

THE North Star MONTHLY

Every Small Town's Newspaper

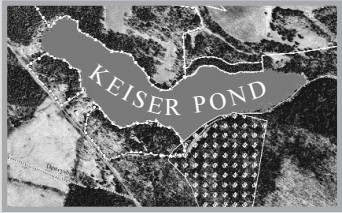
DANVILLE, VERMONT

GOOD FOR THE WHOLE MONTH

\$1.50

JANUARY 2008
Volume 20, Number 9

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Shoreline Protected
for Wildlife and
Recreation**



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His Family in
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WE WALKED TO SCHOOL FROM HOOKER HILL ALONG THE RAILROAD TRACKS

BRUCE HOYT

Any attempt to describe the mid 20th century daily walk to school would be dismissed by school bus-riding teens of today. Not the "two miles uphill through a foot of snow every day," in the exaggerated derision that it evokes, my own experience in the 1940's and '50's typifies the sights and adventures in a school kid's walk to school. I value the connections I made on my walk. I doubt that riders in the big yellow school buses have the same feeling for the places they pass.

My walk began at my home at 20 Perkins Street (now Hooker Hill), a small and elevated neighborhood bounded by the Passumpsic River to the east, the old Purina mill to the north, the Canadian Pacific Railroad to the west and the Saint Mary Street neighborhood to the south. Most families in the private homes had raised their children the decade before, but younger families inhabited the two, multi-apartment tenements, and that's where most of my friends lived. The path to Mill Street might have

(See *We Walked* on Page 10)

Gilmore Somers - The Gentle Giant of Mosquitoville

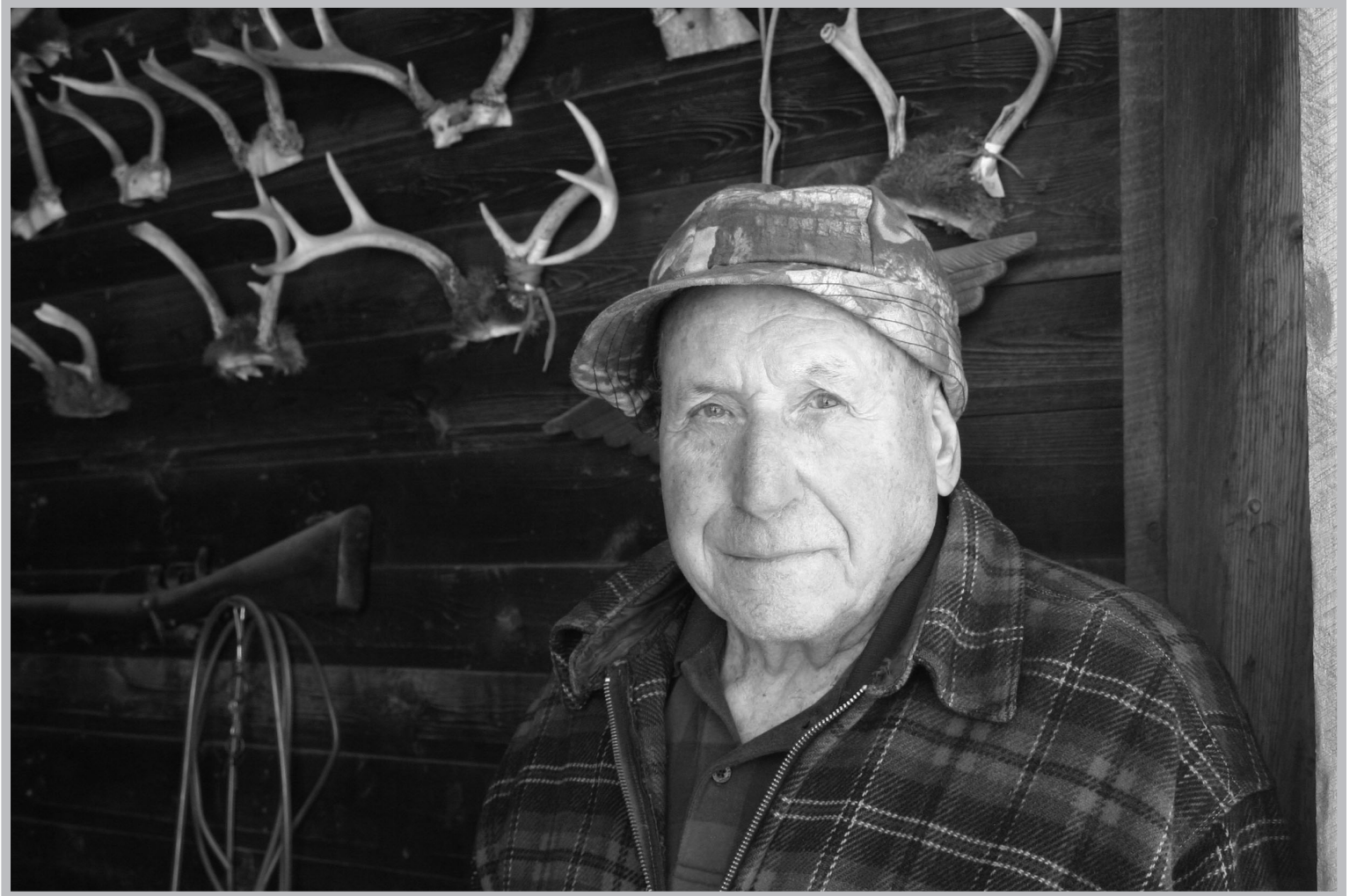


Photo By: North Star Monthly

Gilmore Somers an athlete, deerslayer, logger and businessman, road commissioner, storyteller, husband and father and overall, generously friendly soul - the kind of person for whom the expression "gentle giant" was invented. In his barn are antlers from years of deer hunting. "Each one," he says, "has a story."

TERRY HOFFER

I've often thought I could size people up pretty quickly - in great part by the firmness of their handshake and the directness of their eye contact. It's not easy to fake either one.

I'd known Gilmore Somers by reputation for a long time, but it was in his home of 55-years in the outskirts of Mosquitoville, one of my all time favorite, off-the-beaten-path, crossroads in Vermont, where we first met. Somers turned 90 last summer in July, but none of that prevented him from standing as I entered his living room. He's a big man. He describes himself as 6'7", and though it may be less than that now, Somers can still tower over most of us.

His handshake is convincing. It made me smile. His eyes are clear, and they give the impression that little escapes his view.

Somers is soft spoken, one of those wonderful people who learned long ago that he can be. There is no need to raise his voice or wave his hands or his arms as he talks. Because of his physical presence he holds your attention, and in 90 years, I'd bet there were few who took that lightly.

Somers is a modest man. I'm sure he would never be forward about his accomplishments, but on this cold day in December as the wind whipped fresh snow through Mosquitoville, I persuaded him to fill in some details of his reputation as an athlete, deerslayer, logger and businessman, road commissioner, storyteller, husband and father and overall, generously friendly soul - the kind of person for whom the expression "gentle giant" was invented.

Somers was raised on a dairy farm in the South Part of Peacham. His father had the first corn harvester in the area. Somers was the youngest of eight children, and he remembers cutting corn on neigh-

boring farms for four dollars an acre. His parents didn't let him go to school until he was 8. But he caught on quickly, and by the time he was in 4th grade he had earned the job of school janitor. "I was one of the larger ones in the school," Somers says matter-of-factly, "and I was supposed to get \$25 a year for the job. I guess my parents got the money because I never saw it. I'd go to the school first thing in the morning and start the fire. It might have been zero when I got there, but I'd load up the stove with four-foot wood and open the windows upstairs. You could warm fresh air quicker than stale, and by the time everyone got there at nine o'clock, it would be 72° in the classroom."

Because of his size and his classroom success at the South Part School, Somers was on the fast track to Peacham Academy. "I skipped 7th grade. When I got to Peacham my sister was only a year ahead of me. It was three miles from the farm, and Eunice'd drive the horse. I let her drive so I could hop off and walk with my friends as we caught up to them along the way."

Peacham Academy's principal was Irwin Hoxie. Hoxie was one of three teachers who taught six classes every day. He ran extracurricular programs, coached sports and served as principal all for \$1,800 a year, until, that is, the trustees voted to reduce his pay in 1932 because of the Great Depression.

(Please See *Gilmore Somers* on Page 8)

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Hello Out There Auto Industry

I'm not in the market for a new car. But having learned to drive when cars were automobiles and when V-8's were the norm, I still appreciate the efforts of the automotive industry to serve up new concepts for design and performance.

I just read about the Italian Stallion, that's the new Ferrari ITSF340, that sells for \$270,000 and probably could go to Boston and back before the defroster warmed up. Not in the snow, I suppose, but on dry pavement, one of these limited production beauties will go from 0 to 100 kilometers per hour in a neck-snapping 3.7 seconds. The article did mention fuel economy to be 11 miles per gallon but it avoided the other mundane matters like how many grocery bags fit in the boot or who the heck will work on the thing when salt corrodes the brake system or the timing gets off and the Stallion's whisper sounds more like the bark of logtruck. But with only 350 of them planned to roll off the Ferrari production line, there are probably enough buyers who won't care.

Seriously though, one of my first cars was a Volkswagen, and a description of the 2008 Volkswagen Toureg caught my attention. Even though I have no idea what a toureg is, I still have a soft spot in my heart for a VW. This one is an SUV, and maybe that's a good thing if the December snow fall is any indicator of the winter ahead. Sheesh. This new Toureg starts at \$40 grand and will quickly cost more than \$50,000 if you throw in the technology package, the luxury package and the four-corner air suspension. (I don't know what that is either.) That's a lot of money for a Volkswagen, but wait. Even the Associated Press author of the article I was reading stumbled across this, and she began to trash the Toureg: "... fuel economy is the pits, with a government rating of just 12 mpg in city driving and 17 mpg on the highway." I want to know what the heck is Volkswagen thinking? Whatever happened to the *folkswagen*? Most of us think of a car as some sort of investment in our transportation needs. And with the price of fuel well past \$3 a gallon that Toureg would be an investment in decorating my dooryard.

A day or two later I read about the new Volvo XC70 Wagon. Now there's a car. I'm not sure that I ever even sat in a Volvo, but the XC70, they use to call it the Cross Country, makes anybody look like they belong at the polo grounds or the yacht club. I could use some of that. Volvo has built a reputation around passenger safety with seat belts and side impact airbags way ahead of their time and now radar beaming adaptive cruise control and a keyfob alert system that detects the heartbeat of someone lurking inside the car and warns you not to open the door and sit yourself down into the hands of harm. I can't argue with any of that, but the XC70 will likewise put a big hole in a \$50,000 bill. And what surprised me further is the extent to which it burns fuel. This car is rated at 15 mpg in town and 22 out on the highway. What the heck is Volvo thinking?

Excuse me, but the planet I'm on is struggling under the weight of dependence on oil. I don't understand all of the reasons why, but from my windshield, the bottom line is that the price of regular gasoline has reached the point where I want to top off when I see it priced at less than three bucks a gallon. Oh my gosh. I'm starting to sound like grandparents and my parents, who struggled through the years of the Great Depression. I can hear my mother telling about dropping an egg on the kitchen floor and bursting into tears. I spilled some gasoline the other day, and I almost cried at the fuel pump. It's going to take more than fresh air in the stock market to solve this matter of our dependence on imported fuel.

In the meantime I'd like to know where the market study took place that inspired Volkswagen and Volvo to boast about their new cars with fuel economy in the pits. (I imagine the Ferrari family called a few of their favorite customers and just laughed at the thought of their new Stallion.)

What are they thinking out there, anyway? Don't they know how much I'd like to have a nice little convertible station wagon that will claw its way through the snow and get 40 miles per gallon? Hello out there!

Terry Hoffer

Irrelevance is a Relative Matter

What is it that starts before you really want to think about it, drags on far beyond the "Enough already!" point, and when finally finished, often has disappointing results? (Hint: If you're unhappy with the outcome, you have an opportunity to change things in four years.) Answer: The Presidential political campaign.

Delegates to the Democratic and Republican National Conventions gather in August and September, respectively. At these meetings, each party will elect its candidate for the 2008 presidential election. The process of selecting delegates to the national conventions begins this month, first with the Iowa caucuses on January 3, followed closely by the New Hampshire primary on January 8. The first caucuses and primary often set the tone for the subsequent primary elections and caucuses, as candidates who do poorly in the first rounds of delegate selection often drop out of the race. For the past year, states have been like schoolchildren pushing to be at the front of the primary line (and the national leadership of the Democratic and Republican parties the schoolmarm threatening not to seat the states' delegates at the national conventions if they move their primaries too early.)

Delegates to the Democratic and Republican National Conventions are selected through a variety of methods, none of which I fully understand. (Reading about the process is like reading a manual on how to dance. It's awfully hard to have a working understanding without actually going through the steps.) Each state is allocated by the national parties a number of delegates to the respective national conventions based upon formulae that account for population and the state's "redness" and "blueness." This is measured by the party affiliations of national and state-level elected leaders. There are different flavors of delegates. Depending on state and party affiliation, some delegates are committed to vote for the candidate they profess to support prior to the national conventions, while others are free to wait until the convention before committing to a candidate. Despite the complexities of this whole process, its longevity is a testimony to its success—in providing a forum for the advancement of local, state and national political agenda, and, ultimately, selecting a candidate for president.

This year, Vermont holds its primary elections on March 4, with the actual selection of delegates occurring at state party meetings in May and June. By March 4, thirty-eight states will have elected their delegates to the national conventions. It is probable that one candidate will have gained sufficient delegates to assure his or her election before Vermont even holds its primary. Vermont will send 23 delegates to the Democratic National Convention (DNC) and 17 delegates to the Republican National Convention (RNC). These delegations will be approximately 0.5% of the total delegates at the DNC, and 0.7% of the delegates at the RNC. Late in the game and small in number; Vermont voters are not likely to have much impact on selecting the candidates for the 2008 presidential election.

I am not disturbed, nor do I feel disenfranchised, that Vermont may be irrelevant to the outcome of the presidential primary elections. It is my (perhaps overly optimistic) aspiration that, even if too late and too few to influence the choice of candidate, Vermont's delegates to the Democratic

(Please See *It's a Relative Matter* on Page 4)

THE North Star MONTHLY

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Postmaster: Send address changes to **The North Star Monthly**, P.O. Box 319, Danville, VT 05828-0319. Periodical postage paid at Danville, VT.

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LETTERS: Write to *The North Star*, and let us know what's on your mind. Your point of view or observation is important to us. Letters must be signed.

ARTICLES: We don't have a big staff of writers. So we look forward to your writing. If you have questions or ideas and want to ask first, please call or email us. We'll send you our guidelines. No fiction, please.

PHOTOS: We'd like to see your photos and we welcome them with a story or without. They can be black-and-white or color, but they must be clear. Digital is best.

PRESS RELEASES: We much prefer press releases that are unique to *The North Star*.

DEADLINE: 15th of the month prior to publication.

All materials will be considered on a space available basis.



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Grand Trunk Engineers Strike Strands Hundreds of Passengers New State Law Requires Medical Practitioners To Be Certified

The North Star
 "WHERE LIBERTY DWELLS THERE IS MY COUNTRY"
 1807-1891
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THE NORTH STAR

January 5, 1877

Great Strike of Railroad Engineers - One day last week all the engineers on the Grand trunk Railroad through the whole line from Portland to its western terminus suddenly struck while the trains were in motion and refused longer to do duty, to the great annoyance of hundreds of passengers, who had to complete their journeys the best way they could, by stage, by private conveyance, &c. The mails were also stopped along the whole route. This action occurred, it is said, on account of a recent reduction of wages - the strike being encouraged and sustained by a society called the "United Brethren of Engineers," who comprise some six hundred members and is a powerful combination. The Railroad Company is doing the best it can and refuses to yield to the demands of the strikers. The Company is employing new engineers and has appealed to the

British Government for military protection. The Vermont Central now runs the Grand Trunk trains from St. Johns to Montreal.

Shipwreck and Loss of Life - A dispatch was received from Bridgehampton, LI announcing that the ship Circassian, which went ashore on the night of December 11 during a terrible south easterly gale had gone to pieces and would prove a total loss. All but two or three of the thirty one men on board were lost. The storm which began in the afternoon did not disturb the ship and she lay so nicely that the men were in good spirits and counting on the probability of floating free at high tide. After dark the wind increased in force, the sea ran higher, making a clean breach over the ship, filling the cabins and portholes. At about midnight she began breaking up and was found in pieces yesterday morning.

It is rumored that a formerly prominent member of the Addison County bar has gone crazy and that liquor is at the bottom of it.

January 12, 1877

Daniel Walker of Charleston, age 80 and somewhat infirm, was frozen to death in the road the other morning, while on his way to his barn.

Last Tuesday there died at the Danville poor house a man who called himself James Gillis. He came there sick some four weeks ago and was a perfect stranger declining to give any information

as to his connections or where he had been lately residing. He was about 50 years of age and said to be a Scotchman with no relatives in this country. Funeral services were held at the poor house, and his remains were deposited in the Village cemetery vault.

New Laws - Among the laws of Vermont passed at the last session which went into effect on the first of this month is one that establishes the weight of various produce. Sixty pounds of beans now make a bushel instead of sixty four required as before. The weight of a bushel of apples is fixed by statute for the first time and is forty six pounds.

Another act requires every medical practitioner to obtain a certificate from some of the medical societies to the effect that he is duly qualified. Anyone found guilty of practicing medicine without such a certificate is subject to be fined for the first offense not less than fifty dollars nor more than two hundred dollars. Persons who have practiced five years in the place of their present residence are exempt from the operation of the statute.

January 19, 1877

A New York horse attempting to rival Boynton, swam forty three miles down the Hudson River the other day.

Mr. Marshall J. Morse of this town built a new house last fall with all of the modern improvements. It is a custom of later days to have on such occasions a house warming. In this case it came in

the shape of surprise party. And the affair was so admirably managed as to be a perfect success in every particular. In accordance with a well arranged program, Mr. and Mrs. Morse were invited out to tea, whereupon the house was entered by neighbors and friends from various sections, numbering 125 or more. They passed a pleasant evening and left behind as a token of good will a very nice new chamber set, which just fitted one of the nice new rooms in the house. As evidence of the completeness of the surprise Mr. Morse and his wife were returning from their afternoon visit and when within a half mile of home, they observed their house to be illuminated with the appearance of being on fire. They accordingly and naturally drove the remaining distance in hot haste and arrived at their own door with a smoking horse, whereupon they were invited in to partake of hot coffee and cake which had been previously prepared by the ladies of the vicinity and carried in during their absence.

Small Pox - Mr. John Peck died of small pox at the house of his brother, Simon Peck, in this town on Monday last and was buried the next day. The deceased was aged about 55 years and never was married. It is said that he leaves his property to the amount of several thousand dollars, which will go to his sisters and brothers now living, he having made no will. We know of no more cases of small pox in this town.

Erroneous Statement - The statement which appeared in our columns last week to the effect that Bridgewater, Vermont was in such a sadly demoralized condition as to have no preaching the year round and nobody capable of officiating at funerals, is denied by an intelligent citizen of the place, and the too enterprising reporter from the paper from which we clipped the item had better confine himself to facts hereafter.

January 26, 1877

Snowy Winter - A dispatch from Greenwood, Miss. of January 9 says the snow lies 20 inches deep on the level in that region and that a steamer laden with cotton was frozen in on the Yazoo River. The papers of Northern Texas are full of accounts of skating and sleigh riding. In northern Pennsylvania the snow drifts were reported so deep that many farm buildings have been entirely covered.

R.E. Peabody's mill at McIndoe Falls has sawed out seven million feet of lumber since August. One hundred men are employed at the mill sawing out from seventy five to one hundred thousand feet daily, making a shipment of seven carloads per day.

The last Caledonian is authority for the statement that Mr. and Mrs. Sheldon Moore of Barton have both been made insane by Spiritualism. Mr. Moore has been removed to Brattleboro.

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It's a Relative Matter

(Continued from Page 2)

and Republican National Conventions will be influential in other ways. If nothing more, I hope they will demonstrate the Vermont brand. In my view, the Vermont brand extends beyond material goods. It includes attitudes and behaviors such as social tolerance, a realistic approach to governmental funding of wants and needs, a preference to find the middle ground, and respectfully disagreeing when opinions differ. These attributes have the potential to erode some of the polarity that has consumed a disproportionate amount of political and legislative energy.

I expect members of the Vermont Democratic and Republican parties will support whichever candidate emerges from the national primary elections. Regardless of party affiliation, we can exercise our own choice for president, through our vote, on Election Day in November, 2008.

Tim Tanner

Happy Holidays

"Happiness" is a difficult word to explain regardless of the dictionary definition. "Each to his own" may be the only definition that works. For most of us, it involves the well being of self, family, friends and jobs. Also, for some of us it includes some concerns not directly related to our personal lives. For example, the politics of our country and the world are very important to me. They are crucial to our survival, and I enjoy studying and writing about them.

I am an optimist by nature, but it has been hard these last few years for me to maintain that attitude. But when thinking about the Holidays, I took a fresh look at what is going on around us. It seemed that many things are taking a turn for the better, and they provide me with a long-absent measure of happiness.

At the top of my list of the good news is that in 2003 Iran suspended, and possibly canceled permanently, its nuclear weapons program. It is proceeding with its civilian nuclear power program as it has every legal right to do. Our fear-mongering president's expectation of a war with Iran, (possibly even his hope for one?) is no longer a probability.

Next on my list is the unexpected good news that Hugo Chavez lost the recent vote in Venezuela, which would have given him the power to completely revolutionize the government. He controls the Supreme Court and the legislature, and has spent countless billions of dollars, derived from the sale of oil, currying favor with the poor. Surprisingly, some of them were the ones who deserted him at the polls when he needed them most. Chavez has grudgingly accepted the unexpected result. Democratic process was the clear winner. In retrospect, it seems to me that voters in 2004 didn't exhibit the same concern for the well being of our country, or they would never have re-elected President Bush to a second term.

There is no particular significance to the order of the rest of the matters I will mention — for different reasons they are all important. In a couple of months the noisy furor involved with nominating our next president will end. As interesting as the process is, it can't end soon enough for me. It is ridiculous that Iowa and New Hampshire are so important. But when these early primaries are finally over in February, we still won't know for sure who the two nominees will be.

That decision will be made next summer at party conventions, and anything can happen in the next few months to affect the result. If there is a dead-heat between the top Democratic candidates at the convention that can't be resolved by trading votes, there might be a chance for a groundswell in favor of the most qualified nominee the party could put forward — Al Gore — Nobel Prize winner, former Congressman, Senator and Vice-President. And remember, he received more votes than the president did in 2000.

Although it is "under the public radar," so to speak, there is a serious interest in developing a program to eliminate all nuclear weapons throughout the world. The effort is long overdue, and, of course, would take many years to bring about.

President Bush demonstrates no interest in reducing toxic emissions from automobiles and coal-burning power plants, and he is not cooperating on finding long-term solutions to global warming. Fortunately, individual states and other countries are moving ahead without him. If a Democratic president is elected, there should be a reversal in these policies.

There is a glimmer of hope for reconciliation between Israel and Palestinians. It was significant that one of the Palestinians' two leaders and the Israeli prime minister met, talked, and agreed to work on a treaty to establish a Palestinian state. For the first time President Bush became involved personally in the process. However, the Hamas organization, which elected a majority of members in the freely-elected legislature, and controls the Gaza strip, was left out of the meeting at Annapolis. It opposed the conference, anyway. Probably nothing will happen without peace between Fatah and Hamas.

