

The Bridger



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter

SPRING, 2005

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Notes from VANPO's Non Profit Visibility Day at the Statehouse

by Terry Shaw

Joe Nelson and I attended our second VANPO Non Profit Visibility Day at the Vermont Statehouse on February 23rd. We arrived at 8:00 AM and shared coffee and pastries with several legislators and other VANPO members. At 9:00 AM we joined others and Governor Jim Douglas to recognize winners of the 2004 Vermont Centennial Nonprofit Awards.

After the Governor's briefing we attended a meeting hosted by Rep Floyd Nease, Assistant Majority Leader and Senator John Cambell, Senate Majority Leader. The two legislators spent the better part of an hour discussing issues affecting nonprofit organizations from both the federal standpoint as well as the state. Much of their discussion focused on the lack of money forthcoming from both Washington as well as Montpelier to help support nonprofit activities.

At 11:15 we attended a caucus of the Vermont Arts Council. There we discussed the effort to increase the Art's funding cap from \$50,000 to \$200,000. VCBS inclusion in the caucus was a result of our position as a group that helps define the Vermont Quality of Life (as do all the visual and performing arts). And according to Alex Aldrich, VAC director, this would include any activity or organization, which assists in Historic Preservation of our state treasures. It should also be noted that Andrea Stander, Communications Director for VAC, was helpful to Joe and I by suggesting that VCBS may use VAC as a resource to help educate the general population of the VCBS mission.

We had previously made arrangements to take Representative, Richard Westman, chairman of the House Transportation Committee, to lunch. This we did and we talked about where we were regarding the three primary initiatives we have been working on with the Secretary of Transportation, Dawn Terrill:

- 1) Changes in penalties involving damage to structures on the National Historic Register,
- 2) Our position on Historic Covered Bridge Preservation Plan for towns and
- 3) The installation of signs directing interested travelers to our covered bridges.

We provided Representative Westman with all the correspondence that we had received back from the Secretary along with some thoughts on how to approach each initiative. We expect to get together with Representative Westman prior to our May meeting to get a final read on an approach our proposals.

After lunch, Joe and I spent some time observing a general session of the Legislature where the budget and budget amendments were being discussed. At 2:30 we attended a meeting of the Transportation Committee where they too were discussing budget issues.

As follow up to our day in Montpelier, we will be in touch with the Vermont Arts Council folks to see where they may be of help as a resource. And we also will be in touch with Representative Westman for his suggestions on our three initiatives.

Waterbury's Winooski Street Bridge

by Charlie Elflein

Known today as "Vermont's Recreational Crossroads," Waterbury provides fast access to an unlimited variety of diversions during all seasons of the year. It was in this part of Vermont that American skiing started at nearby Stowe in the 1930s. Today, within a fifteen-mile radius of Waterbury are four major ski areas, plus great hiking, mountain biking, swimming, canoeing, and fishing.

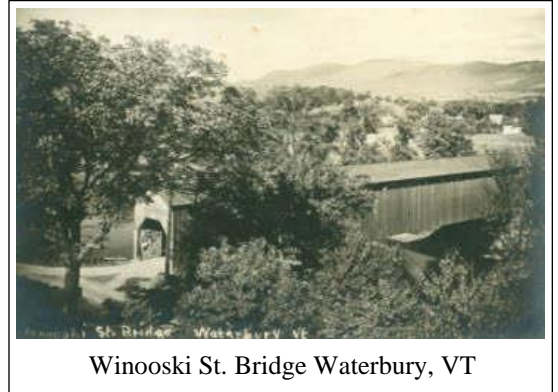
Far more than just outdoor pursuits, this little community possesses an interesting history, as well. Back in 1763, King George III of England granted a charter through Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire for land in the Winooski River Valley. The subjects, mostly from Waterbury, Connecticut, received the charter and named the new township after their hometown. Then in 1783, James Marsh became the first permanent settler.

Waterbury's early industries included lumber, baskets, children's carriages, leather products, scythe handles, and agriculture. With the winding Winooski River flowing through town, bridges had to be constructed to get these locally-made goods to market, plus people needed safe transportation to travel from point A to point B. That's where the covered bridges came in.

Just west of Waterbury village was the Winooski Street Bridge. Unfortunately, very little seems to be known about the history of this former covered span. According to the Waterbury Historical Society, it was located near a creamery and provided access to Duxbury across the river. Like so many other Vermont bridges, it was destroyed on November 3, 1927 in the flood that created havoc throughout the Green Mountain State.

