

The Times Ink!

OF RICHMOND & HUNTINGTON

The Newspaper of Richmond & Huntington

Volume 41 **April 2024 Issue** Number 3

MMUU Budget Vote on April 2

Why is a school budget vote being held in April? It is a response to recent legislation that was passed in February that adjusts the funding formula for Vermont's public schools.

Act 127 was passed by the Vermont Legislature and signed by the Governor in 2022. The bill was intended to improve student equity by adjusting the school funding formula and providing education quality and funding oversight. Instead, chaos ensued with 20% - or more - predicted education tax increases for many towns, based on changes to the formula for weighted students (basic weight, special weights such as those members of families at 185% or less of the Federal Poverty Level and qualifying for free and reduced lunches, weights for grades levels, etc.) Population density was part of the formula with rural areas receiving more weight, as was the number of pupils in each of the subdivisions of the small school. It is not an easy read.

As part of funding formula, an implementation schedule was presented with a spending cap. It was believed that schools districts, which would receive large tax increases based on the new student weights and the formula that created them, should be limited to a 5% tax increase. However, school districts instead presented budgets that included capital projects this year to beat the deadline and fund projects that would not show a tax increase beyond the 5% cap. But, many Boards were thinking the same way.

"It was an unsustainable move as the proposed projects were estimated to cost \$100 million or more," as noted by Senator Thomas Chittenden. The bills still needed to be paid even if the taxes were capped.

Act 850 was introduced in 2024 to repeal the cap. This then revealed that, without the cap, dozens of districts would have property tax increases that in some cases approached 40 percent. H.850 replaces the cap with a "cents discount," or a tax discount for negatively-affected districts; it would be gradually phased out over five years.

The MMUUSD Board has reduced its budget by \$5.5 million and this budget, and other items that appeared on the March 5 ballot, will be voted on April 2.

Read Diane Wester's School Board Meeting Report on page 9 and the budget proposal, and attend the informational hearing on March 28 at MMU High School; the meeting also has a virtual link at mmuusd.org under "School Board."

April 2 Vote

Richmond Polls

Richmond Town Center

Open: 7 am to 7 pm

Note: Polls are not at Camels Hump Middle School

Huntington Polls

Brewster-Pierce School

Open: 6:30 am to 7 pm

Voters need to enter through a side door - the main door is not open for elections. Follow the signs.

The Most Beautiful Sight You Will Ever See in the Sky

Called a "generational spectacle," a total solar eclipse is a rare occurrence and northern Vermont is directly in the path of a total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024.

At 2:14 pm, a partial solar eclipse will begin, and at 3:26 pm, a total eclipse will darken Vermont's daytime sky, lasting about three minutes. A partial eclipse will continue until 4:37 pm. As it passes through Vermont, the speed of the Moon's shadow will accelerate from 2550 miles per hour to 2860 miles per hour.

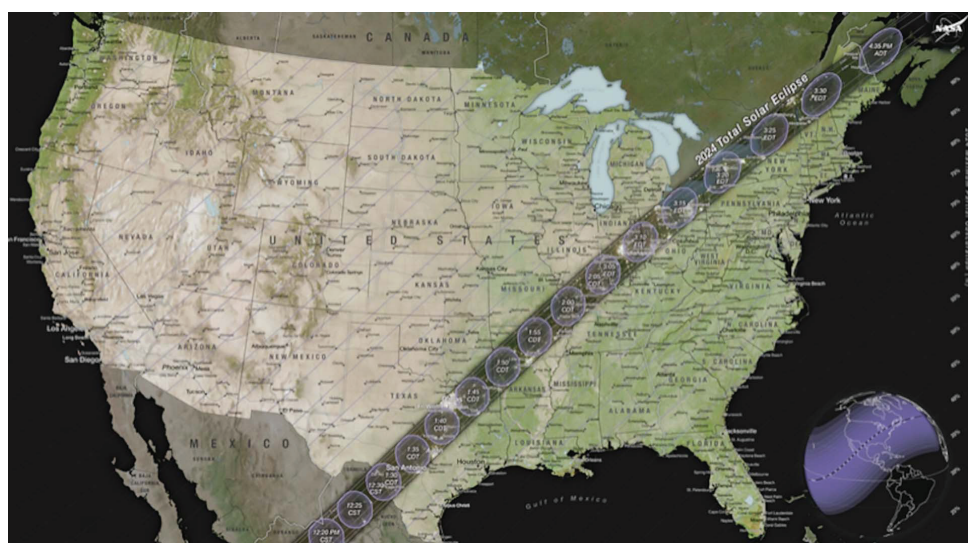
What is a total solar eclipse? A total solar eclipse, or total eclipse of the sun, happens when the moon passes directly between the sun and the Earth and completely covers the entire face of the sun. The phenomenon typically only lasts for about two minutes for those standing within the eclipse's path of totality. However, a partial eclipse — which happens when the moon only blocks a portion of the sun — usually lasts about two to three hours. In April, all of North America will experience a partial eclipse but only some states will get to witness the total eclipse.

Thousands of Visitors & Projected Traffic Jams Vermont is expecting thousands of nature-loving residents and visitors to take in the solar eclipse on April 8. The estimates are as many as 208,000. State employees are being encouraged to work from home, if possible, and local governmental offices will either close for the day or close early. Many schools will be closed, including the MMUUSD, which includes Richmond, Huntington and Bolton.

While it seems like a lovely idea to climb Camels Hump to view what is called "the most beautiful sight you will ever see in the sky," April is mud season in Vermont and all the state park trails are closed due to the fragility caused by the spring snow melt.

Last Total Solar Eclipse in North America The last time a total solar eclipse crossed the U.S. was August 21, 2017. The eclipse's path of totality officially touched 14 states, but only could be viewed widely in about 10 states, according to NASA. The path covered South Carolina to Oregon. An estimated 88% of U.S. adults viewed the moon passing in front of the sun either directly or online. Before 2017, it was more than three decades - almost four decades - since the total solar eclipse of February 26, 1979, which crossed through Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and North Dakota, before heading north to Canada, according to NASA.

The eclipse on April 8 is projected to be different from 2017. For one thing, it will be travelling over a more populated area, through Dallas, Texas and through cities in Ohio, up through western New York, and then angling east over northern Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine and onward to Nova Scotia and finally exiting continental North America off the coast of Newfoundland, Canada, at 5:16 pm NDT.



The 2024 total solar eclipse path crosses from Mexico, through the United States from Texas to Maine, and up through Canada. NASA's Scientific Visualization Studio

Here's NASA's explanation: "The path of totality — where viewers can see the Moon totally block the Sun, revealing the star's outer atmosphere, called the corona — is much wider during the upcoming total solar eclipse than it was during the eclipse in 2017. As the

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Page 1 articles written by Heidi Racht

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Letters on local topics are encouraged. Please submit to news@timesinkvt.org. All submissions must have a signature and phone number for verification. Letters with an inflammatory tone, or prose likely to incite high blood pressure in some of the readers, will be reviewed and evaluated by THE TIMES INK! Board of Directors before printing.



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Letters

Opinions & Other News

Eclipse

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Moon orbits Earth, its distance from our planet varies. During the 2017 total solar eclipse, the Moon was a little bit farther away from Earth than it will be during upcoming total solar eclipse, causing the path of that eclipse to be a little skinnier. In 2017, the path ranged from about 62 to 71 miles wide. During the April eclipse, the path over North America will range between 108 and 122 miles wide – meaning at any given moment, this eclipse covers more ground."

"An estimated 31.6 million people live in the path of totality this year, compared to 12 million in 2017. An additional 150 million people live within 200 miles of the path of totality. Scientists say the sun is approaching its maximum activity of its cycle this year, meaning it will be sending off more solar flares and eruptions from its surface — potentially making this year's total solar eclipse much more dynamic."

According to the WASHINGTON POST, "The sun might put on an extra fun show this time around. This year's eclipse coincides with a period when the sun will be particularly active — at its most bustling in two decades. In fact, the active sun will look very spiky, like a 'very irritated little hedgehog,' solar physicist Scott McIntosh said."

What's the safest way to view the solar eclipse? It's safe to look at the sun with the naked eye and without any protection only during the totality phase of a total solar eclipse, but it's dangerous to stare directly at the sun at any other time, including during a partial solar eclipse. Looking at the sun while wearing regular sunglasses during a partial solar eclipse is unsafe, and using binoculars or telescopes without the proper equipment, including solar filters, can severely damage your eyes.

NASA says on its website that eclipse gazers should use special solar filters or "eclipse glasses," making sure that the glasses are not scratched or damaged.

The State of Vermont, through various departments, including the Department of Tourism and Marketing and the Vermont Department of Libraries, has allowed towns to order, at no cost, these special eclipse glasses. In Huntington, the glasses were available for pickup when residents came to Town Meeting or to vote at the polls. Pairs are still available at the libraries in Richmond and Huntington.

The Vermont Department of Libraries helped local libraries with programs to engage the community and get residents prepared for the big day.

Schools will be distributing the special ecipse glasses to students, who are also learning about the skies and solar system.

In Huntington, the Recreation Committee and Library are

encouraging people in the community to make the Rec Field a town site for viewers to bring their lawn chairs to enjoy an open view of this "once in a generation" phenomenon. A table will be there with whatever glasses are left and Librarian Stacey Symanowicz will have four SUNoculars available for people to share over the short time of the total eclipse. The viewing box will give a chance to view the eclipse the old-fashioned way - before the special glasses were invented to allow a direct look at the sun without worry of vision damage.

April 2, 2024 is the last total solar eclipse to be visible from the contiguous U.S. until 2044. Don't miss out! Don't get busy spring cleaning and forget to get outdoors!

April 3 Blood Drive

The Richmond Congregational Church (20 Church Street) will be hosting an American Red Cross (ARC) blood drive on April 3 from noon to 6 pm. Appointments are required.

Call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or go online to <https://www.redcrossblood.org/> for more information, and to make an appointment. Or, email dthomas@gmavt.net for assistance.

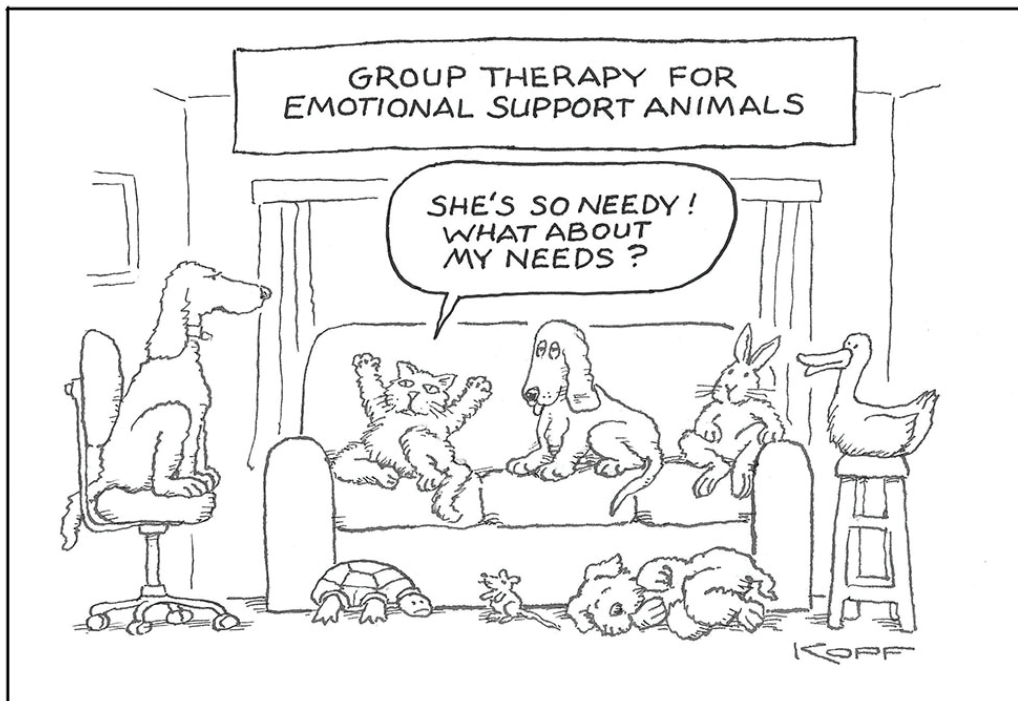
There is a continuous need for blood to help save lives or enable much needed surgeries. Supplies are critical. Please "spring" into action by signing up to donate. Bring a friend, a high school senior, or someone you know who needs your support to be a first time donor. It can be a rewarding experience. Just ask a loyal donor to get the scoop. And folks who weren't qualified in the past might be pleasantly surprised with some changes in the ARC eligibility criteria.

Friday Food Affair is in Full Swing

Richmond's popular Friday Food Affair is back in full swing. This winter, eager eaters enjoyed Chinese New Year fare, an Indian dinner of curry and other dishes, and, most recently, a delicious Pie Dinner in celebration of Pi Day (3.14).

The next dinner will be held early next month. Watch for the sign in front of the Richmond Congregational Church on the first and third Friday of each month to see the theme of the the menu and sponsor/chefs.

Friday Food Affair's purpose is to offer a nutritious and delicious dinner for any and all and an opportunity to gather at the end of the week to visit with neighbors and friends. The meal is by donation as able and all are welcome.



