



WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1

WINDHAM, VERMONT

JULY - AUGUST 2006

NEWS FLASH! Minutes before the *News & Notes* was ready for printing, we received word that Bob Charlebois, managing director of Catamount Energy LLC, informed Select Board Chair Walter Woodruff that his company is withdrawing its interest in the wind energy project on Glebe Mountain. The information in the article below remains very relevant, due to other potential future wind energy projects in our town.

Questions remain despite ruling on wind turbines

by Mary Boyer

The Vermont Environmental Court has rendered a decision on whether the Glebe Mountain Wind Project should fall under the jurisdiction of Section 248 of Act 30 and the Public Service Board or under District Commission of the Act 250 Land Use Regulation, or both.

In its May 18 decision, the Court reasserted the jurisdiction of Section 248 and the PSB over all utility projects in the state. But it also said that Act 250 has jurisdiction over all "secondary impacts" of any project on lands currently under Act 250 permits. Areas of secondary impact could include ground and storm water, erosion, wildlife and habitat, among others.

BBQ, raffle, exhibit happen July 15!

By Imme Maurath

This year's annual chicken BBQ will be held on Saturday, July 15 at 5:30 PM on the lawn of the Windham Meeting House, hosted by the Windham Community Organization. For many, it's a highlight of the summer.

Dinner will include half a chicken, cooked by Walter Woodruff using his secret recipe, potato salad, baked beans, green salad, an assortment of home-baked fresh bread, and strawberry shortcake, made from locally picked strawberries, and fresh whipped cream, all for a mere \$9 per adult and \$4 for kids under 12. Dinner will be accompanied with music by Colin Blazej and Peter and Diane Newton.

Also popular with this event is the raffle featuring items donated by local businesses and artists. The grand prize this year will be dinner for two at the nearby Windham Hill Inn. This fabulous prize, valued at over \$120, includes tax and gratuity. The elegant and delicious dinners at the Inn are a great way to celebrate any special occasion. There will also be many other desirable prizes. Raffle tickets are \$1 each or six for \$5.

A new feature at this year's function will be an Arts and Crafts Exhibition. Local artists and craftsmen will be displaying and selling their creations. If you care to show your goods, please call Nancy Dyke at 874-4428.

The decision left open important questions of how secondary impacts would be defined and what pre-construction steps, or post-completion re-mediation, might be necessary. The decision does not address the possibility of secondary impacts preventing a proposed development from being built in the first place.

Consensus among many experts, both supporters and opponents of commercial wind projects, is that the decision presents as many new questions as it answers and will lead to increased confusion on all sides. With respect to the Town of Windham, the concept of secondary impacts appears to support our existing town plan in discouraging commercial development of any kind.

This muddled picture got an almost immediate response from the Land Use Panel of the Natural Resources Board with a motion to reconsider sent to the Environmental Court on May 22. Under existing Act 250 law, no substantial or material change can be made to lands permitted under the act without a "permit amendment".

The legislature has specifically named certain situations where a permit amendment is not required, but a public utility project is not one of them. In light of the statute language and existing case law, the Natural Resources

(continued on next page)

SUPPORT NEWS & NOTES

Included in this issue are a contribution form and a return envelope. If you appreciate reading the *News & Notes* with its information about our town, we urge you to send at least the basic annual contribution of \$10. We depend upon community support. Please mail the form and your check to Windham News & Notes, c/o Windham Community Organization, 5976 Windham Hill Rd, 05359.

Questions remain despite ruling on wind turbines *(continued from page 1)*

Board asserts the legislature never gave the Environmental Court the power to substantially change land use simply because it will be used for a utility project. A response from the Environmental Court to this motion could come within days or could take several weeks. Whenever the Court responds, all interested parties have 30 days to appeal.

Given the nature of the Court's decision and the importance of this jurisdictional issue, it is considered likely the legislature will address the subject in the next session. The initiation of legislative action should lead to a statewide public debate on the appropriateness of commercial wind developments in Vermont and how and where they should be built to protect the environment and utilize our wind resources.

Planners appreciate input

by the Planning Commission

The Windham Planning Commissions thanks everyone who took the time to comment on the wind turbine proposal on Glebe Mountain. Concerns included visual, environmental, water quality, noise, light, and rural beauty. The Town of Windham determined that wind towers on Glebe Mountain would be in our forest district and incompatible with our Town Plan.

