

Volume 11, No. 6



May—June 2014



Windham News & Notes



ENDLESS WINTER, OR, IN PRAISE OF MUD SEASON (REALLY!)

by Lydia Pope France

Call me crazy, but I like mud season. Actually, in some ways, it is my favorite season. I know I am in the minority, so will not be looking for any "Road to Damascus" conversions here, but maybe I can get you to see the positive side, at least a little bit ...

We have just come off a long winter. The Farmer's Almanac predicted a tough season, and not having read the actual article, I just thought they meant snow. But this winter was really about the cold. If there was a secondary theme, it was ice. Driveways became difficult for long stretches, and with the severe cold, rock salt had little effect.

Total snow (so far, as the universe may have other plans for us) is 95 inches. As winters go, that is pretty average around here. Last year we had 104 inches, the year before was low at 70, and early in the last decade (2002-2003) we hit 177. But 100 +/- 20 inches has been the norm for the past dozen or so years.

So back to the cold, which was relentless, with weeks on end of below zero temps in the morning, and struggling to get into the 20s by mid afternoon. While we all admit to six months of *potential*/winter weather here, this year it was a *reality* and not just potential. March seemed to drag on forever, fully in winter's grip, and in fact was the fourth coldest March in Vermont history. To get a similarly cold March you have to go back to 1971.

With that in mind, I would like to suggest that we consider embracing mud season. Not the scary-what-if-there-was-an-emergency-and-a fire-truck-or-ambulance-couldn't-get-through kind of time, but the pleasantly warm days when you can

get outside without feeling like the Michelin Man, the brilliant blue skies against the beautifully white snow, the sound of water dripping as snow melts, the sun shining in rivulets of water running down the road, the sound of the brook running again, smoke rising from sugar houses, the sweet smell of syrup in the air, the flocks of geese squawking overhead, birds taking little baths in the frigid puddles that form, and even those late season snowfalls that you can smile at as they are here today, gone tomorrow - all signals that there are big changes afoot. I have to admit that seeing the weight limit signs posted along the roads with their bright orange borders gives me joy, announcing "It's happening ... The new season is arriving!"

I can't wait to see the bulbs I planted last year, seemingly so long ago that I have pretty much forgotten what and where. They will be a nice surprise. And then there are the hummingbirds, making their way back to us even now, and the swallows that tease us and sometimes nest in our boxes, sometimes don't. There's the warm feeling as sunshine floods through screen doors and finds your legs. Not to mention that sense of having made it through winter, a sort of pat on the back for toughing it out. And the awareness that life has a rhythm that can be noted by the feel of the air and the length of the day.

People who move south often talk about missing the seasons. They are, of course, referring to spring, summer, winter, fall. But here, we get to enjoy *five*, counting mud. To which I say, lucky us. So get out there and splash around in some puddles and enjoy everything that this time of the year has to offer!

TOWN OF WINDHAM BUSINESS

SELECTBOARD NEWS

Mary Boyer, Frank Seawright, Kord Scott

The high level of participation at Town Meeting this year was helpful and constructive. We have developed a procedure to document specific comments, post them in the News & Notes and on the Town Website (windhamvt.info), and report actions we've taken.

Comments

- Town government should be run more like a business.
- We should utilize the services of a professional highway expert to assist in developing Highway and Structures plans.
- Idling of equipment at the Town Garage should be minimized.
- Salt usage reduction methods and options should be researched and considered.
- Maintaining the roads costs too much.
- Should we consider converting White Road back to an unpaved road?
- We should consider the relative advantage/disadvantage of borrowing vs. building reserve funds.

Selectboard Follow-up:

- Improved accounting: We have updated our accounting methods to enable us to budget more accurately and better plan for the future.
- Quarterly budget reports: Our Town Treasurer provides every department with a quarterly report of expenditures to enable tracking of expenses in relation to budget.
- Improved purchasing policies: We are refining purchasing policies to ensure improved accountability.
- Future planning: In the coming year, as financial setbacks caused by Tropical Storm Irene and the 2012 mud season are resolved, we will present a plan for building a reserve fund to help us prepare for future events and schedule the purchase of large pieces of equipment.
- Road cost: We met with John Alexander of VTTrans to strategize about road materials, costs, grants available, and planning for the future. In addition, Treasurer Peter Chamberlain is working with the road crew to streamline our purchasing policies and give them more feedback about their budget.

It may be a good time to remind everyone that while Town Meeting is a great annual event, the Selectboard

meets year around, twice a month, on the first and third Mondays at 6:30. All are welcome and encouraged to come. It's always a pleasure to have our fellow residents make comments, ask questions, or just listen to see what we're up to. The News & Notes is another great opportunity for us to communicate with you. If you have any suggestions regarding content please phone or e-mail one of us, or leave a note for us at the Town Office.

