



VERNON VOICE



FALL 2022

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Drone photo by Tyler Gagnon



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Drew Crandall, President



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Produced by


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Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Fall is here and with it comes the return to learning, sporting events and harvest activities. We are so very fortunate to have such outstanding teachers and coaches, and numerous activities to help our children grow and learn whatever their interests.

If you are in need of before and after school care for your child, take a moment and call the Vernon Parks and Recreation Department for information at 860-870-3520 or the Vernon Youth Services Bureau at 860-870-3555 about available programming.

This magazine provides lots of important information about other programs, activities and changes happening in the Town of Vernon. Toys for Tikes sponsored by the Fire Department is conducting their annual toy drive. For more information please call the Social Services Toy Hotline at 860-870-3661.

Water Pollution Control is now offering online bill pay for sewer user fees. Credit, debit and eCheck are all options available to you. Call 860-870-3699 for more information.

The Town of Vernon has been piloting a four-day work week for



some departments. The new hours for Town Hall, Town Hall Annex and Building Department are as follows: Monday-Wednesday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. and Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 a.m.

Finally, this edition features a cover photo of the Fox Hill Tower and a feature article by the Town Clerk's Office about its history. Please take a moment to check it out. Special thanks to the Vernon Police Department for the outstanding cover photograph.

As a reminder we are looking for volunteers for Boards and Commissions. If you have interest in volunteering please call Administration at 860-870-3601.

Sincerely,



Daniel A. Champagne
Mayor, Town of Vernon

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Raymond Sinclair, the new Director of Bands at Rockville High School and head of the Grade 6-12 Music Department, has big plans. Chief among them is returning the Marching Ram Band to the glory of years past.

Sinclair, who comes to Rockville High School from a similar position in Cromwell, is equally focused on the concert and jazz bands, musical theater productions and sharing with all students his passion for music. He is also working with school administration to have Vernon students begin learning to play musical instruments in fourth grade rather than fifth.

But the marching band is a passion that Sinclair said goes back to his time as a student at Norwich Free Academy, which had a "powerhouse marching band" that was an exciting and dynamic force in the school. He

also played for several years with the Boston Crusaders Drum and Bugle Corps.

"It's great to be able to do what I'm passionate about, which is marching band," Sinclair said. Last year there were about 19 students in marching band. This year the number is up to 39. And Sinclair is spending time at Vernon Center Middle School working with musicians to get them excited about participating in band when they get to the high school.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Macary said participation in extracurricular activities and athletics is crucial to students social and emotional well-being. A music program that offers students opportunities to learn and perform is a key element.



"The arts offer students a chance to develop and use a variety of skills and abilities, reinforces a students' ability to cooperate with others and leads to the creation of something truly special, whether its music, drama or the visual arts," Dr. Macary

said. "Students involved in the arts also have been shown to do better than their peers on standardized tests, such as the SAT. The more students we have pursuing artistic opportunities, the better our schools and community will be."

Rockville High School Principal Jason Magao said he is looking to Sinclair to restore the Marching Ram Band to the greatness it was once known for. The pandemic, he

See BAND, p. 13

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.

The low interest rate that is enabling buyers to pay over asking is predicted to be short lived, making this the ideal window for you to sell your home.

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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.

Vernon Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary Honored by Adult Education Program

The Vernon Regional Adult Based Education (VRABE) program has recognized Vernon Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph P. Macary with its Dr. Albert J. Kerkin Award.



VRABE presents the award each year to a person or organizations that has provided exemplary service to Vernon Regional Adult Based Education and its students. The recipient must have provided ongoing demonstrable and extensive support to VRABE, and have shown a deep commitment to adult education that results in specific improvement in opportunities for our adult students.

Dr. Macary's support was instrumental in establishing VRABE's Pre-Apprenticeship Program, which was recently certified by the Connecticut Office of Apprenticeship Training.

This could not have been achieved without Dr. Macary's support.

Dr. Macary also advanced the concept of Vernon Public Schools partnering with Adult Education to establish a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program that is available to high school students in VRABE's region (including Rockville High School) and adult English as

a Second Language (ESL) students from VRABE. In the pilot year, all 10 students in the program received their CNA certificates.

A strong believer in adult education, always responsive and supportive, Dr. Macary has truly provided exemplary service to Adult Education.

Dr. Albert J. Kerkin was Superintendent of Vernon Public Schools and in that

See **MACARY**, p. 13

CONGRATULATIONS to Rockville High School Creative Writers

Congratulations to Rockville High School Creative Writers Kaylin Maher and Dakota Ouellette as they take on Carnegie Hall! They received national recognition in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards on June 9, 2022 for their portfolios. It is the top writing award in the nation...and Rockville High School had two winners this year!

Submitted by: Dr. Joseph Macary, Superintendent



Fall Events: Hiking, History, Farm Festival, Music & Arts

It will be a busy fall for Vernon volunteer organizations as the year winds down. There are opportunities to enjoy a variety of activities.

Papermaker, A Play - Oct. 28 - Nov. 6

A play at Arts Center East produced by the Dionysus Theatre Company. A bitter strike at the paper mill sets the scene for the collision of two families - one the owner and the other the union vice president, who is building an ark for his dying wife. Told with compassion, warmth, and humor. Times vary. (ArtsCenterEast.org/dionysus-theatre-company)

Tour of Maxwell Court - Sun., Oct. 30

The Vernon Historical Society hosts a tour of Maxwell's mansion designed by Charles Adams Platt. Led by historian Susan Barlow and followed by a visit to two other Platt designed buildings - Rockville Hospital and Library. 1 p.m. Meet at 9 N. Park Street, Rockville. (See article.)

Poetry Rocks - Thursday, Nov. 3

Pegi Deitz Shea, Vernon's Inaugural Poet Laureate, debuts her first book of poetry for adult readers, "The Weight of Kindling," at 6:30 p.m. at the Rockville Public Library. A reading will be followed by a reception and book signing. (RockvillePublicLibrary.org)

Civil War Tour of Arlington Cemetery - Thursday, Nov. 3

A program by Carolyn Ivanoff at the New England Civil War Museum in Rockville. 7:30 p.m. (NewEnglandCivilWarMuseum.com)

The Vernon Chorale Winter Concert - Saturday, Dec. 3

The Vernon Chorale holds its Winter Concert in Rockville at St. Bernard Church, 7:30 p.m. (See article.)

To learn more about these events visit VernonVolunteers.org. To receive email announcements, join our MeetUp group. Learn how on our website, vernonvolunteers.org.

Submitted by: Jon Roe, Facilitator

PARKS & REC DEPARTMENT

The Parks and Recreation Department is excited to enter the 2022-2023 School Year with a variety of fun activities, programs and events to bring the community together. The fall is a beautiful time of year to be outdoors, visit the trails, go to an event, sign up for a program and enjoy the beauty of Vernon. Full details and information on programs, activities, events and rentals is available online at www.vernonrec.org

SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS

The Parks & Recreation Department had a wonderful summer. It was truly great to see so many cheerful smiles and happy people. We thank the community for their involvement with our programs, events, facilities and parks. A special thanks goes to our seasonal staff, who go above and beyond to be a part of this success. We also thank our event sponsors for their generosity and support

of our events, July in the Sky and the Mayor's Concert Series. Title sponsors include the Bundy Family, McDonald's, VivoChiropractic, Vernon Poolman, Dunkin' Donuts, Santini Villa Apartments, Clay Furniture and Scranton Motors.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Winterfest

Central Park, Downtown Rockville, Friday, Dec. 2, 6 p.m.