Broadband Project considers options

A meeting to consider how the Windham Broadband Project should proceed is set for June 28 at 3:30 at the Town Office. Options include an effort to encourage more people to sign up with Optima as Starters, a possibility to join with other towns to form a broadband cooperative, and a decision to bring broadband to the Town Office and Elementary School with other outreach put on hold.

In other developments, there were press reports that Catamount Energy, proposers of the Glebe Mountain Project, have said they will not pursue their application at this time because of the "additional layer of bureaucracy" created by the court's decision.

Another developer, UPC Wind, is proceeding with plans to construct a 26-turbine development in Sheffield, Vermont, although local opinion on the subject is divided. UPC has optioned land in the Stiles Brook Tract, east of Windham, for a possible development. No details are known at this time of their plans here.

Fire Company invites community to auction

by Imme Maurath

This year's firehouse auction will be held on Saturday August 12, beginning at 9:00 AM. There are always wonderful buys to be had at this event.

If you would like to make a donation of items to be auctioned, please call Rick at 874-4104 or Steve at 875-1709 to arrange for a time to drop off items. We would really appreciate it if you did not leave items without contacting us first. We can also make arrangements for pick-up of larger items.

After the auction, we will have our annual chicken barbeque at 5:00 PM, followed by our famous pie auction. Come see what some people will pay for a pie. If you would like to donate a pie or cake, please call me, Imme, at 875-1709. Thank you in advance for your support.

Clarence Merritt generously served Town of Windham



The *News & Notes* is sorry to report the passing of Clarence Merritt on June 5 after a long battle with cancer. Funeral services were held in Chester on June 9, followed by a 12-gun salute and a tearful playing of taps at the cemetery. Friends and family gathered afterwards at the Meeting House.

Clarence served the town of Windham for many years, including serving as town auditor, justice of the peace, selectman, and lister. At the time of his death, he was forest fire warden, town constable, town agent, grand juror, assistant town clerk, assistant town treasurer, North Wind-

ham Cemetery director, assistant election official, fence viewer, surveyor of wood, lumber and shingles, and emergency service radio operator. Nearly all of the current positions were volunteer.

Clarence was also a founder of the Windham Fire and Rescue Company and a key volunteer with the company for 37 years. Before his passing, he told his wife Carol that instead of flowers he would like donations to be made to the firehouse.

Thank you, Clarence, for all you gave to Windham. You will be greatly missed.

Windham Students Score Big!

by Roberta Stradling

Every Spring the district conducts its own assessments in Math and Reading. We administer the Degrees of Reading Power, a standardized norm-referenced test in May. Windham students scored an impressive string of 100 percents!

In five of the six grade levels tested, 100 percent of the students met or exceeded the standard. In the one remaining grade level, 80 percent of

our students met or exceeded the standard. For our school, 80 percent represents all students but one.

Even better, not only did our students meet or achieve the standard but in five of the six grade levels, 100 percent of the students improved their instructional level scores as compared to last year's scores! Again the remaining grade level score of 80 percent represents one child whose score stayed the same.

An instructional level score indicates at what level students are able to read and comprehend sufficiently to gain new knowledge. Since the level of difficulty increases with each grade level any child whose score stays the same has already improved his reading capacity by a full grade level.

What a pretty sight our report card was with all those 100s. Our kids scored big!



Summer Day Camp offers many activities

by Billie Jean Van Alstyne, camp director

Summer camp will be here before you know it. Camp will be held at the Windham Meeting House from July 10 thru 28. All children from 4-12 years of age are welcomed.

Camp will be held Monday thru Thursday from 9:00-1:00 and Friday from 9:00-12:30.

The cost per week will be the same as last year -- \$20 for the first child in a family, \$10 for the second, and \$5 for the third, payable Monday morning. If you are unable to pay,

assistance is available by contacting Nancy Dyke at 874-4428 or Claire Trask at 824-6304 prior to camp.

Walter Woodruff has agreed to take the kids on another hike this year, and I have many new and fun crafts planned. However, there is always room for more. If you have any ideas or would like to volunteer your time, please call me, Billie Jean, at 875-4371.

I look forward to seeing everyone there.

Vacation Bible School provides religious option

by Pastor Mark Griffin

Come to the Valley Bible Church to set sail on an adventure to discover God's Truth during the Vacation Bible School on July 10-14 from 9:30 - 12:00 noon. Each day will be filled with exciting Bible stories, crafts,

games, puppet skits, snacks & special prizes.

There is no cost, and transportation is available within Windham. Please call Kathy Griffin for more information at 874-7287.



WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

is a publication
of the Windham
Community Organization

Published six times a year,
the basic membership is \$10.
Send to address below.

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Acknowledgments

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

Submissions

Windham News & Notes
welcomes submissions.

Send articles of 100 to 300 words
to the address below.
We prefer emailed submissions.

Next deadline
August 18, 2006

WINDHAM
NEWS & NOTES
c/o Windham Community
Organization
5976 Windham Hill Road
Windham, VT 05359
802-875-4874
wnandn@vermontel.net

Fire Company installs new dry hydrant

by Imme Maurath



Thanks to a grant from the Vermont Rural Protection Task Force, sponsored by George D. Aiken RCND, Windham now has two dry hydrants. The newest one was installed on Burbee Pond Road with the help of Merrill Excavating and Windham's Volunteer Firefighters.

These hydrants are especially important in the winter when waters are frozen and in the summer when waters are low. They are considered dry because there is no water in the pipe until the pump on the firetruck asks for it.

The other hydrant is close to the fire house. Now, we have one on both ends of town. We just need to move the firehouse to the middle.

Thanks to Fire Chief Rick Weitzel for his efforts in applying for the grant.

WCO changes venue, expands membership, continues service

by Nancy Dyke

At the April meeting of the Windham Community Organization (WCO), two important changes took place. First of all, we met at the Meeting House because we are outgrowing private homes. Secondly, a number of men were present. In the past, women have made up the membership, but we are enthusiastic about broadening this to include men. Already they have been a part of assisting families in Windham. Welcome men! We cordially invite any and all people to join the group.

In the past two months, we have assisted another family and will be making a limited number of scholarships available to families for the Summer Day Camp program at the Meeting House. If you are aware of anyone in the community who needs help, please contact Mary Boyer at 875-5242. As always, information is held in confidence.

Ongoing projects are the development of a comprehensive emergency plan for the community and the dissemination of information about health and community resources. We remind everyone that a booklet describing recom-

mended precautions regarding the expected "Bird Flu" pandemic is available at the Town Office.

At the May meeting, Bill Farace, Sr. and his wife, Ching, joined us to talk about their project of collecting medical equipment and supplies in this country to send to places of great need in the Philippine Islands. They would appreciate help in repacking the supplies to be sent. If you are interested in helping in this way, please contact Nancy Dyke at 874-4428.

One of our major fund-raisers, the Chicken BBQ and Raffle, is quickly approaching on July 15. If you would like to help with this event by either donating food or assisting on the day of the barbecue, please contact Imme Maurath at 875-1709. Additional information about the event can be found in this issue of the *News & Notes*. Please join us.

WANTED

**WOODWORKERS
FIBER ARTISTS - POTTERS
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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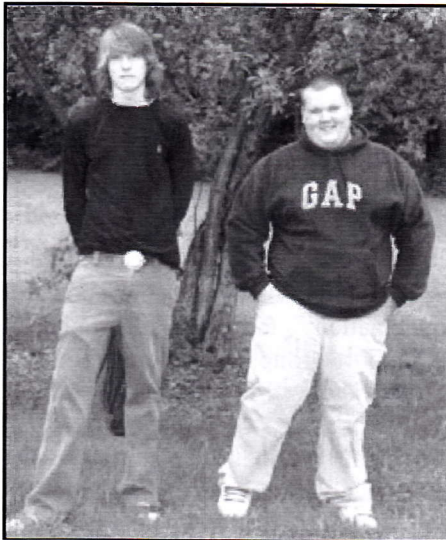
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Four from Windham graduate high school

by Imme Maurath

This year we have four students graduating from high school. Pictured here are Ben Partridge, who attended the Vermont Academy, and Jonathan Gordon, who went to Green Mountain High.

Ben is considering St. Lawrence University to study music or possibly political science. Do you think he might follow in his mom's footsteps? As you all know, Carolyn Partridge is our state representative.

Jon Jon also graduated from Springfield Technical School in Springfield and was awarded student of the year. For this he received \$500 worth of tools. He will be furthering his education at the Stafford Tech Center in Rutland and may be your future plumber.

David Van Alstyne and Nora Pike were not available for this photo. We hope to feature them in the next issue of the *News & Notes*.

Listers complete reassessment of town property values

by Bill Koutrakos, Jerry Dyke, and Michael Simonds

The listers in Windham wish to thank the town's property owners for their cooperation in our recent reassessment. Windham has not had a total reassessment since 1999, and a number of properties had not been reevaluated since then.

