

MOUNTAIN GAZETTE

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

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NEWS BRIEFS

Go Fund Me to help Bolton family losing home to flood

By Amy Grover, Bolton Town Clerk and Treasurer

A Bolton family has been notified by FEMA that their home is facing "imminent catastrophe" – flash flooding washed away a riverbank in 2019 and left only a few feet between the collapsed riverbank and their home.

The Bolton Select Board voted to approve posting notice on Town platforms of this "Go Fund Me" fundraiser as it is with respect to a FEMA property buyout here in Bolton, which is currently in process. The Town approved and supported this application to FEMA for this property buyout.

The GoFundMe page is located at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/helpformelvillehomeescape>.

MMCTV and Town Meetings 2021

While our towns won't be holding in-person meetings this year, there is a lot of information for Mount Mansfield Community Television (MMCTV) to convey. Here are links and dates to related programs/events.

UNDERHILL: MMCTV streamed two charter change related hearings. (Links are at <http://mtmansfieldctv.org/underhillmeetings>).

JERICHO: We recorded a video with Town Clerk Jessica Alexander about Town Meeting 2021, <https://archive.org/details/jericho-town-meeting-2021-update-clerk>. MMCTV hosted a Candidates Q&A on Wednesday, February 10, via GoToMeeting. We also streamed a special meetings on Tuesday, February 9 and will stream another on Thursday, February 25, 7:00 PM. Find them on the MMCTV website via <http://mtmansfieldctv.org/jericho-meetings>.

RICHMOND: We checked in with Town Clerk Linda Parent about Town Meeting Day, and hosted a Candidates Forum on Monday, February 15. MMCTV also streamed an information session on Monday, February 8 and will stream another on Monday, March 1, 7:00 PM: <http://mtmansfieldctv.org/richmondmeetings>.

MMUU: MMCTV has/will stream Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District's special hearings on Thursdays, February 18 and February 25, 6:00 PM (first hour only on 25th): <http://mtmansfieldctv.org/school-board-meetings-cesu-mmuu>.

Upcoming live fire training dates at Camp Ethan Allen

The following dates have been compiled in order to provide advance notice of live fire training events at CEATS (Camp Ethan Allen Training Site).

Scheduled Range usage:

- Week of February 14-20: small arms, 1600 (4:00 PM);
- Week of February 21-28: small arms, 1600 (4:00 PM);
- Week of March 1-6: small arms, 1600 (4:00 PM);
- Week of March 7-13: small arms 1900 (7:00 PM), .50 CAL 1900 (7:00 PM);
- Week of March 14-20: small arms, 1600 (4:00 PM);
- Week of March 21-27: small arms, 1600 (4:00 PM);
- Week of March 28-31: small arms, 1600 (4:00 PM).

Please feel free to contact VTARNG with any concerns that might arise: ng.vt.vtarng.mbx.ving-statepao@mail.mil or 802-338-3000 option 3.

2020 Cambridge Town Report online

By Mark Schilling, Cambridge Town Clerk

The Cambridge Town Report is now available online. Go to http://cms7.revize.com/revize/cambridgevt/town_meeting/TownMeeting2021.php; click on the link that says "2020 Town Report."

A copy will be sent to each registered voter's home next week.

Have a stake in public transportation?

The Town of Cambridge is looking for another Cambridge resident to serve on the Tri-Town (Cambridge, Jericho, and Underhill) Alternative Transportation Committee. The committee was formed to advocate for the #36 commuter bus to Burlington and keep funding available for it, as well as provide education and resources to residents on the service. Senator Rich Westman advocated for it to come to Cambridge several years ago and there was start-up funding to establish the route, but now there is a greater financial commitment to municipalities to retain the route.

The Cambridge Conservation Commission feels that it is a good service, although underused at present. Our concern is that if the route is discontinued, it may be harder to reinstate it in the future. We hope that with recent improvements to the Cambridge Park & Ride and plans for similar improvements in Jeffersonville, that ridership could increase. Of course, the pandemic does not help things.

The Committee is looking into opportunities for grant funding for electrified transit, as well as advising municipalities on the future of alternative transportation options. If you are interested in representing Cambridge on that committee or have questions,

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A Nordic/cross country skier at Mills Riverside Park in Jericho on Saturday, February 6, 2021 enjoying the fresh and fluffy white snow.

PHOTO BY SUZANNE FREITAS

Cambridge Town Meeting: Australian Ballot only

By Mark Schilling, Cambridge Town Clerk

YOU MUST REQUEST A BALLOT FOR EARLY VOTING
– PLEASE READ

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, clerk@CambridgeVT.org, or by visiting the *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 from 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, 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. The 2020 Town Report is now available online and has been mailed to all registered voters' homes.

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

Jericho early voting

By Jessica Alexander, Jericho Town Clerk

We have received the Town and School meeting ballots and begun mailing ballots to those that have requested. If you would like to request an early ballot you can

• call the Jericho Elections Extension (802-899-4936 x100) 24/7; the voice mail message includes what information is needed to request a ballot for yourself or your family member;

• sign into the *My Voter Page*, www.mvp.vermont.gov. If you have trouble signing in, and registered to vote in Jericho before 2005, then call the Town Office elections extension. Just leave your name and that you had trouble signing in and I will be able to fix it;

• complete a early/absentee ballot request form and mail to P.O. Box 67, Jericho, VT 05465, or drop it in the Town Hall drop box, then we will mail you a ballot (you can also use the bottom third of the form if you are making the request on behalf of someone else);

• request in person – the week of February 22, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM, you can come to the Jericho Town Hall, complete a request form (there are some in a folder on the door), and knock – we will meet you at the door, take your form, and give you your ballot. We will only be able to hand the voter their own ballot. (The Jericho Town Hall continues to be closed to walk-in traffic so we will be doing this activity on the front step. Come when the sun is shining if you are able.)

For more information, here is a link to the elections page: <https://jerichovt.org/Elections>. click the text in blue to view links to forms and other info

Lions thank blood donors

The Jericho-Underhill Lions club would like to thank all the donors who braved the snow on Wednesday, February 3. The Red Cross collected 39 pints of much needed blood. And as always, we are very grateful to the Covenant Church for allowing us to use their facility for our blood drives.

We wish you all a healthy and safe rest of the winter season.

Westford Mutual Aid

By Phyl Newbeck

Special to the Mountain Gazette

Carol Winfield thinks many Vermonters are reluctant to ask for help. "There can be a deep-seated country folk mentality that you take care of yourself," she said. "It's a nice independent tradition in Vermont and a very lovely one and one to be proud of, but there is no loss of pride in asking for help from a neighbor." That's why Winfield is pleased to be part of the newly formed group called Westford Mutual Aid, which tries to match those in need of a little assistance with those who can provide it.

The idea for the group came from a post by Will Dunkley on Front Porch Forum. In December, ten Westford residents got together to brainstorm how to put his idea into action. They launched their outreach in the Westford newsletter and provided examples of areas where people might either need help or be able to provide assistance. The group, which runs the gamut from 20-year-olds to 60-year-olds, conducts much of their work by email and meets via Zoom every few weeks. "This is a lovely small town and neighbors help neighbors," Winfield said. "It's not a charity and nobody is trying to make a name for themselves. We just want to lend our neighbors a hand."

At present, the group has more volunteers than requests for help, which, Winfield notes, "is delightful in some ways." However, she hopes that the lack of requests isn't because people are ashamed to ask for assistance. "It's not a bad thing to ask a neighbor for help," she said. "It's what we've done since the beginning of time."

Westford Mutual Aid has helped some residents with snow clearing and they are dedicated to providing assistance to a family who lost their home in a fire. "We started up a funding site online and have raised money for them, collected goods, and started a meal train while they sort through things," she said. Westford Mutual Aid is also hoping to start a second day for the Westford Food Shelf, which has provided sustenance to residents on the third Saturday of each month for the last 12 years. "We've reached out to see what time might benefit the most people," she said. "It might be another weekend day or a morning or afternoon during the week." The group is leaning toward a late afternoon weekday but haven't finalized that decision.

Volunteers are ready to help with snow removal or other property upkeep, errands, transportation, shopping, food delivery (including from the Food Shelf), firewood stacking, and household chores, but Winfield notes that they are also willing to just visit with people and provide companionship. "We're wide open to anyone who needs a hand," she said. "We want to be a way of connecting people. It doesn't have to be us doing the work; we can connect people to others in the community."

Since there are some Westford residents who aren't connected online, Winfield hopes information about Westford Mutual Aid will spread by word of mouth. Technology, however, is another area where volunteers may be able to provide assistance. "There are some things that the younger generation takes in stride but older people may be challenged by," she said.

Winfield recalled that in her youth she helped some neighbors with their choices. The woman of the house was a seamstress and she mended clothes for Winfield in return. "I had the youth and physical strength," Winfield remembers, "and she had skills. That's the sort of thing we're hoping to foster. People might have skills they can provide for the volunteer and then pay it forward." Winfield stressed that Westford Mutual Aid is not charity. "It's not a hand-out," she said. "It's just a helping hand."

Those in need of assistance or interested in volunteering should contact William Dunkley at wdunkley65@gmail.com or 324-7112.

Bolton updates and reminders

By Amy Grover, Bolton Town Clerk and Treasurer

The third installment of property taxes was due on Tuesday, February 16, at the Town Office, or have a federal postmark of 2/16/21 to be considered on time.

Printed copies of the Town Report are in (four days ahead of schedule – thank you REPRO in Winooski!) and are available 24/7 in the "BOLL" (Little Library Box) at the Town Office, and in a grey plastic bin on the porch at Smiley School. The electronic version is available on the town website at <http://boltonvt.com/town-reports-and-town-meetings/>.

Absentee/Early Ballots for Town Meeting 2021 are now available. Registered voters may request an absentee/early ballot online at [https://www.mvp.vermont.gov](http://www.mvp.vermont.gov), or by contacting the Town Office. All ballots will be mailed to the voter. The Town and MMUUSD Warnings, Notice to Voters, and sample ballots are posted at the Town Office, the Fire Station, Smiley School, and are available on the town website at <http://boltonvt.com/town-reports-and-town-meetings/>.

THERE IS NO IN-PERSON TOWN MEETING in 2021! The Select Board will hold a Virtual Public Informational Hearing on all warned Articles on Monday, February 22, 2021 at 6:00 PM. See the Town website for more information: <http://boltonvt.com/vpih/>.

COMING EVENTS

IN-PERSON and VIRTUAL and SOCIALLY DISTANCED 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 accommodation requests contact Katherine, Katherine@vlt.org or 802-745-6304.

Pullman Porters: Unsung Heroes, 1:30 – 2:30 PM, online. The Richmond Historical Society and the Community Senior Center will sponsor a virtual presentation that examines the critical role that Pullman porters played in giving rise to America's Black middle class, the formation of the Black labor movement, and the momentum for the Civil Rights movement. Participants will also discover what it was like to travel and work on a Pullman car. Program is from Hildene, the home of Abraham Lincoln's son Robert, in Manchester, VT. Hildene has a restored 1903 Pullman car. Contact jane@cscvt.org for a link to the presentation.

Friday, February 19

Baked Fish Dinner – Take Out, 4:30 – 6:00 PM, St. Thomas Church Parish Hall, Underhill Center. Adult meal (\$12): baked fresh haddock with lemon butter dill glaze, wild mushroom and herb rice pilaf, buttered green beans, coleslaw, roll, dessert. Kids meal (\$8): crispy battered fillets, tater tots, buttered green beans, coleslaw, roll, dessert. Please call ahead to reserve tickets (899-4632), or purchase tickets at Wells Corner Market, Underhill Center, or Snowflake Chocolates, Jericho.

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.

Wednesday, February 24

Is there a Future for Black Entrepreneurs in Vermont? Racism in America Forum Series, 7:00 PM, on Zoom, hosted by Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Jericho. Featuring Robert Hughes, Hughes Development Properties; Leslie McCrorey Wells, Pizzeria Verità, Trattoria Delia, and Sotto Enoteca; Earl Ransom, Strafford Creamery; and Al Wakefield, Wakefield Global. Pre-registration required at <https://goodshepherdjericho.org/racism-in-america-forum/>. If you're unable to attend, you can view the recorded broadcast by logging into the Mount Mansfield Community Television, <http://mtmansfieldctv.org>.

Virtual Science Fair, 7:00 – 8:00 PM, online. Hosted by Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE). Be part of conversations at the cutting edge of conservation science. Those who sign up will visit each biologist's "Zoom room" to learn about birds, bees, and forest invertebrates. Sessions will include: *2020 Winter Birding Report and Q&A; The Future of Bee Monitoring in Vermont; and Montane Invertebrate Surveys*. Register in advance (<https://vtcostudies.org/virtual-science-fair/>) to receive the Zoom link to attend this event. Space is limited to 30 logged-in attendees. For more information, go online to <https://vtcostudies.org/events/>.

Tuesday, March 2

virtual Suds & Science: Insect Conservation in a Warming World, 7:00 – 8:00 PM, online. Hosted by Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE) biologist Jason Hill, Suds & Science is a scientist-led community discussion that provides a forum for science fans (like you) to engage with an expert through compelling personal narratives, to gain understanding on a particular scientific research topic. These discussions have historically taken place at a warm and inviting Norwich tavern with foamy beverages in hand, but due to COVID-19, this season Suds & Science will meet virtually (so BYOB!) in an interactive interview-style format. For more information and to register, go online to <https://vtcostudies.org/events/>.

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 802-745-6304.