Sap Flows: Townwide Sugarmakers Open House



A young visitor to a local sugarhouse. Photo: John Burns

Good sap flow and boiling conditions require cold nights and warm days and March is the month that hovers between winter and spring when most of the maple syrup is produced in Vermont. For boiling operations to begin each year, a prolonged temperature period below 25°F to get high sugar content in the sap, followed by a freeze/thaw cycle of cold nights and warm days to get the sap flowing. Sugarmakers need to make their maple sysrup when the time is right.

The annual Huntington Sugarmakers Open House, sponsored by the Huntington Conservation Commission, is back. The official event is scheduled for March 23 to coincide with the Vermont Spring Maple Open House Weekend.

Included in this year's tour are:

Audubon Vermont (600 taps), with sugarbush tours, syrup taste tests, and scavenger hunts. Sugar on snow and jugs of our Bird-Friendly Maple syrup will be available for sale. Saturday and Sunday, 11-4.

Purinton Maple (17,300 taps), with maple cotton candy, maple sugar, maple candy, maple syrup on ice cream, and more. Saturday, 9-3, and Sunday, 9-2.

Taft's Sugarhouse (10,000 taps) with maple cream doughnuts and other treats. Saturday and Sunday, 11- 3.

Mountainside Maple (10,000 taps) with free coffee and baked sweets. Saturday and Sunday, 11-3.

Running Saps Mapleworks (3300 taps) with syrup samples, donuts, and some fun kids activities. Saturday, 11-4.

MADwood Maple (200 taps) with pancakes and waffles and syrup samples. Saturday, 11-3.

Most of the sugarmakers will have products for sale.

Maps are available at the Town Clerk's Office and Beaudry's Store.

Huntington boasts over 50,000 taps, which can be found in a mix of commercial and private operations. This event is intended to raise awareness of the diversity of agriculture and forest products in the town.

The Huntington Conservation Commission encourages people to carpool, walk or use other means of non-motorized transportation.

For more information, contact Josh Burns, (973) 534 -3618.

Many sugarmakers welcome visitors throughout the season, not just on open house day. If you can't make it out on Open House day, call one of the sugarmakers listed inside to see if they can accommodate a visit on another day. If they are boiling, chances are they'd be more than happy to have you stop by.

Additionally, Mountainview Mapleworks at the Giroux Family Farm, 1324 Kenyon Road, Richmond will be participating in the Vermont Spring Maple Open House Weekend.

MMU to Present Little Shop of Horrors

The Theatre Department at Mount Mansfield Union High School presents the 1950s rock musical Little Shop of Horrors.

Spawned by a total eclipse of the sun, a new breed of plant life that feeds on human flesh and blood is discovered by dorky flower shop assistant Seymour Krelborn.

He names the plant, Audrey II, as an homage to his coworker, Audrey. The growing plant attracts a great deal of business for the previously struggling flower shop, which greatly pleases his boss, Mr. Mushnik. But the plant's need for food grows and Seymour turns to Audrey's boyfriend, a sadistic dentist to help satisfy the plant's seemingly unquenchable appetite.



Scenes from the MMU Theatre Department's April production of LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS. Courtesy photos



(This comic horror musical is fun for the whole family, but please be aware that some young children may find the large plant puppets scary. And, this play contains the portrayal of domestic abuse.)

Performances are Friday and Saturday, April 5 and 6, at 7:30 pm, and Sunday, April 7, at 2 pm - which just happens to be the weekend prior to the upcoming total eclipse of the sun, so beware!



Tickets are \$7 for students, children, MMU faculty and staff and \$10 General Admission. Tickets will be on sale at school starting on April 1. Tickets are available NOW online at tinyurl.com/MMULittleShop.

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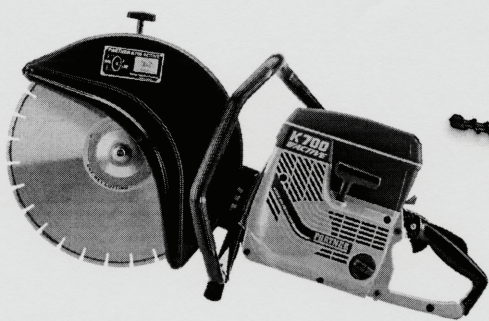
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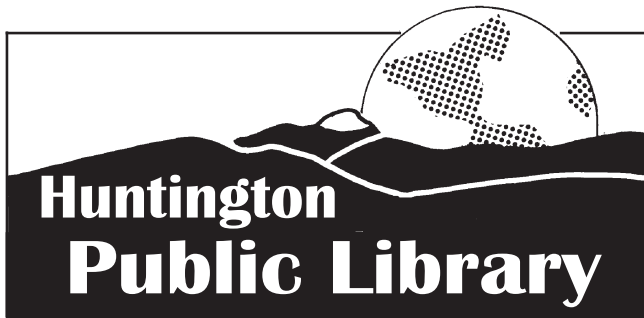
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Beaver Program Join Skip Lisle, beaver aficionado and creator of the famed BEAVER DECEIVERS, for a field walk at the Taft Road Beaver complex, 440 Taft Road, with landowner permission. Saturday, April 6, 10 am- noon. Come on two feet or two wheels - or if four wheels, please park on the east side of the road. This is a Nature Literacy Program co-sponsored by the Huntington Public Library and the Huntington Conservation Commission. Read up on the wonders of beavers - there are many books for all ages at the Library.

Egg Hunt In celebration of National Brothers & Sisters Day join us at the Library for an Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 30. The egg hunt is open for ages 0-6, with snacks, prizes, crafts, games, music and dancing for kids of all ages.

The hunt starts at 9:30 am sharp.

This event is sponsored by Huntington Littles WhatsApp and the Huntington Public Library. If you have Huntington kids under 6 years, to join, reach out to mctoddfamily@gmail.com.

Seed Swap and Social rescheduled to Sunday, April 7, 11am to 1 pm. Come meet fellow gardeners in town, pick up new ideas, and share seeds. Coffee and tea will be ready and hot.

New Adult Fiction COME AND GET IT by Kiley Reid; THE LAST DEVIL TO DIE by Richard Oseman; THE RISK OF DARKNESS by Susan Hill; THRONE OF GLASS, HEIR OF FIRE, COURT OF MIST AND FURY, COURT OF WINGS and RUIN by Sarah Maas; THIS OTHER EDEN by Paul Harding; BEFORE WE WERE INNOCENT by Ella Berman; WANDERING STARS by Tommy Orange; THE WATERS by Bonnie-Jo Campbell; THE GUEST by B.A. Paris; THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN EIGHT by Nalini Singh; THE MEASURE by Nikki Erlick.

Adult Nonfiction CLOSE AGAIN by Ella Francis Sanders; INCITING JOY by Ross Gay; 2024 NIGHT SKY ALMANAC; THE MILKWEED LANDS - AN EPIC STORY OF ONE PLANT - ITS NATURE AND ECOLOGY by Eric Lee-Mader; THE BRILLIANT ABYSS - EXPLORING THE MAJESTIC HIDDEN LIFE OF THE DEEP OCEAN AND THE LOOMING THREAT THAT IMPERILS IT by Helen Scales; THE WILD PLACES by Robert MacFarlane; EMERGENCE MAGAZINE - ECOLOGY, SPIRITUALITY AND CULTURE 2023 COMPENDIUM WHAT WE SOW- ON THE PERSONAL, ECOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SEEDS by Jennifer Jewell; BIRDING UNDER THE INFLUENCE - CYCLING ACROSS AMERICA IN SEARCH OF BIRDS AND RECOVERY by Dorian Anderson; NATURE'S TEMPLES - A NATURAL HISTORY OF OLD-GROWTH FORESTS - REVISED AND EXPANDED by Joan Maloof; MATERIAL WORLD - THE SIX RAW MATERIALS THAT SHAPE MODERN CIVILIZATION by Ed Conway.

Picture Books THIS BOOK IS BANNED by Raj Haldar; THE NORTH WIND AND THE SUN by

Philip Stead; I SHIP - A CONTAINER SHIP'S COLOSSAL JOURNEY by Kelly Rice Schmitt; ZOLA'S ELEPHANT by Randall de Seve; BIG RIG RESCUE by Chris Gall; I WANT TO BE SPAGHETTI by Keira Wright-Ruiz; BIG TRUCK PLAYDATE by Laurie Carmody; OUR NIPA HUT - A STORY IN THE PHILIPPINES by Rachel Abalos; THE TRUTH ABOUT DRAGONS by Lulie Leung; BIG by Vashiti Harrison; BIG BUNNY by Rowboat Watkins.

Juvenile Fiction JAWBREAKER by Christina Wyman; THE FORK, THE WITCH AND THE WORM - TALE FROM ALAGAESIS by Christopher Polini.

Juvenile Nonfiction ECLIPSE by Andy Rash; THE WORLD NEVER SLEEPS by Natalie Rompella; SWIMMING HOME by Susan Hand Shetterly; ECLIPSE by Darcy Pattison; EMERGENCY VEHICLES by Katy Duffield; WHAT IS A SOLAR ECLIPSE? by Dana Meachen Rau; THE MAGNIFICENT MIGRATION by Sy Montgomery.

Juvenile Graphic Novels GERONIMO STILTON REPORTER - CLEAN SWEEP; HISTORY COMICS - WWII by Kate Hannigan; SUNNY MAKES HER CASE by Jennifer Holm; CROSS MY HEART AND NEVER LIE by Matt Bagguely; THE TEA DRAGON TAPESTRY by K. O'Neill.

Weekly Coffee Chat with Don Dresser Wednesday at 9 am-10:30 am. Don has strong coffee and a variety of morning treats for a delicious way to break up the week by meeting friends in a great place. You can browse for books and check them out while you are there, too. Senior event sponsored by the Community Senior Center. Free event.

Family Drop-in Play Group Saturday, April 13, 9 am to noon. Come meet other families with small children in a supportive setting. The Library will be open to mull around, browse, and even check out material, children can play with toys and an easy seasonal craft will be out. Coffee and tea will be available. Please bring your own snack.

Planet Huntington Sunday, March 24, 5:30 pm. Join hosts and presenters Barb Winters and Don Dresser for the second part of their trip to Portugal.

Story Time and Play Group, Fridays, 9:15am-10:30am. Bring your little person ages 0 - 5 to listen to some books, sing songs, do a little crafting, and have some fun! All are welcome!

Book Group The fourth Saturday of every month at 10am. Join a group of avid readers who love to discuss books. March's read is THE BLUEST EYE by Toni Morrison. New readers always welcome.

Afterschool Lego Club Fridays in April (except April 26), 2:30 pm to 4:30pm (ish) There are also games and drawing supplies for anyone who would needs a break from LEGOs. A light snack will be provided.

Vacation Afternoon Family Movie Matinee Join your friends and neighbors for a matinee! Friday, April 26, 2 pm. Families and children are invited to watch KUNG FU PANDA (the first movie). Bring your friends and something cozy to snuggle with and we will pop the popcorn.

Please note that the Library will be closed on Sunday, March 31.

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Are You Ready for the April 8 Eclipse? NASA Solar System Ambassador Bridget Kimsey will be at the Library on March 23 at 11 am to get us ready for the big 2024 Total Solar Eclipse. Eclipse 101: Get to know what to look for, how to look for it, and how to keep your eyes and animals safe! Friends and families of all ages are welcome. No registration necessary.

Free Eclipse Viewing Glasses The library will begin distributing free eclipse viewing glasses provided by STAR Library Network at our Eclipse 101 event on March 23. Any remaining glasses will be available at the library for pickup during open hours.

Vermont Reads RFL joins libraries and community groups around Vermont in a big community discussion of *LAST NIGHT AT THE TELEGRAPH CLUB*, by Malinda Lo. The book is suited for teens and adults and focuses on a Chinese-American young woman coming of age in 1950s San Francisco. Copies of the book are available to take home (to keep or to borrow) now. We're following up our book discussion with a free swing dancing lesson on Friday April 5, at 6 pm, and a paper lantern-making project with Radiate Art Space on Sunday, April 21, at 3 pm. Register for either or both activities by emailing or call us.

Welcome New Babies We will be greeting our youngest residents and future book lovers at our annual baby brunch and book dedication on Sunday, April 7. We have mailed out invitations to Richmond families who welcomed a new baby in 2023 but if you should have received an invitation and one did not arrive, do not despair. Call the Library.

Solar Eclipse Scavenger Hunt To help our young library patrons understand and prepare for Vermont's total solar eclipse on April 8, we will have a scavenger hunt set up throughout the Library during the month of March. Curious kids can hunt for images of the sun in all phases of the eclipse and take note of what time the sun will appear in our sky like that on Eclipse Day. The hunt begins and ends at the youth desk on the second floor.

Lego Club We have loads of Legos. Periodically we offer multi-week sessions of after-school Lego Club fun for ages 4 - 12. Lego enthusiasts work together or separately to build amazing projects. No registration is necessary, just come play. The next six-week Lego Club session will be on Tuesdays, March 12 - April 16, from 3 pm to 4 pm.

