



# WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 6

WINDHAM, VERMONT

MAY - JUNE 2007

## Town Meeting was productive and congenial

by Edith Serke

Voters of the town of Windham take their civic responsibilities seriously, as was demonstrated by the sixty or so residents who attended the annual Town Meeting on March 6. Most of the decisions were on routine matters, such as the various appropriations for roads, the school, garage and town office maintenance and equipment, and support for a number of nonprofit organizations that provide social and health services for Windham residents.

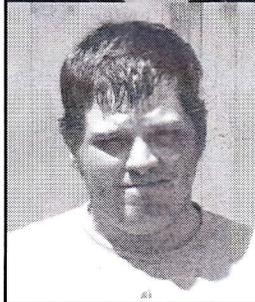
The way delinquent property taxes are collected and penalties are levied generated a lively discussion. The current collector of delinquent taxes, Ernest Friedli, recommended several changes which were passed. Taxes will no longer be due on or before November 1. They will now be due on or before October 31, and delinquent on November 1. The delinquent tax interest rate was set at 1 percent per month, or 12 percent per annum, on unpaid principal. That begins as of April 1, 2007.

The current practice of assessing a penalty on delinquent taxes the day after they are due was also changed. The penalty will now begin on January 1 of the following year. The current practice sets the penalty at 8 percent. That was revised to 3 percent on unpaid principal as of January 1, 2008, and an additional 5 percent on unpaid principal as of June 30, 2008.

The method of paying the delinquent tax collector was also changed from the current practice of paying him or her the penalty fees he or she collects. Now the delinquent tax collector will be paid the same hourly rate some other town officials receive, which is currently \$12.50 an hour.

There was a proposal to appropriate \$20,000 to qualify for a 50 percent matching grant from the Vermont Emergency Management Agency to be used for the purchase of an emergency generator for the school and town office buildings.

Health Boyer stated that Windham did not receive the grant previously because we did not



have the matching funds available, and he recommended that the funds be now appropriated so that we will qualify in the future for such a grant. The funds could be used for some preparatory work such as the purchase and installation of a propane tank and other equipment. The funds were approved by a voice vote.

There was a surprise at the Town Meeting when Helen George, a member and past chair of the select board for thirty years, was replaced by Mary Boyer. Those at the meeting honored Helen for her many years of dedicated service to the town with a long standing ovation, expressing their gratitude.

Other officers were also selected. Michael Simonds was re-elected as a lister; Regina Noel, who was appointed as an auditor last year, was elected for a term until 2010, and Virginia Crittenden was elected as an auditor to fill a vacancy until 2009. David Corriveau was elected as constable. Other officials were re-elected to their respective positions.

Once again, our two state representatives, Carolyn Partridge and Michael Obuchowski dropped by to give us an update on matters before the state legislature, especially budget concerns, school funding, economic development, and environmental concerns.

According to Windham tradition, a delicious pot luck luncheon was enjoyed by all.

Officers elected for the first time: (top to bottom) Select Board Member Mary Boyer, Auditors Ginny Crittenden and Gina Noel, and Constable David Corriveau.

## Windham News & Notes turns 4

With this issue, our little paper completes four years of bi-monthly publications. We've had a lot to report -- town government news, local community groups activities, wildlife sightings, interviews with neighbors, Windham history, etc.

We hope you enjoy the way we fill these pages. In the next issue, we will ask you to send a contribution to support our efforts. We do this only once a year to keep our accounting simple. Please help us meet our costs.

## *Some of the faces from Windham's Town Meeting 2007...*



## **Local survey shows great interest in Verizon DSL**

*by Mary McCoy*

In March, all households in the half of Windham with Verizon phone service received a letter and survey card to assess interest in having faster Internet service through DSL from Verizon. The response was terrific.

While Verizon says that usually around 15 percent of their customers sign up for DSL, 90 of the 180 surveys we sent were returned saying the households were likely or very likely to sign up for DSL. That's 50 percent, more than three times Verizon's usual number!

The Windham select board will be sending a letter to Verizon informing them of our high interest and urging them to bring DSL here this year. Copies of the letter will be sent to our state representatives, the governor, and the Public

Service Board, all of which have indicated support for the expansion of broadband to towns like ours.

Verizon has stated that we are not in their plans for DSL this year, but we are in future plans to receive DSL from Verizon or FairPoint, the company with which Verizon is merging. We want Verizon to act now. They have already installed fiber optic cable up Windham Hill Road, the most expensive part of making DSL service possible.

Very recently, we have been contacted by two wireless broadband vendors and one satellite company expressing interest in providing service here. DSL probably would reach more homes and be less expensive, but if it isn't offered here, we still might have other high-speed options.

