EAST MONTPELIER
# Signpost

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Volume 36 / Number 3 **NEWS OF OUR COMMUNITY** January-February 2026

# Here's to Todd Hill

by Carolyn Pastore




When I arrived at East Montpelier Elementary School to chat with Todd Hill, Head of Maintenance, I found him in the gym surrounded by plastic light covers, small blocks of wood, and a small hairdryer. He told me that there had been a problem with the light covers falling off and breaking. Since they were no longer made by the manufacturer, Todd had found a solution to the problem by heating the plastic covers with the wooden blocks inside.

Solving problems is a skill Todd possesses and has had plenty of practice doing, first in the army, then at Cabot Creamery, as well as at Lydall, where he kept the trucks and mechanical systems running. He applies what he learned in those 20-some years to his work at EMES. Todd grew up in Greensboro and now lives in Hardwick. He says that he doesn't mind the 20-mile commute, even on a snowy day, when he has to arrive about *five AM* to clear the walkways and a path around the school. There's always a great view.

Todd first came to EMES in the fall of 2009 when he was hired as Head of Maintenance by Principal Roddy Cook. During his 15-year career, he has seen many changes and been a part of many more. One major change was the addition that was built in 2013-14. Todd gives the current principal Alicia Lyford credit for her leadership through that major building project. Even during that process, Todd felt less stress than when he was in the manufacturing field.




Photos by Carolyn Pastore

*Student-made sign on Todd Hill's door*

Some of the best things about working at EMES are the dedicated staff and the great kids. One special memory is of the time when a student with special needs shadowed Todd and worked with him. That student clearly enjoyed spending time with Todd, as he came back to work at EMES after he was at U-32. Todd loves watching the kids grow up. Even though there have been changes in the kids' behavior since COVID, he still enjoys interacting with them.

Todd calls himself a family man who loves living in Vermont. He is also proud of his family history. His ancestors immigrated in the 1600s, landing in Boston, and then moving to Vermont to settle in Greensboro. He has two grown children and six grandchildren. In his free time, he enjoys snowmobiling and bike-riding with his wife. He used to hunt but now just does some target shooting. His problem-solving skills are quite helpful when running the large remote-control cars he enjoys. Todd has also built a garage and has nearly completed a big renovation project on his house in his spare time.

As we were finishing our chat, I could hear the pride that Todd takes in his work at EMES when he said, "I think EMES is the most beautiful school and has the most beautiful setting. I just love seeing the sun rise over the mountains."

Thank you, Todd, for your 15 years of dedicated service to EMES and to our community.

*—Carolyn Pastore, a long-time* Signpost *editor, is a retired teacher who lives on Powder Horn Glen Road.*

## TOP OF THE SIGNPOST

Though I don't look forward to winter quite as much as I used to, I eagerly anticipate what comes afterword—that annual tradition that marks the beginning of the end of the long winter: TOWN MEETING—the first Tuesday in March each and every year. I attended my first Vermont Town Meeting in 1970 and was thoroughly taken by this special form of direct democracy and the sense of community that provides the context and is also strengthened by the meeting itself.

All these years (and Town Meetings) later, I still am a great advocate. Even though we don't vote on the major financial issues from the floor, the discussions broaden perspectives and shape the way we handle current and future issues. Most importantly, it gives community members a chance to share and advance their views on the place we all inhabit.

Town Meeting makes abundantly clear the work that goes on all year long—in planning, researching, and preparing for the major issues that face even small towns like East Montpelier. Our leaders on the selectboard, planning commission, zoning review board, school board, the listers, and auditors are mostly volunteers who step up to do the important tasks that keep this town running. In addition, there are dozens of appointed members of committees which handle such diverse topics as cemeteries, conservation, charter changes, and much, much more. As they say, "It takes a village…"

So, while attending Town Meeting is a wonderful way to participate and help to strengthen East Montpelier, the next step is to have even more impact on the way things are done by taking a leadership role. It's easy: just get a nominating petition from the town clerk and have it signed by 25 folks who are registered voters in East Montpelier. By the way, this is a terrific way to meet neighbors you don't already know or catch up with those you do. Nominating petitions are due in the Town Office no later than Monday, January 26. Also, make your interest in our many committees known to the selectboard.

