

Party set for former Pownal town clerk

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POWNALE — When Rachel Mason was growing up, her mother threw large community picnics, and Mason is bringing that back this summer. The former town clerk, who has been involved with town government since 1952, is inviting the entire town to her daughter's Carpenter Hill Road home in July to celebrate her 90th birthday.

"It is a community picnic for everybody who wants to come, as long as they bring food," Mason said. "When I had an excuse to have a party, I said, 'let's do an old-fashioned community one.'"

Mason continues to be active in the town, now serving as a justice of the peace and helping with each election. She is best known, however, for her time as town clerk. She was elected treasurer in 1952 and in 1955 took on the town clerk position. She served in both roles until 1991.

Then Mason became a justice of the peace and a Gray Lady at the Southwest Vermont Medical Center, and remains active in both. She is also involved with several organizations, such as the Bennington Grange and 4-H.

"I like to do things for people," Mason said. "I've been involved with the town for 56 years."

Not only does Mason help during elections, but she is also a go-to person for information. Current Town Clerk Karen Burrington said she still calls Mason with questions.

According to Doris Cottrell, Mason's daughter, the potluck event will include games, dancing, live music and plenty of stories and pictures.

"Her actual birthday was in February, but we thought we could have a bigger celebration in the summer," Cottrell said. "It's an old-fashioned community picnic."

Mason said she is excited to see old friends and meet new ones. Not knowing a lot of people that recently moved to town, Mason said this is a way to meet them.

"It is for anybody that wants to come and meet people," Mason said.

The event will take place at the Cottrell's farm on July, 19, at 1 p.m. At 4 p.m., a local band will begin playing square dance music.

Interestingly, the farm is actually where Mason was born. "The best place to celebrate my birthday is my birthplace," Mason said. "I hope there will be a good crowd there."