# Senior housing takes shape

by Edith Serke

If you drive just past Grace Cottage Hospital on Route 35 in Townshend, you'll be surprised to see two substantial buildings going up amidst lots of construction activity. That's Valley Cares, the senior housing project, scheduled to open later this year.

The three-story building on the south side of the site will house 18 single units and six double units of independent living, along with common living areas and laundry facilities on each floor. The single units will have 564 square feet each; the double units will have 870 square feet. The building will have elevator service.

The two-story building on the north side of the site will house 26 single units and two double units of assisted living. These will be fully accessible and adaptable for the handicapped, with open concept living and kitchen areas, storage closets, and a private bathroom.

The common areas will include a two-story living area with gas-fired fireplace, sunroom library, exterior porches, audio room, common dining room, and a commercial kitchen. The assisted living facility is designed for elders requiring assistance with activities of daily living. Services will include individualized care plans, medication management, a full meal plan, and transportation.

The red brick building in the middle, which will house administrative offices, was made available to the project by Warren Kronemeyer along with the site.

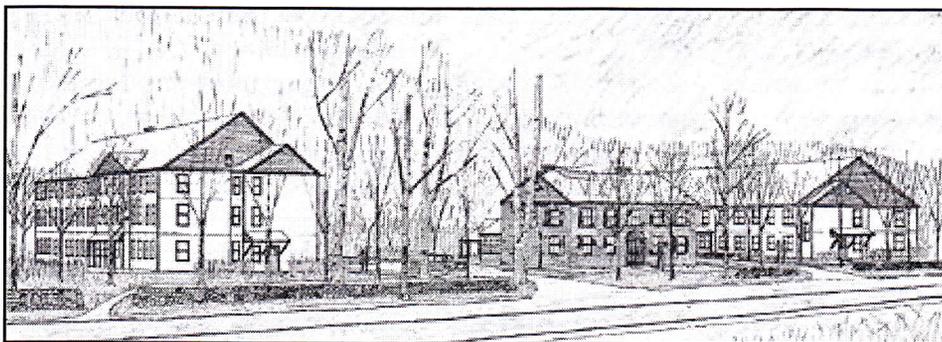
This project was developed by Valley Cares, Inc., an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to create and provide a continuum of quality affordable housing and elder-care services for the residents of the West River Valley and beyond, in cooperation with the community organizations and agencies that serve them.

This \$9.7 million project is the result of several years of planning, needs assessments, and an impressive patchwork of public and private financing. Another \$350,000 is needed to complete the project. Tax deductible contributions may be sent to: Valley Cares, P.O. Box 341, Townshend, VT 05353.

Because of the federal and state funding, a number of the rental units will be restricted to low-to-moderate income seniors. The rest of the units will be available to other elders regardless of income.

Although there is no official waiting list, close to a hundred individuals have indicated an interest in one of the units. Anyone wishing to be placed on the interest list should call Bob Crego, Valley Cares executive director, at 802-365-4115.

Approximately three months before construction is completed in November, all those on the interest list will receive by mail detailed information regarding rents, rates for care and supportive services, and instructions on the application process. Occupancy is planned for December 2007.



## WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

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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 around 300 words to the address below. We prefer emailed submissions.

**Next deadline  
June 15, 2007**

**Windham News & Notes  
5976 Windham Hill Road  
Windham, VT 05359  
802-875-4874  
wnandn@vermontel.net**

## Help clean up Windham on May 5

by Imme Maurath

Three years ago whilst still living on Long Island, we were expecting relatives from Germany. I prayed that the weeds would grow fast enough to cover up the litter on the highways. I was so embarrassed by it, as Germany is very clean.

I was a little surprised last year on Green-up Day by how much garbage we have here in Windham. Not all the roads were done between the six of us who showed up. So please come out on May 5 at 9AM and see what lurks in the weeds.

We will be meeting at the school, and garbage bags will be provided. The snow date (yes, there might still be snow on the ground) will be May 19.

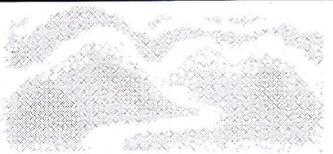
## Fire House Auction to be August 11

This year will be the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the Fire House Auction and Barbeque! The Windham Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company has set the date for Saturday, August 11.

The Fire Company is giving you ample notice of this event for two reasons. First and foremost, they would love for you to donate items worth auctioning. These will be accepted any time after July 1, so please hold on to them till then. The second reason is that they want you to make this traditional event a priority and not schedule other activities on this date. So put it on your calendar now!

They thank you for your past support of this event and also for the many generous donations received during their annual fund drive.

