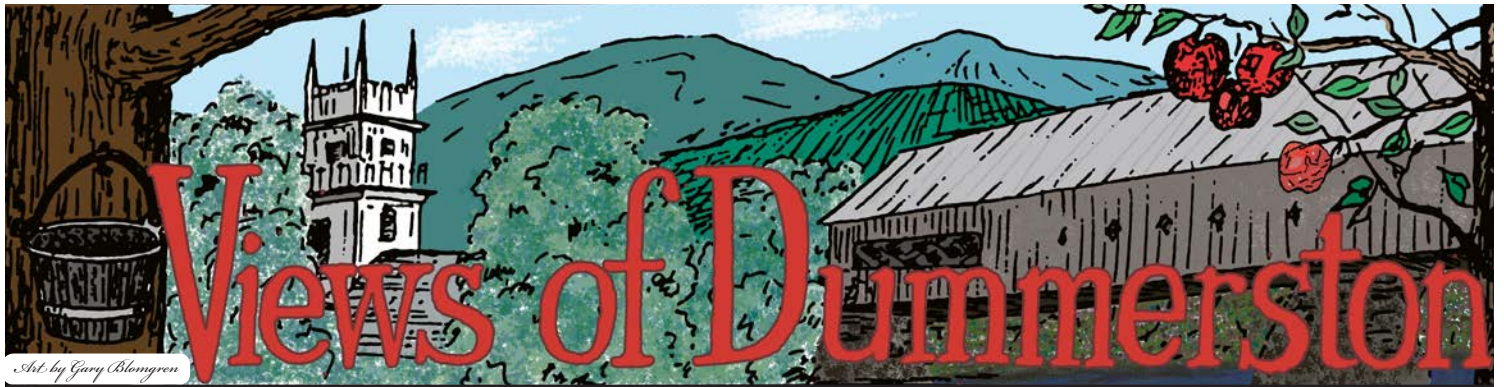




Volume 36 Issue 4

Fall ~ 2026

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Postcards from West Dummerston

Heather Chamberlin Takes the Helm at West Dummerston Post Office

By Heather Chamberlin

Here's a juicy local secret for you. West Dummerston has a post office. Didn't know that? You're not alone. The West Dummerston Post Office is a small, rural mail post office located just off West Street in Dummerston that offers an array of shipping and mailing services. And the very best part is that there are hardly ever any lines. A bank of assorted PO boxes and supplies for mailing and shipping are available. This post office offers friendly, localized service and often has much shorter wait times than its companions in the neighboring towns to the north and south.

I am the new postal service employee that currently operates this office and during my time here, I have gotten to meet so many

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Heather Chamberlin is the new postal clerk at the West Dummerston Post Office.

PHOTO: ROGER TURNER

Three New Faces at Dummerston School

by Julianne Egan

We are excited to welcome the following staff to Dummerston School this year!

Samantha Redding, Elementary Paraeducator: Samantha studied elementary education, special education, and English as a second language at North Park University in Chicago. She began her teaching career in Sweden and has since taught in both general and special education settings throughout Massachusetts and Vermont. Most recently, Sam taught fifth grade

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New to Dummerston School staff this year are (left to right): guidance counselor Kristie Quail, academic support teacher Liza Burns, and elementary paraeducator Samantha Redding.

PHOTO: JULIANNE EGAN



PHOTO: CONNIE EVANS

The Dummerston Town Road Crew (left to right): Tyler Lynch, Wesley Ethier, Lee Chamberlin, and Parker Waite. Missing are Lewis White and Ernest Wood.

Dummerston Cares Honors Town Road Crew

By Connie Evans

Don't know about you, but I've always wanted to drive one of those huge trucks you see around town. The Dummerston Road Crew gets to do it all the time. Lucky guys!

We are fortunate to have a skilled and hard-working road crew of four full-time staff, as well as one part-time and another who pitches in as needed. Lee Chamberlin (who also sugars my sister-in-law's land near Scott Farm) does a great job as highway foreman, with 31 years of experience under his belt. Tyler Lynch has worked eight full years plus six part-time. Parker Waite has been on the crew for 13 months, and Wesley Ethier is the newbie (for us) at five months, plus the part-time plowing he did last winter. Lewis White has also been on the crew part-time for eight years (he started at 28 hours and stepped down to 18). Ernest Wood helps in the winter and as a sub when someone's sick.

Over the course of the year you'll see the crew grading, mowing, plowing snow, sanding and salting, clearing downed trees, clearing

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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: January 5, 2027

Views will be mailed on: February 18, 2027

ADVERTISING:

Rates: All rates are for four issues, however a large or small box ad can be placed for just one issue at an adjusted rate. Payment should be by a check made out to the *Views of Dummerston*, and mailed to: Sara Ryan, 53 Greenhoe Rd., East Dummerston, VT 05346

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Dummerston Selectboard Meetings

Recorded and televised by BCTV and online at www.battleborotv.org. (Select "Watch", select "Watch On Demand", select "Playlist", scroll to "Dummerston", select meeting.)

Heather Chamberlin Takes the Helm

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friendly people who have welcomed me into such a vibrant and diverse community. I've also learned this—the post office is about much more than mail. Sure, the mail keeps the business going and keeps my direct deposit account active. But it's the people who really drive this machine. In fact, the postal service reminds us bi-weekly that it's our customers that pay our salaries and afford us our jobs. "From Our Customers" is printed on the back of each and every paycheck to remind us of this fact.

There's something special about working behind the counter in a small community. People come in to send their packages, buy stamps, and pick up their mail—but along the way, conversations happen. You learn who is headed out of town and who has just moved in, who has grandchildren going off to college, or who is waiting for something special to arrive. I've even gotten to chat with many people just stopping in to say hello and revel at this little office that has been a piece of Dummerston's rich history for several generations.

In a world where so many of our daily interactions have moved online, there is something

so wonderfully old-fashioned about having a place where people still stop, say hello, and get to know the person on the other side of the counter. A quick trip to the post office can turn into a conversation with a neighbor. A package can carry something important or meaningful across the nation—something as valuable as our own maple product or as simple as a set of forgotten keys. Sometimes, the mail itself has a story to tell.

As I settle into my role here in West Dummerston, I'm looking forward to getting to know even more of the people who call this community home. Whether you've been coming to this post office for decades or didn't realize that we were here at all, I hope you stop in and say hello.

So, consider this your invitation, and perhaps your introduction to the little post office just off West Street. As a local, and seventh-generation resident of this county, I encourage any residents from the neighboring towns to stop in and visit on your way to Brattleboro, to take a step back in time and enjoy the simple pleasures of real, tangible community, and get to know me, your friendly neighborhood mail clerk.

Three New Faces at Dummerston School

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at Bellows Falls Middle School. She is thrilled to begin her ninth year in education here at Dummerston School.

Sam is passionate about creating engaging learning experiences, fostering positive learning communities, and helping every student feel successful and supported. Outside of school, she enjoys spending time with her partner, children, and all their family animals at their home in Dummerston. She loves music, relaxing outdoors, traveling, and exploring all that New England has to offer.

Kristie Quail, School Guidance Counselor: Kristie comes to us with more than twenty-five years of experience as an elementary school counselor. Throughout her career at both Franklin Elementary School and Fuller Elementary School in Keene, New Hampshire, Kristie has provided individual and group counseling services while collaborating closely with teachers, special educators, administrators, outside therapists, and community agencies to support the needs of children and families. Her work reflects a deep

understanding of the importance of supporting the whole child and fostering strong partnerships between home, school, and community. Kristie lives in Keene with her family. She loves spending time outdoors with family and friends, playing games, hiking, kayaking, and going to country concerts.

