

Circulation 1350

Published by Vermont Adult Learning in Middlebury

May, 2008

### *A Special Celebration*

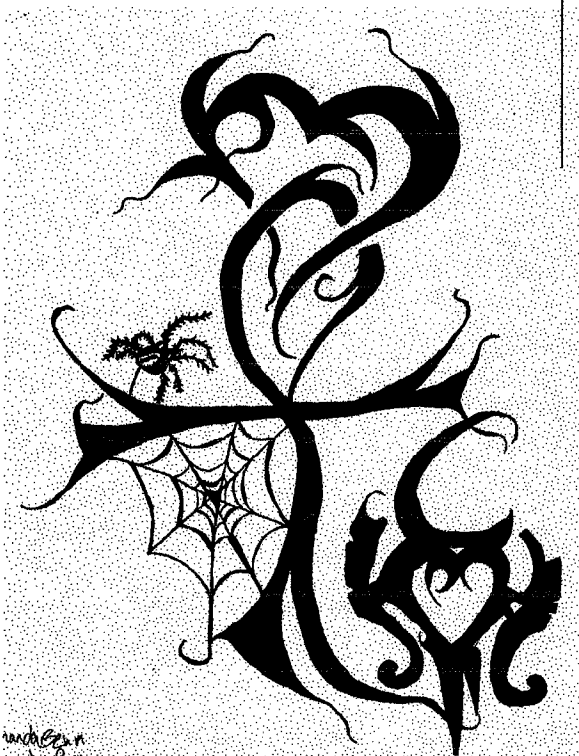
The Spring Festival is the most important festival in China. It is the biggest day of the year for all the Chinese. The Spring Festival is the first day of a year of the lunar calendar. People celebrate in the Spring Festival to wish a good start of the new year.

It's a reunion day. All the families will get together to have a big feast. In the past, Chinese were very poor. Dumplings are the traditional main food of the Spring Festival. It means reunion and happiness. Today, people have lots of choices for delicious food.

Children and the young adults who aren't married will get red envelopes from parents and elders as a special gift. Some money will be wrapped in the red envelopes for good luck. This is a good wish from the parents and elders. The children will grow healthy and study hard. The young adults will meet their lover soon.

All the Chinese love the Spring Festival and celebrate this special festival because it lets you remember you are the member of a family forever.

**Jian Wang**



by Amanda Behm  
St. Albans

### **The Pancake Week or "Maslennitca"**

There are a lot of holidays in Russia but each holiday makes the celebration special and different from each other, such as the Pancake Week or how we call in Russian, "Maslennitca."

Russians started celebrating Pancake Week a long time ago. It was before the Russians became Christians. People celebrated the new season of spring and the end of winter. They greeted spring with a wish to give them the best harvest and food.

Now this holiday has become a tradition. Russians celebrate this holiday in March, one week before Lent. It begins from Monday to Sunday. Each day has its own name and is celebrated differently. But for the best treat of the week people have pancakes with different fillings inside. From the morning to late afternoon the celebration is everywhere. On the main street or in the fairgrounds people cheer, play, sing, dance and eat the sweets and pancakes. There are a lot of competitions in the fairgrounds. The most popular is to get the shoe on top of a high pole. Also young girls and boys guess for the future on Maslennitca. The last day of the week or last day of big celebration - Sunday, people usually ask for forgiveness of each other.

My family and I love this holiday. We always have pancakes as a main dish. We go to celebrate with friends to the fairground. We laugh a lot and play a lot.

This week is the most fun week of the year. This holiday became a tradition for all Russians from long ago to now, from old generations to new generations - forever.

