

The Bridger



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter

FALL, 2003

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Covered Bridge Museum Opened

by Joe Nelson

Bennington, June 14, 2003 - The Vermont Covered Bridge Museum officially opened on this day at 10 a.m., described by entrepreneur Bruce Laumeister as the world's first.

Located on Gypsy Lane off Route 9 west of Old Bennington and in sight of the Bennington Battle Monument, the new museum and learning center is housed in a wing of the Bennington Center for the Arts building. The museum building is designed to resemble a covered bridge. The Center was founded by Mr. Laumeister and his wife Elizabeth Small.

Among the museum's exhibits are a working HO Gauge railroad and covered bridge layout and an interactive kiosk describing covered bridges of Vermont. The covered bridge resource center contains the collected writings of Richard Sanders Allen and covered bridges described in all of their aspects through artful display of models and photographs galore of bridges past and present. The Archives of the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges provided an important share of the exhibits.

The Museum was planned and the exhibits assembled by the Center staff under the guidance and direction of Bennington historian John Dostal and the talented efforts of Emiliano DeLaurentis, founder of Knowledge Environments, Inc. of North Adams, Mass. Also deeply involved in the planning and coordination of the effort was Curator Robert Campanile, former director of the North Adams Museum of History and Science.

The festivities began with the opening of Gallery III exhibit "Art of the Animal Kingdom" followed by a live raptor demonstration by the Vermont Institute of Natural Science. Attendees were entertained by the music of the Flying Garbanzos from noon to two.



Vermont Covered Bridge wing at Bennington
Center for the arts
Photo by Joe Nelson, 6-14-03

The afternoon saw an introduction of Bruce Laumeister by Vermont House Representative Joe Krawczyk, an address by Robert Campanile, some words from John Dostal, and a showing of the Video Film Documentary Covered Bridges of Vermont, directed by Emiliano DeLaurentis.

The ceremonies continued with the recitation of his poem by author and poet Ed Barna, comments by Joe Nelson, president of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society, and entertainment by Eric Peterson and Willy Jones of the Oldcastle Theatre Company; "Yankee Traditions." The celebration was concluded with comments by Vermont Governor, James Douglas.

VCBS Annual Meeting to be Held in Middlebury

by Joe Nelson

The VCBS Fourth Annual All-member Business Meeting will be held Saturday, **October 25, at 10 a.m. in Middlebury's Ilsley Public Library** in downtown Middlebury, next to a municipal parking lot. Irene Barna has arranged for us to use the All Purpose Community Room.

Richard Wilson, President of the New York State Covered Bridge Society and member of the VCBS Board of Directors, will be our speaker. He will give a slide presentation, "The Changing Scene with Vermont Covered Bridges."

The meeting will be followed by a tour of the area covered bridges conducted by Ed Barna, a founding member of the VCBS. Ed is a poet and the author of Covered Bridges of Vermont, published by The Countryman Press.

Attendees will dine on own at local restaurants. The meeting agenda with directions to the meeting place, ballots for the annual election of officers, and a list of motel accommodations will be mailed and emailed to the membership shortly.

[Call the Middlebury Chamber of Commerce for a list of area lodgings. The phone number is 1-802-388-7951-Ed.]

Four Vermont Covered Bridges to Receive Grants

by Joe Nelson

July 16, 2003 - Susan Scribner of the VAOT Historic Bridge Program e-mailed that the Vermont Department of Transportation proposed projects to the Federal Highway Administration totaled \$2 million.

The requested funds, provided through the National Covered Bridge Preservation Program, authored by Sen. James Jeffords in 1998, will be shared by four of Vermont's covered bridges. "Apparently," said Scribner, "the \$2 million figure requested for federal funds was reduced to \$1,987,000 so we will need to make an adjustment of \$13,000 to one or more of the covered bridge projects. The project costs that were estimated included all associated costs including engineering, right-of-way acquisition if needed and construction oversight."

The total estimated project cost for the **Thetford Sayers** bridge is \$500,000. The requested federal funds were \$400,000 along with \$100,000 in state and local funds. The total estimated project cost for the **Salisbury Station** bridge is \$850,000. The requested federal funds were \$680,000 along with \$170,000 in state and local funds. The total estimated project cost for the **Upper Falls (Downers)** bridge is \$750,000. The requested federal funds were \$600,000 along with \$150,000 in state and local funds. The total estimated project cost for the **Cilley** bridge is \$400,000. The requested federal funds were \$320,000 along with \$80,000 in state and local funds.

The Sayers Bridge [45-09-06] is known for its "Haupt" truss, the only truss of its kind in New England, and one of just three in the United States. The truss used in the span is a unique adaptation of Herman Haupt's 1839 patent.

