



VERNON VOICE




SPRING 2023

SPRING/SUMMER 2023

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JUNE 2 @ 7 PM:
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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I hope this edition of the Vernon Voice finds you well and looking forward to spring and good weather. So many of our capital projects are moving forward. We are preparing Windermere Fields for its first soccer game this fall. If the weather cooperates, three fields may be ready for use by our young people. A very enthusiastic Miracle League Field committee is working to reach its fundraising goals to build an adaptive baseball field at Northeast School. The design and rehabilitation of the Fox Hill Tower is moving forward and the vault for the Probate Court has been installed as part of the Citizens Block revitalization program. Read about all the details in the pages of this magazine.

This year marks the 5th Anniversary of the opening of the Vernon Senior Center on Bolton Road. Our membership keeps growing and our programs continue to expand to

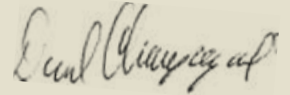
accommodate members' needs.

Thank you to those who answered the call in our last edition and volunteered for our board and commission vacancies. We appreciate your willingness to serve. Our boards and commissions are always in need of volunteers so give my office a call if you are interested in joining us.

Lots of interesting programs are shared in the department articles included in this edition. One in particular, July in the Sky, is organized by the Parks and Recreation Department in partnership with the Rockville Downtown Association. We are looking for vendors and sponsors for the event. If you know of a group or business that would like to join us have them contact the Parks and Recreation Department at 860-870-3520. Parks is also looking for Life Guards and seasonal maintainers for the summer season. For more information visit www.vernon-ct.gov and click on "Job Openings, Human Resources."

Finally, I would like to remind you that our budget is presently being formulated and will be voted on at the Annual Town Meeting at 7 p.m. on April 25, at Rockville High School. All are encouraged to attend and vote. Our budget process becomes more challenging with each passing year. Just as you have experienced increases in utility and other costs in your household, the town has experienced cost increases. I am confident, however, that we can deliver a budget that keeps expenses down and addresses our community's needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Mayor.




Daniel A. Champagne
Mayor, Town of Vernon



Photo by Chris Dehnell/Patch Media Corp



The Town Clerk's Office has transitioned to a new land record system. The land record index is still available on the Town Clerk page of the website, so you can continue to check activity, but you can now sign up for Fraud Alert, which will notify you by email when a document has been recorded on the land records in your name. You may sign up on the Town Clerk page on the town website.



Fishing licenses are issued on a calendar year basis and expire Dec. 31. New licenses can be purchased at the Town Clerk's Office or online at <https://portal.ct.gov/CTOutdoorLicenses>. Fishing licenses are not required for anyone under 16 years of age. There is a 50 percent discount for Connecticut residents aged 16 or 17, and licenses are free for Connecticut residents 65 and older, free for CT residents 65 years or older, although there is a charge for trout and salmon stamps. Fishing season is now year-round, with some exceptions.

A Trout and Salmon Stamp is required for all people 16 or older when they keep any trout or salmon, fish in a designated trout management area, trout park, wild trout management area class 1, 2 or 3, or an Atlantic salmon management area.

Reciprocity agreements with Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New York allows anglers with a valid Marine Waters Fishing License to fish in Connecticut. Any Connecticut resident with a valid Connecticut Marine Waters Fishing License may fish in the marine district of those states.



Annual Town Meeting

The Annual Town Meeting to vote on the fiscal year 2023-2024 budget will take place on April 25th at 7 p.m. at Rockville High School auditorium, Loveland Hill Road.



Dog Licenses

June is dog licensing month in Connecticut. Licenses purchased in June are in effect between July 1 and June 30, 2024. Valid rabies certificates effective July 1st or later are required, along with a spayed or neutered certificate. Licenses remain \$8 for a spayed or neutered dog and \$19 for an unaltered dog. There is a \$1 per month late fee after June 30th.

Board and Commission Positions AVAILABLE
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The Town of Vernon continues to move forward on a variety of capital projects designed to benefit residents by preserving historic structures, streamlining municipal government and enhancing recreational opportunities for people of all ages.

Windermere Youth Athletic Fields

Work continues on the athletic field complex under construction off Windermere Avenue. Grass is growing on three fields; irrigation systems are installed in one field and out to bid for fields 2 and 3. Constructing of a fourth field is planned.

The town is also seeking proposals for construction of a building to house a concession stand and restrooms, and for a septic system. Construction of driveways and parking areas will begin when field construction is complete. Sidewalks and guide rail have been installed and barriers to ensure neighbors' privacy are in the works.

Vernon residents approved purchasing the 42-acre site in 2019 and would have been progressing ever since. The fields will primarily service Vernon's youth soccer program, which has exploded in popularity.

Miracle League Field

There has been incredible progress on the Miracle League Field of Northern Connecticut, which will be built at Northeast School. Ground is expected to be broken when school ends this spring and the field should be completed in about 11 weeks, making it available for soccer in the fall.

Children of all abilities will be able to play baseball, soccer and lacrosse and other sports on the field. It will also be available to Northeast School students, the Vernon Public Schools Unified Sports program and adaptive physical education classes throughout the district.

As one of only three Miracle League Fields in Connecticut, it will draw people to Vernon who will not only enjoy the field, but patronize local businesses.

Citizens Block

The renovation and restoration of the Citizens Block building on Park Place is progressing. Crews worked through the winter on the building's masonry exterior and built an elevator shaft and rear entrance. The vault for the Probate Court has also been installed.

Crews have also been framing and construction the building's interior. The building, constructed in 1879, once contained retail, offices and apartments.

Redevelopment of the building is based on Mayor Dan Champagne's vision to transfer several town departments to the building, thereby making access to town government more convenient for residents. Most town departments will be on Park Place.

Under the Mayor's vision, the Probate Court will move from Town Hall to Citizens Block and the Town Clerk's office will be able to gain much-needed space in the former probate court office. A community room for organizations to use is also planned for the building.

Rockville Public Library Steps

A consultant is evaluating the granite steps, landing pad and adjoining patio and walls at the Rockville Public Library, a historic structure built in 1904.

Weather, use and other factors have made the steps unusable. The consultant is working to determine what it will take to properly restore the steps to their former grandeur and so that patrons can use them to reach the library's front door.

The Town of Vernon has only owned the library since 2018.

Fox Hill Tower

The town has gone to bid for consultants to develop plans and budget estimates to restore Fox Hill Memorial Tower, make it Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant, and then to oversee the work. The Town received a \$2.5 million allocation from the State Bond Commission to go toward restoration work.

The landmark tower in Henry Park provides breathtaking views of the Connecticut River Valley.

It was built in 1937 during the Great Depression as a Works Progress Administration project to put people back to work, and as a memorial to Vernon's war veterans. The tower is an iconic symbol of Vernon and is on the official town seal.



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There are a number of local, state and federal programs available for Vernon residents in need:

Heating Assistance

Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP)

This federally funded program helps low to moderate income residents with heating costs during the winter months. This includes deliverable fuel – oil, propane, kerosene and pellets – as well as gas and electric heat. Residents with heat included in their rent are also able to apply. The program goes through May 31. To set up an appointment, call Social Services at 860-870-3661.

Operation Fuel

In addition to CEAP, residents may qualify for assistance through Operation Fuel. For more information, including how to apply, visit their website: operationfuel.org

Tri Town Fuel Bank

The Tri Town Fuel Bank is a collaborative program between Vernon, Ellington and Tolland. Individuals and families who reside in the three towns can apply for heating assistance – deliverable fuel and electric utility – after first having applied for and exhausted benefits from CEAP and Operation Fuel. Applicants must meet the CEAP income guidelines; each request is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The Maximum assistance is \$750 and is limited to one assist per household in a 12-month period.