And now, for the joys of a couch potato! I am one when it comes to the Red Sox and Patriots. New England may be the proud observer of an unheard-of, glorious record in professional sports. The Red Sox have done their part by winning the World Series in baseball, and the Patriots are unbeaten and favored to win the Super Bowl in football. And as if this isn't more than enough, the Celtics basketball team has the best win/loss record of all the teams. And don't forget the great beginning the area ski developments have enjoyed. If the weather holds through New Years, they will be off to their best beginning in many years.

Despite the good news set forth above, it is no time to forget the trouble spots that continue to plague the world. But it is important to keep them in perspective and not let them destroy a Holiday mood. The excesses of free trade and economic globalization are disturbing. Guantanamo and its prisoners continue to be a cancer on our civil liberties. Our proposed missile bases in Europe continue to be thorns in the side of the Russians (and mine, too). Our national debt and trade deficit continue to mushroom. The Iraq war goes on and on with no end or slow-down in sight. We continue to encourage the recruitment of more terrorists in the world with our belligerent, militaristic policies.

Nevertheless, let's put all of that to one side for now, and enjoy the Holidays, thankful for the good lives most of us have.

John Downs

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From left: Cindy White, Donna Percy, John Blackmore, Joan Field, George Coppentrath, Betsy McKay, Sam Kempton, Darlene Pilbin, Sue Coppentrath and Cindy Hastings.

Smells and Memories

When driving along a back road in late summer, I caught the faint scent of wood smoke. My mind suffered a twinge of fall nostalgia that set in motion a train of thought from image to image to my childhood. My husband tells me that I am losing my sense of smell, but he is wrong, only my perception of certain types of smells is on the wane.

Scent is a powerful force. I remember reading that Napoleon Buonaparte said that, even blindfolded, he would know if he was taken to Corsica, the island of his birth, by the scent of its flowers and shrubs. Scent is used with other sensory stimulation to treat people in comas, and in some cases has succeeded in rousing them when other forms of stimulation have had no effect. What is it that causes a smell to associate with powerful images, and why is it that some people are less disturbed by unpleasant smells than others?

Some of my image/smell connections are strong. The scent of lupine reminds me of my grandparents' garden after the rain. The warm, earthy smell of a greenhouse transports me back to my grandfather's English greenhouse where I can clearly see the grapevine, tomato plants and, of course, the fuchsias that I was forbidden to touch. (The buds of fuchsias pop open so appealingly when gently squeezed by little fingers.) The greenhouse was heated by a small coal-fired stove, and the particular smell of coal ashes in today's world, takes me back to the greenhouse and coal fireplaces of my childhood.

Smells of food cooking are powerful memory aids. A particular herb or spice will do the trick. Cinnamon, ginger and peppermint are all associated with the holidays. But often a sprinkle of tarragon, marjoram, thyme and lavender, the herbes de Provence, can transport me to southern France and its warm sun and dry, rocky cliffs redolent with those wild-growing herbs of the region. Garlic performs the same magic for some people, but it reminds me of a former student who always ate salami for breakfast.

When buying hardy mums in the fall, I seek out those with the crisp and tangy scent that immediately reminds me of the huge russet and gold pompoms of the English chrysanthemums that decorate village churches at Harvest Festival time.

It is interesting that many of my smell-related memories are of my childhood and youth. Is that because the sense of smell is so highly developed in babies and young children, when many memories are being archived, to be retrieved years later? Newborn infants have a powerful sense of smell, and they use this to recognize their mothers and help them locate her nipples. This idea of a personal odor may disgust some women who wish to be thought of as having none, but it is true. Babies sense when their mothers are upset or nervous, using that same awareness of smell that detects the change of body odor as a result of stress. A mother's use of perfume will often confuse an infant who has become accustomed to her natural scent. These responses to smell remind us that we cannot escape our mammalian heritage.

There are few smells that I find disgusting. Barn smells, that some find unpleasant, remind me of animals we used to raise, and of the cow barn I used to visit as a child, the place where I first saw a calf born, learned to chop turnips for the cows, and tasted the molasses-scented cattle feed. The smell of hay reminds me of old-fashioned horse-drawn hay cutters and rakes and the warm broad backs and hay-scented breath of the work horses.

Many people have a negative reaction to the smells of hospitals. The smell of clean hospital linens reminds me of birth, a joyful time. On the other hand, the smell of rubbing alcohol reminds me of those hated shots in the doctor's office as a child and as a mother.

All of us have our own smell related memories. I hope that my grandchildren will associate smells of our garden, kitchen and workshop, with especially pleasant memories of their grandparents. I sometimes wonder whether the air fresheners and scented candles that are used so frequently today, will over-power the magically natural scent of dusty attics and working kitchens, dulling even the exciting memories of hidden treasure and delicious food that I remember so well. I hope not.

Isobel P. Swartz

Round-up in the Supermarket Parking Lot

(An Urban Cowgirl's Lament)

A dozen times today I've rounded up these wandering carts
And saved them from destruction, theft and weather.
Though herdsman I may seem,
I speak no pretty metaphor of husbandry;
If more than steel and plastic these may be,
Then they are just the witless analogs
Of my life's perennial chaos.
Here on this cold and snowy macadam plain
I've struggled every day to make reason answer entropy.
I've soaked my shoes and mashed my fingers.
And I've battered every corner of my soul
Trying to hold back the galloping fragments of disorder.
So once again in gaudy orange costume
I go forth to conquer,
While, safe behind the glass,
God and the manager look mildly on.
You there! Impatience,
Rattling empty down the cobbled mall,
You'll be the first inside.
I'll nest and chain you in Frustration, where you'll stay.
And Error, too,
I'll try once more by strength and will
To dominate your skewed-wheel deviations,
Great and small.
And, oh again, Loneliness:
Will you always be abandoned in the road?
Hurt, Anger, Fatigue, and Doubt,
I'll gather you up and hide you all inside.
Now all together,
Clustered,
Rolling,
Clattering,
Charging toward the door.
I will not hear your whining protests.
In you go!

Bruce Hoyt

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Follow the Money

by Rachel Siegel

“Dollar Despair or Dollar Doldrums?”

So, consumers are reluctant to spend, lenders are reluctant to lend, and the stock market's shorter-term volatility creates longer-term doldrums. Now the dollar's fall is yet another symptom of an economy headed for a rough patch – or is it?

The dollar's drop in value may make things more expensive right now, but create a healthier global balance of trade in the longer run.

The dollar's value has dropped far, nearing historic lows relative to other major currencies. There are plenty of reasons to see woe in this. As commodities – including oil – are priced in dollars, commodity prices are higher for us. Those higher prices, in turn, encourage inflation and rob the dollar of even more purchasing power.

Another worry is that our foreign trading partners will stop investing in U.S. assets, drying up our flow of capital. For years, we have been importing more than we export, so that our trading partners end up with dollars. In turn, they invest in the U.S., either in government bonds – which has funded our ever growing budget deficit – or in our corporate stocks, bonds and real

estate. As the dollar loses value, so dollar-denominated assets lose value, and foreign investors may be reluctant to continue funding them. That would dry up the convenient flow of currency that has kept us in cheap imports, retail heaven and government entitlements.

Another worry is that the dollar may lose its status as the world's reserve currency, that is, that other economies will cease to stockpile their wealth in dollars, or even worse, will actually change their dollar reserves into other currencies. For the last 60 years, since it eclipsed the British pound, the dollar has been the world's reserve currency, its currency of choice, its strongest and most trustworthy currency. It has had its ups and downs, but our relentless productivity and creativity have kept our economy and its currency relatively robust, or at least preferable to others'. There are signs that our reserve reign may be ending.

Commodities do seem more costly, but it's really because demand has been increasing faster than supply, as developing economies mature, and the price – in more dollars – reflects that reality. As long as demand is the underlying driver of price, the reality will be higher prices, regardless of the currency in which we keep score.

With the dollar's fall, American products are actually more competitive for both Americans and foreign buyers. For example, more foreign tourists are visiting the U.S., and more Americans are traveling domestically. That dynamic is being played out in many diverse

markets; the fall off in domestic spending may be somewhat offset by this growth in exports or in foreign spending.

Indeed, the drop in dollar values has shifted our balance of trade. We now export more and import less – although we still have a hefty trade deficit – a correction that needed to begin to happen. The rise in commodity prices implies real growth in global productivity and real gains in strength for our trading partners. To export or sell more, we need trading partners who can import or buy more, partners who can consume as well as produce.

It would be costly if our government bonds were sold as economies divested of dollars; it would raise the interest on our government debt and curtail our ability to borrow. That would

raise other interest rates and probably taxes as well, putting a damper on consumer and corporate spending, as well as on the government's. If U.S. bonds lose favor and thus value, however, it would also hurt our investors, who hold them as assets, so they probably would not purposefully precipitate such a sell off.

It's unclear what currency could assume sovereignty as the world's reserve currency. The euro is a likely candidate, but it still relies on a federation of economies which has a unified monetary policy but is still juggling many, diverse, fiscal policies that can undermine its value.

Newer comers on the global scene – China, for example – have great growth potential, but nascent capital markets and a limited ability to offer the track record of reliable liquidity and

stability that a reserve currency demands. The British pound comes to mind, but the British are facing the same bursting real estate bubble and looming credit crunch that we and our dollar have already begun to absorb.

The dollar's drop in value may make things more expensive right now, but create a healthier global balance of trade in the longer run. We can stand to lose a bit of dominance, and for a while anyway, it looks like most global investors will go home with the dollar that brings them.

Rachel S. Siegel, CFA, consults on investment portfolio performance and strategy, and on accounting and tax dilemmas. She has an MBA from Yale; she is a professor in the business administration department at Lyndon State College.

Ken Burns Will Talk at Brattleboro Museum & Art Center

Award-winning filmmaker Ken Burns will explore the most intimate human dimensions of World War II in a talk at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center on January 2. The talk, “No Ordinary Lives,” is part of the Vermont Humanities Council's First Wednesdays lecture series and takes place at 7:00 p.m.

Burns will discuss how the worldwide conflict of World War II touched the lives of every family on every street in America, demonstrating that in extraordinary times, there are no ordinary lives.

Ken Burns has been making documentary films for more than 30 years, directing and producing some of the most acclaimed historical documentaries ever made, among them *The War*, *The Civil War*, *Baseball*, *Lewis and Clark: The Journey of the Corps*

of Discovery and others. His films have won numerous awards, including the Peabody Award, the Emmy, the Grammy, the Producer of the Year Award from the Producer's Guild, the People's Choice Award and the \$50,000 Lincoln Prize, among many others. The New York Times has called him “the most accomplished documentary filmmaker of his generation.”

The Vermont Humanities Council's First Wednesdays Brattleboro series is held on the first Wednesday of every month from October through May, featuring speakers of national and regional renown. The diverse lecture series is also presented in Burlington at Fletcher Free Library; in Manchester at First Congregational Church (hosted by Mark Skinner Library); in Middlebury at Ilsley Public Library; in Montpelier at Kellogg-Hubbard Library; at St. Johnsbury Athenaeum; and at Goodrich Memorial Library in Newport and Stanstead College in Stanstead, Quebec. The program is free, accessible to people

with disabilities and open to the public.

Talks in Brattleboro are generally held at Brooks Memorial Library. However the January talk with Ken Burns is being held at Brattleboro Museum & Art Center due to space considerations.

First Wednesdays is supported in part by the Institute of Museum & Library Services through the Vermont Department of Libraries. Brooks Memorial Library is sponsored by Brattleboro Savings & Loan, Entergy-Vermont, Friends of Brooks Memorial Library, Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc., and Trustees of Brooks Memorial Library.

“No Ordinary Lives” is a National Endowment for the Humanities We the People project: sharing the lessons of history with all Americans.

For more information, contact Brooks Memorial Library at (802) 254-5290 or the Vermont Humanities Council at (802) 262-2626.

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Gilmore Somers - Gentle Giant of Mosquitoville

(Continued from Page 1)

Somers still speaks with reverence about Principal Hoxie. "He was a great judge of character." (In 9th grade Somers was 6'4".) "In my first year he put me in as center on the basketball team. I had never played much, but I controlled that post until I graduated. I could out-jump anyone. In my last year, the team was Norman and Paul Stoddard, Glendon Randall, Hazen Livingston, Herman Clark, Clifton Kinerson, Francis Lackie and myself. We ended the season with a 9 and 3 record, and we were going to the state tournament in Barre." On the eve of the tournament, Somers came down with scarlet fever and was eventually out of school for 60 days. Somers says, "The team talked about what to do about the tournament, and finally, because I couldn't play, they voted to withdraw. That was the end of the season."

"We're just on the walk trying to go straight."

- Ginny Somers

Somers graduated from the Academy in 1936, but more than 70 years later he still looks forward to its reunions. "Mr. Hoxie always said that of all the schools he taught at, Peacham Academy, that is the teachers and kids, were the best he ever knew. It's a shame the school was closed." [Peacham Academy was established as the Caledonia County Grammar School and closed for

good in 1971.]

After graduation, Somers followed his brother to Worcester, MA and with a job in a plumbing supply business earned a reputation as a rugged and reliable worker. After carrying 125-pound oxygen and 225-pound acetylene bottles for welders, he was reassigned to the machine shop and a drill press. His ease in reading blueprints led to an offer to be shop superintendent, but Somers says, "I realized I couldn't work inside all day, and two weeks later I was back on the farm in Peacham."

In the winters of '38 and '39 Somers worked on the town road crew with Herman Douglas. Peacham had a 40 Cletrac crawler with hydraulic wings for a snowplow. Somers says, "I ran that plow every winter as long as Herman Douglas was road commissioner. It took about seven hours to plow the seven mile loop around Green Bay. There was one storm I remember when the wind blew and it drifted. There was me and a helper on the plow and 12 men shoveling in front of us. The wind was in the west, and there were 20-foot drifts. I was on that plow for 52 hours. That night we were up on East Hill at 11 o'clock. Herm told me to take his car and go home. He called at 7 the next morning and asked me to come back. I was at it again for 36 more hours. I think it was the winter of '39. There was more wind then."

Somers was a boxer. "I'd fight at the fairs. They were three-round fights, and you'd get 15 percent of the gate receipts." In 1942 he fought his way to the title of New Hampshire heavy-weight champion, and at 189

pounds he squared off in an epic fight against Tiger Bromley for the state championship in Vermont. "The fight was in the Auditorium in Burlington," Somers says. "I had cut wood all day, and I drove over there in the fog. I lost in a [referee's] decision. If I'd had another couple of rounds, I would have had him. Those days were something. I fought right up until the War started."

In 1946 Somers married a bright and beautiful woman from Barre, and after moving to this house outside of Mosquitoville in 1952, Gilmore and Ginny Somers raised six children. They were three boys and three girls: Marcy, Mallory, Gilmore Jr., Carrie, Lee and Jeffrey.

By then Somers was in the logging business. With the first diesel log truck in the area with a hydraulic loader on it, his work expanded. "With the old two-ton truck with dollies I could pull 8½ cords. With that diesel I could haul 10½ cords. I bought wood lots and cut off the timber, or I bought logs from farmers. At one point I had 18 men, two with horses and seven with bulldozers. I drew off an awful lot of wood to mills in Danville, Groveton, Berlin, Shelburne and Stowe. I even sold logs in Canada, but I guess most of it went to Newman's in Woodsville. That's where Wal-Mart is going up now.

"My men always put the logs in piles with the pulp separate from saw logs. I'd have everything cleaned up by Friday night. That was payday. It was nothing fancy. My checks just said Gilmore Somers.

"We cut everything down to 8-inches in diameter, and we'd always keep the job squared away. They don't always do it like that now.

"I did that until I quit in 1973."

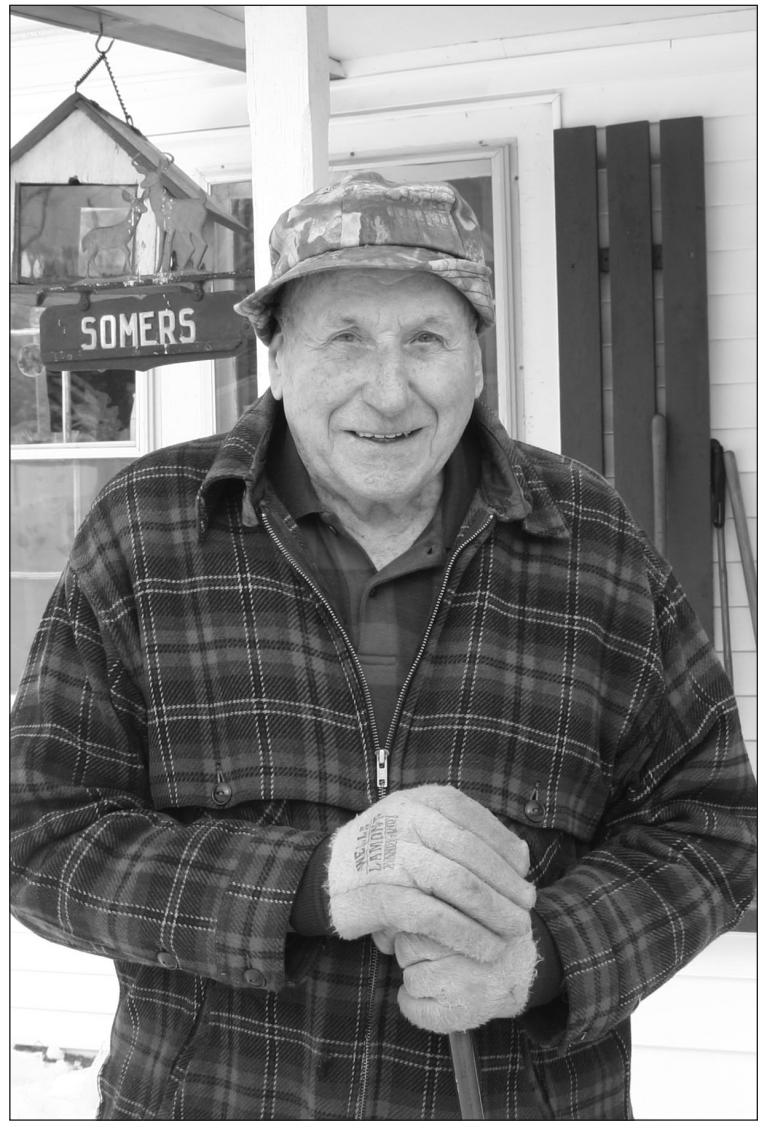


Photo By: North Star Monthly

Gilmore Somers lives with his wife of 61 years, Ginny, on the outskirts of Mosquitoville in Barre.

So Gilmore Somers retired, in a manner of speaking, but he served the town as road commissioner for three more years, and he likes to say, "I've been busy most of my life."

With his wife of 61 years, Ginny, Gilmore Somers finds pleasure in the activities of their expanding family. There are 17 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. "We've always had fun," Ginny says. "There were times that we just got by, but we listened to the kids, and they learned to entertain themselves. I don't want anyone to think that we thought we were perfect about all this, but we sure had good times. We're just on the walk trying to go straight."

Ginny is 84. She says, "I liked the old days. They were so nice. I still cook in my woodstove, and I don't have a

microwave." Her eyes sparkle with her laughter. "Buttons and me don't get along."

One other constant through the years is Somers and deer hunting. "I started hunting my junior year in high school, and I got a deer just about every year since - except four or five years when I couldn't." Somers has a wall in his barn where antlers hang in rows that practically cover the wall. "Everyone of 'em has a story," he says. "The one I got this year up on the hill behind the house was eight points - 170 pounds and a half."

He leans against the barn door frame, lame now from a lifetime of physical exercise, and he looks off up the hill. This is his place, and you can almost imagine him remembering highlights and wonderful days from

(See Gilmore on Next Page)

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Up on the Farm Early

Lorna Quimby



Dick and I have just finished reading a Spenser novel by Robert Parker. Parker writes a lean prose, developing his plots through dialogue. Spenser is an ex-boxer, tough but tender-hearted. He is politically correct to the nth degree.

Spenser had an African-American buddy, also tough. They workout at a gym, trade insults and protect each other's back when the going gets rough. In his latest novel, Parker introduces Chollo, a Mexican-American, whose repartee and Spanish insults show, again, how politically correct Spenser is.

Along with conversations with these interesting characters, Spenser makes understanding comments to the woman in his life. She is an intellectual, a shrink, who graduated from an Ivy League school. Susan and Spenser are an item, but they do not live together. (They tried that experiment once, but it didn't work.) Toward the end of Parker's latest book, they contemplate marriage. Don't worry, folks. They are just discussing the merger.

Spenser is politically correct when it comes to eating, too. Spenser and Susan live in a big city (Boston, I believe, or is it

Cambridge?) and there are plenty of hostelrys and take-out places. Surely I don't need to tell you that Susan does no cooking. She hardly does any eating, either. In all Parker's books I've read, I don't remember Susan tucking into all the good food Spenser describes as he scarfs it down. The most she eats is a stray lettuce leaf or, in this book, a small cube of pork, which she cuts in two and takes a half hour to get a single piece into her mouth. In most cases, shrink or not, we'd be talking anorexia here.

The pair gets through a lot of booze, Susan mostly high-priced wines, Spenser equally pricey hard liquor on the rocks—as does his Afro-American friend. A few chapters of this and one wonders how they manage to stay upright, to say nothing of solving a crime. But we're not talking real life here.

Eventually justice, of a kind, prevails and Spenser and Susan relax, getting ready for the next episode.

Dick and I read a lot of what the Germans call criminal romans, all the way from Rex Stout to Parker's contributions to the genre. Old or new, most are dated. Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe,

with his cook and Archie, his secretary (who types!), is a woman hater. Women, in Stout's books, are either victims or murderers. Archie is suitably gallant and quiet about any romantic interests he has. In the end, Wolfe solves the murder, and the killer is turned over to the police.

The food, in these mysteries, is wonderful. When Wolfe and his cook put their heads together and Stout describes the results, what is a poor plain cook to do but throw up her hands in despair. She could never compete—even if she had a clue to the exotic dishes.

The heroines (and that word is not P.C.) in the 20th century books do not cook. Stephanie Plum, in Janet Evanovich's hilarious novels, goes home to mother for pot roast and chocolate cake. The most she can find to feed her hamster are single grapes and cold stale cereal bits. Her diet is a steady stream of high cholesterol doughnuts and fast-food takeouts. I won't go into her romantic life, but you can bet it is politically correct and uncommitted.

The female detective in the "A is for . . ." series, has a neighbor (male) who dishes up the food when she doesn't go out to eat. If I remember correctly, her refrigerator holds stale cheese, moldy lettuce and little else.

Another thing these P.C. heroines have in common besides not cooking is their dislike of guns and violence. Plum, a bail-bond skip tracer, keeps her gun, unloaded, in her cookie jar. It is always back in her apart-

ment when she needs it. It is amazing the mayhem and disaster these gals create in spite of their anti-violence attitudes.

Spenser is politically correct to the nth degree.

I contrast these 21st century heroines with those of years past. I read Angela Thirkell's books, especially those set in the period before and during World War II, and find them a great escape. Her heroines do not have to cook—because they or their families have someone else to do the dirty work. They do have the trials and frustrations that come from dealing with that someone. Except for a few of Thirkell's hardier women who can quell the butler with a glance, the servants usually call the shots and decide whether tea will be served outdoors (too much work) or inside (much nicer and much less work).