The design, as used here, resembles a multiple kingpost truss. It differs in that it is assembled from planks instead of square timbers and is joined with treenails rather than with mortise and tenon. The builder integrated the whole with a segmented plank arch.

The bridge was restored in 1963 with a mid-span concrete pier and four steel I-beams supporting a new laminated deck. The work was estimated by the VAOT to cost about \$30,000 with \$6,000 the Town's share. The Town replaced the siding and roof as part of a community project. Thetford Center's bridge underwent repairs again in 1997 after a dump truck driven by a local resident tried to drive through with its bed raised. He took off two-thirds of the roof. In November of 2002, a car went through the side of the bridge when the driver lost control inside. The vehicle landed in the Oompompanusuc River upside down. The occupants were rescued by passers-by.

Popularly known as the Tucker Hill Bridge, or as the Sayres Bridge after the furniture mill owned by the Sayres brothers that once operated here, the bridge was listed on National Register of Historic Sites on September 17, 1974 as the Thetford Center Covered Bridge

The 154-foot **Salisbury Station Bridge** [45-01-01] spans Otter Creek on Swamp Road at the edge of the Great Cedar Swamp. It has been known as the Cedar Swamp Bridge, the Salisbury Station Bridge, or simply as the Station Bridge.

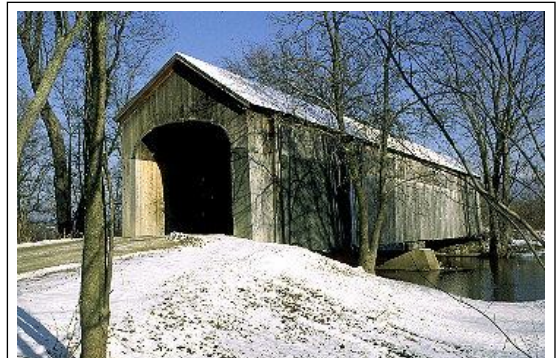
Raised in 1865 by unknown builders, the truss is unique in that the web is wider than that of any other plank-lattice truss in Vermont. It measures four-feet ten-inches on center--the others average about three feet. In 1969 the bridge was renovated and a mid-stream pier added to support the long span. Until then, the Station Bridge was one of the longest single spans in the state. Further work was done in the winter of 1992 when Jan Lewandoski made repairs to the truss.

The **Upper Falls, or Downers Covered Bridge** [45-14-08] was built c1840, the portals finished in the Greek Revival mode. Partial cornice returns and enclosed roof-end overhang bracket the splined gable-end boarding. The treatment simulates the Greek pediments in the Federal architecture popular in the first half of the 1800s. Downers Bridge is Vermont's last example of splined boarding in a bridge portal. The 121-foot plank-lattice span crosses high over the Black River. The tall stone abutments and long curved wingwalls are the most impressive examples of dry stone masonry in the state. The northern abutment has not been cased in concrete and remains a tribute to the skill of the masons.

The trusses were originally constructed with sway braces, or buttresses, but they are no longer in evidence, dispensed with when the restoration was done by Milton Graton and Sons in 1975.



The truss used in the span is a unique adaptation of Herman Haupt's 1839 patent. The midstream pier was added in 1963. Photo by Joe Nelson, 1997.



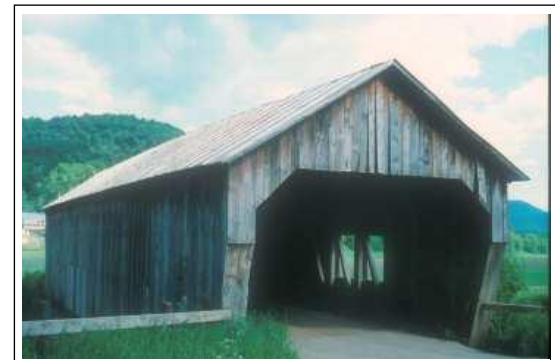
Until the bridge was renovated and a mid-stream pier added in 1969, the Station Bridge was one of the longest single spans in Vermont. Photo by Joe Nelson, 1997.

Neil Daniels, member of the Weathersfield Transportation Advisory Committee and chairman of the Weathersfield Chapter of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society said the bridge has rot in the lower chords not removed in the 1975 rebuild. Instead, a fifth lower chord member was added (a town lattice truss normally uses four chords; upper and lower chords, and upper and lower secondary chords). The south abutment, where the dry laid stone can still be seen, needs attention. The north abutment concrete facing is severely eroded. The exterior of the bridge needs attention, including a new roof.



