



VERNON VOICE



FALL 2021

Celebrate Christmas Season in Rockville!

Drone photo
by Tyler Gagnon



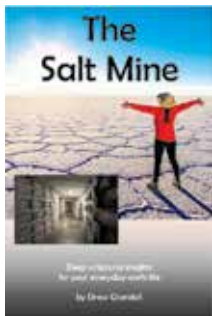
You're invited to a **FREE Christmas Concert** in the Union Church sanctuary by Cochren & Co. from Nashville on **Thursday, December 2 at 7 pm**, as well as weekly 10 am Sunday worship services with our contemporary praise band and faith-building messages. Please visit UnionChurch.community for details.



Here are some *unique* Christmas gift ideas...



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This 145-page book contains inspiring devotions for working Christians written by Drew Crandall. Email him at dcrandall@ChristAtWork.org. You may also subscribe to his free, year-round devotions that go around the world.



This 2022 Calendar contains gorgeous photos by co-founder Chris Luginbuhl. "You Are Not Alone" musical CDs are also available. For details, please email Chris at reflectandglow@gmail.com.



A collector's series of eight custom Christmas ornaments, including three historic Rockville churches (shown above from left to right: St. Joseph, Union and St. Bernard) plus Cogswell Fountain, Fox Hill Tower, Rockville General Hospital, Rockville High School, and Rockville Public Library) are available from the Rockville Downtown Association. Purchase ornaments at Opportunity Works or Lafayette Wine & Liquors. For info, email info@RDAct.com.



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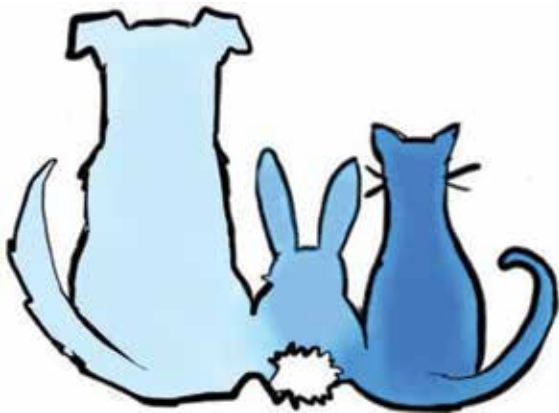
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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I hope that as this edition of the Vernon Voice arrives in your home, you are enjoying the beautiful fall weather and the incredible changing foliage. This has been a difficult year and I hope that as the pandemic eases life is returning to normal for you and your family.

In this edition of the Vernon Voice, we are focusing on some of the good things happening in our community. The new track and field at Rockville High School is our cover story. This state of the art athletic facility is a great example of the Board of Education and the Town working together to fund a much needed upgrade to one of our facilities. Please take the time to visit the new track and field to see the beautiful facility for yourself.

The Senior Center reopening is another of our stories. The Senior Center is now open for both inside and outside activities. Masks are still recommended for inside activities for everyone, but seniors are very excited to return to Senior Center on Bolton Road. The Grab and Go Lunch program is particularly popular. If you are 55 or older, consider joining. Stop by, fill out an application and let the fun begin.

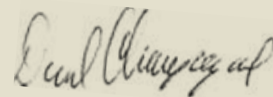
In his article, the Fire Marshal reminds us to make sure that our smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors

are working and have fresh batteries. The end of Daylight Savings Time is the perfect time to check and change the batteries to keep our families safe.

An important upcoming event that I enjoy and am looking forward to is Winterfest. This event is always the first Friday in December. This year the event will be held in Central Park. We'll celebrate by lighting the tree and greeting Santa and Mrs. Claus as they arrive.

We are always looking for volunteers for our boards and commissions. I know everyone has busy schedules, but we need willing volunteers to keep us moving forward and make progress. Please consider giving a few hours a month. If you have questions or are interested in volunteering please call my office at 860-870-3601.

In closing, I wish everyone a happy and safe Holiday season!



Daniel A. Champagne
Mayor, Town of Vernon



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TOWN ASSESSOR

2021 Grand List/Revaluation

The Town of Vernon is in the final stage of completing the 2021 town-wide revaluation of real estate. Value notices showing the previous value and the 2021 value will be mailed to property owners in November.

It should not be a surprise to anyone that property values have increased over the last two years, despite the pandemic. Favorable interest rates, high demand, and limited housing stock have all contributed to the changes in value.

Residential property values, which include one to four-family homes, are influenced by sales of like properties. As a benefit to all, we will post on our website all valid sales occurring over the last two years. Also included will be pertinent information, including style, size and age of the dwelling so residents can compare their property value to actual sales.

If a property owner believes that their property is over-valued, they can request an informal hearing in November/December to provide us with information we may not have been aware of when determining their value. Final change notices will go out in February 2022 for the 2021 grand list.

Board of Assessment Appeal hearings will be April 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st. We will have more information on hearings early next year.

Fall brings other processes such as Business Personal Property filings, Motor Vehicle files from DMV and filings for various exemptions. I encourage everyone to visit the Town webpage, www.vernon-ct.gov, and look under Departments and then Assessor to find a host of information.

Submitted by: David Wheeler, Assessor

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This summer saw the return of the Vernon Parks and Recreation Department's Summer Camps and Aquatics program. Camp programs were offered at Camp Newhoca and Center 375. Also, a new camp program was developed at Vernon Center Middle School to compliment the Summer Learning Program. Aquatic facilities were available on a rotating schedule at Newhoca Beach, Valley Falls Pond and Community Pool.

Camp Newhoca and Center 375 welcomed back children 1st grade through 8th grade. Swimming, boating, group and cooperative games, sports, themes and so much more happened this summer. The annual Summer Camp food drive yielded over 950 pounds of non-perishable food items. Children had visits from Vernon Police Department Officer Bryan Sembersky and his K9 Thor. The final week of Summer Camp featured a mini-bash event with music, inflatables and special activities.

With increased attendance in summer learning programs, a new partnership was formed with the Vernon Public Schools and Parks and Recreation to offer a Summer Camp at Vernon Center Middle School. The VCMS Summer

Camp operated in the afternoons Monday-Thursday and a full day on Friday. The camp offered the same program hours as Camp Newhoca and Camp 375 with students transitioning from the classroom to summer camp for five weeks.

Thank you to all those that were a part of Vernon Parks and Recreation this summer and we hope to see you again in June.

Summer Concert

The Mayor Daniel Champagne Summer Concert Series was held at Henry Park on Thursdays in the month of August. A big crowd came out to enjoy singing and dancing to the music of Night Shift and the Dyno-O-Myte Disco Review. Thank you to our sponsors, Santini Villa Apartments, Juliano's Pool and the Vernon Arts Commission.

TRUNK OR TREAT

The 2nd Annual Trunk or Treat drive thru event was held on October 28 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at Henry Park. Many

See **SUMMER CAMP**, p. 9



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The Vernon community came together Friday, September 10th to celebrate and formally open the new turf field and track at Rockville High School.

Mayor Dan Champagne and School Superintendent Dr. Joseph P. Macary hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony where those who helped bring the project together were honored, and then the Rockville High girls' soccer team became the first varsity team to use the new field for its match against Windsor High School.

"When you stand here and take this in, you can see what a great facility this is," Mayor Champagne said. "And it's going to be for years to come. I want this field to be enjoyed by our teams, our cheerleaders, the band, our youth sports teams and by the people of this community. This new field and track is something that can make us all proud."

Taxpayers approved \$1.5 million for the facility, all of which came from money the town has saved and put aside, Mayor Champagne said. "We did not have to raise taxes to pay

for this worthwhile project," Mayor Champagne said.

A strong partnership between Mayor Champagne, the Town Council and the Board of Education and support for the project shown by voters is what brought a vision for a new track and field to fruition, Dr. Macary said.

"That leadership, that passion, that commitment was huge," Dr. Macary said. "What started as an idea four years ago is now a reality thanks to all of these people."

