

The Bridger



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter - Winter 2006

WRONG-WAY BRIDGE, A MUSEUM TREASURE, AND AN UNUSED RAIL BED

by Bob Moore (an ex-steel bridger)

In Cambridge, Vermont, we often hear residents speak about the so-called "Wrong-Way Bridge" crossing the Lamoille River on VT Route 15, at the east end of Cambridge village. Having had a career with the local steel fabricator who did the steel work for this attractive structure, I was always puzzled by the bridge's configuration. The bridge curves around to the left towards the villages of Fletcher and Fairfield, rather than curving around to the right to carry VT Route 15 towards Jeffersonville. How come, I once asked former Chapter member, the late **Stearns Jenkins**, and a career engineer in the Vermont Highway Department, now the Vermont Agency of Transportation.

Stearns explained to me that this project was part of a post WW II plan to rearrange the highway between the villages of Cambridge and Jeffersonville, Vermont state Route 15. It was a four-part plan, and I never gleaned the exact order for which the plan was to be executed.

For one part, call it Part One; Vermont Route 15 through Jeffersonville village was to be replaced by a parallel by-pass west of the village's main street.

Another part, call it Part Two; was to relocate the adjacent Seymour Brook to join the Lamoille River, upstream, and east of the then existing, large double-barreled covered bridge which crossed over the Lamoille River.

Another part, call it Part Three; was to remove two covered bridges on Route 15 at the east end of Cambridge village, and replace them with a new multi-span steel girder bridge over the Lamoille River, curving to the west as an unnumbered route, named Pumpkin Harbor Road, towards Fletcher and Fairfield.

The last part, call it Part Four; was to relocate VT Rte 15 between Cambridge village and Jeffersonville village, along the abandoned roadbed/right-of-way of the Burlington & Lamoille RR, which ran from Cambridge Junction to Burlington, through Jeffersonville and Cambridge Villages.

Well - what happened?

Part One - relocating Rte 15 just west of Jeffersonville was completed at some point in time.

Part Two - Seymour Brook (now Seymour River) was relocated to join the Lamoille River upstream, east of its former entry into the Lamoille.

(Wrong-way continued on page 4)

VCBS HOLDS ANNUAL FALL MEETING

by Irene Barna, VCBS Secretary



VCBS Annual Fall Meeting, Sept. 30, at the Montshire Museum
Photo by Joe Nelson

September 30 - Norwich, VT - Twenty one people gathered in the meeting room at the Montshire Museum of Science in Norwich, Vermont where the Fall Annual meeting of the VCBS was called to order by President John Weaver at 10:20 A.M.

The first order of business was the reading of the minutes of the Spring All-Member Meeting held in Woodstock by Secretary Irene Barna. There was one correction brought forward by Joe Nelson that Trish Kane is not the Membership Chair; but the Membership Coordinator. The correction was duly made in the minutes. A motion to approve the corrected minutes was called by President Weaver; bringing the motion to the floor made by David Charkes and seconded by Rae Laitres.

EVENTS REPORT Johnny Esau:

Several places available for lunch had been suggested as well as the King Arthur Flour site nearby.

Johnny suggests members contact him with suggestions where to meet geographically for VCBS meetings. He would also like opinions on whether VCBS should sponsor a safari.

LEGISLATION WATCH: no report given in the absence of the chair.

(Fall Meeting continued on page 2)

Annual Fall Meeting (continued from page 1)

THE TREASURER REPORT was read by Treasurer Neil Daniels:

For the period from January 1, 2006 through September 7, 2006:

INCOME

BRIDGER Ads	\$ 36.00
Donations	341.00
Dues	1,135.00
Events	356.25
Sales	40.26
Misc.	<u>210.00</u>
TOTAL INCOME	\$2,118.51

EXPENSES

Communications	\$ 384.78
Crafts committee	279.49
Events	444.30
Legislation	30.77
Membership	62.89
Office & unspecified	<u>97.24</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,299.47

SAVE-A-BRIDGE FUND

2004 Funds	\$2,276.89
2005 Funds	<u>1,554.29</u>
	\$3,831.18

CURRENT VALUE \$3,833.28

Consists of:

Arrow Bank	\$ 539.60	\$ 525.40
Chittenden Bank	432.75	441.30
Merchants Bank	490.00	473.60
Union Bank	<u>633.60</u>	<u>627.00</u>
EQUITY	\$2,095.95	
Cash @ 4.47%	\$1,737.33	\$1,742.13

A motion to accept the treasurer report was made by John Dostal and seconded by Dick Wilson.

