

VERNON COMMUNITY NEWS

May 2015

SAVE THE DATE—IMPORTANT EVENTS IN AND AROUND VERNON

May 2	Green-up Day, Meet at Rec Department on Pond Road
May 3, starting at 3 pm	The Marina Plunge for Charity sponsored by the Marina Restaurant, Brattleboro
May 4, 6:30 pm	Selectboard meeting, Town Office Building, Selectboard Meeting Room
May 5, 7 am to 7 pm	Voting by Australian ballot on proposed revised school budget, Town Office Building, lobby
May 5, 7:30 pm	Special Meeting to Reconsider Article 5 of the 2014 Town Report, Vernon Elementary School
May 6	Vernon Seniors shopping trip to Keene, call Reita at 254-2694 to ride the bus
May 7, 12 noon	National Day of Prayer, Mountain View Seventh-day Adventist Church
May 9	Beef dinner, Bernardston, call Reita at 254-2694 to ride the bus
May 11, 6 pm	School Board meeting, Vernon Elementary School, lounge
May 13, 4:30 pm	Library Trustees meeting, Vernon Free Library
May 15-17 & 21-24	"I Never Sang for My Father," a Vermont Theatre Company production, Hooker-Dunham Theater
May 16, 11 am	Memorial service for Eleanor "Cookie" Allen, Tyler Cemetery, refreshments will be served at Vernon Elementary School from 11 am-2 pm. See information below about the new Cookie Allen Fund to benefit senior citizens in Vernon.
May 17, 9 am-2 pm	"Bags of Fun", Mountain View Seventh-day Adventist Church. See information below.
May 18	Trip to Holyoke Mall, call Reita at 254-2694 to ride the bus
May 18, 6:30 pm	Selectboard meeting, Town Office Building, Selectboard Meeting Room
May 21, 6:30 pm	Vernon Voters Alliance meeting, Town Office Building, lower level
May 25	Annual Memorial Day service, Pond Road Chapel, call Reita at 254-2694 to ride the bus
May 25, 6:00 pm	School Board meeting, Vernon Elementary School, lounge
May 29	Vernon Seniors Bake Sale at the Guilford Welcome Center on I-91

GREEN-UP DAY 2015

Green-Up Day is May 2. We will meet at the Vernon Rec Department building on Pond Road at 9:00 am to get road assignments. Come back at noon for lunch and prizes! To sign up and for more information, email Emily Vergobbe at emily.vergobbe@gmail.com

BE SURE TO VOTE ON MAY 5

Voting by Australian ballot on the proposed revised school budget will be Tuesday, May 5 from 7 am to 7 pm in the Town Office Building lobby. And that evening, at 7:30 pm, there will be a Special Meeting to reconsider Article 5 of the 2014 Town Report at the Vernon Elementary School.

Please be sure to exercise your right to vote on the revised school budget as well as to attend the Special Meeting to Reconsider Article 5.

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COOKIE ALLEN FUND ESTABLISHED AT SENIOR SOLUTIONS

The family of Eleanor "Cookie" Allen has established the Cookie Allen Fund in her memory for the purpose of helping older adults residing in Vernon, VT.

Cookie was born at home on the family farm in 1945 and passed away on December 31, 2014. A lifelong resident of Vernon, in her later years, she was very active in helping local seniors. She often acted as an advocate and she drove the van very often used by seniors.

The Cookie Allen Fund will be administered by Senior Solutions--the Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont. The Senior HelpLine at Senior Solutions serves elders throughout Windham and Windsor Counties by providing information and assistance to enable independence and dignity. Services are provided in collaboration with other agencies to prevent duplication and ensure coordination.

Vernon residents aged 60 and up who might benefit from assistance should contact the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-642-5119. Family members and caregivers are also encouraged to call on behalf of seniors. Types of assistance may include transportation, assistive devices, home modifications for accessibility and safety, or other needs of daily living.

To make a contribution in recognition of Cookie Allen's deep commitment to Vernon elders, send your check with "Cookie Allen Fund" in the memo line to Senior Solutions; 56 Main Street; Springfield, VT 05156.

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THE VERNON TRAIL BREAKERS

Well, winter is but a COLD memory and soon we will be complaining about the HEAT! That will not keep the Trail Breakers from preparing for next winter.

Work parties will work throughout town on various spots that need repair and the finishing touches will be done on the new bridge. We will also be undertaking a large re-routing of our main corridor trail, which promises to be a lot of work. The re-route will be done after two meetings with the ANR forester and will be done not because of snowmobile damage, but rather from damage to wet areas done by four-wheel-drive vehicles. Therefore, the club has to do this work if we want to keep the trails on the state land.

