



Dummerston Recreation Board Revitalized

By Margaret Shugart

First of all, a very special thanks to Maeve Jenks for carrying the Dummerston Recreation Board, nearly solo, for years. I am happy to report she now has a team to support the many efforts of the Board as we move into an exciting future.

Coming into fall this year, it became clear that Dummerston recreation, and especially children's sports, needed a boost of person-power. Hearing about the need for someone to coordinate soccer, Jessica Nelson stepped up and organized the program. Sixty-five kids from pre-k through fifth grade signed up. A group of sixth graders volunteered to assist with coaching the 1st/2nd grade team. Parents also came forward as coaches. The 1st/2nd grade and 3rd/4th grade teams each played four games during the season. The pre-k/kindergarten team also tried a game. Jerseys were sponsored by Berkely & Veller Realtors and everyone who signed up was given a personalized shirt. There was an awards ceremony and a family potluck, topped off with an adults versus kids scrimmage.

During the soccer season, seven more people stepped forward to serve on the board. Adam Palmiter volunteered to chair it. The board has started regular monthly meetings to organize equipment, activities, volunteers, and fundraising going forward. Oliva Sandreuter raised her hand to organize a winter basketball season, for which 35 Dummerston children signed up, ranging from kindergarten through fifth grade. There are eight total games scheduled for the season and jerseys were sponsored by The Putney Diner. The basketball players will also have a final awards ceremony to celebrate all their hard work.

The ice rink was erected in December with volunteers working five hours straight in the cold to put up the boards, carry and roll the liner and set up the lights. We experimented with a single strand of lights under the ice,



PHOTO BY MARGARET SHUGART

A young skater follows the line of the lights installed under the ice at the recreation committee's skating rink at Dummerston School

which was a great success, and we plan to add more next year. Although nature provided the first skateable ice, holes in the liner emptied that water and the West Dummerston Fire Department made five trips with their trucks across two days to the rink to fill it. It will hopefully remain skateable for several weeks

to come. There has been one official event with music, donated skates, a fire and s'mores, and we hope to hold a few more so people can come and enjoy the rink and each other as a community.

And the future is filled with potential: base
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Grant Enables Expansion of Lydia Taft Pratt Library

By Lyle Holiday

The Lydia Taft Pratt Library has had the exciting news that we received a substantial grant from Building Bright Futures, allowing the library to create a children's program. This grant will allow the library to create an early literacy program for children up to age eight and families. Look for more details to follow, including opening times and new

activities for children and families. This grant will provide considerable materials for the program, including furniture specifically for children, a part-time children's librarian, as well as new children's books and materials.

In order to have room to create a new program, the Lydia Taft Pratt Library has been able to work with the Dummerston Community Center Board to rent the room across from
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The *Views of Dummerston* is a quarterly newsletter published by a group of citizen volunteers since 1990, and has non-profit status through the Dummerston Community Center. Mary Lou McBean had the original vision for and was first editor of the *Views*, and Gary Blomgren created the original masthead art.

The current steering committee includes Roger Turner (editor), Michelle Cherrier (co-articles coordinator and calendar), Fred Lee (layout), Sara Ryan (ad coordinator), Linda Rood (co-articles coordinator), and Lee Ives Tice (mailing). We always welcome new interest in joining the committee.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

The *Views* is mailed free of charge to all residents of the town of Dummerston. It is also available online at viewsofdummerston.org. We encourage people to help us save printing and mailing expenses by cancelling their print subscription and accessing the *Views* online at viewsofdummerston.org; to do so please email Sara Ryan at: subscribeonline@viewsofdummerston.org. If you are not a resident of Dummerston and would prefer to receive a paper copy of the *Views*, you may subscribe for an annual cost of \$5. Mail a check made payable to Views of Dummerston, with your name and mailing address to Lee Tice, 230 School House Rd., East Dummerston, VT 05346.

ARTICLES:

We welcome all articles related in any way to the town of Dummerston, including news of town organizations, personalities, history, or activities. Email Microsoft Word documents (preferred) to: articles@viewsofdummerston.org. Typed or hand-written articles can also be sent to: Michelle Cherrier, 72 Miller Rd., East Dummerston, VT 05346.

CALENDAR:

Any (non-commercial) event you would like listed on our Calendar of Events should be emailed to: calendar@viewsofdummerston.org, or mailed to Michelle Cherrier at the above address.

NEXT ISSUE:

Submissions due: March 25, 2025

Views will be mailed on: May 7, 2025

ADVERTISING:

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Dummerston Selectboard Meetings

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Non-Firefighters Sought for Administrative WD Volunteer Fire Department Support

By Alex Wilson, Selectboard, and Daniel Ridlehoover, WDVFD

Dummerston benefits immeasurably from the West Dummerston Volunteer Fire Department. Although "West Dummerston" in name, the department serves all of us, along with neighboring towns through Mutual Aid, the agreement between regional fire departments to help each other out when needed. We can be grateful that we have such skilled and dedicated volunteers keeping us safe by responding to hundreds of traffic accidents, fires, and other emergencies.

Remarkably, these same fire department volunteers, who go through literally hundreds of hours of training and are ready to respond on a moment's notice day or night to whatever the emergency might be, also spend many of their weekends and evenings carrying out fundraising efforts to pay for the capital purchases needed for firefighting and emergency response. This fundraising effort is above-and-beyond!

Dummerston taxpayers support the operating expenses of the fire department and fire truck purchases, but the fire department is responsible for most other capital expenditures, including radios, air packs, turnout gear (firefighting outfits), building repairs, etc.

The Dummerston selectboard and the West Dummerston Volunteer Fire Department board would love to see a much more active fire department auxiliary to lighten the load for our firefighters and emergency medical responders. We already have a fire department auxiliary that helps with fundraising, but most of the members of the auxiliary are family members of our firefighters and EMTs.

If you can help with fundraising in any way, please step forward! No fire or EMS experience is necessary. Examples of how you can help include:

Organizing existing special fundraising events, such as the annual pancake breakfast and golf tournament.

Brainstorming new ideas for fire department fundraising and carrying out those activities.

Assisting with fire department appeals, including writing personalized notes on year-end appeal letters.

Grant writing, including both identifying grant opportunities as well as writing proposals.

Dummerston is an awesome town, and we need your help to support our fire department volunteers and help keep our property taxes manageable. The fire department members and their families are bearing a heavy load; more of us need to get involved. Assisting in this way could improve fundraising success and lessen the load on those involved in emergency response.

Joining the fire department auxiliary is a great way to get actively involved in our community—meeting neighbors and helping to create strong community ties.

To get involved, contact westdummerstonfireauxiliary@gmail.com. Thank-you.

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The Views of Dummerston Mission Statement

Providing reports of town organizations, and stories of townspeople and their good deeds, in promoting cooperation and understanding toward creating a more "ideal" Dummerston.

"All who read may also contribute!"—Mary Lou McBean, founder, *Views of Dummerston*

civic government

Dummerston Selectboard

Town Budget Ready for Town Meeting Consideration

By Todd Davidson

The selectboard began budget recommendation planning for fiscal year (FY) 2026 in October. We met every other Wednesday at the town office.

The current year's budget (FY25) focused on getting town employee pay aligned with current regional rates after failing to keep up with cost-of-living increases. For FY26, the focus is on attempting to sustainably build up the Capital Fund and Structures Fund. Additionally, FY26 brings the first of five years of fire truck payments, \$113,000 annually within the Capital Fund, that will run through FY30.

Overall, the proposed 14.4% increase in municipal expenses (\$203,354) is driven by just a few items that are outlined below. These items far outweigh other changes in the budget. Also, be aware that town expenditures represent a relatively small portion of our taxes, the rest being education. This 14.4% in the town budget produces a net 2.9% increase in our overall total property tax bills.

Capital Fund	+\$130,000
(of which \$113,000 is the new fire truck)	
WDVFD* funding	+\$74,364
Total	+\$204,364

CAPITAL FUND:

The selectboard reviewed capital needs during budget considerations and there were some items we moved to later years after considerable discussion and consultation with our road foreman. Two new Western Star truck purchases are each now moved a year later in capital planning: one from FY26 to FY27; a second from FY27 to FY28. There is no getting around the five years of fire truck payments, which the town voted on last year. By moving the dump truck purchases somewhat later, we won't get hit with a double-whammy in FY26, but that will occur in the four fiscal years thereafter. The plan shown is to flatline the Capital Fund's annual tax needs. By looking over the next five years we've mirrored fund contributions each FY instead of seeing annual swings. The flat \$245,000 over the next five fiscal years allows for only capital items anticipated with our forwarded balances kept at a minimum in order to provide tax relief.

