

## Broadband in Bolton – options in 2021

By Deborah Shelby, Bolton

This is my last update as chair of the Economic Resource Committee (ERC) as I will not be renewing my position. Without more volunteers on the ERC, this may be our last broadband update.

This is a long note, but if your Internet service is not great, please read this carefully and respond to our survey link at the end.

Last year the federal government provided the CARES Act that allowed the state of Vermont to offer funding to expand broadband services in Vermont. Waitsfield Telecom received roughly \$130,000 to run fiber all along Duxbury Road and at the bottom of Bolton Valley Access road. VTel received \$1,000,000 to upgrade some of their wireless towers, one here in Bolton. As of this writing it is unclear how many new customers have requested service from VTel. Roughly 50 homes had the option to receive fiber service from Waitsfield Telecom.

There are still over 120 homes who do not have the minimum service level of 25/3 at their home in Bolton. What we know is putting in fiber takes funding and that money can come from the company's budget for installing fiber, or through grants, or loans.

**State Funding Update** – The legislators have not finalized the bills yet, but it appears that the majority of funding for broadband enhancements are going through CUDs. A CUD is a Community Union District that is considered a municipality that is made of at least two towns joining to be part of a CUD. Bolton is not a member of a CUD, but could join CV Fiber if the Select Board chooses to join. As it stands today, it is unclear if the funding given to VTel will reduce grant options for fiber in Bolton. If VTel demonstrates that their wireless service meets the minimum requirement of 25/3 in Bolton, this may impact future funds for fiber.

**CV Fiber is a CUD** – The organization was started in 2019 and now has 20 towns participating. The structure is all-volunteer and each town is allowed one primary and one alternate volunteer to the team. If a town has no volunteers, then they will not have representation at meetings. The primary goal of the CUD is to ensure that fiber is available throughout Vermont and in this case Central Vermont. If the Bolton Select Board chooses to join CV Fiber, there will be two volunteers needed to represent the town. For more information about CV Fiber, please check out their website <https://cvfiber.net/>. There is no cost to anyone for Bolton to join CV Fiber.

**Waitsfield Telecom** – As noted above, Waitsfield Telecom decided they would apply for funding to run fiber on Duxbury Road and at the base of Bolton Valley Access Road with the CARES Act opportunity. Since Bolton is just one of the many areas where fiber is not completed by Waitsfield Telecom, there are two questions:

- What are the company priorities for Bolton? and
- What is the timeline to complete fiber in Bolton?

Depending on the impact of the VTel funding, Bolton could be in a position where Waitsfield Telecom must fund all the remaining fiber in town with their own resources without additional grants or other state or federal funding opportunities. Funding opportunities are unclear at this time.

**VTel** – The wireless service offered by VTel requires the location to be within line of sight of the tower in Bolton. You can follow this link for more information: <https://www.vermontel.com/>.

**Starlink Beta Program** – Starlink is a very high-speed low latency space-based broadband access service designed for use in rural areas worldwide which lack adequate terrestrial broadband infrastructure. The company Starlink, which offers the service, is a subsidiary of SpaceX, the private for-profit space launch company founded by Elon Musk. This is quoted from this article: <https://vermontdailychronicle.com/2021/03/04/starlink-gamechanger-internet-for-rural-vermont/>; also of interest is <https://www.starlink.com/faq>.

**Power Companies** – Vermont Electric Coop and Green Mountain Power are also looking into connecting Vermonters. Here is an interesting story from WCAX: <https://www.wcax.com/2021/03/15/2-utilities-work-together-to-get-broadband-to-more-vermonters/>.

Where does this leave Bolton and YOU? The most certain thing I can say at this moment is there is no certainty and the options for 2021 are not clear. You are encouraged to contact all of the companies noted here to find out what your best option is for your needs.

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## BRMS raised over \$24,000 this year for Vermont Teen Homelessness



Gregory Martin, grade 5-6 School Counselor at Browns River Middle School (BRMS), received a phone call seven years ago from an old family friend who was working for Spectrum Youth & Family Services at the time. She asked if he would consider getting BRMS students involved in the Spectrum Student Sleep Out.

Although a little apprehensive at first, this event has become an eye opening and engaging perennial favorite for our middle school students at BRMS and for Martin personally. With a sibling who struggled with addiction and homelessness, he wanted to provide support for this population while creating an educational opportunity for BRMS students.

With the help and support of numerous amazing colleagues over

the years (including grade 5 teacher Kate Roberge, whose team this year raised an impressive \$16,500), the BRMS community of parents, including our local Parent Group B.R.A.G., and our administration have raised over \$50,000 in the last seven years.

However, the real stars are the students who agree to Sleep Out in the cold rain or snow every March in solidarity with homeless youth and youth at risk of becoming homeless. Through their efforts and enthusiasm, Browns River Middle School is making a real difference! This year we have raised \$23,877 and counting! The Virtual Sleep Out this year was Friday, March 26. Please consider donating to our cause and helping local Vermont teens receive services, help, safe lodging and meals. Contact Greg Martin, [greg.martin@mmuvsd.org](mailto:greg.martin@mmuvsd.org), for more information.

## Brock Katz is up for a challenge

By Phyl Newbeck  
Special to the Mountain Gazette

For most people the thought of running 51 miles in 48 hours sounds excruciating, but for Mount Mansfield Union High School (MMU) sophomore Brock Katz, it wasn't that bad. "I thought I'd be broken at the end, but I wasn't," he said. "I thought it would be an intense mental battle but it



Brock Katz with his twin brother and parents at home – from left, Brock, Dayna, Weston, and Jennifer. PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Katz continued on page 12

## Tree Warden response to roadside tree cutting/trimming

Don Tobl, Tree Warden, Jericho and Underhill

Before I get started I want to say that we do plan on posting this information and perhaps more on the Town website soon. After reading many (FPF) posts in the past few days regarding the Town's tree trimming and cutting activities that have been undertaken in the last few weeks and continue to happen, I feel it necessary to explain what has happened and also what is still to be done. I've been putting this off for a couple of days now trying to formulate a message that won't get me tarred and feathered. For those of you who don't know me I am a professional forester licensed in both Vermont and New Hampshire with both Bachelors and Masters degree in Soils, Forestry, and Forest Entomology. I only tell you this to hopefully give some credibility to the things I'm going to say. I have been the Tree Warden in Jericho for about 15 years now and the Underhill Tree Warden for about five.

OK, so there are basically three things we are trying to accomplish through the work currently being done:

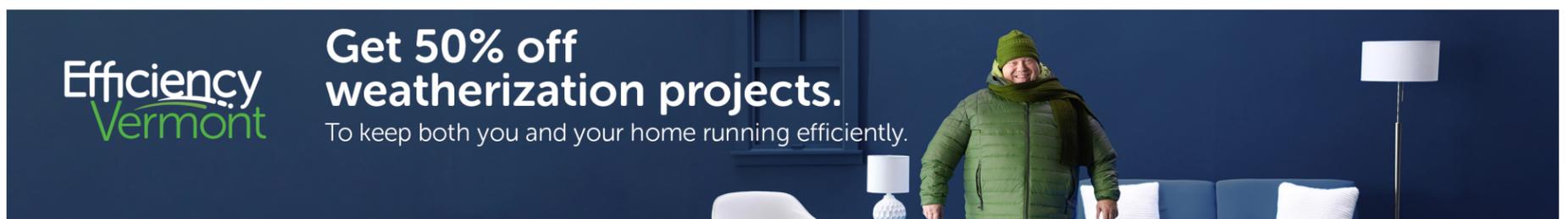
1. Re-establish adequate ditches and remove hazard trees in the Town right-of-way;
2. Establish new stone-lined ditches, catchment basins, and turnouts as part of Federal or State Clean Water grants such as the Better Back Roads grant in order to prevent soil erosion and nutrients as well as road surface pollutants from entering local streams and eventually Lake Champlain (in our case);

3. Proactively remove ash trees before the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and its associated high tree mortality gets here.

Before we get into specifics here though, let's review some pertinent State Tree Warden Statutes and Municipal and County laws regarding road rights-of-way (ROW). All of Underhill's town highways are three-rod roads, which means the road ROW is 49.5 feet wide (24'9" from center of road). The Town has the right to manage the vegetation within this ROW for the purposes of road maintenance and safety. Nobody except the Tree Warden or abutting landowner can plant, cut, or remove vegetation from within the ROW. The Town is required to attempt to notify abutting landowners before tree work is to be done and will work with the abutting landowner whenever possible to minimize the removals, but sometimes trees need to be removed regardless of if public safety is at issue. The Tree Warden does reserve the right to deem a tree or trees unsafe and have them taken down, even if the abutting landowner opposes this action. I have never needed to do this, however, as an amicable solution can usually always be worked out.

OK, let's start with number one. Much of the work being done is basically to re-establish old ditches that have filled in with sediment, and remove trees that are either in the way of re-working these ditches or are hazardous because of insect or

Tree warden continued on page 3



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The Bolton Economic Resource Committee currently has four vacancies. If we are not able to fill these vacancies, the ERC may be forced to dissolve after our next meeting on Wednesday, June 16, 5:30 PM. If the ERC ceases to exist, this will be the last coordinated update from the ERC on the status of broadband updates in Bolton.

Please fill out the following survey. We need your input regarding current broadband services as well as your interest in volunteering: <https://forms.gle/p3iWFCNasYRoRSaP6>.

Please contact [erc@boltonvt.com](mailto:erc@boltonvt.com) for further inquiries.

## EWSD school vote April 13

The EWSD Annual School Meeting vote will occur on Tuesday, April 13, 2021. Based on a decision of the School Board, ballots are being mailed to ALL active registered voters. Their decision was based on temporary changes that were made to the election laws due to COVID. Ballots were mailed around March 24. If you do not receive a ballot, please contact the town office at 878-4587 or [townclerk@westfordvt.us](mailto:townclerk@westfordvt.us).

Polls will be open at the Westford School 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM for in-person voting on Tuesday, April 13. The School and Town Office are working on the logistics of holding the vote if school is in session while keeping students, faculty, election workers, and the community safe and healthy.

If you have any questions about the proposed EWSD budget, please visit [www.ewsd.org/budget](http://www.ewsd.org/budget).

## Cambridge Selectboard sets Special Town Meeting to fill vacancy, appoints former Town Clerk as interim member

At the March 16 meeting, the Cambridge Selectboard approved a warning for a Special Town Meeting, by Australian ballot, for Tuesday, May 11, 2021. At that time, the residents of Cambridge will have the opportunity to elect a candidate to fill the vacancy on the Selectboard created by the retirement of Board member Dana Sweet.

At Tuesday's meeting, we also appointed Jane Porter to fill that seat until it is filled by the special meeting. Jane served the town of Cambridge in the position of Town Clerk for 41 years and retired in 2016. She oversaw many federal, state, and local elections along with the myriad other tasks of a Town Clerk. In the 2015 town report the dedication to Jane stated that "she has dealt with the townspeople with dignity, compassion, and fairness." It was exactly those qualities that led us to appoint Jane as an interim member to the board. Jane's wealth of knowledge and obvious care for her community will serve the board well over the ensuing meetings as we await the results of the upcoming election.

## Attention candidates for the open Cambridge Selectboard seat

By Mark Schilling, Cambridge Town Clerk

The Town of Cambridge will be holding a Special Town Meeting on May 11, 2021 to fill a vacant Selectboard position. Voting will be conducted by Australian ballot, 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM.

Persons interested in running for this position must submit a Candidate Consent Form to the Town Clerk no later than 5:00 PM on Monday, April 5, 2021. Candidate petitions are not required.

Candidate Consent Forms are available at the Cambridge Town Office and online at <https://sos.vermont.gov/media/e3pkphur/local-candidate-consent-pdf.pdf>.

Contact Cambridge Town Clerk Mark Schilling for additional information at 802-644-2251.

## Voting in the Cambridge Special Town Meeting on May 11

By Mark Schilling, Cambridge Town Clerk

You must request a ballot for early voting – please read:

All voting in the Town of Cambridge for the Special Town Meeting on May 11, 2021 will be held via Australian (written) ballot. No floor meetings or floor votes will be held. Voting-By-Mail is strongly encouraged for this election. Ballots will NOT automatically sent to voters – you must request a ballot, or vote in person.

Early voting ballots can be requested by contacting the Town Clerk's Office, 802-644-2251 or [clerk@CambridgeVT.org](mailto:clerk@CambridgeVT.org), or by visiting "My Voter Page" at [www.mvp.vermont.gov](http://www.mvp.vermont.gov).

Ballots can be returned to our 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, May 11, 2021, 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM, at the Cambridge School Gymnasium for in-person voting.

For more information on Special Town Meeting on May 11, please visit [www.cambridgevt.org/special](http://www.cambridgevt.org/special).



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at [www.youtube.com/user/MMCTV15/live](http://www.youtube.com/user/MMCTV15/live)

VIDEO + PODCAST LINKS:  
[MtMansfieldCtv.org](http://MtMansfieldCtv.org)



## Town Meeting and Selectboard approve Mobbs conservation

By Courtney Smith | Community News Service

That any part of the 260-acre Mobbs Farm property in Jericho was not already conserved may have come as a shock to Jericho residents who voted on Article I on this past Town Meeting Day.

But Article I, an advisory vote on whether or not a conservation easement ought to be drawn up for the property, was the first action taken to protect the land against future development. The official language called for the protection of just under 250 acres of land to the tune of \$43,000. 91% of Jericho voters — 1033 people — voted in favor of the conservation easement. 101 voters were against it.

According to Mobbs Committee Chair Pete Davis, conservation of the farm was a part of the original owner's vision for the property. It is easy to understand why: the scenic land, which accommodates bikers, runners, and skiers, as well as many educational opportunities, is a natural asset. And in a phone conversation, he credited Mobbs Farm's beauty with the ability to attract new residents.

Of the 101 votes against the article, Davis suspected that many voters were primarily deterred by the conservation effort's price tag.

However, Jericho residents won't be footing the bill. Somewhat quietly, the \$43,000 has been raised by the Jericho Underhill Land Trust (JULT), the Vermont Land Trust Forest Reserve Fund, and the Jericho Conservation Fund, which is overseen by the Conservation Committee. Each organization accounted for \$10,000. The remaining \$13,000 was put forth by the Kusserow Family Fund.

With funding in place, and the March 2 advisory vote approved, the decision then fell to the Selectboard for an affirmative vote. In their March 18 meeting, the plan was solidified.

The Vermont Land Trust will start drafting a conservation easement which will include sections on restricted and permitted uses, important natural features, public access, and a management plan. That document will then be passed back and forth between the town and VLT until a final draft is solidified.

Livy Strong, Chair of JULT, stressed that precise language is important. "It's a lengthy process, and it should be," she said. The easement will be in effect for perpetuity, said Strong.

And while there are no true barriers to enacting this conservation easement, Strong also mentioned the need for maintained focus on the conservation effort. It could be easy for it to fall on the Selectboard's back burner, Strong said.

Whether or not that's the case, the Mobbs Committee will still be working to use up the rest of their budget before the end of the fiscal year.

According to Davis, the remaining funds will be spent on infrastructure projects, bridge and boardwalk fortification, and kiosk information upgrades. It's also unclear what a spring cleaning effort will look like this year, if it happens at all, Davis said.

Once protected, its trails will be enjoyed by generations to come — according to Davis, this had been the original owner's vision anyway.

## Jericho's Todd Odit to become Hinesburg Town Manager

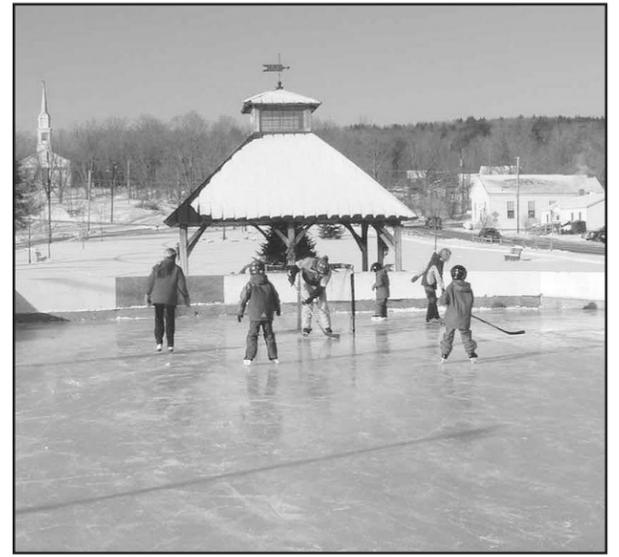
The Select Board of Jericho — Catherine McMains, chair Wayne Howe, and Erik Johnson — is saddened to announce that the Jericho Town Administrator, Todd Odit, has conditionally accepted the offer to become Hinesburg's first Town Manager. The Select Board congratulates him on his new challenge and wishes him well.