As one who has held many of these positions over the years, I guarantee you will gain every bit as much and more than you will give in such service. It's a wonderful feeling to know you can make a difference. Serve your town.

*—Edie Miller is a long-time* Signpost *volunteer.*

### This year we will be electing people to fill the following positions:

**Moderator – 1- year term**

**Selectboard – 2-year term**

**Selectboard – 3-year term**

**Auditor – 3-year term**

**Lister – 3-year term**

**Planning Commissioner (3) – 3-year term**

EAST MONTPELIER

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# Road Crew Heroes

by Rachel Senechal

East Montpelier is fortunate to have a very competent road crew, led by Road Foreman Guthrie Perry. The four-person crew keeps 76 miles of paved and dirt roads well-maintained in all seasons.

Working with Guthrie are Frank Campbell, Ken Lorden, and Caleb Cerutti. Together, Frank and Ken have spent over 50 years working on the road crew. Guthrie began eight years ago, and Caleb started working this past July. We benefit from all this experience.

Four plows are busy during each snowstorm, which might take as little as four and a half hours to complete or more than six hours if conditions are more severe. If it's windy, the crew may be out plowing the roads repeatedly. Guthrie is in close touch with the school bus company to see if they will be picking up students on a particular day. If so, those roads are cleared by 6 am.



Photos by Deb Fillion

*Winter work*



*Snowplow at rest OUTSIDE the old garage*




*Ken Lorden on grader with Craig Seadeek*

Besides running the snowplows, Ken usually handles the grader; Frank or Guthrie operates the excavator. All four crew members use the roadside mower.

The crew normally operates out of the town garage site, located at 325 Templeton Road. However, while the new town garage is under construction, they are temporarily operating out of 145 Codling Road.

There are three snowplows at Codling Road and one at Templeton Road, resulting in the road crew learning new routes this year. Before snow plowing, roads are sanded; trucks are greased and fluids checked. The night before a storm, Guthrie wakes up at 2:30 am to check on the weather. If the snow is flying, he gets up; if not, he can go back to bed.

When Guthrie was asked what he would like to tell the people who drive on East Montpelier roads, he answered, "Put down your phone!" Very sage advice indeed.

Guthrie expressed his gratitude to the residents of East Montpelier for their support of the new town garage. It will make a huge difference.

The road crew does an excellent job maintaining our roads. If you see Guthrie, Ken, Frank, or Caleb plowing snow, give them a smile and a wave.

*—Rachel Senechal is* Signpost *co-features editor and raises chickens on McKnight Road.*

# Learning by Doing: Constructing a Wigwam

by Mária Leon

As I walked into the woods with my nine-year-old son one foggy Saturday morning in September, I discovered much more than why he had so many grass cuts on his hands and why our bandaid stash was dwindling.

At the bottom of the hill below the pine forest, we came to a small flat wooded area with the Kingsbury branch of the Winooski just visible about 50 feet below through the trees. In this flat area stood something wonderfully unusual to our modern eyes—a wigwam.

Guided by "On the Land" teacher Luke Boushee, my son's third and fourth grade class, as well as the middle school at Orchard Valley Waldorf School in East Montpelier, transformed raw natural materials—saplings, grasses, and bark—into this functional, domed structure.

The project began in the woods below the campus buildings, where the classes carefully harvested young saplings. Once cut, the saplings were stripped of their bark and soaked to help maintain their pliability between classes so they could be bent into the iconic arched ribs of the wigwam. Students worked in small teams to tie these ribs together, learning knot-tying, leverage, and the physics of curved structures.

Next, wide strips of bark were placed along the lower edges of the frame, all the way around, to protect the structure from wicking moisture into the grass thatch walls. The thatch walls were made from bundles of native meadow grasses that the children harvested using small knives. These



Photo by Mária Leon

*Alden Leon doing his share*



Photo by Luke Boushee

grasses were hung in bundles on lines for several days to dry naturally in the sun and wind. When ready, the grass bundles were fastened to the wigwam's framework, creating a layered, insulating shell. The roof—bundled thatch—was the final touch. According to Luke, the finished wigwam is expected to last about three years, weathering with the seasons just as a traditional structure would.

