



Spring 2016
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VERMONT'S VOICE

AGRICULTURE

GOVERNMENT

NATURAL BEAUTY

The Town of Vermont's Country Schools

Adapted from: *Town of Vermont – "The Early Years" 1846 - 1890* by Marian Swoboda

The first schoolhouse in the Town of Vermont was built, in what later became identified as District No. 2, of log construction in the early 1850's. Elizabeth Beaty taught school there for five years. Part of the time her only textbook was the Bible. This little log school was in operation through the years of the Civil War until 1874 when the decision was made to build a new schoolhouse. Elizabeth's father, George Beaty, donated the land upon which the new schoolhouse was built, thus the school became known as the **Beaty School**. During the first years the school had a very high enrollment, especially during the winter months. In those days men and also some women went to school in the winter to learn to read and write. At one time during the 1880's there were sixty pupils in the school, most of whom were Irish. During the early year there was no well on the premise; drinking water was obtained from a spring some distance south of the schoolhouse.

In 1865 the first **Steensrud School** was built in District No. 5. It stood until 1885 when a special meeting was held to consider a new location. The new schoolhouse would measure 20' x 30'. There would be a stone wall built around the building, five feet high with plastered walls inside and wainscoted three feet up from the floor. To George Bryant went the job of digging out stumps and burning brush for \$6.00; to John Temanson the job of digging rocks necessary for the wall under the building for \$10.00; to Andrew Huset and Ole Stay the job of digging the basement for \$22.00; to James Deardsley the job of laying the cellar wall, lathing and plastering and laying the chimney for \$35.00; to Andrew Haugner the job of carpenter work for \$80.00.

Also in 1865 another meeting was called for the purpose of levying a \$1,278.95 tax for the building of a schoolhouse in District No. 3. *(continued on page 2)*

In Old Vermont

by Dan Brunner

In the east part of the Township of Vermont along Highway 78 just north of Union Valley Road, is a point that was known as "Rustespringen." It's a spring whose waters meander westward and join Vermont Creek. The name came from an early Norwegian settler named Johannes Ruste. It was a popular gathering and resting spot for farmers and travelers going to and from Black Earth. This place is aptly described in the Vermont Town History published in 1976.

Before it became Highway 78, the crossing at the spring had a small bridge that could be traversed by teams and wagons. Many farmers from Vermont and other the townships south of Black Earth were frequent users of this road. Black Earth at that time was the nearest center for milling, trade and the railroad.

In Springdale Township lived a man by the name of John Plato. Plato was one of those frontier characters who had a notorious reputation. He was described as a large, swarthy, powerful man. He had a reputation as a rough and tumble pioneer with a fondness for liquor, and a streak of meanness in him. He was known to travel to the Black Earth and Blue Mounds area creating chaos in his path.

Sometime in the early late 1860's or early 1870's, Plato, while liquored up, decided to hold the bridge at Rustespringen by blocking the bridge with his team and wagon demanding a toll from whoever needed to cross. Several farmers from Springdale Township with loads of wheat on their way to Black Earth were stopped by Plato. They refused to pay but were unwilling to tangle with Plato either.

John Malone from Springdale was one of the farmers delayed at the crossing. He told the other farmers, "Just wait until John Rue gets here and we shall see."

When John Rue arrived with his load of wheat he tried reasoning with Plato to no avail. Finally he pitched into Plato and the brawl was on.....while the fight continued the other farmers moved Plato's team and wagon and got their loads of wheat across.

Sources: Vermont Township History; Lutheran Evangelical Church Records; Township of Springdale History; and Wisconsin State Journal article May 12, 1864

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SCHOOLS *(Continued from front page)*

The school was first named after the Isaac Steele family who lived in the district when the schoolhouse was built. In later years, the Steele family moved away and the school was renamed the **Booth School** after the Booth family who were the oldest residents in the district. Students from four generations of the Booth family attended the school.