**WINDHAM  
REGIONAL  
COMMISSION**



No doubt you've heard of it. But do you really know what the Windham Regional Commission does? Because the WRC is an important resource for

including news about its activities.

The Town of Windham is represented on the WRC by Carolyn Partridge, who serves on the Executive

Board and on the Nominating Committee. Windham's other commissioner, Heath Boyer, serves on the Project Review Committee and the newly formed Energy Committee.

The article below provides background on the WRC and its purposes. Future articles in the WN&N will discuss specific issues and proposals.

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## WRC helps towns & addresses regional issues

by Heath Boyer

The Windham Regional Commission (WRC) is one of nine such commissions in the State. The Commission lines do not conform precisely to county lines, but generally are named for the county which constitutes most of its territory. The Windham Region consists of all of Windham County and small parts of Bennington and Windsor Counties with commissioners representing 27 towns.

Each town has two commissioners appointed by their select board for one-year terms. The WRC is organized around an executive director and a paid professional staff in Brattleboro whose job it is to support the work of the 12 standing committees plus the Executive Board and to work directly with member towns as needed and requested.

Each committee, the Executive Board, and the commission as a whole meet at least monthly throughout the year. Base funding is through assessment of participating towns (\$1.50 per head) and from a portion of the state property transfer tax designated for planning purposes. There are also special grants for specific activities. The WRC has an annual budget of around \$1,000,000.

The legal basis for the WRC system is VSA 24, Chapter 117 which dates back to the late 1960s and has been amended at intervals since then to help the State of Vermont assist its counties and municipalities in better serving their citizens. The short version of the WRC mission statement says, "WRC assists towns in southeastern Vermont to pro-

vide effective local government and works cooperatively with them to address regional issues."

More specifically, the commission advises and provides technical assistance to towns on such issues as preparation and administration of town plans and bylaws; review and approval of town plans; and assistance with regional problems and opportunities such as transportation, solid waste and affordable housing. The commission also works with planning commissions, state agencies, civic groups, and various boards and commissions and provides information and training to local officials and citizens.

The Project Review Committee reviews and monitors proposed and ongoing developments considered to have regional significance. The committee makes recommendations on positions to be taken by the board and commission.

Recently the committee has been dealing with such things as the updating of the master plan for Stratton Mountain, the renewal of the application for an expansion of the commercial wind installation at Searsburg, and the aesthetic issues surrounding proposals by Verizon to erect large cell phone towers in the area.

The Energy Committee is newly formed and is the only such committee, so far, among the regional commissions in Vermont. Although there is an initial statement of purpose and objectives, the members expect it to evolve some over

(continued next page)

## WRC helps towns *(continued)*

the coming months.

The stated purpose is to "address the broad objectives of energy planning and policy in the region; to promote local, regional and state energy policies that will support the long-term well-being of the region, its communities and citizens, and to work toward the identification and development of sustainable and reliable sources of energy...."

The committee originated because of a belief that as global climate change, "petro-politics," and electricity supplies become more central to the public awareness and debate, Vermonters will need and expect to be well-informed as public policies are developed.

Although for a variety of reasons electricity has been front and center of most recent local public debate, "energy" for purposes of the committee includes all forms of energy used in the state. In that context electricity is only about 20% of the issue. Fossil fuel use in transportation and space heating are far larger issues in terms of both economics and environmental impact.

## Program expanded for kindergarten/preschool

by Cynthia B. Kehoe

Windham Elementary School will have a new kindergarten/preschool program beginning in September 2007. Kindergarten will be in session five mornings a week, 8:30 AM until 12:00 Noon. The preschoolers will be invited to join the kindergartners three mornings a week, 8:30 AM until 12:00 Noon.

The kindergarten/preschool program will be taught by Cynthia Kehoe who will be assisted by Gail Wyman. All children between the ages of three and five are welcome to attend the preschool program. Kindergartners must be five by September 1, 2007. The kindergartners may ride the bus to school but must be picked up by their parents by noon. The preschoolers are considered too small to ride the bus and must be transported by parents.

The additional day for the kindergarten program, which was previously only four days a week, will allow us to offer a comprehensive academic program for the kindergartners which is a key element in their success in first and second grade. The expanded preschool program will allow these young children to develop their early academic and social skills in a warm and friendly setting.

There was a kindergarten/preschool registration and visit on Thursday, April 26 at the elementary school. Parents with children between the ages of three and five who missed this may still register by contacting Mrs. Stradling, our principal, at the school at 874-4159.

We are excited about the newly expanded program and are looking forward to a great school year in September.

