

MT. VERNON ~ VIENNA ~

NEWS
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COMMENT

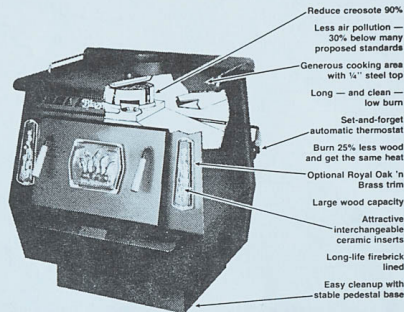
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VOL. II #1

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THE SELECTMEN OF VIENNA

As selectmen in Vienna, our second term started out with a jolt. If you all remember the heavy rains that washed out roads last Spring. We then turned our attention to assessing. After speaking with several people who might have been interested in doing the assessing, we decided we should do it ourselves. The estimates we received were very high and we felt that if we had to defend the assessments, we should know what went into them. So we spent April and May assessing 70+ houses.

Overlapping that time period we worked on converting the information in the town books onto the computer system. This involved filling out a sheet of paper for every piece of property in town with the owner's name, address, property value, map & lot numbers, acreage, date assessed and any descriptive information. That was the reason the tax bills were so late. But the information produced from the computer was a great help, especially in balancing the tax books.

Later we did some spring cleaning. The Vienna Historical Society generously offered to take some of the older records of the town to the State archives. So as we were searching for those we found some other historical treasures which we lent to the Historical Society for review and safe keeping until the town has a proper place to keep them. So the "back" room now has some semblance of order.

Also during this time we were stockpiling cold patch for paving. Based on a recommendation from the Road Committee we decided to stretch our paving dollar by using a more flexible material to cover the roads. As a result, later in the year Harold Bean spread this material on parts of Tower Road, Davis Road, Cumner Road, Kimball Pond Road, and Mason Road; the places we felt required quick attention, or else we would lose them. We are planning the same strategy this year so we would like to hear any comments you might have.

As things started to slow down we got word from the State Department of Forestry that the dump did not meet specifications, and they were revoking our forest fire insurance. So after reviewing the specifications, we decided the best and cheapest way out was to have someone clear out the area around the dump. To make this worthwhile for the person doing the work we marked a three acre parcel. We also had to have a mineral strip 10' wide and 100' cleared land around the dump. So excavating work had

to be done. We have had the State back out to the dump to review it and they approved.

Now we are up to about September and this is when our disagreement with the State Tax Bureau rears its ugly head again. The State put a lot of effort into trying to resolve the discrepancies we pointed out to them last year. In fact they had a field person evaluate at least 30 houses here in town. Coloman spent four full days taking this man all over town. But when all was said and done they still valued Vienna at 9,300,000, very close to the figure they had last year of 9,500,000 and not at all close to 7,500,000 which is what we won last year. So the whole process started over again. We presented our case to Municipal Board of Appeals and they again granted us 7,950,000. At this point we are waiting to hear if the State is going to take us to Superior Court again. (We just heard from the State and they are.)

Now we are busy preparing the town report and balancing the books. We have started planning for next year. Our prime concern will be to finish the assessing. We have about 75 more houses to do. We plan to complete them along with implementing some changes the State suggested in land valuation. One of the State's arguments is that the difference between our value of an unimproved building lot \$2,400 and the value of an improved lot \$3,000 is ridiculous given the current costs of septic systems and wells. We felt their argument was valid so next year we plan to assess an unimproved lot at \$1,500 and an improved lot at \$3,500 with an additional assessment for drilled wells. The other change we are planning is changing the value of excess acreage from \$130 to \$175 an acre. So, for example, if you own a lot with 11 acres and no septic or well, the value would be \$1,500 for the first acre and \$175 an acre for the remaining 10 for a total of \$3,250. Whereas it used to be \$2,400 plus \$130 an acre for a total of \$3,700.

Based on many complaints about the steps at the town house, and a federal requirement for handicapped access, we built a ramp. It can be taken apart and stored easily. We first used it on election day. Since then we have added additional supports and hope to have a handrail. We were unable to find someone to make repairs to the town house last year. We did get the broken panes of glass repaired. Next year we hope to get some work done on the roof. We would like to find someone who will do repairs and maintenance as a part-time job.