TOWN-WIDE REAPPRAISAL WARMS UP WITH SPRING *by the Windham Listers*

With mud season replacing the snow cover in Windham, the professionals from Green Mountain Appraisals (GMA) returned in April to the work they began last autumn. They will continue appraising all Windham properties through this spring and summer.

The reason Windham is having a town-wide reappraisal is that sales over the past three years have shown that the assessed values of properties were often as much as 20% higher or 20% lower than their sale price. This means that a property owner could be paying 20% more or 20% less in property taxes than they should be. This is not fair or equitable to those paying too much or those paying too little.

We listers believe that everyone should pay taxes based on an accurately assessed value of their property. The best way to accomplish this is by having professional appraisers visit and accurately determine the market value of every property in Windham.

The listers have requested that all property owners provide contact information so GMA can reach you to schedule a time to visit your property. The information requested is your name, address, phone number, email address, and the best method and time to contact you. This info will allow GMA to schedule visits to several properties near each other, making their work more efficient. Most visits are only 20 to 30 minutes long. So far more than 200 owners have provided their contact information, and GMA has conducted more than 40 inspections, including those they completed last autumn. If you haven't sent in your info card, please do so. You can also contact GMA directly at (802) 362-4274 or bdece-sare@GreenMountainAppraisals.com.

We thank all of you who have provided your contact information and those of you who have already welcomed the GMA representative into your home.

FROM THE TOWN CLERK: WINDHAM PROPERTY TRANSFERS**2014 Property Transfer Recordings:**

- D. & S. Anderson to S. & D. Anderson Declaration of Trust, 9.5 acres on Burbee Pond Road
- E. Caron II to E. Caron III, 1.1 acres on Popple Dungeon Road
- Hal's Hill Inc. to E. Forbes & K. Goyette, 1.06 acres on Glebe Mountain Road
- Estate of M. Gibbons to F. Gibbons, 28.8 acres on Abbott Road
- S. & D. Hamilton to Mialkowski & Johnson, 6.26 acres on Harrington Road
- R. & C. McGraw to R. McGraw, 10.27 acres on Harrington Road
- B. & D. Koutrakos to K. Koutrakos, 4.5 acres on Burbee Pond Road

**WINDHAM
NEWS & NOTES**

A publication of the Windham Community Organization, published six times a year. Please send donations to the address on the last page.

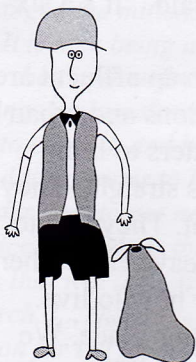
N&N Team

Dawn Bower
Bev Carmichael Leila Erhardt
Imme Maurath Dona Robinson
Nancy Tips

Thanks to all who contribute. Send articles of around 300 words to the address on the last page or email to: windhamnews@hotmail.com

Next deadline: June 15, 2014

A note to News and Notes contributors: it's a tribute to the health of the Windham community that our little paper is attracting more contributors, and space gets used up quickly. To ensure that your article gets in, please submit early. June 15 is the cut-off point for the next issue, but we encourage you not to wait. We welcome your contributions at all times.

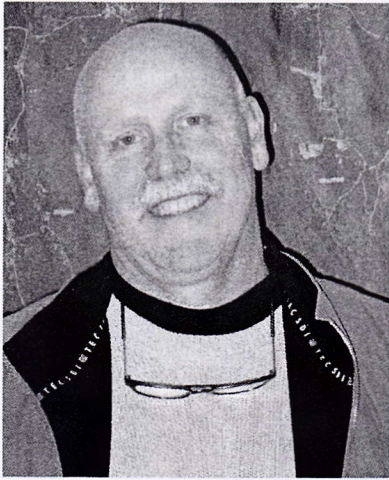
**DON'T MISS OUT ON GREEN-UP DAY, MAY 3 by Marcia Clinton**

The first Saturday of May is Green Up Day all over Vermont. Green Up's mission is to promote the stewardship of our state's natural landscape and waterways and the livability of our communities by involving people in Green Up Day and raising public awareness about the benefits of a litter-free environment. On May 3rd everyone from the very young to the mature is invited to meet at the Windham Town Office at 9 a.m. to pick up collection bags and decide on assignments around the town. The bags will be at the Town Office the week before for those who wish to do some trash picking early at their convenience. Just note on the clipboard the roads you are cleaning and how many bags you are taking. The filled green bags can be left at the side of the road for pick up later

by the town crew.

At 12 noon Saturday there will be a Worker Appreciation Lunch at the Windham Meeting House for all, compliments of the Windham Community Organization. Hot dogs, chips, soda and cookies will be served. After the lunch the "Bragging Rights" prizes will be awarded. Some of the categories are for the weirdest item, number of bags collected, longest distance covered, etc. At the luncheon the Windham Fire Company will bring the fire engine and show everyone the mechanics of the truck, and there just might be an opportunity for people to hold the hose and get the feel of spraying water on a fire.