During his tenure Todd brought organization to the Town Hall and helped the Town move forward with the redevelopment of the sawmill project, master planning for roads, bike and pedestrian pathways, as well as storm water and best practices for gravel roads. He has been skilled in securing grants to significantly offset the cost to the Town to put in sidewalks, upgrade roads, and storm water projects contained in the master plans. His leadership also helped the Town respond to wind storm and flooding emergencies and secure FEMA funding. During his 11 years Todd also contributed in a myriad of ways in updating policies, procedures, and the organization to facilitate a smooth running Town Hall.

The Town has benefitted greatly by his time here.

The Select Board at its Thursday, March 18 meeting discussed transition planning and hiring processes.

We have room for your ad.  
Call Brenda Boutin at 453-6354  
for more information  
or email [mtngazette@gmavt.net](mailto:mtngazette@gmavt.net)



## New septic system key to Westford Town Center project

By Eileen Brickell | Community News Service

The Westford Planning Commission is making headway on the Town Center Revitalization project, though project managers say it will be at least a year until workers break ground to install a new septic system vital to the project.

Plans for revitalizing the Town Center began in the early 1970s and then kicked into high gear in the 1990s. In surveys and during public comment forums, Westford citizens want to see essential businesses, such as grocery stores, in the Town Center, according to Mark Letorney, a member of the Westford Planning Commission.

"It's a business desert," he said.

To bring new business to the Town Center, a municipal wastewater system is needed, according to Letorney.

"There is no septic capacity because the soil isn't suitable," Letorney said in an interview.

The septic tanks for the Town Office and the Westford Brick Meeting House and the Westford Common Hall don't have any capacity left, according to Letorney. The leach field for the Town Office is 60 years old. If these septic systems were to fail today it would be a disaster, because there would be no way to put in a replacement system, said Letorney.

The septic system also isn't as good for the environment as a municipal wastewater system would be, according to Amy Macreillis of Stone Environmental. Her company has been working with the Planning Commission to test soil all over the Town Center.

The town has worked with the businesses and homeowners in the Town Center to develop a wastewater strategy.

"It's been a long road," Macreillis said.

The preliminary engineering report for the wastewater system is nearly done, according to Macreillis. The report includes the size, placement, and type of wastewater system that the town wants to put in the ground.

There will be no digging for at least another year, according to Macreillis.

The Jackson farm, down the road from the Town Center, was found to have the sandy soil needed for the wastewater system, according to Letorney. The land was recently conserved with the hope that part of it could be used for a municipal wastewater system.

There is strong sentiment that the rural and historic feeling of the town should remain intact, according to Letorney.

"None of us wants to pay additional taxes if we don't have to, but we still want some growth," said Patrick Haller, a resident of Westford for fourteen years.

To keep the rural feeling, despite the imminent changes to the Town Center, the town has adopted a form-based planning code, according to Letorney. All new businesses must adhere to the historical look and feel of the community.

To increase business space, the town partnered with the Vermont River Conservancy to purchase the 1705 property, a three-acre property that sits next to the Town Office and was a bus garage, according to Letorney. The Vermont River Conservancy purchased the property and then gifted it to the town. The previous owner, Roland Pigeon, spent 50 years as a bus driver.

"He is known to the community for his generosity and his ability to get the kids safely to school," said Letorney.

His family has agreed to the creation of a memorial structure dedicated to Roland Pigeon, according to Letorney. The 1705 property can provide enough space for three to four businesses.

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Dog licenses due April 1

Underhill: Dog licenses are due on Thursday, April 1! Vermont state law requires that all dogs six months and older be registered in the town where they reside. The cost is \$12 for spayed/neutered dogs, \$17 if intact. A current rabies certificate is required. Please mail a check or use the drop box outside the door. The license and tag will be mailed to you. If you have any questions, please contact 899-4434 ext. 1 or [smorin@underhillvt.gov](mailto:smorin@underhillvt.gov). Remember: a license is your pet's phone call home!

Westford: Dog Licenses are due April 1. A current rabies certificate is required. If you are unsure if the current certificate is on file, please call the Town Office, 878-4587. If you no longer have your dog, please let us know! Due to COVID-19, the Town Office is closed to the public. Please mail or drop off (slot located to the left of the Town Office front door) the fee and rabies certificate along with a self-addressed stamped envelope and your license will be mailed to you. The fee is \$13 unless your dog is spayed or neutered, then the fee is \$11. Dog licenses obtained after April 1 are subject to a late fee.

News briefs continued on page 5

## Eagle Scout Project to benefit Green Mountain Club

Please support my Eagle Scout Project by donating directly to me or participating in a bottle drive. You may contact me directly with information about bottle pickup – just leave your bottles outside your door for a COVID-friendly experience.

Here is a description of my project in alliance with the Green Mountain Club, who is the beneficiary of this project:

Cowles Cove Shelter is a log lean-to on the Long Trail named for Judge Clarence Cowles, who was a charter member of the Green Mountain Club and helped build many trails. Originally built in 1920 by Professor Monroe, the new shelter stands near the remains of the original. A privy was recently installed about 100' away from the shelter. This privy was built without high walls or a roof – just the essentials. My goal is to construct privacy for this privy by building on top of the existing base and installing four walls and a roof, as well as other necessities. My projected budget for this project is \$1000.

Thank you in advance for your support – Julian ([jujuc@gmavt.net](mailto:jujuc@gmavt.net))

## Bears emerging from hibernation

*VT Fish & Wildlife reminds us that it's time to prepare for bears coming out of their winter dens by eliminating as many food temptations as possible. This includes removing bird feeders, securing garbage storage, and protecting chicken or bee homes with electrical fencing. "We are already receiving our first bear reports, and the warmer temperatures predicted now will stimulate more bears to emerge from their dens to seek any food sources they can smell," said Forrest Hammond, Vermont's bear biologist. Read the full press release from VT Fish & Wildlife at <https://bit.ly/3bZ4rY2>. Learn more about living with Vermont's black bears and link to bear incident report at <https://bit.ly/3r2jJ1>.* PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



Tree warden continued from page 1

disease problems. This includes trees that have encroached on the roadway and present a hazard to large vehicles such as Town plows and emergency vehicles. It also includes small to medium diameter trees which have "grown towards the light" and are leaning out over the roadway and are more likely to bend down and block the road when they become ice or snow-covered, often taking down or at least shorting-out power and phone lines. This is what we have started on Stevensville Road. I carefully selected and marked trees for removal along most of the road, especially near the stream where we had to protect the riparian buffer along the stream. Only diseased trees likely to fall onto the road, and a couple of ash, were taken from along this stretch. Any leaning in toward the brook were left.

Now, the infamous bank that everyone is talking about. Firstly, most of these trees were small diameter and probably 30 years old or less, meaning that at one time this bank was way more open than it was before we cut the trees. These had become large enough to impede vision up around the corner and shaded the road in the winter, creating a spot where snow and ice would persist, creating an unsafe condition. And just to be clear, the Town is going to redo the ditch along the bank in question as the one there is nonfunctional now and possibly contributing to erosion and sedimentation into the brook up there. There will not be a need to stump that whole bank, only a portion near the base of the ditch, which will be stone lined and seeded. Yes, it would be bad to stump the whole bank and would surely lead to an increase in erosion. Any stumps that are deemed too high and are an eyesore will be cut down lower by the town. *Please, don't try to cut those stumps yourself, it is a steep bank and one could get easily injured and/or have a stump roll down the bank and into a passing car or biker, for which you'd be liable. Let the Town do it.* In fact, after all of the road work is completed, we will cut any leftover stumps down that are tall and unsightly. Some of the equipment used for cutting these trees leaves a higher stump than manually cutting with a chainsaw.

The recent cutting on Poker Hill, Upper English Settlement, Maple Ridge, and Pleasant Valley Roads fall into this first class of activity. I have just recently marked trees for removal on Daudelin Road as well, although I have no timeline on when they will be cut.

Since we are on the topic of cutting let me cover that. Normally if we can, we will use our own road crew for this although the Town doesn't have the equipment to remove large or hazardous trees safely. Also, the timing of this usually puts the work into mud season because the road crew is in between the plowing season and the summer road construction/grading seasons. For large or hazardous trees or those too close to utilities, we have to hire a local tree service with bucket trucks or a crane, which can be very costly, so we try to minimize this. Our other option which has worked out well for us is to hire a logging crew who use a feller-buncher to come and cut the trees, then grapple skidders to pull the trees off of the road. After offering the trees to each abutting landowner where the trees were cut, the logger then keeps and markets the leftover wood in exchange for a reduced rate for doing the job. We have been very fortunate with this and have saved a lot of tax dollars.

OK, number two. We just started some roadside cutting on Westman Road up to the Cambridge town line. This is part of a State funded Better Back Roads grant where the town is getting funding to correct (or install non-existent) ditching along the road to properly address storm runoff and keep sedimentation and pollutants from the road surface from getting into the Seymour River, which flows into the Lamoille and then Lake Champlain. In my opinion, this is a good thing.

And finally, number three, the Emerald Ash Borer. I'm not going to go into great detail here because I am going to include some links that will describe the pest and what can happen when it gets established in an area. The EAB was found in Richmond last summer and has been found in several other areas of Vermont recently. Basically, it is here. The USDA has removed all quarantines on it because it is a lost cause at this point. We still have some "slow the spread" measures in place here in Vermont, however, designed to delay the mortality of our ash trees as long as possible to give us time to act proactively (rather than reactively) with salvage of the trees, especially in regards to street/ROW trees, because if they all go at once it will be a nightmare of a job because soon after they die they become very brittle and tend to break and fall over. Once this stage is reached they become "hazard" trees, therefore precluding removal by chain saw, in which case they will need to be removed by expensive enclosed-cab equipment due to OSHA regulations. So the longer we wait, the more it will cost. So anyway, as I've been marking trees for removal during the aforementioned road projects, I have also been marking any ash within our road ROWs that might if dead fall into the road. Granted, there are really tall ones outside of the ROW that will reach the road, and each of you as abutting landowners should be aware of any liability that might arise out of leaving these trees until they fall naturally. You need to also

know that Green Mountain Power (GMP) and Vermont Electric Cooperative are both going to be doing the same thing with the power-line rights of way. You can see this in Jericho where GMP is already marking and cutting ash from within their ROW. This is a big deal and will be impacting our lives for several years to come. I should also note that we will be inventorying and mapping all the ash trees in Underhill's ROWs this spring and summer to develop a plan and map for their eventual removal or possible treatment.

One last comment. Since most of the posts regarding the tree removals have been negative, let me just say that in doing these projects over the past few years, by and large the most common comment we get from abutting landowners is, "hey, this looks good, could you cut some more of these trees over the line on my property?" The answer to this depends on the contractor but usually the answer is "sorry, no." We obviously cannot use the Town guys to do this and the same goes for a tree service if the Town is paying for it. The only possibility here might be if the logging contractor we work with is doing the job and agrees to do it for you.

One other thing, thank you for approving the budget line item for town Tree Warden activities this past town meeting day. Even though it is only for \$3000, it is a start. I plan to have the two ash trees in the Veterans Park by Park Street treated to prevent attack by EAB, as well as the two in the front yard of the old schoolhouse by Stevensville Road. It is a stem injection and lasts for a couple (three maybe?) years.

Thanks, and let me know if you have any questions, Don ([dtohi@uvm.edu](mailto:dtohi@uvm.edu))

After this message was posted on PFP I have received many supportive emails from local residents along with some really good questions. I would like to address a couple of them here as they may actually pertain to many of you. The first one was regarding the preemptive cutting of ash trees. The fellow said that he recently had Chittenden County Forester Ethan Tapper out to look at his woodlot and that Ethan had said that it wasn't recommended to just go and cut all of the ash trees within the forest, because some of them may be resistant to the insect and as such will be able to carry on this genetic resistance. So the question was, why are we cutting all of the ash within the town ROWs if some of them may be resistant?

Well, Ethan is completely correct that you shouldn't just go and start cutting all the ash in your woods. My personal recommendation to forest owners is that if you currently have a harvest scheduled, you should go ahead and do it and at least harvest the biggest ash, because the market is good right now, and because it probably won't be worth another entry (harvest) just to remove a bunch of dead ash at a later date. And, if those few large trees are financially mature, now is the time to harvest them anyway. You've been paying the taxes on your woodland all this time, why waste them? In most cases there are many small to medium-diameter ash that remain which, if resistant to the insect, will still be able to pass those genes forward.

However, street trees are another thing entirely because of the very real possibility that they will become hazard trees and pose a threat to the public. What other municipalities have found in areas in the Midwest where the beetle has already become established is that all or most all of the trees die nearly at the same time. It becomes extremely costly if not impossible to safely remove them all in time because they tend to quickly become brittle and break or snap off. This makes it even more urgent to get them removed before they actually die. So, this is why we are removing all of the ash from within the town road ROWs, because they are hazards to the public, whereas in the forest we don't have to worry about that.

The second question that seems to be on folks' minds is in regard to all the ash trees that are already being cut by Green Mountain Power along their power ROWs. So far, this is mostly happening in Jericho and Richmond in our immediate area, but it will be happening all over. Both the Vermont Electric Co-op and GMP will be doing this throughout our area in the near future. Specifically, I'm being asked, "Who owns this wood, and can I go and cut it up and take it?" The answer to that is similar whether the wood is in a town road ROW or a power company ROW. The wood belongs to the landowner whose property the ROW goes through or abuts. If another resident gets permission from said landowner then he/she may go ahead and utilize the wood. However, because the wood in this case is ash which may be infested with emerald ash borer, it should not be moved out of an infestation area if it is from within such an area, or if not from within a State-mapped infestation area, then not moved more than a couple of miles. The whole idea is to reduce or "slow the spread." By slowing the spread we can gain critical time to come up with possible control methods for the insect as well as get the necessary removals done before the trees all become hazards to the public.

I have also been getting some requests to go look at folks'

private property, grounds, and forests. Although I will do my best to respond to everyone and help them if I can, I thought it would be prudent to pass along the actual job description for "Tree Warden" as is posted on the State ANR website:

*What does the Tree Warden do?*

*A tree warden is the designated individual in each Vermont community responsible for making determinations about public shade trees, such as those found on town greens and within the public right-of-way in town centers. State law in Vermont, as in all New England states, requires the legislative body of each municipality to appoint a tree warden. The tree warden's duties and responsibilities are officially outlined in the Vermont Tree Warden Statutes, which were first adopted in 1904 and were amended and updated in 2020. While many tree wardens are, by trade, trained arborists, foresters, or natural resources professionals and take on the role of tree warden as a volunteer, many others are already municipal employees within public works departments, parks departments, or road crews.*

*Vermont's picturesque town greens and tree-lined streets are often the result of deliberate planning, planting, and care. Duties of the tree warden as outlined in the Tree Warden Statutes encompass protection, planting, care, and maintenance of existing public shade trees in addition to making decisions about shade tree removals. Many tree wardens expand upon these responsibilities to include tree assessments and inventories, sitting on the municipal tree committee or board as an ad hoc member, or helping to develop municipal bylaws and plans to ensure the long-term maintenance and management of the public tree population.*

*The position of tree warden is a unique legal responsibility, protecting and celebrating a natural resource. While tree wardens may not work directly with one another, the collective action they take ensure a unified commitment throughout Vermont to make our state a happy home for trees on public property.*

## The Mountain

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## HEALTH NEWS

**Smile! the basics about braces**

Parents have been asking me a mouthful of questions about the indications for their child needing braces. Well, brace yourselves for some information on this topic.

*Why they are needed*

Most children do not have permanent teeth that grow in straight, or have upper or lower jaws that line up with each other. When there is a problem with occlusion of the jaw or teeth aren't straight, braces – made up of wires and rubber bands – are needed. They are put in by a specialist called an orthodontist, usually for at least one to two years. Wires help to shift the teeth slowly but surely into place, and rubber bands help to correct the alignment or how the teeth line up.

Of course, the best way to determine whether or not braces are needed for your child is to discuss it with your child's dentist during a routine check-up of your child's teeth and jaws.

*Something for everyone*

While many of us grew up with metal braces that some used to think were not the most attractive things, be aware that braces today are much less noticeable and can even be clear or the same color as teeth or placed behind teeth, so they blend in more easily. On the other hand, if your child is proud of their braces, they may want to celebrate and ask for wires and rubber bands of different colors.