If you or anyone you know is doing this "mudding", please refrain from it as it could easily STOP all access to these areas. If you would like to help repair or maintain trails, please call Trail Master Andrew Evans at 579-8189 to find out when the next trail work bee will take place. Have a great summer. Winter is just seven months away!

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NEWS FROM VERNON'S CHURCHES

Vernon Advent Christian Church, located at 4554 Fort Bridgman Road at the VT/MA state line, meets every Sunday at 9:15 am for Sunday School classes for all ages. Morning worship begins at 10:30 am and Youth Group and Intercessory Prayer meet at 6:00 pm. Adult Bible study begins every Wednesday at 6:30 pm at the church and other Bible study meetings are held throughout the week. The building is handicapped accessible. Email: accvern@together.net; website: www.vernonadventchristianchurch.com; and FaceBook: Vernon AC Church.

Mountain View Seventh-day Adventist Church, located at 1002 Fort Bridgman Road, Vernon, VT, meets every Saturday at 9:40 am for Sabbath School classes for all ages. Church service begins at 11:15 am. All are welcome. Pastor Art Miller. [802-490-0751](tel:802-490-0751).

Thursday, May 7, at noon: The Southern Vermont Woman's Christian Temperance Union chapter invites anyone interested to attend a National Day of Prayer program at the Mountain View Seventh-day Adventist Church. Lunch will be served following the service. For more information, call [802-254-9368](tel:802-254-9368).

"Bags of Love" will meet Sunday, May 17. Stop by to help between 9:00 am and 2:00 pm. (No food provided.) All levels of skills appreciated. You may bring your own sewing machine or use one provided. For more information, call [802-254-9464](tel:802-254-9464).

"It's My Very Own" Bags of Love is a national program to provide for children placed by social services in custody of foster homes. Sometimes a Bag of Love is all a child owns. Each child who is placed receives a big handmade bag that contains a handmade quilt. Other items include a toy, a stuffed animal, an age-appropriate personal toiletry, and a variety of other items such as sippy cups for toddlers, a book for older children, and other things to help in a time of crisis in the life of a child.

Mary Miller says, "At our monthly meetings, we sometimes fill bags, but usually get to work on a quilt top." She admits that she is, "not a great seamstress but it is so fun to work around talented ladies who let us use their "toys," which are fancy sewing machines!"

Vernon Union Church, located at 2631 Fort Bridgman Road, (next to Vernon Hall), Vernon, VT. Sunday morning prayer time is: 8:00am followed by Bible study at: 9:00am. Morning worship begins at: 10:00 am, followed by a social hour. Childcare is available. Thursday prayer time each week at:

4:00 to 5:00pm. Rev. Terry Robinson is the interim minister as a pastoral search continues. He can be reached at: 802-258-2228. The church is fully handicapped accessible. Church phone: 802-257-8523.

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THE VERNON SENIORS

The Vernon Seniors are always looking for trips or activities for our citizens 55 and older. In April, they went to lunches at Dummerston and Newfane; starting in May, they will be going to Williamsville for lunch on the fourth Thursday. These are great opportunities to visit with seniors in other communities. The Seniors also went to Amherst, MA, for a shopping trip. These trips usually include a coffee stop as well as a lunch stop. If someone wants to shop at a certain store, she or he just lets the group know and they will fit it in. On April 21, they went to the Magic Wings Butterfly Conservatory and Gardens in South Greenfield, MA.

What is on the schedule for May? The Seniors have regular meetings on the second and fourth Mondays. If you need to go shopping, there will be an opportunity to go to Keene on May 6 and to the Holyoke Mall on May 18. We also will have our usual lunches in Dummerston, Newfane, and Williamsville. The Vernon Town Bus will run for any of these activities as long as we have at least 3 people. If you are interested, call Reita at 254-2694. Pick up a bus schedule at the Town Office Building if you are interested in knowing what, when, and where the town bus will be going.

The highlight of May will be a **Celebration of Life for Eleanor (Cookie) Allen**. Cookie was the senior bus driver and trip planner for many years and was always willing to help out the seniors and make sure that they had opportunities to participate. This Celebration of Life is being organized by Cookie's daughter and will be at the Vernon Elementary School on May 16 from 11 am to 2 pm. Cookie will take her last bus ride to the cemetery for burial. Anyone who is interested can meet at the school and ride the bus for this trip. After the ceremony, there will be a dinner at the school.

