

MOUNTAIN GAZETTE

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Serving Bolton, Cambridge, Jeffersonville, Jericho, Underhill, Westford, VT

February 4, 2021

Owl encounter

By Corey Clark

Quick story before I go to bed. A true story at that.

I was on my way to work last night, business as usual. I was tooling up VT Rt. 15 at about 55, I had a car aways in front of me, and another a bit behind. We get to Gerts' Knob Road and I see the car in front of me put their brakes on for a short duration. As I'm approaching the previous position of the vehicle in front of me, I notice a large chunk of snow in the travel lane I'm in. I get my truck set up to straddle the snow chunk. However, when I get within 15 feet of it, I was surprised to find that it was in fact not an ice chunk, but an owl. I held my line, and missed him. The vehicle behind me did the same.

I continued on my way to work. Then, I got the urge to turn around and head back. I debated with myself for a minute or two. "Oh but you might be late for work" and, "poor little fella might die." I whipped my pickup into North Underhill Station Road and went back for him. Worse case, I'll be 10 minutes late.

I got back to the pull off adjacent to Gerts' Knob, turned on my KC Daylighters, highbeams, and any other light I possibly had, and illuminated the area of operation. Phone flashlight in hand, I ran up the edge of the road to get the owl's position. Fearing he was hurt, I approached with caution to find the owl sitting on top of another bird. I was worried it was one of the owl's young.

"Shit, is that one of your babies?"

Upon further investigation, it was not another owl. It was a partridge. "Ah, you got some dinner I see. Well I hate to tell you, but you can't eat that right here. Let's go." I donned my work gloves and slowly reached for the dead partridge. I figured that if

the owl was hungry enough (or angry enough), that he'd follow me or proceed to higher ground till I was done. I was wrong.

I tossed the partridge in the ditch well off the road and turned to see the owl looking at me like I was an asshole. Rightly so, I just stole his chicken... I went back over to him and gave him a quick look over to make sure he wasn't injured. His wings, legs, feet, and head all looked well. Not wanting to end up the owl's next meal, I tried to gently nudge him out of the road with my boot. He demonstrated that his wings worked by spreading them in a defensive stance while he took a couple steps towards the yellow line. He continued to glare at me with his big eyes.

"C'mon dude, you can't be here. Get outta the road."

Nudging a couple more times and he was certain that he wasn't going anywhere. I was not only ruining dinner, but I would also have to evict this owl from a preferred dining spot. I eyeballed his sharp talons to see if I could pick him up by his legs. Yikes, no go there. Those suckers are big. I was then drawn to the sight of his beak. Crap, what to do.

"Alright, time to leave."

I put my phone partly in my mouth to hold my light and enable me to use both hands. I reached down and picked him up, cradling just under each wing. I walked over to where I put the partridge and set him down. He turned his head and looked me in the eye as a thank you (I think). I snapped a quick photo of him, the flash was bright so he squinted. He was A-OK.

We said our goodbyes, I walked back to my truck, and headed on my way.

I even made it to work on time.



Vaccine now available to Vermonters aged 75+

By the Vermont Department of Health

It's official — the public COVID-19 vaccine rollout is underway in Vermont. Vermonters aged 75 and older can now register for an appointment and get a free vaccine at a local clinic.

The quickest way to sign-up for an appointment is online at <https://www.HealthVermont.gov/MyVaccine>. If that is not an option, you can also make an appointment by calling 855-722-7878.

(It has been suggested to the Editor to consider establishing an account for HealthVermont before you go to register for a vaccine. Create an account at <https://vermont.force.com/events/selfregistration>. You would then log in to that account before registering for a vaccine appointment.)

Tips for your appointment:

- Please do not arrive earlier than 15 minutes before your appointment.
- Bring only one person with you if you need assistance.
- Wear a mask.
- Dress for the weather — it's cold out there!
- Your second dose appointment will be scheduled while you are at the clinic.

• If you need to reschedule, please call 855-722-7878.

While we wait for the vaccines to become more widely available to Vermonters, remember to keep up prevention efforts to keep the virus from spreading — including getting tested. *(Registering for a test uses the same account as is mentioned above. And like the vaccine, testing is free. — Editor)* Testing is quick, easy and free at more than 15 regular testing locations for people without symptoms. Many locations are now open daily, and some have evening and weekend hours.

For more info on COVID-19 testing or to sign-up, visit <https://www.HealthVermont.gov/Testing>.

Cambridge Town Meeting: Australian ballot only

By Mark Schilling, Cambridge Town Clerk

All voting in the Town of Cambridge for Town Meeting Day 2021 will be held via Australian (written) ballot. No floor meetings or floor votes will be held in 2021.

Voting-By-Mail is again strongly encouraged for this election. Ballots will NOT automatically sent to voters this time — you must request a ballot. Early voting ballots can be requested by contacting the Town Clerk's Office, 802-644-2251 or clerk@CambridgeVT.org, or by visiting "My Voter Page" at www.mvp.vermont.gov.

Ballots can be returned to our new drop box at the top of the stairs at the Town Office building, by mail, or at the polling place on Election Day.

Of course, polls will be open on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, 7:00 AM — 7:00 PM at the Cambridge School Gymnasium for in-person voting.

An informational meeting on all Town Meeting Day articles will be held Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 7:00 PM via Zoom or call-in. This recording will also be available on our website to view after the meeting at your convenience.

Town Reports will be available for pick up in mid-February at various locations around town and one copy will be mailed to all registered voters' homes.

For more information on Town Meeting Day 2021, please visit www.cambridgevt.org/townmeeting2021.

Information on Westford Annual Town Meeting

By Nanette Rogers, Westford Town Clerk

Important dates:

Wednesday, February 10 — ballots will be available for absentee voting;

Monday, March 1 — 5:00 PM: deadline to request an absentee ballot (please allow sufficient time for mailing);

Monday, March 1 — 7:00 PM: Public hearing to discuss the articles on the ballot (no voting will occur);

Tuesday, March 2 — 7:00 AM — 7:00 PM: polls will be open for voting at the Westford School. All COVID safety protocols, such as wearing masks, will be in place.

Westford's Annual Town Meeting will be on March 2, 2021. This year's meeting will look different than prior years. The Selectboard made the difficult decision to NOT hold an in-person Town Meeting this year. At the time of their decision, COVID cases in Vermont were increasing. Although a vaccine has been approved and is being administered, there was no way of knowing what March 2021 will look like. So, under an abundance of caution and with the health and safety of Westford residents in mind, the Selectboard voted to vote all Town Meeting questions by Australian ballot.

What does this mean?

A public hearing will be held on March 1, 2021 via Zoom. The Selectboard will discuss the questions being voted on Tuesday, March 2, 2021. The discussion will include a PowerPoint presentation of the proposed budget.

Voting will occur Tuesday, March 2, 2021. There will be in-person voting; however, voters are encouraged to vote by absentee (Australian) ballot. In-person voting will be at the school in the gym.

Ballots will be available by Wednesday, February 10, 2021.

Ballots will NOT be automatically mailed to voters. You MUST request a ballot from the Town Clerk's office. Voters are encouraged to request ballots as soon as possible due to the short turnaround time between the date ballots will be available and the vote on Tuesday, March 2, 2021.

The Town Meeting Warning and Public Hearing Notice are available for viewing at <https://westfordvt.us/voting/town-meeting/>.

The FY'22 proposed budget and the January 14, 2021 PowerPoint FY'22 proposed budget presentation are available for viewing at <https://westfordvt.us/boards/selectboard/>.

The Selectboard realizes this is a big change from what Town Meeting has been but firmly believes the change for 2021 is in the best interest of the safety of our community.

Please look for information regarding Town Meeting that will be distributed over the coming weeks.

If you have any questions, please contact the Town Office at 878-4587 or townclerk@westfordvt.us. You may also contact the Selectboard at selectboard@westfordvt.us.

Jericho FY22 budget information

By Todd Odit, Jericho Town Administrator

The Jericho Selectboard has adopted a proposed FY22 budget and approved the articles to be voted on via Australian ballot for the 2021 Town Meeting. Please visit <https://jerichovt.org/town-meeting-2021> for more information.

NEWS BRIEFS

Vermonters 75+ can now schedule COVID-19 vaccinations

Vermonters who are 75+ years old can now schedule a COVID-19 vaccine online, as of Monday morning, January 25. The link below has the information needed to make an online appointment. Please share this widely and help your neighbors, friends, and family if you can.

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine/getting-covid-19-vaccine>

Watch MMCTV for legislative updates, other live meetings

By Angelike A. Contis, MMCTV

In the lead up to Town Meeting Day, Tuesday, March 2, Mount Mansfield Community TV (MMCTV) will be streaming as many special town meetings live as possible on its Comcast channel and on YouTube. You can check the MMCTV updated and weekly schedules online at <http://mtmansfieldctv.org/schedule/>.

MMCTV streamed Representatives George Till and Trevor Squirrel's legislative update live on its Comcast Channel 1086, as well as its YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/MMCTV15/live>) on Tuesday, January 19. The talk was held via Zoom, courtesy of the Deborah Rawson Memorial Library. Following that event, MMCTV streamed the Richmond Selectboard meeting (already in session), which was scheduled to start at 7:00 PM.

On Thursday, January 21, MMCTV streamed the first hour of the Underhill Selectboard meeting, followed by the Jericho Selectboard meeting.

Monthly Essex Jericho Underhill Food Shelf

The EJU Ecumenical Ministry Food Shelf is especially grateful for the outpouring of community support in the form of time, money, produce, and staples during the recent holidays. As you can imagine, the need has grown over the past year.

In 2021 the Food Shelf plans to continue monthly distributions on the third Saturday of each month (next: February 20) from 9:00 — 11:00 AM at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church VT Rt. 15 in Jericho.

Newcomers may register on the spot. To stay safe, clients should plan to stay in their vehicles while volunteers deliver pre-packed bags of groceries.

While regretting the need to limit the number of on site volunteers due to COVID, other contributions are still welcome through local churches, donations bins in local markets, or P.O. Box 65 Jericho, VT 05465.

For more information, email ejufoodshelf@gmail.com.

Truck to Trunk food distribution in Cambridge this month

Cambridge Christian Fellowship has been asked to participate in the distribution of food to needy families. The distribution will take place at the church in the middle of Cambridge at 1:00 PM on Saturdays and will continue through February. There will be a

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30-pound box of groceries available to each family.

There will be a central distribution point in Burlington in the morning and we need a count of how many boxes to pick up. If you plan to participate please call 644-5771 and leave a message or text 730-4013 with the number of boxes that you will need, and do this by Friday night so we know how many to pick up.

To repeat, the distribution will take place on Saturday afternoon at 1:00 PM and it needs to be COVID compliant, so people will need to be masked and we will make the distribution.

Departing Town Administrator thanks Cambridge

By Marguerite Ladd

Cambridge Town Administrator emerita

It has been a pleasure to serve and get to know the Cambridge community for the past few years. Thank you for welcoming me with such kindness – it has been truly inspiring to work with a community that cares so deeply about one another. Continue to take care of each other and stay safe – I'll keep an eye on you from Essex!

Cambridge interim Town Administrator

By Larry Wyckoff, Cambridge Selectboard

The Cambridge Selectboard sincerely thanks Marguerite Ladd for her service as the town's first Town Administrator since July 2018. Her last day was Friday, January 22.

Eric Boozean will serve as interim town administrator while the Selectboard searches for a successor to Marguerite. Eric will also continue his duties as assistant highway manager. The Selectboard thanks Eric, Highway Manager Bill Morey, and the road crew for helping with this transition.

Eric can be reached through the phone number for the Town Administrator (802-644-8290) and the email address for the Town Administrator (townadmin@cambridgevt.org). Townspeople may also, as always, reach out to the general Town Office number (802-644-2251) for assistance.

Friendly "No Parking" reminder: Krusch Nature Preserve

By Marguerite Ladd, Cambridge Town Administrator

The Cambridge Selectboard is delighted to hear reports that the Krusch Nature Preserve has been a popular destination and has been getting regular public use! On that note, please respect the property of the neighbors in the area and remember that there is no parking on private property or on the town roads. The Krusch Nature Preserve Steering Committee and the Town are working hard to get a parking lot constructed as soon as possible, it is currently in the engineering stage.

Lamoille Chamber of Commerce legislative update meetings

The 2021 Lamoille Chamber Of Commerce Legislative Update Series, held on Zoom, began on January 25 and will continue with a meeting on Monday, February 22, 8:00 – 9:30 AM, followed by a meeting on Monday, March 29, 8:00 – 9:30 AM. Join us as we hear updates from our local Representatives. Each event is open to the public, and there will be a question-and-answer portion after each Legislator has had the opportunity to speak.

Participants are asked to pre-register before each event. To register and for more information, go online to <https://www.lamoillechamber.com/events-1>. A Zoom meeting link will be sent to you after registering. Please note that there is a separate registration link for each event.

Please send all questions for Legislators in advance, to executivedirector@lamoillechamber.com.

Underhill rink: free skating / no pucks weekend mornings

By Anton Kelsey, Underhill Recreation Committee

A note to residents that the Underhill Rink has a new guideline: on Saturday and Sunday mornings from 9:00 - 10:30 AM, there will be no hockey pucks or sticks on the ice. Sticks and pucks are allowed at all other times, but please be mindful of other users of the rink.

Don't forget to follow Vermont COVID guidelines – wear a mask!

Thanks to all! It has been great to see so many people out skating.

Nordic ski grooming at Tomasi Meadow

Underhill Recreation Committee update: Tomasi Meadow (the field by Casey's Hill) in Underhill Center is being groomed for nordic skiing this winter. Currently, the grooming is a skate track; there is not a classic track set. A few guidelines:

- Parking – please park in the lot just off Mountain Road (the lot used to sled at Casey's Hill). DO NOT park along Mountain Road.

- Walkers and snowshoers – please avoid walking in the groomed track! If you are walking or snowshoeing, please walk to the left or right of the groomed track.

Classic track grooming: Currently the grooming volunteers do not have grooming equipment to set classic track. If anyone has a piece of nordic grooming equipment sitting unused behind a garage that could be pulled behind a snowmobile, please contact Anton Kelsey, anton@lavjaveler.com or 310-5870. Donations or figuring out a fair price are possible. Thanks!

Westford FY'22 proposed budget and presentation

By Nanette Rogers, Westford Town Clerk

The Westford Selectboard presented the draft FY'22 town budget at their recent meeting. The presentation along with the proposed town budget and anticipated revenue have been uploaded to the town's website. Go to <https://westfordvt.us/boards/selectboard/> to view the documents.

The town budget will be voted on Tuesday, March 2, 2021.

Westford notes

The Town Office is closed to the public at this time due to the spread of COVID-19. Office staff are available to take phone calls, Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM. We will try to accommodate you through email, phone, or snail mail as much as we can! Call to make an appointment for a service that cannot be provided by mail or electronically, such as notary services. Zoning Administrator hours: Monday and Tuesday, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM, by appointment only.

Dog Licenses are due by Thursday, April 1. A current rabies certificate is required. If you are unsure if the current certificate is on file, please call the Town Office. If you no longer have your dog or your dog has passed away, please let us know. For your convenience, you may mail or drop off the fee and rabies certificate along with a self-addressed stamped envelope and your license will be mailed to you. The fee until April 1 is \$13 for intact dogs and \$11 if your dog is spayed or neutered. Dog licenses obtained after April 1 are subject to a late fee.

Senior Luncheon: Once again we are on hold because of the COVID virus. We miss you and want to get them going again, but not to the expense of someone getting the virus. We are told to stay home and that's the best advice that I can give. Wear a mask when going out and if you don't believe this virus is real, please still wear your mask to protect all that go near you. Please know that you're in my thoughts and want everyone to stay safe and healthy. If you need something, please feel free to call me and I will do my best to do it for you or at least will find someone to help you. HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY! It's hard to believe that we've had this virus for almost a year. Carol Howrigan, President; 878-3090 or carolfrank2@comcast.net.

Westford's Winter Road Policy: Read the full policy at <https://westfordvt.us/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Winter-Road-Policy.pdf>. Plowing begins when the snow has accumulated 2-3 inches. Each plow route takes the road crew about four hours to complete. Sand is applied to all gravel roads. Some particles may be large enough to cause windshield damage; use caution and avoid following other vehicles closely. Westford does NOT repair or replace mailboxes damaged by the plow. Plowing snow from driveways across town roads is prohibited. Each winter storm is different, roads may be icy and sand may be loose. Drive slow and know what your vehicle is capable of.

Watch for walkers and wildlife. It will be more difficult to see pedestrians and recreational users of roads this time of year due to snowbanks. Walkers, bikers and other users can do their part by wearing bright, reflective clothing.

Some VAST trails cross Westford Roads. Know where the trails are and watch for crossing snowmobiles. You can find a list of VAST trails at <https://vfvast.org/trails.html>.

Several hunting seasons occur during early winter. Watch for vehicles parked on the side of roads for hunting access. Pedestrians & pets should wear orange/yellow reflective clothing during hunting seasons to help ensure they are seen. You can find a list of VT hunting seasons at <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/hunt/hunting-and-trapping-seasons>.

Westford School trails

to be shared use

Wednesdays, Saturdays

The Westford Selectboard was approached by one of the cross-country ski coaches at BFA Fairfax in January. They're looking for a place for the kids to get out on groomed trails and practice, and wanted to know about using the groomed trails at school. The trails are public and we sincerely appreciate the team having a conversation with the Town about it first! School kids have had to give up so much since last March, we'd like to make sure we can assist in helping with some small portion of their school year move forward.

Nanette has checked with the school, Westford Rec, and the Westford Conservation Commission to make sure that no school or town-sponsored activities are planned during the times that the team would like to use the trails. The BFA Fairfax team has also offered off-season help to maintain the trails and it's likely that the Conservation Commission will be taking them up on that offer!

The BFA Fairfax team will be split into two groups, 15 kids and one coach each. The kids are respectful, well-versed in complying with appropriate social distancing, are masked at all times, and understand that they won't have exclusive use of the trails. They will be at the trails at the same time, but using different parts of the trails, on both Wednesday afternoons (around 3:00 PM) and Saturday mornings (around 9:00 – 10:00 AM) for about an hour and a half each day. This began on Saturday, January 23.

We're all using the town trails more than ever, so this notice will help to ensure that the public knows about the BFA Fairfax team sharing the trails a couple times a week. That way you can either adapt your schedule, or just plan to cheer them on as they train.

Thank you for sharing the trails respectfully, walking well off to the side of groomed trails (or on the Maple Shade side where there's no grooming), leashing your dogs if they're not under voice control at all times, and using the dog waste bags and waste cans at the trailhead.

Many thanks to Tom Lane and Joel Fay for grooming the trails; to the Hallers for storing the groomer in their barn; and, to the Conservation Commission for all their work to create, sign, and map the trails!

