

# WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 5

WINDHAM, VERMONT

MARCH - APRIL 2005

## Town meeting provides democracy in action

by Beverly Carmichael

Another year has passed and once again Donna Koutrakos, our town moderator, will slam down the gavel calling to order the perfect exercise of self-government – the town meeting. In New England, we believe and practice the right to govern ourselves.

In America, town meeting predates representative government. It occurs in each New England state at a set time and in a set place. The agenda for the meeting (the warning) must be published (“warned”) at least thirty days before the meeting. Items not on the agenda cannot be approved into law. Voting is conducted by voice, a show of hands, or a secret ballot. In a town meeting’s secret ballot, citizens walk forward and drop marked slips of paper into a box. Voting can also be done



Donna Koutrakos

by a standing count if the moderator cannot distinguish whether the ayes or nays won. The moderator would then call for all of the ayes to stand and be counted, then all the nays. This is where the saying, “Stand up and be counted” came from.

In Windham at exactly 12 noon, the gavel will slam down again, and our town meeting will be adjourned for lunch. We share a covered dish dinner and the fellowship of our neighbors. For some of us it is the first time we have been together since the last town meeting a year ago. Some of our residents lose a day’s work and a day’s pay to attend town meeting and are usually kidded about whether it is civic duty or home cooked food that tempts them to take the day off.

Before the last gavel sounds, all business relating to the general welfare of our town has been reconciled. At the end of the day, it is refreshing to know that in this age of high-powered, high-priced government, it really is possible to govern ourselves.

### A Dollar and A Dish! by Lydia Pope France

We all know that lunch and the chance to socialize with friends and neighbors are among the highlights of Town Meeting, and we want to make sure that there is plenty to go around ... So please bring a potluck dish to share at lunch – a main course, a side dish, dessert, that’s up to you. We also ask for a \$1.00 contribution to cover the cost of paper goods, utensils, etc. See you there ...

**2005 ANNUAL  
TOWN MEETING  
TUESDAY, MARCH 1  
10:00 AM  
MEETING HOUSE**

## Decisions made for Leland & Gray

by Bill Koutrakos

The 2005 Leland & Gray Union High and Middle School Annual Meeting was held on February 1. Very few turned out for this meeting.

The incumbent moderator, clerk, treasurer, and auditor were reelected. Voters authorized the school board to retain the service of a professional auditing firm, to determine the salaries

and/or allowances for the its officers and directors, and to set the date of the annual meeting of the district for the first Tuesday of February in 2006 and every year thereafter. This was followed by a public hearing on the budget for the 2005-2006 school year.

The next day, the vote on the \$4,652,875 L&G budget (of which

Windham's share is \$146,295) to defray its expenses and liabilities was by Australian ballot and passed.

Out of 300 plus registered voters in Windham, 46 voted with 36 for and 10 against. The total school budget, which includes Windham Elementary School's, will be voted at Town Meeting by those attending.



## Upgrade in phone service requested

by Mary McCoy

I had not lived in Windham long before it was apparent that the phone service here wasn't what I was used to. The line sometimes went off during storms, and the internet connection was always slow. There are two related problems. One is Verizon's poor connections, and the other is lack of DSL as an internet option.

I'm not the only one frustrated by this situation. For this issue of the *News and Notes*, two requests were received to urge residents to work together to improve our service. These requests are printed here.

Lydia Pope France and Ernie Friedli are two people who have already spent many hours trying to convince Verizon to improve our internet service. They have laid the ground work for a continued effort. Lydia reports that the Public Service Commission in Montpelier recently approved DSL for 20 Vermont towns. Windham was not one. Verizon stated clearly to her that it has no intention of upgrading Windham's service. Apparently, they don't think it is worth it to improve their lines and services for a town of 300.

It seems we have two options – better service from Verizon or a change to V-tel. If we work together, perhaps we can persuade Montpelier to get Verizon to improve our service, or to give us a choice of providers like other towns have. With either change, we can also work for DSL.

