



*Waitsfield Telecom*

*June ♡ 1995*

## The Fabric of Our Valley

From the air, a casual observer sees little of the quality of life in the Mad River Valley. It looks like any other quiet valley, nestled between the Green Mountains on one side and the Northfield Range on the other, accessible by five roads leading in and out. Three ski areas dominate the view, they are hard to miss. But they don't define the Valley.

The Mad River Valley lacks the commercial ambiance of Stowe, yet isn't quite a quiet set of farming villages any more either. What makes a place special? The scenery? The people?

Our Valley is blessed with both. No, our mountains aren't gigantic, they are dramatic enough, but user friendly. Not all our people are giants outside our Valley. Some are, of course, but most of us are quiet giants.

From the original settlers, whose families have been here for generations, to the newer arrivals still trickling in, we draw our strength. And the benefits of their experience, their loves, their hobbies, and their contributions to the fabric of our lives.

Just as interesting as how they got here, is how they have chosen to earn a living here. This isn't a place where factories abound. Good-paying jobs don't hang from trees. Survival here is either from the earth, as in farming, or from using your head. There are software companies, computer-based industries, writers, artisans, athletes, shopkeepers, pilots, teachers, bakers, ski bums or former instructors...

What would this Valley be without our theaters, the Skatium, numerous small shops and businesses that make life that much more pleasant?

It was after World War II that skiing came to the Valley, bringing with it the hardy souls who built our ski areas one by one, then the lodges, and the various shops and restaurants that make it a resort.

The fact that the inhabitants of the Valley didn't object to "long-haired counterculture" artists and skiers was a credit to their open-mindedness and downright neighborliness.



*Billy and Marilyn in their studio, horsing around*

Billy Brauer came here to ski with friends in the late '60s. When one of them decided to buy a home here, Billy offered to help him look. It was then summer, a Valley season Billy had not experienced before. Entranced, he bought his own home, a small farmhouse on East Warren Road. "Artwise, I was plugged into the New York City art scene," says Billy. "Down there, you learn to be clever, not good, as an artist. I wanted to be the best I could. If I were to be a serious painter, I had to leave New York, cut my expenses to the lowest and get good at what I was doing."

"This place is like an adult camp!" said one of Billy's friends visiting from Florida while Billy and his friends were working on a July 4th float. "I've never seen so many people who don't work."

"What my friend didn't realize," says Billy, "is that everyone is working very hard. If you don't work during the day, you work at night."

"It's honest work here. And as long as I have to be someplace, why not someplace nice, clean, honest..." Billy smiles as he pours tea. "I love the place. I like the acceptance of the people. I was a wise guy from New York City with long hair out to here, counter-culture," his arms stretch out to there. "No one looked cockeyed at me. They were so accepting."

Sitting in his eclectic living room, his kitchen sink a former soda fountain bargained from Hap Gaylord's old Phyl-Den's (the

former Valley fast-food meeting place), a “bar” with soda fountain stools, and tucked into a corner a booth straight out of an old drug store, Billy and Marilyn Ruseckas, his wife live... well, *quietly* isn’t the word.

Marilyn lived in Brattleboro and doesn’t remember much of her former life. She met Billy at a Vermont Studio Center’s Visual Artists Week “on neutral ground.” Billy brought Marilyn to the Valley where one of her first encounters with Valleyites was at a Valley Players Clean-Up Day. She immediately volunteered to help paint the foyer of the theater. Swaying on an 8-foot ladder she slathered paint on the walls and the very tall ceiling.

“Life began with the Valley,” Marilyn says. “I saw the mountains and learned to ski.” Then came biking, mountain and road, and cross-country skiing. She joined the gang from the Mad River Riders and entered bike races. She won, many times (ironically, she’s ranked third in New England in the Veteran Men category by NORBA the National Off-Road Bicycle Association, a bit of an error on their part). “I love this area. I have my sports buddies, my party buddies, my artist buddies, just lots of different friends!” After the weekly local bike rides, a fair share of the riders end up at the Brauers to enjoy pot luck.

Her painting career took off, too. “I’ve been an artist all my life. I was pecking away at it. Since I met Billy I’ve learned a lot and brought my work up to a better quality.



*Marilyn winning at Craftsbury, 1994*



Now I'm off and running on my own." She, too, exhibits her work outside of the Valley. Between skiing and bike races, of course. This year, her racing is sponsored by the Mad River Bike Shop owned by Dave Knoop.

**D**ave Knoop came to the Valley as the Assistant Director of Skiing at Mad River Glen during the winter of 1986-7. He moved here permanently when he took over as Director of Skiing in 1988. But again, how does one make a living here in the summer? Dave, a bike enthusiast, thought about opening a bike shop. In 1989, he opened his first shop in the barn at the Hyde Away on Route 17. His original idea was to rent bikes and run a touring company. Soon the bikes were sold instead of rented and he made money fixing other bikes as well. When he opened the following year, it was above Adworks on Route 100.

The Mad River Riders flourished as a proper club (racers and non-racers). "I've sponsored racers since the beginning," says Dave. The Mad River Riders racing team produced some of the best racers in the country: Geo Bullock, Ali Goulet, Dennis Curran, Jeff Courter, and plenty of others. A new crop of champion riders is coming up on their heels with Marilyn Ruseckas and junior rider Peter Werner among them. Their reputation for producing



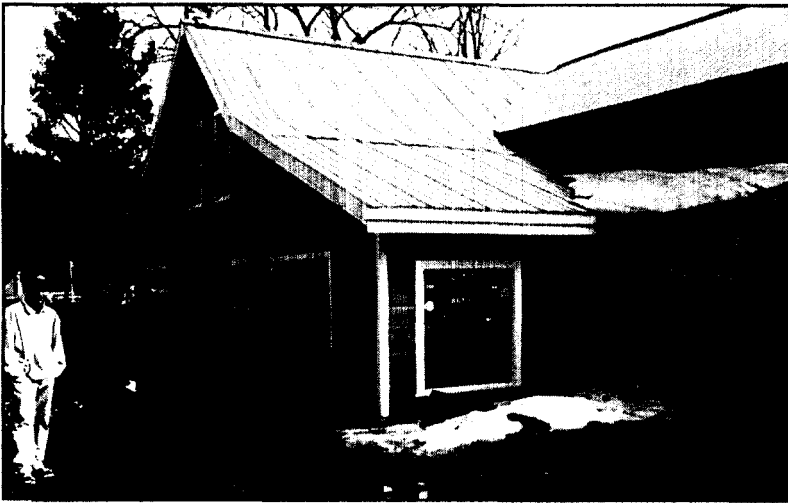
*Dave working in the bike shop.*

some of the best hill-climbers (a big plus in mountain bike races), as well as cross-country racers, has grown throughout the country. The Valley is seen as the "Mountain Bike Capitol" of Vermont by many in the sporting industry. When the western riders from Crested Butte and the Rockies want information about riding in New England, they call the Mad River Bike Shop.

