



WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

Community Build a Success

By Bill Dunkel, Windham Energy Coordinator

From November 11 through November 15, about forty volunteers came to the Windham Meeting House and assembled 164 storm window inserts for about twenty customers. Most of the families receiving inserts were from Windham and Wardsboro, but folks from Londonderry, Townshend, Newfane and Wilmington also ordered windows. We also assembled very large inserts for a church and library in Wardsboro and for the Windham Meeting House sanctuary. The community-build was primarily organized by the Windham and Wardsboro energy committees in conjunction with Window Dressers, a non-profit organization based in Maine. Over more than a decade Window Dressers has developed and refined an eight-stage assembly line process that begins with screwing together a pre-cut frame and ends with applying a soft foam border which allows for a snug friction fit when the windows are slid into place inside one's home.

These inexpensive, energy efficient inserts conserve fuel, save money and keep families warm. They are affordable primarily because volunteers provide most of the labor, working the morning (8:30AM to 12:30PM) or afternoon shift (1:00 to 5:00PM), or both! Other volunteers generously provided lunch for hungry workers. Special thanks to the Windham Community Organization that prepared two delicious lunches and sat down with us to eat! Sometimes neighbors worked alongside neighbors, but very often strangers from different towns worked together, got to know one another and had an enjoyable time. It was especially heartwarming when volunteers who were not getting inserts themselves showed up, unsolicited, just to help their fellow Vermonters. Some came from as far away as Brattleboro, Arlington and Pawlet. We hear a lot these days about how divided Americans are. That certainly was not the case during the five days our volunteers spent together. Thank you, everyone, for your hard work and positive community spirit!



Changes at the Town Office!

(See pages 2 and 3)

Stop by for a look!

**HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

Select Board Looks to the Future

If you haven't been to the Town Office recently, you haven't seen the wonderful changes there. Assistant Town Clerk Carrie Tintle painted the walls, and Sparky Electric put in brighter lights that are LED. Improved insulation was installed, and a new ventilation system is in the works. In addition, a new computer backup system is now in place to protect all town data. Our Town Office is moving toward the future, which may include solar panels on the roof and, eventually, an electric cold climate heat pump to supplement the oil burner. Many thanks to Town Clerk Ellen McDuffie for her help with these changes.

We are also looking forward in terms of our road crew's needs. Grant approval was received for a new salt shed, and we are looking for a new site for it and, if possible, for our Town Garage. If you have land that could be donated to the town for these purposes, please contact one of us. One or two acres are needed for the salt shed or four to five acres for the shed, garage, and other storage.

Richard Paré, road crew foreman, is always looking for ways to cut costs, especially since fuel has more than doubled in price. We now have a 1000-gallon fuel tank for the trucks and other road equipment, but having even more tank capacity would allow us to save money by buying more fuel at once. Our efforts to sell our previous 500-gallon tank were unsuccessful, so we donated the tank to the Chester Snowmobile Club. This helped them, and it gave us space where that tank had been. We have applied for several grants for road improvements that will save the town money, including funds for erosion control on Ingalls Road and the new culvert on Chase Road.

We are moving ahead with increased activity from our Town Constable Jim Lawler. He has handled various issues, like dealing with loose animals and illegal hunting. He can't issue tickets, but he can respond to complaints and move things toward resolution. Jim plans to receive state certification which will enable him to do much of the work now provided by the Sheriff's Department, including the enforcement of traffic violations. Speeding is a problem often discussed in our meetings, with agreement that the limit on unpaved roads should be 35 mph. Some speed studies have been conducted, and more are needed to officially determine the

speed limits on all roads throughout town.

Another recent and frequent topic at our meetings is how to support the Windham Town Plan's intention to promote local businesses. While we have no business center with storefronts, we do have 43 businesses registered in town, as Michael discovered when he began putting together a directory of town enterprises. If you would like to be listed in the Windham Business Directory, contact Michael at michael.herbert.pelton@gmail.com.

For Windham to thrive, we need more affordable housing, an issue we are trying to address by looking at what other towns are doing. Windham has limited rental properties, and some of those are short-term (vacation) rentals. The selectboard has discussed taxing short-term rentals, as other towns are doing. Some towns see such taxation as a way to encourage property owners to rent long-term rather than short-term. Other towns see taxing short-term rentals simply as a way to bring in income. Some towns also set safety regulations that short-term rentals must follow. The selectboard does not want to discourage any business in town, including short-term rentals. This is a complex issue that needs further study and input for property owners.

Selectboard meetings are now conducted in-person at the Town Office and on Zoom. So far, it is clear that folks prefer to attend on Zoom. We encourage you to attend our meetings one way or the other at 5:30 PM on the first and third Mondays of each month. We hope to see you!

Respectfully,

Kord, George, Michael, and Mac



Good luck and thank you in advance to the Windham Road Crew for keeping our roads clear!

News from the Town Office

From Ellen McDuffie, Town Clerk

After 20 + years the Town Office has received an interior face lift! Carrie Tintle, Assistant Town Clerk, has done all the painting single-handed, and has redecorated the office! It looks so good and is much more welcoming to enter a bright, clean, uncluttered space. A huge thank you to Carrie and Ron Cohen, her husband, for all their work in renovating our office. Ron helped do the heavy lifting, installed new shelving and shades, and reinstalled everything Carrie removed from the walls prior to painting. And Bob Kehoe has updated our lighting to brighten up the place.

Please be reminded that as of January 1, 2023, the Londonderry Transfer Station will begin requiring a 2023 Annual Permit. The residential permit can be purchased at the Town Office for \$10 cash or check made payable to the Town of Windham. You may mail in the fee and your permit will be sent to you by return mail. We also have punch cards for sale for \$10 or \$20, which are needed to dispose of trash. Punch cards do not expire. All recycling requires only the annual permit.

Beginning January 1, you may register your dog and purchase an annual dog tag. All dogs must be registered in the Town Office no later than April 1. If you have a puppy, it must be registered by six months of age. The office must also have proof of a current rabies vaccination in order to issue a dog registration. The fee is \$10 for a neutered dog and \$14 for a sexually intact pet. If you have any questions about registering your dog, please call the office at 802-874-4211.