Renters' Rebate

This state reimbursement program is available for Connecticut renters who are elderly or totally disabled and whose incomes do not exceed certain limits. Persons renting an apart-

ment or room, or living in cooperative housing or a mobile home, may be eligible. Renters' rebates can be up to \$900 for married couples and \$700 for single persons. The renters' rebate amount is based on income and the amount of rent and utility payments made in the prior year. The program begins April 1 and runs through September. Call Social Services for information.

Shelter

Persons who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless should call 211 to reach a specialist trained to assess housing needs. Anyone seeking shelter in Connecticut must connect directly with 211. While Vernon is fortunate to have a shelter in town – Cornerstone – all requests must first start with 211. This is also a one-stop connection to other services and assistance.

Food

Hockanum Valley Community Council and Cornerstone both offer food pantries. Additionally, Cornerstone has drop-in hot meals seven days a week. And the Connecticut Food-share Mobile Pantry comes to Vernon twice a week, every other week. Call Social Services for more details.

Submitted by: Matt Hellman, *Director*

CEMETERY DEPARTMENT

The Town of Vernon Cemetery Department is asking families to remove all holiday and winter decorations by April 1. This includes all statues, garden shop figurines, shepherd hook plant holders, etc.

Decorations not removed will be discarded. All artificial flowers must be secured in a pot or suitable non-glass container. No candles or LED garden lights are permitted in cemeteries.

Borders around monuments must be preapproved by the superintendent. For a complete listing of Vernon Cemetery Commission rules and regulations, visit the Town of Vernon website at vernon-ct.gov and click on "Departments."

Lots for cremation or full burials are available for purchase. Contact the cemetery office at 860-875-3158 for details or to make an appointment.

Submitted by: Kevin Bowman, *Superintendent*

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online.

Funds for hiring a graphic artist specializing in map design came from grants awarded by the Vernon Greater Together Community Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and an Operations Grant from CT Humanities. Peter Hary from Quinn & Hary in New London was selected to design the brochure style map.

In addition to a brief paragraph about the 13 hiking trails and 10 historic attractions, a numbered map supplies their locations. QR codes on the map direct users to the Points of Interest

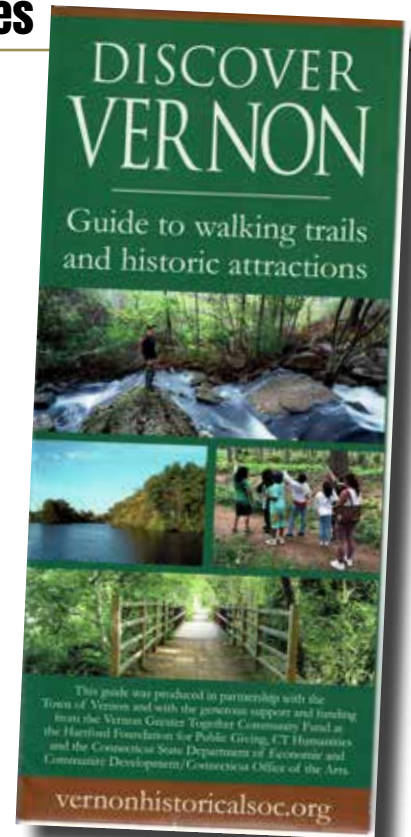
page on the Vernon town web site or to the Society's web page.

An online version of the map has been placed on the Society's web site, vernonhistoricalsoc.org. Click on the link on the upper right side of the page to find a downloadable version. Bob Hurd, Don Sierakowski and Jean Luddy served on the Map Committee

Through the generosity of the Town of Vernon, paper copies of the map have been printed and will be available for free at these locations in town: the 10 Historic attractions, Town Hall, Rockville Public Library, the Senior Center and the Chamber of Commerce.

Get your version of the map and start exploring!

Submitted by: Jean Luddy, *Director*



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Growing Together is the theme of events and opportunities at the library this spring. You can GROW your garden with the help of our seed library, GROW your knowledge through informational programs for all ages, GROW your family tree by attending the Ancestors Roadshow, and GROW your connections with people from your community by coming to our library open house, the Vernon Community Meet and Greet, or attending a program where you can make new friends. However you are looking to grow, the library is here to help you sprout!

OPEN HOUSE



Library Open House: Saturday, May 20th from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Fun for all ages! Come to the library and see what new things we are offering. Join us for live music by Tom Callinan, Connecticut's 1st Official State Troubadour, from 11 a.m. to noon. We will also have games, craft activities, such as flower wreath making for children and families from noon to 1:30 p.m., bath salts for teens and adults, and collaborative art for all ages. We'll also have some treats.

Vernon Community Meet and Greet: Thursday, April 27th from 6 to 8 p.m. - Come and meet your neighbors and learn about the Vernon community. A variety of organizations and Town departments will be on hand to share information and answer your questions. Light refreshments will be provided.

Seed Library: From March through May the library will have vegetable, herb and flower seeds available for patrons in the Main Reading Room. Have extra seeds that you would like to share, we always welcome donations. Come grow with us!

Summer Reading Program: All Together Now is this year's theme. Make sure to sign up your kids! They will earn weekly reading rewards and be entered into bi-weekly raffles. Teens and adults will have their program as

well, so keep checking our website and social media for details. Prizes are sponsored by the Friends of Rockville Public Library and local businesses.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS & EVENTS:

Collage Club for Kids - Experiment with different art materials each session, working towards creating your own amazing art journal. Kids in grades 3-5 will cut, glue, collage, paint, print, and write to express themselves. (April 12, May 24, June 7; 4 to 5:30 p.m.)

The Secret Life of Owls - All ages. Space is limited. Presented by Horizon Wings Raptor Rehabilitation & Education. (April 13, 2 to 3 p.m.)

Floral Tea Party - Enjoy tea and crumpets while making a flower hat or basket. Children in kindergarten through grade 3 with adult. Reservations begin April 10 by phone at 860-875-5892. (April 27, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.)

Storytime with Leanne Pagano - Local author will read her book Lily and Aster! Ages 6-12. No registration required. (May 13, 10:30 a.m.)

Rockin' & Reading with Pete the Cat and Al deCant - Interactive musical performance from Al deCant and a meet and greet with Pete the Cat. (June 24, 10:30 a.m.)

Read to a Therapy Dog - Presented by Bright & Beautiful Therapy Dogs. (April 22, May 20, June 17 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.)

Saturday Series for Families and Children: Family Game Day (April 15, 10am-12pm), Lego Club (May 27, 10am-12pm), Snap Circuits (June 10, 10 a.m. to noon).

Fun, Free Monthly Grab 'n' Go Kits for PreK-Grade 5: Earth Day Project (April 1-22), Spring Tree Craft (May 1-19), Summer Tree Craft. (June 1-16)

Coloring Club & Tabletop Toys - Anytime! Always something to discover! Drop In, Hang Out in the Children's Dept. to color, craft, play or build whenever it's convenient for you.

Exclusively for children ages birth through age 5: Playdate @ the Library

(April 3, April 17, May 1, May 15, June 5, June 19, 10 to 11 a.m.), Lil' Bookworms Storytime (April 12, May 10, June 14 at 10:30 a.m.)

TEEN IN-PERSON CLUBS & PROGRAMS:

TCG Trading Post (All ages) - Tuesdays, 4pm-5pm: April 4, May 2, June 6

Trade or donate your duplicate Pokemon, Yu-Gi-Oh, or Magic cards. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Drop-in.

Mystical Meet-ups* (Grades 7-12) - Tuesdays, 4pm-5pm: April 4, May 2, June 6

Play with tarot decks and practice tarot readings (April 4), create a custom body scrub for yourself or Mother's Day (May 2), and set a summer intention and create a collage (June 6).

