



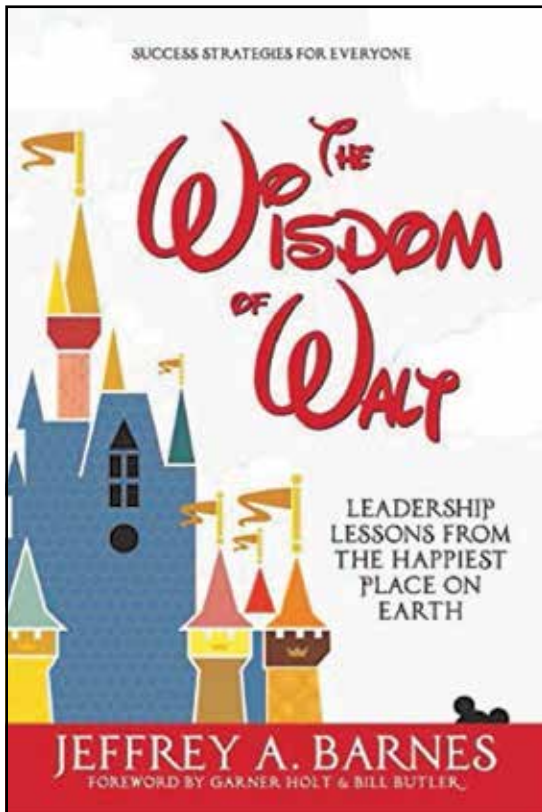
Special


Summer Edition



**VERNON
VOICE**

Hi-Ho! We're bringing a piece of *Disney* to Vernon!



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In addition to live streaming, you can watch archived coffeehouses on our YouTube Channel 24/7 or on the Community Voice Channel.



(l to r) Adrienne Reedy on July 9; Scally Brothers on August 6; Bennett Family on Sept. 3.

Founded in 1995, Jacob's Well shares Good News through the Performing Arts. This year, we're meeting in the Union Church sanctuary. Admission is free and dress is casual. Consider yourself invited! For more details, call Drew Crandall at 860.871.6500 or see JacobsWellCoffeehouse.com.


Jacob's Well
Christian Coffeehouse

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Produced by
the Chronicle

Publisher: Michael Schroeder
Advertising Manager: Jan Koivisto
Production Manager: Lynn Coleman
Cover Design & Layout: Heidi Graf

Next edition: OCTOBER 2021 | To advertise please contact:
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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I am hoping that you enjoy this edition of the "Vernon Voice." This Summer Edition offers articles announcing summer activities, employment opportunities and updates on returning special events. Highlights include "July in the Sky," the "Summer Days Carnival" and "National Night Out."

In addition, some of our students and department employees have received special recognition for their efforts in the classroom and on the job and we have included articles telling you about their accomplishments.

As we move through our reopening we are preparing our offices to accommodate visitors without appointments in a safe and orderly environment. Please excuse our appearance as we work through these changes.

The magazine also provides information about our Vaccination Clinics. It is important that we all continue to follow all CDC Guidelines as our lives return to normal.

To all our students, summer is a fun time, but don't forget to read and keep up with your studies. Our Rockville Public Library has many programs you may want to check out!

I wish everyone a safe and healthy summer season!



Daniel A. Champagne
Mayor, Town of Vernon





CROSSING GUARDS NEEDED

The Town of Vernon needs school crossing guards for the 2021-2022 school year. Post times are:



7:45 AM – 8:15 AM

8:15 AM – 8:45 AM

2:45 PM – 3:15 PM

Crossing guards have summers off and posts are only on school days. Please apply through the Town of Vernon website or Google search "Crossing Guard-Town of Vernon"

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Please get in touch with me if you are looking to sell your home in the near future. I would love to talk to you about what I can do to present your home in its best light and maximize your returns.

I'm not only a Vernon resident, I work and specialize in the Vernon area.

July in the Sky



June 30, 2021*

HENRY PARK

120 South Street
Music By: "The Reminisants"

Activities: "Fun Zone"
Food; Face Painting;
Obstacle Course, Fireworks
and more.