We who live here think Windham is a special place, so Green Up Day is a chance to show our pride in our town, and to all pitch in and clean up the roadways. For more information, please contact Marcia Clinton, Green Up Chair, at 875-3531.

KORD SCOTT JOINS THE WINDHAM TEAM *by Mary McCoy*

I arranged to interview Windham's new selectman, Kord Scott, at the town office after one of his first meetings there. He was with Selectman Frank Seawright and Town Treasurer Peter Chamberlain, and they were obviously enjoying

their interaction and their discussion of new possibilities for the town.

When they left and the interview began, Kord told me he felt he was joining a team effort with people who respect each other and are committed to a cooperative environment. He hadn't planned to join the Selectboard, but when Margaret Dwyer decided not to run for another term, he saw it was the right opportunity at the right time.

"In general, I am politically apathetic," he said. "I've no desire to be involved in a big, dysfunctional mess. But in a small town like Windham, I can get involved, be a part of a competent team, and maybe make a difference." He said that others in his family set an example for him. His wife Kathy is the assistant town treasurer. Daughter Beth McDonald serves on the Windham School Board, and son-in-law Pete McDonald is the town's energy coordinator.

Kord's interests are varied. He enjoys his family - his wife, two daughters, two sons, ten grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. He is involved with the West River Community Project which created the West Townshend Country Store. He looks forward to gardening more, as well as returning to tennis when an injury has healed.

Named after a character from a book his mother loved, Kord grew up in New Jersey. His father was a doctor and wanted Kord to be one too. But Kord wasn't so sure. He pursued a degree in Psychology, but found himself drawn to the idea of running a small business so took business courses too.

He spent a few years after college laying groundwork, then started Process TDH, a company that specializes in parts and services for water, waste-

water, air, and HVAC equipment, providing support for municipal, industrial, and commercial facilities. He was owner and president, and Kathy was the bookkeeper, until recently when they turned control over to one of their sons and a son-in-law. Kord now serves the business on a consultant basis.

This background can be applied to his job as selectman. He explains, "I've worked on many mechanical and construction projects and look forward to working with the town's road crew. I understand budgets and finance and can help with our efforts to better manage the town's money."

Although Process TDH is based in New Jersey near Philadelphia, Kord is no newcomer to Windham. He's been coming to Vermont since the early 1960s, and his father bought a house on Route 121 later in that decade, the same house where Kord and Kathy now live. He said, "I remember my first time to Vermont. At night I was in awe of the black sky full of stars. I'd never seen anything like it in New Jersey. I fell in love from the start." In the 1980s, Kord bought the house when his father moved to the ocean shore.

Over the years, Kord has spent most weekends here, during every season of the year. "I must have a strong draw to this place," he said. "It's a six-hour drive!"

He explained that he grew up in an affluent area with a focus on material possessions and urban life. But those things aren't what matters to him. "People here have their priorities straight. They are concerned about the environment. They like to make things grow. People here leave each other alone. They don't tell each other how to live. We're all here because we love this place. We share that. Yet everyone here has a different story. We are all interesting people with varied backgrounds."

Kord enjoys learning more about his Windham neighbors. "Listening is a priority for me. I try to be trustworthy and listen to what people say. I want to help as I can." That includes working with others to find creative ways to deal with our town's issues. "I'm lucky," he said. "I'm walking into a situation with a team of competent people who all want what's best for this town."

WINDHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEWS *by Carolyn Partridge*

There has been a lot going on at the Windham Elementary School! On March 30, we held a potluck dinner, dance, and Cake Walk that was very well-attended by school families and community members alike. The kids all danced and had great fun. Sincere thanks to Claudia Holmes for baking the cakes and to Sally Newton and Michael Donahue for playing music. Some of the parents strung twinkle lights so it was a nicer atmosphere. As one community member said, "We should do this more often!"

The 3-6 graders have been participating in a six-week "Digital Wish" program that teaches digital citizenship, research techniques, and web-site reliability. Students also had the opportunity to create their own webcasts.

The 3-6 graders have also been participating in the "Early Stages" program sponsored by the Weston Playhouse. They will spend eight sessions with an artist in residence to write, design, and perform their own playlets. This year they have been given a grant to fund the set and costume design as well. This is an excellent opportunity for the students to explore their artistic side a bit more. The program culminates with a performance at the Weston Playhouse on May 18th.

May 12th-16th will find the 5th and 6th graders at Camp Keewaydin, which includes five days and four overnights of outdoor education and nature appreciation. This year, the 6th grade trip will be to Manhattan again. On the itinerary will be a visit to the Statue of Liberty, Ground Zero, the new Trade Center tower, Chinatown, Times Square, and Wooster Street Pizza in New Haven.