COMMUNICATIONS Joe Nelson:

Joe announced the new editor of *The Bridger*, Steve Wheaton, who has taken hold and hit the ground running. Current deadlines dates may change to better conform to Steve's obligations. With his new software, Steve can produce a PDF version of the quarterly *Bridger* newsletter. The PDF version is being offered to the membership for two reasons:

1. To save on postage and printing costs, the committee greatest expense.
2. The subscriber can enjoy their issues in full color, which the PDF version provides.

Year to date printing costs are \$224, postage \$158, totaling \$382. So far fifteen members have signed up for the PDF

Bridger. Steve and Joe will study the newsletter format to simplify production, improve the appearance, and to better showcase our photography.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT by Trish Kane in absentia read by Joe Nelson:

Total memberships as of April 29, 2006	161
Deleted since	-19 (expired)
New members	<u>+4</u>
Total memberships as of Sept 30, 2006	146

(memberships - not people)

States represented in those 146 memberships: 69 Vermont; 75 in 21 other states; 2 reside in Canada.

Membership breakdown:

Business -1, Organization 4, Family 23, Honorary Life 5, Life 33, Life Business 1

Life Couple 15, Others 64.

New Members: Bruce McDonald (LC); Robert Page (I); Paul Lindberg (F); Jack Tecce (I).

BRIDGE WATCH John Weaver: several new members are interested in being involved in the Bridge Watch. John mentions that Part II of the Handbook is available. He asks for semi annual reports from Bridge Watch chairs as many have not been submitted for 6. Please keep up your activities.

The Cilly Bridge in Tunbridge was rehabilitated this past season. The Creamery Bridge in Brattleboro is advertised now for rehabilitation work. Troy River Road repairs to be advertised in January 2007.

John has copies of part II Bridge Watch Handbook available.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE:

President John Weaver
 Vice President Joe Nelson
 Treasurer Neil Daniels
 Secretary Irene Barna

Non-elective positions:

Communications and Membership Chair Joe Nelson
 Bridge Watch Coordinator and Nominations John Weaver
 Events Coordinator Johnny Esau
 Legislative Watch Terry Shaw
 Bridger Editor Steve Wheaton
 Crafts open

COMMENTS FROM THOSE PRESENT:

Will Thomson mentions that the after contacting the Vermont Historical Society in Montpelier, golf carts were available for those with walking difficulties or rehabilitation needs during the History Expo in Tunbridge.

Dick Wilson gave the following updates on the New York Society:

The work done on the Rexleigh and Eagleville bridges is now complete. A slide show presented last evening by Bill Caswell as a piece of the Smithsonian Exhibit was an excellent presentation.

The Smithsonian covered bridge exhibit will appear in Ithaca and is understood to cost \$15,000-- too much money for their budget --so that the NYCBS, as only sponsor, decided, even with grant monies, NOT to sponsor the exhibit in another area in New York.

Over fifty people from the New York Society went on their most recent covered bridge Safari to Pennsylvania. Dick has brought album of photographs of that visit. He and his wife later attended the Richard Donovan Memorial Safari where 42 people visited 19 Lancaster County (PA) bridges.

OLD BUSINESS:

John Dostal: Starting the first week in April 2007 the Bennington Museum of Art will host the Smithsonian Exhibit of Covered Bridges. Although the cost of getting the exhibit in and out has hidden costs; the Smithsonian Institute gives latitude to change the exhibit slightly. If, after viewing the exhibit today, changes could be suggested of things that need to be exposed he would appreciate their being mentioned as they could influence the exhibit as it would be displayed in Bennington next year. John asks for covered bridge models that would enhance that exhibit; but they would need to be brought to and from Bennington at the time as there is no storage for such items.

On another note, John mentions that the CB Museum is NOT a depository for CB stuff. People who have accumulated stuff of family collections that they do not choose to keep want to donate them to the CB Museum; but there is no facility to store them.

Re signage: he has observed that people respond to icons easily recognized.

A two acre island adjacent to the Paper Mill Bridge in Bennington has a new owner. John hopes to convince the new owner that the island be converted to a public park and that hopefully public funds would be available to assist that purpose.

Ed Barna asked if Bennington Roads along the Wallomoosic River are designated as scenic byways since there is a Federal Project designating certain areas as such. John responded that, during the week after next, a meeting will be held to address just that in conjunction with the promotion of the bridges and attractions of the Bennington area.

NEW BUSINESS:

Neil Daniels asks if anyone can explain the National Parks Service funding and putting together the exhibit we will see

today via Smithsonian Institute. Jan Lewandoski, David Wright, Judy Haywood and several from New Hampshire were invited to Washington, DC to attend the beginning of the exhibit. Many of the findings and subject matter are a result of the group of young people brought to Vermont a few years ago to extensively study several bridges.