Dr. Macary also thanked the 10-person committee that worked to develop a plan for the track and field. Its members are: Karen Aafedt, Charlie Chatterton, Keith Hodson, Scott Smith, Rockville High Athletic Director Jeff Farrell, Board of Education Chairwoman Anne Fischer, Board of Education member Stephen Linton, School Superintendent Joseph P. Macary, Vernon Parks and Recreation Director Marty Sitler, and Town Council Members Brian Motola and Steve Wakefield.

Each committee member received a

plaque with a bit of turf attached to thank them for their service.

The new field is literally a game changer for the athletes who will use it, said Michaela Hodson, a Rockville High senior and captain of the girls' soccer team.

"We can play a faster game and challenge ourselves," she said. "On turf, the pace of the game is a lot faster. And having a lot more endurance is important because we have to move so much faster and think so much faster on this field."

Michaela also said she and her teammates considered it a privilege to be the first team to play a varsity game on the new field.

"This is an enhancement for the community as a whole," said Keith Hodson of the Vernon Soccer Club. "Whether they're young folks or old folks, there's something here for everyone. They can walk on the track or play on the field."

Submitted by: Dave Owens,
Communications Specialist

VERNON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Two New Laws For Drivers and Backseat Passengers Go into Force

There are two new laws residents of Vernon should be aware of.

Public Act 21-28 requires drivers to yield the right of way to pedestrians in crosswalks. Drivers are required to grant the right of way to pedestrians in a marked, or unmarked, crosswalk that is not controlled by a police officer or traffic control signal. A pedestrian is considered crossing the roadway when:

- The pedestrian is in any portion of the crosswalk
- The pedestrian steps off the curb at the entrance to the crosswalk and indicates their intention to cross the road by raising their

hand and arm toward oncoming traffic

- The pedestrian indicates their intention to cross the road by moving any part of their body or an extension of themselves such as a wheelchair, cane, walking stick, crutch, bicycle, stroller, carriage, cart or leashed or harnessed dog into the crosswalk entrance.

It is also important to remember that a vehicle operator crossing a sidewalk must yield the right of way to pedestrians on that sidewalk. Violators of this law are subject to a \$500 fine.

Public Act 21-175 is the second

new law of importance to residents. This new law requires all people on a vehicle, including backseat passengers, to wear seatbelts. Previously, the law only required the driver, front seat passenger(s) and occupants under 18 to wear a seatbelt. The existing laws for infants and children requiring separate restraint systems have not changed. Violations of the seatbelt laws are subject to a fine.

It is important for all of us to drive safely and follow traffic laws. By following traffic laws, and staying focused on our driving we can all make the roads safer.

Submitted by: Police Chief John Kelley

Mayor Dan Champagne and the Vernon Economic Development Commission recently launched a new “Buy Local Vernon” campaign intended to educate consumers about the economic and social benefits that come from patronizing local businesses, and to further strengthen Vernon’s economy and business community.

The new campaign theme is Buying Local is a Victory for Vernon. “Thriving local economies make communities stronger and offer a variety of other benefits,” Mayor Champagne said. “Vernon has hundreds of businesses that invest in our community and local economy, offer unique products and services, create and sustain local jobs, pay local taxes, serve local residents and donate to sports teams and local non-profits. Buying local provides a tangible benefit to our community.”

Jeffrey Cohen, Chairman of Vernon’s Economic Development Commission, urged people to consider if a local business can meet their needs and to consult the new buy local website. “It’s easy to sit home and use your computer or phone to order from an online retailer or to head to one of the national chains, but there are many local businesses that offer those same products and services at competitive prices,” Cohen said. “When making purchasing decisions, I hope people will pause

for a moment to ask themselves, ‘Is this something I can buy locally?’”

“Small businesses are the largest employers in Connecticut and the nation and create two out of every three new jobs,” Vernon Town Administrator Michael Purcaro said, “Each dollar spent at a local business returns \$3 to the local economy. Keeping our hard-earned dollars as close to home as possible has a direct and positive impact on all of us. A community thrives by thinking local first.”

Vernon business owner Drew Crandall played a key role in developing the buy local campaign and its theme. “Pausing for a moment to think about your spending decisions can have a real impact,” Crandall said. “Shifting some of the dollars we spend to local businesses is a victory for the local economy and our community.”

Promotional tools are available to local businesses and the public at no charge through the Vernon Economic Development office, 55 West Main Street. To coordinate pickup, please call (860) 870-3637. Residents are encouraged to use the new Buy Local website, www.VernonBusinessDirectory.com, which lists local businesses. Vernon business owners can add or update their listings.

Submitted by: Shaun Gately, *Economic Development Coordinator*




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Rockville's relationship with Shenipsit Lake and the Hockanum River

Did you know that a 550-acre parcel of land (.86 square miles) located in the northeast section of Vernon was known as the City of Rockville from 1889 to 1965? It was a compact industrial area that was a center of textile manufacturing, producing internationally recognized woolen fabrics. What made Rockville a center of textile manufacturing and other commercial and industrial development over two centuries was Lake Mishenipset. Today it is known as Shenipsit Lake, Snipsic Lake or just the Snip. Its waters flowed into the Hockanum River, which provided the hydraulic power to run the mills.

The Native American words Mishe, meaning "big," and nips, meaning "pool," describe the beautiful 2¼-mile lake located in the towns of Ellington, Tolland and Vernon. The 553-acre lake has many inlets and coves. The Hockanum River takes its name from the Native American word hocquaun, which means "hook-shaped or crooked river." The river cascades over ledge and rocks and drops 283 feet in less than two miles as it travels through Rockville. During Rockville's industrial heyday, circa 1884, the Hockanum River powered 14 mills over those two miles.

By 1880, Shenipsit Lake had become a popular summer resort. A 15-acre grove located on the lake featured a dancing pavilion, refreshment room, shooting gallery, bowling alley and automatic swings. It drew visitors from across Connecticut.

Steam boats, most notably a 150-foot-long pleasure steamer, carried 200 passengers and offered Friday night moonlight dances. Sailing and rowing races were held, and during the winter there were horse-drawn sleigh racing. The popularity grew when a trolley line began to bring people from outside Rockville to enjoy the grove and lake.

The Snip, however, was also the drinking water supply for the residents of Rockville. To protect the water supply, the Water and Aqueduct Company purchased the grove property. Bathing in the lake was prohibited in 1894 and in 1913 the company closed the grove site.

Excerpts taken from "Cascades and Courage" by George S. Brookes, 1955

Submitted by: Karen Daigle, *Town Clerk*



Excursion Steamer

SUMMER CAMP, continued from p. 6

trick or treaters out to visit a variety of decorated trunks, trailers and pop up tents. The evening was filled with excitement throughout the park.

WINTERFEST PARADE

The Town of Vernon is planning to have Winterfest return this year with lots of fun, excitement, bright lights and more! Stay tuned for more details. Check the Parks and Recreation Department website at www.vernonrec.org for more information when it is available.

ARCTIC SPLASH

The Arctic Splash is coming back! Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 4th, 1:00 p.m. at Valley Falls. Arctic Splash raises monies for the Send-A-Kid Scholarship Fund, which provides scholarships to children in Vernon

so they can attend summer camp, meet new friends, swim and so much more.

Snow or sun, cold or warm, the Arctic Splash never disappoints. Participants take the plunge into Valley Falls Pond to send children to camp. Past years have seen teams from Vernon Center Middle School, Center Road School, Skinner Road School, Maple Street School, the Vernon Police Department and many more.

Annually the scholarship requests exceed \$25,000!

Pre-registration is recommended! Awards are given for the best costumes and most scholarship funds raised.

If you're interested in taking the splash and helping children attend summer camp, visit us online at www.vernonrec.org

Submitted by: Marty Sitler, *Director*

The Vernon Education Foundation (VEF), founded in 2003, is a volunteer-run, community-based, non-profit organization. The VEF functions similar to a Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) or booster club. Fundraising supports a variety of programs, such as: a personally selected reading book for every Vernon Public School 1st grader; reading books distributed at community events; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion learning for teachers and school staff; and grants for innovative learning projects for students.

