



Windham News & Notes



TOWN MEETING TUESDAY MARCH 3 at 10:00 AM

THE MEETING HOUSE

PLEASE BRING YOUR 2014 WINDHAM ANNUAL REPORT, A POTLUCK DISH AND \$1 FOR DRINKS AND PAPER GOODS

IT'S TIME FOR TOWN MEETING 2015!

As a Vermonter, it is a unique time to come together to conduct town business, vote on the town budget, elect town officers and enjoy a delicious potluck lunch with friends and neighbors. Several positions are up for re-election. They are listed below, along with statements submitted by candidates.



Positions to be elected are listed below along with the term of office and the incumbent:

Moderator, 1 year, Mike McLaine
Selectman, 3 years, Frank Seawright
Lister, 3 years, Jerry Dyke (not running for another term)
Auditor, 3 years, Ginny Crittenden
Constable, 2 years, Billy Jean Clay
Delinquent Tax Collector, 1 year, Ernie Friedli
Grand Juror, 1 year, Jim Scott
Town Agent, 1 year, Michael Simonds
Windham Center Cemetery Commission, 5 years, Alan Partridge
West Windham Cemetery Commission, 5 years, Jeff Riley
North Windham Cemetery Commission, 5 years, Cathy Clay Prouty
Library Trustee, 5 years, Radina Welton (not running for another term)
Windham School Director, 3 years, Beth McDonald

Candidates for Town Office Seek Your Vote *(compiled by the News and Notes staff)*

All elected town offices with terms that expire in 2015 will be filled by election at town meeting on March 3rd. Incumbents may be re-nominated or challenged from the floor. We requested candidates to make a statement here. The following people responded to our request.

Ginny Crittenden – Auditor: Hello! I am Virginia (Ginny) Crittenden, and I would appreciate your vote to re-elect me as one of the three town auditors. In the several years I have been in the position, I have learned a great deal, and I hope I have been of help to the Town of Windham. The job of auditor is seasonal, with the majority of our time spent auditing the year-end books and putting together the town report for the annual town meeting. We also audit the bank accounts on a quarterly basis. I enjoy the work and look forward to having another term. Thank you for your vote.

Beth McDonald – School Board: I am happy to continue as a school board member. Windham is a beautiful community, and our little school is equally beautiful and truly unique.

(Continued on page 3)

Remembering Town Meeting 60 years ago

by David Crittenden

In 1954 all students at the South Windham Elementary School were taught by Blanche Glynn. We called her Miss Glynn. We were told at the time that she was a wonderful, sensible, and an inspired teacher, but back then we thought she was a witch.

Miss Glynn taught us to get to our town meeting wherever it was. In 7th and 8th grades we were required to attend, so I went. Walter Woodruff had to go too; Leona Buzzell also, I think, and possibly Barbara Clark. We were all about 12 years old.

Miss Glenn's lesson was simple. When you are old enough, make sure to vote. No excuses; just go and vote wherever it's happening. Don't worry about Windham's snow or mud, just get there somehow and vote. At 12 years old, obviously we weren't old enough to vote, but Miss Glynn told us that we could be excused from school if we went to Town Meeting and observed the voting. We were required to return to school with an acceptable written report about what we heard and saw.

Some family names in town back then were LeMay, Perry, Dutton, Carvage, Stowell, Newton, Pare, Havell, Hall, Peck, Abbott, Crittenden, Hazelton, Carlton, and Chapin. Many of the kids from these families were not yet in 7th or 8th grade, so they weren't invited to attend. So off we went, missing a day of school, yellow pad in hand, ready to take notes so that the other 10 kids in school could benefit from our assignment and Miss Glynn could check the yellow pads and decide whether or not we should be kept in from recess.



Black Capped Chickadee

Here are parts of my report of that meeting 60 years ago:

- * There were some huge families in town: Chases, Stowells, and Duttons among others
- * We kids wished we had the guts to sneak up on the townspeople as they warmed themselves in front of the wood stove in the Meeting House, and yank the knees of their dungarees forward so they jumped before the backs of their legs got burned.
- * We checked the delinquent tax report for the names of delinquents as soon as the meeting began.
- * There was something fishy going on with the town's gas bill because by 1954 all the equipment ran on diesel.
- * There were a few people 'on the town' and all they did was keep the fire in the town shed going.
- * Kids in our public school got stars for memorizing Bible verses.
- * Somehow the Windham Center School had burned down.
- * The school bus driver, who was also a school board member, decided not to pick up a student who lived up on Chase Road.
- * We waited during the meeting for Ralph Carvage ('Cabbage') to holler out about the Chapin boys blasting their pickup through his cows which were loose on the road.