A picture of the Taftsville Bridge is shown, picking it out as unusual. The bridge is unusual because, as Neil Daniels explained, the tallest and biggest trees were located, somehow gotten to the site, and hand-hewn. The lower chord on that bridge consists of one big tree on either side. The majority of the pictures of Vermont are from the young people who were working for the project of the HAER (Historic American Engineering Record) project.

Ed Barna mentions the HAER Conference held at the University of Vermont a few years back describing details of the study methods and how drawings and measurements were taken of each and every aspect of the selected bridges.

Further comments from Dick Wilson for Bennington to consider regarding the exhibit were that volunteers are needed to load and unload and provide security during the stay. John Dostal wonders if there might be other incidental expenses.

Bill Caswell mentioned that at the Harrisburg exhibit of the Smithsonian was supplemented with materials relative to Pennsylvania bridges.

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL COVERED BRIDGE SIGNS THROUGHOUT VERMONT:

A lengthy discussion on this topic some of those follow:

Potential funding of the directional signs

Joe Nelson: might there be labor conflicts by using volunteers?

Rae Laitres: How might the Vermont Department of Tourism be involved?

David Charkes: Doesn't the State of New Hampshire fund their signs?

How are the Travel Information Signs in Vermont funded?

Ed Barna: Responsibility of Tourism and Marketing? Who do we know in the Legislature that might be influential is getting support from that area?

Dick Wilson: Local highway departments put up the signs in New York State

Will Thompson: If street addresses were given to the bridges GPS could locate them on that system.

It was moved by John Weaver and seconded by Rae Laitres to table the discussion and to leave the matter to Joe Nelson and Terry Shaw who are pursuing the signage issue with VAOT. There is potential funding available for this project from a member.

It was mentioned, then, by John Weaver that **LEGISLATIVE WATCH REPORT** has nothing new to report since the April meeting.

A motion to adjourn at 11:25 a.m. was made by Neil Daniels and seconded by Rae Laitres.

Upon adjournment members were free to visit all of the exhibits at the Montshire Museum of Science especially the featured traveling covered bridges exhibit from the Smithsonian Institute.

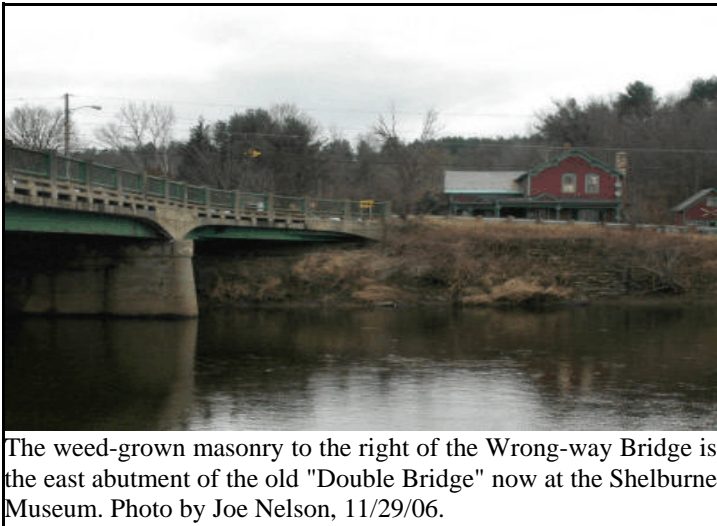
Thank you to Johnny Esau for finalizing the details of the meeting place, bringing the before-meeting refreshments, and for collecting the monies for admission to the Montshire Museum.

A thank you is extended also to Kevin Coburn of the Montshire Museum of Science for his assistance in arranging the meeting space.

Respectfully submitted, Irene Barna, Secretary

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Wrong-way (continued from page 1)



The weed-grown masonry to the right of the Wrong-way Bridge is the east abutment of the old "Double Bridge" now at the Shelburne Museum. Photo by Joe Nelson, 11/29/06.

Part Three - the two covered bridges were removed and a new multi-span steel girder bridge was built over the Lamoille River, curving to the west, towards Fletcher and Fairfield, Pumpkin Harbor Road. The smaller of the two covered bridges, the so-called Gates Bridge still crosses Seymour Brook as it once did on Rte 15, but it was moved to cross the Seymour for access into agricultural fields. But the large double barreled Cambridge Bridge with an adjacent covered walkway, 168 feet long, was dismantled and sold to the Shelburne Museum in 1951. At the museum, a small pond was excavated just off U.S. Route 7, the bridge erected across it, and served as the main entrance to the famous museum for several years. Now it is a secondary museum entrance, a new road entrance having been built just to the south.

