

# The Bridger



## The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter Winter 2011

### PREZ SEZ

Our October meeting in Windsor was enjoyed by all - excellent presentation on a beautiful October day in Windsor. I Hope to see you all at our spring meeting.

There is much bridge re-building/rehabilitation activity going on and about to go on: Gifford CB work in Randolph is almost complete and Pulp Mill CB work will begin as soon as the contract is awarded (before the end of 2011). Several storm damaged bridges are also being addressed at present: Taftsville, Bowers, Hall, and Worrall covered bridges. So please get out and observe the activity.

This is probably my last Prez Sez column. In 2012, I expect a new candidate to be elected to the President's office. However, I will continue my present duties as statewide Bridge Watch Coordinator for VCBS.

John Weaver, President

### VCBS 2012 Election of Officers for Two-Year Terms

Please find and complete the ballot included on the last page of this issue of *The Bridger*. Send your votes to: VCBS Election, P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465, or email your ballot to [jcnelson@together.net](mailto:jcnelson@together.net), or call 802-899-2093. All votes must be cast by December 17 to be counted for the next issue of *The Bridger*.

Please do vote even though the candidates are running unopposed. Our bylaws require that these elections be held and these are the people who are giving of their time and talent to make the Vermont Covered Bridge Society a living and working organization. Your vote is a thank you for their efforts.

If you wish to add your name to the Society Birthday and Anniversary announcement list or wish to update an entry, please fill in the bottom of the ballot. If you have entered dates before, you need not do so again. If you have a new email address you may enter it here. Signing up for the PDF version of the quarterly Bridger newsletter will save the Society mailing costs and you will receive your newsletter in full color.

This is an open organization and all members are encouraged to participate. If you choose not to run for

one of the four offices, volunteer to join a standing committee or a Bridge-watch area. The VCBS needs you to help carry on our mission. Candidates or volunteers please contact Suzanne Daniels, Chair of the Membership Committee; [neildaniels2003@yahoo.com](mailto:neildaniels2003@yahoo.com), 90E Camp Road, Weathersfield, VT 05156.

The membership was canvassed for candidates through *The Bridger* newsletter this year, but no responses were received. Therefore, plan 'B' was followed and John Weaver, choosing not to run for president again, canvassed the membership for a successor. It is our good fortune that William Carroll, life member and the chair of the Historical Committee, agreed to fill the spot. His acceptance letter and bio follows:

**Thursday, October 13, 2011** - John, although I feel that the officers of VCBS should be Vermont residents, I am willing to be nominated for the Presidency. I would like to see during my tenure, if elected, a membership drive to attract more Vermont residents as members and willing to take leadership positions. However, I cannot rule out adding non-residents to the membership roles, and using whatever expertise they have in the best way possible.

I am a professional archivist, semi-retired, and have spent most of my career working with municipal officials, historical societies, libraries, and other non-profit organizations in the smaller Cities and Towns in Massachusetts. From this experience I have developed extensive knowledge of local history from first settlement to the 20th century. I would hope to use this experience with the VCBS to better understand the 'whys' of our covered bridges. I have spent more time than I can count in Vermont visiting covered bridges and other historical points of interest. I have been to all the authentic covered bridges in the state and most of the romantic shelters, and have photographed all of them for my own personal collection. One of my major interests is the environment in which the covered bridges exist; not only at present but also at the time they were built.

If elected, I would want to see increased membership, especially among Vermont residents. I would also like to see some outreach, especially in local schools, to an understanding of the importance of wooden covered bridges as a part of Vermont's historical heritage – William F. Carroll

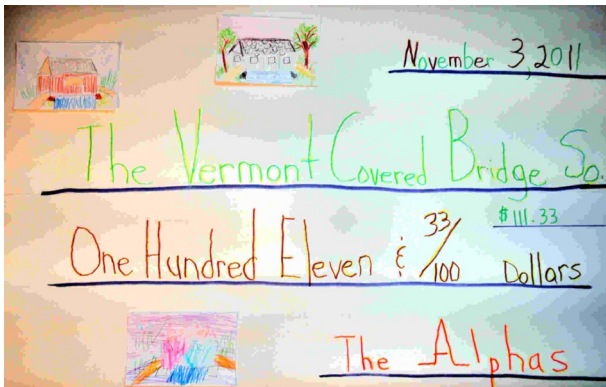
## ***The Schoolhouse* Kindergartner's Penny Drive**

by Joe Nelson

**South Burlington, Vt., October 23, 2011** - "Hi," wrote Nari Penson, "I am a kindergarten teacher at *The Schoolhouse* in South Burlington. I have a class of six Kindergartners. We are in the process of conducting a penny drive to help repair the covered bridges that were damaged during Irene. We want to give our money to the Vermont Covered Bridge Society. When our penny drive is over we would love for someone from the society to come to our school to receive a check. It would mean so much more to them than just putting a check in the mail. We have been reading about and looking at pictures of our covered bridges. We looked at storm footage of our bridges being battered and broken. We made our own covered bridges and we visited the Holmes Creek Bridge and the Quinlan in Charlotte. The local Charlotte paper as well as the Hometown section of the Burlington Free Press wrote about our efforts. We have raised and counted \$52 so far with more to come. Please let me know if you think it will be possible for someone from the society to come to our school. We are located off Dorset Street in the Dorset farms development."