The Upper Falls Covered Bridge, also known as Downers Bridge, crosses the Black River near the historic site of Downers Inn. Photo by Joe Nelson, 1995.

The **Cilley Bridge** (45-09-08] was built in 1883 using the multiple-kingpost truss. The 60 foot bridge spans the First Branch of the White River in Tunbridge, serving Howe Lane, It stands among corn fields in view of Route 110 just south of Tunbridge Village. An old cemetery nearby adds to the ambiance of the site. The bridge is unique in the construction of the tie-beams and the doubled knee-braces. A new roof, funded by a Federal program, was installed in the late fall, 2002.



The Cilley Bridge is unique in the construction of the tie-beams and the doubled knee-braces.. Photo by Joe Nelson, 1993.

TV Station Wants Unique Covered Bridge Photos for Documentary

by Rich Remsberg

WTIU-TV (the Bloomington, Indiana PBS station) is producing a documentary on covered bridges and is looking for interesting visual materials.

We are interested in vintage photos, film footage, and so forth that show covered bridges as a cultural icon. We have plenty of material that shows bridges in a scenic or structural context, but we'd like to find images of weddings, church suppers, and the like on or near covered bridges. We would also be interested in any pictures that show daredevils jumping from covered bridges and that sort of thing.

Also, we are looking for any cartoons, advertisements, and other graphics that show covered bridges.

If you would be willing to share items from your collection, please contact Rich Remsberg, 406 S. Madison, Bloomington, IN 47403. 812-335-1310 rich@rembergphoto.com

Vermont History EXPO 2003 Has Come and Gone

By Irene Barna

An enormous and never-can-be-adequately expressed THANK YOU goes out to John Dostal who spent hours on his feet among the passers-by of the VCBS booth inquiring of them what they might know of by-gone covered bridges in their town.

John was single handedly instrumental in getting our work-in-progress map of the by-gone bridges of Vermont started. He acquired the 3'x4' map of Vermont onto which he has started marking the locations of bridges that can be recollected and documented. No easy task.

But how was Expo 2003? It was the usual GREAT, well attended. The weather cooperated this year without substantial rain.

The VCBS booth was again in the Floral Hall and thanks go to Joe Nelson and John Dostal who helped in the set up on Friday, then both working at the booth. John Weaver, Wilfred Thompson, Bill McKone, and Irene Barna completed the staffing of the booth Saturday and Sunday.

What did we display in addition to the map? We had treenails, examples of original timber showing old-growth rings compared to more recent wood; both from the Sanderson Bridge in Brandon, a breast-drill, and a nice selection of prints and copies of art work by John Weaver and photos by Joe Nelson.

Will we do it again next year? I hope so. Plans are already being made by the Vermont Historical Society for the Fifth Annual Vermont History Expo in Tunbridge. The date is yet to be announced, but it will likely be that third weekend in June again.

Montgomery Hectorville Bridge Project

by Scott Perry

Montgomery holds bragging rights as the Vermont town with the most covered bridges, boasting six inside the town limits and one on our border, the most of any town in the State, country, and, as some claim, the world. As recently as the 1940s there were thirteen in use here. Most were built by Savannah and Sheldon Jewett, from the 1860s to the 1890s.

But with bragging rights also comes obligations and costs, and since two of the town's bridges no longer serve vehicular traffic (the Hectorville or Gibou Bridge, and the Creamery or West Hill Bridge), the costs associated with their upkeep and renovation fall to the town's approximately 900 taxpayers. These costs compete with all other municipal needs; schools, water, roads etc., so it's not surprising the condition of these two bridges has deteriorated over time.

A couple of years ago the Montgomery Historical Society took the initiative to hire an engineer to study these two bridges and develop recommendations on what the town should do. Of the two, the engineer said the Hectorville Bridge was in the worst shape and would likely fall into the South Branch of the Trout River if it wasn't taken down before last winter. The Historical Society made a recommendation to the Selectboard and with generous support raised the funds necessary to disassemble the bridge and put it into storage until its fate could be determined.

The Hectorville Bridge is now resting in the yard of St. Onge Construction and seems to be the object of curiosity and amusement as many still stop and take its picture. In the meantime a group of townspeople has been charged by the Selectboard to recommend where the bridge should be placed and provide a cost estimate for the project.



Hectorville Bridge [WGN 54-06-06]
Photo by Scott Perry

This group has been meeting since May and is building on work by a similar ad hoc group formed by the Historical Society that worked through the winter.