So far in 2021, the VEF has funded 10 grants totaling more than \$4,800. Recent grant funded projects by the VEF include a raised garden bed and compost project for the Total Alternative Learning Center (TALC) Program at Rockville High School and a similar garden project to be run by the students of the Renaissance Program at Center Road School. Hands on learning projects such as these keep students engaged and provide incentives for attendance, collaboration, and positive behavior; as well as science lessons about plants, environment, climate and more. The EPOCH Art program at Vernon



MSS 1st Graders with their slumber party buddies. Photo: MSS Teacher Shireen Rhodes

Center Middle School (VCMS) received a grant for a photography project called The Faces of Vernon's Diversity, which the entire community will be able to enjoy when displayed around town. The VCMS Special Education program received a grant for students to open and run a school store. Maple Street School 1st graders will soon be able to take home a friend for the weekend in their "Slumber Party Kits," which include reading books and a stuffed animal, which will enhance reading skills.

The VEF would not exist without the volunteers who serve our organization and the community. Cheryl Arzt and Donna Magnani recently retired from our Board and we extend our heartfelt thanks for their many years of service and support.

Since March 2020, Vernon Public Schools, staff and families have adjusted and sacrificed to safely educate students. The VEF recognizes these efforts and continues to look for ways to support educational excellence in our community.

Here's how you can help:

- Thank a teacher!
- Is there a child in your life? Read. Make meals together. Go for walks. Play games.
- If you are passionate about education in Vernon-Rockville and are interested in volunteering and/or serving on our Board, email vernonedfound@gmail.com. Also find us on Facebook.
- We gladly accept financial donations. Checks can be made out to Vernon Education Foundation and mailed to 30 Park St, Vernon, CT 06066.

Submitted by: Vernon Education Foundation

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Do you love to see what you can grow? Get your hands in the soil, hear about new gardening techniques and plants, enjoy talking with fellow gardeners about your successes and challenges? Do you like to share plants?

The Vernon Garden Club (VGC) is dedicated to the promotion of horticulture, protection of native trees and wildflowers, and promotion of community spirit, beautification and betterment in Vernon.

We held our first meeting of 18 enthusiastic gardeners in April 2000. Committees formed and got busy. By year's end membership had increased to 63 thanks to renewed friendships, stimulating meetings and good publicity. As we grew, our gardeners enjoyed visiting each other's gardens, taking field trips to regional gardens and gardening

events, and establishing an herb garden at Valley Falls Farm.

Our first milestone was the "Welcome to Vernon" sign at Vernon Circle, surrounded by our signature perennial garden. A second public garden, designed by club members and Garden Barn, is located at Lafayette Square and is maintained and seasonally enhanced by the club. We are very proud of our public gardens.

In a normal year our projects include:

- A well-attended plant sale on the Saturday before Mothers' Day, which is our chief fundraiser.
- A "Junior Gardeners" after school program at Lake Street School each spring where 3rd graders plant and maintain a butterfly garden with help from club members.

- An annual scholarship of \$500 to a graduating Vernon high school senior pursuing a career in horticulture or a related field.
- Free interesting gardening programs on the third Monday of the month, September through June.
- Over the years we also organized five tours of private gardens in the area.

Of course, the last year was anything but normal, however, we continued to maintain Vernon's Welcome Gardens and are slowly returning to normal.

If you love to garden and would like to learn more please watch for our September 20 meeting. You can learn more about upcoming events at our website, VernonGardenClub.org.

Submitted by: Jean Merz

If you are thinking about listing your home, there has never been a better time!

The median sales price in CT is UP and the low inventory is creating competition on most properties.

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Jason Yerke and Distinctive Tree Care do a Good Deed and Save Vernon Taxpayers Thousands of Dollars

Dozens of Dead and Dying Trees Safely Removed from Valley Falls Park

When Jason Yerke, a Vernon native and the owner of Distinctive Tree Care in South Windsor, purchased a new piece of equipment to take down dead and dying trees along roads and highways across Connecticut he wanted his crews to get some practice operating the machine.

Yerke and his team had been working in Vernon and spotted a cluster of dead and dying oak trees near the entrance to Valley Falls Park. Those trees were also on the radar of Jeff Schambach, Lead Foreman for Vernon Public Works and the Town's Tree Warden, and Marty Sitler, Director of Parks and Recreation. Both were searching their budgets and working with town administration and the finance department to find funds to hire a contractor to remove the trees.

Invasive pests such as the emerald ash borer, years of drought, serious storms and age have taken a toll on Connecticut's trees. Many are dead or dying and municipal staff and budgets struggle to keep up with the demand.

Yerke called Schambach and asked, "Jeff, I want to do something to help the town." Yerke offered to put his machine and crew to work to remove the dead trees near the entrance of Valley Falls Park at no cost to the Town. With permission from the Town, Yerke and Schambach went to work marking trees that needed to be removed.

Once the trees were marked for removal, Yerke unleashed his brand new, million dollar tree removal machine manufactured by the German company Sennebogen. It's an impressive piece of

equipment that allows Distinctive Tree Care crews to take down a massive oak tree in minutes.

The Sennebogen is a material handler equipped with a large tree grapple and a 32-inch harvester saw. Operator Josh Levesque, also a Vernon native, grabbed a tree with the grapple, then the saw cut the tree. Levesque used the machine to gently lower a section of tree to the ground. The machine and a skilled operator can take down a large tree with only four cuts, and remove as many as 200 trees in a day. It would take weeks for a traditional tree crew using a bucket truck to do that much work.

"This machine is incredible," Schambach said as he, Sitler and Yerke watched the Sennebogen and Levesque take down one tree after another.

In just a few hours, dozens of trees were removed. Days later Yerke's crew returned with a large chipper to dispose of the trees.

On Tuesday, October 5th, 2021, Vernon Mayor Dan Champagne and the Town Council honored and thanked Yerke for what he and his company did that day.

"I thank and appreciate all Jason

Yerke and Distinctive Tree Care did in stepping up and helping our community," Mayor Champagne said. "His generous contribution and spirit of volunteerism show why Vernon is such a wonderful place to live."

Sitler was impressed by Yerke's generosity and the impact of the work at Valley Falls Park.

"Jason saved Vernon taxpayers a lot of money and helped us ensure a safer experience for everyone who uses one of our most popular parks and swimming areas," Sitler said.

For Yerke, the test at Valley Falls confirmed just how useful the Sennebogen will be. "I saw this machine at a trade show about four years ago and I was hooked," he said. Yerke saw a need for such a machine, especially along Connecticut's highways and tree-lined rural roads. A lot of trees were going to have to come down and the Sennebogen would allow the work to be done efficiently, economically and safely.

It also makes a hazardous job a lot safer because no one has to work in the "fall zone."

"The operator is in a well-protected cab with guards and hardened glass, and has tremendous stability, power and control," Yerke said. "It's very safe."

Yerke and Distinctive Tree Care already had four smaller Sennebogens that can reach 44 feet and were adequate for about 80 percent of trees that need to come down. The new machine can reach 68 feet and will get the trees the other machines could not reach, Yerke said.

At Valley Falls Park, Yerke and his crew took down more

See TREES, p. 25



On Saturday, December 18th, 2021 members of the community will gather together to honor veterans during the holiday season as part of the annual Wreaths Across America Day. A ceremony will be held at Lugg Memorial Field located at Grove Hill Cemetery starting at noon. Seven ceremonial wreaths will be placed to remember all soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who served, honor their sacrifices, and teach our younger generations about the high cost of our freedoms.

Specially designated wreaths for the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine, and POW/MIA will be placed during the ceremony that will be coordinated simultaneously at over 2,500 participating locations all across the Country.

Wreaths Across America traces



its origin to 1992, when Morrill Worcester of the Worcester Wreath Co. in Harrington, Maine, had a number of surplus wreaths as the holiday season was drawing to a close. Recalling a boyhood trip to Washington, D.C., which included a visit to the sacred ground of Arlington National Cemetery, Worcester initially donated 5,000 wreaths to Arlington Cemetery. Each year more than one million wreaths are laid in cemeteries within the United States as well as national cemeteries across the globe.