*Things to remember*

Children with braces need to remember that foods can get stuck in them leading to decay – so they need to really make sure they are kept clean and free of tiny pieces of food. Popcorn, sticky candy, and gum are notorious for doing this.

The important thing to tell your child is that braces are not forever and the benefit occurs the day they come off, when their mouth and smile look terrific.

Hopefully, tips like these will wire you with information that will make your child better understand the benefits of getting braces.

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

## MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

**Watching local meetings live**

By Angelike A. Contis, MMCTV

If you're "zoomed out" but still want to catch up on what is happening locally, note that MMCTV is streaming local meetings live daily on MMCTV (local Comcast Channels 1076 and 1086) and on Youtube ([www.youtube.com/user/MMCTV15/live](http://www.youtube.com/user/MMCTV15/live)).

You can also watch more local board and committee meetings than ever on demand at: <http://mtmansfieldctv.org/>.

**Looking for interest in Western Riding Club**

We are considering starting a Western Pony Club in the Cambridge area, through the United States Pony Club. The USPC is a worldwide organization that encourages riders of all ages (includes adults) to learn more about the sport in both physical and practical knowledge. The club would meet regularly in the summer for riding and horsemanship lessons. Horses are not provided by the club but sharing is an option if you don't own your own horse.

Pony club is an excellent opportunity for lovers of the sport to come together, form lasting relationships (with peers and ponies alike!), and improve riding skills. While the majority of pony clubs are English riding centered, there are Western clubs in other parts of the country. This would be the first in Vermont! Email [muffyhoward@gmail.com](mailto:muffyhoward@gmail.com) and let us know if you would be interested in joining.

**Tree sale - Franklin County Natural Resources District**

Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District is having their annual Tree Sale! There is a variety of trees, as well as fruits, nuts, and flowers. Please check out the link: <https://www.franklincountynrcd.org/tree-sale>.

Plant something, and watch it grow!

**Eleven candidates seek three seats on VEC board**

Eleven candidates are vying for three seats up for election this year on the board of directors of Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC).

Because VEC is a cooperative, members elect local representatives to serve on its twelve-member board. The three districts with seats up for election this year are District 2, East Zone, and West Zone.

"We're pleased to see so many members interested in stepping up to serve the co-op community," said Rebecca Towne, VEC's CEO. "It's certainly an exciting time in the electricity sector and the leadership of our board is an important part of what makes us a member-driven cooperative."

Candidates running for the open seat in each district are:

- District 2: Hazen Converse of Derby, and Penny Thomas and John Ward, both of Newport;
- East Zone: David Atkinson of Maidstone, Tom Bailey of Derby, Kristen Fountain of Albany, and William Gilbert of Lemington;
- West Zone: John DeWitt of Essex, Bonnie Pratt of Cambridge, Peter Southwick of Grand Isle, and Rich Westman of Cambridge.

VEC members can vote for candidates online and by mail starting Tuesday, April 13, 12:00 PM, through Wednesday, May 5 at 12:00 PM. The winners will be announced at VEC's 2021 virtual Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 8. That meeting starts at 9:00 AM and will include updates from VEC, a conversation with Lt. Gov. Molly Gray, and a Q&A session.

For more information, visit: [www.vermontelectric.coop/annual-meeting](http://www.vermontelectric.coop/annual-meeting).

**COVID update by Copley Hospital**

We continue to move forward in the fight against COVID-19! Recent updates from Governor Scott, the CDC, and CMS offer us additional flexibility in how we manage the impact of COVID-19 in our community and across the country.

We continue expanding our community vaccination clinics, increasing the pace of vaccination, and supporting our community's ability to begin returning to living normal lives. Copley Hospital hosted clinics are by appointment only. To schedule, please visit [www.healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine](http://www.healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine) or by calling Vermont Department of Health, 855-722-7878. As of March 31, the COVID clinics will be held at the VFW in Morrisville.

Copley continues to offer drive-thru COVID testing clinics six days a week, analyzing over a thousand tests monthly using our in-house Rheonix Analyzer. Call 802-888-8888 for test appointment.

Update to our visitor policy: We are now allowing fully vaccinated individuals to visit our patients. Vaccinated visitors must be 14 days from their final vaccination, and have proof of vaccine. Vaccinated visitors can accompany a family member to clinics (Mansfield Orthopaedics, The Women's Center, Copley Rehabilitation, the Multi-Specialty Clinic and Oncology), outpatient visits (Laboratory, Diagnostic Imaging, Surgical Center, etc.), and inpatients (Acute Care Nursing Unit and the Emergency Department) providing the patient isn't on any special precautions. One visitor per patient for adults, and two visitors per pediatric patient. If you don't have proof of vaccine, you will not be able to visit.

We understand that it's important for our patients to have family support, and that is why we want to allow vaccinated visitors. Please be patient as we make small steps in trying to make the best effort to keep our patients, our visitors and our community safe.

We believe in the benefit of this vaccine but we have to remember we must continue to practice safe infection prevention practices: Wear your mask in public spaces, wash your hands frequently, and practice safe physical distance.

The great news is... we are slowly opening up and able to have small gatherings with our family members!

Stay well and stay safe.

**COVID vaccine appointments to be open to all by April 19**

By Lucy Rogers, State Representative, Lamoille-3

Over the next five weeks, appointments for the COVID-19 vaccine will open on a staggered basis:

- Thursday, March 25: 60 and older
- Monday, March 29: 50 and older
- Monday, April 5: 40 and older
- Monday, April 12: 30 and older
- Monday, April 19: 16 and older

To register for a vaccine appointment, visit [healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine](http://healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine) (<https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine/getting-covid-19-vaccine>) or call 855-722-7878. You will be asked to provide your name, date of birth, address, email (if available), phone number, and health insurance information (if available, but not required).

On this timeline, everyone in the eligible population in Vermont could be fully vaccinated by the end of June.

## MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

**Volunteer Opportunities with United Way**

United Way's Volunteer Connection site is set up to help connect agencies and volunteers. Agencies are working hard to navigate volunteering during this time, so the opportunities are limited. Here is a link for Volunteer Connection to learn more about these and other opportunities: <https://unitedwaynwvt.galaxydigital.com/>.

JOIN THE BOARD FOR A NEW PRESCHOOL – Join this team along with the Preschool Director of Old School of S. Burlington to initially work on creating the articles of incorporation and bylaws for this new school. Currently seeking a President, Secretary, and a Treasurer to serve two-year terms. The commitment is estimated to be 4-10 hours a month and will be happening virtually for the foreseeable future. Responsibilities include business guidance for growth of the program including grants, budget approval, fundraising, and expansion to include toddler and infant classrooms. To learn more, contact Brandon Diaz, [b.oldschool.vt@gmail.com](mailto:b.oldschool.vt@gmail.com) or 570-350-6580.

SUPPORT HALF MARATHON RUNNERS – RunVermont is looking for volunteers to help out at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Half Marathon Unplugged race on Saturday, April 10, 2021. Volunteers needed to support runners, especially as course monitors, medical screeners, and assisting at the finish area. Volunteer information and a link to the portal to sign up at [https://unitedwaynwvt.galaxydigital.com/need/detail/?need\\_id=547579](https://unitedwaynwvt.galaxydigital.com/need/detail/?need_id=547579).

HELP OUT AT BIG RIG DAY – Franklin Grand Isle Bookmobile is hosting a drive-thru Big Rig Day on Saturday, April 10 at the Franklin County Airport and they need volunteers! Trucks for the event will begin arriving at 6:30 AM and then will be open for people to drive through between 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM. Volunteers are needed to help set up, direct traffic, and give out goodie bags. Volunteers may sign up for shifts or stay the entire event. You can volunteer as a family! Contact Lauren Walsh, [americorps@fgibookmobile.org](mailto:americorps@fgibookmobile.org) or 802-232-2554.

FARM CREW NEEDED! – The People's Farm at the Intervale Center is an educational growing space where food is grown for the Fair Share – a CSA available to income-eligible families. This growing season, we are looking for community members who are interested in learning farming skills, working in community, and helping out neighbors to volunteer at least four hours per week during the growing season and will receive a free weekly share of vegetables. If interested, reach out to Jill Brooks with questions at [jill@intervale.org](mailto:jill@intervale.org).

BLOOD DONOR AMASSADORS NEEDED IN FRANKLIN & CHITTENDEN COUNTIES – American Red Cross needs volunteers to make blood drives a success. Responsibilities include greeting donors, explaining the donation process, and assisting with intake. These volunteers do not assist during the

**Mount Mansfield Maple raising funds for Camp Ta-Kum-Ta**

Mount Mansfield Maple Products has partnered with Generosity Brings Joy and Jen Ellis – the mother, partner, teacher, community member, and crafter who made the famous Bernie Sanders Inauguration Day Mittens – to create a commemorative bottle of pure Vermont maple syrup to benefit Camp Ta-Kum-Ta.

This limited-edition bottle features a custom label inspired by Bernie's mittens to celebrate the movement spurred by Jen Ellis' creation of Generosity Brings Joy, an organization that brings awareness to, and funding for, non-profit organizations working in our community.

Mount Mansfield Maple Products is a small, family-owned Vermont maple syrup company whose quality maple products have been recognized with national accolades, including multiple SOFI Awards and Good Food Awards. They feel a strong connection with their community, and they have pledged to produce and sell 1000 bottles of pure Vermont maple syrup in partnership with Generosity Brings Joy and will donate 100% of the profits from these sales to Camp Ta-Kum-Ta, a Vermont-based organization that serves kids with cancer.

"We approached Jen about partnering for this collaboration and, within the first five minutes of conversation, we knew we were on to something. Jen's warmth and kindness were immediately evident and it is thanks to her passion for generosity that this movement is possible. We are honored to work with her on this project, and it is our goal to raise \$20,000 for Camp Ta-Kum-Ta!" — Chris White and Lindsay Hazelett-Cordner, Owners of Mansfield Maple.

Camp Ta-Kum-Ta supports the family, not the cancer. Its amazing year-round programs allow kids to check cancer at the door and focus on making memories and friends, and to experience life beyond their diagnosis. For more than three decades, Camp Ta-Kum-Ta has provided a loving, safe place where children from Vermont and New York who have or who have had cancer can swim, play, prank, share, and heal. In short, T-K-T is where kids go to reclaim their childhood robbed by cancer.

Pre-orders for this bottle are available on now, with an estimated shipping timeframe of four to six weeks. Special thanks to Vikki Day Graphic Design for designing the artwork, and Dion Label Printing for generously donating the labels. This bottle may be purchased online at <https://vermontpuremaple.com/collections/maple-syrup/products/pre-order-liter-bottle-organic-pure-maple-syrup-generosity-brings-joy-camp-ta-kum-ta-edition-est-ship-4-to-6-weeks>. For more information, [www.mansfieldmaple.com](http://www.mansfieldmaple.com) or 802-497-1671.

**What's in the American Recovery Act? Link to details**

By John Mandeville, Executive Director

Lamoille Economic Development Corporation

Please follow the link below for succinct information on what is actually in this Act just signed into law by President Biden:

<https://gfc.video/project/president-biden-signs-american-rescue-plan-act-of-2021-authored-by-rsm-us-llp/>

donation process. To learn more and apply, visit <https://www.redcross.org/volunteer/become-a-volunteer/urgent-need-for-volunteers.html>.

**Lamoille Regional Solid Waste district updates**

LAMOILLE SOIL COMPOST SALES: Buckets of compost are available now. We have pre-filled five-gallon buckets at all of our locations at \$5 for five gallons and you get to keep the bucket! Stop by the Johnson or Stowe Transfer Station anytime during regular hours of operation to refill it for \$3. You can also bring your own five-gallon bucket to fill with compost, too.

Lamoille Soil compost will be available for purchase by the cubic yard beginning on April 16. The cost is \$50/yard and it will be available on a first-come, first-served basis every Friday and Saturday, 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM, from April 16 until we run out of finished compost. Compost is available for pick up only at Lamoille Soil, which can be accessed through the Johnson Transfer Station (941 Wilson Rd., Johnson). <https://lrswwd.org/lamoille-soil/>

POETRY MONTH: April is National Poetry Month! To celebrate, LRSWMD is seeking poem submissions that highlight materials management from creators of all ages, backgrounds, and experiences. Poems can be about recycling, reduction, composting, anything! Submissions will be collected until the end of April, and will be all be posted at LRSWMD locations to celebrate materials management this spring and summer! Submit poems to Lexi at [americorps@lrswwd.org](mailto:americorps@lrswwd.org). See more information on our new website: <https://lrswwd.org/2021/03/15/celebrate-national-poetry-month-with-lrswwd/>.

DITCH THE DISPOSABLES: In an effort to ditch disposable dishes and cut down on the purchases of single-use items, the LRSWMD, with your help, will be implementing a new program. We are seeking donations of the following durable items: dishes, bowls, cutlery, cups, napkins, and tablecloths. These items will be used to provide event ware kits, at no cost, to be utilized when it is safe to gather again. Items are being accepted now only at the Stowe Transfer Station. We ask that all items donated are clean and dry. Please direct any questions to Lexi at [americorps@lrswwd.org](mailto:americorps@lrswwd.org).

MASKS REQUIRED: To keep our public and our employees healthy, face coverings are required whenever you are on-site at any of our LRSWMD locations. Thank you for your cooperation!

Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District & Lamoille Soil: Serving the towns of Belvidere, Cambridge, Craftsbury, Eden, Elmore, Hyde Park, Johnson, Morrisville, Stowe, Waterville, Wolcott, & Worcester

29 Sunset Dr., Morrisville, 802-888-7317, [www.lrswwd.org](http://www.lrswwd.org)

## COMING EVENTS

**IN-PERSON and VIRTUAL and SOCIALLY DISTANCED Tuesday, April 6**

**Hoarding and Clutter: community support approaches,** 2:00 – 3:30 PM, Zoom. Erin Roekle and Millie Richard of AgeWell. Visit <https://howardcenter.org/community-education/community-education-series-spring-2021/> to learn more and to register.

**Thursday, April 8**

**Virtual Wild and Scenic Film Festival,** 6:30 – 9:30 PM, online. Join the VT Natural Resources Council for the 2021 Wild and Scenic Film Festival. Enjoy an evening of inspiring short films from the comfort and safety of your own home! Tickets are by donation; \$10 or more enters you into a raffle for some wonderful prizes. For tickets and more information: <https://vnrc.org/wsff2021/>.

**Thursday-Friday, April 8-9**

**VT Family Network Annual Conference,** 9:00 AM – 2:30 PM both days, Zoom. This free conference with the theme “Imagine, Inspire, Innovate” will bring speakers and practical information to families of children and youth with special health needs or disabilities and the professionals who serve them. Thursday’s key speaker Rachel Callander will join from Australia to speak on “Life, Love, and Awesomeness: The Impact and Implications of Language.” Friday, Karen Gaffney will speak of overcoming limitations and about what can be accomplished with positive expectations. Six workshops will include: using the “Charting the Life Course” tool; Resiliency and Self-care; Transition to Adulthood from both young adult and parent perspectives; navigating Care Conferences; and Anxiety/Worry with the Puppets in Education program. Parents can chat over lunch. For more information and to register: <https://www.vermontfamilynetwork.org/events-news/annual-conference/>.

**Wednesday, April 21**

**Reimagining Policing and Public Safety in Vermont – Racism in America Forum Series,** 7:00 PM, on Zoom, hosted by Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Jericho. Featuring Lt. Robert Lucas, Commander of the Williston State Police Barracks; Maroni Minter, Campaign Director, VT ACLU; Capt. Garry Scott, Director of Fair and Impartial Policing, VT State Police. 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>.

**Sunday, April 25**

**Revolution on the Hudson** Ethan Allen Homestead Book Discussion, 2:00 PM, Zoom. No part of the country was more contested during the American Revolution than New York City and its surroundings. Military leaders of the time – and generations of scholars since – believed that the Hudson River Valley was America’s geographic jugular, which, if cut, would quickly bleed the rebellion to death. In *Revolution on the Hudson*, prize-winning author and historian George C. Daughan makes the daring new argument that this strategy would never have worked, and that dogged pursuit of dominance over the Hudson

ultimately cost Britain the war. This groundbreaking naval history offers a thrilling response to one of our most vexing historical questions: How could a fledgling nation have defeated the most powerful war machine of the era? Daughan will join the Zoom discussion of his book. To register for the discussion as well as to order the book, go online to <https://ethanallenhomestead.org/virtual-book-club/>. (Note: The \$25 book price includes mailing. All proceeds benefit the Ethan Allen Homestead Museum.)