Options under consideration are to repair the bridge and return it to the Hectorville site on the Gibou Road, or to repair the bridge and relocate it to an area of town that would integrate it into a recreation path. (this bridge was originally located in Montgomery Village and was moved to the Hectorville site in the early 1900's). Of these options, the latter has garnered the most enthusiasm on the committee because it could put the bridge in plain view on a main thoroughfare and make it eligible for several State and Federal programs related to recreational use, easing the financial burden on the taxpayers.

In the future we hope to provide progress reports via the town web site at <http://www.vermont-towns.org/montgomery/>. Advice and any other comments may be made by e-mailing the webmaster at this page or by writing the Hectorville Bridge Committee, or Selectboard, c/o the Town Clerk. Tax deductible contributions will be gratefully accepted also and can be sent to: Hectorville Bridge Fund, Town Clerk/Treasurer, P.O.Box 356, Montgomery, Vermont 05471



Hectorville Bridge in storage
Photo by Scott Perry

Bridge Called Unsafe for Pedestrian Traffic

by Ed Barna, Rutland Herald Correspondent

Pittsford, August 17, 2003 - The Hammond Covered Bridge, [WGN VT-11-05] overdue for repairs, is too dangerous even for pedestrian traffic, according to state historic preservation officials.

The bridge is part of a state-owned site along Kendall Hill Road (known as the "truck route" for the regular passage of trucks to and from OMYA in Florence). It has been closed to vehicle traffic for more than a decade, but not to foot traffic.

According to covered bridge builder Jan Lewandoski of Stannard, a wooden bridge's own dead load is the heaviest weight it has to carry, and is always its biggest problem. Through the years, the Hammond bridge has been subject to what engineers call "creep," a gradual increase in its downward deflection. Well maintained covered bridges compensate with a slight upward bend, known as camber, but this 139-foot bridge has lost its camber entirely and is visibly sagging.

Also, according to Eric Gilbertson, deputy director of the Division for Historic Preservation, the bridge has also developed a twist. "Snaky" was his word to describe the shape of the 161-year-old structure.

"There are holes in the floor," added Margaret Armitage, a member of the Pittsford Historical Society.

One reason for its condition might have to do with its history. During the 1927 flood, the bridge floated downstream about a mile to the Pomainville farm. It was floated on barrels back to its original crossing and put back into use.

Gilbertson and John Dumville, the state's historic sites coordinator, both said they have tried for two sessions to get the Legislature to approve funds for stabilizing and then rehabilitating the Hammond bridge.

But now it is in such bad shape, they said, that a heavy snow load next winter--or a large group of tourists tramping across--could send it into the river. Asked how many people he thought the bridge could safely take, Gilbert's fast answer was "none." He then added, "I couldn't say absolutely."



Hammond Bridge.
"only a chain between two posts"
Photo by Joe Nelson, Aug. 19, 2003

The Hammond site is a likely tour bus stop because it has a large parking area, a state interpretive sign, and it leads to a historic trail on the other side of Otter Creek. The trail goes toward the Revolutionary War site of the former Fort Mott and the shallow area-"Pitt's Ford," General Jeffrey Amherst named it--where troops could cross before there were any bridges.

As for the Hammond bridge, Gilbert said, "I thought we had closed that off. People weren't supposed to go on it."

But Armitage said an inspection Friday showed only a chain between two posts meant to keep vehicles off. "No signs saying 'No Trespassing' or 'No Pedestrians,'" she said. "It hasn't changed at all."

[This article first appeared in the *Rutland Herald* Rutland, Vt., Aug. 17, 2003. Ed Barna is a member of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society and author of the book *Covered Bridges of Vermont*, Countryman Press - Ed.]

Sanderson Bridge Back in Business

by Ed Barna, Rutland Herald Correspondent

Brandon , July 31, 2003 - The Sanderson Covered Bridge over Otter Creek, a link between Brandon and Sudbury, has reopened for traffic after 14 years.

During the past year, the 163-year-old, 132-foot structure has been overhauled by Blow & Cote Construction Co. of Morrisville. The project has been characterized as more of a bridge replacement than a repair job, with only a few of the original timbers and planks remaining.

Voters decided at town meeting to rebuild the bridge rather than pay the high archaeology costs necessary to establish a new road to a new crossing and a modern bridge. Thus the span has been reinforced with glue-laminated timbers to carry up to 40,000 pounds.

Town Manager Michael Balch said at a Select Board meeting Monday that the posted limit will be 24,000 pounds, but he will issue permits for heavier vehicles to cross as necessary.

Selectman Richard Baker urged that improved signs be posted at the west end, where motorists come upon the single-lane bridge very abruptly. Balch said he would try to get stronger warning signs put up, but said "it really is the state's responsibility."

