

WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 5

WINDHAM, VERMONT

MARCH - APRIL 2006

March 7 means democracy in action

by Edith Serke

In Vermont, March is known for two things: maple syrup and Town Meeting. While there is probably not much sugaring going on in Windham any more, the Town Meeting is alive and well.

On the first Tuesday in March – this year it's March 7 – most Vermont towns hold a meeting to elect local officials, approve a budget for the next year, and conduct other local business. Starting at 10:00 AM at our Meeting House, eligible Windham voters (those on the official check list) will discuss and decide on issues important to the town's people. This is true democracy in action.

The Vermont Town Meeting is a tradition dating back more than 200 years. The practice of direct democracy dates back to around 400 B.C. in Athens of ancient Greece. But unlike ancient times, when women, children and slaves could not vote, we not only allow, but encourage all adult Windham residents to register and participate. Ordinary citizens can express their opinions and approve or disapprove items.

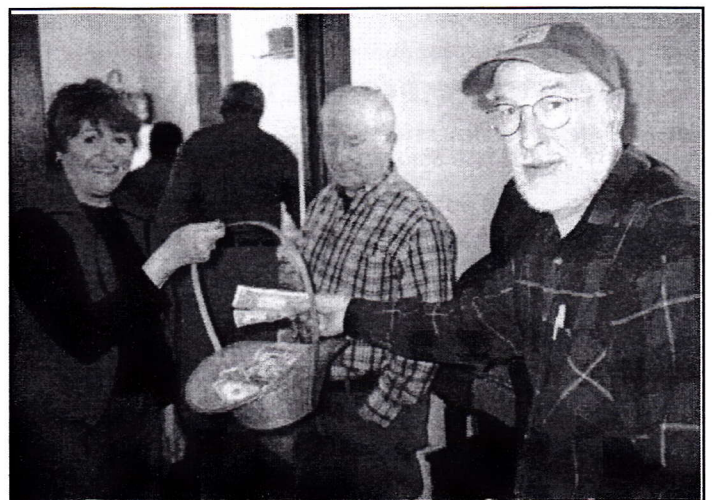
Sadly, participation in town meetings in Vermont has been declining over the past few years. It is now about 20.5 percent. We do not have to fear terrorist attacks or other impediments to exercise this unique opportunity to be engaged in true democracy. We just have to make the effort to show up and be counted.

The Town Meeting is also a social occasion and an opportunity to see and visit with neighbors. Everyone is asked to bring a potluck dish to share at lunch time. Windham has a reputation for serving a delicious meal at the town meeting. It's a real bargain for the donation of one dollar per person which covers paper goods and drinks.

The Town Meeting is conducted according to *Robert's Rules of Order* under the direction of the moderator, elected at the beginning of the meeting. The order of business is listed in the Town Report, which will have been mailed out to all voters about a week before the town meeting. The report, prepared by the town auditors, should be read carefully prior to the meeting. It contains a wealth of information about what is going on in your town.

Following the election of town officers whose term expires in 2006, various items of the proposed budgets are voted upon. Voting is usually by a voice vote, unless the moderator cannot tell the outcome, in which case there is a hand count. Seven people may request a vote by paper ballots, to be counted by the clerk and election officials.

Details of the various proposals and budgets, as well as vacancies in town positions, are discussed elsewhere in this newsletter. Please bring your Town Report with you to Town Meeting on March 7.



At lunchtime during the 2005 Town Meeting, Peg Grimm collected from Walter Woodruff (center) and her husband Ken Grimm (right). Again this year, town residents will bring a dollar each and – *don't forget* – a potluck dish to share. With everyone contributing, a delicious lunch is guaranteed!

Please keep roads safe for everyone

The Selectmen ask that all residents help our road crew keep the roads clear and safe by not parking in the town right-of-way. They also remind everyone that it is illegal to shovel or plow snow into the traveled portion of the roads, as it creates a danger to other drivers.

Numerous votes set for 2006 Town Meeting

by Edith Serke

By now, all residents/tax payers of the town of Windham should have received the 2005 Town Report and the warning for the March 7, 2006 Town Meeting. The Town Report has detailed information about items and issues which will come up for a vote. Highlights include:

Election of town officers: All those whose terms expire in 2006 are up for re-election or may be challenged. Among those are Walter Woodruff for Select Board, Jerry Dyke as lister, Dawn Bower as auditor, Michael Simonds as tax collector, and Clarence Merritt as constable, grand juror, town agent, and North Windham Cemetery commissioner.

Also up for re-election are Christopher Fitch as Windham Center Cemetery commissioner, Herbert Dutton as West Windham Cemetery commissioner, Maureen Fitch as library trustee, and Diane Newton as Windham School director. Open for nominations is the lister's position previously held by Ernie Friedli which expires in 2007. Other positions are filled by appointment by the Board of Selectmen.