### Letter from Jim Scott

Part of Windham has infinitely better telephone service than the rest. The difference is not in cost, but the provider, V-Tel, offers fiber optic lines, which means residents served by this company have access to faster internet service. Verizon, which serves the majority of Windham residents, not only has antiquated copper lines but a switching station at Jamaica that often fails to provide any service because of old, faulty equipment.

We are not getting our money's worth from Verizon! The company has no plans to upgrade or improve equipment.

Doesn't it make sense for all Windham residents to petition Montpelier and the commissioner of public utilities to permit V-Tel to supply our telephone service? We would have better, more modern service at no extra cost. We could get fast internet connections.

Perhaps we can discuss it at the Town Meeting. Or we can circulate a petition at the meeting, requesting permission for V-Tel to supply our phone needs.

### Notice from Principal Stradling

Anyone interested in improving the internet connection at Windham Elementary School, please call me, Roberta Stradling, at the school, 874-4159.

## Legal barrier removed to receive Vermont TV stations

by Lydia Pope France

Until recently, satellite TV companies (Direct, Dish) were not allowed to deliver local VT stations to residents of Windham and Bennington counties, per a ruling by the FCC. After a rather prolonged period of begging, cajoling, whining, etc., this issue made it into the Congressional agenda back in November.

A new ruling has now been passed by the FCC allowing satellite pro-

viders to offer local Vermont stations in addition to the Boston packages that have been available to Windham County residents. This does not mandate that they do so, only lays the groundwork to allow them to do so.

The new law took effect on January 1, but to date, neither satellite company has acted upon it. According to Senator Leahy's office, the companies say "they are working on it" and that

they will have a plan in the next few months.

You may wish to contact your satellite provider to make sure you receive these details when they become available. And perhaps, if they hear from enough of us, they just might move a little faster! There is no longer any legal reason for them not to expand our service to include stations from our home state.



**We  
welcome  
these new  
property  
owners:**

- \* Heath C. & Mary F. Boyer
- \* Palmer H. & Laurie C. Goodrich
- \* John C. Jr. & Michele L. Lingley
- \* Rachel Spengler

**UPDATE:** There is another wireless option for internet service – broadband. *The Brattleboro Reformer* reported on February 16, "Instead of relying on a company to string wires along back roads so computers can be plugged in, the wireless signal might be beamed out of the countryside, providing fast connections capable of sending and receiving vast amounts of data."



## Leadership role offers new responsibilities

by Carolyn Partridge



I was asked to write a short piece on what I do at the State House in my new position as Majority Leader. I should say, first of all, that it was a great honor to be elected by my peers to lead the Democratic caucus, which is now in the majority.

One of the primary responsibilities of the Leader is that of management. This includes managing the action on the Floor of the House during debates, as well as running the Democratic caucuses.

Because I have been asked this a number of times, I will include a definition of caucus, which is both a noun and a verb. A caucus is a group of legislative members who all belong to the same political party. Each week on Tuesday at 1:15 PM, we caucus, that is, have a meeting of all Democrats to discuss policy issues, what bills are coming along, or amendments that may be offered. It is an opportunity to ask questions and air ideas. The Republicans and

Progressives do the same thing.

Being in leadership has been likened to herding cats and, indeed, it is a challenge. It is also a great privilege. It is recommended that leadership not sponsor legislation with the exception of congratulatory resolutions, so you will not see my name on the universal healthcare bill this year. However, being in leadership does afford me the opportunity to work behind the scenes to effect change. I also find myself filling the role of advisor, confessor, and therapist.

It is a privilege to work closely with Speaker Gaye Symington and Assistant Leader Floyd Nease. They are both thoughtful, intelligent individuals who also possess great senses of humor and perspective. This is a great help because, while I am doing this leadership job, I also need to serve my constituents who elected me and balance my home and farm/business life.