What animal is that? Virtual wildlife tracking tour March 11

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 Thursday, March 11, 1:00 – 2:00 PM online for a virtual wildlife tracking tour through Vermont's woods with presenters Pieter van Loon, Vermont Land Trust lead forester, and Chris Bernier, VT Fish and Wildlife. We will learn how knowing animal behaviors, identifying habitat, and recognizing the type of gait can help identify tracks in the snow. Learn how gathering clues about the surrounding habitat and how the animal moved thorough it can help you discover who is out in the woods with you when you are out hiking, skiing, or snowshoeing. For beginners and experienced trackers; hosted by VLT and VTF&W. Free! To register and for more information, <https://vlt.org/event/wildlife-tracking>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing meeting information.

PHOTO BY SARA RILEY

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please contact marshvt@gmail.com or Selectboard member George Putnam.

Cambridge Cares is here to help

Do you, or do you know someone who may be living alone, who may need a visit from time to time, who may have unmet needs, or who may be falling through the cracks?" As frigid weather has set in, do you know someone who could use a neighbor to keep an eye out and see that all is well? Are you looking for someone who cares? Well, Cambridge Cares is here to help!

Cambridge Cares is a group of "neighbors-helping-neighbors" community volunteers who support residents in need and encourage neighbors to aid in the process. We offer information about many varied resources and may collaborate with entities that provide support with heat, hunger, and other needs.

COVID-19 has made it especially hard on many who were already having economic difficulties. Cambridge Cares is making a special effort this winter to ensure that no one is cold due to the inability to secure enough fuel. This includes those who are grossly behind in their fuel bills and in danger of being cut off by their supplier as well as those who heat with wood. If you fall into this category, or if you know someone who does, please contact us. We will make every effort to provide assistance where needed.

Cambridge Cares can be reached at 730-2588 or 644-2927.

UJFD asks for help clearing fire hydrants

Hello Underhill and Jericho,

We want to thank citizens out there who plow, shovel, and/or clear their community fire hydrants. Shoveling out the hydrant better prepares your neighborhood should a fire emergency occur.

If you are physically able to pitch in with community hydrants, we very much appreciate it. Use caution with traffic and work with plenty of light.

With your help, we can keep most, if not all, of the hydrants in our communities at the ready state even through a winter with lots of snow!

Meet candidates for Jericho Selectboard at MMCTV

By Angelique A. Contis, MMCTV

Ahead of the Tuesday, March 2 voting, MMCTV hosted a discussion between candidates for Jericho Selectboard Tim Nulty and Erik Johnson, which can be seen online at <https://archive.org/details/jericho-selectbd-candidates-02102021>.

Thanks to Jericho voters who participated in the event!

Jericho early voting question answered: signatures

By Jessica Alexander, Jericho Town Clerk

"How do you verify my signature on the certificate envelope?" In November, there was a lot of media attention about signature verification for early ballots. These laws are different state by state. The simple answer in Jericho is: if we have a question about a signature, we will attempt to ask the voter. In Vermont we do not use a database for signature verification on ballot certificate envelopes. So you don't need to worry about what is on file with the DMV or if your signature has changed over time. Just sign your normal signature. You do not need to sign the way the mailing envelope was addressed to you. In some cases, voters' full middle names appear on the address label because that is what appears on the voter's driver's license. It is fine to just use your middle initial if that is how you usually sign.

HOWEVER, if you know there are other Jericho voters with the same name as you – for example Robert Smith – please use your include your middle initial and suffix if appropriate in the printed name section on the certificate.

Do not sign as "power of attorney" for a voter. The signature should be the voter's own mark. If you wish to help a voter by printing their name in the printed name section on the certificate envelope or the date, that is fine. However, the voter needs to sign the certificate in the bottom signature section themselves. If special circumstances arise, please contact the Jericho Town Clerk for guidance.

If there is a spelling error in the mailing address label or you would like your name listed differently, please contact the Jericho Town Clerk so that this can be corrected for future mailings.

Underhill Rink update; Casey's Hill parking reminder

Please note: Saturday and Sunday mornings, 9:00 – 10:30 AM are now *open skate* at the Underhill rink, which means no sticks or pucks on the ice during that time. Rink hours are 7:00 AM – 8:30 PM.

Also, a reminder that there is no parking along Mountain Road at Casey's Hill. There is a winter parking ban along most roads in Underhill, and towing may be enforced if needed. Thank you!

Westford Town Meeting sample ballot

By Nanette Rogers, Westford Town Clerk

The sample ballot for Town Meeting can be viewed at <https://westfordvt.us/voting/town-meeting/>.

You can request absentee ballots for Town Meeting by calling the town office at 878-4587, emailing townclerk@westfordvt.us, or through the Secretary of State's My Voter Page (<https://mvp.vermont.gov/>).

Please allow sufficient time for mailing and returning the ballots to ensure your vote counts!

Westford Selectboard meeting draft minutes

By Nanette Rogers, Westford Town Clerk

Minutes, minutes, read all about it! Find out what your Selectboard is discussing by reading the minutes from their meeting on Thursday, January 28 here: <https://westfordvt.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2021-01-28-Draft-Minutes.pdf>.

FY'22 Westford Town Budget presentation

By Nanette Rogers, Westford Town Clerk

The FY'22 Town Budget presentation given at the January 14, 2021 Selectboard meeting is available for viewing online at <https://lcatv.org/westford-budget-presentation-2021-01-14>.

Your tax return can help eagles, lynx, and bats

We saved the loon. Let's not stop now! During tax time, remember the Nongame Wildlife Fund to help our most vulnerable wildlife: Vermont's threatened and endangered species. Consider a donation to the Nongame Wildlife Fund on your income tax return.

For more information, go online to <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/get-involved/donate/nongame-wildlife-fund>.

Jericho notes and information

All of the following information and more is available from <https://jerichovt.org>.

Conserving Mobbs Farm – The Mobbs Farm Committee is currently initiating the effort to permanently conserve Mobbs Farm. A non-binding article is being added to the Jericho Town meeting agenda to allow residents to vote on moving forward with the conservation effort. There is a lot of information about this conservation issue online at, <https://jerichovt.org/Mobbs-Committee>.

Snow removal alert system – Municipal operations have been altered to prevent a significant COVID-19 disruption to services. Thus far, we have been successful in that regard. While most positions in Town Hall can work 100% remotely or a mix of remote and in-office, Highway Department employees do not have a remote work option. As a result, if a case of COVID-19 is identified within highway personnel, which may require the quarantining of additional employees, the highway department's ability to plow roads could be significantly impacted. In anticipation of this occurring, we will be using an alert system during the pandemic. Information will be provided to the public so they can be aware that service levels will be reduced and to what extent. There will be three alert levels:

- Green: The Highway Department can maintain service levels consistent with those historically provided. If there is a significant snow or ice event, there will be delays consistent with the past;
- Yellow: If 60%-70% of the department is available, operations may be delayed 4-8 hours due to the unavailability of crew members or the severity and duration of the storm event or a combination of both. Primary routes and hill sections will be covered first. Coverage on flat secondary and neighborhood roads may be delayed until equipment and personnel are available. This designation may impact school openings or closings and bus pick-ups, depending on the severity and timing of the storm;
- Red: If less 60% of the department is available road clearing operations will be severely impacted, with possible delays from 12-24 hours. This alert will likely impact school openings or closings and bus pick-ups, depending on the severity and timing of the storm.

This alert system only applies to Town Highway Department snow removal operations. It does not replace other emergency alert systems or school decisions regarding opening or closure. The Town will post the status on the Town website at <https://jerichovt.org/2020-2021-winter-alert> (where you can also register for alert email notifications) and on Front Porch Forum, and notify the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District as well as the VT State Police in Williston.

Westford's new dog warden

Friends and Neighbors,

It is an honor to introduce myself as Westford's new Dog Warden. Some of you already know me through my pet care service, LeClair Critter Care (<https://www.leclaircrittercare.com/>). I look forward to meeting the rest of you and serving my community!

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me, dog-warden@westfordvt.us or 802-858-5385.

Richmond Rescue 2020 statistics available online

Richmond Rescue's annual statistical report is available at <http://bit.ly/3tYllx8>. If you have any questions or would like to see other data, contact Michael Chiarella, Richmond Rescue Director of Operations, director@richmondrescue.org.

COMMUNITY COLUMNS

Memories that connect

By Sue Kusserow

Special to the Mountain Gazette

It is Sunday Night...time to turn on the TV and watch *All Creatures Great and Small*. This is the second rendering of a series of books by James Herriot, the veterinarian and author of four books about this northern stretch of England: The Dales. The titles of the books were chosen using the lines of a hymn by Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895):

*All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.*

It is a cheery hymn with a steady rhythm. It gives praise rather than sliding into fear and obedience, as the stern Calvinist hymns were wont to do. It is a story in a beautiful setting, particularly in the summer, with rolling hills and proud meadows, laced with many brooks. These required stone bridges that formed graceful half-circles over the water. Water and treeless meadows drifted together... the unique ability of this land to join with the colors of the sky. Herriot loved this country and wrote of it with humor, balancing the practical and the lyrical. His use of dialect was always respectful, as befitted the new veterinarian just graduated from Glasgow. Actors in the first televised version that I saw and loved were less "pushed" and seemed to play their roles with a bigger heart, often working in the cold stone barns where consults, operations, births, and deaths took place. It was many years ago that I saw this first version and immediately took it into my heart.

There is a reason that it has become precious to me. I had bought all of his books, and I wanted to save them for the quiet times that I hoped would come when grief was done. You see, we knew grief... all four of my family... made smaller by this loss, that was also felt severely by the small precious town where he lived and loved. My husband, Bert, had been driving with me to get some work done on one of the two VWs we owned. On the Interstate my car, ahead of his, stalled, and Bert cheerily waved that he would get me into the breakdown lane. He could not see

what I did in my rear-view mirror: a huge truck aiming for the same lane... and much faster. The cars crashed, enclosing Bert's car like the meat in a sandwich.

That was October: "the bright blue weather" of Helen Hunt Jackson, of Daddy's past birthday, of pressing apples into cider and jumping into hue piles of maple leaves, of hopes for good skiing snow.

Bert was put in ICU, where good folk lie until it is obvious that the hand of God will not let this one go. The children were then 14, 12, and 9, and this was now a week before Christmas. Wonderfully kind neighbors, and many unknowns, got us through: taking kids skiing, stopping with casseroles, teaching me to trust enough to cry.

We lived in an old farmhouse with a large living room and a mammoth fireplace that was mysteriously stocked every week with dry wood on the porch. We moved a long couch to sit in front of the fireplace, trying to ignore the creeping February frosts that crept through the old house's windows. And so I started to read. I knew that sometimes the voice of Nature sings best in small things. And sometimes, when we are unable to hear, it taps us on the shoulder and whispers: *Listen!* So, most every night after a makeshift supper, we gathered on the couch, Adrie curled next to me so she could hear the words... and blankets over us all, watching the mesmerizing throw of flames and light... and we had not much to say, except I kept whispering, "spring follows winter." And I read James Herriot's *All Creatures Great and Small*. Siegfried Farnon became real, an older vet with much more kind feeling than he would usually show; Mrs. Hall, in a stoic and prickly way, she mothered the troupe... and James himself, writing of his new profession and the men of the Dales: gruff practitioners of animal husbandry with their cows, dogs, racehorses, herds of sheep, chickens, and ducks, that were part of the farm and themselves. And the women, who showed quiet strength and stamina. James showed fairness and truth and, sometimes love, to them all.

And then we went to bed. Adrie to cry into her pillow, Paul in a twist of coverlets, still in the clothes he didn't take off, covering his head; Karl silent, calming the fire down and putting

a screen around it; and I did the dishes, and wondered if I could get through this, but knowing that I had a job to do and souls to preserve in a way I had never known before. Sometimes I would go back to the couch... cold again so quickly... and read a few pages for the next evening. What could I leave out that was too blunt, or too vividly alive to be helpful? But I knew I would read it as it was... as life was.

So thank you, James Herriot, for the readings that helped a family get through a Vermont winter. You brought humility, acceptance of what could not and would not change... of water playing its own arpeggios to itself, of a hand that reached out, without judgment or comment, to share and cheer... a farm pond bouncing with spring peepers... the animals that used the land and gave us an evening place to let the rhythm of the day slow and calm. And thanks for hope, that you weren't aware you were giving so generously via our readings. Hope... which wraps up all the small things we do for ourselves and others.

*Another world is not only possible, she is on her way.
On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.*

—Arundhati Roy

**Dodge Grand Caravan, train, bus, airplane, ship**

By Douglas Boardman

Special to the Mountain Gazette

I have listed above my favorite modes of travel, from best to worst. The worst is by ship; I know because I was in the Navy. Second worst was airplane, but had to fly to vacations in the Caribbean. Third would be by bus, and we are talking long range travel not local! Fourth would be by train, but I have only been on one long train ride going from Montpelier to Boston after enlisting in the Navy!

It was July and for some reason the heat was on and coming through floor radiators on both walls of the train. I was on my first train ride and didn't think about the fact that my mother had made me a sandwich, a turkey sandwich with lots of mayonnaise to eat at lunchtime. I mistakenly sat it on the floor beside the radiator and when I opened the bag four hours later, it was "curled" and smelled bad so I didn't eat it. I was already hot, depressed, lonely, thirsty, and very hungry.

My favorite mode of travel is by a large minivan! When the kids were small, we always bought a Ford or Chevrolet station wagon and it was the model that had the most seats. When the minivans came out, we bought the Dodge Grand Caravan. We are now on our fifth Grand Caravan. When we went on vacation, we were able to put all of our luggage and refrigerator/cooler in the back, and got good gas mileage. We had 12 volts electric and 120 volts electric. We stopped at welcome centers to get a coupon

book for motels and figured out what was available. Everything was discounted and most coupons were \$49.95 and normally was \$69.95 or more. After stopping at a couple of motels that advertised full breakfast, we found this one chain was running false ads. I asked them where the full breakfast was and they pointed their finger to the side of the lobby, beside the check-in. There was a coffee machine, juice machine, stale bagels, oranges, and apples. That was what they called a full breakfast; in reality it didn't even qualify as any kind of breakfast. They advertised a full breakfast to get you in the door!