The Bike Shop sponsors its own races including the Mad River Road Race around the Valley and environs, the Wicked Witch Mountain Bike Race run at Sugarbush South (there were 250 contestants in 1994), and the Kamikaze Hill Climb.

The Riders, as a club, have built and maintained riding trails on land throughout the Valley. Following the example of VAST (the snowmobiler's association) they have obtained permission to use the trails from the landowners. Working with the Mad River Path Association they helped build the recreational path along the Mad River. Proceeds from the Hill Climb race were donated to the Path Association.

As the shop's popularity grew, so did the demand for more goods and services, none of which Dave could supply in his present location. Hanging around the shop in the summer, you would be one of many milling around the cramped space, admiring (and



*The combined shops: Mad Mountain Snowboards, The Mad River Bike Shop at the intersection of Routes 100 & 17*

buying) the merchandise, socializing with fellow bikers, learning new techniques of riding or repairs, or just thinking about riding.

Dave had always considered the above-Adworks location temporary as it didn't have enough proper retail space. He wanted space to grow into. Last summer, Dave met another man with seasonal work, Sugarbush's tennis pro Scott Fliegelman. Scott's plan was to open a snowboard shop. The trouble with seasonal shops is paying rent during the off-season when there is no income. After much negotiating, Dave and Scott worked out a deal to share space at the intersection of Routes 100 and 17. For six months in the summer, the Bike Shop is in the major downstairs retail space while the snowboard stuff is in the much smaller upstairs space. Come late fall, the two shops switch spaces through the winter until April 1 when the bike shop moves down again. This way, both save the rent money during their off-season and each can sell the other's merchandise on the off-chance that someone needs snowboard bits in summer, or bike parts in winter. This also gives both shops the room they need to expand their merchandise lines and have a financial bottom line in the black. Dave plans to expand into hiking equipment, footwear and boots, merchandise they had no room for before.

Scott Fliegelman opened his shop, Mad Mountain Snowboards, in the fall of 1994 becoming the "hang-out" of the snowboard set (snowboarding is one of the best ways to stay in biking shape during the winter).

"I had helped Snosearch (a ski tour company) seven or eight years ago," says Scott of his first encounter with the Valley. "I lived here a month at the time. When I left Philadelphia three-and-one-half years ago to come here, it was an easy decision. I knew people here and I came for only one season." He smiles, "Right." He had been thinking of opening a snowboard shop two years ago and knew there was enough enthusiasm for the sport to make it viable. There wasn't any retail outlet just for snowboards. "But whoever did it right would be successful."

The whole deal starting coming together, but he knew getting the best location was the key to success. Then he had to secure some retail lines to sell. And find the money. Through casual conversation with his now landlord he found out that the antique



*It's hard to miss this sign...*

shop at the corner of the Mad Mountain Tavern had no continuing lease. Then he talked with Dave Knoop about sharing the location. In May 1994, it all came together. Scott approached wholesalers' representatives and discussed buying lines of goods to sell. "It was extremely late in the season, but my relationship with Grindrite helped." Grindrite manufactures some of the best equipment made for sharpening skis and snowboards.

"In the beginning it was slow; early December and through Christmas was great," Scott sighs, "then came three weeks of golf season." (Referring to our unusually warm January thaw.) Of course, that's when all the earlier bills came due. But business picked up again.

Scott worked at Sugarbush in the Ski School and with their Racing Program for three years. When he told his Sugarbush marketing friends that he was going to open a snowboard shop, they were thrilled and "offered me the earth." Now that Sunday River is taking over, Scott isn't sure what is happening on the mountain.

As to what he'll do this summer? That's up in the air. He just knows that his shop will hang in there doing just fine, thank you, with Dave and his gang running things downstairs.



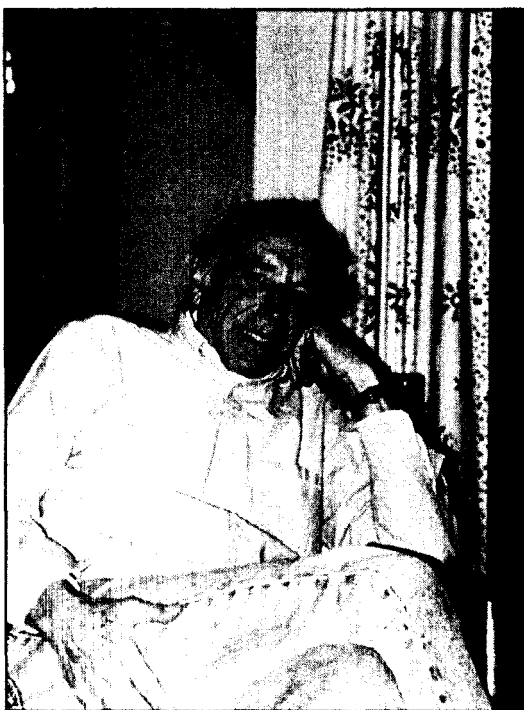
Deciding what to do in the summer has never been a problem for Doug Terman. "Between books, I start a new business," says Doug, author of several bestsellers including *First Strike*.

In his home in Warren, Doug has found an infinite variety of income-earning possibilities. Currently he works with engineers as Antilles Engineering forwarding faxes, stock portfolios, data, and calls.

One new venture is gathering financial information for expatriates and forwarding portfolio updates to them via fax. He's even started a fax newspaper with personalized crossword puzzles, sports and news gathered for each person who joins. His office boasts five computers crunching at once, performing chores as complex as fault analysis, timing, backup, telephone switching and more.