Part four - alas, the State of Vermont never proceeded to relocate Rte 15 between Cambridge and Jeffersonville villages along the then abandoned, B&L RR right-of-way. Probably the "Legislatchah" couldn't find, or wouldn't appropriate the funds

for it. Now eastbound Rte 15 traffic crosses the Lamoille, on the, maybe now appropriately named, "wrong-way bridge", and at the north end makes a torturous very sharp right turn to continue on Rte 15 to Jeff.

One humorous post script to this, is that one visitor to the Shelburne Museum voiced the opinion, that he couldn't understand why the Museum didn't just fill in that little pond, rather than having to find an antiquated bridge, with which to cross over it.

[Robert Moore of South Burlington, Vt. has been a member of the VCBS since February, 2000, one of our very first members. Many thanks to Bob for submitting this article. Ed.]

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Covered Bridge Community News Notes

Parke County Covered Bridge Festival Celebrates 50 Years

Parke County, IN, November 9, 2006 - Around two million people invaded Parke County last month for one of the nation's most popular covered bridge festival.

This year marked the 50th anniversary of the Parke County Covered Bridge Festival.

The 10-day event offered visitors the chance to see the county's 31 covered bridges and take in a variety of vendors.

The festival drew around two million people, about 115 tourists for every resident in the county.

About a week before the festival was held, the county held a special ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the reopening of a bridge that had been destroyed by an arsonist in 2005.

A 245-foot-long replica of the Bridgeton Bridge was built with the help of hundreds of volunteers and thousands of dollars in donated materials. Two Zionsville companies also worked to rebuild the bridge at a fraction of the initial reconstruction estimate.

A DVD documenting the reconstruction process will also be available for sale in the future.

[Says James Crouse, contributor of this item: "This is only a brief 'business news' item, but it is nice to see coverage as a business item, recognizing the importance to the economy of historic/preservation tourism." See

<http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/LeadershipIndiana.asp?ID=41&Detail=True>]

For More Information go to the Parke County Website

<http://www.coveredbridges.com>

Brattleboro's Creamery Bridge to Close

Brattleboro, November 21, 2006 - The Creamery Bridge, WGN 45-13-01, will be closed for reconstruction beginning December 4, completion slated for June, 2007.

The Creamery Bridge Serves Guilford Street, connecting VT Route 9 to Brattleboro Memorial Park.

It was originally planned that the Creamery Bridge would be restored for foot and bicycle traffic and bypassed by a modern bridge. That plan has been delayed due to shortage of state funds. When the bridge reopens it will serve vehicular traffic as before, about 4,000 crossings per day.

The contract was won by Renaud Brothers Inc., of Vernon, with a bid of \$285,000. Ninety-five percent of the cost of reconstruction will be paid by the state using federal funds provided for restoring covered bridges in Vermont. The balance, about \$20,000, will be paid by the town.

The 84-foot Town truss span was built in 1879 by A.W. Wright to cross the Whetstone Brook. The slate roof and pedestrian walkway were added in 1917. The bridge is named for the Brattleboro Creamery which stood nearby.

The renovation will include the replacement of the bridge floor system, portions of the truss lattice, and whatever is found when the bridge is dismantled. A fire alarm and dry sprinkler system will be added.

[Thanks to VCBS member William Carroll for forwarding a Brattleboro Reformer article about the Creamery Bridge repair. Bill comments: "Although this is not one of my 'adopted' bridges, I know it well, and know that it carries far more traffic (all going too fast) than was ever intended. From the sound of the article, it will be a repair/restoration, and not just sticking steel beams under it or putting these very ugly glu-lam beams in it. I agree that it should be bypassed, or maybe moved to a location with far less traffic." Bill Carroll, Chicopee, MA. - Ed.]

Jay Bridge Update [WGN 32-16-01]

by Dick Wilson

Jay, NY - November 21, 2006 - Well, I didn't get to the bridge when it was being moved, so I waited for a nice day to go to Jay and to see what progress has been made since the move. I went up to Jay, New York November 21st.

The Bridge now sets over the abutments, but not on the abutments. During the rains that we had, the engineers found that the new abutments were retaining moisture, so now they are going to build pedestals on the abutments to set the bridge on. The bridge will set high on the cribbing until the new construction is complete.

The temporary bridge that has been used since 1998 was being loaded on a truck to be taken away and used somewhere else. The piers under the covered bridge will be removed, but the workers did not know a time table for that,

as it was to be done by another contractor.