**Push Pull and Pedal Parade Meet in
the Ladd and Hall Parking Lot 6:45 PM.
Parade will step off at 7:30 PM.
Use your best red, white and blue
decorating. Good Luck!**

*RAIN DATE: July 7, 2021

CENTRAL PARK

14 Park Place
Music by: Live DJ

Activities: "Big Jims
Foam Machine"; Face
Painting; Food, vendor
booths and crafters



National Night Out

National Night Out is back this summer and the Vernon Police Department, Rockville Community Alliance, Vernon Community Network, and other organizations have big plans.

National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign intended to promote police-community partnerships and foster a sense of community and make neighborhoods safer, better places to live.

This year's **National Night Out is Tuesday, August 3rd, 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**, in the Ladd & Hall parking lot in downtown Rockville.

"National Night Out is a great opportunity for our police officers to meet our residents in a fun, informal atmosphere," Vernon Mayor Dan Champagne said. "These partnerships make our community strong."

National Night Out also gives residents an opportunity to learn about services that are available to them from local government and social service organizations. Vendor booths are open during the event to share information and offer goods and services to event participants. "The Rockville Community Alliance is proud to be a partner in this great event, bringing residents together to build community and a strong connection to our Police Department," said Tom Didio, Alliance Member.

"The Vernon Police Department has been doing National Night Out since I arrived in Vernon and it's something I really enjoy," said Police Chief James Kenny. "I get to meet people I would not ordinarily have the opportunity to talk to. I've formed a lot of partnerships and friendships. It's an event our department looks forward to every year."

For this year's National Night Out there will be free food, and free activities for children, including The Big Bounce and Big Jim's Fabulous Famous Foam Machine. Free school supplies will also be available. Vernon firefighters and police will also bring trucks and other equipment to display for a "touch a truck" event. Miss Greater Rockville and her Court will also attend. Come join the fun!

Submitted by: David Owens, *Communications Specialist*

Vernon's premier summer event, July in the Sky, is back Wednesday, June 30th with a massive 75th Anniversary fireworks display. (The rain date is July 7th.)

The fireworks show will feature more than 1,500 shells and will begin at approximately 9:30 p.m. The display will be fired from Fox Hill Tower in Henry Park and will be visible from the park and downtown Rockville.

Music, food vendors and family-friendly activities will take place in Henry Park and in downtown Rockville to entertain people before the fireworks show begins. COVID Vaccination will be available in both locations.

The events at Henry Park are organized by the Vernon Parks and Recreation Department and the downtown Rockville activities are organized by the Rockville Community Alliance.

"The pandemic forced us to cancel July in the Sky last year, but we're coming back strong," Vernon Mayor Dan Champagne said. "July in the Sky is a great event that people from all over look forward to. And there's no better way to kick off the celebration of our nation's 245th birthday. I encourage you to join our celebration."

Henry Park will close at 4 p.m. so that food vendors and others can move in and set up. The park reopens at 6 p.m. for people to seek out their fireworks viewing spots and to enjoy music and other events. No street parking in the area of the park is permitted.

In downtown Rockville, East Main Street from Elm to Court streets, Park Place, St. Bernard's Terrace and portions of Park and Elm streets will close at 6 p.m. so that vendors can set up, and so that people can safely view the fireworks from Central Park.

People should bring blankets and chairs to stake out their seating spots for the fireworks.

No pets, alcohol, bicycles, skateboards, fireworks or sparklers are permitted in the Henry Park. The same goes for downtown Rockville, except for pre-fireworks "Push, Pull and Pedal Patriotic Parade".

There are still sponsorship and vendor opportunities available for activities in Rockville and at Henry Park and event volunteers are always welcome. For Henry Park, please contact Vernon Parks Recreation at parksandrec@vernon-ct.gov. For downtown Rockville please contact the Rockville Community Alliance at thomas.didio@snet.net.

Submitted by: David Owens, *Communications Specialist*

Congratulations to Vernon Public Schools 2021-2022 Teacher of the Year – Gifted and Talented Teacher Mrs. Regina Lee.