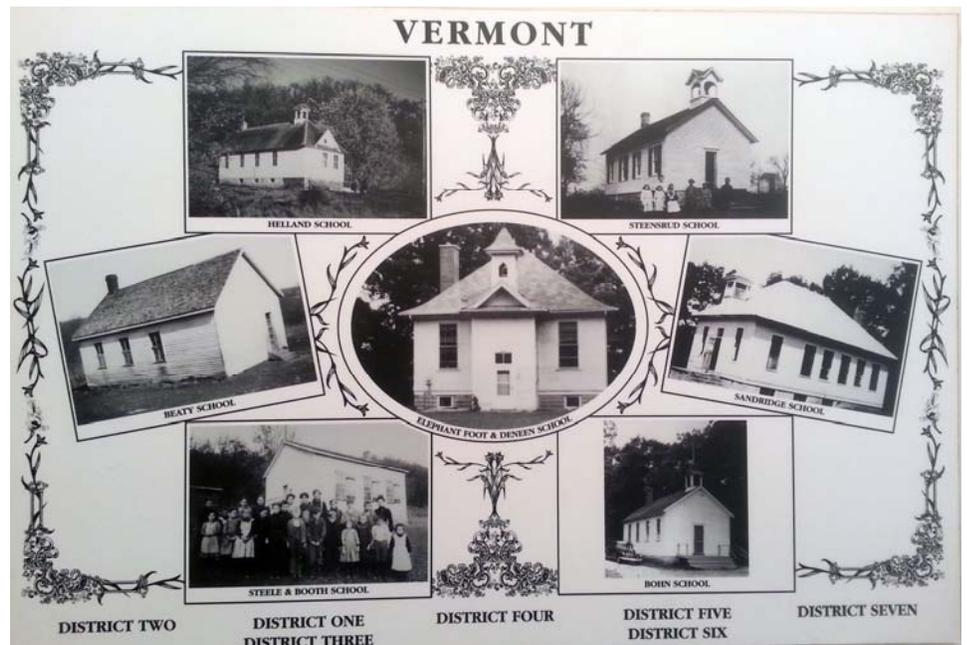
The **Helland School** in District No. 1 began operation in 1866. The earliest available record, the annual meeting of 1867, voted to have a man teacher for the winter months and not to pay over \$40.00 per month. At a special meeting in 1869 it was voted to purchase land in order to change the road by the school, build a board fence around the school ground, and to build one privy. At the annual meeting in 1876 it was agreed that the McGuffey Reader was as good as any textbook and it was only throwing money away to bring in any other.

The oldest record of the **Bohn School** in District No. 6 is a deed signed in 1865 by Ernest Bohn and District Board members Ole Olson Sale and Edward O'Hare granting one-half acre more or less to the District to hold during the term the district wishes to maintain a schoolhouse for school purposes. The school was named after the Bohn family who deeded the land for the school. Four generations of the Bohn family attended this school. The oldest school record book begins in 1867. It was voted to raise \$132.25 by tax on the District to build the school. While the schoolhouse was built in Section 28 of the Town of Vermont, it served students from the Town of Blue Mounds as well. The school served the community until 1892 at which time a new schoolhouse was built on the same site. The building measuring 18 x 32 x 10 feet cost \$586.49 plus \$66.80 for 20 seats.

The **Deneen School** in District No. 4 was built in 1868 at a cost of \$350.00 Humphry Lynch, Aaron Denney and James Blake were each paid \$105.00 for building the school. In March 1869 Aaron Denney received \$100.00 for teaching school for four months and Jane Simpson received \$72.00 for three months. Other expenses were 25 cents for a broom, 35 cents for a fire shovel, and 65 cents for a pail and dipper.