I was told that a lot of work still had to be done to get the picnic area finished.



Side view of the Jay Bridge [WGN 32-16-01] sitting high over the abutments. Notice the new bridge behind the covered bridge and the old piers.

Photo by Dick Wilson, 11/21/06

Haverhill, Bath Accept Covered Bridge Bid

Haverhill, NH, November 28, 2006 - "The Haverhill-Bath Covered Bridge rehabilitation is now officially moving forward with approvals from the Towns of Bath and Haverhill," emails Project Manager Sean James of Hoyle-Tanner Associates of Manchester, NH. "Wright Construction is the contractor for the project and originally bid \$1.18M for the project. We have been negotiating to meet the Towns budget for the project and should have a signed contract soon. Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2007."

The Bath- Haverhill Covered Bridge, WGN 29-05-04, will be restored for pedestrian use.

After discussion about the project at the October 30 joint meeting of the Haverhill and Bath boards of selectmen, the boards voted to approve the sole bid from Wright Construction, provided that the price of any change orders would be locked in for any further work, including decking.

Officials from both towns are hoping area lumber companies will donate lumber for both the siding and decking. If those donations are realized, the bridge also could see its decking replaced. For now, the roof will remain the same.

Some board members were concerned about not approving the option that included replacing the decking and the roof. But that option would have left the towns with about \$19,078 shortfall.

With the approval of the base bid, construction could start as early as November. It is estimated the bridge work will take about eight months to complete. The rehabilitation is

being paid for with federal and state assistance, coupled with money raised by the Bath- Haverhill bridge committee.

The 256-foot Bath- Haverhill Bridge was built in 1829 at a cost of \$2,400 divided between the two towns. The bridge crosses the Ammonoosuc River in two spans using the Town Truss with arches.

[Thanks to Sean James for his comments and to VCBS member Ann Ovitt for sending us the Caldonian Record 10/31/06 clipping - Ed.]

How Kentucky Paved a Better Way to Fix Covered Bridges

September 19, 2006 - The story, *Bridge to New Ground*, by Stephanie Smith, was published 9/08/06 by the on-line magazine for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, www.preservationonline.org.

The highlights are: sistering rather than replacement of timber, adding new wood to support the old, treat new wood to look weathered, and cause contractors to work directly with the engineers. Kentucky was the first state to pass legislation to require the services of a covered bridge expert for all projects costing more than \$50,000, the article says.

For the story about the rehabilitation of Kentucky's Goddard Covered Bridge [17-35-06], go to http://www.nationaltrust.org/Magazine/archives/arch_story/090806.htm

Readers are invited to comment on the differences between how Kentucky treats covered bridge preservation and Vermont's approach. email jcnelson@together.net [Thanks to VCBS member Brian T Fitzgerald for sharing this article. - Ed.]

letters

About "Bridge to New Ground"

September 20, 2006 - Being very interested in the authentic restoration of Vermont's historic covered bridges, I really enjoyed reading, "Bridge to New Ground," [on the [vermontbridges](http://vermontbridges.com) website] pertaining to Kentucky's Goddard span. All of us should congratulate the fine folks of Goddard for standing up for a proper restoration of their old Town lattice structure, the last remaining one in the Bluegrass State.

Kentucky's new legislation requiring the services of a covered bridge expert for all covered bridge projects should definitely be enacted in Vermont, as well. What a wonderful idea!

While most engineers in Vermont have good intentions for restoring the state's old spans, many times the end result is less than extraordinary. Just look at the bridges "restored" with steel I-beams, glu-lam wood, new trusses, ugly metal guard rails, etc. Can't we do a better job in preserving something priceless? I certainly think so.

The most upsetting thing is seeing bridge after bridge being torn down and replaced with a replica. In recent years, Kentucky has done this, also. Unfortunately, Oldtown, Bennett's Mill, Colville and Walcott bridges in the state were torn down by the Kentucky DOT and replaced with almost all new wood. What kind of a preservation plan is this? A very poor one, in my opinion. Thank goodness the tide is starting to turn in Kentucky.

I keep hoping that the tide will turn in Vermont, also. Why can't we have Arnold Graton and Tim Andrews of New Hampshire work in the Green Mountain State's bridges? These men are true craftsmen and know how to fix covered bridges the right way! They should be invited to examine Newfane's Williamsville Bridge and work-up a first-class restoration for the town's last historic span. Keep the glu-lam garbage out; fix it properly!

What happened in Goddard, KY can happen in Vermont just as easily. We people who love and admire the state's covered bridges must not settle for a so-so repair job. Let's all work together to emulate the Kentucky legislation. I think Vermont's bridges are worth it, don't you?

