



Fall 2015

Lisa C. Orman, Publisher  
Chris Coffin, Managing Editor

# VERMONT'S VOICE

AGRICULTURE

GOVERNMENT

NATURAL BEAUTY

## Breakfast at the Brandts

By Dean C. Bossenbroek

Sitting at Earl and Shirley Brandt's breakfast table eating locally produced eggs and freshly baked black cap muffins with a handful of other Vermont neighbors reminds me to breathe in the moment. The atmosphere is easy and welcoming. The conversation is alive with current events, garden talk, and local politics. Letting life slices like this slip by without acknowledging how great they are would be regrettable.

Invariably at these early morning gatherings, I am the one to rush off to the next thing I need to do, even if it means

I won't get to hear Earl tell the one about Pavlov walking into a bar. He and Shirley have been retired for most of the last quarter century, and while they take the time to chuckle at well-worn jokes over an extra cup of coffee with friends, they aren't just sitting around all day waiting for happy hour to begin.

No, these octogenarians will cram a lot into their day before that happens. Because, as author and poet Charles Bukowski once wrote, "The days run away like wild horses over the hills."

Earl and Shirley are certainly aware of the passage of time. They also realize fretting over this fact of life, is not the best use of their precious time. When they decided to retire in the Town of Vermont in 1992, they wove themselves into the fabric of our community in short order.

Shirley is the long time Fire Warden in this area issuing burn permits and regulatory information. She is the treasurer for the Vermont Lutheran Church Women's Group and an active member of the Friends of Black Earth Library. She was a poll worker for 15 years.



### *Clerk's Corner*

## Fall Community Event 9/27

The pace of change in our world today is rapid. The moment you purchase the latest gadget or download the newest application on your smartphone, it is already outdated.

Communication is instant and effortless. There are many social benefits of these new methods for developing human relationships – but in my view, those benefits only outweigh the risks when used as a supplement or complement to the tried and true communication method: face-to-face communication.

And when you have true conversation, you have inter-personal communication and at that point, you're just one small step away from community. So with all that said, I encourage all available Vermont residents to attend the **Town of Vermont Community Event – the Fall Fun Event – on September 27<sup>th</sup>** at Tyrol Basin. This event is a change from what has previously been the Town of Vermont Picnic in August. The community event this year will include many of the same elements as the picnic and will again be held at the beautiful Tyrol Basin Ski area. **The event begins at 3:00 p.m., with the program beginning at 4:30 p.m. and dinner is provided beginning at 5:00. Activities for young and old alike will run from 3:00 until 7:00 p.m.** so please come whenever you are able. Our goal is to have more than 100 Vermont community members attend the event this year! Be part of something tried and true and of incredible societal importance...local community!

# VERMONT'S VOICE

## **Brandts** *(continued from Front)*

Shirley weaves (she has an actual loom in the basement), sews, tends an expansive garden, bakes, and helps Earl wrap up complex, philosophical thoughts.

Earl has written many articles for Vermont's Voice including a long running column called "Hidden in the Hills" highlighting the talents and accomplishments of our neighbors. He also covered Town of Vermont Board meetings as a reporter for the News-Sickle-Arrow. He plants himself in the middle of local issues, because, "I try to bring people together. I'm not shy. I believe in participatory democracy." Here he giggles a little, "much to the chagrin of some Town Board members over the years."

During the winter of 2011 Earl and Shirley joined the throngs of protesters at the State Capitol in support of labor unions and the middle class. Native American and environmental issues are also passions.

Earl enjoys working with his hands and spends many hours in his workshop honing his woodworking talents. He has an affinity for cedar. He has refinished much furniture, built five beautiful canoes, and is the creative force behind the recently dedicated Peculiar Little Free Library.

During life prior to retirement, Shirley was a nurse for 40 years. She rattles off the various health care areas in which she worked: psych, OR, pediatrics, and schools. The last ten years of her career she spent in oncology, and says this was the most rewarding part of her work life. "I learned how to live and how to die from the patients. I learned about pain and hope. In spite of seeing so many patients die, it was uplifting."