Mrs. Lee grew up on a small family farm in Portugal where she learned to shear sheep, sow wheat, press olive oil, and make cheese. When she moved to the United States, she fell in love with the Public Library, never having seen one before, and still remembers how amazing it felt to read as many books as she wanted for free!

In the Hartford Public School system, she was blessed with teachers who helped her grasp the English language, and who nurtured her spirit and her passion for learning. She holds a special place in her heart for the amazing educators who inspired her to become a teacher, especially for Bill Reid, her 7th grade teacher.

School was an adventure, even though it was hard at first, and that adventure has continued for a lifetime. Mrs. Lee is a graduate of Trinity College and received her Master's in English and Language Arts from St. Joseph College. She also received her 6th year degree in Gifted Education from the University of Connecticut, and is dual certified in regular and special education.

Mrs. Lee has been a Gifted & Talented teacher in Vernon for 10 years. At Vernon Center Middle School. Mrs. Lee is passionate about the National History Day competition, the Spelling and Math Bees, Lego League,



writing contests, and the Veterans Day Ceremony. In the near future, she plans to host a school-wide Scrabble and Chess tournament, as well as a Lego Building Challenge. Working collaboratively with her VCMS colleagues makes her love her job even more.

On the day she learned she was Vernon's Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Lee's students and colleagues clapped and cheered wildly for her. Mrs. Lee said she loves being a teacher at VCMS and cares deeply about her students and the school community.

Mrs. Lee is most happy when she is spending time with her husband and children, her hamster Cheeto, her students, and her former Girl Scouts. She lives in Vernon and is proud to have had all four of her children grow up in the Vernon School System. She is also grateful to have been an RHS Band parent for 12 years! Her hobbies include reading, sewing clothes, traveling, watching movies, chatting with anyone who will listen, partaking in afternoon tea, and playing board games. She is not afraid of big spiders and dreams of having a tarantula as a class pet.

Congratulations Mrs. Lee!

Submitted by: Dr. Joseph P. Macary, *Superintendent*





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The top ten graduates from the Rockville High School Class of 2021 excelled academically, challenging themselves in all curriculum areas, completing numerous Honors, Advanced Placement, and Early College Experience courses. Congratulations to the following “Top Ten 2021 Scholars” at Rockville High School:


Saher Ashraf
Charles Bannon
Emma Blanchet
Madison Carangelo
Alexander Dionne
Chad Moreau
Caitlyn Simler
Carley Simler
Jennifer Simmons
Ava Ward

Submitted by: Dr. Joseph P. Macary, *Superintendent*



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Rockville High School Athletic Director Jeffrey Farrell Named Recipient of the Patsy Lemley Kamercia Outstanding New Athletic Administrator Award for 2021

The Outstanding New Athletic Administrator Award is named in honor and memory of Patsy Lemley Kamercia, the first female president of the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors (CAAD) and the first female inductee into the CAAD Hall of Fame. She was the athletic director at Haddam-Killingworth from 1975 to 1985 and made positive and lasting contributions to CAAD. The award recognizes a “new” athletic administrator who has between 1-3 years experience in the State of Connecticut as a CAAD member and who has made positive contributions to interscholastic athletics at the local, league and state level.

This year’s recipient is Mr. Jeffrey Farrell of Rockville High School, currently in his third year in this role. Congratulations to Mr. Farrell!

Submitted by: Dr. Joseph P. Macary, *Superintendent*



Calling all incoming kindergarten families for the 2021-22 school year! We are so excited to meet you, share exciting news and resources, and support you as you make the transition into a new phase of your school experience. Traditionally, we have hosted an annual Ready Set School Fair for families and their incoming kindergarten students featuring registration, and the opportunity to connect with a wide variety of community organizations, activities, and services. This year, we have shifted to a virtual format and invite you to check out our website and register online. **Please reach out the Vernon Family School and Community Partnership Center 860-896-4651 with any questions.**



Virtual Ready Set School Fair – <https://www.vernonpublicschools.org/departments/family-engagement/ready-set-school-fair-virtual>

Online Registration - <https://www.vernonpublicschools.org/departments/family-engagement/student-registration>

Submitted by: Dr. Joseph P. Macary, *Superintendent*

Police Chief James Kenny is retiring after 15 years of service to the Town of Vernon. Chief Kenny joined the Vernon Police Department on May 22, 2006 and served as Captain until then-Chief Rudolph Rossmy retired. Captain Kenny was promoted to Chief on January 5, 2007.