Westford Planning Commission news

By Melissa Manka, Westford Town Planner

Town Center Revitalization Projects

The Westford Planning Commission has been working for over 12 years to find a community wastewater solution for existing and future buildings in our Town Center. During the past 24 months the Planning Commission has also been investigating whether there is a viable opportunity for the Town to be involved with the potential subdivision and development of the property located at 1705 VT Rt. 128 (Pigeon property).

Information regarding both of these initiatives has been available for months on the Town's website, but not all in one location. Rather, the various studies, reports, and summaries were scattered in different locations and it took some investigative work to find all the relevant material.

No more! The Planning Commission has created a webpage that now contains all relevant information and links regarding the community wastewater project and the 1705 VT Rt. 128 project: <https://westfordvt.us/town-center-revitalization-projects/>.

It can also be found on the home page of the Town's website under the heading TOWN RESOURCES and then under Town Center Revitalization Projects. If you have not yet had an opportunity to find out what these two projects are about, we encourage you to check out the new webpage.

We will be updating information and reports on the webpage as we move forward and additional information becomes available.

Please be aware there is no vote on these issues at Town Meeting. We are simply alerting the residents to the existence of the new website and inviting everyone to learn more about these projects now that all the information is in one location. As always, we appreciate and welcome your comments and questions. Please direct any questions you may have to Town Planner Melissa Manka, planner@westfordvt.us.

Town Plan revision meetings

By state statute, municipalities must prepare and update their town plan every eight years; the current Westford Town Plan is set to expire 90 days after the end of the COVID-19 State of Emergency per Act 92 (the plan would have otherwise expired on May 14, 2020). The plan update affects the entire geographic area of Westford and focuses on the following: to add an enhanced energy plan to conform to the standards in 24 V.S.A. §4352, to pursue additional designations, programs, and services to support town center area revitalization, to improve multimodal transportation options and safety, to update data and information in the plan to be as current as possible, to create an implementation strategy, and to incorporate goals and policies that will make Westford a more flood resilient community.

The Westford, Vermont 2021 Town Plan contains 10 chapters, which include: Introduction; Historic Features; Population, Housing & Existing Land Use; Facilities, Utilities & Services; Economic Development; Transportation, Public Land & Trails; Energy; Natural Resources & Features; Future Land Use; Implementation Plan. This plan is intended to be consistent with the goals established in Title 24, Section 4302.

The Westford, VT 2021 Town Plan can be viewed at <https://westfordvt.us/town-plan/> or by requesting a copy by emailing townclerk@westfordvt.us or calling 802-878-4587.

The Town of Westford, Vermont that the Westford Selectboard will hold a hearing Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 7:00 PM via Zoom to receive public comment on the Westford, Vermont 2021 Town Plan. This is a Zoom meeting; when accessing the meeting, please identify yourself by typing in your name (not an email address or phone number). This information is needed for the minutes.

To join the Zoom Meeting:

- go online to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85980592903?pwd=cmRJSzJBMFhhNEovT0tGYmRUL3Azdz09>, meeting ID 859 8059 2903, passcode Q0zMmU;
- or dial 1-646-558-8656, meeting ID 859 8059 2903, passcode: 004399.

COMING EVENTS

IN-PERSON and VIRTUAL and SOCIALLY DISTANCED Wednesday, February 3

J-U Lions Blood Drive, 12:00 – 5:00 PM, Covenant Community Church, 1 Whitcomb Meadows Lane, Essex Junction. There is a critical need so please consider making a donation. You can schedule an appointment at RedCrossBlood.org entering COVENANT. Sponsored by the Jericho-Underhill Lions Club.

Tuesday, February 9

Over and Under the Snow: virtual story ski and tour of Northeast Kingdom recreation spots, 4:00 – 5:00 PM, online. A winter story event for the whole family! Explore five VLT-conserved winter recreation spots in the Northeast Kingdom, and read Over and Under the Snow by Vermont author Kate Messner along the way. In this family-friendly event, we'll travel to a farm, some forests, and even up a mountain! Free. For information and to register, <https://vlt.org/event/story-ski>. For questions and accommodation requests contact Katherine, Katherine@vlt.org or 802-745-6304.

Saturday, February 6

Genealogy: Exploring Archives All Around the Globe, 12:00 – 1:30 PM, on Zoom. In this webinar, David Ouimette will describe the variety of places where FamilySearch finds the best records for family history on all the continents and islands on the planet. David will describe the processes that the Family History Library in Salt Lake City uses to prioritize which records to photograph and digitize next, how access permission is obtained and the path from camera to image collections and, finally, to the indexed records that we now view for free from the comfort of our homes. All classes \$10. Register at www.vtgenlib.org by the deadline for registration, 12:00 PM on the Friday before the class. The library is currently closed. To check if we are open again, or for more details about a class, visit www.vtgenlib.org or call 802-871-5647.

Friday, February 12

Virtual Book Club for Grown-Ups, 7:00 PM, on Zoom. Sponsored by the Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF): Dan Brown, author of The Da Vinci Code. The Book Club will discuss the latest novel in Brown's popular Robert Langdon

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COMMUNITY COLUMNS

Notable vacations and reunion

By Douglas Boardman

Special to the Mountain Gazette

When I was growing up, we had no vacations *per se!* Sundays were our day off, even if my father would rather have me help him do some project on the Holy day. I didn't particularly like to go to Sunday School but it was better than going to work with my father. I bought a 1936 Ford Coupé in 1952 and met the love of my life the same year. Every day I spent with Sandy was wonderful. Days and nights that we were apart, I thought about her all the time. Sandy wrote a letter to me every day. I never took a vacation until we got married and that was a short one. I had a 10-day leave and a three-day honeymoon. We waited until 1980 to have a proper honeymoon. We took a vacation to Paradise Island and Nassau to celebrate our 25th anniversary. Every February after the Paradise Island vacation, we went to other resorts in the Caribbean. Sandy died in 2014, one week after her birthday and one month before our Class of 1954 Reunion. I didn't attend but was given this Reunion letter.

FOR THE CLASS OF '54

WE ARE SURVIVORS!!!

Consider the changes we have witnessed:

We were born before television, before penicillin, before polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, plastic contact lenses, ball-point pens, before pantyhose, dishwashers, clothes dryers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes and before man walked on the moon. We got married first and then lived together: How

quaint can you be? In a time, closets were for clothes, not for coming out. Bunnies were small rabbits and rabbits were not Volkswagens. Designer jeans were scheming girls name Jean or Jeanne. Meaningful relationships meant getting along with your cousins. We thought fast food was what you ate during Lent, outer space was the back of the Capitol Theatre. We were before house husbands, gay rights, computer dating, dual careers and computer marriages. We never heard of FM radios, tape decks, electric typewriters, artificial hearts, word processors, yogurt and guys wearing earrings. For us, time sharing meant togetherness – not computers or condominiums: a “chip” meant a piece of wood; hardware meant hardware and software wasn't even a word! In 1940 “made in Japan” meant junk and the term “making out” referred to how you did on an exam. Pizzas, MacDonald's and instant coffee wasn't heard of. We hit the scene when there were 5 and 10 cents stores where you bought things for a nickel or a dime. For one nickel you could ride the streetcar, make a phone call, buy a Pepsi or enough stamps to mail a letter and two postcards. You could buy a Chevy Coupé for \$600, but who could afford one. A pity too, because gas was only 11¢ a gallon. In our day cigarette smoking was fashionable, grass was mowed, Coke was a cold drink and pot was something you cooked in. Rock music was Grandma's lullaby and aides were helpers in the principal's office. We were certainly not before change: we made do with what we had and we were the last generation that was so dumb as to think you needed a husband to have a baby!

No wonder we are so confused and there is such a generation gap today!

1981: looking back to becoming a firefighter at UJFD

By Randy E. Clark

So January 20, 2021 marked 40 years to when I was voted on to the Underhill-Jericho Fire Department (UJFD). I remember it well as it was the same night that Ronald Regan was sworn into office as the President of the United States. It was a different time in 1981 to say the least, my sponsors that I had to join the UJFD were Lee Dumas and Denis White. My Dad was Chief at the time and I had been riding to fire calls with him for the past four years, watching and learning everything I could. On the morning of January 21, 1981 I was on my way to school at MMU (Mount Mansfield Union High School, Jericho) driving my brother Brian and Mike Greenia (both later to become members of the UJFD) when the tone goes off for a chimney fire at VT Rt. 117 and Skunk Hollow Road. I turned around at David Villeneuve's house and headed to the fire station. I remember being assigned to Truck 2 (the tanker, second out) with Marc Mahuex as the driver. Truck 1 had pulled out of the station with two firefighters and Marc as the driver of Truck 2, released the air brakes, turned on the red lights and pushed in the cigar lighter to light the cigarette he already had in his mouth and away we went. I don't recall if Brian and Mike waited for me to come back or if my mother came to pick them up.

The UJFD had only one station at the time (on the site of current station) it was smaller than the Browns Trace station and

we had four trucks packed in there. There was the main Engine “Truck 1” a 750GPM / 500 gallon pumper, the Tanker “Truck 2” a 350GPM / 2000 gallon tanker, a water supply pumper “Truck 4” a 1000GPM / 500 gallon 4x4 with 3000' of 4" LDH and the wild land fire truck a 1942 4x4 Army truck “Truck 3” with 500GPM / 150 gallon water tank w/Indian pumps, brooms and rakes. The UJFD only owned six (6) Scott Air-Paks and six (6) spare cylinders and “if” they got used we had to drive to the IBM Fire Station or Essex Jct. Fire Station to refill the bottles. Everyone had ¾ pull up boots and Nomex coats were just coming out to replace the old canvas duck coats.

Back in the eighties we seemed to have a lot more fires than we have today and there was no such thing as CO alarms (not that there were not CO incidents, just no detection until it was usually too late). In the wintertime it was car crashes and chimney fires. Every car crash that happened brought two ambulances (usually Essex and St. Mike's), Essex Jct FD Heavy Rescue and the UJFD (Essex Jct covered Heavy Rescue for a large part of Chittenden County). Chimney fires, it seemed like we would have one or two a week and sometimes two and three a day. It was also common that the fire would extend into the wall behind the stove or get out of the chimney. SCBA were never used for chimney fires or car fires and if you were on the roof or nozzle for a car fire you would blow black soot from your nose for the next day or two. The springtime would bring grass



Let your creativity flow at the Westford Common Snow Sculpting Contest, sponsored by Westford Girl Scout Troop 51841 and the Westford Recreation Department. You will have a roped off area to complete your masterpiece – build a snowman, sculpt a dragon – the sky's the limit! Rally your family, grab some snow sculpting tools along with your spirit of fun, adventure, and creativity. Rules: no media other than snow, ice, and water may be used; colorants may be added. No power tools permitted. Sculptors must provide their own tools, at their own risk. Register by Monday, February 15 online at <https://westfordvt.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/WESTFORD-RECREATION-DEPARTMENT-REGISTRATION-FORM-July-2020.pdf>. Entrance fee \$5; sculpting must occur between Thursday, February 18-Sunday, February 21. Judging will be on Saturday, February 21. If weather conditions do not cooperate, the event may be postponed to Presidents Weekend, or canceled.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

and wildland fires, it was common to have two to three a day on the weekends.

Later in 1981 the Browns Trace station was built and Truck 4 moved there to be the pumper out of that station.

When I was working at Underhill Garage, just down the street (where Tim has his shop today) and the daytime help came from Underhill Garage with two or three firefighters, (with Dad going direct as Chief) and Greenmont Lumber with two or three firefighters and Lee Dumas coming from GE at the Firing Range. For a daytime call I would head to the fire station, get my gear on, start Truck 1 and drive it out on the pad, about that time David Villeneuve was pulling in, he would put on his boots and throw his coat and helmet in the dunnage area above the pump, climb into the driver's seat and off we would go. Once on scene David would put the pump into gear and head to check out the scene and I would run the pump.

A lot has sure changed in the last 40 years and most for the better, I can only imagine what the next 40 years will bring...

I would like to thank my Dad, Lee Dumas, David Villeneuve, Denis White, Marc Mahuex, David Sullivan and the countless other UJFD Firefighters, for all that you taught me and for being great mentors along the way! There are also many other great men that helped educate me along the way that deserve mention, the great Ray Davidson, Ken Smith, Arlo Sterner, Bob Jenkins, and many more.

A word for the wise... find people that know more than you and learn all you can from them.

Cheers... to the greatest job in the world!

Essex Rescue welcomes new Executive Director

By Ashley Williams

Essex Rescue is excited to announce that life-long member Colleen Nesto will be the organization's new Executive Director. She is replacing Will Moran, who has accepted a new role as Chief of Vermont Emergency Medical Services. While we wish Will well in his new position, we are fortunate to have one of our most dedicated and deserving EMS providers lead us into the next chapter for Essex Rescue.

Colleen's interest in emergency services began at a young age. Her mother was chronically ill so she experienced first hand the difference that compassionate and competent first responders could make. Her father was active in their local fire department and at the age of 16 she joined the same department, Underhill Jericho Fire Department. By the time she was 18 she had obtained her Firefighter 1 and her Emergency Care Attendant certifications. She joined Essex Rescue on her 18th birthday. By the time she was 19, she had earned her Intermediate EMT license and appeared to have found her calling. By the age of 20, Colleen was hired full time by Essex Rescue and has earned her way upward in the organization and the EMS community ever since.

Colleen obtained her National Registry Paramedic License in 2010, making her one of the first paramedics in Vermont District Three. She kept up this same momentum and was instrumental in helping to design the tactical combat critical care program for Essex and surrounding communities. This program is designed

to allow EMS providers to integrate with law enforcement in active shooter scenarios to allow more rapid medical care to victims. For many years Colleen has been the face of the organization, interviewing and welcoming new members. She has recently completed her Associates degree in Human Resource Management and is currently working towards completing her bachelor's degree in Management with a concentration in Leadership. She has spent the past several years as the Deputy Executive Director and when the Executive Director position opened, she was uniquely qualified for the position.

When asked what her vision for Essex Rescue is, Colleen says it is “to continue using innovative methods for the recruitment, retention, and the training of long-term quality human capital.” This vision comes at a time of excessive turnover in EMS. On average, our organization turns over about 20% of our personnel each year. For a small non-profit with an important job and one that expects professional level performance from all personnel to include volunteers, this is a big vision. Say nothing about the fact that they are managing EMS on the frontlines of a global pandemic.

Throughout the years Colleen, like so many other EMS providers, has missed special events, birthdays and holidays in order to be with people in their time of need. She is grateful to her family who has supported her in her passion. When Colleen is not devoting her life to EMS, she enjoys crossfit and spending time with her eleven year old son, family, and friends.

Essex Rescue is grateful for Colleen's many years of service and devotion, proud of her accomplishments, and excited to have her at the helm moving forward.

accommodation requests contact Katherine, Katherine@vlt.org or 802-745-63034.

Saturday, February 20

Past the Cemetery Gates: Using the Cemetery as a Genealogy Resource, 12:00 – 1:30 PM, on Zoom. This presentation is geared specifically for genealogists. Learn to read the cemetery for clues and information. Using both direct observation and deductive reasoning from objects such as the writing, art, geology, and the cemetery landscape, new insights can be revealed. These can answer questions, create new inquiries, and open doors for further work. All classes \$10. Register at www.vtgenlib.org by the deadline for registration, 12:00 PM on the Friday before the class. The library is currently closed. To check if we are open again, or for more details about a class, visit www.vtgenlib.org or call 802-871-5647.

Thursday, March 11

What Animal Is It? Virtual wildlife tracking tour through the winter woods, 1:00 – 2:00 PM, online. Winter is a busy time in the woods for our animal neighbors and trying to identify all those animal tracks in the snow is hard. Join us for a virtual wildlife tracking tour through Vermont's woods. Free. For information and to register, <https://vlt.org/event/winter-tree-id>. For questions and accommodation requests contact Katherine, Katherine@vlt.org or 802-745-63034.

Coming events continued from page 2

series, [Origin](http://www.Origin.com), as well as learn about his new children's book *Wild Symphony* and have a Q&A with this renowned author. Free; donations to CLIF are encouraged. To learn more and sign up for the event, go online to [N](http://www.N.com)

Saturday, February 13

Using Facebook for Genealogy Research, 12:00 – 1:30 PM, on Zoom. Are you stuck on a family name? Are you hoping to connect with someone who lives in the same town your family lived in for generations? Maureen O'Brien will explore different Facebook groups and pages; and show you how to connect with the amazing number of people on Facebook who are willing to help strangers. It is recommended you have a basic knowledge of Facebook for this class. All classes \$10. Register at www.vtgenlib.org by the deadline for registration, 12:00 PM on the Friday before the class. The library is currently closed. To check if we are open again, or for more details about a class, visit www.vtgenlib.org or call 802-871-5647.

Thursday, February 18

Bark, Buds, and Branches: Learn to identify trees in winter, 1:00 – 2:00 PM, online. Many of us can identify trees like maple and oaks by their leaf shape, but once those leaves are on the ground tree identification can be a little tricky. Join VLT foresters to learn what trees they love the most and tips and tricks to identify trees this time of year. Free. For information and to register, <https://vlt.org/event/winter-tree-id>. For questions and

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HEALTH NEWS

Could your child be allergic to their jeans?

Parents have been itching to ask me if their child's itchy rash after wearing jeans with a metal button made from nickel might be an allergy to the metal itself. Well let me do more than nickel and dime you by providing some important information on this topic.

What is a nickel allergy?

Nickel is a metal used in clothes, jewelry, and even cell phones and tablets. Believe it or not, about 11 million children in this country have a skin allergy to this metal, either just where the skin is directly exposed to nickel, or sometimes all over the body. A nickel allergy usually appears as a rash beginning within 12-48 hours after exposure and can last for as long as two to four weeks. The rash represents your body mistaking nickel as something that can harm you and is characterized by itchiness, redness, bumps, and blistering of the skin.

What to do if your child has a reaction

Nickel allergy tends to occur more in people who have piercings or wear jewelry every day, who work with metal regularly, have a family history of nickel allergy, or are allergic to other metals as well.

If you think your child might have this problem call your health care professional, who can help diagnose it or may refer you to a pediatric allergy specialist. As to treatment, the first line is usually an over-the-counter antihistamine, but sometimes a prescription anti-inflammatory ointment or oral medication like a steroid may be needed as well.

How to prevent a recurrence

Here are some suggestions and recommendations in accordance with a recent policy on nickel allergy from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

- Buy your child belts and jewelry that are labeled "nickel-free" or are made from surgical grade stainless steel or other metals like gold, silver, or platinum. If your child does want to wear something with nickel, coat the metal parts that touch the skin with a clear nail polish and that will reduce the risk.

- Be aware that there are foods that may contain nickel, including chocolate and cocoa powder, some nuts, soy products, and salad dressings. Food labels can help identify if the metal is in a particular food.