## Arbor Day celebrates the future

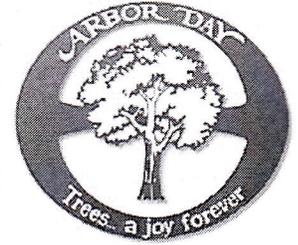
by Imme Maurath

Most holidays celebrate something that happened in the past, like remembering the day someone important was born or celebrating a past religious or patriotic event. Arbor Day, however, reflects a hope for the future.

Trees planted on Arbor Day represent a belief that they will grow and provide wood products, wildlife habitat, shelter from the elements, erosion control, and natural beauty to our environment. When kids plant trees, they feel a certain responsibility for them. For that reason, we are going to have another Arbor Day celebration this year at the elementary school.

Principal Roberta Stradling has offered to donate a crab apple tree that she planted at her house a few years ago that has outgrown its space. Thanks, Roberta, and thanks to her husband for digging and delivering it!

For many years, Arbor Day was celebrated on April 22, J. Sterling Morton's birthday, who was the founder of Arbor Day back in 1854. Today, each state picks a day in the spring that is appropriate for tree planting in that area. We'll be planting on Thursday, May 10.



## Loans available for home improvements

by Edith Serke

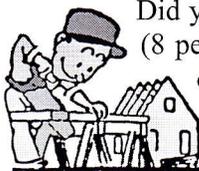
Did you know there are low or no interest loans (8 percent or less) available to Windham home owners for certain types of home improvements? They are available through a program, originally funded by the State in the 1980's, to improve the economic and living conditions of the people in the town.

This program is referred to locally as the "Windham Community Development Program" and the "Housing Rehabilitation Program." A priority of the program is to serve elderly, handicapped, and low or moderate-income owner-occupied homes.

Eligible rehabilitation activities include exterior and interior structural, electrical, plumbing, and heating repairs and improvements; fire and other safety improvements; energy conservation, septic system and water supply repairs; and improvements which are essential to the health and safety of the household.

The program is administered by a Citizens Advisory Committee, appointed by the select board. Current members are Edward Caron, Jr., Alice Worden, Bonnie Chase, Helen George, Michael Simonds, and Marcia Clinton. Edith Serke also serves and was recently appointed to replace Walter Woodruff, outgoing chair of the committee.

To apply, contact the Town Office or one of the members.



## Windham Community Organization has landmark year

by Nancy Dyke

By far the most dramatic change for the WCO in the last year is its incorporation and its not-for-profit, tax exempt status. *Windham News & Notes*, as part of the WCO, is especially pleased to be able to use these advantages.

Meetings are now taking place at the Meeting House on the last Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM. For many years we have met in the home of Helen George, and we thank her for her warm hospitality, but we have outgrown that space. The numbers have grown even more with the addition of men to our membership. Already they have provided leadership in a number of committees and activities. Now we can truly say that all are welcome to become a part of our service to the community.

**Congratulations** to the new elected WCO officers: President Mary Boyer, Vice President Regina Noel, Secretary Dawn Bower, and Treasurer Edith Serke. Many thanks to outgoing President Nancy Dyke.

Puffed up to withstand April's snow-storm, this bird was photographed by Lydia Pope France.



**Coming July 28**  
**WCO's Annual**  
**Chicken BBQ & Crafts Fair**  
**All Artisans Invited to Show their Creations**

Eight individuals were assisted last year for a total of \$1,140. In addition, \$1,150 was donated to the following: CHABHA (Children Affected By HIV/AIDS), three food banks, and the Visiting Nurses' Association.

As a result of a Senior Brown Bag discussion, WCO was asked to form a new committee for the purpose of helping the town develop an emergency plan. Imme Maurath, Edith Serke, Helen George, Dawn Bower, Jim Scott, Mary and Heath Boyer and Marcia Clinton have been working with Rick Weitzel, Fire Chief, and other town officials.

*Windham News & Notes*, now a part of WCO, is pleased to report that its advertising has expanded considerably in the last year, underscoring the fact that a great number of people benefit from receiving this publication.

A craft exhibition was added to the Chicken Barbecue last July. Many Windham residents participated, resulting in a wonderfully diverse display of woodworking and turning, quilting, knitting, crocheting, weaving and other handwork, paper craft, photography and more. Plans are in motion to repeat the exhibition at the July 2007 Chicken BBQ. Finish those projects and prepare now to display your handiwork!

Once again the WCO would like to invite all Windham residents to participate with us in serving our community while we get to know one another better.

## Windham Congregational Church hosts special gatherings

by Nancy Dyke

### Monday School students assist with Palm Sunday Service

Community boys and girls who were part of Monday School added their talents to the Palm Sunday Service at Windham Congregational Church. They shared information about the traditions of Palm Sunday, read scripture, and led the congregation in singing songs they have learned with David Crittenden and his guitar during the last few months. Most importantly, at the conclusion of the service, they led the Procession of the Palms inside and outside the church.

