Town Clerk, Ryan Starr as Assistant Town Clerk, Michele Pallas as Treasurer, and Ryan Starr as Assistant Town Treasurer
- Following exec session, awarded lawn contract to H.S. Landscapes LLC for 3 years with clause to cancel if needed

July 6, 2026

- Appointed the East Montpelier Fire Chief, Troy Seckington, as the Town Forest Fire Warden, in compliance with new state law
- Agreed to try one of the beaver deceiver devices as recommended by Protect our Wildlife and to pay 50% of the cost up to a project total of \$9,000
- Allowed the TC to issue liquor license to Morse Farm Maple Roots Music Festival, occurring on July 26th
- Entered exec session to discuss a personnel issue

July 20, 2026

- Discussed beaver deceiver with a concerned citizen
- Discussed Town Garage generator pricing
- Heard citizen suggestion to build a gazebo at the intersection of US2 and VT14N. Was referred to the rec dept.

July 27, 2026

- Discussed whose responsibility it is that the too small generator was chosen for Town Garage
- Agreed to give employee raise as discussed in exec session

PLANNING COMMISSION

June 4, 2026

- Asked Alex Rob to draft FPF post about updates to Regional Plan, including housing targets and Future Land Use Map, and to schedule town forum with CVRPC in next few months

June 18, 2026

- Public forum was held concerning a draft of the Regional Plan/Future Land Use Map (FLU Map). Brian Voigt, Program Manager at CVRPC, answered questions about Tier 1,2, and 3 and the housing targets. Comments will be accepted into the fall.

Thank you for your support

CAROLYN & ROBERT BROWN, in memory of Conrad Ormsbee

CAROLYN ORMSBEE, in memory of Conrad Ormsbee

CARROLL WITHAM, JR.

PATRICIA WOODWARD

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

June 2, 2026

- Held a sketch plan review of Parcel ID #03-021.000, 1693 County Rd. Rob Lamb and Anne Marie Shea presented preliminary plans for a minor 2 lot subdivision, including a four-bedroom home. Ms. Watson led discussion regarding requirements and subdivision approval.

WCUUSB

June 3, 2026

- Approved the last day of school for students June 17 and set the last work day for all staff June 18
- Approved proposed VSBA resolution regarding early college
- Renewed policy C48: Foreign Exchange Students and Policy B8: Electronic Communications between Employees and Students
- Approved hiring Jackie Batten, U-32 School Counselor and Betsy VanDerlip, U-32 Special Education Teacher
- Heard public concerns about rapidly proposed configuration changes and divisions among and within communities which they caused

June 10, 2026

Special Meeting

- Following exec session, accepted resignation of Superintendent Steven Dellinger-Pate effective July 31, 2026.

June 17, 2026

Board Retreat and Business Meeting

- Approved the Continuous Improvement Plan for 2026-27, as presented by Curriculum Director and Principals

- Moved to appoint a member of the administrative team (superintendent or designee) to choose a representative to the CESA board and to inform the WCUUSB
- Agreed to encourage CVCC to explore the use of U-32 as a satellite location
- Appointed Andrew Boye, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Chris McVeigh and Susanne Gann to the Executive Facilities Committee with the CVCC
- Authorized Chair to enter agreement with the VSBA to begin search for an interim superintendent
- Reviewed petition to amend the Articles of Agreement for the Washington Central School District
- Moved to call a special election for the amendment vote on August 11th. Motion was defeated
- Accepted the hiring nomination of Abbey Goodrich, Art Teacher, and Katy Truesdale, Principal, Calais Elementary School
- Accepted resignation of Mark Chamberlin with appreciation
- Following exec session, accepted the administration's recommendation on the student residency requests for student 1 and student 2
- Following exec session, issued a public response to alleged Open Meeting Law violation. The response was adopted and read aloud as written

June 29, 2026

Special meeting

- Accepted the charge to the Screening Committee that it will recommend up to three finalists to the board for the one-year renewable position of Superintendent

- Appointed Natasha Eckart, Elizabeth Brown and Diane Nichols Fleming as board member representatives to the Screening Committee
- Elaine Pinckney, Consultant, explained that the next steps will be to update the job description, create a job listing, and set dates for the first two committee meetings