- Running tap water for a few seconds will flush out any nickel that leaches from pipes into the water.

Hopefully, tips like these have allowed me to provide more than just 5¢ worth of information when it comes to knowing more about your child possibly having a nickel allergy.

Lewis First, MD, is Chief of Pediatrics at UVM Children's Hospital and Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at UVM's Larner College of Medicine

You can show them what a safe family should feel like

When Zachary was 11 his grandfather died. Grandpa Mick was the closest thing to a father Zachary ever had. Growing up without him has been hard. School changes, a mom who struggles, a manageable medical condition that he's not mature enough to handle without help, and no one to really talk about things who comes close to understanding him the way his grandfather did. Now that Zach is 15, and in foster care, he struggles with finding his place and with what kind of a family he might feel at home. Despite his "I could care less" exterior, Zach would like to fit in somewhere more than anything but he may still have a difficult time showing it.

Might you be the right foster care home for Zachary, or a teen like him? Could you provide the unconditional care and support he needs? Can you work toward hopeful reunification with his mother? If so, we'd love to hear from you! It will be challenging, but it will also be one of the most meaningful decisions you'll ever make.

To learn more, go to <http://fostercare.vt.gov>. If you want us to contact you, complete the form at <http://def.vermont.gov/fostercare-inquiry>.

You can also call your local Family Services District Office and ask to speak to the Resource Coordinator. Find the right district to call at <http://dcf.vermont.gov/fsd/contact-us/districts>.

Are you healthy? Are you in a low-risk category for COVID-19? If so, there may be a child or youth waiting who would benefit from your care. Please visit us on the web at <http://dcf.vermont.gov/fsd/contact-us/districts>.

KEEP LOCAL KIDS LOCAL.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

NOFA-VT's 39th annual winter conference registration open

This February, NOFA-VT invites you to join us for the 39th annual NOFA-VT Winter Conference – an incredible month-long series of events with many different opportunities for online learning, gathering, and movement building.

This series will also be the kick-off of a year-long celebration for our 50th anniversary (NOFA-VT was founded in 1971). Native American attorney, activist, author, and changemaker Sherri Mitchell will keynote. Workshops and speakers will take place virtually from Sunday, February 7-Thursday, March 4.

We hope you'll join us as we work together to grow and nourish a just, verdant, and sustainable food system here in Vermont!

Registration is now open, with sliding scale options available. For the most up-to-date information and to register, visit our website www.nofavt.org/conference.

New VT Naturalist video: Bedrock to Birds (22min)

The Champlain Valley has a unique geology and glacial history. Learn the importance of this history on our wildlands as Alicia Daniel of the Vermont Master Naturalist Program takes us on a 22-minute tour to rare natural communities in our area in a cool video about how geology affects the "Wildlands of the Champlain Valley."

The video can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGFQ2j7Cd0A>.

Giving forestry "The Agriculture Treatment"

By Ethan Tapper

Chittenden County Forester

When forest management is done well it makes our forests healthier, more complex and more resilient, provides incredible habitat for wildlife, and produces local, renewable resources. Responsible forest management supports many things we value, from healthy local economies and ecology to the culture and the character of our communities. As someone who believes in forest management, a big part of my job involves addressing misunderstandings about it — asking people to reexamine deeply-rooted misconceptions about forestry and logging. I do this because I genuinely believe that forest management can be part of how we build a better world.

Recently I've been marveling at the amazing culture we've built around local agriculture in Vermont, and wondering why the same pride doesn't always apply to local forestry. Forest management and agriculture have a lot in common: they are both types of "land use," in which we manage our environment for a renewable resource. In the case of agriculture, it provides us with delicious food. In the case of forestry, it provides us with beautiful wood. But, while we love and celebrate the farms that dot our landscape and the farmers and the food that show up at summer farmer's markets, forestry receives a much less universally-warm treatment.

Like agriculture, forestry can be done in different ways and at different scales. Comparing historic and industrial forestry practices to forest management in Chittenden County is like comparing industrial agriculture in the Midwest with Vermont's local organic farms. Like farming, forest management can be extractive and commodity-focused or it can be regenerative, producing amazing renewable resources while leaving a healthier ecosystem in its wake.

I think that an important part of understanding our role with respect to forests and other ecosystems means recognizing that the question is not if we want to have an impact. Rather, it is: what do we want that impact to be? Humans always have and always will consume resources — the things we eat, we wear, we use to fuel our lives. Everything is made of something and comes from somewhere — and there is no way to extract, process and transport resources without having an impact on ecosystems. Depending on the resource, those impacts could be minor or ephemeral (as in the case of most renewable resources) or major and permanent (as is the case of many non-renewable resources).

The cheapness and availability of non-local resources allows us to pretend that we can consume without costs to our ecosystems, but it doesn't erase those impacts — it just displaces them to peoples and ecosystems somewhere else, perhaps at environmental and social costs that we wouldn't find acceptable if they were in our communities.

In forestry, as in agriculture, if we can move past denying that our actions have environmental impacts, we can start being proactive. Using local resources, especially local renewable resources, means "owning" those impacts, keeping them right where we can see them. Some of these impacts — benefits to our local economies, our neighbors, the culture and the character of our communities, our working landscape — are easy to "own." Others, like the initial "messiness" of a freshly-managed forest or the buzz of a chainsaw from your neighbor's woodlot, may be a little more challenging. Bringing our resource consumption "home" means that we take the radical step to confront the impacts that our lives have on our world with our eyes wide open. It allows us to actively develop a relationship with our resources, rather than consuming without an understanding of the toll we are taking on ecosystems and peoples across the world.

The way that we use land and alter ecosystems will always be a compromise. After all, virtually every farm in Vermont (and every one of our houses and businesses) is on a site that was a forest or a wetland just a few hundred years ago. We accept these environmental impacts because they allow us to live happy, healthy lives in a beautiful place to, to eat delicious food, and to be warm all winter.

In comparison, forest management is a small compromise — harvesting a renewable resource while keeping ecosystems intact, encouraging great wildlife habitat and the "ecosystem services" that make our world work, keeping our communities beautiful and functional. Treating local forestry like local agriculture is something that may require some of us to re-examine how we think about it — but it's worth the effort.

Ethan Tapper is the Chittenden County Forester. He can be reached at ethan.tapper@vermont.gov or 802-585-9099.



The emerald ash borer (EAB, pictured above), an invasive forest pest, is already here in Vermont. As of October 2020, Jericho is in the "confirmed infested area." EAB is a major threat to our trees and forests. It has feasted on over 100 million ash trees in the Midwest, where it was first discovered in 2002. Unless treated with insecticides, most infested trees die within three to five years. Experience in Michigan and other states has shown that once this pest is detected in an area, more detections follow quickly, and the ash trees die rapidly over a few short years. EAB was confirmed in Vermont and 2018 and there are currently confirmed infestations in five Vermont counties. To help slow the spread, burn firewood as close to the source as possible, and do not move it to an uninfested area. Learn how to identify ash trees, and the signs and symptoms of an infestation. If you see suspicious trees, submit photos at <https://vtinvasives.org/reporting-emerald-ash-borer>. Visit <https://VTinvasives.org/> for more information.

PHOTO BY DEBBIE MILLER
U.S. FOREST SERVICE, bugwood.org

CAMP INFORMATION

F&W Conservation Camp registration open

If you are 12-14 years old and want to learn about Vermont's wildlife and gain outdoor skills, consider attending one of the VT Fish and Wildlife Department's Green Mountain Conservation Camps this summer.

Specific details about whether the Camps will be able to operate, and what protocols relating to COVID-19 will be in place, will be communicated via the department's website as they become clear.

The one-week camp programs are held at Lake Bomoseen in Castleton and at Buck Lake in Woodbury. Campers participate in hands-on learning about fish and wildlife conservation, ecology, forestry, orienteering, safe firearm and archery techniques, swimming, canoeing, fishing, and more. Natural resource professionals come to the camp to share information on their programs and take campers out for field activities.

"Whether kids come alone or with friends, they are guaranteed to meet new people and form new bonds while experiencing Vermont's natural resources to the fullest," said Fish and Wildlife Education Coordinator Alison Thomas. "An important take-away message and common theme during the week is that conserving and managing habitat will help ensure Vermont will have fish and wildlife in the future."

"We would love to have all of the advanced sessions filled for girls who have already attended a basic session," added Thomas. "Advanced sessions are for campers who have completed a basic session the summer before and who are 16 years old or younger. Advanced sessions include more in-depth activities about backpacking, camping, natural resources, and unique hunting and fishing techniques."

Conservation Camps open Sunday, June 20 and continue until Friday, August 13. Tuition is \$250 for the week, including food, lodging and equipment.

Applications and information are available at <http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com>.

COVID-19 remains an unknown factor in planning for the 2021 Conservation Camp program. Keeping staff and campers safe and healthy could mean last minute changes. While registration is open, with all camp weeks available to the full number of campers, the specific details of how camp may run are subject to change based on guidance from the VT Health Department and the Governor's orders. This could include, and is not limited to, reducing the number of sessions held, reducing the number of students in each session, or canceling the program for 2021. For more information, contact FWGMCC@vermont.gov or call 802-522-2925.

Summer camps at Poker Hill Arts

Registration is open for summer camps at Poker Hill Arts! There are two camps for children entering grades 1-5, accepting just 10 campers per week:

- Magical Gnomes and Fairies Camp, Monday-Friday, July 12-16; and
- Fairies and Art from Nature Camp, Monday-Friday, July 26-30.

Camp hours are 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM, with before- and after-care available. More information is available at <https://www.pokerhillarts.com/>.

SPORTS NEWS

MMYBL youth basketball season cancelled

Mount Mansfield Youth Basketball League (MMYBL) is canceling its 2020-2021 season due to COVID-19. Despite the recent changes from Governor Phil Scott, which have allowed the return of winter youth sports for both school and youth recreation-based programs, MMYBL could not secure gym space in Mount Mansfield Union School District (MMUSD). MMUSD's current policies and procedures are focused on the safety of students and facility and therefore do not allow outside use of school spaces. Options for MMYBL to conduct a season were limited and involved increased costs and/or travel for

Sports continued on page 8

WORSHIP SERVICES

Virtual services at MMUUF

Join us for virtual Sunday services at the Mount Mansfield Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, held on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, September-June (June 13, 2021). Services are led by members of the fellowship and by invited guest speakers, including visiting UU ministers and leaders of other faiths. Each service explores a different topic. Worship, reflect, and sustain one another, within an inclusive spiritual community, built on values of honoring and affirming the worth of every person, striving for justice, participating in the world community, and respecting the natural web of existence. Check the website for upcoming speakers and topics. For the time being, services are being held exclusively via Zoom. Please contact president@mmuuf.org or 899-2558 for how to join. Located at 195 VT Rt. 15, Jericho. Learn more at www.mmuuf.org and www.uua.org.

United Church of Underhill

The United Church of Underhill is an active, vibrant congregation. We are young and old; single, couples, and families; believers, questioners, and questioning believers. All are welcome. Some people think of us as the Harvest Market Church or the Clutter Barn Church; these are just glimpses of what you will find here throughout the year. We gather to worship together every Sunday morning at 10:30 AM most of the year (9:30 AM in July and August). Our service is traditional but lively, with music, a children's sermon, and much more. For instructions on joining worship from home, please go online to <https://unitedchurchofunderhill.com/joining-worship-from-home/>. We provide many opportunities for worship, fellowship, and service, but we also welcome you to come in, be still, and contemplate your faith. Located at 7 Park St., Underhill. Pastor's office (with voicemail) 899-1722; church secretary, Tuesday and Wednesday 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM (no voicemail) 899-4583.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Rabies clinics in February and March

Rabies clinics that will be held at Tractor Supply Stores around the state in 2021. In general, a rabies vaccination costs less at clinics than a veterinarian's office. This is a great opportunity to get your dog(s) vaccinated before April 1 when licenses are due.

If you are unsure if your dog(s) needs a vaccination in order to be licensed in 2021, please call your town office and ask about the information they have for your pets' previous license registrations.

Below are dates and times for (somewhat) nearby Tractor Supply stores. Please call the store to confirm information and to get pricing.

- Morrisville, 88 Center Road, 1:00 – 2:30 PM, Sundays, February 28 and March 28; 802-888-2010
- Shelburne, 3708 Shelburne Road, 1:00 – 2:30 PM, Saturdays, February 27 and March 27; 802-985-4092
- St. Albans, 2636 Highgate Road, 4:00 – 5:30 PM, Saturdays, February 27 and March 27; 802-524-0705

LGBTQIA+ Town Hall Series

The LGBTQIA Alliance of Vermont is hosting a series of Statewide Town Halls throughout Winter 2021 to hold space for our LGBTQIA+ community members to share what is important to them, explore ways folks are building in their own communities, and create or strengthen connections.

Each of the sessions begin at 7:00 PM and registration is required. We ask that all participants in the six topic-specific sessions self-identify as LGBTQ+. The final Town Meeting Day is open to community members and allies, as well as legislators. Past sessions: Thursday, January 21 – Health Justice (facilitated by Taylor Small and Eva Westheimer); Tuesday, January 26 – Housing (facilitated by Gustavo Mercado Muñiz and Anne Moyerbrailean).

Upcoming sessions:

- Thursday, February 4 – Rural Queerness (facilitated by Justin Marsh and Eva Westheimer);
- Tuesday, February 9 – Youth (facilitated by Outright youth);
- Thursday, February 18 – Aging (facilitated by Rachel Desilets and Keith Goslant);
- Tuesday, February 23 – Racial Justice (facilitated by Reggie Condra and Eva Westheimer);
- Tuesday, March 2 – Town Meeting (facilitated by Brenda Churchill and Keith Goslant).

To register or for more info, visit pridevt.org or contact Justin Marsh, justin@pridecentervt.org or 802-730-2383.

The LGBTQIA Alliance of Vermont is a loose coalition of organizations that support our queer and trans community members across the state. The organizations that collaborated to bring this series together include Out in the Open, Outright Vermont, Pride Center of Vermont, and Rainbow Umbrella of Central Vermont, with additional support from Queer Connect – Bennington. The series is made possible thanks to the generosity and support of The Samara Fund.

Lamoille River (Basin 7) public survey

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is in the process of developing the five-year update for the Lamoille Tactical Basin Plan.

We are asking for feedback from the public in the survey, a link to which can be found at <https://centralvtplanning.org/basin-plan-7-survey-feedback-requested/>, to better understand your knowledge, concerns, and activities in relation to water quality in the Lamoille River Basin (Basin 7) both locally and watershed wide.

Tactical Basin Plans (TBP) are strategic guidebooks for improving watershed health. They identify surface waters in need of restoration and protection, outline a list of actions to achieve water quality goals, and identify partners and funding critical to implementing those actions.

The 2021 Lamoille Tactical Basin Plan will also include the Phase 3 Implementation Plan to reduce nutrient pollution (phosphorus) in Lake Champlain.

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey and share your input regarding water quality concerns and activities in the Lamoille River Watershed. Thank you for your participation.

Calvary Episcopal Church is Zooming!

Calvary Episcopal Church is a welcoming, caring, Christian community called to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ, grow our spiritual gifts, and serve our neighbors. While the church building is currently closed, worship services are being held on Sundays at 9:30 AM via Zoom. All are warmly invited to attend! The Zoom link can be found on Calvary's website: <http://calvarychurchvt.weebly.com/>. Hope to see you soon!

Online church services in Jeffersonville, Waterville

By Rev. Devon Thomas

Hey all, the folks at the Second Congo Church in Jeff and the Waterville Union Church would like to invite all who feel called to join us for our online church services Sunday at 10:30 AM. We are now having weekly Zoom services and any who would like to watch can do so via our Facebook pages. You can find those linked below.

So, as we like to say at the church: know that no matter who you are or where you are in life's journey, you are welcome at our church; or in this case, our web-space!

Peace

<https://www.facebook.com/watervilleunionchurch>

<https://www.facebook.com/SecondCongregationalUCC>

Jericho Congregational Church is here to help

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected our lives in numerous ways that we never could have imagined. Many of us are now working from home, home schooling, and in some cases, separated from those we care deeply about. We at Jericho Congregational Church want you to know that we are here for you during this unsettling time. If you need a listening ear or someone to pray with about any of the impacts of this crisis, please contact us at 858-5452 or jchelps@gmail.com. You are not alone, and we are here to help.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

VT Cavalry Squadron cleared to recruit women

First in Army National Guard

The 1st Squadron, 172nd Cavalry, 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Mountain) is now authorized to recruit women directly into the unit.

This marks the first time in the National Guard's 384-year history that a combat arms battalion-sized unit can enlist women.

"I am incredibly proud of the Soldiers and senior leaders of our squadron," said Maj. Gen. Greg Knight, adjutant general, VT National Guard. "This represents a significant milestone in making the Vermont National Guard an organization that provides opportunity for all. Their focus and hard work made this a reality."

Since the Department of the Army opened combat roles to women in 2016, they could transfer but not enlist into combat units until specific conditions were met. Requirements included installing women into leadership roles throughout the Squadron, completing Gender Integration Training, and demonstrating a healthy unit culture through an Organizational Climate Survey.

"This was an extremely difficult process, designed to ensure a unit was authorized to recruit women only after it demonstrated it was ready to do so," said Col. Brey Hopkins, commander, 86th IBCT (MTN). "But despite the difficulty, we were committed to this. We are eager to integrate more women throughout the unit because it improves our readiness and capability."

Women could not serve in occupational specialties designated as combat roles prior to 2016.

The VT Army National Guard continues to make progress toward seeking authorization to open all combat units for the enlistment of women as soon as possible.

For more information, contact Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs Officer Capt. Mike Arcovitch, 802-734-1677 or mikel.r.arcovitch.mil@mail.mil.

Winooski NRCD Spring Tree Sale open for orders

The Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCD) hosts an annual tree sale as a service to residents of the District, offering a wide selection of tree and shrub species for home, garden, and conservation projects. All proceeds from this fundraiser are used to develop and implement on-the-ground projects that protect our natural resources. All orders must be submitted by Wednesday, March 31.

To order, visit <https://winooskinrcd.org/treesale/>.

Pickup Date: Saturday, May 1, 2021

Pickup locations in Williston and Berlin, VT

New this year: the theme of our 2021 sale is *Focus on Food Security*. We are featuring a variety of trees, shrubs, and berry bushes with edible or medicinal properties. From blueberries to maple trees to paw paws, there is something for everyone! We are also selling raffle tickets, magnets, and t-shirts.

About the plants: We sell mostly bare-root trees and aim to source as many as possible from local, Vermont nurseries. This year our average price per stem is \$8.56.

We have room for your ad.

