

WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2

WINDHAM, VERMONT

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2005

Your tax dollars buy smooth ride

by Edith Serke

Were you as pleasantly surprised as I was to see the resurfacing work done on Windham Hill Road and Route 121? Who can forget the crazy roller-coaster ride this past winter and early spring? It started earlier than the usual "frost heaves" which we had become accustomed to and were more severe and harder on our vehicles than usual.

Resurfacing Windham's two main roads required 2,836 tons of paving material and will cost the town \$136,469. The bill has yet to be received for the fresh lines painted on Route 121, Windham Hill Road, Horsenail Hill Road and White Road.

These lines are a great help on dark, foggy nights. It would also be nice if the town of Townshend painted their portion of Windham Hill Road.

At press time, repair of ditches alongside the roads is not completed. This work involves digging and adding gravel. Let's hope the road crew and contractors have cooler weather for the remainder of this project, as it was rather difficult to do the resurfacing in that awful hot spell we had in July.

Now that the road is so nice and smooth, the temptation to drive a little faster is hard to resist. Please remember that the speed limit is 40



miles per hour, and watch out for children, walkers, and joggers. By slowing down, you can better enjoy the lovely Windham scenery.

Broadband more likely for all of Windham

by Mary McCoy

Progress has been made in efforts to provide broadband internet access to Windham residents who do not have it. Some 30 people responded to the survey in the last issue of the *News and Notes*, saying they wanted a faster web connection. That was enough to bring

support from the Vermont Rural Broadband Project (VRBP).

On July 28, residents met with Al and Laura Duey, consultants for VRBP who live in the Northeast Kingdom. They told us about several options for possible connections, based upon their experiences helping other towns with poor internet service. Wireless seems the way to go, and the Dueys offered to contact internet vendors to see who might serve us.

In order to attract vendors, we need enough households interested in paying for a fast connection. The Dueys said 30 was too few to spark the interest of vendors. So we reached out to increase our numbers. Various people who had returned the surveys contacted others who might be interested. People were encouraged to sign up on our website which the

Duey's, with support from VRBP, had set up: www.windhambroadband.org.

At last count, we had nearly 70 people interested. If you have not signed up and would like fast net access, please visit the site and register as soon as possible. It does not commit you as a subscriber; it just means you might be interested. If you have signed up and want more information, you might find it on the website.

We are also planning to apply to the State of Vermont for funding to help defray some of the costs to set up our new service, such as putting up transmitters, relay connectors, and receivers. The Dueys are also helping us with this, and Lydia Pope France will prepare the proposal.

It looks like all of us in Windham just might at last be headed for the internet superhighway!

State orders reappraisal

by Bill Koutrakos

When the tax bills were sent in August, there was a short notice indicating that there might be a reappraisal/reassessment of all properties located in the Town of Windham. Since that time the state has ordered Windham to do so. Therefore, all properties will be reappraised based on their circumstances as of April 1, 2006.

Do you need a ride?

by Beverly Scott

The Connecticut River Transit, Inc. (CRT) provides inexpensive transportation via bus or car for a variety of needs, including medical, employment, job interviews, and shopping. This article offers basic information on how to tap the Transit's resources and urges you to utilize them.

Transportation is available for Windham residents for medical purposes. Door-to-door, round-trip transportation can take you to Keene or Lebanon, New Hampshire, or Greenfield, Massachusetts, for example. To qualify, you must be 60 years of age or older or any age if you are disabled, require dialysis, or have any Medicaid appointment and do not have a car. Contact Linda or Michele at 802-885-5162 or 888-869-6287 to learn more about eligibility requirements and to make arrangements.

Commuter bus service is also possible for any purpose, with the

departure location closest to Windham being Springfield. Round-trip bus service includes: Route 51 – Springfield, Windsor, Ascutney, Hanover and Lebanon; Route 55 – Springfield and Bellows Falls; and Route 53 – Bellows Falls and Brattleboro. White River Junction will be added to Route 51 later this year.

Routes 51 and 53 run on a time table, available by calling CRT or on line at www.CRTransit.org. Buses on Route 55 leave between 5:30 and 8:30 AM and return between 3:00 and 6:00 PM, with riders added by calling CRT.

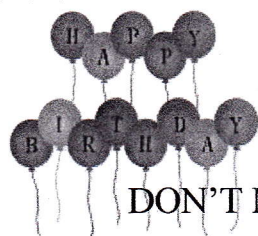
The suggested donation for one-way trips ranges from \$1.25 to \$3.00 per passenger, depending upon distance. No one will be refused a ride if unable to pay the fare donation.

At this time, no regular CRT transportation comes or goes from Windham. However, CRT is looking for volunteer drivers who will use their

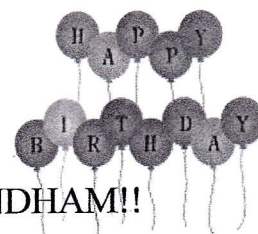
own vehicles to provide rides for Windham residents. Drivers will be reimbursed 40 ½ cents per mile. Orientation and training are provided.