Earl became a Boy Scout at age 12, attained Eagle Rank, and never left. He entered the Scouting profession in 1955 and spent the entirety of his 37-year career dedicated to the Boy Scouts of America. As Executive Director of five different Local Councils, he was responsible for recruiting volunteers, keeping camps going, hiring, training, and supervising staff. Both he and Shirley were very active in the Scouts on the volunteer level.

The Brandts married on August 29, 1953. They both graduated from the University of Wisconsin, where they met while working in the Wisconsin General Hospital Psych Ward. They raised three sons and a daughter living in eight different homes in three states.

They are blue grass music fans invoking the name of the legendary Bill Monroe with reverence. They make regular trips to Madison, enjoying good barbeque and live music at places like the Harmony Bar on the eastside.

## **Peculiar Corners Little Free Library**

By David Stanfield and Ear Brandt

Vermont Township has a new Little Free Library thanks to Barb Perkins. It is located at Peculiar Corners (F&FF) on Dave and Barb's VERMONT VALLEY COMMUNITY FARM. Barb has always wanted a Little Free Library for their farm community members, visitors and neighbors. Dave agreed, but neither could decide how to make it happen.



Driving his tractor down Cedar Hill Lane one day, Dave noticed Earl Brandt sitting on one of his benches in front of his workshop, looking like he should be doing something more productive. The light bulb lit up. He stopped to chat, which should have been a clue as to the real purpose of his visit, and eventually brought up the need for a Little Free Library at Peculiar Corners.

Earl agreed to design and build it and that it should look peculiar, given its location at Peculiar Corners. A miniature round barn was deemed appropriate.

Lacking the knowledge required, Earl recruited several neighbors including Jim Ludolph, a master carpenter and former Building Inspector; Gary Genewikow, a craftsman and partner in Cedar Hill Nature Crafts; Dave Perkins, a self-proclaimed welder; Jesse

# VERMONT'S VOICE

Perkins, a renowned hole digger; Eric Perkins, an accomplished sign painter; Ken Schuster, a professional roofer; David Stanfield, an eager apprentice; Shirley Brandt, an apprentice barn quilter; Mason Maier, sheet-metal specialist; and Jacob Wallencamp, a jack of all trades and lifter of heavy things. Most of the construction took place in Earl's workshop where, he admits, he has more tools than talent.

The barn is made of cedar strips (left over from building cedar strip canoes), donated shingles, a discarded farm implement wheel, metal pipes, used lumber and donated Plexiglas. It sits on a ¾ by 39in circular 'barn yard' complete with wire fencing.

Two opposing Plexiglas doors open to the book shelves – one for adults and one for children. Signs remind users to BRING a BOOK and TAKE a BOOK. They can be used anytime without notification or permission.

---

## The Sting of the Yellow Jacket

By Karen Carlock

It was a hot, humid day but everyone could feel that a storm was brewing. The dark clouds began to roll in and each bright, mesmerizing lighting flash was immediately followed by loud, clapping thunder. From the covered safety of our front porch, we watched as the rain began to fall. The pitter patter of the rain drops was peaceful even as the wind whipped overhead. In the midst of a lovely summer storm, the hero of our story had promptly said a quick good-bye to his family, loaded up his chainsaw and hopped into his truck after hearing of a tree down along one of the town roads. And he didn't need to be told which tree was down along that road – he already knew it by heart - because he knows every bend of every road, every old and new tree, and nearly every resident.

His family laughs quietly in the evening when he shares about his work day and which “neighbor” he had the opportunity to see. Neighbor is not indicative of proximity to our community-minded hero. Instead it is an inclusive term that extends to all those he encounters in our unique and special township. Several years ago, a family from the state of Vermont drove to our Town Hall in order to get a taste of the small town that shared a name with their state. The family followed up their visit with a letter to the Town of Vermont Board sharing how much they enjoyed their visit and how well the Town of Vermont was represented. This incredibly important trait of sharing with and caring for neighbors has been passed down to his children who participate in community activities and volunteer their time toward trash pickup and even assisting with window-washing at Vermont Town Hall.