I am so proud of Windham. Our voter turnout for the November General Election was an unheard of 75%! Thank you for casting your votes! We had 327 registered voters with 247 ballots cast; 170 were returned by absentee ballot and 77 voted in person on November 8. Peter Welch received 162 votes for US Senator and Becca Balint received 150 votes for the US House of Representatives. Windham voted overwhelmingly for Phil Scott for Governor, casting 167 votes for him. Many in Windham voted for Joe Benning for Lieutenant Governor, 96, but David Zuckerman edged him out with 123 votes. A majority of our voters, voted for the democratic candidate. Heather Chase is our new State Representative, and our new State Senators are Wendy Harrison and Nader Hashim. Windham's newly elected Justices of the Peace will take office February 1, 2023: Marcia Clinton, John Hoover, Philip McDuffie, Michael Simonds and Meredith Tips-McLaine. Windham resident Carolyn Partridge was elected as one of Windham County's Assistant Judges. I also want to thank all of those who worked at our polls and counted ballots. You were so instrumental in accomplishing a successful election here in Windham.

Happy Holidays to All!

I look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

To reach the Road Crew, call the Town Garage at 802-874-7025, or Richard Paré at 802-379-5647 (cell) or 802-874-4971 (home). You may also call or email Kord Scott, George Dutton or Michael Pelton to let us know if there's a tree down or any other unsafe road conditions. Thank you in advance for notifying the Road Crew.



WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

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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: December 13, 2022

Town Office Hours

Monday Noon - 6 PM
Wednesday 10AM - 4 PM
Thursday 10 AM - 4 PM

Third Saturday of the Month
11 AM - 2 PM

CLOSED Tuesday, Friday
& ALL Federal Holidays
For an appointment at another time, please call
802-874-4211 or email
windham.town@gmail.com.

Face Mask Optional

To Join A Zoom Selectboard

Meeting: The Selectboard meeting information is available from the printed agendas that are posted at the Town Office, Meeting House, and Fire House on Saturdays before meetings, and are also posted on the town website at: townofwindhamvt.org.

What is Our Hazard Mitigation Plan? Why Do We Want One?

By Ellen McDuffie

The purpose of the Windham's 2015 Hazard Mitigation Plan¹ is to assist the Town of Windham in identifying all the natural hazard vulnerabilities facing the town to include identifying new and continuing strategies to reduce risks from hazards. Hazard mitigation is any sustained action that reduces or eliminates risk to people and property from natural and human-caused hazards and their effects. Based on the results of previous Project Impact efforts, FEMA and state agencies have come to recognize that it is less expensive to prevent damage from disasters than to repeatedly repair damage after a disaster has struck. This plan recognizes that communities have opportunities to identify mitigation strategies and measures during all phases of Emergency Management – preparedness, response and recovery. Hazards cannot always be eliminated, but it is possible to determine what the hazards are, where the hazards are most severe and identify what local actions that can be taken to reduce the severity of hazard related damage. Hazard mitigation strategies and measures alter the hazard by: eliminating or reducing the frequency of occurrence; lowering long term risk; averting the hazard by redirecting the impact by means of a structure or land treatment; adapting to the hazard by modifying structures or standards; or avoiding the hazard by stopping or limiting development. Mitigation could include projects such as: Flood-proofing structures · Tying down propane/fuel tanks in flood-prone areas · Elevating furnaces and water heaters · Identifying and modifying high traffic incident locations and routes · Ensuring adequate water supply · Elevating structures or utilities above flood levels · Identifying and upgrading undersized culverts · Planning for land use for floodplains and other flood-prone areas · Proper road maintenance and construction · Ensuring critical facilities are safely located · Establishing and enforcing appropriate building codes.

Stratton Mountain is the highest point in the region at 3,936 feet. The lowest point is along the Connecticut River in Vernon, at 200 feet. The Town of Windham covers approximately 38 square miles in the Upper Valley of the Saxton's River Watershed area of

Windham County. The major entry and exit routes are steep inclines, rising to the Town center. The Town is at a relatively high elevation (all of Windham is above 1,500 feet) but even so, the surrounding areas to the east and west of the Town centers are still at higher elevations, with settlement concentrated in the "valley" running north and south. Glebe Mountain defines the western region of Windham. The topography of the Town does not lend itself to heavy through-traffic, nor does it attract large commercial or industrial development.

From 2000 to 2010 Windham's population grew from 328 to 419, an increase of 28%. From 1990 to 2000, Windham's population grew 31%. This cannot be considered the result of economic development. The fact is that Windham has attracted this growth by virtue of its quiet and pristine rural beauty. The growth has been due to a fairly constant trend of seasonal homeowners becoming full time residents and to new landowners building permanent homes.

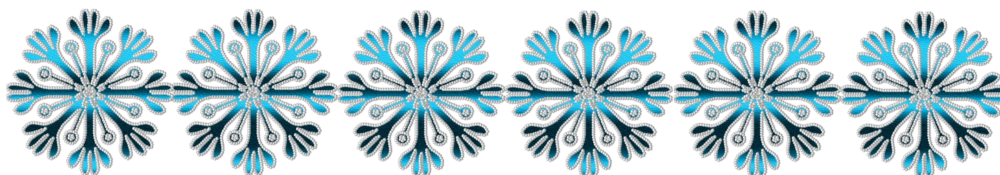
The state requires the town to update its Hazard Mitigation Plan periodically and the town is in the process of working with the Windham Regional Commission to update our 2015 Plan. Some of the hazards that have been identified are: severe weather events to include high winds, hail, extreme cold or heat, snow or ice storms; structure or wild fires; flash flooding and fluvial erosion; downed power lines; landslides; pandemic; hurricanes; hazardous material spills; dam failure; tornados; invasive species; drought; water contamination.