Local Children's Author Book Reading/Storytime Do you love sharing the outdoors with the young people in your life? Join us for this interactive book reading suited for 2-6-year-olds. Debut children's author and local musician Rusty Charpentier will be singing songs, leading games, and reading *It's BEAUTIFUL OUTSIDE TODAY*. In this story, two kitties venture outside to enjoy the weather no matter the season, reminding us that any day is a beautiful day with exciting and fun things to do. This book is full of positivity and excitement for spending the day together with loved ones and enjoying nature. Join us in the Community Room on Saturday, April 13, at 10:30.

Free Stuff Pause in the entryway and browse the bins. Everything is free. There are many adult DVDs featuring great movies and TV shows and adult fiction and nonfiction audiobooks on CD. See something you like - take it.

Cookbook Club Cookbook Club meets monthly on second Saturdays at noon. On April 13, the group will be discussing and eating recipes from *Maple: 100 Sweet and Savory Recipes* Featuring Pure Maple Syrup. Space is limited and registration is required. Email Suzanne at skrohn@richmondvt.gov for information or to sign up.

New! Seed Library Our new seed library is officially open for (free) business. Stop in to "check out" some of our seeds generously donated by High Mowing, FedCo, Annie's and Seed Savers Exchange. If possible, plan to save and bring back some of your harvested seeds for next year! Stop in or email skrohn@richmondvt.gov for more information.

AARP Volunteer Tax Preparers Volunteers working with AARP are meeting with seniors to prepare tax returns in the library community room on Tuesday mornings, February 6 - April 9. Call the library to schedule an appointment.

(Mostly) Fiction Book Group Join us in the Mezzanine Lounge on April 9 at 6 pm to discuss *ATLAS OF THE HUMAN HEART* by Brene Brown. Contact Gwen Landis (434-5012; gwennie1972@yahoo.com) for information on joining this group.

Mystery Book Group Join us in the Mezzanine Lounge on April 18 at 7 pm to discuss *WILD JUSTICE*, by Phillip Margolin. Contact Maureen Parent (434-2055, msparent@gmavt.net) with any questions.

Climate Action Book Discussion In collaboration with Richmond Climate Action Committee, we will be discussing *THE QUICKENING: CREATION AND COMMUNITY at the Ends of the Earth*, by Elizabeth Rush, on May 22 at 7pm. Copies of the book will be available in early April.

Children's Art from Ukraine On loan from The Fermata Arts Foundation in Avon, Connecticut, we will be displaying sixteen drawings done by students of the Vasylykivskyi Children's Art School in Izyum, Kharkiv region, Ukraine. Ranging in age from 9 to 14, students created a piece in support of Fermata's mission of promoting peace through arts and culture.

Weekly/Monthly Children's Programs Weekly programs at the RFL run from September through May and follow the MMUUSD schedule for vacation days and weather closure days.

Storytime/Playgroup The good times kick off with stories and action songs in the Library Community Room and then the toys come out for free play with friends new and old. Co-sponsored by the Library and the Lund Center. Kids infant through five years and their grown-ups are invited to join the fun on Wednesdays from 10 am until noon.

continue to page 17

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Richmond Selectboard

Reported by Mark Aiken

The Richmond Selectboard met on Monday, March 4, just 24 hours before "go-time" – that is, Richmond's Town Meeting.

Selectboard Chair Jay Furr, who would run (and win) the next day unopposed took advantage of the Public Comment period to point out that this would be Selectboard member Jeff Forward's final meeting in this role. Forward was thanked for his service.

Town Meeting Reminder The first agenda item – old news by the time this report sees daylight – was a reminder that Town Meeting would be held the next day at Camels Hump Middle School and that the meeting agenda and Town Report were available on the Richmond town website.

Furr noted that the school budget vote was not to be held on Town Meeting Day; that vote was rescheduled for April 2 as a result of changes at the state level regarding school funding. Town Manager Josh Arneson noted that some residents had already turned in ballots that included the school budget vote. He noted that those school budget ballots would be discarded and new ballots remailed. He also emphasized that the state was reimbursing towns for the cost of the revote.

Appointment to Housing Committee The Board then considered Andrew Mannix, an applicant for one of three vacancies on the Housing committee. (Three vacancies! Surprising, considering how much interest residents have shown in this issue over the past several months in the form of social media postings and discussions at various meetings.) Selectboard members voted unanimously to appoint Mannix to the committee.

Discussion of No More Cash at the Dump Ryan Dinneen from the Casella Waste Dropoff Center on Rogers Lane described a plan to stop accepting cash at the transfer site. He noted that seven other locations have gone cashless and that exact change would be accepted. He said that advance notice would be given before the change was implemented.

Library Construction and Other Library Updates Library Trustee Laurie Dana updated the Board on the upcoming construction to the exterior of the library building using ARPA funds. The work is scheduled to be done and completed this summer, Dana said. One note was the fact that several trees will have to be taken down in order for the work to be performed, so the Board members discussed how to fund this work (tree maintenance isn't really a capital investment and as such doesn't really qualify for ARPA funding). The Board opted to use funds from the Town Center Reserve Fund

for this piece of the project.

Dana also explained some grant opportunities for the Richmond Free Library's Board members voted to give the Library permission to apply for grants supporting high speed internet at the Library and for repair to the Library's ramp and steps.

Eclipse Matters Furr reminded the Board that on April 8, 2024, there will be a solar eclipse – the phenomenon that occurs when the earth, sun, and moon line up. Such an event is exceedingly rare, and it is possible that Vermont will see many visitors as the state is one of the prime viewing locations for the event.

Furr said that members of the Andrews Forest and Richmond Trails Committees have been made aware of the event and that any mud season trail closures should be publicized. There will be a police officer and – even more importantly – Port-o-Potties at Volunteer Green for the event. The Library has over 200 eclipse-viewing glasses which will be handed out at an educational event on March 23. Richmond schools have glasses for staff and students.

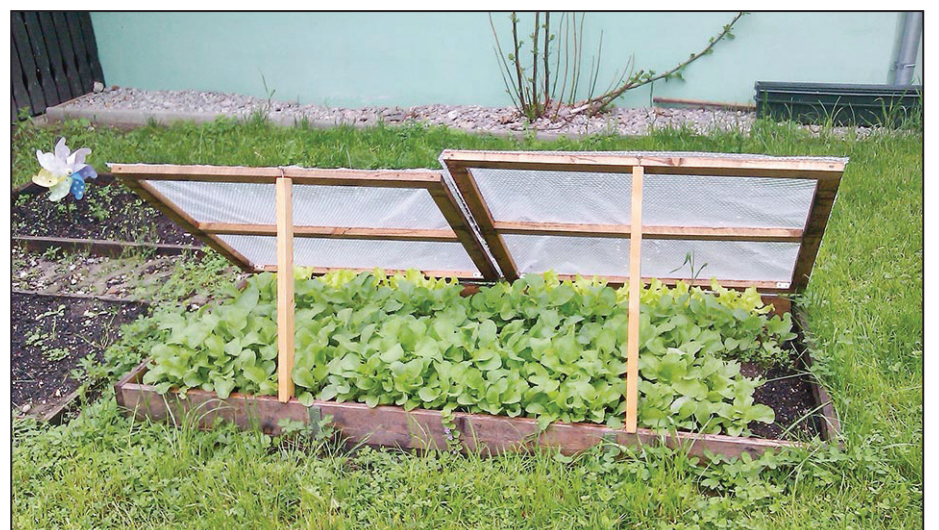
Selectboard member David Sander stated the importance of informational postings so people know where to park. Board member Forward said he heard estimates that 200,000 to 600,000 people may visit Vermont for the eclipse.

Policing Update The Board heard an update from the Police Governance Committee which basically said that everything is currently working well and that all parties are keeping a close eye and working hard to keep things that way.

Purchase of a New Roadside Mower The Board discussed, then voted to purchase a new mower for the sides of Richmond's roadways. Board member Sander noted that Richmond was famous for having well-maintained roadways, and this is no mistake.

The Rest of the Meeting Selectboard members set April 1, 2024 (no joke) for a hearing on the fiscal year 2025 Capital Plan. They discussed the Childcare Contribution payroll tax for town employees. The Board approved Second Class liquor licenses for Cumberland Farms and the Richmond Market, and they approved First Class liquor licenses for Papa McKee's Pizza and Stone's Throw Pizza. They reviewed advice from the town's attorney and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns regarding subcommittee meetings and the Open Meeting Law. Finally, they reviewed and approved minutes, purchase orders (there were actually none), and warrants, and went home ready to return to CHMS the next morning for Richmond's Town Meeting.

Cold Frames as Season Extenders



Now is the time to think about planting early spring greens. A season-extending cold frame can be built using an old window and salvaged wood to allow for earlier planting and harvest of many vegetables including spring greens like lettuce. See article on page 17. Photo: Bernadette Kaufmann/Pixabay, courtesy of the UVM Extension System

Huntington Selectboard

Reported by Paul Susen

The Huntington Selectboard met on February 12, 19 and 26. Topics included a conversation with the local legislative delegation, whether to support a grant application for an electric vehicle charging station, reducing erosion on the Texas Hill buyout property, the Old Town Forest management plan, the archeological report on the preferred alternative wastewater site, a revised memorandum of understanding with the Library Trustees, recommendation from the Old Firehouse Committee, highway operations, communications and appointments.

Senator Bray, Senator Hardy, Representative Stevens and Representative Wood met with the Selectboard to discuss pending legislative changes which would affect the town, including flood plains, reappraisals and the open meeting law. Senator Bray Chairs the Natural Resources and Energy Committee. As to river corridors and flood plains, the modifications would update mapping, and change rule making and permitting.

However, this writer notes that the Governor as well as the Agency of Natural Resources have already expressed concerns. Under the subject of reappraisals, the legislators noted that action on regulations by the tax department remains pending, definition of assets are being considered for expansion to include non-property and more frequent reappraisals should be expected. Previous articles have noted that limited resources, both human and financial, have made it difficult for towns to conduct appraisals more frequently. Expansion of opportunities to participate in public meetings has been discussed in the legislature. This would be accomplished by requiring the meetings to be made hybrid so that people could participate online. However, there are towns, including Huntington, where technical obstacles currently preclude live interactive meetings being conducted over the internet as well. It should be noted that the proposed FY24-25 budget includes \$1000 from ARPA funds for the purchase of hybrid technology equipment. In the last **TIMES INK!**, I mentioned that the Selectboard had received a letter from the state advising them of the projected increase in property taxes on the education side of the ledger. Although the Selectboard stated it might bring up the matter with the delegation, the issue was not broached.

Nix on Charging Station for Electric Vehicles
A discussion was held over two meetings about whether to support a grant application which would result in the installation of a charging station for electric vehicles at either the Audubon parking area or the Library. The Selectboard did not support the proposal for several reasons including concerns regarding public safety; unknown insurance costs; whether enough local demand exists; reserved space would be required; uncertain town financial and logistical obligations; a Level 2 station takes a substantial amount of time to charge an EV vehicle (3-phase power is not available in Huntington); expanding rather than maintaining services; assuming a role comparable to a public utility company; and equity.

FEMA Property Maintenance Erosion at the Texas Hill buyout property has been the source of continued interest and concern. The Conservation Commission requested that \$3000 of their \$10,000 allocation (if voters support the proposed FY 2024-2025 budget at town meeting) from ARPA funds for this FY24-25 project be used for topping trees while maintaining the root systems. The Selectboard supported the idea. Further discussion centered on use of the remaining funds and when this work might be projected to take place.

Old Town Forest Plan Chittenden County Forrester Ethan Tapper presented the Old Town Forest plan. He supports the continued passive management of the plan and remarked that the Huntington Community Forest is actively managed. Discussion focused on a reasonable timetable for reconsideration of the plan, easements, invasive species, use of volunteers and monitoring actions. The Selectboard supported the plan.

Lower Village Wastewater Dubois & King, Consulting Engineers out of South Burlington, reported on the archeological study of the preferred alternative wastewater project site in the Lower Village. No concerns were found which means that the Selectboard can continue to work on the questions of feasibility and affordability.

Memorandum of Understanding After a long, involved process, the Selectboard signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Library Trustees in November 2022. That memorandum was to be reviewed and reauthorized on an annual basis. However, that process was not completed in 2023. Agreement on non-substantive changes have been made and both parties have now agreed to the revised memorandum.

Cleaning Out the Old Firehouse The Old Firehouse Committee expressed its desire to discard odds and ends from that building. The Selectboard supported the idea with the request that the committee share what is available before the objects are tossed. Also, there may be applicable monies available for this purpose from the Chittenden County Solid Waste District Clean Up Fund.

Transportation The Selectboard voted to sign the 2024 Vermont Agency of Transportation Certificate of Compliance for Town Roads and Bridge Standards and Network Inventory. Under public comment, a resident inquired about the radar sign south of the village on the east side of Main Road before East Street and after you pass Raven Ridge Road on the left. The resident asked whether the sign could be moved further uphill to provide drivers with more notice regarding the change in speed limit from 35 mph to 25 mph in the village. Readers are reminded that the radar sign in question was blown from the stakes in the major windstorm and returned to the town garage to be repaired. The Selectboard stated it would discuss the matter with the Highway Foreman.