Mark your calendars for these special events that will help fund the seniors: On **May 29**, the Seniors will sponsor a bake sale at the Welcome Center. This is the Memorial Day weekend and we can use all the baked goods or food for travelers that we can get. Call Carol Shippee or Nancy Durborow if you can make something for the bake sale.

On **June 19, Dinner/Dessert Sale:** Once again, the Seniors will be selling ready-to-eat casseroles and desserts. The way this works is that you come and purchase your dinner and/or dessert and take it home for the family. This is a nice way to have a meal without doing all the prep!

On **October 3, Everything Apple Sale:** It will be fall harvest time and apples will be plentiful. The Seniors will be selling anything that has apple in or on it. It could be an apple pie or an apple printed dish towel. Plan to come and browse what we have and go home with something apple!

Remember, if you are 55 and over, you can join the Vernon Seniors. If you have a trip that you would like the Seniors to take, just come to a meeting and let the group know. We are always looking for places to go!

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VERNON HISTORIANS, INC.

On April 14, after the completion of our business meeting, we enjoyed a program presented by "The Friends of Schell Bridge" from Northfield, MA. Presenters told of their efforts to "Save the Schell." This very informative program was followed by a variety of delicious refreshments and gave attendees time for pleasant conversation with friends and neighbors.

The first event of our busy summer season will be our annual Memorial Day program at the Pond Road Chapel on Monday, May 25, at a time yet to be determined. The Memorial Day program will be followed by the opening of the Vernon Historical Museum on Sunday, June 7, from 2 to 4 pm. We will have a pie sale on opening day. We would welcome and greatly appreciate all donations of any kinds of pies for the sale. We hope to have a wide variety of fruit pies, whoopie pies, etc. Please bring your pies to the museum at 1:30 pm or call Nancy Gasset at: 257-4675 to make other arrangements.

The Museum will be open every Sunday, June through September from 2 to 4 pm. We hope to have another successful Mum Sale in the fall. All are encouraged to come by and enjoy our displays and historical artifacts. Please note that the Museum will not be open Sunday, July 19, as our group has been invited to attend a player piano concert at the home of Ron Warriner in Vernon. We are looking forward to hearing some lively ragtime music!

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MARINA RESTAURANT'S ANNUAL PLUNGE FOR CHARITY CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

On Sunday, May 3, starting at 3 pm, people will be jumping from a boat into the chilly waters of the West River to benefit Big Brothers Big Sisters, doing their part for the Marina Restaurant's Plunge for Charity.

The inspiration for the Marina Plunge came in 2003 when several Marina employees jumped into the river to celebrate a birthday. The following year, they decided to make it an annual event for charity. That year, a handful of individuals were thrilled to raise \$1,500 for The Gathering Place, an adult day care center. Since then, the event has grown steadily, according to founder and organizer Deirdre "Dee" Baker of Brattleboro.

Last year, close to 40 people took the plunge and raised over \$10,000 for Windham County SAFE Kids. Baker says she hope to have even a bigger turn-out this year. Money donated through the Marina Plunge will help to recruit and train volunteer mentors, support new and ongoing matches, and provide group mentoring activities for the nearly 100 local children on the wait list.

Previous beneficiaries of the Plunge include the Brattleboro Dive Team, the water-rescue arm of the Brattleboro Fire Department; the Living Memorial Park Snow Sports; Windham County Humane Society; Brattleboro Area Hospice; the Windham Child Care Association; the Boys and Girls Club; and the Winston Prouty Center.

The dive team plays an important role in the event each year, Baker said, because its members stay in the water to guide the plungers back to the pontoon boat that is used as the jump platform, anchored about 30 feet from shore.

There is no minimum you have to raise in pledges in order to participate, said Baker. Water temperatures tend to be about 40 degrees. Costumes are encouraged, adding an extra layer of insulation.

Pledge forms are available at the Marina Restaurant on Rte. 5 and at Youth Services, 32 Walnut Street. Pledge forms can be downloaded from vermontmarina.com and tips for online fundraising can be found at youthservicesinc.org/plunge.

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HOT TOPICS

From time to time, we plan to publish commentaries on issues of interest to residents of Vernon and the region. We hope these will be developed into objective, informative one-sheeters that will encourage more Vernon residents to become interested and involved in the decisions that will affect us all in the future.

The proposed name for these informative one-sheeters is *Hot Topics of Interest to Residents of Vernon and the Region*, which is too long; hence they will be called simply *Hot Topics*.

Like letters to the editor and op-ed pieces, the opinions expressed in these commentaries are those of the authors and not necessarily of the newsletter staff. We reserve the right to correct them for grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. We will not publish offensive material such as racial slurs, expletives, homophobic, slanderous, and derogatory language.