If Windham obtains volunteer drivers, door-to-door service will be offered; for example, to transport passengers to and from Springfield to work there or to take a bus elsewhere. Volunteer drivers do not schedule passengers – the CRT staff does that. CRT can also assist Windham residents in setting up a car pool.

For special purposes, bus transportation can be arranged for groups from Windham. Any group wishing to travel during regular business hours for shopping, attending flower shows, sight-seeing, etc. can obtain CRT transport service. A local coordinator of the group must plan the trip and contact CRT staff to make arrangements. Call CRT at 802-885-5162 or 888-869-6287.



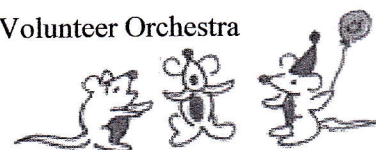
Windham Congregational Church's 200th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION



DON'T MISS THE BIRTHDAY BASH OF THE YEAR IN WINDHAM!!

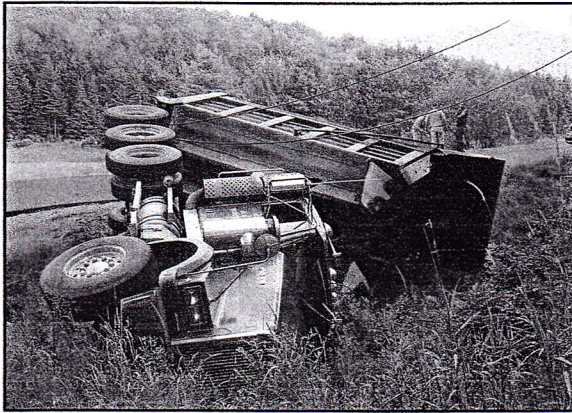
Join us for three Sundays of worship services at 9:00 AM
and/or the party at about 10:30 AM on September 11.

	<u>Former Pastors</u>	<u>Music</u>
Sept. 11	Rev. Maggie Lewis	Maggie Newton, Allison Schantz, Nancy Dyke (cello, clarinet, piano) Windham Mountain Top Volunteer Orchestra
Sept. 18	Rev. Vern Stanley	Erik Borgen, harpist
Sept. 25	Rev. William Salt	To be determined
also:		
Sept. 4-18	Art Exhibit, featuring Ed Brown, Donna Koutrakos, Steve Maurath, Stephen Lowy	



Toppled truck causes power outage

by Imme Maurath



If you were wondering why you lost telephone and cable for several hours in July, here is the culprit. While asphaltting Windham Hill Road, the dump truck driver started driving away before the dump body was down. The truck caught major lines and fell in the gully on its side. The driver was a little shaken but fine. A wrecker had to be called in from NH.

Burning trash can cause problems

by Marcia Clinton

Many Vermonters illegally burn household trash in their backyards. It has been estimated that Vermont households burn some 14,000 tons of trash annually in a practice often called "backyard burning" or "open burning." Trash burning is also done in woodstoves, fireplaces, outdoor boilers, and open pits.

In Vermont, it is illegal to burn trash, junk, construction waste, tires, rubber, plastic, waste oil, asphalt materials, pressure treated wood, or other similar materials. Campfires using untreated wood, outdoor barbecues, leaf and brush fires, and natural wood bonfires are allowed with permission from the local fire warden or where there is snow on the site.

Although burning garbage has never been a healthy thing to do, refuse in years past contained mainly wood, paper and glass. Today, many products are made of plastic or other synthetic materials. When burned without controls, 7 to 9% of this refuse ends up as air pollution that can cause

serious health problems and damage the environment.

Household burn barrels, fire pits, wood stoves or similar devices create low-temperature fires, receiving very little oxygen and producing a lot of smoke. These conditions release various toxic chemicals into the air close to the ground where they are easily inhaled. In contrast, modern refuse incinerators have tall stacks, combustion chambers, and cleaning systems that serve to minimize the impact of emissions associated with combustion.

Studies done by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have shown that backyard burning of household waste is one of the largest known sources of dioxin in the U.S.

It becomes the responsibility of every Vermonter to be aware that trash burning is not only illegal but can be a serious health hazard. If there are any questions, please contact Marcia Clinton, town health officer, or Clarence Merritt, town fire warden.



WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

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Send to address below.

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Bev Carmichael
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Mary McCoy
Imme Maurath
Edith Serke
Margaret Woodruff

Acknowledgments

Thanks to all who provided articles – their names are noted with their submissions.

Thanks also to our advertisers.
Additional ads are welcomed.

Submissions

Windham News & Notes
welcomes submissions.

Send articles and signed "letters to the editors" of around 300 words to the address below.
We prefer emailed submissions.

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October 14, 2005

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802-874-4874
wnandn@vermontel.net

If the spirit of liberty should vanish in other parts of the Union and support of our institutions should languish, it could all be replenished from the generous store held by the people of this brave little state of Vermont.