Irene

There is Always Something

Last year the State of Maine after looking at our Town Dump, declared it to be a fire hazard. So they revoked our insurance protection until we made substantial improvements. Well, we did--they reinspected and reinstalled our insurance. We were really relieved, but this relief did not last very long. We and many other towns were invited to meet at the Civic Center in Augusta. There the department heads from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, a number of other departments, some representatives of government, some engineers were there, but first and foremost, the federal government, and they were the main speakers. The federal agency they represented were concerned with clean air. They were enforcing the Clean Air Act. They told us in no uncertain terms; no more burning at town dumps. No buts or maybes--Just Stop! The same rule applies to all towns without exception for all states of the whole United States! No matter how small a town, no matter where it was located, no more burning on dumps. This caused quite an uproar. Towns from the unorganized territories with 60 residents or less looking at the pollution coming their way in the form of acid rain, etc., couldn't see why! The people representing the State of Maine told us they didn't care if we burned on our dumps, there was no State law that forbids it for towns under 1,000 people, but since the feds said so, and they are bigger, there is nothing they can do about it.

What are the alternatives? Here again was much said pro and con, but the only choice we have is either establishing a sanitary landfill operation including rats and animals and smell which is a byproduct of that, or sending our garbage to an approved incinerator like the one they are now building in Augusta. We were allowed a short period for making the adjustments (late spring or early summer was suggested) before a fine of \$250/day would be levied against the town. I am not sure if it is each time we burn or each day we don't come up with an alternative solution. Augusta's new incinerator is looking for customers and has asked us to answer their letter if we are interested. One thing, if we knew about all that, we probably wouldn't have spent the money to fix up our dump. The problem with sanitary fill aside from the environmental questions such as groundwater pollution, there is a matter

of covering the garbage with sand or gravel after each dumping, and in order to have the sand useable in the winter and not frozen, you have to mix it with salt or put it in a heated shed which you first have to build. Maybe we need to appoint a committee to make recommendations!

One of the Selectmen from a town up north asked about the difference between burning on the ground or in an incinerator that has a tall smokestack, and suggested that perhaps the particles from the smokestack probably fly to Canada and maybe that's how we get rid of them. One of the engineers there pointed out that because of the much higher temperatures, the amount of pollution is drastically reduced. We were told that groundburning is a health hazard since all that smoke will be traveling to nearby houses.

To the question of, can you burn other material such as brush, etc., we were told that it is all right. There are no restrictions on that. The smoke from brush is not a health hazard, but since household trash sometimes contains plastic, such as containers, that makes them a health hazard.

While there, I asked Mr. Wayne Hyland of the D.E.P. to come out to Vienna and check if we can convert to landfill. He said he would, but was understaffed and extremely busy, and didn't know how soon he would be here. Whatever the outcome, it is going to cost a lot more in the future.

There are two more items we will have to think about. First, we will ask Mr. Hyland when he looks at our dump whether we can store our winter sand at our dumpsite, but also our coldpatch. We have plenty of room there. It is easily accessible and we would no longer be dependent on the good graces of the Highway Department.

Second, last year when we had to clear land to comply with regulations, trees and bushes were cut down to the ground. New trees and bushes are going to grow up and it will take only a few years before we will have a major job of clearing on our hands unless we do not let the bushes grow up. Any suggestions?

The Brush Question: Are Herbicides the Only Answer?

In man's battle to wrest clearings from the Maine woods, the development of chemical weed-killers seemed at first to be a miracle. It's hard work, cutting the bushes

and little trees that creep into a field or clog a ditch; and then before the year is out, they've sprouted again. Spray them once, they're dead. Easier, and by some accounts, cheaper.

But now questions have begun to arise about the safety of these chemicals. For example, the herbicide 2,4,5-T was widely used until recently. Now it has been banned as too dangerous. People exposed to it in Oregon forest areas reported many health problems, such as headaches, nausea, and miscarriages. Animals were born with deformities the people had never seen in years of raising them, such as ducklings with crossed bills and backward feet, many of which died. Other animals developed tumors and skin sores that would not heal.¹

It is well to question any such chemical, even the ones at present considered safer than those no longer used (which were once claimed to be safe). In a letter referring to the herbicides Dacthal and Princep, and the insecticide Malathion, the College of Agriculture of the University of Vermont stated:

Pesticides seldom if ever affect only the pest they are aimed at. Other organisms that aren't pests, and that may be beneficial, are also affected and may be killed. All pesticides are harmful to all life in varying degrees. They are more immediately harmful to certain organisms for various reasons, and those are the ones that are killed outright.²

This is a timely issue for us here in Vienna. The land surrounding the dump has recently been cleared, and now the town must consider how the brush is to be kept down. This is a great opportunity to take a step in the right direction, away from the routine use of herbicides.

It has been estimated that this area, 1 1/2 - 2 acres, could be sprayed for about \$100; this would need to be repeated every two to three years, according to Coloman VonGraff. I propose that this money be given to a person willing to cut the bushes, rather than spray them. There may be a person with a brush cutter who could use the money to help pay for his/her machine. Or someone could organize a brigade of kids with snippers, and give them 50 cents for each 30' X 30' patch they clear. (This assumes a cost of \$25 per acre, per year.)