When the kids were young our vacations were a week in Vermont at Christmas and a week in August on Lake Champlain. We bought a timeshare in 1985 and started flying to islands in the Caribbean. I never liked flying but my wife loved it and would read, knit, sleep, watch TV with headphones, and I would sit there staring straight ahead watching the people who went to the bathroom. Surprisingly the same people went to the bathroom repeatedly, whereas the rest of us stayed sitting down and waited to go at the airport. I had to fly because they didn't have bridges to the resorts in the Caribbean. The airlines were usually delayed, either on our trip out or on the way back. We had one flight when we waited on the tarmac for five hours and found out hours later that one of the six masks wouldn't come down in the pilot's cabin. They had to wait for the head office to give permission to fly with one mask not working. A woman across the aisle said this was the longest delay she had ever had and asked my wife what she thought the problem was and Sandy pointed to me and I had to agree. Bad luck followed me everywhere on the plane!

Next column: More vacations!

**Join a virtual Science Fair
February 24**

Engage directly with biologists of the Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE) and be part of conversations at the cutting edge of conservation science. From 7:00 – 8:00 PM, those who sign up will visit each biologist's "Zoom room" to learn about birds, bees, and forest invertebrates. We hope you will come away inspired by what you hear, curious to learn more, and aware of something you did not know before. Sessions will include 2020 Winter Birding Report and Q&A (pictured above is a Common Redpoll); The Future of Bee Monitoring in Vermont; and Montane Invertebrate Surveys. Register in advance (<https://vtcostudies.org/virtual-science-fair/>) to receive the Zoom link to attend this event. Space is limited to 30 logged-in attendees.

PHOTO BY NATHANIEL SHARP

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SnowflakeChocolate.com**Jericho Listen Project an impetus for discussion and discovery**

By Bernie Paquette

Jericho's Valentine Day theme this year is "Jericho Listen Project – Listen with Your Heart." Attentive and effective listening underpins all positive relationships, builds self-esteem and confidence, and can improve our health. From it we can learn of new ideas and reach a shared acceptance of differing views. We can help others fully open up to communicate honestly. We can critically and accurately access what is being said. Effective listening can even help us develop better self awareness.

Listen up, we hear. Listen to those who have a different opinion

or experience than you. Listen to those who are different looking than you. Listen to those less fortunate, and those less privileged than you.

All of which I think is good advice on many scores. Yet, not always easy to do, nor is every situation the same. Hearing is easier than listening. Listening requires focused and concentrated effort. Effective listening is a skill and it can be learned and improved upon with intention. We can listen to learn, to evaluate/analyze, and to understand another person's feelings and emotions.

I cannot count the number of times I have said, "wait a minute

Community columns continued on page 4

HEALTH NEWS

On volunteerism

By Hillary Danis

Essex Rescue's team of nearly forty volunteer providers are some of the most amazing people our community has to offer. I would be remiss to not praise, too, the Essex Rescue employees who have dedicated their careers to emergency medical services and are truly the support pillars of the organization. All these individuals spend time away from their loved ones and life responsibilities to serve Essex, Essex Junction, Underhill, Jericho, Westford, and the surrounding areas. The members give of themselves to take care of their friends and neighbors. They want to be there during what may be the most difficult moment of somebody's life.

Essex Rescue counts among its volunteer members parents of children ranging from newborns (welcome to the newest member of the family; eligible to become an EMT in 2039!) to adults who have gone on to continue a generational tradition of volunteerism. We have students at every level – high school learners who join as junior members at age sixteen, college students, and those pursuing advanced degrees in many different fields. We have grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and dog parents. We have volunteers who work fulltime in healthcare – in emergency services, as dialysis technicians, as physician's assistants, as medical assistants, as nurses, as licensed nursing assistants, and as public health providers, to name just a few. We have athletes, musicians, and writers. We have members who work in engineering, own their own businesses, provide care for animals, do security, work in public utilities, and are police officers, dispatchers, members of the armed forces, and firefighters. We have people who love to cook and bake for their crews, and people who love to eat. Uniting all these individuals of



Mount Mansfield Villages Assisting Members During COVID

Mount Mansfield Villages is happy to announce that we have enrolled our 43rd member! Even though we have had to cut back on our in-person and in-home services during COVID, we have continued to provide rides, shopping, friendly calls, and outdoor services.

Below is a note we received from a new member:

"I recently joined Mount Mansfield Villages after considering all the positive benefits of being a member. Due to the increases in COVID cases, I've discontinued in-person grocery shopping; however, I missed my monthly Costco purchases. Mansfield Villages provided a volunteer to do a Costco run for me and I was delighted to have my favorite Costco items once again. The volunteer went above and beyond my expectations when he generously offered to return to Costco the following week for items that were out of stock."

"Mount Mansfield Villages is providing a wonderful service for seniors wanting to stay in their own homes as long as possible, but need some help occasionally. I'm going to need help in the spring with weeding my flower beds and I'm confident that some special volunteer will come to my rescue. Thanks to Mount Mansfield Villages staff!"

If you would like to learn more about joining Mount Mansfield Villages, please go to our website <https://www.mountmansfieldvillages.org/> or call 802-858-5381. Discounted rate for 2021 is \$120 a year for single member and \$150 a year for a household. Scholarships available.

We also invite you to become a volunteer or a sponsor.

Can you help the Warm Toes Fund?

The Jewish Community of Greater Stowe (JCOGS) is pleased to announce the Warm Toes Fund, which provides socks and underwear for those in our community who are in need of these essentials. Socks and underwear are rarely included in clothing donations, yet they are essential to comfort and dignity. This fund will be perpetual, with sums provided directly to schools and health and human services organizations to provide socks and underwear for those in need.

JCOGS was astonished when one hour after initiating this fund, the sock company Bombas reached out to donate 1000 pairs of socks. JCOGS delivered these Bombas socks to schools and organizations in the community who have requested some to have on hand for those in need. This video shows just how much impact some socks can have: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rHpQIxksJ0>.

Due to a generous matching donor, JCOGS community members have donated \$2814 so far to the Warm Toes Fund, and JCOGS has already begun dispersing funds to organizations who regularly identify people in need. This fund will be evergreen, continuing to take donations and provide for our community. JCOGS invites the larger community to donate to the Warm Toes Fund by going to <https://www.jcogs.org/form/warm-toes-donations.htm>.

Service providers in the area with clients in need should contact the front office: jcogs@jcogs.org or 802-253-1800. JCOGS will be glad to help out.

JCOGS especially wants to thank Bombas for their commitment to donate a pair of socks for every pair purchased. Our community has benefitted from this generous program, and there will be a lot more warm toes this year because of it.

varying backgrounds, identities, and future aspirations, though, is one thing – the chance to make a difference in the community.

When I tell people that I volunteer in EMS, the invariable response is one of disbelief – "What?! How do you have time to do that?" Amidst all of life's responsibilities, especially coupled with the generational public health crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, taking on any additional sort of commitment can seem insurmountable. But I can honestly say that the time and effort I put into volunteering at Essex Rescue is returned to me tenfold as a benefit. The people I have met, the community I have formed, and the patients whose lives I have impacted, will stay with me forever. Essex, Essex Junction, Underhill, Jericho, Westford are lucky to have Essex Rescue, but so to are the members of Essex Rescue lucky to serve the community.

I consider myself fortunate to be able to use my background and training to provide emergency medical care to the community in which I grew up. If I were trained as a teacher, mechanic, accountant, carpenter, whatever – I would want to use those skills to help organizations in my community. I do not have any of those abilities, but I do know how to help people when they are having a medical emergency. Essex Rescue provided all the training I needed along the way. I joined as a college freshman with absolutely zero medical knowledge. Fast forward seven (very short!) years and I find myself just a few months away from graduating medical school. I would not be where I am today without Essex Rescue and I can say with completely certainty that volunteering in EMS will make me a better doctor.

I am so proud to be part of the amazing team at Essex Rescue. Come join us! It will change your life. But so too will any volunteer endeavor. There are so many fantastic opportunities in greater Essex to give back to the community. "Kindness, like a boomerang, always returns."

For those struggling with substance use

VT Helplink is your resource for finding substance use treatment and recovery services in Vermont. Our compassionate, trained specialists can help you or your loved one take a step towards recovery. Referral services are free and confidential. If we can help, please go online to <https://vthelplink.org>.

Safely dispose of old prescriptions

Flushing or throwing old prescriptions in the trash can be harmful to the environment. Keeping them in your house can be dangerous for kids and pets. Do your part: Drop off unused medications at a kiosk near you, or order a free mail-back envelope.

For more information, go online to <https://www.healthvermont.gov/alcohol-drugs/services/prescription-drug-disposal>.

What parents need to know about teen suicide

Parents have been asking me some tough questions recently about their teenagers being stressed to the point they might try to hurt themselves, or even try to commit suicide. This is a topic that should be stressed for all parents, so let me try to provide some helpful information.

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death for ages 15-24, and the risk of this occurring is four to ten times higher if teens have access to firearms in the home.

Health continued on page 5

Community columns continued from page 3

I thought you said..." only to find out I had not processed the words I heard correctly to understand the intended meaning and intent. Active listening requires me to quiet down my own thoughts, and what I want to say (without interrupting) in order to really hear and process the expressed thoughts of the other person speaking to me. Distractions, preconceptions, bias, and particular facets of my personality can derail the effectiveness of my listening. Sometimes I jump to or want to get to a conclusion long before hearing the speaker finish. Or I fail to take the time to ask questions for clarification to ensure my understanding of what was said, is correct.

It's okay to have opposing ideas. Let's take listening to someone with a different opinion as one example. We might be quick to judge a mob of people for their collective expressed opinions. Might we feel differently about any one of those people if we talked to them on an individual basis? Knowing someone personally can impact how we judge them even if we judge a particular behavior of theirs as inappropriate, or judge a particular opinion of theirs as near polar opposite of our own. To understand another's perspective we need to allow their stream to flow. If we go in without judgment wanting to understand their perspective, the other party will feel respected and more comfortable in streaming their views.

If we get to know an individual, I believe we will find them, like perhaps nearly all humans, to be complex beings. Consider the surprise, even shock, we sometimes feel, when we find out a close friend or family member expresses political rhetoric that we consider way, far left or right of our views or of the middle ground. Does this suddenly make that person an unacceptable friend or family member? Sadly, in some cases that separation has occurred.

We all filter what we hear through our own thoughts.

"People completely identify with one side, one ideology. Reconciliation is to understand both sides, to go to one side and describe the suffering being endured by the other side, and then go to the other side and describe the suffering being endured by the first side." *Our True Nature*, Thich Nhat Hanh

By listening with our heart, I envision not only being more empathetic, tolerant, and respectful of an opposing point of view. I mean as well, to listen from a neutral standpoint to know the reasons for the other person's viewpoint. I mean reexamining our own assumptions, our own beliefs, and the reasons we have come to own them. Might we have come to different views had we been more or less fortunate, privileged, educated, or wealthy? Many circumstances out of our control help to develop who we

are, how we think and what we feel. We might explore within ourselves what, about our experiences, brings us to our opinions? We might share that awareness with others and have them share what about their experiences brings them to their opinion. According to a recent NYTimes opinion article *The Science of Reasoning with Unreasonable People*, "Social scientists have found that asking people how their preferred political policies might work in practice, rather than asking why they favor those approaches, was more effective in opening their minds."

We might ask ourselves, what is our purpose in listening? Is it to simply understand a difference? Are we listening so that we might find common goals, needs, wants? Are we listening to find a way to come together so that we each can get reach our goals, each can solve our problems? Are we showing interest, asking open-ended questions? Do we seek to learn at least one piece of insight from every person we encounter? Are we seeking to build relationships? Can we listen not to change minds, not to change the other person's opinions, but to change what we think of each other?

Can we make allies out of our adversaries, without accepting their actions that we believe are immoral or unjust? Can we recognize our adversaries as human and reach to their humanity for a common ground to resolving differences? Can we find paths to satisfying and effective compromises (through thorough listening) instead of winner-takes-all leaving one party out in the cold?

Challenging assumptions and disagreeing is good cooperative listening as opposed to trying to win an argument.

Language matters as well. If we speak openly leaving room for discussion we invite joint problem solving instead of trying to persuade the other party to change their view. Rhetoric, on the other hand, often repeated and splashed in headlines, becomes legitimized therefore becoming harder to challenge or look at more closely.

We can listen with the well-being of the community in mind, and with the health of the planet in mind, something bigger than just ourselves. We can ask ourselves, what will this do for our community?

As Presidents Bush, Obama, and Clinton reminded us after President Biden's inaugural, we can listen not just to people we agree with but also with people we don't. We can recognize humanity in each other and what binds us together. We have more in common than what separates us.

I think listening can help us not just when we have differences, but also help us to learn more about each other as friends and

neighbors often do. We also want to hear from those in need, to know how we might help. We need to be effective listeners to recognize the opportunity to lend a hand, or an ear, or other neighborly care giving. Kudos to Eric and the Axlerod boys as well as all those who contribute to Wood4Good (<http://wood4goodvt.org>), as an example of neighbors helping neighbors. It is not easy for folks in need to ask for help. We can make it easier through effective community listening with heart.

By being curious of what is going on in other people's lives, being respectful, non-judgmental, interested in what they think, we can improve our relationships, build stronger bridges over divides, and feel comfortable to be honest and open with one another.

I once read a story about a co-pilot who perhaps did not have full self-esteem, was perhaps made to feel inferior by the pilot. Upon preparing for take off the co-pilot did not feel comfortable in expressing his opinion that the wings were not thoroughly de-iced. The pilot directed departure. The plane crashed shortly thereafter due to icing on the wings. If the co-pilot had been made to feel comfortable that he would be listened to and his judgment considered, perhaps the pilot would have heard the co-pilot's concern and then made a different decision.