The school budget. At first glance it would appear that the proposed school budget for FY2007 is going down from \$426,843 in FY2006 to \$370,423 in the coming year, a 13.2 percent decrease. However, the new education funding law, Act 130, shifts certain expenses, such as special and vocational education and related transportation, totaling \$70,553, from the town school budget to the Leland and Gray budget., which was approved by voters on February 8.

Therefore, Windham's total school expenditure, K-6 and secondary will be \$595,647, a 4 percent increase over last year. Elementary school enrollment is projected to decline from 31 to 27.5 students, while the number of Windham students at Leland and Gray is up from 11 to 16. According to the Vermont Department of Education, Windham's elementary school expenditures in FY2004 were \$7,938, compared to the average of \$9,431 for schools of similar size.

The town budget. The total Selectmen's budget is \$120,413, up by 1.2 percent from last year. However, only \$89,368 will need to be approved

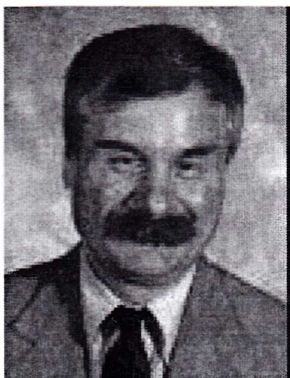
by the town meeting, because of carry-over funds from last year. Most of the budget goes for the maintenance of town roads. Last year, the total spent on roads was \$607,367. Expenditures for roads and other town departments will require a separate vote, as listed in the various articles.

Support for social services. Several agencies and organizations which provide various services to the townspeople have requested ongoing support. The only new request is for \$300 for the Meals on Wheels program. This request came from the Springfield based organization, which, according to their treasurer, would like to expand their services to Windham residents, although there have been no requests for this service thus far.

Additional articles. Article 8 calls for \$6 per capita, \$1,969 total, for the Town Library. Article 38 seeks \$1,200 to support the delivery of broadband Internet access to the Town Office and surrounding area. A non-binding vote, detailed in Article 36, opposes the use of the State Education Fund for purposes outside the law's original intent.

Citizens urged to get involved and stay informed on state issues

by Michael Obuchowski



The 2006 session of the Vermont General Assembly convened on Tuesday, January 3, 2006 at the State House. Healthcare, property taxes, energy and the economy are on the agenda. Decisions made under the golden dome impact our pocketbooks and our lives.

Communication is essential to making good policy decisions. Please contact me anytime with your concerns, questions, ideas or problems regarding our Vermont state government.

During the session you can contact me Tuesday through Friday at the State House by phone at 1-800-322-5616 and leave a message, by mail at House of Representatives, 115 State Street, Drawer 33, Montpelier, VT 05633-5301. My

email address is obie@leg.state.vt.us. Otherwise you can reach me at 802-463-3094 or 72 Atkinson Street, Bellows Falls, VT 05101-1321. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

In addition, the State House has a web site providing information on legislative schedules, a members directory and contact information, bill tracking, text of bills and resolutions, calendars, journals and much more. The address is www.leg.state.vt.us.

Also you can watch State House Conversations on Falls Area Community Television Channel 10 Fridays at 4 PM, Saturdays and Sundays at 7 AM and 7 PM, and Tuesdays at 5 PM for news on State House happenings. Also listen to State House Conversations on 100.1 FM on Saturdays and Sundays at 8 AM and Mondays at 7:30 AM, and on 1480 AM on Thursdays at 7:35 AM for another legislative report.

Tune in, stay informed, and hold your public servants accountable. Together we govern.

Many meetings held on wind turbines

by Imme Maurath and Mary McCoy

Have you ever been to so many meetings regarding one topic? Two important ones were put together by Alison Trowbridge as informational meetings regarding the wind turbines. The first, held in December, presented reasons to oppose the wind turbines. It was followed in January by a meeting presenting reasons to support them.

On February 2, the Planning Commission held a special meeting to explain to residents what is said in the current Town Plan. Chairman Bob Kehoe referred to sections of the plan that call for the protection of the ridge lines. Then town residents expressed their opinions on the issue, and ideas were shared about possible next steps.

The Select Board has chosen to remain impartial, but at a recent Select Board meeting they said they will uphold the Town Plan. A citizens committee has been appointed by the Select Board to advise them as they work to resolve this issue in a way that is best for our community.

The advisory committee has three members opposed to the turbines,

three members in favor, one neighbor knowledgeable of state regulations and procedures, and three liaisons (to the Conservation Commission, the Planning Commission, and the Select Board). These people are David Crittenden, Mary Boyer, Pamela Richard, Howard Ires, Peter McDonald, Peter Newton, Charlie Peck, Alison Trowbridge, Michael Simonds, and Walter Woodruff.

The committee meets independently. Committee Chair Mary Boyer explained that the group welcomes comments from others. "This is such a huge issue," she said, "and we need more shoulders to bear the burden. The more participation there is, the less likely we are to get the polarization that happened in other towns."

Many questions remain, as it is unknown exactly what Catamount, the wind project developers, will propose and what the Vermont Public Service Board, which makes the final decision, will determine is in the "public good."