He said if there is an accident, "we want it to be the state's liability, not the town's."

Some sort of official ceremony will be conducted later to take note of the bridge returning to use after being closed on state orders for 14 years, Balch said.

A temporary bridge, on two large steel girders, has carried traffic during that time.

Balch said the final bill for the work has yet to come from the state, but Brandon will pay 5 percent of \$1.2 million to \$1.3 million, or \$60,000 to 65,000.

Also, the Stone Mill Dam Bridge Road off Route 73 east was reopened following bridge repairs.

[This story appeared in the *Rutland Herald* on July 31, 2003 - Ed.]

Phil Pierce to Present at MIT

Phil Pierce has been invited to make a 2 hour presentation for the Boston Society of Civil Engineers on the evening of November 12, 2003. This is the 6th in their 7 part series, "This Olde Structure" and is entitled "**Rehabilitation of Covered Bridges**". The lecture series is held at MIT in downtown Boston. Anyone interested in attending should contact Scott Civjan at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at (413)545-2521 or Civjan@ecs.umass.edu.

Mr. Pierce is a life member of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society.

Investigator Says No Arson at Sanderson Covered Bridge

by Ed Barna

Brandon, VT - After a recent unsuccessful attempt to burn Bennington's Henry Covered Bridge, it seemed reasonable to think that the newly rebuilt Sanderson Covered Bridge in Brandon might be a similar target.

"Arson attempt on new Brandon bridge," said an Aug. 2 headline in the Addison Eagle. Workers for the Blow & Cote construction company had found a partially burned sock, wrapped in twine, on July 28--which the article characterized as "a charred homemade fuse."

Debbie Bezio (buh-ZYE-oh), the president and engineer of Lone Wolf Drilling and Blasting in Benson, confirmed that the workers on the site had found the sock and thought it looked like fuse--though the Brandon police were not notified until Bezio did so.

Bezio said she had been at the site because blasting was needed to remove foundations for the two steel girders that supported a temporary roadway across the river while the covered bridge was closed.

According to Brandon Chief of Police Craig Hanson, the matter was turned over to the State Police. But when State Police fire investigator Dennis Holman reviewed the evidence and the bridge area, he concluded that the fuse wasn't connected to anything but rumors.

"It's a real stretch to call it an attempted arson," Holman said. He said it was more probable that the sock had fallen off some kind of vehicle, perhaps a farm wagon being taken along the farm road north of the bridge--the area where it was found.

Hay had been put on the ground to help reseed the work area, Holman said. None of that hay had been ignited where the sock landed, he said.

A close inspection of the bridge and the two portal areas found no evidence of any sort of arson, Holman said. Had someone made an attempt, it probably would have been futile, he said, because the bridge has been treated with a fire retardant.

That precaution, which had also been taken with the old Sanderson Covered Bridge during the 14 years it was closed, was taken after the town lost Deans Covered Bridge (Union Street) due to arson in 1986. A concrete bridge was chosen for that crossing, in a town meeting vote.

Of more concern to Holman was the way the western approach to the bridge (from Sudbury going into Brandon) leaves so little time to see an oncoming vehicle. At the most recent Select Board meeting, board member Richard Baker expressed the same concern. The board agreed that there ought to be stronger signs along the approach, but could only advise Town Manager Michael Balch to talk with the state about it because such signs are a state responsibility. Balch said he would, because if there is an accident "we want it to be the states liability, not the towns."

The final bills have not come in for the Sanderson reconstruction, but Balch said the total will be about \$1.2-1.4 million, of which \$60-65,000 will be the local share. Federal covered bridge money obtained by Sen. James Jeffords will pay \$450,000 of the cost.

[This article written for the Valley Voice by Ed Barna - Ed.]

Arson Attempt on Henry Bridge

Bennington, July 11, 2003 - According to Bennington Banner news, gasoline was dumped on the floor of the Henry Bridge Wednesday night and set on fire.

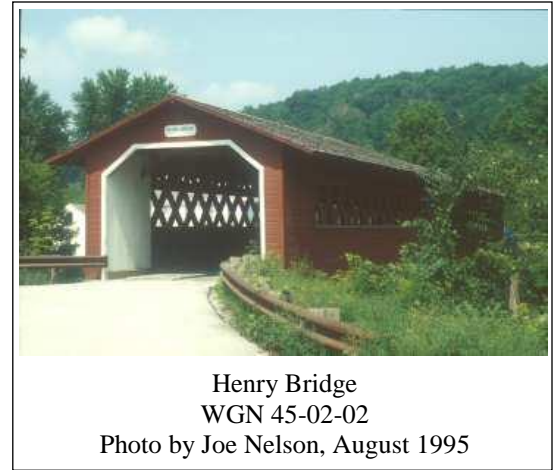
The Bennington Rural Fire Department made a midnight call to the bridge. The fire had burned itself out by the time firefighters arrived and damage was minimal. Firefighters hosed down the area of the bridge that was covered in gasoline.