The **Sandridge School** built in District No. 7 in 1883 was the last schoolhouse to be built in the Town of Vermont. The legal voters at the time were: Guul Olsen, Jorgen Olsen, Thos. Wilkens, Ever Mikkelson, Syver Berthus, Paul Handel, Frank Handel, Wm. Deneen, Michael Bakken, Paul Anderson, Hans Gilbertson, Gilbert Anderson, Ole P. Moen, Ole Tollefson, Joe Souitoulfth, Ole Amble, Syver Amble, Halvor Bakken, Erick Bakken, John Lohrs, Arne Steensrud, Gilbert Erickson, Florian Zwettler, and Andrew P. Moen. The first officers elected were: Director – Ever Mikkelson; Treasurer – Guul Olsen; and Clerk – Andrew P. Moen

Mr. Moen loaned \$200.00 and a motion was made to build a schoolhouse 16 x 24 x 10 feet, three thicknesses of board, the two outsides of flooring and the middle of common lumber covered with tar paper and to locate the school on about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre in Section 15. The school district rented the land from John Wall and Ole S. Amble for five cents a year for as long as the premises were kept for public school purposes. Ole Amble agreed to furnish good dry oak wood, cut to fit the stove for both terms for \$10.00. Three hundred dollars was to be raised to finish and furnish the schoolhouse and pay the teacher's wages. In the winter term from November 1884 to March 1885, 33 pupils were enrolled: 19 boys and 14 girls with an average daily attendance of 22. In the summer 19 were enrolled: 9 boys and 10 girls with an average daily attendance of 11.



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Vermont Student Spotlight: Eliana Baker

By Karen Carlock

A self-assured 18 year old with maturity and vision beyond her years, it is a thrill to feature Eliana Baker in this issue of Vermont's Voice. Eliana moved from the Chicago suburbs to Vermont Township with her family when she was about to enter 6th grade. While her parents had already fallen in love with the beautiful landscape in Vermont, Eliana, who typically goes by Ellie, was initially a bit concerned about the significant change to her life. The hustle and bustle of the city had been replaced by quiet county roads and rolling hills; the playgrounds and neighborhood friends had been replaced by trees, birds and squirrels.

Yet this resilient and adaptable young lady quickly engaged in her new community. She joined her mother at the gatherings of the Vermont Vixens and feels this group of strong, intelligent women had a big influence on the way she evaluates the world around her and helped develop her appreciation for candid discussion on a variety of topics. She also remembers the warmth with which her family was welcomed by neighbors upon their arrival. This exposure to a great group of neighbors and women fostered lasting and meaningful connections. As a small community, Vermont residents took and continue to take, action to live a life in support of the commonly shared quotation that "It takes a whole village to raise a child".

Growing up, Ellie shared that during the winters she would go to Tyrol as often as she possible could and during the summers, her family would go kayaking and fishing. Over time, she grew to love the opportunities offered by an area with a focus on the beauty of the outdoors. During her childhood years, she also learned piano which laid a musical foundation. This foundation eventually grew into her teaching herself to play the guitar, banjo and ukulele. She also enjoys writing music and playing with her cousin who also plays the guitar and ukulele.

Ellie is now a young woman of compassion with a world view that few her age realize. She open-enrolled into Madison for middle school and high school in order to benefit from additional diversity of people, ideas and courses. After watching a documentary on US border control, a passion was ignited in her for political science and she immediately called her school to change her course load from a focus on science to political science. As a senior in high school, her favorite courses she is currently taking are: Advanced Placement Government and Politics, Ethnic Studies, and US and World Affairs. She is using this semester to validate her passion and to help identify a focus area within this field of study.

Work as a waitress at Biaggis consumes many of her hours not spent in school as she strives to save up for college and future travel. Ellie has dreams of returning to Guatemala and Mexico, and to explore Africa, having been inspired by her parents' time of service in the Peace Core. College starts for Ellie in the fall and she will be making a decision shortly on where to attend. She is excited about her future, and Vermont residents should be too!

Each day, Vermont residents choose to be part of a unique and special community where youth like Eliana Baker can grow and thrive.



Clerk's Corner

By Karen Carlock

Elections, Elections

It is sure to be an exciting election year! The February 16th spring primary is already behind us but mark your calendars for April 5th, August 9th and November 8th. April 5th is both the presidential primary as well as the Town of Vermont local election for two Town Board Supervisor positions. Please see candidate profiles within this issue of Vermont's Voice.