On the following Thursday, November 3, I stepped into the kindergarten classroom to be greeted by Liz Shayne, Interim Head of School, Nari Penson, and seven enthusiastic kids and a smiling staff. The kids eagerly showed me the pop-stick covered bridge models they had made, each a work of art. Now I know where our next generation of covered bridge builders will come from.

They gleefully brought out a beautiful check for \$111.33, measuring three feet long.



I am grateful they didn't give it to us in pennies. I thanked the class and the staff for their good work and read to them the letter written for the occasion by VCBS President, John Weaver:

"Dear children of South Burlington, *The Schoolhouse* Kindergarten: On behalf of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society, I wish to thank you so much for all of your fund raising efforts to address the recent damage to Vermont covered bridges. Most of these structures are presently town owned, maintained, and fully used for public transportation. They are also an important part of Vermont, linking us to past history. Many people come from other states to marvel at their beauty and authenticity.

"It is inspiring that such a young group as yourselves

is dedicating so much effort to historic covered bridge preservation. Again, thank you so much."

I thanked each child and teacher with a Vermont Covered Bridge Society Patch and to the class, a stack of covered bridge coloring pages. The kids were thrilled with both.

### **Covered Bridge Coloring Book Wanted**

Kindergarten teacher, Ms. Penson, asked if the VCBS knew of a covered bridge coloring book. Three of our members, Robert Salvi, Bruce Laumeister, and Irene Mele found the website About.com, New England Travel;

<http://gonewengland.about.com/cs/coloringpages/1/blcovbrdgecolor.htm>, offering free coloring pages. These are beautiful pages, but maybe a bit advanced for children in the lower grades.

Ruth Nelson found a single covered bridge coloring page at the Jericho Corner School and from this we made copies for Ms. Penson's class. See the photo.



Three Chittenden County elementary schools that I am aware of have used covered bridges to enhance their studies. If the VCBS plans to be a resource for these programs, it would be good to design a coloring book for the purpose. This is a call for volunteers to create this study resource. Please contact me at [jcnelson@together.net](mailto:jcnelson@together.net).

### **VCBS OFFICERS**

*John Weaver, President*  
*Joseph Nelson, Vice President*  
*Irene Barna, Secretary*  
*Neil Daniels, Treasurer*

### **Bridger Newsletter Staff**

*Ray Hitchcock, Editor*  
*Joseph Nelson, Staff Writer*

802-899-2093 [jcnelson@together.net](mailto:jcnelson@together.net)



Rockingham Bridges Pounded by Irene  
By Ray Hitchcock

Just when I was getting smug about the updated and fine condition of our local covered bridges, Hurricane Irene hit.

As we were held captive in our home by washed out bridges and roads we heard a variety of stories, some true and others not.

I had just completed the interview with Paul Petrasca for the Fall Bridger when I received a call that Bartonsville Covered bridge had been lost.



Bartonsville north abutment August 30, 2011 photo Ray Hitchcock

People at the bridge reporting it shuddering fifteen minutes before the south abutment was scoured away and the bridge was lost. People were standing by the washed out bridge days later and were in shock or mourning the loss to the community. The current bridge was completed in 1870 by Sanford Granger to replace an earlier bridge destroyed when the unforgiving Williams River changed course in the floods of 1869.

In the process of traveling in the river the roof had separated from the structure and collided with the newly refurbished Worrall Bridge one half mile downstream. Worrall stood tall but received some damage and the approaches to the abutments were a mess. Adam Geller of the Associated Press did an excellent article which can be found by doing a Goggle Search on "*Bartonsville Covered Bridge Adam Geller*"

The insurance company approved moving the Bartonsville wreckage from private property. Town folks are hopeful that some of the original fabric can be used in the new bridge. The Bartonsville bridge abutment construction started the week after Thanksgiving. Plans are to have both abutments completed by February 2012. A temporary bridge will be placed on new abutments.

The select board plans on getting bids on new replica bridge this spring.



Worrall south abutment August 30, 2011 photo by Ray Hitchcock

The Saxtons River went wild with the flood destroying homes and roads from Grafton to Bellows Falls. The Kidder Hill Covered Bridge in Grafton had its abutments washed out and was closed for several weeks. The Hall Covered Bridge east of Saxtons River was damaged and the south abutments were nearly scoured away. Both of these bridges have been repaired and returned to service just before Thanksgiving.