Call Brenda Boutin

at 453-6354

for more information or email
mtngazette@gmavt.net

Jericho United Methodist Church outdoor worship service

Jericho United Methodist Church welcomes you to grow in Christ with us. We hold dear the United Methodist Church's motto: "Open doors. Open Hearts. Open Minds." We recognize that our faith journeys are all unique, just as we as individuals are all unique. Know that whoever you are, whatever you do, you are welcome here. We believe that we grow together or not at all. All are welcome! Join us Sundays at 10:00 AM. There will be music, prayer, and message from our new pastor, Rev. Sean Delmore on Zoom for virtual worship. For updates or a Zoom invitation, please contact 802-899-4288 or Jen (luitjens@yahoo.com). Located at 71 VT Rt. 15, Jericho.

Online worship service at Good Shepherd

Please consider joining us for online worship at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church starting 9:00 AM every Sunday morning. You can connect with each podcast/video service from Sunday morning through Wednesday of every week.

Centering Prayer Meditation Practice is now available on Fridays. Thanks to Alan's leadership and Zoom-genius, you can now take part in Centering Prayer Practice from your own home every Friday at 8:30 AM. Everything you need to know is at Goodshepherdjericho.org. Click on *Menu* and then *Weekly Centering Prayer Meditation*. It is easy to join in. The Practice is geared for beginners through established meditators.

We are an open-minded Christian community where people from different faith traditions, along with those who aren't sure where they belong or what they believe, seek the support of a non-judgmental, all-embracing spiritual home. Join us at goodshepherdjericho.org. No matter who you are, how you are physically or spiritually, or where you are on life's journey, we welcome you in the name and love of Christ.

Please contact Rev. Dr. Arnold Isidore Thomas, Pastor, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church for more information or with any questions, at 802-503-9666 or pastorthomas@goodshepherdjericho.org.

VT food, beverage producers win Good Food Awards

Thirteen Vermont specialty food and beverage producers received fourteen awards across ten categories in the annual 2021 Good Food Awards. Four VSFA Members received awards: Blake Hill Preserves, Mad River Distillers, Mount Mansfield Maple Product, and Spring Brook Farm Cheese. Winners were announced during a virtual award ceremony on Friday, January 22. Find the full list of 2021 winners online at <https://goodfoodfdn.org/awards/winners/>.

These awards are presented by the Good Food Foundation as a way of "shining a spotlight on the taste-making crafters at the vanguard of deliciousness and social and environmental excellence. The Awards catalyzes a shift in spending towards truly good food, and the rest of the industry follows." Out of 1928 entries across 16 categories, 336 producers made it into the finals, with 22 Vermont finalists in 13 categories. 2021 finalists were announced in November 2020; view the full list of Vermont finalists at <https://vtspecialtyfoods.org/news/vermont-specialty-food-and-beverage-producers-named-finalists-at-national-2021-good-food-awards>.

Award celebrations will continue through Sunday, February 7 with a virtual Pop Up Shop. Consumers can browse and purchase the award winning products through the Good Foods online marketplace online at <https://shop.goodfoodfdn.org/>.

"The growing list of Vermont specialty food producers that are recognized among the top-ranking producers in the nation says a great deal for Vermont's food landscape," says Erin Sigrist, Executive Director of the Vermont Specialty Food Association. "This rigorous competition is blind tasting and requires producers to meet environmental and social responsibility standards. The contributions that these producers make go far beyond the craft food landscape, their impact can be felt within Vermont and their communities."

To learn more about the work VSFA does, visit their website at www.vtspecialtyfoods.org, or call their office at 802-839-1930.

Volunteer Opportunities with United Way

United Way's Volunteer Connection site is set up to help connect agencies and volunteers. Agencies are working hard to navigate volunteering during this time, so the opportunities are limited. Go to www.unitedwaynvt.galaxydigital.com or contact us at megan@unitedwaynvt.org.

DATA MANAGEMENT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION – Samaritan House, St. Alban's homeless shelter, is seeking a volunteer to maintain, improve, and protect agency-wide data systems. The volunteer would coordinate methods and procedures for data acquisition, input, management, and quality control. Volunteer needed one day a week and is welcome to choose the day which best suits their schedule. To learn more contact Ben Kaufman, 802-527-0847 or ben.kaufman@samaritan-house.com.

VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERS – The American Red Cross is looking for volunteers to help your neighbors and support their life-saving mission from the safety of your own home. Volunteer roles you can fill virtually include Onboarding & Training New Members in Blood Service, Scheduling in Blood Service, International Humanitarian Law Instructor, and Volunteer Recruitment. You can find a full list of "virtual" opportunities by visiting <https://www.redcross.org/volunteer/volunteer-opportunities.html>. Contact Recruitment Specialist Erica Fuller, erica.fuller4@redcross.org.

HELP WITH FOOD SECURITY – Northwest Family Foods

LIBRARY NEWS

DEBORAH RAWSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Deborah Rawson Memorial Library has gone back to curbside only. COVID numbers in the state are rising and we want to keep our community members safe! We will open again for appointments once we see the numbers declining.

Curbside hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00 – 7:30 PM; Wednesdays and Fridays, 1:00 – 5:30 PM; and Saturdays, 11:00 AM – 1:30 PM. You may place items on hold at <https://drml.bywatersolutions.com>. You will receive an email or a phone call when your item is ready. Just let us know what day you would like to pick it up by calling 899-4962 or emailing rawsonlibrary@drml.org. Items may be returned in the book drop any time. Items are quarantined up to a week before they are checked in. Our WiFi remains active and is accessible from the parking lot or other areas adjacent to the building. WiFi is available 24/7. A password is not needed to connect. Please be aware that our WiFi does not offer a secure connection.

Adult programs: to register, please email Erik, program_assistant@drml.org.

Mah Jongg — Monday, February 15, 1:00 PM. Please join us as we explore the ancient Chinese tile game of winds, dragons, and number tiles. If you like Rummy-style card games, you'll love Mah Jongg! We'll be meeting on the free website MyJongg.net, with a Zoom call allowing us to chat once again. All are welcome, no experience necessary! Registration required. This program uses the application Zoom and the website MyJongg.net. A National Mah Jongg League 2020 card is required to participate.

Tech Talk: E-Book Expertise — Thursdays, February 4, 2:00

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need volunteers to help with organizing food drives, picking food up, stocking shelves, customer service, and more! Interested? Please contact Walter Gaskill, Food Shelf Coordinator, 527-7392 or taurimedia@cvoeo.org.

VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) – Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity needs volunteers during tax season to help prepare basic tax returns for low-income families. Contact Mike McClintock, mcclintock@cvoeo.org.

Utility pole assessment completed for Lamoille FiberNet CUD

A utility pole assessment commissioned by Lamoille FiberNet CUD has been completed, moving the CUD one step closer to the buildout of their fiber optic broadband network.

The assessment covered certain routes in the towns of Waterville, Belvidere, and Eden, as well as north Johnson and part of Cambridge, and 2924 poles were surveyed in total.

The pole assessment was carried out by Matrix Design Group, a New Jersey-based engineering firm that responded to a request for proposals issued by Lamoille FiberNet. Using data from the pole assessment, Lamoille FiberNet can begin the design and engineering phase of the project, as well as develop a concrete business plan for initial buildout in those areas over the next two to three years.

"During the pole assessment, Matrix engineers visited each pole on foot to gather essential data, including precise pole GPS location, pole height, and who owns the pole," noted Lea Kilvadyova, Lamoille FiberNet Clerk. "Before new fiber can be attached to the poles, in some cases, the existing cables will need to be relocated. The pole assessment provided an estimate of the cost required for attaching fiber. Lamoille FiberNet will use the information gathered during the pole assessment to apply to each pole owner for permission to install fiber on the poles."

The mission of Lamoille FiberNet Communications Union District (LFCUD) is to make locally controlled, affordable and reliable high-speed Internet service available to every address in our member towns. For more information, go online to <http://www.LamoilleFiber.net>.

CSWD upcoming webinars

We have a full schedule of webinars for February – register for one of our upcoming ZOOM webinars (also available on Facebook LIVE). Visit our webinar page often for new topics: <https://cswd.net/webinars/>.

Food Scrap Options: From Soup to Nuts — Wednesday, February 10, 6:00 – 7:00 PM. Learn about your many options for keeping food scraps out of the landfill. Tips for avoiding waste, tricks for convenient kitchen collection, and how to choose a scrap-management strategy that works for your household, your budget, and every Vermont season. Register in advance at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_uXa8XgaPTK-kfH7Bza2MKg.

Worm Composting in the Classroom — Thursday, February 11, 6:00 – 7:00 PM. Calling all teachers of all grade levels! Vermicomposting, composting with worms, is a hands-on way to compost raw food scraps in your own classroom while allowing students the opportunity to explore worm anatomy. Discover how compost adds nutrients to soil and how to care for living beings. Recycle Rhonda teaches all about composting worms, what they can eat, and how to make your own bin (or have the students engineer one). Bonus: discover some fun cross-disciplinary lessons you can use with your students as well. Register in advance at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-Xor1h0SSBK0dEoCcSxpZA.

Thinking Outside the Blue Bin: Special (non-blue-bin) Recycling Explained — Thursday, February 18, 12:00 – 1:00 PM. It's not all about the blue bin! We are celebrating National Battery Day by learning more about batteries and other items that can only be recycled separately, like plastic wraps, mercury bulbs, and electronics. We will explore the what, where, why, and how non-blue bin recyclables — AKA Special Recycling items — get turned into new things! Register in advance at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Sp2imkSySq2sJrL0yTcUA.

Backyard Composting — Saturday, February 27, 10:00 – 11:30 AM. Discover the benefits of "closing the loop" with your own household food scraps in this lively, online demonstration of a healthy compost system. Each video section will be followed by live Q&A sessions. Let's get composting! Register in advance at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1NOK4BC7QFCunsSDzKthRA.

PM, and 18, 6:30 PM. This new series of programs is designed to demystify digital technologies. This month, we'll be looking at Libby by Overdrive, the digital ebook and audiobook service we offer. Have questions you'd like answered? Send them to Erik, program_assistant@drml.org. Registration required. This program uses the application Zoom. Need assistance in joining the program? Email Erik, program_assistant@drml.org.

Deborah Rawson Book Lovers — Tuesday, February 9, 7:00 PM. This is a monthly adult book discussion group. New members are always welcome to drop in on any meeting, which is always the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM. For more information on how to join in, contact Christine@cstaffa.com.

Legislative Update — Tuesday, February 16, 6:30 PM. Join your local representatives George Till and Trevor Squirrel for an update on the current legislative session. Registration required. This program uses the application Zoom, and will be recorded and livestreamed by Mount Mansfield Community Television.

Mystery Book Club: *Lady Cop Makes Trouble* by Amy Stewart, Tuesday, February 23, 7:00 PM. If you need a book, please call the library (899-4962) to request a copy. Due to delays with our courier you should request soon so that it has time to arrive. Registration required. This program uses the application Zoom.

Vermont Humanities Council presents: *Daisy Turner's Kin*, Thursday, February 25, 7:00 PM. Vermont folklorist Jane Beck shares the story of the Turner family, a multigenerational saga spanning two centuries, played out across three continents. The saga was related to Jane Beck by Daisy Turner, who had listened to her father, Alec Turner, recount stories of the family past. Her captivating narrative covers the early 19th century British-African trade, shipwreck, birth of a biracial child, slave trading, enslavement, plantation life, escape, Civil War, moving north, battling racism, buying land, and settling on a hilltop in Vermont that became a family center. Daisy also shared her own life story, a powerful and rare account of the African American experience in New England from the 1880s forward. Jane Beck founded the Vermont Folklife Center in 1983 and served as its executive director until 2007. During that time she traveled the back roads of Vermont, recording oral interviews of everyday Vermonters, and produced a variety of media productions, exhibitions, and publications. In retirement, she has completed a book, *Daisy Turner's Kin, an African American Family Saga*, based on 60 interviews with the daughter of slaves. This program is presented in partnership with the Vermont Humanities Council as part of their Speakers Bureau. For more information about the Vermont Humanities Council, visit www.vermonthumanities.org/. Registration required. This program uses the application Zoom.

Youth programs, offered weekly

Curbside Crafts (all ages): Crafts on Wednesdays. They will be put out with the curbside pickups starting Wednesday at 1:00 PM, and are first come, first served. If you would like a copy of the instruction sheet for a craft, please email youth_librarian@drml.org. Crafts this month are: paper tube pet parrot, snowflake garlands (to celebrate Snowflake Bentley's birthday!), fork painted polar bear, and craft stick catapults!

Zoom Story Time, Tuesdays, 10:30 AM (baby/preschool). Join Ms. Abbey for stories, songs, rhymes, and felt board fun live-streamed right to your home! This will happen each Tuesday morning in February, 10:30 to about 11:00 AM. Call 899-4962 or register for a meeting link at <http://bit.ly/drml youth221>.

Sign up for these great programs!

Zoom with paleontologist Dustin Growick, Saturday, February 6, 11:00 AM (all ages). Love dinosaurs and want to know more? Join us for a Q&A with American Museum of Natural history educator and author of *Dinosaurs A to Z*, Dustin Growick! To sign up, call 899-4962, email Abbey at youth_librarian@drml.org, or follow this link to submit your questions and sign up for a meeting link: <https://forms.gle/i8uHZVp5WknCCQpJ9>.

Young Writers Group, Thursdays, February 4 and 18, 4:00 PM (teens/tweens). Mad libs, writing skill, and free write time, oh my! Come hang out with the young writers and all this fun could be yours to have. Call 899-4962 or register here for a meeting link: <http://bit.ly/drml youth221>.

Graphic Novel Fan Club, Thursdays, February 11 and 25, 4:00 PM (teens/tweens). Get the scoop on the newest comics at the library, talk about your faves or suggest what we should get next, plus excellent drawing games! Join the Graphic Novel Fan Club today. Want comics anytime? Visit our elibrary web page to get set up with ComicsPlus and get access to thousands of comics online: <https://www.drml.org/collections/elibrary/>. Call 899-4962, or register here for a meeting link: <http://bit.ly/drml youth221>.

Among Us, Fridays, February 5 and 19, 4:00 – 5:00 PM (teens/tweens). Can you get around Mira HQ or Polus while completing your tasks, or are you going to vent? Join your friends and deduce who's totally sus and who's safe in a librarian-moderated online environment. The app is free on Android and iOS systems, or costs \$5 for PC play through Steam. Call 899-4962 or register here for a meeting link: <http://bit.ly/drml youth221>.

D&DRML - Sunday, February 21, 3:30 PM (teens/tweens). The party has navigated a dangerous dungeon to assist the specter they rescued with his unfinished business, and now it's time to regroup, but things won't be quiet for long. New players welcome! Please have a level 3 character ready, or email youth_librarian@drml.org for help building a character, or to get a premade character. Call 899-4962 or register here for a meeting link: <http://bit.ly/drml youth221>.

Ongoing at your leisure

NEW: Board Games at DRML. Looking for a screen-free family activity? Check out one of our brand new board games! Place a hold through the online catalog, or call the library to reserve one for your family game night. Here is a brief description of our games: Pictureka is a game of visual hide and seek. Catan is the classic game of collecting and trading resources to build settlements. Telestrations is kind of like Telephone and Pictionary had a hilarious baby. Lanterns is a beautiful, peaceful tile matching game. Codenames is a team based guessing game great for deductive reasoning. Check out our Youtube channel for video instructions on how to play these games: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMLG9hSKPW1d1s3dhORdnKIL5HT6iUmIu>.

Beanstack Reading Challenges: Beanstack is a free and mobile friendly reading tracker app with reaching challenges specially curated for you by Vermont librarians. Sign up today and get started on the Red Clover, Golden Dome, and Green Mountain Book Award reading challenges. Be on the lookout for even more



Pick up all the supplies you'll need to make Westford Library's "heartwarming" Valentine's Day Curbside Craft collage! The kits were put together by a local crafter. The kits will be available curbside from Friday-Saturday, February 5-13. No need to order, just stop by and pick up! One kit for each crafter. For all ages. Next month: "Mark My Place" bookmark project. PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

coming soon! Visit <https://vermont.beanstack.org/> to get started.

1000 Books Before Kindergarten! Did you know that you can jump into the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program at any time? Visit their website for reading logs or to get the app, <https://1000booksbeforekindergarten.org/>. When you're ready, schedule a curbside pickup to get books. Have questions? Email youth_librarian@drml.org for more information.

Winter Citizen Science: Want to turn your curiosity into action? Check out this list of citizen science initiatives curated just for your winter fun! <https://scistarter.org/list/1182>

For a full list of online resources, including digital e-book and audio book services, classes including language courses, and compilations of filmed programs, please visit <https://www.drml.org/how-to-use-a-closed-library/>.

Contact information: email rawsonlibrary@drml.org; website www.drml.org; phone 802-899-4962.

JERICHO TOWN LIBRARY

It is already a busy start to the year here at Jericho Town Library! We want to be sure that our current hours and services are working well for everyone, especially as we move through the winter months and folks continue to return to working from home. To that end, thanks for taking a few minutes to fill out our quick, completely anonymous survey: <https://forms.gle/jvKjdapQZT26L1Bw8>.

We continue to be open by appointment, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM Tuesday to Friday and 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM Saturday, and are very busy fulfilling curbside pickup orders, so keep 'em coming! You can sign up for a browsing session, submit a curbside request, and read more about our COVID-19 policies here: <https://www.jerichotownlibraryvt.org/covid-19-policies.html>.

Jericho Town Library is now admitting only one individual or one family group during each 30-minute time slot. You can still sign up for a browsing session (either individual or family) on our Calendly page: calendly.com/jerichotownlibrary.

We will also be conducting a very brief health screening at the door, including a quick temperature check with a contactless thermometer and a question about if you have left the state in the past 14 days and followed state-mandated quarantine policies. Masks and 6' social distancing procedures are still absolutely required. You can read our full reopening plan on our website: <https://www.jerichotownlibraryvt.org/covid-19-policies.html>.

We cannot stress this enough: if you are sick, please stay home. If a family member is sick, please stay home. We are doing our part to keep the community safe, and we ask you to do the same, especially as we approach the winter holidays.

For our *Around the World in 2021* reading program, we have wrapped up Europe and will be moving on to a new part of the world in February. There are craft kits available on Tuesdays: everything you need to make stained glass rose window hangings! And our final European recipe is French crepes; the recipe is available at <https://www.jerichotownlibraryvt.org/around-the-world-in-2021>.

Thank you all for your support as we move through this reopening process! We look forward to having everyone back and happy reading — Gretchen Wright, Director, Jericho Town Library

Library hours are Tuesday-Friday, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM and Saturday, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM. Please check our website and the notice boards outside of the library for updates.

For more information on programs and library services, please visit our website www.jerichotownlibraryvt.org or call 899-4686.

VARNUM MEMORIAL LIBRARY JEFFERSONVILLE
Were you inspired by Amanda Gorman's poem on Inauguration Day? The Varnum has copies of the poem, *The Hill We Climb*, available for pickup. They will be stored in our clear plastic container on the front porch.