Letters of Complaint Letters were received from a resident expressing concerns regarding the availability of recordings from meetings, location of bollards (short thick posts used to divert traffic) and email. In response, it was stated that recordings were available upon request and that the bollards were not in violation of zoning regulations. An additional letter was received from the same resident which was circulated but not discussed nor made public. Finally, a letter was received from a different Huntington resident who stated her opinion regarding the burning of tree debris from the road rights of way after the recent significant windstorm.

Appointments The Selectboard made the following appointments: Nate Sands as Tree Warden (one year term), Becky Cozzens as Town Service Officer (one-year term), Terry Boyle and Linda Fickbohm as Town Hall Committee members (three-year terms), Jenn Randall as Planning Commission Representative on Development Review Board (one-year term), Susan Gulrajani as Development Review Board member (final year of an existing three-year term), Jeannette Segale and Guthrie Smith as Conservation Commission members (four-year terms), and Jennifer Esser as Conservation Commission member (three-year term).



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Canine Visitor Inspires Student Writing

Ms. Motta's First Grade Class at Brewster-Pierce Memorial School has a regular canine visitor each week. Tipper and his humans, Juliet and Papa Pete, come to visit and interact with the students and adults during writing time. Tipper inspires the writers. Please read their work below.

Tipper is a therapy dog and Tipper is soft. The color of Tipper is black. Tipper is gentle. Tipper is 13. I really, really like Tipper
—Gretta

Tipper is a therapy dog and therapy dogs help people stay calm.
—Kassel

Tipper is a therapy dog. Tipper is soft.
—Emmett

Tipper is a girl with long fingernails and she has long whiskers. Tipper is 13.
—Hunter



Tipper the therapy dog and the star visitor to Ms. Motta's First Grade class, calmly enjoys the attention of some of her many admirers.

Tipper is a therapy dog. She is fun and gentle, soft and cute and cuddly! She is a girl and she is 13 years old.
—Alyssa

Tipper is a therapy dog, she is sweet and soft. Her fur is black. She is 13.
—Atom

She walks around the classroom. Tipper has soft fur. Feel her fur.
—Kayra

Tipper is gentle and playful. She likes to come. Her color is black. She is 13 years old.
—Rylie

Tipper is a therapy dog. I like Tipper because she is black.
—Elena

Tipper is a therapy dog. She is gentle. Tipper is fun. She is soft and Tipper is playful. Tipper is black. Tipper has big whiskers. Tipper is 13 years old.
—Evan

Tipper came to visit. I like when she visits. Tipper is 13 years old.
—Emmet



Juliet and Papa Pete look at the work done by the students during the classroom visit by Tipper, the therapy dog. Photos: Aimee Motta



Tipper is a black dog. I love that she walks around the school.
—Oliver

Tipper is a therapy dog and a nice dog. Tipper's color is black.
—Opal

Tipper is a therapy dog. She has dark fur.
—Sully

MMUUSD Board

Reported by Diane Wester
School Board Meetings, February 2024

The lion's share of time spent in the two February meetings was devoted to trying to make sense of the twists and turns in the education funding plan revised by Montpelier through Act 127.

The District had an approved budget before the State suggested adding more to it for one time capital expenditures to being the total under 10%. Due to a quick reversal in the law from the legislature, the District removed these one time expenditures of \$5.5 million from the budget to return it to its original condition.

The overall increase of this budget is 8.77%. The largest contributing factor to this increase is double-digit health insurance costs. The last teacher's contract edged in the salary increases over a few years – including this one. There was also a relatively nominal increase due to inflation.

The total budget the Board approved unanimously for FY 25 was \$60,123.48. There are no additional new programs from last year.

The capital expenditures needed for the buildings will be handled over time, some through the Capital Improvement Fund, some probably funded through a bond request, in order of greatest need.

It was determined the budget and articles needed to elect officers would need to be re-written. The procedures for old ballots (discarded) and new ballots, both paper and in-person were explained. Flyers and public notices will be re-published with the current numbers.

Voting on the school budget will be April 2, 2024.

Board members emphasized that community members should communicate with their legislators about the property tax structure and tax formula. The Board is responsible only for setting a budget that will meet the needs of the students.

Brown's River Principal Kevin Hamilton reported on the state of the school emphasizing Community/Family engagement, participation in clubs, and participation in the advisory period. It was noted during the generation of the budget meetings that the greatest need for counseling occurred during the middle school years.

Due to the extensive Act 127 discussions during these two meetings, all committee reports and policy governance reports were postponed to a later date.

The next regularly scheduled school board meeting is March 11, 2024.

Valley Stage to Present Two April Concerts in Richmond



Above, local band Marsh Lights will perform in Richmond on April 4; below, Canadian singer-songwriter Madeleine Roger will take the stage on April 14 as part of the P.M. Sundays concert series. Both events are produced by Valley Stage.



built over years of performing together makes for a band that can go light and heavy, solemn and joyful, fast and slow.

Madeleine Roger is a singer-songwriter from Winnipeg, Manitoba. While skillfully accompanying herself on acoustic guitar, it is her artistry as a songwriter that can silence a room, uniting her lyrical prowess with breathtaking melodies that linger long after they are sung. Don Sheldon,

producer of the concert series, notes "She will be our final performer for this season." These concerts will take place at the Richmond Congregational Church at 20 Church Street. Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$27.50 day of show. Seniors (65+) and children 16 and under are \$17.50 in advance and \$20 day of show.

For more information about these concerts, tickets and all Valley Stage events: www.valleystage.net or contact Don Sheldon at 802-434-4563 or don@valleystage.net

Local band MARSH LIGHTS will perform on Thursday, April 4 at 7 pm as part of the Valley Stage season, while the monthly P.M. Sundays concert will have Canadian Madeleine Roger take the stage on Sunday, April 14, beginning at 4 pm.

Marsh Lights plays acoustic folk-grass music with a hyper-literate edge and beautiful execution. Colby Crehan and her band-mates have received accolades, including Vermont Vocalist of the Year and Vermont Song of the Year (Tammie Awards, Barre-Montpelier Times-Argus). The group's strong rapport

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March 28: Maundy Thursday
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March 31:

Easter Sunday Sunrise Service
at the Cozzens' home (TBA)

Church Service at 9 am

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Town Meeting Day Sees

Huntington Meeting Concludes at Noon

Reported by Paul Susen

The Huntington Town Meeting took place in person on March 6, 2024, at the Brewster-Pierce Memorial School. The meeting was well attended throughout the morning. After some discussion, all articles passed without objection. There were presentations by Senator Hardy, Representative Stevens and Representative Woods, Huntington Lister

ance will be above the required contingency of \$125,000 and closer to \$200,000. The amounts being reallocated, and the respective reserves are as follows: \$118,000 to the Highway Bridge Reserve (Article 5); \$42,826 to the Highway Paving Reserve (Article 6) and \$5,000 to the Highway Equipment Reserve (Article 7). After discussion, these three articles were each voted with no opposition.

Article 8 requested that voters agree to the Selectboard recommendation of a 4.9% increase in expenditures. Under point of order, a resident noted

regulations (specifically mapping), and the recent change to not allow people headed to the Community Forest to cross private land due to an unfortunate lack of respect displayed by some hikers (alternative paths are being explored but any modification will take time).

Senator Hardy discussed housing, flood recovery and resilience, infrastructure, the definition of first responders, grant programs, public safety, financing schools, and the open meeting law. Representative Stevens reviewed the status of bills in general including a broad perspective and focused specifically on housing. Representative Woods referenced the 650 children who are being housed temporarily in motels. She

also commented on remediation to avoid death from drug overdoses. Representative Stevens expressed his thanks for Representative Woods' tireless efforts to deal with some very tough and critically important issues affecting vulnerable individuals and families.

Huntington Lister Susan Gulrajani reviewed the property reappraisal process which has been underway since last year and will be completed by June 2025. The last appraisals were completed in 2015. This round will affect the 2025 tax bills.

Students from the University of Vermont are working with the Conservation Commission on flood resilience strategies in Huntington. They delivered a formal presentation on the reasons for the problems and ideas on what can be done with good planning and adequate professional and financial resources. A separate group of University of Vermont students are working with the Conservation Commission on climate adaptability and they were available at a table with a display and answered questions.

Heidi Racht presented the 2024 Olga Hallock award to Paula Kelley. Ms. Racht mentioned a long list of Ms. Kelley's community accomplishments and involvement including School Board, Library Trustee, Cemetery Trustee, Haunted Forest volunteer, and Times Ink! director.



Susan Gulrajani, and a group of students from the University of Vermont. The Olga Hallock Award was presented to Paula Kelley. Retired Town Administrator Barbara Elliot and retiring Highway Foreman Yogi Alger were both commended. The new Town Administrator Adam Argo and Road Foreman Jonathan Dennis were introduced.

Article 1, required by law, certifies that Town



that a typographical error existed in the warning of this article. Fiscal Year 2023-2024 was amended by a vote from the floor to Fiscal Year 2024-2025. The proposal calls for a total budget of \$2,395,465 of

which \$2,008,920 will be collected from taxes and \$386,544 is non-tax revenue. Discussion included comments on the solar array on the library roof, meeting hybrid technology, debt service and borrowing, use of ARPA dollars and the process to commit the unallocated amount, building permits, the certificate of occupancy fee, and the number and function of drivers with commercial driver licenses. The FY 2024-2025 budget passed without objection.

Article 9 allows residents to bring up any non-binding business. Discussion included conservation projects, the Lower Village wastewater feasibility and affordability process, zoning

Photos, clockwise, from top left: Paula Kelley, recipient of the Olga Hallock Award for Community Service; Selectboard board members Dori Barton, Larry Haskins Junior and Everett Lewis Junior; Jeannette Segale, left, co-chair of the Conservation Commission, introduces UVM students who will present the results of their work in the town on addressing flood resiliency; Nat Weaver makes point; Scott Hansen asks a question about the highway budget.



Huntington Town Meeting Photos:
Bobbi LoCicero

Well-Attended Meetings

Richmond Has Mixed Results

Submitted by Linda Parent

Residents gathered March 5 at Camels Hump Middle School to take care of the business of our town. Moderator Clint Buxton welcomed all and reviewed the ins and outs of the procedures of the meeting. A moment of silence in honor of veterans and those now serving in the military to protect the freedoms we have today. Boy Scout Troop #23 served as Honor Guard and presented the national and state flags. This year, approximately 250 people attended the in-person meeting, many more than in previous years. In attendance were 11 members of the AmeriCorp group serving with the Wiliston FEMA office.

Town Manager Josh Arneson presented the proposed budget of \$4,819,779 to meet expenses and liabilities of the Town for Fiscal Year 2025. After the presentation, Richmond resident, Cara LaBounty proposed an amendment to remove \$200,000 from the budget. This was proposed to lower the tax rate. This vote was taken by "paper ballot" and was defeated; Yes to reduce the

budget and No to hold the budget at the printed amount. The budget later passed in the original amount of \$4,819,779 by voice vote.

Other articles were voted on and approved to support social service groups listed in the warning, totaling \$16,760.

Jeff Forward gave a presentation of the Article 12 bond vote, regarding the renovation & capital improvements to the Richmond Town Center. This article was voted by Australian ballot. The total proposed bond would have been



Thanks were expressed to Select-board member Jeff Forward who is stepping down from the board.

Thanks to all who volunteered their time to be election workers and the groups who set up their information and wares for all the town to see. Special thanks to the Boy Scouts of Troop #23 who helped set up and tear down the gymnasium. Thank you to the staff of Camels Hump Middle School for their assistance with the day. The lunch this year was sponsored by the Community Senior Center. It was a tremendous hit! Thank you.



\$9,841,603, subject to reduction of grant funds and other state & federal aid. This bond vote was defeated, with a vote of Yes 666 and No 772.

Article 13 on the ballot was to approve funding the Conservation Fund by adding one cent to the town tax rate. This article passed, Yes 1014 and No 420.

Close to 1500 voters cast their ballots early and throughout the day.

All unopposed officers were elected: Clint Buxton, Moderator; Jay Furr, three-year Select-board; Dennis Gile, Cemetery Trustee; Rafael Kennedy, Library Trustee; Andy Squires, Constable; and Katie Nelson, MMUUSD School Director.

This year, the ballot had one contested race, for the two-year position of Selectboard member: Adam Wood was the winner with 878 votes. His

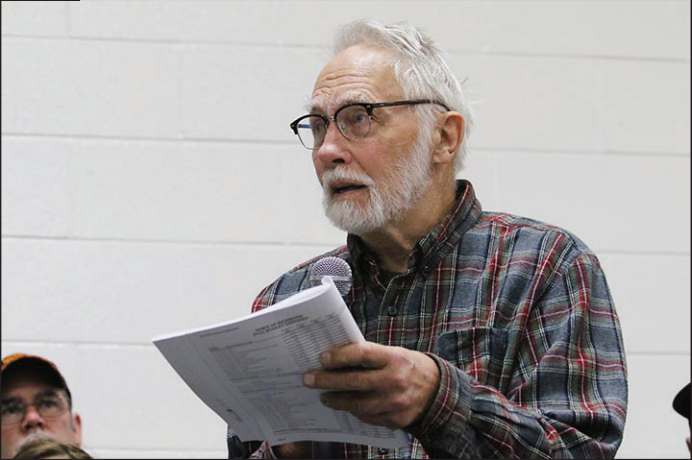
opponent was Matthew Moultroupe with 458 votes.

