

Danville's New Recycle Center Builds on a Thirty-one Year Tradition

By Sharon Lakey

Back in April of 1991, the North Star Monthly published its first article on recycling in Danville; it was entitled *Game Plan for Garbage*. This was the year when Act 78, Vermont's 1988 Solid Waste Law, was required to be implemented. By the end of the 1991, both volunteer and professional planners were required to set up a system of waste management and recycling that would be available to all. At the 1990 Town Meeting, voters approved of Danville's joining the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District. Its mandate was "to plan for the effective, economical and environmentally sound handling of our solid wastes for the next twenty years."

The 1991 Town Report printed a Solid Waste Report that noted "Danville, like most other towns in the Northeast Kingdom and throughout Vermont, spent 1991 wrestling with how to handle their solid wastes." At the time, Danville was still dumping in an unlined landfill, but by July 1 that had to stop. A letter from Lessard's Rubbish Removal to customers states, "All unlined landfills have to close as of June 30, 1992. All the rubbish will have to be trucked to a double lined landfill and our dumping fee will be three times what it is now...which means, we will have to triple our charges. We ask that you do your part to cut down on the amount of garbage that you generate by recycling...When you drop off your recyclables, they ask for a small contribution, which is appreciated and encouraged."

A committee, spearheaded by Winona and Arnie Gadapee and Doug McGill worked together to plan and run the recycling element. A December 1991 *North Star Monthly* article entitled "Recycling on Trial" states "Recycling is available every Saturday from 8 to 11 am in the school parking lot. Recyclers will find large boxes and friendly help in which to sort a variety of recyclable materials. The large boxes come gratis from EHV, spoken for by Marty Pollard." A County, Regional and State report of 1991 identifies the District Supervisor as James Ashley with Barry Cahoon and Doug McGill listed as alternates. Danville's Committee on Recycling lists Winona and Arnold Gadapee, Doug McGill and Joe Lessard.

Team members spoke about why they were willing to volunteer. Doug McGill is quoted as saying he wanted "to see people change their habits and think more about what they buy and how much waste is associated with it." Winona Gadapee had "visions of us standing hip deep in garbage unless we start doing something about it..." Arnie, Winona's husband, said 'because my wife made me.' He quickly added, "Oh, I believe in it."

In March of 1992, the recyclers moved from the school parking lot to "every Saturday morning out of the former fire house on Hill Street." The building needed some work, including a leak in the roof. Selectmen agreed not to sell the building for at least six months and would pay to have the roof repaired immediately. According to Winona, the team nearly froze to death working in that fire station before they realized the furnace actually worked and even had oil in the tank. Tim O'Rourke of Vermont Rural Recycle would pick up, but the six month deadline created a need in the near future. Where, oh where, were they going to locate?

Looking around town, the old vacant train station located on Peacham Road heading out of Danville, seemed a possibility. After serious evaluation of the space a February 4, 1993 article in Caledonian Record informed the community of the next step. "Selectmen... reviewed a design by Fairbanks Mills for the recycling activity at the Danville Railroad Depot, whose outward appearance will be preserved through another Historic Preservation grant." It goes on to report that the grant money will only cover the structural repairs, primarily to the foundation and not for the landscape and parking area. Some money may come from the sale of the fire station, the old home of the recycling center."

The Danville Planning Commission minutes from December 8, 1993 approved the site plan submitted by David Jacobs of Fairbanks Mill to make the recycling site usable at the Station. The plan included thoughtful traffic safety issues, landscaping compatibility, sewer and water connection, some insulation and heating and signage that identified the area as "Danville Recycling Center" to be styled like a "railroad sign." (Blueprints of the plan are available at the Danville Historical Society.)

After completion of the work in 1994, Stephen Parker, Chairman of the Danville Board of Selectmen, wrote a letter to the Agency of Natural Resources requesting that the Town's recycling center be certified with the State of Vermont. He reported the number of weekly volunteers, the amount of recycling average of 2,000 pounds or more every week and the fact that the Town had voted to purchase and renovate the St. J. and L. C. Railroad station as a place for the recycling to occur. Jim Ashley, as Waste Supervisor, broke down the funding costs for the Town, and Winona Gadapee reported to the Town in the yearly report a detailed account of the renovation. Grants were received through the Agency of Natural Resources and the Preservation Trust of Vermont as well as volunteers who contributed their hours, making the final cost to the Town of the original \$25,000 predicted to be just \$2,500.