Due to the surge of COVID cases, the Varnum is back to

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LEGISLATIVE REPORTS

Report from the Legislature

By Theresa Wood, State Representative
Washington-Chittenden

Friday, January 15

This is the first in a series of weekly legislative updates that I will provide during the 2021 legislative session.

- Elections and swearing in. We got underway last week with the election of a new Speaker of the House, new Clerk of the House, and new President Pro Tem of the Senate. For the first time in history we have an all-female legislative leadership team, including the new Lieutenant Governor. The Governor and other constitutional officers were also sworn in. All legislators took their oath of office and we were “seated.” And, of course, because of the pandemic, all of this took place without the usual pomp and circumstance that normally occurs – most of it done remotely or outside on the front steps of the capitol building. The new Speaker of the House is a member of the Democratic Party and she was nominated for the position by two fellow legislators – a Democrat and a Republican.

- Response to events in Washington. In stark contrast, at the same time Vermont was carrying out a peaceful transition, we were witnessing an attempted attack on the democracy on which this country was founded. The Governor was quick to condemn the action in a strongly worded statement that can be

found here: <https://governor.vermont.gov/press-release/official-statement-governor-phil-scott-rioters-us-capitol>. And the very next day the legislature acted swiftly to pass a joint resolution of the House and Senate condemning the violence. The full text of that resolution can be found here: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/RESOLUTN/JRH001/JRH001%20As%20Introduced.pdf>.

- Committee assignments and Clerk of the House. I was honored to be appointed as Vice-Chair for the House Human Services Committee, my first year in that position. Rep. Tom Stevens was reappointed as Chair to the House General, Housing and Military Affairs Committee. Additional leadership from Waterbury is our new Clerk of the House, BetsyAnn Wrask. Ms. Wrask is an attorney who previously served in the Office of Legislative Counsel; we are fortunate to have her skill and expertise in this position.

- Town Meeting 2021. The House and Senate acted swiftly to pass H.48 and move it to the Governor’s desk this week. This bill provided additional flexibility for the manner in which cities and towns across the state, as well as school districts, water districts, etc., hold their annual meetings and vote on local matters. The Legislature also approved up to \$2 million to send to towns to assist with extra expenses for Town Meeting 2021. It is clear that we will not be holding our customary town meeting events in Bolton, Huntington, and Waterbury. Watch for updates about

Town Meeting from our very capable and hard-working Town Clerks in all three towns.

Tuesday, January 26

Last week in the legislature saw action on another COVID related bill (see below), as well as the issuance of a report by the State Treasurer on the condition of the state employees’ and teachers’ retirement funds.

S.9 is a bill that extends temporary changes to the workers’ compensation laws that relate to COVID-19. Essentially, the changes that were passed in the last session regarding proof of contracting COVID-19 in the workplace were extended to thirty (30) days following the termination of the state of emergency called by the Governor.

State Employees’ and Teachers’ Retirement Funds – the State Treasurer is required to issue a report to the Legislature each year on the status of the retirement funds that are managed in the Treasurer’s office. This year, the Treasurer’s report contained a number of recommendations to address the solvency of the retirement funds. I have received many emails from people with concerns about the recommendations made in the report. The solvency of the funds has been an ongoing issue for a number of years, and Vermont is among many states that face this predicament. However, it has reached a critical point and frankly, we can’t kick the can down the road any longer. The Legislature

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curbside delivery: Monday, Tuesday, and Friday, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM; Wednesday, 1:30 – 6:00 PM; Thursday, 11:30 AM – 6:00 PM; and Saturday, 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Please send your requests to varnumrequests@gmail.com. We can print pages for you at 25¢ a page. Please stay safe and let us know (644-2117) how we can help.

To view our catalog, please visit <https://varnum.kohavt.org/>. When you find your selections, please send a request to varnumrequests@gmail.com.

Your Libby login is your entire library card number and your password/pin should be your last name, all lowercase. If your password/pin doesn’t work, please let us know and we can reset it.

Thank you for continuing to bear with us as we navigate these uncertain times; we miss you all and look forward to the day when we can have more consistent offerings.

The Varnum Library, P.O. Box 198, 194 Main St., Jeffersonville, 802-644-2117; thevarnum@gmail.com; www.varnumlibrary.org.

WESTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

For the safety of the community, the Westford Public Library has (temporarily) returned to a curbside-only service model. With an increase in COVID cases in the area, we are doing our part to minimize interactions between community members.

While our building is closed, we are taking the opportunity to make some infrastructure improvements. Thanks to a generous grant from the UVM Office of Engagement, we were able to upgrade our air filtration from standard filters to HEPA filters. We also had a UV duct light installed to help with bacteria, viruses, mold, dust, and other allergens. These upgrades allow us to provide a safer environment for our patrons, now and for the future.

Curbside pickup of library materials is available on Wednesdays and Fridays 3:00 – 6:00 PM, Thursdays 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM, and Saturdays 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM. Order form (when needed) is on the website and the Facebook page, or email or call.

Curbside order form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAlpQLSjTe1x3cPw3Puj9ghTzBxJitoPuJdX0RZp-7GpOzL_cGvVw/viewform. We have added printing services to these curbside hours. Call the library for more information if you need something printed.

Virtual Storytime is posted every Thursday on YouTube, FPF, Facebook, and the website.

Winter Story Hike – sponsored by the Westford Public Library and the Westford Conservation Commission, this hike up on the school trails starts from the back parking lot – look for the signs. Please do not walk on any of the groomed cross-country ski tracks. Featured book: *Big Snow* by Jonathan Bean.

Friday-Saturday, February 5-13 – Valentine’s Day Collage curbside pickup. Kits put together by a local crafter. One kit per crafter. No need to order; just stop by and pick one up.

Wednesday, February 17, 7:00 PM on Zoom – Adult Book Group: *Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine, and the Murder of a President* by Candace Millard.

Friday-Saturday, February 19-27 – Family Science Kits curbside pickup. A fun and enriching project to do with your kids over February vacation. Using resources from *NASA@myLibrary*, these kits have four activities and some of the needed supplies, with instructions and further NASA links and resources. Projects: making a clinometer, mapmaking, Cloud in a Jar, and building a mosquito larvae trap. One kit per crafter. No need to order; just stop by and pick one up.

Here are another couple of videos about things you can check out from the Westford Public Library. If you missed our previous *Bree on Books* videos, you can check them out on our YouTube channel, as follows. *Bree on Books – the Binge-Watching Edition*, features DVD series that the library has to offer and is online at <https://youtu.be/4qxEc5IHLVk>. *Bree on Books – What Did I Miss?* has new books from big-name authors that came out over the pandemic, that you might have missed! Part I is online at <https://youtu.be/Yuu2mrVZ598>; Part II is online at <https://youtu.be/mFo95vNcvV0>.

The VT Department of Libraries, along with several state agencies and groups, has put together an online resource page: https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/children_and_teens/homeschooling_resources.

Library cards can be renewed or created via email or the phone.

Free Downloadable Ebooks and Audiobooks: Libby/Overdrive, free with your library card. Don’t know your number, card expired, don’t have a card? No problem! Can all be done over email. Here are two helpful links:

- <https://help.libbyapp.com/6144.htm>
- <https://help.overdrive.com/en-us/categories/getting-started.htm>

While our building is closed, we are taking the opportunity to make some infrastructure improvements. Thanks to a generous

grant from the UVM Office of Engagement, we were able to upgrade our air filtration from standard filters to HEPA filters. We also had a UV duct light installed to help with bacteria, viruses, mold, dust, and other allergens. These upgrades allow us to provide a safer environment for our patrons now, and for the future.

Like us on Facebook. Bree Drapa, Librarian. 878-5639; <http://westfordpubliclibrary.org>; westfordpubliclibrary@gmail.com.

RICHMOND LIBRARY

Please note, there is lots of new information on our website, <https://richmondfreelibraryvt.org>, on homeschooling resources (on our home page), finding books and more, a long list of online resources, book clubs, and more.

Regular curbside pick-up hours are: Monday 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Tuesday 12:00 – 4:00 PM, Wednesday 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM, Thursday 12:00 – 4:00 PM, Friday 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, and Saturday 12:00 – 2:00 PM. You may request anything from the Library’s holdings: books, audiobooks on CD or Playaway, DVDs, music CDs or magazines. Browse the catalog at rfl.kohavt.org. Need help deciding? Just call or email us and we’ll be your “personal shoppers.” Remember that items are quarantined for seven days before circulating again. If you’ve returned an item and it still shows on your record, be patient, we’ll be checking it in soon.

A Moisture Meter may be borrowed for seven days from the Richmond Free Library. The meter was provided to the library via a new program from the VT Department of Environmental Conservation’s Air Quality and Climate Division and the VT Department of Libraries. Use the hand-held meter to make sure your wood is dry enough to burn safely and efficiently. See our webpage for more information.

Storytime. If your child enjoyed outdoor storytime at the library this fall, you can share our special holiday storytime video with them by visiting the youth page of our website and clicking on the video link you will find there. Miss Wendy and Miss Jennifer as well as Big Gorilla share stories and songs of the season.

Electric vehicle charging is now available at the Library/Town Center Municipal Parking Lot. Anyone with an electric vehicle (EV) can take advantage of the Town’s new ChargePoint Charging Station, providing level-2 charging for up to two vehicles. Energy is provided “at cost,” and is equivalent to paying about \$1.50/gallon for a gas vehicle. Users can check if the chargers are in use on chargepoint.com or your favorite EV app. Want to learn more about EVs? Learn more at DriveElectricVT.com. The Richmond Climate Action Committee helped the Town to secure the grant for installation, aligning with the Richmond Town Plan and the State’s goal of 90% renewable energy across all sectors by 2050. The funding is based on the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust.

Discover *Between the Covers*. Join Stacey Symanowicz (Huntington) and Rebecca Mueller (Richmond) for monthly book chats introducing readers to hidden gems and latest titles, on the third Wednesday of the month at 1:30 PM, via *Google Meet*. Hosted by the Community Senior Center. Contact the library for the connection link.

- Call us at 434-3036. Leave a message if it is after hours.
- Email us at rfl@gmavt.net.

Richmond Free Library, 201 Bridge St., P.O. Box 997, Richmond, VT 05477; 434-3036; fax 434-3223; www.richmondfreelibraryvt.org.

DOROTHY ALLING MEMORIAL LIBRARY,
WILLISTON

If you would like to join us but need some assistance connecting via Zoom, we are here to help. Please email us at programs@damlvt.org or call us at 878-4918, and we will be happy to help walk you through it.

FAIRFAX COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Curbside pickup will continue on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00 – 7:00 PM. The table is located in the hallway inside the glass double doors and materials are available upon request.

If you would like to schedule a 20-minute library visit on Tuesdays, 3:00 – 6:30 PM, Please call the library, 802-849-2420. Due to COVID-19, all programs will be virtual. Keep an eye on our Facebook page and website for any updates.

All events are free unless otherwise noted. Pre-registration required; contact 849-2420 or libraryfairfax@gmail.com. Please sign up at least one week before the program date!

For up-to-date information about programs, visit www.fairfaxvtlibrary.org, where you can also find a link to the interactive Google calendar.

Youth events

Thursday-Friday, February 4-5: Heart Suncatchers. Make your own suncatcher! (Heart shaped or otherwise.) Pick up your materials at the library on Thursday, February 4, 3:00 – 7:00 PM, and watch the Facebook livestream on Friday, February 5 at 4:00 PM. The video will remain available afterwards, so don’t worry

if you miss it! Ages 6+ (adults are welcome too!) Please register!

Thursday-Friday, February 11-12: No-Sew Heart Pillows. Make cute fleece pillows without having to touch a needle and thread! Pick up your materials at the library on Thursday, February 11, 3:00 – 7:00 PM, and watch the Facebook livestream on Friday, February 12 at 4:00 PM. The video will remain available afterwards, so don’t worry if you miss it! Ages 8+ (adults are welcome too!) Please register!

Thursday-Friday, February 25-26: DIY Stethoscope. Make your own stethoscope and learn more about how to take your pulse. Pick up your materials at the library on Thursday, February 4, 3:00 – 7:00 PM, and watch the Facebook livestream on Friday, February 5 at 4:00 PM. The video will remain available afterwards, so don’t worry if you miss it! Ages 6+ (adults are welcome too!) Please register!

Adult events

Saturday, February 27, 1:00 PM: Virtual Knitting Club. Relax and chat while working on your latest knitting or crochet project! If you would like some basic knitting materials, let us know and they will be provided at curbside pickup on Thursday, February 25, 3:00 – 7:00 PM. Join the Zoom meeting on Saturday at 1:00 PM! Please register with libraryfairfax@gmail.com to receive the zoom link!

Thursday-Friday, February 18-19, 7:00 PM: DIY Storybook Paper Roses. Make beautiful paper roses out of old book pages! Pick up your materials at the library on Thursday, February 18, 3:00 – 7:00 PM, and join the Zoom meeting on Friday, February 19 at 7:00 PM. Please register with libraryfairfax@gmail.com to receive the zoom link!

Virtual Book Club: book and time TBA! If you have any questions, please email fairfaxlibrarian@gmail.com.

The library website <http://www.fairfaxvtlibrary.org> has a new digital resource! In the “Write. Right. Rite.” series linked on our website homepage, you can find an exciting program led by writer Jason Reynolds, the National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature for 2020-2021. The program is all about young people learning to express themselves creatively through writing and storytelling. Check out the videos and writing prompts in this fun series sponsored by the Library of Congress.

Fairfax Community Library, 75 Hunt St., Fairfax, VT 05454; www.fairfaxvtlibrary.org, 802-849-2420. Call or email libraryprograms@fvsu.org.

BROWNELL LIBRARY, ESSEX JUNCTION

We are not be hosting in-person gatherings for now; this could change. We will keep you informed of any additional program offerings or program changes on Facebook and our program calendar at <https://brownelllibrary.org/events/calendar>.

The library offers curbside service, Monday-Friday, 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM.

Place books, DVDs, etc. on hold at <https://brownell.kohavt.org/> by calling us at 802-878-6955, or emailing frontdesk@brownelllibrary.org. Holds and email requests received by 5:00 PM will be available for same-day pick-up. Phone-in requests received by 5:30 PM will also be available for same-day pick-up. We will call you when your request is ready.

Our book drop is open for returns. Because we are still encouraged to stay safe and stay home, all materials will be checked out to you for three weeks.

Downloadable audio books and ebooks are available through Libby or Overdrive: <https://gmlc.overdrive.com/>. For Village residents, we can even offer a temporary virtual card that will provide access to these online services. For a virtual card, contact the library by phone or email.

You can catch our digital programming on our website program calendar: just select the event for details and the meeting link to log on: <https://brownelllibrary.org/events/calendar>.

If you need help using any of these services, email us at frontdesk@brownelllibrary.org. We will also be checking voicemail periodically, and you can leave us a message at 878-6955.

Brownell Library, 6 Lincoln St., Essex Junction. Contact Main Desk 878-6955, Youth Desk 878-6956, Reference Desk 878-6957, or frontdesk@brownelllibrary.org.

ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

The Essex Free Library is currently closed to the public, but offers curbside pickup, Monday-Friday, 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM. For more curbside details, please visit <https://www.essexvt.org/753/Curbside-Services>.

We are accepting book returns in the book drop only. Please do not return books inside the vestibule.

While the building is closed, our online resources and services are always open. All you need is your library card. Don’t have a library card? Request a virtual library e-card today to access our ebook and audiobook collections. (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScH6EF1cpRRmOhjQ_O1GTNOzZ1_eJS3WJtR4BQe1aT6mYMT0A/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1)

Essex Free Library, 1 Browns River Rd., Essex. 802-879-0313; essexfreelibrary.com.

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will review the recommendations and work with those who represent all affected parties. Fairness and equity are extremely important. If you'd like to read the Treasurer's report (there is a quick executive summary), you can find it under Report to Board of Trustees and General Assembly 1.15.2020 FINAL.pdf (at vermonttreasurer.gov).

COVID-19 Vaccine – The other hot topic of the week is the COVID-19 vaccine sign up. As with all new initiatives, there were some hiccups as the system rolled out. However, over 21,000 people signed up in the first day, which was a great success. You can sign up at a Kinney Drugs location near you, or at a Health Department clinic. The sign up links for both, as well as a phone number, can be found at Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine | Vermont Department of Health (healthvermont.gov). Please feel free to reach out to me with questions or concerns, and as always, you can reach me at twood@leg.state.vt.us.

MLK, inauguration, and start of legislative session

By Kesha Ram, State Senator, Chittenden District
January 18, 2021

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It is hard to adequately speak to the historic times we're living through, but I am reminded that it was following President Kennedy's assassination, riots in at least six American cities, and the murder of three civil rights workers that Dr. King famously said, "The time is always right to do what's right."

In the same speech, just before the 1964 election, he went on to say: "It is true that behavior cannot be legislated, and legislation cannot make you love me, but legislation can restrain you from lynching me, and I think that is kind of important." I reflect on this as we return to our shared values and principles in this transition of power and moment of great grief and loss in American history. So let us enter into another period of reconstruction, but this time with redemption and reconciliation at the heart of our worthy experiment building a multicultural democracy.

In this historic year, I was proud to be one of Vermont's three electors, casting a historic vote on your behalf in the Electoral College. President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris will be sworn in on the West Front of the U.S. Capitol building on January 20 — at a time yet to be determined and announced, with their safety in mind. After they take their oaths of office, President-elect Biden will deliver an inaugural address, laying out his vision to defeat the pandemic, build back better, and unify and heal the nation. More information about Inaugural Ceremonies and streaming of events can be found at bideninaugural.org.

As you may know, our legislative session is underway and we are entering our second full week of work. This biennium, I am grateful to have received my top choices. I am serving as Clerk of the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing & General Affairs and Clerk of the Senate Committee on Government Operations. I am also beyond honored to co-chair the joint legislative Social Equity Caucus.

The Senate Economic Development & Housing Committee has jurisdiction over labor issues, unemployment, support for working families like paid family leave and access to child care, access to capital, affordable housing, homeownership, and supporting small businesses and their employees through the pandemic. As someone raised in my Indian immigrant father and Jewish American mother's Irish pub, I recognized the importance of access to capital and affordable housing as a major determinant of our family's health and stability. In a pandemic especially, economic well-being is health care, and I am excited to get to work rebuilding and improving the economy for all Vermonters.

There are key reasons I chose the Senate Committee on Government Operations as well, especially in a pandemic that is leaving BIPOC and new American Vermonters behind. This committee has jurisdiction over elections, voting, political redistricting (a once-a-decade process happening this biennium), and oversight of state and local government, including law enforcement and policing. We have already begun our work in earnest to ensure safe Town Meeting Day elections across the state, and we will then be looking at the state of policing, including training and limiting use of force. Another issue of great importance to me I plan to focus on is language access in state government. I will look to advance a comprehensive Language Access Plan for Vermont this year.