### Scott leads discussion groups

Windham Congregational Church was pleased to have Jim Scott lead Bible Study and discussion groups for the four Tuesdays in March which included church and community members. Topics were "Our Lifestyles and the Environment," "Are We Really Interested in Fighting Poverty?", "Diversity in a Complex, Global Society," and "Can We Be Authentically Christian and Tolerant in a Terrorist World?" Lively interactions took place each evening. It is always a treat to have Jim facilitate these groups because of his leadership skills and his diverse background.

### Memorial Day Service to be at Windham Center Cemetery

The church is planning its second annual Memorial Day Service to be held at the cemetery by the Town Office on Sunday, May 27 at 9:30 AM, weather permitting. If the weather is inclement, the service will be held at the church. We invite community members and visitors as well as church members to join us for this service commemorating those who have passed on before us. Share with us your memories of a person who has influenced your life or come to silently give thanks for the contributions of those now departed.

# Ned Caron does not talk to tree stumps

by Mary McCoy

One knows immediately that a visit to Ned and Gay Caron's home is going to be fun. The tree at the start of their driveway has wooden eyes, nose, and mouth protruding from its trunk, looking as if the tree will speak or even burst into song.

There was another tree, Ned says, telling one of his many tales, that he wanted to climb. Pretending to his companions that he knew what he was doing, he put tree climbing spikes on his feet. He dug one foot into the trunk and then the other. But when he tried to pull his first foot out and up, it would not budge. In fact, both spikes were too deeply embedded. Ned fell backwards, head first to the ground, with both feet still in the trunk. He hung there, as his companions howled.

Says Gay, "Life with Ned is one joke after another."

She would know. Ned (Edward, Jr.) and Gay (Gabrielle) have known each other since first grade in Huntington, Massachusetts, and their romance began when they went together to their senior prom in 1939. Then Gay went to Boston to become a nurse, and Ned stayed home to work on a dairy farm. Soon circumstances pulled Ned in new directions. He moved to Springfield (MA) to be caretaker of a home, but met the superintendent of a drop forge plant and became an apprentice. Then he joined the Navy and went to the Pacific to fight the Japanese.

In 1944, he came home on survivor's leave, and he and Gay married. Their honeymoon suite in Boston cost \$7. They still have the receipt. Having celebrated 63 anniversaries, Ned says, "We're considering making it a permanent relationship."

After V-J Day, Ned returned to his job at Moore Drop Forge and became very active in the Labor Movement. In 1953, he went out on strike and lost his job. He and Gay moved to Buffalo, the center of drop forging, where Ned got a job. He quips, "That company went belly up because I worked there."

Next he began a 26-year career with J. H. Williams. Ned was a die sinker, then forge foreman, and eventually forge superintendent. With close to 500 employees in his division, Ned managed with ease issues related to civil rights, equal opportunity, and Vietnam. But another challenge did him in — modern technology. By then, he and Gay were 58. Their kids were grown, out of college, and married. "I couldn't

stomach the new systems," he says, "and decided it was time to retire." Then he adds with a grin, "The business went down the tubes."

Ned had become friends back in Springfield with a co-worker, Don Warner, Donna Koutrakos' father, beginning a long-lasting friendship. Don and his family also had moved to Buffalo for work. Then the Warners came to Windham to develop Tater Hill Golf Course, and in the 1960s, the Carons purchased from them three acres of land here.

The Carons had two sons, and Donna became "the daughter we never had." Ned says, "Gay always said they were better Catholics than we were because they had five kids and we had two." That was quite an accomplishment since the Carons were Catholic and the Warners were not.

In 1978 when Ned retired, the Carons moved permanently to their log house in North Windham after, Ned says, "divesting ourselves of our vast properties in Buffalo." They didn't want to go south because "that's where the old folks go." They still like being here with people of all ages and with all four seasons.

They especially enjoy winter and snow, and snowmobiling remains a favorite activity. They used to go out every day, and for a while Ned and Don rented out snowmobiles and took people on trail rides. "The snowmobiles we used were junk. Every night we had to put them back together."

Ned also relishes mud season, recalling a time he drove his car to the end of his road to get the newspaper, dressed only in his "skivvies and robe." He slid and got stuck with his front wheels in the air, where he remained until Steve Amsden saw him and pulled him out.

Ned and Gay have now lived in Windham longer than anywhere else. Over the years, Ned has been a lister, serving along with Bob George (Helen's husband) and John Lingley, Sr. "Our claim to fame was tax mapping. We did the first ones." He also served on the Planning Commission and was chair for a while. "I wanted to create a deep water port on Burbee Pond, but Carolyn Partridge objected."