Kidder Covered Bridge in Grafton & Hall Covered Bridge in Saxtons River are now open. Hall has had a stone mason do abutment repairs and sports a few new lattice pieces & siding. The Worrall Covered Bridge has had some work started but remains closed.



Hall lattice and siding repairs—Nov 29, 2011 photo by Ray H.

**Vermont Covered Bridge Society**  
**Twelfth Annual Fall Meeting**  
 Saturday, October 15, 2011

The Twelfth Annual Fall meeting of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society was held in the Old Toll House in Windsor, Vermont on Saturday, October 15, 2011.



President John Weaver called the meeting to order at 10:05

**Minutes** of the Spring All-Member meeting held in Middlebury April 9, 2011 were not read because all minutes are available in *The Bridger*.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Neil Daniels reports the following from January 1 to date: I always remind us, that we're on a calendar basis, we are a 501c3 corporation, we are non-profit, we typically have \$5,000 in the checking account, and that's what we have now, and we have a Save-a-bridge Fund with a balance of \$6005.00, and we gain five cents a month in interest.

### **Committee Reports**

**Communications:** Joe Nelson reports that of the 142 memberships, 35 have opted to receive their newsletter electronically, saving the VCBS \$61.60 in postage per year and approximately \$92.94 in printing costs, a total of \$254.54 per year. The newsletter costs \$0.66 each to print, fold and tape.

**Wanted, a newsletter editor trainee** to ultimately take over the editorship of *The Bridger*, a key position in the Vermont Covered Bridge Society's out-reach.

**Wanted, reporter/correspondents** to bring local covered bridge news to **The Bridger**.

For more information or to sign up, please contact Joe Nelson, Communication Committee Chair, jnelson@together.net.

Joe Nelson reports that since that fateful day in August, we have been getting **donation letters** from folks as far away as Washington and Indiana.

September 7, 2011: Let us introduce ourselves. We are Dan & Kathy Collom and we are from a very small town, Bridgeton, Indiana. We have heard of your terrible loss due to the hurricane and we know how you feel. We

had a covered bridge in our little town of about 120 people and our bridge was burnt to the ground by an arsonist. It was a huge loss for us. After a lot of community help we rebuilt our bridge. I am sending you a donation along with a video of what happened here and how we went about getting it back.

We hope you enjoy this video and hope that it gives you hope on rebuilding soon. If there is anything that we can do to help please let us know: Dan & Kathy Collom, Rosedale, Indiana. [The Colloms sent \$20 cash and a video]

Sept 16, 2011: Dear Vermont Friends; I am from Parke County, Indiana - where we boast about ourselves being the Covered Bridge Capital of The World. We are a very, very rural county, but every October we have a 10-day bridge festival where we welcome over a million visitors to our 30 bridges.

I watched and read in horror as many of your bridges were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Irene. A few years back, our most beloved bridge, the Bridgeton Bridge, was destroyed by a crazed arsonist. Our small community banded together, volunteering everything from donated timber to labor, in an effort to rebuild the bridge. In addition to a small donation, I am inclosing a simple bracelet that we sold for 5 dollars apiece that helped raise thousands of dollars. I hope it will inspire you, and give you hope that you can get your bridges back: Sincerely, Cindy S. Peterson, Rosedale, Indiana. [Cindy sent \$20 and a rubber bracelet]

August 29, 2011: Dear VCB5- I am a Green Mountain College graduate and admirer of covered bridges. I am sorry to hear of the recent devastation of two of Vermont's historic covered bridges. Not only is it a loss of history but a loss of beauty in nature. Please accept my small donation as an appreciation for all of your efforts to restore these wonderful assets to society.

P.S. If you still have an 'I Love Covered Bridges' bumper sticker and/or VCBS patch in stock, I would appreciate receiving one or both from you in the mail. I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Thank you, Lynne Handlos, Seattle, Washington, September 1, 2011.

[Lynne sent \$25 and applied for membership]

September 1, 2011: Use this as a starting point to rebuild your bridges. Here in the mid-west we had "our" bridge in Bridgeton Indiana burned to the ground by a mutant! We immediately started working to gather money to rebuild - and we did! Look on line and see the pictures before and after. You will be astonished at what a few people do with a plan. Now get busy. Have those bake sales, and sell those rubber bracelets. You can do it: Linda Thomas, Tuscola, Illinois, [Linda sent \$25]

### **Membership: Suzanne Daniels**

We welcome new member, Lynne Handlos of Seattle Washington who Joined the VCBS when she heard of what Hurricane Irene did to our bridges, sending along a donation.

Today we have 142 memberships. Of these we have: 54 Individual members, 37 Life members, 21 Life-couple members, 18 Family memberships, 4 Honorary-life members, 3 Contributing members, 3 Businesses, and 2 Organizations. This totals 182 members. We have memberships in 25 states from Maine to California, and Ontario, Canada. Of these 66 are in Vermont. 76 are elsewhere.