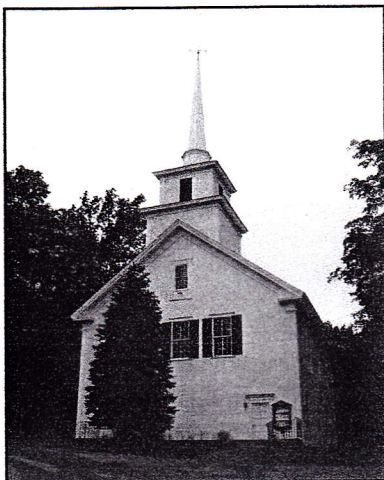
– President Calvin Coolidge

Friends preserve Windham Meeting House

by Ernie Friedli

At the high point of land on Windham Hill Road stands a white towered building with a belfry. It celebrated its 200th birthday in 2002, after having undergone extensive restoration, repairs, and alterations. Known as the Windham Meeting House, it is the home of the Congregational Church, the annual town meeting, town library, children's camp programs, community barbecues, square dances, exercise programs, and many others activities.

Twenty-five years ago, however, the building was in disrepair with a crumbling foundation, windows that wouldn't open, cracks in the walls, etc. In 1980, Sherwood Mercer, a summer resident and associate member of the Church, recommended that an inspection be conducted to identify the needs of the building and an organization be established to



raise funds to accomplish the necessary work.

Over \$200,000 has been provided from a variety of sources. A letter was sent to all property owners, resulting in many generous contributions. Grants were received from the state, the Windham Foundation, and the Freeman Foundation. Fund-raising events were held, and the Windham Community Organization pitched in. An anonymous donor gave a house which brought in \$75,000.

With these funds, changes were made, including a new foundation, sills, exterior siding, window and roof repairs, paint, ceiling and wall repairs, updated electrical wiring, plumbing, heat, running water, and countless other improvements. The work continues with a new exterior sign soon to identify the site as "The Windham Meeting House" with associated information.

"The Friends" is the organization that makes these changes possible. Any and all residents of Windham who share an interest in managing the needs of the building are invited to join and participate. The officers are Peter Newton, president, Helen George, treasurer; and Ernie Friedli, secretary. Meetings are few and concentrate on identifying projects and directing selected activities.

Please join us at the next meeting, scheduled for September 13, 2005 at the Meeting House at 7:00 PM.

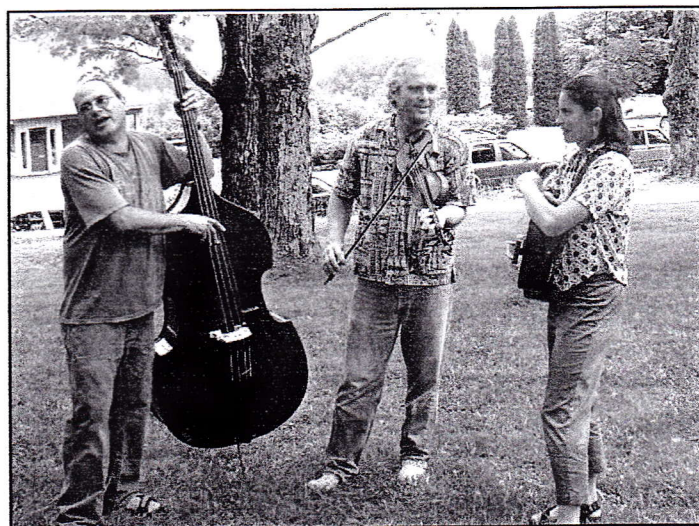
WCO's Chicken BBQ again a great success!

by Nancy Dyke

Once again this year, the rain was held at bay by positive thinkers in the community, so that all could enjoy the annual Chicken Barbeque dinner on July 16. The event is sponsored annually by the Windham Community Organization, which assists needy individuals and families in Windham.

Approximately \$850 was raised for that purpose by the dinner and another \$700 by the raffle. The grand prize, a covered bridge painting by Steve Maurath, was won by a lucky Ann Garrett. One hundred and fifty guests were served, as well as 20 workers.

Thank you to all who attended and contributed to the effort and to everyone who helped in any way – by cooking, serving, setting up and taking down, cleaning up, parking cars, and taking tickets. Special appreciation is extended to Walter Woodruff for once again cooking the chicken to perfection and to Colin Blazej and Peter and Diane Newton (shown here left to right) for providing the music.



Country Living Sales and Service

Trimmer - Chainsaw - Mower - Tractor - Snowmobiles

Roy "Coby" Coburn

424 Abbott Rd., Windham, VT - 802-874-4298

Fire Company Raises \$10,000

by Imme Maurath

The Windham Volunteer Fire & Rescue Company's annual auction was a huge success, thanks to the many donations and countless hours of all the volunteers. About \$10,000 was raised.

The weather held out for us, and we had a good showing for the chicken BBQ. If you didn't stick around for the pie auction, you missed out on some good comedy and some delicious desserts.