Please remember that I am available at the State House through the Sergeant at Arms office at 1-800-322-5616 from Tuesday through Friday and at home Saturday through Monday at 802-874-4182. Please do not hesitate to contact me with your concerns, thoughts, and comments.

### Windham Congregational Church invites your participation

by Nancy Dyke

A Bible study and discussion group is in progress at the Meeting House on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM, led by Rev. Jim Scott. Everyone is cordially invited to attend the last two sessions: March 9 "Why Can't I Have What I Want?" and March 16 "Is God In My Suffering?"

Previous topics were "Overcoming Bitterness and Rebuilding Self-Love" and "Repairing Torn Relationships and Enjoying Life".

Those attending are asked to bring a Bible and writing materials.

#### HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Maundy Thursday 7:30 PM.

Good Friday 7:00 PM

Easter Service 9:00 AM

Easter Brunch follows the service.

All are invited and welcome.

Please join us.



### WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

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#### Submissions

Windham News & Notes  
welcomes submissions.

Send articles and signed "letters to the editors" of 100 to 300 words to the address below.  
We prefer emailed submissions.

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## Snowmobiling provides fun at any age

by Ned Caron

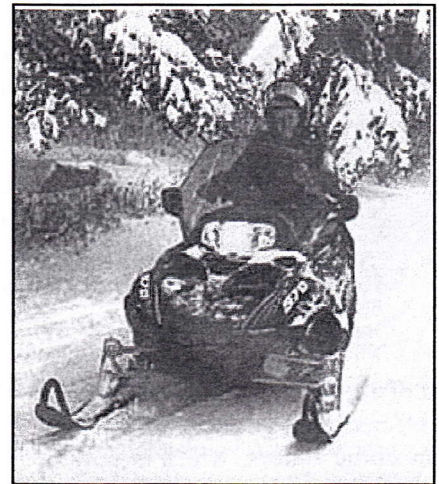
A recent visitor from Venezuela wondered what we could do in the winter with the snow and cold. Everyone could not be skiing, she guessed. We told her that since we had given up drilling for oil many years ago and since we are in our 80's, jogging was out of the question. My wife Gay and I had decided that other than frequent naps, snowmobiling was the answer for us.

Years ago, one purchased a machine, took off on your own, no restrictions. Now, it is more controlled with machines having to be registered along with rules and regulations.

Snowmobiling has come a long way both in the technology of the machines and where you can go with them. There are many types of snowmobiles, and many of them provide the comfort of warm seats and warm hand controls, radios, etc.

By snowmobile, we can leave from our house in Windham and travel to neighboring states and Canada. Be gone for days. This has been made possible by the many snowmobile clubs and VAST (Vermont Association of Snow Travelers). We belong to the Andover Mountaineer Snow Riders Club. They have two machines that are designed for maintenance and grooming of some 60 miles of trails in the area. Maps of trails are available and well indicate places for food, fuel, repairs and lodging. Cookouts are a fun thing.

If done properly, young and old can enjoy the sport, using common sense. Snowmobiling allows one to go places and see things not otherwise possible. Gay and I have traveled extensively in the state, stayed in motels, met interesting people, burned hot dogs, gotten stuck, cold and wet at times,



More than 80 years old, Ned Caron still enjoys snowmobiling!

broken down, but over all, had a great time and will continue to do so, God willing and the devil consenting. By the way, Gay drives her own machine, thinks I am too reckless at times.

## Winter on the Hill

by Arlene Hay

Once upon a time in a cozy yellow house, lived a man and a woman and a little gray mouse.  
Green wreath with red berries hung on the door, and brown dog and fat cats stretched out on the floor.

When a blanket of snow covered the hill, a glowing hot stove kept off the cold chill.

Quite content were the couple curled up with good books, while outside spring flowers slept snug in their nooks.

Yellow-eyed cats kept busy as bees, although now and then Siamese gave a small sneeze.

Every so often he rolled over and snored, but even brown dog did not seem to be bored.

Mailman in his gray car stopped by everyday, then waved at the folks as he drove on his way.