The students learned the trails that spread across the 55-acre campus as they hauled materials during their weekly "On the Land" class. As my son recounted the trials of carrying the saplings across campus and up and down from the river, the grass cuts on his hands, and the fun of it all, I saw all the lessons he was actually learning just below the surface. His nine-year-old brain doesn't quite have words for these important new-found assets: self-sufficiency, teamwork and cooperation, solving disagreements, navigation and orientation, knife and fiber skills, observation of nature, and practical physics.

With the early days of snow arriving, my mind drifts back to the wigwam often—when I brush my teeth in my own warm house, when I walk in the woods taking new notice of my surroundings. I ask myself what would it be like to survive a winter in one of those structures?

So yes, I'll need to buy more bandaids, with the understanding that a little injury is part of the vision—that one day my son, in his old age, will tell his family how he helped build a wigwam in the woods!

*—Mária Leon has lived in East Montpelier with her family for 11 years and practices acupuncture in Montpelier. She loves learning new skills, audiobooks, and any kind of craft.*

## Town Offices

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**Town Administrator**
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**Fire Permits**
Ty Rolland 793-8532

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Jon Boucher 917-4855

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**Development Review Board**
Steve Kappel, Chair
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Zach Sullivan, *zsullivan@u32.org*

**State Representative**
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*echapin@leg.state.vt.us*



Photo by Celina Barton

# Soil Mate:

**by Celina Moore Barton**

There is a certain kind of stillness that settles over East Montpelier in January, the kind that asks you—softly, firmly—to slow down. At first glance, winter looks like an ending. But standing in stillness, you begin to notice: winter is not absence. Winter is work. Just the quiet kind.

Beneath the frozen topsoil, the roots are doing their slow and necessary labor. The maples and oaks are stockpiling sugars. Even the fragile pasture grasses are making plans for spring in ways we can't see. Life carries on beneath the frost line.

And in that way, East Montpelier is no different from the land it rests on.

As smoke curls from chimneys like quiet reassurance, we, too, shift into winter gear: one neighbor plowing out another just because, an extra pot of soup delivered because someone cares. Nobody makes a fuss about it. We just do it.

Around here, winter is not a season; it is a group project. And everyone contributes something. One person sharpens chainsaw blades in their barn. Another keeps a vigilant eye on the river levels. Someone else makes sure the older folks have a ride to the store or checks whether the new family down the road needs help from those who know the ropes. Half of this town is held together by casseroles and goodwill; the other half by pellet bins, snow tires, and the stubborn belief that we can handle whatever arrives next.

Winter, in all its hush and hardness, is our yearly lesson in resilience. It asks us to root down, to tend to the invisible things, to trust that what rests now is only gathering strength.

Come March, we will see the proof: sap rising, soil softening, neighbors emerging from hibernation with muddy boots and bright spirits.

But for now, let us honor this quieter work—the steady hum beneath the frost, the unseen labor of roots and people alike. Let us remember that rest is not idleness, and tending is not small.

In East Montpelier, winter does not stop the story. It simply turns the page, reminding us that even the coldest seasons prepare the ground for change.

*—Celina Barton grew up in East Montpelier and has returned to become a very active community member, contributing this column to the* Signpost *as well as taking on leadership roles in civic life.*

# East Montpelier Trails Inc: 2025 in Review

by Bill Heigis



Photo by Jeb Wallace-Brodeur

*Infrastructure of boardwalk*

Well, we've almost made it to the end of 2025; and as I sit here in a post-Thanksgiving glow, I am thinking about what has been a very busy year for EMTI. The words, people, paths, and PR come to mind.

I became the new president this year, taking over from Mary Stone. Don't worry—Mary is still on the board, just happily taking on new roles as an advisor and trail steward. Nona Estrin became our first ever Emerita member. The town is indebted to her for decades of vision and guidance. Richard Brock retired from the board and handed over the treasurer's duties to the capable hands of Steve Kappel. Richard is still active as a trail steward on the Mallory Brook trail, so look for him sporting his EMTI steward baseball cap when you're out there. We were also thrilled to welcome a new member, Jeb Wallace-Brodeur. Jeb is excited to increase our social media presence and will be a co-steward with Richard. Speaking of trail stewards, make sure you say "Hi" and "Thank you" to these dedicated trail-management volunteers.