STRUCTURES FUND

There are over 40 town structures covered

by this fund, all bridges, and culverts with diameters greater than three feet. These structures are prioritized on a 100-year replacement schedule. The goal of the plan is to ensure that culverts don't fail, causing sinkholes or floods that wash away roads. Public safety and convenience of travel are both at the top of the board's planning objectives. There is a list with the top ten priority structures (within the complete list) at dummerston.org and our planning this year is based on funds the town will need between FY26 and FY52 when the East-West Road bridge (#11, at the sharp turn at the bottom of the hill to the center) will need replacing at a cost exceeding \$1,000,000. Much like the Capital Fund, we are recommending a level funding amount each year so that projects can be completed on time. There is some grant funding available every five years that is taken into consideration. We believe that *\$85,000 per year starting in FY27 through FY52* is a responsible level that will meet our goals. That number should be reviewed and evaluated every five to ten years.

GENERAL FUND

Overall, General Fund expenses are increasing 13.2% (about \$77,400) over the current year. As noted, the WDVFD line items are contained in this fund and contribute to most of the increase. Currently, Dummerston contributes considerably less to our fire department than do most surrounding towns, and we want to ease the fundraising load on our hardworking emergency responders (see page 2). The WDVFD budget increase is based on funding the department's entire operating expense request without dollars offset by fundraising. Additionally, we reviewed the WDVFD needs over the next five years and want to provide greater support for

equipment purchases. Firefighting equipment and safety gear are expensive, with prices always going up, and new regulations require upgrading equipment to maintain insurance coverage. Potential grants will hopefully reduce the town's contribution to the WDVFD capital budget.

Pay for town employees is increasing 2.4% this year, in line with the Social Security Administration cost of living adjustments (COLA). Reductions are being made in insurance responsibilities for employees, emergency management (annual hours), and removing hours for the collector of delinquent taxes.

HIGHWAY FUND

We have reduced expenses by .6% in FY26. The driver behind the overall decrease is anticipated savings in diesel fuel purchases. With assistance, the selectboard is planning on working with a new supplier to gain a more competitive price. Those recognized savings will not only cover 2.4% COLA pay increase for our highway crew, but more than cover other small increases in other line items.


TOWN COMMISSIONS / COMMITTEES / VOLUNTEERS:

We had a great year of folks stepping up to help all across our areas of need. The cemetery commission is now full, the conservation commission is full, and our town office team is stepping up to take on the delinquent tax duties within their own work hours. There were valuable inputs from all sides concerning the budget, and we appreciate everyone's participation. Looking forward to 2025, we want to work with WDVFD on building a strong auxiliary to help with fundraising. We also want to work with the Lydia Taft Pratt Library Trustees and Friends of Lydia to increase fundraising in 2025.

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Dummerston Conservation Commission

A Significant Portion of Dummerston Land is Conserved

By Jesse Wagner

Commission member Bill Conley recently ran into an old acquaintance who inquired of him, “How much land has the Dummerston Conservation Commission conserved?” Bill described being at a bit of a loss for words in his response. So, as any good commissioner would, he came before the rest of us at our last meeting to get some clarity. “What, fundamentally, does it mean to conserve land, and what should we as a commission consider to be our most important role in land conservation?” Conservation means a lot of things to a lot of people, but you can be sure that your town conservation commission is actively engaged in trying to answer this for you. Here are a few of our thoughts.

The Conservation Commission provides information and support to landowners who are interested in conserving their land, either by donation, sale, or conservation easement. In 2023, we hosted Pieter Van Loon from Vermont Land Trust (VLT) who discussed

conservation easements, and Sam Schneski, Windham County Forester, who discussed Vermont’s Use Value Appraisal (UVA) tax relief program. We were pleased with the large turnout at both events and by the body of questions asked of these speakers during Q&A sessions. We were amazed by both the strong desire to understand these programs and interest in land conservation.

One way land can be conserved is by outright purchase by a conservation group. The Dummerston Conservation Commission has not historically purchased land in its own right. Other towns have taken on this level of involvement, as have organizations statewide and right here in Dummerston, and we’re grateful to have such active and knowledgeable people doing this type of work. For example, the Nature Conservancy owns the Black Mountain preserve (and several easements on private land surrounding it), and the Green Mountain Conservancy has astonishingly acquired and conserved 943 acres in Dummerston, including Deer Run Nature Preserve and Canoe Brook Nature Preserve. In addition, the state owns Dutton Pines, and Brattleboro owns some conserved land along the Whetstone Brook watershed. Finally, the commission takes an active role in stewarding town-owned land at Prospect Hill and the Covered Bridge swimming hole.

Currently, there are more than a dozen properties in Dummerston that have conservation easements. A conservation easement gives a third party, usually a land trust, the right to enforce certain restrictions on how land is used, such as for agriculture, forestry, or natural preservation. A conservation easement is a valuable tool for landowners that would like to create lasting protection for their land. The VLT is a good starting point to find out more about how conservation easements work and if your land would qualify. Properties that are subject to conservation easements here in town are Elysian Hills, Bunker Farm, and many others.

Finally, land can be “conserved” to some extent by enrolling it in the Current Use Value Appraisal Program. While participating in the UVA, landowners agree not to develop their land but to manage it for forest and/or farm products and resource protection, in return for a significant tax break. While this is not as long-term or legally binding as the ownership or conservation easement models, the UVA program incentivizes agricultural and silvicultural uses of land over development. Excitingly, in recent years, UVA has allowed landowners to qualify by managing their land to promote forests with old-growth characteristics.

So, how much land is conserved in Dummerston? Well, our resident cartographer David Greenwalt has once again taken matters into his own hands to answer this question. In a new map of Dummerston, David is working hard to identify and categorize every parcel according to whether it is enrolled in UVA, town owned, has a conservation easement, is managed by local or national conservation organizations as a preserve, or simply is not involved in any conservation program. We’re hoping to have this map completed and publicly available in the spring of 2025. If you have land with a private conservation easement on it, please let us know at info@dummerstonconservation.org. David discovered that an impressive 55 percent of Dummerston’s total land area is managed for some level of conservation. Clearly, there is a strong interest among our townspeople to protect lands!

Finally, a *huge* thanks to 2024 conservation fund donors, Jesper Brickley for his huge donation of time and machinery to mow the badly overgrown summit of Prospect Hill, Phil Goepf for his continuing website construction, and the generous donors in town who make many of our programs possible. We also want to extend a warm welcome to new commissioner Debbie Miller. With that I wish my neighbors a happy new year and invite you to read John Anderson’s quarterly nature notes on page 9.

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Cares Volunteers of the Quarter

Disbanded Community Chest Recognized for Years of Service

By *Catie Berg*

Frank Vara presided over directors Mark Whitaker, Art Benedict, Dwight Miller, Jr., directors Pam McFadden, Art Benedict, Jean Newell, Bob and Margaret Evans, Janice Duke, Laurie Frechette, Lewis White, Wayne Emery, and Shorty Forrett.

In this frigid season, Dummerston Cares hopes to warm your hearts with our celebration of the Volunteers of the Season, which this quarter are all the compassionate people who served on the Community Chest of Dummerston from 1941–2024.

During World War II, folks in Dummerston, and throughout the U.S., were struggling financially, due to the war effort. Dwight Miller, Jr., Kenneth Chamberlin, and Olive Evans saw a way to help. Knowing about Community Chests that helped towns throughout the country since 1913, these civic-minded people formed the Community Chest of Dummerston.

Directors of the Chest asked townspeople to contribute funds to help other townspeople—*neighbors helping neighbors*. People didn't receive funds directly, though. Rather, funds went to organizations, programs, and emergency services that spread a mantle of caring throughout town and beyond.

Looking at "snapshots" of the Chest's directors throughout the years, in 1998



The final board of the disbanded Dummerston Community Chest included (back row, left to right) Pam McFadden, Dawn Hubbard, Jean Newell, Libby Lafland, and Charles Ranney, and (front row, left to right) Cheryl Wilfong, and Carol Wood.

Until recently, Dummerston Community Chest was the sole remaining Community Chest in Vermont - a stalwart from times when a Chest served nearly every town in Vermont.