Under other non-binding business, a resolution was presented and approved to support an immediate and permanent ceasefire by both Hamas and Israeli governments. This was supported by the agreement of those present.

Also under non-binding business, the question of shall the town investigate developing housing on the town owned property located on Browns Court, locally referred to as Browns Court Ballfield. The consensus of those present was that the ballfield should remain a recreational area, with the possibility of housing to be explored elsewhere in Richmond.



Photos, clockwise, from top right: Photographer Jared Katz, as seen through the lens of photographer Jake Levison; the view from the back of the room shows a good Town Meeting Attendance; Elections officials Marshall Paulsen, Francis Churchill, and Becky Vigneault; Mary Houle spoke passionately in favor of retaining the current uses of Browns Court, a property, she recalled from childhood, was intended to remain a place for play and recreation in perpetuity; Jack Linn speaks in support of the police, and also of reducing the budget by \$200,000 in accordance with Cara LaBounty's motion to amend the budget. Linn expressed his support and respect for the officers and also his support for reducing the budget wherever possible; Daphne Loesel looks to mom, Katie, after happily receiving her mom's "I voted" sticker.



Richmond Town Meeting Photos
Jared Latz (color) & Jake Levison (black & white)

Richmond's Food Shelf: Making

by Heidi Racht

Sixteen years ago, Marcia Levison stopped by the Miscellany Mart on Bridge Street in Richmond and asked Carol LaRue and Edythe Slayton, who were coordinating the community thrift shop and food shelf, if they needed any help. After some discussion with LaRue and others who had been involved with the Mart, where the proceeds went to community food distribution, Levison decided then and there to make a commitment to the organization. She gathered a committee of friends and existing community members already working at the Mart to form a Board of Directors after her good friend Jane Barlowe helped her file the 27-page application to the IRS for 501c3 nonprofit status. She reflected recently, "We formalized the grassroots effort of the Miscellany Mart to feed people in the community."

One of the first acts of the new Board was to change the name to more directly reflect the purpose of its bylaws. Simply put, it became the Richmond Food Shelf and Thrift Store (RFS). And, closely following the reorganization, the Board decided to become a Network Resource Partner with the Vermont Foodbank, which allowed it to use the resource to apply for (and receive) grants and other benefits under the umbrella of the larger organization. Attending the conferences and trainings enabled them to get the Richmond Food Shelf "on its feet" in the early days.

The organizers of the new Richmond Food Shelf worked closely with the Foodbank to learn about how to best help the people they



Marcia Levison will retire as director of the Richmond Food Shelf and Thrift Store after 16 years at the helm. Here she spends some time in the store with her successor, Mary Joy (MJ) Patchett, who will take on this important community service organization at the end of April.

serve. Levison explained, "They educated us on food insecurity, generational and crisis poverty, which has always existed." It was important to understand "how does one get to the food shelf?" before they could help with food distribution. It is not always easy to ask for food – and "some people needed help walking in the door." Levison noted that they were taking on this community project at the right time and were ready to see it evolve. "We had a lot of help," she reminisced, "individuals, family, kids, businesses."

Levison remarked that inheriting an existing storefront right in the middle of the town's business block meant that the volunteers did

not have to look for a space. She commented that North Star Lodge #12 of Grand Lodge of Vermont Free & Accepted Masons, which owns the building, "has been a great landlord."

The Richmond Food Shelf is part of the space that is mostly occupied by the thrift shop that supports it. By creating relationships with consignment shops like Creative Consignments in Stowe, the RFS is able to have quality clothing from people who put their clothes on consignment and if not sold, donate them to the RFS. The volunteers at RFS spend time sorting through the donations, organizing the window displays and racks of clothing, and pricing the clothes. It is a "labor-intensive endeavor," including the seasonal changeover with deals that are intended to clear out the store to make room for new inventory. Due to limited space, the clothes are carefully chosen. Levison admitted that "some people think we're picky." She also noted that the inventory needs to change "to keep us relevant." After all, the RFS has "regulars" looking for great clothes at great prices.

"I am most proud," Levison said, "that we stayed open during the entire pandemic. It was quite a feat." She described it as a time "surrounded by fear." For only three weeks, the staff took boxes of food out to cars, then began letting people come in for food "one at a time." The thrift store was closed, but the food shelf remained open with the dedication of the volunteers.

Levison works closely with the Board, which she describes as "exemplary." It is "a group of people who get things done." The volunteers are well-trained and operate with "social justice in mind. They serve without judgment." Levison talked extensively about the stigma of the food shelf, which has been evolving into acceptance, noting, "It's not easy for people to ask for food. Once people come in, they will not be judged."

The Richmond Food Shelf's patrons cross all ages. "We feed many elders on fixed income. Before COVID, we were only serving certain towns." Now, and in 2023, the Food Shelf serves an average of 71 families each month. They purchased and distributed over \$44,000 of food in 2023. The money that is raised from the thrift shop is also subsidized by donations from community members and businesses. The finances of the Food Shelf are wrapped in a goal for it to be self-sustaining. The organization does not ask for support from taxpayers of the towns it serves.

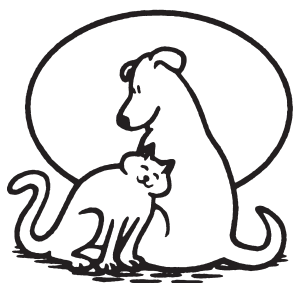
"We are fortunate to live in these generous communities," Levison said. "Many who now donate to the Food Shelf may have had food insecurity at times in their lives. They remember it and are generous."

continue to next page



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A Local Commitment to Social Justice

The RFS has a close relationship with the Richmond Market, where it buys most of its food, and the money is recycled back into the community. Levison explained that the Market has been “very supportive” and has a program at the cash registers called Coins for Community.



The front windows on the sidewalk provide an opportunity to show the new clothing in the store as well as sending messages of thanks. Photo from the RFS Facebook page

Customers are asked if they would like to round up their purchase to the next dollar and the funds are split between four nonprofits; the Food Shelf has always been in this program since its inception. The program was the idea of Marie Thomas, who was also the director of Our Community Cares Camp for many years. The RFS also orders monthly from the Vermont Foodbank and food is delivered to their front door.

Food drives are conducted by the churches. The Knights of Columbus, organized by Doug St. Amour at Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Catholic Church, hands out bags to the congregation to fill with newly purchased food, and volunteers from the Richmond Congregational Church also have food drives. Most recently, the Souper Bowl of Caring which brought in 424 cans of Progresso soup! The Girl Scouts and kids in the town school have food drives in their classrooms. Volunteers also work on other aspects of promoting the Food Shelf, which has Facebook and Instagram accounts, thanks to the efforts of MMU junior Dira Bush, who photographs and posts new clothing arrivals

to the thrift store. (@richmondfoodshelfstore) Another goal is nutritious food, Levison said. “We try and stay away from sugar and carbohydrate-laden foods.” The space is limited and they work hard to have choices. Levison confided that they keep their eye on the sales at the Richmond Market and “load up” the shelves in the back storeroom.

Fresh produce is available in the summer. Judy Bush and her volunteers started a community food shelf garden, generously given space by Tim and Marie Schonholtz on Wes White Hill that produced organic food twice a week. This program no longer exists and the RFS will work with the VYCC this year. Throughout the year, good food comes in every week: fresh eggs, yoghurt, fresh produce.

This all leads to the fact that the Richmond Food Shelf is in good financial standing and Marcia Levison has decided to retire at the end of April. She is excited to be leaving the organization “in capable hands.” Richmond resident Mary Joy Patchett, who goes by MJ, has been working at the food shelf since November. Patchett has been doing the food part of the operation and will now be taking on the thrift store. She will bring a new perspective to the food

shelf, if only that she is three decades younger. Levison commented that the Board will be more active during this time of transition. The Board includes: Sue Bender, Kirsten Bower, Angie Jacobs and Becky Vigneault.

A Long Journey Levison muses that both she and Patchett came to this organization out of a sense of commitment to social justice. Patchett was a music major and Levison’s degree was in Animal Science. But, working for the greater good involves a dedication to learning new skills like basic accounting, supervising volunteers and working with a variety of people in the community.

Moving to Vermont in 1983 and to Richmond in 1985, Levison was a nationally-certified massage therapist. When asked about the certification test she took decades ago, she said she remembered the rigorous anatomy test. Her massage studio was, for a while, upstairs in the business block in Richmond, which put her right in the heart of the small businesses and restaurants in the town. Levison had many loyal clients and her appointment book was always filled. Already into the Bridge Street business

scene, she also was able to enjoy the other work possibilities in the community: a couple of shifts at Daily Bread Bakery and even putting in a couple of years as the ad sales rep for this newspaper. (Editor’s note: She was great.)

A chance opportunity to attend a home birth in Huntington Center in 1990 (Abbott Rachampbell, the second son of good friends Heidi Racht and Alan Campbell) led to a new career. Levison became a certified doula and enjoyed almost two decades of working with pregnant women and new babies and their families. She reflected that she loved the work, was “quite busy” and then “aged out” as it, too, required a lot of energy.

During that time, she and her husband Jake had two children, Bess and Aaron, and there were gardens and community activities that rounded out their lives on Dugway Road and Stage Road in Jonesville, where they moved in 1996. Jake Levison’s support of his wife, working full time as an educator at Champlain Valley Union High School, enabled her to do service work. In fact, she remembered her whole family was involved with pulling up old carpet in the store (finding a beautiful hardwood floor) and preparing it to reopen.

Richmond Food Shelf came along when Levison was looking to make a change in her life. As a Miscellaneous Mart regular, her first thought was to volunteer. But being the director and guiding the Food Shelf through a period of transformation and then stability has been very rewarding. She has worked to create a consistent schedule of open hours with the dedicated volunteer staff, although on occasion, the Food Shelf might close due to weather. Those who need the Food Shelf can count on the schedule, the good food, the kind treatment and a clean store. She explained that it is the details that make the difference, stating, “I was brought up to do a good job. To pay attention to detail and appearance.”

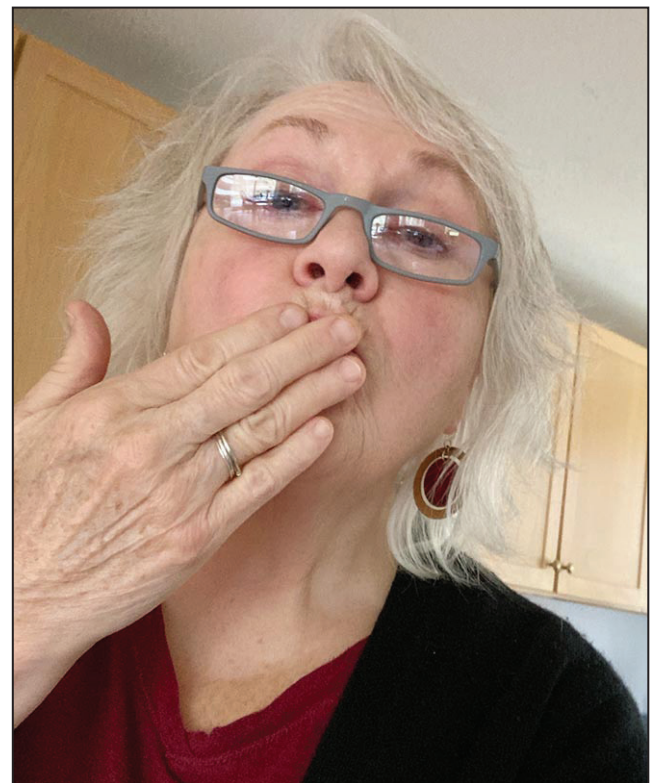
And the Richmond Marcia Levison blowing a kiss for the camera. Photo: Jake Levison



Display in the window of the Richmond Food Shelf following the Richmond Congregational Church’s Souper Bowl of Sunday, a food drive that brought in 424 cans of Progresso soup to be distributed in the community. Photo: RFS Facebook

community has certainly benefitted greatly from Levison’s efforts at the Richmond Food Shelf. She casts a wide net and makes sure that those in need benefit from the efforts of RFS. It has good visibility in a time when people are recognizing that food insecurity is real and needs to be addressed in a meaningfully and consistently. “We are trying to do our work in a quiet, dignified manner,” Levison observed.

Marcia Levison said she is looking forward to spending time with her perennials, but, she confided, “I will also be looking for a new project.”



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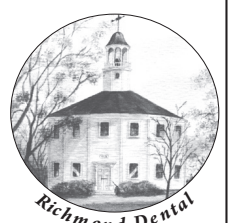
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Rep. Jana Brown

O’e’re halfway through the 2024 legislative session! Our work officially began on January 3, when we gaveled in for the second year of our legislative biennium. We’ve passed some significant legislation in these first two months, and this update provides some highlights. You can find the full mid-session report that I prepared on my Facebook page @janabrownforstaterep or email me to request a copy. Meanwhile, work on our key priorities will continue, across the House and in collaboration with the Senate, as we debate bills and consider investments prior to our anticipated May adjournment.