A Membership Coordinator is needed to assist our Membership Chair in serving the membership. The volunteer must have E-mail and be able to work with Microsoft Excel.

**Events: Suzanne Daniels**

We need to be planning our next meeting – finding a site and a speaker – membership suggestions and participation is asked for. Last [meeting] we had a wonderful talk, the couple is here that presented it, about motorcycles, What do motorcycles have to do with bridges? Well, we found out because their motorcycles took them to all the covered bridges that they went to, it was a fabulous membership meeting. So if you have any ideas such as that, let us know.

Volunteer worker-bees are needed by the Events Committee to help set up meetings and assist in hosting them. For details, contact Suzanne Daniels, Events Committee Chair: 802.885.5517 or neil-daniels2003@yahoo.com

**Historical Committee: no report**  
**Bridge Watch: John Weaver**

Certainly bridge watch has been busy with all of our reports of the bridge damage in Vermont, and I'm sure we'll get to that more extensively later on in the meeting.

There are quite a lot of projects to look at, however some of the regularly scheduled covered bridge projects are still going on; the Gifford covered bridge in Randolph should be completed within a month, the rehabilitation, and as far as I know, the Pulp Mill Bridge in Middlebury will be advertised for bids within the next few weeks. [The restoration work on the Pulp Mill Bridge will] be quite extensive. There is a lot of superstructure work that has to be done to rehabilitate that structure with the trusses and the arches. The flooring's going to be changed in configuration.

Also, the Taftsville covered bridge in Woodstock is still moving forward. I expect that will be advertised for bids next year. It's not like any of the regularly scheduled projects for covered bridges have changed as far as I know. So, please do get out there and take a look at the progress of projects that are ongoing, it's certainly interesting and worthwhile. This is a very good time of year to look because the foliage will be coming down and you will be able to get a real good look at covered bridges and their present condition.

Irene Barna reports (by email 10/11/11) that from a brief conversation with Middlebury Town Manager, Bill Finnger, it is not likely that anything will be happening with

the Pulp Mill Covered Bridge any time soon because of the priority to attend to damage throughout the state caused by the Hurricane Irene. He has recently spoken with Mr. Sargent of VAOT who tells him that a contract has yet to be awarded; therefore no call for bids on the work have gone out.

**OLD BUSINESS: none**

**NEW BUSINESS**

John Weaver: Bill Carroll is stepping up as candidate for president in 2012 for the Vermont Covered Bridge Society, and I'd like to endorse Bill's candidacy.

William Carroll: I'm an alien from Massachusetts. We're going to have to increase our membership a lot so there's no need to go out of state to find officers for this organization. That, basically is the first thing I want to say and I didn't know I offered to step up, I think John called me and told me I was going to be nominated for the next president. So we'll muddle along as best we can, I will need a lot of help because I don't have contacts in Vermont like I do in Massachusetts, but that's something we can work around and develop, and it's an honor and I thank everyone.

John Weaver: Are there any other nominees for president? Or vice president, or secretary or treasurer? No? You folks can think about it. We're going to publish Bill's bio and ballot in the Winter Bridger. The deadline for that is November 30

Bob Richards: Reported for the official record that the Middle Bridge in Woodstock now has a Mountain Avenue address. I is no longer Union Street.

**Presentation by Ray Hitchcock**: Photos of Hurricane Damage to our Covered Bridges, namely the Bartonsville, Hall, Worrall, and Williamsville. [The photos and text will be presented on the Vermont.com website.]

**Next meeting date**: Bill Caswell suggested that our next meeting should be held at the Bennington Covered Bridge Museum in late April. We haven't had a meeting in the southwest corner of Vermont in a long time and we would be able to observe John Dostal's lilacs. No place or date has been set.

Joe Nelson pointed out that Suzanne Daniels is the chair of the Events Committee and we should work with her in determining the date and place of the next meeting.

**PRESENTATION**: Robert Haight; Architect and architectural historian, will talk about the tollhouse.

Suzanne Daniels: Because the toll house really needed to be considered to be part of Windsor's history, so I was able to contact Bob Haight who is a well known architect in this area. Neil and I talked with Bob and we've gotten to the point where we are going to significantly work on the tollhouse so that it can be open to the public and recognized as an important part of Windsor's history. Bob has agreed to do a presentation of the tollhouse from an architectural viewpoint.

Robert Haight: My plan wasn't to directly talk about the tollhouse, so much as the tollhouse and the context of Windsor itself . . .

No further discussion, the meeting adjourned. The drawing yielded \$44.00, table sales were \$66.38 for a total of \$110.38 to go to the Save-a-bridge Fund. In the absence of Secretary Irene Barna, this meeting transcript is submitted by Joe Nelson.

### Covered Bridges by Cynthia Weston

Standing relics of the past,  
Monuments of another time.  
A wooden road and roof to cover the  
The river or stream below.