In the older novels, most of the women, even those with modest incomes, do no cooking. Jane Austen's heroines, although not wealthy, do not slave over a hot stove, although Elizabeth Bennett's friend, who marries Mr. Collins, "helps with the pies." Jane Eyre may have a hard time of it, but her meals are served on a regular basis.

So much for cooking. Political correctness, as far as race and sex are concerned, does not raise its head in these books. Authors did not worry about their "little women" being equal. They were more than equal, far ahead and way above the wooden heroes who pursued them. Conversations in these novels may be diverting in a certain sense (Did anyone ever talk like that, one wonders in Jane Eyre) but compare unfavorably to Spenser and Susan's witty and oh-so-understanding pillow talk. Authors of the older novels never felt they had to drag in ethnic groups for any other reason than to provide light relief with an Irish accent.

In a family newspaper, I won't go into other aspects of 21st-century novels. (I do find that clinical descriptions, repeated at regular intervals, get boring.)

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Gilmore Somers

(Continued from Page 8)

more than 70 years in these woods.

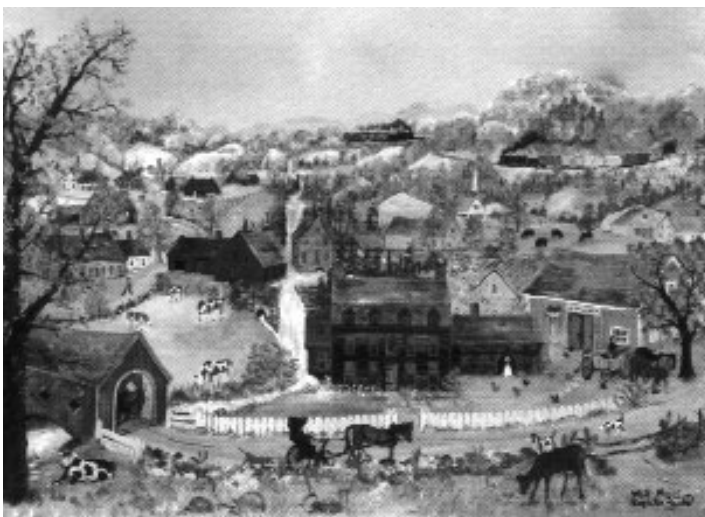
Gilmore Somers says, "I've always thought if you do what you like, you'll do it well. But if you're going to do it in Vermont you have to like four seasons. In the end, if you like it you'll probably excel in it."

Somers says, "I turned 90 on July 8, and the next year's about half gone."

Perhaps thinking about some day now gone, he laughs about his own contentment. "Don't I wish I felt as good now as I did then." He slides the door to his barn closed with the strength of a much younger man and with many years of familiarity. He smiles. "You just have to be thankful for what you have."

It is cold, and the snow is falling harder now. Somers pulls off his glove to shake hands again. His eyes are steady, and his grip is firm. If this were a test of a man's character, I'd given him the highest grade. I'm certain he's not faking it. ★

"Snow in the Hills" by Will Moses



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We Walked to School from Hooker Hill Along the Railroad Tracks

(Continued from Page 1)

been the more logical route, but the detour over the walkway to the Reed Block and down two flights of outside stairs was sure to find another boy ready to head to Arlington School, half a mile away.

Mill Street leaves the north end of Railroad Street, slopes down to the railroad tracks, runs north, paralleling Railroad Street and the tracks for about 100 yards until it intercepts the western end of Concord Avenue. Its short length provided more than enough activity to slow a boy's progress to classes. The large gray Wirthmore Mill on the other side of the tracks and the windowless wall of the Purina Mill formed an architectural canyon that shaded both morning and afternoon sun. In the long days of summer a baseball diamond was scratched on the dirt road, and pick-up games proceeded with little interference from traffic. The wall served as right field.

The Wirthmore Mill had a railroad siding, and the Purina Mill had a spur that left the CPR and ran a few cars deep into its bowels. The St. J. & L. C. shifters brought grain cars to and from the mills, often diverting and sometimes blocking our path. Sometimes farmers came to the Purina track to sweep out the spilled grain in the emptied cars for their animals.

As summer hires in high school, a classmate and I tore out several floors of the Wirthmore Mill to prepare it as a retail outlet, now Mayo's. As our work progressed higher and higher, we looked down from our precarious perches to a more and more ominous pile of splintered boards, and we poked less and less effectively with our crowbars. Our boss, Mr. Stetson, suggested that we seek more suitable employment, which we gladly did.

Near the Purina Offices, the dam and hydroelectric station

beckoned, especially when there was high water or ice floes were moving on the river.

A little further on, Arthur Hevey's woodworking shop whirred with saws, planes, joiners and other machinery. The noise often deserved a peek through his dusty windows on the way to school but invited a longer stay on the way home. I visited often enough that Mr. Hevey tolerated and ignored my presence on the entryway platform. Overhead, several shafts belted one to another and to a single electric motor somewhere beneath the floor, turned idly until engaged by a wooden lever to power his machinery. Viewed day by day, progress on a piece of furniture was like watching a slow motion movie, ending in a beautiful work of art - a table, a crib or a cabinet, now, I suppose, in somebody's home. There was a big pot-belly stove, which burned wood scraps to warm the shop, a further attraction on win-

try days for a boy coming home from school.

An abandoned meat market, which stood just beyond Mr. Hevey's shop, was vandalized enough to make it easily accessible. Since old buildings are likely to be a location for ghosts or treasure or both, it invited our exploration. Unfortunately, no ghosts or treasure were found. On the other hand, either through caution or luck, we didn't get locked in the big meat cooler.

Next, a stub of a street led down to a vista on the river. This viewing opportunity required passing the large open doorway to the town's sand shed, where, older boys told us, there would be vagrants or drunks sleeping on the sand who would do terrible things to us if awakened.

The sand shed was attached to the St. Johnsbury Water Department. During warmer weather, the double doors were often open, allowing a view of Mr. Gagetta's "office" where

pipes and valves lay strewn about. Mr. Gagetta's brain held a map of everything underground in the town. When I worked as a laborer on the gym at the trade school, we drove several pilings down into a source of putrid liquid that bubbled up into my trench. Though not on any printed map, the source and the place to shut it off was identified quickly by Mr. Gagetta. The rest of the task was left to me.

Concord Avenue heads across the tracks and US 5 to the steep and curvy Sand Hill. When new cars became available after the War, they were sometimes tested by getting a running start to see if they could make Sand Hill in high gear.

There was a tan house with brown trim at the corner of Mill Street and Concord Avenue. An older couple rocked on the porch. On the other side, across the tracks, Mr. Adelbert Smith's Chevrolet Garage kept war weary vehicles alive.

Concord Avenue heads right across the bridge, but in the other direction it leads across the tracks and US 5 to the steep and curvy Sand Hill. When new cars became available after the War, they were sometimes tested by getting a running start to see if they could make Sand Hill in high gear. One brand new Buick stalled on the tracks and was abandoned just before the south-bound CPR demolished it.

Crossing the Concord Avenue bridge gave another opportunity to view the river and dam. Beyond the bridge, at the bottom of Pleasant Street, a few businesses brought services to the community and interesting places for a boy to stop. There was a barbershop, a machine shop, a gas station and Lowery's Super Market. The Lowery brothers and their employees always seemed to have time to talk and joke with a school kid. On Ground Hog Day, February 2, butcher Charlie Prevost used to screen the window with soap leaving a peephole with the invitation to "see the groundhog." The object inside, of course, was pork sausage.

One time I got into a fight beyond my ability when some older boy made comments about the full length "ladies" stockings I had to wear in cooler weather with the mandatory shorts. It was grocery boy Bill Pearl who res-



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“I was stubborn and ignorant about my condition,” he remembers. “I figured I’d get by somehow.”

Joe’s health went downhill. So his doctor, Trank Meierdiercks, referred him to Ginny Hlanders, Registered Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Educator at NVRH. Ginny taught Joe to track his glucose levels. She helped him work on his meal plan and adjust his insulin. But most importantly, she got him to take responsibility for managing his diabetes.

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cued me.

In the long garage at the head of Elm Street two fellows built an airplane, and that required my attention. A cardboard mockup of a Piper Cub (and instruction book) became my Christmas wish and ultimately my favorite toy. I have no idea as to the success or failure of those Wright Brothers imitators on Elm Street.

After school on winter days, the excellent sliding hill alongside the steepest part of Pleasant Street often caused my delay on the walk home if a neighborhood kid could be convinced to give up his sled for a run or two.

Finally, if no one had come along with me, I would stop to drip my snowy boots on Mrs. Johnson's kitchen floor while I waited for Richard so we could dash the last few yards to the school yard.

I walked to school through 8th grade (at North Hall) and St. Johnsbury Academy. My zig-zag

route made the distance about a mile. I carried my trombone, a black workman's dinner pail, gym bag and my books. The style for carrying books passed beyond the cluster held together by an old belt and had not yet reached the phase of the backpack or rolling suitcase. We carried a sturdy zipper notebook stacked with several books and carried it on the hip. That usually meant that your fingers curled around the stack of books to grasp one of the other objects as well.

Few students had their own cars at the time. One classmate who came in from Barnet had an unspoiled 1940 Ford. Another had a big Packard from the 50's that could hold a dozen girls or so, and often did. Some of the upper classmen bought a 1932 Chevrolet sedan. They cut off its top and fenders and painted the remaining carcass red. It looked like a gaudy bathtub on wheels.

They often made a show of arriving at school, searching with milk bottle binoculars for a couple of passes, then swooping in with the shouted warnings of "NO BRAKES!" and finally putting a senior or two over the side with a rope hitched to the chassis to bring the rig to a shuddering halt after taking a couple of turns around a campus tree.

I had a brief chance to take my father's classy black Chrysler to school when my parents went to Florida. They left the first day of spring vacation, and soon I took to the road. Some friends and I went skiing in Stowe for a couple of days. Then we went on to Burlington to go dancing. We went to try out the new Pomalift at Burke. A buddy and I visited the girls we knew in Lyndonville. I courted a girl who lived in Sugar Hill, and I took her driving all around the White Mountains.

When school resumed, I prepared to drive and be a "big man on campus," but I looked at the odometer and realized that I had driven more than half the distance to Florida. Sure that my father had recorded the mileage before he left and that he would check it when he returned, I got cold feet, put the car in the garage and walked to school.

In 1963 I returned to the Academy as a teacher, and I

found that more students had cars than in my own student days. The clay tennis courts at Brantview were removed to make way for a parking lot. The south end of Main Street saw more traffic as students sought parking or turned around there to make one more tour of the town before classes. Town kids seemed to share rides to a large extent so probably more students rode than walked.

In the winter of '68-'69 we had a snowstorm that totaled 39 inches. School was not closed. I snowshoed from my Joe's Brook home, over the hill to Passumpsic and hitched a ride on a Kilfasset milk truck. I arrived on time.

The student population, forced to walk, was depleted, especially among the senior class. As mandated by Academy protocol, Sarge Morrison called the parents of each missing student but found that most of the missing had left home and should be at school.

I remember Guidance Director Frank Ryan saying, "I have an idea." He left and returned about a half hour later.

"Well?" we inquired. Ryan said, "It's amazing how many students struggled in from Portland Street and Arlington and collapsed right in front of Perkin's Restaurant."

In grades K through 8, St

Johnsbury village has about 700 students and about 336 school bus riders. Another 273, are driven to school and dropped off. The school system generally does not provide transportation for students in grades 5 through 8 who live within a mile of the school.

There are about 84 students who actually walk to school. They should think of it as an experience they will be glad to remember someday. ★



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TERRY HOFFER

Witold Rybczynski writes about land use planning and architecture for *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic* and *The New Yorker*. Last summer his book, *Last Harvest - How a Cornfield Became New Daleville*, detailed the transformation of 90-acres of farmland west of Philadelphia into a brand new residential development.

Rybczynski's vision is that in places like Londonderry, PA, founded in 1734, the old-guard farmers make up but ten percent of the small town population. However, their open farmland is in many ways the appeal that attracts developers, landowners and visitors who arrive and then want no more development. Pennsylvania farmers, Rybczynski says, are free marketers when it comes to property rights. They prefer no development, but if it is to happen, they want the option of selling their land. That transaction is often described as "the last harvest."

The last harvest happens in Vermont, too, but in the Green Mountains we see it as the har-

vest of forests as well as open pastures.

I like to think that in a hundred years it will look much the same, and it will still be a peaceful place to put in a canoe."

- Wil Merck

The vast majority of Vermont forestland is in private ownership. According to the Vermont Land Trust, more than 80 percent of it is privately owned. Those woods are home to all manner of wildlife from the big moose and white-tailed deer down to the less conspicuous coyotes and fisher. No matter how you look at it they are fascinating ecosystems, and for many it's very much what makes Vermont Vermont.

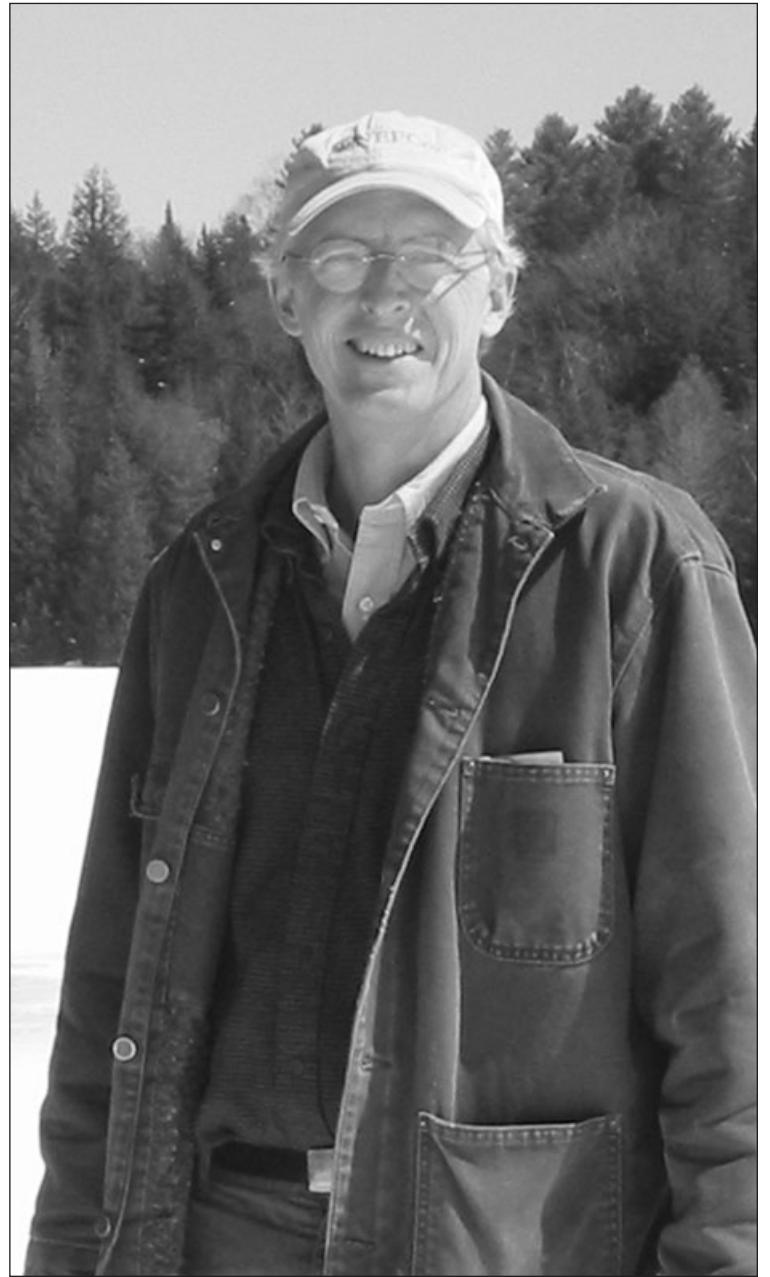
Many come to Vermont to see her forestland, and they fall in love. They fall in love with the landscape, but if they aren't careful there is the chance they will love it to death.

Wil Merck is the managing member of the group of private investors that forms the Essex Timber Company. It was the Essex Timber Company that led and ultimately leveraged the acquisition of 132,803 forested, Northeast Kingdom acres from Champion International in 1999. That transaction was described by the Vermont Land Trust as Vermont's largest conservation project - ever.

Merck calls the infatuation with Vermont's landscape a paradox. "The quiet undeveloped spaces are fewer and farther between," he says, "and people come here and they live here because of those things. The paradox is that the appeal leads to diminishment."

The purchase of the Champion lands, involving federal, state and private partners, resulted in a conservation project that will protect the land while allowing people to enjoy it. Twenty-six thousand acres have become part of the Silvio O. Conte National Wildlife Refuge. Twenty-two thousand acres are now owned by the State of Vermont as the West Mountain Wildlife Management Area, and eighty-four thousand acres are controlled by Essex Timber Company, which is dedicated to preserving traditional public uses and sustainable forestry.

Merck is also the president of the Merck Family Fund based in Ipswich, MA. The Fund has embraced the purposes of restoring and protecting the natural



Vermont Land Trust Photograph

On November 30, Wil Merck transferred ownership and created conservation easements on 105 acres of property with 4,800 feet of frontage on Keiser Pond to secure its future use for wildlife and public recreation. On the town line between Peacham and Danville, Keiser Pond has 33 acres and an aura that many compare to remote ponds in northern Maine.

Kellie Merrill, of the Vermont Water Quality Division of the Department of Environmental Conservation and president of the Passumpsic Valley Land Trust, says, "There are very few ponds in Vermont where you don't feel like you're in someone's backyard. Now Keiser Pond is there for everyone. You don't need to have a camp there. We all own it together."

environment and strengthening the social fabric and physical landscape of the urban community. In 2006 the Fund provided grants totaling \$2.9 million to projects across the United States

from Boston to San Francisco and from Chicago to Charleston, SC. The Merck family takes this mission very seriously.

In 1991 Wil Merck purchased the house and property that form a spectacular setting remembered as the Goss Farm in

Without Further Ado

Poetry
by
Don Tescher

Don Tescher's popular collection of poetry will warm your heart and tickle your funny bone. Don writes with a passion for villages and small towns. In his tenth decade his work continues to put bright light where before there was patchy fog.

A staple in the pages of *The North Star Monthly* since 1988, Don's poetry will satisfy your search for light on the water, children laughing on the lawn and an occasional outrageous adventure.

Reprinted and available again, *Without Further Ado* is available at the Pope Library in Danville, the Brainerd Library in North Danville, the Cobleigh Library in Lyndonville and the Athenaeum in St. Johnsbury.

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West Danville United Methodist Church 2008

Ring out the darkness of the land; Ring in the Christ that is to be.
"In Memoriam"
by Alfred Lord Tennyson

Overlooking Joe's Pond
Sunday Worship Service
9:30
God's Children of All Ages
Welcome

Rev. Gerry Piper
(802) 684-9804

Peacham. The house has a wonderful view to the north into Canada sweeping east into New Hampshire. Closer up the view looks down over Keiser Pond between Peacham and Danville.

Kidney-shaped Keiser Pond covers 33-acres and is easily accessible from West Danville or the Danville Green through Harveys Hollow. Keiser Pond has a boat ramp and public access on 24-acres of land owned for years by the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife. The pond has a mean depth of only six feet and fishing is thereby limited, but with the popularity of waterfront property evidenced by continuing development on Joe's Pond and Harvey's Lake it has retained an aura that many compare to lakes and ponds in northern Maine.

From the boat access there are no visible signs of development, and the few marks of humankind have not interfered with an annual population of wood ducks and the appearance of loon chicks in 2005 and 2007.

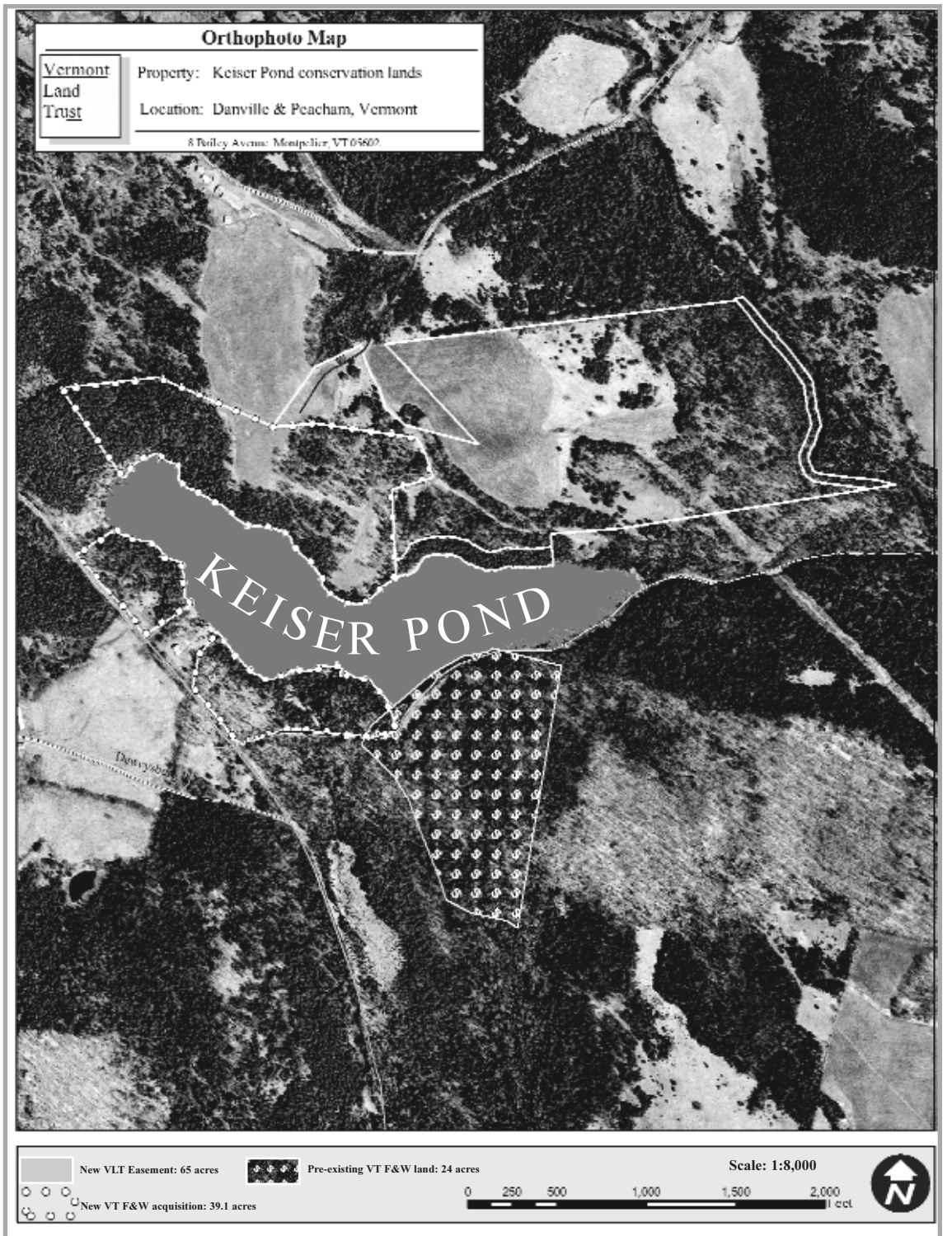
According to Tracy Zschau of the Vermont Land Trust, Keiser Pond hosts four rare aquatic plants documented by the state's nongame and natural heritage program: blunt leaf pondweed, slender pondweed,

lesser bur-reed and matted spikerush. According to ecologist Art Gilman, Keiser Pond has one of the most diverse populations of pondweeds in the state.