Happy Bridging, Charlie Elflein

Hay Bale Art



One of 10 painted bales done by grade school students of Barnet Town School.

Barnet, VT - The Town of Barnet, has held a hay bale painting contest the last two years. The school has ten bales and there were ten other bales painted by both adults and children scattered around town.

I don't know if the covered bridge picture got a prize or not; one of the other bales at the school (of a round barn) earned its painter, a seventh grader, a first place prize. AnnOvitt (VCBS Life Member)

Question: Is There a Truss That Lasts Longer?

by Bob and Trish Kane

At a recent Covered Spans of Yesteryear presentation, the following question was asked and I'm hoping you will share your thoughts with us. Here's the question: Was there a particular type of truss that lasted longer in a bridge than others?

Although I'm not sure if there is any way we can actually determine this, I'm hoping some of you might have a scientific answer, or an educated guess. Our uneducated guess is a Town Truss. Our reasoning is based solely on knowing how strong the Town Truss is, and from seeing so many old photographs of Town Lattice bridges removed from their abutments by a flood. Often times you will see where the entire side of the bridge is still intact even after the trauma from the flooding. We have also seen a few photos of Town Lattice bridges that have been destroyed by fire to some degree, but yet the truss still appears to be pretty much still in one piece.

Response from Miriam Wood, Hilliard, OH - I would say it depended greatly on the maintenance it received through the years. On the all-wood trusses, I would have to say the Long truss, if correctly built according to Col. Long's specs. For the combination trusses, it has to be the Howe.

Response from David Simmons, Columbus, OH - I think the issue would have to do with "tightness" over time that would come from a consequence of the natural tendency of wood to shrink and shorten. The technical term for this is "creep." That's one feature of wooden trusses that made a true Long truss with wedges such an advantage, since it could periodically be re-stiffened by re-driving the wedges. For just that same reason, a Howe truss would have had an enviable longevity since the iron verticals would allow the entire truss to be re-tightened. The fact that the Howe remained a part of standard RR construction throughout the 19th century is testimony to its value and durability.

Your suggestion of a Town truss as a long-lasting truss is reasonable simply because there were so many redundant members which would make shrinkage overall less of an issue.

Response from Robert Durfee, NH - I do not believe you will find a true scientific answer to your question. There are many factors that relate to longevity of a covered bridge and to the trusses, including frequency of traffic, loading, maintenance, extent of protection (siding), timber species, etc.

I would say that the Town Lattice Truss lasts longer, but I have no definitive proof. Here is my reasoning:

1. A review of the NSPCB World Guide to Covered Bridges

indicates that more Town Lattice Truss Bridges have survived over any other truss type. This may be misleading, in that it may be that more Town Lattice Trusses were built over other truss types, leading to more of these trusses surviving.

2. A Town Lattice is a very sturdy and rugged structure, having a lot of redundancy in its members. Should one member fail, there are several adjoining members to pick up the load. Other truss types, such as Howe, Pratt, Kingpost & Queen Post, etc., do not have much, if any, redundancy. A failure of one member in these trusses would usually lead to a total failure of the truss and a collapse of the bridge. Thus the redundant Town Lattice Truss would have a better survival record.

3. Different truss types were chosen for covered bridges for specific reasons related to a site such as economy, timber availability, and skilled or unskilled labor available. The most economical truss for a given location was usually the deciding factor. The original builders probably did not think much about longevity when selecting a truss type, as all trusses were covered to protect them.

Response from Phil Pierce, Treadwell, NY - I am not disagreeing with responses to date - but from another perspective, the Burr Arch has been identified as one of the earliest patented configurations and there are a lot more of them extant than other configurations which must mean something. Now that doesn't indicate that they were better perhaps, but at least popular and long lasting in spite of the typical lack of attention that most CBs have endured.

Response from John Weaver, VT - To my knowledge there is no particular type of CB truss that lasted longer than other types. They all require protection and maintenance to function over a long lifetime. The plank lattice truss is the easiest CB truss to fabricate and repair. However it is subject to racking, due to its slender cross-section, and is vulnerable to lattice member impact damage.

Response from Leola Pierce, VA - In answer to your question about the strongest truss. I believe it is a Burr Truss because the Burr Truss is used on the longest bridges. Therefore it would seem to be the strongest and last the longest.

Response From Sylvain Raymond, Canada - Although not an expert, but more like an observer, I will venture an answer. The Town truss is a good choice for it has proven easy to build and long lasting. It has been used for the Railroad as well as for little used roadways. Where wood was plentiful and skilled workers few, the Town truss became all the more popular. Now, can we deduct from this that the Town truss is a longer lasting proposition?