Kick off the winter season off with a fire truck parade, lighting of the tree and the snowflake on Fox Hill Tower, music and other fun.

Arctic Splash

Valley Falls Park, Saturday, Dec. 3, 12:30 p.m.

The annual Arctic Splash raises money for the Send-A-Kid scholarship fund, which provides scholarships to Vernon children to attend summer camp. Grab your friends, family members, coworkers or classmates and splash into Valley Falls together to support



camp scholarships.

Event information and registration is available now at www.vernonrec.org. Register early to receive an event T-shirt.

FALL OFFERINGS:

Preschool Fitness

Center 375, Lower Level, Fridays starting Sept. 16, 9:30-10:15 a.m.

Get your little ones on their feet and ready to have some fun with Ms. Pat! There are games, music, exercise and much more. The class is open to children ages 2½ to 4 and will help your child develop motor, listening and social skills. This program runs in four-week sessions.

Pee Wee Track

Rockville High School Track, 5:30-6:15 p.m., Thursdays, Sept. 15-Oct. 6 (Inclement weather location is the gym at Center 375.)

This program is open to children ages 3 to 6. Learn the fundamentals of track running. Meet new friends, release a bundle of energy and play fun drills and activities with Ms. Pat.

Beyond Dance Program

Center 375, various times.

Get ready to dance to the beat with Ms. Jess and the Beyond Dance

See PARKS & REC, p. 16



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When Will The Leaf Program Begin?

The program begins on **Monday, November 7, 2022**. 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 temporary leaf laborers.

When Will Our Leaves Be Collected?



All streets in the Town of Vernon have been divided into three 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.

Other Options?

Residents may either transport their leaves to a designated leaf bin or bag them for pickup by DPW crews in December. Leaves may be bagged using only **biodegradable paper bags**.

When Will The Bagged Leaves Be Collected?

Bagged leaves will be collected the first two Fridays in December. Please call the Public Works Office at 860-870-3500 to schedule a pickup of bagged leaves.

When Will Leaf Bins Open?

Leaf bins are for leaves only and opened for the convenience of residents in 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.

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 program!

Leaf Bins

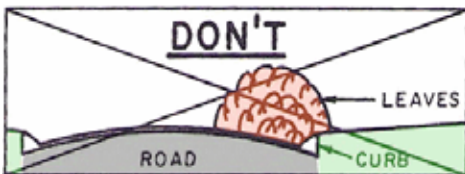
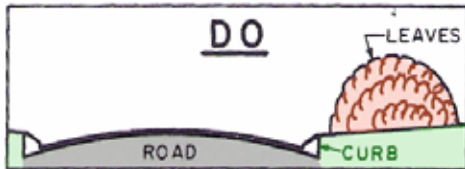
Leaf bins are normally opened mid-October and are located at:

- 1) the Nye Street Firehouse** (off West Street)
- 2) the Church Street parking lot**
- 3) Legion Field** (off Regan Road at rear of parking lot)

Deposit leaves in the areas provided. Bins are for leaves only - no grass clippings or brush are allowed. Contamination caused by disposal of any other type of yard waste will result in leaf bin being shut down.

Remove the container used to transport leaves. Plastic bags can be left in the trash barrel. Lawn-sized paper bags are recyclable and do not need to be emptied.

NOTE: Once the leaf collection program has been completed, two of the three leaf bins are closed. The Nye Street Firehouse (or City Lot) leaf bin is open throughout the year.



Bagged Leaves Pickup

Bagged leaves cannot be put out for collection with regular trash. A pickup of bagged leaves may be scheduled for the first two Fridays in December. Please call the Public Works Office at 860-870-3500 to schedule. Biodegradable paper bags **ONLY** will be collected.



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Dionysus Theatre Company and Arts Center East present Papermaker by Monica Wood

Workers at the local papermill have been on strike for three months. Tensions are running high in Abbott Falls and Ernie Donahue is building an ark.

Weekend performances October 28- November 6
Reserve tickets online at www.artscentereast.org or call 860-871-8222
709 Hartford Turnpike Vernon, CT 06066

VERNON, Connecticut – Freshmen entering Rockville High School this fall will be the first class to experience a new program designed to help them identify a possible career and set them on a course of study that prepares them for that career or to continue their education.

The Career Pathways program will require every member of the Class of 2026 to join one of three academies. Students will then have the opportunity to select an area of focus, called a pathway.

The goal is to get students more engaged in their own learning, to better prepare them for a career or post-secondary education, and to help them be successful when they leave Rockville High School, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph P. Macary said.

"Preparing students for meaningful post-secondary experiences, be they at college, in the military or the workforce, is the mission of the Vernon Public Schools," Dr. Macary said. "Providing these career pathways will enable students to deter-

mine where they want to become successful in life."

It's important to provide students with options that meet their needs, Rockville High School Principal Jason Magao said.

"We're trying to positively impact every student," Magao said. "Typical high schools are designed for students who plan to go to college. We need to make sure we are doing our best for students who have college aspirations as well as those who do not. There are many successful people who took different paths in life but it all begins with the drive and opportunity to succeed."

The Career Pathways program will help students discover the next chapter in their lives.

"We want to empower everyone to be successful when they leave here, whether they want to be a welder or a doctor," said Bryan Wright, a technology education teacher at Rockville High School. The three academy options are:

- Academy for Advanced Technology and Science.
- Academy for Arts, Business and Communications.
- Academy for Health, Human and Public Services.

Within each Academy students will find a variety of pathways that can be adjusted to match their particular interest. In addition to coursework, students will have opportunities to participate in internships with local businesses and an opportunity to enroll in courses at local colleges and universities. These courses will provide students with college credits that will follow them upon graduation.

"All students will choose an academy," Wright said. "Those hyper-focused will enroll in a pathway and have more specific areas of study for their interest."

Students who have not yet figured out what they want to do need not worry. School officials know that many students won't be

See CAREER, p. 16



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At the end of World War I in 1918, America wanted to honor those who served their country, and Rockville was no exception. On Nov. 19, 1923, the Town Council passed a resolution establishing a committee to design a memorial to honor veterans from all wars. That same year, the City of Rockville received a bequest of land on Fox Hill from the Estate of E. Stevens Henry, who had served as mayor of Rockville, Connecticut State Treasurer, and in Congress. That land is what we know today as Henry Park.

Walter B. Chambers, the architect who designed Fox Hill Tower, modeled it after the Charroux tower at the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Sauveur in Charroux, France. Chambers also designed the Lucina Chapel in Grove Hill Cemetery, Maple Street School and the Sykes Memorial Manual Training and High School. The tower was to be 72 feet tall, 24 feet in diameter, with a concrete foundation set on a granite platform. A bronze railing would lead from the ground floor to the third floor observation platform and the ceiling over the platform would be made of oak timbers. There would be three bronze tablets with the words: Justice, Democracy and Freedom.

The project cost was to be \$53,600, but in 1937 President Roosevelt approved funding for the “Rockville War Memorial Tower Project” in the amount of \$27,066 through the Works Progress Administration. Conditions of the WPA grant included hiring local workers and using local suppliers. Granite mined in a Tolland quarry was used to construct the tower.

Groundbreaking was in November 1937 and construction continued through the winter. The tower, still not complete, survived the 1938 hurricane that caused widespread destruction throughout Rockville. The tower’s top, made of stainless steel, arrived in January 1939. Before it was installed it was housed in the Town Clerk’s office for a few days.

