

# The Bridger



THE VERMONT COVERED BRIDGE NEWSLETTER - Spring 2012

**PREZ SEZ**

## Vermont Covered Bridge Society Annual Spring Meeting

April 28, 2012

Bennington Center for the Arts  
Gypsy Lane, Bennington, Vermont

Greetings!

I would first like to thank all those that encouraged me to run for President, and all who supported me. It is an honor and a privilege.

We have several needs ahead of us in the coming year. Most importantly we need an editor for the Bridger, our quarterly newsletter. This is our highest priority. We hope that someone will come forth and volunteer for the position. In addition, we need to add active members to our committees.

In far too many cases our committees are dependent on just one person, the chair. More on this to follow after a review of our committees and their needs.

Some upcoming events to keep in mind. Our annual spring meeting will be held in Bennington at the Covered Bridge Museum on Saturday April 28, from 10 to noon. We hope to see a large turnout.

Again this year we will have a presence at the history fair at the Tunbridge fairgrounds. We will be asking for volunteers to set up, take down, and staff our booth during this two-day event in June.

Yours in bridging,

Bill Carroll

### VCBS Officers

Bill Carroll, President  
Joseph Nelson, Vice President  
Irene Barna, Secretary

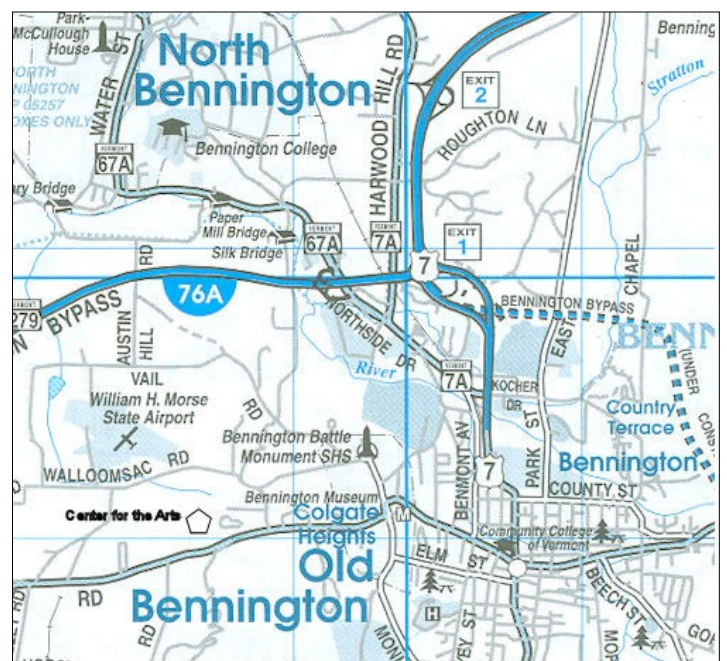
### Bridger Newsletter Staff

Ray Hitchcock, Editor  
Joseph Nelson, Staff Writer

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

### Agenda

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 10:00 am | Business Meeting - Committee Reports   |
| 11:15 am | Tropical Storm Irene Presentation by Bill Caswell; The presentation will focus on the storm's toll on covered bridges.           |
| 12:00 pm | Lunch on own; Four Chimney's Inn & Restaurant, 21 West Road is suggested. It is located 0.6 miles east of Gypsy Lane on Route 9. |
| 1:00 pm  | Tour the Covered Bridge Museum & Bennington's Covered Bridges  |
- View the John Dostal Memorial Lilacs.
  - Coffee and snack is served by the Center for the Arts at 50¢ per item.
  - The Center for the Arts features a retail store – there will be no VCBS drawing or sales table.

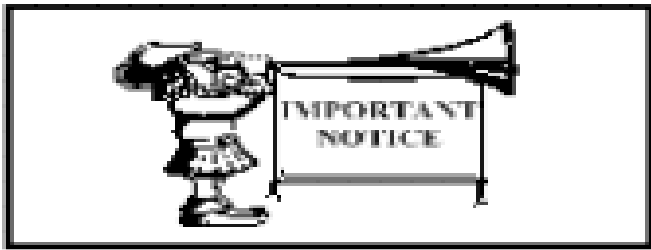


# Events

**VERMONT HISTORY EXPO 2012** will be held Saturday and Sunday, June 16 & 17, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the Tunbridge World's Fair Grounds.