July 8, 2026

- Following public comment and exec session a motion passed which included the following proposed change in the Articles of Agreement section 4 C stating: "Academic Year 2027-2028 and after, the New Union District Board shall not close any school building or cease using the building to provide direct instruction in at least one grade, pre-kindergarten through grade 12, unless first approved by both a majority of the Union District Board and the voters of the New Union District. The vote to close a school for the 2027-2028 school year may occur prior to the beginning of that year, with the closure effective on or after June 30, 2027." And to warn the date of the election to be held August 11, 2026.
- Accepted Melissa Tuller's resignation, with gratitude. Authorized Steering Committee to authorize interim clerk until interim clerk is no longer needed



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A Vision of Community

by Celina Barton

As children, my sister and I galloped around the great rolling fields of sand in East Montpelier playing Star Wars, Dune, and Little House on the Prairie—taking on new identities and inventing stories. Along with our friend Jonathan, we raced up those Sandy Pines dunes, laughing all the way back down into the sand we had just conquered. I will never forget watching Jonathan tip back a bottle of Sprite and drain the entire bottle in one gulp—bubbles and all. I was seven, and that seemed to me the most remarkable feat a person could perform.

A child doesn't know to separate the playing from the place. The sand, the friend, the fizzing bottle, the collapsing hill that made you giggle on the way back down — it was all one thing. Sadly, we unlearn that knowledge as we get older. That a place and the people in it are not two subjects, but one.

What perplexes me is why we let that separation happen so easily the moment the subject turns to policy — housing stock over here, heating fuel over there, per-unit costs somewhere else, as if the mobile home parks within our commu-

nities, the families, our school chums, the local businesses providing jobs, and the woods out back are five different ledgers instead of one small, whole, particular world.

Those same pits sit alongside Sandy Pines, and I have come to love that neighborhood the way you love a member of your own family—not as acreage to be managed, but as a place with its own soul, its own belonging. It sits up on the high ground above the village, and there is something fitting in that. Fifty-six households keeping a kind of quiet vigil over the rest of us.

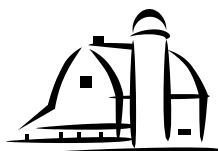
Here is the thing about Sandy Pines that I keep returning to, the thing that has nothing to do with any ledger. Years ago, that neighborhood gave truckloads of its own sand, freely, to soften the Riverbend Store shoreline at North Montpelier Pond. I don't know whose idea it was first, only that it happened quietly, the way good things happen here — one neighbor deciding that what they had, another neighbor could use. No contract asked for it. No accounting kept track of it. We swam at that beach for hours as kids, rented paddle boats and canoes, stayed past the point of pruned fingers, on a shoreline that exists to this day because a community up on the hill looked at what it had and thought there was enough to go around.

That is what neighborliness looks like when nobody's watching to grade it. The old, unfashionable idea that we belong to a place and to each other in it, the way a hand belongs to an arm, not the way a customer belongs to a store. Sandy Pines has been living that old covenant of neighborliness all along. What we have, we share; where we live, we belong; and the fate of one of us belongs to all of us.

—Celina Moore Barton grew up in East Montpelier, flew from the nest for several decades, and has returned to play an active role in our community including writing this column for the Signpost.



Tom, Celini, & Eliza Moore on the North Montpelier beach



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Activity on the Trails

by Jeb Wallace-Brodeur

It's been a busy summer so far for East Montpelier Trails, Inc. (EMTI). The big news is that EMTI met, and even exceeded, our fundraising goal for the Mallory Brook Trail bridge replacement project. We received 58 generous donations for amounts ranging from under \$50 to \$5,000 and raised a total of \$17,800. We can't thank our generous neighbors enough. As of this writing, our permitting process has been delayed a bit, so construction hasn't begun yet, but we hope to get things moving shortly.

In the meantime, we've been busy with other trail projects. The biggest has been a major relocation of portions of the Sparrow Farm Trail. This trail connects Sparrow Farm Road in East Montpelier with the North Branch Trails in Montpelier and is used by walkers, runners, bikers, and skiers. If you're part of this last group, you may be familiar with the alarmingly steep fall-line plunge just south of the open fields below North Street. This old snowmobile trail is very hard to groom and typically turns to an ice sheet after a few skiers have snowplowed down it. Not fun. And for bikers, the climb straight up the hill was not anyone's idea of a pleasant outing. This is the section we've been tackling this summer. "We hope the new trail is a lot more fun for everybody. It was really time to replace the steep, rocky, eroded trail," says Bill Heigis, president of EMTI.