The Town of Vernon Cemetery Department invites the public to join in honoring, teaching and remember our fallen veterans. For more information please visit www.wreathscrossamerica.org

Submitted By: Travis Clark, *Superintendent*
Polly Schaefer, *Chairman*

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Helping You Plan

Are you looking to add a personal touch to your loved one's funeral service? Would you like to browse through our catalog of viewing merchandise? Maybe you want to learn more about planning your own funeral. We've made all of this information - and more - available for you to explore in the comfort and privacy of your home.

Helping You Grieve

Our experience has taught us that when losing a loved one, those left behind feel lost and alone. Many do not know where to turn to or how to cope. Our grief support programs in place are dedicated to helping you during your difficult time and making each day a little easier for you when a loved one is lost.



Burke - Fortin Funeral Home
76 Prospect St
Rockville - Vernon CT
860-875-5490

Tolland Memorial Funeral Home
375 Merrow Rd.
Tolland, CT
860-875-1415

Coventry-Pietras Funeral Home
2665 Boston Tpk (Rte 44)
Coventry CT
860-742-1255

Bassinger & Dowd Funeral Home
37 Gardner St
East Windsor CT
860-623-4292



Help Make Vernon a Special Place to Live: Support Your Local Nonprofit

The Vernon Volunteers' Collaborative (VVC) is a group of 14 Vernon nonprofit organizations helping to make Vernon a special place to live and work through:

- Preservation or beautification of Vernon's open space, parks and environment.
- Preserving and sharing Vernon's history and historic properties.
- Encouraging appreciation of and participation in the arts.

Which of these are important to you and your family?

Vernon is blessed to have dedicated and passionate volunteers who donate their time to such organizations as Arts Center East, Friends of Valley Falls, New England Civil War Museum, Northern Connecticut Land Trust, Strong Family Farm, Vernon Garden Club, Vernon Greenways Volunteers and the Vernon Historical Society.

These last two years have been challenging due to the pandemic as many activities and fundraisers had to be cancelled. This fall, things have begun to open up. There have been a series of programs, indoors and out, and a number of guided hikes. We're hopeful that life will return to normal by spring and you'll have many activities from which to choose.

But we need your support. Most of their funds are raised through membership, donations, grants, and fundraisers.

The holiday season is traditionally a time of giving to the charities and organizations we each support. As important as they are, most of our holiday giving doesn't benefit the activities we enjoy locally. This year please support the local nonprofit volunteer organizations that make Vernon a special place to live for you.

Visit our website at VernonVolunteers.org to find a description of each organization. Choose one or more that resonates with your interests and either become a member or make a donation. Membership numbers are important when applying for grants and to maintain nonprofit status.

On our website you'll find a "Join" tab for becoming a member of each organization. That should also take you to a page that will help you donate.

Submitted by: Jon Roe,
Chairman



The 5K Chicken Run returned to Strong Family Farm in September.
Photo: Jon Roe



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The Vernon Social Services Department is Working with Residents Who Qualify for a Variety of Assistance Programs

Energy Assistance is a federally funded program that helps low to moderate income residents with heating costs during the winter months. Residents can call to get information about the materials needed to complete the application process. Documents are being accepted for both deliverable fuel (oil) heated households and for utility (gas and electric) heated households.

CHOICES open enrollment is October 15 through December 7. CHOICES is Connecticut's program for Health insurance, Outreach, Information and referral, Counseling, Eligibility Screening. The Department has one CHOICES counselor who has been trained and certified by the North Central Area Agency on Aging. CHOICES counselors help older adults understand and exercise their rights, receive benefits they are entitled to, and make informed choices about quality of life issues. CHOICES counselors also provide free information and assistance about Medicare options, Medicare Supplemental Insurance (Medigap), Medicare Part D (Prescription coverage) and other state and federal programs. CHOICES counselors DO NOT sell insurance.

For the upcoming holidays, Social Services will again partner with the Vernon Fire Department to coordinate **Toys for Tikes** for younger children. For older kids, the department will accept and distribute gift cards from the community. Last year, toys were given to 377 children and \$3,000 in gift cards were given to 60 teenagers. Gift cards in increments of \$25 are preferred and can be dropped off at the Social Services office at Town Hall or mailed to Social Services, Town of Vernon, 14 Park Place, Vernon, CT 06066.

Social Services staff – Candy, Yisenia and Christi – help coordinate and administer the above programs. In addition, they volunteer their time in the community on behalf of Mobile Foodshare. Matt Hellman, the new director of Social Services, began work on July 12. He is busy getting to know and meet the many programs and individuals who offer services to Vernon residents and with whom Social Services collaborates.

Submitted by: Matt Hellman, *Director*



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r-kon@sbcglobal.net

As summer turns to fall, it is good time for everyone to freshen up on fall fire safety tips. Most safety tips apply year-round, but here are two topics for children and families to think about as the weather cools and before the first cold snap of the season: cooking safety and candles.

Cooking fires account for a majority of the fires the Town of Vernon Office of the Fire Marshal is called to investigate. Cooking is a wonderful family activity that brings people together and teaches children an essential life skill. Below is information from the US Fire Administration on cooking fires in the United States:

- US fire departments responded to an average of 172,900 home structure fires a year started by cooking activities in 2014-2018. These fires caused an average of 550 civilian deaths, 4,820 civilian fire



injuries, and more than \$1 billion in property damage per year.

- Home fires caused by cooking peak at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Ranges or cooktops were involved in 61% of reported home cooking fires, 87% of cooking fire deaths and 78% of cooking fire injuries.

- Households that use electric ranges have a higher risk of cooking fires than those using gas ranges.

Here are some tips to keep you and your family safe while cooking:

- Never leave your range or cooktop unattended while cooking. If you have to leave the room, turn the range or cook top off.
- Wear short, close-fitting or tightly-rolled sleeves. Loose clothing can hang down onto hot surfaces and catch fire.
- Keep the cooking area clean and free of materials that can catch fire.
- Clean up spilled or spattered grease. Built-up grease can catch fire.

These numbers and facts clearly show how cooking fires impact the community. As we get ready to celebrate several major holidays in the next few months, please take extra precautions in the kitchen to ensure a safe and enjoyable time with your family.

The second topic we wanted to highlight is the use of candles in our homes. Candles have been used for centuries for light, celebration and to make our homes smell wonderful. Candles account for 3% of all home fires in the America. On average, fire departments respond to 25 fires per day involving candles. The following candle safety tips will ensure that an unfortunate incident doesn't occur in your home:

- Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn
- Use candle holders that are sturdy, on a stable surface
- Don't burn candles all the way down. Extinguish it before it gets too close to the holder or container

We hope you have a safe and wonderful fall season. Please don't forget to change your smoke alarm batteries when you change your clocks! Daylight savings time ends November 7th, 2021.

Submitted by: Daniel Wasilewski, Fire Marshal

Unlock Your Potential with Vernon Adult Education

- High School Completion - Three options (CDP, GED, NEDP)
- Learn English (ESL) - day and evening programs
- Become a U.S. Citizen
- Prepare for College/Training
- Increase Employability Skills
- Family Learning Program
- Free Childcare some nights



Vernon Adult Education is here to support you and help you accomplish your goals. Call today to find out more about our support services.



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Text VRABE to 866-436-0005

Leaf Collection Information

Please be aware of some delays that are beyond our control - leaf fall timeframe, weather conditions, holidays. "Mother Nature" plays a big role in our leaf collection program!

When will collection begin?

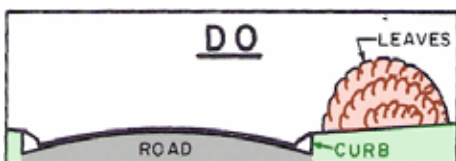
The start of leaf collection will begin on **Monday, November 1, 2021**. Leaves should be raked to the curb by this date to ensure collection. Do not be alarmed if you see DPW crews out the week before this date. They are testing the vacuum equipment and training our temporary leaf laborers.

When will my street's leaves be collected?