The Expo theme this year is "**The Civil War and Vermont.**"

Set-up day is Friday, June 15, from 8 am. Volunteers are needed for set-up and to staff our booth Saturday and Sunday, June 16 & 17. Please contact Irene Barna, [ibarna@middlebury.edu](mailto:ibarna@middlebury.edu), or (802) 443-5900.



**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*.

**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 for any of these three positions, please contact Joe Nelson, Communication Committee Chair, [jcnelson@together.net](mailto:jcnelson@together.net) or Bill Carroll, [wcarroll@crocker.com](mailto:wcarroll@crocker.com)

**Wanted:** Volunteer worker-bees are needed by the Events Committee to help set up meetings and assist in hosting them.

**Wanted:** Volunteer to serve as membership coordinator assisting Membership Committee Chair.

For more information or to sign up for any of these three positions, please contact Bill Carroll, [wcarroll@crocker.com](mailto:wcarroll@crocker.com)



## VCBS Annual Board of Directors Meeting

**February 24, 2012** – The VCBS Board of Directors met to consider four proposals.

Proposal 1: The proposed budget for the current year, \$4,375.00, \$40 more than the budget for 2011. However, of the 2011 budget, only \$1021.69 was spent. Each of the fifteen Directors was asked to examine the proposed budget and make any adjustments necessary.

Proposal 2: Shall the amount received in the year 2011 by the VCBS in donations and sales be put into the Save-A-Bridge Fund? \$255 (member donations) + \$327.57 (sales & drawings) = \$582.57.

Proposal 3A: Should a donation to owners of covered bridges damaged in Tropical Storm Irene be made?

We had received \$251.33 in donations from non-members, including \$111.33 from *The Schoolhouse* Kindergarten. This amount plus a donation from the VCBS would be turned over to Eric Gilbertson of The Preservation Trust of Vermont for distribution to Irene-damaged covered bridges.

Proposal 3B: Should the VCBS donation be for the amount of \$2,000? (This amount is in the proposed budget for 2012).

Proposal 4: It was proposed that the bylaws of the VCBS be changed in future elections when there are no opposing candidates for the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, that balloting of the membership will be dropped and the Board of Directors move to approve the slate.

The reason for the proposal is that in our last election of officers, only 13 ballots were received of the 142 sent to the membership. This has been our experience with all of our elections.

The election procedure will otherwise remain unchanged: Candidates for the four offices are invited to come forward each election year by the call for candidates in the Summer issue of *The Bridger*. The candidates are asked to introduce themselves to the membership with a letter, which is published in the Fall *Bridger*. The Ballots are provided in the Winter *Bridger* if there is a contest for any one of the four offices.

Of the 15 Directors, 10 Voted (The quorum is 8):

Proposal 1: Approved 10-0

Proposal 2: Approved 10-0

Proposal 3A & 3B: Approved 10-0

Proposal 4: Approved 8-2



## VCBS Lending Library, a Learning/Research Source

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 Joe Nelson for an electronic copy at [jnelson@together.net](mailto:jnelson@together.net).

A borrower can contact Warren Tripp who will send the book by Postal Service Media Mail. Books are returned the same way.

Send Warren the complete title of the book(s) you wish to borrow. He will respond with the mailing cost and mail the order when the fee is received. The borrower is then responsible to return the item(s) in a reasonable time, preferably not more than two months.

Contact Warren Tripp, P. O. Box 236, Groton, VT 05046, [fftwbt@yahoo.com](mailto:fftwbt@yahoo.com) Phone (802) 584-3545.

# 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. Go to <http://www.vermontbridges.com/special%20070514.htm> Also see: <http://www.vermontbridges.com/bookreviews.htm>.*

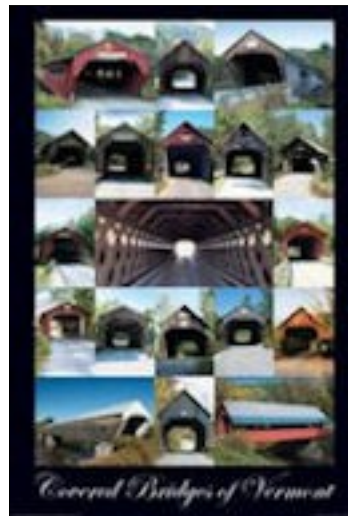
**World Guide to Covered Bridges - 2009 Edition** Published by the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges. On Sale: \$15.00. Profits will go to the Vermont Covered Bridge Society's Save-A-Bridge Program. For your copy send \$15.00 plus \$4.95 shipping to Joe Nelson, P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465-0267.