One thing is certain, however. There will be more meetings.

We can all do more to conserve energy

by Imme Maurath

Proponents and opponents of the wind turbines agree – the best way to deal with our energy needs is through conservation. It requires no fuel, creates no pollution, and demands no maintenance.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 offers consumers and businesses federal tax credits beginning in January 2006 for purchasing fuel-efficient hybrid electric vehicles and energy-efficient appliances and products. Up to \$500 is deductible for replacing old windows or putting in insulation. Go to energy.gov or speak with your accountant.

Reception of local TV channels requires phone call

by Lydia Pope France

Direct TV is now broadcasting local TV channels to our area. You must subscribe to the local package, and you also need to make an appointment to have a second dish installed and, in some cases, an upgraded receiver box as well.

Call 1-888-355-7530 for further details and an appointment. They are offering this free as long as you commit to a one year (additional) contract. The good news is, these new channels do indeed come in addition to the Boston and New Hampshire channels that were available to date.



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The WN&N Team

Carolyn Chase
Jean Coburn
Dawn Bower
Bev Carmichael
Bill Koutrakos
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.
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Submissions

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welcomes submissions.

Send articles and signed "letters to the editors" of 100 to 300 words to the address below.
We prefer emailed submissions.

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Windham News & Notes
P.O. Box 1068
Windham, VT 05359
802-875-4874
wnandn@vermontel.net

Listers must reappraise all homes at market value

by William Koutrakos

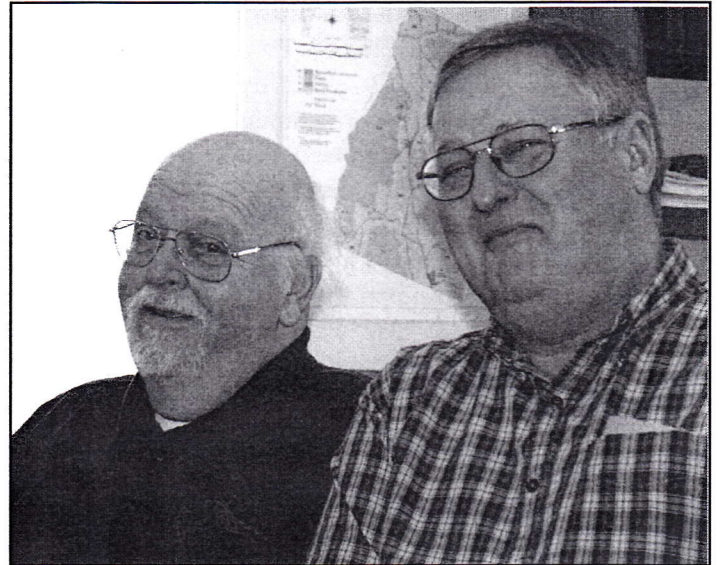
It is now time to reappraise properties in Windham. The listers are already involved, and it will be completed this year. We knew it was inevitable and have been preparing for it during the past two years. As listers, we must appraise or assess properties at fair market value. That is our mandate from the state, and that we must do.

Your Listers are residents of the Town of Windham and want to be fair to all, be you full-time residents or second-home owners. It should be clearly understood that listers do not set the tax rate; we only do what we are mandated to do.

Many of the properties have been inspected. Other home owners will shortly receive letters asking permission to inspect their property. To be fair to all, both interior and exterior inspections are necessary. By law, we cannot inspect your property without your permission. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

Ernie Friedli has served as a lister for over 20 years and has decided to resign as of Town Meeting day, March 7, 2006. His knowledge of properties and the process of listing will be sorely missed.

Anyone interested in this position must be elected at the Town Meeting. Knowledge of property values and use of the



computer would be helpful but is not required. Willingness to attend some courses or seminars is necessary and will be paid for by the town. Whoever may be interested, please call one of the current listers, Bill Koutrakos (*above on left*) at 874-4131 or Jerry Dyke (*above on right*) at 874-4428.

Fire Company hosts Bingo night

by Imme Maurath

Our first Bingo night, preceded by a soup and salad supper, turned out to be a huge success. If you were not one of the 50 or so there, you missed a good time and a hearty meal.

According to Bill Koutrakos, "How can you beat a choice of six homemade soups, salad, rolls, and drinks for \$3.00 and then \$3.00 for a Bingo card of three."

We served chili, vegetarian chili, pasta fagioli, chicken noodle, and a lentil mushroom stew. Some people brought their Beano in anticipation that at least one of the soups would have beans. The chicken noodle was the only safe bet.

Bingo started a little late, and we apologize to those who only came to play the game and had to wait. Steve Maurath (my husband) did the calling and Tankred (my brother from out of state) rolled the cage. Having never played Bingo before, Steve made a couple of fopperies like removing the winning balls before checking that we actually had a winner. But this was backed up with humor and entertainment that continued throughout the evening.

Some people even donated their winnings to the Fire House, saying they really enjoyed the fun. As Bill said, "T'was a fun night for all, and great to get out and visit with our neighbors."