All streets in the Town of Vernon have been divided into 3 groups. Group A Streets will be collected first and completed before leaf crews move on to Group B Streets and so on. This program is dependent on weather. Under good conditions, we expect to complete a group of streets in 1-2 weeks. Rain, snow or freezing temperatures will delay the program.



Do not rake leaves into the street or onto the sidewalk. This is a safety and flooding hazard as well as a violation of Ordinance No. 235, Sec. 7-20 and is punishable by a fine of \$100.



How many passes will there be this year?

All streets are guaranteed at least one pass. If time permits, there will be a second pass. Residents are at their own risk whether to wait for a second pass or to bag their leaves

for pickup on either of the first two Fridays in December.

When will the leaf bins open?

Leaf bins are open for the convenience of residents mid-October. Contamination caused by disposal of brush, bags, grass clippings or any other debris will result in these leaf bins being shut down.

- **Nye Street** - At the firehouse off West Street. Bin will be marked.
- **Church Street** - In the bike trail parking area. Bin will be marked.
- **Legion Field** - Off Regan Road at rear of parking lot. Bin will be marked.

Other options?

Residents may either transport their leaves to a designated leaf bin or bag them for pickup in by DPW crews. Leaves may be bagged using either the biodegradable paper bags OR plastic lawn & leaf bags.

When will bagged leaves be collected?

Bagged leaves will be collected the first two Fridays in December. Bag pickup is not automatic - please call the Public Works Office at 860-870-3500 to schedule. Leaves cannot be put out for collection with regular trash.

LEAF COLLECTION PROGRAM - Street Listings

GROUP A STREETS - Amy Dr, Austin Dr, Autumn Wood Ln, Bellevue Av, Berger Rd, Berkley Dr, Bette Cir, Birch Street, Blue Ridge Dr, Box Mountain Dr, Bradley Dr, Brent Dr, Bridle Path Ln, Brittany Ln, Brooklyn St, Brookside Ln, Burke Rd, Butternut Ln, Campbell Av, Carol Dr, Carolyn Dr, Cedar St, Cemetery Av, Center Rd, Center St, Central St, Chamberlain St, Charter Rd, Chelsea Ridge, Cherry St, Christopher Dr, Church St, Cindy Ter, Clavet Pl, Cold Spring Dr, Correia Way, Country Ln, Court St, Crestridge Dr, Cross Dr, Crown St, Dart Rd, Daryl Dr, Deerfield Dr, Diane Dr, Earl St, East

St, East Main St, Echo Dr, Echo Ridge Dr, Emily Dr, Eric Cir, Ertel Dr, Estelle Dr, Eudy Ct, Evergreen Rd, Fern St, First St, Foster Dr, Fox Hill Dr, Franklin St, Frederick Rd, Garden Dr, Gardener Rd, Glenn Ln, Glenstone Dr, Grady Rd, Grant St, Green Rd, Grove St, Hale St, Hale St Ext, Hammond St, Hansen Dr, Harlow St, Hartford Tpk, Heather Ln, Heidi Dr, Hemlock Dr, Hickory Hill, High St, Hillcrest Dr, Hillside Av, Hillside Manor Av, Hilltop Av, Hyde Av, Inland Dr, Jan Dr, Jen Dr, Jonathon Dr, Kanter Dr, Kenneth Dr, Kevin Dr, King St, Kingsbury Av, Knollwood Dr, Kristyn Dr, Lake St, Laurel St, Legion Dr, Lewis St, Liberty St, Linden Pl, Lynn Dr, Maiden Ln, Maple Av, Mary Ln, McLean St, Meadowlark Rd, Michael Dr, Midland Dr, Minterburn Ct, Ogden View Dr, Old Stone Rd, Oxbow Dr, Partridge Hollow Ln, Pearl Dr, Peterson Rd, Phoenix St (north), Progress Av, Quarry Dr, Rambling Rd, Range Hill Dr, Reed St, Regan Rd, Regan St, Regina Rd, Reservoir Rd (Rt. 31), Rheel St, Richard Rd, Robert Rd, Robin Rd, Rolling View Dr, Rosewood Dr, Russel Dr, School Brook Ln, Scott Dr, Second St, Snipsic St, South Grove St, South Deerfield Dr, South St, Spruce St, Stanley St, Stone St, Strong Av, Summit Rd, Sunnyview Dr, Sunrise Dr, Sunset Av, Susan Rd, Tankerhoosen Rd, Temple St, Terrace Dr, Thomas St, Timber Ln, Tolland Av, Tower Rd, Tracy Dr, Troutstream Dr, Tumble Brook Dr, Tunnel Rd, Tunnel View Ter, Valley View Ln, Vassar St, Vernon Center Hgts, Vernon Summit Rd, Vernon Av, Vernwood Dr, Vine Dr, Warren Av, Washington St, Wayne Rd, White St, Windermere Av, Windingbrook Trl.

GROUP B STREETS - Acorn Rd, Ahearn Dr, Allan Dr, Allison Rd, Alpert Rd, Ann St, Bailey Ln, Bancroft Pl, Bancroft St, Barbara Rd, Becker Pl, Boulder Crest Ln, Briarwood Ln, Brighton Ln, Brimwood Dr, Brookview Dr, Bruce Dr, Butcher Rd, Cathy Dr, Chestnut St, Cottage St, Dailey Cir, Danny Trl, Dart Hill Rd, Davis Av, Davis Av Ext, Donnell Rd, Dow St, Drigg's Rd, Eastview Dr, Edith Rd, Ellington Av, Eliot Dr, Elm Hill Rd, Elm St, Emerald Dr, Emma Ln, Eva Cir, Faith

See LEAF, p. 24

No one in the Vernon Area would have to be convinced that June, July and August were exceptional months with regard to the frequency and intensity of rain events. During that time, we had five named storms run through Town, leaving in their wake localized flooding and damage to homes, businesses, drainage systems and roads.

In this part of the country, we normally experience about 48 inches of precipitation over the course of the year. While not evenly delivered throughout the seasons, this works out to an average of just under an inch of rainfall each week. The National Weather Service reports that from June 1st to August 31st, Bradley Field experienced 21.7 inches of rain, the bulk of which came in those discrete storm events. Each one dropped a month's worth of rainfall in a single day. The record high for

this same period of 27.9 inches was established in 1955, with the record low of 4.4 inches just last year.

These types of average statistics are interesting but tend to underestimate the actual intensity that specific locations experience. Bradley Field is a dozen miles away and storms rarely behave in uniform and predictable ways. It is not uncommon that one neighborhood experiences very heavy rainfall and one on the opposite side of town is just getting a shower. Equally confounding is the tendency that these cells move quickly, repeatedly shifting the intensity from place to place.

Meteorologist often categorized a Storm by the likelihood a particular intensity will occur on any given year. For example, we are told that a storm is a "25-year storm", but that doesn't mean we only experience that combination of rainfall intensity

and duration once in every 25 years. It is more correct to think of such a storm having a 4% chance of happening in any given year. When this happens for back to back to back storms, it is clearly something out of the ordinary.

Just like power outages, or blizzards, we can in some cases take some steps to help minimize the impact of such an event. Some of these are simple such as making sure that catch basin tops, roof gutters and foundation drains are not obstructed and can perform as expected. Swales, drainage ways and small streams need to flow freely and discarding lawn clippings, leaves, and other debris into these not only limits their capacity, but once mobilized during a storm, will accumulate downstream further restricting the flow and causing runoff to jump out

See **STORMWATER**, p. 26

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KERENSKY
CAPOSSELA, LLP

ATTORNEYS



L to R: Attorney Brandon Fontaine,
Paralegal Tracey Toney, Attorney Douglas Manion

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Town of Vernon Enhances the Simple Recycling 'Pink Bag' Collection Program

The Town of Vernon has revised the Simple Recycling "pink bag" collection program to make it even more environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Simple Recycling collection vehicles will no longer follow refuse trucks looking for pink bags of used clothing, shoes and other small household goods.

Instead, residents can conveniently call a toll free number, (866) 835-5068, or visit www.simplerecycling.com to schedule a pickup. Pink bags are also no longer necessary. Simple Recycling will pick up items in any bag or container.