**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.

**New York State Covered Bridge Driving Tour Now Available!** - Would you like to see all of New York State's Covered Bridges at your leisure in the comfort of your own vehicle? Well now you can! The 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: [bobtrish68@frontiernet.net](mailto:bobtrish68@frontiernet.net)



**Covered Bridges of Vermont Print** - The Covered Bridges of Vermont features 19 photographs of covered bridges taken throughout the state by photographer, and VCBS member, Ray Arsenault. The print is beautifully printed on professional high quality 100lb paper, and measures 18" x 26.5." Order now at: [www.coveredbridgesofvermont.com](http://www.coveredbridgesofvermont.com)



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





### Bridge-watch activities – John Weaver

**Feb 7, 2012** - Rehabilitation construction is on-going at the site of the Pulp Mill CB in Middlebury. It started in January and the completion date is November, so there will be quite a bit of activity on site to watch this year.

The West span of the Taftsville CB in Woodstock was removed in December due to the threat of severe slope failure at the West abutment. All salvageable/historic superstructure components are stored for reuse, once the bridge rehabilitation project gets started in 2012. A new west abutment is also to be constructed as part of the project work.

Other bridges undergoing work include the new Bartonsville CB and rehabilitation of Worrall CB. Ray Hitchcock has provided recent ongoing reports for those projects.

Work is also (sometime) anticipated at the site of the Bowers CB in West Windsor and at other sites around the state.

Scott CB has been closed for *any* crossing, due to structural deficiencies noted last week's AOT inspection. There are serious condition problems (buckling, etc.) with the top and bottom chords of the lattice span. Up until now it has only been open to pedestrian use.

Please keep the field reports coming in. Thanks,  
John Weaver, Bridge-watch Coordinator

### Hurricane Irene Aftermath in Windham County - Ray Hitchcock

**Feb 25, 2012** - Two of the bridges impacted by Irene are back in service. Both Kidder in Grafton and Hall in Saxtons River are back to business as normal.

The debris and remains of Bartonsville are about 85% cleaned up and put into storage. Local residents are hopeful that fabric from the old bridge will be used in the replacement bridge. The new bridge will have stronger and therefore bigger lattice components.

The north abutment was removed as redesign was needed for the additional weight of the replacement bridge. Pilings were driven for both abutments.

The abutments are placed about ten feet wider making the replacement bridge longer. The original south abutment jutted out into the river which may have led to the failure from scouring from the Williams River at flood stage.

Bids will be let soon for the new bridge but the abutments were bid separately.

Work on the new abutments is completed and a temporary bridge is being installed. At 161 feet it may be the longest single span of record.



North abutment – December 14, 2011 by Adrienne Hitchcock



New pilings – Dec 14, 2011 by Adrienne Hitchcock



Temporary bridge- Feb 29, 2012 Paul Petraska



# Covered Bridge Community News Notes

## Bartonsville Bridge Restoration WGN 45-13-11

**January 26, 2012** - Pilings are in on the Bartonsville bridge and work is proceeding on the forms



Bartonsville Bridge Pier, Photo by Adrienne Hitchcock January 25, 2012

“Bridge Update: Cullenen reported that Phil Pierce of Clough Harbour is continuing work on the bridge design for both the Bartonsville and the Worrall bridges and the abutment design work is also moving forward. Cullenen stated that he will have further information within the next few weeks. Cullenen also noted that he would like to defer any action on the Bartonsville Bridge wreckage removal for another few weeks pending receipt of further information.” - From the Jan 3rd Rockingham Select board minutes

## Pulpmill Bridge Renovation WGN 45-01-04

My crew has been installing the temporary steel support structure underneath the old bridge. They will install another one on the inside to carry the upper loads.

The support structures are similar to the ones we have used on other covered bridges. The decking has been removed and some of it laid back in as a temporary work deck. That sort of work will continue for another couple of weeks.



Pulpmill Covered Bridge Renovation Begun  
Photo by Ed Barna, February 27, 2012]

Much of my first month on the project was spent on surveying existing conditions and aiding in the design of the support structure. I didn't have much time to crawl around in the bat guano before heading out on vacation.