A short survey has been developed to help the working group find out what residents think the biggest natural hazards are to our town. Your answers will help the working group identify, analyze, and develop mitigation strategies to lessen the impacts of these natural hazards in the future. Please complete the online survey by **January 16th** using this link:

<https://forms.gle/cYtdESB3FyqfRfUb7>.

Hard copies of the survey are also available at the Town Office, and may be returned to the Town Office drop box. Thank you for your input!

¹See Windham's 2015 Hazard Mitigation Plan - [ANNEX D](#):



Listers Corner: Let's Talk Taxes!

As we begin discussion of next year's municipal and education budgets, it is helpful to review the difference in calculating the tax rates for these two separate budgets. The municipal tax is based on the proposed budget and the total value of the grand list (both homestead and non-homestead values), while the education tax is based primarily on the number of students in the school averaged over a two year period (aka equalized pupils or EP in the school budget documents).

For example: if the Town municipal budget is \$200,000 and the grand list value is \$2,000,000, then the municipal tax rate is \$0.10 per \$100 of value. If the grand list increases as a result of the reappraisal process to \$3,000,000, then the municipal tax rate becomes \$0.067 per \$100. So, as the grand list goes up, if the municipal budget remains the same, the effective tax rate goes down.

In the case of education taxes, there are a few different factors, with the main factor being the number of students (EP count). The education tax does not go down if the grand list value increases since the education tax is dependent on the cost per pupil in the education budget. For example: if the school budget is \$500,000 and the EP count is 20, the cost per pupil is \$25,000. The EP count would need to increase in order to reduce the education tax. For example, if the EP was 25 and the education budget remained at \$500,000, the cost per pupil would decrease to \$20,000. And if the number of EP's remains the same and the budget increases, the cost per pupil increases and so does the education tax. The education tax does not decrease if the grand list increases. This is where the CLA has its impact.

The Comprehensive Level of Appraisal (CLA) adjusts the education tax using a 3 year average of recent real estate sales, comparing the fair market sales to the appraised value on the grand list, to determine a statistical variance. If the average sales price is higher than the average appraised value, the CLA is less than 100. In Windham's case, due to an increase of home sales and rising prices, the factor last cycle was 83.75, meaning the three year average for sales is approximately 16.5% higher than the appraised grand list values.

The CLA affects the school tax only and it applies only to property values. Taxes based on household income are not affected by the CLA, nor is the municipal tax affected by the CLA. The CLA is not the cause of taxes rising faster than school budgets. It is simply a mechanism for making sure property is

correctly valued. There are three reasons why school taxes can go up faster than the town's school budget.

- *The number of pupils in the district is decreasing.*
- *The town's property values are increasing faster than the state average.*
- *School spending is growing faster than non-school tax revenue to the education fund.*

There are two tax forms (HS-122 and HI-144) that are instrumental in determining your individual education tax amount. The HS-122 (Homestead Declaration) establishes that the filer is a full time resident of the town. The HI-144 is the household income declaration that codifies the income of all individuals within the residence. The HI-144 determines if you are eligible for a credit towards your education taxes based upon the aggregate total of household income. As stated earlier, the CLA will not apply to your education tax rate if your taxes are based on income documented on the HI-144 form. Both forms are required to be filed with your Vermont Income tax return.

Once the education budget is finalized and the cost per pupil is determined, several adjustments are made to the tax rate. If the cost per pupil is higher than a stated amount determined by the Agency of Education, the excess spending over that amount is doubled, and added to the excess spending limit to determine the new tax rate. Once that step is completed then the adjusted tax rate is divided by the CLA. If the CLA is less than 100 then the net education tax is higher. Conversely, if the CLA is above 100 then the net tax is lower.

Both the homestead and non-homestead tax rates are adjusted by the CLA, but only the education tax is affected.

Note here that the education tax is not impacted by a change in the grand list values.

Any homestead resident filing a HI-144 may be eligible for a credit from the state if their household income is below a specific level established by the Vermont Department of Taxes. This amount varies each year. To help filers estimate this amount, please go to: <https://tax.vermont.gov/document/2021-property-tax-credit-calculator>.

We hope this explanation helps in understanding how taxes are calculated.

Windham Listers,
Ali Cummings,
Russ Cumming,
William Casey



Windham Elementary: School Board Report

By Beth McDonald

It's time to develop the budget for the next school year for Windham Elementary School (WES). We have received the first budget draft from our CFO, Laurie Garland. Laurie is a highly respected leader for the Windham Central Supervisory Union (WCSU) and surrounding supervisory unions. The WES budget is up 11.16% mainly with an increase in staff to address safety and security concerns. In addition, WES is now providing breakfast and lunch to all students. As we move through this budgetary process, we value all input. We are looking into grants such as Hunger Free Vermont to help alleviate some of the costs of providing meals to our students, and we have had feedback from community members with experience in grant writing for which we are grateful. We are also grateful for our new teacher, Natalie Beckstrom, our new administrative assistant, Bridget Corby, and our new meals coordinator, Erin Kehoe. As always, the board, staff, and WCSU will continue to address the needs of the students and the needs of our community members. Please share your thoughts, concerns, and ideas with us at our board meetings which take place the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6pm in person and by zoom.

Windham Elementary School Update

By Bridget Corby

Ms. Natalie's class has continued the relationship with the Grafton Nature Museum with two field trips to their Mighty Acorns program. They have covered topics from leaves to winter solstice and the students are led in a craft, and have time to play in and around their structure in the woods. Students had the chance to enjoy potatoes cooked over a fire... many went back for seconds!



Other work the K-2 students have been doing has been focused around phases of the moon and our solar system. They have been working hard on their typing and Ms. Natalie has been so proud of their focus and dedication on picking up new skills.



Update on West River Valley Modified Union Education District

By Crystal Corriveau

On the West River board front there is not much to report. We are going into budget season. Please watch the recording that I post on The Town of Windham Facebook page to get this important information. The video also contains information about making Leland and Gray an accredited school and important information regarding the feasibility study on the future of the building set ups in the West River District.