There is often a mischievous gleam in Ned's eyes, and one has to think a second about the words that come out of his mouth. Gay says, "Don't believe anything he says." Yet

*(continued next page)*



# Ned Caron *(continued from previous page)*

he seems serious when he says he likes the people in Windham because "they don't throw their weight around," and when he talks about the joy of gardening and sugaring, and when he shows off the complex jigsaw puzzles he and Gay have put together.

He also seems sincere when he talks about a World War II submarine commander who was Senator John McCain's father. But his attitude is unclear when he says, "I sent the senator a letter saying had I known his father helped me win the war, I would have thanked him personally. Senator McCain hasn't replied, so I won't vote for him."

There's no question, however, about his intentions when he brings out a small wooden box shaped like an outhouse and labeled "Vermont Outhouse Bank." When the coin he offers is dropped in the slot on the top of the "bank," the box flies apart with a bang.

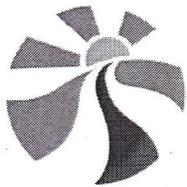
"Oh, we do have fun," Gay says when the laughter ends.

Ned adds, "We'll be 86 this year. We can tell people anything we want. We can read about the war and how awful it is. But war isn't all bad. Amusing things happen even then. And if you can't think of something funny, then you'll end up talking to tree stumps."

## Walk for Healthy Aging – FUNdraisers set for spring

*from the Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont*

May is Older Americans Month, and this year's theme is Making Choices for a Healthier Future. This spring, the eleventh annual Walk for Healthy Aging FUNdraisers will be held at four sites in Windham and Windsor counties.



Making **Choices**  
for a **Healthier Future**

Each event raises money for a local group that works with seniors and for the Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont (COASEV). You can walk for the health of it, raise awareness about

living well, and raise funds to support seniors in our communities, all at the same time.

Walking is a way to be active for all ages and all fitness levels. Walkers don't need any special equipment and don't have to drive to a special location to do their walking. Walking can happen any day, anywhere, either alone or with one or more friends of the two- or four-legged kind.

Walking has been shown to strengthen muscles and bones, improve flexibility and balance, increase stamina, help control weight, and improve mood and sleep. It can be meditative or social, vigorous or relaxing, and a daily habit that has no bad side effects. Outside, you also take in sun and fresh air.

For more information, call the local collaborators (listed in the accompanying box) or the Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont at 800-642-5119.

### The Walks for Healthy Aging:

- Saturday, April 28 at 10 AM in Putney, contact Putney Cares, 387- 5593.
- Saturday, May 5 at 10 AM in Bellows Falls, contact the Bellows Falls Area Senior Center, 463-3907.
- Saturday, May 5 at 10:30 AM in Dummerston, contact Dummerston Cares, 254-2703.
- Wednesday, May 31 at 11AM in Windsor, contact Volunteers in Action, 674-5971.

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# Counting snow flakes provides interesting data

by Lydia Pope France

People in New England say, "If you don't like the weather, just wait fifteen minutes and it will change." Living in Vermont, we all know how true that is. For some of us, that leads to a bit of weather-watching fixation.

Back in December, I wrote about a method of predicting "snow events" that I had heard from a woman at the Vermont Country Store. As a reminder, here is how it works: you take the date of the first snowfall -- not just a flurry, but something where you can actually leave footprints in the snow. Count from that date until Christmas, and you have the predicted number of "snow events".

This year, our first snow ("cat print snow," as Marcia Clinton has heard it called) came relatively late, on November 3. For three years running, we had had *measurable* snow on October 23. Using "the method," this meant that we stood to have 53 snow events in the '06/'07 season (for last year, the predicted number was 63).

Sitting here, mid April, watching the snow falling gently, I guess I have to admit that the technique isn't an exact predictor of what we can expect. Last year we were off by six extra "snow events". So far this year, we are plus seven.

But even if the formula doesn't quite work, all of this record keeping is not for naught. Last year I was really surprised to see that we had somewhere close to 70 days on which we saw some form of snow between late October and early April. This year, I was equally surprised to think that we were due to have somewhere over 50 days with a dusting, flurries, or more. So far, we are closer to 60.

Looking at my notes and charts, I see that we have actually had a lot more snow this year than last. Nothing like some of the big snow years in the past, but, while winter may have been late to start, it has made up for its early absence with some big storms late in the season.

So far this year (since who knows when it will be over!), we have had 105 inches versus 83 1/2 inches last year. Interestingly, the bulk (63 inches) of last year's snow came in December and January. This year, we didn't even have any significant snow until Valentine's Day, by which time it was pretty much all over last year. In fact, we've had 92 of our 105 inch total since mid February, as the chart shows.

