



The Barnard Bulletin

AUGUST 2025

Vol. XL No. 8

A VERMONT WRITER

BY MARGARET EDWARDS

This column is an offering of the Danforth Library in Barnard and a chance to introduce a Vermont writer who deserves wider renown. Ann Batchelder, a native of Vermont, was a suffragist. (The term "suffragette" at that time was a popular slang put-down of the movement.) As a feminist, journalist, and poet, she was determined to enlarge the possibilities for women's lives in America.

Ann Batchelder

(1881 – 1955)



Ann Batchelder in an undated photo—circa 1930—preserved in the Lisa Sergio Papers, Georgetown University Library, Special Collections Division, Washington, D. C.

Born in Windsor and brought up in Woodstock, little Ann Maria Batchelder was astonishingly smart as a youngster. Her mother, Julia E. Kennedy Batchelder, and her father, William, a prominent Woodstock lawyer, were determined to give their only child a first-class education. They hired tutors for her until she reached the age of ten, then sent her to Bishop Hopkins Hall in Burlington. They were not surprised that their precocious daughter, while attending high school, was also busy qualifying for the

bar. She passed the bar easily, yet began practicing law only in 1917 at the age of 36.

From her high school graduation until she became Vermont's first female lawyer, what else was she doing? For three years, she was a police reporter for *The Boston Globe* while also writing columns for *The Delineator*, a women's magazine. Someone at *The Ladies Home Journal* noticed this young woman had talent—she could write in a compelling way about almost anything. In 1934, Batchelder was hired to be the food columnist for *The Ladies Home Journal*. This job, which seemed oddly tame for someone as feisty as she was, nonetheless delighted her. Never mind her rural background and her attraction to all aspects of country living, she embraced New York City. She wrote and edited for the *Journal* from the mid-1930s through the 1940s.

This "food columnist" developed a very wide readership and became a celebrity. Here is Batchelder describing herself in her own words to a journalist interviewing her: "I have sold stamps and read postcards in a country post office. I taught one winter in a district school. I have edited and practically written a country weekly. I have campaigned for woman suffrage, read law and practiced it. Written poetry and still do. Cooked my way around including cutting camps in the Canadian woods, a tearoom in Massachusetts and spent years on *The Delineator* and *The Ladies Home Journal* . . . I am an experienced map-maker and a lover of woods. I don't know what you expect a food editor's background to be, but this is part of mine . . . I love my job, love food, and the ways to do something about it."

Such a bold voice captured in prose suggests supreme confidence. As a lawyer, Miss Batchelder (not "Ms." in those days) had become the chair of the publicity department for the Woodstock Suffrage Club as well as the secretary of the Vermont State Equal Suffrage Association. In these offices, she was well-positioned to recruit young ladies to the cause of winning The Vote. On April 21, 1920, she led a march of over four hundred women through the rain down the streets of Montpelier to the State House. They demanded that Vermont's Governor Percival Wood Clement call a special legislative session to discuss ratifying the suffrage amendment to the Constitution. He wouldn't and didn't.

Later, when dismissed as a mere "food editor," Ann Batchelder always held her head high and declared herself as dedicated to food as to suffrage. She expressed how determined she was to "ennoble the chore of cooking to the rank of culinary art." She wrote copiously on

whatever topics interested her. She composed and published music as well as cookbooks—and poetry.



When asked how she came to love cooking, Batchelder told an anecdote about going fishing with her father. When she caught her first fish, he congratulated her and then reminded her of his rule: cook what you catch. Cooking that fish, she believed, was her first inkling that cooking would become a prominent part of her life. She always embraced with enthusiasm whatever caught her interest. Despite her feminist politics, her tastes were conventionally feminine; she collected Persian cats and antique furnishings.

Ann Batchelder had a flair for celebrity, yet her private life was very private. In the middle of her New York success, she met a beautiful, much younger woman—an Italian refugee named Lisa Sergio. The two lived together, and Batchelder legally adopted young Lisa as a daughter. A fellow Vermont writer with a national celebrity and of equal renown, Dorothy Canfield Fisher was Batchelder's friend. Although convinced that this “adoption” masked an affair of the heart, Fisher kept mum. The exact nature of Ann and Lisa's relationship remained a subject of low-voiced speculation and gossip, but it was never mentioned in print. There was no public scandal.