I say no. I think that maintenance and overall building

material quality determined if a bridge was to last or not. Any structure will slowly degrade and need repair. The art of bridge building has to do with material, maintenance, structure type and, less we forget... climate!

Much to my understanding of structural engineering, a 200 year old covered bridge can still be a solid part of any infrastructure. As I saw in Germany, bridges built around 1700 are still in everyday use by vehicular traffic. So why can't an overpass built in 1971 stay up on its abutments? (The Quebec overpass failure last month.) Maintenance is the answer!

Blessed were those covered bridges built in areas where their construction was appreciated and understood. The thrifty elected officials saw to it that the money spent was going to be an investment as well as a way to carry traffic over waterways. Cursed are those who poured concrete everywhere and now tell us that our roads are safe, for they are not! Of the thousands of cement bridges built in the Americas since the 1950s, very few are actually in good shape. Many are in what we can call the gray zone, this is a structure which is in no danger of collapse but, a structure that has lost structural integrity due to ice formation and peeling of the protecting layers, lack of proper maintenance, clogged drains and total lack of basic inspections.

So for the covered bridge longer lasting must be taken in account the team of dedicated folks who will see to it that the structures remain safe. By sheer number, the Town truss may win overall. But then considering other systems like Howe, the Queen and others, I have a hard time giving credit for long longevity to an assembly of timber alone.

Response from Joseph Conwill, ME - On bridge longevity, I agree with those who say the key is proper maintenance, rather than any inherent advantage of one truss type over another.

Another factor is unstable economic conditions, which bring changes in loading demands. We see this now in covered bridges that have been swallowed up by the suburban development. An earlier example was found in Oregon where bridges were designed for relatively high loadings -- typically 15 tons--but then suddenly had to carry log trucks which might weigh up to 40 tons. These bridges were among the strongest built yet also among the shortest lived. This problem could happen with any truss type.

Membership

It is always nice to be able to report new members joining the Vermont Covered Bridge Society. For this quarter, however,

we only have one new member and that is Robert Page from Brattleboro, VT. Welcome Robert!

By the time you receive this issue of *The Bridger*, Christmas may be just a couple of weeks away. If you need to do a little last minute shopping, why not consider giving a gift certificate for a membership to the Vermont Covered Bridge Society? We also have some lovely covered bridge gift items on our website which you can view by visiting: www.vermontbridges.com. Or contact Joe Nelson directly for more information. All proceeds from the sale of these items support the mission of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society -- to help preserve our covered bridges. A covered bridge book and/or a membership make lovely gifts and are another great way to promote our covered bridges.

You Still Have Time! Don't forget the Early Renewal Contest for 2007. All you have to do is pay your membership fee *before the December 31st deadline*. By doing so, you will qualify for a chance at a nice gift. The prizes for this year's contests are: One year free membership to the VCBS; a lovely covered bridge welcome sign, or a gift bag filled with covered bridge items. For more information, see complete details in the Fall 2006 newsletter.

Bob and I send along our warmest wishes for a wonderful and healthy holiday season to you and your families.
Trish Kane, Membership Coordinator

Upcoming Birthdays and Anniversaries December

1	Terry and Jane Shaw
6	Priscilla O'Reilly
8	Barbara McPherson
20	Ben and June Evans
23	Ed Barna
24	Tina Conn
24	Dave and Marikka Guay
25	Ann Ovitt
26	Virginia Brackett
27	Steve and Susan Miyamoto
27	Dan Brock
28	Anthony and Pat Daniels
31	Ben Evans

January

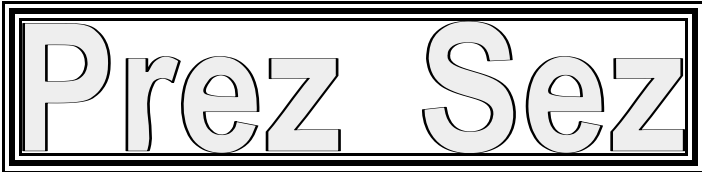
4	Don Prideaux
12	Jim Patch
15	Dan Castellini
29	Bill Jeffrey

February

2	Bill Caswell
8	Conrad Nagengast
12	Joe and Ruth Nelson
14	George and Tina Conn
14	Bob Cassidy
21	George Longenecker
23	Pauline Prideaux
24	Marge Converse
24	John Weaver
26	David Guay

Update from the Nominating Committee

In late October, 145 letters and ballots were sent out to each membership in the VCBS. If you did not receive your ballot, please be sure to let us know. As of this writing, only 56 of these ballots have been returned. Please remember, it is *very important* that you return your ballots. If you have not done so, please drop them in the mail as soon as possible. Thanks!