A small area like this, and the availability of some volunteer labor, is a situation ideal for trying out such alternatives to spraying.

Jean Anderberg

Sources:

¹A Bitter Fog: Herbicides and Human Rights, c. 1983 by Carol Van Stum. Sierra Club Books, excerpted in East West Journal, July 1983.

²Letter to the editor, "How Safe is 'Safe'?" Country Journal, August 1984.

I AM NO LONGER YOUR TOWN CLERK

We have enjoyed serving the people of Vienna this past seven years as Town Clerk. The Fire Department is demanding more of my time and Claudia has the Girl Scouts, along with our regular jobs. We no longer have the time. We will miss meeting all the people that come to our home, especially when a new family moves to town, and the young people getting a marriage license.

We look forward to working with the new Town Clerk, and will give all the help we can.

Jon & Claudia

WHO IS RUNNING FOR OFFICE IN VIENNA Tax Collector

I would like the opportunity to serve the people of Vienna as Tax Collector. I feel that I'm capable of performing the duties required of the office and will do so to the best of my ability.

I do have some experience in bookkeeping. I have done inventory control and production control for several large companies.

I've lived on the corner of the Bessey Road for six years now, and truly enjoy living in our small, but growing community. I'm asking for your support and the chance to become a useful, active member of our town.

Joyce Cox

I, Rachel Meader, would like the support of the voters at the upcoming election for the position of Tax Collector.

I do want people to know that at the time I took out my nomination papers, I was lead to believe that the incumbent Tax Collector wasn't running for re-election. With jobs being scarce, I have decided to run for this position anyway.

If I'm elected I am going to try having informal hours. I will also set aside Saturday mornings for business.

This would be a first time thing for me, but I enjoy working with numbers. I have done bookkeeping for a small business we have for eight years. For a short time I have also done some bookkeeping for the selectmen of the town of Chesterville.

I enjoy working and talking with people--a trait I have acquired from my Dad. I think the people who know me find me to be honest and direct.

Thank you for your support and come out and vote.

Rachel

My first year behind me I decided to run again. This past year was a learning experience; it was tougher than I thought. It takes a lot of my time and considerable patience. Taxpayers have a tendency to complain to the Tax Collector how high the taxes are; yet they vote at town meeting to raise the money. One change occurred in 1984--boats are no longer taxed as personal property. Now there is an excise tax on boats.

I urge you to come to the town meeting. If you don't want your taxes to increase, keep the appropriations down. Town meeting is March 3. See you there.

Betty Clark

TOWN CLERK

This is my first attempt to serve the Town in an official capacity. I will do my best to fulfill the duties to the office of Town Clerk if I am elected. I am aware that this job has many responsibilities such as keeping

records, sending out numerous reports, issuing hunting and fishing licenses, dog licenses, and more. Since I am home 80% of the time I can do it. If I need help I can count on John to advise me. I'll be available most afternoons and evenings.

P.S. My driveway is always plowed.

Ivy Berry

Road Commissioner

I have never served as an officer of the town before, and am not too familiar with the duties. I can only say I have the equipment, and if I am elected, I shall do the best I can, and am hoping for cooperation from the people. I shall be fair, and will try to help everyone the best I can.

Frank Berry

Depending on the Problem, They Call Me

I am your Constable. I will post a warrant; or arrange to find someone lost; I will help or investigate an accident on the road, or in a home; I receive calls to investigate a breakin; I catch stray dogs and take them to the pound, and so on. Sometimes I need help. Then I call the State trooper, or the game warden, or the fire warden. I have done this for many years now. Just a few years back we had three constables in Vienna, but now I am the only one. Since I have to work for my living, I am not always here, but when I am I do what I can. At the end of the year I report to the Selectmen on how many calls I went on and what type of call they were. All the details are confidential; I keep them to myself. I don't keep an exact statistic, but one thing is certain, the crime rate, including breakins and arsen, is down considerably; I would guess by 50%. I had only 25 calls this year in total. I am happy about that, and of these calls nothing was really major. We all can be proud of living in Vienna.

Linwood (Juny) Meader

1984 and the Vienna Planning Board: Plans, Maps, and Permits (but not much about George Orwell)
by Creston Gaither

The Vienna Planning Board currently consists of Susan Burns, Creston Gaither (secretary), Knute Kilponen, Robert Nurse, and Waine Whittier (chairman). Ellen Miller and Alan Williams serve as alternate members, and Coloman VonGraff attends meetings as the Selectmen's representative.

Early this year the Board helped the Town revise its Comprehensive Plan, which was readopted at the March Town Meeting. The Plan outlined present and projected future development in Vienna and presented options for future land use regulation. The Town has rejected such additional regulations in the recent past, however, and the Board recommended only that the Town carefully monitor land use trends and regulatory options in the future. The possibility of poor water quality in Flying Pond was discussed in the Plan by Frank Fiore.