Chief Kenny grew up in Rocky Hill and graduated from Rocky Hill High School in 1978. He enlisted in the United States Army and entered service in August 1978. Chief Kenny was trained as a military police officer and served at bases in the United States and Germany. He was honorably discharged in August 1981.

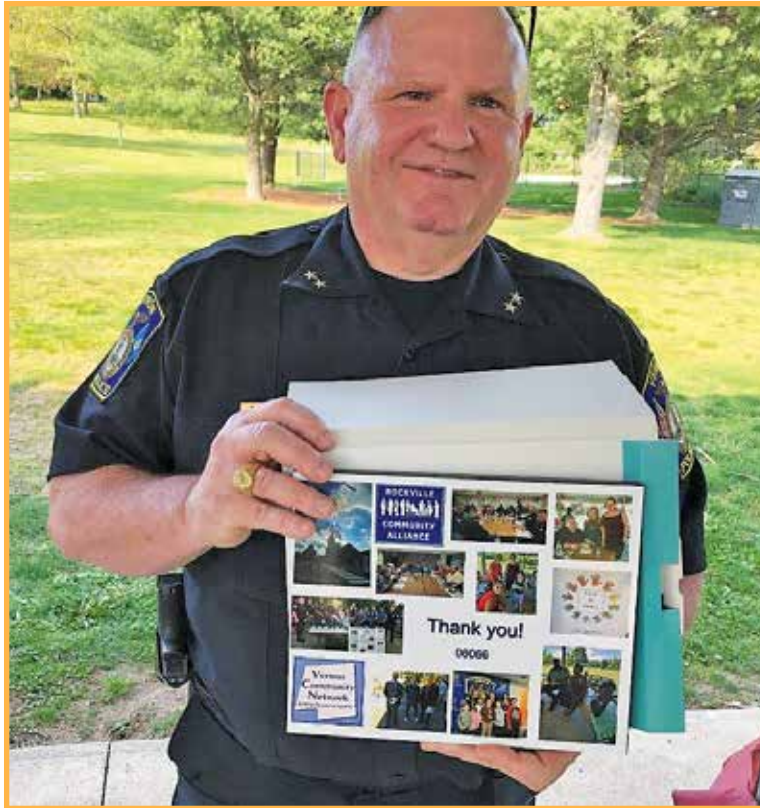
After the Army, Chief Kenny enrolled in Bryant University in Smithfield, Rhode Island, and graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice. While attending Bryant, he worked as a part time constable for the Town of Old Lyme Police Department.

Chief Kenny was hired by the Glastonbury Police Department on July 14, 1985 and was promoted to sergeant on November 25, 1996. In September 1999 Chief Kenny was selected to be one of the original members of the Capital Region Emergency Services Team (CREST). CREST is an emergency services team that is made up of officers from numerous departments in the capitol region.

In April 2000, Chief Kenny was promoted to lieutenant and served as a supervisor in both the patrol and detective divisions in Glastonbury. Chief Kenny also rose through the ranks of CREST to eventually become the team leader. He also served as a Police Officer Standards and Training Council certified instructor, teaching officers in Glastonbury and elsewhere various law enforcement topics.

Chief Kenny retired from Glastonbury Police Department on May 19, 2006 and three days later became the captain of the Vernon Police Department.

The chief has been called on to share his knowledge and



experience at the state level. In January 2008 he was selected to sit on the Governor's Sentencing and Parole Review Task Force. In May 2008 he was selected to be a member of the Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission (CJPAC), a position he held until his retirement.

At the local and regional level, Chief Kenny played an important role as one of the creators of the Blue Plan, a police emergency response guide to serious incidents. After several critical incidents in Connecticut, police leaders determined that a measured, predictable mutual aid plan was needed. Chief Kenny

helped research, coordinate and author the plan that details police response to mutual aid requests in north central Connecticut. He also led the Vernon Police Department through several critical incidents.