Certainly both Town Meeting and Miss Glynn convinced me that no matter what or how I think, voting is pivotal.

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Select Board News

by Mary Boyer, Frank Seawright and Kord Scott

The Select Board spent most of its time in the last few months preparing the 2015 budget for your review at town meeting on March 3rd. Our treasurer, the auditors, and we have made every effort to produce a document that is easy to read and understand.

We encourage everyone to review it before the meeting, and don't forget to bring your copy to the meeting on March 3rd. Vermont town meeting is one of the only places in the world where you, the voters, decide directly how much money to pay out for government.

Jerry Dyke will not run again for the lister position. We thank Jerry for his nine years of dedicated service. Radina Welton will not run again for library trustee, stating health reasons for her regret.



Town Meeting Potluck 2014

Appointed positions are made at the first Select Board meeting after town meeting, which this year is March 16th. Anyone wishing to serve in an appointed position, please let our town clerk, Alison Trowbridge, or one of the Select Board members, know of your interest. If you have an interest but are uncertain of the duties or qualifications, Alison has information on all positions at the Town Office. She will be happy to help you decide if serving is something you would like to do.

We look forward to seeing you at town meeting and sharing that delicious lunch on March 3rd.

(Continued from page 1, Candidate Statements)

John Hoover – Lister: After a 35-year career in education, I retired to Vermont with my wife, Sally, first to Londonderry and then to Windham. I currently serve as a library trustee and justice of the peace and have been encouraged to stand for the post of lister. Today's listers should possess a variety of traits and experiences. Listers should have a sense of fairness, be good listeners, and be able to articulate decisions in a clear and understandable way. Additionally, listers should be organized and have a familiarity with computers and their programs. Given 3½ decades working with people, plus over 30 years' experience using various computer programs, I believe I can bring the needed traits and experiences to the job.

Frank Seawright – Select Board: I would appreciate your vote on March 3rd to serve another three-year term on the select board. I'd like to complete the creation of the Roads Management Software. This database system will enable improved planning and budget comparisons of our roads budget by tracking man-hours, equipment use hours, road materials and structures expenses. In addition, I would like to establish a user-friendly list of parcels to make our listers' information more accessible to property owners. Thank you for your consideration.

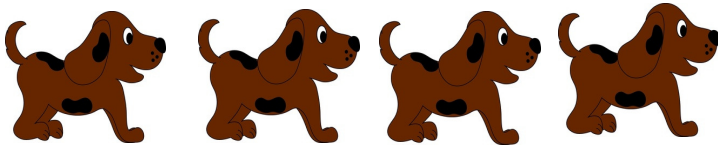
Leland and Gray Budget Passes by Wide Margins

By Howie Ires, Windham's L&G school board representative

The 2016 Leland and Gray school budget passed by a wide margin of votes, and it passed in each of the member towns. This is good news after we had to vote three times last year!

The level-funded budget preserved all of L&G's course offerings while holding the line against rising costs. According to the tentative numbers I have seen as of 2/10/2015, the L&G budget combined with the Windham Elementary budget may leave Windham with a combined school tax rate of 1.5802 for 2016, a 7.91% decrease from the 2015 rate of 1.716.

Thank you to everyone who voted!



APRIL 1 is the Deadline for Licensing your Dog! All dogs and wolf hybrids 6 months or older must be licensed at the Town Office. Bring certification of rabies vaccination and proof of neuter/spay if applicable. Fees are: Neutered or spayed dogs, \$8. After April 1, \$10. Males, females, wolf hybrids, \$12. After April 1, \$16.



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.

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Many 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: April 15, 2015



Town Meeting 2014; Mary Boyer, Frank Seawright, Margaret Dwyer



REMINDER: Property owners wishing to file for the **HOMESTEAD TAX EXEMPTION HS122** MUST file on or before April 15th, tax day. If you are filing for an extension of your income taxes you still must file for the Homestead Tax Exemption by the April 15. deadline. Failure to do so incurs rather substantial fines.



SNOW ~ verload!

By Lydia Pope France

When we were moving to Vermont, we wanted a place that got a lot of snow. We ruled out lower altitudes, not enough snow potential we thought. Good thing we are still on that wavelength, or this year could definitely be a case of “be careful what you wish for”! The snow has been so deep that you only need to find a crack or crevice to see brilliant blue. (Read about this phenomenon at <https://nsidc.org/cryosphere/snow/science/characteristics.html> .)