The state required Windham to assess all properties in town to bring them to market value. Market value is the agreed upon price of a willing seller and a willing buyer. Property sales in Windham over the past several years are the lister's guide to market value for all properties. When a property sells for more than the assessed value, that sale puts upward pressure on all property values. The reason your assessment rose even though you didn't make any improvements is because buyers are paying higher and higher prices for properties like yours.

Buyers need to realize that the price they pay for a property becomes the market value and the assessed value their taxes are based on. The listers don't set the market value -- the buyers and sellers do.

The most common question, we listers are asked is, "How will this affect my taxes?" For each taxpayer, our answer is, "We don't know." In general, however, we can tell you how the process works.

When the appeal process is completed, the listers add all the property values in town together to create the Grand List. The Grand List will reflect the increase in all property values plus additional properties built during the past year. Some of these are in the half million to million dollar range.

The Grand List is the basis for setting the municipal tax rate. The voters of Windham passed a budget at our town meeting in March. The municipal rate will be set to raise only the amount of money needed for the budget. The town doesn't raise additional money beyond what the budget requires.

The Grand List is also sent to the state where the Grand

Lists from all Vermont towns are added together. This statewide grand list is then multiplied by the resident and non-resident educational tax rates passed by the legislature this past session.



Windham Elementary says goodbye to seven

Seven 6th graders will be taking a longer bus ride next fall as they graduate from the Windham Elementary School and move on to Leland & Gray. The kids say they are going to miss Mr. P. J. but are looking forward to the future.

Pictured here are Crystal Clay, Jason Carey, Kayla Farace, Eric Starr, Caitlin Persa, Maxx Scott, and Nikki Ires, with their principal Mrs. Stradling and their teacher Mr. Parker-Jennings.

Hospice provides support for one's final days

by Beverly D. Scott

Hospice is an approach to care for people in the final months of their lives. Because hospice is a philosophy of care and not a place, home is wherever the patient is. Patients receive individualized attention emphasizing pain and symptom management, as well as emotional support.

Patients who choose hospice can participate fully in the development of their plan of care, focusing on what is most important to them. The dedicated hospice staff also provide support to families and loved ones of those touched by life-limiting illness.

Goals of Hospice

Hospice provides support for the patient and his or her family. It addresses the physical, psycho-social, emotional, spiritual and financial concerns of terminal illness. Throughout the last days of life, hospice helps the patient live as fully as possible.

Eligibility

Hospice services are available to people facing life-limiting illness who choose to discontinue curative treatment. Anyone can request hospice services. Referral may come from the patient, a family member, healthcare clinician or the patient's own physician.

An initial assessment visit by a hospice nurse, physician or social worker can help a patient and family decide whether or not hospice services may be appropriate. A physician's order is necessary for admission to the program.

Available Services

A team of skilled medical professionals, counselors and trained volunteers provides the following services:

Nursing services - Specially trained hospice nurses visit the patient in his/her own setting to provide physical care and assist the family.

Medical services - Hospice medical directors are available to consult with the patient's doctor about any care issues and to make home visits when appropriate.

Social services - Social workers are available to assist in accessing community services, providing financial guidance, and offering supportive counseling.

Spiritual services - The hospice chaplain is available for counseling or contacting the patient's own clergy.

Licensed nurses' aides - When appropriate, certified nurses' aides can assist with physical care.

Volunteer services - Trained volunteers provide vital assistance, such as, emotional support, companionship and respite care.

Bereavement services - Home visits and community resources are offered to the patient's family for 13 months after a patient's death. Support groups are offered in all regional office locations for bereaved family, friends and community members.

Other services - Physical, occupational, nutritional and speech therapists are available for expert consultation when needed.

Timing

When curative treatment for an illness is no longer appropriate, hospice services complement ongoing medical care. Since emphasis is on comfort and support, the decision to enter the hospice program should be made early enough for the patient to fully benefit from all services.

Payment

Medicare and Medicaid have a special hospice benefit which covers eligible patients for all hospice services, medications and medical equipment that are approved by the care team and are related to the terminal illness.

Many private insurance plans cover hospice services. Hospice staff will work with families to access benefits and utilize coverage that is available to them. The hospice program is available to all who are eligible without regard to ability to pay.

Obtaining Hospice

Physicians or hospital discharge planners usually make referrals to receive services. However, a patient may request services for himself or herself, a family member, or a neighbor. Referral calls should be made to Visiting Nurses Association/Hospice at 800-575-5162.