So many times I have heard somebody say something that I was one hundred percent sure was incorrect, only to later confirm their statement was indeed correct. Never assume someone does not know what they are talking about, and always allow for the fact that you may be incorrect on some point or fact.

If we ask what people think, be genuinely interested without an agenda; trust will grow.

If we each listen to at least one person, be they friend or foe, spouse or neighbor, friend or stranger, perhaps one more person heard, one more person truly seen and understood, one more person cared about, one more person valued, will build stronger and brighter hearts, more resilient to struggles, a community more willing to share and cooperate, with greater understanding of each other; perhaps we will experience more caring and more love from and for all living beings, all life. If we better listen, perhaps we will hear an even better humanity that lives in each and all of us.

David Augsburger wrote, "Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable."

The Jericho Listen Project for discussion and discovery is about Community listening to each other in ways we have not heard before.

I wish you all a Happy Valentine's Day.

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.

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 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.

Calvary Episcopal Church on Zoom

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

The Second Congregational Church in Jeffersonville and the Waterville Union Church would like to invite all who feel called to join us for our online church services, Sundays 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. 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! <https://www.facebook.com/watervilleunionchurch> or <https://www.facebook.com/SecondCongregationalUCC>

Jericho Congregational Church is here to help

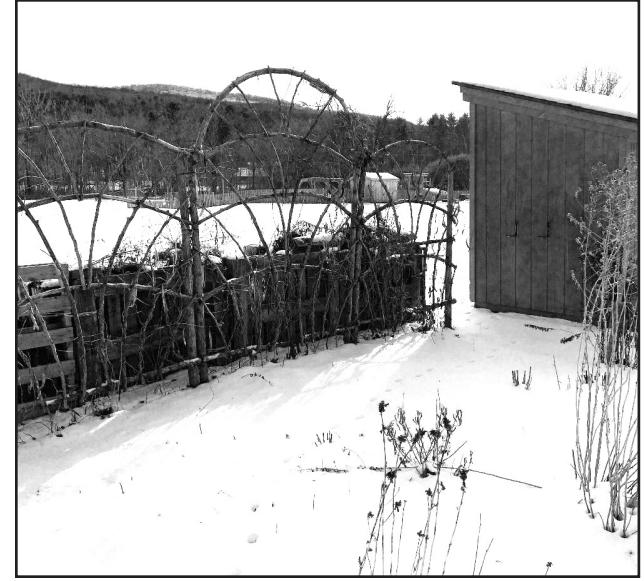
The COVID-19 pandemic has affected our lives in numerous ways that we never could have imagined. Many of us are now working from home, home schooling, and in some cases, separated from those we care deeply about. We at Jericho Congregational Church want you to know that we are here for you during this 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 jcchelps@gmail.com. You are not alone, and we are here to help.

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, Fridays 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.

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. 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 see <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.



Winter gardening tips

The Deborah Rawson Memorial Garden is quietly sleeping under layers of white snow. Its Master Gardeners are looking forward to spring. A whole year of gardening is ahead of us. Now is the best time to pause, reflect, and prepare for a year of incredible gardening. Here are a few winter gardening tips to keep you busy this February.

The first task is to dream, scheme, and plan for next season. Winter is a great time to review how our gardens grew and think about new ideas for what to do differently next year. Look through the garden photos and notes you've taken, then make a list of plants that need to be moved, divided, or replaced. Search for solutions about how to improve your soil and make a list of the new plants you'd like to try.

The second task is to pre-order bulbs and plants for spring. Gardening catalogs are a great way to learn about new plants, tools, and supplies. Grab your highlighter and start marking your must-haves for next spring, or go online to pre-order plants and bulbs. Visit our local hardware store and enjoy their large selection of seed packets. Now is a great time to purchase seeds. Organize your new orders and the seed packets you have left over from last year, so you'll know exactly what you have to add to the garden in spring.

Keep in mind when ordering plants, the "Right Plant, Right Place" rule for gardeners. The whole concept behind right plant, right place is that if you choose plants that are well-suited to the location where they are planted, they will perform well with limited additional input. Plants that are well suited to their site will establish quickly, they will have a healthy root system, and be healthier plants. Healthy plants will be much better equipped to withstand problems than those who are struggling with their environment.

Ward off those winter blues with a hearty helping of green, gardening thoughts planning your garden.

Conserve Mobb's Farm for future generations

By Pete Davis Chair, Mobb's Farm Committee, Jericho

Did you know that Mobb's Farm is the home of a young, juvenile orchard? Trees planted, just east of Fitzsimonds Road in an easy-to-access meadow, include pear, peach, plums, and four varieties of apple: Macoun, McIntosh, Northern Spy, and Honey Crisp! All trees are identified with signs and should come into abundant fruit production in the years ahead. Let's conserve this amazing 200+ acre resource for future generations of Jericho residents.

VOTE to Conserve Mobb's Farm, Tuesday, March 2 at MMU, or request a mail in ballot from Jericho Town Hall: 899-4936. Thanks!

If you would like to learn more about conserving Mobb's Farm, please watch this short informational video: <https://vimeo.com/506944959>.

Frequently asked questions and answers are available on the Mobb's Farm Committee page of the town website: <https://jerichovt.org/Mobbs-Committee/widgets/28151/faqs>.

4-H NEWS

4H offers VTeen Science Exploration

Join 4H every Wednesday, 3:30 – 4:45 PM, at a virtual science cafe where you will meet scientists, learn about their work, explore different science pathways, and engage in informal discussions. Free and open to all youth in grades 7-12 in VT and beyond! Registration is required; to get the login access link, go online to www.uvm.edu/extension/youth/announcements.

Upcoming topics to be explored include:

- February 24 – Endangered Crops of Vermont;
- March 3 – How Psychological Science Can Help You Succeed in ANY Organization;
- March 10 – Opioids: An Epidemic Within a Pandemic;

- March 17 – DevelecoLOGY: The Science of How Our Ecosystem Shapes Our Development.

To request a disability-related accommodation to participate in this program, please contact Lauren Traister, 4-H Teen & Leadership Program Coordinator, at 802-888-4972. Watch recordings of past science cafes on the University of Vermont 4-H YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXgBDThoh3SmF7EAwg77emQ/playlists>, or search YouTube for "University of Vermont 4-H") and click on the "Teen Science Cafes" playlist.

For more information about this and other programs offered through UVM Extension 4H, go online to [https://www.uvm.edu/extension/youth/announcements](http://www.uvm.edu/extension/youth/announcements).

Health continued from page 4

Who is at risk for thinking about suicide? Usually, it's the teen who feels disconnected and isolated from family and friends (and that can certainly be the case in the midst of this pandemic), or perhaps an adolescent who might have an underlying and undetected mental health disorder like depression. Often a stressful event – such as failure at school, a breakup with a boyfriend or girlfriend, or a major family conflict – can trigger thoughts of suicide in a teen.

Here's what parents can do:

• Be aware of some of the warning signs that may mean your teenager is considering hurting or killing themselves, such as when your teen appears to pull away from family and friends, is no longer eating or sleeping well, and suddenly starts showing signs of self-destructive behavior like drinking alcoholic beverages and taking drugs, especially when they have never done this type of behavior before.

• Don't be afraid to use the word "suicide" if you do see any of these signs in your teen. Have a conversation with your teen, since getting the word out in the open may help your teenager understand that someone has heard their cries for help. This does not plant the idea into their head, but enables you to get them help before something bad happens rather than after it's too late.

• Know that the national suicide hotline, 1-800-suicide (1-800-784-2433), can also help get you or a loved one the emergency help needed, and your older child or teen's health care professional is always poised to help as well.

• If you do own a gun and think your teen is depressed or having mood swings, store your gun outside your home for the time being until your teen gets the help they need.

While suicide prevention is not an easy topic to think or talk about, hopefully my helping to raise your awareness about this topic may allow you to be the lifesaver for someone you love.

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

Healthy Lamoille Valley cafés, meetings, mini-grants, and more

February Coalition Meeting – We have a scheduling dilemma that has forced us to cancel February's Healthy Lamoille Valley Coalition Meeting. It's the best kind of dilemma and one that should be celebrated! Our coalition is a graduate of the National Coalition Academy, a three-week intensive training program that helps us to do the work of the coalition in more meaningful ways! We will be attending the graduation during our regularly scheduled coalition meeting time. Read more and register for the March Coalition Meeting at www.healthylamoillevalley.org/february-coalition-meeting-cancelled.

Parent Café Series – Healthy Lamoille Valley is pleased to invite all parents/caregivers to our monthly Parent Café Series. Join us on the first Thursday of each month from 4:30 – 5:30 PM on Zoom. These monthly gatherings are designed to highlight a community resource or parenting skill and then encourage conversation with other parents/caregivers from around the region. Breakout groups will be facilitated by local school and mental counselors arranged by children's ages, i.e. elementary, middle, and high school parent discussion rooms. View the full list of sessions and pre-register at www.healthylamoillevalley.org/parent-cafe-series.

Seeking Applications for 3-4-50 Mini-Grants – Healthy Lamoille Valley is seeking applications for mini-grants of up to \$500 for towns, agencies, businesses, organizations, faith-based institutions, colleges, and schools in the Lamoille Valley to support 3-4-50 efforts in physical activity, nutrition, and tobacco prevention. Applications will be collected and reviewed through Monday, March 1. For more information, please visit www.healthylamoillevalley.org/minigrants.

LiveYourWhy: Afterschool Edition – Healthy Lamoille Valley has been working on a campaign called LiveYourWhy: Afterschool Edition with the aim of helping youth explore meaningful, healthy, substance-free activities in their free time.

Our website has many activity sheets with additional reflective questions that help youth build self-awareness, resource development, connectedness, self-management skills, and other skills which encourage them to make the most out of their free time. It can help youth to identify meaningful activities, to alleviate boredom, and increase one's own personal responsibility for how they spend their time. Each week, five new activities for each age group (elementary and middle/high school), with a different theme for each day, will be added to the website. Visit www.healthylamoillevalley.org/livewhyourwhy to learn more.

Youth and Young Adult Vaping Prevention Series – In January we have presented two of three sessions of our Vaping Prevention series. Part 1 was part of our regular coalition meetings and included the launch of our Youth Vaping Prevention Workgroup. Our guest speaker was Marcella Bianco, Executive Director of *Catch My Breath*, a vaping prevention curriculum. A recording of the first session was made by Green Mountain Access TV and is available at www.healthylamoillevalley.org/youth-vaping-prevention-series. If you want to join the HLV Youth and Young Adult Vaping Prevention Workgroup, email Alison Link, alison@healthylamoillevalley.org.

Community Planning Toolkit – Our December Coalition Meeting focused on our new Community Planning Toolkit. Couldn't make it to our December meeting? The recording is now available on Green Mountain Access TV at <https://greenmountainaccess.tv/project/healthy-lamoille-valley-community-planning-toolkit>. If you would like to receive a hard copy of the toolkit, *Community Planning Toolkit: Preventing Youth Substance Misuse and Building Protective Factors*, please email alison@healthylamoillevalley.org. The Community Planning Toolkit is also available on our website at www.healthylamoillevalley.org/community-policy-toolkit in both printable and web formats. Want to follow up on how you can use the toolkit in your community? Contact Alison Link, HLV Policy and Outreach Coordinator, alison@healthylamoillevalley.org.

LIBRARY NEWS

Varnum Library Trustee information

By Christy Liddy, Director, Varnum Memorial Library

The Varnum librarians are excited to see all the interest in the library trustee positions! As you know, these positions support our library and staff and play an important role in serving all of you.

I wanted to take time to post important resources for these positions, to give everyone an idea of what they entail and to inform their vote on Town Meeting Day.

This slideshow gives a snapshot about what the primary duties of trustees are: <https://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/PublicLibraries/Trustees/TRUSTEE%20TRAINING%20BASIC%20TEMPLATE%20LARA.pdf>.

We hope this gives the candidates and voters a better expectation of what supporting the library looks like. For more information about the trustee positions, please visit https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/public_libraries/trustees for insight. There are videos and other slideshows to fill in any questions you might still have around this role.

We look forward to working with our upcoming trustees and look forward to your questions!

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.libbywatersolutions.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.

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

Deborah Rawson Book Lovers — 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 (March 9) at 7:00 PM. For information on how joining, contact Christine@cstaffa.com.

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.

VT 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 and three continents related to Beck by Daisy Turner, who had listened to her father Alec Turner's stories of the family past. Her 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. Beck founded the VT Folklife Center in 1983 and served as its executive director until 2007, traveling the back roads of Vermont, recording oral interviews of everyday Vermonters, and producing 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. Presented in partnership with the VT Humanities Council as part of their Speakers Bureau. For more information, visit www.vermonthumanities.org/. Registration required. This program uses 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! Tuesday mornings in February, 10:30 to about 11:00 AM. Call 899-4962 or register for a meeting link at [Sign up for these great programs!](http://bit.ly/drml>youth221.</p>
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Young Writers Group, Thursday, February 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 for a meeting link at [Graphic Novel Fan Club, Thursday, February 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 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: \[Among Us, Friday, February 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: \\[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\\\]\\\(mailto: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: \\\[Ongoing\\\]\\\(http://bit.ly/drml>youth221.</p>
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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. Our games: Pictureka, a game of visual hide and seek. Catan, the classic game of collecting and trading resources to build settlements. Telestrations, kind of like Telephone and Pictionary had a hilarious baby. Lanterns, a beautiful, peaceful tile matching game. Codenames, a team based guessing game great for deductive reasoning. Check out our YouTube channel for video instructions on these games: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmLG9hSKPW1d1s3dhORdnKIL5HT6iUmlu>.