The photograph here shows some of the folks who attended the auction under the big tent.



Trust on the open road

by Nancy Dyke

A Hellava Place To Lose A Cow was the book under discussion in July by a number of the good ladies of Windham at their monthly Book Club meeting. The book relates the experiences of Tim Brown, an Englishman who decides to hitchhike from the East Coast to the West Coast. Twenty years later he repeats the trip to see if he can connect with people he met on the earlier trip.

Often the book club members enjoy relating their own experiences around the book's general topic rather than limiting remarks to the book itself. Several people shared their own college hitchhiking tales.

One member talked about bicycling from coast to coast in the 1980s, a few months later bicycling to Alaska, and a year later bicycling back to the East Coast. Another related traveling in the 1950s with her family in an old station wagon from Michigan to Arizona, sleeping in the car along the way. While these two trips are not hitchhiking adventures, they have some of the same ingredients.

One consistent theme in all these experiences is the friendliness and helpfulness of the people encountered along the way. Almost always they were eager to give directions and other helpful information, often giving rides and sometimes providing food and sleeping accommodations.

Is this kindness a lost part of our culture? Last summer my husband and I were headed for a family reunion in Michigan when a tire on our travel trailer began losing air. We managed to get off the expressway in Cleveland to change the tire, but we had no idea how to get back on the expressway from the residential area where we found ourselves. A woman who lived nearby put her ninety-year-old mother in her car with her and escorted us to the nearest interchange, insisting that directions would be too confusing.

Often it is easy to observe concern and helpfulness in a foreign country because the need for assistance simply seems more acute. In the Netherlands a shopkeeper refused to give up his attempt to communicate with my daughter and me, though we knew virtually no Dutch and he spoke no English. After much shouting and arm waving, we finally understood him and his face fairly beamed with the pleasure of his success.

In Beijing, China, my friend and I were waiting in the airport for our flight to Xian to see the famous Terra Cotta Soldiers when a young Chinese man waiting for another flight, heard us talking, tapped us on the shoulders, pointed to a gate and urgently explained in English that our flight was now boarding. We had been given other information, but he was correct and if we had not followed his advice, we would have been delayed for a day or more.

A family in our community has recently returned from a six-month stay in Wales. Though they knew no one there, they tell of the warmth that greeted and surrounded them in the small community and church where they rented a house, culminating in farewell parties as they prepared to return to the States.

I enjoy relating these experiences, because everyone I meet can tell a similar story, so universal is the drive to help those around us. Windham is no exception to this concern for others. My husband and I have been here for two and a half years and have experienced its helpfulness. We have been given directions to everywhere imaginable, have been informed about cultural events, have been introduced to other people, and have generally been welcomed in every way possible.

(continued on page 7)

Many help make summer camp memorial

by Bev Carmichael

Along with the usual arts and crafts projects, the kids who attended the Windham Day Camp this year had an unusual surprise. Walter Woodruff took them on a hike to Cobb Rock in W. Windham. They were both surprised and thrilled with an unusual history lesson along the way.

"You can stand in two towns at once," said Abagale Van Alstyne "It's a large flat rock as big as my house," she continued. They enjoyed a view of South Londonderry from the top. Walter explained that many years ago it was a meeting place for picnics and even weddings. Some of the children found money along the way hidden under rocks, left there by our ancestors many years ago.

Nancy Dyke led the singing first thing in the morning while husband Jerry built birdhouses with the children. Bev Carmichael taught ice cream making in a bag and Megan Peters took the kids swimming. There were dream catchers hanging in the windows and angels waiting to be hung this Christmas thanks to Jodi McCoy and Brittany Doane our new



Summer camp children and helpers display their tie-dyed creations.

counselors this summer.

Many thanks to the Londonderry IGA and Londonderry Hardware for their generous donations. Also thanks to all who helped make camp a success again this year, Imme Maurath, Clair Trask, Cathy Prouty, and Sue Pare were our eyes, ears, and hands everyday and helped make a smooth and fun experience for the kids.

Billie Van Alstyne, who took over this year as camp director and did a great job, plans on taking the Red Cross water safety course and also being CPR certified before next summer's camp begins. She is planning two fundraisers over the winter, the first being a spaghetti dinner at the Meeting house, also a bake sale.



Local students graduate

by Bev Carmichael

Congratulations to Brittany Fitch and Jeffrey Weitzel on their graduation from Leland and Gray High School. Both students were born in Windham.

Brittany, the daughter of Chris and Maureen Fitch, played soccer and golf in high school. This summer, she worked to save for college in the fall. She will attend the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams, Massachusetts, where she will major in business.

Jeffrey started a Boys Group at L&G, approved by faculty and counselors, for young men to talk about their problems and ask for help if needed. He was also in the play, "Grease." He is currently working and plans to attend college in the future. Jeffrey is the son of Rick and Linda Weitzel.

We wish both young adults the best of luck.