In addition, Chief Kenny has played a key role in the Town's response to severe storms from hurricanes to blizzards. He guided the police department through the COVID-19 pandemic. His leadership through many dark days early in the pandemic prepared the department for the many changing protocols and personnel shortages due to infections

During 2020, the nation saw a push for police accountability. Connecticut announced its own police accountability bill in July 2020 and again Chief Kenny rose to the challenge and placed the department in a position to succeed. Chief Kenny has always been an innovator. Vernon had already adopted some provisions of the accountability bill long before they were required. For example, Vernon was one of the first police agencies in Connecticut to issue body cameras to its officers. Our use of force policy and language already incorporated some of the language passed in 2020.

Chief Kenny has always believed in leading from the front and has been a leader and mentor to many people in the Vernon Police Department and beyond.

Submitted by: John Kelley, *Captain*

The Parks and Recreation Department announces an exciting schedule for the Mayor Dan Champagne's Summer Concert Series at Henry Park. Bring your chairs and blankets and get ready to dance to the beat, or sit back and enjoy the music.

The free concerts are held Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on the McCoy Baseball Field at Henry

Park, 120 South Street, Vernon. This year's concerts are sponsored by Santini Homes and Juliano's Pools and Spas.

This summer's lineup is:

Vernon's own 102nd Army Band,
July 29th

**Nightshift, a 60s, 70s and 80s
cover band,** August 5th
(rain date August 10th)

Dyn-O-Myte Disco Review, a 70s dance music cover band that performs pop, rock, disco and funk, August 12th (rain date August 17th)

Please visit vernonrec.org or the parks and recreation Facebook page for updates or more information.

Submitted by: Marty Sitler, *Director Parks and Recreation*



Vernon Parks and Recreation Summer Camps are returning in 2021. Camps are offered for children as young as 4 through eighth grade.

Center 375 at 375 Hartford Turnpike hosts Kiddie Camp and Center 375 Camp. This site features a large indoor game room, multi-purpose programming rooms, outdoor field space and playground. On rainy days we take advantage of the gymnasium!

Camp Newhoca is held along Middle Bolton Lake. Daily activities include arts and crafts,

boating, time at the beach, group and cooperative games and more. Campers will explore the Camp Newhoca trails and may even leave behind a memento in the Art Building.

New this year, in partnership with the Vernon Board of Education, a partial day summer camp will be offered at Vernon Center Middle School. VCMS Summer Camp coincides with the summer learning schedule at VCMS. This camp begins at 11:30 a.m. Monday through Thursday, and offers a full day on Fridays. Campers will have

access to the gymnasium, cafeteria and outside fields.

The free summer lunch program provided by the Vernon Youth Services Bureau and Vernon Public Schools will be available at all Summer Camp locations!

COVID-19 guidance provided by the Office of Early Childhood will be implemented at all Vernon Parks and Recreation Summer Camps.

Submitted by: Marty Sitler, *Director Parks and Recreation*



Whether you are looking for a beautiful view to just gaze at the water or jump in to cool off this summer, come check out our two waterfront aquatic areas. Valley Falls, located at 300 Valley Falls Road, offers beautiful walking trails, fishing, a braille trail, a full-size pavilion, a sandy beach and is great for bird watching. Valley Fall is open sunrise to sunset. Park entrance fees apply when lifeguards are on duty.

Newhoca Park is located on picturesque Middle Bolton Lake, 185 Grier Road, and is the perfect place to bring a picnic lunch and spend a relaxing afternoon on the beach or in the water! Newhoca Park is open to the public when lifeguards are on duty. Both waterfronts are slated to open for swimming the week of June 21st. Check vernonrec.org or the parks and recreation Facebook page for updates, schedules and fees.

Submitted by: Marty Sitler, *Director Parks and Recreation*

Valley Falls Beach



Newhoca Beach

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Come See What's POPPIN'
at The 4th of July Event
"July in the Sky"

The Vernon Parks and Recreation Department is already gearing up for the 2021/2022 School Year by providing lots of fun for children after school!