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 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 pick up 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

We want to be sure that our current hours and services are working well for everyone. Thank you for taking a few minutes to fill out our brief, completely anonymous survey: <https://forms.gle/jvKjdpQZT26L1Bw8>. Hearing from you is so helpful!

February is Black History Month! Check our Instagram and Facebook every day this month for our Black Stories Spotlight, where we'll be recommending three great books for readers of all ages. These books are all part of our collection and available for curbside pickup! How many of them have you read? How many have your children read? Black stories matter; we hope you'll read along with us!

We are open by appointment, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM Tuesday-Friday, and 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM Saturday, and are still filling curbside pickup orders, so keep 'em coming! You can sign up for a 30-minute browsing session, submit a curbside request, and read more about our COVID-19 policies here: <https://www.jerichotownlibraryvt.org/covid-19-policies.html>.

We do a very brief health screening at the door, including a 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>. 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.

Thanks to everyone who joined us last month as we read, created, and cooked our way through Europe! In February, we'll be "visiting" a new part of the world: the Middle East. Check out our website to access our weekly recipes and read more about Around the World in 2021: <https://www.jerichotownlibraryvt.org/around-the-world-in-2021>. Our featured recipe this week is pita bread and tzatziki, and our monthly discussion will be on Thursday, February 25 at 7:00 PM. Happy reading and safe travels!

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

If you haven't checked us out on social media in a while, check in and get a preview of our new releases, hear about virtual events, links to book reviews and more. Follow us on Instagram @thevarnum and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/thevarnum>. You can also visit our website www.varnumlibrary.org for our curbside hours and links to search our catalog.

Were you inspired by Amanda Gorman's poem on Inauguration Day? We have 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 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/1FAIpQLStelx3cPw3PujgfhTzBxJitoPuJUdXORZp-7GpOzLcGvVw/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.

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](https://nasa.gov/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 larva trap. One kit per crafter. No need to order; just stop by and pick one up.

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/4qxEc5lHLVk>. *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.

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>

Like us on Facebook. Bree Drapa, Librarian. 878-5639; westfordpubliclibrary.org; westfordpubliclibrary@gmail.com.

RICHMOND LIBRARY

Please note, there is lots of 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.

Electric vehicle charging is 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.</p

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Support on Jericho Town Meeting Article IV - Old Red Mill Funding

To the Editor,

I would like to call on the citizens of the Town of Jericho to come together to support Town Meeting Article IV by voting "Yes."

I learned about the funding issues that the Jericho Historical Society (JHS) was facing a few months back from a Selectboard meeting where it was discussed about the grant that Todd Odit was attempting to get on the behalf of the JHS to repair the damage done to the Old Red Mill in the Halloween flood of 2019.

I spoke with Todd as well as members of the Historical Society and members of the Selectboard to get ideas of how the community could assist with preserving the historical gem in our town, The Old Red Mill.

I believe that what is needed is for the community to allocate funds to be set aside for the maintenance and improvements of the Old Red Mill and associated properties. I do not see these funds being the sole source of funds, but more as "seed" money to help obtain grants to do the work that is needed.

Below is the presentation that I gave to the Selectboard a few weeks back, and at the end is Article IV as worded on the Town Meeting Ballot.

I believe that the Jericho Historical Society as well as the members of the Selectboard are in favor of this proposal.

Proposal by Randy E. Clark to the Jericho Selectboard on Thursday January 7, 2021

- I became aware of the Old Mill repair challenges from a Selectboard meeting several weeks ago.

- I have been impressed with the help that the Town has provided to the Jericho Historical Society, with Todd Odit being able to get a grant to assist with the repairs.

- I would believe that there is not many in town that could argue that the Old Mill is a very important piece of our town's history. I have connected with this building with my service with the UJFD and have toured all floors both for training and for fire alarm calls. It is a building that you can feel the presence of a time that has long passed.

- I understand that several years ago a tough decision had to be made by the Jericho Historical Society with the Pre-School that occupied the small office building on the site and it left a bad taste with many in the community. I can tell you that a car has a bigger windshield than a review mirror because it is more important to see where we are going than where we have been... we need to put that time behind us and move on.

- I have talked with members of Jericho Historical Society and I have reviewed their financial information. While there are changes that they could make in the daily operations that might provide more income, it is my belief that they will struggle greatly to ever keep up with repairs and improvements.

- I found a lot of great history information on the Jericho Historical Society website and found this interesting: At the 1973 March Meeting, the Town voted to purchase the Mill and to rent it to the Jericho Historical Society, which undertook the renovation of the building for use as a cultural, educational, and recreational center for the community. A 1975 vote transferred ownership to the Historical Society.

I believe that it is time that the community of Jericho step up to help this great icon that we all adore, and I would propose the following:

"Let it be known that the Town of Jericho shall allocate annually not less than \$18,560 (being that the mill was built in 1856) into a fund named "Old Red Mill Fund" it shall be known that the Old Red Mill Fund would be overseen by the Selectboard, to help maintain the Old Red Mill and associated properties.

"The Jericho Historical Society would submit a request to the Selectboard to fund a project or projects that would provide ongoing maintenance and or improvements for the above-mentioned properties. JHS would also submit quotations and a budget plan for the project to be completed.

The Selectboard would not be able to award more than two-thirds of the fund balance in any one year."

ARTICLE IV Shall the voters establish a tax rate of \$0.0027 to levy against the Grandlist (raising approximately \$18,560) annually for a period of ten years, for the Purpose of creating a reserve fund dedicated to capital improvements of the "Old Red Mill"?

Thank you for your support.

Randy E Clark
Jericho

Libraries continued from page 6

3:00 – 7:00 PM. The table is located in the hallway inside the glass double doors and materials are available upon request.

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.fairfaxvlibrary.org, where you can also find a link to the interactive Google calendar.

Youth events

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!

Westford School Board opening

To the Editor,

In Tuesday's forum (FPF) the Essex Westford School District (EWS) included a communication about running for election to the school board. This seems like a good moment to let folks know that I am not going to run for re-election to my seat. I started serving on the Westford School Board in 1985 and have served on the EWS board since it was formed. It is time for someone else to take on this important community service. If you think this is something that would interest you and would like to talk about it, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Martha Heath
Westford

Thanks from Barbara Chaffee St. Denis

To the Editor,

I want to thank everyone who sent me 90th birthday cards. I appreciate all the birthday wishes and notes that were included. I received 115 cards; it was such a surprise and helped to make my day special. I heard from many long time residents that I haven't seen in so many years. I appreciate the photo cards from new residents. Thank you to the children that made me cards, they were so sweet. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated. Thanks again.

Barbara Chaffee St. Denis
Westford

Seeking support for two-year Cambridge Select Board seat

To the Editor,

Some may wonder why I am running for the two-year select board seat rather than for my current three-year seat... Historically Cambridge rotates the three-year (the chair assignment) between the three three-year seats, of which this is my third rotation/assignment. This year I decided to switch with Courtney Lietz so that she can move to the three-year seat, and serve as chair in the future. To this end, it is my desire to see Cody Marsh rotate into the next three-year seat so that he too can also serve as chair. It is exciting to have this younger generation stepping in and running the town.

This board has made giant strides in improving operation of the town, and improving transparency. I would like to serve a couple more years to help finalize many of the improvements that have transpired.

During my term(s) over the last nine years the town has seen a change in demographics, and has faced challenges as we worked to minimize property tax burdens. We have been able to fund town committees and commissions sufficiently, but in a frugal manner. We offer first class services such as Highway, Fire, and Rescue, and provide funding to support our town recreation board, library, Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, and Economic Development committee.

Six years ago we invited the Vermont Council on Rural Development to help us with a "Community Visit" program. Through this initiative, the Cambridge Select Board invited the residents of Cambridge to highlight, and rank, areas that they felt needed attention. From this event several areas were identified for action. Among them was a "Governance Module" that led to the addition of two additional select board members, and the creation of a Town Administrator position.

- The addition of Cody March and Courtney Lietz has been an overwhelming success. These two represent the next generation of select board members who will lead the board into the future;

- The creation of a Town Administrator position also exceeded our expectation. With this position we were able to address many personnel improvement, namely offering a retirement program and working to offer more creative health care insurance options to save the town money in the future.

- Over the last nine years we have created capital funds for Town Highway, Fire and Rescue. By contributing to these funds annually, we have been able to even out any tax rate fluctuations.

I cannot personally take all the credit for these successes, but was proud to serve on the board during these productive times.

I would truly appreciate the support of the residents of Cambridge and kindly ask for your support for the two-year select board position.

Larry Wyckoff
Jeffersonville

Re-elect Steinbauer to Underhill Selectboard

To the Editor,

I was very happy to see that Dan Steinbauer is running for re-election to the Underhill Selectboard. He has provided steady leadership to the board and to the town during his current term. As the Chair of the Underhill Recreation Committee, I have worked with Dan on numerous occasions and I have appreciated his thoughtful and patient approach to governance. He has consistently shown that he supports our town and our town employees. Dan approaches challenging issues with integrity. He is a dedicated public servant, and his commitment to our town has been admirable. Thank you, Dan, for running again, you will have my vote!

Anton Kelsey
Underhill

Dogs running off leash on my property

To the Editor,

I have had domestic dogs (with collars) running free on my property repeatedly over past several months.

I have caught them on my trail cam. Also, they barked up my tree while sitting in my stand bow-hunting. Didn't improve my hunting success.

This is not acceptable. Keep track of your dogs. If you're lucky enough to enjoy access to unposted land, don't abuse the privilege. WALK WITH THEM. Some people would not hesitate to shoot unattended dogs running off leash in the woods, as it is common knowledge that they can cause additional stress to deer that are already having a hard time surviving the winter.

You are responsible for your dogs, and you can't just let them run for hours at a time on someone else's property.

Christopher Butler
Underhill

About the VT data breach

To the Editor,

We take every precaution to protect ourselves from identity theft and a glitch in our own State Government sends out personal information to the wrong recipients? Not acceptable. Damage has been done. Let's hope that whoever receives the incorrect forms are honest people; after all, we are all Vermonters.

I know that when I was in HR and payroll, if I did something anything like this, I'd be instantly fired.

Angie Meltzer
Westford

VT has one more step to go on suffrage

To the Editor,

February 8, 2021, marks the 100th anniversary of Vermont's ratification of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote... coming almost six months following its adoption and after women had voted in November 1920.

Contrary to its history of progressive change, Vermont lagged behind the nation on women's suffrage. Legislators resisted the reform for decades before 1920, when a groundswell of women faced off against Governor Percival Clement, a perennial opponent of suffrage and prohibition.

After Congress and 35 states approved the amendment, Vermont suffragists organized a massive campaign urging Clement to call a special session of the legislature to make Vermont the "Perfect 36," the last state required for ratification. Upon Clement's refusal, Lillian Olzendam and Ann Batchelder of Woodstock orchestrated an historic non-violent protest on April 21, 1920, when 400 women paraded silently through Montpelier and converged on the State House to demand equal justice.

Clement's stance notwithstanding, women's suffrage became a reality on August 26, 1920, after Tennessee became the "Perfect 36." By November, over 28,000 Vermont women had registered to vote, helping elect a pro-suffrage governor and Vermont's first woman legislator, Edna Louise Beard of Orange. She helped approve both the amendment and an adjustment to

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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!

The library website <http://www.fairfaxvlibrary.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.fairfaxvlibrary.org, 802-849-2420. Call or email libraryprograms@fwsu.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.

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/Curb-side-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/1FAIpQLScH6EFICpRRmOhjQ_O1GTNOzZI-EJS3WJtR4BQelAT6mYMT0A/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1)

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

LEGISLATIVE REPORTS

The governor's budget address

By Rich Westman, State Senator, Lamoille District
Friday, January 29

For anyone on an Appropriations Committee in the Legislature, the Governor's budget address really is the start of our work on next year's budget. This coming week, Governor Scott delivered the FY'22 budget address to the Legislature. For me, and for lots of us in the Legislature, this feels like the start of the budget discussion. For governors like Governor Scott and his administration, the budget address represents months of work by agencies, departments, and members of his administration on the 5th floor of the Pavilion Building. That work started, for them, back in the early fall.

Twice yearly the revenues estimates are produced in a joint process between the Administration and the Legislature. This generally happens once in July and once in January. In short, the revenue estimates set by the Emergency Board are the estimates of what we have to spend and the money we have to build budgets on as a state unless there are tax law changes. The State's two economists – one representing the Administration and the other representing the Legislature – work to create a consensus forecast based on revenues under the present law.

Last week the Emergency Board met and approved the latest consensus forecast. The economy, as we all know, has been on a rollercoaster during this pandemic. A year ago, things looked good for the economy and revenues. Revenues estimates were up. By mid-summer estimates were down and the most recent estimates, approved last week, were up from August's estimates but still below estimates from a year ago...

Tom Kavet, one of the two State Economists, explains our economic situation like this in his latest Economic Report last week:

"The Vermont and U.S. economies continue to be driven by two dominant phenomena: the epidemiological path of the pandemic and the colossal federal fiscal and monetary policy responses to it. Both are without precedent in the past century, leaving little historical basis for current projections. As a result, the forecasts herein remain highly uncertain, pending further developments associated with each of these causal factors, and are best understood as order of magnitude estimates. Revenue data from the first half of FY'21, however, appear to indicate that if federal deficit spending is sufficiently massive, it can offset almost any recessionary event – including a pandemic. With nearly \$7 billion in federal transfer payments to Vermont already in progress and as much as \$3 billion more likely to come, economic "winners" are now more than offsetting "losers" and tax revenue expectations for both FY'21 and FY'22 have been radically upgraded from prior August projections."

With revenues now set we know, without tax increases, what we have to spend. With the Governor's budget coming this week we will have feedback and information from state agencies and departments regarding the pressures and needs as they see them. These are major components that will make it possible for the Legislature to start our budget work in a real way.