The “War Memorial” tower, as it was named, was

dedicated on Aug. 4, 1939. About 2,000 people watched as flags fluttered, an American Legion band performed, and Governor Raymond E. Baldwin and others spoke about the tower and proclaimed it a beacon of freedom.

Within a month of the dedication, World War II began. Fox Hill and the tower became an observation and lookout post for enemy planes. Spotters volunteered their time counting planes and documenting their activities, which continued until the end of the war. On July 2, 1945 the red light atop the tower was again lit. It had been dark since December 1941.

There were multiple restoration efforts over the years, and corresponding rededication ceremonies to remind the public of the original intent of the people who proposed constructing the tower – to honor those who gave their lives in the service of freedom.

We may now refer to the tower at the top of the hill as Fox Hill Tower, but we should never forget its origin as the War Memorial Tower.

Reproduced from “Remembering Those Who Served” by James W. Ashe and Carolyn G. Blouin, and used with permission from the author.

Submitted by: Karen Daigle, Town Clerk




Dionysus Theatre Company and Arts Center East present Papermaker by Monica Wood

Workers at the local papermill have been on strike for three months. Tensions are running high in Abbott Falls and Ernie Donahue is building an ark.

Weekend performances October 28- November 6
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Vernon WPC offers online bill pay for sewer user fees

Vernon Water Pollution Control has contracted with Paymentus, a third-party bill pay vendor, to offer a secure online payment system for sewer customers who want to pay with a credit or debit card, or by electronic check. There is a \$2.95 processing fee for transactions with credit or debit cards and a 50 cent fee for eChecks. The fee goes to Paymentus.

There is a transaction limit of \$300 for online payments to keep transaction fees low. If your bill is more than \$300 you can make multiple payments, or pay by check at no cost. More than 85 percent of sewer bills are less than \$300 and limiting the transaction amount to \$300 resulted in across the board savings for the

Town and sewer users.

The Paymentus portal also allows residents to view their current and previous sewer user bills, payments, and consumption totals. Customers can also request a change of billing address or contact the Water Pollution Control Department with questions via the Town website.

Customers can create an account with Paymentus, or search for their sewer account with their sewer account and customer numbers, which are on the front of your bill.

Please visit www.vernon-ct.gov/payments for more information or to make a payment.

Sewer bills are due Oct. 1, 2022. The last day to pay without a penalty is Oct.

31, 2022. After this date bills are considered delinquent and are subject to interest at the rate of 1.5 percent per month from the due date of Oct. 1. Please consider paying online or sending your payments to our secure lockbox: Town of Vernon Sewer, P.O. Box 416337, Boston, MA 02241.

Did you know that your sewer user fees go towards maintaining Vernon's collection system? The system consists of 135 miles of pipe and seven pump stations that transfer wastewater to the Water Pollution Control Facility for treatment.

If you have questions, contact the Water Pollution Control Department at vernonwpca@vernon-ct.gov or 860-870-3699.

Submitted by: Rob Grasis, *Director*

FIRE MARSHAL

Halloween Decorations and Fire Safety Tips

Dried flowers, crepe paper, cornstalks and decorative scarecrows may make your home look festive for fall, but these classic decorations can also pose a scary fire risk. The National Fire Protection Association says flammable decorations are the first items to ignite in 900 reported home fires each year. Two out of five of these fires were started by a candle.

Decorate safely and keep these tips in mind:

- Don't put decorations near open flames and other heat sources, such as light bulbs and heaters.
- Check that any decorative lights have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory. Examine each set of lights for broken sockets, frayed wires or loose connections, and discard any damaged sets. Be careful not to overload sockets when plugging in lights and other electronic decorations.
- Consider glow sticks or battery-operated candles instead of real candles when lighting your jack-o'-lanterns or other luminaries. If you do use real candles, light them with long, fireplace-style matches or a utility lighter. Keep lit decorations off of doorsteps, yards and sidewalks where excited trick-or-treaters may knock them over.
- Check that no decorations are blocking your home's exits or pathways, so you have a clear escape route in case of an emergency.

To make sure children enjoy their evening of trick-or-treating, follow these tips:

- Avoid costumes with loose, trailing fabrics or other hanging parts, which can catch fire on open flames. Check the labels on costumes, wigs and props to be sure they are made with flame resistant or retardant materials.

- Double-check that the eyeholes in masks are large enough that children can see and avoid any trips or falls, or brushes with open flames. If visibility is an issue, use makeup or face paint instead of masks.
- Provide flashlights or glow sticks to carry for lighting, and use glow-in-the-dark reflective tape on costumes for extra visibility near roads.
- Talk with children about fire safety before heading out, reminding them to stay away from open flames.
- Practice the "stop, drop and roll" technique.

Submitted by: Dan Wasilewski, *Fire Marshal*



BAND, continued from p. 6

said, took a toll on so many activities, including band. “Everything we do, we’re shooting for excellence,” Magao said. “We’re looking to build it back up, give our students the opportunity to participate and our community the opportunity to enjoy the band, whether it be at competitions, football games, or state championships. There’s a lot of pride in Rockville around the band and we want to give the town and the students what they deserve.”

Shortly after he was hired and before school began, Sinclair contacted RHS students in the band or who used to be in the band to introduce himself and tell them about his plans. He is also running daily practices and prepping the band for football season. He has even taught the musicians a few things they can do to help the football team.

Most of all, Sinclair is focused on sharing with student his love and enthusiasm for music and how music enriches lives.

“The goal is to expose the kids to a lot of different things related to music,” Sinclair said. “There is so much we can do.”

Sinclair lives in Vernon with his wife and three daughters and by chance learned about the position at Rockville High while attending one of his daughter’s softball games. He was not looking to leave Cromwell, but decided to email Magao about the position. He also liked the idea of being two minutes from home, especially on days with hours-long rehearsals.

And now he is enthusiastic about rebuilding the band program.

“We’re going to equal the greatness that once existed here,” Sinclair said. “It’s going to look different, it’s going to sound different and I think people are going to like it.”

Submitted by: Jason Magao, *RHS Principal*

MACARY, continued from p. 7

role was the strongest possible supporter of Adult Education. By providing service to our adult students at all levels - operational, financial, educational and moral - he both helped individual students and furthered the cause of adult education in our region. By attending many events, connecting with students, staff and teachers, ensuring the expertise and resources of the entire district were made available, he set the standard for exemplary service.

Submitted by: David Owens, *Communications Specialist*



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8 pm

"Unfailingly original." -*The New York Times*

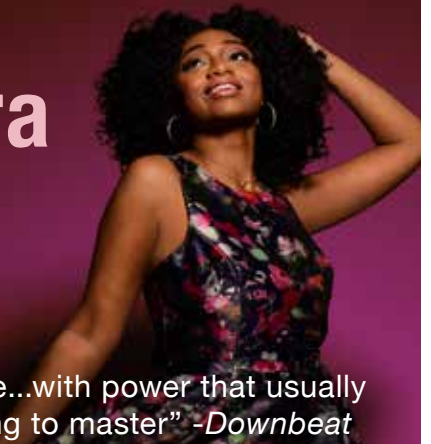


CABARET

Samara Joy

Fri, Nov 18
8 pm

"...deeply emotive...with power that usually takes a lot of living to master" -*Downbeat*



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On the UConn Storrs Campus. Ticket prices vary.

Note: all artists, events, dates, programs and COVID-19 policies are subject to change.