"I deliberately picked the Valley. The year my father was ill, I was living in the Caribbean, my Dad in

Pittsburgh. I had 4,000 hours of military flying time. I looked around for a place with good soaring within three hours of Pittsburgh." Checking out various soaring sites, Doug called Sugarbush. Ann Macone answered the phone. She was so warm and encouraging that "I piled into my '65 Mustang and headed north. I got my soaring ticket in two weeks." (His license plate is SOAR.) He kept coming all that summer. After his father died, Doug sold his boat in the islands and with four friends prepared to fulfill an obli-



*Doug Terman at home*

gation in New Zealand to build fiberglass airplanes. They got as far as British Columbia. While they were loading tools and equipment for the job, the new government of New Zealand changed its mind. The contract was off. "I had seven months of time (to kill) and I was just starting to write."

Doug went back to all the places he had visited: Santa Fe, San Juan Islands of Puget Sound, Colorado, Montana. The Valley drew him back. The mountains were accessible for sports, he liked the work ethic, the people were independent, honest and besides, the skiing was excellent and the soaring even better. He moved to Sugar Run in 1977. He now lives with his wife Seddon Johnson in East Warren.

**P**eter Boynton also came for the skiing, the flying (he is a licensed pilot) and soaring, the mountains and the people. He grew up in Maine and Massachusetts. During his high school years he skied all over Vermont and while in college worked at Stratton Ski Area. In his late 20's and early 30's he worked as an actor in the soap, "As The World Turns." When he came to the Valley to ski, he stayed with three friends at the Battleground on Route 17. Eventually, he decided he wanted a home here, a place to raise a family. One year, while at the Fourth of July parade, he heard that the Leiths were selling their home in Waitsfield. Peter bought it.

Then he met Susan Snyder, a fellow actor on the series. He wanted to marry Susan, but feared she wouldn't like the Valley, much less his new house. He didn't need to worry.

"I love the Valley," says Susan. "The marriage was a package deal, Peter and the Valley. I feel a kinship with the people here, there's something special." Susan came from a hazelnut and walnut farm in Oregon, one of ten children. She loves the "small town feel." They were married at the Inn at the Round Barn Farm in October 1989.

Peter said it very well, "The Valley is a special place to live, it's trying to make a living here that's tough. I would love to be able to make a living in the Valley." While Susan commutes to New York weekly, Peter composes music (his dream) while caring for their three-year-old daughter, Logan.

Their quiet Valley homestead became a mecca for visiting friends. At times this made finding time to spend together difficult. During one period of endless guests, Susan mentioned this lack of privacy. Peter grabbed a brown blanket and his wife and walked out the door. They climbed up the hill above their home, spread the blanket and sat down to enjoy some peace and quiet. They hadn't been there long when Peter heard noises. As he looked down the hill, one of his neighbors, Bob Tracy, was walking up toward them with a rope in one hand and a gun in the other. "Thought you were a dead cow that ought to be moved," Bob told them. Bob still laughs about that one. "Well, I was only trying to help."

Helping seems to be Marty and Lois DeHeer's other name. Through their years of moving antiques they have collected, they have perfected the art of moving stuff. When Brian and Linda Forrest were moving back into their rebuilt home, after a nasty fire, the DeHeers were there to help.

Another neighbor mentioned that her mother was moving just up the road from them. "Gee, we'll help move her. When do you want us there?" That Wednesday at 8 AM they arrived with their van, truck, and stacks of blankets. Their sweatshirts said it all, "Super Movers." Within three hours the apartment was emptied; the large furniture was in the new house, the big boxes of possessions in the proper rooms, and the Super Movers done and gone. The bewil-



*Lois at work at the DeHeers' shop Step Back in Tyme*

dered neighbor had planned for two days of moving. She slept in her new quarters that night for the first time.

"We love the people, the quaintness of the buildings, the fact that the Valley isn't overcrowded," says Lois. "Shopkeepers give you time, they don't ignore you. You are accepted as a friend, not just as business. You just can't beat the people in this Valley!"

In 1980, the DeHeers, then living in New Jersey, had a chance to "borrow" a friend's house on Roxbury Mountain Road in exchange for yard work and cleaning. As they traveled around the Valley, they grew to love it. So much so, they bought property here to build their retirement home. It had to be just right, close enough to town, yet far enough from town to be perfect. They found their spot on the East Warren Road.

By 1986, Marty had seven years plus until his retirement from the Waldwick Borough Police Department in New Jersey. Their house in Waitsfield was under construction. That Fall, even before it was finished, they moved in. Working weekends in Vermont, by the next summer, the house was done. They furnished it by traveling the flea market and antique circuit. In New Jersey, Lois worked for a while with an antique shop and started collecting. Soon, antiques overflowed their New Jersey home. Lois says, "We had to consider selling the collection." An antique shop seemed to be the way to do it, although, with Marty nearing retirement, they didn't want to get tied down to a daily shop schedule. In talking with their friend Arty Bennett they discovered he wanted a year-round antique shop instead of his seasonal Forgotten Furnishings.

After Marty's retirement, joining forces, they bought the old Moriarity Building (formerly Valley Paint, then Sweet Pea), fixed up the interior and opened Thanksgiving Week in 1994. Arty works some days, the DeHeers work others and they are free to trade off as the need arises.

Pete and Dottie Damone traded off the Long Island lifestyle for the quiet of Vermont, so they thought. Deciding Vermont was a good place to live, they moved to Stowe. Unfortunately for them, Stowe was too much like the Hamptons. While playing polo with the Stowe team, Pete realized there was something about the Sugarbush Polo Team he appreciated. Coming to the Valley to play and visit, he figured out what it was he

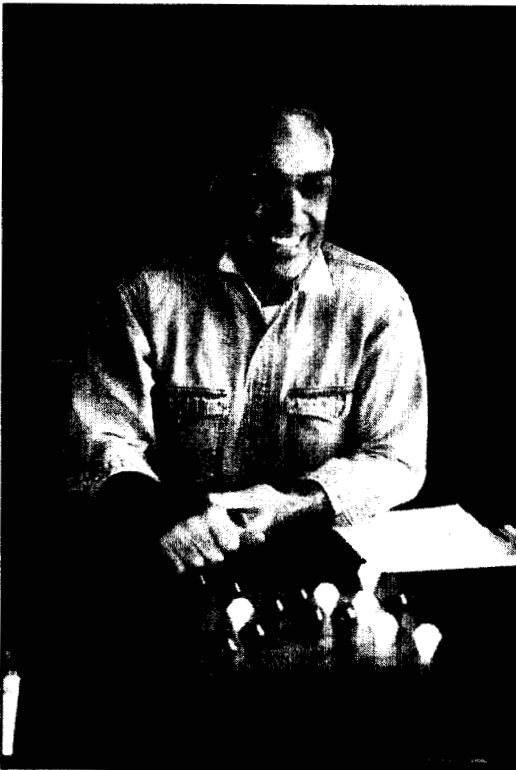
liked: the people! Their attitude, their friendliness. This was the change he and Dottie were looking for.