Liza Burns, Academic Support Teacher: Liza Burns brings to our community over 35 years of dedicated experience teaching neurodiverse students. While she spent most of her career just up the road at Landmark College, Liza has also taught globally at K-12 international schools; last year she was learning support teacher at the American Overseas School of Rome. Outside the classroom, she is the proud mom of two fabulous college students. In her free time, Liza loves exploring new places, getting lost in a good book, and taking peaceful walks in the woods. Fun facts: she has a passionate love/hate relationship with the NYT Connections game and is allergic to avocados.

Welcome to Dummerston School, Sam, Kristie, and Liza!

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*

town government

Dummerston Selectboard

Selectboard Considering Local Tax Option

By Todd Davidson

The selectboard agendas have a number of items for the coming months. FY28 budget planning begins in October and will last through the end of December. Budget planning sessions take place every other Wednesday evening (on alternating weeks to normal selectboard meetings) at 6 p.m. at the town office. Residents are welcome to attend in person or join via the Dummerston Zoom link, which will be included in posted agendas. In the next *Views* we will include a summary of the recommended budget.

Within the budgetary realm, selectboard member Alex Lockie is presenting an idea of a local option tax (LOT) which could be applied to sales, food and alcohol in a dining setting, or lodging. The 1% LOT can be applied to all, some, or none of the options. Procedurally, the process of approval is two steps. First, the selectboard would need to

approve by a majority vote. Second, town residents would need to approve via a majority vote at either our annual town meeting or a special town meeting. The LOT would apply, at least partially, to non-residents and could be used to offset property taxes or fund new initiatives.

We also continue to discuss options to address speeding in Dummerston. We are looking at all options that include speed tables (you can see them in use in both Williamsville and Marlboro), visual warnings (more signage and/or digital feedback forms), and patrols. All of these options and associated implementation require funding, so they'll be pertinent to budget plans.

We've had a wonderful run of residents volunteering to serve the town. Both the planning commission and the cemetery committee have new members. If you are interested in helping you can contact the town office and see where there are vacancies.

Important Positions Need Applicants

The opportunities to support our town, listed in the box below, are either open to be filled or will be open in the future. Contact the town office if you have questions or if you want to pursue one of these positions.

Town Office & Committee Vacancies

Planning Commission

2 seats: 4-year terms

Assistant Zoning Administrator

Selectboard Assistant

Town Auditor (to serve until

Town Meeting in 2027)

Upcoming Elected Vacancies

(Town Meeting, 2027)

Town Clerk

Town Treasurer

Lister

Selectboard (2 seats)

organizations

Library Now Offering Ads-Free Streaming Service

By Erin Riley

The Dummerston Community Center and Library now has a **free** streaming service called Biblio+ for movies, TV shows, documentaries, music, and over 3,500 BBC titles and episodes! There are no ads, no wait times, and no holds for over 8,000 titles of groundbreaking film and captivating television, available on any device.

All you need is an up-to-date library card, your library card number, and your library card pin/password on hand. If you haven't used your library card in over a year, you may need to update it by visiting, calling the library at (802) 258-9878, or by emailing dummerstonvtlibrary@gmail.com. Your library card pin/password is the last four digits of your library card number by default.

Go to biblioplus.com/register and search for "Dummerston Community Center and Library" to make an account, or visit the library during library hours for more information! The library is open Monday and Wednesday 10 a.m.–3 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday 1–7 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Or, visit our website at

dummerstonlibrary.org/biblioplus for more instructions on how to get started.

I hope you're just as excited as I am to cozy up with a blanket, a warm drink, and a movie or TV show from Biblio+ this winter!

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Dummerston Conservation Commission

Fall is a Great Time for Conservation Work

By Christine Goepp

Fall is a great time to think about conservation projects. As garden chores (hopefully) lighten up, we can assess the health of the natural environment surrounding our houses. Harmful invasives often become obvious this time of year. Why are they harmful? Because they have not evolved to be a productive part of the complex local web of life and in fact damage local healthy ecosystems. Birds, mammals, and insects are generally not adapted to eat them or raise their young on them. So these plants grow unimpeded, taking over large patches of land from native shrubs that do support wildlife. Why are they obvious in the fall? Because many hail from warmer climates, so they stay green longer than native trees and shrubs. Buckthorn and honeysuckle become green patches in an increasingly brown forest, as does bittersweet with its roundish leaves and red berries. Knotweed has sprays of rather attractive white flowers. Burning bush, so bright red in the sunlight, takes on a pinkish hue in the forest shade.

Fortunately, this is also a great time of year to manage invasive plants on your property. Soil loosened by rain means that roots release easily when pulled. And if you're not able to pull, you can cut the stems and dab them with glyphosate.

It only takes a tiny amount, because the plants are drawing their resources down into their roots for the winter. The roots are killed and won't resprout in the spring like they would if simply cut. Another method for dealing with larger buckthorn plants that can't easily

well as various practical and financial considerations. The Conservation Commission is inviting a panel of foresters to speak about "eco-ethical" forestry practices this winter, time and date to be determined. Subscribe to our newsletter using the button on our website

at dummerstonconservation.com for future updates on speakers, monthly nature news, and other topics. Even sometimes stargazing and poetry show up on the website!

We are grateful to the Dummerston Community Center and Library for letting us use some shelf space for a featured book related to conservation work, coordinated by Bill Conley. This fall, Conservation Commission member Debbie Miller's favorite book is *Lawns into Meadows*. This book is full of practical advice about how to create a beautiful and wildlife-friendly meadow. What we appreciated the most about it is that it was clearly written by someone who had personally experienced this process many times and had unique and personal insights into it. You can check out

the book at the library.

The Conservation Commission noted that visitors to the swimming hole by the covered bridge were not recognizing poison ivy. We shudder to think the evenings some of these families might have had after a fun day outdoors. So, we put up a sign warning about the poison ivy and providing identification guidance.

Lew Teich patrolled Stickney Brook and the West River looking for trash and invasives, and Phil and Christine Goepp and Michelle Cherrier did the same on the Dummerston portion of the Connecticut, ending up docking at the Marina for lunch. We applaud the good care our town residents and visitors are taking of these beautiful natural resources.

Also spotted in Dummerston this fall: Ron Svec had loads of monarchs in his unmowed milkweed patch, Lew Teich found 30 pounds of chicken of the woods mushrooms, and Lynn Levine spotted a mushroom "fairy circle" and 24 wild turkeys. And Jesse Wagner came across a huge flock of common nighthawks doing acrobatics in the sky behind a car dealership on Putney Road. As our clerk Todd Davidson noted, "top that!"



PHOTO BY MELANIE GREENEWALT
The crew takes a sandwich break while working on eradicating invasives on the top of Prospect Hill last November. Left to right (bottom): Debbie Miller, Lew Teich, Jesse and Phoebe Wagner; (top) Eric Postcher, Gary Clay, Bill Conley, Christine Goepp, and David Greenewalt

be pulled or dug up is girdling, which you can learn how to do at dummerstonconservation.com under the "Resources" tab. We also have a booklet on specific methods for managing most common invasives in this area available as a PDF on the website or at the town office in paper form.

The Conservation Commission has been using these methods on Prospect Hill to tackle a large patch of buckthorn at the top of the trail, before you get to the bench. David Greenewalt's inspection of the work we did last fall revealed that very few of the buckthorns that were treated had returned, so, encouraged, we had another buckthorn cutting work day on October 11th. Little by little we are making great progress clearing the large patch at the top of the trail. It is exciting to see maples and other trees taking their place as the sunlight and nutrients become available to them. Eventually these will become large enough to suppress the buckthorn, with minimal intervention. We thank the volunteers who help preserve this lovely piece of town land each year.

A big question for landowners is ethical harvesting of timber products. There are state guidelines and best practices for logging, as



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Dummerston Cares Honors Town Road Crew

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cemeteries, and doing road shoulder work. They don't have much to do with repaving, because Lee puts that job out to bid. Trees across the road are always dramatic. They have to clean up the ones that come down, and sometimes they can't get the power company to deal with something that's close to the wires. Ash trees are a real problem now; we have a lot of them, and they're coming down because of the ash borers.