Sentinels of days gone by,  
An untold richness not surpassed,  
The beauty of aged wood,  
Often hidden in the country's landscape.

A path of many memories,  
not to be forgotten,  
splendors of a thousand eyes,  
offering a spectacular view.

Brilliant colored leaves lay  
On the roof above,  
A myriad of colors of  
Another season passing by.

A new season begins,  
Young couples holding hands  
As they watch the clear water flow,  
A remembrance of the past.

The covered bridge remembered,  
Appreciated for its spectacular beauty.  
A bridge so lasting and strong,  
The majesty of a thousand years.

Covered bridges,  
Souls of the long ago days,  
Holding an untold richness,  
To be as treasured as gold.



### Taftsville Bridge to be 'Unconstructed'

**Woodstock, Vt., November 16, 2011** - The Taftsville Covered Bridge will be dismantled and stored for the winter in the Woodstock Town Garage, leaving only its arches standing over the Ottauqueechee River. The project is expected to be completed by the end of December.

The bridge will be restored as part of the reconstruction project already planned to begin in 2012. The Wright Construction of Mount Holly won the disassembly work with the low bid of \$226,758. FEMA is expected to fund 75% of the cost with the state and town providing 15 and 10% respectively. - Johnny Esau, VCBS Life Member

## Historical Committee Report

### Henry Bridge 45-02-02

Henry Bridge is an 121 foot long Lattice Truss bridge across the Walloomsac River in the northwestern part of Bennington. The original Henry Bridge was built about 1840, and replicated by the present one in 1989. The river crossing at this point has been important at least since Colonial times. Earlier bridges were not covered bridges, but likely were no more than rough stringer bridges. Henry Bridge is on an early major road leading from Bennington to Albany, and is likely the same road laid out by the British in the 1750s to connect Boston and Albany.

In 1771 at the site of Henry Bridge, there was a standoff between New York authorities and the Green Mountain Boys who were representing the interests of the early settlers in the area. In simplest terms, both the New Hampshire Colony and the New York Colony claimed the land that is now Vermont, and it had been settled by the New Hampshire interests. New York sent a Sheriff and posse to evict the settlers, but after coming against a large group of Green Mountain Boys, the New York posse returned to New York without a battle.

In the 1860s iron was discovered west of Henry Bridge, and the Burden Iron Company of Troy New York began operations, mining the ore and shipping it to furnaces in the Bennington area. In a misguided attempt to strengthen the bridge, the company added planks to the lattice, essentially doubling it. Years later it was found that the extra planks did nothing to add to the strength of the bridge, and only added to its dead weight.

There is a small dam just upstream from the bridge, and old mill foundations between the dam and the bridge. The Henry family, long-time land owners near the bridge and for whom the bridge was named, and

others, operated mills near the bridge for much of the 19th century and early 20th century. The bridge area today is largely rural with some development.

In 1952 the bridge was rehabilitated and the added planks removed. By 1989 the bridge had deteriorated, and a complete restoration was planned. However because of some miscommunication, usable truss parts from the original bridge were ignored and all new wood used. The bridge seen today is a replica of the original 1840s bridge.

Sources:

Vermont Street & Road Atlas. American Maps, 2006.

Covered spans of yesteryear. <http://www.lostbridges.org>

Nelson, Joseph C., Spanning time, 1997.

Barna, Ed, Covered bridges of Vermont, 2000.

Evans, Benjamin D. and June R. Evans, New England's covered bridges, 2004.

Congdon, Herbert Wheaton, The covered bridge, c. 1941, rep. 1989.

Historic USGS Maps of New England ....., <http://docs.unh.edu/nhtopos/nhtopos.htm>

Resch, Tyler, Glastenbury, the history of a Vermont ghost town, 2008. (p. 38, 42)

### VCBS Board of Directors Activity

On October 20, 2011 the board of directors was called upon by Neil Daniels, VCBS Treasurer, to consider reinvesting the \$6000 Save-a-bridge Fund to get a better return than the current 0.1%. Neil offered three choices: Leave the fund where it is, go with AT&T, or diversify with DUPONT, INTEL, PEPSIE, and AT&T.

Neil Instructed that our fund is with Muriel Siebert & Co, Inc. getting small yield, that the number of shares and prices will change slightly, that this would be long term holding and we could expect considerable price appreciation.

A chart was provided to the 14 board members showing the investment details. The vote was as follows: Leave the money where it is – 0; Move our Funds to AT&T alone – 0; Diversify – 12; Abstained – 1; Failed to vote – 1

Treasurer Neil Daniels is directed to diversify the Save-a-bridge fund. - Joe Nelson, Chair, B of D.

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On November 5, 2011 the board of directors was called upon by John Weaver to consider a request by the Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center of Oxford New York for a donation by the VCBS for the purchase of computer equipment necessary to fully operate the Center for researchers and patrons. Terry and Sara Miller of Kent, Ohio have offered to match \$2 for every \$1 raised up to \$5000 to fund computer equipment for the center.