– Back to School –

Windham Elementary
starts August 31
for a full day of school

No changes to the bus runs

All in Windham
invited to the annual
Pot Luck Breakfast
8:30 AM

Come see your tax
dollars at work!

Mountain roads once key to life here

by Margaret Woodruff

Last issue I wrote about a few of the old roads in Windham. Let us continue on our journey, going down Turkey Mountain.

This road is in Jamaica and Windham. We begin by going down the southern entrance of Old Cheney Road, but instead of turning right up Cheney Road, go straight ahead down the hill to Turkey Mountain Brook on what is now called Kibbe Camp Road. Part way down the road on the right there is quite a drop-off called the Gorge. This is not as spectacular as Hamilton Falls, but a lovely site.

There used to be a bridge over Turkey Mountain Brook but it is now gone, washed out in flooded waters. Turning left you could walk all the way down to Route 30 in East Jamaica. A right hand turn would take you to the mill site on Burbee Pond Road. If you continued straight ahead, you would go up over the mountain and down into Jamaica. There was also a road that would take you to Hamilton Falls. Quite a lot of busy little backroads, wouldn't you say?

There were two houses along the road, one just across the bridge known as the lower Chase place where my great-grandfather Aruna lived. Then up the road about a quarter of a mile stood the second Chase house where my

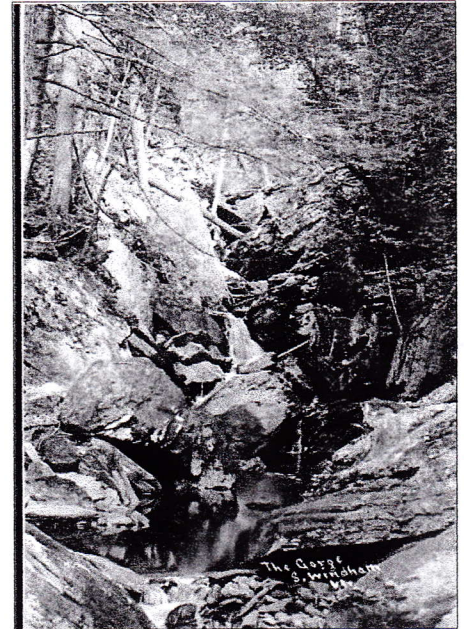
Grandfather Owen raised nine children, six girls and three boys. The oldest was born in 1866 and the youngest in 1887.

I remember my Aunt Ida talking about the young people hitching up the horse and going to Brattleboro for an evening's entertainment. This is so hard to imagine. They would also travel to neighboring towns for various Lyceums.

My father didn't marry until 1923 when he was 45, so he continued to take care of his family down on Turkey Mountain. Then in 1903 he purchased the house here on the land that I am still living on. From there he took care of them until they passed on. There are hunting camps down on the mountain, but the old houses are gone.

We had quite a large flock of sheep while I was growing up plus cows and a pair of horses. We drove the sheep down to pasture on Turkey Mountain each year. They had to be pastured there, as we only had enough room up here on the farm for the cows. They couldn't go in the same fields as the sheep would eat the grass down so low that the cows would starve.

My father would go down to check the sheep about once a week. One time he found that bear had gotten in and killed a lot of them so we had to sell the sheep. I remember bottle feeding



Life has changed over the years, yet the Gorge remains much the same.

one lamb whose mother wouldn't own it. It was such fun, she followed me everywhere (just like Mary and her little lamb). When the flock was brought home in the fall, my lamb was so frightened of them she would not go near them!

Those were hard working days but very good days too, as my memories these many years later still remind me.

So long for now,
Margaret Woodruff

Trust on the open road

(continued from page 5)

When Tim Brown, the author, told his friends about his desire to retrace his steps of twenty years ago, he met with skepticism and expressions of concern for his safety. When he pointed out the statistics showing that the crime rate is considerably lower than it was in the 1970s, few were convinced.

To be sure, all of us meet individuals who are suspect or rude but the overwhelming majority derives great pleasure from responding to need. In a climate of suspicion and fear,

sometimes engendered by our own government, it can be especially rewarding to trust others. We can become too comfortable inside our protective walls, interacting with people much like ourselves, but extending ourselves to take risks, can greatly enlarge our perspectives. It invites us to meet a variety of people on a level playing field, appreciating them for who they are.

See you on the open road!

Clarence serves Windham in own unique way

by Mary McCoy

Clarence Merritt's home on Horsenail Hill is just minutes from the property where he grew up. He describes himself as a "regular Vermonter," although others would add that in Clarence's case regular doesn't mean he's like anyone else.

Clarence was among those who established in the 1960s what is now the Windham Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company. He had been trained in firefighting while in the Navy, and despite holding adamant opinions that are uniquely his own, he was elected chief at the first meeting.

He declined then because he was working construction and was away from home for weeks at a time. Over the years, however, he has always played a key role.