This issue I would like to highlight an amazing student who will be graduating this year: our only Windham senior at Leland and Gray, Mary McDonald. It has been an absolute delight for our family to witness a few of her many accomplishments. Last year Mary helped out in the elementary school a few mornings a week; that was when our Jaxson fell in love. She helped him and other students with different subjects and projects that needed to be done.

We got to see Mary playing lead roles in Mama Mia, Hats Off, and most recently The Adams Family. She was so funny in The Adams Family and had the voice of a song bird in Mama Mia. It was truly incredible.

This fall we went to Mary's championship game for soccer at Applejack Field in Manchester. These girls worked hard and were undefeated. When that timer hit 0 and they had won the championship - what an amazing day! Don't let that sweet smile fool you; if you have the ball Mary is coming for you and more than likely you are giving her that soccer ball. Mary has been an amazing mentor to Kyleigh who has branched out in chorus and is even doing some solo work.

In April we will put a card box in the Town Office and ask everyone in town to put a card in to wish this incredible young lady lots of love on her next journey after Leland and Gray. It has been a gift to watch her act, sing, and play sports and we look forward to the next six months of her high school career.



Mr. PJ's class of grades 3 and 4 have also been very busy these last few months. Topics they have been working on include shark presentations, long division, tackling chapter books, and for extra fun learning about the history of the Peanuts

Comic Strip! Students have really hit their stride in working together and problem solving as a group!

Article Continued at the top of page 7

Windham Elementary School Update, continued



An exciting addition to the school this year has been our new art program, funded by a grant and led by Casey Junker Bailey. We have beautiful new art decorating the walls, and many students have taken home new creative decorations including apple dolls, pine cone skiers, and pencil elves.



Ms Sally continues to donate her time to the school for both music and outdoor learning. This Fall she helped the students in building their own terrariums, and now that there is snow on the ground she has been teaching them how to cross country ski!



Meadows Bee Farm keeps our young farmers busy; many are already earning badges for the year. Gardening and sewing are among the milestones they have passed. The staff was above and beyond impressed with the skill, patience and bravery so many of the kids exhibited in helping to round up and tag turkeys. What would have been a long challenging chore for the staff alone was smooth and quick with our Windham kids!

Education Tax Rate Calculations: Helpful Information from the Listers

How is the CLA used?

Suppose the equalization studies (a comparison of recent sale over three years to the assessed values) determine that a town's a CLA will be 90%, indicating that property in the town is generally listed for 90% of its fair market value, on average. If the homestead education property tax rate in the town is \$1.50 (per \$100 of property value) before the CLA is applied, then the actual (final) tax rate would be $\$1.50 / .90 = \1.6667 (per \$100 of property value) after the CLA is applied.

The nonhomestead rate is \$1.466 (per \$100 of property

value as established by the State) before the CLA is applied in all Vermont towns in FY23. In this example town, the actual (final) nonhomestead education property tax rate will be $\$1.466 / .90 = \1.629 (per \$100 of property value) after the CLA is applied. These final rates are what will appear on the property tax bills issued by the town.

How does education spending in my town affect the homestead education property tax rate?

Total education spending in a town is not the determinant of tax rates, only the amount spent per-pupil. This means that our town could spend less on education than the prior school year, but if the number of students in our town declines, the tax rate may actually increase from the prior year. The only thing that matters is our town's per-pupil spending, and Act 46 changed 16 V.S.A. § 563 to make sure that the per-pupil amount was being clearly communicated on town ballots since it is the determinant of tax rates, not total spending.

Keep in mind that some towns are members of multiple school districts as is Windham. In those cases, the town gets a tax rate that is a prorated blend of the rates from any districts where the town sends students, Leland & Gray, based on the proportion of students going to each district.

Is a town's nonhomestead tax rate adjusted to reflect education spending?

No. The base rate for nonhomestead property is the same for all towns in Vermont. It is adjusted only by the common level of appraisal of the town. If the CLA in a town is 90%, the final nonhomestead rate for the town will be about 10% higher.

Does the Education tax rate in our town depend on the size of our grand list?

No. The *municipal* tax rate depends on the size of the grand list, but the education tax rate does not. The municipal tax rate is calculated as the amount of money needed to provide municipal services (after any other sources of funding are accounted for) divided by the total value of the grand list in that town. At a given level of services, if the grand list grows from one year to the next, the municipal tax rate could go down because the taxable base got bigger.

The education tax rate used to be calculated in the same way as the municipal tax rate until Act 60 passed in 1997. Since then, *it no longer matters how big the grand list in a town is*, the yields and rates are based on the size of the statewide grand list and total statewide education spending. The current system is designed to ensure that approved budgets are fully funded and that towns that spend the same amount per pupil will have the same tax rate (before the CLA is applied), irrespective of how much property value the towns have.

Profiles in Community: Walter Woodruff as told to Carolyn Rubin

For this issue I've had the pleasure of getting to know life-long resident Walter Woodruff. Walter is a wonderful masterful storyteller who loves sharing his memories of everyday life in Windham as a young boy: playing outside, going to school (or not), hunting and fishing, and contributing to daily family chores taking care of animals and gardens for seasonal survival. These are just some of the stories Walter told me.

Walter Woodruff was born in Brattleboro, December 18, 1942. "My family lived on Chase Road, on the Windham/West Townsend border. My first two years of school were at West Townshend Elementary. Bus driver Walter Van Ness picked me up every day in a Model A Ford car. Everybody had a Model A back then because that's what could get through the mud and everything else." Driving the country dirt roads was an adventure: "The Back Chase Road is very steep and only wide enough for one car. In fact, this is the case for all the dirt roads: the old timers still drive down the middle of the road because that's how they had to drive back then. If you've ever driven the Chase Road, it's very steep with banks on the side and I was in constant fear of going over the bank."

Miss LaMorda taught school at West Townsend Elementary. At that time, rural backwoods teachers were single women whose life work was teaching. At this time, polio was the scourge of the country and the teacher was always watching out for polio. "You know, if you came to school with a limp, and sometimes I would, this terrified the teacher. My father would call it growing pains; you develop pain, you start limping. It was kind of scary back then. You had to dress warm and make sure you didn't catch a cold because the symptoms of a cold mimic polio"; and a lot of people Walter knew got polio.