Under the capable direction of Allan Serrano, we completed the brand-new Sparrow Farm North trail this past summer. Dave Webb worked tirelessly with the Vermont Land Trust and the landowners to preserve and secure this beautiful hillside forest access. Look for this lovely lolly-pop trail across from the Sparrow Farm South trail. Speaking of Sparrow Farm South, we replaced over 550 feet of boardwalk through a sensitive wetland area this past spring—it's a beauty. This project required over 220 wet, muddy hours from Trish Dwyer, Rick Hopkins, and other volunteers from the Montpelier Area Mountain Bike Association and the White Pines community. And a special thanks to our local utility, Washington Electric Coop and Dawn Johnson, who generously supported this project with a grant from the Community Fund. As if that weren't enough, Allan and crew rerouted the trail on Fairmont Farms property off Dodge Road to stay out of the farm field and bypass that pesky steep rocky pitch at the end of the field. New kiosk signage will roll out this year at every trailhead, thanks to Jody Stryker and Mary. You can use QR codes on the signage to download the latest trail map or make donations. Thanks to the efforts of Sharon Plumb, we also completed Accessible Trails assessments on portions of the network.

Courtesy of Jeb, you should be seeing more of East Montpelier trails in the local papers, and who knows, maybe even Instagram in the future. For more social media fun, make sure to visit the EMTI Facebook page that Sue Chickering lovingly maintains.

Well, I think that's about it. If you have any questions or want to get involved, feel free to contact anybody mentioned here, or me—Bill Heigis—directly at ***bheigis@comcast.net***. We look forward to seeing you out on the trails. Finally, a big thanks to all the landowners who graciously host the network—it doesn't exist without you.



Photo by Jeb Wallace-Brodeur

*Mallory Brook Trail in use*



Photo by Jeb Bill Heigis

*EMTI volunteers building new boardwalk on Sparrow Farm South*

*—As a longtime local carpenter, Bill Heigis is excited to be shifting his energy from working on peoples' homes to building new trails and bridges around town as he leads EMTI.*

# Why We Light the Bridge

by Celina Moore Barton




Photo by Celina Barton

*Singing bridge at night*

Certain places become more than the sum of steel beams, timbers, or trusses. Places where the practical gives way to the symbolic, where the ordinary becomes a threshold. The Singing Bridge in North Montpelier— a metal-grated span that hums beneath tires crossing the Kingsbury Branch—is one such place.

North Montpelier was once an innovation center, thriving with brickworks, lumber mills, woolen factories, a musical organ maker, a whiskey distillery, a bobbin works, toolmakers, printing presses, poets, musicians, a legendary dance hall, three country stores, a creamery, and a beloved beach for swimming. But like so many rural villages, it was undone by shifting technologies, new roads, and the gravitational pull of larger towns. The mills closed, families moved on; little by little, the village center hollowed out.

Now, gradually, green shoots are emerging. Pick-up hockey has returned to the pond. Community potlucks are back. Each winter recently, villagers gather, singing carols, for the holiday lighting of the Singing Bridge—a reminder that the story of this village isn't over, only waiting for its next chorus of voices.

In a time of fracture and polarization, when it seems the world is splintering into smaller, sharper pieces, we choose—quietly, stubbornly, luminously—*to bridge*. We light the Singing Bridge not because lights can erase the darkness, but because shared light is a way human beings say, "I'm here. You are not alone. We can find our way together."

Our small ritual is part of a larger vision, seeking to rebuild a historic village at a time when rural communities everywhere are faltering. We are crafting a model where neighbors heat locally, grow food together, care for land and each other, and imagine futures that fit within planetary boundaries.

The village we are rebuilding is not just a place; it's a promise. And the Singing Bridge is where that promise shines.



Photo by Celina Barton

*Decorating the bridge: Angney family; Moore sisters (below)*



Photo by Jeremy Greene

## Marriages

- Dylan Walker-Clayton & Madelyn Joslin married in July

## Deaths - *survivors living in East Montpelier are listed when known*

- Glenna Hale, sister of Arthur Hale, died in October
- Richard Sicely, partner of Rebecca Dodge, died in November
- Duane Wheeler, husband of Joyce and father of Duane, died in November
- Elvira Woodworth, mother of Fran Weinbaum, died in October

## Land Transfers

*Transfers relative to estate planning or corrective deeds are not included in this listing. For further information, please contact the Town Clerk.*