Broadband might begin at Town Office and School

by Mary McCoy

The Windham Broadband Project now has a clearer idea about the delivery of faster internet service, although the actual implementation is undetermined.

Nearly 100 potential subscribers have been identified, primarily from Windham with others from West Townshend and Jamaica. We await proposals from possible service providers. Our efforts are helped by advisors from the Vermont Rural Broadband Project.

Currently, we are considering an organic approach for delivery, beginning with one cluster of subscribers and expanding from there. The first connection could be to the Town Office, the Elementary School, and nearby homes.

A petition was circulated to place an article for vote at the annual Town Meeting for \$1,200 for broadband service at the Town Office and elsewhere. A faster connection will be of benefit to town officials who are now required by the state to provide reports via email. With the current dial-up speed, it takes hours to upload and download these reports.

To learn more or to be added to the list of potential subscribers, go to www.WindhamBroadband.org.

2005 was busy year for Windham Community Organization

by Nancy Dyke

At its January meeting, the Windham Community Organization (WCO) reviewed and celebrated the many activities it completed during the last year.

Early in the year a new effort was launched, a Committee for Health and Community Resources. It was responsible for highlighting available community resources in the *News & Notes*. It also organized the new monthly Senior Citizen Brown Bag Luncheons which have been meeting since last fall.

Thanks to the support of the community, its two annual benefits,

the Chicken Barbeque and Raffle in July and the Harvest Supper and Square Dance in November, were resounding successes. Another new effort was the art exhibit in September which featured four local artists, Ed Brown, Steve Maurath, Richard Mazur, and Donna Koutrakos.

The generosity of the community enabled the WCO to assist four Windham families and to assist Hurricane Katrina victims through the American Red Cross. In addition, an annual gift was given to the Neighborhood Pantry, as well as flowers and gifts for Windham people

who were ill.

After much discussion, the WCO decided to adopt new by-laws and to incorporate as a nonprofit organization. Among other advantages, this allows WCO to provide support for the *News & Notes* which began in 2003 as a project of WCO. Once a nonprofit status with the IRS is achieved, the *News & Notes* and mailings about other events can be sent at a discounted rate.

All residents of Windham are invited to join the WCO at its meetings on the last Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM at the home of Helen George.

Exercise group gains strength

by Mary Boyer

The Strong Living Class which met twice a week for 12 weeks last fall was so popular that the six participants decided to continue meeting through the winter months.

During the 12 weeks between August and Thanksgiving, participants followed a routine established by Tufts University for people over 55. By the end of the schedule, everyone who participated was able to add weights to her customized program, master a difficult balancing exercise, and limber-up.

Carolyn Chase and Jean Coburn spoke for the group in saying that in addition to the physical gains, everyone had fun doing each exercise together to a count. The moral support was important and made it easier for all.

To prevent back-sliding and for inspiration to continue exercising during the long winter, the class is continuing on a "maintenance" program once a week on Wednesdays, 1:30 to 3:00 at the Meeting House.

The class was ably led by Maggie Newton and Nancy Dyke. Both are trained to instruct on the correct postures,



Ginny Crittenden, Jean Coburn, Carolyn Chase, and Nancy Dyke build muscles through Strong Living program.

breathing practices and on choosing weights according to strength level. The class is informal, and all are encouraged to join or drop in for the fun. Both ankle and hand weights are available.

Nancy is facilitating the current class, and any questions can be directed to her at 874-4428.

Receive email reminders!

Many of you gave the *News & Notes* your email address when you sent in your subscription contribution. If so, you are on the WN&N email list, and you recently received an email reminding you that the WCO Supper and Square Dance was happening on February 25. If you did not receive that email and would like to be on the WN&N email list to receive reminders of community events, please email us at wnandn@vermontel.net.

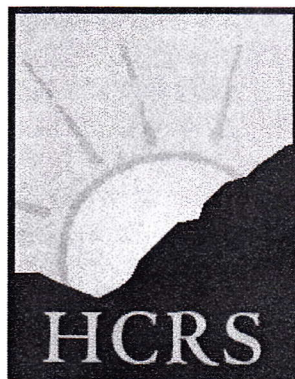
"Vermonters for 200 years have handed down certain attitudes of mind from generation to generation. Some folks call us old-fashioned and backward-looking for adhering to the ideas and principles characteristic of the people who settled our state. We value our heritage of ideas."

— George D. Aiken, 1938
67th governor of Vermont

HCRS offers mental health services

by Beverly Scott

Health Care and Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont (HCRS) offers Windham residents a comprehensive range of community-based mental health services that provide high quality, cost-effective, and caring services. Specifically:



Outpatient Mental Health Services: A highly trained staff of professional therapists, social workers, and psychiatrists help individuals and families cope with stress and anxiety. The goal is to ensure that children, adolescents and adults receive appropriate and timely care. Walk-in Clinics are

available to any resident who has an urgent need to see a mental health counselor for support and more effective coordination of services.