You probably won't see the crew maintaining and repairing the town vehicles, but Ty, Parker, and Wes do almost all of it. Wes worked at a tire place, so he's sort of the tire specialist. Parker was a mechanic and Ty's just always worked on vehicles. Lewis does some of it too. Parker noted, "Major projects we may send out. If it's a project that seems manageable in-house, then we're usually fairly willing to give it a try." If it's anything to do with a computer or warranty stuff, it's sent out. But welding, whatever, they do it all.

I asked what their favorite part of the job is. "Working for the town you live in," said Lee. Parker likes operating different pieces of equipment. Ty noted that there's always something a little different each day. Lee also noted that he likes the hours—on a good day, that is. Their regular hours are 6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., so they're able to do other things in the afternoon like hunting or part-time jobs.

The hours aren't always so sweet. "Being on call every day, every hour, it's literally what it is," noted Lee. In the thick of winter, all vacations have to be nearby in case you get called back, which is tough for people who like a break in Florida. If one person is missing from the crew, that's a quarter of the main crew. And Parker and Ty are on the fire department, so they need to be able to answer calls. "Most of us work when we're sick, you know, in the winter plowing," said Lee. "We do get sick time and stuff, but if you don't want to force it on everyone else, you tend to just go in and do it."

Dummerston residents can be a little challenging at times, although for the most part they've been great. The most common complaint is that the crew hasn't graded or plowed on their road. But the crew is always working; it just might not be in that person's neck of the woods. "We can't be on every road at once. In the spring when we're grading, it's three or four weeks to grade everything up. Somebody's got to be first, and somebody's going to be last," noted Lee.

Other than the long hours, I asked what parts are the most challenging. Drivers passing the truck on a double yellow line—that's a favorite. A lot of times the crew pulls off the road, but they can't always do that. "Someday it's gonna cause a serious accident," said Lee. "That's the scariest part." Wes said he sees a lot of that when he's mowing, driving that big tractor with the arm that swings out and grinds up everything in its path. "It's not fast enough for people," said Wes. "Yeah, like 21 miles an hour," added Parker.

When there are snow storms, people seem to think they should plow all night long. "I'd rather not have anyone falling asleep at the wheel or just making poor decisions because of being tired," stated Lee. "After 16 or 17 hours, people need to go home and get some rest. That rule's been broken maybe two or three times in the past but it's sound policy." I asked how they deal with the long hours of plowing. Getting down out of the truck and walking around a little taking a break and getting some fresh air helps some. But in the end, as Ty always says, "Get it done and you can sleep when you're dead."

How do they gauge when to start plowing? "He'll tell you," said Wes, pointing to Lee. If the buses are going to run, the crew needs to start around three or four in the morning. They might get to stay in bed for another hour if there's no school. "And there's a 16-hour daily limit which dictates a lot of that, too," added Lee. "Because if it's going to snow later into the night or snow heavier, you want to make sure you have hours at the end of the day instead of using them all up in the beginning of the day." They split up the crew a bit, like the part-time person might come in early to open up the blacktop if there's no school.

The schedule is usually decided by the forecast; Lee uses Channel 9. Then every night he calls the crew and gives them a time. "Sometimes I've definitely been wrong on the time," Lee admits, "but most of the time it works out."

Another challenge is ice storms. Lee thinks they're the worst of the worst. They don't end up getting home until 9 or 10 at night, and then just as they get to sleep a call comes in that someone has a problem and they have to go back out. "It's like self-survival on ice," said Lee. "All you want to do is get the work done without crashing the truck."

With winter approaching, I asked what's their advice for residents.

- Don't go out if it's icy.
- Slow down.
- Don't park in turnarounds.
- Put on good snow tires at the beginning of the season.
- Don't plow snow onto the road or even across the road. That leaves two lines of snow on the road and it's going to end up as humps.
- Mark obstacles and favorite things. With three feet of snow they're not going to see it. They mark big stumps and culverts and other dangerous things in the road, but they don't mark any private things.

Road Crew Fast Facts

Crew of 4.5 regular staff with more than 50 combined years of experience.

12.3 miles of Class 2 roads (mostly paved)—those and parking lots get salt in the winter.

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Dummerston Historical Society Turns 50!

By Muriel Taylor

The Dummerston Historical Society has exciting events to report. First, though, we invite you to visit our Schoolhouse to explore our archive, view our exhibits, attend our programs, or just chat with your neighbors. Our open houses, the first and third Sundays of every month, 1-3 p.m., have become well-attended social hours.

All of our events are advertised in local media and listed on our website, www.dummerstonhistorical.org. Located in Dummerston Center next to the town office, our building is accessible and open to all free of charge.

At the July quarterly meeting Chuck Fish spoke to a full house on his photo exhibit, *Chronicles of Vermont Life: Farm, Rivers, Fairs*. This was followed in October by a major celebration. Fifty years ago, a group of loyal Dummerstonians, the Dummerston Bicentennial Committee, decided to devote themselves to local history and became incorporated as the Dummerston Historical Society. One of them, first president Dick Virkstis, is still with us, retired in California, a faithful

reader of the *Views*. At our 50th celebration in October, we shared memories of society doings over the years and viewed the generous display of photos and other documents of our history. There were pictures of the moving of

the project, told us how to go about it, and offered continuing advice. A committee of three—John Pinkney, Gary Miller, and Muriel Taylor—shepherded the project through its many steps to conclusion. Basic information about the bridge can be accessed on a sign next to the bridge via a QR code that leads to videos and an account of the bridge's history composed by Bill and read by Muriel Taylor. The project was approved by the selectboard, Wesley Ethier of the highway department installed the post, and Tom Bodett offered his studio for the recording. The historical marker was officially opened July 5 in a celebration at the bridge which was attended by many local people and some motorcyclists. Muriel led us in an apple cider toast to Caleb Lamson, the talented 22-year-old builder of the bridge.

Looking ahead, January's exhibit and program will feature Dummerston's ski

areas including, of course, Maple Valley, operated by Terry Tyler of West Dummerston. Dan and Karyn Tyler are sharing ski area papers and are participating in the project.

The Historical Society's annual calendar, *Scenes of Dummerston* (2027 edition), edited by Sheila Pinkney, is now available at the town office and the Historical Society. This is one of our fundraisers to support the cost of maintaining our building.

Just to repeat, you do not have to be a member to enjoy all the events and resources of the Historical Society, and all events are free. We will add, however, that we rely heavily on donations to support our work and are very grateful for community generosity.



E.H. Miller with his crew and dog pose at the barn which stood on the former Murtha, current Cook/McOwen property. They are loading corn on to the conveyor for storage in the barn's loft.

the Schoolhouse from near the road where it had served as the town garage. Gordon Evans, general contractor of the job, was honored and a reminiscence by Clyde Johnson, then selectboard chair, was read.

Another significant undertaking was the installation of an historical marker at the west end of the covered bridge. Bill Holiday, a veteran of these enterprises, suggested

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Evening Star Grange

New Kitchen Range is in the House!

By Sallie J. May, Secretary

There is a feeling of fall in the air. The summer has been a very busy one for the Grange. We have been receiving and saving wonderful donations from folks in and out of the Grange family and in August we finally ordered our new eight-burner gas range. We were able to coordinate delivery of our new stove with the two convection stoves purchased by the church from the same company, which cut our delivery cost considerably. The best deal was that the delivery men disassembled and took away our old range. Two friends of the Grange spent a lot of their precious time “seasoning” our cast iron range burners to prevent future rusting. What a job they did! Best of all, our first cake dessert came out wonderfully as the installers

leveled the ovens, the first time that had been done in many a moon.