Three years later, they moved to East Warren, where Weather Hill Restoration rebuilt a several centuries-old Vermont home for them. As the house was nearing completion, Pete, along with many other fellow employees, lost his job with Universal Gym.

Now, he and his business partner, Don Pfeiffer, are Break Away Enterprises, Inc., selling Vermont-made wooden puzzles and games. Many of the games are childhood favorites, local or borrowed from international sources: Chinese Checkers, Tic-Tac-Toe, French Solitaire, Danish Solitaire, Migration, Nine-Man Morris, The Odd Games, and Mankala (from Africa, used in the local schools to help teach math). Tucked above his garage, overlooking a spectacular view of the Valley, Pete and Don market their games, nationally and internationally.

Vermont craftsmen make the board games of local hardwoods

from around the state. They have earned the *Vermont Makes It Special* seal of approval for quality. Many are sold through museums. Others find their way into retirement and nursing homes. The thoughtfully designed "smokestack pegs" used with many of the games are perfect for people with limited hand motion. Many of these games have been donated to schools, nursing homes, and as items for raffles to help



*Pete winning at Nine-Man Morris. again*



*The Damone's home in East Warren*

raise money for latest was for the Skatium.

Pete has resurrected games from as far back as King Arthur's time and the Middle Ages. Shakespeare refers to Nine-Man Morris in one of his plays. If you are bold and want to play a vicious bout of Nine-Man Morris, just ask Pete, the expert. Or catch him on the polo fields around the Valley this summer.

Sparky and Peggy Potter are another couple making their living from Vermont wood. Years ago, Peggy Sparks needed a ride to visit her boyfriend at a Vermont ski area. She hitched a ride with a fellow college student, named Sparky Potter, heading to the same place. Sparky was a demonstration "hot-dog" skier with Dynamite at the time. They fell in love on the trip up. Once when Peggy came back to visit Sparky and he was gone on tour, she stayed around on her own. "During that time I got to know my own friends and places in the Valley," she says.

Sparky first came to the Valley in 1970 because his fraternity had a ski house here. Peggy had been coming since the early 1960s, skiing at Mad River Glen. After their first trip to the Valley together, Peggy lived with him off and on until she graduated from college in 1973, and then they married.

During their college years they collected old barn board and,



using an ancient wood-burning tool of Sparky's, made signs to sell at craft shows. "We did corny phrases like 'Have a Nice Day', 'Wreck Room', general art, Calvert bottles, that sort of stuff," Peggy says. "I started painting wooden bowls and sold them. But when people saw the signs, they asked for more, so we concentrated on the signs." When the recession hit, Peggy went back to painting bowls. Selling by word-of-mouth and through gallery contacts, they now sell bowls as far away as Arizona, New Mexico, Japan, Europe, Mexico, and Africa. While in Mexico once they met a woman on the beach who had just received one of Peggy's bowls as a gift.

Sparky's first shop was in the Old Church basement on Route 100. His partner was Aldo Speroni, their landlord. While Aldo eventually went into commercial art, Sparky continued making his hand-carved signs but moved to the old Blue Building on Bridge Street in 1972. By 1974, they decided the rent was too high and they could live and work in one place. The house they built then has since expanded to four buildings on a Fayston hillside.

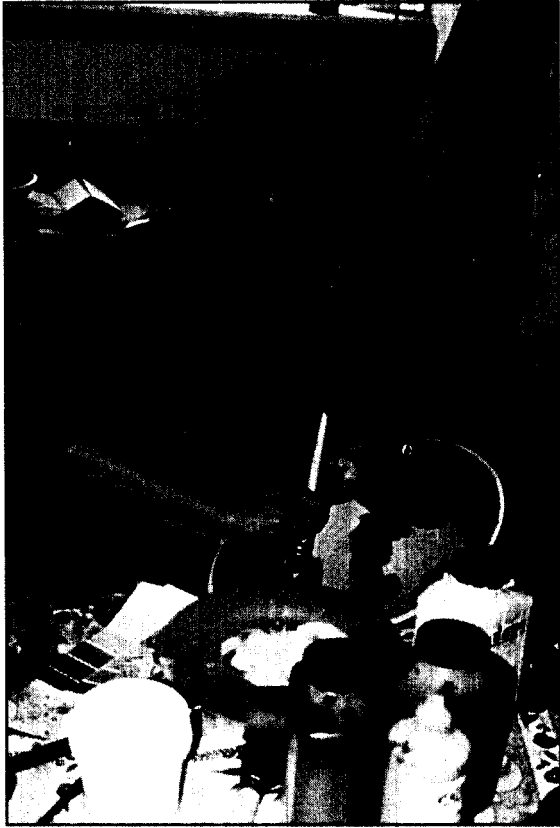
Sparky's first Valley sign was for the late Hal Flad's Gallagher's Pub. According to Peggy, Sparky had a tendency to say "yes" he could do any sign, whether he'd done one like it or not. Then he'd have to figure out how to do it.



*Sparky and Peggy Potter caught between jobs...*

Sunny Lindy, a restaurateur from Montreal asked Sparky to make signs for his many establishments in Canada. The first signs were so good that he told Sparky he could do whatever he wanted. Sparky did: bar tops, seats, just plain artwork, whatever he could manage. Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Company "let's us go nuts with our stuff in their Gift Shop," says Peggy.

Roy Cohen, former owner of Sugarbush, used Sparky's talents when he had told



*Peggy at work in her studio*

businesses he would help pay for a new sign—if they added the words "At Sugarbush Valley" to the artwork. Many took Roy up on the offer. Of course, those three words caused an uproar among Valley residents who knew they lived in the Mad River Valley.