As the model for Community Chests grew more regional, the United Way became an area's manager for funding. The question: Why keep the Chest, since it has become redundant? Instead, the Chest decided to disband and transfer its remaining funds to another worthy tax-exempt entity, Dummerston Cares.

Tom Johnson, Shorty Forrett, Paul Normandeau, Jack Manix, Lester Dunklee, Kenneth Chamberlin, Caroline Ranney, and Priscilla Smith. The Chest sought funds to help 4-H Camp Waubanong, Rescue, Inc., Winston Prouty Center, American Red Cross, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts, Lydia Taft Pratt Library, and Dummerston Caring & Sharing, among others.

In 2009, Gladys Miller presided over

While the United Fund helps larger organizations, Cares also helps individuals. So, in November of 2024, the Chest notified residents of its decision to disband, urging people to continue their generosity as *neighbors helping neighbors*.

We give a huge thanks to president Pam McFadden (2013–24), and fellow directors Charles Ranney, Libby Lafland, Dawn Hubbard, Jean Newell, Cheryl Wilfong, and Carol Wood!



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organizations

Evening Star Grange

Grange’s Senior Meals Program Has Storied History

by *Sallie J. May*,
Secretary

The north wind doth blow around the corner of my house as I scramble to get a few notes down to send to the winter *Views*. The weatherman says the wind chill might reach the minus numbers tonight and yet the warm air experienced today in the Grange kitchen smelled like cinnamon and sausage as we prepared yet another senior luncheon for folks in our town and elsewhere. Many years ago, Marion Gasset had heard about a program being started by the organization then known as ‘Council on Aging,’ called something like ‘Senior Lunch Program,’ and she was quick to offer the Grange facility and herself along with it as a volunteer site. Surely, the older folks in Dummerston and surrounding towns would like a place to get together a time or two a month to socialize and have a good home-cooked meal for a small donation, if they could afford it—no one would be turned away if they could not. At first, only a few

people showed up, but the word was out, the Grange was cooking, and we had a good cook who made great food. Gradually, Marion brought in folks to help her, some lasted a short while, a few lasted for years and years. She was quick to show you what she wanted and how she wanted it done, but don’t try to do it differently. That just didn’t fly. The Council was helpful, supplying recipes, instructions, and recommendations for menus, but Marion’s belief, as ours still is today, was, ‘Give them home-made, nourishing, balanced meals and enough to fill their bellies, and they will come back!’ When Marion retired, Linda Hellus followed as head cook; she had worked with Marion but was a little more concerned with following the Council guidelines. With Linda’s retirement the newbies took over - Sallie May and Larry Lynch, Jr., one a long-time volunteer, the other a culinary school alum and life-long grocery employee and cook, and both of them Grangers who continue to uphold the ‘feed them well and they will come’ rule of thumb.

With the onset of COVID, most meal sites in the state of Vermont shut down, or severely restricted their service. Not Evening Star Grange. At first, we shifted to a take-out service only, and the people came. We quickly went from serving 40-50 in-house meals and perhaps a dozen or so take-outs to 100 – 200+ take-outs. Our highest ever was this past Thanksgiving, when over 400 meals were either taken home or eaten in-house.

(formerly the Council on Aging). All sites were notified that because the official ending of COVID as an epidemic had been declared, the amount of federal funds that the program would be receiving was going to be drastically reduced if not eliminated completely, and the way the sites would be reimbursed for food costs would be changing. The sites will now have to prove that they are feeding people in-house, and the food costs for these meals will receive partial or full reimbursement. Because the point of the meal has been as much socialization as providing a nutritious meal, we will no longer be reimbursed for take-out meals, with a few possible exceptions; these will be worked out, I suspect, on an individual basis.

All of this means, of course, that the donation cost to attendees will have to be raised, something the Grange has not done since the program’s inception. As of February, we have increased by a dollar our suggested donation for sit-down meals to \$4 for ages 60 and above, and \$5 for those younger. All take-outs will be a flat \$5 (we get no reimbursement funds for these) and in all cases we will still allow those of lower incomes to contribute what they can - no one will be turned away. We would love to see more of our town folk come and join their neighbors and friends for some social time; we have a book exchange shelf and a puzzle table if anyone wants to drop in a piece or two while waiting for the meal to be served.

By the way: Watch for our advertising regarding our Grange Sugar Supper coming up toward the end of March.



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Dummerston Historical Society

Schoolhouse Walls Filled with Faces of Dummerston

by Muriel Taylor

As 2025 stretches before us, we would like to take this opportunity to invite you to attend our quarterly meetings and to visit our exhibits. A special thank you to those who continue to support our ongoing efforts to preserve and celebrate Dummerston's historic past, its present, and its future. All of our events are advertised in local media and are listed on our website, dummerstonhistoricalsociety.org. The following exhibit will still be in place by the time you read this article. We are open throughout the year on the first and third Sunday of every month from 1-3 p.m., as well as quarterly meetings in April, July, and October. Watch for occasional special programs. We hope to see you there.

The Dummerston Historical Society is pleased to present a new exhibit from its growing collection of local portraits, *Faces of Dummerston, II*. Curated by Chuck Fish, you will find over 100 new photos, some of ancestors sadly gone, others of newcomers who have just unpacked. We have farmers and foresters, painters and printmakers, butchers and bakers (but no candlestick makers). We welcome new photos. If you have some to share, we will scan them, keep copies, and return the originals. All pictures will be preserved in albums for future generations. You can be part of the historical record.

As of this writing in early January, we are looking forward to our Historical Society's annual meeting, scheduled for January 26th. Although this meeting will have already happened by the time you read this article, it will have included electing officers, reviewing

the past year's activities, and sharing stories about how attendees came to live here in Dummerston. It is imagined that the conversation was energized and wide ranging: born here, came to ski and stayed, came "home" after living elsewhere, etc. We hope you were there to tell your own story and hear those of others. Dummerston is a wonderful blend of people who dearly love our town. How lucky we are.

The Dummerston Historical Society always welcomes donations of historical interest to Dummerston and we encourage you to join us in 2025 as a member, a volunteer, a participant in our programs, or as a viewer of our exhibits. Find more information and videos of recent programs at dummerstonhistoricalsociety.org. (Please note that you do not need to be a member of the Historical Society to attend any of our functions.) Our Schoolhouse is handicapped accessible. You are always welcome.



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Remember When?

A familiar recipe from 50 years ago, borrowed from a little cookbook called: *What's Cooking in Dummerston, Vermont*, compiled for the Second Annual Dummerston School Fair, June 1, 1974.


POUND CAKE
(Lucy Parker)
Stand on your legs
And beat 4 eggs.
Add 1 cup of sugar
And beat like a "bugger".
Add 1 cup of flour
And bake half an hour.

I put the batter in a greased loaf pan and bake in a 350 degree oven until it is done, which is about half an hour. I bake until a toothpick doesn't come out "tacky" when put down into the center of the cake. It is great with fruit, ice cream, or maple syrup.

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Calendar Photographs Needed

Do you have a nice photo of
somewhere in Dummerston?

The Historical Society is seeking photos for the 2025 Scenes of Dummerston Calendar. All photos must be horizontal and have no identifiable people in them. You do not have to be a professional photographer or have a special camera. Cell phones take excellent photos.

Please send photos to Sheila Pinkney at: dummerstoncalendar@gmail.com. You will receive a free calendar if your photo is selected.



organizations

Ice Rink Rules Promote Safety and Prevent Damage

By Margaret Shugart

You may have seen the new Open/Closed signs at the ice rink at the school, as well as the *rules for rink use when it is open*, which are:

- Only enter the rink over the black mat.
- Skate at your own risk.
- Carry in/ Carry out - please remove all trash when you leave.
- Please do not leave the chairs on the rink, lean them against the outside of the rink upon departure.
- If there is snow on the rink, please do not skate until it's cleared.
- The lights are on a timer, please do not play with or unplug them.

Have fun!!

And the rule for when the rink is closed:

The rink is currently not able to be skated on. Doing so could cause you injury and/or damage the rink, making it unusable for others in the future.

Also, there is a QR code on these signs for donations!

In January, the rink suffered one large hole and several smaller holes in the liner



PHOTO BY MARGARET SHUGART

Dummerston firefighters volunteered to provide water for the skating rink.

during the warm spell. Many gallons of water leaked out, exposing more liner along the bottom, making it unskateable. There were cardboard signs up stating it was closed, but it appears people used the rink anyway. More holes showed along the liner edges. All of the holes we could find were patched but a large ice slick formed around the outside of the rink, perhaps indicating additional leakage.