On November 30, Merck transferred ownership of 39.1 acres with 3,900 feet of frontage on Keiser Pond to the Department of Fish & Wildlife with a conservation easement to be co-held by the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board limiting use of the property to wildlife and public recreation. At the same time Merck transferred a similar conservation easement on another 65-acres with 900 feet of pond frontage to the Vermont Land Trust.

Moving this land from private ownership to the state and organizations like the Vermont Land Trust will protect Keiser Pond from the last harvest. Zschau says, further, that the agreement with the towns includes a schedule of payments in lieu of taxes, thereby offsetting the towns' impact associated with a loss of property in taxable ownership.

"It's clear that sprawl is happening," Merck says, "and it's pretty unusual to have a pond that size practically undeveloped. It's such a peaceful place



Cold!

After the snowfall, when each soft flake muffles sound, comes the dry and noisy rattle of sleet on dead leaves. A sibilant hiss as icy crystals, sifting and blowing off rooftops, fall on swept sidewalks, drifting there like sand. And then deep winter comes. Snow creaks, crystals rasping under pressure of footfall. Lake ice booms and cracks as it shifts and splits. Dry, mysterious, alien sounds.

Isobel P. Swartz

to put in a canoe." Merck is familiar with land conservation efforts in other parts of the country, and he is quick to salute the groups involved with his efforts to protect Keiser Pond. "Vermont has reliable protectors. In my experience you don't always find land conservation institutions with the savvy and staying power of the Vermont Land Trust and the Passumpsic Valley Land Trust [which secured \$50,000 of the transac-

tion financing]."

Merck says, "The quiet and undeveloped spaces in the country are harder to find. I like to think [referring to the threat of global warming] that if palm trees haven't taken over the Keiser Pond shoreline, in a hundred years it will look much the same, and it will still be a peaceful place to put in a canoe."

Kellie Merrill is employed by

the Vermont Water Quality Division of the Department of Environmental Conservation, and she is president of the Passumpsic Valley Land Trust. Merrill says, "There are very few ponds in Vermont where you don't feel like you're in someone's backyard. Now Keiser Pond is there for everyone. You don't need to have a camp there. We all own it together." ★

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January is Radon Awareness Month

Radon is a naturally occurring gas formed by the radioactive decay of uranium in rocks in the earth. Its movement upward through the soil is unpredictable, so that two adjacent buildings may have very different levels of radon. The gas may enter one building through foundation cracks, drawn up by slight negative pressure from within the structure, a process that occurs more rapidly during the heating season. An adjacent structure may have fewer opportunities for the gas to enter. One cannot assume that one home test result will be the same as those of its neighbors.

Radon is odorless, colorless and tasteless so that it is impossible to detect without testing. There are several reasons to test a home for radon. Among non-smokers radon gas is the leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. Fifteen to 22 thousand lung cancer deaths per year are directly attributable to radon exposure.

Another reason to test is for real estate transactions. Many homebuyers will request that a radon test be done during the

home inspection. This is just one more thing to add to the stressful issues surrounding a home sale. If you test before you plan to sell your home you can file away the results for the time when they will be useful and take care of any problems that may be shown to exist. The Museum has a list of qualified radon mitigation contractors who can give advice about correcting problems associated with high radon levels.

Testing is simple. It takes about three months followed by one to three weeks during which the kit is analyzed at a lab. An official letter containing the confidential result is then sent to the home owner or apartment dweller performing the test.

For the past 13 years the Fairbanks Museum has had grants from the U. S.

Environmental Protection Agency through the Vermont Department of Health to encourage Vermont residents to test their homes and places of work for radon. The test can be done free of cost by means of a test kit from the Museum.

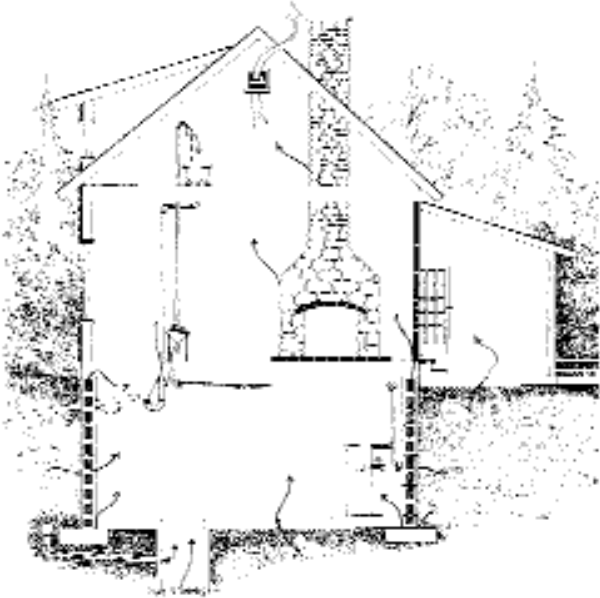
The kits, which cost \$25 if purchased at a hardware store, are termed long term tests. They are used over a period of at least three months, preferably during the heating season, when the home is fairly closed up. Short term tests (48 hours) are available at hardware stores, but the Museum does not carry them.

Kits may be acquired by using the form on the web site: fairbanksmuseum.org/education_radon.cfm or by calling Patricia Swartz at the Museum (802) 748-2372 ext. 105. You may also call the Vermont Department of Health (800) 439-8550.

Don't delay, test today.

How Does Radon Enter Your Home

Radon is an odorless, tasteless, colorless gas which can move freely through spaces in the rocks and soil and into cracks in the foundations of buildings.



Radon can accumulate in buildings that are closed or that have poor air circulation. It mixes with the air we breathe and enters our lungs without our knowledge. For most of us, radon is the source of our greatest exposure to harmful radiation during our lifetimes.

the ARTS around

January

- 1 Tony Trischka, Middle Earth Music Hall, Bradford.
- 3-5 Paul Zaloom and "The Mother of All Enemies," Flynn Center, Burlington.
- 4 Cheryl Wheeler, Middle Earth Music Hall, Bradford.
- 4-10 *Margot at the Wedding* (2007 U.S.) [R] Director: Noah Baumbach. Nicole Kidman leaves Manhattan to attend the wedding of her teacher sister, at the rundown family home in the Hamptons. She hasn't seen her sister in years and she disapproves of her choice of an unemployed slob as a husband. She disapproves of anything just to see how far she can push family and friends in the name of affection. Now she has a secret: she's thinking of leaving her husband and son to start a new life. Catamount Arts, St. Johnsbury. (802) 748-2600.
- 5 La Bottine Souriante and Le Vent du Nord, Flynn Center, Burlington.
- 10 Old School Freight Train and Carolina Chocolate Drops, Hopkins Center, Hanover, NH.
- 11 Lamb's Bread, Middle Earth Music Hall, Bradford.
- 11 Company Ea Sola with

- Drought and Rain, Hopkins Center, Hanover, NH.
- 11 Carolina Chocolate Drops, Flynn Center, Burlington.
- 11 Golden Dragon Acrobats of China, Flynn Center, Burlington.
- 11-17 *Lars and the Real Girl* (2007 U.S.) [PG-13] Director: Craig Gillespie. An offbeat lyrical fable, a heartfelt comedy this is the story of Lars Lindstrom, a loveable introvert whose emotional baggage has kept him from fully embracing life. Finally, Lars invites Bianca, a friend he met on the Internet to visit him. Bianca is a life-sized doll, not a real person and the family doctor who explains it as a delusion and that they should all go along with it. Catamount Arts.
- 12 Sharon Isbin, classical guitar, Hopkins Center, Hanover, NH.
- 12 Chris Kleeman, Middle Earth Music Hall, Bradford.
- 18-24 *Bella* (2006 U.S.) [PG-13] Director: Alejandro Gomez Monteverde. The story of two young people who fall in love because of an unborn child and it's a heart-tugger with the confidence not to tug too hard. Its undeniable touch of humanity melts all feelings of isolation and aloneness.

- Catamount Arts.
- 18&19 Savion Glover, Live at the Hop, Hopkins Center, Hanover, NH.
- 19 Jason Moran & The Bandwagon, Flynn Center, Burlington.
- 21 Ani Difranco, Capitol Center, Concord, NH.
- 23 Momix presents "Lunar Sea," Flynn Center, Burlington.
- 24 Jason Moran and the Bandwagon, Hopkins Center, Hanover, NH.
- 25 Richard Thompson, "1,000 Years of Popular Music," Flynn Center, Burlington.
- 25-31 *Before the Devil Knows You're Dead* (2007 U.S.) [R] Director: Sidney Lumet. An overextended broker lures his younger brother into a larcenous scheme: the pair will knock over a suburban mom-and-pop jewelry store that appears to be a quintessentially easy target. The store owners are the parents of the perpetrators and, when the seemingly perfect crime goes awry, the damage comes home. Catamount Arts.
- 29 Urban Bush Women & Compagnie Jant-Bi, Flynn Center, Burlington.
- 29 Richard Thompson with 1000 Years of Popular Music, Hopkins Center, Hanover, NH.

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Envisioning the Future of Vermont - A New Year's Commentary

PAUL COSTELLO AND
SARAH WARING

A couple of years ago the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) conducted a community forum in a Vermont hill town where a wise 14-year-old took the floor and spoke with riveting precision.

"When I come into the cafeteria for lunch I know just where to sit. The hippy kids sit along one wall, the rednecks in the back, kids whose families have been in town for six years or less on that side, the rich kids from the hilltop on the other. And, I don't talk to you, because my dad doesn't talk to your dad."

He concluded in a way that galvanized the meeting, "It's time we work together as one community."

How do we get there? How do we get away from our separate corners and bring our communities - all parts of our communities - together to define their priorities and future?

Over the last two years VCRD has held public meetings with residents in 17 towns who want to look at the big picture of their future and line up together to address local priorities. Towns throughout Vermont are working to build a vision, a brand that reflects their sense of place and that will help them retain and attract youth, entrepreneurs and the creative businesses that will allow them to succeed in the economy of the future.

It's challenging to work together at the community level to build consensus on the opportunities and obstacles ahead and then set strategic goals. How much more difficult is it to do this at the statewide level? Can we articulate who we are as a people and what our common hopes for the future are as we face the challenges already putting pressure on our sense of community?

This is a key challenge of our time.

Through all the public discussions we've managed in the last few years, we hear people asking, "Where are we going as a state?"

What is our vision? What are our priorities? What goals will we rally around as Vermonters, and even sacrifice for, to achieve the future we desire?" Whether the primary concerns expressed are with the affordability of life in the state, the impacts of climate change, or the fear of loss of civic engagement, Vermonters are eager to think about the major challenges and opportunities ahead.

The Vermont Council on Rural Development has come to see the need for a ubiquitous statewide conversation, a process of coming together to discuss our values, priorities and goals as Vermonters. We believe it is time for a dialogue, the like of which has not happened in 20 years.

We recognize the challenge of doing this right, in a way that is authentic, avoids pre-conceived outcomes and builds unity for action. We believe that in a well-constructed conversation people will educate each other, tough challenges will be explored and collective thinking will emerge that will spark action. We have seen this time and again in our work with communities throughout the state. Coming together in structured discussion, founded on and building a sense of place raises the bar, and helps individuals commit to putting themselves on the line for their community.

VCRD has built the "Council on the Future of Vermont" to lead this discussion over the next year and a half. Council members represent a range of geographic and demographic backgrounds as well as professional expertise. They will be called upon to listen to Vermonters as these conversations take place around the state and to identify those trends and commonalities that emerge. Where there is diversity of opinion, this too will be captured by the Council.

The Council on the Future of Vermont will actively engage Vermont residents in different ways. First, the project will travel, holding at least one large community forum in every county. We'll meet in smaller groups with a vari-

ety of stakeholders, from mobile home tenant associations, to business groups, college students and farmers. The Council will have an interactive website by early 2008 where Vermonters can contribute their opinions and concerns using various online formats. A survey will capture representative ideas, and in-depth research will be commissioned on the specific issues that are identified by our listening sessions. All these sources of information and their contributions will be evaluated by the Council by early 2009.

The new year marks two decades since we've had a public dialogue on the future at this scale. We have not yet asked the younger generation what it means to be a Vermonter or what they value about Vermont that would make them want to stay, work and raise a family here. We have not invited newcomers to Vermont to participate in defining the state and its future. And, we have not had a coherent and systematic discussion of what common perspectives we have about the future of the State in a generation.

Thinking back to the remarks of that thoughtful high school student, it's time we come to a common table to consider the points of vision that can unite us as we look to the challenges ahead.

Future of Vermont Community Forums are scheduled to take place in Bennington on January 3; St. Albans, January 24; Hyde Park, February 13; North Hero, March 6; Newport, March 27; Island Pond, April 17; St. Johnsbury, May 8; Middlebury, May 29; Burlington, June 19; Barre, July 10; Hartford, July 31 and Brattleboro, August 21. For more information on VCRD, The Council on the Future of Vermont, and meetings scheduled to take place near you, see www.vtrural.org or call (802) 223-6098.

Paul Costello is the Executive Director of the Vermont Council on Rural Development; Sarah Waring is the VCRD Program Director of the Council on the Future of Vermont.



Pope Notes

Dee Palmer,
Library Director

Happy 2008! We hope all of our patrons and extended community members had a wonderful holiday. Our annual Holiday on the Danville Green was a beautiful event despite tricky weather. We had lots of good food and good company, and the evening provided us with the perfect opportunity to show off our new chandeliers. If you haven't seen them, please stop in. They are beautiful and so in keeping with the style of the Pope Library.

Many thanks to all who contributed to our 2007 annual appeal. Without your support we wouldn't have the top notch library that we are.

With the start of the New Year, please make returning your overdue material a resolution for 2008. We are beginning the process of automating the library, and it would be a great help to have our collection in order when we take inventory before automating. We do not charge overdue fines, but if you would like to make a donation we will gratefully accept it.

Our next book discussion series is Southern Writers. This series includes a sampling of some of the finest writers of the American South. It raises questions important to any discussion of regional writing. How is the region defined? What makes a writer or a work southern? Whose south is being portrayed? Which themes are unique to southern writers and which are universal? We will discuss *A Curtain of Green and Other Stories* by Eudora Welty, *The Second Coming* by Walker Percy, *Oral History* by Lee Smith and *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*. Books and schedules are available at the Library. We hope you will join us!

From the Children's Room and YA Center

Story hour resumes on Monday, January 14 at 10:00 a.m. Please join us for books, stories, songs, activities and snack.

The YA program will be back in session on Wednesday, January 2. This after school program meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons from 2:30 - 5:00.

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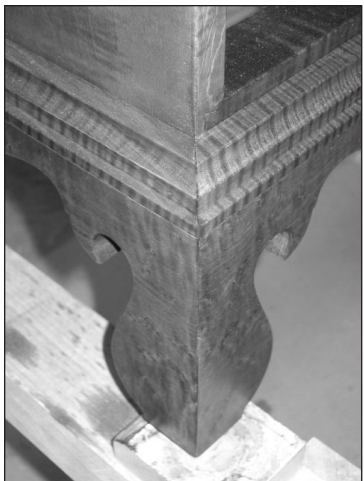
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TERRY HOFFER

Për Courtney tells about finding his way in school as a woodworker. "I had a rebellious nature, but my teachers said there was something special going on, and they put up with me."

When asked about the source



of his appreciation and his inclination for working with wood, he says, "I was born with it," but he quickly shifts to talk about the multitude of influences from his father.

Për's father was a bit of Renaissance man with a list of careers that includes innkeeper, ski patroller, stockbroker, home restorationist and lobsterman, but the lesson that launched Courtney-the-younger might have been one at home. "My father had a workshop. It was probably the size of a sheet of plywood, but we worked there together, and my first project was a pair of bookends. I made them for him when I was 6."

Then there was a private school in Fitchburg, MA where most of his classmates were firmly on tracks bound for college. "It wasn't my thing," Courtney says.

"But we started a shop program, and by the time I was in 7th grade I was teaching younger kids woodworking. I went on to the regional trade school, and I'm sure teachers there argued about my staying. There were all kinds of reasons they could have thrown me out, but they let me stay, and in 1976 I graduated in a class of a thousand."

Courtney found work as subcontractor restoring antiques, manufacturing clocks and providing millwork for home-builders, but on the side he always found time to make furniture. "I read books and I talked to people and I learned the vernacular - that is the differences - between the colonial styles of Connecticut, Philadelphia, Boston, Newport, RI, Portsmouth, NH and Virginia. Like the traveling craftsmen at the time, I remembered what appealed to me, and if it looked right I incorporated it into my own work."

In 1987, with confidence from his experience, Courtney opened his own shop in Massachusetts, and he says, "I did kitchen instal-



Photo By: North Star Monthly

Për Courtney checks the final details on this electric guitar.

lations for the money, but I made furniture for the personal satisfaction. I had all kinds of contacts, and I was booked 18 months in

advance. Eventually I did work for people in Australia, Singapore, Israel and all over the United States. Today I have five portfolios of photographs and a couple of cardboard boxes full of pictures of my work."

Now in Greensboro Bend in what he calls his "dream shop," Për Courtney works far from the blistering pace and the pressure of southern New England. "I travel when I have to, and I still get a lot of work from Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire. I've learned that my approach and my taste is appealing to people who like furniture. Some find me for my past work, and they give me free rein over their general idea. Others come with blueprints and specifications to a 64th of an inch."

Courtney's work is spectacular for its design, construction and

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St. Johnsbury Academy Winter 2007-2008 Sports Schedule

Boys Basketball ~ Varsity and Junior Varsity Varsity Game follows JV Game			
January			
3	Rice	H	5-6:30
5	@ Colchester	A	11-12:30
10	@ Burlington	A	5-6:30
14	North Country	H	5-6:30
18	@ Spaulding	A	5-6:30
24	CVU	H	5-6:30
26	Brattleboro	H	1-2:30
28	Colchester	H	5-6:30
31	@ S. Burlington	A	5-6:30
February			
4	Mt. Mt. Mansfield	H	5-6:30
7	@ Essex	A	5-6:30
9	Rutland	H	1-2:30
12	@ North Country	A	5-6:30
Girls & Boys Basketball ~ Freshmen			
January			
4	MMU	H	5-6:30
10	Lyndon	H	5-6:30
12	Burlington	H	1-2:30
14	@ CVU	A	4-5:30
16	@ Hartford	A	6:30-5
19	SHS	H	12-1:30
23	@ North Country	A	5-6:30
26	@ Lyndon	A	11-12:30
31	Essex	H	5-6:30
Nordic Skiing			
January			
5	U32 @ U32 HS		10:00
10	Peoples Academy @ Peoples		3:00
12	Colchester @ Bolton Valley		10:30
19	St. Johnsbury/Lyndon @ Burke XC		10:00
23	Montpelier Relays @ Montpelier		3:00
25	MMU Pursuit @ Ethan Allen Firing Range		4:00
February			
2	North Country @ Newport		10:00
6	North Country Relays @ NCUHS		5:00
9	U32 @ U32 HS		10:00
16	State Meet - Classic @ Middlebury, Breadloaf Touring Center		10:30
21	State Meet - Free Style @ Rutland, Mt. Top Touring Center		10:30
Alpine Skiing			
January			
4	Lyndon @ Burke *Carnival		9:30
11	@ MMU, Smugglers Notch		
18	HU/Lam @ Mad River Glen		12:00
23	Midd. @ Midd. Snow Bowl		
26	CVU @ Bolton * Carnival		
30	NCU @ Jay Peak *Carnival		
February			
8,9	Essex Invite @ Smuggs		
12	SJA @ Burke Mt. *Carnival		10:00
19	Girls NVAC District Meet		
	Midd. @ Middlebury College Snow Bowl		
21	Boys NVAC District Meet		
	BFA @ Smugglers Notch		
March			
3	Boys State Meet		
	Lyndon @ Burke Mt.		
5	Girls State Meet		
	Burr/Burton @ Bromley		
	Host is Underlined		
Girls Basketball ~ Varsity and Junior Varsity Varsity Game follows JV Game			
January			
3	@ Essex	A	5-6:30
5	@ Rutland	A	1-2:30
8	Rice	H	5-6:30
11	@ CVU	A	5-6:30
15	Brattleboro	H	5-6:30
18	@ Burlington	A	5-6:30
22	@ North Country	A	5-6:30
25	@ Spaulding	A	5-6:30
29	@ BFA St. Albans	A	5-6:30
February			
1	Essex	H	5-6:30
5	@ Rice	A	5-6:30
8	CVU	H	5-6:30
11	Spaulding	H	5-6:30
15	North Country	H	5-6:30
19	@ Burlington	H	5-6:30
Hockey			
January			
2	Mt. Mansfield	H	8:00
5	@ Missisquoi	A	12:30
9	@ Brattleboro	A	5:00
12	Woodstock	H	4:30
16	@ Hartford	A	7:00
18,19	@ Woodstock Tourney @ Woodstock/TBA		8:10
26	@ North Country	A	5:00
30	U32	A	8:00
February			
2	Montpelier	H	6:00
6	Lyndon	H	6:00
9	@ Northfield	A	5:30
Wrestling			
January			
5	@ Newfound Invitational	A	10:00
8	@ MMU, Enosburgh	A	6:30
12	@ Mt. Anthony Invitational	A	9:30
18,19	Essex Classic Invitational	A3:30/10:30	
23	@ White Mt.	A	6:00
27	Colchester Invitational	A	10:00
29	Mt. Abe, Harwood	A	7:00
February			
2	Mt. Anthony Duals	A	10:00
6	Spaulding	H	6:00
9	NVAC Tournament @ Middlebury	A	10:00
13	Mt. Abe, Vergennes	H	6:00
16	JV States @ Spaulding	A	10:00
23,24	Varsity State Tournament @ Rutland	A	6/10:00
29,1/1	New England Tournament	A	TBA
	Host is Underlined		
Gymnastics			
January			
11	Essex	H	6:00
18	@ Harwood	A	7:00
25	So. Burlington	H	6:00
February			
2	Milton, U32	H	3:00
8	@ Randolph	A	7:00

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Lyndon Institute Athletic Events Winter 2007-2008

Athletic Director: Paul E. Wheeler (802) 626-9164

BOYS BASKETBALL (JV/V)		GIRLS BASKETBALL (JV/V)	
January		January	
2	Lyndon @ Randolph, 6:00/7:30	2	Lake Region @ Lyndon, 5:30/7:00
4	Lyndon @ Montpelier, 6:00/7:30	4	Harwood @ Lyndon, 5:30/7:00
9	Harwood @ Lyndon, 5:30/7:00	8	Lyndon @ U32, 5:30/7:00
18	U32 @ Lyndon, 5:30/7:00	10	Montpelier @ Lyndon, 5:30/7:00
23	Oxbow @ Lyndon, 5:30/7:00	14	Lamoille @ Lyndon, 5:30/7:00
25	Lyndon @ Lamoille, 6:00/7:30	17	Lyndon @ Oxbow, 6:00/7:30
30	Randolph @ Lyndon, 5:30/7:00	24	Lyndon @ Randolph, 6:00/7:30
February		31	Lyndon @ Harwood, 5:30/7:00
1	Montpelier @ Lyndon, 5:30/7:00	February	
6	Lyndon @ Harwood, 5:30/7:00	5	U32 @ Lyndon, 5:30/7:00
8	Lyndon @ Hazen, 5:30/7:00	7	Lyndon @ Montpelier, 6:00/7:30
12	Lyndon @ U32, 5:30/7:00	12	Oxbow @ Lyndon, 5:30/7:00
FROSH BASKETBALL Boys		14	Lyndon @ Lamoille, 6:00/7:30
January		19	Randolph @ Lyndon, 5:30/7:00
2	Lyndon @ North Country, 6:30	February	
5	Lyndon @ Randolph, 2:30	2	Lyndon @ North Country, 5:00
8	Hartford @ Lyndon, 7:00	5	Lyndon @ Randolph, 1:00
10	Lyndon @ St Johnsbury, 6:30	8	Hartford @ Lyndon, 5:30
17	Lyndon @ Lamoille, 7:00	10	Lyndon @ St Johnsbury, 5:00
21	Lyndon @ Montpelier, 7:00	17	Lyndon @ Lamoille, 5:30
24	Lyndon @ U32, 7:00	24	Lyndon @ U32, 5:30
26	St Johnsbury @ Lyndon, 12:30	28	St Johnsbury @ Lyndon, 11:00
28	Lake Region @ Lyndon, 7:00	28	Lake Region @ Lyndon, 5:30
February		February	
1	Lyndon @ Harwood, 5:30	4	Enosburg @ Lyndon, 5:30
4	Enosburg @ Lyndon, 7:00	9	Randolph @ Lyndon, 11:00
9	Randolph @ Lyndon, 12:30	February	
ALPINE SKIING		2	MSJ @ Lyndon, 6:00
January		5	Harwood @ Lyndon, 6:00
4	@ Burke Mt., 9:30	9	Lyndon @ Middlebury, 7:00
11	@ Smugglers (MMU), 9:30	12	Peoples @ Lyndon, 6:30
18	@ Mad River (Harwood), Noon	23	Lyndon @ Milton, 8:00
26	@ Bolton (CVU), 9:30	26	Lyndon @ U32, 6:00
30	@ Jay Peak (NCU), 9:30	30	Montpelier @ Lyndon, 6:00
February		February	
8	@ Smugglers (Essex Invite), Noon	2	Lyndon @ Northfield, 8:00
9	@ Smugglers (Essex Invite), 10:00	6	Lyndon @ St Johnsbury, 6:00
12	@ Burke Mt (SJA), 10:00	9	Lyndon @ North Country, 5:00
19	@ Middlebury (Midd) Girls District		
21	@ Smugglers (BFA) Boys District		
March			
3	@ Burke Mt. (LJ) Boys State		
5	@ Bromley (B&B) Girls State		

GO VIKINGS!