Walter's mother needed an operation and the only place she could get it was at Vassar Hospital in Poughkeepsie, New York. So the young family moved there, close to extended family. Walter went to school through third grade and didn't do too well there. "My parents were concerned. They determined it was because we had moved away from the Windham area."

The family moved back to Vermont, into a house in South Windham right across from Ed Brown. "That's pretty much where I grew up. I started attending

grade school in South Windham, starting in the third grade. I walked to school, walked home for lunch and back to school for the afternoon. Every kid in town did the same thing. Parents provided transportation for kids from the outskirts who couldn't walk or whose parents didn't want them walking in bad weather. Everyone got to school." Walter went to school in South Windham through the eighth grade, which he didn't particularly like because he was the oldest one in the whole school. "I was friendly to everybody but sometimes picked on younger kids, like any normal boy. But if anything happened in school, the teacher always looked at me first. The first time a jet ever broke the sound barrier, the teacher came rushing over to me: "What have you done?" She was sure I had gone up the stairs where the belfry was and had done something to the bell. Although she couldn't find anything wrong, she was bound and determined that I had done something until the next morning. The community heard about it on the news. And the teacher came in to school almost in tears and apologized and let me out of school ten minutes early."

The school had a belfry and the kids would take turns ringing the bell at recess, at lunchtime and time to go home. The bell was way up in the belfry, with a very long rope. It was a very big deal to ring the bell. It's the very same bell that now sits in Windham Hill Elementary School.

After elementary school, students picked where they would go to high school. At that time, Windham did not provide transportation but paid tuition to any school the family wanted. Walter picked Chester because the Newtons, who taught at Chester, lived in Windham and went to Chester every single day. "Many times, I was able to finagle a ride with one of the Newtons. But coming home was a different story. I could get from Chester to Route 121, but Route 121 was a "no-man's land". All roads were dirt and the weather was sometimes rough. Many times, I would walk home and hardly ever see a light on. There weren't many houses and not everyone was home. So, walking up Route 121 and then Windham Hill Road, and then over the mountain, over the hill to South Windham – that was more than nine miles. From the cemetery all the way to South Windham, only two houses had people. Sometimes I would see a logger who lived in town who would give me a ride, but in the wintertime, it was always dark." After two years of this, his sister joined him and they walked together, squabbling with one another on the daily adventure to and from school.

Two of Walter's passions are hunting and fishing. Walter explained that **(continued top of page 9)**

Profiles in Community—continued from page 8

Walter explained that getting a deer meant a lot to his family's food supply: "Getting a deer meant you didn't have to buy meat or kill your own cow to get it." He went fishing and brought home supper many times and he enjoyed it. Although there weren't many other things to do here, Walter liked being self-sufficient and was glad to have the opportunity to be that way. "Windham residents had it all – right behind the house, across the road, and beautiful trout right out of the brook! And rabbits: I always had a rabbit dog that would go out and chase rabbits around, always a beagle. The fun of it was doing it – you didn't have to kill anything. Just going out, listening to the dog running the rabbit. They would always run in circles; sure enough, here he comes! You could hear him coming by the dog's bark and you'd eventually see it. And when it was time to go home, you either shot the rabbit or jumped in front of the dog to stop the dog who knew enough to stop." Walter's mother would cook all that wild game and made a gourmet meal out of it. The kids all looked forward to it and enjoyed it; it was a good life. And everybody else did too. "Fishing started on the first of May. Even the teacher understood because she lived close to school and often came to school early. In the spring and the fall, when we got there early, we could put in our time and get out early and go fishing." Not too many teachers would do that nowadays.

After high school, Walter attended one year of college in Greensboro, North Carolina. He encountered racial segregation and it bothered him. He worked in the kitchen to pay his tuition and decided at the end of the year he wasn't going back. He returned to Windham and worked for a lady who lived across the street from the town clerk's office. She was a school teacher and urged him to get more education. So Walter went to New York City where he spent 3 months. "New York had so many people! Thousands of people, and when you got on those subways, you couldn't sit down because the trains were so crowded. You couldn't fall over because everybody held each other up." He lived in Brooklyn and worked in Manhattan, making good money. But he missed Windham. "Oh, Windham. Windham had so much to give you and most people didn't even realize it. Like the freedom to walk out the door and just disappear. Walk through the woods, discover things, breathe the fresh air, see all the critters that inhabit this world with you..." So, he returned to Vermont.

Walter met Mary Lou when he was 20. Mary Lou lived in Londonderry and went to Chester High

School. Walter met her on a visit back to his high school when a friend wanted to double date. They married when Mary Lou was 18 and he was 20. Because of state law, he had to have his parent's permission to marry but Mary Lou could legally make this decision on her own. Walter and Mary Lou have been married for nearly 60 years.

Walter worked for two years at Ethan Allen Furniture Company in Randolph, Vermont, then at Fellows Gearshaper in Springfield, Vermont for about twenty years. He and Mary Lou acquired land on Windham Hill Road within sight of both of his grandmothers, built a house and raised two boys. In 1976, they bought land on Baker Hill Road, cut and peeled logs, cut them square with an Alaskan Chain Mill and finished them with an adz. In 1980, after two years of building, they were home. Walter was elected to the Windham Select Board in 1980 and served for thirty years.

Walter notes that in Windham, everybody knows everybody. "And more or less, everybody was somehow related to you, by marriage or otherwise. It was just a family feeling. Like people would always protect you or understood where you were coming from. They knew your parents. They knew your grandparents. They knew your great grandparents because they all grew up here. When I sit on the bench and look at the Veteran's Memorial stone and see all those names, they're all people I either knew or knew of or certainly knew a relative of theirs. And to me, that's just the reason right there. Because you're connected. In New York City, I wasn't connected to anything. Up here, I'm connected still; I have found my roots."