- Carl & Sally Benson to Loretta & David Santos, 0.99 acre & dwelling on Taylor Rd.
- Sherry Carver to Richard & Louise Cadwgan, 1.8 acres & dwelling on Sibley Rd.
- Fecteau Residential d/b/a Fecteau Homes to Dylan Walker-Clayton & Madelyn Joslin, a mobile home on North St.
- Elizabeth Fukushima to Harlyjane Pelletier, 0.54 acre & dwelling on Factory St.
- Jeffrey & Renee Harrington to Brian Preman & Judy Huntington, 5.92 acres & dwelling on Coburn Rd.
- Nathanial Hausman & Christine Hertz Hausman Trust to Thomas Eisenbeiser, 15.92 acres on Fitch Rd.
- Lakeview Loan Servicing to Lark Delaney, 1.42 acres & dwelling on Old Railroad Ln.
- Ellen Leonard Trust to Alice Sky and Ethan O'Hara, a condominium on Wyvern Way
- Robert Ohlstein to U.C. Development, 41.35 acres of open land off County Rd.
- James & Kristin Renner to Amanda Reid & John Kim, 7.21 acres off Jacobs Rd.
- Ellen Seeger to Rachael Timberlake, 6.85 acres and condominium on White Rock Dr.
- Todd & Angel Wood to Eduart & Paige Lamthi, 3.06 acres & dwelling on Cherry Tree Hill Rd.

*The following are excerpts from minutes of EM's and WCUUSD's governing boards. Complete minutes are on the town and school websites. Unless otherwise noted, all meetings were held in person with a remote participation option available.*

## Selectboard

### October 6, 2025

- Agreed to support Energy Committee's grant application for sidewalk construction from the bridge on VT14S to top of hill past Paul's Square
- Decided to change start time for the Selectboard meetings to 5:30 beginning in December
- Offered full-time personnel a choice of the following: 1) 100% payment of the MVP Platinum Plan; 2) the option of either an MVP or BC/BS health insurance plan, or 3) a stipend equal to 50% of the single MVP Plan in lieu of a health insurance plan

### October 20, 2025

- Authorized town to purchase equipment trailer as requested by road foreman
- Accepted resignation of Zoe Christensen from her various roles, including planning commissioner and town health officer
- Signed required resolution to authorize submission of the CDBR DR planning grant
- Appointed Justin Michaels to the Recreation Board
- Approved Wheeler Rd. curb cut per application #25-047
- Increased pay for road foreman by $2/hour starting the next pay period

### November 3, 2025

- Approved and signed Errors and Omissions Form brought up by the Listers
- Agreed to order a total of 8 TC 600 Lighted Solar Speed signs to be installed on roads with speeding problems
- Approved resolution for a planning grant for the Village of North Montpelier for $29,500 with a small match

### November 17, 2025

- Approved purchase requested by EMFD of a 2025 Ford F-350 utility truck at the cost of $65,489 from Quirk Ford

## Planning Commission

### September 18, 2025

- Adopted Chapters 3, 4 CD, and 5 AD as revised
- Recommended Alex Rob as a new member of the Commission

### October 2, 2025

- Discussed creating a "priority housing zone" with Sandra Vitzum, who is interested in creating 10 small lots at the far corner of the Goddard campus which are in East Montpelier
- Made minor changes to Chapter 6A, 6F, and 7
- Decided Chapters 4CDE, 6A, 6F, 7, 8 CH 9A-E and Chapter 10 are complete

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**October 9, 2025**

- Approved application from Bonte Bakery to create a wholesale bakery on County Road
- Passed motion to seek a Municipal Planning Grant to study North Montpelier, Gallison Hill, and Goddard properties for housing development

**October 16, 2025**

- Discussed town forum, Nov. 6, for public input on the Town Plan

**October 30, 2025**

- Discussed existing water and waste water possibilities for potential housing developments
- Recommended SB not opt-in to Tier 1B of Act 181 (formerly Act 250) in 2025

**November 6, 2025**

- Held Public Forum on draft 2026 Town Plan

**November 20, 2025**

- Recommended SB not object to the extension of the priority housing project onto the 13.3-acre parcel owned by Goddard SPE
- Delegated to the chair and the vice chair, the task of making minor changes to the Town Plan suggested by CVRPC