	<i>This Year</i>	<i>Last Year</i>
October	0	8
November	0	7.5
December	4	27.5
January	5	35.5
February	32	1.5
March	35	1.5
April ( 4/1-17)	29	2



This photo was taken by Lydia Pope France from her front door early in the day on Sunday, April 14. Already the snow was heavy on the trees. It continued to snow nonstop for 12 hours that day.

A few weeks back I sat outside reading in the sunshine for most of the afternoon, and thinking maybe we should get the porch furniture out. Then this past weekend, we had over a foot of snow, followed by over 2 1/2 inches of rain (thank you Steve Maurath for having your rain gauge out!). Lest we think that May is our safe month, let's not forget May 18 in 2002 when we got five inches of snow on Burbee Pond Road and a foot up at the Meeting House!

People who've lived here all their lives will tell you not to put your tomatoes in until after the first full moon in June, unless you are prepared to go out and cover them up a few nights, and in my experience, they are right. So if you think that through, that means that even early June could be a time of "snow events" in Windham.

Will I keep snow charts again next winter? Absolutely, since even if it isn't precise, it is interesting.



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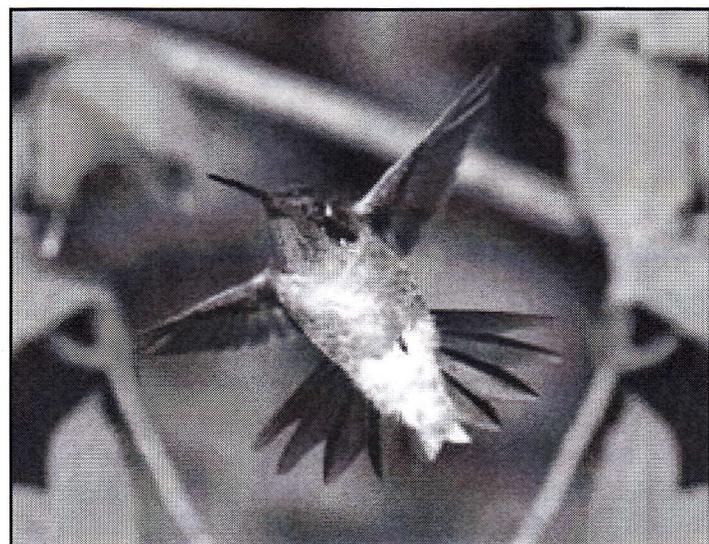
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Michael Simonds and Mary McCoy, owners

# Hummingbird drama begins again mid May

by Mary McCoy

Every May around the 15<sup>th</sup>, the ruby-throated boys arrive at our home in South Windham. Once assured we have their sugar water ready, they somehow let their partners know, and the girls, unadorned with red, appear a few days later.

Being from the Midwest where I saw no hummingbirds, I find these creatures to be magical. My husband, Michael Simonds, and I would rather watch them than most television shows. And the guests who visit our vacation rental unit



## Tiny hummingbirds have awesome power

The January 2007 issue of the *National Geographic* featured hummingbirds, offering many interesting facts.

- Hummingbirds are found only in the Americas.
- They are crucial to the pollination of plants.
- They weigh only five to six grams, about what a teaspoon of butter weighs.
- Ruby-throated hummingbirds, which we see in the eastern U.S., spend their winters in Mexico.
- Before migrating here, they gorge on insects and nectar in Yucatan Peninsula, storing fat and doubling their weight in a week.
- They fly nonstop across the Gulf of Mexico for 20 hours and 500 miles.
- Their hearts, which are the size of a cranberry, beat on average 500 times a minute while perching and up to 1200 times per minute during high-speed chase with other hummers.
- The hummingbird heart accounts for about 20 percent of its body volume, a higher proportion than that of any other animal.
- The power in the hummer's wing stroke is greater per unit mass than that of any other vertebrate.
- The hummer's upper wing bone can rotate more than 180 degrees in the shoulder socket, enabling them to

are equally enthralled. We have a feeder right outside their kitchen window where guests say they sit for hours mesmerized by the little wonders.

Last summer, Michael's cousin came to visit. A professional photographer, he was determined to capture a hummingbird on film. It took the good part of a day to get the photo you see here. The hummingbird's wings move so quickly that only the fastest film set at the fastest speed in the fastest camera mounted on a tripod can capture the wings without a blur.

I find myself caught up in the drama of hummer life. There always is a bully at each of our three feeders, a male who flashes his red chest and drives the others away. Last year, we had one whose feathers were a bit battered. He seemed to suffer from the stress of his vigilance, as he always sat atop "his" feeder, jerking his head this way and that, watching for another hummer that might sip a bit of "his" sugar water. Even though there was plenty to share, he was determined to have it all to himself.