Even so, perhaps there was a political punishment of this couple's bohemian, care-free style. In 1950 Lisa—not Ann—was accused of being a communist—a “Red Sympathizer”—and blacklisted by Joseph McCarthy. At that point, Batchelder was suffering from an ailment (possibly bone cancer) that eventually confined her to a wheelchair. Even so, she fought hard to clear Lisa's reputation. When Batchelder retired from the *Journal*, she moved at once back to Woodstock. There she died in 1955. Her will left everything to her “daughter.”

East of Bridgewater, Ann Batchelder's last book of poetry, was published by E. P. Dutton of New York in 1943. A look at a map of Vermont shows that the town that's “east

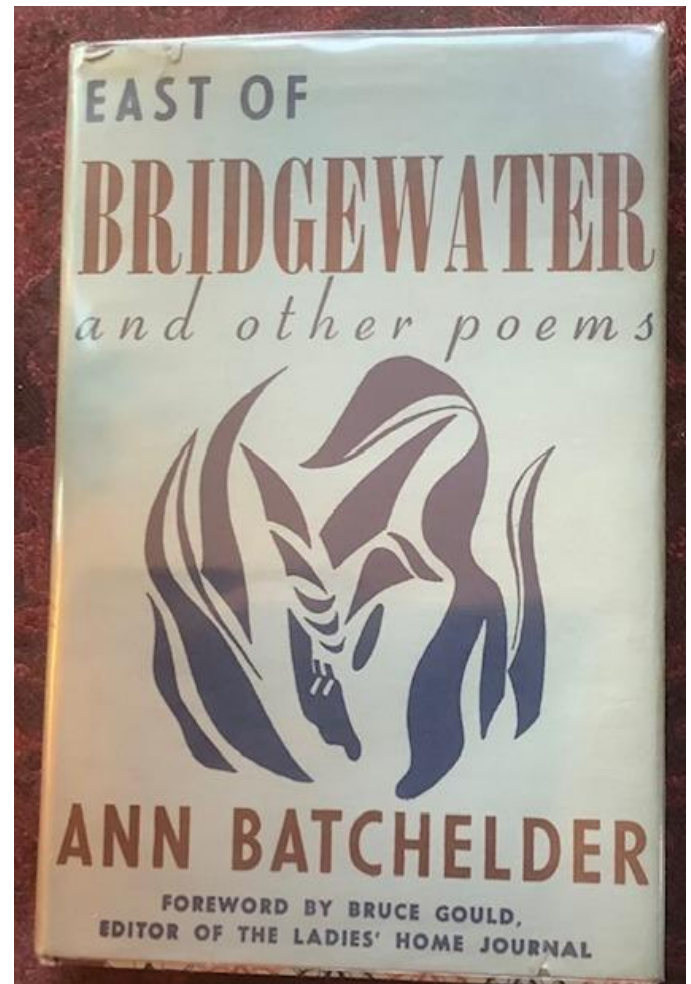
of Bridgewater” is the poet's home town. Woodstock is mentioned directly, and often, in her poetry. Batchelder also names other recognizable landmarks—the Kedron Brook appears in this example:

Still Night in Woodstock

*Oh, Woodstock green, lie still, lie still.
The moon is high and bright,
And morning brings the whippoorwill
That will not sing at night.*

*And morning brings the meadow lark,
So let the silence lie
Up the long street and in the park—
Deep as the midnight sky.*

*The Kedron's humming well may hush,
Release no guiding strain.
Tomorrow brings the hermit thrush
Who may not come again.*



“Still Night...” is characteristic of her poems. It is a short lyric, with traditional rhymes and a regular meter. Batchelder was not aiming for any modernity of expression or experimentation with forms. Her work in *East of Bridgewater* is proudly traditional—accomplished

and skillful, if conventional. What has shock value (and perhaps only to this essay's readership) is the poem's specificity, her naming Woodstock outright as its setting, a place instantly familiar to anyone with a connection here.