The two commentaries offered here concern the vote on Tuesday, May 5 on the proposed revised school budget and the reconsideration vote on Article 5 of the 2014 Town Report.

Please be sure to exercise your right to vote on the revised school budget as well as to attend the Special Meeting to Reconsider Article 5.

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MAY 5, 7:30 PM – VERNON SCHOOL CAFETERIA – RECONSIDERATION VOTE: ELECTED AUDITORS' ROLE

submitted by Nancy Gasset

At Vernon's recent 2015 Town Meeting, an article was presented by the Selectboard to eliminate the role of elected auditors as a part of Vernon's governmental structure. The article passed by a small margin with 109 votes to eliminate, 100 votes not to eliminate, and 7 votes spoiled or unreadable.

Voter Confusion

During and after the vote, several voters reported having confusion about how to mark their ballots. Before voting took place, the article question was read by the moderator and those participating formed lines and waited to pick up their ballots to mark them. As paper ballots with the words yes and no printed on them were given out at a table attended by town clerk assistants, many voters expressed confusion about what the yes and no votes meant.

Several voters asked those in line with them to clarify the question and others approached the town clerk assistants to help them know how to vote. Town clerk assistants told voters they couldn't help as it would be illegal for them to be involved in directing their votes. Previous to the vote, during a discussion on the subject of auditing, there were misinforming and contradictory statements made by some town officials with no opportunity to provide corrections.

Reconsideration Petition

The circumstances of the first vote on the article; wanting voters to clearly know how they are voting, gave a purpose for collecting signatures on a petition to initiate a reconsideration of this article question. In looking more closely at *Roberts Rules of Order*, it was discovered that the article question should have been written out on the paper ballots along with the yes and no answers. The ballots that will be used for the May 5 reconsideration vote will follow this format.

Another important reason to raise this subject again is to allow for an, open transparent discussion, so the voters/taxpayers have a full understanding of the matter and the outcome of their choices. There have been decisions made that have affected how Vernon's financial system is presently functioning

related to the removal of auditing tasks that have existed for many, many years in Vernon. The townspeople have not been fully informed and given their rightful place and freedom to choose. Since the elected auditors' duty is to be a watchdog peer and advocate for taxpayers; providing accountability concerning their monies, the decision to remove the role should be fully understood and clearly chosen by town voters.

Outside Audits – Inside Auditors

Common sense dictates that periodic outside audits need to be performed on town finances by accountants, but this is not a replacement for the function of elected auditors. Many towns do not have residents who are interested to fulfill elected auditor positions in their towns. Therefore, statutes allow outside audits as a replacement. Outside auditors are certified public accountants who live outside of Vernon. They do most of their work in their own offices outside of the town office building. They do not interact with the townspeople. They are chosen by the Selectboard and they report to the Selectboard.

The role of elected auditors provides an important independent function for taxpayer freedom and the balance of authority within Vernon's government. Inside auditors are residents and taxpayers of Vernon who have a direct personal interest in town finances. Elected auditors are peers, advocates, and watchdogs providing accountability for the spending of taxpayer monies. They are independent and protected from interference and the details of their audit findings are reported directly to the townspeople in an easy-to-understand written report annually. Inside auditors also have the opportunity to interact with townspeople, providing information and seeking answers to questions about town matters.

I hope you'll exercise your freedoms by attending, participating and voting.

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YOUR TAXES ARE GOING UP 25%

With the closure of Vermont Yankee, the Vermont funding formula for schools will change. Over the next three years our share of the statewide education property tax will increase by 25%. 76% of our 2014 property tax bill was for education, so even with no increase in spending, our taxes will rise by 19% within the next three years. On a house with an assessed value of \$200,000, **this works out to a \$400+ tax increase.**

With the defeat of the original school budget at Town Meeting, a revised budget was presented with a decrease of only \$37,506; we are being asked to approve spending **\$4,376,585.**

I attended the WSESU annual meeting, where our education budget for everything except the elementary school was approved. Less than 100 people from five towns showed up. There were 9 people from Vernon. **The \$15 million budget was approved in a little under an hour.**

I attended the first informational meeting of the school board on April 13th. It was sparsely attended. The overall theme of those in attendance was that we cannot afford the tax increase that is coming, and some significant changes have to occur.

Most people I've spoken with were unaware of how our education budgets are approved. They weren't notified of the annual BUHS District Meeting and vote, or the impact it has on their taxes. And while the local school budget was defeated at Town Meeting, they didn't know about the informational meetings until the yellow flyer was sent out last week.