The Town of Vernon Fire Department is proud to support the community in many ways, including our annual Toys for Tikes program. The following article was written by Diane Carpenter, who chairs the committee responsible for making this annual event successful every year.

The Town of Vernon Volunteer Fire Department has been conducting the annual toy drive for Vernon/Rockville families since 1953. In the early years, Rockville Fire Department members would collect used toys, then gather at the Prospect Street Fire House to repair and paint these toys for distribution to a small number of local children.

Sixty nine years later the tradition continues. This fall, Vernon Volunteer Firefighters Association members will again accept monetary and new toy donations from local businesses, schools, and community members. The department also purchases toys to ensure that we have enough for all ages. We find it most challenging to collect enough donations for 9 to 12 year olds. Thanks to generous community support we have always been able to fill the need. Our goal is to distribute 100 percent new toys to 400 children each Christmas.

Vernon families in need of assistance, with children ages


infant to 12 years old, can register with Vernon Social Services by calling 860-870-3661, ext. 9, from November through early December.

Once Thanksgiving arrives, our Fire Police members will be out daily until mid-December to collect thousands of toys from more than 25 donation locations, including many local businesses that allow us to set up collection boxes. Toys are taken to a local firehouse until they are distributed. As Christmas approaches, fire department members with assistance from C.E.R.T., police explorer staff and other volunteers sort toys by age and gender. When delivery night arrives, firefighters and many other volunteers gather to stuff bags and load the goodies onto 10 delivery trucks (some donated from local businesses) to visit and delivery toys to more than 200 families. The toy distribution is completed within three hours.

Firefighters normally interact with town residents at tragic events, such as crashes or fires. Collecting toys and then delivering them to families is very rewarding for us and brings happiness to the kids during a special time of the year. Toys for Tikes is something we look forward to every year and we plan to be around for years to come!

For information about the Town of Vernon Fire Department and how to join our volunteer family, go to www.vernonfire.com.

Submitted by: Steve Eppler, *Fire Chief*



mansfield
ob
gyn

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MD, FACOG

Robert Gildersleeve
MD, FACOG

Lesley Gumbs
MD, FACOG

Veronica Helgans
MD, FACOG

Yvette Martas
MD, FACOG

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VERNON SOCIAL SERVICES

Farmers' Market Vouchers, Energy Assistance

Vernon Social Services has a number of programs to assist individuals:

Farmers' Market Vouchers

The Town of Vernon is a local coordinating agency for the distribution of the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) check booklets to eligible participants who are 60 or older and meet the income guidelines. Vouchers can be used at farmers' markets in neighboring towns. Call Vernon Social Services at (860) 870-3661 for more information.

Energy Assistance

This federally funded program, which helps low to moderate income residents with heating costs during the winter months, began Sept. 1 for deliverable fuel, including oil and propane. For gas and electric heat it starts in November. Residents can call Social Services to set up an appointment.

Submitted by: Matt Hellman, *Director*

Every autumn, the singers of The Vernon Chorale begin honing their voices in preparation for their upcoming concert season. Chorale president Liz Whiteley said there is a sense of anticipation for chorale members as rehearsals begin.

"There is always a sense of excitement when we get back to spreading our passion for choral music with the local community after our summer break," she said.

This season, the chorale heartily welcomes its new conducting fellow, Greg Flower, as he begins his journey under the mentorship of Artistic Director Ehren Brown. After a 'COVID hiatus,' students from area universities will join the chorale as choral fellows, lending their voices to the ensemble.



Whiteley said the choral fellows program benefits the fellows and the chorale.

"These awards fulfill the crucial educational aspects of our mission and we look forward to working with the fellows and sharing our community choir experience," Whiteley said.

You can enjoy The Vernon Chorale's 2022-

23 season opener, "A Ceremony of Carols," a winter concert celebrating the holiday spirit, on Dec. 3, at St. Bernard Church, 25 St. Bernard Terrace, Vernon.

For more information about the chorale's fellowship programs, upcoming concerts, and how to become a member, visit VernonChorale.org. The chorale is a member of the Vernon Volunteers' Collaborative.

Submitted by: Members of the Vernon Chorale

VERNON YOUTH SERVICES

Afterschool program starting this fall!

Now that school is back in session the Youth Services Bureau Afterschool Program is well underway. Our program serves elementary aged children in grades 1-5, and is held at the Youth Services Bureau at 9 Elm St. in Vernon Mondays through Thursdays from the close of school to 5 p.m. The program runs in four 10-week sessions throughout the school year. Transportation from school to the YSB is provided. Parents pick up their children from the YSB at the close of the program.

Children who are enrolled receive an afterschool snack, homework support, and get to participate in a variety of activities that promote social skills and positive youth development. It's a great place to make new friends and have fun after school.

For more information or to enroll your child please contact the Youth Services Bureau at 860-870-3555.

Submitted by: Michelle Hill, *Director*

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PARKS & REC, **continued from p. 8**

staff! Learn new dance moves and enhance skills. Choose the best match for you from a variety of class offerings. Classes start in September and run in four-week sessions. Classes are held at Center 375 weekly to. In December, a winter showcase will be held to show all students have learned. New classes begin in January. Classes available for people 18 months and older. All skill levels are welcome.

Recreation Basketball

Recreation basketball programs for children 3 years old through 12th grade.

-Instruction is available for 3-year-olds through second grade Saturday mornings. The focus is on building the child's enjoyment of basketball through engaging games and drills.

-Grades three through eight can register for the recreational basketball leagues. Participants have one to two practices a week and games are played on Saturdays.

-Weeknight pick-up basketball is available for 9th-12th graders.

Pre-registration is required for all programs and registration deadlines apply. Visit www.vernonrec.org for program details.

R.E.K. After School Program

R.E.K. After School is offered to students currently enrolled in grades K-5 at each of Vernon's elementary schools. The program runs from the end of the school day until 6 p.m. Students will have a chance to participate in a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities aimed to capture every student's interest. Activities include STEM projects, arts and crafts, various sports and group games. R.E.K. provides students with a safe space to meet new friends and try new things! For more information on how to register visit the Vernon Parks and Recreation website.

Vacation Camp

Join us at Center 375 during Winter and April vacations! Vacation Camp is available to students currently enrolled in grades K-5 and offers a fun, safe space for students from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Weather permitting, students will enjoy time outside on the playground and playing group games. They will also be provided with a variety of arts

and crafts, cooperative games, and science projects. In the past students have even been visited by special guests from the Children's Museum and UConn's 4H program. Students are welcome to join us for the full week or individual days. For more information on how to register visit the Vernon Parks and Recreation website.



New York City Bus Trip *Saturday, Dec. 10.*

Enjoy a fun day on your own in New York City during one of the most beautiful times of year! This is a perfect time of year to view the famous tree in Rockefeller Center, see the amazing windows decorated in the stores, shop for the holidays or get a ticket to a

show! New York City is filled with excitement! The bus leaves from and returns to Center 375 (375 Hartford Turnpike).

Programs Coming Soon...Life of Bloom, Pickle ball and more!

Rentals

Looking to have a picnic? Party? Meeting? The Vernon Parks and Recreation Department rents out a variety of facilities that can fit your needs. Offerings include, but not limited to, Community Room, Pavilion, Picnic Areas, Lodge, Athletic Areas and more. Detailed information and a rental application are available online at www.vernonrec.org

Vernon Parks & Recreation is Hiring Part time/Seasonal Staff!