Our summer suppers were relatively successful, though some were not as well-attended as one would have hoped. The economy is not our friend. We continue to shop locally and as frugally as we can and still produce a healthy and varied menu to satisfy the majority of those we serve. We are thankful for our many friends and neighbors who come to as many of our meals and lunches as they possibly can. When we see all of the smiling faces as they leave, we know they have been well fed. A big THANK YOU goes out to all of the non-Grange volunteers who constantly help us prepare, serve, and clean up afterwards. Without you all, we would no longer be one of the bigger Senior Lunch program sites in the state. Just

ask a senior from other areas and hear the comments and you know they wish they were closer to us than two or more hours away.

Evening Star Grange is already booking events for next spring and summer for weddings, showers, theatre productions, private banquets, etc. and inquiries come in all the time. If you are looking for a place to hold a meeting, hold a dance, throw a baby or bridal shower, do crafts with friends, or a myriad of other events, please call Larry Lynch (802) 310-0799 and talk to him about prices and availability. Also, if you are interested in learning more about the Grange or in joining this socially active, non-denominational fraternal organization which is open to both men and women, you may talk to him as well.

We wish you all a happy and healthy fall season and thank you for your support!

Lydia's Friends

Who Was Lydia Taft Pratt?

Sam Bledsoe,

Treasurer, Lydia's Friends, Inc.

Over the past few years, I've been researching the question “Who was Lydia Taft Pratt?” Lydia Taft Pratt, as long-time Dummerston residents may know, was the namesake of the library that is now part of the Dummerston Community Center and Library. She is still the namesake of the Lydia Taft Pratt room, where the adult section and archives of the library are shelved.

She was born Lydia Anna Taft in Newfane on January 15th, 1831, the granddaughter of Josiah Taft who was one of the earliest Dummerston settlers. Her teaching career began at the Patapsco Female Institute (PFI) in Ellicott City, Maryland. According to newspaper archives, she had returned to Vermont by 1858 to teach at the Bridge School in Dummerston, which would suggest that her time at PFI coincided with Almira Lincoln Phelps' time as principal. Phelps is known for her biology books and was an early female pioneer in 19th century science, mathematics, and education. Under her tenure, PFI gained a reputation as a progressive girls' finishing school that encouraged gardening as a study of biology, as well as

teaching women mathematics and event organizing for social causes.

On December 23rd, 1863, Lydia Taft married Francis Roscoe Pratt in Dummerston but used her maiden name Taft for various official documents. In 1865, the Pratts moved to Franklin County, Massachusetts where Francis worked as plant manager for a tool company. Their son William later started his own tool manufacturing company that went bankrupt in 1929. According to her obituary, Mrs. Francis Pratt was very involved with her church, and with the Shelburne Falls Women's Christian Temperance Union. Her precise activities within these groups are unknown today, but according to issues of the *Vermont Phoenix* and *Brattleboro Daily Reformer* between 1865 and 1913, she often visited friends and relatives in Dummerston. After her death, Francis donated Lydia's personal library to the town of Dummerston to start a library. It was Lydia's friends in Dummerston who were originally able to turn this collection of books into a library through organizing and fundraising. With no official building, Ida Sergeant volunteered her home to house the collection and published in the local papers hours when the collection could be accessed by the public. Maude Taft, a young relative

of Lydia, was an early super volunteer who sang and performed guitar at the opening of the library as well as fundraisers, and she hand cataloged the 300 books in the original collection. In 1913, Maude wrote an article in the *Brattleboro Daily Reformer* explaining how Lydia had originally wanted to donate the collection to a local Dummerston school, but had been convinced instead to donate it towards a municipal library. Dr. Grace Burnett, a female pioneer in Brattleboro medicine, read an account of Lydia Taft Pratt's early life at the opening of the library as well as later fundraisers. The fundraisers and book drives were organized mainly by the West Dummerston Grange. The Grange advertised many chicken pot pie dinners in support of raising funds and books for the library in the early years, then later helped the Lydia Taft Pratt Library find a permanent home in a remodeled West Dummerston Grange coat room after 1921. It found success for a small rural Vermont town in the early 20th century, advertising that it raised \$90 towards the library in 1917. Francis himself stayed active from his home in Greenfield, as there are reports of his donations of subscriptions to popular magazines to the library in the *Brattleboro Daily Reformer* in 1913, as well

continued on page 15

organizations

Dummerston Supports and Benefits From the Foodshelf

By Hannah Pick

Happy Thanksgiving from the Putney Foodshelf! We are preparing to distribute our annual Harvest Bags on November 20th and 21st, which include all the fixings for a Thanksgiving meal. Signups are required ahead of time, during regular Foodshelf open hours: Friday 12:30–3:30 p.m. and Saturday 9–10:30 a.m.

Typically our busiest week of the year, shoppers stock up before we take a week off to rest. We'll be closed November 27 and 28.

We continue to feel gratitude for the many ways that Dummerston supports the Foodshelf. Here are a few highlights from the summer months:

On July 8th, Crepe Night at Scott Farm was co-hosted with the Putney Foodshelf, and it was a true success. We had a gorgeous evening and a happy crowd of people.

Dennis Mewes, volunteer from Dummerston Cares, put his skills to work retrofitting our produce display, which functions as the center island in our shopping room.

Donations from Walker Farm and Dwight Miller Orchards filled out our produce offerings during the growing season.

Over the past year, six percent of the people we served came from Dummerston, with 16 households shopping for the first time. Overall, we have around 180 visitors each week. When you walk through our doors, you find a variety of nourishing foods and a shopping experience like a small grocery store. Shoppers can pick up essentials for the week, including milk, eggs, produce, and meat, in a welcoming, family-friendly space.

Curious to learn more about the Foodshelf? Check our new website at putneyfoodshelf.org.



PHOTO:HANNAH PICK

Shoppers select needed food from the well-stocked shelves.



PHOTO:HANNAH PICK

Cares luminaries Bill Schmidt and Meg Lyons attended the Foodshelf benefit at Scott Farm's Crêpe Night this past July.



PHOTO:HANNAH PICK

Chefs Paul Lenouf, Simon Renault, and Yann Falquet prepare crêpes for the Foodshelf benefit at Scott Farm.



PHOTO:HANNAH PICK

Dennis Mewes and Sheena Tesch check progress on the new produce station Dennis built.

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Recollections of My Neighbor Charlie Richardson

By Roger Turner

It's Apple Pie Festival season at the Dummerston Church, and in my mind's eye I see a table full of plates of slices of apple pie being carried from the church basement to the adjacent tent. A long line of people eagerly wait for the table emptied of slices to be replaced by this table full of slices. Charlie Richardson holds one end of the laden table, a big smile on his face, and Ray Enello the other. This was one of the jobs Charlie had at the Apple Pie Festival. He and Bess, his bride of 68 years, have long been active members of the church and for the two weeks of making pies before the pie festival, both of them nearly lived at the church, taking care of all the preparations necessary for the big day. Charlie also served as a church deacon and trustee, and with Don Hazelton and Merrill Barton started the church's Wood Pantry—when Charlie and Don were well into their 80s! If anyone needed some firewood for any reason, they could give Charlie a call, and he would organize a crew to cut, split, and transport wood to where it was needed with, as Cliff Bergh, who joined the Pantry team told me, no questions asked. It was always inspirational to me that these very elderly gentlemen were committed to and capable of the physical work that providing this service required, in addition to the altruistic motivation for it. Charlie referred to it as a ministry.

He was a forester by trade, and his house and yard were distinguished by stacks of firewood. One winter's worth filled each of the two cribs on either side of his garage. The field up above his house usually had a loose pile of logs alongside the road, and long lines of carefully-stacked firewood flowing across the sloping hillside, drying out before being moved to the garage. Thus his wood always had at least a couple of years to dry before it was brought in the house to the stove. From our house down the road, I might hear his chainsaw start up at any time of year, when he would buck those logs into rounds. It was not uncommon to drive by his house and see Bess operating the wood splitter control while Charlie fed in the rounds and the split wood fell out.



Charlie was always available for Heidi to lean on.

Charlie liked having a dog, usually a yellow lab, and they would accompany him everywhere when he was driving around, leaning in next to him so I figured he had to have a bench seat in his truck. His dogs were both happy and well-behaved; he had a good way with them.