In our society we have come to expect that our work is acceptable until we hear otherwise because words of appreciation are often few and far between. For the Town of Vermont patrolman, his day to day activities often go unnoticed yet if they were not completed with the high level of quality that they are, it would certainly be apparent. With each winter storm, Vermont residents can wake up in the morning with the assurance that the Town roads will be clear and safe. Additionally, residents know that mowing will be timely and all equipment will be well-maintained in order to be a good steward of a Town investment.

When our hero received more than twenty stings by yellow jackets while clearing the downed tree during that lovely summer storm while I sat on my front porch, it didn't surprise me one bit that Jack Schulenberg, who goes above and beyond each day, dismissed the incident and the emergency room visit that followed as just another day as Town of Vermont patrolman.



### Clerk's Corner

- As many are already aware, 2016 is a big election year! If you are interested in supporting your community as an **election worker**, contact Karen Carlock, clerk at 608-767-2457 or via email at [clerk@townofvermont.com](mailto:clerk@townofvermont.com)
- **How's your internet?** The Town Board is gathering data in an effort to address internet issues throughout the township. To help us with data collection, please consider going to speedtest.net and clicking “Begin Test” which is located in the center of the screen. Once the test is complete, email [clerk@townofvermont.com](mailto:clerk@townofvermont.com) or call 608-767-2457 with your download and upload speed.
- **Want to stay involved in Town of Vermont happenings?** Check out [townofvermont.com](http://townofvermont.com) and sign up for email notifications.
- **Fall Website Photo** – the beauty of Autumn will soon be upon us and the Town of Vermont website needs a new photo to showcase the beauty of our township. If you have a photo that you would be willing to share on the website, please email the photo to [clerk@townofvermont.com](mailto:clerk@townofvermont.com)

# VERMONT'S VOICE

## How to reach us:

Publisher: Lisa Orman, 767-4930, home; [lisa@kidstuffpr.com](mailto:lisa@kidstuffpr.com)  
Managing Editor: Chris Coffin, 437-3213, [ccoffin@mhtc.net](mailto:ccoffin@mhtc.net)

**Mission Statement:** It is the mission of Vermont's Voice to provide information about our town and articles of interest to the residents of our town in order to promote a sense of community, encourage participation in and understanding of town government, and improve communication among residents. Vermont's Voice is a volunteer, citizen-run publication that encourages and depends on citizen participation in providing information, articles, or suggestions for articles, photos, criticism, and help with mailings. The cost of printing and postage is included in the town budget. Vermont's Voice is not the official voice or viewpoint of the town government.



**Lisa and Chris**

Keep up to date on town ordinances, meetings and other business at <http://www.townofvermont.com>.

## Town Officials

*Chair*, Barb Grenlie 437-5856  
*Supervisor #1* Scott Moe 767-4738  
*Supervisor #2* Don McKay 437-4071  
*Supervisor #3* Todd Culliton, 767-4145  
*Supervisor #4* Doug Meier 767-8860  
*Town Clerk* Karen Carlock 767-2457  
Or email: [clerk@townofvermont.com](mailto:clerk@townofvermont.com)

*Town Treasurer* Kathy Smith 767-0809  
*Town Patrolman* Jack Schulenberg 437-5490  
*Building Inspector* Johnson Inspections 608-444-0372

Scott Moe 767-4738  
Eric Haugen 767-3327  
Doug Meier, 767-8860  
Dean Bossenbroeck 669-1728

## Plan Commission Members

*Chair* Todd Culliton 767-4145  
*Vice Chair* Jim Elleson 767-3553  
*Secretary* Karen Carlock 767-2457

## Fire Warden

Shirley Brandt 767-3030

Fall 2015

## VERMONT'S VOICE

AGRICULTURE      GOVERNMENT      NATURAL BEAUTY

PO Box 204  
Black Earth, WI 53515

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
Permit #5  
Black Earth  
WI 53515

Return Service  
Requested

Designed and edited by

**KidStuff**  
PUBLIC RELATIONS