What happens in Washington still remains an unknown. Without further flexible federal aid, construction of a state budget seems like an uphill task. Normally, with state revenues and a Governor's budget proposal we have what we need to begin to move a budget through the legislative process. Now without knowing what federal assistance might be out there that seems difficult – to say the least.

These really are uncertain and unprecedented times. The pieces we need to construct a state budget are unfolding, but never before this pandemic has federal aid seemed more uncertain and as important... just one of the many unexpected issues and difficulties COVID has created for all of us!

Senate update: data breach, she-cession, and school equity

By Kesha Ram, State Senator, Chittenden District

February 2

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Wishing you a reflective and meaningful Black History Month. February also includes holidays like *Library Lovers Day* and *Random Acts of Kindness Day*, so hopefully we can all find ways to continue to support our civic institutions and communities in this difficult time. It appears to be welcomed and appreciated to provide periodic updates from the Senate, so I will try to keep it

up, and hope you will be in touch with any thoughts, questions, concerns, hopes, or ideas.

First, a very grave situation is unfolding involving a data breach within the Vermont Department of Labor (DOL). An unknown number of 1099G forms for unemployment insurance beneficiaries were mailed to the incorrect recipient. DOL is issuing a mass recall of all 1099s that have been mailed out and asks everyone who received this form to wait for a self-addressed, stamped envelope to return the documents. If the envelope does not have your name on it or the information inside does not match, please hold on to the envelope and form to return. The Department will provide ID protection services for impacted individuals whose private information has been improperly released.

Please know we are taking this breach extremely seriously and calling for a full investigation, once the situation is under control, to ensure this does not happen again and all affected parties receive services and protection. While the guidance is unfolding, if you are worried about your credit information or tax forms, please reach out to me (kram@leg.state.vt.us) and I will find the right person to help you. Further instructions will be mailed to everyone who is receiving a 1099 from DOL, and information will be posted at labor.vermont.gov as it becomes available.

In Senate Economic Development & Housing, much of our focus is on supporting unemployment insurance (UI) beneficiaries and trying to ensure the coordination of federal and statewide housing agencies as we anticipate receiving \$200 million in rental assistance from the federal government. The goal is to get these resources to those in critical need and help create further pathways out of poverty and toward greater stability to the extent possible. The UI bill we anticipate passing out of our committee soon would continue pandemic guidelines that remove the requirement for workers to have to look for work as a condition of their benefits while the state of emergency is still in effect.

When we first began looking at UI data, it was noted that we have the greatest disparity between men and women receiving UI benefits in the country. Women in Vermont made up 73% of UI recipients in January and are now at 69% of recipients, while the rest of the country is much closer to an even split. A "she-cession" of this nature calls for us to look more deeply into experiences into gender-imbalanced industries and childcare options. We will continue to work to understand the jarring statistic, and it will influence our approach to recovery, in hopes that no women or families get left behind as we seek to regain our collective footing.

I am always grateful to hear from young people, but I am sad to note that recently it is because many of our students in Chittenden County are upset and concerned about House Bill 92. This bill seeks to prohibit any flags flying at our schools besides the American and Vermont flags, which many see as a thinly veiled attempt to ban Pride and Black Lives Matter flags. While this bill has almost no chance of even being taken up for discussion, I know it makes many BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students feel further silenced and marginalized, and I apologize on behalf of the Legislature. It strengthens my resolve to advance legislation to better support BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students, such as increasing the use of restorative justice practices in our schools and creating more funding mechanisms for multicultural liaisons.

On a related note, all BIPOC Vermonters deserve to feel safe and welcome in our state, and I wrote an op-ed about our collective focus needed on the support and retention of our BIPOC neighbors and co-workers, not simply seeking to advance racial diversity through recruitment. It clearly struck a chord, with nearly 900 shares from the VT Digger website: <https://vtdigger.org/2021/01/19/kesha-ram-vermonts-lack-of-racial-diversity-is-a-retention-problem-not-a-recruitment-problem/>.

Hopefully this gives you a sense of my thinking and what I'm focused on, and I look forward to being in touch (kram@leg.state.vt.us).

Reach out to your Chittenden County senator

By Thomas Chittenden, State Senator, Chittenden District

Please don't hesitate to reach out for any reason. I always say the best part of public service is hearing from people and what they care about (and the worst part are the occasional long meetings that go late into the evening well past my desired bedtime). I can be reached at 802-233-1913 or www.thomaschittenden.com.

Letter continued from page 7

the Vermont Constitution that replaced "man" with "person" in the requirement for the Freeman's Oath.

Since then, women's legislative representation has grown steadily over the last hundred years, outpacing national trends. Today it is approximately 42.2%, but Vermont is the only state that has not sent a woman to Congress.

Marilyn Blackwell
League of Women Voters of Vermont
Vermont Suffrage Centennial Alliance

Dave Baczewski for Westford Selectboard

To the Editor,

I'd like to give my support to our neighbor Dave Baczewski, who is running for the Selectboard. I had the privilege of working with Dave for several months last year as we planned the (sadly postponed) May Day Festival, which was to be hosted by the White Church. I believe Dave and Rebecca are true Westfordians at heart, and understand what this great little town is all about. Dave's a great guy to chat with, and easy to work with. He is very knowledgeable, but also always listens and cares about the opinions of others. He has a lot of worldly experience; his family could have chosen just about anywhere to settle down, and they chose to come home to Westford, where their kids went to school. This is, to me, a great endorsement right there!

I'm voting for Dave Baczewski for Selectman.

Carol Winfield
Westford

Mobbs Farm – thank you!

To the Editor,

Many thanks to the Mobbs Farm Committee for taking such good care of our community gem. The Browns Trace access gives us a whole new side of Mobbs to explore. The marked sledding hills by the pine trees are awesome. Also, the trails from the Browns Trace parking lot are great now – much improved the past few years.

The trails have been great – spring, summer, fall, and now winter, with all this snow. I appreciate the trail markers, the bridges, the mowing, the forestry work... Especially during the pandemic – it's been great to get outside to hike and ski and snow shoe and sled, right here in Jericho. Thank you all!

Susan Bresee, Jericho

Support the Post Office and rural carriers

To the Editor,

The rural delivery concerns are at a national level not just here in Underhill unfortunately. See <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/in-rural-america-the-postal-service-is-already-collapsing/>.

I also would like to suggest a small thing we all could do to help out those hard working people that deliver our mail. Probably pretty obvious that rural delivery in the winter is a more challenging job. Something we may all forget to do is shovel in front of our mailbox. Doing this is one way to make a small but probably big difference. Imagine the difference that just cutting a small amount of time out of delivering to each mailbox could make in the mail carriers' day.

Norm Poutre, Underhill

Legislative update, Chittenden 8-3

By Alyssa Black, State Representative, Chittenden-8-3
February 1

Another great week at the virtual statehouse! Here are some of the highlights.

H. 138 passes with strong bipartisan support: Otherwise known as the budget adjustment or BAA, this is the bill that makes mid-year technical adjustments to the current year's budget to keep it in balance. H.138 included investments to further support the continuing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We were able to include additional Coronavirus Relief Funds for emergency food, housing assistance for the homeless, rental assistance, broadband extension projects, and support for Vermont State Colleges and their expenses related to COVID-19.

There are some disappointments as this bill needed to be crafted in only six days, particularly around additional economic recovery grants to businesses that missed out on earlier CR funds. But there is consideration of another appropriations bill to fund these urgent needs. The Committees of jurisdiction are already hard at work on this.

Health Care Committee work this week: My committee has been taking testimony this past week on making permanent, coverage for audio only telehealth. Prior to the pandemic, telephone-only services from a provider were not covered. We've now seen how valuable this service has become to many Vermonters. While in-person or even telehealth using audio and video are preferable, that is not always a possibility for many. Issues with technology, transportation, Internet access, and health status affect many people and their ability to access healthcare. Audio-only has meant the difference between receiving some care rather than none at all. And for many patients, providers, and certain conditions, this has actually been preferable. We continue next week with more testimony and discussion.

I'm interested in your experiences with this mode of care. If you had given consent and agreed to this type of follow-up, chronic condition management, or needing medical advice, is this an option of care that you'd like to see continue post-pandemic?

My newest challenge: I started my new crash course on the budget this week. Basically I'm being groomed to be the Healthcare Committees new "budget buddy." This is the person that tracks the House Appropriations Committee's work on matters that affect healthcare. I'm really excited about this, and I'm eager to take on this responsibility. So in addition to my own committee I drop in to Appropriations anytime someone from the Department of Health, Health Access, or Mental Health comes and then report back to my own committee. I've got a lot to learn but I'm getting a lot of help. And I'm trying to channel my inner Martha Heath, our own former Chair Extraordinaire of House Appropriations!

To that end, Commissioner Levine presented the budget this week for the Department of Health. Of course, anytime Dr. Levine testifies, legislators can't help but ask him about vaccines. Dr. Levine reported that of the first age band, 75+, over 32,000 people scheduled their vaccine in the first two days of scheduling! That's a really amazing number. Between those and residents of long-term facilities, it's approximately 80%. As more vaccine becomes available they will work through the age bands 70+ and 65+. Then they will move on to Vermonters with chronic conditions and co-morbidities.

Stay warm!

February 7

The weeks are flying by. A very busy week in committee and our first roll call (more on that after the jump!).

H.R.7 House Resolution disapproving an Executive Order: The Governor presented Executive Order 1-21 on January 15. This order would create an Agency of Public Safety, consolidating several law enforcement and public safety functions into one agency. By statute, either body has 90 days to disapprove of an executive order and then it would not go into effect.

This restructuring proposal has been under consideration for many years and I agree that the intent is a laudable goal. However, an executive order is not able to be amended and therefore input and feedback from the public or the state employees affected would not be possible. I feel as though such a proposal, making a large-scale change to state government, is best achieved through the legislative process. And beginning next week the Committee on Government Operations will begin taking testimony on this

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Can you read me now?

To the Editor,

Inflation squeezes the elderly on fixed incomes. So to do the economics of publishing a newspaper effect the elderly. The smaller the print the more ads and material per page. Unfortunately those with not so good 'near sight' perhaps particularly common for those with aged eyes, are getting squeezed out of the joy of reading the newspaper. As the font size diminishes, so does the readership.

Bernie Paquette
Jericho

(The Mountain Gazette throughout its 20 years of publication has always printed in 9-point Times New Roman text, as is the standard for newspapers. — Editor)

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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. Here is a link for Volunteer Connection to learn more about these and other opportunities: <https://unitedwaynwvt.galaxydigital.com/>.

SEEKING ADULTS TO MENTOR YOUTH – This is a fun and rewarding way to support kids in our community! Big Brothers Big Sisters of Vermont is looking for adults to spend two to four hours per month mentoring a youth age 6-17. Community-based, site-based, and online options available. Volunteers are provided with training and ongoing staff support for the duration of the match. Background check required. To apply, go online to <https://bbbs.tfaforms.net/4841134>.

Volunteer continued on page 11

PEOPLE - OBITUARIES



Dorothy (Dot) Irene Root, 92, of Westford, VT died Tuesday, January 26, 2021, with her daughter, Mary by her side. She was born in Fairfax, on January 16, 1929, the daughter of Girard and Agnes (Boozan) Learned. Dot lived in Westford for most of her life. For the past three-plus years Dot lived with her daughter and son in-law, Mary and Jim Anderson of Fairfax. Mary's siblings cannot express how very grateful and thankful we are that mom spent her last few years in Mary and Jim's home and they took care of mom. She loved her new home and felt welcomed, safe, comfortable and part of their family. Dot was a true Vermonter, she loved the changing four seasons. She enjoyed maple sugaring, berry picking, vegetable and fruit gardening, canning and reaping her produce, as well as the quietness of a winter snowstorm. When Dot was in her fifties, she and her husband Eastman decided to heat with wood from their woodlot. After Eastman died, Dot continued to log and cut trees for wood well into her eighties. Once she fell and broke her leg in the woods. She crawled to the truck, drove home, crawled into the house, took a bath (she didn't want to go to the hospital dirty) then she called for help! When she healed, Dot continued to go to the woods! Dot was an excellent seamstress. In her younger years she made all of her children's clothes. In later years she began quilting. Her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren were the proud recipients of her heirloom quality quilts. Dot was an excellent cook. Her family especially looked forward to her filled cookies at Christmas time. Dot was employed at Mary Fletcher Hospital for over 20 years. Dot loved her Sunday drives and enjoyed looking at the Vermont scenery and finishing her drive with a stop at her favorite restaurant, McDonalds. She loved the big macs and chicken nuggets. She also enjoyed her cross word and jigsaw puzzles. Dot had strong beliefs in "right and wrong." She felt everyone should be free to make their own decisions but needed to be accountable for their actions. Dot was frugal and loved a good rummage sale, as well as lawn and garage sales. In later life Dot and her husband got into antiquing and started their own business. While doing this they collected Depression glass and were able to give sets of this

to their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Dot was predeceased by her husband Eastman Root Sr., her parents, Girard and Agnes (Boozan) Learned, her brothers Aaron, Elmer, and Ralph Learned, as well as her step-son, Richard Root. Dot is survived by her children, Eastman and Patricia (Scott) Root of Fletcher, VT, Mary and Jim Anderson of Fairfax, VT, Sharon and John Palmer of Florida, Bruce and Linda Root of Westford and her daughter-in-law, Beverly LaPlant of North Carolina. She also leaves her grandchildren and their spouses, Anita and Reggie Spiller, Justin Root, Tina and Peter Zettel, Jeremy and Cindy Anderson, Maureen and Brad Weed, Jodi and Jeff Deslauriers, Josh Root and Heather Dolloff, Brad and Emily Root, Olivia Root and Jordan Pasha, Wendy Root-Clark and Randy Root; and several great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. She is also survived by sisters, Marcia Wilkinson of Virginia, Margaret Woodworth of Westford, Bernice Hakey of Swanton, VT, Mary Cleary of Milton, VT, Arlene Brown (Bill) of Fairfax, VT, and numerous nieces, nephews and friends. Per Dorothy's wish, there will be no services. Her family will bury her ashes this coming summer. In lieu of flowers, donations in Dot's memory may be made to Franklin County Animal Rescue, 30 Sunset Meadow, St. Albans, VT 05478; or Fairfax United Church, P.O. Box 204, Fairfax, VT 05454. Funeral arrangements and final wishes for Dorothy are in the care of Heald Funeral Home, where messages of condolence or sharing of memories are welcome at www.healdfuneralhome.com.