He served the town by joining the fire department, and in his 21 years rose to Captain of Engine 2 and served as a fire warden, giving a thumbs up or down on requests from anyone in town who wanted to burn something outdoors. Lester Dunklee remembers going to a fire at the Putney Paper Mill, and after getting some on-the-job training in how to use a Scott Air Pack, went into the building with Charlie. "He was a good guy to have standing beside you, behind you, wherever, to make sure everything's working out right," Lester commented. And Cliff Bergh told me, "I don't think he ever said no to one of my requests for a burning permit. That's probably because we always burned on good days, and I was probably more afraid of fires than he was."

In addition to the orderly arrangements of

firewood, another feature of the Richardson property is its agricultural plots. A big fence encircles the asparagus bed, some berry patches, and plenty of space for summer vegetables. Charlie was a master gardener and knew what each plant needed for a great yield. Fruit trees grow outside of the fence, scattered around the property. Charlie would grow things and Bess would cook them.

Carleton Charles "Charlie" Richardson started out in life as a tiny baby, weighing just two pounds ten ounces, the son of Carleton and Eleanor Richardson, who called him her "miracle baby." After graduating from Brattleboro High School, he earned a forestry degree from Paul Smith's College in 1955, then served in the U.S. Navy aboard the USS Valley Forge. Charlie and Bess parented Michael, John, Nancy, Anne, and Brian, who have given them nine grandchildren. He was a kind and thoughtful man, soft-spoken and wise. He knew something about a lot of stuff, too. He could always tell me who I could buy some firewood from.

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Firemen's Breakfast and Apple Pie Festival



Lizzie Hickin puts batter on the grill.



Allen Pike makes cakes.



Cindy Bacigalupo, Pat Green, and Karen Campbell serve up cakes at the Firemen's Breakfast.

PHOTO: DAVID SHAW

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Share the Spotlight on Holiday Weekend



PHOTO: DAVID SHAW

Dan Ridelhoover holds Gladys the goose who came to the Pie Festival and Firemen's Breakfast from Hancock, NH in the sidecar of owners Diane and Kevin Westcott's motorcycle.



PHOTO: ROGER TURNER

John Ogorzalek and Mollie Farwell sell pies.



PHOTO: ROGER TURNER

Anticipating the usual big crowd, the pie sale table is staffed by (right to left) David Baker, Julie Johnson, Kylie Miller, Mark Brown, Peggy Kipp, Felicity Bedell, and Haley Frechette.



PHOTO: DAVID SHAW

Trevor Houle cuts up apples to add to the pancake batter.



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school news



Community Buddy Classroom Program

Dummerston School comes together in community every Thursday morning in a variety of ways including all-school meetings, all-school sing, middle school town meetings, and buddy classroom time. During buddy classroom time, an older grade and a younger grade gather together for a special project or activity. Students develop a relationship with their buddies over the course of the year, creating a special bond that strengthens students' sense of belonging at school.

Middle School Soccer Underway!



Middle School soccer is underway at Dummerston School! Keith Marshall, Dummerston School STEM teacher, returns as coach this season. Joining Keith this year is Dummerston School alum and former BUHS varsity soccer player Morgan Houghton. We are grateful to both Keith and Morgan for sharing their time, experience, and love of the game with our students. A special thank

you to Kim Lane, our athletic director, for coordinating the game schedule and all of the communication that keeps our soccer season running smoothly. We look forward to a great season!



school news



Celebrations of Literacy and Math this Fall

Dummerston School celebrated the joy of literacy with a PreK–4 Literacy Lollapalooza on Thursday, October 1. Students rotated through a variety of fun, hands-on literacy stations, including poetry, spelling games, word activities, campfire stories, bookmaking, and more. Students collected stamps as they explored stations and had the opportunity to enter a raffle for prizes. Later in the month, students and families participated in Math Circus Night. The evening included hands-on math fun, with games, manipulatives, and activities designed to build problem-solving skills and encourage learning at home.



News from the School Garden

By Tara Gordon

Students in PreK–2 have been taste testing raw kale and yellow summer squash, arugula wraps with honey mustard vinaigrette, and cooked yellow summer squash. Their time in the garden has also included planting plenty of garlic which will be harvested and enjoyed next year. A highlight of their time in the garden this September was the Mr. Mariposa Cranky show!

Mr. Mariposa tells the story of a farmer who seeks to protect the habitat of monarch butterflies. Thank you to John Ungerleider for writing this story, setting it to music, and performing live for our students in the garden! Madeline Conley, Green Street art teacher who grew up in Dummerston, created a Cranky with beautiful illustrations to accompany the story of Mr. Mariposa. Thank you to Dummerston's retired veterinarian Dr. Ron Svec who shared his terrarium of caterpillars and chrysalises with our school. The PreK students took excellent care of these precious creatures, watching them closely until they were ready to be released.



Cultivating Connections to Land and Place at Dummerston School

by Lindsey Glabach Royce

This fall, Dummerston 5th/6th STEM teacher Lindsey Glabach Royce began her work as a Rowland Fellow at Dummerston School. Lindsey was selected in the spring for the Rowland Fellowship, a statewide program that supports Vermont educators in leading innovative, school-wide change. She will be out of the classroom for the school year to dedicate time to working on this project.

Lindsey's fellowship project focuses on strengthening ecological knowledge, community connections, and student well-being at Dummerston School. The project will expand opportunities for science and outdoor learning and also help students build deeper connections to the local land, history, and community.

Throughout the school year, Lindsey will research, collaborate, and explore ways to bring this vision to life at Dummerston School. She is working with a Collaborative Work Group (CWG) made up of teachers, principal, and community members. The group will meet throughout the year to develop ideas and strategies that can support the school both now and in the future. The year has already gotten off to a strong start. During a busy summer and September, teachers have been working to build connections and gather ideas that will support this work.

Lindsey and Molly Oglesby, our PreK teacher, are participating in a year-long program at Shelburne Farms called "Educating for Sustainability: Leadership



As a Rowland Foundation fellow, Dummerston teacher Lindsey Glabach Royce occasionally meets in Burlington in groups representing a cross section of other teachers, administrators, students, and community members to develop and execute school-wide equity or educational change proposals

Academy." The program gives teachers an opportunity to learn from experts and connect with educators from across New England as they develop new ideas and resources for their schools. (A blog post about their work can be found at shelburnefarms.org/about/news-and-stories/describing-sustainable-future.)

Members of the Dummerston CWG also recently traveled to Burlington for a Shared Leadership Retreat. There, they met with teams from other schools participating in the Rowland Fellowship program and spent time imagining the future of Dummerston School. They discussed ideas and goals raised by teachers and community members and began planning how to move those ideas forward.

In late October, the group will attend the Rowland Conference at the Univer-

sity of Vermont. The conference is one of Vermont's largest education gatherings. This year's theme is "America at 250: We Need a Declaration of Interdependence." The conference will feature a keynote address by writer and comedian Baratunde Thurston, along with a variety of workshops.

Students will also have an important role in this work. Dummerston School's student leadership group, ASSET, will collaborate with Shelburne Farms and Up for Learning through a statewide program called Cultivating Pathways to Sustainability. Through the program, ASSET students will develop leadership skills, connect with students from other schools across Vermont, and design an action project for Dummerston School. Their project will connect with the United Nations' Sustainable Develop-

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Windham County Humane Society

Hot Firefighter Pet Calendar 2027 Pre-Sales are Open!

By Violet Zarriello

The Windham County Humane Society (WCHS) just announced pre-sales are open for their highly anticipated, first ever *Hot Firefighter Pet Calendar* for 2027. WCHS teamed up with fire departments from Wilmington, Rockingham, Dummerston, Whitingham, and Brattleboro to create a professional calendar featuring fire department heroes posing with shelter dogs and cats that's as hot, and adorable, as it sounds.