Sparky teaches skiing at the Fayston Elementary School and coaches soccer with his children's teams. He and his daughter, Gracie, sang in Cabin Fever Follies. Peggy taught piano for five years, filled in during rehearsals of Valley Players' musicals, volunteered at the Fayston Elementary School playing piano for their programs, and worked with the ELF program. She also worked with Zelda Zeleski developing an early childhood development program to mainstream special needs kids into regular classrooms. All this while raising their children: Charlotte, Gracie and Lee.



*The Potter home in Fayston overlooking the Valley*

Catering to the kid in all of us, Gaelic McTigue's All Things Bright and Beautiful on Bridge Street is a haven of stuffed animals—from tiny to humongous.

"We picked the Valley because it was in the center of the state. Fold a Vermont map any way and Waitsfield comes out in the middle." Gaelic McTigue emphasized her words with the appropriate map-folding actions. In 1969, sight unseen, the McTigues, Gaelic, her twin sister Bonnie, and their mother, Irene, came to the Valley. They had never been to Vermont before. "We weren't in our house an hour before Fletcher and Ruth Joslin came over to see if they could help.

"Gee, we were from Chicago! We didn't know that in small towns if the lights go on in a formerly empty home, the neighbors figure it means new friends to meet and come on over."

Surrounded by animals, some real, most toy, Gaelic recalls their arrival. "There was a note on the door, 'Prime the pump. If you need help call George Sawyer.'" She throws back her head and laughs. "In Chicago, if you want water, you turn on a faucet! Pump? What pump?" She shook her head. "We called George. He took pity on us."

Gaelic had a mail-order Christmas ornament business, Bonnie got a job working for architects. By 1972, they opened their first shop in the Blue Building on Bridge Street. One room, selling ornaments and hand-made quilts. As shops next to them left or

abandoned space, Gaelic and Bonnie moved in adding stuffed animals and more toys. Soon they filled all 12 rooms, overwhelming the space with creatures. For years, Santa held forth just before Christmas next to the biggest, most-perfect tree decorated with hand-made ornaments.

In 1985, someone else bought the Blue Building with plans to renovate. Looking for new space, the McTigues bought the late Emily Eaton's home across the street and promptly crammed the 12-rooms worth of Blue Building animals into the slightly smaller Eaton house. In 1990, the house between their shop and the covered bridge came up for sale. They purchased that house, did some decorating and opened it as a Christmas Shop.



*There really is a dog hidden in there... on the seat in the lower right*

The only danger upon entering the McTigue's shop is finding too many winsome stuffed animals to want to hug, to keep, and to buy. The Eaton-house shop is jammed with stuffed animals, some in groups by type: jungle, bear, baby-proof, farm, whatever strikes Gaelic's fancy. Animals are dressed up in themes (St. Patrick's Day bears), named, costumed and loved. Many are hand-made by Vermont craftspeople.

Years ago, they had a life-size cow that Gaelic decided needed leg-warmers. Off the three McTigues went to Harry's Depart-



*Bridge Street: The McTigue's Animal Kingdom*

ment Store on the Barre-Montpelier Road to purchase same. When they requested two identical sets of leg warmers (front and back legs, of course) the saleswoman asked if the legwarmers were for an animal in the “teddy bear shop in Waitsfield.” Their reputation had spread. Aside from the fact that they have often been written up in numerous news articles and national magazines.

After a seven-year hiatus from making her own Christmas ornaments, Gaelic is creating her Santas again. “I really missed making those ornaments. It was such a part of me.” She paints each ornament seated at her workbench in the Christmas Shop surrounded by stacks of balsam ornament shapes waiting to be painted, paper designs for yet more ornaments, jars of colorful paints and dozens of brushes. Her inspirations come from international traditions and just plain whimsy: “Three Dog Night” has three dogs sleeping with Santa in bed, Santa on skis, Santa on a bike, Santa and various animals.

In describing their arrival in 1969 Gaelic said, “It was like instant family. We didn’t have any living grandparents. I didn’t know what it was like having a big family.” She fondly remembers the help so freely given in the early years by the Joshlins, Everett and Katherine Palmer, Elyse Long and her late husband Carl. “Suddenly, we had ‘family and grandparents’.”

Bob Gove remembers his neighbor, Elijah Fuller, coming to take Bob on his rounds around his farm. "When I was a little bit of a guy, no sooner could I walk, I was drawn to animals. We had calves and horses. Elijah Fuller used to come over the pasture from what is now Blueberry Lake with his little horse, to salt his young cattle and foals and mares. He used to drive an extra two miles a day to fetch me to take me with him because he knew I loved animals."

According to Bob, he was "hatched" at the little house next to what is now Blueberry Lake. He was the last of eight; four girls, four boys.

"We used to farm where the Roths are now (off East Warren Road) and tapped 2,300 buckets for sugaring. We used two teams of Belgian horses to gather sap." He earned his living logging, farming and giving sleigh rides.

He lives in Moretown now with Marion Barton, his partner of 20 years, "who pushed and shoved me to get where we are today."

Fifteen years ago he sold out his dairy herd of 115 head of Ayrshires. His herd included two heifers nominated for national awards, one cow that lead the state in butterfat for two years in a row, and two that were sold for high dollar (they were the highest bid animals of the sale) in Rutland at an all-New England sale. He showed his prize animals at fairs around the state and at UVM.

"I really love my horses." Bob Gove not only loves his horses, but it is obvious that they love him equally. Now he has 11 of three different sizes—most are huge Belgians, three Haflingers and two miniatures. An 18-year-old Belgian brood mare spent the winter in Langdon, NH used by a friend to raise a team. His Belgian "Prince" was down in New Hampshire through the winter and hitched with his friend's Belgian "Jim" for sleigh rides. "I miss him. Terribly." He has a pair of Belgian mares, 6 and 7-year-olds, that foaled this spring.

"You know, we worked hard in those days. During sugaring season, the school arranged a four-week vacation so the boys could help with the sugaring. We stayed in school straight through to the sugaring break instead of having a week off every eight weeks as they do now. The gathered syrup was put into 55-gallon drums and taken to Burlington for sale. The dark stuff, we were told, was used to cure tobacco."