Pope Library

Monday & Friday
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Wednesday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. - Noon.



and internal components are high-end and state-of-the-art, and the details including inlays, silver work, matched grain and other embellishments could not be found in a mass production process at any price. These guitars are beautiful.

Courtney says, "These are handmade, and if it ever gets beyond that it won't be satisfying anymore. The quality of the wood, the finish and the hardware is important, and I don't ever want to sacrifice that. My dream is that with one other person, the right person who cares about this as much as I do, we could produce 50 guitars a year."

Për Guitars are the culmination of one man's experience as a guitarist, silversmith and maker of custom cabinetry and the advance in high tech electronics.

And maybe. Për Courtney has had encouragement from guitar players and music dealers who have said things like "awesome" and "I can't believe how many useable sounds I get out of this guitar." Recently Courtney offered one of his guitars to Joe Bonamassa, the "best blues guitarist" in the Guitar Players Magazine 2007 Readers' Choice Awards. Bonamassa is a rising star in his own right inspired by the styles of John Mayall, Jeff Beck, B.B. King and Eric Clapton. Bonamassa accepted the Për Guitar and asked for another one of a custom design.

One art critic once said, "In any artistic court of judgment, consensus and circumstance reign as king and queen," and popular opinion often shows no understandable emotion or logic. However guitar player and furniture maker Për Courtney is

pleased by the early response.

"I could make a guitar exactly like the one Eric Clapton played last night, and I'm sure Clapton could make it sound like his own. In the right hands it could make the sound, but I would be hard pressed to tell a customer of mine that if they buy this guitar they'll sound like Eric Clapton. My guitar might have the heart, and as great as that might be, it wouldn't have the soul."

Courtney says, "But that's not what counts. I want people to look for their own sound, their own voice, in a guitar that I promise will be a great looking and great sounding package. I think I can appeal to the happy home players and the touring professionals alike, and I can provide a high quality product from the place in Greensboro Bend where craftsmanship and sound converge." ★



Photo By: Lynette Courtney

Për Courtney's furniture spans the range from early traditional to modern.

It's ready for the stay-at-home performer, the recital hall or concert stage.

finish. He describes his range as Period to Modern, but what is immediately striking is his attention to detail in the alignment of the grain. He says, "I'm pretty color blind in that red, green and brown all look much the same to me. I use dyes to adjust the wood color, but I really appreciate the grain. I can match any color in what is basically a mathematical process, but I spend more time and I devote more attention to the grain than anyone else that I know."

Courtney is a member of the highly selective Guild of Vermont Furniture Makers, and he finds that customers beat a path to his door even in Greensboro Bend. It's a wonderfully quiet setting and as snow falls silently through the trees outside in the northern Vermont landscape, it is like a dream shop. Perhaps that explains Courtney's latest dream.

For 10 years in Massachusetts, he played an electric guitar in a blues band, and, he says, his eyes were drawn to the instruments. He always admired the iconic Fender Stratocaster made famous by Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan or the Fender Telecaster played by Keith Richards and Johnny Lang. He admired Gibson guitars including the Les Paul, the SG and the ES-335 played by literal rock stars like Eric Clapton, Angus Young, B.B. King and Paul McCartney. Record sales speak to the popularity of their music, but Courtney believes their guitars were beyond extraordinary.

At 50 years of age and with the slowing that comes with two broken backs, torn ligaments in his wrist followed by three years in a cast and nine broken fingers, Për Courtney imagines an artistic outlet for himself that moves aside from the heavier furniture work that established his reputation.

"I made my first electric guitar

17 years ago," he says, "but today custom made guitars are big. I don't want to make copies, but like my furniture I want to make a blend of the qualities I appreciate."

Për Guitars, as he calls them, come in three styles. He makes two Gibson styles, two Fender styles and two, what he calls, Retro styles like those played by Buddy Holly and Jimmy Page in the 1960's.

Për Guitars are the culmination of one man's experience as a guitarist, silversmith and maker of custom cabinetry and the advance in high tech electronics. His guitars are handmade with mahogany, maple, ash or butternut backs and carefully matched curly maple, bird's eye maple or curly birch fronts. The electronics

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2007-2008 Schedule

Athletic Director: Merlyn Courser CAA

Boys High School Basketball

January		
3	Thursday	Hazen @ Danville NL 6:00/7:30
5	Saturday	Williamstown @ Danville 1:00/2:30
9	Wednesday	Danville @ Stowe NL 6:00/7:30
11	Friday	Northfield @ Danville NL 6:00/7:30
18	Friday	Danville @ Winooski 5:30/7:00
23	Wednesday	Richford @ Danville 5:30/7:00
25	Friday	Danville @ Lake Region 6:00/7:30
30	Wednesday	BFA Fairfax @ Danville 5:30/7:00

February		
1	Friday	Peoples @ Danville 6:00/7:30
6	Wednesday	Danville @ Hazen 6:00/7:30
8	Monday	Stowe @ Danville 6:00/7:30
11	Monday	Danville @ Northfield 6:00/7:30

Girls High School Basketball

January		
2	Wednesday	Danville @ Williamstown NL 6:00/7:30
9	Wednesday	BFA Fairfax @ Danville 5:30/7:00
12	Saturday	Winooski @ Danville 1:00/2:30
19	Saturday	Danville @ Richford 1:00/2:30
24	Thursday	Stowe @ Danville NL 6:00/7:30
26	Saturday	Williamstown @ Danville (SAT) 3:00/4:30
29	Tuesday	Danville @ Enosburg 5:30/7:00
31	Thursday	Peoples @ Danville 6:00/7:30

February		
2	Saturday	Danville @ Blue Mountain NL 1:00/2:30
5	Tuesday	Hazen @ Danville NL 6:00/7:30
7	Thursday	Danville @ Northfield NL 6:00/7:30
9	Saturday	Danville @ Concord NL 1:00/2:30
12	Tuesday	Danville @ Lake Region 6:00/7:30
14	Thursday	Northfield @ Danville 6:00/7:30
16	Saturday	Danville @ Stowe 1:00/2:30
19	Tuesday	Danville @ Hazen 6:00/7:30

What's Happening at the Town Hall?

Barnet

Town Clerk: William Hoar
Selectboard: Ted Faris, Stanley Robinson and Jeremy Roberts

November 26, 2007

Tax Collector – Tax Collector Donald Nelson met with Board to review list of property owners with at least three years of unpaid taxes. Nelson proposed to start collection proceedings unless arrangements are made to pay amounts due. Board approved the request and expenditure of funds for legal services if needed.

Appropriations Request – Board approved a request from Pleasantview Cemetery Association for an appropriation of \$3,500 in 2008 budget and agreed to include request from Rural Community Transportation for an appropriation of \$1,100 in warning for March town meeting.

Morrison Hill Road – Board read letter from Barry Fudim expressing concerns for about a depression on Morrison Hill at its junction with the East Peacham Road, which may become a safety hazard. Road foreman Maurice Gingue will look at it.

December 10, 2007

Use of Town Highways by Snowmobiles – On request of Ross Page Board approved use of portions of Bony Woods Road and Somerhill Road by winter snowmobiles.

Town Forest Road Discontinuance – Board noted January 7 hearing for discontinuance of a portion of Town Forest Road near transfer station.

Town Garage Site – Board discussed special town meeting during week of January 14 to vote on purchase of 11 acres of land at intersection of US 5 and road to North Monroe from Harold J. Dunbar for \$70,000 to be used for new town garage.

Health Insurance Rates – Board noted notice from Blue Cross Blue Shield that health insurance rates have increased by 12-13%. Board authorized town clerk to select plan closest to current coverage.

Special Appropriation – Board noted 2008 special appropriation request from Fairbanks Museum of \$1,700.

Town Plan – Shirley Warden reported revised town plan is ready for presentation by planning commission for adoption but they will need assistance.

Regional planning commission will do that for an \$800 fee or go over process with Shirley for \$250. Board approved expenditure of \$250 fee.

Cabot

Town Clerk: Doug Harvey
Selectboard: Larry Gochey, Caleb Pitkin and Ted Domey

November 21, 2007

Earth Tech Contract – Board met with Jefferson Tolman, Earth Tech regional manager and discussed contract extension and compensation adjustment package. Board approved proposal extending contract for five years and a 3.5% cost of living increase for next year.

Budget Review – Doug Harvey presented a budget and actual financial report for year to date. Major topic of discussion was the \$45,000 higher than budget cost of new highway truck. Based upon current figures highway fund will be \$25 - \$30,000 higher than budget.

Sheriff's Department – Board reviewed annual sheriff's report.

VT League of Cities and Towns – Board discussed dues and life insurance program with VT League of Cities and Towns.

Legal Matter – Doug Harvey informed Board that Ken Davis has asked town attorney for a two week extension for completion of interrogatories. Extension was granted.

Discontinuance of Right-of-Way – Board discussed deed being prepared to confirm town's additional 30-foot right-of-way per agreement with Ruth Glaude which will discontinue a right-of-way on her property.

McCullough Gravel Pit – Board reviewed its letter of concern addressing closing of McCullough Crushing gravel pit in East Calais. After several changes Board approved letter for mailing.

Dog Complaint – Board discussed complaints about excessive dog barking from Jennifer Person's dogs on Brickett's Crossing road. Board directed town clerk to send a letter including a copy of town dog ordinance to Ms. Person.

December 5, 2007

Budget Review – Board reviewed financial reports and estimated \$25,000

shortfall projected for year end and discussed various ways to resolve situation including short term loan or extending term for tax anticipation loan. Caleb Pitkin will contact UDAG committee to see if options are available through UDAG fund.

Wastewater Commission – Board noted fuel surcharge effective November 26 and agreed to discuss with Earth Tech to be sure of best options for town.

Health Order – Board discussed rebuttal to its previous discussion from Leonard Spencer, owner of property at 3065 Main Street. Board visited the property and returned. Board then voted that "within 14 days a weather-tight, water-tight door shall be installed on the front entrance and a conventional locking mechanism shall be installed." Spencer was given a copy of signed order.

Wiley Building Lift – After discussing proposals for servicing Wiley Building Lift, Board directed Wiley Building committee to contact Bay State Elevator and ask to modify proposed agreement from six service visits per year to four visits keeping cost at proposed \$175 per visit.

Danville

Town Clerk: Virginia Morse
Town Administrator - Merton Leonard
Selectboard: Marion Seigny, Denise Briggs, Doug Pastula, Marvin Withers and Michael Walsh

December 6, 2007

Zoning Bylaws – Board convened a public hearing for discussion of revision to zoning bylaws. After discussion, Board voted to adopt revised bylaws as presented. Jeff Frampton reported planning commission will use a new grant to study and define town's village centers for next phase of zoning bylaw revisions.

Conservation Commission – Frampton reported conservation commission has made progress establishing priorities and is working on development of a conservation fund.

Historical Society – Mary Prior reported on activities of town historical society including large gifts of money received to purchase a house and restore it to a condition associated with earlier times. She requested \$15,000 to assist in paying expenses for the house and indicated the society's benefactor is waiting to see support from town before establishing a trust to provide continuing support for the project. Historical society is also pursuing exemption from paying property tax on the property.

Tax Late Fee Abatement – Melody Peterson asked to have her penalty for late payment of property taxes waived due to death of a neighbor on day property taxes were due. No action taken.

Road Work – Kevin Gadapee reported road crew has been busy plowing and sanding with snow and freezing rain. Crew is cutting wood and working on its building between storms. On Gadapee's request, Board reviewed quotes and authorized purchase of a new International truck to replace one that is 10 years old. Order may be canceled if there are budget constraints later on.

New Town Ordinance – Merton Leonard reported burning ordinance and speeding ordinance will go into effect on December 17.

Use of Town Hall – On request of Danville School French Club, Board voted to waive town hall rental fee for club's fund raising dance.

Sewer Connection – Board approved sewer connection application from Marty and Plyn Beattie for one of their new business apartments at 15 Hill Street.

Town Bequest – Board noted bequest from the late William Stanton in the amount of \$25,000. Board voted to sign required probate court documents.

Personnel – After executive session to discuss employee wages, Board approved 3.5% wage increase and a \$100 stipend for winter fluorescent coats for each member of town's road crew. Further, Board voted to remove Kevin Gadapee from its list of annual appointments as Gadapee was hired under a contract.

Lyndon

Town Clerk - Lisa Barrett
Administrative Assistant - Art Sanborn
Selectmen: Martha Feltus, Kevin Calkins and Kermit Fisher
November 26, 2007

Highway Report – Board reviewed highway report as of week ending November 16. At 88% through year, entire budget is 80% expended.

County Budget Review – Assistant Judge Roy Vance reviewed proposed 2008 budget for Caledonia County.

Intermunicipal Police Agreement – Art Sanborn reviewed first draft of the agreement for intermunicipal police services between town and village showing amendments proposed by Village Trustees. Current contract expires December 31.

Budget Review – Art Sanborn reviewed 2008 budget information.

Grand List – On recommendation of board of listers, Board voted to increase 2007 grand list by \$125,400.

Perpetual Care – Board approved perpetual care agreement for Edna Mills.

Sanitation Services – Following executive session to discuss contract for sanitation services, no action was taken.

Peacham

Town Clerk: Bruce Lafferty
Selectmen: Richard Browne, Tim McKay and Gary Swenson.

November 28, 2007

Peacham Town Hall Gym – Board met with Ken Cyr, Danville School's Elementary Athletic Director, and discussed a draft policy for use of Peacham Town Hall Gym. Cyr reported he had provided a liability insurance certificate showing Town of Peacham as covered by the policy. Gary Swenson reiterated his request that Board be provided a written statement that Danville School will indemnify Peacham against any loss during use of the gym and naming Peacham as an insured party on the policy and indication that proper scheduling and supervision will be provided. Board discussed gymnasium policy. No action was taken, although Board directed administrative assistant to proceed with weekly safety inspections of the facility. Board asked town clerk to develop a gym access policy to be introduced prior to March town meeting.

Trash Compactor – Board discussed breakdown of trash compactor. Dick Blair will communicate with Casella Waste Management about repairs.

Reappraisal – Board discussed reappraisal of grand list including having listers do the reappraisal rather than an outside firm. Lister Becky Jensen indicated listers would do a more accurate job and produce a better product at a price no higher than that of an outside firm.

Planning Commission – Planning Commission Chair Gib Parrish presented commission's 2008 budget. Board voted to set compensation of zoning administrator at rate of \$1,500 for the year, the same as before.

Town Clerk – Town clerk discussed recommendation to make assistant town clerk/treasurer a full time position with benefits. Board discussed specifics, alternative work schedules and reduced office hours. Town clerk agreed to provide written list of additional administrative duties at December 5 meeting of Board.

Recreation Committee – Board discussed reestablishing recreation committee.

Budget – Board reviewed 2008 budget.

Road Crew – Board reviewed 2008 road budget and road plan and reviewed agreement with Town of Cabot for mutual assistance on Mack Mountain Road. Phil Jejer reported use of sand and salt has increased with recent freezing rain. Board discussed purchase of new 2007 Model 4300 International dump truck. Total price of truck, completely outfitted, will be \$95,314. Jejer will explore financing options. Board instructed Jejer to bring

Blue Poly Tarps		Heavy Duty Tarps	
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6x8	12x32	25x40	10x17
8x10	12x36	30x30	10x20
8x12	17x45	30x40	12x16
8x18	15x20	30x50	15x30
8x20	15x25	40x40	20x20
10x10	15x30	40x50	20x30
10x12	18x24	40x60	30x40
10x20	20x20	50x50	
12x12	20x25	50x100	
12x16	20x30		
12x20	20x40		

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Excerpts from Selectboard Minutes from Area Towns
See your Town Clerk for complete minutes of the meetings

financing agreement and vehicle description to next meeting. Board asked Jejer to follow up on complaints received from residents Quagliano and Kaplan/Evangelista and report back to Board on planned improvements.

St. Johnsbury

Town Manager: Michael Welch
 Town Clerk: Sandy Grenier
 Selectboard: Jerry Rowe, Daniel Kimbell, Bryon Quatrini, Gary Reis and Dale Urie.

November 19, 2007

NEK Human Services – Mary Lunderville of Moose River Campground read a letter outlining displeasure with development review board (DRB) and its dealings with NEK Human Services project to house people in crisis at the O’Shea’s Motel at intersection of Routes 2 and 15. Lunderville objected to DRB’s timing of a follow-up meeting, accuracy of meeting minutes and claimed that DRB was not following guidelines as to what type of business could be developed in zoned area. Board agreed to not get involved at this time but to serve as point of appeal if neighbors feel they have a valid objection to DRB’s decision.

Water Treatment – Board recognized Water Treatment Plant Operator Dan Gray for outstanding knowledge of water filter system and for doing a great job for town.

Legislators Delegation – Local legis-

lators including Jane Kitchel, David Clark, Don Bostic and George Copenrath met with Board to discuss pending legislation.

Walking Tour Grant – Board authorized town manager to sign documentation for Preserve America Grant for a walking tour program in St. Johnsbury. Grant was for \$22,375 and requires a match to be provided by St. J Works.

Winter Parking Ban – Board discussed winter parking ban with Police Chief Richard Leighton. Bryon Quatrini asked to have flashing light or some signal instituted so as to allow street parking except during storms or snow removal. It was agreed this is not possible this year but will be re-addressed in spring.

Hours of Meter Enforcement – Board discussed downtown parking meter hours currently Mon. - Thurs. and Sat. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Fri. 8 a.m. - 9 p.m. and downtown commission’s recommendation to change hours to 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Mon. - Fri. Board voted to not change the schedule.

Police Department Contract Services – According to Attorney Ed Zuccaro, there is nothing to prohibit police department from contracting outside of its territory for a fee. After discussion Board expressed no interest whatsoever in having department contract for services outside of Village. Board also discussed behavior problems on Railroad Street and consideration among downtown merchants of raising funds for a full time police offi-

cer on Railroad Street at least in the daytime by next summer.

Community Center – Armory – Following presentation by Recreation Director Joe Fox with recommendations for bringing armory building up to code and saving money in operations, Board voted to establish a committee to consider options for recreation department.

Reappraisal – After discussion of mandate from State Department of Taxes ordering a town reappraisal, Board voted to respond that Town is taking action to reappraise properties to 100% of fair market value.

Economic Development – Following recommendation by Joel Schwartz that town try and get at least one disadvantaged business enterprise to work on Railroad Station Pomerleau project, Board voted to adopt policy to actively pursue such businesses for future projects.

Duck Pond in Waterford – Jerry Rowe suggested Board visit Duck Pond pull off in Waterford, owned by Town. Area is becoming a popular parking and party area and junk is accumulating. Board may want to block off access to pull off.

Labor Contract – After executive session to discuss labor contracts, no action was taken.

December 10, 2007

Industrial Park – Following Joel Schwartz’s review of a grant funded project at industrial park, an analysis of energy use by multiple businesses in the vicinity of the industrial park and feasibility of a biomass generation facility, Board voted to close out the project grant.

Zoning Policy and Procedures – Jim Rust and Mary Lunderville spoke to Board about procedure for appealing decisions of design review board and their objections to the manner in which a certain situation has been handled by the Board. Jerry Rowe pointed out that further debate was not necessary and that a formal appeal could be made to the environmental court.

Grand List – On recommendation of town clerk Board approved various amendments to town grand list.

Three Rivers Bike Path – Kevin Russell, municipal project manager, and Jeffrey Tucker, of Dubois & King, met with Board to describe current status of Three Rivers Transportation Project. Russell described the team as making traction. Work continues on alignment and preliminary right-of-way plans. Jeff Tucker indicated that by February 2008 all permits should be in hand.

Recreation Committee – Board voted to appoint Lisa Warren and David Miller to Recreation Board and to appoint Chip Langmaid as an alternate.

Ambulance Signals on Hospital Drive – On request of CALEX and following discussion, Board voted to request that VTrans install equipment at the traffic signals at intersection of US Route 5 and Hospital Hill to facilitate ambulances passing through intersection.

Parking Meters – On recommendation of downtown improvement commission Board voted to amend enforcement periods for parking meters to Monday - Saturday, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. No Sundays or Legal Holidays.

Water Main Repairs – Mike Welch reported an emergency water shut-off in Main Street area to repair a water leak.

Pull-Off Duck Pond Road – On recommendation of Board chair who had looked at the pull-off area on town land on Duck Pond Road and said he did not see any reason why the area needed to be open for people to dispose of garbage and deer carcasses, Board voted to barricade the area.

Planning Commission – William Merrow, planning commission chair asked that if people were requesting an overview of zoning and planning policies and procedures that the request be referred to planning commission.

Spring Street Construction Debris Clean-up – Mike Welch reported that he and Priscilla Messier had met with Greenwood’s, owners of property on Spring Street that burned down. Greenwood’s have agreed to a lien on the property to allow town to clean-up remaining construction demolition debris. Board agreed to proposal.

December 17, 2007

Caledonia County Budget – Assistant Judge William Kennedy reviewed proposed 2008/2009 County & Sheriff’s Budget with Board.