The real photo card shown here gives us a good glimpse of the bridge. This was taken from the Duxbury side looking north into Waterbury, with the Worcester Range in the background. The Winooski Street Bridge was a single span Howe truss, with large diagonal portals and vertical siding. You'll also note that there's a large advertising sign pasted onto the bridge's weatherboarding. What better place to catch the attention of the person entering by buggy, auto, bicycle, or on foot? Since the river is quite wide at this location, the bridge must have been impressive to cross or observe from a nearby vantage point.

So, the next time you're in Waterbury, turn south in the center of town on Winooski Street and check out the location of this former covered bridge. It's only a short jaunt south of today's Route 2 and provides access to Duxbury's River Road. This unpaved route meanders along the south bank of the Winooski in true Vermont fashion. It's just the type of road we bridgers love!



Winooski St. Bridge Waterbury, VT

VCBS 6th Annual Spring Meeting - May 7, 2005

The Sixth Annual Spring Meeting will be held at the Grange Hall in York Street, Lyndon, Vermont. There will be a short business meeting beginning at 10 a.m. followed by a presentation by our speaker William Caswell, Jr. about Long Gone Bridges. Dinner will be served at 12:30. After dinner, attendees are invited to tour the area's covered bridges on own.

Covered Bridge Weekend in Virginia

Covered Bridge Society of Virginia and Patrick County Board of Supervisors

The first "Covered Bridge Weekend in Virginia" event is to promote and preserve our historic timber covered bridges and to promote tourism in Patrick County and the Commonwealth. We also want to educate our children and adults as to the historic part these timber structures played in the history of our country. Also to a start chapter and promote membership in the Covered Bridge Society of Virginia.

Admission:Free
Dates and times of event:.....Sat. 06/18/05 to Sun. 06/19/05, 9 a.m. till 5 p.m.
Where?Bob White Bridge on Rte. #618 and Jack's Creek Bridge on Rte. #615.
Contact:.....Leola Pierce, Phone: 757-484-4404

[Interested readers may contact the Covered Bridge Society of Virginia through email address VaBridgeLady@aol.com. The CBSV web site is <http://hometown.aol.com/vabridgelady/myhomepage/index.html> - Ed.]

Covered Bridge Community News Notes

More Money For Buskirk Bridge

Cambridge, NY February 24, 2005 - The Washington County Board of Supervisors voted to amend the contract for ongoing repairs to the Buskirk Covered Bridge adding \$102,000. The increase was said to be due to construction delays and additional inspections. To date the cost of the reconstruction of the historic bridge spanning the Hoosic River is \$2.5 million, nearly twice the original estimate of \$1.3 million.

Area residents are reported frustrated with the costs and delays. The bridge has been closed for two-and-a-half years and is not expected to open until late May, 2005. The delays were caused by efforts to preserve the bridge rather than replace it with a modern span. Also, instead of a projected carrying capacity of 17 tons, the renewed bridge will be limited to 7 tons despite the replacement of 90 percent of the bridge's original fabric with new material.

The bridge repairs were funded by federal and state grants meant to repair all three of the Washington County covered bridges, the Rexleigh, Eagleville, and the Buskirk. However the funds were exhausted on the Buskirk Bridge, it being most in need of work

[Our thanks to Dick Wilson for forwarding the clipping from the Feb. 24 edition of The Eagle on which, in part, this report is based -Ed.]

Groton Street Bridge Reconstruction Slate

Pepperell, Ma., February 25, 2005 - Quotes writer Paul MacDonald in his Pepperell Free Press article: "Construction is expected to be completed within 18 months of commencement," was the word from Mass Highway project manager Michael O'Dowd as the length of time required to replace the covered bridge over the Nashua River on Groton Street." The cost of the reconstruction is estimated to be \$2.1 million.

Writes MacDonald: "O'Dowd was speaking at the Design Public Hearing for the bridge replacement project held Feb. 17 at Town Hall. With the design anticipated to be completed by this fall and bids going out shortly thereafter, construction could begin in March 2006 with completion in the fall of 2007."

Popularly known as the Groton Street Bridge, the 108-foot Chester H. Waterous Bridge [WGN 21-09-01#2] was built in 1963 using a Pratt Truss variation. It replaced two earlier bridges, the first built in 1742, the second, the Nehemiah Jewett Bridge, built in 1818.

For the complete article, go to <http://www.pepperellfreepress.com/stories/0,1413,109~5517~2731901~00.html>

[Our thanks to Patricia Kane for forwarding this article - Ed.]