## Development Review Board

**October 7, 2025**

- Approved application 25-042 (with conditions) by Lamb and Shea of Bonte Bakery for a wholesale bakery at 1693 County Road

**November 11, 2025**

- Granted setback waiver (application 25-046 by Nathan and Megan Koenemann) on the condition that the structure be moved to at least 17 feet from the property line within one year from this date

## WCUUSB

**September 22** (Special Meeting)

- Following an executive session, moved to affirm the administration's recommendation concerning a student matter

**October 8, 2025**

- Heard public input about the proposed Career Center
- Heard information and discussion of Act 73

**October 15 2025**

- Discussed preschool programming recommendations
- Accepted the budget parameters as presented, keeping increase in per pupil spending less than or equal to 5%
- Approved policies: Behavior Threat Assessment; Student Exchange; Use of Restraint; Flag Raising
- Approved the creation of a Network/ Infrastructure Specialist and a Network Security Specialist to replace two of the current IT positions
- Approved the intention to move forward with continuing a contract with the superintendent

**November 19, 2025**

- Discussed Budget Draft #1 as presented by superintendent
- Discussed Configuration Committee Model
- Accepted the resignation of Beatrice David, French Teacher-U-32, (effective January 31, 2026)
- Following an executive session, authorized board chair to negotiate a 2-year contract with superintendent

### Annual Dog Licensing is from January 2 through April 1, 2026

Dog licensing occurs on a yearly basis. It ensures that rabies vaccines are up to date and helps town officials identify and/ or re-home your pup if it gets away from you.

Licenses are $11 for spayed/ neutered dogs and $17 for unaltered dogs.

Licensing is quick and EASY and may be done by phone, online, or at the Town Office. Just call us to confirm what's needed. Personal visits are encouraged! Dogs are welcome, and treats are available for our canine visitors and their humans. Please call 802-223-3313 with any questions about licensing your dog.

### Is Your Dog #1? This Could be the Year!

Every dog licensed between January 2 and April 1 will be automatically entered in a random drawing to win a prize package including the #001 tag, bragging rights and a treasure trove of canine loot. The winning pooch's photo will be posted in the Town Office reception area, with a mention in the *Signpost*.

*—Rosie Laquerre is EM town clerk*

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# Get your Hot Latte Here: Fox Market




For those of us who have long wished to be able to meet a friend for a frothy latte and a home-made scone without driving into Montpelier, that dream has finally come true.

Since closing Foxy's in Barre, Doni Cain and Livv Dunton have re-imagined East Montpelier's Fox Market. Adding more tables and chairs to the already cozy space, they now offer espressos, lattes, chai, cappuccinos, teas, and more, in addition to the usual bar fare of wine and cocktails. There are other surprises too, including new products and gift items.

Hours have changed, so check their website or sign up for their newsletter.

*—Hilari Farrington is co-features editor of the* Signpost.





Photos by Hilari Farrington

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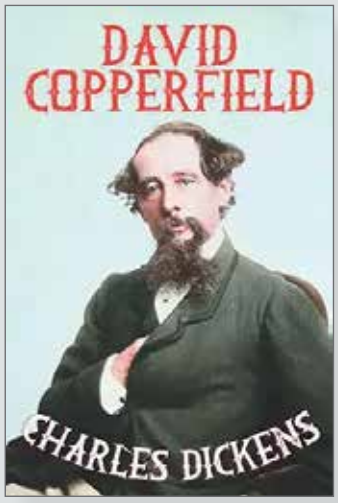
# A Reading Life in Review

by Tom Schmidt

One of the few good choices I made at the age of twenty was to begin a reading journal with a four-star rating system. Fifty years and five thousand books later, I find the accumulation of so many titles profoundly humbling. Set all the books I've read on shelves, and they barely cover a wall thirty feet long. Place that wall inside the UVM library, and I am reminded of the tiny fraction of available knowledge or wisdom that one person can absorb in a lifetime—to say nothing of all I've failed to comprehend, or forgotten. Has reading made me a better person? I expect that it has benefited me more than, say, keeping up with the Kardashians or watching professional wrestling; but I might also have kept up better with friends or wrestled more with the forces of injustice.

Thus, my lifelong habit of reading and rating is both a point of pride and a prod of conscience. But to focus on the positive, I'll suggest a few benefits of my pastime, and then I'll recommend three favorites.