Budgeting to Meet the Needs of Vermonters
In the first half of the legislative session, the Appropriations Committee prepares the FY24 budget adjustment—a “true up” of the current state budget that reflects actual revenues and new cost pressures midway through the fiscal year. The committee also takes testimony from all state agencies and develops the FY25 state budget.

During the pandemic, Vermont received an enormous amount of federal money. That funding is now spent or obligated, and the House is making sure every last federal dollar is used effectively to create a more resilient Vermont. We are also coming to grips with new cost pressures and needs.

The budget adjustment process—and now the FY25 budget process—are shaped by three realities. First, unlike in recent years, we do not have pandemic federal funds to rely on. Second, we’re still trying to help our neighbors in flood-stricken communities. Third, the committee’s review of proposed state agency budgets reveals underfunded and fragile organizations in need of critical support. This translates to workforce shortages, agencies that can’t provide the services Vermonters need, upward pressure on wages for state workers, and IT systems so outdated they make it hard for employees to do their jobs. In several cases, we’re leaving tens of millions of federal dollars on the table because we have not invested in core systems that would make us eligible to access those dollars.

Despite the challenges, we’re celebrating significant success stories. For example, Vermont is on track to push high-speed internet access to all corners of the state. Flood damage was less severe than it might have been due to previous investments in resilience. Families across the state are signing up to access new childcare subsidies, the result of last year’s historic legislation.

As we grapple with this year’s budget challenges, we’re working hard to put dollars behind our priorities. The House budget will make sound investments to enhance the stability and effectiveness of state government, while making sure we fund strategic priorities like flood recovery, housing, public safety and climate resilience. Our goal is to create a budget that meets the needs of Vermonters, at a cost they can afford. We are taking care to make sure Vermont is a place all people can thrive, not just the select few.

School Construction Aid: Taking the Next Steps
Vermont’s school buildings need more than \$6 billion in investments statewide to bring them up to date, replace worn-out systems, achieve code compliance, and replace buildings that would be cheaper to rebuild than repair. Unfortunately, the state has not managed a program to assist school districts in paying for major capital projects since 2007, and some districts have struggled to pass bonds.



The House Education Committee is creating a bill—based on recommendations of a fall 2023 task force—to restart a state aid program that would share the cost of construction projects, with incentive contributions toward annual bond payments. The proposed program could be vital to districts while not affecting Vermont’s pristine bond rating. While the program will take time to develop, the bill would provide immediate help to districts through grants and technical expertise for long-range planning. Meanwhile, the legislature will develop financing details and an incentive system.

Public Safety: Shoring up the System
Public safety has been the theme for the House Judiciary Committee this session. Almost every bill taken up is connected to the crimes and conditions that contribute to the sense that Vermonters are not as safe as we were just a few years ago. The two most effective crime deterrents are 1) a high probability of being caught and 2) certain and quick consequences for criminal activity. The probability of being caught depends on the presence and availability of law enforcement. The certainty and immediacy of consequences depends on a well-functioning, well-resourced criminal justice system made up of the courts, prosecutors, defenders, victim advocates, and restorative justice providers.

The legislature’s primary lever to address



the issue is the state budget. The Judiciary Committee continues to work with the Appropriations Committee to ensure that all vital elements of the justice system have sufficient resources. In addition to advocating for properly resourced criminal justice entities, we’ve voted several public safety-related bills out of the House and on to the Senate.

Mental Health Crisis Response
Mental health is a cornerstone of health in Vermont and a priority this legislative session. To respond effectively and respectfully to the mental health needs of all Vermonters, we’re focusing on crisis response and community-based programs—specifically mental health urgent care, mobile crisis response, and the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline.

Currently, Vermont has six mental health urgent care programs. This includes four brick-and-mortar centers providing psychiatric urgent care for both children and adults. In addition to these centers, there are two “living room models” that are designed to feel like a welcoming space where guests feel safe and meet with teams to get support. These provide alternatives to emergency departments.

A new statewide mobile crisis response also helps people experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis by providing mental health and welfare checks in lieu of police intervention.

Services are delivered by two-person teams in the community, referring individuals to other forms of care as needed.

Connecting it all is the 988 Vermont Suicide and Crisis Lifeline that responds to calls, texts, and chats 24-hours-a-day, seven days a week. Through these and other programs, we are making sure there is always someone to call, someone to respond, someone to prevent, and somewhere to go.

Please reach out anytime with ideas, questions, and concerns. I’m happy to provide electronic or paper copies of my full mid-session report.

Rep. Tom Stevens

It was, as always, a pleasure to spend some time with Huntington residents at this year’s town meeting. I feel like this was the first year we visited without a bouquet of wonderful things to share with you about our work during the first half of the session. It’s always difficult to relay our work on individual bills, which is necessarily incomplete at this time of year given that we still have “crossover” and then if the bills pass they need to go to the Senate, where they decide on their own whether to take up the bills we’ve talked about at town meeting. Never mind wondering if the bill will be signed or vetoed by the governor, and if vetoed, will both the House and Senate override the veto. This is our democracy — we’re just a piece of it.

That said, we take great pride in the work we do on your behalf. In my committee, we have been able to pass protections against discrimination in housing, employment and equal pay, as well as passing our version of the CROWN Act, which stands for “Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair”. Twenty-three other states have passed a version of this bill over the last five years and if it is passed by the Senate and signed by the governor, we will be the twenty-fourth. We also passed H.132, which adds “housing status” to the protected classes when it comes to several categories of discrimination. When we add a protected class, we are saying that you cannot simply say to someone that their status is the reason for denying them a service. Our protected statuses are more numerous than those allowed in federal law, and more inclusive of the diversity we find in our population.

We also passed out of committee the beginnings of an expansive bill that could start a 10-year program to build enough affordable housing across the state to address our extreme housing shortage. The Administration refuses to take intermediate steps in addressing the housing crisis, except for saying there is one. The infusion of federal funds to create housing has been successful, but was literally the tip of the iceberg. If we are to address the crisis upon us,

it would behoove us to call for a housing state of emergency and work in a different way than we are able to now. And by saying that housing is a priority and then cutting housing investments by 90% in this year’s budget, the Administration is not being serious about solving the problem, if indeed it can. H.829 will propose nearly \$200 million in annual investment of state funds for housing for low to middle income Vermonters, as well as for the services necessary to help keep tenancies stable, so we don’t continue to churn low income Vermonters in and out of units due to their poverty. There is no argument that is valid that contradicts the fact that keeping people housed is less expensive and far healthier than the current system. But to do that, we will need to raise revenue, and there are options on the table that target tax increases on the wealthiest Vermonters — those with the capability of paying. There is no promise that the bill will get across the line in the House, and no promise that if it does that it will be embraced by the Senate. Without the vision, however, and without the attempt to illustrate just how big the need is, we will remain in this loop of complaining about the lack of housing that is affordable for everyone.

Please stay in touch.

Rep. Theresa Wood

It was good to see folks during Town Meeting, an opportunity I always appreciate! When we returned to the State House the looming deadline of crossover was upon us. This is the date by which all policy committees must have bills voted out of their committees in order to be considered this year.

One of those bills in my committee, House Human Services, is H.661 — an act relating to child abuse and neglect investigations and substantiation standards and procedures. In reviewing this bill, our committee needed to carefully balance the safety of children and youth, family dynamics and the impacts of placing a person’s name on the child abuse registry, which can have lifelong economic implications for an individual.

We heard from families directly impacted by decisions made by the State, that upon appeal, were overturned by the Human Services Board — all in a process that can take months and sometimes years. Vermont’s “standard of proof” has been evidence that “would lead a reasonable person to believe that the child has been abused or neglected.” A different standard would then be used upon appeal, resulting in inconsistencies and the potential for significant harm for individuals.

In H.661 we are proposing a shift to be more in line with national standards and consistent with the standard used on appeal, namely “where there is a preponderance of the evidence necessary to support the allegation.” What this means is that the scales of whether abuse or neglect happened, need to tip over the 50% level, it’s not just based on a “reasonable person.”

This bill will be considered by the full House and then sent to the Senate for consideration.

Thanks for your continued interest and emails. It is always an honor and privilege to represent you in Montpelier.

Rep. Theresa Wood Washington-Chittenden Chair, House Human Services Committee 1461 Perry Hill Road Waterbury, VT 05676 (802) 585-5202 twood@leg.state.vt.us	Rep. Tom Stevens Washington-Chittenden Chair, General, Housing and Military Affairs 12 Winooski Street Waterbury, VT 05676 595-0429 (cell) tom@stevensvermont.com tstevens@leg.state.vt.us	Rep. Jana Brown Chittenden 1 Member, House Education Committee PO Box 66 Richmond, VT 05477 434-2854 / 999-4333 jbrown@leg.state.vt.us janabrownforvt.com
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Hinesburg Hollow Wetlands: Treasure and Trauma

Submitted by Diane Reynolds

“But it never used to be wetlands!” Yogi Alger, Huntington Road Foreman, is exasperated. He points to a large swath of watery land. “All that, all the way to the brook, used to be hayed.”

Before 1998, Alger could walk across grass to the Hollow Brook and fish for the trout stocked there. Not anymore.

Beavers, for 300 years, had a rough go of it. Once upon a time they lodged in most every waterway in North America. But the early settlers hunted and trapped thousands upon thousands of beaver for their fur and meat. During just the 10 years from 1630-1640 about 80,000 beavers were taken every year from the Hudson River Valley.

Beavers are easy to kill. They stay in one place so it’s a piece of cake to trap an entire lodge family. Beavers nearly became extinct. Protections began in the 1900s. The beaver population has rebounded to about 12 million, just a fraction of the estimated 170 million before the fur trade.

And one day, one of these intrepid beavers, arrived here, at the Hollow Brook.

The beaver got to work and did what beavers do. The sound of moving water to a beaver is an anathema. It must be dammed at all costs! The beavers built a dam just past the end of Agnes Drive and - voila! – birthed a 50-acre wetland complex. The largest wetland in Huntington. To the delight of many. To the dismay of some, including the Road Foreman.

And understandably so. Alger’s job is to keep the very busy Hinesburg Hollow Road passable. The wetland water is a worry. He believes it softens the earth under the road. Over the years he has dredged the brook in some places and ripped the road in other places and, on a regular basis, he dismantles the beaver dam to keep the water moving.

It’s such a trade-off. When humans decided to build a road through a lowland area, there was always the possibility of wetland formation. After all, it used to be a wetland. When the beaver disappeared from North America, it’s estimated that about 150,000 square miles of wetlands were converted to dry land.

The Raymonds own the marsh and live just above it on Lincoln Hill. They used to mow the marsh! It was all grass. As it became wetter, Tina Raymond was on the phone with Alger. “Can’t you do anything? Make it stop!”

Chittenden wetland ecologist Tina Heath says the Hollow Brook wetland complex is located in a valley between two steep mountain ridges. Water naturally collects there and seasonally floods. Wetlands have likely always been there. Previous years may have been dryer due to lack of beaver activity and climate patterns, but the wetland complex is now established and Vermont Wetland Rules would not permit any major changes to it.

Beaver-created wetlands are essential to many species. They are living and feeding areas for: moose, bear, otter, mink, waterfowl, songbirds, amphibians, reptiles, insects, fish and other

creatures. This is why beaver are called a “keystone species.”

The Hinesburg Hollow wetland has lured almost all these critters. Unfortunately, quite often as roadkill. One resident, who regularly runs the road, has reported a list of dead animals he’s passed: a deer, an otter, two beavers, a few skunks, an opossum, and about ten cedar waxwings (he thinks a flock was chasing an insect hatch and got in the way of vehicles).

The 2013 SCIENCE TO ACTION REPORT, Huntington’s natural resources inventory completed by Arrowwood Environmental, reports the Hinesburg Hollow Wetlands as “state significant,” being a series of 15 interconnected wetlands along Hollow Brook. The brook crosses the road in three places making the wetlands aesthetically visible on both sides. Hollow Brook also serves as a vital connecting corridor between the Huntington River and Lewis Creek watersheds.

Wood ducks and ringed-neck ducks live in the marsh. But most beloved of the waterfowl are the Canada geese who return every year. To their peril. The marsh looks ideal for raising a family. One side of the busy road is open water. The other side is green grass. Geese love grass. But two years ago we lost, in August, one of the adults of a goose family. Last summer, in May, we lost one of the adults and later two of the four goslings.



Gaggle of Canada geese crosses Hineburg Hollow Road. Photo: Kathy Kort

The speed limit is 45 mph so people drive 50. And the geese look like wooden posts on the side of the road.

Amphibians too arrive at their peril. On warm wet early spring nights they migrate down from the uplands to breed in the wetlands. Hundreds of tiny salamanders and peepers and toads are squashed by moving vehicles. Then in late spring female turtles cross the road in the other direction to lay eggs in the uplands.

The town’s volunteer Amphibian Crossing Guard program tries valiantly to save as many as they can. And the Huntington Conservation Commission has begun the long process to see if the road can qualify for a wildlife crossing underpass like the successful Monkton one.