This next sample of Batchelder's poetry teeters on the edge of sentimentality—well, actually it jumps in, with both feet! Perhaps the pleasure of encountering the names of Woodstock's nearby mountains can redeem this verse for a local reader:

Little Lost Mountain

*I have been to look once more upon
the mountains
From whence I came:
Ascutney and Mansfield and
Killington and Pico
And one with no name.*

*Little mountain, nameless, between
your big brothers
Lost to my view,
Longer than I shall remember
Mansfield or the others
I shall remember you!*

Batchelder was a dedicated walker—and she paid attention to grave yards. Resurrecting the dead by means of poetry appealed to her. A section of her poems labeled “Epitaphs” contains this quick portrait of a woman deceased:

Mercy Steele

*Here in her garden she sleeps.
This was the place for her;
She can hear the thyme as it creeps,
She can savor the lavender.*

*Here where the foxglove bends
And verbenas drift like snow,
Her garden she still attends.
(She loved verbenas so!)*

The garden flowers identified by name and the fanciful idea of a corpse that “sleeps” and “can hear” as well as “savor”—these show a whimsy striving for charm. But in other poems, Batchelder dares more and accomplishes more, as in this portrait:

Abby Blake—Spinster

*Straight as a poplar in the wind
Miss Abby Blake was known to be:
Spare as her gray hair slightly thinned,
Married to chastity.*

Behind the curtains of her thought

*She lived alone and tended well
To other lives less closely caught
In honest virtue's shell.*

*Now in her everlasting ark
She lies unspent who could not spend.
She thought of love as something dark,
Mistrustful to the end.*

To ponder the line “She lies unspent who could not spend” is to wonder: does it suggest autobiography? Batchelder never married, and she had no natural children. Was she “mistrustful” of intimate relations? In other poems, her readers encounter a stark sensuality. Her bolder, more personal poems indicate this poet didn't consider herself a woman fearful and “unspent.” In fact, “Remembering Midas” comes as close as Batchelder dared to confessing what was, in her era, an indecent passion. Here are two excerpts:

*...Discover where the shameful mandrake bleeds
And bury this secret of our untoward love.
Dig deep and breathe our passion to the earth...*

*...Deep in the ground, what nomad shall discover
This buried whisper, and what voice repeat
The hidden secret of a ghostly lover
Beneath the bank where reeds and river meet?*

The “untoward love” must remain a “hidden secret.” Her poem “Song in a Minor Key” that begins “If you must play upon my heart,/ Play softly in a minor key”—goes on to give specific instructions to the lover: “Touch lightly on a single string,/ Make it respond. Make it obey/ The resonant bow that bids it sing—/If on my heart you wish to play.” The message that restraint is essential, and that all unbridled, passionate feeling must be “muted,” becomes clear in the verse that follows:

*Know what the muted string must know:
Confined and tentative melody
Unravished by the insolent bow,
Inviolable where the note would be.*



The whole of her sonnet “Bid Me Discourse” goes even further to suggest (but not fully reveal) what sort of love is being described. The vocabulary may be formal, almost Shakespearean, but the tone seems poignantly confessional:

Bid Me Discourse

*Bid me discourse of moonlight and of roses
But never of the secret of my heart;
Choose the inconsequential which supposes
That love, for me, has neither place nor part.*

*There are no lines to help your hand in tracing
What of the past has left its mark on me.
And of the future my desire is facing,
There are no signs to show what that may be.*

*Bid me to pleasure; and the day or hour
Pleasure shall cease, swift shall my feet take flight.
I would not pause to pluck a withered flower,
Nor strew my floor with rushes touched with blight.*

*Let us dispute the night, deflower the day;
Bid me discourse, but not of love, I say.*

Hidden love is one of this poet's two major topics. When she's investigating her other favored topic—nostalgia—Batchelder's verse relaxes, and she seems to feel much safer. Yet she doesn't have much new to say about how keenly she misses joys from her past while trapped in the present. Let this poem, with its hyperbole, be a stand-in for others that are similar:

Proposed Bargain

*Purple the hills in this clear air;
Green are the maple trees,
I'd give the world if I were there
For only one of these.
Bargains are struck and this is mine:
For only one long day
By Kedron Brook with hook and line
I'd give the world away.*



Ann Batchelder died at the age of 74 and was buried in the Riverside Cemetery of Woodstock, Vermont.

In much of her work, Batchelder seems most serene and comfortable when handling nostalgia. To be “homesick” for an idyllic place—always Vermont, in her case—can be

confessed without shame. Nothing “untoward” will, by accident, reveal itself.