"Simple Recycling has saved taxpayers money by diverting items from the solid waste stream," Mayor

Dan Champagne said. "Scheduling pickups will reduce fuel consumption and make the program even more environmentally friendly."

During fiscal year 2020-2021, the Simple Recycling program diverted 18.11 tons of discarded items from the solid waste stream, resulting in a savings in tipping fees.

Use Simple Recycling to dispose of clothing, toys, sleeping bags, pots and pans, toys, shoes, blankets, tools, backpacks, purses, drapes and curtains, silverware, coats and jackets, pillows and dishes.

Mailboxes

Now is the time to check mailboxes and mailbox posts to ensure they are ready for snow season. Replace loose nails with screws, tighten or replace loose screws, replace loose or deteriorated wood and reinforce the post.

The Town's policy is to replace mailboxes that are hit by a plow, but not boxes damaged by snow thrown by a plow. Replacements are standard mailboxes.

Bulky Item Pickups

Public Works offers bulky item pickup for a fee. Pickups are on Wednesdays.

- To schedule call Public Works at (860) 870-3500 from 7:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- Payment by cash or check made to the Town of Vernon must be received by end of the day Monday.
- Fees for a 7-foot by 4-foot square space is \$45. Disposal of air conditioners, refrigerators, freezers, dehumidifiers is an additional \$20 each.
- Items must be placed curbside no earlier than 24 hours in advance.

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VERNON SENIOR CENTER

The Vernon Senior Center is looking forward to a very busy fall and winter season with special events, the return of many activities, and new program offerings.

In recognition of Veterans Day, we will bring together members who are veterans to honor their service with an afternoon luncheon. All veteran members are invited to attend and we look forward to recognizing them for their service. The Veterans Group meets monthly with Sherri Vogt, Veterans Liaison, from Hartford HealthCare at Home, who provides information on veteran entitlement programs.

We will celebrate the holidays with a traditional Holiday Luncheon. This is a wonderful time to gather members to share a delicious meal while enjoying a musical performance by Noah Lis. Staff and members look forward to this holiday event, and there are always a few gift surprises throughout the afternoon.

The Fitness Center is open! Personal Trainers from Select Physical Therapy design fitness programs that keep members in shape. We also offer fitness classes. Chair Yoga and Tai Chi are a couple of our most popular classes. But that's not all, we also have Line Dance classes and virtual Balance and Strength classes that keep members on their feet and fit.

A variety of health and wellness programs are available including: Foot Care, Hearing & Vision Screenings and health-related presentations. In September, we launched a year-long program "Block Diabetes with the Prevent T2" program, hosted by the Eastern CT Health Network. This program focuses on preventing



A Barbeque dinner and musical entertainment, by Steel-N-Eazy, was enjoyed by members at the "End of Summer Bash."

diabetes by educating members on nutrition, physical activity, and stress management.

The "Grab & Go" Nutritional Lunch program is very popular. Chef-prepared meals are provided on Tuesdays & Thursdays.

Support groups are essential for those who have daily caregiver challenges and we're here to help. The Eastern CT Health Network hosts the Vernon Alzheimer's Support Group, Hartford Healthcare hosts a monthly Parkinson's Support Group, and the Alzheimer's Association and Home Helpers® facilitates a monthly Virtual Dementia Caregiver Support Group.

Members love to have fun and socialize! Weekly games are offered on Tuesdays, from Bingo to Trivia. The Billiards room is always busy and we also offer Ping Pong. For outdoor enthusiasts, members can play Pickleball, Shuffleboard, Horseshoes, Bocce, Cornhole or Ladder Toss on our outdoor recreational courts. Movie lovers can join us for the Friday movie or the Film Critics Club. The monthly Book Club and the "Mysteries & Just Desserts" Book Club are designed for those who love to read and want to share literary critique.

Special interest groups offer a forum for conversation and sharing of

projects and ideas. Some of the special groups include: Genealogy Group, Crochet & Knitting Group, the Poetry Corner, and Free Drawing Group.

We encourage creativity through the monthly "Make It & Take It" paint classes and the Crafty Creations class, which creates a different craft project each month. We also have a Watercolor Painting

Class, Card Class, and a Jewelry Making Class. There are a variety of craft classes for all skill levels.

Members are out and about this fall. They enjoyed a Hudson River Cruise, a jaunt to Meredith, NH to board the Turkey Train, and several members ventured to Iceland for a 7-day trip to view the Northern Lights. In November, members look forward to a trip to Boston to view the paintings of Van Gogh. In December, members will visit the Aqua Turf Club, for lunch and a performance by The Edwards Twins. An Alaska adventure and a trip to South Carolina are on the calendar for 2022, and a variety of day trips and multi-day trips are being planned for next year.

Membership to the Vernon Senior Center is easy. New members are required to complete a Membership Information Sheet and submit with a lifetime membership fee of \$10 for Vernon residents or \$15 for Non-Vernon residents.

For more information on the Vernon Senior Center, please call 860-870-3680, visit the website: <https://www.vernon-ct.gov/departments-services/senior-center>, or the Facebook page: Vernon Senior Center at Bolton Road.

Submitted by: Maureen Gabriele, *Director*

Athletic Director Jeffrey Farrell Dyes his Hair Pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month

On Friday, October 1, 2021, Rockville High School Athletic Director Jeffrey Farrell followed through on a commitment he made to members of the girls' volleyball team and allowed them to dye his hair pink for the kickoff of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Team members were decked out in pink socks, shirts and bandanas Friday, October 1st, which marks the beginning of the annual observance.

Team member Stella Scheff said Mr. Farrell agreed to the temporary



change in hair color if the girls won their first game.

But before he allowed the hair painting to begin, he read the label on the can to make sure it could be washed out relatively easily. He did spend Friday with pink hair and a tinge of pink in his eyebrows. The girls even put some pink glitter into Mr. Farrell's hair, although he protested that he did not agree to glitter.

Submitted by: Dr. Joseph Macary, Superintendent

New Board of Education Student Representative

Rockville High School student Anaya Tolton is the new Board of Education Student Representative. Anaya is an 11th grade student whose favorite classes are creative writing and American studies.

She is involved with Rockville High School sports and made the JV Volleyball Team. Outside of school she participates in basketball.

Anaya's hobbies include reading and arts and crafts. Her family includes her younger brother and dog



Shadow. Anaya's future plans include becoming an author. She would also love to play college basketball.

Serving as a student representative is a big role. Anaya and returning Rockville High School Board of Education Student Representative James Wheeler will be representing the Vernon Public Schools students at the Board of Education Meetings. Welcome Anaya!

Submitted by: Dr. Joseph Macary, Superintendent

Say Hello to PermitLink

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Beginning in October 2021, the Vernon Building Department has transitioned to a new cloud-based permitting software.

In an effort to enhance customer service and staff efficiency, PermitLink will be the new platform Vernon residents and contractors will use when applying for permits online.

After a one-time registration (by providing an email and creating a password) PermitLink will allow

Building Department staff to stay connected to the applicant throughout the permitting process through automated email notifications, and allow applicants to check the status of their application 24/7 through the online portal.

PermitLink will email all supporting documents including permit cards and certificates, and allow inspectors to email inspection reports to the applicant from mobile devices in the field. This transition will move the

Vernon Building Department toward its goal of reducing dependency on paper forms, creating a more efficient permit application process, and enhancing field operations.

We ask that our residents and contractors bear with us during our transition, as we work to enhance the permitting and inspection experience. Thank you.

Submitted by: Steve Prattson, Building Official

The winter season is nearly here and the Rockville Public Library staff are pulling out all the stops to make it the best ever.

We still offer curbside pick-up for library items. Pick-ups can be scheduled at any time during operating hours. Feel free to call us at (860) 875-5892 or email: rockvillelibrary@vernon-ct.gov

Did you know that you can check-out e-books, downloadable audio books and magazines on an app called Libby (by Overdrive) for free? You just need to create an account using your library card and you will be able to download and access items on any device (phone, tablet, laptop or computer).