Helping Hospice

You can help the hospice program in many different ways, such as becoming a volunteer, giving a donation, or helping educate others about hospice. Call the Visiting Nurses Association/Hospice at 802-295-2604 for information.

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Church conducts service in cemetery

by Nancy Dyke

On Sunday, May 28, members and guests of the Windham Congregational Church (UCC) met in the cemetery for a unique service. A number of people shared remembrances of those now departed who left a positive legacy for which they are thankful. Personal stories were shared about both military and non-military people. Dave Crittenden played his guitar and led group singing. Isabel Bernegger, a resident of Townshend and student at Leland & Gray High School, played taps.



Valley Bible Church invites your participation

Pastor Mark Griffin
www.valleybibleVT.com
 3264 Windham Hill Road
 South Windham
 802-874-7287

Calendar of Events

July 10-14 - Vacation Bible School
 July 29 - Sunday School Picnic
 August 19 - New England Church History Trip
 August 27 - Sunday Afternoon Picnic
 at the Parsonage

Sunday Services

9:55 AM - Sunday School
 > 2 & 3 year olds - Teacher - Sally Cutts
 > Pre-Primary - Teacher - Rachel Hammond

> Primary & Juniors - Kathy Griffin
 > Teens and Adults - Pastor Mark Griffin
 11:00 AM - Worship Service
 6:00 PM - Evening Bible Study

Thursday Services

7:00 PM - Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

Current Bible Study Series

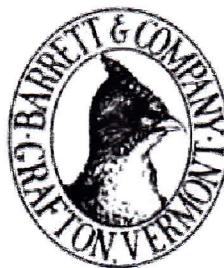
- Adult Sunday School - Revealing Christ
The Purpose of Biblical Prophecy
- Sunday AM - The Quest for Joy
The Book of Philippians
- Sunday PM - God is Faithful to Failures
Studies in the Book of Judges
- Thursday PM - The Great News
The Book of Romans

HYMN SING

Sunday, July 2, 2006, 5:00 PM
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Is Windham a good place to grow old?

by Edith Serke

During a recent Brown Bag Lunch meeting, a dozen Windham residents discussed the pros and cons of growing old successfully in Windham. This was part of a Windham County Long Term Care project under the auspices of the Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont (COASEV).

The goal of this project is to determine what makes a community conducive to healthy and successful aging. The focus group was led by Edith Serke, who currently serves as president of the COASEV.

Not surprisingly, the group agreed that the best things about growing older in Windham are concerned neighbors, lots of fellow seniors, less stress, good medical care, year-round outdoor activities, and access to cultural events. The most difficult things are dealing with power outages, weather, limited transportation and access to services, high taxes, and insects, e.g. black flies, mosquitoes.

The group agreed that Windham residents have excellent resources available to them, such as visiting nurses and hospice, fire and rescue, community organizations, church communities, information at Town Office, Council on Aging, Grace Cottage Hospital, caring neighbors and friends, access to state legislators, a sense of community, and volunteer opportunities.

However, there are some challenges to growing older. Among those are: difficulty in information dissemination, older persons' pride and reluctance to ask for help, not

being connected to the community, remoteness from family, a lack of knowledge and understanding of services, appropriate housing with services, and inter-generational activities.

Finally, the group described their vision of a successful community. It would have affordable housing with transportation, stores, sidewalks, and community services, such as health care and recreation. There would be a continuum of care and services, including volunteer assistance. There should also be an annual census of older people to track their condition and needs.

In addition, older people would be recognized as a valuable resource. There would be inter-generational activities and an awareness of people's needs, and there would be regular get-togethers of older citizens. (The latter is already available in Windham at the monthly Brown Bag Lunch and Chat Group meetings which are held at noon on the third Wednesday of each month at the Meeting House.)

The results of about two dozen focus groups, such as the one held in Windham, will be combined and analyzed by the Council on Aging and its consultants. They will serve as the basis of a county-wide needs assessment and an area plan to develop and coordinate services, many of which are funded with federal and state dollars.

For more information, contact Edith Serke at 874-4812.

Residents create art on palettes

by Mary Boyer

From Memorial Day through October, the Vermont Art Council is sponsoring a statewide exhibit of artwork created on wooden palettes. The council has distributed over 7,000 free palettes throughout the state to artists and people who might not think of themselves as artists.

Long-time resident and artist Donna Koutrakos has painted one with a classic Vermont farm scene. Members of Windham's Wednesday Library Group have created a sampler of their handiwork with small examples of crochet-

ing, rug hooking, weaving, quilting, and knitting.