The West Dummerston Fire Department graciously contributed multiple truckloads of water over several days to the rink so we could enjoy a healthy rink with smooth ice. Many volunteers have given up hours of their free time to create this wonderful community resource. Please respect their efforts and the rink by following the rules, so all can enjoy the rink this season and in future seasons.

Nominations Sought for Southern Vermont Emerging Leaders

By Rachel Shields Ebersole

The Southern Vermont Young Professionals and Shires Young Professionals are seeking nominations for this year's Southern Vermont Emerging Leaders awards, which honor community and professional leaders in all fields who are between the ages of 21 and 40.

Each year since 2018, the Southern Vermont Young Professionals (a program of Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation) and the Shires Young Professionals have sought to highlight and honor young adults in their roles as leaders and change-makers in the southern Vermont economy and community through the Emerging Leaders awards. Over 170 local leaders have been given an Emerging Leaders award since the beginning of the program, and 38 of those have subsequently been recognized statewide through Vermont Business Magazine's Rising Stars awards as well.

Nominations are due March 14 and can be submitted using a brief online form at sovermontzone.com/emerging-leaders.

For more information, visit sovermontzone.com/emerging-leaders or email Rachel Shields Ebersole at rsebersole@brattleborodevelopment.com. (Rachel Shields Ebersole is the Community Projects Specialist and GROW SoVermont Program Manager at the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation.)

About Southern Vermont Young Professionals
The Southern Vermont Young Professionals is a workforce initiative of Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies and the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation. Our mission is to attract, retain and support young professionals in southern Vermont by providing engaging opportunities and networking through social and educational events, and volunteer opportunities. The Young Professionals initiative is increasingly important to southern Vermont's businesses and communities as a strategic approach to growing the size of the region's workforce and increasing the number of younger households in the region. For more information please visit brattleborodevelopment.com/sovtyps.

Dummerston Community Skating Rink
is
OPEN

Please follow the guidelines below:

- Only enter the rink over the black mat
- Skate at your own risk
- Carry in/Carry out, please remove all trash as you leave
- Please do not leave the chairs on the rink, lean them against the outside of the rink upon departure
- If there is snow on the rink please do not skate until it's cleared
- The lights are on a timer, please do not play with or unplug them
- HAVE FUN!!

Donations to the rink are always appreciated at:

Dummerston Community Skating Rink
is
CLOSED

The rink is currently not able to be skated on, doing so could cause you injury and/or damage the rink, making it unusable for others in the future.

We hope to have it open again soon!

Donations to the rink are always appreciated at:

Book Adoption Returns to Town Meeting

By Linda Rood

You are invited to come in to the Dummerston School library on town meeting day to see the new books purchased by the Friends of the Library! We hope that you will help us by “adopting” a book or two of your choice. How it works: you reimburse us for the cost of the book(s), and we place a book plate with your dedication inside the book. You could adopt a book in the name of a child or grandchild, or in honor of a friend. You could write a message to the future readers of the book(s). We will use the funds we raise at town meeting to buy more books!

The library will be open from 9:30 a.m. until the meeting ends. Come see us when you come in to vote, or take a break from the meeting to have a cookie and a visit.

We would love to see you.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HAZELTON FAMILY

Don Hazelton tends the evaporator in his Dummerston Center sugar house back in the day.

Conservation Commission Nature Notes

Less-Snowy Winters Curtail Red-Tail Hawk Migration

By John Anderson

In the fall of 1999, the Putney Mountain hawkwatch counted 891 migrating red-tailed hawks, establishing a site record that stands to this day. Their count for 2023 was just 292, a decrease of 67% over 25 years.

Based on such data it would be easy to conclude that red-tails are in decline. It would be logical to be concerned, and concern is warranted, but not concern for these nearly ubiquitous buteos. Only the number counted is in decline, not the population.

At this latitude, red-tails may or may not migrate, and therefore, may or may not get counted. Given our ever-milder winters, increasing numbers either delay migration or don't migrate at all. When the winters were harsher, more migrated. However, temperature is not the primary driving factor. These raptors are big and hardy. Cold alone does not seem to faze them but snow depth is an issue.

Red-tails hunt rodents and while they will take prey as large as gray squirrels, they rely heavily on catching mice and voles and apparently they are not adept at locating such prey beneath snow cover. A season with frequent substantial snowfall will often precipitate a red-tail exodus.

A good example of a snow-triggered flight was the infamous Halloween snowstorm of 2011. That year it snowed heavily on October 27th, blanketing Canada and northern New England. On the 28th alone 93 south-bound red-tails were counted on Putney Mountain by

PHOTO BY MORRIS FINKELSTEIN, COURTESY OF PIXELS.COM



watchers who were themselves boot-top deep in snow.

Snow depth and red-tailed migration are closely linked and over the last two decades, as less and less snow has fallen in any given season, fewer and fewer red-tailed hawks have migrated. In all likelihood, the majority of the 292 counted from Putney Mt last year originated at more northerly, snowier latitudes. Red-tails here in southern Vermont frequently feel no need to move south.

Within my seven decade's memory, seeing a red-tail in January or February was once quite noteworthy. Now I expect to see many and would be puzzled if I didn't. Our red-tails

are transitioning from mostly migratory to frequently sedentary. They are adapting to the changing climate.

I will have to admit that I do not mourn for the extreme cold and deep snow of past decades. But I do understand that climate changes that may be a positive for the red-tails will impact a vast array of other species, ours included, and I know that the changes I'm seeing are both ongoing and, most concerningly, they are completely without parameters. And that fact concerns me greatly.

For more information on the Conservation Commission go to dummerstonconservation.com

school news

Happenings at Dummerston School



Birds Visit Dummerston School

◀ Kindergarten students enjoyed a very special session with Mike Clough from the Southern Vermont Natural History Museum earlier this month. Mike brought some special visitors and taught students about the four different ways Vermont animals survive in winter. ▶



Farm to Table Program Continues Through Winter



Dummerston School's Farm-to-School program keeps going strong all winter long! During the winter months, students engage in a variety of activities with garden coordinator Tara Gordon. Preserving root vegetables, drying fruits and vegetables, making lip balm with our school garden's dried herbs, sprouting seeds indoors, and mushroom cultivation are a few of the projects students have engaged in while the ground is frozen. Thanks to a grant from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets, Dummerston School is stocked with a lot of kitchen equipment that makes these projects possible--a food dehydrator, waffle maker, scale, blender, InstaPot, and air fryer are just a few of the items teachers can sign out for cooking lessons and community activities.

In these photos, 4th grade students work with Tara Gordon on an indoor sprouting project.



Winter Activities

Thank you to staff, students, and families for supporting our winter sports program for students in grades 1-8! Students participate in one of three activities: skiing at Mt. Snow, ice skating at Living Memorial Park, and winter nature exploring with Mike Clough from the Southern Vermont Natural History Museum. There are so many stories of students exemplifying the different elements of our school social contract at the mountain, rink, and here in our very own woods. It is not easy to go outside your comfort zone to tackle a new skill, connect with different people, and learn a new routine in a place that might be unfamiliar--the confidence that children can build in doing this is the magic of Winter Sports. Well done, students, and thank you to staff and family volunteers for all of your help in this complex undertaking!



school news



Winter Solstice Day Activities



Dummerston School students celebrated the winter solstice with their Buddy Classrooms. Students made edible ornaments to hang along the woods trail and gathered for a whole-school solstice celebration that included student-led singing, a play about the earth's tilt, poetry readings, and a warm fire built and tended by Mr. Bailey and middle school helpers.



Girls' Basketball Team Season in Full Swing



The Dummerston Middle School basketball season is in full swing! We are so proud of our middle school basketball players who work together to develop their skills as individuals and a team and who embody our Dummerston School social contract skills at practices and games. Thank you to coach Kelsey Parker, athletic director Kim Lane, and our student athletes and families for making this season so successful!

Top row: Hailey Cogliano, Maebel Wampler, Katja Feusi, Peyton Thibault, Kelsey Fellows, Gretchen Green, Charlee Poplawski, Rylee LaFarr, and coach Kelsey Parker. Bottom row: Ky Lawrence, Layla Wheeler, Lily Arnold, Gracia Lenois, Aleeah Moore, and Alli North.