The VCBS board was asked by John Weaver to vote on the amounts \$0, \$50, or \$100.

Board Chair Joe Nelson instructed the board members to comment and to consider the above amounts plus an additional amount of their choice.

Of the 14 members, two voted for \$0, three voted for \$50, six voted for \$100, one voted for \$59, and one voted \$500 or more.

Comments: "At this time I offer the thought of no VCBS contribution until we know if, for certain, our \$\$ might be better used for our mission of the repair and restoration of covered bridges per se."

"Since at some point down the line the Resource Center will presumably be housing most of the VCBS archives and collections, we ought to make a contribution, especially for computer equipment which will make the collections more accessible. Although our priorities should be to support efforts to repair/restore damaged bridges in Vermont, I would agree to sending \$59.00 to the center."

"Good points about taking care of VT bridges, but also considering the NY resource center as a valuable asset, so I vote to send \$50.00 with the possibility of an additional contribution after we see how the VT situation sugars off."

The final vote: One for \$0, one for \$500, 12 for \$100.

By the vote of the Board of Directors, Neil Daniels is instructed to send a check for \$100 specifically for the Theodore Covered Bridge Resource Center to the Oxford Memorial Library, PO Box 552n Oxford, NY 13830 - Joe Nelson, Chair, B of D



### Reminder; Don't Let A Learning/Research Source Go To Waste

The Vermont Covered Bridge Society has set up a lending library available to all Society members-in-good standing through media mail. Librarian Warren Tripp has created a detailed booklist complete with a description and critique of each book. Copies of the index are available by mail, or you may contact Warren Tripp at [fftwbt@yahoo.com](mailto:fftwbt@yahoo.com), or Joe Nelson at [jcnelson@together.net](mailto:jcnelson@together.net) for a PDF copy.

## Membership

by Suzanne Daniels, Chair, Membership Committee

Please join me in welcoming new members Lynne Handlos of Seattle, Wa., Peter Boemig of Vernon, Vt., Martin Irons of Fair Haven, Vt., and Raymond Arsenault of Stamford, Vt. to our group. A warm welcome to you all!

**2010 Early Renewal Contest** - We are pleased to be able to once again offer our Early Renewal Contest. This contest has been a huge success in the past and helps the Society in many ways. Paying your membership fees before the December 31 deadline not only qualifies you for a chance to win a nice gift, but gives the society the funds it needs going into the new year.

Here are the prizes for this year's contest: Two-year free membership to the VCBS or a signed copy of *Spanning Time, Vermont's Covered Bridges* by Joe Nelson, or the cash equivalent. To be eligible for this year's contest, there are two things you need to do:

- 1) Pay your membership dues before December 31, 2011. (Please note that if your 2012 membership has been paid in advance of this date, or if you are a life member, your name will automatically be entered into the drawing.)
- 2) Complete the membership form in this issue of the newsletter and return it with your check made payable to the VCBS no later than December 31st. The mailing address is: VCBS, PO Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465-0267. Winners will be announced in the spring issue of our newsletter.

### Membership Birthdays and Anniversaries

#### December

01 Terry and Jane Shaw, 06 Priscilla O'Reilly, 08 Mark Dawson, 20 Ben and June Evans, 20 Lyn Whiston, 22 Richard Davis, 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, 30 Gloria Davis, 31 Jan Bramhall, 31 Ben Evans

#### January

4 Marclay and Thomas Davis, 12 Ray Hitchcock, 12 Jim Patch, 15 Dan Castellini, 23 Ray & Adrienne Hitchcock, 29 Bill Jeffrey

#### February

2 Bill Caswell, 7 Richard (Rick) Cyphers, 12 Joe and Ruth Nelson, 14 George and Tina Conn, 14 Richard Howrigan, 12 Robert Cassidy, 21 George Longenecker, 21 Jean Carrington, 24 Tina & George Conn, 24 John Weaver, 26 David Guay

## Letters

**October 25, 2011** - Hello Joe, I can give you a bit of an update on the Waitsfield Bridge.



Waitsfield Bridge photo by Richard Hiscock 10/24/2011

Two weeks ago, when confronted with choosing between a short term fix that allowed for the opening of the bridge and a long term fix that would keep it closed for months, maybe till the late Spring, we chose to perform the short term fix.

Last night we opened the bids for the short-term work and will hopefully be selecting a contractor tomorrow, Wednesday. If so, we do expect the work to be completed and the bridge to be opened sometime in early November. Next Spring we will do the complete restoration, which will require that the bridge be closed again for that work.

The thinking was to have a functioning bridge for the winter, the time of year when we get many visitors. - Sal Spinosa, Member, Waitsfield Selectboard

## Events

by Suzanne Daniels

I am making arrangements to hold the Annual Spring Meeting in late April at the Bennington Center for the Arts Covered Bridge Museum. Meeting details will appear in the Spring 2012 Bridger.