The library will be hosting a variety of programs, including workshops, book discussion, trivia, and crafts, for patrons of all ages. For the safety of all, we encourage mask use indoors. Want to attend? You can register for programs on our website: www.rockvillepubliclibrary.org

ADULT PROGRAMS

Understanding Your Senses (online)

November 15 @ 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

This presentation focuses on the many ways participants can learn to use their senses, such as smell, hearing, sight and touch to connect with their loved ones. Participants are given step-by-step instructions and demonstrations for each sense. Registrants will receive a Zoom link by email the day before the presentation.

Book Discussion Group

November 16, December 21, January 19

Each month, on the third Tuesday of every month our book discussion meets. November's title is *Three Things About Elsie* by Joanna Cannon. Check our event calendar for the December and January titles. Copies are available for circulation at the check out desk.

Winter Scene Terrarium

November 29 - December 10

Create a magical winter scene in a globe shaped terrarium. Use miniature items, snow and more to create your own unique creation. Available while supplies last.

Winter Lace Votives

January 3 - 14

Adult Take and Make. Using glass jars and lace, turn ordinary objects into a pretty votive. Available while supplies last.

Smart Solutions for Heart Health

January 19th at 4pm via Zoom

Jill Patterson, RDN returns and will share practical and easy ways to adopt a heart healthy lifestyle. Registrants will receive a Zoom link by email the day before the presentation.

Magical Window Stars

January 24 - February 4

With some folds and tape, turn waxy kite paper into beautiful stars to hang in your window. The sunlight streaming in lights them up. Available while supplies last.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

1000 Books Before Kindergarten - Register anytime. Please stop in to obtain your start-up packet.

Gratitude Journal Take and Make

November 15 thru November 24

Start a new tradition with a family gratitude journal. Fill blank pages with memories throughout the month or year. Grab and go. Limit 1 per family, while supplies last.

Grab 'n' Go Kits:

Dec. 1-17 - Oversized Greeting Card Craft Kit. Pick up in the Children's Dept. while supplies last.

Jan. 3-14 - DIY Catapult. Pick up in the Children's Dept. while supplies last.

Lil' Bookworms Storytime:

Nov. 10, 10:30 a.m. - Zoom Storytime.

Dec. 8, 10:30 a.m. - Zoom Storytime.

Jan. 12, 10:30 a.m. - Zoom Storytime.

Email rockvillelibrary@vernon-ct.gov to register.

TEEN PROGRAMS

Nov. 5 - Teens Create, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Meet in the teen area.

Nov. 11 - Manga Club, 4-5 p.m. Meet in the teen area.

Nov. 18 - Teen Trivia, 4-5 p.m. Meet in the teen area. Show what you know! Teen trivia for grades 7-12.

Categories include: books, geekdom, zoology, and retro throwbacks (gizmos, music, & pop culture from the 70s-90s).

Dec. 1-17, Beaded Ornament Grab 'n Go Kit. Ages 12-19. Pick up at the 1st Floor Circulation Desk while supplies last.

Dec. 3 - Teens Create, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Meet in the teen area.

Dec. 9 - Manga Club, 4-5 p.m. Meet in the teen area.

Dec. 16 - Teen Trivia, 4-5 p.m. Meet in the teen area.

Jan. 3-21, Paint-by-Sticker Travel Poster Grab 'n Go Kit. Ages 12-19. Pick up at the 1st Floor Circulation Desk while supplies last.

Jan. 7 - Teens Create, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Meet in the teen area.

Jan. 13 - Manga Club, 4-5 p.m. Meet in the teen area.

Jan. 20 - Teen Trivia, 4-5 p.m. Meet in the teen area.

Submitted by: Jennifer Johnston-Marius, *Director*

The Town of Vernon Fire Department is proud to announce it placed into service the new Squad 441 on July 6th, 2021. This company represents the consolidation of two fire companies, both with rich histories and a legacy of dedicated service in the former Rockville Fire Department and the current Town of Vernon Fire Department. Those companies, based out of the Nye Street Firehouse, include Engine Tank 441 (Hockanum Hose Co.) and Rescue 441.

The Hockanum Hose Company was one of the first companies established within the Rockville Fire Department in 1854 as many mill owners sought protection for their manufacturing properties, and for the homes of the mill workers who lived in the

greater Rockville area. Many of the mill workers became members of the department. The Hockanum Hose Company has seen its equipment progress from horse-drawn hose carts to the modern trucks we use today.

Rescue 441, originally called Rescue Salvage 141 during the Rockville Fire Department era, was established in 1974 using a retired Vernon Police van. The founding members included Battalion Chief Robert Kelley, Ernie Willard, Bart Blonstein, Richard Kingsbury, Ray Blanchette, Doug Say, Paul Bassette, Gay Kelley, and Charles Konarski. Mrs. Kelley served as a registered nurse with the company. The Emergency Medical Services was in its infancy. The rescue tools during this time included a hand-pump

operated "Jaws of Life." Throughout the years, the Rescue Company has seen its equipment and apparatus improve to meet the needs of the community.

The new Squad 441 is a 2021 Pierce Enforcer, which provides both fire suppression capabilities as well as technical and vehicle rescue capabilities. What once required two separate companies now can be done efficiently with one truck and our dedicated and well-trained volunteers.

The companies of the new Squad 441 and recently delivered ET-341 held a "Wet Down" ceremony at the Nye Street Firehouse on Saturday, October 2nd, 2021. This fire service traditional ceremony blesses the new apparatus and affords an opportunity for the community to see the equipment and meet the personnel.

If you would like to join our volunteer family please visit: www.vernonfire.com for more information! Photos provided by various contributors.

Submitted By: Robert Babcock,
Assistant Fire Chief



First Hockanum crew assembled in front of station house approximately 1858.



Above, Rescue 441 was established in 1974 using a retired Vernon Police van.



The Youth Service Bureau (YSB) is a Town department that provides prevention and intervention programs, coordinates services to youth and refers youth and families to needed services. The YSB has been providing these services for more than 40 years. Here are two of the many programs we have to engage young people.

Peer Advocates program at Rockville High School

The Peer Advocates is a group of students who act as leaders and role models at Rockville High School. They work to better the school and community, and educate students about the importance of good decision making. Their activities include:

- Giving tours to new students.
- Organizing school activities such as the dodgeball tournament, Blue and Gold Run, Mock Car Crash and the Overnight Volleyball Lock-in
- Planning education and prevention activities to educate students, such as the #No3DDriving – Don't Drive Drunk, Drugged or Distracted campaign, self-care, suicide prevention and safe dating activities

- Collecting gift cards for RHS students in need during the holidays
- Organizing and participate in various community service activities
- Participating in REAL TALK Vernon in collaboration with the Vernon ROCKS Coalition to prevent underage alcohol use and prescription drug misuse.

There is an application and interview process that takes place once a year. Students interested in getting more involved at Rockville High School in a positive way are encouraged to apply. For more information, please contact Kim McTighe at kimberly.mctighe@vernonct.org

The Vernon School Readiness Council

The YSB takes a leadership role in creating a coordinated network of community services. This is accomplished through YSB involvement and membership on a variety of boards and commissions, including the Vernon School Readiness Council.

The Vernon School Readiness Council is a partnership of dedicated parents,

educators, community leaders, policy makers, and businesses all focused on the mission of ensuring that every child in Vernon will start school ready to learn. The council oversees the School Readiness grant funded by the State of Connecticut through the Connecticut Office Of Early Childhood. The grant funds 50 school readiness slots in the Vernon community for preschool aged children.

With funding support from the Connecticut Council for Philanthropy, the Vernon School Readiness Council is currently working to strengthen its capacity with a focus on increasing the role of parents and caregivers in collaborative decision making about the local early childhood system. If you are a parent interested in learning more about how you can participate and partner with the VSRC please contact Michelle Hill at mhill@vernon-ct.gov.