We haven't had a record snowfall by any means. But we have had temperatures that were cold enough ~ and colder, for that matter, with no January thaw to speak of ~ to keep pretty much every flake we've gotten still on the ground. And in most cases, frozen pretty solid. Those piles at the end of your driveway could quite possibly total a car! For the second time in fifteen years, we had to bring in the big guns, this time a tractor, to push snow back in an attempt to make room for the next batch.



Lydia's buried mailbox



Yes, the owl is upside down!

How do the numbers stack up? It's mid-February, and we've had 95.5 inches of snow (8 feet). But just about half of that came with four storms in February, and we still have half the month to go. Totals by the month are:

November –	13.5 inches
December –	20.0 inches
January –	16.0 inches
February 1-15 –	46.0 inches

It's the season of the sad mailboxes, with added casualties after each new plow. From dented, to hanging, to gone, or just plain buried in snow. And on dirt roads, even the boxes that have gone unscathed are now so low to the road that *even I* have to bend to reach in. Lucky Norman has that right-hand drive Jeep, or he'd never reach them from the car ...

We also wanted proper winters, but the entire state pretty much qualifies there. This winter has seen many temps on the minus side. So far we've dipped below zero ten times, with the "lowest low" coming in at -15 one morning. And only ten days in January got above freezing, ditto five of the first fifteen days of February.

The third “must” was a spot where you could live up close and personal with nature. That magic continues. Moose, bear, hawks, spotted darners are all wonderful, but one of the most special visits is the appearance of an owl. In many winters we have had one hanging around, often above the feeders watching and listening keenly to the snow below. The head cocks, and down he swoops, returning to his perch with a mole or vole from the depths. The cycle of nature ...

They usually come on dull or stormy days, and this year we've had plenty of “good owl weather” as we call it. But maybe the deep snow is not such good weather for the owls themselves. Last weekend I looked out to see “our owl” hanging from the suet feeder, doing stomach crunches to eek out a few chunks of frozen suet. For a bird that generally eats things that are alive, and even then doesn't chew them, this must have been quite a comedown, but desperate times demand desperate measures. And it did make for a wonderful photo op.

There are signs that things are changing. Gardening catalogues arrive almost daily. And the days are noticeably longer, with bright afternoons that make such a difference.

My friend Ann has a great quote. Each year we talk about whether and when it has come:

*There is that one day in February
when you can smell
the distant yet approaching summer.*

And you know, I think that day was last Wednesday, when in the midst of all this bright white, fierce winds and frigid temps, the thermometer on the sunny side of the house hit 41 degrees! That wonderful time of anticipating the coming season has begun.

P.S. As noted above, this article was written prior to the deadline for submission. But in the week that the newsletter was being prepared for production we've had another 14 or so inches, Nine feet and counting. Happy shoveling!

Windham Town Library News

by Beverly Carmichael

Upcoming book club selections are:

Mar.4 – “The Space Between Us” by Thrity Umrigar,

Apr. 1 – “The Boston Girl” by Anita Diamont,

May 6 – “In the Fall” by Jeffrey Lent.

Please feel free to join us for our monthly conversation about these great books. It always proves to be a good time,

with refreshments offered. We meet the 1st Wednesday of the month from 3-5 PM at the Meeting House.

The Windham Library has purchased “**The Vermont Movie**” and will be showing the six part series at the library this spring. Look for the movie sign in front of the library for times and dates.

Your Library Trustees would also like to remind everyone that we have **high speed Fiber-Optic Internet** service at the library. Feel free to bring your laptop or tablet to the library and download movies at super-fast speed. This can also be done from the parking lot after hours. No password required.

Dunkels Return to Vermont with Move to Burbee Pond Road

by Bill Dunkel

Moving to Windham last summer was a homecoming of sorts for us. My wife, Chris, is a native Vermonter from Winooski. Our children, Katie and Bryan, were born at Springfield Hospital in the 80's when we were living in Jamaica and Stratton. I am the lone flatlander in the family and occasionally am reminded of this.

I fell in love with Vermont when I met and fell in love with Chris in 1970. I can still remember getting out of my car on a remote road one night and marveling at all the stars in the sky. I certainly couldn't see that many in New Jersey!