Three people saw flames and called police. A fire truck was sent to check the town's other two covered bridges and no problems found.

The town has been looking into using a fire retardant for application to the town's bridges at the suggestion of John Dostal of Bennington, a member of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society and the man behind the Covered Bridge Museum, which opened at the Bennington Center for the Arts in June.

The 120-foot Town Truss Henry Bridge spans the Walloomsac River serving Murphy Road in North Bennington. The original covered bridge, which served a local iron smelter, was built circa 1840. It was famed as the strongest bridge in the state due to its doubled truss, not replicated when the bridge was rebuilt in 1989.

The bridge is named for the Henry family long in residence adjacent to the bridge. The Henry home is now a B&B. There has been a wooden bridge at this site since early times.



[This news item is gleaned in part from the Bennington Banner, forwarded by Thomas E. Walczak - Ed.]

A Passing by Joe Nelson

Vermont Covered Bridge Society member Jim Fearon of Lyndonville Vermont passed away Tuesday, June 24. Services were held on the 27th in Lyndon's School House Covered Bridge.

Jim Fearon realized the value of his town's covered bridges and as a member of the Lyndonville Chamber of Commerce he chaired a committee to see that the bridges received the maintenance they needed. He recruited volunteers to do the work, sweeping, painting and clearing brush. His campaign made the town's covered bridges a centerpiece for many of the town's celebrations and activities, declaring Lyndon to be the "Covered Bridge Capitol of the Northeast Kingdom."

Jim joined the VCBS having already created a Bridge-watch area in the best sense of the word. He served on the Board of Directors as chairman of the Lyndon Chapter and hosted the first VCBS All-member meeting in the Spring of 2000. He will be missed by all who knew him. He is survived by his wife Mary and two sons. Cards may be sent to 259 South Wheelock Road, Lyndonville, VT 05851-8412.

Covered Bridge Community News Notes

Oregon Bridge Collapses

According to an article in the Mail Tribune the Wimer Covered Bridge, WGN 35-15-05, collapsed and fell into the Evans Creek on July 7, 2003. A grandfather and his twin 5 year old grandsons were injured.

The bridge was built in 1892 and was scheduled for restoration through the National Historic Covered Bridge Preservation Program. See the Mail Tribune web site for the complete story: www.maftribune.com in the archives for July 7, 2003.

Noah Carolina Bridge Washed Out

According to Miriam Wood, the Pisgah Covered Bridge, WGN 33-76-01, in Asheboro, North Carolina was washed out due to heavy rains on August 9, 2003. The bridge had been closed to traffic according to the 1989 edition of the World Guide to Covered Bridges.

Gorham Bridge Renovation

by Joe Nelson

Pittsford-Proctor, Aug. 19, 2003 - The Gorham Bridge renovation is well underway. Rotted upper chord members have been replaced with native spruce, the upper bottom chords have been replaced with southern yellow pine. Thirty-four lattice planks found by the inspection and marked in the contract drawings for removal were replaced with southern yellow pine. Twelve others requiring replacement were found by the contractor and replaced with native spruce.

Most of the truss work is completed except for the lower bottom chords. These will be modified to support the Town's request for a carrying capacity of 40,000 pounds. The lower bottom chords will be replaced with glulam beams. The new floor will be 2" x 6" nail-laminate as before, supported by 10.5"x13.75" southern yellow pine floor beams at 3'5" spacing, replacing 6" x 11.5" floor beams at 1'9" intervals.

Formerly of corrugated steel, the roof will be replaced with galvanized standing seam metal. The new roof will have an eave overhang of at least one foot, requiring that the original roof rafters be replaced with longer members; the original roof system had no eave overhang, and with the siding cut short of the eaves to provide ventilation, the upper chords and lattice were exposed to the weather.

All of the knee-braces will be replaced and installed at five-foot intervals instead of ten, and they will be fastened with lags instead of spikes.

Borings demonstrated that there is very poor soil under the abutments, so these are being replaced with cast-in-place concrete on driven piles. The cast concrete will be faced to give an original appearance.

Work began in May, 2003 with a completion date in early November. The cost of the project is currently estimated to be \$1,243,788. The funds were received from the National Historic Covered Bridge Preservation Program. The prime contractor is Contractors Crane Service of Morrisville, the truss work is being done by Groton Timber Work, and the abutments by H.B. Fleming of Maine.