The Board has recently begun discussing methods of mapping the Town for fire protection purposes with Fire Department Chief Jon Ljunggren. The maps must provide quick, accurate location of residential structures for firemen, including those assisting from out-of-town who may be unfamiliar with the area.

Throughout the year the Board has administered such existing regulations as the Notification of Construction Ordinance and the Shoreline Zoning and Subdivision ordinances. One 4 lot subdivision on Route 41 was approved. The Board also responds to an occasionally irritating number of bureaucratic questionnaires, surveys, etc.

The Board is always interested in the ideas of the townspeople and welcomes attendance at its regular meetings, held the 4th Tuesday of every month at the firehouse. We occasionally need new members or alternates.

The Board will continue to administer some of the Town's existing ordinances and may look into ideas for developing Town recreational facilities as they present themselves (we have spoken wistfully of having a basketball court somewhere in town, for example). Unless a significant change in development trends becomes apparent, we will probably not advocate any major regulatory changes over the next few years. However, we will on occasion put our ears to the track.

UNION HALL

Dear Neighbors,

This is the first annual State of the Union Hall letter. I would like to give an account of the progress we have made towards the revitalization of the Union Hall since we reorganized the association this Fall.

We have formed a non profit corporation, membership in which is open to all Vienna people. I would like to give a special thank you to Attorney Paul Mills of Farmington, who has donated his legal services to the corporation.

The Hall was once again filled with life at the Halloween and Christmas parties, and a good time was had by all. We hope to hold many more such events this year, for both adults and children, starting with a Spring Festival.

Between our two fund raising events, the Hunter's Breakfast and the bake sale at the Revels, and donations, we have raised over \$500 this past year. Our goal this year is to raise several thousand dollars, through various fund raising events, dues and donations. Most of this will go towards the restoration of the outside of the Hall--the roof, painting, windows, outhouse, etc., and then we will start on the interior.

We were not able to get our activity night going this winter, due to heating problems. However, come warmer weather, we will start with one night a week of supervised activity. We already have the loan of a ping pong table and several games. Anyone who would be interested in helping out with this project, please get in touch with me.

In closing, I would like to thank you all for the generous support you have given to the Union Hall Organization. We hope to achieve much towards our revitalization program this year and we welcome all new members.

Marti

THE MEADER DEER CLUB

March 8, 1972, a group of Vienna residents thought it a good idea to organize a hunting and recreational club in the Town of Vienna. They organized and incorporated the Meader Deer Club, Inc. Whatever their success or failures, in 1982, they decided to disband. There was only one

particular paragraph in their constitution and bylaws that had to be considered and obeyed. It was Article #4. It read as follows:

This shall be a Corporation exempt from taxation and any proceeds derived from the operation of said organization shall be retained by the Corporation will not be shared by the members; and at the time of dissolution of said Corporation, any assets owned by said Corporation shall be transferred and assigned to the Selectmen of the Town of Vienna to be applied by said Selectmen for educational, charitable, and scientific organizations.

So the Town of Vienna owns the land and building of the Meader Deer Club located on Rt. 41 across from the former North Vienna schoolhouse. The Town now has to decide what to do with it. So the Selectmen put an article in the town report for a vote by the residents whether they want to keep the land or sell it. My personal inclination is to keep it. If we ever want to have a playground or anything like it, we would at least have a piece of land we could use. If we ever wanted to buy a 7 acre lot on the highway, it would cost us dearly. Furthermore, if we did sell it, we probably should, out of respect to the donors and their wishes, use the money for educational, scientific or charitable purposes. That means it will be gone anyway; no more land, no more money.

Coloman

VIENNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In the past year, the Vienna Historical Society sponsored various events in support of an ongoing project--raising funds to facilitate publication of a collection of historical articles by Beverly Wight Smith. A variety show was held in February at the Mill Stream Grange Hall. Both children and adults from the area performed with dance, music, and monologue. The youngest performer was six, the oldest, 75. It was an enjoyable event with a warm community atmosphere evident. In July, a flea market was held in the area between the VHS building and the Grange Hall. Again, friendship and cooperation made for a successful community

effort. A beautiful Presidents Quilt, embroidered by society members, was on display in the VHS booth at Farmington Fair. Geneology charts and other historical material was also of interest to fairgoers. In November, two plays by Beverly Smith were presented at the IOOF Hall in Mt. Vernon. As in the previous year, The Mt. Vernon Area Community Arts Group joined with VHS to produce the plays. By popular demand, a repeat performance is being planned. The society is pleased to announce that work has been completed on the above-mentioned Smith book and that printing arrangements are being made. The support received from the community is great appreciated.