Children were bundled in warm wooly suits, with red, black, and yellow shiny new boots.

Bright yellow school bus came before eight, always on time never made the kids late.

Sunflower seeds on sparkling white snow showed black and white birds just where they should go.

Yellow-eyed cat on a high window shelf had no time for birds when grooming himself.

Bush tail squirrel hurried for if he was late, he might not get suet to put on his plate.

Old maple tree rested for he worked hard every year, knew it was time now to bring out his cold winter gear.

His branches just glistened like on a stage set, while snowflakes whirled round him like the dancers white net.

When Father Frost came and dimmed down the lights, the yellow house yawned and buttoned up tight.

Where ladies made cookies and parties did give, Windham in winter a nice place to live.



# Special Supplement

Articles by students from the 4-6 Class at Windham Elementary

## Students send school supplies to tsunami victims

by Joey Campbell, Nikki Ires and Jesse Newton

On February 14, 2005, twenty-seven book bags full of school supplies were delivered to schools in Sri Lanka. The bags were made by students at Windham Elementary and filled with a variety of school supplies generously donated by the people of Windham and faculty members at the school.

School kids in Sri Lanka were devastated by a horrible event on December 26, 2004. A tsunami hit and wiped out many schools, along with school supplies. Many people also lost their lives, homes and family members.

People in New England know these things are important. Although we

can't provide family members or homes for children, Windham Elementary students felt it was the least we could do to donate book bags full of school supplies.

We put time, effort and love into the bags. We cross-stitched "VT" onto the front of them. Special thanks to Diane Newton for teaching us to cross-stitch. We also wrote letters about our lives to the students in Sri Lanka. We hope they have a good future and always remember us.

The bags were delivered by the 4-6 grade teacher's father-in-law, Bob

Jennings. When he gets back, he will tell us what Sri Lanka was like. It will be a real learning experience, and we students are very excited.

The tsunami caused one of the worst natural disasters ever. Five million people are homeless. Schools, hospitals, and stores are in tremendous need of supplies. Countries all round the world are sending food, money, medicine, and other supplies. If you would like to join our cause, contact Noonday Farm, Box 71, Winchendon Springs, MA 01477, or you can call Beth Ingham at 978-297-1148.

## Nature trail to be revived

by Thomas Pentoney

This coming spring, the fourth, fifth and sixth graders of Windham Elementary school will be fixing the old and making up the lost. In the back of the school, there once was a beautiful trail. But over the years, it was ignored and not taken proper care of. Now the trail is no more, and the trees are unlabeled.

We students have made a decision to rebuild the broken and re-clear the covered. In the next two years, we will create a trail halfway to Grafton and will try to convince them to make a trail halfway to Windham. Then we will be able to have a day hiking trip to Grafton.

## Students head for Camp Keewaydin

by Rachael Ires

My class of 4-6 is going to take a break from the modern day technology, like talking on the phone, watching TV, and more. We are going to a place called Camp Keewaydin in Salisbury, Vermont.

There we will spend five days in the wilderness. We will go on nature hikes and explore the outdoors. We will even cook our meals over an open fire.

Our school finds that by going to Camp Keewaydin, we are not only having fun, but learning at the same time. We will learn to learn from a different view.



**Windham Elementary Class 4-6:** Front row - Crystal Clay, Erik Starr, Tyler Beebe, Maxx Scott, Mr. Mickey Parker-Jennings. Second row - Joey Campbell, Jesse Newton. Third row - Nikki Ires, Kayla Farace, Caitlin Persa. Back row - Josh Targonski, Tom Pentoney, Rachel Ires. Not pictured - Jason Carey

## New cross-country skis put to good use

by Josh Targonski

Good news for Windham Elementary – our new cross-country skis and boots have been delivered. This has been a great experience for the skiers each way.

Because the principal decided to make a backyard ski trail behind our school, the whole school goes skiing! But the main reason why we have our skis is because Dan Reilly decided to be very thoughtful and went around getting people to donate money.