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school news

School Raises Funds for Accessible Walking Path

By Jessica Nelson

Safe, flat walking surfaces are often hard to come by in rural Vermont, and Dummerston is no exception to this challenge. With this reality front of mind, the Dummerston School Playground and Outdoor Committee is finally putting into motion its final major project of its four-phase renovation that started in 2021. The upgrades have included new playground equipment, a pavilion and outdoor amphitheater, disc golf, and hiking/mountain biking trails.

When the Dummerston School Leadership Council surveyed school and community members in 2021 on how the school grounds could be re-envisioned, a walking path was seen as a desirable feature, but projects that more directly impacted the school playground, such as new equipment and a pavilion, took priority. Now that those components are complete, the committee is able to turn its attention to a half-mile walking path that would utilize the flat terrain

around the school, looping around the soccer and baseball fields. Large-scale projects like this, however, come at a cost and the school has depleted most of its funding sources at this point. Construction bids for a half-mile, six-foot-wide crushed rock and Sure Pack trail have come in upwards of \$53k.

When it looked like the project would have to be put off for a few more years, enter Tim Knapp, and some very motivated sixth grade students. Tim, with deep roots locally, grew up in Dummerston and attended Dummerston School, and like so many, moved away, only to find himself called back to his hometown later in life. After sponsoring the school's outdoor stone amphitheater and seeing the transformation of this community space, Tim asked what else needed to be done. The walking path was the last major remaining project—desired but financially out of reach. Mr. Knapp stepped up once again and has made the very generous offer of a \$30k match-donation challenge to all Dummerston School alumni and community members; he will match every dollar donated up to \$30k to make an accessible, community walking path in Dummerston a reality. If this goal is met, the project can be completed this summer.

The first residents to take him up on this challenge have been a moti-

ivated group of sixth graders at Dummerston School. After watching a news story about students in Minnesota that raised funds for an accessible playground for their classmates with limited mobility, they were inspired to fundraise for our own accessible walking path that could accommodate bikes, strollers, and wheelchairs. As sixth grader Leo Neeper put it, "Everyone deserves a chance to have fun. Helping is hard work, but it feels good."

Through bake sales, slinging hotdogs at soccer games, and hosting family dances, the sixth graders have raised over \$2,500, knowing each penny made counts as two. Mr. Knapp said of this collaboration, "It's been great to be part of such a joint effort. The kids have taken the initiative to make this project a reality for their school and community and they are truly inspiring." He is hoping the students' efforts motivate the greater Dummerston community to contribute to the project and help see it through to the finish line.

While the walking path is part of the school's ongoing outdoor renovation project, the re-imagining of this space has always had the greater Dummerston community in mind, recognizing that rural schools such as ours can be essential shared spaces. Creating a community walking path will take the whole community's support. If you would like to learn more about the project, or would like to make a donation of any size, you can email dummerstonplayground@gmail.com, or donate at [gofundme.com/f/dummerston-school-playground](https://www.gofundme.com/f/dummerston-school-playground).

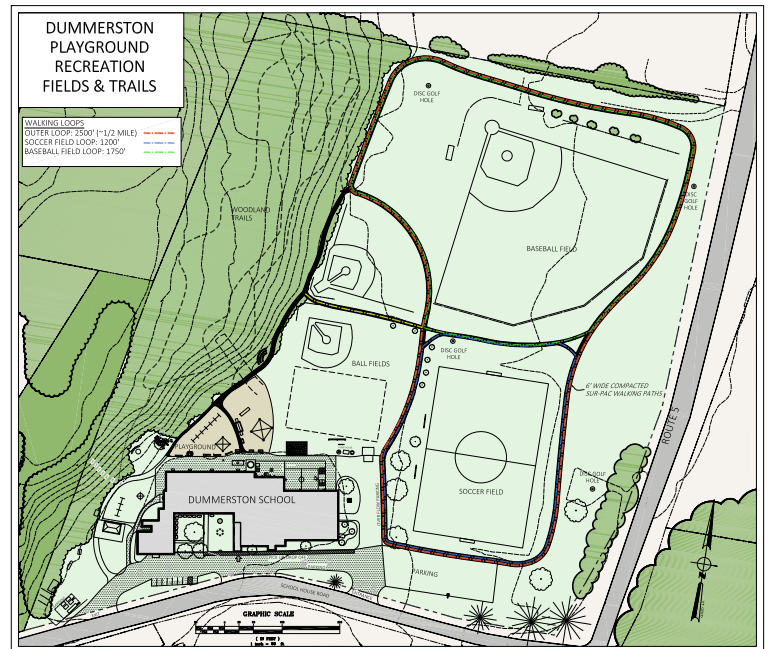


PHOTO BY REGINA STEFANELLI

These sixth graders held a hot dog sale to raise funds to add to the money that will be matched, up to \$30,000, by Dummerston resident Tim Knapp. If you're reading this, you can pitch in too! See article for details.

school news

The Busy Bees Thrive at Dummerston School

by Cindy Bacigalupo

Looking back at my school days, I can remember our weekly spelling word list. On Monday we would get our list to learn, and then every day we wrote the words in cursive. On Thursday of each week, we would have a spelling bee with the kids in our class. And then on Friday, we would have a written test on the words.

Last year, Dummerston teacher Carmen Winchester looked into the national spelling bee contest, called the Scripps Spelling Bee, and decided to enter Dummerston School. Students in grades three through six competed in a grade-level Dummerston School spelling bee, and the four winners of each grade then went to the Vermont Scripps Spelling Bee that was held at Middlebury College.

This year, with the help of fellow teacher Katie Legare, Carmen again enrolled Dummerston School in the Scripps Spelling Bee. Dummerston School grades three and four will have their spelling bees on January 14th and the fifth and sixth grades will have their spelling bees on January 28th. The winners from each of these grades will then attend the



Spelling Bee participants await their turn to be called to spell.

state-level competition which will be held at Saint Michael's College in Colchester on March 28 from 3 - 6 p.m. The winner of the Vermont Scripps Spelling Bee will then go on to the national contest held in Washington, DC.

The Vermont State Spelling Bee is sponsored by WCAX TV and the Vermont Principals Association. The four Dummerston students will each be awarded a Dummerston School winner's certificate and a dictionary donated by the Brattleboro Elks.

The \$185 entry fee for the children of Dummerston School to participate in the

Scripps Spelling Bee, paid for by the Dummerston School Fund, is for materials, including the spelling list, and participation. The Dummerston School Fund is maintained by donations and is available for different activities and events held at the school for the children. If you care to donate money to the school fund it is always welcome and greatly appreciated!

Dummerston School is always busy with activities, and families along with grandparents and relatives are always welcome to attend most of the activities which take place. So please come visit and see your children participate.

Dummerston Cares Offers Emergency Fuel Assistance

By Bill Schmidt

As winter winds down and we move toward spring, payment for a remaining fuel delivery may be a challenge for some if bills are piling up and money is tight. Dummerston Cares has an emergency fuel assistance program for folks who qualify and need oil, propane, or kerosene to get through the winter. Any funds

for fuel assistance are paid directly by Cares to the fuel dealer.

For information on this program or to request an application, call the Cares Message Line (802-258-5800) and leave a message with your name, address, and phone number.

Firewood is available from the Dummerston Congregational Church's Wood Pantry. Contact Charlie Richardson at 802-254-6963.

Sponsors

- Elsa Waxman
- Elizabeth & George Wright
- John and Lori Brunelle
- Debbie & Wayne Carpenter
- Ellen Olmstead



Carmen Winchester (left) and Katie Legare are the teachers managing Dummerston School's participation in the national Scripps Spelling Bee.

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PHOTO BY MELANIE KEISER

Town Budget Ready for Town Meeting Consideration

continued from page 3

LTP LIBRARY:

The library is attempting to grow in space and programming in coming years. For the current fiscal year (budget approved last March), we increased hours as well as the hourly pay to reflect COLA increases. Last fall, the library was awarded a grant of about \$54,000 to support a children's literacy program covering the period of January 2025 through September 2025. The library budget request for FY26 showed a 93% increase, from about \$22,000 to \$42,000. But FY26 extends three months beyond the end of the grant period, and we felt that town residents should have an opportunity to discuss the portion of this increase that is not covered by the grant, and will presumably carry forward in future years if adopted. To fund the program expansion through the end of FY26 will require that during town meeting a little more than \$12,000 needs to be added to the library's budget in

LTP anticipated budget with expansion Anticipated budget w/o expansion

FY26	\$42,505 (~1% increase in tax rate)	\$30,062
FY27	\$47,239 (increase due to 12-month coverage)	\$30,814
FY28	\$48,400	\$31,584
FY29	\$49,600	\$32,373
FY30	\$50,100	\$33,183
Total	\$238,000	\$158,016

Work in Progress

By John Anderson

Vermont classic architecture
(or, more correctly, add-chitecture)
main house, an added ell
with kitchen and
adjoining milkroom,
abutting woodshed,
incorporating privy,
linked to carriage shed
and on to barns
to corncrib
sheep shed
sty ...