Both palettes will be placed in the Meeting House for viewing throughout the summer, and Donna has generously donated her palette for the raffle at the Windham Community Organization's Chicken BBQ.



CLASSIFIED ADS * CLASSIFIED ADS * CLASSIFIED ADS * CLASSIFIED ADS * CLASSIFIED ADS

WANTED

People to place small notices in the Windham News & Notes. 25 words for \$10 in one issue.

Do you have an item to sell or give away? Is there a used item you'd like to purchase or have donated? Do you need someone to help you with a task? Or have you skills to offer for pay? What about homes for those kittens?

Send \$10 and your 25 words or less to News & Notes, 5976 Windham Hill Rd, Windham, VT 05359, or give them to a member of the WN&N team, listed on page 3.

Living in Hall's house brings tales of Harry

by Elisabeth Robinson

For a house to be named after you, you have to live in it for two generations, so when we bought our house in South Windham in 1986, it was known locally as Hall's Farm. Harry Hall had owned it and had brought up his family there.

It was a farm before Harry retired, and a hundred foot chicken coop trailed at right angles from the back of the house. Once painted a bright barn red, it had faded and was starting to fall down. As we were not going to raise chickens, we had it torn down and burnt in what was the old sand excavation pit, which later became our pond, but that is another story.

Like many people in Vermont, Harry had several jobs. As well as keeping chickens, he kept several bee hives, and apparently had started raising bees when he lived in Massachusetts as a child. One of the games he used to play with his friends was to torment his neighbor's bees and get them to leave the hives. Then it was a question of who could run fastest to outrun the bees and avoid getting stung. Apparently, everyone got stung, and it did not bother Harry.

He also used to grow onions, although he found the weeding of them to be a terrible chore.



In 1943, Harry was working at the Burbee Pond saw-mill, as well as having been "forced" into the position of town clerk, a job he did not relish, but did for 32 years. Harry was not in favor of government intervention and liked to run things himself.

Harry built a room onto the back of the house which also served as a post office. The postboxes had to be moved when we renovated the back of the house, but we still have them (with the original names) and use them to store wine bottles. A flag pole used to grace our front door, before it rotted and fell down. We have plans to replace it.

Harry used to follow the loggers down the West River before the Townshend Dam was built, and would cook massive fry-ups for them on the riverside.

The old kitchen cupboards were covered in buck shot, and I found out years later that Harry would sit in his rocking chair in the evening and wait for rats to pop out from under the sink, then blast them.

Our house is now called The Old Manse, as that is what it appears to be in the deed, but we will always think of it as Hall's Farm.

NATURE'S DANCE

by Carolyn Chase

He moves to the music
of his hunger as
it gnaws at his vitals.

The pasture becomes his stage.
His calling is the way of nature -

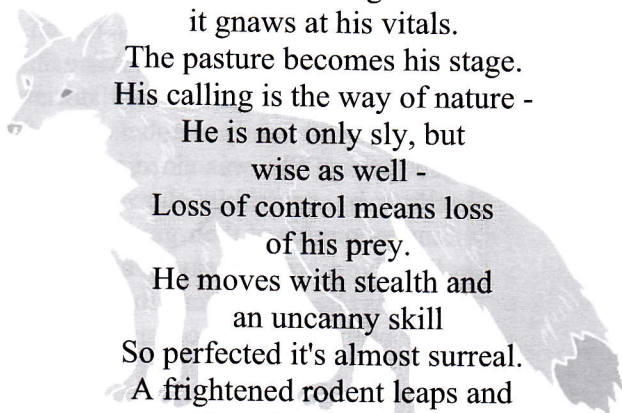
He is not only sly, but
wise as well -

Loss of control means loss
of his prey.

He moves with stealth and
an uncanny skill
So perfected it's almost surreal.

A frightened rodent leaps and
Graceful as a dancer

The fox rises in the air
And is rewarded with his prize.



Flies and caterpillars bug us

Are you seeing pesky flies everywhere? Not cluster flies. Not black flies. But flies that sit in your hair and on your outdoor furniture or just about anywhere outside.

Word has it that all these flies were imported to fight the infestation of tent caterpillars, which is very bad in other parts of the state. This particular kind of fly lays its eggs on the caterpillars, and the larva eat the caterpillars alive!

One can only hope that those who brought the flies here are right about the flies dying off once they no longer have caterpillars to devour!