Entertainment was barn dances, or races, dances and shows at the fairgrounds behind Hap Gaylord's. "I remember seeing a white-haired man always out there (at the dances). And I wondered why he would be there. Afterwards, I found out that he was making home-brew beer and he brought there and sold it. It was one of the ways he supported his family—selling beer. He went in the woods in the summertime gathering roots to make salves. He didn't have any horse and buggy, but he had a big family and he would go out on the road peddling those salves. Just another way to get by."

In the 1930's the Valley had its own semi-pro baseball team. They played in Canada, Springfield, and all over Northern Vermont. Most of the players came from Warren: Dennis Gove, Sham Blake, Clesson and Ed Eurich. Harold Stafford, Bing Jones, Ransom Tucker, Lyle Ford, Layton Leno, Bernard Kew and from Waitsfield: Ernest Tucker. Occasionally they had to "bolster their team" with someone from out of the Valley. Much of their playing was done at the old fairgrounds.

The fairgrounds were the scene of many dances and fairs bringing people in from all over the Central Vermont area. Bob and one of his best friends since childhood, Ed Eurich, both tell of the dances held there. "It was quite an event," said Ed. The fair had a Ferris wheel, race track, dance pavilion, side shows, and animals for exhibit. As they remember it, it was sponsored by the local Grange. Unfortunately, it eventually died from lack of volunteers.

Barn dances were huge affairs years ago. When new barns were



*Bob with a new member of his "family"*

built, before the livestock or hay moved in, a dance was held. Ed remembers his first dances at the old Neill farm on East Warren Road, during Prohibition. "I remember going there as a teen. Traveling then was something! We had lots of dances with Andy Baird's orchestra. They played all over Central Vermont. It was a four-or five-piece orchestra with a sax, violin, drummer, trumpet, and piano, just like Glenn Miller's orchestra. We had 'two-round dances', the two-step, polka, foxtrot, Boston fancy, Portland Fancy, and square dances. Riley Moulton was the best caller around. He lived off Number Nine Hill in Fayston."

"Runners" selling illegal hootch for so much a drink came to the dances. Even the moonshiners themselves occasionally showed up. "The authorities only enforced Prohibition laws when they had to." When Ed's brother-in-law built his barn, dances were held there, too. In 1959, Ed's family built their big barn. The last of the big barn dances were held there until the hay went in. "We picked up bags of empty beer bottles," cleaning up the mess.

Sometime in the mid-60s, Ed Wheldon decided that he had done Minstrel Shows elsewhere and wanted to do some in the Valley to raise money for the PTA. Accordingly, the shows were held at the Valley Players Theater on Route 100. If you go backstage and look on the walls, you'll find their names and dates scrawled everywhere. Ed Eurich remembers that he and Katherine Palmer, as part of their act, did a "'boom' and fell over backwards."

Ed said, "Some of us sang as a quartet, and we had a chorus. We had school teachers, Clesson and Florence Eurich, Jan Barnard, Gertrude Baird and others. We used the money for extra-curricular activities at the school."

Ed himself, became the Head of the Vermont Department of Agriculture for six years, spent four years in the Legislature (1965-69), and was the youngest elected trustee of UVM, in its history, during that time. Before his election to the Legislature, he was working as the Vice President of the State Farm Bureau for years. He had to "go to conferences, all over. If I hadn't had a working family (of five children) I couldn't have done it. We were in the potato business, too. We harvested up to 17,000 bushels a year."

Now retired, Ed is the President of the Couples Club. Before their proper organization, the Couples Club's activities were more a social meeting to play cards and games at churches and the homes



*Bob Gove and Ed Eurich taking a break*

of the members. In 1958, they formed “for betterment of the community.” The members raised money at first by babysitting, hair cutting, mowing lawns, selling wood, then holding auctions, roast beef suppers for skiers, games suppers, and clambakes. They sponsored dances for youngsters, held stork showers, fixed up the Federated Church, put up lighted trees at Christmas, made sick visits and gave gifts. One year Carol Kingsbury accepted an award for the club for having collected 48 bags of trash on Clean Up Day.

Their community spirit lead them to plant the trees between the old High School and the center of town, bring toilets into the Town Clerk’s office, fix up the old Methodist church and put in showers for the basketball players using the building (now the home of Cabin Fever Quilts on Route 100). They won a beautification award for a lovely garden of flowers they planted. Realizing a need for recreation space for youngsters, they bought the land that is now called the Couples Club Field on Route 100 across from Olde Tymes. As a united community effort by couples and singles, they have and continue to accomplish much in the Valley. The dues are simply \$5 to join, \$1 a year after that to stay a member. They are always looking for new members and volunteers. You can join by calling Ed Eurich (president), Jack Smith or Vic Dumas. “We get older and we have our limitations,” says Ed.

On the counter of the Bridge Street Bakery, next to the cash register, is a small jar with the legend: "Vermont Children's Aid Society." Over the last year, patrons of Mary Lauliss' bakery have donated \$500 to VCAS, the largest donation from the Valley.

Along Bridge Street, near the covered bridge, next to the last shop on the right is Mary's bakery. Step up between the little ceramic pigs perched on the stairs and step backwards in time into Mary Lauliss' version of a quiet, homey gathering spot for artists, coffee and tea-lovers, musicians, bakery aficionados and whoever wants a bit of small-town America.

"I was a Service brat. Over the years of travel I figured out what to me really made a community place. Some little corner where people could gather, talk art, music, politics, just whatever." Mary's vision has been a success since opening day, January 6, 1994. "On our first anniversary, one customer came down from Burlington with a bottle of champagne!"

Mary was trained as an artist in Boston. She worked at creating her own stained glass designs and doing restorations for others. Working with the toxic substances necessary



*Mary, backstage, in her bakery*



*Glo serving treats*

for her profession almost destroyed her eyes. During the 1980's she and her husband and their son, Daniel, moved to Vermont.

After her divorce she had to earn a living. She had always loved cooking, so she went to work for the Warren Store as their baker and got into catering. Finally, she took the plunge and opened her own bakery.

The hours are long, but she loves it. "I

love the business end, too. I love the wrangling with the suppliers. It's part of the fun."

Her clientele range from the before-work-coffee crowd, the lunch crowd, the afternoon teas, the in-betweens, and tourists who discover her establishment "I didn't set out to create something just for the tourists, I wanted this to be a 'locals' place. Where anyone can come in and feel at home."