I'll be back onsite March 5 to get the rebuilding underway. Many repairs and additions have been made through the years and those coupled with the original design flaws makes this project an interesting one.

Best regards, Jim Ligon, Alpine Construction

## Scott Covered Bridge Closed WGN 45-13-13

**Jan 21, 2012** - After Tropical Storm Irene struck Vermont last August, Townshend Historical Society members Heidi Clawson and Ann Cousins, checked the condition of the covered bridge in their town. They found that the Scott Bridge suffered no storm damage but they found damage done over time caused by weather and vandalism.

They contacted the Vermont Covered Bridge Society asking for contacts to which they could report their findings, sharing photos of the damage. The VCBS directed them to Scott Newman, VTrans Historic Preservation Officer.



Photo by Heidi Clawson, September 5, 2011

Mr. Newman responded: “. . . while the Division for Historic Preservation owns the structure, the responsibility for repairs belong to VTrans. With that in mind, I have contacted the structures and inspection divisions here at VTrans. Furthermore, the bridge will be discussed at the February meeting of the covered bridge committee, and I will respond with updates at that time.”

The inspectors found more problems than Heidi and Ann had observed: There are serious buckling problems with the top and bottom chords of the lattice span. The bridge, previously closed to all but pedestrians, is now, as of February 13, closed to all use. . It had been serving as a pickup point for students needing access to the school bus. Hurricane Irene damage to local roads has not been repaired making the old bridge a more convenient pickup spot.

*[Ed note - The lattice section of the Scott Bridge lacks secondary upper chords.]*

## West Arlington Covered Bridge WGN 45-02-01

**January 25, 2012** - Repairs are underway on the West Arlington covered bridge.



West Arlington Bridge - Courtesy VERMONT Magazine

I took the above photo this morning (I will be doing a VERMONT Magazine story on the project.) Wright Construction of Mt. Holly is doing the repair work.

Project Superintendent Richard Butrimas told me his crew had recently finished removing one half of the Taftsville bridge in preparation for further work... and also just repaired the Benedict Crossing (wooden through-truss) bridge over the Battenkill, further upstream in West Arlington.

As shown here, they are installing a parallel, temporary bridge to serve as scaffolding, preparatory to replacing two "D cords" upstream and putting in new "trunnels."

Best, Phil Jordan  
Editor and Publisher  
VERMONT Magazine





## Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center

Hello Everyone! Since many of you have inquired about the progress of the Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center, I thought it would be nice to send out an update on our progress.

To date, nine wonderful covered bridge collections have been donated to the Center. Many of these collections included old newspaper clippings, photographs, slides, postcards, and newsletters from various covered bridge societies, some of which no longer exist so it is great to have this material. We have been fortunate to add a lot of fantastic educational material to the Center.

Our library of covered bridge books is steadily increasing and no doubt will be quite extensive in the next few years as covered bridge books continue to come in. One of our most prized possessions is a wonderful book, *The Elements of Bridge Engineering: Prepared for Students of the International Correspondence Schools* of Scranton, PA, published by The Colliery Engineer Co., in **1897**. Yes, 1897! It is a fascinating book on all types of bridges, including covered bridges.

Our collection of covered bridge models now stands at 25. These are absolutely fantastic models and display such amazing details. Our future plans include visits to the Center by school children, boy and girl scout groups, 4-H groups, historical societies, etc. These models will be an important part of the educational programs we hope to offer. We also have a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher who would like to devote a semester on educating his students about covered bridges and their significance in our history. This will include a class trip to the Center where they can actually see the models on display and learn more about the various truss types as well.

Many of you have also asked how we are doing with the wonderful challenge presented to the Center by Terry and Sarah Miller. But before I update you on our progress, a little background information on the challenge might be helpful for those of you who may be learning about it for the first time.

In October of 2011, Terry and Sara Miller offered us an exciting challenge where

they would match every dollar we raised with two dollars (up to \$5,000) to purchase computer equipment for the Center. Needless to say, we were pretty excited about this challenge but concerned that with the recent devastation to some of our bridges due to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, it might be a difficult challenge to take on. However, after discussing this with the Board of Directors of the Oxford Memorial Library, we decided to take on the challenge! Thanks to so many of our wonderful and enthusiastic covered bridge friends, we have been able to raise almost \$2,000 towards their challenge! How exciting is that!!! We have simply been overwhelmed by the generosity of the various covered bridge societies and individuals who have supported us in this effort.