Publications Committee
The Vienna Historical Society

Mill Stream Grange Vienna

Mill Stream Grange has had an active and productive year. In the early spring some of our younger members were involved, for the fourth year in a row, in a Procedure and Degree Team Contest. A plant and food sale, later in the spring, brought in needed funds and gave us the opportunity to welcome back many of our friends whom we had not seen all winter.

The summer found us planning and preparing for our annual display of home arts and crafts for the Farmington Fair. This was one of our better displays since we walked away with the blue ribbon. A beautiful patchwork quilt was made by our members and raffled off following its display at the Fair.

This year National Grange met in Maine for the first time since 1948. We were very proud of the members of our Grange who took part in the proceedings.

Our Grange Hall has been used for many civic and social activities throughout the year. We welcome the chance to make use of our hall in this way.

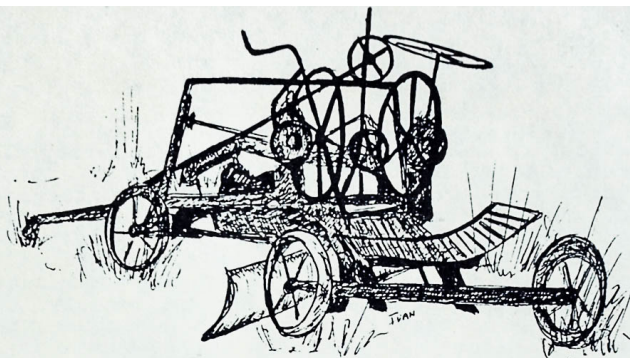
We are looking forward to another interesting year and welcome all who wish to join us in making it so.

Judy Dunn

CIVIL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (C.E.P.)

I would like to bring to your attention that currently an effort is underway to improve the emergency management system in Kennebec County. This process involves several steps: First, gathering facts about the hazards we may face, our vulnerability to hazards, and the resources available; second, assembling a team to develop an area operation plan to clarify emergency functions and responsibilities, as well as to enhance coordination among th various response organizations; and finally, conducting an exercise to test the systems on which we would rely during a disaster. In order to do that and to familiarize personnel with emergency operations in a non-emergency environment, we will have meetings which we will set up in cooperation with the county C.E.P. You are aware that this project will need manpower; volunteers that are willing and able to take responsibility in an emergency and can fulfill the demand of this effort. I will compile a list of volunteers, and will keep them on file until the time when this coordinated effort of instructions will be announced. Then I will contact these persons for one or more training sessions. So please get in touch with me so I can put your name in my file.

Joseph M. Gajarski, Director, C.E.P.
Vienna Civil Emergency Preparedness



Interview with Everett Williams
by Peter Devine

N & C When did you first become involved with the road business?

E.W. I was fifteen years old. The first man I worked for was Carl Jacobs, the Road Commissioner in this town.

N & C What did you do for him?

E.W. Everything. There weren't any particular jobs. I used to follow the road machine we had. We had one of them old road machines, was hauled by horses, those days, six horses on them.

N & C Did you roll the roads in winter?

E.W. Those days we used to have a double sled, just the same as if you were hauling out wood and pulp. Had a dray on it. We used to have a pole on the forward sled. Roy Hopkins and I used to go to work. We had wings built like this. We had a round stick and we used to chain it to the sled runners on each side. Then we had wings on each side of the forward sled there that carried the snow over.

N & C You pushed it back and it got packed down and people went on top of it?

E.W. Oh, yeah. You didn't have automobiles in those days.

N & C Did anything else happen to the roads in the winter?

E.W. No, nothing.

N & C In mud season you must have had to do something else.

E.W. Take it in mud season we used to go out and turn out water so our roads wouldn't wash out. We never done any more to them until it got settled over.

N & C "Turn out the water," how'd you do that?

E.W. Had a pick and a shovel, ditched it out about like this, took care of the water. After the roads got dried off, we used to have these drags. Had a cutting edge on them, just the same as you do on your snow plow. And had an oak plank and bolted it to this oak plank and had bushes in it, so to keep it up and it wouldn't tip over. We used to scrape the roads in those days with our horses. Roy Hopkins used to scrape, and I did, and Carl Jacobs. There were a number of the taxpayers that scraped to dry them out. Then after it got dried off suitable to work on Carl always went out and scraped them up with six horses on the road machine, those days. Then we'd ditch the roads.

N & C Describe the road machine.

E.W. You used to have a seat on there. And we used to hook six horses on the road machine. Carl Jacobs used his and I used mine. That's the way we operated in those days.

N & C Were there any paved roads?

E.W. There was none. Everything was gravel and dirt roads. I can remember when this road here [Belgrade Road] was all dirt, clear to Belgrade line. And I can remember also that that road from the village right straight down to Readfield line was all dirt road. We didn't have any paving those days whatsoever.