Winona gives this account of the finished work at the Railroad station. "The Danville Recycle Center finally has a new home. The eastern two-thirds of the Station has been framed-up, insulated, walled, electrified with bright lights and many outlets. It is now warmly heated with a new mini gas furnace (a far-cry from our beginnings on cold November days behind the Danville School!). The floor and wood wainscoting, cut from the town woodlot, warm the whiteness of the newly painted upper walls and ceiling. The painting was completed in three hours by fourteen volunteers on a Saturday afternoon..."

Some interesting statistics were given by Winona in ensuing reports:

1997-- 109 townspeople had volunteered at the Recycle Center

1998-- Quarterly Recycling Report from October 1 through December 31--112,198 pounds of material collected, making Danville second out of fourteen communities in the amount of waste sent to the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District. The total cost in that year was \$10,430.77. Users contributed \$4,088, making the cost to the Town at \$6,341.84.

1999--nearly 90 people volunteered to work Saturdays from 9:00 to noon. Special thanks to Jim Ashley, John White and Beth Williams, who were the top volunteers. Thanks also to Gail and

Dave Hare, who spend many hours lining up volunteers for each Saturday. Arnie and Winona Gadapee turned on the heat and opened the door each Saturday morning, took bottles to the redemption center and counted and deposited the contributions. Volunteerism didn't stop there. In the present time period Bob Larose, related to Arnie and Winona through marriage to their daughter, Kim, took up the job of Recycle Manager every Saturday for the last 17+ years.

The Station was an appropriate place for recycling, but it did have its drawbacks. The biggest problem noted was that parking wasn't all that safe. Added to that were the stairs that needed to be climbed to drop off the bags, and in winter ice could form on the surface presenting a risk of falls. Still, it was the Town's best option until time and change, once again, pushed things forward.

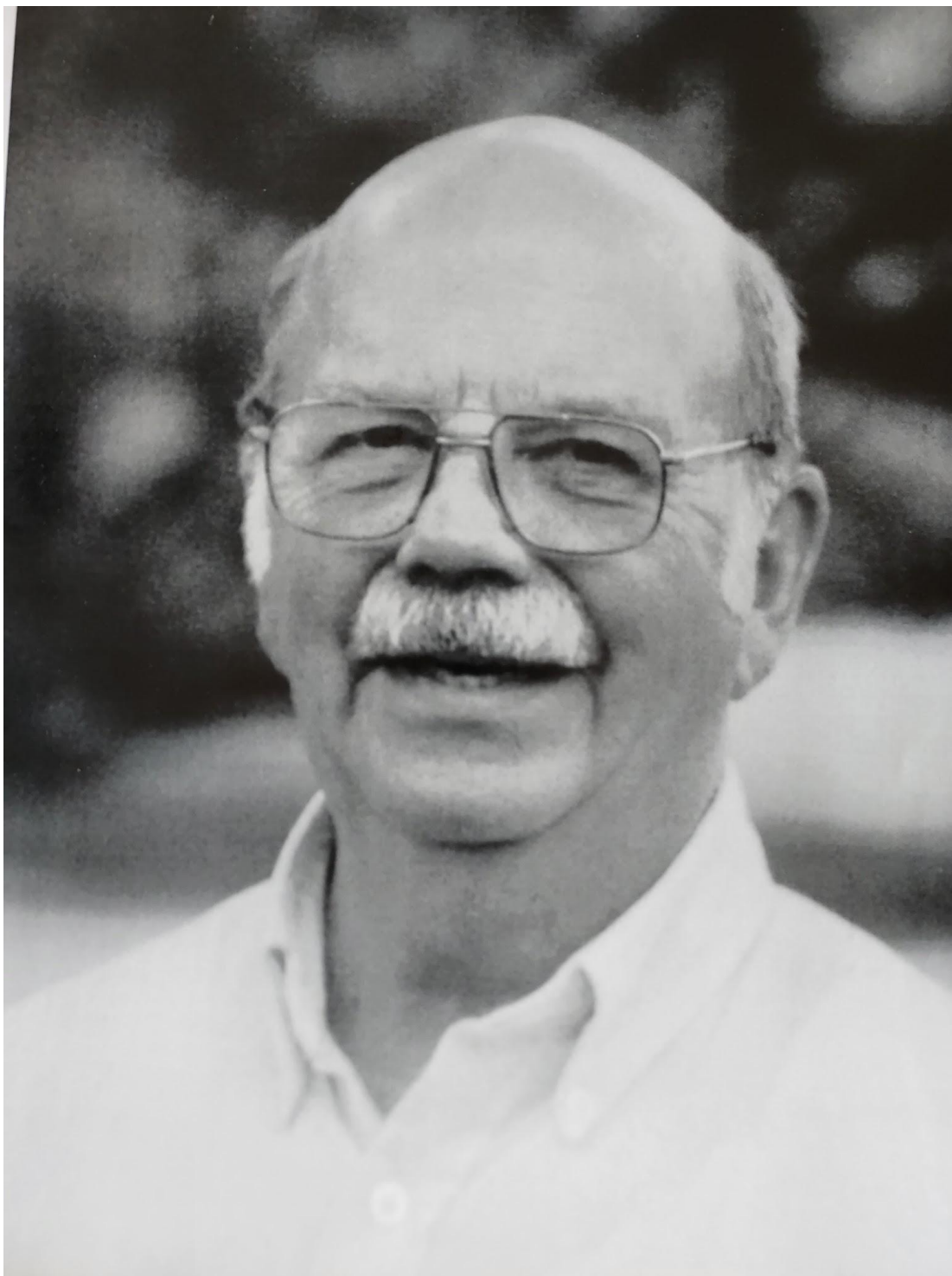
When the Rail Trail was completed through Danville and many bikers and walkers began crossing the Peacham Road at that particular spot, it became more obvious that it wasn't a perfect place for recycling. The Danville Historical Society has developed an interest in the building as a historical site that could draw the interest of visitors and possibly bring them into the village center. And, the continuing safety issues with parking and traffic wasn't going away.