Graduation is tentatively planned for June 10th and we invite everyone in the community to join us at the school. It is a joyous and moving occasion!



WES Students, Ready for the Cake Walk!

FROM THE WES NEWSLETTER *by Gail Wyman*

Feb 28...Our school sends out many thanks to Jerry Dyke for the homemade mitten dryer he made for us...He even arranged the mittens and hats on the dryers after he set it up. It is nice being able to count on townspeople to help out...Just in time for the wet snow we are going to get with spring coming along!!...We are still looking for more people to come in and be mystery readers in Sally's class. A good time seems to be Tuesdays around two o'clock. As a reader you do not need to stress about what you pick for a choice to read. At the end of your story, there will be a few kids that will ask "Can you read that again?"

March 7...Thanks go to the Windham Community Organization for the three new Samsung Chrome Books for our school. They will be put to good use. There are enough now so it is possible for the entire class to be using the chrome books at the same time. Khan Academy is frequently used, where they can learn everything there is to know about math, listen to presidential speeches, look up the Great Depression, the history of art, plants, the human body, people, places, anything. Check it out....

March 28...The cake decorating on Thursday was a huge success. Decorating their cakes was like art class. After directions, they all bring their own personality and talents to the table. So no two cakes are alike. Some of the cakes have over an inch of icing on them, so there will be some wide eyed kids at bedtime tonight. Thank you Claudia and Lisa for the cakes. The cakes were perfect size. Our parent

group is doing a great job. There were parents at each table helping the kids, cleaning up tables, putting chairs and tables away and dish washing. Thank you, thank you.

April 11...We did go back again to the Merinoff farm to watch the shearing that was postponed last week... The shearer had ten sheep to shear and clip their nails, and one llama to shear. So that we would not have to stay for the whole shearing, the shearer sheared and clipped two sheep, then went on to Tatters, the llama. Tatters was tied by the neck to a barn post, with two helpers holding her. She protested with a low cry for the whole procedure, and would not come away from the post for awhile after she was done. She lives with the sheep and once they started coming to her, she relaxed and went back to her usual spot to lay down. This was a wonderful day and very enlightening for the kids and adults...The Springfield Recreation Center was super per usual. Everything went off smoothly and the kids got an hour and fifteen minutes of swimming. We made an unplanned trip to the Springfield Fire House after swimming, walking over the river and to the Firehouse. That is a very impressive place to go. The kids had some interesting questions to ask. An excellent morning was had by all...After swimming and working up a good appetite we returned to a tasty hot lunch made made by Lisa, Jan, and Claudia. Hot mini pizzas and glasses of milk were already set up at the tables. They had carrot sticks and salad too. After everyone ate their fill, they had ice cream. Thank you ladies, you are awesome.

THOUGHTS ON RISING TAX BILLS *by Heath Boyer*

During Town Meeting there was informative and spirited conversation about the relentless rise in our tax bills in recent years. In an attempt to understand where the increases originate I did some simple math for my own use and shared some of it during the meeting. Several folks said it was useful, so here it is in summary form. All the numbers come directly from the Town of Windham Annual Reports from 2009 through 2013. Budget numbers for Leland and Gray High School (L&G) and the state education tax for 2014 had to be estimated.

In 2013 Windham collected \$2,387,000 in property taxes. That amount represents an increase of \$600,000 or 34% since 2009. Where does the increase come from? Here are the numbers:

- Local education spending for L&G and Windham Elementary School (WES), combined, was \$702,000 in 2009. In 2014 we have budgeted \$692,000, a *decrease* of \$10,000 (1.4%) from 2009. WES budget for 2014 is smaller by \$17,000 (4.5%) than it was in 2009.
- Total municipal spending (General Fund plus Roads) since 2009 has increased from \$536,000 to \$600,000, a growth of \$64,000 (12%).
- The State Education Tax, which is over and above local education spending, has shown steady annual increases from \$344,000 in 2009 to \$816,000 in 2013, an increase of 137%. None of these dollars are returned to Windham. We know that total taxes will go up this year; we just don't know how much. Even if we assume no increase, and we subtract the sum of local education plus municipal budgets from the 2013 total collected property tax of \$2,387,000, we can expect a State Education Fund bill for at least \$1,100,000. That's a 220% increase since 2009.

The conclusion is that 96% of the increase in our total tax bills since 2009 is due to the rise in State Education Fund taxes, over which we have no control and from which we derive no direct local benefit. It's not opinion; it's in the numbers.

Although the Town's total Education Tax has increased

by 36% from \$1,300,000 to \$1,700,000 (rounded), only 2.8% of that increase has come from our local education expenses. The remainder is all a result of increased spending at the state level, over which local school boards have no control.