Dwelling most of her life in the canyon streets of New York City made Batchelder long for the singular beauty of her native town. The sincerity of her ache to return there is without question. In writing of her lost “home,” she could feel confident her readers shared the same emotion. It's no surprise that lines in her “nostalgia poems” have such a graceful, easy rhythm. Today, however, in an age of gay freedom (“out and proud”), Batchelder's oblique but brave poems about lesbian love are more interesting.

LOCAL CRYPTOGRAM

A cryptogram is a code in which one letter is substituted for another. For example, the word “Church” could be written BWMSBW. The letter B would be the letter C and would be so throughout the entire message. In this message W = T. The solution is found by trial and error. The CRYPTOGRAM answer is on the last page.

“WSYW HGQDD UN NLQHSDV

BOW MLYHH GYPQH GQ WSJFP

UN NLJRYV FJMSW NUUWCYDD

JF SJMS HBSUUD. WSQ HGQDD

UN KUKBULF YFR BJMYL

HGUPQ LQGJFRH GQ UN WSQ

HWYRJOG. WSQ BOWWJFM UN

WSQ MLYHH LQGJFRH GQ UN

WSQ YOMOHW KLYBWJBQ.”

GLAD RAGS SALE

SALE FALL AND DONATION DATES

The Fall 2025 Sale dates are:

Friday, September 19 ~ 2 - 6 PM

Saturday, September 20, 9 AM - 2 PM

Sunday, September 21, 10 AM - 1 PM (when everything is half price)

The Saturday collection dates for the Fall sale are 10 AM - 1 PM on: August 2, August 16, August 30

Charles B. Danforth Library News



Open Hours

2-4 p.m. Monday
2-4 p.m. Wednesday
10 a.m. – Noon – Saturday
Hi-speed ECFiber Wi-Fi

Free Membership – This is your local library.

Need a good book? We have lots of great books highlighted on our New Books shelf.

Stop in to see what you have been missing!

Vermont State Parks Lake Quality Report: [SwimWater](#)

Free Online Series from Road Scholar

Road Scholar is celebrating their 50th anniversary by offering free online lectures. These are 45 – to 60-minute lectures, and participants can engage with expert instructors and Join live Q&A sessions. See: [Free Online Lectures: Art History, Music, and More | Road Scholar](#)

Coming in August

Vermont Humanities – Words In The Woods

Matthew Olzmann: Words in the Woods

August 23: 11:00 am - 12:00 pm at Silver Lake State Park

“Matthew Olzmann is the author of Constellation Route as well as two previous collections of poetry: Mezzanines and Contradictions in the Design. A recipient of fellowships from Kundiman, MacDowell, and the National Endowment for the Arts, Olzmann’s poems have appeared in the New York Times, Best American Poetry, The Pushcart Prizes, Kenyon Review, and elsewhere. He is an assistant professor at Dartmouth College and also teaches in the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College. “
(Vermont Humanities)

Registration: [Matthew Olzmann: Words in the Woods - Vermont Humanities](#)

2025 FEAST & FIELD

BARNARTS MUSIC SERIES

July 24 Khumariyaan Pakistani - hyperfoik & Pashtun
July 31 The Wormdogs - roots & Americana
Aug 7 Mal Maiz - psychedelic latin
Aug 14 Zikina - Afro-jazz & rock
Aug 21 Beecharmer - old timey/bluegrass
Aug 28 Bow Thayer's Choirs of Aether
- improvisational rock
Sept 4 Timbermash - bluegrass/Americana
Sept 11 Queer Dance Party
Sept 18 Fabiola Mendez - Puerto Rican folk& jazz
Sept 25 Equinox Closing Festival

OTHER BARNARTS EVENTS

Roald Dahl's Matilda BarnArts Summer Youth Theater, August 1-3, Barnard Town Hall

Haunted Village Theater, October 18, Village of Barnard
Fall Global Music Residency, October and November, dates to be announced, at Various Schools & Venues

Holiday Cabaret dinner & dance, Wassail Weekend, December 13, Barnard Town Hall

Winter Carols December 19, First Universalist Church of Barnard

BARNARD STREET DANCE

The Barnard Street Dance is a free family-friendly, community event featuring live music, dancing, kids activities, boat races, and an all-ages contra dance!