# For Sale

**Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges** by Joseph C. Nelson features 102 color photographs of Vermont's covered bridges in fifteen chapters, each a guided tour. The tours are complete with maps, commentary on the uniqueness of each bridge, and historic highlights about the towns and villages in which the bridges stand.

An appendix provides: A Summary of Vermont's Covered Bridges; A Covered Bridge Glossary; A Bridge Truss section, explaining how trusses work; Thumbnail biographies of people who designed and built the bridges; A Covered Bridge Reading List, for bridge and history buffs; A detailed Index. *Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges: 7" x 10", 288 pages. Published by New England Press at P.O. Box 575, Shelburne, VT 05482. Spanning Time is available directly from the author for \$39.00, free shipping. (Vermont residents add 6% sales tax). Go to <http://www.vermontbridges.com/special%20070514.htm>*

*Also see: <http://www.vermontbridges.com/bookreviews.htm>.*

## **World Guide to Covered Bridges - 2009 Edition**

*Published by the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges On Sale: \$15.00. Profits will go to the Vermont Covered Bridge Society's Save-A-Bridge Program. For your copy send \$15.00 plus \$4.95 shipping to Joe Nelson, P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465-0267. (Vermont residents add 6% sales tax)*

**Covered Bridges of New England —DVD** Produced by Ocean State Video of Rhode Island for Public Television. On Sale: \$20.00. Profits will go to the Vermont covered Bridge Society's Save-A-Bridge Program. For your copy send \$20.00 plus \$1.88 shipping to Joe Nelson, P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465-0267. (Vermont residents add 6% sales tax)

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New York State Covered Bridge Driving Tour is a spiral bound, full color tour which includes turn by turn directions and color photographs of each of New York's authentic and historic covered bridges. Included are the statistics on each bridge and an interesting history of the bridge and the surrounding town, and old postcards of how the bridges looked during an earlier time. To obtain a copy of the tour, contact: Bob and Trish Kane, 167 Williams Rd., Sherburne, NY 13460, 607-674-9656, Email: bob-trish68@frontiernet.net



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To place your ad in the Bridger, contact Joe Nelson, [jcnelson@together.net](mailto:jcnelson@together.net). The ad must be about covered bridges and you must be a member of a covered bridge society.

## Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center Update

It has been a while since I updated you on the progress of the Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center and we have some exciting news to share!

First, just let me say how pleased we all were to see so many of you at the grand opening on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. It was so nice to see some old friends and meet folks we have only corresponded with through email. Many new friends were made that day.

We were also very pleased to have representatives from five different covered bridge societies (Indiana, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and the National Society) all in attendance as well. Oxford residents and businesses also joined in the festivities. And even though rain was predicted, the weather cooperated and we had a beautiful day. Overall, it was a great event and so nice to see so many covered bridge enthusiasts all in one place.

As I mentioned during the celebration, the Center is now complete, with the exception of the computer equipment necessary to fully operate the Center for our researchers and patrons. And thanks to the generosity of Terry and Sara Miller from Kent, Ohio, we now have a wonderful opportunity to purchase this equipment.

Terry and Sara have agreed to offer a \$2 match for every \$1 we raise up to \$5,000 in match money to fund the computer equipment for the Center! This is an extremely generous offer and we certainly would like to be able to take advantage of it. The computers will allow access to the internet and the scanners will allow the Curator to scan the postcards, slides and photographs presently in the Center and any donated in the future. It will also allow our researchers access to the various collections without actually handling the original documents which will ensure the safety and well-being of the collections.

I would like to invite you to join us in taking advantage of this most generous offer as it is such a wonderful opportunity for the Center. If you would like to consider a monetary gift and assist us in this important endeavor we would certainly appreciate it. Whatever amount you can afford will be most welcome and help us reach our goal. To donate, please specify that you want your donation used specifically for the Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center and mail your gift directly to the Oxford Memorial Library, PO Box 552, Oxford, NY 13830.

On behalf of the Oxford Memorial Library and the Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center, thank you for considering this request.

**Trish Kane**, Collections Curator, Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center



**Wanted**, a newsletter editor trainee to ultimately take over the editorship of The Bridger, a key position in the Vermont Covered Bridge Society's outreach.

**Wanted**, reporter/correspondents to bring local covered bridge news to The Bridger. For more information or to sign up, please contact Joe Nelson, Communication Committee Chair, **jcnel-son@together.net**

**Wanted**, a VCBS member to share the duties of the webmaster of [www.vermontbridges.com](http://www.vermontbridges.com) For more information or to sign up, please contact Joe Nelson, Communication Committee Chair, **jcnel-son@together.net**

**Volunteer worker-bees** are needed by the Events Committee to help set up meetings and assist in hosting them. For details contact Suzanne Daniels, Events Committee Chair: 802.885.5517 or **neil-daniels2003@yahoo.com**

**Wanted:** Volunteer to serve as membership coordinator assisting Membership Committee Chair, Suzanne Daniels. Contact Suzanne at: 802.885.5517

### A Look Back—The Cornish-Windsor Bridge WGN NH-10-09

by Margaret Foster, Windsor, Vt.\*

THE PRESENT Cornish-Windsor Bridge is the fourth one on this spot. The first was opened to the public in October 1796, and lasted until spring 1824. A new bridge was promptly built. It too, was lost in a spring freshet, this time in 1849.