Alcohol & Drug Treatment Services: A comprehensive program of assessment, inpatient referral, outreach, outpatient treatment and aftercare are offered to adults and family members affected by the use of alcohol or drugs.

Community Rehabilitation & Treatment Program (CRT): The CRT program provides services to adults over 18 years old who are suffering from a mental illness so

serious it interferes with the capacity to function in the community. Clients are helped to regain stability and learn how to manage their mental illness, either in a hospital setting or out-patient settings. In addition, assistance and information are provided to concerned family members.

Community Services Division (CSD): The CSD provides services to people with developmental disabilities and their families. Services are available to people of all ages who are eligible. Each individual served receives a written program tailored to meet his or her needs.

The Alternative Program: A short-term alternative to hospitalization that provides crisis stabilization, respite and support to clients with psychiatric disabilities or to any adult experiencing an acute mental health crisis. The program provides individualized attention in a homelike, community based setting.

Emergency Services: An Emergency Services Team is prepared to respond and act quickly in critical situations. Specially trained mental health professionals are available 24 hours a day for emergencies. Anyone may use this service when an emergency arises including individuals of any age, family, or friends of an individual in crisis, hospitals and nursing homes, police, schools, clergy, businesses, or other community agencies.

For additional information telephone: 802-463-3947.

NOTE: Another square dance with John Newton was set for February 25 with a soup supper before the dance.

110 enjoy Harvest Supper and Dance

by Nancy Dyke

If you didn't attend the Harvest Supper in November, you missed an evening of wonderful food, music and dancing. Thanks to the ladies of the Windham Community Organization, the meal of ham, scalloped potatoes, baked beans, squash, rolls and pie was delicious.

Special thanks to Carolyn Partridge who was in charge of the kitchen and who did a great deal of the cooking. The group planned to serve about 80 people, but managed to make it stretch to 110. There was very little food left in the kitchen after the meal.

After the food and tables were cleared away, the real fun began. John Newton was the caller for the square dance and also played the bass fiddle. Peter and Diane Newton joined him on the violin and guitar. Many positive comments were made about John's expertise in providing fun for both experienced and novice square dancers. He also entertained everyone with stories about earlier days in Windham when the dances were held in a barn lit with kerosene lamps.

The WCO realized a profit of about \$650 from the evening. They wish to thank the community for their support which makes it possible to help those in financial need.

Congregational Church News

by Nancy Dyke

The highlight of the Christmas Eve service was the pageant. Dave and Cassidy Crittenden, Claire Trask, Kayla Ferace, Corryn, Crystal, Becca, and Levi Clay, Sara Duffley, and Chris and Naomi Taylor were the participants.

It was also an evening of great music with a cello and piano duet by Maggie Newton and Nancy Dyke (The Faith) and vocal solos by Tessa Stanley (Some Children See Him) and Vern Stanley (Sweet Little Jesus Boy). The evening concluded with the traditional Candlelighting Service. Refreshments followed in the Meeting Room.

At its annual meeting on February 3, the Windham Congregational Church voted to accept Nancy Dyke as a Lay Pastor to replace Margaret Woodruff who retired last year. Officers were elected for the coming year. Possible handicapped accessibility to both the meeting room and the sanctuary was discussed.

Paul Dutton carries on family farming tradition

by Mary McCoy

Perhaps no one knows more about farming in southern Vermont than the Duttons. The family first settled in Windham around 1800, and in 1834 they built the house on West Windham Road where Herbert and Ida Dutton still live. Herbert was born in the house and has lived there all his life, working the family land. He married Ida Chase in 1947, and their six children grew up there, including Rebecca Dutton who still lives in Windham, and Paul Dutton, their oldest son.

According to Paul, his ancestors and their peers were subsistence farmers. With only horses for

transportation and few stores in the area, they needed to either grow everything themselves or get it from their neighbors. The Duttons kept cows for their family's use and for selling milk and butter. All the milking was done by hand, as was the wood they logged to pay their taxes.

When Paul was a child in the late 1950s and 1960s, "Life in Windham was a good life, maybe a lot better than for kids elsewhere." Paul worked each day with his father and considered it a privilege. There wasn't much time to play with the kids who lived nearby. Paul says, "Dutton kids were lousy ball players, but great at handling a dung fork."

He remembers his first jobs away from the farm. "No one could use a shovel or split wood as well as I could." Working hard ran in the family, and not just among the men. His mother and sisters labored hard, too. His parents continued dairy farming until Herbert retired in his mid-70s about 10 years ago. As recently as last year, his mother baled hay and his father raked it.

Paul, who studied agriculture at UVM, has lived in Vermont all of his life except for four years in Michigan where he learned the berry business. After he returned to Vermont in 1982, he married his wife Wendy, and they

founded their Dutton Farms business, now with fields and greenhouses in Windham, Newfane, Brattleboro, Manchester, and Brookline (where he, Wendy, and their four children live).