Walter remarked that he was recently thinking about his family on a drive to West Townshend: "I was going by my parent's house, which somebody else owns now. And then, right across from my parent's house is my grandmother's house, who was my mother's mother, and then my old house because I built a house down there which is right across the road from my grandmother's. Then I go just hop, hop, skip and jump up the road. There's my other grandmother on my mother's side. And then Route 30. They're all right on Windham Hill Road, West Townshend. Okay. That whole section - right there's my family. Whether somebody else lives there now or not doesn't matter to me. But it's still my history. Yeah, I'm reliving all the experiences I had with those people who made that place right there their home. And to me, that's worth something."



Funds Available for Wells and Septic Systems

By Marcia Clinton, Health Officer

More money is available for Vermont homeowners to fix failed septic systems and wells. The deadline to file a pre-qualification application is January 31 2023, according to the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR). The application is online at bit.ly/VT-On-Site. Anyone who needs help filling out the form can email: ANR.HealthyHomes@vermont.gov or call 802-828-0141. The toll-free number is 877-344-0354.

The ANR plans to award funds to between 150 and 200 projects. The program is aimed at low-to-middle-income residents whose failed septic systems and wells have environmental impact;

household demographics and the amount of work needed will also be considered in choosing projects for funding.

To be eligible for funding, applicants must have a failed or inadequate drinking water or wastewater system. These can be wells, springs, septic systems, septic tanks, leach fields, drywalls, and cesspools. The applicant must own and live on the property. The property must be residential with either a single-family home or a multi-family home of up to four units. The applicant's household income must be under \$80,835 a year.

ANR will announce their selections by May 1. People who receive funding must have their projects completed by 2026.

Mountain Town Connector on the Move

By Kathy Jungerman

The Mountain Town Connector, a program offered by Neighborhood Connections in Londonderry, has quickly become one of their most utilized services. The wheelchair-accessible van ferries riders to medical and other essential appointments, grocery and pharmacy shopping, social and recreational outings, and access to Neighborhood Connections and community programming. Over 75% of the rides provided this year were for important medical appointments and to provide access to food and/or essential items, such as prescriptions. There is no age or income criteria to catch a ride on the Connector.

Neighborhood Connections is in Londonderry's Mountain Marketplace, next to the Post Office.

NEED A RIDE? 802-824-4343



IT WAS A DARK AND EERIE NIGHT

By Marcia Clinton

Actually it was a cold and joyfully noisy night at the firehouse in North Windham October 28th at the outdoor Halloween party for all the kids in town. The parade of scary creatures and one duck circled round and round as the judges made their decisions for creativity, scariest, most beautiful, etc. The winners scooted over to the prize table loaded with eye-catching kid stuff. Then the night became a free-for-all as the costumed kids raced around collecting all the treats available to them from the decorated car trunks. There was a balloon stomp; 80 orange, purple and black balloons filled with mini-Tootsie Rolls were released. The popping explosion only lasted a few minutes as those kids were really quick with the stomping dance. Grilled hot dogs

disappeared as fast as they hit the table and whoopee pies were gone in a flash. There was judging for the best decorated car trunk and a bottle of wine was awarded to the winner. The hayride had to be cancelled due a malfunctioning tractor, it didn't seem like the kids even noticed. The party started to die down after a couple of hours most likely the adults were getting cold, but certainly not the kids with their bags filled with candy and prizes.

Earlier in the month the Windham Fire Company visited the school during Fire Prevention Week. All the equipment on the fire truck was shown and explained to the kids, safety in the home was explained and each kid received a Windham Fire Company T-shirt.



ARPA Survey Provides Guidance

by Mary McCoy

Seventy-four Windham folks completed the online survey about how to spend the \$118,380 Windham received from the American Rescue Act Plan (ARPA). The ARPA Committee will use this input as it makes its recommendation to the Selectboard about the use of these funds.

Of the eight options presented in the survey by the committee, protective gear for the Windham Volunteer Firefighters was seen as of greatest importance. Next most important were two options – funds for improvements to the Meeting House and financial aid for those who need it to connect their homes to high-speed internet from DVFiber. Close behind those two was putting a solar array on the Town Office that will eliminate all electrical bills for the town's buildings.

Next, three options were similarly rated – paying a professional grant writer to administer applications to

additional funding sources; buying new audio-visual equipment for use in broadcasting and recording town meetings; and updating equipment in the Town Office, including providing a digital system for remotely accessing town records. The lowest rated item was the beautification of town properties with plantings.

The ARPA Committee will consider this input along with the cost of the various projects, to determine its recommendations. Currently, members are getting the cost estimates for completing the various projects. More than one project will be funded, and some money for all projects might be possible. Committee members have committed to seeing the preferred projects through to completion – helping the selectboard determine exact costs, make purchases, and supervise services.

The ARPA Committee thanks all who participated in the survey (69 full-time and five part-time Windham folks) and all those who are offering assistance with the procurement of cost estimates.

Replacement Bridge on Chase Road

By Susan Persa

The 93-years old one-way bridge at the town line was effectively replaced in 2 1/2 weeks this August. Work was done by the Amsden construction company from Jamaica, Vermont. This bridge was originally 17 feet wide and is now 35 feet wide.



*The New Bridge Over
Clarence Jenison's
Brook*

The original structure was probably lost in the flood of 1927 as the old photo taken in 1929 by Effie Fisher showed the replacement in place in 1929. Clarence Jenison owned the farm before Persa.

Noel Pare' says he stands in awe of the design and plan of this historical bridge that lasted so long. They must have used poured concrete with forms on site and used horsepower to move rocks and

boulders. Of course no government agencies were involved!

After 90 plus years, this poured concrete box culvert was failing due to cracking and erosion over time and was becoming unsafe for heavy traffic. Since the historic cathedral type bridge in West Townsend cannot accommodate heavy log trucks and construction equipment, this bridge needed to be well built.

Cord Scott said culverts of this size qualified for grants from V-Trans. Windham received a \$175,000 structures grant from them in a process that took over five years involving several agencies plus an engineer. Congratulations for a job well done!