After a long and happy life, **Marjorie Diana (Fitt) Beck**, 95, of Essex Junction, VT passed away on Sunday, January 24, 2021 with family by her side. Marge was born January 29, 1925 in Connecticut and spent her youth and young adult life in Kearny, NJ. It was there that she met the love of her life, William H. Beck, who predeceased her in 2009. Marge and Bill were married October 23, 1948. After a time, they settled and raised their family in River Plaza, NJ. Surviving are their four children: Diana P. Broussard and her husband Nicholas of Shady Cove, OR; Susan M. Belton and her husband Curtis of Underhill, VT; William T.

Beck of Anchorage, AK; and Thomas A. Beck of Deltona, FL. She also leaves their granddaughter Caitlin Hazelton and her husband Bryant of Underhill. Marge's extended family included their niece Sharron Davis and family in New Jersey, with whom they enjoyed a close relationship. Also predeceasing Marge is her sister, Jessie Mary (Fitt) Gillespie of Kearny, NJ. They spent many happy days together growing up and later raising their families. Marge and Bill were active in their community. They supported and nurtured their children by being involved in their many activities both inside and outside school. They also fulfilled their civic duty, volunteering for the River Plaza Hose Company that included both community support and fundraising efforts. In addition to raising a family, Marge developed her skills as an Executive Secretary. Her employment path started during WWII for the military and transport aircraft commander at Newark airport, and later for the CEO at Hoffman-LaRoche in Nutley. After raising her children, she returned to work with a start-up automobile leasing company, where she stayed until retiring to Florida in 1978. Not wanting to sit still for very long, she took a position for the Dean of Education at Stetson University in Deland, FL. Marge and Bill thoroughly enjoyed travel and took many trips around the country to visit children and family. They also rekindled relationships with many family members in England, taking several trips around the U.K. and Wales. These trips were a pure joy for them. Three years ago, Marge moved to Maple Ridge Memory Care in Essex Junction, VT. It was there that she lived out her days under careful care. Her children remained deeply involved, with those out of town visiting frequently. Special thanks to the staff there, from whom we learned so much. They trained us kids well! Special thanks also to her son-in-law Curt, who entrenched himself as a volunteer and saw Marge daily. We will be forever grateful to these caring and empathetic people. Donations in Marge's honor may be made to the American Cancer Society or the Alzheimer's Association. For those who wish, online condolences may be made at www.minorfh.com.

Take the Vermonters Survey 2021

Vermonters have had a challenging year. In addition to creating new issues for us all, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated issues many of us were already facing.

Alliance for a Better Vermont wants to hear from you about how you've been impacted by the pandemic. Take this brief and confidential survey today – go online to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TK8TGTGX>.

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and will work directly with the Administration to achieve these efficiencies. For this reason and a several other concerns, I voted yes to disapprove. After our first roll call of the biennium, the final vote was 108-40.

While I'm quite proud I was deftly able to unmute, say yes, and then re-mute, turns out a roll call vote isn't nearly as exciting as one would think it would be. The total process takes about 15 minutes and I'm not sure I've ever been more grateful that my last name starts with a B. Once your name has been called it's acceptable to leave the House Floor; in Zoom world that means you can go off video and take care of any personal business. I was able to prepare and consume an English muffin and answer several emails by the time it was over. I also learned that when we are in the actual Statehouse you are not allowed to use any electronic devices while the roll is being called. Which means neither my toaster nor laptop will be allowed. Note to self: buy some of those little crossword puzzle and Sudoku books.

Health Care Committee: This week we ended testimony on audio-only telehealth. Our committee has begun crafting legislation that would mandate coverage for these types of visits after the COVID-19 State of Emergency has ended, with full patient consent. We learned that while there are concerns over patient safety compared to in-person or audio/visual visits, oftentimes issues with transportation or broadband make audio-only visits the only option. Additionally, audio-only telephone visits were found to be helpful with many individuals with mental health disorders, such as anxiety. Concerns were raised that losing access to audio-only visits would further exacerbate disparities among marginalized populations. We will complete our work on this in the next week.

We also spent considerable time getting up to speed on the mental healthcare system in Vermont. We took extensive testimony from the Department of Mental Health (DMH), various Peer-Peer groups, representatives for the Designated Agencies, and many other advocates. This was very educational and timely as next week we will begin the budget review process for the DMH.

We have also been working jointly with the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare as there is some time sensitive legislation that needs immediate attention. Much of the healthcare regulatory flexibility that was enacted last year for COVID-19 is set to expire on either March 31 or June 30, depending on which provision. Legislation is being drafted to address these deadlines.

Thank you to all who attended our "Community Conversation;" it was wonderful to connect with so many of you. I apologize that we scheduled it on Super Bowl Sunday; perhaps we should have had more foresight when we originally scheduled this two months ago! If you were unable to attend today, our next one will be Saturday, March 6 at 9:00 AM.

Have a wonderful week and never hesitate to reach out to me with any questions, concerns or feedback at 802-598-1026 or ABlack@leg.state.vt.us.

Data breach at the Department of Labor

By Thomas Stevens

State Representative, Washington-Chittenden

The following is an announcement from the Commissioner of Labor regarding the data breach discovered this weekend. If you received unemployment or any of the COVID-related wage replacements, please read and follow the advice given.

"On Monday, February 1st at approximately 9:30 AM the Department of Labor began receiving reports regarding discrepancies involving 1099G tax documents that were issued by the Department for unemployment insurance benefit

purposes. Upon further review of the reports that were coming to the Department, we learned that individuals were receiving 1099G tax documents where the name and mailing address did not match on the front of the envelop and in other cases where the name and social security number on the inside did not match the recipient. Additionally, we believe that in certain cases individuals may have received another claimant's name and social security number.

"As of now, the Department believes this issue is specific to the 1099s that were associated with the Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) program and a portion of the Vermont Short Term Supplemental benefit population; however, the Department is issuing a mass recall of ALL 1099s that have been mailed, regardless of program. This is being done out of an abundance of caution. The Department will be mailing further instructions to everyone who received a 1099, along with a self-addressed stamped envelope, to return the incorrect 1099 to the Department.

"In addition, recognizing that there is the potential of the improper release of confidential and personal information, the Department has already been in contact with the Vermont Attorney General's Office in accordance with state statute, and we will be providing all impacted individuals with the option to enroll in ID protection services. This improper release of data did not occur in every instance, but for those cases where an individual's information was released, they will be provided the opportunity for identity protection. More specific information will be provided in a mailing to impacted individuals along with further instructions.

"We are still in the midst of investigating this issue, the cause of the issue, and the next steps for impacted individuals, but in the immediate, individuals should do the following:

"If an individual receives a 1099 letter from the Department and the name and address on the front do not match, they should not open the 1099. The Department will mail them further instructions for returning the 1099.

"If an individual receives a 1099 letter from the Department and the name and address on the front do match, but when they open the 1099, the information on the inside does not match their information, they should hold onto the 1099. The Department will mail them further instructions for returning the 1099.

"If there is even the possibility that an individual's confidential information was improperly released, the Department will mail them instructions for protecting their identity and how to enroll in consumer protection services through the Department.

"The Department will be issuing additional guidance to these populations later today/tomorrow along with next steps.

"This issue does not impact an individual's claim or benefits. This issue is specific to the printing and mailing of 1099 tax documents.

"No incorrect tax information has been shared with the State or Federal tax departments, nor the IRS. The Department will ensure that correct 1099 tax information is sent to the tax departments and IRS for proper tax reporting.

"All claimants will receive a new 1099G tax document from the Unemployment Insurance Division.

"More information will be posted to the Department's website at labor.vermont.gov.

"I know there are many questions around how this happened and exactly who is impacted and to what extent, and I promise that we will conduct a thorough review of the incident; however, at this time we are focused on getting important information to impacted Vermonters as quickly as possible. This is obviously frustrating, as many Vermonters rely on state government to issue accurate and timely information, let alone during this public health emergency. I want to assure all of you that we are working as fast as we can to correct this error and ensure that this does not happen in the future."

Legislature works on budget bills

By Theresa Wood, State Representative, Washington-Chittenden
February 5

Last week in the legislature we passed the budget adjustment act. Each year, the Governor submits adjustments to the budget to reflect actual experience through the first half of the fiscal year. The State's fiscal year runs from July 1-June 30. This year the budget adjustment also included investments to support our continuing response to the coronavirus pandemic. Highlights from the bill (H.138) include:

- Coronavirus Relief Funds for emergency food, hotel-housing for the homeless, and rental assistance;
- Support to the VT State Colleges for additional expenses related to COVID-19;
- Continuation of the Everyone Eats program through June 2021, which provides healthy meals prepared by restaurants for food-insecure Vermonters;
- Funding for technical assistance to implement the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2020;
- Funding for completion of broadband extension projects;
- Partial relocation costs for Burlington High School.

In my committee (House Human Services) we began our work on understanding the Governor's proposed budget for fiscal year 2022, which begins on July 1, 2021. We also took testimony on the Governor's proposal to eliminate the Child Development Division and move existing programs to the Agency of Education, Department of Mental Health and Department of Health.

Upcoming public meetings: The House and Senate Committees on Appropriations hosted hearings to receive public input on the Governor's budget proposal on Monday, February 8, via videoconference. To view the Governor's FY'22 recommended state budget: <https://finance.vermont.gov/budget/budget-recommendations/operating-budget/fy2022>. The public hearings are available to watch on YouTube; more information is located online at <https://bit.ly/3oZQ4N5>.

February 12

Last week in Montpelier the House passed two bills:

- H.18: this bill further strengthens the child sexual molestation laws to include simulated sexual contact.
- H.20: this bill makes changes to the current requirements for pretrial risk assessments, making them discretionary.

Just as a reminder, you can access the status of any bill that you are interested in by using the search function on the legislative home page located at <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2022/>.

In addition to the various official legislative committees that are part of the Legislature, there are also less formal group caucuses. What's a caucus? It is essentially a group of people who have a common interest in a particular topic or a group belonging to the same political party. In addition to the Democratic, Republican, and Progressive party caucuses, there are currently eight other caucuses. These groups are not necessarily permanent, but are formed as issues or areas needing focus materialize. Currently, the following caucuses generally meet on a weekly basis:

- Working Vermonters Caucus;
- Older Vermonters Caucus;
- Social Equity Caucus;
- Climate Solutions Caucus;
- Tourism Caucus;
- Rural Economic Development Working Group;
- National Guard Caucus;
- Women's Caucus.

Often, participation in a topic caucus is helpful to keep up to date on issues that are not the responsibility of your assigned legislative committee. Currently, I am co-chair of the Older Vermonters Caucus and am a member of all the other caucuses. As always, I am available at twood@leg.state.vt.us.

ART / MUSIC / THEATER

Bow Thayer will be releasing a new album written over the course of the COVID pandemic and recorded at his central Vermont studio, "The Woodshed." Thayer's playing makes up the lion's share of tracks, but the recording also features long-time drummer Jeff Berlin and Boston bass staple Jeremy Dryden, both of whom will be joining Thayer for the show on Saturday, February 20 at 7:00 PM at Spruce Peak Arts in Stowe. Other guests providing tracks remotely include Chris McGandy (Perfect Trainwreck) on pedal steel and Val McCallum on guitar. The show will cover most of the new album as well as some old favorites. Sometimes groovy, sometimes dissonant, often thought-provoking and ultimately positive. In the event that VT guidance shifts to restrict in-person attendance, existing in-person tickets will be changed to livestream. In-person ticketholders will have the option of a credit, refund, or making a donation with the remainder. Thank you for your support of musicians and other performing artists to keep the arts alive!

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

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/>.

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/>.

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 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.vermontarts.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.vermontarts.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.

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. This might become one of your monthly highlights.

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

MISCELLANEOUS**February is Black History Month**

Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett, an NIH scientist, led the team that developed the Moderna COVID vaccine: https://youtu.be/emuTXyu_ei8 and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kizzmekia_Corbett

Long before Dr. Corbett, Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson were three Black mathematicians who worked for NASA at the height of the space race in the 1960s. Their story is captured in the *New York Times* bestseller *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly, also made into an acclaimed film by the same title. <http://www.hiddenfigures.com/>

The scientists in the TED talks below tell about their experiences as Black women in the STEM field today:

- <https://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-hidden-women-of-stem-alexis-scott>
- https://www.ted.com/talks/raven_baxter_you_don_t_look_like_a_scientist
- <https://www.scimaven.com/about>
- <http://alexismscott.com/>

Burn Right offers info on tax credits, safe wood burning

The stimulus bill (Consolidated Appropriations Act) that was signed into law on December 27, 2020 includes a 26% tax credit for modern wood heating systems, including cordwood. The credit became effective January 1, 2021, and applies to the total installed cost of stoves and boilers that are at least 75% efficient. It lasts for three years, has no upper limit, and can be stacked with other incentives. This means you can take the 26% tax credit on your 2021 taxes as well as any other state-local rebates or incentives that might apply. The federal government will be releasing information in July but the program is in effect from January 1. Your dealer can provide details on EPA certification.