N & C Were the dirt roads maintained any differently then than now?

E.W. No, only they do it with a power grader now, which they didn't years ago. They done it with horses.

N & C Was anything done to the roads in the summer?

E.W. Only just smooth them up so the people could travel them. Those days we only raised \$1,500 for summer roads.

N & C Did you do anything in the fall to prepare for winter?

E.W. Carl would go to work and clean out the culverts, the leaves out the end of them and that was it.

N & C What did they use for culverts?

E.W. A lot of them, these old stone culverts, had these flat rocks and side stones. They took these flat rocks and covered them, put them right across and then buried them.

N & C When did they first start tarring roads?

E.W. When they started out tarring roads, we used to go to work and put our sand out in small piles. I think it was twelve feet apart. Then they used to have a tar tank come in, one of these old tar tanks. They had a bar, had

sprayers on it. They'd spray it right on. They put on enough to cover the road in good shape with that tar. We used to have a section, not spray the whole width of the road. We'd cover that with the sand and then we'd take the other side. Used to be anywhere from six to seven men spreading sand over this tar.

N & C What was the first road to get paved?

E.W. They called it, those days, third class maintenance. We put tar on this North Road.

N & C When did you become Road Commissioner?

E.W. I went in Road Commissioner in '34.

N & C Was Carl Jacobs Road Commissioner from the time you were 15 until you took over?

E.W. Carl, and then Ray Towle, he took over before I did. And then I was elected in '34 and I had it for 22 years.

N & C From '34 to '56. What were some of the biggest changes during the time you were Road Commissioner?

E.W. We was getting, those days, 75 cents an hour; labor, yourself and your horses you used on the road. We was getting \$6 a day for self and horses.

Then they went to work. They bought an FWD and I had the FWD and the old cleat track. We broke out the lower end of town with the cleat track. This end we used the FWD. The FWD had the V plow and your two wings but your wing man, those days, had to get out and wind it up, had a crank on it to pick up your wings.

N & C Were there further improvements in your snow plowing equipment?

E.W. I had a Walters truck. And I had Louis Hibbard plowing and Milton Hall plowing on these cross roads. And take it on the main line if it comes a big storm, we used to take the Walters truck, a heavy 7 1/2 ton Walters truck and after we got it broke out the shoulders got up too high, we used to take a wing to push them back. It was all hydraulic. All you had to do was catch the lever in the cab, you'd pick it up. Didn't have to get out of the cab.

N & C Were any new roads built during the time you were Road Commissioner?

E.W. I started in on the Bean Road and I built the whole of that road clear on to the Belgrade Road. And it was built on the TRI specifications, 50 foot right of way, 18 foot top, and a two foot shoulder. We put a base in then after we had it done, we had our ditches on it. And we put the tar to it, fast as we built them.

N & C Who decided that the Bean Road needed to be built?

E.W. When, after the town meeting we got our money to start in on the roads in the summertime, I used to go to the Selectmen. We used to talk it over. I said, "Whereabouts do you want to put the TRI [Town Road Improvement, state funds] this year? Which amounted to around \$5,000."

They'd look up at me, tell me "Ain't you the Road Commissioner?"

"Yeah, supposed to be."

"Well, if you've got a certain place you want to put it..."

I says, "We've got to divide it up, give the lower end of the town some and we've got to have some up here."

It was important to me to fix these roads where your school buses go, your milk truck. Your farmers have to live and they have to get the milk out.

N & C Were there other roads that you built?

E.W. I built practically all the roads down at the lower end of town. All them cross roads down there.

N & C How long has there been a Road Committee?

E.W. As far as I'm concerned, we were just as well off before we ever had a Road Committee. I always said and I stick to it now, if we ain't got a Road Commissioner capable of handling our roads, kick him out and put in somebody who is capable of it. Because the way I look at it, everybody wants to be boss. Everybody has different ideas. In fact, they didn't used to bother me, tell me what I ought to do or anything.

I had this job to do and I knew that was my job. And I got out and I done my job.

Candidate for Road Commissioner

You asked why I would like to be Road Commissioner.

I believe the roads can be maintained more efficiently and economically by using a grader rather than trying to do them with a bulldozer.

The roads in the past have not been properly ditched or crowned to shed water; this being the reason why the roads are in such poor condition today.

If elected I do not plan to spend a lot of money on these back roads, but do plan to get them ditched so they will shed the water rather than having the water running

down the wheel tracks on all the hills.

I do not plan to own a lot of equipment. I have a bulldozer and have the use of a backhoe, which I can hire. I plan to utilize the people and equipment in town to do this work.