They planned to be wholesale farmers, selling fruits and berries, but the demand for retail was greater. They grew vegetables and flowers too, rotating their crops to meet customer demands. Now each season brings a new focus. The first four months of the year are the slowest with only maple sugaring and greenhouse work. Paul's favorite holiday is Mother's Day when sales pick up again.

Paul has seen major changes in farming. No longer is most produce grown locally. Now fruits, vegetables and flowers are flown in from around the world. Just 15 years ago, Paul sold low-grade apples for concentrate. Now he lets them rot in the fields. Smuckers and other companies buy it cheaper from Poland or from China which is now the #1 seller of juice concentrate. Most people don't seem to care about buying locally, although the energy crisis and accompanying price increases may change that.

The Duttons are not certified organic gardeners, although Paul appreciates the changes the organic movement has brought. He's seen the damage done by spraying for pests and killing many of the beneficial insects in the process. The Dutton Farms have a low-spray program that protects beneficial insects. They also remove wild bushes and trees where pests live.

Another change has come with the end of large farming families. Now seasonal workers must be hired, and many of those who work for Paul in the later half of the year come from Jamaica through the government's H2A Program. It's a lot of paper work to bring them here legally, but Paul

"The Dutton property will remain farmland."

explains, "If we didn't have these workers, we'd be hard pressed." Still two-thirds of his employees are from the U.S.

One thing that continues as always is the use of the Dutton land in Windham. Paul said, "The Dutton property will remain farmland. The pastures will remain open, and the land will be submitted to the state for Current Use as forest and agriculture only. There will be no houses or other development. My father doesn't want utility lines or access roads on the land, and I will honor that." Smiling, he adds, "My neighbors would hate me if I did otherwise, and my

(continued on page 11)



Circle under stars warms family

by Elisabeth Robinson

A number of years ago we visited friends in Brookline and were impressed with the burning pit which they had dug in the woods and used mainly as an open air wood barbecue.

Although we are converts to the gas grill, we liked the idea of sitting out in the woods in the dark by flickering firelight and sipping beer and telling stories. There is something special about sitting in the dark in front of a crackling campfire that brings out mysterious tales and reminiscences from even the shyest among us.

A fern-filled woodland glade undisturbed for centuries was the obvious place on our property for this project. During the ice age huge granite boulders were tossed by moving glaciers into what are now our woods. One such outcrop looks like a small cave with an impressive overhang that forms a ten foot waterfall when we have torrential rain, such as caused the August flood two years ago.

Beneath this rocky ledge, the natural bowl-shaped declivity in the ground seemed to be the perfect place for our burning pit. Completely surrounded by woods but with a view of the setting sun to the west, it was the right spot. At dusk the yellowing rays from the setting sun enlighten the ferns, and we are surrounded by an unearthly green glow.

My husband dug a big round hole near the cave entrance and sunk flat rocks around the edge to enclose the fire

safely. Logs from a newly felled pine placed on end became seats when placed in a circle. Eventually someone came up with the idea of making stands for beer or soda cans by nailing little squares of wood to long thin sticks which were sunk into the ground. My daughter had been to camp and liked to share her campfire songs with us. Marshmallows were toasted and eaten before dinner.

Many happy times were had out in the woods sitting around the circle. Friends who came to stay thought at first that we were a bit eccentric, leading them out into the woods at dusk, armed with a big wicker basket filled with the requisite drinks, nibbles, matches and bug spray. However, they quickly warmed to the cheerful excitement of the occasion as the fire dispersed the mosquitoes.

Eventually the log seats rotted and were ceremonially burned in the pit. My son dug up and hauled some very large flat stones to the area which he then built into benches to create a more permanent seating area.

It has to be said that the presence of children makes all the difference. Now that my younger daughter is a teenager, she is less interested in the mysteries of the burning pit. However, I have a first grandson now, so it won't be long before another generation revives the enchantment of the circle under the stars.

NOTE: All open burning in Windham requires a permit from the Fire Warden.



This is one sorry sight for mid-February in Windham!

What's up with the weather?

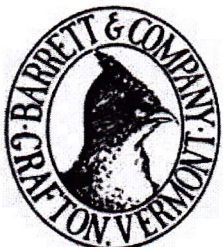
by Imme Maurath

Vermont can be defined as having three seasons. Summer, winter, and mud season. Usually they come in succession. Not this year.

We've had more winter break-ups than I can count. I know we all saved a little money on our heating bills in January and February, but at what expense? The town has so many road heaves, I don't think Rodney and Bill have enough signs to say so.

And snowmobiling – not one good ride yet. Twice we've gone out and actually had to turn around. Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing through major puddles that haven't frozen over – I don't think so. Downhill skiing and snowboarding in the rain – not fun.

I'm just hoping my daffodils don't get confused and start showing their little heads.



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Fred makes telephone service possible

by Mary McCoy



Michael Simonds gives “Fred” a pat of thanks for pulling 5200 feet of phone wire across Perry’s Field in South Windham. After waiting two months, Michael’s new tenants on Old Cheney Road, Lea Bunce and David Norway, would at last receive phone service.