The third bridge, the first to be covered, was built the same year. It went as the others had - in a flood. This was in March of 1866. These three bridges were lower than the present one, as can be seen by the central pier. Had the present one been this lower height, it would have gone out in the flood of 1927 when there were several inches of water over the bridge floor.

On April 3, 1866, the contract for the present bridge was signed. James F. Tasker of Cornish and Bela J. Fletcher of Claremont signed as builders. It is usually believed that Tasker, who could neither read nor write, actually built the structure. Allen Wardner, Alfred Hall and Henry Wardner represented the bridge company proprietors.

The bridge was framed in a meadow north of Bridge Street in Windsor. It is a Town Lattice truss and is made of timber. Late in 1866 the bridge was opened to the public—probably the last of October or the first of November.

Repairs have been made at numerous times, the last being 1954-55. At that time it was necessary to drive ten miles to get across the river. Many workmen who lived in New Hampshire left their cars on that side of the river and walked across the bridge to work.

Most of the early spans were toll bridges and this was no exception. It is easy to wonder how a bridge paid off before the days of automobiles. It was produce and livestock headed for the Boston market, plus stage coaches, that made the bridge a paying investment. In 1838, before the railroad was built, 14,084 sheep and 2,208 cattle crossed the bridge on their way to market. At this time four stage coaches were crossing the river each day.

President Wilson had his summer White House in Cornish during 1914 and 1915 and used this bridge. Other Presidents who are reputed to have crossed here are Hayes, Monroe and Theodore Roosevelt. In 1825 Lafayette came into Vermont over this span.

A "holding company" owned the bridge until 1935, when the New Hampshire Legislature gave permission to the State Highway Department to buy it. The plan was to collect tolls for another ten years. However, in the early 1940's gasoline became scarce and travel was at a minimum. Tolls collected did not amount to as much as the cost of hiring a gate keeper. Since the bridge had already paid for itself, it was decided to make it free. This was done June 1, 1943, with much fanfare.

The gate, which was removed when the bridge was freed, was a distinguishing feature. It was controlled by a rope from the toll house porch. A pull of the rope lowered the gate and held up traffic until the proper cash had changed hands. It was customary to lower the gate at 10 p.m., at which time all respectable people were supposed to be at home. If anyone wanted to cross after that hour, he had to wake up the toll collector and settle with him. In later years the gate was not down at night. It was

considered better to lose the 15 cents than to disturb the keeper's rest.

At one time Windsor was "dry," but there was a good tavern just across the bridge. The toll collector had quite a bit of leeway as to what he charged. At this time he set the price for pedestrians at two cents for leaving Windsor and three cents for returning - both to be paid as the person left for the tavern.

There are many stories about this span, as there are about all covered bridges. One story says that at one time a woman tried to run the bridge and not pay toll, which she considered exorbitant. James Montieth, the toll collector, took time out from his knitting to pull the rope. The gate came down between the horse and the buggy and the horse kicked it nearly to pieces. The woman had to pay her toll and the damages. Mr. Montieth never dropped a stitch of his knitting!

A prominent citizen of Windsor says he lost his first job because of the bridge. He was driving for a laundry and had one more delivery to make across the river. There was a dance that night that the young man wanted to attend. As soon as the gatekeeper gave him the nod, he larruped up his horse and ran the bridge. The gatekeeper called the laundry and fined them \$2.00. When the young man got back he was fired.

At one time a man who lived in New Hampshire had a good riding horse. He galloped onto the bridge. The keeper dashed out and dropped the gate. This did not deter the horse in the least. When he came to the gate he jumped over it and raced up the street.

A woman refused to pay her toll, claiming there had been no rate set for automobiles when the franchise was granted. There had been a similar case in New York and the motorist won. A case had been tried in Vermont and the decision, based on the New York case, was again for the motorist. But this case was tried in New Hampshire and the woman lost. However, proper steps were taken to legalize fees for cars.

Some people wish the bridge were gone and a new, modern one in its place. Others, more sentimental, would like to see it kept. It could be blocked to traffic and become merely a tourist attraction. Besides being the longest covered span in the United States, it is very photogenic. Let's keep it for another hundred years.

\*[This article is reprinted from the Connecticut River Covered Bridge Society Bulletin, Fall 1966 issue, with permission - Ed.]



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	Individual membership use column A Family membership registered adults use columns A thru C as needed.					
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