"I think this is a great idea to help the animals at WCHS and I'm proud our department is involved," said Wilmington Fire Department Chief Scott Moore.

"We're all animal lovers, and we're happy to help the animals at the Windham County Humane Society however we can," said Dummerston Fire Department Deputy Chief Leon Dunbar.

Calendars are on sale now for \$25 each at windhamcountyhumane.org. Calendars will arrive to WCHS by October 15 and can be picked up at the shelter, or mailed to you for a \$5 fee per calendar.

"I had high hopes for this calendar, but it's 1,000 times better than I dreamed," said WCHS Marketing Manager, Violet Zarriello. "We wanted to keep it fresh and interesting, so we staged creative scenarios including a dog picnic, a doggy spa day, and a kitten 'library.' Each photo is guaranteed to make you smile."

Their goal is to raise \$30,000 through calendar sales for shelter pets.

"Every calendar you purchase will provide essential care, supplies, and services to the thousands of animals we have the privilege of caring for each year," said WCHS Executive Director Maya Richmond. "This is a fun and creative way to help the animals while showing some love to our amazing first responders. We're so grateful for their kindness, and to our community for supporting everything we do."

WCHS does more than just adoptions, and every service is funded by donations. They offer spay/neuter services, vaccine and nail trim clinics, microchipping services, flea and tick preventatives, a pet food pantry, and

wellness appointments for pet care assistance (PCA) clients.

Already in 2026, WCHS has placed 465 pets in new adoptive homes, and performed 995 spay and neuter surgeries. They've taken their services mobile with vaccine clinics, and offered free spay and neuter surgeries to Tri-Park residents.

Animals arrive at WCHS as strays, owner surrenders, transports from other states, or when they are removed by animal control from an unsafe situation. Many are sick, almost all need vaccines and spay/neuter surgery, and every single one needs extra, tender love and care before they are ready to meet their new families. Animals stay at WCHS for as long as needed before finding their forever homes.

Founded in 1887, WCHS has improved the lives of pets and people for over 130 years. As a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of animals and enhancing the relationship between individuals and their pets, we play a role in

Who Was Lydia Taft Pratt?

continued from page 7

as a notice that he won a quilt in a 1913 raffle. Lydia's **friends** have been the women and community members who saw Lydia Taft Pratt's donation of books as important to the growth and educational mission of the town of Dummerston, and **Lydia's Friends** became the official name for this organization in 2006. Through their grassroots volunteer efforts, her friends have helped Dummerston's town library for 113 years, through its infancy as a collection of books in the homes of early librarians into today's knowledge hub. Lydia's Friends continues to this very day and welcomes new members.

Passings

Carlton Charles Richardson	7/11/26
Thelma Maddie Dunn	7/22/26
Leigh Anne Holstein	7/23/26
Erika Elias Stahl	7/31/26
Eugene Hill Ferrara	8/3/26
Linda J. McCulloch	9/1/26
Diana Lischer	9/3/26
June Grove	9/9/26

Births

Oskar Drummond O'Donnell 7/8/26

2027 Hot Firefighter Pet Calendar



the community that goes far beyond finding new homes for homeless pets. The Humane Society's services include public, affordable veterinary care and spay/neuter services, stray and lost pet sheltering, pet adoptions, humane education, and expertise in aiding law enforcement in cruelty investigations. The organization is a self-funded charity that receives no national or state funding.

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Dummerston Authors Publish Books

By Linda Rood

We have been graced with new books published this past year by two creative Dummerstonians, Joyce Marcel and Cheryl Wilfong. I have had the pleasure of reading both of these new books, and I want to make sure you know about them. If you have a chance to go to a public reading with either Joyce or Cheryl, I highly recommend that you go. It'll be interesting.

If you're planning to read Joyce Marcel's new book, *JOYRIDING. Sex, Drugs and Adventure on the 1970s Gringo Trail* (The Owl Publishing Project, 2026), buckle your seatbelt, because it's going to be a wild ride! Joyce has written an astonishing memoir of her experiences in South America when she was in her early thirties. I think you could call it a feminist tale in the tradition of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and *The Motorcycle Diaries* of Che Guevara, with a touch of Erica Jong thrown in.

In the summer of 1974, Joyce was "a painfully shy 32-year-old woman who had been raised to believe she didn't have the right to breathe." She was living in New York City; her career as a costume designer in the Off-Off-Broadway theater was foundering, she had suffered a painful miscarriage, and her marriage was failing. She had \$800 in the bank. She needed to make a change. On a whim, she took a bus to Miami, then a plane to Ecuador with the intention of visiting the Galapagos. Joyce says this was the "most major decision" of her life. She intended to go for a month but she ended up staying for almost fourteen years, and based this book on the first of those years.

The second chapter begins, "I would not have stayed as long as I did if I hadn't been caught in the middle of a gun battle that day after I arrived..." That sentence pretty much sets the tone for the rest of the story: crazy adventures, risky behavior, near death, and eventually, self-discovery.

It turned out that summer is the busiest time for visitors to the Galapagos, and there was no possibility of finding a way to get there without reservations in advance. This led Joyce to start exploring Ecuador and finding her way to the "Gringo Trail," a route through Latin America traveled by North Americans, Europeans, and Australians, many of whom were ex-pats, hippies, or drug dealing entrepreneurs. Joyce discovers places of great beauty, as well as great danger at times, finds love and friendship, contracts hepatitis which is treated by an indigenous healer, and experiences a shipwreck while traveling the Amazon. It's miraculous that she survived any of this. In the course of this wild time, Joyce liberates herself from her shyness, realizes that she is a writer, and as a result finds her way to a new life. It's an amazing tale, and Joyce doesn't pull any punches. Her narrative is honest, open, unfiltered, and she really knows how to tell a story.

Go to Joyce's website, joycemarcel.com for instructions on how to get the book. There should be a copy at the Dummerston Community Center and Library (the DCC&L), or you can stop Joyce when you see her, and ask.

Cheryl Wilfong's book, *Long Haul* (Heart Path Press, 2025), is a historical novel of the 1918 flu epidemic. Cheryl's story is based on her own family history and legend, combined with extensive research, and in my opinion, profound imagination. It took her six years,

and seven revisions, to write this book which tells the story of George Smith, Cheryl's great grandfather, a stalwart Indiana farmer, and his family. Cheryl brings her story alive in part by her inclusion of the rich detail of the daily lives of her characters, their homes, their work, their language, and beliefs, details which she gleaned from local newspapers, the literature of the times, especially Sinclair Lewis and Thomas Wolfe, and silent movies from the 1920s. There were no family diaries or letters to work from, but there was family legend, which helped formulate character and plot. Cheryl grew up three miles from the farm which is the center of the story, so the creation of the setting was organic. Cheryl's own education and work as a mental health counselor, as well as her many years as a hospice volunteer fueled her imagination to explore the family dynamics: a frustrated wife, a semi-stranded daughter, a son who has no interest in farming, and a man's grief and shame at the loss of his ability to do the hard work his life requires.

I was drawn in to the world of this novel, and the strength of its characters, whom I came to care about, along with the suspense created by the tension between what we know about that flu pandemic (and our own recent experience of one) and what the characters don't know. In the end, it's a moving tale.

You can find a copy of this book at Everyone's Books, Byway Books, and on the internet. An ebook version is available. There should also be a copy at the DCC&L.

In the last few months I have very much enjoyed reading *All the Beauty in the World*, by Patrick Bringley, a fascinating memoir by a security guard at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Whistler* by Ann Patchett, another great story by a master story-teller, and *The Things We Never Say* by Elizabeth Strout, an all-time favorite author of mine, which is a finalist for the Booker Prize.

Again this year, I plan to compile a readers' choice column for the winter *Views*, so please, when you see me, feel free to tell me about your favorite books of the year, or email me at turood802@gmail.com. I will be so grateful.