Extend your child's day during the school year with the After School Club (ASC). ASC is held at all five elementary schools. At the end of the school day your child transitions to the After School Club in the cafeteria. The program features homework time, playground and field games and gymnasium activities. A snack is also provided. ASC is available on half days too!

For a program to operate we must meet minimum registration so remember to sign up soon! Registration for the 2021-2022 school year begins in August. Two registration options are available. Pick your schedule, which allows you to choose specific days within a

month, or register for every day.

After School Club Vacation Camps are available during winter break, April break and several "no school" days during the year. Each camp is full of fun activities. Past camps have featured special activities presented by the Connecticut Science Center and Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo.

Are you interested in joining the After School Club staff team and providing high quality programming to children in Vernon? Applications for the 2021-2022 school year can be found online at www.vernon-ct.gov

Submitted by: Marty Sitler, *Director Parks and Recreation*

Help Wanted:

The Vernon Parks and Recreation Departments is currently accepting applications for Summer Camp Counselor, Lifeguards, Seasonal Maintenance and Facility Monitors. Please email parksandrec@vernon-ct.gov for more information or visit <https://www.applitrack.com/vernonct/onlineapp/default.aspx> to apply.



Submitted by: Marty Sitler, *Director Vernon Parks and Recreation*

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On May 17 the Town of Vernon Fire Department held its annual awards ceremony at Rockville High School. The evenings event recognizes and honors the members of the department with various awards and citations for both individual and team efforts of life saving, heroism and valor displayed at various calls for

emergency services throughout the year. Along with these awards, there is an annual recipient for the *Junior Firefighter, Firefighter and Officer of the Year* awards. Chosen by his or her peers, these awards recognize members who consistently go above and beyond, who stand out and make a difference in their company and the department.

Junior Firefighter of the Year was presented to Adam Bowman, the fourth generation of his family to serve in the Fire Department, recognized for his hard work both in school and in the fire department and for his eagerness to learn and volunteer.

Firefighter of the Year was presented to *Matthew Kenzior*. Although he has only been a member of the department since 2019, in that time has distinguished himself and shown a deep commitment to professionalism, positivity and integrity. He has consistently attended training and responded to calls to gain experience, including responding to 279 calls and spending more than 350 hours volunteering.

Officer of the Year was presented to *Captain Jon-Paul Lucas* for his dedication to serving the Fire Department and community. He responded to 190 incidents and volunteered more than 500 hours in 2020. Captain Lucas consistently leads by example both on scene and in the fire station. He mentors and trains the members under him to ensure they are prepared and ready to face the challenges they come across on the emergency scene.

The Town of Vernon Fire Department still operates exclusively with volunteers in each of its 5 fire houses throughout town. Our membership comes from everyday people who want to help others and give back to their community. Our Junior Program is for those 14 to 17 years old with an interest in the fire service and specifically geared towards training and activities that fall within the limits of state safety guidelines. For those 18 and older, there is no experience needed to join, we provide all necessary training required. If you are interested in joining our volunteer family, please visit www.vernonfire.com/recruitment for more information.

Submitted by: Steve Eppler, *Chief*



Firefighter of the Year was presented to Matthew Kenzior.



Officer of the Year was presented to Captain Jon-Paul Lucas for his dedication to serving the Fire Department and community.



Junior Firefighter of the Year was presented to Adam Bowman, the fourth generation of his family to serve in the Fire Department.



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The library will be open to the public Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., and on Fridays from 1 to 6 p.m. We anticipate opening on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the coming weeks.

Auto-renewal is coming to RPL!

Still got a few more chapters left in that book? Want to watch that movie again? As of June 3, RPL will automatically renew all materials that have been checked out if they are not returned by their due date. Patrons will receive an email notice prior to the item's due date noting that, unless there is a hold on the item, it will automatically be renewed for them. Then, on the day that the item is due, they'll receive a confirmation notice that the item was successfully renewed. Please note: items only auto-renew one time. If you wish to extend your borrowing period further, you will have to call the library or send us an email.