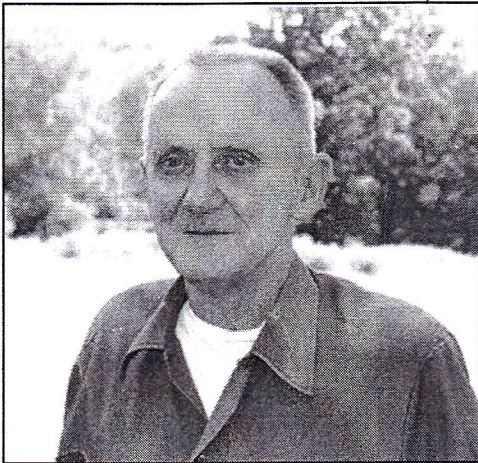
He recalls that the first fire truck was kept at a garage at Four Corners

until land was leased for a firehouse. A women's auxiliary raised money through frequent bingo games and purchased an acre for the current firehouse. A well was drilled, making Windham one of a few Vermont firehouses with running water. Some towns our size don't even have a firehouse.

While the fire company has saved many homes over the years, Clarence remembers one year when there were three or four major fires, including one in which three people died. Better radio and telephone communication have brought quicker responses, and the 911 addresses have ended confusion about where homes are located. Education helps too, Clarence added, with people learning to keep their ashes in their fireplaces and never on their porches.

In the mid 1990's, Clarence was again chosen as chief. He was in Florida at the time, but he did not decline the job when he returned, and he served as chief for about 10 years. He is now the fire company treasurer.

This is only one of the many jobs Clarence performs for our town. Currently, he is also forest fire warden, town constable, town agent, grand juror, assistant town clerk, assistant town treasurer, North Windham Cemetery director, assistant election official, fence viewer, and surveyor of wood, lumber and shingles. Nearly all of these positions are volunteer. In the past, he has also served as town auditor,



justice of the peace, selectman, and lister. He jokes, however, that his main job is to keep his wife of 44 years, Town Clerk Carol Merritt, in line.

Despite all his government jobs, Clarence is anything but a bureaucrat. He believes we are over-regulated, and he doesn't like it when people move into town, change things to their way, and then move out. He said, "I don't care what others believe, but don't force it on me."

Last year, he was diagnosed with throat cancer and was given the choice of surgery that would remove his voice box or radiation and chemotherapy treatments. He went with the second option. Although the daily treatments were a challenge, he met it with a positive attitude and with an appreciation for his doctors because "they didn't pull any punches and always told me the truth." A recent check up showed no trace of the tumors, and he has gained back most of the weight he had lost. What remains is to stretch his throat so that he can swallow. Once that is accomplished, he hopes to return to his job at Stratton Mountain, running the ski lifts.

His recovery involved giving up smoking, which he did cold turkey, in the same way he had quit drinking 16 years before. "I'm going to stick around," he explained with a spark in this eye, "just to make it miserable for everyone."

Humor and honesty are qualities that stand out in Clarence Merritt. He admits to having done "some stupid things" during his drinking days. With an end to his drinking and smoking, he said two-thirds of his vices were gone. "When I give up wild women, bury me." Carol, who sat beside him when he said this, smiled and rolled her eyes.

His neighbors also know him as both a generous and a stubborn man. Ralph Wyman recalls that when he built his new home and could not afford a plumber, Clarence did all the work and refused to charge him. Rick Weitzel said Clarence will help out anyone, even those with whom he disagrees.

"That can be most people, because Clarence is his own person," Rick said. "He doesn't travel the well worn path. He has his own ideas and strong positions, and he's outspoken. But anyone who asks Clarence for a hand will get it. No matter what."

Enclosed with this issue of the News & Notes are 911 stickers to place on your telephone. In case of fire or other emergency, call 911 and give the dispatcher your 911 address.

Swallows and barn delight eyes

by Elisabeth Robinson

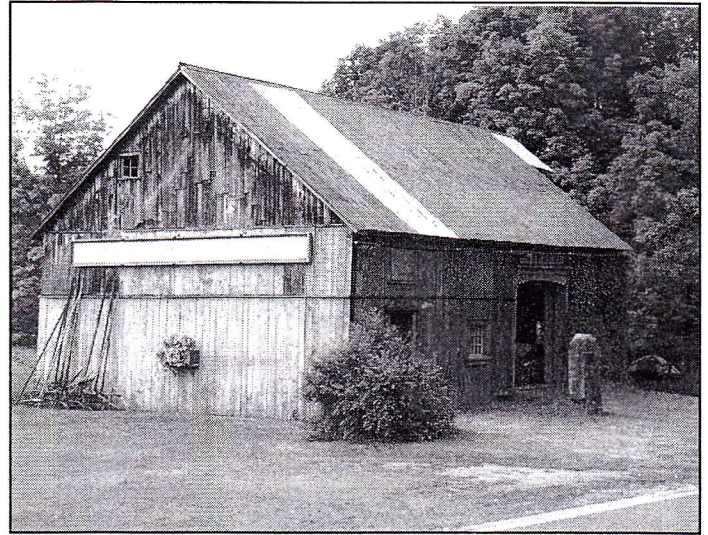
During the first weeks of August, the barn swallows are starting to flock and practice their flying skills over my pond. Dozens of young birds perch momentarily on the electricity wires, chittering and preening themselves before launching into the air in waves with the older swallows circling around them, guiding and protecting them as they curve and swoop, flying all over the place.