Fire Station and Municipal Building Cost Estimates – Board met with Jay Ancel of Black River Design to review cost estimates for construction of a fire station on Hastings Hill. Preliminary construction estimate including site development, design, construction and development of a replacement parking lot for Black Bear Tavern Restaurant was \$4,834,714. Total square footage of proposed building is 19,200 with estimate, including site cost, approxi-

mately \$192 per square foot. Renovations to existing municipal building are estimated in \$1,000,000 range. Town manager will be meeting with USDA officials to review financing options. Board chair Jerry Rowe indicated decision needs to be made by end of January to have a bond vote in March 2008.

Budget Review – Town manager presented preliminary drafts of 2008 budgets, including general fund: \$2,367,148 (6.5% over 2007 approved budget), highway fund: \$2,113,965 (12% over 2007 approved budget), special services: \$1,061,750 (5% over 2007 approved budget).

Town Forest – Dale Urie reported new county forester will be helping to develop a forestry plan for the town forest.

Contracts and Civil Actions – Following executive session with Joel Schwartz to discuss contracts and civil actions, no action was taken.

Walden

Town Clerk: Lina Smith
 Selectboard: David Brown, Perley Greaves and Douglas Luther

November 27, 2007

Budget Review – Board discussed preliminary budget for 2008.

Employee Insurance – Town Clerk reported she will be attending a meeting of VT League of Cities and Towns Health Trust to find out how insurance will change and will report back.

Generator – Board discussed maintenance of generator at the school and directed town clerk to have propane bill sent to the town and the \$400 maintenance fee will be paid by the town.

Cost of Elections – Town clerk reported she asked school to reimburse town for expense of additional votes for school budget. Board agreed that town should absorb costs of initial vote, but any additional votes related solely to the school should come from school budget.

Noyestar Road – Board read letter from Annegret Pollard regarding erosion on Noyestar Road and the beaver fence she installed. Board expressed concern that the fence might fail, plug the culvert and cause the road to wash. Dave Brown will contact Jake McGrew at the State to discuss this situation.



Photo By: North Star Monthly

On December 21 Mary Cote (center) and Kristine Brill (right) from the Passumpsic Savings Bank met with Ollie Wolfson (left) at The Open Door in Danville distributing a share of the food and funds collected during the Bank’s customer appreciation day food drive for area food shelves. During the food drive 1,600 pounds of food were collected for distribution to food shelves in Danville, Lyndon, St. Johnsbury, Newport, Sheffield and Island Pond as well as in Lancaster, Groveton and Littleton.

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Come to the Table

Denise Brown



'A loaf of bread,' the Walrus said,
'Is what we chiefly need:
Pepper and vinegar besides
Are very good indeed -
Now, if you're ready, Oysters
dear,
We can begin to feed.'

- Lewis Carroll,
*Through the Looking-Glass
and What Alice Found There*

Oysters are one of those food-stuffs I tend to enjoy more in theory than practice. Truly, I want to be the sort of woman who dances the tango with small provocation, who laughs in the face of impropriety, and of danger, and of trifling blood diseases. A woman who eats oysters with aplomb.

But there's just this one thing.

A little history: January always leaves me thinking about oysters. My mother loved those tiny smoked oysters that come neatly tucked inside a flat tin you open with a key, all safely packaged within a printed box. Those little oysters, along with thin slices of sharp cheese, stuffed olives and chilled jerkins, savory dips, delicate canapés and crisp crackers, contributed to the festive spread which sustained us during the long evening of card playing and conversation leading up to the dropping of the renowned ball in Time's Square at midnight. Oysters played a recurring, happy role in our annual celebration.

Those oily, smoked nibbles

weren't her only weakness, however. Mom loved oysters fried and topped with ketchup-spiked horseradish sauce, both on the plate and peaking out of hard roll sandwiches, and oysters dunked in a simple stew of broth and hot milk, a pool of butter swirling on top, those inevitable eponymous puffs floating about on the surface like abandoned life boats. Every few weeks, it seemed, we were blessed with a meal built around one or the other version of those darling crustaceans.

Dear Lord, I hated oysters.

And then, I grew up. I dated. Gentleman callers took me to nice restaurants. And while I learned many things not directly related to oysters via dating, a few connections come to mind, and one suitable for mention in a family newspaper: that raw oysters - oysters just shucked, fresh, briny, beautiful, splashed perhaps with a bit of Tabasco and slurped right off the pearly shell - are simply divine. Raw oysters, I discovered, were a thing unlike any other.

Enter, however, a deadly hepatitis outbreak among a group of inordinately attractive single men who frequented the beach resort in my mid-Atlantic county of my youth. Blamed, rightly or not, upon their profligate consumption of uncooked oysters.

Paradise lost.

Consequently, I have only on occasion succumbed to the siren's call of the raw bar. As a rule, I've insisted on being fairly inebriated at the outset. There was that fabled evening with my

husband-to-be, which I have heard tell of, but frankly do not remember. And an anniversary celebration in Boca Raton years later, when we were flush in love and money, and I believed nothing could touch us. And one night since, at a hopping, upscale restaurant in Connecticut after a half-decade of tundra living alone. The menu sported several dozen types of oysters from waters all over the world. Not trying at least a few seemed irresponsibly incurious, like forgoing an opportunity to witness the landing of alien beings, or skipping out on a meet and greet with a Yehti.

They were glorious, those oysters, if memory serves. But a far cry from the unidentified swimming substances in those scary little tubs you'll find at the local, landlocked market. But let's say, the spirit is willing. Let's say, you're ready to try once more. What's a girl to do when faced with a half pint of milky mollusks?

Fry, fry again. Only this time, take a hint from Lewis Carroll's gluttonous walrus, who well advised a bit of pepper and vinegar to flavor the catch. The following is a simple adaptation of a New Orleans po'boy recipe from David Rosengarten's, *It's All American Food: The Food We Really Eat, the Dishes We Will Always Love*.

For those with access to oysters in the shell, this book's ele-

gant, old fashioned recipes will inspire you. There's Oysters Bienville - oysters baked with cream, pimentos, cheese and bell pepper. And if you're curious about how to make authentic Oysters Rockefeller, Rosengarten's book is a must-read: a morsel of history - not a bit of spinach appears in the original recipe from Antoine's.

So, get reacquainted with bivalves, though do be cautious. Ask to see proper identification. Never simply take a Malpeque or Bras d'Or at his or her word. Still waters, you know. And by all means, practice safe shucking.

Fried Oysters

Dredging in a cornmeal mix instead of coating with a serious flour and egg batter makes preparation a snap. Serves two.

- 1 dozen oysters, shucked
- Tabasco sauce
- 1 tablespoon Lemon juice
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1/3 cup flour
- 1/2 to 1 teaspoon black pepper
- Pinch of cayenne
- Onion and/or garlic powders
- Salt
- Vegetable oil for frying, preferably corn

Drain the oysters well. Pat dry thoroughly with paper towels then set in a shallow bowl. Sprinkle with a few drops of Tabasco sauce, or a bit more if

you're adventuresome, then add the lemon juice. Toss well to coat. Set aside.

Heat about an inch of corn oil in a heavy skillet. (I prefer corn oil for frying and loathe canola, though, of course, you'll use what you like. Olive oil would overpower.) Meanwhile, in another bowl or on a dinner plate, mix together the cornmeal, flour, pepper to taste, cayenne, a healthy pinch of salt and up to a teaspoon of either or both of onion and garlic powders.

Shake off any extra lemon juice from the oysters and dredge them in the seasoned cornmeal mix, pressing lightly to be sure they are well covered. Fry in hot oil in batches, 4 to 6 at a time, depending on the size of your skillet. Remove from the oil when they are golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Keep warm in a low oven or on a plate at the back of the range. Don't cover. Serve immediately.

A variety of sauces will accompany these nicely. Try my mother's simple mix of prepared horseradish and ketchup blended to taste. Or amend with a dash, pinch, or smidgen any of the following: Worcestershire, Tabasco, or chili sauces; Old Bay seasoning or cayenne; lemon juice or red wine vinegar; or brown or Dijon mustard. For added interest, consider a tablespoon of chopped parsley, scallions or a minced dill pickle. ✦

New Requirements for ID's at Border Crossing Go Into Effect January 31

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of State have issued a reminder to the traveling public that as of January 31, 2008, all adult travelers will be required to present proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate, and proof of identity, such as a driver's license, when entering the United States through land and sea ports of entry.

The change is a necessary step to prepare travelers and ease the transition to the future requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). WHTI proposes to establish documentation requirements for travelers entering the United States including citizens of the U.S., Canada and Bermuda. As recommended by the 9/11 Commission, Congress

enacted WHTI in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. WHTI will result, the notice says, in enhanced security and increased facilitation across the border once implemented. During this transition, DHS and the Department of State are attempting to minimize the impact on legitimate trade and travel.

Currently, U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers may accept oral declarations of citizenship from U.S. and Canadian citizens seeking entry into the United States through a land or sea border. However, as of January 31, 2008, oral declarations of citizenship alone will no longer be accepted. U.S. and Canadian citizens ages 19 and older will need to present a government-issued photo ID, such

as a driver's license, along with proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate or naturalization certificate. Children ages 18 and under will only be required to present proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate. Passports and trusted traveler program cards including NEXUS, SENTRI and FAST, will continue to be accepted for cross-border travel. All existing nonimmigrant visa and passport requirements will remain in effect and will not be altered by this change.

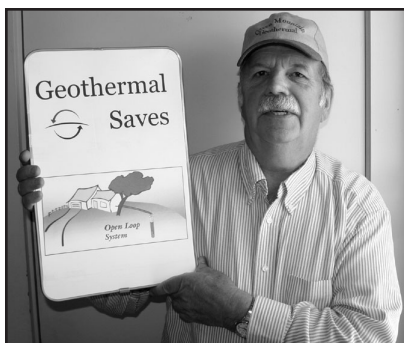
Officials remind the public that the turnaround time for a passport is four to six weeks, so Americans planning international travel may wish to apply now. For information on obtaining a U.S. Passport visit www.travel.state.gov or call (877) 487-2778.



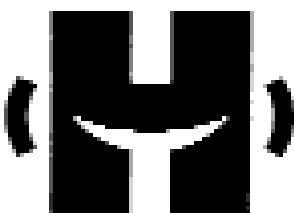
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String Worth Saving

Bill Christiansen

You may have heard the urban legend that the Inuit or Eskimos have a hundred words for snow. Sometimes this is quoted as their expressions for snow are a thousand or more. In any event, there is little or no truth to this notion. The Inuit speak several languages, and if you count the snow words in each and add the results together, you might get to one hundred. We have about that many in English.

The record for the world's largest snow flake was set in January of 1887 in Keogh, MT. There were flakes at the time measuring 15 inches across.

The first reference to the Inuit having several words for snow was introduced in a book, *The Handbook of North American Indians*, published in 1911. Authors Franz Boas and Edward Sapir stated the Inuit had four words for snow, while English only has one. The Inuit words were aput, snow on the ground, qana, falling snow, piqsirpoq, drifting snow, qimuqsuq and snowdrift.

In 1940, a popular article by Benjamin Whorf stated that there were seven different Inuit words for snow. By 1978, the number was published as 50, and on February 8, 1984, an editorial in *The New York Times* gave the number as 100. Could it be that the Inuit were highly and linguistically inventive during this period?

If we look at our own language, we will find a wealth of terms describing snow or snow conditions. For example, words for falling snow would include blizzard, flurries, graupel (snow pellets), hail, sleet, snow squalls

and rimed snow to name a few. For snow on the ground we can start with artificial snow, blowing snow, corn snow, crust, powder snow, packed powder, slush, ice and firn. I'm sure you can add more to both of these lists.

Science recognizes four classes of snowflakes, and each class has many sub-classes. Dendrites is a class of snowflakes with six points, the classic "star" shape. Columns are flakes that are shaped like a six-sided column. Needles are flakes that have one dimension longer than the other, like a needle, and lastly there is rimed snow. These are snowflakes that are coated with tiny frozen water droplets. This class of snowflake has passed through a cloud with super-cooled moisture, which adheres to the flake as it passes. To each of these classes we can add a variety of sub-classes. How many words for snow in the English language? You can try to count them.

A second myth is one we have all heard: no two snowflakes are alike. This is pure speculation. Consider the number of snowflakes that fall in the average snowstorm and then consider how many were actually examined. For the few that were examined, none were alike, but this does not mean that they all were different. To this snowstorm, add all of the other snowstorms, world-wide for the last hundred years, and we don't have any idea about the likelihood of identical snowflakes.

There is an argument that says that there should be many snowflakes that are identical. Snowflakes are frozen water. A water molecule, two hydrogen atoms bonded to one oxygen atom, has a unique form. The two hydrogen atoms bond to one side of the oxygen atom at an angle of about 105 degrees. This makes one side on the molecule positively charged and the other side negatively charged. That means that when molecules bond together in a snowflake they form a six-sided structure, a hexagon. This is why all snow

flakes are six-sided and maintain that shape as they grow.

While snowflakes all start out as a six-sided crystal, many are broken, melted, reshaped and reorganized as they fall to the ground. So, not all snowflakes have the nice shape and structure we see in the photographs by "Snowflake" Bentley.

To the question of identical snow flakes: The shape and structure of the flake is a function of the environment in which it was created. The main conditions are the temperature, the wind direction and the availability of moisture. Six-petaled ice crystals grow in air between 0 and -3° C (32 and 27° F). The water vapor droplets solidify around a dust particle, and the crystals grow as more vapor is added to the structure.

At temperatures between -1 and -3° C (30 and 27° F) the crystals form dendrite, plate structures or six-petaled snow flowers. All of this points to the

idea that different snowflake forms are created under different conditions.

The same conditions produce the same snowflake structures. Therefore, it would seem probable that under the same conditions, the same snowflake crystal configuration would form many times. This would lead to the conclusion that many snowflakes would form that were alike.

Having two identical snowflakes would not violate any known law of science. The American Meteorological Society reported a matched pair of crystals discovered in Wisconsin in 1988 by Nancy Knight of the National Center for Atmospheric Research. However, fine definitions come into play, in that those crystals were not flakes but hollow hexagonal prisms. Do these count?

Some might not know about the snow research station in the

highland of Danville. The project included research as to how best to measure snow fall, snow packs, snow density and snow surface temperature. The project was part of a larger undertaking, the Sleepers River Watershed Project.

An interesting winter project, when there is nothing else to do, would be to go out in the next snow storm and collect as many snow flakes as possible and look for symmetry. This could be a project for the whole family.

Finally, we are always looking for records, and here are a couple of good ones. In the winter of 1998 -99, the Mount Baker Ski Area, outside Bellingham, WA, received 1,140 inches of snow. That's 95 feet. *The Guinness Book of World Records* says that the record for the world's largest snow flake was set in January of 1887 in Keogh, MT. There were flakes at the time measuring 15 inches across.

Snow Loads Threaten Barn Roofs

With the threat of a potentially record-breaking snowfall this winter, farmers and homeowners should take precautions to avoid the collapse of barn roofs.

It's important to understand how much weight your barn can withstand and what to do to keep livestock safe. Many agricultural buildings in Vermont are designed for total roof load of 30 to 40 pounds per square foot. This includes the "dead" weight of the framing, trusses, rafters and ceiling. Add to this two or more feet of heavy snow, and the weight on the structure begins to exceed its carrying capacity.

Another important consideration in snow loads is that a roof may be able to hold a heavy load for some period of time, however, it may not be able to support the elevated weight load for the rest of the winter or through another storm that produces significant additional accumulation. A roof can lose its structural integrity after about 30 days if it is not cleared. The threat of extreme conditions makes it imperative to remove the snow from the building as soon as possible.

"Removing snow from the

roof of any structure as it accumulates is the best way to avoid a collapse and potential damage or injury to you and your livestock," advises Anson Tebbetts, deputy secretary for the Agency of Agriculture.

When clearing snow from a roof, work to ensure an even unloading from both sides at a time. Work in pairs, and use a safety line when clearing steep pitched roofs. Plan an escape route before you begin, and keep personal safety the first priority. The center of the rafters and the center of the building are the weak points. Some recommend keeping 4x4 or 6x6 poles on

hand to place under every fourth rafter, or along the center of the roof line. This will provide additional strength to your roof.

If you are unsure about the structural integrity of your barn you may want to consult an experienced builder or engineer to assess the condition of the building. Even barns that have survived the last storm may have gradual deterioration or hidden structural damage that might not be apparent until the next snowfall. A professional engineer can provide a structural review of your building and assist with a recommendation for improvements, if they are necessary.

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Life Seems to Pause In the Winter

VAN PARKER

Migratory birds have long since departed to Florida, Central America or wherever they spend their winter. People who go south have already gone. Naturalists tell us most animals slow down during this season. Bears hibernate. Crickets come in from the cold before the cold does them in. Leafy trees have long since shed their leaves. Even the evergreens are in a kind of holding pattern.

Of course life goes on. In the country, as everywhere else, people get up and go to work. Cows always have to be milked. Mail is delivered, and roads get cleared of snow. In this part of the world outdoor types ski and snowmobile. Political primaries go on in Iowa and New Hampshire. Non-retired people go to their jobs just as they do any other time of the year. Business people travel, even though some flights are canceled. Meetings and social occasions of all sorts continue. But, if we follow the rhythms of nature even a little, pausing and reflecting a bit might do us some good.

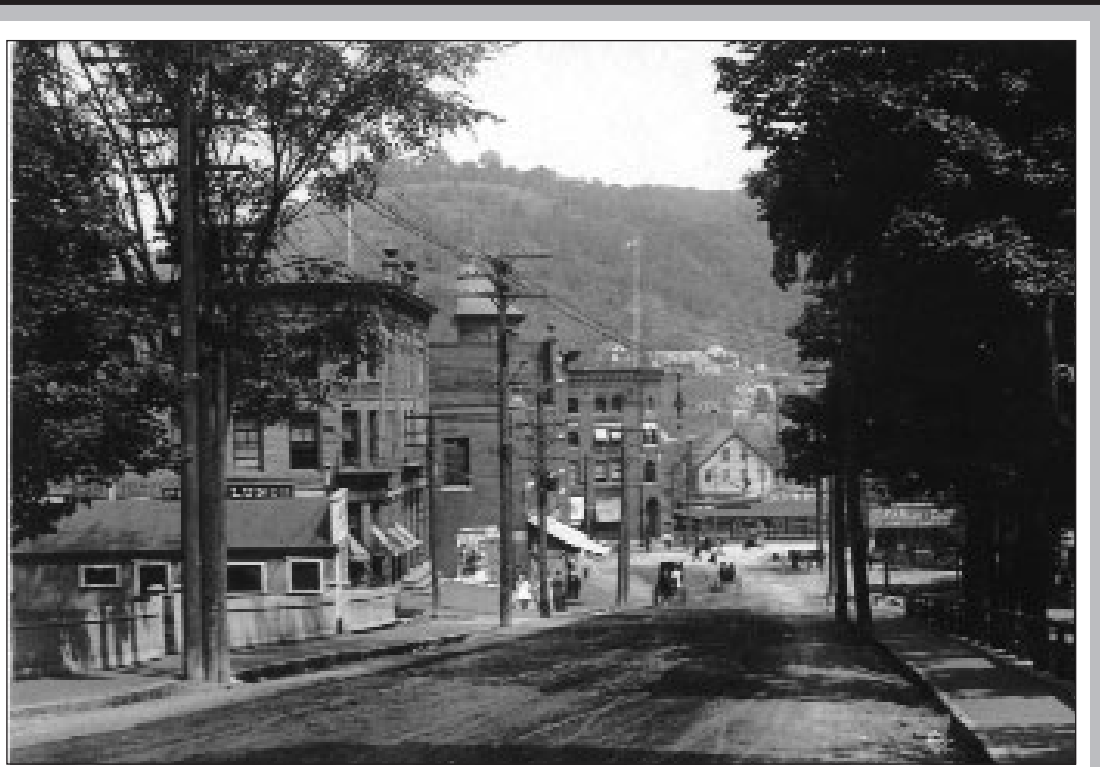
Monks at the Weston Priory in Weston, VT have composed many albums. One of those albums has the intriguing title "Winter's Coming Home."

That's an unusual name for a song. For over a dozen years our family has gathered in Danville during the holidays. Usually there's at least a little snow on the ground. The house gets crowded, but nobody seems to mind as we all come and go, skiing, walking, going to a Christmas Eve service or just "hanging out." We don't call it a homecoming, but it has that feeling to it.

I wonder if that song about winter has another dimension. One image that comes to my mind is that of a store that is closed for a few days while the owners take inventory. How much do we have? How much do we really need? What can we add? What can we get rid of? What new ideas can we try?

I used to think that making New Year's resolutions was a futile exercise. Now I'm beginning to have more respect for such resolutions. Maybe some resolutions spring from a kind of stocktaking, the kind of stocktaking that a cold northern winter and a look at nature can encourage. The monks at Weston seem to think that winter offers a chance to be attentive to the people around us and to the sort of activities that come to us most naturally. What can we let go? What can we do without? What truly energizes us?

It's easy to see changes in the spring. The landscape is a little different each day. Spring is when everything that appeared dormant comes to life. But winter is the time when, unseen, the changes begin. Blueberries, for instance, need a certain number of "freeze hours" to have a good crop. Nature rests. Of course it doesn't "take stock" the way people do, nor, as far as we know, do animals make resolutions. But winter still has a homecoming quality about it. It's a time that can be used for turning, for making resolutions, some of which we might even keep.



Photos Courtesy of Merton Leonard

Sometimes as we look ahead into a New Year it's tempting to look back and think about changes that have occurred. Change generally does lead in the direction of improvement, but the good ol' days still haunt us as somehow better. This photo and the one on the next page recently caught our attention for the similarities and the differences. In about 1908, Eastern Avenue in St. Johnsbury enjoyed the shade of mature elm trees and far less traffic squeezed against the curbs. The New Avenue House Hotel beckoned travelers from the St. Johnsbury Railroad Station and people traveled on foot or by horsedrawn vehicles. The Avenue was not paved, but on this day there appear to be tracks of the occasional automobile and there is that hint of change to come.

Orangeries and Greenhouses

LEONARD PERRY

Did you know that greenhouses as we know them had their origins in the 1600's? The purpose of the first such structures was the same - to protect plants during winter and to grow plants outside of their native environments.

The first greenhouses were those of the Romans who used mica coverings to grow cucumbers. Later the Italians and French had primitive greenhouses, with the earliest record from France of a south-facing glass pavilion dating to 1385.

Early greenhouses were constructed by the northern Europeans in the 17th and 18th centuries to grow oranges, a fruit exotic to the area. They called the structures "orangeries" and built them of glass and masonry and heated

them with stoves. The earliest orangeries were in Holland, but shortly after they appeared in England. The orangery at Kew Gardens in England was built in 1761. At the time it was the largest glass greenhouse in England.

Peasants could not afford greenhouses, given the high cost of materials. Thus, it became a status symbol, especially among the aristocracy, to own an orangery. Plants were usually grown in large tubs, wheeled outside during summer.

Alexander I, the Russian czar, had three. An enormous one was built at the Palace of Versailles in France. It measured 500 feet long, 42 feet wide and 700 feet high. Even the father of our country, George Washington, had a greenhouse at his home, Mount Vernon. Washington called his a pinery,

since he built it to grow pineapples, his favorite fruit. Pineries were popular abroad due to the popularity and the expense of this "new" fruit. A single pineapple in England during the latter part of the 18th century might cost the equivalent of \$10,000 today. You wouldn't have wanted to waste one.

By the middle of the 19th century, the popularity of greenhouses had reached its peak. What's more, materials became less expensive and more readily available, so greenhouses and growing plants under glass were no longer a pastime limited to the wealthy.