Milton Hall

A Selectman's Statement
by Deane Jones

I've been asked to write an article for this newspaper advocating my campaign for re-election as a Selectman in Mount Vernon. Well, I like the job and I'd like to be re-elected and I'd like to endorse the re-election of Jack Flanery and George Smith. I've enjoyed serving with them and while we don't agree on every issue, both are intelligent people and we often compromise on what we feel is in the best interest of the Mt. Vernon taxpayers. A Selectman's job is simply to carry out the wishes and mandates of town meeting and get the taxpayers the most services for the fewest dollars. We started a newsletter this year to keep people advised of town activities and the year has brought only minor controversy. It's a shame that Selectmen can't make everyone happy with every decision they make, but unfortunately there are two or more sides to every problem, and compromise isn't always possible. We feel we have acted all year with the best interest of the taxpayers and voters in mind, and if enough people agree with us we'll continue to do so for another year.

To Grow Or Not To Grow, by Selectman George Smith

Mt. Vernon's largest taxpayers are either farmers or developers. That should tell us something. Where fields and farms once dominated the Mt. Vernon landscape, single family houses have sprung up like wild flowers. And one cannot hike anywhere in this area without coming upon cellar holes, some "deep" in the woods, testament to fields and homesteads carved out of the forest, but now reclaimed.

Mt. Vernon is in transition, and if we have any idea of what kind of community we want in the year 2,000, we better act now, to steer things in the right direction.

As a Selectman, I find our time generally taken up by the routine business, from roads to the dump. There is little time for planning the future. Perhaps the Planning Board is a group to look to for guidance, but we only got together with them once this year, and little has come of our discussion. It's frustrating.

I expect most people would like Mt. Vernon to remain as it is, with a decidedly rural character. If we wanted to live cheek by jowl, we'd be living in Augusta.

Growth is already putting pressure on many town services, particularly roads, the dump and our educational system. Our tax rate is rising. We need careful thought and consideration of the path we are on. Is it the right one? What can we do to maintain our rural character?

Well, there's a lot we can do. But these Selectmen can't do it alone. We tried a community survey last year, which got little response. Maybe we need a special committee, which can take a look well down the road, without getting bogged down in the day to day issues which dominate our town's agenda.

A Commission for Mt. Vernon's Future? It does sound rather pretentious, but it's a job which must be done, and done now. After all, in fifteen years, I don't want to have to move another 20 miles down the road, in search of what I moved to Mt. Vernon for six years ago.

MT. VERNON RESCUE

by Pat Rawson

With the help of the Maine Bureau of Public Safety, Mt. Vernon Rescue has been able to expand our existing car seat loan program to include six Astroseat Toddler Seats. These are designed to accommodate children who weigh between 17 and 42 lbs. and whose height is 42 inches or less.

In light of the new child restraint law requiring any child under four years be restrained, we hope that there are many of you who will take advantage of this program.

These seats are available to anyone in Mt. Vernon and surrounding towns regardless of individual income. Rather than the typical deposit and monthly fees that are charged by most other agencies, we are requesting a small \$5.00 fee for the use of these seats. This amount covers the entire

rental period.

If anyone is interested in borrowing one of these toddler seats or one of our infant seats, please contact Pat Rawson at 293-2597.

THE CHRISTMAS CONTROVERSY: A Teacher's Viewpoint
by David Solmitz

"Use your judgement, but if I receive calls from parents again this year, we may have to eliminate all celebrations" wrote Charlene Popham, Superintendent of School Union #42, to her school principals regarding annual school Christmas celebrations particularly in reference to that held at Maranacook Community School.

Charlene is not an ogre. She is a school administrator just like so many throughout our state and across the nation. She simply reflects the views of the school board by whom she is employed and to whom she is ultimately responsible. She is, however, discharging her duty as an educator by believing that she must respond to the will of the people. Who is the general public? What is that "will?" Is everybody in a community expected to hold the same views? By submitting to the criticism of an individual or to that of a particularly vocal group regarding a school program, she is trying to avoid controversy. By threatening to cancel the event, pushing the issue under the carpet, it can smoulder and in time ignite into a major dispute. Had she defended the celebration as a tradition as old as Maranacook Community School itself, that it is not a religious celebration by any stretch of the imagination but a secular festival just prior to the school vacation as the year draws to finality, merely an expression of shared friendship between faculty and students, she actually would be supporting her principals and teachers. By so doing she would be fostering an environment that is solid enough to allow for the sharing and discussion of ideas. As a leader of the educational community the superintendent has the responsibility to help both young and old seek answers to their questions and concerns through dialogue, to raise new questions that will foster understanding and human growth. It is a sad commentary when any person, particularly an educator, submits to one who is blinded by narrowness. In this way she leans support to the worst elements in our

society: those which breed prejudice, abuse, and intolerance. In the future I hope to see Charlene, the board of directors, other administrators, and fellow teachers stand up for the principles on which our democracy was founded: justice for all.