**Wednesday, May 5**

**NAACP in Vermont – Racism in America Forum Series,** 7:00 PM, on Zoom, hosted by Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Jericho. Steffen Gillom, President of Windham County NAACP, and Tabitha Pohl-Moore, President of Rutland NAACP, share their thoughts regarding major issues and concerns of Black Americans, including Black Vermonters. 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>.

**Wednesday, June 9**

**The Social Equity Caucus – Racism in America Forum Series,** 7:00 PM, on Zoom, hosted by Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Jericho. In the summer of 2019 Vermont state senators, representatives, and citizens met at Hartford Union High School in Hartford, VT to form the Social Equity Caucus to advocate for the creation and passage of social justice legislation affecting people of color. We shall hear and discuss what progress has been made from its founding members, State Representative Kevin Christie, State Representative Brian China, and State Representative Lucy Rogers. 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>.

**Remembering the Rescuers**

**Yom HaShoah Holocaust Remembrance Day Commemoration, the Annual Gathering for Holocaust Remembrance, will be held on Thursday, April 8 at 7:00 PM, online. The Vermont Holocaust Memorial (VTHM) joins the Jewish Community of Greater Stowe (JCOGS), the Greater Stowe Interfaith Coalition, and caring Vermonters throughout the state to honor the memory of those who perished at the hands of evil, and pay tribute to those rescuers and survivors who have made a better world for us all. Author and VTHM speaker K. Heidi Fishman of Norwich, VT will be the featured presenter. Free, but registration is required at <https://www.jcogs.org/event/annual-gathering-for-holocaust-remembrance.html>.** PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Ash trees cut in Jericho right-of-way: what to do?**

The Jericho Conservation Commission shares the information. Ash trees, which may become hazardous if infested with Emerald Ash Borer, have been cut along many local roads as a precautionary safety measure. You may be wondering, what is happening with all of this ash? Many homeowners are using the wood for firewood or building projects. If you are wondering what can be done with wood on your land, check out the Ash Processing Options from the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation, online at [https://vtinvasives.org/sites/default/files/documents/pests/AshProcessingOptions\\_FINAL.pdf](https://vtinvasives.org/sites/default/files/documents/pests/AshProcessingOptions_FINAL.pdf).

The entire town of Jericho is part of the infested area. View a current map of Emerald Ash Borer detections and infested areas in Vermont at <https://vtanr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/PublicInformation/index.html?appid=cfd13ad1464b7b9103a3d7806f0cc5>.

If you are considering moving ash wood out of the immediate area, consider the risk of spreading this invasive insect, and follow these recommendations to slow the spread of this invasive pest, at <https://vtinvasives.org/sites/default/files/images/SLS/SlowSpreadWoodVT%20FINAL.pdf>.

The Jericho Conservation Commission will be holding a virtual event this spring to share information and answer questions about EAB. Stay tuned!

**Westford Board and Commission news**

The Westford Development Review Board (DRB) met on Monday, March 22 (on Zoom) and discussed the “Sketch Plan Review & Conditional Use for 3 Lot Resubdivision w/ WRO Crossing – Jonathan & Celine Czapski Property (approx. 49.4 acres) located on Rogers Road in the Rural 10 & Water Resource Overlay Zoning Districts. The applicant proposes to resubdivide/reconfigure two lots into three single family dwelling with accessory dwelling building lots.”

The Westford DRB will meet on Tuesday, April 6, 5:30 PM at 61 Rogers Road for a site visit: Sketch Plan Review & Conditional Use for 3 Lot Resubdivision w/ WRO Crossing – Jonathan & Celine Czapski Property (approx. 49.4 acres) located on Rogers Road in the Rural 10 & Water Resource Overlay Zoning Districts. The applicant proposes to resubdivide/reconfigure two lots into three single family dwelling with accessory dwelling building lots. Masks & distancing required; COVID-19 protocols apply. Questions and/or concerns should be directed to Melissa Manka, Town Planner, at [planner@westfordvt.us](mailto:planner@westfordvt.us).

The Westford DRB will meet on Monday, April 12, 7:15 PM, on Zoom, to continue considering the Sketch Plan Review & Conditional Use for 3 Lot Resubdivision w/ WRO Crossing – Jonathan & Celine Czapski Property (approx. 49.4 acres) located on Rogers Road in the Rural 10 & Water Resource Overlay Zoning Districts. The applicant proposes to resubdivide/reconfigure two lots into three single family dwelling with accessory dwelling building lots.

The DRB will also continue consideration of Waiver Public Hearing – Westford Historical Society property (0.25 acres) located on Common Road in the Common and Form Based Code Overlay (T4) Zoning Districts. The applicant is requesting a front setback waiver (10ft required, 0ft requested) due to small lot size and presence of steep slopes. To join Zoom Meeting, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89120564847?pwd=SnpqcHVzUHhAeUlnY3djdWpkMXo2QT09> or dial +1 646 558 8656 US (New York), Meeting ID: 891 2056 4847, Passcode: 0412.

What did your Selectboard talk about at their latest meeting? Find out by reading the draft minutes from the Thursday, March 11 meeting at <https://westfordvt.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021-03-11-Draft-Minutes.pdf>. The Selectboard held a Special Meeting in executive session on March 18 to Executive Session to interview and deliberate about candidates for appointment or hire.

On Thursday, March 25, the Westford Selectboard meeting (on Zoom) agenda included discussions of the Highway Department’s road schedule and annual financial plan; and discussions about the Town Center Area Community Wastewater Project Overview, Northern Border Regional Commission Economic Infrastructure Grant – Letter of Intent, Bond Vote Letter of Support, Northeast Site Solutions & Wireless Real Estate – Cell Tower Inquiry, Congressional Funding Request for Wastewater and 1705 VT Rt. 128 projects; and the Treasurer’s brief on the accounts payable and payroll warrants. Read the minutes at <https://westfordvt.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021-03-25-Draft-Minutes.pdf>.

The next regular Selectboard meeting will be on Thursday, April 8.

News briefs continued from page 2

**Homestead declarations are due on April 15**

By Vermont law, property owners whose homes meet the definition of a Vermont homestead (<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/32/135/05401>) must file a Homestead Declaration (HS-122) annually.

This year, the deadline to file a Homestead Declaration is Thursday, April 15. Failure to file the form by the deadline will result in a penalty being assessed.

For more information and to file your form online, go to <https://tax.vermont.gov/property-owners/homestead-declaration>. You will need a copy of your tax bill to complete the HS-122. If you do not have a copy, please contact your town office.

**Help with the Poo Patrol at Bolton’s PPCA?**

By Amy Ludwin, Bolton Conservation Commissioner

Hi Bolton friends of our Town Forest, the Preston Pond Conservation Area (PPCA)! Spring is in the air, hooray, and we know what that means – snow melt and frozen things thaw...

Writing to ask if some of you would be up to volunteer for Poo Patrol at PPCA? I heard that there’s a lot of doggie poo on the trails, some in poo bags, and some on the loose.

Have shovel scoop and will travel? If so, then you are the person we need, if you could walk one section of the trail with your trusty shovel and trash bag, do some pre snow melt clean up. It might be an easier job, and less smelly if done sooner rather than later?

Thank you to Larissa Urban, who’s going to help pick up some poop! She will tidy up/work the Stage Road access to include the Pond Loop and the Libby’s Loop. We’re looking for someone to scoop up poop on the trail from the Notch Road to the intersection of Libby’s and Lars’ trails, and tidy up that; and tidy the short Lars’ trail spur?

Enhance the beauty of nature! Get rid of the poo bags, and the on the loose stuff – save a soul from stepping in it! Get a head start on Green Up Day?!

**Westford has resumed required burn permits**

By Dennis Angiono, Westford Fire Warden

Fire weather reports to Fire Wardens resumed on Friday, March 19. As a result burn permits resumed also.

No fires larger than a four-foot around campfire will be legal without a burn permit. Permits can be obtained online or from the Town Office or the Fire Warden during regular business hours and weekends.

For anyone new in town since the winter permit suspension, please call me on 879-1231 if you have any questions about permits or what you can legally burn and obligations that come with taking out a permit.

By following all burn permit regulations we will all have a safe upcoming spring and summer.

**Recent and planned Jericho meetings**

The Jericho Planning Commission (PC) met on Tuesday, March 16 via Zoom. The Commission discussed next steps for updating the Public Works Specs, looked at next steps for enhanced energy planning, discussed PUDS, and further discussed the 2024 update of the Town Plan. The full agenda is available to view online at <https://jerichovt.org/planning-commission>.

The Jericho Selectboard met on Thursday, March 18 via Zoom. The Board discussed Mobbs Farm, reviewing the Town Meeting vote, document summary to Mobbs Farm Map, Conservation Easement and information about conserving Mobbs, sources of 43K funding summary, and a Memo of Understanding / next steps between the Town and Vermont. Also on the agenda: Land Trust; liquor license applications from several businesses; appointment of Jason Cheney to the Planning Commission; interim/long term plan for Town Administrator replacement; and more. The Board held an executive session “pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3) the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee.”

The Development Review Board met on Wednesday, March 24, on Zoom, and heard three applications: a request to the DRB by Steven and Katrina Pomarico site plan review to amend a previously approved PUD. This property is located at 55-57 VT Rt. 15, which is in the Village Center Zoning District; 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 Tobias Brown for Sketch Plan Review for a nine-lot PUD. The property is located at 21 Cilley Hill Road, which is in the Village Center Zoning District. The full amended Agenda and meeting materials may be found on the DRB’s webpage at <https://jerichovt.org/DRB>.

**Town of Underhill meetings and goings-on**

The Underhill Selectboard meets on the first and third Thursdays of the month, at 6:00 PM, on Zoom; remote meeting links and call-in numbers are provided on the final agenda prior to each meeting. All of this information is posted on the Town of Underhill website.

The agenda for the March 18 Selectboard meeting included updates from the interim Town Administrator; Planning Commission, Energy Committee, and Natural Resources Inventory and Mapping Committee appointments; paving bid summery; auto bill pay; 2021 Animal Control Officer ad; UJFD request for use of Casey Hill parking area; and Highway expenditure requests – plate steel and grader

**We have room for your ad.  
Call Brenda Boutin at 453-6354  
for more information  
or email [mtngazette@gmavt.net](mailto:mtngazette@gmavt.net)**

## LIBRARY NEWS

**DEBORAH RAWSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY**

Deborah Rawson Memorial Library has gone back to curbside only. We will open again for appointments once we see COVID numbers declining.

Curbside hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00 – 7:30 PM; Wednesdays and Fridays, 1:00 – 5:30 PM; and Saturdays, 11:00 AM – 1:30 PM. You may place items on hold at <https://drml.bywatersolutions.com>. You will receive an email or a phone call when your item is ready. Just let us know what day you would like to pick it up by calling 899-4962 or emailing [rawsonlibrary@drml.org](mailto: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**

Unless otherwise noted, all programs are free and open to all, but registration is required. To register, please email [program\\_assistant@drml.org](mailto:program_assistant@drml.org).

Mah Jongg: Mondays, April 5, 6:30 PM, and 19, 1:00 PM, Zoom. Please join us as we explore the ancient Chinese tile game of winds, dragons, and number tiles. If you like Rummy-style card games, you'll love Mah Jongg! We'll be meeting on the free website [MyJongg.net](http://MyJongg.net), with a Zoom call allowing us to chat once again. All are welcome, no experience necessary! Registration required. A National Mah Jongg League 2020 card is required.

Deborah Rawson Book Lovers: Tuesday, April 13th at 7 PM on Zoom. DRBL is a monthly adult book discussion group. This month's selection is *Cleopatra: A Life* by Stacy Schiff. New members are always welcome to drop in on any meeting, which is always the second Tuesday of the month at 7 PM. For more information on how to join in, contact [Christine@cstaffa.com](mailto:Christine@cstaffa.com).

Legislative Update: Tuesday, April 20, 6:00 PM, Zoom. Join your local representatives George Till and Trevor Squirell for an update on the current legislative session. Registration required.

**Offered weekly**

Curbside Crafts (all ages) 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](mailto:youth_librarian@drml.org). Crafts this month are egg carton critters, celebrating spring, leprechaun trays, and bunny ear headbands!

Zoom Story Time: Tuesdays at 10:30 AM (baby/preschool). Join Ms. Abbey for stories, songs, rhymes, and felt board fun, live-streamed right to your home! This will happen each Tuesday morning in April from 10:30 to about 11:00 AM. Call 899-4962 or register for a meeting link at <http://bit.ly/drml youth321>.

**Sign up for these great programs!**

Young Writers Group: Thursday, April 15, 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 <http://bit.ly/drml youth321>.

Graphic Novel Fan Club: Thursdays, April 8 and 22, 4:00 PM (teens/tweens). Get the scoop on the newest comics at the library, talk about your faves or suggest what we should get next, plus excellent drawing games! Join the Graphic Novel Fan Club today. Want comics anytime? Visit our elibrary web page to get set up with ComicsPlus and get access to thousands of comics online: <https://www.drml.org/collections/elibrary/>. Call 899-4962 or register for a meeting link at <http://bit.ly/drml youth321>.

Among Us: Fridays, April 2 and 16, 4:00 – 5:00 PM (teens/tweens). 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 for a meeting link at <http://bit.ly/drml youth321>.

**Ongoing at your leisure**

Digitally browse new youth books at our website! Find what you want, place a hold and give us a call to let us know when you want to pick them up curbside.

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

1000 Books Before Kindergarten – You can jump into the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program at any time! Visit their website for reading logs or to get the app, <https://1000booksbeforekindergarten.org/>. When you're ready, schedule a curbside pickup to get books. Have questions? Email [youth\\_librarian@drml.org](mailto: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>

Contact information: email [rawsonlibrary@drml.org](mailto:rawsonlibrary@drml.org); website [www.drml.org](http://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/jvKjdapQZT26L1Bw8>. Hearing from you is so helpful!

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.

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](http://www.jerichotownlibraryvt.org) or call 899-4686.

**VARNUM MEMORIAL LIBRARY JEFFERSONVILLE**

As we celebrate Vermont's Spring (or Mud Season), the Varnum is excited to offer a grab-and-go kit for you to create a Peep-based diorama! Using the Peeps and craft supplies (as well as anything else you might have on hand), create a scene for your Peeps. In Peep world, anything is possible so feel free to stretch your imagination! If you need some inspiration, just google "Peeps diorama" to marvel at all Peeps can do. We want to see what you have created, so please send us photos at [varnumrequests@gmail.com](mailto:varnumrequests@gmail.com), tag us on Facebook and Instagram @[thevarnum](https://www.facebook.com/thevarnum) and display your Peep diorama proudly. We can't wait to see your creativity. To request a kit, email [varnumrequests@gmail.com](mailto:varnumrequests@gmail.com). Supplies are limited, but depending on interest, we can put together more.

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](https://www.facebook.com/thevarnum) and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/thevarnum>. You can also visit our website [www.varnumlibrary.org](http://www.varnumlibrary.org) for our curbside hours and links to search our catalog.

Were you inspired by Amanda Gorman's poem in 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.

The Varnum is continuing curbside pickup and printing services (.25/page): Monday, Tuesday, and Friday, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM; Wednesday, 1:30 – 6:00 PM; Thursday, 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM; and Saturday, 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Please send your requests to [varnumrequests@gmail.com](mailto:varnumrequests@gmail.com). 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](mailto:varnumrequests@gmail.com).

If you are having difficulty with your Libby/Overdrive login, your credentials are your library patron card number (beginning with 2C1400...) and your pin number is your last name, all lowercase.

We have been trying to find ways to show more of our newer titles since library browsing is not an option at this time. If you follow this Facebook link, it should take you to a photo album with a bunch of newer materials we have available for checkout: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?vanity=thevarnum&set=a.3612772452092956>. We will be updating this monthly, so please check back regularly.

If you would like to search our catalog, you can find it online at <https://varnum.kohavt.org/>. Please let us know how we can assist you by emailing us at [varnumrequests@gmail.com](mailto:varnumrequests@gmail.com) or calling us at 644-2117.

The Varnum Library, P.O. Box 198, 194 Main St., Jeffersonville, 802-644-2117; [thevarnum@gmail.com](mailto:thevarnum@gmail.com); [www.varnumlibrary.org](http://www.varnumlibrary.org).

**WESTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Westford Public Library has returned to a curbside-only service model. While our building is closed, we are taking the opportunity to make some infrastructure improvements to upgrade our air filtration from standard filters to HEPA filters, install a UV duct light 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.

Bree on Books – New Adult Fiction Part I: <https://youtu.be/U4rdHupvsr4>; New Adult Fiction Part II and Non-Fiction: <https://youtu.be/uRfOGnT5J0o>; YA, Middle Grade and Kids: <https://youtu.be/puWJzWNrdUU>.