## Mr. P-J inspires students

by Jason Carey

There have been changes at Windham Elementary School recently, and the changes are for the best. Our new teacher for grades 4-6 is Mickey Parker-Jennings or Mr. P-J. He is a teacher who is happy and willing to take his time to help us learn and understand new things.

One of the best parts of his class is the hands-on experiments. My favorites were the "egg drop" and the clay boat experiment. Another great aspect is that he understands us kids, and he's cool.

A resident of Windham, Rosemary Carey, was asked her opinion of this new educator. "Windham Elementary School has gained a fabulous educator. Mr. P-J has that certain something that is not taught at any educational facility, but comes from within. I have seen a lot of remarkable changes in my son. He has blossomed under the educational care of Mr. P-J. He is a credit to his profession."

Teachers like this encourage the students to want to learn more about the world. I feel it is a great compliment to our district that we have a teacher like this. His impact will only have positive effects for our community in the future.

## Mr. P-J enjoys small school

By Maxx Scott

Mr. Parker Jennings is our new grade 4-6 teacher. He is thirty years old. He is from Connecticut. In his old school, there were 1,000 kids.

When I asked him what the differences are between his old school and his new school, he said, "It would take up the whole paper, with both positive and not as positive – the main difference being the 970 kids."

Mr. P-J likes the idea of living in Vermont. He thinks there are a lot of benefits in teaching in a small school, such as the small class size and the close-knit community. Mr. P-J thought it was a unique opportunity to teach in a setting that might soon be extinct. He is good at teaching the students at Windham Elementary School.

Mr. P-J hopes to stay at this school and eventually become a principal or even move up to the superintendent of all schools in WCSU. In five years, he sees himself either still here or in Connecticut working with his father on his next financial endeavor.

I really like Mr. P-J and I think he is a good teacher. I hope Mr. P-J stays for a long time.

## School bell rings with history and pride

by Caitlin Persa

When I hear the chime of Windham Elementary's school bell, I feel proud of my heritage. My great-grandparents, Ed and Mary LeMay, donated that bell. Their names are on a plaque by the school door. I interviewed my great-grandmother to understand the history behind that ring.

In 1945, Ed and Mary moved to the small, yet pleasant, town of Windham. The bell was still being used at the South Windham schoolhouse. Later it was given to the church where my great-grandparents were deacons, and they eventually ended up with it.

I asked Mary why she and Ed

donated the bell, and she said, "We were asked to donate the bell...."

In 1996 it was installed in the new school building. Ed rang the bell with sheer pride for the first time at Windham Elementary School. My great-grandmother, Mary, is so happy that it is still being rung to this day.

## Caitlin Persa moves to Windham

by Erik Starr

A girl named Caitlin Persa moved here from New Jersey. She is a new student here, so I chose to interview her.

She came from a school that had 1,100 students. She moved to Vermont on December 14, 2004. I asked Caitlin which did she like more, Vermont or New Jersey? She told me, "Neither. They each have their benefits and hardships."

I think Caitlin is the smartest student in our class. I like that she helps other students. My teacher was asked what he likes about Caitlin. He said, "What I like most about Caitlin is her excellent work ethic."

I think it's great that Caitlin is here. If you see her, please say, "Hello," and welcome her to the community.

## Cinnamon comes home to Kayla

by Kayla Farace

In May, 2005, I will bring my horse home from Roger Post in Brookline, VT. She is a quarter horse, and her name is Cinnamon. She is now five years old.

In early fall, I bought this beautiful red roan horse. I am in high hopes that Cinnamon will be a good show horse and enable me to be in many competitions. I am trying to teach her new things, like jumping. I will be overjoyed if Cinnamon becomes an excellent dressage horse.

I am really excited that my horse is coming home. Cinnamon will possibly have the company of a donkey and another horse. After waiting almost a year, I will finally bring her home where she belongs.