As the first woman of color to serve in the State Senate, I am honored to join Rep. Kevin "Coach" Christie of Hartford in co-chairing the joint Social Equity Caucus. Our first order of business is the vaccine rollout and ensuring necessary trust and rapport is built with BIPOC Vermonters in our vaccine delivery system. We are working to dismantle systems of oppression in our legislative work to ensure more BIPOC Vermonters can access the halls of power and advance systemic change.

Thank you for the faith you have placed in me. I am grateful to be serving you at this critical time in our state and nation's history. Please stay in touch – kram@leg.state.vt.us.

Legislative update, weeks 2, 3

By Alyssa Black, State Representative, Chittenden-8-3

Welcome! Week 2 of the legislative session turned out to be a productive and satisfying week. I feel like I'm definitely getting my feet underneath me and becoming more proficient with the schedule, the many Zoom links, and flow of all the various activities we engage in.

The Vermont House passed H.48 this week in record time. This was the first priority of the biennium. Vermont towns and village clerks were asking for flexible options to be able to conduct their annual Town Meeting safely, due to the pandemic. It includes the option to send ballots for local elections as well as the ability to delay Town Meeting. It was specifically crafted in such a way to make certain that each municipality could choose what works best for them. The Senate concurred and this bill is now awaiting the Governor's signature.

We've spent this week in the Healthcare Committee getting up to speed on Vermont's intricate system of healthcare, as well as reviewing the emergency legislation that was passed last year. We'll be taking a deep dive into the healthcare funding that was

a part of the Cares Act. Each committee is trying to get a sense of what worked and what could be improved upon. This will guide us in making important decisions on the allocation and distribution of future federal aid packages.

Dr. Mark Levine, VT Commissioner of Health, delivered testimony regarding vaccines to a joint meeting of the House Human Services, House Health Care, and Senate Health and Welfare Committees. He noted that while Vermont has reached the highest rate of COVID-19 hospitalizations yet, we are nowhere near exceeding the capacity of our healthcare system. However, Vermonters have less access to interstate health care from hospitals such as Dartmouth-Hitchcock and UVM Plattsburgh due to COVID-19 surges in these neighboring states. Regarding the vaccine, Dr. Levine stated that we are "completely at the mercy of the federal government." We are presently receiving only 8000-9000 vaccines per week, largely due to delays in distribution (not manufacturing). With the current limited supply of doses, the State has adopted a strategy of focusing on older Vermonters, one of the larger demographics for whom COVID-19 is most deadly. At this rate, with approximately 125,000 Vermonters over the age of 65, we are still many months from completing this next phase of vaccine distribution. However, Dr. Levine stated that he is optimistic that distribution rates will improve as we receive more supply and with another new vaccine receiving FDA emergency approval. I have heard from many of you, and I understand the frustration you feel over the distribution of the vaccine. But Dr. Levine was a sober reminder that this is about saving lives. And I am confident that our VT Department of Health is making their decisions based on the best interests of all Vermonters, especially our most vulnerable.

As always, you can reach out to me anytime at 802-598-1026 or at ABlack@leg.state.vt.us with any concerns or questions. As I write this I'm looking out on the beautiful new snowfall. I hope you are able to get outside and enjoy this. Not a popular opinion, but winter is my favorite season! Be careful with shoveling and take care this week.

Week 3

I think it's week 3, frankly I'm starting to lose track of time because it seems to be going so quickly! I'll just share a couple important updates that I think will be relevant to both constituents and what I've been concentrating on.

State Pension Funding Gap: I want to start with Treasurer Pierce's recent recommendations regarding the unfunded liability for teacher and state employee pensions. I've heard from many of you and I want you to know that the entire Legislature takes this very seriously. First and foremost, we must ensure that those who have worked so hard throughout their careers have confidence that they will receive their pensions when they retire. The Speaker has met with representatives for both teachers and state employees and will continue to do so. While there are no easy solutions for this issue, it's imperative that we have participation from all parties. The Government Operations Committee will be working towards a policy related to pensions while other committees will work on specific challenges related to their area of jurisdiction.

Vaccinations began for Age 75+: I wanted to make certain to make mention and provide the Department of Health link for COVID-19 vaccination: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine/getting-covid-19-vaccine>. Scheduling began Monday, January 25 for Vermonters 75 years of age and older. The VT Department of Health is encouraging that you sign up online; however, they do know that many are more comfortable using a phone: 855-722-7878.

H:95 (3+3) Bill Introduced: This week H:95 was introduced and has been assigned to the Government Operations Committee. Sponsored by Rep. Marybeth Redmond and co-sponsored by me and Rep. Vyhovsky, this is a re-introduction of last year's H.944. It requests changes to the Town of Essex charter, adjusting the number of Select Board members to six (three from TOV and three from TIV.) Language was added to provide a timeline for transition. I have received no word from Gov Ops on when they may take up this legislation, but it seems likely they will wait until the results of the coming merger vote in order to deal with all Essex charter changes simultaneously. I realize how important this is to my constituents and I will continue to add my voice advocating for this.

Health Care Committee: This week we continued our high-level education on the healthcare system in Vermont. Fortunately, as a healthcare administrator I came in with a lot of knowledge already, but I learned an awful lot. Particularly about how Medicaid is funded using what's referred to as FMAP (Federal Medical Assistance percentages.) This is the federal match we get to fund our state Medicaid program. Should state funding to our Medicaid program be reduced, we would lose a sizable federal match – between \$2.20-10.00 for every dollar Vermont spends, depending on the program. This is a sobering fact and provides important context to health care finance.

On Friday we heard from Comm. Cory Gustafson from VT Department of Health Access and Comm. Sarah Squirrel from VT Department of Mental Health on their requests for the 2021 budget adjustment. Both their requests were reasonable and necessary, as they have had unintended budget pressures due to COVID-19. Comm. Gustafson advised us that due to the pandemic and job losses, they have had 18,000 increased enrollments! Comm Squirrel indicated they have had staffing issues directly attributable to COVID-19 and the need to establish a separate facility for inpatient psychiatric care for COVID-19 positive patients.

Lastly, a more personal note: On Friday, H.110 was introduced. Sponsored by Rep. Till of Jericho and Rep. Mrowicki of Putney, H.110 would establish a 48-hour waiting period for the purchase of a firearm. I'm listed as a co-sponsor on this piece of legislation. After a lot of soul searching this past December, I decided that I would not sponsor this. I'm here to do important work on behalf of my constituents, not to push my own agenda. But I support this measure. We are focused on COVID-19 recovery this year, and the work we do must be concentrated on rebounding and rebuilding a more sustainable future. For this reason, I don't think H.110 will receive any focus. It will go on the wall, like so many other important bills, and is likely to stay there. But on Friday, I listened to H.110 get its first read on the House floor and I was proud.

Never hesitate to reach out to me at 802-598-1026 or ABlack@leg.state.vt.us.

COVID vaccine appointments for 75+ open

By Lucy Rogers, State Representative, Lamoille-3
Saturday, January 23

Starting Monday, January 25, Vermonters age 75 and older have been able to book an appointment at www.healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine for a COVID-19 vaccine.

Relatives or friends are encouraged to assist people who are eligible in making an appointment. A phone number has been added to the website for anyone who cannot register online, or who needs to speak with someone in a language other than English. Secretary of Human Services Mike Smith has asked that you please do not call any other Health Department number to make an appointment, and also avoid calling hospitals, health care providers, pharmacies or 2-1-1 to make an appointment.

"While we expect some bottlenecks in the first few days of registration, (Vermonters age 75 and older) WILL be able to get an appointment during the weeks we are scheduling," Smith said. Vaccination appointments began on Wednesday, January 27.

"When you make an appointment, please keep it," Smith added. "No-shows, late cancellations, and disruptions to schedules delay vaccines for others and may cause doses that have been prepared to be spoiled."

I will post vaccination updates as I receive them, and you can also view the most recent vaccination plan for Vermont online at https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/VermontCOVID-19VaccineImplementationAdvisoryCommittee-12.31.20AllocationRecommendations.Final_.pdf.

Legislative update Washington-Chittenden district

By Thomas Stevens

State Representative, Washington-Chittenden

As the VT Legislature ends its second full week, we are in full swing. Committees have been taking testimony from administration officials and service providers to get a recap of the work we all did last year in immediate response to the COVID crisis. In my committee, General, Housing and Military Affairs, we heard that programs that were developed in our committee resulted in the creation of approximately 450 units that will be used to provide stable housing for families and households experiencing homelessness. These units were created using the Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF), and, along with helping to mitigate a desperate problem, also created a number of construction jobs to get the units ready by the end of the year. We had appropriated funds to provide services to help these households stay stable, and while we acknowledge there are more units to create, we were proud to provide the tools the housing organizations needed to get these units online.

By the end of January, the CRF will have also provided the means to provide up to \$25 million in rental arrearages, which kept families and households in their homes, as well as providing the funds to landlords in order to keep them solvent. Nearly \$5 million was used for mortgage arrearages, preventing foreclosure actions on homeowners, and nearly \$6 million was provided in grants to landlords who brought apartments once unable to be rented back online to rent to those who need them most, primarily those experiencing homelessness. Over \$15 million has been budgeted to provide the necessary services to keep these families and households in their homes. We have never had such an opportunity to help so many with this kind of funding, and we know that these actions do not fully address the ongoing circumstances that lead to homelessness. That said, we are confident that by doing this right thing – by providing a home to stay safe in during an unsafe time – we have saved the health and the lives of many who were at risk.

The Legislature takes the state pensions issue extremely seriously; there is not a quick and easy answer to the increasing unfunded liability gap experienced by so many states around the nation. We want to ensure our state employees and teachers who have worked so hard have peace of mind when they retire.

Resolving this growing debt problem has been acknowledged by numerous Administrations over many years with little progress made, but we are at a tipping point where we can no longer ignore the issue. We are experiencing the pressures in this upcoming budget. If this problem is not addressed, the ripple effects could be felt for decades to come.

Treasurer Pearce released a report last week outlining the state of the pensions, the grave situation we are faced with, and options to consider as the legislature digs into the issue and discusses the best path forward. Following new analyses of the pension system's current and future performance, the pension board recently lowered the expected annual rate of return on the funds from 7.5% to 7%.

Actuaries project that the pension system's unfunded liabilities have grown by another \$600 million. That's in addition to the \$1.5 billion shortfall that was projected beforehand. The Speaker of the House, Jill Krowinski, has met with, and will continue to meet with, union representatives for the teachers and state employees; ensuring that both parties have a voice at the table as policy decisions are considered.

There is no perfect solution to solve this issue, but we must make sure we have participation from all parties, sitting together, and working to get to a place where Vermonters can be assured they will have their retirement benefit, while also curtailing the unfunded liability.

We will endeavor to keep you informed about this serious matter. It has been decades in the making, and will take time to resolve, and the time is now.

As always, please feel free to contact me with questions, tom@stevensvermont.com.

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families.

MMYBL will now look at providing options later in 2021 once outdoor courts become available, and hopefully, COVID-19 becomes less of a bar to recreational activities with increased vaccinations.

Thank you for your patience, and we hope to see all of our current and future players on the courts later on in 2021.

Mount Mansfield Girls Lacrosse seeks volunteer coaches

By Melissa Mutolo

I have been running the middle school girls' lacrosse program for 18 years. I worked as a coach and administrator for the first 11 years, and now I am responsible for the administration of the league.

We are in need of coaches for the 2021 season. This is a volunteer role and would start at the end of March and run through the first week of June. Practice is at Mills Riverside Park in Jericho on Mondays and Wednesdays, 6:00 – 7:30 PM. Games are on Sundays in May and the first weekend of June.

Our program supports middle schools girls in grades 4-8. If you have an interest, please email me at melissamutolo@live.com.

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Valentine's Day dinner benefits Westford Rec

Get a three-course dinner delivered to your doorstep on Valentine's Day, Sunday, February 14 (or on Saturday, February 13), 3:00 – 5:00 PM on both days, and benefit the Westford Recreation Department! Place your order by Saturday, February 8 – order by email to recreation@westfordvt.us. Orders will be delivered to your door.

The dinner will be prepared by Chef Shawn Calley – 2015 Chef of the Year, 2012 Top Chef Vermont winner, three-time Culinary Cup Chef Choice winner, and two-time Culinary Cup People's Choice Award winner. The three-course dinner for two is \$50 (add a kid's meal for \$10) and includes two entrées, salad, dessert, candle, and flower.

Menu: green salad (mixed greens, watermelon radishes, English cucumbers, red onion, maple balsamic dressing); entrée choices winter squash risotto (sage, goat cheese, pepitas, ginger), duck ragu (braised duck, roasted root vegetables over gnocchi), or cheddar apple stuffed chicken roulade (apple cider jus, glazed carrots, whipped potato); dessert – chocolate flourless cake. Kids' meal: crudité, pasta, red sauce, meatball, cookie.

Meals will be cooked and packaged, delivered between 3:00 – 5:00 PM on the date you choose. There will be directions

included to reheat your meal so you can enjoy it at your convenience. All deliveries will be contactless – left at your doorstep with a knock or doorbell ring. Payments can be by cash or check (made out to "Westford Recreation Department" memo "Valentines Dinner") left for pickup when delivery happens, or mailed to the Westford Town Office; or online via westfordvt.us/payments (reference number "Valentine's Dinner"). Please specify payment, date, special delivery instructions, date choice, and your name, phone number, and email address when you order.



COLLEGE NOTES

Lucy Boyden of Cambridge, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI.

Nicole Cutler of Waterbury, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center, VT. Cutler is studying toward a Bachelor of Science in Business and Management Technology.

Madeline Daly of Underhill, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ. Daly is a Communication and Media Arts major.

Althea Devereux of Jericho, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, earning High Honors.

Molly Finn of Jericho, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, earning Highest Honors.

Emma Forsyth of Jericho, VT has excelled during the Fall 2020 semester, earning a spot on the Dean's List at Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY.

Samuel Grandfield of Waterbury, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Dean College, Franklin, MA.

Colin Green of Waterbury, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center, VT. Green is studying toward a Bachelor of Science in Construction Management.

Heather Hamlin of Underhill, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center, VT. Hamlin is studying toward an Associate of Science in Nursing.

Brandon Hanley of Waterbury, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center, VT. Hanley is studying toward a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering Technology.

Alex Hill of Westford, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center, VT. Hill is studying toward a Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering Technology.

Ethan Howard of Underhill, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI.

Lily Loomis of Jeffersonville, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI.

Aidan Luther of Jericho, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center, VT. Luther is studying toward a Bachelor of Science in Electromechanical Engineering Technology.

Laura Lyford of Waterbury, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 President's List at Hudson Valley Community College, Troy, NY. Lyford is studying in the Criminal Justice program.

Liam Poulin of Waterbury, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center, VT. Poulin is studying toward a Bachelor of Science but has not yet declared a field.

Shane Riddell of Jericho, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center, VT. Riddell is studying toward a Bachelor of Science in Electromechanical Engineering Technology.

Madison Roberge of Underhill, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, earning High Honors.

Brittany Rudacille of Jericho, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 President's List at Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center, VT. Rudacille is studying toward an Associate of Science in Nursing.

Julia Stergas of Cambridge, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, earning Highest Honors.

Colby Surprenant of Waterbury, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center, VT. Surprenant is studying toward a Bachelor of Science in Renewable Energy.

Jenna Treat of Jericho, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center, VT. Treat is studying toward a Certificate in the Practical Nursing program.

Jacob Wechsler of Jericho, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI.

Finn Whelan of Underhill, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center, VT. Whelan is studying toward an Associate of Science in Radiologic Science.

OBITUARIES



Sylvia Ella Parot Nolan, 95, of Underhill, VT died on Monday, December 21, 2021 at Gifford Medical Center in Randolph, VT. She was born on January 24, 1925, in Hyde Park, VT, the daughter of Fred and May (Lamotte) Parot. She was the fifth of six children and is survived by her sister Arlene Allen of North Hyde Park, VT, and was predeceased by her brothers Arnold Parot, Cleon Parot, and Fred Parot, Jr., and by sister Grace LaBelle, all of Hyde Park. She attended school in Hyde

Park, VT. Sylvia married Donald Francis Nolan on December 26, 1949 in Hyde Park, VT. He passed away on October 27, 2008. She is survived by her two children, daughter Sandra Nolan Russell and husband Charles of Randolph Center, VT, and son Wendall Wayne Nolan and wife Michelle, of Essex Junction, VT; and by fourteen grandchildren and sixteen great-grandchildren. For the last three years, she had been living with her daughter in Randolph Center, VT, but kept her house in Underhill. She was a seamstress and worked at the Johnson Woolen Mill and at sewing factories in Burlington, VT and Essex Jct., VT. Sylvia loved country music and played several instruments including guitar, piano, accordion, and fiddle. Fiddling was her favorite. She was a member of the Northeast Fiddlers Association and the Champlain Valley Fiddler's Club. In her younger years, she played in a band for square dances. She also sang and yodeled. After her children were grown and married, she and Donald would go square dancing almost every Saturday night! She also was a member of the Jeri-Hill Senior Citizens in Underhill-Jericho. She loved cooking, especially pies and doughnuts to share with her children, grandchildren, and neighbors! She loved crocheting and made many doilies, tablecloths, dishcloths, and infant layette sets, and sewed many outfits for her grandchildren. Sylvia was the embodiment of the hardworking, frugal, salt-of-the-earth Vermonter. She valued family time at the dinner table above all else and never wanted for more. When the surviving members of her family smile, you can see the hint of her classic grin on their faces. A graveside service at the Underhill Cemetery is planned for Friday, April 30, 2021. Arrangements are being made by Gifford Funeral Home, Richmond, VT.

Gerd C. Sommer, Jr. passed away on Wednesday, January 13, 2021 at the age of 92. He was born in Mount Vernon, NY on June 3, 1928 to Gerd C. Sommer, Sr. and Elsie (Knauss) Sommer. As a six year old child, Gerd took rudimentary drum lessons from a legendary instructor J. Burns Moore. From there he joined a fife and drum corps and then in 1968 brought fife and drum from NY to Vermont. He is best known for creating Hannaford's Volunteers Fife and Drum Corps of Underhill, VT in 1975 as a bicentennial project. He was a great influence on many children's lives that were members of the Corps. They will always remember the friendships made and adventures taken. Gerd joined the Army Air Corps during WWII and was an active member of the Cambridge, VT Post 35 American Legion. He graduated from RPI and ACUNY with a bachelor's degree in metallurgical engineering, and worked at



IBM from 1968 until retirement. Gerd was a founding member of the Good Shepherd Lutheran church in Jericho, VT. He sang in the church choir for many years and was a very faithful attendee. Gerd was an amateur archeologist. He dug with David Starbuck, who was best known for leading numerous archaeological digs over the decades at Fort William Henry and Battleground Park in Lake George and at Rogers Island in Fort Edward. He loved woodworking, he built his log cabin house and helped Scott his son build Lori and Cole's post and beam house. He passed those skills on to his grandson Dillon. We will thank him forever for taking us skiing, camping, fishing, hiking, and visiting historic sites. Gerd loved living in rural Vermont. He raised sheep, chickens, ducks, geese, cows, and horses, and always had a nice garden. He was predeceased by his wife Ruth (Logan) Sommer and by his son Scott Sommer. He is survived by his sister Jeanne (Sommer) Gross, daughter Lori (Sommer) Tierney, her husband Cole Tierney, his daughter-in-law Lisa Sommer, grandson Dillon Sommer, and granddaughter Cassidy Sommer, and by a niece, three nephews, and their children.