The Gorham Bridge is owned jointly by the towns of Pittsford and Proctor. It was built in 1841 by Abraham Owen and Nicholas Powers. It is 114' 2" in length in a single span, using the Town lattice truss. The bridge was rehabilitated in 1956 and again in 1979.



The multi-color timber shows the different species used in the new work; native spruce, southern yellow pine, and Douglas fir contrast with older timbers.

Photo by Joe Nelson, Aug. 19, 2003



"Romantic Shelter" Lost near Chester, Vt.

August 25, 2003 - When at camp, we visited Chester. We took Route 11 between Londonderry and Chester. Along that route, there was a private covered bridge right off the main road that went to a private home. We found that the bridge had been washed away three weeks ago in a flash flood. We found the truss and roof washed downstream and destroyed. Only the abutments are left and the people can't get to their home. I never knew the name of the bridge, but we saw it every time we went to Chester.

It was built in the early 1990's, so it would not be in the guide to Romantic Shelters. It was located in North Windham. In the Vermont Atlas, Map 11. Follow Route 11 to North Windham. Just below the route 11 sign, is a small drive way. That's where the bridge was located. One half of the sign on the side of the bridge says

Londonderry, the other half says Windham. The bridge was on the town line, as you can see in the Atlas. I photographed it in the Spring of 1997.

Dick Wilson

The word "Membership" is written in a purple, cursive font and is enclosed within a double-lined rectangular border.

by Trish Kane, Membership Coordinator

Summer is winding down I hope you had an opportunity to get out and visit some of our bridges. If not, there is still time and autumn is a splendid opportunity to photograph them in their natural environments surrounded by a wonderful array of fall colors.

We welcome 8 new members this quarter. Joe and Linda Bills, Wilton, NH, William Carroll, Chicopee, MA, David Charkes, Fairlee, VT, Daniel and Maree Clancy, Danbury, CT, Robert Gallucci, Waterbury, CT, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Giaccone, Marlborough, CT, Neil Manley, Burlington, VT, and Fred and Linda Spink, Harrisville, RI. Please join me in making them feel welcome to our Society.

Wouldn't it be great if the Vermont Covered Bridge Society could function completely on its own without any help from its members? Perhaps in a fantasy world, but here in the Real World, we need the help and support of our members. We can't continue this important work without your help. The nominating committee is looking for volunteers to help in many areas of the society. Please give our president a call and volunteer to help in any way you can. Remember, many hands make light work, and many volunteers, working together can make all the difference in preserving our covered bridges. I'm sure many of you are extremely busy with full time jobs and families. We all are, but there are many small jobs that you can assist with that will not take a lot of your time. Can you donate a couple of hours a month? If you can, we need your help. Please give our President a call and just say, "What can I do to help, Joe?" There is strength in numbers and together, we can have a very strong and positive impact on helping to preserve Vermont's Covered Bridges.

Although some of us may not want to think about the holidays just yet, this is a great opportunity to do a little 'early' Christmas shopping. And you don't even have to wrap the gift! Why not give the gift that keeps on giving throughout the entire year... an annual membership to the Vermont Covered Bridge Society. It is an excellent gift for the covered bridge enthusiast in your family. It is also a great gift for an elderly, shut in friend. We will gladly send an attractive gift certificate stating it is a gift from you. Just be sure to include their complete name and address and the name you would like put in the "given to you by" line on the certificate.

Happy Bridging to each of you.

Upcoming Birthdays and anniversaries:

October

- 6 Conrad and Dorothy Nagengast
- 6 Dick Wilson
- 7 Helen Smith
- 11 Trish Kane
- 13 Mary Hyde
- 20 Phil Pierce
- 21 John & Joanne Billie
- 22 Ellen Everitz

November

3	Beverly Ostler
6	Kathy Knight
15	Linda Crouse
17	Kathy Winn
18	Euclid Farnham
22	Marikka Guay

December

23	Ed Barna
24	David & Marikka Guay
27	Francis & Marjorie Converse
31	Thelma Barker

The logo consists of the words "PREZ SEZ" in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The text is enclosed within a rectangular border that has a double-line effect, with the inner line being slightly offset from the outer line.

Now Is The Time For All Good Members To Come To The Aid Of Their Society

If you think you have read these words before in this column, you are correct--It was the title of this column last year with Annual Meeting time coming up.

Our Nominations Committee is once again searching for interested people to fill our many vacancies and to take an active roll in working for the preservation of our covered bridges and to help the VCBS live up to its premise: that we actively work to preserve covered bridges.