Perhaps most troubling to me is that our school board didn't hold a public meeting to gather comments from the public to determine why the budget was defeated before drafting a revised budget.

Jefferson said a properly functioning democracy depends on an informed electorate.

We have only one more opportunity to become informed before the revote on the budget. This meeting will be at the Vernon School on Monday, April 27th at 6:30 PM. Please join your neighbors and me at this meeting and become an informed electorate. Ask the questions. Let the school board and your fellow neighbors know what you think. Listen to what the school board has to say. Then turn out and vote on May 5th at the Town Offices. We are a strong community, and we make the best decisions when we all participate.

Thank you, David Andrews

We welcome letters to the editor and op-eds. The opinions expressed are those of the writers, not the Vernon Community News or its staff.

Important Dates

Wednesday, April 29th

Deadline to register to vote. Visit the Town Clerks office or call them at 257-0292 for details. It is painless and free.

Monday, April 27th

School Budget Informational Meeting
6:30 PM in the school cafeteria

Tuesday, May 5th

→ VOTE on School Budget

←

7 AM to 7 PM Vernon
Town Office Lobby

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HOW MY VACATION BEGAN

by Bronna Zlochiver

'Allo, bonjour from Paris (email sent to family and friends on April 15)--

How are you? I am well, pretty much over jet-lag, thank goodness. The weather is beautiful, sunny and warm, not a cloud in the sky. We went for a boat ride on the Seine this morning and then for a walk in a lovely garden on the grounds of the Palais Royale, which hosts a lot of shops nowadays.

Last night, with dinner, which was stir-fry chicken with turmeric and a vegetable stew, we had a bottle of rose' that had a nice fruity finish. Yummy. Tonight, we are having orange lentil soup with fresh peas and salad, and for those of us who are omnivores, pork spring rolls and a very nice red wine I am told. Life is good and so is the conversation.

I hope I have made you plenty jealous so that you will consider such a trip yourselves.

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Do you know ...

... that in 1885, there was a treasure hunt on J.S. Sterns' farm because of rumors that Captain Kidd came up the Connecticut River and buried his treasure there? On moonlight nights, holes were dug all over the farm until Mr. Sterns offered a reward of \$1.00 to catch the trespassers.

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CLASSIFIED ADS

Mary Kay Cosmetics: Spring is coming and you are going to need hand cream and sunscreen, too, for when you work in the garden. Call Janis Pereira, [802-257-7416](tel:802-257-7416) or find her at www.marykay.com/jpereira.

MAY 2015

567 Governor Hunt Rd
Vernon, VT
257-0150

www.vernonfreelibrary.org
vernonfreelibrary@comcast.net
Find us on FACEBOOK



SUMMER HOURS

Monday 1—6 pm
Tuesday 9 – noon & 1—6 pm
Wednesday 1—6 pm
Thursday 1 –6 pm
Friday CLOSED
Saturday 9—12 noon

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MaryAnne Deer

Janis Pereira (Chair)

David Webb

Bronna Zlochiver

PROGRAMS

BASIC COMPUTER CLASSES

Call Kris to arrange a class.

KNITTING GROUP

Every Wednesday @ 1 pm

READING GROUP

2nd Thursday of the month @ 5pm

RHYME TIME

Every Monday @ 10:30 am for ages 0 to 5 years old

PRESCHOOL STORY TIME

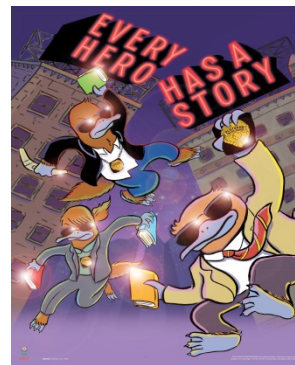
4 times a month - check website for dates and times

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Every Tuesday @ 6 pm

MEET THE AUTHOR

The event for May has been cancelled due to illness. Watch for announcements of future events!



Our theme this summer is *Every Hero Has A Story.*

We will also be doing an Adult Summer Reading Program with lots of prizes!

More information to come!



In honor of

MEMORIAL DAY

the library will be **CLOSED**

MONDAY, MAY 25

DONATIONS

We welcome your donations of unwanted books (hard cover & paperback) for our ongoing **BOOK SALE** in the lobby. Please contact the staff if you want to donate!

VOLUNTEERS

We are always looking for volunteers to assist us in the library. If you have a couple of hours a week to spare, please stop in or call.



Pay-As-You-Throw Trash Bags

are sold at the library!

We are open Saturday mornings 9am -12pm!