This project is a bit unique in that this trail is located in two towns. Planning for the trail began last November with several different proposals for the route being considered. Multiple presentations to the East Montpelier Selectboard, one presentation to the Montpelier Parks Commission, and walk-throughs of the route with Forest Committee members got us to a consensus on the new route.

The construction began this summer and has been a big collaborative effort. The cost of the project has been split between EMTI and the Montpelier Area Mountain Bike Association (MAMBA). The Montpelier Parks Department consulted on the project and provided a full cadre of laborers that included AmeriCorps members and Montpelier Youth



Geoff Beyer & Kris Hammer doing the heavy lifting

Conservation Corps volunteers. Geoff Beyer from East Montpelier and Kris Hammer from Montpelier roughed in most of the new trail with a mini excavator, and other volunteers did the finishing work. Montpelier Parks Director Alec Ellsworth says "It's been great to work together with East Montpelier Trails and MAMBA on the Sparrow Farm project. The Sparrow Farm Trail from the North Branch Park up to Sparrow Farm Road has always been a challenging climb, and we're excited to see it become more approachable for more users."

—Jeb Wallace-Brodeur is an active trail user and a member of the EMTI board.



TWIN VALLEY SENIOR CENTER

Canasta This classic card game combines skill, strategy, memory, and teamwork. Beginners and experienced players welcome. Join us: 2nd and 4th Monday, 10:15 am– noon.

Hot Dog - It's Friday! Grilled hot dog and drink: \$2; Fridays, noon-1 pm.

Volunteers Needed to deliver Meals on Wheels to seniors in our community. A small amount of time makes a big difference in someone's day by providing both a nutritious meal and a friendly check-in. For info: 802-223-3322





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CALENDAR

Tues. Sept 8, (every second Tuesday) 2 – 3:00 pm, Parkinson's Mutual Aid group, Old Meeting House Parish House, Individuals and caregivers dealing with the challenges of Parkinson's meet to share resources and practical ideas for improving quality of life. Free and open to the public. Please contact admin@oldmeetinghouse.org or 802-229-9593.

Thurs. Sept 10 (every second Thursday), 6:00 pm, Community Potluck, Old Meeting House Parish House. All are invited to bring a labeled dish to share, noting if it is gluten-free, dairy-free, or nut-free. For more information contact admin@oldmeetinghouse.org or 802-229-9593.

Mon. Sept. 21, 6:00 pm, EM & Calais Hist. Society meeting with potluck supper, Old Brick Church, EM Village; bring place setting and dish to share. Program: Historian and author Kevin Graffagnino on Ira Allen, one of Vermont's colonial founding fathers. Free, accessible, open to the public. Contact sandal.cate@gmail.com

Tues. Sept. 22, 6:30 pm, Is HomeShare Vermont Right for Me?, Old Meeting House Parish House, dessert at 6:00 pm, free and open to the public; please reserve your spot by contacting catherine.cerulli@oldmeetinghouse.org or by calling 802-229-9593.

Sat. Sept. 26, 9 am – 3 pm, Cribbage Tournament, Twin Valley Senior Center.

Sat. Oct. 10, 9 am – 3 pm, Annual Craft Fair and Flea Market, Twin Valley Senior Center.

Tues. Oct 13, 2-3:00 pm. (every second Tuesday) Parkinson's Mutual Aid group, Old Meeting House Parish House, Parkinson's Mutual Aid group. Free and open to the public. Please contact admin@oldmeetinghouse.org or 802-229-9593.

Thurs. Oct 15 (every second Thursday), 6:00 pm, Community Potluck, Old Meeting House Parish House. Contact admin@oldmeetinghouse.org or 802-229-9593.

Mon. Oct.19, 6:00 p.m. EM & Calais Historical Society Meeting with potluck supper Four Corners Schoolhouse. Bring place setting and dish to share. Program: Jennifer Boyer on "The White and Hersey Families of EM: The Lure of the West." Free, accessible, open to the public." Contact sandal.cate@gmail.com

**NOVEMBER-DECEMBER SIGNPOST
SUBMISSIONS DUE: SEPTEMBER 30, 2026**

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

1st Tues. 6:30 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
1st & 3rd Wed. 6:15 pm
3rd Mon. 6 pm

Town Office Building
EMFD Community Room
Four Corners Schoolhouse
Town Office Building
Elementary School
Town Office Building
Rotating Locations (check website)
Old Brick Church/E. Calais