As you step inside, you will most likely be greeted by Gloria "Glo" Currier. Glo retired from Green Mountain Coffee Roasters and was languishing in retirement. "I hated it!" It didn't take much persuasion from Mary to convince Glo to help Mary open her new bakery. Besides, her parents used to own the Warren Store. It's in her blood. "I love people. Can't you tell?" And everyone loves Glo, too.

From the smell of baking bread and perking coffee as you en-

ter, the intimate cloth-covered tables, some atop sewing machine legs, to the paintings on the walls, it resembles a large country kitchen. Racks of fresh bread are stacked on the right behind the door, the fresh make-you-drool pastries are lined up on tables to the left of the entrance. The liquid refreshments are in the middle. Between the two food groups, making tough decisions can cause serious traffic jams.

The art work is that of local artists. Mary doesn't take a commission from anything she sells. "I want to help our artists." Her little corner of Waitsfield has become a haven for the cozy-starved crowd; a place where chatterers can visit, where readers can read in peace.

Speaking of books, there's nothing like walking into your favorite library and being greeted by a friend. One who knows your taste in books, and can get them for you. An inveterate reader herself, Jane Goodwin has spent 20 years working as a volunteer librarian at the Warren Town Library, with the occasional Saturday at the Joslin Memorial Library in Waitsfield as well. Even the Warren Church benefits from her efforts, too.

In the late 1960's Jane and her late husband, Charlie, lived and taught in Long Island, New York. When they sold their home in 1970, their lawyer suggested they find something in about the same price range. They figured a place in a resort area, where they could live in the summer and rent in the winter made sense.



*Jane caught in the act of reading...*



First, they looked in Stowe. For months they looked in Stowe. When they ventured toward the Valley, their Stowe real estate agent said, "If you make it to Warren, you won't come back here." He was right. Charlie found a house off the Inferno Road. They moved to the Valley permanently in 1976 and ran a dining room where cross-country skiers could stop for lunch, mainly soups. She is still noted for her fantastic soups.

In 1985, she and Charlie moved to an apartment in Waitsfield, "because it is so much easier to get anywhere. You can walk! Beats the Inferno Road."

Typical of most people who lead exciting lives, these days Jane still has her projects. Aside from her library work, she volunteers at the Wood Art Gallery in Montpelier. She was on the Board of the Washington County Mental Health for a couple of years. Ask her about teaching in China or her two-year stint as a WAC while Charlie was in the Army Air Corps.

Flying seems to be in the blood of many a Valleyite. Bob Buck and his wife, Jean, came because of the gliding. Bringing their son, Rob, a fellow pilot, they arrived just as the Sugarbush Airport was getting started. Jean "poked around" looking for a house. "At that moment a guy put his hunting camp on the market," says Bob. "We bought it immediately."

Bob is no stranger to Vermont. "There have been Bucks in Vermont since 1794, making me almost a woodchuck." His father was born in Johnson, his grandfather in Fairfax.

"We were in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, making an old barn into a lovely home, and got sidetracked," Bob grins, "Fortunately."

Shortly after Bob and Jean moved up, Rob followed.

Bob retired from TWA in 1974 as "the #1 pilot in seniority at the time," flying 747's to Europe as Captain. He was an advisor to the design team of the SST (Supersonic Transports).

Bob literally wrote the books on weather flying, three in fact, after pioneering the practice of heaving himself and his plane into anything foul above tree level. He received many citations and recognitions for his contributions to weather flying safety—including one from President Harry Truman. He started flying by building himself a glider when he was fifteen. In 1937, Bob joined TWA rising in rank to Chief Pilot. He wrote the TWA instruction manual

for the new Constellation when those planes first started flying. He was one of the five pilots on an historic flight to circumnavigate the globe—from North to South Pole and back again. Of course, Bob managed to be in the pilot's seat each time they flew over the poles. He even set a land speed record as a solo pilot crossing from California on his way to New York, despite engine trouble over Ohio which forced him down.



*Bob Buck in one of his quieter moments*

His bestseller, *Weather Flying*, is regarded as the bible of small plane pilots since its publication in 1970. His latest *The Pilot's Burden, Flight Safety and the Roots of Pilot Error* was published last spring. He occasionally works for the FAA investigating crashes involving weather situations.

One of his friends keeps bugging him to finish the book he started years ago on the aviation history he lived through. Bob met and lunched with Charles Lindbergh. He flew former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy to Rome and has an autographed picture to prove it. Keep writing Bob!

Some day, Phil King will get a chance to write his memoirs, his wife, Onriette will get to finish her novel set in Los Angeles at a time when she was working as a publicist for Alfred Hitchcock. Until then, life keeps intervening.

Phil and Onriette King came to the Valley in 1987 to visit their friend, Al Benjamin. Phil was "compulsive" about looking at real

estate anywhere they went. No change while visiting the Valley. Sigi Haslinger took them around until they came to what is now their house on Dump Road in Warren. They bought it, having already sold their home in the Washington, DC area. "Santa Barbara cost too much, Arizona was too hot."

Al had recommended they stay at the recently opened Inn at the Round Barn Farm when they visited. But when Phil called to make reservations, Jack and Doreen Simko's business phone never answered. They came to the Valley anyway and stayed elsewhere. Later, phoning for reservations again, this time using the Simkos' home number, they got through. The Kings were among the Inn's first guests and witnessed the first wedding there. At the time, the Simkos were beginning to renovate the round barn and hoping to find a good use for it.



*Phil and Onriette King*

For two years Janos Lawrence and Roberta Tracy had been trying to start a "cultural center" in the Valley. A place for artists to show their work and gather. They had a small gallery on Bridge Street, but it was not growing as they had hoped. Eventually the idea was hatched to start a cultural center using the barn. Through the collective efforts of many, spearheaded by the Kings, Frank and Marge Sherman, and Jack and Doreen Simko, the Green Mountain Cultural Center was born.

In the meantime, Phil took watercolor courses and met members of the Valley Players. He was roped into running lights for coming productions. Onriette volunteered to work backstage. Their contributions to the Valley Players over the last eight years have been considerable. Onriette has been stage manager for most of the productions since their arrival. Phil has been lighting maestro, either hanging and aiming the lights, and/or running them.