The Parks and Recreation Department is accepting applications for after school program staff, seasonal park maintenance and more. For an updated listing and to apply, visit the Town of Vernon website at www.vernon-ct.gov and click the Employment, Human Resources button.

Submitted by: Amy Watt,
Assistant Director

CAREER, continued from p. 10

ready to choose an academy or pathway immediately. That's why all incoming freshman will first take exploratory classes that allow them to experience the opportunities each academy presents.

"We're going to broaden their horizons and give them a sampling of everything we have to offer," said Jennifer Kasek, a business teacher and the career services coordinator.

Even after that sampling, students may discover the pathway they choose is not right for them.

"Students aren't locked in," said Charles Martucci, a business and computer education teacher. "If they decide it isn't what they want, they can change."

The Academy for Advanced Technology and Science is grounded in the traditional STEM areas: science, technology, engineering and math. It also includes Rockville High School's Agricultural Science and Technology Education (ASTE) program. The Academy is for students considering careers in science, manufacturing, agribusiness, construction management, engineering and design, information technology and natural

sciences.

The Academy for Arts, Business and Communications blends STEM and the humanities. It is for students interested in areas such as business and finance, hospitality and food service, digital media and design, performance arts, journalism and new media.

The Academy for Health, Human and Public Services also blends STEM and the humanities to help students interested in careers that could include biomedical science, healthcare, human and family services, education and teaching, government service, law enforcement, the fire service and the military.

All students will continue to have traditional core requirements, including algebra 1, geometry, U.S. history, English, biology, world language, American civics, personal finance and health and physical education.

There is enough flexibility built into the program and Connecticut graduation requirements to allow students to pursue a curriculum that is personalized to their career goal.

Martucci said the program follows on Dr. Macary's goal to have all students identify an area of interest earlier.

A variety of capital projects are moving forward that will benefit residents, beautify Vernon and preserve its history for decades to come.

The projects include:

- Upgrades to the Water Pollution Control Facility.
- Restoration of the steps in front of the historic Rockville Public Library.
- Construction of three new soccer fields on Windermere Avenue.
- Renovation of historic Fox Hill Tower.
- Renovation and restoration of Citizens Block.
- Analysis of Horowitz Pool options.
- Construction of a Miracle Field for children with disabilities.

Vernon's Water Pollution Control Facility was built in 1959 and upgraded in 1973 and 1993. The current upgrade project will bring the plant up to current government standards for removing phosphorous and nitrogen from wastewater, replace existing treatment equipment and replace the electrical infrastructure. The \$65 million project is expected to be completed during 2023.

About half the project cost is covered by Vernon taxpayers, with the remaining balance covered by a state grant and from assessments to neighboring towns that use the plant.

Once completed, the Water Pollution Control Facility will meet current treatment regulations and have new energy efficient equipment that be more reliable and resilient, and save money.

The Rockville Public Library, part of the National Register Historic District in Rockville, was built in 1904. It was a gift to the town from the wife and children of George Maxwell and was constructed with three types of marble.

The granite steps, landing pad and adjoining patio have fallen into disrepair due to weather, continual use and other conditions, and are no longer useable.

The Town of Vernon took ownership of the library in 2018 and Department of Public Works crews have made repairs, although the underlying issues that continue to

contribute to the deterioration of the steps remain.

A \$20,000 grant obtained by the Town will allow for a consultant to be hired to fully examine the stairs and adjoining infrastructure and develop plan to fully repair the steps and return them to their original, historic magnificence.

The library began in 1893 with a \$10,000 bequest from the estate of George Maxwell, the former president and treasurer of the Hockanum Mill. Subsequently, his wife and children gave money for the building of the current library, which opened in 1904.

Construction of the Windermere Youth Athletic Fields has been underway since last year and field No. 1 is complete, but not yet ready for play. Construction of field No. 2 and 3 is underway.

Infrastructure work, such as driveways, utilities, fencing and parking lots, will be completed once field construction is complete. There are plans to construct a fourth field at the site, as well.

Vernon residents approved purchasing the 42-acre site at a town meeting in 2019. Work has been progressing ever since. The fields will primarily serve youth soccer, which has exploded in popularity in Vernon.

A major renovation of Vernon's landmark War Memorial Tower, more commonly known as Fox Hill Tower, is planned. The tower sits at the top of Henry Park and overlooks Rockville and the Connecticut River Valley. It is an iconic symbol of Vernon and is featured in the town seal.

The tower was built in 1937 during the Great Depression as a Works Progress Administration project and intended as a memorial to Vernon's war veterans. The WPA was an employment and infrastructure program created to get Americans back to work.

The Town obtained a \$2.5 million allocation from the State Bond Commission that will go toward a major renovation and restoration of the tower.

Last year, the Town hired an engineering firm to examine the tower and promenade, to recommend a restoration program and

develop a budget. Recommendations include extensive masonry restoration, concrete repair, repainting and adding handicapped access and additional lighting.

The historic Citizens Block building on Park Place is being restored and will house town offices and provide public meeting space when complete. The building, constructed in 1879, once contained retail stores, offices and apartments.

The redevelopment of the building is based on Mayor Champagne's vision to relocate several town offices to the building, thereby making all town services more easily accessible to residents. The Mayor's vision also includes moving the probate court from Town Hall into the Citizens Block, and construction of a community room for organizations to use.

The current funded portion of the project includes construction of an accessible entryway and restrooms, additional structural stabilization work, and an addition to house an elevator and staircase.

Work already completed includes restoration of the building's façade, installation of a new roof, removal of environmental hazards, preliminary structural stabilization, improved drainage and concrete and brick repairs.

The Town has been examining options and the associated costs of repairing or replacing Horowitz Pool.

The pool was built in 1952 and has undergone renovations and repairs in the years since. The last significant renovation occurred about 1990. Age and ground water have taken a toll on the pool. In recent decades, considerable expense and effort by Parks and Recreation Department staff went into preparing and opening Horowitz Pool for each summer season.

The Town of Vernon, the Vernon Public Schools and The Miracle League of Northern Connecticut have entered into a unique partnership to develop a state of the art accessible baseball field on land at Northeast School.

The Miracle League Field will serve children with disabilities and their families from throughout the state.

See **PROJECTS**, p. 19

After a hot and busy summer, we're jumping straight into sweater weather and the holiday season. And again, we have lots planned for you!

PLEASE NOTE - programs marked with (*) require registration (go to rockvillepubliclibrary.org/events, or call 860-875-5892 for details and to register).

ADULTS:

POETRY READINGS:

11/3, 6:30 p.m. - **Pegi Deitz Shea** - Vernon's Inaugural Poet Laureate, will debut her first book of poetry for adult readers, *The Weight of Kindling*, Thursday, Nov. 3 at Rockville Public Library. A reading will be followed by a reception and book signing.

Concerts* (all require registration):

11/12, 2 p.m. - **Blue River Jazz Band** - the band's duo will play America's traditional, classic, "hot" jazz and swing music from the early 20th century.

12/10, 2 p.m. - performer TBD

Special Programs* (all require registration):

10/4, 6 p.m. - **Wildlife in Winter** - White Memorial Conservation Center will present on wildlife in winter - strategies CT animals employ to get through harsh winter conditions.

10/27, 6 p.m. - **Herbal Medicine Making: Fire Cider Workshop** - We will learn all about this spicy and sweet remedy, including the history, the herbal actions and applications, and the recipe variations you can try at home! Each participant will leave with a quart jar full of Fire Cider!