Westford Library and the Carpenter-Carse Library in Hinesburg have partnered with SURJ-BTV to offer a four-part series (one is now past) of online workshops based on David Camp's *White Ally Toolkit Workbook*, which with associated materials teach aspiring white allies to have effective conversations about race. Each session focuses on one part of Camp's method, with an emphasis on role-play practice. Classes are on Zoom on Sundays, 6:00 – 8:00 PM: April 11 – Connect; April 25 – Expand. Free and open to the public, wherever you live. Contact the library to borrow materials. To register and receive a Zoom link, contact [surjburlington.vt@gmail.com](mailto:surjburlington.vt@gmail.com) to let them know which sessions you will attend.

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. We have added printing services to these curbside hours. Call the library for more information if you need something printed.

The Westford Food Shelf is now open twice a month, on the first Wednesday of each month, 4:30 – 5:30 PM, on the third Saturday, 8:00 – 9:00 AM. With increased openings, they need more inventory! The Westford Public Library will have food collection bins at all curbside pickups from now on. These bins are for non-perishable food and household items. The food shelf is especially in need of canned meats (tuna, chicken, ham etc.); bathroom tissue, paper towels, Kleenex; canned corn, creamed and whole; frozen entrees; breakfast meats; fresh fruit and vegetables; dairy, such as butter and cheese; pet food; laundry detergent; household and bathroom cleaners.

The library is doing a lot of virtual programming, available on YouTube. Search YouTube for "Westford Librarian" and subscribe to see all virtual story times and the popular "Bree on Books" series.

Enjoy another installment of Bree on Books – new adult fiction and non-fiction offerings: <https://youtu.be/NSHbeyqkpV4>. People have asked me why I talk so fast on these videos. It is because I use a recording software that has a five-minute time limit. Otherwise, I would talk for hours!

Virtual Early Literacy Story Time is fun for all ages and is

posted every Thursday on YouTube, FPF, Facebook, and the website. Curbside Craft Kits available weekly, as a curbside order (see above).

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](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; <http://westfordpubliclibrary.org>; [westfordpubliclibrary@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://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](http://chargepoint.com) or your favorite EV app.

Discover *Between the Covers*. Join Stacey Symanowicz (Huntington) and Rebecca Mueller (Richmond) for monthly book chats introducing readers to hidden gems and latest titles, on the third Wednesday of the month (April 21) at 1:30 PM, via *Google Meet*. Hosted by the Community Senior Center. Contact the library for the connection link.

Contact us at 434-3036 (leave a message after hours) or [rfl@gmavt.net](mailto:rfl@gmavt.net).

Richmond Free Library, 201 Bridge St., P.O. Box 997, Richmond, VT 05477; 434-3036; fax 434-3223; [www.richmondfreelibraryvt.org](http://www.richmondfreelibraryvt.org).

**DOROTHY ALLING MEMORIAL LIBRARY, WILLISTON**

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

**FAIRFAX COMMUNITY LIBRARY**

As part of our next phase in the library reopening, the library will send overdue notices on a regular schedule again. It has been several months since we contacted patrons about overdue materials through email and the postal service; this is another step toward normal library procedures. Please consider these notices as reminders to return any overdue materials to the library. Books and other items can be dropped off in the outside book return bin, or on the return cart at the curbside pickup table on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 3:00 – 7:00 PM. Also, if you would like to set up an appointment to come to the library for a 20-minute in-person visit, feel free to bring your returns with you! If you have any questions about this, don't hesitate to contact the library.

In other news, the library has tax forms available. We can also scan documents of any type easily to your USB thumb drive.

All programs are still virtual. Keep an eye on our Facebook page and website for any updates.

All events are free unless noted. Pre-registration required; please sign up at least one week before the program date. Contact 802-849-2420 or [libraryprograms@fwsu.org](mailto:libraryprograms@fwsu.org).

**Youth Events**

Thursday-Friday, April 1-2, 4:00 PM: Fluffy Slime. Learn how to make some ooey goeey fluffy slime! Pick up your materials at the library on Thursday, 3:00 – 7:00 PM, and watch the Facebook livestream on Friday at 4:00 PM. The video will remain available afterwards, so don't worry if you miss it! Ages 6+ Please register!

Thursday-Friday, April 15-16, 4:00 PM: Plastic Bottle Whirlygig Windchime. Make a simple, colorful decoration out of old plastic bottles! Pick up your materials at the library on Thursday, 3:00 – 7:00 PM, and watch the Facebook livestream on Friday at 4:00 PM. The video will remain available afterwards, so don't worry if you miss it! Ages 6+ Please register!

Thursday and Friday, April, 8 & 9, 4:00 PM: Hopping Bunnies. Make a little bunny that actually hops up and down! Pick up your materials at the library on Thursday, 3:00 – 7:00 PM, and watch the Facebook livestream on Friday at 4:00 PM. The video will remain available afterwards, so don't worry if you miss it! Ages 6+ Please register!

Wednesdays, April 7, 14, 21, and 28, 4:00 PM: Kids' Yoga with Jessica Turner. Join Jessica for weekly kids' yoga classes! Classes continue until April 28. Sign up for the full eight weeks, or pick and choose the classes you want to attend! To sign up, go online to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/kids-yoga-classes-with-jessica-turner-tickets-141741664133>.

Marshmallow Peep Pageant. This month, get creative with some marshmallow peeps! Make scenes and build little worlds for them, make some art with them – just have fun! We will have both a physical display in the library as well as a virtual gallery online, so feel free to bring in your peep creations yourself, or send a picture of it to [libraryfairfax@gmail.com](mailto:libraryfairfax@gmail.com). The cutoff for submissions is Thursday, April 29. Kids and adults welcome!

**Adult Events**

Saturday, April 24, 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, 3:00 – 7:00 PM. Join the Zoom meeting on Saturday at 1 pm! Please register with [libraryfairfax@gmail.com](mailto:libraryfairfax@gmail.com) to receive the zoom link!

Thursday and Friday, April 22 & 23, 7 pm: Rag Rug. Give new

## COMMUNITY COLUMNS

## A Gospel singing workshop, part 2 The Saturday night concert

By Sue Kusserow

*Special to the Mountain Gazette*

This is the second of a four-part adventure when I was a visiting instructor in home health in Portland, Oregon, at least 25 years ago... (but it is still good, I think!) Part 1 was published in the February 20 Mountain Gazette. Part 3 will appear two weeks after this one. And a grand finale is Part 4.

There are announcements: this workshop will culminate in a concert Saturday night. Women are to wear red, with black stockings and black shoes. A discussion ensues about the size of earrings: "nothing bigger than a quarter, not dangling, no gold, at least the heavy kind." "Should we have gold or silver?" comes a question from the floor, but it is lost in a new motion which suggests that earrings no bigger than a nickel should be the rule. That is quickly shouted down. We sing some more... rather difficult lines, but for me that doesn't really matter, since I have found that there are three volumes: loud, louder, and ear-splitting, so I can sing anything in my delicate madrigal voice and no one will notice.

Three hours after starting we are dismissed into the cool night air... a relief after the sanctuary, made bearable only by cardboard fans, bearing legends for "Cox's Funeral Home: will fill your requirements" and the other side with a picture of MLK, or, in vivid contrast, a New England white clapboard church complete with steeple and red and gold autumn maples.

Friday night is much the same, except longer, and again I am politely ignored. I don't mind, since there is no malice in it... just the admitted fact that I am just a beginner to the micro-culture and the activity. I am learning and it is fun, even though exhausting.

Saturday is a day of contrasts. The University of Portland Community Chorus, to which I belong, is having a day-long retreat... to practice and to "bond." We start with some spirituals. They are sung the way the white community thinks *All My Trials*, *Lord and Hold On*, *Sister* should be sung. I stand

out in this group; my old-age vibrato is not good for a blended chorus, so the director politely asks if I would mind singing tenor (a vibrato is less prominent in a lower register) and anyway, they need tenors. There are already three women with LOW voices. We are socially restrained in our singing as befits our training. There is little chatting, no clapping; certainly no *Amens* or even *Good-for-Yous*. I miss them!

The hours left to me before the 6:30 PM concert are devoted to my ensemble. I have no red in my reduced, travel-to-Oregon wardrobe, and red is not a color I wear often. I go to my favorite haunts. The Salvation Army in St. John's yields up a pair of red knit pants and a turtle neck top, and a pair of black patent leather shoes. I stop at the checkout counter and an elderly wizened woman, to whom I tell my tale, informs me that she used to sing gospel, play the steel guitar, sing country with a group. "But now I only pick at the piano. You should have fun! I used to love gospel! There, that will be \$2. I know that's not the real price, but I want you to have fun." Back home to shorten the pants, which must have been worn by a six-footer, I discover I have no needle and thread, so I dash the four blocks to the Goodwill and buy same for 15 cents.

I am finally dressed and already late ("Try and be here by 5:30. We need to get you lined up.") But I still need black stockings. I run lights on Martin Luther King Avenue and lurch into a small variety store. "Do you have any black stockings?" All they have is knee-highs, so I grab a pair. I notice the inevitable lopsided rack of second-hand dresses in a darkened corner... and being vividly attuned to red by now, I notice one that I pick out. Ah, this is it! It is my favorite Eddie Bauer knit, with an elasticized waistband and other easy-fit characteristics. And in my size: Large. I grab it for four bucks, refuse a bag, and run to the car. At the church, I find my way into the darkened basement and the ladies' room, redolent with perfumed lotions. I don my ensemble at a cost of \$4 for the dress, \$1 for the stockings, and 50 cents for the shoes. I join the rest of the choir, resplendent in fire engine reds, orange-reds, shimmering magenta, lacy reds, scarlet-reds with slashes of black, cardinal with gold trim.

We join hands.



The property on which the "Frank Brown House" sits was originally purchased by Samuel French from Ira Allen in 1795 for six shillings. The French family – Samuel French and his wife Thankful Meigs, his parents Didymus and Jerusha French – are interred in the nearby Jericho Center Cemetery. Members of the French family seem to have owned the property through the years, down to Warren and Russell French, who conveyed the property to Burke Brown and thence to his son Frank, who died in 1945. Burke and Frank Brown were descended from the original Brown family of Jericho. Bernie Paquette's blog (<https://jerichovermont.blogspot.com>) gives much more information about this lovely Jericho home, built around 1802-1805. PHOTO BY BERNIE PAQUETTE

## Bermuda – Triangle and timeshares

By Douglas Boardman

*Special to the Mountain Gazette*

The Bermuda Triangle runs from Bermuda in the north to the Bahamas in the south. I was in the Navy and went through the Triangle a few times. We didn't have much choice, obviously. We had to go where the ship went. We were worried about the Triangle but hadn't seen it on a map, so we didn't think much about it. After all, there are no signs showing the boundary lines. We all hoped the Captain knew which route to take. When I was aboard ship, we docked in Bermuda, but only stayed overnight, so we didn't see much of the island.

My wife and I bought our first timeshare in 1984 at the Trapp Family Lodge in Stowe. A few years later we sold it. In 1985, we moved back to Vermont (Underhill Center), so we didn't use the timeshare very much. But my wife's mother and her sister-in-law loved going there! Later on we bought another timeshare, not intending to stay there, but wanting to trade for a beach resort. We started flying to different tropical islands in February to get out of the cold.

We found out with the new timeshare that we never could book our first-choice destination. One year, the only island we could trade for was Bermuda. In February, Bermuda is far from

tropical. It is a lot like the weather in the Carolinas. Sandy had never been to Bermuda, so we decided to go there in February.

I was pleasantly surprised with Bermuda, but shouldn't have been, because Bermuda was a British Colony. When I was stationed in Malta, we shared a Naval air base with the British. They were always wearing shiny white shoes, spotless white shorts, white long socks, white uniform tops, and white hats. They never walked normally, they always marched in columns, but at the end of the day they were all drunk and disorderly.

Bermuda was the cleanest island I have ever seen. I didn't see any trash. The streets and sidewalks looked like you could eat off of them. I was also impressed with their water supply. They have tile roofs, which catch the water and funnel it into barrels and tanks. Most of the timeshares that are available in the Caribbean in February and March are not that great. That's why they were available. Bermuda wasn't warm, but it was refreshing to not worry about food poisoning, bad water, or unwashed vegetables that could make you sick.

My wife and I signed more papers buying the timeshare than when we bought our home! I should have known that a pile of legal signed papers means that they have you tied up so tight, you can't sell it. You can only give it back to them if you use it for a down payment on a bigger timeshare. Every time you go a vacation timeshare, they call you the first or second day and

make an appointment to see a representative to supposedly keep you up to date on your timeshare. It shows you that you should have read all those legal pages and afterward, you probably wouldn't buy a timeshare.

You don't realize it but they start you out with a nominal maintenance charge, which then increases every year. They give you a \$50-100 coupon to lure you to meet with them. Friends and family that use our timeshare go the meeting where the salesman tries to sell them a timeshare. When we were on our vacations, we went to some of the meetings and they always wanted to upgrade us, and if we didn't, we would lose out on benefits we already had. They had gold, silver, platinum, etc. but kept raising the maintenance fee and made two upgrades that cost an extra \$6000.

I found out that the maintenance fee included a lot of non-maintenance items that included a second phase of new condos. I used to deal with different timeshare salesmen with fake Rolex watches and was able to say no to them. So, they started sending the "Bully" and his younger assistant. He never upgraded me because of his tactics, and I informed them that I would never go to another meeting with them unless it was to sell our timeshare, and that would never happen.

As I told you before, the best advice I can ever give you is, "Don't every buy into a timeshare."

Next column: driving vacations

## When the state takes a child

By Bill Schubart

The most extreme authority Vermonters have accorded their government is the taking of a human life. This ended in 1972, 18 years after the last Vermonter was electrocuted in Windsor Prison.

The second most extreme authority is the taking of children from their parents, either through the state assuming custody or the termination of parental rights (TPR).

There are unquestionably cases in which the removal of a child from its parent or family can be justified – physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, neglect, abandonment, or addiction-compromised parenting are stark examples – but the State must be held accountable for proving the need for removal and an absence of other possible non-State placements.

The process in Vermont for both CHINS petitions (a petition filed in court requesting the court to review circumstances and determine into whose custody the child should be placed) and TPRs (Terminations of Parental Rights, where parents permanently lose custody) are deeply flawed. Most of those within the system know it, but there have been too few serious efforts to quantify the injustices and amend them with a new and more accessible, transparent, and accountable process.

I once was blessed to hear Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund, speak. A comment she made has stayed with me for 30 years: "We are willing to spend the least amount of money to keep a kid at home, more to put him in a

foster home, and the most to institutionalize him."

Like a slinky descending a staircase, the troubled partnership between the VT Department of Children and Families (DCF), the States Attorneys, the Defender General System, the Attorney General, and the VT Superior Courts just keeps rolling along with little in the way of accountability, transparency, or oversight.

In 2019, DCF's total budget was \$126 million. This covered some 20,500 unspecified calls (abuse reports or queries) made to the DCF hotline, resulting in 2682 assessments and 3405 investigations, which led to 1239 children in custody, (481 in "family support" and 754 in "conditional custody). Of those, 361 were removed from their families and placed with relatives or "known connections."

The current system has been described as "organized chaos" by many participants. "The sum of the parts is greater than the whole," one observer noted. The roster of participants is expansive and costly: DCF workers, prosecutors, appointed attorneys for parents and children (one each for the child and parent or parents), a Guardian ad Litem, sometimes an Assistant Attorney General, and the Family Court hearing judges. The number of participants alone makes the "system" ripe for multiple continuances due to absences, with each continuance resulting in an average delay of three months (Kalfus Report).

The process begins with a report of possible abuse or neglect, which can be made by anyone and for any reason. Reports are reviewed at local DCF offices and initiate either an assessment or an investigation. If it appears that abuse or neglect might have

occurred in the estimation of the worker and supervisor, reports are then referred to county prosecutors who bring charges against the family.

Thus begins a judicial process that can take years and cost tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The Defender General's Office maintains a bevy of lawyers to represent children and parents but is chronically underfunded and struggles to provide effective legal services. One lawyer may have as many as 100 cases, even as the American Bar Association recommends a case load of no more than 60.

To do justice to the complexities of each case, attorneys are expected to have a detailed grasp of case facts and family dynamics for each client. But with these caseloads, there's precious little time to spend per case.

Appointed attorneys frequently recommend that the family at risk of losing a child simply concur with DCF findings and seek a plea deal. But there's ample evidence that this often results in the loss of custody or a prolonged legal engagement regardless of whether there was actually abuse or neglect.