Charlemont Massachusetts Embracing its Covered Bridge

Charlemont, Ma. , February 27, 2005 - Writes Trudy Tynan, Associated Press: "Folks here hold an abiding fondness for the old interlocked timbers -- so much so that for the second time in a century, they banded together to beat back attempts to replace it with steel and concrete.

"Only a handful of covered bridges remain in Massachusetts. But after generations of trying to replace them, state engineers are now pondering ways to save the most threatened of the state's historic structures.

"The standoff in Charlemont – the state owns the bridge, but the town controls the river crossing -- lasted for 14 years before state engineers agreed this winter that it could be repaired using wood and a few steel strengthening bars.

"Although it is one of the state's newest -- built in 1950 after a brisk round of skirmishing between earlier residents and state engineers to replace an 1880 homemade covered bridge -- the unique design of the Bissell Bridge's truss work has earned it a place on the National Register of Historic Places."

The 92-foot Bissell Bridge [WGN 21-06-04#2] crosses Mill Brook using a Long Truss variation. The bridge is found on Rte. MA8A north of the junction with Rte. MA2

For the complete article, go to <http://www.milforddailynews.com>.

For more information on the covered bridges of Massachusetts, go to <http://www.masscoveredbridges.com>.

[Our thanks to Patricia Kane for forwarding this article - Ed.]

Town Ratifies Bucks County Plan For Mood's Bridge

East Rockhill, Pa., Jan. 26, 2005 - The Township Supervisors at their Jan. 18 meeting ratified an agreement with Bucks County for the Town to take over Mood's Covered Bridge, allowing PennDot to rebuild. The state-owned wooden bridge was destroyed by arson June 22, 2004.

Last fall, county and township officials met and agreed the covered bridge should be rebuilt because of its historic significance in Bucks County. PennDOT said it would only replace the span as a covered bridge if another entity would take it over.

The State will replace the covered bridge then transfer it to the county. The county will assume all major maintenance and repair while the township will handle regular upkeep. The town will form a nonprofit corporation for fund-raising to defray cost of maintenance and an annual insurance premium.

The design and engineering phase will take about a year in preparation before the work is put out for bids. The construction work is expected to take six months. The cost is estimated to be not less than \$500,000.

The burned Mood's Bridge, [WGN 39-09-07] was built in 1873 using the Town Truss to cross the East Branch of Perkiomen Creek. It was 126 feet long in a single span.

[Our thanks to Doris Taylor for sharing the *News-Herald* clipping upon which, in part, this report is based - Ed.]

Former Beauséjour Bridge(61-58-01) Moved

February 13, 2005 - Hi; The former Beauséjour Bridge (61-58-01) has been moved to Amqui. Located in a park, crossing the Matapedia River, the bridge is now opened for foot traffic (14/02/05).

I have not visited the bridge yet, but I saw the bridge before it was moved. The structure was cut with a chainsaw at two points, not dismantled.

Have a nice day,
Gerald Arbour



Beauséjour Bridge [61-58-01]
Photo by André Boulianne, Sept. 2, 2005

Canyon Bridge Damaged

Jeffersonville, February 5, 2005 - Dear Joe,

Don't know if you would want this but I visited the Canyon bridge today and noted damage to the NE end. Appears that a truck might have caught the corner. Photo is attached.
John Borthwick

Dear John; Thank you very much for the photo and report. I passed it on to the Vermont Covered Bridge Society Bridge-watch folk. When anyone sees damage done to a covered bridge they should please report it. The VCBS will contact the authorities. The licence plate of the perpetrator would be very much appreciated by the Town, the owner of the bridge. Someone will need to pay for the repairs and it shouldn't be the town taxpayers. Your report got the response below.

Joe

Hi all; Thanks for the info and the photo. I saw the damage when I was running through the bridge yesterday. I was distressed because it shows gross negligence and lack of any good judgement on the part of a truck driver, and because I'm the bridge watch for this structure, I shall speak with the Cambridge Select Board regarding getting the damage repaired.

Thanks,
Zeke



Canyon Bridge Damaged [WGN45-08-01]
Photo by John Borthwick Feb 5, 2005

Covered Bridge Weekend in Virginia Planned Feb. 21, 2005

Covered Bridge Weekend in Virginia will be held on Saturday, June 18, and Sunday, June 19, 2005. It will be held at the Bob White Covered Bridge and at the Jack's Creek Covered Bridge in Patrick County, Virginia. On your map it is either Woolwine, Virginia or Stuart, Virginia.