They have taken off from my neighbor's barn across Windham Hill Road. The ventilation doors of the barn will remain flung open until the swallows have migrated south in September. Their closure will signify the onset of fall and winter.

Several years ago, Ed Brown acquired the old and dilapidated cow barn from the farm next door. It stands today on new foundations which he carefully prepared and faced with field stone. The barn was moved some 50 feet to its new home by a series of hydraulic lifts. Steel beams were inserted underneath before the whole barn was lifted up 20 feet in the air. It was then lowered onto other steel beams and slowly rolled into place. This was a big event in the village, and several people stopped their cars to watch the spectacle.

Over the months that followed, a new floor was built out of heavy old timbers, and the rest of the structure underwent a painstaking process of restoration. The faithful matching of old paints and stains has retained the special character of this old barn which – thanks to hard work, skill and the faithful use of materials – has been preserved for future generations. In its new location, it commands some of the finest views of open country in the entire village.

Outside the barn, there stands a huge monolithic piece of



granite which was transported from the bed of a stream in Londonderry and carefully placed there, an eloquent symbol of prehistory, while on the southern gable a beautifully hand-painted sign above a window box filled with pale yellow coreopsis proclaims "South Windham, Vermont" in lettering appropriate to the age of the barn.

Inside, there is an impressive old carriage, an antique horse-drawn sleigh, and various pieces of farm equipment from a bygone age: an old milk churn, fruit barrels and baskets, cider bottles, harvesting equipment, and a large American flag printed on faded cotton. The old cow collars are still in place in the milking parlor.

And high above it all, summer after summer, the swallows return to build their mud nests and to hatch their young. Swallows make my summer.

Art Exhibit

featuring local talent:

Ed Brown

Donna Koutrakos

Steve Maurath

Stephen Lowy

Sundays 10:30 - 11:30 AM

Wednesdays 3:00 - 5:00 PM

September 4-18

Upstairs at the Meeting House

Strong Living class starts

by Nancy Dyke

The Strong Living exercise class begins August 29 at the Meeting House. It offers training to improve strength, flexibility and bone density in persons over 40 years of age.

Classes are each Monday and Wednesday at 1:30 PM for 12 weeks, ending before Thanksgiving week.

To join late or for further information, call the class co-leaders Nancy Dyke at 874-4428 or Maggie Newton at 254-3484.

Bear info requested

The *Windham News and Notes* is gathering information on bear sightings in Windham. Word is that bears have been active this summer, stealing bird feeders, raiding compost piles, and strolling across our roads.

If you have witnessed bears, send a short description of what you have seen to the *WN&N* team. Email it to wnandn@vermontel.net or snail mail it to *WN&N*, Box

Japanese Knotweed invades Windham

by Imme Maurath

If you have been wondering what's under the blue tarps around town, it's something we don't want to grow here – Japanese Knotweed (*polygonum cuspidatum*), also known as Mexican Bamboo for its hollow stems.

Japanese Knotweed is a native to Japan where it is used as a spring vegetable while the shoots are still small and tender. It was introduced to Britain in the early 1800's and later that century to North America. It was initially useful for ornamental purposes, erosion control, and landscape screening. Beekeepers have planted it for its abundant nectar secretion.

In reality, Japanese Knotweed is a highly invasive weed, which if left unchecked, will displace native species and cause extensive damage to properties. Interestingly, it is a dioecious plant, requiring both male and female plants to reproduce, and only the female form was taken to the

UK. Still, it has proven to be a rampant spreader, with its rhizomes (root system) capable of reaching several meters. New sites can be contaminated through movement of dirt. When growing near water, root fragments can be carried down stream to establish new colonies. The plant can regenerate from rhizome fragments as small as 0.7 gram and can remain dormant in the soil for over four years.

Japanese Knotweed is a herbaceous perennial which forms dense clumps 3-10 feet high. Its broad leaves are somewhat triangular and pointed at the tip. Clusters of tiny greenish-white flowers are borne on the axils during August and September. Japanese Knotweed belongs to the buckwheat family, which includes rhubarb, the ornamental plants silver lace-vine, and such weeds as lady's thumb, prostrate knotweed and sheep sorrel.

In April of 2002, the Vermont legislature passed the Plant Quarantine



Rule, which made it illegal to sell, distribute or transport certain invasive plants. In addition to Japanese Knotweed, other plants are bush honeysuckle, buckhorns, common reed, flowering rush, garlic mustard, goutweed, Japanese honeysuckle, oriental bittersweet, purple loosestrife, swallow worts, and tree of heaven.

If you suspect you have Japanese Knotweed growing on your property, cut it down early in the spring and cover with a dark tarp and rocks or logs. If you have any questions or need help identifying this noxious weed, feel free to call Allison Trowbridge or Diane Newton of the Windham Conservation Commission.