Turnover further complicates the process, with some parents having two to five different attorneys over time, and meeting them only minutes before a hearing.

One veteran Family Court judge reports that most defending attorneys in his court have never met the defendant or read the investigative report prior to Emergency Care or Temporary Care hearings (which often determine the child's custody) and, when

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life to your fabric scraps and learn how to make a rag rug! If you don't currently have a stash of scrap fabric we can provide some! Pick up your materials at the library on Thursday, 3:00 – 7:00 PM, and join the Zoom meeting on Friday at 7:00 PM. Please register to receive the Zoom link!

Thursday, April 29, 6:30 – 8:00 PM: Virtual Book Club The Library Book Club. *Spying on the South* by Tony Horwitz. Weather permitting, we will meet outside at the library. To request a copy of the book for curbside pickup, contact the library at [fairfaxlibrarian@gmail.com](mailto:fairfaxlibrarian@gmail.com) or 849-2420. All are welcome!

For up-to-date info about programs, visit our website: [www.fairfaxvtlibrary.org](http://www.fairfaxvtlibrary.org), where you can also find a link to the interactive Google calendar.

Curbside hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00 – 7:00 PM.

Fairfax Community Library, 75 Hunt St., Fairfax, VT 05454; [www.fairfaxvtlibrary.org](http://www.fairfaxvtlibrary.org), 802-849-2420. Call or email [libraryprograms@fwsu.org](mailto:libraryprograms@fwsu.org).

### BROWNELL LIBRARY, ESSEX JUNCTION

Our program offerings or changes are on 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](mailto: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.

Contact us at [frontdesk@brownelllibrary.org](mailto:frontdesk@brownelllibrary.org) or 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](mailto:frontdesk@brownelllibrary.org).

### ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

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

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

While the building is closed, our online resources and services are always open. All you need is your library card. Don't have a library card? Request a virtual library e-card today to access our ebook and audiobook collections. ([https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScH6EF1cpRRmOhjQ\\_O1GTNOzZ1\\_eJS3WJtR4BQe1aT6mYMT0A/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScH6EF1cpRRmOhjQ_O1GTNOzZ1_eJS3WJtR4BQe1aT6mYMT0A/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1))

Essex Free Library, 1 Browns River Rd., Essex. 802-879-0313; [essexfreelibrary.com](http://essexfreelibrary.com).

## LEGISLATIVE REPORTS

## Senate update: vaccines, unemployment, and family support

By Kesha Ram, State Senator, Chittenden District

March 16

As some of you have heard, I grew up in my family's Irish pub, so March 17 had special meaning in our multicultural household, and I hope you had a festive, safe St. Patrick's Day. It also helps us to contextualize the year that we have spent dealing with the greatest collective crisis of our generation. Thankfully, spring is emerging and pandemic recovery is on the horizon, but we must remain vigilant.

As of now, over a quarter of Vermont adults have received the COVID-19 vaccine and appointments are available for anyone 16 and older with certain high-risk health conditions. BIPOC Vermonters who meet the current eligibility requirements for the vaccine may bring the members of their household with them to receive the vaccination, but I am hearing this offering lacks clarity. Black adults have half the vaccination rate as White adults in Vermont and our prisons are full of coronavirus cases. This is unacceptable and, as co-chair of the Equity Caucus, we are seeking answers and action.

Vaccine appointments can be made on the Vermont Health, CVS, Kinney Drugs, and Walgreens websites. Appointments can also be scheduled through a call center at 855-722-7878 (press 1 for interpretation services). English language learners can also call the Association of Africans Living in Vermont at 802-985-3106 or USCRI VT at 802-655-1963.

The committee I serve on, Senate Economic Development, recently passed S.110, a landmark unemployment bill that provides rate relief to small businesses and additional support to unemployed Vermonters. With women making up over two-thirds of those seeking unemployment, it is clear many families are in crisis. I am proud my amendment passed to permanently provide an additional \$50 per week to unemployment recipients who have child dependents, though the legislation still has a long way to go until passage in both chambers.

Additionally, several bills I introduced are moving through the Senate this week. S.16 would create a council to propose alternatives to suspension, expulsion, and criminalized truancy for our children and families. S.115 includes my language from S.27, which honors the life-saving role of our multilingual liaisons and allows municipalities and school districts to share the cost so these liaisons can deliver vital information about emergencies to those in need. S.24 is a bill that eliminates the sale of flavored tobacco and e-liquid products. We have seen the disastrous effects of vaping and menthol cigarettes on lung function exacerbated by the pandemic, and these lethal products are disproportionately marketed to youth and BIPOC Vermonters.

Finally, many have reached out to share your thoughts and concerns about educator and state employee pensions, school employee health care bargaining, and advancement of early childhood education. Thank you for reaching out regarding these critical issues and sharing your very poignant and personal stories. Please know that I will always seek to support the dignity and well-being of our workers, retirees, and growing Vermont families, and I am fighting for you in the Senate.

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asked to then meet with clients or to vigorously contest the charges, simply refuse or quit.

There are also cultural causes for systemic failure that serve no one well. Throughout the system, there's an overriding, and understandable, fear of being responsible for injury to a child, which could manifest itself in headlines, investigations, and demands for firings, all of which militate in favor of painting the worst possible picture of the family by DCF investigators. And families can only request the investigative reports through their attorneys, some of whom are told not to share them with families to minimize any future litigation against DCF.

Another pervasive issue is socio-economic: the average DCF investigator is young, middle class, and college-educated. When such a person enters a home with overwhelming evidence of poverty, they may be ignorant of the underlying conditions that lead to a sink full of dirty dishes, such as a broken hot water heater, an empty fridge, no heat etc. Their emotional response to seeing such signs of abject poverty, in spite of training to the contrary, may well influence their reporting.

The final problem is simply political and process inertia. Even as many acknowledge privately that the expensive and unwieldy system is broken and serves neither children nor families well, there's little motivation to change it.

Change must come from the Legislature. An imminent bill currently in draft (Child and Parent Representation Working Group) sponsored by Representatives Tiff Bluemle and Gabrielle Stebbins and Senators Kesha Ram and Dick McCormack aims to address the problem with new – and due – process for all parties: the parent, the child, and the State.

The Federal Children's Bureau has just made available new funding for states in the form of a 50/50 match under Title IV E of the Social Security Act with which to reform the system. Such funding (the Working Group is to determine the amount) could enable a redesign of the current process, improving outcomes while significantly lowering the cost to Vermont taxpayers.

Given the traumatic impact of child removals, Vermonters should insist that the current system be objectively reviewed and redesigned for fairness, accountability, and cost-efficiency, and with greater consideration for the interests of both the child and parents.

These funds could enable a redesign that reduces cost in time, family trauma, and general fund resources and leads to needed reforms and more effective upstream investment in reducing poverty, mental health crises, and addiction, all triggers to child removals.

While not as horrific as taking the life of an innocent person, the unwarranted removal of a child from their parents can lead to tragic impacts later in life. Let's get this right for our children and families, the well-being of which is the stated mission of DCF and our Family Court system.

## Crossover week and beyond

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

March 16

What a week it was at the virtual Statehouse. With a crossover date of Friday, March 12, every committee was in a frenzy to get their priority bills out of committee. We will spend this upcoming week debating and voting on these, during what is expected to be some extended floor time. Let me share a few of these important pieces of legislation, and of course please reach out with any questions or concerns.

Pre-pandemic we knew, and post-pandemic we confirmed, how integral accessible, affordable, reliable, high-quality child care is. For the social, emotional, and physical development of Vermont's youngest citizens, its families, and ultimately its workers and employers. Child care is essential in putting the state on the path of economic recovery. Significant COVID-19 funding was used last year to stabilize our child care system.

H.171 continues this critical work, laying the foundation for Vermont's future early childhood education system. Included are investments in our childcare workforce, critically needed IT upgrades required to administer our Child Care Financial Assistance Program, expanding those who can receive CCFAP subsidies to 350% FPL, and laying the groundwork to meet a goal by 2025 that no family in Vermont will pay more than 10% of their annual gross income for child care.

H.159 is an omnibus economic recovery development bill that the Commerce Committee has been working on. Included in this are significant investments in workforce development and education, grants to create or revitalize public spaces, a one-time appropriation of \$1,000,000 to the Department of Tourism and Marketing, specifically to boost marketing as Vermont emerges from pandemic restrictions, extending the current Downtown and Village Tax Credit program as well as additional supports to cultivate and support BIPOC businesses.

H.360 from the Committee on Energy & Technology is a Broadband Bill. With the passage of the \$1.9 trillion federal stimulus bill this past week, and with a meaningful portion of that money allowed to be used for broadband deployment, this bill sets up an important framework on where to deploy these resources. This bill is about directing funding to accomplish universal coverage, supporting local/regional coordination with communication union districts, and building future-proof connectivity for a post-COVID economy.

The House Education Committee voted out three significant bills this week. H.426 addresses the needs and conditions of public-school facilities in the State. The bill mandates several important actions to address Vermont's aging school buildings and deferred maintenance needs. H.101 provides grant funding for systems-driven, sustainable literacy supports. Finally, H.106 establishes a demonstration grant program for up to ten eligible districts to explore and roll out a community schools model. Also known as full-service schools, these are schools that help kids and families access vital services like health care, mental health counseling, or help with food or housing, often right in the building.

I serve on the Health Care Committee and the major bill that we have moved forward is H.210. This is a bill addressing disparities and promoting equity in the health care system. We have taken many hours of testimony, and research and lived experience demonstrate that Vermonters experience barriers to the equal enjoyment of good health based on race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability status. H.210 establishes a Health Equity Advisory Commission and lays the groundwork to stand up an Office of Health Equity. It also provides funding to collect data to better understand health disparities in Vermont.

Not a major bill but H.430 is the program I've been advocating for to extend Dr. Dynasaur to all income-eligible children and pregnant individuals, regardless of immigration status. The Health Care Committee voted this out of committee on a vote of 10-0-1! The good news is that it is going for a full vote in the House, the bad news is I'm the reporter of the bill. This means I'm the one to walk through the bill on the floor and then all the other members get to interrogate me. I'm scared to death!

These are just a few of the important pieces of legislation that have been put forward this first year. After the work of voting on these and many others, our attention will turn to the many bills that the Senate has approved and are now assigned to the House Committees of jurisdiction. And then of course, we can't forget the immense amount of work that we will embark on to distribute the upcoming federal funds from the American Rescue Plan of 2021. Always keeping in mind the principal of, how can we provide relief to those most in need while simultaneously investing in our future to ensure that we leave no Vermonter behind.

March 26

It has been a busy couple weeks in the virtual Statehouse and I'm afraid I'm falling behind on some of my communications. I presented my first Bill on the House Floor this week. H.430, which was the proposal to expand Dr. Dynasaur to all income eligible children and pregnant women, regardless of immigration status. I am proud to say I made it through that terrifying experience, and it passed on a voice vote with only two No votes! Now this Bill moves to the Senate and I will present to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare next week, in hopes that they will take this Bill up and advance it. I am feeling really optimistic.

Speaking of busy, I thought I'd give you a few highlights of this week. Today we are voting on our budgets, but here are a few of the important Bills that have passed in the House this week.

Transforming Transportation in the Green Mountain State: This year's Transportation Bill (H.433, the "T-Bill") represents a significant investment in Vermont's roads, railways, and bridges. While fully funding the FY'22 Agency of Transportation (VTrans) projects and programs, the infusion of new federal dollars also allows us to ramp up funding to cities and towns. The bill also uses one-time stimulus money to address climate change by providing more affordable, low-carbon transportation options to people across the state. With transportation accounting for 44% of Vermont's carbon emissions, the T-Bill gives Vermonters the tools they need to switch to cost-effective, electrified options – while helping the state meet its carbon-reduction goals.

ACCELERATING BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT: Granted preliminary approval by the VT House, H.360 invests \$150 million of new federal American Rescue Plan Act funds to support

the construction of broadband assets in the most underserved parts of the state. The digital divide is real and has only widened since the start of the COVID pandemic. After a year of remote schooling, online medical appointments, and family Zoom calls, the need for high-speed internet for all Vermonters is even more clear. This bill will put critical coordination and financial tools in place to advance the State's goal of achieving universal access to reliable, high quality, affordable broadband.

AMBITIOUS PLAN FOR CHILD CARE IN VERMONT: H.171 is a landmark bill with an ambitious goal: that no family receiving subsidized child care spend more than 10% of its gross annual income on child care. With \$12.5 million in state and proposed federal funds, H.171 continues the redesign of childcare subsidies to help more low- and middle-income families, updates the IT system that supports this program, and invests in the early childhood workforce through scholarships and student loan repayment. The COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed what we already knew: Accessible, affordable, and high-quality childcare is critical for Vermont's youngest children, for our families, and for our workers and employers. H.171 is a childcare bill that will help put our state on the path to economic recovery and vitality.

INVESTING IN ECONOMIC RECOVERY FOR ALL 14 COUNTIES: H.159 is a sweeping bill to invest in commerce and economic recovery across Vermont. It allocates \$20.5 million to the VT State Colleges for workforce development, funding scholarships to help Vermonters finish a degree, return home from out-of-state postsecondary institutions to attend VSC, or pursue education and training in critical occupations like nursing, accounting, childcare, and mental health counseling. H.159 also allocates \$5 million to the popular Better Places program, which provides matching grants to create or revitalize public spaces in communities, and expands the Downtown Tax Credit program that helps owners redevelop or renovate income-producing buildings in our designated downtowns and neighborhoods.

EARLY LITERACY BILL: H.101 is a bill that will strengthen early literacy instructions for Vermont students in grades pre-K to 3. The bill taps into \$3 million in federal stimulus funds to provide grants to supervisory unions – money our schools will use to improve literacy teaching and outcomes and ensure that students who struggle receive instruction from highly skilled teachers. Grants will support professional development, coaching and training, and using data to promote continuous improvement. The bill also creates a new position at the Agency of Education – a statewide literacy coordinator – and sets up a council to advise the AOE on how to improve and sustain reading skills for all students, grades K-12. According to a 2019 national assessment, only 37% of Vermont's fourth-graders were proficient in reading, a percentage that declined from 2017. This legislation puts funding and powerful intent into our goal of ensuring that all students receive the literacy support they need to succeed.

Please feel free to reach out to me at anytime at [ABlack@VT.leg.state.us](mailto:ABlack@VT.leg.state.us) or 802-598-1026.

## COVID vaccine appointments to be open to all by April 19

By Lucy Rogers, State Representative, Lamoille-3

Over the next five weeks, appointments for the COVID-19 vaccine will open on a staggered basis:

- Thursday, March 25: 60 and older
- Monday, March 29: 50 and older
- Monday, April 5: 40 and older
- Monday, April 12: 30 and older
- Monday, April 19: 16 and older

To register for a vaccine appointment, visit [healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine](https://www.healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine) (<https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine/getting-covid-19-vaccine>) or call 855-722-7878. You will be asked to provide your name, date of birth, address, email (if available), phone number, and health insurance information (if available, but not required).

On this timeline, everyone in the eligible population in Vermont could be fully vaccinated by the end of June.

## Legislative work on crossover bills

By Theresa Wood, State Representative, Washington-Chittenden

March 20

As the crossover date (the deadline when most bills need to be out of committee in order to be considered this year) for most bills occurred on Friday, March 12, the House started to see quite a bit more activity on the floor in terms of bills coming to a vote of the full House. The next few weeks will see a number of bills moving through the House to the Senate and vice versa. A summary of key bills that saw action last week is below:

H.88 – the bill amends existing law to enable a waiver of the current requirement to submit an annual statement saying that a person's agricultural land continues to be used in that manner;

H.108 – this bill amends the current clean water act to clarify that wetlands are included in the act;

H.128 – this is a bill that prohibits a defense based on the victim's perceived or actual sexual identity or gender;

H.195 – the bill permits the use of facial identity software in the case of sexual exploitation of children;

H.420 – this bill makes a number of miscellaneous changes to portions of the statutes on agriculture;

H.421 – this bill makes changes to the training requirements for animal cruelty investigations;

H.133 – is an act that clarifies a court's ability to order relinquishment of firearms in emergency relief from abuse orders. This is an authority judges already have; however, this bill creates more clarity to insure victims of abuse have more consistency from the judicial branch across the state.

As more voting activity occurs in the next few weeks, you can see bills I have sponsored or co-sponsored as well as my voting record for roll call votes at the following link: [Representative Theresa Wood \(vermont.gov\)](https://www.vermont.gov/legislator/theresa-wood)

In my committee, House Human Services, we have been working on a major child care bill, H.171; and we presented testimony on this bill to the House Appropriations Committee. The most recent federal COVID bill – the American Rescue Plan Act – invests over \$47 billion in child care for Vermont.