WES expenses have averaged \$312,000 over the five years. With some ups and downs in between, 2013 was about \$12,000 (4%) above the average budget. L&G expenses have been fairly stable for the five years. L&G has averaged \$341,000 for the period, with 2013 being \$20,000 (6%) above the average.

NOTES ON THE LELAND AND GRAY BUDGET

*by Howard Ires, Windham Representative to
L&G School Board*

I'm really proud to be representing Windham on the L&G school board. Our town has a great reputation as a town that supports its schools. Turnout for the budget re-vote was excellent - 49 people voted in our little town, with 75% in favor of the budget. Jamaica, Newfane, Brookline, and Jamaica also voted for the budget, but the Townshend vote was so overwhelmingly against the budget that it failed by ONE vote overall, forcing another vote on a cut-back budget on April 29.

It has been 10 years since a L&G budget was rejected by voters, and we have to remember to put the vote in the context of a statewide discontent with school taxes, with many other school budgets being rejected. Press coverage suggests widespread dissatisfaction with the state funding process. The heart of the problem appears to be declining enrollment, coupled with a funding formula that penalizes schools and taxpayers for enrollment declines. As the enrollment at L&G declines, we will cut the staff, and costs will go down. While it is hard to make cuts, we understand that it needs to be done.

For the third try at getting a budget passed we cut capital items but not educational programs, trying to respect

(Continued on page 9)



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LONDONDERRY TRANSFER STATION NEWS *by Esther Fishman*

Take it or leave it: The transfer station now has a take away area, or as one resident suggested, a "Take It or Leave It" area. If you would like to take advantage of this service, please check with Keith or Steve before leaving anything. There is a fee associated with this service because after an appropriate amount of time, if nobody wants what you've left, it would need to be disposed of as trash.

Food scrap collection: We will start a food scrap collection program at the transfer station this spring. Even if you compost at home you might not be putting meat, bones and dairy in your bins. We will be able to take all of those materials. We will have countertop buckets as well as five gallon pails with screw top lids available for sale for your collection convenience.

Dates to remember: Electronics Collection (Sat. May 17, 2014, L'derry Transfer Station), Hazardous Waste Collections (Sat. June 7 and Oct. 4, 2014, Flood Brook School). Want more info? www.londonderryvt.org

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WINDHAM VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY UPDATE
by Marcia Clinton

Fire Company calls:

Feb. 9 - Responded with fire truck to Chester at 8 a.m. for a mutual aid call to stand by at their fire station as Chester and other town fire companies fought a fire in Chester. Windham maintained stand-by call for 5 hours.

Feb. 15 - Responded with fire truck to Jamaica at 12 a.m. for a mutual aid call where CO₂ detector from Windham was used.

March 6 - Responded to Jamaica at 1 a.m. for a mutual aid call with tanker for CO₂ detection.

The Fire Co. is instituting a driver training course in anticipation of the new truck to be ordered later this year. The five new members will train for three days during April and May. It is imperative that the Fire Co. have several people available to drive a fire truck, especially during the day when there are fewer fire fighters in town to respond to calls.

At the March meeting the Fire Co. welcomed Josh Dryden, town highway crew, as a new member and he was quickly outfitted into his turnout gear.

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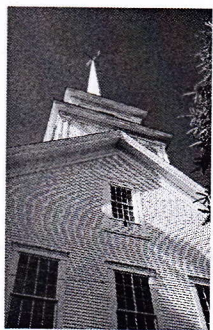
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MIRACLES HAPPEN *by Lydia Pope France, on behalf of the Friends of the Meeting House*

This is the third in a series of four articles on the Windham Meeting House.

I once heard a well known philanthropist describe her rather major donation to a worthy cause as one of the only ways she knew to get a guaranteed 100% return on her investment. What a nice way to think about charitable giving, and how true. We have in our midst the historic Windham Meeting House,

which relies on the dedication of the community and donations from near and far.

The Society of the Friends of the Meeting House was formed in 1980 to provide funds for restoration. Their efforts enabled hiring contractors for major restoration – replacing the foundation, sills, and main support timbers, adding concrete supports and building a new sub-floor, and also brought heat and bathrooms to fruition.

The group has actively raised money via grants, letters to property owners, auctions, raffles, and sales of cookbooks, t-shirts and tote bags. But in an interview with Ernie Friedli, longtime member of The Friends, Greg Noel learned that often, when funds were short and needs were great, suddenly, *like magic*, someone would appear and save the day. They have received the donation of a home, which was sold to fund The Friends' coffers. Once a visiting stranger was impressed with the building and all it stood for and donated professional services. Other similar miracles have occurred.