11/1, 6 p.m. - **Modern Calligraphy** - Come learn where this style comes from, strategies

on how to create this lettering. Taught by calligrapher, Debby Reelitz. Registration fee is \$5 to cover the cost of a special pen you'll get to keep.

11/10, 6 p.m. - **Alpine Skiing Instruction** - As winter season approaches, we will welcome local PSIA alpine ski instructor Dave England to talk about alpine skiing and to help you understand how to ski safer and have more fun!

12/8, 5:30 p.m. - **Acrylic Painting** - paint a lovely winter scene. No experience necessary, Sandra Poirier will guide you through the process. Supplies will be provided.

RECURRING PROGRAMS:

Hooks & Needles - Do you knit, crochet, embroider or cross stitch? Join us for a crafty social hour - we meet on a first Wednesday of the month at 2 p.m. (10/5, 11/2, 12/7).

Movies at the Library - Once a month on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. (10/6, 11/10, 12/1).

Spice It Up!* - Every other month we'll give you a spice along with a recipe to try out at home. This is a grab 'n' go program.

Cookbook Club - Meets every other month, each time different theme, author or cookbook will be chosen. You pick a recipe, make it, and bring it to share. (6:30 p.m., 10/11).

Book Discussion - Third Tuesday of the month at 2 p.m. (10/18, 11/15, 12/20).

Needle Felting* - Angelina Fleury will guide you through the process of creating decorative woolen pieces. (6 p.m.: 10/13 - Owl, 11/17 - Gingerbread Man Ornament, 12/15 - Jingle Tree). For Vernon residents only.

Tai-Chi Classes* - Local instructor Susan Barlow will offer

a series of free classes outdoors in the library's upper parking lot. No experience necessary; class will meet inside in case of rain (9:30 a.m.: 10/22, 10/29, 11/5).

Crafts for Adults (ages 18 and up)*:

10/19, 5 p.m. - **DIY Fall Cards**
11/8, 5:30 p.m. - **Mandala Painting**

TEENS:

TUESDAYS:

Chess Club (grades 5-12) - 4-5 p.m.: 10/4, 11/1, 12/6

Learn the game or play a match with old and new friends.

Will It Waffle? (grades 5-12) - 4-5 p.m.: 10/25, 11/22, 12/27

Cookies, pie, fruit? Will it waffle???

WEDNESDAYS:

Teen Manga Club (grades 6-12) - 4-5 p.m.: 10/5, 11/2, 12/7

Get ready to geek about your favorite manga and anime. Trivia, games, snacks, & prizes included!

Digital Art with Danielle (grades 7-12) - 4-5 p.m.: 10/19, 11/16, 12/21

Bring your creations to the digital realm.

THURSDAYS:

Unplugged Game Night (grades 7-12) - 5 p.m.: 10/13, 11/10, 12/8

From Magic to Unstable Unicorns, unplug and play.

Brain Flex Trivia (grades 7-12) - 5 p.m.: 10/20, 11/17, 12/22

Challenge your trivial knowledge! Topics include: pop culture, world mythology & more!

Dungeons & Dragons (grades 7-12) - 6 p.m.: 10/27, 12/29

Try out the game with a one-

shot quest! October's theme will be the Headless Horseman. December's will be Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory.

TAKE-AND-MAKE KITS (while supplies last):

October 17-28: **Paper Skeletons**

November 7-18: **Fall Wreath**

December 12-23: **Origami Ornaments**

CHILDREN:

SPECIAL PROGRAMS:

10/8, 11:45 a.m. - **Braille Storytime with Jolene & Odi**. Meet Odi, a seeing eye dog, learn about her training and enjoy a story read in Braille by Jolene. For children ages 4+.

10/13, 5:30 p.m. - **Libraries Love Lakes STEM Storytime**. Learn to take care of lakes. Environmental stories and crafts with research scientist Kendra Kilson. Ages 4-8.

10/22, 11 a.m. - **Robots Rock the Room*** - Learn about robots that move like animals with author Linda Zajac. Ages 5+, registration begins Oct. 3.

11/3 (6 p.m.) and 11/12 (11 a.m.) - **Gemstone Tealight Holder Craft** for children grades 2-5.

12/6 (4 p.m.) and 12/8 (5 p.m.) - **Ugly Sweater Ornament Craft** for children ages 4+.

RECURRING PROGRAMS:

Read to a Therapy Dog - Register in person at the event (10:30 a.m., 10/8, 11/5, 12/3).

Playdate @ the Library - For babies, toddlers and preschoolers (10 a.m., 10/3, 10/17, 11/7, 11/21, 12/5, 12/19).

Lil' Bookworms Storytime - Join us for a fun-filled story time. No registration is required (10:30 a.m., 10/12, 11/9, 12/14).



1000 Books Before Kindergarten – Register anytime! It's never too early to read to your child and develop a love for reading.

Coloring Club & Tabletop Toys – Anytime! Drop in, hang out to color or play whenever it's convenient for you.

SATURDAY SERIES for FAMILIES and CHILDREN:

10/1 – **Bee Bots** (10 a.m. - 12 p.m.)

11/19 – **Family Game Day** (10 a.m. - 12 p.m.)

12/10 – **Lego Club** (10 a.m. - 12 p.m.)

GRAB 'N' GO CRAFTS (while supplies last):

Oct. 1-12 – **DIY Rainstick Instrument** (ages 4-10)

Oct. 17-31 – **Velvet Art Halloween Magnet** (ages 4-11)

Nov. 7-23 – **'I am Thankful' Wheel** (ages 4-11)

Dec. 1-17 – **Snowflake Wreath Activity** (ages 4-11)

SPECIAL EVENTS for all Ages:

12/2 – Join us for live music, refreshments and children's activities on the day of the town's **Winterfest**. It will also be the first day of our **Tree Festival**. The Tree Fest is a time not only to celebrate the holi-

days, but also the love of literature. This year we ask that each tree be decorated in a theme surrounding a particular book (children or adult book). The library staff will then coordinate with each participant to ensure that a copy of the book is displayed alongside the tree.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Kanopy – A video-streaming service that contains thousands of different movies, documentaries, children's content. Can be accessed from TV, computer or mobile device.

Libby – The Libby App provides access to e-materials purchased by RPL or made available through the Bibliomation consortium – ebooks, audiobooks, and magazines.

True Flix - An engaging resource for kids, offering e-books enhanced with primary sources, fiction, videos, audio, images and websites. Focuses on social studies and science topics.

Book Flix - Designed to strengthen early literacy skills while exposing young learners to real-world concepts, it pairs animated videos with non-fiction e-books.

Submitted by: Jennifer Johnston-Marius, *Director*

Registrar of Voters

Election Day is Nov. 8. Polls will be open from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. at the following locations: Northeast School, Vernon Center Middle School, Rockville High School and Skinner Road School. You will be voting at the same locations as you did for the primary in August. All registered voters, regardless of party affiliation, are eligible to vote on Nov. 8.

If you are not registered to vote you can register at any Department of Motor Vehicles office or online at ct.gov/SOTS. You can also visit the Vernon Registrar of Voters office any Monday, Tuesday or Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon. The office is at 375 Hartford Turnpike, Room 117. Any questions? Please call us at 860-896-2376.