Chess Club (Ages 10+) - Tuesdays, 4 to 5 p.m.: April 18, May 16, June 20

Learn the game or play a match with old and new friends. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Drop-in.

Teen Manga Club (Grades 7-12) - Wednesdays, 4 to 5 p.m.: April 5, May 3, June 7

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

Digital Art with Danielle* (Grades 7-12) - Wednesdays, 4 to 5 p.m.: April 19, May 17, June 21

Bring your creations to the digital realm.

Unplugged Game Night (Grades 7-12) - Thursdays, 5 p.m.

From Magic to Unstable Unicorns, unplug and play. Drop-in.

Dungeons & Dragons One-Shot* (Grades 7-12) - Thursdays, 6 p.m.: April 20, June 22

Try out the game with a custom one-shot created by DM extraordinaire, Josh. Bring your level-2 character.

The Parks and Recreation Department is excited to announce the upcoming 2023 Spring & Summer Events & Camps. We have lots of fun activities, programs and events coming up to bring the community together. The spring and summer are 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

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Fishing Derby – Saturday, April 15

Valley Falls Pond will be stocked with plenty of trout. Take this opportunity to introduce your children (ages 15 and under) to fishing when the odds are stocked in their favor. There are six divisions and awards are given to the top finishers in each division. 8-10 a.m.. The Fishing Derby is free for Vernon residents.

Mother's Day Dash – Sunday, May 14

The Mother's Day Dash 5K in Henry Park will be on Sunday, May 14th. This is a USATF Certified 5K course and averages more than 250 participants. The start and finish line are in Henry Park. The Mother's Day Dash offers 16 divisions and a special Mother/Daughter and Mother/Son division. Proceeds from the race benefit the Vernon Police Explorers and Send-A-Kid Scholarship Fund. Pre-registration is available online. There is limited space for day-of registration. Check-in begins at 8 a.m. Awards provided for each division. Free T-shirts for anyone pre-registered by April 16th. Every pre-registered runner will receive one ticket for the prize raffle, additional tickets available for purchase on site. This event is made possible by support for our generous sponsors as well as the Vernon Police, Fire and

Ambulance services.

Trails Day – Sunday, June 4

The Parks and Recreation Department will celebrate Trails Day on Sunday, June 4. Vernon has more than 40 miles of trails for the community to enjoy walking, jogging and biking on. More information available online for featured activity on June 4.

July In the Sky – Tuesday, July 11

Mark your calendars for the Town of Vernon's 77th Annual July In the Sky Fireworks Spectacular on Tuesday, July 11. The rain date is Wednesday, July 12. Food, music, fun activities and the spectacular fireworks display will make Henry Park and Downtown Rockville the places to be. Details of all the festivities coming soon. For vendor and sponsorship info, call Parks and Rec at 860-870-3520.

Mayor Champagne Summer Concert Series

Concerts will be held on select Thursday evenings starting at 6:30 p.m. on McCoy Field in Henry Park. Dates and band schedule will be available soon.

SPRING PROGRAMS

Pee Wee Track

For boys and girls ages 3-5 years old. Learn the fundamentals of track running. Participants will play fun drills and activities to develop an appreciation and love for running track. Program will meet once a week for six weeks at Rockville High, starting late April/early May. Schedule details coming soon.

Track Club

For boys and girls ages 6-14. Participants will be introduced to and learn about a variety of track and field events. The program meets one night per week for six weeks starting mid-April. Practices are held at the Rockville High School Track. Practice times and day of the week are based on facility availability. Visit us online

for more details.

Community Gardens

Harvest beautiful flowers, lovely plants, healthy fruit and fresh vegetables! Garden plots 25' x 25' are available to reserve, \$25 for Vernon residents and \$35 for non-residents. Plots are located at Vernon Center Middle School via the West Street entrance. More information and registration is available online at www.vernonrec.org

SUMMER DAY CAMP OFFERINGS:

- **Summer Day Camps** run in 1-week sessions June 26-Aug. 11
- **Day Camp Hours** 8 a.m. 3:30 p.m.
- **Extended PM Hours** 3:30-6 p.m.
- **Newhoca Bussing Hours** 7:45 a.m. pick up/3:45 p.m. drop off

Camp Newhoca (entering Grades 1-8)

This camp is located in a wooded setting with a lodge, activity cabins and pavilion on picturesque Middle Bolton Lake. Activities include arts and crafts, table games, swimming in the lake, kayaking, canoeing and paddle boating, basketball, hiking, field games and much more. This camp is held at Newhoca Park.

BUSSING IS BACK: Newhoca Camp bussing is available from the Reservoir Road commuter lot for an additional fee. This offering is helpful to extend your morning and afternoon a little, as well as save the travel out to the lake.

Center 375 Camp (entering Grades 1-6)

This location is held in an indoor, air-conditioned facility with a gym, game room and activity rooms. Outside there's a swimming pool, playground, field for games, basketball court and picnic area. Campers enjoy fun theme days, physical fitness, arts and crafts, swim and much more! This camp is held at the Center 375.

See PARK & REC, p. 13

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Important Fire Prevention Tips to Follow

The weather is warming, so it's time for spring cleaning. This year, don't forget to add some fire safety. By following these simple tips, you can help reduce the risk of a fire happening in your home.

One of the most important things you can do to prevent a fire is to keep your home clean. Dust and dirt can quickly build up and become combustible. Make sure to dust all surfaces, especially those that tend to collect dust, like bookshelves and window sills. Don't forget to vacuum regularly too!

The Vernon Office of the Fire Marshal has compiled a quick list of additional fire prevention and safety measures to include in your cleaning routine this year.

Indoor spring cleaning fire safety tips

Clear any clutter from your home, especially hallways and stairways.

Did you know that clutter provides fuel for a fire to spread? Make sure that all of your exits are clear and have a clear path to them. If you have any items blocking an exit, move them immediately. This ensures your family will have good escape routes should you need to evacuate due to fire.

Check smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.

Test your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure they are working properly. Now is an excellent time to install them if you don't have any. Replace your carbon monoxide and smoke detector batteries and look for any corrosion on the batteries or their connection points in the device. Replace the entire device if you notice any corrosion

inside the battery compartment. Otherwise, install fresh batteries in your carbon monoxide and smoke detectors.

Don't use electrical appliances or tools with frayed cords.

If you have any electrical appliances or tools with frayed electrical cords, replace them as soon as possible. Using damaged electrical cords could start a fire. This is also an excellent time to check your extension cords. Too many devices plugged into an outlet can overload it and cause a fire.

Check for water around electrical appliances.

Water around electrical appliances, such as your washing machine, dryer, or dishwasher, can be a sign of trouble. If you notice any water, have a professional inspect your appliance to make sure it is safe to use.

Check appliances to make sure they are in good working condition.

This includes your stove, oven, microwave, toaster, coffee maker, and anything else you use daily. If you notice any issues with an appliance, have it repaired or replaced as soon as possible.

It's a great time to clean your clothes dryer vent and lint trap.

Regularly clean your clothes dryer lint trap. Lint is highly combustible and can easily cause a fire if it isn't removed. Clean your dryer vent and hoses at least once a year to remove and prevent excess lint buildup or blockages.

Outdoor Spring-Cleaning Fire Safety Tips

Trim trees and bushes that are too close to your home.

Trimming bushes and trees creates a "defensible space" between your home and potential fire sources. Additionally, if you have dead or dying trees, now is an excellent time to remove them. Dead vegetation can easily catch fire.

Check gas grills for rust, worn parts, grease, and other debris.

Grilling is a popular spring and summer activity, but it's essential to ensure your grill is clean and in safe operating order before firing it up for the first burger of the season. Remove any rust, grease, or debris built up over the winter. Inspect all parts to make sure they are in good working condition. If you notice any worn parts, have them replaced. It's a great time to check your grill's propane tank for gas leaks.