We are also grateful to those of you who recognize the importance of having a dedicated archive where serious researchers, as well as covered bridge enthusiasts, can learn more about our bridges not only here in the United States, but worldwide. Those of you who have had the opportunity to visit the Center told us how impressed you were with the models on display and what we have accomplished in such a short period of time. Many have also written to us in support of our efforts and commented on the need for something like this for such a long time. We couldn't agree with you more and we thank you for your kind words, and your support. It means a lot to us.

As you can see, however, we are still a little bit short of reaching our goal. We still need around \$500 to meet the challenge so we can purchase the necessary computer equipment for the Center. Having this equipment will allow us to scan and preserve the postcards, photographs and slides for future generations to enjoy. It will also allow anyone visiting the Center to have access to over 20,000 covered bridge postcards, and thousands of photographs and slides. We are very excited about this aspect of the Center and hope you will support us in our efforts.

If you have already made a gift in support of this great challenge, we thank you!! Please know that every dollar counts and gets us that much closer to reaching the challenge. This is a wonderful opportunity for the Center and for covered bridge enthusiasts

to have their gift doubled. Keep in mind all gifts are tax deductible. You may even wish to donate a gift in memory of a friend or loved one. Donors gifting \$1,000 or more will have their names prominently displayed on our prestigious donor's plaque.

We are *extremely* grateful to Terry and Sara for offering this very generous challenge. We hope you will seriously consider joining us in our efforts by supporting this challenge. To donate, make your check payable to the Oxford Memorial Library (be sure to write TBCBRC in the memo line) and mail your gift directly to: **Oxford Memorial Library, PO Box 552, Oxford, NY 13830.**

On behalf of the Oxford Memorial Library and the Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center, we would like to personally thank each of you for your support of the Center. The Center exists because of your generosity and support, and for that we are extremely grateful.

**Please note:** If you are interested in donating a collection of covered bridge items, please contact me in advance of sending your material. All material should be sent directly to me at my home address for processing and inventorying and not directly to the Library as they do not have the staff to handle the shipments.

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



January 28, 2012

Dear Neil – Please find enclosed my check for renewal of my membership in the Vermont Covered Bridge Society for 2012.

I enjoy reading The Bridger newsletter and being kept up to date with news of Vermont's covered Bridges.

I hope all is going well in Vermont following the destruction caused by Hurricane Irene last August.

I hope all the covered bridges will be repaired or rebuilt so the legacy can continue.

I wish the Society continued success and a happy and Productive new year.

Sincerely, Thomas E. Walczak

## Historical Committee Report

By William Carroll, Historical Committee Chair

We are pleased to announce the receipt of a collection of slides of Vermont covered bridges, donated by Thomas Hildreth of Chester, Vermont. The collection includes 91 Kodachrome slides, most taken in the 1990s by Mr. Hildreth.

Photographs of covered bridges are always a valuable tool for research purposes. They show alterations in the bridge appearance over time, as well as any changes in the natural or cultural environment of the bridge.

Kodachrome slides, although difficult to use, are a preferred method of photography, as they retain color quality almost indefinitely if cared for properly. Plans for this collection are to scan the slides and save to a CD, and to print enlargements of the images for easy reference.

Our thanks to Mr. Hildreth for his gift.

## Membership

Membership Committee Chair, Sue Daniels.

Please join me in welcoming a new member to our group: Katherine Hill of North Ferrisburgh, VT, a warm welcome to you!

And now, our Early Renewal Contest. Many thanks to each of you who mailed your membership dues on time.



As in years past, the drawing was done by Ruth Nelson's first grade reading group at the Jericho Elementary school. (The little rascals have fun doing it.)

Here are the prizes for this year's contest: A two year free membership to the VCBS or a signed copy of *Spanning Time*, Vermont's Covered Bridges by Joe Nelson, or the cost of the book to the VCBS (\$30).

The winners are: Sarah Ann Gallagher of Hudson, OH, and Ray Arsenault of Stanford, VT.

Congratulations to you both, and thank you for your membership.