What caused this delay? Verizon had moved the phone line used by the previous tenants of the apartment Lea and David now rented, in order to provide service for someone else on Old Cheney.

As you might suspect, Lea and David found life without a phone to be a challenge, and Michael intervened with numerous calls to Verizon and the Vermont Utility Board to urge Verizon to restring the cable.

Eventually, he learned that connecting the service was delayed because it required a method from the original days of stringing phone line. A horse was needed to pull the cable from the southern part of Old Cheney Road across the hay field to Windham Hill Road.

Fred, a Belgium, works about 100 days a year for Verizon, earning only oats and hay, according to his owner, Claude Desmarais, of Barton, VT.

Fisher is not cat

by Mary Western

I’m responding to the article in the last *News & Notes* about the fisher cat. I saw one eight to ten years ago as it raced across the road a little below Dick Jackson’s house on Windham Hill. It was dark, sleek, very fast, and had a very luxurious big tail.

When I got home, I looked it up in my book of American mammals, and I’m sure it was a fisher. I learned that the correct name for it is just a fisher, not a fisher cat, although I think the latter name is widely used in Vermont.

Its biological name is *Martes pennanti*, and it’s related to the weasel family. The word fisher is also the name for its fur or pelt.

Etching

by Carolyn Chase

The trees, black silent specters stand
against the winter whitened land.
The waning moon lends little light
to this cold and colorless, eerie sight.
The roadways like dark ribbons wind
and shadowed posts the meadows bind.
Black and white mid-winter etching –
Still-life scene, with nature sketching.

Carbon monoxide detectors can prevent poisoning

by Marcia Clinton

Unintentional carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning annually sends an estimated 15,000 persons to hospital emergency departments nationwide, and Vermont has numerous occurrences every year.

CO is an odorless, potentially deadly combustion pollutant. It can be released into a home by unvented or malfunctioning gas, wood or oil appliances; a blocked chimney; or a car idling in an attached garage. Other common sources include improperly

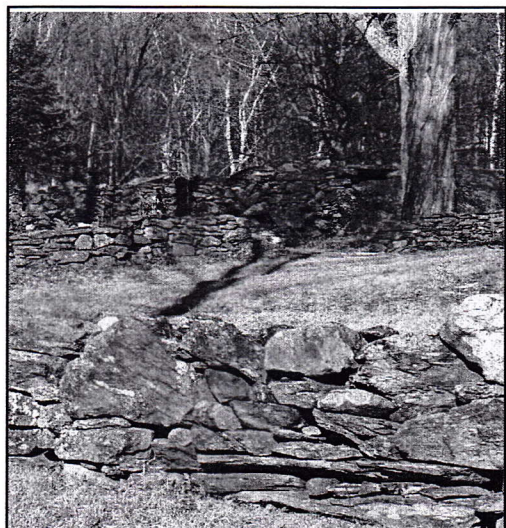
installed generators or space heaters. Malfunctioning heating appliances are the major cause of unintentional CO poisoning in Vermont.

Typical signs of CO poisoning include headache, dizziness, and nausea. Since these symptoms are common to many illnesses, few people realize when they are caused by CO.

Because of the dangers of CO poisoning, a law was passed in Vermont beginning July 1, 2005.

Owner occupied single-family dwellings that are sold or transferred and all newly constructed dwellings are required to have CO detectors installed in the vicinity of any bedrooms. Standards for CO detector installation and inspection of gas-fired heating appliances are also addressed.

For more details on the requirements of the law, call the Division of Fire Prevention in Springfield at 885-8883.



The Stonewall

In back of the wall of stone a seat is found
Green mossy stones laid years ago, some flat, some round
Who laid them here? Why the toil and care?
With no strength except muscles, and hands bare.

Did they ever relax here? With book or friend?
Or stop to watch the bird's flight, the mosses round the bend?
They left their labor's work, these miles of wall
Of we who contemplate, what in 100 years hence will they recall?

So long for now ...
Margaret Woodruff

Slithering Stonewall Story

by Bill Koutrakos

I once sat on that stonewall with my lunch pail between my legs. As I started to devour my vittles and enjoy conversation with friends who sat on a deck facing me, one asked if I enjoyed sharing my lunch.

Knowing I had more than enough, I answered, "No problem, I have another sandwich I'll share with you."

With a smile he remarked, "I'm not the one who's sharing your lunch."

Confused, I asked, "What do you mean?"

He responded, "Look down and you'll know what I mean."

As I lowered my sight, my body reacted with a leap. Over the lunch pail I went unto the ground.

The uncontrollable laughter of my friends reddened my face, as a poor little snake slid out of my lunch pail and returned to the safety of its stonewall home.

Safe Steps Program helps people prevent falls at home

You may know someone who has fallen. Some of your friends and neighbors may have even lost their independence this way. In fact one out of every three people over the age of 65 will fall each year, and 60 percent of these falls will occur at home.

The Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice of Vermont and New Hampshire offers the Safe Steps Home

program in order to help people reduce their risks of falling. VNA staff members and trained volunteers provide free "Home Safety Visits" which include discussion of common ways people fall, risk factors related to health, balance and personal precautions, and recommendations for home safety.

Improvements are made and up to

\$75 worth of free materials are provided to those who need assistance. Materials include stair rails and grab bars (including installation), non-slip rugs, hand held shower hoses, tub seats, reacher sticks, power failure and night lights and much more.

To make an appointment for a Home Safety Visit call Eileen Katchen at 1-800-858-1696.



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Advance directives provide peace of mind

Mary McCallum, Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont

In our culture, death is a topic that we avoid thinking about for as long as we can. So it is not unusual for people to die suddenly and leave behind a family surprised to discover there is no will.

It is perhaps even more common for someone to become incapacitated without having put in place any advance directives, or instructions, for medical care that family members can follow. The Terri Schaivo case was a wake-up call for many Americans to put advance directives in place.

Advance directives have two parts: a living will and a health care power of attorney. Both are needed. A living will (or "terminal care document") is a legal tool that provides written instructions for your medical care in the event of illness, incapacitation, or injury. They are usually broad choices about nourishment and life support.

A health care power of attorney (often called a medical durable power of attorney) authorizes someone you

have chosen to make health and treatment decisions for you in the event that you are incapacitated or unable to communicate. Without a health care power of attorney, hospitals and doctors will interpret your living will and make decisions that may not be what you want.

In June 2005, the Vermont legislature passed the groundbreaking Advance Directive Bill (H115). Its purpose is to enable adults to retain control over their own health care through the use of advance directives. Other important features of this law include sections regarding "do not resuscitate" orders, organ donation, and funeral arrangements.

The Vermont Ethics Network has put together a packet of information that explains what advance directives are, how to choose an agent to make health decisions for you, how to clarify your treatment wishes, stance on organ donation, and wishes

regarding autopsy and funeral arrangements. Included are worksheets that help you define your spiritual and quality-of-life values.

The ramifications for not putting in place your own advance directives can be great: your own end-of-life experience could be compromised by family conflict, expensive legal intervention, and the painful prolonging of life when there is no longer quality to it. While most elders – and young people – desire to "go gently into that good night," not having the right paperwork can make that impossible.

Rather than thinking of advance directives with a sense of dread, think of them as a way to provide relief to a family that, in a time of crisis, will know that they are doing exactly what their loved one would want. The Terri Schaivo case showed us that no adult is too young to benefit from an advance directive.

Paul Dutton carries on farming tradition

(continued from page 7)

ancestors would turn in their graves and come get me."

Paul plans to raise a variety of crops on the Windham land. He'll plant hay after removing more rocks so he can mow it. Apple and pear trees, already planted there, will soon be old enough to harvest. Plum trees, pumpkins, or raspberries might also be grown, as Paul plans to experiment and see what works best.

Paul says that he was taught at UVM that a successful farmer is one who adapts. "I'm trying to be a good farmer, one who can change." Yet there is plenty about Paul that is solid and unchanging. One of the original Duttons who settled in Windham two centuries ago might have described himself as Paul does. "I'm just a farmer who minds his own business and wants to keep peace with the local people."

CONGRATULATIONS, TOWN AUDITORS

The Town of Windham received recognition from the State of Vermont for the excellence of its 2005 Town Report. Thanks to the auditors who prepared it – Dawn Bower, Sheila Friedli, and Edith Serke

**We extend greetings
to Windham's new
property owners:**



Andrew & Dawn-Marie
Dryden

Gary & Samantha Clark

John & Anne McDonald

Peter Muller

Leonard McCormick

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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 10:00 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 to 5 PM. Also at that time: reading group on first Weds, knitting group on second and third Weds, and writing group on fourth Weds. All invited to join.

Tuesday, March 7 – **TOWN MEETING** at 10:00 AM at Town Meeting House. Everyone is urged to attend!

Every Second Thursday – **Town Planning Commission** meets at 7:00 PM at Town Office, public invited.

Wednesday, March 15 – **Senior Brown Bag Chat Group** at 12:00 PM at Meeting House

Wednesday, March 29 – **Windham Community Organization** meets at 7:00 PM at Helen George's. Call Carolyn Chase at 874-4039 to confirm.

Monday - Friday, April 17-21 – **Spring Vacation** for Windham Elementary School.

Wednesday, April 19 – **Senior Brown Bag Chat Group** at 12:00 PM at Meeting House

Wednesday, April 26 – **Windham Community Organization** meets at 7:00 PM at Helen George's. Call Carolyn Chase at 874-4039 to confirm.

Friday, April 14 – **Deadline for WN&N submissions** (*see notice above and page 3.*)

Saturday, May 6 – **Spaghetti Supper** at 5:00 PM at Meeting House to raise money for Summer Camp. Look for more details in the next *News & Notes* or ask Billie Van Alstyne