Move the grill at least 10 feet away from the house before use.

It's essential to keep your gas grill at least 10 feet away from your home when in use. This will help prevent any accidental fires. Additionally, make sure that the area around the grill is clear of any debris or flammable materials.

Make sure your home's address is visible from the street.

If your home's address is not visible from the street, it will be difficult for emergency responders to find your home in the event of a fire or other emergency. Make sure that your house number is visible and easy to read from the street. If you need to, repaint or replace your address sign.

Submitted by: Daniel Wasilewski,
Fire Marshal

Senior Center members to celebrate 5th anniversary at Bolton Road location

On April 8, 2018, Mayor Daniel Champagne, Town officials, the Senior Citizen's Advisory Board, and members, who coordinated details for the new center, opened the doors and welcomed community seniors to the new senior center. Since that time, programs and services have expanded to meet the needs of Vernon seniors and seniors from surrounding communities. Since 2018, an outdoor pavilion has been added to the senior center campus along with an outdoor pickleball court, horseshoe pit, bocce pit and shuffleboard court. With more than 3,000 members, membership continues to increase for adults 55 and older.

Members are invited to attend a five-year anniversary reception on April 11. The reception will feature hors d'oeuvres, cake, a guest speaker, and entertainment by the Elderly Brothers.

There are some exciting events planned over the next few months. Claire Taylor, a talented, professional opera singer, and private vocal coach will be hosting an evening concert on April 19th. She sings a wide variety of genres including opera, musical theatre, classical and jazz.

The annual Ladies Tea will be held on May 10th. A variety of finger sandwiches, teas, and desserts will be served. During the tea,

Susan Jerome will provide a presentation on feminism and fashion through the decades. This is always a popular spring-time event.

The Rockville Public Library and the Vernon Senior Center are partnering to host a community Sock Hop on May 20th, from 6 to 8 p.m., at the Vernon Senior Center, 135 Bolton Road. A DJ will provide music for everyone's dancing enjoyment and snacks will be provided. Registrations will be accepted at the senior center and library. The cost is \$5 and is payable at the time of registration. Pull out your poodle skirt, bobby socks and saddle shoes, and join us for a fun-filled evening.

It will be a pleasure to welcome Arnie Pritchard to the center on May 25th. Mr. Pritchard will be reciting his father's World War II letters home. This will be a first-hand account of the war through a soldier's experience.

The center will welcome summer on June 21st by hosting an evening dinner and concert at the outdoor pavilion. Mass-Conn-Fusion Duo will provide entertainment following a delicious summer-time meal.

Several trips are scheduled for the summer. On June 27th members will have the

opportunity to visit the Griswold Inn in Essex for lunch followed by a cruise on the Connecticut River. On July 18th, members will venture to the Log Cabin restaurant in Holyoke, Mass. for a delicious lobster or prime rib lunch followed by a show of R&B and Doo Wop music. There are several other trips planned through the end of the year, as well as a multi-day trip to America's National Parks in August, and France in September. Trip flyers are available at the center.

Please refer to the monthly newsletter Out and About for program registration information.

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

For more information on the Vernon Senior Center 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

PARK & REC, continued from p. 10

Extended PM is available to those attending Camp Newhoca and Center 375 in the afternoon from 3:30-6 p.m. and held at each perspective site.

All fees and details available online.

SPECIALITY CAMP OFFERINGS:

Multi-Sport Camp – July 10-14

3rd-6th Graders. Experience several different sports throughout the week to build enjoyment and skills.

Circuit Labs – July 17-21

4-7th Graders. Electronics power our world. Participants will learn to design our future.

Art-venture Art Camp – July 24-28

5-12 year olds. Inspiring week of art to spark creativity, engagement, exploration and individual expression. Art explorers travel back to where art began.

STEAM with Lego – July 31-Aug 4

7-12 year olds. Use standard LEGO to problem solve and engineer problems using levers, gears, pulleys and more!

Mad Science Summer Camp – August 14-18

Crazy Chemworks! Learn about the tools scientists use in laboratories. Continue at home with take-homes. 9 a.m.-noon.

A complete line-up of full and half day summer camps, as well as swimming lessons, are available online at www.vernonrec.org

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 are not limited to, Community Room, Pavilion, Picnic Areas, Lodge, Athletic Areas and more. All detailed information and rental application are available online at www.vernonrec.org

Submitted by: Amy Watt,
Assistant Director

Macary Honored as Outstanding Superintendent of the Year by UConn's Neag School of Education

Vernon Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph P. Macary has been honored by the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut as Outstanding Superintendent of the Year.

He is one of several Neag alumni honored as part of the schools 25th annual Alumni Awards program and was formally recognized in March.

Dr. Macary, who earned his undergraduate degree at UConn and doctorate from Neag, has served as Vernon's superintendent since 2015. Before arriving in Vernon, he was superintendent in Wolcott, and before that Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and Director of Special Education and Alternate Programs. He began his education career in Waterbury as a teacher.

During his tenure in Vernon, Dr. Macary has set high expectations across the board and established a vision for every Vernon Public Schools graduate to be a critical thinker, collaborator, communicator, resilient individual and responsible citizen.

He also expects students to make progress every year and for those who are struggling to receive the services they need to help them achieve.

"Everybody says to me, what do we want? I want every child to grow academically, socially and emotionally over a year," Dr. Macary said. "I want them to grow based on their abilities. We want to keep showing student growth."

That is achieved in a system with high standards and high quality, he said.

"I personalize this," Dr. Macary said.

"What would I want for my child if they had this teacher, this administrator, this paraprofessional? I have high expectations for myself, for my staff, for my students, for my parents. There are definitely high expectations for learning."

Board of Education Chairwoman Anne Fischer said board members believe Vernon is lucky to have Dr. Macary as superintendent.

"Joe is an amazing superintendent who puts his heart and soul into his job, all for the benefit of each and every one of our students, staff and parents," Fischer said. "He is a tireless worker with boundless energy and he is incredibly adept at juggling the many different aspects and demands of his job."

Dr. Macary said he views his job as being an advocate for children, especially those who may struggle and need extra support. And as crucial as reading, writing and arithmetic are, there are other equally important components of a student's education.

"I'm a believer in the whole child approach to learning," he said. "That's academic, social and emotional."

The merits of that approach were driven home during the pandemic. Although Vernon did much better than many other districts, academic achievement still slipped. That's one of the reasons Dr. Macary advocated for getting students back to school.

"Kids need structure," he said. "They want to be with other people. That interaction is huge. That's the social component of it all. And then the emotional part is



people being together, getting through adolescence together, getting through early childhood together. That developmental approach is critical. Then of course there's the academic, the reading, writing and arithmetic. I think that whole child approach

to learning is key and that's what we want to make sure we do for our students in Vernon."

Parents play an essential role in their child's education and need to be engaged.

"It's a partnership," Dr. Macary said. "You need three legs for a table to stand. You need the student, you need the teacher and you need the parent. If the parent is not there, a two-legged table does not stand. It falls. Parents are their children's first teachers. Children learn so much from their parents. We need them to be part of it."

Dr. Macary also wants parents to know he is committed to helping their children continually move forward and achieve.

As for Vernon, it's unique community that is similar to the state as a whole.

"We have urban, we have suburban, we have rural" Dr. Macary said. "We have schools next to farms. We have an urban center. When you bring it all together, you've got the classic American melting pot. That's what we are proud of."

Submitted by: David Owens,
Communication Specialist

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2022, Town of Vernon Public Works Refuse and Recycling employees collected 7724.81 tons of municipal solid waste and 2248.79 tons of single stream recycling curbside.

The goal is to manage the collection, recycling, reduction and disposal of municipal solid waste in an efficient, safe and cost effective manner while complying with all Federal, State and local regulatory requirements.