Saturday, August 23, 2-7pm

At 2pm at the Silver Lake State Park

Boat Races sponsored by the Silver Lake Association

At the Barnard Town Hall

Music: 2pm Open Mic with Justin Park

4pm Community Contra Dance with Blind Squirrel

5:30 pm Pointe Noir Cajun Band

All day activities for families:

Games and activities with Barnard Rec

Art Bus visit & project

Touch-a-truck and meet members of the Barnard Volunteer Fire Department

We need sponsors for this great event!!!

Sponsorships are available for \$50-1000, all with varying levels of support and connection to this great community event and BarnArts mission of *Building Community through Art*

More info on the event and sponsorship details: <https://barnarts.org/mainstage/archives/barnard-street-dance/>

We are also gratefully accepting items for our Street Dance Auction and Raffle. Please email us at info@barnarts.org to donate something - goods, services, activities and stays are all welcome donations! All funds raised through the auction & raffle will directly support the Barnard Street Dance and other free BarnArts events.

BarnArts Center for the Arts www.barnarts.org
PO Box 41 info@barnarts.org
Barnard, VT 05031 802-234-1645 (voicemail)

THE BULLETIN BOARD

AT ARTTRISTREE

Opportunities to Dance this Summer!

Move Together: An Inclusive Improv Dance Jam

Sunday, August 10 from 10am - 12pm

Come move, play, and groove in community! Whether you're a seasoned dancer or just love to move your body, you're invited to our Inclusive Improv Dance Party — a joyful space for connection, creativity, and self-expression.

Learn more: <https://artistreevt.org/movement-classes>

Beginner & Beyond Improv Dance

Mondays, July 28, & Aug 11 from 6pm - 8pm

No dance experience necessary! This is an anti-perfectionist, pro-joy workshop! Beginner & Beyond is for folks new to improv / dance, and for experienced dancers to play and deepen their skills. We will explore prompts and themes that make way for creative self-expression.

Learn more: <https://artistreevt.org/movement-classes>

Wednesdays Music on the Hill Summer Concert Series

Free Admission. Join us every Wednesday at 6:30PM from now through September 24th for unforgettable evenings of live music and community.

Artistree Community Arts Center & Gallery

2095 Pomfret Road
PO Box 158
South Pomfret, VT 05067
802.457.3500 ext. 129

Support Artistree at:

<https://artistreecommunityartscenter-bloom.kindful.com/>

Website: www.artistreevt.org

AT FABLE FARM

Join us at our Tasting Room series, 3:30-5pm at the Fable Farm Fermentory. This series will be hosted by Lauren & Sycamore, a nutritionist and chef visiting for the summer. They will explore the newest science, ancestral wisdom, and practical tools to help one reconnect with the true sources of nourishment often overlooked by medicine today.

Saturday July 26th – Soil Health & Nutrient Density

Saturday August 23rd – Fats, Seed Oils, & Cholesterol

The Tasting Room. The tasing room is open every Saturday from now through November, from 12–6pm, rain or shine, in our indoor/outdoor barn-orchard gathering space.

In addition to our rotating selection of artisanal pizzas, our expanded menu will continue celebrating seasonal vegetables and meats from the farm, with the new inspired offerings featuring fresh-ground masa from Nando at [Moon and Stars](#) in South Royalton, VT

Whether you're in the mood for a leisurely lunch, an early dinner, or small bites paired with curated flights from our full lineup of Fable's living wines and ciders, it's the perfect way to spend a Saturday afternoon.

Keep an eye out for the special Saturdays featuring private tasting dinners, educational experiences, and guided tours led by maestro Sycamore. Sign-ups will be available on our [website](#) soon.

Sycamore steps in as our Chef-in-Residence at Fable Farm for the summer season. Sycamore began his food journey 15 years ago by apprenticing on organic farms around the East Coast, which then inspired him to become a private chef, as the steward and translator between farmer and eater. After years of managing a small catering company in California, he expanded into teaching as a professor at the Culinary Institute of America. Now, he brings the full depth of that experience—gardener, chef, and teacher—to the kitchen at Fable Farm.

Running through September is Soil to Soul Suppers, a monthly gathering under the Fable orchard canopy, where food becomes prayer and sacrament. Guests will be invited to gather in reverence, storytelling, and seasonal bounty.