One advantage of record-keeping is to recommend books to others. For example, my college roommate recently asked me about WWI books, and I was able to recommend twenty rank-ordered novels, poetry collections, and histories—a list I could never produce from mere memory. To serve as a reading resource for friends, family, and former students is a meaningful extension of my own experience with books.




Two other benefits of my reading records are to remind me of admired authors whose other works I might try, and to guide me to re-read books I enjoyed years ago. For example, I read Dickens' *David Copperfield* as a young man and found it good, while in my sixties, I found it great. Why the upgrade? It's about an older man looking back on the follies of his youth—an alien prospect in my twenties, but supremely relevant now.

A creative birthday present from my wife one year was a list of 100 little-known books recommended by friends and family members. Inspired by that gift, I'll recommend three lesser-known titles that, for me, contain the elements of a perfect book: a redemptive story, sympathetic characters, humor, and soul-feeding insight.

***Godric***, by Vermont author Frederick Buechner, is a Pulitzer-nominated gem of historical fiction in the voice of a reluctant 11th century saint. Written in a spare, poetic style, this little book is a life- and love-affirming treasure.

Wendell Berry's fictional Port William, KY is the setting for his remarkable stories and novels, the best of which, in my opinion, is ***Jayber Crow***. The title character is the town barber, whose initials hint at his profound sacrifice and function for his beloved townsfolk.

A pair of novels by Niall Williams, ***Boy in the World*** and its essential sequel ***Boy and Man***, immerses the reader in the rain-soaked beauty of rural Ireland while offering profoundly satisfying characters and engaging plot twists.

There you have it. From one long list, two short lists: three benefits of book listing, and three reading recommendations. Now, stick some wood in the stove—and stick your nose in a book!

*—When he's not reading, retired humanities professor Tom Schmidt is often writing. Author of fourteen books and poetry collections, his latest is a bicentennial history of the OMH.*








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# Signpost

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## CALENDAR

**Mon. Mar. 2, 5 pm, WCUUSD informational meeting** U-32, tinyurl.com/2w9vu7x6

**Tues. Mar. 3, 9:30 am Town Meeting Day,** EMES auditorium

**Tues. Mar. 3, around 12 pm, TM Potluck lunch,** EMES

**MARCH-APRIL *SIGNPOST***
**SUBMISSIONS DUE: MONDAY, JANUARY 26**

## CORRECTIONS TO THE PREVIOUS ISSUE

- The formal name of the featured business is The Manghis' Bread
- In the featured article on Quakers in East Montpelier, the founder of The Society of Friends should have been George Fox, NOT John Fox.
- Hilari Farrington's name was spelled inconsistently in the issue

## IMPORTANT DATES:

**Fri. Jan. 2, 2026, 2026 Dog Licensing begins**

**Mon. Jan 26, 2026, Deadline to submit petitions to run for public office,** due at Town Office by 5 pm

**Tues. Mar. 3, Town Meeting**

**Thurs. Jan. 1, 2026, Town Office closed for New Year's Day**

**Fri. Jan 2, License dogs at Town Office**

**Thurs. Jan 15,** deadline for filing petitions for articles on the Town Meeting warning

**Mon. Jan. 19, Town Office closed** for MLK Day

**Mon. Jan. 26,** deadline for filing nominating petitions for EM elective offices

**Mon. Feb. 16, 2026, Town Office closed** for Presidents' Day

*Thank you for your support*

**CHRIS & MARY STONE**

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Development Review Board (DRB) | 1st Tues. 7 pm | Town Office Building |
| East Montpelier Fire Department (EMFD) | every Tues. 7 pm | EMFD Community Room |
| Four Corners Schoolhouse Assn | 2nd Wed. 7 pm | Four Corners Schoolhouse |
| Planning Commission (PC) | 1st & 3rd Thurs. 6:30 pm | Town Office Building |
| Recreation Board | 2nd Mon. 7:15 pm | Elementary School |
| Selectboard | 1st & 3rd Mon. 6:30 pm | Town Office Building |
| WCUUSD Board Meeting | 1st & 3rd Wed. 6:15 pm | Rotating Locations (check website) |
| East Montpelier Historical Society | 3rd Mon. 6 pm | Old Brick Church/E. Calais |