After finishing graduate school, I desperately needed a job and was hired to teach history at Stratton Mountain School, where my classroom was in the basement of the old Hotel Tyrol. I taught there and served as director of studies from 1978 until 1989. Chris worked at a law office in Manchester until we started our family. Subsequently, I was a teacher and administrator at three other independent schools in Colorado Springs, Weston, MA, and Atlanta.

Although we moved around the country, every sum-

mer we put the kids in the car and returned to our converted hunting camp on the back side of Stratton Mountain. We always knew that when we retired we would return to Vermont. We chose Windham because it is relatively close to friends and a grocery store and has great natural beauty. So far we really like the people we have met here and are enjoying the balmy climate.



Changes Await Windham's Listers and Property Owners

by the Windham Listers

The Windham listers would like to thank the citizens and property owners of Windham for their support during the town-wide reappraisal. Green Mountain Appraisals was able to visit over 90% of Windham's properties. We believe this will be as accurate and equitable an appraisal as Windham has ever had.

Two of us, Michael Simonds and John Lingley, want to give a special thanks to our team mate Jerry Dyke for his nine years of service as a lister in Windham. Now he is looking forward to spending more time working in his shop and traveling. During 2014 especially, Jerry has done the lion's share of the computer work needed to complete our reappraisal. He will still be around to help the new lister who will be elected at town meeting. We trust the voters will elect someone with good skills for the position, especially good computer skills.

The listers' job has become much more specialized and complicated over the past decade. Knowledge and experience in construction and real estate are helpful. Listers also need to be able to read, understand, and implement legal documents and both state and federal regulations. People skills are important as is the ability to speak in public. Perhaps most significantly these days, computer knowledge, experience, and ability are crucial. While it is unlikely that each of the listers will have all of these qualifications, as a team we need them all.

By April, Green Mountain Appraisals will have completed their work. The listers will mail "change of appraisal" letters to all Windham property owners whose values have changed. At that time, you will be able to request a PDF file with information about your property and three other properties which are similar to yours that recently sold in our area.

If you accept your new value, you don't need to do anything further. If you don't accept it, you can grieve your appraised value during the grievance period in the last two weeks of May. Further information on how to file a grievance is stated in this year's town report.



Barred owl

School Board Ponders Budget & Plans for Future

by Carolyn Partridge, Beth McDonald, Antje Ruppert

The Windham School Board has completed work on the FY2016 budget *and* has approved the proposed draft in the amount of \$363,333.00.

We invite and encourage everyone in the community to attend our meetings, which are generally held on the first Monday of every month at 4:00 PM at the school. However, due to snowstorms on the first two Mondays of February, not only the regular board meeting but also the budget information meeting for the public had to be postponed twice.

We are aware of several areas where we will see increases in the budget. Despite its newness, maintenance for the school bus has been costing us more than anticipated, and we will have to add to that line item. Fuel for the bus is also costing more. The heater in the secondary room needs replacement now, and that expense will have to be factored in.

State Legislative News *by Rep. Carolyn Partridge*

This will be a year of very tough choices. Building the FY 2016 budget is a huge challenge because it is our ninth year of budget cutting. Why has this happened? In the past, economic projections have been more optimistic than what has actually occurred and, because we always balance our budget, cuts have been repeatedly made.

Every area of government will experience reductions including our beloved Working Lands Enterprise Initiative that has increased economic output and created 4,100 jobs from 2009 until the present, way outpacing the estimated 1,500 jobs in ten years. The Capital Grant and stipend money for Vermont's agricultural fairs has been zeroed out. These fairs are important for many reasons but agricultural education for children and tourism are two of the big ones.

Adding to the burden is the impending need to clean up Lake Champlain. The State of Vermont will be required by the Environmental Protection Agency to take targeted steps toward that goal. Included in the proposal are seven positions for the Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets (AAFM) to work on small farm certification and the engineering strategies to fix the nutrient runoff problem.

While we are talking about cuts, we are also talking about revenue increases. One proposal I have made would increase the Rooms Tax 1%, which raises \$4.8 million. This would pay for full funding of the Working Lands Initiative, Agricultural Fairs, and Farm to School program, as well as the positions required by the AAFM to help with the water quality issue. The Rooms Tax is mostly paid by people coming to the state for the beauty of our working landscape, lakes and streams, and recreational opportunities so it seems fair.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 802-874-4182.