Dear Members

As I have stated before, volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization. Welcome to Suzanne Daniels as she joins the Board of Directors replacing Joe Nelson as Director of the Membership Standing Committee. Trish Kane will continue as Membership Coordinator. Joe will continue as a member of the committee supporting both Suzanne and Trish. Suzanne's main thrust will be in creating materials to support visits to schools to teach the next generation about the value of our covered bridges and preserving them.

Joe Nelson will continue as Director of the Communications Committee supporting our newsletter editor Steve Wheaton, collecting news and maintaining the website.

We are still looking for a Director of the Crafts Committee, running the sales table at meetings and other occasions, collecting covered bridge mementos for sale or display: books, postcards, and sundry donations from members and the public. It would be good if someone would volunteer to take this function over. Knowledge of, or interest in, archiving would be a plus for a candidate.

Also we need someone to be a Bridge-watch chair for the Lyndon-Danville area. At a very minimum, semi-annual bridge watch inspection site visits and reports are required. Our Handbook describes other duties.

John Weaver, President VCBS



Attention Covered Bridge Postcard Collectors

If you are interested in one of the Special Commemorative Hyde Hall Covered Bridge postcards that were recently produced in honor of the Hyde Hall Celebration, please contact Trish Kane at: bobtrish68@frontiernet.net. She only has a very limited supply of the cancelled cards left, so be sure to get your postcard while you still have the opportunity to do so. Those of you who have already seen this postcard know it is stunning and will be a welcome addition to anyone's collection. The cancelled cards are \$2.00 each and once they are gone, will **not** be reproduced. Uncancelled cards are \$1.00 each. Postage for up to three cards is \$.87. For more information, contact Bob and Trish directly.

□□□

The VCBS "Patch" Still Available!

The "must have" VCBS iron-on patches are still available for sale at a modest \$3.50.

The profits go to the VCBS Jim Fearon Save-Bridge-Fund to help fund the VCBS mission advocating the preservation of covered bridges. The patches are for sale through the web site; www.vermontbridges.com/market.place.htm and are available at all VCBS meetings.

You can also order your patch from Joe Nelson. Send \$3.50/patch and a self addressed, stamped envelope to P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465. (up to three patches can be sent to you with a 39-cent stamp.)

The patch depicts the "Bridge-at-the-Green" in West Arlington, Vermont, the covered bridge and chapel familiar to us all, it being one of the most photographed of the state's scenic places. The initials "F.C." at the bridge portal honor designer Francis Converse.

The design began as a pencil drawing donated by the late Francis Converse way back before the first VCBS Annual Meeting was held in November 11, 2000. The drawing was ultimately digitized in full color on an iron-on patch 3.5" in diameter.

VCBS Officers

- John Weaver, President
- Joseph Nelson, Vice President & Board of Directors contact
- Irene Barna, Secretary
- Neil Daniels, Treasurer

Bridger Newsletter Staff

- Steve Wheaton, Editor
562.420.3141 stephen.wheaton@gmail.com
- Joseph Nelson, Staff Writer
802.899.2093 jnelson@together.net
- Distribution, Kathy Knight

THE NORTHEAST POW /MIA NETWORK

The goals of our organization is the return of all LIVE American POW/MIAs, repatriation of the remains of those who have died, and explanations for cases where the two options do not exist.

Great attention paid to maintaining physical reminders of the issue's continued significance. The international logo's appearance on flags, pins, decals, articles of clothing, and accessories bolsters awareness. Wearing POW/MIA bracelets honors those individuals who still wait and evokes conversations on the issue.

We are involved in presentations with schools, veterans' organizations, and through a broad spectrum of events allowing us to convey our concerns to the public. We are involved in the legislative process, as we attempt to provide protection for those who serve our Country, and for their families and loved ones should loss occur. We attempt to address the needs of families and returned POW/MIAs, and assist in coordinating activities with associated groups and promoting information flow.

We are a volunteer organization, veterans and non-veterans, using awareness, communication, education, legislation, and compassion to assuage the pain associated with one of the most devastating outcomes of service to one's Country. As we honor POW/MIAs, returned and still waiting to come home, we aggressively pursue means to return the missing and protect those serving.

Don Amorosi, NY Chair Vets Serving Vets 1-518-792-2057

NORTHEAST POW / MIA NETWORK

Don Amorosi



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Together Always
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