Both of these bridges are historic timber covered bridges. Details to follow.

Steve Pierce for Leola B. Pierce, Covered Bridge Society of Virginia



January 8, 2005

I have read in the newsletter of your agenda to get roadside signs to direct visitors to Vermont's covered bridges.

In Bennington, such signs have already been put in place by the Town. They seem to be successful. However, I have also seen signs by the property owners who live nearby stating that their land is not to be used for parking. It seems the occasional parker has become more numerous and a nuisance.

Perhaps the legislation Committee could advocate for parking signs too. We need those neighbors to welcome the visitors and watch out for our bridges, happily, not begrudgingly.

Similarly, I would suggest that letters to the editor of the local newspaper, slide shows in schools, talking about the value of the bridges as historic artifacts, and remarkable technological innovation, as tourist magnets which bring needed dollars to our communities (people staying overnight, eating, shopping, etc - you know the rest!) will do as much to protect the bridges as increasing penalties for damaging structures.

Thank you for your good work making our bridges more present in the minds of our Vermont legislative and executive branches. I am sure having a committee that the VAOT can respond to will make a concrete difference.

Sincerely,
Jane Griswold Radocchia
Bennington, Vermont

A Letter From Switzerland

February 5, 2005

Hi Joe

I thought that you would like these pictures of Swiss covered bridges taken by my friend, Gregor Wenda. He has given permission for you to publish them on your website, provided you give him credit for the pictures. I have attached his commentary from two separate messages.

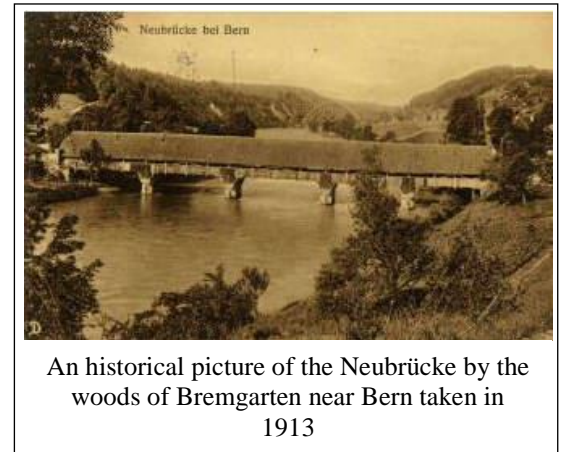
Tom Keating

The first two scans are an historical picture of the Neubrücke by the woods of Bremgarten near Bern taken in 1913. The bridge crossing the river Aare is 91 meters long, 3.4 meters high, over 6 meters wide and said to have been built in 1466.

If you go to Switzerland, you must not miss the City of Luzern in the central part of the country. It has two of the world's most famous wooden covered bridges. The bigger one ("Kappellbrücke") was completely destroyed in a blaze in 1993 but later rebuilt in the original style.

The smaller sister ("Spreuerbrücke") is a few hundred meters down the river and also extremely nice. I visited Luzern last December (2004) and saw both bridges so I know that you got to go there! Attached are a few snapshots from my visit.

I also heard about a very nice 400 hundred old Swiss bridge called "Neubrücke" crossing the river Aare on the way from Bern to Bremgarten.



Gregor Wenda

[See the rest of the pictures at the VCBS website: www.vermontbridges.com Ed.]



by Trish Kane, Membership Coordinator

The wrath of Mother Nature certainly arrived during January and February leaving us with a lot of snow, and no place to put it! But for those of us who enjoy photographing our snowy covered bridges, it was paradise. I'm sure this wasn't the case for those who have to shovel, snow blow or plow 20-22 inches of snow. But spring is not far away and I certainly look forward to getting out of the house and doing some bridging.

Please join me in welcoming the following new members to our Society: Marshfield Historical Society, Marshfield, VT; and Virginia Brackett, Gardner, MA. A special thanks to Joe and Linda Bills for converting to a life membership.

Membership Renewal Contest Winners!

Now, some exciting news...the winners of our Membership Renewal Contest! Congratulations to the following members whose names were entered into the contest by paying their renewal membership fee before the December 31, 2004 deadline. And the winners are...***Eva & Andy Behrens*** of Thetford Center, VT who won an I Love Covered Bridges bag filled with covered bridge stationery, pins, notecards, an I Love Covered Bridges Bumper sticker as well as some other neat covered bridge items. ***Carleton and Janet Corby*** of Oriskany, NY won a beautiful hand painted covered bridge plaque. And, ***Ben and June Evans*** of Coopersburg, PA won a one year free membership to the VCBS. Congratulations to our winners along with a BIG thank you for renewing their membership before December 31, 2004.

