

# MUNSONVILLE

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Besides the serving at the fire department, I served on several boards over the years: selectman, planning board, zoning board, school board, assistant moderator for town meetings, and ballot clerk during elections.

Both our children graduated from Munsonville Elementary School and Keene Middle and High Schools. Chris works at (now) Markem-Image and owns a home in Marlow, but has not married.

Kim's life, however, is another eventful saga. After college, she got a job with E.M.S. and was doing quite well. As a Christian young woman, Kim had considered service with His Mansion Ministries in Deering, New Hampshire, a Christian care facility for troubled young people. While there she met a young man also serving there, from Montana. They met, fell in love, married and, after a local honeymoon, moved west to Helena, Montana. We grieved!

Kim's husband, Daniel, discovered there were more employment opportunities in the east than in Montana, so after much deliberation, he, Kim, and their two (at that point) boys moved to New Hampshire in 1991. Daniel, a friend, Brett, and I drove two vehicles, towed a third, and a trailer while Kim, Barb, and two babies flew east to New Hampshire.

The Montana family was renting a home in Hinsdale and was expected for dinner at our home in Munsonville on a Sunday. Barbara and I had discussed and prayed for several years about what to do with our house. We were nearing retirement age and the house was more than we could continue dealing with. During the next week the thought came to mind that if Barb and I could have an apartment to retire in then Kim, Daniel and family could have the house.

So, at Sunday dinner with Kim, and Daniel, I proposed this idea to Kim. Her response was, "That's interesting, Daniel suggested the same thing this week." Thank you Lord – an answer to prayer!

We transformed the small attached barn into a lovely retirement home for Barb and me and now, in the 16th year in our barn-house, we are still content and enjoy a loving, growing relationship with Kim, Daniel and their four boys (two now in college).

Transforming the barn is chronicled with many photos and a narrative describing the project in considerable detail with a number of amusing anecdotes.

Our barn-house originally had a large sliding door in front which overlooked the mill pond and Granite Lake. During the years we occupied the house this barn served as a garage for us, among other things including my woodworking shop and hay storage on the second floor for Kim's horse. Now the seven foot bay window where the door had been provides an ever-changing seasonal scene including the lake, mill pond and several ancient maple trees.

The mill pond is immediately down stream of Granite Lake and fed through a small culvert over which the West Shore Road passes. In about 1999, someone judged the culvert between the lake and millpond to be unsafe to carry the traffic flow over it so contractors were hired to remove the existing concrete structure and replace it with an eight foot steel culvert. A large excavator was brought in to dig out the concrete which was judged to be badly fractured and dangerous. After nearly standing the machine on its nose it was determined that was probably not going to remove the structure. Failing that, it was decided to bring in a dynamite crew. So holes were drilled, charges were set, wires strung and heavy padding dragged over the site. Then - "Fire in the Hole!" a dull thump, some smoke and the culvert was shattered, right? – Wrong, the old concrete demanded two more charges to break it up sufficiently to be picked out with the excavator.

At the start, the road bed was scraped away exposing the original poured concrete structure and in one wall of the bridge was revealed initials and the date of construction. The year was 1923 and the initials were either AC

"Friends are an aid to the young, to guard them from error; to the elderly, to attend to their wants and to supplement their failing power of action; to those in the prime of life, to assist them to noble deeds."

~ Aristotle

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or AG - possibly the initials of a state employee or the town road agent.

That "fragile" culvert had carried traffic and withstood flood and freeze for 70 plus years and didn't give up easily. Removing the dirt fill also revealed two iron railroad rails about 20 feet long running parallel with the road bed and encased in the concrete lending considerable support to the structure.

One positive result of having a larger opening was easier, more uniform regulation of the lake level during heavy rains or spring snow melt.

*This is the second part of Don Bennett's reminiscences of his family's life in Munsonville. You may read the continuation in the next issue of the Grapevine in August.*