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Grace Cottage Earns National Recognition from American Heart Association

By Alysabeth Simon

Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital has received two major recognitions from the American Heart Association for its commitment to providing high-quality healthcare in a rural setting. The **Get With The Guidelines®—Stroke Rural Recognition Bronze Award** recognizes hospitals that work to improve stroke care and address healthcare

disparities in rural communities. The Bronze Award is the highest recognition possible for the first year in the program.

In addition, Grace Cottage achieved Silver Status in the American Heart Association's **STEMI Achievement Award Program** (ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction) for delivering timely and effective treatment for patients experiencing STEMI, the most severe and potentially fatal type of heart attack.

This recognition reflects Grace Cottage's efforts to provide top-quality stroke care and reduce those risks for patients in the community.

Vaccines Prevent Flu

By Alysabeth Simon

An annual seasonal flu vaccine is the best way to avoid getting the flu and spreading it to others. It takes about two weeks for protection to develop after vaccination. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone age six months and older get an annual flu vaccine. People over age 65 or those with a chronic disease, such as diabetes or asthma, have a higher risk of contracting the flu and are especially urged to get the vaccine.

For more information about the flu and vaccination, visit healthvermont.gov or call the Vermont helpline at 211. Flu vaccines are available weekdays by appointment at Grace Cottage Hospital. For more information or to make an appointment, visit gracecottage.org or call (802)365-4331.

Bird Feeder Stories

By John Anderson

This has been a year for small, well-intentioned changes in my routines and the unintended consequences of some of those changes.

Early this spring, before the black bears came out of hibernation, I took down all except one of my seed and suet feeders. That one suet feeder, suspended nine or ten feet above the ground, has always stymied even the cleverest bears. As the one remaining source of high energy food in my yard, it attracted a lot of birds, especially woodpeckers. Red-bellied, hairy, and downy woodpeckers along with yellow-bellied sapsuckers squabbled over positions on that lone feeder. It was a very busy spot.

In late April when I was putting up an array of nectar feeders, two designed for ruby-throated hummingbirds and one for Baltimore orioles, heat was already reducing the suet to the consistency of some rather unpleasant axle grease and I decided that when the feeder was empty I would not refill it.

A few days later the suet was gone but the woodpeckers were not. They continued to visit the now empty feeder and, finding no food, soon began exploring the nearby nectar-filled oriole feeder. By early May all of the neighborhood woodpeckers were competing with the newly arrived orioles for the sugar water in that feeder, a feeder designed to resemble a large orange, equipped with perches and feeding ports appropriate for orioles (and it seems woodpeckers).

The orioles seemed able to compete with the woodpeckers for the sugar water in that feeder and the hummingbirds had their own smaller, perchless feeders, feeders that required them to hover as they fed. At that point I thought that resource sharing in my yard had reached some sort of avian equilibrium. However, competition at the oriole feeder was intense and soon some of the woodpeckers and orioles were exploring the hummingbird feeders. Hovering was not an option for these larger birds but

eventually, through trial and error, they learned that by clinging to one feeding port and then performing some rather awkward contortions they could reach, and feed from, one of the adjoining ports. My hummingbird feeders had become hummingbird, woodpecker, and oriole feeders.

It amused me that through small incremental changes in my routine I had managed to inadvertently train four species of woodpecker, as well as some Baltimore orioles, to feed out of the seemingly inaccessible hummingbird feeders. That was not an experiment that I would ever have intentionally attempted. It was simply the result of a few minor changes in my decades-long bird feeding routines. Who would have guessed that what I ultimately accomplished would diverge so wildly from my original intent. I doubt if a diet heavy on cane sugar is optimal for woodpeckers and it was never my desire to provide such a diet for them, but that's how things turned out.

All of our actions have far reaching, multi-species consequences that are mostly beyond our abilities to anticipate. In this case the consequences seem a little amusing and they seem relatively benign, but who knows how far reaching the effects of any of our other actions may be? Who knows what impacts those actions will have on any other species?

While I was still puzzling over the downside of my bird feeding routines, another little drama was slowly unfolding. Knots of foraging honeybees began clogging the feeding ports on all of the nectar feeders. During the heat of the day any bird that tried to feed was quickly driven away. By early August, my hummingbird, oriole, and woodpecker feeders had to a great degree become honeybee feeders.

I'm now left to wonder if the story ends with the bees? I leave all three feeders up until the last lingering hummingbirds have gone south. There is still plenty of time for the results of my actions to diverge yet further from my original intent.

Revelations

By John Anderson

In a pretty little tableau
of seeming incongruities
I once watched spider webs
catch snowflakes,

summer's sticky laceworks
netting winter's crystal jewels.

Webs on bushes, weeds,
low hanging limbs
in leafless
late October woods,
webs previously invisible,
were suddenly revealed
as glittering
crystal coated vestiges
of a season I'd thought
long since gone.

That brief passing
squall revealed
the unexpected and it
left me standing, bemused,
surrounded by a scene
of snow limned incongruities,

summer's sticky laceworks
wearing winter's crystal jewels.

Groundworks Opens Hope's House

By Susan Lienau

Groundworks has recently opened Hope's House, a new 40-bed shelter featuring intentional design, individualized support, and coordinated services based on Groundworks' established trauma-informed approach to help individuals along pathways toward greater stability and permanent housing. Hope's House was designed to bring together the physical environment and individualized support that also emphasizes clear expectations, accountability, and shared responsibility that are central to Groundworks' approach to shelter. Illicit drugs and alcohol will not be permitted at Hope's House.

"Hope's House has been thoughtfully designed and intentionally programmed around dignity, safety, accountability, and hope," said Libby Bennett, Executive Director of Groundworks Collaborative. "For Groundworks, shelter has always been about much more than providing a bed. Our work begins before someone enters shelter and continues as we work alongside each person to mitigate barriers, establish goals, connect with services, and build greater stability in permanent housing. For many people we serve, Hope's House will be an important step on that path."

Groundworks staff will work alongside each person to identify goals and barriers, secure identification, increase income, pursue housing opportunities, connect with healthcare and behavioral health resources, explore employment and training opportunities, and navigate the systems and services necessary to move toward greater independence. For residents in recovery or seeking recovery support, a designated HCRS case manager will provide on-site support and help connect residents with additional recovery resources and services. Groundworks also hopes to expand the recovery services available at Hope's House over time through partnerships with community providers.

"Having the opportunity to design a purpose-built structure allowed us to approach this work with a different level of intentionality and create a safe, welcoming environment from the outset," said Sam Beall, AIA, Principal at Duncan Wisniewski Architecture. "Working closely with Groundworks staff, we designed Hope's House with trauma-informed principles at the heart of the process—from welcoming, human-scaled spaces and flexible areas for programming, to natural light, gardens,

outdoor spaces, and a walking loop. The goal throughout was to create an environment that communicates care and dignity, supports the work happening inside the building, and strengthens connections with the broader community." That intentionality is reflected throughout Hope's House. Safety considerations are incorporated into the building's design, while dedicated spaces support the services that are central to Groundworks' approach—including case management, housing navigation, recovery support, and connections to healthcare, employment, and other resources.

The name Hope's House honors Hope Chapman, a Brattleboro community member whose generosity established the purpose this property continues to serve today. Chapman donated the original farmhouse with the intention that the property be used to support people experiencing homelessness. "Hope understood that caring for people experiencing some of life's most difficult circumstances is part of what it means to build a strong community," Bennett said. "Her name will remain on this property not simply as a remembrance of where this story began, but as a reminder of what this place is here to make possible." Members of the Chapman family joined Groundworks for the September 23rd opening and official naming of Hope's House.

Hope's House was made possible through significant public, institutional, and philanthropic investment, including critical partnership and support from the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board and Evernorth, along with the generosity of individuals, foundations, and local businesses. Additionally, US Bancorp Impact Finance contributed private capital to the project through Evernorth's New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Program.