## Membership Birthdays and Anniversaries

### March

2 John Billie  
2 Gordon O'Reilly  
4 Sarah Ann Gallagher  
8 Neil Daniels  
16 Bruce Laumeister  
12 Priscilla Farnham  
21 Thomas & Lisette Keating  
23 Steve Miyamoto  
24 Adrienne Hitchcock

### April

13 Gary Krick,  
22 Anthony Daniels

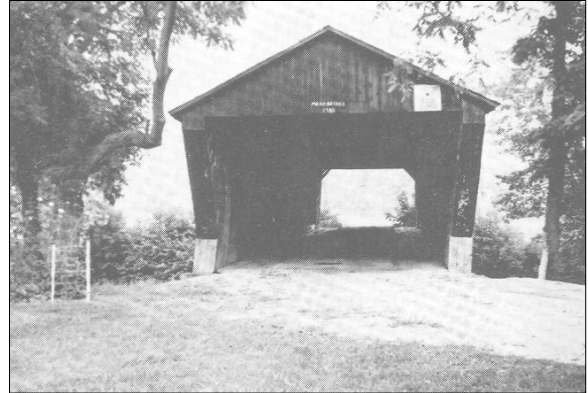
### May

3 William Carroll  
3 Thomas Keating  
4 Sarah Ann Gallagher  
6 Debbie Whiston  
9 Erwin Eckson  
10 Charles Lovastik  
11 Steve Wheaton  
12 James Crouse  
15 Andy Behrens  
17 Ron Bechard  
19 Mary Ann Waller  
22 Irene Barna  
22 Lisette Keating  
27 June Gendron  
28 Bill McKone



## A Look Back 38 Years\*

**Late news just received.** The "Mead Bridge," over Otter Creek just off the Florence-Proctor Road was destroyed by fire of very suspicious origin about 4 a.m. Thursday, July 22, 1971, only about 2.5 miles out of Pittsford, Vt.



Mead Bridge WGN 45-11-08  
CRVCBS Photo

From the Elmer Jacksons. of North Andover and the Brainerds of Brandon, Vt. we have the story and pictures that appeared in Rutland Daily Herald, Rutland, Vt. July 23, 1971.

This old span became known far and wide for the date of 1785 on the portal, and it raised many questions. Mr. Davenport who lived until his death two years ago beside the bridge delighted to talk with people, telling all about the bridge and pointing out interesting things about it. Mr. R.S. Allen gives the date of this bridge as being built in 1840, and that it was built by Abraham Owens, Nicholas Powers and Daniel Powers and was a Town truss. At one time this was on the main road to Pittsford, but in its latter years has only been used by two farmers to get to their fields, who now will have to detour about five miles.

The Elmer Jacksons went to Pittsford, Vt. July 24, 1971 to check for themselves, because of conflicting reports. They checked all the bridges since they were there, going first to Pittsford-Proctor (45-11-04) (as they had heard there was a fire in it also) where they found about 12 feet charred, but no great damage. Fireman and the Jacksons too believe this to have been caused by a carelessly discarded cigarette. Firemen arrived in time to save this one. Next they went to Cooley and that is all right, could stand a little repair. Depot (45-11-06) was next and that is leaning more each year. They felt a really strong north wind could blow it down. They visited Mead (45-11-08) nothing left of it. A very sad sight indeed. Hammond or Florence Station Bridge is just the same except trees grown bigger and more difficult to photograph. (45-11-05)

The photo of the old span we took in 1954 and had a wonderful time with Mr. Davenport, he was so proud of that old bridge.

[\*Reprinted from the Connecticut River Valley Covered Bridge Society *Bulletin*, Summer 1971 with permission – Ed.]

## Membership Application

(Business or Society please provide name of contact person)

New Member       Renewing Member

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Check type of membership

Individual - \$10     Family - \$15     Student - \$8

Life single - \$150     Life couple - \$200

Business/Organization/Municipality - \$15

Sign me up for PDF version of newsletter

Check type of donation:

Palladio - \$2     Palmer - \$5     Hale - \$10

Powers - \$50     Town - \$75     Tasker - \$100

Paddleford - \$200     Whipple - \$250

*(Memberships valid to the end of the current calendar year,*

*Dues and Donations will be used to promote preservation of Covered bridges.)*

Please make all checks for dues and donations payable to:

The Vermont Covered Bridge Society. Mail to:  
V.C.B.S., Inc.

**Please clip and send with check Attn: Treasurer  
PO Box 97, Jeffersonville, VT 05464-0097**