The State of Vermont also offers a rebate of up to \$600 for a new wood or pellet stove. The program is administered by Efficiency Vermont. Check out the details online at <https://www.efficiencyvermont.com/rebates/list/wood-stoves>.

Five simple ways to Burn Right

• *Burn the right fuel* – Use properly seasoned wood, cut in the spring and dried over the summer. Store wood outdoors, off the ground, with the top covered but the sides left open for airflow.

• *Flip your fire upside down* – Yes, you read right, upside down! The conventional method of lighting kindling below big logs releases excessive smoke. Lighting from the top and letting the fire spread down creates a better draft and less pollution.

• *Keep the fire burning hot* – This ensures that the combustion chamber doesn't cool. A hot fire is an efficient and clean fire. Harmful emissions are burned before they can go up your smokestack.

• *Check the color of the smoke* – When you Burn Right there should be no smoke in your firebox or chimney. Black and yellow smoke mean your fire is burning inefficiently and producing a lot of health-damaging emissions.

• *Use a clean and efficient stove* – Low-emission wood stoves and furnaces are designed to reduce air pollution. If you have an older stove, consider upgrading. A new stove will use less fuel and will save you money over time.

Miscellaneous continued on page 11

TOWN OF JERICHO- DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

The Jericho Development Review Board will hold a public hearing at 7:00 pm on WEDNESDAY March 10, 2021 at the Jericho Town Hall to consider the following.

- A request to the DRB by Brad Faucher on behalf of the Jericho Historical Society for a conditional use review for the establishment of a Ice Cream Scoop Shop. This property is located at 4 Red Mill Drive which is in the Village Center Zoning District.
- A request to the DRB by Robert Shea for Final Plat review for a two-lot subdivision. This property is located at 73 Ethen Allen Road which is in the Low Density Residential Zone District.
- A request to the DRB by Randall & Christal Clark for Final Plat review for a two-lot subdivision. This property is located at 83 Browns Trace which is in the Low Density Residential Zone District.
- A request to the DRB by Brenda and Lee Charron for a Preliminary Plat Review for a nine-lot PUD. The property is located at 316 VT Route 15 which is in the Forestry Zoning District.

All interested persons may appear and be heard. Additional information related to this application may be viewed at the Jericho Planning and Zoning Office during regular business hours.

Chris Flinn
Zoning Administrator
cflinn@jerichovt.gov

SCHOOLS

MMU students seek volunteer opportunities

MMU students are looking for volunteer opportunities of any type. If you have something that might be a good fit, please reach out to MMU volunteer coordinator David Alofsin, david.alofsin@mmuusd.org or 802-858-1661 with details. Opportunities can be one-time or ongoing, in-person or virtual. Thank you for your help!

MMUUSD weekly newsletter switching to monthly

At the start of this year, we wanted to be intentional about our commitment to communication and transparency. This resulted in a weekly newsletter (*District Happenings*). We are now at a place where we feel that a monthly newsletter will suffice. Going forward, we will be sending a *District Happenings* on the first Friday of each month. The next issue will be sent March 5. You will still receive emergency notifications as they arise.

Richmond Elementary continues embracing life-long PE

Starting new and exciting programs isn't anything new for Richmond Elementary School's well known PE Teacher Brian Godfrey, or Mr. G. as he is more commonly known. With COVID-19 turning gymnasiums into classrooms and limiting the existing PE curriculum, Brian knew he'd have to go outdoors and engage students differently for the 2020-21 school year. His answer? A six-week Learn to Ice Skate program.

300 Richmond Elementary students in grades K-4, to date, have learned to skate independently since the start of the six-week curriculum that began after the December break. "It's really been a community effort," says Brian. "Local businesses have donated lumber, parents helped raise \$1000, the local Lions Club donated \$500, and the Richmond Fire Department filled the rink." With the help of RiseVT, Richmond Elementary School (RES) PTO also received a \$3000 Spark Connecting Community grant through the Vermont Community Foundation (VCF). The VCF aims to support the work happening throughout Vermont's 251 towns that builds social capital, keeping Vermonters healthy and happy. VCF funds went to purchasing 60 pairs of ice skates, which will allow RES to continue the program in future years.

The program has had a positive impact on the entire community. In addition to the six-week PE curriculum, the rink is getting a lot of use after school and on the weekends. The "buzz" even inspired some families who had chosen full remote learning to send their child to school on PE days, and kids have recently been bringing their own skates to school.

"Learn to" programs are part of Brian's teaching philosophy. "Being exposed to these various forms of movement at a young age will support life-long physical health. It's like riding a bike — by adopting a PE curriculum that allows learning to translate into adulthood, all students have an equitable opportunity to discover a form of movement that inspires them," says Brian, who already runs learn to ski, snowboard, swim, bike, rollerblade, and run curriculums. When asked if there are any improvements you would make for the 2021-22 school year, Brian notes, "It's a lot harder to maintain an outdoor ice rink all winter than you'd think. We've built a homemade zamboni and are thankful to volunteers who help shovel off the ice. Overall it's been super rewarding. As you drive into school you immediately see a bunch of kids skating around with their friends."

Miscellaneous continued from page 10

Anti-racism program for MMU students

For current MMU students and their parents:

This past fall, a group of MMU alumni got together to bring anti-racist learning to our former high school. We developed an introductory curriculum and ran a virtual program where we facilitated discussions about various topics centering around race and racial justice. This program is running again this spring and parents can encourage their students to join, or students can consider joining. It is critical for our wellbeing as individuals and members of deeply interconnected communities to begin learning more and addressing these issues at a young age in our life. Unfortunately, MMU simply does not prepare students to have these conversations. So please consider joining the program! Here's a short program description and signup link.

Learn the "hidden history" of Vermont and the foundations for anti-racist work by participating in the Anti-Racism @ MMU program. Led by MMU alums from the classes of 2012-2017, this eight-week program is free and open to all current students. Engage in weekly discussions with two alumni facilitators and a small group of your peers on topics ranging from incarceration to environmental justice to eugenics in Vermont. Sign up via the following link and we'll be in touch shortly: <https://bit.ly/36r7jtE>.

We're also offering four-week seminars on a few different topics. The course description and signup link is here: <https://bit.ly/eeYzQf>.

Essex Westford School District board seats, budget info

If you or someone that you know would like to run for a seat on the Essex Westford School District Board (EWSB), the process is slightly different this year because of COVID. Petitions are not required this year, as candidates will need to just complete a Consent Candidate form (download the form at <http://bit.ly/3tna7BN>).

Board members to be elected this year are:

- one Essex Junction resident: Three-year term;
- one Essex Town resident (outside the Village): Three-year term;

- one Westford resident: Three-year term.

Completed consent candidate forms must be returned to the Essex Town Clerk's Office (81 Main St., Essex Junction) for Essex Junction and Essex Town residents by mail, left in the drop box in front of the building, or emailed to clerk@essex.org. The form can also be mailed, delivered to the Westford Town Office (1713 VT Rt. 128), or sent to townclerk@westfordvt.us for Westford residents. The form must be in by Monday, March 8, 2021, at 4:30 PM in order to have a name placed on the ballot.

EWSB FY'22 Budget Information can be found online at www.ewsd.org/budget.

The EWSB annual meeting will be held on Monday, April 12, 2021. Don't forget to vote on Tuesday, April 13, 2021. Stay tuned for more information regarding polling locations and voting.

Additional information:

- Thinking about running for a school board? Learn more: <https://www.vtvsba.org/prospective-school-board-members>
- EWSB Board agendas and meeting minutes: <https://www.ewsd.org/Page/7864>

Message from EWSB Board

By Liz Subin, EWSB Board Clerk

The Essex Westford School Department (EWSB) is deep in the heart of budget season! As part of that process, the board is provided with presentations that tell the story of how our investments are working to fulfill our vision: Growing hearts and minds, for a better today and tomorrow: every day, every way, every one.

The first presentation was an overview of the FY'22 Proposed Budget, <https://prezi.com/view/vycE4D3hYw6EER035H5A/%5D>, on January 26, 2021. This week we had the opportunity to hear from Bob Travers, Director of the Center for Technical Education, Essex (CTE) and members of the Regional Advisory Board (RAB) about the incredible things happening in our center.

As stated in their mission, CTE provides comprehensive technical programs for all students, which include career exploration, preparation and technical literacy in a respectful learning environment. I encourage you all to take the time to view this presentation at https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1t11mNh7Nvooe641_lG7Rgh2spn6W2LgbBzXaYArWU_E/edit?ts=6019ff04#slide=id.gb5d21fd1f2_1_11 to see how they do it! You will hear stories of transformation, opportunity, excitement, rigor and relevance. You will see videos of learning by doing while on virtual tours of each of CTE's award-winning programs. You will see creative, engaged and motivated learners and will hear success stories from alumni whose lives were made better by their choice to attend CTE. We are so lucky to have CTE in our community and applaud them for all their hard work.

As a reminder, all board presentations can be found by clicking the red BUDGET button at www.ewsd.org/budget.

Volunteerscontinued from page 8

COME ON BOARD – Steps to End Domestic Violence needs a few talented and conscientious volunteers to join their Board of Directors. Community members with a passion for their mission of ending domestic violence and addressing the needs of those affected by violence in Chittenden County. Applicants should also have a familiarity with nonprofits and enjoy fundraising. If interested in exploring this opportunity, email steps@stepsvt.org.

SOCIAL MEDIA LIASON AND WEBSITE DEVELOPER – Betty's Bikes is a nonprofit bike shop that hopes to fill the gap between affordability and safe, eco-friendly transportation for Vermonters. They need a social media content developer to help create an online media presence and a website developer that can help keep offerings current and the website working well. Contact Julie Williams, bettysbikes@gmail.com or 802-322-3889.

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Are you up to the Good Citizen Challenge?

Help revive the spirit of liberty and strengthen our democratic institutions by taking part in the Good Citizen At-Home Challenge. Many of us are spending more time at home than usual this winter, so *Kids VT* (<https://kidsvt.com/>) and *Seven Days* (<https://sevendaysvt.com/>) have collected a wide variety of activities — many from our Good Citizen partners — to keep you occupied. This new Challenge will help you learn more about your state and your country, and give you a chance to help others, as well. To learn more, go online to <https://goodcitizenvt.com/>.

How it works:

- Form a team and choose a name. Your team can be just one person or a whole household or class. It can include both youth and adult members — in fact, we encourage adult-child teams! This is a great project to do with your kids, grandkids or students.
- Do an activity. There are more than 40 to choose from, in four different categories: History, Government, Community Service, and News Literacy. All of them can be done while keeping a safe distance from others, and most of them can be done remotely.
- Submit your evidence. Fill out the "Submit an Activity" form linked at <https://goodcitizenvt.com/at-home-activities/> for every activity your team completes. The first time you submit an activity, the online form will ask you for information about your team and team captain. We will use that information to contact your team captain with questions and prize information.
- Keep track of your progress on the website's public leaderboard. It lists all of the teams competing, as well as the number of activities participants have completed.
- Finish four activities (one in each category) before March 5 — and get 12 answers correct on the sample U.S. Citizenship test at <https://goodcitizenvt.com/at-home-challenge/#test> — and your team will be eligible for the grand prize drawing on March 10. The winning team will receive a \$500 gift card to a local business of the winner's choice! You must pass the citizenship test to win the grand prize. You can take it as a team, and if you don't pass the first time, take it until you make it!

Extra credit: The person or team that completes the most activities during the Challenge will be able to make a \$500 donation to a Vermont charity of their choice. In the event of a tie, a winner will be chosen at random from among those tied for the top spot.

For more information or if you have questions, contact 802-865-1020, ext. 14 or goodcitizen@kidsvt.com.

Eligibility & Guidelines:

Individuals or teams may enter. The leaderboard will identify participants by team name. Those participants who do not choose a team name will be listed by first name and last initial.

Participants should submit an entry for every activity done by a member of their team. Teams can either ask participants to submit their own entries, one at a time, or they can submit a single entry for the group and note multiple completions. For example, if a team of 12 listens to a podcast, the team captain can send in one activity submission noting 12 completions, or each individual member can send in their own entry. But teams should not do both for the same activity.

We encourage adult-child teams! This is a great family project. Adult participants are only eligible for prizes when participating on a team with at least one K-12 student.

Participants may submit multiple activities monthly to be eligible for monthly prize drawings, but they will only be entered once in the grand prize drawing.

Only submit photos and comments that can be used online, in print or broadcast by Good Citizen media partners. We'll use this material to inspire others to be Good Citizens.

Be sure to proofread your work — we'll highlight outstanding submissions in *Kids VT* and *Seven Days*!

All activities must be completed and submitted online by Friday, March 5, 2021 to be entered in the grand prize drawing.

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Browns River Little League registration

Registration for Browns River Little League (BRLL) opens online at www.brownsriverlittleleague.com on runs through Friday, March 19! BRLL 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 BRLL'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. BRLL will strictly adhere to all state/fed/MMUSD 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 brownsriverll@gmail.com with any questions!

Mt. 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.

Winter trail use in Westford

Here are 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.

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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 - \$350,000
To be built! 1680 sf Colonial on wooded 0.81 acre lot on over 6+ acres of common land. 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, open floor plan, hardwood floors on 1st floor. 1st floor primary suite. Beautiful large kitchen and adjoining gathering room. 2 car garage, front porch, rear deck & big backyard in the country.



Westford - \$150,000
This amazing land borders Essex & is an easy commute to towns & schools! Build your home on this 8+ acre parcel w/ wonderful 1.5 acre pond that greets you as you arrive! Septic permit for 4 bedrooms! Mostly level & open, some trees add shade & interest to the land!

**NANCY JENKINS
REAL ESTATE**

CALL NANCY TODAY!

Nancy Jenkins Real Estate
140 Kennedy Dr, Suite 102
South Burlington, VT 05403
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