**Evgeniya Kapish**

### **INSIDE**

**At the doctor's with a**

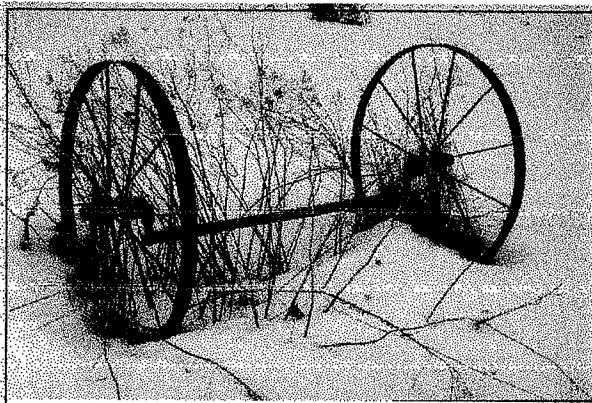
**6 month old.....p. 2**

**By the side of a river...p.3**

**Who We Are.....p. 4, 5**

**Around the corner.....p. 6**

**The Eagle apologizes to Florita Williams and to our readers. We misspelled Philippines in her story on the front page of the last issue.**



### *Day After Day*

Look at me. Here I sit. Through rain, snow, ice, wind and sun. Day after day. Does anyone really care? Does anyone want to know? People drive by me and stare; for they really don't know why I'm there.

A long time ago I was really something. I was proud as could be. Now I sit here day after day. I'm getting old, and I have lots of rust. My wheels round still with spokes, but that's about all with just a small shaft that connects us together for our last days to sit here day after day.

I once followed the farm work horses, plowing deep furrows into the ground. This was the beginning of every spring. My farmer and my partner horses - we worked as a team. It was hard work, but when the day was done you knew it, and you were glad to sit the night out and you knew why you were sitting.

But now I sit here not knowing why. Day after day sitting and sitting. Day after day. Look at me.

**Sharlena Payne**  
Cornwall



by **R. Chirnoff**  
Ripton

**I have a six month old son. We had to go to the doctor's. It was time for those dreaded shots.** I feel so bad for my son Gabriel when he starts to cry in that "Mommy, this hurts. Please help," cry. Then there's that horrible face of pain that makes it all even worse.

The past few times he has been OK with the doctor. But this time it was not fun for him at all. The doctor still has not yet touched him. She comes over with the little gismo to dilate your pupils, and it was as if she was going to be horrible to him. He looked at me and cried. I felt so bad because he did not even know what was coming. He was going to be getting three shots in his thighs.

When it came time to get those shots, he cried like he was being killed. It makes me feel so horrible that I can't help him. I just have to let it happen.

Once it was all over, the nurse made it all better with a wonderful lemon lollipop that he loved. This was a wonderful end to a not so wonderful six month visit.

**Michelle New**  
Leicester

I first came to Learning Works in Middlebury in the fall of 2004. I had developed tendonitis in my left knee and had lost my job. I went to Voc Rehab for help and they referred me to Learning Works. Because of outdated computer skills, I signed up and completed computer classes which in turn earned me a year-long internship in the Middlebury office of Learning Works. Their help and encouragement changed my life and helped me develop as a person. I am now part of the Student Advisory Board, helping in statewide functions and local fund raising projects such as the Spring Fling. I also participate in the Reading Celebration each spring. I am no longer shy about calling people asking for donations or telling them about the benefits Learning Works can provide.

**Susan Van Ornum**  
Addison



**My special place is by a river in the woods.** The river is important to me because it's peaceful, full of fresh air, and on a hot day you can go for a swim.