Chris Prue, *Democratic Registrar of Voters*

Lisa Moody, *Republican Registrar of Voters*

Absentee Ballots Available

Election Day is Nov. 8. If you will be out of town on Election Day, are an active member of the armed forces, have religious beliefs that prevent you from performing secular activities such as voting on Election Day, will be serving as an election official at a polling place other than our own, or have a sickness or physical disability that prevents you from voting in person, you are eligible to vote by absentee ballot.

Absentee ballots are available effective Oct. 7. You can obtain an application for an absentee ballot from the Town Clerk's office at Town Hall, 14 Park Place, Vernon, or from the Secretary of the State website: <https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS>.

Please note that the Town Clerk's office is closed on Fridays and on Monday, Oct. 10, in observance of Columbus Day.

Submitted by: Karen Daigle, *Town Clerk*

PROJECTS, continued from p. 17

The field will have synthetic short turf to make it accessible to people who use wheelchairs or have disabilities that affect their mobility. It will also have wheelchair-accessible dugouts, and will be completely flat and barrier free so that children with visual disabilities can participate.

The Miracle League Field of Northern Connecticut has raised considerable money to fund the project, and continues to work toward its goal of \$600,000. Organizers plan to break ground in June.

The Vernon ROCKS Coalition is a collaboration of community stakeholders, parents, youth, and volunteers, whose focus is to prevent Vernon youth from using drugs and alcohol.

Each year coalition members nominate a Vernon ROCKS member who goes above and beyond for the coalition. The Coalition Member of the Year continuously promotes the mission of Vernon ROCKS and shows a strong desire to protect and promote the young people of Vernon. This year's Coalition Member of the Year is Dustin Yager, a Vernon resident who works as a case manager for the Rivereast Treatment Center in Vernon.

"The coalition has been a way to get more involved with the community I live and work in and has enabled me to connect with people and share a message of reducing substance use and engage people in treatment who might need it," Yager said. "In the more than 10 years I have done substance abuse treatment, I have seen how the stigma it carries can often prevent people from seeking treat-



ment or asking for help. It's been great to connect with others in the coalition who have more experience doing prevention work and learning from them."

His fellow Vernon Rocks Coalition members say Yager has been a great contributor.

"He is an integral part of the coalition, thinks outside the box to come up with innovative prevention activities, and consistently participates in coalition events and activities to showcase the work of Vernon ROCKS and to further the group's mission," one member said.

"Dustin is eager to participate in events, bring creative ideas to the table for awareness campaigns, has some great connections due to his prevention work in the community and has a terrific sense of humor," said another member.

"Dustin's experience working with those in treatment and recovery from substance use disorders provides a valuable perspective to the work of the Vernon ROCKS Coalition," said another coalition member.

To learn more about the Vernon ROCKS Coalition or how to get involved, visit www.vernonrocksct.org or email Vernon ROCKS Coalition Chairperson Michelle Hill at mhill@vernon-ct.gov.

Submitted by: Michelle Hill, *YSB Director*

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Fraud and Scams are on the Rise

Credit card fraud, check fraud, cryptocurrency fraud and imposter scams are on the rise. There are some things residents can do to reduce their chances of becoming victims.

First, stay up to date on current fraud and scam trends. You might receive an e-mail/telephone call saying you have won a prize or from someone claiming to be a government official. They even may claim to be a grandchild, relative, or friend. Whatever the story might be, the goal will always be the same. The scammer will ask you to wire money to a bank account or go to a store to purchase reloadable gift cards and they will want you to transfer the balance to them via the gift card numbers. Scammers have been using gift cards because they are virtually untraceable and leave no trail for police to investigate.

If you are ever in such a situation, STOP and look into what they are asking of you. If they are calling and claiming to be a family member or friend, hang up and call the person they are claiming to be with a phone number you possess. If they are pretending to be a government agency, call that agency and ask what is going on. A government agency will never ask for

a wire transfer or to be paid in reloadable gift cards.

More recently, scammers are trying to get their victims to use Bitcoin or some other form of digital currency sent to them as payment. Again, the stories will be similar to the ones listed above but scammers are now trying to get you to go to a Bitcoin ATM and deposit money into it so it exchanges to Bitcoin. Once your currency is exchanged to Bitcoin, they are asking for pictures of your ATM receipt. They want to obtain the information on the receipt to transfer the funds you just deposited into their cryptocurrency wallets. If you have concerns about the phone call being a scam or fraud please contact the Vernon Police Department and officers can assist. Remember, no legitimate business or government agency will ever ask you for cryptocurrency as payment for debts, criminal bonds, or other penalties.

Lastly, credit card and check fraud still exist and ultimately can lead to having your identity stolen. Be mindful that scammers will send you phishing emails pretending to be legitimate companies in an attempt to obtain your credit card information. Be diligent in checking who the e-mail comes from and ask why they want

or need your credit information. You will often find numerous spelling errors in these phishing emails as well as an unusual email which does not match the origin company's email address. One of the best remedies to prevent ID theft from check fraud is to make sure your checks are kept in a safe location. When throwing away a check be sure to shred it so it cannot be used or obtained later.

If you receive an unknown purchase on your credit card or you are alerted about potential ID Theft follow these steps:

1. Call the Vernon Police at 860-872-9126.
2. Call the companies where you know the fraud occurred. Explain the situation and ask them to freeze any accounts if possible.
3. Place a fraud alert with one of the three credit bureaus (Experian, TransUnion or Equifax) and get your credit report.
4. Report identity theft to the Federal Trade Commission.

The Vernon Police Department is always here for its residents.

Submitted by: John Kelley, *Chief*

The Vernon Historical Society is sponsoring a tour of Maxwell Court, the Rockville mansion once owned by mill owner Francis T. Maxwell. The mansion is now the home of the Rockville Elks Lodge.

The tour begins at 1 p.m. on Sunday, October 30 at the Elks Lodge, 9 North Park Street and is free and open to all. Meet and park at the Elks Lodge.

Maxwell Court was designed by Charles Adams Platt (1861-1933), a renowned architect and one of America's most influential landscape designers. The Colonial-Classical Revival mansion was built in 1902-1904 and was Platt's first large-scale project. His design integrates the mansion and the surrounding landscape.



The house and the 4.5 acres on which it sits are on a hill overlooking Rockville with views to the south and west. Its architecture, gardens and landscape were influenced by the Villa Gambraia near Florence, Italy.

Maxwell was a part-owner of the Hockanum Mills Company in Rockville.

Susan Barlow, Manchester's Town Historian,

will speak about Platt's work and his roots in Connecticut as a member of Manchester's Cheney family, which operated silk mills. Dennis Cartier of Rockville Elks Lodge No. 1359 will lead a tour of the building.

After exploring the mansion, participants will walk to two other Platt buildings in Rockville: Kellogg Lawn, which is now Rockville General Hospital, and the Maxwell Memorial Library, which is better known as the Rockville Public Library.

Submitted by: Jean Luddy

TOWN OF VERNON ASSESSOR

Personal Property Declarations must be filled out, according to law, between Oct. 1 and Nov. 1, 2022.

Those engaged in any type of business in the Town of Vernon who do not submit their declaration will receive a 25 percent penalty of the total assessment due and payable in July 2023. You can file your Personal Property Declaration electronically. You do not have to submit a hard copy of the signature page to the Assessor when filing electronically; however, the deadline remains no later than Nov. 1, 2022. Electronic signatures are now acceptable.

All persons filing for land reductions **under PA-490**, Farm, Forest and Open Space, for the first time, must apply between Sept. 1 and Dec. 1, 2022

Crumbling Foundation Applications MUST be submitted no later than Dec. 31, 2022 for consideration for the 2022 grand list. Applications are available on the town webpage/Assessor or at the assessor counter. Applications received after Jan. 1, 2023 will become effective for the 2023 Grand List.