Vernon residents play a key role in helping to improve our environment by providing effective management of household trash and recyclables. Resident efforts help the town reach its goal of protecting our natural resources while promoting a better quality of life for our community, all while ensuring compliance with state and local refuse and recycling ordinances.

DPW Refuse & Recycling answers a commonly asked question....

Q: How do I properly dispose of shredded paper?

A: Shredded paper should be placed in a paper bag, stapled closed and placed in the brown trash cart.

Why: Shredded paper jams sorting equipment at processing facilities. Loose scraps may also cause littering throughout our town.

RECYCLE RIGHT. EVERY TIME.

Use this guide to learn **What's IN** and **What's OUT** of your bin.

What's IN?

Follow these steps before placing acceptable items into your recycling bin.

DO: empty, clean, rinse, and repeat for each item. | **DON'T: shred, box, or bag items.**



PAPER & CARDBOARD



Newspapers & magazines, food and beverage cartons, mixed paper and flattened boxes



GLASS



Bottles and jars



METAL



Food and beverage cans, aluminum foil and foil containers



PLASTIC



Jugs, tubs and lids

What's OUT?



No plastic bags or plastic wrap
(Return to retailer)



No styrofoam or black plastic containers
(Throw them in the trash)



No clothing or linens
(Use donation programs)



No tanglers
(No hoses, wires, chains or electronics)



No combustibles
(No propane tanks, batteries, and non-food grade aerosol cans like spray paint and pesticides)

To learn more about what goes in your bin and what doesn't, ask the **RecycleCT Wizard** at RecycleCT.com, download our app, or scan this QR code.



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RecycleCT



The Town of Vernon Fire Department is a predominantly volunteer organization that relies on the commitment and dedication of residents and business owners to answer calls for fire and rescue emergencies and to carry out fire prevention education and other mission-critical tasks.

Volunteers have provided fire protection since 1855, when the Rockville Fire Department was formed. The tradition continued with the 1940 establishment of the Vernon Fire District. Those two entities joined forces in 1980, creating the Town of Vernon Fire Department. And while we are one of the largest fire departments in Connecticut, we need volunteers to help us answer the call when our neighbors are in need.

The volunteer fire service across the nation has struggled with the recruitment and retention of volunteers to fill the boots of first responders. Even before the hardships of the fluctuating economy, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the "great resignation" that the country and world have experienced, the need was significant.

Risking life and limb to help protect your neighbor and their property provides great pride and satisfaction. And the fire service is a brotherhood and sisterhood that for many members is a second family.

No experience is necessary, as all baseline training is conducted here in Vernon at our fire stations. Additional advanced training is available at programs outside of town. Excellent equipment, a reimbursement and length of service awards programs are available and can incentivize your participation with the fire department.

Will you answer the call? Will you fill the need? Come make new friends and memories that will last a lifetime all while giving back to your community.

"Volunteering is at the very core of being a human. No one has made it through life without someone else's help" – Heather French Henry

If you're ready to take the next step and join our diverse family of volunteers, visit us on the web at www.vernonfire.com and fill out your application today!

Submitted by: Robert Babcock,
Assistant Fire Chief



Water Pollution Control Authority

The Town of Vernon's upgrade to its Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) has been ongoing since 2019.

Some systems have been completed and are now in use, such as the ultraviolet (UV) light disinfection system. The WPCF is required by permit to disinfect effluent prior to discharging it into the Hockanum River. Previously, liquid chlorine was used for disinfection and a second chemical had to be used to offset chlorine's harmful effects.

The new UV system put in place in 2021 eliminates the need to use potentially hazardous chemicals for disinfection. When water passes through the ultraviolet light, it is disinfected without chemicals.

The result is a process that is safer for staff and environment, and more efficient.

Submitted by: Robert Grasis, *Director*



Vernon Greenways Volunteers Support Vernon's 40 miles of biking and hiking trails

For 18 years the Vernon Greenways Volunteers has been helping the Vernon Parks and Recreation Department maintain, clean and beautify more than 40 miles of trails in Vernon. These efforts have largely been led by President Don Bellingham, with the help of 130 volunteers. Various committees have formed to carry out our mission to provide an enjoyable experience for all. The work performed by these groups includes surface repair, trash, tree and debris removal, spring cleaning and planting of gardens. Our Trail Blazing crew cleared a new trail running behind Starbucks and Tri-City Plaza, creating a southward extension of the path along the Hockanum River.

Recently the Vernon Greenways Volunteers merged with the Friends of the Hockanum River Linear Park and we are now a nonprofit officially known as the Vernon Greenways Volunteers, Inc.

Many trails form the Vernon trail system. These include the Rails-to-Trails, the Hockanum River Linear Park, Valley Falls Park, the Valley Falls Braille Trail, Risley Pond Loop and the Belding Wildlife Management area. All offer the beauty and tranquility of nature while enjoying activities such as biking, running, walking, hiking, snow shoeing, and cross country skiing. Other trails offer



ponds, streams and picnic areas.

As you explore Vernon's trails you will certainly get a chance to see abundant wildlife. Signs in certain spots provide an educational component, explaining the historical and ecological significance of the area. A must see is a remarkable piece of art in the form of a mural found on the Rockville spur of the Rails to Trails near the I-84 underpass. For additional trail information, please visit vernon-ct.gov and search "trail system."

Attesting to the popularity of Vernon's trail network, the Rails to Trails portion is the 5th most visited trail in Connecticut. Local businesses and residents sponsor portions of our trail network through the Adopt-A-Trail program. These tax deductible sponsorships have assisted in the purchase of trail maps, dog litter bags, signs and supplies for maintaining the trails.

The Vernon Greenways Volunteers, Inc. is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and we welcome your donations. Please email Vernongreenways@att.net for more information.

Get out there and enjoy one of these trails today!

Submitted by: Lynn Lusardi, *Member*

Empower Vernon Offers Money-Saving Tips

ADMINISTRATION

With the sharp increase in electricity rates, the Town of Vernon and the Energy Improvement District Board are working to provide residents with information about how they can save money.

The Empower Vernon initiative is all about sharing information, including options utility customers have to save money by increasing efficiency in their homes and obtaining electricity from alternative suppliers.

"Energy prices have increased across the board and we're all paying more – consumers, businesses and town government," Mayor Dan Champagne said. "That's why it's so important to do your homework and learn how to save energy."

An "Energy Efficiency and Money Saving Resources" page on the Town website, <https://www.vernon-ct.gov/about/energy-efficiency-resources>, offers a variety of resources.

You can learn about money and energy saving tips from the U.S. Department of Energy and Eversource, information about Energy Star appliances, energy audits for your home and programs for businesses.

Shopping around for a new energy supplier may be an option for you. You can learn about the rates other suppliers are charging, the process to change your supplier and consumer information you'll want to consider. Be sure to have a copy of your most recent electric bill to help you compare costs.

For residents who are struggling with energy bills, Vernon Social Services may be able to help. Please call the office at 860-870-3661. There is also information on the web page about programs to help people who are struggling to pay their utility bills.

If you do not have access to the internet, you can visit the Rockville Public Library, where there are public access computers and staff to help guide you to the webpage. Vernon Senior Center members can use computers there to access the webpage.

Submitted by: David Owens, *Communication Specialist*

Horizon Wings Raptor Rehabilitation & Education - Apr. 17, 7 p.m.

The Vernon Garden Club's program features Mary-Beth Kaeser and her birds. It will be held at the Vernon Congregational Church. (VernonGardenClub.org)

Pvt. Wars, A Play - Apr. 29 - May 14, Times vary.