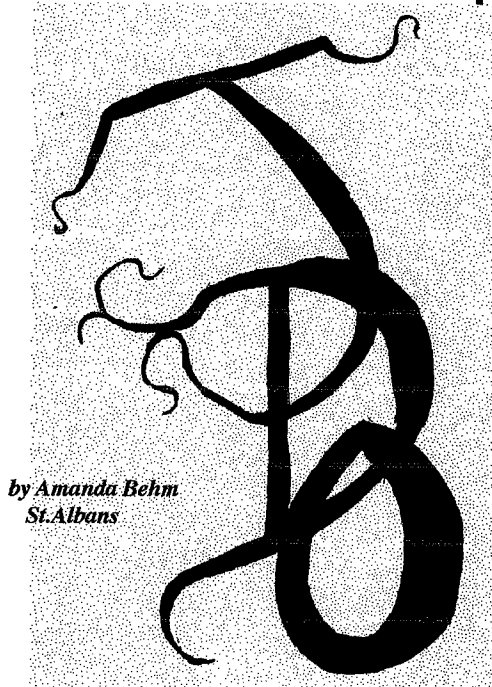
It's always peaceful by a river. All you have to do is sit back on the bank and watch the water flow by. You don't have to worry about what you look like. You just sit there and listen. When my stepdad died a couple years ago, I couldn't think straight. So that night I went down and sat by the river. For the first time I could think about everything that was going on clearly. The best part is that I didn't have to worry about anyone hearing me cry. I was alone and peaceful.

I have asthma, so fresh air is a big thing for me. So if I've been out in the city all day and I get to the point that it's hard to breathe, I just go home, put on shorts and a tee shirt, then walk to the river. At the river I can breathe and feel safe, because I know I'm breathing in fresh air.

On hot days I love calling my friends over. All of us kids get into bathing suits and we run for the river. Nothing's better than a cool swim on a hot, sunny day. One day last summer, the temperature got up over 120° plus the humidity, and all my friends and I were getting killed by the heat. So I suggested that all of us go take a dip in the river. No one wanted to go out into the heat, but then we thought of how cool the river must be. All of us ran as fast as we could to the river and jumped in. The river was so refreshing and so relaxing that all of us stayed in until the sun went down.

So if anyone ever asked me where is my special place, I'd tell them down in the river in the woods, because it's always peaceful, full of fresh air, and a great place to swim. I see myself in the future owning my own house in front of a large river.

**Amber Kimball**  
Starksboro



*by Amanda Behm*  
St. Albans

**We have been researching about different kinds of animals and plants.**

First we grew plants and measured how fast they grew and learned about photosynthesis and found the percentage of seedlings that survived. Then we planted them outside in the community garden. Then we studied birds and counted and kept a chart of birds at our feeder. This year we have been studying animals. So far we have studied birds, bees, butterflies and deer. We talk about what we know, ask questions and then we read about them.

**Deer are beautiful.** In VT we have white tail deer and moose. White tail deer are about three and a half feet tall at the shoulder. Moose are seven at the shoulder. Deer have hooves. Deer are slim. Deer have antlers that grow all summer and in the fall the antlers fall off. Baby deer are called fawn for a year. Fawns are spotted to help them hide. When they sense danger, they flash their white to warn the other deer. Deer eat apples, berries, grass, clover and acorns in summer and in the winter they eat branches. Some deer live and some don't because of hunters, predators, cars and starvation.

**Butterflies are pretty and cute.**

Butterflies are insects. They have six legs and four wings and three body parts and antennae. They smell with their antennae and taste with their feet. The caterpillar in the cocoon dissolves, then turns into a butterfly. Then the butterflies mate and they lay the eggs that become caterpillars. Butterflies pollinate plants. People in Africa and Asia eat caterpillars, and in China silk worms make silk. We enjoyed learning about the butterflies together.

**Mrs. Frances Hill**  
Paula Bocash  
Morrisville



# WHO WE ARE

## *in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties*

I came to Learning Works to get my GED. Coming here helped me to have a better outlook towards myself and others. I was chosen to be a delegate to the VALUE (national adult literacy organization) conference in Connecticut in July. This was a great opportunity.