Together they have produced quite a few shows. Onriette directed *Cherry Cokes*, finally achieving a dream. Phil has appeared in several shows and discovered a talent he didn't know he had. He's very good *onstage!*

Both the Kings are writers, making them natural members of the League of Vermont Writers. Onriette served on the Board of Directors for three years helping move the League into the 1990s. Both have been instrumental in putting on the Dorothy Canfield Fisher Writers Conference in Burlington for the last seven years.

Onriette said, "The first few years we were here, it was like a vacation. We kept expecting a tap on our shoulders saying 'You've got to get back to work...'"

Then, Phil started working in 1994 for the *Valley Reporter* as a full-time journalist, making this another career move after retirement.

**F**red and Vikki Meade moved to Vermont in 1980. Vikki remembers the date, August 1, 1980 because three years later they moved into the house they had designed and built themselves. Aside from logging help from Francis Kathan, they did all the work themselves using logs from their property in Fayston.

While Fred worked for NCR repairing ATMs and other equipment, someone suggested to Vikki that she work up on the mountain to get free skiing for her family. She applied at Sugarbush, was hired by Lixi Fortna and has been there ever since selling tickets at "North." She has long since attained Supervisor status and runs a lively group of sellers during the season. Fred retired from NCR and spent this past winter working "on the mountain" too, making snow and loading skiers onto the lifts.

Their children have grown and left the house, allowing Vikki time to do other things. She was an art major at school, "but I never found anything I could enjoy and make money at, too."



Kathy Horst, who worked with stained glass, asked Vikki if she wanted to try it. Vikki did and has been selling her work through Shimmering Glass in Waterbury Center or by word-of-mouth since then.

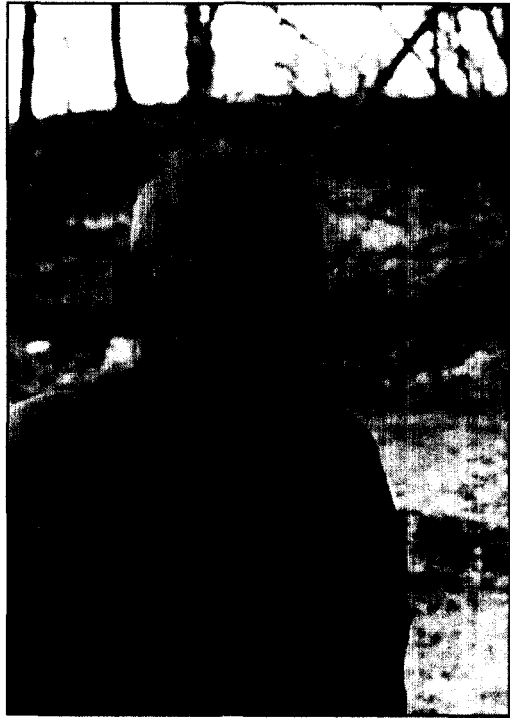
Of course, between Fred's retirement, Vikki's stained glass work and seasonal retirement from the mountain, this allows them time for their favorite summer activity, sailing.

*Vikki Meade working on a stained glass lamp*

Alden Bettis keeps retiring too. The weather retired him this spring as the "ring master" at the Skatium. He remembers when Altee Farr had his skating rink under the covered bridge in Waitsfield. "Altee strung a wire across the river so he could get down to skate at night. The first time I tried skating, I was using clamp-on skates. I stuck my foot up to go and was going 60 miles per hour and not knowing where I was going to land! One of the teachers asked my [now] wife, 'That Bettis boy, has he been drinking?' 'No,' she said, 'it's his first time on skates.'"

He was born in Fayston, although "I wasn't old enough to remember." Alden is the one of the first in Vermont to build a "cable television" (if you will). "In early 1952, through the goodness of Mrs. Farr, she let me use her telephone poles, and I hitched the wire onto the trees. We had what they called the 450-ohm ladder wire. It was just 300-ohm, but it had the least resistance wire that was practical at the time. Co-axial cable was way beyond

anyone's means. I got 15 people together and I strung a wire from Ernest Tucker's house [north corner of Old County Road and Route 100, opposite Kenyon's] to the old hotel [Waitsfield House on the corner of Route 100 and Bridge Street] and hitched 15 sets on. We had a set in the restaurant in the basement of the old Ghetto Building (now Waitsfield House). And people came from all over the country to see it. They thought it was pretty miraculous! It did work pretty good. It had a lot of problems, thunder-showers knocked it out.



*Alden Bettis*

People got all shook up about it. Actually, it was one of the second systems in Vermont. Bill Hart had one in Rochester. In fact, he was the guy who helped me engineer the whole thing."

Alden's family history goes back along with the Valley's—a long time. One of his grandfathers lost a leg in the Civil War. His family had a cabin up by Slide Brook, until the slide of 1897 came close to covering the house. His dad used to travel over McCullough Turnpike (Route 17 over the mountain) to visit his mother before their marriage.

### And Finally...

Which proves that as much as some things change, the basics don't seem to. That we share the beauty of our Valley and its heritage together and enjoy each other's company is a credit to us; we who live here.



Within these pages, we have tried to introduce you to a few of the people enriching our Valley. There are many more we didn't have the room to include. To those of you who are quietly donating your services and asking for nothing in return, our thanks.

Just as we have variety in our landscape, we have even more in our citizens. Most are more than willing to tell you about the Valley's history and about themselves.

There is a richness of experience hiding behind quiet faces and lively smiles. Ask! What have you to lose? You will enrich your own life in the learning.

This is still a place where friends wave to each other when passing in their cars, where "social hour" can be a spontaneous meeting at Mehuron's Supermarket, the recycling center, or a chance meeting at the post office.

That's what we love about our Valley: so many friends, so much to do. If you haven't taken part yet, maybe now's the time to start.

## Thank You

The author wishes to thank the people in these pages who allowed me to invade their privacy for this piece. And to thank Phil and Onriette King and Muriel de Marne for their editing and comments. My writing is better for their input.

## The Author

Katherine de Marne Werner is a freelance writer living in Waitsfield. She writes features for the *Times-Argus Country Courier* and edits Random House's *The Official Directory to U.S. Flea Markets*, a bi-yearly edition published in the spring. She is the director of the Dorothy Canfield Fisher Writers Conference held in Burlington, Vermont on the fourth weekend in June.

She is married to Peter, a masonry contractor. They still have two children, Pete and Heidi, two cats and two many dogs. For a while, they were adopted by Porkie, a porcupine, living very close to them until his death.