Our by-laws require that we elect officers at the end of each year to one-year terms. Candidates for the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer are needed--an election without competing candidates is not an election. New blood helps keep an organization vibrant and alive. Please, if you want to see the VCBS grow and prosper, contact John Weaver, Nominations Committee Chairman, (802) 223-7064 or jweaver6cl@aol.com and have him put your name on the ballot for the office of your choice.

Of greater importance is finding volunteers to staff our Standing Committees. We need more members to come forward to join the stalwart few who are making the VCBS function. Most of the positions require only a few hours of time each year. Members interested in joining a committee are invited to contact John Weaver. You will be received with gratitude and rejoicing.

The Communications Committee publishes the **Bridger** quarterly newsletter. The staff includes the Newsletter Editor who collects stories, edits, and composes the quarterly issues; the Staff Writers who write feature articles, assist the editor in the collection of stories; **Correspondents** to collect covered bridge items and stories and send them to the newsletter staff; and the **Distribution Person** who works with the copy center, labels and mails each issue of **The Bridger**. Staff writers, photographers, and correspondents are needed.

The members of the Events Committee plan All-member meetings, bridge excursions, picnics, dinners and work parties. This species of member are and have been in short supply and are greatly needed. We have the leadership, we need workers to help make things happen, like picnics, pot luck suppers, speakers, and covered bridge excursions year-round, not just our usual spring and fall All-member meetings.

Legislation Watch Committee members keep up to date on historical preservation legislation and apply for grants to fund bridge preservation. Again, we have the leadership, we need folks who can apply for preservation grants or are willing to learn how. The VCBS can find classes for you.

Ask about our Membership Committee and our Publicity Committee. They will find something for you to do. Do you have a committee in mind we don't have? Tell us about it. There is always room for new ideas.

Whatever you would like to do, please join us in the trenches.

Yours in Bridging,
Joe Nelson

COVERED BRIDGE POSTCARDS FOR SALE!

<u>Qty</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Price</u>
800	3 x 5 modern covered bridges all in USA	\$0.10 each
2	3 x 5 Somerset County, PA	\$0.30 each
11	long-gone of PA	\$0.50 each
100	4 x 6 PA	\$0.25 each
3	4 x 6 of Ontario Canada	\$0.50 each
14	views of PA 4 x 6	\$0.35 each
1	5 x 7 of Breezewood, Bedford County, PA	\$0.59 each
1	5 x 7 of Cornwall, CT	\$0.35 each
	The postcard list	\$6.41 each

Plus postage and handling. No stamps accepted as payment please. Make check or money order payable to Robert L. Damery, 2000 Burma Road, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168-8302

Covered Bridge E. RL. Barna

No space warp, teleport or time machine, this wooden tunnel into the past remains as ordered, "a load of hay high and wide," though ornaments on the portals show its builder knew his classics: made them to look like ancient pilasters and cornice returns; today, inside, the rows of kingposts are like colonnades improbably remaining after earthquakes. No silence is louder: each of its hardwood pegs tolled for its oak tree as it was malletted in--among the hundreds, not one loose. They worked to make the timbers hewn from the heartwood of the best of the uncut forest grow together again as one--a magnificent wilderness hollow trunk fallen across the stream. On moonlit, windswept nights you can hear the bridge and the trees around like a pack of the wolves that roamed these hills before the settlers' drives doomed them, the higher, louder, throat-voice of the bridge leading the rest.

The spirits of boys, like those chubby angels of Renaissance paintings, are everywhere: some loll on the highest roof beams, or swing from one to another; carve their initials or their names with jack-knives; fish through cracks in the floor; dive through windows into the swimming hole below. One older, more serious, waits with a shovel for winter, to snow the bridge so sleighs can cross. Another, more serious yet, is making a wooden model: the day will come when he stands atop a triple arch so vast the mockers call it his folly--a wooden suspension bridge a generation ahead of its time--and he will walk to the center of the ridgeline and shout, "If she goes, I go with her!" They pull away the scaffolding beneath, it settles--and the bridge, the world's longest single wooden span, remains to this day, hardwood married to softwood. The girls were there, too, initials in hearts on the walls attest.

What other blessed place was sanctified not by deaths of animals or splinters of bones of murdered saints, but with the kisses and wishes of all the secret loves exchanged therein? This temple of democracy, with its arch reaching in one direction back to Greece, leads in the other . . . beyond. Who imagined past the iron horse, the

horseless wagons, exceeding the weight of anything those roads had seen? This much of life beyond the grave they proved: do what you do the best you know how and you will do better than you could ever know.

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This file posted September 21, 2003