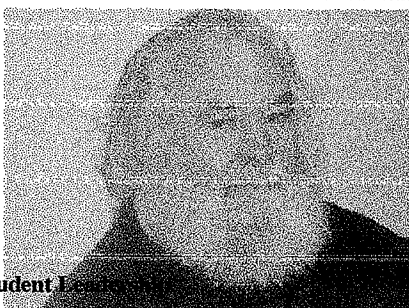
I accomplished something that I didn't think I could do - getting my GED after being out of school for 40 years. I feel better about myself. I've always been aware of myself helping others; now, I've helped myself.

**June Therrien**



Coming to Vermont Adult Learning has helped me because I'm really learning more about my math and reading. I got help studying for my permit test and I have accomplished passing my permit test, thanks to Carolyn for helping me on that. That was a big accomplishment for me. I have learned more about fractions, decimals, reading and writing. I come here because I think some of the teachers are very helpful to me. It's special to me because I come here and everybody is so helpful and everybody seems to be in a happy mood.

**Tracey Barrette**



**History of Student Learning**

I enrolled in Vermont Adult Learning in 2002. I did graduate from high school back in 1960, but I never learned how to read well enough to hold down the kind of job I wanted to do. I know what it's like. I have been an advocate for other students since I've been here. In the early stages of my involvement with VAL, I quit drinking.

I started our local Student Advisory Board and I act as a support person for trouble-shooting student problems. I joined the State Student Advisory Board in 2003. I started going to Montpelier to testify before Appropriations and Education Committees about the need for adult education services. I was chosen to be a delegate to the VALUE conference in Florida in June, 2003 and again in Connecticut in 2007. I went to two VALUE trainings in Pennsylvania and Vermont. In 2005 I went with other members of VALUE to Washington, D.C. to ask members of Congress to put adult education funds back into the budget, and the very next day they voted the funds back in. I talk to everyone I know about the value of adult education.

In 2005, I had the honor of being chosen for the LEAD Program for developing community leaders, a yearlong monthly seminar program. I became more active in VAL: Chair of the State Student Advisory Board, Student Representative on VAL's Board of Directors, and served on hiring committees and site visits. I am one of four students statewide who participated in a five day Leadership Retreat with program managers and directors of VAL.

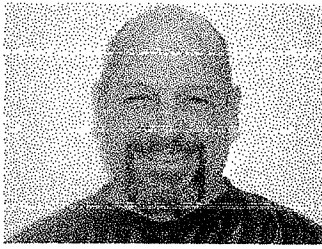
I want to spread the word about adult learning to anyone who will listen. VAL has changed my life and I want to help people improve their lives like I have.

**Roger Sweet**



There was a time when I felt so bad that I did not want to live anymore. I have a lot of health problems that make it difficult for me to come to school sometimes, but I have been pushing myself to keep coming here because it makes me feel good about myself when I see I am learning and making progress. I got my diploma through this program, and now I keep coming here to work on my math and reading skills. The teachers make me feel good for going back to school. I am a member of the Student Advisory Board and we are doing what we can to support all the students here who need encouragement and a little pat on the back.

**Roy Parah**



I started coming to Learning Works in the fall of 1992. My company was selling out and after 21 years working for the railroad, I had no other job to go to. I wanted to get my high school diploma in order to get a job. I enjoyed coming here because the atmosphere is different from going to regular school as a kid. Having one-on-one instruction really helped me a lot - no interruptions and I could work at my own pace. I graduated in June, 2000. I never got discouraged even though it took seven years to finish. I could not read a thing when I first started. My biggest accomplishment that I am proud of is learning to read.

**Allan Laroche**



I graduated high school, but they pushed me through and I never learned how to read. When I first came to Learning Works I had lost my license and didn't have a car or a job. While working on learning how to read, I also studied for my learner's permit, got it, and finally got my license back. Then I was able to attend a professional training program for janitorial and maintenance services, and got a job at a local school which I kept until I was laid off. I have kept up my connection with Learning Works by being an active member of the Student Advisory Board. Being here has helped me work on my goals for my life and I am grateful for all the help I get from the staff here.