The Principal's View

by J. Lucarelli

I appreciate this opportunity to explain the events leading up to our Holiday Assembly at Maranacook Community School. Early in December, Maranacook's Management Team discussed plans for December 21st, the day before vacation. They said that typically this has not been a productive school day. The morning has been spent with parties in many classes and the whole afternoon has been devoted to an assembly which has had inadequate planning more often than not. There have been as many as fifteen disciplinary hearings from student behavior on the day before vacation. Given this background, and given my charge from the community to raise academic expectations of students, I agreed that activities on December 21st needed to be limited. We decided to shorten each class period and allocate 45 minutes at the end of the day for parties in advisor groups. We agreed to request that teachers not hold parties during classes. Pat Stanton, our Latin teacher, was organizing fund-raising for Ethiopian relief, and some advisor groups were planning to focus their advisor time on this. We did not anticipate strong reaction to eliminating the afternoon assembly since no students or staff members had shown any interest in planning the assembly.

Shortly after this management team meeting, I received a memo from Superintendent Popham directing all Union principals to be sensitive to the needs of minority religions in planning activities for the week before vacation. We are all aware of the laws and court cases pertaining to public schools and religion. Ms. Popham asked us to use our good judgment and assured us that she would keep us informed on any concerns expressed to her.

I shared both the Management Team's decision and the Superintendent's request with staff, who passed it on to students. What became apparent very quickly was that the assembly was extremely important to a small group of

students. On Monday, December 17th, several petitions were circulated requesting a Christmas assembly. About one third of the students signed the petitions. Stan Cowan and I each met with a few concerned students and told them that the Management Team would reconsider the assembly if they had a plan for a well-organized program ready for the team meeting at 3:00 that afternoon. The Management Team agreed to the proposal developed by two seniors for a holiday assembly, cutting an additional 15 minutes out of class time to allow one half hour with advisor groups and one half hour for the assembly. The seniors decided to focus the assembly on the fundraising efforts for Ethiopia with a live tree called "The Giving Tree." The assembly, and the fundraising effort were both highly successful. No discipline reports were filed. The assembly was well organized and enjoyable. And over \$1,000 was raised for relief in Ethiopia.

The controversy surrounding the holiday assembly seems to have focused on the memo from Superintendent Popham. Separation of church and State was the issue that brought the first European immigrants to New England, and it has been a highly charged issue ever since. We do not have the perfect solution to this issue in CSD10: if there was a solution that would satisfy all parties, someone would have come upon it in one of the numerous communities where the concern has been raised in the past several decades. The decision to cancel the assembly, which started the controversy was made prior to Ms. Popham's memo, and was made for instructional management reasons.

I would like to close with a request of the residents of Mt. Vernon. If you have a concern or a question about something you have heard about Maranacook, please call me about it. I may not be able to resolve matters in the way you would like, but I would sincerely appreciate the opportunity to attempt to do so. Thank you.

CHRISTMAS PAST by Pat Jones

Christmas 1984 arrived with a new proclamation from some of our local school administrators. The celebration of Christmas in local schools should be eliminated or minimized. Indeed, it seemed that Scrooge himself had arrived among us in the form of school administrators and some teachers. Each spouting such remarks as: "Separation

of Church & State!", "Protecting minorities rights!", and "Carrying out the 5th Amendment!".

A complaint was made by a local family that too much time was spent on Christmas celebrations in school the week before the holiday vacation. In reaction to this, school administration decided to rush to the rescue and protect this family and others like them by issuing this edict. Some schools chose to ignore this information and continued with their original plans. Other school personnel, like dutiful soldiers, upheld the new request and proceeded to eradicate Christmas celebrations. Some conscientious school staff even insisted that a poster in school which advertised a Christmas Dance had to be remade or changed to say Holiday Dance. One wonders if the complaining family really intended for change to be carried out to this extent.

The celebration of Christmas in our public schools could understandably be an annoyance to non-Christian families. We should sympathize with them.

The tradition of Christmas celebrations in local schools runs deep. Grandmothers have reminisced about Christmas pagents of long ago where they would yearly attend to sing carols with their children and neighbors. Sometimes this was the only time that community members get together. Many parents still look forward to sharing these school celebrations with their children.

The issue of Christmas celebrations in schools is a sensitive one. Sending edicts to our schools to eliminate these activities is not an effective way to deal with this problem. Let's try to understand each others needs and find a solution that is workable and agreeable to both sides. An Issues and Answers night at Maranacook School might be a good forum to work on this problem.

To eliminate Christmas in our school would be a loss and to continue to ignore minority rights isn't fair.



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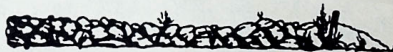
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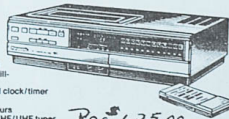
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