Kathleen Christina Sprout (Kitty) of Marana, AZ, cherished Mom, Grandma, Aunt, and friend, passed away peacefully after a short illness on Sunday, December 27, 2020. She was born in Barre, VT on August 2, 1931 and resided in Vermont for most of her life. She was predeceased by her husband of over 50 years, Lyman, in 2010. Kitty's life long passion was teaching. She taught for over 30 years in the Essex Junction, VT school system. In retirement, she continued to substitute teach at the Morgan Elementary school in Morgan, VT, and as a volunteer at the Wells Elementary School in Wells, ME. She was awarded the distinction of Volunteer of the Year for her work in Wells. Kitty was an avid reader and continued to look for well-written books to read throughout her life. She loved snow, whether on the ocean in Wells or in the mountains of Vermont. She loved to be outside hiking, snowshoeing, or cross-country skiing. She was loved and cherished by her family and friends. She is survived by her three children Greg (Donna) Bluffton of SC, Cynthia Marana of AZ, and Jeff (Liz) of Underhill, VT; by six grandchildren – Kathleen Van Atta, Cassandra, Christine, Ben, Caleb, and Corin Sprout; and by four great-grandchildren – Victoria, Angelo, Valentina, and Kaimana. At the family's request, there will be no service at this time. For family and friends who would like to honor Kitty's memory, please consider donating to the Children's Literary Foundation of Vermont, which donates new books to children in need, at Clifonline.org.

Christopher James Buttolph, age 73, died Saturday, January 9, 2021, at his home in Jeffersonville, VT, succumbing to the effects of ankylosing spondylitis. He was the eldest son of Edward E. and Barbara Coast Buttolph who preceded him in death. He is survived by his siblings Janet Johnson of Coatesville, PA, David (Jerilyn) of Lititz, PA, Martin (Fawnda) of Middlebury, VT, and Alison Kutchma (David) of Falls Church, VA; eleven nieces and nephews; and by eight grandnieces and grandnephews. His family is especially grateful to his friend and devoted caregiver Jennifer Osgood, and his friend Bob Hindshaw who visited him daily. As a young teenager, Christopher took a keen interest in model aviation and competed in the national competition held at the Willow Grove U.S. Naval Air Station. He spent many hours with his father surveying land in northern Vermont and building sustainable forestry operations. Christopher was a

natural athlete and he competed on the high school ski jumping team, graduating from Middlebury Union High School in 1965. He served in the U.S. Army from 1966-1969 and was stationed in Germany, assigned to a unit maintaining the guidance system for Hawk missiles. During periods of leave, he discovered the joy of bicycling in the Alps, often riding 120 miles in a day with his Army cycling buddy. Soon after his return home, when he was 22, he was diagnosed with ankylosing spondylitis. Christopher faced his lifelong declining condition with incredible courage and humor. He attended the University of Vermont and worked with his father in the family timber and maple sugaring businesses, where he designed and installed unique boiling and vacuum systems required for a large modern sugaring installation. Christopher had many natural talents. He was an excellent photographer, a voracious reader, and a natural pianist and could play by ear almost anything he had heard. During his time living in Middlebury and Starksboro, he enjoyed sharing his talent for theater, performing in various productions with the Middlebury Community Players. Having a real passion for motorcycles, he hung on to the joy of riding for as long as he could. For years he rode his BMW R69 motorcycle with a sidecar, even riding throughout the winter. Later he switched to riding a Yamaha XS1100S, which he rode for years. In recent years he enjoyed a good poker game with friends, but most of all he loved his view of the Vermont mountains and the birds who frequented his window feeder. He will be remembered for his sharp mind, his quick wit and dry humor. To remember Christopher, donations can be made in his name to the Spondylitis Association of America at <https://spondylitis.org/>, the National Institute of Arthritis at <https://www.niams.nih.gov/>, or the Vermont Special Olympics at <https://specialolympicsvermont.org/>, or you can take a motorcycle ride on an open road for him or simply sit and enjoy the birds outside your window. Services will be announced at a future date. Assisting the Buttolph family is the Heald Funeral Home; messages of condolence are welcome at www.healdfuneralhome.com.

Charles Earl Barnard, age 68, died on Sunday, December 20, 2020 in Redding, CA with his sons by his side. The cause was bile duct liver cancer. Formerly of Oaklyn, NJ and Jeffersonville, VT, Charlie was born in Camden, NJ. He graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in Camden in 1971, and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst campus in 1983, after serving a tour of duty in the U.S. Navy. Charlie was preceded in death by his parents, Edward C. Barnard and M. Jeanne Rogers Barnard, and his brother-in-law, Edward J. Heinhold. He is survived by his sons Daniel Forest Barnard and wife Chelsea, and Justin Barnard and wife Kari; by his grandson Forest Sterling Barnard; brother Mark E. Barnard and wife Barbara of Kennesaw, GA, sister Barbara J. Heinhold of Rockville, MD; six nieces, one nephew, two grandnieces, and four grandnephews; by a host of cousins and friends; and by his companion Charlotte Lafferty of Oaklyn, NJ. All will miss Charlie and thought of him as the fun uncle and cousin, always with a big smile, and a good man with a big heart. Burial will be private in 2021 at a Veterans' cemetery in California.



ART / MUSIC / THEATER

Outdoor art show in Westford

Getting Cabin (and Covid!) Fever? Get some fresh air and enjoy the Outdoor Art Show at the Westford Common Hall, the old white church at the west end of the common, right off of VT Rt. 128. The show, called *The Biodegradable Series: Connected, Distanced, Changed, and Impermanent*, was installed by Westford artist Anne Cummings to bring people outdoors, allow for ample physical distancing, and share a gift with the community. The show runs through Thursday, April 1, 2021. Also check out the amazing Mittens Across Westford while you're there! For more information about the Outdoor Art Show, check out <https://www.wcax.com/2021/01/04/art-show-weathering-the-elements-in-westford/>.

Mountainfilm on Tour virtual film fest February 4-7

Please join *Mountainfilm on Tour* and Spruce Peak Arts for a virtual film festival from Thursday, February 4, 12:00 PM to Sunday, February 7, 12:00 PM. This event features ten environmentally-minded, culturally rich, adventure-packed, and incredibly inspiring documentary films curated from the annual Mountainfilm festival held in Telluride, CO.

In lieu of a traditional in-person gathering, Spruce Peak Arts will host this virtual screening of *Mountainfilm on Tour* with an inspiring program of films that explore themes connected to Mountainfilm's mission of using the power of film, art, and ideas to inspire audiences to create a better world.

Tickets for this event are free, but need to be reserved in advance. Spruce Peak Arts is able to present this event at no cost to the public through the generous support of our Screening Sponsors. In lieu of a ticket purchase, please consider donating to Spruce Peak Arts. For tickets, go online to <https://mountainfilm.myeventcenter.com/event/Mountainfilm-On-Tour-Stowe-Vt-45953>.

VT International Film Festival runs through June 2021

The Vermont International Film Festival has partnered with the Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival to present Split/Screen, an eight-month curatorial collaboration. Running through June 2021, the festivals will co-present a monthly series of films online. Learn more about Split/Screen at <https://vtiff.org/vtiff-now/split-screen/>.

Spruce Peak Arts Winter Concert series

This year's Spruce Peak Arts Winter Concert series will bring live performances, including options for limited, safe, in-person attendance, as well as for live-streaming. The mix of limited in-person seating and live-streaming of events is to ensure the health and safety of our patrons and community.

On Saturday, February 20, 7:00 PM, Bow Thayer, Boston bass staple Jeremy Dryden, and long-time drummer Jeff Berlin will cover most of Bow's new album *The Woodshed* as well as some old favorites.

The final Winter Concert Series event will be on the Spring Equinox, Saturday, March 20, 7:00 PM with *Beg, Steal, or Borrow*. The Vermont-based quintet is known for warm harmonies, virtuosic instrumentals, and tight musical interplay in an ever-growing repertoire of original music.

Protocols for in-person attendance include mask-wearing, social distancing standards, reduced seating capacity, hand sanitizing, health checks, and extensive cleaning protocols. To learn more, please visit our Health and Safety Policy page, <https://www.sprucepeakarts.org/safety-and-health-policies/>.

Tickets are \$25 for in-person attendance, \$15 for live-stream. In the event that Vermont guidance shifts to restrict in-person attendance, existing in-person tickets will be changed to live-stream. In-person ticketholders will have the option of a credit, refund, or making a donation with the remainder.

Art relief for COVID

Essex Art League invites all of you – artists, wannabees, or art lovers – to join our nonprofit for only \$15/year. Then you will be able to Zoom with this warm, friendly group and enjoy Kathy and other prominent artists on the first Thursday of every month at 10:00 AM.

The artist presenters work in many different mediums, so you will be able to enjoy mosaics, mono-printing, acrylic, and oils. I bet this might become one of your monthly highlights.

Please contact Annette Bauerle (annettebauerle@gmail.com) to join!

VT Arts Council director's update

By Karen S. Mittelman

Executive Director, VT Arts Council

2021 opens with a momentous transition in political leadership and the first phase of COVID vaccinations across the country, bringing hope to millions of people. While we know that the nation – and our arts and culture sector – face grave challenges, "there is always light," as we were reminded yesterday by National Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman.

On the federal government level, there is good news with regard to funding the federal cultural agencies. In the appropriations bill passed in December, Congress increased the budgets of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) slightly, from their current budgets of \$162.25 million each to \$167.5 million.

National arts advocacy organizations will continue to push to increase those allocations. For now, it's heartening to note that there was bipartisan support in Congress for the NEA and the NEH, despite the former president's repeated calls for their elimination.

The Biden administration is expected to move quickly to address mounting economic losses from the COVID pandemic, which we hope will include relief for the arts. The December aid package (the Consolidated Appropriations Act, or "CAA") included two programs that promise to deliver urgently-needed

relief to arts businesses and nonprofit organizations. The Act authorizes additional funding for the Paycheck Protection Program. It also includes a new \$15 billion grant program called Shuttered Venue Operator Grants – also known as "Save Our Stages" – to provide aid to struggling live performance venues. The grants will offer a lifeline for the nation's performing arts venues, movie theatres, and museums.

Both the National Assembly for State Arts Agencies and Americans for the Arts are already meeting with legislators and representatives from the Biden team to map out key priorities for the coming year. We will keep our readers posted about any advocacy campaigns that are forthcoming from these national advocacy partners.

Locally in Vermont, it's clear that there are pressing economic needs in the arts and culture realm that will continue at least through 2021. We are actively exploring ways to address those needs, and with the energies and input from many stakeholders in the Vermont Creative Network, we have developed an action framework for advancing the creative sector and its role in Vermont's future. We will continue to focus on convening, engaging, and amplifying the power and potential of our state's creative economy; supporting diverse creative talents and voices; and finding ways for the arts to help us all to heal and rebound from the pandemic.

Our top priorities are as follows:

- Equipping artists and cultural organizations with tools to navigate the various COVID relief programs and requirements on the federal and state levels;
- Ensuring that artists and cultural organizations are considered when COVID relief packages are developed;
- Supporting individual artists (especially to develop the skills and financial strategies that will put their creative businesses on firmer footing);
- Providing cultural organizations with the resources, equipment, and

OFFICIAL WARNING

MOUNT MANSFIELD UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

March 2, 2021

The legal voters of the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District comprising the voters of Bolton, Huntington, Jericho, Richmond, and Underhill, (all Grades PK-12) are hereby notified and warned to meet in the respective polling places hereinafter named for each of the above-referenced town school districts on **Tuesday, March 2, 2021** at 7:00 a.m. (Huntington at 6:30 am) at which time the polls will open until 7:00 p.m. at which time the polls will close, to transact any business involving voting by Australian Ballot.

- Article 1: To elect the following officers
- Moderator for one year
 - Clerk for one year
 - Treasurer for one year
- Article 2: Shall the voters of the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District authorize the school board under 16 V.S.A. 562 (9) to borrow money by issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenue for the school year?
- Article 3: Shall the voters of the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District approve the School Board to expend **\$51,123,876**, which is the amount the School Board has determined to be necessary for the 2021-22 fiscal year?

It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of **\$16,660** per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is **2.95%** higher than spending for the current year.

Upon closing of the polls, the ballot boxes will be sealed, re-opened at Camels Hump Middle School in the Town of Richmond, the ballots commingled and publicly counted by representatives of the Boards of Civil Authority of the Towns of Bolton, Huntington, Jericho, Richmond, and Underhill under the supervision of the Clerk of the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District.

The legal voters of Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District are further warned and notified that virtual informational meetings will be offered at 6:00 pm on February 18, 2021 and February 25, 2021 for the purpose of explaining the 2021-22 proposed budget. To find information on how to attend and participate in these meetings, please go <https://www.mmuusd.org/> or call 802-434-2128.

Polling Places

The voters residing in each member district will cast their ballots in the polling places designated for their town as follows:

Bolton	*	Smilie Memorial School	*	7 am - 7 pm
Huntington	*	Brewster-Pierce Memorial School	*	6:30 am - 7 pm
Jericho	*	Mt. Mansfield Union High School	*	7 am - 7 pm
Richmond	*	Camels Hump Middle School	*	7 am - 7 pm
Underhill	*	Underhill Town Hall	*	7 am - 7 pm

Dated this 15th day of January, 2021 and unanimously approved by the MMUUSD Board of Directors.

LETTERS

Please be mindful in Underhill Center

To the Editor,

Please be careful and mindful when parking to use the Underhill Center Post Office of your neighbors that live next door to the post office. I have been nearly hit in my own driveway many times, or get blocked in by those using my driveway as a parking space. I'm even more concerned as we have a new neighbor building a house across the street that these issues will only intensify. Drive slowly, be aware and considerate.

Laura Allen, Underhill Center

Westford School Trails

To the Editor,

We are so fortunate to have such a beautiful network of trails at our school. They are there for walking, skiing, snowshoeing, and exercising our dogs.

We are also so very lucky to have Tom, Joel, and Dale giving their time (and no doubt money for gas) to clear, roll, groom, and track those trails for cross country skiing. I noticed that this year many of the trails have been widened to accommodate all of the traffic.

Once the trails are groomed and tracked, it would be wonderful if the walkers and folks using snowshoes stayed way over to one side. Preferably walking on the opposite side from where the tracks are set. Many people might not know that the footprints, especially once frozen, make it really difficult to ski.

Thanks again to the guys who maintain those ski trails for all of us to share. And thanks to the walkers for staying to one side, whenever possible, so we can all enjoy them in the way that we choose.

Laurie Gardephe, Westford

The found baby hat

To the Editor,

Many thanks to the thoughtful and sharp-eyed neighbor traveling on Leary Road in Jericho. The hat you found is about 35 years old and was made for a new baby girl who now has her own baby son. I was supposed to repair the holes in the wool so the baby could wear it. But the hat DISAPPEARED between Leary Rd. and my house! OMG! I could make a new hat, but it wouldn't contain those memories!!! And then you found the hat, put it in the branches of a pine tree, and about a week later it was noticed by a friend and returned to me. HAPPY ENDING! Many thanks.

Elizabeth Bernstein, Jericho

Steinbauer seeks re-election to Underhill Selectboard

To the Editor,

I want to inform the voters of the Town of Underhill that I will be on the Town Meeting Day ballot for re-election to the Selectboard. My platform is simple: provide continuity and consistency for the Selectboard; work in partnership with the

town employees, benefitting from their wisdom and expertise; support and cultivate the vital team of community volunteers who contribute so much to our town; and make decisions on behalf of the public good with fairness and integrity.

Thank you for your support.

Dan Steinbauer, Underhill Center

Henry Corse for Bolton Select Board

To the Editor,

Hello neighbors! My name is Henry Corse and I'm running for a seat on the Bolton Select Board.

I'm a lifelong Vermonter, having grown up on my parents' dairy farm in Whitingham. My longest stint outside VT was when I enlisted in the Vermont Air National Guard (VTANG) in 2011 and spent nine months in Texas and Mississippi for training. I finished my Bachelor's Degree in Software Engineering from Vermont Tech in 2014. I worked a few years as a Software Engineer, first for Union Mutual of Vermont Companies, then for the Boeing company as the on-site engineer for the flight simulators at the VTANG. For the last four years I've been serving full-time in the VTANG as a Cyberspace Operations Instructor.

My wife Allie and I got married and moved to Bolton in 2017, but my ties to the town go back much further. We bought our house from my aunt and uncle, Kim and Wayne Deslaurier, who lived here for 37 years before deciding to retire to warmer climes. It also happens to be right next door to the house where my mother grew up. When my aunt and uncle told us they were moving, we couldn't pass up the opportunity to live in such a beautiful place with so much family history. This past June, we were thrilled to welcome our first addition to that history, our daughter Lily.

Allie and I love the outdoors; hiking, kayaking, and camping in the summer and cross-country skiing in the winter. I enjoy reading in the evenings, in the past mostly science fiction and fantasy, but lately I've gotten into military history and astrophysics.

From a very early age I was imbued with a strong ethic for public service. My mother served on the school board for over a decade, my father has been Whitingham Town Moderator for 36 years, and both have served on a number of other boards and committees at the local, state, and regional levels. Not long after we moved to Bolton, I began looking for opportunities to serve. I was appointed to the town energy committee two years ago and have enjoyed the opportunity it has given to get to know the community better. Working to create the town energy plan gave me a crash course not only in the various regulations in the town, but also some of the nuances of navigating and complying with state statutes.

I believe that my knowledge, skills, ideas, and values can be leveraged to the benefit of the Bolton community. If you give me your vote, I will bring honest dialogue, sound judgment, and strategic vision to every issue I face on your behalf. Together, we can continue to cultivate this wonderful community that we're all proud to be a part of!

Please feel free to ask me any questions you have about my candidacy: henry.m.corse@gmail.com.

Henry Corse, Bolton

Please run for Underhill Selectboard

To the Editor,

We deserve to have representation in our town's governance that is fair, impartial, and accountable.

