

In this year's Halifax Town Meeting Malcolm Sumner stood up and "passed on" Halifax's "Blue Plate" award to Joan Courser for her untiring work on behalf of the Community Club, the Halifax Senior Meal and editing this journal, among other neighborly volunteering.

Towns have different ways to recognizing the efforts of good neighbors. Anchorage, Kentucky, a close-knit community on the edge of bluegrass country, names its honoree during the annual Fourth of July festivities. To symbolize and make the contribution known to all, an antique wooden manure spreader is hauled to a prominent position in the awardee's dooryard where it must remain in full view from the road until the next Fourth of July celebration. Even casual passers-by take note and are reminded of the original use of the wagon on exceptionally humid days if the breeze is just right.

Halifax's "Blue Plate" reminds us less aromatically of the outpouring of neighbors helping neighbors after Hurricane Irene, specifically of an ingenious solution to navigating our neck of the woods when the most well traveled roads and many bridges were washed out. With portions of Routes 9 and 112 and the Green River road impassable, even natives and long time residents of Halifax and adjoining towns were at a loss to find their ways to Greenfield, Brattleboro and Whitingham. A helpful neighbor had a plan. Green plates appeared on trees leading to Greenfield, white plates to Whitingham and blue plates to Brattleboro. When the roads were repaired, one of the original blue plates was given to the Halifax Historical Society. Through action of the Selectboard the clever and cost effective solution became a symbol of how the best of us join together to help us all work through adversity. At the celebration of the work of good neighbors helping others to recover from Hurricane Irene, Tim Putnam was recognized with the first "Blue Plate". The tradition began to note the name, contribution and date of the award in a special blue book and then pass the "Blue Plate" to another deserving good neighbor after a couple of weeks and usually not more than two months, sometimes quietly and other times in a public forum. What is special about this "Blue Plate" is that it is given by a good neighbor to another. Since Tim's award on Oct. 20, 2012, the "Blue Plate" has honored the good works of Christina Moore (Nov. 20, 2012), Wayne Courser (Dec. 8, 2012), Lewis Sumner (Feb. 15, 2013), Ross Barnett (Mar. 8, 2012), and Malcolm Sumner (Jan. 20, 2014). On March 23, 2014 Joan passed the award on to Pastor Mark and Leslie Monroe.