A play at Arts Center East produced by the Dionysus Theatre Company about three Vietnam veterans who are recuperating in an Army hospital. The play combines humor and compassion with uncompromising honesty. (ArtsCenterEast.org/dionysus-theatre-company)

Vernon Historical Society's Annual Book Sale - Apr. 28, 29, 30 & May 6, 7

This popular annual event features a wide selection of used books, DVDs and books on tape. See website for times. (VernonHistoricalSoc.org)

Cruising Down the Tankerhoosen - May 4, 12 p.m.

Program by Jon Roe for The Friends of Rockville Public Library. The history, geography and beauty of the Tankerhoosen River. (RockvillePublicLibrary.org/support/friends-of-the-library)

Canoe & Kayak Paddle of Upper Bolton Lake - May 6, 9 a.m.

Northern CT Land Trust's annual water tour.

(NorthernCTLandTrust.org)

The Friends of Valley Falls Spring Walks At Valley Falls Park

May 13, 7:30 a.m. - "Birds of Valley Falls" - Biologist Denise Animani on the birds in the park.

May 27 - "Spring Wildflower Walk."

June 3, 10 a.m. - "Tree Walk" - Identify and learn about the trees of the park with Nicholas Cranmer. 1 p.m. (FriendsOfValleyFalls.org)

Vernon Garden Club's Spring Plant Sale - May 15, 8-11 a.m.

Garden Club members will have for sale, perennials, annuals and unusual plants from their gardens at the Vernon Center Middle School. Rain date is May 20. (VernonGardenClub.org)

The Eastern Coyote - May 18, 7 p.m.

The Vernon Greenways Volunteers season kickoff at Camp Newhoca features wildlife expert Ray Hardy. (VernonGreenways.org)

5k Chicken Run - May 21, 8 a.m.

More than a road race this annual Strong Family Farm event is a family activity. (StrongFamilyFarm.org)

Talcottville Memorial Day Parade - May 28, 9 a.m.

One of the state's shortest parades takes place in Talcottville the Sunday before Memorial Day. Marchers walk to the Civil War monument in Mount Hope Cemetery where ceremonies are held.

Letterman and Modern Medicine - June 1, 7:30 p.m.

Jonathan Letterman not only saved thousands of lives on the battlefield, his innovations as Medical Director for the Army gave birth to the emergency medical system we use today. Presented by Greg Susla at the New England Civil War Museum in Rockville. (NewEnglandCivilWarMuseum.com)

The Vernon Chorale's June Concert - June 3, 7:30 p.m.

The Chorale closes it's season with "A Chorale Tapestry" at St. John's Episcopal Church. (VernonChorale.org)

Grand Opening of the Valley Falls Farm Heritage Center - June 10

The Heritage Center museum at the Valley Falls stable has been under development for several years. Learn about the development of this Gentleman's Farm. (FriendsOfValleyFalls.org)

Rockville High School: 150 Years of Excellence - June 11 (Sun.)

Program by Jean Luddy for the Vernon Historical Society. (VernonHistoricalSoc.org)

To learn about these events and others visit VernonVolunteers.org. To receive email announcements join our free MeetUp group at Meetup.com/Making-Vernon-Special.

Submitted by: Jon Roe, *Collaborative Facilitator*





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PLANNING DEPARTMENT

The Planning Department works closely with all land use commissions. It also works with the public to guide the permitting process, land use matters, and future development, while also performing long range planning and overseeing development projects in order to create a prosperous community.

The Planning Department has joined the Building Department in transferring all land use applications onto Permit Link, an online system. This will allow the permit process to run more smoothly while giving the public the opportunity to apply for permits from home.

The Planning Department recently expanded to create a planning specialist position, that works alongside the town planner.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

The Building Department is responsible for reviewing applications for all building permits as well as inspecting the work performed per the Connecticut Building Code, while ensuring public health, safety and welfare.

The Building Department has been working with ScanOptics to transition all paper street files to an online database. The files will be viewable by the public on the town website.

The Building Department has three administrative assistants, a full time building official and part time building inspector. The department also has a property maintenance and zoning enforcement officer.

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

The Engineering Department works diligently to review and inspect all construction activities within public rights of way. It also reviews development proposals to determine compliance with Town standards.

The department recently updated several documents on its website relating to determining property lines and requirements for as-builts, a part of the building process in Vernon.

The department has been working to solicit proposals from firms specializing in historic preservation to rehabilitate Fox Hill Memorial Tower.

The Engineering Department has a full time engineer, and senior engineering technician/wetlands enforcement officers. The Department has a full time surveyor on staff too.

The Town of Vernon's land use departments – Planning, Building and Engineering – are now fully staffed through a recent reorganization of the departments, under the direction of Shaun Gately, Director of Development Services. Staff provides technical guidance and support to the residents and businesses of Vernon, reviews public and private development projects,

encourages sound economic development within the guidelines of the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development, works collaboratively with staff on town-wide projects, and strives to maintain a high quality of life for all, with a mix of desirable neighborhoods and open space, a historic downtown and convenient access to thriving commercial corridors.

TOWN OF VERNON

Department Listing

Administration.....	860-870-3670
Assessor.....	860-870-3625
Animal Control.....	860-870-3558
Board of Education.....	860-870-6000
Building.....	860-870-3633
Cemetery.....	860-875-3158
Collector of Revenue.....	860-870-3660
Engineering.....	860-870-3664
Finance.....	860-870-3690
Fire.....	860-871-7468
(In An Emergency, Call 911)	
Fire Marshal.....	860-870-3652
Information and Communication Technology.....	860-870-3646
Parks & Recreation.....	860-870-3520
Planning.....	860-870-3667
Police.....	860-872-9126
(In An Emergency, Call 911)	
Public Works.....	860-870-3500
Registrar of Voters.....	860-896-2376
Rockville Public Library.....	860-875-5892

Senior Center.....	860-870-3680
Social Services.....	860-870-3661
Town Clerk.....	860-870-3662
Water Pollution Control.....	860-870-3699
Youth Services.....	860-870-3555

Important Numbers to Remember

Ellington Probate Court.....	860-872-0519
Tolland County Chamber.....	860-872-0587
Historical Society Museum.....	860-870-3563
Hockanum Valley (HVCC).....	860-872-9825
Vernon Housing Authority.....	860-871-0886
Kidsafe.....	860-872-1918
North Central District Health.....	860-745-0383
Section 8 Housing.....	860-872-4255
Rockville Hospital.....	860-872-0501
Manchester Hospital.....	860-646-1222
Connecticut Water Company.....	800-286-5700
Eversource.....	800-286-2828
Journal Inquirer.....	860-646-0500

Rockville High School Creative Writing Students Win Big in Annual Scholastic Writing Competition

The students in Rockville High School's Creative Writing Program continued to distinguish themselves and their school with their short stories, essays, poetry and other forms of writing in recent competitions.

Rockville High School students won 59 awards, including eight gold keys, 23 silver keys and 28 honorable mentions in the 2023 Scholastic Writing Awards, which are hosted by the Connecticut Writing Project at the University of Connecticut.

Senior Clarissa Halpryn earned two perfect 10s from judges for a piece of creative writing and was one of five students statewide nominated for an American Voices award from the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers. Clarissa also earned a best in show nomination for one of her entries.

"The creative writing program at Rockville High School is one of the pillars of our school," Superintendent Dr. Joseph P. Macary said. "When an outstanding teacher helps students unleash their creativity, it's a powerful combination and highlights educational excellence."

Principal Jason Magao said students and faculty in the creative writing program, including teacher Victoria Nordlund, have created something special that makes the school and town proud.

"From the day I began my tenure as Rockville High School principal, I have been beyond impressed with the dedication and passion of our creative writers," he said.

Nordlund said that the students who participate in the creative writing program are not only outstanding writers, but articulate speakers, dynamic performers, and wonderful role models and ambassadors of Rockville High School.