Please feel free to reach out to me with questions or comments. I can be reached at [twood@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:twood@leg.state.vt.us).

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Hall seeks support on Cambridge Special Town Meeting, May 11

To the Editor,

Upholding our democracy is so important. I am willing to step up in a fashion that is fair to the residents of Cambridge. Here is a presentation of: Who I am, What I have done the last couple weeks, and What I plan to be doing. I also address a couple infrastructure issues: <https://youtu.be/3Ce1BDafA2Q>.

I have a lot of energy and would be excited to serve and earn your vote again next town meeting.

Happy to listen to your concerns, questions or ideas – [teelah@t-ladesigns.com](mailto:teelah@t-ladesigns.com).

**Teelah Hall**  
Jeffersonville

## Westford ice rink

To the Editor,

On behalf of the Westford Recreation Department, I would like to announce that The Westford Town Ice Rink is officially closed for the season.

A lot of time and effort is required to run and maintain the rink every year and I would like to thank everyone that helped out. Jake Cady's fantastic carpentry and welding skills helped to fix some broken boards and brackets. Dan McClain's knowledge and enthusiasm are invaluable. Ben McElvany did a fantastic job painting this year. Bob Gagne was the most dedicated ice clearer I had with Chris Cunningham coming in a close second. Art Woolf has been a huge supporter over the years, letting us store the rink in his barn. Every year, Joe Flynn surveys the site which allows for quick and easy set up. Steve Willard and The Fire Department help us fill up the rink and they returned for additional flooding to keep the ice smooth throughout the season. Adam Adoriso fixed the lights. Tonya and Sean Calley built and donated a small shed for the snow blower, allowing it to be closer to the rink. Lori and Brian Miller not only helped with snow clearing, but Lori also got some nice signs made to post the rules. There was a ton of others involved in set up, maintenance, and snow clearing! I appreciate each and every one of you! Watching the ice skating lessons this year, brought joy to my heart! Seeing some life in our town center during the pandemic was wonderful. The money raised from the lessons made the rink financially possible.

We were unable to hold the annual Broom Ball Tournament, but we did have a pick-up broom ball games on a regular basis. Look for pick-up broom ball again next year, as well as a tournament that will be bigger and better than ever.

I hope you were able to get out and enjoy the ice rink. It takes a village and we live in a great one!

**Chuck Medick**  
Westford

## Thank you to Underhill for roadside tree work

To the Editor,

Just want to say thank you to the town – and particularly to Nate Sullivan – for the roadside tree work that was done along my property on Stevensville Rd. I know there has been a lot of discussion on the forum (FPF) about this topic, which I have no problem with. For my property and from my perspective, the work was welcomed.

Two large hemlocks were removed, both of which were very close to the road, and were dead at the top. Four very large "popples" were taken down, all of which had reached the end of their natural life. When large popples fall, they normally pull a large root ball up with them, which probably would have damaged the road and/or Clay Brook bank – not to mention the potential to block the road and/or stream. And finally, several ashes were removed. This is sad, but in my mind necessary. The emerald ash borer is coming, whether we like it or not. I have seen what happens to ash post-borer in NY – they die quickly, become brittle, start dropping limbs, and suddenly topple over.

The work was done professionally and courteously. I was pleased with the outcome.

**Stephen and Christina Shuma**  
Underhill

We have room for your ad.  
Call Brenda Boutin at 453-6354  
for more information  
or email [mtngazette@gmavt.net](mailto:mtngazette@gmavt.net)

## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

## COLLEGE NEWS

**Wyatt Cunningham** of Waterbury, VT has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Emerson College, Boston, MA.

**William Harvey** of Jericho, VT has been named to the Class of 2023 Headmaster's List at Worcester Academy, Worcester, MA.

## OBITUARIES

**Heather Sheppard**, age 46, went to be with her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, on Sunday, March 7, 2021 at the University of Vermont Medical Center, Burlington, VT. Heather was born on June 8, 1974 in Exeter, NH to Jill Sharon Brooks and John Patrick Boylan. After the passing of her mother at age 3, Heather was raised by her grandmother Virginia Brooks (Grammy). Heather is known for her Love for Jesus Christ as well as her passion for others to come to know Him. She shares the love and joy of living life as a Daughter of the King and as a natural encourager. Heather graduated high school in Sand Springs, OK. She married her high school sweetheart Jerry Craig Sheppard on June 1, 1994. Heather is loved by many as an on air personality on the Light Radio Network. Heather is passionate about Right to Life, VT GOP, and raising awareness for NMO with the Guthy-Jackson Foundation. Heather loved and served joyously with her Catalyst Church family. She leaves behind her husband of 26 years, Jerry Craig Sheppard; her father, John Patrick Boylan; grandmother Virginia Brooks; daughter: Brandalia Sheppard, Emily Sheppard, Olivia Sheppard, and Scarlett Sheppard; many spiritual sons and daughters; a brother, Shayne Brooks; sisters Holly Anger and Erin Boylan; her grandsons Elias and Ayden; and a large extended family. She was predeceased by her mother Jill Sharon Brooks and grandmother Carolyn Joan Street "Nanny." We want to thank everyone who has prayed and supported us during this difficult season. We know she is in the Glory of The Lord! Due to the times we live in the family is going to have a private Celebration of Life. The service was live-streamed on Saturday, March 20, 2021. In lieu of flowers, please give to Catalyst Church on Raceway, The Light Radio Network, The Vermont Right to Life, or The Guthy-Jackson Foundation (NMO). Heather would prefer balloons rather than flowers at the Church in her honor. That is just a symbol of who she is!



**Martha Marion Boudah** passed away peacefully with her children by her side on Thursday, March 18, 2021. A long time resident of Essex, VT, Martha was 86. Martha was born on January 20, 1935 in Westford, VT to Lucille (Deuso) and Arthur Meunier. She graduated from Bellows Free Academy, Fairfax and attended Johnson State College, Johnson, VT. Martha married Richard Boudah on October 30, 1954 at St. Luke's Catholic Church in Fairfax, VT. They were married for 62 years before Dick's passing in 2017. Martha had many interests but first and foremost was her family and home. Dick and Martha built their home together in Essex in 1966 on seven acres of land. Here she enjoyed her horses, dogs, maple sugaring, vegetable gardening, and tending her flower beds. She taught her five children the country way of life, which included being involved in the local 4-H clubs. Martha was an expert seamstress, sewing clothing and many quilts over the years. She did extensive family genealogy research. She also loved to write and had several magazine articles published. Camping was always a big part of their life. In their later years, Dick and Martha traveled with their truck camper to 49 of the 50 states. She loved the outdoors and was happy riding her horses, walking her dogs, or strolling on a beach. Surviving Martha are her children Debra (Stuart) Toof of Fairfax, James Boudah of Westford, VT, Richard Boudah Jr. of Fairfax, Thomas (Kim) Boudah of Colchester, VT, and daughter-in-law Lauri Boudah of Bradenton, FL; her grandchildren Shannon, Jason, Kasey, Sean, Alexandra, and Tommy; her great-grandchildren Tyler, Kaitlyn, and Audrey; her brothers James (Lena) Meunier and Roger (Donna) Meunier, both of Fairfax. Martha is also survived by her brothers- and sisters-in-law, an aunt and uncle, and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. She also leaves behind many dear friends who will remember her kindness and smiles. Besides her parents, Martha was predeceased by her husband Richard Boudah, Sr. and her son David Boudah. A mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at St. Pius X Catholic Church in Essex Center, VT. Burial followed at St. Luke's cemetery in Fairfax, VT. To honor Martha's love of animals, especially dogs, please consider a contribution to the rescue where she adopted her last dog, Missi: Franklin County Animal Rescue, 30 Sunset Meadows, St. Albans, VT 05478. For those who wish to leave online condolences, please visit [www.minorfh.com](http://www.minorfh.com).



*Yellow-bellied sapsuckers are medium-sized, migratory woodpeckers that arrive in Vermont before the last snowfall to begin their breeding season, which lasts from April-July. They feed on tree sap and insects.* PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

## Lea Kilvdyov – in Memoriam

By Paul Warden, Board Member

Lamoille FiberNet Communications Union District

Lea Kilvdyov of Johnson passed away Sunday, March 7, 2021 from complications related to a long-term illness. Lea was instrumental in the founding of Lamoille FiberNet Communications Union District (CUD) and this tribute is a small reflection of our gratitude for her efforts and admiration for her abilities.

After earning a degree in economics from the University of Matej Bel, Lea studied in England, the Netherlands and France before coming to Vermont on a Fulbright Scholarship to study at UVM. Lea worked for the Town of Johnson as the Community and Economic Development Coordinator from 2004-2016, where her education and drive enabled the Mainstreet Project, Sterling Market, Legion Field bandstand, and many other accomplishments that will long be appreciated.

In 2016, Lea began working as a regional planner at the Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC), where she realized early on that bringing high speed Internet broadband would make a significant difference to Lamoille County towns. She worked tirelessly to get this effort off the ground, and her passion for the project combined with her strategic approach and her broad range of expertise in planning and fundraising become the driving forces that launched Lamoille FiberNet CUD in July 2020.

All of us at Lamoille FiberNet are grateful for her insight, steady guidance and the roadmap she left us. Lea had a delightful way about her, bringing her lighthearted humor to all our work, even when dealing with setbacks or difficulties, and she will be missed in a million ways, both personally and professionally.

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

## Changes on Cambridge Rec Board

The Cambridge Recreation Board would like to extend their sincere appreciation to Deb Nevil for her service on the board. Deb resigned her position on the Board effective January 2021.

We are excited to welcome the following incredibly talented and energetic community members to the board:

Amanda Tingaud is the manager of the Cambridge Community Center (CCC), active as a basketball coach, and she also works at Smuggs. Amanda is the parent of a six year old and volunteers to coach soccer. She is interested in growing recreational opportunities for all residents in our community.

Jessie Jacobs is interested in developing recreational programs for our community, especially kids, as she also has a six year old. She sees a lot of opportunity in our area with the available trails and waterways, the existing CCC, and closely accessible Smugglers' Notch Resort.

Bonnie Pratt has a seven year old daughter and another child on the way. Bonnie has a PhD in natural resources from UVM. She also teaches entrepreneurship, mainly for women. Bonnie is currently the Director of Energy Products for *Packetized Energy.com*, a start-up in Burlington. Bonnie is interested in engaging the community in pursuits that provide recreation in concert with our natural world.

Anyone interested in serving on the Cambridge Recreation Board is encouraged to contact one of the current members, as there is still one open position.

All community members are encouraged to attend meetings (fourth Monday of the month, 6:30 PM), respond to our interest survey, volunteer to lead programs, and to participate in recreational activities through our town. See <http://www.cambridgevt.org/recreation> for more information.

Current board members also include Chair Kevin White, Vice Chair Emily Boek, and Clerk Nanci Lepsic.

## Veterans Fire Wood Project supports vets

By John Connell, Underhill

Our local Veterans firewood project is always looking for block length or fallen trees to cut and split. We sell the firewood at market prices to raise funds that support projects for veterans.

Perhaps you know of ash trees that are being removed. Please contact Donna Laperle ([donna.laperie@gmail.com](mailto:donna.laperie@gmail.com)) if you wish to donate or have further questions.

## SCHOOL NEWS

## EWSD School Board meeting March 23; school vote April 13

The Essex Westford School District (EWSD) Board met on Tuesday, March 23, 6:30 – 9:30 PM. Board members joined the meeting remotely and the Media Factory (formerly RETN) broadcast the meeting on Facebook Live and on Zoom.

Agenda items for the meeting included:

- learning/information updates – each student is an engaged/inspired learner
- approve FY'22 number of student days
- approve the last day of school for 2020-21
- approval of building access control expansion project bid
- superintendent report
- local and statewide update

The EWSD Annual School Meeting vote will occur on Tuesday, April 13, 2021. Based on a decision of the School Board, ballots are being mailed to ALL active registered voters. Their decision was based on temporary changes that were made to the election laws due to COVID. Ballots were mailed around March 24. If you do not receive a ballot, please contact the Town Office at 878-4587 or [townclerk@westfordvt.us](mailto:townclerk@westfordvt.us).

Polls will be open at the Westford School 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM for in-person voting on Tuesday, April 13. The School and Town

Office are working on the logistics of holding the vote if school is in session while keeping students, faculty, election workers, and the community safe and healthy.

If you have any questions about the proposed EWSD budget, please visit [www.ewsd.org/budget](http://www.ewsd.org/budget).

## EWSD proposed school budget and projected tax implications

By Martha Heath

The Essex Westford School District Board has finalized its proposed school budget, which will be voted on in April. The proposed budget is \$81,732,048 – a 1% decrease from last year. For those who like the details:

- Education Spending (a key number in determining tax rates) is down less than 1% (-0.03%)
- Equalized pupils are decreasing by 29.21 pupils
- Education Spending per Equalized Pupil is up less than 1% (.74%)
- The resulting projected equalized tax rate (using the latest figures the Legislature is working with) is down 2.68% from last year to \$1.4853.

School news continued on page 11

## ART / MUSIC / THEATER

# MMU presents *A Killer Party* – murder, mystery, musical



MMU's murder mystery musical *A Killer Party* will be streamed for viewers throughout the weekend of Friday-Sunday, April 9-11. Pictured is Logan Mohn as Cameron Mitcheljohn, calling on his good angel for support. For tickets and more information, [tinyurl.com/AKPMMU](https://tinyurl.com/AKPMMU) or 802-899-4690, x1715. PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The Mount Mansfield Union High School Theatre Department presents a brand new murder mystery musical called *A Killer Party*, streaming Friday, April 9, 7:00 PM through midnight, Sunday, April 11. When Varthur McArthur, the artistic director of a failing theater in Duluth, invites his troupe of disgruntled actors and collaborators to a dinner party for the first read of an "immersive murder mystery play," someone obviously ends up

dead before the entrée is served. Enter the eager, determined, and untested Detective Case. After sequestering the guests into separate rooms (because, you know, social distancing), she gets down to finding out whodunnit, uncovering secret affairs, life-long grudges, backstage drama, and a lot of musical theater song and dance. Sifting through lies and red herrings and a truly baffling murder mystery script left by the deceased, Detective

Case vows to find the truth and secure her future as a great detective. Tickets: \$10 for a single ticket; \$20 for a household; available at [tinyurl.com/AKPMMU](https://tinyurl.com/AKPMMU). The ticket price entitles you to 48 hours of viewing during this time period. View MMU's movie trailer at: [tinyurl.com/AKPTrailer](https://tinyurl.com/AKPTrailer). For more information: 802-899-4690, x1715.

## Poetry Without Tears: a workshop with poet Verandah Porche

On Friday, April 23, 7:00 PM, Guilford poet Verandah Porche will lead *Poetry Without Tears*, a free, virtual interactive poetry workshop organized by the Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF). The workshop is open to teens and adults. You can sign up at [www.clifonline.org](https://www.clifonline.org). Since the fall, CLiF has been offering adult programs and book discussions with local authors, in addition to its children's programming. In honor of National Poetry Month in April, this session will celebrate poetry and encourage writers of all levels to create their own poems. *Poetry Without Tears* will be a safe space to write a first poem or sharpen skills. Verandah will share her poems and talk about finding beauty in our own language. Participants will create a collaborative poem where each person adds a few lines. Verandah will offer a prompt for inspiration and we'll write for five to ten minutes. Those who wish to can share their work.

## 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/>.

## Creation Grants: call for applications

The Vermont Arts Council is now accepting applications for its annual Creation Grant.

Creation Grants support the creation of new work by Vermont artists. Creation Grants can fund time, materials, some equipment costs, and space rental for artists and artist groups. An independent panel of practicing artists and arts professionals reviews the applications for this highly competitive program.

Examples of fundable projects are:

- a multimedia artist creating a new video series;
- a writer completing the first draft of a novel;
- a dance ensemble developing choreography for a new piece;
- a visual artist creating art for exhibition that explores new subjects and techniques;
- a musician composing music for a new album.

While all eligible Vermont artists are encouraged to apply for a Creation Grant, special consideration will be given to emerging artists in this grant round. Generally, emerging artists are defined as those who are at an early stage in their career development. Age is not a factor in determining an emerging artist. Emerging artists must be "active" or "practicing" artists (i.e., creating work regularly, rather than a few times a year); and should not have received major grants, awards, or other significant recognition (such as a solo exhibition) at this stage in their career. With regard to the Vermont Arts Council's grant programs for individual artists, only Creation Grants are considered to be "major grants."