Michael and I had to acknowledge how human this bad boy's behavior was. When he disappeared before the usual exit of all the hummingbirds, which is in mid September, we were certain he had suffered a heart attack. I confess that I missed the little dickens. At least when I shouted at him to stop being so selfish, he heard me and flew away.

hover and instantly change direction.

- Their aggression stems from fierce territorial instincts shaped by their need to sip nectar every few minutes.
- Through their long slender bills, hummingbirds take in more than one and a half times their body weight in nectar each day.
- The tongue, forked and trough-like for optimal lapping, flickers up to 13 times a second.
- Hummers live up to 17 years, based upon those observed in captivity.
- These little birds are durable only in life. In death their delicate, hollow bones almost never fossilize.

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## Two Spring Poems by Carolyn Heidel Chase

### Country Garden

A country garden, wild and free,  
no formal bordered symmetry  
sweet purple violets, kissed with dew,  
blossom, when the summer's new –  
then their foliage, rich and green,  
remains an accent to the scene;  
as fresh white daisies circle round –  
tiny weed flowers, on the ground.  
Clumps of lovely white bell flowers,  
nod gently through the daylight hours,  
their lacy leaves and graceful stalks  
dramatic contrast to hollyhocks –  
whose hardy, homespun buds presume  
to fairly burst in glorious bloom;  
Deep rich garnet, dusty rose,  
as wild and free, my garden grows.



### Gift of Violets

Sweet violets bloom again each spring  
and spread across the lawn.

Woe to those, who mow the grass,  
before the last bloom's gone!

'Tis true of course, the grass still grows  
and things get looking seedy –  
but violets bloom but once each spring  
and I'm a wee bit greedy!

One time, not so long ago,  
a happening, strange but nice –  
all was timed so perfectly,  
my violets blossomed, twice!

Rather, since perfection's rare,  
where we mere mortals trod –  
would seem there ruled another's hand –  
Sweet violets, gifts from God!

## Conservation efforts can save you money

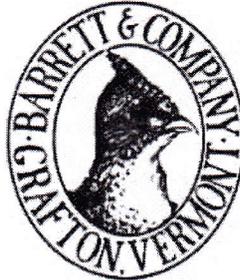
by Imme Maurath

Did you know that the government is offering a tax credit for energy saving improvements you make on your house during the 2006 and 2007 calendar years?

It's a dollar for dollar reduction on the taxes you owe, not a tax deduction that merely reduces the amount on which you are taxed. Ten percent of the cost can be used as a credit. Everything from storm windows to insulation to energy efficient cars is on that list. Go to [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov) for more specifics.

One item I did not see on that list was trees. Shouldn't we get some credit too for reducing greenhouse emissions by planting more trees?

But there are other savings involved related to trees. Planting a shade tree on the south side of the house can cool your home by 10 degrees in the summer and reduce your electric bill for running fans. Planting an evergreen wind block on the northwest side can save you 10 percent on your heating bill.



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**Windham Community Organization**  
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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](mailto:wnandn@vermontel.net)

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**GET INVOLVED  
IN WINDHAM!**

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*~ Windham Community Calendar ~*

Every Sunday - **Windham Congregational Church (UCC)** has worship services at 9:30 AM; everyone invited.

Every Sunday and Thursday - **Valley Bible Church** has services: Sunday 10 AM Sunday School, 11 AM Worship, and 6 PM Bible Study; Thursday 7:00 PM Prayer Meeting.

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, quilting class on the second Weds, writing group on third Weds, and knitting group on fourth Weds. All invited to join.

Every Monday & Thursday - **Strong Living** exercise class at 10:00 AM at the Meeting House.

Saturday, May 5 - **Green-up Day** to clean up our roadsides, begins 9:00 AM at Town Office.

Monday, May 7 - **Select Board** meets at 6:30 PM at the Town Office; public invited.

Thursday, May 10 - **Windham Planning Commission** meets at 7:00 PM at Town Office; public is invited.

Wednesday, May 16 - **Brown Bag Chat Group** at noon at the Meeting House.

Monday, May 21 - **Select Board** meets at 6:30 PM at the Town Office; public invited .

Sunday, May 27 - **Memorial Day Service**, at 9:30 AM at Center Cemetery (by Town Office).

Wednesday, May 30 - **Windham Community Organization** meets at 7:00 PM at the Meeting House

Monday, June 4 - **Select Board** meets at 6:30 PM at the Town Office; public invited.

Thursday, June 14 - **Windham Planning Commission** meets at 7:00 PM at Town Office; public invited.

Wednesday, June 20 - **Brown Bag Chat Group** meets at noon at Meeting House.

Wednesday, June 27 - **Windham Community Organization** at 7:00 PM at Meeting House.