Last year, the Vermont legislature passed a bill requiring school districts to cover the cost of preschool-kindergarten. This legislation will go into effect on July 1, 2015. While it is still unclear that it will be implemented, it is prudent to include funds to cover Pre-K for all 3- and 4-year olds. It would be very helpful for anyone who knows of a 3- or 4-year old to let the school staff or board members know as soon as possible for planning purposes.

Our secondary room teacher, Mickey Parker-Jennings, has been serving as our head teacher. He is attending school and will be certified as a principal in the near future. As part of our contract agreement, we have been and will be paying for his tuition. This is a good investment in our school's future. Mickey is very dedicated to our school, and we appreciate his hard work as he continues to do a great job with our students, attends classes, and does homework!

To offset these increased costs, we are making decisions about some of the direct instructional services that we have historically offered.

Show your Pride in Windham on Green Up Day

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 residents and raising public awareness about the benefits of a litter-free environment.

Everyone from the very young to the mature is invited to meet on May 2nd at the Windham Town Office at 9 AM to pick up collection bags and decide on assignments around the town. 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 road crew.

For tramping through the high grass and brush along the roadsides, it is imperative that everyone wear clothing that completely covers their arms and legs. Wear boots and heavy duty gloves, and use an insect repellent to protect against ticks.

At 12 noon that 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, most bags collected, longest distance covered, etc.

We who live here believe Windham is a special place, so Green Up Day is a chance to show our pride for our town. Let's all pitch in and clean up the roadways.

For the first time on Vermont Tax Return IN-111 you may make a voluntary contribution to Green Up Vermont which is tax deductible. Please consider making a contribution.

If you have questions, contact Marcia Clinton, Green-up Day chair, at 875-3531.

Safety When Operating a Generator

A generator can be a reliable source of electrical power when we lose electricity due to storms or downed power lines. However, it is imperative that one is aware of the dangers that exist with improper use of a generator.

Generator exhaust contains carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless, poisonous gas. Use a generator only outside far away from windows, doors, and vents. Do not use a generator inside a garage, carport, porch or any other enclosure.

To avoid kickback when starting the engine, pull the cord slowly until resistance is felt and then pull rapidly. Kickback will pull the hand and arm toward the engine faster than you can let go, which can result in serious injury.

When adding fuel, the generator must be turned off and cooled for at least two minutes. Loosen the cap slowly to relieve pressure in the tank. Do not overfill the tank. Allow space for fuel expansion. Keep fuel away from sparks, open flames, pilot lights, heat and other ignition sources.

Use approved transfer equipment to prevent back feed by isolating the generator from electric utility workers. A certified electrician can install the appropriate shut-off feature to your electrical circuit board.

Do not operate the generator in the rain or wet weather. Keep a five-foot clearance on all sides of the generator including overhead. Do not exceed the generator's wattage/amperage capacity.

Start the generator and let the engine stabilize before connecting electrical loads. Connect the electrical loads in OFF position, then turn ON for operation. Turn electrical loads OFF and disconnect from generator before stopping the generator. Starter and other rotating parts could entangle hands, hair, clothing, or other accessories resulting in serious injury.

Read the owner's manual thoroughly for the maintenance schedule, as regular maintenance will improve the performance and extend the life of the generator. There may also be a reference guide for wattage requirements of household appliances, so that the generator does not become overloaded.

Submitted by Marcia Clinton

New Year Keeps Fire Company Busy

by Marcia Clinton

The Windham Volunteer Fire Company responded to these calls in January:

- Jan. 8 - Cross Rd. chimney fire; 4 firefighters responded.
- Jan. 11 - Spruce Rd. concern of a gas leak; 6 firefighters responded.
- Jan. 13 - Jamaica mutual aid for a chimney fire; 2 firefighters responded.
- Jan. 14 - Abbott Rd. chimney fire; 9 firefighters responded.
- Jan. 16 - Rt. 11 car rollover, no injuries; 5 members responded for traffic control.
- Jan. 21 - Chase Rd. chimney fire; 7 firefighters responded with Townshend Fire Co.
- Jan. 28 - White Rd. chimney fire; 3 firefighters responded.
- Feb. 14 - White Rd. report of a chimney fire; 7 firefighters responded.

Of the above chimney fires, besides the fact that all of the wood stove flues had not been cleaned of creosote for a long time, in two of the homes the people were using green wood. Green wood burns with a very intense flame and can quickly ignite the built up creosote in the chimney. To be safe, use seasoned wood which has been cut and dried for a year.

The members of the Windham Fire Co. appreciate and are very pleased by the donations sent in by the residents of Windham in response to the letter sent to everyone in December.