A plethora of purpose
one long linking commonality
of roof.

As seen from on high,
from the omnipotent,
hard valley folds,
proud ridges, crisp
sloping, random angles
forming complex linking geometric
shapes and planes.

Like some vast uncompleted origami
forever one or two deft
folds away
from at last revealing
a mammoth horse, a frog, a crane.

the General Fund. Those increases will extend into FY27 and beyond. During December and January, two members of the selectboard worked with the library and community center boards to reach an agreement for an expansion into a portion of a currently vacant room in the Community Center.

Overall, town expense to fund library expansion, beyond the grant money, over the next five years would be as follows, assuming a 2.5% increase each FY, per the figures above.

The expansion would result in a net change of funding for the library of about \$80,000 over five years.

It's important for the town to realize that voting on this year's General Fund, which includes the library line item, is making a commitment to future expenditures. To that end, the library board is expected to present their case for this additional budget request at town meeting.

Grant Enables Expansion of Lydia Taft Pratt Library

continued from page 1

the current library space to set up the new program. When the room is not in use by the children, it will be available for community use. In collaboration with the Community Center, the plan is to have comfortable seating and an area for light refreshments, so that small community groups can meet just to chat or to have a more formal meeting.

As we are able to move the children's materials out of the existing library, this will open space for groups to meet or just sit and read in the library. It will also allow the current space to be realigned, allowing more room for easier access to both fiction and non-fiction materials.

The grant will pay for an assistant librarian with a strong background in working with children, and it will cover the costs of new furniture, rugs, books, games, and rent for nine months. In order to ensure that the children's programming continues through June of 2026, the library line will show an increase in this year's town budget. This increase will be used to cover the cost of paying the Dummerston Community Center rent for the new room and also to pay a children's librarian through this period.

We are very excited about this new opportunity and urge you to contact the librarian (802 258-9878, dummerstonvtlibrary@gmail.com) or any of the Lydia Taft Pratt Trustees (Phyllis Emery, Lyle Holiday, Dave Schottland) for more information.

Dummerston Recreation Board Revitalized

continued from page 1


ball/ softball in the spring, perhaps some races and/or a cross-country team, and other celebratory events. We hope to have a concession stand again and to keep upgrading equipment for our players. You may have heard the Dummerston School Playground and Outdoor Committee is working to build a half-mile, finished-surface walking trail on the school grounds. The Recreation Board hopes to support its fundraising and maintenance into the future.

If you are interested in volunteering with the Dummerston Recreation Board in its exciting new chapter, please watch for calls to volunteer and reach out! We look forward to continuing to build momentum with the community.

**Write
for the
Views**

We appreciate people taking the time to write something about our beloved town, so please consider becoming a correspondent.

Email articles@viewsofdummerston.org



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Election 2025: Candidates' Statements

The 2025 Dummerston Town Meeting is coming up on Tuesday, March 4. It will be held at the Dummerston School beginning at 10 a.m., and polls will be open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. to vote for our town officials.

The following seats are up for election this year, with incumbent candidates running unopposed: **moderator**, one-year term—Cindy Jerome; **clerk**, one-year term—Laurie Frechette; **treasurer**, one-year term—Christopher Brown; **auditor**, three-year term—Ruth Hoffman; **lister**, three-year term—Steve Mindel; and **school director**, three-year term—Deborah Stanford. Additionally, Paul Adler is

running unopposed for the two-year **selectboard** seat Alex Wilson is leaving, and there is no candidate for a three-year selectboard seat. Jessica Everlith, after being appointed by the **Windham Southeast School District Board** to fill out the term of **Dummerston representative** Eva Nolan who resigned, is running to fill the remaining one year of Nolan's three-year term. Finally, there is no candidate for a five-year term term for a **library director**.

The Friends of the Library will hold their book adoption in the school library beginning at 9:30, and the Grange will be cooking up a lunch for purchase.

SELECTBOARD

Paul Adler

2-year term

- Continue to work with the Windham Sheriff's office to reduce traffic violations and increase safety on our roads.
- Work to reduce speed limits on our dirt roads to reduce the amount of dust and airborne particles which can be hazardous to health.
- Assist the fire department with fund raising efforts to reduce taxpayer burden
- Explore options for better cell phone reception in town required for emergency situations
- Explore incentives to attract businesses to Dummerston and thereby reduce taxpayer burden.
- Work diligently with other selectboard members to provide a welcoming, affordable, and safe Dummerston for all who wish to live here.

TREASURER

Christopher Brown

1-year term

Hard to believe its been a year already since being voted as Treasurer for the Town of Dummerston. And by any measure of mine, it has not been an easy year. The learning curve has proved to be steep as the responsibilities are many and keep growing more complex. There were successful and rewarding days but they seemed to pale against the many frustrating and confounding days of failure.

So why am I running for Treasurer again one may ask? After spending a year getting my feet wet and learning the basics, I just can't throw it all away because it was hard. The hardest part is done and now I can concentrate on improving beyond the day-to-day basics. Besides, quitting after only a year after being voted Treasurer by the Town of Dummerston sure looks and smells like failure on my part and by nature I'm not built for that. I've not worked hard and come this far to give up now.

So as only Oliver Twist could say, after spending long hours in the workhouse and eating a thin bowl of gruel at the end of the day, "Please Sir, I want some more".

I would certainly appreciate your confidence and vote as I continue my journey to serve the Town of Dummerston as Treasurer.

AUDITOR

Ruth Hoffman

3-year term

My name is Ruth Hoffman and I am running for re-election as a Town Auditor (a three-year term). I have enjoyed serving Dummerston these past six years as one of your Auditors (there are three Town Auditors). My background—I moved to Dummerston in 2011 and lived on Miller Road until June 2024, when I moved to Middle Road. I am retired after a long career in Washington DC, first in the public sector as a tax attorney and later in the private sector as a tax consultant at a major accounting firm. Prior to moving to Dummerston, my previous community service includes elected positions on a local school board and two homeowner association boards. Currently, I am Treasurer of the Dummerston Historical Society, a Dummerston Justice of the Peace, and a Windham County Guardian ad Litem. Thank you for your consideration.

LISTER

Steve Mindel

3-year term

I have been a lister since 2019, being appointed to fill the remainder of Doug Hamilton's term, then being re-elected in 2022. The work is challenging, complicated and detailed. Our primary responsibility is maintaining the town's grand list on which taxes to support the town are based. It has been hard to keep up with the market changes brought on by Covid and it was very difficult to conduct the 2021 town wide reappraisal during the pandemic when access and mobility were severely limited.

Through it all, our dedicated group of listers has persevered and kept on task. I would like to continue this journey and ask for your support. Thank you.

TOWN CLERK

Laurie Frechette

1-year term

It has been my honor and privilege to serve as your Town Clerk for the past nine years. Thank you for placing your confidence in me! Everyone who works at the Town Office takes pride & pleasure in making it a friendly and welcoming place for you to visit. Feel free to stop by to see us! I look forward to serving the Town for another year and ask for your vote on March 4th. Thank you!



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- Cindy Wilcox
- Michelle Cherrier & Philip Goepf
- Eleanora Patterson & Gordon Faison
- Jim Johnson & Meg Lyons

Election 2025: Candidates' Statements

SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Jessica Everlith

Remaining year of 3-year term

My name is Jessica Everlith, a Dummerston parent, resident, and volunteer, and I am running to fill the vacancy on the Windham Southeast School District Board. If elected, I will support policies that prioritize student safety and foster an environment of belonging and inclusion. I want to work towards creative solutions for our financial hurdles without compromising the quality of education or wellbeing of staff or students. My background in civic service combined with my career in nonprofit communications, fundraising, and program management has uniquely prepared me to serve in this role with the skills to best support the WSESD community. I believe real solutions come from genuine listening, understanding, and compromise. I am a creative, solution-focused, and values driven individual. The strength and sustainability of the district matter deeply to me not only as a parent but as a member of this community who wants every child and teacher to thrive.

TOWN MODERATOR

Cindy Jerome

1-year term

I am happy to again ask for your vote for Town Moderator.