## Warmer weather brings mud and tales of woe

by Bill Koutrakos

Today is February 8, and we just came off a cold spell last week. Now we are experiencing the signs of our beloved Mud Season. It almost feels like you are driving on ice, for the top of the road is slimy and slippery. Yesterday morning, we had a quick freeze for a short while, and for about a half hour, it was icy, then thawed again. Tomorrow a northeaster is on its way. I hope it gets cold before it arrives, for the highway crew does not want to plow mud.

These conditions are unusual for this time of year. Mud Season usually starts in late March or early April. Then the fun really begins. Many of us go on vacation during the worst part of it, hoping that upon our return, a dryer spring will come upon us, and the gravel roads will become firm. The highway crew can grade them for a nice smooth ride.

During Mud Season, the roads are

posted so large vehicles are not allowed to drive on them, for they tend to make deep ruts, and our cars can get stuck in them. We are quite fortunate now, for although we have many gravel roads, they have been improved to the point that they can be traveled upon even in the worst conditions.

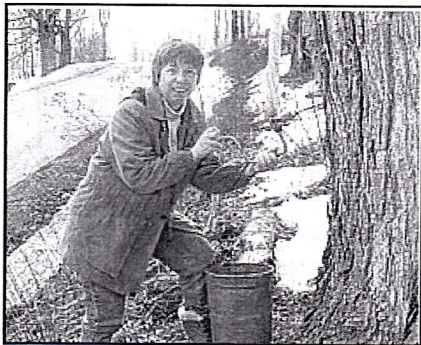
It was not always so. I moved to Windham in 1969 and live on Burbee Pond Road, four-tenths of a mile from Windham Hill Road. For awhile, I did not have a four-wheel drive, and it was questionable if I could make it out of Windham during Mud Season.

Once, before Windham Hill Road was paved, as I tried to make it up the hill, I sank into the mud. The grader was at Meeting House, and it came to pull me up the rest of the way. I wore loafers, forgot my boots, and as I stepped out of the car – need I say more? Of course, I also had the pleasure of obtaining a new muffler

and taking the tires off to wash around the brakes and the underside of the car.

Another time, I and my family were returning from vacation when Windham Hill Road was paved from the south only to the south entry of Burbee Pond Road. I came off the pavement to turn unto Burbee Pond Road. That was a mistake. It was nighttime, and the car was a rear-wheel drive. The back wheels were on firm ground, but I had to jack up the front of the car, then back up quickly. I made it out, but the jack became part of the road, never to be seen again. Those were fun times.

As I mentioned before, most of the roads are passable now even during the worst conditions. But, drivers, beware of the mud! Now it is February 10 and snowing, but the weather is not quite cold enough. The snow is heavy and wet and underneath, quite messy. You guessed it: MUD!



Bev taps maples on Windham Hill Road.

## Maple sapping delivers annual delight

by Beverly Carmichael

I don't remember March coming in like anything other than a lion, but as the days grow longer, a new spark of enthusiasm enters my world. It won't be long before Tom comes

it is as if we are boiling winter away along with the sap.

It feels incredibly wonderful to be outside. On a fine sap day, I can stand on the porch and hear the drip, drip, drip after we empty the buckets. But a good run can never be expected to last more than a few days, as winter always comes creeping back in. As the run slows down, we have time to catch up with the full buckets that stand waiting.

It's a joke how much slab wood we burn. We pay \$5.00 for a truckload, but our truck is so small that we are allowed to come back and fill it as many times as we need. We do have to put up with much laughter about the tiny truck, but at the end of the day, the job gets done. Last year we easily burned a full cord of wood and worked from dawn to dusk for three weeks, all of this yielding five and a half gallons of finished product.

Sometimes this seems like a folly, but the treat of getting outdoors for any reason, breathing the fresh mountain air, taking a long drink of cold sap fresh from the tree, and seeing the first robin is reason enough to continue this yearly tradition.

(See next page for Bev's maple ginger cake recipe.)

in from outside and says, "It's time to tap the maple trees."