Correction: We would like to correct an error on page 9 in the November-December 2022 Issue, "How Would YOU Spend \$118,380 for the Benefit of Windham?", option "Broadband Connections". Standard installation for DVFiber will include **400** feet of line from a utility pole to the house. Additional cost would be incurred where the house was more than 400 feet from a utility pole. The original article incorrectly stated 40 feet. Thank you to David Cherry for identifying this error.

More Success for Windham Horsewoman and Team

By Susan Persa



Megan Carson competed on the 4H Equine Knowledge Team for the Northeast Region Contest held in Castleton Vermont on October 16, 2022. Her team captured second place in the Hippology Competition. Megan is the second from the left. This contest was in preparation for the Eastern National 4H Horse Round-up in Louisville Kentucky on November 4-6, 2022.



In Kentucky, the team placed second in Team Problem Solving, coming in only two points behind first place Virginia. They were eighth place in Written Horse Knowledge and fifth in Judging. Megan, seated on the right, says it was a great honor to participate in these programs and to be a part of 4H for the last eight years.

To learn more about joining a 4H Club or being an adult 4H Volunteer, contact Sarah Kleinman at 802-651-8343, ext. 521 or sarah.kleinman@uvm.edu. For information about the University of Vermont Extension 4H horse programs, contact Wendy Sorrell at wendy.sorrell@uvm.edu.

Call for Nominations: West River Valley Youth Ally of the Year Award

By Elisha Underwood

We are seeking nominations for our Second Annual West River Valley Youth Ally of the Year Award. This award is intended to provide much-deserved recognition for all of the great work being done to support youth in the West River Valley. Research has shown that youth who receive support from the adults in their community are more likely to live happier and healthier lives. We need your help identifying and honoring those caring adults who are supporting our youth!

Who can be nominated? There are two criteria for nominations:

- * Nominee must live in Windham County.
- * The Nominee must have been involved in initiatives having a positive impact on youth in the West River Valley (defined as Newfane, Brookline, Windham, Jamaica, Townshend, Wardsboro, Marlboro and their surrounding hamlets) in 2022.

Top nominees will be recognized for their work on Thrives' website and social media and the winner will be honored at a recognition ceremony and featured in a press release.

The deadline for nominations is February 9, 2023. Winners will be announced in February 2023. You can submit nominations via this QR Code:



So go ahead and nominate your favorite teacher, youth pastor, or scout leader! Please note that Thrives will not be accepting self-nominations at this time. Any questions please contact wrvthrives@gmail.com or (802)-365-4700.

Windham Library

The Windham Library is open every Wednesday from 3-5 PM. You are kindly asked to wear a mask when inside the building. Book Club meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 3:30 PM.

Windham Library Book Club Selection Wednesday, February 1, 2023, 3:30 PM



Ruth Jefferson is a labor and delivery nurse at a Connecticut hospital with more than twenty years' experience. During her shift, Ruth begins a routine checkup on a newborn, only to be told a few minutes later that she's been reassigned to another patient. The parents are white supremacists and don't want Ruth, who is African American, to touch their child. The hospital complies with their request, but the next day, the baby goes into cardiac distress while Ruth is alone in the nursery. Does she obey orders or does she intervene?

Ruth hesitates before performing CPR and, as a result, is charged with a serious crime. Kennedy McQuarrie, a white public defender, takes her case but gives unexpected advice: Kennedy insists that mentioning race in the courtroom is not a winning strategy. Conflicted by Kennedy's counsel, Ruth tries to keep life as normal as possible for her family—especially her teenage son—as the case becomes a media sensation. As the trial moves forward, Ruth and Kennedy must gain each other's trust, and come to see that what they've been taught their whole lives about others—and themselves—might be wrong.

With incredible empathy, intelligence, and candor, Jodi Picoult tackles race, privilege, prejudice, justice, and compassion—and doesn't offer easy answers. Small Great Things is a remarkable achievement from a writer at the top of her game.

Clean and Sober

Clean and Sober, a 12-step recovery program for those struggling with alcohol and/or drugs, meets in Londonderry at Neighborhood Connections on Wednesdays at 5:30 PM. No appointment necessary.



Windham Library Book Club Selection Wednesday, March 1, 2023, 3:30 PM



One night in 1967, twenty-six-year-old John Donohue—known as Chick—was out with friends, drinking in a New York City bar. The friends gathered there had lost loved ones in Vietnam. Now, they watched as anti-war protesters turned on the troops themselves.

One neighborhood patriot came up with an inspired—some would call it insane—idea. Someone should sneak into Vietnam, track down their buddies there, give them messages of support from back home, and share a few laughs over a can of beer.

It would be the Greatest Beer Run Ever.

But who'd be crazy enough to do it?

One man was up for the challenge—a U. S. Marine Corps veteran turned merchant mariner who wasn't about to desert his buddies on the front lines when they needed him.

Chick volunteered.

A day later, he was on a cargo ship headed to Vietnam, armed with Irish luck and a backpack full of alcohol. Landing in Qui Nho'n, Chick set off on an adventure that would change his life forever—an odyssey that took him through a series of hilarious escapades and harrowing close calls, including the Tet Offensive. But none of that mattered if he could bring some cheer to his pals and show them how much the folks back home appreciated them.

This is the story of that epic beer run, told in Chick's own words and those of the men he visited in Vietnam.

Windham Library Book Club Selection

Wednesday, April 5, 2023 at 3:30 PM

Horse by Geraldine Brooks

Donations Welcome for Grace Cottage's Cabin Fever Auction

By C.J. King

TOWNSHEND – Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital's annual Cabin Fever Auction will be held from February 14-27, 2023.

Do you have items you'd be willing to donate to this important wintertime fundraiser? Art, jewelry, antiques, household items, gift certificates or other items you've collected or been given that you'll never use? All proceeds benefit Grace Cottage.

E-mail info@gracecottage.org, or call Andrea, Charma, or C.J., Charma, or Andrea at 802-365-9109 to arrange pick-up or drop-off of anything you'd be willing to donate!

Bidding takes place Feb. 14-27. You can visit the auction site now to get registered, check out the selection, and plan your bidding at <https://www.32auctions.com/CabinFeverAuction2023>

Register now so you can hit the ground bidding on Valentine's Day!