This March 4th will be the 14th Town Meeting I've been privileged to serve; you'll be voting on whether I'm Moderator again next year.

In years past I was a Selectboard member, including serving as chair for a couple of years. I've also chaired the Social Services Advisory Committee. After running senior living communities for many years, I now consult with non-profits who need training for their board of directors or help creating a strategic plan.

I love our Town and am honored to play a role in our community. My goals at Town Meeting are to be sure voices are heard and to help the townsfolk enact their will.

Thank you for your trust in me over these years. I hope to earn it again and hope to see you all at Town Meeting at the Dummerston School on Tuesday, March 4th at 10:00am.

SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Deborah Stanford

3-year term

I am committed to the education and well-being of children and young adults. After 35 years actively teaching critical reading, writing, and grammar as conduits of effective communication, now I am applying my lifelong lessons to support the children and the adults in our schools.

In 2022, as we were recovering from the pandemic, I ran for a position on the WSESD School Board. Immediately upon election, I resurrected the Policy and Amendment Committee, concerned that pivotal policies needed to be evaluated and updated. I wanted to ensure that what was posted on the District's website represented the values and ethics of every adult in our schools. My colleagues on the committee must have seen value in my meticulous commitment to detail; they immediately elected me Chair of this significant committee. I was honored by their trust which is renewed every year. And I continue to be honored: in March of 2023 I was elected Vice-Chair of the Board and a year later as Chair. My responsibilities have increased – I am now a voting member of the WSESU and regularly audit Finance Committee meetings.

I take my responsibilities as an elected board member seriously from code of conduct to fiduciary responsibility, from Open Meeting Law to Robert's Rules of Order, from the inner workings of our school communities to the legislative issues that we must anticipate long before they are enacted as laws.

As you realize from my track record, I am wholeheartedly committed to public sector rural education. I am a perfect fit for this job – always the quintessential student, always ready for the next challenge, unafraid of a

learning curve no matter how steep. Three years ago I remember being stymied by Open Meeting Law and Robert's Rules of Order. Three years later I am firmly grounded in the intricacies of both. Like every good student, I know to reach out to others for support and assistance.

During my term on the board, I have witnessed an increased degree of civility and collaboration whether we are at a full board meeting or serving on the Finance Committee or the Policy Committee. I know how to create bridges when there seems to be only disagreement. And I value those difficult conversations that invite discovering a middle ground that in retrospect is the best approach. I value civil, courteous discourse in which we listen to each other with respect and with sensitivity. I know that every administrator is fully committed to the care and well-being of their charges, the children and the adults in their schools – and I know that every board member sits at the table with a high degree of integrity, determined to do their very best in carrying out their responsibilities mandated by law and by personal commitment.

I am grateful for this time that enables me to continue to serve my community. I have been a lifelong educator whether as a graduate student, teacher, or now board member, and I will continue to be that lifelong educator whether re-elected or as a community member. Please vote on March 4. And know that if re-elected, I will continue to give my all to my community.

Births

Aleah Seong O'Donnell	8/24/24
Anora Leigh Graham	10/4/24
Austin Steven Glabach	10/22/24
Elliott Martin Glabach	10/22/24
Henry Finn Saunders	11/25/24
Aldea Eroina Hidalgo-Derby	12/4/24

Passings

Germaine Annette Securo	9/15/24
Leslie Sally Rothkopf	9/23/24
Clarence Herbert Leonard	10/13/24
Neal Gerald Langford	10/15/24
Thomas W Stockton, Jr.	11/30/2024
Robert Lavaggi	12/13/24
Susan Alan Herbert	12/18/24
Harriet Stewart Virkstis	12/23/24

Dummerston Readers Name Their Favorite Books

By Linda Rood

Every year end, we see “Best of” lists everywhere for everything: movies, books, travel, music, kitchen appliances, you name it. Once again this year, readers in Dummerston have sent me their favorite books from this past year’s reading, and as usual, it proves to be varied, interesting, and *nothing* like *The New York Times* (or any other list I’ve seen for that matter). There are some brand-new titles and some old classics, fiction and non-fiction. Enjoy.

Debbie Baker was the first to respond this year:

The God of the Woods by Liz Moore (2024). A double mystery. At a family-owned summer camp in the Adirondacks, the owners’ daughter disappears. Fourteen years previously, their son had similarly gone missing.

The Frozen River by Ariel Lawhon (2023). Historical mystery based on the life of Martha Ballard, a 1700s Maine midwife who discovered a shocking murder. Gripping.

The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters (2023). Set in 1962. A Mi’kmaq family from Nova Scotia comes to Maine to work as blueberry pickers. Their four-year-old daughter goes missing, and the mystery remains unsolved for fifty years. Riveting story.

The Situation Room by George Stephanopoulos (2024). Very interesting. Inside story of crises managed by twelve presidents, starting with John Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

From Jim Bombicino:

The God of the Woods. Jim seconds Debbie’s choice, saying this book really keeps you guessing. He plans to read this author’s other books.

The Robert Galbraith mystery series. Galbraith is the pen name of J.K. Rowling, famous author of the Harry Potter books. She created this name so that she could write an adult crime series that would succeed on its own without distraction from Harry Potter fame. There are now seven books in the series, and Jim has read all of them. The first title is ***The Cuckoo’s Calling*** (2013), and the most recent title is ***The Running Grave*** (2023). Jim says she is a terrific writer, employing involved, unpredictable plots, with a knack for intriguing little details. He says, “Each book is as good as the last.”

From Jean Newell:

The Berry Pickers. Jean agrees with Debbie’s

choice. She says she could relate to the story as a mother, and that she was “overcome with peace and comfort” as she read.

From John Warren:

Wives and Daughters by Elizabeth Gaskell (1865). John’s number one pick for the year, and Gaskell’s masterpiece. The story of Molly

one of the oldest surviving Jewish texts. The story alternates between Hannah researching in the present and fictionalized explanations for Hannah’s discoveries about the history of the text.

Out of Africa by Isak Dinesen (1937). Memoir by this Danish author about her life on a coffee plantation in Kenya in the early twentieth century. Beautiful meditation on her life there and a view of British colonial Africa. The basis of the 2012 Academy Award-winning film starring Meryl Streep and Robert Redford.

Go Tell it on the Mountain by James Baldwin (1952). Baldwin’s highly regarded autobiographical first novel. Coming of age story of John Grimes, a sensitive teenager in Harlem of the 1930s. Focuses on the role of the Pentecostal church in the lives of Black Americans.

How Green Was My Valley by Richard Llewellyn (1940). Classic novel of a Welsh mining family, the Morgans, narrated lovingly by the youngest son of the family. Best-seller and winner of the National Book Award in the U.S.

From Elizabeth Catlin:

Peggy by Rebecca Godfrey with Leslie Jamison (2024). Fictional biography of art collector Peggy Guggenheim, known for rescuing important modern artworks before the Nazis could get to them in WWII.

The Wide, Wide Sea by Hampton Sides (2024). Non-fiction. The epic story of Captain James Cook’s final voyage and his death in Hawaii.

You Are Here by David Nichols (2024). Fiction. Two middle-aged characters meet on a long-distance hiking trail in the Lake country and the Yorkshire Dales of northern England. Romance, modern love, comedy.

How to Read a Book by Monica Wood (2024). Fiction. Set in Portland, Maine, narrated by a retired English teacher who runs a reading group in a women’s prison. Violet, released from prison, must face the tragedy she caused in a drunk driving accident. A moving story that is also a meditation on the power of books.

From Suzanne Weinberg:

The Other Eden by Paul Harding (2022). Based on the troubling, true story of the mixed-race community on Malaga Island, Maine. Poetic writing style. Shortlisted for the 2023 Booker Prize.

Eastbound by Maylis de Kerangal (2012).

continued on next page

Lingering Precipitation

By John Anderson

Under a hemlock
The detritus dusted white
Of long-lingering snowpack
Belies the August calendar.

Intrigued, I turn from
In the leaves
A coyote skull.
Warm, hard, crested,
Calcerous to finger tips:
Snug sutured brain case, graceful
Zygomatic arches,
Wind-polished nasal
Cavities,
All of that pointedly
Omnivorous dentition.

Nearby, deer bones, random knuckly
Joints and shattered ice-white
Shards and flakes and
Splinters.
Two – perhaps three – years fallen.
Snowy precipitations from
The careless jaws
Of some long gone winter storm.
Frozen remnants of
Some once quick others.