Private event and catering inquiries are also welcome. Join us for a season of deep nourishment and grounded celebration.

Jon & Christopher

THE PLANNING COMMISSION meets on the Monday prior to the first Wednesday of every month at 7 PM in the Town Office.

BARNARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION meets the first Monday of the month, 7:00pm, Town Hall.

BEES MEETINGS are held at 6:30pm on the 2nd Thursday of each month in the library at the school.

DANFORTH LIBRARY HOURS: Monday & Wednesdays 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.; and Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to Noon. ECFiber Wi-Fi. Phone: 802-234-9408. Email: charlesdanforthlibrary@gmail.com.

SELECTBOARD meets the first and third Wednesday of the month at the Town offices at 7:00pm.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, selectboard@barnardvt.us, by phone: 234-9211 x 2. Office Hours: Tuesdays 9am-4pm, Thursdays 8am-noon, and by appointment.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR, zoning@barnardvt.us, by phone: 234-9211 x 2. Office Hours: Tuesdays 9am-4pm, Thursdays 8am-noon, and by appointment.

TOWN CLERK office hours are Monday and Tuesday, 8:00am—3:30pm. Public access is restricted. Call 234-9211 for an appointment.

THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:00pm at the Barnard Town Hall as necessary.

THE BARNARD ENERGY COMMITTEE meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7:00pm at the Town Hall

BARNARD GENERAL STORE, Monday-Saturday: 7am-7pm, Sundays: 8am-6pm.

<https://www.facebook.com/barnardgeneralstore>

BARNARD LISTSERV: to subscribe please send an email to: barnard-subscribe@lists.vitalcommunities.org

RECYCLING Click [here](#) for Hours and Regulations

The Barnard Inn is running a "Feeding Neighbors & Sustaining Community" campaign. Purchase an e-Gift Card and in turn the chefs will feed neighbors. Whole chicken dinners (serves 4-6) and individual sized meals to help feed Vermonters in need. Thank you and please stay safe. E-Gift Cards are available at www.barnardinn.com.

ECFIBER Governing Board meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7pm via. Zoom. Contact the clerk of the District. secretary@ecfiber.net, for meeting information or visit <https://www.ecfiber.net/virtual-meetings/>

HISTORICAL SOCIETY Programs to be announced. Questions? Email: historicalbarnard1761@gmail.com

DELECTABLE MOUNTAIN QUILTERS (DMQ) meet the 1st Tuesday of every month at the Bethel Library from 1-3pm. Contact: Mary Croft 802-763-7074

CRYPTOGRAM ANSWER

"That smell of freshly cut grass makes me think of Friday night football in high school. The smell of popcorn and cigar smoke reminds me of the stadium. The cutting of the grass reminds me of the August practice."

- Garth Brooks

LOCAL ORGANIC BLUEBERRIES

Pick your own. \$4.00 a pound

They are amazingly abundant this year and ripening fast.

Fish Hill Farm

2086 Fish Hill Rd

Randolph, Vt

For further information email

mailto:Deonne.pop@gmail.com

802-224-6909

2025 GOLF BALL CHALLENGE

Zack's Place has a Golf Ball Challenge for you! We would like to sell 300 golf balls by July 31st. Please help us meet this goal!

Zack's Place Tournament of Champions will be on Thursday, September 4th. We are notorious for our Golf Ball Drop on that day. A helicopter will fly over the Woodstock Country Club around 5:30 and drop 500 golf balls on the 8th hole.

Golf Balls are \$50.00 each, and you can win \$5000 for being closest to the pin.

1st Place wins \$5000 2nd Place wins \$2000

3rd Place wins \$500 4th Place wins \$100

There are 10 Fourth place winners

Use this link to purchase your golf ball -

<https://zacksplacevt.org/helicopter-golf-ball-drop/>

Please consider purchasing a golf ball or two in support of Zack's Place and all that we do there. Did you know that all the programs provided to our Zack's Place participants are free? There are 2 to 3 programs a day, five days a week. We do so many fun things including sports, science, art, cooking, games, yoga, music, book club, bowling, skiing, water events at Silver Lake and so much more.

Thanks to everyone for their support of Zack's Place.

Patty Hasson

Zack's Place

Woodstock, VT