This is one area where we have not entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We still hang the old metal buckets along the hedgerow that borders our property, and 20 buckets are plenty for us to handle on a daily basis. For us this is fun, not the backbreaking work of our forefathers.

Every morning a new surprise awaits as we lift the lid on each bucket to see how much sap has run the day before. We make quite a few trips from the trees to the driveway where we boil our sap on our handy-dandy-homemade-barrel stove evaporator. But each day as we boil, more snow melts, and



# Herbs thrive in Windham after snow melts

by Elizabeth Robinson

Anyone who has spent time on Windham Hill knows there is a temperature variation of several degrees from the bottom of the hill on Route 30 to the top. In summer this can work to your advantage simply because it is slightly cooler at the top on a hot sunny day. In winter, however, this can make all the difference from a wet blizzard on the top of the hill to an ordinary rainstorm below.

Until I spent the month of April here, I could not understand why the daffodil bulbs I planted near the edge of the church [in South Windham] had such short stems. I discovered that the snow blew in such high drifts, often right up to the sills of the church windows, that the snow stayed on them long after the daffodil season was over. These poor bulbs had no chance to grow.

Come summer, the growing season is short, and weeds can take over quickly. Where we live is part of an ancient riverbed and the soil is rich. Most herbs grow well here despite the harsh winters. I brought some marjoram seeds from England, and the plants have done remarkably well. They have spread all over the lawn which smells wonderful when the lawn is cut. They grow in clumps all around our pond, and I have observed drifts of the soft purple heads on the roadside.

Chives form tall clumps and have large purple globe-shaped flowers in June. Summer soups are marvelous when garnished with the freshly snipped chives. Basil does well in pots if you bring it inside at night so that the roots do not get chilled. No beefsteak tomato is complete without its basil topping. Sorrel comes up every year, but my husband is convinced that it is some

inedible weed and refuses to eat the delicious soup I have made with it. Mint is indestructible. I have a fuzzy-leaved variety which grows about four-feet tall with soft pointed pale purple flower heads. Thyme and lavender survive the winter, but not rosemary.

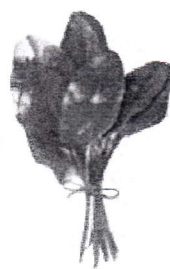
You can dry most herbs by collecting them on a sunny day, not too late in the season, so that they retain their essence. Hang them upside down in the attic or a dry cupboard covered with an old net curtain to keep the insects off them. You can later crush them and put into little jars with labels. This year, I am going to chop up chives and freeze them in a plastic jar. Friends have told me they have frozen pesto in ice cube trays for soups and pastas, but I have yet to try this.



Basil



Chives



Sorrel



Thyme

## BEV'S MAPLE GINGER CAKE

Sift together 2 cups all-purpose flour, 1-teaspoon baking soda, ½ teaspoon ginger, ½ teaspoon allspice, and ¼ teaspoon salt. Beat together: 1 egg, 1 cup maple syrup, and 1 cup of commercial sour cream. Sift the flour mixture in and beat well. Beat in 2 tablespoons of melted butter. Pour into a greased 9-inch square pan. Bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until cake is done.

Serve with MAPLE SAUCE: Put 2 egg yolks in a double boiler. Beat well. Cook over hot (not boiling) water. Slowly add 2/3-cup hot maple syrup. Cook and stir until the mixture is the consistency of thin custard. Cool to room temperature. Fold in ½ cup heavy cream, whipped stiff, and 1 teaspoon rum.

For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.

— *Old Testament, Song of Solomon, II*



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## Transit group offers rides for Windham residents

by Marcia Clinton

The Connecticut River Transit, Inc., a private, non-profit personal mobility organization, provides services for 28 towns in the Windham and Southern Windsor County areas

Each town supports the organization according to its population size,



and at this year's Town Meeting, Windham has a requested appropriation of \$250. The rest of the organization's \$1.8 million budget is comprised of awards from government agencies and area human service organizations.