New Video Streaming Platform:

RPL is excited to announce that we've subscribed to Kanopy, a video-streaming service that contains thousands of different indie movies, classic films, documentaries, crowd-pleasing comedies, and movies for kids. Kanopy can be accessed from your television, computer, or mobile device. Adult patrons are allowed 10 movies per month and children's content is unlimited!

Programs for Adults:

Register online at:
rockvillepubliclibrary.org/events

You Are Not Alone: Thursday, July 15th from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. via Zoom

Metaphysical Author Sydney Sherman continues her successful book tour for *You*

Are Not Alone. Her book approaches the science of death or dying with a healthy dose of common sense and encourages rational skepticism. The author looks at why and what we believe about the afterlife.

Cemetery Resources for Genealogy Research: Wednesday, July 28th from 1 to 2 p.m. via Zoom

While most people are familiar with Find-A-Grave, there are actually several other sites and sources that contain cemetery images and information, which Carol Ansel, Godfrey Memorial Library Director, will share with you.

Tai Chi with Susan Barlow:
Tuesdays at 10 a.m.

Enjoy strengthening exercise in the great outdoors! Meet in the upper parking lot. Check calendar for exact dates.

Crafts:

Take and Make

Kits can be reserved by phone or email starting on the first day listed below.

French Knitting Kit, ages 8 and up,
July 1 - July 31

Animal Puppet Grab 'n' Go, ages

4-7, July 1 - July 31

Outdoor Tic Tac Toe Take and Make, for adults, July 19-31

Wreck the Book Wednesdays: A series of fun paper crafting projects for ages 8-adult. The program will be held outside (weather permitting) but it is also available as a Grab 'n' Go.

July 21, 10-11 a.m. - Book Bowl

Aug. 18, 10-11 a.m. - Bangle Bracelet

Sept. 15, 10-11 a.m. - Paper Beadmaking

Oct. 13, 10-11 a.m. - Paper Orb See Less

Summer Reading:

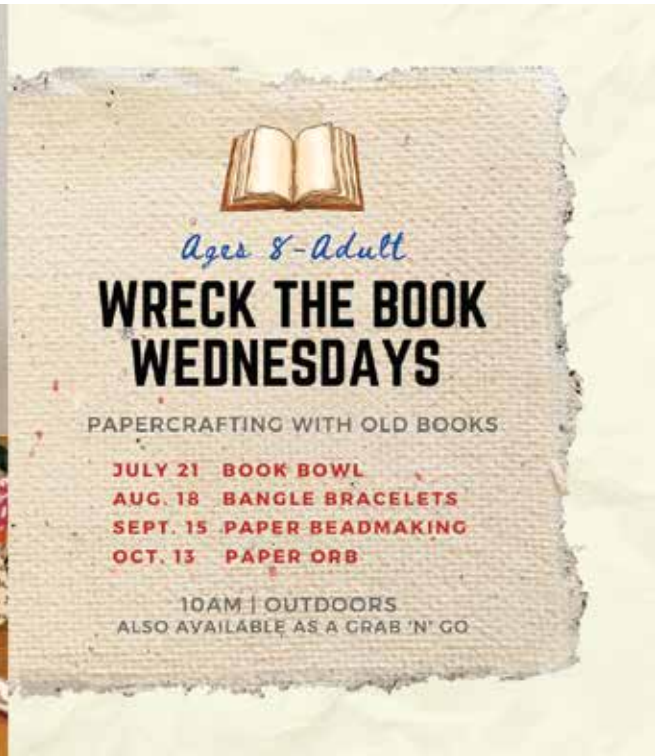
Is your beach bag full of books? If you haven't already, now is the time to participate in Rockville Public Library's Summer Reading Program, *Tails and Tales*, which runs June 21 - July 30.

Children and teens will earn weekly reading reward goodie bags, fun brag tags, and cool beads to create their own 'Read to Bead' necklace. Teens will also be receiving weekly goodie bags and collectible beads with their curbside service. To register email rockvillelibrary@vernon-ct.gov with your child's name, age, rising grade and school.