A special thanks to Ruth Nelson for organizing the drawing. She graciously took the ballots to the school where she is employed and had three second grade boys from her class do the drawing. Thank you Toby, Jason and Nathan.

We still have a few members who have not renewed their memberships and if you are not sure if you are one of them, check your mailing label. You will find a red dot next to your name on the label.

Email update

Often times it might be necessary to convey late breaking news to our membership. The easiest and least expensive way to do this is, of course, via email. If you have an email address you would be willing to share with us, we certainly would appreciate having it on file for you. Or, if you have recently changed your email address or have a new email address, please let us know that as well. Email is an effective way to communicate with our membership and saves the society money on postage. Rest assured, your email address will not be shared with anyone and will only be used for official VCBS business. So please, if you don't mind sharing your email address with us, send me an email at: **bobtrish68@frontiernet.net**. Please be sure to put VCBS in the subject line so I don't delete it thinking it is a virus.

A word of thanks from the nominating committee...

The nominating committee would like to thank each of you who returned your ballots for our election of officers for the 2005 term. It makes our jobs so much easier when information is returned to us quickly. To date, we have received a total of 31 ballots back from our members. If you haven't returned your ballot yet, please do so as soon as possible.

Yours in Bridging,
Trish Kane
Membership Coordinator

Upcoming Birthdays and Anniversaries:

March

2	John Billie
8	Neil Daniels
18	Priscilla Farnham
23	Steve Miyamoto

April

13	Gary Krick
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May

3	Russ Holmes
9	Erwin Eckson
10	Charles Lovastik
12	James Crouse

12 Jeanette Wilson
17 Ron Bechard
18 Ruth Nelson
19 Mary Ann Waller
22 Irene Barna
23 Judy Marolewski

PREZ SEZ

Five years ago, The Vermont Covered Bridge Society had its very first All-Member Meeting in Lyndonville. Our **6th Annual All-member Meeting** will be held in **Lyndon** this year. Our hostess, Kathryn Ramsey, Director of the Lyndonville Bridge-watch, has arranged with the Lyndon Grange for a meeting place and catered dinner at the **Grange Hall in York Street, on Saturday, May 7, 2005.**

The dinner will be chicken and biscuits with vegetable, coffee or tea, with sheet cake dessert for \$8. The Grange Hall will be open beginning 10 a.m. We will begin, as usual, with a brief business meeting followed by our featured speaker.

Bill Caswell has agreed to speak to us about lost bridges. He is part of a group, "Covered Bridges of Yesteryear," researching long-gone covered bridges and recording their history. Much of their material comes from the NSPCB archives and from participating covered bridge historians among the CB societies. Bill and the group host an excellent website www.lostbridges.com. His presentation should be of great interest to all of us.

Look for the dinner registration form and a map of Lyndon in this newsletter issue.

When we met in September of 2000, our host was Jim Fearon, Director of the VCBS Lyndonville Bridge-watch Area.

Jim 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 and landscaping. 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. Jim passed on in June, 2003.

The 2004 Annual VCBS Directors meeting adopted the proposition that the Society establish a fund in which moneys may be deposited to grow for the purpose of making contributions to groups who are actively preserving their covered bridge. At that time the membership was asked to suggest a name for the fund referred to by the working title "Save-a-bridge Fund."

This year, the Annual Directors Meeting voted that the Save-a bridge Fund be named in honor of the late Director of the VCBS Northeast Kingdom Chapter: "**The Jim Fearon Save-a-bridge Fund**".

To kick-start the fund, the oil painting "Cambridge Junction Covered Bridge," by artist Eric Tobin Eric has donated the painting to the VCBS to help us promote the preservation of our covered bridges. It is on exhibit at the Bryan Memorial Gallery in Jeffersonville, and on www.bryanmemorialgallery.org for sale for \$2400.

Eric has authorized the VCBS to sell prints of his painting. We are offering these prints for sale on our web page www.vermontbridges.com, at our meetings, and in this issue of the *Bridger*. The proceeds of the print sales will go to "The Jim Fearon Save-a-bridge Fund"

I am looking forward to seeing you all in Lyndon on May 7.

I am yours in Bridging
Joe Nelson, President, VCBS