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Michael Simonds and Mary McCoy, hosts

Each year the celebrated Stowell family has a reunion. This year it was held on Memorial Day weekend with the first event held here in Windham at the Meeting House on May 27. The arrival of many of the descendants of Minnie and Elias Stowell inspired three articles in the News & Notes.

Stowell family celebrates with dinner and dance

by Margaret Woodruff

Chef John Stowell Malone and his wife Juanita arrived a few days in advance to prepare the dinner for Saturday evening. Every time I peeked into the kitchen, Juanita was busy in the dish pan. The Malones recreated the meals that were served when the Stowell family ran the Saturday night dances in South Windham -- baked beans, brown bread with raisins that was steamed in coffee cans, steamed hot dogs, and potato salad.

The desserts of sweet potato pie, custard and other pies, and fruit puddings were served after the main meal was finished. Then the floors were cleared of tables and the extra chairs. Appetites were renewed by square dances called by Sally Newton, while her friends helped her with the music.

Out of the original 17 children born to Elias and Minnie Stowell only four girls remain. Three of them were at the dinner; the one who lives in Florida didn't make it. Alice, who is very spry at 95, told a joke on Saturday during the dinner. May we all be that able when we are her age.

During the afternoon, Mary & Heath Boyer opened their home to be viewed by the group. Their house is the only standing structure left in Windham of the former Stowell general store. Many thanks to the Boyers for providing this opportunity for them to view a piece of their Windham history.

So long for now,
Margaret Woodruff

Family visits their former home and store

by Mary Boyer

The Minnie and Elias Stowell family occupied several homes in Windham and the nearby towns. From about 1923 to 1947, they lived in what is now our home at 6844 Windham Hill, where they operated a general store and pumped gas. Pictures of the house at that time are on display in the Windham Meeting House.

Stowells also had a repair and blacksmith shop and a barn for cows next to the creek where today only a partial foundation remains. The last of their 17 children were born in this house, and after ownership passed to the next generation, three grandchildren were born there.

As the stories revealed, Elias, affectionately known as

El, was a consummate entrepreneur. In addition to running the store, he had the town's first phone. Calls would come in the store, and for a fee he would start up the truck and deliver messages. He also set up the first electrified house in Windham. A gasoline engine was used to turn a generator and charge four truck batteries in the basement. The electric lights were run off the batteries before rural electrification arrived. Water for the house was piped down from a spring high up on Corn Hill Road.

Of the four surviving Stowell children, three came to the reunion. My husband and I offered to open our house to the family on the Saturday afternoon of the reunion. It had been many years since any of the family had been in the house, and some of the younger generations had never been inside. During the open house Alice Stowell Bliss gave tours and told stories to more than 60 family members from four generations. She was aided in her story telling by several nephews who had fond memories of their grandfather.

Family members came from as far away as Oregon to attend the reunion. In spite of their broad geographical dispersion, the Stowell family is deeply connected to Windham, and many of them were gratified that so much of the town is as it was so many years ago.



Alice recalls growing up in world's best town

by Mary McCoy

Alice Stowell Bliss was born in Windham in 1911, and she's glad of it. The thirteenth of Stowell's children, she grew up in a house near Burbee Pond Road and later in the house on Windham Hill Road. Her memories of those days are vivid and full of warm regard.

"It was great growing up in a big family," she says. "We learned to get along and to appreciate family. It was a happy life."

Her parents had a farm, and they ran the dance hall in South Windham. Both parents played musical instruments, but others performed for the dances. Her mother was busy serving the suppers she made -- baked beans, hot dogs, potato salad, stuffed eggs, steamed brown bread, and cream pies -- the same meal they serve at their annual reunions. They've published a cookbook, and recently also a booklet of their family's favorite songs.

Tragedy hit the family in 1923, when Alice's brother Martin was killed. He was riding in a buggy when he hit rough road and his gun accidentally went off. Shortly after, her father bought the general store which operated from the house where Heath and Mary Boyer now live.

The sign outside said only "E. L. Stowell," yet inside was everything the town folks needed -- grain and meal for livestock, clothes and shoes, foods, and medicines. The Boyers found a large wooden box left from those days. Among the medicines inside was Dr. Mills Anti-pain Pills, which Alice regrets is no longer on the market.

The winters that followed included rides on a sled that held as many as six people. Night rides under the moonlight were the best. They slid all the way from the church to the cemetery (by our current town office), then hiked back up to do it again. Skating on Burbee Pond was also a delight, and all the Stowell kids were good skaters.