"Groundworks is a leader in addressing housing insecurity, and this investment will help restore and expand its full range of support, allowing more individuals and families to safely move from crisis to stability," said Beth Boutin, Vice President of Community Investments at Evernorth. "Evernorth is proud to be a partner, providing financing through New Markets Tax Credits and the Evernorth Loan Fund, as well as predevelopment consulting expertise, to help expand supportive housing and critical services for those who need them most."

That investment brought together government and housing partners, private philanthropy, businesses, project professionals,

donors, supporters, and members of the community around a shared goal: creating a thoughtfully designed and intentionally programmed shelter that supports pathways toward greater stability.

Groundworks recognized the many partners, donors, project development team members, staff, and supporters who helped make Hope's House possible during the September opening. "I'm proud to help celebrate the opening of Hope's House and look forward to seeing the impact it will have on the Brattleboro community for years to come," said Congresswoman Becca Balint at the opening. "Increasing housing access and affordability is a top priority for me in Congress and Groundworks Collaborative is a critical partner in those efforts. I'm grateful for all they do for people in our community experiencing homelessness—Hope's House is exactly the kind of investment we need to make sure every Vermonter has a safe, stable place to call home."

"With the opening of Hope's House, Groundworks Collaborative continues to lead the way in the critical work of supporting vulnerable Vermonters in Brattleboro," added Senator Peter Welch. "With housing and food insecurity on the rise, Groundworks' core mission of helping people meet their basic needs while treating everyone with dignity and respect is more important than ever. I am deeply grateful to those who came together to make Hope's House a reality, and to the Groundworks team who put in the hard work for their community every day."

Cultivating Connections to Land and Place at Dummerston School

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ment Goals, which provide a framework for addressing challenges related to people, communities, and the environment. ASSET students recently attended the program's kickoff event at Shelburne Farms. They met with student and community leaders from around the state and began developing ideas for projects they could bring back to Dummerston.

This work is just getting started, and the school hopes to involve the broader Dummerston community along the way. If you have ideas, hopes, or questions related to the project, or would like to collaborate with the school, please reach out to Lindsey at lglabachroyce@wsesdvt.org.

Windham Solid Waste Management District**Reducing, Reusing, Recycling, and Composting Holiday Paper Waste***By Alex Lacy**WSWMD Outreach Coordinator*

With the holidays upon us, many are bracing for increased trash, recycling, and composting. Gifts and gatherings can produce a lot of waste, as much as 25% more than usual, and WSWMD would like to assist in detangling the details of holiday waste dos and don'ts.

Clean paper and paper fiber-filled packaging is recyclable, while all Styrofoam, bubble wrap, and plastic film are unacceptable in our recycling program and cause major trouble in the recycling centers. Styrofoam should be trashed, but clean and dry plastic film can be dropped off at a large grocery store like Hannaford, Market 32, Shaws, or Walmart for plastic film recycling destined to become plastic lumber (you've probably seen this on playgrounds or park benches). Buying locally usually reduces the amount of packaging associated with gifts (and helps out our small businesses!), but some-



times we hit the easy button.

Wrapping paper free of glitter or foil is recyclable. Don't worry about that bit of tape because it will come out through the pulping process for paper recycling. Ribbons and bows are not recyclable but

they are reusable. Gift bags can be reused and if they are non-glossy paper they can be recycled. You get extra points for removing any plastic or fabric handles. Tissue paper is recyclable as long as it's glitter-free! While many tags on the gifts we give and receive are made of paper or paper-like materials, they are usually too small for the recycling centers and regularly fall through the cracks of the system causing extra rubbish to clean up after each shift. Unfortunately, tags should be trashed.

If you're ditching your natural holiday tree, consider donating it to someone with goats or sheep, add it to your yard to provide habitat for wildlife, or it can be dropped off at WSWMD in the brush pile. Natural trees with decorations still hanging on will

be landfilled. String lights are accepted at no charge at our scale house so that the wire can be recycled in a special program. Please do not throw these away or put them in the regular recycling container. If you're ready to part with your artificial tree, try giving it away or trash it. Artificial trees are not recyclable.

Entertaining is a big part of the spike in waste generation. From extra food waste to the disposable plates and cutlery we source to reduce time spent cleaning up - it all adds up. All food scraps can be composted, including meat, dairy, and bones when using WSWMD's composting program. If you are set on using disposable ware for your guests, use BPI compostable products. These can be found at most stores. Just look for the dark green BPI certification, and you can rest assured that it is safe to compost with WSWMD. However, please note that these certified compostable materials usually don't break down in backyard composting systems.

Please reach out if you have any questions, concerns, or comments, or just want to talk trash (or recycling or composting)! WSWMD extends warm holiday wishes to all, from our family to yours!



Dummerston Cemetery Association Invites Donors

The Dummerston Cemetery Association, a small private cemetery, invites you to consider a beautiful resting place for a loved one, and is also seeking financial support. Donations will support tree removal to protect historic gravestones and growing maintenance costs.

Thank you.

Ines McGillion 646-246-3868

Donations can be sent to:

Treasurer, Dummerston Cemetery Ass'n
95 Park Laughton Rd
E. Dummerston, VT 05346



PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage PAID
Mailed From
Zip Code 05346
Permit No. 61

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

USEFUL STUFF TO KNOW

Smoke Alarms & Carbon Monoxide Detectors: Dummerston Cares and Dummerston FD 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*

Putney Food Shelf: *Putney Foodshelf serves Dummerston residents. Open Hours: Fridays 12:30–3:30 p.m. Saturdays 9–10:30 a.m.; Putney Community Center, 10 Christian Square, Putney*

NAMES & TIMES & NUMBERS

Conservation Commission website: www.dummerstonconservation.com	Vermont Theatre Company 802-258-1344
Dummerston Cares Message line & Fuel Assistance 802-257-5800, email: info@dummerstoncares.org , website: www.dummerstoncares.org	Evening Star Grange Larry or Carol Lynch, 802-310-0799
Dummerston School 802-254-2733 website: dummerston.wsesu.org	Meals on Wheels Cynthia Fisher, 802-257-1236 Selectboard selectboard@dummerston.org
Fire Chief Larry Pratt, 802-579-9494 website: dummerstonfire.org/	Senior Solutions Carol Lynch, 802-254-2517 Springfield Office 800-642-5119
Fire Wardens Leon Dunbar, Allen Pike	Town Garage Lee Chamberlin, 802-254-2411
Deputy Fire Warden Allen Pike, 802-258-0100	Town Office Laurie Frechette, 802-257-1496 email: townclerk@dummerston.org
Dummerston Community Center & Library Community Center booking: 802-380-7935 or email catherineocallaghan32@gmail.com Library: 802-258-9878 Hours: Mon., Wed. 10–3; Tue., Thu. 1–7; Sat. 10–2 website: dummerstonlibrary.org email: dummerstonvtlibrary@gmail.com	Veterans Assistance Contact Dummerston Cares message line or email
	Views of Dummerston views@viewsofdummerston.org
	WSESU 802-254-3730
Websites: Official Town: www.dummerston.org Calendar: calendar.dummerston.org Local Interest: www.dummerston.com	

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 6 p.m.
Every other Wednesday

Planning Commission 6:30 p.m.
2nd Monday

Conservation Commission 6 p.m.
2nd Thursday

Energy Committee 5 p.m.
1st Monday

Development Review Board 6 p.m.
3rd Tuesday at the town office

Community Ctr & Library Board 7 p.m.
2nd Wednesday at the Community Center

PTFO 6 p.m.
3rd Thurs. at the Dummerston School Library

WSED 6 p.m.
2nd & 4th Tuesdays, revolving locations

Historical Society
QUARTERLY MEETINGS: 3rd week of Jan./April/July/Oct.
OPEN HOUSE: 1st & 3rd Sundays 1–3 p.m.
Meetings at Historical Society; See additional meetings at DummerstonHistoricalSociety.org

Lydia's Friends 5 p.m.
2nd Thursday, Lydia Taft Pratt Library