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Be your own Ponce de Leon

By Mary McCallum, Council on Aging

With people 65 and over now representing 13 percent of the U.S. population (and more than 22 percent of Windham's residents), notions about aging are undergoing closer scrutiny, testing and revision. The findings provide a blueprint for people of all ages.

Past thinking about our elder years took a pessimistic view with worries about depression, degeneration, loss and withdrawal. New thinking takes a vastly different approach as we strive to stay active, mentally nimble, physically fit, connected and still learning. The optimistic view, while not denying the lessening of certain strengths and resources, challenges the meaning of "retirement," a period that can amount to one-fourth of our potential lifetime.

Life expectancy figures continue to hit new highs. By 2050 we may have 834,000 centenarians (people who reach 100) among us. The U.S. Census Bureau admits that is a prediction that could climb into the millions. Ponce de Leon, in his search for the fountain of youth, never

dreamed that nearly five centuries later so many would experience the longevity he never found. Longevity is one thing, quality of life is another. We need to shift our thinking from how to prolong life to how to make a longer life worth living.

In his book *Successful Aging*, John Rowe puts forth strategies for avoiding disease and disability in old age and for maintaining physical and mental health and engagement in life. He concludes, "Physical activity is at the crux of successful aging." Many other scientists and gerontologists support Rowe's belief in exercise's key role in improving and maintaining muscular, skeletal, cardiovascular and brain function.

Dr. Marian Diamond, a world expert on brain research, lists five brain-related factors important for successful aging: diet, exercise, challenge, newness and human love. Diamond, who believes we should change the word "retire" to "redirect," emphasizes the importance of dietary protein for healthy brain maintenance. Exercise brings oxygen to all parts of

the body, but especially to the brain.

She also asserts that in successful aging it's not enough to continue the same activities we've already mastered. The brain needs new challenges, and we must push ourselves one step beyond what we think we can do, attacking a more difficult level of crossword puzzle or learning a new hobby or dance step.

As for human love, Diamond echoes what many researchers tell us – that love, nurturing and social connection are the psychological components of successful aging. The link between social support and health cannot be overestimated. Those who have close relationships and are connected to others tend to eat better, exercise more and manage stressful events with greater ease.

Our challenge is not simply to live longer; it is to live better, with health and independence. So continue to exercise, eat a healthy diet, stimulate your brain by learning new things and altering habitual activities. And always keep love in your life.

Chorus pleases Windham audience

by Mary McCoy

The Yankee Male Chorus performed to a full house at Windham's Meeting House on August 11. Among the selections presented were traditional glee club songs, Broadway musical hits, spirituals, our national anthem, and "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." A song from the 1800s called "Laughter" was among the crowd-pleasers.

The acoustics on the second floor of the building are perfect for music, and because of this and the enthusiastic Windham audience, some chorus members commented after their tour that the performance here was their best.

Among the 80 men in the chorus was Windham's own Jerry Dyke, pictured here on the top row in the middle toward the right. Jerry did not have a solo, yet for his friends



in the audience, he was the star of the show!

The concert was sponsored by the Congregational Church. Carolyn Partridge and others fed the choir.



WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES
P. O. Box 1068
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The WN&N Team welcomes your
signed letters and articles
(approx 300 words). Send them to
the address above or preferably by email
to wnandn@vermontel.net

**GET INVOLVED
IN WINDHAM!**

— Windham Community Calendar —

Every Sunday – **Windham Congregational Church** has
worship services at 9:00 AM; everyone is invited.
Communion first Sunday of each month.

Every Sunday and Thursday – **Valley Bible Church** has
services; call the pastor at 874-7287 for times.

Every Wednesday – **Windham Town Library** open at
Meeting House from 3:00 to 5:00 PM. Also at that time:
Reading group on first Weds, knitting group on second
and third Weds, and writing group on fourth Weds. All
are invited to join.

Last Wednesday of month – **Windham Community
Organization** meets at 7:00 at Helen George's house.
Call Carolyn Chase at 874-4039 to confirm time and
place or for info.

Every Second & Fourth Thursday – **Town Planning
Commission** meets at 7:00 PM and public invited.

Every Monday and Wednesday – **Strong Living
exercise class** at Meeting House at 1:30 PM

Every Third Wednesday – **Senior Brown Bag Chat
Group** at 12:00 PM at Meeting House

Wednesday, August 31 – **Elementary School** starts
with annual pot luck breakfast at 8:30 AM

Sundays, September 4, 11 & 18 and Wednesdays 7 & 14
– **Art Exhibit** of local talent (*see page 9*)

Sunday, September 11 – **Celebration of 200th Birthday
of Congregational Church** at 10:30 AM (*see page 2*)

Tuesday, September 13 – **Friends of the Meeting House**
at 7:00 PM (*see page 4*)

Friday, October 14 – **Deadline for WN&N submissions**
(*see notice above*)