I stand deep in
Summer heat and black flies
And mosquitoes.
While under the hemlocks hard
White winter traces
Linger.

Gibson, only daughter of a widowed doctor in a small country English town. John says, “I felt as if I were catching up with old friends as they made their way, haltingly, messily, earnestly, through life in the north of Victorian England.” Watch the one season miniseries on Prime.

People of the Book by Geraldine Brooks (2008). Historical novel. Dr. Hannah Heath comes to Sarajevo to restore the Haggadah,

Dummerston Readers Name Their Favorite Books

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Short, intense novel that takes place on a train across Siberia. Really good writing, translated from French.

Novels by Tracy Chevalier. Suzanne writes, “Many of my peers seem to be coming out of, or heading into, surgery or serious medical treatment. I found Chevalier’s books easy to read, absorbing, and well written when I wasn’t up to anything very effortful.” (Author’s note: I agree with Suzanne’s good suggestion, and would recommend *A Single Thread* as a place to start.)

From Lou Nelson:

The Sentence by Louise Erdrich (2021). For anyone still looking for Covid era books. It’s witty and insightful.

The Covenant of Water by Abraham Verghese (2023). Lou writes, “This novel reminds me that his 1994 memoir *My Own Country: A Doctor’s Story* is memorable for its deftly written details of practicing medicine in rural Tennessee as the AIDS epidemic began.”

The Flight Portfolio by Julie Orringer (2020). Best plot-driven read for me this fall. Controversial because some aspects of it are historical

fact, and other aspects are fiction. The key plot area is definitely fiction. Historical novel based on the true story of journalist Varian Fry’s attempt to save the lives and work of Jewish artists, including Chagall, Duchamp, and Ernst, from the Holocaust.

From Marcy Hermansader:

American Sirens by Kevin Hazzard (2022). Non-fiction, audio. This is a stirring history of the first paramedics – a group of forgotten Black men in Pittsburgh who developed the concept of paramedicine as well as specific methods that are still used around the world today.

This is Happiness by Niall Williams (2021). This beautiful novel is a portrait of a remote village in Ireland and a few of its inhabitants just when electricity is reaching them, heralding the beginning of a seismic shift between old ways and new. (Author’s note: one of my favorite books.)

From Cami Eliot:

Harry’s Trees by Jon Cohen (2019). A modern fairy tale weaving together three characters mourning lost loves, a fairy tale, the forest, and a close-knit community. Great characters. Starts a little slowly.

Diamond Eye by Kate Quinn (2022). In typical Kate Quinn style, this historical novel is fast-paced, full of intrigue, and we meet another strong woman, a librarian turned sniper, from WWII who never got the recognition she deserves.

What the Wind Knows by Amy Harmony (2019). Time travel/historical fiction. Today and Ireland 1921. We follow Anne Gallagher as she is pulled from our modern world into the turmoil of the Irish Troubles, becomes attached to the people, customs, and politics of that time. She must then decide which world she really belongs in.

From Fred Lee:

Patron Saint of Liars by Ann Patchett (1992). Patchett’s first novel. Fred is a lover of character, and this story has character in spades. A young woman gets pregnant, leaves the man she doesn’t love and her family on the west coast with no plan, and ends up in a home for unwed mothers in Kentucky, and what follows. There is mystery and tension and rich humanity throughout.

LaRose by Louise Erdrich (2017). Erdrich has a way of holding your attention with character, mystery, spirit, tension. A Native American accidentally shoots his neighbor’s and best friend’s son while hunting, and, as is custom, gives his own son, LaRose, in the dead boy’s stead. LaRose begins to come into his own as a character of wisdom and spirit. It seems to be his role to bring both families to peace.

And there you have it. Another amazing list for your perusal. There are so many here that are intriguing to me that I’ll never get to them all. Thank you to all who contributed to this wonderful list, and happy reading.

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Dummerston Notable Events

FEBRUARY

- 19 Dummerston Cares Afternoon Tea Social**
Dummerston Congregational Church, 1-3 p.m.
Reservations requested by 2/14; call Cares Message Line (802) 257-5800 and leave name, phone number, and number in your party.
- 20 Town property taxes**
due by 5 p.m.
- 23 Third Annual Snow Golf Event**
Landmark Trust at Scott Farm, 707 Kipling Rd., 12-3 p.m.
\$35pp, \$125/foursome.
For more information and tickets, visit landmarktrustusa.org/snow-golf

MARCH

- 4 Town meeting**
Dummerston School, 10 a.m.
- 4 Friends of the Library Book Adoption**
Dummerston School Library, 9:30 a.m. until end of Town Meeting.
- 4 Town meeting lunch prepared by Grange.**
- 22 Grange Sugar Supper**
Evening Star Grange; seatings at 4:30 and 6 p.m.; ages 6-11 \$7, age 12 and up \$15; under age 6 free



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THE CALENDAR IS ON PAGE 19

USEFUL STUFF TO KNOW

Smoke Alarms & Carbon Monoxide Detectors: Dummerston Cares and WDVFD are providing and installing *free* smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Call the DC Message Line at (802) 257-5800 and leave your name and phone number for callback.

Senior Lunches *Evening Star Grange; Second & fourth Wednesday, noon. Suggested donations: in-house meals \$4 for age 60 and up; \$5 for age 59 and under. Take-out \$5 regardless of age. For Take-out call: 802-254-1138. Leave name, phone number, number of meals desired, whether Eat-in or Take-out.*

The Front Porch Forum: *online at www.frontporchforum.com*

Heating assistance: *Fuel options listed on Dummerston Cares website. For assistance, call Cares Message Line at (802) 257-5800. Leave name and phone number to receive a callback.*

Firewood: *contact Charlie Richardson of the Dummerston Church Wood Pantry at (802) 254-6963.*

NAMES & TIMES & NUMBERS

Community Center Randy Hickin 802-257-0784	Evening Star Grange
Conservation Commission <i>Web site: www.dummerstonconservation.com</i>	Larry or Carol Lynch, 802-310-0799
Dummerston Cares Message line & Fuel Assistance 802-257-5800, email: info@dummerstoncares.org, web site: www.dummerstoncares.org	Meals on Wheels Cynthia Fisher, 802-257-1236
Dummerston School 802-254-2733 <i>Web site: dummerston.wsesu.org</i>	Selectboard selectboard@dummerston.org
Fire Chief Larry Pratt, 802-579-9494	Senior Solutions Carol Lynch, 802-254-2517
Fire Warden Ted Glabach, 802-384-6994	Springfield Office 800-642-5119
Deputy Fire Warden Allen Pike, 802-258-0100	Town Garage Lee Chamberlin, 802-254-2411
Lydia Taft Pratt Library 802-258-9878 <i>Hours: Tue. 2-6; Wed. 1-5; Thu. 1-5; Sat. 10-1</i>	Town Office Laurie Frechette, 802-257-1496 <i>email: townclerk@dummerston.org</i>
<i>Facebook: www.facebook.com/dummerstonlibrary</i> <i>email: dummerstonvtlibrary@gmail.com</i>	Veterans Assistance Contact Dummerston Cares <i>message line or email</i>
Vermont Theatre Company 802-258-1344	Views of Dummerston views@viewsofdummerston.org
	WSESU 802-254-3730
	Websites: <i>Official Town: www.dummerston.org</i> <i>Calendar: calendar.dummerston.org/</i> <i>Local Interest: www.dummerston.com</i>

Dummerston Meetings

Please note that these meetings may not be taking place at their usual locations. Please refer to the town web site, www.Dummerston.org, for updated information.

Town Meetings

Selectboard <i>Every other Wednesday</i>	6 p.m.
Planning Commission <i>2nd Monday</i>	6:30 p.m.
Conservation Commission <i>2nd Thursday</i>	6 p.m.
Energy Committee <i>1st Monday</i>	5 p.m.
Development Review Board <i>3rd Tuesday at the town office</i>	6 p.m.
Community Center <i>1st Monday at the Community Center</i>	7 p.m.
PTFO <i>3rd Thurs. at the Dummerston School Library</i>	6 p.m.
WSED <i>2nd & 4th Tuesdays, revolving locations</i>	6 p.m.
Historical Society <i>3rd week of Jan./April/July/Oct. at the Dummerston Historical Society</i>	
OPEN HOUSE: <i>1st & 3rd Sundays</i>	1-3 p.m.

Exact dates posted at dummerstonhistoricalsociety.org