Important Note: Voter ID is in effect this year so when you come to the polls don't forget an approved form of photo ID. Call Karen Carlock, Town of Vermont Clerk, at 608-767-2457 or email clerk@townofvermont.com with any questions.

Vermont's Voice Moving Online

Vermont's Voice typically is mailed out on a quarterly basis and it is such a delight to have such a wonderful newsletter available to residents. This year, the issue that you receive in September will be the final paper mailing of Vermont's Voice. Paper copies will be available at Town Hall for those who wish to pick up a paper copy to enjoy.

You can sign up easily to receive the Vermont's Voice electronically by going to www.townofvermont.com, entering your email address, checking the box next to "Vermont's Voice Quarterly Newsletter" and then clicking the "Subscribe Now" button.

Or, you can simply find the Vermont's Voice newsletters at your convenience by going to www.townofvermont.com, and clicking "Vermont's Voice" under the word "Community" in the top menu bar.

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Spring Election – Local Candidate Spotlight

By Karen Carlock

Local government is of significant importance in each of our lives and culture. I asked our 2016 candidates for Board of Supervisors Seats 2 and 4 what they see as the issues facing the Town of Vermont in the next five years. Some of the challenges shared included maintaining the Town's rural character, maintaining roadways to keep them safe, broadband/internet service, making sure services provided to residents are cost effective and of good quality and making sure outside forces can't impose changes that go against the desires of the Town of Vermont residents. It may sometimes feel like 'yet another item on the to-do list' but as a resident of this community, please do not hesitate to make your voice heard by voting, periodically attending Town Board meetings and contacting your local elected officials.

Town Board Supervisor – Seat 2

Mary George is a relatively new addition to the Town of Vermont and also to local government. Mary and Griff, along with their sons Matthew, Mitchell and Grady moved to the Town of Vermont in March of 2013. Their passion to become small sustainable farmers in the Driftless region is becoming a reality as later this year, they will market goats, sheep, chickens and pigs raised on their land.



In April of 2015, Mary was asked to serve on the Town Plan Commission, became very engaged and “realized that this was a great opportunity to not only enjoy living [in Vermont] but also to be involved in keeping the Town of Vermont a great place for others to live as well”. As Mary developed relationships with the other Plan Commission members and Board members, she developed a ‘deep respect for their sacrifice and commitment to serve our community’. Mary has brought quality input and knowledge to the Plan Commission which led other members to encourage her to consider running for a supervisor seat on the Town of Vermont board.

Mary has spent most of her professional career at Newcomb Construction Company in Madison. As the Chief Financial Officer, she is responsible for many aspects of keeping the company profitable. As a board member, one of her areas of focus is to maintain the balance of protecting taxpayer money while still providing the services that keep our town beautiful and a safe place to live and work. She also feels that “all residents should be treated fairly and have a voice”. Mary intends to listen to resident concerns and is interested in working alongside residents to find solutions.

When asked what her goals are for the Town Board for the next two years, Mary stated that “Broadband services need to improve in our area. One goal is to have a plan in place to upgrade our broadband services or have other options available to our residents. This may require new legislation for rural broadband services, grant applications, and local support from an internet provider – more than likely it will require all three. There is a process involved but we are committed to continue to “make noise” until we have adequate services. Inadequate broadband services affect our property values and could limit potential buyers that need sufficient broadband services to simply complete homework assignments or to have the ability to work from home. Another goal is responsible budgeting of taxpayer money such as setting reserves for expected repairs and maintenance along with forward thinking of Town financial needs. I will listen to concerns from the town residents over town spending and take those concerns to the board”.



Town Board Supervisor – Seat 4

Doug Meier has served the Town of Vermont as a member of the Board of Supervisors and on the Plan Commission. In addition, he serves as an election inspector so you have likely met him at some point in one or more of these capacities. Doug is running unopposed in the upcoming April 5th election.

Doug has loved the hills of the Driftless area since he was a kid growing up between Madison and a farm west of Verona. After raising their two boys, he and his wife Char decided it was time to make the move. Since then, they have enjoyed the peaceful walks and being surrounded by nature. They hope to be “Vermonters” as long as possible.