"I'm so incredibly proud and impressed

with the RHS Creative Writers who have excelled in every literary genre," Nordlund said. "They continue to top themselves, and this year is no exception. But these achievements alone do not make my students outstanding. It is the community that we have built together that makes us shine year after year."

Very few public high schools enter competitions, she noted. Rockville High students are competing with students from private schools and arts schools and doing very well.

In the 2023 Scholastic Writing Awards, the winners were:

Ninth graders: Mars Hermanson, honorable mention, and Iris Hida, silver key.

Tenth graders: Brooklyn Bachand, honorable mention and silver key; Mihailee Constantopoulos, two honorable mentions and a silver key; Piper Jones, silver key; Athena Lavigne, two honorable mentions, a silver key and a gold key; Atara Quick, honorable mention; and Brooke Vazquez, two silver keys.

Juniors: Abigail Aggarwala, gold key; Natalie Crowley, silver key; James Custer, two honorable mentions; Grace Dehnel, honorable mention; Amelia Dykstra, three silver keys and a gold key; Liz Gluck, honorable mention; Joey Gorski, silver key; Bee Hermanson, honorable mention; Gabrielle Mckayle, three honorable mentions; Kaylen Nearine, honorable mention; Lauren Tedford, two honorable mentions, silver key and a gold key; and Miles Tolman, silver key.

Seniors: Caitlin Chatterton, honorable mention, silver key and two gold keys; Isabel Cintron, honorable mention; Jerelis DeLeon, silver key; Joshua Grisales, honorable mention; Clarissa Halpryn, three silver keys, a gold key and American Voices nominee; Mikayla Leskey, honorable mention; PJ Mecca,

two honorable mentions; Victoria Mitchell, honorable mention; Paige Nicholoy, honorable mention; Tovah Oslovich, two honorable mentions and two silver keys; Kyle Schambach, silver key; Anaya Tolton, honorable mention and gold key; and Lillian Westerberg, silver key.

Rockville's creative writers will also have a record 13 published pieces in UConn's 2023 Connecticut Student Writers Magazine. The students also garnered 11 gold awards, 20 silver awards and 22 honorable mentions. Rockville High School students won awards in every category – fiction, poetry and non-fiction – and won more awards than any other school in the state.

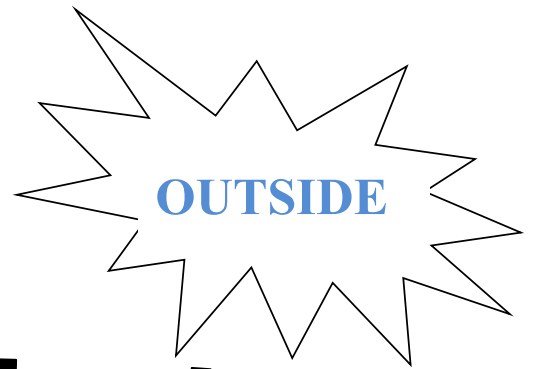
Students whose pieces will be published are: Iris Hida, Brooklyn Bachand, Athena Lavigne, Gray Dehnel, Elizabeth Dwelly, Lauren Tedford, Kaitlin Soucier, Brenna Schnitzke, Kyle Schambach, Clarissa Halpryn and Caitlin Chatterton.

Gold award winners are: Kyle Schambach, Caitlin Chatterton, Clarissa Halpryn (2), Brenna Schnitzki, Kaitlin Soucier, Lauren Tedford, Elizabeth Dwelly, Athena Lavigne, Brooklyn Bachand and Iris Hida.

Silver award winners are: Madalyn Behrmann, JC Castro, Piper Mecca, Tovah Oslovich, Anaya Tolton, Abigail Aggarwala, McKena Clemons, Natalie Crowley, James Custer, Grace Dehnel, Amelia Dykstra, Morgan Fischer, Aurora Luce, Emma Millett, Kaylen Nearine, Lauren Tedford, Mackenzie Fox, Mars Hermanson, Gray Dehnel and Iris Hida.

Honorable mentions went to: Caitlin Chatterton, Jerelis DeLeon, Mikayla Leskey, Tovah Oslovich, Julia Andrews, McKena Clemons, Morgan Fischer, Joey Gorski, Gabrielle Mckayle, Jenna Michaud, Emma Millett, Adiyella Ramirez, Emaan Raza, Ryan Tierney, Miles Tolman, Oliver Ward, Mihailee

See **COMPETITION**, p. 24



Ready Set School Fair

13th ANNUAL EVENT

A Community Event for Families with Children Starting Kindergarten, Making Connections to Area Opportunities, Activities, Camps, Sports, Services, and Vernon Public Schools

THURSDAY, MAY 4TH, 4:00-6:00 PM, HENRY PARK, VERNON CT
120 SOUTH STREET, VERNON, CT 06066
Rain Date – Friday, May 5th, 2023

1. Kindergarten Registration for the 2023-2024 school year is now OPEN. Please visit our website to REGISTER TODAY! Children who turn 5 yr. on or before January 1, 2024 are eligible.
<https://www.vernonpublicschools.org/departments/family-engagement>
2. Sign up for an Activity Pack for your child. Packs will be distributed at the Ready Set School Fair on May 4th with a rain date of Friday May 5th Register at:
<https://forms.gle/1kKnF8hFkKqg75567>
3. Please visit the Ready Set School Fair - family resource page at
<https://www.vernonpublicschools.org/departments/family-engagement/ready-set-school-fair-virtual>



Questions? Contact Allison Altieri, Coordinator of Family Engagement at
aaltieri@vernon-ct.gov or 860-896-4651



experiences and activities for all!

May 21st is our kickoff with the 10th Annual 5K Chicken Run and Walk as well as the kids fun run. Run or walk with us and say hello to our chicks! This year, we will match sponsorships and double your impact! Submit sponsorships and logo by Monday, May 8, 2023.

Save the Date:

Raised Bed Gardening program - April 1 and May 1 start dates for the growing season

10th Annual 5K Chicken Run and Walk - Saturday, May 21st at 9 AM; 8:30 AM for kids

Junk in the Trunk - Saturday, June 10th

***CT Open House Day** - Saturday, June 10th

Backyard Chicken Program - Wednesdays, starting June 28th

Scarecrow Contest - Mid-October

***The Harvest Festival** - Sunday, October 22, 2023

The Civil War Kids Camp - TBD

***Activities:** Sundays will be filled with special themed activities for all ages.

Education: Garden workshops, demonstrations, and talks as well as bee lectures will be posted on our social media and in our newsletter.

Food: The Farm Store will be offering only CT Grown and produced items starting June 10th. Check our website and newsletter for our new store hours.

The farm is partnering again with Mon Soleil Farm in Union to offer Community Supported Agriculture

(CSA) produce pick up at the farm on Thursdays and Saturdays. Select shares include fresh herbs from our onsite herb garden! To sign up go to <https://www.monsoleilct.com/>. Mon Soleil Farm's Deborah Winicki will be on hand Sunday afternoons to answer gardening questions.

Special membership discounts are offered, such as a 10% membership discount at the farm store and program discounts. Email us for information about how to become a member!

**With the exception of select Sunday activities that require advanced notice, these events and activities do not require a sign up.*

Information, Signups, and Questions Contact:

info@strongfamilyfarm.org

www.strongfamilyfarm.org

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The Vernon Youth Services Bureau is excited to present its 11th Greater Vernon Holistic Healthfest on Saturday and Sunday, April 15-16, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Vernon Center Middle School, 777 Hartford Turnpike.

We extend our great thanks to gold sponsors: Collaborative Natural Health Partners and The Tankerhoosen, who will be exhibitors at the event.

Holistic health deals with health of all kinds – physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, relational and recreational.