**Frank Elliott**

Adult Ed has been helpful to me because I was laid off from IBM after 21 years of service. I just felt so alone and down and I didn't know what to do. So I started going to Vermont Adult Learning (Learning Works) to brush up on math and learn computer skills, because it's been a long time out of school. My goals are to help young adults who drop out of school and are troubled about how they can achieve their goals. I am on the Town School Board and also on the BFA board. Coming to Vermont Adult Learning has gotten me out of my shell and made me confident to speak out and take on new tasks. The teachers and staff here are very dedicated and helpful. At 53 years old, I am still learning!



**Pat Vincent**



How did I end up here at Learning Works, about to enter the Associate Degree Program at Community College? It all started when I found out my husband was doing drugs. I was eight months pregnant with my second daughter and I had gestational diabetes. We also had a vending machine business and two mortgages on our house. I found out my husband was smoking crack and spending six to eight hundred dollars a day on his habit. My name was on our credit cards and so my credit was ruined. I divorced my husband and then I was on my own with two small children. I knew I needed to do something to prepare myself for supporting my family.

I applied for assistance with the Department of Economic Services and worked with a case manager to make a plan for moving forward. I knew I did not want to rely on receiving assistance for any longer than I needed just to get on my feet. I wanted to get trained and prepared to earn the kind of money that would make me independent. My case manager referred me to the Learning Works office in St. Albans, where I went through their enrollment and assessment process. I found out that, even though I had a high school diploma and some college credits, I needed to brush up on my basic reading, writing and math skills. I started attending their open learning center where I felt very comfortable and where I met other students who were in much the same situation as I.

*(This story by Heather Williams continues on page 8.)*

After my twin boys were born my husband became abusive to us. I knew that I couldn't stay in that situation. I made the hardest decision I ever had to make, called my parents, and asked for help. They opened their doors to me, so I left the state I was living in with him and ran with my boys to Vermont. Then I had to fight hard for custody, which cost my family a lot of money. My whole life had been overturned, and I knew I had to make changes in myself also.

Desperation brought me to Learning Works. I had worked as a bartender and made good money, but I never looked beyond bartending. After being out of school for nearly 20 years, you get scared and don't even think of school as an option. I knew I wanted to have a career, and as a single mother, bartending was no longer a good choice for me. Learning Works was the first place that let me see where I wanted to go. I just thought - I'll take baby steps one at a time, and see how it goes. I got my high school diploma here by sitting in here every day for six hours. I even came in on Fridays to work on my projects. I did homework at home standing up, with my books on the shelf, and with my kids pulling at my legs. I got my diploma in two months - a record for this site. I am so proud of that.

I have three year old twin boys. One has a hole in his heart, but he is progressing well and should outgrow it. The other is autistic and needs lots of attention and services. Since they have been enrolled in the YMCA preschool program, they have really blossomed and even though it costs a little more, I'm so grateful and motivated to keep them in there. It has been hard attending school and programs while having special needs children, but I am determined, and I will do it. *(This story by Kim Lloyd continues on page 8.)*

## Story of Guardianship

For a long time Bruce had a guardianship with one person and then that person died and then his dad was still alive. Then R. J. took over for Bruce's guardianship for a long time.

In March or April he told R. J. that he was sick of this so much that he told R.J. that he got sick of waiting for checks from her a lot.

On April 15, 2008 R. J. wrote up this note about Bruce Swan to the judge of the court. R. gave Bruce the note and he read it and then signed it and then R. J. signed it and she brought it to the court and the judge read it and on April 18 Bruce Swan got the note from the court telling on the paper that Bruce Swan is his own guardian starting April 18. He called the court to make sure of this and now R. J. is no longer guardian to Bruce Swan.