Enter Keith Gadapee, Danville's Road Foreman. He pitched an idea in 2021 through a grant application to the NEKWD (Northeast Kingdom Waste District) that the recycle site be moved to the Danville Town Garage where an addition would be added to its present building. The Town voted for the addition, showing its strong historical support of local recycling.

At this point in this article comes my own guilty admission; until recently, I have never used Danville's recycling program. I chose to use the Casella "no sort" option in St. Johnsbury, because it was easier. So, when asked to write this article, I asked for directions to the new site and traveled there on a Saturday morning at 8:30 am to get a feel for it and interview Clayton Cargill, who is the present manager of the site.

What I found there was more than recycling. I found I was among a community, smiles, and a group of Danville residents recycling that I haven't seen since the pandemic began. It raised my spirits to see them once again, and I watched as they moved from one box to another depositing their recyclables into the proper containers. I watched as Clayton and his two sons helped residents with questions. It was plain and simple fun to be among them.

I vowed to return the next week with my own recycling to see how hard it really was to sort. On the internet, I found the information for pre-sorting by searching *Danville Recycling and Waste Disposal Guide*. However, Clayton and his sons are right there to help if need be. I'm pleased to report my trial a success, and it wasn't hard. I urge you, dear reader, to give it a try. There are smiles and help and neighbors to brighten your weekend. And, it's free!



The new Danville Recycle Center will be named the “Jim Ashley Recycling Center” at a celebration on November 5, 2022. Jim was a dedicated recycler and served on the NEKWD board of advisors.



The sign on the Danville/Peacham Road showing the way to the Danville Highway Department to which the Recycle Center is attached.



The new addition to the Town Garage is the Danville Recycle Center, located at the Danville Highway Department site. **Hours are Saturdays, 7:30am – 12:30pm (summer) or 8am-12pm (winter).**



Clayton Cargill, Supervisor of the new Danville Recycle Center with his two sons, Graham and Nolan.



Keith Gadapee, Danville Road Foreman, and instigator of the move to the Town Garage site.



Signage instruction is clearly written and posted, but if one has a question about which box to put their recycling items in, there is help.

Pull Those Glossies

Dec 1991



Winona Gadapee helps Ginny Flanders go through her paper bag full of newspapers to remove glossy inserts on the first day of recycling in Danville.

*See **Recycling On Trial**, pg. 5*

A photograph from the December 1991 issue of the North Star Monthly paper taken on the the first day of recycling in Danville.