In addition to the projects above, The Friends have overseen new flashing for the steeple, new clapboards, exterior painting, roof repairs, floor refinishing, a building addition, new plaster and painting, wiring, duct work, septic, and the installation of the handicapped accessible lift.

Major grants and donations include those from The

Windham Foundation, the State of Vermont, the Freeman Foundation Preservation Trust, Town of Windham, The Alvord Family Foundation, S.B. Daily P.C. and others. They have received checks large and small from residents and property owners, all of which add up to help the cause.

Back in 2003 when we were just starting up Windham News & Notes, we ran quite a few articles encouraging people to use the Meeting House. While it has long served for church services and Town Meeting, it now enjoys activities on many days of the week. It is home to weekly yoga and exercise groups, the greatly expanded and updated library and book club, meetings of the Windham News & Notes team, the WCO and The Society of the Friends of the Windham Meeting House, hosts concerts, movies and talks, community suppers, the WCO BBQ, weddings, funerals, church council meetings, the summer day camp and more. There was even a bingo night a few years back. Fair to say that that wish has been fulfilled!

So now, once again, the Friends are hoping for a miracle. Will you be the latest white knight riding up Windham Hill to offer your help, be it in the form of ideas, professional services or funds? The Society of the Friends of Windham Meeting House is a 501(C)(3) organization, so all donations are tax deductible. And where else can you feel that you are absolutely guaranteed a return on your investment? The delight at helping maintain and preserve this grand old building is payback indeed, so please consider getting involved.

If you would like to be part of this, please leave your name and contact details with the town clerk. Checks gratefully accepted.

Stay tuned, the Friends are planning an event for everyone enjoy hidden aspects of this great monument of our town, to be announced in the coming issue of WN&N.

WINDHAM COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION NEWS *by Mary Boyer*

The WCO held our annual meeting in March. First, we elected officers; last year's officers are willing to serve again: President, Dona Robinson; Vice-President, Ellen McDuffie; Secretary, Dawn Bower; Treasurer, Cindy Kehoe.

This year has been a very busy one. Thanks to you, our supporters, we had a very successful Chicken BBQ and Harvest Dinner, and the News & Notes was brimming with interesting articles.

Your support allowed us to fulfill our mission of helping residents of Windham and the surrounding communities. We provided families with heating fuel, gasoline, rent, and food assistance. We were able to donate to Neighborhood Connections and two neighboring food banks that serve our residents. In addition we provided three Chrome Books to the Elementary School. We sponsor Green Up Day with lunch, and on occasion have presentations for residents.

Our next two meetings are April 30th and May 28th. We welcome new members for this next year and hope to continue to increase our presence in Windham. For more information please call Dona Robinson at 874-7242 or Ellen McDuffie at 874-8183.

The volunteers of the WCO and News & Notes appreciate all of the community support we have received over the years and look forward to another year of serving Windham.

WHY HOMESCHOOL? *by Kathy Griffin*

There are days when I ask myself that question. When I come to the end of the day and the house looks like a tornado ripped through it and the kids have spent all day on their first subject. We're all tired and grumpy and it feels like we have accomplished nothing. Then there are days of discovery. A question from the news headlines sparks a discussion that leads to research and ends up tying into what we've studied in a class. Those lessons in history, literature, or science apply to our lives *now*. That is when I remember *why* we homeschool.

Many wonder about socialization. Our boys love to socialize, but they also like to be able to minimize their distractions. Sometimes we listen to music as we study, other times we enjoy quiet. We can snuggle on the couch to read our textbooks, or we can spread out our papers on the kitchen table. Two days per week we participate in a homeschool co-op at our church. We have 21 children from pre-school through 12th grade. All our classes have mixed age groups, and we choose curriculums that work well with multi-age groups. Different parents teach various subjects allowing each to teach in their area of expertise. The co-op allows for fellowship and encouragement, both for the parents and for the students. It's really neat to incorporate what we learn in the different classes and see how the subjects fit together. It's also nice as parents to be able to share struggles and ideas.

Like any educational endeavor, homeschooling has both its challenges and its triumphs. Why do we homeschool? We homeschool because we feel it's a great way to invest ourselves in the lives of our children.

Do you have questions about homeschooling in Windham? Send them to windhamnews@hotmail.com, and

THOUGHTS ON THE LELAND AND GRAY BUDGET

(Continued from page 6)


the wishes of those that wanted the budget cut and those that voted for the budget the first two times.

Windham resident Evan Riley is the student representative on the Board, and at the meeting where the school administration proposed the cuts that would be made, he spoke strongly against cutting \$2,500 for a 3-D printer, persuasively enough that the Board restored it to the budget. Technology jobs are the high paid jobs of the present and future, and we need to encourage our kids to familiarize themselves with as much technology as we can. A 3-D printer can print three-dimensional prototypes from

drawings, and they are used extensively in research and industry.