Mud season was another story. Alice recalls that the ruts in the roads were so deep, cars sank to their running boards. The batteries in cars were in the lower part of the vehicles then, and the mud seized one of her brother's batteries, which was never seen again. Yet even this was not disturbing. Alice remembers fondly how neighbors pulled each other out of the mud. Herb Dutton helped many a neighbor with his horses.

Alice's mother made all the children's clothes, and Alice remembers the night her mother found out that her

brother was speaking in a Christmas program the next day. Somehow, her mother managed overnight to make a shirt and tie for him to wear. Her father wanted to be a lawyer and taught himself law through books he bought at auctions. Despite having only a seventh grade education, he served for four terms in the state legislature.

Alice says, "I'm thankful to have been born and brought

up in Windham, the best little country town in the world. People were neighbors who got to know each other and helped each other. If anyone had bad luck, others were there to help." When one of her brothers lost the horse he depended upon for his logging business, people took up a collection and bought him a new one.

When she was 18, Alice left home for a job in Ludlow, bottling milk and doing housework. Then she worked in a log cabin "eating place" where hamburgers were 15 cents. She met her husband Bill Bliss at a dance, and they married in 1933. She still wears her gold wedding ring, purchased for \$2.95 from Montgomery Ward. They made their home in Chester, where Alice still lives. When Bill passed away, they'd been married 56 years.

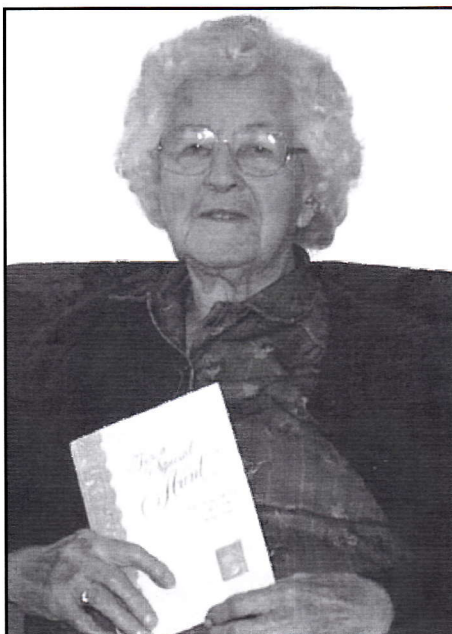
Alice still keeps busy, working two days a week at the Chester Information Center. She stays in touch with family

and friends by writing letters, and she helps to organize the annual Stowell family reunion.

By today's standards, Alice's hard-working life has not been an easy one. Yet she says, "Thank goodness I was born when I was and not today. Look at the time savers -- push a button -- it's done. Microwaves are wonderful and make life easy. But things go too fast, and we don't work to make them happen. Kids know the computer, but they don't know a nickel from a dime. It takes away their thinking. And we call that progress."

When Alice was a student at the one-room school in West Windham, each morning one child took a pail, went across the road and down the bank to the brook, bringing back a pail of water for all the students to drink during the day. It was an honor to do this chore.

We can only hope that our kids today will look back on their childhoods with memories as sweet as those of Alice Stowell Bliss.



Alice looks at one of the many cards she received for her 95th birthday in June of this year.



WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

Windham Community Organization
5976 Windham Hill Road
Windham, VT 05359

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 (UCC)** has worship services at 9:30 AM; everyone is invited.

Every Sunday and Thursday -- **Valley Bible Church** has services (*see page 7*).

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.

Monday - Friday, July 10 - 14 -- **Vacation Bible School** at Valley Bible Church (*see page 3*).

Monday - Friday, July 10 - 28 -- **Summer Day Camp** at Meeting House (*see page 3*).

Saturday, July 15 -- **WCO's Annual Chicken BBQ** with Raffle and Crafts Fair (*see page 1*).

Wednesday, July 19 -- **Senior Brown Bag Chat Group** at 12 noon at the Meeting House.

Wednesday, July 26 -- **Windham Community Organization** meets at 7:00 PM at the Meeting House. All welcomed.

Saturday, August 21 -- **Firehouse Auction**, all day from 9:00 AM (*see page 2*).

Wednesday, August 16 -- **Senior Brown Bag Chat Group** at 12 noon at the Meeting House.

Friday, August 18 -- **Deadline for WN&N submissions.**

Wednesday, August 30 -- **Windham Community Organization** meets at 7:00 PM at the Meeting House. All welcomed.

Come one and all -- enjoy our wonderful town!