Adults get to share in the fun with summer reading bingo, which will run concurrently with *Tails and Tales*. Pick up a reading-themed bingo card at the library or print one directly from our website. Readers who complete five in a row across, down, or diagonally—or four corners!—can turn their card in for a raffle ticket. We'll host three gift card raffle drawings over the course of the summer (July 2, July 16, July 30).

Submitted by: Caitlin Kelley,
Assistant Director





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The 12th Annual Vernon Summer Days Community Carnival will be held Wednesday, July 21st through Saturday, July 24th at former Connecticut Golf Land, Rt.83/30 in Vernon.

The gates open Wednesday through Friday at 6 p.m. and Saturday at 5 p.m. All rides are unlimited with the purchase of a wrist band. Individual

ride tickets are also available.

There will be a game midway and a food court.

Sponsors are the Rockville Exchange Club, the Maple Grove Club and the Vernon Parks and Recreation Department.

Proceeds from the carnival benefit charitable programs such as KIDSAFE CT, the Fidelco Guild

Dog Foundation and scholarships and the Town of Vernon summer campership program.

For more information, contact Steve Wakefield, event chairman, at 860-573-6544.

Submitted by: Carol Nelson, *Member Carnival Committee*



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The Youth Service Bureau is a Town of Vernon 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.

The Youth Services office at Rockville High School has led programs this spring, and the YSB will offer summer work, fun and nutrition programs.

Youth Services at RHS

Rockville High School Peer Advocates, led by YSB Youth Counselor and Prevention Program Coordinator Kim McTighe, were busy this spring organizing awareness activities and planning events.

Peer advocates determined that mental health among their peers had suffered significantly due to social isolation and other issues related to the pandemic. They developed a Mental Health awareness campaign called "Mental Health Matters: Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, Healthy Life" and coordinated a variety of activities, including: A school wide Spirit Week where students and staff were encouraged to dress according to a daily theme, such as Mellow Monday (Wear PJ's to be comfy), Twin day (We all need someone to count on) and Fight It Friday (Fight the stigma- dress as a superhero!)

- Daily announcements with mental health statistics and words of positive encouragement
- Setting up a coloring station in the library to provide a calming space for students and staff to "de-stress"
- A Mental Health Matters bulletin board in a prominent area of the school with mindfulness coping skill cards and QR codes for students to use when they were overwhelmed or having a hard

time regulating emotions.

- Coordinating with the Agricultural Science and Technology Education program to provide therapy animals so students could pet them and interact with them
- A "Chalk Walk" leading up to the student parking lot with positive sayings and encouragement.

Feedback to the campaign was overwhelmingly positive. Mental health awareness will be a continued focus for this group during the next school year.

Several Peer Advocates assisted the REAL Talk committee, which is the youth leadership team of the Vernon ROCKS Coalition. The group works to reduce underage drinking and prevent prescription drug misuse. The group is working with the Vernon ROCKS event subcommittee to plan a virtual webinar series about health and wellness focusing on issues such as good decision making and the dangers of substance abuse.

YSB 2021 Summer programs

- Summer Youth Employment: the YSB partners with Capital Workforce Partners to offer jobs for income eligible youth ages 16 to 21. Youth hired for the summer

employment program work for 20 hours/week for six weeks between July and August. For more information, contact Kim McTighe, Prevention Coordinator, at: Kimberly.mctighe@vernonct.org.

- The Summer Fun Program offers fun programs for 15 youths in grades 1-5 and runs for six-weeks from July-August. Our focus this summer is nutrition, exercise, reading and plenty of time for play. There are two 3-week sessions, \$90/session/youth. For more information contact: Michelle Hill at: jhalpin@vernon-ct.gov
- The YSB supports the summer food service program sponsored by Vernon Public Schools, which provides free lunches to any youth 18 years and younger. This is a federally funded program and lead partners are: State Department of Education, Vernon Parks and Recreation, and Vernon Public Schools. To find approved summer meals site information call 211, or go to www.CTSummerMeals.org or for more information contact: Michelle Hill mhill@vernon-ct.gov

For information about any of our programs, call 860-870-3555.

Submitted by: Michelle Hill, *Director*





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