By the time you are reading this, L&G will have had a third vote on it's budget (April 29), and hopefully this budget will pass and save us all the trouble of doing it again. There are towns that have gone through this six times!

L&G Board meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, at 7p.m. at L&G in the library. Everyone is welcome, it's lot's of fun... If you have any questions, concerns, or comments about L&G, please email me at: hires@windhamcentralboard.org



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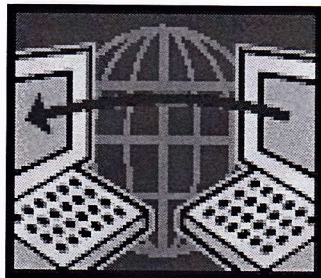


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WINDHAM LIBRARY FIBER OPTICS UPDATE*by John Hoover*

On Wednesday, March 5, 2014, the Windham Town Library fiber optic internet connection went “live” thereby joining libraries and schools throughout Vermont with incredibly fast internet connections. As a result of substantial federal grants Bel-

lows Falls-based Sovernet was able to run fiber optic cable to many communities in Vermont. This Fiber Connect Project, supported by the Vermont Department of Libraries (DOL), offers 21st century levels of connectivity to many rural communities in Vermont.

The DOL has been instrumental in providing the library with the means to access the new connection by providing essential equipment such as routers and switches at no cost to the library. Technicians from the DOL have come to Windham to set up the equipment and make the necessary connections. Additionally the DOL has provided the Town of Windham the opportunity to receive a substantial discount on the continuing cost of the fiber connection service and has provided a consultant whose job is to do all the paperwork and filings necessary for us to receive the discount.

As a “non-technophile” I have been fascinated to learn the technological effects of the library’s new connection. Internet connection speeds are typically measured in bits per second where a bit is a “character” to be transmitted. A kilobit is 1,000 characters and a megabit is equal to 1,000,000 bits or characters. While typical non-fiber connections can range from 1 to 200 megabits per second (Mbps) a single glass strand in a fiber optic cable is capa-

ble to moving a minimum of 10 gigabits (10,000 megabits) per second. To provide a more concrete example, if a typical e-book is 9.6 megabits it would be possible to transmit over 300,000 books at the same time over a 1 gigabit connection. Speeds that fiber optics can provide are essential for the transmission of large video and data files and can provide seamless connections for video conferencing with a program such as Skype.

How might this new high-speed internet connection be of value to the Town of Windham and its residents? High-speed connectivity can play a critical role in economic development, job training, education and health care. It can also provide access to local, state and federal government services. Broadband also can offer seniors unique opportunities to conveniently access a range of healthcare services, and to socialize and connect families in ways that might otherwise have been difficult or impossible without it. In libraries around Vermont high-speed internet connections have enabled individuals to establish a business or to “telecommute” to an employer’s office and still live in a rural area. Large data files can be quickly downloaded onto portable devices which will allow users to work at home on their personal computers. The connection is available at all times and is strong enough that if the Meeting House isn’t open, a connection can still be made from a laptop computer in the parking area. All that is necessary is agreeing to the terms of use that appear when you log on to the internet.

The next step for the library is to determine ways to make its computer services more accessible and up-to-date. Discussions need to be held as to what additional equipment the library might need and how it can best provide access for Windham’s residents. Please feel free to share your thoughts and ideas with the library trustees as we enter this new phase of library services.

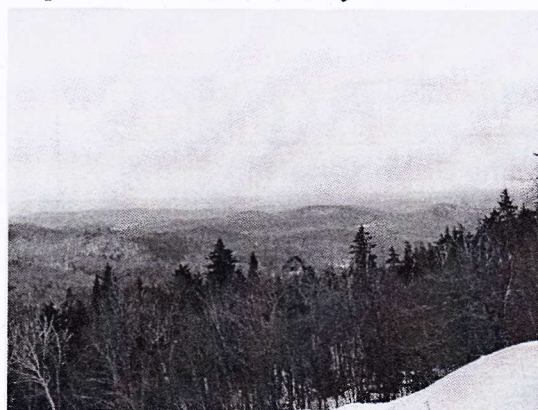
FROM THE WINDHAM TOWN PLAN, CHAPTER VI: WINDHAM'S HISTORIC, RECREATIONAL, AND SCENIC RESOURCES

“Windham has an abundance of historic resources which contribute to the Town character and quality of life. Places of historic interest located in Windham include The Windham Village Historic District, The South Windham Village Historic District, The Windham Meeting House, The South Windham Church, Town Cemeteries, and Existing Stone Walls. Both South Windham Village and Windham Village are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This is the official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation in the United States. The natural recreational resources of Windham are its waterways and forests. These areas provide fishing, hunting, hiking, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing and other activities.