It takes a while to get used to it. The people helping Bruce are my father and Jim E. and Lesley Wright and Arlene Denis for a while until he gets the hang of it. It feels weird for him as his own guardian. This is the first time in his life and the Social Security check will go to him and R. J. will close the checking account in the Middlebury bank. We are taking one thing at a time right now, then our land and our house in Salisbury. Saturday the 19th is the first full day of his guardianship for Bruce Swan. It is strange for him.

Ginger Swan  
Bristol

## Around the Corner...

I grew up around Vermont and am still amazed at what I can find around the corner. For example, my husband and I were coming home from church one day and were turning on to our street when right in front of us stands this very huge and very angry bull. I said to my husband, "What do we do now?" Well, my husband, being raised on a farm, just gets out the car and proceeds with the help of the animal's owner to put the animal back where it belongs.

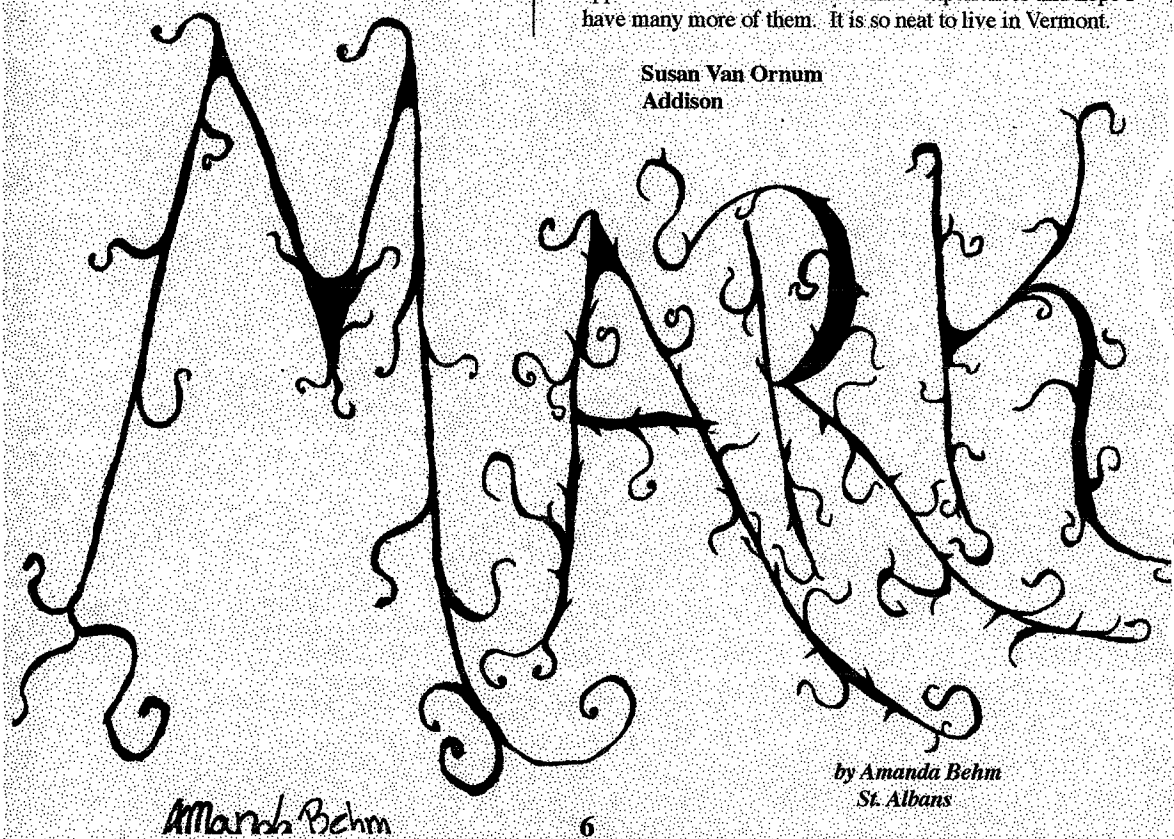
Another time, we were coming home from New York State late at night on a back road not far from home, when out in front of me trots this (for lack of a better word) old nag with a bell around her neck. Up the road she goes, taking her sweet time, not a care in the world and certainly not phased by our car. She finally decided to veer off the road into a field and disappeared into the night.