For information about any of our programs or referral services, please call 860-870-3555 or contact Michelle Hill at mhill@vernon-ct.gov

Submitted by: Michelle Hill, *Director*

LEAF, continued from p. 17

Dr, Fernwood Dr, Gaynor Pl, George Dr, Gerald Dr, Grand Av, Grandview Ter, Hamilton Dr, Hany Ln, Hartl Dr, Hayes Dr, Haylin Dr, Highland Av, Hublard Dr, Ironwood Dr, Janet Ln, Jeff Rd, Jeniffer Ln, John Dr, Kenwood Dr, Lawler Rd, Lawrence St, Leona Dr, Lily Ln, Lorraine Dr, Loveland Hill Rd, Main St, Maple St, Mark Cir, Montauk Dr, Morrison St, Morrison St Ext, Mountain St, Neil Rd, Newmarker Rd, North Park St, North View Dr, Nye St, Oak St, Old Town Rd, Olive Ln, Olson Dr, Orchard St, Overbrook Dr, Park St, Penfield Dr, Phoenix St (south), Pillsbury Hill #1, Pillsbury Hill #2, Pine St, Pinewood Dr, Pinnacle Rd, Pleasant St, Pleasantview Dr, Prospect

St, Quail Crossing, Rainbow Trl, Rau St, Rau St Ext, Raymond St, Ridgewood Dr, Risley Rd, River St, Riverside Dr, St. Bernard's Terrace, School St, Skinner Rd, Spring St, Sunset Ter, Talcott Av, Talcottville Rd, Tallwood Dr, Taylor St, Thompson St, Thompson Ct, Thrall Rd, Trumble St, Tyler Knoll, Union St, Valerie Dr, Village St, Wappingwood Rd, Ward St, Watson Rd, Webster St, Welles Rd, Wellwood Cir, Werner Dr, West St, West Main St, Westwood Dr, Willow Stream Dr, Wilson Ln, Windsor Av, Windsorville Rd, Wolcott Ln, Woodland St, Worcester Rd.

GROUP C STREETS - Anchorage Rd, Baker Rd, Bamforth Rd, Beechwood Rd, Beverly Rd, Bolton Rd, Boxwood Dr, Brandy Hill Rd, Castlewood Dr,

Cemetery Rd, Claire Rd, Crest Dr, Cubes Dr, Deepwood Dr, Discovery Rd, Dobson Rd, Dockerel Rd, Duncaster Ln, Eleanor St, Eleanor St Ext, Forestview Dr, Foxcroft Rd, Gottier Dr, Grier Rd, Harriet St, Hatch Hill Rd, Howard Dr, Huntington Dr, Indian Trail, Irene Dr, Juniper Ln, Lakeview Dr, Laurel Rd, Llynwood Dr, Marjorie Ln, Maxwell Dr, Merline Rd, Miller Rd, Miriam Dr, Oakmoor Dr, Old Dobson Rd, Patricia Dr, Pineview Dr, Pitkin Rd, Ravens Croft, Reservoir Rd, Seneca Dr, Sunningdale Ln, Sutton Dr, Sycamore Rd, Tamarack Ln, Tiffin Dr, Tobias Ct, Valley Falls Rd, Vernon School Rd, Vinetta Dr, Walker Ter, Wheeler Rd, Wildwood Rd, Wildwood Rd So, Wilshire Dr, Wilshire Rd, Zoey Dr.

Submitted by: Dwight Ryniewicz, *Director*

The Friends of Rockville Public Library is a nonprofit volunteer organization. The Friends advocate for the library by annually purchasing museum passes and, when our funds allow, purchase the Book Page obtainable at the circulation desk, and other requests of the library.

We raise money several ways. The Friends usually holds a popular holiday cookie sale bringing our community together by making phone calls to bakers, by baking, and by putting platters together. This allows us to fund requests of the library. Because of the pandemic, we decided that our cookie sale, usually held in December, would have to be skipped for another year.

We also raise funds by asking that bottle return receipts, addressed to the Friends, be brought or mailed to the library.

With the funds raised in 2021 we

have continued to purchase museum passes as well as the Book Page, and purchased nine gift cards for the Summer Reading Program.

The Friends also support the library by delivering books to patrons who are homebound and not able to make it to the library on their own.

The library is an important asset to our community with books, audio books, movies, computers, adult and children's crafts, programs, museum passes, and sometimes quiet places to study or read. Our first meeting of 2021 was not held until September 9th in the library and it was wonderful to see familiar and new faces.

The Friends is a membership organization. If you would like to support us applications can be obtained on the RPL website or at the library circulation desk. Our meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at noon with our December

meeting scheduled for Thursday, December 2nd and, for now, we ask that attendees bring their own lunch, snacks, and, drinks. Learn more at our web page RockvillePublicLibrary.org/support/friends-of-the-library.

Member Vernon Volunteers Cooperative.

Submitted by: Donna Barnas, *Member*

TREES, continued from p. 12

than two dozen large oak trees in a single afternoon. The estimated cost for the work is over \$50,000, but Yerke did it for free.

"I grew up here in Vernon and I learned to swim here at Valley Falls," Yerke said. "This is a great way for me to give back to my hometown."

Yerke studied urban forestry at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and is a Connecticut-licensed arborist.

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Fans of choral music will be excited to hear that the Vernon Chorale is planning a live, in-person concert for December 4th at St. Bernard Church in Vernon.

When the pandemic, with all its uncertainty, first upended rehearsals in March 2020, Vernon Chorale Artistic Director Ehren Brown was determined to find a way for the chorale to survive.

“My mission for the pandemic was simple,” Brown said. “Whatever we did, I wanted to do it with the goal of making sure the family was still together by the time we made it out the other side.”

To that end, Brown and the chorale’s board of directors devised ways to keep singers united and creating music that could reach the Vernon community. Rehearsals shifted online, with Brown directing from the living room of Kathleen Bartkowski, the chorale’s collaborative pianist, and singers joining in, muted, via Zoom. While the experience was challenging and sometimes surreal, the chorale released its first virtual chorus recording, “Lord, For Thy Tender Mercy’s Sake,” on YouTube. Warmly received, that first experiment provided the template for the chorale’s strategy to adapt.

The Vernon Chorale’s Board of



Ethan Brown and the Chorale. Photo: Brett Martin

Directors, helmed by President Cindy Trenholm, soon determined that the entire 2020-2021 season should go virtual. Singers continued with online rehearsals and produced six more virtual choir recordings, including the lively “Sleigh Ride.” Though singers were isolated from each other, the virtual season provided a welcome social link and unexpected growth. Trenholm invited feedback and noted, “Some singers talked about recording many times, but while doing so learned the music better and better.”

One warm night in early September, the Vernon Chorale reunited to rehearse in person again, and despite masks and social distancing, they rejoiced in being able to lift their voices together. Brown has embraced this sense of homecoming for the

chorale’s upcoming concert. “Christmas to me is about coming home ... to family, to tradition, to hope, to joy,” he said. “I decided that was all very much needed by both the singers and audience alike, so I designed a program to encapsulate as many of those feelings as possible, to do my best to create a feeling of coming home.”

The Vernon Chorale’s next concert, “Love Came Down at Christmas,” is on December 4th at 7:30 p.m., at St. Bernard Church in Vernon. CDC and state health guidelines will be followed.

For more visit VernonChorale.Org. Member of the Vernon Volunteers’ Collaborative.

Submitted by: Caragh O’Brien, *Member*



The ladies of the Vernon Chorale. Photo: Brett Martin

STORMWATER, continued from p. 18

of the channel and flood adjacent properties. If you know of an area where this might be occurring, kindly notify the Engineering Department or the Public Works Department so that we can assess if additional maintenance is required.

Current Land Use Regulations require the application of Low-Impact Development (LID) techniques such as porous

pavements, retention and recharge system and minimizing unnecessary impervious surfaces. We are developing a more detailed understanding of the Town’s drainage patterns, to assess areas that are more prone to storm related issues and where improvements can be made to reduce impacts to property owners, but also to preserve water resources throughout the Town. The Vernon Inland Wetlands

Commission reviews these types of activities in and adjacent to Wetlands and Watercourses. These natural systems have evolved over centuries and are our best defense against severe flooding and downstream impacts.

Anyone interested in joining this Commission is asked to contact the Mayor’s Office.

Submitted by: David Smith, *Town Engineer*

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