We recently received a \$2500 grant from the Thrifty Attic towards the purchase of thermal imaging camera. This is a valuable

tool for conducting a search in a smoke-filled building. It is similar to a television camera, except that it captures heat images instead of visible light images. The images appear on a display screen and show the relative temperatures of different objects. This information may enable a firefighter to navigate through the interior of a smoke-filled building. Firefighters are able to identify the shape of a human body with a thermal image scan because the body will be either warmer or cooler than its surroundings. The camera can be used to locate a fire behind walls or ceilings. On the exterior of a building, the camera can locate the fire source and determine the direction the fire is spreading. In Vermont where there is a prevalence of chimney fires, the camera is often used to see if the fire in the chimney is totally out.

On January 31st, the firefighters assembled for a training session. They practiced putting on their "personal protective equipment" (also called "turnout gear"). This includes all the protective clothing, head gear, radios, etc. A firefighter must be able to completely outfit himself/herself in turnout gear in less than one minute. Next he/she has to put on the "self contained breathing apparatus" in less than one minute. This consists of the face mask connected to a backpack.

CPR COURSE MARCH 25
at 6 PM at Windham School.
Call the Fire Company to sign
up at 875-5332.



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Leigh Merinoff Sows Self-Sufficiency and Community

by Mary McCoy

If you read Leigh Merinoff's article about her Meadows Bee Farm in the last *News & Notes*, you know she is focused on small, experimental farming with educational experiences for young people. But what is motivating this former sculptor?



Born in Michigan outside Detroit, she earned degrees in Fine Arts before moving to New York City to pursue the life of an artist. With little money, she rented an apartment for four days a week, staying with various friends on weekends. "I can be very frugal," she says.

One night she went to a party to partake in the food served there. She met Charlie Merinoff, whom she later married. Charlie's family owned a large beverage distribution business, now called the Charmer-Sunbelt Group. Charlie became its CEO.

Fifteen years ago when their son Andrew was 8, he became interested in the work of Doctors Without Borders. He and his family visited a simulated refugee camp and, Leigh says, seeing children who were just skin and bones shook their comfortable world.

Andrew next took an interest in Heifer International, and their family went on a tour around the world meeting with villagers who had received livestock through Heifer. "It changed our lives," Leigh says. With Heifer, when you receive livestock, you share your gift with others. Leigh learned, "When you do for yourself, you do for others." She also realized she could do little for herself, unlike the self-sufficient villagers. She vowed to learn to grow food.

Andrew attended the Vermont Academy and their daughter, Leslie, went to UVM. They traveled to Vermont often and began looking for a farm to buy here. Leigh was drawn to the former "Mowings" on Windham Hill Road and bought it in late 2006. She laughs and says, "The bees made me do it," explaining that she had met many beekeepers on her visits with Heifer, and she was keeping bees in New Jersey. Yet of all the honey from around the world, the best was from Vermont.

Leigh redirected her energies to learn to farm independently and to promote small farming. "I've learned an enormous amount," she says, "how to use a chainsaw, grind grain, milk cows, even how to lobby U.S. senators and President Obama." Her meetings with politicians always focus on promoting small farming.

Yet she chooses to "do for others" primarily by teaching young people to farm and become self-sufficient. She welcomes WWOOFers (young people from World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) who work on various farms around the world to learn new ideas. Leigh says several who have worked at Meadows Bee have college degrees from prestigious schools, but are uninterested in traditional jobs.

Last year, the Merinoffs bought the former Beck Farm further south on Windham Hill Road in West Townshend. Now known as the Field House, the place includes an agricultural library, a community ceramic studio, barns, livestock, garden beds, and growing fields. WWOOFers also live there, as well as in the Windham farmhouse. So do a variety of visitors who come to see the experimental farming, staying a few days and often returning. She and Charlie now live across the road from the Windham farmhouse in a home that is underground on three sides, built with help from the young interns.

Another way Leigh "does for others" is by hosting local students to introduce them to alternative ways of farming, including students from Windham Elementary, Leland & Gray, and Kindle Farm. Visits are not only educational, they are enjoyable, as Leigh wants students to love the idea of farming. She hopes to give them the will and the desire to develop their own small farms. She adds, "I'm doing this with the help of our neighbors, especially Beth McDonald." Beth manages her livestock.

Leigh says it is important to her to be a part of the community. Even though not an official resident of Vermont, she attends all of Windham's town meetings. She was a co-founder of the West River Community Project, and she is a proud advocate of its West Townshend Country Store with its café, thrift store, Friday dinners and programs.