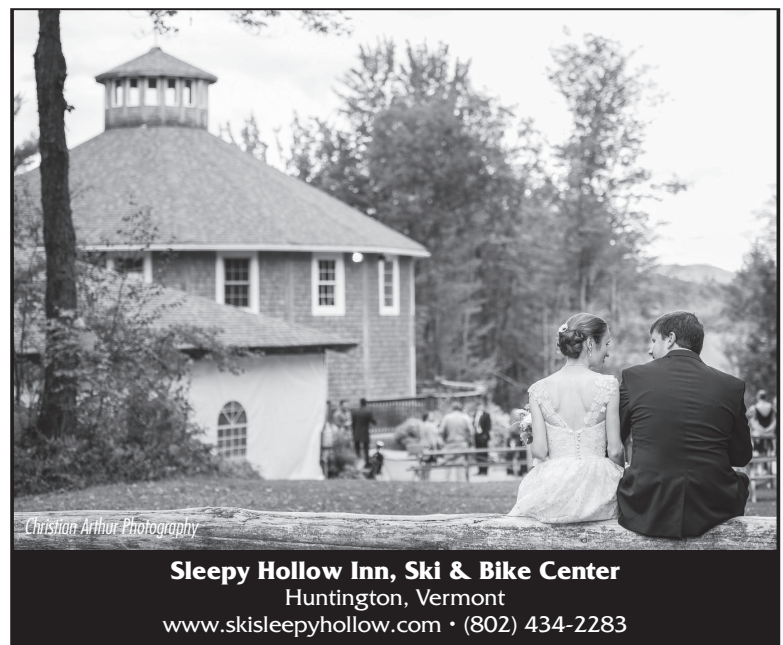
Tina Raymond, though she lost her grass, and battles the beaver over tree damage, says she and her grandchildren love many of the critters in the marsh: the turtles basking on the waterlogs, the frogs, and especially the goslings.

So the Hinesburg Hollow wetlands, though quite different from the way they used to be in recent memory, may in many respects be more valuable as long as we can figure out a good way to coexist with the creatures who use it and call it home.

(Diane Reynolds is a member of the Huntington Conservation Commission.)



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News from Area Churches

Richmond Congregational Church

802-434-2053 (www.rccucc.org)

March 24, 10 am: Palm Sunday Worship and Brunch with Revs. Katelyn Macrae & Doug Wysocky-Johnson

March 28, 7 pm: Maundy Thursday Worship at Williston Federated Church

March 29, 7 pm: Good Friday Worship at Richmond Congregational Church

March 31: Easter

7 am Easter Sunrise at the Volunteers Green Park

10 am Easter Celebration Worship with RCC CHOIR FOR THE LOVE OF GOD

April 7: Sunday School

April 14, 10 am: Worship with Rev. Doug Wysocky-Johnson

April 21, 10 am: Worship with RCC Choir

April 28, 10 am: Worship

A Century of Stories, Conservation, and Recreation

Vermont State Parks is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, marking a century of conserving and interpreting the state's natural, cultural, and scenic heritage while providing recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. The anniversary celebration began at the Vermont State House on February 15, 2024.

Vermont State Parks' journey began in 1924 when Frances Humphreys donated land for the creation of Mt. Philo State Park in Charlotte, the first state park in Vermont. Over the years, the park system grew through land donations, Civilian Conservation Corps projects, and the efforts of dedicated individuals and organizations. Today, Vermont State Parks encompasses 55 parks, spanning the entire state and connecting people to the outdoors through a diverse range of activities, from camping and hiking to swimming and boating, and nature education.

State parks contribute to the state's overall quality of life, providing a sense of place and pride for Vermonters and enhancing the attractiveness of Vermont as a tourist destination. This vast connection of special places promote physical and mental health, foster environmental stewardship, and create lasting memories.

Vermont State Parks is committed to inclusivity, ensuring that everyone has equal access to the

natural wonders and recreational opportunities our parks offer. As we cherish these natural treasures, Forests, Parks and Recreation's Commissioner, Danielle Fitzko, encourages everyone to 'Try Vermont' and experience the unique beauty our state parks have to offer.

According to State Parks Director, Nate McKeen, Vermont State Parks are a key component of Vermont's \$1.9 billion outdoor recreation economy, providing visitors with affordable, high-quality places to stay as they explore surrounding communities and attractions, as well as opportunities to watch wildlife, share a picnic with friends, and enjoy the great outdoors.

McKeen said "State parks are an amazing success story with over one million visitors each year. Our 100th year anniversary marks a reflection point to build on our rich history so future generations can enjoy the beauty and benefits of our state parks."

You are encouraged to share your own Vermont State Parks story at vermontparksforever.org/ stories or plan ahead to create future stories and memories by making a camping reservation through vtstateparks.com. For additional information follow Vermont State Parks on Instagram at [vtstateparks](https://www.instagram.com/vtstateparks) and track the hashtag #vtstateparks100th.

Green Mountain Passports: Free State Parks Admission

Vermont residents, age 62 or older, and any Vermont resident who is a veteran who has been honorably discharged from active duty in US armed services, are eligible for a lifetime day entry pass into the parks called the Green Mountain Passport. The cost of the GMP is a one-time fee of \$2.

To enjoy unlimited use of the parks, you must purchase your Green Mountain Passport from your Town Clerk.

Richmond: Linda Parent, 802-434-2221
Huntington: Heidi Racht, 802-434-2032



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Cold Frames as Season Extenders

Submitted by Andrea Knepper

Cold frames allow for the early planting of spring vegetables such as lettuce, radishes, carrots and cabbage by protecting them from frost and cold temperatures at the beginning of the season.

You can construct a season-extending cold frame for your garden with an old window, some salvaged wood and basic tools and hardware. This enclosed box with a transparent top allows sunlight to heat the space within. Gardeners can anticipate the temperature inside a cold frame to be 5 to 10 degrees warmer than the outside air.

One easy cold frame to make is a wooden box with the back taller than the front with a window that acts as the lid. There is no bottom, so the frame can be easily moved to any location with soil suitable for planting.

The placement of your cold frames is flexible. You can place them directly in a garden bed and then remove them when temperatures warm. You also can put one near your house to access vegetables earlier in the season. This is especially helpful if your garden is not easily accessible in the winter months. Make sure your cold frame faces south to soak up the sunshine.

To build your cold frame, you will need a discarded framed single-pane window. You also will need

boards that are as long as the perimeter of the window and six or more inches wide. With a little effort, you can obtain these materials for free or at a very low cost by looking at places like social media listings and in classified ads.

It is important to note that caution is necessary when using salvaged materials. You should avoid treated wood as the chemical preservatives can leach into the soil and your vegetables. Wood that looks off-color is one way to identify treated wood. When in doubt, keep looking.

Paint also should be avoided when making a cold frame. Sand off any paint before using the wood to build your cold frame. As always, use the necessary protective equipment when doing so.

Once you have secured your window and wood, measure the perimeter of your window and make a note of the dimensions. Decide how tall you want the front of the box to be. The back of the box should be a few inches taller to create a slanted top.

The angled top of the side panels will be the same length as the sides of the window. After marking this, mark the front and back heights and cut. Make two of these sides.

(Andrea Knepper is a UVM Extension Master Gardener, who lives in Bolton.)

Gov's Institute Applications Open for Summer Programs

The Governor's Institutes of Vermont (GIV) has opened applications for the 2024 offerings of their residential summer programs. Passionate Vermont ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade students are invited to apply for "the experience of a lifetime."

GIV Institutes take place on Vermont college campuses and give their attendees the opportunity to dive deep into a topic of interest for an intensive one to two weeks. Each Institute is focused around a career-oriented topic including Arts, Engineering, Entrepreneurship, Environmental Science and Technology, Global Issues and Youth Action, Health and Medicine, Mathematical Sciences, and Technology and Design. New for this year will be two sessions of the Health and Medicine Institute to accommodate the high demand for career pathways in the health care sector.

At GIV, students learn from industry professionals, participate in hands-on projects, and explore career options - all while having fun and making friends. The programs are designed to be affordable to all Vermont families with scholarships that allow students to pay as little as \$10 to attend.

GIV has served more than 13,000 Vermonters over 40 years, and will welcome 550 young people in the summer of 2024. To learn more about GIV's 2024 summer Institutes, visit <https://giv.org> or email hello@giv.org with any questions. Students can visit www.giv.org/apply to fill out a simple application now. The deadline is March 31.

The Governor's Institutes of Vermont is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. More than 75% of GIV students need financial assistance each year. To give, call 802-865-4448 or visit www.giv.org/support

Local Calendar

Regular Meetings can sometimes be held in physical locations. Remote options remain in place.

Go to the town's website for the meeting link.

SELECTBOARD:

Huntington: 1st & 3rd Mondays, 6:30 pm, Zoom meeting.

Richmond: 1st & 3rd Mondays, 6:30 pm, Town Center

SCHOOL BOARD:

MMMUSD: 1st & 3rd Mondays, 6:30 pm. Meetings will rotate among the MMMUSD schools. Check the website for specifics: www.cesu.k12.vt.us.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Huntington: 2nd & 4th Tues, 7 pm, Zoom meeting.

Richmond: 1st & 3rd Wed, 7 pm, Town Center

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

Huntington: 3rd Tues, 7 pm, when required. Zoom meeting.

Richmond: 2nd & 4th Wed, 7 pm, Town Center.

WATER & SEWER COMMISSION

Richmond: 1st Mon., Town Center

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Richmond: 2nd Tues, 7 pm, Town Ctr

Huntington: 2nd Thursday, 6:30 pm, Zoom.

RECREATION COMMITTEE

Richmond: 1st Tues, 7-9 pm, Town Center Mtg Room

Huntington: 1st Wed, 6 pm, Rec Field or Community Church.

RICHMOND TRAILS COMMITTEE **Richmond:** 3rd Tues, 7 pm, Town Center Meeting Room

RICHMOND LAND TRUST First Thursday. Monitor Barn Annex. All are welcome. Dan Martin, (4231).

TOWN HALL COMMITTEE

Huntington: 4th Thursday, 7 pm, Huntington Town Hall.

LIBRARY

Richmond: Trustees, 1st Thursday in January, March, April, June, September & November, 6:30 pm. 434-3036.

Huntington: Board of Trustees, days vary, Zoom meeting and Huntington Public Library, 434-4583.

HUNTINGTON ENERGY COMMITTEE 3rd Wed, 7 pm, Zoom meeting.

COMMUNITY GROUPS:

May Not be Meeting.

Call for information.

Hale and Hearty Seniors Club: 2nd Wed. Holy Rosary Parish Hall, 6 pm., Sept.-May.

HHCT (Huntington Historic and Community Trust): 1st Thurs, Huntington Public Library, 7:30 pm. All are welcome to attend.

Howl Women's Land Monthly Business Meeting, 2nd Sunday of each month. 10 am. All women welcome 434-3953.

Richmond Drop-Off Center

Open all year Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, 8-3:30. Located on Route 117 (80 Roger's Lane).

Worship

Call for information.

Community Church of Huntington: Sunday morning Worship & Sunday School, 9 am. Communion: 1st Sunday. Senior Luncheon 3rd Tuesday (434-3155).

Richmond Congregational Church, United Church of Christ: 20 Church Street., 434-2053. Sunday Worship and Sunday School, 10 am.

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church: Religious Education Classes: Sat. 9-10:15 am, CHMS, Richmond. Sacrament of Reconciliation: Sat. 3:15 pm. Masses: Sat. 4 pm, Sun. 8:30 am.

Community Alliance Church: 190 Pond Road (overlooking CVU), Hinesburg. Sunday, 9 am, Sunday school for all ages, with adults and teen electives; Scott Mansfield, 482-2132, www.hinesburgcma.org

Jericho United Methodist Church: Rte. 15 in Jericho Corners. Sunday Worship and Church School 9 am winter and summer; Bible/Prayer Study Tues 7:30 pm. Rev. Kirk Thompson, 899-4288.

Jericho Congregational Church: on the green in Jericho Center Circle; Senior Pastor Dave Coons; Youth Pastor Pete Anderson; Sunday services 10 am livestream on Facebook page. Sunday Youth Group: 6:15 pm. 899-4911 / www.jccvt.org

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church: 273 Vt Rte 15 (near Browns Trace) Jericho, 899-3932, Rev. Arnold Thomas, pastor. Worship Service: 9 am (nursery care provided), Sunday School & Bible Study: 10:30 am. www.goodshepherdjericho.org

Mount Mansfield Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship: 195 Vermont Route 15, Jericho, (the red barn across from Packard Road) 9:30 am services second and fourth Sunday (September to June). All are welcome.

League of Women Voters of Vermont Offers Scholarships

The League of Women Voters of Vermont Education Fund is now accepting applications for its Winona Smith Scholarship program. Created in 1998 to honor the legacy of League leader 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.

Richmond Library

continued from page 7

Baby Laptime This short, active story time is for our youngest little book lovers and their grownups. We'll look at picture books, sing simple songs, do some rhyming and bouncing and sometimes get out the shakers and scarves. This program is designed for infants and early toddlers. Mondays at 10:30 am.

Hora del Cuento (Spanish Storytime) Join native Spanish speakers, Chichi and Eva for thirty minutes of picture book stories and rhymes. This program is a great introduction to Spanish for young children and a nice way for parents of older children placed in the Spanish Immersion Program to hear the language. Join us in the Community Room at 10:30 am on the third Saturday of every month, September through May.