Learning about Dan Steinbauer running for re-election I want to plead with the voters of the Town of Underhill to consider running for a position on the Selectboard and/or voting for just about anyone else because we need a Selectboard member that is willing to work for a much needed break from the pattern and practice of many past and present Selectboard members using their positions of governmental power in nepotistic and sometimes downright malicious ways. Our town's employees should be allowed to work for ALL of our residents' best interests, instead being forced into following the "leadership" of a Selectboard that literally literally spent our tax money for legal advice on how to circumvent the Petition on Public Accountability Advisory Articles which was submitted in November with over 200 verified signatures. It is also worth mentioning they chose to delay officially responding to that petition until there was only a single scheduled Selectboard meeting left before the Town Meeting Day Articles needed to be warned.

Please be understanding of the fact that I would personally run for the Selectboard position myself simply to try and improve

things in our town, but I am all too aware the significant toll the stress of being in litigation over my rightful access to my home and land has already taken on every facet of my life since 2009 (see p.6-7 of the February 20, 2014 *Mountain Gazette*, which is archived at the *Gazette's* website). As a result of this personal reality and given the magnitude of the various legal issues Dan Steinbauer and other Selectboard members have created involving TH26 (i.e. the old Dump Road/New Road/Fuller Road/Crane Brook Trail) which I would need to recuse myself from if I were on the Selectboard, and that the current Board seems to have an interest in forcing our town into a similar costly legal battles involving TH11 (Butler Road) I strongly believe it would be best to have an impartial resident as a candidate for the Selectboard to help remedy problems in our town and let all people in our town enjoy the common benefits of our town's governance.

David Demarest, Underhill

Dan Steinbauer for Selectboard

To the Editor,

In the several decades I've lived in Underhill, I have crossed paths with David D. a number of times, and he has always acted very kindly and considerately toward me. But in the matter of the Selectboard and Dan Steinbauer, David and I are going to have to agree to disagree.

I wholeheartedly give my support to Dan Steinbauer and will vote for him for Selectperson this coming Town Meeting Day.

Over the years, I have woven in and out of Selectboard meetings and town issues. Never have I experienced a Selectperson who listens as carefully and thoroughly as Dan Steinbauer. Dan is insightful and has the ability to draw the critical concerns out of a meandering discussion or a complicated report. He is open-minded and listens to both sides of an issue, and he has always seemed to put his personal opinion aside and put the best interest of the town ahead.

As a current member of the Selectboard, one of Dan's jobs is to oversee the town staff. From my observations, he does not attempt to micromanage our very skilled, experienced town staff, but treats them with respect and trusts them to know their jobs and have the integrity to fulfill their job responsibilities.

What I have seen of Dan's open-mindedness and willingness to listen, his ability to interact with staff, coworkers, and the public in a pleasant and respectful way, his putting the best interest of the town first – that wins my vote!

Penny Miller, Underhill

Vote for Dan Steinbauer in Underhill

To the Editor,

First, I'd like to say "thank you" to all the people, appointed, elected, and employed by our town for the work they do on behalf of the greater public good. By and large these people approach their tasks with the desire to do what is right, without hidden agendas or axes to grind. They make the town run. In some cases they also suffer the slings and arrows of dissatisfied individuals in carrying out their work. In the case of our Select Board, the discomfort from such can be considerable and as a result, the turnover in positions is frequent.

Select Board members are representatives of the town when they speak publicly – whether they wish to be or not. Among the reasons Dan Steinbauer does not publicly speak out in response to David Demarest's comments is likely a need to maintain an unbiased and objective position on behalf of his responsibilities to his position – a difficult thing to do, but to do otherwise would disqualify him from acting upon his duties.

The opinions of Mr. Demarest, who is neither impartial or unbiased as regards matters of the Town of Underhill and with an axe to grind with regards to Mr. Steinbauer (as judged by his PFP posts and public statements), does not represent for me a meaningful litmus test for who should be on our Select Board.

I feel our town is best served by demonstrably capable individuals who are open-minded and do not bring a predetermined mindset to the position. It requires individuals who can be immune to the withering criticisms they and the Select Board are bound to receive and hopefully not be intimidated by verbal attacks from individuals with self interests. Dan Steinbauer has somehow managed the latter while attempting the former in his public performance of his position as best I can judge. It can't be easy. To assert that votes for Dan Steinbauer are an erroneous pattern (and more) which needs to end is also to suggest that the hundreds of people who support Dan, approve of his performance track record, and appreciate his efforts on behalf of the overall good of the town are mistaken.

I appreciate Dan Steinbauer and thank him for his efforts on behalf of our town. I will vote for Dan again.

Chris Miller, Underhill

Dan Steinbauer's Selectboard run

To the Editor,

I am voting for you for many reasons: Your calmness, deep knowledge of our town's history and issues. Your past work speaks for someone who is fair and willing to put in hours of thought and research and displays much patience in very difficult situations... fortunately for the town you are willing to continue! Thank you for your time, energy, and the firewall you have erected to survive.

Rita St Germain, Underhill

Send your news
to the
Mountain
Gazette at
mtngazette@gmavt.net

Art continued from page 10

training they need to adapt to COVID and beyond; and

- Advocating for the powerful role the arts must play to help Vermont communities to heal, recover, and revitalize our downtowns.

Reflecting these priorities, we are joining with other public and private funders to invest in Better Places (<https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/better-places>), a community place-making initiative; we are supporting additional Artist Development Grants (<https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants/artists/artist-development>); and we are keeping the field informed and up to date on COVID resources and funding opportunities through webinars and the Arts Council's COVID web pages, <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/covid-19>.

I know you share my belief that the arts – and the gifts of creativity, joy, and compassion that they bring – are essential to envisioning a hopeful and just future for Vermont. As our communities weather the next phase of the pandemic, we know that the creative sector will be at the heart of community recovery and re-opening. I look forward to working with you all to support, advocate for, and tell the stories of the amazing artists and cultural organizations across our state.

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SCHOOL NEWS

MMUUSD Summer Food Service

Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District is participating in the Summer Food Service Program. Meals will be provided to all children under the age of 18 without charge and are the same for all children regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, and there will be no discrimination in the course of the meal service. Meals will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Meals can be picked up at the sites and times as follows:

Jericho Elementary School, 90 VT Rt. 15, Jericho, MWF, 8:00 – 10:00 AM (including July 3) from July 1-August 19.

Browns River Middle School, 20 River Rd., Jericho, MWF, 8:00 – 10:00 AM (including July 3) from July 1-August 19.

Camel's Hump Middle School, 173 School St., Richmond, 8:00 – 10:00 AM (including July 3) from July 1-August 19.

Brewster Pierce Elementary School, 120 School St., Huntington, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM (including July 3) from July 1-August 19. For Brewster Pierce families, please contact Alison Forrest, Alison.Forest@mmuusd.org, to be added to the list.

Please complete the survey located at <https://sites.google.com/mmduusd.org/covid-19information/food-service-plan> so we can plan accordingly. Meals for multiple days will be provided at each location so that families have access to breakfast and lunch seven days per week.

To ensure adequate meal quantities are available for families, it would be helpful if you could fill out the survey or call us at 802-434-1010 to place an order. Children do not need to be present to pick up meals, please let volunteers know the names of children.

If you are unable to pick up meals, please contact David Horner. For questions, please contact David Horner, 802-434-1010 or david.horner@mmuusd.org.

MMUUSD communication survey – online

By Renee Langevin, Communications Coordinator & Technology Integration Specialist, MMUUSD

In order to streamline the communication from MMUUSD and our schools, and to ensure that we are reaching as many people as possible, we ask for your feedback in this survey: <https://forms.gle/aTTZLJAzmv2rdj89A>.

Westford PreK registration

Information is now available to request that your child is entered into the EWSD school-based prekindergarten lottery for the 2021-22 school year. Eligible students reside in Essex Junction, Essex Town, or Westford and are at least three years old on September 1, 2021. The deadline for entering next year's prekindergarten lottery is Friday, February 26, 2021.

Registrations for Act 166 for the 2021/22 school year are also being taken (there is no deadline for Act 166 registration).

More information and links to the forms can also be found on either the EWSD or Westford School websites. Questions regarding all EWSD preK programs can be directed to Johanna Simmons in the Office of Student Support Services at jsimmons@ewsd.org.

MMUUSD 2021-22 preschool registration open

Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District (MMUUSD) is excited to continue providing pre-kindergarten opportunities to families who are residents of Bolton, Jericho, Huntington, Richmond, or Underhill. The Universal Pre-K bill (Act 166) entitles all 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds (not attending kindergarten) to receive 10 hours per week of publicly funded Pre-K, for 35 weeks. This education can be in any pre-qualified private program or home-based program, with a tuition of \$3536 paid to the provider by the school district. If a child attends a public school-based Pre-K, the program is free of charge. However, there may be a lottery for school-based programs.

For more information, please go online to <https://www.mmduusd.org/parents/registration>.

Westford School news

Our school community has come together to best support a new 3/4 multi-age classroom. Based on current social distancing guidelines from the VT Department of Health and the VT Agency of Education, and in light of an increase in school wide enrollment particularly impacting the already large number of third and fourth grade students, we are hiring a new multi-age 3/4 teacher. The decision to create a new classroom means that we can continue to meet distancing guidelines from the VT Agency of Education and the VT Department of Health, continue with in-person learning for all current students, support new enrollments and students who may wish to return from the Remote Academy, and reduce class size in the existing third and fourth grade classrooms. While we examined many creative ways to address these challenges and our students' needs, the decision to hire a teacher was deemed the most desirable in meeting the needs of all students. As you can imagine, setting this classroom up for success in the middle of a pandemic required a team effort. Again, our teachers, parents, and staff have gone the extra mile to create a learning environment mid-year that meets the high expectations of Westford. I'm proud to be part of an organization that can demonstrate such high standards and flexibility when faced with an unexpected challenge. A huge thank you to all involved in the advertising and recruitment process, the hiring process, the placement of students, the setup of the physical space, and the ongoing instructional support. And a special thank you and appreciation to current third and fourth grade families for your comments and flexibility. In response to the placement of current students into a new classroom, we received feedback such as "place our child wherever you need. We have trust in our teachers and administration and want to make this as easy as possible for a difficult transition. We love his current teacher, and we understand others have needs and we want them in the front of the line. Also, thank you for making this decision so all students have a place at school and a safe one during this pandemic." The mutual trust and confidence shared between home and school is a cherished gift, especially during such a challenging time for all.

Assessments

A student's learning requires ongoing instruction and assessment as well as solid communication among team members. We have set up a series of opportunities to provide ongoing communication with parents about their student's learning experiences throughout the year. Please note that mid-year process reports were sent home Friday, January 22, and winter assessments are underway. Parent conferences are scheduled for Friday, March 19.

Local Assessments

Our winter assessments serve as a mid-year check providing information concerning student progress in literacy and math. It allows us to adjust both individual student plans and school-wide action steps. The EWSD Comprehensive Assessment plan can be found at <https://sites.google.com/a/ewsd.org/ewsd-comprehensive-assessment-plan-2019-2020/>.

National Assessment: NAEP, which assesses various subjects across the nation for fourth and eighth grade students, is postponed and will take place in 2022.

State Assessments: SBAC will take place this year on in-person learning days only. The assessment window is March 16-June 11. Once our teams determine grade specific days for testing, we will communicate this to families. Math and English/Language Arts Assessment: All students in grades 3-8 are required each spring to take the state test called the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). SBAC is a computer-adaptive assessment measuring each student's performance against the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and English/Language Arts.

Fitness Assessment is not a state requirement. Vermont is in year two of a new Fitness assessment using the Fitnessgram tool. Westford has been administering this assessment for several years through the PE program and will continue to use pieces of this when appropriate.

Children's literacy grants available

The Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF) is committed to ensuring that all children in New Hampshire and Vermont have access to enriching literacy experiences, the resources they need to learn, and high-quality books in the spaces where they spend time, particularly in the home. Literacy skills are one of the strongest indicators of a child's future success and the best way to ensure children develop those skills is to give them access to books they want to read.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, low-income, at-risk, and rural kids are at-risk of falling further behind in literacy. Too many lack access to books at home and the materials they need to learn. CLiF offers grants to schools, afterschool programs, English Language Learner classrooms, meal programs and food banks, homeless shelters, libraries, and other spaces where children spend time. CLiF has adapted to virtual storytelling sessions and has modified grants designed to serve a wide variety of programs reaching low-income, at-risk, and rural kids.

CLiF Program Director Meredith Scott says, "CLiF continues to strive to keep our grant applications and components flexible as we all make accommodations for the pandemic. We recognize the challenges of offering programming for kids and families; we are open to ways potential partners can adjust grants to fit the needs of their communities, while providing some much-needed fun!"

Grant applications for CLiF's Year of the Book grant for the 2021-2022 school year, as well as applications for CLiF's Community Building grant for Spring 2021, are now available at www.clifonline.org.

The Year of the Book grant provides \$25,000 in new books for the school and local library, author visits (virtual this year), special literacy programming, and ten new books for each child to choose. The goals of the grant are to supplement schools' existing

literacy efforts, encourage reading and writing for fun, celebrate a community-wide culture of literacy, and provide access to high-quality reading materials that meet kids' needs and interests. See www.clifonline.org for more information and the application, due Wednesday, March 10, 2021.

CLiF's Community Building grant was started in 2017 in response to a time when communities felt divided. The grant provides several options for children to connect to other parts of their communities, in addition to new, diverse books. This year's Community Building grant offers 1000 Books Before Kindergarten, Senior Reading Buddies, Pen Pals, and a partnership with the Center for Cartoon Studies, including copies of their comic, *This is What Democracy Looks Like*, with funds for a civic engagement project. CLiF also encourages classrooms, afterschool programs, and other organizations serving low-income children to design their own community project.

Through these and other grants, CLiF aims to ensure all children continue to learn and develop strong literacy skills amidst the challenges of our current world.

JES Partners in Education online store, fundraiser

The Jericho Elementary School Partners in Education (JES-PIE) online store is now open for orders. The online store offers some JES gear and apparel to support the Partners in Education and the planned project to build an outdoor learning space. Please visit the PIE store's website for your chance to purchase hats, masks, clothing and other items: <https://screenmylogo.com/jes/shop/home>.

The store will be open until Monday, February 22 and any orders will be available for pick-up at JES on or around Tuesday, March 9.

The PIE team is hard at work creating a dedicated Outdoor Learning Space for our children and educators. Our dream is that the new Outdoor Learning Space will be a multipurpose space that will not only allow teachers to easily hold classroom lessons outside, but will also provide a space for community to gather, children to play, and friendships and creativity to grow for years and years to come. For more information about the JES PIE please visit <https://sites.google.com/view/jespie/home>.

Those who wish to make a donation to the project may do so via the go fund me page at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/jes-outdoor-learning-space>.

VSAC scholarships deadline February 11

Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) offers more than 120 scholarships for Vermont students for college or training. Only one application is needed! Learn about VSAC's scholarships, view a free webinar, connect one-on-one with counselors, or call us at 1-833-802-8722 for help. For information, go online to <https://www.vsac.org/pay/student-aid-options>.

Sports continued from page 8

Browns River Little League registration begins February 1

Registration for Browns River Little League (BRL) opens online at www.brownsriverlittleleague.com on Monday, February 1 and runs through Friday, March 19! BRL is open to boys and girls ages 4-12 in Jericho and Underhill (13-year-olds are eligible for Mount Mansfield Babe Ruth and school baseball). Please visit our website or tune in to BRL's Facebook page for frequent updates and information.

We're optimistic of a fun, safe season while we continue to navigate the challenges of COVID-19. BRL will strictly adhere to all state/fed/MMUUSD guidelines for youth recreation as the season unfolds.

If you have a credit from last season, our league treasurer will be reaching out with information on how to register.

Feel free to reach out to brownsriver1@gmail.com with any questions!

Winter activities on school trails

Please see below the official trail use guidelines for the winter season from the Westford Conservation Commission (WCC):

SCHOOL TRAILS: The WCC, with help from the Westford Recreation Department, was able to purchase a new groomer to create cross-country skiing trails. It grooms the trail with "corduroy" and also lays down a deeper track for cross-country skis. Walkers and snowshoers – PLEASE try to stay off all groomed portions of the trails, including the corduroy. Please try to stay to the side as much as possible. Many of the trails back in the woods are not groomed, so there are plenty of opportunities for all winter activities. We have lots of other trails in town that are wonderful to walk in the winter! These include Maple Shade Trails across the street, as well as Schultz, Goodrich, Seymour, and Covey Trails!

You can find the Westford Trail Guide on our town page at <https://westfordvt.us/boards/conservation-commission/>.

We understand that the trails are for everyone, and so this is a friendly request; it's more important that people get out and enjoy the trails however they can.

AS ALWAYS: Please let us know if you see downed trees or other required maintenance to any of the trails. We're happy to go out and clean things up! Email us at westfordcc@googlegroups.com or get in touch on Facebook @WestfordCC.

Winter Bike/Walk Challenge

Looking for another reason to get outside and move this winter? Take the Vermont Winter Bike/Walk Challenge and be entered to win some awesome prizes from Vermont companies! Prizes include \$100 gift cards to Outdoor Gear Exchange and Farm-Way/Vermont Gear (can be used online).

This challenge is hosted by Local Motion, Vital Communities, and GoVT! All you have to do is head outside for a bike ride, a roll, a stroll, or a run, twice, between February 1-12, and record your trip on the *GoVT!* app. Anyone who records at least two trips is entered to win prizes. Winners will be chosen in mid-February.

Download the app online at <https://govermont.agilemile.com/>. Questions? Contact Sandy, sandy@localmotion.org.

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Westford - \$550,000
Beautiful parklike setting on 8 acres in Westford just over the Essex border. Enjoy sharing the great pond that attracts wildlife year round. 1872 sq ft with 3 bedrooms and 2.5 baths with our to be built open floor plan, contemporary colonial with a full front porch. Great location, private and exclusive.



Milton - \$420,000
New home to be built on 3 acre private lot. The 1768 sq. feet contemporary colonial has 3 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, w/ kitchen featuring an island, pantry, & dining area. Energy efficient home with full basement & 2 car garage. Enjoy nature and the easy convenience of your location to town and I89.



Fairfax - \$389,000
To be built! Colonial on wooded .90 level lot on over 6+ acres of common land. Primary suite w/ large walk-in closet & bath. 2 additional bedrooms and full bath up. Open kitchen and dining area. Living room and den with a view. 2 car garage & full front porch. A Vermonter's dream!



St. Albans - \$148,000
Fantastic opportunity to purchase a fully approved four lot subdivision comprised of 7 + Acres. All state and local permits in-hand. Sellers even have the driveway curb cut. Set and ready to go for you! In a lovely location just outside of town with an open level plot filled with a fringe of woods to the rear.

CALL NANCY TODAY!

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