When asked why she does all this, Leigh answers, "To move the future forward. By feeding ourselves and sharing with our community, we know resilience and ultimately peace."

Those are lofty goals, yet appropriate for our state with its motto: Freedom and Unity. Traditionally, we Vermonters are both self-sufficient and ready to help our neighbors. At a time when we see many of our young people leave the state, we can be grateful that Leigh Merinoff works to inspire youth to tend our land and protect the Vermont way of life.



Burbee Pond February 2015

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update *by Heath Boyer*

On Feb 12 Windham's Committee updating the 2008 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan met with the Select Board and Alyssa Sabetto, WRC Staff expert on Emergency Planning. Attending were Bob Bingham, Peter Chamberlain, Pete Newton, Pete McDonald, Marcia Clinton, Heath Boyer, Imme Maurath, and Margaret Dwyer.


Alyssa presented a draft and the group discussed the key threats to Windham as identified at the earlier meeting: Flooding, Winter Storms & Ice Storms; Wildland and Structure Fires, High Winds and Landslides. In the first meeting the group was given a list of possible hazards and asked to force-rank them for likelihood of occurrence in Windham. Initially there was agreement that landslides belonged on the list. After further discussion however it was agreed that while erosion of creek banks during high water events created some collapsing of banks, these situations did not qualify as landslides in the usual sense.

The group then reviewed the remaining items on the list and identified possible means of mitigation. FEMA's new rules for Local Hazard Mitigation Plans require at least two mitigation actions for each identified hazard. The group emphasized that education and communication regarding how individuals and property owners can

anticipate and prepare for possible hazardous events is a major component of mitigation. Several topics were selected for future discussion in the News and Notes and town meetings.

The Plan is in its final stages of revision and will be available for review in the Town Office and will be posted on the Citizens' website windhamvt@info.com. Click on Windham LHMP.

The Select Board and Planning Commission are grateful to all of those who volunteered their time and offered thoughtful suggestions to this important process. The Plan requires an annual review and must be updated fully every five years. All suggestions for future editions can be offered in writing to the Town Clerk who will forward it to the proper people.



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Snow Delirium at Windham Elementary

by Gail Wyman



This is not about school work. It is about enjoying our environment and the outdoors where we live. No sleds, skates, snowshoes, just kids well dressed for the snow, finding ways to have fun. While we adults have grumped about all this snow, our students don't feel the way we do. They are wild about the amount of snow on our ball field. The cold has not deterred them at all from walking out to the backboard, laughing and yelling "look at me, the snow is way up on my stomach." Other kids are sliding down the massive snow banks in the driveway, screaming, laughing, scrambling right back up to do it again. When the bell rings they are all smiles, red cheeks, snow covered and competing as to who had the most fun or best slide. Thanks to the homemade drying rack Jerry Dyke made for them last year, they have dry mittens and hats for when they head out again.



Country Diary: Ravens in Windham

by Frank Seawright



I'm almost finished reading the book *Mind of the Raven* by Bernd Heinrich. I'm not a bird watcher, but was interested in just how Heinrich went about collecting information. He's a tough guy, climbing trees in freezing temperatures, sitting motionless for freezing hours in a hide, carrying road kill carcasses over steep trails so he could attract ravens close enough for observation, and keeping careful records of whatever he saw them doing.

Of course, I hauled out my *Peterson Field Guide of Eastern Birds* to learn if I could expect to see them here. My fourth edition of the guide has maps showing their range as considerably north of Windham. Doubts about their range arose a few weeks ago when I saw a large black bird with a chisel shaped tail; crows have a straight cut tail, I had learned from Heinrich. I could have been mistaken though.

But this morning I saw one and then shortly after a second large bird flashed past a window. It didn't have the silhouette of an owl, so I grabbed binoculars and went hopefully to see if they had landed close by. They had and they were definitely ravens – a solitary pair, with Roman nose bills, ruffled feathers at the neck, and each larger than a crow.

I knew the old Peterson bird guide was out of date and looked on the web to see what I could find about the range of ravens in Vermont. I found the website ebird.org where you can look for sighting reports and add your own if you feel expert enough. It is an interactive map showing sightings, and the nearest I could find to Windham have been at Mollie Beattie State Forest in Grafton. Perhaps our Windhamites who are enthusiastic birders would like to register their sightings on bird.org.