If you have any other question regarding your Real Estate, Motor Vehicle, Business Personal Property or Exemptions, please call 860-879-3625.

Submitted by: David Wheeler, Assessor

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Creative Writers Dominate Competitions and Win Acclaim for Their School

Great things happen every day in the classrooms, labs and greenhouses at Rockville High School.

But something even more remarkable has been happening in Creative Writing Teacher Victoria Nordlund's classes. Her students have written and published poetry, fiction and non-fiction, won hundreds of awards, dominated writing competitions, and earned Rockville High School state and national acclaim.

In June, two of Nordlund's students, Kaylin Maher and Dakota Ouellette, stood on the stage at Carnegie Hall in New York City to receive awards and national recognition for their writing portfolios in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. Dakota received a Gold Medal and Kaylin and Silver Medal with Distinction.

That level of success is not new. For more than 15 years Rockville High students have won more writing awards than students at any other public or private school in Connecticut.

Maher and Ouellette were joined by 27 fellow Rockville High School students, who together won 49 awards in the 2022 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. Students won 10 gold keys, 16 silver keys and 23 honorable mentions – the most of any high school in Connecticut. Muriel Stankeviciute received a 2022 American Voices nomination for best in show.

Rockville High School students also won a record 70 awards in UConn's 2022 Connecticut Student Writers contest. Rockville High students had 10 Platinum Published pieces, 10 Gold awards, 24 Silver awards, and 26 Honorable Mentions. Students were winners in every category -- fiction, poetry and non-fiction -- and won more awards than any other school in the state. Their work has been published in Connecticut Student Writers magazine, which can be viewed by clicking here.

What's behind the students' success is a teacher who is a poet herself, committed to helping her students find their voices and express themselves in various forms of writing, and pushes them to publish and share their writing.

"The creative writing courses build a community where people feel safe to express their feelings and safe to be who they are," said Nordlund, who has taught at Rockville High School for 32 years and began the Creative Writing program 20 years ago. "There's not a lot of space for that in places. I think our program thrives because of that community. It lets people develop their own voice."

Nordlund also brings guest speakers in to talk to students about the craft of writing. Novelists, playwrights, screenwriters, poets, and other writers describe how they got started, their writing process, their frustrations and helps students understand the creative process.

"It gives them a perspective on a real life author," Nordlund said. "They understand that the frustrations and struggles they experience as writers are not unique. Writing is not easy and requires revision after revision to make it better."

Students also visit museums, attend a Broadway play and participate in other creative events.

The students take their work far beyond Rockville High School. They represent Vernon at poetry readings and poetry slams, at the Connecticut Literary Festival at Real Art Ways in Hartford, and at the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington. They also share their writing closer to home, with students in Vernon's elementary schools, residents of senior housing and at Arts Center East.

Having students share their writing through readings and contests is important, Nordlund said.

Jason Courtmanche, an assistant professor in residence and Director of the Connecticut Writing Project at UConn, agrees.

"In the field of rhetoric and composition, we talk about audience and purpose," he said. "The audience is typically the teacher and the purpose is a grade. That is not sufficiently motivating."

If students do not have a real audience or purpose for their writing, why should they care, he asks.

"When a student realizes people are going to be reading this, that ups the ante a lot," Courtmanche said. "What Vicky is doing is helping students find subject matter that is important and a genre they feel strong in. They take it seriously because they want to write about it. They care about it and they care what people think about them when they have something to say about it."

Students gain confidence from the process, he said. "It's such a validation to be published, to have someone say your words and ideas mean something. That means so much to a kid."

Kaylin Maher, the Class of 2022 salutatorian and one of Nordlund's students, said she was still in middle school when she learned about the writing program and decided to participate.

"It seemed like a great way to make friends and see if I would enjoy writing," she recalled. "I've been able to delve into different styles of writing. I really like poetry and short stories. I also feel more comfortable externalizing a lot of emotions. Sharing vulnerable moments with other people has been important to me."

Kaylin has also strengthened her public speaking skills through readings, and been able to travel thanks to her participation in the program.

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The National Council on Aging designates September as National Senior Center month and this year's theme was "Strengthening Community Connections." Members celebrated by participating in social events, historical presentations, health and wellness programs, creative arts programs, and trips. Members visited the Old Mill Tea House in Somers, for an enchanting tea featuring delicate sandwiches with a variety of tea offerings.

Several of our community partners hosted informative presentations: HomeHelpers sponsored a lunch and learn presentation on "Stay Healthy at Home," and the Eastern Connecticut Health Network provided great information on osteoporosis. Our friends at Foxhill Center/Genesis HealthCare sponsored a fall wreath project. Ruth W. Crocker, author of "The Secret Life of Louisa May Alcott," discussed the writings of Alcott and her book "Little Women." A Square Dance Hoedown was enjoyed by members who put on their dancing shoes and kicked up their heels to celebrate National Senior Center month.

We are very excited to host the Silk City Strays for an evening concert on Oct. 13. The band will perform songs from a variety of genres, including country, rock, and pop. As the spooky season

WRITERS, continued from p. 22

And while she does not plan a career as a writer or in the arts, she said the experience she gained at Rockville High School has given her a love of writing that she expects will continue. She also thinks it will help her better communicate with patients as she pursues a career as a physician assistant.

"A lot of STEM people are kind of aloof when it comes to patient care and interacting with patients," she said.

Nordlund said creative writing is beneficial to students whether they pursue a career in the arts or in business, science or any other field.

"It's important to be creative and to be an innovator – an idea person – in any field you take on," Nordlund said. "In any career, it's important to be a problem solver. Part of problem solving is to be creative and to have a different perspective."

approaches, we invite members to join us for two haunting presentations: "The Ghosts of the Civil War" on Oct. 26 and "The History of Halloween" on Oct. 27.

The Out to Lunch Bunch will travel to the Salem Cross Inn, a restored 18th century farmhouse, in West Brookfield, Mass., on Oct. 12, for a lunch featuring traditional New England fare. This is the perfect way to celebrate the arrival of the autumn season. On Oct. 19, we will tour the Huntington Homestead, a National Historic Landmark, in Scotland, Conn., which is the birthplace of Samuel Huntington, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. If you feel like spoiling yourself, join us for two days of luxury at the Encore Boston Harbor Resort and Casino on Nov. 14-15. Enjoy a lavishly appointed guest room, a variety of restaurants, spa treatments, shopping, and gaming. On Nov. 30, we will visit Newport, R.I.'s most famous mansions, The Breakers and The Elms, which will be beautifully decorated for the holidays.

November would not be complete without recognizing our members who are veterans at the annual Veterans luncheon on Nov 9. All veteran members are invited to attend as we thank them for their service. Tom Callinan will entertain the group with his patriotic musical tribute.

On Nov. 16, we'll travel to historic Sturbridge, Mass. for lunch at the Publick House. Dating back to the 1700s, this inn is the perfect place to enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving feast. Before departing, we'll stop at the Bake Shoppe for homemade pastries, decadent desserts, breads, and pies to bring home.

Members will gather together on Dec. 14, for the annual Holiday Luncheon. A delicious holiday lunch and entertainment by Noah Lis will get everyone in the holiday spirit.

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

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

Submitted by: Cynthia Maheu, *Administrative Assistant*

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