The grant amount for this program is \$4000 per award. The application deadline is Wednesday, April 14. For full details and online application, see <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants/artists/creation>.

## Shuttered Venue Operator (SVO) grants

The Shuttered Venue Operators (SVO) Grant program was established by the COVID-19 relief law, the Economic Aid to Hard-Hit Small Businesses, Nonprofits, and Venues Act, signed into law on December 27, 2020. The program includes \$15B in grants to shuttered venues, to be administered by the Small Business Administration's Office of Disaster Assistance.

While this program has not yet opened for applications, there are important updates regarding eligibility and the application process. We anticipate that it will open in the next few weeks.

SAM Registration: Any applicant to this program must be registered through <http://sam.gov/>, a centralized government website used by entities to apply for and obtain federal government contracts and grants. This process takes more than a week, so we are encouraging anyone who might apply to begin this registration process now. Organizations who already have a SAM.gov registration are encouraged to check that the login information and password is up to date.

Eligibility information: The SBA has released several rounds of updates on the eligibility and guidelines of the program. Interested applicants should check online at <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/shuttered-venue-operators-grant> for updates, especially the FAQ section, and sign up for SBA email alerts about the program.

## VT Arts Council secures new funding for creative aging

The Vermont Arts Council (VAC) in partnership with the Central Vermont Council on Aging (CVCOA) has received a \$23,000 award from the National Assembly of State Art Agencies (NASAA) and Aroha Philanthropies to advance creative programming for older adults.

In 2020, CVCOA created the Creative Care Kit program, which provided over 160 free Creative Care Kits to people age 60+. The kits included several activities along with supplies, instructions, and resources needed for practicing and producing artwork. In addition, each participant in the Creative Care Kit Project could access a trained Creative Companion volunteer. Through phone and video calls, the volunteers engaged participants in meaningful conversations inspired by the activities and stories that arose in the process.

With the new funding, the VAC will partner with CVCOA to build awareness, relationships, and skills among teaching artists, staff, and volunteers for creative aging programming to flourish. This will include another Creative Care Kit project and additional initiatives to build creative aging capacity.

Older adults have many contributions to make to their communities, but they often face ageism and isolation and have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. The Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging program, a joint initiative of the NASAA and Aroha Philanthropies, attempts to meet these challenges.

The VAC is one of 36 state arts agencies receiving the award. With this funding, each state will conduct creative aging activities tailored to the unique needs of its constituents. Activities will bolster existing creative aging programs, support artist residencies, provide professional development for teaching artists and community partners, develop creative aging communities of practice, provide direct programming to older adult audiences, cultivate creative aging partnerships, and more.

For information about new creative aging activities taking place in Vermont, contact Troy Hickman at the VAC at [thickman@vermontartscouncil.org](mailto:thickman@vermontartscouncil.org). For more information about NASAA's Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging initiative, visit <https://nasaa-arts.org/communication/new-initiative-expands-creative-aging-nationwide/>.

## Lyric Theatre Company to hold auditions

Lyric Theatre Company is holding auditions for their production of *A Year With Frog and Toad* happening this summer, in conjunction with local libraries and other community venues.

*A Year with Frog and Toad* is a Tony Award-nominated musical that follows two of literature's greatest friends, Frog and Toad, through four fun-filled seasons. This show is a work of Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA). It is designed to educate, appeal to, and entertain young theatre-goers, but is built for adult actors to perform.

We are inviting and encouraging all performers age 16+ to audition for this production, which will entertain the whole family. For more information about how to audition online or sign up for an in person audition go to <https://lyrictheatre.org/frog-and-toad/>.

FAIRFAX COMMUNITY LIBRARY

## Marshmallow Peep Pageant

This April, all ages are encouraged to get creative with marshmallow peeps! Make a diorama, paint a picture - just have fun! We will have both a physical display in the library and a virtual gallery online, so feel free to bring in your peep creations yourself, or send a picture of it to [libraryfairfax@gmail.com](mailto:libraryfairfax@gmail.com). The cutoff for submissions is April 29.

**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. April 11: *This I Believe, This I Wonder* with Abigale Soudi Breez and Hailey Ward offering thoughts about what they believe and wonder about over the course of their spiritual journey. Check the website for upcoming speakers and topics. For the time being, services are being held exclusively via Zoom. Please contact [president@mmuuf.org](mailto:president@mmuuf.org) or 899-2558 for how to join. Located at 195 VT Rt. 15, Jericho. Learn more at [www.mmuuf.org](http://www.mmuuf.org) and [www.uua.org](http://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](mailto:luitjens@yahoo.com)). Located at 71 VT Rt. 15, Jericho.

**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 10:00 AM. 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.

**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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](mailto:pastorthomas@goodshepherdjericho.org).

**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!

School news continued from page 9

- Our merger incentive decreases by 2¢ each year. The coming year, FY'22, is the last year of the incentive. The projected incentivized tax rate of \$1.4653 is down 1.43%
- The Common Levels of Appraisal are decreasing in all communities. (The state views our properties as more valuable than they are assessed for.) Essex Town and Essex Junction's CLA went from 91.86% to 89.05%. Westford's CLA went from 91.34% to 89.80%.

Bottom line: for those who pay their education taxes based on the value of their property, here are the projected homestead tax rates after the CLA adjustment is applied:

- Essex Town and Essex Junction: new rate \$1.6455 an increase of \$.0276
- Westford: new rate \$1.6317 an increase of \$.0046
- For those who pay based on income the rate is projected to increase from 2.42% to 2.46% of household income.

To review all FY'22 budget materials, please visit [www.ewsd.org/budget](http://www.ewsd.org/budget).

**Eagles offer scholarships to Lamoille County graduating seniors**

The Green Mountain Fraternal Order of Eagles in Jeffersonville is accepting applications for two achievement/scholarships they offer. The Robbie Pollander and the Edison A. Reynolds Awards, both award \$500 that can be used by the recipients for anything school related, from books to transportation, classes to clothing. They are available to any graduating high school senior in Lamoille County. Our awards are not based on academics. They are granted to any high school senior who expresses the qualities of a good citizen in their community with the desire to pursue a higher education.

Requirements for consideration are: The submission of a biography and a theme based short essay on the topic "In my Community, People helping people." All entries are due postmarked by Friday, May 21, 2021. Send your application to: Fraternal Order of Eagles, Attention David May, P.O. Box 216, Jeffersonville, VT 05464-0216.

There is an additional scholarship available from the Auxiliary specifically for female students. The criteria are the same as above. All entries should be submitted to: Ladies Auxiliary, Fraternal Order of Eagles, P.O. Box 326, Jeffersonville, VT 05464-0216

**Winona Smith Scholarship opportunities now open**

The League of Women Voters of Vermont Education Fund is now accepting applications for its Winona Smith Scholarship program. Created in 1995 to honor the legacy of Winona Smith, the scholarship is awarded annually to local high school seniors who embody the characteristics and qualities Smith displayed – of civic participation and community service.

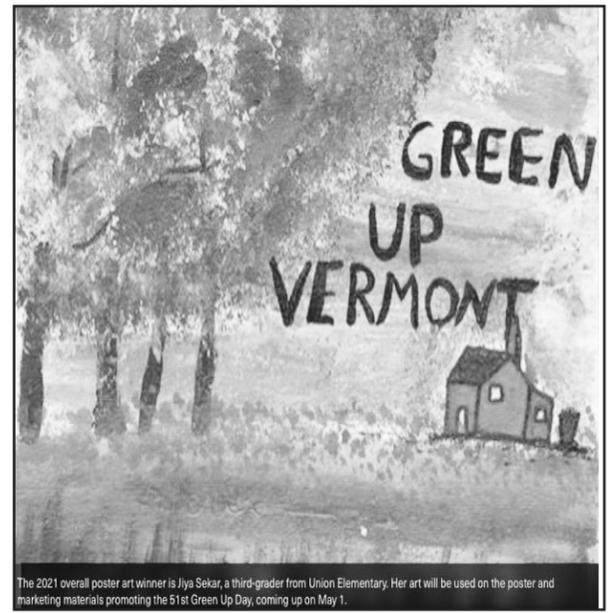
Four \$1000 scholarships will be awarded to students who demonstrate financial need, scholastic achievement, and come highly recommended by their instructor.

Applications, due on Saturday, May 1, can be completed online at <http://bit.ly/lwvsscholarship>. Students need to submit two essays (500 words), one on issues concerning voting rights, and the other on the impact of a recent civic, national, or world event. A letter of recommendation from a teacher is also required.

The scholarship can be applied toward continuation of education in an accredited vocational-technical or trade school and two- or four-year college or university. Scholarship recipients will be announced on Tuesday, June 1.

Last year, LWV scholarships were awarded to students from Hazen Union, Rutland, South Burlington, and U-32 High Schools.

Questions can be directed to Scholarship Coordinator Becky Miller, [lwvofvt.edfund@gmail.com](mailto:lwvofvt.edfund@gmail.com).



The 2021 overall poster art winner is Jiya Sekar, a third-grader from Union Elementary. Her art will be used on the poster and marketing materials promoting the 51st Green Up Day, coming up on May 1.

**Grants for students, workers in public works profession**

The New England Chapter of the American Public Works Association is pleased to announce the availability of five \$1000 scholarships for 2021 to promote and improve financial assistance to individuals committed to the Public Works Profession who are seeking opportunities to advance within their department.

2021 George R. Crombie – Emerging Leaders PWX Scholarship Form: Please consider me for the New England Chapter's APWA PWX Scholarship (to cover the conference registration fee, round trip airfare and hotel accommodations) to attend August 30-September 2, 2021 in St. Louis, MO.

Timothy J. O'Leary Scholarship: The New England Chapter of the American Public Works Association (NEAPWA) is pleased to announce the availability of five \$2500 scholarships for the 2021-2022 academic year. This scholarship aims to promote and improve the Public Works Profession by providing financial assistance to students committed to, and seeking a degree in, a Public Works or related field of study.

More information and applications can be found online at <http://newengland.apwa.net/PageDetails/4489>.

**CES preschool screening 2021/2022**

Will your child be turning 3 or 4 by September 1, 2021? Cambridge Elementary Early Childhood Program is now enrolling children for our pre-kindergarten program for school year 2021/2022. Our 5 STARS program offers a morning or afternoon session, Tuesday-Friday, 12 hours per week.

Pre-register your child at [www.insu.org](http://www.insu.org). To inquire about our program, please call Liz Lamphere at 521-5613.

**MMUUSD Board meetings**

By Edye Graning, School Board Chair, MMUUSD

The Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District (MMUUSD) School Board held a meeting on Monday, March 22. At this meeting the Board heard the presentation about remote learning that was delayed at a previous meeting. In addition, there was a presentation on the school calendar, its history, and how it is created.

In April, the board will only have one meeting, on Monday, April 12.

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### Good Shepherd Church Holy Week, Easter Services

You are invited to worship with Good Shepherd Church in Jericho, live virtually! (instructions below)

Holy Week Monday-Friday, March 29-April 2, 6:45 – 7:00 AM Ecumenical Morning Prayer. Throughout the week there will be outdoor meditation spaces provided at Good Shepherd and at other area congregations.

Thursday, April 1, 7:00 PM: Maundy Thursday service with communion

Good Friday, April 2, 7:00 PM: Tenebrae Service

Easter Sunday, April 4, 9:00 AM: Festival Service with communion, followed by Fellowship Time

To join in: Zoom links are provided via Good Shepherd's communication document called the E-Bulletin. Please subscribe ahead of time, particularly the Tuesday prior to a service you hope to attend, at <https://goodshepherdjericho.org/>. You need to subscribe only once, and you can unsubscribe at any time.

### Easter weekend events at Catalyst Church on Raceway

Join us for any or all of these events, in person or online (except for the Sunrise Service):

Good Friday, April 2, 6:30 PM – our Epic Student Ministry team will be hosting an experience including drama

Easter Sunday Morning, April 4, 6:30 AM – Sunrise Service followed by a continental breakfast

Easter Sunday Morning, April 4, 9:00 AM – come celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ with us!



Today's tears bring rise to tomorrow's flowers.

PHOTO BY BERNIE PAQUETTE

Katz continued from page 1

wasn't as mentally challenging as I thought." In fact, the teenager said the hardest part of the run was having to get up a 7:00 AM.

Katz wasn't always this athletic. He said that when he was younger he had very stiff legs and bad hand-eye coordination

but believes he has overcome those issues. He started running with his parents when he was in seventh grade and joined a team in eighth grade. This year, he ran cross-country for MMU and will run track in the spring. "I was never really that competitive," he said, "but I've been running a lot more lately and liking it." Katz admitted that part of the impetus for his running might have been the pandemic. "I'm going a bit COVID crazy," he said.

Katz' preference is for longer distances and trail running. He enjoys pushing himself when he runs. "It's a good feeling to push through the pain," he said. "I like that feeling and then afterwards whatever I'm doing, including homework, seems easier."

Katz' parents, Jennifer Silpe-Katz and Dayna Katz, and his twin brother Weston signed up to run four miles every four hours to raise money for Aunt Dot's Food Shelf in Essex. "I decided to do it on a whim," he said. "My parents were doing it and I figured they'd be grumpy, so I decided I'd be grumpy with them." Katz explained that the challenge was to run four miles in whatever time that took and then take a break until the next four hour interval began. "It was eating, sleeping, running, and sleeping again," Katz said, although he noted that he wasn't always able to sleep between running intervals. Katz tried to eat healthy food during the breaks. "I was eating a lot of beans, protein shakes, fruit, and honey," he said. "I'm trying to go vegan, but I was eating everything in the house."

At night, Katz ran with his parents on a loop that left from their house and included Maple Leaf Farm Road and Stevensville Road for an elevation gain of 500 feet. During the day, there were times he used the treadmill

instead of going outside. The first night of the run, the wind chill factor was -8 so they all had to bundle up against the cold.

When the run was over, instead of collapsing in a heap, adrenaline kept Katz awake and he thought more about running. "When I woke up the next day and had to go to school, that's when I really wanted to sleep," he said.

The family raised over \$1000 for Aunt Dot's Place. Katz started volunteering at the food shelf last month and would like to do so on a monthly basis. "It's good to support local food shelves," he said, "particularly in hard times like this."

Jennifer Silpe-Katz couldn't be more proud of her son. "He's very motivated and focused on his running," she said, "but what is equally remarkable about Brock is that he is always talking about how to help others and how to make a difference in our world. He is concerned about the environment and climate change and other cultures and their plights." Silpe-Katz said her son uses his birthday as an opportunity to ask people to contribute to others, rather than give him gifts. "He wants to travel the world and learn about other cultures and provide service to others," she said. "He talks about joining the Peace Corps and wanted to volunteer rather than get a job that paid him."

Silpe-Katz noted that teenagers can sometimes be selfish and self-focused but that's not the case with her sons. "We are surprised every day by their thirst for knowledge, intrigued by their interest in news and current events and the deep discussions they want to have over dinner, and inspired by their desire to make a difference in the lives of others," she said. "Brock and Weston are smart and kind and caring – they are far from typical in every way."

Completing the challenge has made Katz think about other possibilities. "It definitely helped me set goals for myself," he said. "I'd like to train for a marathon or maybe an Ironman when I turn 18." As of yet, Katz isn't a swimmer or cyclist but he's looking to take up those sports. In the meantime, he's going to spend more time running. "I'm already looking at longer distances," he said. "I want to create some training schedules for myself."

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## New *Open Days* at our Drop-Off Centers in Essex, Richmond & South Burlington!

Starting April 5, 2021

For details on limits and specifics for what is accepted at each location, visit [cswd.net/doc](http://cswd.net/doc).



Doing some spring cleaning? Make an appointment to bring leftover paint, pesticides, and more to the Environmental Depot. Visit [cswd.net/depot](http://cswd.net/depot) for details and to make an appointment.

### CSWD Drop-Off Centers Schedule

LOCATIONS	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Burlington <i>Food Scraps Only</i>	Closed	Closed	Closed	8-3:30	Closed	8-3:30
Essex	Closed	8-3:30	8-3:30	8-3:30	8-3:30	8-3:30
Hinesburg	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	8-3:30
Milton	Closed	Closed	8-3:30	Closed	8-3:30	8-3:30
Richmond	Closed	8-3:30	Closed	8-3:30	Closed	8-3:30
South Burlington	8-3:30	8-3:30	Closed	8-3:30	8-3:30	8-3:30
Williston	8-3:30	8-3:30	8-3:30	8-3:30	8-3:30	8-3:30

Closed
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| All facilities are closed on Sundays.

Days and times are subject to change.



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## Sunday, April 4

Set your table and decorate your home with a lovely bouquet, beautiful roses, or flowering plant.



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