Seeking Artists and Collectors We are currently scheduling art shows for our walls and display case in 2024. If you have framed pieces (art, photography) and would like to schedule a show, contact us to choose your month. No professional experience is necessary, just a willingness to share your talent. We're also seeking interesting collections for our foyer display case. If you are a collector of thimbles, old books, feathers, nut crackers or anything else that would fit in our case that you would be willing to share, we would love to hear from you. Call or email the library.

Three \$2,000 scholarships will be awarded to students who demonstrate financial need, scholastic achievement, and come highly recommended by their teacher.

Applications, due on May 1, can be completed online at <https://bit.ly/LWVScholarshipDetails>. 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: <https://bit.ly/LWVTeacherRec>.

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 June 1.

Last year, LWV scholarships were awarded to students from Thetford Academy, Windsor, Otter Valley Union, and Middlebury Union High Schools.

Questions can be directed to Becky Miller, lwvofvt.edfund@gmail.com.

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OFFICIAL WARNING
MOUNT MANSFIELD UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

April 2, 2024

The legal voters of the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District comprising the voters of Bolton, Huntington, Jericho, Richmond, and Underhill, are hereby notified and warned to meet at polling places hereinafter named for each of the above-referenced towns on **April 2, 2024**, at 7:00 a.m. (Huntington at 6:30 a.m.) at which time the polls will open until 7:00 p.m. at which time the polls will close, to transact the following business involving voting by Australian ballot:

- Article 1: To elect the following officers:
a Moderator for one year,
a Clerk for one year,
a Treasurer for one year.
- Article 2: Shall the voters of the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District authorize the school board under 16 V.S.A. 562 (9) to borrow money by issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenue for the school year?
- Article 3: Shall the voters of the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District approve the School Board to expend **\$60,123,048** which is the amount the School Board has determined to be necessary for the 2024-25 fiscal year?

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

Informational Hearing

Said persons and voters are further notified and warned that Thursday, March 28, 2024 at 6:00 P.M. at the Mount Mansfield Union High School, in Jericho, VT shall serve as an informational meeting to discuss Articles 3 which will be voted on by Australian ballot on April 2, 2024. A virtual option will be available at:

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/epk-nuwn-iov>
Or dial: (US) +1 765-329-3138 PIN: 349 034 792#

Polling Places

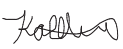
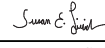
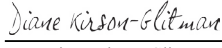
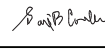
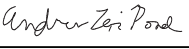
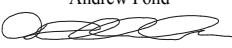
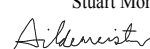
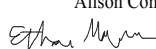
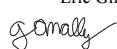
The voters residing in the Mount Mansfield Unified Union will cast their ballots in the polling places designated for their towns as follows:

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

This Official Warning is meant to and hereby does supersede the Official March 5, 2024 Warning dated January 15, 2024 and previously posted.

Dated this 28th day of February, 2024.

SCHOOL DIRECTORS

 Kevin Campbell	 Edye Graning	 Katie Nelson
 Susan Lillich	 Diane Kirson-Glitman	 Tara Ameson
 Gail Conley	 Lisa Pawlik	 Andrew Pond
 Stuart Morigeau	 Alison Conant	 Heather Chadwick
 Eric Gildemeister	 Ethan Maurer	 Grace Batsie
 Gabrielle O'Mally		

Received for record this 28th day of February, 2024, A.D.


_____, Clerk, Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District

Into the Woods

Five Techniques for Managing a Forest Efficiently

by Ethan Tapper

Some of my favorite forest managers are landowners, people who work on a small scale to make their forest a little healthier and more vibrant each year. While a thoughtful forest steward can have a truly positive relationship with their woods, the breadth of their impact is limited by their finite time and energy. Through using these five simple techniques, you can maximize the positive impact that you have on your forest.

1. Leave dead trees alone. Fallen trees, dead-standing trees and dead wood benefit wildlife habitat, soil health and fertility, carbon storage and forest hydrology, among other things. If the tree is dead, leave it alone! Be proactive, not reactive: focus on cutting living trees, especially unhealthy trees which are competing with healthier “crop trees.”

2. Use the “crop tree release” method. Crop tree release is a shift in the way that we look at the forest: instead of focusing on cutting all the trees that “need to go” – trees that are unhealthy, that have wounds or defects, trees of undesired species – we find our forest’s healthiest, most promising trees and release them from competition individually. “Crop tree” is a bit of a misnomer: while a crop tree could be a tree that we’re encouraging to produce a crop like maple sap, it can also be any healthy tree of almost any species. What makes crop tree release so efficient is that we only cut trees that are competing with our crop trees. If a tree isn’t competing with a crop tree, leave it alone. To learn more about crop tree release, check out this video on my YouTube channel, or my article about it in Northern Woodlands magazine.

3. Get comfortable with cutting trees and leaving them on the ground. As you release your crop trees, you’ll end up cutting trees that are smaller or that, for a variety of reasons, just aren’t worth pulling out of the woods. Instead of taking the time to process these small trees into firewood, leave them on the ground and move on. This will be a more efficient use of your time – allowing you to release more crop trees and thus have a greater positive impact on your woods – and will also increase the amount of dead wood in your forest and its associated

habitats and benefits. It’s not a waste! These dead trees will be a real asset to the health and ecology of your forest.

4. Girdle some trees. “Girdling” a tree means creating two shallow, parallel cuts around its circumference, just deep enough to touch its wood. This severs the tree’s cambium, eventually killing the tree and turning it into a “snag” (a dead-standing tree), which is another important habitat. I generally use girdling as a faster and safer method for killing trees that are



Courtesy hotoa cherry tree released using the crop tree release method.

competing with crop trees but are too dangerous to fell. Girdling will turn trees into hazards, so it’s not a method to be used around your house or your recreational trails.

5. Get comfortable with “messiness.” In working with hundreds of landowners, I find that nearly everyone’s instincts tell them that a healthy, well-managed forest looks like a park: with large, evenly-spaced trees and a clear, open understory. In fact, healthy forests are “messy,” with trees of all different sizes and ages, dead trees, gaps in the canopy and tons of dead wood on the forest floor. “Cleaning-up” our forests – removing dead trees and dead wood, managing them to look like parks – is not just a waste of time: it actually makes our forests less healthy, less resilient, less rich with habitat. When you manage your forest, avoid piling brush or lopping-up trees and branches so that they lie flat on the ground. While they make your forest look neater, these practices actually diminish many of the benefits that these trees and tree tops offer to wildlife and forest ecology. If you can learn to appreciate the messiness, you’ll see that not “cleaning-up” your forest will save you tons of time and energy, and make your forest healthier at the same time.

To learn more about these five techniques, watch a short video on my YouTube channel: [here](#).

(Ethan Tapper is the Chittenden County Forester for the Vermont Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation. See what he’s been up to, check out his YouTube channel, sign up for his eNews and read articles he’s written at <https://linktr.ee/ChittendenCountyForester>.)



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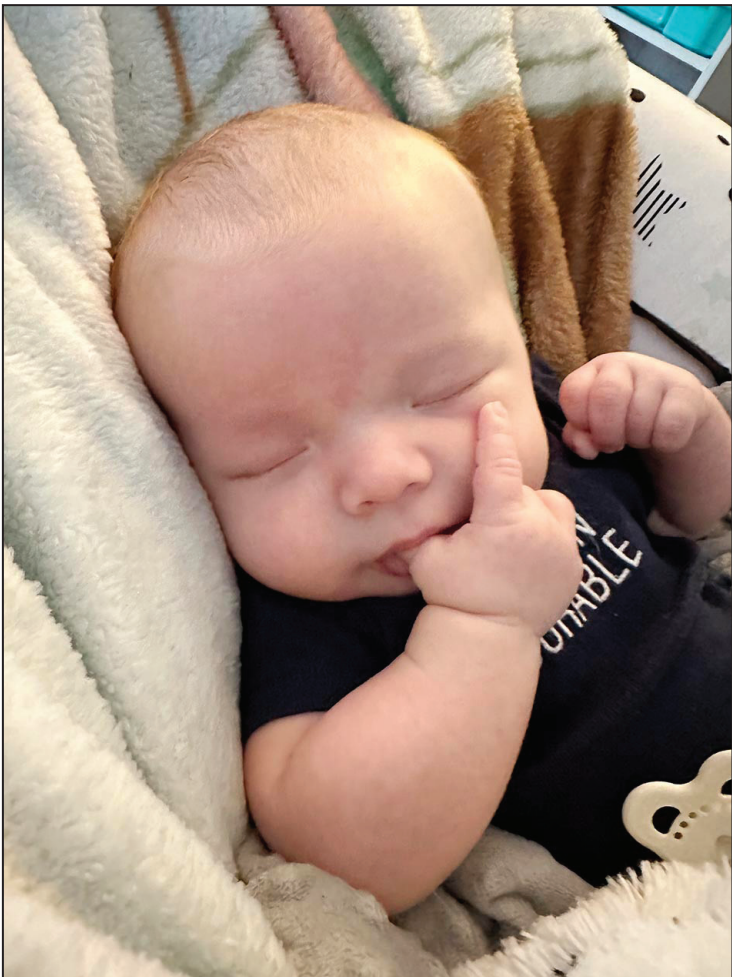
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April 2

Community Babies of the New Year(s)



Wyatt Murray, born January 1, 2024, lives in Richmond.

Two local families each had a New Year's Day baby. Parker Haskins was born at the UVM Medical Center on January 1, 2023. She was the third Vermont baby of the year and the second new human being at the Burlington hospital. Her parents are Adam Haskins and Kaycee Severance. She is also lucky to live near her grandparents Mike and Chrstine Haskins.

Wyatt Murray was born at the UVM Medical Center on January 1, 2024. He was the first baby of the new year at the hospital. A few hours later, his parents Josh and Korin Murray learned he was Vermont's first baby. And, then they were told he was the first baby in the northeast, the second, also a boy, was born in New York State about eight hours later.

Waytt's grandparents are Peggy Murray and Kevin Youngman.

His great-grandparent is Russell Murray.



Parker Haskins, born January 1, 2023, lives in Huntington. She was the oldest 2023 baby - over a year old! - at the Huntington Public Library's Baby Brunch in January.



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Mon: 1 PM at the Huntington Public Library
Tues: 10 AM at the Fire Station in Bolton

Morning coffee and chat

Wed: 9 AM at the Huntington Public Library - and/or-
10 AM at the Bolton Fire Station

Thur: 9-11 AM, Holy Rosary Church Hall in Richmond

Seniors from any of our 3 towns are welcome at any one.

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Questions? Get answers! Chat with a senior volunteer from your own town! Call Martha at the number above to set it up.

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**Community
Senior Center**

All Things Human

by Demaris Tisdale

Thinking Rationally

"When a man begins to feel that he is the only one who can lead in this republic, he is guilty of treason to the spirit of our institutions."

—Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933)

Sally, a good friend of mine from college, recently wrote to inform me of the birth of her daughter's third child. Sally expressed grave concern about her daughter's decision as she described the state of the planet. She said she worries about her granddaughter's future, and what kind of world the child will have to live in. Today, these kinds of life decisions are not easy.

We each have personal reasons for our beliefs and the actions we take. Our backgrounds influence our development and how we each choose to live our lives. Much depends on the nurturing we received and the opportunities we have had that allow us to grow and learn. If we have had the necessary love and caring, we can mature and establish our own independent lives. We will have learned how to live together in society and how to be good citizens.

We humans are by nature egocentric and this can cloud our thinking and resulting actions. We are often more concerned about ourselves than about the needs of others or the world around us. At the same time, we'd like to believe we are omnipotent and can arrange things the way we want. We pretend there are no limits, and that we can do whoever we please. We feel entitled. This thinking is largely unconscious, driven by motivations of which we are unaware, and is evident in our behavior and interactions with other people.

We humans are drawn to imagination and are fascinated with the idea of omnipotence. We wish we wouldn't have to accept reality.

We don't want to have to accept ecological limits. It's easier to be oblivious or put our faith in technology to fix it so we can continue to pollute the earth. We don't want to have to limit population or more fairly distribute resources, or consume less, because we just can't tolerate being limited. We want to believe we have unlimited resources and the planet will provide for our needs indefinitely. In fact we are oblivious to the fact that we have been exceeding our limits and overshooting them since December 1970, when Paul Ehrlich wrote *THE POPULATION BOMB*.

Most of us are psychologically intact and able to think rationally. We learn from experience and are able to interact in the world around us. Despite this, we have a powerful unconscious of which we are, in fact, unaware. This unconscious has much greater influence than we know about. People who have greater skills and resources need to accept a greater share of the responsibility. In reality, we are not all born equal, but many of us do have choices.

Unfortunately, some of our citizens have formed opinions that are inconsistent with rational thinking. For example, some folks believe it's a bad idea to vaccinate to protect citizens from COVID or from measles. These are not scientifically endorsed opinions. The governor of one state has decided that certain history books that have been widely accepted for more than a century are incorrect and must be removed. They are misguided and misinformed, of course, and continue to refuse to accept reality. The egocentricity of these people gives them a feeling of omnipotence and an experience of fascination with their own illusion of superiority.

Thinking rationally requires self-discipline and an open mind. We can all help each other to improve our capacity to listen, read and learn.

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