There was competition among cities and countries to build conservatories. These housed exotic, non-native plants as well as common varieties, and were open to the public. One of the most famous was London's Crystal Palace, built in 1851. One of the largest remaining Victorian glasshouses in the world, recently renovated, can be seen at the New York Botanical

(See *One of the* on Next Page)

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Ask the Shrinks

Alice S. Kitchel and Burton Zahler

Dear Shrinks,

My boyfriend and I have lived together for three years. We have started talking seriously about marriage. I am hesitant to take this step, mostly because of a difference we have.

"Harry" is devoted to the book *The Lord of the Rings*, a book he has read any number of times. And now he loves the three movies made from the books. I never let him know how silly and childish I find this story, and how hard it is for me to admire any grown man who revels in a story about elves and trolls and orcs and other utterly fantastic creatures.

I guess I can't change his taste in entertainment, but maybe if I could understand his fascination it could ease my opinion.

I Hate the Ring

I guess I can't change his taste in entertainment, but maybe if I could understand his fascination it could ease my opinion.

Dear I Hate the Ring,

It is probably true that you cannot change Harry's taste in entertainment. Let us see if any explanation of ours can change your opinion.

One definition of humanity is that we are the story-telling animal. We tell stories to establish our roots, our history. We tell stories to confirm the themes and principles we live by (our myths and fairy tales). Indeed, one of us has studied fairytales because they are considered by some therapists to be instructions for human development. And we tell and read and watch stories to entertain ourselves, to confirm and satisfy our fantasies (our inner stories) and also to enrich our imagination.

It is true that some people cannot tolerate any form of fiction. Some enjoy only romances, some only tales of war or fantasy or science fiction or newspapers or westerns. Some enjoy a rich mix of many forms of stories. Books could be written about what in our genes and our childhoods leads us to prefer a particular form of story. Perhaps it would be easier for you if you considered that you wouldn't expect everyone to have the same taste in music, art or fashion. And you wouldn't think that one style was better than another.

There is something else we feel we need to mention. You have lived with Harry for three years and are concerned about his taste in stories although you have not discussed this with him. We wonder if there are more pressing and serious issues in your relationship that disturb you and the irritation with stories is a cover for those. Or perhaps you are using a superficial issue to feel upset about and thus question marriage. If either of these rings true for you we wonder if considering marriage is premature and you have more self discovery to do. Time to delve into your own story?

Alice S. Kitchel & Burton Zahler who each have a psychotherapy practice in St. Johnsbury.



Not far from the New Avenue House Hotel was Sheldon's. Sheldon's had a telephone. And just to the south below the laundry drying on the second floor porch is a garage, where tires are advertised for sale and automotive services were available to guests at either hotel. Our friend and a reliable source of Vermont history, Graham Newell, remembers that in one of these basement spaces there was a Chinese laundry, where some poor fellow was murdered in the 1920's, perhaps having run afoul of the nightly card game traditions managed by the St. Johnsbury power brokers of the day.

One of the Most Famous Greenhouses Was London's Crystal Palace

(Continued from Page 22)

Garden.

Today, greenhouses are common virtually everywhere, used both by commercial businesses and homeowners to start plants, grow plants out of season, and display heat-loving tropicals and exotics. Greenhouses come in all sizes and forms from large, free-standing structures to ones that fit into an apartment window. Small ones for starting and hardening seedlings in spring can be purchased for a few hundred dollars. Attached greenhouses are popular with home gardeners, as they can be added to a house to form another room, which also can

be used as a sun room.

Leonard Perry, Ph.D., is extension professor in the department of plant and soil science at the University of Vermont. ★

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Walden Hill Journal

ELLEN GOLD

January 1, 2007: 30° and a coating of ice cover the first day of 2007. Our south windows are totally opaqued with a stippled layer of ice. It looks like Jack Frost got carried away with his own celebration ringing out the old and welcoming in the New Year. Hopefully the thermometer will rise and melt off our icy imprisonment. It doesn't look like we can count on the sun to do so today. The thermometer reached only 34°. That was not enough to release the ice encrusted trees, but fortunately it did bring down the roof ice. Huge slabs came cascading down in a forceful roar, crashing and shattering like broken glass. At least we don't need to worry about all that weight remaining on the roof.

January 2, 2007: It's almost 5 o'clock, and there's still a bit of winter sunset glow. The days are growing longer, a welcomed consolation as the coldest months prevail. The nearly full moon has risen just as the sun set. Fresh snow strengthens the moon's bright beacon. It also is giving slight purchase to the slippery layer of ice

that hasn't had a chance to melt. Roof ice hangs midair from the cooler, shadier north side of the house. Winter is always full of surprises. Even the Big Dipper hangs in its question mark phase, wondering what will happen next.

January 4, 2007: A gentle, radiant, diffused sunrise greets the day. As the sun climbs above the horizon, long shooting beams burst through the clouds. January sky shows have been magnificent at both ends of the day. Last night's full moonrise prolonged the light show with clouds just above tree line. Once the moon found a clear path, it cast incredibly distinct moon shadows. Its beacon was so bright that it brought out the sparkle in the snow. At ground level, the ice remains. My cautious walk to the compost bin yesterday was a crunchy adventure as I broke through frozen layers to terra firma.

January 6, 2007: 47° and rain. Fortunately the rain is washing away that slick coating of ice. Walking to the mailbox yesterday was a treacherous affair. I probably should have used my snowshoes for their ice cleats, but they are still stored away. We have yet to have



The shortest day (and the longest night) of the year were on the December 20 in 2007. As the Earth orbits the sun over the course of the year, the north-south position, the elevation, of the sun changes due to the changing orientation of the Earth's axis with respect to the sun. The dates of maximum tilt of the Earth's axis correspond to the summer solstice and winter solstice. In winter in the northern hemisphere, the shadows seem extremely long as the sun appears to get above the horizon. In summer the sun seems much higher, and shadows cast, especially at midday, are short.

The winter solstice marks the first day of winter.

enough snow to warrant snowshoes. It was likewise tricky driving out to the road. I had to disengage the traction control and whine and whir up the slippery drive to the well-sanded road. Hopefully the rain and warmer weather will hold until the ice is gone. Then of course, we'll need dry weather before the temperature drops or we'll be back to where we started. Meanwhile, we're fogged in. High of 53° on the hill today. It looks, feels and smells like spring. We're having our January thaw and serious mud season all rolled into one, and it's only the 6th day of January.

January 7, 2007: Now that's what I like about living in Danville. We phoned over to West Danville yesterday to see how long the post office was open on Saturday. It was about 11:25 and the post office had closed at 11:15. The post mistress however was going to be there a while yet so she said to hurry on down and she would weigh and post our package. I guess that's the advantage of having the old post office situated inside the general store. What great and friendly service.

January 10, 2007: Our snow birds, the juncos, are out frolicking

in the falling snow. Reading Hal Borland's description has helped solve an identity mystery. The sparrow-looking bird that arrived en masse as winter was setting in could very well have been juvenile juncos: "... the young snowbird ... dressed in juvenile plumage ... looks, at first glance, like that of the adult song sparrow, streaked and speckled." It's finally beginning to look and feel like winter. After our touch of mud season and rapid freezing afterwards, the roads are a mess. Frozen troughs make for a slow and bumpy ride. Hopefully the snow will fill in to smooth out the ridges. A pass or two with the snow plow should help to even out the road. Brrr, it's down to 7° tonight. We have the stove cranked up and watched a DVD wrapped up in our snuggle sacks. Now that's January in Vermont the way it's meant to be.

January 16, 2007: A nippy 11° this morning. After too many overcast days, it looks as though we might see some sunshine today. We have a fresh base of 4 to 5 inches of snow. Unfortunately it's topped by a layer of freezing rain but that in turn is getting a little fresh powder. I think we can finally get out the snowshoes and enjoy the winter woods. Yesterday it was exercise enough just shoveling and snowblowing.

January 17, 2007: Minus 10°. Now that's winter. A feint ice bow

frames the rising sun. This is the first subzero reading I've seen on our new thermometer. There's a very polite, rather inconspicuous dash that seems to shyly announce that the temperature has dropped below zero. In Vermont we're usually more boastful and boisterous about our weather extremes. We did get out for our first snowshoe of the season yesterday. It was a bit blustery in the open but very pleasant in the protection of the woods. We are laying out a circular path that connects out to the main logging road, climbs the hill and then circles back through our woods. The layers of snow, ice and more snow made for crunchy but sturdy footing. If the sun stays out a bit today, we may give it another go.

January 20, 2007: 11° this blustery morning. Snow continues to fall, and the wind sends it spewing every which way. There's a melodious uproar, whistling down the chimney. Our well-trodden snowshoe path has been wiped clean so we'll need to make a fresh start there. The drive and stairs need to be cleared, but it's a wasted effort until the wind dies down. Five o'clock and it's still light out. Those are the only encouraging words I can conjure up for this dismal day.

January 23, 2007: 32° with the sun partially muted by thin clouds. Today was the first time I could linger a bit while snowshoe-

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Photos By: Jeff Gold

"We did get out for our first snowshoe of the season."

ing. The bitter cold that had kept me moving has abated for now. I learned from an interesting article in "Northern Woodlands" magazine, to be on the lookout for "walkovers," broken-down saplings that twig eaters have bent and broken to browse on the more nutritious upper twig ends. Sure enough I found several, the best example showing bare, polished spots on the trunk where deer or moose had rubbed their antlers. Nearby was a beech tree with claw marks where a bear had sharpened his claws or marked his territory. I got an aerobic workout climbing up the road and a nice cool down returning downhill through the woods. I'm beginning to get the occasional scent of skunk. They usually aren't out mating until February, but these extreme fluctu-

ations in temperature may be throwing off their internal clocks. **January 31, 2007:** I've just returned from a sunny but cool week in Florida; well - cool by Florida standards. While I was experiencing low 40's, Jeff was in the midst of a brutal, subzero cold snap. He remembers at least minus 11° with wind-chill bringing the temperature down further. Every morning saw the minus sign on our thermometer. I braved the Florida "cold" with my wind breaker and headed onto the boardwalk in the Wakadahatchee Wetlands. One stroll was near sundown when birds were gracefully flocking to fill the island trees. I watched a pair of great blue herons mating and nest building. Nearby Anhingas displayed their exquisite emerald green eye ring, which is indicative

of their mating "attire." Throughout my walk, I was surrounded by a symphony of bird sounds as flocks returned to roost for the night. There was a huge wood stork, cranes and of course the common but elegant variety of herons, egrets, ibises and anhingas. I also took a cool (52°) morning walk. Two alligators were high on the mud banks, warming in the full sun. One was a youngster about 6 to 8 feet long, the other seemed huge in comparison. He was at least 1½ to 2 times longer than the "smaller" gator and the same again in width and girth. Turtles were

sunning nearby but not too close. One gator's eyes were closed, but the other's were open, watching the turtles in case one carelessly ventured closer by. The trees were bare except for a few nest sitters. Some newly hatched chicks were stretching their beaks, demanding food from their attending parents who kept rearranging themselves to

keep the chicks warm and protected. Vigilant hawks perched on poles high above and vultures continually soared overhead.

To view an extended version of this month's Journal with additional photos, go to www.jeffgoldgraphics.com and click on "The View from Vermont." ★

Once I had the chance to read with some neighbors Dylan Thomas' *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, and as the clan gathers again I'm drifting into my own child's ...

Years and Years and Years Ago . . .

We took a cutter ride on a crisp white day
When I was a boy on the farm
and bundled up under the buffalo robe.
We were cozy and safe and warm.

The mare was young and frisky,
And her trot was full of spice,
And she sailed along on the narrow lane
'til she stepped on a patch of ice.
And over we went, the horse and the sleigh
and Pa, Ma, Sis and I
All tangled up in the buffalo robe
In a drift with our feet in the sky.

Well I don't remember what happened next,
But then it was fuzzy and warm
At home in the kitchen by the stove,
And the mare was safe in the barn.

Don Tescher

This poem appears in Don Tescher's popular collection, *Without Further Ado*, reprinted and available again. See page 12.



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No Small Potatoes

Vanna Guldenschuh

Skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling and the like all keep us active in the cold and snowy month of January. They are good activities for the body and soul. But, for the cook, nothing is as comforting as spending a day in the kitchen. The warmth of the stove while preparing favorite foods of family and friends is a perfect foil to the blustery weather outside. It's better than a warm fuzzy blanket.

I like to long cook a dish on top of the stove while baking bread or sweets in the oven. The method that works best for this enterprise is braising. It is a simple way to make a complex dish and produces a comfort food that is hard to beat.



Braising Notes:

Braising is a moist cooking process that will tame even the toughest cut of meat. These cuts tend to be less expensive – a bonus for the cook.

Braising is similar to using a crock pot. But, I think the true braising method on top of the stove produces a far superior product. A crock pot tends to steam the food, whereas braising creates a flavor enhancing reduction of the sauce that cannot be duplicated.

Cuts of meat recommended for braising are: Beef - pot roasts, briskets, short ribs, shanks and so forth; Veal and Lamb: shanks, blade roast and shoulders, etc.; Pork: picnics, ribs and hocks; Poultry: legs and thighs of chicken, turkey, duck and pheasant. You can also braise certain vegetables, just remember they take considerable less time. Leeks and endive are two vegetables most commonly braised.

Braised Lamb Shanks

Lamb shanks become tender and develop deep flavors in this dish. Braising allows us to take

this very tough cut and turn it into a culinary masterpiece. If lamb does not appeal to you, use veal or beef shanks. You can follow this same method for many meats.

- 3-4 lamb shanks
- 4 carrots – peeled and finely diced
- 2 medium onions – thinly sliced
- 1 bunch scallions – chopped
- 2 celery ribs – diced
- 3 garlic cloves - chopped
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 quart beef stock (the boxed stock is fine)
- 2 cups red wine
- ¼ cup chopped parsley
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme

Heat the oil in a large skillet. Dredge the shanks in flour, and brown on all sides. Set aside. In a large sauce pan (large enough to hold all the shanks) lightly brown the garlic in the butter. Add the carrots, onions, scallions and celery and cook over medium heat until the vegetable soften. Add the shanks to the pan and pour in 1 cup of the wine and 1 to 2 cups of the broth. The liquid should not cover all the ingredients (like in a soup) but provide a moist atmosphere that will cook the shanks and not dry out too quickly. Add the parsley and thyme and cover. Cook over low to medium heat for about 2½ hours. You will want to check the contents every 15 minutes or so to make sure there is enough liquid in the pan. You want this liquid to reduce, but not stick to the bottom of the pan. When it starts to get low – add the remaining wine and as much broth as you need.

It is done when the meat is falling off the bone and all the flavors have melded together to make a rich sauce.

I like to take about half the sauce and puree it in the food processor or use an immersion mixer to puree it right in the pan. It makes the sauce nice and thick without having to add any binding agent. Serve over rice or polenta or with that bread you were baking while tending to the braised meat. For a very hearty January meal cook some barley in broth and serve it with this dish.



Braised Pheasant with Champagne

This dish sounds as elegant as “Pheasant under Glass” and is certainly every bit as delicious. It is also very good made with rabbit. The faint hint of the wild in these meats is a perfect match for Champagne. Use the best Champagne you can afford for this dish or – there are some Spanish sparkling wines (from Cava) that are very good in this dish.

- 1-2 pheasant cut into pieces
- 1 quart chicken stock (homemade is best, but the boxed is fine)
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- ¼ cup fresh parsley – chopped
- 6 scallions - chopped
- 2 onions – thinly sliced and chopped
- 6 tablespoons butter
- 1 bottle “Champagne”
- Salt and pepper to taste

Melt two tablespoons of the butter in a large sauté pan. Dredge the pheasant in flour and brown on all sides. Set aside. In a large sauce pan, cook the onions and scallions in the rest of the butter until soft. Add the thyme, parsley and the pheasant to the sauce pan, and pour in 2 cups of champagne and two cups of broth. Let simmer on the stove-

top for about 1½ hours checking occasionally for a proper level of liquid. If it is low just add a little of each (Champagne and broth) to the pot. Just before it is done adjust for salt and pepper. If the sauce is not thickened enough - reduce it on the stovetop in a separate pan. Pour back on top of the pheasant.

Before service sprinkle with a little chopped parsley, and serve with a seasonal vegetable and baked sweet potatoes.

Braised Endive

This is truly a French dish, and it goes well with many dishes including the two braised meats above.

- 8 medium whole endive
- 3 tablespoons of butter
- ¼ cup chicken stock or water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- ½ lemon fresh squeezed lemon juice
- pepper

Slice off ¼ inch off the ends of the endive and cut up into the core a bit. Make sure you keep the endive whole. In a deep sided sauté pan melt the butter and sauté the endive until lightly browned. Put the rest of ingredients on top of the endive, cover and cook for about 20 minutes. The endive will be soft to the touch.

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Letters from the Past

When writing was a necessity and an art

Lynn A Bonfield



More than 200 men from Caledonia County rushed to California after gold was found at Sutter's Mill in 1848. Danville men hoping to gain their "pile," as gold fortunes were labeled, included John K. Batchelder, Ira Hill, Orin and Steven Langmaid, Joel Sanborn and Isaac and James Stanton. One group left Danville in the spring of 1852, went to New York, boarded a clipper ship and sailed around Cape Horn.

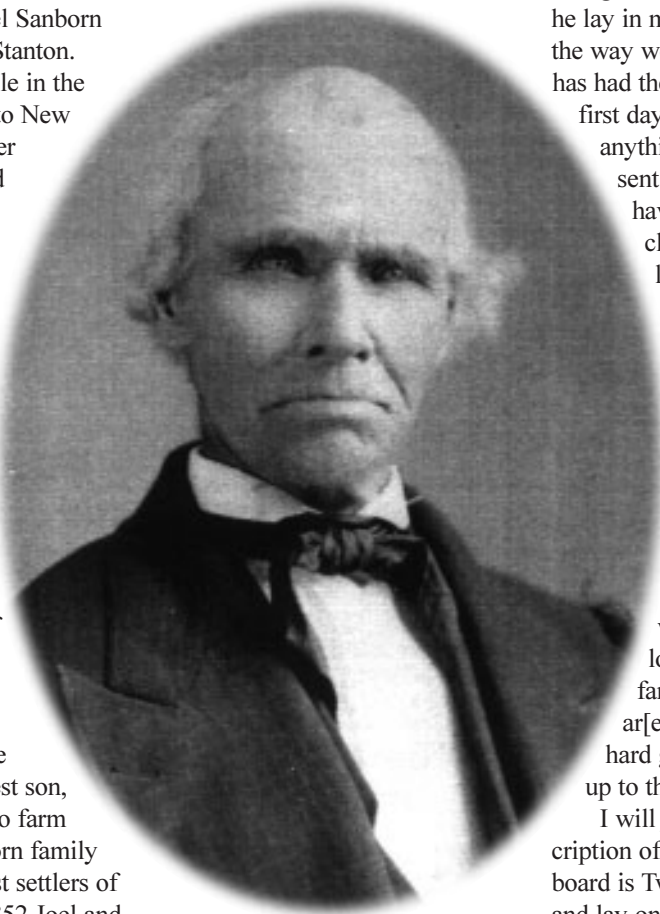
Fortunately, the Sanborn family preserved more than a half dozen letters penned by Joel R. Sanborn (1806-1818) to his family in North Danville, and especially to his wife, Charlotte Haviland (1809-1892), of more than 20 years. Joel, one of the oldest miners at 46, left his wife pregnant with their eighth child. For \$150 for the year, he hired his oldest son, Warren (born 1833), to farm their land. The Sanborn family was among the earliest settlers of North Danville. In 1852 Joel and Charlotte felt the California gold mines presented a possible opportunity for advancement. Charlotte especially reminded her husband of their "mutual desire" for a large home and easier life.

The Danville company arrived in San Francisco on December 6, 1852, and three weeks later, Joel wrote the following letter home. In all his letters, Joel reported on his health - often poor - and his desire to return to Vermont. Once he admitted: "I never knew how to prize home and friends till I came to this Country."

He often asked for news about his North Danville farm - had they hay enough, had they killed the old mare and how much sugar had they made. Before Joel left Vermont, Charlotte wrote in his Bible: "When this you see, remember me," and he wrote of finding her note "with pleasure" and how he had "read it over and over."

By October 1853 Joel's health had improved, and he took a job chopping wood at \$2.50 a cord. By December he had made \$380 at the same business. Finally in spring 1854, he returned home with gifts for his wife and children, and "some raw gold to have made into things at home."

There is no record as how Joel struck it rich, whether in the mines or by working steadily at good paying jobs. Not finding banks reliable in Vermont, he kept his money hidden, and thus the town listers, did not know



myself, Stephen Langmaid and James Stanton took the stage and gave Sixteen Dollars for our ride each

I spent all my money and borrowed twenty five Dollars I have just earned enough to pay my borrowed money that I earned in seven days I was sick about ten days on the boat and about as long after I landed but my health is now verry good Steven is on the gaine but verry home sick Steven got verry sick riding on the stage part the way he lay in my lap and the rest of the way we held him up John K has had the chills to day is the first day that he has don[e] anything this day I was sent out prospecting I have not taken any claim yet and labor is hard to be found at present but we hope for better times it has rained every day for a fortnight the weather now looks tolerably fare but the roads ar[e] verry bad and hard getting provisions up to the mines

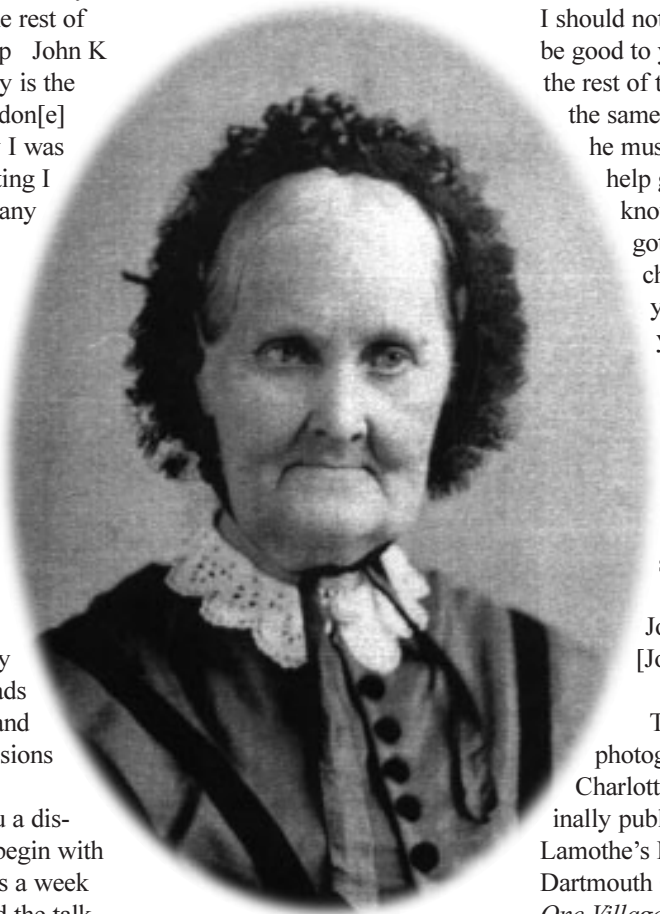
I will just give you a discription of produce to begin with board is Twelve Dollars a week and lay on the flore and the talk is it will be Sixteen Dollars a week flour is one hundred Dollars a barrel pork fifty cts a pound corn meal 35 cts beans 30 cts potatoes 25 cts a pound or fifteen Dollars a bushel butter one dollar a pound sugar 25 cts & molasses three Dollars a gallon, dried apple 30 cts beef 25 cts eggs three Dollars a dozen and all provisions are hard to be got at that but I am not discouraged yet although if I had known half as much as my wife I never should showd my head in California mother, if I thought you would be willing, I should come home as s[o]on as I got money enough I tell you I have seen hard times tell Warren [son] to be thankful that he did not come if he had he would [have] starved to death I may come home in the spring and I may stay till a year from april I may bring back as much money

what to tax him. Today's letter readers do not know the extent of his "pile." A descendant said that after the Civil War, Joel bought the largest house in North Danville, still owned by the family 140 years later. It is not surprising that Joel's health was never good after California, and for the rest of his life he suffered stomach complaints.