Welcome New Baby in Windham

Evelyn Rose Larson was born on November 11, 2022 at 5:28 AM at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital to Caitlin and Emmett Larson of Windham. She was 8 pounds 13 ounces and 20" long. Her grandparents are Doris and Tony Persa of Windham, Melanie and Gary Keiser of Williamsville, and Bob Larson of Hartford, Connecticut. She's lucky to have great grandparents too: Sherry and Jack Green of Townshend and Susan Persa of Windham.

Parents Caitlin and Emmett Larson were married on Chase Road in Windham on July 17, 2021 and have lived in Windham since the winter of 2021.

Evelyn's name honors the late Ruth Evelyn Butler Hazard, Emmett's "Nana" of Jamaica, Vermont. She went by her middle name Evelyn and is remembered for her kindness.



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Londonderry Transfer Station and Recycling Center **Holiday** Hours

OPEN SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24th

CLOSED SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25th and MONDAY DECEMBER 26th

CLOSED SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31st and SUNDAY, JANUARY 1st

OPEN MONDAY, JANUARY 2ND

Regular Schedule: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Give Those Old Lights A New Life !

Broken or tired decorative light strands can be recycled but NOT in your recycling bin or at the transfer station! The Christmas Light Source, a seller of holiday lights in Texas accepts holiday light strands for recycling at no cost except for shipping. Just box up your lights and send them to their address. If you provide an email address they will email you a discount coupon toward a future light purchase. The proceeds from recycling your lights are used to purchase toys for Toys For Tots organization. For details visit: <https://www.christmas-light-source.com/pages/christmas-lights-recycling-program>

TOWN WEBSITE: TOWNOFWINDHAMVT.COM

Select Board: Kord Scott, 802-875-3725; George Dutton, 802-874-4426; Michael Pelton, 802-874-4246

Town Treasurer: Kathy Scott, phone: 802-874-4211; email: windham.towntreasurer@gmail.com

Town Clerk: Ellen McDuffie, phone: 802-874-4211; email: windham.town@gmail.com

Town Road Foreman: Richard Paré, cell phone: 802-379-5647 or call the Town Garage, 802-874-7025

Lister and Zoning: Alison Cummings, 802-874-7223, cobbbrookfarm@gmail.com; Lister: Russ Cumming, 802-874-7011;

E-911 Coordinator and Lister: Bill Casey, 802-874-7012

School Board: Beth McDonald, chair, phone: 802-874-4015; email: 219woodburn@gmail.com

Windham Meeting House Committee, Co-Chairs: Tom & Eileen Widger, 802-875-4604

Windham Fire Warden: Rick Weitzel, phone: 802-874-4104; Ralph Wyman, phone: 802-875-3373

Health Officer: Marcia Clinton, phone: 802-875-3531; email: mcclinton@vermontel.net

Planning and Energy Commission: Bill Dunkel, phone: 802-874-4131; email: bdunkel1455@gmail.com (lower case L, then number 1455)



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Happy Holidays!



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OFFICIAL TOWN WEBSITE

Be sure to use the Official Windham Town
Website: TOWNOFWINDHAMVT.COM
for warnings, meeting schedules and
minutes, events, town information. Please
contact the webmaster, Vance Bell, with
input: webmaster@townofwindhamvt.com.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED WINDHAM MEETINGS CALL CONTACT TO CONFIRM

Citizens Advisory Committee:
Second Tuesday of
Feb., May, Aug. & Nov. at
5:00 PM. Contact Marcia
Clinton at 802-875-3531.

Energy Committee:
3rd Thursday of the month,
at 4:30 PM on Zoom, Contact
Bill Dunkel 802-874-4131.

**Windham Community
Organization:**
Last Wednesday of most
months at the Meeting House
at 5:15 PM. Contact Ellen
McDuffie at 802-874-8183.

Town Clerk: 802-874-4211
Monday: Noon - 6 PM;
Wednesday: 10 AM - 4 PM
Thursday: 10 AM - 4 PM
Closed all Tuesdays, Fridays, and
Federal Holidays. Open third
Saturday, 11 AM - 2 PM.

Planning and Zoning:
Second Wednesday of the
month at 6:30 PM usually at
the Town Office. Open
meetings. Agenda posted.
Contact Bill Dunkel at 802-
874-4131.

Conservation Committee:
Third Tuesday of the month
usually at 7 PM. Contact
Alison Trowbridge at 802-
874-7050 for information.

Select Board:
1st & 3rd Mondays at
5:30 PM—Hybrid: at the
Meeting House and on Zoom.
Open meetings. Agenda posted.
Check website:
townofwindhamvt.com

Library:
Wednesdays, 3-5 PM
Book Club 3:30 PM, 1st
Wednesdays at Meeting
House. Contact Maureen
Bell at 802-875-1024.

Valley Bible Church:
Sundays: Sunday School,
10 AM; Morning Worship,
11 AM; Followed by potluck.
Wednesdays, Bible Study/
Prayer, 7 PM. Call
802-874-7267 for more info.

Windham School Board:
Third Tuesday of the
month at 6 PM. Contact
Beth McDonald 802-874-
4015 or Russ Cumming 802-
874-7011 for information.

Volunteer Fire Company:
First Thursday of the
month at 6 PM. Contact
Jan Wyman at 802-875-
3373 for information.

Listers: Every Wednesday, 9
AM- Noon at the Town Of-
fice. 802-874-4211

**West River Education Dis-
trict:** Third Mondays at 7 PM
at Leland & Gray. Call Leland &
Gray 802-365-7355 for info.

SAVE THESE DATES!

Jan.1—Valley Bible Christmas Concert, 1:00 PM
Jan.4—Book Club, Windham Meeting House, 3:30 PM (Dead Land)
Feb.1—Book Club, Windham Meeting House, 3:30 PM (Small Great Things)
March 1—Book Club, Windham Meeting House, 3:30 PM (The Greatest Beer Run Ever)
March 7—Town Meeting Day—SAVE THE DATE!