Even yet, another time, on the same road we came upon four or five cows in the middle of the road. Not knowing whose farm they belonged to, we tried two or three different houses before we finally found the right owner. Needless to say, he was not happy to be told his cows were on the loose.

Other times, I have come across pheasants in their regal attire along back country roads. Sometimes hens with their little brood of chicks would scurry back into the bush when we disturbed them. Or rabbits playing along side of the road would hurry to safety at the sound of a door opening when my husband tried to get closer with his camera.

My favorite "around the corner" episode was when I was on Lake Street in Addison and came upon this fawn in the road. The mother must have been on the side of the road watching it. The fawn seemed confused and instead of joining its mother, it continued up the middle of the road on very wobbly legs. I could hear the mother calling. Finally, after a few minutes the fawn ran off the side of the road and joined its mother. I just so appreciate these "around the corner" experiences and hope I have many more of them. It is so neat to live in Vermont.

Susan Van Ornum  
Addison



by Amanda Behm  
St. Albans

I am like all the others,  
I am tall  
I am green  
I am strong  
I stand in place to do my job  
I am proud to do this in life.

I have been told, "Look at you.  
You are not like us.  
You are tall but taller than the rest  
You are green and strong  
But look how you grow  
A branch here, way out of place  
And thinning where branches should be."

"You are not like us," the others say.

"When wind blows, you sway too much.  
You take my place and the place of others.  
You take up space that others need.  
Why don't you go away, for you  
Are not like the others and me."

I say to the others I am tall and green and strong. I will stay for I belong. I do not need to be alike to be able to do this, for I am only one out of many and many can do what one cannot. Therefore I am like all the others.

**Sharlena Payne**  
Cornwall



### **My life had some unexpected events that led me not to complete high school.**

First, I left home at an early age, got into a bad crowd, then had to get myself out of the crowd. After settling down and getting out of a bad relationship, I got into a new relationship. Then, I unexpectedly found out that I was pregnant. I had a wonderful boy and then started my second life as an adult.

I will start by telling you what my experiences in life are now. I currently work as a personal care attendant for an eighty-one year old lady who needs twenty-four hour supervision. She needs several different tasks done. Some examples are: general housekeeping, preparing her meals and any other daily tasks of living. I also babysit for a three year old boy. I get breakfast for him, then get him off to pre-school. I volunteer at Mary Hogan on Wednesdays in my son's pre-school class. In addition to these jobs, I'm also a full time mom.

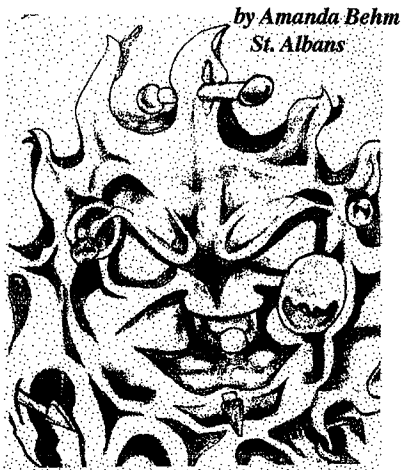
My strengths are my health and purpose. My purpose for being in the Vermont Adult Diploma Program is to better myself and get a good education.

In doing that, I will advance myself in life. As a parent, I know that proper diet and exercise are important to accept new challenges. As we get older we change and grow like children.

We learn our values from our parents at a young age. Respecting people and working hard are values that I have learned throughout my life. As a parent I have learned to have patience. "Patience is a virtue" is very true when it comes to having children. Cooperation and understanding are very important in dealing with everyone in my life. I strive to try my best to be who I am, as a mom, wife, and a friend. I am working hard in life to get where I want to be. Being responsible for myself and other people makes me who I am.