Volunteers give rides to qualified people who have medical appointments or treatments. A wheel-chair accessible van is available to take individuals for shopping trips or other excursions.

A van is also available to take groups on monthly shopping trips. A group of eight or more individuals from Windham can be organized for this purpose by calling the Connecticut River Transit, which will send a

representative to meet with the group and set up a schedule.

There is always a need for volunteer drivers, who use their own cars and are reimbursed 40 cents per mile. Volunteers can be selective in their choice of availability and area. Supplemental insurance is provided, although volunteers must carry their own car insurance.

To schedule or to ask questions, call 802-885-5162 or 888-869-6287 between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday. For hearing challenged riders, call Relay Vermont at 711. Rides need to be scheduled two business days prior to the ride. The suggested donation for a ride is \$5.00.

## Discussing difficult issues can bring positive results

by Mary McCallum, Council on Aging

Conflict between people is bound to happen. So it is important to begin dialogues before a crisis puts pressure on the discussion. If you make a point of spending quality time together, that will pave the way for opening the more difficult conversations. When you begin to talk with others, speak calmly and patiently, listen to what they have to say, and don't interrupt. Respect their right to their own ideas and opinions. Include humor if you can.

Here are some ideas for discussing hard issues:

- Pick a time and place free of distraction to talk, so you can have each other's undivided attention.
- Don't go into a discussion intent on a resolution. You may need several talks before everyone has processed the information and considered choices.
- Stick to one topic without bringing up past issues and hurts. Remember to talk about the problems, and not people or their shortcomings.

- Include talk about everyone's hopes and fears.
- Offer a helping hand rather than acting heavy-handed in the conversation. Act more as a consultant, not a dictator who knows what's best.
- Use "I" statements that tell the other person, "I feel angry because..." or "I worry because..." instead of "You don't..." or "You were wrong to..." "I" statements lead to agreements, while "you" statements sound like blaming and can lead to battle.

When people feel listened to and understood, barriers drop and tension recedes. Then everyone can see that although you seem divided, you in fact want similar things. If you reach an impasse and continue to have concerns, you may want to seek assistance from someone everyone respects, such as a pastor, therapist or mediator.

Talk often, be persistent but gentle, and keep trying, even when the door seems closed. It's worth it!



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## WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

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The WN&N Team welcomes your signed letters and articles (300 words max). Send them to the address above or preferably by email to [wnandn@vermontel.net](mailto:wnandn@vermontel.net)

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### GET INVOLVED IN WINDHAM!

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## — Windham Community Calendar —

Every Sunday – **Windham Congregational Church** has worship services at 10:00 AM; everyone is invited. Communion first Sunday of each month. (For complete schedule, see page 3.)

Every Wednesday – **Windham Town Library** at the Meeting House is open from 3:00 to 5:00 PM. All are invited to join the following also at that time: Reading group on first Wednesdays, knitting group on second and third Wednesdays, and writing group on fourth Wednesdays.

Tuesday, March 1 – **Town Meeting** 10:00 AM at the Meeting House. All are encouraged to attend. (See page 1.)

Monday, March 7 – **Windham School Board Meeting** 4:00 PM at the school; open to the public.

Thursday, March 17 – **Parent Conferences** at Windham Elementary, all day by appointment.

Friday, March 18 – **Music Department's Spring Concert** at Leland and Gray at 7:00 PM. All are invited to attend.

Thursday, March 24 – **Musical Experience** for Windham Elementary students attending "The Unhappy Kingdom" at the Brattleboro Music Center.

Monday, April 4 – **Windham School Board Meeting** 4:00 PM at the school; open to the public.

Friday, April 15 – **Report Card Day** for Windham Elementary School students.

Monday, April 18 - Friday, April 22 – **April Vacation** for Windham Elementary and Leland and Gray students.

Saturday, April 30 – **Journey East Homecoming Show** at Leland and Gray at 7:00 PM. All are invited.

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