The event features energy healers, holistic nursing, crystal color light illumination sessions, sterling silver and metal jewelry, Tibetan singing bowls, healthy olive oils, crystals, gemstones, sound healing and CDs, white time energy sessions, Reiki infused crystals, Reiki and sound healing sessions, auricular therapy, trauma healing services, chakra analysis, balance sessions and much more. There will also be talks about mindfulness, spiritual eating, a Sunday drumming session, Qigong, vegan diets, crystal bowls, the nervous system, love languages and much more.

This is one of our favorite fund raisers and we hope you will join us for two fun days of vendors, crafters, with presentations and speakers running on the hour on both days. Food onsite is available from Monet's Table. Admission is \$5 per person. People under 16 are admitted free. Visit www.vernonhealthfest.com

Yoga • Tai Chi • Pilates • Health Spas • Chiropractic • Energy Work

Biofeedback • Birth Services • Psychotherapy • Cancer Screening • Hydrocolon Therapy • Alexander Technique



Greater Vernon Holistic Healthfest
Natural Options for Body, Mind and Spirit
Saturday & Sunday, April 15 – 16, 2023
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Vernon Center Middle School
777 Hartford Turnpike (Route 30), Vernon
For events schedule and more info:
www.vernonhealthfest.com
Admission: \$5 for adults
Free for children under 16 with a parent.
A wide variety of practitioners, vendors, and artists, plus hourly workshops will be offered.
Produced by The Vernon Youth Services Bureau.
Proceeds support programs.



Hypnotherapy • Sound Healing • Gems & Minerals • Hyperbaric Oxygen • Meditation • Nutritional Counseling

Ayurveda • Past Life • Bodywork • Naturopathy • Homeopathy • Acupuncture

com for more information and to see photos and videos of past Healthfests. We hope to see you there.

Submitted by: Michelle Hill, *Director*

Vendors, Sponsors, Volunteers needed for July in the Sky

July in the Sky, Vernon's annual fireworks spectacular and patriotic summer celebration is Tuesday, July 11th.

There will be family-friendly games and activities, all kinds of food vendors and tons of fun at Henry Park and in downtown Rockville. Festivities run from 6 to 10 p.m. The rain date is Wednesday, July 12th.

The Vernon Parks and Recreation Department manages events at Henry Park and the Rockville Downtown Association is managing events in Rockville.

The Parks and Recreation Department is seeking sponsors and food vendors for Henry Park. The Rockville Downtown Association is seeking sponsors, vendors, food vendors and volunteers for the Rockville portion

of the celebration.

Vendors must obtain appropriate permits from the Parks and Recreation Department and the Vernon Police Department. Food vendors also need a permit from the North Central District Health Department. Permits must be obtained well in advance of the event.

For information about being a vendor, sponsorship or anything else related to July in the Sky, please call the Parks and Recreation Department at 860-870-3520 or email parksandrec@vernon-ct.gov.

For information about being a vendor in downtown Rockville, sponsorship opportunities, volunteering and anything related to activities in Rockville, please call 860-805-5610 or email info@rdact.com.

CABE Award

The Vernon Board of Education has won the “Bonnie B. Carney Award of Excellence for

Educational Communications” for its Board of Education Member Handbook.

The board handbook was selected for an award by the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) for meeting the following criteria: clarity of the message, image and consistency, readability, editing, graphics, type, format, presentation, design and value of the expenditure.

CABE has given the award since 1975 and renamed in 2016 to honor Bonnie B. Carney, a longtime staff member of the organization who devoted 47 years to education with a focus on communications.

CABE Vice President Leonard Lockhart presented the award to Board of Education Chair Anne Fischer.

Effective communications with parents and taxpayers in a school district is a significant part of the district's operation. Vernon's Board of Education recognizes the importance of ensuring the community is aware of the activities and events that take place in schools each day.



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Veronica Helgans
MD, FACOG

Yvette Martas
MD, FACOG

Shannon Morgan
CNM, DNP

Stephanie Welsh
CNM, DNP

Lauren Startz
CNM, DNP

COMPETITION, continued from p. 20

Constantopoulos, Makenzie Fox, Piper Jones, Athena Lavigne and Katherine Morey.

Rockville High School students also dominated the Eastern Connecticut State University Creative Writing Competition in the fall.

Seniors Anaya Tolton and Nathan Kay won first and second place, respectively. Anaya received \$500 prize for a poem and Nathan a \$250 prize for his story. Athena Lavigne, Victoria Mitchell, Katherine Morey, and Tovah Oslovich received distinguished writers awards for their outstanding entries. The students were honored at the ECSU Literary Festival on Oct. 15, 2022.

Senior Tovah Oslovich took 1st place in the 2022 International Renee Duke Youth Award Poetry Contest, which celebrates the 74th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The theme of this year's youth award poetry contest was "Human Rights Hero" – living or dead, famous or unknown. Tovah received a \$500 prize and their work will be published online.

Submitted by: Dave Owens, *Communication Specialist*



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Vernon Police Continue Partnership with Ring Neighbors App

The Vernon Police Department is working with Ring and its Neighbors App to share information with residents and to ask for video that may be helpful in solving crimes and other incidents.

We have been using this program for about two years and have found it to be helpful on multiple occasions.

The Neighbors App enables police to quickly provide information to a neighborhood where an incident is occurring or has recently occurred. And it is not necessary for residents to have a Ring Video Doorbell, Ring cameras or any other security system to use the free Neighbors App.

Neighbors who have cameras can also choose to share their video with police. Police do not have access to a person's video unless the person chooses to share it publicly on the app or specifically

with police.

In addition to allowing police to share information with a particular neighborhood, the Neighbors App allows neighbors to share information with each other.

We can ask the community for assistance by asking residents to share information and their videos to aid investigations. We have found residents security and door bell videos to be helpful when their camera captures an incident or crime. They have also helped us identify missing people and people we would like to talk to in connection with incidents we are investigating.

The Neighbors App allows police to appeal directly to residents when seeking video for an investigation.

The Neighbors App is available for iOS, Android, or FireOS supported devices.

Submitted by: Captain Luke Gallant

VERNON ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Property tax relief available to qualified elderly and totally disabled homeowners

A property tax relief program is available to homeowners who are elderly or who are totally disabled. To be eligible, individuals and couples who own homes must have adjusted gross income of less than \$49,100 and meet other guidelines. People must apply for the program every other year. The application period this year is from Feb. 1 to May 15.

Under the property tax credit program an applicant must, as of the October 1, assessment date, be a Connecticut resident, be the property owner or have life use, and be age 65 as of Dec. 31. There is no age requirement for people who are totally disabled. Applicants must also submit evidence of verified income. This can be in the form of a federal tax return and Social Security statement (SSA-1099). People who have not filed their federal tax return, or who do not file, must present pension statements, bank interest statements, and statements of any other income.

Another possible option for homeowners 70 and older who are of limited income is the Local Freeze program. For more information, contact the assessor's office at 860-870-3625.

Submitted by: David Wheeler, Assessor

Refuse and Recycling Cart Placement

Proper Placement

Carts should be placed a minimum of 3 feet apart from one another as well as other obstacles such as poles, mailboxes and stonewalls. Ensure no vehicles are blocking access to carts.



Improper Placement

Incorrect spacing, too close to mailbox. Loose items cannot be collected. Handles should be facing away from street. Lids should be completely closed to avoid littering. Items should not be placed on top of closed lids.



Only Town of Vernon branded tipper carts are allowed. Additional carts may be purchased by calling the Public Works office at 860-870-3500



(L-R) Nick Statoulas Chief Consumer Banking Officer
Gerry Tavernier, Senior Commercial Lender,
Jen Moreau, Area Manager, Manchester & Vernon,
Tony Sweet, Branch Manager, Glastonbury

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