I have a few goals to accomplish. The first step in accomplishing my goals is successfully completing the Vermont Adult Diploma Program. The next step is going to college for nursing or early education. I would like to attend Vermont Technical College or Community College of Vermont.

**Shannon Dufresne**  
Bridport



**Grocery Shopping! Have you ever enjoyed grocery shopping?** I am a housewife and a mother to a six month old who lives in Leicester, Vermont and has no vehicle. So when Sunday comes around, I am up at 7:30 in the morning.

I actually enjoy comparing prices per pound. It has almost become a game. I start by checking the fliers earlier in the week to find the bargains. Then I am at the store checking all the prices, getting the best deal. All I really figure I am doing is saving money. And getting all that much closer to having a car.

Hopefully, I will be able to get a car and maybe even a part-time job. But until then, grocery shopping is my big adventure for the week.

Michelle New  
Leicester

*(Continued from page 5)*

I also enrolled in classes called Making Choices and Making It Work to help me plan for my goals, and I am presently in a work training placement at Diversified Resources. I have tried to take advantage of every opportunity that has come my way. I am very motivated and determined to make a better life for myself and my children.

The best thing that has come out of my time here at Learning Works is that I applied for the Post-Secondary Education Program and I was approved for entering college under this plan. This means that I will continue to receive assistance while I take classes. Without this, I would never be able to go to college. It is a great honor for me and I am very excited about working toward my goal of becoming a radiographer. I could not have gotten this far without a lot of help and support. I am grateful to my family, Learning Works, and everyone else who has helped me get to this point.

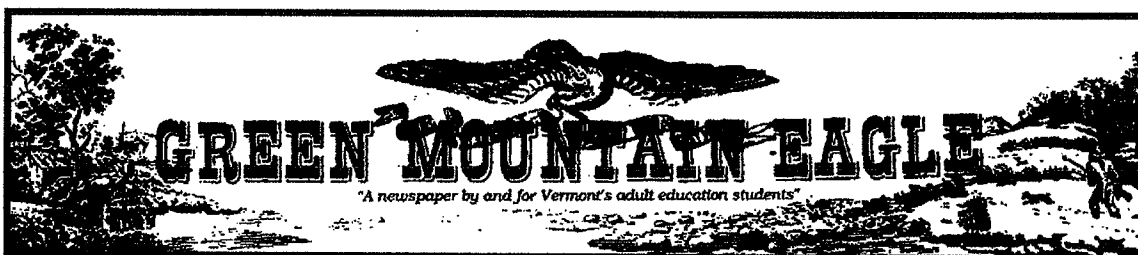
Heather Williams

*(Continued from page 5)*

I knew I wanted to go to college. I researched different careers and chose the medical field (radiology) because there's high demand for medical personnel. I need something secure that promises job opportunities when I graduate. Also, with my own and my sons' health problems, we've been through so much. It would be good to be on the other side and be able to give back and help people.

There was no way I could go to college without being awarded the Post-Secondary Education grant. That application was a very difficult and competitive process to go through and I am proud and grateful to have been selected. I am nervous about what's ahead, being a mom to my boys has to come first. But I know I can do it, and I will just keep praying and devoting all my energy to what needs to be done. I want to thank the staff at Learning Works for believing in me and supporting me to go for my goals.

Kim Lloyd



**KEEP YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS COMING!**

Address all comments, questions and contributions to:

*The Green Mountain Eagle*  
c/o Vermont Adult Learning  
282 Boardman Street  
Middlebury, VT 05753

Fax: (802) 388-4396

Phone: (802) 388-4392

E-MAIL ADDRESS: [gmeagle@vtadulthoodlearning.org](mailto:gmeagle@vtadulthoodlearning.org)

Please be sure to include your name, phone number and/or address or a way to reach you in case we have questions about your contribution.