The scenic resources of Windham are numerous and varied. Together, they form the pattern that has come to be associated with Windham's landscape. There are numerous excellent views and vistas available from many points in Windham.”

Here is the view from Timberidge facing the eastern slopes of Windham. What's your favorite view?—Imme

Maurath



ZUMBA SHAKES WINDHAM AND BEYOND*by Gina Noel*

Zumba Gold came to Windham last July with its signature exercise program of Latin infused dance. Initially the group comprised only full time Windhamites. It has grown to include participants from neighboring towns and part time residents from all over.

It is the most fun workout over the fastest 45 minutes I have ever spent! Although much of the music is Latin for the hot rhythms, current hits and fun, classic oldies are thrown into the mix making it something for everyone. The program is paced to suit active, older (55+) adults but it's really suitable for anyone just wanting a fun workout mid-week.

Join us and get ready to love to dance again. And, not to worry, we definitely are a mixed bunch of skill levels. *Dancing with the Stars* does not have to be concerned.

Now that it looks like spring has actually come to Windham, I encourage everyone to come out and shape up so we can be nimble weekend warriors all summer long. It's the perfect fit for a comprehensive workout at the most convenient location in Town – free parking, no special equipment needed.

The program is held Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5p.m. at the Windham Elementary School. Please contact our multi-certified and innovative instructor, Pauline O'Brien, at paulinebob@hotmail.com or call 802-376-5397 for more information or if you have

Town Contacts:

Town Office: Alison Trowbridge, Town Clerk. phone: 874-4211 email: windham.town@gmail.com

Town Treasurer: Peter Chamberlain: phone: 874-4211 email: windham.towntreasurer@gmail.com

Town Garage: Bill Roberts and Josh Dryden 874-7025

Town listers: Michael Simonds, chair. phone: 802-874-4790,

email: Michael@windhamcountryhouse.com

Selectboard: Mary Boyer, chair. phone: 875-5242: email: mfb@vermontel.net

School Board: Beth McDonald phone : 874-4015; email: 220woodburn@gmail.com

Windham Community Organization: Dona Robinson phone 874-7242

BULLETIN BOARD**HOW CAN WE HELP?**

Do you need a ride to the doctor's or dentist's office or a trip to the grocery store? Are you a caregiver who could use a short break? Do you need someone to stay with your loved one while you run errands? If your answer is "yes" to any of these questions, people from Windham Congregational Church are willing to help. Please call 874-4428.

JOIN THE "FRIENDS OF WINDHAM"

Our mission

- Encourage the preservation of the rural heritage and the woodlands of the Town of Windham;
- Develop and publish analysis of the potential effects on our community of industrial wind turbines on the ridgelines surrounding Windham;
- Actively raise contributions for to cover cost of our Newsletter.

Inquiries can be sent to Friends of Windham, Box 297, Londonderry, Vermont 05148 or by email to fw@vermontel.net. Donations can be sent to the Treasurer at the above address.

**** CHANGE OF ADDRESS ****

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TOWNSHEND, VT 05353

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SPRING FITNESS AT THE MEETING HOUSE

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above address or preferably by
email to windhamnews@
hotmail.com

*Please keep us informed of any
address changes*

REGULAR MEETINGS & SCHEDULES

Town Clerk: Mondays, 12-6;
Tuesdays, 8:45-2:45;
Thursdays, 12-3 ; third
Saturdays, May 17 & June
21 , 9-noon.

Selectboard: Mondays, May
5 & 19 and June 2 & 16,
6:30 p.m. at the Town Of-
fice. Open meeting.

School Board: Mondays,
May 5 & June 2, 4 p.m. at
Elementary School. Open
meeting.

Listers: Wednesdays, 9-
noon at the Town Office.

Planning and Zoning:
Wed, June 6, 6 p.m. Hear-
ing, Draft Town Plan At the
Town Office. Open meeting.

Library: Wednesdays, 3-5.
Book Group will meet May 7
& June 4 at the Meeting
House during library hours.

Volunteer Fire Company:
Thursdays: May 1 & June 5,
6 p.m. at the Fire-
house. Heavy refresh-
ments served.

**Windham Community Or-
ganization:** Wednesdays,
May 28 and June 25, 7 p.m.
at the Meeting House. Eve-
ryone invited.

**Windham Congregational
Church (UCC)** Sundays:
Worship Services at 9:30
a.m.

Valley Bible Church: Sun-
days: Sunday School, 9:55;
Morning Worship, 11 a.m.; Pot-
luck, 12:10; Afternoon Service,
1:10. Tuesdays: Bible study/
Prayer, 7 p.m.



SAVE THE DATES

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 6 P.M. HEARING ON THE DRAFT TOWN PLAN, AT THE TOWN OFFICE