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Leland and Gray Wellness Fair, March 6

Leland and Gray Union Middle and High School will be hosting a Wellness Fair March 6th from 4pm-7pm. The goal of this fair is to connect our local communities with wellness services that they may not know are available to them. If you would like to be a vendor, please contact Jaclyn at jhamilton@lelandandgray.org. And please come to the fair! It will be a fun event. Thanks, Jaclyn

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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; phone: 874-7025

Town Listers: Michael Simonds, chair; phone: 874-4790, email: Michael@windhamcountryhouse.com

Select Board: Mary Boyer, chair; phone: 875-5242, email: mfb@vermontel.net

School Board: Beth McDonald; phone: 874-4015, email: 219woodburn@gmail.com

Windham Community Organization: Ellen McDuffie; phone: 874-8183, email: eflockwood@aol.com

Windham Volunteer Fire and Rescue: phone: 875-5332

BULLETIN BOARD

JOIN THE "FRIENDS OF WINDHAM"

Our mission

- Encourage preservation of Windham's rural heritage and woodlands ;
 - Develop and publish analysis of potential effects on our community of industrial wind turbines on the ridgelines surrounding Windham;
 - Raise contributions to cover cost of Newsletter.
- Inquiries can be sent to Friends of Windham, Box 297, Londonderry, Vermont 05148 or email fw@vermontel.net. Donations can be sent to the Treasurer at the above address.

STRONG LIVING AT THE MEETING HOUSE

Mon. and Thurs., 10 AM Bone building, muscle strengthening, stretching, balancing. All levels welcome in all classes. **More information: Mary Boyer, 875-5242 or Ginny Crittenden, 874-4049.**

3SquaresVT

3SquaresVT helps eligible Vermonters buy nutritious food. Open to individuals and families based on household income. Anyone over 60 or disabled may deduct many medical expenses from their income which can help you to qualify. Benefits come as an EBT card that looks like a debit or credit card. For more information or help applying for 3SquaresVT, call the Vermont Senior Helpline at 1-800-642-5119.

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? People from Windham Congregational Church are willing to help. **Please call 874-4428.**

West Townshend Country Store and Café is open daily from 7 AM—7 PM, serving delicious, made-to-order Breakfast selections, Lunch/Dinner offerings of freshly made Soups, Sandwiches, Salads Deli items and baked goods. Our famous pizza is served every Friday from 5-7 PM with Live Music beginning at 6:30 PM. Please check with us for special speakers and events. Don't forget to visit the Thrift Shop above the Café. **Café phone: 874-4800 or info@westtownshend.org.**



Windham News & Notes
5976 Windham Hill Road
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Windham News & Notes welcomes submissions. Send articles of about 300 words to the Editor at the above address or by email to: windhamnews@hotmail.com

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REGULAR MEETINGS & SCHEDULES



Windham Community Organization: Wednesday, Feb.25, March 25, April 29 at 7 pm at the Meeting House. Everyone invited. Call Ellen McDuffie for info. 874-8183.

Town Clerk: 874-4211
Mondays 12-6; Tuesdays 8-12; Thursdays 12-4. Third Sat. of month 9-12.
874-4211

Planning and Zoning: 2nd Wednesdays, March 11 and April 8 at 6 pm at the Town Office.

Windham Congregational Church (UCC) Sundays:
Worship Services at 9:30 am.

Select Board: Mondays:
March 2 & 16 and April 6 & 20 at 6:30 pm at the Town Office. Open meetings.

Library: 1st Wednesdays, 3-5 pm. Book Group March 4 and April 1 at the Meeting House during library hours.

Valley Bible Church: Sundays: Sunday School, 9:55 am; Morning Worship, 11 a.m.; Potluck, 12:10 pm; Sun. Afternoon Service, 1:10 pm. Tuesdays: Bible study/ Prayer, 7 pm.

School Board: Elementary School at 4:00 pm, March 2 and April 6. Open meetings.

Volunteer Fire Company: 1st Wednesdays: March 4 and April 1 at 6 pm at the Firehouse. Heavy refreshments served.

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

SAVE THE DATES

March 3: TOWN MEETING DAY 10 AM
April 15: Deadline for Filing HOMESTEAD TAX EXEMPTION
May 2: GREEN UP DAY





**DON'T FORGET FRIENDS OF THE
MEETING HOUSE!**



WHERE ARE YOU?
BURIED IN THE SNOW?



Along Stiles Brook, October. Photo:



Black Capped Chickadee Nest



Jake Dingel/PGC Photo