Shortly after moving into Vermont, Doug attended a Town Board meeting and was recruited by a past board member. He served two terms in the late 90's and then re-engaged in 2010 as a member of the Plan Commission and as a member of the board again in 2014. Doug lives his life as a model of community engagement: He has volunteered as a Cub Scout Master, with the Boy Scouts, at

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(continued from insert)

church, National Ski Patrol and National Ski Patrol Outdoor Emergency Care instructor. "I will always encourage people to be engaged and volunteer," he says. "It just makes the world a little better."

When asked what he brings to the board of supervisors, Doug responded that he brings "a sense of doing what's right for the town in an unbiased manner; yes I have my own values, but they are only as good as what the Town residents call for. I hope to always be responsive."

During his next two year term as a board member, Doug hopes to achieve the following: "1) To facilitate reasonable internet broadband speeds to the Town 2) To work with the Town Clerk and Board in making sure our ordinances meet the needs of the town and are clear in their understanding. 3) To hold the Town's service providers to responsible fiscal standards as compared to like services provided to other municipalities 4) And most of all, to always work for a transparent local government."

Two Beer Blizzard Stomp

by Dean C. Bossenbroek

After sufficiently layering up for the first driving snow squall of 2016, I shoved the front door open against a growing deck drift, and stepped into a 40 mile an hour, cheek-stinging nor'easter. Mabel, our four-year-old lab/shepherd mutt, was raring to go. She is from the school of canine thought, which espouses the virtues of unlimited walks. Mabel is staunch in her belief that there are not enough walks taken, and those that are taken are too short. She consistently advocates for more and longer walks.

Given the right circumstances, I am amenable to her unlimited walk philosophy, especially on a snow day from work. On this particular afternoon, Mabel could sense a longer-than-usual-fields-and-woods stomp was on my mind. She was doing a spot-on impression of the Snoopy happy dance, complete with jiggling hind legs, celebratory ear pumps, and grinning double axles. So, when I got to the top step and turned around to go back in the house, her spirit was dampened slightly by what she perceived to be unnecessary dawdling.

Going back in the house before leaving to go anywhere – work, the grocery store, for walks – is completely normal for me. I am forever missing something important like my wallet, cell phone, keys, a bottle of water – stuff that I just don't want to be without, yet I don't gather it all at once. Mabel butt planted on the deck drift and gave me an impatient, whale-eyed yawn. Back in the kitchen, I swapped my bifocals for wrap around, blue-tinted safety glasses to guard against the sideways snow bluster. I also grabbed a couple of tall PBRs for my pockets and homemade dog cookies for Mabel.

Mabel waited for me to say, "Let's go!" before she did one more twirl and charged down the steps. On a clear day up here on the north face of Blue Mound Minor at the southern edge of the Town of Vermont, the sight lines go all the way to the Baraboo Bluffs. I paused to take in the view, and could just barely make out the neighbor's wind turbine a half mile down the hill. With the temperature in the low 20s the conditions were ideal for a Mabel-approved two beer blizzard stomp.

As I bent into the gale and Mabel lightened her load along the tree line, a song I listened to a lot in the '80s popped into my head, and became the soundtrack of this excursion: Aztec Camera's "Walk Out To Winter". If you are reading this online, click on the following link to check it out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0rFMN9Ht4c> If you are reading the paper version of Vermont's Voice, you could Google it later.

For the next 90 minutes Mabel and I walked out to winter at a pace that was both leisurely and warming. We made our way through open fields, tromped through wood necks, and wended up neighboring farm lanes in a series of wide arcs back to where we began. Back on the deck I grabbed the scoop shovel and began moving snow around. Mabel and I grinned at each other and turned to face the continuing snow pelt. She came over to where I stood and snout poked my thigh, "Are you up for another walk?"

I chuckled. Unlimited walks means no limit to walks. She's a stickler, that's for sure.



VERMONT'S VOICE

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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>.

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Fire Warden

Shirley Brandt 767-3030

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