December 27 1852
Woods Diggings Calif.
Dear wife I now take this opportunity to write a few lines to you and let you know where I am and what my condition is which I suppose you are anxious to know I landed in Sanfransisco December the 6th my health was verry poor we came about sixty miles to the Diggings three of our Danville boys wa[s] not able to walk

as I brought away and I may not tell brother Jonathan not to think of coming to California untill he hears from me I shall write to him the next steamer Direct your letter to Woods Crossings, California

it looks verry dark now but I may do well yet Charlotte you must not be discouraged for I shall do the best I can if I dont get money here I can get a living at home and if I wa[s] to home now with my wife and children I



cramp in my legs enough to kill Seventeen Devils it has snowd four days here and the ground freezes hard but never mind mother, I am not dead yet Charlotte you said you would not write a word to me but I want you to write me as s[o]on as you get this and have all the children write alittle and tell Gowson [Stutson?] West he must write a few lines you must, you must write all the news and how you get along I want to know if you have named our baby Warren, if I should not live to come home be good to your mother and all the rest of the children must do the same tell Gardner [son] he must be a good boy and help get a living I want to know if Gardners hip has got well I say again children be kind to your mother I know your mother will be kind to you Charlotte except this from your affectionate husband and children from your father, please write soon.
tell brother Jonathan he must write.
[Joel R Sanborn]

This letter and these photographs, of Joel and Charlotte Sanborn, were originally published in Gerard W. Lamothe's MA Thesis, Dartmouth College, May 2002, *One Village-Two Centuries - Several Families: An Oral and Documentary History of North Danville*. The editor thanks him. Letters in this series are printed with no corrections to spelling, punctuation, or capitalization. Eclipse indicate words missing and brackets indicate information added by the editor.

should be contented and happy often I think of the good meals and good lodging I have at home
When here I have hard work in the mine lay down in the wet on the hard flore with nothing but a few of blankets over me and lay cold all night and have the

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Click & Clack Talk Cars

Car Recommendations for Older Folks

Dear Tom and Ray:

I will be 77-years old soon and would like your opinion as to which of the following automobiles you would recommend for someone like me. I love driving, and I drive a stick shift to this very day. For the past eight years, I have driven a Honda Accord coupe. The practical side of me tells me to get a new Honda Civic, while the less-practical side argues for a Mini Cooper, a car that has great appeal to me aesthetically. Incidentally, before I bought the Honda, I drove a Toyota Celica, which I loved. Your input will be much appreciated. Are there cars you would especially recommend for older drivers?

- Isaac

TOM: Well, there are certain things we do look for when recommending a car for an older

driver in addition to making sure the blinker-cancel switch is robust.

RAY: No. 1 is modest size. When you were a young whipper-snapper, you might have been able to navigate a 30-foot-long Chrysler Imperial and bring it into dock without smashing up cars around it. But that ability diminishes with time. So we generally recommend that older drivers step down a size or two.

TOM: Smaller cars tend to be easier to maneuver and park. And while some older folks resist smaller cars at first, it's been our experience that they come to appreciate the certainty of knowing where the car begins and ends. And they like having to make fewer apologies for taking out mailboxes and tulip beds.

RAY: We also look for good visibility. In general, visibility has gotten worse during the past

10 years. Car styling has veered toward rising belt lines and high trunks.

TOM: That's automotive styling, Isaac, not whether your personal belt line is up around your chest.

RAY: A lot of modern cars are harder to see out of, particularly out the back and out the sides toward the back. So that's something to consider.

TOM: Then we look for comfort. Not in terms of DVD players and electric butt-scratchers, but we want an older driver to feel comfortable behind the wheel. Because a person who is comfortable driving his or her car (a comfortable seating position, familiarity with the controls) is a better, safer driver.

RAY: There are other specific needs people might have, like ease of entry and exit, and large, readable instrumentation. But appropriate size, visibility and driver comfort and confidence are at the top of our list.

TOM: And while the Honda Civic meets all of those criteria, we think you should go out today and get the Mini Cooper, Isaac.

RAY: Absolutely. We've just been test-driving a new Mini, and it's got great visibility, it is fun to drive, it's easy to get in and out of, it doesn't feel small inside, and you can fit into half a parking space when you're late for bingo and the parking lot is already crowded.

TOM: And if you're itching to get one, what are you waiting

for? Your roaring 80s? If the majority of your driving is around town, and you don't have to schlep lots of kids or passengers, the Mini is the perfect car for you, Isaac.

RAY: I agree. You deserve it, Isaac, don't you? Live it up! And be sure to get a loaded one with racing stripes on the hood. The 80-year-old gals at my brother's nursing home really love the stripes.

Muffler Warranties Aren't Worth It

Dear Tom and Ray:

I have a 1986 Volvo 740 GLE wagon. I had the exhaust system replaced from the catalytic converter two years ago, at a cost of almost \$500. Last week, I took it in to have the timing belt changed, and when I picked it up, it sounded like a hot rod. When I complained, they showed me the rusted-out exhaust system and said it would need to be replaced again. What would cause it to rust through so fast? I drive the car almost every day and park it in the street, so it is exposed to the range of New England weather. Is getting a warranty worth it? Thanks so much.

- Jake

RAY: Well, it's not unusual for after-market, replacement exhaust systems to last about two years. Especially in areas of the country where they're exposed to rain, snow and salt.

TOM: Particularly if the car makes a lot of short trips. On short drives, the exhaust system never heats up enough to vaporize the moisture that's produced by the engine. So the moisture just sits there and turns your exhaust system to rust.

RAY: There's really nothing the mechanic could have done while replacing your timing belt that could have damaged the exhaust system. Not unless he was rushing to the coffee truck, took a shortcut under your car and whacked his head on the thing while moving at full speed.

TOM: A warranty is fine. But understand that most warranties cover just the muffler (or in the case of some cars, like yours, the mufflers). So, the next time your exhaust system fails, if you're even lucky enough to (A) still have the car, (B) remember that you got a warranty, and (C) remember where you put the paperwork, you'll still have to pay for the gaskets and connectors, as well as all of the labor.

RAY: Muffler warranties typically are more marketing



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Danville Senior Meal Site

January Meal Schedule

January 1 - NO MEAL:
New Year's Day.

January 3 - Clam Chowder with Saltines, Macaroni & Cheese, Spinach Salad with Mandarin Orange and Red Peppers, Tomato Juice.

January 8 - Seafood Newburg, Brown Rice, Broccoli and Carrots, Biscuits, Pears.

January 10 - Chicken Divan, Rice, Whole Wheat Rolls, Carrots, Clementines.

January 15 - Shepherd's Pie, Whole Wheat Rolls, Peas & Carrots, Orange Juice, Bread Pudding.

January 17 - Breakfast for Lunch: Veggie Omelets, Bacon, Toast, Blueberry Muffins, Orange Juice, Fruit Cocktail.

January 22 - Meat Loaf with Tomatoes and Peppers, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Broccoli, Whole Wheat Rolls, Oatmeal Cookies.

January 24 - Pot Roast, Potatoes, Carrots, Whole Wheat Rolls, Tomato Juice, Fruit Cobbler.

January 29 - Homemade Pizza with Vegetables and Pepperoni, Clementines, Apple Crisp.

January 31 - Kielbasa with Peppers and Onions on a Bun, Greek Salad with Feta Cheese and Black Olives, Orange Juice.

Meals at Danville Methodist Church. All meals served with beverage, homemade breads and desserts. Reservations are appreciated by calling (802) 684-3903 before 9:30 a.m. on day of the meal. A donation of \$3.00 for guests 60+ (Others \$4.00) is appreciated.

devices than consumer-protection devices. But if they give it to you for free - which most places do -put it in your glove compartment, try to remember that you have it and hope that it saves you a few bucks off your exhaust bill in two years.

Not a Lot of Choices When Parts Run Out

Dear Tom and Ray:

I purchased a Nissan Sentra GXE brand new in 1999. The reason I chose Nissan was its reputation for reliability. At 120,000 miles, the "service engine" light came on, and I took it to the dealer. He found that the metal fuel-filler tube was corroding and leaking fumes. But here's the rub: The dealership said Nissan doesn't make the part anymore, and they could neither fabricate it nor find the part anywhere else. They said, "Sorry, we can't fix it, these things sometimes happen," and he sent me on my way. I questioned whether the car was safe to drive, and they said yes. Is this true? And why did Nissan stop making parts on a car that's only eight years old? I suppose I could have some shop look into it, but I don't want to spend \$1,500 on a car that's worth only \$3,000. What can you suggest? By the way, I will never recommend a Nissan. I should have gone with a Dodge. At least I would still be able to get parts for it when it

breaks. - Lorna

TOM: That would frost my shorts, too, Lorna. We checked with Nissan, and, after some hemming and hawing, they confirmed that they no longer make the part. And they had no explanation for why they stopped making it. One has to assume it was a business decision. But it's not a very nice one.

RAY: You can check with your state's consumer-protection agency, but there are no federal laws that require a manufacturer to provide parts for any length of time. Most companies just do it because it's good for business - especially repeat business.

TOM: You could understand if they stopped making cosmetic parts once the car got old. If you couldn't get a piece of side body molding, or a latch for your glove-box door, it's no big deal. But this part, which connects the fuel filler to the gas tank, is crucial to the operation of the car. And no, it's not a good idea to drive around with gas fumes seeping out. It's not good for your health, or for the health of the environment.

RAY: In fact, there's no way you'll pass an emissions inspection like that in any state that requires one.

TOM: Your best bet is a junkyard. Oops, pardon me. I mean an "auto recycling center." It may be hard to find a good used one, because if your fuel-filler hose is rusting, so is everyone else's. But your local junkyard can "put it on the wire," and see if any other junkyards (oops) have one. Maybe they'll find you one in a region of the country where rust isn't as much of an issue.

RAY: If that doesn't work, you have two choices. One is to pay someone to fabricate a part for you or repair the one you've got. I doubt that'll cost you \$1,500, but it will involve some labor.

TOM: And if that doesn't pan out, then you're down to frozen-orange-juice cans, Lorna. I've got a collection of those

from the exhaust system on my '74 Chevy, if you need any. Good luck.

Short Drives Are Tough on the Car in the Winter

Dear Tom and Ray:

My car-knowledge-challenged son lives in North Conway, New Hampshire. His job is about 300-yards from his apartment. Instead of walking, he starts his car every day and drives the three minutes to work. I told him that this is bad for his new Subaru Impreza. He was not impressed. He insists that it is better to start the car every day than to let it sit in the cold weather. Please help me educate this ingrate who does not appreciate his father's vast knowledge.

- Barney

TOM: I feel your pain, Barney. Sure, it's not good for a car to drive 300 yards a day, or even 600 yards, if you count the round trip. When you do that, several things happen.

RAY: First, the car runs inefficiently until it's fully warmed up. When it's warming up, extra gasoline is being sent into the cylinders. But not all of that gas gets combusted. So some of it sneaks down past the rings and dilutes the oil.

TOM: Gasoline is not as good a lubricant as oil. Trust me. I've tried it in my brother's car.

RAY: The other problem is that the exhaust is full of moisture. Actually, it's always full of moisture. But it's only when the exhaust system reaches its full operating temperature that the system can evaporate that moisture and expel it. When you drive just 300 yards, the moisture just sits there and leads to premature rusting of the muffler and exhaust pipes.

TOM: While he can help the engine a little bit by driving it more extensively on weekends and getting everything up to full operating temperature to expel the moisture and gasoline from

the crankcase, he can't reverse the damage he'll be doing all week. So there's no question that the car won't last as long, and will cost him more to maintain, if he drives it very short distances every day. And conversely, there's absolutely no harm in letting it sit during the week.

RAY: Of course, cars exist for our pleasure and convenience. And if he wants to use the car that way, and wants to spend

the money on more-frequent oil changes and exhaust systems, that's his prerogative, isn't it, Barney? It certainly keeps people like us in business.

TOM: But if he is concerned about the cost and the longevity of the car, then you're right. He should walk. Plus, it's healthier. Remind him it's better for HIS crankcase and exhaust system, too! ✦

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West Barnet Senior Action Center

January 2008

- January 2** - Sweet & Sour Chicken on Rice, Broccoli with Sauce, Green Beans, Wheat Bread, Orange Jell-O with Pineapple.
- January 4** - Buffet
- January 9** - Beef Stew, Tossed Salad, Biscuit, Cake with Topping.
- January 11** - Spaghetti with Meatballs, Tossed Salad, Garlic Bread, Vanilla Pudding with Oranges.
- January 16** - Baked Fish, Mashed Potatoes, Mixed Vegetables, Assorted Breads, Lemon Jell-O.
- January 18** - Liver & Onions, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Dark Bread, Peaches.
- January 23** - Barbecued Chicken Legs, Mashed Potatoes, Sauerkraut Salad, Dark Breads, Tropical Fruit Salad,.
- January 25** - Tuna Noodle Casserole, Sliced Beets, Assorted Breads, Chocolate Pudding.
- January 30** - Hot Hamburg Sandwich, Oven Fried Potatoes, Spinach, Ice Cream.

Meals served at West Barnet Church. All meals served with a beverage. Reservations not required. Suggested donation of \$3.00 per meal is appreciated. Phone (802) 633-4068.

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AROUND THE TOWNS



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- Daily** - Northeast Kingdom Artisans' Guild Backroom Gallery, Artisan's Guild, St. Johnsbury.
- Mondays** - Story Time, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum Youth Library, 10:30 a.m. (802) 748-8291.
- Mondays** - Story Time, Pope Library, Danville, 10 a.m. (802) 684-2256.
- Mondays** - Just Parents meet with concerns for drugs and kids, Parent Child Center, St. Johnsbury, 7 p.m. (802) 748-6040.
- 1st & 3rd Mondays** - "Six O'Clock Prompt," Writers' Support Group, 6 p.m. St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. (802) 633-2617.
- 2nd Monday** - Cancer Support Group, NVRH Conference Room A, 4 p.m. (802) 748-8116.
- Last Monday** - Alzheimer's Support Group, Caledonia Home Health, Sherman Drive, St. Johnsbury. 7 p.m. (802) 748-8116.
- Tuesdays** - Baby & Toddler Story Hour, Cobleigh Library, Lyndonville. 10 a.m. (802) 626-5475.
- Tuesdays** - Cribbage Tournaments, 6 p.m. Lake View Grange Hall, West Barnet. (802) 684-3386.
- 2nd & 4th Tuesday** - Bereavement Support Group, Caledonia Home Health, Sherman Drive, St. Johnsbury. 5:30 p.m. (802) 748-8116.
- Wednesdays** - Preschool Story Hour, Cobleigh Library, Lyndonville. 10 a.m. (802) 626-5475.
- Wednesdays** - Bridge and Cribbage games, 12:30 p.m., Good Living Senior Center, St. Johnsbury House. (802) 748-8470.
- Wednesdays** - Read 'n' Stuff, Cobleigh Library, Lyndonville. 3:30 p.m. (802) 626-5475.
- 3rd Wednesday** - Cardiac Support Group, NVRH, 6:30 p.m. (802) 748-7401.
- Thursdays** - Introduction to Computers, Cobleigh Library, Lyndonville. 10 a.m. (802) 626-5475.
- 3rd Thursday** - Caregivers Support Group, Riverside Life

Enrichment Center, 10 a.m. (802) 626-3900.

- Thursdays** - Read and Weed Book Club, Cobleigh Library, Lyndonville. 3:30 p.m. (802) 626-5475.
- Fridays** - Friday Tea Room, North Danville Baptist Church, 2-4 p.m. (802) 748-4096.
- Saturday & Sunday** - Planetarium Show 1:30 p.m. Fairbanks Museum, St. Johnsbury. (802) 748-2372.
- Saturdays** - Bridge Club for all experience levels, Cobleigh Library, Lyndonville, 12:30 p.m. (802) 626-5475.
- 3rd Saturday** - Breast Cancer Support Group, Caledonia Home Health, Sherman Drive, St. Johnsbury, 10 a.m. (802) 748-8116.

January

- NEK Audubon Christmas Bird Count, Call Call Charlie Browne at (802) 748-2372.
- "Gertrude Stein and 27 Rue de Fleurus" with Barbara Will, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, 7 p.m. (802) 748-8291.
- "Queen Elizabeth I: Woman Monarch in a Man's World" with Joanne Craig, Goodrich Memorial Library, Newport, 7 p.m. (802) 334-7902.
- Men's Ecumenical Breakfast, Methodist Church, Danville, 7 a.m. (802) 684-3666.
- Scrabble Club, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, Noon - 4 p.m. (802) 748-8291.
- Seated Tap Dance Classes begin at 10:30 a.m., Good Living Senior Center, St. Johnsbury House. Tap shoes and experience not required. (802) 748-8470.
- Book Discussion, Joseph Ellis' American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson, Dailey Memorial Library, Derby, 10:30 a.m. (802) 766-5063.
- NEK Audubon information and planning meeting, 4:30 p.m. Fairbanks Museum.
- Nuclear Weapons Today and Tomorrow with John Downs, 7 p.m. North Congregational Church, St. Johnsbury. (802) 748-3663.
- North Danville Community Club, Meeting, 6 p.m. North Danville Community Center. (802) 748-9415.
- Book Discussion, Doris Kearns Goodwin's *No Ordinary Time*: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt on the Homefront in World War II, Walden Community Library, 7 p.m. (802) 503-2630.
- A Writing Workshop led by Reeve Lindbergh begins at Good Living Senior Center at 1:30 p.m. (802) 748-8470.
- Film discussion following 7 p.m. film at Catamount Arts, St. Johnsbury. (802) 748-8813.
- Quilting for Warmth & Beauty, 10 a.m. - Noon. VT History Museum, Montpelier. (802) 828-2180.
- Northeast Kingdom Audubon bald eagle survey. Call Charlie Browne for information. (802) 748-2372.
- Book Discussion, John Berger's *G*, Barton Public Library, 7 p.m. (802) 525-6524.
- NEK Audubon trip to the Champlain Valley. Meet in West Danville park at intersection of US 2 and VT 15, 7 a.m. (802) 626-9071.

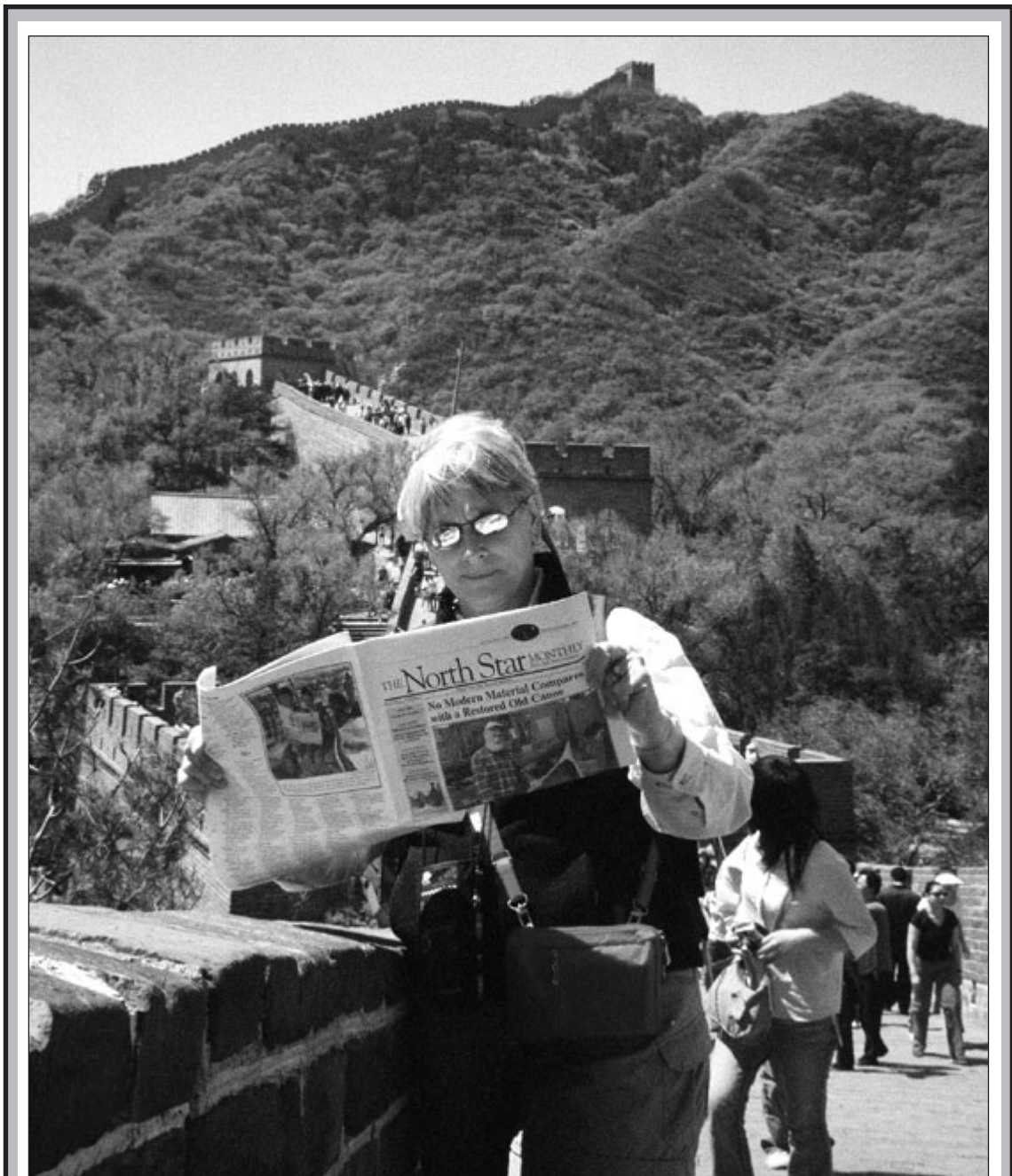


Photo By: Tom Ziobrowski

In May 2007 Beth Williams and Tom Ziobrowski visited the "Great Wall" of China in Badaling outside Beijing. The "Wall" is a series of stone and earthen fortifications built, rebuilt and maintained between the 5th century BC and the 16th century to protect the northern borders of the Chinese Empire. Several walls, referred to as the Great Wall of China, were constructed. The most famous is the that built between 220 BC and 200 BC by Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of China. Most of the ancient walls, constructed by stamping earth and gravel between board frames, have eroded, and very few sections remain. The current wall was built during the Ming Dynasty. Unlike earlier walls it was stronger and more elaborate as a result of its construction with brick and stone. At its peak the Ming Wall was guarded by more than 1 million men to defend against Mongol raids from the north. Today tourists are brought to the "Wall" to celebrate the history of China.

- Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt on the Homefront in World War II, Walden Community Library, 7 p.m. (802) 503-2630.
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- See also the Arts Around the Towns Calendar Page 14.

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